

Foreign Language Professional Standards and CSL: Achieving the 5 C's

Darcy W. Lear

University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Annie R. Abbott

University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

The professional standards in the field of foreign language pedagogy focus on communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities. Using those 5 C's as a framework, the authors examine student success at satisfying those disciplinary standards through community service learning (CSL). Data is used to present a qualitative case study. This case concentrates on the standards for foreign language learning, but the results hold meaning for CSL instructors of all disciplines, suggesting ways in which CSL can help students achieve the national standards of other disciplines and highlighting the fact that all CSL facilitates student learning about these 5 C's.

Walk by any campus Spanish language classroom and you will likely hear students speaking only Spanish, engaging in conversations, asking questions, discussing current events, analyzing stories, and comparing cultural practices. Developments in second language teaching since the 1980s have transformed language learning from memorizing verb conjugations and random dialogues to true communication. Then walk a few steps, blocks, or miles away from that classroom, and you will probably encounter native Spanish-speakers using Spanish in a variety of daily-life contexts. This is a relatively recent trend as well. Not only have the numbers of Latinos in the United States increased rapidly in recent decades, the areas where they live and work have also expanded from cities to the suburbs and rural towns and from the coasts and Southwest to the Midwest and South.¹ Spanish CSL courses allow instructors to bring together these pedagogical and demographic trends. More and more Spanish departments now offer CSL courses. However, the research on those courses is far from complete, and the general failure in CSL literature to closely examine the connections among language, language pedagogy, and cross-cultural CSL motivated this study.

Traditionally, only study abroad provided immersion in the Spanish language and its cultures. While some study abroad programs have integrated CSL into their programs, in a recent report from the International Partnership for Service-Learning and Leadership, *Service-Learning Across Cultures: Promise and Achievement* (2004), none of the major findings addressed students' language skills though they play a large role in students' experiences.

Nowadays, however, study abroad is no longer the only path to immersion for students of Spanish. Indeed, Spanish programs find themselves at a crossroads. While still housed within "foreign languages," they teach the language and cultures of the largest US minority. Carlos Alonso, Chair of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at Columbia University, wrote: "Spanish should no longer be regarded as a foreign language in this country" (2006, p. 17). This pronouncement's impact on Spanish programs is profound, yet it highlights what the early adopters of CSL in Spanish have already proved with their courses. In fact, in the United States, CSL in Spanish appears even more developed than in English as a Second Language programs (Minor, 2002). By situating CSL within the current sea change in Spanish programs, our research responds to Edward Zlotkowski's call to research CSL within "the norms of the disciplinary (and interdisciplinary) communities where service-learning is practiced" (2000, p. 61).

Language issues are rarely problematized in the research on CSL, even when describing courses and programs involving work with non-English speaking or limited-English proficiency communities. For example, while considering CSL's relationship with globalization, Keith (2005) does not take into account language issues. As is often the case, English is assumed to be the language of globalization—and of CSL. Articles that describe CSL projects that specifically take place within Spanish-speaking communities mention language issues briefly, if at all (Jorge, 2003b; Kiely, 2005; Madsen Camacho, 2004; Porter & Monard, 2001; Simonelli, Earle, & Story, 2004).

Foreign Language Teaching and the 5 C's

First published in 1996, the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century (National Standards)* revolve around “five C’s” (see Figure 1). To comply with these standards, the successful student will use language to *communicate* for real purposes, understand *multicultural* and global issues, *connect* with other disciplines and acquire new knowledge, make *comparisons* with their own language and culture, and participate in multilingual *communities*. Each “C” has sub-categories that serve as guides to creating language curricula and assessing language acquisition (see Table 1).

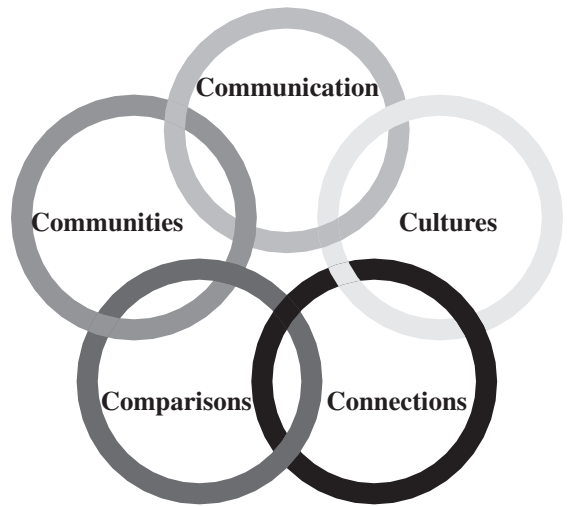
There is no consensus on the extent to which the first four “C’s” can be addressed within the classroom context (Allen, 2002; Jeffries, 1996; Kadish, 2000; Savignon & Sysoyev, 2005). It is acknowledged that the 5th C, communities, cannot easily be addressed in the classroom context (Jeffries). CSL has been a boon for the communities standard and an achievable one for Spanish language courses in the U.S. (Beebe & DeCosta, 1993; Hellebrandt, Arries, & Varona, 2003; Hellebrandt & Varona, 1999; Plann, 2002; Weldon, 2003).

Within the context of CSL, community is a given. When placements are made based on Spanish language use and Hispanic cultures, then skills, culture, communication, connections, and comparisons are reinforced in the community and not limited to the classroom. In this paper we use a case study of one student to demonstrate how students in one particular Spanish CSL course achieved all 5 C’s of language learning. Other articles have described Spanish CSL efforts, but none have systematically related student achievement to the *National Standards*. Despite the success of our students, the structure of CSL courses can vary widely, even within one discipline such as Spanish. Therefore, we conclude by delineating features of the course that can help lead students to achieve disciplinary standards and demonstrate that achievement.

Review of Literature

CSL and the professional standards expounded in the *National Standards* are connected throughout the literature. Plann (2002) asserts that “service learning can advance the objectives of the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning*” (p. 332), but the article does not directly address *how*. Weldon (2003) discusses how she believes the standards were met in her CSL course. Mullaney (1999) writes anecdotally about her expectation that CSL would be about two C’s: communication and communities, then concludes that students made progress on four of the five C’s (all but *connections*). The one published

Figure 1.
ACTFL’s Standards for Foreign Language Learning, the 5 C’s.



study that directly addresses CSL and the *National Standards* concludes with the authors hoping “to find soon the kind of test that will help us study the relationship between community based learning and the foreign language standards” (Varona & Bauluz, 2003, p. 77).

Most literature on Spanish and CSL addresses furthering the goals of acquiring Spanish language and Hispanic cultures skills, and scholars writing in the field report improvement in students’ linguistic and cultural acquisition as a result of engaging in CSL (Beebe & DeCosta, 1993; Darias et al., 1999; Hale, 1999; Jorge, 2003a; Mullaney, 1999; Varas, 1999). The vast majority of this literature consists of anecdotal, “how-to” articles meant to help other faculty design CSL courses in university departments with Spanish programs (Díaz-Barriga, 2003; Jorge; Julseth, 2003; Olazagasti-Segovia, 2003; Plann, 2002). In all reported cases, “Spanish” in some form (traditional language courses, conversation courses, culture courses, or literature courses) is the classroom content.

Implications from the descriptive articles on Spanish and CSL are often drawn for faculty (Jorge, 2003a); however, any mention of method in the literature refers to teaching rather than research (Díaz-Barriga, 2003; Jorge; Julseth, 2003; Olazagasti-Segovia, 2003; Plann, 2002). Attempts to collect data are recent. Hellebrandt’s research (2006) addressed engagement’s impact on faculty teaching, research, and service as well as the campus-community bridge. The present study adds to the growing body of literature on Spanish CSL by presenting a qualitative case study based on multiple data points. It also com-

Table 1.

A complete listing of ACTFL's Standards for Foreign Language Learning.

Communication

Communicate in Language Other Than English

Standard 1.1: Students engage in conversations, provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions.

Standard 1.2: Students understand and interpret written and spoken language on a variety of topics.

Standard 1.3: Students present information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics.

Cultures

Gain Knowledge and Understanding of Other Cultures

Standard 2.1: Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the culture studied.

Standard 2.2: Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the products and perspectives of the culture studied.

Connections

Connect with Other Disciplines and Acquire Information

Standard 3.1: Students reinforce and further their knowledge of other disciplines through the foreign language.

Standard 3.2: Students acquire information and recognize the distinctive viewpoints that are only available through the foreign language and its cultures.

Comparisons

Develop Insight in the Nature of Language and Culture

Standard 4.1: Students demonstrate understanding of the nature of language through comparisons of the language studied and their own.

Standard 4.2: Students demonstrate understanding of the concept of culture through comparisons of the cultures studied and their own.

Communities

Participate in Multilingual Communities at Home and Around the World

Standard 5.1: Students use the language both within and beyond the school setting.

Standard 5.2: Students show evidence of becoming life-long learners by using the language for personal enjoyment and enrichment.

plements other published accounts by focusing on a course that utilized content-based instruction (CBI)—using Spanish as a vehicle to teach social entrepreneurship—rather than a traditional “Spanish” curriculum.

Description

In spring 2006 the researchers taught a special section of a Business Spanish class called “Spanish and Entrepreneurship: Languages, Cultures, and Communities.”² We defined entrepreneurship as a process of opportunity recognition, resource gathering, and value creation, and the course content focused specifically on social entrepreneurship in nonprofit organizations (Dees, Emerson, & Economy, 2001). Service in the community complemented the social entrepreneurship content.³ Students worked at nonprofit organizations serving the local Latino community. For their coursework, students completed online quizzes that tested the content of each textbook chapter (Dees, Emerson, & Economy, 2001), wrote 15 weekly journal entries responding to prompts, and completed take-

home midterms and finals. The final project required students to identify a small-scale entrepreneurial opportunity during their community experience and develop the idea through vision and mission statements and specific objectives, strategies, and plans (Horan, 2004). Students reported progress on the project with two activity reports and presented poster versions of their innovative ideas at the last class meeting.

We conducted a qualitative case study (Stake, 2005) to provide an in-depth description of how CSL impacts the achievement of the *National Standards*. The population for the study was the 40 fifth-semester students enrolled in two sections of the “Spanish and Entrepreneurship: Languages, Cultures, and Communities” course that was team-taught by the researchers in the spring of 2006. Data was collected in the form of documents from three sources: students’ written work for the course (written journals, activity reports, and exams), instructor-student correspondence, and instructor-community partner correspondence. The data were coded for presence and absence of the 5 C’s and tri-

angulated (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The student selected for the case, Steve, emerged as exemplary because of his strengths and weaknesses. In connecting our data to the professional standards in the field of foreign language education, our research questions emerged:

- Does CSL contribute to satisfying ACTFL's 5 C's?
- Does it contribute to satisfying the 5 C's in ways that a non-CSL course cannot?

The analysis that follows presents a case study illustrating how one student achieved the 5 C's in a Spanish CSL course. Steve's coursework regularly demonstrated that achievement, but not always. In fact, some of his classmates received a higher final course grade than Steve; others a lower grade. Nonetheless, Steve's case illustrates that even students who do not always achieve each standard still can make significant progress toward reaching those standards in a course with CSL. Steve's case is analyzed by each of the five C's.

Findings

Communication

CSL is ideally suited to the communication standard for Spanish language students in virtually every geographic region of the U.S. Throughout the nation there is tremendous demand for students with Spanish language and Hispanic cultures skills to learn and serve in the community, thus using language to communicate for real purposes. In our course, Steve worked with Spanish-dominant Latino boys and their adult leader in a local Boy Scout Troop. It was clear to Steve that CSL provided communication opportunities not available to him otherwise. On the final exam for the course, Steve explicitly mentioned that the CSL "provided opportunities to speak Spanish with native-speakers, experience Latino culture, and gain a sense of community in which the participants in the program live." He went on to juxtapose the CSL experience and the traditional classroom experience, explaining the importance of practical applications for the "theory" explored in the academic context that would have been unavailable to him in a traditional course. According to Steve, CSL allows students "to use the lessons learned in class in practical situations... without [which] the lessons learned in class would not have been valuable because the opportunity for hands-on, practical experience and observation would have been missing."

Even within the campus classroom, the fact that there was a community service component to the course and student entrepreneurship projects were directly related to their work in the community

required students to communicate with each other in Spanish for real purposes. Students worked in groups to give each other feedback as they developed their final projects for the course; twice in the semester students submitted an activity report representing the development of their final projects up to that point in the semester. With each report, they included a reflection on the group process. Steve commented on the final exam that this form of communication for a real purpose was useful to him in both his work for the course and his work in the community: "The process with the group provides an opportunity to hear the ideas of others and a lot of this information is very useful."

From the perspective of linguistic development, Steve showed improvement and, more importantly, an awareness of his own weaknesses in oral and written communication in Spanish. Grammar was not explicitly taught in the course, but Steve improved his written communication in at least two areas without any targeted instruction or instructor feedback. On activity report 1, the first formal assignment in the course, Steve was unsuccessful in using the Spanish equivalent of "to like"—a difficult structure for native English-speakers to master because it is so different from English and does not have an exact translation. He wrote, "*Las chicas en mi grupo se [sic] gustaba mi visión*" when it would have been more accurate to write "*A las chicas en mi grupo les gustaba mi visión*." "The girls in my group liked my vision [statement]." By the time he prepared activity report 2, he had mastered that structure. Similarly, after ignoring a unique feature of Spanish grammar—the personal "a" that precedes all human direct objects—in all of his written Spanish, an example finally appeared in Steve's eleventh journal entry: "*También he apoyado a los Scouts y pienso que ellos son mis amigos*." "Also, I have supported the Scouts and I think they are my friends." He did not consistently use it from that point on, indicating that he was only beginning to acquire the form, but both of these examples align with the natural acquisition orders expected of language learning through immersion (Lee & VanPatten, 2003).

The experience of CSL also encouraged Steve to reflect on his own level of proficiency in Spanish. In his tenth journal, he wrote that he wanted to learn more Spanish because the number of monolingual Spanish speakers in the U.S. would make it important to speak both English and Spanish in the future. Steve was clearly looking to the future—his own professional future as well as this nation's. A few weeks later, Steve directly addressed the role of CSL in his language acquisition, first acknowledging the limits of his linguistic skills in Spanish

and following with the affirmation that working in the community afforded him an opportunity to practice (journal #12).

Despite improvement in certain features of Steve's Spanish grammar and lexical accuracy, his work still showed a lack of control over several forms. This is not surprising. Language learning is a long and complex process. However, Steve successfully communicated in Spanish in multiple settings, with people of different generations, socioeconomic backgrounds, and varieties of Spanish. This rich language environment would be impossible within a traditional, classroom-based Spanish course. Furthermore, Steve's successful communication with all these parties is more representative of real-world language use than a perfectly uttered statement in a class of language-learning peers and an instructor. The communication standards 1.1 - 1.3 require successful exchanges of information, not complete proficiency. Steve consistently, although not always, achieved that.

Cultures

Steve's written work for the course demonstrated his own awakening to the cultures standard—starting with a purely academic perspective that had nothing to do with CSL, moving through the experiences in the community with the Scout troop, and concluding with an understanding of multicultural and global issues promoted by the *National Standards*. On the first exam for the course, Steve showed that he understood multicultural and global issues as they are taught in academic contexts: "A person needs to have different perspectives, change their suppositions, have intense discussions with kids and clients in order to solve problems..." While his words were true and accurate, they fell short of demonstrating a full understanding of multicultural and global issues; in fact, it was a classic example of telling the professors what they wanted to hear. By the time of the final exam, Steve clearly understood that the experience of culture within a community that was itself distanced from the classroom was essential to understanding multicultural and global issues. However, it was Steve's reflective writing that revealed the most about his own growth in the cultures standard. When asked to describe one person in particular from the community, Steve invoked a stereotype, but used the example he was describing to contradict that stereotype, asserting that even though the boy lived in a trailer park he was nice and intelligent (journal #6). From there, his understanding of the cultural context in which he was serving continued to develop.

A few weeks later, when prompted to write about communication between the community organiza-

tion and its stakeholders, Steve did not hesitate to respond that there were not many stakeholders interested in the local Latino Scout troop, demonstrating a clear understanding of what it means to be disenfranchised. He came to understand that only through the first-hand experience of CSL. Despite being part of a high prestige organization—The Boy Scouts of America—the fact that this was a Latino troop in a trailer park led Steve to believe that the only stakeholders were the troop members and their families.

While he articulated his own growth in the cultures standard, Steve also started to apply it to his CSL. He decided to find a way to provide scout uniforms for the boys who did not have them and included the boys so that they could expand their experiences of the local community. Steve "contacted a multicultural sorority on the UIUC campus, explained the circumstances, and asked their help in providing for the Scouts" (exam 2). As Steve engaged more cultures in his project, he targeted his engagement to appropriate stakeholders who would also provide the most benefit to the participating Scouts. Through this project, he not only demonstrated his understanding of the cultures standard, he applied it.

By the end of the semester, Steve's writing had moved well beyond the lip-service answer to multicultural issues that he had demonstrated on his first exam. He wrote that he wanted to not only understand, but to know the community in which he was serving. More than that, he was clear that it was something he aspired to do in the future, not something that he had already claimed to have done: "I hope to understand and know the Latino community" (journal #12). In his journal entry about networking he said, "When I work with kids and adults from an organization, I learn a lot of things about me and about the world" (journal #11). Through his experience, Steve discovered that cultural understanding is not learning *about* others "out there" in the community, but rather about oneself and one's place in the world, a world in which all those "other" groups are a part.

Steve did not always demonstrate full achievement of Standards 2.1 and 2.2. Regarding cultural practices (2.1) in particular, Steve showed on several occasions that he did not fully understand the perspective of the Scouts, their parents, or the troop leader. All the Scouts had personally experienced transnational migration and maintained ties with their communities of origin, yet Steve believed they had little knowledge of the world outside their trailer park. The Scout leader was from Honduras, and the Scouts and their school classmates were from many Latin American countries. In some

ways, the Scouts knew more about the larger world than our university students. Moreover, Steve's goals for the boys revealed both his sincere enthusiasm and a lack of understanding about the resources available to all parties. He viewed the troop's limited resources solely in terms of their economic status and seemed to never consider other important factors, such as that the community's cultural practices were necessarily impacted by work schedules and lack of free time (the parents often worked more than one job). Language barriers, fear of discrimination when moving outside of the space of their community, and legal status also impacted the culture. Furthermore, it was not clear from his coursework if these Scouts wanted "more," if Steve wanted more for them, or a combination of the two. The community partner and parents highly valued what the troop already gave them: homework help, mentorship, and a safe place for their children to be after school (O. Fonseca, personal communication, April 12, 2006). It is possible that Steve extended his own cultural beliefs to those of the boys with whom he was working, assuming that they needed to have the same activities as troops with which he was familiar.

The process of fully understanding the perspectives of another culture is just as long and complex as language learning, if not more so. Even students in a Spanish CSL course cannot always understand another group's cultural products and practices, but Steve's comments show that working in the community with local Latinos gives CSL students greater access to culture than can be found in a traditional classroom.

Connections

The *National Standards* were not an explicit part of the curriculum for the course; the instructors did not use the term "connections" as part of the pedagogy. Yet in his written work for the course, Steve used the word "connection(s)" himself six times (exam 1, journal #9, twice in the final project, exam 2, activity report 2). While it cannot be shown that Steve would not have made use of the word "connection(s)" in a traditional Spanish class, it is clear from the context that without the community element he would not have had use for the term. He acknowledged that he felt connected to the individuals in the community, saying that he saw the Boy Scout troop members as his friends (journal #11). That connection seemed to allow Steve to advance to the meta-level task of reaching out to the boys with whom he was working in the community to help them make connections.

From the start, Steve's work for the course pointed to the connections standard. His first activity

report described specific suggestions for networking connections and suggested involving "the Scouts themselves in letter-writing and other methods to request outside support... Additional resources... will be utilized for purchasing uniforms and supplies, and providing additional educational and recreational activities for participants in the program."

In addition to explicitly mentioning networking connections, Steve planted the seeds for connections with two other disciplines that re-appear throughout his work: the first is the entrepreneurial principles studied in class, especially resource acquisition, and the second is youth education and recreation.

In his seventh journal entry, Steve suggested specific ways to secure more money for the organization, including possibilities internal (e.g., the Boy Scouts' popcorn sales) and external to the organization. Steve clearly saw that his own contribution would be greater if he focused on the latter. His second activity report included the following objective: "Establish fundraising and volunteering connections with five businesses and 3 UIUC groups," and on his first exam he wrote explicitly about resource providers in terms of money (local businesses) and time (volunteers from campus groups). It was not until the last page of his final exam that Steve revealed the true extent of his ability to seamlessly connect Spanish, entrepreneurship, and CSL, and translate his learning into action. He wrote about a brainstorming meeting with members of a multicultural sorority that resulted in a charity can shake on campus. He concluded, "we involved two of the boys in this activity, and we were able to raise almost all of the money needed to purchase the uniforms."

In terms of connecting with the field of youth education and recreation, Steve aspired to plan trips for the Boy Scouts (activity report 2, journal #13). He was not able to fulfill that goal, but including the boys in the fundraiser on the university campus was a significant off-site activity for the scout members. Steve never overlooked the social dimension of his entrepreneurial ideas; on the first exam, he couched that in terms that connected his work to youth education and recreation: "My venture is committed to providing the Scouts with opportunities to learn and grow. By gaining a connection with community businesses and student organizations, the Scouts will gain valuable experiences."

Gaining new knowledge is part of the *National Standards* connections standard. Steve was never small-minded with regard to the new knowledge he gained through his CSL experience. In a discussion of the concept of innovation, Steve acknowledged

the importance of building on previous knowledge to create something new, concluding that, “The past is important to learn about the present and predict the future” (exam 2). We know that those words were true in Steve’s own experience not only because he mentioned how much he learned about himself and the world while working with the community partner (journal #11), but because he looked to his own future and connected his experience with a small group of Boy Scouts to broader issues such as poverty and racism: “But what is even more important [than keeping in touch with the Scouts] is that I would help and I would work for people in similar situations (with financial problems, racism, and other things) a lot” (journal #11). Steve did not settle simply for making an academic connection to sweeping issues; he narrowed his discussion to his own context and specified where and with whom he would work in the future, writing that while in law school in another state he would work with the local Latino population in that community (journal #13). And we know he did because the semester after the course, Steve sent an email from Iowa to inform his instructor that he “just signed up to volunteer to communicate with Latinos in the local jail to ensure humane conditions and proper access to legal services. I’m looking forward to continuing to improve my Spanish” (personal communication, September 8, 2006). Steve’s achievements within the connections standard came to full fruition when he started law school and on his own time continued to be active in the community by bringing to bear his own interdisciplinary skills in Spanish language, Latino cultures, and law.

Comparisons

For all students in the course, compliance with the *National Standard’s* call to participate in multilingual communities was implicit because the CSL placements were all based on Spanish language and Hispanic cultures skills. Steve wrote about his participation in the multilingual community in which he was placed, specifically mentioning his desire to understand and know the Latino community (journal #12). While participation in multilingual communities was a given for students in the course, their attitudes toward CSL and multilingual communities was something over which the instructors had no control. Steve offered the following insightful comparison between his own attitude toward CSL at the beginning and end of the semester: “At the beginning of the semester, I did not know if I would like this class or the community work. Now, four months later, I am happy that I am in this class. Each week I like to support the

Scouts in the community” (journal #14).

Steve’s comparisons between his own language and culture and those of the community in which he was working fell into two principle categories. The first was general comparisons between the multilingual community to which CSL granted him access and his own experiences with community up until that point. The second category of comparison was explicit comparisons of the Boy Scout Troop with which he was working and more affluent troops.

Steve’s final exam revealed his own belief that CSL afforded him access to a community that he would not have otherwise come to know. As compared to his experience of other communities, the CSL experience allowed him to “gain a sense of community in which the participants in the program live.” Earlier writing for the course revealed Steve’s surprise, and unmasked some stereotypes with respect to the kind of people who live in trailer parks. It was only through his CSL experience that Steve was able to smash that stereotype by coming to know an individual who did not fit his preconceived notions of those living in trailer parks. Steve had no experience with trailer parks before this course and not surprisingly it was clear to him that the boys “do not have many things or much money” (journal #5). Steve not only pointed out that four of the boys were being raised by single mothers, but reacted emotionally to that fact, exclaiming, “What a shame!” (journal #5). What this journal entry revealed about Steve was his limited prior exposure to a range of successful household configurations; he did not have the experience to think that a single-parent household might be successful, too.

Steve’s experience with the Boy Scout troop in the trailer park allowed him to take note of the stark contrast between that troop and other Boy Scout troops with which he was familiar. On his first written exam for the course, Steve pointed out that there was no difference between the membership of the troop with which he was working and any other Boy Scout troop: “I am trying to assist a group of boys who deserve the same opportunities as more affluent scout troops. They are smart, creative, and kind, and only need a level playing field to thrive.” Toward that end, Steve aspired to acquire resources “for purchasing uniforms and supplies, and providing additional educational and recreational activities for participants in the program” (final project one page business plan). When a journal prompt asked if there were better ways to organize the community partner’s space, Steve answered in the affirmative, but was careful to compare the relative importance of rendering direct services to the boys over using limited resources to improve the meeting space (journal #4).

In the context of comparison, Steve also repeated his desire to allow the boys to participate in activities outside the trailer where they had their weekly meetings. He attributed their inability to participate in such events to being a newly formed troop, but was also careful to point out the contrast with other troops that had been able to participate in specific events sponsored by the Boy Scouts of America organization (exam 2). Through the CSL experience, Steve was able to begin what was to become ongoing participation in multilingual communities and draw comparisons between his own experiences of community and those of the boys with whom he was working.

Steve's writing clearly demonstrated that he did gain insight into the nature of language and culture (comparisons), but at times his work showed that he was not fully engaged with the effort it takes to make those comparisons. His early reflective journals were somewhat anemic. As his connection with the partner organization deepened and his practice with the novel technique (to him) of reflective writing in Spanish increased, his efforts also increased. Other students also worked with the Boy Scouts, but Steve's journals began to reveal his unique take on the prompts (which were the same for everyone), moving from "just doing homework" to truly comparing his own language and culture with those he encountered in the community.

Communities

CSL is uniquely suited to the communities *National Standard*. Students in a Spanish CSL course necessarily are going to participate in multilingual communities throughout their lives due to changing U.S. demographics. Steve moved through the phases one would expect in engaging with new communities. First, he brought his expectations of a trailer park into alignment with the reality he experienced when he went to support the Latino Boy Scout troop (journals 4, 5, 6, 9, exam 1, exam 2), then he suggested connecting that community with campus organizations and businesses in the town to gain support for materials and activities (journal 9, activity report 1, exam 1, exam 2), which led him to express a desire to broaden the community of the boys participating in the Boy Scout troop (journals 5, 7, activity report 1, exam 2). Steve also recognized the Boy Scout organization as a key community that would provide continuity for the boys: "All this [his work with Troop 91] is possible because the organization exists....This organization is very important to the future of the boys in the Scouts" (journal #8).

Most of the specific examples of Steve's participation in multilingual communities have been dis-

cussed above; however, it is worth noting that Steve always wanted to "involve the Scouts themselves" (activity report 1) in connecting with campus organizations and local businesses. In his seventh journal entry he said that it was a good idea for the boys, not him, to work with those groups. Steve simultaneously acknowledged the important role of parents in those efforts (journal #7) and his own limited impact in a single semester of service. Yet Steve offered the community a model: he executed his plan to connect with other organizations and involved the boys in fundraising, while participating in activities away from their meeting place by helping the boys conduct a can shake with a multicultural sorority to raise money to buy uniforms (exam 2).

As the semester passed, it became clear that it was not a sense of duty or a course requirement that made Steve get involved with the multilingual community in question. In his 12th journal entry he wrote that he not only understood the importance of supporting the community, but that he genuinely enjoyed working with the Scouts each week. He was even more emphatic in another journal entry in which he asserted that it was not because of the Spanish class that he supported the boys, and offered the fact that he had done a lot more than the course required as evidence of that: "I want to know the Hispanic community better. I like the boys in the Scouts a lot. It is not important that I should support them for Spanish class—I want to work with them and I have supported them more than the requirement [for the course]" (journal #10). He genuinely wanted to know the local Latino community and as the semester came to a close, his conviction that Latino communities would be part of his own future only grew stronger. Because he knew that he was graduating at the end of the semester and moving away, in his 11th journal entry he said that it would be more important to help people in similar situations in the future than to keep working with the same community he had gotten to know during the course. Two weeks later he expressed an interest in working with Latinos in communities near the University of Iowa where he was going to law school the following semester (journal #13) and in his final journal entry he concluded that these communities would be part of his life from that point forward: "My experiences in the community are useful to me because I want to support the community a lot during my life" (journal #15).

One common thread throughout Steve's written work for the course was the meta-level at which he was not only successful with the *National Standards* himself, but saw it as his role to help the boys communicate with others, explore cultures beyond their home community, establish connections with other organizations, compare their troop

with others, and participate in broader communities. Steve repeated his aspirations to engage the boys in activities that would mirror the kinds of experiences Steve himself was having during the CSL course—such as off-site trips (journal #13) and popcorn sales to raise funds (activity report 2). By involving two boys from the Scout troop in the fundraiser on campus, Steve went beyond charity or volunteering to convey the important lessons he was learning about communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities to the boys through action. He was not telling the boys *about* the *National Standards*; he was helping the boys live them.

Implications

While this study has focused on student achievement toward the national standards for foreign language learning, implications can be drawn for CSL instruction across disciplines. It is important to plan courses in any discipline with that discipline's national standards in mind; they are important guideposts for curriculum design and assessment. Furthermore, just as it is important to begin a CSL course by informing students about that pedagogy, teaching the standards to students can help them understand why certain activities and exercises are included in the course. In fact, we now include in all our CSL courses a lesson plan on the 5 C's and a comparison of how they can be achieved with study abroad versus CSL. A discipline's national standards can also be addressed explicitly in the prompts for students' reflective writing. We added this journal prompt related to the *connections* standard in our course materials: "Describe how your experiences in the community for this course have confirmed or contradicted information you learned in other classes" (ACTFL Standard 3.1).

The best practices of the discipline also must be maintained within a CSL course. In our case, we included communicative language teaching and task-based instruction (two important, current methods in foreign language teaching) in our course. For example, in one class students discussed the resources their community partners already possessed and others they needed; this was accomplished through a series of task-based activities in which students shared previously unknown information. In this way, we used our discipline's best practices to strengthen the CSL experience.

Partnerships with more than one community organization enhance students' abilities to meet the discipline's standards. Placement variety enriches classroom discussions and comparisons among students' experiences. Students worked with youth in schools and after-school programs, a service

agency that helped parents of infants and preschoolers locate and pay for child care, and a refugee/immigrant resettlement agency that helped adults with a wide scope of issues. By comparing their community experiences in the classroom, students gained a more complex understanding of community members, their language, and cultures. For example, if one student at the resettlement agency discussed a housing problem with an adult, other students in the class would see how that might affect a child's performance in school. This leads to a more complete understanding of all the *National Standards*.

Finally, this study, related to the national standards for foreign language education, has implications for other disciplines. Language and cultural issues are likely to appear in many CSL courses. Instructors in all disciplines can highlight issues related to language and culture; it is not necessary to speak—or teach—a language to lead a discussion about language's impact on a community and its relationship with other language communities.

Conclusions

Steve's case demonstrates that Spanish CSL can satisfy the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages 5 C's *National Standards*, and in ways a traditional class cannot. We have presented one successful case. And though other students in the course may have been less successful than Steve, all students in the course provided evidence of learning in all 5 C's. Students' particular strengths varied amongst the 5 C's. For example, most heritage speakers excelled in demonstrating the *communication* and *cultures* standards. Students with strong academic skills and/or a personal interest in entrepreneurship were particularly adept at *connections*. All students achieved the *comparisons* standard, but some were able to tease out those comparisons on a more complex level than others. And finally, all students met the *communities* standard (5.1), but some showed more enthusiasm and personal enjoyment (5.2) from the CSL than others.

We are not saying that traditional classroom-based Spanish courses are less valuable than CSL courses. All students came to this course with a certain level of Spanish proficiency and cultural knowledge acquired in traditional classrooms, and most returned to those types of courses in subsequent semesters. Our Spanish CSL course asked students to apply what they had learned in other classes in their community experiences. They, then, may have utilized the knowledge gained through their CSL in their subsequent Spanish classes. An ideal university-level Spanish curriculum would include both types of courses (as well as study-abroad).

All instructors in all disciplines, along with their students, can benefit from including disciplinary standards in their respective curricula. The disciplinary standards can inform the choice of community partners, work that students undertake with those partners, and work students do for the course. What we have learned from this case is relevant to other disciplines using CSL: partnerships among academic institutions, students, and communities will inevitably intersect with issues of communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities.

Notes

¹ The Pew Hispanic Center offers complete, up-to-date demographic information on Latinos in the U.S. See <http://pewhispanic.org/>.

² The course was developed with support from two UIUC programs: the Academy for Entrepreneurial Leadership and the Center for International Business and Education Research.

³ The community-based learning program was initially developed with a grant from the Vice Chancellor for Public Engagement at the University of Illinois.

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Authors

DARCY W. LEAR co-founded the *Spanish & Illinois* program and is currently a Lecturer in the Department of Romance Languages at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. She is the coordinator of the Spanish for the Professions minor which requires CSL of all students. She collaborates with the APPLES Service-Learning Program on the UNC-CH campus.

ANNIE R. ABBOTT is an Assistant Professor of Spanish at the University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign. She directs the *Spanish & Illinois* program (www.spanishandillinois.uiuc.edu) and is the author of a forthcoming Spanish CSL textbook to be published by Prentice Hall.