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Introduction

Allen G. Wood

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INTRODUCTION

As we go to press at the end of 2012, uncertainty runs high concerning global business and the world's interconnected economies. Although many gains have occurred in most sectors since the dismal days of 2008, these economies are nonetheless threatened from many different sources. The United States faces a "fiscal cliff," which, if not averted, could lead to a recession and increased unemployment. The eurozone, while temporarily stable, has systemic problems that will curtail growth in general for several more years, and cause some member economies to impose severe austerity measures. And China, which has for years shown impressive annual growth, is experiencing a slowdown in its pace. All these challenges require a return to basic, sound principles, and demand a professional workforce that is competent in business and able to effectively communicate across national borders.

The articles we have assembled for the 2012 collection represent many different approaches to studying communication across linguistic borders and improving understanding of another culture in order to forge partnerships on a solid basis of mutual respect. The articles discuss matters across a wide range of languages, and we wish to remind our readers that much of the instructional methodology can be transferred, with some adjustments, from one language/culture to another. A classroom project on German business Web sites, for instance, may be readily adapted for a French or Chinese classroom using many of the same kinds of exercises.

As has been our practice for the past two years, we provide these articles in both print form and online at <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/gbl/>. In assembling the articles for the printed edition, we have decided to begin with articles that address some more general questions in the discipline, followed by articles that focus on a more specific aspect of business language instruction. In "Shifting the Curriculum to Language for Specific Purposes," Jennifer L. M. Gerndt makes the case for expanding course offerings in business language, claiming that those of us teaching Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) courses need to argue our case better. She lists the linguistic and cultural advantages of LSP instruction, as well as the global perspective and skills needed to engage in the professional world, among the reasons for adding more courses in our field. Instructors of business languages need to be better aware of the professional skills required from our students as they enter the workforce, as examined in Darcy Lear's article "Preparing Business Language Students

to Meet Employer Needs.” In order to meet expectations of professional behavior, she proposes activities involving email etiquette, effective ways to request action (letters of recommendation), and constructing a good cover letter. Michael Hager’s study “Culture: The Basis for Learning Business in a Foreign Language” begins with a useful review of critical materials on the role of culture learning in second language (L2) learning. It next stresses the need for an integrative approach to the teaching of language and culture, as exemplified by classroom exercises of writing a *Lebenslauf* (resume) that meets German criteria, and then proceeds to mock interviews.

The importance of first-hand experience with another culture is explored in Carlos Coria-Sánchez’s article “Lived Experiences in a Mexican Business Context.” Students need authentic materials and the real-life knowledge that comes with time spent in the target country, and also from interviews with native professionals. The next article takes a similar approach, focusing on one highly successful business professional in order for students to learn from interviews and real materials in the target language about the general and business culture in Mexico. In “Culture, Constructivism, and Media: Designing a Module on Carlos Slim,” Roberto Rey Agudo focuses upon the life and business practices of the wealthiest man in the world in his classroom exercise that uses constructional approaches to gaining cultural competence. Individual success stories are also used in Christine Uber Grosse’s “Intercultural Management Cases for the Business Language Class.” The three men studied who “effectively lead across cultures” are Jack Ma of China’s Alibaba, Carlos Ghosn of France and Japan’s Renault-Nissan Alliance, and Ratan Tata of India’s Tata Group. She uses their stories to develop situation analysis and problem-solving skills.

Most research on business language instruction centers on written materials, yet the article “Online Business Chinese Speaking Instruction: A *Speak Everywhere* Speaking Program for *Practical Business Chinese*” by Bailu Li, Atsushi Fukada, and Wei Hong examines the importance of oral practice in language learning. It then describes *Speak Everywhere*, a program Professor Fukada developed and applied to a Chinese textbook, which has language and cultural enhancement activities that are used outside the classroom for students to record, replay, and improve their oral skills. Jinghui Liu’s article “Curriculum Development of International Business with Language Concentration: Results of a Seven-Year Study of an American Business Executive in China” analyzes American international executives’ perceptions of language and cultural barriers in China. The answers to questionnaires and interviews

that Liu compiled are used in curriculum development. An effective use of inter-cultural negotiations in a classroom environment is explored in “An Inter-cultural Communication Approach to Teaching Business Korean: A Case Study of a Mock Negotiation between Korean and American College Students” by Yeonhee Yoon and Kiwoong Yang. They study the role of the bi-cultural negotiator and pedagogical methods to increase a learner’s inter-cultural awareness in order to overcome cultural prejudices that can hinder effective business practices.

Tilman Schröder’s article “Web Genres in Intercultural Business Language Research” shows the usefulness of genre studies in research and teaching projects related to intercultural business communication. Students realize that Web sites are “highly culture-bound media” reflecting different mentalities and communication styles. In “*Rich Dad Poor Dad: An Entrepreneurial Approach to the Teaching of Business French*,” Steven J. Sacco and Joseph Hammett use a French translation of Robert T. Kiyosaki’s book that leads to several entrepreneurial course activities. Students often gain a fresh perspective on entrepreneurship from the book and the class projects derived from it. The importance of publicity and marketing in business and business language education is examined in Elizabeth Martin’s “Using Advertising to Explore French Language and Culture in the Classroom.” Projects using advertising from another language/culture demonstrate the need for greater awareness and competence in the global business environment. Finally, the legacy tourism industry and its attendant linguistic needs are analyzed in Nina M. Ray’s study “Standing on the Family Farm in Tysvær: How Did ‘Kallekødt’ become ‘Thompson’?—How Is Tysvær Pronounced?” Tourists visiting foreign sites related to family origins often lack essential language skills, creating a need to supply everything from the meanings of names to the translation of documents.

To complete this year’s issue, Maida Watson reviews a Community Service Learning textbook. While the book is in Spanish, instructors in all languages will find interesting information in both the review and the suggested additional readings that accompany it.

We can be reached at our email address: wooda@purdue.edu. For more information you can visit us also at our Web site <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/gbl/>. We hope that this online presence will facilitate your access to our journal, provide information on subscriptions, and disseminate the call for new articles.

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International Business Education and Research (CIBER) here at Purdue University. This publication would not be possible without the financial support provided by the Purdue CIBER and the School of Languages and Cultures at Purdue University.

We wish to extend our deepest gratitude to Susanna Easton as she retires from her position as Team Coordinator for International and Foreign Language Education with the United States Department of Education. For the past several decades, she has provided invaluable guidance to the CIBER network and the innumerable projects that have helped thousands of students prepare for a professional career. She has vigorously supported business language education as part of the CIBER mission, and this journal would not have been possible without her commitment at the national level. We will miss her.

Allen G. Wood
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