

Appendix 4

First Documentation of Hellenisms

XIII Cent.	XVI Cent.	XVII Cent.	XVIII Cent.	XIX Cent.	XX Cent.
anatema (amb.)	asma (f)	anagrama (m)	aforisma (f)	adenoma (m)	angioma (m)
clima (m)	broma (f)	apotegma (m)	calima (f)	aneurisma(amb)	*eczema (m)
corma (f)	chusma (f)	aroma (m) (f)	crema (f)	coma (m)	enzima (amb)
crisma (amb.)	diafragma (m)	axioma (m)	estigma (m)	enema (both)	fonema (m)
fantasma (m)	dilema (m)	carisma (m)	gama (f)	erotema (f)	sarcoma (m)
flema (f)	dogma (m)	diploma (m)	lema (m)	*esquema (m)	glaucoma (m)
	*dracma(amb)	drama (m)	prisma (m)	estoma (f)	soma (m) ¹
	edema (m)	emblema (m)	sistema (m)	*neuma (m)	trauma (m)
XIV Cent.	esperma (amb)	enigma (m)		numisma (m)	
	estratagama (f)	idioma (m)		programa (m)	
bizma (f)	nema (f)	jalma (f)			
calma (f)	(a)pócima (f)	panorama (m)			
cima (f)	plasma (m)	poema (m)			
*cisma(m)	tema(m)	problema (m)			
postema (f)		reuma (amb.)			
		síntoma (m)			
		sofisma (m)			
XV Cent.		teorema (m)			NOT DATED
coma (f)					diagrama (m)
diadema (f)					paradigma (m)
					sintagma (m)

*Words have undergone a gender change since 1958.

¹ *Soma* is not dated in Corominas, but *somático* appears in 1925 (4:217), hence we assume the same date for *soma*.

Building the Bridge: The Combination of Transitional Courses and the Study Abroad Experience

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Introduction

A far too common problem faced in most advanced-level foreign language classrooms is the under-prepared or ill-equipped student. This problem is often identified as language gap wherein students are incapable of reading lengthy and original texts in the upper-level courses. In addition, students complain that foreign language programs move too abruptly from classes focused on language acquisition and development of the four learning skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) to those of literature or culture where a significant amount of reading is required, and moreover, where an advanced linguistic knowledge is assumed. Furthermore, foreign language instructors often refuse to teach grammar in the more advanced content courses because they feel that grammatical knowledge should be acquired in the lower-level sequence. Based on instructor complaints and student criticisms, perhaps it is time to consider the implementation of transitional courses which are specifically designed to aid in bridging the students' gaps of knowledge from the lower-level courses to the advanced, more content-based, classes.

Transitional courses aim to advance the students' knowledge about the foreign culture and literature while implementing manageable authentic literary and cultural texts, grammar activities, and a continual recycling of the language skills. This article will address the methods I have used to develop transitional courses in conjunction with the study abroad experience. I will first discuss the problem of language gap faced by many foreign language professors. Second, I will present the program I established abroad, which includes a description of the

transitional courses and discussion of the integral role that the host family plays in providing valuable input for the students. I will then present the techniques I have used in class to help equip students with the proper language tools needed to transition into the advanced level coursework. Finally, I will discuss the students' feedback regarding the program as it relates to the transitional courses they took and to the study abroad experience itself.

The problem

In my three short but telling years as a French professor, I have witnessed the following problem time and time again. In my lower-level courses, students are capable of accurately using complicated verb structures when those structures are taught in isolation during any given chapter. But it seems that when a particular grammar element is no longer the focus of the chapter, once in the advanced courses, those same students struggle to make grammatically correct statements using those difficult forms. For example, when I taught my first upper-level French conversation course (a 300-level course), there was a unit on asking for and giving advice which required the imperfect tense paired with the conditional mood (*Si j'étais toi, je ferais...*). Later in the unit, students were expected to offer opinions and suggestions while manipulating the subjunctive mood (*Je veux que tu...*). I naively expected the students to be successful in using the targeted forms, only to find that once working with pairs, there was indeed a language gap, and the students defaulted to English when working on the exercises. It did not occur to me that these students, all of whom successfully completed the lower-level sequence, would have already forgotten how to form those targeted grammatical structures when they were capable of doing so in the previous language courses. It was during that semester when I decided that upper-level courses needed some sort of restructuring, specifically one in which the language gap was reduced, which would lead to more success in advanced language courses.

The problem of language gap becomes more serious in the upper level, more content-based courses when students are required to write essays or research papers, both of which require complex verb forms and other sophisticated grammatical elements, and the students no longer have a working control of such structures. Instead of focusing on the content of the paper or essay, professors of these advanced courses

find themselves correcting silly grammatical errors that should have been avoided by students who should have already acquired such skills because professors of these advanced courses generally expect students to be proficient in oral and written communication in the development of a second language (Graman 1987). This disparity of expectations creates a gap between lower-division courses on the one hand, and upper-division courses on the other.

What happened, then, between the end of the second year sequence and the upper-level courses? During the first two years of foreign language coursework, the focus is on the development of basic interpersonal communicative skills used in a contextualized, informal, and cognitively undemanding environment (Cummins 1992, 1984). Instruction is focused on the acquisition of the four language skills (speaking, reading, writing, and listening). In addition, it is during this two-year sequence that grammar, vocabulary, and culture are explored and recycled. Once finished with the two-year base, students are expected to have a working knowledge of their foreign language grammar, yet professors find that there are gaps in what the students know (Dupuy and Krashen 1998; Gonzales-Berry 1996; Graman 1987; Harlow and Muyskens 1994). The upper-level courses are ones in which content is primary. Grammar is no longer explicitly taught, and so it would appear that as grammar is no longer practiced and recycled it is pushed further away from the students' working knowledge. The old saying "out of sight, out of mind" seems appropriate for describing this dilemma. Alas, this is the reality in which professors and students alike find themselves. In an effort to bridge this information gap for my own students, I have developed two transitional courses that are offered during the study abroad experience. My courses are designed to help effectively transform intermediate foreign language students into capable learners and competent users of foreign language structures in advanced courses. With its emphasis on real-life communication, an immersion setting allows foreign language students to take part in genuine (as opposed to make-believe or contrived) communicative activities, which may not completely bridge the gap, but would narrow it. Real-life experience in the immersion setting of this study abroad program involves the authentically communicative use of the language. Piaget (1985) supports the notion that such empirical work with language is usually necessary in all learning, especially before conceptualizing can successfully take place. Furthermore, students will

develop language in environments where they have an immediate need to use language (MacNamara 1973). Piaget agrees with this idea of immediate need. He refers to this concept as "a momentary disequilibrium and its satisfaction as reequilibration." He points out that there is an important distinction between "needs in general and the 'question' as the initial and necessary moment of the act of intelligence" (p 23). Piaget's constructivist theory of intelligence argues that cognitive and linguistic development cannot take place simply through the stimulation of "being taught." People learn by doing. People naturally encounter this immediate need when they are using language as it is normally used, to understand and express ideas. Therefore, foreign language students construct language when they have an immediate and genuine need to understand and express themselves (MacNamara 1973).

In learning language, the need to use language, in the Piagetian sense, is a matter of authenticity. Students must have the opportunity to involve themselves in real, rather than artificial, concerns in their use of language in order to learn from it. Authentic linguistic experiences entail analyzing human problems and ideas generated from discussions, readings, and dialogues about real and interesting themes which touch students' lives and help them explore ideas and grow intellectually and emotionally (Freire 1970). Such experience provides the initial and necessary moments for learning. With such a genuine need, students have a natural incentive to focus on the perceptual data of language they encounter, the interest and a reason to act to communicate at different points in time, and the opportunity to compare and coordinate these experiences in order to assimilate language while accommodating their developing linguistic structures in an on-going process of linguistic construction.

Overview of the study abroad program

In order to be considered for the study abroad experience at my institution, students must have completed the two-year lower-level sequence (101, 102, 201, and 202). The study abroad program spans a four-week period and takes place in Avignon, France, where I rent classroom space at the Institute for American Universities (IAU). This program is designed to allow a group of students from my institution to travel together and to have the comfort of a familiar instructor while at the same time reaping the benefits of a true immersion experience.

Each student lives with a host family who provides the student with daily meals, a bedroom, laundry service, and the unique opportunity to speak only in the target language as most of them do not speak an English. The homes are within easy walking distance of the school, and all families are selected and overseen by IAU.

The study abroad program includes three required excursions outside of class to neighboring cities (Arles, Nîmes, and Cassis). The excursions are designed as a "field-trip" of sorts, to inform and educate the students. Additionally, the excursions allow students to learn outside of the classroom, and to experience French culture as it is lived day-to-day. Students admire the ancient Roman ruins (*les Arènes*, *la Maison Carrée*), they climb atop the *Pont du Gard* and imagine life as it was 2000 years ago, they take guided tours of the *calanques* in Cassis, they savour local cuisine, and they speak French while doing all of this.

As part of this study abroad program, students enroll in two courses: *Discussion de Textes*,¹ which introduces students to a wide range of literary texts and includes supplementary grammar instruction, and *Études Contemporaines*,² which presents students with the current social and cultural realities of France. The courses are designed to strengthen the students' foreign language skills while challenging them to read and understand authentic texts and readings written for native speakers of French. The courses complement one another because several of the themes discussed in *Études Contemporaines* (religion, immigration, sexuality, and education) are paired with the readings from the authentic texts of *Discussion de Textes*. In this way, students are presented with two very different courses that "fit" together nicely for the purposes of discussions, lectures, and homework assignments. For example, while reading about the sexuality of youth (sex, pregnancies, birth control, etc.) in the course on culture, I assign a complementary reading from the *Discussion de Textes* class, *L'amour au Val-Fourré*, written by the young pop star Faudel, who tells about the sexual life of young Arabs in the *banlieue* of Paris.³ In this manner, students read both objective and subjective information regarding the sexual life of young French people. The contemporary culture text presents background information, statistics, and interesting facts about the situation in France today, while the article by Faudel recounts a personal perspective of a young Muslim male who lives in a culture in which sex is considered taboo. These two views provide students with

rich information that then helps them to form a framework regarding sexuality in French culture.

Since students live with French host families, I assign homework that requires nightly interaction with the family. In this way, the immersion experience provides students with a unique opportunity to raise questions, to gain cultural perspective, and to dialogue in the target language. By obliging the students to interview their hosts on topics covered in class, the families become a valuable, living resource from which the students gain knowledge of, understanding of, and access into the French world. The families share views, opinions, beliefs, and insights on the cultural topics under investigation. The interviews will be discussed in further detail at a later point in this article.

Classroom techniques

The combination of the study abroad experience and transitional courses promotes a high level of foreign language production and comprehension which can be achieved by incorporating a variety of classroom techniques: requiring daily use of the four language skills, implementing active learning strategies, assigning presentations that place students in the role of "instructor," and requiring nightly interaction and interviewing of the host families. Following the explanation of the techniques, I will present the students' perceptions of their study abroad experience: what they feel they learned, what benefited them most, and how they feel they improved in their language skills.

First, every class period requires the use of all four of the foreign language skills. For instance, students watch videos, listen to lectures and presentations, and generate discussions in French. They are required to speak only in French, both inside and outside of the classroom while with their classmates or me. During class, they engage in small-group activities which mandate the use of their oral communication skills. They write class notes and exercises in the target language, and they engage in daily reading of authentic French texts. Class discussions primarily focus on the material from the text, but I do supplement class with grammatical activities and explanations, comprehension questions, pair discussion questions, and small-group activities, all of which are used to challenge the students' capabilities. By designing a class period that requires students to engage in all four language skills, I am assured

that they are recycling material, sharpening their minds, and improving in the acquisition of the foreign language. To complement skill use, regularly implement small-group and pair work during daily class sessions which support the cooperative learning model (see Shaw 1997; Slavin 1995). This offers students the opportunity for greater participation and use of the target language in less stressful situations. I encourage cooperative learning in my transitional courses because this particular model lets students share responsibility and work together to complete tasks. Dupuy suggests using small-group work, team learning, jigsaw reading, and peer editing as being among the many techniques used for cooperative learning because they "provide students with ample opportunities to interact, share ideas, test hypotheses, and construct knowledge together in a low-risk forum" (207).

During class time, I draw upon Bonwell's examples of enhanced lectures which are used as a means to promote active learning in the foreign language classroom. In order to ensure that students develop language most successfully, it is useful to provide students with lecture outlines, to deliver them clearly, and to make special effort to spiral and recycle language and content which can facilitate understanding. These enhanced lectures keep students from becoming passive learners. Rather, it requires them to take an active role, to be fully engaged, and to be responsible for providing content to the class. Examples of enhanced lecture exercises include the pause procedure, short writes, think-pair-share, lecture summaries, discussion questions, (ungraded) quizzes, and games (Bonwell 1995, 35-6). The key to success when using enhanced lectures is to create assignments that encourage student responsibility. These could include answering associated study questions, developing summaries, or solving problems that are turned in at the beginning of class. In this way, students come to class with some knowledge about the given topic, and are ready to discuss and use the information during class time. This preparedness on the part of the students makes for a successful classroom experience, one in which students actively participate and produce in the target language.

In both of the study abroad courses, I require student presentations. During the presentation, students take on the role of "instructor" and inform the class about a pre-selected topic related to the course material. Students receive the grading rubric ahead of time that allows them to know in advance what criteria will be important in terms of their grade. They are asked to not only present on the topic, but to ask

insightful questions of their classmates, and to prepare a pedagogical activity that is related to their presentation. This form of "student-led" classroom activity gives the students a real sense of responsibility, not only for their own learning, but for the learning of their peers. I have found that their presentations, questions, and activities are quite creative, and allow for continued use and practice of the four learning skills because students are required to read, to write, to speak or to listen in order to respond to the presentation or to the activity. This role of "instructor" encourages the students to become independent, self-learners. Because of the added responsibility of creating questions and an activity that follows their oral presentation, students are more prepared and knowledgeable about their own topic. They are able to present (and not read), they make eye contact, they speak the target language with little effort, and they are able to convey ideas to their peers because of the extra time and effort spent in the preparation stages for their presentation. By requiring the students to play "instructor" for part of the class, they understand the importance of being fully prepared to "teach" the class. In turn, their classmates understand the material because it is viewed as different or exciting as it comes from a peer and not exclusively from the instructor. Student-led presentations and activities allow students to flourish in the classroom. They transform into prepared, organized, and motivated learners who are engaged in the material.

Interviews with the host family provide an excellent avenue through which learning occurs. First, the conversations and interviews take place in the target language, requiring students to work on their oral communication and listening skills. In addition, students are required to write notes as they dialogue with their families. Their notes present me with proof of the conversation and further develop their foreign language writing skills. During the interview, students ask questions of the host family in an effort to gain a sort of "French perspective" on different topics (marriage and the family, education, religion, politics, immigration, holidays and leisure activities, and daily life). The interview questions are provided on the syllabus and serve as a starting point for the interview.⁴ As the interview continues and the conversation develops further, students gain insight into the opinions, thoughts, and ideas of their host families. This in turn gives them a framework from which to build further knowledge on the themes. Once in class (the following day), students share their interview experience

with their classmates. Often times they elaborate on interesting details learned during the conversation with their host families. This discussion of interviews acts as a springboard for sharing ideas about the cultural topic. It provides a great way to introduce a new topic, and to lead into it further through the readings in the text. Students find that by first dialoguing with their families, they have some basic knowledge on a specific topic, and it makes for more engaged students during their reading assignments because the topic is already somewhat familiar to them. The host family, then, provides an authentic component in the study of French culture.

Student Feedback

Students were asked to fill out a course evaluation questionnaire upon completion of their study abroad experience. They made general comments regarding their language development, the transitional courses, and their host families. Students indicated having made gains in their language skills (see Appendix A). Their reactions to the courses were overwhelmingly positive because they felt that they had learned a great deal.

With regard to the host family, all students expressed that they had established a good relationship with the family and appreciated the family's willingness to spend time with them to practice their language skills and discuss French culture and customs. Some students were invited to attend family gatherings, parties, and other social events. One in particular loved to sing and was invited to attend her host mom's choir practice. For several students, the weekend provided an opportunity to travel to the Mediterranean Sea with their families during which they experienced an entire weekend free from English language use. Living with host families allows the students to not only dialogue with native speakers but to use these native speakers as a resource with which to better understand the French culture. Students are generally very satisfied with their families and find that in a short amount of time, positive relationships and good bonds form between the two.

Conclusion

The pairing of study abroad experience with designed transitional courses was effective in providing an opportunity in which intermediate

level students of foreign languages could enhance their language skills. They developed more positive attitudes toward the target language, showed increased self-confidence in their ability to use the target language, and expressed an interest in further pursuing their French studies. When students returned from their study abroad experience, they had transformed into capable foreign language users. They now hesitate less before speaking, they understand more aurally, they are able to use grammatical structures more correctly, and their pronunciation and word choice are more accurate. Because the study abroad experience provided a true "immersion" experience in the foreign language, students' knowledge increased tremendously and their ability to use and manipulate the language increased. The combination of language practice and course material proved successful not only in enhancing the students' linguistic and cultural knowledge but also in better preparing them to meet the demands of the advanced-level language classroom. Participants returned from France armed with the tools needed for further language study.

I have presented some strategies that call for regular use and continual recycling of the four language skills, implementation of the active learning model, student-led presentations and activities, and the resource of using the host family to aid in the teaching of French culture, all of which have proven successful in my transitional classes. Through the creation of transitional courses combined with the study abroad experience, I am helping to build the bridge from the lower-level to advanced-level foreign language courses. The two have proven to be a greatly needed partnership, one that was missing from the foreign language curriculum.

Of course, I do realize that not all language professors have the opportunity to lead a study abroad nor do all foreign language students have the financial means or desire to study abroad. I do feel, however, that the techniques and strategies I used to develop my transitional courses can be implemented successfully on campus. I understand that a study abroad offers an immersion experience, during which students are completely surrounded by the French language: on the bus, in the streets, at restaurants, and with their host families. The benefit to immersion is that it jump-starts the brain and permits the students to begin thinking in the target language rather than to perform the endless task of translating thoughts from English to French or vice versa. However, transitional courses can be beneficial outside of the study

abroad context. If instructors and students convert the classroom into a meeting place where they share ideas, orally and in writing, much like people do in their first language, they will be providing the necessary and sufficient conditions for learning language. Additionally, when instructors of the advanced-level coursework begin implementing some of the strategies described above, they will aid in equipping their students with the proper foreign language tools and find that they are building the bridge that will transition their lower-level students into capable and competent users of foreign languages.

Appendix A

Students' responses to the questionnaire

1. Do you think your language skills have improved as a result of the academic aspect of this Study Abroad program?

"My listening comprehension as well as my speaking skills improved tremendously."

"Most definitely. Reading and writing come much easier to me now."

"Yes very much so. I found myself holding conversations without planning and saying things I didn't know I knew!"

2. What were the best things about the courses?

"The small group setting."

"I really enjoyed learning about contemporary French culture while experiencing it."

"In the culture course, I found that the interview portion really forced me to get to know my host family—which is a good thing!"

"I feel that both courses were conducted in such a manner that they were able to cater to individual students."

3. Please describe the level of satisfaction with your host family and the accommodations provided.

"The mother, son, and student (who rents a room from the family) were so welcoming. I consider them friends now."

"I LOVED my host mom!"

"I LOVED it! My parents were amazing and I would definitely recommend them."

NOTES

¹ I used Furry and Jarausch's *Bonne continuation: Approfondissement à l'écrit et à l'oral*, 2nd edition, because it provides students with a variety of discourse types: French and Francophone short stories, poems, songs, and expository selections such as newspaper articles, art reviews, historical discussions, calls to political action, or letters. In addition, I incorporate other forms of authentic materials to supplement the readings and discussions. Cartoons, magazines, advertisements, and brochures are all viable texts for studying the content area.

² I used Edmiston and Duménil's *La France Contemporaine*, 3rd édition. I worked primarily with the chapters on cultural and social life (Chapters 9-14). Written entirely in French, this text offers comprehensive information that is appropriate for intermediate to advanced learners of French.

³ *L'amour au Val-Fourré* is an article found in *Bonne continuation: Approfondissement à l'écrit et à l'oral*, 2nd édition.

⁴ Examples of interview questions are provided. Pour Interview 1: Qu'est-ce que votre famille aime faire pendant les vacances? Où passe-t-elle ses vacances? Pourquoi? Quand? Quelles sortes de loisirs aime-t-elle faire? Est-ce que c'est similaire aux loisirs des Américains?

Pour Interview 10 : Demandez si votre famille a des souvenirs de l'origine du voile musulmane? Comment est-ce que les Français ont réagi en général? Comment sont les relations entre les différentes religions en France, dans son opinion? Comment est-ce qu'elle voit les relations?

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