ENHANCING TEACHING IN THE FSL CLASSROOM THROUGH CULTURAL AWARENESS: RESEARCH AND PRACTICAL APPLICATION

by

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A project submitted to the Faculty of Education
in conformity with the requirements for the
degree of Master of Education

Queen’s University
Kingston, Ontario, Canada
April, 2010

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ABSTRACT

With the undeniable presence of multiculturalism in Canada and the rising globalization of the world, it becomes increasingly important to develop intercultural competence in the second language classroom. The objective of this project was twofold: first, to review the existing literature on cross-cultural awareness and foreign language learning and second, to develop a framework for applicable materials to support and promote intercultural competence in the Ontario French as a Second Language Program. For the purposes of my project I first surveyed the literature related to the importance of culture in foreign language learning. I then reviewed literature concerning goals, frameworks, assessment, materials and strategies related to intercultural competence in order to determine appropriate cultural approaches in the second language classroom. Finally, based on my findings and the Grade 9 Core French curriculum objectives, I developed a practical application in the form of a cultural portfolio. The main themes revealed through the development of cultural activities for student use in the FSL classroom include the promotion of cross-cultural awareness, self-reflection and respect for others regardless of their beliefs or practices.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I would like to thank Dr. Marie J. Myers for her guidance over the past two years. Your continual support and mentorship as both my program and project supervisor is greatly appreciated. Thank you for your patience, encouragement and for sharing your incredible wealth of knowledge. I have learned so much from you and your contribution to the field of foreign language learning.

I would also like to acknowledge Dr. William Higginson for taking the time to be the second reader for this project. It has been a pleasure working with you both in class, and on this project.

To my friends, my chosen family, I am so grateful for all you have done to help me accomplish this task. Whether it was in the form of long distance phone calls, coffee dates, or walks in the park, I want you to know that your support and friendship are greatly appreciated.

I would also like to thank my family, particularly my parents, for their encouragement throughout this process. You have always supported me wholeheartedly, and this endeavor is no exception. Thank you for always pushing me to strive for greatness, and for your continual guidance and friendship along the way.

And finally, to Ryan, thank you for your unconditional love and support, whether near or far. Your encouragement and belief in me has helped me through the hard times, and the successes were that much sweeter because you shared in them. You never cease to motivate me and you continually inspire me to put my best effort into any task I undertake. This experience truly would not have been the same without you.
“People need to see that, far from being an obstacle, the world’s diversity of languages, religions and traditions is a great treasure, affording us precious opportunities to recognize ourselves in others.”

- Youssou N’Dour
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

Rationale

At the age of five I started formally leaning French as a Second Language, entering into an Extended French program at the age of ten. I continued my French studies through high school and received my bilingual certificate upon graduation. Still fuelled by my passion for languages I obtained a degree in French from McMaster University, supplemented by Spanish courses. In reflecting on my language learning experiences, I considered all the courses I had taken over the years, and what I had learned from them. In doing so, I realized that there was one course in particular that really fuelled my passion for language learning. In the third year of my degree, I took a class in which the focus was learning about the culture of France. I also realized that this was the first time in fifteen years of learning French that I had ever learned about a specific Francophone culture. With the realization that there was still so much to learn, I took it upon myself to learn about other Francophone cultures, in Algeria or Burkina-Faso for example. I found that when learning was associated with a cultural connection it was not only more enjoyable, but also aided my language acquisition. Presently, I am a certified French and Spanish Intermediate Senior teacher in Ontario. Upon the completion of my Bachelor of Education degree, I took on a full-time teaching position in the Ottawa area. While I aimed to incorporate cultural awareness into my daily teaching practice, I found that there was a significant lack of supporting material, and thus, I was faced with quite a challenge. This is the reason why I pursued graduate studies; so that I could improve my understanding of cultural teaching in a second language classroom, and
create appropriate materials to fill the current void. As a teacher, I aspire to incorporate
culture into every language lesson, as it not only provides a deeper connection for the
students but allows them to explore the world outside the classroom. Although I may be
teaching the French as a Second Language curriculum, I do not only intend to focus on
Francophone cultures, but rather on a general sense of cultural awareness from the
students’ perspectives. Unfortunately, as I have experienced personally, the materials
accessible to teachers rarely provide culturally based learning activities. Therefore, it has
become my goal to research the importance of cultural awareness in second language
learning, and to develop materials that will aid my classroom practice. It is my belief that
through the development of materials that include cultural content, in alignment with the
curriculum objectives, students will be provided the opportunity to improve and master
their language skills, while learning about the diversity of the world’s cultures.

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to develop materials that can be used in a foreign
language classroom to promote cross-cultural awareness. Within this project, my first
goal is to investigate the link between language and culture, both in theory and practice,
and the many ways in which cultural learning can be supported in a second language
learning environment. Furthermore, I wish to explore and establish attainable goals,
frameworks and forms of assessment that support intercultural competence in the foreign
language classroom. It is my hope that through this research, I will be able to create
materials that enhance the cultural learning of foreign language students in both a positive
and respectful environment.
Defining Key Terms

The terminology I use throughout this paper relates to second language learning in a traditional classroom setting. In this section, I define and explain what is meant by the following terms: culture, first, second and foreign language learning, cross-cultural awareness and intercultural competence.

Culture

Throughout this project I use the term culture on numerous occasions. In the context of this paper the term culture is used in a general context, meaning the conventions, customs, beliefs, and systems of meaning of another country or group of people (Thansoulas, 2001). The term culture incorporates many aspects of a way of life including, but not limited to, language, religion, tradition, arts and education (Condon, 1973). While there are many other levels and definitions associated with the term culture, as explored in Chapter 2, its use in this paper is intended in the general sense, unless otherwise indicated.

First, Second and Foreign Language Learning

Throughout this paper the term foreign language learning refers to the study of a language that is not a person’s first language, which is referred to as L1, or mother tongue. The term second language learning is used interchangeably with foreign language learning, although I do recognize that it may not be a precise indicator for all parties, particularly those who have learned three, four or more languages. It should also be noted that the term L2 appears throughout this paper and designates the second language of an individual or group. In the context of this project, language learning experiences are generalized and classroom examples are based on those in a standard
Ontario classroom, unless otherwise specified.

**Cross-Cultural Awareness and Intercultural Competence**

The term cross-cultural awareness appears on numerous occasions throughout this document. Cross-cultural awareness is defined as the “uncovering and understanding of one’s own culturally conditioned behaviour and thinking, as well as the patterns of others” (Damen, 1987, p. 141). Used interchangeably with cross-cultural awareness throughout this project, intercultural competence is outlined as “the awareness, valuing and understanding of cultural difference, experiencing other cultures, and self-awareness of one’s own culture” (Deardorff, 2006, p. 247). Essentially, both terms promote the consideration of one’s personal values, while learning about those of others.

**Overview of the Paper**

In this first chapter, I provide a rationale for conducting this project, the purpose of this project, as well as outline the meaning of some of the key terms used throughout this document. The following chapter presents a review of the literature which serves two purposes. First, the literature review identifies the theoretical link between language and culture. Second, it provides a critical review of both educational and academic views on the inclusion of culture in foreign language learning. Particularly, this chapter highlights the importance of cultural learning and the inclusion of cross-cultural awareness or intercultural competence in an L2 setting. In the third chapter, I consider the goals of intercultural competence in the classroom setting, outlining a series of my own goals developed from the research and personal beliefs. I also examine potential frameworks for the implementation of cross-cultural instruction and review the ways in which assessment of intercultural competence is approached. Next, in chapter four, I turn to the
practical application of materials for use in the second language classroom, choosing a portfolio approach, which supports the goals, framework and assessment of intercultural competence discussed in the previous chapter. I justify the choice of the cultural portfolio through the alignment of objectives as per the Ontario Ministry of Education, specifically focusing on the Grade 9 Core French Curriculum. In chapter five, I discuss the significance of the study and identify some of the limitations associated with my project. I suggest next steps for future studies and conclude with some final thoughts and recommendations on cross-cultural awareness. I end my project with an appendix of a portfolio intended to promote intercultural competence in a Grade 9 Core French classroom. This portfolio contains strategies, activities and assessment tools that support the development of cross-cultural awareness and the Ontario curriculum.

This following chapter provides a review of the literature, which has two aims: one, to outline the link between language and culture from a theoretical standpoint, demonstrating that one cannot be taught without the other; and two, to explore the approaches of cultural teaching in the foreign language setting in order to determine which methods should be employed in the classroom.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Cultural learning is important in all classrooms, but its role is particularly significant in the foreign language classroom. By surveying the literature regarding the role of culture in second language learning and teaching it will be possible to understand how the two concepts are linked and how they influence each other. The main premise of this chapter is to demonstrate that language learning is more than a matter of acquiring grammatical structures, and that cultural learning is an inseparable component of the language learning process. Through an examination of the definitions of culture, it will be possible to observe and understand the ways in which cultural instruction can be approached in the foreign language classroom. Perspectives on teaching culture as factual information and cross-cultural awareness will be explored, and the benefits and limitations of each will be discussed. By studying the relationship of language and culture, it will become apparent that the study of culture thoroughly enhances and enriches the curriculum in any second language classroom. This can be seen as students profit from the opportunity to empathize and develop respect towards a multitude of cultures while promoting objectivity and gaining cultural perspicacity.

Linking Language and Culture

The interrelatedness of language and culture has been discussed by scholars for many years. Brown (1994) posits that language is “the most visible and available expression of [a] culture” (p. 8) and that the two cannot be divided. This viewpoint is shared by McLaughlin (1996) who believes that cultural factors cannot be separated from,
and in fact, run deeper than the language itself. Therefore, it would be expected that language instruction would inherently include cultural instruction, if the two are indeed inseparable. In terms of language learning, Kramsch (1993) believes that in order to achieve true linguistic competence, culture and language should be learned together. This opinion is shared by Saphonova (1996) who also believes that learning a foreign language must include learning about the culture(s) associated with the target language. The overall consensus can be summarized by saying that “foreign language teaching is foreign culture teaching, and, in one form or another, culture has, even implicitly, been taught in the foreign language classroom” (Thanasoulas, 2001, p. 3).

Although language and culture may appear to be two distinct fields on the surface, they have an intertwined relationship and affect each other mutually. Gleason (1961) states that languages are not only the products of cultures, but that they are also the symbols of cultures (p. 18). Kuo and Lai (2006) also support the view that the development of a language frequently affects its associated culture. Armour-Thomas and Gopaul-McNicol (1998) explore the views of language as a social institution, both shaping and being shaped by society. This means that language is not an independent construct, but more of a social practice, that affects and is affected by the structures and forces of the social institutions within which we live (Kuo & Lai, 2006). Therefore, it can be stated that all language learning will incorporate cultural learning whether it is explicitly or implicitly taught.

One of the common misconceptions associated with foreign language teaching is the conviction that language is merely a code, and that once mastered, students will achieve communicative competence in the target language. Samovar, Porter and Jain
(1981) comment that culture and communication are inseparable because culture not only dictates who talks to whom, about what and how the communication proceeds, but also helps to determine how people encode messages, the meanings they have for messages, and the conditions and circumstances under which various messages may or may not be sent, noticed, or interpreted. Therefore, in exploring the ways in which culture and language learning interact, it becomes apparent that one cannot be accurately learned without the other. Culture is inextricably related to language as Duranti (1997) states:

> Words carry in them a myriad of possibilities for connecting us to other human beings, other situations, events, acts, beliefs, feelings…language is thus part of the constitution of any act of speaking as an act of participation in a community of language users (p. 46).

Politzer (1959) supports this view and posits that “if we teach language without teaching at the same time the culture in which it operates, we are teaching meaningless symbols or symbols to which the student attaches the wrong meaning” (p. 545). Without cultural knowledge, the meanings of words and actions may be misinterpreted by the language learner, resulting in confusion and frustration. The National Standards for Foreign Language Education project (1996) also affirms the belief that students cannot truly learn a new language until they have learned the cultural context in which the new language occurs. This solidifies the argument that understanding the target culture is of utmost importance for student success in second language learning. Given the information presented above, the inclusion of culture is indisputably an integral part of foreign language learning. Additionally, it is clear how both language and culture have a symbiotic relationship, as each is affected by even minute shifts in the other. An example of this can be seen in immigration, and how new members of a culture can influence the existing language. Despite this information, culture is often underrepresented in the
second language classroom and treated as though it were less important than the other
emphasizes the importance of culture in language teaching in saying:

Culture in language learning is not an expendable fifth skill, tacked on, so to
speak, to the teaching of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. It is always in
the background, right from day one, ready to unsettle the good language learners
when they expect it least… challenging their ability to make sense of the world
around them (p. 141).

Therefore, it is clear that without an understanding of culture, students will struggle in
second language learning. However, what is unclear is what exactly is intended by the
term culture, and how it should be integrated into language learning and teaching.
Therefore, the following sections will explore what is meant by the term culture and how
its meaning has shifted over the years. This will aid in the understanding of how culture
and language function together, and the ways in which they can be incorporated into the
classroom.

Views on Culture

The word “culture” has long been discussed in the field of education however it is
difficult to define in specific terms. Therefore, it is important to review the range of
meanings implied by the term culture, as through the exploration of past definitions and
shifts in its meaning, it will be possible to realize what culture has come to mean in
today’s society.

Nemni (1992) and Street (1993) recognize that defining culture is a complex task,
particularly in an increasingly international world. Generally speaking, culture has been
referred to as “the ways of a people” (Lado, 1957, p. 14). This incorporates both
manifestations of culture that are easily seen and ones that are more difficult to observe
Anthropologists define culture as “the whole way of life of a people or group. In this context, culture includes all the social practices that bond a group of people together and distinguish them from others” (Montgomery & Reid-Thomas, 1994, p. 5). Condon (1973) also shares this same view and notes that culture includes a variety of dimensions including customs, skills, arts, ideas and tools that characterize a group of people in a given period of time.

Damen (1987) makes the astute observation that cultures are in process; constantly changing and impossible to define in exact terms. Robinson (1998) also supports this view and describes culture as a “system of symbols and meanings” and explains that “past experience influences meaning which in turn affects future experience, which in turn affects subsequent meaning, and so on” (p. 11). Recognizing this component of culture, and ensuring that this message is passed on to the students, is imperative when teaching in foreign language classrooms.

While it may be impossible to define culture in specific terms, it is undoubtedly an important part of language learning. It is inherent in our beings and is a powerful tool to add to our knowledge, and establish relationships between people. Without culture, we cannot empathize with the lives and motivations of others or connect with their concerns and interests. By blending culture into language teaching, students will be more readily able to learn a second language while gaining an appreciation and respect for others around them.

Historical Overview

Before examining the goals of cultural teaching in the current language classroom it is important to review the perspectives and theories that have been discussed in the past.
In doing so, it becomes possible to understand the evolution of teaching culture in the language classroom and I will present any limitations that have been discovered over the years.

Lessard-Clouston (1997) notes that, historically, people learned a foreign language to study its literature, and this was the main medium of culture. “[I]t was through reading that students learned of the civilization associated with the target language” (p 39). Throughout the 1960’s and 1970’s several scholars, such as Hall (1959), Nostrand (1974), Seelye (1974) and Brooks (1975), undertook the task to base foreign language learning on a common ground so that “the foreign culture [would appear] less threatening and more accessible to the language learner” (Kramsch, 1993, p. 224). In his early work, Brooks (1960) presented a list of sixty-four topics regarding culture in the language classroom along with questions for discussion. This list, or “hors d’oeuvres” as he called them, included crucial aspects of culture such as greetings, expletives, cosmetics, tobacco, verbal taboos, bars, restaurants, contrasts in town and country life, politeness and medicine, just to name a few. This work was groundbreaking in its own right as it provoked a shift of focus from a geographical or historical perspective to an anthropological approach to the study of culture in the language classroom. As a result, a distinction was made between “Culture with a capital C”, that which includes art, music, literature and politics, and “culture with a small c”, the behavioural patterns and lifestyles of everyday people. Furthermore, by presenting culture in this light Brooks helped dispel the myth that it was an intellectual gift bestowed only upon the elite (Thanasoulas, 2001). It is clear that the main goal of Brooks’ work was to raise the awareness that culture exists in the lives of all people, in their “modus vivendi,
their beliefs, assumptions and attitudes,” (ibid, p. 4) rather than in high society. This position is supported by Weaver (1993), who believes that the commonly held notion of culture is largely concerned with its insignificant aspects, but that our actual interaction with it takes place at a subconscious level.

Many, if not most, people think of culture as what is often called ‘high culture’ – art, literature, music, and the like. This culture is set in the framework of history and of social, political, and economic structures....Actually, the most important part of culture for the sojourner is that which is internal and hidden…, but which governs the behavior they encounter. This dimension of culture can be seen as an iceberg with the tip sticking above the water level of conscious awareness. By far the most significant part, however, is unconscious or below the water level of awareness and includes values and thought patterns (ibid, p.157).

In 1974, Nostrand developed the Emergent Model scheme, which can be described as the first major shift since Brooks’ work in the 1960’s. This model consisted of six main categories: each of which related back to culture. Topics such as value systems, family, religion, interpersonal relationships and conflict, animals, travel and health care were explored and all were considered important subjects to discuss in the foreign language classroom. However, what is perhaps the most significant component of this scheme is that it included the study of cross-cultural environments, or the attitudes of learners towards other cultures. This topic will be discussed at length later in this chapter, as it is has developed into one of the more commonly practiced cultural teaching methods in the present day language classroom.

In studying Brooks (1960) and Nostrand (1974), it can be seen how their models cover specific facts related to the target culture. As Singhal (1998) notes, “[i]t is evident that one would have to be quite knowledgeable in the culture under study to be able to present all of these aspects accurately to the second language learners.” This concern is also acknowledged by Damen (1987) as she explains that many language teachers have
not had first-hand experience with one or more of the target cultures, or even if they have, that their exposure may not be recent or in-depth. Thus, transferring cultural facts to students may present problems in the classroom and result in confusion or the presentation of incorrect information.

Since this era, countless scholars have studied the importance of the cultural aspect in foreign language learning so as to best understand how it should be incorporated into daily teaching practice. The 1970’s saw an emphasis on sociolinguistics which led to greater stress on the situational context of the foreign language. Savignon (1972) proposed the notion of ‘communicative competence,’ which advocated for the “value of training in communicative skills from the very beginning of the foreign language program” (ibid, p. 9). As a result, the role of culture in the foreign language classroom and curriculum was reviewed and enhanced by significant works from Seelye (1974) and Lafayette (1975). In the 1980’s Canale and Swain (1980) claimed that “a more natural integration of language and culture takes place through a more communicative approach than through a more grammatically based approach” (p. 31). The development of the communicative approach saw an increase in chapters in teacher-based texts which explored cultural teaching in the foreign language classroom (Hammerly, 1982; Higgs, 1984). It became clear that the predominant goal of language teaching was communication within the cultural context of the target language (Lessard-Clouston, 1997).

While the topic of culture in the language classroom had been explored for several decades, it was not until the 1980’s that scholars began to explore the relationship of culture and its vital role in successful foreign language learning (Byram & Morgan,
1994). The overall value of cultural teaching in the classroom was certainly evident and advocated by several scholars, as explored in the earlier stages of this paper. It should also be noted that in studying the relationship between language and culture that many insightful comparisons have been made which affect the ways in which language is understood. There are many culture-specific issues such as politeness (Odlin, 1989), the use of silence (La Forge, 1983; Odlin, 1989) and turn-taking (Preston, 1989) that can influence a foreign language learners’ success in the target culture. By recognizing the cultural influences in language learning, the view of language as a code or simply for communication is squandered. The notion of communicative competence “falls[s] short of the mark when it comes to actually equipping students with the skills they need in a second-culture environment” (Straub, 1999).

Since this time period, the focus of culture teaching in the foreign language classroom has taken on a more critical approach, exploring the values of the target culture in comparison with the language learner’s home culture. This approach to language learning is referred to as cross-cultural awareness or the development of intercultural competence, and will be explored in depth in the subsequent section of this paper.

Cross-Cultural Awareness

Years ago, Hall (1959) proposed that the primary goal of language and cultural study “is not to understand foreign culture, but to understand our own” (p. 53). The notion of cross-cultural awareness or intercultural competence is based on this principle, suggesting that students cannot learn about the values of another culture without considering those of their own. Damen (1987) has also posited that awareness of self is a necessary corollary to awareness of others. “Cross-cultural awareness involves
uncovering and understanding one’s own culturally conditioned behaviour and thinking, as well as the patterns of others. Thus, the process involves not only perceiving the similarities and differences in other cultures but also recognizing the givens of the native culture” (ibid, p.141). This practice is reasonable, as it can be assumed that without a considerable understanding of their home culture, students will never be able to develop an appreciation for other cultures.

The practice of cross-cultural awareness in the language classroom is presently supported by scholars and teachers alike. For Crawford & McLaren (2003) the purpose of developing awareness of self as a cultural subject in the classroom is to increase students’ understanding of cultural identity, its conflicts and multiple dimensions, and to make cultural practices in their own environment visible to them. When learners are encouraged to reflect on the perspectives of others, they are better able to understand their own perspectives. Thus, the learner needs to take the role of the foreigner, so that he or she may gain insights into the values and meanings that are internalized in the home culture, or the society to which he or she belongs (Byram & Morgan, 1994). Additionally, Baumgratz-Gangl (1990) asserts that the integration of values and meanings of the foreign culture with those of one’s home culture can bring about a shift of perspective or the “recognition of cognitive dissonance” (Byram, 1994), both of which are conducive to reciprocity and empathy. This shift is what Galloway (1999) terms “growing the cross-cultural mind” (p. 164) and allows students to develop respect, rather than fear, for the unfamiliar culture. In exploring the approaches to intercultural competence, Brière (1986) suggests that questions regarding culture should be framed as relational rather than absolute. Framing cultural discussions in this manner encourages growth towards the
goal of perceiving the other “as a cultural subject rather than a cultural object” (ibid, p. 204). Briefly stated, studying other people’s values and practices makes us more aware of our own, and promotes a deeper understanding and respect of culture in general.

The implementation of cross-cultural awareness in the language classroom is further supported by Damen (1987) and Knutson (2006) as they outline the limitations associated with teaching culture as factual information. The transmission of culture as fact implies that teaching culture simply involves teaching common facts about the target culture, as seen in the work of Brooks (1960) and Nostrand (1974). However, Knutson notes that there is not one single given culture associated with any language. Therefore, by focusing on teaching information associated with the French culture in France, it implies that other French cultures, such as those in Africa, may not be as important to study. Obviously, the implication that certain cultures are of greater importance than others is untrue, and studying various cultures in the language classroom will broaden the students’ horizons. However, as Knutson suggests, it is impossible to explore cultural facts from every Francophone culture, and therefore, it is more important to encourage intercultural competence. Moreover, Knutson identifies that difficulties arise in teaching culture as factual information due to the ethnic diversity or heterogeneity of most cultures. Damen (1987) furthers this discussion by insightfully noting that “cultures and cultural patterns change. It is more important to learn how to learn a culture or adapt to these changes than to learn the ‘facts’ and ‘truths’ of the moment” (p. 88). She continues to describe how reducing cultural content in the classroom makes space for important culture-general issues, such as the need for empathy and understanding the nature of culture (Damen, 1987). Recognizing these significant limitations associated with the
transmission of culture as fact, supports the theory of cross-cultural awareness. “The reality that culture as content or product cannot ever be adequately ‘covered’ is important to recognize; acceptance of that reality can free educators to focus on fostering understanding of the cultural dimension of thought, values, and communication” (Knutson, 1996, p. 12).

The development of intercultural competence can also be supported by exploring language acquisition theory. According to Krashen (1994), language learners usually need a transformational period when they are learning a new language. He suggests that students must apply and compare the structures of their mother tongue to the new language in order to understand its patterns. In theory, the same process can be applied to cultural learning. This would suggest that for students to understand a second culture, they must examine its values against their own, or in other words, increase their cross-cultural awareness or intercultural competence.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the view of cross-cultural awareness is supported by educational ministries and governments. Through the exploration of the National Core French Study in Canada (NCFS), LeBlanc and Courtel (1990) note that cultural learning is cited as one of its general goals. Further examination of specific objectives finds that the NCFS encourages the broadening of student’s cultural horizons, defined as openness to cultural difference and altered awareness of one’s own culture. This ties in directly with the goals of intercultural competence, as raising awareness of other cultural values encourages deeper consideration of one’s own home culture. The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) also stipulates that students are able to “recognize that cultures use different patterns of interaction and apply
this knowledge to their own culture” (National Standards, 1996, p. 216). Students reaching this objective are said to understand their home culture as distinct and will be able to develop some understanding of the concept of cultural specificity, continually discovering “perspectives, practices and products that are similar and different from their own culture” (ibid., p. 216).

The importance of cross-cultural awareness is undoubtedly obvious as the topic has been discussed by several scholars, in addition to its inclusion in the cultural syllabus of both the Canadian and American education ministries. This approach in the foreign language classroom not only promotes intercultural competence, but also encourages lifelong learning. It is evident that individuals are likely to forget specific facts about a culture over time; however, through the cross-cultural approach they are able to keep in mind more general notions regarding cultural learning, categories of cultural behaviour, and the nature of language-culture relationships (Knutson, 2006).

Language Theory and Cross-Cultural Awareness

The promotion of intercultural competence is indisputably a valuable part of foreign language learning. In examining various language learning theories it can be seen how the sociocultural model of language acquisition also supports the inclusion of cross-cultural teaching. The term sociocultural has become more widely used in recent years, supporting the dominant view that language and culture are integral to one another (Savignon, 2002). However, the exploration of cultural learning can be viewed as far back as Lado (1957), who posits that when elements of a foreign language differ greatly from a students’ native language that he or she will likely struggle with the language learning process. Therefore, it can be presumed that when similarities or comparisons
between a students’ mother tongue and second language are presented that second language learning is facilitated. This suggests that through cultural support and understanding, in the form of intercultural competence, students will make connections and the diversity in the language will be explored. Schumann's Acculturation Model (1976) also underlines the importance of the inclusion of culture in language teaching from a theoretical standpoint. His theory claims that "the smaller the social distance between two cultures, the more likely the learner [will] be successful in acquiring the target language" (Schumann, 1976). This “social distance” includes both the individuals’ prior knowledge of certain cultures and a focus on teaching culture in second language instruction. More recently, Ricento (2005) explains acculturation theory as the degree to which an individual identifies with another culture influences his or her motivation to acquire that culture's language. Therefore, by increasing intercultural competence in the second language classroom, students will be more likely to succeed in language acquisition as they will be able to better identify with the culture of the target language.

It is evident through the research that cultural study in the second language classroom is vital to student success in language achievement, while fostering an understanding of other cultural realms. However, given the wide range of possibilities that are presented in the general area of teaching culture, consideration of the goals associated with cultural learning is paramount. The following chapter explores not only the goals associated with intercultural competence, but also frameworks to aid in its implementation. Additionally, Chapter 3 will examine methods of assessment for intercultural competence, as well as possible strategies and materials that can be employed to promote cross-cultural awareness in the second language classroom.
CHAPTER THREE

INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE IN THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

Introduction

The results in the research literature presented in chapter two of this project highlight the importance of cross-cultural awareness in student learning. While this notion is applicable in all classrooms, it is of particular importance in the second language classroom given the inextricable link between language and culture. This third chapter will focus on the implementation and inclusion of intercultural competence in the foreign language classroom.

In order to best understand the role of intercultural competence in a second language setting, it is necessary to outline achievable goals. In this chapter, I will examine pedagogical aspects in the literature more closely, observing possible goals for cultural learning, and, based on the findings, I will propose a series of objectives for consideration. Once realistic targets have been outlined, the next step is to develop a framework for the implementation of cross-cultural teaching. I will examine several possible frameworks, highlighting their strengths and weaknesses, ultimately choosing the best fit for the promotion of cross-cultural awareness in a second language classroom. Additionally, this chapter will consider the area of assessment, examining whether or not it is feasible to assess intercultural competence; and if so, which methods serve as the best approaches. This chapter will also explore the use of supporting materials in the foreign language classroom that aid in the instruction of cross-cultural awareness. A survey of textbook requirements will highlight limitations of cross-cultural content in teaching materials and therefore, supplemental materials will be promoted. Finally, this chapter
will conclude with a consideration of strategies suitable for the teaching of intercultural competence, with a particular focus on foreign language learning examples. However, before the latter areas can be explored, we must first establish suitable objectives for intercultural competence in the second language classroom for today’s new knowledge economy and in light of the globalizing of learning.

Goals of Cross-Cultural Awareness

In all areas of life, goal setting is necessary in order to implement any successful program or curriculum. One must know what curriculum is to be achieved as an end result before determining the best way to approach its implementation. The same theory applies to cultural teaching; in order to ensure its practice is effective one must have designated objectives towards which the program is aimed. Given that certain foreign language programs will aspire to accomplish different tasks, individuals will need to consider their goals with respect to their particular environment. For example, a classroom of thirty grade nine students will most likely have different objectives than an adult learning a second language in a one-on-one environment. Factors such as maturity, linguistic competence and previous exposure to cultural teaching will influence the ways in which teachers approach this subject in the classroom. While it is virtually impossible to outline specific cultural goals applicable to all levels, it is possible to explore some general objectives associated with cultural teaching and learning in the foreign language classroom.

As Savignon & Sysoyev (2002) put it,

The learning of foreign culture does not start from "an absolute zero". By the time learners begin the study of a L2 context and its culture, they have already formed certain concepts, stereotypes, and expectations about L2 cultural realities. These
expectations are not fixed and immutable. But they will influence the way learners comprehend and interpret a L2 culture (C2) (p. 510).

Remembering that students will have some preconceived notion of the target culture prior to its study in the language classroom is essential for the language teacher. One of the goals of cultural teaching should then be to discover the views held by students regarding specific cultures and aim to dispel any myths or stereotypes with which they have been associated. This can be achieved through the promotion of intercultural competence as suggested by Melde (1987) who believes that foreign language teaching should foster “critical awareness” of social life.

Brière (1986) suggests that the goal of culture teaching should be to promote an understanding of the target culture, not necessarily love or affiliation. And, rather than viewing cultural knowledge as a prerequisite for language proficiency, it is more important to view it as “the community’s store of established knowledge” (Fowler, 1986, p. 19). This is not meant to imply that culture is static, as previously stated by Damen (1987), but rather that students will require some form of cultural base as a starting point. That is, to view the teaching of culture as a means of “developing an awareness of, and sensitivity towards, the values and traditions of the people whose language is being studied” (Tucker & Lambert, 1972, p. 26). General goals such as these are certainly achievable at any level of foreign language learning. Admittedly, the complexity of culture and critical awareness will increase in stride with that of the language skill. However, even at the most basic level, the inclusion of intercultural competence is indispensable to the foreign language classroom.

In discussing goals of cultural teaching in the foreign language learning classroom, Thanasoulas (2001) questions whether or not there is the need to overtly focus
on culture in the language curriculum, if language and culture are so inextricably linked. Even though culture is inherent in foreign language teaching, believing that the learner of the foreign language is also learning the cultural knowledge and skills required to be a competent L2 speaker “denies the complexity of culture, language learning, and communication” (Lessard-Clouston, 1997). Additionally, including culture in the foreign language curriculum helps avoid or correct stereotypes or prejudices as previously mentioned in this paper. Furthermore, expressly teaching culture in the second language classroom enables students to take control of their own learning while achieving autonomy by evaluating and questioning the wider context within which the learning of the target language is embedded (Thanasoulas, 2001).

Additionally, analyzing learners’ real world and academic needs, in terms of cultural knowledge, awareness, or ability to function in culturally appropriate ways is an important step in determining objectives for cultural learning (Knutson, 2006). Questions such as: with whom, and in what contexts, will students be interacting in the target language?, serve as a good starting point for goal setting. For example, for many learners of French, exposure to the second culture is close at hand, as they may travel to a Francophone country or communicate with foreigners in their home country. Conversely, others may never be presented with the opportunity to interact with native French speakers of any kind. This does not mean that cultural learning should not be a component of language teaching, but rather that the aims of cultural learning should differ based on the specific context and the needs of the learner.

Several educators and academics have outlined tables or charts of goals that they believe to be the most important with regards to cross-cultural awareness. Exploring the
objectives set out by others throughout the years will provide us with some insight on how intercultural competence can be promoted in foreign language classrooms from practitioners’ experiences and perceived needs. Additionally, by studying a variety of proposed goals, one will discover common threads among academics and be able to reformat the objectives to suit the needs of a specific foreign language classroom. It is unlikely that the foreign language teaching profession will ever reach a consensus regarding the contents of cultural teaching however, it is essential to agree on some common, foundational objectives for all language learners in the area of culture and to decide what foreign language teachers can and should be accountable for in regards to this topic.

In examining goals associated with intercultural competence in the foreign language classroom it is evident that there are many possible approaches. Providing an overview of the literature will allow one to see patterns, and the evolution of cultural instruction in the foreign language classroom. Studying the objectives outlined by academics in the past will assist in the development of goals to be applied in the current classroom.

**Historical Overview of Cultural Objectives**

This section of the paper will provide an overview of objectives related to cultural learning in the foreign language classroom. Over the years many different goals have been proposed by academics and educators alike. As previously mentioned, in order to establish objectives for the present day foreign language classroom, it is valuable to explore the past suggestions of others. This section will survey various objectives
proposed over time with the aim of illuminating common themes that will aid in the formation of applicable goals for the present day second language classroom.

Nostrand (1970) outlined the following broad culture-related goals for the foreign language program:

A student, after having been exposed to a substantial foreign language sequence, ought to have a coherent set of concepts based on facts concerning the main values of the culture, its assumptions about the nature of man and his world, its great art forms, its folk art and its humor. He likewise, should have an understanding of the people’s social institutions, their social psychology and their ecological arrangements (p. 73).

Based on this overall goal statement, Nostrand and Nostrand (1970) proposed nine specific objectives for cross-cultural learning, in order of apparent difficulty:

- The ability to react appropriately in a social situation
- The ability to describe, or to ascribe to, the proper part of the population a pattern in the culture or social behavior
- The ability to recognize a pattern when it is illustrated
- The ability to “explain” a pattern
- The ability to predict how a pattern is likely to apply in a given situation
- The ability to describe or manifest an attitude important for making one acceptable in the foreign society
- The ability to evaluate the form of a statement concerning a cultural pattern
- The ability to describe or demonstrate defensible methods of analyzing a sociocultural whole
- The ability to identify basic human purposes that make significant the understanding which is being taught (as cited in Lafayette & Schulz, 1997, pp.578-579)

In examining these goals it becomes apparent that there is an overt focus on social behaviour and the recognition of cultural patterns. While each of these areas is an important component of cultural awareness, there is a noticeable lack of focus on attitudes, open-mindedness and comparison with the home culture. Additionally, these proposed objectives are quite specific, and would perhaps be better suited to an individual situation as opposed to a general classroom application.
Contrary to Nostrand (1970), Lafayette and Schulz (1975) posited that only three broad goals are realistic for foreign language learners:

1. Students should acquire knowledge, i.e., factual information about selected patterns of the target culture that enables them to recognize, recall, and describe cultural information
2. Students need to develop understanding, i.e., the ability to explain selected cultural information or patterns in terms of their meaning, origin, and interrelationships within the larger cultural context (this goal presupposes factual knowledge, but also implies critical thinking in attempting to see the logic of a pattern in its own cultural context)
3. Students need to develop appropriate behaviors, such as the ability to act meaningfully, unobtrusively, and inoffensively in real or simulated culture situations (Lafayette & Schulz, 1997, pp. 581-582).

In currently used terminology, the first objective refers to factual knowledge about cultural practices and products; the second objective refers to the development of perspectives; and the third objective refers to the development of interactional competence. Interestingly, Lafayette and Schulz (1997) did not include attitudinal objectives, showing that they were not convinced that attitudes toward a particular culture, its language, or its people should play a role in the second language classroom.

In 1993, Tomalin and Stempleski promoted “seven goals of cultural instruction” which include the following:

To help students to develop an understanding of the fact that all people exhibit culturally-conditioned behaviors.
To help students to develop an understanding that social variables such as age, sex, social class, and place of residence influence the ways in which people speak and behave.
To help students to become more aware of conventional behavior in common situations in the target culture.
To help students to increase their awareness of the cultural connotations of words and phrases in the target language.
To help students develop the ability to evaluate and refine generalizations about the target culture, in terms of supporting evidence.
To help students to develop the necessary skills to locate and organize information about the target culture.
To stimulate students’ intellectual curiosity about the target culture, and to encourage empathy towards its people (pp.7-8).

It appears as though these goals are general enough that they could be applicable in a variety of language learning settings. Although the self-reflection on students’ home cultures is not explicitly stated, it can be implied through the first goal, in which students would reflect on their own cultural behaviors. Overall, the spectrum of the aforementioned objectives is broad in that it covers a variety of topics relating to cultural awareness, yet they are not overly vague. With some supporting materials, based on the foreign language learning setting, these goals would certainly suit the overall purpose of cross-cultural awareness.

Following the proposed objectives in 1970, Nostrand, Grundstrom and Singerman (1996) proposed four stages of cultural competence for students of French: elementary, basic intercultural skills, social competence, and socioprofessional capability. They proposed “empathy toward other cultures” and “the ability to observe and analyze a culture” as two general areas of competency relevant to any target culture. They also proposed seven “knowledge areas” relevant to the French-speaking world: communication in cultural context; the value system; social patterns and conventions; social institutions; geography and environment; history; and literature and the arts. Once again, it appears as though the cultural goals given by Nostrand focus on the social aspect of one culture, as opposed to the comparisons with one’s home culture, as a necessary ingredient, to promote intercultural competence. Although, the inclusion of empathy and cultural analysis can be seen as an improvement on the 1970’s version, the updated objectives still seem to fall short of the overall purpose of intercultural competence.
In 1997, Seelye set out to approach cultural awareness in the form of an overarching goal in which, “all students will develop the cultural understandings, attitudes, and performance skills needed to function appropriately within a segment of another society and to communicate with people socialized in that culture” (p. 100). However, to support this “supergoal” Seelye (1997) also offered six instructional goals related to culture:

Goal 1 – Interest: The student shows curiosity about another culture…and empathy toward its members
Goal 2 – Who: The student recognizes that role expectations and other social variables such as age, sex, social class, religion, ethnicity, and place of residence affect the way people speak and behave
Goal 3 – What: The student realizes that effective communication requires discovering the culturally conditioned images that are evoked in the minds of people when they think, act, and react to the world around them
Goal 4 – Where and When: The student recognizes that situational variables and convention shape behavior in important ways
Goal 5 – Why: The student understands that people generally act the way they do because they are using options their society allows for satisfying basic physical and psychological needs, and that cultural patterns are interrelated and tend mutually to support need satisfaction
Goal 6 – Exploration: The student can evaluate a generalization about the target culture in terms of the amount of evidence substantiating it, and has the skills needed to locate and organize information about the target culture from the library, the mass media, people and personal observation (p. 102)

The format of supporting the “supergoal” with more specific objectives is admirable as it allows for a more in-depth approach to cultural awareness in a second language classroom. However, one limitation of this “supergoal” is that it does not incorporate the required self reflection necessary to achieve intercultural competence. That being said, although not expressly stated as its own instructional goal, self cultural awareness would likely be implicitly taught through the targeted objectives.
Byram (1997) proposed 29 objectives for the “intercultural speaker” in the European context, related to attitudes, knowledge, skills of interpreting and relating, skills of discovery and interaction, and critical cultural awareness/political education.

Attitudes:
   a) Willingness to seek out or take up opportunities to engage with otherness in a relationship of equality, distinct from seeking out the exotic or profitable
   b) Interest in discovering other perspectives on interpretation of familiar and unfamiliar phenomena both in one’s own and in other cultures and cultural practices
   c) Willingness to question the values and presuppositions in cultural practices and products in one’s own environment.

Knowledge:
   a) Historical and contemporary relationships between one’s own and one’s interlocutor’s countries
   b) The means of achieving contact with interlocutors from another country (at a distance or in proximity), of travel to and from, and the institutions which facilitate contact or help resolve problems
   c) The types of cause and process of misunderstanding between interlocutors of different cultural origins
   d) The national memory of one’s own country and how its events are related to and seen from the perspective of other countries
   e) The national memory of one’s interlocutor’s country and the perspective on them from one’s own country
   f) The national definitions of geographical space in one’s own country, and how these are perceived from the perspective of other countries
   g) The national definitions of geographical space in one’s interlocutor’s country and the perspective on them from one’s own
   h) The process and institutions of socialization in one’s own country and one’s interlocutor’s country
   i) Social distinctions and their principal markers, in one’s own country and one’s interlocutor’s
   j) Institutions, and perceptions of them, which impinge on daily life within one’s own country and one’s interlocutor’s country and which conduct and influence relationships between them
   k) The process of social interaction in one’s interlocutor’s country

Skills of interpreting and relating:
   a) Identify ethnocentric perspectives in a document or event and explain their origins
   b) Identify areas of misunderstanding and dysfunction in an interaction and explain them in terms of each of the cultural systems present
Skills of discovery and interaction:
   a) Elicit from an interlocutor the concepts and values of documents or events and develop an explanatory system susceptible of application to other phenomena
   b) Identify significant references within and across cultures and elicit their significance and connotations
   c) Identify contemporary and past relationships between one’s own and the other culture and society

Critical cultural awareness:
   a) Identify and interpret explicit or implicit values in documents and event in one’s own and other cultures
   b) Make an evaluative analysis of the documents and events which refers to an explicit perspective and criteria (Byram, 1997, pp. 57-64)

Examination of these goals may seem overly ambitious or unattainable for a foreign language teacher in the North American environment. Byram realizes that, contrary to the European context, the majority of students in the western world do not anticipate extensive contact with speakers of the target language (except possibly French in certain areas of Canada and Spanish in certain areas of the United States) and that the “real-time interactions” objectives may be unattainable. Nevertheless, while students in Canada may not have significant contact with target language speakers, they can apply their knowledge in other cultural situations, especially given the increasing multilingualism in Canada. However, based on the limitations to the implementation of several of these goals in Canada, as they are more pertinent to the European context, Byram’s objectives do not seem suitable to support the implementation of intercultural competence for the purposes of this project, which is more limited in scope.

This overview of cultural goals is certainly not exhaustive, but it offers insights and suggestions for the general implementation of culture in the foreign language classroom. Regardless of specific objectives, the aim of cultural teaching should be “to
increase students’ awareness and to develop their curiosity towards the target culture and their own, helping them to make comparisons among cultures” (Tavares & Cavalcanti, 1996, p. 19). These comparisons are not meant to undervalue foreign cultures but “to enrich students’ experience and to sensitize them to cultural diversity” (Thanasoulas, 2001, p. 12). However, it is necessary to outline goals in order to successfully incorporate cultural awareness into foreign language learning. Therefore, while taking into consideration the literature surveyed above, the following section of this paper will aim to outline a new set of general objectives that will support cross-cultural awareness in a variety of second language learning environments.

Proposed Fundamental Objectives for Culture Learning in the Foreign Language Classroom

Based on the review of the literature, my experience in a foreign language classroom and the conviction that a comparative approach is the most beneficial in gaining cross-cultural understanding, as suggested by academics such as Tomalin and Stempleski, Byram and Kramsch, I suggest five fundamental objectives for cultural learning and the development of cross-cultural awareness in a high school setting. It should be noted that these objectives do not include the obvious goals of developing appropriate levels of linguistic, sociolinguistic and discourse competence necessary for cross-cultural interactional competence, but are restricted to cross-cultural awareness and understanding. In other words, the proposed objectives are meant to supplement the Ministry of Education documents which currently exist for the Ontario curriculum. The five fundamental objectives proposed are outlined below:

1. Students develop and demonstrate awareness that geographic, historical, economic, social/religious, and political factors can have an impact on
cultural perspectives, products, and practices, including language use and styles of communication. (Gleaned from Lafayette & Schulz, 1975)

2. Students develop and demonstrate awareness that situational variables (i.e. context and role expectations, including power differentials, and social variables such as age, gender, social class, religion, ethnicity, and place of residence) shape communicative interaction (verbal, nonverbal, and paralinguistic) and behavior in important ways. (Gleaned from Tomalin & Stempleski, 1993 and Seeyle, 1997)

3. Students demonstrate curiosity and openness, a readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about their own, and recognize stereotypes or generalizations about the home and target cultures and evaluate them in terms of the amount of substantiating evidence. (Gleaned from Seelye, 1997, Byram, 1997 and Savignon & Sysoyev, 2002)

4. Students develop and demonstrate awareness that each language and culture has culture-conditioned images and culture-specific connotations of some words, phrases, proverbs, idiomatic formulations, gestures, etc. (Gleaned from Nostrand, 1976)

5. Students develop and demonstrate awareness of some types of causes (linguistic and nonlinguistic) for cultural misunderstanding between members of different cultures. (Gleaned from Byram, 1997)

Evidently, each foreign language curriculum will aim for different goals with respect to cultural teaching in the classroom, based on the level of the learners.

Regardless, cross-cultural awareness should be present so students do not maintain or develop a skewed perspective of the target culture(s) (Knutson, 2006). Once meaningful goals have been established, it is necessary to examine the ways in which intercultural competence can be incorporated into foreign language learning in order to achieve the designated objectives. The following section of this paper will explore various frameworks, which are intended to support the implementation of cross-cultural awareness in a range of second language settings.

Framework

It is important to consider the variety of ways in which cultural material can be presented in second language learning in order to meet the goals associated with cultural learning. As previously stated in this project, cultural awareness is not equivalent to
simply learning specific facts about a culture. Instead, the notion of intercultural competence promotes self-reflection and encourages students to draw comparisons between their home and target cultures. With the previous section outlining attainable goals related to cross-cultural awareness, the next step is to establish a framework for its implementation. This section of the paper will explore the works of various academics in order to determine the best suited framework for intercultural competence in the foreign language classroom.

Tang (2006) suggests a simple framework which categorizes culture into three parts: cultural perspectives, cultural products and cultural practices. Cultural perspectives include the popular beliefs, commonly upheld values, shared attitudes, and widely maintained assumptions of the members of a culture. The cultural products can be either tangible (paintings, works of literature or chopsticks) or intangible (education systems, oral tales and rituals). Finally, cultural practices comprise the patterns of behavior accepted by a society and other procedural aspects of culture such as rites of passage, forms of discourse, and so on. Figure 1 indicates the relationships of these three composite parts of culture and the ways in which they interact with each other.

![Figure 1. Interactions of the “Three P’s” of Culture](image_url)

Tang (2006) discusses how this framework reconceptualizes the categories of culture yet still manages to encapsulate all cultural elements.
Most significantly, by including and placing cultural perspectives at the pinnacle of the pyramid, this conceptual framework emphasizes the importance of meaning systems of a culture, highlighting their role in shaping the cultural products and fostering the ways in which people in the culture behave and interact with each other (p. 90).

By arranging culture in this way, the “Three P’s” model embodies both the concepts of cultural facts and cross-cultural awareness. With the emphasis focused on cultural perspectives and meanings, this implies a greater consideration for intercultural competence, as opposed to the memorization of cultural information. Tang expresses that “culture as a source of meanings also comprises complicated knowledge structures. Whereas some are specific, observable, and easily expressible, others are tacit and invisible, resisting an easy explanation and defying culturally uniformed emulation by outsiders” (ibid, p. 89). This provides yet another reason why intercultural competence should be promoted and explored in the foreign language classroom. By approaching cultural teaching using the “Three P’s” model, all aspects of culture are explored. Students will be able to learn basic cultural facts based on products and practices, a necessary part of the process if they are ever expected to understand the target culture in relation to their own. Tang (2006) aptly notes that “what differentiates individuals of one culture from those of another is not their behaviors, but the meanings of their behaviors as internalized by the members of the respective cultures (p. 89).” Through the development of cross-cultural awareness in the foreign language classroom, students will recognize the similarities and differences of the target and home cultures, and be able to see parts of themselves reflected in other individuals.

Deardorff (2006) proposes not one, but two possible frameworks that support cross-cultural awareness. Deardorff explains that the visual representation of intercultural
competence (as seen in Figures 2 and 3) eliminates long fragmented lists by placing components within a visual framework that can be entered from various levels. That being said, having components of the lower levels enhances the upper levels. Process orientation (mindfulness) throughout is key; this means being aware of the learning that takes place at each level and the necessary process skills that are needed for the acquisition of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006).

Though individuals can enter these frameworks at any particular point according to Deardoff, awareness of one’s attitude toward the other culture and how competent one’s judgment is, are fundamental starting points (Byram, 1997). Lynch and Hanson (1998) highlight the fundamental role of attitude in intercultural competence in saying, “After all the books have been read and the skills learned and practiced, the cross-cultural effectiveness of each of us will vary. And it will vary more by what we bring to the learning than by what we have learned” (p. 510). Okayama, Furuto, and Edmondson (2001) further reinforce the foundational importance of attitude by stating,

What may be most important is…to maintain culturally competent attitudes as we continue to attain new knowledge and skills while building new relationships. Awareness, the valuing of all cultures, and a willingness to make changes are underlying attitudes that support everything that can be taught or learned (p. 97).

The following two models support the views of these scholars in emphasizing the importance of attitude to the learning that follows. Specifically, the attitudes of openness, respect (valuing all cultures), and curiosity and discovery are necessary to intercultural competence.

The pyramid framework of intercultural competence (Figure 2) allows for degrees of competence. That is to say, as more components are acquired and developed through the various stages, there is an increased probability of a greater degree of intercultural
competence as an external outcome (Deardorff, 2006). This framework enables the development of specific assessment indicators within a context or situation while also providing a basis for general assessment of intercultural competence, thus embracing both its general and specific definitions. This model of cross-cultural awareness moves from the individual level of attitudes and personal attributes to the interactive cultural level in regard to the outcomes. The specific skills delineated in this model are skills for acquiring and processing knowledge about other cultures as well as one’s own culture. The model also emphasizes the importance of attitude and the comprehension of knowledge (Bloom, 1965).

Figure 2. Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence

Source: Deardorff, 2004
A unique element of this pyramid framework of intercultural competence is its emphasis on the internal as well as external outcomes of cross-cultural awareness. The internal outcome, which involves an internal shift in frame of reference, although not requisite, enhances the external (observable) outcome of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006). The external outcome can be described as essentially “behaving and communicating appropriately and effectively in intercultural situations” (Deardorff, 2004, p. 196). In this instance, definitions of effective and appropriate are taken from Spitzberg’s (1989) work, where appropriateness is the avoidance of violating valued rules and effectiveness is the achievement of valued objectives.

It is interesting to compare this pyramid framework of cross-cultural awareness to the four developmental stages generated by the American Council on International Intercultural Education (1996). The four stages of development of the global competence development process were listed as follows:

a) Recognition of global systems and their interconnectedness (including openness to other cultures, values, and attitudes)
b) Intercultural skills and experiences
c) General knowledge of history and world events
d) Detailed areas studies specialization (i.e. language).

The administrators who developed these stages recognized that the first stage was most important to all global learners. In the same manner as the first stage focused on the importance of openness, both the pyramid (Figure 2) and process (Figure 3) frameworks have the same starting point. Additionally, the topics of intercultural skills and general knowledge that are mentioned in the developmental stages are accounted for in these two visual models.
Another way of organizing intercultural competence is the process model, as seen in Figure 3, developed by Deardorff (2004). While this process framework contains the same elements of cross-cultural awareness as the pyramid model (Figure 2), it “depicts the complexity of acquiring intercultural competence in outlining more of the movement and process orientation that occurs between the various elements” (Deardorff, 2006, p. 257). This model denotes movement from the personal level to the interpersonal level, that is, intercultural interaction. As in the pyramid model, it is possible to go from attitudes and/or attitudes and skills/knowledge directly to the external outcome. However, the degree of effectiveness of the outcome will likely be higher when the entire cycle has been completed and begins again.

Figure 3. Process Model of Intercultural Competence  
Source: Deardorff (2004)

Note. Begin with attitudes; move from individual level (attitudes) to interaction level (outcomes). Degree of intercultural competence depends on degree of attitudes, knowledge/comprehension and skills achieved.
The unique components of internal as well as external outcomes are also maintained with this process model, and in fact, it would be possible for an individual to achieve the external outcome of behaving and communicating appropriately and effectively in intercultural situations without having fully achieved the internal outcome of ‘a shift in the frame of reference’ (Deardorff, 2006). That being said, the degree of appropriateness and effectiveness would be more limited than if the internal outcome had also been achieved.

I believe that this process framework is well suited for the development of cross-cultural awareness in a foreign language curriculum and is suitable to the aforementioned objectives. Like in Deardorff’s pyramid model, the attitudinal element in the process model is the most critical, and as such, attitudes are indicated as the starting point in this cycle. Although I appreciate the simplicity of Tang’s “Three P’s” model (2006), the lack of inclusion of attitudes presents a serious limitation. This is why I believe that the process model is the best suited framework for the development of intercultural competence in the foreign language classroom. The process model encapsulates all of the required elements and is unique as it demonstrates the ongoing process of intercultural competence development, meaning that it is a continual process of improvement. As culture is constantly evolving, it is important to highlight the fact that one may, and likely never will, achieve ultimate intercultural competence.

Therefore, through the study of various models, one can see how the conceptual frameworks related to cultural awareness can aid in its implementation and support the goals of intercultural competence in the foreign language classroom. Now that suitable objectives and a suitable framework have been established for the purposes of this study,
the next section of this chapter will focus on the assessment of cross-cultural awareness in the second language learning environment.

Assessment

Can intercultural competence be assessed? This question generates a variety of responses that will be examined in this section. As both goals and frameworks for the implementation of cross-cultural awareness have already been explored, the next major task is to consider how one demonstrates intercultural competence and understanding as defined in the aforementioned objectives. The main focus of this part of the paper is to determine which forms of assessment could and should be used to obtain a meaningful measure of desirable knowledge, attitudes and skills in a foreign language setting. Often overlooked, this topic frequently results in frustration, avoidance, uncertainty or ignorance on the part of teachers. While all teachers would agree that not everything taught can or should be formally assessed it is important to note that objectives will lose their validity for the learner if they are not assessed in some manner. This next section will explore possible techniques for the assessment of intercultural competence that support the objectives and framework discussed in the previous section. It should also be noted that for the purposes of this project assessment is defined as “the process of gathering information from a variety of sources (including assignments, demonstrations, projects, performances and tests) that accurately reflects how well a student is achieving expectations…” (Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 13).

In 1996, Bartz and Vermette outlined 16 prototypes for the assessment of cultural competence. They include: portfolio assessment; semantic-differential tests; solving cross cultural “conflict situations,” including culture assimilators; answering written or
oral questions on appropriate behavior or about the significance of a fact; analyzing visual examples of authentic cultural situations; giving verbal descriptions of a typical or an unlikely situation; reports on reading; simulated interactions or situations; examining the cultural significance of underlined words or phrases; identification of significant features in a literary passage; describing a photo or drawing of a culture-specific situation showing social behavior; observing an audio or video document for sociolinguistic behavior; organizing and making sense of one’s cultural observations; and demonstrating knowledge or courses of information (Bartz & Vermette, 1996).

While these assessment formats can be useful for selected purposes, the proposed fundamental objectives previously listed are largely process based objectives and do not lend themselves easily to traditional assessment techniques such as multiple-choice questions, short-answer or even traditional essays. These formats often compel students to engage in broad stereotypes or generalizing, thus defeating the purpose of promoting cross-cultural awareness. Many scholars including Lange (2003), Moore (1997), Byram (1997) and Ramirez (2004) conclude that many of the traditional assessment methods do not lend themselves to evaluating culture learning and promote the use of alternative forms of assessment such as self-assessment, reflective journals, diaries or portfolios. In other words, assessment of intercultural competence will be primarily qualitative in nature as opposed to quantitative.

In 2006, Deardorff surveyed scholars and administrators regarding the ways in which post-secondary institutions include intercultural competence in their curriculum and how it should be assessed. Although the results are based at the post-secondary level, the results provide insight into the ways in which assessment can be applied in a variety
of settings. The administrators achieved 100% consensus on four specific assessment methods: observation by others/host culture, case studies, judgment by self and others, and student interviews. Assessment techniques that created controversy were mostly of a quantitative nature, thus implying that qualitative measures of cross-cultural awareness are more suitable for assessment in the classroom. In fact, the survey presented nearly unanimous results (95%) on using qualitative measures to assess student’s intercultural competence. Therefore, there appears to be general consensus among scholars and administrators that assessment of intercultural competence involves more than observable performance. Additionally, it is important to measure the degrees of competence as well as consider the cultural and social implications associated with the assessment of cross-cultural awareness.

The results from the Deardorff (2006) study indicate that when it comes to measuring intercultural competence, a multi-method, multi-perspective approach must be used in order to adequately assess cross-cultural awareness. Deardorff (2006) reiterates that one tool or assessment method alone is not sufficient to measure one’s intercultural competence. This is further supported by Fantini (2000) who acknowledges that the multidimensional assessment approaches are essential for monitoring and measuring a phenomenon as complex as intercultural competence. Therefore, assessment of cross-cultural awareness requires a variety of tools and methods which ensure the validity and reliability of the results. Maki (2004) reiterates, “relying on one method to assess learning …restricts interpretations of…achievement within the parameters of that method” (p. 86). This notion is also supported by the Ontario Ministry of Education as found in documents stating that teachers must use assessment and evaluation strategies
that “are varied in nature, administered over a period of time, and designed to provide opportunities for students to demonstrate the full range of their learning” (Ministry of Education, 2000, p.13)

There are many tools and surveys that have been developed to aid in the assessment of cross-cultural awareness. Some examples can be seen in the table below with a brief description and link to each individual resource. It should be noted however, that while these tools may be helpful and offer insight into the realm of intercultural competence, their use in a second language learning environment would primarily be for self-discovery or self-assessment and are in no way intended to gather concrete data that should be used in determining student achievement.

Table 1

*Intercultural Competence Assessment Instruments*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI) | Measures: Individual potential for cross-cultural adaptability  
Description: A culture-general instrument designed to assess individual potential for cross-cultural adaptability based on the notion that individuals adapting to other cultures share common feelings, perceptions, and experiences that occur regardless of their own cultural background or target culture characteristics. The inventory contains 50 items, resulting in individual profile scores along four dimensions. | Source: Kelly, C., & Meyers, J. Intercultural Press. Tel; 1-800-370-2661 |
| Cross-Cultural Assessor (CCA) | Measures: Individual understanding of self and others  
Description: This tool is designed to improve people’s understanding of themselves and others as well as to promote positive attitudes to cultural difference. The tool also allows provides a personal navigator system that allows individuals to conduct a self-assessment to aid in successful communication across cultures through a multimedia program that measures, builds, and manages cross-cultural skills and characteristics through exercises and questionnaires. |
**Cultural Orientations Indicator® (COI®)**

**Measures:** Cultural preferences

**Description:** A web-based cross-cultural assessment tool, based on 10 dimensions, that allows individuals to assess their personal cultural preferences and compare them with generalized profiles of other cultures.

**Source:** [https://www.culturalnavigator.com](https://www.culturalnavigator.com)

**Global Literacy Survey**

**Measures:** World knowledge

**Description:** A self-test used to measure the degree of knowledge young Americans have about the world.


**Intercultural Competence Questionnaire**

**Measures:** Global Literacy

**Description:** A brief questionnaire that provides a self-test of intercultural competence described as global literacy.

**Source:** Available online. [http://www.7d-culture.nl/website/index.asp](http://www.7d-culture.nl/website/index.asp)

*Note. All URLs were confirmed at the time of this writing; however, URLs and websites may change over time.*

It should be noted that the inclusion of this table is not for the purposes of endorsement, but rather provides a brief sample of the many assessment tools that concern cross-cultural awareness. While some of the tools are primarily developed for use in the workplace, their use in a classroom setting is also valuable. Educators intending to use any of these tools for the purposes of self-assessment are highly encouraged to thoroughly investigate each instrument on an individual basis to determine its appropriateness based on setting and age-level.

When it comes to assessment there are many factors to consider such as alignment with curriculum objectives and the tools used for assessment purposes. Additionally, it is
important to remember that the assessment of student’s work is not only an indication of their achievement, but that it serves as a marker for teachers as well. Examining the results of student assessment allows for self-reflection and encourages teachers to make necessary changes to instruction or assessment tools for future assignments, or courses. In a classroom environment it is important to consider that the needs of students will vary from class to class and year to year. That being said, assessment tools should be reviewed and altered frequently to ensure that both the curriculum objectives and the needs of the current students are being met.

With all this information regarding the assessment of intercultural competence, it is vital to remember that in the foreign language classroom objectives such as reading, writing, and oral communication also need to be assessed. However, it is certainly possible, and highly recommended, to incorporate the assessment of these skills into activities that promote cross-cultural awareness. Combining both language skills and cultural awareness highlights the fact that culture is indeed inseparable from language, a valuable lesson learned earlier in this project. Furthermore, it should be noted that while assessments of intercultural competence should preferably use qualitative methods, they can be used in combination with other measures for the purposes of evaluating the grammatical language achievement of students. For example, in writing journal entry, teachers can include requirements for the use of specific language structures (i.e. passé composé in French) to simultaneously evaluate the students’ grammar (counting errors) and self-reflection (qualitative). Finally, as all students will have varying levels of cultural awareness, they will also have differing levels of skill in the target language.
Prior to any assignments or testing, teachers should be assessing the students’ current knowledge in order to best meet their further needs.

This section aimed to highlight the best ways to use assessment in the foreign language classroom. It is evident that there are increasing assessment options available to educators that can help in conducting effective and reliable evaluation. However, it must be restated that the alignment of assessment tools with measurable objectives is paramount. Quality assessment requires a thoughtful approach and significant planning time. It is clear that if properly executed, “good assessment not only provides solid information that can guide our educational practices from start to finish but can also enrich and transform the teaching and learning processes for both teachers and students” (Fantini, 2009, p. 475).

However, assessment approaches are only one of the factors to consider when incorporating a cross-cultural approach in the foreign language classroom. The following section of this paper will examine the ways in which materials, such as textbooks, can be used in the foreign language classroom to support the goals and assessment needs of a curriculum.

Materials

In current practice, it is rare to see a course that does not use a text to support curriculum objectives. Essentially, textbooks make the work of educators easier, as they readily provide information, activities and assessment tools. Despite that, while textbooks may serve as a source of knowledge and help structure teaching, it is also possible that they are more of a hindrance than helping hand. Particularly, their use becomes an issue when teachers begin to rely on the given material as the only source of knowledge or
instructional strategies. This reliance on textbooks is not uncommon, and is especially present in the practice of new teachers (Giroux, 1983). The fact that teachers often base their course on the content of one textbook is unavoidable, and therefore, it becomes vital to examine the quality of the product being used. It also becomes necessary to ensure the content presented in the textbooks reflects the objectives of the curriculum and the cultural diversity of the classroom. In the case of this project, cross-cultural awareness is of primary importance, as it is my belief that a well developed text will aid in the fostering of interculturally competent language learners. While it is assumed that materials undergo revisions and pilot programs before mass production, quality controls need to be implemented in order to ensure that the best suited materials are being used by students and teachers in classrooms. Additionally, it is important to reassess the value of all textbooks after a period of time, to ensure that they still reflect current cultural issues. This section of the project will critically examine the policies for current use of textbooks in Ontario, as this locale is the basis of my teaching experience. Additionally, the following section will provide a survey of the literature surrounding the inclusion of culturally responsive materials with a focus on the foreign language classroom.

A textbook is defined by the Ministry of Education as:

a comprehensive learning resource that is in print or electronic form, or that consists of any combination of print, electronic, and non-print materials collectively designed to support a substantial portion of the Ontario curriculum expectations for a specific grade and subject in elementary school or for a course in secondary school, or a substantial portion of the expectations for a learning area in the Ontario Kindergarten program. Such a resource is intended for use by an entire class or group of students" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006).

This explanation most likely aligns with the general societal understanding of a textbook, yet it remains important to the examination of textbooks in Ontario. Evidently, the format
of texts will change based on the needs of students and teachers, or the format of a course. However, there are several criteria that need to be examined before a text should be allowed to serve as a resource in a classroom. The *Trillium List* (2002) provides the titles of all texts that have been approved by the Ministry of Education for use in Ontario classrooms. A further examination of its evaluation process and criteria is essential in order to understand how texts come to be used in current practice. A brief outline of the Trillium List and its guidelines for approval are explored in the following pages.

*The Trillium List*

Since 2002, the *Trillium List* has identified the textbooks approved for use in Ontario schools by the Minister of Education. This list includes the titles of English and French languages textbooks used in English-language schools, as well as non-print format resources such as software and CD-ROMs. The *Trillium List* has a French counterpart, *La Liste Trillium*, which covers the materials used to deliver the curriculum in French-language schools. The relevance of both of these lists is reinforced by the Education Act (1990), which requires that teachers and principals ensure the use of approved textbooks in their classrooms.

Although accessible to all, the Trillium list mainly exists to support teachers. As the texts are subjected to a thorough review process, educators can be confident in the value of materials used in their classrooms. However, in my personal experience in the second language classroom, I have found that the approved textbooks are lacking in several areas, particularly in the area of cultural awareness. This prompts a further exploration of the criteria used for textbook approval, and a survey of the relevant literature regarding the role of culture in such supporting materials.
Like all written materials, textbooks undergo the editing and review processes before being published. However, in order to be used in Ontario they must also withstand a rigorous evaluation before being approved for use in classrooms. This form of quality control ensures that only those textbooks which accurately reflect the standards set by the Ministry of Education become accessible to teachers and students. The guidelines for the approval of textbooks incorporate several eligibility requirements which textbook authors need to account for in their materials.

One major eligibility criteria for textbook approval requires the material to have Canadian orientation. This criterion states that wherever possible, textbooks must be manufactured in Canada and should be written by Canadian citizens (Ministry of Education, 2006). The document also states that the content presented in the textbook must acknowledge Canadian contributions and achievements and use Canadian examples and references as often as possible. Additionally, Canadian spelling conventions, familiar vocabulary and SI units (International System of Units) for measurement must be used. One should be encouraged to see that the Ministry is pushing the support of Canadian products by ensuring opportunities for its nation's authors and publishers. Additionally, it is also easy to support the use of common vocabulary and other conventions typically seen on a daily basis. However, one issue that presents itself is the emphasis on the use of Canadian examples and references. While it is important to recognize the achievements of Canadians, it is equally important to relate course materials to other cultures and nations. For example, if only Canadian examples are used in a French class, students will mainly have exposure to the traditions and culture of Québec. While it is definitely important to
study Canadian examples, it is also necessary to explore other primarily French-speaking countries such as France, Belgium and Algeria. In studying a multitude of cultures, students will become more accepting of others, instead of having a nationally-centered view.

The policy document also states that the content of the textbook must be free from bias. Such bias could include, but is not limited to, racial, ethno-cultural, religious, regional, gender, age, and bias by omission. The document also states that the material in the text should present several points of view, and be free of discriminatory or exclusionary photographs and information. The avoidance of these biases is extremely important, especially given the diversity of students studying in today's schools. However, while the guidelines for approval are attempting to be inclusionary, they are also somewhat contradictory. This can be seen in relation to the development of a Canadian product; where it seems as though only Canadian examples, information and views should be presented. While it is possible to have different Canadian viewpoints, it is necessary to incorporate other cultures in order to teach the underlying vision of the Ministry; the exclusion of none and the acceptance of all, which is especially important in our globalizing learning economy and for Canadian multiculturalism.

Survey of the Literature Concerning Cultural Representation in Textbooks

In surveying the literature, it becomes evident that the representation of culture in textbooks is a concern shared by many. The importance of cultural awareness can be seen by Gross (1996) in his study on the perceptions of the United States in Chinese textbooks. He emphasizes the need to be more encompassing of global views as he concludes that "in the present era of global coexistence... it is increasingly important that
peoples and nations be helped to understand and come to grasp the realities of one
another's countries" (p. 134). This would include the inclusion of and study of cultures
from around the world. The study also suggests that "all individuals concerned with the
production of textbooks need to strive to remove the overly nationalistic, one-sided, and
biased statements that remain in many texts" (p. 134). While the study may be limited in
that it deals specifically with portrayals of Americans in Chinese textbooks, the same
conclusions can be applied in any textbook-related setting. Thus, Gross' (1996) opinions
contradict the criteria for textbook approval in Ontario, which state that eligibility
requires a nationalistic focus on content.

Sleeter and Grant's (1991) study also supports the ideas represented in Gross'
(1996) study. Their results suggest that most textbooks used are controlled by the
dominant culture, and confirm its status and contributions. This is clearly represented in
the aforementioned guidelines for textbook approval currently used in Ontario. While
blatant ethnic stereotypes, racist depictions and exclusions have been eliminated (Gordy
& Pritchard, 1995; Wade, 1993) since the 1980's, the overall treatment of culturally
diverse groups and experiences continue to be inadequate. In their examination of
numerous textbooks, Sleeter and Grant (1991), found that while negative cultural
portrayals were non-existent, the general content included about ethnic issues appeared to
be conservative, conformist and "safe." This result could be limited as their study focused
on textbooks used specifically in elementary classrooms. If the study included a survey of
the texts used in secondary schools, they may have found the inclusion of cultural issues,
as opposed to conservative materials. Nevertheless, the lack of exploration of cultural
diversity at any age is problematic, in that the students are not presented with accurate information.

In order to eliminate nationalistic viewpoints in textbooks it becomes essential to focus the content on the diversity of cultures, which in turn promotes cross-cultural awareness. Given the central focus of the textbook in classroom practice, the issue of cultural inclusion in materials needs to be addressed in all subject areas. In a study by Wade (1993), reports found that textbooks are the basis of 70-95% of classroom instruction. With an overwhelming focus on textbooks, the need to avoid nationalist portrayals in materials is strongly emphasized. Additionally, Gordy and Pritchard (1995) found that students consider the authority of textbooks to be incontestable. Understanding that students view the information presented in texts to always be "accurate, authentic, and absolute truth" (Gordy and Pritchard, 1995, p 73), also reinforces the importance of culturally relevant materials. If materials do not present the views of other cultures, students will likely not consider the variations, due to the fact that they will take the information presented in the textbooks as accurate knowledge. These studies are limited by the fact that they focus on general classroom use of textbooks and do not include specific examples related to second language classrooms. Furthermore, with these studies taking place in the early 1990's, they did not focus on the role of technology in classrooms. Given the recent gains in technology, and easy access to the internet as a source of knowledge, students may no longer view the information presented in textbooks as the ‘absolute truth’.

In her book entitled *Culturally Responsive Teaching*, Gay (2000) underlines the importance of the quality of textbooks as an important factor in student achievement. She
states "the inadequacies of textbook coverage of cultural diversity can be avoided by including accurate, wide-ranging, and appropriately contextualized content about different ethnic groups' histories, cultures, and experiences in classroom instruction on a regular basis" (Gay, 2000, p. 46). The recognition of poorly designed materials is an important step in fixing the problem. Finding a solution is especially important given the focus on textbooks as educational resources. In order to ensure the best education for students, there needs to be content that focuses on the inclusion of diverse cultures thus, promoting cross-cultural awareness.

While the importance of culturally responsive materials crosses all subject areas, their inclusion is particularly important in foreign language classrooms as demonstrated in the second chapter of this project, which highlighted the link between culture and language learning. As a French teacher, personal concerns for culturally diverse materials arise when teaching with the aim of promoting intercultural competence. In Ontario, the Core French Program specifically aims to provide an understanding of the nature of the language and its culture in order to promote appreciation and diversity. The curriculum document states that "since language and culture are inseparable, the cultural study of French-language regions will be integrated into daily instruction rather than presented in an isolated fashion or on an occasional basis" (Ministry of Education and Training, 1999, p 4). Therefore, since textbooks are viewed as the basis of instructional intervention, one would expect that the materials in Core French classrooms would reflect the diversity of francophone cultures. However, given the restrictions imposed by the Ministry of Education in their textbook approval process, the primary resources used in Ontario focus solely on Canadian content. These two governing policies cause problems as they are
contradictory in nature. Therefore, when incorporating cross-cultural awareness into foreign language teaching, it becomes important to use supplemental materials, those which are not required to be approved by the Ministry of Education. In using such material that encourages cultural awareness, teachers will be able to meet the goals of the Core French Program, and will be able to avoid reliance on a Canadian-centered textbook. The attached portfolio appendix at the end of this project supports this goal as it aims to provide alternate supporting materials that promote cross-cultural awareness in the foreign language classroom.

In summary, a review of the policies surrounding the approval of textbooks for use in Ontario classrooms highlights issues relating to the inclusion of cultural material. While there is no definitive answer, nor quick fix solution, to the problem, it is strongly suggested to minimize the use of the mandated textbooks and to supplement the content with cultural materials. It will likely never be possible, nor would it make sense to completely eliminate textbook use in schools. And while there are many negative effects such as budget issues and frequent teacher reliance on materials, textbooks are inevitably going to be used in classrooms. However, the possibility for change always exists, along with the hope that one day all texts will support the needs of teachers, while engaging the students with relevant and culturally responsive material.

Supplemental Materials

In consideration of the literature reviewed and the evident flaws in the criteria for textbook approval in Ontario, it becomes apparent that supplemental materials are required for those who wish to develop cultural awareness in their classrooms. This
section will briefly look at some examples of materials that can be used to fill the current cultural void that exists in the foreign language classroom.

As previously mentioned, a limitation of the research findings noted above is the fact that they do not accurately reflect the technological gains made in recent years. Therefore, it is valuable to consider that both teachers and students have greater accessibility to cultural information via the technology that has evolved in recent years. Moore (1999) suggests using the technical advances in our increasingly globalized world to encourage student exploration and expose them to authentic cultural materials. Using resources such as the internet and digital technology also promotes cross-cultural awareness as students will be able to access information pertaining to the target culture(s) in order to establish connections and draw comparisons with their home culture.

Via the internet, students will have access to a multitude of cultural materials that can be used to support the specific curriculum objectives while promoting intercultural competence. Teachers can use print materials such as newspapers and menus, which can be accessed online in the target language for reading comprehension activities. Other mediums such as videos and commercials can be used in the assessment of students’ listening. Additionally, students can base written responses or oral presentations on news broadcasts or even a TV episode that can be viewed in the target language. It should be noted, however, that teachers will hold the responsibility of extra preparation, by searching for age and language appropriate materials ahead of time instead of relying on ministry approved textbooks. However, if educators are willing to contribute the time to find and use culturally relevant materials, the students will benefit in the long run.

Essentially, there are endless possibilities when it comes to using technology in the
foreign language classroom. Nevertheless, there are certain limitations to consider when incorporating supplemental materials from the internet in a language learning environment.

While technology such as the internet allows considerable access to information, it is imperative that students are aware that not all websites serve as reliable or accurate sources of information. Ensuring that students use reputable websites, as well as a variety of sources still including books and journals, is a task that teachers must be willing to undertake when using technology in the classroom. Nevertheless, encouraging students to use a critical eye when obtaining information also supports the notion of intercultural competence; it forces students to see that general stereotypes about a nation or culture may or may not be true accounts of a given culture, and that the opinions of others do not reflect the opinions of all.

Additionally, it is important to survey supplemental materials from worldwide organizations and/or other academics that can be used to support intercultural competence in the foreign language classroom. The Council of Europe (COE) is one example of an outside source that offers an approach to cultural awareness applicable to second language learning. The Common European Framework supports the objectives of promoting cultural awareness and respect for diversity, believing that:

The learner of a second or foreign language and culture does not cease to be competent in his or her mother tongue and the associated culture. Nor is the new competence kept entirely separate from the old. The learner does not simply acquire two distinct, unrelated ways of acting and communicating. The language learner becomes *plurilingual* and develops *interculturality*. The linguistic and cultural competences in respect of each language are modified by the knowledge of the other and contribute to intercultural awareness, skill and know-how. They enable the individual to develop an enriched, more complex personality and an enhanced capacity for further language learning and greater openness to new cultural experiences (Council of Europe, 2001, p.43)
The accomplishments of the COE are seen in the development of materials such as the European Language Portfolio, which includes a language passport, a language biography, and a dossier, all geared towards the notion of intercultural competence. Alteration of these materials and assessment techniques to suit the Ontario standards helps to fill the void of culturally relevant materials that currently exists. Thanks to the work of the Ontario Modern Language Teachers Association (OMLTA) and academics such as Larry Vandergrift and Maureen Smith, modifications have been made to adapt the European Framework to the provincial context, providing teachers with additional resources.

The contributions of Multilingual Matters should also be recognized, as they contribute a wealth of knowledge to the area of intercultural competence in the field of foreign language learning. In particular, their journals entitled “Language and Intercultural Communication” and “Language, Culture and Curriculum” serve as wonderful resources, providing suggestions and strategies which encourage cultural awareness in the language classroom. With their online articles and frequent publications, Multilingual Matters allow teachers to access valuable information which can aid in the fostering of intercultural competence of second language learners.

The supplemental materials of the COE and Multilingual Matters are just two examples of outside resources containing applicable information and strategies to raise cultural awareness in foreign language learning. There are many options for supplemental materials available to teachers, and while finding and modifying these additional resources requires significant time contributions, the end result of increasing cultural awareness among second language students is well worth the work.
Therefore, it can be seen through this chapter that the materials approved for use in Ontario classrooms will not contain information that fosters cross-cultural awareness, based on the limitations imposed by the Ministry of Education approval guidelines. While this certainly makes intercultural competence in the foreign language classroom more challenging to implement, it does not make it impossible. Through the use of supplemental materials, preferably in the target language, teachers can expose students to a variety of cultures while achieving the grammatical expectations of any given course. However, it is not only the use of these supplemental materials, but also how they are presented to the students, that will foster cross-cultural awareness. The final section of this chapter will explore a selection of strategies that can be used in a second language environment and how they can help promote intercultural competence.

Strategies

When incorporating intercultural competence into the second language classroom it is important to remember the number of different dimensions involved, such as grammatical competence, language proficiency and cultural understanding (Thanasoulas, 2001). Promoting cultural awareness requires that cultural activities be incorporated into daily teaching practice to enrich the teaching content. This section of the paper will explore a variety of cultural activities and strategies suggested by scholars and teachers for use in a foreign language classroom.

Kuo and Lai (2006) suggest immediately that culturally relevant materials are the foundation for the successful inclusion and development of intercultural competence. Using age and skill appropriate materials such as films, news broadcasts, television shows, websites, magazine, newspapers, menus, etc. can help students engage in real
cultural experiences. As previously discussed, the accessibility to these aforementioned materials has been greatly increased by the recent gains in technology and access to the internet. Ensuring the use of appropriate materials is an extremely important factor in success in the foreign language classroom, as has been explored in the previous section of this project.

A second strategy proposed to promote intercultural competence is to explore common proverbs in the target and native language. Discussing proverbs commonly used in the target language can help students understand and identify differences from those in their mother tongues. Additionally, this can also help students understand how difference might underscore the historical and cultural background of a country (Ciccarelli, 1996). Using proverbs as a transferred tool to explore different cultures will guide the students to analyze the similarities and dissimilarities of culture, thus promoting cross-cultural awareness.

Role play is also a useful instructional strategy from a sociocultural perspective. Tomalin and Stempleski (1993) explain that role play activities can examine cultural behavior and patterns of communication. Although role play may not be ideal when it comes to assessment, it is still a valuable strategy in the second language setting. Exploring historical incidents can help students understand cross-cultural misunderstandings and can help promote intercultural competence. Through role plays, students will not only be actively engaged in foreign language learning, but it will also help them develop communicative strategies to overcome similar problems of miscommunication as those having caused historical incidents in real second language communication (Kao & Lai, 2006).
A non-traditional approach to promoting cultural awareness in the second language classroom is to create culture capsules. Developed by Taylor and Sorenson in 1961, the culture capsule has become one of the best-established and most widely respected methods for teaching culture. Culture capsules incorporate a brief description of certain aspects of a target culture, contrasted by information from the students’ home culture. The teacher encourages students to point out the contrasts or similarities between the two cultures, evidently increasing the intercultural competence of the students.

Furthermore, Taylor and Sorenson (1961) suggest that students can also be presented with objects or images that originate from the target culture and asked to do research or investigate the significance of the specific object in order to gain insight into certain cultural perspectives. In the last decade, Brigham Young University has embodied the notion of culture capsules by publishing “Culturgrams” for 100 different countries (Kao and Lai, 2006). Each “culturgram” is divided into sections on family, lifestyle, attitudes, customs and courtesies, and history. By employing culture capsules or “culturgrams” students can make comparisons and notice contrasts in the customs and traditions or other cultures with their own, heightening their cross-cultural awareness. It should be noted, as outlined in the second chapter of this project, that cultures are not static. Therefore, the use of culture capsules and “culturgrams” needs to consider the evolution of culture and that these resources should also be adapted to reflect the most recent shifts in cultural traditions.

The strategies listed above are some examples of context specific outputs, used in order to promote cross-cultural awareness. However, there are a variety of strategies that I have compiled from multiple resources, including personal experience, which can be used
repeatedly with varying topics. The list presented in Table 2 is certainly not exhaustive, but presents a list of teaching methods that can be used in any context. I have included a brief description of each strategy as well as one example of how it can be employed in the classroom to promote intercultural competence.

Table 2

*Strategies used to promote cross-cultural awareness in a second language classroom*

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<th><strong>Graffiti</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Source:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Description:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Graffiti is a collaborative group strategy where, in a predetermined amount of time, students write out as many words as possible used to describe a certain person, place, object or event. This strategy is intended to draw out possible stereotypes, common associations, and help teachers understand students’ current viewpoints on a subject matter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Application:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As an introduction to cultural awareness, students can be asked to write out words to describe “The culture of France.” Upon completion of the task, the teacher will be able to point out any common misconceptions. Additionally, the teacher can encourage student reflection on similarities between the target and home culture, thus, promoting intercultural competence.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>KWL Chart</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Source:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students respond to the questions “What I know, “What I want to know,” and “What I learned” over a period of time (lesson, week, or unit). This strategy is intended as a diagnostic tool.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Application:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a form of self-reflection encouraged by cross-cultural awareness, students will use a KWL chart over the period of the semester to write out information they have or questions they would like answered about their own culture. This chart will be continually revisited to incorporate what the students have learned about themselves, and to add any other inquiries.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Venn Diagrams

**Source:**

**Description:**
A Venn diagram is a chart in which two circles partially overlap one another. This diagram is used to highlight the differences between two people, places, or objects, as well as highlight their similarities. The similarities are noted in the overlapping section of the diagram, while the differences are noted on their respective sides.

**Application:**
Students can use this strategy in comparing their home culture with a target culture. Noting both the differences and similarities and graphing their results will heighten the intercultural competence of the students as they see themselves in others.

---

### Word Wall

**Source:**

**Description:**
A word wall is a wall, chalkboard or bulletin board listing key words that will appear often in a new unit of study, printed on card stock and tape or pinned to the wall/board. The word wall is usually organized alphabetically. Word walls allow students to develop a sense of the meaning of a word before encountering it in context as well as improving comprehension and spelling by easily enabling students to reference the words.

**Application:**
Particularly useful in second language classrooms, teachers can create and post word walls with the help of students. It is suggested that vocabulary based on cultural awareness be posted in the classroom to aid students in acquiring the language necessary to speak or write about culture in a foreign language.

---

### Fishbowl Debate

**Source:**
Harvey, S. & Goudvis, A. (2007)

**Description:**
Students are divided into groups to prepare general points in support of one side of a question to be debated. Half the class is designated as the debate team and sit in a circle to discuss the topic. Non-debating members of the class sit in a circle around the actively participating members (hence, the term fishbowl) and must remain silent. They can participate in the debate by "tapping out" one of the debating participants and replacing him or her.

**Application:**
This strategy is particularly useful in a second language classroom as it reinforces listening skills on the part of the non-debater and speaking skills on the part of the active
debaters. Basing the debate on a cultural topic will promote critical thinking, personal reflection and encourage intercultural competence.

Please note that these strategies are only a brief sampling of those applicable to cultural awareness. Additionally, the strategies used in this table cite only one example of their employment in a cultural context in a foreign language classroom but are certainly not limited to these constraints. There are indeed numerous ways in which these strategies can be used both in and out of a second language learning environment.

Therefore, it is evident that there are numerous strategies that can be used in the second language classroom to support the goals of cross-cultural awareness, as depicted in both the literature and Table 2 listed above. Undoubtedly, there are many more strategies that can be used, and I encourage educators to share their resources with one another, in order to create a learning environment which fosters cross-cultural awareness. Finally, it should be noted that while some of the aforementioned strategies refer to intercultural competence in a foreign language context, their use is not only applicable, but also encouraged in other areas of the curriculum.

In summary, this chapter has thoroughly examined the ways in which intercultural competence can be incorporated in the foreign language classroom. This part of the project has served to establish attainable goals for cultural awareness, as well as a framework for its implementation. Examining assessment of intercultural competence has provided the insight that qualitative measures outweigh quantitative approaches, yet that cross-cultural awareness can also be combined with the evaluation of language skills such as reading, writing, speaking and listening. Through a survey of the literature regarding materials in the foreign language classroom, the issues surrounding a lack of cultural content in current textbooks has been highlighted. By exploring the policies for
textbook approval in Ontario, serious cultural limitations have been established, resulting in a push for the use of supplemental materials which promote intercultural competence. Finally, this chapter discussed a variety of strategies designed to aid in the development of cross-cultural awareness. Overall, there are many factors to consider when implementing an intercultural approach in the foreign language classroom. While several challenges and limitations have been unveiled in this chapter, many encouraging ideas have also been discovered. It is certainly possible to foster cross-cultural awareness in the foreign language classroom; however, this task requires serious commitment on the part of the teacher.

The following chapter of this project will turn its focus to a practical application of intercultural competence in the second language classroom. As I am determined to foster cross-cultural awareness in foreign language students, I am prepared to create my own materials for use in the second language classroom. With the knowledge obtained from the research in the previous chapter, I will aim to develop a portfolio for student use in the hopes of developing intercultural competence. The fourth chapter of this project will focus on a rationale and outline of the proposed portfolio, and will incorporate current Ministry of Education objectives which support this form of practical application.
CHAPTER FOUR

PRACTICAL APPLICATION: PORTFOLIO

Introduction

As discussed in the previous chapters of this paper, there are many reservations regarding the reliability, practicality, and even validity of many forms of assessment of cross-cultural awareness. However, as argued by Schulz (2007), in the case of culture learning, portfolios may be one of the few appropriate alternatives to traditional classroom achievement assessment that lend themselves to both formative and summative assessment and are able to evaluate process as well as product. This chapter will explore the reasoning behind the choice of a portfolio approach to promote cross-cultural awareness in the second language classroom.

Rationale

If cross-cultural understanding is indeed to be a byproduct of foreign language learning, and if, as recommended by Kramsch (1993), language should be taught as a cultural practice, it is important that educators provide learners with the opportunities to develop intercultural competence, and that they are able to assess the achievement of these goals. The use of a portfolio as an assessment tool in the second language classroom can allow for the fostering of cross-cultural awareness while meeting the language objectives outlined in any given curriculum.

For the purposes of this project, portfolios are viewed as structured collections of a student’s work over time based on specific objectives that can, however, be related to individual student interest. Portfolios are said to encourage students’ critical reflection and self-evaluation and, at least in theory, provide continuous formative instructor
guidance and feedback. This tool encourages discussion, collaboration, revision, elaboration, and, important in the area of cultural learning, use of multiple sources of evidence (Schulz, 2007).

I undertook several steps in order to develop the portfolio that is in Appendix A. First, I reviewed the extant literature concerning the application and assessment of intercultural competence in the foreign language classroom, as seen in the third chapter of this project. I then developed the portfolio application using the findings of Deardorff (2006), which suggest that the acquisition of intercultural competence should be assessed over time using qualitative methods, as a frame of reference. Just as second language acquisition is not an instantaneous event but develops over time, the development of cross-cultural awareness should also occur over time in a cyclical fashion. The process framework, as seen in Figure 3, was the foundation of the portfolio approach. The activities included in the attached portfolio support this process framework, in that they focus on both individual growth and preparation for interaction in the target culture.

In the cultural portfolio, students will focus on personal reflection of cultural experiences and what it means to be interculturally competent. Through the development of cultural self-awareness, students will expand their ability to observe and interpret cultural practices as an expression of their given perspectives. Students will then be encouraged to interact with the target culture using appropriate and effective communication. The portfolio assessment allows learners to document their growth and awareness based on new information and insights. Additionally, it aims to encourage a sense of curiosity about foreign cultures, while promoting a sense of respect for all. The proposed portfolio approach can be used and reused with modified or different tasks at
practically any level of instruction. However, it can be expected that at lower levels, students’ responses would most likely still be in the home language, as opposed to the expectation that intermediate and advanced level students would communicate their answers and opinions in the target language.

Appendix A presents an example of a template for a cultural learning portfolio, based on the fundamental objectives presented in Chapter 3. The activities in the portfolio are designed to support the Grade 9 Core French Curriculum however, can be altered to suit other levels of foreign language learning. I chose to tailor the portfolio to support the Grade 9 Core French Curriculum as it is the last required course in the Ontario FSL curriculum. Additionally, students at this level will not only have the language knowledge to understand the content, but the maturity to discuss the importance of cross-cultural awareness. It should also be noted that the proposed portfolio approach for the assessment of intercultural understanding in the context of foreign language instruction is intended to be an additional component to the existing curriculum, not a replacement for the objectives which currently exist.

Alignment with Ministry of Education Objectives

The decision to choose the portfolio as a form of practical application for second language learning is based on the literature surveyed in Chapter Three and the objectives presented by the Ontario Ministry of Education in both the Program Planning and Assessment (2000) document and the French as a Second Language Curriculum (1999) document. In order to implement the cultural portfolio as an assessment tool in any classroom, it is imperative that it supports the objectives outlined by its governing body.
This section of the fourth chapter will confirm the validity of a portfolio application by providing supporting documentation from the Ontario Ministry of Education.

**Program Planning and Assessment**

In examining the objectives of the Ontario Ministry of Education it can be seen that one of the overall goals is “ensuring that graduates from Ontario secondary schools are well prepared to lead satisfying and productive lives as both citizens and individuals, and to compete successfully in a global economy and a rapidly changing world.” (Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 4) The notion of preparing students for an increasingly globalized world can definitely be supported by the promotion of intercultural competence. As students develop this form of cross-cultural understanding they will gain valuable knowledge and strategies that can be applied not only to second-language learning, but to life outside the classroom setting. Additionally, the Ministry encourages the integration of “antidiscrimination education” (Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 4) which can certainly be related to cross-cultural awareness. As discussed in the previous chapters of this project, intercultural competence encourages students to explore cultural beliefs and practices from various perspectives, instead of through one specific lens. Therefore, encouraging students to accept and respect cultural differences that exist worldwide meets the Ministry of Education goal of educating without discriminating.

As previously discussed in the third chapter, when it comes to assessment, the Ontario Ministry of Education states that teachers must use assessment and evaluation strategies that “are varied in nature, administered over a period of time, and designed to provide opportunities for students to demonstrate the full range of their learning” (Ministry of Education, 2000, p.13). The use of a cultural portfolio supports this entire objective as it is intended to be used for the duration of the course, and includes multiple
activities which allow students to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways. Another goal that can be achieved through the use of a portfolio is the need to “promote students’ ability to improve their own learning and to set specific goals” (Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 13). Through the inclusion of activities and strategies such as the KWL chart in a portfolio, as seen in the previous chapter, students are encouraged to set their own goals for cultural learning, and are able to assess whether or not they have been met.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the proposed portfolio found in Appendix A is not intended to be a static document. Instead, it should evolve over time to integrate new knowledge and new strategies, while meeting the needs of all students. This notion is supported by the Ministry of Education Program Planning and Assessment (2000) document which explains that, “teachers and principals should systematically review course content, instructional strategies and assessment procedures and make the program changes needed to improve their students’ achievement” (Ministry of Education, 2000, p.17). Moreover, the Ministry of Education describes that “assessment and evaluation of student achievement provide[s] teachers with an opportunity to think critically about their methods of instruction and the overall effectiveness of their program” (Ministry of Education, 2000, p.17). In this case, a portfolio is an excellent assessment tool as teachers can easily remove certain activities that do not suit the needs of students, or add new activities to support areas of cultural awareness that may require more attention. The format of a cultural portfolio allows for these changes to occur with ease, and can be implemented immediately or for future courses.

Finally, the Ministry of Education outlines that assessment and evaluation are to be “based both on the categories of knowledge and skills and on the achievement level
descriptions given in the achievement chart that appears in the curriculum policy
document for each discipline” (Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 13). To meet this
requirement, an outline of how each activity ties into the mandated curriculum objectives
is included in the portfolio, found in Appendix A.

Overall, it appears as though a cultural portfolio supports the objectives outlined
by the Program Planning and Assessment (2000) document as mandated by the Ontario
Ministry of Education. However, as the portfolio is geared to the Grade 9 Core French
Course, it should be ensured that this assessment tool also meets the objectives of the
French as a Second Language (FSL) Program.

*French as a Second Language Curriculum*

The overall aim of the French as a Second Language Program in Ontario is “to
prepare students to perform effectively in the challenging world they will face by
providing them with the skills they will need to communicate in a second language”
(Ministry of Education, 1999, p. 2). While there is an evident emphasis on the
communicative language skills such as speaking, listening, reading or writing, there is
also the need to consider the cultural knowledge that will be required for effective
interaction in a second language. As has been demonstrated throughout this project,
language and culture are inseparable, and therefore, in order to communicate effectively
in a second language, cultural awareness is required. By incorporating the proposed
portfolio, students will develop intercultural competence while mastering the required
communicative language skills.

The FSL curriculum also states that “as students study French, they gain an
appreciation of French literature and an understanding of French societies in the world”
(Ministry of Education, 1999, p.4) and that “the cultural study of French-language regions will be integrated into daily instruction rather than presented in an isolated fashion or on an occasional basis” (Ministry of Education, 1999, p.4). The portfolio approach is certainly capable of achieving these goals, as the development of cross-cultural awareness is implemented so that it becomes part of every lesson, and encourages students to reflect on their learning on a consistent basis. The FSL program also aims to “make curriculum relevant to students’ lives” (Ministry of Education, 1999, p.2) by teaching “knowledge and skills in contexts that reflect their interests and experiences” (Ministry of Education, 1999, p.2). The proposed portfolio achieves this goal as it allows for personal choice on certain activities and encourages students to reflect on their own cultural experiences. Activities found in the portfolio can (and should) also be modified to reflect current cultural issues occurring worldwide, which ensures that the content is pertinent to all students.

More specifically, in the Grade 9 Core French Course students are encouraged to “build on and apply their knowledge of French while exploring a variety of themes, such as relationships, social trends, and careers” (Ministry of Education, 1999, p.7). All of these topics can be incorporated into the curriculum through a cross-cultural approach, and are covered in some manner in the attached portfolio. Finally, it should be noted that the proposed portfolio covers each of the strands of language use: oral communication (speaking and listening), reading and writing, as outlined by the FSL Curriculum document.

While the portfolio approach clearly supports the current FSL curriculum, it should be noted that the Ministry of Education is currently in the process of revising the 1999 document, and is intending to release an updated version in the fall of 2010. Given that the
new version is still undergoing revisions, the objectives and the activities found in the cultural portfolio have been aligned with the 1999 version of the FSL Curriculum Document. Although the new version has not yet been released, drafts indicate that there will be a greater focus on cultural awareness, in terms of both cultural literacy and cultural competence. Possible fundamental concepts include an emphasis on the interdependence of language and culture, and the fostering of empathy and respect toward different cultures (Ministry of Education, in press). As the proposed portfolio encapsulates all of these objectives, it will remain a useful assessment tool and will likely require only minor revisions to meet the new objectives of the FSL program.

This chapter has provided a rationale for the adoption of a cultural portfolio in the second language classroom. It can be seen that the choice to use a cultural portfolio as an instructional and assessment tool is supported by academics such as Schulz (2007) and Deardorff (2006). Additionally, and perhaps more importantly, the portfolio approach is also complementary to the overall goals of the Ontario Ministry of Education, both in terms of the Program Planning and Assessment (2000) and the French as a Second Language Curriculum (1999) documents. As previously mentioned, the relation to specific curriculum objectives is described in each activity in the attached portfolio.

The final chapter of this work will serve as a conclusion for this portion of the project. In Chapter Five I will make a personal statement pertaining to my research and will present a general summary of this paper. Moreover, I will acknowledge certain limitations of this work and will suggest some additional steps for the future development of cross-cultural awareness.
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

Personal Statement

My story of second language learning throughout my education set the stage for my research. Having been a student of foreign languages since the age of five, I have come to realize the value of the inclusion of intercultural competence in second language learning. Not only has cultural awareness in the second language classroom improved my understanding of the target language, but it has also opened my eyes to cultural diversity on a global scale. Now, as an educator, I am in a position where I want to make cultural awareness accessible to all foreign language classrooms in order to provide the best possible second language education. This marks the purpose of my project: to research and develop a practical application that can be used to promote intercultural competence, with the portfolio in Appendix A being the end result. I hope that this work will enlighten others as to the importance of cultural awareness in foreign language learning and that, as a result, they will be encouraged to improve intercultural competence among their students.

Summary

This project aims to illuminate the importance of cross-cultural awareness in second language learning, and to develop practical materials that would suit its implementation in the classroom setting. The introductory chapter set the stage for this project, explaining my personal experiences in second language learning and why I feel cultural awareness is integral to the foreign language classroom. The second chapter highlights the undeniable link between language and culture, offering insight into cultural
teaching practices over the past five decades. In the third chapter, the focus shifts to the implementation of intercultural competence in the second language classroom, outlining goals and a framework for cultural learning. Additionally, the chapter includes the exploration of certain issues pertaining to cross-cultural awareness such as assessment, materials and strategies. Chapter Four is a focus on the cultural portfolio, and provides a rationale for its inclusion in the Appendix of this project. Finally, the current chapter concludes the paper with a personal statement and general closing comments. The following section discusses the limitations of this work as well as suggestions for future endeavors in the area of intercultural competence.

Limitations

While this project aims to cover all areas of incorporating cross-cultural awareness into the foreign language learning environment, there are undoubtedly some limitations to this work. Although it is relatively easy for teachers to find examples of culture-specific practices (i.e. Christmas traditions, greetings, mealtime-related etiquette, dating conventions) or products (i.e. special foods, film, literature), most teachers lack sufficient background knowledge and experience to determine relationships between those practices or products and the cultural perspectives that gave (or give) rise to them. Therefore, in terms of promoting intercultural competence in the second language classroom, educators will need to put forth a significant effort to research cultural practices and to ensure that materials reflect current issues. While this may require a notable time commitment, teachers will certainly benefit from their efforts. As it has been noted that there is no “ultimate” level of intercultural competence, teachers will continue to grow and become more culturally aware along with their students.
Another limitation presented in the area of cross-cultural awareness is the notion that it may be difficult for students to express their ideas in the target language. While there is no doubt that students will encounter some challenges in communicating their opinions, I am hopeful that appropriate skill-level activities will alleviate some of the pressures. Additionally, while students should be encouraged to use the target language as much as possible, they should not be penalized for expressing their ideas in the native language or mother-tongue.

The use of a cultural portfolio as an assessment tool is a personal decision, and while it is supported by existing literature, it is particularly appealing because it supports my personal teaching style. Many educators may find it challenging to use the strategies and activities outlined in Appendix A, and as such, are encouraged to use materials that suit their needs as well as the needs of their students. It has been suggested that intercultural competence assessment tools be created by a team, in order to ensure that all needs are met and that the information presented does not appear to be biased (Deardorff, 2006). In daily practice it would be quite reasonable to develop materials with co-workers and to share strategies that promote intercultural competence, however based on the nature of this project, the portfolio was designed singlehandedly.

An added limitation is that accommodations for exceptional students are not included in the activities found in the portfolio. This exclusion was made consciously as it is impossible to modify the activities without knowledge of the given exceptionality. Teachers will have to make the necessary changes in reference to a student’s Individual Education Plan (IEP) (Ministry of Education, 2000).
It should also be noted that while this paper may cite French language learning and Francophone culture, the arguments put forward and the approaches suggested are equally applicable to other second language contexts. The French context was chosen based on personal experience and to suit my needs for future teaching.

Finally, it should be noted that the objectives presented in the portfolio are based on the Curriculum document from 1999, and that, as previously noted, the Ministry of Education intends to release an updated version in the fall of 2010. Therefore, it is possible that some of the outlined objectives may no longer exist, and that new goals will be introduced. Given that the updated version is not available at the time of publishing, the content will be limited to the original FSL Curriculum document.

Next Steps

After reviewing my personal experiences and the current state of foreign language learning in Ontario, I believe that many positive changes can be made to improve cross-cultural awareness. The development and inclusion of specific cultural goals in the Ministry of Education documents will allow intercultural competence to be implemented with more clarity. Additionally, a revision of the current textbook approval process should be considered, encouraging a cross-cultural approach instead of the currently existing Canadian-centered view. Finally, the inclusion of cross-cultural awareness should be an issue covered across the curriculum, and should not only be present in second language classrooms. In an increasingly globalized world, it is important that all students become interculturally competent not only for the purposes of communication, but because, on a deeper level, they will develop a sense of respect and empathy for others.
Closing Comments

While there may be limitations to the implementation of cross-cultural awareness in the foreign language classroom, I firmly believe that it is better to attempt to promote intercultural competence and have some flaws in the system, than to ignore the issue entirely. As suggested by Myers (2007), “the simple fact of being aware of the complexity involved in [intercultural] communication, places us in a good position to further elaborate and refine theoretical models to enhance our understanding” (p.300). As such, it is imperative to recognize that there will always be room for improvement, for when it comes to the acquiring of intercultural competence, there is a continuous learning cycle. Finally, it is essential to recognize that the encouragement of cross-cultural awareness will not only support student learning in cultural areas, but will also equip them with the critical thinking skills necessary to consider gender, sexual, or religious issues from an unbiased standpoint. In summary, by fostering a respectful environment and by “putting the target culture in relation with one’s own” (Kramsch, 1993, p. 239) teachers promote empathy for other cultures and raise the critical awareness of students; skills that are applicable not only in the foreign language classroom, but in all aspects of life.
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Overview of the Portfolio

This portfolio is intended to be used as a tool to promote cross-cultural awareness in the FSL classroom. The portfolio contains a compilation of self-developed activities which promote intercultural competence in alignment with the objectives for the Grade 9 Core French Curriculum as per the Ontario Ministry of Education documents.

The first section of this portfolio outlines activities and strategies for students, which aim to enhance cultural awareness. Each of the activities is designed to encourage student awareness of cultural issues through personal reflection and exploration. Additionally, each of the tasks aims to support both the Grade 9 Core French curriculum objectives and language structures. Please see the teacher reference notes (pp. 16-31) for more detailed information.

The second section is geared towards teachers as it outlines the relation between activities and the curriculum objectives. Teachers will find an explanatory note for each assignment, describing any additional information that may not be included in the student activity description. This section also outlines the relation between each task and the applicable overall and specific objectives. Additionally, this section includes charts for both the language structures and achievement levels for the Grade 9 Core French Curriculum.

Although the following portfolio contains activities geared towards a specific curriculum, they can certainly be used in other foreign language classrooms. The enclosed activities may be written in French however, they can (and should) be translated or modified to suit the needs of other second language curricula.
Section 1

Student Activities
**Message to Students**

*Introduction:*

To behave appropriately in another culture necessitates cross-cultural insights and understanding of what one can say to whom, how, and in what circumstances. Intuitively, we expect that other cultures behave similarly to our own. It is this (mistaken) expectation that often leads to cross-cultural conflicts. There are indeed many cultural products (traditional food, clothing, etc.) and practices (greetings, popular leisure activities) that are easily observable to an outsider. However, what is important is to realize that these manifestations reflect underlying perspectives, shaped by culture-specific events, attitudes, values and beliefs.

Developing intercultural competence requires that you become aware of culture-specific manifestations in your home culture. Through the development of understanding of your home culture, you will be able to appreciate the perspectives of other cultures. Although you may not necessarily understand or value certain products or practices in a foreign culture, you will develop a sense of respect and accept that whatever cultural manifestations you discover make sense to the target language speakers in their own cultural context.

The purpose of this portfolio assignment is to encourage you to discover and examine some of the differences in cultural practices between your home and target cultures. Through the completion of the enclosed tasks you will gain a deeper understanding of the significance of your own culturally conditioned behaviour, and develop a sense of cross-cultural awareness.

*Instructions:*

Over the course of this semester, you will be asked to develop a portfolio, demonstrating the extent of your growing awareness about the phenomenon of “culture” and obstacles to intercultural understanding. Additionally, you will examine cultural similarities and differences between Canadian culture(s) and the target language culture(s) which may give rise to cultural misunderstandings. Each of the enclosed activities will be reviewed in class prior to its assignment. Furthermore, appropriate due dates and assessment criteria will be discussed and decided upon together. Please note that you will be required to document all sources used to gather information for your portfolio. I encourage you to use as many French-language sources as possible, however, you may use English language sources as required. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the activities or the completion of the portfolio please do not hesitate to ask. Bonne chance!
Activité # 1 – Citation

La citation suivante présente des idées associées à la compétence interculturelle. Que penses-tu de l’opinion présentée par Youssou N’Dour? Es-tu d’accord avec sa déclaration? Écris un paragraphe pour expliquer ta réponse. Incorpore des exemples personnels et tes propres opinions.

<< Les gens doivent comprendre que, loin d’être un obstacle, la diversité des langues, des religions et des traditions dans le monde est une grande richesse qui nous offre des précieuses occasions de nous reconnaître dans les autres >>

-Youssou N’Dour

ATTENTION :

Ton paragraphe doit inclure les structures suivantes :
- un minimum de dix phrases complètes
- un minimum de trois conjonctions (et, mais, ou, donc...)
- un minimum de trois pronoms disjoints (moi, toi, lui, elle, nous, vous, eux, elles...)
- un minimum de trois pronoms directs ou indirects (le, la, les, lui, leur, y, en...)

Je vais te donner du temps en classe pour réviser avec un partenaire. N’oublie pas de remettre ton brouillon (avec signature) avec ta bonne copie!
Activité # 2 – Blog

Cette activité incorporera la technologie et te donnera l’occasion de parler de tes propres opinions et expériences culturelles. Au cours du semestre, tu écriras un minimum de 10 courts passages dans ton journal concernant le thème de la culture. Tu peux partager un défi personnel, ou même écrire quelque chose à propos des faits que tu apprendras en classe.

Tu créeras ton blog en utilisant le site web www.blogger.com. C’est gratuit et il t’offre des options de sécurité variées. Tu peux partager tes pensées seulement avec moi ou tu peux inviter tes amis ou camarades de classe à lire ce que tu écriras. Nous aurons une leçon dans la salle d’ordinateurs et je donnerai les directives nécessaires pour la création de ton blog.

ATTENTION :

Chaque entrée doit inclure les structures suivantes :
  - une phrase négative (i.e. Je ne savais pas...)
  - une question concernant la culture (utilise les mots interrogatifs : quand, qui, comment, pourquoi)
  - un minimum de 15 phrases

La date limite de cette activité sera discutée en classe. N’oublie pas qu’il faut écrire dans ton blog un minimum de 10 fois avant de le remettre. Donc, je suggère que tu écrives dans ton blog environ une fois par semaine.
Activité #3 – « Lisons! »

En lisant le journal on apprend non seulement les nouvelles quotidiennes dans notre communauté mais aussi à travers le monde. Grâce à l’internet, on a accès à plusieurs journaux mondiaux et donc, aux nouvelles importantes dans n’importe quel pays. Ces avancements technologiques nous offrent l’opportunité d’apprendre et de lire des articles à propos d’évènements et d’avis d’autres personnes.

L’activité suivante se base sur les journaux à diffusion mondiale et contient deux tâches. Pour la première tâche, tu liras l’article distribué en classe et répondras aux questions de compréhension. Ensuite tu créeras une question supplémentaire (en utilisant les mots interrogatifs) concernant l’information présentée dans l’article pour amorcer une discussion de classe.

Pour la deuxième tâche tu trouveras un article d’un journal électronique pour une discussion avec tes pairs. L’article sera écrit en français et se concentrera sur le thème de la culture (soit une pratique culturelle, la compétence interculturelle, etc.) Tu résumeras ton article brièvement pour la classe, puis tu poseras une question de discussion concernant le sujet de ton article. On fera une présentation par jour, au cours d’un mois. Chaque étudiant présentera son article selon la date discutée en classe.
Activité #4 – « Correspondons! »

Au cours du semestre, tu écriras des lettres de correspondance avec un ami français. Je vais te désigner un partenaire d’un pays francophone avec qui tu échangeras des lettres par courriel. Tu échangeras un minimum de trois lettres avec ton correspondant avant la date limite désignée en classe.

La liste suivante présente quelques sujets de discussion :
- ton émission de télévision préférée
- ton sport favori
- les genres de musique que tu aimes écouter
- ton cours préféré à l’école
- ta famille
- la vie au Canada
- tes expériences culturelles (voyages que tu as faits, etc.)
- n’oublie pas de lui poser des questions aussi!

Avant d’envoyer ta lettre, tu éditeras ton message avec un de tes pairs. N’oublie pas d’imprimer ton brouillon et de le remettre avec la signature de ton partenaire. Après avoir écrit ta lettre, tu l’imprimeras pour la mettre dans ton portfolio. Donc, à la fin du semestre, tu auras un minimum de six feuilles pour cette activité; 3 brouillons avec signature et 3 trois bonnes copies.
Activité #5 – « Écoutons! »

Les expériences personnelles des autres nous permettent de comprendre la vie quotidienne dans une culture étrangère. Donc, j’organiserai une présentation par un orateur invité qui nous parlera de ses expériences avec l’immigration au Canada et les différences culturelles qu’il faut surmonter. Cette présentation t’offre l’opportunité de lui poser des questions concernant la vie dans son pays natif, et les défis associés à l’apprentissage d’une nouvelle culture.

Avant la présentation nous ferons un remue-méninges des questions possibles pour notre invité. De plus, je partagerai de l’information générale sur son pays d’origine, et tu feras un peu de recherches sur ses pratiques culturelles. Nous discuterons les résultats ensemble.

Pendant la présentation, tu rempliras un organigramme concernant l’information discutée par notre invité pour montrer tes habiletés comme auditeur ou auditrice. L’organigramme présentera des points forts de la présentation et tu noteras un minimum de cinq faits intéressants que tu apprendras de l’orateur invité. Je ramasserai l’organigramme à la fin de la présentation alors faites attention!
À quoi penses-tu quand tu entends le mot « canadien? » Quels sont les symboles ou stéréotypes associés à notre culture? La feuille d’érable? Un castor?

Cette activité te demandera de réfléchir sur les stéréotypes canadiens et les associations avec la vie au Canada. En bref, comment est-ce que les autres pays nous perçoivent? Pensent-ils qu’on habite des igloos? Ou que nous sommes tous des bûcherons?

Nous explorerons des possibilités ensemble en classe, puis tu créeras une présentation orale originale pour présenter tes idées. Tu travailleras avec un partenaire pour développer une chanson, une scénette, ou une annonce publicitaire qui représentera les stéréotypes populaires au sujet des canadiens. Les possibilités sont illimitées...alors soyez créatifs, eh!
Activité #7 – Comparaisons culturelles

Cette activité explorera la culture québécoise et les stéréotypes associés à cette province francophone. Nous parlerons des similarités et les différences entre les pratiques à Québec et celles dans les autres provinces au Canada. Tout le monde participera à une discussion de classe en partageant des informations et des expériences personnelles.

Ensuite, tu développeras un diagramme de Venn (photo ci-dessous) qui montrera les ressemblances et différences entre la culture québécoise et tes pratiques quotidiennes. Tu feras des comparaisons sur des sujets comme les repas, le système d’école, la mode, la musique, etc.

Finalement, tu répondras aux questions suivantes:

1. Comment les différences entre les deux cultures peuvent-elles créer des conflits?
2. Pourquoi est-il important de noter la diversité des pratiques culturelles au Canada?
Activité #8 – La culture et moi

Nous avons tous eu une expérience avec une culture différente à un moment dans notre vie. Peut-être es-tu allé/e en vacances en Europe ou peut-être il y avait un étudiant d’un programme d’échange dans un de tes cours à l’école?

Pour cette activité tu créeras une affiche qui démontrera tes expériences personnelles avec les autres cultures. Tu utiliseras des photos ou des dessins pour faire part de ton expérience. Par exemple, si tu as visité un pays étranger, tu pourras dessiner ton souvenir préféré ou un repas que tu as pris. Tu peux dessiner tes propres photos ou prendre des photos des journaux, des magazines, de ton appareil photo ou même de l’internet.

Ensuite, tu présenteras ton affiche à la classe. Tu expliqueras la signification de chaque photo et décriras l’expérience culturelle que tu as eue. De plus, tu parleras de ce que tu as appris de tes expériences culturelles. Dans ta présentation orale tu devrais expliquer un minimum de cinq photos au cours de trois minutes.

Comme toujours, je présenterai un exemple de mon affiche en classe pour te donner un exemple. Nous choisirons une date limite et créerons une rubrique ensemble.
Activité #9 – À l’avenir...

Au cours du semestre, tu as appris beaucoup de choses concernant la compétence interculturelle. J’espère que tu continueras à augmenter tes connaissances à propos des cultures mondiales et d’employer ces connaissances culturelles dans ta vie quotidienne. Donc, pour cette activité tu réfléchiras et décriras comment tu incorporeras tes connaissances à l’avenir. En utilisant le futur proche tu répondras aux questions suivantes. Explique tes réponses avec un minimum de 10 phrases.

1. Comment démontreras-tu la compétence interculturelle hors de la classe de français à l’avenir.
2. Qu’est-ce que tu aimerais apprendre à propos des autres cultures et pratiques qui existent à travers le monde?
3. Comment partageras-tu les connaissances que tu as acquises au cours du semestre avec tes amis? ta famille?

ATTENTION :
Ta réponse doit être écrite au futur proche...
Activité #10 – Découvrons les cultures francophones!

Pour cette activité tu étudieras une culture francophone d’un pays étranger. J’organiserai une liste en classe et chaque étudiant recevra un pays différent. Comme activité cumulative du portfolio, tu compléteras quelques tâches concernant la culture du pays donné.

Tâche #1
Tu rechercheras les cinq sujets suivants concernant la culture de ton pays :
1. la géographie physique/le climat
2. les événements historiques notables
3. le système d’éducation
4. les comportements (les salutations, les manières, etc.)
5. les personnages importants/vedettes (auteurs, acteurs, scientifiques, inventeurs, etc.)

Tâche #2
Utilisant l’information obtenue dans la Tâche #1 tu feras des comparaisons avec la culture étrangère et ta culture native. Tu présenteras l’information sur les sujets énumérés ci-dessus dans un organisateur graphique de ton choix.

Tâche #3
Tu développneras une présentation de PowerPoint qui expliquera les points principaux de ta recherche. Tu feras une présentation orale de cinq minutes pour partager tes informations et ton organisateur graphique avec tes camarades de classe.
Section 2

Teacher Information
Message to Teachers

This portfolio is intended to be a document which constantly evolves to reflect current issues in cultural awareness. While the basis of the outlined activities may remain the same, the content or issues discussed in class should be a reflection of contemporary cultural concerns or achievements. Additionally, teachers may add, remove, or modify activities to suit their teaching style or the needs of the students.

It should be mentioned that the language structures required in specific activities will need to be taught in the classroom prior to the corresponding assignment. Additionally, although the activities outline specific language structures pertaining to the Grade 9 Core French Curriculum, they can be altered to suit varying levels of language learning.

The following section provides additional information pertaining to the student activities. For each activity teachers will find a general outline and any extra instructions that were not provided on the student handouts. Furthermore, the correlation between each task and the overall and specific curriculum objectives will be presented. Teachers will also note the inclusion of the language structures to be covered in the Grade 9 Core French Course. They are encouraged to promote these language structures wherever applicable.

A copy of the Achievement Chart for the Grade 9 FSL program has also been included in this section. I have not included individual rubrics for each activity as I prefer to create rubrics with the students in the class. I believe that students take more ownership over their work when they feel they have had a part in determining the categories and levels of assessment. However, as all teachers have different styles, some may prefer to follow the ministry guideline. Additionally, I will create an example of any activity requiring specific information for the students (i.e. oral presentations, sample blog entries and letters) in order to demonstrate my expectations and provide a general format which they can follow.

I welcome any additional suggestions of strategies that suit the goal of this cultural portfolio, so that they may be added in the future. As well, if you have any questions or concerns regarding the enclosed strategies please feel free to contact me for clarification. All inquiries can be emailed to: colettemaurice@gmail.com.
Activity #1 – Citation

Purpose:
This activity is included to promote the self-reflection aspect of intercultural competence. In examining the quote, students will ideally recognize the inherent similarities of the human race regardless of race, religion or culture, and will develop a sense of respect for all.

Teacher Notes:
Teachers are welcome to use another suitable quote for this activity or, as an extension of the learning, encourage students to find an additional quote that promotes cross-cultural awareness. Some possible language structures have been outlined however, they may be altered or removed based on the level of the students.

Curriculum Objectives:
WRITING
Overall Expectations:
- express ideas and opinions in short written texts
- create short written texts in structured and open-ended situations
- identify and use appropriate language conventions in their written works

Specific Expectations:
- write a descriptive paragraph, including an introductory sentence, development of main ideas, and a concluding sentence
- recognize and use appropriate language structures
- revise, edit and proofread their writing, focusing on grammar, spelling, punctuation, and conventions of style
- incorporate newly acquired vocabulary into their written work
Activity #2 – Blog

*Purpose:*
This activity is included to show the growth of the student’s cultural awareness over the course of the semester. By reflecting on the knowledge gained and their own cultural experiences, students will recognize the importance of adaptability and flexibility when interacting with members of the target culture.

*Teacher Notes:*
The site www.blogger.com was chosen based on personal experience however, any other suitable blog site may be used to complete this activity. In using this site students may make the content of their online journal public, or choose to share their entries with only the teacher. In terms of the blog, teachers may assign general questions to answer with each entry and/or may modify the number of or length of the required entries. Teachers may also add a reading component and require students to comment on their peers’ blogs. As always, language structures can be added or removed based on the level of the students.

*Curriculum Objectives:*
**WRITING**
Overall Expectations:
- express ideas and opinions in short written texts
- create short written texts in structured and open-ended situations
- identify and use appropriate language conventions in their written works

Specific Expectations:
- record personal thoughts and observations in diaries, journals, and logs
- recognize and use appropriate language structures
- revise, edit and proofread their writing, focusing on grammar, spelling, punctuation, and conventions of style
- incorporate newly acquired vocabulary into their written work
Activity #3 – « Lisons! »

Purpose:
This activity is included to expose students to current cultural issues and to promote reading in the target language.

Teacher Notes:
Teachers will be required to choose a suitable newspaper article to reflect current cultural issues and to suit the reading level of the students. Based on this article teachers will create comprehension questions and inquiry questions which encourage student reflection. The second task is designed to take place over the course of a month, so as to generate cultural discussion on a daily basis. If this does not suit your needs or the needs of your students, the timing of presentations can certainly be altered.

Curriculum Objectives:
**READING**
Overall Expectations:
- read and demonstrate an understanding of a variety of simple texts
- read a range of simple texts to gather information and to expand their knowledge of the French language
- identify and understand language conventions used in their reading materials

Specific Expectations:
- recognize and use appropriate language structures
- use reading strategies (e.g., knowledge of cognates, word families, root words) to determine the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary and expressions
- use French-English dictionaries to determine the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary

**WRITING**
Overall Expectations:
- identify and use appropriate language conventions in their written work

Specific Expectations:
- write point-form notes to record key information from articles, poems and reading passages
Activity #4 – « Correspondons! »

Purpose:
This activity is included to encourage interaction with speakers of the target culture. In exchanging letters with a pen pal, students will aim to demonstrate effective and appropriate communication and behaviour in an intercultural situation.

Teacher Notes:
Teachers will be required to set-up the pen pal program with a school in the target culture. Due to recent technological advances, this can be arranged quite easily. Once the pen pals have been assigned, teachers can create free websites where general information can be posted and exchanged among the students. Additionally, teachers can encourage students to share their blog (Activity #2) with their pen pals. In terms of the individual letters, the structure may be left open-ended, or include specific language structure requirements.

Curriculum Objectives:

Writing
Overall Expectations:
- express ideas and opinions in short written texts
- create short written texts in structured and open-ended situations
- identify and use appropriate language conventions in their written works

Specific Expectations:
- exchange information by writing a letter, a postcard, or an e-mail message that includes an appropriate salutation and closing
- recognize and use appropriate language structures
- revise, edit and proofread their writing, focusing on grammar, spelling, punctuation, and conventions of style
- incorporate newly acquired vocabulary into their written work

Reading
Overall Expectations:
- read and demonstrate an understanding of a variety of simple texts
- read a range of simple texts to gather information and to expand their knowledge of the French language
- identify and understand language conventions used in their reading materials

Specific Expectations:
- recognize and use appropriate language structures
- use reading strategies (e.g., knowledge of cognates, word families, root words) to determine the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary and expressions
- use French-English dictionaries to determine the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary
Activity #5 – « Écoutons! »

Purpose:
This activity is included to provide students with a personal example of a struggle with cultural adjustments. In listening to the guest speaker, students will gain knowledge of cultural products and practices which present difficulty in new cultural situations.

Teacher Notes:
Teachers are encouraged to ask a friend, relative or acquaintance who has experienced issues with cultural adjustments to share their story with the students. This person does not necessarily need to be a newcomer, but could be someone who has studied or travelled abroad. If possible, the guest speaker should conduct the talk in the target language.

Curriculum Objectives:

ORAL COMMUNICATION (LISTENING)
Overall Expectations:
- listen and respond to short, structured spoken texts
- express ideas and opinions in short conversations and teacher-guided discussions
- use appropriate language conventions during oral communication activities

Specific Expectations:
- listen to ideas and opinions of others, agree or disagree, and justify their points of view
- use complete sentences in sustained conversation
- recognize and use appropriate language structures
- recognize particular vocabulary items used in Canada are different from those used in other French-speaking regions (e.g. le diner/le déjeuner, l’école secondaire/le lycée)
- infer the meaning of unfamiliar words from verbal and non-verbal visual cues (e.g. volume and tone of voice, facial expressions and gestures)

WRITING
Specific Expectations:
- write point-form notes to record key information from articles, poems, and reading passages
Activity #6 – « Au Canada! »

Purpose:
This activity is designed to encourage cultural self-awareness in the identifying of common misconceptions and stereotypes associated with the Canadian culture. By examining the ways in which others view the home culture, students will develop awareness of similar stereotypes in the target culture, thus increasing intercultural competence.

Teacher Notes:
Teachers should encourage students to brainstorm as many common Canadian stereotypes as possible, and aim to dispel any myths surrounding these labels. Teachers may also choose to view commercials or listen to songs which may contain Canadian stereotypes. One example is the “I am Canadian” commercial which aired in 2000 and can be seen on YouTube via the following link: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BRI-A3vakVg

Curriculum Objectives:
ORAL COMMUNICATION (SPEAKING)
Overall Expectations:
- make oral presentations on a variety of topics
- use appropriate language conventions during oral communication activities

Specific Expectations:
- speak in French when working in collaborative and exploratory activities
- present short dialogues (e.g., based on wordless comic strips, illustrations, photographs)
- prepare and give oral presentations on topics under study, incorporating appropriate audio and visual aids
- recognize and use appropriate language structures
- use newly acquired vocabulary in conversation
- recognize particular vocabulary items used in Canada are different from those used in other French-speaking regions (e.g. le diner/le déjeuner, l'école secondaire/le lycée)
- use appropriate verbs to express thoughts and feelings (e.g., croire, penser, espérer)
Activity #7 – Comparaisons culturelles

Purpose:
This activity is designed to highlight the similarities and differences between the students’ home culture and target culture in order to develop intercultural competence.

Teacher Notes:
Teachers will need to encourage students to research popular cultural products and practices in the Québécois culture, focusing on the cultural perspectives behind the actions. Teachers may modify or add additional reflection questions suited to the promotion of cross-cultural awareness.

Curriculum Objectives:

ORAL COMMUNICATION
Overall Expectations:
- express ideas and opinions in short conversations and teacher-guided discussions
- use appropriate language conventions during oral communication activities

Specific Expectations (Listening):
- listen to ideas and opinions of others, agree or disagree, and justify their points of view
- infer the meaning of unfamiliar words from verbal and non-verbal visual cues (e.g. volume and tone of voice, facial expressions and gestures)

Specific Expectations (Speaking):
- use complete sentences in sustained conversation
- speak in French when working in collaborative and exploratory activities
- recognize and use appropriate language structures
- use newly acquired vocabulary in conversation
- recognize particular vocabulary items used in Canada are different from those used in other French-speaking regions (e.g. le diner/le déjeuner, l’école secondaire/le lycée)

WRITING
Overall Expectations:
- express ideas and opinions in short written texts
- identify and use appropriate language conventions in their written work

Specific Expectations:
- recognize and use appropriate language structures
- incorporate newly acquired vocabulary into their written work
Activity #8 – La culture et moi

Purpose:
This activity promotes cultural self-awareness as students reflect on their personal experiences with various cultures. The aim is to develop respect, along with a curiosity and openness, towards the practices observed and experienced in other cultures.

Teacher Notes:
Teachers are encouraged to share their personal experiences and reflections with the students as a way of introducing the assignment. It should be noted that while the focus of the poster is picture oriented, the oral presentation should contain an explanation of the experiences and what the student has learned from their interaction with varying cultures. Teachers should encourage a class discussion and questions following each presentation.

Curriculum Objectives:

ORAL COMMUNICATION (SPEAKING)

Overall Expectations:
- make oral presentations on a variety of topics
- use appropriate language conventions during oral communication activities

Specific Expectations:
- use complete sentences in sustained conversation
- prepare and give oral presentations on topics under study, incorporating audio and visual aids
- recognize and use appropriate language structures
- use newly acquired vocabulary in conversation
- use appropriate verbs to express thoughts and feelings (e.g., croire, penser, espérer)

ORAL COMMUNICATION (LISTENING)

Overall Expectations:
- listen and respond to short, structured spoken texts
- express ideas and opinions in short conversations and teacher-guided discussions

Specific Expectations:
- use complete sentences in sustained conversations
- listen to ideas and opinions of others, agree or disagree, and justify their points of view
- infer the meaning of unfamiliar words from verbal and non-verbal visual cues (e.g. volume and tone of voice, facial expressions and gestures)
Activity #9 – À l’avenir...

Purpose:
This activity is designed to encourage students to consider the ways in which they will continue to demonstrate intercultural competence in the future, outside of the French classroom.

Teacher Notes:
This activity is based on developing intercultural competence as a life-long skill. Teachers should emphasize the fact that there is no ultimate level of intercultural competence and that students can continue to learn and grow in this area for the rest of their lives. Although the questions and length of response can be altered, the use of the ‘futur simple’ should remain the focus of the language structures.

Curriculum Objectives:
WRITING
Overall Expectations:
- express ideas and opinions in short written texts
- create short written texts in structured and open-ended situations
- identify and use appropriate language conventions in their written work

Specific Expectations:
- write a descriptive paragraph, including an introductory sentence, development of main ideas, and a concluding statement
- recognize and use appropriate language structures
- revise, edit and proofread their writing, focusing on grammar, spelling, punctuation and conventions of style
- incorporate newly acquired vocabulary into their written work
Activity #10 – Découvrons les cultures francophones!

Purpose:
This activity serves as a cumulative assignment for the cultural portfolio, allowing students to apply the various skills they have learned related to developing cross-cultural awareness.

Teacher Notes:
Teachers will be required to assign Francophone cultures to each student for the completion of this task. Teachers may choose to develop and present exemplars for this task using a culture that was not assigned to students. The completion of each task should be monitored carefully, providing due dates or check-in points to allow for student feedback prior to moving on to the next step.

Curriculum Objectives:
READING:
Overall Expectations:
- read a range of simple texts to gather information and to expand their knowledge of the French language
- identify and understand language conventions used in their reading materials

Specific Expectations:
- use reading strategies (e.g., knowledge of cognates, word families, root words) to determine the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary and expressions
- use French-English dictionaries to determine the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary

WRITING
Overall Expectations:
- express ideas and opinions in short written texts
- create short written texts in structured and open-ended situations
- identify and use appropriate language conventions in their written work

Specific Expectations:
- write point-form notes to record key information from articles, poems, and reading passages
- recognize and use appropriate language structures
- revise, edit and proofread their writing, focusing on grammar, spelling, punctuation and conventions of style
- incorporate newly acquired vocabulary into their written work
Curriculum Objectives (Continued):

**ORAL COMMUNICATION (SPEAKING)**

Overall Expectations:
- make oral presentations on a variety of topics
- use appropriate language conventions during oral communication activities

Specific Expectations:
- use complete sentences in sustained conversation
- prepare and give oral presentations on topics under study, incorporating audio and visual aids
- recognize and use appropriate language structures
- use newly acquired vocabulary in conversation
- recognize particular vocabulary items used in Canada are different from those used in other French-speaking regions (e.g. le diner/le déjeuner, l’école secondaire/le lycée)

**ORAL COMMUNICATION (LISTENING)**

Overall Expectations:
- listen and respond to short, structured spoken texts
- express ideas and opinions in short conversations and teacher-guided discussions
- use appropriate language conventions during oral communication activities

Specific Expectations:
- respond to classmates’ presentations by asking questions for clarification and by providing feedback
- use complete sentences in sustained conversation
- recognize and use appropriate language structures
- infer the meaning of unfamiliar words from verbal and non-verbal visual cues (e.g. volume and tone of voice, facial expressions and gestures)
The following chart outlines the language structures which should be encouraged and incorporated in the portfolio activities.

| Nouns and Pronouns | - substitute personal pronouns to replace nouns (e.g., *Philippe marche. Il marche vite.*)  
|                    | - direct and indirect object pronouns (*le, la, les, lui, leur, y, en*)  
|                    | - disjunctive pronouns (*moi, toi, lui, elle, nous, vous, eux, elles*)  
|                    | - relative pronouns (*qui, que*)  
|                    | - position of a single object pronoun with simple or compound verbs in affirmative sentences (e.g., *Je le vois. Je vais lui parler. Elle leur a téléphoné.*)  
| Verbs              | - passé compose of verbs conjugated with *être* (e.g., *rester, arriver*), including the agreement of the past participle (e.g., *Elle est restée tard à l’école.*)  
|                    | - present tense of reflexive verbs related to daily routines (e.g., *se lever, s’habiller*)  
|                    | - future simple of *–er, -ir, and –re* verbs and irregular verbs  
|                    | - verbs followed by the prepositions *à* and *de* (e.g., *essayer de, avoir besoin de, assister à, répondre à*)  
| Adjectives         | - singular and plural, feminine and masculine, of irregular adjectives (e.g., *frais, gentil, gros, creative, cher, sérieux*)  
|                    | - comparative and superlative forms of *bon*  
| Adverbs            | - comparative and superlative forms of *bien*  
| Conjunctions       | - *et, mais, ou, donc*  
| Interrogative Constructions | - question words (e.g., *qui, quand, où, comment, pourquoi, de qui, à qui*) used with est-ce que (*Quand est-ce que tu viens chez moi?*) and with subject-verb inversion (e.g., *Quand viens-tu chez moi?*)  
| Negation            | - use of *ne...pas* with compound verbs (e.g., *Je n’ai pas vu le film.*)  
|                    | - use of *ne...pas* with simple sentences that include an object pronoun (e.g., *Vous ne la regardez pas.*)
Achievement Chart – Grade 9, French as a Second Language

The following chart identifies four categories of knowledge and skills in French as a Second Language: Knowledge/Understanding, Thinking/Inquiry, Communication, and Application. Levels of student achievement are outlined for each category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>50-59% (Level 1)</th>
<th>60-69% (Level 2)</th>
<th>70-79% (Level 3)</th>
<th>80-100% (Level 4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Knowledge/Understanding</strong></td>
<td>The student: - demonstrates limited knowledge of language forms and conventions</td>
<td>The student: - demonstrates some knowledge of language forms and conventions</td>
<td>The student: - demonstrates considerable knowledge of language forms and conventions</td>
<td>The student: - demonstrates thorough knowledge of language forms and conventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- knowledge of language forms and conventions</td>
<td>- demonstrates limited understanding of content</td>
<td>- demonstrates some understanding of content</td>
<td>- demonstrates considerable understanding of content</td>
<td>- demonstrates thorough understanding of content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- understanding of content</td>
<td>The student: - uses critical and creative thinking skills with limited effectiveness</td>
<td>The student: - uses critical and creative thinking skills with moderate effectiveness</td>
<td>The student: - uses critical and creative thinking skills with considerable effectiveness</td>
<td>The student: - uses critical and creative thinking skills with a high degree of effectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thinking/Inquiry</strong></td>
<td>- critical and creative thinking skills (e.g., formulating questions; planning; selecting strategies and resources; analyzing, interpreting, and assessing information; forming conclusions)</td>
<td>- applies few of the skills involved in an inquiry process</td>
<td>- applies some of the skills involved in an inquiry process</td>
<td>- applies most of the skills involved in an inquiry process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>- communication of information and ideas</strong></th>
<th><strong>The student:</strong></th>
<th><strong>- communicates information and ideas with limited clarity</strong></th>
<th><strong>- communicates information and ideas with some clarity</strong></th>
<th><strong>- communicates information and ideas with considerable clarity</strong></th>
<th><strong>- communicates information and ideas with a high degree of clarity</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>- use of language</strong></td>
<td><strong>- uses language with limited accuracy and effectiveness</strong></td>
<td><strong>- uses language with some accuracy and effectiveness</strong></td>
<td><strong>- uses language with considerable accuracy and effectiveness</strong></td>
<td><strong>- uses language with a high degree of accuracy and effectiveness</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>- communication for different audiences and purposes, using various forms</strong></td>
<td><strong>- communicates with a limited sense of audience and purpose, using few appropriate forms</strong></td>
<td><strong>- communicates with some sense of audience and purpose, using some appropriate forms</strong></td>
<td><strong>- communicates with a clear sense of audience and purpose, using appropriate forms</strong></td>
<td><strong>- communicates with a strong sense of audience and purpose, using appropriate forms</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Application

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>- application of knowledge and skills in familiar contexts</strong></th>
<th><strong>The student:</strong></th>
<th><strong>- applies knowledge and skills in familiar contexts with limited effectiveness</strong></th>
<th><strong>- applies knowledge and skills in familiar contexts with moderate effectiveness</strong></th>
<th><strong>- applies knowledge and skills in familiar contexts with considerable effectiveness</strong></th>
<th><strong>- applies knowledge and skills in familiar contexts with a high degree of effectiveness</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>- use of the language in new contexts</strong></td>
<td><strong>- demonstrates limited ability in using the language in new contexts</strong></td>
<td><strong>- demonstrates some ability in using the language in new contexts</strong></td>
<td><strong>- demonstrates considerable ability in using the language in new contexts</strong></td>
<td><strong>- demonstrates a high degree of ability and confidence in using the language in new contexts</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>- making connections (e.g., between personal experiences and the subject, between FSL and other subjects, and between FSL and the world outside the school)</strong></td>
<td><strong>- makes connections with limited effectiveness</strong></td>
<td><strong>- makes connections with moderate effectiveness</strong></td>
<td><strong>- makes connections with considerable effectiveness</strong></td>
<td><strong>- makes connections with a high degree of effectiveness</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References

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