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Michael Lettieri
Editor

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From the Editor

Volume 97.1 of *Italica* includes studies on Petrarch, Boccaccio, Giuseppe Guido Loschiavo, Beppe Fenoglio, Nanni Balestrini, Aldo Nove, Tullio De Mauro and Umberto Eco. It is complemented by two essays examining topics in the scholarship of teaching and learning, and nine book/journal reviews.

It is no secret that the quality and integrity of *Italica* rely on the excellent contributions received for publication and the time-consuming evaluations done in the peer review process. The selection of the various covers is not a whimsical choice but a carefully thought-out decision often made with the Publisher. Each issue is literally “sculpted” and we appreciate the enthusiastic and heart-warming comments sent by many readers who encourage us to continue *ad maiora*.

The cover features “A Tale from the *Decameron*” by John William Waterhouse (1849-1917), which depicts a scene from the frame story of Boccaccio’s literary masterpiece.

Buona lettura!

MICHAEL LETTIERI

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ITALICA

Volume 97 • Number 1 • Spring 2020

From the Editor

MICHAEL LETTIERI.....2

Essays/Research Studies

Griselda Between Boccaccio and Petrarch

MASSIMO VERDICCHIO.....5

Il romanzo *Piccola pretura* di Giuseppe Guido Loschiavo:
la percezione popolare della malavita e i suoi esiti
in transcodifica

ANTONIO R. DANIELE.....32

Paradise Lost on the Hills above Alba: Nostalgia in Fenoglio's

Una questione privata

MEGAN CROGNALE.....50

Della sovversione del soggetto nel *Tristano* di Nanni Balestrini

LUIGI SALA.....74

La narrativa di Aldo Nove tra morbo della temporalità e
desiderio bulimico

JOHN PICCHIONE.....88

Teachers, Students and Social Margins on the Italian Screen

CARLO ANNELLI.....113

New Messaging and Intercultural Competence Training
in Response to Falling Enrollments in World Languages

JANICE M. ASKI AND APRIL WEINTRITT.....134

Notes and Discussions

Tullio De Mauro e Umberto Eco, verso una teoria semiotica
complementare

ROSARIO VITELLO.....155

Reviews

Massimo Scalabrini (a cura di). *Lodovico Castelvetro. Parere sopra
una comedia di Aristophano et sopra ciascuna di Plauto.*

(THOMAS E. MUSSIO).....164

Unn Falkeid and Aileen A. Feng (eds.). *Rethinking Gaspara
Stampa in the Canon of Renaissance Poetry.*

(MARIANNA ORSI).....166

Luca Gallarini. *Le molte vite di Aldo Buzzi. Letteratura, editoria
e cultura del cibo.*

(SERGIO DI BENEDETTO).....168

Table of Contents

Elena Ferrante. <i>La vita bugiarda degli adulti</i> . (STEFANIA LUCAMANTE)	171
Robin Pickering-Iazzi (ed.). <i>The Italian Antimafia, New Media, and the Culture of Legality</i> . (VERONICA VEGNA)	175
Loredana Di Martino and Pasquale Verdicchio (eds.). <i>Encounters with the Real in Contemporary Italian Literature and Cinema</i> . (MARTA RICCOBONO)	177
<i>Parol – Quaderni d'arte e di epistemologia</i> . N. 29 (2018). (MARIA ELENA ALAMPI)	180
Raffaella Bombi e Francesco Costantini (a cura di). <i>Plurilinguismo migratorio. Voci italiane, italice e regionali</i> . (SALVATORE BANCHERI)	184
Anthony Mollica. <i>Ludolinguistica. I giochi linguistici e la didattica dell'italiano</i> . Vol. 1. Prefazione di Tullio De Mauro. Postfazione di Stefano Bartezzaghi (SILVIA GILARDONI)	188
Contributors	194
Advertisements	196
Alma Edizioni.....	196
University of Toronto Press.....	197
Edilingua.....	198
ELI-La Spiga.....	199
ELI-La Spiga.....	200

New Messaging and Intercultural Competence Training in Response to Falling Enrollments in World Languages

JANICE M. ASKI AND APRIL D. WEINTRITT

The Ohio State University

Abstract: The trend in declining enrollments in world language courses demands investigation into likely causes and thoughtful solutions to resolve the crisis. We explore common negative attitudes from the general public toward world language study, and conclude that frustration stems from speaking proficiency as the perceived sole measure of success – a skill that takes time to achieve and may be lost without consistent practice. We propose new messaging that highlights the development of intercultural competency that evolves by interacting in full-immersion language courses and through explicit instruction in the attitudes and qualities of the interculturally competent global citizen. Suggestions for implementation at the course, program, university and community levels are provided.

Keywords: Intercultural competence, enrollments, general education requirements, language teaching, culture.

Introduction

The Modern Language Association's twenty-fifth language enrollment census revealed a 9.2% decline in enrollments in languages other than English between fall 2013 and fall 2016, the second largest drop in the history of the MLA's enrollment census (the largest decline was 12.6% in 1972) (Looney and Lusin 3). This report follows the 2009-2013 enrollment data that demonstrated an overall 6.7% decrease in enrollment in foreign languages. As Looney and Lusin confirm: "The results for 2016 suggest that the results for 2013 are the beginning of a trend rather than a blip; the decline between 2009 and 2016 is 15.3%" (3-4). However, the authors also remark that:

Italica • Vol. 97 • No. 1 • Spring 2020

[d]espite the overall drop, there were gains in nearly half of all language programs (45.5%) that mitigate somewhat the downward trend. There is no denying that in some institutions the numbers are negative, but where the numbers are positive, they are impressive indeed [...] Despite challenges at the local and national levels, many language programs remain strong (Looney and Lusin, Executive Summary).

Notwithstanding this optimistic note, the downward trend remains troubling. This is elucidated by data surrounding program closures reported by the Chronicle of Higher Education¹ and confirmed in Looney and Lusin's final report: from 2013-2016, 651 foreign language programs were cut at universities and colleges across the U.S.; French was the hardest hit, losing 129 programs, followed by Spanish with 118, German with 86 and Italian with 56 (Looney and Lusin, Executive Summary). Further reason for concern is the decreasing number of majors hosted in language programs. The Humanities Departmental Survey of 2012-13, conducted by the American Institute of Physics and sponsored by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, reports that minors exceed the number of majors in the languages examined in this Humanities department survey (White, Chu, Czujko). Moreover, in the conclusion of Looney and Lusin's report they state that

[m]ost striking, perhaps, is that the total number of enrollments in modern language courses in relation to the total number of students at postsecondary institutions in the United States fell to 7.5, almost matching the low point in 1980 (21).

Drops in enrollments and program closures are related to changes in the role of world languages in core requirements at the university level. Indeed, language study is at risk as universities revamp their general education requirements. To give just a few examples: when the University of Buffalo revised their GE curriculum, world language study became optional; students must complete a "global pathway" choosing between: global reflections (courses in English), international experience (study abroad), or language and culture (language courses).² The Wayne State University College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) considered reducing the language requirement to one semester in lieu of three. After strong pushback, the faculty succeeded in maintaining the language requirement, now only two semesters. A third semester of language and culture will count as a university Global Inquiry Gen Ed, and language programs will try to keep students that way.³ SUNY Albany now requires only one course to complete their language requirement. Moreover, this requirement is considered satisfied if students demonstrate competence in a language other than English in a

variety of ways, suggesting that it is unlikely that many students will take a language at SUNY Albany.⁴ In addition, there are universities that propose that language learning in high school is sufficient. At Bowling Green State University, admission to the BA includes a requirement for a language other than English that is “typically satisfied through completion of 2 units of the same language other than English in high school.”⁵ The Columbian College of Arts and Sciences at the George Washington University has eliminated the requirement to study a world language altogether.⁶

The question remains: What propels this downward trend that has recently accelerated? A 2017 report by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences showed that the recession hit world-language degree programs harder than it did many other humanities programs: “Colleges and universities cut 12 percent of their foreign-language degree programs from 2007 to 2012 but about 6 percent of degree programs overall by 2013” (Lewontin). Yet the downward trend is likely more complex than simple economics. In his article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* on program closures, Steven Johnson reports that the causes of the decline in enrollments and program eliminations, beyond the economic crunch, remain subject to debate. Some academics point to colleges’ clear prioritization of STEM programs or to the long-term effects of colleges reducing or forgoing GE language requirements, but Johnson points out that Dennis Looney, the MLA Director of Programs and ADFL, has stated that this began happening in the 1970s, and adds that Paul Sandrock, Director of Education at the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, notes that a decline in student enrollment that triggers program closures is perhaps motivated by changing student preferences and goals (Johnson).

In his review of the history of world language study in the US from the post-WWII era to the present, Levine works from a much broader perspective of American attitudes and values when he highlights several significant points: that the study of languages other than English has a history of being associated with an elitist education or a luxury, that Americans perceive English and “American culture” as superior, and that there is an overall mistrust of the “foreign” Other. These views are undercurrents in contemporary discourses regarding the value of language learning, including the comments by notable figures such as Michelle Bachmann in a 2005 debate, the President of Harvard in 2012, and

House Speaker Newt Gingrich in a 2007 speech and in an attack add against Mitt Romney in 2012, that downplay or dismiss the importance of language study. Levin also points out that, when support is given for language study, it is in terms of increasing our global competitiveness and providing skills and an employee pool for the government. This focus on competitiveness and employment, in turn, translates into a preference for politically critical languages.

The goal of this study is to add to the conversation about what has caused a shift in student preferences and goals away from world languages at a time when graduates are joining an increasingly diverse and globally interconnected working environment.⁷ Our research concludes that most people strongly believe that the goal of language study is to speak the language proficiently, a skill that both develops slowly and is quickly lost without practice. This expectation creates frustration and, ultimately, contributes to the resistance toward language study that we see today. We respond to Levine's call to "fundamentally alter how we, the professionals, think about the ontology of foreign language teaching" and change the messaging about the value of language study (72).⁸ The priority, we argue, is highlighting that the study of any world language, even without attaining high proficiency levels, is essential for achieving transferable skills that are part of intercultural competence, which is ranked fourth of the top ten work skills needed for the future.⁹ We also advocate for explicit training in intercultural competence that is enhanced by being embedded in language courses. We do not abandon the call for our majors to achieve high proficiency, but the goal is to make languages relevant to a wider demographic by incorporating key conversations and activities on intercultural competence into the curriculum. High proficiency in languages that are politically critical or sought after in the business world is not the only way to reap tangible benefits from world language study.

Exploring Attitudes

The internet abounds with impactful reasons for studying a world language, but nonetheless students' preferences and goals are not altered. In order investigate this resistance, a Google search in Fall 2018 of 'why *not* study a foreign language' provided some obvious yet unexplored information.¹⁰ Blogs and media posts fall into a variety of categories, such as the more expected: 'Americans don't

need to speak a foreign language because everyone speaks English' and 'learning a foreign language is a waste of time because most people live happy lives without a second language.'¹¹ In addition, there were expressions of frustration over having learned very little in high school and university courses, concluding that instructors do a bad job of teaching languages.¹² Others complain that language courses and materials are costly and require an immense time commitment, but that skills are quickly lost.¹³

Somewhat more intriguing are comments that shed light on what people believe the relationship is between world languages and employment. Some bloggers suggest that knowing a language will not secure anyone a job because there are many immigrants entering the US workforce with native skills:

So, what's the need for a lifetime American who speaks mildly fluently in foreign languages when there are millions of other candidates who fit the whole bill? (Darwin).¹⁴

These opinions fly directly in the face of reliable data to the contrary. Indeed, the 2019 ACTFL survey with the support of Pearson LLC and Language Testing International *Making Languages Our Business: Addressing Foreign Language Demand Among U.S. Employers* confirms that nine out of ten U.S. employers rely on U.S.-based employees with language skills other than English, that their foreign language needs have grown over the past five years, and that they will continue to grow (3).¹⁵ Furthermore, and most importantly, many employers report a "foreign language skills gap – i.e., that their employees are currently unable to meet the employer's foreign language needs – and that this gap results in lost opportunity and lost business" (*Making Languages Our Business*, 3). The 2017 report by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences presents a similar finding:

Almost 30 percent of the U.S. business executives who participated in a 2014 Coalition for International Education commissioned study reported missed opportunities abroad due to a lack of on-staff language skills, and nearly 40 percent reported that they had failed to reach their international potential due to language barriers (1).

The opinions that doubt the value of language skills in the workplace are, however, supported by respected sources, such as the Freakonomics podcast on "Is learning a foreign language really worth it" on March 6, 2014.¹⁶ The webpage prominently displays the following quote, apparently from a parent, that reflects not just frustration but anger regarding language study:

I'm very curious how it came to be that teaching students a foreign language has reached the status it has in the U.S. [...] My oldest daughter is a college freshman, and not only have I paid for her to study Spanish for the last four or more years – they even do it in grade school now! ? but her college is requiring her to study *even more!* What on earth is going on? How did it ever get this far? In a day and age where schools at every level are complaining about limited resources, why on earth do we continue to force these kids to study a foreign language that few will ever use, and virtually all do not retain? Or to put it in economics terms, where is the ROI [return on investment]? (“Is learning a foreign language really worth it?”).

The hosts and guests of the podcast propose that knowing a language does not translate into meaningfully higher wages, a position that is based on the research of a MIT economist who tracked 9000 college graduates and how language study affected their wages. After controlling for many characteristics, researchers found that you will earn 2% higher wages if you speak another language, which they view as inconsequential. The ascending rank of pay increase is reported as Spanish, French, and German with the highest return, but the hosts and guests repeat that the increases are modest. They also draw into the debate a contrasting ‘fact:’ for those who study English outside the U.S., there is a much larger return on their investment of time and money – a 10%-20% increase in salary (“Is learning a foreign language really worth it”).

Fortunately, this particular representation of the real world outcomes of language study did not go unnoticed, as Robert Lang Green challenged this podcast’s calculations in the journal, *The Economist* on March 11, 2014.¹⁷ The author recalculates the increase in pay and finds that the ‘real return’ is not insignificant. In fact, his calculation is that Spanish is worth \$51,000, French, \$77,000, and German, \$128,000. In addition, the author provides additional data that support the need for world languages in the business sector, including lost revenue and business opportunity (Green).¹⁸ Nonetheless, economists – in and outside the professoriate – continue to cast doubt on the value of the study of languages. For example, Bryan Caplan, Professor of Economics at George Mason University and blogger at EconLog states in his blog entitled, “The Numbers Speak: Foreign Language Requirements Are a Waste of Time and Money”.²⁰

“Learning a foreign language” sounds noble, but so does “climbing Mount Everest.” The wise calmly weigh costs and benefits instead of being carried away by words. Any honest scale will tell you that the costs of foreign language instruction dwarf the benefits. Think about it: Even ignoring teachers’ salaries, we’re currently burning two years of class time per

graduate. The payoff? Making less than one student in a hundred fluent (Caplan).

These arguments are picked up by others, such as Art Carden, also arguing against the study of world languages in *Forbes* on May 22, 2018:²¹

Don't get me wrong: languages are great, and I think our lives would be improved considerably if we all knew at least one additional language and could read classics like *Les Misérables*, *War and Peace*, and *Don Quixote* in their original languages [...] But alas, as the economist and education iconoclast Bryan Caplan has pointed out, Americans rarely read the classics even in translation (Cardan).

This evidence from the web tells a significant story and reveals the following public opinion: languages are not worth studying because one can live a perfectly happy life without knowing another language and everyone speaks English anyway. World language study in an academic environment is a waste of time because schools and universities do not do a very good job teaching them, and you have to spend many years studying, buying books, and paying tuition only to ultimately lose your language skills quickly. Finally, what's the point of dedicating a lot of time and resources to learning a language if it won't help you get a job, and academics and economists state in reputable journals that it won't boost your salary and the odds of ultimately becoming one of the few fluent are not in your favor?

The recurring theme, or main measure of success, across all these positions is the ability to speak a language well. There appears to be a strong essentialist desire to see the unequivocal return on investment in speaking skills, and public opinions suggest that the only assessment of years of language study is a 'you have it or you don't' litmus test of fluency. Of course, the irony, and disappointment, is the core belief and practice among language instructors that much more is taught and acquired in language courses than speaking – or even the four skills. Even though these findings regarding public opinion are obvious and imaginable, we believe it is important to note the disconnect it infers. It is clear that, for many students and the public at large, the only visible and marketable outcome of foreign language study is speaking proficiency and that our multifaceted learning goals and outcomes have not been made explicit to language learners.

The Disconnect

Academic published standards have traditionally considered

proficiency development a high priority (e.g. the ACTFL proficiency guidelines (2012) and the *ACTFL World Readiness Standards for Learning Languages* [now in its 4th edition, 2015] that focus on how learners use the target language to achieve the five Cs). However, there has been a shift toward the inclusion of intercultural competence skills in, for example, the 2007 MLA report to the Executive Council that calls for translanguaging as well as transcultural competence,²² ACTFL's 2014 position statement on Global competency,²³ and the 2017 NCSSE-ACTFL Can-Do Statements for Intercultural Communication and the Reflection Tool for Learners.²⁴ The disconnect between the academic priorities for language study and public perception can only derive from the fact that language program and course goals do not adequately express the priorities related to intercultural competence,²⁵ which in turn does not allow them to centrally situate themselves in the larger university mission. The key, we argue, is to accentuate goals of intercultural competence and set them apart from language proficiency goals.

World languages are being lost as part of the core requirements of the undergraduate education, so the value of language study for students who achieve low to intermediate levels of proficiency, or for students majoring in a language that is not politically or professionally critical and requires high proficiency in order to secure employment using it, is not clear. J. G. Christensen states:

[i]n these circumstances [referring to the argument that 'everyone speaks English so why learn a world language'], it is particularly important that learning focused on a language which may never be used outside school – such as German or Russian – should give high priority to the acquisition of skills, attitudes and knowledge which are transferable to situations both within and beyond national frontiers where cultural awareness and sensitivity is [sic] required (28).

We argue that in order to engage students whose contact with languages is limited to the elementary sequence or a reduced or eliminated world language requirement, the focus must be on a more general understanding of intercultural competence and the essential skills it entails for functioning as a global citizen and achieving career success regardless of the particular language studied. This is also true for the ever-growing number of world-language minors or majors in a language that is not frequently sought after by employers. High proficiency in strategic languages will continue to be a goal for the majors who are committed to the long language-acquisition journey, but what about the students who do not choose

that path? This is the cohort to whom we must communicate clearly and unequivocally the value and necessity of their language study in the 21st-century interconnected world. Moreover, focus on internal intercultural competence skills that cannot fully be achieved without experiences of language study demonstrates how language study not only satisfies, but is *essential* to, university educational goals, that increasingly stress internationalization and the achievement of intercultural competence.

New Messaging

The most cited models/definitions of intercultural competence derive from the work of Byram (1997), Bennett (1993), Deardorf (2006, 2009, 2011), so the literature has not settled on one particular definition.²⁶ Darla Deardorff, executive director of the Association of International Education Administrators based in Durham, North Carolina, sought to resolve this issue – as much as possible – with a consensus-based definition developed in 2006.²⁷ She identified 46 definitions of intercultural competence from 1976-2004, and then in consultation with 23 scholars specializing in intercultural competence, she developed a model that has persisted as the dominant model in the field and will be the point of reference in the rest of this discussion. A narrative version of Deardorf's (2006: 254) model (originally presented in the form of a more detailed pyramid) might read as:

Intercultural competence is a lifelong process that includes the development of the
attitudes (respect and valuing of other cultures,²⁸ openness, curiosity),
knowledge (of self, culture, sociolinguistic issues)
skills (listen, observe, interpret, analyze, evaluate, and relate), and
qualities (adaptability, flexibility, empathy and cultural decentering) in order to behave and communicate effectively and appropriately to achieve one's goals to some degree.

Prue Holmesa and Gillian O'Neil take issue with the focus on 'goal achievement' in definitions of intercultural competence that leave out the psychological and emotional features of communication (708). They turn to B. H. Spitzberg and G. Changnon who introduce the notion of "relationality," or how people manage intercultural interactions, and define intercultural competence as

the appropriate and effective management of interaction between people who, to some degree or another, represent divergent affective, cognitive, and behavioral orientations to the world" (7).

As both of these definitions demonstrate, all educators can

contribute to developing intercultural competence, and the development of intercultural competence supports effective and appropriate behavior and communication in any language, including one's native language (Byram and Wagner 145).²⁹ Wagner, Perugini and Byram point out that there is a fuzzy boundary between the competences required for successful interaction between two people that speak the 'same' language and interactions when at least one person is using a language in which they do not have full competence (2017:7). People who speak the 'same' language may have misunderstandings or feel that their language abilities are not adequate for the topic or task, or people speaking a foreign language may have high levels of competence and not feel inhibited linguistically.

We stress, above all, that intercultural competence cannot be fully achieved without study of a language. Deardorff has expressed in her findings since 2006 that scholars disagree on the extent to which language is necessary, thus commenting: "language is necessary, but not sufficient."³⁰ This supposition is related to a truism that one can become a 'fluent fool,' a learning outcome explored by Milton Bennett in 1993. Of course, it is possible to develop the traits of a fluent fool, learning language quite proficiently without understanding the sociocultural or historic dimensions of its culture(s) and thus committing a multitude inappropriate acts, but this should not diminish the role of language study in ensuring intercultural development.

Language study is essential for the development of intercultural competence because there are skills that, we argue, can only be developed in full-immersion language courses beginning at the elementary level. When students are asked to leave behind their native language and interact with their peers and/or native speakers (on TalkAbroad, for example), they develop some of the "psychological skills" identified by Byram, such as the ability to be mindful and cognitively aware of the process of communication rather than the intended outcome of said communication, to tolerate ambiguity in communication and tolerate the anxiety this generates, and to adapt to the behavior and expectations of others (1997: 16). Developing Byram's "psychological skills" produces Deardorff's "internal outcomes," by which students possess the ability to shift frames of reference and engage adaptively, flexibly, and empathetically in communication.

Having to interact in another language opens students' eyes to

the fact that languages are organized differently and therefore self-expression in another language changes. The perceived linguistic superiority of one's native language is removed from the equation, and learners are forced to attend to the messages that they wish to communicate, which, in turn, provides an opening for self-discovery. Kramsch addresses the journey toward cultural decentering, when she states:

[b]y rallying the body, heart, and mind connection, the foreign language experience can open up sources of personal fulfillment that might be foreclosed by an exclusive emphasis on external criteria of success [...] We only learn who we are through the mirror of others, and, in turn, we only understand others by understanding ourselves as Other (2009: 17-18).

Gerhard Neuner points out that in language education learners have to negotiate ambiguity, signal non-comprehension and invite interpretation and help, which may cause embarrassment.

It is essential that the learners realise from the beginning that in learning a foreign language such breakdowns in comprehension and communication are quite natural and will occur again and again at all stages of foreign language learning and use. Such awareness will help the learners sustain interest, gain calmness and overcome "dumbfoundedness" in critical situations (49).

This is true whether one is interacting in the target language or in one's native tongue with speakers of other languages.

Heightened awareness to one's 'Otherness', attention to the messages one wishes to convey and imperfect comprehension of the received messages force the learner to be keenly aware of their interlocutor. As the learner looks for cues from the interlocutor and the environment to enhance comprehension and achieve communicative success, she is developing the ability to engage adaptively and flexibly with the expectations of others.

These 'internal' skills are developed through first-hand experience in full-immersion language study and cannot be achieved in any course taught in one's native language. Moreover, they are precisely the skills that are overlooked when discussing the value of language learning and its essential contribution to the development of intercultural competence. As Deardorff explains, external outcomes are indeed achievable even when internal outcomes are not fully realized, but external outcomes improve even further with the requisite, and more developed internal ones (2006).

Besides the "psychological skills" or "internal outcomes" that

are developed by simply functioning in full-immersion language courses, training in intercultural competence must also be explicit, and this training starts in introductory language courses where Bennett, Bennett, and Allen argue is the ideal point at which to begin intercultural competence development (2003). Barsky and Wilkerson-Barker's research empirically demonstrates just this point. They administered the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), a 50-item questionnaire available online to assess intercultural competence, to 43 students at the beginning of first semester French and Spanish courses and to 25 of these students at the end of the courses (2019). They found that in these courses that focus primarily on developing language proficiency and teaching cultural information,³¹ "while limited gains can be made, language courses that do not explicitly focus on intercultural competence development are insufficient; that is, they do not successfully support learners' progress in this area" (504). Explicit training in intercultural competence means a conscious curricular change with a clear understanding of what this training entails. Fred Dervin notes that interculturality is often confused with cultural, trans-cultural or multi-cultural approaches that have different goals (2010). He observes that "[s]ome teachers even assert that they incorporate "interculturality" while in fact what they incorporate is culturism, i.e. "grammar of cultures" or unfounded facts/stereotypes about the Other (158). Additionally, Bennett, Bennett, and Allen emphasize the need for explicit attention to intercultural competence training when they state that "

[d]eveloping intercultural competence demands a mix of culture-specific approaches that stress the apprehension of a particular subjective culture combined with culture-general approaches that address the larger issues of ethnocentrism, cultural self-awareness, and general adaptation strategies" (Bennett, Bennett and Allen 245).

In the Ohio State University Italian Program we seek to achieve these goals by embedding intercultural competence modules on understanding the difference between stereotypes and generalizations, the diversity of perspectives on issues of importance and how this impacts team approaches to problem-solving, and curiosity about unfamiliar cultures and people into the elementary sequence. All modules include contact with Italians via TalkAbroad, class discussion, and personal reflection.

One can imagine language instructors shying away from this work, assuming that it must be done in the target language – an attitude that may be linked to the traditional goal of full-immersion

instruction: striving to achieve the abilities of the educated native speaker. Not only has this unrealistic goal has been dismissed (Byram and Wagner 144; Larsen-Freeman 33), but the “hybrid heteroglossic reality” of our globalized world highlighted by Kramsch opens doors to linguistic hybridity as an acceptable tactic.

[...] with globalization, the purity of the standard language and the authenticity of its use by authentic NSs are put into question. Alternative sites of language use, such as the Internet and online exchanges, are exposing students to the heteroglossic real world of linguistic hybridity, “truncated multilingualism” (Blommaert, 2010, p. 103), and phatic exchanges that are no longer what communicative language pedagogy had in mind when it aimed at teaching learners how to interpret, express, and negotiate intended meaning (Breen & Candlin, 1980) (2014: 300).

Depth of discussion and most certainly personal reflection cannot be meaningfully achieved at the introductory level (and it can also be a challenge at the intermediate levels and sometimes at the advanced levels) without use of students’ native language. In the intercultural competence modules prepared for the elementary Italian language sequence at OSU, students gather data for discussion by interviewing native speakers on TalkAbroad in Italian. In-class discussion of the results and the larger implications begins in Italian and continues until students are no longer able to engage, at which point they are allowed to move into English, but language mixing is strongly encouraged and modeled by the instructor. The same is expected in the personal reflections that are assigned after class discussion. We encourage and embrace the linguistic hybridity that these discussions entail, applauding students for using the target language whenever they can to communicate their ideas and opinions. We do not recommend conducting intercultural competence modules completely in English for the entirety of the elementary sequence, indeed discussion in the target language gets longer each semester, but the desired depth cannot be achieved without some use of students’ native language. Student uptake of the content of these modules, class discussion and personal reflections is measured by questions in English on the final exam.

At OSU intercultural competence modules have been embedded in Italian courses required for the minor and the major as well. In addition, we require all of our majors and minors to participate in a World Languages Skills and Competencies Workshop in which we train students how to incorporate the intercultural competence skills that they have developed into their resume and how to articulate them in a job interview. We have modified our course

and program goals to reflect the commitment to the development of internal and external intercultural competence attributes and skills, and are working to update our website to make these modifications known to the public. In addition, we are communicating with the faculty members currently in charge of finalizing the goals and outcomes for the World Language Requirement in the College of Arts and Sciences to keep our goals aligned, and drawing attention to how world language study satisfies the goal of intercultural competence that has been incorporated into the revised General Educations Requirements of the university.

In order to change the trajectory of world language enrollments, the relevance of world language study must be made clear to students, parents and university administrators. The strategy works from the bottom up: the intercultural competence skills achieved exclusively in full-immersion language courses as well as the explicit training in intercultural competence need to be highlighted in course goals, incorporated into the program goals, and linked to the university mission. In addition, outreach to the community is essential. At OSU we have created a week-long Global Citizen Summer Camp³² for middle school children, the first iteration of which was in June 2018. In the mornings, OSU undergraduates taught full-immersion lessons in the language they study followed a culture lesson in English about the culture(s) of their target language. In preparation for this teaching, the undergraduates took a two-credit course in which they learned the fundamentals of full-immersion teaching, the fundamentals of intercultural competence, and how to teach culture without over-simplifying and essentializing (Monoly, Harbon, Fielding). A graduate student led the afternoons with instruction and activities on global issues, international games, and reflection on what it means to be a global citizen. Parents were invited to the last afternoon, during which the students demonstrated what they had learned during the week.

Concluding Remarks

Now that we have identified how the study of world languages is a necessary component of achieving the transferable skills of intercultural competence, it is important to remember how we got here: a trend in falling enrollments, language program closures, modifications in general education requirements that threaten language study, and the shared public sentiment that if you cannot speak (fluently) the language that you have studied, you are left

with nothing (no ROI, return on investment). In response, we have devised introductory-level initiatives that explicitly discuss with students the transferable cognitive and affective skills and attitudes that they develop in world language courses, as well as activity and reflection modules that target intercultural competence development directly.³³ In addition, intercultural competence goals have been incorporated into the undergraduate major and minor and connected to the university goals for undergraduate education. This internal messaging is linked to outreach activities that spread the same information to the community at large. The ultimate goal is to educate parents, students, and university administrators that those pursuing a world language develop essential 21st-century knowledge, attitudes and skills that those who have not done this course work do not have. In short, world language study is a corner stone of the undergraduate experience; without language study, our students are ill-prepared for living and working in our increasingly globalized world.

NOTES

¹ See Johnson's article that previews data collected by the MLA: <<https://www.chronicle.com/article/Colleges-Lose-a-Stunning-/245526>>

² See <<https://catalog.buffalo.edu/policies/pathway.html>>. See <<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2016/06/10/suny-buffalo-and-university-virginia-reform-general-education>>.

³ Information obtained via personal communication with a faculty member at Wayne State, who shall remain anonymous.

⁴ Students may pass a Regents "Checkpoint B" Examination or a Regents-approved equivalent in a foreign language with a score of 85 or above, complete at least three years of a foreign language in high school with a course grade in the third year of 85, or B, or better, or earn a score of 530 or better on an SAT II Subject Test in a foreign language. <<https://www.albany.edu/generaleducation/foreign-language.php>>

⁵ See <<https://www.bgsu.edu/catalog/academic-policies/foreign-language-admission-requirement.html>>.

⁶ See <<https://advising.columbian.gwu.edu/general-education-curriculum>>.

⁷ These values are in direct contrast to the Council of Europe that frames the task of second language learning in terms of "cooperation, mutual cultural understanding, and fostering European integration" (Levine 2014: 69).

⁸ Byram and Wagner also put forth a call last year to critically examine our professional identity as language teachers and our views of language, language teaching and culture (2018: 148).

⁹These data are from *Future Work Skills 2020*, a study conducted by the Institute for the Future for the University of Phoenix Research Institute (2011). The study can be accessed here: <<http://www.iff.org/futureworkskills/>>.

¹⁰Google searches in 2019, including late summer searches, fielded similar results.

¹¹See <<http://foreignpolicy.com/2008/07/09/the-case-against-foreign-language-study/>>; <https://www.huffingtonpost.com/delfan-carbonell/learning-a-second-langua_b_9150922.html>; <<https://www.vivafifty.com/learning-foreign-languages-5549/>>.

¹²See <<https://www.fluentin3months.com/studying-will-never-help/>>; <<https://qz.com/309143/a-case-for-cutting-foreign-languages-from-us-schools/>>; <<https://marginalrevolution.com/marginalrevolution/2018/05/foreign-language-education.html>>.

¹³See <<http://classroom.synonym.com/arguments-against-learning-foreign-language-7953845.html>>

¹⁴See <<http://www.darwinsmoney.com/learning-foreign-language-useless/>>.

¹⁵See <https://www.leadwithlanguages.org/wp-content/uploads/MakingLanguagesOurBusiness_FullReport.pdf>.

¹⁶See <<http://freakonomics.com/podcast/is-learning-a-foreign-language-really-worth-it-a-new-freakonomics-radio-podcast/>>.

¹⁷See <<https://www.economist.com/prospero/2014/03/11/johnson-what-is-a-foreign-language-worth>>.

¹⁸This *Economist* report states that of the top ten list of richest countries in the world that are dominated by open, trade-driven economies (not including oil economies) include countries where trilingualism is typical, like Luxembourg, Switzerland and Singapore, and small countries like the Scandinavian countries, where knowledge of English is excellent. The argument is that a willingness to learn about export markets, and their languages, is a plausible explanation for their success.

¹⁹Caplan is the author of three books: *The Case Against Education: Why The Education System is a Waste of Time and Money*, *Selfish Reasons to Have More Kids: Why Being a Great Parent is Less Work and More Fun Than You Think*, and *The Myth of the Rational Voter: Why Democracies Choose Bad Policies*.

²⁰See <https://www.econlib.org/archives/2012/08/the_marginal_pr.html>.

²¹See <<https://www.forbes.com/sites/artcarden/2018/05/22/should-schools-require-foreign-languages-doubtful/#66105ef12303>>.

²²"The idea of translingual and transcultural competence [...] places value on the ability to operate between languages. Students are educated to function as informed and capable interlocutors with educated native speakers in the target language. They are also trained to reflect on the world and themselves through the lens of another language and culture. They learn to comprehend speakers of the target language as members of

foreign societies and to grasp themselves as Americans – that is, as members of a society that is foreign to others. They also learn to relate to fellow members of their own society who speak languages other than English.” See <<https://www.mla.org/Resources/Research/Surveys-Reports-and-Other-Documents/Teaching-Enrollments-and-Programs/Enrollments-in-Languages-Other-Than-English-in-United-States-Institutions-of-Higher-Education>>.

²³ The first goal focuses on language use as the ability to “communicate in the language of the people with whom one is interacting,” and the remaining five address features of intercultural competence, which include interacting with awareness, empathy and knowledge of the perspectives of others, withholding judgment and knowing one’s own perspectives, being alert to cultural differences and clues to miscommunication, displaying culturally appropriate behaviors, having knowledge about the products, practices and perspectives of other cultures. See <<https://www.actfl.org/news/position-statements/global-competence-position-statement>>.

²⁴ The 2017 NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements for Intercultural Communication “guide [l]anguage learners to identify and set learning goals and chart their progress towards language and intercultural proficiency; [e]ducators to write communication learning targets for curriculum, unit and lesson plans; [s]takeholders to clarify how well learners at different stages can communicate.” These tools also lead learners toward developing intercultural communicative competence, which in this ACTFL document, refers “to the ability to interact effectively and appropriately with people from other language and cultural backgrounds.”

²⁵ A special thanks to Carmen Taleghani-Nikazm for sharing this insight.

²⁶ [...] or for that matter, a standardized nomenclature. Dervin states that the different terms and interpretations used to refer to intercultural competence are so confusing, that he has decided to use the term “proteothilic competences” to refer to “the appreciation of the diverse diversities of the self and the other” (2010). According to Hammer, “[i]ntercultural competence has been identified with a bewildering set of terms, including intercultural sensitivity, cross-cultural effectiveness, intercultural skills, cross-cultural adaptation, global competence, multicultural competence, cross-cultural relations, cultural proficiency, intercultural agility, and even the misnomer cultural intelligence (483).”

²⁷ See also Fantini and Tirmizi for another definition based on an overview of the literature (2006).

²⁸ There is controversy over how the term ‘culture’ is used in the literature; see Dervin.

²⁹ In 2018, Byram and Wagner are responding to an equally language-neutral definition of intercultural competence by Huber and Reynolds (2014:16-17).

³⁰ In a recent podcast, Deardorff repeats this finding from the 2006 study’s

attempt at a collective definition of intercultural competence. It can be found here: <<https://soundcloud.com/freshed-podcast/freshed-80-what-are>> and in many of her publications.

³¹ “[E]ven as efforts to bring intercultural competence development to the fore in beginner-level language courses increased as the course outcomes were aligned with the culture outcomes of the World-Readiness Standards (i.e., students would be able to identify some perspectives, products, and practices of the target culture and compare them to those of their own culture; National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015), beginner language instruction remained textbook-driven and primarily oriented toward communicative language teaching and the development of linguistic competence” (Barsky and Wilkinson-Barker 496-497).

³² See <<https://u.osu.edu/globalcamp/>>.

³³ We are not alone in this initiative. For example, Purdue University’s Italian program, under the guidance and development of Tatjana Babic-Williams, has created elementary-level activity series targeting experience with and rendering explicit the intercultural learning present in Italian courses from day one (<https://mediaspace.itap.purdue.edu/media/Tatjana+Babic-Williams+2018+CILMAR+Minigrant+Presentation/0_j77cknjo>). We imagine that there are many more colleagues working diligently in such endeavors. For example, South Dakota State University has recently developed a Certificate in Workplace Intercultural Competence for students. In addition, The MLA’s 2016 Enrollment Census Final Report suggests numerous ways in which colleagues are working towards innovative curricular changes.

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