
Multi-storied Lives: Global Simulation as an Approach to Developing Multiliteracies in an Intermediate French Course

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Recent scholarship has proposed a pedagogy of multiliteracies to frame FL curricula and instruction, and encourage critical reflection about language use through a variety of discourses and textual genres. One pedagogical framework conducive to fostering learners' intersemiotic awareness is Global Simulation (GS). GS consists in the creation of a culturally grounded, fictitious scenario, wherein students adopt specific character roles through which they enact discourse styles associated with their characters' identities and the simulation's attendant social demands. The adoption of characters reinforces the notion of literacies based on participation in a variety of discourses from the standpoint of particular social roles. This article reports on the development and implementation of a multiliteracies-based GS in fourth semester French applying a genre-based framework. First, we provide background on GS and its compatibility with multiliteracies and genre-based approaches. Next, we outline the framework and various texts and modules used in the course under study. Finally, we demonstrate through our findings the potential for this approach to foster learners' awareness of language and other communication modes as social signifying practice, and their abilities to draw upon multiple *Available Designs* in making meaning.

INTRODUCTION

In 1993 Kramersch challenged the dubious language-literature/culture split in U.S. collegiate foreign language (FL) education and called on the profession to rethink the mission and goals of the field (Kramersch, 1993a, pp. 2-3). Numerous volumes dedicated to reforming the FL departmental structure and rethinking the curriculum ensued (e.g., Byrnes, 1998; Byrnes & Maxim, 2004; Scott & Tucker, 2002; Swaffar & Arens, 2005), but two decades later, little has changed. However, with the forces of globalization influencing FL enrollment trends and the push for accountability in academia putting FL programs' futures at risk, scholars are calling again for FL departmental reforms which respond to these challenges. One such call was issued in 2007 by the MLA *Ad Hoc* Committee on Foreign Languages in a report which argued for a unified 4-year FL curriculum throughout which a renewed focus on cultural narratives could foster development of students' "translingual and transcultural competence," (p. 237). Although the report does not propose any specific approach to

facilitate the implementation of such curricula, several scholars have argued that *a pedagogy of multiliteracies* (New London Group, 1996) has the potential to help overcome the curricular divide and (re)situate FL departments in the humanistic tradition by anchoring instruction in the teaching of textuality and genre in cultural contexts (e.g., Allen & Paesani, 2010; Kern, 2000; Maxim, 2009b).

Recent years have seen a growing sense of the limitations of communicative competence as an appropriate goal to guide collegiate instruction. As underscored by Byrnes (2006), communicative competence has come to be associated with “interactive, transactional oral language use” (p. 244), a goal which she argues oversimplifies purposes of language-in-use and undervalues the intellectual contributions of foreign language (FL) departments to humanities scholarship. Concurrent with the rise of the multiliteracies movement in the last decade, numerous applied linguists in collegiate FL departments have argued in favor of the teaching of texts in cultural contexts with the purpose of fostering the development of symbolic competence (Kramersch, 2006), the core goal of humanities and the stated mission of many FL departments (Allen & Paesani, 2010, Byrnes, 2006; Byrnes, Crane, Maxim, & Sprang, 2006; Kern, 2000; Kramersch, 2006; Swaffar & Arens, 2005). While communicative competence emphasizes accuracy in the mere encoding and decoding of language-as-sign, symbolic competence foregrounds an ability to engage in meaning construction through various semiotic systems—image, sound, gesture, dress, and other social practices (Kern, 2000; Kramersch, 2006). Meaning-making does not merely take place through linguistic interactions, but rather across a range of modes (such as visual, audio, gestural, tactile and spatial) and genres (such as newspaper articles, interviews, short stories, blogs, personal diaries, editorials, literary works, and documentaries), and transpires through a dialogic process of negotiating the specific social languages and identitiesⁱ (Gee, 2002) out of which texts are created and interpreted. Such a paradigm shift from communicative to symbolic competence has major implications for FL programmatic and teaching practice. A number of researchers have advocated for a pedagogy of multiliteracies as one appropriate approach to fostering symbolic competence in second language/culture (LC2) discourses, and to addressing curricular dissonance in FL departments in order to meet this goal.

One pedagogical framework with the potential to make salient the socio-cultural situatedness of language is a Global Simulation (GS)ⁱⁱ. GS consists in the creation of a fictitious yet culturally grounded world in which students adopt character roles, enacting discourse styles associated with their characters’ social identities and the attendant demands of a particular event within the simulation. The adoption of character roles reinforces the notion of language-in-use based on participation in a variety of discourses from the standpoint of particular social roles (Gee, 2002, 2011a). Further, the simulated world of GS is conducive to the organization of multimodal texts varying in genre around three continua of discourse styles: from primary to secondary (Gee, 2002, 2011a), from private to public, and from narrative to expository (Maxim, 2009a).

This article reports on the development and implementation of a pilot GS in fourth semester French at a large public university in the Southwestern United States, applying a multiliteracies, genre-based approach as a means of fostering learners’ understanding of language as “a socially and culturally grounded semiotic system” (Byrnes, Maxim, & Norris, 2010, p. 45). First, we provide background on GS and its compatibility with multiliteracies and genre-based approaches. Next, we outline our GS curriculum and various texts and modules used in the course under study. Finally, we discuss our findings through the

perspective of Available Designs (New London Group, 1996) and students' beliefs about language learning.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Global Simulation

Global Simulation (GS) as a pedagogical framework was initially developed for French as a first language (L1 French) and was quickly adapted for a variety of purposes by instructors of French as a second language (L2 French) in France and beyond (see Yaiche, 1996 for discussion of the history of GS). More recently, instructors of other languages (e.g.: EFL/ESL, German, Russian, Turkish, Italian) have implemented GS in their classrooms. In a GS, learners participate in a fictitious yet culturally grounded world in which they take on character roles related to a specific context, for example: a hotel, company, museum (public sphere contexts) or apartment building (private sphere). Simulations may last for the entire duration of a course, or may be encapsulated in a shorter module throughout which learners perform interactive tasks related to the simulation context and through the voices of their imagined characters.

Several published studies which have been conducted in upper-division collegiate courses demonstrate the variability of GS contexts, ranging from public to private sphere. Magnin (2002) engaged college level marketing students in a simulation around a hotel. Levine, Eppelsheimer, Kuzay, Moti, and Wilby (2004) implemented a GS in intermediate German in which students became curators of a museum exhibit, negotiating which cultural objects to include in their exhibit. Levine (2004) reported on two other GS projects: the creation of a web-based fashion clothing company in Germany and the staging of a German film festival. Other examples are centered in the private sphere, such as Péron's (2010) and Kearney's (2012) 1939 apartment building in France during the German occupation, and Dupuy's (2006), Mills and Péron's (2009), and Mills' (2011) simulations where L2 French learners played the role of residents living in a contemporary apartment building in Paris. The former GS examples framed in the public sphere carry with them specific scripts for tasks, goals, and decisions (e.g., deciding what products to sell, to whom to market the products, what to include on a product webpage, etc.) while the apartment building curriculum relates to everyday life and requires a basic overarching story framework to structure the tasks, events, problems, and communicative situations which arise in the simulation. In short, GS is a well-developed pedagogical framework and continues to be retooled to respond to calls for new directions in FL education.

Multiliteracies

Although elements of multiliteracies approaches to FL teaching can be seen as early as 1991 in the work of Swaffar, Arens, and Byrnes (1991), whose discussion of teaching reading is framed within a philosophical position of “replac(ing) standards for mastery of form with standards for construction and expression of meaning” (p. 14), many trace the roots of multiliteracies to the 1996 publication of The New London Group (NLG)'s seminal article, “A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures” in which they describe social factors contributing to a paradigm shift away from earlier notions of literacy. Specifically, they argue that the emergence of increasingly diverse linguistic and cultural communities,

and the emergence of new technologies and communication channels foregrounding multiple modes of communication have led to new literacies embodied in new social practices (NLG, 1996). A consequence of these broad and sweeping changes is that it is no longer enough for “learners to know how to communicate meanings” (i.e. be able to accurately construct and understand sentences to convey or receive information; Kramsch, 2006, p. 251). Rather, learners have to develop competences in understanding, interpreting, and producing a variety of multimodal texts in the target language, and must develop an ability to understand how language and other symbolic systems are used in order to design meaning. Specifically, students need to learn “how to rely on clues other than verbal ones to find out the intentions of [their] interlocutor...” (p. 250).

The New London Group outlined two paradigms which could be used to structure teaching praxis around the principles of multiliteracies pedagogies: *Design of meaning*, and *four curricular components*. Design of meaning refers to an active, dynamic, and transformative process which involves the construction of meaning-form-function connections while engaging in the interpretation or creation of texts. The three core aspects of this view of design are described in Table 1 (NLG, 1996; Cope & Kalantzis, 2009).

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Available Designs</i> | Meaning-making resources (linguistic, visual, audio, gestural, spatial and multimodal) found in one’s social, cultural, and historical context. |
| <i>Designing</i> | The active process of drawing upon the Available Designs to make meaning. |
| <i>The Redesigned</i> | A transformed representation of Available Designs that is the result of Designing |

Table 1: Aspects of Designs of Meaning

Design of meaning in this view includes meaning-making across a range of modes (NLG, 1996) as outlined in Table 2 below.

| | |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Linguistic</i> | Delivery, vocabulary and metaphor, syntax, modality, information structure, cohesion and coherence, etc. |
| <i>Visual</i> | Colors, view, vista, scene, etc. |
| <i>Audio</i> | Music, sounds, noises, etc. |
| <i>Tactile</i> | Manipulable objects, artifacts, aromas, etc. |
| <i>Gestural</i> | Hand and arm movements, facial expressions, eye movements and gaze, body postures, gait, clothing, hair style, makeup ceremonial rituals, etc. |
| <i>Spatial</i> | Proximity, spacing, layout, cityscape, landscape, architecture, etc. |

Table 2: Modes of Meanings and Multimodality (Kalantzis & Cope, n.d.)

In order to articulate and enact a pedagogy of Design and multimodality (the *What* of multiliteracies pedagogy), NLG (1996) proposed four curricular components to scaffold and support student learning: Situated Practice, Overt Instruction, Critical Framing, and Transformed Practice (the *How* of multiliteracies pedagogy). In 2005 Kalantzis and Cope reframed these four dimensions of multiliteracies pedagogy into four “acts of knowing” (p. 30) or “knowledge processes”: *Experiencing*, *Conceptualizing*, *Analyzing* and *Applying* (p. 69).

Figure 1: Four Curricular Components (NLG, 1996) and Knowledge Processes (Kalantzis & Cope, 2005)



Situated Practice has been referred to as experiencing, or immersion in the text, and might include activities such as describing, exploring, observing, or connecting with a text (Kalantzis & Cope, n.d.). *Overt Instruction* activities focus attention on how form (linguistic, spatial layout, color, etc.) creates certain meanings and not others, and might involve learners reflecting on why present tense, rather than past tense, may have been chosen by a particular author to narrate a story that took place in the past. *Critical Framing* involves metacognitive reflections on how meaning is made, and could involve comparing, synthesizing, critiquing, or understanding, including analyzing author purpose, and/or ideologies and discourses in texts. Finally, *Transformed Practice* consists of activities that allow learners to apply what they have learned. In this phase, learners might compose, construct, design, and demonstrate (Kalantzis & Cope, n.d.). Activities framed within these four curricular components involve both interpretive and productive engagement with texts, and metacognitive reflections on how meaning is made which draw attention to how choice of form (linguistic, spatial layout, color, etc.) creates certain meanings and not others. Taken together, these four curricular components form a paradigm that can be used to structure a daily lesson. They do not represent a sequence-to-be followed, but rather offer “a map of the range of pedagogical moves” that can be interwoven in a non-linear, recursive sequence in order to best meet learners’ literacy needs (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009, p. 186). Furthermore, many activities simultaneously involve multiple curricular components. (See also Allen & Paesani, 2010; Hall, 2001; and Kern, 2000 for discussion of these four curricular components). Traditionally, *Situated Practice* and *Overt Instruction* have been at the center of instruction in lower-level courses, leaving out *Critical Framing* and *Transformed Practice*, which are essential “for the development of students’ critical and cultural understanding of language, literacy, and communication” (Kern, 2000, p. 134). A goal of a multiliteracies approach is to ensure that the skills addressed through *Critical Framing* and *Transformed Practice* activities are also a significant goal at the beginning and intermediate levels for a better aligned 4-year FL curriculum.

Multiliteracies pedagogies have been taken up both as curricular reform projects as well as instructional techniques, including general curricular projects (Kern, 2000, 2003), specific broad-based curricular reform projects involving the entire four-year language sequence (Maxim, Höyng, Lancaster, Schaumann, & Aue, 2013; Byrnes, Maxim, Norris, 2010), lower

level FL courses (Allen & Paesani, 2010); and instructional techniques such as using multiliteracies to frame writing instruction (Allen, 2009; Byrnes, Maxim, & Norris, 2010; Kaur, Ganapathy, & Sidhu, 2012), or to develop advanced capabilities (Byrnes, 2005). Several of these projects also demonstrate how texts, when placed at the center of the curriculum, serve to organize both linguistic and cultural content (Byrnes, Crane, Maxim, & Sprang, 2006; Crane, 2006; Maxim, 2006; Maxim, 2009a).

Although we are not aware of any published studies linking GS with a multiliteracies approach, these are highly compatible in praxis. GS provides learners with a socioculturally-based setting in which language can be taught as social signifying practice, where links between linguistic forms and social practice become salient through the enactment of specific social identities through the characters. Learners can begin to grasp differences in how language and other semiotic systems are used differentially based on identity factors (e.g., gender, class, profession, and race), all while becoming aware of discourse practices (Kramsch, 1993b).

Genre-based Approaches

A key feature of a multiliteracies approach to LC2 teaching is the use of a range of texts and genre types. Consistent with the nuances of multiliteracies approaches—i.e., the importance of social roles and identities in processes of designing meaning—the notion of genre undertaken here is not merely that of different structural *forms*, but rather one which reflects Martin's (1984) description of genre as a “a staged, goal-oriented, purposeful activity in which speakers engage as members of our culture” (p. 25). Genres are characterized by “a schematic structure—a distinctive beginning, middle, and end” (*ibid.*), and are socially-constructed and purposeful (Johns, 2002, p. 12).

The interest of genre-based approaches in FL teaching lies in the ability to arrange genre types along several discourse continua which align with various forms of linguistic expression, and which can be laid out across an entire course syllabus or four-year curriculum in a way that mirrors developmental processes of language proficiencies and abilities. Specifically, genres can be arranged from primary to secondary discourses, where the former consist of topics centered around private life and the latter evoke discussions related to public life. The discourse style associated with the former is narrative in nature (Maxim, 2009a) and gives way to linguistic expressions such as describing oneself, routines, environment, vacation, leisure activities, etc. The style associated with secondary discourses can be described as expository, and lends itself to discussion of more abstract concepts, expression of opinions, or debates about controversial issues. Linguistically, primary discourses tend to be expressed through what Maxim (2009a) calls “congruent” forms of expression (e.g., subject - verb - object) while secondary discourses are often instantiated through “synoptic” means (e.g., nominalizations; p. 174). Personal narratives, journal entries, and autobiographical accounts constitute primary discourse genre types while secondary discourse genre types may be film reviews, newspaper articles, historical accounts, political speeches, and so on (Byrnes, Crane, Maxim, & Sprang, 2006). A genre-based approach allows for the linking of content and language from the very beginning of the language learning trajectory, following a continuum of foci moving away from “‘contextualized’ language teaching” toward “‘language-conscious’ content teaching” (Byrnes, Maxim, & Norris, 2010, p. 35).

Applying a Genre-based Approach to a GS

The progression of discourses from primary to secondary, from private to public, can be effectively carried out through a GS situated in an apartment building. The first part of the simulation can focus on describing self and others, lifestyle, routines and activities, while the second part can progress toward describing location, apartment, building, and neighborhood. Texts such as identity cards, passports, blogs, literary descriptions of self, popular TV clips and films depicting neighborly interactions, photos of one's apartment, YouTube video tours of a neighborhood, all align with these primary discourses and can be linked with specific language forms such as present tense verbs, adjectives, and expressions such as *this is/it is* and *there are*. From these primary discourses emerge characters who interact with each other within their building and their community, participating in social events such as birthday parties, visiting neighbors, dining out, traveling, going to school, changing jobs. These simulated social events can be facilitated through texts such as written or oral invitations, recipes, voicemail messages, restaurant menus, job announcements, CVs and cover letters, and give way to language functions such as extending and responding to invitations, greeting people, or asking informational questions. Finally, in the third part of the simulation, the textual, topical foci can involve secondary discourses, where characters live out various forms of civic engagement, working with texts related to justice (e.g., investigative reports relating how a wrong-doing was redressed), law (e.g., summary of a bill and various interpretations/reactions by political groups and/or bloggers), and politics (e.g., electoral campaign posters or websites). These topics foreground language forms such as future, conditional, and subjunctive verb tenses through comparing and contrasting, expressing and supporting opinions, persuading, or drawing conclusions. Thus, a GS grounded in the context of an apartment building provides an ideal topical structure for arranging texts of varying genres along a primary-to-secondary, private-to-public discourse continuum.

Drawing upon multiple and varied textual genres brings into focus differences in linguistic and other semiotic conventions associated with particular contexts of expression. For example, writing one's daily agenda might be carried out through imperative verbs and a color code for work versus home activities, while describing one's day at the dinner table would more typically be expressed in the past tense, using time adverbs, and possibly different intonations, as well as facial and hand gestures. Through a genre-based approach, students' attention can be focused "on the interactions between linguistic form, situational context, and communicative and expressive functions" (Kern, 2003, p. 51). Such interactions are at the core of a multiliteracies approach. The specific story context and learners' adopted character roles within the GS engages learners in ongoing Transformed Practice, and has the potential to serve as a catalyst for suspension of students' own first language/culture (LC1) frames of reference to where they may begin to consider what kinds of LC2 discourses are at work in the production and interpretation of LC2 textual genres.

METHODOLOGY

Research Questions

The current study was guided by the following research questions:

- 1) How does a multiliteracies-, genre-based GS contribute to students'?
 - a) awareness of the interrelationship between language use and social identities based on genre and discourse conventions of target language communities?
 - b) understanding of relationships among Available Designs across modes and their contribution to meaning-making through apprenticeship in LC2 Design practices?

- 2) What do students believe about language and language learning at the end of a semester-long GS framed in multiliteracies, and how do their beliefs compare to those of students who did not participate in the GS/multiliteracies curriculum?

Course Context and Description

The project was carried out at a large public university in the Southwest of the United States in one pilot section of a fourth semester French course. This course is the last in the lower-level sequence, and one which satisfies the language requirements for students enrolled in a B.A. degree program. The current project was based on Debyser's (1980) apartment building scenario, *L'Immeuble*, and was set in the 14th district of Paris on a commercial street in an *immeuble haussmanien*ⁱⁱⁱ. The original *L'immeuble* framework was used as a point of departure in order to map a progression of modules centered around personal relations, urban living, family life, media world, work life, justice, laws and politics, changing societal landscape, and memories^{iv}. These themes were then mapped to target language functions and forms intended in the GS (Appendix A). Texts, which ranged in genre type from informal to formal language registers, were selected with the goal of exposing students to varying language forms and functions and multiple modes. Lesson plans were developed around primary and secondary texts, and activities were framed within the four curricular components discussed above. For example, in the module on work life, texts consisted of authentic print and video curriculum vitae, job ads, and videos offering advice on finding and interviewing for a job. Assessment and evaluation of student learning was carried out through a combination of quizzes and tests as well as Transformed Practice activities (e.g. the creation of the character CVs). Quizzes included Critical Framing questions related to culture, such as asking students to describe the function of a *conciierge* as it is understood in France and to reflect upon why this role/function exists in France and not in the US. Such questions prompted students to reflect on ways in which specific structural and architectural features of a haussmannian residence symbolized the historical stratification of social class by floor.

The two other sections of the course used a communicative and integrated approach emphasizing language use in realistic contexts. The core text for the course was *Controverses* (Oukada, Bertrand, & Solberg, 2011) which attempts to go beyond the mere presentation of culture as a set of facts and facilitate discussions in which learners' critical thinking is promoted through reading of texts presenting multiple sides of complex, contemporary French issues and questions that prompt cross-cultural comparisons. Although the textbook appears at first glance to align well with multiliteracies, genre-based approaches, namely the foregrounding of texts which promote discourse styles primarily falling on the secondary, public and expository end of the continuum, a closer examination reveals that the inclusion of these texts is primarily driven by linguistic motives. Further, these texts are almost exclusively written in a formal register with no identifying information about the author or

the context in which they were written, thus limiting learners' meaning-making capacity. What such texts fail to accomplish, as put by Hasan (1996), is encouraging learners "to ask why the said is being said, what it implies, and on what grounds...; whose point of view does the writing represent...; why it [the text] is structured the way it is; [and] what would change, for whom and at what price, if the structure were to be changed" (p. 411, as cited in Maxim, 2009a, p. 175). As a result, the "writing" learners are exposed to through these texts bears little resemblance to a "culturally-bound activity" (Crozet & Liddicoat, 2000, p. 10) and is no longer a rhetorical act of communication but merely a decontextualized linguistic act. It is in this particular context that the GS curriculum was developed as a pilot once per week, as a way to compliment texts from the existing curriculum and expose learners to language use in a variety of social contexts and lead them to actively reflect "on how meanings are constructed and negotiated in particular acts of communication" (Kern, 2000, p. 39). The GS curriculum in the course under study was implemented as a pilot once per week, complimenting delivery of the regular curriculum on the other three days. The goal of the pilot GS curriculum was to examine how the adoption of characters through which to interact with a variety of textual genres might help move students toward an awareness of language as social signifying practice (RQ1).

Course Technology Tools

Multiple Web 2.0 tools were used to carry out course tasks. Moodle 2.2 was used as a learning management site for the GS and an interactive space for online critical reflections. A list of the Web 2.0 tools and their respective purpose and use frequencies are provided in Table 3.

| <u>Web 2.0 Tool Used</u> | <u>Purpose of use</u> | <u>Level of use</u> | <u>Learner interacting as</u> |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| Moodle module: | | | |
| File | Provide access to content (e.g., images, texts, videos) | Daily | Self |
| Forum | Stimulate critical framing discussions among learners interacting as themselves on a given topic; enable learners to bring different perspectives and knowledge about topics; promote meaning negotiation and critical thinking | Weekly | Self |
| Online Text | Complete written texts (e.g., literature reaction journals, guided essay writing) online | Bi-monthly | Self |
| Quiz | Complete summative assessments of learning in the GS | Twice | Self |
| Facebook Pages ^v | Provide venue for multimodal expression of characters and | Weekly | GS character |

| | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------|
| | sharing of photos and other media; stimulate conversations between neighbors who post messages and share various media on <i>timelines</i> | | |
| Eyejot ^{vi} | Complete speaking assessments; create and send video messages to resident friends and neighbors | Bi-weekly | Self and GS character |
| Google Docs | Deploy collaborative worksheets for Situated Practice activities; provide space for collaborative Transformed Practice writing assignments | Weekly | Self |

Table 3: Purpose and Use of Web 2.0 Tools Deployed

Character Selection

Following the first week of the course, students selected four identity characteristics at random which indicated an age range, professional category, place of birth, and marital status. The number of available cards for each identity category reflected demographics of the 14th arrondissement where the *immeuble* was located. This process ensured a diverse group of residents with the goal of rendering more salient differences in language use by different social identities. Secondly, it mitigated the risk of reinforcing stereotypes through the randomization of combinations of age, profession, birthplace, and marital status. Next they chose names for their characters based on a set of website resources listing popular French last names as well as first names by birth year.

Participants

Participants included 12 students from the GS section and 17 students from the other two (non-GS) sections of the course, all of whom were recruited just after midterm from within their classes per IRB approval and without the presence of their instructors. Participants from the GS section were asked for their consent to use learning artifacts and their responses to the midterm questionnaire, to complete a final questionnaire about their beliefs about language learning, and to participate in an additional interview external to the course assignments. This interview took place only after submission of final course grades. Non-GS participants were asked to complete a questionnaire about their beliefs about language learning. The instructor only found out who had consented to participate in the study after final course grades were submitted.

All 12 GS participants reported English as a first language, with three indicating knowledge of additional languages as well. Three of the participants were French majors, while the others majored in disciplines in the Humanities, Art, Social Sciences, Sciences and Business. One student was non-degree seeking. The majority of the participants (78%) had taken a French class in the previous semester. A more detailed profile of the GS participants

is included in Table 4.

The profile of the 17 non-GS participants was similar: most students' L1 was English; two students indicated knowledge of Spanish; one student reported knowledge of Hebrew, and another student listed Indonesian. A majority of non-GS participants (65%) had taken French in the previous semester.

| <u>Name*</u> | <u>Languages other than English</u> | <u>Majors</u> | <u>Character name and age</u> |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Alyssa | | Political Science/Molecular & Cellular Biology/Public Health | Kareem Revoir (46) |
| Ashley | | Psychology | Christelle Dubois (13) |
| Brenda | ASL | Philosophy/Psychology | Ella Dubois (42) |
| Claire | | Creative Writing/French | Loris Gautier (70) |
| Daniel | Spanish French | Linguistics/Psychology | Thierry Denis (64) |
| Emma | | Studio Art/Art History | Adèle Bonnet (38) |
| Jamie | | Theatre Production/ Anthropology/French | Émilie Leclerc (20) |
| Jane | | | Gisèle-Gervais LeBlanc (79) |
| Jenna | | Business | Émilie Rousseau (42) |
| Lauren | | Art Education/French | Cécile Martin (28) |
| Tom | Portuguese | Political Science/Portuguese | Jean-Paul Leclerc (55) |
| Trevor | | Philosophy/Astronomy | Pascal LeBlanc (81) |

* Pseudonyms were given to protect the anonymity of the participants

Table 4: GS Participant Profiles

As indicated through instructor observations and two surveys, as a group, participants in this study were overall quite positive with respect to the target language, culture and people, indicating a desire to learn French to get to know French speakers and their cultures better and to make friends with native speakers of the language.

Data Collection and Analysis

This study took a mixed method approach incorporating multiple quantitative and qualitative data sources collected before, during, and after the 15-week course. In order to answer RQ1, learning artifacts, video recordings, and in-class observation notes were collected. Additionally, interviews were conducted and recorded. Learning artifacts consisted of work that students completed as themselves and as their characters. Artifacts from students as themselves included online forum posts (Moodle 2.2), individual essays (Moodle 2.2), and open-ended responses on written exams. Artifacts from students as their characters included audio-visual recordings through Eyejot, online chat transcripts, Facebook pages and posts, job interviews, written memoirs, and CVs. Video recordings were conducted during

one class session in which characters participated in job interviews^{vii}. One in-class observation took place during which students interacted as themselves, reflecting on each other’s characters’ CVs. Finally, semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight participants from the GS-section three days following the completion of the semester during which we asked students to reflect on their real versus character-based presentation of self, their respective interactions with others, the extent to which they considered the social identities and voices out of which they were speaking, and whether these factors influenced their choice of language. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed in their entirety. Questions solicited elaboration on their linguistic and multimodal design choices made on specific assignments, including Eyejot audio-visual recordings, their character CVs, their character memoires, and their Facebook pages and photos (Appendix B).

RQ2 was addressed through a questionnaire given at the end of the semester to participants from all course sections, and asked about students’ language learning history, knowledge of other languages, and their responses to belief statements taken from Horwitz’s (1988)^{viii} Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI). Eight of the 12 participants in the GS section and 17 participants from the non-GS sections completed the questionnaire. At midterm, GS students were invited to complete a course evaluation about the format of the course, including open-ended questions asking them to say what they would like to spend more or less time doing in class. Initially not envisioned as a data source, responses helped shed light on some participants’ beliefs and trends among the class. Eight of the 12 GS participants completed the midterm questionnaire, six of whom also completed the BALLI. Finally, interview responses served to triangulate student beliefs and provide additional insight into RQ2.

A summary of data sources is included in Table 5 below.

| Research Questions | Data sources (number of consented participants who completed the activities)^{ix} |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>1) How does a multiliteracies-, genre-based GS contribute to students’:</p> <p>a) awareness of the interrelationship between language use and social identities based on genre and discourse conventions of target language communities?</p> <p>b) understanding of relationships among Available Designs across modes and their contribution to meaning making?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning artifacts (12) • In-class observation notes (12) • Semi structured interviews (8) |
| <p>2) What do students believe about language and language learning at the end of a semester-long GS framed in multiliteracies,</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Midterm Questionnaires (8) • BALLI (GS) (8) • BALLI (non-GS) (17) |

and how do their beliefs compare to those of students who did not participate in the GS/multiliteracies curriculum?

Table 5: Summary of Data Sources

Data analysis began with reviewing learning artifacts from all GS participants (Facebook screen shots, Moodle forums, in-class collaborative online activities, Eyejots, journals) with an eye for instances where students demonstrated use of design choices specific to their character's social identity and/or the communication situation (RQ1). BALLI questionnaire data from all sections were tabulated, and percentages were calculated to identify trends in students' responses related to their beliefs about language learning, specifically related to grammar, vocabulary, cultural knowledge, repetition and practice, memorization, and comparison with other subjects (RQ2). Salient examples of student artifacts were brought to the interviews, where participants were asked to reflect on their design choices as a way to triangulate our preliminary analyses. Additionally, the interview included a follow-up question asking all participants to expand upon their response to the BALLI question comparing language learning to other academic subjects. Researcher observations (of artifacts, class observations, and BALLI data) and student reflections (from interviews) were combined, and the data was scanned for patterns. For example, if a particular comment or practice emerged three times across multiple participants (e.g., language learning is about memorization, interviewer is demonstrating interest by leaning forward), these comments were catalogued together. Design choices (observed or articulated) were then re-categorized in terms of linguistic, visual, gestural and other Available Designs (RQ1), and beliefs about language were analyzed in terms of beliefs about grammar, vocabulary, cultural knowledge, practice, memorization, and relation to other subjects (RQ2).

FINDINGS

The focus of this GS was on creating a context in which learners could become aware of the interrelationship between language use and social identities. Further, we hoped that this course would develop students' understanding of meaning making through various Available Designs by apprenticing in design practices (RQ1). Secondly, we were interested in exploring whether a GS course could lead students to re-examine their views on language, culture and communication (RQ2) and bring them to new levels of understanding of language learning and use as dynamic and multimodal processes.

Awareness of Language Use and Social Identities

We anticipated that creating a context in which students' familiar and taken-for-granted "ways of being in the world" could be made "strange" (Gee, 2011a, p. 127) through their adopted characters would contribute to greater awareness of the interrelationship between language use and social identities (Gee, 2002), and could impact students' designing of meaning based on LC2 genre and discourse conventions (RQ1). Within this GS, learners created French and francophone characters that lived together virtually in an apartment building in the 14th *arrondissement*. They spoke and wrote as their characters in the first person in their: Facebook profiles; interactions with

neighbors, self-portrait, voicemail message, video invitation to a party, Voicethread descriptions of their apartment and a meal they shared with neighbors; résumés, memoirs, etc.

Across various oral and written communication situations in the roles of their characters, students' language use was reflective of both their characters' identities and their imagined interlocutors. In a simulated phone conversation with a neighbor-friend (recorded on Eyejot), Alyssa began by making her invitation (as Kareem), then inserted several pauses, after which she responded "ouais, ouais, ouais" (*yeah, yeah, yeah*), to her imagined interlocutor in an informal language appropriate to the communication situation and relationship, and different from her usual in-class responses of a more formal "oui" (*yes*). In their Facebook posts Tom, Jamie, and Trevor each demonstrated language use characteristic of their respective characters' social identities. Reacting to their new apartment building caretaker, (a young man originally from Benin), Tom, playing a 55-year-old father, said: "C'est genial qu'il ne ressemble pas un gardien typique. Cela montre que les temps changent maintenant." (*It's great that he isn't a typical caretaker. It shows that times are changing.*) In so doing, Tom positions his character as a more mature individual with enough life experience to have lived through different times. By contrast, Jamie, playing Tom's character's 20-year-old daughter, responded: "Il ne fait pas de mal qu'il était un pompier, oui?" (*No harm in that he's a former fireman, no?*) and included an emoticon with a wink, indexing her character's position as a young female calling attention to the attractiveness factor of their new *caretaker*. Her somewhat insolent attitude also comes through in her post about visiting her neighbors (see Figure 2 below).

Figure 2: Facebook Post



(I visited the Leblanc's apartment for a party. It was a bit annoying (we have nothing in common!), but my parents and I had a good time. Their apartment? Boring and drab! There was no color, everything was white—except for a touch of red on the kitchen wall. All the furniture looked too

expensive. Good thing I didn't spill my drink!)

Trevor's Facebook posts are also reflective of his character's social identity. Commenting on the job interviews, his character, Pascal LeBlanc, an 81-year-old retired philosophy professor from the Sorbonne, posted:

Apparement Jean Paul LeClerc a fait une bonne impression avec la représentante de Disney—il savait tout de l'organisation en Europe et aux États-Unis. Thierry Pinot, en revanche, n'a pas réussi dans son entretien.

(Apparently Jean-Paul Le Clerc made a great impression on the representative from Disney—he knew everything about the organization in Europe and in the US. Thierry Pinot, on the other hand, was not successful in his interview.)

In this post, the specific choice of “en revanche” (characteristic of a formal language register and more likely to be found in written or in more academic discourse) indexes his character's age and profession in a way that other choices (e.g., “par contre”) might not. Trevor affirmed his awareness of his character's social identity when, during the post-course interview, he mentioned “formality” both in appearance and speech as hallmarks of who his character was.

In the post-course semi-structured interviews, several students expressed unequivocal awareness of their characters' identities and voices. Alyssa reported:

I definitely changed character from a 19-year-old female in America to this 47-year-old eccentric guy... yeah, you definitely try to portray what your character is in that I portrayed my own ideas in the Forums when I'm speaking as myself but when I'm speaking as Kareem, I definitely wanna sound like this upbeat, funny dude, kind of eccentric. So I wouldn't say things I personally would say normally, but definitely changed to fit the character more.

Similarly, Tom responded that he was very aware of his character's voice when interacting in the GS:

I tried to put myself in his shoes as much as possible when we were doing the group conversations, I tried not to use my own thoughts, I tried to create a character but because my vocabulary is somewhat limited a lot of it would have been what I would have said too... I tried to tailor him as much as possible as to what I thought a Parisian businessman might be like.

Jane, whose character was a 79-year-old, retired, married woman offered:

It certainly influenced what I said. At some point I had to think about how old am I vs. how old is Jane. Did it make a difference in the choice of words... maybe not... I think I was just limited in vocabulary.

For all of these students, certain aspects of their character's social identity affected their positioning vis-à-vis specific communication situations and was manifest in their language choices. Tom and Jane, however, perceived this as only manifesting itself in

the position and opinion they took, but not necessarily in terms of lexical choices because of a perceived lack of vocabulary.

Apprenticeship in Designing

Despite the perceived vocabulary limitations students expressed, many demonstrated through the presentation of character-selves and in reflections on certain artifacts that they were able to draw upon various Available Designs in designing meaning both in face-to-face and textual communication. The findings presented below are framed in light of the New London Group's (1996) Available Designs paradigm.

Linguistic Available Designs: grammar. In her post-course interview, Claire (whose character, Loris Gauthier, was a 70-year old retired man who lived alone) reflected on a particular Facebook post her character had made (see Figure 3 below).

Figure 3: Facebook Post



(I attended a party at Adèle Bonnet's. She has a lovely apartment, with exquisite details. I love the soaps in the bathroom. The décor was chic and modern...And they were many cats, everywhere! The guests gave her a cat. I thought it was a nice gesture. Thank you Adèle. It was a great party.)

Claire's character had recently visited a younger female neighbor whom he was interested in courting, and posted a message directed to this neighbor, but written in the third person. When asked about this grammatical choice, she reflected, "yeah, I didn't want to seem too forward because I was the only one at the party... didn't want other people to know I was interested... I'm a little old..." Claire was clearly aware on a metacognitive level that the use of the third person could have the effect of distancing herself from her interlocutor.

Tom also drew upon grammatical resources in designing meaning. Following the simulated job interviews in the module on work life, he posted a response, as his character, to a neighbor applying for a position in a bakery. He wrote: "J'espère que vous aurez la tâche. À mon avis, vous êtes très bien qualifiée. Nous aimons tous vos pâtisseries."

Bon courage!” (*I hope you will get the job. In my opinion, you are very well qualified. We all love your pastries. Good luck!*) Reflecting on this post during his interview, Tom offered:

I don’t know how I would say it but I feel like in that post I was trying to be a little bit... more formal about it... I wasn’t like oh that’s so exciting, I hope you get the job, congratulations, this will be a great opportunity for you... I was trying to be... like I had come from the experience of interviewing people and I was trying to be very professional about what I said to her.

Most interesting in his post was the fact that by choosing the plural pronoun “nous” (*we*) over the singular “je” (*I*), and infusing his words with a sense of the collective through “tous” (*all of us*), Tom’s role of father figure, speaking on behalf of his family in offering encouragement to a younger neighbor, was effectively carried across.

Linguistic Available Designs: names, titles, and naming. In reflecting on their choice of names in the post-course interviews, more than half of the students shared that their chosen names carried symbolic meaning. For Daniel, the last name of his character, “Denis,” was reminiscent of Saint Denis, an important figure for him. Trevor’s choice of names, “Pascal” was also personal, and was based on phonological similarity with his own real name. Jane, Claire, Emma, and Ashley all expressed the importance of a certain aesthetic to their names. Jane’s character name (Gisèle Gervais-LeBlanc) was inspired by a spontaneous comment by another French professor who told her she “looked like a Gigi,” and she expanded the name to create a certain sophistication. When asked whether there were any particular ideas she had formed around her character name, she responded that it fit with the glamorous image she had been constructing. Jane also imagined her character to be a very strong and independent woman (her character had a hyphenated name: Gisèle Gervais-LeBlanc) who had worked all her life, and saw her character as someone who did not follow the norms set for women at that time.

In addition to exploring how students designed meaning as their characters, we were also interested in the extent to which they were able to reflect, as themselves, upon others’ processes of designing. One of the story lines within the simulation was the firing of the building’s existing *concierge* and the consideration of possible candidates to replace him. The eventual new *concierge* was based on a real-life individual brought into the simulation through an authentic article read in class (*Rémi, gardien d’immeuble, pour 1000 à 1700 euros par mois / Rémi, apartment building caretaker for 1,000 to 1,700 euros a month*). After reading the article, in which a 35-year-old man from Benin who goes by the title “*gardien*”^x is introduced, students engaged in a Critical Framing activity as themselves reflecting on the importance of the distinction between these two titles (*concierge* vs. *gardien*). For Emma, Jane, Trevor, and Brenda, the distinction was important, and resided in signaling the kind of work being done. Among all students, only Brenda referenced the identity stereotypes associated with each term: “‘*Concierge*’ est associée avec une femme plus âgée et Rémi ne ressemble pas cette image.” (*‘Concierge’ is associated with an older woman and Rémi does not resemble this image*).

Visual Available Designs: images. Students’ use of a range of semiotic resources in designing meaning was evident throughout the GS, most notably through the creation of character Facebook profiles and characters’ professional CVs. Jane’s choice of image for her Facebook profile photo (Figure 4) reflected her character’s glamorous identity:

“there was something about the red lipstick, the hat, that ... goes with the whole glamorous thing”. She further carried out the hat motif in a spoken audio-visual recording made through Eyejot in telling stories of her life to her grandchildren, she wore a wide-brimmed straw hat and pink ribbon, noting her attempt to convey her character’s timeless glamour. She later shared: “I don’t know if in speaking French I got that across, but that’s how I pictured her”.

Figure 4: Facebook Profile Photo of Jane’s Character



Trevor’s character was a retired professor who had taught at the Sorbonne. His Facebook banner was a stately image of the Sorbonne, and his profile photo showed an older man whose stern gaze and scruffy grey beard were clothed in a button-down shirt, beige suit jacket and cream-colored, narrow-brimmed nylon hat. Trevor felt these images gave his character the maturity and composure he imagined in an older professor. He later reappropriated this multimodal text (now part of his Available Designs) when recording a video-voicemail message for a neighbor. Rather than presenting himself, Trevor held a printout of this same profile photo in front of the camera. Later, he shared that this had been an intentional choice: he wanted those receiving the message to know who was talking.

Visual Available Designs: fonts, color, textual features. During the module on work life, Alyssa created a CV which stood out for its use of vibrant colors (bright red, turquoise) and modern fonts. She volunteered:

I was trying to get this modern look going on so I didn’t want to use Times New Roman or other fonts ... I wanted something that had the straight... looks modern, looks new, looks fresh... portrays the character better and makes it seem like someone who’s in the times who can get stuff going... marketing.

In this same module, students engaged in an analysis of characters through a Situated Practice activity involving their characters’ CVs. Comparing two CVs, Claire commented on how one candidate’s CV was more professional and organized than the

other because it contained lines and bullet points, while the other was presented through a clumsier layout. Discussing yet another CV, Lauren surmised that the candidate in question was not very organized because of the position of the photo, which appeared to have been pasted haphazardly onto the bottom of the page.

Re-examining Language Views

In addition to directly observing students’ language use practices throughout the course, we were interested in knowing what beliefs learners held about language and language learning after participating in a semester-long GS course framed in multiliteracies (RQ2). Capturing these beliefs represented a way to begin to understand learners’ readiness to embrace an approach to FL teaching and learning whose focus is on meaning in context rather than language as code. Findings for RQ2 are drawn from the post-course BALLI questionnaire from both GS and non-GS sections, semi-structured interviews with participants from the GS section, and midterm questionnaire data from GS participants

| | <u>Strongly agree / Agree</u> | | <u>Neither agree nor disagree</u> | | <u>Strongly disagree / disagree</u> | |
|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------|-----------------------------------|------|-------------------------------------|------|
| | Non-GS | GS | Non-GS | GS | Non-GS | GS |
| Importance of... | | | | | | |
| ...Cultural knowledge | 65 % | 67 % | 18 % | 0 % | 18 % | 33 % |
| ...Vocabulary learning | 35 % | 33 % | 29 % | 45 % | 35 % | 22 % |
| ...Grammar learning | 53 % | 33 % | 35 % | 33 % | 12 % | 33 % |
| ...Repetition and practice | 100 % | 100 % | 0 % | 0 % | 0 % | 0 % |
| Language learning... | | | | | | |
| ...Involves memorization | 88 % | 89 % | 12 % | 0 % | 0 % | 11 % |
| ...Is different than learning other subjects | 88 % | 89 % | 6 % | 11 % | 6 % | 0 % |

Table 6: Post-course Select BALLI Results (GS and non-GS sections)

In analyzing data from the BALLI, we honed in on those questions which relate to specific language learning topics that have historically had an established place within the FL curriculum and where a multiliteracies approach takes a radically different stance. For example, a traditional classroom might prioritize grammar and vocabulary as objects of learning, while a multiliteracies approach sees these as resources for meaning-making. We expected that students in the GS would downplay the importance of these in light of the fact that the GS curriculum fostered an environment where meaning-making was central, and grammar was peripheral. In comparing the BALLI results from the GS and non-GS sections, in fact, students from both course formats seemed to agree on several points. First, all students in both course formats agreed/strongly agreed that language learning involves repetition and practice. Further, the majority of participants from both formats agreed/strongly agreed that language learning involves memorization, and agreed/strongly agreed that language learning is different from other subjects. On the importance of cultural knowledge in language learning, they were similarly aligned, with 67% GS and 65% non-GS students agreeing/strongly agreeing. Their respective responses to the importance of

grammar learning, however, demonstrated a noticeable difference: 53% of the non-GS participants agreed/strongly agreed with its importance compared to only 33% of GS students who agreed/strongly agreed. Further, only 12% of the non-GS students disagreed/strongly disagreed with this point, while 33% of the GS students disagreed/strongly disagreed with the importance of grammar learning. Finally, in terms of the importance of vocabulary learning, GS students seemed to prioritize this more than non-GS students by disagreeing/strongly disagreeing (22% GS; 35% non-GS) with the BALLI statement asserting its importance.

Analysis of the mid-term questionnaire data showed five of eight GS participants mentioned grammar when asked what they would like to spend more classtime doing. Three participants mentioned listening exercises, and one indicated an interest in doing more vocabulary practice. Students' expressed desire to spend more time with explicit grammar instruction even after eight weeks of instruction through this multiliteracies-based GS potentially reflects the depth of impact of prior language learning experiences on their beliefs about the nature of language.

During the post-course semi-structured interviews, several participants offered comments on these issues. Alyssa volunteered that FL learning involves "having to memorize news words, having to conjugate things, that's more similar to other academic work where you have to study, memorize, and then repeat what you memorized". Emma echoed Alyssa's words when she stated: "In language learning, you have to do a lot of memorization", qualifying her statements with "but we did a little bit more than that in this class, I think". Ashley and Tom, much like Emma, agreed that language learning involves some memorization but that it is not the whole story. Ashley explained that "it's not a lot of memorization, ... well there's some of that, you can memorize what you are going to say, but the way you say it, is a totally different process." She further commented that "being able to voice yourself" makes FL learning "different from other subjects". Tom elaborated on some of these points himself:

I feel like a lot of other subjects, there's a lot of memorization, that's an important part of language learning, but in my own experience it's a lot deeper than just memorizing, it's having to understand how things connect and in language there's so many different ways to say things and so many different triggers for expressing yourself and different tenses that I find it... to be much more in depth and complicated than what I study... language can be kind of a combination of the set rules but there's a lot of openness to it as well.

Our findings show that during and after a semester spent in a GS course framed in multiliteracies, several students continued to view language primarily as a code. In their view, language is made up of grammatical paradigms and/or lexical items that can be dissociated from the larger contexts in which they are used, and learned and practiced in isolation. We must note however that the GS participants saw grammar as less important than the non-GS students by the end of the course. One additional, noteworthy result is that although 67% of the GS participants indicated their agreement with the importance of cultural knowledge in language learning, a remaining 33% did not. As put by Kramsch (1993b), "understanding a foreign language and making oneself understood in that language require more than the acquisition of formal skills; learners must be willing to see the world from another perspective," (pp. 8-9); but, as the NLG (1996) contends, "both immersion and many sorts of Overt Instruction are notorious as socializing agents that can render learners quite [...]"

unconscious of the cultural locatedness of meanings and practices” (p. 85). Daniel, in his end of the semester interview, commented: “Most language learning is mostly just learning grammar and it’s not really learning how the language is spoken or acting through it...” We surmise that, in this statement, Daniel is acknowledging the gap that often exists between language instruction that too often amounts to no more than mastering “the fixities” and “learning to adhere to rules” (Byrnes, 2009, p. 5), and language-in-use where the workings of the whole are revealed and a proper appreciation of grammar and language is achievable.

Despite some students’ prevailing views of the importance of linguistic form (i.e. grammar and vocabulary instruction), the views expressed by some students, many of which we reported in our findings, underscore their budding awareness of “form as carrier of meaning, difference in the attribution of meaning, and critical reflection on discourse processes” (Kramsch, 1993b, p. 9). Tom’s explanation of his preference with respect to two texts presented in class^{xi} possibly represents best among all participants the readiness for a pedagogical approach that links forms and social meaning, that teaches difference and change, and that requires distinguishing the voices of society from the particular voice of the individual:

I really liked the video it was really emotional but ... it was a YouTube video that looked like it had been put together by students... I felt sad watching it... but it didn’t really call me to really believe that this was 100% a true situation... the UNICEF [piece] I felt was really a reputable source and seeing those numbers really made it... hit home more...

Rather than “reading” this video in terms of the information it could convey through linguistic form alone (in this case, spoken language), Tom’s reading took into account authorship, social purpose, and publication venue through attention to visual Available Designs, such as logos, and audio designs, such as music, all of which contributed to how he came to interpret the text.

DISCUSSION

The findings reported above demonstrate that a multiliteracies-based GS has the potential to help students move beyond traditional views of language as code and embrace an approach to learning that involves meaning-making across a variety of modes and with respect to specific social identities. Traditionally, memorization of rules and words, good habit formation through drills, memorization of structural patterns, and repetition of language forms, have been at the core of FL instruction and have typically been viewed by learners as important to FL learning. Chavez (2011) has underscored that it is possible that learners “see little wrong with the lack of connection between classroom instruction and real-life language-use practices” (p. 94). Only one participant (Daniel) alluded to this discrepancy and seemed to accept it as matter of fact. In her study, Chavez found that learners referred to themselves as consumers, not users, of the target language. What learners value and say they want to see in FL instruction is likely due to the fact that this is all they know. We suspect that this was exactly what was happening at midterm, when a majority of the participants were asking for more grammar and vocabulary practice in their course evaluation.

Student perceptions of a lack of vocabulary as a hindrance to enacting their characters’ social identities suggests not so much a dearth of words, but perhaps rather an overemphasis

on vocabulary as primary conveyor of meaning, a further carry-over from prior socialization in traditional FL instructional methods. Citing Twaddell (1980), Zimmerman (1997) notes that “language learners often overvalue word knowledge and equate it with knowledge of the language” (p. 12). Rivers (1981) has suggested that attention to vocabulary early on in language instruction contributes to this belief, and that students “often fail to realize that meaning is expressed in groups of words and in combinations of language segments” (p. 254). In fact, students in the GS were indeed able to express meaning through other linguistic resources than vocabulary, such as in two students’ use of grammar as a resource for conveying identity (Tom) and relationships (Claire).

Students’ reactions to the terms *gardien* and *concierge* also hint at prior language learning influences. Although four students agreed with the importance of using the title *gardien*, three of these students’ reflections were limited to thinking referentially about this term while only one student reflected on connotations. Dewaele (2004) recaps Bijvoet’s (2002) observation that

language teaching is...traditionally more concerned with word phonology, morphology, lexico-syntax and denotative word meanings rather than with ‘associative word meaning (consisting of connotations and stylistic properties)’ ... [w]hile denotations are shared by large groups of speakers, connotations are shared by particular communities of practice and are much more dynamic. (Dewaele, 2004, p. 130)

Located outside of the communities of practice in which a *gardien* or *concierge* has been an important figure, FL students do not have a full range of conventionalized associations. Indeed, a GS offers the potential to simulate these authentic communities of practice, and considerable attention within the simulation was given to the role of the *concierge* in an *immeuble* in France through various textual genres and discussions. It is suspected that a GS carried out daily rather than once per week could be even more effective in this socialization into communities of practice and into various associative meanings of specific language forms.

Although some participants continued to believe in the importance of grammar and vocabulary learning, practice, and memorization, they simultaneously demonstrated that meaning-making does not rely solely on practicing and repeating language forms. Through several reported comments, it is evident that some participants were aware that “linguistic forms are only one system of signs among many that people use to give meaning to their environment” (Kramsch & Andersen, 1999, p. 32) and that other signs such as gestures, facial expressions, body movements, proxemics, and images, are also resources that can be drawn upon to make meaning. For the majority of the GS participants, what their character expressed and how he or she did so remained central; why he or she chose certain forms of expression based on interlocutor and communicative purpose, and how he or she chose to express interest, support, etc. were also very much part of the communication choices students made, as discussed by many participants in their interviews.

Literacy is linked to one’s relationship to society and one’s ability to develop expertise in certain discourses, an ability that rests on being apprenticed into complex social practices through supported interaction with people who have already developed this expertise (Gee, 2001). In other words, one becomes literate through ways of being in the world, through learning how to act, talk, write, and think according to different social identities. In the FL classroom, apprenticing in designing meaning is achieved through a combination of

collaborative student-student interaction, expressive talk and writing, engagement with texts, consideration of important questions, and the active role of the instructor who can act as facilitator, guide or expert depending on what the situation calls for.

Students' ability, by the end of the course, to describe how their character's identity motivated certain design choices in both linguistic and non-linguistic semiotic modes is a reflection of this in- and out-of-class socialization. Throughout the GS course, students were habitually asked to reflect upon authors, audiences, and purposes of particular texts and were guided through Overt Instruction activities in linking their interpretations back to the designed texts before them. Chavez (2011) has remarked that curricular practices and student expectations are interdependent and for the latter to change, the former has to be altered significantly across all levels of the curriculum, as learners begin forming personal theories of not just language but also language learning very early on.

Limitations and Future Directions

The findings of this study can only be considered in light of its limitations. First, fewer than half of the enrolled students in all sections consented to participate in this study and only one third of the class completed the midterm evaluation, the BALLI questionnaire, and the interview. Thus the final pool of participants may not represent the opinions of the students enrolled in these courses. The reasons which motivated learners to participate in this study or not, and whether or not to follow through with all components, are likely diverse and are unknown to the researchers. Furthermore, we can only surmise whether the instructional experience the participants had in the GS course resulted in the outcomes reported; it is not known to what extent students' prior language background and education may have impacted our findings. We did not solicit instructor beliefs about language learning and thus cannot discuss the students' beliefs in light of their instructor beliefs and consequent approaches. Additionally, only part of the course under study was devoted to the GS, and textbook-related activities carried out during the other days may have impacted our findings. In the planned follow up to this pilot, the incorporation of pre- and post- course questionnaires will allow for tracing of development of language beliefs over time. Additionally, reflective learning portfolios collected at multiple time-points throughout the semester have the potential to shed light on multiple literacies development over time.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Overall, the GS carried out through a multiliteracies-, genre-based approach appears to provide an effective context for promoting FL literacy development. For all students, adopting a character role incited conscious awareness of the choices they made in self-presentation and communication, including choice of attire, appropriate topics, register, and tone. Indeed students were aware of the interrelationship between *situated identities* and *social languages* (Gee, 2011b) and were able to articulate how particular semiotic choices worked to design meaning. Nevertheless, this awareness was not always manifest in specific language choices students made in the name of their characters. This lack of awareness suggests a need to expose students to a broader range of language varying in register through a wide selection of authentic materials drawn from a range of genres, with their respective discourse conventions and authorial purposes. Additionally, our findings suggest a need for Critical Framing activities at the outset around specific LC2 discourses in order to help learners

situate textual practices and literacy events in terms of author, speaker, and audience. As Swaffar and Arens (2005) suggest, FL programs

must set themselves the intellectual goal of enabling students to encode the multiple literacies [...] that they encounter in a FL context and its texts - to deal with culture and its communicative forms as mutually informing systems. That is, from the outset of instruction, students must learn to consider who speaks or writes to what audience, in what ways, from what perspective, and with what demand, language must be considered as a set of culture-based performances, situated in various public, private, and disciplinary contexts. (p. 20)

In other words, immersion in texts (*Situated Practice*) must go beyond asking students to relate the what and the how of designing meaning to include reflection on the who of the identities being indexed.

Although a fourth semester GS course framed in multiliteracies is certainly a step in the right direction, it is not enough. A number of scholars (e.g., Maxim 2009b, Maxim et al. 2013; Rinner & Weigert, 2006) have problematized the bridge course, an attempt by many FL programs to handle the transition between lower level language courses and upper level content or literature courses. Others (Byrnes, 2008; Paesani & Allen, 2012; Redmann, 2005; Swaffar, 2006) have referred to this gap between the language and content courses, and have underscored that the goal of linking content and form cannot be accomplished by a single course (Byrnes, 2005; Crane, 2006; Maxim, 2006). Framing FL instruction in multiliteracies at the beginning of the FL undergraduate four-year sequence is essential in order to apprentice learners into new practices, beliefs, values, attitudes, ways of thinking about language and language learning, and also to restore the “intellectual identity for foreign language studies that anchor its teaching in multiple textualities and genres in a variety of cultural contexts” (Swaffar & Arens, 2005, p. 11). Accomplishing this goal means, as outlined for example by Kern (1995) and Chavez (2011), “maintain[ing] an early communicative focus and inject[ing] literacy tasks from the very beginning” (Kern 1995, p. 83) as a way to set the stage for intermediate and advanced FL courses.

Despite the limitations mentioned above, we have nonetheless demonstrated the potential of a GS curriculum in the development of multiliteracies. Further research which takes into account greater numbers of students will more effectively elucidate the effect and scope of literacy development. In addition to the pedagogical interventions already mentioned above, future iterations of this course will be greatly enhanced through the implementation of a broader range of assessments throughout the semester (e.g. dialogic interviews) which have the potential to play a formative role for students in their nascent understanding of language as a social semiotic system. Additionally, studies comparing literacy-based GS courses with traditional FL teaching will undoubtedly contribute meaningfully to the ongoing discussions related to multiliteracies curriculum development in lower-level FL courses.

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Appendix A: Sample Modules from Global Simulation Curriculum

| | | Week 2 | Week 7 |
|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Textbook Focus | Textbook Unit | Chapter 1 Friendship | Chapter 3 Gender equity |
| Discourse continuum | Discourses | Primary | Primary/Secondary |
| GS Module | GS Theme | Personal Relations | Work life |
| GS Module | GS Focus | "L'autportrait" ("The self-portrait") | "Un nouveau gardien" ("A new caretaker") |
| GS Module | GS Goals | Moving in; Neighborly encounters | Home relations; Work relations |
| Language goals | Language functions | Describing self and others; Greeting people; Making introductions; Describing places and things; Asking informational questions | Comparing; Contrasting; Generalizing; Expressing and supporting opinions; Asking clarifying questions; Persuading; Cause and effect; Drawing conclusions |
| | Language forms | Present tense verbs; adjectives | Adverbs; comparisons |
| | Primary Genres | Blogs | Magazine article (online) |
| Texts | Texts: | Autoportraits écrits par les élèves en cours de Français Jeux d'écrit Autoportrait/JE écrit par MOI écrit par MOI-MÊME écrit par [vide] | Rue 89: Remi, gardien de l'immeuble |
| | Secondary Genres | Music video, paintings | Photos |
| | Texts: | Autoportrait - Johnny Halliday | Photos of people (possible "concierge" candidates) |
| Activities | Situated Practice | Extract adjectives from text; complete wiki grid on Google Doc in small groups, noting adjectives to describe physical features, character traits, put in columns based on positive or negative descriptors; review text for descriptions of daily activities | Create hypertext lexical glosses on a whole-class wiki |
| | Overt Instruction | What is a self-portrait? | Discussion of functions of "la concierge" in France (pre-discussion reflection on group wiki, then whole-class discussion) |
| | Critical Framing | Genre comparisons: discussion of social purpose behind texts, authorship, analysis of variation of linguistic form based on genre, analysis of how multimodal textual elements work to create meaning | Discussion of stereotypical conceptions of la concierge; Moodle forum: how important is the title (concierge vs. gardien?); |
| | Transformed Practice | Write own self-portrait for GS character | Reflections on the new "gardien" (Facebook posts as character) |

Appendix B: Questions for Semi-structured Interviews

BALLI and Beliefs about Language Learning

1. On the language learning survey, question number 27 asks the extent to which you agree with the statement: “Learning a foreign language is different than learning other academic subjects.” Your response to this question was (insert response). Can you say more about this... in what ways is learning a foreign language different from other subjects?

Character Development

2. In the Global Simulation you created a character named _____. Describe your character in a few sentences.
3. In selecting a name for your character, you were given a list of choices of common French names, which were popular in a particular decade. How did you decide on (character name)?
4. In creating your Facebook profile for (character name) you had unlimited, unconstrained choices in terms of photos to use for your banner and for your profile photo. What led you to choose the photos you chose?

Language Use and Social Roles

5. Some of the communication that took place in this class was as yourself (for example in the online Forums) while some took place as your character (for example on Facebook). To what extent did you think about whose voice you were speaking out of? Did that influence your choice of language when posting?
6. In the Facebook posts, often you were posting responses to various neighbors from the apartment building. To what extent did you think about the language you were going to use, based on whomever you were addressing?

Web 2.0

7. In this course we used several Web 2.0 tools to carry out various goals of the course (Moodle Forums, Moodle chat, Facebook, Wikis (through Google Docs). In what ways were these various tools conducive to your learning or in what ways did they hinder your learning and how?

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NOTES

ⁱ We are borrowing from Gee's (2002) notion of social languages and identities as described here: "To know any specific social language is to know *how its characteristic design resources are combined to enact specific socially-situated identities and social activities*. To know a particular social language is to be able to *do* a particular identity or to be able to recognize such an identity..." (p. 162, emphasis in original).

ⁱⁱ Levine (2004) has described Global Simulation as "simultaneously an approach, a set of classroom techniques, and the conceptual framework for a syllabus" (p. 26).

ⁱⁱⁱ Haussmannian buildings are widely spread in Paris and are icons of neo-classic architecture. They have the same number of floors and same architectural elements on their facades. They have been described by some (Lepoutre, 2010) as a synthesis of the Parisian social hierarchy, with the bourgeoisie living on the second floor, civil servants and employees on the third and fourth, low-wage workers, house staff, students, and the poor on the fifth under the roof.

^{iv} Although the curricular planning grid laid out a progression of topics along a primary-secondary discourse continuum, there was no a priori story framework. Rather, the grid allowed for the structure to guide the activities all the while leaving room for the story to emerge week by week.

^v Facebook Pages are primarily used for marketing and promotion purposes of an artist, a business, a non-profit organization, a cause, etc.

^{vi} Eyejot is a client-free, online video-messaging platform.

^{vii} Character job interviews took place in succession in front of the class with five students who volunteered to have their character participate in the recorded interview with a guest "human resources director". Students whose characters were not interviewed played observer roles, reflecting on discourse styles in the interactional setting of the interview. Video was recorded solely of interview participants and not observers.

^{viii} Horwitz (1988) underscored the importance of examining learner beliefs about language and language learning, noting that the classroom environment can challenge learners' pre-conceived notions and may result in the reshaping or appropriation of new views.

^{ix} Different configurations of participants completed each data source activity.

^x Recent articles and books discuss the evolution and differences between "concierger" and "gardien" (Bonnin, de Villanova, & Basile, 2006; Marchal, 2007; Stébé & Broner, 2000).

^{xi} Students had read a textbook graph of facts and figures related to human trafficking and globalization, then watched a video on this same topic which had been produced by three students for a class project and available on YouTube. Tom had expressed in a class discussion forum that he had found the textbook facts to be the more effective of the two at conveying its message because it had been produced by UNICEF.