

2013

Business Language Studies and Study Abroad in “A Changed World”

Deb S. Reisinger

Duke University, debsreis@duke.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/gbl>

Recommended Citation

Reisinger, Deb S. (2013) "Business Language Studies and Study Abroad in “A Changed World”," *Global Business Languages*: Vol. 18 , Article 3.

Available at: <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/gbl/vol18/iss1/3>

Copyright © 2013 by Purdue Research Foundation. Global Business Languages is produced by Purdue CIBER. <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/gbl>

This is an Open Access journal. This means that it uses a funding model that does not charge readers or their institutions for access. Readers may freely read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to the full texts of articles. This journal is covered under the [CC BY-NC-ND license](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/).

Deb Reisinger
Duke University

BUSINESS LANGUAGE STUDIES
AND STUDY ABROAD
IN “A CHANGED WORLD”

ABSTRACT

Postsecondary institutions increasingly focus their efforts on internationalization, but foreign language faculty and language and literature departments are conspicuously absent from the great majority of these discussions (Knight, 2006; Gerndt, 2012). The emerging field of Business Language Studies (BLS) (Doyle, 2012) offers an important path to participating in these decisions and thus to helping shape the discussions about developing our students’ global and intercultural competencies. The purpose of this article is twofold. On the one hand, we will show how BLS aligns with recent pedagogical trends put forth by national associations (MLA, ACTFL, AACU), underscoring the importance of showcasing its work not only within language departments, where it is often relegated to a minor status, but on campus and in the larger community where students engage in project-based and community outreach work. On the other hand, we will demonstrate how deliberate BLS programming in the study abroad context provides a model of best practices that offers important opportunities for growing the field of BLS, and more importantly, gives students unprecedented access to the business world. A new study abroad program, Duke in Montreal, provides a case study for how to implement such a program.

KEYWORDS: Business Language Studies (BLS), Languages for Specific Purposes (LSP), study abroad, French

Over the past 10 years, a number of national organizations have published large-scale advocacy pieces that challenge the current structure of foreign language programming. Most notable was the 2007 Modern Language Association report *Foreign Languages and Higher Education: New Structures for a Changed World*, which recommended transforming existing academic programs, calling the current two-tiered paradigm of foreign language classes that feed into literature courses “a narrow model.” While Business Language

Studies (BLS) was not named directly in the report,¹ this emerging field provides a strategic model for the MLA's advocated changes. By the very nature of its interdisciplinarity, BLS meets many of the benchmarks set forth by the MLA, and it offers real solutions to the ongoing challenges of student recruitment and retention, budgetary cuts, and most importantly, pedagogical innovations and student learning outcomes. Despite its long history, however, BLS remains a little known field of study, marginalized by language and business departments alike, frequently underfunded, and generally misunderstood in its scope and application.² This article explores how the field of BLS can develop its existing strengths through (1) a more clear articulation of its alignment with national objectives and learning outcomes as put forth by major educational organizations and (2) increased programming on an international scale in the form of short-term study abroad opportunities. Through a case study of one such business language program, we will see how students can make important discipline-specific gains that underscore the development of their linguistic and cultural competence. The development, marketing, and implementation of such programs provides a model of best practices for teaching foreign languages in context, and the resulting expanded course offerings present our students with new opportunities to articulate their knowledge of culture and language into real-world applications.

REVIEW OF RECENT NATIONAL POLICY CHANGES

In 2005, the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AACU) launched its *Liberal Education and America's Promise* (LEAP) campaign, and subsequently published *Essential Learning Outcomes* for a liberal education that set benchmarks for learning and education. These broad guidelines state that "students should prepare for twenty-first-century challenges" by making gains in four areas: knowledge, intellectual and practical skills, personal and

¹ The MLA report (2007) makes just one reference to the study of business in its explanation of what a student should be able to do when reading a cultural narrative: "Understand how a particular background reality is reestablished on a daily basis through cultural subsystems such as: ... —the social and historical narratives in literary texts, artistic works, the legal system, the political system, the educational system, *the economic system*, and the social welfare system" (p. 5; my emphasis).

² See Michael Doyle's 2012 article "Business Language Studies in the United States: On Nomenclature, Context, Theory, and Method" in which he advocates for a theoretical framework for BLS that would increase understanding of the decisive roles of language and culture in our economy.

social responsibility, and integrated and applied learning. The listed gains are followed by a series of examples explaining how students will attain each goal. To gain intellectual and practical skills in numerous areas that include “information literacy,” “teamwork and problem solving,” and “critical and creative thinking,” for instance, students will *practice* them “extensively, across the curriculum, in the context of progressively more challenging problems, projects, and standards for performance.” The emphasis on what students will do to attain these goals is noteworthy, and it points to how we can better articulate learning outcomes for activities typical of a business language class, as well as how study abroad can offer an important context for these learning opportunities.³

The MLA report (*Foreign Languages*, 2007) that was released two years after the LEAP report (*Liberal Education*, 2005/2011) offers a more general overview of how language and literature departments should respond to the “new challenges of a post 9-11 world.” In this new world, languages are deemed important, but are often marginalized in discussions about the internationalized university (Knight, 2006; Gerndt, 2012), framed by an adversarial discourse (Scollon, 2004), or victim to internal debates about practical (language) vs. intellectual (literature) endeavors (Warner, 2011). In response to these and other challenges, the MLA report proposes several steps, including (1) placing the focus on transcultural and translingual competence, (2) transforming the two-tiered system of language/literature, and (3) offering multiple paths to the major. BLS meets these objectives in its systematic teaching of differences in meaning and negotiation, its emphasis on interpreting media sources, and its focus on history, geography, economics, and culture. Moreover, its current position outside the two-tiered system presents a unique path to the major,⁴ and offers an ideal place to bridge the

³ Rather than noting that students will give multiple presentations during the semester, a syllabus might explain that students will “develop oral communication and teamwork skills through a series of group presentations that will address progressively challenging problems”; rubrics and performance standards will accompany these assignments. In many cases, the re-articulation of an existing syllabus will help faculty reassess and refocus an assignment, and for the student, it will draw attention to the larger goals of a given activity.

⁴ In addition to counting French Business classes for the major, some schools have developed certificate programs in French for the Professions, or Global Business Certificate. Programs at San Bernardino, Georgia State, and Wake Forest—to name a few—have been successful in drawing more students to French through these unique pathways.

current language/literature split through dialogue about new pedagogies, such as those put forth by the AACU.

Many of the pedagogies theorized by the MLA have been articulated and put into practice on a national level that is specific to foreign language education. In 2011, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) published its 21st Century World Languages Skills Map, renewing its call for interdisciplinary-themed content and new modes of communication. The map advocates teaching language through four content areas, one of which is “Finance, Business, Economic, and Entrepreneurial Literacy.” This emphasis on interdisciplinary themes is at the core of BLS, and indeed the other three content areas are often addressed in BLS courses through discussions of environmental and sustainability issues (“Health Literacy”), global perspectives on trade, microfinance and social entrepreneurship (“Global Awareness”), and examinations of business law and workers rights (“Civic Literacy”). The three communication modes that make up the National Standards for Communication (interpersonal, interpretative, and presentational) and that are reemphasized in the 21st Century World Languages Skills Map document complement the existing “5 Cs” (Communication, Connections, Comparisons, Cultures, Communities) and dovetail with the four skills of writing, reading, listening, and speaking. Here again, BLS aligns naturally with the three communication modes, which we see in the following examples:

(a) presentational mode (“one-way written or oral communication with limited feedback”). Students in BLS courses often present short reports on current events, longer presentations on country or company profiles, and group projects that include marketing pitches.

(b) interpersonal mode (“oral or written communication with the goal of negotiating meaning”). Students in BLS courses engage in global simulations, mock job interviews, or role plays, such as a jigsaw teaching approach to a union strike.⁵

⁵ A jigsaw is a cooperative learning strategy in which students work first in homogenous “home” groups to research a task, and then work in heterogeneous groups to delve further into an issue. In the case of the union strike, home groups would represent union organizers, political parties, non-unionized workers, and company leaders. After researching their group’s position in relationship to the issue, students then break into heterogeneous groups made up of a representative of each home group to debate the issue. The goal is both to gain expertise in a particular perspective and to see a complex issue from multiple sides.

(c) interpretive mode (“listen or read a text and interpret”). Students in BLS courses read economic reports (*France 24, Le monde diplomatique*), listen to podcast debates (*FranceInter, Radio Canada*), and watch films (*Ressources humaines, Tu seras mon fils*). Best practices related to these activities involve follow-up questions and discussion to engage students in analysis and interpretation of primary sources.

The new ACTFL Skills Map also offers suggestions for student assignments that target specific learning outcomes (such as “Leadership and Accountability”), and also provides relevant examples of student-driven activities that can inform the BLS classroom and its local community. In one example, students “investigate alternative energy projects in a target language country and use ideas gleaned from their investigation to design and explain an original design of an electric car, solar house, or a renewable-energy alternative specific to their school” (21st Century, 2011, p. 10). Such a project could be developed further by having students design a social entrepreneurship concept that they pitch to an international organization. These kinds of assessments represent real-world applications that help students to develop language and cultural competencies in an “economic” setting.

National assessments and standardized testing organizations have also made important changes in recent years that reflect the shifting nature of the foreign language education field. In 2011, new Advanced Placement exams in French and German replaced two separate exams (AP Literature and AP Language) with a single AP Language and Culture exam. While this narrowing of the AP assessment from two exams to one has drawn criticism from some language educators who see this shift as a reflection of the smaller numbers of students studying these languages, and as a manifestation of the larger humanities crisis as a whole, the shift of the exam content remains significant. By focusing uniquely on the change from an AP *Language* exam to an AP *Language and Culture* exam, a change that will include Spanish in 2013, we note an important shift in how we assess both linguistic and cultural competence. In French, the new AP exam aligns with the national standards, emphasizes the three modes of communication, stresses the varied cultures of the French-speaking world, and favors a thematic approach to exam content. New questions focus on language in context, and include assessments on topics such as globalization and economics. Most importantly, this change in assessment creates space for the teaching of BLS in high schools, where this content has been largely absent. Instead of reading and discussing *Le Petit Prince*, for instance, students might instead create a partnership with their

local community to develop one of the AP Themes in the Global Challenges category to explore overarching questions such as “What economic issues pose challenges to societies around the world?” (*AP French Language and Culture*). The new exam format presents a significant opening for BLS in secondary education, one that may attract new students to languages and also lead teachers to tailor coursework and even study abroad programs to BLS.⁶

As we see in all these examples, the content of our courses aligns naturally with the goals, objectives, and learning outcomes of principal national organizations. BLS, in fact, has always done this. On the third page of ACTFL’s introduction to their 21st Century Skills Map, a chart distinguishes practices “In the past” from “Now.” In reading through the chart, it is clear that the list is not a reflection or characterization of all courses being taught, but rather a prescription for how to move forward. “In the past,” for example, teachers used the textbook for curriculum, whereas “now” teachers specify learning outcomes and methodology before selecting texts (“backward design”). Instead of using synthetic textbook situations, for instance, classes now examine personalized real-world tasks. Instead of turning in work for the teacher, students now share and publish to larger audiences. In scanning the list of “Now,” most teachers of BLS at the postsecondary level will note that this is how they have always taught their BLS courses, in part because they are content-based and in part because they can be individualized.⁷

Given that BLS aligns with new standards of communication, shares essential learning outcomes, and promotes new ways of incorporating languages across the curriculum, it seems well positioned to grow as a field. This growth should include expanded programming options in US high schools, colleges, and universities, and it is central to ensuring the existence and expansion of the field in an era of tight budgets and decreased funding for second-language initiatives. One significant way to increase BLS visibility is through the development of a theoretical model that is articulated at national conferences and in large-scale publications (Doyle, 2012). Another is to show how BLS aligns with a college or university administration’s internationalization goals

⁶ Until recently, secondary French programs have concentrated largely on literature and language, ignoring the important role of the French language in conducting international business. In their 2011 report, for instance, Bloomberg ranked French the third most useful language for business, after English and Chinese. Arabic ranked fourth and Spanish fifth (*Mandarin Chinese*, 2011).

⁷ At larger institutions, it can be challenging to personalize syllabi because of multiple sections of a given course. As a result, innovations can be easier to adopt in single-section courses, such as BLS.

by giving students hands-on ways to engage in educational pedagogies that support increased competence in global citizenship. Finally, BLS should be rooted in the programs that we develop abroad, where we can best extend learning outcomes to real-world situations in immersive environments. By focusing on programs abroad, we raise the visibility of BLS internationally, but we also offer important experiential learning opportunities for students who study languages that are not widely spoken in the US.⁸ In addition, study abroad figures high on the MLA report's list of continued priorities, which states that we should "insist on study abroad whenever possible." In this next section, we will explore why we are at a crucial moment to develop study abroad programming in BLS.

STUDY ABROAD VISIBILITY AND ADVOCACY

According to the North American Foreign Study Association (NAFSA) in its 2011–12 Annual Economic Analysis, "while the number of students studying abroad continues to increase, less than 2 percent of all U.S. students enrolled in higher education are participating in study abroad programs" (Feighner, 2012). In fact, the percentage of international students studying in the US rose 5.7% in the 2011–12 academic year, while participation in US study abroad programs rose just 1.3%. Among US students who choose to study abroad, more and more are electing to spend a shorter time abroad. Semester and year programs are decreasing, and short-term programming (four weeks or less) is experiencing considerable growth. According to NAFSA, these spring break, January term, and four–six-week summer programs make up the bulk of study abroad programs, with over 50% of all programs falling into this category.

Given the increased emphasis on globalization by our government policy makers and academic leaders, coupled with growing economic pressures for job creation and business development, why have US students not embraced study abroad in larger numbers? The American Council on Education suggests that the main barriers for US students include "cost and a lack of confidence in speaking another language, as well as insecurities about feeling safe in, or fitting into, a different culture" (Mulholland, 2013). Another significant barrier may be the perception that US students hold about the nature of the study abroad experience. In March 2013, the British Council released its findings on barriers to overseas study abroad with a report entitled *Broadening Horizons*. The organization surveyed over 10,000 UK and US 16–19 year

⁸ While site visits, company tours, and invited speakers introduce students to local business cultures, these exchanges can be equally informative for the host culture. Moreover, local site visits rarely take place in the second language (L2).

olds about whether they intended to study abroad and why. Most students identified study abroad as an opportunity to have fun and experience another culture (66%). The main non-academic drivers cited by students include the opportunity for a unique adventure (84%), followed by a desire to travel overseas (66%). Just 36% of students indicated “an opportunity to become self-sufficient” and 34% “to build confidence” as a factor in their decision. If students perceive programs as “unique adventures” rather than learning opportunities for growth and development, *and* they are not participating in large numbers, it follows that study abroad as it is currently configured could benefit from a significant rebranding, if not a large-scale overhauling. According to the survey, the main academic reason for students is “to gain credit for my field of study” (75%) and “to improve my language skills” (73%). While these statistics underscore the importance of offering BLS programs in the L2, they also point to the poor branding of study abroad programming, which has not been able to successfully position itself as a stepping stone for career advancement, job placement, or (pre-)professional training.

This may be because traditional programs that have characterized study abroad programming of the recent past reflect an outmoded paradigm that views students as glorified tourists.⁹ These programs persist, however, and there can be a place for them if we offer alternative programming, but without other more realistic visions of the Francophone world or the Hispanic diaspora, we run the risk of presenting an outmoded and fictitious vision of the cultures in question. If we instead engage students as much as possible with local cultures and with working professionals, students experience more accurate representations of life abroad. This means that a class may not take place in a classroom, but at an office, in a factory, or on a farm. These kinds of experiences ensure that students do not encounter busloads of tourists, but rather a realistic sampling of the workforce in which a majority of the population participates.

What other reasons might explain the relatively low numbers of students studying abroad? We might turn to what students are doing instead. Anxious to secure a job after graduation in an uncertain market, many students are choosing to spend their summers pursuing internships. At my own institution, for instance, we have noted a related shift in *when* students are electing to study abroad. Rather than waiting until their junior year to go abroad—or the summer immediately before or after that year—many more students are

⁹ Museum tours, wine tastings, and visits to famous monuments are not the best ways to engage with local cultures, but rather with an image of the city that arguably does not exist except in the eye of the foreign, moneyed tourist.

opting to study abroad in the summer following their freshman year. When asked why they have chosen this particular time, students cite competing interests, and increasingly, the importance of gaining real-world experience through practical experience that will help build their résumé. Given these trends, we need to rethink marketing strategies to reach a different population of students, and—more importantly—to address the needs of students for more real-world experiences akin to internships and fieldwork abroad.

Given that (1) there is considerable room to increase the numbers of students who study abroad, (2) there is a trend of short-term study abroad at an earlier point in the four-year experience, and (3) there are meaningful experiences for students that will help them secure a job, it follows that study abroad programs should begin to target first- and second-year students interested in gaining exposure to the working world, in an academic environment. It should be noted that few programs offer such possibilities, and fewer still offer combined business language studies. While there are a handful of private organizations that offer such programs,¹⁰ many universities are moving away from external providers in an effort to exert greater control over their programs (Redden, 2013). Faculty-sponsored university programs in BLS are rare, and there is considerable room for growth in this area.¹¹

How, then, can we create more study abroad opportunities that capitalize on the strengths of business language studies? As noted in the previous section, BLS is already ahead of current pedagogical trends in many ways: its approach to teaching language through content, its project-based work, and its team-based and real-world centered projects position it logically in a study abroad context. How, then, can we transform what we do in BLS courses into study abroad programming to provide more opportunities for students to gain real-world experience? We will now look at a case study of such a program, a new four-week business language program in Quebec for which success is measured by the support it has garnered from students, administrators, and centers on campus.

BUSINESS LANGUAGE STUDIES IN FRENCH: A CASE FOR QUEBEC

Taking business language studies off-campus is an important step in introducing students to business culture, but taking students out of the US and immersing them in a foreign culture is a guaranteed way to ensure access to

¹⁰ CIEE offers a business program in Shanghai, and CLIC International House in Seville offers Business Spanish, for instance.

¹¹ One notable exception is Georgetown's partnership with the Paris Chamber of Commerce.

real-world business environments. There are numerous considerations when doing so, however, ranging from location to logistics, and it is important to detail some of the choices and challenges that arise when trying to align program goals with economic, strategic, and logistic realities.

Selecting a suitable site for a study abroad opportunity is often the first step in developing a new program. Western Europe remains the most popular destination for study abroad for French programs, indicating that a business program in France would draw many students. But while France is a popular destination for students and certainly a country with an important business climate, Canada is the US's largest trading partner, and Quebec is our most important Francophone trading partner. Moreover, the province is actively recruiting French speakers to its growing economic sectors, which include Green and Smart Building, Life Sciences, and Insurance and Financial Services (Québec International, 2013). For students interested in working in a French-speaking environment, then, Quebec presents an advantageous option, especially when one compares their 7.5% unemployment rate with the 9% unemployment rate in France today, to say nothing of the youth unemployment rate, which hovers at 15% in Canada and is near 28% in France.¹² Despite these compelling reasons, however, Quebec remains relatively unknown for students, and its advantages of proximity, low cost, and high opportunity necessitate a particular kind of marketing and branding.¹³

To explore Quebec's viability as a study abroad destination with a unique business environment, I traveled to Quebec in 2011 to investigate its business environment, to meet with various figures in business and government, and to identify places in Montreal and Quebec City that would offer suitable housing, meeting venues, and classroom space. This short trip was funded by a grant from Quebec's Ministère des Relations Internationales. After just a week in Quebec, I was convinced of its suitability, both as a location that would please students seeking personalized attention and as a destination that offers unique opportunities that could translate into real-world projects.

¹² See *The Atlantic*'s recent article and accompanying graph detailing the rising unemployment in Europe at <http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2013/05/europes-record-youth-unemployment-the-scariest-graph-in-the-world-just-got-scarier/276423/>

¹³ Students from the North East may have traveled to Montreal with a high school French class, and increasingly, students are learning about Quebec through elementary textbooks that emphasize *la francophonie*. Nonetheless, these descriptions rarely eclipse the importance of France, and of Paris in particular, which remains the most visited city in the world.

Convincing colleagues and administrators that Quebec is a worthwhile place to study presented a challenge that involved combatting both stereotypes and statistics. While colleagues subtly questioned our students' ability to understand the Quebec accent, administrators pointed to the low numbers of students who choose to study abroad in North America; according to NAFSA, just 5% of US students who study abroad choose North America (Feighner, 2012). After some initial and understandable hesitation, our Global Education Office agreed to add the program to our list of offerings for the following year, noting that it diversified our French-speaking program offerings and would draw from the very large student population enrolled in the Markets and Management certificate program, which agreed to cross-list the course as part of their program.

Our institution has two long-standing summer programs that offer some competition to this new one: a six-week program in Paris that takes place in the first summer session (mid May–end of June) and a six-week program in Geneva, offered in the second session (July–mid August). While the Paris program also offers French immersion for advanced students, it provides a more traditional focus on literature and is one of the most expensive programs offered at Duke. The Geneva program offers Markets and Management credit in a vibrant city, but the program is held in English and is equally cost-prohibitive. To appeal to a broad range of students looking for both a practical and affordable experience (at almost half the cost of the other programs), we opted for a four-week, one-course summer program that would take place in July during the second summer session. In addition to the strategic decision not to directly compete with our department's existing Paris program, we also chose one of the most exciting periods of the year to visit Quebec, when it hosts the Montreal International Jazz Festival, the Just for Laughs Festival, the Summer Music Festival (*Festival d'été*), and the African Nights Festival (*Festival des nuits africaines*), to name but a few of their more than sixty summer festivals. After considerable reflection, we set a four-semester language requirement for the program. This requirement would necessarily narrow the applicant pool, but allow us to conduct meetings and tours in the L2, offering the unique and personalized features that would frame the program's immersive environment. As short-term family stays were logistically challenging and would have placed students far from the city centers, we placed students in international dorms on college campuses close to downtown, at the Université de Québec à Montréal (UQAM) in downtown Montreal's Place des arts and at Laval University in Quebec City.

COURSEWORK

In keeping with the learning objectives put forth by ACTFL and the MLA report, the program focuses on project-based coursework that immerses students in local cultures. The program is entitled “Made in Quebec: Marketing and Cultural Identity,” and it focuses on the crossroads of culture and commerce, examining how Quebec endeavors to maintain its identity through unique marketing strategies that include cultural preservation and marketing localization. The first half of the program focuses on the political, economic, and linguistic history of the province, and gives students the necessary context to understand Québécois cultural identity. In the second half of the summer semester, students study marketing, advertising, and branding in both public and private sectors. While these parameters offer a solid framework for successful programming, post-program feedback indicated that there were several aspects of the course that contributed to its success, factors that reflect the BLS framework earlier described. These factors, which appear below, echo the framework set forth by the MLA, ACTFL, and LEAP, and they are offered here as a set of guidelines for best practices for successful programming.

GETTING OUTSIDE OF THE CLASSROOM

Field trips and site visits are highlights of the study abroad experience, giving students access to professional venues that they would otherwise only read about. The varied perspectives they hear likewise increase students’ linguistic competencies as they are exposed to different accents and registers of language.

Our program’s most successful visits included:

- *Site visits to companies:* Most large companies offer tours for free. Cold calls will yield some results, but it can be worthwhile to go through an umbrella organization such as the Business Development office to set up more meaningful exchanges. During the program, we chose to visit the Cirque du Soleil and the global gaming company Ubisoft, as well as several smaller businesses held by artisans and entrepreneurs.
- *Meetings with marketing agencies:* We worked with the Quebec Advertising Association (AAPQ) to understand advertising law, and it helped us arrange meetings with a variety of agencies. Each of these agencies had prepared lengthy presentations and case studies catered to our students’ interest in cultural marketing. The insightful comparisons and contrasts that students later made would not have been articulated in such a profound way had they not had hands-on experience with the creative and strategic directors of these agencies.

- *Business meetings with US and local governments:* From US Consulates to in-country offices, governments will often share their internal workings. In Montreal, our students were briefed by the US Consulate on how to find work in the foreign service, and in Quebec City, we met with the US Consul General on how to manage the environmental disaster in Lac Megantic. The US Consulate often organizes an event that introduces students to careers in the foreign service. Although these meetings frequently take place in English, bilingual officers share with students how language can give them leverage in the search for international work. Our most fruitful discussions, however, were with the Quebec government. We were briefed by the Office Québécois de la langue française (OQLF) on linguistic policy, and later met with the Ministry of International Relations in Quebec City, which unveiled its new branding campaign for the Quebec province.
- *Chambers of commerce:* As bridges between government policy and the local business community, chambers offer a unique perspective that can provide students with a more in-depth understanding of business culture. In our case, they worked with both groups to put together a series of meetings that included private consultants for large companies (*consultants de francisation*) and government representatives that work with small businesses (*agents de francisation*) to help them comply with Quebec's language policies. These meetings gave us a more clear understanding of how Quebec's language policies impact business development.
- *Guest speakers:* Local graduate students, faculty members, and business professionals are often delighted to share their expertise and enjoy contact with students. Instead of inviting them to a classroom, it can be more meaningful to meet them on location at their offices or place of business. One faculty member explained Quebec's separatist movement over lunch at his offices, while a francization agent gave us a walking tour of the Chinatown business district.

These consultations and their accompanying venues invite us to examine new ways of assessing students. Do exams and research papers still reflect the kinds of learning students obtain abroad? We found that the unique nature of the study abroad experience aligns well with ACTFL's twenty-first-century assessment models.

ON-GOING ASSESSMENTS THAT SHOWCASE STUDENT LEARNING

- *Blogs:* These online but closed journals offer students a space to process new experiences. Students can upload photos and videos, and write

thoughtful and reflective answers both in response to prompts and on their own accord. Blogs are also a useful way for students to develop questions related to their final course projects, to process company interviews, or even to reflect on group dynamics in a more relaxed environment.

- *Ethnographic research*: By taking advantage of their surroundings, students practice language skills in a real-world context. As part of their final project, my students were required to conduct marketing research. While several found the initial experience daunting, the repetition of the questions they posed and the wide variety of persons polled led to linguistic exchanges that would not otherwise have taken place. Since they had to survey people in a wide spectrum of age groups in different areas of town, they gained a much deeper understanding of the population than they would have had they just narrowed their exchanges to persons their age.
- *Project-based learning*: Last year, our students' final project, which they presented to the US Consulate in Montreal, was a website that rebranded the Quebec province to US youth. The site later became part of our marketing campaign for the following year's program. This year, students developed marketing campaigns that were presented to our guest speakers. The feedback they received from these key figures in government and business was invaluable and helped them to shape a final product that became part of their undergraduate portfolio. Creating a real audience for student work is as motivating as it is useful for eventual work in a professional context.
- *Quizzes*. In end-of-semester evaluations, students said they preferred being held accountable for their assigned readings, for paying attention during tours and visits, and for being able to retain this information. In order to not utilize class time, we opted for online quizzes that offered a mix of quantitative and qualitative responses.

RETENTION AND RECRUITMENT

Student program and course evaluations for both summer 2012 and 2013 were excellent, and we have been able to build strong relationships with our business and government partners that have laid the groundwork for years of future programming. Despite these successes, however, we find ourselves in the challenging place of recruiting students. As stated earlier, US students study abroad earlier than they used to, for shorter periods of time, and with multiple and varied goals. Keeping these facts in mind, we should be well-positioned to recruit for future programs. Most successful recruitment strate-

gies involve student participants, as nothing is more convincing to students than testimony from their peers. To increase our own enrollment, we have invited students to visit classes, to create videos, to post virtual postcards, and to participate in our study abroad fairs. By offering courses that are interdisciplinary and cross-listing a BLS program with business, economics, entrepreneurship, or markets and management, we can also attract students from a wider applicant pool. This wider pool includes financial resources, and when enrollments are down, other programs, centers, and departments can contribute funding to offset losses and ensure that a program can take place despite low enrollment. In our first year of the program, I used grant funds from a Quebec government grant to cover student activity fees when our numbers did not match the budget guidelines set by our global education office. This past summer, our Center for Canadian Studies was financially generous. Our business school recently pledged funds and has written our program into their next grant cycle. In short, we can be creative not only with our program creation and development, but also with the financial sources that will support its success.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

As we have seen from the example of the Duke in Montreal program, both public and private sectors abroad are willing to dedicate their expertise, their time, and even their funding to help US students increase their knowledge of BLS. Chambers of commerce, government entities such as consulates and embassies, and local language associations such as the Alliance française or the Goethe Institute that have mandates for cultural outreach are other sources of support as we develop and market similar programs. The overall success of the Quebec case study presented here indicates that other programs would have equal or greater success attracting students interested in combining language with business—and even in drawing students who do not yet realize that this is a useful pursuit. In the case of French, we can imagine programs such as “Social Entrepreneurship in Senegal,” “Microfinance in Morocco,” “The Arts and Culture Industries of Montreal,” or “Alternative Energies in France,” all of which would offer unique pathways to develop our students’ linguistic and cultural competencies.

As we know from internationalization efforts across the country, US postsecondary institutions are eager to see this kind of transdisciplinary work related to global issues. Business Language Studies offers the ideal context for these pursuits; as Gerndt (2012) reminds us, “language programs that focus on specialized purposes (LSP) can prepare students linguistically and

culturally, as well as complement their education in content areas such as business and the sciences” (p. 3). Most of all, programs that can transport Business Language Studies abroad will not only provide students with practical, international experience, but they will raise international and institutional awareness of the validity and importance of such programs in our students’ pursuit of multiple competencies.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 21st century world languages skills map. (2011, March). American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) with Partnership for 21st Century Skills. Retrieved from <http://actfl.org>
- AP French language and culture course and exam description*. (2011). New York: College Board.
- Broadening Horizons*. (2011). British Council. PDF. Available from <http://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/documents/broadening-horizons-report.pdf>
- Doyle, M. S. (2012). Business language studies in the United States: On nomenclature, context, theory, and method. *Modern Language Journal*, 96(1), 158–72.
- Essential learning outcomes*. (2013). American Association of Colleges and Universities (AACU). LEAP campaign. PDF. Available from http://www.aacu.org/leap/documents/EssentialOutcomes_Chart.pdf
- Feighner, M. (2012). *What the numbers say about international education*. North American Foreign Study Association (NAFSA), Association of International Educators. Retrieved from <http://blog.nafsa.org/2012/11/16/what-the-numbers-say-about-international-education/>
- Foreign languages and higher education: New structures for a changed world*. (2007, May). Modern Language Association (MLA) Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages. Retrieved from <http://www.mla.org/flreport>
- Gerndt, J. L. M. (2012). Shifting the curriculum to Languages for Specific Purposes. *Global Business Languages*, 17, 3–15.
- Knight, J. (2006). *Internationalization of higher education: New directions, new challenges. The 2005 IAU global survey report*. Paris: International Association of Universities.

- Liberal education and America's promise* (LEAP). (2005/2011). American Association of Colleges and Universities (AACU). Retrieved from <http://www.aacu.org/leap/index.cfm>
- Mandarin Chinese: Most useful business language after English*. (2011). Bloomberg.com. Retrieved from <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-08-30/mandarin-chinese-most-useful-business-language-after-english-1-.html>
- Mulholland, J. (2013, March 13). *Why aren't more students studying abroad?* British Council USA. Retrieved from <http://usa.britishcouncil.org/blog-study-abroad-research>
- Québec International. (2013). Key industries. Retrieved from <http://www.quebecinternational.ca/key-industries/>
- Redden, E. (2013, May 14). Beyond study abroad. *Inside Higher Education*. Retrieved from <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2013/05/14/penn-pushes-international-internships-and-career-opportunities>
- Scollon, R. (2004). Teaching language and culture as hegemonic practice. *Modern Language Journal*, 88(2), 271–74. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3588757>
- Thompson, D. (2013, May 31). Europe's record youth unemployment: The scariest graph in the world just got scarier. *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from <http://www.theatlantic.com>
- Trends in U.S. study abroad*. (2012). North American Foreign Study Association (NAFSA), Association of International Educators. Retrieved from https://www.nafsa.org/Explore_International_Education/Advocacy_And_Public_Policy/Study_Abroad/Trends_in_U_S__Study_Abroad/
- Warner, C. (2011). Rethinking the role of language study in internationalizing higher education. *L2 Journal*, 3, 1–21. Retrieved from <http://www.escholarship.org/uc/item/7188g4z0>

