

SUBJECTS-IN-INTERACTION VERSION 3.0:

**AN INTELLECTUAL SYSTEM FOR MODERN LANGUAGE STUDENT
TEACHERS TO APPROPRIATE MULTILITERACIES AS DESIGNERS AND
INTERPRETERS OF MEDIA TEXTS**

by

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**We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard**

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Abstract

This dissertation, which draws on the fields of critical theory, sociolinguistic theory, teacher education, and human-computer interaction, examines issues of culture and intercultural understanding, critical multiliteracies, learning in general and, specifically, the role of new media in the creation and interpretation of (learning) cultures.

Critical modern language education theorists advocate engaging in ethnographic studies of one's own and the target language culture as a way to shed traditional, static, product-based notions of culture for postmodern, dynamic, process-based interpretations of culture(s). To this end, how can teacher educators prepare student teachers to be reflexive about their own classroom practice?

In this approach, sixty secondary-level student teachers made short digital movies on their cultural interpretations of an object of their choice, such as cars. They filmed each other and were filmed as they worked and reflected on their movies and then used an on-line video analysis tool to share, annotate and critique the digital representations of their processes and products in relation to the course content. The participants assumed a variety of research roles, such as research initiators, qualitative researchers, video ethnographers, reflective practitioners and beta-testers of previously unreleased software

Multimedia profiles of eight participants, presented on an accompanying CD-ROM, illustrate learning experiences that occurred throughout the group. They found it *challenging* to reconcile their prior schema and new concepts; *confusing* to develop a teaching approach while their basic assumptions were evolving; *exciting* to use state of the art tools and take on research roles; *rewarding* to participate in forums for productive reflection and discover new capacities; *effective* for making abstract ideas concrete; and *empowering* to appropriate the technical and intellectual skills to carry out similar projects.

This study points to a need for a pedagogical shift in preparing modern language student teachers which positions them to claim the classroom as their own. This includes

claiming the right to: include culture in a language driven classroom; choose their own media materials; determine their own curriculum within standardized curricular and textbook guidelines; use non-traditional language teaching approaches; and hold high expectations for their students for critical thinking and use of the target language.

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List of Movie Files

The eight student teacher profiles located on pages 141-226 of this dissertation are embedded with QuickTime™ movies, which can be accessed on the accompanying Macintosh and PC platform CD-ROMs. This is a list of the movies, identified by the caption which describes them in the written text, their file names and the page on which they are discussed. Readers are encouraged to consult the Readers' Guide on page 140 for further information.

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Acknowledgements

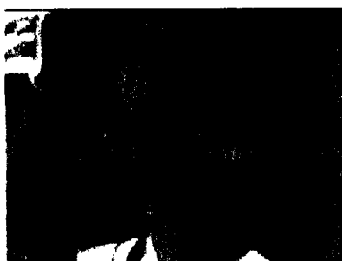
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For Antoine & Rémy

Chapter 1

Overview

Readers' Guide

To acknowledge that each reader comes to this text with different motivations, interests and energy levels, some navigational tips are offered:

Readers interested in a brief overview of the dissertation and its conclusions may find the first and last chapters sufficient. Chapter One briefly outlines the educational dilemma and motivations for this study, the theory base which informs the research, and the research methodology and method used in carrying out the study, including data collection techniques, analysis, interpretation and limitations. All of these concepts, except the limitations, are reintroduced and developed with more context and detail in the subsequent chapters. Chapter Six presents the conclusions, findings and implications of this study as well as recommendations for further research.

Readers who prefer to immerse themselves deeply in the ideas of this dissertation may want to pass over the first chapter altogether, or use it for reference purposes, and begin at the Interlude. Readers interested in trends in modern language education and teacher education are directed to Chapter Two. Those who are intrigued by innovative research methodologies as well as the design and development of digital learning environments will want to read Chapters Three and Four. Readers who want to explore the multi-modal representations of the unique experiences of eight participants are directed to Chapter Five and its accompanying CD-ROM. Critics, friends, family and my examiners will want to read everything.¹

¹ The idea and some wording for this 'Readers' Guide' and the Interlude come from Sandra Gail Kouritzin's (1997) doctoral dissertation, *Cast-away Cultures and Taboo Tongues: Face(t)s of First Language Loss*.

Importance of Topic and Global Implications

This dissertation deals with the intersection of a number of areas in which considerable research is currently taking place in modern language education² (MLED) and in other areas of the humanities and social sciences. These include issues of culture and intercultural understanding, the development of critical multiliteracies, learning in general and specifically the role of technology and new media in learning and in the creation and interpretation of cultures. Though the project is described in local terms, situated within the context of a modern language teacher education course at the University of British Columbia, the dynamic view of language, culture and learning that it presents, as well as the collaborative research methodology used to investigate these areas, have wider implications for teaching, learning and research.

Educational Dilemma

British Columbia modern language curriculum guidelines for grades 5-12 highlight the importance of cultural understanding and positive attitudes for students' success in their language learning endeavors as well as in their ability to assume their roles as international citizens (e.g. Spanish, 1996). The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign³ Languages (ACTFL, 1993, 1996) has also developed new national standards which indicate students should demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices and

² In this dissertation, modern language education generally refers to the teaching of second languages other than English at the secondary level, as well as the preparation of student teachers to teach these languages. Though I often use Spanish as an example, since that is my particular language specialty, the following languages were represented in the study: French, Spanish, Japanese, German, Mandarin, Punjabi, Italian. These languages are listed in order of number of student teachers enrolled, with French being the most commonly chosen as specialization.

³ The term "foreign" has traditionally been used to describe a minority language and culture of study. Though this is still used by many organizations, such as ACTFL, there is a movement to replace it with more inclusive terms which do not emphasize a "strangeness" or "otherness." Therefore, in this dissertation the terms: "modern language," "target language," and "target language culture" will be employed, rather than "foreign language" and "foreign culture," unless the purpose of the term is to highlight the notion of "other" or "strange." For accuracy, the use of "foreign" will be retained in citations and mention of organizations which employ the term.

perspectives and the products and perspectives of the culture, or culture(s)⁴ studied. In order to effectively integrate the notion of culture into their curriculum, modern language teachers are encouraged to look beyond the fields of linguistics and literature to those of anthropology, sociology, psychology and education and to adopt a critical pedagogy of intercultural discourse which speaks to the multiple voices that comprise an individual and her culture (Kramsch & von Hoene, 1995).

Despite encouragement to use emerging technologies to create innovative learning environments that enable students to become ethnographers, rather than “tourists” (Goldman-Segall, 1998b; Fischer, 1996), modern language teachers cite “textbook notes” and “authentic texts” as their top resources for teaching culture (Moore, 1996). However, modern media, with their capabilities to create “media rich texts” complete with sound, images and video, create a new, unexplored predicament for the language teacher and learner in this new role as “ethnographer.” Whereas the anthropologist traditionally started from a context-and-experience-rich environment and imagined a “text,” the language teacher and learner start with a “text” and must imagine a context, drawing from previous experience, knowledge, or stereotypes about the target language culture (Teroaka, 1989).

In modern language teacher education, the aim is to prepare student teachers to be experts in the languages they teach, as well as in creating a rich instructional environment, so they, at the sides of their students, can begin a life-long exploration of the target language culture and the texts it produces. Elliot Eisner (1998) explains that an expert in any field is able to draw from her⁵ experience to see certain qualities that other lay people do not notice. Carmen Luke (2000) argues the digital information age has forced educators to reconsider the qualifications we use to paint our profile of “expert.” The expert is not only able to see, but also to seek the connection among related pieces of information and to

⁴ I have pluralized the word “culture” to problematize the monolithic, singular notion of culture that is commonly-held by teachers, learners, materials developers and policy makers. Distinct varieties of the target language culture, as well as the local culture, are linked to variables of nationality, ethnicity, and other particular circumstances. These particularities are manifested in the different regions in which the language is spoken, as well as in the language of the individuals who speak it.

possess a digital electronic text multiliteracy based on notions of hybridity and intertextuality that transcends genres, media and cultural frames of reference. An effective way, therefore, for students to become experts at seeing the multiple layers of qualities present in an artistic creation, such as an authentic text, is to undergo the process of creating art. In the study presented in this dissertation, these modern language student teachers created art and, in the process, began to develop the technical and intellectual skills to become multiliterate writers and readers of digital texts.

The Media-Based Approach and Project Specifics

Based on communicative language teaching and constructionist⁶ learning models, the researcher⁷ implemented a media-based approach which encouraged pre-service and in-service modern language teachers to use their personal experiences to create and interpret “media-rich texts.” The students, who had little or no experience with digital media, received initial instruction in filming techniques, video capturing, and scanning. Next, working in design teams of 5-6 individuals, each group created a 30-second CineKit™ (Baecker, Rosenthal, Friedlander, Smith, & Cohen, 1996) movie based on the cultural significance of a particular object, or artifact, of their choice such as coffee, cars, flowers, or shoes. These movies, along with other video clips of the participants going through and/or reflecting on the movie-making process, were then posted on-line with a software program called WebConstellations™ (Goldman-Segall, 1997). In this forum, participants were able to

⁵ Throughout this dissertation I, a female, use the feminine subject pronoun to represent a gender neutral individual. No disrespect to males is intended.

⁶ According to Papert (1990, as cited in Goldman-Segall, 1998b), constructionists “understand “constructionism” as including, but going beyond, what Piaget would call “constructivism.” The word with the v expresses the theory that knowledge is built by the learner, not supplied by the teacher. The word with the n expresses the further idea that this happens especially felicitously when the learner is engaged in the construction of something external or at least sharable...a sand castle, a machine, a computer program, a book. This leads [constructionists] to a model of using a cycle of internalization of what is outside, then externalization of what is inside and so on (pp. 159-160).

⁷ The researcher will henceforth be referred to as “I.”

view and comment on each other's creations and reflections, and make connections to their own experiences as well as key concepts presented in the course.

Digital tools

Formerly known as MAD, *CineKit*TM is an interactive system that runs on inexpensive personal computers which allows individuals without specific computer, film, or video backgrounds to create digital video motion pictures and lecture-demonstrations which can be transmitted over the Internet. *CineKit*TM supports the process by enhancing the author's ability to structure and modify a presentation and to visualize the ultimate result. It does this by allowing both top-down design and bottom-up creation with a hierarchical multimedia document representation; by supporting the flexible inclusion and combination of words, images, sounds, and video sequences; by providing a variety of movie representations and editors for these representations; and by providing real-time playback of the best approximation to the ultimate presentation that can be produced at any stage of the design process. *CineKit*TM movies are stored in digital formats that can be transmitted over the Internet and played back under typical World Wide Web browsers (Baecker et al., 1996).

*WebConstellations*TM is a digital annotation and analysis tool created by Ricki Goldman-Segall in her research lab, MERLin (Multimedia Ethnographic Research Laboratory), in the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia and built with Bitmovers Communications, Inc. It is the first server-side, web-based database system designed to enable a community of researchers to catalog, describe, and meaningfully organize multimedia data accessible on the Web. The underlying metaphor for *WebConstellations*TM, like in Goldman-Segall's earlier tools, *Learning Constellations*TM (1989) and *Constellations*TM (1994), is stars and constellations. Researchers in dispersed locations can use this tool to access the same database and collaboratively analyze that set of data. Stars, which are individual pieces of digital data, and constellations, which are

personally meaningful clusters of these stars, can be tagged with keywords. Users can engage in dialog about particular stars and constellations using the annotation discussion system.

Funding and site

An initial pilot study to test this approach was funded by a 1998 University of British Columbia Teaching and Learning Enhancement (TLE)⁸ grant: *Making Movies, Making Theories: Digital Media Tools for Educating Educators to Connect Experiences to Curriculum* (Goldman-Segall & Beers, 1997) and carried out in July/August of 1998 in a modern language teacher education course I designed and taught for this study: *Advanced Studies in Language Education: Integrating Language and Culture with Modern Media (MLED 480)*. The final phase of this research was completed in the same course in May/June of 1999. Both phases of the project were carried out in MERLin and approved by the university ethical review committee.

Participants

The pilot study, in 1998, in which we were an alpha test site⁹ for CineKit™ and WebConstellations™, and the final study, in 1999, in which we were a beta test site for these two media tools, included two separate groups of approximately 30 pre-service and in-service modern language teachers from 8 different language specialties. These students were enrolled in the 3-credit MLED 480 elective for credit towards the completion of their teaching degrees or certificates. The students were aware that their participation in the research study was entirely voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study or remove their data from the common database at any time, without their class standing being adversely affected.¹⁰ They were also given the choice to use their real name or create a

⁸ These grant monies are provided from student fees and are awarded to projects that show promise for improving teaching and learning at the University of British Columbia.

⁹ In alpha or beta test sites, groups of individuals agree to try out software programs that are not ready for release to the general public and provide the developers with useful feedback regarding system bugs, ease of use and suggestions for future versions of the software.

¹⁰ See appendix F for a copy of the participant consent form.

pseudonym. All of the students enrolled willingly agreed to participate and all chose to use their real names. The participants were aware that the data collected was to be used for my doctoral dissertation and might also be used in various conference presentations or publications which described the project and its results.

Theory Base for Research

Critical theory

Academic texts which focus on critical theory and critical pedagogy, usually in relation to the situatedness of humans in their worlds, frequently make a distinction between "Subject" and "object," though they also acknowledge neither are constants. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1993/1970), Freire introduces this notion and presents the term "Subjects," which denotes those who know and act, in contrast to "objects," which are known and acted upon (p. 18). Freire's work, which emerges from his experiences in poverty-stricken areas of Brazil, concentrates on the human elements in the power structures of society, arguing that teachers are the instruments of the oppressors, whose job it is to indoctrinate their students into the oppressive power structures of society by filling their heads with facts and turning them into unquestioning, passive objects.

Pennycook (1990) and Tedick, Walker, Lange, Paige and Jorstad (1993) have applied the Subject / object distinction to language education, arguing that language has historically been viewed as "object," a perspective that has been reflected in the positivist instructionist methods that have been used to teach it. Tedick et al. (1993) argue for a movement toward viewing language as "Subject," stating this view emphasizes the power of language along with its communicative, dynamic, and social nature (p. 71).

Modern language teacher educators, along with their student teachers and their future students, can learn a great deal about themselves and their environment by

acknowledging they are all involved in complicit and dialectical power structures which affect the way in which they view and act in the world. Freire identifies the human elements in the pedagogical ecosystem, the teachers and students, and Pennycook and Tedick et al. expand upon this notion to include one seemingly non-human element, language. I suggest we extend the Subject / object metaphor to include the *other* perceived non-human elements (culture, curriculum, method and texts) as well. In this way, we recognize that all these participants in the ecosystem¹¹ of the modern language classroom, which have traditionally been viewed as objects, have the potential to become Subjects, since they are, at the same time, the products and creators of their social world, engaged in a dynamic dialectical relationship. By assigning the term "Subject" to inanimate objects, I am not trying to suggest they have any consciousness. I am emphasizing the need to look behind the physical objects themselves to recognize the human faces which created them and which interpret them to give them meaning.

Constructionism

Based on the theories of his mentor, Jean Piaget, Seymour Papert developed the theory and methodology of constructionism, which assumes children are more actively engaged when working on a personally meaningful external artifact, whether it be a sandcastle or a computer program, which he calls an "object-to-think-with" (1980). Papert also used this approach with his graduate students studying under him at MIT, including Goldman-Segall, as they developed their own objects-to-think-with to facilitate their theory-making about the ways children think.

¹¹ van Lier (1996) uses a similar metaphor when he describes the ecology of the second language classroom. This is discussed further in Chapter Two.

Configurational validity

While under Papert's mentorship, Goldman-Segall developed her object-to-think-with, Learning Constellations™ 1.0, and her theory, configurational validity. Learning Constellations 1.0 is the first digital media ethnographic analysis tool which supports the analysis of an entire body of research data using ethnographic style video data (Goldman-Segall, 1990). This digital environment allows not only for the media writer's "thick description" (Geertz, 1973) of the event, but also the reader's "thick interpretation" (Goldman-Segall, 1998b).

Configurational validity says that a more robust interpretation of a phenomenon can be achieved when the human participants are given a forum in which to view and discuss each other's representations and interpretations, or readings, of the event. For Goldman-Segall (1998b), this phenomenon to be interpreted is often a socio-cultural subject which serves as a site for investigating the different viewpoints, such as those of the inhabitants of Clayoquot [Klak-wit] Sound (Goldman-Segall, 1998b), one of North America's largest temperate rain forests with intact watersheds. In order to emphasize the human aspects of this socio-cultural phenomenon (Goldman-Segall, 1998b), Goldman-Segall proposes Clayoquot Sound be thought of as a subject-to-think-with, rather than an object-to-think-with.

Subjects-in-interaction

The theory I put forth, Subjects-in-interaction, builds upon Papert's notion of objects-to-think-with in that the authentic media texts can serve as catalysts for exploration and discovery on the part of the student and teacher, and it builds upon Goldman-Segall's notion of subjects-to-think-with in that it highlights the humanistic aspects inherent to the area of study. However, I view Papert and Goldman-Segall's notions through a critical theory lens, in which the object and subject take on a new level of agency. The Subject is,

therefore, promoted to the status of proper noun and assumes the role of actor, rather than companion, as in object-to-think-with, or site, as in subject-to-think-with. Subjects-in-interaction extends Goldman-Segall's theory of configurational validity.

Subjects-in-interaction, as applied to modern language education or, more specifically, the designing and interpreting of authentic media texts from one's own and the target language culture, says that all of the human and seemingly non-human element which contribute to the pedagogical context are active agents in the social construction of the meaning-making event. Subjects-in-interaction is both a theory and a methodology for the writing and reading of authentic media texts which looks at the process of creation and interpretation of the text as this event. In this dynamic meaning-making process, all Subjects, human and non-human, are agents in an ever changing, dialectical inter-action.

Prior Research on This Topic

Cultural studies

The Euro-American conservative concept of culture as an essence to be captured, labeled and consumed is borne out of the Latin root *colere* (cultivate, protect, worship). Within the European intellectual scenes in the 18th century, culture was considered to be a condition of total perfection, attainable through education (Whittaker, 1992). Culture came to be defined by the writings and ideas of a small group of "men" of letters, poets, philosophers, and academics and, though anthropologists have managed to separate culture from civilization, this general notion of culture as a display of accomplishment and perfection still persists today. It is this concept of "C" culture, easily transmitted as facts since it manifests itself in the canonized literature, music, art, and history of the target culture, that modern language teachers are inclined to teach (Weber & Mitchell, 1996).

Anthropologists hold a different view of culture, seeing it as a process and as patterns of beliefs, values and systems of interpretation that guide the actions and interactions of its members (Weber & Mitchell, 1996). One of the most prominent anthropologists, Clifford Geertz (1973), has been instrumental in bringing about a redefining of culture and, along with Max Weber, believes

that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning (p. 5).

More recently, culture is believed to be characterized by the diversity of discourses which exist within a society (Clifford, 1988; Gee, 1992; Kramsch & von Hoene, 1995; Kubota, 1999). Ironically, this recognition of multiple discourses in postmodern and feminist ideology could also bring about a demise of culture as we know it since the very recognition of voice within a society negates the imperialistic notion of culture as an object to be studied. This demise of “culture” as a monolithic entity appears to be happening in TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages), an institution which has produced extensive research in the areas of second language learning and teaching that informs modern language education.

In a recent review of the articles published over the last ten years in the TESOL Quarterly, Atkinson (1999b) notes that, in addition to “discourses,” other terms such as “identity, hybridity, essentialism, power, difference, agency, resistance, and contestation are being used by second language theorists as a way to call into question the traditional monolithic notion of ‘culture’” (p. 626). Atkinson attributes this shift in terminology to a gradual change from “more traditional/received to more postmodernist/critical understandings of culture” (p. 629, note 6). As Whittaker notes, in traditional terms “culture is the very epitome of othering. It depends for its existence on the subjective ordering of a world full of Others (...) the Other is such essences as class, gender, race, ethnicity. The very act of research makes an Other out of someone” (p. 113). Atkinson encourages his colleagues

in TESOL to develop a notion of culture which takes into account “the cultural in the individual and the individual in the cultural” (p. 648) as a way to recognize the diversity of discourses and contexts which exist in one’s own and the target language cultures.

Cultural objectives

Modern Language Education is a subject area with enormous potential for self discovery, though past instructionist approaches, which have focused more on the teaching of *language* at the exclusion of *culture*, have consistently sidelined attempts at this form of exploration. Over the past decade, new research interest in the areas of acculturation, language socialization and the role of identity in language acquisition have highlighted the role culture plays in learning to effectively communicate in another language and influenced the direction of modern language education (Byram, 1989; Duff & Uchida, 1997; Kramsch, 1996; Norton, 2000; Norton Peirce, 1995). Curriculum guidelines for modern language teaching in both the United States and Canada have reflected the overwhelming call from modern language pedagogues in the areas of global (Strasheim, 1981), multicultural (Carey, 1997; Heffernan, 1996; Roblyer, Dozier-Henry & Burnette, 1996), and critical (Hellebrandt, 1996; Peck, 1992; Pennycook, 1990, 1999, 2000; Reagan & Osborn, 1998) education to lead their students on a systematic and in-depth study of culture in their language classes. By doing so, students are expected to achieve a range of objectives, including cultural sensitivity, multicultural literacy, a sense of international citizenship, an understanding of self and other and higher motivation in their language learning endeavors.

Culture teaching

Despite the ambiguous and contradicting definitions of culture, as well as differing objectives on how to “teach culture,” the last thirty years of literature on culture teaching have left teachers with no shortage of ideas on how to approach it. Modern language

pedagogues have published a wide variety of literature, providing inventories of topics and themes for cultural instruction (Seelye, 1974, 1985, 1993), lists of culturally-sensitive personality traits desired for our students (Byram & Morgan, 1994), suggestions on the use of authentic materials (Galloway, 1992; Kramsch, 1989; Kramsch, 1993a; Kramsch, 1993b; Nostrand, 1989), guidelines for the process of preparing and guiding the students through the process of learning culture (Kramsch, 1993a; Mantle-Bromley, 1992), or statements of recommended goals for cultural instruction (ACTFL, 1993, 1996; Strasheim, 1981), to name but a few.

Strasheim (1981) reports that twenty years ago, two studies (Moskowitz, 1976; Nerenz, 1979) indicated that teachers spent approximately 10% of their instructional time on culture. Since that time, no conclusive studies had been carried out until Moore (1996) surveyed more than two hundred secondary school modern language teachers in upstate New York to determine how high-school teachers teach culture, how frequently they teach culture, which teaching techniques they judge to be more appropriate for achieving the cultural goals stated in school syllabi, and what constraints, if any, they experienced in their efforts to teach culture.

Though the individual teachers' personal objectives for teaching culture are not explicitly outlined, Moore gives a general inventory of techniques used and makes some judgements as to their quality and effectiveness based on whether or not they include the perspectives of the members of the target language society. In her study, Moore (1996) found that training in teaching culture corresponded to both a higher frequency and better quality of culture teaching, whereas teaching experience was related only to the frequency of teaching culture and academic qualifications only to the selection of techniques. The top five techniques teachers reported for teaching culture, which demonstrate these teachers' implicit assumptions of culture as object, were: students read notes in the textbooks (54%), students got information from authentic material (48%), lectures were used to present information (46%), students were assigned projects on specific topics (41%), students were

exposed to the food of the culture, to songs, dances, and celebrations (41%). Teachers listed constraints to teaching culture to be shortage of time, materials and training.

Research Methodology

Qualitative research

Subjects-in-interaction as a theory and methodology for developing multiliterate designers and interpreters of digital texts is informed by the general assumptions that guide qualitative researchers in their inquiry. Qualitative researchers believe there is no such ideal as a single objective reality. Instead, multiple realities of any given phenomenon are socially constructed through individual and collective interpretations of the situation (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993, p. 14). Each individual constructs her own reading of the event as directed by her sense of self in relation to the other—the self being the sum total of the life experiences that have informed the paradigm in which she operates and the other being the entity which either confirms or contradicts this paradigm. The qualitative researcher's aim is to understand the event from the perspective of the participants, to uncover the qualities that contribute to re-constructing its meaning and significance.

Ethnographic studies

Ethnographic studies are prototypical examples of qualitative research in that the ethnographer integrates herself into a localized group of individuals, often taking on a participatory role in their activities. The ethnographer collects data in the form of field note observations, artifacts, interviews, conversations, and images and compiles them into a descriptive and interpretive account. She recognizes she is an active element in the dynamic and ever evolving cultural phenomenon of inquiry who changes the social context. She also

acknowledges the subjective lens through which she views the events will influence her findings and interpretations. Critical ethnographic approaches to research in second language learning and teaching (see Atkinson & Ramanathan, 1995; Canagarajah, 1993; Duff, 1995; Holliday, 1996; Ramanathan & Atkinson, 1999) have enabled researchers to treat formal learning and teaching contexts as cultural constructs and thereby situate them within the larger social realities in which they operate.

Early positivistic approaches to ethnographic research, however, tried to eliminate the subjective self from its equation, thinking that objectivity makes it possible to locate and isolate the reality of the world out there. Subjectivity was seen to weaken the validity of the findings, in that they might say more about the beliefs of the person carrying out the study than about the truth itself (Eisner, 1998). We are the sum total of our life experiences. Our wisdom is created by our contact with nature, its inhabitants and their artifacts. Qualitative inquiry acknowledges that the self is the instrument through which we experience the world around us. As such, this inquiry "is not only directed towards those aspects of the world "out there," it is also directed to objects and events that we are able to create" (Eisner, 1998, p. 21).

Digital video ethnography

Digital video ethnography, a term coined by Goldman-Segall (1990, 1995a, 1996b, 1998b), is a qualitative research methodology which centers its processes of interpretation on those very objects, and events we are able to create. It is a testimonial to Goldman-Segall's struggle with the dilemma between subjectivity and validity in the human sciences. It reconceptualizes and reinvents traditions of qualitative research within a post-modern framework, one in which authorship and identity are transitive in relation to the context of the event. Goldman-Segall's theories on what constitutes robust research in a socio-cultural site are inspired by the work of scholars from the areas of visual and cultural anthropology

(see Clifford & Marcus, 1986; Geertz, 1973; Mead, 1975), critical ethnography (see Lather, 1991; Tyler, 1986), semiotics (see Barthes, 1977), and filmmaking (see Davenport, Evans & Halliday, 1993; Leacock, 1973, 1986) and are embodied in her digital ethnographic methods and data analysis tools (1990, 1997, 1998b).

Digital video ethnographic tools and method

In her research method, Goldman-Segall encourages the participants in the study to take on new roles as digital ethnographers, thereby becoming both the researchers and researched, while investigating their chosen subject of inquiry. Together, they create a robust collective database of qualitative digital data, open to interpretation and re-interpretation by its many users. These participants use digital ethnographic tools, such as video camcorders, movie making software and Goldman-Segall's digital video ethnographic analysis tools to build these robust collective data bases, or, as she also terms them, "platforms for multi-loguing" (1995a).

Goldman-Segall's digital video ethnographic tools exploit digital video's descriptive capacities and on-line digital networks' potential for perspective sharing and trading. Video is able to provide the "thick description" Geertz (1973) calls for in ethnographic fieldwork because it captures the subject of interest, along with her interactions with the environment, tools and the others (1998b). In its digital format, the video can be scrutinized, analyzed, and catalogued down to its most minute detail (Goldman-Segall, 1989). With Goldman-Segall's data analysis tools, the digital video ethnographer can further contextualize her video with text, documents, fieldnotes, and other data in order to gain insights into what to shoot and to provide other users with layer upon layer of interpretation and significance (Goldman-Segall, 1996). As the data base grows, the digital video ethnographer can sort, annotate, and group this data into meaningful configurations based on her own interpretations while other users can simultaneously do the same. With

Goldman-Segall's latest on-line tools, WebConstellations™ and Orion™, these users need not operate within local networks, they may work from removed sites, assuming the role of viewer or active participant, depending on the access they desire or are granted.

Method for Research Site Development

Research site/system

Like the two versions before it, the final research site for this project can, in the broadest of terms, be called a university course. Indeed, it had all the required specs: it was listed in the UBC course schedule as MLED 480A: *Advanced Studies in Language Education: Integrating Language and Culture with Modern Media*, it had an enrollment code (51162), a section number (921), and met regularly (Mondays and Wednesdays, 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM) for a period of 6 weeks, (May 17 to June 21) in the summer session. There was one teacher and enough students enrolled to make it economically viable, and even profitable, for the university (29). Students who successfully completed this course received 3 credits toward graduation and a mark on their transcripts.

Yet this course was unique in that students configured themselves in unusual groupings, assumed uncommon roles, and used a variety of new digital learning tools (WebConstellations™, CineKit™, Photoshop™, QuickTime™, FusionRecorder™), some never before released to the public, to carry out innovative projects. A better descriptor for this site, therefore, may be "digital learning environment," since this conjures up a mental image of a stimulating place where students come to engage with digital technologies to carry out meaningful tasks and learn. But this term is unsatisfactory, too. It does not allow me to tell the whole story of how this place came to be; how it started from an idea, gained momentum from student and administrative support, and evolved and transformed itself over a three year period. What emerged was not a place that I, the teacher, created and to

which they, the students, came; but a place where teacher, students and tools converged to create an ever-evolving culture of learning.

As we venture into more collaborative, interdisciplinary projects which incorporate multifaceted tools, and multi-skilled individuals, it is easy to see that previous individualistic models of teaching, based on the ideal of one teacher before a group of students, do not lend themselves to innovative risk-taking in education. It is therefore helpful to turn to established development models which have proven to be efficient and productive in other cultures outside of academia. If we imagine a digital learning environment to be a smooth running *system*, rather than a course taught in a school with its traditional roles and expectations, we can free ourselves to step outside of our firmly entrenched schemas we use to define the functions of each component. We can look to the model of systems design teams in the fields of “Human Factors” and “Human-Computer Interaction” to find such an organizational framework.

Human-computer interaction

Human-computer interaction (HCI) is a field of research which converges experts from a variety of disciplines, including computer science, graphic design, kinesiology, applied linguistics, and experimental psychology. Once gathered on a common project, each contributes her individual expertise toward developing a computer system which successfully interfaces with its users.

The terminology used to describe the various roles people play in a system design team can easily be adapted to academia. This is most appropriate in academic courses and programs which integrate technology, since simultaneous and cyclical development of curricular and technical aspects closely emulates the “iterative” and “integrated” systems design process popular in industry for creating digital tools. A computer “system” is an architecture that is designed to help users perform their tasks. The “systems design team,”

or “development team,” refers to those actively involved in the systems development project and normally excludes contributions made by those in management and support roles (Grudin, 1991/1995, p. 294). The term “user” refers to the people directly engaged with the system and generally is synonymous with “end user,” though as Grudin explains: “[o]f course, developers are also users of the tools and the development system” (1991/1995, p. 294).

In Chapter Four, I use the general term “system” to represent my research site, MLED 480A, and refer to the three evolving versions of this course as Subjects-in-interaction (SII) version 1.0 (1997), SII version 2.0 (1998) and SII version 3.0 (1999). Each version represents the iterations made to the course and corresponds to each time it was taught during three consecutive summer sessions at the University of British Columbia.

Due to my key role in the conception, design and installation of the system, I appropriated the title of “principal developer.” Other members of the systems design team included advisors and colleagues in MLED, MERLin, Bitmovers Communications Inc. and the University of Toronto, as well as the student teachers themselves. Within the general system, two digital tools, WebConstellations™ and CineKit™, were being developed simultaneously. Ricki Goldman-Segall at the University of British Columbia led the development team for WebConstellations™ and Ron Baecker at the University of Toronto led the development team for CineKit™. Given the integral part these two tools played in the smooth running of the overall SII system, they can be considered subsystems in this context, though they are both independent tools for a range of purposes on their own. The term user, though problematic due to the passive role it connotes, refers to the pre-service and in-service teachers enrolled in SII v. 3.0. The user “interface” of a computer system is the part that handles the output to the display and the input from the person using the program (Myers, 1995, p. 323). Since we have established the user to be the student, we can then determine the interface, in the general context of SII v. 3.0, refers to the medium of

communication the user interacts with, whether it be technology, text, discussion or lecture.

Data Collection, Analysis and Interpretation

Research questions

The aim of this doctoral dissertation is to explore the interactions between the various human and seemingly non-human Subjects involved in this study. It is also to see how the use of digital media to create texts within a constructionist learning model might inform these pre-service and in-service teachers' notion of culture and its role in their future teaching. The specific research questions guiding the analysis are:

- 1) What is the nature of the human and seemingly non-human interactions that occur when modern language student teachers are:
 - (a) users of a system designed to promote multiliteracies and
 - (b) digital video ethnographers of their own learning processes?
- 2) How might the use of digital media to create texts within this constructionist learning model inform these student teachers' notions of culture, or Subjects-in-interaction? How might this affect their future teaching?

Working within a Piagetian / hermeneutic framework, this study aims to identify and examine moments of equilibrium and disequilibrium these learners pass through as they assimilate and accommodate evolving concepts of culture, method and text in modern language education.

Data collection

Data collection procedures during the installation phase of SII v. 3.0 incorporated a wide spectrum of digital and traditional media. Though they may all be considered

“constructions” of one type or another, for organizational purposes I subdivided the types of data collected during SII v. 3.0 into the following categories: “printed data,” “constructions,” “digital data,” “evaluative data” and “observational data.”

The printed data included fairly traditional forms of content delivery and knowledge representation. These were embodied in the course syllabus, course readings, students’ reflective syntheses of the readings and their “chunking” of key and provocative ideas from the readings. Also collected were students’ answers to an initial questionnaire which inquired into their professional background, familiarity with teaching culture and using technology.

Constructions included the three dimensional identity objects and 30-second digital movies the student teachers created and shared in class. Each of the identity objects was videotaped for future analysis and some were also accompanied by student explanations of their process and product. Several stills of these objects were also posted on WebConstellations™ to invite further written comments. The 30-second movies were saved in their original CineKit™ format, which explicitly shows the multiple layers of text, sound, and image incorporated into each film, as well as an exported Quicktime™ version in which the work was flattened into one seamless entity. A smaller Quicktime™ version of each movie was also posted on WebConstellations™ to invite comment and criterion peer evaluation.

Digital data included the WebConstellations™ database, approximately 8 hours of filmed and transcribed focus group sessions, and approximately 20 hours of filmed ethnographic observations of the movie making process, student reflections, and classroom interactions. The WebConstellations™ database included still images and video chunks from SII versions 2.0 and 3.0, as well as 150 pages of written comments they elicited from SII v. 3.0 users. Data from SII v. 2.0 included the 5 digital movies created by design teams, still images of various identity objects, as well as several video chunks of various students explaining their identity objects. Data from SII v. 3.0 included still images of various

identity objects, the five finished digital movies, and video chunks excerpted from focus group discussions and the movie making process.

In the focus groups, students discussed sets of pre-determined questions designed to elicit reflection on past teaching practice in light of current ideas presented in the course through readings, discussion and hands-on digital activities. On five separate class meetings, and on a rotating basis, one individual from each design team met in a focus group in lieu of the day's digital activities. There were several motivations for this arrangement. It gave students an opportunity to meet with members from other design teams to pool experiences and strategies and reflect on their learning; it freed up limited digital resources for the remaining workers; and it provided the researchers with documented insights into the evolving thinking processes of the project participants. I was not present at these focus group meetings, though I later watched the videotapes and periodically posted on WebConstellations™ what I considered to be intriguing and representative video chunks from their discussions to invite further comment and reflection.

Evaluative data reported on the process and product of developer, student, peer and teacher. The students and teacher provided a running log of user feedback to CineKit™ and WebConstellations™ developers to evaluate the digital tool performance. The students assessed their creative processes and products through criterion-based self and peer evaluations of the movies and their group processes. I assessed the students' academic performance through criterion and comment-based procedures and submitted a final mark for each student to the university. The students completed the standard university criterion and comment-based teacher evaluation forms for the teacher and course.

Data analysis and interpretation

In this investigative learning environment, participants were provided with different venues, such as focus groups, class interactions and on-line forums, in which to openly

reflect on their learning processes as they grappled with evolving notions of culture, method and text in modern language education. Many of these reflections were recorded on film, others on paper, and others in an on-line data base. Data analysis of the learning processes of eight student teachers, supported by on-line excerpts of their movies and reflective process, was carried out within a Piagetian / hermeneutic framework described in Chapter Five, which examined moments of equilibrium and disequilibrium these learners passed through as they assimilated, accommodated or rejected these different concepts of culture, method and text in modern language education.

I chose these eight student teachers to represent the more than ninety that participated in this study over a three-year period for two reasons. First, all were participants in version 3.0 of the study, which was the most complex and smooth running of the three systems due to changes based on lessons learned during the first two versions. Version 3.0 also incorporated the most robust data collection techniques with the addition of focus group forums and WebConstellations™. This additional data allowed me to form more complete profiles on their thinking processes.

Second, each of these eight modern language student teachers chose to engage with one particular issue, for example: “self and other” (Paula), “tourist versus explorer” (Kevin), “filming perspectives” (Murray) or “connection and interaction” (Lesley). Each then continued to approach his or her self-selected topic from many different angles, repeatedly articulating his or her thinking processes in various forums and media for reflection and communication, such as in the focus group discussions, written assignments and WebConstellations™ comments. The fact that each of these individuals connected with one topic to such an extent was a surprising result of this study. I did not encourage the students to choose one idea and follow it through, this was a spontaneous personal decision on the part of the individuals.

It should be noted that these eight student teachers were not chosen based on ethnicity, language specialization nor academic performance, but rather on their level of

focus on their chosen theme and their capacity and willingness to provide a window into their thinking processes through clear and consistent articulation of their ideas.

Through their stories we can begin to piece together the individual qualities of the text that is this project. Their interactions were many, their interpretations varied, but they all contributed to the creation and understanding of what this project was and what lessons it provided. The individuals whose stories were explored are introduced in the following section:

Student profiles

Anne is a German language specialist who, despite her multicultural multilingual background, initially questioned whether she was qualified to teach issues of culture in her language classes. As a result of actively participating in the reflective forums and constructionist projects in this study, however, Anne's broad notions of culture, teaching and learning evolved. Whereas she initially prized external, product-based, representations of knowledge and culture, she eventually found the internal, process-based manifestations to be more meaningful and empowering.

Layla is a Spanish language specialist, considered a cultural expert by her classmates due to her undergraduate degree in anthropology and her bilingual, bicultural upbringing. Layla, however, often doubted her ability to guide her language students in cultural exploration. Like many of her classmates, Layla found it difficult to find time for cultural exploration in a curriculum she perceived to be driven by the grammatical objectives of the prescribed textbook. Layla's quandary can be attributed to the competing concepts she held of culture in each of her fields of study. In anthropology she studied the process, in modern languages she studied the product. Layla used this course as a means to explore, reassess and reconcile these conflicting concepts.

Paula is a French and Spanish specialist who wondered how she could encourage her students to construct understandings of the target language culture that went beyond the stereotypes presented in the media. She grappled with one incident that occurred on her practicum in which the first image her students were able to call up of the Spanish speaking culture(s) were stereotypical caricatures diffused on television. Paula experienced a cultural revelation when she began to examine the notion of “self and other” and the implications it had for her teaching practice.

Kevin is a French language specialist who spoke for many of his classmates when he admitted in frank and honest terms that his only source of culture teaching had come from the “culture corners”¹² in the textbook. Kevin was disturbed by the lack of critical cultural reflection he had promoted in his students and himself and pursued this dilemma throughout the course. He experienced a cultural revelation of his own when he considered the distinction between a cultural tourist and a cultural explorer in one of the readings. He then applied this notion to all aspects of his learning and teaching and resolved to continue with this new perspective in his future practice.

Klara is a French and Spanish language specialist who identified with the role of ethnographer—one who spends her life moving between cultures. Early in the study, Klara held a static, nationalistic notion of culture and believed that a person had a limited capacity for cultures, like rooms in a hotel. She feared that the more cultures she learned, the less she belonged to any of them. During the movie making process, however, Klara honed her technical and intellectual ethnographic skills. She began to look for and identify the many cultural patterns and symbols in her own and her classmate’s texts and came to appreciate the dynamic, interactive forces of culture(s).

Murray is a French language specialist who used the course to develop his filming techniques. Originally timid in his shooting, he became more bold and critical as he

¹² “Culture corners” are brief “snapshots” of cultural themes, such as parades and monuments which usually present a static, non-controversial vision of culture. They generally consist of a photograph accompanied by a short written text and are presented in the corner of the textbook page, isolated from the rest of the

appropriated this skill. Nonetheless, he devalued the technical skills he was learning in an secondary-school educational environment he perceived to be regulated by external standardized assessment practices and the whims of angry parents. In his analysis of his classmates' movies, however, it was apparent that the skills he had honed as a videographer contributed to his keen and insightful interpretations of his classmates' products. He readily looked for and identified the individual qualities of the texts, and made simultaneous technical and intellectual critiques on how their interactions contributed to his enjoyment of the viewing event.

Jessica is a French and Spanish specialist who began the course from an anti-technology perspective with strong reservations about her abilities to complete the constructionist projects in the course. With the enjoyment of making her first project, the three-dimensional identity object, and the success she experienced while quickly appropriating the technical skills to edit her group's movie, Jessica became highly motivated in her learning. A competent and natural teacher in her own right, Jessica was soon designated leader by her design team. Reluctant to jeopardize her status as equal at first, Jessica eventually lead the team to work within the physical and human constraints to produce a product of which they were proud. She did this by delegating and teaching when possible, taking control when needed, and showing empathy and encouragement in their efforts and frustrations.

Lesley is a Spanish and French language specialist who actively connected her personal experiences to the perspectives of those with whom she interacted, whether they were embodied in text, tool, or person. Enthusiastic about the prospect of learning new methods for exploring culture with digital media, Lesley was also apprehensive about how they may affect the face to face contact she so enjoyed. In the process of investigating strategies for addressing controversial topics in the classroom, Lesley exploited all media available to advance her thinking. Ultimately, Lesley overcame her trepidation regarding

this digital medium and appropriated WebConstellations™ as a meaningful social event. She accessed this tool from home and watched the movies with family and friends. In her comments, she continued to make personally meaningful connections between her intertextual and interpersonal experiences in response to the posted comments and digital media texts, proving that in Lesley's world there were no objects, only Subjects-in-interaction.

Limitations

This dissertation aims to show examples in which the theory and methodology of Subjects-in-interaction in the context of a digital video ethnographic study informs teacher education practice. This dissertation explores the human and non-human interactions that occurred when modern language student teachers were at the same time users of a system designed to promote these multiliteracies as designers and interpreters of digital texts and digital video ethnographers of their own learning processes.

This study does not aim to make claims that this theory or methodology will lead to better second language acquisition, nor that these teachers who used this system were better prepared to teach language than others who had not. It does aim to investigate whether users of this system found it to be engaging, enlightening, and empowering in terms of their own practice. However, research which notes the powerful role motivation (Tremblay & Gardner, 1995; Gardner & Lambert, 1972) plays in language learning indicate that this study may have implications for better practice.

Though data was collected over a three-year period, the data analysis was limited to the data collected from the final installation phase of SII v. 3.0, which occurred in the third year. The first two years of data served to inform the iterative and integrated design process of the system and were therefore reflected in the final product. Lessons learned from versions 1.0 and 2.0 also led to more robust data collection techniques in version 3.0, which

allowed for a “thick description” (Geertz, 1973) and “thick interpretation” (Goldman-Segall, 1998) of the event.

The aim of this dissertation is to study a local phenomenon as it occurred within the SII v. 3.0 environment. Due to the nature of the intervention I performed, the claims I will be making about the process will not necessarily be applicable to other modern language teacher education courses. By some standards of ethnographic educational research, the data I have collected might be perceived as limited since I chose to document and film only select and partial scenes, at times excluding the surrounding context in order to focus on the specific as I saw fit. At other times I relinquished the power of the camera to the participants so they could capture the scenes from their perspectives. Hence, I contend this was not an anthropological study, though it was anthropologically inspired and informed. The criteria I used to collect my digital video data was based on an informed eye. It was an eye that had been immersed within this SII system for three years and had learned to look for and notice the qualities which comprised the creation process within SII version 3.0. I have attempted to write these qualities into this text, into this dissertation, for you to interpret.

Interlude

Kiss me, I'm Irish. My mother taught my three older siblings and me to wear this pin with pride. St. Patrick's Day was the day we wore green knee-highs with our Catholic school uniform to confirm what she had been promising us all our lives—that we belonged to a distant clan and we were connected to an exotic people that lived beyond the sameness that was our suburban culture. I was the Irish prototype; my freckles proved it, as did the red streaks that the hot California sun would pick up in my otherwise jet-black hair. I even had an Irish first name. Never mind that my last name was Dutch, and my ancestors came from a number of places besides Ireland, including Luxembourg, Germany, Scotland, and Austria. The magical world of my Irish ancestors was blanketed by verdant fields, dense with lucky four leaf clovers. It was inhabited by green leprechauns and elders whose eyes twinkled with stories to tell those children who were ready to crawl into their stout laps and listen. Alas, it was disappointing to learn that my imagined "cultural heritage," as it were, was a sham. Nonetheless, I am grateful to my mother for having instilled in me a sense of simultaneous wonderment and connection with regard to different cultures.

What I didn't realize at the time was that I was, in fact, member of a mysterious and emerging culture, which my oldest brother, David, later coined "Blue Sky Tribe" (Beers, 1996). This "tribe," sons and daughters of aerospace engineers and university researchers, grew up during the cold war in sunny middle class suburbs which had been financed by massive government spending. Though I was surrounded by technology, I was rarely encouraged to interact with it. For me, technology had always been part of a masculine culture, housed in the sprawling compounds of my father's place of work, into which I was never allowed due to security restrictions, and manifested in the unfathomable instruments of my father's workshop, into which I rarely ventured. Ambivalent to this culture, I sought out those that appealed to me.

As a child en route to my tennis match, one of the many rituals shared by other members of my tribe, I paused on my bicycle under the freeway overpass one morning to watch the construction of a new building. Topped with a multicolored logo of a half-eaten apple, the building was a playful triangle, reminiscent of those we pushed through the appropriate slot on the Playskool™ bench when developing our earliest of cognition processes. How intriguing this sight was, not even half a mile from home, a new spirit in what was later to become Silicon Valley.

On Christmas morning, now a senior in high school, I stripped away the colorful wrapping paper to reveal my gift, a Smith Corona™ self correcting electric typewriter. Having witnessed each of my three older siblings unwrap a similar token when at the same stage in their development, I understood this tool to be the key to my next culture—academia. My studies have taken me to distant places, beyond the suburbia I knew, beyond what had come to be the first of many cultures into which I would seek entry. Surely other adolescents, in the same transition to adulthood, were unwrapping primitive computers on that very morning, jumpstarting their immersion into the new culture that would shape our lives forever. The computer culture that was forming in the town I was leaving behind was not to beckon me until more than a decade later.

I have always been intrigued by the different customs and ways of speaking of other cultures. For years I dedicated myself to decoding their languages and rites, enjoying the increased acceptance that I gained through my efforts. I have learned two languages, Spanish and French, in addition to my mother tongue, English. I learned the first in a relatively formal context as an adolescent and the second in an informal, naturalistic context as an adult. In both processes, my periods of success and failure in relation to native speakers have led me to experience moments of self-doubt and confidence, humiliation and euphoria. My native tongue and visible ethnicity have positioned me variously, as the object of resentment, indifference or admiration.

I am, therefore, keenly aware that the second language acquisition process is a complex one in which culture(s)¹³ play a central role. In the words of Bialystok and Hakuta (1994), "mostly we learn second languages to gain access, through verbal interaction, to cultural dealings with people who lay claim to that language" (p. 161). The satisfaction I have felt from learning a new language and my excitement in using it to engage with members of the target language culture have made me want to encourage others to interact with them and discover their secrets which are not so deeply hidden. I believe that technology, or digital media, is a highly effective tool for aiding the learner in this process of discovery. Yet ironically technology is a culture unto itself, not without its own rites of passage and codes which must be deciphered. When first interacting with this technology and the culture and language which surround it, I was forced to overcome the same issues, such as language, access, gender and ability, that often prevent educators from using this medium to its potential.

With this new culture comes a new language which is acquired through experience and repeated exposure to the rituals. Originally frustrated by the strangeness of the language spoken in the computer environment, I noticed that the process involved in acquiring this new dialect of English was much like the acquisition of other languages I had tackled. In order to acquire this language, the learner must have repeated exposure to the vocabulary through readings, conversations and practice. Impatience that I felt at not being able to fully absorb the gist of conversations being carried out in this other language eventually began to subside when my personal computer vocabulary expanded. It is inappropriate to assume that the language of a culture which has developed over years or even generations can be acquired in the time span of weeks. The fact that language learning is a long process

¹³ As noted in Chapter One, I have pluralized the word "culture" to problematize the monolithic, singular notion of culture that is commonly-held by teachers, learners, materials developers and policy makers. Distinct varieties of the target language culture, as well as the local culture, are linked to variables of nationality, ethnicity, and other particular circumstances. These particularities are manifested in the different regions in which the language is spoken, as well as in the language of the individuals who speak it.

which requires a great deal of individual commitment is often overlooked by educators and administrators.

Another seeming barrier to the acculturation into this computer culture was that of gender. It has been widely expressed that females do not benefit from the advantages offered by technology and are less confident in their use of computers, due to the traditionally masculine image of computers presented in mass media (Colley, Gale, & Harris, 1994). This is affirmed by movements in education (see Bryson & de Castell, 1998; Chan, Stafford, Klawe & Chen, 2000) and industry (e.g. www.wiredwoman.com) to encourage females to pursue careers in technology. Having understood the advantages that technology offers in helping to bridge the cultural gap between people from different languages and cultures, I have had to confront and overcome my computer anxiety that was inhibiting my growth in this domain. According to Charlton and Birkett (1995) in their article on computer apathy and anxiety, computer anxiety is associated with a lack of computing experience and females are likely to be at an "experiential disadvantage" which stems from a relative lack of parental and peer encouragement. Given that a large proportion of language teachers are women, this issue is one that needs to be addressed in teacher education programs and in-service courses in order to encourage the use of technology in the classroom.

As a modern language teacher and teacher educator, I saw that my challenge was to foster a learning environment to accommodate the various learning styles of my students, provide them with quality language input from a variety of authentic sources, and encourage them to actively participate in the activities I had organized. Over time I have realized that one cannot develop communicative and cultural competence in a target language by merely learning its grammatical rules and vocabulary.

As Madeleine Grumet (1988) so eloquently states: "Decentered, lost in thought, locked into the courtesies and protocols of our very formal operations, we forget that the symbolic systems of language, number, art, and culture are part of our lived worlds" (p. 131).

Chapter 2

Modern Language Culture Teaching In/Con Struction:¹⁴

Subjectifying the Objectified

Ideas on Integrating Language and Culture

A good teacher makes an art form out of something that is already an art form. She builds on what exists for her, through her eyes, and presents it to us as a precious gift—something to learn about, to turn over in our minds, and to reshape for new reconstructions (Goldman-Segall, 1998b, p. 215).

Most aspiring teachers are fortunate in that they have at one time fallen under the spell of a talented teacher's poetic ways and received the gift Goldman-Segall describes above. What these individuals may not have recognized at the time, however, is that they were able to take this gift and create their own unique and personal interpretation of this knowledge by drawing from their inner wisdom and resources. Indeed, the role of a good teacher is not only to transmit information, but to involve herself and her students in a process of self discovery in relation to the subject matter at hand.

Modern Language Education is a subject area with enormous potential for self discovery, though past instructionist approaches, which have focused more on the teaching of "language"¹⁵ at the exclusion of "culture,"¹⁶ have often sidelined attempts at this form of exploration. Over the past decade, new research interest in the areas of acculturation, language socialization and the role of identity in language acquisition have highlighted the

¹⁴ This word-play is to draw attention to the transition from instructionist, or traditional, teaching approaches and constructionist, or non-traditional, ones. The shift is not an easy, or clear one to make, as demonstrated in the phrase: "In construction."

¹⁵ In this context, "language" is understood to be the building blocks, e.g. syntax, grammar and lexicon.

¹⁶ In this context, "culture" can take two meanings. The first is a traditional product-based interpretation which views culture in static, essentialistic terms. The second is a process-based interpretation which views

role culture plays in learning to effectively communicate in another language and this has influenced the focus of modern language education (Byram, 1989; Duff & Uchida, 1997; Kramsch, Cain & Murphy-Lejeune, 1996; Norton, 2000; Norton Peirce, 1995). Curriculum guidelines for modern language teaching in the United States, Australia and Canada have reflected the overwhelming call from modern language pedagogues in the areas of global (Strasheim, 1981), multicultural (Carey, 1997; Heffernan, 1996; Roblyer, Dozier-Henry, & Burnette, 1996), and critical (Hellebrandt, 1996; Peck, 1992; Pennycook, 1990, 1999, 2001; Reagan & Osborn, 1998) education to lead their students on a systematic and in-depth study of culture in their language classes. By doing so, students are expected to achieve a range of objectives, including cultural sensitivity, multicultural literacies, a sense of international citizenship, an understanding of self and other and higher motivation in their language learning endeavors.

Indisputably, these are worthy goals that, if met, will prepare the students to become capable, concerned and compassionate members of our global society. It is easy to visualize the fruits that we, as modern language educators, would like our teaching to bear, but it is more difficult to envision the approach that will plant and nurture the seeds to maturity. If students are to “learn” these desired skills and traits, what are we, as teachers, going to “teach?” The problem lies in our thinking that the student’s task is to learn and the teacher’s task is to teach, especially in matters of culture(s). Culture is an abstract notion, subject to differing interpretations according to the field of study. In the literature, hundreds of definitions have been suggested, some of which include: Culture as a process, as high art, as discourse or food, facts, fairs and folklore. It is intimidating and frustrating to new and experienced teachers alike to attempt to teach what no one person can ever fully understand.

culture as dynamic and constantly changing. This postmodern view of culture entertains notions of hybridity, difference, agency and intertextuality.

Teaching culture or teaching meaning?

In a breakfast meeting with Claire Kramsch at the 2000 AAAL¹⁷ conference, I confided in her my dissatisfaction with the term “to teach culture” and asked if we could imagine an alternative. Co-author of the convincing article entitled, “Why should language teachers teach culture?” (Kramsch et al., 1996), Kramsch tugged at her croissant, sipped her coffee, then leaned forward on her elbows and said, “It is true we don’t teach culture, what we teach is meaning.” I felt relief at hearing Kramsch admit the impossibility of it, but was not yet satisfied with this definition of the task. After all, the true essence of meaning is just as elusive as that of culture.

As I reflected on my past teaching, the voices of EFL¹⁸ students came back to me as they decoded the target language texts they were reading. “What does...*mean*?” The student’s insistent inquiry was often reduced to a more urgent, albeit grammatically incorrect, “What *means*...?” I was transported back to my first ACTFL¹⁹ conference in 1988 in Monterey, California, where I was excited to be surrounded by thousands of language teachers, whom I considered masters in the profession where I was only an apprentice. I attended a session where two teachers from Illinois were selling signs they wore around their necks as they taught. The French version read, “Je ne suis pas un dictionnaire!” (I am not a dictionary) and the Spanish one, “¡No soy un diccionario!” The other session attendants nodded their heads in conspiring unison—they wanted these signs. I was puzzled and wondered to myself if this could be the level of meaning we, as language teachers, were destined to teach.

To most language students, meaning lies within the signifiers, the lexical representations of the signified. They want a quick and easy translation from the target

¹⁷ American Association of Applied Linguistics

¹⁸ My experience teaching Spanish, English and French has generally been in a “foreign” (e.g. English as a Foreign Language—EFL), now referred to as “modern” language education (MLED), rather than “second” (e.g. English as a Second Language—ESL) language context. In the FL, or MLED context, relatively homogeneous groups of students receive the bulk of their contact with the target language and its culture in the classroom environment. In the L2 context, the assumption, though often erroneous because they tend to stay within their language groups outside of class time, is that diverse groups of students have extended contact with the target language and culture outside of the classroom.

language into their native tongue so, they believe, they will be able to understand the true sense of the target language text. The English question is absolute and promises mastery: “What does...*mean*?” English grammar presents the possibility as an optimistic given, a promise of mastery, a problem solved, devoid of ambiguity. In contrast, the French and Spanish questions, “Que...*veut* dire?” (What does ... *want* to say?) and “Qué *quiere* decir...?” (What does ... *want* to say?), do not give such a resolute promise. By employing the verbs “vouloir” and “querer,” which roughly translate into the English verb “to want,” these languages communicate a more accurate representation of meaning making. The English verb to want, coupled with the verb “to say,” does not convey a given outcome, it shows a process, an ongoing attempt to convey meaning.

Teaching Subjects-in-interaction²⁰

To believe that a teacher can teach meaning is overly optimistic. No signifier is ever perfect, it never fully connotes the meaning of the signified; it never captures the complex, multilayered interpretation that one, much less fifty, native speakers may give to it at any given point in history.

The French and Spanish questions demonstrate that meaning making between signifiers, the signified, authors and readers is a constant, imperfect process, continuously changing in relation to the Subjects²¹ that are involved and their interactions with each other. In her book, Points of Viewing Children's Thinking (1998b), Goldman-Segall discusses in depth the interactive and multi-layered process that members of cultures undergo while creating and interpreting meaning with their [digital] artifacts. For Goldman-

¹⁹ American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages

²⁰ I have created this term to signify the content matter and skills that we, as modern language teachers, aim to “teach” when we say that we are “teaching culture.” Central to the understanding of the abstract concepts of language and culture is the ability to identify and interpret the different perspectives of the Subjects (student, teacher, language, culture, curriculum, method and text) in the modern language classroom and acknowledge that they interact to form a delicate and dynamic ecosystem of interdependence.

²¹ I mark the difference in levels of agency between “Subject” and “object” by capitalizing the term Subject and leaving the term object in lower case.

Segall, “[i]nteraction consists of conversing with self, others, and the rest of nature, whether in their physical presence or absence (p. 5).”

In language, meaning is contextual. The sense that is connoted by a signifier depends a great deal on its *interaction* with the other elements surrounding it, whether they are visual, lexical, grammatical, or environmental. A good language learner, who has learned to speak the second language, will be able to read the contextual clues in any given text—or artifact—and infer their significance. The teacher’s role, therefore, is to engage the student in a meaning making process by drawing the student’s attention to the individual but interconnected elements in a text to see how they interact with themselves, the others, and the rest of nature. A talented teacher may reveal the roles of the various voices, or Subjects, within the text, but she alone cannot account for the subjective, situated readings from each of her students. She cannot teach the meaning of the text because the learner, the reader of these texts, always brings one or more variables into the equation—the self.

I have created this term Subjects-in-interaction to represent a new vision toward the content matter and skills that we, as modern language teachers, can aim to “teach” when we aspire to “teach culture.” Whereas previous concepts of teaching culture reified product-based, essentialistic definitions of culture, my concept of teaching culture is process-based. It maintains that central to the understanding of the abstract concepts of language and culture is the ability to identify and interpret the different perspectives of the Subjects (student, teacher, language, culture, curriculum, method and text) in the modern language classroom and acknowledge that they interact to form a delicate and dynamic ecosystem of interdependence. By calling the inanimate elements Subjects, I am not trying to infer that they have any sort of consciousness. I am suggesting that we need to look beyond the physical objects to see the perspectives of the humans that created them as well as those who interpret them to give them meaning. In doing so, we remember that these artifacts, or tools, were created at a specific time and place, within a specific context, as a representation of the creator’s thinking processes at that time. In our modern language classes, we can

learn more by examining our interactions with the perspectives behind the objects than with the objects themselves.

Lev Vygotsky's (1978) Activity Theory is a framework in which to study human activity. Within this theory, human activity is the focus of study and has three basic characteristics. First, it is directed towards a material, or ideal object which distinguishes one activity from another. Second, this activity is mediated by artifacts such as tools and language. Third, this activity is social and occurs within a culture.. Vygotsky's work is particularly useful to the field of second language learning because he argues that thinking and language, though separate, are intimately linked since it is only through the public act of speaking that internal thoughts are completed (Lantolf, 2000, p. 7). He highlights the critical role an individual's interaction—either with other humans or with artifacts and tools—plays in permitting an individual to advance to higher levels of thought.

Like Vygotsky, Leo van Lier (1996) believes that much of learning resides in the interaction between the “intrapersonal,” or mental, and “interpersonal,” or social interactive sides of an individual (p. 36). As a means to include both of these sides, van Lier applies an ecological perspective to his conceptualization of the second language classroom. He states: “applied to language education, the ecological perspective emphasizes social interaction, which makes linguistic affordances available to the developing child, and the cultural context in which language learning takes place” (p. 36). To describe the elements available to the learner in the classroom, van Lier prefers Gibson's (1979, as cited in van Lier, 1996, p. 36) term affordances, defined as that which is “offered by the linguistic environment and perceived by the learner” (p. 12), to the “mechanistic information-processing term input” (p. 12). The concept of affordances, according to van Lier, emphasizes complementarity and promises a resolution of the object/ subject dichotomy.

Feminist theorists have developed standpoint theory to describe the phenomena that “we can only see the world from our own position, our own standpoint, in terms of race, culture, and gender” (Goldman-Segall, 1998b, p. 261). Goldman-Segall takes issue with the

permanence of one's position in standpoint theory that implies "we can only view the world and be viewed from that static lens" (p. 261). In describing how visual representation of Subjects have evolved over time, she provides us with a fitting metaphor to show how our readings of texts change according to the varying interactions amongst its Subjects:

Once we took pictures with standing cameras of people seated, posing for the camera. People were positioned in time and space, captive in their clothing and fake settings. A video camera can now provide moving images to the videographer. Those who are being filmed are in some sense directing the filmmaker through their movements. The camera follows the movements. Backgrounds change. Positions change. The camera is passed around and those who were being filmed can film. Positions change when we have opportunities to see and understand other positions (p. 261).

In our attempts to teach culture(s), or meaning, we as modern language teachers can only invite ourselves and our learners to identify and explore the multiple points of viewing²² that live within a text and attempt to position ourselves within. The teacher can present her point of viewing as a gift, and educate the learner to identify and participate in the various conversations, or discourses, which are occurring between all of the Subjects involved, most notably the reader and the text. In the end, we cannot aspire to teach culture, or to teach meaning, because these aims are beyond the resources of any single individual. What we can aim to teach, rather, is the situated activities of the various Subjects-in-interaction.

Subjects and objects in critical theory

Academic texts that focus on critical theory and critical pedagogy, usually in relation to the situatedness of humans in their worlds, frequently make a distinction between "Subject" and "object." In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970/1993), Freire introduces this

²² According to Goldman-Segall (1998b), "[t]he notion of points of viewing encompasses where we are located in time and space, as well as how our combination of gender identities, classes, races, and cultures situates our understanding of what we see and validate. But the notion of points of viewing is not limited to the various positions we occupy. Indeed, the purpose of understanding points of viewing is to enable us to broaden our scope—to enable us to learn from one another" (pp. 3-4).

notion and presents the term "Subjects," which denotes those who know and act, in contrast to "objects," which are known and acted upon (p. 18). For Freire,

man's ontological vocation (as he calls it) is to be a Subject who acts upon and transforms his world, and in so doing moves toward ever new possibilities of fuller and richer life individually and collectively. This *world* to which he relates is not a static and closed order, a *given* reality which man must accept and to which he must adjust; rather, it is a problem to be worked on and solved (Shaull, 1970/1993, p. 14).

Freire's work concentrates on the human elements in the power structures of society, arguing that teachers are the instruments of the oppressors, whose job it is to indoctrinate their students into the oppressive power structures of society by filling their heads with facts and turning them into unquestioning, passive objects. Pennycook (1990) and Tedick et al. (1993) have applied the Subject / object distinction to language education, arguing that language has historically been viewed as "object," a perspective that has been reflected in the positivist instructionist methods that have been used to teach it. They argue for a movement toward viewing language as "Subject," stating this view emphasizes the power of language along with its communicative, dynamic, and social nature.

Modern language teacher educators, their student teachers, and their future language students, can learn a great deal about themselves and their environment by acknowledging they are all involved in complicit and dialectical power structures which affect the way in which they view and act in the world. Freire identifies the human elements in the pedagogical ecosystem, the teachers and students, and Pennycook and Tedick et al. expand upon this notion to include one non-human element, language.

I suggest we extend the Subject / object metaphor to include the *other* non-human elements (language, culture, curriculum, method, and texts) as well. In this way, we recognize that all these participants in the ecosystem of the modern language classroom, which have traditionally been viewed as objects, have the potential to become Subjects, since they are, at the same time, the products and creators of their social world, engaged in a dynamic dialectical relationship.

In the following pages, I will, first, review the current situation of culture teaching in modern language education in British Columbia, second, propose a critical methods course for preparing modern language teachers to implement a framework for teaching Subjects-in-interaction in which all of its participants are actively involved in a dynamic, dialectic relationship, and, third, discuss the evolving role each of the participants can claim as they evolve from objects into Subjects.

The State of Culture Teaching

Modern language education in British Columbia

In response to the changing demographics of British Columbia, where Chinese was the most commonly spoken minority language, followed by Punjabi, Vietnamese, Spanish, Hindi, Korean, Tagalog and, finally, French (Carey, 1997, p. 212) the new British Columbia Language Education Policy, enacted in September of 1996, requires that each student study a second language between grades 5-8, with prior or continued study of that language up to grade 12 being optional. This language may be French, Mandarin, Spanish, Japanese, or Punjabi, and other languages will be considered if the demand is expressed (Carey, 1997, p. 213). This language policy, which "puts Asian-Pacific languages on an equal footing with French as a mandatory second language" (Carey, 1997, p. 213), states that learning a new language:

- broadens the social and cultural horizons of students
- promotes the continued vitality of all cultures
- enhances mutual understanding and respect by promoting interaction among students from a variety of language communities and backgrounds
- is essential to the intellectual development and socialization of all students
- contributes to personal growth and cultural enrichment
- provides opportunities to link with the past, our multicultural heritage, and our diversity
- serves to prepare our students for the future (Spanish, 1996)

In this rationale, the cultural and social implications of learning a second language are explicitly mentioned in all but one of these statements.

Along with the new language policy, the BC Ministry of Education released a curriculum, in the form of a series of language specific Integrated Resource Packages (IRP's) which have helped define the direction of minority language instruction in the BC schools from grades 5-12 . Though the language IRP's are divided into 4 syllabi, or goal areas—Using Language for: Communicating, Acquiring Information, Experiencing Creative Works, and Understanding Culture and Society—the overriding objective in the IRP is the development of a deeper understanding of one's own self and culture, as well as that of the target culture. Ideally, this new knowledge would lead to greater cultural sensitivity, as illustrated in the introduction of the Spanish IRP (1996):

The study of Spanish language and cultures is intended to enable learners to communicate and acquire information in Spanish. It also provides opportunities for students to gain insights into their own cultures and encourages the development of intercultural sensitivity (p. 1).

This assumption is immediately followed by the rationale for the study of Spanish, and other minority languages:

Because of British Columbia's diversity and ever changing societal landscape, students also need to acquire understanding and positive attitudes toward cultures that may vary from their own (p. 1)

It is further explained that students will explore the individual differences that exist within a culture that affect communication, such as societal position, gender, family and age, will gain a deeper understanding of their own and other cultures and in the process gain self-confidence and develop their risk-taking, interpersonal and critical thinking skills.

The same year the British Columbia Ministry of Education published its prescribed learning outcomes in the form of language-specific IRP's, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL, 1996) developed National Standards for teaching modern languages, which included the following cultural objectives:

2.1 Students should demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the *practices* and *perspectives* of the culture studied.

2.2 Students should demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the *products* and *perspectives* of the culture studied (*emphasis added*).

Similarities between the two curricular guidelines highlight the importance of studying not only the practices and products of the people, but also their perspectives. In a pessimistic interpretation of these guidelines, they suggest product-based notions of culture with the addition of a static, homogeneous set of “other” perspectives. In an optimistic interpretation, however, these guidelines are calling for a postmodern, critical teaching of culture which I have described as Subjects-in-interaction. This new approach, which validates the interaction and points of viewing of all the participating elements, promotes positive feelings towards diverse individuals, their practices, and their perspectives, though it does not condone those which are not politically correct. It varies significantly from previous models, in which culture studies have been limited to either high art or folkloric facts (Kramsch, 1993b; Weber & Mitchell, 1996).

How do teachers “teach culture?”

Despite the ambiguous and contradictory definitions of culture, as well as differing objectives on how to teach culture, the last thirty years of literature on culture teaching have left teachers with no shortage of ideas on how to approach it. Modern language pedagogues have published a wide variety of literature, providing inventories of topics and themes for cultural instruction (Seelye 1974, 1985, 1993), lists of culturally-sensitive personality traits desired for our students (Byram & Morgan, 1994), suggestions on the use of authentic materials (Galloway, 1992; Kramsch, 1989; Kramsch, 1993a; Kramsch, 1993b; Nostrand, 1989), guidelines for the process of preparing and guiding the students through the process of learning about culture(s) (Kramsch, 1993a; Mantle-Bromley, 1992), or

statements of recommended goals for cultural instruction (ACTFL, 1993; ACTFL, 1996; Strasheim, 1981), to name but a few.

Ultimately, the decision whether to include cultural instruction, regardless of what this may entail, in the crowded time-tables of her language classes rests with the teacher. Although there exists a wealth of literature promoting and prescribing approaches, techniques and goals for teaching culture in the K-12 setting, there has been little documented work indicating whether teachers are prepared or willing to integrate critical interpretations of culture into their modern language classes, or what type of culture teaching and learning is happening in the schools.

Strasheim, (1981) reports that twenty years ago, two studies (Moskowitz, 1976; Nerenz, 1979, as cited in Strasheim, 1981) indicated that teachers spent approximately 10% of their instructional time on culture. Since that time, no conclusive studies had been carried out until Moore (1996) surveyed more than two hundred secondary school modern language teachers in upstate New York to determine how high-school teachers teach culture, how frequently they teach culture, which teaching techniques they judge to be more appropriate for achieving the cultural goals stated in school syllabi, and what constraints, if any, they experienced in their efforts to teach culture.

Though the individual teachers' personal objectives for teaching culture are not explicitly outlined, Moore gives a general inventory of techniques used and makes some judgements as to their quality and effectiveness based on whether or not they include the *perspectives* of the members of the target language society. In her study, Moore (1996) found that training in teaching culture corresponded to both a higher frequency and better quality of culture teaching, whereas teaching experience was related only to the frequency of teaching culture and academic qualifications only to the selection of techniques. The top five techniques teachers reported for teaching culture, which demonstrate these teachers' implicit assumptions of culture as object, were: students read notes in the textbooks (54%), students got information from authentic material (48%), lectures were used to present

information (46%), students were assigned projects on specific topics (41%), students were exposed to the food of the culture, to songs, dances, and celebrations (41%).

Most teachers, Moore found, use techniques which provide students with opportunities to gain factual knowledge about the products and practices of the target culture, such as by lecturing on cultural topics or using cultural notes from textbooks. An overwhelming majority of teachers who indicated that they had had training in teaching culture, (79%, as opposed to 35% of their counterparts), however, selected techniques which “reportedly have the potential for allowing discussion of the products as well as the values, and attitudes of the people, namely the perspectives” (p. 277). These activities included culture capsules, culture clusters, culture assimilators, ethnographic studies, and mini-dramas. Those teachers who signaled constraints on their abilities to teach culture cited insufficient time (40%), lack of adequate instructional material (25%), lack of training (23%), and absence of culture tests (10%).

The results of this study lead Moore to warn that “we need not confine teaching culture merely to the level of sampling the products. Not only are we likely to perpetuate stereotypes in so doing, but we do our students little service by limiting their learning experiences to the primary level” (p. 283). She signals two important pedagogical recommendations for modern language teacher education programs in the United States, which prepare their graduates to meet the culture based curricular objectives established by ACTFL (1996). These recommendations can also be applied to teacher education programs in British Columbia which, as noted above, prepare their graduates to meet similar curricular objectives prescribed by the Ministry of Education (Spanish, 1996). Moore calls, first, for a more experiential curriculum, and, second, to increase teacher education courses on the teaching of culture, by including the teaching of culture in existing courses and creating other courses specifically on the use of authentic materials.

Moore has carried out some important research that sheds light on the current situation of culture teaching in the schools. Her recommendation to place the bulk of the

responsibility in the hands of the methods instructors, however, needs to consider the confining power structures which exist in modern language education due to a long tradition of instructionist teaching paradigms which objectify, rather than Subjectify, the individual elements in its ecosystem. As Duff and Uchida (1997) found, second language teachers often teach their own implicit understandings of culture without being aware of that they are teaching culture at all. Therefore, new methods courses created around cultural themes or the addition of cultural topics to existing courses may not change the nature of culture teaching, as shown in the history of attempts at modern language teaching reform which have experienced marginal success.

Subjects-in-interaction in the methods course

Like those before her, Moore identifies the methods course as the place in which student teachers should learn approaches and techniques for effectively integrating the critical teaching of culture, or Subjects-in-interaction, into their practice. Yet, in the past two decades of teacher education reform, the true value of the methods course has come under question time and again. It has either been criticized for being too idealistic and not practical enough, or too simplistic and without rigor (Adler & Goodman, 1986, p. 4). Indeed, a methods course in a specialization area such as modern language education is not allocated enough contact hours to meet the enormous array of expectations that all student teachers, teacher educators, administrators, and policy makers may hold for it.

Student teachers, generally concerned with classroom management issues, may expect to develop those skills that have traditionally formed the base of methods courses, such as planning lessons, managing basal programs, and disciplining children. Teacher educators may strive to use these methods courses to prepare a new generation of educators who will be able to effect pedagogical and intellectual change in the schools. Administrators and policy makers may hope the methods courses prepare the student teachers to carry on

with pre-established curriculum goals and teaching practices that are already functioning in the schools. With so many conflicting expectations, it is no wonder the methods courses generally leave student teachers frustrated at the limited opportunities to apply the theories presented to practical teaching situations. At the same time, teacher educators are troubled by the lack of intellectual growth and maturity reflected in their students, while administrators may simply complete the task of indoctrinating the beginning teachers into the culture of the schools while on practicum or once they are free from their teacher education programs.

To ensure that our student teachers are able to foster in their future students a deeper understanding of not only the practices and products of the target language's culture(s), but also the perspectives of its people(s), Moore proposes more hours be spent on cultural teaching in methods courses or more method courses on cultural topics. Linda von Hoene (1995), in her work preparing modern language graduate teaching assistants at the University of California, Berkeley, calls for a more critical approach to the methods course, which she constructs through psychoanalytic, feminist and postcolonial theoretical lenses. She draws heavily upon the work of Julia Kristeva (1991), widely regarded as a critical feminist, who uses the maternal body with its two-in-one, or other within, as a model for all subjective relations. Like the maternal body, we are all what Kristeva calls subjects-in-process, in that we are always negotiating the other within, that is to say, the return to the pre-linguistic, pre-subject position where all vestiges of difference are erased. For von Hoene, the modern language learner is a subject-in-process when she undergoes an internal transformation of self when confronted with the external other of the target language. In the modern language classroom, according to von Hoene, the learner generally takes on one culture and discards another, an encounter with difference that "can be perceived more as a challenge to one's identity than as a desired locus of identification" (1995, p. 49).

To counteract this negative subject relation, von Hoene encourages modern language university departments to become centers of cross-cultural studies, or better, cross-cultural

travel. She proposes a curriculum in which students reflect on their own personal transformation, as subjects-in-process, in light of those of others as presented in their theoretical and literary works. Suggestions include reading Alice Kaplan's *French Lessons* (1993), based on her language learning experiences, Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987), inspired by her experiences living in the Mexican-American cultural "borderlands," and Kristeva's *Strangers to Ourselves* (1991) rooted in issues of nationalism. Von Hoene has expressed her dissatisfaction with the state of teacher education at the university level, which she attributes to the low status it occupies in comparison to literary studies, yet the curriculum she proposes relies almost exclusively on theoretical, intellectual texts. Her psychoanalytic, feminist and postcolonial contributions to the curriculum clearly inform the discussion on self and other as it pertains to language learning and teaching at an abstract level, yet this approach attempts to raise the status of teacher education by making it more like literary studies.

To prepare student teachers to teach more than superficial ideals of culture, modern language methods courses, for secondary or university level language teaching, should go beyond assigning heavy doses of theoretical and intellectual texts on critical issues, or lists of cultural topics to be covered and techniques and strategies to carry them out. They should also give student teachers enough guidance to make the leap from theoretical to practical. As Adler & Goodman (1986) affirm, "the methods course provides an opportunity to go beyond an examination of the theoretical; such courses can seek to develop ways in which theory and practice may be unified" (p. 4).

To learn to teach Subjects-in-interaction, I propose a critical—or analytical—methods course in which modern language student teachers are critically engaged in hands-on constructionist approaches to teaching and learning about various interpretations of culture in which the different human and non-human participants are viewed as socially constructed Subjects, with their own voices that reflect their particular situations in the world. This critical methods course would strive to prepare teachers who would be

thoughtful and reflective about their work and who would be able to prepare original curricula that would engage their students in thoughtful action. Such teachers could undertake the task of helping students rethink the democratic possibilities within schools and within the wider society of which they are a part" (Adler & Goodman, 1986, p. 4).

This process may ultimately lead to a better understanding of the interactions between the practices, products and perspectives of their own and the target culture.

Critical Theory in Modern Language Education

More than ten years ago, Pennycook (1990) argued that second "language teaching has remained strangely isolated from educational theory and the sociopolitical questions that better educational theorists have been more inclined to raise" (p. 304). Previous attempts to relate modern language education to educational theory, according to Pennycook, had been misguided and lacked a true understanding of the empirical models used. Since that time, however, a new field of research, critical applied linguistics (Pennycook, 1999, 2001), has emerged to address these concerns. Critical applied linguistics, according to Pennycook (2001):

is more than just a critical dimension added on to applied linguistics: It involves a constant skepticism, a constant questioning of the normative assumptions of applied linguistics. It demands a restive problematization of the givens of applied linguistics and presents a way of doing applied linguistics that seeks to connect it to questions of gender, class, sexuality, race, ethnicity, culture, identity, politics, ideology, and discourse.

Within the various domains of critical applied linguistics are those particularly applicable to this study: critical approaches to language teaching (see Bartolome, 1994; Canagarajah, 1993; Duff & Uchida, 1997; Graman, 1988), critical discourse analysis (see Kubota, 1999) and critical literacy (see Luke, 2000). Other areas include critical approaches to translation, language testing, language planning and language rights, and language, literacy and workplace settings (Pennycook, 2001, p. 10).

Peter McLaren (1999), immersed in the ideas of his mentor, Giroux, defines the broad notion of critical pedagogy as, “a way of thinking about, negotiating, and transforming the relationship among classroom teaching, the production of knowledge, the institutional structures of the school, and the social and material relations of the wider community, society, and nation-state” (p. 51). Though critical theorists share a commitment to liberating the individual voices in a society from the oppressive structures that may silence them, critical theorists differ in their view of the power of dominant institutions and beliefs. In one view:

the dominant message is that things as they are *must be* as they are. Thus institutions and ideology become reified and objectified - they are “out there,” having lives of their own, not open to challenge. The meanings and explanations conveyed by particular social arrangements are taken-for-granted and unquestioned (Adler & Goodman, 1986, p. 3).

The other view sees the power structure as more dialectical, less one-sided. “There is both individual and collective resistance to dominant culture and practices. People are both the products and the creators of their social world (Adler & Goodman, 1986, p. 3). It is in this second view of the power structures, one which depends on dialectical action, that the various voices in the modern language classroom can be liberated and productive learning and understanding of Subjects-in-interaction can take place.

The human elements

To understand the complexity of the power structures in the modern language classroom, we must recognize that people, along with their cultural products, practices and perspectives, are not static objects, but rather Subjects which are, at the same time, both the products and creators of their social world. Traditional instructionist views have treated the human elements—*students and teachers*—as well as the seemingly non-human elements—*language, culture, method, curriculum and texts*—as “object.” Critical theory has largely concerned itself with only the human elements in the pedagogical ecosystem. It has

urged them to abandon their traditional roles that perpetuate the complicit Subject-object relationship of domination and subordination in the classroom and stifle their intellectual inquiry about the world.

Teachers and students in a Subject-object relationship

Freire (1970/1993) denounces the narrative, teacher-student relationship, accusing education to be suffering from “narration sickness”:

This relationship involves a narrating Subject (the teacher) and patient, listening objects (the students). The contents, whether values or empirical dimensions of reality, tend in the process of being narrated to become lifeless and petrified (p. 52).

In this “banking” concept of education, students are viewed as “containers” or “receptacles” and the teacher’s duty is to fill those receptacles with motionless, static visions of reality and topics that are alien and removed from the students’ experience. “The more completely she fills the receptacles, the better a teacher she is. The more meekly the receptacles permit themselves to be filled, the better students they are” (1970/1993, p. 52). Traditional interpretations of culture teaching in modern language education, which asks students to fill themselves with decontextualized and disassociated facts about the target culture, also suffers from narration sickness. Student teachers, long treated as receptacles in their language classes, are anxious to eventually take on the role of narrator and view the methods course as an opportunity to be filled with the tricks and techniques to best fill their future students.

The goal of the critical methods course, then, should be to engage the student teachers in a reflective process (Schon, 1988) which challenges them to rethink not only their position in relationship to the teacher educator in their methods course, but also their position in relation to their students in their future language classes. This reflective and dialogic process is the one Freire calls for in his rethinking of the teacher-student relationship. “Education must begin with the solution of the teacher-student contradiction,

by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously teachers *and* students" (Freire, 1970/1993, p. 53). Through communication, human life holds meaning and new constructions of reality about the world outside the classroom are formed:

[T]he teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist (...). The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow (Freire, 1970/1993, p. 61).

Future teachers are former students who have been influenced to some degree or another by their past personal experiences with teachers who taught them from kindergarten to university. Granted, these student teachers have also influenced their teachers along the way. By the time they arrive at the university, these students have spent thirteen thousand hours observing teachers, grown up around popular culture images and stereotypes of teaching, and have already formed a teaching schema which reflects the model of what an individual believes teaching is supposed to be (Weber & Mitchell, 1996).

This schema includes expectations about students and the student role, about parents and the nature of schooling, and about how languages are best learned and best taught. As Weber and Mitchell state, "[s]chemas are an integral part of culture. Because they organize beliefs and provide a structure for interpreting experience, schemas have the power to reflect, replicate, or even modify the culture in which they are developed or acquired" (Weber & Mitchell, 1996, p. 306). A critical perspective towards the teaching of a methods course, would draw on the student teachers' past schemas in order "foster a questioning attitude toward teaching, learning, knowledge, and curriculum, and toward the role of schools in society" (Adler & Goodman, 1986, p. 4).

Teacher educators often approach their task as though each student teacher were a tabula rasa, void of the knowledge of what would make her a good teacher and waiting to be told what to do (Weber & Mitchell, 1996). In this banking concept of education, "knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing" (Freire, 1970/1993, p. 52). Other teacher educators,

however, "no longer view future teachers as fresh clay to be molded, but rather as people already brain-washed with firmly entrenched stereotypes and misinformed ideas about teaching" (Weber & Mitchell, 1996, p. 304).

Some student teachers also share this view, as illustrated when one of my modern language student teachers asked to be "deprogrammed" in a summer methods course from the undesirable habits he thinks he "picked up" from his sponsor teacher and colleagues while on practicum. Based on my observations of him in the classroom, however, I would conclude his teaching approach varied little from the one he demonstrated in micro teaching exercises in his fall methods course and is most likely the result of a lifetime of schooling. Clearly a "deprogramming," or "liberation" of that nature would involve a long, reflective process that would examine and redefine the dynamic and dialectic relationships between the human and non-human elements in modern language education.

Freire has illuminated the transformative power that comes from turning students and teachers into Subjects, thus liberating them from their previously objectified state. Now let us imagine what can happen when their tools become Subjects as well.

The non-human elements

Language, culture, curriculum, method and texts are the seemingly non-human elements that are in constant conversation with the learners and teachers in the modern language classroom. Created by humans, they are both the products and makers of their social world. They have the potential to either unlock the inner creativity and expression of the participants or stifle them down in a state of defeat.

Language as object

The language class is unique, in that language is both the content and the medium of the class, "a relationship which has perhaps led language teaching theory to look in on itself

and become overly concerned with the inner workings of language and language learning at the expense of other issues" (Pennycook, 1990, p. 304). Rather than drawing from the fields of sociology, psychology, anthropology and education for rich insights into approaches for studying the cultural aspects of a second language, as recent modern language pedagogues (Kramsch, 1993a; Tedick et al. 1993; Weber & Mitchell, 1996) have encouraged, second language education has limited itself to the fields of linguistics for a theory of language, psycholinguistics for a theory of learning, and sociolinguistics for a theory of language use. This has resulted in an instrumentalist and positivist orientation towards language and teaching. "In this view, language becomes an objective system that can more or less be described by the theorists and transmitted by the practitioners, and teaching becomes a technical process prescribed by the experts and implemented by the teachers" (Pennycook, 1990, p. 304).

In their article outlining the problems that plague modern language education, Tedick et al. (1993) argue that the view of language as "object", "— that which is acted upon, an entity to be scrutinized, analyzed, and broken down into its smallest components—" (p. 305) is pervasive in modern language teacher education programs and is, in turn, perpetuated in modern language classrooms. As a result, language educators have denied the social nature of learning and language acquisition, and defined it as a topic to be studied, a content area. "As such, this focus nullifies the essence of language as intercultural communication, as key to profound consciousness" (p. 305). In response, socio-cultural theory, a new movement in second language acquisition research which studies the social aspects in second language acquisition, is quickly gaining momentum (see Lantolf, 2000).

The frustration and isolation language teachers experience as a result of being seen as technicians rather than professionals and, therefore, marginalized in the schools, is well documented (Bernhardt & Hammadou, 1987; Hammadou & Bernhardt, 1987; Saito, 1996; Weber & Mitchell, 1996). These feelings have led language teachers to make efforts to legitimize their place in North American schools. Modern language teachers, in particular,

have traditionally needed to justify their content area as more than a “frill” and, in so doing, they have defined a body of knowledge or content for their discipline and developed a scope and sequence for delivering that body of knowledge. They have defined the content as the lexicon, syntax, morphology, and phonology of language—or as the notions and functions (Tedick et al., 1993, p. 305). Though these efforts have allowed some modern language educators to establish a precarious foothold for themselves in their academic institutions, they have done little to set modern language education apart as unique from other disciplines.

The overuse of the students’ native language in far too many modern language classes is further evidence that the target language is a content area which should be talked about, rather than used as a vehicle for the class participants to share and analyze the different perspectives of the human and non-human course Subjects. Even when teachers are very competent in their second language, they tend to use English as the major vehicle for actual instruction, thus devaluing the second language as a legitimate means of communication (Tedick et al., 1993). Students may be made to feel small by the lack of confidence their teachers place in their ability to comprehend the target language, further reinforcing their unequal power relationship. Modern language teachers can look to ESL and immersion programs as models that communication can be carried out entirely in the target language. Low expectations for the capabilities of the language learner limits language examples to objectified utterances that illustrate the aims of the teacher, publisher or administrator, but not the student. The challenge for the critical modern language teacher is to ensure that discussion allows for meaningful exchanges of perspectives based on the experiences and realities of the students, rather than detached and objectified examples of linguistic structures.

Culture as object

Many teachers and student teachers would eagerly teach their interpretations of cultural studies, but are held back by the traditional view of language as object. This

sentiment is voiced by one my secondary student teachers on practicum when she sighs, "I haven't really gone over it much, about *culture*, per se, there's just so much *language*." Culture, in the modern language classroom, as well as in their adopted textbooks, is treated as an add-on, always secondary to the more important linguistic content.

Among the European intellectual scene in the 18th century, "culture" was considered to be a condition of total perfection, attainable through education. Culture came to be defined by the writings and ideas of a small group of "men" of letters, poets, philosophers, and academics and, though anthropologists have managed to separate culture from civilization, this general notion of culture as a display of accomplishment and perfection still persists today (Whittaker, 1992). It is this objectified concept of "C" culture, easily transmitted as facts since it manifests itself in the canonized literature, music, art, and history of the target culture, that modern language teachers are inclined to teach (Weber & Mitchell, 1996).

Anthropologists hold a different view of culture, seeing it as a process, patterns of beliefs, and systems of interpretation that guide the actions and interactions of its members (Weber & Mitchell, 1996). One of the most prominent anthropologists, Clifford Geertz (1973), has been instrumental in bringing about a redefining of culture and reasons, "believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning" (p. 5).

More recently, culture is believed to be characterized by the diversity of discourses which exist within a society (Clifford, 1988; Gee, 1992; Kramsch & von Hoene, 1995; Kubota, 1999). Ironically, this recognition of multiple discourses in postmodern, poststructuralist, and feminist ideology could also bring about a demise of "culture" as we know it since the very recognition of voice within a society negates the imperialistic notion of culture as an object to be studied. This demise of "culture" appears to be happening in TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages), an institution whose

extensive research in the areas of second language learning and teaching informs modern language education.

In a recent review of the articles published over the last ten years in the *TESOL Quarterly*, Atkinson (1999b) notes that, in addition to “discourses,” other terms such as “identity, hybridity, essentialism, power, difference, agency, resistance, and contestation are being used by second language theorists as a way to call into question the traditional monolithic notion of ‘culture’” (p. 626). Atkinson attributes this shift in terminology to a gradual change from “more traditional/received to more postmodernist/critical understandings of culture” (p. 629, note 6). Though he acknowledges some critical perspectives have begun to infiltrate the field, he believes that culture is still very much an understudied notion in TESOL and one which needs to be substantially revised and updated. To facilitate this advancement, he proposes the following six ideas, or principles, to be used as “sociocognitive thinking tools” (p. 649), not as a specific theory or definition of culture:

First, “all humans are individuals” (p. 641). Second, “individuality is also cultural” (p. 642). Individuals do not exist separately from their social world and are therefore, “individuals-in-context” (p. 642). Third, “social group membership and identity are multiple, contradictory, and dynamic” (p. 643). Individuals are entwined in multiple discourses, or social practices, social tools, and social products, which identify them as members of social groups. Fourth, “social group membership is consequential” (p. 645) in that one’s membership or exclusion from different groups will have a negative, positive or neutral effect on their daily lives and opportunities. Fifth, “methods of studying cultural knowledge and behavior are unlikely to fit a positivist paradigm” (p. 646). In critical approaches to culture, qualitative and ethnographic approaches lend themselves better than quantitative ones because their flexibility accounts for cultural knowledge and behavior. However, in this paradigm, Atkinson proposes quantitative ideals such as “validity,” “reliability,” and “generalizability” be replaced with other justificatory concepts such as “particularizability”

(Ramanathan & Atkinson, 1999, pp. 55-59), “understanding” (Maxwell, 1992) and “thick description” (Geertz, 1973). Sixth, “language (learning and teaching) and culture are mutually implicated but culture is multiple and complex” (p. 647). Understanding of the sociocultural context within which language is used and also for what action it exists is critical to the knowledge of language. What’s more, each circumstance is unique and therefore explanations which rely on simplified and stereotypical representations of cultural phenomena do not do justice to the target language’s many unique and interconnected cultures. To conclude, Atkinson encourages his colleagues to develop a notion of culture which takes into account “the cultural in the individual and the individual in the cultural” (p. 648).

Pennycook (1999) also outlines an alternative to traditional interpretations of culture, based on critical pedagogy, which is in line with Atkinson’s above mentioned principles:

In critical pedagogy (...) culture takes on a fundamental role in the way we make sense of the world and is taken to be a productive rather than merely a reflective system. It reflects the personal ways in which an individual makes sense of and lives out her situation in the world. From this point, critical pedagogy is then able to outline a project of cultural politics, a project which makes problematic the way in which teachers and students “sustain, resist or accommodate those languages, ideologies, social processes, and myths that position them within existing relations of power and dependency” (Giroux, 1988, p. 136). This, then, starts to address questions of student voice, popular culture and difference (p. 309).

Curriculum as object

In opposition to traditional positivist positions regarding second language instruction and research, Pennycook (1989) makes two basic claims: that all education is political, since it “is constantly involved in the (re)production of social and cultural inequalities (both within and between nations), and of particular forms of culture and knowledge” (p. 590); and that all knowledge is “interested” since “it is produced within a particular configuration of social, cultural, economic, political, and historical circumstances and therefore always both reflects and helps to (re)produce those conditions” (p. 595). These

assertions are especially relevant to modern language education since, first, language is forever tied to the controversial issues of bilingualism, minority education, and internationalism, and, second, curricular guidelines are generally developed by researchers within the fields of linguistics and applied linguistics where there is a “dominance on one particular type of knowledge (rational-purposive or scientific-technological)” which makes “claims to universality, objectivity, and truth, and the belief in inherent progress” (p. 595).

This underlying ideological framework has led to an environment in which scientific objectivity is prized over subjectivity, and curricular models are designed in the interest of dispensing unquestioned truths. This curricular approach is an example of Freire’s banking concept of education

in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits. They do, it is true, have the opportunity to become collectors or cataloguers of the things they store. But (...) it is the people themselves who are filed away through the lack of creativity, transformation, and knowledge in this (at best) misguided system (Freire, 1970/1993, p. 52).

The study of modern languages as sets of compartmentalized linguistic and cultural facts has lead to a curriculum that is largely decontextualized and unrelated to students’ real life within their school, community, family, and peer groups (Moore, 1996; Pennycook, 1989, p. 305). When human elements are included in the curriculum, they are invariably incarnated in the practices and products of the “Other,” which makes the content area even more “foreign,” or strange, and further alienates the students from the target language and culture(s). Indeed, some students suffer from “culture panic” at the thought of having to take on the “cultural baggage” that accompanies the learning of a second language (Kramsch, 1995, p. xviii).

Reagan & Osborn (1998) assert that these power plays in the modern language curriculum doom the students to failure from the outset due to the limited number of contact hours, an overemphasis on the strange and alienating nature of the “Other,” and complete disregard for the personal realities of the students, among other reasons. So

indoctrinated into the educational system that gives credit for hours seated in a classroom and all but discourages the learning of a second language, students see the course requirement as a necessary hoop for entrance into university, completion of the undergraduate requirements or the research requirement in graduate studies. Given the choice, they would rather complete this step within the instructionist curriculum which requires the least emotional investment and to which they are already accustomed.

This instructionist curriculum, which consists of easily assessable goals of proficiency and mastery of linguistic and cultural facts, inevitably leads to a means-end view of language and culture pedagogy. Within this framework, more emphasis is placed on the sequencing of linguistic structures in the syllabus than on developing a keen understanding of one's own and the target culture's products, practices and *perspectives*. It also assumes that there is a "dichotomy between human beings and the world: a person is merely *in* the world, not *with* the world or with others; the individual is spectator, not re-creator" (Freire, 1970/1993, p. 56). Yet

language is not a world of its own. It is not even a world. But because we are in the world, because we are affected by situations, and because we orient ourselves comprehensively in those situations, we have something to say, we have experience to bring to language (Ricoeur, as cited in Grumet, 1988).

To invert the oppressive power structures which have constricted students' learning and self expression, we can reconsider the role of the curriculum and imagine ways to liberate it from its objectified state. Adler & Goodman (1986) remind us of our ability to effect change by recognizing we all have potential to be Subjects in this dynamic relationship: "The curriculum, the "public" knowledge presented in schools, like social institutions themselves, has become reified and objectified; but, like institutions, it is socially constructed and therefore open to change" (p. 3).

Steps to effect change would include a process oriented curricula which encourages student exploration (Fischer, 1996; Goldman-Segall, 1998b; Hellebrandt, 1996), an experiential curricula which focuses on the personal lives and experiences of the students

(Grumet, 1988; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Moore, 1996), and a curriculum based on generative themes which would promote multiple critical literacies to prepare the students to (pro)actively participate in the restructuring of their social environments (Freire, 1970/1993; Graman, 1988).

Method as object

The dominance on rational-purposive and scientific-technological types of knowledge in the fields of linguistics and applied linguistics have left modern language education with a legacy of positivist method-dependent teaching practices which leave little room for new exploratory and experiential approaches to meaningful learning of language and Subjects-in-interaction. Despite the fact that most modern language teaching practices in use today are basically reconfigurations of strategies which have existed for the past 2,000 years, applied linguists' blind faith in inherent progress has inspired academics in elite institutions of higher education to create—and recreate—a myriad of methods for second language teaching, each one purporting to be better than the one before, and each promising a new and improved version in the next published edition. An examination of their inherent qualities, however, would not show a linear progression towards excellence in teaching, but rather a reactive change due to shifts in the social, cultural, political and philosophical climate (Pennycook, 1989, p. 608).

The Grammar Translation Method, widely used in academic institutions of higher learning until the 19th century (though one could argue is still alive and well today), comes from methods used in teaching Latin. This method requires little language or culture proficiency from the instructor, is easily assessed, and, because it extracts the language structures from all social context, is highly abstract and cognitive in nature. These characteristics may explain its popularity in a time when education was viewed as an activity for the elite, far removed from the realities of the social world. The Audiolingual, or "Army," Method, popular in the 1950's, was a direct result of technological advances

originated in World War II. This method, which left little room for the expression of individual differences, was ideal at a moment in history when rapid assimilation of immigrants and the functionality of US Army personnel overseas was a social priority. It relied on the use of tapes, language labs, and prefabricated dialogues spoken by a monolithic, usually male, voice. "Designer" methods of the 1970's directly reflected the public's radical ideological shift in the 1960's, a period of experimentation, self-expression, and political uncertainty. Methods such as Community Language Learning, Suggestopia, The Silent Way, and Total Physical Response, placed an emphasis on group dynamics, interpersonal relationships, discovery learning, and physical responses.

These seemingly different methods, which can be identified by their accompanying textbooks and accoutrements, all constitute "interested knowledge." Though they have been instrumental in advancing the academic and professional careers of academics and publishers alike, they have not been proven to reflect the realities of the classroom and have done little to advance the teaching and learning of modern languages and their cultures. Pennycook (1989) asserts:

Method is a prescriptive concept that articulates a positivist, progressivist, and patriarchal understanding of teaching and plays an important role in maintaining inequities between, on the one hand, predominantly male academics and, on the other, female teachers and language classrooms on the international power periphery (p. 589).

A new anti-method movement, initiated by critical theorists, has resulted in attempts to replace the oppressive term, "Method," with more teacher friendly alternatives, all of which have caused some initial, and perhaps continued, discomfort in the modern language community. In the post-method condition, prescriptive method terminology of the past is recoded with broader terms, such as *principles* (Brown, 1994), *approaches* (Duquette, 1995; Littlewood, 1981; Nunan, 1989; Penfield, 1987; Ramírez, 1995; Richard-Amato, 1988; Savignon, 1983; Yalden, 1981), or *macrostrategies* (Kumaravadivelu, 1994), that are open to the

interpretation, based on their situational realities, of the different participants in the modern language classroom.

Theories of language as a hierarchically arranged system of rule-governed structures have been replaced by theories of language as a system of meaning whose primary function is interaction and communication. Dialogues and drills, repetition and memorization, and pattern practice have been substituted with processes that engage learners in communication such as information sharing, interaction, and negotiation of meaning. Syllabi based on a contrastive analysis of phonology, morphology and syntax have become more flexible; their ordering is guided by the learners' needs and include either structures, notions, themes, and/or tasks.

What is a modern language teaching methods teacher to do at a time in which, on the one hand, critical theorists claim the very concept of method is in complete ideological contradiction with their aims, and, on the other, many modern language researchers, educators, and materials developers still cling to it as their life-line and meal ticket? Adler & Goodman (1986) reveal the tensions that are inherent in the development of critical methods courses, which traditionally exist within a very different paradigm from ones that come from critical theory:

[D]ominant assumptions about teaching and learning in the twentieth century have emphasized efficiency, measurable outcomes, and objectivity. The teacher within this dominant tradition, is not seen as one who designs curriculum or reflects upon alternatives, but rather, as one who is to master techniques of effective instruction in order to implement a predetermined curriculum (p. 6).

Simply advising student teachers to develop an "eclectic approach," as was popular in the past, does not allow them to develop confidence in an effective teaching approach. Without this, they risk falling back on the outdated, yet trusty methods they were exposed to as language students themselves.

At the University of British Columbia, the adopted approach for preparing modern language student teachers is to ground them in the fundamental concepts (i.e. the role of

the student, teacher, materials, activities, language etc.) of a highly adapted version of the communicative approach. A critical methods course that involves student teachers in an experiential, exploratory, process-oriented curricula would also incorporate constructionist teaching philosophies that empowers them to understand difficult course concepts by engaging in hand-on activities in which they connect personal experiences to course content. These student teachers involve themselves in an active conversation with themselves and the other Subject elements in the ecosystem of teaching.²³

Originally introduced in the early 1980's, the communicative approach has evolved from a thinly veiled reincarnation of previous paternalistic language teaching methods, which prized information sharing over meaningful interaction, to a new educational philosophy which aims to create experiential learning environments which draw on the personal experiences of the participants and encourage a reflective and enlightening exchange of perspectives. Though the philosophy of teaching within the communicative approach has changed over the past 20 years, the terminology, unfortunately, has not.

Student teachers entering modern language methods courses are familiar with terms such as "communicative competence" and "authentic materials." Their teaching paradigms, nonetheless, often reflect the prescriptive environment in which they learned the language they will be teaching; one in which the curriculum was determined by the "communicative," yet grammar driven textbook, and in which the materials, though "authentic", were used for superficial exercises for language proficiency. A critical methods course would integrate guiding philosophies of a modern communicative approach and constructionism, in order to engage the participants in hands-on activities in which they construct and reconstruct the various realities of the participants, whether they be the students, the teacher, the language, or the materials. For, "knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through

²³ For a model, see the UBC Teaching and Learning Enhancement Grant Making Movies, Making Theories: Digital Media Tools for Educating Educators to Connect Experiences to Curriculum (Goldman-Segall/Beers, 1998).

the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other" (Freire, 1970/1993, p. 52).

Constructionism and the communicative approach

Constructionism, an educational philosophy and method developed by Seymour Papert, builds on the "constructivist" theories of Jean Piaget, arguing that knowledge is not transmitted from teacher to student but constructed in the mind of the learner. In the process of constructing a personally meaningful object, learners construct and reconstruct knowledge out of their experiences with the world. This knowledge arises from the relationship that exists between the content, the artifact and the process binding them together. Constructionism is a wholly appropriate and applicable learning model for enabling learners to experience the relationship between the products, practices and *perspectives* of the students' own and the target cultures, because of the emphasis it places on affect, personal experience, diversity, and relationship forming. It creates an environment in which to experience the dynamic nature of Subjects-in-interaction. First, constructionism, like communicative language learning theories, recognizes that learners are most likely to become intellectually engaged when they are working on personally meaningful activities and projects. Second, constructionism emphasizes diversity by setting up learning environments which encourage multiple learning styles and multiple representations of knowledge and, third, constructionism asserts forming new relationships with knowledge is as important as forming new representations of knowledge (Kafai & Resnick, 1996, p. 1).

Materials as object

Language teachers have to teach the language of kitchen recipes and the language of poems, language as a means of communication and as a mode of representation, they have to focus on the message and on the form of utterances. But most of all, behind someone's words, they have to teach their students how to recognise both the cultural voice of a socially dominant group and the unique voice of a particular person (Kramsch et al., 1996, p. 105).

New teaching approaches that view language as discourse and advocate the inclusion of multiple perspectives in order to represent the many voices present in one individual, not to mention her culture(s), call for a shift in the focus of instruction. Whereas the aim of teaching methods of the 1980's was to place the learner at the center of instruction, the goal of the 1990's is to situate the Subject at the center of learning (Kramsch et al., 1996; Lave & Wenger, 1991), in an attempt to validate the subjective perspective with its multiple points of viewing (Goldman-Segall, 1998b). In this framework, the enunciating Subject, whether it be the text, the student, or the teacher, becomes the focus of inquiry, in which a critical analysis of its situated perspective provides insight into its cultural reference points and history, ultimately leading to a keener understanding of, and empathy for, its Subject position.

Modern language education has long been dependent on the textbook as the main source of pedagogical, linguistic, and cultural content and guidance. Indeed, the textbook, often referred to as simply, "the text," has been synonymous with various instructionist methods over the years and teachers still cite it as the number one source for culture teaching (Moore, 1996). Administrators are attracted by its potential to standardize instruction and content across different sections of language courses and, in response, publishers have even tried to create "teacher-proof" instructional materials. Recently, however, the textbook has been the focus of several studies (see Brosh, 1997; Heilenman, 1991; Kramsch, 1989) which have criticized its cultural biases and representation of the target culture realities.

As a result, many modern language teachers have turned to new forms of materials, most notably authentic texts, in the hopes of introducing the cultural perspectives of the target culture into their isolated classrooms. "Authentic," a term used "as a reaction against the prefabricated artificial language of textbooks and instructional dialogues (...), refers to the way language is used in non-pedagogic, natural communication. (...) An authentic text, [therefore], is a text that was created to fulfill some social purpose in the language

community in which it was produced. ” (Kramsch, 1993a, p. 177). Though they are most commonly manifested in various limited genres of printed communication, such as menus, timetables, and advertisements, teachers are adopting a broader interpretation of *text*— as anything that can be read or interpreted— and have included songs, television programs, films, and, more recently, multimedia texts from the Internet. So popular are these authentic texts for teaching culture that teachers rank them as their number two source for culture teaching (Moore, 1996).

But what do we really know about how these texts are used in the classrooms and what, if any, culture learning takes place? Despite their popularity and persistence in the modern language teacher’s repertoire, surprisingly little research has been carried out on how they are selected, used, and read in the classroom. Are these texts used to explore the practices, products and Subjective perspectives of the target culture or do they serve as a colorful repackaging of the linguistic content already available in their textbooks? Those few researchers who have considered this topic in any depth (see Fischer, 1996; Hellebrandt, 1996; Kramsch, 1989; Moore, 1996) suspect readings of these authentic texts stay within a proficiency based methodology and rarely move beyond a superficial understanding. The reality in the classroom, it would seem, is that Text is forever equivalent to Method, whether it be in the form of a prefabricated textbook with accoutrements or authentic materials collected from the target culture.

To enable our texts to move from their role as object of linguistic or folkloric study to that of Subject in which the historical, ideological and political voice of the author becomes the focus of critical inquiry, students and teachers need to develop multiple, active literacies. In a Freirian sense,

literacy involves a good deal more than reading and writing: It is a form of social practice, interwoven into larger social practices, and developed through apprenticeship. Moreover, it is not just a receptive process of socialization into certain conventions of language use—it is an active process of critically evaluating those practices into which one is being socialized (Kern, 1995, p. 68).

Modern language students are frequently called upon to analyze and decipher the texts of the "Other," yet they are rarely asked to become the authors of their own, multilayered texts.²⁴ By creating their own cultural texts, in which the content and genre are drawn from their own subjective, political and historical perspectives, they, and their texts, would become the Subject of exploration, ultimately leading to a greater sensitivity for the perspectives and *points of viewing* of their fellow authors.

What's more, this activity builds on van Lier's (1996) three principles that guide meaningful interaction in the language curriculum: Awareness, autonomy and authenticity. The first principle follows the belief that for students to learn something new, they must first notice it. Once they are aware, they are able to focus their consciousness on that concept and process it by linking their perceptions of the outside world to the patterns of connections that exist in the mind (p. 11).

The second principle, autonomy, stems from the knowledge that the impetus for learning must come from the learner. If the students feel a sense of choice and responsibility towards the activity this will have a direct influence on the degree of positive affect, stemming from feelings of control, ownership and competence, they experience (p. 12). The third principle, authenticity, moves beyond the common interpretation of authentic as applied to classroom texts and tasks. To formulate his notion of authentic, van Lier draws from the existentialist definition which deems an action to be authentic "when it realizes free choice and is an expression of what a person genuinely feels and believes" (p. 13). In the language class, therefore, authentic should also be looked at as "a *process* of engagement in the learning situation, and as a *characteristic* of the persons engaged in learning. As such, authenticity relates to who teachers and learners are and what they do as they interact with one another for the purposes of learning" (p. 125).

The reflexive process of creating and interpreting one's own texts raises the students' awareness of their underlying cultural assumptions and builds a bridge between their own

²⁴ For discussions on the multiple layers of representation and interpretation of student generated [digital]

and the target language cultures. In the process, these students are involved in an authentic activity as they interact with their fellow learners while working on their personally meaningful texts.

Concluding Remarks

Modern language educators, curriculum designers and policy makers agree that the teaching of culture as process, not product, needs to take a higher priority in the classroom if we are to succeed in preparing our students to take their place as respectful and enlightened cosmopolitan citizens. In intellectual circles, a great deal of debate has followed about which concept of culture should be promoted, ranging from anthropological views on cultural processes to feminist and multicultural views of difference. Ultimately, this has led to a common understanding that culture consists of the many perspectives and voices that are represented by its members and manifested in their socially constructed multi-layered artifacts, whether in the form of texts or institutions.

To decipher these artifacts and understand the situated position of the Subject, teachers and students require critical literacies that enable them to recognize their own position, and that of the voice, or author, who speaks. To develop this critical literacy, teachers and students may need to re-conceptualize not only their relationship with each other, but also with the educational and social tools and instruments—manifested in language, culture, curriculum, method and texts—they have created. “[B]y helping students to decode the ideological dimensions of texts, institutions, social practices and cultural forms, critical literacy aims to develop a critical citizenry capable of analyzing and challenging the oppressive characteristics of the society” (Pennycook, 1990, p. 309)

In constructionist and communicative learning environments and ecologies, modern language teacher educators and student teachers have the exciting opportunity to call upon

texts, see Goldman-Segall 1995b, 1998b.

their life experiences to share and read the many situated points of viewing of the various Subjects-in-interaction. To move beyond, student teachers can then use the multiple, active literacies learned in their methods courses to construct not only new interpretations of the cultural artifacts created by individuals within their own and the target culture, but to create their own texts, in a variety of media, that reflect their newly discovered awareness of their Subject position in relation to the socially constructed artifacts of the cultures of study.

Chapter 3

Designing Selves, Interpreting Others: Digital Video Ethnography as a Methodology for Apprentices to Appropriate Multiliteracies

Theoretical Lineage of Educational Theory and Method

Piaget to Papert

In 1964, Seymour Papert left behind the Alpine villages near Geneva, Switzerland, where he had spent the previous five years immersed in the constructivist child development theories of his mentor, Jean Piaget, to enter the “urban world of cybernetics and computers” (Papert, 1980) at MIT in Boston, Massachusetts. There he carried inside himself Piaget’s theories and began a life long inquiry into how children think and how computers just might think one day. In the process, he developed constructionism, a teaching method which assumes that children are more actively engaged when working on a personally meaningful external artifact, which he calls an “object-to-think-with” (Papert, 1980). Papert remembers his bicycle gears as his very first object-to-think-with and the joy he derived from thinking about them, tinkering with them, and using them ultimately fueled his passion for mathematics. He created the computer language LOGO to encourage children to invent their own objects-to-think-with. One such object is Turtle, a computer controlled cybernetic animal which exists within the cognitive minicultures of the LOGO environment. Turtle is a successful object because it embodies “an intersection of cultural presence, embedded knowledge, and the possibility for personal identification” (Papert, 1980, p. 11). Papert has spent most of his professional life advancing the constructivist ideas of Piaget by developing his own theories of constructionist teaching practices. Graduate

students who have passed through Papert's MIT Media Lab have immersed themselves in the Piagetian/Papertian theories that guide their research within its walls and those of the inner-city classrooms in which they conduct research. Graduate students over the past fifteen years have constructed their own objects-to-think-with and emerged with their own theories which take these scholars' research to new levels of understanding and practice.

Papert to Goldman-Segall

In 1990, one of these doctoral students, Ricki Goldman-Segall, left behind the cyber labs of MIT and the urban classrooms of Boston for the lush and rainy forests of British Columbia, Canada. With her she brought her object-to-think-with, Learning Constellations 1.0, and her theory, configurational validity. Learning Constellations 1.0 is the digital media ethnographic analysis tool Goldman-Segall created and used to analyze six video discs of data she collected of children using LOGO to design cyber objects-to-think-with at the Hennigan School in Boston. This tool is the first video annotation system built which supports the analysis of an entire body of research data using ethnographic style video data (Goldman-Segall, 1990). It employs the metaphor of stars and constellations to build upon the ethnographic research methods of Clifford Geertz within a constructionist framework. Users select, label and annotate individual data chunks, stars, and then group them into meaningful knowledge clusters, constellations. This digital environment allows not only for the media designer's "thick description" (Geertz, 1973) of the event, but also the interpreter's "thick interpretation" (Goldman-Segall, 1998b). Goldman-Segall's theory of configurational validity argues that distributed communities of inquiry can build more robust analyses of multimedia stories. Stories of multiple "authors" can be layered in clusters, or "constellations," in such a way that larger, more robust theories emerge (Goldman-Segall, 1995a, p. 1).

Since coming to the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia, Goldman-Segall has gone on to develop other digital media tools— Constellations™, Points of Viewing™, WebConstellations™ and, most recently, Orion™—to further the digital data analysis methods in the field of research she has pioneered, digital video ethnography. In her Multimedia Ethnographic Research Lab, MERLin, Goldman-Segall has carried on in the Piagetian/Papertian model, working with graduate students to extend and further the methods and theories of her mentors as well as her own. Many of Goldman-Segall's recent digital tools and theories have emerged from a three-year digital video ethnographic study she carried out with middle-school children who studied Clayoquot Sound, one of North America's largest temperate rain forests with intact watersheds, as a community of inquiry.

In this socio-scientific study, the students assumed the role of video ethnographers who researched the various *points of viewing* (Goldman-Segall, 1998b) of its members, ranging from loggers to environmentalists, tourists to local shopkeepers. These student-ethnographers collected data in various media forms and used Constellations to build artifacts and theories. They didn't try to find a solution to the problem, they tried to use it as an object-to-think-with. Eventually, however, Goldman-Segall found it necessary to re-articulate Papert's notion of objects as catalysts for learning. In wanting to emphasize the importance of the humanistic elements in the Clayoquot Sound project, she puts forth the notion of *subjects-to-think-with*. She shares her theory-making process in this digital video ethnography when she writes, "what we found was that it was our relationship with it, how we turned an object into a subject of interest for us all, that kept our interest levels high" (1996b, p. 106). Goldman-Segall refers to this phenomenon in her earlier research in the late 1980's, when she observes that Mindy, a student at the Hennigan school in Boston, has an affinity for programming make-believe girls in LOGO. Goldman-Segall ponders:

Is the object a transitional obsession, as Freud would have us believe—a fetish around which to gather our images? Or can the object provide a sociocultural window into a thinking process, a way to think about thought and about the lives we

live? Maybe the girls that girls make are indeed epistemological inventions, subjects rather than objects-to-think-with, as Mindy suggests (1998b, p. 186)

In her subsequent articles, Goldman-Segall uses the term subject in the same context as when she describes Mindy's girl object as a socio-cultural subject. For Goldman-Segall, subject is field of study to be explored, whether it be academic, such as mathematics or science, or socio-cultural such as the political, social and environmental tensions in Clayoquot Sound. Within these various subjects exists a multitude of perspectives and stories to be learned. The digital video ethnographic tools that Goldman-Segall develops provide the platform for these voices to be heard, a forum for what she terms "a multi-logue" (1995a).

Goldman-Segall to Beers

In 1996 I left behind the Flemish belfroi towers and flat countryside of Lille, France, for the streamlined skyscrapers and snow-capped mountains of Vancouver, Canada. A native of California, I had been in Lille on a three-year English language teaching assignment at the National Centre for Scientific Research and the Institute of Political Sciences. I came to Vancouver to begin a Ph.D. program in modern language education at the University of British Columbia and brought with me my experience and expertise as a Spanish and English language teacher, teacher educator and materials developer (see Ascarrunz Gilman, Zwerling Sugano, & Beers, 1993; Beers, 1997; Gil & Beers, 1993). In my 9 years teaching prior to my arrival, I had consistently centered my lesson plans and textbook materials on authentic media documents, such as newspaper, television and music, taken from the target language culture. I witnessed with enthusiasm the growing popularity of the Internet, which houses a myriad of multilingual multimedia texts, and sensed this would be the direction language teaching and materials development would take.

Over the years I had become dissatisfied with the level of sense making that my students and I were able to achieve with traditional media texts. I predicted these new digital texts would require an even more sophisticated literacy, one that would call upon the intellectual and technical skills needed to decipher their inherent cultural, linguistic and design elements. My role as teacher and author assumed I was an expert of sorts in my ability to lead my students to understand the meaning behind these texts, yet I was sure that I, and my colleagues, had much to learn. My search to develop a method to promote an authentic media text literacy in teachers and their students ultimately transpired within the walls of MERLin, working closely with Goldman-Segall. Here in MERLin we are immersed in the Piagetian/Papertian theories of educational development and design, submerged in the artistic and seductive filming techniques of Richard Leacock (1973, 1986) and Glorianna Davenport (1993), and, in short, mentored by its maker in the art of digital video ethnography.

Whereas Goldman-Segall's *object-to think-with* was her digital media ethnographic analysis tool, Learning Constellations™ 1.0, my *object-to-think-with* is the modern language methodology course I designed and taught over a three year period, *Advanced Studies in Language Education: Integrating Language and Culture with Modern Media*. To improve upon each new version of the course, I adopted the iterative and integrated design process used by systems design teams in Human Computer Interaction (HCI) interface usability studies which allowed me to alter and improve aspects of the course in response to student feedback and instructor observations. While Goldman-Segall's *subject-to-think-with* is her recent research is Clayoquot Sound, my *subject-to-think-with* is the course content of versions 1.0, 2.0 and 3.0 of the modern language teacher education course.

The theory I put forth in this dissertation, Subjects-in-interaction, comes as a result of designing and re-designing my *object-to-think-with* and analyzing the data collected during the digital video ethnography carried out in versions 2.0 and 3.0. It builds upon Papert's notion of *objects-to-think-with* in that the authentic media texts can serve as

catalysts for exploration and discovery on the part of the student and teacher, and it builds upon Goldman-Segall's notion of subjects-to-think-with in that it highlights the humanistic aspects inherent to the area of study. However, I view Papert and Goldman-Segall's notions with a critical theory lens, in which the object and subject take on a new level of agency. The Subject is, therefore, promoted to the status of proper noun and assumes the role of actor, rather than companion, as in object-to-think-with, or site, as in subject-to-think-with. Subjects-in-interaction extends Goldman-Segall's theory of configurational validity.

Configurational validity, as applied to a socio-cultural subject such as Clayoquot Sound (Goldman-Segall, 1996b, 1998b), says that a more robust interpretation of the phenomenon can be achieved when the human participants are given a forum to view and discuss each other's representations and interpretations, or readings, of an event. Subjects-in-interaction, as applied to modern language education or, more specifically, the designing and interpreting of authentic media texts from one's own and the target language culture, says that all of the textual elements, human and non-human, are active agents in the social construction of the event. Subjects-in-interaction is both a theory and a methodology for the writing and reading of authentic media texts which looks at the process of creation and interpretation of the text as the event. In this dynamic meaning-making process, all Subjects, human and non-human, are agents in an ever changing, dialectical inter-action.

Application of Educational Theory and Method

In this section, I will examine how the theory and methodology of Subjects-in-interaction can inform our practice as we encourage modern language teachers and students to become expert designers and interpreters of digital media texts. First I will discuss how the methodology of digital video ethnography informs our teacher education practice as we strive to prepare certain modern language student teachers to become expert designers and

interpreters of digital media texts. Second, I will explore how the notion of self and other, in the context of a digital video ethnography, informs our practice as critical, multiliterate modern language designers and interpreters of media texts.

Multiliterate designers and interpreters of digital media texts

In modern language teacher education, the aim is to prepare student teachers to be experts in the languages they teach, so they, at the sides of their students, can begin a life-long exploration of the target language culture and the texts it produces. These teachers will encourage their language students to eventually become critical interpreters of the target language texts; to draw from their own interactions with the world to comprehend and even delight in the interactions of the other. Carmen Luke (2000), a language and literacy pedagogue, outlines the three components inherent to critical literacy. It includes a meta-knowledge of diverse meaning systems and the socio-cultural contexts in which they are produced and embedded in everyday life; the mastery of the technical and analytic skills with which to negotiate those systems in diverse contexts; and, finally, the capacity to understand how these systems and skills operate in relations and interests of power within and across social institutions.

In my approach within the modern language classroom, we are active participants in our sense making as we constantly call upon our life experiences and interactions to decipher the codes of the texts we read and the discussions we hear. Traditional authentic texts from the target language culture have always been multilayered and enigmatic. Their pages incorporate cultural references nuanced in color, type set, and image. Their language is encoded with register, style and mood. Their voices capture accent, rhythm and intonation. More and more, digital media is changing the ways in which we communicate. The messages we are able to transmit across language communities are taking on new representational forms; they are increasingly more complex, incorporating sound, video,

image and text. These new multilayered electronic texts, despite their life-like qualities and increasing depth of detail, are no truer than older, simpler versions. After all, they are still artistic *re*-presentations of one author's experience presented through a medium. As Elliot Eisner notes:

One feature of a medium is that it mediates and anything that mediates changes what it conveys; the map is not the territory and the text is not the event. We learn to write and to draw, to dance and to sing, in order to *re*-present the world as we know it (1998, p. 27).

Cultures throughout history have created formulas and genres to facilitate the re-presentation of an event, but they are only effective when mutually understood by the designer and the interpreter. Language teachers and learners who are versed in the myriad of genres of communication are best able to decipher these texts. Eisner's (1998) notion of connoisseurship and criticism help identify some of the skills student teachers and their students can use to call upon their life stories to become active interpreters of the target culture's texts: "The word connoisseurship comes from the Latin *cognoscere*, to know. In the visual arts, to know depends upon the ability to see, not merely to look" (p. 6). Eisner explains that an expert in any field, whether a radiologist studying an x-ray or a conductor directing an orchestra, is able to draw from her experience to see certain qualities that other lay people do not notice. Only when these qualities are seen can they be appreciated; for when they are invisible they go unnoticed and no further reflection can take place.

Luke (2000) argues the digital information environment has forced us to reconsider the qualifications we use to paint our profile of an expert. These days, an "understanding of the relations among ideas is as if not more important than mastery of the ideas themselves" (p. 73). The expert is no longer the one with the decontextualized facts, Luke says, she is the one who "sees and seeks the connection among related pieces of information" (p. 73). In this sense, the expert interpreter of the target language's authentic media texts not only sees the inherent qualities of the text, as Eisner explains, but also seeks how they, the interpreter included, inter-act to co-create meaning.

Luke's digital age expert possesses a digital electronic text multiliteracy,²⁵ based on notions of hybridity and intertextuality, that "transcends genres, media and cultural frames of reference" (2000, p. 73). In this context,

[m]eaning making from the multiple linguistic, audio, and symbolic visual graphics of hypertext means that the cyberspace navigator must draw on a range of knowledges about traditional and newly blended genres or representational conventions, cultural and symbolic codes, as well as linguistically coded and software driven meanings (p. 73).

The technological multiliteracy which Luke defines is difficult to develop even when reading the texts of one's own culture, in which one is versed in the common protocols of daily life and language. Presented with the texts of the target language culture, the task's difficulty is compounded.

As tourists, we may only see the superficial qualities in the target language culture: We hear the rhythm of the language, we see the icons of its civilization, we see the color of its people and feel the fabric of its dressings. We remain at our novice understanding of its potential. As experts, we are able to penetrate deeper into the multilayered text, to see those qualities that a lay person may overlook. We can enjoy the difference, understand the reasons, and grow personally from this interaction. The qualities of the text, their intertextuality and inter-action, become the Subject in research, not the Object.

Digital video ethnography as methodology to foster multiliteracies

Subjects-in-interaction as a theory and methodology for developing multiliteracies for writing and reading digital texts is informed by the general assumptions that guide qualitative researchers in their inquiry. Qualitative researchers believe there is no such ideal as a single objective reality. Instead, multiple realities of any given phenomenon are socially constructed through individual and collective interpretations of the situation (McMillan &

²⁵ Ricki Goldman-Segall (1998a) notes that, as a result of being involved in the Clayoquot Sound project, some of the Bayside middle school children showed signs that they had "become more fluent in the use of media and the role of media when thinking about complex socio-scientific issues(...) They had shown that they could converse, write about, and build representations that showed their deep understanding of the issues" (p. 11).

Schumacher, 1993, 14). Each individual constructs her own reading of the event as directed by her sense of self in relation to the other. The self is the sum total of the life experiences that have informed the paradigm in which she operates and the other is the entity which either confirms or contradicts this paradigm. The qualitative researcher's aim is to understand the event from the perspective of the participants, to uncover the qualities that contribute to re-constructing its meaning and significance.

Ethnographic studies are prototypical examples of qualitative research in that the ethnographer integrates herself into a localized group of individuals, often taking on a participatory role in their activities. Critical ethnographic approaches to research in second language learning and teaching (see Atkinson & Ramanathan, 1995; Canagarajah, 1993; Holliday, 1996; Ramanathan & Atkinson, 1999) have enabled researchers to treat formal learning and teaching contexts as cultural constructs and thereby situate them within the larger social realities in which they operate. The ethnographer collects data in the form of field note observations, artifacts, interviews, conversations, and images and compiles them into a descriptive and interpretive account. She recognizes she is an active element in the dynamic and ever evolving cultural phenomenon of inquiry who changes the social context. She also acknowledges the subjective lens through which she views the events will influence her findings and interpretations.

Early positivistic approaches to ethnographic research, however, tried to eliminate the subjective self from its equation, thinking that objectivity makes it possible to locate and isolate the reality of the world out there. Subjectivity was seen to weaken the validity of the findings, in that they might say more about the beliefs of the person carrying out the study than about the truth itself. We are the sum total of our life experiences. Our wisdom is created by our contact with nature, its inhabitants and their artifacts. Qualitative inquiry acknowledges that the self is the instrument through which we experience the world around us. As such, this inquiry "is not only directed towards those aspects of the world 'out there,' it is also directed to objects and events that we are able to create" (Eisner, 1998, p. 21).

Digital video ethnography is a qualitative research methodology which centers its processes of interpretation on those very objects and events we are able to create (Goldman-Segall, 1990, 1995a, 1996b, 1998b). It is a testimonial to Goldman-Segall's struggle with the dilemma between subjectivity and validity in the human sciences. It reconceptualizes and reinvents traditions of qualitative research within a post-modern framework, one in which authorship and identity are transitive in relation to the context of the event. Goldman-Segall's theories on what constitutes robust research in a socio-cultural site are inspired by the work of scholars from the areas of visual and cultural anthropology (see Clifford, 1986; Geertz, 1973; Mead, 1975), critical ethnography (see Lather, 1991; Tyler, 1986) semiotics (see Barthes, 1977), and filmmaking (see Davenport, 1993; Leacock, 1973, 1986) and are embodied in her digital ethnographic methods and data analysis tools (1990, 1997, 1998b).

In her method, Goldman-Segall encourages the participants in the study to take on new roles as digital ethnographers, thereby becoming both the researchers and researched, while investigating their chosen subject of inquiry. Together, they create a robust collective database of qualitative digital data, open to interpretation and re-interpretation by its many users. These participants use digital ethnographic tools, such as video camcorders, movie making software and Goldman-Segall's digital video ethnographic analysis tools to build these robust collective data bases, or, as she also terms them, "platforms for multi-loguing" (1995a). The use of these visual forms of data for cultural analysis and interpretation is not new since anthropologists have long incorporated a wide variety of media representations, in the form of photographs, films, novels and cultural artifacts into their field notes. What is different is the interaction that this new media provides for the sharing of the different perspectives as they relate to these media objects. These tools support rich interactions between the different human and non-human elements, enabling them all to take on a more active role of Subject, rather than object, in research.

Goldman-Segall's digital video ethnographic tools exploit digital video's descriptive capacities and the potential of on-line digital networks for perspective sharing and trading.

Video is able to provide the “thick description” Geertz (1973) calls for in ethnographic fieldwork because it captures the subject of interest, along with her interactions with the environment, tools and the others (1998b). In its digital format, the video can be scrutinized, analyzed, and catalogued down to its most minute detail (Goldman-Segall, 1989). With Goldman-Segall’s data analysis tools, the digital video ethnographer can further contextualize her video with text, documents, fieldnotes, and other data in order to gain insights into what to shoot and to provide other users with layer upon layer of meaning, interpretation and significance (Goldman-Segall, 1993). As the data base grows, the digital video ethnographer can sort, annotate, and group this data into meaningful configurations based on her own interpretations while other users can simultaneously do the same. With Goldman-Segall’s most recent on-line tools, WebConstellations™ and Orion™, these users need not operate within local networks, they may work from removed sites, assuming the role of viewer or active participant, depending on the access they desire or are granted.

Digital video ethnographic scenario in modern language education

In the body of literature on multimedia and digital video ethnography Goldman-Segall has written over the last ten years, she has invited the interpreter to partake in her methods and use her tools by sharing her experiences and presenting scenarios that can serve as models of practice. She has chosen not to outline specific procedures to follow and techniques to implement, acknowledging the individuality each video ethnographer brings to the relations between her subject of study and fellow researchers. In this tradition, this dissertation presents an example of a digital video ethnography carried out within a university modern language education methodology course. In the model presented in this dissertation, 29 modern language student teachers took on the role of digital video ethnographer in the summer of 1999 as they developed theories about how personal life

experience, representation and interpretations of culture affect one's writing and reading of digital media texts.

Digital media, with their capabilities to create media rich texts complete with sound, images and video, create a new unexplored predicament for the language teacher and learner in this new role as ethnographer. Whereas the anthropologist traditionally starts from a context-and-experience-rich environment and imagines a text, the language teacher and learner start with a text and must imagine a context (Teroaka, 1989), drawing from previous experience, knowledge, or stereotypes about the target language culture. To explore this quandary with my student teachers, I implemented a media-based approach based on communicative language teaching and constructionist learning models which encourages pre-service and in-service modern language teachers to use their personal experiences to create and interpret multi-layered media rich texts. By, in effect, reversing the contextual void these modern language teachers and learners often confront when interpreting the texts from the target language culture, I hoped to raise our awareness to the many subtle and dynamic inter-relations between the human and non-human textual Subjects that lead to the process of creation and inter-pretation.

In this digital video ethnography, participants used a digital movie authoring and design tool, CineKit™, to make 30-second digital movies on their cultural interpretation of an object of their choice. Topics they chose included coffee, cars, flowers, and letters. The purpose of centering their movie around a physical object, was to heighten their awareness to the many human faces, or perspectives, that give it meaning. Students were encouraged to choose their own topics to ensure they felt a sense of ownership and personal attachment to their project, thereby encouraging autonomy and authenticity in the activity (van Lier, 1996). Throughout the project, the participants filmed each other and were filmed as they worked and reflected on their digital artifacts. They then used WebConstellations™ to share, annotate and critique the digital representations of their process and product in

relation to the content, the integration of language and culture with modern media, being studied in the course.

Multiliterate designers and interpreters of digital texts, like ethnographers involved in qualitative research, try to unearth the various Subjects in a social artifact to study the way their inter-actions contribute to the designer and interpreter's sense-making process. They acknowledge there is no single reading of a text, just as there is no single account of an event. The text is the visual artifact of a social process involving one or more authors' representation and inter-pretation of an event as viewed through each interpreter's cultural filter.

Digital video ethnography enables the researcher and the researched to become experts in seeing the qualities in the target language culture as manifested in its artifacts. It does this by providing a tangible medium in which to step outside of one's self to view the data from multiple perspectives (Goldman-Segall, 1998b), each perspective building upon the former, to approximate a whole. In the process of working toward capturing the entirety of an event, one discovers the impossibility of it. As Eisner affirmed earlier, "[t]he text is not the event" (1998, p. 27). Digital video ethnography reminds us that interpretation is a cyclical, infinite process.

When the digital video ethnographer sets out to create a text in the form of a short digital movie, she is obliged to make a series of decisions based on her understanding of the event. In a 30-second movie, real estate is coveted. In other words, there is only enough visual and audio "space" for a fraction of the images, sounds and words she may like to include. She must assess the role each Subject plays in the whole and work within the constraints of the medium to best represent this interaction:

Being a digital ethnographer combines groping through [a] myriad [of] video-taped conversations and finding connections between and among them, fumbling through data, catching the nuance in a smile, and finally producing a work that seems whole, even though, as author or co-author, one always has a feeling of partiality (Goldman-Segall, 1998b, 87).

After striving, yet failing, to capture the entirety of the event, the digital video ethnographer no longer believes that a reality does exist out there, which can be captured and documented. Terms such as validity and authenticity are no longer prized, as they only reflect degrees of proximity to this unattainable ideal. The language learner's interpretation of the target culture's authentic media text, therefore, is but one of many possible readings; often an inexperienced reading at that.

The Subject position digital text designers and interpreters occupy becomes even more apparent when the ethnographer's digital creations, along with data chunks capturing moments in her creative process, are posted in a visible, open forum. At this point, the digital video ethnographer has no alternative but to

reposition (...) [her]self as a member of a community of inquiry—one voice among many. The ethnographer, the video technology, and the total environment within which the researcher and the [Subjects]²⁶ interact are inseparable (Goldman-Segall, 1998, p. 88).

Confronted with multiple interpretations that sometimes differ, sometimes confer with her own, the digital video ethnographer is acutely aware that her self is but one Subject-in-interaction with the others.

A Digital Video Ethnography of Self and Other

The notion of self and other, explored in the context a digital video ethnography, can inform our practice as multiliterate modern language designers and interpreters of digital texts. With practice, a digital video ethnographer learns to seek different data and her ability to see the important qualities of a text heighten:

As one's ability to take different perspectives grows, what is considered relevant shifts. The data one seeks change. The interpretation that is appropriate alters (...) It

²⁶ Goldman-Segall uses "children" in the original citation, a reference to her digital video ethnographic research with middle school children in Boston and Vancouver Island. I have replaced "children" with "Subjects" to apply her observation to my situation.

is a matter of being able to handle several ways of seeing as a series of differing views rather than reducing all views to a single correct one (Eisner, 1998, p. 49).

This awareness of self and other as gained in the research process is a significant step toward becoming multiliterate digital text designers and interpreters in one's own and the target language. The constant role reversal that digital video ethnographers undergo, as they move between viewer and viewed, teacher and learner, Subject and object, develops a certain flexibility of perspective which facilitates the study of self and other. This skill is valued in the second language learning process, as it can lead to communicative and cultural competence (Byram, 1994) and, ultimately, greater intercultural understanding (Byram, 1994; Christie, 1990; Rorty, 1995).

Multiple identities: The study of selves and others

Before my student-teachers and I set off exploring what it might look like to begin to understand and teach the nuances in the products, practices and perspectives of those who speak the target language, I lead them through a simple, yet revealing, activity of self discovery. I ask them to draw a graphic representation of their many selves, or identities and social roles, to share with their classmates.²⁷ Most often my words are met with cocked heads and quizzical looks. Many are wondering what relevance this exercise has for the course content and others are fretting the personal probes that are bound to come their way.

I begin with myself because, over the years, I have developed a policy to never ask my students to engage in activities in which I would not feel comfortable participating. *I am a teacher, a student, a daughter, a sister, a wife, a mother and a friend. I am an American, a native English speaker, a near-native Spanish-speaker, and a reluctant French-speaker.* My graphic representation of self may take the form of gradually expanding circles, or a series of boxes with interconnected arrows, or perhaps a tree with hanging branches and penetrating roots.

After I have shared my graphic self-representation with my students, I ask each one to extend this metaphor further by creating an identity object, a 3-dimensional representation of her self.

This assignment, inspired by Papert's constructionist notion of objects-to-think-with (1980), is designed as a rapport building activity that can promote sharing and contribute to building participant identity and group awareness of the various countries, cultures, and values represented in the class. Its aim is to encourage the participants to go beyond the traditional forms of representation and provide the first tangible bit of data for discussion on the relation between identity and language learning.

In any of my imaginings, or in those of my students, the same is always true: We, as individuals, are invariably defined by our relationship with the other. Indeed, the "root word of *self*—*se*, or *seu*, (...) [is] the pronoun of the third person. Most of the descendant words, except *self* itself, were constructed to allude to "other," to connected people" (Heshusius, 1994, p. 17). I am a daughter because I was born to a mother and father. I am a teacher because I share my knowledge and experience with my students and try to create an environment which fosters learning. Modifiers can be attached. I am a reluctant French speaker because I am ashamed of my accent and syntax, yet I am a French speaker nonetheless because I have at one point in my life formed a deep and intimate relationship with the French language and those who speak it. These multifaceted physical objects make obvious the fact we are not a singular self but multi-identified selves. Likewise, our classmates are not each an other, but others, increasing exponentially with the size of the class.

Culture teaching in modern language education has typically concentrated on the lives and artifacts of the target language native speakers, with little regard for the personal stories of its learners. As a result, the perceived social distance between the two has made language and culture learning appear to be a daunting, if not impossible, task (Reagan &

²⁷ This activity was first inspired by the "Identity Posters" module in *Talking Culture* (MacNiel & Wilmann,

Osborn, 1998). This dilemma finds its origin and, fortunately, its possible alternative in the field of anthropology. The problem, as Elvi Whittaker, an anthropologist, explains, is that Anthropology has invented the notion of culture as a means of promoting the self worth of the colonial, white male by drawing clear distinctions—and distances—between the researchers and their objects of study:

[C]ulture is the very epitome of othering. It depends for its existence on the subjective ordering of a world full of Others (...) the Other is such essences as class, gender, race, ethnicity. The very act of research makes an Other out of someone" (p. 113).

In this passage, the Other, not the Subject, is promoted to the status of proper noun, thereby emphasizing the grandiose position it has occupied in anthropological research. Lingering implications from this ethnocentric attitude towards cultural diversity are manifested in contemporary society in the form of multicultural government policy and educational practices. For example, Peter MacLaren (1995, p. 122), a critical theorist, argues that conservative approaches to multiculturalism in the schools do not treat whiteness as a form of ethnicity and therefore posits whiteness as an invisible norm by which other ethnicities are judged. In this way, ethnic *cultures* are treated merely as add-ons and are judged in relation to the inflated culture capital of the Anglo middle class.

Target languages and their cultures are often the objects of study in modern language classrooms, but are rarely the Subjects. Several modern language and other critical pedagogues have suggested approaches to classroom exploration which aim to include and validate the conversant voices in a culture. For Claire Kramsch and Linda von Hoene (1995), the metaphor that speaks to the difference of gender, class, age, region, and ethnicity is the metaphor of culture as discourse; discourse being the process by which people create, relate, organize, and realize meaning (p. 337). As a framework in which to treat culture as discourse in the modern language classroom, they propose a critical feminist modern language

pedagogy which they define as, "the dialogic emergence of differences in an attempt to promote a critical social consciousness through self-reflexivity and self-revision" (p. 331).

Ryuko Kubota (1999, as cited in Pennycook, 2001), in her analysis of Japanese culture constructed by discourses in English language teaching, is also critical of the ways that Japanese culture(s) and other cultures are constructed in the language classroom. She argues that discussions on difference

[h]ave tended to dichotomize Western culture and Eastern culture and to draw rigid cultural boundaries between them. They have given labels such as *individualism, self-expression, critical and analytical thinking*, and *extending knowledge* to Western cultures on the one hand, and *collectivism, harmony, indirection, memorization, and conserving knowledge* to Asian cultures on the other (p. 146).

Poststructuralist feminists point to the multiplicity of Self which strives to break down the dichotomies of native/"foreign," self/other, Subject/object to which Kubota refers. In the same vein, other modern language pedagogues (Fisher, 1996; Hellebrandt, 1996; Moore, 1996) have stressed the need to critically study and assess a linguistic or cultural concept and phenomenon from multiple perspectives. These scholars would agree that

what is needed of both the teacher and of the students is a metalinguistic and metadiscursive awareness that can explore the enactment of difference and encourage critical reflection and revision of one's own subject position (Kramsch & von Hoene, 1995, p. 339).

The modern language classroom has been dominated by a single voiced discourse that restricts the students from seeing themselves as they may be perceived from the perspective of another culture, or even through the eyes of their classmates. A double voiced discourse, however, could incorporate more of the many identities that compose each member.

In his description of an ethnographic study carried out in his modern language class, Fischer (1996) has outlined the advantages of using technology to enable students to become cultural explorers, rather than tourists. He develops his position in the context of an email exchange between American and German language students and demonstrates that students need not remain at a superficial "touristic" level of discussion despite their limited language abilities. He urges them to probe deeper, to explore the target cultures' beliefs and value

systems. Although the study focuses on the other, at the exclusion of self, in that the target language learners are not asked to explicitly reflect on what their own answers may be in their native culture, many of my student teachers have been inspired by the distinction he makes between these two approaches to cultural travel. These student teachers are eager to accompany their future students on an exploratory adventure of this nature since it is only an electronic variation to a familiar approach to research in the language classroom; for most, culture is out there, it is embodied in the other.

Let us imagine the possibilities, however, when these same student teachers are immersed within a digital learning environment that encourages them to re-search and re-think their interactions with the Subjects that surround them, both in their own worlds and in the worlds of the target language speakers. What might these student teachers learn about themselves as learners, teachers, language speakers, and active members of local and global communities? What skills might they learn in the process that will allow them to carry out similar investigations with their future students and what impact might this have on their students' lives and the lives of those with whom they interact?

An alternative to developing still more approaches to anthropological research which essentially evaluate the worth of the target culture from an ethnocentric Anglo perspective, therefore, is to lead the student teachers in a reflective (Schon, 1988; Wallace, 1991) and reflexive (Prell, 1989) process in which they are both the Subjects and objects of study. These students no longer limit their investigations to the other, but also explore themselves and others. This exercise is useful to develop skills in the second language as well as intercultural sensitivity. Digital media, when used within a constructionist discourse based pedagogy, can empower students to carry out their own critical ethnographic research in which the students are able to become both researcher and researched in a "mutually enlightening relationship" (Prell, 1989).

Though the United States and Canada are pluralistic democratic societies which pride themselves on their liberal multicultural ideals, the integration of "culture" and

"diversity" into their modern language curriculum has usually taken the isolated and superficial form of an occasional "cultural day" in which students are treated to folkloric spectacles and a sampling of the target culture's products. Rather than fostering tolerance, intercultural sensitivity, and a higher motivation for learning, these approaches can, in fact, do more harm than good in that they increase the social distance between the learner and the target culture, perpetuate stereotypes, and give only a static, and often archaic, snapshot of what is really an evolving and dynamic cultural discourse within a people who speak the target language.

If, as Mendus (1995) states, "we should see education as, quite generally, a means of enabling all students to understand themselves" (p. 181), and, as Prell (1989) observes, "one must know oneself through and in light of the other" (p. 252), it is clear that the study of self and other should be central to any meaningful curriculum. The process of reflecting on self and other plays a key role in critical multicultural education and modern language education can learn a great deal by following this lead.

"Inter-cultural" education, which is the basis for multicultural and anti-racism programs, and modern language education share the common concern which is to prepare students to take their place as cosmopolitan citizens. In her argument for including cross-cultural and modern language education in the democratic curriculum, Rorty (1995) states, "we cannot hope to understand ourselves-and still less make wise political decisions-without understanding the values, the politics and economics that mark our global neighbors" (p. 62). This exploration of self and other, to which Rorty alludes, is a critical step in the process of constructing one's identity and finding one's place in a modern democratic society. It is also one that is critical to one's success in second language learning.

The contemplation of self and other in the modern language classroom attaches the contextual meaning to the linguistic structures the students are learning, fosters the positive psychological traits adolescents need to live in a pluralistic society and continue in their language learning endeavors, and promotes a favorable classroom

environment conducive to learning. Furthermore, this reflective process guides students to develop critical thinking skills as they contemplate larger issues of native and "foreign" languages and speakers, which can ultimately be applied to the notions of in-group and out-group. *Critical thinking*, as described by Pennycook (2001), "is used to describe a way of bringing more rigorous analysis to problem solving or textual understanding, a way of developing more critical distance" (p. 4).

To establish what skills are necessary to become an international citizen, we can look to the aims of both "inter-cultural" education, which is the basis for multicultural and anti-racism programs, and modern language education. Byram and Morgan (1994), modern language specialists, note that these two fields share the common concern which is "to encourage the acquisition of psychological characteristics susceptible of generating harmonious relationships: lack of ethnocentrism, cognitive flexibility, behavioral flexibility, cultural knowledge, interpersonal sensitivity, [and] communication skills" (p. 181). Speaking from the perspective of multicultural Britain, though these ideals are applicable to any pluralistic society, he argues, "it is thus feasible to see language and culture learning as a significant - perhaps *the* significant - locus for education for international citizenship" (p. 181). In light of the strength of his conviction, I believe these characteristics warrant a deeper discussion of their meaning and implications for developing digital media text multiliteracies.

Within the first of Byram's characteristics, a lack of ethnocentrism, lies the assumption that ethnocentrism is an undesirable quality. Indeed, in examining the characteristics included in Sumner's (1940) definition of ethnocentrism, one can see the threat this attitude can pose to harmony in a pluralistic society:

Ethnocentrism is the technical name for this view of things in which one's own group is the center of everything, and all others are scaled and rated with reference to it...Each group nourishes its own pride and vanity, boasts itself superior, exalts its own divinities, and looks with contempt on outsiders (as cited in Damen, 1987, p. 214).

However, Damen (1987) argues that ethnocentrism - an "adherence to a given set of cultural options adjudged right" (pp. 213-214) - is, in fact, a necessary and natural human attitude which is the very foundation of human identity, given that humans find safety and strength in groups. It is only in modern pluralistic societies, when different ethnic groups come into closer contact and become more accessible to one another, that ethnocentrism can become a threat. In this context, ethnocentrism becomes negative when it is used to "shut others out, provide the basis for derogatory evaluations, and rebuff change" (Damen, 1987, p. 214).

A parallel can be drawn between Byram's ideal of possessing a "lack of ethnocentrism" and Richards' (as cited in Mendus, 1995) ideal of "humility." Richards explains that if we understand humility not as "holding oneself in low esteem," but rather as "having oneself in proper perspective," then humility can be a valuable trait in Western society (p. 40). Mendus (1995) concludes, "the humble person is not someone who puts a low value on his own talents. Rather, he is someone who makes a proper assessment of those talents" (p. 40).

In a similar vein, we can further benefit from adopting Appiah's (1997) sentiment of "cosmopolitanism" as an ideal to counter ethnocentrism. For Appiah,

the cosmopolitan patriot can entertain the possibility of a world in which everyone is a rooted cosmopolitan, attached to a home of her own, with its own cultural particularities, but taking pleasure from the presence of other, different, places that are home to other, different, people (p. 2).

In order to learn a second, or third, language and enjoy interactions with its speakers and the texts they produce, it is important to be able to first imagine the possibility of a culture beyond one's own; one worthy of the investment it takes to learn the linguistic components of its language and cultural practices of its people. One must also keep in mind that we are, in effect, members of " 'imagined communities' of modernity we call 'nations'" (Appiah, 1997, p. 10), and that these differences and particularities we reject from the other groups are really endemic to our own as well. This ability to emotionally shift from one world to another reflects a higher level of thinking, one Rand Spiro (see Spiro, Feltovich, Jacobson &

Coulson, 1991) describes as cognitive flexibility in his work with the effects of digital hypermedia with learners.

Byram (1989) is not alone when he speculates as to “the [cognitive] effects on the individual of being exposed to two languages and cultures, particularly two which are fundamentally distant and distinct from each other; in other words, of having the linguistic and cultural potential realized simultaneously in two ways rather than one” (p. 105). Byram’s mention of the positive trait of cognitive flexibility arises from Lambert’s early studies on the cognitive process of bilingual students in French immersion schools in Canada. Lambert (1977) concluded that bilinguals are psychologically different from monolinguals. More recently, Lambert et al. (1993) have made the claim that bilingual schooling leads to higher cognitive processes in the students which improves their performance across the curriculum (p. 18). These findings have been contested since they can just as well be attributed to such variables as the high socio-economic class of its learners and the high status and cultural capital of the French language and culture in the Canadian society in which they live. These factors lead Carey (1997) to speculate:

(...) students in bilingual programs at all ages spend much time contemplating differences in expression between the two languages and playing with the similarities and differences in the languages with their peers (...) However, to argue that explicit awareness of a second language, as opposed to enrichment in the first language, is more beneficial to cognitive functioning has not been demonstrated (p. 216).

Nonetheless, I believe it is fair to assume that knowing two languages is much more than simply knowing two ways of speaking. The mind of a speaker who has in some way attached two sets of linguistic details to a conceptual representation has contemplated possibilities and alternatives that the monolingual speaker has had no need to consider.

It is in keeping with this opinion that Stern (1982), in his plea to reform French core programs across Canada, proposes a general language education syllabus as an integral component of the curriculum. In this syllabus, one would attempt to “think about language and languages in general, about language learning, about cultures and societies” (p. 41). He justifies this progressive change in the modern language curriculum by stating that this

syllabus would deal with general linguistic and cultural phenomena, make learners alert to the process of language learning (...) and might even include discussions of a philosophical nature about the relations between language and thought, language and society, or language and reality" (p. 42). The teaching strategy he proposes would be a "highly cognitive one that involves students in making "crosslingual" and "crosscultural" observations and comparisons and that will encourage them to think about their own language learning" (p. 42). The larger goal would be for learners to be able to transfer their insights into language and culture gained in their core French, or other modern language, classes to other languages and cultures in their own society. Some of the recommendations Stern (1982) has made have only just recently been embodied in the new British Columbia modern language curriculum, manifested in the curriculum guidelines (IRP's) for each modern language taught in grades 5-12.

A commonly held assumption in modern language education is that if an individual is familiar with the social norms and shared beliefs of a culture, this knowledge will then inform her to model her behavior accordingly (Byram, 1989; Seelye, 1993). However, it has been established that neither the mere banking of cultural facts nor the close physical proximity of the minority and majority members leads to intercultural appreciation or tolerance (Byram, 1989; Christie, 1990; Kramsch, 1993). A consistent analysis of the underlying motivations of the actions performed by members of the students' own and the target culture is critical to developing an understanding of what contexts lead to what actions by members of both groups, as well as a sensitivity and willingness to alter one's performance accordingly.

The two ideals of cultural knowledge and behavioral flexibility that Byram identifies can be clarified by contrasting the two multicultural models of cultural competence and cultural understanding Feinberg (1995) presents. He defines cultural competence as "what we have when we are able to recognize and participate in the routines of another way of life and thereby guide a part of our own development by its conceptions of performance and

excellence" (p. 54). Cultural understanding, however, means "we understand its core set of beliefs about self and other and we are able to translate these into particular patterns of behavior" (p. 56). In other words, "to say that a person understands a culture is to say that she has access to that set of beliefs and is able to reconstruct them when required" (p. 55).

Having engaged in the reflective process of creating and sharing one's interpretation of one's own culture, as well as reading the texts of the target culture, one becomes conscious of the difference between the accepted and expected behavior of one's own culture and that of the other. This insight is the result of a multitude of nuanced decisions taken from cues in the context, in the form of qualities, in which the interpreter finds herself. Language is a social construction, invented by humans to transmit the codes and meanings of a culture. To communicate, one must be able to read the other person, like a text, and intuitively grasp the meaning and emotion she is trying to convey. Communication skills, which are needed to carry on a dialogue with another person, therefore involve a sensitivity to the other speaker. Communicative competence involves "knowing what to say, when to say it, how, and to whom in any given speech act" (Damen, 1989, p. 368). These skills require not only linguistic and lexical knowledge about the target language but also intercultural and interpersonal sensitivity and critical language awareness.

Because individuals are members of many communities, cultures and subcultures, it is useless to learn only the labels, or signifiers, without also experiencing those codes and artifacts, or signifieds, to which the signifiers are attached. Geertz (1973) believes that reading culture is like reading a text. Systems of meaning, or webs of significance as he calls them, are sets of arbitrary relationships between variables— such as words, behaviors, and physical symbols— in a culture and the meanings that are attached to them. To read the culture and its texts, then, it is crucial to learn what it is about these signifieds that gives them importance to the community that refers to them.

The modern language student teachers involved in version 3.0 of this university course and research project created their movies with the intent to unearth the webs of

significance in which the object of choice in their movie is entangled. They made the implicit systems of meaning surrounding the object explicit when they meticulously chose and layered the qualities they wanted to include into their textual representation of this object. These systems of meaning grew as each participant used WebConstellations™ to spin their interpretations and re-interpretations of the digital media texts into this web.

Subject-ive Conclusions

In light of the new BC Language Policy, implemented at the dawn of the Pacific century, in which we will see a shifting in the status and cultural capital of minority languages and cultures (Carey, 1997), I believe it is timely to re-evaluate the state of modern language education. Innovative methods we use to educate our student teachers, by nature of their design, can have a dramatic effect on our future success in preparing young learners to take their place in a pluralistic society. We can shake up conventional power relations between traditional Subjects and objects of research by inviting the participants to undergo a systematic and multidimensional exploration of not only the other, but selves and others as Subjects-in-interaction within the context of a digital video ethnography. In this way, we can model positive investigative methods to be used by all Subjects of the research project—ranging from text to classroom student to student teacher to teacher educator and university professor.

A focus on ones' own textual representations, along with those of the others, is an important first step in balancing the unequal power plays in which the dominant language group scrutinizes the other culture from the superior position of their generally shared interpretation of what is normal. Naturally, when one is member of a seemingly homogeneous group of language learners involved in a one-way study of the other, it is easy to evaluate those other customs, products and perspectives as strange, rather than viewing them as different, but valid. In these situations, without an in-depth and systematic

inclusion of selves, intercultural sensitivity goes out the window and we are left with target culture consumption.

The study of selves and others in modern language education can, indeed, be a catalyst in fostering in its learners those positive psychological traits that facilitate successful language learning and a cosmopolitan inspired approach to global citizenship. But let us not end the argument here. Lous Heshusius (1994) cautions against becoming overly concerned with the self in the research process— or the other, for that matter—lest our preoccupation with the still-dominant discourse of Cartesian dualism cloud our abilities to interpret and know. Heshusius calls for a new approach to ethnographic research, one she terms participatory consciousness, in which there exists an “awareness of a deeper level of kinship between the knower and the known” (p. 16). For this to occur, “an inner desire to let go of perceived boundaries that constitute “self”—and that construct the perception of distance between self and other—must be present” (p. 16).

Language learning requires a certain generosity of spirit and reckless abandon in that the learner adopts new ways of looking at the world and communicating. To achieve this level of competence, she alters herself and grows in light of the others. It is not enough to acknowledge that there are two or more ways of operating in the world, she internalizes the two systems and remains open to more.

Ideally, the learner, or ethnographer, is able to step outside of herself to achieve “an attitude of profound openness and receptivity” (p. 16). Heshusius adopts Berman’s (1981, 335, as cited in Heshusius, 1994, p. 17) term selfother to signify participatory consciousness. Self and other do not exist, they are fused into a selfother (p. 17). This process involves

a temporary eclipse of all perceiver’s egocentric thoughts and strivings, of all preoccupations with self, and self-esteem. One is turned toward other (human or nonhuman) “without being in need of it” (Schachtel, 1959, p. 181) or wanting to appropriate it or achieve something (Heshusius, 1994, p. 16).

Multiliterate designers of digital texts are keenly aware of their Subject position, as they have undergone a meticulous process of selection and refinement in their creative process, and they use this knowledge and experience to close the social distance between

designer and interpreter. They meet somewhere in the middle, in a place that is rich with perspective, not assumption.

Chapter 4

Subjects-in-Interaction Version 3.0: The Integrated and Iterative Systems Design Process

The classroom culture, its course content and the tools it uses to create, connect and communicate meaning comprise an interactive learning environment which, when successful can enhance teaching and learning. Digital ethnographies and case studies which richly and thickly describe harmonious interactions between tools, learners and teachers outline innovative projects that would not have been attempted were it not for the capabilities of new media tools (see Goldman-Segall, 1998b; Hellebrandt, 1996; Tang, 1993). In Canada, an extensive network of educational researchers, practitioners, and industry partners exists under the name of *TeleLearning*, a term it defines as, “the use of networked computer environments and tools for education and training” (1998). This organization established an international network of *Centres of Excellence*,²⁸ in which each center has aimed to become a model of innovative uses of technology to improve learning experiences, often the result of positive collaboration between industry and academia. These new partnerships are changing the inherent structure of academia, and models for the development of courses, or learning environments, need to evolve to support this trend.

New approaches to learning call for new frameworks in which to develop these learning environments. Successfully innovative learning environments which integrate digital tools are frequently on the cutting—or bleeding—edge of technology development. In

²⁸ WebConstellations™ earned the First Prize in the Demonstration Category at the Annual Conference of Canada's National Centers of Excellence in Telelearning (TL-NCE), held in Vancouver, BC in 1998. In this demo, the MERLin team used WebConstellations™ to showcase data from Goldman-Segall's graduate seminar on Digital Video Ethnography and Version 2.0 of Beers' modern language teacher education course, described in this dissertation.

addition to the effort required to design and develop the digital tools themselves, there is an overwhelming amount of work involved in simultaneously modifying and adapting the curriculum, method and support materials. Given the complexity and volume of tasks required to design, test and implement the various interconnected components that make up a digital learning environment, projects of this nature may begin with one solitary teacher with a vision but certainly do not finish this way.

The teacher often consults with a variety of experts in different domains and may enlist the help of colleagues or technical support for different phases of the project, even delegating some tasks completely. This is not a typical higher educational teaching model. Traditionally, an instructor is responsible for developing and carrying out all aspects of her course from beginning to end. It might be considered irresponsible to enlist the help of her colleagues, who are, after all, busy with their own teaching loads. The rare exception is the case of large lecture style courses where the instructor manages a team of teaching assistants who lead individual discussion sections and assist in such matters as marking. In this context, however, these persons are employed to assist the primary lecturer in carrying out the original course concept by managing its large numbers of students, not to provide creative support in the initial design stages.

In this chapter, I will describe the method I followed in designing and teaching a university modern language teacher education methodology course that served as the site for my doctoral research. This course has been my object-to-think-with (Papert, 1980) and subject-to-think-with (Goldman-Segall, 1998b). I will describe its three-year integrated and iterative design process, the specs and content of each of the three versions that emerged and how it facilitates the exploration of Subjects-in-interaction.

The Integrated and Iterative Design Process for System SII V. 3.0

A site for inter-active, inter-disciplinary research and development

The research site for this project can, in the broadest of terms, be called a university course. Indeed, it had all the required specs: it was listed in the UBC course schedule as MLED 480A: *Advanced Studies in Language Education: Integrating Language and Culture with Modern Media*, it had an enrollment code (51162), a section number (921), and met regularly (Mondays and Wednesdays, 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM) for a period of 6 weeks, (May 17 to June 21) in the summer session. There was one teacher and enough students enrolled to make it economically viable, and even profitable, for the university (29). Students who successfully completed this course received 3 credits toward graduation and a mark on their transcripts.

Yet this course was unique in that students configured themselves in unusual groupings, assumed uncommon roles, and used a variety of new digital learning tools (WebConstellations™, CineKit™, Photoshop™, QuickTime™, FusionRecorder™), some never before released to the public, to carry out innovative projects. A better descriptor for this site, therefore, may be “digital learning environment,” since this conjures up a mental image of a stimulating place where students come to engage with digital technologies to carry out meaningful tasks and learn. But this term is unsatisfactory, too. It does not allow me to tell the whole story of how this place came to be; how it started from a broad spectrum of ideas, gained momentum from student and administrative support, grew in scope with new partnerships and collaborations, and evolved and transformed itself over a three year period. What emerged was not a place that I, the teacher, created and to which they, the students, came; but a place where teacher, students and tools converged to create an ever evolving culture of learning.

As we turn to more collaborative, interdisciplinary projects which incorporate multifaceted tools, and multi-skilled individuals, it is easy to see that previous individualistic

models of teaching, based on the ideal of one teacher before a group of students, do not lend themselves to innovative risk-taking in education. It is therefore helpful to turn to established development models which have proven to be efficient and productive in other cultures outside of academia. If we imagine a digital learning environment to be a smooth running system, rather than a course taught in a school with its traditional roles and expectations, we can free ourselves to step outside of our firmly entrenched schemas we use to define the functions of each component. We can look to the model of systems design teams in the fields of Human Factors and Human Computer Interaction to find such an organizational framework.

Human-computer interaction to study Subjects-in-interaction

Human-computer interaction (HCI) is a field of research which converges experts from a variety of disciplines, including computer science, graphic design, kinesiology, applied linguistics, and experimental psychology. Once gathered on a common project, each contributes her individual expertise toward developing a computer system which successfully interfaces with its users. In an academic setting, like in industry, a systems design team can be more effective for developing a quality product than an individual, regardless of her area of specialty, since

an effective team is more than a set of skills. It is also an appropriate combination of personalities, each making a contribution. Consider a favorite "team" in an adventure novel or movie. Very likely one member will be cerebral; a second, physical; and a third, aesthetically oriented. Different personality types are important in facing unknown challenges (Baecker, Grudin, Buxton, & Greenberg 1995, p. 277).

Unknown challenges are a part of education. Students come to a classroom from a variety of backgrounds with different talents and motivations, each one affecting the emerging classroom dynamic. The availability of tools and resources, along with the teacher and students' skill at using them, can also contribute to the overall success of a project. A team-

like approach, which taps into the strengths of each member, can only benefit the group as a whole.

Terminology

The terminology used to describe the various roles people play in a system design team can easily be adapted to academia. This is most appropriate in academic courses and programs which integrate technology, since simultaneous and cyclical development of curricular and technical aspects closely emulates the iterative and integrated systems design process popular in industry for creating digital tools. A *computer system* is an architecture that is designed to help users perform their tasks. The *systems design team*, or development team, refers to those actively involved in the systems development project and normally excludes contributions made by those in management and support roles (Grudin, 1991/1995, p. 294). The term *user* refers to the people directly engaged with the system and generally is synonymous with *end user*, though as Grudin explains, “[o]f course, developers are also users of the tools and the development system” (1991/1995, p. 294).

For the purposes of this chapter, I will use the general term *system*, to represent my research site, MLED 480A. Administrative reasons, unrelated to the course content, prompted the course number to change from 480B to 480A after the second year. To avoid further confusion and better reflect the three-year evolution of this system from 1997 to 1999, I will refer to the three evolving versions of this course as Subjects-in-interaction (SII) version 1.0 (1997), SII version 2.0 (1998) and SII version 3.0 (1999). Each version corresponds to the course, or system, taught during three consecutive summer sessions at the University of British Columbia.

Due to my key role in the conception, design and installation of the system, I have appropriated the title of *principal developer*. Other members of the systems design team include advisors and colleagues in the Modern Language Education program, MERLin, Bitmovers Communications Inc. and the University of Toronto, as well as the student

teachers themselves. Within the general system, two digital tools, WebConstellations™ and CineKit™, were being developed simultaneously. The development team for WebConstellations™ was led by Ricki Goldman-Segall at the University of British Columbia and the development team for CineKit™ was led by Ron Baecker at the University of Toronto. Given the integral part these two tools played in the smooth running of this particular system, they can be considered *subsystems* in this context, though they are both independent tools for a range of purposes on their own. The term *user*, though problematic due to the passive role it connotes, refers to the pre-service and in-service modern language teachers who used the three versions of this system. The user *interface* of a computer system is the part that handles the output to the display and the input from the person using the program (Myers, 1995, p. 323). Since we have established the user to be the student, and the system to be this university course, we can then conclude the *interface*, in the general context of versions 1.0, 2.0, and 3.0, refers to the medium of communication the user interacts with, whether it be technology, text, discussion or lecture.

Human factors and HCI for systems design

HCI emerged as its own reputable field in the early 1980's after it distinguished itself from the earlier field of human factors, which was "dismissively referred to as 'knobs and dials' psychology" (Bannon, 1995, p. 209). Cognitive scientists agreed that what was "required was a better *cognitive coupling* between the human and the new universal machine, the computer, and not simply better designed surface characteristics of display" (Bannon, 1995, p. 209). Since its inception, the area of human-computer interaction has become widely respected both within academic research environments and corporate research laboratories, accounting for its tremendous increase in followers. Scholars from HCI, most notably in North America and Scandinavia, have developed different methodologies to aid systems design teams in developing and testing usable products.

John D. Gould from the IBM Research Center, Hawthorne, has been instrumental in advancing the field of HCI and identifying the steps it takes to develop successful products (Bannon, 1995, p. 211; Grudin, 1991/1995, p. 293). To put it simply, says Gould, the best systems, are “easy to learn, easy to use, contain the right functions, and are liked” (1988, p. 93). In his seminal article, “How to Design Usable Systems,” Gould provides HCI researchers and systems design teams with a comprehensive set of objectives to follow during system development and installation, along with a chronological time line for achieving them. He recommends adhering to four key principles during the usability design process: 1) early, continual focus on users; 2) early, continual user testing; 3) iterative design and 4) integrated design (p. 95). By doing so, Gould provides us a working framework in which to describe the system development of SII version 3.0. Where he falls short, however, is in his restricted conceptualization of the user.

Systems users as actors, not factors

Several scholars have identified the unidimensional interpretation of the term user as problematic in HCI studies. Liam Bannon (1995) concedes that Gould’s view of the user is a welcome departure from the Human Factor approach to systems design where

the human is often reduced to being another system component with certain characteristics, such as limited attention span, faulty memory, etc., that need to be factored into the design equation for the overall human-machine system (p. 206).

Nonetheless, Bannon critiques Gould’s view on the role of the user, in which she is relegated to the sidelines of the design process, and offers a more inclusive perspective. Bannon thus provides us with a powerful link between systems design and Freire’s concept of education when he contrasts the terms human factors and human actors, much like Freire contrasts objects and subjects. Bannon has chosen these terms because he believes it “highlights a difference in the perception of the person; the former connoting a passive, fragmented, depersonalized, unmotivated individual, the latter connoting an active, controlling one” (p. 206). Bannon states that “users are not simply passive objects that

others must study and design for, as some accounts would have it. People are, or can become, *active agents*" (1995, p. 207). This view not only makes for a healthier work environment, it's just good business. After all, "involvement of users in design is both a means for promoting democratization in the organizational change process and a way to ensure that the resulting computer system adequately meets the needs of the users" (1995, p. 211). As technology advances, it will become even more important to include the user in the design process and hold her perspective in high regard. Grudin cautions:

[t]he generic term 'user' masks a tremendous diversity of computer users and contexts of use. This diversity will continue to increase—even if progress in hardware development stopped today, current technology would take decades to realize its potential. (...) The physical separation of developers from some or all users is often critical, as are barriers of class, culture, or language (1991/1995, p. 297).

In both academic and work environments, the social distance between users and developers can be narrowed by encouraging users to participate actively in the design process. In this collaborative working relationship, each participant can discover and appreciate the human qualities of the other, and how this affects the way in which they operate in the world. After all, "[p]eople are more than a sum of parts; be they information-processing subsystems or physiological systems, they have a set of values, goals, and beliefs about life and work" (Bannon, 1995, p. 206).

Iterative and integrated system design process

The collaborative integrated and iterative systems design process, in which individuals interact with each other and their creations, leads to iterations not only in the tools they are developing but also in their understandings of the system's function and potential. We are constantly transformed by the interactions we have with the human and non-human Subjects that surround us, and are enriched by the ideas, partnerships and resources they bring to our being. The three-year iterative design process of this system

corresponds precisely with the first three years of my doctoral work. The three resulting versions of this system are the embodiment of iterations in my thinking brought on by the intellectual ideas presented in the graduate courses I was enrolled in and new collaborations and partnerships within the university and extended community. In this section, I will present a chronological account of the iterative design process of this system by presenting the intellectual, collaborative and technical contexts that have shaped each version's transformation.

1997: Version 1.0

Gould (1995) describes the first phase of iterative design as the gearing up phase, which is “mainly a time of information gathering and conceptualization.” This accurately describes the first year of my doctoral studies, in that I immersed myself in the theories of my professors and respected scholars in my fields of inquiry as well as the needs and interests of my modern language student teachers. The ideas presented in the graduate seminars I enrolled in, along with those that arose in my teaching, interacted to inform my evolving concepts of culture, language teaching and research.²⁹

During this time I was also learning more about curriculum design by working in close collaboration with Dr. Monique Bournot-Trites, an experienced instructor in the modern language education program, as we team-taught a modern language education methods course. This course provides an overview of second language acquisition theories, curriculum guidelines and policies, unit and lesson plan creation, and teaching strategies for the four language modalities—listening, speaking, reading and writing.³⁰ An important focus of this methods course is to prepare the student teachers to meet the objectives outlined in the newly released curriculum guidelines, called *Integrated Resource Packages*. These guidelines

²⁹ Graduate seminars included Patricia Duff's seminar *The Application of Theories of Second Language Acquisition to Curriculum and Instruction*; Stephen Carey's seminars *Multilingualism, Multiculturalism and Education in the Asia-Pacific* and *Multilingualism, Multiculturalism and Education in the Pacific Century*; Kogila Adam-Moodley's seminar *Advanced Studies in Multicultural Education*; and Ricki Goldman-Segall's seminars *The Multimedia Classroom: Creating an Electronic Space for Learners* and *Digital Video Ethnography: Culture, Technology and Interpretation*.

³⁰ See Appendix D for course outline of the 1998 methods course I taught for the student teachers enrolled in

are based on objectives outlined in the new British Columbia language education policy (Spanish, 1996), the majority of which address intercultural and multicultural issues. I became curious to learn if these student teachers are, indeed, prepared to address these issues and, if not, what preparation they would need. In my graduate seminars, I began to investigate this area further. From the literature, I identified what I considered to be the desirable skills for meeting these cultural objectives, initial methods for acquiring them, and the current state of culture teaching at the secondary level in North America.

At this point, I began what Gould (1988) would call the “initial design phase” of this system. This began when Stephen Carey, coordinator of the UBC Modern Language Education program at the time, called a meeting for the summer session modern language education instructors to coordinate the course offerings for pre-service and in-service teachers. Several of these courses, which are aimed at preparing pre-service and in-service teachers to meet curricular objectives, are offered under generic titles such as “Advanced Studies in Language Education” to give the instructor the freedom to choose the course content and teaching approach most suited to his or her expertise and interest. In the past, for example, Stephen Carey had used electronic bulletin boards to facilitate discussion and interactivity in his courses (Carey, 1999; Carey & Crittenden, 1998).

In this meeting we negotiated the areas of expertise each of the three offered courses would cover. It was decided that my course would focus on methods to integrate language and culture with modern media at the secondary level. A second course would concentrate on language policy and global issues as they relate to modern languages and a third course on interactive methods for teaching French at the elementary level. I proposed a title for my course, “Integrating Language and Culture with Modern Media,” and a series of objectives it would meet. Once approved, I selected ten course readings, created a series of assignments and class activities, and determined the evaluation procedures. I then taught this course over a three week period, from July 7-25.

Though, using low tech, I had incorporated concepts into this system from Goldman-Segall's graduate seminars, such as the exploration of self and other through the creation and sharing of cultural artifacts, I had not yet established a formal collaboration with the MERLin laboratory at this point in the design process. Nor had I determined it to be the site of my doctoral research.

1998: Version 2.0

The second year of my doctoral studies, I continued to grapple with the challenge of how to prepare student teachers to address concepts of culture in their future teaching. By this time I was an active member of Goldman-Segall's team in MERLin and was apprenticing in digital video ethnographic research. This experience, along with ideas presented in the graduate seminars I was enrolled in, provoked further iterations in my thinking in regards to teacher education, cultural exploration and classroom tools.³¹

At the same time, Goldman-Segall had agreed to collaborate with a colleague, Ron Baecker from the Department of Computer Science at the University of Toronto, in the co-development of their digital tools, CineKit™ (Baecker) and WebConstellations™ (Goldman-Segall). Their goal was to integrate these two tools, thereby increasing their functionality for a variety of users in different contexts.

Funding

This set of circumstances provided an ideal environment for collaboration between developers, educators, researchers and students. It also created a rich context in which to carry out my doctoral work. Goldman-Segall and I conceived a learning scenario, described in a successful UBC Teaching and Learning Enhancement (TLE) grant application entitled: *Making Movies, Making Theories: Digital Media Tools for Educating Educators to Connect Experiences to Curriculum* (Goldman-Segall & Beers, 1997), in which participants use

CineKit™ to create representations of their learning experiences in the form of digital movies and then use WebConstellations™ to share, annotate and critique these movies in relation to the subject being studied in the university course. The project outlined in this grant consisted of three phases. The first was to develop the learning model and tool, the second was to refine them in Goldman-Segall's video ethnography graduate seminar in July of 1998, and the third was to implement them in my modern language teacher education course in August of 1998.

Subsystem usability studies

During the development of the learning model and tool, I visited the University of Toronto to meet with Baecker and his CineKit™ development team to learn about the digital movie tool and foster possible research partnerships with MERLin. I returned to Vancouver with an alpha version of CineKit™ and, in collaboration with three classmates from my human computer interaction graduate seminar, performed a usability study on the tool. In this study, three different diads were asked to perform a similar task with CineKit™ after having received different treatments of instruction. Based on the Subjects' feedback, as well as our observations, we submitted a list of thirty recommendations to the Toronto development team—most of which were incorporated into subsequent versions of the tool.

At this stage, WebConstellations™ was also in its early developmental phases, though it had the advantage of emerging from two intellectually grounded and technically sound tools: Constellations™ (Goldman-Segall, 1995), a desktop digital data analysis tool, and Points of Viewing™ (Goldman-Segall, 1998b), an on-line digital data annotation tool. Students enrolled in the video ethnography course, phase two of the grant, conducted an informal usability study on WebConstellations™ when they used it to annotate their

³¹ Graduate seminars included: Gaalen Erickson and Anthony Clarke's *Doctoral Seminar in Teacher Education* and Kellogg Booth and John Dill's seminar *Human-Computer Interaction*.

movies, though students enrolled in version 2.0 of my course, phase three of the grant, used Constellations™.

System iterations

Though the bulk of the course content remained the same, the integration of these two digital tools, or subsystems, prompted a structural overhaul for version 2.0 of this modern language system. Outside funding and new partnerships with MERLin and the University of Toronto made it possible to attempt new projects in version 2.0 that were impossible to imagine in the earlier version. First, these modern language student teachers now had access to the MERLin and MUSES computer labs, previously unavailable to them, to carry out their digital creations. Second, it provided a salary for a fellow graduate student in MERLin, Aaron Bond, to work along side me in managing the 30 students as they learned to use and debug the movie making software. Bond was an excellent resource, as he offered not only a great deal of emotional and physical support in carrying out the daily tasks of conducting a digital video ethnography of this scale but also insightful observations and feedback that informed the creation of the final version of this system.

The methodological changes to version 2.0 attempted to eliminate the lingering influences from the instructionist teaching models into which I had been enculturated as a student. I replaced these with constructionist approaches, as manifested in assignment descriptions, course readings, and evaluation procedures. For example, assessment methods in version 1.0 placed a disproportionate weight on traditional genres of knowledge representation, such as written lesson plans and formal group presentations on readings. In version 2.0, I tried to stay more loyal to constructionist teaching methods, central to which was the creation and sharing of the students' own objects-to-think-with (Papert, 1980) in the form of three-dimensional identity objects and 30-second digital movies.

The few substitutions I made to the readings reflected the evolving intellectual classroom culture. I eliminated the article which detailed the elements of a whole language

lesson plan, noting that it was redundant since the fall methods course had already prepared the student teachers in lesson plan creation. In its place, I inserted the introduction from Goldman-Segall's (1998b) book, *Points of Viewing Children's Thinking*, which provides a discussion on constructionism and the digital classroom culture and an excerpt from Tedick et al.'s article (1993), "Developing Language Teachers for a Changing World," which discusses the notion of language as object.

The evaluation procedures in all versions of this system are based on pre-established criteria, but the responsibility for evaluating the assignments changed radically in version 2.0. In version 1.0 the students were only responsible for self-assessing 10% of their final mark, through self-evaluation of their participation. In version 2.0, the criteria descriptions were made more relevant to the students' experiences and peer and self evaluation constituted 60% of the student's final mark.

1999: Version 3.0

Version 2.0 of this system served as a pilot study for the data collection for my doctoral dissertation, and as a beta test site for the systems and subsystems development. For my purposes, the installation of version 3.0 was the final phase in my data collection as well as the system and subsystems' iterative design process. Continued funding from a subsequent TLE grant, *On-line Digital Data Documentation An Integrated Model for Teaching Media Arts and Sciences* (Goldman-Segall & Grimm, 1998), made it possible to carry over changes made to version 2.0 to version 3.0.

Version 3.0 is the most robust of the three versions, in that it incorporates improved data collection techniques. First, it incorporates filmed focus group meetings, which, in addition to being useful to the students by providing a forum in which to reflect openly and exchange ideas, have provided a clear entry into their thinking processes. Second, it incorporates WebConstellations™ as a tool for sharing and documenting experiences and interpretations. These additions to version 3.0 greatly added to the students' individual

experiences as they engaged in the system, as well as in my interpretation and analysis of their processes.

As Gould notes, the iterative nature of this design process acknowledges that, though final in the context of the project and the user, the latest version of the system can always be improved upon. In the following section, I will describe the specs and content for the system and subsystems as they were during the system installation phase.

Specs and Content for System SII Version 3.0

SII v. 3.0 aimed to promote in its users the development of a wider knowledge base and instructional techniques for language and culture teaching. Specifically, users were expected to become familiar with methods of teaching second languages and their cultures to develop an informed approach; become familiar with constructionist learning philosophies to create meaningful media projects; and learn the value of approaching a topic from multiple perspectives to gain insights into their own and other cultures and develop critical thinking skills.

To achieve these objectives, the system was set up to provide the users with four simultaneous cycles of exploration. The first cycle, *Community Building*, aimed to establish a trusting learning environment in which users felt safe to open up, take risks in their learning, and invite an exploration of selves and others. The second cycle, *Active Readings of Texts*, encouraged the users to make constant connections between their own life experiences and those ideas presented in the written, digital, and oral system texts. The third cycle, *Cultural Artifact Construction*, engaged the users in the hands-on creation of explicit public representations of their implicit cultural interpretations as informed by the ideas presented in SII v. 3.0. The fourth cycle, *E-value-ation* (Goldman-Segall, 1995) is a

shared process in which the users elicit the value up, down and across, of their own and each other's participation in the process and product of construction.

First cycle: Community building

The first cycle, Community Building, aimed to establish a trusting learning environment in which users felt safe to open up, take risks in their learning, and invite an exploration of selves and others.

What is community?

Successful learning communities are built by people who share an interest in a subject area, such as modern language education, but approach it from different perspectives and diverse experiences. Once gathered around a common goal, each member contributes to the overall enjoyment of the exchange by the manner in which she participates. Communication in itself does not lead to community, despite their shared linguistic lineage, and conscientious teachers play a pro-active role in establishing and maintaining a caring and supportive dynamic to ensure the benefits of this community are reaped by all its members. A successful group can lend support and maintenance, serve as a pool of resources and as an instrument to facilitate learning (Douglas, 1983, as cited in Hadfield, 1997, p. 11). Indeed, a positive dynamic, in the language classroom as in geographical spaces, is essential to the free exchange of ideas and personal resources:

A positive group atmosphere can have a beneficial effect on the morale, motivation, and self-image of its members, and thus significantly affect their learning, by developing in them a positive attitude to the language being learned, to the learning process, and to themselves as learners (Hadfield, 1997, p. 11).

To promote active participation, sharing and community building in SII v. 3.0, users were expected to present and/or participate in various activities. These included daily warm-up

activities, the sharing of snacks and the application of ideas presented in the lectures and readings in the form of practical group activities.

Creating a positive classroom dynamic

Warm-ups: In groups, students took turns leading the class in a daily warm up activity aimed at building trust and a better understanding of each other as individuals. I led the students in a model activity on the first day, and then each group was responsible for finding and orchestrating a ten minute activity that corresponded, in sequence, to one of the three themes. The first phase, *Breaking the Ice and Building Trust*, emphasized the affective side aimed at introducing group members to each other and creating a relaxed and supportive atmosphere in which to learn. Examples included leading a blindfolded partner through the obstacles of the classroom and divulging secrets and unknown qualities of each other's personalities.

The second phase, *Exploring "Self" and "Other" and Creating Culture*, encouraged students to develop an awareness of the different perspectives that comprise a culture by exploring the views and backgrounds of the members of their own micro-culture of SII v. 3.0. Examples included an interactive multicultural bingo and "Find someone who..." scavenger hunt. Users determined that, in their multicultural group, they sometimes conferred and sometimes differed in point of view, much like what happens in the larger society.

The third phase, *Towards Interpersonal and Intercultural Communication*, built upon the trust established at this point to further explore and bridge personal and cultural differences. Students learned that a positive classroom dynamic is a result of support, negotiation and compromise. Examples included role plays, skits and debates that explored heated expressions of difference and cultural misunderstandings.

Group-work: Engaged in the dynamic interlockings of the system, the group often participated in collaborative hands-on activities to explore practical applications of the

theories presented in other fields of the interface. For example, lectures on conservative and liberal multicultural frameworks in which to teach modern languages, coupled with readings that address cultural stereotypes as portrayed in authentic media texts from the target language, were followed by interactive group activities that invited students to explore their own stereotypes. One activity from *Talking Culture* (MacNiel, & Wilman, 1996) begins lightheartedly by first soliciting class stereotypes on the driving abilities of different groups of Canadians, and then explores the ways in which stereotypes are originated and perpetuated. As a result of participating in this activity, students acknowledge that family, friends and media play a key role in maintaining this cycle.

To address the media's influence, I replicate an activity which explores intercultural differences, as outlined in a course reading from Kramsch (1993b). In this case, groups view a Snapple™ drink commercial which makes many stereotypical cultural references to North American schools and then create their own target cultural equivalents. These interactive activities, which the student teachers can repeat with their future modern language students, provide a low-tech forum in which to explicitly explore the implicit cultural assumptions that guide the decisions they make in choosing and interpreting the authentic texts they use in their classrooms. Though these activities address larger, culturally loaded issues, the entertaining nature of these exchanges fosters a relaxed environment which contributes to the sharing of perspectives and experiences and a gradual heightening of awareness of their importance.

Second cycle: Active readings of texts

The second cycle, *Active Readings of Texts*, encouraged the users to make constant connections between their own life experiences and those ideas presented in the written, digital, and oral system texts.

The media text capitalizes on a myriad of culturally significant references to transmit a message as efficiently as possible within a short time span and assumes a certain shared literacy and knowledge base amongst its readers. Each reader draws from her personal experience and resources to best interpret the text. Riv-Ellen Prell (1989), a critical ethnographer, highlights the active role personal experience plays in the acquiring and interpretation of ethnographic data when she explains the relationship between ethnographer and Subject of study:

[o]ne must know oneself through and in light of the other. The subject-subject relationship is itself a reflexive event in which a self is presented with the full knowledge of reporting, or constructing itself. The recorder participates fully in a parallel if submerged frame. (p. 254).

In critical ethnography, this personal filter, or bias, that allows the ethnographer to learn about herself and the other is not to be considered a hindrance to a valid interpretation of the events, but, rather, a carefully honed skill that the ethnographer uses to actively write and read cultural accounts. It is a skill to be developed in multiliterate writers and readers of digital texts so they, too, can learn about themselves and the others in light of the digital representations they and the target language culture produce.

The new digital age is changing the way in which media is distributed, confronting the reader with an overwhelming amount of data to interpret. Douglas Rushkoff, a pop-culture media critic, warns: "If we are about to enter an age of information glut, those who can wade through it will be people with the ability to inspect, evaluate, and discard a screen of data immediately" (1996, p. 51). Rushkoff believes the MTV generation, with its ability to interpret non-linear texts that appear chaotic to the illiterate, has developed a higher form of literacy than the linear readers. In effect, these new viewers are able to ignore the textual qualities that are irrelevant to their own situation and summon their life experiences in their own sense making of the flashing images, sounds and words that appear on the screen.

The digital video ethnographer is in a similar quandry. Faced with an exorbitant amount of data to describe and interpret, she must learn to “wade through” the task top-down, inspecting, evaluating and discarding the information that does not fit into her personally meaningful knowledge system. Rather than amass information, she must use herself as a filter to construct knowledge from the data. While completing her doctoral dissertation, Goldman-Segall (1990) was obliged to make sense of the vast amounts of digital information she had collected on video disks during her digital video ethnography on children’s thinking styles at a computer-rich Boston inner city elementary school. To enable her to use her ethnographic eye to select “chunks” of data, such as text, image, sound and video slices she determined representative of the entire body of data, she and her design team developed a digital tool, Learning Constellations™. In this metaphor, carried over into her more recent tools such as Constellations™ and WebConstellations™, these chunks of personally selected data become individual stars which are later grouped into personally meaningful constellations.

Originally conceived to aid Goldman-Segall and her participants in her middle school research projects (Goldman-Segall, 1994), chunking is an activity that eventually transferred to her teaching in a graduate research seminar, *Video Ethnography: Culture, Technology and Interpretation*, in which I was a participant during my first year of doctoral study. On the first meeting of this seminar, Goldman-Segall introduced the notion of chunking in ethnographic research and suggested we begin to hone our research skills by selecting a few chunks from the assigned readings we found to be intriguing, enlightening, or worthy of criticism.

The first few weeks of the course we sent our chunks to Goldman-Segall, who later compiled and photocopied our excerpts for the next class discussion. Later, however, one of the students suggested we use a listserv to post our chunks directly on-line so we could relieve Goldman-Segall of the organizational task and have more time to read each other’s chunks and comments. As the course progressed, this chunking activity transformed the

class dynamic as we actively engaged with not only the articles but also our classmates' interpretations of them. Anxious to meet in person after our on-line sharing, we often delighted in the uncanny similarities and revealing differences of our choices. Later that year, several of us (Goldman-Segall et al., 1997) shared our experiences at the annual meeting of the AERA (American Association of Educational Research) in San Diego in a theatrical performance entitled: "Selecting 'Chunks' For On-Line Theory-Building: A Case Study of a Video Ethnography Course."

Having experienced first hand how this chunking activity encourages active and personally meaningful readings of academic texts, I introduced this activity in SII versions 2.0 and 3.0. Due to the large number of students in the class, I limited the exchanges of chunks to small group in-class discussions. As in Goldman-Segall's video ethnography course, students are asked to identify two or three chunks, or quotations, they find intriguing, enlightening, or worthy of criticism from each of the assigned readings. However, the student then pulls these chunks from their context and copies them onto a separate paper along with an additional sentence or two explaining why she has chosen that chunk. These chunks are shared in small groups the day of the assigned reading.

The motivation of chunking is to encourage the reader to read for herself, rather than for the author's seeming intent or teacher's projected expectation, by calling attention to only those moments in the reading in which the words resonate with her own life experiences. By reconstructing a second text with these excerpts, the reader moves to the role of author. Chunking is a timely metaphor for this post-modern era in which we lament the death of the Subject and question the notion of authorship. In this "age of mechanical reproducibility (...) the self is dissolved into so many bytes of ephemeral messages" (Arnowitz, 1994, p. 9). The act of chunking and sharing these readings educates the system user in the practice of parceling out that data relevant to her personal knowledge system. It allows her to seek and see the filters through which she interprets the qualities in the traditional and digital texts she reads and creates.

Reflective summaries Chunking is a shared activity that encourages the students to exchange their interpretations and experiences with the text. It is an initial dialogue with the text and their peers in which they probe for connection and meaning and try out new intellectual concepts. As an extension to this ongoing activity, each student individually writes three reflective summaries, each based on any one of the eleven assigned articles. Two pages in length and submitted at different dates throughout the course, this assignment is evaluated by the instructor based on three pre-established criteria. First, the ideas of the article are synthesized in no more than a half page; second, key ideas are given critical consideration; and, third, personal reflections and anecdotes illustrate an insightful understanding of these ideas and how they relate to one's own teaching situation. For the user, the goals of this assignment are to further explore personal reactions to the readings in the chunking experience and engage in a reflective (Schon, 1988) analysis of how the concepts presented in the readings may apply to their personal teaching experience. This assignment aims to make evident to the user that readings from areas outside of her particular language specialty can inform her practice, a position previous modern language students in the UBC teacher education program did not readily hold. Secondly, it provides valuable data into the users' thinking processes as they struggle to make connections between the concepts explored in all domains of the system interface.

Reading content

The system readings were selected on a basis of thought-provoking ideas, readability and mention of a practical application for the issue discussed. They are organized into five subtopics, which form a general ideological framework in which to base lectures and discussions.

The first unit, *Student teachers: Their Cultures and Reflective Process*, invites the learners to call upon their recent experiences to situate themselves in the cultural context of the teacher education course and determine "where they are at." The second unit, *What is*

Culture and Why Should We Teach it?, explores psycholinguistic, sociological, anthropological, and multicultural concepts of culture and its traditional and future role in language education. The third unit, *How Can We Construct Meaningful Learning Environments in Which to Study Culture?* presents constructionist and communicative models for creating meaningful digital learning environments in which to actively investigate course concepts. The fourth unit, *What Materials Can We Use to Teach Culture and How Should We Use Them?* is central to the system content in that it critically examines the ways in which we select and read authentic media texts and exploit them for cultural exploration. The final unit, *What Is the Student's Role in Understanding Culture and What is the Teacher's Role in Integrating Language and Culture?* encourages teachers and students to take active and collaborative research roles in setting up meaningful and adventurous digital media learning environments in which to explore one's own and the target language culture.³²

Third cycle: Cultural artifact construction

The third cycle, *Cultural Artifact Construction*, engages the users in the hands-on creation of explicit public representations of their implicit cultural interpretations as informed by the ideas presented in SII v. 3.0.

The first project asks students to individually construct a three-dimensional “*identity object*” which represents the multiple facets: social, professional, emotional, intellectual, cultural, etc., that form an individual's identity. This artifact can take any form the creator wishes as long as it can be brought to class. This assignment is designed as a rapport building activity to promote sharing and contribute to building participant identity and group awareness of the various countries, cultures, and values represented in the class. For the second, and central, project, participants used a digital movie authoring and design tool, CineKit™, to make 30-second digital movies on their cultural interpretation of an object of

³² See appendix E for student-generated summaries of the course readings.

their choice. Both of these assignments encourage the participants to think beyond the traditional forms of representation and to provide “objects-to-think-with” (Papert, 1980), for discussion on the relation between identity and language learning.

Fourth cycle: Evaluation up down and across

The fourth cycle, *E-value-ation* (Goldman-Segall, 1995a), is a shared process in which the users elicit the value up, down and across, in their own and each other’s participation in the process and product of construction.

Digital video ethnographers are faced with the challenge of managing large quantities of data objects and media forms and organizing them into useful personal knowledge systems that can be shared with others. One of Goldman-Segall’s digital ethnographic tools, *Constellations*TM, addresses this problem by enabling the users to use a significance scale to e-VALUE-ate, or assign values to attributes within the media objects, so that users can see what data are important to a given task (Goldman-Segall, 1995a). She explains, “We need to be able to attach weights to the qualities of the data as we see, hear, or read them. Assigning weights will assist our visualizing which data are significant” (1995a, p. 29).

SII v. 3.0 incorporates a variety of significance scales which aim to elicit the value in the processes and products of its users and developers. The evaluation procedures evaluate up, down, and across as they involve evaluation of the process and product of student, peer, teacher and developer. Inspired by anthropological perspectives that see culture as a process, this system gives significant value to the process of creation and learning. These e-value-ation measures include self-assessed criterion evaluation of the users’ participation and group collaboration; peer-assessed criterion evaluation of the final movies; teacher-assessed criterion evaluation of the students’ written reflective summaries, identity objects and *WebConstellations*TM comments; student-assessed criterion based evaluation of the course

and teacher's performance; and electronic and comment based evaluation of the two digital subsystems, CineKit™ and WebConstellations™³³.

Margaret Riel (1996) observes, "one of the most important part[s] of any community is the valuing of their work and knowledge. The ideas and product must be in a format that can be shared, and others with access to this work need to determine its value" (p. 1). Assessment practices for traditional representations of knowledge are not readily applicable to the media artifacts produced in new media learning environments. Creators and viewers of media objects, therefore, need to develop common understandings of what qualities contribute to the overall value of not only the product, but the process as well. The criteria used to elicit the value of the movies and group process created in versions 1.0 and 2.0 of SII have evolved from a series of co-constructions between various creators and viewers. First, Goldman-Segall proposed an initial series of criteria she had developed after reflecting on calls from the scholarly community to address this need. Next, graduate students enrolled in the first phase of the *Making Movies, Making Theories* grant carried out in Goldman-Segall's Video Ethnography and Multimedia Classroom courses proposed their own versions, which Goldman-Segall and I used to refine her original suggestions. For my course, SII v. 2.0, which followed shortly after, I began the process again by first adapting the most recent criteria to the context of SII v. 2.0, and then encouraging the students to make adjustments as they saw fit. As such, users helped create the criteria used to e-value the process and products shared in various domains of the SII v. 3.0 interface. The final criteria used to assess the process and product of participants engaged in SII v. 3.0 were, therefore, developed over a period of several years by determining the attributes that lead to successful digital media design teams.

Self and peer: Self and peer assessments constitute 44% of the users' final marks, with 10% attributed to overall participation, 16% to group creative process and 18% to the movie product. Group process criteria ensures the group manages conflict, disagreements and

³³ See Appendix B for evaluation criteria of the students' process and products.

tensions in a constructive manner; makes full use of tools, time and human resources; modifies its ideas and adapted to each member's suggestions; validates each other's viewpoints as decisions are made; and shares the spotlight with each other in the storyboarding phase, shooting of video, chunking of video, and final editing.

The product criteria ensures the movie accommodates and represents a variety of viewpoints; captures a notion of culture which is not limited to "Big C" or "small c"; is engaging and encourages the viewers to explore content issues; stands on its own without further explanation; and tells a story and communicates it in a unique and original way.

Teacher-student: I have retained some aspects of my conventional role as teacher to bridge the university and digital media cultures and maintain accountability on the part of the students. I am responsible for assigning the remaining 56% of the marks of which 30% is attributed to individual written reflective summaries, 10% to the creation of identity objects, and 16% to comments on the WebConstellations™ data base. The criteria for the reflective summaries have already been discussed. The criteria for the identity objects ensures the object demonstrates creativity and incorporates resources in a non-traditional way; conveys a clear message without additional explanation; and represents and/or embodies the multiple layers that comprise one's identity.

Originally, I had not planned on formally assessing the WebConstellations™ comments but later, based on my observations of the users' comment writing practices early on in SII version 3.0, I saw the need to intervene in order to ensure a productive level of engagement on the part of the users. As a group, we established the criteria I used to evaluate these written comments. Comments were to be constructive; show critical analysis; show a connection to one's own personal experience; and illustrate an insightful understanding of the key ideas presented in this course.

Tools: Evaluation of digital tool performance includes a running log of user feedback to CineKit™ and WebConstellations™ developers. Questions generally address usability concerns, such as the general intuitive nature of the interface, ease of use and functionality

of its features, and technical soundness. CineKit™ also incorporates a bug report feature which allows the programmers to debug instabilities in their software. At the moment of a crash, the user is prompted to write a brief message in which she anecdotally describes what function she was intending to do at the time of the problem. This, along with a computer generated bug report which describes the state of the computer operating system at the time of the crash, were emailed to developers in Toronto.

Student-teacher: As per university regulations, students completed an anonymous standardized criterion and comment based evaluation of the course and the teacher. Feedback from the students over the three year development phase have been invaluable as they informed the iterative design process of the system and my practice as teacher. Criteria include aspects of my teaching style and perceived interest in the course, competence in the subject matter and classroom management, clarity of lectures and evaluation procedures, and respect for students. They also address the relevance of course materials and assignments and degree of intellectual challenge provided in the course, the results of which have confirmed the users' perceived success of the system.

Conclusions: SII 3.0 as a System for Exploring Subjects-in-Interaction

Digital media's potential for changing the ways in which we make sense of the world cannot be ignored. Culture itself is determined by the media messages that it proliferates and, invariably, the messages the readers learn are deeply and profoundly affected by the media in which they are represented (Eisner, 1998; Landow, 1992; Rushkoff, 1996). Currently, the global boundaries we use to define our neighbors and ourselves are narrowing. Culture is not static and the various Subjects that comprise a culture are in a constant state of flux. As their interactions change, they redefine themselves as well. Goldman-Segall (1998b) observes:

our tools are continually working with us to recreate our cultures, and our cultures are being reshaped by this interaction, which, in turn, reshapes our tools. The relationship is not one of cause and effect but interactionist: cultures, tools, and artifacts orbit around each other in all kinds of unusual patterns (p. 11).

SII v. 3.0 is a system that enables the study of Subjects-in-interaction. It is a malleable framework that incorporates a plethora of media, tools and perspectives in which users can focus on the process of textual creation and inter-pretation as the event. It is a system with multiple cycles of inter-action, whose actors are constantly informing each other as they cycle and spin, twist and turn. As they come into contact, these elements merge and e-merge, transformed by the experience. As such, the users, developers, texts and tools are in an iterative process of inter-pretation, as they read, write and re-present each other's intentions in mutating forms of media.

Chapter 5

Designing Products, Interpreting Processes: Analysis and Interpretation

A Piagetian/ Hermeneutic Framework for Data Analysis

Jean Piaget (1896-1980), a Swiss psychologist and pioneer in the study of cognitive development, has had an enormous impact on modern psychology and education. Best known for his research on the development of cognitive functions in children, Piaget's learning theory of equilibrium also informs our understanding of how we, adults included, continue to construct knowledge as we interact with the world around us. These very ideas are the founding principles of the various tenets of the constructivist movement which maintain a strong and renewed influence at all levels of current education practice. "The constructivist mode of learning promotes the paradigms developed by Piaget - that knowledge is invented and reinvented. In other words, knowledge is constructed and reconstructed by the learner" (Akyalcin, 1997).

Hermeneutic interpretations of texts also acknowledge the cyclical nature of meaning making inherent in Piaget's theories. The reader is not a passive object in the relationship, but one who actively calls upon her prior knowledge to help her construct and re-construct meaning from what is present in the text. The theory and methodology of Subjects-in-interaction is informed by the concepts shared by constructivist and hermeneutic philosophies which explain how we make internal meaning from our interactions with external objects— whether they be in the form of digital movies, course materials or classroom discussions. As such, Piaget's notion of equilibration (Piaget, 1975)

and an hermeneutic notion of interpretation, which both highlight the interactive nature of knowledge construction, provide a useful framework in which to analyze the data collected during this study.

Vygotsky's (1986) Activity Theory, as described earlier in Chapter Two, is also a useful framework in which to examine the effects that interactions have on the development of higher thinking levels and his emphasis on language and communication as mediator of these interactions make his theories popular in second language acquisition circles. However, James Lantolf (2000) has drawn a convincing correlation between Vygotsky's theory of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) and Piaget's theory of equilibration. To make his case, Lantolf presents Newman, Griffin and Cole's (as cited in Lantolf, 2000) interpretation of Vygotsky's theory. They call the ZPD the "construction zone" (p. 191) because "when people with different goals, roles, and resources interact, the differences in interpretation provide occasions for the construction of new knowledge" (p. 191). Lantolf finds this interpretation to be similar to Piaget's theory of equilibration in which "[d]ifferent perspectives, knowledge, and strategies create cognitive conflict in the participants, and in the resolution of such conflict, in the context of social interaction, new perspectives, knowledge, and strategies are created" (Lantolf, 2000, p. 191). For the purposes of this dissertation, which builds on a constructionist learning model inspired by the ideas of Piaget and aims to identify and address the interactions which affect these student teachers' learning processes, not necessarily their acquisition of a second language, I have chosen to analyze this data within a Piagetian framework.

In this chapter, therefore, I will explore Piaget's theories on cognitive development and equilibration as well as hermeneutic approaches to text interpretation and how they inform the theory and methodology of Subjects-in-interaction. I will then identify and examine various states of equilibrium and disequilibrium eight modern language student teachers involved in this study go through as they learn to design and interpret their own

digital media texts in relation to the course topic—integrating language and culture with modern media.

These teachers pass through periods of equilibrium and disequilibrium as they learn to claim the language class for themselves, develop new concepts of culture, develop the technical and intellectual skills to design and interpret their own digital media texts, and develop new methods to teach these changing concepts of culture in their evolving concept of the modern language classrooms.

Piaget's theories on cognitive development

Piaget believed that children evolve through four levels of cognitive development—sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational, and formal operational—in which cognitive structures progressively become more complex. In the sensorimotor stage (birth to 2 years), children develop their intelligence through sensory experiences and movement. The child is primarily concerned with gaining motor control and learning about concrete objects. Once the child progresses to the preoperational stage (ages 2-7), she becomes preoccupied with mastering symbols, such as pictures and words, to represent ideas and objects. She can name objects and reason intuitively. Cognitive development during the concrete operational stage (ages 7-12) includes logic but requires physical examples to which the logic can be applied. The child begins to deal with abstract concepts such as numbers and relationships. Children in the formal operational stage (age 12-15) begin to reason logically and systematically about abstract concepts. This allows analytical and logical thought without requiring references to concrete applications. Although Piaget believed that all children eventually achieve formal operational abilities, some recent studies have contested this assertion. These studies show that many adults, up to 50% in some reports, never achieve this final developmental phase, and continue to carry out their adult functions in the concrete operational stage of reasoning.

Equilibration

Though Piaget's findings of *when* children learn new concepts have at times been contested, his theories on *how* children construct knowledge as they interact with the world around them are still widely respected. Constructivist movements in secondary and higher education show that this concept is applicable to all learners, regardless of age. To explain this learning process, Piaget adds his notion of equilibration to the three classical factors traditionally believed to contribute to cognitive development, which include: influences from the physical environment, innateness, and social transmission (Piaget, 1977, p. 838). Piaget believes that individuals, regardless of the cognitive stage they are in, pass through states of equilibrium and disequilibrium as they construct and re-construct new understandings of the external world. Equilibrium is a temporary state in which the learner has struck a balance between her internal schema and the external event. It is not a resting point but rather a transitional stage from which to embark upon new discoveries.

As the learner comes into contact with a new external source, whether it be an idea or physical object, she enters a process of assimilation in which she attempts to fit the new information into her existing schema by making connections to her own background knowledge and prior conceptions. Invariably, differences prompt the learner to leave this period for one of accommodation, in which she alters existing schemas or creates new ones in response to this new information. As a result, a new state of equilibration is achieved, from which the learner can again depart to build new knowledge structures. In this continual process, knowledge is constructed as the learner alternates between states of equilibrium and disequilibrium, as she assimilates and adapts new knowledge structures in relation to her pre-existing schema.

This assimilation and accommodation of an external object into the learner's internal schema is the first of three types of equilibration Piaget has identified in cognitive development. The second is an equilibrium among the subsystems of the subject's schemes. "In reality," Piaget explains, "the schemes of assimilation are coordinated into partial

systems, referred to as subsystems in relation to the totality of the subject's knowledge. These subsystems can present conflicts themselves" (1977, p. 839). The third kind of equilibrium must be established piece by piece as the parts of one's knowledge is reconciled with its totality. There must be an equilibrium between the differentiation and the integration because this eventually leads to "new actions upon the previous actions" or "new operations upon the previous operations" (p. 839). Piaget considers this final type of equilibrium to be the secret to cognitive development which prompts a transition from one developmental stage to the next.

Piaget credits the distinguished biologist, Weiss, and the cognitive scientist, Presburger, for inspiring the notion of equilibrium. In biology, the totality of a cell structure remains stable despite, and because, its elements are active. Similarly, in cognitive science, a system remains coherent and closed despite, and because, its subsystems are open and dynamic. Indeed, the success of the totality of the cell and system remain dependent on the active negotiation between its parts and subsystems. Likewise, the learner's ability to construct new knowledge, and thus carry out informed action, relies on her capacity to maintain the integrity of her schema while assimilating and accommodating new concepts. "[E]quilibration is the search for a better and better equilibrium in the sense of an extended field, in the sense of an increase in the number of possible compositions, and in the sense of a growth in coherence" (Piaget, 1977, p. 840).

Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics in education

Traditionally, hermeneutics has been regarded as the art and science of interpretation of historical literary texts. Recently, however, as scholars adopt a wider interpretation of "text," hermeneutics is gaining more ground in educational contexts as an approach to construct meaning from knowledge representations in a variety of media.

Education itself is a human enterprise, to which linguistic understanding and communication are essential, and is guided by the interpretation and creation of texts and commentary. Hermeneutics, which draws on these subject matters to form its theories, can aid in building a deeper understanding of the learning process (Gallagher, 1992, p. 24). Historical hermeneutics hold important implications for intercultural language learning and teaching in that it provides a framework in which the learner can situate and develop her historical and cultural understanding of self and the linguistic other through the interpretation of media rich texts (Roche, in press).

Central to hermeneutic interpretation is a process known as the hermeneutic circle, in which individual features of a text become clear in terms of an entire context, and the entire context becomes clear through the individual features. "This interchange of interpretations is a dialectical give and take between one interpretation and another, and it characterizes precisely the process of learning" (Gallagher, 1992, p. 38). Parallels can be drawn between Piaget's concept of learning, in which the learner rocks between stages of equilibrium and disequilibrium as she assimilates and then accommodates new ideas into her pre-existing schema. The notion of the hermeneutical circle does not originate with modern day philosophers of hermeneutics, however, nor with Piaget. Indeed, it is one of the oldest and most influential philosophical concepts. Aristotle and Plato both make reference to the fact that we learn because we have the ability to place the unknown within an already known context which gives it sense (Gallagher, 1992, p. 68). Nonetheless, two German philosophers, Martin Heidegger and Hans-Georg Gadamer (as cited in Eagleton, 1996), have been instrumental in applying this concept specifically to the interpretation of literary texts and offer insight into how the reader can call upon her prior knowledge, or "pre-understandings," to better understand the text and, ultimately, herself.

Hermeneutics of Being

Heidegger believed that we, human subjects, are in constant interaction with others and the material world (Eagleton, 1996). This world is a reality which we can never objectify, since we are as much the creators of this reality as we are participants in it. Human existence, or Being, is a dialogue with the world and, he advises, the more respectful activity is to listen rather than speak. Language is not merely a means to communicate, it is communication itself. As such it forms the basis for human existence, for it is only through participation that human beings come to be human at all. As a result of our being in the world, we carry with us certain pre-understandings, or assumptions, about how the world operates. It is from these pre-understandings that knowledge departs. Understanding is the structure of human existence, for life itself is always a question of fresh possibility, of perpetual advancement and reinvention of self.

Historical hermeneutics

Gadamer's concept of historical hermeneutics recognizes the importance and constraints historical perspective places on the interpretation of texts, in that we understand the present through the past, yet view the past from within our narrow viewpoint, based in the present (Eagleton, 1996). It sees history as a living dialogue between the past, present and future, and seeks patiently to remove obstacles to this endless mutual communication. The event of understanding occurs when our own historical meanings and assumptions of the past merge with those embodied in the text. This area of interception is what, in Gadamer's hermeneutics, constitutes meaning. It is an understanding aided by our pre-conceptions which are based in an historical, literary tradition. Understanding involves advancing the meaning of a text with what we bring to it, finding in it new potential. In this sense, understanding is a "coming home," in that we better understand ourselves when the past and present, subject and object, alien and intimate are drawn into our own realities.

Subjects-in-interaction

Subjects-in-interaction, as applied to modern language education or, more specifically, the designing and interpreting of authentic media texts from one's own and the target language culture, assumes that all textual elements, human and non-human, are active agents in the social construction of the event. In Piagetian terms, the event is the process of discovery, as in Columbus finding what already existed, or invention of new concepts, as in the creation of the first airplane. We learn by being in active contact with the world, by continually putting ourselves in contexts where we are confronted with new human elements, such as ideas, and non-human elements, such as children's building blocks. These external elements are the catalysts for our learning, from which our schemas can deepen and expand. Hermeneutic theorists say that we are part of the human and material world, both past and present, and, as a result of our social involvement, have constructed assumptions as to how these worldly elements, human and non-human, operate. These assumptions guide our interpretations of the world, through its texts, and can only become further informed through continual interaction and dialogue with their elements. Our role as humans is to consider these elements as active agents, each with a voice, and defer the parole to them so they can penetrate our consciousness.

Subjects-in-interaction is both a theory and methodology for the creation and interpretation of authentic media texts which looks at the process of creation and interpretation of the text as the event. The learning process, in which one alternates from states of equilibrium and disequilibrium, moving back and forth between the known and the unknown, reconciling discrepancies between external objects and one's schema, or rejecting them altogether if they are too foreign to be accommodated, constitutes the essence of our human existence. Learning, for Piaget, is always a productive process since the learner is constantly achieving better, or optimized, states of equilibration. The temporary state of equilibrium is not the goal, but rather a starting point from which to re-initiate this active

process. It is not the state of equilibration that is primordial to our cognitive and emotional growth, but rather the disequilibration.

Interpretation in hermeneutics is also productive and focuses on this iterative process of perpetually optimizing our understanding of the textual event. The hermeneutic circle engages the interpreter in an active process in which she alternately centers her attention on the discrete qualities and the global picture of the text. With each re-interpretation, she finds new potential in the text, and in herself, since she develops an increased understanding of how the interactions between the individual elements, and her connection to them, affects the meaning she makes from the text. This interpretation is based on a merging of the reader's historical world views and assumptions and those of the author. What comes of this fusion is perhaps not a better understanding of the author's intention, since one can never presume to embody the sentiments of an other, but rather a heightened awareness of the reader's association with the text, her interactions with its qualities and understanding of their inter-relatedness.

The modern day digital environment, with its expanded authoring capabilities, calls on the reader to assume new roles in her textual interpretations, thus requiring a new set of multiliteracies. Often the interpreter finds herself in the simultaneous roles of creator and interpreter, transgressing notions of time, past and present, culture, native and "foreign," and medium, traditional and modern. These multiliteracies describe the reader's ability to interpret the connections between the information, the meaning making events, rather than the information itself. The flexibility to move from author to interpreter, known to unknown, alien to intimate, other to self, are skills that can facilitate intercultural hermeneutics.

Subjects-in-interaction notes that in this dynamic meaning-making process, all Subjects, human and non-human, are agents in an ever changing, dialectical inter-action. In modern language education, intercultural mediation occurs at many levels. Any exchange in which the parties are confronted with differences, or even commonalties, in world view

based on age, gender, ethnicity, medium or power discrepancies constitutes an intercultural mediation. These exchanges, carried out between the human, teacher, student and cultural “other,” or non-human, such as texts, methods, or curriculum, can be integral to an individual’s intercultural development — or not. Indeed, Piagetian and hermeneutic theories agree that external objects and concepts are key to optimizing one’s understanding, but also that they risk being rejected if determined too distanced from one’s internal structure.

Joerg Roche (in press) notes that, to assist their learners in developing keen intercultural interpretation skills, modern language classes need to challenge the individual’s “at-homeness,” in which she perceives the world based on her existing knowledge and rejects the “foreign.” Often times this calls for outside help to break through the sometimes deceiving hermeneutic circle, since the cyclical “nature of the processes inherent in understanding makes it difficult for an individual to escape the weight of the gravity field exerted by their own culture’s world view” (p. 33).

The constructionist learning environment detailed in this dissertation serves as an example of the “outside help” to which Roche refers. Modern language student teachers assume the role of digital video ethnographers as they design their own digital media texts and interpret those of each “other,” reflecting on their process and products in relation to the course content. In this investigative learning environment, participants are provided with different venues, such as focus groups, class interactions and on-line forums, in which to openly reflect on their learning process as they grapple with alternative concepts of culture, method and text in modern language education. Many of these reflections are recorded on film, others on paper, and others in an on-line data base. Data analysis of the learning processes of eight student teachers from version 3.0, supported by on-line excerpts of their movies and reflective process, is carried out within the Piagetian / hermeneutic framework described above, which examines moments of equilibrium and disequilibrium as

these learners assimilate, accommodate or reject their evolving concepts of culture, method and text in modern language education.

Individual Student Teacher Profiles

I chose these eight student teachers to represent the more than ninety that participated in this study over a three-year period for two reasons. First, all were participants in version 3.0 of the study, which was the most complex and smooth running of the three systems due to changes based on lessons learned during the first two versions. Version 3.0 also incorporated the most robust data collection techniques with the addition of focus group forums and WebConstellations™. This additional data allowed me to form more complete profiles on their thinking processes.

Second, each of these eight modern language student teachers chose to engage with one particular issue, for example: “self and other” (Paula), “tourist versus explorer” (Kevin), “filming perspectives” (Murray) or “connection and interaction” (Lesley). Each then continued to approach his or her self-selected topic from many different angles, repeatedly articulating his or her thinking processes in various forums and media for reflection and communication, such as in the focus group discussions, written assignments and WebConstellations™ comments. The fact that each of these individuals connected with one topic to such an extent was a surprising result of this study. I did not encourage the students to choose one idea and follow it through, this was a spontaneous personal decision on the part of the individuals.

What’s more, I do not recall being aware of each student’s personal journey at the time of the study, they only became apparent to me upon analyzing the data. I do, however, recall that these themes were common topics for reflection throughout the course. It is interesting to explore these particular eight cases since many of the remaining students also engaged with these themes in the data I collected, though perhaps to a lesser extent because

they chose to grapple with several issues rather than one. It should be noted that these eight student teachers were not chosen based on ethnicity nor academic performance, but rather on their level of focus on their chosen theme and their capacity and willingness to provide a window into their thinking processes through clear and consistent articulation of their ideas.

Through their stories we can begin to piece together the individual qualities of the text that is this project. Their interactions were many, their interpretations varied, but they all contributed to the creation and understanding of what this project was and what lessons it brought. The research questions that guided my interpretation of their stories in this chapter, as well as my conclusions in the following chapter, are:

- 1) What is the nature of the human and seemingly non-human interactions that occur when modern language student teachers are:
 - (a) users of a system designed to promote multiliteracies and
 - (b) digital video ethnographers of their own learning processes?
- 2) How might the use of digital media to create texts within this constructionist learning model inform these student teachers' notions of culture, or Subjects-in-interaction? How might this affect their future teaching?

The different types of data called upon to construct these profiles is color coded to aid the reader in understanding its source. The reader is encouraged to consult the following reader's guide for clarification.



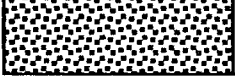
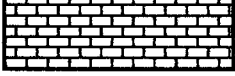


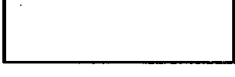

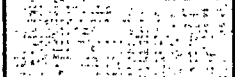
Readers' guide for student teacher profiles

Viewing the videos

Media: The reader has been provided with two different media versions of this dissertation. The first media is a pattern-coded printed paper version, and the other a multi-media CD-ROM. One is compatible with PC computers and the other for Macintosh. On the PC CD-ROM, movies for each student profile are within the media folder with the student's name (i.e. "Anne's_Media"). Movie file names are indicated in the text box below the embedded image in the printed text. On the Mac version, the viewer has the choice to either select the individual movies from within each student's media folder, as in the PC version, or to view the movies from within the Word document (i.e. "Anne's_Story"). Unfortunately, at this time PC versions of Word do not support embedded movies.

Software requirements: The text document is in Word '98, the movies are in QuickTime™. Both software programs are compatible with either Macintosh or Windows. To view the videos it is necessary to install QuickTime™ 3.0, which is included on the CD-ROM. A newer version is available, free of charge, from the Apple™ website: <http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/>

Pattern coding system for data

	Final movies created by the design teams.
	Video captured during Focus Group Sessions. Each student participated in one of five focus group sessions.
	Video taken from mass media.
	Video taken during classroom interactions in multimedia labs or classrooms in, or outside of, the Scarfe building.
	Video taken during WebConstellations™ Focus Group Sessions, carried out near the end of the course.
	Excerpts from the student's 'chunks' and responses, taken from an article.
	Excerpts from the student's written reflective syntheses of an article.
	Excerpts from my field notes, written after the day's meeting.
	Comments posted via WebConstellations™ in response to the video 'star' also included. Video is active, see indicated movie file to play.

Anne

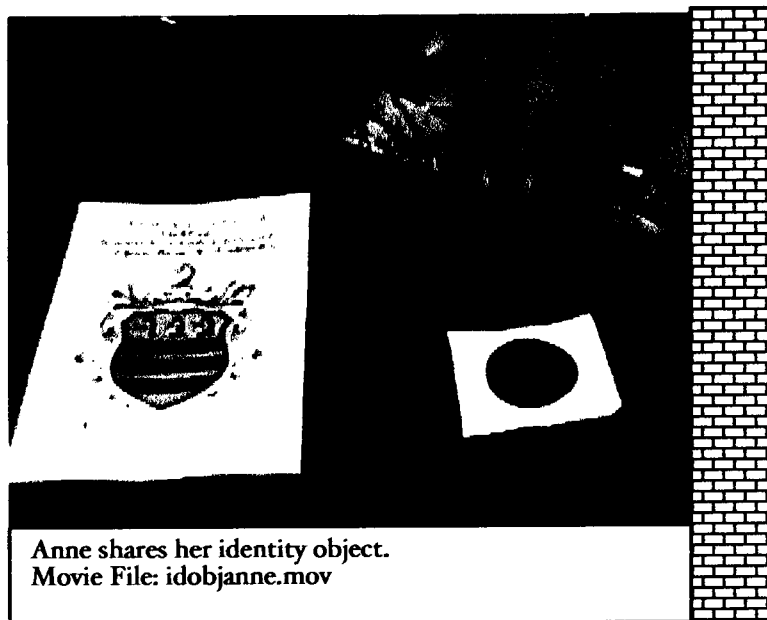


Anne's Movie "Fine Grind"



Anne's Group Movie, "Fine Grind."
Design Team: Anne, Peter, Layla, Heather, Agnes
Movie File: finegrind.mov

Anne's Story

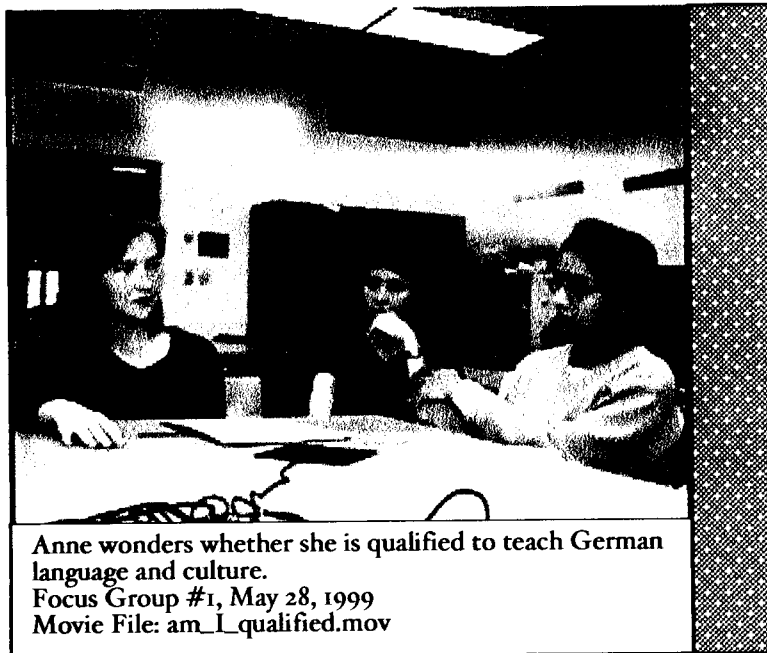


Anne has chosen to weave the cultural threads of her identity into an interactive cloth book which beckons the reader to explore its many pockets and folds to discover the borders she has crossed on her journey to Canada. Each symbol has been carefully chosen, each artifact safely stored, each cloth meticulously stitched. The more intimate aspects are buttoned into pockets, zipped into cases and hidden under flaps. When Anne describes herself in nationalistic terms, she tucks away the legal documents proving her Russian-German family heritage in a pocket, and places the seal of the family crest of her new British husband under a flap. She reasons these are the aspects of herself that she carries deep inside her, that are not readily visible to the external eye.

The internal and external spaces that Anne incorporates into her identity object are a fitting metaphor for the issues she grapples with in this study. As she engages in the reflective forums and constructionist projects in this course, Anne comes to realize that process-based, or internal, concepts of culture, teaching, and learning are imminently more rewarding than the product-based, or external, ones that guided her previous practice. This

transformation is evident in her self-assessment of her teaching qualifications and her opinion of constructionist teaching methods.

Anne immigrated to Canada at a young age and spent her childhood co-constructing concepts of Canadian culture through her interactions with the children of fellow recent arrivals. She is unsettled by her perceived lack of knowledge of her heritage language and culture, German, which she will be teaching, as she explains in this focus group discussion:

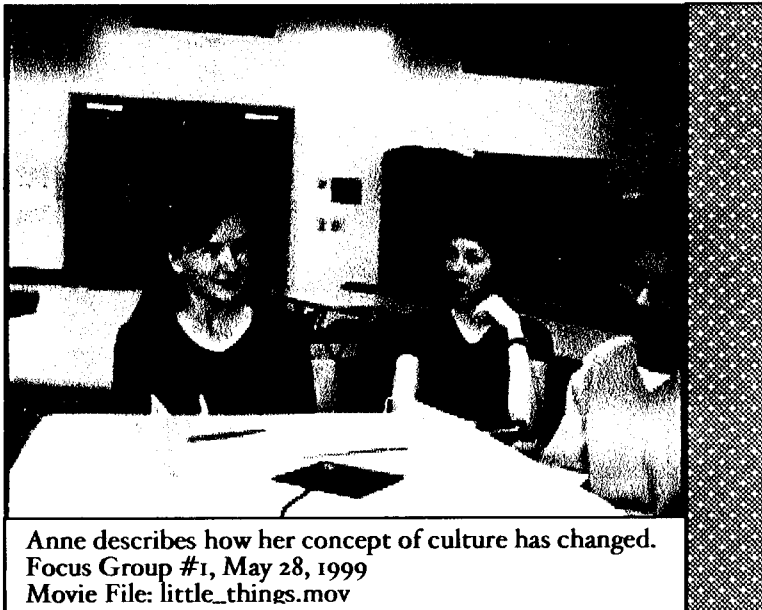


As demonstrated in this exchange, Anne's misgivings about her ability to approach the topic of culture in her language classes is shared by many of her classmates. Other students, like Anne, often equate time physically spent in the target language culture with their qualifications to teach its culture. Interestingly, those students in this study who have spent time on student or work exchanges in the target language culture do not show greater confidence in their abilities to teach culture than those who have not. When Anne admits she would like to "know everything" but would settle for being "knowledgeable," she does not relieve the burden she has placed on herself in terms of professional preparedness. Indeed, there is little difference between the two levels of expertise she has proposed, as

they both measure culture in terms of stored information, or products, and are never fully attainable.

This attitude may be attributed to Anne's lingering concept of teacher as expert in the language classroom. In this role, the teacher embodies the level of mastery, in terms of language and cultural proficiency, which the students should aim to achieve. In recent approaches to language teaching and learning, however, many students find the acceptance of 'interlanguage' as a valid medium for expression and discovery to be a liberating and motivating alternative. This term, first introduced by Selinker (1972), has been appropriated by other second language theorists and is used in a variety of contexts. Ellis (1994) determines interlanguage has come to be understood as the "system of implicit [second language] knowledge that the learner develops and systematically amends over time" (p. 354). In the context of the communicative second language classroom, students are encouraged to use the target language, regardless of their level of proficiency, to engage in meaningful interaction. They are no longer expected to postpone this level of engagement until native like mastery, an unattainable goal for most and distant one for all, is achieved. I propose such a philosophy towards the exploration of culture can be equally empowering for student and teacher alike. Students and teachers use their "interculture" to engage in meaningful cultural exploration, regardless of their cultural background or time spent in the target language culture. In the process, a great deal can be learned about one's self and the target language other.

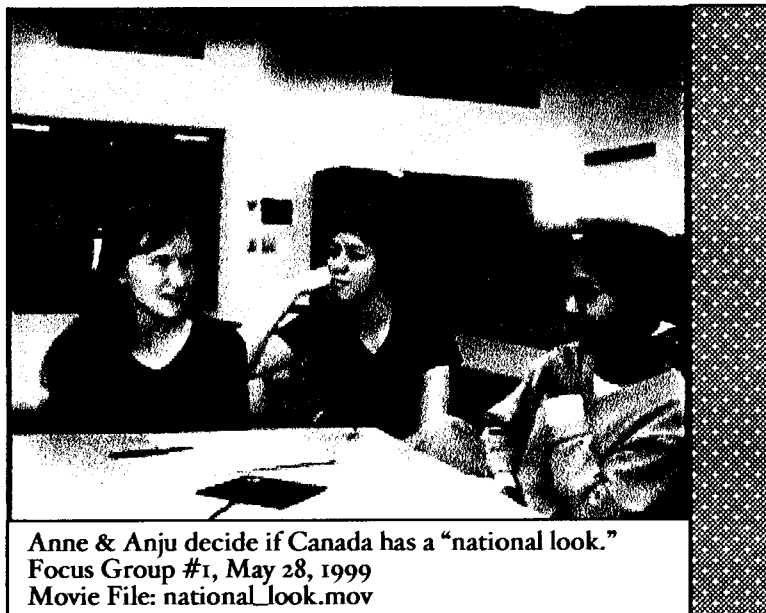
Anne is already coming to accept this notion of interculture, as she begins to redefine her notion of culture to include process-based understandings. She explains in this excerpt from her focus group session that she is beginning to examine the more internal, everyday workings of a culture, rather than its external performances, such as "parades:"



Having redefined her approach towards culture, Anne begins to reflect back on her teaching practice during her practicum and worries that she may have given her students an overly external, and hence foreign and strange, view of the target language culture:

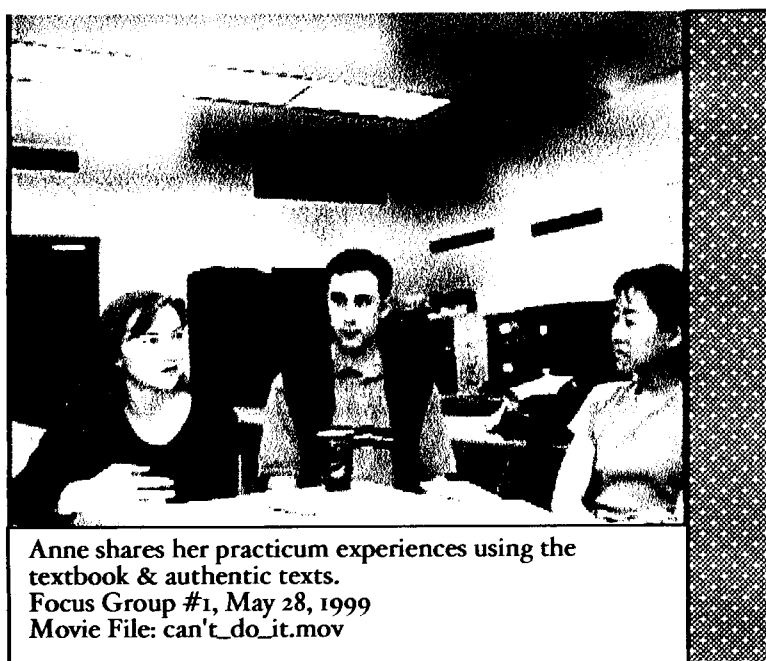
Near the end of my practicum, my sponsor teacher and I planned a German lunch with traditional and some not so traditional foods: breads, meats, cheeses, sauerkraut, sausage, salad, and dessert. In the classes which followed I discussed the various cultural differences associated with food (i.e. going to the bakery in the morning for fresh bread/rolls for breakfast). It seems I only succeeded in helping the students realize how different German culture is, and "strange" in their words. As a result, I can see the value and need of first discussing Canadian culture and also the cultures of our individual backgrounds. This was especially the case in my German classes, because my students all came from a variety of backgrounds, and had themselves immigrated to Canada at some point in their lives. In my German II class, no one had been born in Canada! I think it would have been really helpful for them to reflect on their birth cultures, Canadian culture and then learn about German culture. Then German culture would have been *another* culture, not a different, disconnected culture (Anne's Reflective Synthesis #1, on Mantle-Bromley, 1992).

In this reflection, Anne begins to see the wealth of cultural resources in her students' multicultural backgrounds. She shares a great deal with them in that she, herself, is an immigrant and still continues to simultaneously learn about the target language and Canadian cultures, as shown in this focus group exchange:



Though most outsiders would mistake her for a native-born Canadian anglophone, based on her external physical appearance and language abilities, Anne carries within her a multilingual and multicultural identity. Unfortunately, Anne believes this compromises, rather than enhances, her inter-cultural teaching expertise.

Despite her self critiques on her teaching effectiveness during the practicum, Anne has proven herself to be capable of overcoming more traditional concepts of method and materials in the language class. Like most of the students in this study, Anne had learned about recent communicative language teaching approaches in her Fall methods course and developed many teaching materials based on authentic texts. She was excited to use these new techniques on practicum, but, like many student teachers reported, was discouraged from doing so by her sponsor teacher. This is explained in this video excerpt:



As she reports, Anne is able to eventually incorporate almost all her teaching materials into her classes, despite what she perceived to be strong signals to the contrary. What is interesting in Anne's case is that she persevered in integrating her authentic texts, whereas other students reported giving up when faced with initial hesitation from their sponsor teachers. It is unclear whether the sponsor teachers were expressly adamant about their refusal to allow these materials into their classes or whether the student teachers allowed an initial hesitation on the part of the sponsor teacher to sway them back into performing like the traditional teachers of their educational experiences.

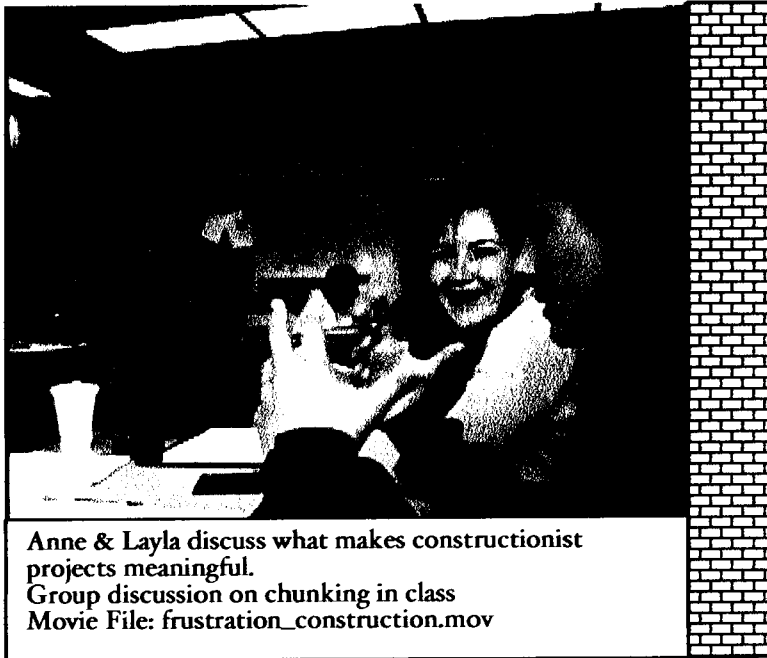
Towards the end of the course, Anne is determined to claim the language class and curriculum for herself and looks forward to implementing her newly formed philosophies in her own teaching:

In my own personal experience on the practicum, the German course was very strongly driven by the textbook. Even though the textbook was supposed to be communicative, it still presented artificial situations, and consequently lacked authenticity. My sponsor teacher insisted that I use and follow the textbook, therefore I found myself driven by the chapters in the textbook. There was little time to discuss German culture. I find the classroom which Tedick describes exciting. Once I have my own classes, I would like to set up language learning and cultural learning side by side with authentic texts, 90% target language usage, and lots and lots of authentic materials. Unfortunately, I don't have much of an idea of how to go about doing so, other than what I have learned at UBC. I know the basics of lesson planning, etc., but how do you put it all together and have it work? I guess I'll have to find out for myself.

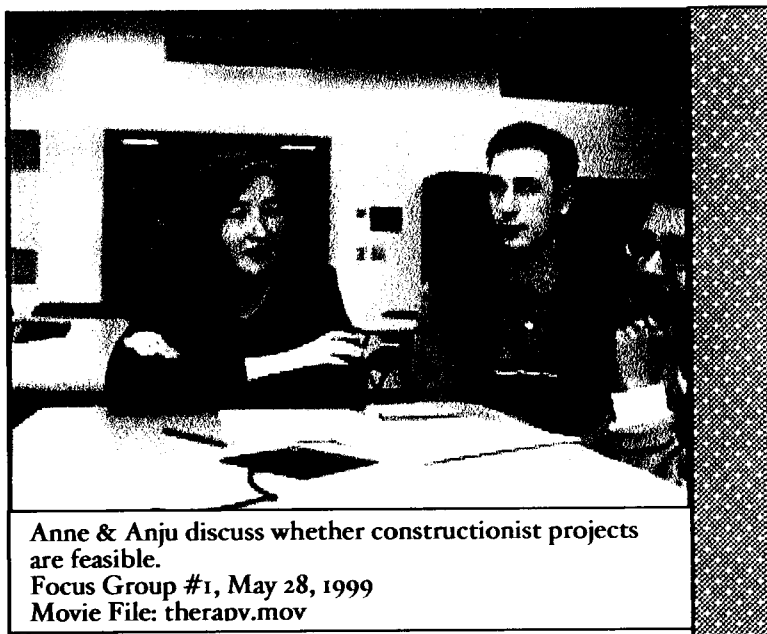
(...) However, all these changes seem so radical in comparison to the way I was taught in high school and from the way I ended up teaching on my practicum, that I question whether I would be able to create the second language classroom that Tedick advocates (Anne's Reflective Synthesis #3, on Tedick et al., 1993).

Despite her will to apply these ideas to her own teaching, she still struggles to reconcile the discrepancies between these contemporary process based approaches she has deemed to be more effective and empowering, and the more traditional, product based ones she has housed within a schema formed over a life long study of language and culture. As she confirms, she is a beginning teacher who has not yet been able to claim the language class for herself. A new level of equilibration will only be possible when she does.

This tension between Anne's prior and evolving concepts of culture in the language classroom also affect her view on knowledge representation, which originally prizes product over process. Anne struggles to fit her new appreciation for constructionist projects into a more traditional paradigm for language teaching. In one group classroom exchange, Anne and her classmate, Layla, try to uncover the aspect of constructionist projects that make them so meaningful. Layla argues that it is the frustration level involved but Anne suggests it is perhaps the amount of time spent with the actual object:



In another scene, however, it is this very element of time that makes Anne wonder if they are feasible in the language classroom:



In the previous conversation, Anne has concluded the amount of time invested in creating a project is what determines its value, yet this, ironically, is what devalues these projects in a system in which language learning is measured out in increments to be tallied up at the end of the day.

Anne is a creative and meticulous artist, who clearly values and enjoys the process of constructing artifacts to share. She is proud of her identity object, widely regarded as the best “product” in the class. Yet Anne, herself, admits to her tendency to go for the “A,” which may have affected her choice of medium in which to construct her object. She is already an accomplished seamstress, having sewn all the dresses for her wedding, and this may have given her the confidence to undertake this assignment. It is only in the movie making process, which obliges Anne to work with new and imperfect tools under various human and technological constraints, that Anne comes to have the most radical transformation in her thinking process.

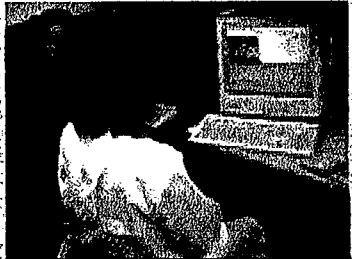
Anne enjoys being part of the software development process and finds it exciting to hold an insider’s perspective. She comments on this more than once via WebConstellations™. In her first comment, she responds to a movie in which I explain to a design team the implications of the students’ work for the CineKit™ developers:

WebConstellations™

Beta Testers!

Anne Hickling on 6/26/99 at 5:18:18 PM

It was interesting being part of a beta test site. I never knew such things existed before I took this class. It gave me an idea of how computer programs are developed and it was pretty cool to be a part of that. Luckily my group didn't have too many problems with Cinekit; we just weren't able to polish our movie as much as we wanted to. I think I would have been really frustrated if we had actually lost sections of it due to the program crashing. I must admit though, when Cinekit did crash, we didn't know why and were pretty frustrated so we didn't type in very many comments.



Movie File: betatest.mov


In her second comment, Anne responds to her classmate Nazlynn's observation that she has gained a lot of confidence in herself by having experienced success in using media tools that previously intimidated her:

WebConstellations™

confidence builder

Anne Hickling on 6/26/99 at 4:51:11 PM

It has been exciting to be on the "bleeding edge" of technology (as Maggie calls it) but it certainly was frustrating at times as I'm somewhat of a perfectionist. I can relate to Nazlynn in that it was great to see that we could actually learn to use all the equipment quite easily. That's pretty exciting and then you actually construct something with it as well. I would definitely like to learn more, and feel that I would need to in order to use this in the classroom.



Movie File:
nazlynn_confidence.mov

In both of these comments, Anne makes reference to her frustration at not being able to make her product as perfect as she would have liked due to the limitations of the beta-version of CineKit™, since system bugs limited the usability of its features and made it prone to crashing. However, it is this very frustration that leads Anne to discover aspects of herself that may have hindered her own learning. This is made clear in her comment on a scene in which I encourage the students to work within their constraints to finish their movies so we have time to follow up with meaningful discussion on the process via WebConstellations™:

WebConstellations™

Lower your Expectations!

Anne Hickling on 6/26/99 at 5:40:15 PM

I think our group was going to ask for an extension as well, except that we'd heard that others had already been answered in the negative. I remember we spent one day at Muses [multimedia laboratory in the Faculty of Education] until 6:30 and at the end of that day I felt braindead! I think we maybe wanted to accomplish too much, I guess we've all been conditioned to strive for the "A." Sometimes I think we do ourselves a disservice by doing so, we'd probably learn a lot more if we just slowed down a little bit. I think we've been brainwashed into valuing the product more than the process.



Movie File:
magexpectations.mov

In her transition from product to process based approaches to learning and teaching, it appears that Anne has learned some valuable lessons that will continue to inform her practice when she claims her language class for herself. Anne has learned that she can look to her multilingual, multicultural self as a valuable resource for the exploration of culture. She has also learned that cultural exploration is a long and difficult process which consumes a great deal of time and, as Anne has admitted herself, is all the more meaningful because of it.

Layla



Layla's Movie "Fine Grind"



Layla's Group Movie, "Fine Grind"
Design Team: Anne, Peter, Layla, Heather, Agnes
Movie File: finegrind.mov

Layla's story

Layla is a bi-cultural and bi-lingual Spanish teacher whose family immigrated to Canada from Spain when she was a young child. Through relatives and frequent visits back to her "homeland," her study of the Spanish language and culture has been a life-long process. Layla's borderland identity has undoubtedly contributed to her interest in cultural studies, culminating in an undergraduate degree in anthropology. This degree makes Layla a cultural expert in the eyes of her classmates, who often look to her for guidance on the ideas and methods presented in the course as they pertain to language teaching. Layla, however, does not share this high opinion of her skills, as she still admits near the end of the course, as she has throughout, "I seem to have more questions than answers in regards to this idea of culture" (Layla's Reflective Synthesis #3, on Fischer, 1996)).

Though she is versed in the theories of anthropology and envied by her peers for her language skills and cultural knowledge, she, too, is struggling to reconcile the dual concepts she holds of culture as they pertain to anthropology and language teaching. Prior conceptions of language teaching, reinforced in her practicum experience, have prevented Layla from readily applying process oriented anthropological notions of culture to her own teaching practice. In the course of this study, nonetheless, Layla eventually comes to reach new levels of equilibrium, and disequilibrium, as she appropriates new process oriented concepts of culture as they apply to the teaching of modern languages.

Layla's parents have served as the main source for her linguistic and cultural education, speaking the target language at home and providing her with interpretations of its cultural symbols and meanings. Her family interactions carried out in a non-dominant language of the society in which she lives have, no doubt, made her associate culture with family and country of origin. This may explain why she chooses to "chunk" and respond to this quote which offers a different perspective on culture:

Chunk from Goldman-Segall, 1998, p. 11: "Culture is not merely the sum total of what we inherit from our parents and social groups; it is what we create with others in the context of our lives, with or without various technologies."

Response from Layla: This is a very interesting way of looking at culture. One that I've never thought about. Culture really isn't just what we've received from our parents. It also includes other things like the society in which you live and the people that surround you (not including your family). I've realized that culture is everything that surrounds a person and not just where they come from.

Further chunkings and responses also concentrate on notions of culture, making evident her efforts to reach a deeper understanding of its role and implications for her teaching.

Examples follow:

Chunk from Kramersch, 1989, p. 327: "A coherent understanding of another culture includes "the central a code of (that) culture plus an awareness of its socioeconomic and regional variations."

Response from Layla: I agree with this idea as I feel that understanding another culture is not just knowing the language and a little history. Understanding culture includes all aspects of that society. Looking at the political, economic and social. They are all required to fully understand a culture.

Chunk from Kramersch, 1989, p. 341: "However, knowledge of cultural facts and events is of limited use, even in a pragmatic sense, if it is not accompanied by an awareness of the larger ideological context."

Response from Layla: I feel this is to the point. Just studying culture on the surface is of no use to anyone unless they also understand the intricacies of that culture. Studying culture means moving beyond the artifacts and historical events and actually digging deeper into the ideological perspectives of the culture.

Chunk from Kramersch, 1993, p. 349: "The current emphasis on the relationship of language and culture in language teaching is prompting many educators to reassess their definitions of both language and culture, and to declare culture an indisassociable component of language teaching."

Response from Layla: Once again, this statement just backs up the claim of many that language and culture cannot be separated. Without language, culture is missing something and vice versa. I agree with this because I feel that they are one in the same.

Chunk from Kramersch, 1993, p. 349: "Culture was a sightseeing curiosity or the stuff that daily life is made of."

Response from Layla: This is just another way of saying that culture is everything in society. The politics, economic, social aspects, language. Everything life is made of. I believe that to learn a culture you have to look at all its angles and perspectives.

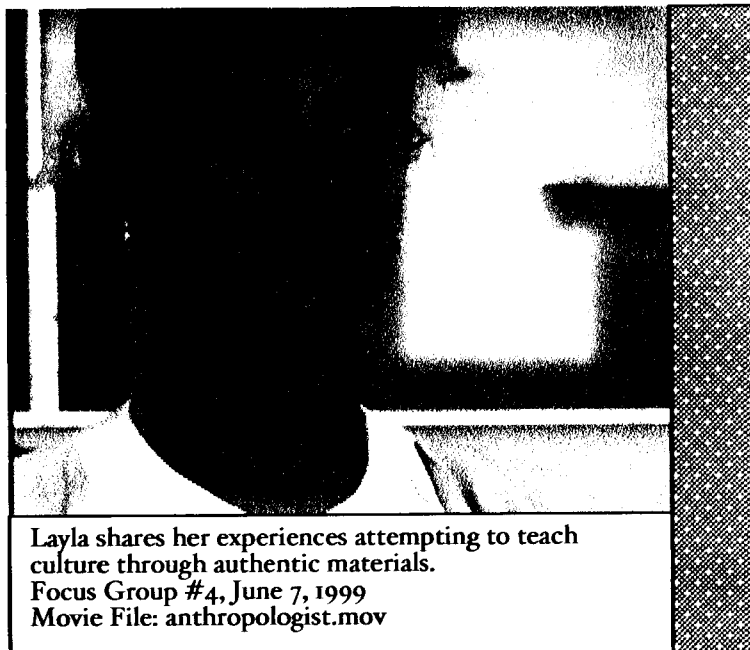
It is interesting to note that other students do not pursue the concept of culture to the extent that Layla does, even though it is the topic of the course. Others choose different themes, each meaningful in terms of their own personal quest for understanding. Despite Layla's background in anthropology, she does not seem satisfied to rest with the definitions of culture she has encountered thus far. She continuously chunks and responds to the author's descriptions of culture, comparing them to her own ideas to either confirm or disconfirm them for her own use. Although she acknowledges that culture is "everything in society," which can not be understood by knowing "the language and a little history," Layla continues to hold the belief that a "real" culture does, indeed, exist and, given the skills and enough class time, it is possible to teach it in a language course. In her reflective synthesis on Tedick et al's, article on language as object, Layla laments:

As a Spanish teacher and anthropology major, I feel that the study of culture is foremost in the study of a language. Without going into depth into the "real" culture, the language being studied is decontextualized. I found this to be one of my greatest challenges during my practicum. How am I supposed to teach the "real" culture of Spanish speaking countries when there remains such a vast amount of grammatical learning to occur within a short thirteen week period? It is of paramount concern to me that although I retain a strong belief in the value of learning and teaching a cultural reality, I was only able to integrate such an endeavour in merely one of my lessons. This leads me to question how strongly I believe in teaching culture. I thought that by using authentic material within my grammar lessons, the cultural significance would be obvious. However, when I read this article it increased an awareness in me that perhaps I had failed to teach "real" culture to my students. I realized I was guilty of teaching only the superficial, often stereotypical perspective of culture, and that cultural relevance was largely transparent. I was doing the exact thing I vowed never to do (Layla's Reflective Synthesis #1, on Tedick et al., 1993).

As Layla probes deeper in her journal writing, she discovers for herself that her inexperience as a teacher and prior conceptions regarding the nature of language class, in which the rules of grammar monopolize the curricula at the expense of even the most limited cultural exploration, are what present the greatest challenges for her:

During my practicum I was largely concerned with one thing...passing. To do this I had to do my best as a teacher and in so doing it was safer and more confidence building to use techniques that I was comfortable with. As a result of this, I realize that my failure to incorporate more cultural lessons was a result of my discomfort with the process of teaching cultural material congruent with the material necessary to effectively complete the grammatical component of language education. I was taught that in a language class you learn about grammar and how to use it orally and written. The whole idea of culture and teaching it as a part of language education was new to me, thus it could be said that I was reluctant in the attempt to teach it. However, by reading this article, my eyes have opened to the fact that the teaching of culture is as important, if not more so, than the teaching of grammar (Layla's Reflective Synthesis #1, on Tedick et al., 1993).

Layla had received some instruction on culture teaching with authentic documents in the fall methods course and was enthusiastic about experimenting with this approach on her practicum. However, like many, if not most, of her classmates reported, her sponsor teacher was not eager to allot class time to this exploration if it usurped the place of grammar:



Layla shares her experiences attempting to teach culture through authentic materials.
Focus Group #4, June 7, 1999
Movie File: anthropologist.mov

It is interesting to note in this video excerpt that the other focus group participants, while listening to Layla's story of her hijacked culture lesson, vacillate between empathy for her disappointment and self-motivated interest learning which grammar point she was able to extract from her documents. Though Layla explicitly points out that "the point of the lesson was *not* to do grammar," the conversation immediately turns to talk about what grammar point she presented and how she was able to adapt it to the various language levels of her students. If grammar talk is able to take over this focus group conversation, despite its explicit focus on the use of authentic texts for teaching culture, it is not surprising that student teachers are confronted with almost insurmountable obstacles to exploiting their authentic texts for cultural understanding in more traditional classrooms.

Layla soon begins to consolidate the process oriented concept of culture she holds for anthropology and the product centered one for modern language education during the making of her movie. She is excited about the potential of the media she is using and sees how it can espouse the previously divergent interpretations of culture for her new professional life. Fischer's (1996) urging to use available media to turn our modern language students into explorers, rather than tourists, as cited in Hellebrandt's article on humanistic approaches to the use of multimedia intrigues Layla. She observes:

Chunk from Hellebrandt, 1996, p. 252: "...without access to and use of modern technology student's cultural learning resembles that of a tourist."

Response from Layla: I never thought about it this way but this is very true. Using modern technology can really open up many doors into other cultures that we never had before. This new technology can really push us into becoming explorers as opposed to tourists. New information and different perspectives can really help towards becoming an explorer.


Layla reveals that she enjoys the frustration involved in the debugging process inherent to constructionist media projects and believes that this level of engagement makes them personally meaningful and, hence, memorable. Via WebConstellations™, she shares in the excitement of a classmate who has overcome a challenge in the creation process:

WebConstellations™

capturing excitement

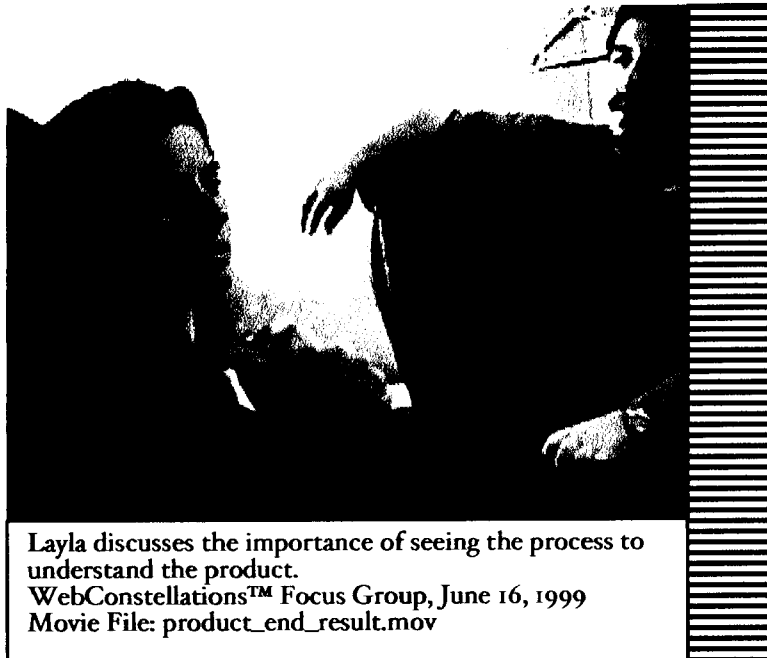
Layla D'Emanuele on 6/16/99 at 10:50:32 AM

i felt the exact same way that sylvie felt when i first captured my video. this is an amazing technological innovation. when i think about the process i went through to get my movie on web constellations i am very proud of myself. before i took this class i thought i was a technological idiot. but now all i can think about is my movie and i want to show everybody what i accomplished. in this sense i feel as excited as sylvie did when she first captured a part of her movie



Movie File: sylviecapture.mov

In an earlier comment Layla writes, "Studying culture means moving beyond the artifacts and historical events and actually digging deeper into the ideological perspectives of the culture." In the movie making and reflective processes Layla has learned a great deal about her own perspectives and those of her classmates, as revealed in this closing focus group session carried out at the end of the course in which the individual design teams discuss the lesson learned from making their movies and commenting on them and the process via WebConstellations™:



Though she has yet to settle some issues regarding the integration and language and culture in her teaching, these may only be resolved through personal experience in her own modern language classroom. Nonetheless, Layla has moved “beyond the artifacts and historical events” of the culture in which she has been immersed and has learned, through looking at the process in which they are created, to uncover and give voice to the perspectives of its members.

Paula



Paula's Movie: "Cars 'R' Us"

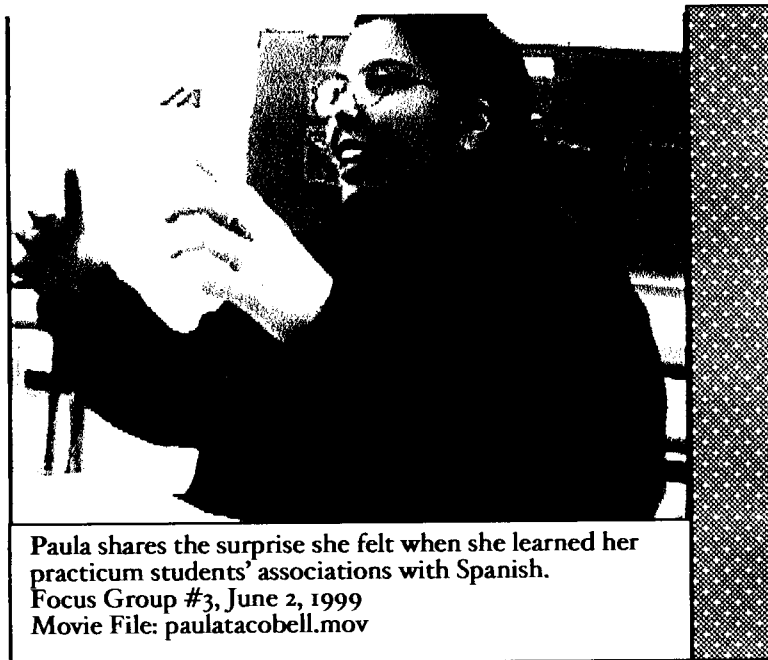


Paula's Group Movie, "Cars 'R' Us"
Design Team: Paula, Corinne, Sylvie, Esther, Christina, Julia
Movie File: carsareus.mov

Paula's Story

The daughter of Portuguese immigrants, Paula's life story is similar to that of many of her classmates. She has maintained her mother tongue and cultural ties through community and family interactions and this experience has fueled her passion for discovery of other cultures. A French and Spanish specialist, Paula takes an equally enthusiastic approach to her language teaching and professional development. She greets new discoveries about herself and her field with sincere pleasure and a contagious laugh. Paula struggles with the dilemma of how to explore the target language culture without perpetuating the stereotypes found in media.

On the first day of her practicum in her home town of Kelowna, British Columbia, Paula asked her students to share with her the first thing that comes to their minds when they think of Spanish. She recounts this exchange and the students' surprising response with her focus group mates in this video clip:



Paula shares the surprise she felt when she learned her practicum students' associations with Spanish.
Focus Group #3, June 2, 1999
Movie File: paulatacobell.mov

The “Taco Bell Dog” to which the students referred, is a comical chihuahua who speaks either in English with a Mexican accent or Spanish with English subtitles. He is a marketing construct, aimed to sell tacos and burritos, which taps into the shared North American concept of Latin American culture. These ads have been carefully constructed,



their target audience meticulously researched. Taco Bell™ is, after all, a \$4.8 billion company with 6,500 stores serving approximately 55 million customers a week.¹ Not surprisingly, this chihuahua’s success has been phenomenal, inspiring his own website², complete with video clips of commercials starring the Taco Bell Dog, as seen below, and a “Taco Dog Mall” in which visitors can select from a line of merchandise including windchimes, tee-shirts, snack boxes and talking plush toys.



This chihuahua evokes “endearing” images of gun-ready revolucionarios, all powerful dictators and love sick Romeos. To the older generations watching these television commercials, they revive fond

¹ As reported on:

<http://www.microsoft.com/windows/windowsmedia/en/archive/casestudies/tacobell/default.asp> Accessed from the World Wide Web January 5, 2001.

² These video clips of commercials and the Taco Bell Mall can be found at:

<http://www.everwonder.com/david/tacobelldog.html>
Accessed from the World Wide Web January 3, 2001.

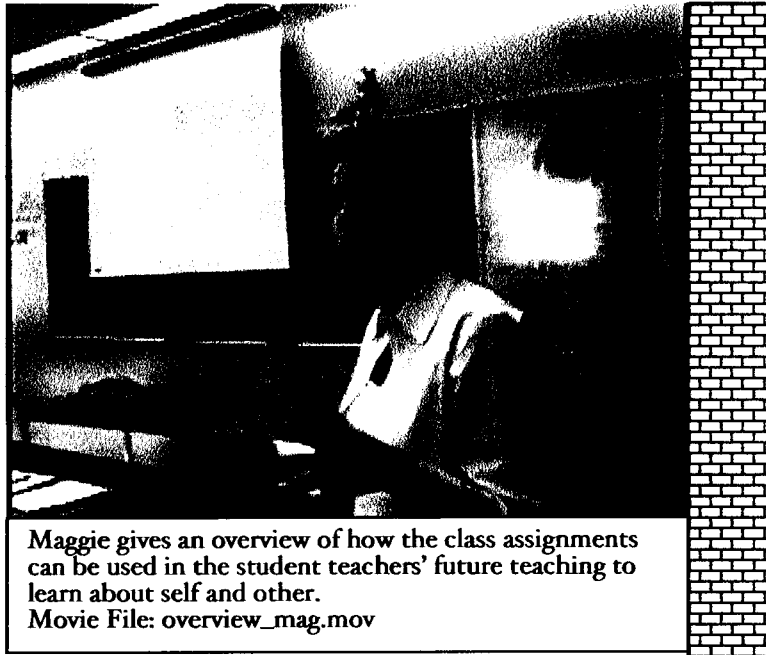
childhood memories of Saturday mornings spent watching cartoons of the gun slinging "Speedy Gonzales," which have since been removed from circulation due to the less than positive image they perpetuate of Mexicans in specific and Latin Americans in general. For many of the younger generations, these ads present a seductive characterization of a distant culture.

Kelowna is a city in the interior of British Columbia which does not have a large Hispanic community. As such, Paula was keenly aware that, for these students, she was the main, if not only, source of contact with the Spanish speaking world. She was teaching students who had never taken Spanish before and therefore felt it was her responsibility to present her students with other cultural viewpoints than the "Taco Bell Dog." She invited native Spanish speakers to her classes and created cultural listening lessons based on authentic texts such as songs and videos, as she had learned in her Fall methods course, but she is still not satisfied with her success when she begins this course in the summer. This problem continues to nag Paula, and she reflects on it in light of Kramsch's (1989) article on the use of media materials:

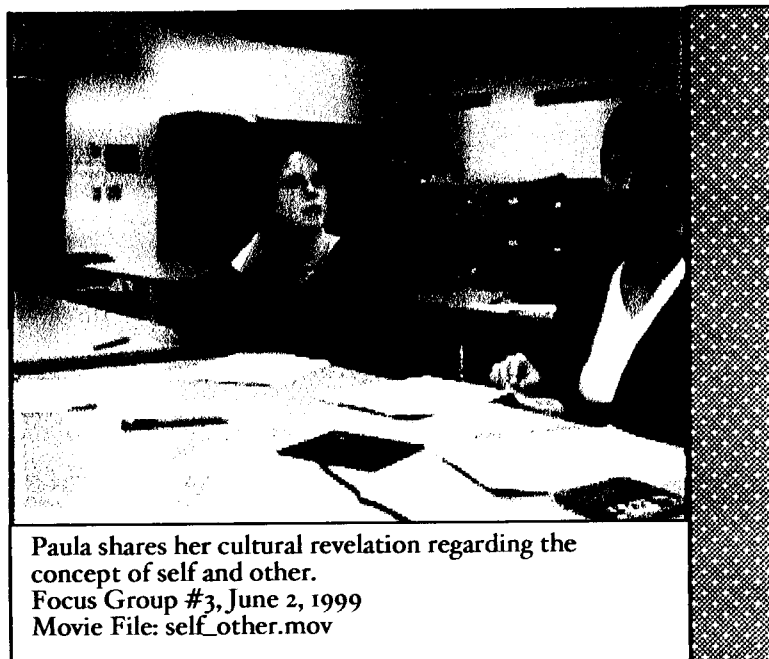
This article poses questions that I asked during my practicum and still do — how do we teach culture without continuing the biases and stereotypes inherent in the minds of the students. For instance, when I asked my students what the Spanish culture meant to them, they responded by saying "The Taco Bell Dog" or burritos and tacos. These of course are fabrications and commercialization manipulated by media in order to capitalize on a stereotyped culture. When you turn on the TV and observe a dog with a stereotyped Spanish accent selling burritos and tacos, it is no wonder that students attribute such images to the culture. In my opinion, the role of the teacher is to teach culture in such a way that dispels these myths and fabrications (Paula's Reflective Synthesis #2, on Kramsch, 1989).

Paula has identified the dilemma early on in the course and makes it the focus of her personal discovery and growth. As she completes her first constructionist assignment, the identity object, and engages in a series of course lectures on the notion of self and other and its potential for stimulating intercultural reflection and understanding, she continues to

construct a personal understanding of how these ideas can inform her own teaching. This video excerpt is an example of a class lecture in which the notion of self and other is applied to the projects the participants are constructing and their implications for teaching:



Once Paula has assimilated the concept of self and other into her pre-existing schema, she undergoes what can only be described as a “cultural revelation” as can be witnessed in this excerpt from her focus group session:



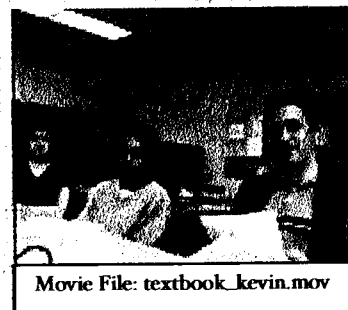
Paula now grapples with this new found notion of self and other and applies it to all aspects of her learning, not releasing it until she has accommodated it completely. On one level, Paula applies this notion to the use of classroom materials, such as textbooks and authentic texts, and on another to constructionist learning activities. In response to the video clip in which Kevin admits to using only the textbook for teaching culture, Paula agrees this practice is, indeed, common in the schools. She offers a plea to her fellow student teachers to break free from this cycle and suggests the notion of self and other as an alternative:

WebConstellations™

Textbook Culture

Paula Alves on 6/16/99 at 11:16:10 AM

I agree that in the majority of the schools culture is taught using cultural notes in a textbook. We need to break free from the vicious circle of stereotypes and biases. I believe using the notion of self and other is an effective method to combat these preconceptions.

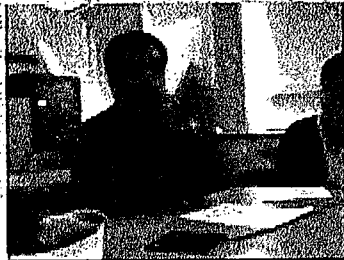


In another WebConstellation™ star, Paula views a conversation between several focus group members who debate the quality of cultural materials in the textbooks they've been using on practicum. They go on to admit that, had it not been for their involvement in this course, they might not have questioned their practice with regard to selecting and using teaching materials. They would have assumed teaching primarily from the textbook was, "what teachers do." Now, however, they have developed the confidence to incorporate their own materials and demand more reflective thinking from their students. Paula adds to this discussion with her written comment in which she confirms the points they make and suggests emphasizing the notion of self and other to aid them in reaching their goals:

WebConstellations™

Tacky Texts
Paula Alves on 6/24/99 at 11:57:41 AM

I do agree with Peter that many language textbooks are tacky in their culture capsules. I feel they are full of generalisations and biases that it is no wonder that students have these incorrect notions that the French for example only eat baguettes or that the Spanish only eat tacos. I think it is acceptable to incorporate these texts, but not emphasize them as the only perspective. Teachers should always incorporate more than one perspective in the classroom and as well, emphasize the notion of self and other. This will most certainly not abolish these misconceptions, but it will certainly shed a more broader and multifaceted vision of culture.




Movie File: tackytexts.mov

Textbooks are an integral part of the modern language curriculum and can be excellent guides to understanding various grammatical, lexical and even cultural points. Having authored various forms of textbook related materials (see Ascarrunz Gilman, Zwerling Sugano, & Beers, 1993; Beers, 1997; Gil & Beers, 1993), I am keenly aware of the collaboration process between publisher and practitioner/author and how the cultural

distance between the two can ultimately strengthen or weaken the quality of the final product. In my class lectures, I shared my experiences — most notably one in which the majority of the authentic texts I had based the written activities on were omitted at the last minute in order to save costly space — and cautioned the students to view all textbooks with a critical eye. When I urged the students to have as much, if not more, confidence in their own self-selected authentic texts than in the prescribed textbook, many students interpreted this to mean they were to throw the book out completely. They subsequently expressed feelings of guilt when they reflected on moments in which they “resorted” to the textbook for lesson plan suggestions in the wee hours of the night during their practica. To reopen this topic, I posted this group discussion on WebConstellations™ in which I give some suggestions on critical approaches, based on the notion of self and other, to using the textbook in the classroom. As can be expected, this topic resonated with Paula and she offers this comment:

WebConstellations™
Canadians love to dance!
Paula Alves on 6/24/99 at 11:33:53 AM

I think that if we were to ask teachers teaching french in Germany and then people in France to show the french culture, we would most certainly observe different perspectives. Therefore, as Maggie says, by allowing us to have an introspective look at how others see us may allow us to break or tap into the circle of biases and stereotypes in order for us to gain more awareness and understanding of our own misconceptions.



Movie File:
canadians_dance.mov

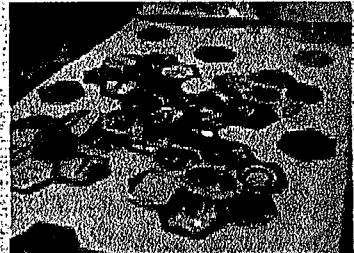
In this latest comment, Paula appears to have reached a new state of equilibrium in her understanding of the notion of self and other as it pertains to the use of classroom materials for cultural learning.

The second level on which Paula applies this notion is with regard to classroom projects. In video excerpt which documents the “open-house” format for sharing each individual’s identity objects, Paula comments about the construction and sharing process and how it has allowed her to learn about her “self” and the “others” in the class, and how these lessons can be extended from the local to a global context:

WebConstellations™

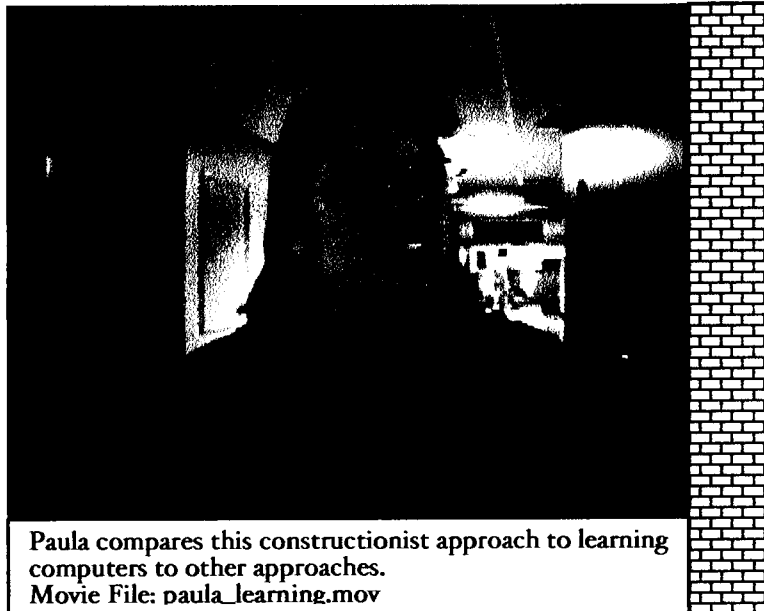
Identity objects-Jessica/Erin
Paula Alves on 6/24/99 at 11:39:23 AM

I really enjoyed making the identity objects even though at times I was concerned of not being able to produce something- I am not extremely creative. However, I did and it was amazing to see not only my own construction but everyone elses interpretation of themselves. I think this was a valid learning experience and one that could be easily incorporated in the classroom. I think by creating identity objects it allows us to the view the world in a more dynamic and multi-faceted approach realizing there are differences and similarities among all of us rather than a narrow, tunnel-like approach to who we are.

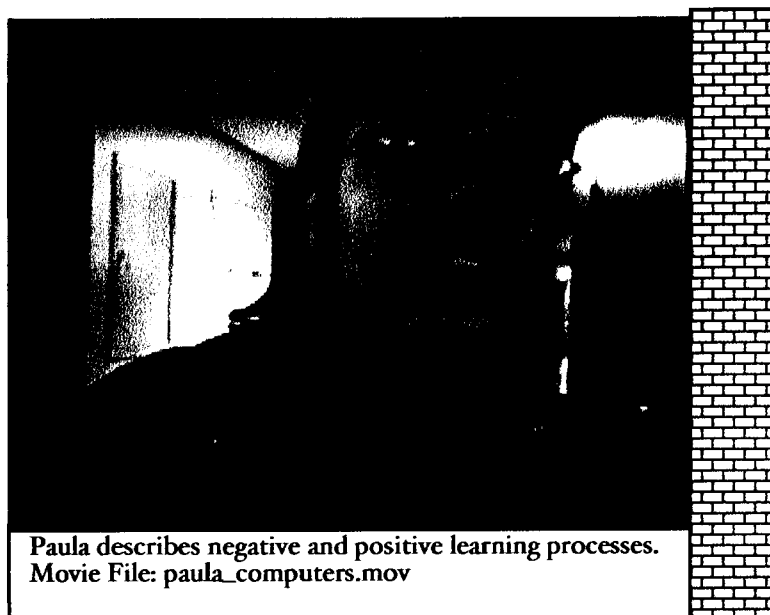


Movie File: idobj_jess_erin.mov

This first project is an individual construction. The other class members share in each others’ products by exploring, touching, and discussing them amongst themselves as they circulate informally from one to the next. The second project, the making of the movies, is a group project in which the members collaborate and negotiate which parts of themselves they wish to include or omit from their final products. Most of the students are novice computer users, with little or no experience in creating digital artifacts of their own. In this hands-on project based learning approach, they develop their technical literacy skills through co-discovery learning methods as they construct their final products. Paula makes an interesting comparison between this approach to learning to use computers and more traditional ones,



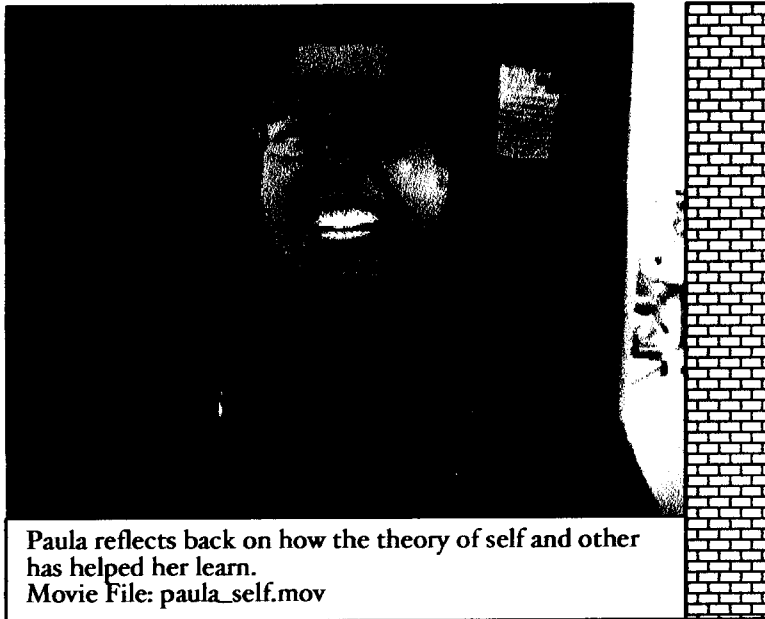
Paula analyzes these teaching strategies within the notion of self and other and develops some pointed insights into the effects each has on the opinion one ultimately forms of one's self and the other. In traditional computer classes, the teacher is at the head of the class and imposes her will on them by directing the students to learn the features of a program linearly. Students develop negative opinions of self when they find they are unable to keep up with the teacher's direction or retain the information of the program that has been presented. This process is other oriented in a negative way since the fellow students, or "others," are negatively perceived as a nuisance, or hindrance to one's own learning if they dare interrupt the instruction with a question and thereby stall the tour. The product is also other-oriented in a negative way, since the product is the program itself, that which is causing the negative sentiments towards self and other:



For Paula, the co-discovery constructionist approach to digital media instruction, however, promotes positive perceptions of self and other. In this computer culture, the students are self motivated because they are engaging in hands-on work on personally meaningful projects. The “other” is seen as a collaborator, helper, and peer. As a result of this collaboration, each individual is able to experience success, and hence pride, in her achievements, fostering positive feelings of self. The process and product are other-oriented in a positive way, since the product is not the program itself, but rather the personally meaningful group constructed artifact.

Paula demonstrates that her assimilation and accommodation of the concept of self and other have moved her to to a new state of equilibrium with regards to the dilemmas she encounters in her language teaching. Her process of discovery has been an enjoyable and exciting one in which she has learned a great deal about herself as a learner and teacher and her classmates as collaborators and friends. She has developed a new strategy for addressing stereotypes and confronting bias in her language classroom and is excited to try them out. Fortunately, the digital camcorder’s battery lasted long enough

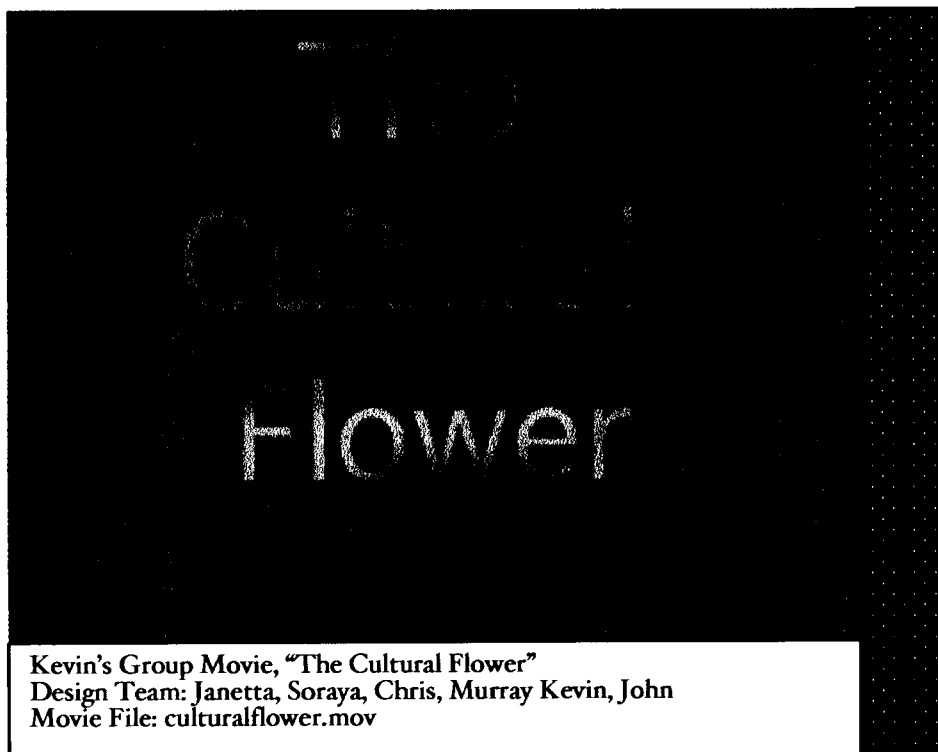
for me to capture most of this excitement on tape:



Kevin



Kevin's Movie "The Cultural Flower"



Kevin's Story

Kevin, a self described "shy guy," communicates his thoughts through a few chosen words, often laced with sarcasm and delivered with a devious smile. His frank insights into his own teaching practices, usually followed by a dose of self deprecating humor, have won him the respect and affection of many of his classmates. Early in the course, Kevin boldly admits his lack of attention to matters of culture in his French language teaching, surprising many with his candid honesty about his dependence on textbooks and prompting further frank discussions on this topic in a variety of media throughout the course. The video excerpt of this particular confession was placed on WebConstellations™ where it solicited empathetic comments from nearly half his classmates, including a characteristically humorous one from Kevin himself:

WebConstellations™


Textbook Culture

John Little on 6/14/99 at 11:41:43 AM

I, too, have experienced the burning pain of having to portray the "Venetian gondola driver," the "French guy in a beret," the "Japanese woman in a kimono," and the "bear-wrestling Canadian in a mack jacket." Textbook culture is just a superficial representation of true culture, like an artifact dug up from some stereotypical mudhole. I think I may just use these examples from textbooks for comic relief when they come up in the future, and hope that it turns into a lesson on how to critically examine information.

Kevin Haslbeck on 6/14/99 at 11:31:47 AM

Who was that dashing young man?



Movie File: textbook_kevin.mov

Clearly, this dilemma on whether to allow one's self to depend almost entirely on the textbook for teaching materials strikes close to home for many beginning language teachers. These teachers often find themselves short on personal resources and long on prescribed learning outcomes, most of which pertain to grammatical points outlined in the textbook. It is thus understandable that the "cultural corners," which provide static, uncontroversial

depictions of the target language culture and emphasize the grammatical points and vocabulary presented in the chapter, are an attractive option to the overly taxed beginning teacher.

One might imagine that Kevin's dismissive comments regarding his use of the textbook indicate that he has no desire to further reflect on this aspect of his practice, yet this is not the case at all. Subsequent communications, written and oral, clearly indicate that Kevin is quite disturbed by the fact that he has neglected to promote any critical cultural reflection not only in his students during his previous teaching experience but also in himself as a language learner. He uses all interfaces of the course to, first, methodically investigate the underlying components of his psyche that have allowed him to be unreflective in his presentation of culture, and then to develop a critical approach for his future teaching.

Kevin questions the basis for his own cultural perspective early on in the course when he selects and responds to this chunk:

Chunk from Mantle-Bromley, 1992, p. 120: "An ethnocentric outlook can hamper some students' second language and culture learning. They may believe that learning about other languages and cultures is somehow unpatriotic, and consequently resist alternate views and beliefs."

Response from Kevin: I never before considered the impact of ethnocentricity on second language and culture learning. I'm wondering whether subconsciously, my own ethnocentric attitude has been getting in the way of my own cultural learning. From now on, I'm going to be more aware of this factor in all my learning.

Kevin has come to realize that he may have compromised his learning experiences by relying too heavily on the first view that presents itself, whether it be the unidimensional perspective of the textbook or his own ethnocentric outlook. This opens him to question the very notion of learning and knowledge construction when he reads and comments,

Chunk from Goldman-Segall, 1998b, p. 6: "In this book, I demonstrate how knowledges are deconstructions, reconstructions, and co-constructions that emerge as a result of the interaction between what is already known and what is yet to be known again, in a new form."

Response from Kevin: This quote first seemed a little confusing to me, but after reading it a few times, I realized how accurate its message is. Knowledge does not come from one individual, but from all individuals who perceive certain pieces of knowledge in slightly different ways. I see now that knowledge is not a static phenomenon, but one that changes over time. It is no surprise that the more advanced the world's forms of communication become, the more knowledgeable we all will be.

Kevin's enthusiasm over media's potential to facilitate knowledge construction based on the sharing of different perspectives causes him to reflect upon his own language teaching. As he interacts with the readings and the ideas presented in the course, he looks back on his practicum experience with a sense of disappointment at the lost opportunities for cultural sharing. After viewing a video excerpt on WebConstellations™, in which a fellow classmate shares the restrictions placed on her use of media by her sponsor teacher, Kevin laments:

WebConstellations™

Media in the practicum

Kevin Haslbeck on 6/16/99 at 2:07:39 PM

During my practicum, I had the same sort of situation where the advertisements I used in class were part of a unit in the textbook on advertisements. In fact, the adds that my sponsor teacher supplied me with were in English!! Talk about unauthentic materials!! From the instruction I've received at UBC, I realize how important it is to use authentic materials, no matter what the topic of the unit is. There is always a way to incorporate them!



Kevin experiences his own cultural revelation when he reads Fischer's (1996) article which makes a distinction between touristic and exploratory approaches to cultural learning. With respect to his teaching, Kevin writes:

When I first began reading this article, I immediately thought that getting students who can barely identify themselves in a foreign language to partake in a digging inquiry of that language's culture and social realities would be impossible. At the end of the article, I found out that I had committed a "crime" through my assumption. Indeed, I felt shame – quite deservedly, I might add. Ultimately Fischer had fully convinced me that I should be an explorer and that I should help my students become the same. So many secondary students complete their foreign language training having learned next to nothing about the language or the culture. The reason? For most of them, there was no motivation or driving purpose to learn it. The beauty of being a language explorer is that the students have the opportunity to create their own purpose (if the teacher allows for freedom of project choice) and are self-motivated in the process to pick up the linguistic tools necessary to accomplish their goals.

The important thing I learned about myself through the reading of this article is that I am still unprepared for teaching culture in my classroom. Contrary to Fischer's assumption, I have certainly not "developed a deep understanding of the country and the people". During my practicum, I was learning almost as much as my students about French culture through the stale, concrete slabs of information that the textbook provided. If I do not develop my cultural knowledge prior to reentering a classroom, I feel I have at least the necessary reflective and inquisitive skills to guide myself and my students on an exploration of culture and language (Kevin's Reflective Synthesis #3 on Fischer, 1996).

Kevin's insights into language learning are not limited to his students. He is also prompted to reconsider the way in which he has conducted himself as a learner in his personal travels and what he has been able to gain from them as a result. Contrary to what many of Kevin's fellow classmates commented on at various points in the course, he does not believe that travel abroad guarantees in depth cultural learning. This is exemplified in his response to this video clip posted on WebConstellations™:

WebConstellations™

travel julia

Kevin Haslbeck on 6/16/99 at 1:42:37 PM

Travelling abroad does not necessarily mean that cultural education is any easier. After reading the Fischer article, I realized that the trip I had made to France a few years back was really no better than learning culture through the textbook clips. The problem was that I went there as a tourist. I actually went there to work, but I carried the tourist mentality of gathering information like snapshots, not as pieces of mofuable culture. The thing to do is to go into another culture as an explorer, finding out why things are the way they are and why they differ from the realities I bring with me from my own life and culture.

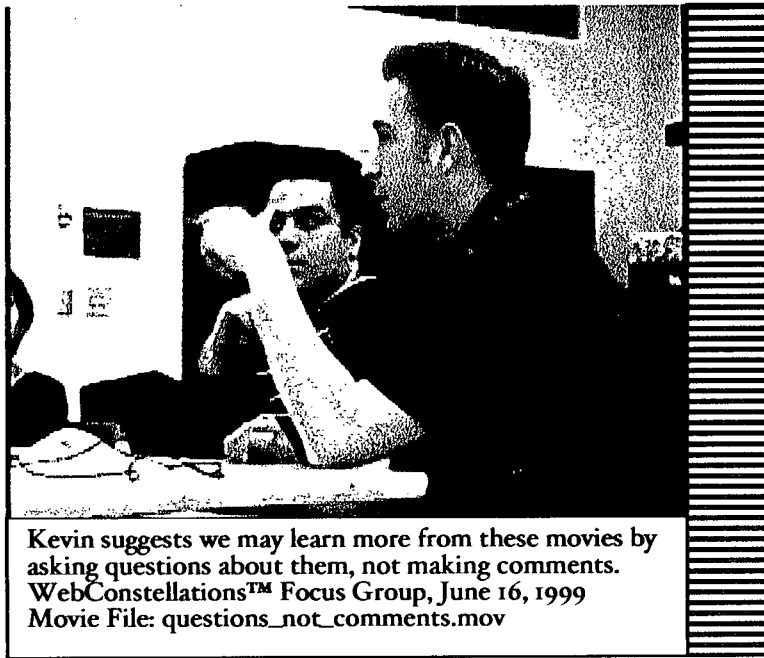


Movie File:
travelljulia.mov

At this point in the course, Kevin has established a clear idea of what he hopes to accomplish for himself and his students in his modern language classroom. Kevin hopes to create a media-rich learning environment in which students and teacher alike appropriate the skills to become explorers, rather than touristic consumers of culture. For Kevin, the fundamental skill required of an explorer is the ability to ask pointed and relevant questions:

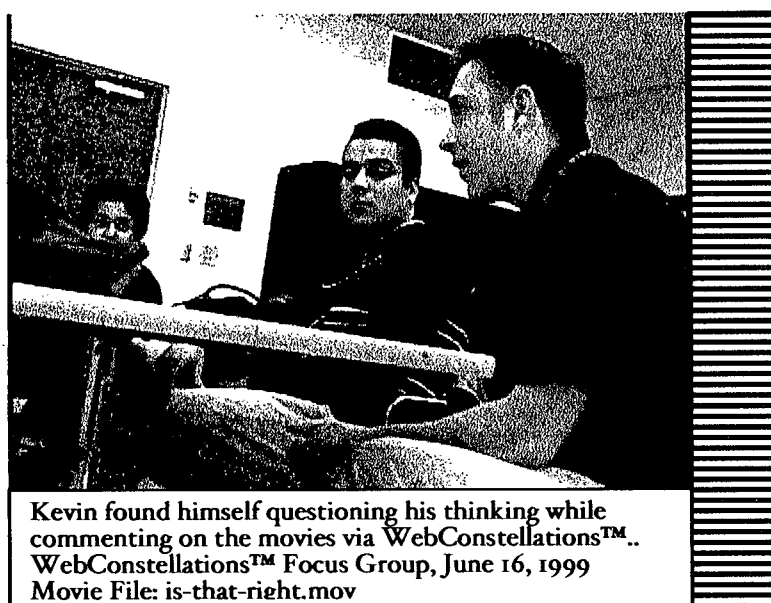
Chunk from Fischer, 1996, p. 77: "Asking such sincere information-seeking questions shows reflection, and asking questions is the first step in exploration."

Response from Kevin: As much as questions are valued in classrooms, I wonder why they aren't promoted as strongly. Too often teachers will spew out a clump of information and follow it up with, "Was that clear?" or "Any questions?" This does not motivate students to question. Teachers should definitely spend more time teaching students how to ask higher level questions and find ways to make their students want to learn more and therefore question more.



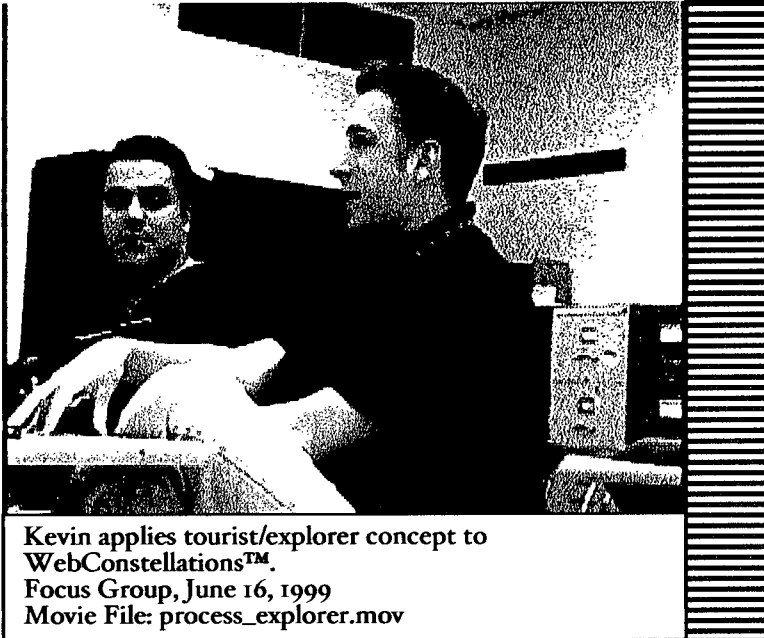
Kevin does not stop with himself or his students, he holds the same high expectations for critical reflection for his peers as well. In this WebConstellations™ focus group session near the end of the course, Kevin demonstrates he has appropriated the ethnographic skills to become the cultural explorer he aims to be. He applies Fischer's concept of "tourist vs. explorer" to the movie making and annotating process carried out in this course and suggests that more could be learned by asking questions about the movies rather than making comments on them.

Furthermore, when asked whether commenting on other people's constructions on WebConstellations™ helped him think about his own thinking, Kevin replies that he found himself *questioning* the way he was thinking, "Is that *right*? Or is that *wrong*?", making reference, perhaps, to his vow to be critical of his own ethnocentric perspective:



Finally, when asked whether he enjoyed more viewing the finished products or the process of making them he provides a fitting closing by drawing the conversation once more to the "tourist/explorer thing" to put his textbook "culture corners" behind him for once and for all. As can be predicted, Kevin prefers the process of discovery learning because, "just watching the movie it's like getting fed a cultural fact. Like a little box, right?...And seeing the...observing the making of that movie is like exploring why certain cultures do certain things:"

(cont...)

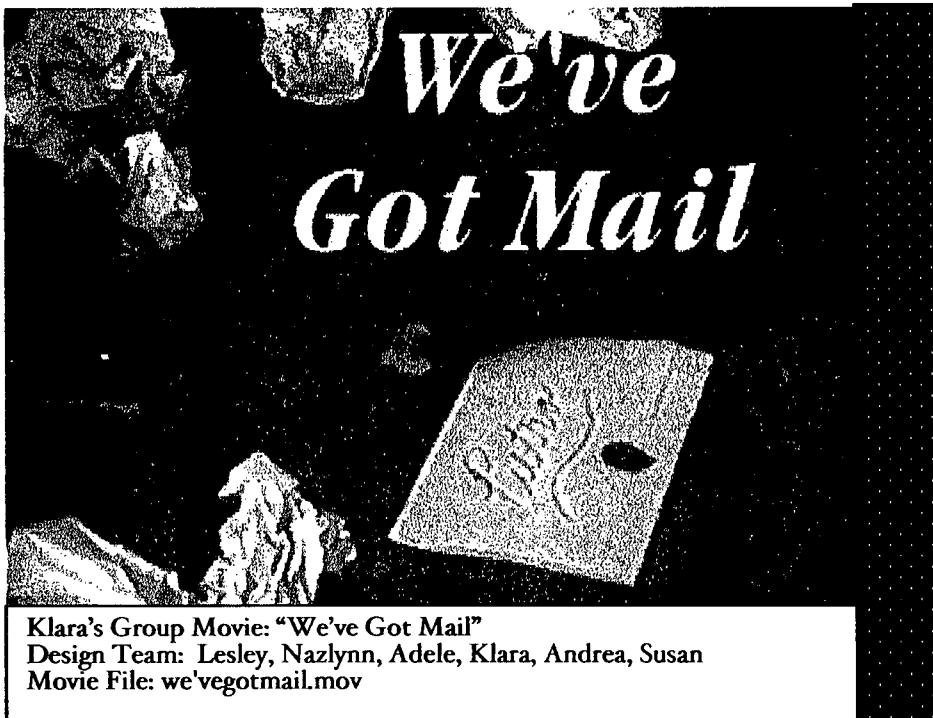


Kevin applies tourist/explorer concept to
WebConstellations™.
Focus Group, June 16, 1999
Movie File: process_explorer.mov

Klara



Klara's Movie "We've Got Mail"



Klara's story

Born in the Czech Republic where she spent most of the first half of her life, Klara then immigrated to Canada with her family and has maintained a solid link to her past through her native language and family ties. Her bright eyes, expressive mannerisms and explosive smile engage the viewer and provide an open window into her thinking processes. Klara constructs and performs her ideas as she speaks. Her eyes dart back and forth while she processes, they narrow and travel off to the right as she ponders a deeper thought and eventually they open wide to indicate she has arrived at a final conclusion. Her words are accompanied by gestures and movements that captivate the viewer and narrate the sentiments she is evoking – she clutches her heart as she indicates that something comes from inside, opens her arms to extend an idea globally and punctuates her conclusions with a radiant smile.

Klara is multilingual, specializing in the teaching of French and Spanish. She enjoys learning about different cultures and her embodied communication has surely facilitated her interactions with their speakers and the learning of their languages. She carries this enthusiasm over into her philosophy of teaching, as shown in this comment she made on her classmate's observation on how she has learned about culture:

WebConstellations™

Life-long culture learning

Klara Kohoutova on 6/18/99 at 1:41:57 PM

Like Anju, I feel like I'm always learning about different cultures and I really enjoy that. Learning languages to me is a way of getting to know other people and their cultures. What use is language if you do not use it to communicate with people with whom you would not normally have contact? In our second language classrooms, students may not be able to have contact with people from the target culture until later, but if we teach them the target culture in an interesting way, with different points of view, they will get excited about that culture and will want to make contact with people from it. Isn't that our job? How can anyone get excited about a language from learning its grammar?



Movie File:
anju_culture.mov

Klara identifies her experiences with those of an ethnographer, moving between cultures, leaving one to immerse herself in another. She makes this point by selecting and commenting on this chunk from Fischer's (1996) article on tourists and explorers:

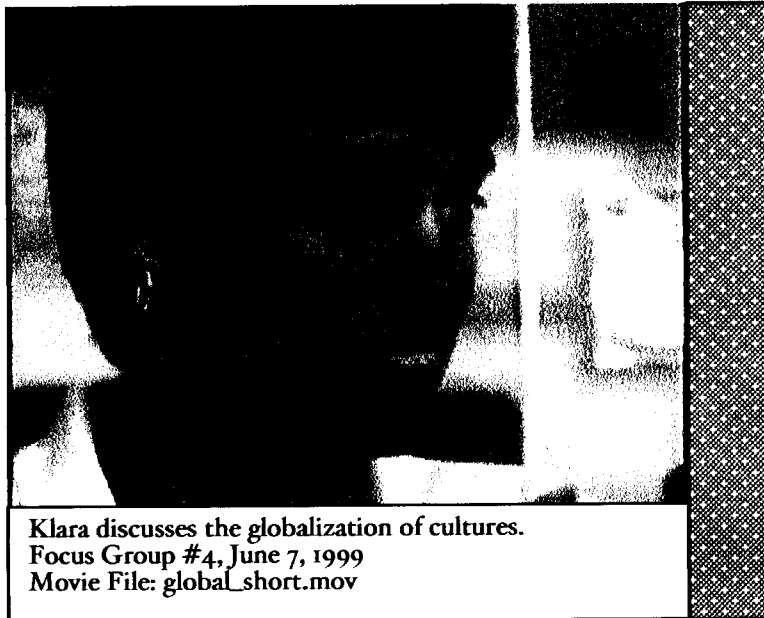
Chunk from Fischer, 1996, p. 74: "Where, to a certain extent, ethnographers belong to two worlds, to their own and to the new, they almost invariably create some distance from their home culture through partial immersion in another culture."

Response from Klara: I could identify with this idea because I feel like the more cultures I study and immerse myself in, the less I belong to any of them. I feel like the more you can identify with other cultures, the more you feel like an outsider in your "own" culture because you see things which they do not.

During this project Klara hones her ethnographic research skills by becoming a perceptive participant observer of the computer culture in which she is immersed. She first examines and restructures her concept of culture and then appropriates the technical and intellectual

skills to identify and research the symbols and patterns that mark the artifacts and observations of her fellow researchers.

Early in this course, Klara believes that cultures are self contained entities, best left alone to thrive since they risk collapsing if presented with too many external influences:



Klara believes that cultures are to be protected and nurtured. Once an individual begins to take on too many cultural identities she risks becoming confused as to her cultural identity, or worse, left without any. At one point in the focus group session, Klara recounts a painful memory of her return to Czechoslovakia on a family visit after having spent years in her new country, Canada. Anxious to visit her childhood friend, with whom she had shared so many pleasant moments, Klara is stunned when her friend shuts her out, refusing to see her. Clearly, Klara had abandoned her home culture, and proved herself unworthy of a welcome return.

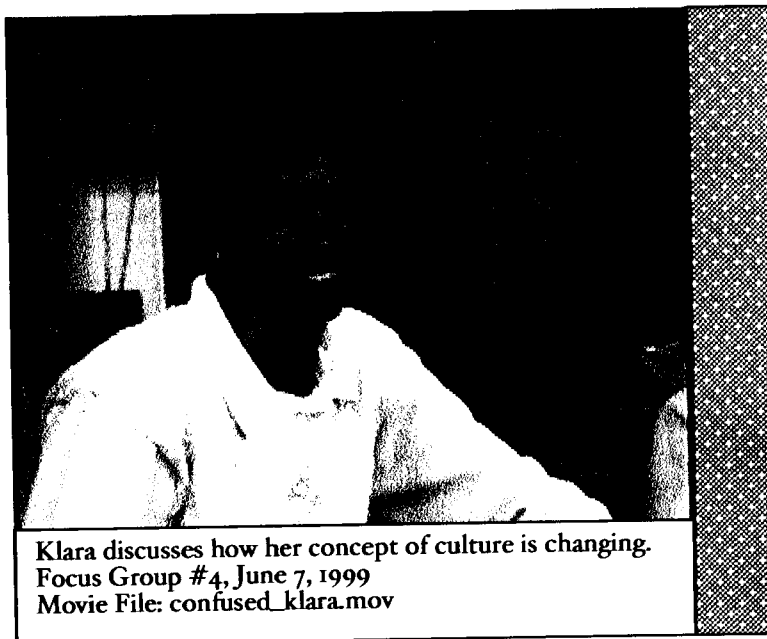
Klara's heartbreak at not finding the Czechoslovakia she remembered might be attributed to the static notion she held of culture, along with, perhaps, a sense of nostalgia and longing for what once was. Her concept evolves to consider cultures as dynamic,

moving entities in which relationships are structured and restructured based on changing circumstances, as demonstrated in this selection and response to Weber and Mitchell's (1996) article on the culture of student teaching:

Chunk from Weber & Mitchell, 1996, p. 302: "Because cultures are rarely static, defining cultural boundaries is a rather arbitrary, difficult, and probably futile enterprise. Cultures interact, overlap, evolve, expand, disappear, re-emerge, change. To be human implies living within one or more cultures. Emanating from human interaction, culture is not only social, it is constitutes and shaped by individuals who are in turn shaped by the culture or cultures in which they live."

Response from Klara: I found this quote interesting because it presented a very dynamic view of culture. For this reason, it is difficult to teach effectively since it is hard to get a grasp of what it is. The reason everyone has such a different view of what culture is is probably because it is so dynamic and complex and because there is a constant interaction between the individual and the culture.

Confronted with a new concept of culture in the classroom, Klara passes through a moment of disequilibrium as she re-evaluates her teaching experience based on these prior conceptions:



Klara discusses how her concept of culture is changing.
Focus Group #4, June 7, 1999
Movie File: confused_klara.mov

Klara entered this course with reservations about her own technological abilities and also the merits of constructionist projects. Klara admits that she never liked “building things” when she was a student and was surprised to find this approach to be especially effective in making the abstract more explicit. She comments:

When it came to my own learning in this course, I found I learned a great deal from the hands-on making of the movies. Apart from the great side benefit of learning how to use internet and media technology, I found that through the process of making the movies, the ideas about culture which were up to that point abstract and unclear, became more concrete and real. As we made the movie, we would ask ourselves if we were portraying different views of culture, if we were presenting different layers in our movie, etc., which improved our movie and our understanding of the material presented in class and through the readings (Klara's Reflective Synthesis #3, on Kafai & Resnick, 1996).

This point is further iterated in a post process interview in which she also emphasizes the importance of personal affect and attachment in her project:

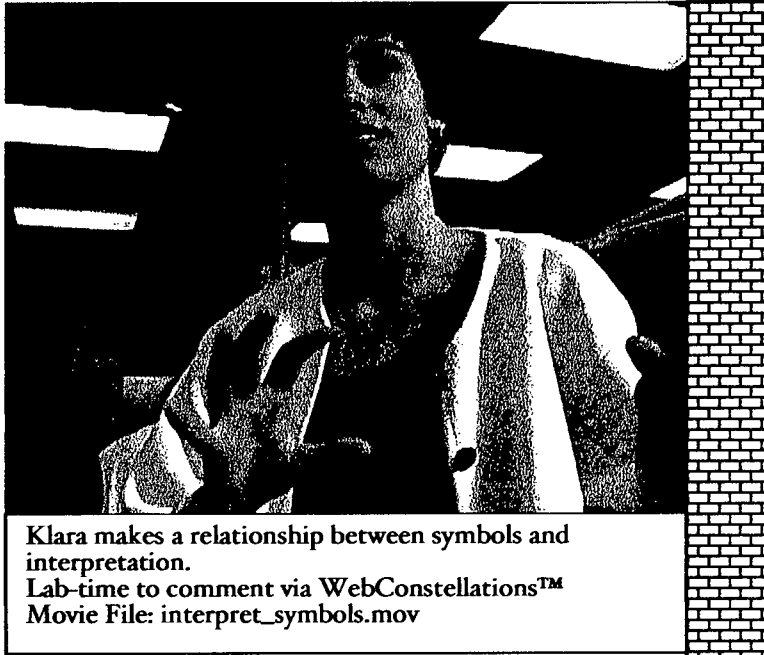


Having gone through this hands-on constructive process, Klara clearly has a keener understanding of the issues that inform her ethnographic investigations. Culture, for Klara, is an open, dynamic and interactive social construct which is more easily studied by seeking and seeing the many perspectives of its members. She comments:

Chunk from Rorty, 1995, p. 60: "...any viable culture is dynamically internally divided, encompassing radically distinct outlooks and insights."

Response from Klara: I liked this quote because it stresses the fact that a healthy, growing culture is one that has many divisions and different points of view and that is changing and developing. It means that we should not try to "pin" culture down in order to analyse it but to observe its many aspects and be open to contradictions and differences.

It is clear that Klara enjoys being the Subject of ethnographic research. When describing her own movie, she acknowledges her group capitalizes on the efficiency of employing culturally loaded symbols to convey larger messages within the 30-second time constraint. She looks forward to learning the different interpretations her classmates construct of her movie, based on the perspective each one brings to the reading:



In the final stages of the movie making and annotation process, Klara, unlike many of her fellow classmates, is not content to merely comment on her enjoyment of the individual products posted on WebConstellations™. She digs deep into the content of the movie to make her own ethnographic analysis:

WebConstellations™

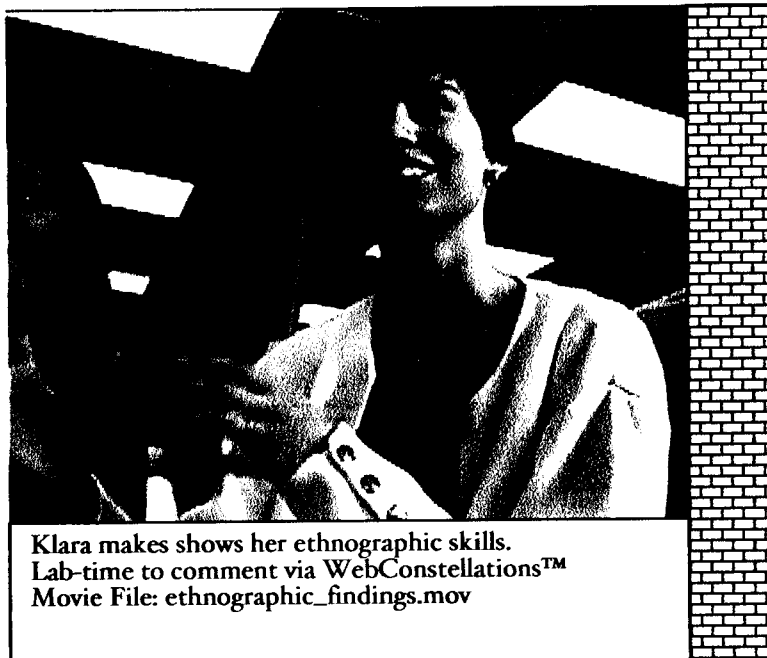
Cars Are Us

Klara Kohoutova on 6/14/99 at 11:03:49 AM

It was interesting that many people talked about the obvious use of cars, namely transportation. But other people picked up on the status symbol of cars. These people mentioned that their self-esteem improved when they had a nice car...I believe this is very typical in North America, especially amongst young people...but that's a stereotype. good work! :)

Movie File: carsareusfinal.mov

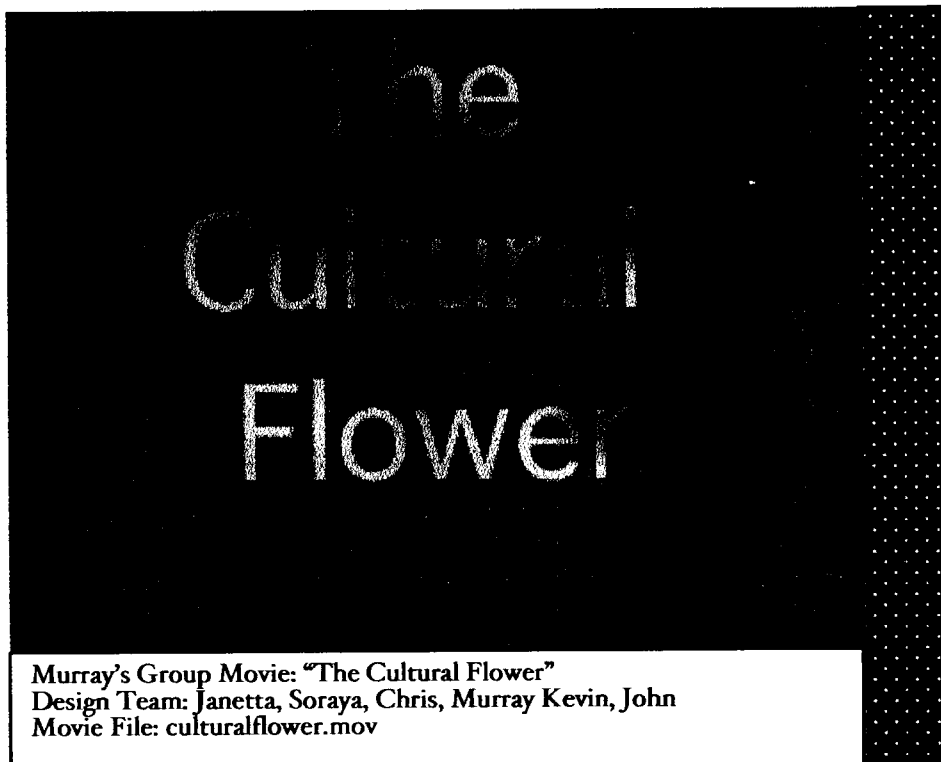
Klara goes beyond interpretation of the movie itself and performs a meta-ethnographic analysis on her classmates' comments on the movies. She searches for the different points of view presented in her classmates's comments, identifies patterns and contradictions, and speculates on their motivations. It is clear in this video excerpt that Klara has appropriated the technical and intellectual skills to actively design and interpret digital media texts:



Murray

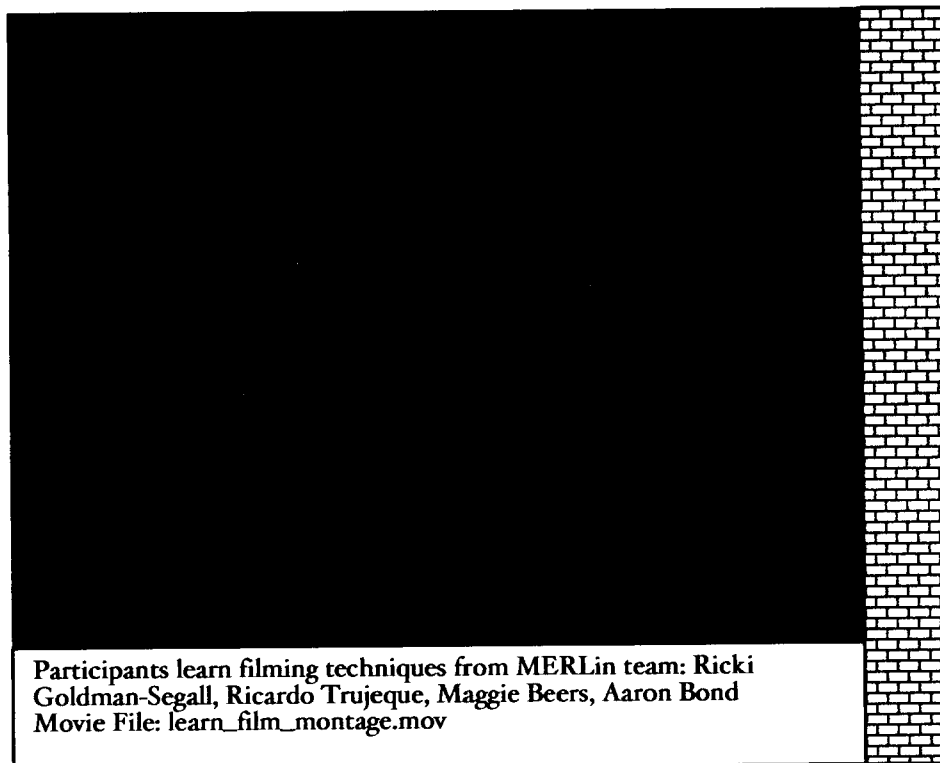


Murray's Movie "The Cultural Flower"



Murray's Story

Murray is a ready participant in all cycles of the course. He actively contributes his ideas in group conversations, gets his hands dirty with the new technologies and is one of the first to spontaneously pick up the digital camcorder to film his classmates during their learning. Murray uses his participation in this project to develop keen technical and ethnographic skills, especially to examine the relationship between filming angles and perspective. Though all the students receive instruction from MERLin team members in how to film, most notably from Ricardo Trujeque and its director, Ricki Goldman-Segall, as seen in the film below, Murray is the one who later most engages with this medium and seeks out opportunities in which to develop his skills:

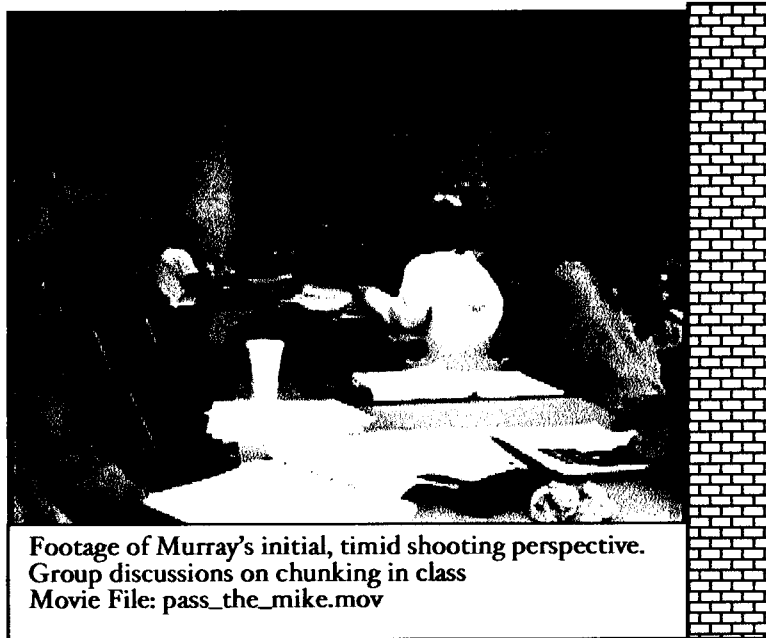


By the second week, Murray and his classmates are coming to realize that the digital camcorder will be an active and present participant in the course. Despite my encouragement to the students to also participate in the filming of each other, up until this point I have been the principal videographer. During this group activity in which the students share and discuss the various chunks they have excerpted from the night's readings, however, this dynamic takes an interesting turn. In my fieldnotes, which follow, I document the initial sign of Murray's growing interest:

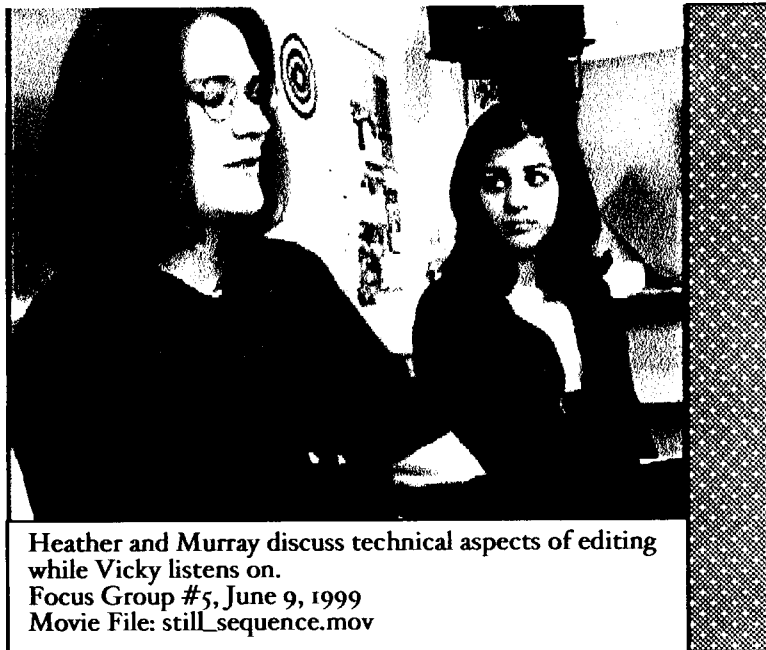
**Ethnographic Field Notes,
May 31, Beginning of week 2
Maggie Beers**

Chunking of articles: We had some interesting conversations. I chose to sit with a group of 4 students and filmed them as they spoke. I felt they were a little uncomfortable with me (teacher) filming (conducting research). Behind me was Kevin and Murray, who were alone, discussing the articles. I (...) sensed that Murray was more interested in the filming than the chunking. He said he was trying to figure out all the different buttons on the back. I asked him if he wanted to film, he was hesitant at first, as if he didn't feel he had the right. I reassured him, showed him the camera and the microphone and then went off to another group where I sat down and became involved in an interesting discussion on the treatment of texts and culture notes in the classroom and what it means to "teach" culture, along with everything else. Later, I noticed Murray, and now Kevin, were both actively involved in the filming of our group. They had placed the microphone on the windowsill behind us. They said they were "eavesdropping." I picked up the microphone and moved it into our group so that our conversation would be recorded. We passed the mike around, as if to grant the floor to the speaker. By now it was Kevin who was filming, afraid to come close, lurking in the background even if it meant he was filming the back of the head of one of the speakers. Eventually, a quiet pause came over the class and I realized it was time to move on to another subject.

This videoclip is an excerpt from Murray's footage, which I describe in my fieldnotes. In this clip we are privy to the perspective of an uneasy videographer:



unsure of the boundaries that separate himself and his fellow participants and the right he has to venture closer. Nonetheless, my encouragement to not only take possession of the camera but also use it to intervene in group discussions, gives Murray the confidence to develop his videographic skills. From this day on, Murray often picks up the camera, recording conversations and documenting the movie making process of his peers and visitors. At the same time, he plays a key technical role in the creation of his own group's movie. Murray is genuinely motivated by the technical aspects of the movie making process and enjoys engaging at this level of conversation. In this excerpt from his focus group session, Murray becomes very animated as he discusses strategies for debugging CineKit's inability to incorporate more than five still images into a movie.



It is interesting to note that another focus group member, Vicky, considers this conversational thread to be off topic from the focus group agenda and quickly diverts the conversation back to the list of guiding questions provided.

Much like Vicky's action to pull the topic of conversation away from the technical matters of movie making and back to the intellectual, Murray often discredits the value of the technical skills he is learning in the larger context of curriculum and education. Though he acknowledges that he is thoroughly motivated and inspired by the constructionist projects he is engaged in, he often concedes his reservations about the feasibility of such projects in a school culture he perceives to be driven by standardized assessment practices and the whims of angry parents. Murray has stated in earlier discussions that one the main criterion he uses in choosing his media materials for the classroom is whether or not they will "get him into trouble" with parents or administrators due to foul language or offensive topics. This same sentiment makes him reluctant to address controversial topics in class, as he explains in this comment:

WebConstellations™

Controversy in class

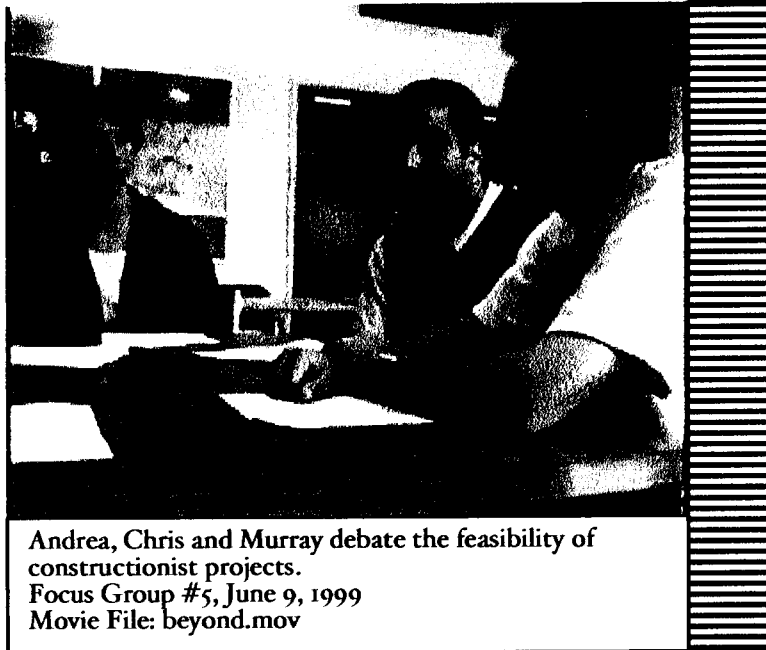
Murray Ross on 6/16/99 at 11:35:08 AM

I think that teachers should deal with the controversial issues. If not, it's too plausible that ignorance will be perpetuated. Unfortunately we now face the added dilemma that someone may get offended in the process and then the teacher will be held accountable. It's funny how students can spew out anything they like and then at most get sent to the principal's doffice and asked if they know why what they said was wrong, then get reprimaned, etc..., yet in some cases, if a teacher simply says something in the "wrong" tone, the parents are dragged in and there is a big controversy about how the teacher is cruel and oppressive and not fit to be in the class. I think there needs to be some way that can be made for teachers to deal with very controversial issues without having to worry about offending people.



Movie File: lesleycontro.mov

Murray's frustration at having to conform and/or justify his teaching methods to the expectations of school administrators and the community are echoed by many of his classmates. Indeed, the reluctance to "take up" class time with projects that can't be systematically evaluated within the existing standardized assessment practices lead many to question what value, if any, they hold for their future teaching. This dilemma is one that rises time and again in classroom discussions, reflective writings, and posted comments, as exemplified in this focus group discussion:



Murray acknowledges that, like himself, secondary students are highly motivated and engaged while working on constructionist projects and learn relevant life skills in the group process, but he still is not convinced he will be able to apply them within the school system he has experienced.

Murray's lack of confidence may be attributed to the low status he has occupied as a student teacher on practicum. As of yet, he has not been in the position to claim the classroom for himself and establish his own curriculum. With experience and new territory, his confidence will surely grow and his teaching repertoire expand. At that time Murray will be able to call upon the literacy skills that he has developed but as of yet does not value. For example, we have established that the multiliterate interpreter of digital texts is able to see and seek its individual qualities and understand the connections between them. Through his extensive hands-on experience filming in class and editing his own movie, Murray has developed a sensitivity to the role angle, sound and text play in the message of a movie. In his comments on the others' movies, Murray consistently focuses in on individual elements, such as a sound effect, the speed of scrolling text, and the camera angle in which a scene is

shot, and relates how this quality affects his overall enjoyment of the particular text.

Examples follow:

WebConstellations™

Fine Grind

Murray Ross on 6/14/99 at 11:28:30 AM

To start with, what really struck me was the really great camera angles and cutting of scenes. There was no cheezy batman-esque shots. I thought that the theme of the coffee culture was quite identifiable as a Vancouverite. It's funny when you are able to look at a clip and see what you do everyday as a stereotype. I found the sound change from the short coffee shots to the interview a bit sonically abrupt, but of course trying to do a volume fade would have probably been a very tedious task. I like the ending with the sunset; a sort of metaphorical end to the clip. One could see it as an illusion to the insomnia that these characters will incur as a result of drinking so much coffee. It happens—I know! All in all ...two thumbs up



Movie File: finegrind.mov

WebConstellations™

West Coast Coffee Culture

Murray Ross on 6/14/99 at 11:41:11 AM

Another coffee movie! Great! These were the ones I went to first out of interest. I thought the backing music fit quite well. Good camera angles. I also thought that the time spent on each shot was very well done. I've noticed in some of the old videos people may have spent a bit too much time focused on a person or an object—that didn't happen here. One problem I had was being able to understand what the people were saying, but that may have been due to the computer's built in speaker—I didn't have externals on the computer I was using. The only other criticism would be the scrolling of the names at the end was a bit fast, but that's a very minor point. I think that the idea of expressing Vancouver culture through coffee is a natural extension of being a Vancouverite. I am a part of the coffee culture and found this to be a very fair representation of it. A very good job!



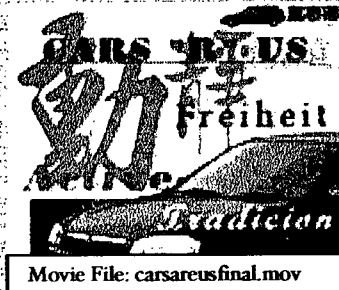
Movie File: westcoastcoffee.mov

WebConstellations™

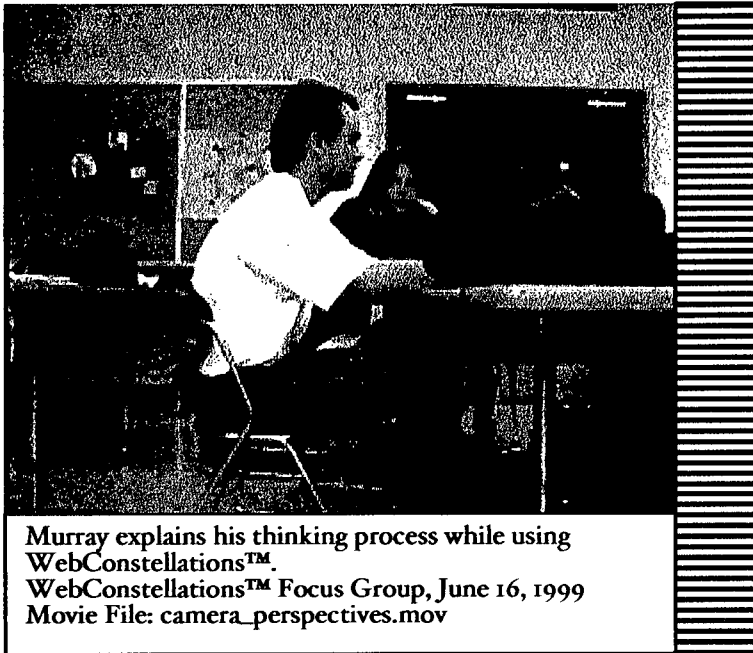
Cars Are Us

Murray Ross on 6/14/99 at 11:51:09 AM

I thought the beginning and the end were really well done. The sound of the car starting and the the red light were a great idea. Cars do hold a large position in society and it was good to see such a varied selection of people's opinions of what a car means to them. To some people their car was a big part of their identity... which made me think back to our identity objects, I didn't put a car anywhere on mine. Just a personal observation. I noticed that there was quite a variety of vehicles chosen as well. I wonder what the comments would have been if the focus had been on one particular type or brand. I found that the clips may have been a bit too short, there was very little processing time for a few of them, but it did keep the pace up, which is nice.



In the process of viewing and commenting on his classmates' movies via WebConstellations™, Murray shows that the skills he has honed as a creator of texts have contributed to his keen and insightful interpretations of them. He demonstrates, what Eisner (1998) terms "connoisseurship" when he consistently makes simultaneously technical and intellectual critiques regarding the individual qualities of the texts and the effects of their interactions on his enjoyment and interpretation. Nonetheless, Murray continues to maintain distinct the technical and intellectual aspects that contribute to multiliteracies. This is evident in this video clip, extracted from his WebConstellations™ focus group session, conducted near the end of the course,



When asked whether the use of this tool to comment on the others' constructions has encouraged him to think about his own thinking, Murray's response remains at the level of technical interpretation, concentrating on camera angle and choice of footage. Murray does not believe this activity has led him to a higher level of metacognition. Nonetheless, he observes his perspective may at times either corroborate or conflict with his classmates' representations of the cultural event. The mere fact that he is constantly obliged to register and compare his fellow researchers' perspectives with his own undoubtedly forces him to think about his own thinking, and, therefore, the larger issues of text, perspective and representation.

Jessica



Jessica's Movie "West Coast Coffee Culture"

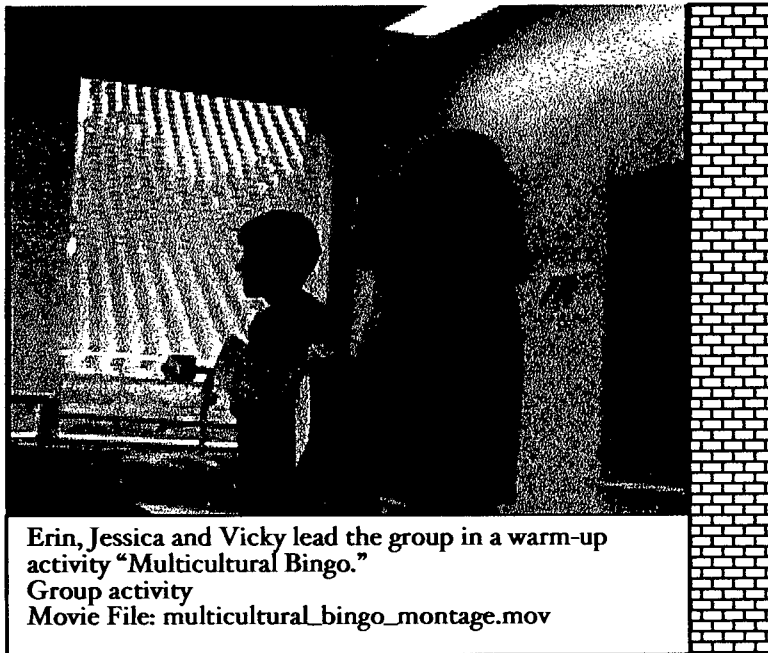


Jessica's Group Movie: "West Coast Coffee Culture"
Design Team: Jessica, Vicky, Erin, Ty, Yuki, Anju
Movie File: westcoastcoffee.mov

Jessica's Story

Jessica is a French language specialist of Italian descent who has maintained strong and active ties within the local Italian community. She is a determined and tenacious worker who does not let go of an idea or project until she is satisfied with the result. Those who come within Jessica's realm are immediately whisked up by her powerful energy. She is anxious to learn and eager to teach. In her alternating roles of teacher and group leader, she inspires confidence in her Subjects and leads them to accomplish great things. Having observed the confidence Jessica exudes as she goes about the technical tasks involved in making her movie, it is difficult to imagine that she, too, has shared the same technological apprehensions as her classmates. Jessica begins the course uneasy about some of the expectations placed on her through the constructionist assignments. Early on, she identifies her perspective as "anti-technology," admitting, "this course in general is quite a challenge" (Jessica's Reflective Synthesis #1 on Goldman-Segall, 1998b) for her to overcome. In the process of appropriating the technical skills necessary to create her digital text, Jessica proves herself to be a competent and natural teacher and group leader, able to draw on these new found technical and intellectual abilities to inform her evolving concept of cultural teaching.

Warm-ups are one of the many non-technologically based activities in the course. Groups of students take turns leading the class in a short, interactive exercise which leads the members to learn about their peers' perspectives and personas. This video exemplifies Jessica's established teaching competencies and leadership abilities:



Though this activity is a group presentation, it is clear in this example that Jessica is the designated group leader and spokesperson. At the same time, she is at ease in the role of facilitator as she allows the students to interact amongst themselves in controlled chaos.

Although Jessica is comfortable in front of the class in this more traditional context, she reveals some apprehensions about her teaching capacities by selecting and responding to a chunk from Kramsch's article on media materials:

Chunk from Kramsch, 1989, p. 325: "This abundance of authentic materials and new modes of delivery of language and culture raises far-reaching questions on the role of teachers and the way they can use these materials to foster communication and understanding across cultures."

Response from Jessica: As we proceed with this new approach to L2 learning with media in the classroom, I begin to worry that I don't have the knowledge or the technical experience to take on this new challenge. There are so many issues that one must consider when beginning: what is the appropriate linguistic level of the materials, how do you encourage students to want to learn using more current ideas, how do you motivate them. It is our role as educators to bring these perspectives into the class and encourage cross cultural acceptance.

In addition to feeling uneasy about her responsibility in the role of language teacher to carefully choose and implement media materials in her teaching, she also expresses uneasiness about her ability in the role of student teacher to complete the unconventional constructionist assignments in this course. This is first revealed in a selection and response to a chunk from Kafai and Resnick's chapter on constructionism:

Chunk from Kafai & Resnick, 1996, p. 2: "...learners are most likely to become intellectually engaged when they are working on *personally meaningful* activities and projects."


Response from Jessica: I agree with this statement in that for MLED we have to create an object that personally represents who we think we are and how we define ourselves. At first I didn't really want to do the project because I couldn't summarize myself in one particular thing since my interests are everywhere, but once I had my idea, that is all I want to work on. It is meaningful to me because it is me and it describes who I am without words and it allows me to express my[self] creatively.

Educators are very familiar with the notion "success breeds success" in all aspects of learning. Much like language learners are motivated to continue their learning as a result of experiencing success, Jessica is encouraged to persevere with more constructionist assignments based on the fulfillment she has received in completing this first, low-tech,

identity object. In the beginning, Jessica considers herself to possess the same low level of technical literacy as the majority of her classmates, yet once she begins to engage in hands-on construction of the movie she quickly learns the necessary skills. With each success, she is motivated to learn more, ultimately becoming very proud of her accomplishments. This is clear in her comment posted on WebConstellations™ in response to a video clip which shows a fellow classmate, Sylvie, express excitement at having captured video images onto the computer for the first time:

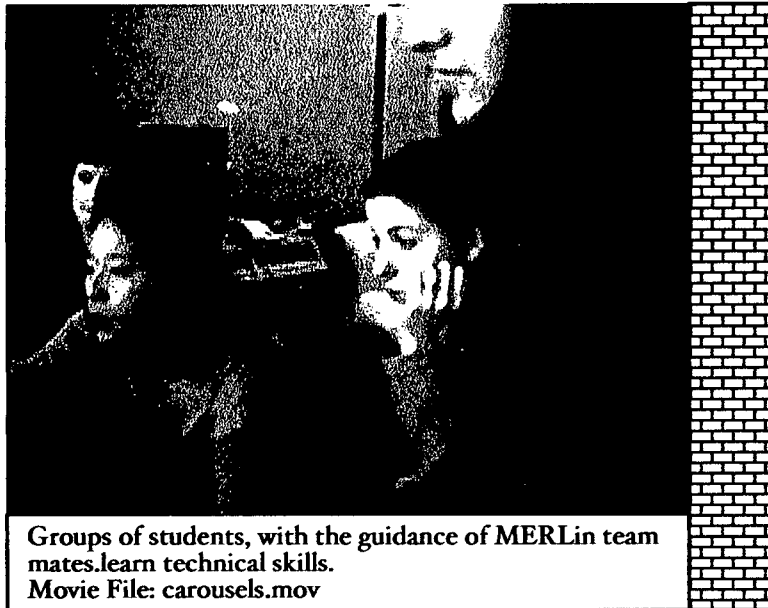
WebConstellations™
capturing excitement
Jessica Parisotto on 6/14/99 at 10:58:50 AM

I know how Sylvie feels. At the beginning of this course all I could think was "I'll never be able to do this. I can't even turn the computer on!" The first time that we actually saw our "final product" we all were on such a high because we saw what we had really accomplished. We never thought we would actually make it to that point.



Movie File:
sylviecapture.mov

Jessica begins to learn the technical skills along side her design team mates during an educational "carousel" in which groups of students rotate around different media stations where MERLin team members teach the basic skills, such as scanning and capturing. This video shows the process:



Despite Jessica's similarly novice understanding of the digitizing process, her quick assimilation of the computer skills immediately win her the admiration and respect of her design team mates who begin to look to her almost immediately as a leader. This is apparent in this video, taken during the carousels, in which she is already able to instruct her teammates in the task of exporting sound and image files from captured video which they have just learned. Jessica is the designated authority, though the group members still look to me, the videographer and carousel instructor, for confirmation.



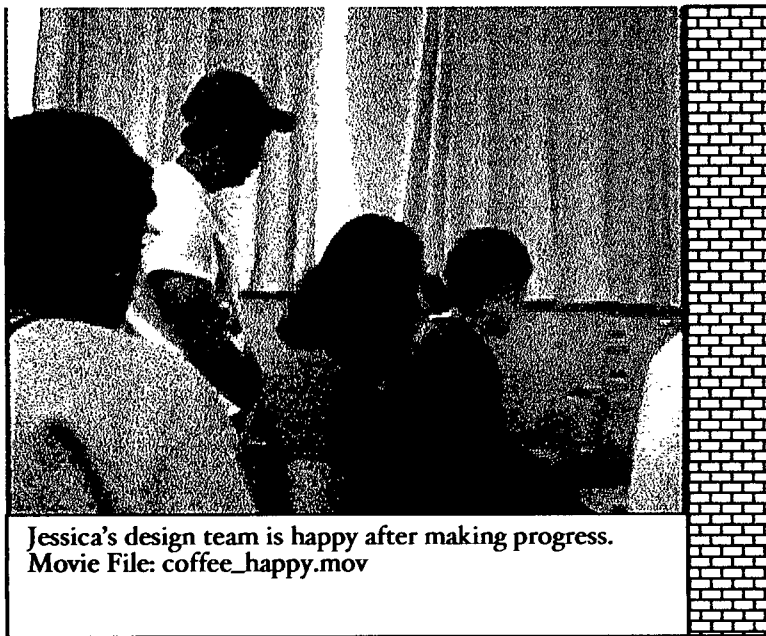
Jessica's design team learn to edit.
Movie File: capture_tools.mov

As the movie making process gets underway, the group has clearly designated Jessica to be the leader, though she is still reluctant to claim this role, not wanting to jeopardize her peer status with her friends. In this awkward work environment, the movie production slows to a grind. Time is passing, their movie is not advancing and the group begins to fear they won't complete it before the approaching deadline. This group sends Jessica to me to ask for an extension, as described in this excerpt from my field notes:

**Ethnographic Field Notes,
May 31, Beginning of week 2
Maggie Beers**

Time went fast in this class, and students are getting nervous about how much time they will be able to spend on their movies. I think I will give them most of the class time on Wednesday for movie making. I advised them to have some of their shooting done by then. Jessica was wondering about an extension but I explained I can't even consider it because we need time to use WebConstellations™ to talk about them. That the discussion is important, too. They agreed.

I probe a bit deeper, asking what factors are holding up the group's progress. Jessica admits that she has strong reservations about the effectiveness of the team's collaboration methods, since each member wants to be involved in each step of the process. We agree that the work needs to be delegated and that each person should take responsibility for a different piece of the movie. I offer to talk with the group, but Jessica prefers to take control herself. This approach has dramatic effects, as can be witnessed in this video clip:




After this success, the movie making process continues productively, with Jessica serving as the undisputed leader. She is an effective leader because she is able to lead the team to work within the physical and human constraints to produce a product that represents the many perspectives and talents of its creators. She does this by alternatively taking the controls when needed and instructing others to carry out the same tasks. She also consistently shows compassion and encouragement to the other members of her team. These qualities are demonstrated in both this video clip of her working with a design team member posted on WebConstellations™ and her written comment in response to it,

WebConstellations™

technological dinosaur

Jessica Parisotto on 6/9/99 at 11:27:27 AM

ty, don't feel stupid. i felt the same way when i first started using the macs. i have a pc at home and somebody told me that they really are all the same, only the icons are different so if you keep that in mind, it might get better. you were great!!!



Movie File:
ty_feelstupid_web.mov

Jessica is also compassionate and encouraging to her classmates when she comments on their movies. Though it is clear that she enjoys the movies, her observations generally refer to the creation and interpretation process of making the movie, rather than its individual technical qualities. She prefers to comment on the process of creation, as shown in this response to a video clip posted on WebConstellations™ in which I explain to a group why deadline extensions on the movies are not possible:

WebConstellations™

Lower your Expectations!

Jessica Parisotto on 6/21/99 at 7:49:11 PM

I remember feeling the way that Corrine felt, since we also had asked for an extension. But as I look back now, what we thought was so unattainable, we accomplished because we cooperated and worked as a group to narrow our focus. Originally we wanted to make people aware of the fad of coffee, how much money was spent on it daily as people and children go hungry, but then we thought making people feel guilty wasn't the purpose of creating the movie. The definition of coffee culture as we perceived it however was. So that is why we had to take cuts out and make it more specific to work within the constraints that we were given. Good job for staying tough when all of us pleaded with you Maggie because we usually succeed in begging our way to an extension. We learned that you have to work with what you have and do your best with the time and resources that you are given. We needed to spend more time getting pieces done rather than wasting time trying to find ways to prolong the assignment. We all felt pressured at the end but I think that all of the groups succeeded in accomplishing the end product!!!



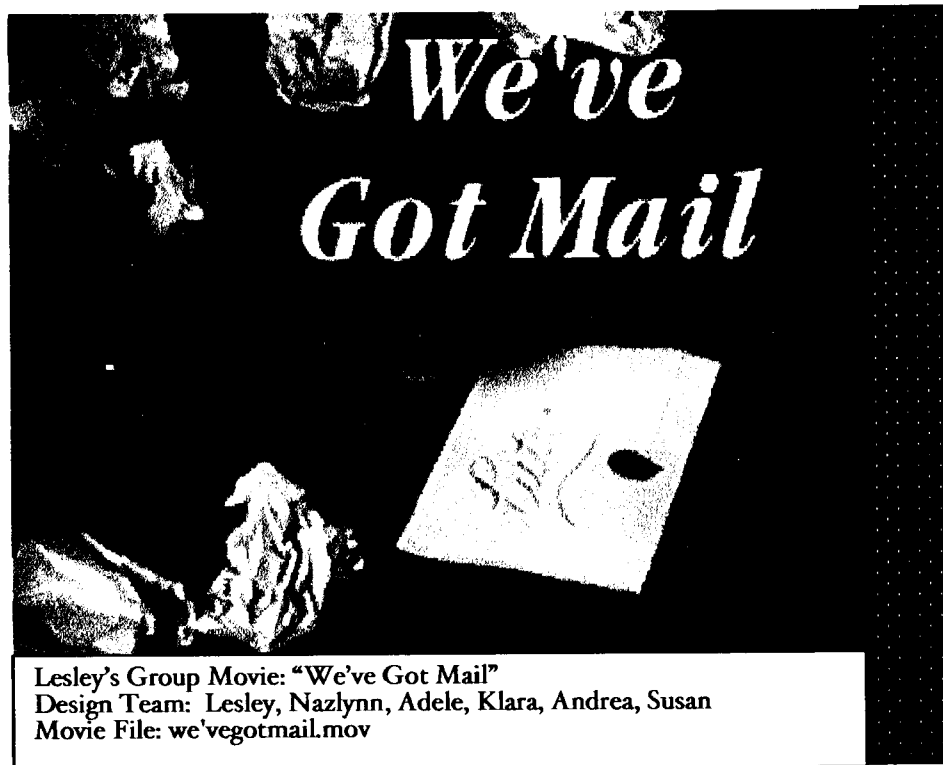
Movie File:
magexpectations.mov

In the process of making her movie and leading her team to produce a product they are proud of, Jessica has learned many valuable skills as they pertain to ethnographic analysis and collaboration. She has learned that no textual representation is perfect, each is created within the physical and human constraints of time, resources, medium and perspective. She has also learned that in trying to represent a whole, the creator is obliged to approach the task piece by piece, often making uncomfortable decisions and deletions in the interest of group consensus and continuity.

Lesley



Lesley's Movie "We've Got Mail"



Lesley's Group Movie: "We've Got Mail"

Design Team: Lesley, Nazlynn, Adele, Klara, Andrea, Susan

Movie File: we'vegotmail.mov

Lesley's Story

Lesley is a French and Spanish specialist of Italian descent who makes frequent visits to her extended family in Southern Italy to remain connected to her heritage roots. She has a quick and active mind, constantly connecting her prior experiences to new elements that present themselves. No reference is forgotten, nor any relationship neglected, as she calls them up time and again to help her make sense of new contexts and cope with new situations. She takes full advantage of all resources, human and non-human, to build upon previous ideas and make new ones. In fact, the more resources that are available to Lesley, the more she interacts with each and the more entangled, and empowering, her "webs of significance" (Max Weber, as cited in Geertz, 1973, p. 5) become.

It is interesting to note that on the first day of this course, when all the groups are asked to draw a picture of a metaphor that represents culture, Lesley's group, perhaps unknowingly, makes reference to Weber's notion of culture to be "webs of significance" by drawing a spider web. Later in the course, via WebConstellations™, Lesley chooses to reflect back on that metaphor with a new perspective:

WebConstellations™

Culture is a web

Lesley Sinclair on 6/21/99 at 2:07:26 AM

I was part of the group that drew this image of culture on the first day of class (Yes, Maggie makes us work on the first day of class!). Basically, the big red spider is the teacher and he or she is facilitating the students, represented by the little black spiders all around the web to draw similarities and contrasts between their native culture and that of the target language. I guess we later learned this idea as "Self and Other." In the most general of terms, this could be entitled "Making Connections."

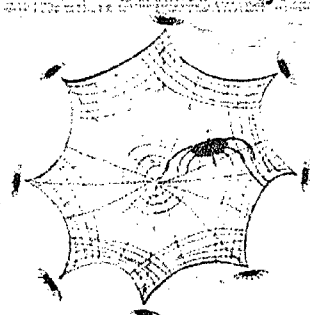


Image File:
culture_web.jpg

Making connections is of utmost importance for Lesley as she actively struggles to connect her perspectives to those of her students, classmates, teachers, friends, family, and the media with which she is interacting. Lesley is troubled by some of her practicum experiences, specifically the unsatisfactory level of connection she was able to achieve with her students. Lesley attributes this to the diverse backgrounds of her students and her inability to use her authentic texts in a way that inspires introspection.

First, the diversity in the cultural backgrounds of her students, usually different from Lesley's own background, required Lesley to work extra hard to understand their points of cultural reference. Lesley describes this challenge in her selection and response to an excerpt from Mantle-Bromley's article on preparing students for meaningful culture learning:

Chunk by Mantle-Bromley, 1992, p. 120: Teachers must "build a bridge between the old and the new by providing culturally familiar content as a point of departure for introducing culturally unfamiliar context at every level of instruction."

Response by Lesley: I think this seems idealistic especially since my culturally familiar content was different from that of many students. My idea of a culturally familiar festival may be the Calgary Stampede whereas theirs may be the Chinese New Year's Celebration held downtown Vancouver every year. Because of this, it was paramount for me to understand where my students were coming from. I would have to ask questions to understand what they related to because nine times out of ten, it was not something with which I was familiar.

Once Lesley felt she had provided the necessary groundwork for meaningful cultural interaction with the students, she found her efforts were stifled by her sponsor teacher's opinion of the role of authentic texts in the classroom. Lesley was frustrated and uncomfortable that her sponsor teacher was content to use the texts as "filler" rather than

point of departure for cultural inquiry, as described in this selection and response to a chunk from Davis' article on using commercials in the classroom:

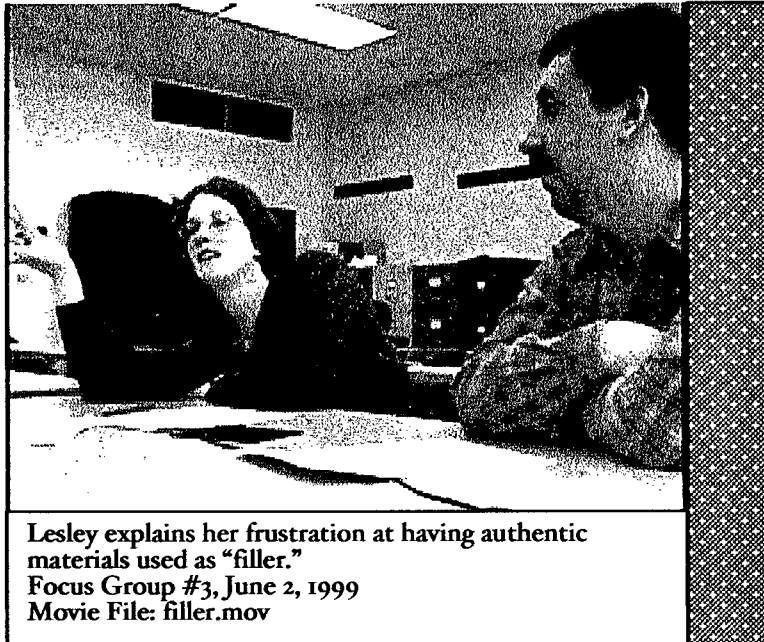
Chunk from Davis, 1997, p. 14: [video] "provides realism and excitement" [but teachers] "abuse or misuse" it by showing it only as filler when a class is finished early.

Response from Lesley: Unfortunately, as enthused as my sponsor teacher was with my authentic material, she could not really see beyond using it as filler. It was almost like a slap in the face to show both my World Cup soccer material as a filler on the Friday before Easter and my Ricky Martin video the Friday before March Break. There were many questions that could have been addressed but I had to just "display" them. I felt embarrassed because the materials all of a sudden seemed "cheap" and "cheesy" to me. I felt like I was implying "Look, kids, isn't this great? This is what French people like doing, or this is how Spaniards dance!" Not only that but it gave the impression that I wanted to show the Ricky Martin video because of Ricky Martin himself, when in fact, he did not even write the song and it was the words I wanted to examine, not the singer. As a result, I felt their "excitement" was short-lived and misdirected.

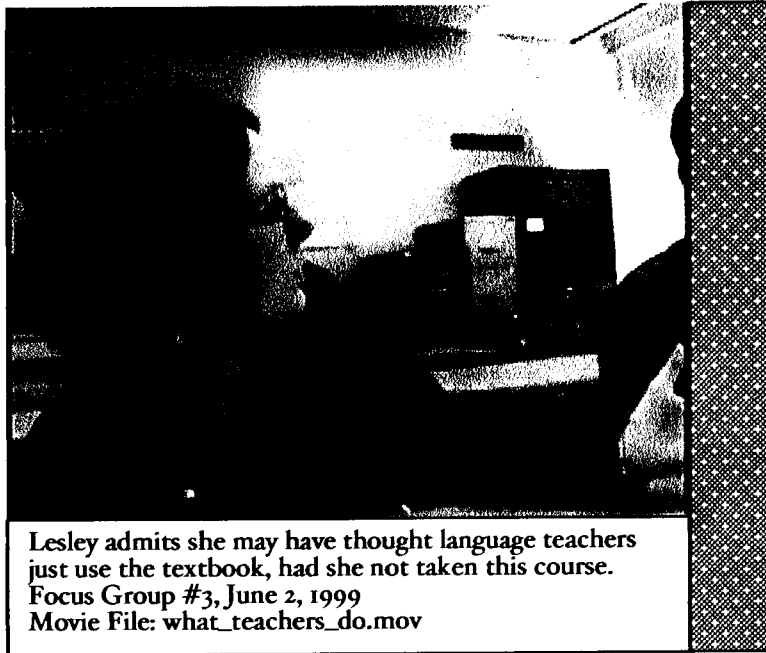
I will, however, [say] that an English song that I played only as a hook worked very well to promote a warm-up discussion. When I was introducing "Latin Americans in the United States" I had the song "Miami" by Will Smith playing as they walked in. They discussed why I was playing it and many of the students had interesting insights into the song. One said a lot of American musicians are tapping into Latin American sounds because of the large population of Latin Americans and they [the musicians] know they can make more money by tapping into this market. I was able to be a facilitator in his comment because, although this may be only a small reason why Will Smith, for example, wrote a song about Miami, that Italian musicians are starting to sing in Spanish too for some of the same reasons!

In this discussion, Lesley makes a pointed contrast between the success of authentic materials when used as object, as in the case of her World Cup soccer and Ricky Martin Videos, and Subject, as in the case of the song "Miami," by Will Smith. When a text is observed as an object, there can be no connection nor interaction since an object is inanimate, unable to respond. However, when the text is used as a Subject, it initiates the interaction itself, it inspires the probing questions that lead to better understanding of its Subject position.

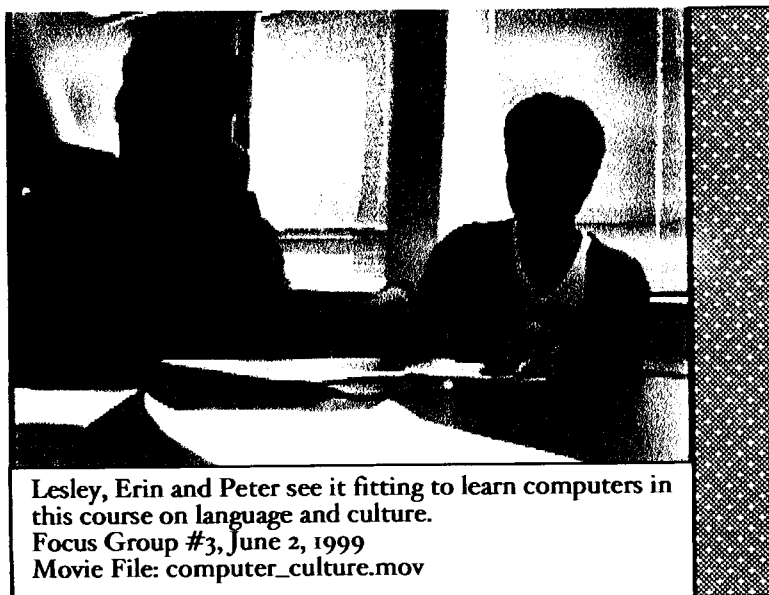
As is common practice for Lesley, she shares this experience with the other members of her focus group:



In this last scene, we can see that Lesley feels some relief at having been able to express her frustration over the limitations imposed on her by her sponsor teacher and enjoys the exchange with her peers, who validate what she says and offer strategies to overcome it. She also finds strength and support in the ideas presented in the course which encourage her to claim the language classroom for herself through her choice of materials, curriculum and method. This is shown in this videoclip:



Early in the course, Lesley is excited about the prospect of learning new methods for exploring culture, especially the opportunity to learn to use computers to make movies. She makes the point that computers are such a prevalent part of culture today that it makes sense to learn to use them within the context of this course on language and culture:



Despite her enthusiasm over these new tools, however, Lesley still expresses some apprehensions about how they may ultimately affect the face to face contact she so much enjoys, as expressed in her selection and response to Goldman-Segall's definition of interaction:

Chunk from Goldman-Segall, 1998b, p. 5: "Interaction consists of conversing with self, others, and the rest of nature, whether in their physical presence or absence. In my view, our computer partners could one day be included as members of a virtual community of minds."

Response from Lesley: I think her view is progressive and honest. I hope, however, that she does not assume that by incorporating the computer into our community, we eliminate or devalue conversing with people. There is a certain scary feeling to this concept. The fact that people spend hours conversing in chat rooms is scary to me. I hope that the computer *does* become a *part* of our "community of minds" but not at the expense of true person to person communication.

Interaction is an important concept for Lesley, so it is not surprising that she chooses to select and reflect on this particular chunk. Indeed, Lesley identifies herself through this person to person interaction she so wants to preserve. Lesley's identity object is a letter box which she has covered with a sampling of a lifetime's worth of correspondence she has maintained with her best friend in Toronto. Inside are the letters stacked in neat piles and tied with satin ribbons. Generous of herself, she has decided to give this letter box, this incarnation of her "self," to this friend as a wedding present. It is fitting that the theme of her group's movie is on the concept of letters. Surprisingly, for Lesley too, Lesley did not originally consider letters to be an appropriate topic for cultural exploration. She shares this discovery in a comment she posts on WebConstellations™ in response to one from her classmate, Soraya, who assumes the letter concept must have come from Lesley,

WebConstellations™

We've Got Mail

Lesley Sinclair on 6/20/99 at 11:07:22 PM

Hi everyone! Thank you for all your positive comments! Unfortunately, I must say that this was not my idea, Soraya. In fact, I wanted to do a movie about "pets" because I thought it would have been more "exciting." I was initially reserved about this project but I think we did a good job by transforming something so "silent" and seemingly "uninteresting" into something three dimensional with emotions and sounds and movement. I'm surprised now at my initial reaction to the idea. In retrospect I realize that my identity object was, in fact, all about letters! In fact, my whole life can be easily retraced through my correspondence with a friend of mine in Toronto. The other thing I realized is that there is one letter in particular that will always be a part of my life and will never be erased from my mind. I wrote a nasty hateful letter to an ex-boyfriend a few years ago and it will forever be there. It is something permanent. I cannot take it back, erase it or apologize for it — ever. I guess then doing a movie on letters isn't so strange after all!



Just as Lesley shares herself through her identity object, she also shares herself through her movie. She is the one who opens with the line, "Letters are a lasting expression of my love." It is interesting that her group chooses to follow this more traditional form of correspondence with the scene, "Why write a letter when you can email?" It seems Lesley's reservations about the cost of technological efficiency on human interaction are made explicit in her movie.

Not only does Lesley nurture the relations she maintains between the people, but also the texts that continue to shape her being. She sees the people and the texts to be living Subjects. She actively intermingles the ideas of all texts she has appropriated over her lifetime, making constant connections between them, regardless of the medium in which they are represented. Appropriately, the title of her group's movie is a take-off from the title of the popular Nora Ephron movie "You've Got Mail" in theaters at the time. Yet Lesley is also careful to guard the origin of these ideas, providing the context in which they came to be. In her second reflective synthesis on Davis' (1997) article on using commercials

in the classroom, Lesley interlaces her life experiences with the ideas presented in the article, and those provided on class handouts in this course and another. At the end of her work, she includes a bibliography in which she cites these class notes along with the reference of the article on which she is commenting, thereby establishing teacher as text. She is one of the few to include bibliographical references in her assignments, and the only one to cite the individual course materials of her instructors. By doing so she makes explicit the interactive meaning making process she is going through as she assimilates and accommodates the ideas embodied in the texts, whatever their form, into her pre-existing schema. An excerpt follows:

(...) Also, commercials contain such dense cultural meaning that the students can practice their ability to think critically, something J.R. Coombs agrees with: "we must foster [students ability to think]" (Coombs, 2). If a teacher were to follow Davis' four step lesson plan, the students would be able to think critically about important cultural topics such as: the difference between Self and Other (comparing commercials in their own culture to those of the target language)); critical multiculturalism (using the commercial to discuss the differences between and among the groups represented in the commercial); and language as Subject (commercials prove that "language is both medium and content" (MLED notes, 1).

Bibliography:

Beers, Maggie. MLED 480A Notes Subjectifying the Objectified in Modern Language Education, and Multicultural Education in Modern Language Education, May, 1999.

Coombs, J.R. Notes on Knowledge, May 1999.


Davis, Randy, MLED 480A Reading Package, TV Commercial Messages: An Untapped Video Resource for Content-based Classes, June 1999.

(Lesley's Reflective Synthesis #2, on Davis, 1997)

Another example of Lesley's penchant for postmodern intertextuality is demonstrated in her chunking style, which incorporates a variety of media and outside references to her personal selections and interpretations of chunks from the course readings. This is best

represented in this selection from Kafai and Resnick's (1996) article on constructionism, in which Lesley pastes a cutout picture of Rodin's "Thinker" to illustrate her connective thinking processes:

b) *"the individual thinker" plays a strong role in our culture. In most school classrooms, children must do worksheets, and tests on their own."*



When Kafai and Resnick mention the "individual thinker", I immediately think of Uguste Rodin's "Thinker" which seems to portray the act of thinking as separate, silent, remote, and above all else, not to be connected with anyone else. This, as I have learned through the article is the wrong representation of thinking. You need people to bounce ideas off of and to advance forward in your thinking, otherwise you remain silent like the marble statue. Even Rodin himself understood the idea of sharing his thoughts because he was the one who convinced the French government to keep open his home to share his sculptures with the world! In fact, introducing the "Thinker" to students as an introduction to critical thinking (everyone at UBC is pushing us to concentrate more on this in our secondary schools) would be an interesting "hook." The teacher could ask them to write down all the things that they do when they "think," and whether this statue represents what they do. Just a thought.

Chunk from Kafai & Resnick, 1996, p. 4: "...the individual thinker' plays a strong role in our culture. In most school classrooms, children must do worksheets, and tests on their own."

Response from Lesley: When Kafai and Resnick mention the "individual thinker", I immediately think of Uguste Rodin's "Thinker" which seems to portray the act of thinking as separate, silent, remote, and above all else, not to be connected with anyone else. This, as I have learned through the article is the wrong representation of thinking. You need people to bounce ideas off of and to advance forward in your thinking, otherwise you remain silent like the marble statue. Even Rodin himself understood the idea of sharing his thoughts because he was the one who convinced the French government to keep his home to share his sculptures with the world! In fact, introducing the "Thinker" to students as an introduction to critical thinking (everyone at UBC is pushing us to concentrate more on this in our secondary schools) would be an interesting "hook." The teacher could ask them to write down all the things that they do when they "think," and whether this statue represents what they do. Just a thought.

Lesley has learned that she needs to "bounce ideas" off people to advance forward in her thinking and, as the course continues, she exploits every medium available to do this.

This is clearly visible in her treatment of a controversial incident that occurred during her practicum. Lesley identifies this dilemma when she selects and responds to this chunk from Tedick et al's (1993) article on language as object, one of the first class readings:

Chunk from Tedick et. al., 1993, p. 57: "The deeper cultural questions of values, beliefs, attitudes, and the contradictions and conflicts associated with them are left unexplored."

Response from Lesley: I must say that since I only taught Grade 8 French, it was difficult to get into meaty subjects about the French culture. I had not help from the textbook (the sponsor teacher thought the chapter on a murder mystery was excellent and did not want me to deviate) or the sponsor teacher. I would always be faced with their question: "What is the point? What do you want the students to get out of this? Is this a French class or a class *about* French? I think you may want to rethink this activity altogether." In my Spanish class, when a discussion ensued about Hispanic immigrants in the United States, many of the students had preconceived ideas and one particular discussion resulted in some fairly racist, if not prejudiced comments. I did not know how to handle this as language teachers are not taught how to lead a controversial discussion at UBC. This is something I was not prepared for. I considered it the problem faced only by Social Studies teachers. However, the practicum taught me I'm going to have to find a way to learn, or to practice leading controversial "cultural" discussions.

As is the practice with this chunking exercise, the students share their selections and responses in small groups during class time on the day the reading is assigned. Later, however, she brings this issue up again during a focus group session:



In this clip, Lesley shares this uncomfortable teaching moment with the group and admits that she has not yet developed a strategy to deal with controversial topics in her language class. Interpreting this as a call for suggestions, I encouraged Lesley to work with a classmate, Nazlynn, to post this clip on WebConstellations™ to solicit ideas. While viewing the clip, however, Lesley becomes concerned that her comments may be misinterpreted by her classmates since part of her speaking is drowned out by her focus groups' exclamations of surprise. She uses the space provided for media descriptors to clarify the context of her utterances:

controversy in class

by Nazlynn Janmohamed (6/14/99 at 11:22:48 AM)

Lesley posts this written clarification along with the movie :

This is about a student mentioning that Latin American immigrants are hard workers simply because they were slaves. I knew I had to address this stereotype and misinformation but I did not know how to go about it. (You may notice that the comment about the slaves is lost in people's laughter)



Movie File:
lesleycontro.mov

Lesley later talks about her motivations for clarifying this in the WebConstellations™ focus group session:



Lesley describes her motivations for placing a clarifying descriptor on her WebConstellations™ star.
WebConstellations™ Focus Group, June 16, 1999
Movie File: lesley_clarify.mov

Lesley is looking for a delicate and productive way to deal with controversial topics that jeopardize the class dynamic amongst her students and also their potential interactions with members of the target language culture. She is persistent with this topic because she views it as a threat to her students' and her ability to connect and interact with each other and the texts of the target language culture. This clip receives quite a few sincere and helpful responses and prompts several classroom discussions, including activities on how to diffuse hot topics and address stereotypes.

Ultimately, Lesley overcomes her trepidation regarding this digital medium and the threat she perceives it to represent for the human interaction she so enjoys. Lesley uses WebConstellations™ as a meaningful social event. She is able to access this tool from home and watches the movies with her family and friends. In her comments, she continues to make personally meaningful connections between her intertextual and interpersonal experiences in response to the posted comments and digital media texts. In the context of the digital media texts, Lesley chooses to share her life stories through her postings. We learn many things. Her mother, Lillian, is a nurse who warns Lesley of the dangers of coffee yet drinks it anyway. Her fiancé is fascinated with the sound effects of the cars and continues to play them "just like a two year old!" Her girlfriends decorate their homes with dried flowers. Her family in the south of Italy served Lesley cooked zucchini flowers as a dish. Her ex-boyfriend is still probably stinging from a hateful letter she, regretfully, sent him years ago.

Lesley is keenly aware that a human face will receive her message and, hence, makes her comments personal. When she responds to the texts representing the process, she addresses her comments to individual people, as if she were carrying on a live conversation, even though their phrases are suspended in Quicktime™ movies. When she responds to the finished products, she brings them alive by addressing the individual creators by name.

The digital, printed, and human texts that surround Lesley are all active contributors to Lesley's life. They move in and out of each other's existence, each one independent yet interdependent on the other for connection and meaning. There are no objects in Lesley's world, only Subjects-in-interaction.

Chapter 6

Conclusions and Implications

Summary of Project

Educational dilemma

Despite encouragement to use emerging technologies to create innovative learning environments that enable students to become ethnographers, rather than “tourists” (Goldman-Segall, 1998b; Fischer, 1996), modern language teachers cite “textbook notes” and “authentic texts” as their top resources for teaching culture (Moore, 1996). Yet modern media, with their capabilities to create “media rich texts” complete with sound, images, and video, create a new, unexplored predicament for the language teacher and learner in this new role as “ethnographer.” Whereas the anthropologist traditionally started from a context-and-experience-rich environment and imagined a “text,” the language teacher and learner start with a “text” and must imagine a context, drawing from previous experience, knowledge, or stereotypes about the target language culture (Teroaka, 1989). In this information age, student teachers are also expected to possess multiliteracies, which allow them not only to notice but look for the qualities in a text (Eisner, 1998), and also the relationship between these qualities (Luke, 2000).

Media-based approach

Based on communicative language teaching and constructionist learning models, the final phase of this project, referred to in this dissertation as Subjects-in-interaction v. 3.0, implemented a media-based approach which encouraged modern language student teachers

to use their personal experiences to design and interpret media rich texts as a means to promote the development of multiliteracies. These student teachers, with little or no experience with digital media, received initial instruction in filming techniques, video capturing, scanning, and digital editing. Next, working in design teams of 5-6 individuals, each group created a 30-second CineKit™ movie based on the cultural significance of a particular *object*, or *artifact*, of their choice such as coffee, cars, or flowers. These movies, along with other video clips of the participants going through and/or reflecting on the movie-making process, were then posted on-line with WebConstellations™. In this forum, participants were able to view and comment on each other's creations and reflections, and make connections to their own experiences as well as key concepts presented in the course. Throughout the project, the participants assumed various research roles and used a variety of digital research tools.

Research roles

Research initiators: Student teachers were involved in the initial and subsequent writing of the UBC Teaching and Learning Enhancement grants (Goldman-Segall & Beers, 1997; Goldman-Segall & Grimm, 1999), which provided the funding. The potential participants were presented with the concept for version 2.0 of the project during their 1997 fall methods course and asked for their input. They conveyed their enthusiasm for this project and the significance it would have for their learning in written comments which were then incorporated into the initial grant. When the funding was approved, many felt a sense of pride and ownership in the project. Their evaluation of the success of the project was incorporated into a subsequent grant (Goldman-Segall & Grimm, 1999), which provided funding for the continuation of this project in version 3.0, as well as another related project in the UBC Integrated Science Program.

Beta testers: The two software programs, or subsystems, incorporated into this system, CineKit™ (Baecker, University of Toronto), a movie-making tool, and WebConstellations™ (Goldman-Segall, University of British Columbia), an on-line digital data annotation and analysis tool, were under development and not yet ready for commercial release. The students, therefore, were beta testers of this software. They were able to make suggestions as to how to improve the interface, usability, and functionality of the software, knowing that their comments would be listened to by programmers and developers and incorporated into future versions of the software. Though frustrating at times, because CineKit™ was not always dependable and WebConstellations™ was sometimes slow due to overloaded ethernet connections, many students felt empowered at being involved in the design process and said that it de-mystified the world of technology for them.

Qualitative researchers: An effective way to learn to see the multiple layers of *qualities* present in an artistic creation is to undergo the process of creating art (Eisner, 1998). Many of the student teachers involved in the process of making digital movies based on their own personal interpretations of a cultural artifact recognized that, along the way, they were advancing from novice to experts in their textual readings:

Making this movie was an eye opening experience. I loved being 'behind the scenes' instead of just passively watching a finished product. I now view all kinds of media (TV, movies, magazines...) with an insight as to how they were made, how the images were chosen and manipulated, and I can be more critical of them than before. I don't unconditionally accept everything that is put before me (WebConst/Confidence Builder/Anju Garg, 6/28/99 at 3:50:52 PM).

Video ethnographers: In the literature, modern language teachers are encouraged to turn their students into "ethnographers" in order to explore the culture of the people who speak the language they are studying. In this system, Subjects-in-interaction v. 3.0, the student teachers were video ethnographers and actively filmed themselves and each other in different capacities. They were the Subjects of the films they made, they filmed each other

during the movie making process, they filmed themselves during the focus group meetings, they filmed each other in spontaneous interviews and conversations about interesting issues that came up during the course. They then commented on these images on-line when they saw their final movies or clips of themselves via WebConstellations™.

These student-teachers were encouraged to use these digital video ethnographic techniques with their future classes in order to study “self and other,” a concept which is key to the understanding of one’s own and the target culture. This new understanding can ultimately bring about cultural sensitivity and a greater appreciation of the role of media in its creation and perpetuation of stereotypes and generalizations of the target language cultures and speakers. As digital video ethnographers, these student teachers became aware of the impossibility of capturing the entirety of an event. As Eisner affirms, “the map is not the territory and the text is not the event” (1998, p. 27). Digital video ethnography reminds us that interpretation is a cyclical, infinite process.

Reflective practitioners (Schon, 1988; Wallace, 1991): Throughout the project, these student teachers participated in various focus groups in which they filmed themselves responding to a set of pre-established questions having to do with their practicum and life experiences as they used media to understand and teach culture. The students reported that these focus groups were a rewarding experience in that they were beneficial to their understanding of the course concepts and allowed themselves to actively reflect on their own teaching and learning. I, the instructor, was not present during these focus groups, though I viewed these filmed discussions later and posted video excerpts on WebConstellations™ for further comment from the students. These data have served as part of this dissertation but also modeled a form of research these pre-service teachers could carry out in their future classes.

Findings and Results

Research question #1

What is the nature of the human and seemingly non-human interactions that occur when modern language student teachers are:

- (a) users of a system designed to promote multiliteracies and
- (b) digital video ethnographers of their own learning processes?

Each of the eight student teachers I have chosen to profile in this dissertation had a unique experience as user of this learning system and digital video ethnographer of their own learning processes, based on the life experiences they brought to this project and their personal interactions with the tools, ideas and fellow participants. Therefore, my interpretations of their experiences cannot be understood as generalizations, but conclusions based on what I saw at this particular place and time.

Based on the sentiments expressed in the various written, digital, and face-to-face forms of communication provided in this project, many descriptors can be used to qualify the individual experiences of these eight student teachers. The nature of the interactions, which comprised the student teachers' unique experiences as participants in this interactive, digital learning environment and digital video ethnographers of their own learning processes, can be described as challenging, confusing, exciting, rewarding and effective.

Challenging aspects

For many of these student teachers, the most challenging aspect of this study was the struggle to reconcile prior and evolving concepts of the roles of culture, language, text and teacher in the modern language classroom. Many students' prior experiences with culture had been carried out within a Big C or small c product-based notion of culture, which is manifested in the products and practices of its members, with little emphasis on their perspectives. Similarly, these students' previous experiences with language learning had

occurred within a curriculum that breaks down language into small objects to be analyzed and stored. Texts, in this educational context, are exploited for the products rather than the perspectives they provide, be they cultural fact or grammar point. These approaches to culture and language learning elevate the teacher to the level of master, a status to which her students then aspire. These knowledge-based notions of culture and language place unattainably high expectations on the teacher, who is expected to be all knowing in all matters of the target language culture and language. This goal, as the student teachers involved in this project came to realize, is neither productive nor realistic and can only inhibit their personal exploration and learning and that of their future students.

Confusing aspects

These new concepts of language, culture, teacher and text led many of the student teachers to pass through periods of confusion as they reconciled the differences between their prior and evolving concepts of these notions. This confusion manifested itself as they reflected back on and reevaluated their prior teaching practice. Many acknowledged they were dissatisfied with the way in which they had addressed a controversial or stereotypical cultural issue on their practicum but, at the same time, had not yet developed an alternative strategy for their future practice. This left them feeling at a professional loss, no longer confident in their decision-making abilities.

Not only did they experience confusion over their interactions with their students, but also in their choice of student assignments and assessment practices. The student teachers generally acknowledged that motivation is one of the most important factors in language learning and in promoting the learner's desire to continue with his or her language learning endeavors (Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Gardner, 1996). They also enthusiastically agreed that the constructionist projects they completed were personally meaningful and motivating because of the time they spent interacting with their classmates and engaging in critical personal reflection. Furthermore, they were aware of the connections between

communicative and constructionist teaching approaches which emphasize affect, diversity and relationship forming. Nonetheless, these student teachers constantly grappled with the question of whether these projects were feasible in their vision of the modern language class, due to the time they may take away from grammar instruction and their perceived incompatibility with standardized assessment measures.

Exciting aspects

Many students commented on the excitement they felt at being part of a research community, in the capacity of the *Making Movies, Making Theories* (Goldman-Segall & Beers, 1997) UBC Teaching and Learning Enhancement Grant, and the alpha and beta software development and usability studies for CineKit™ and WebConstellations™. Students involved in version 2.0 of this system contributed to the writing of the grant by expressing how they felt they would benefit from participating in such an event and shared in the same excitement as the principal and co-researchers after it was accepted and were able to participate. Other students, not involved in the original grant writing, expressed excitement at being able to assume roles as video ethnographers and users of software not yet released to the public.

In a different context, many students showed excitement at being trusted to use state-of-the-art digital tools to carry out creative hands-on projects and document their own learning processes. Public displays of excitement after having learned and successfully completed a new technical task were common occurrences. What's more, the students found the environment, in which they often filmed or were filmed during class discussions and activities, to be highly motivating and engaging, prompting them to probe deeper in their reflections and articulate their ideas more clearly. They also expressed excitement at seeing their own images and comments, as well as those of their classmates, appear in an on-line public forum that they could also share with friends and family at home. Indeed, the power of the medium cannot be denied. Outside individuals, not involved in this project but

who performed cameo roles in the students' movies, were often elevated to near movie star status when they visited the multimedia lab during the editing or commenting process.

Rewarding aspects

Many students found their participation in this project rewarding in different contexts. First, they were pleased with the new understanding they gained of themselves and their capacities. At first, many students expressed apprehensions about their abilities to complete the constructionist assignments, with several later admitting they had considered dropping the course for this very reason. Surprisingly, students expressed more anxiety over the first assignment, the low-tech identity object, than the movie making. The most difficult aspect of this assignment, the students reported, was determining "how far" they wanted, or were willing, to go in terms of sharing their inner identities with the general public. Those who chose to engage deeply with their object, and push themselves further, reported feeling higher levels of personal satisfaction with themselves and their product. The students also found the movie-making project highly rewarding in that they were able to overcome their apprehensions to learn technical and intellectual skills they had previously deemed beyond their abilities. The students also liked the tangible result, in the form of a digital movie, that documented and served as a lasting artifact of their learning process.

Another aspect of this course the students found rewarding was the reflective and meaningful interactions they were able to carry out with their classmates in a variety of forums. Students found the focus group meetings, an aspect added only in version 3.0, to be a valuable experience because it allowed them to discuss their thoughts and experiences, especially from their practice, in a productive and positive setting. They reported that the suggested questions gave them an opportunity to explore areas of their experience they had not necessarily looked at before. They also enjoyed working with individuals outside of their design teams. Many key points raised in these focus groups were later posted on

WebConstellations™, providing a forum in which to work out and find solutions to common dilemmas, such as how to promote critical thinking and address stereotypes and controversy in the language classroom.

Effective aspects

Time and again, many of these students expressed their surprise at how effective this system was in terms of allowing them to apply abstract concepts and develop useful skills and strategies for their teaching and learning. Most of the students were originally apprehensive over their ability to learn the digital tools quickly enough to create a movie and post it on the web. However, they enthusiastically expressed their common surprise and relief at how quickly they were able to learn the tools and apply their new skills to the making of their movies.

Many also commented that the hands-on work of making their movies enabled them to make concrete the abstract concepts presented in the course readings and lectures. Several student teachers also reported that the movie making process prompted them to critically examine all texts, not just the ones used in their classes, with an insight into how they were made and how the images were chosen and manipulated.

Research question #2

How might the use of digital media to create texts within this constructionist learning model inform these student teachers' notions of culture, or Subjects-in-interaction? How might this affect their future teaching?

A significant finding in this study is that many students found this project to be empowering in terms of their self-confidence and determination to integrate language and culture with modern media in their future teaching. On a technical level, many students believed the computer skills they developed during this project would provide them with a competitive edge over other prospective applicants in the job market. Many also envisioned themselves capable of leading their students in constructionist digital media projects. Some

of the students attributed this new-found confidence in technology to their experiences working with imperfect software. The unpredictable nature of the software, in particular CineKit™, obliged these students to think creatively to find ways to overcome its shortcomings. This debugging process proved critical to their empowerment, ultimately demonstrating they were “smarter” than the technology. This “debugging” process is considered fundamental in the phase shift from disequilibrium to equilibration (Akyalcin, 1997) and is central to problem-based learning scenarios based on the ideas of Dewey (e.g. 1938).

On an intellectual level, many students found that newly appropriated process-based approaches to exploring culture relieved them of the heavy emotional burden placed on them by product-based approaches. In this process-based concept, students and teachers engage in a collaborative process to look for and analyze the interactions between the various qualities of their own and the target language culture’s texts. Teachers are no longer required to house banks of information; they are only expected to possess and foster the reflective and inquisitive skills necessary to guide themselves and their students on an exploration of the target language culture’s many Subjects-in-interaction via its texts. In this new framework, these student teachers assessed their professional preparedness and qualifications not on what they did not yet know, but on what they could learn alongside their students.

Also empowering to many student teachers was the discovery that they already stored many of the resources needed to carry out this exploratory task. They already had strong critical thinking skills, developed over a lifetime of educational preparation and honed during their participation in this ethnographic approach to the design and interpretation of digital media texts. They also possessed a wealth of cultural resources from their rich bicultural, bilingual life experiences, which could be tapped through the study of self and other.

How might this affect their future teaching?

The student teachers involved in this study shared similar backgrounds and life stories in that many, if not most, were the children of first or second generation immigrants and had grown up in bicultural and bilingual homes. These early experiences had motivated them to explore other languages and cultures, ultimately leading them to choose modern language teaching as their profession. As they developed the technical and intellectual skills needed to design and interpret digital media texts, these student teachers shared many of the same personal challenges in the process.

Over the course of this study, one important consideration became apparent to me that I, a beginning teacher educator at the time, had not taken into sufficient account. This was that fact that these student teachers were, indeed, beginning teachers—not that they had yet to prove themselves as knowledgeable and competent teachers, but that they had yet to appropriate a modern language classroom for themselves. Their concepts of what it meant to choose classroom materials and methods for cultural exploration were often formed in comparison to what they had observed from either their sponsor teacher while on practicum or their own language teachers during their lifetime of study. When asked to comment on their own teaching practices, the student teachers often responded in the context of what their sponsor teacher or faculty advisor had “allowed” them to do.

Limitations and constraints, perceived or real, imposed on the student teacher during the practicum experience had left a profound effect on their confidence and desire to take risks in their teaching. Early in the study, many student teachers revealed misgivings over their personal qualifications to teach culture. They expressed doubt regarding the place for culture, even product-based culture, in a textbook-driven, standardized curriculum. Over the course of the study, however, some student teachers began to visualize themselves as capable and autonomous teachers with the right to claim the modern language classroom for themselves. As these student teachers came to visualize the classroom as their own, they

more readily and enthusiastically developed the technical and intellectual skills to design and interpret digital media texts.

Claiming a modern language class for one's own purposes involves more than acquiring a teaching position. The completion of this appropriation process is critical to the success in which a modern language teacher is able to teach language *through* culture. In other words, a teacher who has appropriated the language classroom is one who possesses the confidence and resources necessary to use the target language as a medium of expression in which to explore the many perspectives which comprise her own students' cultures as well as those of from the target language. This teacher works within the constraints of the classroom to provide culture for learning that empowers the many Subjects of study. I have identified five cognitive steps these and other student teachers may need to pass through in order to position themselves to claim their future modern language classrooms for themselves. These steps are based on my observations of these student teachers' thinking processes, as voiced in their initial reservations and eventual determination regarding their future process-based teaching of culture, or as I have come to call it, Subjects-in-interaction.

The first step is to claim the right to include culture in a subject area that has long treated language as object and delegated meaningful or controversial social inquiry to the field of social studies. The second step is to claim the right to choose one's own materials, more specifically authentic texts based on contemporary themes personally relevant to student and teacher alike. The third step is to work within external expectations to claim the right to determine one's own curriculum, based on process-centered approaches to culture and language learning, that may or may not correspond chronologically to the prescribed textbook or standardized curricular objectives. The fourth step is to claim the right to use non-traditional language teaching methods and forms of knowledge representation, such as hands-on constructionist projects, to advance the participants' inquisitive skills and understanding and further their motivation in learning the course content. The fifth step is to claim the right to hold high expectations for one's students to

use critical thinking for the design and analysis of texts from one's own culture and the target language culture and to carry out these tasks in the target language.

Implications

Bialystok and Hakuta (1994), in their synthesis of the literature on prior research in the field, voice their frustration at the lack of theories to explain the practice and process of second language acquisition (SLA), adding that the few theoretical frameworks that do exist explain only a narrow set of findings. In the place of theories, they lament, is a predominance of lists which "are unable to analyze the interrelations among their constituent items, to predict behavior in new situations, or to explain the reasons for observed patterns" (p. 211). Since they made their call to their colleagues, a great deal of research from interactionist, sociocultural, and sociolinguistic perspectives in the field of SLA has emerged which aims to describe the contexts within which second language learning takes place, and the kinds of interactions in which learners become engaged (Mitchel & Myles, 1998). Each perspective has, in its own way, contributed to the field's understanding of how learners' engagement in second interaction is systematically influenced by power relations and other cultural factors which in turn prompt the individual to renegotiate his or her identities according to the context (Mitchel & Myles, 1998). This particular study aims to contribute to this discussion.

Granted, this study does not explore the second language acquisition process. However, it does attempt to offer insights into the thinking processes of eight modern language student teachers who will be engaging their future students in a second language acquisition process. As part of their second language learning, these students will experience a second language acculturation process as well. Past research in approaches to intercultural teaching have provided lists of themes (Seelye, 1974, 1985, 1993), lists of culturally-sensitive personality traits desired of our students (Byram & Morgan, 1994), and statements of recommended goals for cultural instruction (ACTFL 1993, 1996; Strasheim, 1981), for

example. In my research and analysis, I do not put forth lists. Instead, I present the reader with a descriptive and interpretive account of my experience working with modern language student teachers as they begin to appropriate multiliteracies for designing and interpreting digital media texts to explore the practices, products and perspectives of their own and the target language culture. In this dissertation, I have built upon the theories of Piaget, Papert and Goldman-Segall by proposing a theory and methodology for *context*, Subjects-in-interaction, as an empowering alternative to product-based burdensome or unattainable notions of “teaching culture.”

Informing practice

It is my hope that modern language teacher educators, teachers, learners and materials developers will find this perspective helpful in their practice. This project may serve as a model for modern language teacher educators who desire to answer the calls in their field to provide their student teachers with specific and extended education in the use of authentic texts for cultural exploration. Those modern language teachers who are already established in the field may find this theory and methodology refreshing and liberating, as many of the student teachers in this study have. These ideas may inspire these teachers to venture into new, uncharted territories in their life-long exploration of the target language culture, constantly rekindling their passion with new findings. Modern language learners who appropriate the technical and intellectual skills to enjoy the authentic media texts of their own and the target language culture may feel motivated and empowered to continue with their own self discovery and language learning. Finally, given the important role that texts hold in modern language classes, this project provides developers of multimedia learning environments and educational materials with some insights into how to better motivate and engage their users.

Low-tech, or global approach

Another implication for teaching across the curriculum, not only in modern languages, that has emerged from this study is an approach to “teaching culture” which does not necessarily involve the use of state-of-the-art digital tools. Though this study has reported that many of the participants found the inclusion of these highly interactive digital tools increased their motivation and level of self reflection and discovery, I believe an alternative low-tech approach, which embodies the philosophy of Subjects-in-interaction, can also be productive. This approach to teaching Subjects-in-interaction includes six teaching principles or recommendations:

First, look to ourselves as well as the other in our cultural explorations. Multiple levels of reflexivity, in the form of journal, focus group discussions, and the examination of texts and perspectives from within one’s own culture can provide opportunities to reflect on one’s subject position in relation to the “other.”

Second, use lots of interactive activities, such as group work, to create a safe classroom environment in which to explore individual differences. Community building activities, such as warm-ups, collaborative projects and the validating of the classmates’ work by sharing it in public forums can help foster a positive classroom dynamic.

Third, dive deep in our “readings” of authentic and non-authentic texts to find their many voices and levels of meaning. Alternative forms of reading, such as the “reflective syntheses” and “chunking” activities described in Chapter Four, call attention to the reader’s personal relationship with the text and can be instrumental in identifying the prior assumptions that one brings to each reading. Students can also heighten their awareness of the individual qualities of media texts by creating their own, in a variety of low-tech media.

Fourth, systematically include cultural perspectives in teaching and assessing all four modalities (writing, speaking, listening, and reading). Grammar lessons and written examinations are often neglected as opportunities for intercultural study. However, they can be just as informative as listening lesson plans based on authentic video texts as long as

attention is given to incorporate various perspectives from the target language or home culture which reflect differences in gender, age, ethnicity, and socio-economic level. If cultural exploration is to be seen as a worthy endeavor, it should be incorporated into all aspects of the course and students should be held accountable.

Fifth, approach stereotypes head-on to determine their origin, validity, and implications. Some teachers avoid discussing stereotypes in language classes for fear of perpetuating them by acknowledging they exist. Others don't want to make their students feel uncomfortable. Yet every student can benefit from a frank discussion, carried out with respect and consideration for the individuals involved, on the origin of stereotypes and the harm they can cause.

Finally, consider alternative forms of knowledge representation, such as a three dimensional identity object or other constructions, and place equal emphasis on the process and product for assessment purposes. Cultures depend upon a variety of media and genres to communicate their messages, so why limit evaluation methods to paper-and-pen academic compositions and written examinations? Furthermore, evaluation models which prize the finished product and place little value on the process of creation and negotiation reinforce static product-based notions of culture and language over dynamic process-based ones.

Further research

This research study has raised many issues that can serve as the impetus for future research. This study has focused on the experiences of three groups of student teachers while enrolled in a course on the university campus. Future research would examine their pre- and post-participation experiences, to get a better understanding of the context from which they emerge and the effect their university course experience has on their future practice.

These student teachers' memories of recent experiences on their practicum in the schools seem to play a large role in their abilities to assimilate and accommodate the new concepts presented in the course. Many students, who claimed to have entered the practicum intending to integrate language and culture with the limited skills they had learned in the fall methods course, were quickly discouraged from doing so. It would be interesting to observe future student teachers on practicum, and the interactions they have with their sponsor teachers, to understand their experiences before they participate in this course. What examples, if any, does the sponsor teacher use to integrate language and culture? What are the interactions between the sponsor teacher and the student teacher in terms of materials selection for exploring cultural issues and their implementation? Is the resistance the student teachers report feeling from their sponsor teacher when they suggest using authentic texts real or imagined? Can this tension be attributed to the sponsor teachers' discomfort with the use of authentic texts in the classroom or the fact that the student teacher is unprepared to carry out the exploration?

Other areas of research would involve examining the current practices of these former project participants now that they have a language classroom of their own. An added dimension would also explore the experiences of their own modern language students. Questions might include: What implications, if any, has these former student teachers' participation in this study had on their current teaching practice? In what types of projects do they engage their students? What authentic texts do the student teachers use and how are they examined? What challenges do they present? Are other concepts from the course, such as the notion of self and other and tourist versus explorer, incorporated into their teaching? What are their students' levels of engagement with and understanding of the texts? The answers to these questions, along with continued research into interactionist, sociocultural, and sociolinguistic perspectives would allow me to further refine and deepen my understanding of Subjects-in-interaction, prompting further iterations of the learning model, environment and theoretical framework.

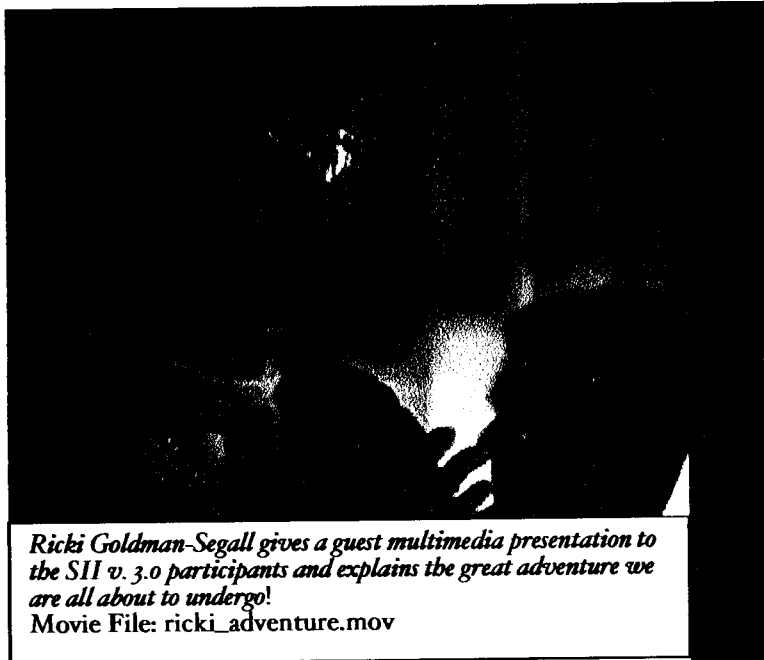
Reflections**WebConstellations™****A great adventure!****Heather Fischer on 6/16/99 at 11:12:24 AM**

I must admit that the idea of making a movie and putting it on a computer was similar to travelling to the moon and finding gold. I did not see how it could happen or how I would be able to change my position from a technological relic to an adventurer and discoverer. I am happy to say that some part of that transformation has taken place. No longer do I feel that I am alone on a desert island with my prehistoric abilities. I now see that I have been involved in an adventure where each day brought new discoveries, along with frustrations and enjoyment.



Movie File: ricki_adventure.mov

Heather's words voice the sentiments of many of her fellow participants from Subjects-in-interaction version 3.0 who listened to Ricki Goldman-Segall's guest multimedia presentation on our first group meeting, in which she situated this research site within the tradition of scholarly work carried out in her research lab, MERLin. At the end of this talk, which was later excerpted and placed on WebConstellations™ for students to comment on, Ricki sparked excitement in the students by telling them the media objects they were going to make might "hit someone else's learning off and change the way they think about things." She gave us an excited send-off on this project by adding, "It's a great adventure we're all on!"

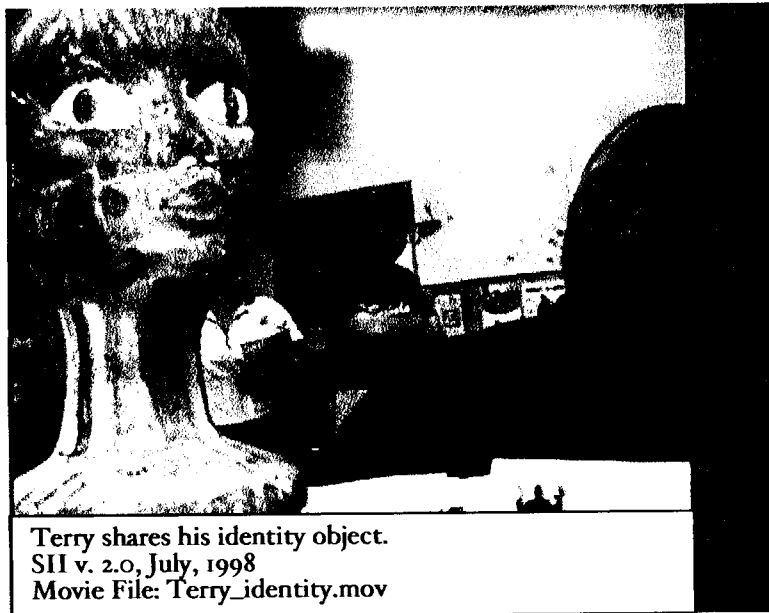


As I make the final adjustments to this narrative, and thereby revisit the voices of the many individuals that create its story, I am deeply aware of the great adventure we have just shared. It is interesting to reflect back on that moment, and remember the feelings of excitement, expectation and wonderment that Ricki inspired in all of us. Yet, for me the adventure has lasted longer than the short six weeks of this final study. For me, the adventure has been a four year exploration to the moon and back, in which I have, indeed found gold in the richness of the human interactions I have been privileged to share within the MERLin laboratory and its extended community.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to express my gratitude to all of those who have participated and collaborated in my learning and research, either as admired mentors, collaborative colleagues, or generous co-researchers and Subjects. I am also grateful to the various scholars who have encouraged this work by traveling from far away or just down the hall to attend some of the classes and participate in the research. In particular, Shen Chen from the University of Newcastle, Barry Carbol from the Open Learning School, Désirée Pointer from the Carnegie Institute, and Cynthia Nichols from the University of British

Columbia. This ongoing encouragement and faith in the lessons to be learned from this project have energized my efforts.

Above all, I feel an especially deep gratitude to those whose names have not appeared in this text, those who have participated in the early two versions of the study who, often without knowing, have definitely changed the ways in which I think about things. I can only hope that those with whom I have interacted have also been transformed in some small way. As a token to those students who have not been represented, I would like to leave you with the powerful image and words of one student, Terry, who participated in version 2.0. Terry's insights, enthusiasm, and generosity of spirit have left a lasting impression on me and a desire to continue with this work. In this video excerpt, Terry presents us his life story through his identity object:



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APPENDIX A: 1999 MLED 480A Course Syllabus (SII v.3.0)

**Advanced Studies in Language Education:
Integrating Language and Culture with Modern Media**

Course website: <http://www.merlin.ubc.ca/people/beers/home480a.htm>

Modern Language Education 480A, Section 921

Summer, 1999: May 17-June 21

Mondays and Wednesdays, 9:00-12:00 pm

Main Meeting Room: Scarfe 200

Media Labs: Scarfe 1224 (MERLin), Scarfe 1227 (MUSES), Scarfe 1210 (Physics Lab)

Instructor: Maggie Beers, M.A.

E-mail: magbeers@interchange.ubc.ca

Office: Scarfe 300B Tel: 822-6821

Scarfe 1224 (MERLin) Tel: 822-3569

This three-credit second language methodology course is designed to provide opportunities for second language teachers to develop the skills and compile the resources necessary to teach modern languages and their cultures in a multicultural society with modern media.

I. Rationale

When presenting the rationale for studying a second language, the 1996 B.C. language education policy includes the following objectives for students:

- to gain insights into own and other cultures and subcultures
- to understand individual differences within a culture
- to develop a sense of 'self' and 'other'
- to develop intercultural sensitivity
- to develop positive attitudes necessary to live within a multicultural society
- to develop critical thinking skills

II. Goals of the MLED 480A course

Students will:

- become familiar with methods of teaching second languages and their cultures to develop an informed approach
- learn the value of approaching a topic from multiple perspectives to develop critical thinking skills and to gain insights into own and other cultures
- develop and demonstrate instructional techniques to meet the above mentioned prescribed learning outcomes stated in the B.C. Integrated Resource Package
- become familiar with second language acquisition theory to understand the cognitive and affective process of learning a language
- compile authentic resources from a variety of media and critically examine them for their cultural and educational merit
- become familiar with constructionist learning philosophies to create meaningful media projects

III. Course components

- opportunities to reflect on past teaching experiences
- a discussion of cultures, subcultures, and intercultural sensitivity
- a discussion of self, other and individual differences
- integrated readings and activities taken from a variety of sources to present multiple perspectives
- opportunities to observe and practice language teaching strategies which apply course objectives and integrate a variety of skills
- a critical analysis of authentic 'texts' and their implications for language learning
- opportunities to learn about and use modern media to create and annotate digital movies

IV. Some definitions

Authentic: "The term 'authentic' has been used as a reaction against the prefabricated artificial language of textbooks and instructional dialogues; it refers to the way language is used in non-pedagogic, natural communication" (Kramsch, 1993, p. 177).

Authentic text:: An authentic text is a text that was created to fulfill some social purpose in the language community in which it was produced" (Kramsch, 1993, p. 177).

Text:: 'Authentic text' and 'cultural artifact' and 'resource' can be considered synonyms. A 'text' is anything that can be 'read' or interpreted. In other words, a text can also be called a 'document' 'program' 'poster' 'artifact' 'menu' 'movie' etc.

V. Course evaluation and due dates

1. Identity objects: (10%)

Due either Thursday, May 27th or Friday, May 28th, depending on scheduled make-up day

2. Cultural media artifact (digital movie) & annotation (WebConstellations™): (50% total)

Digital movie due Wednesday, June 9

Annotation with WebConstellations will be on-going throughout the course.

3. 3 Reflective Syntheses of Readings (10% x3=30% total)

Due: #1: Wednesday, May 26; #2: Monday, June 7; #3: Wednesday, June 16

4. Participation and Attendance (10%)

Self Evaluation due Monday, June 21st

"Chunking" of articles will be ongoing throughout the course, and turned in on Monday, June 21st

VI. Description of assignments

1. Identity objects

Identity objects: Individually, students construct a three-dimensional 'identity object' which represents the multiple facets: social, professional, emotional, intellectual, cultural,

etc., that form an individual's identity. This artifact, or *object-to-think-with*, may take any form the creator wishes (as long as it can be brought to class to share and is *not* a poster).

Rationale: This assignment is designed as a rapport building activity that can promote sharing and can contribute to building participant identity and group awareness of the various countries, cultures, and values represented in the class. Its aim is to encourage the participants to think *beyond* the traditional forms of representation and to provide '*objects-to-think-with*' for discussion on the relation between identity and language learning.

Evaluation criteria: The creator uses resources in a non-traditional way; the object conveys a clear message without additional explanation; the object embodies multiple layers of interpretation.

2. Cultural media artifact and annotation

Digital CineKit™ Movies: In design teams of 5-6 individuals, students will **CREATE** their own '*media artifact*,' in the form of a **30-second** digital CineKit™ movie, which depicts one's own culture or that of an 'other' by exploring the various interpretations of a cultural *object*, or *artifact* (i.e. piece of jewelry or clothing, statue, symbol, ornament etc.). These movies can incorporate video sequences, stills, text and graphic images. *These movies may be placed in a public forum, so we request students do not include copyrighted images or images of individuals who have not given prior written consent.*

Annotation and Analysis of Digital Movies and Media Objects with WebConstellations™: These movies and media objects (i.e. images, webpages, video clips from class discussions etc.) will be posted on-line for discussion and analysis using WebConstellations™, a digital video annotation tool. Students are expected to actively participate in this exercise by reflecting on the movies and media objects and making at least 5 insightful comments and inquiries per week, all the while respecting the various '*points of viewing*' of their colleagues.

Rationale: The purpose of this assignment is to a) examine how medium and personal experience affect the representation and interpretation culture; b) demonstrate the difficulty in representing an entire culture within the restrictions of any medium (paper, video, computer, etc.); c) build a community of practice in which the work, knowledge, and diversity of experiences of its members are valued. In the process, choices must be made about what aspects of the culture to include and how they can be portrayed and transmitted. Eventually, students will be able to use their finished products as a model for future teaching situations.

Evaluation criteria: Evaluation will be criterion-based and place equal emphasis on the *process* and *product* of learning about the integration of language and culture with modern media.

Process: The group's *process* of conceptualizing and creating their digital movie will be *group* assessed, on an individual basis (i.e. each group member assesses his or her *own* group's *process* and a mark is assigned to the entire group based on the average of these individual assessments). (See attached criteria for evaluation of group *process*) Students will *self*-assess their own thinking process while using and commenting with WebConstellations™, according to pre-established criteria decided by the class.

Product: Digital movies will be *self* and *peer* evaluated by all the class members (See attached criteria for evaluation of *product*). WebConstellations™ comments will be *self* and *instructor* evaluated, according to pre-established criteria decided by the class.

Please note: The instructor reserves the right to contact any student to negotiate his or her mark (*either up or down*) if she seriously disagrees with his or her evaluation.

3. Reflective synthesis of readings

Individually, students write 3 reflective syntheses (2-pages each) on any 3 of the 11 assigned articles.

Evaluation criteria: Key ideas of the article are synthesized in *no more* than 1/2 page; key ideas are given *critical* consideration; *personal reflections and anecdotes* illustrate an insightful understanding of these ideas and how they relate to *one's own* teaching situation.

4. Participation and attendance

Students are expected to be punctual and attend class regularly and participate in the class activities with a collaborative spirit. Participation will include, but not be limited to, the following activities:

a) Warm up activity: In groups, students will lead the class in a warm up activity which aims to build trust and a better understanding of each other as individuals. Warm up activities should last no more than ten minutes and correspond to the assigned theme:

Phase 1: Breaking the Ice and Building Trust

Phase 2: Exploring 'Self' and 'Other' and Creating Culture

Phase 3: Towards Interpersonal and Intercultural Communication

b) Reading and 'chunking' of articles: Individually, each student is expected to read all the articles included in the reading packet. After having read each article, the student will extract the two or three '*chunks*' (quotations) which the student finds intriguing, enlightening, or which the student would like to criticize. The student will then copy each chunk onto a piece of paper, with a *brief* (one or two sentence) explanation of *why* that chunk was chosen and bring them to class on the day the article is discussed (you may keep an ongoing list, if you like). Though students will bring their '*chunks*' to class on the day of the assigned reading, all '*chunks*' will be turned in to me on June 21st.

c) Sharing of cultural 'texts': On occasion, students will be asked to bring in examples of written, media or music 'texts' to share with the class. These 'texts' should be chosen with care so that they are engaging, correspond to the ideas presented in the readings and add to the group's understanding of culture.

d) Exit slips: On occasion, students and groups will be asked, during class time, to provide written feedback on their thinking processes, concerns, and suggestions.

e) Self evaluation: Students will individually evaluate his or her own performance in class and in group activities to assess his or her participation mark (see attached criteria). This assessment is due on the final day of class (June 21st), with up to one page of explanation (*optional*) about how he or she evaluated his or her own participation. Please note: The instructor reserves the right to contact any student to negotiate his or her mark (*either up or down*) if she seriously disagrees with his or her evaluation.

VII. Course readings and fees

Required readings and photocopy fee: Selected readings compiled by the instructor will be available for pickup the first day of class. In lieu of a required text, a photocopy fee of \$20 will be collected from each student for readings, handouts, and CanCopy fees. This amount is based on estimates from previous years' courses. Should there be any money remaining from the collected fees, and unless the instructor has been asked otherwise, the remaining total will be donated to the Vancouver Children's Hospital. Human and material resources, including media lab space, lab assistants and hardware and software for digital movie making and annotation are generously provided by the course sponsors: *MERLin*, *Bitmovers*, *Expresto*, 1998 & 1999 *UBC Teaching and Learning Enhancement Funds*.

On-line communication and access to the education computing center will be necessary during the course. Students are required to register for access to the Education computers and an e-mail account. (As a registered UBC education student in possession of a library card, you are eligible for free access to the Education computers and an internet account. Apply at the Education Computing Centre, ground floor of the Scarfe Building, for an account and password.)

Recommended texts:

- British Columbia Ministry of Education. (1996). *Integrated resource package: French, German, Japanese, Mandarin, Punjabi, and/or Spanish*. Victoria, B.C.
 Kramsch, C. (1998). *Language and Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
 Ramírez, A.G. (1995). *Creating contexts for second language acquisition: Theory and methods*. New York: Longman.

Recommended cross-cultural activity resources:

- Hadfield, Jill. (1992) *Classroom Dynamics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
 ISBN # 0 19 437 147 6
- McNeil, Deborah, Wilmann, Diane. (1996). *Talking culture: A cross-cultural communication manual for ESL*. Vancouver, BC: Mosaic Press. (If you would like to obtain your own copy, please contact Mosaic Language Centre: 684-8825, 684-8859)

COURSE READINGS

I. Student teachers: Their cultures and reflective process

Weber, S. and Mitchell, C. (1996) Betwixt and between: The culture of student teaching. In Z. Moore (Ed.) *Foreign language teacher education: Multiple perspectives*. Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 301-316.

II. What is culture and why should we teach it?

Mantle-Bromley, C. (1992). Preparing students for meaningful culture learning. *Foreign Language Annals*, 25 (2), 117- 127.

Tedick, D. J., et al. (1993). "Language as object." Excerpted from: Second language education in tomorrow's schools. In G. Guntermann (Ed.), *Developing Language Teachers for a Changing World* (pp. 43-75). Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company, p. 56-58.

III. How can we construct meaningful learning environments in which to study culture?

Kafai, Yasmin B. , Resnick, Mitchel. (1996). Introduction. In *Constructionism in practice: designing, thinking, and learning in a digital world*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 1-5

Goldman-Segall, R. (1998). Introduction: Computers, cultures, and constructions. In *Points of viewing children's thinking: A digital ethnographer's journey*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1-12.

IV. What materials can we use to teach culture and how should we use them?

Rorty, A. O. (1995). Runes and ruins: teaching reading cultures. In Y. Tamir (Ed.) *Democratic education in a multicultural state*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 59-64.

Wojtan, L. (November, 1994). Ideas for integrating Japan into the curriculum. *Eric Digest*, 3-4.

Kramsch, C. (Fall, 1989). Media materials in the language class. *Contemporary French Civilization*, 13(2), 324-345.

Davis, R. (1997). TV commercial messages: An untapped video resource for content-based classes. *The Language Teacher: The Japan Association for Language Teaching*, 21 (3), 13-15.

Kramsch, C. (1993). Language study as border study: Experiencing difference. *European Journal of Education*, 28 (3), 349- 358.

V. What is the student's role in understanding culture and what is the teacher's role in integrating language and culture?

Fischer, G. (1996). Tourist or explorer? Reflections in the foreign language classroom. *Foreign Language Annals*, 29 (1), 73-81.

Hellebrandt, J. (1996). Multimedia and the foreign language teacher: A humanistic perspective. In Moore, Z. (Ed.) *Foreign language teacher education: Multiple perspectives*. Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 249-267.

VIII. Course schedule

All assignments are due and readings will be discussed on the day indicated. All late assignments will be deducted 10% per day late.

Week 1	Monday, May 17	Wednesday, May 19
Class Topics	<i>What is culture? Introductions; cultural metaphors; course overview; UBC Teaching & Learning Enhancement grant</i>	<i>Student teachers: Their culture and reflective process; identity; language (and others) as subject, not object</i>
Readings Discussed		1. Betwixt and between: The culture of student teaching 2. Language as object (excerpt)
Hands-on Digital Activities		(Ricki Goldman-Segall) <i>Points of Viewing & WebConstellations™</i>
Assignment Due		
Week 2	Wednesday, May 26	Make-up Class, May ?
Topic	<i>Why and how should we teach culture?; Cultural "points of viewing" in digital ethnography: Angles and techniques</i>	<i>What can we use to teach culture? How can we create meaningful learning environments for exploring culture?</i>
Readings	1. Preparing students for meaningful culture learning 2. Video shooting techniques	1. Constructionism in practice 2. Computers, cultures, and constructions
Hands-on Digital Activities	Camcorder carousels: Intro to different camcorders; practice shooting; critique and analysis of shooting techniques	Digital carousels: Capturing; scanning; extracting sound (AIFF) and still image (PICT) files from video; Photoshop™
Assignment Due	1st Reflective Summary Due	Identity Objects Due
Week 3	Monday, May 31	Wednesday, June 2
Class Topics	<i>Multicultural readings of texts; cultural assessment.</i>	<i>Media materials and textbooks for teaching culture: How can we use these media materials? Video techniques</i>
Readings Discussed	1. Runes and Ruins: teaching reading cultures 2. Ideas for integrating Japan into the curriculum	1. Media materials in the language class
Hands-on Digital Activities	Digital carousels: Capturing; scanning; extracting sound (AIFF) and still image (PICT) files from video; Photoshop™	CineKit™ digital movie production
Assignment Due	Bring Authentic Media Texts for Discussion	Bring Authentic Media Texts for Discussion

Week 4	Monday, June 7	Wednesday, June 9
Class Topics	<i>Stereotypes; ethnography; Media materials for exploring cultural representation</i>	<i>Who are Canadians? Critical thinking skills for cultural exploration</i>
Readings Discussed	1. TV commercials messages: An untapped video resource for content-based classes 2. Language study as border study: Experiencing difference	1. Tourist or explorer? Reflections in the foreign language classroom
Hands-on Digital Activities	CineKit™ digital movie production	Finish CineKit™ movies, put them up on WebConstellations™
Assignment Due	2nd Reflective Summary Due	CineKit™ Movies Due
Week 5	Monday, June 14	Wednesday, June 16
Topic	<i>Review: What is culture and why should we teach it?</i>	<i>Review: What is the teacher's role in integrating language and culture with modern media; what is the student's role in understanding culture?</i>
Readings	1. Multimedia and the foreign language teacher: A humanistic perspective	
Hands-on Digital Activities	WebConstellations™ annotations, comments on movies, data from course	WebConstellations™ annotations, comments on movies, data from course
Assignment Due		3rd Reflective Summary Due
Week 6	Monday, June 21	Wednesday, June 23
Topic	<i>Review: What can we use to teach culture and how should we use these materials?</i>	NO CLASS MEETING
Readings Discussed		Panel Presentation at 1999 ED-MEDIA Conference in Seattle
Hands-on Digital Activities	Wrap-up; document discussions	
Assignments Due	"Chunks" from Readings (with brief explanation) Due Self-Evaluation Due	

Note: This schedule is for guidance purposes and, with the exception of due dates for assignments and the completion of required readings, is subject to change based on class interests and needs. All class meetings begin in Scarfe 200 and will move to various media labs in Scarfe, depending on the day's hands-on digital activities, after the snack break.

APPENDIX B: 1999 Evaluation Criteria: MLED 480A (SII v.3.0)

MODERN LANGUAGE EDUCATION 480A, section 921
Advanced Studies in Language Education: Integrating Language and Culture with
Modern Media
Course Coordinator: Maggie Beers

Evaluation Criteria:

WEIGHT: Each of the criteria below will be given equal weight and should be marked according to the Operational Definitions of Letter Grade Categories (LANE, January 1997).

—

IDENTITY OBJECTS

1. The creator demonstrated creativity and uses resources in a non-traditional way
2. The object conveys a clear message without additional explanation.
3. The object represents and/or embodies the multiple layers that comprise one's identity.

REFLECTIVE SYNTHESSES

1. *Key ideas* of the article are synthesized in *no more* than 1/2 page.
2. These ideas are given *critical* consideration.
3. *Personal reflections and anecdotes* illustrate an insightful understanding of the key ideas and how they relate to one's *own* teaching situation.

MOVIE

Please assess each digital movie individually, considering the success with which it meets the following criteria (1= Outstanding, 4=Adequate, 7=Inadequate)

1. The movie accommodates and represents a variety of viewpoints (cultural, social, etc.)
2. The movie is engaging and encourages viewers to explore content issues.
3. The final movie stands on its own without explanation.
4. The movie tells a story and communicates it in a unique and original way.
5. The movie captures a notion of culture which is not limited to "Big C" or "Small c."

COMMENTS ON WEBCONSTELLATIONS™

1. *Comments* are constructive.
2. *Comments* show critical analysis.
3. *Comments* show a connection to one's own personal experience.
4. *Comments* illustrate an insightful understanding of the key ideas presented in this course.

GROUP PROCESS

Please assess the success with which **your group** (*not yourself*) met the following criteria (1= Outstanding, 4=Adequate, 7=Inadequate):

1. Group members equally contributed in the process of making the movie.
2. The group managed conflict, disagreements, tensions in a constructive manner
3. The group made full use of the resources:
 - a) Tools (computer, camera, etc.)
 - b) Human

- c) Time
- 4. The group modified its ideas and adapted to each member's suggestions.
- 5. Group members validated each other's viewpoints as decisions were made.
- 6. The participants shared the 'spotlight' with each other during:
 - a) the storyboarding process
 - b) shooting of video
 - c) chunking (selecting and capturing video)
 - d) final editing (using CineKit™)

PARTICIPATION SELF EVALUATION

Every student should come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings. Class members will learn as much from the exchange of views inside the classroom as we will from analyzing the readings on our own. You will evaluate your own performance in class and assess what your marks for participation will be (10% of your final mark). This assessment is due June 21st, with an option to include up to one page of explanation about how you evaluated your participation. I reserve the right to contact you and negotiate your mark (*either up or down*) if I seriously disagree with your evaluation.

Every student should come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings. Class members will learn as much from the exchange of views inside the classroom as we will from analyzing the readings on our own. You will evaluate your own performance in class and assess what your marks for participation will be (10% of your final mark). This assessment is due June 21st, with an option to include up to one page of explanation about how you evaluated your participation. I reserve the right to contact you and negotiate your mark (*either up or down*) if I seriously disagree with your evaluation.

1. Did I read the assigned material and come to class having attempted to synthesize the readings, to identify concepts I didn't understand, to pinpoint where the author(s) seemed confused?
2. Did I attempt to contribute to class discussion in a way that enhanced our understanding of the readings? (Measure yourself against your usual inclination for "speaking up," not against how much other people talked).
3. Did I do my fair share in group work and collaborate in a cooperative spirit?
4. Did I avoid dominating discussion and group work?
5. Did I make an effort to invite others into the conversation and the making of group decisions?
5. Did I make an effort to invite others into the conversation and the making of group decisions?
6. Did I deal respectfully with others' questions, confusion, and discussion priorities?
7. Did I use class discussion and activities (regardless of whether I spoke) as an opportunity to expand my understanding of the topics at hand?

APPENDIX C: 1999 Focus Group Questions: MLED 480A (SII v.3.0)

MLED 480A
Focus Group #1
May 28, 1999

Focus Group Members:

Anju
Kevin
Anne
Susan
Julia

Focus Group Questions:

Please take your time and discuss the following themes, focusing on your past and present learning processes. Share the camera, experiment with shooting angles, (and make sure you are speaking loud enough to come through!)

Themes: Culture, Identity, Personal Experience, Curriculum, Digital Media

1. Culture:

- a. What past experiences have you had learning about culture?
- b. What past experiences have you had teaching culture?
- c. What materials have you used and how have you used them?
- d. Is your idea of 'culture' changing as a result of ideas presented in this course? In what ways?
- e. How can you imagine including culture in your future courses?
Would you include a different perception of culture?
Would you use materials differently?

2. Identity:

- a. Have you ever thought about your identity being connected to culture? How?
- b. Have you been asked to reveal parts of yourself in your past language classes? How? How did that make you feel?
- c. What was the most difficult part of creating your identity object?
- d. What have you learned in the process of constructing a 3-D representation of yourself?
- e. How can you imagine addressing the idea of identity in your future classes? What do you hope to gain from such an approach?

3. Personal Experience:

- a. What is the difference between reading for pleasure or reading for a course?
- b. What do you think of the 'chunking' activities with the readings for this course? Does it make you read differently? How?
- c. What do you think of the 'reflective summary' assignments for this course? Does it make you read and respond to the articles differently?
- d. Can you share some other examples where you have been asked to draw on your personal experiences when learning new ideas?

- e. Can you imagine using these 'reading' approaches with texts in your future courses?

4. Curriculum

- a. Have you ever questioned the ways that language and culture are taught in your language classes? In what ways?
- b. How would you change the language and culture curriculum?
- c. How can the language curriculum lead to a better understanding of self and other?
- d. How can the language curriculum lead to a better respect for other perspectives and points of view?

5. Digital Media/ Technology

- a. What has been your past experience with technology in the schools?
- b. How do you feel about using technology to study language and culture in this course?
- c. If digital media were not a part of this course, how might that change the learning process?
- d. What types of media projects can you imagine carrying out in your future classes?
- d. How can this medium change your learning experiences and those of your students?

MLED 480A
Focus Group #2
May 31, 1999

Focus Group Members: *Introduce yourselves!*

Agnes
Ty
Corinne
Nazlynn
Soraya

Please take your time and discuss the following themes, focusing on your past and present learning processes. Share the camera, take turns facilitating the conversation, read each question out loud before you answer it, , experiment with shooting angles, (and make sure you are speaking loud enough to come through!).

Focus Group Themes: *Culture, Texts, Digital Media, Multicultural Education*

1. Culture:

- a. What past experiences have you had learning about culture?
- b. What past experiences have you had teaching culture?
- c. What materials have you used and how have you used them?
- d. Is your idea of 'culture' changing as a result of ideas presented in this course? In what ways?
- e. How can you imagine including culture in your future courses? Would you include a different perception of culture? Would you use materials differently?

2. Texts:

- a. What is the difference between reading for yourself or reading for a course?
- b. How have you been asked to read authentic or non-authentic texts in your language learning? And in your language teaching?
- c. What criteria have you used to choose authentic texts for your language classes?
- d. What do you think of the 'chunking' activities with the readings for this course? Does it make you read differently? How?
- e. What do you think of the 'reflective summary' assignments for this course? Do they make you read and respond to the articles differently?
- f. Can you imagine using either of these 'reading' approaches with texts in your future courses?

3. Digital Media/ Technology

- a. What has been your past experience with technology in the schools?
- b. How do you feel about using technology to study language and culture in this course?
- c. If digital media were not a part of this course, how might that change the learning process?
- d. What types of media projects can you imagine carrying out in your future classes?
- e. How can this medium change your learning experiences and those of your students?

4. Multicultural Education

- a. What is your interpretation of multicultural education?

- b. Have you made attempts to address multicultural objectives in your language teaching?
- c. How can you imagine addressing the ideals of tolerance in your future language classes? Intercultural sensitivity? Self and Other?
- d. Have you seen examples of multicultural education in the schools?

MLED 480A
Focus Group #3
June 2, 1999

Focus Group Members: *Introduce yourselves!*

Peter
Lesley
Paula
Erin

*Please **take your time** and discuss the following themes, focusing on your past and present learning processes. Share the camera and take turns facilitating the conversation, being sure to elaborate on each other's responses.*

*Some technical advice: For the eventual viewer, please read each question out loud before the group addresses it, speak loud enough to come through and **experiment with shooting angles** (don't forget those close-ups and be sure you aren't getting too much ceiling in your frame!)*

Focus Group Themes: *Culture, Digital Media, Constructionism, Multicultural Education, Media Texts*

1. Culture:

- a. What past experiences have you had learning about culture?
- b. What past experiences have you had teaching culture?
- c. What materials have you used and how have you used them?
- d. Is your idea of 'culture' changing as a result of ideas presented in this course?
In what ways?
- e. How can you imagine including culture in your future courses? Would you include a different perception of culture? Would you use materials differently?

2. Digital Media/ Technology

- a. What has been your past experience with technology in the schools?
- b. How do you feel about using technology to study language and culture in this course?
- c. If digital media were not a part of this course, how might that change the learning process?
- d. What types of media projects can you imagine carrying out in your future classes?
- e. How can this medium change your learning experiences and those of your students?

3. Constructionism

- a. What is your interpretation of constructionism?
- b. Have you seen examples of constructionism in the schools?
- c. How could you see yourself engaging in constructionist activities and projects in your classes?
- d. What would you hope to gain from these types of projects?

4. Multicultural Education

- e. What is your interpretation of multicultural education?
- f. Have you seen examples of multicultural education in the schools?
- g. How can you imagine addressing tolerance in your language classes?

- h. How can you imagine addressing intercultural sensitivity in your language classes?
Self and Other?
- i. How can you imagine addressing Self and Other in your language classes?

5. Media Texts:

- a. What is the difference between reading for yourself or reading for a course?
- b. How have you been asked to read authentic or non-authentic texts in your language learning? And in your language teaching?
- c.. What criteria have you used to choose authentic texts for your language classes?
- d. What do you think of the 'chunking' activities with the readings for this course? Does it make you read differently? How?
- e. What do you think of the 'reflective summary' assignments for this course? Do they make you read and respond to the articles differently?
- f. Can you imagine using either of these 'reading' approaches with texts in your future courses?

MLED 480A
Focus Group #4
June 7, 1999

Focus Group Members: *Introduce yourselves!*

Layla
Sylvie
Yuki
John
Klara

*Please **take your time** and discuss the following themes, focusing on your past and present learning processes. Share the camera and take turns facilitating the conversation, being sure to elaborate on each other's responses.*

*Some technical advice: **Beware of backlight**, the filmer should have his/her back to the windows. For the eventual viewer, please read each question out loud before the group addresses it, speak loud enough to come through and **experiment with shooting angles** (don't forget those close-ups and be sure you aren't getting too much ceiling in your frame!)*

Focus Group Themes: Culture, Media Texts/Movies, Inter/ Multicultural Education Digital Media/Technology, Learning Approaches

1. Culture:

- a. What past experiences have you had learning about culture?
- b. What past experiences have you had teaching culture?
- c. What materials have you used and how have you used them?
- d. Is your idea of 'culture' changing as a result of ideas presented in this course? In what ways?
- e. How can you imagine including culture in your future courses? Would you include a different perception of culture? Would you use materials differently?

2. Media Texts/Movies:

- a. How have you been asked to read authentic or non-authentic texts in your language learning? And in your language teaching?
- b.. What criteria have you used to choose authentic texts for your language classes?
- c.. What cultural aspects have you tried to incorporate into your movies?
- d. Have you drawn on your personal experiences to make your movies for this class? In what ways?
- e. What difficulties have you had to overcome in making your movies?
- f. Discuss the movie making process in general.

3. Inter/Multicultural Education

- e. What is your interpretation of multicultural education?
- f.. Have you seen examples of multicultural education in the schools?
- g. How can you imagine addressing tolerance in your language classes?
- h. How can you imagine addressing intercultural sensitivity in your language classes?
- i. How can you imagine addressing Self and Other in your language classes?

4. Digital Media/ Technology

- a. What has been your past experience with technology in the schools?

- b. How do you feel about using technology to study language and culture in this course?
- c. If digital media were not a part of this course, how might that change the learning process?
- d. What types of media projects can you imagine carrying out in your future classes?
- e. How can this medium change your learning experiences and those of your students?

5. Learning Approaches

- a. What is your interpretation of constructionism?
- b.. Have you seen examples of constructionism in the schools?
- c. How could you see yourself engaging in constructionist activities and projects in your classes?
- d. What would you hope to gain from these types of projects?

MLED 480A
Focus Group #5
June 9, 1999

Focus Group Members: *Introduce yourselves!*

Andrea
Heather
Christina
Chris
Murray
Vicky

*Please **take your time** and discuss the following themes, focusing on your past and present learning processes. Share the camera and take turns facilitating the conversation, being sure to elaborate on each other's responses.*

*Some technical advice: **Beware of backlight**, the filmer should have his/her back to the windows. For the eventual viewer, please read each question out loud before the group addresses it, speak loud enough to come through and **experiment with shooting angles** (don't forget those close-ups and be sure you aren't getting too much ceiling in your frame!)*

Focus Group Themes: Culture, Media Texts/Movies, Inter/ Multicultural Education Digital Media/Technology, Learning Approaches

1. Culture:

- a. What past experiences have you had learning about culture?
- b. What past experiences have you had teaching culture?
- c. What materials have you used and how have you used them?
- d. Is your idea of 'culture' changing as a result of ideas presented in this course? In what ways?
- e. How can you imagine including culture in your future courses? Would you include a different perception of culture? Would you use materials differently?

2. Media Texts/Movies:

- a. How have you been asked to read authentic or non-authentic texts in your language learning? And in your language teaching?
- b.. What criteria have you used to choose authentic texts for your language classes?
- c.. What cultural aspects have you tried to incorporate into your movies?
- d. Have you drawn on your personal experiences to make your movies for this class? In what ways?
- e. What difficulties have you had to overcome in making your movies?
- f. Discuss the movie making process in general.

3. Inter/Multicultural Education

- e. What is your interpretation of multicultural education?
- f.. Have you seen examples of multicultural education in the schools?
- g. How can you imagine addressing tolerance in your language classes?
- h. How can you imagine addressing intercultural sensitivity in your language classes?
- i. How can you imagine addressing Self and Other in your language classes?

4. Digital Media/ Technology

- a. What has been your past experience with technology in the schools?
- b. How do you feel about using technology to study language and culture in this course?
- c. If digital media were not a part of this course, how might that change the learning process?
- d. What types of media projects can you imagine carrying out in your future classes?
- e. How can this medium change your learning experiences and those of your students?

5. Learning Approaches

- a. What is your interpretation of constructionism?
- b.. Have you seen examples of constructionism in the schools?
- c. How could you see yourself engaging in constructionist activities and projects in your classes?
- d. What would you hope to gain from these types of projects?

APPENDIX D: 1998 Fall Methods Course Syllabus: MLED 311-318**MODERN LANGUAGES EDUCATION 311, 313-318, section 301*****Curriculum and Instruction in Modern Languages***

Mondays and Wednesdays, 3:30-6:30 Scarfe 200

Winter 1998- September 9 - December 2

COURSE COORDINATOR: Maggie Beers, M.A.**E-MAIL:** magbeers@unixg.ubc.ca**MLED WEBSITE:** <http://www.mled.lane.educ.ubc.ca>**PHONE:** 822-6821 or 822-3569**OFFICE:** Scarfe 300B or MERLin Laboratory, Scarfe 1224**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Curriculum organization and principles and methods of instruction applied to teaching modern languages in a multicultural society.

COURSE TEXTS (REQUIRED)

Ramírez, A.G. (1995). *Creating contexts for second language acquisition: Theory and methods*. New York: Longman.

British Columbia Ministry of Education. (1996). *Integrated Resource Package: German, Japanese, Mandarin, Punjabi, and/or Spanish*. Victoria, B.C.

COURSE TEXTS (RECOMMENDED)

Lightbown, Patsy, M. and Spada, Nina. (1993). *How languages are learned*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

PHOTOCOPY FEES

A photocopy fee of \$8 will be collected from each student for readings, handouts, and CanCopy fees. This amount is based on estimates from the previous year's course. If there is any money remaining from the collected fees, and unless the instructor has been asked otherwise, the total will be donated to the Vancouver Children's Hospital.

GOALS OF THE MLED 311, 313-318 COURSE

Students will:

- become familiar with second language acquisition theory to understand the cognitive and affective process of learning a language
- become familiar with methods of teaching second languages and their cultures to develop an informed approach
- develop and demonstrate instructional techniques to meet the prescribed learning outcomes stated in the B.C. Integrated Resource Package

- learn the value of approaching a topic from multiple perspectives to develop critical thinking skills and to gain insights into own and other cultures
- compile authentic resources from a variety of media and critically examine them for their cultural and educational merit

COURSE COMPONENTS

Students will have opportunities to learn about the following aspects of modern language education in British Columbia through course readings, class discussions, and group and individual projects.

1. *History and philosophy of Modern Language Programs in British Columbia.*
 - * History of language learning and teaching
 - * Stern and "National Core French Study": the four syllabi.
2. *Multicultural education and its role in modern language education*
 - * Developing positive attitudes necessary to live within a multicultural society
 - * Developing a sense of 'self' and 'other'
 - * Gaining insights into own and other cultures and subcultures
 - * Understanding individual differences within a culture
 - * Developing intercultural sensitivity
 - * Developing critical thinking skills
2. *IRP (Integrated Resource Package)*
 - * Origins and Philosophy
 - * Relation between objectives, strategies and evaluation
 - * IRP and the communicative approach
3. *Communicative Approach*
 - * Definition and characteristics
 - * Characteristics of a language unit in the perspective of the communicative approach
4. *Second Language Acquisition*
 - * The 'ecosystem' of language learning: language, brain, mind, self, culture
 - * Popular ideas regarding language learning
 - * Critical Period Hypothesis
 - * Learner differences and learning styles
5. *Using Authentic Media Materials*
 - * Using the internet to find resources and communicate with students and parents
 - * Using authentic media materials in class (print, video, radio, web)
 - * Balancing the use of textbook materials with authentic materials
6. *Knowledge Framework and Communicative Approach*
 - * Integrating language, culture and content
 - * Language as a vehicle for learning
7. *Grammar and language structures for communication*
 - * Role of grammar in language pedagogy
 - * From intrinsic motivation to extrinsic motivation: metacognition
8. *Teaching strategies*
 - * Opportunities to meet with specialists from different languages
 - * Teaching listening

- * Teaching oral language
- * Teaching writing
- * Teaching reading
- * Teaching learning and coping strategies

9 *Assessment and Evaluation*

- * Communicative Language Testing
- * Criterion Evaluation
- * Relation with IRP's objectives, with strategies, and learning

COURSE EVALUATION

FINAL EXAM OR QUIZZES	30%
PARTICIPATION (<i>SELF-EVALUATION</i>)	10%
COLLECTION OF AUTHENTIC TEXTS	10%
LANGUAGE UNIT PLAN	20%
CULTURAL LISTENING LESSON PLAN	10%
GRAMMAR LESSON PLAN	10%
CRITERION EVALUATION OF A PROJECT	10%

All assignments are due on the day assigned below. The final mark on any project turned in after the noted due date will be deducted 5% for each day late. If you receive a mark below 65% on any project, you have the option to receive additional help from the instructor and redo the assignment within one week of the day it is returned to you. If you choose to redo the project, your mark on this project will not exceed 65%.

- I. *Participation: Due Wednesday, December 2nd*
 - Readings, Discussions, Group Work, Journal Questions and Responses
 - The final mark is based on your self-evaluation. *See criteria included in course syllabus.*
2. *Collection of Authentic Texts: Due Monday, October 5th*
 - Go to your language IRP.
 - Choose a theme (for example, diet, sports, dating, relationships) from any of the four sections in any grade level with which you choose to work.
 - Find four authentic texts in your target language that can be used to teach the theme. These texts will be from four different media (print, audio, visual, video; see page 26 of Ramirez). These 'texts' are from the REAL WORLD, they are not from the language teaching texts.
 - If you use a video or audiocassette, be sure to include a description. If you use a website, be sure to include printed versions. If you use a song, be sure to include the written lyrics.
- 3) *Language Unit Plan: Due Monday, October 19th*
 - Use the theme you have chosen for your authentic texts as a basis for planning a communicative language unit plan.
 - More details will be given on the day of language unit lecture.
- 4) *Cultural Listening Lesson Plan: Due Wednesday, November 18th*
 - Use either the video or audio resource from your collection of authentic texts to create a cultural listening lesson.
 - More details will be given on the day of cultural listening lecture.

- 5) **Grammar Lesson Plan: Due Monday, November 23rd**
 - Use personal pictures of yourself, your friends or your family develop your own text which will be used in a discovery-based grammar lesson plan.
 - More details will be given on the day of the grammar lecture.
- 6) **Criterion Evaluation of a Project: Due Monday, November 30th**
 - Taking a project from your language unit, establish evaluation criteria.
 - More details will be given on the day of the criterion evaluation lecture.
- 7) **Quizzes: Monday, September 28th; Monday, November 9th; Wednesday, December 2nd (OR one final exam, December 7th depending on class vote)**
 - 3 quizzes of 10% each, which are based on the class readings, will consist of any or all of the following: multiple choice, short answers, problem solving.

ATTENDANCE

Students are required to attend all scheduled course meetings and make full use of independent study time. According to UBC 1997/1998 calendar "Regular attendance is expected of all students in all their classes (including lectures, laboratories, tutorials, seminars etc.)" Please note that students who miss more than 10% of class time (5.7 hours) will not be able to write the final examination.

PARTICIPATION

(SEE ATTACHED PAGE FOR PARTICIPATION CRITERIA)

Every student should come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings. Class members will learn as much from the exchange of views inside the classroom as we will from analyzing the readings on our own. You will evaluate your own performance in class and assess what your marks for participation will be (out of 10). This assessment is due on the last day of class (December 2) with up to one page of explanation about how you evaluated your participation. I reserve the right to contact you and negotiate your mark (either up or down) if I seriously disagree with your evaluation.

RESPONSE JOURNAL

Rationale:

"Controversies that arise in the language-teaching profession are interesting, even exciting, as ideas and proposals are thrashed out in journals and workshops. Language teachers need these new ideas to refresh their minds and revitalize their teaching. Frequently, however, they come back from their search confused and befuddled by a plethora of conflicting assertions and recommendations. The next day they must go straight back into the classroom to teach. Their students, with their lives before them, cannot wait until conclusive answers have been found for the problems of language learning and teaching. Teachers must make the most of what they have learned from others, sift it, sort it, and select from it according to their own experiences in a particular situation."

(Wilga Rivers, 1993, pp xiii)

As pre-service language teachers, you will be exposed to different theories, strategies, and programs for teaching and learning languages. Reflection is necessary to connect your

learning to your experiences, beliefs and personality. This journal will give you the structure to attempt to do just that and, in the end, you should be able to describe your own teaching philosophy and justify it to others.

Method:

At the end of each class, you will be given questions to reflect upon and prepare for the next meeting. You will be required to respond in writing to some of these reflections in your journal. Each entry should not be longer than one page. You may also write any other reflections you have as you progress throughout the year. Then, much like you will as a teacher collaborating with colleagues in the schools, you will share these ideas with your classmates. Every three weeks you will exchange your journal with one of your peers, respond in writing to the reflections written in the journal you read and sign your name. You may work with the same person all along the semester or with different persons each time. However, exchanging with many different people will give you a greater variety of feedback.

Evaluation:

This journal will be part of the mark you give yourself in your self evaluation. I will also look at your journal three times during the course to note your progress. Keep in mind that the evaluation is not based on the 'product' but rather on the depth of your reflection, the questions you ask yourself, and the connections you make from what you learn or discuss with your peers.

LIBRARY CARDS

All registered students are eligible to receive a UBC library card. The education library offers information sessions on accessing library resources and using electronic research methods.

E-MAIL ACCOUNTS/ INTERNET (NETINFO)

On-line communication will be necessary during the course and all MLED 311, 313-318 students are expected to open an e-mail account. As a registered UBC student in possession of a library card, you are eligible for a free Netinfo/Internet account. Apply at the Education Computing Centre, ground floor of the Scarfe Building. Computing Services also offers free workshops on the use of email and the Internet. All MLED 311, 313-318 students are expected to attend one of these sessions.

APPENDIX E: Student Summaries of MLED 480A Course Readings

What follows in this appendix are multivoiced, interpretive summaries of the individual course readings, organized according to the various themes in the course. These summaries are multivoiced because each is composed of excerpts from several students' syntheses of the articles. I have authored my own interpretation, without meta-analysis, of the student teachers' summaries by taking pieces from their collective work to form a representative whole of the main ideas presented in the articles. Except for the few words I have placed in brackets, these are not my words. Rather, I have constructed a representation of the student's work. All of the students enrolled in version 3.0 are represented. To preserve and honor their voices, I have placed a physical separation between where one student's words end and another student's words begin. The author of each is indicated in parenthesis at the end of the excerpt.

Student teachers: Their cultures and reflective process

Weber, S., & Mitchell, C. (1996). "Betwixt and between: The culture of student teaching."

Sandra Weber and Claudia Mitchell's [1996] article "Betwixt and between: The culture of student teaching" outlines the subculture of student teachers in the broader culture of teaching (Ty Christopher Chieu, Reflective summary #1, p. 1, May 26, 1999).

Weber and Mitchell believe that the student teacher is faced with the predicament of dealing with past traditions and practices and the desire to establish their own personal style of teaching. In order to resolve this problem, they either must adopt these specified ways of thinking and teaching, or they must develop a "personal sense of self that allows [them to] both move into the broader culture and to retain unique elements required as a member of other subcultures" (p. 312) (Jessica Parisotto, Reflective summary #1, p. 1, May 25, 1999).

In the second part of the article, Weber and Mitchell analyze data obtained from interviews and journals of student teachers. This data identifies four aspects of being in the student teacher subculture that the subjects found difficult to deal with. These are as follows: Exclusion or rejection by sponsor teacher(s) and/or faculty

advisor, feeling that one must adapt to the expectations of both the sponsor teacher(s) and/or faculty advisor, struggling between wanting to belong and remaining true to oneself, and coping with disillusionment over placements, colleagues and the school environment (Klara Abdi, Reflective summary #1, p. 1, May 26, 1999)

What is culture and why should we teach it?

Mantle-Bromley, C. (1992). Preparing students for meaningful culture learning.

In the article, "*Preparing Students for Meaningful Culture Learning*," Mantle-Bromley [1992] addresses the connectedness of language and culture and contends that culture should be taught as a process instead of as an object.

According to her definition, culture learning is a process of acculturation – the process of accepting the patterns of behavior of another culture. The author points out that it is erroneous for teachers to assume that the target cultural patterns can be fitted to their students' existing cultural framework. In this light, teachers need to (1) pay attention to their students' existing cultural patterns and (2) prepare students for the acculturation process (i.e., learning and accepting the patterns of behavior of the target culture). The purpose of this article is to describe the preparations that students must make for their acculturation and to outline the problems that might arise in the acculturation process.

Mantle-Bromley stresses the importance of developing a positive attitude towards a language and also a culture. To successfully learn another culture, students need to prepare themselves and be motivated to participate *actively* in the culture learning process (e.g., to explore their own culture, self-identity, and voice their emotions and attitudes toward the target language and culture (Esther K. Tong, Reflective Summary #1, p. 1, May 26, 1999).

In the process of acculturation, students pass through and often fluctuate between stages ranging from culture shock to actually understanding the feelings of members of a target culture. Teachers can help students move through the various, often frustrating, stages, and assist them in understanding the emotions that will undoubtedly surface during the acculturation process.

In addition to discussing students' attitudes before and during the acculturation process as well as their need for readiness and self-awareness for meaningful culture learning, Mantle-Bromley identifies various acculturation problems. The perception of dominance over a culture being studied can create an inhibiting "social distance." Some language learners may also believe they will devalue their own ethnicity or identity in learning about another culture. Negative attitudes or stereotypes about other cultures, which are often perpetuated through generations are factors which can affect students' language and culture learning. Additionally, unrealistic expectations, low motivation, frustration or a fragile language ego can all be detrimental to language learners. Mantle-Bromley's report introduces lesson ideas to help students learn about cultures, both their own and others, in foreign language classrooms (Corinne Hamilton, Reflective Summary #1, p. 1, May 26, 1999).

Tedick, D. J., Walker, C. L., Lange, D. L., Paige, R. M., & Jorstad, H. L. (1993). "Language as object" Excerpt from: Second language education in tomorrow's schools.

In "Language as object," Tedick, Walker, Lange, Paige and Jorstad [1993] advance that the prevalent view of the second language in our schools is still very much that of an object, "that which is acted upon, an entity to be scrutinized, analyzed, and broken down into its smallest components" (...) [T]his "objectified" view of language can be seen in the decontextualized nature of language study, the superficial treatment of culture as an interesting "add-on," the textbook driven "curriculum" of language courses, and the fact that the use of English is still pervasive in the foreign language classroom (Erin Levins, Reflective Summary #1, p. 1, May 25, 1999).

This consequence, stemming from the traditional appreciation and valorization of the linguistic aspects of language learning, as well as the negligence and depreciation of the cultural benefits and value, has lead to language being perceived as similar to and not distinct from other content areas in the school curricula.

[Language learning in general, and most specifically culture studies, are] considered more as a 'frill' rather than an important and relevant tool that the student would be able to use as a life long skill (Vicky Kravariotis, Reflective Summary #1, p. 1, June 7, 1999).

[M]any language instructors simply skim the surface of the cultural pond, reluctant to present or address any social, political, economic, etc. issues that may prove controversial or spark critical thought, thus leaving students with a very banal sentiment and dispassionate desire for further exploration (Ty Christopher Chieu Reflective Summary #1, p. 1, June 7, 1999).

The focus is not on the ethnographic study of the culture itself, but rather looks merely at the ephemeral skin that wraps the reality of the true culture. The in-depth, profound cultural realizations are missing from the teaching of culture (Layla d'Emanuele, Reflective Summary #1, p. 1, May 26, 1999).

How can we construct meaningful learning environments in which to study culture?

Kafai, Y. B., & Resnick, M. (1996). Introduction. In Constructionism in practice: Designing, thinking, and learning in a digital world.

[This introduction to the book Constructionism in Practice: Designing, Thinking, and Learning in a Digital World, edited by Yasmin B. Kafai and Mitchel Resnick,] [1996] discusses the concept of "constructionism." This concept builds on that of "constructivism." Essentially, it states that children construct their own ideas. They build their own personal knowledge by, literally, building an artifact that has meaning for them. The constructionist view makes the connection between design and learning and encourages activities such as "making, building, or programming." This article further notes the emergence of the importance of community in

constructionism. "Community members act as collaborators, coaches, audience, and co-constructors of knowledge" (Soraya Rajabally, Reflective Summary #2, p. 1, June 4, 1999).

Since learning is constructed as students work on their artifact, the process of the creation of the artifact is very important. After the artifact is created, further learning takes place as students reflect on the artifacts of their classmates. This brings up the point that learning is a social process, for a great deal can be learned from collaboration with others and reflection on their points of view.

[T]he authors explore the idea that not only will technology change the way we learn but we must also change what we learn because we will be able to explore concepts which were not possible to explore with merely a pencil and paper (Klara Abdi, Reflective Summary #3, p. 1, June 15, 1999).

Systems, such as "biological, technological, and social" ones, etc., are composed of many interacting components. New computational strategies have been designed to aid in understanding these systems (Soraya Rajabally, Reflective Summary #2, p. 1, June 4, 1999).

Goldman-Segall, R. (1998b). Computers, Cultures, and Constructions. In Points of Viewing Children's Thinking: A Digital Ethnographer's Journey

In her introduction, Ricki Goldman-Segall [1998] explains the importance of computer technology to our understanding of different points of viewing; the way we perceive the world considering where and who we are, and how we are affected by our surroundings and personal opinions to create new stories and ideas. We as people are compared to galaxies where our individuality is comprised of several stars and we define ourselves through the observation of the interpretations of others thanks to technological tools. We incorporate these diverse ideas into ourselves while becoming more aware of our sense of being. She states her "theory" as us wanting "to see how others see both what we see and what we do not see" (4). We glean bits of important meanings and it is up to us to discuss and refine these snippets into something tangible and definitive affected by our perceptions, our past culture and our growing future culture (Jessica Perisotto, Reflective Summary #1, p.1, May 26, 1999).

What materials can we use to teach culture and how should we use them?

Rorty, A. O. (1995). Runes and ruins: Teaching reading cultures.

In the article "Runes and Ruins: Teaching Reading Cultures," Amélie Oksenberg Rorty [1995] discusses the issue of reading in the classroom. Before even mentioning reading, she clarifies an important point about culture: "Culture are both diffuse and pervasively interactive [and yet also] dynamically internally divided, encompassing radically distinct outlooks and insights" (60). Having discussed this, she then introduces the idea of reading in order to study culture. She points to two

questions that are currently being debated: What makes up multicultural education? and what literary works should be included in the canon? However, Rorty states that these debates are redundant. She suggests instead that we should pay attention to the "issues that should concern us" (60). She defines this issue as *how* to teach with texts, rather than from *which* texts to teach. As teachers, whether we are teaching from Jane Austin or from "low art" (59), we should make sure our students "become active interpreters" (64) of the chosen texts (Lesley Sinclair, Reflective Summary #3, p. 1, June 16, 1999).

Wojtan, L. (November, 1994). Ideas for integrating Japan into the curriculum.

In her article, "Ideas for Integrating Japan into the Curriculum," Linda S. Wojtan [1994] outlines the important political and economic roles played by Japan in the Asia-Pacific region, thereby calling for its study as part of the American curriculum. She highlights the undeniable might of Japanese developments in the areas of technology and commerce, suggesting further examination of the *Land of the Rising Sun* could help to attain a better understanding of the Asia-Pacific region as a whole (Ty Chrisopher Chieu, Reflective Summary #3, p. 1, June 16, 1999).

In order for educators to present content on Japan in as culturally accurate a way as possible, the author has several suggestions. She emphasizes using perspectives from various viewpoints rather than presenting a solely American viewpoint as is often portrayed in U.S. media. Sources directly from Japan can be invaluable resources. Historical and traditional content should be included [since] perspectives on past events and customs are no doubt different in the U.S. and Japan. Japanese nationalists and other community members with links to Japan should be utilized to help students see beyond typical stereotypes and inaccurate information. Introducing students to contemporary materials such as Japanese pop music and culture, for example, or values in the Japanese educational system, can help bridge the gap between the familiar in their own country and the unfamiliar in another.

Perhaps the aspect which will seem most complicated and foreign to American students learning about Japan will be the Japanese language. An introduction to the writing system could help students gain an appreciation of what must to many seem incredibly intimidating and overwhelming. The author sums up her report by listing a number of resources such as The National Clearinghouse for U.S.-Japan Studies and The Center for Educational Media which provide materials for teachers integrating Japan into the K-12 curriculum (Corinne Hamilton, Reflective Summary #2, p. 1, June 4, 1999).

Kramsch, C. (1989). Media materials in the language class.

"Media Materials in the Language Class," by Claire Kramsch [1989], discusses how language classrooms can use media such as television and hypermedia as a method "to foster communication and understanding across cultures (Paula Alves, Reflective Summary #2, p. 1, June 6, 1999)."

To this end, [Kramsch] reviews three differen[t] approaches to using authentic text television material in the second language (L2) classroom: [T]he proficiency approach, the discourse analysis approach, and the use of hypermedia. [I]n response

to her observations that all three of these approaches reveal weaknesses when used independently, [Kramsch] then suggests [an alternative approach in which the purpose] is to achieve intercultural understanding by reflecting upon one's own culture. [This can be achieved by] studying different points of view, and (...) taking into consideration the student's understanding of the target culture (Julia Nutter, Reflective Summary #2, p. 1, June 4, 1999).

Kramsch suggests that, by making communication more authentic, students will be able to better understand French-speaking environments."

[Kramsch attributes the current failings from the use of media materials in the language class to the fact that] [e]ven though these authentic materials are selected to increase the linguistic proficiency of the learners, the cultural competence does not seem to be considered. These media documents are treated more like textbook material and they ignore the larger cultural frames of reference—"the view from the top." Kramsch also suggests that the problem [encountered while] using these media documents is that they are not an actual depiction of the target culture. They are, instead, showing a fabricated version of the culture under study—"what French television shows is not 'How French live,' but 'How French television chooses to portray them living.'" Therefore, in order to attempt to steer away from linear and paradigmatic text-based pedagogy, Kramsch suggests [a hypermedia approach to viewing these media materials] as a way that revolutionizes the way we use television (Paula Alves, Reflective Summary #2, p. 1, June 6, 1999).

Davis, R. (1997). TV commercial messages: An untapped video resource for content-based Classes

In today's world of technology, language teachers are constantly striving to find meaningful and educational video materials that can be used to present engaging lessons for their students. Although various forms of video media such as documentaries, movies and news programs have been used to a wide extent, Randy Davis [1997], in his paper entitled, "TV Commercial Messages: An Untapped Resource for Content-Based Classes," suggests that TV commercials are a little-explored yet invaluable classroom tool in language teaching (Corrine Hamilton, Reflective Summary #2, p. 1, June 6, 1999).

[Davis] presents us with four rationales as [to] why TV commercial messages could and should be used within the second language classroom. His first rationale is: *commercial messages are an excellent source of authentic text*. Commercials are created for the native speaker and therefore would expose students to "real" language. Overseas commercials are also very appealing to students. They allow students to travel and learn the culture of a target population. Second rationale: *commercials are short, focused and thematic*. The concise and brief nature of commercials are able to present messages which can be easily analyzed, played with, and digested within a lesson. Third rationale: *commercials contain culturally-loaded slices of modern society*. They are able to capture the small ["c" and Big] "C" of a target population. Gestures, body language, values, behaviors, ways of thinking, social problems, stereotypes and idiosyncrasies can all be extracted from commercial messages. Fourth rationale: *commercials contain visual, verbal, and written images*.

In commercials, words are often used to compliment the pictures and vice versa. Key words and slogans are also often used. This makes it easier for students to

understand and learn new concepts (Chris Rivas, Reflective Summary #3, p. 1, June 16, 1999).

[A]lthough videos in general and commercials in particular can be an invaluable tool in any classroom, the author is quick to point out that such resources should not be used as time-fillers but instead should be integrated into lessons in a purposeful and meaningful way for the students. The author then presents an example of a 4-step lesson utilizing commercials which aims to develop speaking, writing, listening and presentation skills. Though the lesson outlined is one geared towards learners of English, the concepts presented can be extended to include students in any type of language class (Corrine Hamilton, Reflective Summary #2, p. 1, June 6, 1999).

Kramsch, C. (1993b). Language study as border study: Experiencing difference.

With communicative competence as [the] goal of second language learning, language teachers are expected not only to be fluent in the target language, but also in the target culture and its subcultures. This ideal, however, is far from reality (Christina Neumann Reflective Summary #3, p. 1, June 16, 1999).

[In her article, "Language study as border study: Experiencing difference," Claire Kramsch [1993] describes a study carried out in a cross-cultural teacher training seminar which] focused on three particular groups of teachers: French, American and German. The teachers were all asked to bring culturally authentic texts that they would use in their classes, and as well, documents used to teach their own respective language to non-native speakers. The purpose was to compare "target cultural materials among teachers of the same foreign language and native cultural materials among native speakers from the same national culture." As a result, Kramsch concludes that not one "national group was able to achieve a consensus on what 'American' or 'French' or 'German' culture should be taught abroad" (Paula Alves,, Reflective Summary #3, p. 1, June 16, 1999).

[I]nsights gained during this seminar, besides (...) cultural relativity, is the need for linguistic vigilance, especially when using lexical equivalents to explain cultural concepts. Too often direct translations turn out to be misleading. All participants also agreed that personal contact and dialogue with people from the target culture were invaluable experiences that would allow language learners [a] necessary reality check, prevent stereotypical views of the 'other,' and rectify cultural generalisations (Christina Neumann Reflective Summary #3, p. 1, June 16, 1999).

The findings of the seminar demonstrate that there [is] a need for the teachers to become more objective of materials used in class, to differ between the myths and realities presented in authentic texts, and to use caution when presenting a culture from the point of view of a text and when translating parts of a text (Heather Fischer, Reflective Summary #2, p. 1, June 7, 1999).

What is the student's role in understanding culture and what is the teacher's role in integrating language and culture?

Fischer, G. (1996). Tourist or explorer? Reflections on the foreign language classroom.

In "Tourist or explorer? Reflection in the foreign language classroom," Gerhard Fischer [1996] sites a passage from Paul Bowles' *The sheltering sky*, a passage which distinguishes the "tourist" and the "traveller." The "tourist" hurriedly visits a destination, while the "traveller" makes a concerted effort to open his or her mind and to explore a destination (Erin Levins, Reflective Summary #2, p. 1, June 7, 1999).

[I]n order to truly learn about a foreign culture, one must be willing to free him/herself from [the] "layers of conventions" and become part of the new culture which will take time. As a "tourist", one expects to receive explanations from a "guide." There is no questioning the assumptions entering these explanations and it is difficult not to attach one's observer-relative meanings. In contrast, an "explorer" makes efforts to inquire, question the assumptions and find out the observer-relative meanings someone else attaches to his/her social reality (Murray Ross, Reflective Summary #3, p. 1, June 16, 1999).

[Fischer, drawing from the example of an e-mail exchange between German and American students,] proposes that learners should adopt an "ethnographic approach to cultural learning"—to carefully *listen* and *observe*, and to *inquire* and *reflect* on the phenomenon of the target culture to make sense of the social realities of the target and their own culture. He suggests that the topics of discussions should be of students' own choices and interests, (...) because it is believed that, with a reflective and an inquisitive mind, students' discussions about any "content" will ultimately lead to an understanding of another culture.

In this light, to facilitate the process of "explorations" of the target culture, teachers should encourage students to ask sensitive questions and reflect on the answers about the target culture in their discussions/interactions with those students of the target culture in the partner school. By going through this process of exploration, it is believed that students can *construct meaning* and *make sense of social realities* in the target culture in relation to their own culture and personal experiences.

Finally, Fischer points out that these cultural exchange activities are also plausible with lower proficiency students because the focus of the interactions is on communicating the cultural messages. With the appropriate context provided in the on-going dialogs, it is believed that messages can be communicated in simple structures (Esther Tong, Reflective Summary #3, p. 1, June 16, 1999).

Hellebrandt, J. (1996). Multimedia and the foreign language teacher: A humanistic perspective.

The use of computers and multimedia software has dramatically increased in the past few years. It is not surprising, therefore, that our schools are also interested in partaking in this revolution. However, as Josef Hellebrandt [1996] points out in his article "Multimedia and the Foreign Language Teacher: A Humanistic

Perspective," schools, teachers, and students need to be taught how to critically examine new technology before using it as an educational tool. Hellebrandt states many positive uses for multimedia technology in the classroom, but at the same time, he realizes that there are still many areas of concern with regards to multimedia instruction (Agnes Kowalska, Reflective Summary #3, p. 1, June 21, 1999).

[R]easons for instituting multimedia into one's instructional practice [include]: the fact that multimedia enhances creativity, facilitates collaboration among students working together, increases the possibility for interdisciplinary projects, provides rich learning experiences for all students, and permits students to express their feelings and opinions (John Little, Reflective Summary #3, p. 1, June 15, 1999).

[Factors inhibiting successful multimedia instruction include:] 1) Slow integration of technology, 2) Using technology as a showcase rather than an instructional tool, 3) Superficial use of technology, 4) Bandwagoning, 5) Culture of higher education is preventing the use of technology in the classroom [because research in this area is not valued for tenure and promotion].

Hellebrandt then goes on to describe an effective approach towards multimedia: the humanistic use of technology. The main principles of this approach include critical reflection, personal involvement, and collaboration. These three principles are the underlying factors in the creation of a successful and meaningful relationship between teacher, learner, and multimedia (Agnes Kowalska, Reflective Summary #3, p. 1, June 21, 1999).

[Yet, for this to be effective, teachers, students and media all have an important role to play. Teachers need to identify a rationale for using media and establish open cooperation. Students need to see a 'human face' at the other end, connect it to their own experience, and try out exploration as opposed to tourist like beliefs. Media needs to provide meaningful points of view, give an authentic perspective, and allow interaction with other participants.]

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APPENDIX F: Informed Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

STUDY

Making Movies, Making Theories: Digital Media Tools for Educating Educators to Connect Experiences to Curriculum

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

Dr. Ricki Goldman-Segall, Dept. of Curriculum Studies, 822-8193.

CO-INVESTIGATORS

Maggie Beers, Ricardo Trujeque, Aaron Bond, graduate students, Faculty of Education

This study is funded by a grant from the 1998 UBC Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund and is being carried out in the context of the Modern Language Education 480B course, *Advanced Studies in Language Education: Integrating Language and Culture with Modern Media*, of which Maggie Beers is the principal instructor.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to determine if, by using digital tools in a reflective process, learners can construct a better understanding of the difficult course concepts and better get to know, respect and understand one another's perspectives and personas. We will observe if this learning process leads to more advanced levels of cognitive and social practices.

STUDY PROCEDURES

I will make digital MAD™ movie representations of my learning experiences in relation to the subject—the integration of language and culture in modern language education—being studied and post them on the password protected MLED 480B website. My classmates and I will use Web Constellations™ to annotate and critique each other's movies. Parts of the creation process will be filmed, and I will be interviewed by the researchers on the understanding I gain during the project.

REMUNERATION

I will not be paid for my participation and I will contribute on a purely voluntary basis..

CONFIDENTIALITY

This project is designed to encourage students to become authors of their media objects and take credit for their work. As an author, I will choose to be identified by name or

pseudonym and I will decide what to post on the web as well as whether I want to contribute my creations to a public database to interact with other learners.

CONTACT

If I have any questions or desire further information with respect to this study, I may contact Dr. Ricki Goldman-Segall or the Co-Investigators.

If I have any concerns about treatment or rights as a research subject I may contact the Director of Research Services at the University of British Columbia, Dr. Richard Spratly at 822-8598.

CONSENT

I understand that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and at any time I may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study. I understand my class standing will not be affected if I decide not to participate in the study. I realize my data objects can be removed from the common database at any time.

I have received a copy of this consent form for my own records.

I consent to participate in this study.

Signature: _____

Date : _____