

Part 2

Vertical Articulation

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Chapter 5

Implications of Advanced Proficiency World Languages and Cultures Tenets for University Foreign Language Programs

Christina Frei, University of Pennsylvania

Heather Willis Allen, University of Wisconsin

Bridget Swanson, University of Pennsylvania

Glenn S. Levine, University of California, Irvine

Introduction

A decade ago, the College Board undertook a redesign of the Advanced Placement (AP) World Languages and Cultures (WLC) curriculum and examination. The reforms were based in part on a nationwide survey of third-year collegiate foreign language (FL) course objectives, learning outcomes, and instructional tasks, resulting in a reframing of the AP course's goals (Bischof, 2005, pp. 77–79). In addition, in Spring 2007, the Educational Policy Improvement Center, on behalf of The College Board, commissioned a review of third-year U.S. collegiate FL courses in Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, and Spanish, the results of which guided the development of the redesigned AP Language and Culture curriculum (Cothrun, 2010). The analysis identified six key themes common to collegiate FL courses at the fifth-semester level: beauty and aesthetics; contemporary life; family and community; global challenges; personal and public identities; and science and technology. Findings from the curriculum review pointed to the development of multiliteracies as students engage with a range of materials and genres (Bischoff, 2005, p. 77). In creating the AP WLC curriculum and exam, the College Board followed *backward design* principles (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). This approach to instructional planning includes identifying desired student learning outcomes, designing appropriate assessments that show the extent to which students achieve these learning outcomes, and selecting authentic materials representative of cultural products, practices, and perspectives. The new AP WLC curriculum and exams were launched during the 2011–2012 school year, and courses taught in high schools since that time follow the guidelines we will detail in this chapter.

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During the same period the AP WLC curriculum and exam were being reformed, the MLA issued bold recommendations in the much-discussed 2007 Report “Foreign Languages and Higher Education: New Structures for a Changed World” (MLA Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages, 2007). In the years that followed, a prolific publication stream proposed ideas for countering two challenges addressed in the report: curricular bifurcation of collegiate FL programs and the related personnel division among those who teach lower-division language versus advanced literary-cultural courses (e.g., Allen & Maxim, 2013; Byrnes, Maxim, & Norris, 2010; Kern, 2000; Paesani, Allen, & Dupuy, 2016). Yet despite plentiful discussion of the language-literature divide in professional conferences and publications during the past decade, curricular approaches advocated as means of overcoming incoherence in collegiate FL programs have been limited primarily to literacy- and genre-based approaches and, to a lesser extent, ACTFL Standards-based approaches. As Paesani and Allen (2012, p. 70) stated, “[w]ithout more diverse models for effectively mapping language and content across the curriculum, FL departments may be less likely to find program-appropriate solutions to overcoming bifurcation.”

In this chapter, we concentrate on one resource for rethinking the bifurcated collegiate FL curriculum that has remained largely unexplored: the tenets that underpin the redesigned AP WLC curriculum and examination, which connect to the three interrelated components of backward design: learning outcomes, assessment, and instruction (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). The AP tenets we detail in the following pages hold valuable implications for undergraduate FL programs as well as for teacher education of graduate student instructors (GSIs). By applying these backward-design principles across the curriculum, incorporating multiliteracies-focused instruction from the beginning, and focusing on tasks reflecting the three modes of communication to the end of the undergraduate FL program, we may be able to take on the bifurcation between lower-level “skills”-based instruction and upper-level “content” courses that the 2007 MLA Report so pointedly critiqued.

Concerning the “skills”-oriented introductory level in U.S. FL programs in particular, a pervasive mismatch has been observed between constructivist pedagogical models (which have gained much scholarly attention in recent years) and the conventional transactional-interaction model associated with communicative language teaching (CLT) (Block, 2010; Kramsch, 2006; Swaffar, 2006). Particularly since the 1990s, such approaches have come to inform scholarly inquiry into FL learning and teaching, while articulation challenges that persist between lower-division language courses and advanced literary-cultural courses continue to drive curricular changes. The fact that most introductory FL textbooks do not accord well with the sociocultural turn in second-language acquisition (SLA)—arguably a point of focus in the teacher education of many GSIs—aggravates the problem. Integrating the tenets underlying the AP WLC curriculum into this system can

have a twofold benefit. First, these tenets can help align introductory and intermediate course content with graduate students' professional development as teachers. Second, they can assist in articulating the intellectual and pedagogical scope of the introductory curriculum with that of the intermediate and advanced undergraduate FL curricula. At the same time, the tenets can offer a solution by aligning intellectually sound applications of the revised *ACTFL World-Readiness Standards* (The National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015) with the full four-year undergraduate curriculum while articulating linkages to graduate education.

Recent Advances in Secondary FL Education

The ACTFL *World-Readiness Standards* (2015), which represents a revision and expansion of the *Standards* document developed in the 1990s (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 2006), establishes a blueprint for curricular design and assessment for Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Italian, and Spanish. The most significant of the innovations in the revised *Standards* is a move away from teaching isolated reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills and towards an integrated pedagogical approach that emphasizes the “five Cs” of culture, communication, comparisons, connections, and communities. Three modes of communication—interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational—are understood to guide student's FL language use.

To complement the new *Standards*, ACTFL issued a position paper that identified “reaching global competence” as a larger aim of FL instruction (in addition to many other areas of the curriculum). Global competence is “developed and demonstrated by investigating the world, recognizing and weighing perspectives, acquiring and applying disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge, communicating ideas, and taking action” (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language (ACTFL), 2014). Framing FL teaching and learning with this position in mind, the overarching educational goals of the revised *Standards* inextricably address critical thinking and humanistic inquiry, and require a more capacious pedagogical approach. The AP WLC curriculum in use in thousands of secondary-level FL classrooms around the United States has moved in this direction, and its implications for university-level instruction are coming into focus.

The AP WLC guidelines for course design, which secondary FL teachers use to create and propose AP courses in their respective schools, follow the backward design framework mentioned earlier (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). The AP curriculum is built around six themes explored through “essential questions,” another concept that Wiggins and McTighe unpack in their work. The backward design model begins with an explication of learning outcomes, followed by consideration of assessment, and finally design of instruction to facilitate achievement of the learning outcomes. Each of the six themes sets up its own frame for learning outcomes statements, while essential questions engage students intellectually and critically; finally, formative and summative assessments gauge students' development

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toward learning about the theme and addressing the essential question. Under the backward design model, a particular pedagogical approach (e.g., CLT) does not circumscribe instructional practice. Instead, instruction and teaching techniques are implemented as needed to help students achieve the stated outcomes.

An FL curriculum grounded in backward design principles emphasizes language functions, contexts, content, and text types and includes collaborative learning strategies necessary for students to navigate communicative tasks from the onset of their university FL learning. Designing instruction to align with the themes requires developing overarching essential questions to prompt declarative learning and reflection about students' own linguistic and cultural frames and those who use their new language. Essential questions lead to interdisciplinary inquiry, asking students to apply skills and perspectives across content areas while working with content from the language, literature, and cultures of the target language (College Board, 2011, p. 31). The themes and essential questions invite students' exploration through authentic materials, teacher-developed resources, commercially produced materials, teacher creativity, and student interest. Choosing and didacticizing authentic material requires careful scaffolding and inclusion of learning strategies. The three modes of communication also acknowledge the interrelatedness of comprehension and comprehensibility, vocabulary usage, language control, communication strategies, and cultural awareness (College Board, 2011, p. 5). They further reflect sociolinguistic and constructivist tenets of language acquisition, in that students learn language structures in context and use them to interpret and convey meaning. Language structures are addressed inasmuch as they serve the communicative task of promoting both fluency and accuracy in language use (p. 5).

In the remainder of this chapter, we discuss the three components of backward design, their instantiation in the AP WLC tenets, and their applicability to collegiate FL departments. In our discussion of assessment, we also describe the AP WLC exams and detail some implications for the FL curriculum. We conclude with a consideration of implications of the AP WLC curriculum for future language professionals.

The AP WLC Tenets: Learning Outcomes, Assessment, and Instruction

The backward design model recommended by the AP curriculum guidelines described in the previous section offers a helpful framework for university FL programs. This framework is founded on three elements of curricular design: outcomes, assessment, and instruction. Significant to this model is the stipulation that instructors consider appropriate assessment *after* determining outcomes and *before* they design the trajectory of instruction or select effective teaching techniques. Once the aims of instruction have first been established, instructors then identify how students may demonstrate progress toward the stated learning outcomes (whether for the purpose of moving to the next phase of instruction or grading an assignment). After discussing each of the tenets (outcomes,

assessment, and instruction) in turn next, we will describe and think about the implications of the AP WLC exam for college-level FL instruction. Looking ahead, we will conclude that considering instructional design in accordance with the AP framework's recommended steps can help instructors orient instruction toward valid, transparent assessment practices rather than “teaching to the test.”

Outcomes

A notable difference between secondary and postsecondary FL educational contexts in the U.S. is the degree to which programs use national or state-level standards and frameworks to inform curricular design and tie student learning outcomes to assessments of various sorts, from locally produced tests to normed exams such as the AP WLC exam and other instruments. In higher education, the practice of formulating explicit outcomes and designing and implementing assessments is often criticized or dismissed as hampering academic freedom, creativity, and spontaneity in the classroom. Yet, as Bernhardt (2014) points out, “[t]he effectiveness of assessment practices depends on the articulation of their objectives—that is, what is to be accomplished in the instructional setting—and on the comparison of claims with actual results (pp. 16–17). She argues that “contemporary use of *assessment* . . . is [often] conjoined with claims about the redirection of learning from substantive content to statistically defined achievement or from the deep conceptualization of material to multiple-choice test scores” whereby “teachers are forced by assessment to ‘teach to the test’” (p. 15).

In collegiate contexts, the formulation of identifiable learning outcomes toward assessment is often viewed as a means of quality control designed to hold faculty accountable for the efficacy of instruction; as a result, this process has often been seen as interfering in areas in which the faculty are the experts (Bennett & Bennett, 2004). Yet Bernhardt holds that “good assessment provides the field of humanities with much-needed evidence at a time when sentiment seems to guide discussion” (p. 15). And while her essay is framed as a critique of Berman’s 2012 MLA Presidential Address (which Bernhardt claims oversimplifies and dismisses the issue of national-level articulation of standards and assessments), in fact, Berman admonished colleagues to embrace the articulation and assessment of outcomes at the university level on its own terms: “Unless we teachers act to seize control of assessment and accountability in language and literature education, we may eventually see one-dimensional national metrics and a national curriculum imposed at the college level as well.”

In a similar vein, Swaffar (2003) asserts that constructing curricula with an eye toward individual faculty rather than to the department as a whole is a contributing factor to the ongoing “crisis mode” in collegiate FL departments. Graff (2003, p. 3) observes that formulating outcomes in a collaborative, coordinated way holds faculty to the obligation to “correlate and align our courses to prevent students from being bombarded with confusing disjunctions and mixed messages” and encourages instructors to “operate not as classroom divas and prima donnas but as

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team players who collaborate with our colleagues to produce a genuine program.” A “genuine program,” of course, means different things depending on the institutional context, department, program, individuals in the program, and FL students. Developing a clear understanding of the benefits of (faculty-controlled) articulation of concise, transparent learning outcomes for curricular design and assessment is an important undertaking that can help us to question and adapt teaching practices across the curriculum—from language and culture courses to graduate seminars.

As we have made clear thus far, the AP WLC curriculum tenets offer a compelling framework for collegiate programs and departments, oriented toward the ACTFL five “Cs” and emphasizing the interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational modes of communication (ACTFL, 2014). In addition, the six themes mentioned earlier categorize intended learning outcomes, while essential questions focus the themes on a particular issue within an instructional unit. Indeed, the articulation of themes and corollary essential questions facilitates examination of a range of particular manifestations of that theme in cultural, historical, political, and/or linguistic contexts. This approach aligns both with the development of intercultural competence and, arguably, the larger thematic and humanistic-inquiry aims of many intermediate- and advanced-level collegiate FL courses.

Considering the issue of the essential questions that form the core of the approach, Wiggins and McTighe (2005) argue that they are the means of structuring or orienting outcomes and of linking outcomes to assessment and instructional practice. Essential questions aim to “stimulate thought, to provoke inquiry, and spark more questions” (p. 106) rather than prompting brief and simple answers. Essential questions can “serve as doorways through which learners explore the key concepts, themes, theories, issues, and problems that reside within the content as yet unseen: it is through the process of actively ‘interrogating’ the content through provocative questions that students deepen their understanding” (p. 106). In the AP WLC curriculum, essential questions go to the heart of a particular topic, problem, or field of study; this is what makes them “essential.” Each learner can develop deeper understandings and capacities by addressing these questions individually—since, by definition, essential questions do not have one “right answer.”

Within the context of FL instruction, essential questions can be overarching, in the sense that they highlight and problematize larger cultural and social issues. Furthermore, essential questions can assist investigation into target cultural practices, products, and perspectives by focusing on specific aspects of the lives of people in the target culture. Through essential questions, curriculum designers and teachers have a means of making concrete decisions about assessment and instructional activity. While language teaching tenets can remain elusive and somewhat abstract in practice (cf., for instance, Byram’s (1997) five *savoirs* of intercultural communicative competence or the admittedly still-undertheorized concept of translingual and transcultural competence proposed in the 2007 MLA Report), key themes and essential questions can inform curriculum design and

teaching practices in concrete ways accessible to students and teachers alike. For collegiate FL programs, weaving essential questions into curricular design also places the emphasis on learners' intellectual engagement with target culture practices and perspectives, while allowing language forms to serve as a vehicle for learning and addressing those questions.

Assessment

The content of the redesigned AP Language and Culture examination, the culminating summative assessment for the related AP course, may be largely unfamiliar to many faculty members, yet it holds significant implications for collegiate FL curricula and instructional practice. The College Board describes the exam as assessing “students’ proficiencies in the Interpersonal, Interpretive, and Presentational modes of communication” (2011, p. 38). The exam’s first section focuses primarily on interpretive communication, wherein students read authentic print materials, listen to audio materials, and respond to related multiple-choice questions. In the second section, focused on both interpersonal and presentational communication, students complete free-response tasks including replying in writing to an e-mail message, writing a persuasive essay, taking part in a simulated conversation, and recording a two-minute presentation on a cultural topic. Across both sections of the exam, coverage of all six themes of the course occurs. As indicated by this brief description, the exam aligns well with a literacy-based notion of assessment and evaluation, including Kern (2000)’s three desiderata for shaping literacy-based assessment: (1) it is based on a broad view of language and literacy and entails learners’ capacity to use language, literacy conventions, and cultural knowledge thoughtfully in communicative acts; (2) it is multidimensional in nature, entailing a range of multiple, varied indices of performance; and (3) it is highly integrated with teaching and learning. These desiderata are demonstrated in the AP exam by its grounding in the backward design model, the three modes of communication, and the six course themes.

Lack of familiarity with the content of the AP exam aside, collegiate FL faculty may not readily see the relevance of the exam to their own context and purposes. Digging beyond the exam’s generalities, however, one finds at least two features with important implications for collegiate programs. First, as typified in the exam’s first section, test takers must demonstrate sophisticated textual analysis of audio and print documents to reach correct responses to 65 multiple-choice questions. At face value, we may dismiss assessment of textual analysis by way of multiple-choice questions as traditional and over-simplistic, involving surface-level comprehension of the texts’ main ideas and supporting details. Yet in reality, the range of knowledge targeted in the AP exam’s multiple-choice questions goes far beyond those features.¹ The following table demonstrates the types of knowledge

¹ Information about and sample items from the AP WLC exams are available at http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/public/exam/exam_information/index.html

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targeted in the exam's first section, based on a sample AP French Language and Culture exam. The content of this exam aligns closely with that of the other language exams (College Board, 2011).

Table 5.1. Types of Textual Analysis Targeted in Part I of a sample AP WLC Exam

Subsection of Exam	Types of Knowledge Targeted in Exam Questions
Print advertisement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose of message and point of view of its author • Comprehension of content from text • Understanding of features of target culture communities • Reflection on cultural perspective • Critical reading of text • Understanding of written exchange of information in formal situations
Print excerpt from novel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of vocabulary in context, including idiomatic and culturally authentic expressions • Comprehension of content from text • Critical reading of text
Print article and table	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose of message and point of view of its author • Critical reading of text • Understanding of vocabulary in context, including idiomatic and culturally authentic expressions • Comprehension of content from text • Understanding of the use of reference tools and sources; how to cite them appropriately • Understanding of content across disciplines
Print letter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehension of content from text • Purpose of message and point of view of its author • Understanding of features of target culture communities • Understanding of vocabulary in context, including idiomatic and culturally authentic expressions • Understanding of written exchange of information in informal situations
Print article and audio report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose of message and point of view of its author • Critical reading of text • Understanding of vocabulary in context, including idiomatic and culturally authentic expressions • Comprehension of content from text • Critical listening in relation to authentic audio resources
Print chart and audio conversation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehension of content from text • Reflection on cultural practice • Understanding of vocabulary in context, including idiomatic and culturally authentic expressions • Understanding of features of target culture communities • Understanding of oral exchange of information in informal situations

(continued)

Table 5.1. (Continues)

Subsection of Exam	Types of Knowledge Targeted in Exam Questions
Audio interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of features of target culture communities • Comprehension of content from text • Critical listening in relation to authentic audio resources • Purpose of message and point of view of its author • Understanding of oral exchange of information in formal situations
Audio report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose of message and point of view of its author • Identification of distinguishing features of authentic audio resources • Critical listening in relation to authentic audio resources • Comprehension of content from text
Audio presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of distinguishing features of authentic audio resources • Comprehension of content from text • Understanding of content across disciplines • Understanding of features of target culture communities • Understanding of vocabulary in context, including idiomatic and culturally authentic expressions • Understanding of the use of reference tools and sources; how to cite them appropriately

As this list of targeted knowledge types demonstrates, “interpretive communication” in the AP exam is understood as involving more than comprehension of textual content and the ability to read or listen “between the lines” (i.e., critical reading or listening). Beyond those elements, interpretive communication involves engagement as a reader or listener with a text’s purpose, point of view, and distinguishing features and the capacity to compose a written or oral message in response to the text in either formal or informal discourse (e.g., respond to a question such as “What question would be most appropriate to ask the interviewee?”). Though linguistic features of texts are included in exam questions (e.g., understanding of vocabulary in context), there is equal emphasis given to cultural practices and perspectives and content across disciplines embedded in audio and print texts.

Intertextuality is a notable thematic component of the multiple-choice section of the exam, in which the test taker is presented with two thematically related texts, either both print or print and audio. These texts may include combinations such as a journalistic print article and a graphic treatment of information (bar chart, table, etc.) or a report or interview from a radio broadcast. This emphasis on intertextuality reflects an understanding of interpretive communication as complex, in this case requiring the test taker to synthesize information from more than one text type and perspective and to function as a multimodal meaning maker, employing listening and reading in an overlapping and complementary way. In short, the requirement to conceptualize interpretive communication in

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the exam's first section is sophisticated and multidimensional, and can provide a valuable blueprint for collegiate FL teachers to evaluate their students' capacities to engage with authentic texts. Further, and in line with backward-design principles, the types of knowledge targeted through print and audio documents in the AP exam can also serve as a model for classroom-based talk about texts—a pedagogical area that research has revealed to remain problematic long after secondary FL study (Donato & Brooks, 2004; Mantero, 2002; Polio & Zyzik, 2009). The information contained in Table 5.1 can serve as a starting point for reflection not just on how one constructs a summative assessment in relation to interpretive communication, but also how one designs instructional conversations and formative assessment.

The AP exam's approach to eliciting meaning-making in the free-response section also bears implications for collegiate FL programs. Each interpersonal or presentational task in the exam's second section requires textual interpretation of either a print or audio source (or both print and audio sources, in the case of the persuasive essay). As such, these tasks embody the literacy-based notion of language use as *meaning design*: the process of interpreting and creating texts based on an awareness of the relationships between textual conventions and their contexts of use (Kern, 2000). For example, in the e-mail task, test takers are prompted to respond (in the case of the sample French Language and Culture exam, College Board, 2011) to a short print message containing several specific criteria that need to be addressed. Thus, the test taker first acts as a reader and then as a writer, responding to what was communicated in the question prompt.

The learning objectives associated with the four tasks in the free-response section of the exam clarify what successful meaning-making entails. Learners demonstrate their ability to mobilize accurate linguistic resources in speech and in writing and use appropriate schematic resources, including knowledge of the format and conventions of a given text type. Furthermore, learners must know when to use an informal or formal register based on the communicative context. The persuasive essay task promotes multimodality and intertextuality (through interpretation of a print text, table, and audio text) and synthesis of the perspectives presented in those texts as part of the test taker's persuasive essay. Thus, the test taker must make meaning by weaving ideas and resources from the three source texts into the essay, while also producing an argument or perspective that is distinct, cohesive, and reflective of the schematic conventions of the essay genre. The cultural comparison task, that is, the brief oral presentation, is multimodal inasmuch as students organize their ideas in writing prior to recording their two-minute presentations. The improvised conversation involves reading an outline of a series of conversational turns, listening to prompts and responses provided by the interlocutor in the simulated conversation, and, of course, speaking during assigned conversational turns.

The AP exam's conceptualization of meaning-making in the free-response section mirrors the genre-specific and multimodal nature of interpersonal and presentational communication in real-world contexts and provides collegiate FL programs with a useful model for weaving textual content into performance-based assessment of students' oral and written FL capacities. Whereas collegiate classroom FL instruction may be evolving beyond discrete skill-based conceptions of language use in the post-communicative era, our testing practices often reflect a more traditional approach to assessing listening/viewing, reading, writing, and speaking skills separately. In this regard, the AP exam embraces the integrated use of linguistic modalities as test takers interact with texts and make meaning around them. It is also worth noting that, in accordance with the alignment sought in backward design, test takers' performance on the AP exam's free-response section is evaluated using four holistic rubrics, the specifics of which are tailored to characteristics of interpersonal and presentational speech and writing. Perusal of the rubrics' descriptors reinforces the notion that successful FL communication is multifaceted, entailing more than simply using the right words and grammatical structures to convey one's message; it requires knowing how to be appropriate, comprehensible, and effective in genre-specific ways.

Instruction

Earlier, we outlined ways in which the AP WLC exam assesses test takers' ability to make meaning based on comprehensibility, appropriateness, and knowledge of how to create and interpret specific textual genres in the FL. According to the backward design model, the final stage of course design—after deciding on assessment strategies for measuring achievement of learning outcomes—entails crafting instruction that aligns with both targeted outcomes and assessment practices. Yet often, instruction in collegiate FL courses takes what we might call a “forward design” approach (Richards, 2013) instead.

Let's look briefly at a forward-design approach to lesson planning. Forward design begins with the instructor selecting a topic or text for a lesson. In introductory FL courses, for example, a specific communicative setting (e.g., discussing one's daily routine) is often chosen to prompt language production. In the intermediate level, a specific text, such as a short story, newspaper article, or film clip, is typically used to prompt comprehension and discussion activities. Instructional practices, which involve the full range of communicative teaching techniques, include traditional activities such as grammar drills or other activities designed to elicit particular target features. Once the forward-designed learning goal and activity type have been determined, an assessment strategy is devised, often taking the form of a summative written and/or oral test. In this design approach, choices of topic, activity, and assessment do not always align with learning outcomes set in advance by the

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instructor; rather, the particular textbook or other commercial instructional materials chosen determine learning outcomes.

As detailed earlier, the backward design model follows a very different approach. Backward design begins with a clarification of outcomes independent of a particular set of instructional materials, based on the identified needs of the particular program. Therefore, the outcomes are framed in terms of a larger theme that allows for cultural and linguistic exploration and learning and can be built around a set of essential questions. These essential questions, in turn, provide affordances to pursue instructional activity through *meaning-making*, rather than an (over)emphasis on “skills” acquisition, the empty exchange of information, or the acquisition of mere grammatical knowledge. Essential questions, in Wiggins and McTighe’s (2005) framing, prompt “genuine and relevant inquiry” into the “big ideas”; they provoke deep thought, lively discussion, sustained inquiry, and new understanding—as well as more questions. Instructional planning is oriented toward getting students to consider alternatives, weigh evidence, support their ideas, and justify their answers. Students are guided to make connections with prior learning and personal experiences, and perhaps also transfer their learning to other situations and subjects.

The foregoing discussion highlights the importance of framing outcomes and means of assessment in the backward-design approach. If these initial two stages have been adequately attended to, classroom activity finds a purposeful trajectory. It should also be apparent that applying the tenets of the AP curriculum outlined above requires more than simply questioning conventional CLT models—rather, these models must be revised entirely or at least reorganized: many of the tried and true techniques of CLT classrooms must be moved to the end of the priority list when making backward-design-inspired curricular and teaching-practice decisions. By encouraging this paradigm shift, the backward design model speaks to some of the persistent problems of instruction that numerous scholars and stakeholders have described, particularly at the collegiate introductory level. In the next section, we turn to another vital consideration: the link between graduate language programs and multi-section undergraduate language programs, in which GSIs form the core of the teaching staff.

AP WLC Curriculum and Future FL Professionals

Thus far, we have shown that approaching the collegiate FL curriculum through the tenets of the AP WLC course and exam can benefit postsecondary learners, encouraging them to navigate and interpret cultural products and communicate meaningfully from the outset of their language education. This framework can also benefit GSIs, who, as part of their MA and/or PhD requirements, usually instruct introductory and intermediate FL courses while receiving mentorship

and theoretical training in graduate methods courses, preservice workshops, coordination meetings, and other settings. Indeed, an estimated 80% of GSIs' teaching assignments over the course of their education involve lower-level instruction (Steward, 2006). Thus, lower-division FL courses reflective of advances in SLA and current teaching methods should be designed in parallel with methods courses to allow a convergence of current theory and practice in which SLA-informed approaches, theories of language learning and development, and collaborative teaching techniques are intertwined into the day-to-day praxis of GSIs.

Over the past decade, the content, duration, and scope of the FL methods course has received much attention. Historically, such courses have followed a curriculum primarily determined by textbooks (Brandl, 2008; Hadley, 2001; Lee & VanPatten, 2003), which introduce GSIs to a variety of widely used CLT models and theoretical readings aligned with the type of instruction expected of them, particularly at the introductory level (though we note that most of the methods textbooks do not address the development of literacies and/or advanced capacities in the target language). In light of the 2007 MLA Report, however, several suggestions have been offered to bring methods course content into sounder alignment with more recent SLA and language pedagogy principles (Allen & Maxim, 2013; Katz Bourns & Melin, 2014; Shrum & Glisan, 2015).

As was earlier mentioned briefly, one major area of FL teaching in which GSIs can play a positive role is in mitigating the problematic bifurcation between introductory and advanced-level courses that is pervasive in undergraduate language instruction. Some LPDs are attempting to address this issue by introducing recent constructivist approaches to FL education into the graduate methods classroom through readings on sociocultural theory (Lantolf, 2000), ecological models (Kramsch, 2009; van Lier, 2004), genre-based instruction (Byrnes, Crane, Maxim, & Sprang, 2006), multiliteracies approaches (Kern, 2000; Paesani, Allen, & Dupuy, 2016), and intercultural competence frameworks (Byram, 1997; Díaz, 2013; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013).

As well-intentioned as these advances may be, many GSIs are still compelled to employ teaching techniques that reflect the outdated communicative approaches found in many commercial FL textbooks. These materials emphasize the "four skills," prioritize memorization of conversational routines, and incorporate cloze-passages, fill-in-the-blank exercises, and deductive approaches to grammar—methods that constrain GSIs' pedagogical options and offer them little opportunity to engage in teaching techniques informed by sociocultural or other constructivist models in their classrooms. It is therefore understandable that many FL graduate students report frustration and a general sense of feeling ill-equipped to enter the profession (Mills, 2011). In other words, simply integrating sociocultural/constructivist models of language learning into the methods

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seminar and other teacher-training contexts—without altering the instructional materials and expanding upon the teaching techniques that GSIs are expected to use—yields a significant disjuncture between theory and practice (Katz Bourns & Melin, 2014).

To address this disjuncture, some LPDs have argued for an expansion to the scope of the methods course. In the proposed model, an initial methods course, based on CLT approaches, would focus largely on the practical matters GSIs must tackle while teaching introductory courses; subsequently, a second methods course would deepen GSIs' understanding of theoretical foundations and curricular design issues (Allen, 2014). Expanding the one-semester crash course into a two-semester course has the potential to greatly support the GSIs' ability to "make connections between theoretical underpinnings and classroom teaching methods and techniques," so that the GSIs can better "weav[e] together linguistic and literary-cultural content" as they teach beyond the introductory level (Allen, 2014, p. 181). If, however, the backward-design approach to undergraduate FL curricula described earlier is adopted, then GSIs will by necessity engage with constructivist and collaborative teaching techniques and curricular design issues from the beginning of their professional activity. In this case, both the one- and two-semester variants of the methods course must be adapted to more thoroughly integrate methodological approaches and teaching techniques from the onset, in order to assist GSIs to teach effectively across the curriculum, from introductory through advanced-level courses.

By suggesting criteria for preparing GSIs to teach across the undergraduate FL curriculum, from multi-section introductory courses to upper-level courses, the tenets of the AP WLC curriculum lay the groundwork for working through the disjuncture between the content of many methods seminars and the pedagogy implemented in classrooms. The same backward-design approach used in high school FL education can be used to structure novice GSIs' approaches to the theory-practice link outlined above. Instead of mechanically teaching the materials from a given textbook, GSIs would be challenged to identify and articulate outcomes, recognize assessment means, and delve into instructional practices based on theoretical readings (albeit while working within the constraints of particular textbooks or with other materials). In practical terms, GSIs may create concept maps (Paesani, Allen, & Dupuy, 2016), engage in thorough lesson studies, and closely analyze sample-teaching materials (Allen & Maxim, 2013). Tightly aligned with theoretical readings, these practical components would seek to prepare GSIs to focus on issues of curricular design by independently selecting, didacticizing, and instructing meaningful theme-based content across various genre and media forms within the three communicative modes at any level of instruction.

Applying the AP tenets to activities within the methods course can also serve to link GSI education to FL curricula and classroom practice. For example,

creating instructional units or modules individually or collaboratively would allow GSIs to form connections between SLA scholarship, classroom practice, and exploration of articulation issues. Applying the AP WLC tenets at the graduate teacher-training level could yield learning-outcomes-based projects like the following:

- Demonstrate understanding of the ACTFL *World-Readiness Standards* by formulating learning outcomes.
- Engage one or more of the six WLC themes.
- Develop one or more essential questions and develop means of fostering the learners' declarative learning, reflection, and critical thinking.
- Develop both formative and summative assessment instruments, including performance descriptors and rubrics.
- Select authentic materials that speak to the theme and hold the potential to help students address the essential question(s), while also focusing on target structures and context-specific vocabulary items that facilitate understanding of meaning in context.
- Didacticize the materials such that students will engage with the three modes of communication: interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational.
- Integrate inductive and/or deductive learning of grammar in the context of the theme, essential questions, and modes of communication, depending on the stated outcomes and essential questions.

Projects such as these, in line with the AP curriculum tenets, would provide graduate students with diverse affordances to translate the pedagogical practices and methods they have learned into the creation and implementation of their own original materials.

Designing a graduate methods course with the AP WLC tenets in mind also offers an opportunity to instruct GSIs in the pedagogical techniques needed to teach effectively within this framework. One way to accomplish this is for the methods course instructor to model so-called “collaborative teaching techniques” for comprehension, discussion, debriefing, and presentation of course materials. We offer two examples for applying this approach in a teaching methods seminar.

Example 1: As part of a unit of teaching practices, students read and prepare assigned sections of *Collaborative Learning Techniques: A Handbook for College Faculty* (Barkley, Major, & Cross, 2014), which is divided into techniques for discussion, reciprocal teaching, problem-solving, using graphic information organizers, focusing on writing, and using games. In class, graduate students present the key information of the assigned reading by employing the same collaborative teaching technique about which they have read. Thus, the graduate student assigned “Techniques for Using Graphic Information Organizers” selects one of

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the five techniques (i.e., affinity groups, group grid, team matrix, sequence chains, and word webs) listed in the chapter and presents and leads class discussion via the chosen technique to elicit and visually convey the main ideas of the assigned reading.

Example 2: When planning for a class discussion on *Intercultural Language Teaching and Learning* (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013), the instructor employs one of the reciprocal teaching techniques (i.e., note-taking pairs, learning cell, fishbowl, role-play, jigsaw, and test-taking pair) to facilitate collaborative learning. Learning cell asks students to create guided comprehension questions for the reading, work with a partner, and alternately ask and answer one another's questions. As Barkley, Major, and Cross (2014, p. 195) explain, "the purpose of this [technique] is to engage students actively in thinking about content, to encourage students to generate thought-provoking questions, and to teach students how to check their understanding. [. . .] It provides an opportunity for students to think analytically, to elaborate as they put material into their own words, and to begin to use the language of the discipline." When constructivist learning techniques based on the AP curriculum tenets discussed here are incorporated into the graduate methods course, GSIs will be able to translate what they have learned at any level of language education.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have argued that the underpinnings of the redesigned AP WLC curriculum and exam should serve as a blueprint for rethinking three elements of curricular design at the college level: student learning outcomes, assessment of the degree to which outcomes are being achieved, and instructional practices that align with both outcomes and assessment. We further argued that implications of the AP curriculum should be thoughtfully considered not only for undergraduate FL learning, but also for GSIs' professional development as teachers. This is particularly important given GSIs' prominent role in delivering a great deal of instruction, particularly in beginning and intermediate undergraduate language classrooms. Close examination of the AP curricular guidelines, exam content, and evaluation criteria reveals a sophisticated framework for guiding advanced FL learning and for assessing student performance in the three modes of communication in relation to numerous textual genres. As such, this framework can serve as a model for collegiate FL programs that are grappling with identifying guiding tenets to counter the still prevalent problem of curriculum-by-default (i.e., a collection of courses lacking cohesion, rather than an intentionally crafted curriculum) (Byrnes, 1998). Finally, given that many undergraduates whom we encounter in advanced intermediate and third-year literary-cultural courses may have recent experience participating in

an AP WLC course, by gaining a deeper understanding of the AP curriculum and exam we also get a better sense of who our students are and the ways in which they have previously engaged with the language and culture during advanced secondary FL study. The metaphorical bar has been set quite high by the redesigned AP WLC curriculum and exam; collegiate FL departments would be well served to glean insights from these materials to improve the quality of instruction and assessment in our programs.

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