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Language Proficiency: Perceptions and Mediated Actions of a Kentucky World Language Educator

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LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY: PERCEPTIONS AND MEDIATED ACTIONS OF A
KENTUCKY WORLD LANGUAGE EDUCATOR

DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in the
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By

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

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Since the inception of the Kentucky Educational Reform Act in 1990, Kentucky has
undergone numerous educational changes. Regarding world languages, recent changes
include a new state World Language Standard, a K-12 world language program review,
and university language proficiency entrance requirements. These changes create an
interesting context in which world language educators negotiate their perceptions and
pedagogical choices. This study explored the perceptions, influences, and pedagogical
choices of one Kentucky world language educator regarding language proficiency and
cultural tools of context, standards and assessments. A constructivist framework guided the
case study design. Data collection included interviews, observations, and artifact collection
and data analyses followed the comparative analysis process (Yin, 1994; Merriam, 1998).
Findings suggest that the participant's perceptions of language proficiency reflect
characteristics of the communicative competence language proficiency model of Uso-Juan
and Martinez-Flor (2008). In addition, the participant's pedagogical choices regarding
context, standards and assessments reflect organizational, policy, and personal influences
(Grant, 2003) and characteristics of mediated action (Wertsch, 1998). This study highlights
the importance of understanding world language educators' perceptions during a time of
contextual change and the need for professional
development supporting educators' pedagogical choices.

Key words: Language Proficiency, Context, World Language Standards, Assessments,
            Mediated action

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Dedicated to Jason and Cole.

Your love and support made this dream a reality.

In loving memory of those smiling down: Daddy, John, and Helen.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Language Proficiency

      Since the 1940s, efforts have been made to describe the abilities and language proficiency levels of second language (SL) speakers. In 1978, President Carter, reacting to the Helsinki Accords, created a commission to determine the state of SL studies in the United States. The findings were telling. Words such as "incompetence" and "scandalous" were found in the report titled *Strength through Wisdom* (Barnwell, 1996, p. 142). Consequently, recommendations were made as to how to improve our SL programs and levels of competency with the most influential being the creation of a National Criterion and Assessment Program. This agency "'would establish language proficiency achievement goals for the end of each year of study at all levels, with special attention to speaking proficiency' (Report 1980)" (Barnwell, 1996, p.142).

      At roughly the same time as the formation of the President's Commission, another entity was investigating proficiency levels for second languages, the Educational Testing Service (ETS). ETS, working collaboratively with European testing agencies, created a standardized method to measure proficiency (Barnwell, 1996). The project, titled *Common Yardstick*, produced an eleven-range scale that closely resembled that used by the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) during World War II. However, instead of the FSI's numbers, descriptive indicators such as Novice-Low and Native were introduced.

      Encouraged by the progress made, the federal government provided a grant for ETS and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) to continue the work that the ETS and European Community had started. A significant change included the expansion of the lower proficiency levels to better disperse the clumping of language speakers falling in this range after an "ordinary academic course of study" (Woodford, 1981, p. 1). The creation of the ACTFL/ETS scale "aroused great hopes for many commentators" (Barnwell, 1996, p. 149), because SL learners for the first time in academic settings were being assessed for proficiency rather than a set body of language.

      In 1986, the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines* for world languages were published (Swender & Duncan, 1998). Originally geared towards the description of adult language

performances, these guidelines greatly influenced assessment and curriculum development in the schools by explaining "what individuals can do with language" (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 2012a, p. 3). In 2012, ACTFL released a third edition of its *Proficiency Guidelines* which included the addition of a fifth level of proficiency labeled "Distinguished", prior revisions of language skills to address real-world assessment needs, and division of Advanced level proficiency into sublevels.

In addition to proficiency guidelines, ACTFL collaborated with world language organizations, educators, and community stakeholders to create National World Language Standards released in 1996, *Standards for Foreign Language Learning.* These Standards included five overarching goals: communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1996). The Student Standards Task Force, commissioned to develop the National World Language Standards, created a philosophy statement to guide their work. It states:

> Language and communication are at the heart of the human experience. The United States must educate students who are equipped linguistically and culturally to communicate successfully in a pluralistic American society and abroad. This imperative envisions a future in which ALL students will develop and maintain proficiency in English and at least one other language, modern or classical.
> (National Standards in Foreign Language Project, 2006, p. 7)

This vision suggests that proficiency represents an important goal of language learning. But, what meaning is associated with language proficiency? MacDonald (1990) describes language proficiency as a dual component comprising cognitive ability and communicative skills. For the Student Task Force members, knowing a language is described as "having the ability to carry out a large variety of tasks" in that particular language (National Standards in Foreign Language Project, 2006, p. 36). Furthermore, knowing consists of "controlling the linguistic system" and "access[ing] the pragmatic, textual, and sociolinguistic aspects of language" (National Standards in Foreign Language Project, 2006, p. 36). For this study, the focus is understanding a practicing world language educator's perceptions of language proficiency.

Communicative Competence

Numerous language proficiency perspectives are addressed in the literature (Mitchell & Myles, 2004) and recent approaches suggest a communicative focus (Kissau, Algozzine, & Yon, 2013; Richards & Rogers, 2000). Based on Lee and Van Patten's work (2003), Kissau, Algozzine, and Yon (2013) characterize a communicative approach as placing emphasis on "meaning rather than grammatical accuracy and on student interaction in the L2 via participation in relevant and cooperative tasks". One such communicative approach is Usó-Juan and Martinez-Flor's (2006) communicative competence which incorporates the underlying components of the National World Language Standards and ACTFL's proficiency guidelines. Expanded from Canale and Swain's 1979 concept, Martinez-Flor and Usó-Juan place discourse competence at the center of language production and encase it within the skills of speaking, writing, reading, and listening. Extending equally from the center focus of discourse competence are four competencies: linguistic, pragmatic, intercultural, and strategic. Depicting competence in this way suggests that each competency influences the discourse competence, or language proficiency, and that each is integral to language production.

The communicative competence theory of Martinez-Flor and Usó-Juan (2006) explains communication among language users; however, it has not been used to understand educators' perceptions that guide student language proficiency development. Due to its close alignment with the National World Language Standards, I use the communicative competence theory as an analytical framework for this study in order to understand the definitions and perceptions a world language educator expresses with regard to language proficiency.

Teacher Choices

Authors of the *National Foreign Language Standards* report argue that world language educators play a crucial role in facilitating student language learning (Glisan, 1996):

> You are at the heart of educational reform. Within your states and districts, you will shape the curricular frameworks… in ways appropriate to your mandates and directions. You are the agents of change, you are the implementers of standards

for your students, you are the catalyst for their success or failure. (National

Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1996, p. 8)

Thornton (1991) describes teachers' roles in curriculum change as "gatekeeping".

Gatekeeping encompasses the daily decisions teachers make "concerning both the subject

matter and the experiences to which students have access and the nature of that subject

matter and those experiences" (Thornton, 1991, p. 237). This concept incorporates

curricular and instructional decisions and reflects the essence of the National Foreign

Language Standards' vision. Moreover, gatekeeping provides this study a framework for

understanding the pedagogical choices that an educator makes.

Using Thornton's framework, Grant (2003) investigated the pedagogical choices

made by two secondary history teachers with regard to teaching about the civil rights

movement in the United States. Each teacher in the study incorporated differing

instructional strategies, set differing expectations of student participation, and chose

differing curricular points of emphasis. Grant views these choices as reflections of

gatekeeping and suggests influences on each participant, whether similar or unique,

guided their gatekeeping choices.

Grant proposes the question, "how to frame the inquiry" (2003, p. 151), as a main

determiner of which categories of influence researchers should use. He offers the

reminder that influences "come from multiple directions, they push in various ways, and

they interact such that no influence is purely perceived" (2003, p. 151). Building on the

work of Thornton, Grant offers three influences that are "broa[d] and… inclusive" (p.

152) and allow for a more complete understanding of teacher as gatekeeper: personal,

organizational, and policy.

Grant's description of personal influence reflects a broad range of descriptors

including teachers' personal knowledge and beliefs, dispositions, professional

experiences, personal history, and perceptions regarding function of subject matter

knowledge. Based on his research, Grant divides personal influences into two

subcategories: beliefs and influences. Beliefs, or the "ideas that teachers *accept* to be

true" (2003, p.153) include categories such as values, teaching and learning, and the

subject matter being taught. Influences, on the other hand, are identified as teachers'

experiences. The second category of influence, organizational, includes influences such

as institutional cultures, organizational structures, and organizational players, like "students and teaching peers…and school and district administrators" (Grant, 2003, p. 163). In addition, Grant suggests two other categories of organizational influences: teacher relationships with individuals and groups and organizational norms and structures. Within each, Grant asserts that large groupings can be found. Teacher relationships with individuals and groups include colleagues, administrators and students within the contexts of classroom, school and district. Organizational norms and structures delve deeper into teachers' contexts and vary from school-day schedule and courses offered to "expectations of how 'noisy' a classroom can be, how grades are determined, and which textbooks will be used and how" (Grant, 2003, p. 167). The final category of influence, policy, consists of curriculum standards, textbooks, and assessments.

Though Grant uses his categories of influences to address research focusing on history educators, their "fluid, situational, and contingent" (Grant, 2003, p. 184) characteristics make them applicable for this study's focus of understanding the perceptions, or views held, and the pedagogical choices of world language educators. Furthermore, the three categories of influence—personal, organizational, and policy— guide this study's analyses by providing a means for organizing and understanding the data.

Context as Influence

Although there are many influences on the pedagogical choices educators make, context stands out as an overarching concept. Grant (2003) implies context in his discussions of influences stating that "few teacher decisions reflect purely one category or another" (p. 153). Thus, personal, organizational and policy influences combine to describe the context in which educators navigate choices. The 2006 *National Foreign Language Standards* report addresses the importance of language learning contexts for the "determin[ing] of instructional approach" (p. 24) used by educators.

The literature provides numerous explicit descriptions of teacher's context. In the 2011 *Decade of Foreign Language Standards* report, context is described as "institutions" and is defined as "states, districts, schools, institutions of higher education,

professional organizations, and resource centers" (Phillips & Abbott, p. 6). Borg's (2003) synthesis of teacher cognition studies identifies contextual factors influencing educators' decisions such as "parents, principals' requirements, the school, society, curriculum mandates, classroom and school layout, school policies, colleagues, standardized tests, and the availability of resources" (p. 94). In his study of world language educators and their perceptions pertaining to reading instruction, Graden (2006) found that context played a significant role in influencing the pedagogical choices that teacher participants made. In particular, participants identified their context as students and allowed perceptions of these students to influence the reading practices implemented in the classroom.

Although Borg and Graden's studies add to the world language literature pertaining to context, studies specifically addressing educators' perceptions regarding context are lacking. This raises the question of what perceptions do world language educators have of context. How do they describe their context and what influences do they perceive this context as having on their pedagogical choices? These questions are of interest to this researcher and guide this study's focus.

Standards as Influence

Another influence on educator's pedagogical choices is content standards. Many studies have focused on the impact of national and state Standards on teacher choices (Phillips & Abbott, 2011; Shrum & Glisan, 2009). Donnelly and Sadler's (2009) study of twenty-two Indiana science educators focused on educators' perceptions regarding national science standards. The survey findings suggest six categories of perceptions reflecting standards and their influences: "negative perspectives, game of testing, already doing it, part of the cycle, reality of teaching, and useful tools" (2009, p. 1050). Overall, cited participants' perspectives were most often negative. Roughly half of the teachers chose to implement the standards and use them as a guiding force for their curriculum development and half did not. From the non-implementing group, most agreed that they would use the standards if testing, or accountability, was an end result for the learners.

A similar study by Wood (1999) surveyed world language educators regarding the influence of National and State World Language Standards on their pedagogical choices. The survey found that roughly half of the participants made curriculum changes due to the Standards. Examples of changes were authentic use of target language, a focus on language proficiency, assessing learners, and creating activity-based lessons. Conversely, the half of world language educators who reported no curricular changes cited the following reasons: lack of time and money or already implementing a curriculum based on Standards.

Findings from both Wood's (1999) and Donnelly and Sadler's (2009) studies suggest that Standards have an impact on some educators' choices. In a similar fashion, the *Decade of Foreign Language Standards* report suggests National World Language Standards are impacting teaching practices, but with limitations (Phillips & Abbott, 2011). Based on surveys completed by over 1800 world language supervisors, methods course faculty and educators, findings support the claim that teachers are using the Standards as an "organizing principle and that the Standards are the basis of activities" (p.11). However, the influence of the National Standards appears to be limited to teachers "focus[ing] primarily on the communication (79%) and cultures (22%) standards in their teaching" (p.11) with minimal address given to connections, communities, and comparisons.

Although these studies provide valuable background information about teacher choices pertaining to standards, surveys served as the means of data collection. Interviews, observations, and artifact collection were not included. This study delves deeply, through a case study approach, to further explore the influence of standards on the choices world language educators are making.

Assessments as Influence

Another influence on educators' pedagogical choices is assessments. Within this category, a specific focus of test use is washback. As defined by Bachman, washback is "the impact of tests on instruction" (2005, p. 5). Considerable research on this concept has been conducted with standardized assessments and the chain reaction they create of

particular interest (Abrams, Pedulla, & Madaus, 2003). Findings suggest educators'
decisions pertaining to assessments influence pedagogical choices; however, differences
occur based on whether impact exhibits positive or negative washback effects (Adair-
Hauck, Glisan, Koda, Swender, & Sandrock, 2006).

Abrams, Pedulla, and Madaus (2003) sought to understand educators' perceptions
of state mandated testing and the influence, or washback, on pedagogical choices.
Educators from twenty-nine states representing differing classifications of "consequences
or stakes attached to their state test results" (Abrams et al., 2003, p. 22) participated in the
survey study. Results suggested a significant commonality: respondents positively
viewed their State Standards and believed "if [teachers] teach to the state Standards or
frameworks, students will do well on the tests" (Abrams et al. 2003, p. 23). However,
differences pertaining to impact on classroom practices emerged based on levels of stakes
testing respondents reported. Educators experiencing high-stakes testing reported an
increase of time on tested content versus those educators experiencing low-stakes testing.
Conversely, a decrease in time was reported for areas such as "fine arts,
industrial/vocational education, field trips, class trips, enrichment assemblies, and class
enrichment activities" (Abrams et al., 2003, p. 23). In addition, 76% of high-stakes
educators versus 63% of low-stakes educators shared that they changed instructional
practices in ways that contradicted their own perceptions due to the testing.

Of interest, research focus on washback and educators who choose to implement
testing on their own accord is lacking in the literature, especially with regard to world
language educators. A study focusing on language educators and the effect language
proficiency assessments have on their pedagogical choices would provide foundational
knowledge for further studies. In addition, such a study would add a missing perspective,
that of world language educators, to existing research on teacher choices and positive and
negative washback.

Kentucky

In the United States, world languages are "at a unique moment historically"
(Branaman & Rhodes, 1998). The 2011 *A Decade of Foreign Language Standards* report
suggests a negative change (Phillips & Abbott, 2011). It claims one of the greatest

challenges for school districts is the non-core subject status attributed to the world languages. The report further suggests that emphasis on No Child Left Behind resulted in a "lack of funding [and] exclusion from district priorities", creating a "negative impact … in terms of student learning opportunities and funding for professional development for teachers" of world languages (Phillips & Abbott, p. 9). Conversely, the recent changes made by ACTFL and other collaborative organizations to align the National World Language Standards with the Common Core State Standards received recognition from the Council of Chief State School Officers (Robelen, 2011). In addition, the alignment between ACTFL and the National Council on the Accreditation of Teacher Education to develop "performance outcomes" later served as a model for other content areas challenged with adapting their standards (Phillips & Abbott, 2011, p. 10).

During this time of national adjustment, Kentucky has exhibited interesting changes suggesting an environment supportive of world languages. The first change reflects world language requirements for students. In 2004, Kentucky legislation 13 KAR 2:020 elevated world languages as part of the required pre-college curriculum component by stating "first-time freshmen under age 21 who enroll in a four-year degree program at a Kentucky public university" must attain two credits in the same world language or demonstrate competency in that language (Kentucky Department of Education, 2010). In 2010, a collaborative effort among the University of Kentucky, Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), and the Educational Professional Standards Board led to an increase in college entrance requirements in world languages at the University of Kentucky. Beginning with the 2011 freshmen class, entering students must demonstrate a minimum level of proficiency in a SL as determined by a proficiency-based language exam. Students' high school transcripts listing two years of a world language are no longer acceptable as demonstrators of language proficiency ability. More recently, Western Kentucky University has initiated similar world language requirements with a minimal proficiency level of Novice-High.

Other examples of changes in world languages in Kentucky reflect state initiatives. In 2011, the Kentucky Board of Education recognized the importance of world language education by supporting a proposal to include a World Languages Program Review as part of each school's accountability system (Tungate, 2010). Beginning with

the 2014-2015 school year, all public schools will be required to conduct a self-assessment of their K-12 world language programs in four areas: curriculum and instruction, formative and summative assessment, professional development, and school leadership. In 2016, the World Language Program Review scores will be included in schools' overall accountability indexes.

Finally, in 2009, KDE drafted a revised state world language standard. Created by a team of Kentucky world language educators, the standard uses ACTFL's language proficiency scale and delineates student language proficiency skills and modes of communication. Furthermore, learner benchmarks and indicators contain sample learning targets describing the functions a student should be able to perform with the language at each level. Overall, the format of the learning targets are "can-do statements" based on the European inspired LinguaFolio learner goals. Subsequent updated versions of the *Kentucky Standard for World Language Proficiency* have been released, in 2012 and 2013, and reflect the inclusion of intercultural competencies and changes made in part by ACTFL's National Standards refreshment plan (Kentucky Department of Education, 2013). Previous stated learner goals now reflect rewritten Lingua-Folio goals that are aligned with ACTFL's Proficiency Guidelines and included in the *National Standards for Foreign Language Learning*. This alignment with the National Standards, along with the aforementioned changes, makes Kentucky a state of interest in which to seek understanding of world language educators' perceptions and choices.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study is to explore a Kentucky world language educator's understanding of language proficiency and the influences perceptions of context, World Language Standards, and student assessments have on the pedagogical choices she makes. This research study can potentially impact multiple audiences. First, for Kentucky educators, the increase in understanding of how and what peers believe can impact their own perceptions and choices during a time of change enhanced by a new State World Language Standard, the incorporation of proficiency assessments for college admissions, and a World Language Program Review. Second, for Kentucky policy makers, understanding a world language educator's perception can provide valuable insight as

decisions and changes are made. Third, for those in positions of support for Kentucky world language educators, such as professional organizations, professional development providers, and teacher education programs, having a better understanding of the perceptions and decisions world language educators make can inform the way teachers are guided or prepared. Clark and Peterson describe the potential of teacher thinking as being able to "influence substantially the outcomes of teacher… and curriculum effectiveness" (1986, p. 292). It is with these goals in mind that this study is designed.

Research Questions

In order to understand the perceptions and choices of a Kentucky world language educator, two central questions guided this study. Each question is supported by sub-questions focusing on language proficiency, context, world language standards or student assessments.

1. What perceptions does a Kentucky world language educator bring to teaching with regard to language proficiency?
   1.1 How does this world language educator define language proficiency?
   1.2 How does this world language educator describe language proficiency in the context of her school and community?
2. How do perceptions of context, standards, and assessments influence the Kentucky world language educator's pedagogical choices?
   2.1 How does this world language educator describe the context in which she practices?
   2.2 How does this world language educator describe the influence of the context in which she practices on pedagogical choices?
   2.3 How does this world language educator describe the influence of state and National World Language Standards on pedagogical choices?
   2.4 How does this world language educator describe the influence of student assessments on pedagogical choices?

Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

Over the last 60 years, the expansion of second language acquisition (SLA) has resulted in deeper understandings regarding language learning and instruction. Current pedagogical approaches and instructional tools, such as standards and proficiency assessments, suggest a communicative focus (Kissau, Algozzine, & Yon, 2013; Phillips & Abbott, 2011; Usó-Juan & Martinez-Flor, 2006) emphasizing "meaning rather than grammatical accuracy and… student interaction in the L2" (Kissau, 2013, p. 580). Exploring world language educators' perceptions of these concepts and their influences on pedagogical choices is essential in order to advance instructional practices and learners' language proficiency growth (Mitchell & Myles, 2004; Phillips & Abbott, 2011). The constructivist stance of this study suggests such understanding is incomplete without consideration of the context in which world language educators negotiate meaning.

This chapter addresses concepts related to world language educators' pedagogical choices and the literature supporting these choices. I began my review of the literature using broad terms: language proficiency, influences, teachers' choices, context, standards, and assessments. I then narrowed my research scope to include world language and foreign language to the aforementioned terms. Overall, sources such as EBSCO, Academic Search Premier, JSTOR, and second/foreign language collection databases provided the majority of resources and titles listed in the reference sections of relevant studies provided invaluable leads.

Second Language Learning Theories

In his discussion of SLA, Long (as cited in Block, 2003) outlines the expansion of language learning theories, from 15 to 20 in 1985 to over 40 in 1993. Supporting these theories, three strands are identified: the environmentalists, the innatists, and the interactionists (Usó-Juan & Martinez-Flor, 2006).

The environmentalists' view included two branches: structural linguistics and behaviorist psychology. Structural linguistics assumes "that language was primarily an oral phenomenon" and that language consists of "different elements related to each other

in a linear way by means of a series of structures or rules" (Usó-Juan & Martinez-Flor, 2006, p. 5). The behaviorist psychology, led by Skinner, claimed that the environment and conditioning guided the learning process and that internal mental processes did not exist.

In contrast to the environmentalists, the innatists focused on generative linguistics and "the creative nature of human language" (Usó-Juan & Martinez-Flor, 2006, p. 6). Inspired by the work of Chomsky, innatists esteemed language learners' competence, rather than performance and children were viewed as possessing a language acquisition device, or LAD, that allowed them to learn. The psycholinguists challenged the behaviorists' assertions by perceiving children as active learners and "language development [as] incremental" and going "through similar stages" (Usó-Juan & Martinez-Flor, 2006, p. 8).

Influenced by developments in the 1970s, the interactionists espoused discourse, function, and cognitive processes of learning a language (Mitchell & Myles, 2004; Usó-Juan & Martinez-Flor, 2006). Linguistic focus turned to discourse and "the study of both structure and function in order to understand what language was" (Usó-Juan & Martinez-Flor, 2006, p. 8). Halliday (1975) identified seven communicative functions of children's language development. These functions emphasized the importance of social context for situating linguistical understanding. Similar to the environmentalists, cognitive psychologists regarded "the mental processes that were involved in the (language) learning act" (as cited in Usó-Juan & Martinez-Flor, 2006, p. 9). This led to two areas of interest: the information processing approach, how humans "take in information", and the constructivist approach, how humans make "personal understanding from the experiences that surround them" (Usó-Juan & Martinez-Flor, 2006, p. 9).

Moving into the 21st century, the three strands supporting language learning theories have expanded or inspired new strands. Mitchell and Myles (2004) identify six overarching second language (SL) learning theories: universal grammar, cognitive, functional, socio-cultural, input and interaction, and sociolinguistics. These theories are characterized as either a property theory, focusing on the underlying linguistic knowledge of the learner, or a transition theory, examining the learning process. Of particular interest to this study are the transitional theories of functional, sociocultural, and input and

interaction. A discussion of the basic structures and relevant studies pertaining to these theories will provide a foundation for situating this study's findings regarding participant's perceptions and pedagogical choices.

Influenced by the interactionists, the functional theory of SLA is uniquely interested in language learners' performances. It seeks to understand how meaning is portrayed in order to achieve personal communicative goals. Language created by the learner, interlanguage (Corder, 1967; Selinker, 1972), is critical to functionalist theory and subsumes consideration of the context, or speech act, in which the language occurred. The attempts of the speaker to make meaning ultimately drive the developing SL structures (Mitchell and Myles, 2004).

The European Science Foundation conducted a large-scale study focusing on the rate and route of naturalistic interlanguage development. Five research teams from differing countries focused on ten varying SL groups of adult migrant laborers to explore the relation of function to the development of an evolving SL. Findings suggest that development of a specific notion, such as time, evolved sequentially and without the influence of first language on the SL, or transfer (Huebner, 1996). The interlanguage produced by the workers in a natural setting reflects functionalist thinking and answers the question, how is meaning portrayed while also emphasizing the importance of context for understanding language learning.

In contrast to the functionalists, the sociocultural approach views language learning as a social process first, then as an individual. Inspired by the works of Vygotsky, sociocultural theory embraces concepts such as mediation, regulation, and Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) to describe language learning. In his discussions of mediation, Lantolf states the "central… concept of sociocultural theory is that higher forms of human mental activity are *mediated*" (2000, p.80) and that symbolic tools, such as language, are used during mediation. Regarding the learning process, a learner is understood as engaging in regulation. Self-regulation reflects an adult's ability for "autonomous functioning" (Mitchell & Myles, 2004, p. 195). In contrast, a child learns through other-regulation, or "carrying out tasks and activities under the guidance of other more skilled individuals… typically mediated through language" (Mitchell & Myles, 2004, p. 195). In addition, the domain in which learning most effectively takes place is

the ZPD. Vygotsky describes ZPD as, "the difference between the child's developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the higher level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 85)" (as cited in Mitchell & Myles, 2004, p. 196).

Although sociocultural theory is a relatively new field in SLA, research focusing on interactions of language learners has been a dominant area of focus. For example, Ohta's study of seven learners of Japanese as a SL illustrates that learners, when interacting with a peer, are able to understand language material situated in their ZPD. Furthermore, Ohta notes that beginning learners, when assuming the role of listener, are able "to both analyze what is being said, and also project what might come next" (Mitchell & Myles, 2004, p. 216). Overall, research focusing on the mediated actions of world language educators is lacking in sociocultural literature. Inspired by Wertsch's claim that human actions are "configurations of influence, both social and individual" (1995, p.63), this study explored a world language educator's actions within the influences of her social and individual contexts.

The interactionist category of SL learning theory, input and output, is influenced by the works of Krashen, Long, and Swain (Mitchell & Myles, 2004) and focuses on the "role of environmental language in promoting SLL [second language learning]" (Mitchell & Myles, 2004, p. 159). Environmental languages are defined as input, language provided by another to the learner, and output, language produced by the learner and negotiated for meaning (Mitchell & Myles, 2004).

In 1982, Krashen addressed the concept of input in his comprehensive theory of SLA: the Monitor Model. The concepts and terminology of the Monitor Model sustained heavy criticism (Lightbown, 1990; Mitchell & Myles, 2004; Omaggio, 1986); however, Krashen's methodological triangulation of data, which included self-observations of his SL learning experiences, observations of SL speakers in natural quasi-ethnographic settings, and existing data generated from structured research studies, is attributed to advancements in SLA "epistemological data bases… and research questions" (Block, 2003, p. 22).

Influenced by fields such as linguistics and social psychology, the Monitor Model supports five hypotheses: natural order, acquisition/learning, monitor, input, and affective filter (Krashen, 1982, 1985). The natural order hypothesis reflects research findings produced by the morpheme studies of Dulay and Burt (as cited in Block, 2003) and states SL learners acquire rules of language in a predictable manner. The acquiring and learning hypothesis addresses the dichotomy of sub-conscious knowing of a language and conscious/learning of a language. The monitor hypothesis emphasizes the negative impact that the learning of rules has on the language production process. The input hypothesis suggests language learning occurs when the learner is exposed to enough comprehensible language one level above his/her skill level and the affective filter describes the role of emotional factors in a learner's ability to receive such input.

Of particular interest to this study, Krashen's (1982) hypotheses of affective filter and input hypothesis help guide understanding regarding the pedagogical choices world language educators make. The affective filter reflects the influence of three emotional variables on a learner's ability to comprehend input: motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety. In order for a student to increase language acquisition, a learning environment promoting student motivation, increased self-confidence, and a lowering of anxiety is needed.

While the affective filter relates to a learner's emotional needs, the input hypothesis describes the learner's language needs. Krashen's (1982) model assumes language learning can only occur if sufficient comprehensible input is provided to the learner. Symbolized by "i", input is described as the level at which a learner is currently within the natural order of progression. In order to advance, a learner must receive input one level above, $+ 1$, his/her current range. This $+ 1$ language becomes comprehensible to the learner if the affective filter is low and aids such as contextual clues or visuals are present to support comprehension. Krashen includes two corollaries to the input hypothesis. First, "speech cannot be taught directly but 'emerges' on its own" (1985, p. 2) as a "result" of the language learning. Second, "If input is understood… the necessary grammar is automatically provided. The language teacher need not attempt deliberately to teach the next structure" (p.2). These assertions continue to endure as acknowledged instructional guides for world language educators' pedagogical choices (Omaggio

Hadley, 2001). For those educators embracing the hypotheses and/or corollaries, what meaning is negotiated between their perceptions and the Model and what instructional decisions are they making?

Pedagogically, two approaches emerged based on Krashen's work: natural approach and total physical response, or TPR (Omaggio, 1986). The natural approach was a collaborative effort between Terrell and Krashen to put the monitor model into practice. It assumes language learning occurs through the building of a large vocabulary base and comprehensive grammar knowledge. In a similar manner, Asher's TPR incorporates the input hypothesis but includes movement. Learners spend extended periods of time listening to the target language building their listening proficiency skills. To demonstrate understanding, learners respond to commands given by the teacher. Typical lesson formats include the instructor giving numerous commands integrating new vocabulary and grammar and the learners carrying out the actions. After the initial listening/input stage, learners are invited, never pressured, to exchange roles with the teacher and orally produce their own commands. Finally, with minimal emphasis, the students may request explanation and the instructor writes expressions or examples for all to see (Omaggio, 1986).

Krashen's input hypothesis (1982) instigated a chain of studies that challenged and expanded its claims. Reacting to the claim that comprehensible input suffices for language learning to occur, Long (1985) paired sixteen native speakers (NS) into groups with other NS or non-native-speakers (NNS). Conversational tasks were assigned to each pairing and the linguistical patterns that emerged suggested "little linguistic difference between the talk produced" by the NS-NS pairs and the NS-NNS pairs regarding grammar (Mitchell & Myles, 2004, p. 166). However, what did emerge was the frequency of specific conversation tactics to assure comprehension. Techniques such as repetitions, confirmation checks, and clarification requests served as tools to increase the comprehension levels of the NNS; furthermore, input at $i + 2$ or $i + 3$ increased the use of such tactics and was viewed as "unknown linguistic elements, and, hence, potential intake for acquisition" (as cited in Mitchell and Myles, 2004, p.168). To support this belief, Long (1985, 2007) studied the effects of elaboration on comprehension levels. Findings suggest learning was blocked when the learner received large quantities of

unrecognizable input as well as simplified, redundant *i + 0* input. From these findings, Long (1985) expanded Krashen's (1982) input hypothesis to include extended discourse, relabeling it interaction hypothesis.

Building on Long's assertion that interaction would promote comprehension, Pica, Young and Doughty (1987) established a link between the implementation of input negotiation and increased comprehension. Using two groups of language learners, participants were asked to place colored cutouts on a scene according to given input. One group heard a simplified script of the task and was allowed no interaction in which to negotiate for meaning. The other group heard a non-modified, native speaker (NS) version of the task and was encouraged to ask clarifying questions to assure comprehension. Despite the input elevation of the NS script, the learners demonstrated significantly higher levels of comprehension, as indicated by task completion, resulting from their interaction (Mitchell and Myles, 2004).

Carroll and Swain (1993) took a more in depth look at input and its effect on learner comprehension. Known as the immersion observation study, Canadian students in grades 3 and 6 were observed as they received content-based SL French instruction throughout lengthy parts of the day (Allen, Swain, Harley, & Cummins, 1990). Focus narrowed to four issues: vocabulary instruction, use of vous/tu, frequency and length of student talk, and treatment of errors. From the findings, Carroll and Swain's assertions challenged Krashen's (1982) input hypothesis and its claims to learning. The immersion students received large quantities of comprehensible input resulting in native-like levels of comprehension in the SL. Emphasis was placed on semantics, due to the content base of the immersion setting, and limited instruction occurred regarding grammar or vocabulary development. However, the language production, or output, of the learners was minimal and weak (Mitchell and Myles, 2004). Students during the French portion of the day were provided two-thirds fewer opportunities to speak versus the English portion of the day. In addition, when students did speak, it was usually "teacher-initiated… [and] linguistically controlled…encourag[ing] minimal responses. Less than 15 % of student turns in French were…sustained (more than a clause in length)" (Allen, Swain, Harley, & Cummins, 1990, p.65).

These findings directly contradicted the underlying premise of Krashen's input hypothesis. Learners, who received large amounts of comprehensible input for multiple years, were unable to show acquisition as evidenced by their output. To explain, Swain created the model of comprehensible output hypothesis. Consisting of two parts, the comprehensible output hypothesis states a learner must both hear and produce the language in order to reach near native levels of proficiency and receive feedback that is neither ambiguous nor inconsistent. As a result, learners will become more aware and notice points in which their interlanguage is lacking and hypothesize or test possible solutions in order to fill the holes advancing language acquisition (Allen, Swain, Harley, & Cummins, 1990).

One aspect of the output hypothesis that Swain (2004) later expanded upon focused on learner SL production. Reflecting on the observations from the immersion study, Swain claimed that students were rarely "pushed" (2004, p. 99) by their teachers to produce past their current level of language abilities, or interlanguage level. She cites an example of two young girls, Sophie and Rachel, working on an answer. During their discussion of an assigned task, a grammatical debate occurs as to which article "de" or "des" precedes a plural adjective. Sophie and Rachel eventually come to the correct conclusion, "de". Swain identified collaborative dialogue, or "engage[ment] in problem solving and knowledge building" (2004, p. 102), as a means for optimal language learning. Carroll and Swain's comprehensible output hypothesis had immediate relevance for instructional practices within immersion programs and challenged Krashen's claims for learning within the input hypothesis. However, for world language educators outside of immersion settings, what impact did the comprehensible output have on pedagogical choices, if any?

A principal reason for conducting SLA research is to improve SL instruction (Larsen-Freeman, 1998; Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991; Nassaji, 2012; Pica, 2005). Yet, research regarding the perceptions of world language educators and the influences on their pedagogical choices is lacking. Nassaji's (2012) survey study of 201 English as second language educators suggests educators' understanding of SL research did improve instructional practices. However, in what way did those educators improve? This study seeks to understand which theories influence world language educators who espouse

specific language learning proficiency perceptions. The works of Krashen (1982), Long (1985), Pica, Young and Doughty (1987), Carroll and Swain (1993) illustrate a theoretical timeline of the expansion of the input hypothesis into an input-output hypothesis and provide a basis for understanding the pedagogical choices of this study's case participant. The following section discusses relevant studies focusing on teacher perceptions and cognitions.

Teacher Beliefs/Perceptions

The concept of teacher beliefs has multiple connotations in the literature. Grant (2003), in his model of categories of influence, situates beliefs within the sub-category of personal influences and includes examples such as beliefs regarding values, teaching and learning, and the subject matter being taught. Aligning with Grant's descriptors, Davis (2003) provides a working definition of beliefs that emphasizes the role of context. Davis states, "people's beliefs are instrumental in influencing their behavior is a truism: people act on the basis of perceptions and their 'definition of the situation' (207)". Focusing on world language educators, Borg (2003) situates beliefs within the concept of teacher cognition and explores "what teachers think, know, and believe and the relationships of these mental constructs to what teachers do in the language teaching classroom" (p.81). He suggests three themes for teacher cognition: prior learning and experiences, teacher education, and classroom practices. In addition, Borg recognizes the role of context regarding congruence of teachers' cognition and pedagogical choices. Borg's findings provide a model for understanding teachers' beliefs, which supports Grant's (2003) framework, and includes: persona, organizational, and policy. For this study, Borg's (2003) and Davis's (2003) definition of teacher beliefs and Grant's (2003) categories of influences informed my understanding of teacher perceptions. Thus, teachers' perceptions were the understanding, or views held, of perceived personal, organizational, and policy contexts that influence, to some extent, ones actions.

This study's focus addresses four areas for understanding teacher perceptions: language proficiency, context, standards, and assessments. Although SLA literature remains sparse regarding these concepts, the following studies are relevant to the design or findings of this study. Thompson (2009) conducted a comparison study focusing on

students' and teachers' perceptions of target language and first language usage in the classroom. His findings suggest that first language usage in the classroom by the teacher and students did not impede learners' listening skills. Of the 16 participating educators, 12 used the target language 80% or more during classroom instruction; furthermore, the students' of the instructor who used the most target language (only 27 words throughout three class observations) showed no significant improvement on the post-listening assessment. Thompson's findings raise interesting questions regarding the efficacy of SL learning theories that focus on input as a significant learning tool and the language learning affects of educators' pedagogical choices.

Another study addressing perceptions of target language use during instruction is Levine's (2003) survey study. With 600 student and 163 educator participants, Levine addressed the communicative complexities within a world language classroom and the affect target language use has on learners' levels of anxiety. Findings suggest teachers' perceptions of learners' anxiety to use the target language were significantly higher than that identified by the learners. Levine's findings add interesting insight to existing literature regarding learners' levels of affective filters; however, the inclusion of teachers' perceptions of contextual factors (i.e. students' affective filters) adds understanding to the sparse literature regarding teachers' perceptions of context.

Addressing educators' perceptions of instructional practices, Kissau, Algozzine, and Yon (2013) employed data from over 200 survey responses to inform their findings and create a listing of effective world language teaching practices. Kissau et al. suggest multiple areas as indicative of effective teaching practices such as exposure of the target language and culture to learners, inclusion of varying teaching strategies, and de-emphasis of grammatical instruction. In addition, Kissau et al. indicate that context plays a role as per L2 teachers' abilities to "put their beliefs into practice" and recommend future research on teacher perceptions that "speak[s] to the need to incorporate working conditions and instructional challenges" (p. 592). This study sought to address that need through exploring one Kentucky world language educator's perceptions of her instructional context and the influence those perceptions have on her pedagogical choices.

Pedagogical Choices

In their description of goals for SLA researchers, Doughty and Long state, "SLA researchers study the process language teaching is designed to facilitate" (2003, p. 7). This process, or gatekeeping (Thornton, 1991), encompasses pedagogical choices which educators make regarding what and how they teach. Influenced by the writings of Westphal, Omaggio (1986) addresses a pedagogical component, teacher method. She states:

> The syllabus refers to the subject matter content of a given course or series of courses and the order in which it is presented; the approach is, ideally, the theoretical basis or bases which determine the ways in which the syllabus is treated; a strategy or technique is an individual instructional activity as it occurs in the classroom. (Omaggio, 1986, p. 44)

In addition, Omaggio warns that achieving coherence among syllabus, approach, and strategy is challenging and a world language educator's stated goals might not be in congruence. As a result, the language educator's teaching method could be working against itself hindering learners' understanding and overall language proficiency skills.

Another view regarding pedagogical choices is pedagogical content knowledge. Based on Schulman's work, Grossman and Schoenfeld (2005) describe pedagogical content knowledge as:

> The most regularly taught topics in one's subject area, the most useful forms of representations of those ideas, the most powerful analogies, illustrations, examples, explanations, and demonstrations- in a word, ways of representing and formulating the subject that make it comprehensible to others. Pedagogical content knowledge also includes an understanding of what makes the learning of specific topics easy or difficult; the conceptions and preconceptions that students of different ages and backgrounds bring with them to the learning of those most frequently taught topics and lessons (Shulman, 1986, pp. 9-10). (As cited in Grossman & Schoenfeld, 2005, p. 207)

In addition, Grossman and Schoenfeld (2005) make a distinction between knowing a subject matter and knowing a subject matter in such a way that knowledge can effectively be shared with learners. For the purpose of this study, Omaggio's (1986) teaching method

and Grossman and Schoenfeld's (2005) pedagogical content knowledge form a working-definition of pedagogical choices.

Research focusing on world language educators' pedagogical content knowledge is limited. However, a niche of studies focusing on beginning world language educators' decisions and perceptions regarding pedagogical content knowledge is informative for this study. In her review of this research, Vélez-Rendón (2002) shares five themes categorizing the development of pedagogical content knowledge: beliefs and instructional decisions, professional collaboration, reflective practice, teacher education programs, and field experiences. Watzke (2007) addresses the changes in pedagogical content knowledge over time in his longitudinal study of the needs and processes specific to the development of nine beginning world language educators. His findings suggest four core areas as influencers of pedagogical content knowledge change: prior knowledge that frames instruction, attitude toward teacher control in the classroom, instructional goals for daily lessons, and considerations for responding to student affect. In addition, Watzke calls for more studies addressing the influences and development of latent pedagogical content knowledge.

This study's address of pedagogical choices incorporated Omaggio's (1986) understanding of teaching method, including syllabus, approach, and technique, and Grossman and Schoenfeld's (2005) description of pedagogical content knowledge. In addition, Watzke's (2007) focus of understanding the processes that influenced the participant's developed pedagogical content knowledge guided this study's use of Grant's (2003) categories of influence: personal, organizational, and policy.

Instructional Practices

Though it is not the intent of this study to suggest effective teaching strategies, the case participant was selected, in part, due to certain exhibited characteristics such as student success at the World Language Festival competitions and incorporation of a proficiency-based assessment that were assumed to reflect an effective world language educator. In addition, understanding effective teaching strategies specific to the world language classroom provided an additional means for understanding the pedagogical choices of the case participant. Although research focusing on effective world language

teaching strategies remains sparse, three studies contributing to the base of knowledge of language teaching will be discussed due to their differing perspectives of effective world language teaching.

Tellèz and Waxman (2006) conducted a meta-synthesis of qualitative studies pertaining to effective instructional practices for educators of English Language Learners (ELL). Findings from 25 studies suggest four instructional practices as "effective" in the ELL classroom: communitarian teaching, protracted learning events, building on prior knowledge, and use of multiple representations. Furthermore, Tellez and Waxman recognized a common concern among qualitative researchers of effective teaching practices, a lack of contextual awareness in the findings. This lack of awareness raises many questions regarding instructional practices suggested as effective. What influences guided the educators' pedagogical choices to include specific teaching strategies? What role did the educators' teaching contexts, personal perceptions and experiences, or policy have on instructional choices? As Tellèz and Waxman point out, "individual and contextual variables that represent the great diversity of conditions or risk factors that students encounter" (2006, p. 248) makes consideration of context paramount for language studies. This study addressed this concern by framing context within its questions.

Likewise, Bell (2005) shares concerns regarding the overgeneralization of context as well as the lack of research "regarding discipline-specific teaching behaviors and attitudes of teachers" (p.259). Bell contends that specificity in individual content areas is a necessary component and that some disciplines exhibit unique descriptors that make effective teaching quite different from other content areas. It is in this uniqueness that she surveyed 457 world language educators to determine which behaviors and attitudes they valued as contributors of effective world language teaching. Bell describes the decision-making process of which effective teaching characteristics to include on the questionnaire as challenging. She ascribed to Schrier and Hammadou's claim that "attributes of effective teaching should first be identified on repeated occasions, should be agreed upon by foreign language teachers as being worth evaluating, and should be proved worthwhile in many settings" (Bell, 2005, p. 260). The resulting survey included 80 questions

reflecting a brief overview of the concerns and theories of SLA. Categories of questions and the number of occurrences were as follows:

> (a) learning objectives related to the Standards for Foreign Language Learning (National Standards, 1999) (17 items); (b) corrective feedback (7 items); (c) theories and teacher behaviors related to communicative approaches (27 items); (d) focus on form in classroom SLA (10 items); (e) individual learner differences in foreign language learning (4 items); (g) theories about SLA (5 items); (h) teacher qualifications (6 items); and (i) assessment in foreign language teaching (8 items). (Bell, 2005, p. 261)

Of interest, three survey questions incorporating the word *proficiency* were included. For each of the proficiency-oriented questions, the response rates were consistently high in disagreement, ranging from 50% to 86%. The first question addressed the possibility of adult learners gaining native-like proficiency of a SL and earned a 37% in agreement. The second question focused on a learner's ability to acquire a SL only through exposure and met with a 17% agreement rate. The third question asked if native-like language skills of an educator is more highly prized than teaching skills and only 3% of the participants agreed.

> Based on her findings, Bell defines effective teaching as:
>
> Clear and enthusiastic teaching that provides learners with the grammatical (syntactical and morphological), lexical, phonological, pragmatic, and sociocultural knowledge and interactive practice they need to communicate successfully in the target language. (2005, p. 260)

This definition reflects characteristics of Uso-Juan and Martinez-Flor's (2006) communicative competence approach to language proficiency providing this study a cohesive vision of world language learning. Although Bell's survey questions were not directly addressed in this study, the perceptions educators have of language proficiency were. In addition, two topics from Bell's categorization (2005) of questions, standards and assessments, were incorporated as areas of inquiry regarding educators' pedagogical choices. Thus, what perceptions do world language educators have regarding standards and assessments? And, how do these perceptions influence educators' pedagogical choices? Furthermore, Bell suggests the need for research focusing on world language

educators' perceptions levels K-12. Thus, this study focuses on a secondary educator's perceptions.

Building on Bell's findings, Brown (2009) addressed effective teaching practices through a survey comparison of 49 world language university instructors and their students. Results suggest a significant discord between the ideals of professors and students. As a whole, instructors responded favorably towards questions that characterized communicative approaches for learning while their students favored more traditional teaching styles. Of greatest discord are the following five statements:

Q5 Not correct immediately

Q16 Use activities to practice grammar points rather than information exchange

Q 14 Require students to speak L2 [second language] first day of class

Q11 Have students complete specific tasks rather than grammar

Q 15 Not use small group or pair work

(Brown, 2009, p. 51).

The first four questions listed, numbers 5, 16, 14, and 11, represent effective teaching traits that instructors indicated stronger agreement with than students. Conversely, the last question, number 15, received a significantly lower rating by educators than given by students. Overall, Brown suggests a discord between the instructors' and students' perceptions that, if realized, could enhance educators' abilities to relate to ones students. Brown suggests educators take time to explain pedagogical choices to their students emphasizing how certain activities can enhance language learning. This instructional step can lead to learners' increased satisfaction with their language experience and continuation of SL studies.

Though Brown stresses the importance of studying both educators' and students' beliefs, his research, like Bell's, incorporates a survey of pre-determined teaching characteristics. Consideration of context, as Tellez and Waxman (2006) encourage, is not reflected in either research designs. In addition, the survey participants' personal experiences and beliefs regarding world language learning cannot be fully understood. Thus, what reasons or influences guided the learners' responses to the survey questions? Furthermore, instructors' responses regarding agreement with communicative approaches do not explain the approaches being implemented in their instructional practices. This

study's design addressed such a concern by incorporating interviews and observations to capture perceptions of pedagogical choices and actions.

World Language Standards

The 1996 publication of the National World Language Standards was a combined effort of eleven language organizations and "individuals from education, government, and business" sectors (Phillips, 1999, p. 2). Their vision was to "chart a course toward a world class education system where 'students… are linguistically and culturally equipped to communicate successfully in a pluralistic American society and abroad' (1996)" (Jeffries, 1996, p.1). The decision of what direction world language education should take in the twenty-first century was significant and influences from multiple theoretical views are reminiscent, especially those from functional, sociocultural, and input-output. The goal for the modern SL program and educator has become:

> All students must have the opportunity to become functionally proficient in a second language; curriculum and assessment must focus on language use rather than language analysis; and language programs must be extended, well-articulated sequences in which adequate time is given to develop a functional communicative skill within a classroom setting. (Jeffries, 1996, p.1)

As evidenced by the last line, communication and what a student can do with the language assumes a significant role; however, this role is only one of many within the new National World Language Standards.

The National World Language Standards are based on five goals, commonly referred to as the 5 Cs, that guide educators' pedagogical choices towards congruence with the above stated vision. The 5 Cs are: communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities. Representatively placed equal distance on a circle, the formation signifies equal importance and inter-connectivity among the five. As noted by Phillips (1999), this framework deviates substantially from traditional world language practices which emphasize the four skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening and the occasional reference to culture as the basis of pedagogical decisions. Reflecting on the 5 Cs, Phillips describes the benefits programs and educators will experience through incorporation of each of the goals:

The addition of goals and standards that encourage students to use new languages

to explore interdisciplinary content (Connections), to develop insights into the very

nature of language and culture as systems or patterns (Comparisons), and to search

actively to test their new competencies in venues beyond the school

(Communities) legitimize the occasional forays that foreign language classes took

into these areas. (Phillips, 1999, p.3)

Supporting each of the 5 Cs, specific Standards further delineate expectations of learner

knowledge (see Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1. National Standards for Foreign Language Learning

COMMUNICATION Communicate in Languages Other Than English

x	Standard 1.1: Students engage in conversations, provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions
x	Standard 1.2: Students understand and interpret written and spoken language on a variety of topics
x	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

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

x	Standard 3.1: Students reinforce and further their knowledge of other disciplines through the foreign language
x	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 into the Nature of Language and Culture

Figure 2.1. (cont.)

x	Standard 4.1: Students demonstrate understanding of the nature of language through comparisons of the language studied and their own
x	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 & Around the World

x	Standard 5.1: Students use the language both within and beyond the school setting
x	Standard 5.2: Students show evidence of becoming life-long learners by using the language for personal enjoyment and enrichment.

(National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 2006, p.9).

The intended goal of the National World Language Standards is to serve as a guide for world language educators' pedagogical choices; yet, the implementation of the Standards is up to each individual world language educator. With the current third edition including 10 world languages, the absence of sustained national funding, training and support for educators to effectively implement the Standards is a concern. Although some research focusing on the affect of the World Language Standards on educators' pedagogical choices can be found in the literature (Wood, 1999; National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1996), an apparent lack of case study research creates a gap of understanding that this study sought to address.

Kentucky Standard for World Language Proficiency

In Kentucky, the 2013 release of the revised Kentucky Standard for World Language Proficiency document illustrates a pedagogical path for Kentucky's language educators to follow. Inspired by the European LinguaFolio Project, the Kentucky Standard is now aligned with the proficiency expectations outlined by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) delineating what learners are expected to be able to do at Novice, Intermediate and Advanced levels of language learning. In addition, intercultural standards have been added corresponding with each proficiency level (Kentucky Department of Education, 2013). The 5 Cs of the National

World Language Standards are reflected in the singular statement reflecting the goal of the Kentucky World Language Standard. The Standard states:

> Every learner will use a world language, in addition to English, to engage in meaningful, intercultural communication, understand and interpret the spoken and written language, and present information, concepts and ideas in local and global communities. Through learning the language, learners will connect with other disciplines and gain an understanding of the perspectives of other cultures and compare the language and cultures learned with their own. (Kentucky Department of Education, 2013, p. 4)

Following the standard, six "core competencies" categorized by "language" and "intercultural" are listed along with descriptors. These competencies reflect a merging of language skills, modes of communication and goals of language usage. They are: 1) interpretive listening and reading, 2) interpersonal communication, 3) presentational speaking and writing, 4) investigation 5) perspective, and 6) action (Kentucky Department of Education, 2013). Next, divided by proficiency levels, the modes of communication are listed in vertical columns: interpretive listening, interpretive reading, interpersonal communication, presentational speaking and presentational writing. Finally, under each form of communication, "learner benchmarks" followed by delineated "learning indicators" and "sample learning targets" are stated (Kentucky Department of Education, 2013, p. 6). Figure 2.2 illustrates a sample learning indicator listed within the Novice-High proficiency level and under the interpersonal communication category.

Figure 2.2. Sample Kentucky World Language Standard Indicator

Learning Indicator NH.IC.4 I can make plans with others. Sample Learning Targets
- I can accept or reject an invitation to do something or go somewhere.   - I can invite and make plans with someone to do something or go somewhere.   - I can exchange information about where to go, such as to the store, the movie theatre, a concert, a restaurant, the lab, or when to meet.   This goal is listed in the Novice High, NH, category under interpersonal communication, IC, and is the fourth goal listed, 4.

(Kentucky Department of Education, 2013, p. 34).

As of the writing of this study, no research incorporating the Kentucky Standard for World Language Proficiency exists in the literature. The release of the revised and nationally aligned state Standard create an interesting context from which pedagogical change can occur; the indicators provide "I can" statements guiding curricular choices and the targets provide sample functions guiding instructional activities. It is this study's intent to begin a dialogue as per the influence of Standards, state or national, on the pedagogical choices of Kentucky's world language educators. What role do Standards have in their gatekeeping decisions and how are educators negotiating the national 5 Cs and goals of state Standards?

World Language Assessments

In his 2007 acceptance speech for the International Language Testing Associations' Lifetime Achievement Award, Charles Stansfield chronicled the history of world language assessments and shared his speculations for its future. Of significance, Stansfield addressed the need for:

> Tests of language proficiency in more languages, and tests of language skills for different situations. There will be a need for tests of proficiency in the national language for children in the schools. There will be a need for still more LSP (Language for Specific Purposes) tests. (Stansfield, 2008, p. 321)

Each of Stansfield's projected needs reflects a distinct purpose and context for testing. Shohamy (2005) focuses much attention on the power of tests as well as the contexts in which they are used. Accordingly, she classifies testing research into two categories: traditional testing and use-oriented testing.

In traditional testing, Shohamy (2005) describes the focus as the creation of the test. Characterized by "precise boundaries and defined criteria" (p. 102), traditional testing encompasses: how a test is created, validity determined, and administered to intended users. Conversely, use-oriented testing focuses on what occurs to the test after administration and how a test becomes an intricate part of the context in which it is used. Shohamy describes use-oriented testing further by stating:

> It focuses on what happens to the test takers who take the tests, to the knowledge that is created by tests, and to the teachers who prepare students for tests. It asks

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questions about the effect of tests on the material and content that teachers teach, the methods used by teachers, and the intentions and motivations in introducing tests. (2005, p. 102)

Shohamy's concept of use-oriented testing informs this study and question 2.4 regarding influences of assessments on pedagogical choices. Each of the three components mentioned by Shohamy, content, methods, and intentions, will be addressed during the interviews and observations in order to better understand the impact of assessments within the case participant's context. In addition, Firestone, Schorr, & Monfils warning of "ambiguity about the effects of testing" (2004, p. vii) due to differing contexts will be addressed as well. Thus, the understanding that "the same test may lead to different consequences in different circumstances; and teachers may use very different strategies to prepare students for tests" (Firestone, Schorr, & Monfils, 2004, p. vii) will guide data collection and analysis.

Studies focusing on use-oriented testing abound in the literature (Watanabe, 2006). Shohamy (2005) claims that within these studies teachers are viewed as powerless; however, she believes "teachers as professionals" can "take an active part in making decisions about tests and do not only carry out orders" (p. 107). It is this concession and description of educators that gives impetus to this study and the selection of the case study participants. The intent of this study is not to seek the marginalization of world language teachers but rather the power and impetus of decisions within perceived contexts. More specifically, what influences do assessments have on educators who choose to implement a form of proficiency assessment within their school's language programs and their own classes?

Although no studies in SLA literature directly address educators who choose to implement language proficiency assessments, many are available regarding mandated testing. One such large scale project is that of Firestone, Schorr, & Monfils (2004). Situated within New Jersey, researchers sought to understand the impact of the mandated fourth-grade Elementary School Performance Assessment (ESPA) of math and science on fourth-grade teachers. In addition, they explored "those factors influencing teachers other than testing" (Watanbe, 2006, p. 375). Observations, surveys and interviews

provided a triangulation of data of each case study participant. Overall, the findings suggested:

> Widespread use of some of the specific strategies often associated with reform, and… the teachers 'attributed the implementation of many of them to the test' (p. 35). However, the strategies were rarely accompanied by changes in which teachers organized their 'overall approach to their subjects' (p. 35). (Watanbe, 2006, p. 376)

In addition, the findings suggest teachers felt more pressure as a result of the ESPA and that this pressure "reinforce[d] conventional teaching practices" (Watanbe, 2006, p. 377). Firestone et al. contend that changes, i.e. instructional practices, will be "piecemeal" in the absence of a "concerted effort… made at various levels" (2004, p. 378) supporting reform and implementation of mandated testing. If pressure from stakes-testing encouraged traditional teaching, what influence would self-implemented high-stakes testing have on teaching practices? Would it encourage particular approaches?

The findings of Firestone et al. (2004) provide an interesting context by which to situate this study. First, this study is within the context of a world language educator who chooses to incorporate a form of stakes testing within her own program. Thus, any initial negative effects are assumed to be absent. Second, influences from such proficiency testing are assumed to be prevalent due to the participants' chosen context. In essence, this study reflects components of the Firestone et al. (2004) project but with a context of self-created stakes-testing.

Forms of Assessments

For the purpose of this study, three forms of assessments were recognized: proficiency, summative, and formative. A working definition of each is needed in order to better understand perceptions held by the case participant. Definitions chosen are those deemed accessible to the participants due to their availability on ACTFL and Kentucky Department of Education's websites. A language proficiency assessment is that which determines "functional language ability" as described in the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 2012a, p.3). A

summative assessment demonstrates learning and "indicates a student's learning at a particular point in the instructional process… is typically administered to obtain a comprehensive evaluation of student knowledge and skills, rather than for short-term instructional decision-making" (Kentucky Department of Education, 2012, June). Thus, a proficiency assessment reflects characteristics of summative assessments. Conversely, a formative assessment informs teaching practices by "gain[ing] an understanding of what students know (and don't know) in order to make responsive changes in teaching and learning" (Kentucky Department of Education, 2012, June).

Proficiency assessments vary in form and purpose (Stansfield, 2008). In a synthesis and historiography of proficiency assessment uses, Thomas (2006) identified two time periods, 1988 to 1992 and 2000 to 2004, and searched four leading SL journals for mentions of forms of proficiency assessments. Different forms of proficiency assessments were compared and categorized. Within the first time frame, 1988-1992, Thomas identified 157 instances of research referencing the use of a language proficiency exam. Four major classifications of proficiency assessments emerged:

(1) Impressionistic judgment

   (Seemingly) spontaneous, unsupported, characterization of learners' competence in L2

(2) Institutional status

   Learners' membership on a specific group… or assignment to a particular rank within some research-external social structure, used as a proxy for achieved proficiency

(3) In-house assessment

   Proficiency defined by locally-developed instruments such as program-internal placement tests, or by the outcome of research-specific tests

(4) Standardized test

   Assessment of proficiency through standardized instruments in the public domain. (Thomas, 2006, p. 282)

The second period, 2000-2004, reflected an increase to 211 articles in which researchers discussed assessments to identify learners' language proficiency levels. Using the same

four categories as stated above, Thomas categorized each assessment. The findings suggest movements in language testing as well as beliefs of language proficiency.

First, no significant differences in the forms of assessments used by researchers were demonstrated through the categorization. If one journal showed a lessening prevalence of a specific form of assessment, another journal reflected an increase. However, the extent to which participants' proficiency levels were identified did suggest an overall difference. For example, "studies in the 2000-2004 corpus frequently probe[d] learners' proficiency in finer detail, then integrate[d] those data into the research in more complex ways" (Thomas, 2006, p. 289). Second, Thomas noticed a minimizing of researchers' focus on a participant's specific level of proficiency while other variables became more prevalent. As an explanation, Thomas referred to Norris and Ortega who suggested an increased interest in "questions about universals or implicational relationships proposed to hold for all learners over the whole course of acquisition" would account for this change (as cited in Thomas, 2006, p. 292).

According to Thomas (2006), the findings from the research synthesis on language proficiency assessment suggested no definitive trends emerging from the past twelve years. However, both an increase towards specific detailing of language proficiency and a decrease in description is suggestive of the commencement of a trend. Such a potential split in world language testing research calls for a clear understanding of what language proficiency means to various stakeholders. One intention of this research study is to provide an initial understanding of the beliefs of a Kentucky world language educator regarding language proficiency as well as the impact assessments have on pedagogical choices. Thus, the meanings assigned to the four assessment categories emerging from Thomas' research will be understood and particular emphasis will be placed on the fourth categorization, standardized test, in both the initial choosing of a
case study participant and data collection.

Adair-Hauck, Glisan, Koda, Swender and Sandrock claim, in comparison to classroom instruction, "change in assessment has been much slower to occur" and that "creating a closer connection between instruction and assessment" (2006, p. 359) is a priority. Addressing this need, Adair-Hauck et al. (2006) conducted a multi-tiered study involving the creation and integration of the Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA)

and the impact of the assessment on "teacher's perceptions of instructional practices" (2006, p. 360). The 30 participants of the IPA study represented teachers of Chinese, French, German, Italian and Spanish situated within six different states. After trainings and implementation of the IPA within their classes, participants' perceptions were documented by questionnaire. The findings suggest a positive impact on participant perceptions of standards-based language learning. Adair-Hauck et al. (2006) further shared, "83% (19 of 23) of respondents indicated that implementation of the IPA had a positive impact on their teaching, and 91% (20 of 22) reported that the project had a positive effect on their design of future assessments" (p. 372). The positive washback (Bachman, 2005) effects of the IPA study provide a foundation for understanding differing influences on teacher choices. However, what factors influenced the reports of positive washback? Were respondents more receptive to implementing the IPA as a result of the trainings or was it the assessment process itself that impacted their teaching? It is this study's intent to add, in a small manner, a different perspective to assessment influence through the focus of teacher-chosen assessment implementation.

Standards-Based Measurement of Proficiency

Situated within Thomas' fourth category of language proficiency assessments, the Standards-Based Measurement of Proficiency (STAMP) is a standardized assessment central to this study. Designed as an adaptive, computer-assisted language test (Chapelle, 2001), STAMP was a merging of two interests brought together by life experiences. At the University of Oregon, Carl Falsgraf was pursuing language assessment development through the Center for Applied Second Language Studies. At the same time, David Bong and his wife Sheila were returning from Japan where he had worked as a fraud investigator of crimes against Japanese corporations. Immersed in another culture, Bong learned the value of language and changed his professional pursuit to language education (Bong, n.d.). A collaboration between the Bongs and Falsgraf formed the corporation of Language Learning Solutions, which has since become Avant Assessments.

The language versions of the STAMP assessment continue to expand and include: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, and Spanish. All of the

STAMP exams are capable of assessing a learner's proficiency skills through reading, writing, listening and speaking with the exception of Italian that offers no listening assessment. Prices vary based on the quantity of skills assessed but fall under $20 (Avant Assessments, 2014). The implementation of the STAMP assessment within public and private schools, universities and other organizations is increasing. Avant Assessments' website claims over 1.5 million STAMP tests have been administered world-wide since inception and educational partners in the United States include eight states, eighty school districts and private schools, and fifty colleges; the Kentucky Department of Education is listed amongst these.

Like the National and Kentucky World Language Standards, STAMP incorporates proficiency level descriptors ranging from Novice-Low to Intermediate-high. Advanced and Superior levels are not intended to be assessed by this exam. For each proficiency range, a numerical level is assigned, starting with 1 for Novice-Low and 5 for intermediate-high. Figure 2.3 illustrates a released sample-progression of written prompts listing the scenario, or context, and task, or function, required of a test-taker.

Figure 2.3. Released STAMP Writing Prompts

Level	Scenario	Task
1	French friend coming to visit	List your classes by email
2	Talking to new friends at an exchange school	Describe family members in the Photo
3	Leaving your Apartment at an exchange school	Write an ad to sell your furniture
4	Traveling in Switzerland	Write a message describing your illness And asking for help
5	Talking to host family	Describe who and what is occurring from a photo

(Avant Assessment, 2010b).

Of particular relevance to this study is STAMP's conduciveness to use-oriented testing research as explained by Shohamy (2005). An educator's gatekeeping choices regarding content, methods and intentions can readily be influenced due to the transparent curriculum of STAMP's questions posted on the Avant Assessment website.

As an example, figure 2.4 illustrates the reading benchmarks for level 2, or Novice-Mid learners. This resource allows interested educators to create STAMP-like questions through the combination of topic, or content, with text, or real-world form.

Figure 2.4. STAMP Benchmarks for Novice-Mid Learners

Reading benchmarks	
All level 1 topics plus:	Found in simple texts such as:
x Clothing x Food/Beverage x Family/ Friends x Home x Places/Geography	x Advertisements x Simple notes and messages x Menus x Labels x Instructions/Directions
Students are able to:	
x Recognize and understand commonly used words, phrases, and expressions. x Use visual and contextual clues to assist in comprehension. x Sometimes recognize previously learned material when presented in new context.	

(Avant Assessment, 2010a).

As with any assessment, limitations are present and STAMP's added component of computer-adaption creates possible further complications (Chapelle, 2001). The first limitation reflects test design. Although STAMP offers assessments addressing each of the four language skills, the modes of communication as described within the National World Language Standards are not fully addressed. Interpersonal communication, due to the lack of another language speaker, is replaced with a quasi-presentational speaking assessment that allows the test-taker time to prepare and re-record a response. The second limitation is incorporated within the real-time scoring. After completion of the reading section, an immediate reading proficiency level score is generated. Subsequent writing and speaking prompts are then assigned to the test taker based on the reading section's score. For example, if a language learner scores a 2/Novice-Mid on reading, that learner is then given a writing prompt based at the Novice-Mid level. Constrained by the structure of the prompt, a score no higher than one above the reading level score can be earned. This technological design feature, though perhaps unintentional, can potentially negatively impact test-takers' scores in multiple areas.

To date, no qualitative study has incorporated the STAMP assessment within its design. This assessment, due to its open-sharing of content incorporated within its questions and alignment with National Standards, provides a rich context within which the influences of proficiency assessments can be understood. For this reason, the purposeful sampling of a case participant for this study included only those educators who had incorporated STAMP within programs or classroom activities.

Summary

The predominant language learning theories situated within SLA research have guided research towards a focus of language production and pedagogical approaches (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). Studies focusing on language educators' perceptions and pedagogical choices are limited in scope and many researchers have indicated a lack of understanding regarding educators' perceptions of context (Bell, 2005; Borg, 2003; Kissau, Algozzine, & Yon, 2013; Tellèz & Waxman, 2006). Bell's (2005) questionnaire of effective teaching emphasized the importance of standards and assessments as components of educators' practices. Although ACTFL's 2011 study suggests the National World Language Standards have impacted educators' instructional practices (Phillips & Abbott, 2011), observational data supporting such claims is lacking. Furthermore, research regarding use-oriented testing (Shohamy, 2005) and world
language proficiency testing is sparse. In a time of change for world language educators, this study seeks to understand the perceptions of a world language educator regarding her context, National and State Standards, and assessment practices to support pedagogical choices conducive of change. The following chapter addresses the design of the study, the case participant selection, and the theoretical framework for data analysis.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Research Questions

As national and state initiatives for world languages continue to expand, little attention focuses on the perceptions and decisions of the language educators situated within these changes. This study attends to that gap in the literature in order to better inform educators interested in increasing language learners' growth towards proficiency in this era of increasing oversight of student learning. In doing so, I focus on a single case of a Kentucky world language educator, her perceptions regarding language proficiency and the influences that her perceptions of context, standards, and assessments have on the pedagogical choices she makes. In this chapter, I describe the methodology of this study including research questions, theoretical framework, research design, setting, participant, data collection, data analysis, trustworthiness, and limitations.

Two overarching questions with six sub-questions guided this study. The first (1) addresses a world language educator's understanding regarding language proficiency and the second (2) focuses on the educator's perceptions of context, World Language Standards, and student assessments and the influences these perceptions have on pedagogical choices. The questions are as follows:

1. What perceptions does a Kentucky world language educator bring to teaching with regard to language proficiency?

    1.1 How does this world language educator define language proficiency?

    1.2 How does this world language educator describe language proficiency in the context of her school and community?

2. How do perceptions of context, standards, and assessments influence the Kentucky world language educator's pedagogical choices?

    2.1 How does this world language educator describe the context in which she practices?

    2.2 How does this world language educator describe the influence of the context in which she practices on pedagogical choices?

    2.3 How does this world language educator describe the influence of state and National World Language Standards on pedagogical choices?

2.4 How does this world language educator describe the influence of student

assessments on pedagogical choices?

Theoretical Framework: Constructivism and Sociocultural Theory

The overall design of this qualitative study was grounded in the constructivist approach. Constructivists tend to view knowledge and truth as created; there is no preexisting "real world" separate from the influence of human perception and beliefs are products of "complicated discursive practices" (Schwandt, 1998, p. 236). The goal of constructivist inquiries is to "reconstruct understandings" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 187) in order to capture "the complex world of lived experience" (Schwandt, 1998, p.221) through an emphasis on the *emic* account, or the view of the participant (Creswell, 2003, Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Schwandt, 1998). Such views are particularly useful in examining the complexities of professional behavior in a period of shifting understandings, contexts, standards, and assessments. Constructivism, however, is a broad concept that offers numerous lenses through which such practices can be examined. Among these, sociocultural theories (SCT) emphasize the ways in which "human mental functioning results from participation in, and appropriation of, the forms of cultural mediation integrated into social activities" (Lantolf & Beckett, 2009, p. 459). In terms of analyzing human activity, then, the researcher focuses on how mediational tools (in this study, context, standards, and assessments) mediate the relationship between humans (in this study, teachers) and their social activities (in this study, teaching a world language in a Kentucky high school).

Wertsch (1998) argues for sociocultural analysis of contemporary social problems in order to more fully explore political, cultural, and institutional contexts for those problems. Drawing on Kenneth Burke, Wertsch (1998) describes a pentad comprised of act, scene, agent, agency, and purpose that accounts for human motives as well as human activities:

> In a rounded statement about motives, you must have some word that names the
> *act* (names what took place, in thought or deed), and another that names the *scene*
> (the background of the act, the situation in which is occurred); also, you must

indicate what person or kind of person (*agent*) performed the act, what means or instruments he used (*agency*), and the *purpose*. (as cited in Wertsch, 1998, p. 13) With an understanding that instrumentality is agent using cultural tool, Wertsch (1998) further incorporates "a dialectic between agent and instrumentality" (p. 17) as a guide for his understanding of mediated action. Thus, acts are mediated by a variety of cultural tools resulting in "irreducible tensions" (Wertsch, 1998, p. 25). In this study, for instance, the primary cultural tools examined include World Language Standards, assessments, and administrative directives. The world language educator, or agent, interacting with these tools creates acts in the form of pedagogical choices. These acts reflect *mediated* action, "action interpreted as involving irreducible tension between mediational means [cultural tools] and the individuals employing these means" (Wertsch, Del Río, & Alvarez, 1995). As a result, a focus that ignores this interaction, or mediated action, eliminates the complexities created through the process of interaction and reduces the whole into singular elements.

Wertsch's (1998) concept of mediated action and its resulting tensions forms the theoretical background for this study's focus on understanding the tensions that arise as a world language educator negotiates the demands of the systems within which she works (for instance, standards-based teaching and assessment), her views of teaching and learning a world language, and the responses of students in her classroom. To understand and analyze mediated action, Wertsch (1998) offers ten claims or basic assumptions about human action:

1. Mediated action is characterized by an irreducible tension between agent and mediational means;

2. Mediational means are material;

3. Mediated action typically has multiple simultaneous goals;

4. Mediated action is situated on one or more developmental paths;

5. Mediational means constrain as well as enable action;

6. New mediational means transform mediated action;

7. The relationship of agents toward mediational means can be characterized in terms of mastery;

8. The relationship of agents toward mediational means can be characterized in terms of appropriation;

9. Mediational means are often produced for reasons other than to facilitate mediated action;

10. Mediational means are associated with power and authority.

(Wertsch, 1998, p. 25)

For discussion purposes, I have categorized Wertsch's claims describing mediated action into two groupings, actions and means. For the action category, I include four claims: (1) irreducible tension, (3) simultaneous goals, (4) developmental paths, and (6) transformation of mediated action.

First, the claim regarding the irreducible tension between agent and mediational means (claim one, above) addresses the interaction of an agent and a cultural tool and the tension this interaction creates. For example, a world language educator (the agent) experiences inevitable tension in interacting with National World Language Standards (tool) to guide instructional practices. The irreducible nature of that tension requires attention to both the world language educator (agent) *and* the National Standards (cultural tool). In Kentucky, this attention includes an additional layer as the Kentucky World Language Standard becomes another cultural tool available to educators. Analyzing either the Standard or the educator in isolation distorts understanding of the instructional practices as a whole.

Second, the claim regarding multiple goals (claim two, above) suggests that an action may address more than one purpose at a time, as suggested in the idiom "kill two birds with one stone". However, Wertsch (1998) warns that addressing multiple goals carries the potential for complications; the multiple purposes are not always in agreement and conflict may occur. Such conflicts are not uncommon for world language educators who must meet multiple goals (i.e. increasing learners' language proficiency as determined by various assessment tools) within varying contexts.

Third, the claim regarding developmental paths (claim four, above) describes the agent's interaction with cultural tools. In essence, when engaged in a mediated action, an agent moves along a unique path influenced by the agent's history with particular cultural tools. From Wertsch's (1998) perspective, this "developmental history" provides insight

into the "skills and intelligence" (p. 38) of the agent. He also warns that this is a moving target: Agents, cultural tools, and the irreducible tension between them… are always in the process of undergoing further change" (p. 34) which can affect the developmental path of the agent.

Fourth, the claim regarding the introduction of novel cultural tools focuses on how new tools transform action (claim six, above). For example, the implementation of high stakes testing influences educators' decisions regarding curriculum, instructional activities, and assessment formats. World language educators in Kentucky are experiencing the introduction of college proficiency requirements, as determined by high stakes proficiency assessments rather than seat-time in high school language classes, and an increase in proficiency assessments, such as the Standards Based Measurement of Proficiency (STAMP), are becoming more evident. As a result, such new assessments, or cultural tools, are transforming the pedagogical choices, or actions, of the world language educators interacting with them. Reflecting on transformations of mediated action, Wertsch (1998) emphasizes the importance of cultural tools to "provide the context and standard for assessing the skills of an agent" (p. 45) and questions who decides which cultural tools are used to assess.

The second categorization of Wertsch's claims focuses on mediational means. I include six claims within this category: (2) materiality, (5) constraints and affordances, (7) mastery, (8) appropriation, (9) reason for production, and (10) power and authority.

First, the claim regarding materiality of mediational means (claim two, above) describes boundaries for understanding and identifying cultural tools. The two groupings of materiality include: physical and non-physical objects. Wertsch (1998) describes physical objects as items "that can be touched and manipulated" (p. 30). For this study, these include tools such as grant requirements, World Language Standards and proficiency assessments. Conversely, non-physical objects are less obvious due to their lack of materiality. Language is the primary example due to its ability to "evaporate after a moment's existence" (Wertsch, 1998, p. 31) and yet still affect a listener. Perceptions of context, standards, and assessments influenced by conversations and interactions are examples of non-physical cultural tools that "continue to exist" (Wertsch, 1998, p. 31) despite physical presence.

Second, the claim describing constraints and affordances (claim five, above) characterizes cultural tools as either enablers or limiters of action. Wertsch addresses this as the "half-full" or "half-empty" perspective and refers to the work of Vygotsky and Burke to discuss language. Vygotsky, reflecting the half-full perspective, describes language as "enabling" in that language encourages "abstract concepts" of reality in order to ascend towards "an ideal outcome" (Wertsch, 1998, p. 39). Conversely, Burke reflects the half-empty perspective, noting language possesses the potential to "open doors to experiences" while "also form[ing] a prison which constricts and narrows (Gusfield, 1989, p. 12)" (Wertsch, 1998, p. 40). In relation to a cultural tool such as National World Language Standards, a world language educator is at once afforded curricular guidance by the Standards' foci of communication, comparisons, community, culture, and connections (5Cs) while also constrained by the scope of the 5Cs.

Third, the claims regarding internalization address relationships between agents and cultural tools. Internalization as mastery (claim seven, above) describes an agent's knowing-how to use a tool. Mastery occurs internally or externally and reflects a certain level of achievement. For instance, an educator who uses a textbook to guide her instructional pacing and curricular path has mastered the textbook's sequence. Conversely, internalization as appropriation (claim eight, above) is "the process… of taking something that belongs to others and making it one's own" (Wertsch, 1998, p. 53). Using the textbook example stated above, that same educator who follows a textbook's suggested curriculum but adjusts the order of the content, changes the instructional activities, and incorporates supplements of outside instructional resources has taken the text and made it her own, figuratively speaking. Although Wertsch characterizes mastery and appropriation as internalization, they are not contingent; thus, one may easily master a tool but not appropriate it.

Fourth, the claim regarding production (claim nine, above) addresses the creation of new cultural tools. Broadly, Wertsch (1998) describes spin-off as "the processes whereby mediational means come into being" (p. 58) which includes "production and consumption of mediational means… examined in tandem" (p. 58). Through this step, discovery of a tool created for a purpose other than the one being employed in the mediated action can occur. For example, a school focusing on increasing students'

national assessment scores creates smaller-learning communities for the students. This focus leads to the creation of professional learning communities for faculty members to address strategies regarding the school's goal. Such a tool, or spin-off, exhibits certain characteristics, the most interesting being that the new tool may "impede… performance" (Wertsch, 1998, p. 59).

Fifth, the claim regarding power and authority (claim ten, above) explores the sociocultural situatedness of mediational means with human action. Thus, an agent's interaction with mediational means produces power, an influence over others that is taken, and/or authority, an influence that is given. Research addressing accounts of power and authority through the agent, exclude the mediational means and any transforming power it has on the agent. Wertsch (1998) suggests incorporating both agent and mediational means to understand the complexities of action, power, and authority. Within school contexts, educators experience various authoritative roles. For example, a world language educator who initiates and incorporates a new mediational means, such as the STAMP assessment, either within her own instructional practices or as part of a school-wide determiner of language proficiency levels of incoming students might exhibit power or authority in relation to peers who had no interaction with the STAMP assessment. The STAMP assessment served as a transforming tool for that educator's level of power and authority.

Research Design

This study incorporates a qualitative approach to research design. The research questions assume a focus of "how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (Merriam, 2009, p. 5). In addition, the natural setting of the participant and researcher on-site (Creswell, 2003; Merriam, 2009) allows for the inclusion of contextual features to "explore nuances of learners and learning environments [and the] complexity of language learning under varied conditions and contexts" (Téllez & Waxman, 2006, p.246), while the researcher's role as "the primary instrument of data collection and analysis" (Merriam, 2009, p. 15) enhances responsiveness during the data collection process. Téllez and Waxman's (2006) synthesis of second language (SL) studies addresses the contributions of qualitative

studies to the field of SL instruction; most significantly, "attention to important contextual features of SL learning" (Téllez & Waxman, 2006, p. 2) are emphasized. Téllez and Waxman (2006) share Lazaraton's claim that qualitative research holds the potential to assist educators in their "work" (p. 2) and it is with this purpose that I conducted my research.

For this research, the qualitative strategy of inquiry I used was a descriptive, single case study. I understood a case study as "a specific… complex, functioning thing" (Stake, 1995, p. 2) drawing from the "naturalistic, holistic, ethnographic, phenomenological, and biographic research methods" (Stake, 1995, p. xi) that "investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident, and in which multiple sources of evidence are used" (Yin, 1984, p. 23).

A case study design provided multiple advantages for exploring a Kentucky world language educator's perceptions and pedagogical choices. First, the approach of the research topic emphasized "issues" (Stake, 1995, p. 16), such as language educators' perceptions of language proficiency, rather than hypothesis and goal statements. The research questions took into consideration "the situation and circumstance, …complexity and contextuality, …and problems and concerns" (Stake, 1995, p.16) of Kentucky's changing world language context. Second, a case study created a sense of being bounded (Creswell, 2003; Hatch, 2002; Stake, 1995; Yin, 1984) supporting a focus of one world language educator exhibiting specific characteristics of interest. Third, the descriptive nature of the case study allowed for the inclusion of multiple variables (Merriam, 1998), such as language proficiency, context, standards, and assessments, fostering a thick description of the findings for readers' generalization. Furthermore, these case study characteristics support the framework of mediated action and this study's emphasis of agent (case study participant) interacting with cultural tools (context, standards, and assessments).

Setting of the Study

The public school system of the Commonwealth of Kentucky is comprised of more than 640,000 public school students in 174 school districts. Kentucky students are

representative of diverse backgrounds including 116 different languages reported as being spoken at home (Kentucky Department of Education, 2012, May). At the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), there is one world language consultant position as well as various online tools for educators such as the new Kentucky World Language Standard document, the World Language Program review, and assessment tools. Recent Kentucky initiatives for world languages include a state standard document adopted by the American Council of Foreign Language (ACTFL) to serve as a national model, a pilot-stage World Language Program Review that will become seven percent of a school's accountability index in 2015, and minimal language proficiency entrance requirements for incoming freshmen set by two universities.

Independent of KDE, the Kentucky World Language Association (KWLA) is a professional organization serving all world language educators of Kentucky. For the past forty years, KWLA's mission has been to provide networking, support and advocacy for its members through two principal activities: a conference and a student language showcase. The annual KWLA conference offers attendees session and workshop choices ranging from understanding the new Standards and experiencing effective pedagogical practices to incorporating proficiency-based assessments and building language programs. The Language Showcases provide members the opportunity to assess their students' proficiency levels at regional sites and then send qualifying students to the state showcase hosted by the University of Kentucky. Student participants are offered a day of activities in target languages to celebrate their language proficiency achievements and skills.

It was from within Kentucky and the bounded group of KWLA educators that the case study participant was chosen. The qualities that make KWLA bounded (Creswell, 2003; Merriam, 2009; Patton, 1990; Stake, 1995) are multiple. Foremost, the members are assumed to be information rich. The majority are practicing teachers who join the association to stay informed, enter students at regional and state showcases and/or have a group with whom one can network. In Kentucky, there is no other professional association designed for world language educators of all languages and levels. Thus, KWLA meets Patton's (1990) description of a bounded case by being the most

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information-rich source that ties directly to the purpose of the study—understanding an educator's meanings associated to language proficiency.

The School: Être High School

Situated in the central region of Kentucky, Emerald Town reflects a quilt-like conglomeration of cultures and socio-economic statuses (SES) resulting in the public school system's occasional readjusting of school boundaries in an attempt to better balance minority and/or low SES populations of each school. There are multiple high schools in Emerald Town. Nestled in the back of an established neighborhood, Être High School sits on a large lot with multiple out-buildings and athletic complexes. According to the school's website, the students' ethnic make-up is 75% Caucasian with African-Americans reflecting the largest minority population at 15%.

A visitor to the school follows a labyrinth of corridors leading to the world languages wing and the French room. The classroom is a kaleidoscope of colors. Posters depicting scenic views, maps of France and modern art adorn every wall, and knick-knacks and teaching supplies are stored on every shelf. The room is divided into several sections. For students, there is an area for independent reading filled with French magazines and books, a bean bag, and a trompe l'oeil of a French countryside and a bulletin board area displaying a work calendar, hanging shelves of distributed worksheets, and a book-case housing needed supplies. For the teacher, there is an area identified by "Caution Teacher Area" signs hanging from the ceiling, a table holding a computer and a teacher's desk. Behind this, a double-wide bookshelf houses color-coded binders containing lessons for each level of French at Être High School.

In the front of the room, there are two white boards. On the left board, books and CD cases sit along the ledge and a squared off area designates in short-hand French the goal, agenda and homework for each class that day, as follows:

French I

   Aujourd'hui on parle du futur.

   matin, etc. , pop quiz, au/à la ppt./tabl. blancs, vocab, Ladder, cheat sheet,

   ppt. tabl. blancs, questions, pt/notes, mémoire

Devoirs: Wb pg. 41-42 ex. 1-4

French III

Aujourd'hui on écrit de nous-mêmes.

Bibliothèque: Ma vie en images

Devoirs: "Ma vie en images" due lundi

French IV

Aujourd'hui on parle des films.

Ck devoirs; les pronoms, ppt/tableaux blancs; rond des questions, mega

quiz, le vocabulaire des films: exemples, jeu de bloque busters

Devoirs: Composition due April 22

French AP

Aujourd'hui on prépare l'examen AP.

Examen pt. 1

Devoirs: Traductions

On the right board, a pink sign with the word Anglais and a slash through it is on display along with a large French Honor Society sign reminding students of the week's upcoming event. Finally, four rows of students' desks are organized around a center aisle facing forward.

Participant

For a case study design, Stake (1995) reminds researchers that selection of the case is all-important. They are not to be used as "sampling research" and are not chosen "to understand other cases" (Stake, 1995, p.4). The goal is to understand the case at hand and "to discover… and gain insight" (Merriam, 1998, p. 61) in order to learn from the participants. For an instrumental design, choice is based upon which case does "a better job" (Stake, 1995, p. 4) of addressing the research questions and providing thick data (Merriam, 1998) so that readers can make their own generalizations from the findings. Other factors such as convenience, accessibility, and alternative choices should be considered in the decision making process.

With this in mind, purposeful sampling of the bounded-group KWLA provided an initial selection of over 400 potential case participants. The most critical criterion for

participant selection was an educator who had administered the STAMP assessment within the last two years to his/her students because my study focuses on understanding a teacher's choice to use this specific cultural tool and how that choice influences other pedagogical choices. Although the STAMP assessment has been available since 2002, it is only partially implemented as a means of proficiency testing at Kentucky's university level and is still being introduced to Kentucky's world language educators at the annual KWLA conference. Furthermore, a 2005 state-funded grant, Improving Educators' Quality (IEQ), focused on STAMP and provided training to a small group of interested world language educators. Thus, for this study, educators who incorporate STAMP are thought to be "atypical" as described by Merriam (1998, p. 62) and representative of unique sampling (Stake, 1995). A listing of Kentucky educators who had administered the STAMP assessment yielded 55 potential case participants. From those, a search of Kentucky secondary-French educators who were also members of KWLA yielded a listing of 11 potential case participants. [1]

To further delimit participant characteristics due to contextual changes in Kentucky, I searched for a teacher who appeared to look beyond the immediate context of KERA, embraced a broader vision of education, and incorporated pedagogical tools to increase students' language proficiency achievement. In addition, only a "non-native speaker" of the target language was sought. Non-native speakers have personal experiences as a language learner of the language being taught and participation in the American educational system. These experiences influence perceptions of language learning and proficiency (Thornton, 1991) aligning with this study's focus of language proficiency and context. Understanding the perceptions of native-speakers, although valuable, is outside the scope of this study. Thus, a non-native speaker was assumed as: (a) receiving his/her education in the United States (b) being well versed and inculturated in the American educational system (c) having language proficiency limits. Finally, a focus of the secondary level helped further create a sense of bounded case and allowed for an educator who teaches a language past the Novice level of proficiency, had students who participated and placed at state World Language Festivals, and demonstrated a

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[1] Data regarding the search of Kentucky educators who had administered the STAMP assessment to their students were provided by Avant Assessments, the parent-company of STAMP.

certain level of language proficiency and instructional ability as determined by National Board Certification in French. Table 3.1 lists criteria which guided participant choice.

Table 3.1. Characteristics Guiding Participant Selection

Participant Criteria	Membership in KWLA
	Administered the STAMP assessments to students within the last two years
	Teaches full time at secondary level
	Non-native speaker of French
	Students place at state W.L. Festival
	Students earn high STAMP scores
	Earned National Board Certified in French or Participant in professional development (ex. IEQ)

Initially, two case participants were identified. I contacted each by email to determine initial interest and then followed up (in person or by email) providing more details and answering initial questions. No aspect of the research design was concealed, and every attempt was made to clearly state the duration of the study, observations and interviews. After each participant accepted, I contacted district and school level officials for procedures and approval. Although not required of case studies involving less than three participants, I provided and explained the IRB consent form to the case participants (see Appendix A). Finally, a determination focusing on which case participant provided the most information rich data narrowed the case participant selection to one case study.

Data Collection

For this descriptive case study, the specific forms of data collected were interviews, classroom observations, and pedagogic artifacts. These three sources formed a methodological triangulation (Creswell, 2003; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995), enhancing

the internal validity. Table 3.2 illustrates an overview of the forms and timeline of data collected discussed in the following section.

Table 3.2. Data Collection: Forms and Timeline

Forms of Data		Timeline	

Interviews	Formal	Formal Interview 1
		    February: 75 minutes
		Formal Interview 2:
		    April: 60 minutes	

	Informal	Between classes, before and after school, during lunch break 1-10 minutes each, over 12 interactions	

Observations		Round 1
		    March: 2 days
		Round 2
		    April: 2 days
			7 block classes, 1 Plan, 1 dept. mtng.
			5 block classes, 2 plans, 1 dept. mtng.

Artifacts		Photos of room and school, classroom activities, quizzes, test, goal checklists, unit binders	

Interviews

To ask background information and gain understanding of the participant's perspective regarding language proficiency, teaching context, standards, assessments, and pedagogical choices made, two forms of interviews were used during data collection: formal and informal. As explained by Hatch (2002), the purpose of both forms of interviews was to explore the participant's "experiences and interpretations" (p. 91).

I conducted two formal interviews. The first occurred 15 days before the first round of observations and the second 11 days after the completion of second round of observations. Each interview took place in the participant's classroom. This choice of setting served three functions. First, it allowed initial access to the school's environment. Second, it provided an introduction to the educator's setting including the layout of the room and available resources. Third, it helped minimize the affective filter that may have existed regarding the upcoming observations and create a sense of comfort. Immediately following each interview, I reflected in a research journal (Hatch, 2002; Merriam, 1998). This allowed me to self-assess biases and "reflect on what is happening during the research experience and how [I] feel about it" (Hatch, 2002. p. 88). Being a world

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language educator myself, it was important to acknowledge any biases that I might have had towards the perceptions and actions of the participant minimizing their impact on the data collection process and analysis.

The structure of the formal interviews included the use of guiding and probing questions and the following of the participant's leads. In addition, descriptive, structural and contrasting questions (Hatch, 2002) were asked eliciting descriptions of "the particulars of a social scene" (p. 104), how the participant "organize[s]… cultural knowledge" (p. 104), and "make[s] meaning in… [her] social world" (p. 105). The focus of the first interview included eliciting information regarding the participant's background and perception of language proficiency, as well as familiarity with the National Standards and STAMP assessment (see Appendix B). In addition, a second set of questions focused on teaching practices and the relationship of standards and assessments to pedagogical choices. These questions incorporated Hatch's (2002) concept of projection, or the participant's "explanations of anticipated experiences" (p. 92). The focus of the second formal interview was two-fold: for clarification and discussion. Clarification centered on specific information given during the first formal interview that proved thought-provoking during the transcription process, one example being the participant's certification route. Discussions centered on the observed lessons. I asked open-ended questions prompting the participant to describe pedagogical decisions made pertaining to standards, assessments, and context. Each interview was tape recorded, allowing me to take minimal notes limited to key words and follow up questions. I completed transcriptions within one week.

The second form of interviews was informal. Described by Hatch (2002) as "unstructured conversations that take place in the research scene" (p. 92), these interviews served as a valuable means of clarifying what was being observed and to gain insight into what the participant was thinking. They occurred between classes, during lunch and planning periods, and/or after school dismissal and pertained to something I had observed or heard. In addition, informal member-checking was used through the sharing of preliminary thoughts and perceptions with the participant.

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Observations

Observations focusing on the participant's pedagogical choices provided a second form of data for this study. There are multiple advantages for the use of observations by qualitative researchers (Creswell, 2003; Hatch, 2002; Merriam, 2009; Stake, 1995), the main reason being "to understand the culture, setting, or social phenomenon… from the perspectives of the participants" (Hatch, 2002, p. 72). In addition, observations allow the observer to "see things firsthand and use his or her own knowledge and expertise in interpreting what is observed rather than relying on once-removed accounts from interviews" (Merriam, 2009, p. 119).

I observed the case participant in her school setting a total of four days divided between two rounds during March and April, 2011. Observations occurred in twelve 90-minute block classes, three planning periods, and two department meetings. Every effort was made to observe courses reflecting different levels of French and different students, as well as different lessons. As a result, all courses taught by the participant were observed at least once including levels I, II, III, IV, and AP. The method for recording data was raw field notes (Hatch, 2002; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 1984). As described by Hatch (2002), field notes are, "descriptions of contexts, actions, and conversations written in as much detail as possible given the constraints of watching and writing in a rapidly changing social environment" (p. 77). The contents of the notes included, "verbal descriptions of the setting, the people, the activities…quotations or at least the substance of what people said [and] observer's comments" (Merriam, 1998, p. 106). Target language produced by the participant during instruction was documented as stated; no linguistical changes were made. For my field notes, I used spiral notebooks and divided the pages down the center; descriptions and observations were kept on the left side and observer comments on the right. Referred to by Hatch (2002) as bracketing, these comments contained "impressions and preliminary interpretations that go beyond the descriptions reserved for the field-note record" (p. 77). After each day of observations, I reflected on the experience and reviewed the raw field notes; I journaled my impressions and listed potential questions to ask the case participant during the following observational visit.

Artifact Collection

The third form of data collected was artifact, document, or unobtrusive data (Hatch, 2002; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995; Yin, 1984). Occurring in multiple forms, Merriam (1998) identifies sample documents as "public records, personal papers, physical traces, and artifacts" (p. 133) while Yin (1989) uses "technological device, a tool or instrument, a work of art, or some other physical evidence" (p. 88). However, it is Hatch's (2002) categories that were understood by this study; they are "artifacts, traces, documents, personal communications, records, photographs, and archives" (p. 117). Thus, artifacts were any material objects the participant used "in the everyday activity of the contexts under examination" (Hatch, 2002, p. 117). This included lesson plans as shared on the white board, unit binders containing lessons, assessments, and activities, and materials distributed to the students such as assessments, worksheets, and writing prompts. Another artifact form included documents, or "official written communication" (Hatch, 2002, p. 117), which consisted of department meeting agendas and data shared on Être High School's official website regarding student population, parent information, and department descriptions. Finally, photographs of the participant's classroom, materials (i.e. posted National World Language Standards and lesson binders), and situatedness during lesson planning were taken as well as outside pictures of the school and grounds. These photos helped recall materials available to the participant and see things from a differing perspective.

Data Analysis

The data collection for this study spanned three months. This allowed for mulling over and exploring the data, important qualitative research strategies (Merriam, 2009). For the purpose of this study, data analysis was understood as "a systematic search for meaning" that involves "organizing and interrogating data" to uncover "patterns, …themes, …relationships" (Hatch, 2002, p.148). The approach to data analysis I used was the constant comparative method based on Glaser and Strauss. This method allows for "inductive, concept building" analyses providing richer understanding of the data (Merriam, 1998, p. 159). It relies on the process of segmenting data and then comparing those segments to new data within the same data set (Merriam, 1998); this comparison

"lead[s] to tentative categories" (Merriam, 1998, p. 159) which in turn are continuously compared to new data.

As suggested by Hatch (2002), all data were read at the onset of data analysis, creating an overall picture or "sense" (p. 162) of the data set. Then, data were broken down into frames of analysis. To reinforce this concept, Hatch's (2002) suggestion of using formal interview data as natural breaks of analyzable parts was followed. The first formal interview transcription was divided into broad categories such as teacher's personal history, perceptions of standards, and assessments. These sections were each re-read and open-coded following Coffey and Atkinson's (1996) description of coding; thus, coding is not perceived as just a means to give categories to collected data, "it is also about conceptualizing the data, raising questions, providing provisional answers…, and discovering the data" (p. 31). The open-codes assigned were a mixture of language used by the participant and terms discussed in the literature review of this study (Hatch, 2002). For example, the line "I think it is awesome for like level I and level II… it is pretty accurate as far as that goes, but I don't think it works for the upper-level kids" led to the initial coding of "STAMP" (Formal Interview 1, p. 11). After each successive analyzable part was coded, an outline format was written on the bottom of the page, placing the codes into emerging categories. All prior-coded parts were re-read with new emerging categories in mind. If evidence of the new category was found, the new codes were added and the rough outline for that page expanded. If needed, data were coded with multiple terms and categorized under each relevant section of the outline format. With each subsequent analyzed frame of data, the categories grew—moving away from the particular to broader concepts (Hatch, 2002). An example of a category growth based on the example given above is "STAMP" becoming "Perception of STAMP data".

The narrowing down of data was done systematically. After each chunk of data was open-coded and written as an outline on the body of that data set, outlines were then transferred to a master outline. This transferring process included a notation of where data could be found, for example FI 1.P 11 representing the first formal interview, page 11 of the transcription. The main goal for this step was to provide a means of seeing large amounts of codes at one time so that patterns could slowly begin to emerge. The next step in the data analysis expanded this process further and began the creation of domains.

Outlines were read and categories collapsed into larger groupings, or domains, and written on large index cards. For example, "Perception of STAMP data" became a category under the domain of proficiency assessments. As domains were built, color-coded ink was used to allow at a quick glance larger domains based on the research questions and data collected. For example, red ink represented data pertaining to context, blue represented pedagogical choices, green represented teacher's personal history, and orange represented perceptions of language proficiency. This iterative process continued until two-thirds of the data had been analyzed. At this point, saturation of several domains urged the initial identification of salient domains leading to the building of matrices. Each matrix included a salient domain with all related categories branching from it. Key words, starts of quotes and identifying location tags were listed. Throughout the remaining data analysis, domains continued to be identified and added to the matrices if saliency was evidenced.

Following this analytical process, I incorporated Grant's categories of influence to categorize the matrices and domains regarding context, standards, and assessments. Each matrix was read through and evidence supporting organizational, personal, and policy influences was labeled and new matrices of influence were constructed. Finally, in a similar manner, I used the ten claims of Wertsch's framework of mediated action to organize the participant's actions.

Trustworthiness

Due to the qualitative nature of this study, the concept of reliability in the positivistic sense does not apply. Merriam (1998) describes this non-congruence between qualitative and quantitative paradigms as a result of constraints within attempts of replication and suggests the use of the term trustworthiness. Thus, this study understands trustworthiness as, "whether results are consistent with the data collected" (Merriam, 1998, p. 206). Multiple strategies were implemented in the research design to ensure high standards of trustworthiness.

First, triangulation (Creswell, 1994; Hatch, 2002; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995) was used in the collection and analyses of data (see Data Collection section). Three

sources of data collected were interviews, observations, and artifacts. The reiterative collection of data revolved around the concepts of language proficiency, context, assessments, and standards as they related to the educator's perceptions and choices. The process of constant comparative, inductive analysis required a systematic means to find multiple supports for the emerging domains and themes.

A second strategy incorporated was member checking (Creswell, 2003; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995). Through informal interviewing, data and tentative interpretations were shared with the participant in order to determine the plausibility of the interpretations (Merriam, 1998, 2009). The use of member checking served as a valuable connector to the participant's reality and the validity of the data analysis.

A third means of enhancing trustworthiness was length of the study (Creswell, 2003; Merriam, 1998). Spanning three months, the participant was formally interviewed two times, observed during two rounds totaling four days, and informally interviewed a minimum of eight times. Such a timeline meets the specifications suggested by Creswell (2003) for prolonged time in the field enhancing trustworthiness of the findings.

The final means of enhancing trustworthiness was peer examination (Merriam, 1998, 2009). Being a Novice researcher, I asked at least one member of the doctoral committee to comment on the data analysis findings after each stage of the data collection process. Emerging domains, discarded domains, and finally emerging themes were shared during this time.

Role of the Researcher

The role of a case researcher varies according to the needs and interests of the researcher and the issue being studied. In alignment with the research questions regarding participant perceptions and the constructivist approach to this study, I assumed a constructivist role. That is, I assumed all knowledge shared by the case participant as having been learned or created based on experience and what was told (Hatch, 2002; Stake, 1995). This assumption allowed for a deep understanding of the influences of the participant's perceptions through data collection methods such as interviews, observations and artifact collections that incorporated questions of past participant experiences and how these relate to today's perspectives. Furthermore, during data

collection, my role reflected a "participant observer" (Hatch, 2002; Merriam, 2009). This assumed a level of participation known to the group and secondary to the role of "information gatherer" (Merriam, 2009). During classroom observations, I remained predominately as an observer in order to focus on the participant's words and actions as well as the students' responses to the learning and instructional activities. However, as the observations continued, I occasionally interacted with students in order to better understand instructional activities or to hear their perspectives of the learning task. Participant-observation allowed me to more fully document the pedagogical choices of the case participant and obtain depth of information regarding the perceptions of the case participant. Such sharing of information by the participant created a level of confidentiality that added to the overall understanding of the findings.

Ethical Issues

It is important to note here Merriam's reference to the term participant in qualitative studies and the possible ethical implications this carries. A participant is a part of the research (Merriam, 2009). During this study's collection of data, the participant was fully aware of what was being sought and permission was always asked prior to retrieval of documents; informal questioning and member checking was used to clarify understanding and verify interpretations. The purpose of this study is one of understanding; there is no intention to judge the quality of the participant's teaching skills. This participant was chosen due to specific attributes or experiences she has had regarding world languages. Furthermore, data analysis and interpretation at the early stages was shared with the participant through informal and formal interview member checking. This allowed for any misinterpretation to be clarified as well as any potential misrepresentation to be discussed.

Another ethical consideration included me as researcher. My background and experiences as a French teacher at the secondary and middle school levels for twenty-two years has informed my views regarding language proficiency, learning and instruction. As a result, I took intentional steps to minimize the influence of my perceptions on the participant and interpretations. The most significant steps taken were those designed to

enhance the trustworthiness of the study: triangulation and member checking (see Chapter 3, Trustworthiness). In addition, journaling (after each observation and interview) as well as notations (during observations) provided me a means to immediately address any bias I had during data collection and be aware of these biases during data interpretation.

Limitations

As with any study, there were limitations to this one. The scope of this study was narrowed to one participant who reflects a particular professional experience, certification route and teaching context. Likewise, the scope of this study included only one state: Kentucky. However, as discussed in the introduction, the current world language efforts in Kentucky pertaining to state Standards, university requirement and proposed Program Review create an interesting case study context. Generalizibility was not the intent of this study. Rather, the intent was to understand the perceptions and influences of a Kentucky world language educator in order to share with other language educators, inform policy makers and support systems, and to begin to address a void in the literature pertaining to world language educators' choices.

Summary

Guided by the constructivist view that "individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work" and "develop subjective meanings of their experiences" that are "varied and multiple" (Creswell, 2007, p. 20), I explored one world language educator's perceptions of language proficiency, context, standards, and assessments and the influences these perceptions had on her pedagogical choices. The descriptive case study design included data from interviews, observations, and artifacts. The method of analysis used was constant comparative analysis.

In the following chapter, I share findings and preliminary conclusions focusing on the participant's perceptions of language proficiency, context, standards and assessments, and the influences of context, standards, and assessments on the pedagogical choices she makes. In addition, Usó-Juan & Martinez-Flor's (2006) theory of

communicative competence situates the findings regarding language proficiency and Wertsch's (1998) framework of mediated action provides a lens for understanding the pedagogical choices.

Chapter Four: Case Study of a Kentucky World Language Educator

Introduction

The inspiration for this study comes from discussions with fellow world language educators throughout my teaching career. Whether at conferences, coffee shops or in the hall during class changes, an inevitable sharing of *"what"* we were doing in our classrooms and *"why"* we made those choices would occur. Overtime, I began to notice a pattern in our answers: an inclusion of perceptions regarding context, standards, and assessments influencing our choices. Above all, our perceptions were never the same despite seemingly similar experiences and beliefs. This chapter analyzes one descriptive case study of a world language educator's understanding of language proficiency, context, standards and assessments, and the influences these perceptions have on pedagogical choices. The research questions for this study are:

1. What perceptions does a Kentucky world language educator bring to teaching with regard to language proficiency?
    1.1 How does this world language educator define language proficiency?
    1.2 How does this world language educator describe language proficiency in the context of her school and community?
2. How do perceptions of context, standards, and assessments influence the Kentucky world language educator's pedagogical choices?
    2.1 How does this world language educator describe the context in which she practices?
    2.2 How does this world language educator describe the influence of the context in which she practices on pedagogical choices?
    2.3 How does this world language educator describe the influence of state and National World Language Standards on pedagogical choices?
    2.4 How does this world language educator describe the influence of student assessments on pedagogical choices?

The analysis draws on two approaches to teacher behavior. The first, Grant's (2003) categorization of influences on teacher decision-making, builds on the work of Thornton (1991), Doyle and Ponder (1977) and is situated within the constructivist view that meaning is constructed and "that learning is a… complex activity… a wide range of factors… influences [on] our behavior, and that the same factor may influence different people in different ways" (Grant, 2003, p. 84). Grant's framework emphasizes that teachers' decisions are not made in a vacuum; rather, decisions reflect specific influences categorized as: personal, organizational, and policy (see Chapter 1, Discussion of Organizational Influences). Within each influence, a comprehensive listing of sub-categories supports meaning. Table 4.1 lists Grant's influences and sub-categories, as well as sub-categories relevant to this study's analysis.

Table 4.1. Categories of Influences: Grant's Framework

Categories of Influences	Sub-Categories	Sub-categories of relevance to this data analysis

Personal	x Personal knowledge
	x Personal beliefs/history
	    -Based in values
	    -Based in exper.
	x Dispositions
	x Professional experiences
	x Personal experiences
	x Function of subject matter knowledge
	x Beliefs about teaching and learning
		x Personal history
		x Personal experiences
		x Beliefs about teaching world language
		x Personal beliefs

Organizational	x Institutional cultures
	x Organizational structures
	x Organizational norms
	x Organizational relationships
	    -students
	    -colleagues
	    -administrators
		x Organizational norms
		x Organizational structures
		x Organizational culture
		x Organizational relationships

Policy	x Curriculum x Standards x Textbooks x Assessments	x Curriculum x Standards

Grant's categories of influences frame the analysis of teacher's perceptions and inform the discussion of pedagogical choices. Focus is given to Grant's understanding of beliefs which he describes as, "ideas teachers accept to be true. There is no objectivity requirement here: Beliefs may be grounded in lived experiences, but it is an individual's interpretation of those experiences that makes something a belief" (Grant, 2003, p. 153).

The second approach to teacher behavior informing analysis is Thornton's (1991) construction of teacher as gatekeeper. Influenced by Beard (1934), Thornton defines gatekeeping as "'the decisions teachers make about curriculum and instruction and the criteria they use to make those decisions' (p. 237)" (Grant, 2003, p. 51). He further recognizes that teachers, or gatekeepers, make their decisions "with reference to some frame of knowledge and values" (as cited in Grant, 2003, p. 51). This concept of gatekeeper situates the understanding of the pedagogical choices of the case participant regarding: context, standards, and assessments.

Finally, the findings I present are interpreted through Wertsch's (1998) framework of mediated action (see Chapter 3, Theoretical Framework). Situated within the sociocultural perspective, Wertsch's (1998) mediated action subsumes human action as best understood through its relation with "cultural, institutional, and historical contexts" (p. 24). Borrowing from Burke's pentad elements of: act, scene, agent, agency, and purpose, mediated action emphasizes two elements: agent and agency, and their resulting interaction. Agent is defined as the individual carrying out the action and agency is the instrument/ cultural tool/ mediational mean interacting with the agent. Framing this study within mediated action, the agent is the case participant and mediational means are context, standards, and assessments. A further description of contextual characteristics of this case study is beneficial in two ways. First, the case is 'bounded" (Creswell, 2003; Merriam, 1988; Stake, 1995; Yin, 1984) by the teacher's incorporation of the Standards-Based Measurement of Proficiency assessment reflecting a cultural tool directly addressed in this study's questions. Second, the case participant teaches in Kentucky, a state that has been the subject of considerable reform efforts since a 1990 Kentucky Supreme Court decision ruling the state's educational system unconstitutional (Kentucky Department of Education, 2010). More than two decades later, the reform efforts continue and those related to world languages include a new state

world language standard, a proposed mandated world language program review and changes in university world language admission requirements. This political environment reflects the cultural tools of context, Standards, and assessments, and situates the sociocultural components of cultural, institutional and historical dimension.

The Teacher: Elise

An observer entering Elise's classroom before school might find the ponytailed teacher wearing jeans and French club t-shirt and checking her emails. Students drift into the room and approach her desk; she stops her typing, sits back with a smile and listens to a non-stop recitation of the students' weekend. Born and raised in Emerald Town, Elise began her French studies in the fifth grade at the parochial school she attended. She recalls French being offered because a student's parent was fluent and available to teach the class. There were no other choices of languages and fortunately, Elise was "really good" at this newly offered subject (Formal Interview 1, p. 2). In high school, Elise continued French classes, took the Advanced Placement (AP) exam, and recalls an overall lack of enthusiasm for the subject.

Elise's disinterest in French extended into college; but, after one year, she discovered she "missed it". She changed her career focus and major and applied for admission to the French and English Secondary Education program at her university (Formal Interview 1, p. 2). Elise describes her undergraduate experience in the College of Education as a time of flux, seeing her caught in a bureaucratic transition resulting in her graduating without a teaching certificate. She explains:

> My diploma says College of Education, not College of Arts and Sciences, and it's in education because I did have to have maybe like two or three education classes… I didn't do practicum, most students do… I don't know how I even got out of there. (Formal Interview 2, p. 50)

Reflecting on this experience, Elise believes if she had been in the College of Arts and Sciences her experience would have been different and her French language skills higher, "I would have had more knowledge than I did going through the College of Education" (Formal Interview 2, p. 50). Elise applied to the same University's Graduate Program, Masters with Initial Certification (MIC), to earn her teaching certificate. Elise lacked

educational experiences required for admission, such as classroom observations. In the end, however, the program counted her work in summer camps and with AmeriCorps as acceptable teaching experiences and she entered the MIC program. After completing the coursework, Elise's student teaching experience included a split placement of English and French; during the French placement, she shadowed a teacher who taught at both the middle school and the secondary levels. Following her program completion, Elise's participation in the Deauville Teaching Exchange Program in France helped expand her knowledge of French language and culture.

From Elise's perspective, the MIC program helped her achieve two goals. First, she earned her teaching certificate and a Masters degree in Secondary Education with an emphasis in French and English. Second, she took a teaching position at the same high school in which she completed student teaching. As a first year teacher, Elise completed the mandatory Kentucky Teacher Internship Program (KTIP). A more experienced world language teacher located at another high school within her district mentored Elise during the KTIP year. Eleven years later, Elise remains at Être High School. She teaches five levels of French and shares her students with another quarter-position French teacher. Elise explains that maintaining her level of language fluency is a priority; so, she has led four student trips to Europe and taken tours of the French wine country with her husband in order to immerse herself in the language and culture of France. Professionally, Elise's achievements are notable. She is a multi-award winning teacher, recipient of National Board Certification in French and a KTIP mentor to first year teachers as well as other French teachers seeking their National Certification. At the same time, Elise shares the challenge of juggling work and home responsibilities and the difficult choices that juggling act requires. At this stage of her life, Elise describes herself as trying to "fly under the radar" at work in order to protect family time (Formal Interview 1, p. 4). She declined to mentor a first year teacher the year of this study and was unsure if she would accept a student teacher. When asked if this might change, Elise responds, "I anticipate that [it] will. I burnt out. So, I need to kind of relax and I need for my kids to be older" (Formal Interview 1, p. 5).

Reflecting on her teaching, Elise describes some notable changes that she has made over the years. In the present, for instance, she describes her lessons as having a

purpose. In the past, Elise reveals, "I was just trying to fill up the time… I look at some of my handouts… and I am kind of like what was the point?" (Formal Interview 2, p. 51). She also says she incorporates more technology and that this allows her to "go more seamlessly from one thing to another…use more visual aids" (Formal Interview 2, p. 51). Finally, Elise shares her concern that earlier in her career she "made a lot of grammatical mistakes" especially with gender agreement. "I just feel sorry for those kids who had to experience my learning curve," (Formal Interview 2, p. 51) she says.

Elise sums up her current strengths and weaknesses by noting that, at this point, the former outweigh the latter. From her perspective, her top strength is the ability to engage her students in the interpretive mode by teaching 90% in French and using language at a level her students can understand. She explains:

> Speaking at a lower level… speaking with words that I know they can understand, giving all their instructions and I think that that builds their confidence and I think that that builds their vocabulary and their knowledge of pronunciation and the structure of the language. (Formal Interview 2, p. 6)

Other strengths Elise recognizes relate to lesson design: usage of time, creativity of activities, variety of activities and recycling a concept five different ways. Finally, she says that her organizational skills have helped her create a system of tracking what she teaches, including targeted Standards and how students will demonstrate mastery of targeted language concepts.

Elise also identifies areas in which she would like to improve. For instance, she would like to incorporate more opportunities for her students to use interpersonal communication during class. In addition, she would like to "be able to give immediat[e]… and detailed feedback" on assessments. Right now, Elise "just circle[s] and make[s] a notation what the mistake is" (Formal Interview 2, p. 55). Her desire to do better in this area represents a challenge for Elise as she also strives to carve out more time with her children and family.

Perceptions of Language Proficiency

Regarding language proficiency, how do a world language educator's perceptions provide a lens for examining pedagogical choices? Elise's understanding of language

proficiency focuses on usage, on students "being able to communicate in a real situation in the language" (Formal Interview 1, p. 7). Her goal for students' language proficiency achievement is their being able to "get their point across… I want them to be able to talk … whether they do it correctly, they all figure out ways they get by" (Formal Interview 1, p. 7-8).

Such language proficiency expectations manifest themselves throughout the pedagogical choices that Elise makes, in particular the alignment of Standards and assessments. Elise creates a means to measure and track each student's language proficiency growth as determined by quizzes, homework, and in-class activities while setting minimum levels of demonstrated language proficiency expectations such as: "3 out of 6 meets expectations, 4 or higher exceeds, and if they [students] get lower, they haven't met" (Formal Interview 1, p. 10). Through such a process, Elise believes she can best meet her goal for students and for her as their teacher, to "be able to read something from beginning to end and understand what they have said" (Formal Interview 1, p. 7).

Dimensions of Language Proficiency

Elise's perceptions of language proficiency include dimensions that recur throughout the interviews and observations and appear to support her students "being able to communicate" (Formal Interview 1, p. 7). These components include providing real-world context, emphasizing grammar and levels of correctness, and incorporating the three modes of communication—interpretive, interpersonal and presentational.

The first dimension, real-world, refers to scenarios Elise perceives as replicating real-world interactions. These real-world scenarios are a part of instruction and referenced when discussing the concept of communication. These scenarios are intended to facilitate language production and were directly included in Elise's definition of language proficiency and demonstrated during classroom observations. As she explains below, these examples are intended to tie what her students are learning to the ways in which they might someday actually use the language. For level I, she explains:

> We watched the weather report today. I want them to watch, and if they are sitting and doing an exchange in college or whatever, and they are sitting in a dorm, I

want them to be able to watch the report and know what is going on outside.

(Formal Interview 1, p. 7)

For level III students, Elise explains:

They were learning about clothes, but what we did is a department store map. Chances are if they go to Paris, they are going to a department store, and how are you going to read this crazy complicated map? I want them to be…to say, you need to go buy a pair of pants, what part of the store are you going to, that kind of stuff. (Formal Interview 1, p.7)

After sharing these examples, Elise points out a contradiction in her teaching practices that signifies another dimension of her language proficiency perceptions—grammar.

Describing the role of grammar for the achievement of language proficiency, Elise simply states, "You still have to teach them grammar" (Formal Interview 1, p. 7). Throughout the observations, multiple examples of her doing this occurred. During a level III class, 15 minutes were spent reviewing the future tense formation and, during a level I class, students practiced choosing the correct article preceding a noun. Elise's choice to incorporate direct grammar instruction is incongruent with her perceptions of current trends in world language education that emphasize indirect, content embedded grammar learning.

In her teaching of the French language, Elise stresses that student mistakes, or lack of correctness, should not inhibit language proficiency. Referring to the French subjunctive mode as an example, Elise explains, "We don't all speak English perfectly… so if they [students] don't use the subjunctive correctly, they can still communicate" (Formal Interview 1, p. 7). During a level I class, students orally presented results from an in-class survey. Though the students' skills varied greatly, each student stood with a partner and described their findings. Overall, students' presentations contained only minimal mistakes with no significant errors inhibiting comprehension and Elise made no verbal correction.

The last dimension of language proficiency involves the three modes of communication: interpersonal, presentational, and interpretive. Within each of these modes, the embedded skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking form the basis of Elise's students' language usage. The level of the language learner plays a significant role

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as to which mode receives the emphasis in the pedagogical choices that she makes. During formal interviews, Elise explains that in planning and teaching, "I work towards all three and I do consider all three" (Formal Interview 1, p. 7); however, for level I, the emphasis is on interpretive communication. Once a student enters level IV or V, the focus shifts from interpretive to interpersonal, student-to-student speaking skill. Elise's reasoning for such an approach reflects her understanding and implementation of a particular language learning theory—comprehensible input.

Language Learning Theory

When asked if she embraces a particular language learning theory, Elise identified theory related to comprehensible input. This theory, most identified from Krashen's (1985) monitor model, suggests language advancement occurs when a learner receives input, "*i*", at a level just above (*+1*) his or her current range. Elise describes comprehensible input theory as, "having a lot of focus on listening, interpretive mode, me talking to them and them understanding it" (Formal Interview 2, p. 56). For instance, Elise gives directions to students entirely in French because "I think that builds their confidence and I think that builds their vocabulary and their knowledge of pronunciation and the structure of the language" (Formal Interview 2, p. 56). This understanding reflects Krashen's overall premise that a language learner must be exposed to large quantities of the target language, "*i*", in order to increase language proficiency (Krashen, 1985, 1982). For Elise, a key element of "comprehensible input" is adjusting her French "to a lower level" in order to reach "*i+1*". In this context, she also notes that "a lot of people argue that you shouldn't dumb down your speech for them [students]" (Formal Interview 2, p. 56).

An interesting effect of Elise's reliance on comprehensible input can be seen in a student activity that followed her review of a certain set of vocabulary words. The students were placed in teams to play a form of "Password" which involved one team member sitting with his/her back to the white board as a vocabulary word or phrase was projected up for the rest of the team to see. Team members gave clues in French to enable a player to determine what the hidden word was. Overall, students exhibited two different

approaches to this task. Either they generated their own simple grammar, inadequate word choices and rough pronunciations, or they reproduced the grammatically correct phrases that Elise had used during the vocabulary review. In the latter case, students' language use suggested that they understood and recalled their teacher's language and, to some extent, at least, absorbed them as their own.

When asked about her evaluation of students' performance, Elise explained that her students were capable of learning but barriers sometimes limited student performance. With her lower level students, for instance, "You can do a lot with them but you can't get them to where other students are" (Formal Interview 2, p. 52). On the other hand, the English Language Learners (ELL) "could do the best at learning another language but there is an issue with motivation and parental support" (Formal Interview 1, p. 8). When asked about which level of students' Elise was most proud in terms of language proficiency growth, she identified the change between levels III and IV, explaining that their grammatical performance was stronger; where level III students made simple grammatical mistakes, students at level IV could understand more complex grammar.

Perceiving the Complexities of Language Proficiency

Although Elise broadly defines language proficiency as students' ability "to communicate" in a "real situation", interviews, observations, and artifact collections suggest a more nuanced definition, encompassing the following dimensions: modes of communication, language correctness and real-world application (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.2. Language Proficiency: Elise's Perceptions of Language Proficiency

Categories	Descriptions
Definition of language proficiency	"Being able to communicate in a real situation in the language" (Formal Interview 1, p. 7)
Supporting dimensions of language proficiency	-Modes of communication -Language correctness -Real-world
Language learning theory	Comprehensible input theory

The first concept, *modes of communication*, reflects terminology found in the National World Language Standards with parallels in Kentucky's Standard. It includes three categories: interpretive, interpersonal and presentational. The interpretive mode coincides with Elise's preferred language learning theory, comprehensible input, and guides her to speak 90-100% of the time in French. By doing so, Elise argues that her students are engaged in the listening interpretive mode as she describes vocabulary, gives directions, and explains grammatical functions.

The next concept, *language correctness*, is described by Elise in relation to her students' language proficiency. In her view, language correctness should not inhibit students' ability to communicate. She worries that fear of misspeaking will effectively silence students. As a result, she rarely stops student presenters to address grammatical errors nor does she address them afterwards. Rather, she focuses on the content of student presentations and provides positive comments such as "bien fait" and "bon travail" once completed. Nonetheless, Elise worries about grammar. During a formal interview, Elise shared her internal debate between her emphasis on communication and the need to "still have to teach grammar". In her discussion she does not expand on this conflict, nor does she refer to the ACTFL proficiency levels to support her opinion.

Finally, the provision of real-world situations serves as a primary vehicle for her students' authentic language usage. For example, Elise incorporates an activity in which students invite each other to do certain sports or hobbies at specific times of the day. In another activity, Elise re-creates a tarot card reading scenario for students to use newly acquired grammar and vocabulary. Furthermore, Elise extends students' concepts of real-world language usage through facilitating interactions with students in France. Each of Elise's students communicates with a French pen pal to whom emails and Prezi collages describing certain aspects of their lives are sent.

The *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines* describe language proficiency as "what individuals can do with language in terms of speaking, writing, listening, and reading in real-world situations in a spontaneous and non-rehearsed context" (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 2012a, p.3) while *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* sums up human interaction as "Knowing how, when, and why to say what to whom" (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 2012b, p. 3). Elise's

definition and understanding of language proficiency suggests strong similarities to both definitions of language proficiency. She addresses communication including the three modes: interpretive, interpersonal, and interpretive, and identifies communicating in a real-world situation using any skills possible.

In Grant's (2003) discussion of influences on teachers' pedagogical choices, he addresses personal influences and teacher beliefs. Borrowing from Eisenhart, Grant (2003) defines a belief as "'a proposition, or statement of relation among things accepted as true' (Eisenhart et al., 1988, pp. 52-53)" (p. 153). For Elise, her definition of language proficiency reflects her perception regarding the goal of language learning for her students. Her understanding, influenced by her experiences with tools such as standards and assessments, creates an overarching personal influence on pedagogical decisions she makes.

Understanding Perceptions of Language Proficiency through Communicative Competence Theory

Elise's definition and supporting components of language skills, correctness, and real-world can be situated within the language learning theory of communicative competence (Bachman, 1990; Canale & Swain, 1980; Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei & Thurrell, 1995; Lee & Van Patten, 2003; Savignon, 1983; Usó-Juan & Martinez-Flor, 2006, 2008). The model suggested by Usó-Juan and Martinez-Flor's (2006, 2008) is particularly helpful in understanding Elise's perceptions of language proficiency.

Influenced by the works of Canale and Swain (1980), Bachman (1990), and Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei and Thurrell (1995), Usó-Juan and Martinez- Flor's (2008) model of communicative competence focuses on "being able to use the linguistic system effectively and appropriately in the target language and culture" (p. 157). Composed of five components, the model places discourse competence at its center encircled by the skills of listening, reading, writing, and speaking. Branching from discourse competence are four equal components influencing the communicative skills of the individual: linguistic, pragmatic, intercultural and strategic (see Chapter 2, Language Proficiency). This model of communicative competence reflects an inclusive understanding of

language proficiency and aligns with the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines* and Standards for Foreign Language Learning.

Overall, Elise's perceptions of language proficiency reflect three of the five competencies: discourse, linguistic and pragmatic (see Table 4.3).

Table 4.3. Language Proficiency: Communicative Competence and Elise's Perceptions

Components of Communicative Competence	Elise's Perceptions
Discourse Competence	Identified in definition of language proficiency and guiding factor for pedagogical choices
Linguistic Competence	Identified in discussions of language correctness and pedagogical choices
Pragmatic Competence	Suggested in definition of language proficiency and real-world tasks
Strategic Competence	Awareness as a goal of activities
Intercultural Competence	Awareness as a component of instructional activities

Of the five competences, discourse appears the most often in Elise's discussions and pedagogical choices. In interviews she emphasizes listening, speaking, writing, and reading and her instructional choices reflect this emphasis. For example, during a French III lesson focusing on the future tense, Elise led activities requiring the students to read and listen to a song, speak and listen to partners, and write sentences. The next competence, linguistic, comprises elements such as "phonology, grammar, and vocabulary" (Usó-Juan & Martinez-Flor, 2008, p. 160), and is reflected in Elise's discussion of language correctness. Her pedagogical choices reflect similar attention to linguistics in rubrics for oral assessments and foci of instructional activities. For instance, during a level I summative assessment, Elise's rubric for students' speaking skills included "no errors" in the descriptor for the highest score. The last competence, pragmatic, reflects "knowledge needed to perform language functions" (Usó-Juan & Martinez-Flor, 2006, p. 17) and is suggested in Elise's definition of student language proficiency as "being able to communicate in a real situation in the language". Interestingly, Elise's instructional activities rarely incorporate the kind of pragmatic focus outlined by Usó-Juan and Martinez-Flor (2006) regarding participant and situational variables such as the overall purpose of the interaction or the social status of

those interacting. For example, during Elise's presentation of the Tarot card activity to her students, she explained the procedure of the activity and the grammatical focus without including directions or reminders as to how to interact in such a situation.

In some cases, Elise makes reference to strategic and intercultural competencies during interviews, but they do not appear in classroom observations. For instance, Elise mentions strategic competence in discussing her students' interactions with pen pals, explaining that her goal for them is to be able to communicate in "any manner possible," but she does not share this goal with her students nor does she provide related communication strategies. Similarly, Elise references intercultural competence as a goal in discussing a "Match.com" activity, but explains that her main focus is on increasing specific language skills, such as speaking.

Usó-Juan and Martinez-Flor (2008) describe this as a common pattern, explaining that intercultural competence is "the approach less taken in the language class" (p. 162). They cite three reasons based on Omaggio-Hadley's (2001) work: overcrowded curriculum, limited knowledge of target culture, and confusion over cultural topics to cover. These explanations, however, do not account for Elise's choice to de-emphasize the interculturality of language production, awareness of sociocultural context on the interpretation and production of language. Rather, her views of students' language proficiency growth and the role that comprehensible input has as an instructional approach account for her choices. For Elise, allowing time in her lessons to explain, in multiple ways, the meaning she is trying to convey while also checking for students' comprehension becomes priority. Other emphases, such as intercultural competence, become secondary.

Perceptions of Context

Elise's perceptions of context reflect a focus on *where* and *who* she teaches. Although she characterizes Être High School by the students who attend it and their SES, Elise works within a multilayered and interrelated set of contexts that extend well beyond her students, though in many cases they are influenced by student performance on various high stakes measures. Elise likens her city to "a pie" where each school must get "their share of the poorest neighborhoods" and that Être High School has "some of the poorest

kids" (Formal Interview 1, p. 3). As evidence, she explains that over one quarter of the students are on free-reduced lunch, there is an on-site social worker, and a Youth Service Center is available to meet the diverse needs of Être's students. In addition, Elise says, "Our test scores used to be pretty high and they have slowly kind of declined… in Math… English… Reading" (Formal Interview 1, p. 6). As a result, Être High School received a seven-year government grant focusing on the creation of *Smaller Learning Communities* to improve student progress and learning as determined by *No Child Left Behind* assessments. *Professional Learning Communities* (PLC) were established and every teacher must collaborate with other teachers who teach like subjects to share instructional practices and create common assessments. As a result, Elise's teaching context includes significant layers of administrative, collegial, and community involvement that surround her work with students.

Overall, Elise' perceptions of administrative context are organizational. She describes her school's Smaller Learning Communities grant as an organizational norm, or "expectation" (Grant, 2003, p. 167), and the resulting PLC's as part of the organizational structure. She questions what will happen when the grant ends and what changes from their current practices will occur. Her descriptions of the school and the students suggest an organizational culture of low test scores and students of low SES. To begin with, administrators oversee the requirements set forth in the Smaller Learning Communities grant. Elise describes the Smaller Learning Communities grant and its associated requirements as multi-dimensional and outcome driven with the main focus for teachers being standards-based units incorporating aligned assessments. Teacher accountability for implementing the grant's requirements is overseen by administrators who visually check classrooms' whiteboards for goal statements and agendas. Explained by Elise as an off-shoot of the grant, teachers at Être High School must also participate in Professional Learning Communities with teachers who teach like subject areas, which for Elise means collaboration with a part-time French teacher. She explains:

> We talk about how we are going to meet 2.28 and 2.29 and we document that so they can have it in the office because no one is ever going to come in and check with us because we are world languages and we are not assessed on the CATS test. (Formal Interview 1, p. 6)

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Elise sees such requirements as a challenge for some departments, such as English, who must meet, discuss, and create a common curriculum even though material shortages, such as novels, force each teacher to use different materials.

Another administrative influence on Elise's work is the school's daily schedule. Labeled as an A/B block schedule, students take four classes one day and four different classes the following day; each day of classes is categorized as "A" day or "B" day classes and the two rotate throughout the school year. For Elise, this creates a schedule in which she only sees her students every other day and which her preps are split, or repeated, depending on which daily schedule it is. The transition to block scheduling was not easy for Elise and she still prefers a year-long, seven-period day believing it is the best schedule for students.

As a result of recent administrative overhaul, Elise says, "the entire school kind of feels like nobody is sure of what they are doing… and that is a really, like nervous feeling to have" (Formal Interview 1, p. 5). Nonetheless, she has job security due to her tenure status and she feels that her understanding of what administration expects of the teachers helps her cope with change. She explains, "as long as we [World Language faculty] continue to meet, continue to submit minutes, and continue to write a goal on the board, we are fine (Formal Interview 1, p. 5). This perception seems consonant with those expressed by her colleagues who reiterated it during a world language department meeting. Teachers were reminded to continue to administer common assessments and activities as well as share successful activities with their Professional Learning Community colleagues.

Elise's perception of the administrative team's support for teachers is conditionally positive, contingent on how well teachers will be perceived as meeting administrative expectations. For example, while chatting with a colleague, the topic of high failure rates was addressed. Elise shared steps she takes, how those procedures met administrative expectations, and advised her colleague to document her own procedures in order to avoid administrative scrutiny. Despite her concerns about organizational structures, the relationship Elise shares with administration appears professional and she relies on their quick response to discipline issues within her classroom. On two occasions during observations, an administrator was summoned to her room to address students in a

verbal altercation or unable to stay awake. With each summoning, the interaction between the administrator and Elise appeared supportive and student behavior improved.

Finally, an additional administration dimension influencing Elise's perceptions of Être High School is the available instructional materials. When asked if she uses textbooks to implement the curriculum, Elise responds, "I do" explaining, "For me, when I first started teaching and I got all five levels [of French] right away, that [using textbooks] was the only way I could do it" (Formal Interview 1, p. 9). In contrast, Elise believes her students are unaware of her textbook usage due to the lack of overt presence. In addition to textbooks, ample resources are available throughout Être High School. Elise jokingly comments her reason for staying at Être High School is, "I have unlimited copies here, I have free lamination here" (Formal Interview 1, p. 6).

Collegial contexts include formal as well as informal interactions. The World Languages Department is comprised of educators who teach Japanese, Latin, Spanish and French and is not combined with any other department. Teachers have a common lunch time and the majority of the department members choose to eat together in the World Languages' workroom. Their informal camaraderie includes discussing personal matters, school business and teaching strategies. Elise describes a changing relationship with her colleagues based on her own changing ambitions. During her first nine years at Être, she was the "person with her hand up" (Formal Interview 1, p. 4). She aspired to become department chair as the impending retirement of the former chair neared. Yet, after considering the needs of her children, Elise backed down from that goal. Today, she strives to spend more time with her family and to "coast through" and "avoid extra responsibility" at school (Formal Interview 1, p. 4); her goal is to "just follow the rules" and fly "under the radar" (Formal Interview 1, p. 4).

Perhaps as result, her description and observed actions with her department reflect a complex relationship with colleagues. During common lunches, Elise interacts positively with her peers, often assuming the role of mentor with the younger world language teachers. However, her relationship with the department chair is observably different. Elise's negative perception of his leadership skills could be seen when details of the upcoming Standards Based Measurement of Proficiency (STAMP) assessment for incoming freshmen were reviewed during a lunch-time department meeting. The

department chair expressed his concerns and frustrations regarding the shortage of department volunteers to help proctor the assessment. Multiple teachers, including Elise, commented that the lack of communication and forewarning regarding date and responsibilities had kept them from being available. As the department chair began to comment, Elise reminded him it was his responsibility to oversee and carry out the STAMP test, not theirs. During an informal interview immediately following this event, Elise noted that her sudden decision to not pursue the department chair position left her department in limbo and "the last guy to touch his nose" earned the position (Formal Interview 1, p.4).

Further, and despite her description of herself as "flying under the radar" and "just following the rules", Elise describes herself as more passionate and invested than her colleagues. This is due, she explains, to the amount of time she spends creating lessons that she perceives as meeting the needs of her students as well as the amount of money she spends trying to create an enjoyable environment in which to learn and teach French. Her room contains a large selection of reading materials tucked in the student reading corner and a number of posters hang on the walls—so many, in fact, that Elise describes her room and its collection of materials as "France threw up in here… an ADHD child's worst nightmare" (Informal Interview 1, p. 3). In defense of the décor, she explains that if a student is "not going to pay attention to me and what I am doing, I at least want [them] to pick up something, whether it is an appreciation for the culture…or one word" (Formal Interview 1, p. 3).

The physical plant—the building and its surroundings—as well as administrators and their organizational mandates and Elise's colleagues form the backdrop—the *where*—against which she interacts with the *who* in her work context—the world language students. Elise characterizes her classes with regard to students' actions and/or SES. Level I students are her "'sleepers' who did not take a language in middle school" (Informal Interview 3, p. 34). During one round of observations, a fifth of the level I first-hour class continuously placed their heads in the crook of their elbows with eyes closed throughout instruction. Describing level II, Elise rates these students as "higher level" due to their middle school French preparation. Overall, Elise describes her level I and II students as predominantly poor:

Maybe 8% of my kids I would say come from a background of money where their parents could afford to send them on a trip, where their parents could afford a pair of Ugg boots or a new binder when they need it. If you look at my French I classes… up to French III…at least half of them are on free and reduced. French I, I would say all but five are on free and reduced. (Formal Interview 1, p. 3)

Amongst those groupings, Elise anticipates 20 to 30 % of her students will fail despite her efforts to help them succeed and despite her claim that 80 % to 90% of her level I students understand what she is saying when instruction occurs all in French.

The interaction between Elise and her students suggests sincerity and an interest in student motivation and success. She seeks to create an environment where students' needs are met, explaining that "When I am here really early in the morning, those kids are in my room… they want to talk, they don't have any adults to talk to at home" (Formal Interview 1, p. 3). As a result, Elise will stop her morning routine to listen to students share their weekend adventures. In addition, Elise keeps a stocked selection of pencils, paper, extra notebooks, and agendas located on the wood bookcase by the door with the expectation that a student should take any materials needed to learn.

Elise also tries to maintain supportive attention during instruction. During one activity, for instance, as students wrote answers to PowerPoint questions and on individual white boards, Elise pointed to white board after white board maintaining a constant level of attention, whether students answered correctly or not. During a level III game of memory, too, Elise playfully moved game cards in order to challenge the guessers. On each occasion, students either laughed or murmured "Madame" despite the effect of the changes on their opportunity to win (Observation 1, Level III, p. 4). Finally, during a level I summative assessment, two students turned in their test answers without attempting to answer questions requiring a written paragraph response. Elise privately approached each student and discussed why no attempt was made and then gave words of encouragement to "write something" (Observation 2, Level 1, p. 13). Each student then retrieved their tests and completed the unfinished sections.

Elise's interest in her students is further suggested through the multiple extra-curricular opportunities she provides from French Club and French Honor Society to study trips to Europe. For her most advanced learners, Elise organizes a week-long AP

summer camp including a tour of her city's downtown, eating at a local French restaurant and watching movies; all with the goal of igniting the students' French language skills before the start of the school year.

Elise expresses particular concern about her ELL students. They appear to her to have low motivation and little parental support. Telephone interactions with parents have encouraged her to learn simple phrases in Spanish to communicate the basic information of her concerns. She reports the challenges of teaching students who are struggling in English and have been placed in French and identifies counselors as having placed them in her classes for lack of other options. Francophone students from Haiti, the Congo, and Belgium, however, present a different set of challenges. Elise explains that for most of the Francophone students, poverty and a lack of formal schooling are realities. She must be "mindful" of these students' physical and language needs as they sit alongside her non-francophone students in upper level French classes. She explains that this mindfulness is exemplified when she engages her Francophone students in conversations to expand answers given to activities.

"Luckily" from Elise' perspective, she can also make use of student aides and peer tutors, most of whom are upper level French students. Working in the background as Elise teaches, aides carry out a well orchestrated range of tasks such as: cutting lamination, preparing teaching materials, sorting student work and checking for completeness. Student tutors help students find and understand missed assignments after absences and provide one-on-one tutoring and retesting of students in the hall. On occasion, Elise entrusts an aide or tutor to search out an administrator for assistance in her room or to act as teacher while she deals with a discipline issue outside the door. When asked, Elise's aides and tutors never hesitate and do exactly as requested.

Situating herself within these interconnected contexts, Elise describes an increasing sense of unhappiness leading to her desire for "flying under the radar". She stays at Être High School because "It's easy to be here… I know the way that things work around here" and "I like speaking French fluently and talking about various cultural topics older kids can understand" (Formal Interview 1, p. 5).

Context and Pedagogical Choices

Elise's perceptions of context reflect significant organizational influences, including her school and students, interwoven with policy and personal influences. Within her school, the overarching influence is the Smaller Learning Communities grant and the organizational norms established by administration regarding alignment of standards and assessments and student achievement. As a result, Elise's pedagogical choices have changed. She begins each unit with a self-created learning checklist guided by the 5Cs of the National World Language Standards. She pre-determines assessments for each goal that focus on a particular mode of communication. Elise reports that these changes have influenced her instructional practices. Her students no longer write daily in journals to demonstrate their knowledge; rather, they take daily "collected" quizzes aligned to the learning standards (Formal Interview 1, p. 10). Students' quiz scores are used to determine mastery of targeted goals; those students not demonstrating mastery receive peer-tutoring during class and are then reassessed.

Reflecting on the learning experiences her instructional changes have created for her students, Elise states:

> They [Students] never know. Some days I will take the grade on the quiz and put it into my grade book and some days I take the quiz pass/fail and check it on the checklist… if I need to check their reading comprehension, they will have a pop quiz, they don't know what it is for, they just know they have to read this and answer questions. (Formal Interview 1, p. 10)

When asked why her assessments are unannounced, Elise identifies the daily schedule of Être High School as the reason. Described as an A/B schedule, students take 8 classes per year that rotate every other day. Elise views this organizational structure as a hindrance for students being able to remember work assigned a day prior and a contributor to non- study habits. As a result, she rarely forewarns her students of daily quizzes and expects them to assume quizzes as a natural part of her class's daily routine.

The instructional materials available for Elise's use at Être High School reflect organizational and policy influences of *what* and *how* she teaches. Elise identifies textbooks, chosen by her, as a significant resource and guide for her curricular choices,

despite their being "really dated" (Formal Interview 1, p.9). She describes her initial and continued use of them:

> So, I guess I sort of started organizing my units by chapters. And so, it's really easy for me, it's stuck in my head. If you ask me, I could tell you what we teach without mentioning a chapter, you would think that I don't use it, but I do.
> (Formal Interview 1, p. 9)

In addition, Elise makes use of the ancillary materials that accompany the textbook series, such as the listening activities. Despite descriptions of the videos as "silly" (Formal Interview 1, p. 9) due to outdated clothing, she continues to incorporate them as conversation starters. Likewise, she continues to give pages from the workbooks "every now and again" (Formal Interview 1, p. 9) as homework assignments.

Another organizational influence, availability of lamination and copies, influence Elise's instructional approach to speak 100% in the target language. For example, Elise uses various laminated visuals to teach concepts, such as vocabulary. During a level I observation, Elise packed her laminated valise with pictures of items she needed for a trip to Martinique. Each item was held up for students to see as she described the object and how it would be used on the trip. For the students, Elise laminates manipulatives that allow interaction with the language. From tarot cards for an interpersonal activity to vocabulary pictures for a class game of memory, laminated materials are in abundance and Elise's aides help in the preparation of these manipulatives. In a similar manner, Elise's access to "unlimited copies" and an abundant quantity of colored paper allows her to incorporate a color-coded system helping her and her students' easy recognition of different forms of work, such as quizzes, homework and essays.

Elise's perceptions of how to teach world languages reflect personal influences on the pedagogical choices she makes with regard to her instructional approach, students' levels of comprehension, affective filters, heritage, and participation. Elise's preferred language learning theory, comprehensible input, implies target language usage by the instructor in order to provide modeled language for the learners at a level $i + 1$, slightly above the learners' current level of language proficiency. Elise explains the influences of this theory on her instructional practices and on her students, "It is more important for me not to be fast and to explain… very diligently in French so they [students] can understand

it" (Formal Interview 2, p. 55). This is achieved through "carefully constructed language" (Formal Interview 2, p. 54) and consistent and predictable phrases, such as those used for routine descriptions and activity instructions. An observed example of her level IV students recognizing a predictable instruction occurred as Elise instructed her students to "Débarassez vos tables" and the class chimed in "pour un petit examen" (Obs 3, L4, p. 29). Elise believes her purposeful language constructions serve two purposes: increasing students' confidence and creating a vocabulary base. Another teaching strategy Elise incorporates as a result of her personal beliefs is non-verbal clues and gestures to act out vocabulary and expectations for her students. During instruction, Elise has a matching action for each thought she conveys in French and teaches these to her students as part of the vocabulary learning process.

As an accompanying instructional strategy to her approach of 100% target language, Elise incorporates student comprehension checks and a willingness to put "language before plan" when students' understanding is not as quick as she expects (Formal Interview 2, p. 55). For instance, when checking comprehension she asks "Comprenez-vous?" followed by a pause for students to ask questions. Another strategy is students' miming of Elise's prior actions as she speaks the directions or uses vocabulary. Overall, language repetition, whether reworded or directly stated, plays a significant role in her checking for student comprehension. Repetition through rewording involves Elise giving a description and then immediately restating it using different words in an attempt to provide an alternate version that students might better understand.

More commonly, direct repetition appears in her lessons. Direct repetition involves saturation of a topic until every student understands the concept being addressed. During a lesson on future tense, for instance, students were given white boards and, in response to a PowerPoint slide, were expected to complete formations of verbs in the future tense. Over 20 PowerPoint slides provided students repeated opportunities to create the future tense. Throughout the activity, students remained attentive and the increasing amount of correct answers provided Elise formative feedback regarding students' comprehension.

Overall, Elise's perceptions of world language instruction lead her to work to lower students' affective filters in order to increase students' language proficiency. In a

broad sense, the affective filter encompasses the emotional response a learner has to the learning environment. To achieve this aim, Elise incorporates two instructional strategies: safeguards and verbal support. Safeguards reflect intentional, instructional steps Elise takes to support her students during the learning process while verbal support reflects the positive comments she makes to motivate students' learning.

Safeguards come in multiple forms and their existence in the classroom is suggested by the calm and attentive nature of the students. During a level II class, a student interrupted Elise's descriptions of how to play a review game to ask a question. She quietly acknowledged his raised hand and went on with her descriptions. Once the class had begun to play, Elise moved to his side and described in French the expectations of the game until he understood. To further assist students, Elise distributed a "Judges' Sheet" containing all the game's answers. During play, if students were unsure of an answer, they had the safeguard of looking at the answer sheet to determine an answer's correctness.

In addition to safeguards, Elise uses verbal support, especially with unwilling or non-participatory student, to lower their affective filters. She provides clues or verbal encouragement to help students participate in instructional activities as exemplified during a level I class. After noticing a student who demonstrated no interest in participating or answering Elise's question, she first explained how he could find the answer and then began to give him odds as to how right he would be with the four choices. Her tone and manner was playful and encouraging as the student guessed three answers that were wrong. When he chose not to say the final and correct answer, Elise asked in a pleading voice, "Do I need to get on my knees?" (Obs 4, L1, p. 45). This action elicited a chuckle from the student, the right response and then his asking, "Do you enjoy tormenting me?" (Obs 4, L1, p. 45). Elise turned to the class and asked, "It's not just you…who have I tormented?" and roughly half of the class raised their hands (Obs 4, L1, p. 45). An interesting example of students seeking to lower their own affective filter occurred during a level IV class. After the listening section of a quiz, a student asked Elise to repeat certain questions with no prompting and cueing that such actions would be allowed. Other students, witnessing this interchange, asked for repeated statements and Elise addressed all student requests with no hesitation or visual impatience. Immediately

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following, a student took his quiz to Elise and asked if his answers to a certain section were correct or not. Elise looked and answered, "Oui, Non" (Obs 3, L4, p. 28). The student returned to his seat retrying his answer. Two other students then got up, retrieved their quizzes and approached Elise for feedback on their answers.

Elise's perceptions of her students' heritage also influence her instructional choices. She explains that she considers the instructional activities that she chooses in relation to her students' cultural beliefs—sometimes in retrospect. Following an activity in which students manipulated Tarot cards to talk about the future, for instance, Elise shared her concerns that the activity might have offended participants' religious convictions. This concern, however, wars with her interest in maintaining student engagement and she perceives the Tarot activity as accomplishing that goal. This goal is so powerful that during a "Match.com" activity which required students to assume fictional personas, Elise's failure to get one student to participate led her to physically prop the student up, pin his bio to his shirt, and help him through the verbal steps of the activity. She defends this action by arguing that, because so few students were in class that day, her only other choice was to drop the activity and deny the participating students a real-world interaction in the target language.

Overall, Elise's pedagogical choices reflect organizational influences stemming from the expectations of her school's Smaller Learning Community grant and administrative enforcement of the grant's expectations. Elise has created a system demonstrating her Standards-based instructional choices and assessments and her students are expected to demonstrate mastery of each standard. However, Elise's instructional practices are influenced by her personal beliefs regarding instructional approach, strategies, and perceptions of her students. Emphasis is placed on the interpretive listening mode of communication, due to perceptions of comprehensible input theory, and numerous comprehension checks are incorporated throughout her lessons with awareness of students' affective filters and their heritage. Finally, policy influences, such as availability of materials and textbooks, influence her instructional choices and guide her curricular choices towards her goal of increasing students' language proficiency. The following section approaches Elise's pedagogical choices

through a different lens by situating Elise within her context and viewing her choices in relation to the cultural tools around her.

Discussion of Influences of Context

Elise's interaction with her perceived context reflects the dynamics explained through mediated action. Elise, acting as agent, interacts with mediational means such as organizational expectations and available materials and personal beliefs regarding world language instruction and her students to make pedagogical choices. These choices reflect actions of tension, constraints and affordances, multiple goals, and appropriation (see Table 4.4) and are described within Wertsch's (1998) framework of mediated action as:

- x   Mediated action is characterized by an irreducible tension between agent and mediational means.
- x   Mediational means constrain as well as enable action.
- x   Mediated action typically has multiple simultaneous goals.
- x   The relationship of agents toward mediational means can be characterized in terms of appropriation. (p. 25)

Table 4.4. Mediated Action: Mediated Claims Resulting from Perceptions of Context

Mediated Claims	Perceptions of Context
Tension	x Requirements of Smaller Learning Communities grant x Curriculum guided by textbooks
Constraints Affordances	x Merging comprehensible input theory with textbook curricula x Collection of students' work creates large quantities of grading x Framework for curriculum x Checklist of students' language proficiency skills meets grant's requirement
Simultaneous Goals	x Instructional materials align curriculum and increase students' language proficiency x Checklists of students' mastery of language proficiency goals documents alignment of assessments and standards and tracks students skills
Appropriation	x Requirements of Smaller Learning Communities grant x Textbook materials

Tension, Constraints, and Affordances

Elise's perceptions of her school's context are significantly influenced by her perceptions of the Smaller Learning Communities grant requirements that include alignment of Standards and assessments and determining students' attainment of language proficiency goals. Elise's interaction with the grant and its perceived requirements, creates a "dynamic tension" (Wertsch, 1998, p. 27) resulting in particular pedagogical choices. For instance, Elise creates standards-based units with assessments aligned to each standard. She then documents each student's achievement of the standard and provides tutoring and reassessment to those not demonstrating mastery. Although this checklist system enables Elise to meet a requirement of the grant, it also constraints her time as time spent grading daily quizzes, essays and tests mounts. Wertsch (1998) describes this as a *retrospective* constraint "typically recognized only in retrospect through a process of comparison from the perspective of the present" (p. 40). Thus, Elise realizes the impact of her increased work load only in hind-sight.

The dynamic tension Elise experiences in regard to her specific context can also be understood through her interaction with instructional materials and the constraints and affordances this interaction creates. In particular, Elise chooses to use textbooks as a "skeleton" for her five curricula creating an irreducible tension (reflecting the basic elements of the tension) as she negotiates curriculum and her personal beliefs of language instruction not supported by the textbook series. In addressing this tension, Elise argues that textbook usage was "the only way I could do it" (create five curricula the first year of teaching) (Formal Interview 1, p.9). Thus, textbooks, in the capacity of a cultural tool, provided Elise "empowerment" (Wertsch, 1998, p. 38) to achieve her goal of aligning five curricula. Conversely, Elise's textbook-influenced curricula "limit[s] the forms of action" she takes due to her desire to embrace the language learning theory of comprehensible input (Krashen, 1985). Elise must rework, or replace, the textbooks' instructional activities with those focusing on the interpretive mode of communication creating constraints of her time

Simultaneous Goals and Appropriation

Elise's pedagogical choices reflect her awareness of the need to meet multiple goals through singular actions. As Wertsch (1998) notes, "in most cases mediated action cannot be adequately interpreted if we assume it is organized around a single, neatly identifiable goal" (p. 32). For example, Elise incorporates textbooks in order to achieve the goals of creating horizontal and vertical curriculum of her classes and increasing students' language proficiency skills. However, she also considers the goals of the Smaller Learning Communities grant, creating standards-based checklists to document her use of Standards, aligning assessments to the Standards and affirming her students "know what [she] think[s] they know" and are increasing their language proficiency skills. And, underlying these professional goals, Elise constantly juggles her personal goals and obligations, including her desire to spend more time with her family.

As Elise strives to meet simultaneous and often incongruent goals, her actions reflect her appropriation of cultural tools or, "the process… of taking something that belongs to others and making it one's own" (Wertsch, 1998, p. 53). For example, Elise's perceptions of the grant's requirements resulted in her creation of checklists that indicate alignment of Standards and assessments as well as students' achievements of language proficiency goals. Stemming from this, she incorporated a system allowing students to receive tutoring of un-mastered language proficiency skills followed by a retry assessment of that skill. In like manner, Elise appropriates the curriculum and the materials included with her textbook and then manipulates them to support her understanding of language learning theory as comprehensible input (Krashen, 1985). Like the pedagogical choices she makes regarding the grant's requirements, Elise is aware of her appropriation of the textbooks' materials stating, "I can tell you what page and chapter something comes from" but "my students would claim I do not use them".

Summary of Context and Pedagogical choices

The influences of context on Elise's pedagogical choices include Être High School's: Smaller Learning Communities grant, its daily schedule, available instructional materials, and the number of her French students and their performance in her classes. These perceptions reflect significant organizational influences supported by official

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policy and as well as more personal influences. Within the organizational influences, requirements of the Smaller Learning Communities grant and the available textbooks guide Elise's decisions regarding alignment of Standards and assessments, development of a mastery-learning system, and a vertically-aligned curriculum. Resulting pedagogical choices demonstrate the tensions, constraints and affordances, as well as appropriation and simultaneous goals fit within the framework of mediated action (Wertsch, 1998) with Elise acting as agent and these cultural influences operating as mediational means. Broadly, Elise's inclusion of standards in her understanding of context reflects national and state directives regarding standards-based teaching. The following section addresses Elise's perceptions and the resulting pedagogical choices, or actions, she makes.

Perceptions of Standards

Elise's perceptions of World Language Standards reflect national directives including the National World Language Standards and its goals of community, connections, communication, culture, and comparisons (5 Cs). Elise's KTIP year coincided with the release of the National World Language Standards. She attributes constant interaction with the Standards as having "hooked" and "engraved" (Formal Interview 1, p. 80) them in her thinking. As a result, Elise values the standards enough to share them with other educators. "Whenever I have a student teacher", she says, "I have to sit down and show them to them. This is what you are working on" (Formal Interview 1, p. 8). Likewise, Elise's connection to standards is suggested in her response to the findings of Donnelly and Sadler's (2009) study of science educators' usage of national science standards during pedagogical decision making. Half of the survey participants reported using the national standards while half did not. Donnelly and Sadler argue that the failure to assess science at the state level contributed to the low level of usage. Elise, however, provides a differing perspective:

> Well… my first thought was does the half who doesn't use them need them
> anyway? Um, because I think that… I don't sit down and like write out my
> Standards and stuff, but I also think that I can read them with my eyes closed. I
> don't have to sit there and think about what the Standards are because they are so

ingrained with what I do. I think part of that was KTIP year happened right after the Standards… I was put on the spot (Formal Interview 2, p. 52).

Elise's personal experiences with the National World Language Standards are layered with perceptions of policy. Reflecting on her current lesson planning process, Elise states, "I don't have to sit there and think", the Standards form the framework for pedagogical choices. "I'm always working towards them [Standards]" and "I can give you an example in every class that we have met the five Standards or that we are working towards them" (Formal Interview 1, p. 8). Elise's discussions of World Language Standards do not include the recently released Kentucky World Language Standard. When informed of it, Elise admonished herself for having "tuned out" and she asked questions regarding its format, origins and influences. However, she expressed little interest in loosening her pedagogical attachment to the National World Language Standards. At the same time, Elise's self-created goal statements closely reflect the indicators and learning targets addressed in the Kentucky World Language Standard. These indicators, inspired by the "I can" statements in the European LinguaFolio, are the same indicators that Elise experienced during her participation in the Improving Educators' Quality training several years ago. This suggests that the LinguaFolio influenced Elise, whether intentionally or not, regarding her expectations and goals for her students' language learning, thus guiding her unexpected alignment with the State Standard.

Standards and Pedagogical Choices

Elise's perceptions of Standards and their influence on her pedagogical choices illustrate her role as a curricula/instructional gatekeeper (Thornton, 1991). As Grant (2003) noted in his study of teacher decision-making in high-stakes standards-based states, personal influences are often as powerful as policy in determining what curriculum and instructional practices enter the classroom. During a formal interview, Elise explained her understanding of how Standards and curriculum connect, describing her approach to curriculum development as "backwards". She states, "I think about the content and then I can connect them [content] to the Standards" (Formal Interview 2, p.

52). However, after saying this, Elise added that the Standards are always in the back of her mind and the content "always goes in the direction of the Standards" (Formal Interview 2, p. 52). In doing so, she changed her self-assessment from doing things backwards to doing them correctly.

In addition to the curricular influences, Elise's perceptions of the National World Language Standards reflect influences on instructional choices as well. Because Elise describes her system of Standards-inspired unit checklists as guiding her instructional choices (she states, "I will not move on" until each goal has been addressed), it is important to understand how Elise's instructional activities are organized around these goals, beginning with the 5C's (community, connection, comparisons, culture, and communication.

Community, Connection, Comparison, Culture, and Communication

As Elise conceives of how community structures instruction, she incorporates activities that allow her students to connect with other French speakers outside the community of Être as well as use their French for personal enjoyment in the community of Être. For instance, Elise has coordinated a pen-pal exchange between her level III students and a school in France. In addition to pen-pal letters, her students create virtual collage-like portrayals of their lives including pictures of their school, town, and extra-curricular activities accompanied by written descriptions in French. During the collage activity, students' reactions varied from calm focus or sharing technology tips to enthusiastic cries of "It's my pen pal's birthday" or "I want a letter from my pen pal" (Obs3, L3, p.23). Elise also includes opportunities for her students to use French outside their school, within the community of Être. Perhaps due to a lack of native French speakers, Elise's instructional strategies shift from students communicating with other Francophones to using French among themselves, but in public. For example, prior to the start of school, Elise offers her Advanced Placement students (level IV) a week-long camp to refresh their French skills. On the last day, Elise meets her students in downtown Être and they tour local establishments and attractions while assuming the role of French-

speaking tourists. Overall, Elise's understanding of community influences her inclusion of instructional activities that are overarching in nature and focus on communication.

Distinct from community, Elise's perceptions of the goal connections include instructional activities that tie her curriculum to other content areas. As such, a content area like math becomes a vehicle for using and/or learning particular French language structures or vocabulary. For instance, during a level I class, students surveyed their peers regarding preferences and activities and used the responses to create bar or pie charts of the findings. Students then presented their graphs and "pourcentages" to the class. This connection of mathematics to leisure activity vocabulary (used in the survey) provided the students a different means, and Elise a way to assess, specific language skills and knowledge. In a similar manner, Elise incorporated a magazine survey on love and relationships with her level IV students. Students read and answered the survey questions and then tallied their results to determine their relationship classification. A class discussion focused on the questions, new vocabulary, and students' categorizations. Although Elise's understanding of connections suggests the goal of language production or practice for the inclusion of other content areas, this last activity reflects language learning (such as slang vocabulary found in the relationship survey) as inclusive in her understanding as well.

Elise's perception of comparisons, and how it structures her instructional practices, is linked to another goal, culture. That is, Elise uses cultural topics to guide her students through comparing their own culture to that of another culture or to compare two cultural concepts. For instance, during a level II class, Elise gave verbal descriptions of the similarities and differences between "les villages et les villes" (Obs 4, L2, p. 39) while students demonstrated their understanding on a Venn diagram. Elise's address of culture, as an embedded topic, also occurs through intentional vocabulary choices. For example, to address the topic of environment, Elise includes the word "minuterie" on a unit's vocabulary list (Informal Interview, Obs 2, p. 15). She then uses minuterie, a timed light found in public areas such as hotel halls, to talk about environmental differences between France and the United States. Elise's approach towards the goals of comparison and culture reflect an interesting inter-relatedness within her understanding of the national goals.

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The final goal, communication, is the base of Elise's understanding of the national goals and the most significant influence on her pedagogical choices. Elise situates communication foundationally in her overall understanding of language proficiency, "being able to communicate in a real situation in the language" (Formal Interview 1, p. 7) as well as in her description of instructional activities, such as her students' pen-pal interactions, "Whether it is through a mix of English and French or… using a dictionary, they can all have a relationship with this person" (Formal Interview 1, p. 8). Elise's perception of communication is supported by three modes of communication (interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational) which are reflected throughout the National World Language Standards. Moreover, these modes guide her instructional choices and provide a structure by which Elise evaluates her strengths and weaknesses.

Three Pedagogical Modes

Of the three modes, Elise reports the interpretive mode as a pedagogical strength and a necessity for beginning language learners. Describing her level I and II courses, Elise states, "Lessons are mainly focused on interpretation…it's a lot of listening and understanding and showing me they understand" (Formal Interview 2, p. 56). This perception influences Elise to incorporate various pedagogical strategies requiring students to communicate their understanding. For example, Elise uses TPR to check vocabulary recognition. She inserts a specific word within a contextual sentence and students show their understanding through acting out the meaning of the sentence. Songs provide another example. While the music plays, students place strips of the song's words in order, demonstrating their recognition of phrases in the song. A final example incorporates You-tube videos. During a video of young French children discussing a topic, Elise's students take notes. These activities reflect sample interpretive activities Elise incorporates into her daily lessons. However, Elise's most prevalent and consistent interpretive pedagogical choice is her usage of the target language. During class instruction, Elise is observed speaking 100% in French including class directions and explanations of activities and language structure. By doing so, Elise claims she is providing students a way to be engaged in the interpretive mode throughout each lesson.

In contrast to the ease with which she incorporates the interpretive mode of communication, Elise reports presentational and interpersonal modes as challenging to incorporate within her pedagogical choices. She explains the level of the students influences how often these modes appear in her classes, with upper level French experiencing more interpersonal communication than beginning classes. Overall, Elise describes her inclusion of presentational and interpersonal as, trying "to hit the other ones in maybe one little activity in the classroom" (Formal Interview 2, p. 56). Reflecting on interpersonal communication, Elise addresses concerns with classroom management asking rhetorically, "Level I, how can I assess, you have 33 kids sitting in here, how are you going to get to everyone and make sure? We do work on interpersonal communication, but that is the least" (Formal Interview 1, p. 8). Regarding presentational mode, Elise describes this as "getting a kid to prepare a presentation or to stand up" (Formal Intervew1, p. 8). She identifies challenges with this mode relating to students' personal issues, such as anxiety, which might prevent a student from presenting.

Despite Elise's self-assessed weaknesses and challenges regarding interpersonal and presentational communication, she continues to "work towards" their inclusion within her pedagogical choices and observational data support this claim (Formal Interview 1, p. 8). For example, Elise uses vocabulary PowerPoints to interact with her students in an interpersonal question and answer format. In addition, she incorporates interpersonal activities among her students such as vocabulary ladders. This activity requires partners to have corresponding papers possessing slight differences. Partner "A" asks questions about pictures in the left column while partner "B" listens and responds with the picture on the right. The activity continues until both partners answer with the same response. Another less guided interpersonal activity involves surveys. Students create questions and then move around the room asking classmates their questions. Answers from each student are recorded and used for the next mode of communication, presentational. Elise's pedagogical choices reflect two types of presentational communication: speaking and writing. Each observed survey activity ends in an oral presentation. For example, level I students used their short-hand notes regarding peers' preferred free-time activities to create oral presentations based on their findings. A similar activity during a level II class had students interviewing partners based on a pre-

determined set of questions and then orally presenting partners to the class. An example of a written presentational activity is the level III Prezi page. Each student included written descriptions presenting their town, school and daily activities on their Prezi-collage for their French pen-pals to read.

Policy Influences

Within Elise's perceptions of the 5 Cs and three modes of communication, two themes, or policy influences, support the instructional choices she makes: authentic materials and grammar.

Authentic materials are not a category identified by Elise during interview discussions; yet, within each lesson observed, authentic materials are incorporated, such as the video of children speaking about love and the song used to introduce the future tense. Of interest, Elise's use of authentic materials is almost exclusively in the interpretive mode supporting her personal beliefs regarding language learning approaches. Conversely, the second theme, grammar, is directly identified by Elise as something she "still has to teach" despite the "conflict in [her] head (Formal Interview1, p.7-8). Accordingly, Elise's pedagogical strategies more often include addressing grammar as an isolated, direct concept rather than integrating it within a mode of communication. Though authentic materials and grammar are not one of the 5 Cs of the National World Language Standards, their incorporation into Elise's pedagogical choices represents their significance in her overall understanding of language proficiency.

Discussion of Influences of Standards

Elise's perceptions of the National World Language Standards reflect personal and policy influences on her pedagogical choices, in particular with regard to her curricular approach and instructional strategies. Within these perceptions and choices, Elise's interaction with a cultural tool, the National World Language Standards, creates actions suggesting tension, affordances and constraints, and appropriation (see Table 4.5). Wertsch (1998) explains these characteristics in his framework of mediated action:

- x   Mediated action is characterized by an irreducible tension between agent and mediational means.
- x   Mediational means constrain as well as enable action
- x   The relationship of agents toward mediational means can be characterized in terms of appropriation (p. 25).

Table 4.5. Mediated Action: Mediated Claims Resulting from Perceptions of Standards

Mediated Claims	Perceptions of Standards
Tension	x Incorporate each of the 5 Cs x Address each of the three modes of communication
Constraints	x Curriculum advancement x Listening interpretive mode x Direct Grammar instruction
Affordance	x Values goals x Framework for curriculum
Appropriation	x 5 Cs x Three modes of communication x Self-created goals and checklists

Tension and Appropriation

As Elise incorporates the National World Language Standards within her pedagogical choices, she reports tension between her perceptions and her choices. Elise understands Standards as encompassing the 5 Cs and communication as having three modes; thus, she is determined to "not move on" until each component has been incorporated into each unit she teaches. This "dynamic tension" (Wertsch, 1998, p. 27) creates units Elise perceives as drawn out, or lasting too long, despite her students demonstrated understanding of the material. In addition, Elise's incorporation of comprehensible input theory creates an emphasis of the interpretive mode of communication while presentational and interpersonal modes are given a lesser emphasis. This differential treatment of the three modes creates tension as Elise "tries to hit" each mode in her lessons. Elise's challenges within her pedagogical choices align with Wertsch's (1998) claim that irreducible tension is "a system characterized by dynamic

tension among various elements" (p. 27). However, Elise's decisions suggest a deeper understanding of Standards, a "taking something that belongs to others and making it one's own" (Wertsch, 1998, p. 53). This taking, or appropriation (Wertsch, 1998), becomes evident through Elise's usage of the 5 Cs to guide content selection and goal creation and her incorporation of the three modes as the core of instructional activities. Her self-created checklists document Elise's efforts to guide her students' language proficiency development and her appropriation of the goals of the National World Language Standards.

Constraints and Affordances

Elise's usage of the 5 Cs and three modes of communication within her pedagogical choices creates constraints and affordances similar to Wertsch's (1998) description of cultural tools "enable[ing] action" or "limit[ing] the forms of action" (p. 38-39). Overall, the influences of the National World Language Standards act as an affordance and means of empowerment (Wertsch, 1998) in Elise's decision making. She values their goals, as seen through her response to the Donnelly & Sadler (2009) study of science educators, and believes the Standards are a framework for developing curriculum and enhancing students' language achievement. However, Elise's perceptions of Standards also reflect constraints that "limit the forms of action" (Wertsch, 1998, p. 39) she takes. Elise describes her instructional pace as hindered when her students are ready to "move on" with curriculum but not all the 5 Cs have been addressed through instructional activities. In addition, Elise's use of the interpretive mode listening with her beginner classes constrains her from implementing other modes of communication such as interpersonal and presentational.

Summary of Standards

Elise identifies the National World Language Standards as the Standards supporting her pedagogical decisions. Her perceptions, regarding personal and policy influences, guide her gatekeeping to include the five national goals: community, connection, comparisons, culture, and communication and three modes of

communication: interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational. Within each goal, Elise varies her instructional activities but maintains an overall emphasis on the interpretive mode, especially for beginning level classes. Data suggest two themes within Elise's pedagogical choices: authentic materials supporting inclusion of the 5 Cs and three modes of communication and direct grammar instruction conflicting with her perception of Standards. Overall, Elise's pedagogical choices reflect actions of tension, affordances and constraints and appropriation (Wertsch, 1998) as she negotiates her interactions with the cultural tool of Standards.

Perceptions of Assessments

Elise's perceptions of assessments reflect a range of purposes influenced by personal views (Grant, 2003) of world language teaching. She identifies proficiency as well as summative and formative assessments as components of her instructional practices with proficiency assessments situated as an overarching target. Elise likens her understanding of proficiency assessments to the STAMP assessment. STAMP's on-line, adaptive design assesses a learner's skills in listening, reading, writing, and speaking through a focus on what the learner *can do* in real-world scenarios. Skills are rated numerically and aligned to ACTFL's Novice through Advanced ratings. Elise's personal views and support of the STAMP assessment influenced her to establish a system of language proficiency placement at Être High School for incoming students with second language experiences. An earned score of 2 in each of the four language skills places the student in level II of the respective language and awards high school level I transcript credit for prior middle school world language studies. Students earning a 3 or higher in all skill areas have the opportunity of advancing to level III; however, Elise shared her concerns that scores for advancement should be raised. This system, now a part of Être High School's School-Based Decision Making policy, reflects a relationship forged between Elise's personal views and her context's organizational structure which affects incoming students. Elise remains a steward of STAMP having shared at state and local conferences the procedures she went through to implement policy at her school as well as, during department discussions of STAMP, reminding colleagues (such as her department chair) of the intent and procedures supporting STAMP's implementation.

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A further example of Elise's perceptions regarding proficiency assessments is her support for state mandated language proficiency assessment of students. Elise states, "I would probably vote yes" (Formal Interview 2, p. 52) if such a measure were proposed, "I am always ready for that to come around the pike" and "I am not going to sit back and kind of relax because I'm not assessed" (Formal Interview 2, p. 52). Elise suggests that the absence of such an exam leads to teacher apathy and that, potentially, a mandated proficiency assessment could help teachers "meet the Standards…and be a lot more involved" (Formal Interview 2, p. 54). However, she acknowledges that her Spanish colleagues might hold a different viewpoint. She explains:

> It's not like Social Studies where you can be taking World History and the World History teacher teaches World History and they are assessed over it because it isn't. We build on skill. And, you know, it's kind of like reading, if a kid is in high school and they can't read, somebody dropped the ball… and it is hard to say who is responsible for that. (Formal interview 2, p. 52)

With optimism, Elise perceives issues such as teacher apathy and lack of involvement as decreasing if world language teachers were held accountable by their students' proficiency assessment ratings.

Another assessment form Elise identifies is summative assessments. Characterized as "a day in class where you don't talk to each other" (Formal Interview 2, p. 55), Elise concludes each unit with a "paper and pencil" (Formal Interview 2, p. 55) assessment composed of self-created and textbook ancillary materials focusing on grammatical structures and modes of communication. Elise's summative assessments address learning goals of which students have already demonstrated mastery; thus, her personal view of redundancy is suggested by descriptions such as "it doesn't fit in the flow" (Formal Interview 2, p. 55). Adding to this view, Elise expresses frustration regarding her ability to provide timely and meaningful feedback. She explains:

> On an essay, I will just circle and make a notation what the mistake is, not like I correct, I tell them what the problem is… but I don't give them good feedback on the test. We don't look at it we don't do class corrections. (Formal Interview 2, p. 55)

Elise's continued implementation of summative assessments, despite perceived challenges regarding feedback and not fitting "in the flow", suggest a deeper influence, one of organizational norms to include summative assessments as an instructional practice.

Unlike summative assessments, Elise's perceptions regarding formative assessments are salient, embracing, and significantly influenced by organizational influences. She characterizes formative assessments as occurring "every day" for the particular purposes of: "'A', I can check in with them [students], 'B', make sure they know what I think they know, and 'C', if they did the homework the night before" (Formal Interview 2, p. 56). In addition, Elise describes formative assessments as "collected". She explains, "People might call it summative because I collect it" but formative assessments are used as a grade in the grade book or as a determiner of proficiency achievement for a unit's Standards and assessments checklists. This perception of the role of formative assessments in pedagogical practices reflects an organizational influence originating from Elise's understanding of the requirements of Être High School's Smaller Learning Communities grant. As a result, Elise embraces and implements formative assessments in her instructional practices while devaluing the role of summative assessments.

Assessments and Pedagogical Choices

Elise's perceptions of proficiency, summative, and formative assessments reflect personal and organizational influences; yet, her gatekeeping choices (Thornton, 1991) suggest varying levels of implementation and structures of assessments within her pedagogical choices. Elise's personal views of proficiency assessments, in particular the STAMP assessment, influence her to implement STAMP as a classroom activity. Elise reports, "Every year, I have managed to get at least one free STAMP test for at least sixty of my kids…I think it is worthwhile" (Formal Interview 1, p. 10). However, the role of the STAMP test as a pedagogical choice varies due to the level of student taking the assessment. For example, with level I and II students, Elise uses STAMP as a motivator saying "You are really good at what you are doing" (Formal Interview 1, p. 11) and you should continue your language studies. As for her AP students, STAMP is a confirmation

activity, a way for Elise to say "Hey, look what you can do" (Formal Interview 1, p. 10) based on their earned scores. Overall, Elise finds it "nice" (Formal Interview 1, p. 10) to be able to look back over four years of data for her students and analyze their progress.

From her data reflection, Elise has formed a distinct perception of the value and validity of STAMP. These perceptions resemble a pros and cons listing. She states:

> What I found after four years, they [AP students] really didn't move a lot….that made me kind of look at the test. I like… that… it's grammar related and proficiency based. But, a kid in French II scoring a four on it and… kids in AP scoring a three on it…I just can't agree that's the way it is. (Formal Interview 1, p. 11)

As an explanation for the perceived incongruent scores, Elise cites low-level forgotten vocabulary. She gives as an example "the four seasons" (Formal Interview 1, p. 11) claiming her students learned those words but have not used them since "a homework assignment" in level I (Formal Interview 1, p.11) and, with STAMP being an adaptive test, a student missing low-level questions would not "get to the higher level questions that they would have done really well on" (Formal Interview 1, p. 11). Elise concludes, "It is awesome for like level I and level II… it is pretty accurate as far as that goes, but I don't think it works for the upper-level kids" (Formal Interview 1, p. 11). Although Elise administers the STAMP assessment to her students, she does not overtly align her curriculum with the released STAMP curriculum nor does she model STAMP's structure in her assessment structures. Students' STAMP scores are not shared with organizational members, such as administrators, and there is no established policy at Être High School (other than for incoming freshmen) regarding expectations of minimal student proficiency level achievement.

Elise's pedagogical choices regarding summative and formative assessments suggest influences of organizational norms (Grant, 2003). Although Elise describes summative assessments as "a day in class [that]… doesn't fit in the flow" (Formal Interview 2, p. 55), she continues to include a summative assessment at the end of each unit she teaches. For instance, during a level I class, Elise grouped students for a review game; and, as they played, she moved from group to group conducting the interpersonal component of the assessment. This included each student choosing a card with an English

question on it, and one-by-one, asking that question in French to a fellow group member. By the end, each group member had asked and answered a question in French. Each student was scored using the following rubric:

12 points Student asked question with little hesitation &/or no errors.	9 points Student asked question with hesitation & errors but NO ENGLISH.	6 points Student asked question but it made little sense and/or he/she used ENGLISH.	3 points Student's question made little to no sense and TEACHER has to restate the question.	0 points Student could not ask the question.

(Observation 2, level I, p. 12)

Following the interpersonal assessments, Elise began interpretive listening using a textbook CD. Students were assessed in multiple ways and at multiple difficulty levels: part "A" focused on recognition, part "B" sequencing, and part "C" synthesizing. The last section of the assessment included interpretive reading questions and presentational writing responses simulating an email and two person dialogue.

Overall, formative assessments reflect the most significant assessment within Elise's pedagogical choices and their role and occurrences have changed due to organizational influences resulting from the Smaller Learning Communities grant's requirements. To meet these requirements, Elise aligns her formative assessments with specific learning goals based on the National World Language Standards and the three modes of communication: interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational. Elise explains:

> I have an assessment check list that I use with every unit where all three are on there and all the assessments. I've already thought of all the assessments we are going to do; it helps me to remember. You know I get to the end of the unit and I look at the check list and I'm like we haven't done any presentational; so I cannot move on until I see them present something. That helps me. (Formal Interview 1, p. 8)

As a result, Elise's formative assessments reflect a broad range of styles and foci. For example, during a level III interpretive assessment, students listened to sentences and indicated the verb tense of the speaker. AP students engaged in a combined interpretive

reading and interpersonal assessment by reading and taking a survey on love and then sharing their results during class discussion. Level I students presented their partner to the class after having asked interpersonal questions.

Following each formative assessment, Elise implemented two instructional strategies. First, she provided immediate feedback by explaining the answers in detail using visuals such as a PowerPoint or transparency projector to increase students' understanding of her French explanations. Students were encouraged to ask questions in order to clarify answers they may have missed. The second instructional strategy, observed only during upper-level classes, allowed students the opportunity to retry their quizzes for an increased score. Elise explains this encourages students to learn from their mistakes and be rewarded for their efforts.

In addition to Elise's formative assessments, observation data suggest Elise's pedagogical choices include a multitude of formative activities providing immediate feedback of students' understanding and informing instructional pace. Examples of these activities include student use of white boards and games. Elise explains she "frequently" uses white boards in lower level classes to "make sure they know what I think they know" (Formal Interview 2, p. 56); however, for AP students, Elise states, "They are kind of beyond that. They can just tell me; there are fourteen of them in there" (Formal Interview 2, p. 56). An example of a white board activity during a level I class included students writing the correct preposition, "au, à la, aux", in relation to the picture of a place being shown on a PowerPoint slide. Students then held up their answers and Elise systematically pointed to each board indicating "oui" or "non". This activity occurred for several slides as preparation for the next activity.

As for games, Elise has a large repertoire designed for whole-class, partner, or group play. One observed whole-class game was memory. Every student stood up while holding a memory card. Two players called on students' asking if they had a needed word. If a match of French and English was made, the two students holding the cards sat down. A group game was titled vocabulary squares. Focusing on recognition of certain grammatical aspects, students worked with group members to match vocabulary squares in a domino-like, square-shaped fashion. Students made matches by connecting questions to plausible answers; this action required them to demonstrate understanding of question

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words. The goal of each of Elise's games varied but included interpretive and interpersonal communication while incorporating certain topics of vocabulary.

Throughout discussions of formative assessments, Elise does not refer to her instructional activities as formative; this offers an interesting insight into her perceptions of assessments. During formative activities, such as white boards or games, Elise's instructional pace is guided by her students' responses and she makes no observed effort to document students' achievement. This suggests that Elise's characterization of formative assessments as being "collected" guides her perceptions and that organizational influences, such as norms created by the requirements of the Smaller Learning Communities grant, or personal influences, such as personal beliefs of world language assessment practices, support or influence this perception. In other words, Elise's understanding of formative assessments includes a collected assessment aligned to a particular learning goal used as a grade (in the grade book) or demonstrator (on her standards' checklists).

Discussion of Influences of Assessments

Elise's pedagogical choices regarding assessments reflect personal and organizational influences (Grant, 2003) that result in formative assessments as the salient assessment form. Implementation of formative assessments situates Elise as an agent interacting with the cultural tool of assessments. Her actions reflect characteristics of change, mastery, constraints and affordances, multiple goals, and power and authority (see Table 4.6) and are described in Wertsch's (1998) claims of mediated action as:

- x Mediational means are material
- x The relationship of agents toward mediational means can be characterized in terms of mastery
- x Mediational means constrain as well as enable action
- x Mediated action typically has simultaneous goals
- x Mediational means are associated with power and authority. (Wertsch, 1998, p. 25)

Table 4.6. Mediated Action: Mediated Claims Resulting from Perceptions of
Assessments

Mediated Claims	Perceptions of Assessments
Changes in Pedagogical Choices	x Increased formative assessments x Change in role
Mastery and Range of Mediational Means	x Variety of assessments -Foci -Mode of communication

Constraints & Affordances Generated by Pedagogical Choices
    Constraints
 	
    Affordances
	x Increased quantities of formative assessments
	
	x Inform teaching
	x Determine students' attainment of language proficiency goals

Multiple Goals of Mediated Actions	x Address goals of: -meeting grant's requirements and - language proficiency skill or - grade for grade book
Power & Authority in Gatekeeping	x Control of how formative assessment is used x Control of students' proficiency checklists

Changes and Mastery of Pedagogical Choices and Mediational Means

Elise's perception of herself as teacher reflects a journey of change. She feels
sorry for prior students who experienced her "learning curve" as she functioned in
"survival mode" and made instructional choices exhibiting a "lack of purpose". Now,
Elise perceives her instructional choices as changed and improved. She has a sense of
purpose in her choices and daily assessments aligned to learning goals support her
understanding of students' mastery of goals. Such pedagogical direction is a combination
of organizational influences, or norms, established at Être High School through the
Smaller Learning Communities grant and the "materiality of mediational means"
(Wertsch, 1998, p. 30), or assessments, Elise chooses to use as a vehicle of change. Her

constant engagement with these assessments, and in particular formative assessments, fosters a "development of particular skills" (Wertsch, 1998, p. 46) such as mastery of a wide range of formative assessments structures linked to specific learning goals and modes of communication. For example, level I students experience an interpretive listening assessment of Elise describing geographical components while AP students' listen to a You-tube video of students discussing love. Elise's skill-level regarding development of formative assessments suggests an internalization of mastery (Wertsch, 1998), or "'knowing how' (Ryle, 1949) to use a mediational means with facility" (p. 50), resulting from her progression of change influenced by organizational expectations.

Constraints and Affordances, Power and Authority, and Multiple Goals of Mediated Action

By incorporating formative assessments into her instructional practices, Elise creates layers of intentions and effects. For example, the incorporation of daily formative assessments "empower[s]" (Wertsch, 1998, p. 38) her to inform instruction, focus on targeted learning goals, and document students' language proficiency skills. The manner in which Elise uses the results of the formative assessments, either for a grade or as a language proficiency skill determiner, appear interchangeable and Elise maintains control, or power, over this decision. These actions address multiple goals; however, satisfying organizational norms appears the most pronounced. The act of addressing multiple goals carries a caveat, "these… goals… are often in conflict" (Wertsch, 1998, p. 32). However, for Elise, there is no suggested conflict regarding her implementation of formative assessments. Each formative assessment focuses on a singular language proficiency goal, such as interpretive listening, and Elise uses the students' scores to determine mastery of a language proficiency goal or as a grade for her grade book.

However, Elise's decisions to address simultaneous goals interlaced with her personal view that formative assessments should be collected create a constraint on her ability to effectively carry out her pedagogical intentions. As Elise collects daily assessments from each student, her time becomes constrained and her ability to grade in a "timely manner" results in a back-log of ungraded assessments. AP essays remain

stacked on her desk and Elise expresses frustration over when to grade them. Despite these constraints, she expresses satisfaction with the decisions and actions she has made. Wertsch (1998) explains such a seemingly contradictory sentiment when he explains that, "It is usually only with the appearance of new, further empowering (and constraining) forms of mediation that we recognize the limitations of earlier ones" (p. 40). Thus, Elise's prior actions suggest she was limited in her ability to determine students' understanding of targeted language proficiency skills, the changes she has made, although time consuming, provide her the best alternative to meet multiple goals and assess her students' language skills.

Summary

Elise's pedagogical choices regarding assessments vary according to the style of assessment and the category of influence. The proficiency assessment STAMP, incorporated as a placement assessment at the school level under Elise's guidance, is also a yearly instructional activity in Elise's classes. Of interest, data suggest no explicit policy influences on Elise's pedagogical choices resulting from the STAMP assessment. Elise continues to incorporate summative assessments at the end of each unit despite an explanation of them as being "paper and pencil" and a "day that just doesn't flow". This decision suggests influences of organizational norms that expect teachers' use of summative assessments. Contrastingly, Elise's use of formative assessments to address organizational norms reflects a significant change in her pedagogical choices. Her actions and pedagogical choices suggest multiple characteristics and claims of mediated action such as: change, mastery, constraints and affordances, multiple goals, and power and authority.

Conclusions

Elise's perceptions of context, standards, and assessments suggest a depth within her understandings guided by an overarching influence of context. This influence reflects the environment in which she teaches, such as her school, her students, and available instructional materials, but more significantly, organizational norms resulting from

perceived expectations of her school's Smaller Learning Communities grant. Regarding standards, Elise values the National World Language Standards, its goals the 5 Cs, and the three modes of communication. Her perceptions of assessments include three categories: proficiency, summative, and formative. Proficiency assessments are likened to the STAMP assessment, summative assessments are "pen and pencil", and formative assessments are "daily", "collected", and aligned to Standards.

Elise's perceptions reflect an interesting distribution of emphasis amongst personal, organizational, and policy influences. Personal influences, the most balanced of the three, includes beliefs and experiences guiding most significantly her perceptions of assessments, followed by contexts, and then standards. Conversely, organizational influences predominately focus on Elise's perceptions of context through sub-categories such as: norms, structures, and relationships. Assessments were also influenced by organizational perceptions; yet, data suggest context as an influencing factor for this association due to the requirements of the Smaller Learning Communities grant. Of interest, Elise's perceived value of standards and her implementation of them as a guide for pedagogical choices were not influenced by organizational norms and structures. Although this finding seems contradictory to Elise's description of the Smaller Learning Communities grant's requirement of aligning Standards and formative assessments, it supports her claim of having embraced the National World Language Standards since her first year of teaching and already doing what is expected by the grant. Finally, influences regarding policy, although limited, guide perceptions of Standards and context and, more significantly, Elise's gatekeeping choices (Thornton, 1991). Instructional materials, such as textbooks, guide Elise's curricular decisions and the 5 Cs of the National World Language Standards guide her choices of instructional activities.

By situating Elise's gatekeeping choices (Thornton, 1991) within a sociocultural perspective, her actions as agent interacting with cultural tools of context, standards, and assessments can be understood through the framework of mediated actions (Wertsch, 1998). Overall, Elise's actions generate seven characteristics reflective of mediated action with constraints and affordances being the most substantive claim. The pedagogical choices relating to all three cultural tools generated actions limiting Elise's instructional practices, such as timely feedback to students due to the quantities of assessments or easy

adherence to comprehensible input theory, while concurrently enabling Elise to achieve specific pedagogical goals, such as checking students' language proficiency levels or following a developed curriculum.

Other areas of mediated action generating multiple forms of pedagogical choices are tension, multiple goals, and appropriation. Elise generates tension through her choices regarding standards and context. Her focus on the National World Language goals and modes of communication and requirements of the Smaller Learning Communities grant create tension through changes she makes resulting from interaction of cultural tools. These changes suggest her appropriation of the Standards and the grant's requirements through acts such as language proficiency goal checklists. Elise infers the intent of the Standards and grant making them her "own" (Wertsch, 1998). By doing so, Elise's actions address multiple goals. Her checklists meet the expectations of the grant allowing for alignment of Standards and assessments while simultaneously monitoring students' language proficiency skills.

Finally, the mediated actions of change, mastery, and power and authority reflect a singular pedagogical choice within their descriptions. Elise's interactions with mediational means create changes as suggested through her increased quantities of formative assessments and reflects a large repertoire of assessment formats and foci suggesting mastery of this particular instructional strategy. Lastly, Elise's control of which formative assessments assess language proficiency skills and which reflect grades in her grade book suggests power.

Of interest, three claims of mediated action were not suggested through data analysis. They are:

- x Mediated action is situated on one or more developmental paths.
- x New mediational means transform mediated action.
- x Mediational means are often produced for reasons other than to facilitate mediated action. (Wertsch, 1998, p. 25)

A commonality among these claims is a sense of newness, or non-mastery of cultural tools. For Elise, her interactions with cultural tools of context, Standards, and assessments have not, at the time of the study, undergone recent change. For example, no

"new mediational means" "produced for reasons other than to facilitate mediated action" (Wertsch, 1998, p. 25) have occurred. A deeper look within each cultural tool suggests reasons as to why. Elise's perception of her context, influenced by expectations of the Smaller Learning Communities grant, has remained relatively unchanged since the grant's implementation several years ago; thus, her actions regarding the approach towards assessment have remained the same. Likewise, Elise's understanding of standards, based on the National World Language Standards, has remained unchanged due to, at the time of the study, no changes in the national Standards. Elise's response to a new cultural tool, the Kentucky World Language Standard, suggested limited interest and no intentions to transform her pedagogical choices, or actions. Overall, Elise's pedagogical choices are seasoned and refined to reflect her perceptions of her context, Standards, and assessments (see Table 4.7 for an overview of conclusions).

Table 4.7. Categories of Influences: Relation to Pedagogical Choices and Mediated Action

Claims of Mediated Action	Descriptions of Pedagogical Choices	Categories of Influences
Tension	Standards x Incorporation of 5 Cs x Address each mode of communication Context x Requirements of SLC grant x Curriculum guided by textbooks	Policy Organizational Policy
Changes	Formative assessments x Increased quantities x Role	Organizational
Simultaneous goals	Formative assessments x Meets SLC requirements and language proficiency skills' checklist Context x Instructional materials	Organizational

Table 4.7. (cont.)

	x Materials align curriculum and increase students' language proficiency x Checklists document alignment of assessments and Standards and tracks students' skills	Organizational
Constraints (-) and Affordances (+)	Formative assessments x -Increased quantities x +Inform teaching x +Students attainment of language proficiency goals Standards x -Curriculum advancement x -Listening interpretive mode x -Direct grammar instruction x +Values goals x +Framework for curriculum Context x -Comprehensible input vs. textbook curriculum x -Increased collection of student work leads to increased grading x +Framework for curriculum x +Check of students' language proficiency skills meets grant's Requirements	Organizational Personal Personal Policy Organizational
Mastery	Formative Assessment x Variety	Organizational

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Table 4. 7. (cont.)

Appropriation	Standards	Policy
	x 5 Cs x 3 modes of communication x Self-created goals and checklists Context x SLC grant's requirements x Textbook materials	 Organizational Policy
Power and Authority	Formative assessment x Control of how assessments are used x Control of students' proficiency checklists	Organizational

Note. SLC= Smaller Learning Communities; - = constraints; + = affordances

The following chapter discusses conclusions, implications and limitations of this study. In addition, suggestions for future research are shared with the goal of informing existing literature regarding world language educators' perceptions of language proficiency, context, standards and assessments, and understanding the influences on world language educators' pedagogical choices.

Chapter Five: Conclusions and Recommendations

In Kentucky, recent state-wide world language initiatives have resulted in the inclusion of language proficiency as a pre-college entrance requirement, a mandatory world language program review as part of schools' accountability indexes, and a World Language Standard aligned with the National World Language Standards. These changes suggest an interesting context for research exploring the perceptions of world language educators. This case study sought to understand one world language educator's perceptions of language proficiency, teaching context, standards, and assessments and the influences these perceptions have on her pedagogical choices.

The following research questions organized this study and form the basis of the conclusions that follow (see chapters 3 and 4 for method description and data analysis):

1. What perceptions does a Kentucky world language educator bring to teaching with regard to language proficiency?
    1.1 How does this world language educator define language proficiency?
    1.2 How does this world language educator describe language proficiency in the context of her school and community?
2. How do perceptions of context, standards, and assessments influence the Kentucky world language educator's pedagogical choices?
    2.1 How does this world language educator describe the context in which she practices?
    2.2 How does this world language educator describe the influence of the context in which she practices on pedagogical choices?
    2.3 How does this world language educator describe the influence of state and National World Language Standards on pedagogical choices?
    2.4 How does this world language educator describe the influence of student assessments on pedagogical choices?

Conclusions

1. A world language educator's perceptions of language proficiency reflect characteristics of communicative competence theory (Usó-Juan & Martinez-Flor, 2006).

Elise's understanding of language proficiency reflects three of the five competencies stated in Usó-Juan and Martinez-Flor's (2006) communicative competence theory: discourse, linguistic, and pragmatic. Most significantly, discourse competence is addressed in Elise's definition and discussions of language proficiency during interviews and her incorporation of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills within her pedagogical choices during observations. Elise's attention towards grammatical structures, phonology, and vocabulary building (see Chapter 4) suggests an understanding of linguistic competence (knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, and phonology). Elise's incorporation of real-world scenarios (i.e. match.com interaction) for language usage reflects pragmatic competence (knowledge needed to carry out a language function). Although Elise displayed awareness of strategic competence (strategies for communication) during interviews, she did not incorporate any such strategies within her instructional activities while being observed. Likewise, Elise demonstrated awareness of intercultural competence (role of sociocultural context on language production) during interviews, but explained she does not emphasize culture in the instructional practices.

Much like other educators, Elise incorporates cultural artifacts (i.e. tarot cards, songs); however, she does not address the interculturality of language learning. Addressing cultural products, practices, and perspectives allows learners to situate and understand a cultural topic (e.g., music) through a comparative lens of the target culture to their own. Thus, the complex relation of a language to its culture is emphasized. The findings that Elise does not address *interculturality* within her pedagogical choices supports Uso-Juan and Martinez-Flor's claims that intercultural competence is the "approach less taken in the language class" (2008, p. 162). In Kentucky, recent revisions to the state World Language Standard focused on the inclusion of intercultural competence at the Novice, Intermediate, and Advanced levels. The Standard further delineates learners' interculturality through the investigation of cultural products and practices, the understanding of cultural perspectives, and the participation in cultural

interaction (Kentucky Department of Education, 2013). The new emphases in the standards provide a vehicle for educators, like Elise to helping students build intercultural competence.

Elise's understanding of language proficiency, however, includes characteristics that expand past the boundaries of communicative competence including modes of communication, level of correctness, and real world. The modes of communication (interpretive, presentational and interpersonal) reflect the National World Language Standards and guide Elise's instructional practices. Her apparent embracement of the comprehensible input theory of language learning creates an emphasis on the interpretive mode of communication with a goal of increasing her students' interlanguage (Corder, 1967; Selinker, 1972), language produced by the learner. As a result, her instructional strategies predominately reflect listening and reading skills. Elise's expectations regarding students' language correctness are suggestive of her language proficiency definition, "being able to communicate". Her expectations do not include flawless language production, as evidenced by her assessment rubrics; rather, she expects enough linguistical knowledge to maintain communication. This expectation creates a "conflict" for Elise as she continues to incorporate direct grammar instruction into her lessons. She states, "You still have to teach them [students] grammar". Finally, Elise uses "real-world' scenarios in her instructional practices to provide structure to in-class and out-of-class instructional activities as well as a purpose or goal for students' language usage. Real-world scenarios vary and include students' creating and asking survey questions, telling each others' futures, and communicating with pen pals in France.

2. A world language educator describes her teaching context beginning with town, then school, and finally students.

A constructivist view emphasizes the emic, participant's understanding of the complex world he/she experiences (Creswell, 2003, Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Schwandt, 1998). In this case, Elise begins her description of teaching context with the community. Having grown up in Emerald Town, her description reflects her personal beliefs about her school's community and student population, with particular emphasis on SES. Her description of the school includes the student population, the Smaller Learning

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Communities grant received to increase national test scores, and the world language department. Elise's description of her students includes interactions and needs as well as their role as teaching assistants. Elise's inclusion of students within her description of context is in line with Graden's (1996) research of world language educators' beliefs regarding reading instruction. Graden suggests participants' perceptions of context include students. Overall, Elise's perceptions of context suggest an encompassing view extending outside her classroom to include the school and the community. However, organizational norms, in particular the perceived requirements of the Smaller Learning Communities grant, play a significant role in Elise's interpretations of context such that students become secondary. For example, during interviews, Elise described pedagogical changes she made (e.g., daily formative assessments aligned to learning goals); however, she attributed these changes to meeting the requirements in the grant, not the needs of her students. In addition, the Professional Learning Communities, intended to enhance student learning, are described by Elise as an opportunity to meet "with herself", or at times the part-time French educator, and fulfill a requirement expected of her administration. At a time in which student-centered schools are the focus, external forces (such as the Smaller Learning Communities grant) distract educators from the intended focus of students.

3. A world language educator's perceptions of the influence of her teaching context on her pedagogical choices reflect organizational, policy, and personal influences (Grant, 2003).

Elise's perceptions of context influence her gatekeeping choices (Thornton, 1991) regarding the experiences her students have and the subject matter she addresses. The most significant of these is the organizational influence of the Smaller Learning Communities grant and the perceived requirements Elise incorporates into her instructional practices. For instance, to meet the grant's expectations of aligning assessments to standards, Elise creates a system of accountability to track her students' language proficiency skills. This includes alignment of all assessments to specific learning goals and modes of communication (interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational) and monitoring students' achievement of these goals.

Another influence on Elise's pedagogical choices is a policy influence, textbooks. Elise follows the suggested curriculum of the text series for each level of French she teaches and incorporates ancillary materials, such as listening activities or testing structures, into her instructional practices. Finally, Elise's beliefs regarding instructional approaches suggest a personal influence on the pedagogical choices she makes. She embraces one theory, comprehensible input, and, as a result, strives to carry out instruction 100% in the target language and at a level +*1*, just above the students' current proficiency levels. She anticipates an increase in students' affective filters resulting from this teaching approach and incorporates multiple strategies to check her students' comprehension through her lessons.

4. The participant values National World Language Standards and attributes that valuing to specific experiences that influenced her understanding of them.

In Donnelly and Sadler's (2009) study of science educators' usage of National Science Standards, half the participants reported incorporating the Standards during their pedagogical decision making while half did not. Donnelly and Sadler argue that negative perspectives and lack of testing, or accountability, attributed to educators' non-usage of the standards. Elise's response to these findings suggests another interpretation; participants claiming non-usage might have the Science Standards "ingrained" in their decision-making processes, therefore citing non-usage due to a lack of overt referencing during lesson planning. Reflecting on her own knowledge of the National World Language Standards, Elise explains, "I don't have to sit there and think about what the Standards are because they are so ingrained with what I do". Elise attributes her deep understanding and assimilation of the Standards to her first year Kentucky Teacher Internship Program (KTIP) experience. The National World Language Standards had just been released and Elise was required, by KTIP, to design lessons aligned to standards.

Of interest, Elise does not identify the requirements of her school's grant as enhancing her understanding of the National Standards. Rather, she attributes the grant as having guided her creation of learning goals, based on the National Standards' 5 Cs (communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities) and three modes

of communication (interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational), which are aligned to daily assessments. These self-created learning goals are similar to the learning targets of the Kentucky World Language Standard resulting in Elise's unintentional incorporation of the state Standard.

5. The National World Language Standards influence the participant's pedagogical choices.

Elise identifies the National World Language Standards as a significant influence on the pedagogical choices she makes. Within this influence of policy, Elise espouses the three modes of communication identified as a guide for her students' language experiences. In addition, Elise incorporates the 5 Cs as a guide for her instructional practices, stating she "will not move on" to a new unit until each goal has been addressed. The *Decade of Foreign Language Standards* (Phillips & Abbott, 2011) report identifies world language educators as focusing almost exclusively on the goal of communication followed by the goal of culture. Although Elise focuses on communication in her pedagogical choices, she intentionally incorporates the other four goals throughout her lessons.

Within Elise's incorporation of the National World Language Standards, three themes support what and how Elise teaches: use of target language, authentic materials and direct grammar instruction. Overall, Elise conducts 100% of her instruction in French. This supports her language learning theory of comprehensible input and is in line with Woods' (1999) findings that standards influence educators' pedagogical choices. Although authentic materials are not listed in the 5Cs, their importance is suggested in the sample progress indicators listed in the National World Language Standards and Elise uses them throughout her lessons. Finally, Elise's choice to directly teach grammar is not supported by the standards. Elise describes this as a "conflict in my head", suggesting a tension between her support of the standards and her pedagogical actions.

6. The participant incorporates various forms of assessments reflecting multiple instructional strategies.

Elise identifies three categories of assessments: proficiency, summative, and formative. Interview and observation data suggest that Elise's personal beliefs and organizational norms (Grant, 2003) influence variations in goals and implementation of each assessment form. Regarding proficiency assessments, it is important to note here Elise's influence on school policy at Être High School. Elise guided policy that provided incoming freshmen the opportunity to take the Standards-Based Measurement of Proficiency (STAMP) assessment for language placement and earn credit for language taken in middle school. In addition, she supports the idea of state-mandated student language proficiency testing. Elise's pedagogical choices include yearly proficiency assessment of her students with the STAMP assessment to motivate and acknowledge language proficiency progression. Despite her beliefs and choices regarding proficiency assessments and STAMP, Elise claims and exhibits no *washback*, or "impact of tests on instruction" (Bachman, 2005, p.5), in her instructional activities. Data suggest two explanations for the lack of washback: policy and organizational influences. First, Elise chooses to align her curriculum with her chosen textbook series, and her instructional activities are designed to address the 5Cs of the National Standards. Although Elise demonstrates knowledge of STAMP features that challenge her students, such as forgotten vocabulary by upper level students, Elise does not choose to readdress these skills with her students, exemplifying a lack of washback. Second, Elise's assessment designs are linked to daily goals reflecting the National World Language Standards as required of her by administration supporting the expectations of the Smaller Learning Communities grant at her school. The policy and organizational influences are significant enough that STAMP, though incorporated as an instructional strategy, has no affect on the pedagogical choices Elise makes.

Elise's descriptions of summative assessments encompass terms such as "pencil and paper" and "it doesn't fit in the flow". Her continued use of summative assessments, despite her negative perceptions, reflects the influence of organizational norms at Être High School and her personal belief that summative assessments are an expected norm (Grant, 2003). Regarding formative assessments, Elise uses descriptions such as "collected" and given "daily" while excluding in-class, uncollected instructional activities, such as student white-board usage or comprehension checks. Elise incorporates

formative assessments at various points throughout her instructional activities and aligns each to a specific, targeted National World language standard. For Elise, this reflects the significance of formative assessments as a pedagogical strategy employed to identify students' language proficiency skills.

7. The influences of context, standards, and assessments on the world language educator's pedagogical choices reflect multiple characteristics of mediated action (Wertsch, 1998).

Research focusing on understanding world language educators' pedagogical choices is sparse. Elise's interaction with cultural tools, such as her teaching context, World Language Standards, and assessments, suggests five salient actions that align with Wertsch's (1998) claims of mediated action. First, Elise exhibits "dynamic tension" (Wertsch, 1998, p. 27) as she interacts with the requirements of her school's Smaller Learning Communities grant, her textbooks, and the National World Language Standards. The pedagogical choices Elise makes reflect her understanding of the expectations of the grant and her teaching of French; thus, she aligns her assessments to the standards and creates a system of accountability as per the students' language proficiency skills. Elise's interaction with textbooks reflects a vertically aligned curriculum guided by the textbooks, and her understanding of the standards guides her to "not move on" until each of the 5Cs has been addressed in each unit she teaches.

These actions suggest further evidence of mediated action: appropriation and mastery. Elise appropriates, or makes her own, the cultural tools of Smaller Learning Communities grant, textbooks, and National World Language Standards. For example, Elise's understanding of the grant includes alignment of standards and assessments and knowing if her students achieved the stated learning goals. This understanding results in pedagogical actions such as assessing daily, tracking students' mastery of goals, re-teaching students not demonstrating mastery, and reassessing those students with a new assessment. Regarding textbooks, Elise employs the texts' suggested curriculum and reworks activities such that the interpretive listening mode of communication becomes the focus. By doing so, the appearance of using textbooks diminishes. Finally, the National World Language Standards provide overarching guidance to the pedagogical

choices Elise makes. Elise's actions suggest appropriation through her creation of "I can" statements, or learning goals, aligned to her curriculum, the modes of communication, and the 5Cs of the Standards. Likewise, Elise's actions reflect mastery with regard to her use of formative assessments. She incorporates various forms of formative assessments, including presenting a partner, listening and identifying verb tenses, and answering a survey, all of which align with her standards and learning goals.

Overall, the pedagogical choices Elise makes reflect a fourth claim of mediated action: simultaneous goals. Elise's actions regarding the Smaller Learning Communities grant and gatekeeping decisions (Thornton, 1991) reflect multiple choices in which one action serves multiple purposes. For example, Elise's use of formative assessments serves four purposes: assigning a grade, providing evidence of mastery of a particular skill, informing her instruction, and meeting the requirements of her school's grant.

The fifth claim of mediated action suggested in Elise's pedagogical choices relates to affordances and constraints. Elise's choices provide her a means to meet specific needs, which create restraints on her actions. Within her context, Elise chooses to use textbooks to guide her curriculum; however, these texts are not aligned with Elise's preferred instructional approach, comprehensible input theory, creating a constraint she must address. Elise's creation of a student language proficiency checklist system affords her the means to meet a requirement of the Smaller Learning Communities grant. However, this action constrains her due to the quantity of assessments she uses with her students and the time it takes to grade each assessment and mark their achievement regarding a particular language proficiency skill. Data indicate that lack of "detailed" feedback concerns Elise as she considers her students and their overall language proficiency growth. Finally, Elise's choice to embrace the National World Language Standards affords her a framework for designing each unit she teaches. However, the need to address each of the 5 Cs creates constraints on the pace of the unit due to the large nature of each of the national goals.

Implications

This case study focused on understanding a world language educator's perceptions and pedagogical choices regarding language proficiency, context, standards,

and assessments. Findings add support to Grant's (2003) categorization of influences on teachers' decision-making (personal, organizational, and policy) and Wertsch's (1998) framework of mediated action for situating pedagogical choices. In addition, the influence of the National World Language Standards on the case participant's gatekeeping choices (Thornton, 1991) supports the findings of Wood (1999) and the *Decade of Foreign Language Standards* (Phillips & Abbott, 2011) report regarding the impact of standards on teachers' practices. Based on my findings, I have developed recommendations for world language educator professional development. The overarching focus is to increase awareness of instructional strategies that support language proficiency beliefs and address personal, organizational, and policy influences regarding context, world language standards, and assessments.

1. **Professional Development for world language educators should be designed to address the competences of language proficiency and the components supporting language proficiency beliefs.**

Usó-Juan and Martinez-Flor's (2006) communicative competence theory suggests a framework of five competences: discourse, linguistic, pragmatic, intercultural, and strategic. However, findings from this study illustrate that not all competencies are addressed, since in this case, only three were noted: discourse, linguistic, and pragmatic competences. Professional development aimed at all five competences, with emphasis on strategic and intercultural, might strengthen teaching practice. This approach might deepen understanding of communication and enhance educators' foci regarding instructional strategies. Additionally, components supporting language proficiency beliefs, such as Elise's modes of communication, level of correctness, and real world focus, are areas of professional development that, when emphasized, may greatly benefit world language educators. Elise's report of "conflict in [her] head" over her continued direct grammar instruction illustrates a need she has for such focused professional development training.

2. **Professional development focusing on educators' abilities to negotiate perceptions of contextual influences and their pedagogical choices should**

be offered.

The constructivist design of this study emphasizes the emic, or participant's view (Creswell, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Schwandt, 1998), allowing for knowledge and truth to be created by the participant. It is Elise's perception of her context that is of interest, not "the direct transmission of knowledge" (Grant, 2003, p. 83). Her pedagogical choices, such as connecting standards to assessments and incorporating techniques to lower students' affective filters, are a direct result of her interpretation of her context and the negotiation of these perceptions with her beliefs regarding language proficiency. World language educators might benefit from opportunities to practice such negotiation of contextual influences, personal beliefs and pedagogical decisions to enhance students' language learning through activities such as simulations or role-playing. These opportunities might also incorporate a system of self-monitoring that enables educators to balance influences, in particular organizational, in such a way that their focus can remain on the students.

3. Professional development for world language educators focusing on appropriation of National World Language Standards should be offered.

The National World Language Standards emphasize the experiences of language learning for students (Glisan, 1996) and the importance of educators as gatekeepers of curriculum (Thornton, 1991). In order for language educators to achieve this goal, they must develop a deep, ingrained understanding of standards and "shape… in ways appropriate to [their] mandates and directions" (National Standards in Foreign Language Project, 1996, p. 8) their language goals. This ability suggests professional development focusing on appropriation of the National World language Standards, or making them one's own. Such appropriation should include the 5 Cs and the three modes of communication as well as the creation of instructional activities supporting self-created learning goals reflective of each educator's unique contexts.

4. Professional development focusing on the effects and goals of assessments should be offered to world language educators.

Abrams, Pedulla, and Madaus (2003) suggest high-stakes mandated testing affects teachers' pedagogical choices in ways that often contradict educators' beliefs regarding curriculum and instructional practices. Likewise, Firestone, Schorr, and Monfils (2004) suggest teachers experience increased pressure and a reliance on "conventional teaching practices" (p.377). For world language educators in Kentucky, world language testing is not mandated. However, recent changes at two post-secondary institutions reflect a movement that may impact expectations at the secondary level, creating positive or negative washback. The more exposure to and awareness of policy influences regarding proficiency testing, the more prepared world language educators will be during pedagogical decision making. Thus, decisions supporting their beliefs regarding language proficiency, language learning, and effective teaching practices can be made.

Adair-Hauck, Glisan, Koda, Swender, and Sandrock (2006) suggest "closer connection between instruction and assessment" (p. 359) as a priority for world language educators. This study's findings illustrate such a connection through the participant's alignment of all formative assessments to the National World Language Standards' goals. These pedagogical choices reflect organizational influences of the participant's context and a goal of measuring students' mastery of language proficiency skills. To address Adair-Hauck et al.'s (2006) call for connection, professional development opportunities might better be offered to world language educators focusing on alignment of summative and formative assessments with instructional practices to enhance students' language proficiency.

Limitations of the Study

As with any research, this study has limitations. First, the design was a single case study providing deep understanding of the participant's perceptions of language proficiency and pedagogical influences. The intent was not generalizibility; rather, it was to provide insight into the field of world languages where research is lacking. Similarly so, the setting of this study was Kentucky. State and university initiatives have created a unique context for Kentucky world language educators that allowed for rich data for understanding one particular educator's perceptions. Finally, this qualitative study embraces the emic account; however, my own beliefs and perceptions based on training

and twenty-two years of teaching experience as a world language educator create a lens through which the data collection and interpretation filtered. These beliefs include that there is no one best approach to learning a language and that the classroom is a dynamic context influenced by the educator's pedagogical choices and the learners' reactions to these choices. Triangulation of data and member-checking increase validity and decrease the influence of possible researcher bias.

Future Research

Within the field of second language acquisition, the sub-field of language pedagogy (Ellis, 2012) continues to grow. However, literature focusing on language teaching is lacking with regard to beliefs, influences, and choices of world language educators. The importance of understanding teacher beliefs and perceptions to initiate curricular and instructional changes (Clark and Peterson, 1986, Glisan, 1996) cannot be overlooked, and the following suggestions for future research address such needs.

1. **Researchers should conduct additional qualitative research focusing on world language educators' perceptions and beliefs of language proficiency and the components that support those beliefs.**

My findings situate one world language educator's understanding of language proficiency in Kentucky, a state experiencing changes in world language policies at the state and university levels. Additional studies incorporating larger groupings of world language educators and other learning contexts throughout the United States would provide a broader understanding of language educators' perceptions of language proficiency and the pedagogical components supporting those beliefs. Also, it would add to the existing literature regarding the use (or lack thereof) of intercultural competence as part of the second language curriculum. Such knowledge would be useful in helping those who are charged with implementing change examine how intercultural competence enhances student learning.

2. **Researchers should conduct studies that examine participants' perceptions of instructional contexts and the influences those perceptions have on pedagogical choices.**

Elise's perceptions relating to context significantly influenced her pedagogical choices. Gatekeeping choices, such as curriculum and instructional practices, are reflective of the requirements of her school's grant and Elise's usage of textbook materials. Studies focusing on various groupings of educators and the influences their contexts have on their pedagogical content knowledge, such as Watzke's (2007) look at beginning world language educators, are informative. However, there is a lack of focus regarding in-service, experienced world language educators. Studies focusing on various groupings of world language educators, such as at the same school, district, or state, would continue to provide insight into language educators' perceptions of context, the negotiation of contextual demands, and the resulting instructional choices they make.

3. Researchers should conduct studies focusing on world language educators' appropriation of the National World Language Standards.

Research focusing on world language educators' incorporation of the National World Language Standards (Donnelly & Sadler, 2009; Phillips & Abbott, 2011; Shrum & Glisan, 2009) provides insight regarding the influences of standards on educators' pedagogical choices. However, research focusing on the relationship between language educators and the National World Language Standards is lacking. My findings suggest the participant appropriates (Wertsch, 1998) the standards. This action creates interesting questions as to the affect of appropriation on educators' pedagogical choices.

4. Researchers should conduct studies of world language educators who implement proficiency assessments to understand influences of washback on pedagogical choices.

Existing research regarding mandated-testing and washback suggest positive and negative influences on educators' pedagogical choices (Abrams, Pedulla, & Madaus, 2003). However, my findings suggest no evidence of washback on the participant's pedagogical choices. Research focusing on world language educators who choose to implement a form of stakes-testing, such as the proficiency assessment STAMP, is lacking in the literature. Understanding the influences of proficiency assessments on

gatekeeping choices (Thornton, 1991) would inform interested groups, such as professional development providers, affects of washback.

      5. Researchers should conduct further studies incorporating a sociocultural framework to build a deeper understanding of the pedagogical choices world language educators are making.

Sociocultural theory provides a framework for viewing the interactions of educators with their context (Gánem-Gutiérrez, 2013; Lantolf & Beckett, 2009). For world language educators, this context reflects change. At the national level, multiple proficiency-based assessments and revised National Standards incorporating interculturality and "I can" statements are creating new cultural tools (Wertsch, 1998) with which educators can choose to interact and to inform pedagogical choices. At the state level, contexts vary. This study focused on Kentucky, a state with significant changes including standards, college entrance requirements, and mandatory Program Reviews. By implementing a sociocultural framework, such as Wertsch's mediated action (1998), these changes are placed at the forefront and the interaction of the educator with them becomes the focus.

Summary

World language educators find themselves in a time of change and evolving cultural tools (Wertsch, 1998). The 2012 release of the revised *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines*, the increase in readily available language proficiency assessments, and the changes in university entrance requirements create a context in which understanding educators' pedagogical choices needed to develop professional development activities that address such changes. Yet, it is not entirely clear what influences are guiding world language educators' pedagogical choices and what perceptions do educators have of language proficiency?

This study embraced a sociocultural approach, mediated action (Wertsch, 1998), to understand the case participant's mediation of three cultural tools: context, standards, and assessments. The overarching influence on the participant's pedagogical choices was her context, Être High School. In particular, the organizational expectations of a school-

wide grant created a dynamic tension in which the participant negotiated meaning and used the cultural tools of standards and assessments to meet the grant's requirements. This mediated action resulted in the participant appropriating National World Language Standards and mastering use of formative assessments to check language learners' achievement of language proficiency goals. In addition, the participant's understanding of language proficiency reflected three areas of competence: discourse, linguistic, and pragmatic.

My findings suggest areas of professional development to enhance world language educators' pedagogical choices. World language educators need opportunities to practice making pedagogical choices that reflect negotiation between contextual demands, such as mandated requirements, and their beliefs regarding language learning and language instructional practices. In addition, professional development is needed that promotes an understanding of language proficiency surpassing discourse, linguistic, and pragmatic descriptors; this would include strategic and intercultural competences. Such an expanded understanding of language proficiency can guide richer instructional activities that provide learners' the skills needed to increase communication. Finally, in the absence of state-mandated language proficiency testing aligned with specific world language standards, professional development directed towards the familiarization of national and state World Language Standards needs to continue. Within this training, a focus on not just mastery of the standards, but also appropriation, would enhance world language educators' skills in making the standards their own and a guide for their pedagogical decisions.

The next step for this researcher is to continue exploring the beliefs of world language educators and the influences on pedagogical choices in order to improve second language teaching (Nassaji, 2012). Although Kentucky's current directives in world languages create a context of interest, the findings of this study are unique to Elise and the case participant's context, Être High School. Thus, expanding this study to include multiple language educators of differing experience and preparation routes would expand understanding and better inform professional development facilitators or organizers as to "how to support their [language educators'] continued professional development" needs (Vélez-Rendón, 2002, p. 66).

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Appendices

Appendix A: Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Language Proficiency: Perceptions and Mediated Action of World Language Educators

WHY ARE YOU BEING INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH?

You are being invited to take part in a research study about teachers' perceptions and the choices they make. You are being invited to take part in this research study because you teach French and have used a proficiency assessment in the past. If you volunteer to take part in this study, you will be one of two people to do so.

WHO IS DOING THE STUDY?

The person in charge of this study is Laura Roché Youngworth of University of Kentucky Department of Curriculum and Instruction. She is being guided in this research by Dr. Sharon Brennan and Dr. Sadia Zoubir-Shaw.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?

The purpose of this study is to understand what world language teachers believe and how those beliefs influence their decisions. In particular, how do they view their context and how does that context impact their decisions. Also, how do standards and proficiency assessments influence their teaching choices?

By doing this study, we hope to learn how teachers negotiate all these factors and make good pedagogical choices.

ARE THERE REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD NOT TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?

If you do not plan to be teaching throughout the 2010-2011 school year or your schedule is not predominately French classes, you should be excluded from this study. This might prevent the researcher from having any enough time to understand the topic fully.

WHERE IS THE STUDY GOING TO TAKE PLACE AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?

The research procedures will be conducted at Fayette County Schools in the classroom in which you teach. There will be two rounds of visits, with each lasting two to three class periods and for two to three days. The total amount of time you will be asked to volunteer for this study is six days over the next two to five months.

WHAT WILL YOU BE ASKED TO DO?

During this study, you will be interviewed in order to get your background and beliefs about teaching. Then, you will be informally observed- no special lessons or activities are requested. The four to six days of observations will focus on your teaching strategies and choices. Finally, a follow-up interview, after the second round of observations, will focus on what was seen and your opinion.

Time-line

>Initial interview at your school, roughly one hour.

>Round one of observations in January

>Observations two rounds, the first in January and the second in March, with each lasting 2 to 3 days. An observation will range from one to three class periods.

>Final interview at your school, roughly one hour.

During the interviews, you will be asked basic questions about your perceptions of different things. During the observations, your instructional strategies and usage of assessments will be the focus. In neither situation will your actions be perceived as "wrong", rather they will help create an idea of "right" teaching.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS?

To the best of our knowledge, the things you will be doing have no more risk or harm than you would experience in everyday life.

WILL YOU BENEFIT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

There is no guarantee that you will get any benefit from taking part in this study. However, you may experience more attention paid to lesson planning and teaching through participation. Your willingness to take part, however, may, in the future, help society as a whole better understand this research topic

DO YOU HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY?

If you decide to take part in the study, it should be because you really want to volunteer. You will not lose any benefits or rights you would normally have if you choose not to volunteer. You can stop at any time during the study and still keep the benefits and rights you had before volunteering.

IF YOU DON'T WANT TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY, ARE THERE OTHER CHOICES?

If you do not want to be in the study, there are no other choices except not to take part in the study

WHAT WILL IT COST YOU TO PARTICIPATE?

There are no costs associated with taking part in the study.

WILL YOU RECEIVE ANY REWARDS FOR TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

You will not receive any rewards or payment for taking part in the study.

WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION THAT YOU GIVE?

Every effort will be made to keep private all research records that identify you to the extent allowed by law.

Your information will be combined with information from other people taking part in the study. When the study is written about to share with other researchers, information will be combined. You will not be personally identified in these written materials. We may publish the results of this study; however, we will keep your name and other identifying information private.

We will make every effort to prevent anyone who is not on the research team from knowing that you gave us information, or what that information is. Pseudonyms and codes will be used for your name and location as well as any other descriptors such as where you went to college. At the end of the study, all records will be destroyed or deleted indicating such information.

We will keep private all research records that identify you to the extent allowed by law. However, there are some circumstances in which we may have to show your information to other people. For example, the law may require us to show your information to a court. Also, we may be required to show information which identifies you to people who need to be sure we have done the research correctly; these would be people from such organizations as the University of Kentucky.

CAN YOUR TAKING PART IN THE STUDY END EARLY?

If you decide to take part in the study you still have the right to decide at any time that you no longer want to continue. You will not be treated differently if you decide to stop taking part in the study.

The individuals conducting the study may need to withdraw you from the study. This may occur if you are not able to follow the directions they give you, if they find that your being in the study is more risk than benefit to you, or if the agency funding the study decides to stop the study early for a variety of scientific reasons. If you wish to withdraw, please notify Laura Youngworth at yworth@aol.com.

WHAT IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, SUGGESTIONS, CONCERNS, OR COMPLAINTS?

Before you decide whether to accept this invitation to take part in the study, please ask any questions that might come to mind now. Later, if you have questions, suggestions, concerns, or complaints about the study, you can contact the investigator, Laura Youngworth at 859-312-3831. If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact the staff in the Office of Research Integrity at the University of Kentucky at 859-257-9428 or toll free at 1-866-400-9428. We will give you a signed copy of this consent form to take with you.

WHAT IF NEW INFORMATION IS LEARNED DURING THE STUDY THAT MIGHT AFFECT YOUR DECISION TO PARTICIPATE?

If the researcher learns of new information in regards to this study, and it might change your willingness to stay in this study, the information will be provided to you. You may be asked to sign a new informed consent form if the information is provided to you after you have joined the study.

_____   _____

Signature of person agreeing to take part in the study   Date

_____

Printed name of person agreeing to take part in the study

_____   _____

Name of [authorized] person obtaining informed consent   Date

Appendix B: Formal Interview #1

Date_____   Time_____   Location_____

Background Questions

1. I would like to start with some background questions.
   Where are you from?
   How many years have you been teaching?
   How long have you been at this school, any prior schools?
   Do you have any international experience?
   What languages do you speak?
   When did you acquire these languages?
   Why these languages?

2. Could you help me a little in terms of my visit to your classroom? How would you characterize your classroom?

Context

3. All of us, when we teach, have a lot of influences on our teaching.
   How would characterize your school?
   What about the community that feeds the school?
   What is the composition of your department?
   Where do you position yourself in your department?
   What about the field of world languages? (Ex. Some of us identify ourselves as being really interested to…how do you see yourself?)
   Why teach at this school?

4. Thinking about your school, how does this environment affect your usage of:
   Standards?
   Assessments?

Language Proficiency

5. When you think about language proficiency, what does that mean for you?
   What are the components and skills that make up language proficiency?

Standards

6. What influences what you teach?
   What about national standards?
   What about the three modes of communication?
   What about textbooks?

Assessments

7. Do you consider your assessments both formative and summative?
    Do you use both formative and summative?
    Can you give me a couple of examples of each?

8. What about proficiency assessments?
    How do you use proficiency assessments? How do they affect what and
    how you teach?

Let's arrange for a time to visit.

Appendix C: Formal Interview #2

Date_____   Time_____   Location_____

Instructional Practices

1. During a typical day, what are examples of instructional practices you use in your classroom?
   > What about the approaches you take?
   > What about strategies?
   > Are there any of these strategies that you really feel meet the needs of your
   >> students or community where you teach the most?

Member Checking

2. Throughout the days of observations, I have asked you questions to clarify and better understand what I had seen. Let me share with you some things so far to make sure my understanding is on the right track.
   > Clarify any concepts evolving.

Closure

3. Thank you so much for your time and willingness to open up your classroom and to share with me your beliefs! This has been a wonderful experience for me. If per chance, I have a question and need clarification as I look through my notes, may I contact you?
   > How best should I contact you?

<div align="center">**Vita**</div>

Laura Roché Youngworth

Lexington, Kentucky

Education

    University of Kentucky

        Rank I in Curriculum and Instruction , 2006

        Masters in Curriculum and Instruction, 2001

        Bachelors of Arts, 1992

            French, English, and Secondary Education

Professional Experiences

    Fayette County Public Schools, Lexington KY., 2010-Current

        Beaumont Middle School

            French Teacher

    Anderson County Public Schools, Lawrenceburg, KY., 1993-2010

        Anderson County High School

            French Teacher, Gifted & Talented Coordinator

    Kenton County Public Schools, Covington, KY., 1992-1993

        Scott High School

            French, English Teacher

Professional Honors

    Kentucky World Language Association French Teacher of the Year Award

        Recipient, 2013

    American Association of Teachers of French- KY Chapter

        Vice-President, President-Elect, 2011-current

    American Council of the Teaching of Foreign Languages

        Oral Proficiency Interview rater trainee/candidate, 2013-current

    Campbellsville College Teacher Award

        Recipient, 2009

Publications/Contributions to Publications

Youngworth, L.R. (2005). Teacher action research as a means for improving student achievement: A Case study of the teacher education model program. http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=4&ved=0CDwQFjAD&url=http%3A%2F%2Feducation.uky.edu%2FO FE%2F sites%2Feducation.uky.edu.OFE%2Ffiles%2Fdocuments%2FReport-LY. doc&ei=fDs4U-rnIMb1qAGk54CwDw&usg=AFQjCNHOJpXovOwkTs7 pDsYpUaM2Wf7Fig&bvm=bv.63808443,d.aWM

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Presentations

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Kentucky World Standard and Program Review, 2013

Building a World Language Empire, 2012

Talking about Talking: Using Interpersonal Communication in the Classroom, 2011

Fayette County Public Schools, Lexington, KY.

Interpersonal Activities for the Communicative Classroom, 2011

University of Kentucky Star Talk, Lexington, KY.

Interpersonal Activities for the Communicative Classroom and Building a Viable World Language Program, 2011