ACTION RESEARCH: PERCEPTIONS OF CONTENT-BASED INSTRUCTION

IN AN ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE SETTING

by

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STATEMENT OF THESIS APPROVAL

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ABSTRACT

Content-based instruction (CBI) aims to develop students' content and language knowledge as well as their ability to use learning strategies to become autonomous learners. It is a language teaching methodology that uses content as the organizing principle and makes a dual commitment to both language and content objectives. Through a three-cycle action research project, this M.A. thesis investigated teacher and learner perceptions of a content and language integrated course in an English as a foreign language (EFL) environment. As the teacher/researcher in this project, I designed and taught the CBI course at a private English center in Niterói, Brazil. Learner data were obtained from initial questionnaires, student journals, and oral interviews in Cycles 2 and 3, and teacher data were obtained from teaching journals and videotaped lessons in the three cycles.

Learner data indicated that some participants recognized the integration of language and content during the course and appreciated CBI methodology. Other participants had expectations for a traditional language course and were not able to recognize the integration of content and language. Although content was used as the organizing principle in the course, some learners paid little attention to the content and expressed a desire to improve their language skills, not realizing that it was possible to do both. Furthermore, some participants revealed that learning vocabulary derived from the

content and vocabulary-learning strategies (VLSs) were beneficial despite the difficulty of some strategies. Although participants identified the importance of the content being taught (i.e., culture and specifically, intercultural tolerance), they did not show tolerance toward some aspects of American values and ideas during in-class activities.

Teacher data showed that CBI methodology in Cycles 2 and 3 promoted a deeper understanding of content. As my own knowledge of the course content deepened, I realized that I was also able to use content resources more appropriately. Based on an analysis of qualitative data, I concluded that course design improved through the three cycles. Additional modifications to course design in the future would allow for more opportunities to target strategies and promote the gradual development of intercultural communication, tolerance, and acceptance.
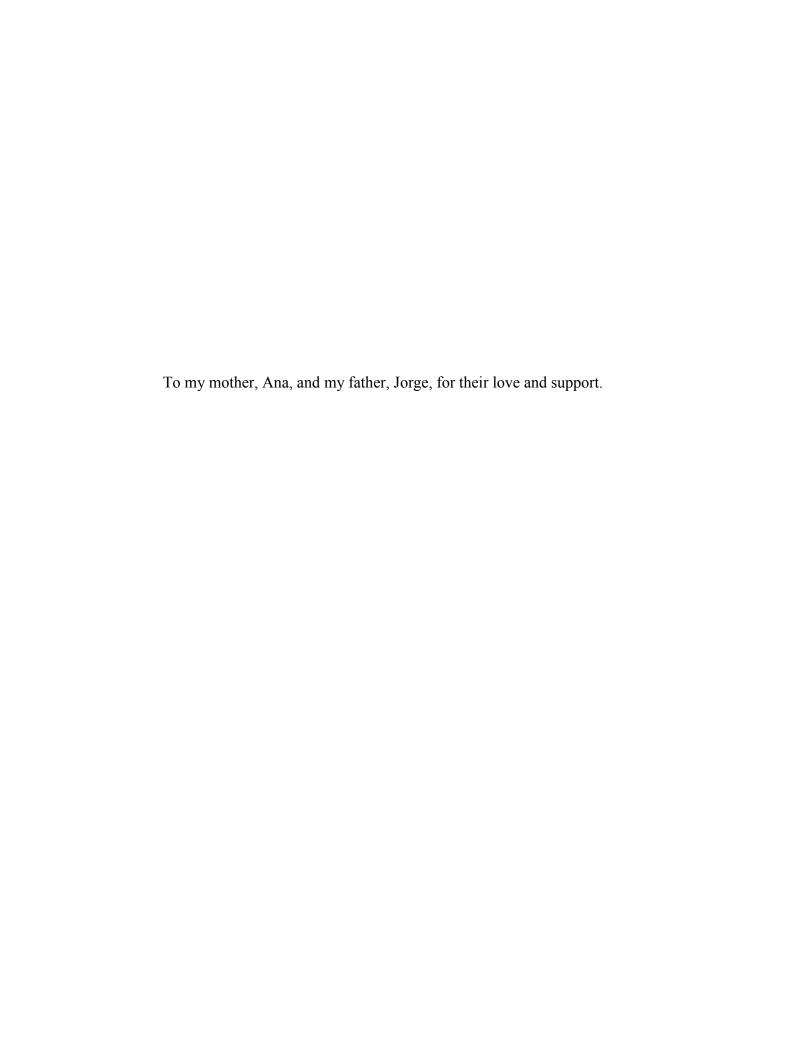
To my mother, Ana, and my father, Jorge, for their love and support.

"For us, to learn is to construct, to reconstruct, to observe with a view to changing—none of which can be done without being open to risk, to the adventure of the spirit."
Paulo Freire, 1998, *Pedagogy of Freedom*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In 1971, the U.S. President, Richard Nixon, visited Brazil, and in delivering a speech

to a multitude of Brazilians, he gave what in America is known as the "A-OK" sign;

however, that sign in Brazilian culture amounted to an offensive gesture. According to

Watson (2013), the Brazilian population "responded with anger" (p. 29).

Human interaction is entering a unique period through globalization. The impact of

technology on human communication has facilitated the interaction among people from

different languages and cultures, metaphorically shortening the distance between nations

by allowing people to interact through new social platforms. In this era of intercultural,

multiple, instantaneous social interactions, several challenges have arisen in tandem with

global partnerships. The need is greater than ever to promote mutual understanding

between people from different cultures with a particular emphasis on attitudes, such as

empathy, tolerance, and openness toward otherness—attitudes necessary for the

resolution of possible cultural conflicts between people with different orientations toward

life. The world has become metaphorically much smaller. One critical concept that

proves useful in avoiding cultural conflicts is developing knowledge and skills for

understanding cultural differences. When engaging in intercultural conversation, one

needs to be aware of the cultural context of the person (or in Nixon's case, the people) with whom one is interacting to understand the actual message that is being conveyed, a message that may go beyond one's own cultural expectations. Content knowledge, therefore, plays an important role in successfully communicating in a second or foreign language across cultures.

Content and language integrated teaching is believed to be a successful way of addressing the intercultural challenges involved in foreign language (FL) learning. By integrating content (e.g., culture), language (e.g., vocabulary used to learn culture and intercultural differences), and learning strategies (e.g., vocabulary-learning strategies), teachers can, not only help learners make gains in a foreign language but also ensure that L2 students will learn meaningful content (i.e., content they will be able to use outside of the language classroom). Both teachers and learners play important roles in the learning process and the perceptions of both should be valued and investigated.

In private language centers in Niterói, Brazil, content-based instruction (CBI) is not a common approach to language teaching. This statement is supported by the observation that there are no content and language integrated courses taught in the Niterói private language center where I conducted my study. In addition, I am a product of the English language courses taught in Brazil and studied in numerous classes. All of my English courses used audiolingual methodology that focused primarily on grammar and language structures. I had previously worked at this private language center in Niterói, so it was a logical place to seek permission to pilot the CBI course I was developing, and the administrator of the language program was open to the idea. The content that I chose for this course was culture and developing intercultural understanding.

The program in Niterói gave me complete freedom in selecting the content for the pilot course. I chose culture as the content because I had always been interested in culture as a language learner in Brazil and enjoyed cultural readings when they were integrated into my mostly grammar-oriented English language lessons. Selecting specific academic content such as history, math, social studies, or science would not have been a good fit for the learners or the program at Niterói; culture seemed to be an obvious fit.

When I first came to the U.S. as a Fulbright scholar, I experienced culture shock as I tried to relate to other people and make friends. Even though I had studied English for over 15 years in Brazil, I was still surprised to learn that there were quite a few differences between American culture and Brazilian culture. These differences became much more evident when I was immersed in studying, living, and working in the United States. These differences motivated me to choose culture as the content in the CBI pilot project. Data collected from prospective learners (i.e., English students at the private language center in Niterói) also validated my decision to design a course on American culture, more specifically, on the theme of interpersonal relationships in the United States.

When I first began the project, I focused on the design of the CBI course. In the design process I followed a cyclical design process that included such steps as formulating goals and objectives, conducting a needs analysis, identifying and sequencing content, and assessing learning. Even though I knew that the process of course design was iterative, I still naively envisioned that I would develop the CBI course and teach it and that the project would somehow be complete. I did not think too much about the next steps or the modifications I would want to make as a result of my

experiences in Cycle 1.

After teaching the content-based course on culture in Niterói the first time, I observed that the course design could be improved upon in numerous ways, so I decided to continue revising the course in a systematic way by conducting an action research project. Action research, with its emphasis on advancing instructional practices, allowed me to refine course design by identifying and addressing potential areas for improvement and to reflect on my own teaching practices and to understand my own teacher development.

Although the process of course design comprised a significant part of my initial project in Cycle 1, it is beyond the scope of this thesis project to detail the entire course design process while at the same time focusing on the research questions that I wanted to answer and the changes that I made to instruction from Cycle 1 to Cycles 2 and 3.

The goal of this M.A. thesis is to report on a multicycle action research project, which focuses on the implementation of the content-based instruction (CBI) course that I developed for an English as a foreign language (EFL) setting. The course specifically targets teaching culture and intercultural awareness as organizing principles and is the focus for the content of the course. In the three cycles of action research, I document how my approach to working with content changes as my sophistication as a teacher develops, my understanding of the principles that govern CBI advances, and my understanding of learners and context deepen. For example, in Cycle 1, I target the content of cultural understanding through the use of *Dear Abby* letters that highlight interpersonal conflicts related to culture. By Cycle 3, I use appropriate cultural texts and target specific vocabulary within the texts.

My primary research questions for Cycle 2 and 3 are focused on investigating teacher and learner perceptions of the language learning process in a CBI environment, in particular, teacher and learner perceptions of vocabulary development and vocabulary-learning strategies. In all three cycles, CBI remains the overall focus of my investigation.

In this action research study I employ three complete cycles of action research. These cycles involve planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (Nunan & Bailey, 2009). I conducted the first cycle of action research when teaching the pilot content-based course in Brazil in the summer of 2012, and the purpose of this experience was to understand the use of CBI methodology in an EFL setting and acquaint myself with students, their needs, and the educational setting where I planned to conduct my CBI unit. In addition to teaching this content-based course in summer 2012, I collected data from the participants, which helped me understand more about the success of the course and about using CBI methodology in an EFL context. During the data analysis process, it struck me that I wanted to take the information that I had learned in summer 2012, make revisions to the course, and teach it in summer 2013. This decision led to the use of the project as a part of my thesis and to the development of a multicycle action research project.

In Cycle 2, I drew on my own observations and reflections from Cycle 1 and on students' performance and feedback to make revisions in the course. In the summer of 2013, I taught the revised CBI course on culture. In Cycle 2 my approach to teaching culture was revised based on my teaching experiences and on feedback from the learners. In other words, I no longer used the *Dear Abby* letters but selected other readings and texts on culture and began to extract useful vocabulary related to culture from the texts that I had selected. As it turned out, I was given an opportunity to teach the course a third

time, so I embarked on Cycle 3. I used the data that I collected in Cycle 2 to inform the changes I made in my teaching in Cycle 3. In Cycle 2 I began working with the important vocabulary related to culture and intercultural communication and included specific strategies for helping students work with vocabulary learning strategies. This continued in Cycle 3. Through the three cycles, the content of culture was my main organizing principle.

This action research study, which examines teacher and learner perceptions of a content-based course taught at a private language center in Niterói, Brazil, is divided into several chapters. In Chapter 2, I present a review of the literature on the main supporting areas of this study—CBI, curriculum design, vocabulary development, teaching culture, developing intercultural competence, and investigating teacher and learner perceptions. In Chapter 3, I delineate my research design, the data collection tools, the participants of the study, and the educational setting in which the study was conducted. Additionally, I explain my orientation to research in this chapter. In Chapter 4, I present the results of the learner data that I collected during Cycles 2 and 3 of the course. In Chapter 5, I describe the results relative to the teacher data that I collected during Cycles 1, 2, and 3. In Chapter 6, I discuss the results from learner and teacher data in light of the literature reviewed for this research study and the research questions that framed my study. In Chapter 7, I summarize the present study and include final considerations.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review presents a brief summary of research studies on content-based instruction (CBI), curriculum design, second language (L2) vocabulary teaching and learning, teaching culture, and intercultural communicative competence in foreign language courses that influenced my work. This review allowed for the identification of areas that needed further investigation, which helped me frame the research questions for this study.

Content-based Instruction

Communicative language teaching (CLT) is an approach that was created in response to the audiolingual method (Richard & Rodgers, 2001). It focuses on the use of language as a tool to communicate meaning. Meaning is supposed to be negotiated when L2 learners interact. Compared to audiolingualism, CLT places less emphasis on the production of impeccable grammatical forms and values the content conveyed by interlocutors. A concern about learners' ability to convey meaningful messages in a foreign language is part of a larger goal: the development of L2 learners' communicative competence in language classes. However, like audiolingualism, CLT concentrates on the

development of learners' speaking skills. According to Swaffar (2006), "both audiolingual and communicative competence approaches share an emphasis on oral communication in generic contexts as the cornerstone of the beginning and intermediate foreign language (FL) learning" (p. 246). Schulz (2006) explains that in CLT comprehensible input and meaning-oriented activities are highly valued. Learners should be given opportunities to use their skills in group activities, and tasks should reflect real-life situations. Nevertheless, Schulz points out that, in college lower-division language programs in the United States, students are not likely to become very proficient in the target language. In addition, she claims that language teaching should not only aim to prepare learners to communicate in the target language, but also develop learners' critical thinking and cross-cultural awareness, and teach content, such as the target culture.

Content-based instruction (CBI) is an alternative to approaches that focus primarily on the development of learners' oral language skills. CBI is an approach that combines content, language, and strategy teaching. It is content-driven, which means that content serves as the organizing principle and that the language and the strategies one chooses to teach must derive from and support learning the targeted content.

Support for CBI from Training Studies

Grabe and Stoller (1997) claim that one of the research fields that provides support for CBI is training studies research. Training studies provide support for CBI in several ways, one of which is by using cooperative learning strategies in the classroom. Grabe and Stoller explain that cooperative learning draws on Vygotsky's notions of negotiation within the zone of proximal development (ZPD), the use of private speech, and the

appropriation of learning tasks. The ZPD displays the difference between what learners can do by themselves and what they can do with peer or teacher assistance. Private speech is an inner speech aimed at solving problems and finding the right strategies to deal with them. As students need to cooperate in their groups, knowing how to solve problems is thought to lead to group success. When learning from peers, learners can turn specific strategies into their own (i.e., the process of appropriation).

When working in groups, students are expected to learn content and negotiate meaning with one another. Students are likely to perform better in cognitively demanding activities with the assistance of other classmates. McGroarty (1992) describes the benefits of cooperative learning in multicultural classrooms. She encourages the use of cooperative work as opposed to the use of approaches that induce competition among students. When there is a focus on group work, all students have a chance to succeed.

Due to an increase of student interaction in class, students benefit from the exposure to modified input and opportunities to negotiate meaning and from asking for task clarification and refining utterances, as they need to get their messages across. Even though some learners may be native speakers of the language in question and others may speak it as an L2, L2 speakers benefit from these interactions in that they can draw on the knowledge of their native language to check their comprehension of tasks and texts. Cooperative learning also impacts the roles that teacher and students play in class. Teachers are supposed to be facilitators, whereas learners are encouraged to have an active role in class by contributing to the accomplishment of tasks.

The main benefit of cooperative learning is that it facilitates the integration of language and a content area. Interesting content tends to boost students' motivation as

well as enhance the development of their language skills. This is a strong argument to support the use of cooperative learning in CBI.

In addition to benefits McGroarty presents some cooperative activities. Jigsaw is an activity in which each student has a responsibility for the completion of a text, thereby creating positive interdependence among learners. For example, students can read different parts of an article and they collaborate to understand the main idea and details of the piece. Peer tutoring and cooperative projects are other activities that can involve collaboration toward a goal.

Another contribution from training research is strategy instruction. Strategies are considered one of the components of content-based instruction. Echevarría (2007) states that teachers play the role of facilitators as far as strategy teaching is concerned. She argues that a "learning strategy is a series of steps that can be repeated over and over to solve a problem or to complete a task" (p. 100). Teaching students how to learn, how to do tasks and how to study is of paramount importance and is known as one of the hallmarks of CBI (known within the cooperative learning paradigm as individual accountability). Students must be encouraged to become independent life-long learners. However, strategy instruction needs to be a significant part of the teaching curriculum because some learners may not employ any learning strategies, unless they are explicitly taught how to do so. In other words, explicit strategy instruction should be present in all lessons.

Strategies can be divided into metacognitive (e.g., selective attention, monitoring comprehension, self-assessment, etc.), cognitive (e.g., resourcing, grouping, note-taking, etc.), and socioaffective (e.g., asking for clarification, cooperation, and self-talk) (Chamot

& O'Malley, 1994). Before teaching methods to solve problems or do tasks, instructors should know students' level of proficiency and identify what strategies are the most relevant to learners.

As strategy instruction needs to happen in class on a daily basis, there are some procedures to make it a more successful experience. Instructors should identify and model strategies, set up practice sessions, give students an opportunity to practice them, and provide students with feedback and multiple chances to use the strategies. One important strategy learners should know is how to use graphic organizers (i.e., visual representations of the organization of complex ideas). Teaching them how to complete Venn diagrams, semantic webs, timelines, etc. helps students organize their own ideas and see the relationship between concepts in a text.

Another important strategy is teaching L2 learners about the writing process. Instructors should raise students' awareness that texts are often not complete the first time that they are written. Learning the significance of proofreading, peer reviewing, and using different drafts is necessary in learning how to be a proficient L2 writer. If students are able to improve their own texts based on peers' or teachers' comments, they are likely to improve their overall writing skills and be more aware of the way they write. Last but not least, summarizing is another crucial strategy that students should be taught. They need to know what to delete from a text, what to include in the text, what to modify, and how to organize sentences in order to have a coherent summary.

CBI and Second Language (L2) Development

When it comes to the relationship between CBI and the four skills, reading plays a crucial role in the CBI model because CBI is literacy-based. Language objectives derive from the content one chooses, so the selection of content is key to the implementation of CBI. Language objectives can focus on many different aspects of language. In order to create language objectives for CBI lessons instructors can use a language objectives (LO) menu (Lindahl & Watkins, 2007) to guide them. The LO menu is composed of different areas of language that can be used as a focus for objectives, such as vocabulary, reading comprehension, functional/formulaic language, word study, grammatical structures, or language conventions. Not only is reading comprehension one of the targeted areas, but it is believed that reading helps students improve in the other areas of language development as well (Krashen, 1982). The more students read comprehensible text, the more their vocabulary will increase, for instance.

Extensive reading is a tool that comes from training studies. Students are expected to read coherent texts, and they should be exposed to a great amount of written input, which should be consistent with the learners' proficiency level. According to Krashen's (1982) comprehensible input theory, students should be exposed to input that is slightly higher than their current level of proficiency. That is what Krashen means when he makes uses of the code $i + 1$ (i: interlanguage; 1: higher than what learners can comfortably process). Such input exposure is believed to boost learners' content knowledge and language abilities. Furthermore, students tend to become more motivated if they read texts about topics that interest them.

Regarding motivation, one of the ultimate goals of CBI is for students to experience

flow, which can be defined as those exceptional moments in learning when students' skill levels are perfectly matched with the learning challenges they face resulting in a sense of effortless action (Csikszentmihályi, 1997). Students experience flow when they are totally absorbed by a learning activity, and they are able to forget their own problems. They feel encouraged and spend a great amount of time on a task without realizing that time has gone by. Students improve their reading skills and content knowledge because they concentrate on the completion of a challenging task, which matches their interest and learning abilities.

There are some reading activities that can improve learners' knowledge and motivation: reading aloud (done by the teacher), independent reading, and shared or guided reading. Reading aloud consists of reading a text to a class. Teachers should normally choose interesting books whose language is slightly beyond the learners' proficiency. Students will be able to learn the content of the book in that teachers play the role of facilitators bridging the gap between students' knowledge and the new information. Independent reading is also one activity that is highly recommended. By reading other books (suggested readings or other texts students find about a specific theme) student knowledge is expected to improve. Finally, shared or guided reading is an activity in which both teachers and students read the same book/text and students are provided enough support to understand it.

Instructional Frameworks for CBI

Lesson planning should focus primarily on content, but the other CBI components (i.e., language and learning strategies) should derive from it. In their article "Into,

Through, and Beyond: A Framework to Develop Content-based Material," Brinton and Holten (1997) present a structure for lesson plan organization that is divided into three stages: *into*, *through*, and *beyond*. Their framework was designed to help instructors to teach language through content, which is a challenging task. Authentic materials (i.e., sources that were not created with an instructional purpose) and cognitively demanding tasks are some of the features that lesson plans that use this framework should have. Each of these stages has a set of recommended activities.

The into stage is the first part of a CBI lesson. It aims at piquing students' curiosity, activating their schemata, and preparing them for the material to which they will be exposed. Making connections and recognizing the breadth and depth of the topic that will be focused on is another goal for this stage of the lesson.

Once students are better prepared to cope with new content and their background knowledge has been activated, the through stage can be carried out. In this stage, students are guided through a text, and they should be helped in order to process the information in the texts they will read. The goal at this stage in the lesson is text comprehension and the development of content and language as they relate to the text.

In the beyond stage, students should be provided an opportunity to apply what they learned in the through stage of the lesson. Clarifying and reinforcing vocabulary, working cooperatively, and applying knowledge to real-life situations are some of the aims of this stage of the lesson.

Stoller and Grabe's (1997) seminal article, "A six-T's approach to content-based instruction," provides additional information on how content-based courses should be designed. Content-based courses should contain *themes*, *texts*, *topics*, *threads*, *tasks*, and

transitions in order to be coherent and promote content and language learning.

Themes are central organizing principles that allow for the development of expertise and depth-of-processing. Students will become "specialists" in a specific area by reading extended materials and doing cognitively demanding tasks. *Texts* are written and aural materials that will be used in class. They should match students' interest and level of proficiency and should be relevant and challenging. These are the resources through which linguistic features will be taught and analyzed. *Topics* are "the subunits of content which explore more specific aspects of the theme" (p. 83). They should be logical and allow for the exploration of language and content. *Threads* are the links among themes. They can be abstract ideas and must enable students to see the connections between different areas, ideas, or concepts. *Tasks* are the instructional activities that organize lessons. The three main components of CBI (content, language, and strategies) are taught through tasks. These tasks should derive from the texts that will be utilized, which means that content establishes what tasks are to be done. Finally, *transitions* refer to the links among tasks or topics. They are of paramount importance to show that the lessons are coherent and have a natural flow.

In addition to an instructional design that makes use of the six T's, it is also crucial to know the steps involved in this approach. First, content, themes, texts, and topics should be determined. Second, threads ought to be thought of to make instruction progress naturally. Third, sequencing and project length need to be planned. The next step focuses on teachers and on how much the teachers should get involved and how much they need to research in order to be well prepared to provide instruction. Afterwards, language, content, and strategy objectives ought to be written and tasks ought to be designed.

Lastly, transitions should be created and adjustments made.

CBI and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

CBI is an instructional model that has been used in the U.S. for about 40 years. A more recent approach that shares some features with CBI is CLIL. This approach, popular in Europe, also has a dual commitment to content and language development. Nevertheless, unlike CBI, "[there] is no orthodoxy as to how, exactly, CLIL should be implemented…" (Graddol, 2006, p. 86).

Both CBI and CLIL are content-driven, meaning that language derives from the content chosen for a course. Content could be a traditional school subject such as history and geography. However, content is not limited to that because content and language integrated courses can be taught in many different educational contexts. According to Stoller and Grabe (1997), "content-based instruction is theme-based instruction" (p. 81). According to Coyle, Hood, and Marsh (2010), in addition to being thematic, content could be cross-curricular, involving "…inquiry into health in the community, water or genocide" (p. 28), or interdisciplinary, encouraging "… collaboration on a common theme while maintaining the integrity of each subject" (p. 28). Content could even include global issues such as race. Therefore, there are several ways that content could be conceptualized in CBI and CLIL.

Curriculum Design

Graves (2000) discusses the process of designing language courses and argues that course design is a decision-making process that includes mutually dependent components

ranging from the formulation of course goals and objectives to the creation of assessment tools. When developing a course, teachers ought to identify the context in which the course will be taught and obtain information about students' needs. Specific information about students, the institution, the available resources, and course length will help teachers decide how to design their courses. Graves also stresses the fact that teachers should be aware of the beliefs that drive their decisions about their teaching. Their views of language, language teaching and learning, and the social role played by languages will influence how teachers create their courses.

Course design also requires the elaboration of course goals and objectives, material development, course organization, and an assessment plan. Courses should mirror teachers' articulated beliefs and, in Graves's words, the "conceptualization of content." According to Graves, course design is far from a linear process. Instead, it is an iterative in nature. She states that teachers can start designing their courses by working on any of the aforementioned components, which are always subject to change and influence each other. Graves's position about the curriculum design process aligns with the position of other scholars such as Christison and Murray (2014).

Assessing students' needs provides information that allows teachers to tailor course design to students' preferences and knowledge. By using needs assessment tools (e.g., questionnaires, interviews, journals), teachers can investigate students' language proficiency, interests, cultural knowledge, and so on. Graves states that these collection tools, which can be administered prior to or during courses, vary based on what is already known about students.

Another component of the course design process is teachers' decisions about content.

Teachers are supposed to decide what they would like their students to learn by the end of their courses, and these objectives will facilitate their selection of content items. Furthermore, teachers should organize content items so that connections among items are highlighted. Graves provides categories that can help teachers make decisions about the focus of their courses. Teachers can focus on language (e.g., skills, communicative functions, grammar), on learning and learners (e.g., learning strategies, attitudes and personal relationships in class), and on the social context (e.g., using language appropriately, understanding the target culture and becoming a member of a given community).

Teachers' decisions about a course should also align with course goals and objectives, which are supposed to have a cause-effect relationship. By articulating goals and objectives, teachers are able to identify what their course priorities are and how to assess their students effectively. Goals ought to be realistic, measurable, and achievable statements about what students will be able to do by the end of a course. In order to achieve goals, students should reach short-term, specific objectives related to these goals.

Courses can be organized at different levels. Teachers continuously make decisions about the organization and sequencing of individual lessons as they attempt to create coherent units or modules, which should themselves be organized as well. These decisions are influenced by other components related to the course design process—such as the conceptualization of the content, goals and objectives; the teachers' beliefs; and the students' needs.

At the unit and lesson levels, courses can be organized in a predictable cyclical sequence. Alternatively, teachers can create a list of course items and select and sequence

them accordingly; no predictable order is necessary. It should be pointed out that one organizational format does not exclude the other; both can be present in the same course. Although Graves argues for course organization, she advises teachers not to be limited by strict plans that do not allow for instructional modification. The context and interaction with students could provoke teachers to make necessary changes to the design of courses.

Courses should include relevant materials and activities that are designed for or adapted to students' needs and the educational context. Materials should not only reflect teachers' beliefs but also allow students to achieve course goals and objectives. For example, when teachers adopt textbooks, their choices should be informed by beliefs, goals, and objectives. Graves claims that textbooks should be constantly assessed and adaptations should be made to promote better student learning.

Course design also integrates both teachers' and students' assessments and evaluations of the learning experience in the course. Formative and summative assessment tools should be able to measure what students have learned in the course, allowing modifications to be made during a course and in preparation for teaching the same course in the future. Based on students' performance, activities, texts, goals, and objectives should be revisited and altered accordingly. Curriculum design is a cyclical process of planning, implementation, modification, and re-implementation.

Developing Intercultural Communicative Competence and

Teaching Culture

Moran (2001) draws attention to the wide range of definitions of culture and to the dynamic and complex nature of culture. For example, culture can be defined as

civilization. The encyclopedic knowledge of a culture (e.g., history, architecture) is usually labeled "big C" culture and cultural conventions and norms are usually labeled "small c" culture. Culture can also be regarded as "intercultural communication," which entails skills in communicating effectively and appropriately according to cultural norms.

Moran puts forward that culture has five dimensions: *products*, *practices*, *perspectives*, *persons*, and *communities*. In Moran's words, *products* are defined as "all artifacts produced or adopted by the members of the culture" and "are located and organized in physical spaces" (Moran, 2001, p. 25). Examples of products are clothes, monuments, and so on. Products can also be intangible (e.g., songs, poems). *Practices* concern what people do and how they interact with other people from the same culture. *Perspectives* are a deeper component of culture. They refer to people's perceptions of and attitudes toward life. *Persons* are members of a culture and *communities* are a group of members who share cultural practices. *Communities*, *products*, *practices* and *persons* are the visible components of culture and *perspectives* are the invisible and potentially subconscious component of culture. Based on these dimensions, Moran defines culture as "the evolving of life of a group of persons, consisting of a shared set of practices associated with a shared sets of products, based upon a shared set of perspectives on the world, and set within specific social contexts" (p. 24).

Intercultural Communicative Competence

As one of the definitions of culture includes notions of intercultural communication, a focus on the interaction among speakers of different languages and from different cultures is believed to be of prime importance to a better understanding of the ability to

communicate effectively and appropriately across cultures. Based on the idea of an

intercultural speaker, Byram (1997) proposes the model of intercultural communicative

competence (ICC). Competence in Byram's model is not used in a Chomskyan sense. In

other words, for Byram competence does not mean the underlying and subconscious

"system of rules that determine both the phonetic shape of the sentence and it is semantic

content" (Chomsky, 1965:102) in ideal speaker-listeners. Byram's use of the term

competence is inspired by Hymes's (1972) definition of the concept:

> I should take *competence* as the most general term for the capabilities of a person.
> (This choice is in the spirit, if at present against a letter, of the concern in
> linguistic theory for underlying capability.) Competence is dependent upon both
> (tacit) *knowledge* and (ability for) *use*. (Hymes, 1972, p. 64)

Hymes's definition of competence includes an emphasis on the relevance of sociocultural

features of language speakers. Appropriateness and language variation are part of

Hymes's proposed linguistic concept.

The model of ICC captures the need to raise one's awareness of one's own cultural

values and one's interlocutor's values. Language learners should be able to reflect on

intercultural differences and exhibit openness to interaction with the other. The following

is a description of what ICC involves in Byram's words:

> [S]omeone with Intercultural *Communicative* Competence is able to interact with
> people from another country and culture in a foreign language. They are able to
> negotiate a mode of communication and interaction which is satisfactory to
> themselves and the other and they are able to act as mediator between people of
> different cultural origins. Their knowledge of another culture is linked to their
> language through their ability to use language appropriately – sociolinguistic and
> discourse competence – and their awareness of the specific meanings, values and
> connotations of the language. (Byram, 1997, p. 71)

Therefore, ICC is the ability to partake in meaningful and appropriate interactions with

other cultures.

Byram claims that the model of ICC is composed of four types of competencies: linguistic competence (ability to use the standard variety of a language), sociolinguistic competence (ability to assign culturally appropriate meaning to language), discourse competence (ability to employ, find, and negotiate strategies to produce and interpret written and aural texts appropriately), and intercultural competence (ability to interact with people from different cultures). Intercultural competence feeds the other competencies by drawing on "factors in intercultural communication," such as knowledge of the target culture and community, skills to comprehend and interact, cultural awareness, and acceptability and appraisal of cultural differences.

Teaching Culture

In order to learn the values of a new culture, learners should ideally experience the culture. Cultural experiences are important in raising L2 learners' awareness of cultural diversity. Moran (2001) claims that three frameworks work in conjunction to provide a logical organization of learners' involvement in cultural experiences and the results of such situations: "the cultural experience, cultural knowings, and the experiential learning cycle" (Moran, 2001, p. 13). Cultural experiences are meetings between people with different cultural approaches to life.

Cultural knowings describe the processes through which learners learn and analyze a new culture. This framework shows a progression from knowing factual information about a specific culture, passing through learning cultural norms (knowing how) and being able to reflect on cultural experiences (knowing why), to knowing oneself (awareness of one's own culture). Knowing oneself is the organizing component of the

framework.

Moran draws on cultural knowings to propose the experiential learning cycle. This model describes a learner who is influenced by cultural knowings. Learners' interactions with another culture, the reflections and interpretations of their experiences will prompt self-awareness. These are the stages of the experiential learning cycle.

When it comes to teaching culture, Moran points out that the goal of teaching a culture is to develop learners' cultural knowings. The author recommends combining the cultural content and the learning process by following the experiential learning cycle. Cultural content should be obtained by a careful analysis of the different dimensions of a specific culture. It should be noted that learners experience the culture learning process differently and teachers have distinct roles at each stage of the learning cycle.

Otwinowska-Kasztelanic (2011) discusses the importance of teaching culture in language classes and asserts that language and culture cannot be separated from each other. Teaching culture poses some challenges. One challenge involves the decision of the content that needs to be taught and narrowed down. Another challenge concerns the use of language textbooks as a number of them avoid introducing complex cultural aspects. Culture is presented superficially and an emphasis is placed on cultural facts as opposed to a greater concern about unwritten cultural norms or behavior.

The author sustains that European citizens should have a sense of their national identities, but should be encouraged to show tolerance toward other cultures. Otwinowska-Kasztelanic puts forward that intercultural competence entails the ability to prevent oneself from exercising judgment about behaviors that conflict with one's perspective and the ability to understand one's own cultural norms.

Similarly, Byram (1997) states that the intercultural communicative competence model is supposed to be used in educational settings. Drawing on his model, Piasecka (2011) states that teachers should raise language learners' awareness that language and culture are inseparable entities. They should also develop a deeper understanding of their own culture and their target culture in order to prepare them to communicate with people with different values, norms, and thoughts. Teachers should promote "intercultural reflection, sensitivity, tolerance, empathy, open-mindedness and understanding" (p. 32), which are important attributes of an interculturally competent individual.

Vocabulary Development

When defining vocabulary, two essential questions arise: What is vocabulary? What does knowing a word mean? According to *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language*, some answers are provided to the first question. In this dictionary, "vocabulary" is defined as:

> **vo·cab·u·lar·y**
> *n.pl.* **vo·cab·u·lar·ies**
> **1.** All the words of a language.
> **2.** The sum of words used by, understood by, or at the command of a particular person or group.
> **3.** A list of words and often phrases, usually arranged alphabetically and defined or translated; a lexicon or glossary.
> **4.** A supply of expressive means; a repertoire of communication: *a dancer's vocabulary of movement.*

The notion that "vocabulary" is a group of words is present in the first three definitions. However, the definition of vocabulary should be more specific. Folse (2004) states that "vocabulary" is composed of single words, phrases, idioms and phrasal verbs. Moreover, the author addresses the question, What does knowing a word mean? by claiming that

knowing a word involves knowing its possible meanings, usage, spelling, pronunciation, derivative forms as well as collocations with the word. Therefore, vocabulary learning and teaching must entail a variety of tasks and is not merely restricted to learning the meaning of individual words.

Nation (2001, 2008) categorizes vocabulary into four different classes: high-frequency words, academic words, technical words (words related to a specific topic), and low-frequency words. High-frequency words, which include function and some content words, should be given priority and ought to be the first category to be taught in language classes. Knowledge of these words will increase text comprehension.

In addition to defining "vocabulary" and "vocabulary knowledge," Folse (2004) deconstructs the idea that grammar plays a more important role in FL learning than vocabulary. Folse, quoting Wikins (1972), puts forward that "while without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary *nothing* can be conveyed" (p. 23). Lightbown and Spada (2006) highlight the importance of vocabulary knowledge for communication purposes. The authors claim that when speaking a foreign language the message is likely to be conveyed regardless of some pronunciation or syntax problems. However, using an incorrect word can lead to more serious miscommunication.

Teaching Vocabulary

Before creating vocabulary activities, Nation (2001) states that teachers ought to reflect upon their learning goals, the psychological conditions needed to achieve these goals, the observable signs that indicate whether the goals are achieved or not, and the design of the activity. Nation states that psychological conditions are processes that

motivate a word to be recalled and he identifies three processes: noticing (attention to vocabulary), retrieval (multiple opportunities to remember the L2 words), and creative use (opportunities to use L2 words in new contexts). The three processes should be encouraged when L2 vocabulary is taught.

Eyraud et al. (2000) claim that vocabulary should be recycled through several exposures to L2 words so that learners are able to make meaningful connections between words. Nation (2001, 2008) adds that retrievals should be spaced as L2 vocabulary learning is a cumulative process and knowing a word entails form, meaning, and use. There would be an information overload should teachers want to explore the form, meanings and uses of a word in a single encounter.

In a chapter devoted to the presentation of new L2 vocabulary, Brandl (2008) encourages L2 instructors to use a multimedia approach to vocabulary teaching. This approach involves the use of both words and visuals when teaching new words, as humans tend to recall images better than words. Visuals should be culturally authentic and easy to understand. Brandl argues that not only does this sort of input help learners understand the content more easily, but it also allows them to make form-meaning connections and word associations. These connections and associations are believed to promote better vocabulary retention because the brain will be able to store information in several ways.

Nation (2001) also recommends the use of clear visuals and body language and asserts that a "picture is not necessarily worth a thousand words, but one which clearly represents the underlying concept of the word undoubtedly is" (p. 85). Furthermore, he explains that these visuals and gestures should be combined with definitions so that L2

learners can store words visually and linguistically. He also stresses that definitions ought to be clear, specific, straightforward, concise, and simple. However, according to Graves (2013), student-friendly definitions are "… longer, often written in completed sentences, phrased in ways that are as helpful as possible to second-language learners, and do not include words more difficult than the words being defined" (p. 58).

As far as listening and speaking activities are concerned, Nation points out that "if learners' receptive vocabulary is very small, their productive vocabulary is likely to be smaller" (Nation, 2001, p. 126). Listening and speaking activities should be used as a way of increasing learners' repertoire of words. Listening activities focusing on vocabulary should involve interesting content and be an opportunity for learners to receive modified input and negotiate meaning. Both modified input and negotiation of meaning are beneficial to vocabulary learning as they require retrieval and generative use of vocabulary. Speaking activities should include cooperative work. Examples of such activities are oral debates, problem-solving activities, and role-plays. These activities give learners a chance to turn their receptive vocabulary into productive vocabulary. Teachers could also elicit vocabulary from students while working on semantic maps. When drawing these semantic maps, teachers would encourage learners to provide explanations and justifications and make connections between words orally.

In addition to listening and speaking, reading and writing can promote learners' vocabulary enrichment. L2 teachers should select reading materials that are appropriate to the level of their students. Nation states that these materials should include graded readers as, in order to promote vocabulary learning and reading comprehension, research shows that L2 learners must be familiar with at least 95% of the words in a text. Even though

graded readers are criticized for not being authentic materials, Nation takes issue with such criticism. He claims that authenticity should be measured by the readers' response to the materials. Furthermore, if L2 learners do not know the meaning of a significant number of words in a text, the reading materials will not lend themselves to vocabulary learning. Nevertheless, using texts that are extremely simple is not recommended, either, because L2 learners will not have an opportunity to notice and learn new vocabulary. Additionally, simplifying authentic texts reduces or eliminates some of the natural redundancy that is typically built in and actually facilitates comprehension.

L2 teachers may also use authentic texts provided that they facilitate learners' interaction with these materials. Including a gloss that contains simple and clear definitions is thought to promote learners' vocabulary growth and, to a certain extent, help them with reading comprehension. Visuals, such as pictures, graphs, and maps, can also contribute to a better understanding of more difficult reading materials.

In spite of the fact that reading large quantities of books promotes vocabulary learning, L2 teachers should supplement these readings with explicit vocabulary teaching of high-frequency words. Lightbown and Spada (2006) argue that L2 learners benefit from extensive reading, especially if the materials are useful and appeal to them, but their vocabulary gains are expected to be higher if they engage in vocabulary activities, particularly productive ones, so that a gap between receptive and productive vocabulary does not exist. Leaners should also be taught strategies to learn vocabulary independently.

Vocabulary activities should also be done so that learners retrieve and produce the target vocabulary creatively. As lack of vocabulary is one of the main difficulties learners

have when writing in their target language, teachers should see writing tasks, especially essays or any other type of composition, as an opportunity to motivate learners to expand their L2 vocabulary.

In Blachowicz and Fisher's "Vocabulary Lessons" (2004), these authors claim that instructors should do activities with students to raise their awareness of how words are structured and how they relate to one another. Teachers should select important vocabulary, teach it, activate it by relating to previous knowledge or by using demonstrations (e.g., total physical response demonstrations), and recycle it by using games, picture books and word walls.

Eyraud et al. (2000) put forward that the word wall approach is an appropriate tool for vocabulary expansion. By using thematically organized vocabulary panels or posters, students will be able to have multiple exposures to words, establish meaningful connections, and know other contexts in which the words are employed. Student involvement is essential and several activities can motivate them to be actively engaged. Games, word grouping, word part exercises, free writes, storytelling, and guessing games are just a few activities that can be done with the vocabulary students add to their word posters.

Folse (2004) also emphasizes the idea that vocabulary should be thematically organized. He deconstructs the idea that semantic sets help L2 learners to learn L2 vocabulary more easily. Semantic sets are present in a myriad of language textbooks and common examples are days of weeks, clothes, sports, parts of the house, to name a few.

Thematic sets differ from semantic sets in that the former have words that are not semantically related to one another, but are taught when a specific theme is introduced.

Folse exemplifies thematic sets by explaining that in a unit with a theme such as "looking at a picture of a trip," three words would be taught through a text: "sister," "tall," and "blue."

Even though it is a clear way of organizing textbooks, Folse states that new vocabulary should not be presented through semantic sets. In research studies conducted by Tinkan (1993, 1997) and Waring (1997), informants had difficulty learning words taught through semantic sets and words that were not semantically related were learned faster than semantically related words. These studies show that thematic sets could be a better alternative for vocabulary presentation. On the other hand, further research is necessary to investigate whether semantic or thematic sets are preferred when real languages are used. These studies used artificial languages, which prevented their results from being generalized to natural languages.

Not only is it relevant to describe what vocabulary teaching and learning involve, but it is also crucial to describe the process of designing a course to teach vocabulary. Nation (2001) argues that L2 teachers/course designers must have the specific goal of improving learners' vocabulary and enabling them to use the words in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. L2 teachers should also investigate learners' prior vocabulary knowledge and vocabulary strategy knowledge by creating a "needs analysis," a document based on the learners' lacks, needs and desires. When writing an "environmental analysis," course designers can study the participants of the learning process (teacher and learners), the learning process itself and what can help or interfere in learning.

It should be noted that a vocabulary course ought to be assessed based on the academic or administrative perspective of the participants of the learning process.

Finally, by taking a course on vocabulary learning, in addition to learning new L2 words, L2 learners should learn how to learn new words by themselves. Learners ought to be taught how to be autonomous. They should be encouraged to be responsible for making progress and knowing how to study vocabulary on their own.

Moving from course design to the implementation of vocabulary instruction, Folse (2004) rejects the myth that language teachers, textbooks, and curricula place an emphasis on L2 vocabulary teaching. It is a myth to consider that L2 vocabulary has been taught satisfactorily. Some professionals even believe that L2 vocabulary is learned effortlessly.

L2 learners are usually aware that it is important to have solid vocabulary knowledge. They are aware that little knowledge in this area results in communication problems and affects their reading and written performances. In addition, learners tend to pose more questions about vocabulary than other topics such as grammar. Vocabulary is also crucial for other disciplines in the curriculum and each discipline requires that L2 learners be able to use specific vocabulary.

For these reasons, vocabulary should be emphasized in language classes. Teachers should not only encourage learners to make associations when learning new L2 words, but also justify these associations and provide students with multiple encounters with the target vocabulary (Grabe & Stoller, 2013). Folse encourages instructors to teach vocabulary in every lesson and adds that vocabulary needs to be tested as well.

Vocabulary-learning Strategies

Folse (2004) presents arguments to support vocabulary-learning strategies (VLSs) that are commonly criticized by several language teachers. Folse defends the use of word lists to learn vocabulary in a second or foreign language even though it is commonly believed that these word lists are unproductive. Nevertheless, research (Carter, 1987) does not provide counterevidence to the use of word lists. In fact, learning vocabulary from word lists can be an effective strategy, especially with beginning L2 learners, who seem to benefit from simpler definitions, synonyms and translations into their native language (L1). Beginning learners do not benefit as much as advanced learners when they are exposed to vocabulary in context. Instead, a gloss with L2 words and their translations is reported to be a useful tool that helps L2 learners to retain vocabulary better (Prince, 1995).

Although word lists are criticized for not promoting a deeper knowledge of words, Folse asserts that students benefit from using them. Using word lists that allow learners to retrieve words more easily is a useful strategy because it allows learners to have more encounters with vocabulary. Word lists can be useful, but they cannot be the only source of vocabulary learning. New words can be practiced in written and oral activities.

Contrary to common teacher beliefs, Folse rejects the widely held belief that use of translation as a means to learn new vocabulary should be avoided at all costs. Despite the fact that some words do not have an exact translation in a foreign language, Folse argues that beginning L2 learners benefit more from an L1 translation than an explanation in the target language. Research (Lotto & de Groot, 1998) indicates that L2 learners who were exposed to the words and their corresponding translations had better task scores in

productive tasks than L2 informants that were exposed to words and their corresponding pictures. Therefore, Folse suggested not preventing students from writing down the translation of a word. It should be noted that the author never claims that teachers should use students' L1 as a way of delivering instruction.

Due to the impossibility of teaching all the words of an L2, Nation (2001) and Graves (2013) suggest that vocabulary-learning strategies be taught and practiced in language classes. In reading materials, L2 learners tend to encounter unknown words and may need to infer their meaning in order to fully comprehend the meaning of a piece of reading. Therefore, learners need to be taught how to guess the meaning of L2 vocabulary words. To make correct guesses, they need to be guided. Contexts can provide useful clues that can help learners make sense of what they are reading.

Even though Folse (2004) acknowledges that inference of meaning is a strategy that can be used to facilitate reading comprehension, he deconstructs the myth that guessing L2 words from context is a fruitful strategy to learn L2 vocabulary. As it is not likely that L1 learners received instruction on every single word that is part of their lexicon, they had to infer their meaning by using context clues and learned a significant amount of L1 vocabulary through guessing. However, the same does not appear to happen to L2 learners when learning L2 vocabulary. Inferring the meaning of L2 words is a more demanding task, especially because some L2 learners may not know enough L2 vocabulary to use this strategy. This strategy requires that learners have a large repertoire of L2 words. When L2 learners come across an unknown word, they may ignore it or make a correct or incorrect guess of its meaning. Furthermore, context clues may not abound in authentic materials and if L2 learners do not know a specific word, it is likely

that they will not know the words around it.

Despite the fact that inferring the meaning of words from context is not recommended for L2 vocabulary learning, Folse points out that this can be a beneficial reading strategy as learners may not be familiar with all the words that are used in a text. Furthermore, it seems rather unlikely that L2 teachers will be able to teach all the words that compose a foreign language lexicon. Therefore, the ability to infer meaning based on context should be developed in L2 learners, but new L2 vocabulary should be taught and practiced.

Still in the realm of strategies to learn L2 vocabulary, a prevailing myth states that good L2 learners just employ a couple of specific strategies to learn new L2 words. Folse rejects such a myth because L2 learners should be able to use a variety of vocabulary-learning strategies (VLSs). VLSs should be explicitly taught and practiced, as some learners may be unaware of their existence.

The literature on teaching VLSs presents several different strategies that can be incorporated into language instruction. According to Folse, the most prominent method to learn vocabulary is the keyword method, which involves two stages. Folse states that "[in] the first stage, learners form their own acoustic association between the target word and any word in L1. In the second stage, learners form an image link between the target L2 word and the L1" (p. 93). The same steps are described in Nation (2008). For instance, native English speakers who are learning Portuguese should first learn that *cachecol* means *scarf* in the latter language. The following step could be to associate the pronunciation of the target word with the pronunciation of the phrase "catch a cold" in English due to their pronunciation similarity. In this case, the association could be even stronger in that the Portuguese noun and the English phrase are semantically related. One

could claim that people wear *cachecóis* (*scarves*) to avoid getting a cold.

Folse (2004), together with Nation (2008) and Graves (2013), suggests that morphology could be used to help learners expand their vocabulary repertoire. For example, teachers could address the different parts of words such as "review" ("re-" meaning "again" and "view" meaning "see"). Teachers could also use links to teach words such as "valley" (the first letter of the word resembles a valley) and particles and prepositions could be used to teach phrasal verbs such as "call off" ("off" has a negative meaning in some phrasal verbs). However, this last strategy is limited in use because there are different L2 words that cannot be learned through an L1 association.

Vocabulary notebooks are also suggested as a way of reviewing the meaning of L2 words. These books should be organized and facilitate the access to its context. One possibility of organizing a vocabulary is by listing the L2 word, an L1 translation, a synonym or an antonym related to the word, an example/collocation.

Notwithstanding the array of strategies that can be utilized to learn L2 vocabulary, there does not appear to be a perfect strategy. Learner differences and cultural differences should be valued when teaching VLSs. Additionally, the amount of time that L2 learners engage in activities that contribute to vocabulary learning is relevant. The more time L2 learners spend learning new vocabulary, the more they are likely to succeed.

Not only should L2 learners be able to apply VLSs, but an ability to use dictionaries is believed to help L2 vocabulary learning (Graves, 2013; Nation, 2008). Dictionary skills should be taught and L2 learners should learn how to deal with issues such as polysemy (i.e., the coexistence of many possible meanings for a word or phrase) in dictionaries. When looking up a word in the dictionary, learners may find entries that

contain several definitions for a word and L2 learners should be able to choose the appropriate definitions.

Along those lines, the idea that only monolingual dictionaries should be used in language classes does not hold true. Those who believe in this myth consider the use bilingual dictionaries counterproductive. Folse argues that the use of bilingual dictionaries can be encouraged because research that has been conducted on the use of dictionary does not condemn such dictionaries. On the contrary, research studies demonstrate that bilingual glosses contribute to vocabulary learning.

Vocabulary Instruction in the Brazilian Context

This M.A. thesis describes an action research study that was carried out in Brazil; consequently, knowing how vocabulary instruction is traditionally implemented in the target country is of paramount importance. Rodrigues (2007) investigated how L2 vocabulary is taught in different education settings in Brazil. In addition, he focuses on Brazilian teachers' and students' beliefs about vocabulary teaching and learning. In order to collect data, Rodrigues administered questionnaires for the participating English teachers and students. Moreover, he wrote teaching journals as he observed L2 instructors in different settings: two high school teachers, two language teachers who work at private language centers and two college professors. Half of the students who answered the questionnaires revealed that lack of vocabulary makes communication in an L2 an extremely challenging task. Half of the students also informed the researcher that they did not study vocabulary before class, but when they did study it, they used strategies such as word lists, and rote memorization, which were criticized by the author. Students did not

claim to make any word associations. However, they acknowledged that vocabulary-learning strategies should be taught.

The interviewed teachers stated that students struggle to speak a foreign language because they think in Portuguese. High school teachers believe that grammatical structures prevent students from coping with a conversation in the target language. These teachers taught grammar-based classes in which sentence translation was the most common activity done in class. On the other hand, English teachers in private language centers and college professors believe that the difficulties of communicating in a foreign language arise from vocabulary deficiencies. Only one teacher in the study used different strategies (e.g., associations, visuals, games, context, body language, computers) to teach vocabulary that poses problems while carrying out a task.

In his study, Rodrigues observes that the participating teachers did not teach vocabulary explicitly to facilitate classroom interaction. He concludes that teachers' beliefs about the importance of vocabulary for communication differed from how they taught vocabulary in their classes. Rodrigues argues that vocabulary teaching needs improvement in the settings that were investigated, and it is the teachers' role to teach students vocabulary and vocabulary-learning strategies.

Teacher and Learner Perceptions

As far as the learning process is concerned, teachers and learners may not view languages and language learning in a similar fashion. Gabillon (2012) acknowledges that the fact that teacher and learner beliefs do not often match could be detrimental to the learning process. Such mismatches could discourage learners from continuing their

learning experiences as divergence could trigger demotivation and lack of confidence. Drawing on her review of the literature, Gabillon (2012) stresses the need to consider both learner and teacher beliefs in order to promote a more harmonious foreign language learning experience. Additionally, she puts forward that instruction should be planned to address learners' needs and "dysfunctional beliefs" (p. 97).

With an interest in another educational setting, Peacock (1998) also investigated teacher and learner beliefs mismatches in a university setting in Hong Kong. His research study entailed to what extent these mismatches contributed to an unsuccessful English learning experience. In addition, he analyzed the relationship between learner incorrect beliefs and lower proficiency scores.

Peacock collected data by using the beliefs in the beliefs about language learning inventory (BALLI) questionnaire (Horwitz, 1988). The author observed that teachers and students diverged in some beliefs, and results showed that learners who disagreed with the sentences in the questionnaire tended to be more proficient users of English.

Based on his results, Peacock concluded that wrong learning beliefs can result in unsuccessful language learning. Furthermore, he encourages teachers to discover what their learners' beliefs are in order to try to change incorrect beliefs and avoid lack of motivation and self-confidence. Explaining the rationale behind classroom activities is also believed to contribute to learners' awareness of the language learning process.

From a teacher's perspective, in his review article, Borg (1997) provides a comprehensive review of research studies on teacher cognition, which is defined as "what teachers know, believe, and think" (p. 81). He also acknowledges that beliefs, conceptions and knowledge are interwoven and inform teaching practices. Borg claims

that teacher cognition is influenced by teachers' schooling, professional coursework, contexts, and teaching experiences.

Schooling has an influence on teacher cognition, as teachers tend to have plenty of experience as learners in school settings. The author states that beliefs developed at an early age have a far-reaching effect on cognition. Professional coursework, that is, educational background, also influences teacher cognitions in varying degrees. Opportunities to revisit their own beliefs may lead to the development of new paradigms regarding the learning process. Additionally, teachers' experiences may also inform their cognition. However, a discrepancy between cognition and classroom practice is encountered. Finally, cognition can be affected by the context in which teachers are inserted.

Along the same lines, in his article, Richardson (2003) presents an overview of research studies that investigated preservice teachers' beliefs in teacher education programs. She defines beliefs as "psychologically held understandings, premises, or propositions about the world that are felt to be true" (Richardson, 2003, p. 2). She also points out that terms such as perceptions, and attitudes, which are usually used by scholars, actually mean the same as beliefs. In referring to teacher beliefs and attitudes in this thesis, I will use the term perceptions in Richardson's (2003) sense.

As beliefs are held understandings, it is claimed that they are not only difficult to change, but they influence teachers' pedagogical approach. Preservice teachers tend to start their teacher education programs with firm beliefs that were shaped by their personal experiences as school learners and by their knowledge of school disciplines and pedagogy. Richardson reiterates that the reasons why it is complicated for teachers-to-be

to change their beliefs are that teacher education programs are short and that there seems to be a separation between academic programs and field experiences, which is not conducive to belief changing.

In the realm of students' beliefs, Simon and Taverniers (2011) investigated first-year university students' beliefs of a foreign language (English in this study), language learning and language learning strategies in Flanders, Belgium. By using a questionnaire, these researchers elicited participants' view on grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation learning. They were interested in to what extent learners' beliefs reflected the two most common L2 approaches to language teaching in Belgium: grammar-based and communicative language teaching.

In general, learners' beliefs included the idea that vocabulary mistakes cause more communication problems than grammar or pronunciation mistakes. However, they do not see vocabulary learning as a challenging task as school language classes emphasize the use of dictionaries as a resource for vocabulary learning. Good memory and self-study were believed to contribute to better vocabulary knowledge.

Overall, participants stated that they believed that it is difficult to learn grammar. However, one can succeed in mastering English grammar by studying hard and doing practice exercises. Participants revealed their belief that having a "good" pronunciation is a talent that can be successfully developed by living abroad.

Most participants supported the idea that it is possible to achieve a native-like level in English. As a matter of fact, participants demonstrated confidence of their proficiency in English when answering the questionnaire. Simon and Taverniers attributed this confidence to the fact that most young people in Flanders have a good command of

English. Such a set of beliefs is unique to the population that was analyzed.

The review of the literature provided in this chapter frames my action research project. Action research is personal; it is a process in which the researcher as teacher examines his own educational practice systematically and carefully. The research ideas presented in this chapter were used to inform the choices I made in the initial curriculum design process and in the implementation phases, the three cycles of teaching the course. I briefly summarize these influences below. More detailed reflections are provided in Chapters 6 and 7.

I used a CBI model in the course design, using content (i.e., culture and intercultural communication) as my organizing principle. In addition, I followed the six-T's approach, which targets the importance of selecting theme-based texts, and the three-stage lesson planning process, which targets the importance of activating and building background knowledge. I planned for cooperative learning activities so that my students could benefit from working with peers and move beyond their own zone of proximal development (ZPD; Vygotsky, 1978, as cited Grabe & Stoller, 1997).

I used extensive reading, selecting texts that were all related to developing knowledge of culture and skills related to intercultural communication. My main area of interest in terms of culture was in Moran's (2001) notion of perspectives, the invisible part of culture than can affect our intercultural attitudes, and, ultimately, our relationships. To this end, I designed vocabulary development activities that supported content development, helped learners derive their understandings of vocabulary from context, and deepened learner's understanding of culture and how to use this understanding to become better intercultural communicators. I considered the level of learners' abilities and the

challenges of the tasks that I gave them in order to promote a learning experience in the classroom that is similar to flow (Csikszentmihályi, 1997).

My main research interest in terms of CBI resides in learner and teacher perceptions of this methodology in an EFL context. Throughout the three action research cycles, I focused on collecting data on learner and teacher perceptions that would inform my understanding of CBI methodology in an EFL context.

Research Questions

Drawing on the components and foci of CBI that I deemed important for teaching culture as content in the Brazilian context, I have framed the following research questions for this action research project:

1. What are student perceptions of the use of CBI in this EFL context?

2. What are teacher perceptions of the use of CBI in this EFL context?

3. What are the teacher's challenges in teaching culture in a content and language integrated classroom in this EFL context?

4. To what extent do learners recognize the importance of intercultural attributes, such as "tolerance, empathy, open-mindedness and understanding" (Piasecka, 2011, p. 32), to successful intercultural communication in a content-based classroom in an EFL context?

5. What are the teacher's challenges in teaching vocabulary in content and language integrated curriculum in this EFL context?

6. What are student perceptions of how vocabulary-learning strategies help them in learning vocabulary in a content-based classroom in this EFL context?

7. What are teacher perceptions of students' vocabulary learning in a content and

language integrated learning classroom in an EFL context?

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The design of this research study and also the design of the CBI course on which the

research is based align with my own views about knowledge and how we come to know

what we know. In terms of my orientation to research, I define myself as a constructivist,

a view of research that presents reality as a multifaceted construction. More specifically, I

see human beings as sociohistorical individuals who have unique backgrounds and

experiences, see the world, in practice, from a myriad of perspectives, constructing reality

and knowledge through interactions with other people and with the environment. To that

end, action research—with its intense focus on the interaction of specific individuals and

cultural contexts—is ideal for constructing my understanding of teaching from a

constructivist point of view. My understandings of educational settings evolve as I

participate in a cyclical process and interact with other interlocutors involved in the

process. In action research, learners' perspectives and beliefs are constantly assessed,

which allows a specific reality to be (re)constructed based on the experiences of its

members. This action research project offers me an opportunity to implement my

constructivist's orientation to research.

Action research is conducted by instructors in their own classrooms and aims to

improve teaching practices through a critical examination of instruction. The iterative nature of this kind of research involves 1) the identification of a problem or a research question, 2) the creation of a plan on how to address this problem or answer the question, and 3) the formulation of hypotheses that are based on the outcomes; therefore, the process can be used as a possible intervention. Steps are taken to implement the plan and then analyze the results. Finally, these results clarify what actions ought to be carried out in the new cycle of action research (Nunan & Bailey, 2009).

Along those lines, the aim of this study is not the discovery of an absolute truth but of ways to unearth and manage the many relative truths in a classroom. As such, the objectives of this study are 1) to analyze how a content-based intervention is perceived by research participants, and 2) to identify learner perceptions of vocabulary development (specific to culture and intercultural competence) and the use of vocabulary-learning strategies. It should be noted that individual participants may have completely different experiences when taking part in this investigation.

This study is based on the organizing principles of action research: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. In order to investigate teacher and learner perceptions of vocabulary learning and vocabulary-learning strategies in content and language integrated curriculum, I designed and taught a content and language integrated course using culture and the development of intercultural competence as the content (and, therefore, the organizing framework) to pre-intermediate and intermediate English students in a language school in Niterói, Brazil for two summers with the course being taught twice in the second summer.

<u>Action Research Cycles</u>

In this section, I briefly explain my curricular choices in each of the three action research cycles with a focus on the major changes that occurred from one cycle to the next.

<u>Cycle 1</u>

Cycle 1 of this action research project was conducted in Summer Semester 2012 as part of an independent research project that I hoped would be fruitful enough for my thesis. Cycle 1 provided an opportunity for me as the teacher/action researcher to design an initial CBI unit and pilot it at a language school in Brazil. The first step was to decide on the content for the course. During the spring of 2012, I created a survey in which I gave potential students possible options for content themes for the course. These were themes that I thought it was possible for me to teach in the summer given my own expertise and my knowledge of the English program in Niterói. The results showed that the students wanted to learn about social issues in the United States, particularly issues concerning interpersonal relationships. On the basis of the results of the survey, I began identifying possible content, sequencing it, and looking for resources, such as the *Dear Abby* letters, which all focus on relationship and interpersonal issues as they are contextualized in the United States. I also selected texts and segments from two TV series targeted for a U.S. audience. I established communication with the language school coordinator who gave me initial feedback on my ideas and supported me in moving forward. I was able to teach the course in Summer Semester 2012, interact with students from the language school, and observe how students engaged with the target content that

focused on culture and specifically, on understanding interpersonal relationships in the United States as a way to improve intercultural understanding. During that first course, I also focused on helping students develop one specific language skill (writing).

The pilot cycle was a ten-class content-based course. Students and I met for 3 hours (two class periods of 90 minutes) once a week. In these five meetings, I approached the topic of family relations in the United States and introduced the topic of romantic relationships in the United States. The content, specifically interpersonal relationships in the context of the U.S., was taught through TV series (*Modern Family*© and *Parenthood*©), articles and several letters (*Dear Abby* letters) from an online advice column, in which people asked a counselor for help. The letters were always accompanied by the counselor's response. A key component of the course was giving students an opportunity to discuss the content of these letters. In addition, students were invited to write their own texts in multiple stages. Students wrote their first drafts and submitted them for peer revision. After receiving feedback from other classmates, students worked on their second drafts and submitted them to me. I provided students with specific feedback that aimed to guide them through the process of discovering the answers to their writing problems on their own. In other words, instead of simply correcting learners' errors, I pointed them in the best direction to correcting their own texts.

Based on students' feedback and submission of written assignments, I made the decision to continue with the target culture but to adjust it slightly. In Cycles 2 and 3, I selected specific texts on culture and intercultural communication and extracted vocabulary related to the content from the texts instead of using *Dear Abby* letters. The

decision to focus on vocabulary related to intercultural communication was not random as it was based on my observations during Cycle 1. As many language learners tended to struggle to communicate about the content in the L2 due to the lack of vocabulary knowledge, vocabulary became the language component of the new cycles of the course.

One issue that encouraged me to shift from a focus on L2 writing development in Cycle 1 to reading and vocabulary development in Cycles 2 and 3 was student participation. This was not a required course. While students loved having an opportunity to take another English course, they were not motivated to do homework. In the pilot course, few participants actually turned in compositions and were engaged in the process of drafting, revising, and reviewing their peers' texts even though they were enthusiastic participants in class. The fact that students were supposed to write their texts outside of class likely influenced the number of assignments that were submitted. In Cycles 2 and 3, the activities that I used to collect learner perceptual data were completed during class time, so I was more successful in obtaining the data that I needed in order to understand how my students were responding to the instruction.

Cycle 2

Cycle 2 was an 11-class course that happened in summer semester 2013. During this cycle, new participating students and I met twice a week (2 hours per meeting). The conceptual framework of Cycle 2 was designed as part of an independent study project and a course and curriculum development class, both taken in spring semester 2013. The content around which the lessons were planned was still interpersonal relationships in the United States. The conceptual framework from Cycle 1 was refocused to target

intercultural differences in interpersonal relationships and was organized in terms of how these relationships are established in life: family relationships, friendship, romantic relationships, and relationships at work. Like Cycle 1, lessons were planned according to Briton and Holten's (1997) into, through, and beyond framework and Stoller and Grabe's six-T's approach to CBI as the lessons included a *theme* (interpersonal relationships in the United States), written and aural *texts*, different *topics* (family, romantic relationships, workspace, and friendship), *tasks* related to L2 vocabulary and vocabulary strategies, and *transitions* among topics.

In Cycle 2, I began to work with the content and language in a different way by extracting key vocabulary items (i.e., words, phrases, formulaic expressions, collocations) from the texts themselves and working with them in class. I began to see that vocabulary development within an L2 classroom does not happen automatically just because you target a list of vocabulary words. Because vocabulary knowledge is complex, learning vocabulary is not solely a matter of the rote memorization of a definition, but one that is multileveled. I began to explore different ways to use the targeted vocabulary in a variety of activities to help my students talk about the content and contribute to the discussions on intercultural differences in interpersonal relationships between the U.S. and Brazil. Learning the cultural values and norms of a foreign culture through reading and then working with specific language in that content area is likely to aid learners in communicating outside of the L2 classroom in an appropriate fashion and help them in developing intercultural tolerance and acceptance.

In Cycle 2 participants were also introduced to three vocabulary-learning strategies: analyzing word parts, keeping an organized vocabulary notebook, and using the keyword

method. These were strategies that were intended to be used by learners outside of the classroom. Analyzing word parts aided participants in the identification of unknown words. Keeping an organized vocabulary notebook provided students with a chance to retrieve new words. This notebook was intended to contain several aspects of vocabulary knowledge in each word entry. The keyword method was useful in that learners were asked to make connections between words and acoustic representations and images. Learners had opportunities to use the content words in a creative way during this cycle.

Cycle 3

At the end of Cycle 2, I had the opportunity to teach the course for a third cycle. The course in Cycle 3 was attended by new participating students and 1 student who also took the course in Cycle 1. In Cycle 3, I made additional modifications to the curriculum that I taught in Cycle 2. Even though the Cycle 2 conceptual framework included four types of interpersonal relationships that I explored from a U.S. perspective —family relationships, friendship, romantic relationships, and relationships at work—I only explored family relationships in Cycle 2. The main reason for this was because I began to understand how to work with concepts in depth. Although I was aware that one of the goals of the CBI is to promote depth of processing, I did not truly understand how to do it in the classroom. In Cycle 3, not only did I attempt to include more information about U.S. family relationships, but I was able to teach the course for more hours in Cycle 3, allowing me to add one more topic on interpersonal relationships—friendship in the United States.

In Cycle 2, I began the process of recycling content and language, but in Cycle 3 I really saw how important it was to do this. In Cycle 3, I provided students with more

opportunities to review and use the content vocabulary. Furthermore, new activities were added to the beyond stage of the lesson in order to allow learners to apply what they learned about content and language. Some activities, especially vocabulary activities and text comprehension activities that were planned for Cycle 2 but were not used due to time constraints, were also carried out in Cycle 3. As a result, more vocabulary was taught and recycled in Cycle 3.

The Cycle 3 course was an intensive course because students and I met every day (Monday – Friday) for 2 hours. This course contained a total of 13 classes, as opposed to 10 classes during Cycle 1 and 11 classes during Cycle 2.

<div align="center">Data Collection in Cycles 2 and 3</div>

In order to answer my research questions, I needed to collect data from my students. In addition, the data needed to be collected during classroom learning activities as I could not count on students doing homework. Participants were also asked to keep a journal to reflect on their perceptions of the use of CBI in an EFL context, the strategies that helped them in learning target vocabulary in a content-based course, and their reflections on the importance of the topics on interpersonal relationships and intercultural communication. At the end of Cycles 2 and 3, I also interviewed some students, those who attended most lessons, in order to obtain more data on participants' perceptions. In addition, students completed a questionnaire prior to the course in Cycles 2 and 3.

As I was the teacher of the three cycles of this content-based course, I kept a teaching journal to register my own perceptions about the use of CBI in an EFL setting and my perceptions of the development of students' vocabulary learning skills and

understandings of intercultural communication and the differences in interpersonal relationships between the U.S. and Brazil. Additionally, I described my personal challenges in teaching vocabulary and culture in a content and language integrated curriculum in an EFL context. All the lessons were videotaped and served as additional data to corroborate teacher and learner perceptions.

What follows is a detailed description of the data collection tools and their use in obtaining information about teacher and learner perceptions.

Student Journals

In these journals, students were expected to reflect on their learning experience by answering questions based on a specific lesson that they had attended. In Cycle 1, students were asked, "What did you learn about culture in today's class?" Students were free to answer this question in English or Portuguese and most chose Portuguese. After Cycle 1, I realized that this question was not providing rich enough responses. In Cycles 2 and 3, learners were asked the following questions:

1. What did you learn about culture in today's class?

2. What did you learn about English in today's class?

3. What else did you learn in today's class? In what ways will you be able to use what you learned in future experiences?

4. In what way(s) was today's class similar to or different from other language classes you took or are taking?

5. What activity did you like the most? Why?

6. What activity did you like the least? Why?

These questions were asked in English and in Portuguese and participants were allowed to use either language to answer the questionnaire.

Participants' answers in their daily journals provided information on their learning experiences while attending the Cycle 2 and 3 courses. Their answers were analyzed as a means to investigate the content, language, and strategies that they claimed to have learned in each lesson, as well as their ability to identify how this knowledge could be applied to real life situations or to their language studies. In addition, participants' views on the similarities and differences between the CBI course and their traditional language classes address Research Question 1 of this study: What are student perceptions of the use of CBI in this EFL context? This data collection tool also helped me answer Research Question 4 (i.e., To what extent do learners recognize the importance of intercultural attributes, such as "tolerance, empathy, open-mindedness and understanding" (Piasecka, 2011, p. 32), to successful intercultural communication in a content-based classroom in an EFL context?) and Research Question 6 (i.e., What are student perceptions of how vocabulary-learning strategies help them in learning vocabulary in a content-based classroom in this EFL context?).

Initial Questionnaires

Data were collected from participants in Cycles 2 and 3 through an initial questionnaire. This initial questionnaire focused on their views of how they study vocabulary and their experiences with CBI methodology as students. The 16 questions were adapted from Rodrigues[1] (2001; see Appendix A for the questionnaire used in this

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[1] I would like to thank Daniel Rodrigues for allowing me to adapt his questionnaire for my research study.

research study). This questionnaire was administered to identify the characteristics of the student population participating in Cycles 2 and 3. Participants' initial perceptions of the use of CBI in language classes, as well as the importance of vocabulary-learning strategies were also analyzed.

Oral Interviews

Oral interviews were conducted at the end of each action research cycle. In Cycle 1, 3 students were interviewed, whereas in Cycles 2 and 3 the teacher interviewed the students who attended the most classes—2 in Cycle 2 and 3 in Cycle 3 (see Appendix B for a complete list of the oral interview questions). Oral interviews were conducted to investigate what participants believed that they had learned regarding content, language, and strategies by taking a content and language integrated course. In addition, their perceptions of the use of CBI (Research Question 1) and how helpful they believed the targeted vocabulary-learning strategies were to their learning of vocabulary (Research Question 6) were investigated through these interviews.

Videotaped Lessons

Lessons were videotaped to obtain information about learner and teacher perceptions. Learner perceptions on the importance of intercultural attributes (Research Question 4) were investigated through these videos. Two lessons on tolerance were transcribed and students' comments were interpreted through the lens of the action researcher.

The other lessons were watched in order to identify teacher perceptions of the use of CBI (Research Question 2) and challenges in teaching culture (Research Question 3) and

vocabulary (Research Question 5). Teacher perceptions of students' vocabulary learning were also investigated (Research Question 7).

<u>Teaching Journals</u>

A teaching journal using a set of questions to help teachers reflect on their teaching (M. Christison, personal communication, March 26, 2012) was kept during the three action research cycles. After each lesson, the teacher/action researcher answered a number of questions about how successful the class was. These questions focused on the following:

- description of the specific lesson

- personal teaching goals

- performance objectives for students

- instructional activities and strategies used in the lesson

- the most effective and least effective parts of the lesson

The answers to the journal questions were analyzed to investigate teacher perceptions of the use of CBI in this particular context (Research Question 2) as well as teacher's challenges in teaching culture (Research Question 3) and designing vocabulary activities (Research Question 5) in a course that integrates content and language. Teachers' perceptions of participants' vocabulary learning (Research Question 7) were also examined through these journals. The list of questions present in the teaching journals is available in Appendix C.

<u>Data Coding</u>

Excel spreadsheets were utilized to store learner data. Students' initial questionnaire answers and student journals entries were translated into English and organized on separate spreadsheets. Oral interviews and two lessons on cultural tolerance were transcribed and copied to spreadsheets as well. In the first round of coding, I went through all the learner data and labeled the topics of each entry. Different types of information struck me during my first contact with this data and I took notes on another Excel spreadsheet. In the second round of coding, I re-read the data and selected the parts that I found relevant. I used a color-coding technique to indicate the categories to which those parts belonged. Different colors were used to identify learner perceptions of content and language, content, language, and strategies. Additionally, learner perceptions of each vocabulary-learning strategy and their different perceptions of the importance of developing intercultural understanding and tolerance were color-coded.

The process of investigating teacher data was different. The teaching journals written from Cycle 1 to Cycle 3 were examined and relevant parts were extracted and copied into a Microsoft Word document. In the same file, I recorded notes from the videotaped lessons on the use of CBI and the challenges of teaching culture and vocabulary.

<u>The Context for the Study</u>

The Niterói private language center where I conducted the three action research cycles has a 5-year program of study. The instructional time-frame is 16 weeks, and there are ten levels offered by the school:

- Basic 1

- Basic 2

- Pre-Intermediate 1

- Pre-Intermediate 2

- Intermediate 1

- Intermediate 2

- Advanced 1

- Advanced 2

- Advanced 3

- Additional language development module

The textbooks adopted by the school indicate that they follow a communicative approach. According to the textbook writers, their textbook series places an "[e]mphasis on communicative competence" and "[a] balance of skills, vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar gets students speaking with confidence" (Oxenden & Lathan-Koenig, 2008a, back cover). However, teachers are given considerable freedom in teaching their courses and allowed to create activities that do not necessarily coincide with communicative language teaching.

Vocabulary is introduced through short reading and listening activities on different topics. Most new vocabulary is introduced in a separate section of the book with words grouped according to the topics to which they belong. Typical vocabulary learning activities include matching the pictures to the right words/expressions and completing sentences with the most appropriate words based on a list of words provided in a box or based on pictures. No vocabulary-learning strategies are found in the four textbooks analyzed. Some exercises involve synonyms and antonyms, but there are no activities that

stress raising learners' awareness of the use of synonyms and antonyms as a strategy to learn vocabulary.

The concept of culture is present in reading and listening materials in the textbooks and most lessons focus on general cultural topics (i.e., big "C" culture with readings related to food, history, architecture). Countries, cultural facts, products, and social practices are emphasized. In the Basic 1 level, for instance, there is a quiz on facts related to the United States, and in the Basic 2 level, there is a lesson on New York and another lesson on two cities named Sydney, one in Canada and the other one in Australia. This approach to teaching culture is commonplace in EFL classrooms in Brazil, but it is quite different from the one that I propose in which learners use the content in order to participate in classroom activities that raise awareness of intercultural differences and develop skills for intercultural communication.

Research Participants

There were 10 participants from Cycle 1, 8 from Cycle 2, and 4 from Cycle 3 who participated in the study. One participant attended the course in Cycles 1 and 3; therefore, I collected data from a total of 21 different students. However, due to the small amount of data collected during Cycle 1, this action research study concentrates on data obtained from the participants who attended the course during Cycles 2 and 3. Each of these participants was given a number from 1 to 12 and these numbers were used to refer to the same participants throughout the analysis and discussions of the results.

Participants 1 through 8 attended the course in Cycle 2, and Participants 9 through 12 attended the course in Cycle 3. Participation in all the action research cycles of the

course occurred on a voluntary basis and participants could drop the course at their discretion.

The participants were Brazilian college students and/or members of the local community aged 18-60, who attended the language school in Niterói, Brazil. They were pre-intermediate and intermediate English language learners according to modules that they attended at the private language center. I selected this student population based on the fact that it is not necessary to wait until students are advanced learners of a foreign language to use content and language integrated curricula.

Teacher as Action Researcher

I taught the three cycles of the content and language integrated course and collected and analyzed data during these three cycles. According to Richardson (2003), my teaching experiences and my overall educational background are thought to influence my teaching beliefs and perceptions; therefore, it is relevant to provide an overview of what experiences shaped these beliefs and perceptions.

I was born and raised in the state of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and I attended four different schools there. I double-majored in Portuguese and English and earned a secondary teaching license from one university in the same state. I also earned a specialist's degree in teaching Portuguese as a foreign language from another university in Rio de Janeiro. I am currently a graduate student at the University of Utah, where I have completed linguistics courses on content-based instruction, course and curriculum development, and L2 methods.

I worked as an English teacher at four different language schools, one of which is the

language school where I conducted my action research study. Additionally, I have taught Portuguese as an L2 at an intensive program in Rio de Janeiro. As an M.A. student at the University of Utah, I have taught beginning and intermediate Portuguese courses and academic English as a Second Language (ESL) courses.

CHAPTER 4

LEARNER DATA

This study makes use of two data types—learner data and teacher data—to inform

action research. Learner data were collected in the language school classroom where

classes were held. Teacher data were collected from teacher reflections during the three

cycles. Both types of data are relevant in addressing the research questions of this study.

Chapter 4 is devoted to the results of learner data from Cycles 2 and 3, and Chapter 5

presents the results of teacher data during Cycles 1 through 3.

This chapter contains a summary of participants' perceptions of content-based

instruction (CBI) as a language learning methodology, as well as information on the

vocabulary-learning strategies (VLSs) that were taught in Cycles 2 and 3. Because one of

the goals of this CBI course was to develop learners' content knowledge related to the

development of intercultural understanding, learners' views on intercultural tolerance are

also summarized in the present chapter.

Quotes from participants' journals and oral interviews are used throughout this

chapter. Most original journal entries are in Portuguese, and all the oral interviews data

are in Portuguese; however, their English translations are used in the present chapter.

Misspellings in participants' comments did not prevent me from clearly identifying the

intended Portuguese words. Fillers and repeated consecutive words were omitted from both the English translations and the original quotes in Portuguese.

Participants' comments during course lessons offer insight into their views on their acceptance of the difference between Brazilian and U.S. ideas related to interpersonal communication. Most of these comments are in English and no translation is necessary. Participants' grammatical errors are maintained in the quotes used in this chapter because participants' intended messages are understood.

<p style="text-align:center">Student Perceptions of CBI Methodology</p>

Research Question 1 focused on student perceptions of the use of CBI methodology in an EFL context. As previously stated, CBI methodology makes a dual commitment to content and language, and, as such, it is an atypical approach to teaching English in Niterói, Brazil, where the focus of foreign language teaching is on language per se. Learner data addressed different areas related to CBI, including comments that related solely to content or language, as well as some that addressed content and language integration.

Student Perceptions of Content and Language Integration

Participants' initial perceptions of content and language integration in Cycles 2 and 3 were investigated through their responses to a questionnaire. In this questionnaire, participants were asked about the possibility of learning English through interesting content. All participants indicated that they initially believed that learning English through interesting content was possible. They were also invited to explain their answers

by either providing an example of how they might learn English through interesting content or a description of what obstacles might prevent content and language integration. Table 4.1 categorizes learners' responses.

Table 4.1 shows that learners' examples did not clearly focus on content and language integration or illustrated how content and language could be taught simultaneously. Most of the examples they gave included types of language learning activities with which they were familiar (e.g., games and songs). There were a few responses that presented possible types of content they were curious about, such as nutrition and current topics.

The results presented in Table 4.1 suggest that the concept of content and language integration was not well understood by the participants, at least at the beginning of the course in Cycles 2 and 3; most of the responses included no evidence of content or language. This is not surprising given that traditional language teaching methodology is the expectation for most students. In addition to little evidence of content and language integration, even those responses that identified content revealed doubts about the role it plays in the class devoted to teaching language. For example, the phrase *curiosities about nutrition* from 1 participant's interview downplays the relevance of content, suggesting that it is neither a component that drives the curriculum nor a methodological choice for

Table 4.1

Examples of Content and Language Integration

Activities	Resources	Content
• role-play • field trips • games	• songs • videos • movies • interesting text • article in my field	• curiosities about nutrition • theme of interest • current topics

instruction.

In addition to data from the questionnaire given prior to instruction, student journals, and oral interviews cast some light on participants' perceptions of content and language integration. These data suggest that the integration of content and language became clearer to the participants as the course progressed. Most participants who were interviewed stated that content and language were taught during Cycles 2. Referring to the Cycle 3 course, Participant 10 explained that "[a] specific content and a foreign language at the same time… is exactly what we did here all the time..."[1] Another piece of evidence supporting this perception was found in Participant 7's comment: "I think I was able to learn a lot both about family [in the U.S.], which was our subject, and improved my language."[2] In one of his journals, Participant 7 also acknowledged that the activities done in class required knowledge of content and language: "… we had to debate about family themes and, in order to do that, we needed to know both English and the culture of the countries studied."[3]

Not only did some participants acknowledge the possibility of content and language integration, but they also expressed the value of such integration. On describing content and language integration, participants utilized positive adjectives, such as *interesting* and *very good,* to describe this integration. Furthermore, Participant 9 used the idiom *to kill two birds with one stone* to communicate how she regarded content and language integration: "… I think that as we have a saying: *kill two birds with one stone*. So, I think

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[1]Participant 10: [um] conteúdo específico e uma língua estrangeira ao mesmo tempo... é justamente o que nós fizemos aqui o tempo todo...

[2]Participant 7: Eu acho que consegui aprender bastante sobre tanto sobre família, que era o nosso assunto, quanto melhorar minha língua.

[3]Participant 7: … tivemos que debater sobre temas familiares e, para isso, necessitavamos saber tanto o inglês, quanto a cultura dos países estudados.

that we would be filling two things. Besides learning the language, learning the content. I think it is very good."[4]

Nevertheless, content and language integration does not appear to have been understood by all participants. Some participants did not fully grasp the concept of content and language integration, or they thought that the content of the course was language. During her oral interview, Participant 11 did not explicitly identify American culture as the content of her course. Instead, she explained that language was the course content: "Yesterday even in that lesson on prefixes, you taught the content of prefixes in this project that you are developing."[5] Participant 11's statement placed an emphasis on prefixes, which was only a small portion of the lesson, as the content of the class, and American culture, which occupied the large portion of the lesson, was not included in her comment.

Based on these data from participants' journals and the follow-up oral interviews that addressed content and language integration, it was possible to identify two groups of students. One group included those who easily identified the integration between language and content at the end of the course. They were able to explain how content and language were integrated during the course and regarded this integration as positive. The other group included participants who did not show a clear understanding of content and language integration. Their responses to questions about content and language integration were vague or did not highlight the integrated nature of language and content that I have

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[4]Participant 9: acho que como nós temos um ditado: *matar dois coelhos numa cajadada só*. Então, acho que seriam duas coisas que nós estaríamos preenchendo. Além de aprender a língua, aprendendo um conteúdo. Acho que é muito bom.

[5]Participant 11: Ontem mesmo naquela aula de prefixo, você deu aquele conteúdo de prefixo dentro desse trabalho que você tá desenvolvendo.

been striving for in the courses.

Student Perceptions of Content

Participants' oral interviews and journal entries in Cycles 2 and 3 produced data about their perceptions of the content on interpersonal relationships in the U.S. and intercultural communication. Participants expressed different views. Some participants highlighted the depth of understanding that they achieved in working with content during these cycles. In one of her journals, Participant 9 pointed out, "I notice that the theme is maintained, but it is deepened."[6] Her statement shows that she regarded the content in Cycle 3 as recurrent and deepening over time. Similarly, during his interview in the same cycle, Participant 10 stated, "You brought us the cultural part more deeply, got it? Yes, I learned a lot of things here about American culture, and I solidified concepts that I had an idea of."[7] In his response, he reported that there was depth in the way culture was taught.

However, not all participants regarded content as deep. By saying "I learned a little bit of culture,"[8] Participant 11 did not seem to recognize any depth to the course content in Cycle 3, as she said that she did not gain much cultural knowledge in the course. The same comment on the little cultural knowledge generated by the course was made during Participant 2's interview.

Some comments reflected students' overall thoughts about the target content. Participant 12 referred to the themes discussed in class as appealing during Cycle 3. Also,

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[6]Participant 9: Noto que o tema se mantém, mas com mais aprofundamento.

[7]Participant 10: Você nos trouxe essa parte cultural mais profundamente, entendeu? É, eu aprendi muita coisa aqui sobre a cultura americana e firmei conceitos sobre a cultura americana que eu tinha uma ideia.

[8]Participant 11: Aprendi um pouco sobre cultura.

Participant 5 surprisingly commented that content was real during Cycle 2. When asked about similarities and differences between the content in regular language classes that she took/was taking and the CBI course, Participant 5 stated that the latter course "[demonstrated] American reality. Not fictional as it appears in textbooks or movies."[9]

Other comments targeted specific topics that were discussed in class. When asked about what she learned about culture during a course lesson, Participant 11 commented on the content of the documentary. According to her, she learned "[what] the interviewees think about the culture in the United States of children leaving their parents' house in the U.S. when they turn 18 years old…"[10] She continued, "… it was enriching because I could compare it to our habits."[11] Participant 11 viewed the knowledge that she gained as enriching because it allowed her to compare American culture and Brazilian culture. Participant 9 also made a positive comment based on a lesson that she attended. When asked the same question that Participant 11 was asked, she explained that she liked to learn about mobility (i.e., why people move around) both in the United States and in Brazil.

An interesting contribution to the data of this study came from Participant 7 because he appeared to reflect on his own values while learning new content. When independence in the United States and in Brazil was discussed in class, one of Participant 7's journal entries included the following sentence: "I also learned that we need to be prepared, that one day we will be independent and obligated to make decisions that we were not used to

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[9]Participant 5: [demonstrou] a realidade americana. Não fictícia como aparece nos livros de aprendizado ou em filme.

[10]Participant 11: [o] que as pessoas entrevistadas pensam sobre a cultura que há nos Estados Unidos de os filhos saírem de casa ao completar 18 anos...

[11]Participant 11: ... foi enriquecedor porque pude comparar com os nossos hábitos.

making while we lived with our parents."[12] Participant 7 appeared to believe that independence from one's parents was inevitable. He also showed the same type of interaction with content when geographic mobility in the U.S.A and in Brazil were compared in Cycle 2: "I think I liked this idea of moving, so if one day I am brave enough to leave everything behind, who knows if I will live my life like that."[13] This statement suggests that Participant 7 could be reflecting on his own values and considering the possibility of moving to another place in the future.

Some participants pointed out the advantages or benefits that learning content in a language class might bring. In one of his journals, Participant 12 wrote that the class themes are appealing, which helps learning. His comment suggests a connection between learning and content. Participant 9 wrote a journal entry on the benefits of content as well. She stated that "… the permanence of the theme helps to consolidate vocabulary."[14] According to this student, the recurrence of content was helpful to solidifying vocabulary knowledge.

Some participants placed an emphasis on cultural knowledge, while others had difficulty identifying culture as the content that drove the course. When Participant 2 was interviewed and asked about what he learned during Cycle 2, additional elicitation was necessary before he talked about culture:

Interviewer: What did you learn here specifically?
Participant 2: In relation to what?
Interviewer: To content.
Participant 2: To content. For example: this part of suffix, prefix, I had never seen it. I mean, we see it, know that there's a lot, see it in textbooks a lot there, but really

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[12]Participant 7: Aprendi também que devemos estar preparados, que um dia seremos independentes e obrigados a tomar escolhas que não estavamos acostumado a tomar enquanto viviamos com os nossos pais.
[13]Participant 7: Acho que gostei dessa idéia de me mudar, então se um dia eu tiver coragem de deixar tudo para trás, quem sabe eu passe a vida dessa maneira.
[14]Participant 9: ... a permanência do tema ajuda a fixar o vocabulário.

speaking about prefix and suffix, here it was new. I had never seen it. Separating, seeing there what the parts of the words are... Separating them correctly.

Interviewer: OK. In addition… to this part, thinking a little bit about what we talked about here, especially the cultural part, what did you learn?

Participant 2: I learned these strategies, these three strategies… for vocabulary, to enrich vocabulary, I found very interesting. By the way, I will even, I will use this as a tool to improve vocabulary.

Interviewer: In addition… to what you mentioned about vocabulary and strategies, did you learn anything else in this course?

Participant 2: Culturally, it was already what I… have an idea of because I search… I stay tuned… in general, I try to see what is happening in the United States, in other countries, I try to stay tuned. Everything that was taught met with I had… about the other countries there.[15]

As shown in this excerpt, some elicitation was necessary for the participant to comment on culture. The fact that the participant struggled with the connection between content and culture suggests that he may not have seen culture as the organizing principle for this course, or he may not have identified culture as content.

Similarly, Participant 11 did not connect her learning of vocabulary to talk about culture to the content of the course when explaining what she learned in Cycle 3. She stated, "I learned many things. I learned new vocabulary. I remembered a lot of vocabulary. I learned a little bit about culture. I also learned expressions, I remembered

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[15]Interviewer: O que você aprendeu aqui especificamente?

Participant 2: Em relação a quê?

Interviewer: A conteúdo.

Participant 2: A conteúdo. Por exemplo: Essa parte de sufixo, prefixo, eu nunca tinha visto. Quer dizer, a gente vê, sabe que existe muito, vê muito no livro didático ali, mas falar mesmo sobre sufixo e prefixos, aqui foi novo. Eu nunca tinha visto. Separar, ver ali o que é as partes da palavras... Separar direitinho.

Interviewer: Tá. Então, além... dessa parte, pensando um pouco nos tópicos que nós tratamos aqui, mais a parte cultural, o que que você aprendeu?

Participant 2: Eu aprendi essas estratégias, as três estratégias... para o vocabulário, pra enriquecer o vocabulário, eu achei muito interessante. Inclusive, eu vou até, eu vou usar isso como ferramenta para melhorar o vocabulário.

Interview: Além... do que você mencionou sobre vocabulário e estratégia, você aprendeu mais alguma coisa nesse curso?

Participant 2: Culturalmente, já era o que eu... tenho ideia porque eu procuro, sou antenado... em geral, procuro ver o que está acontecendo lá nos Estados Unidos, em outros países, eu procuro estar sempre antenado. Tudo que foi dado aqui já veio, veio ao encontro que eu já tinha... sobre os países lá.

other expressions that I already knew."[16] Participant 11 did not emphasize her culture learning as much as she stressed her vocabulary learning. Even when asked about the cultural topics that she learned, she did not provide a more extended answer about culture.

The results from participants' perceptions of content indicated that some students perceived depth and recurrence of theme and saw the benefit of learning content. Others did not place an emphasis on content when asked about their learning experiences.

Student Perceptions of Language

Vocabulary related to the content was the focus for language development in Cycles 2 and 3. Participants used the following words to describe their views on the targeted vocabulary of this course—*deep*, *deep meaning*, *meaningful*, *interesting*, *not regular vocabulary*, and *not common in textbooks*. All participants described vocabulary learning in a positive way. Participant 10 perceived vocabulary relating to culture and the meaning of words taught in Cycle 3 as deep, which is believed to mean a deep understanding of the words targeted in the course. In response to the journal question "What did you learn about the English language in today's class?" he shared that he learned a "[deep understanding of vocabulary] about families and how to say it in English."[17] In another lesson, Participant 10 stated that he learned "[new] vocabulary deepening the meaning of words and practicing their pronunciation."[18] In other words, the meaning of the words

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[16]Participant 11: Eu aprendi muitas coisas. Aprendi vocabulário novo. Relembrei muito vocabulário. Aprendi um pouco sobre cultura. Também aprendi expressões, relembrei outras expressões que eu já sabia.

[17]Participant 10: [entendimento profundo de vocabulário] sobre as famílias e como dizê-lo em inglês.

[18]Participant 10: Vocabulário novo com um aprofundamento no significado das palavras e o treinamento de suas pronúncias.

taught in this course was also viewed as deep.

Participant 9 also commented on the meaning of words. During her oral interview, when asked about the words that she learned in this course and the ones that she would retain in her memory, she listed words such as *individualism* and *independent*. Her justification was that she "… used to speak them, but they were not so meaningful because they were not related to culture…"[19] meaning that they were just words, but were not tied to specific content that she had used. Thus, it appears that Participant 9 saw a connection between the development of vocabulary knowledge and content.

Participant 2 said that he learned words in Cycle 2 that were not common in the textbook series used at the language school. He commented on his learning some of the target words such as *adulthood*, *curfew*, *sever*, and *errand*—words that had all been used in the class. Similarly, Participant 9 commented that in this course she learned words that were not everyday vocabulary. However, some participants indicated that some of the words were familiar. In one journal entry Participant 2 stressed the fact that many of the words that he encountered in the texts that he read during the course were words that he had seen before in his regular English class. For these 2 participants the reading materials also contained a good number of known words.

Other comments included some remarks on the benefits of vocabulary knowledge for participation in interpersonal interactions. During Cycle 3, both Participants 9 and 10 explained that knowing a larger number of vocabulary words that were not part of everyday vocabulary (i.e., vocabulary that was specifically tied to content) was advantageous because, in Participant 9's words, "[we] can talk like an adult, and not just

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[19]Participant 9: ... falava, mas elas não tinham tanto sentido porque não estavam relacionadas com cultura...

talk about basic things."[20] Participant 10 perceived that having vocabulary knowledge

before reviewing grammatical structures was beneficial. In other words, knowing

vocabulary and strategies for learning vocabulary were considered important steps that

could turn a grammar review into an easier task.

In other parts of his interview, Participant 10 elaborated on his perceptions of

vocabulary learning during this course:

> Participant 10: But I think that the course does this, it makes you break this barrier, this was a thing I noticed, you break the barrier and do not worry about language very much and consequently you acquire a larger vocabulary and are able to communicate…[21]

Participant 10's statement suggests that he believed that vocabulary learning was a result

of using the vocabulary to communicate. In other parts of the interview, he brought up

the topic of language and restated his perception. He considered language learning as

something that flowed naturally and peacefully and did not need to be forced.

Global Perceptions of Course Activity

Based on the data collected through student journals and oral interviews, some

general perceptions of the course taught in Brazil were noted. These perceptions related

to the course as a whole, the way the individual lessons were presented, and instructional

activities that were used. The overall perception of the course was positive. Participants

used adjectives such as *useful* and *interesting* to describe the course. Moreover, all

participants who were interviewed stated that the course had met their expectations.

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[20]Participant 9: A gente pode falar como adulto, e não falar só sobre coisas básicas.

[21]Participant 10: Mas eu acho que o curso faz isso, faz você quebrar essa barreira, uma coisa que eu notei foi isso, você quebra a barreira e você não se preocupa muito com a língua e com isso você vai adquirindo um vocabulário maior, e vai conseguindo se comunicar...

When it comes to the instructional activities utilized in class during Cycles 2 and 3, most activities were perceived as positive. Furthermore, some participants highlighted the variety of activities completed during the course. According to these participants, these activities had an impact on their motivation to learn. Participant 12 explained that tasks were different (i.e., different from traditional language learning classes) and had an influence on motivation. Likewise, Participant 10 referred to motivation when he commented on the course in-class activities: "[Motivation] was constant because of the different activities. One day a game, a different game on the other day, a way of interpreting the text…"[22] Participant 10 perceived his motivation as constant during Cycle 3. A similar perception of the activities was also identified in another one of Participant 10's quotes: "All the activities that peaked our interest and, during the course, in all classes, I think that I never left, never looked at the watch to see if the class was taking long, the time that I would leave, got it?"[23] These statements show that participants found the course engaging and that it peaked their interest.

Another perception of the course activities concerned the level of difficulty of certain activities. Several participants perceived some activities to be difficult. Some participants used the word *difficult* to make a negative remark, whereas others used the word *challenging* to mean that an activity was considered difficult; nevertheless, they were perceived in a positive light. In response to the journal question "What activity did you like the least?" Participant 9 reported, "Listening is difficult for me; therefore, it is always

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[22]Participant 10: [A motivação] foi constante devido às atividades diferentes. Um dia um jogo, um jogo diferente no outro dia, uma maneira de interpretar o texto...

[23]Participant 10: Todas as atividades que nos despertaram interesse e, ao longo de todo o curso, em todas as aulas, eu acho que eu nunca deixei, nunca olhei pro relógio pra ver se a aula estava durando muito, a hora que eu ia sair, entendeu?

the worst activity."[24] This participant struggled to understand the interviewees that were filmed for the documentary used as a classroom resource during Cycle 3. In this quote, the word *difficult* was employed to make a negative remark about the activity. Participant 8 also used the word *difficult* in response to the question "What activity did you like the most?" She explained that her favorite activity during Cycle 2 was to comment on what she read, and she stated that "[this activity] is difficult but it's challenging."[25] Similarly, Participant 10 described several activities as *challenging*. Even though he acknowledged the difficulty of some activities, he saw the value of doing them.

In addition to the perception of instructional activities, some participants perceived activities to be combined or to follow a sequential order. When completing a journal entry on one of the classes of Cycle 3, Participant 10 reported, "Vocabulary, interpretation, listening, writing, and speaking. This combination is very good."[26] Not only did he perceive a combination of activities in this specific class, but he also found it to be a positive combination. In her oral interview, Participant 9 noticed the connection among some course activities:

> Participant 9: Everything is so tied, isn't it? It is very difficult to say which was the best part because what happens? One depends on the other. The text favors, the words also favor the discussion. Before, you give us, let's say, resources for the discussion. So, the discussion ends up happening. It isn't out of nowhere.[27]

Participant 9 used the word *tied* to refer to the activities in Cycle 3. She viewed them as dependent on one another because some activities were a preparation for students to carry

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[24]Participant 9: Tenho dificuldades no *listenning*, por essa razão sempre é a pior atividade.
[25]Participant 8: [essa atividade] é difícil mas desafiante.
[26]Participant 10: Vocabulário, interpretação, audição, escrita, fala. Esta combinação é muito boa.
[27]Participant 9: É tudo tão atrelado, né? É muito difícil dizer qual é a parte melhor. Porque, o que que acontece? Uma depende da outra. O texto favorece, também os vocábulos favorecem a discussão. Antes, você nos dá, digamos assim, subsídios para a discussão. Então a discussão acaba saindo. Não é do nada.

out others (i.e., they were hierarchically organized and presented). This connection and dependency among activities was perceived as beneficial by this participant.

In summary, most participants provided positive feedback on the course and its activities. Most activities were appreciated by students, and some participants were able to identify how activities were connected. As for the level of difficulty of activities, there were different views on the benefit of difficult and challenging activities. Some participants did not regard more demanding activities very positively, whereas others saw them as providing opportunities to improve their English.

<p style="text-align:center">Learners' Vocabulary Study Practices</p>

Data collected through the initial questionnaires show that all participants believed that vocabulary was an important factor for learning another language and facilitated communication. Their responses focused on different skills and the most recurrent response was that knowledge of vocabulary facilitates text comprehension, followed by conversation.

Most participants reported that they consciously studied vocabulary on their own. Only 1 participant admitted to never studying vocabulary prior to class. Lack of time was a recurrent reason for not studying vocabulary on a regular basis. Some variation was found in participants' forms of studying vocabulary. Most participants explained that they resorted to reference sources (e.g., a dictionary and the internet), their class textbook, and/or other texts. Wordlists were a popular strategy through which half of the participants reported that they studied vocabulary. The organization of these lists varied as some participants wrote the target words and their corresponding translation in random

order, whereas other participants organized their words around themes or topics. A few participants stated that they did not identify any specific form of organizing their lists and just looked up the words at the time they were studying. All participants agreed on the usefulness of being taught different vocabulary-learning strategies. Most of them regarded the knowledge of a variety of strategies as beneficial, and a few expressed some dissatisfaction in solely relying on traditional strategies for studying vocabulary.

In the initial questionnaires, participants were also asked about their views on vocabulary teaching at the language school that they attended. According to most participants, vocabulary teaching was based on their textbook. Although a few participants noted that vocabulary teaching at their school could be improved, most students assessed it as positive. The majority of participants identified several resources, especially audio-visual resources and texts, as a desirable way of being taught vocabulary. Additionally, some of their responses included instructional activities (e.g., games) and themes.

<p align="center">Student Perceptions of Vocabulary-learning Strategies</p>

Content-based instruction not only integrates content and language, but also includes a strategy component. One of the objectives of this model is to teach learners strategies to become independent learners and equip them with tools to access more cognitively demanding texts on their own. Because the focus for language development in the course was vocabulary, I decided to target vocabulary-learning strategies. During the CBI course taught in Brazil, three vocabulary-learning strategies (VLSs) were taught: organization of a vocabulary notebook (VLS 1), analysis of word parts (VLS 2), and use of the keyword

technique (VLS 3). Research Question 6 investigates student perceptions of how these strategies helped them in learning vocabulary in a content-based classroom in this EFL context.

This section is divided into several subsections, which focus on student perceptions of the VLSs taught in the CBI course in question. The first subsection presents the global perceptions of these VLSs and the other subsections summarize the results of student perceptions of each strategy.

Global Perceptions of VLSs

These data on global perceptions of VLSs come from the oral interviews conducted at the end of the course in Cycles 2 and 3. Participants 2, 9, and 10 referred to the three strategies in a global fashion. Their data show that they valued the VLSs as they used positive adjectives (*valid*, *useful*, and *interesting*) to evaluate them. In addition, participants regarded these strategies as helpful to memorizing and retaining words. Participant 9's reflection provided an insightful summary of what these VLSs meant to her:

> Participant 9: This is for us, in a certain way, to prevent ourselves from having a feeling of failure, of wasted time because [forgetting] is fast, is fast. These strategies will be valid in the sense of storage, of appropriation, I think I'd say this… of appropriation of basic vocabulary, important, and not only basic, and there's also vocabulary about the themes that we like to talk about.[28]

Participant 9 admitted that one's capacity to store information is limited. She regarded these strategies as a tool to store more information, develop a sense of vocabulary

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[28]Participant 9: É pra gente, de certa forma, nos prevenirmos dessa sensação mesmo de fracasso, de tempo perdido, porque [o esquecimento] é rápido, é rápido. Essas estratégias vão ser válidas no sentido de armazenamento, de apropriação, acho que eu diria isso... de apropriação de vocabulário básico, importante, e não só básico, e também tem esse sobre os temas dos quais a gente gosta de falar.

ownership, and avoid forgetting words. Therefore, the VLSs were perceived as a way of succeeding in vocabulary learning.

Some participants were able to make connections among the VLSs. Participant 9 explained how she planned on connecting the three strategies: "I intend to make the notebook the same space where I can make the three strategies in the same space."[29] According to Participant 9, it is possible to use the three strategies simultaneously. Participant 10 connects the VLSs in a different fashion:

> Participant 10: I think that you for a certain word, you can use the technique of separating in parts, you can also take the root of the word and try to use the mnemonic rule, the third strategy, in the part of the root, got it? So, I think that a combination of these things, I think that it's interesting.[30]

Participant 10 claimed that the three strategies taught in Cycle 3 should be used selectively. Even though he advocated for a combination of these strategies, he did not support their simultaneous use. He explained that some strategies work better for certain words. However, according to Participant 10, the combined knowledge of these three strategies promoted learning.

In short, the data indicate that some participants saw the advantage of knowing the three VLSs and making use of them either simultaneously or selectively.

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[29]Participant 9: Eu pretendo fazer do notebook o mesmo espaço para fazer as três estratégias no mesmo espaço.

[30]Participant 10: eu acho que você pra uma determinada palavra, você pode usar a técnica de separar em partes, você pode também pegar o radical da palavra e procurar usar na parte do radical a regra mnemônica, a terceira estratégia, entendeu? Então, eu acho que uma combinação dessas coisas, eu acho que é interessante.

<u>Student Perceptions of VLS 1</u>

Vocabulary-learning Strategy 1, namely, the vocabulary notebook, was the strategy to which participants referred to the most in their oral interviews. Most participants expressed that the vocabulary notebook was their preferred strategy among the three strategies that were taught. Moreover, participants offered an assessment of the value of this strategy. The majority of participants regarded it as a helpful strategy. Participant 7 regarded VLS 1 as the most common and the easiest strategy to practice. Participant 10 believed that it was more common to use a dictionary.

Other relevant comments drew my attention to participants' perceptions of the process of creating a vocabulary notebook. Two participants perceived that the act of organizing this notebook was conducive to learning English. In Participant 11's words,

> … and I also think that the fact that you're thinking about that at the time you are also making [the vocabulary notebook], I think it is good, because you will look for examples, sometimes you will look up a monolingual dictionary, which was my case, because I looked up the dictionary, there other examples are already provided. Sometimes one word means various things, you read that, too. I think that it kind of forces you to search for more.[31]

Participant 11 believed that the thinking process and the research involved in the creation of a vocabulary notebook were beneficial. During her oral interview, she also stated that the vocabulary notebook promoted learning as it allowed for the creation of sentences and a focus on life situations. Participant 9 also considered this process of creating a notebook a beneficial task; nevertheless, unlike Participant 11, she focused on the benefits of writing down information, as opposed to thinking and doing research.

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[31]Participant 11: ... e também eu acho que o fato de você pensar naquilo na hora que você tá fazendo também, acho que é bom, que você vai procurar exemplo, às vezes você vai procurar num dicionário monolíngue, como foi o meu caso, que eu fui procurar no dicionário, ali já dá outros exemplos. Às vezes, uma palavra quer dizer várias coisas, você já lê aquilo também. Acho que meio que te obriga a buscar mais.

Other participants reported that the vocabulary notebook promoted more vocabulary learning. Two participants explained that the vocabulary notebook provided an opportunity to learn more words simultaneously. For example, Participant 7 described that words were learned in tandem: "… because sometimes we see a word and still learn another if there is its synonym, you end up learning two words in only one."[32] This participant concluded that the vocabulary notebook allowed users to learn target words as well as their synonyms.

In addition to the promotion of learning and the benefits of the process of creating a vocabulary notebook, most participants who were interviewed expressed interest in continuing to use this strategy after the completion of the course. Participant 11 described her plans regarding the use of her vocabulary notebook: "... I want to take [this strategy] further, I want to put expressions. I am even thinking about using it for Spanish."[33] Participant 11's plan involved using this strategy to learn English expressions. Furthermore, she planned to use the same strategy to improve her Spanish vocabulary. Participant 7 also revealed that the vocabulary notebook would be the strategy that he would practice the most. Additionally, when referring to VLS 1, he reflected on his study habits:

> … it was this year when I started to put the vocabulary notebook into practice even in my English class and now I am improving this form of (organizing) my notebook because I never had, I never used… as I said, I only tried to memorize [vocabulary]. Then, I think it is more difficult to remember everything… because I swear, you end up forgetting a lot of things.[34]

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[32]Participant 7: ... porque às vezes, a gente vê uma palavra e ainda aprende outra se tiver um sinônimo dela, você acaba aprendendo duas palavras em uma só.

[33]Participant 11: ... eu quero levar mais adiante, quero botar expressões. Estou pensando em até usar no espanhol.

[34]Participant 7: ... esse ano que eu comecei a botar em prática o caderno... de vocabulário mesmo na aula de inglês e agora eu estou aprimorando essa forma de (organizar) meu caderno, porque eu nunca tinha, nunca fui de usar... como eu disse, eu tentava só decorar. Aí, eu acho mais difícil você chegar depois e lembrar de tudo... porque eu juro, você acaba esquecendo muita coisa.

Participant 7 described his development in using a vocabulary notebook. He explained

that he had begun to use this type of notebook previously, but he had the opportunity to

improve such strategy during Cycle 2. He compared his past (i.e., sole memorization) and

present study habits, and his statement suggests that the vocabulary notebook could be a

more effective way of studying as it helped him remember information. Participants' self-

assessment on the use of VLS 1 showed how helpful this learning strategy was to them.

Participant 7 focused on his achievement when using a vocabulary notebook. He

reported,

> … there was also one [word] that I even used in one composition in the last exam, which was *rather than*, which I saw, which I even put in my vocabulary notebook. It was one [word] that I think I will not forget anymore because... I even put it in a composition.[35]

Participant 9 enthusiastically acknowledged that he was able to use one of the vocabulary

notebook phrases in a written text. Because of such experience, he believed that the

phrase *rather than* would remain in his memory.

In short, the data produced during the oral interviews in Cycle 2 and 3 showed that

the majority of participants considered the vocabulary to be helpful and identified some

of its benefits. Some participants highlighted that the creation of a notebook *per se*

promoted vocabulary learning, whereas others pointed out that the notebooks led to the

concomitant learning of the target words and other related words. Finally, some

participants evaluated their performance in using their vocabulary notebook.

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[35]Participant 7: teve uma [palavra] também que eu usei até numa redação na última prova, que foi a *rather than*, que eu vi, que eu até botei no meu vocabulary notebook. Foi uma [palavra] que eu acho que eu também não vou mais esquecer por causa... coloquei até numa redação.

Student Perceptions of VLS 2

The analysis of word parts was the second strategy taught in Cycles 2 and 3. The majority of interviewees evaluated the analysis of word parts positively. Some participants expressed different views on this strategy that are worth pointing out. Participant 7 and Participant 11 commented on the level of difficulty of this strategy. Even though Participant 7 acknowledged that VLS 2 can be helpful, he admitted that analyzing word parts was not an easy task: " . . . if the prefix is a known one... you can already understand what the word is about, you can discover the word… without having ever seen it. It requires a lot of ability, though."[36] Participant 7 identified a benefit that the knowledge of VLS 2 might bring; nonetheless, he pointed out that one needed to have an ability to use this strategy. He admitted that this was an ability that he did not have: "I am not good at dividing words in Portuguese. I don't have this gift."[37]

Similarly, Participant 11 considered VLS 2 to be a difficult strategy. She stated, "[VLS 2] is also good, but I think it is a little bit more difficult, for people who do not have much knowledge it is a little bit more difficult. I think it is good, it is feasible, too, because we are also forced to do research, to search."[38] In spite of acknowledging the difficulty of the strategy, Participant 11 identified that the advantage of using VLS 2 was to do more research on vocabulary.

Participant 10 highlighted benefits of using VLS 2: "… when the word has a prefix, suffix, root, when it is complete, sometimes it is difficult to understand the word. When

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[36]Participant 7: ... se o prefixo for algum conhecido... você já pode entender do que se trata a palavra, pode chegar a descobrir a palavra... sem nunca ter visto. Só que requer muita habilidade.

[37]Participant 7: Não sou bom em português em dividir palavras. Não tenho esse dom não.

[38]Participant 11: [VLS 2] também é bom, mas eu acho que é um pouco mais difícil, pra pessoa que não tem muito conhecimento é um pouco mais difícil. Acho que é bom, é viável também, que a gente se obriga também a pesquisar, a buscar.

you get to the root, maybe it is, I felt it was easier."[39] Instead of referring to analyzing

word parts as a difficult task, Participant 10 argued that analyzing morphologically

complex words without using VLS 2 was *the* difficult task. It was easier for him to

understand the meaning of a word after separating its morphemes.

Participants' perceptions of VLS 2 demonstrated that most of them regarded it as a

positive and helpful strategy. However, some of them highlighted that the benefit of

knowing how to analyze word parts could only be fully achieved with the proper skills

and knowledge in identifying parts of words.

Student Perceptions of VLS 3

VLS 3 was the keyword technique. Some participants expressed their views on the

level of difficulty of this strategy. In Cycle 2, Participant 2 attributed the difficulty of this

strategy to the fact that finding examples was not a simple activity. By finding examples,

it is believed that Participant 2 meant that it was difficult to find words in his native

language whose pronunciation matched the pronunciation of target English words.

In spite of the difficulty of VLS 3, most participants viewed it as a positive strategy

for several reasons. One reason for this positive evaluation was that some participants

perceived VLS 3 to aid in the memorization of words. When asked to describe how the

keyword technique worked in Cycle 2, Participant 7 stated, "… I think that some words

that I saw in class I won't forget…"[40] Participant 7's statement suggests that this

technique was helpful in that it contributed to his retention of vocabulary presented in

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[39]Participant 10: ... quando a palavra tem prefixo, sufixo, radical, quando ela está inteira, às vezes fica difícil você compreender a palavra. Quando você chega à raiz, né, talvez fique mais, eu senti mais facilidade.

[40]Participant 7: ... acho que algumas palavras que eu vi na aula, eu não vou esquecer...

class. Participant 9's oral interview corroborated that this strategy contributed to word retention of some participants in Cycle 3. Participant 9's exact words were "I find it difficult, but I think I will try [to use it] because I remembered the word *roof* after I did this, *folks*, after I did that... exercise that we did last class."[41] Participant 9 referred to an activity that participants did in order to practice the keyword technique. In this activity, they had to find a keyword in Portuguese whose pronunciation reminded them of the target English word and draw a picture that connected both.

In addition to difficulty and helpfulness, VLS 3 was perceived in a way that the aforementioned VLSs were not. Words such as *creative* and *fun* were used to describe this strategy. Participant 3 explained that the keyword technique "… was a creative way to learn new vocabulary,"[42] and Participant 7 described it as "a very good and fun method."[43] Furthermore, the keyword technique matched Participant 1's interests in Cycle 2. In response to a journal question about her favorite activity of a course lesson, she replied, "[The] activity in which we learned a new vocabulary technique because I like to draw and found this technique that involves drawing interesting."[44] The fact that Participant 1 liked VLS can be directly associated with her interest in drawing.

Data from journals and oral interviews showed that learners' perceptions of the three learning strategies varied. Even though VLS 1, the vocabulary notebook, was the preferred strategy, participants also acknowledged the usefulness of the VLSs 2 and 3. Despite the variation in perceptions of these strategies, each of the target strategies was

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[41]Participant 9: Acho difícil, mas eu vou tentar [usá-la], que eu lembrei da palavra *roof* depois que eu fiz isso, *folks*, depois que eu fiz aquele... exercício que nós fizemos na aula passada.
[42]Participant 3: ... foi uma forma criativa de se aprender novas palavras.
[43]Participant 7: um método muito bom e divertido
[44]Participant 1: [A] atividade em que aprendemos uma nova técnica de vocabulário, pois gosto de desenhar, e achei interessante essa técnica que envolve desenho.

seen as positive and helpful by at least a few of the participants.

<u>Recognition of Intercultural Attributes</u>

The goals of the second and third cycles of the content-based course taught in Brazil focused on the development of content knowledge related to differences in interpersonal relationships across cultures and included the development of intercultural awareness— the ability to compare and contrast American and Brazilian relationships and to demonstrate acceptance and tolerance toward American culture. Along those lines, participants' recognition of intercultural attributes (e.g., acceptance and tolerance) to successful intercultural communication was investigated through Research Question 4.

Data from participants' journals and the videotaped lessons in Cycles 2 and 3 were helpful to identifying the tensions that arose as far as intercultural acceptance was concerned. The transcriptions of two classes showed how some participants viewed tolerance. In Cycle 2, Participant 4 explained that tolerance was necessary in order to ensure a harmonious society and promote peace. In Cycle 3, participants pointed out that there was a direct correlation between tolerance and education. In other words, the more education a person has, the more tolerant this person will be. Furthermore, these participants appeared to have reached consensus on the importance of tolerance and stressed the fact that tolerance not only could be taught, but also had an inherent component.

Participant 10 reported that tolerance could be demonstrated by accepting other people's opinions, listening to them, and accepting all types of family structures. Participant 9's following statement illustrates her views on tolerance:

> And to understand that each person has an opinion, and we can't change the, we don't. Ah! Is important is to understand that we don't know where, what is right. We don't, we don't can, we don't can guarantee what is right or not, or what is wrong. It's relative. Sometimes what we think it's right is not right. If we understand that we can, we must be wrong. And I think it's very important to learn to say the word, the word *excuse me*.

In response to the question "How can we demonstrate or show tolerance?" Participant 9 highlighted the importance of understanding that people could have a wide range of opinions. In order to prove her point, she questioned the existence of a single truth. Moreover, her statement suggests that politeness was a way of demonstrating tolerance as she mentioned that it was important to use the expression *excuse me*. In this class, Participant 9 also pointed out that one way of showing tolerance was to accept that individualism is a characteristic of American culture.

Some participants seemed to display a certain resistance to the idea that the intercultural differences ought to be tolerated. Instead of elaborating on the multiple ways of exhibiting a tolerant behavior, some participants made negative remarks about U.S. culture. This misalignment between what these participants said about tolerance and what they actually did when talking about another culture can be exemplified by contradictory comments. When reflecting on what she learned in a lesson during Cycle 2, Participant 4 stated, "Today I learned about tolerance toward other cultures. It is possible to have different opinions and be tolerant."[45] Her statement signaled that tolerance was possible regardless of the existence of divergent viewpoints. However, the same participant did not endorse the idea of tolerating American culture when asked in class. Additionally, some participants in Cycle 2 acknowledged that some American family values and

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[45]Participant 4: Hoje eu aprendi a tolerância com culturas diferentes. É possível ter opniões diferentes e ser tolerante.

practices did not represent a logical lifestyle in their opinion. Participant 1 supported this view by stating, "I don't live in America. For example, the American person thinks Brazilian culture is crazy, too." Her comment suggests that it is reasonable to consider other cultural practices as illogical provided that one is not from the specific country that is being discussed. In other words, she viewed such lack of intercultural understanding as reciprocal.

Not all participants considered American family values to be illogical. A different perception was found in Participant 7's statement: "… if you want to get a great life, and get money, you have to be independent and you have to *deixar* (leave) your family." This statement revealed that, according to Participant 7, independence and separation from one's family led to a financially successful life, contrary to other participants' views. Participant 7's comment endorsed American family values in such a way that depicted his own belief that independence and separation from family were the key to success.

When analyzing students' comments on tolerance, my perception was that they sometimes judged the target culture, instead of demonstrating empathy. During the in-class discussion on tolerance, Participant 9 commented, "I think the best question would be how American culture could be tolerant with us because I think Brazilians are very tolerant in relation to foreigners in general because we admire Americans for they are successful in many areas…" Participant 9 did not focus on the fact that tolerance needed to be shown toward American culture. Instead, she pointed out that Americans needed to be more tolerant. Similarly, Participant 10 added to Participant 9's comment by saying, "I think the general tolerance… comes from the people. If people is tolerant, all peoples are tolerant. I think the American people don't are as tolerant as other Brazilians…"

Participant 10 viewed American culture as less tolerant than Brazilian culture, which suggests that he believed that Americans were the ones that should improve their disposition to tolerate other cultures. Not only did Participant 7 focus on tolerance in the United States, but his following comment included ideas that were not present in the class discussion: "In today's class, I learned about tolerance in American society and we compared it to our society. We saw that they don't tolerate the foreigners' issue, despite knowing that this is not the right way to treat another person who does not have the same culture as yours."[46] Participant 7's quote depicted Americans as intolerant people in spite of their awareness of how inappropriate such behavior was.

In addition to participants' view on tolerance, it is crucial to take into account how participants' proficiency in English facilitated the discussion of such topic in the target language. Evidence was found to suggest that participants' English proficiency hindered learners' expression of their views. A comparison between some participants shows how their oral proficiency differed from one another. When expressing how tolerance and peace could be related in Cycle 2, Participant 4 explained, "When have tolerance, easy have a peace, more easy." In this statement, Participant 4 meant that tolerance facilitates the existence of peace. She did not seem to be able to elaborate on the connection between tolerance and peace due to her difficulty in communicating in English. Her statement shows that this participant struggled to create sentences in the target language. However, it was, to a certain extent, easier for other participants to express their views at the sentence-level. For example, Participant 10 commented on the relationship between

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[46]Participant 7: Na aula de hoje aprendi sobre a questão da tolerância na sociedade americana e conflitamos com a nossa. Vimos que eles não toleram muito a questão dos estrangeiros, apesar de saber que essa é a forma errada de tratar outra pessoa que não tenha a mesma cultura que a sua.

education and tolerance in Cycle 3:

> I think if you have a better culture, a better education, we are more tolerant. If we
> have the same education of the American peoples, we will be more, will be, would be
> more tolerant than the United States today, even we don't were, we don't more
> problem, because we don't have a good education, the people, generally.

Participant 10 pointed out that education influences how tolerant people are and that

Brazilians would be more tolerant than Americans if Brazilian society was as educated as

American society. Even though some features of the target language posed challenges to

Participant 10, he was able to communicate his ideas by using two related sentences on

the same topic; the second sentence narrowed down the idea expressed in the first

sentence. The oral production of some participants was more similar to Participant 10's,

whereas the oral proficiency of others resembled Participant 4's. An overall comparison

between Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 participants based on the transcription of the two classes on

tolerance indicates that the latter participants appeared to use sentence-level English more

easily than the former.

   Another response that showed that participants struggled to communicate their views

on tolerance in the target language was that some of them either resorted to their native

language to express their ideas or admitted that they did not know to express an idea in

English. For example, Participant 1 started her statement in English, but ended it in

Portuguese: "I think it is crazy because in Brazil and I don't, *eu não sei explicar em*

inglês (I don't know how to explain in English)." In this sentence, Participant 1

acknowledged that she was not able to express an idea in English. Participant 10 provided

an example of use of Portuguese in which he could not express what he intended:

> If you have more education, you're less radical. You have, you will have a medium.
> We arrive in a class, for example. Each person has your opinion about a thing or one
> thing. But if you have a class of… the person has, the persons has high education, the

tolerance is more, is happen in the development of the talking, of the... I think. *A gente nivela as pessoas, o grupo vai se nivelando automaticamente. Eu penso isso, que quanto mais as pessoas vão vendo o exemplo de outras, então as pessoas vão se nivelando, vão sendo mais tolerantes.* (We level people out, the group automatically levels itself out. I think so, that the more people see each other's examples then people level themselves out, they are more tolerant.)

Participant 10 stated that people become more tolerant when they interact with other people and observe their examples. He made use of Portuguese to convey a more specific message. He knew what he would like to say; however, his oral proficiency seemed to be a barrier that prevented him from expressing a more specific thought. Due to participants' linguistic difficulties in expressing their views on tolerance as well as time constraints, no data were obtained on the relationship between intercultural attributes and successful intercultural communication.

All in all, the two classes on tolerance and, to a lesser extent, participants' journals and oral interviews captured students' perceptions of tolerance. The data produced through these three sources showed that some participants were able to identify some ways through which tolerance could be demonstrated. Nevertheless, some participants emphasized their negative views on the target culture instead of displaying tolerance, which indicates that there may have been a misalignment between what a few students said about tolerance and what they actually did to express their own tolerance. Participants' oral proficiency and time constraints impeded a deeper understanding of their perceptions about tolerance and their views on the relationship between intercultural attributes and successful intercultural communication.

CHAPTER 5

TEACHER DATA

Chapter 5 is devoted to teacher data. Teacher data originated from the researcher's own perceptions of teaching in Cycles 1 through 3 and were captured in the teaching journals written, as well as the videotaped lessons from each cycle. Research Questions 2, 3, 5, and 7 provide the organizational framework for this chapter:

- Research Question 2: What are teacher perceptions of the use of CBI in this EFL context?

- Research Question 3: What are the teacher's challenges in teaching culture in a content and language integrated classroom in this EFL context?

- Research Question 5: What are the teacher's challenges in teaching vocabulary in a content and language integrated curriculum in this EFL context?

- Research Question 7: What are teacher perceptions of students' vocabulary learning in a content and language integrated learning classroom in an EFL context?

Teacher Perceptions on the Use of CBI Methodology

This subsection presents my perceptions of the use of each component of the CBI model—content, language, and strategies. Additionally, I offer some observations on the use of lesson planning using a three-stage model (i.e., into, through, and beyond), as well as some difficulties in implementing the CBI model.

Perceptions of Content, Language, and VLSs

Relationships in the U.S. were the content of the three action research cycles. In Cycle 1, most of the classes focused on family relationships, but one class was designed to present different types of romantic relationships in America. Cycle 2 explored the topic of relationships in American families, and Cycle 3 focused on family relationships and friendship in the United States.

Interpersonal relationships with a focus on intercultural differences was the content for the three cycles. This content was hierarchically organized into topics. The topic sequencing in Cycle 1 was based on the availability of resources to be used in class, as well as the results of a needs analysis survey completed by prospective participants and my personal knowledge of different types of relationships in the United States. In Cycle 1, I was prepared to teach about family relationships and romantic relationships in the United Sates. Therefore, the topic sequencing in Cycle 1 was based on my preferences as a teacher. In Cycles 2 and 3, the sequencing of topics was intended to reflect the typical order of relationships established in life: family relationships, friendship, romantic relationships, and relationships at work.

Even though interpersonal relationships with a focus on intercultural differences was

a common content in the three action research cycles, it is relevant to point out that the depth in which I was able to explore the targeted content differed from Cycles 1 to 2 and from Cycles 2 to 3. In Cycle 1, I noticed that the instructional activities and my own questions to participants did not promote a deeper knowledge of content. Content was discussed in a general fashion, which did not allow for a real improvement of students' understanding of the cultural concepts. In most activities, especially the ones that involved *Dear Abby* letters, the take-away message appeared to be that the interpersonal problems described by Americans could also happen in Brazil. Learners' comments also corroborated this perception, as they were not able to point out many differences between family relationships in the two countries.

In Cycles 2 and 3, I was able to foster a deeper understanding of important family values and how they influence family relationships in the U.S. Lessons also included a focus on American values such as individualism and independence and their impact on geographic mobility, the concept of families, and separation between parents and children. Although American culture was compared and contrasted with Brazilian culture in the three cycles, I noted that the more effective intercultural comparisons were made in Cycles 2 and 3.

My perception of language instruction across cycles provides important information on the types of decisions that were made in each cycle. Table 5.1 presents the language items that were taught in each cycle. In Cycle 1 the language components included grammar, vocabulary, and transition words. Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 did not focus on grammar or transition words but on vocabulary words.

I observed that there were multiple language foci in Cycle 1. My perception is that

Table 5.1

Language Explicitly Taught by Teaching Cycles

	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Grammar	simple past present perfect	-	-
Vocabulary	family members *aggression* *anger* *beating* *buddy* *casual* *dating* *disappointment* *double* *hurt* *online* *raise* *rescue* *speed* *serious* *wrap*	family members relationship statuses *adulthood* *be away* *chores* *collectivism* *curfew* *earn* *errands* *extended family* *folks* *grow up* *immediate family* *individualism* *look out for* *move* *move out* *nomadic* *raise* *role* *sever* *siblings* *tie*	family members relationship statuses *adulthood* *ambitious* *be away* *chores* *collectivism* *conforming (to)* *curfew* *earn* *errands* *extended family* *folks* *grow up* *immediate family* *individualism* *look out for* *move* *nomadic* *move out* *on your own* *pass away* *sever* *raise* *rely on* *rent-free* *role* *rules* *siblings* *survive* *tie* *turn* *under someone's roof*
Transition words	*after* *and* *because* *but* *for* *however* *or* *when*	-	-

this attempt to teach grammatical structures, vocabulary, and transition words was somewhat counterproductive for some reasons. First, there was not enough in-class time to explicitly teach these language items and effectively practice and use them in developing understanding of the content. Even though students were exposed to the verbs' forms and transition words and also did a few grammar exercises, they were not provided with enough opportunities to use the targeted linguistic items with the content in meaningful ways. In other words, they did not use them to compare and contrast Brazilian and American cultures. In Cycles 2 and 3, vocabulary learning was the only language objective, and the vocabulary was derived from the texts. Such a specific focus was perceived to be more beneficial because there were more opportunities for students to use the targeted words and participate in meaningful use of the content. The vocabulary words that were taught enabled students to identify important values in relationships in the United States and contrast them with Brazilian values. For example, when it comes to geographic mobility and independence, students learned and used words and phrases such as *to move*, *to move out*, *to be away*, and *to be on your own*, which prepared them to discuss mobility in the two countries in question. Such a connection between language and content was not clear in Cycle 1. For instance, in Cycle 1 teaching words such as *buddy*, *rescue*, and *wrap* did not contribute to students' understanding of the content or enabled them to better express their views on the content.

My emphasis on learning strategies shifted from Cycle 1 to Cycles 2 and 3. One of the language objectives in Cycle 1 was to enable students to create their own *Dear Abby* letters. In order to help students to outline a *Dear Abby* letter, they were asked to complete a graphic organizer to identify the main components of this genre. However,

this was the only time that students used this graphic organizer or focused on the structure of *Dear Abby* letters. There was simply not enough employ of this strategy during Cycle 1. In Cycles 2 or 3, students learned three vocabulary-learning strategies (VLSs) and had multiple opportunities to use the strategies.

Compared to the use of a graphic organizer in Cycle 1, my observation was that the VLSs taught in Cycles 2 and 3 were more immediately relevant to the students as they can continue to use the strategies outside of the classroom as they continue studying English.

<u>Teacher Perceptions of Lesson Planning</u>

Another difference in the three action research cycles involves lesson planning. I used the three-stage approach (i.e., into, through, and beyond) to design lesson plans for the three cycles of this course. In the CBI model, lessons are conceived around the content to be covered and not the amount of time the class meets. Table 5.2 contains summary examples of three lesson plans, one from each cycle. The activities listed in each lesson plan are in sequential order.

The Cycle 1 lesson had more activities and more variation in activities than the lessons in Cycles 2 and 3. In the into stage students listened to a song, ordered its lyrics, answered some comprehension questions, guessed the meaning of some words, identified life changes in the lyrics, and explored the concepts of turning points in life and rites of passage. There were also multiple through activities in this Cycle 1. The only beyond activity in this lesson plan was supposed to be done at home. Students were supposed to write a *Dear Abby* letter by following the structure taught in class. Students were also

Table 5.2

Summaries of Example Lesson Plans from Cycles 1-3

Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Into: • Activity 1: listen to song. • Activity 2: rank order turning points and rites of passages. **Through:** • Activity 3: do Instant Expert. • Activity 4: watch a video. • Activity 5: read a *Dear Abby* letter. **Beyond:** • Homework Activity: write a *Dear Abby* letter. **Through (for language):** • Activity 6: focus on present perfect. • Activity 7: identify transition words. • Activity 8: brainstorm marriage vocabulary. • Activity 9: read *Dear Abby* letters. • Activity 10: watch TV series. • Activity 11: read *Dear Abby* letter.	**Into:** • Activity 1: take a quiz on the U.S. • Activity 2: find cities on the map of the U.S.A. **Through:** • Activity 3: watch part of the documentary. • Activity 4: read the documentary script. • Activity 5: work on vocabulary. **Beyond:** • Activity 6: draw a timeline.	**Into:** • Activity 1: compare families. • Activity 2: brainstorm family vocabulary. **Through:** • Activity 3: watch part of the documentary. • Activity 4: read the documentary script. **Beyond:** • Activity 5: compare American families and their own families.

supposed to peer review each other's letters outside of class. After the beyond activity, I included additional through activities, which I now realize was not an effective sequence.

The Cycle 2 lesson included fewer activities. These activities were focused and connected to one another. For example, students took a quiz on U.S. geography and facts and identified several American cities and states on a map. They used this information to speculate about mobility in the United States. In the through stage, students watched part of a documentary and tried to discover whether the interviewees moved a lot or not. A

follow-up activity required students to read different parts of the documentary script, identify the reasons why people decided to move to other places, and compare mobility in Brazil and in the United States. In addition, students were taught new vocabulary derived from the documentary and did several vocabulary activities that focused on the form, meaning, and use of these new words. In the beyond stage, students were asked to draw one another's timelines. This approach was quite different from the Cycle 1 approach, which had different activities that were enjoyable but not connected to one another through content.

The topic of the example lesson in Cycle 3 was family structures in the United States and it was the second lesson about the topic in this cycle. In the into stage of this example lesson, students described a painting of a traditional American family and compared it to other types of family structures in the United States that had been presented in the previous class. In the through part of this lesson, they watched part of the documentary on family structures and completed a table with information on the interviewees' families. After completing this table, they discussed surprising facts about the interviewees (e.g., the fact that one interviewee states that her family is independent and not very close) and compared them to family structure in Brazil. In this activity, students were taught new vocabulary. In the beyond stage, students were asked to describe their own family structures in pairs and compare them to American families at the end.

The three example lessons from Cycles 1, 2, and 3 in Table 5.2 are characteristic of the difficulties I faced as the lesson plan designer in the three cycles. I noted that as I developed more experience with the CBI model, the rationale for the structure of the lessons became clearer, and my lessons became more focused.

Tensions between Time and Content

Another perception was that time was a barrier during the three cycles. In my

teaching journals, there were several references to the challenges of teaching the three

cycles of the course due to time constraints. In some of these comments, I stated that it

took students a long time to do certain activities or the pace of a specific lesson was too

slow. I also commented on not being able to finish one activity and being forced to

continue it in the following class. Even though I was aware that CBI is not a time-driven

model, all the references to time in my teaching journals were in response to questions

about problems encountered during the lessons.

Due to these time constraints and to the focus of CBI on content, language, and

strategies, my understanding was that there was a tension between the activities and

topics that should be kept in order to explore the content and those that could be skipped

in order to keep to a set time. In the three cycles, my original plan for the curriculum was

to address different types of interpersonal relationships in the United States (i.e., family

relationships, friendship, romantic relationships, and relationships at work), so that

students would have a basis for making intercultural comparisons, which I hoped would

lead to intercultural awareness and ultimately to intercultural tolerance and acceptance.

My ultimate goal was to promote intercultural communication. However, while teaching

the course in the three cycles, I noticed that I would not be able to introduce and discuss

these four types of interpersonal relationships. As a result, the topic of family

relationships was the only topic that received close attention during the three cycles. In

addition, in Cycles 2 and 3, I noticed that addressing American family relationships

required more time than I had planned, especially because I was trying to deepen

students' knowledge of the topics.

Challenges in Teaching about Culture

Teaching culture posed different challenges during the three action research cycles. The first challenge concerned the use of resources to teach American culture. As one of the aims of content-based instruction is to develop learners' literacy skills, written texts were used in each cycle. In addition, audio-visual resources were part of the materials used in class. Table 5.3 presents the main resources used in Cycles 1, 2, and 3.

In Cycle 1, students read several *Dear Abby* letters, watched different snippets of two American TV series (*Modern Family*© and *Parenthood*©), and read two texts found on the internet. The first text contrasted the reasons why Brazilians and Americans move out of the parental home, and the second text presented descriptions of different types of dates in the United States. In Cycle 2, I changed the readings and included excerpts from three different cultural guides—one that focused on American culture, and one that contrasted Brazilian and American cultures. Furthermore, students watched a snippet of *Modern Family* and different parts of a documentary in which Americans and foreigners were interviewed. In addition to watching the documentary, students read transcripts of

Table 5.3

Classroom Resources

Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
• *Dear Abby* letters • snippets of TV series • internet sources	• cultural guides • snippet of a TV series • documentary • graph	• cultural guides • documentary • graphs

some of the interviews. They also analyzed a graph about the structure of American families. In Cycle 3, the cultural guides, documentary, and graph about American families were maintained. A graph about the structure of Brazilian families was added to the list of resources used in this cycle.

When teaching culture through *Dear Abby* letters in Cycle 1, I observed that the texts did not provide a clear picture of relationships in the United States. All these letters presented problems and Abby's reply with a suggestion on how to solve them. However, my perception and students' perceptions were that most of these problems could have happened in Brazil as well. I did not realize this fact until I taught the course. Even though some relevant characteristics of American culture were implicit in these letters, they required a previous understanding of the target culture to be identified.

In Cycles 2 and 3, the excerpts from the cultural guides and the graphs about family structures were perceived to be more useful because the cultural information was more explicit and contributed to students' understanding of core cultural values in the United States and in Brazil as well as their knowledge of statistics regarding families in the two countries. These informational materials provided a better overview of American culture, especially because it was possible to focus on relevant pieces of the three cultural guides.

The snippets of the TV series were perceived to have some limitations for the purposes of teaching of culture. On the one hand, both *Modern Family*© and *Parenthood*© provided students with an idea that several family structures are possible and real in the United States. On the other hand, these fictional shows display stories of specific characters, which did not contribute to an overall understanding of American families. Choosing scenes from these shows also posed challenges, as the American

cultural values that may have influenced the characters of the shows were implicit in the content.

The documentary produced for Cycle 2 was considered more effective than the snippets of the TV series. First, the information about American culture was readily available as the questions that guided the interviews addressed different relationships in the United States. As a result, the vocabulary used in the interviews could be taught because several words pertained to the topic of relationships. Second, the documentary provided different views on American culture because interviewees were both from different states in the U.S. and from other countries. I noticed that the American cultural values described in the culture guides were reinforced by the different voices that composed this documentary. In addition, the presentation of multiple perspectives on American culture was thought to contribute to the students' understanding that there is not one single American culture in spite of the existence of cultural trends.

During Cycle 3, as I was teaching about different family structures in the United States, I observed that students would benefit more from watching the documentary than from a specific snippet from *Modern Family*©. In this part of the documentary, interviewees described their families, which helped learners recycle family vocabulary while learning about different American families and American cultural values. Therefore, my decision to use the documentary instead of the TV series was informed by my observation that the documentary was a more useful resource as far as content and language.

Another challenge that teaching culture posed was related to my ultimate goal for the course, which was the development of students' tolerance and acceptance toward

American culture. My perception was that no tolerance was developed in these cycles. Perhaps it was because there were insufficient activities, but I also noticed that tolerance is not a disposition that develops rapidly. Instead of fostering more tolerance, I consider that these activities only enabled students to express their opinions about tolerance. In other words, my understanding is that the activities did not promote any change in students' behavior; instead, they only served as a tool to verify how tolerant some students were at that point in time. Perhaps the discussions raised their awareness of cultural differences that will ultimately lead to more tolerance and acceptance, at least, that is what I hope.

By the end of the third cycle, I also came to realize that teaching about American culture was challenging due to my own limited knowledge of the content presented. I observed that one of the reasons why the activities designed in Cycle 1 did not lead to a deeper understanding of the content was because I was still educating myself. In Cycles 2 and 3, I noted that students learned more information about American culture through activities as I had boosted my own knowledge of the cultural content through extensive reading after Cycle 1, and I had spent additional time in the U.S. Expanding my knowledge about American culture helped me revise the syllabus of the Cycle 1 course and make changes in the design of the Cycle 2 course.

Challenges in Teaching Vocabulary

The language focus for Cycles 2 and 3 was vocabulary. The targeted vocabulary was derived from the texts and resources used to teach the content of American culture. However, teaching vocabulary in this context posed some challenges.

One of these challenges concerned how to decide on the words to teach. Both the cultural guide excerpts and the documentary contained a significant number of words that could have become the target vocabulary of these cycles. However, determining which words were crucial for students to be able to compare and contrast relationships in Brazil and in the United States was not a simple task. Even though some words were not crucial for the topic of relationships in the United States, my perception was that students needed to know their meanings in order to understand the texts that they would read. For example, I taught the words *nepotism* and *Orange Julius* prior to a reading activity because students would have to know them in order to have a better understanding of their texts and summarize them to their classmates.

I also noted that some words were more difficult to teach. Defining the words such as *welfare* and *entity* in a clear way was, to a certain extent, challenging due to their abstract meanings. Even after presenting the definitions of these two words in English during Cycle 2, I observed that some students had not fully understood their meanings. After paraphrasing these definitions, I used the Portuguese translation of the word *entity* as a last resort. As this word was problematic during Cycle 2, I decided to use the Portuguese translation as a way of explaining the meaning of *entity* during Cycle 3. My perception was that using the Portuguese word was easier and caused fewer misunderstandings.

In addition to difficult words that were pretaught, some definitions of the target vocabulary were challenging for some students. Words with similar meanings (e.g., *errands* and *chores*, *raise* and *look out for*) were perceived to be more difficult for students as some of them used one instead of the other during activities. Although students' attention was drawn to some collocations involving some of these words, they

still caused some problems. Furthermore, I noted that some written definitions were not easily decoded. Students in Cycle 2 needed additional help in doing some activities in which they had to match the target words (presented in context) to their corresponding definitions. I needed to scaffold these definitions by eliciting information and additional examples from students. My observation was that some definitions contained words with which students were not familiar.

Designing beyond activities that would promote the use of the target vocabulary posed some challenges as well. Table 5.4 presents the beyond activities that were completed in Cycles 2 and 3. In the Walkabout activity, students were asked to walk around the classroom in pairs or groups to answer the following questions in order to discuss Brazilian and American cultures:

- Do you remember being **away** from your parents when you were younger? When did it happen? How long were you away from them?

- What are the steps to **adulthood** in Brazil? When do they happen? Any similarities to what happens in the U.S.?

- Did your parents set a **curfew** when you were a teenager? What time did you have to be home?

Table 5.4

Beyond Activities

Cycle 2	Cycle 3
• Walkabout • Timeline	• Family comparison • Walkabout • Family discussion • Timeline

- When should parents motivate teenagers to **earn** their own money? What should teenagers do? Do you think children should receive an allowance?

- Do you think Brazilian teenagers should run some **errands** to help their parents? Which ones? Did you do that when you were a teenager?

- Thinking about family structures and family relationships, are there any differences between the time your **folks** were young and now?

- What do you think parents' **roles** are in preparing children for real life? Are there any differences between the U.S. and Brazil in this regard?

- Did you have to do **chores** around the house when you were little? What did you have to do? Do you think American kids do chores around the house?

- When do you think Brazilians **sever** emotional **ties** with their parents? What is the difference between the U.S. and Brazil in this regard?

In the Timeline activity, students were supposed to ask each other questions and draw their partners' timelines. These questions should include:

- Where did you live? Were you **nomadic**?

- Did you **move** a lot when you were younger?

- Where did you **grow up**?

- Who **raised** you?

- Did people **look out for** each other in your neighborhood?

In both sets of questions, the target words were bolded.

In the Family Comparison activity, students were asked to describe the structures of their families and compare them based on the following instructions:

- Talk about your families (immediate and extended families).

- Answer: Who has the largest/smallest /closest immediate family?

In the Family Discussion activity, students had to suppose that they would adopt a child in pairs. They were asked to discuss the family values that they would teach this child. These are the instructions given to students:

- Work in pairs/groups. You're members of the same family.

- Discuss:

  - What family values are you going to teach him/her?

  - Are you going to teach him/her American family values, too? Which ones?

  - What rules is he/she going to have to follow?

My challenge was to create beyond activities that would encourage students to use both the content knowledge that they had developed and the language that they had learned. I perceived that the Family Discussion activity required students to use some of the targeted vocabulary as students would not be able to do this activity without it, but the other beyond activities did not necessarily require the use of the targeted vocabulary. For example, the Walkabout activity did not promote the targeted vocabulary. To do this activity, students read the sentences that included the targeted vocabulary, but they did not need to produce this vocabulary in their exchanges.

Perceptions of Students' Vocabulary Learning

Vocabulary use and vocabulary recycling were the focus of different activities in Cycles 1, 2, and 3. Although vocabulary was not the only language objective in Cycle 1, some activities aimed at giving students an opportunity to review the words that were

taught in this cycle. Students' responses to various activities in the three cycles led to different perceptions of their retention and production of the target words, which provided some information on their vocabulary learning.

Several recycling activities were carried out during Cycles 2 and 3 and students were exposed to the target words in many instances. In Cycle 1, vocabulary was also recycled, but fewer vocabulary activities were done. Table 5.5 contains a list of recycling activities divided by cycle.

In Cycle 1, students participated in a Walkabout activity in which they were asked to walk around the classroom and write on posters based on the following prompts: *two topics we talked about*, *two activities we did*, *two characters from a TV show*, and *two words that we learned*. Students were supposed to write information that they remembered from previous classes; only one prompt explicitly focused on vocabulary.

In the Guess the Word activity in Cycle 1, stickers with words were placed on students' backs. As they could not see these words, their classmates described them until the words were guessed. The same activity was done during Cycle 2, but in this cycle

Table 5.5

Recycling Activities

Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
• Walkabout • Guess the Word	• Hangman • Guess the Word • Word Wall • Multiple-choice Questions • Odd One Out	• Hangman • Word Wall • Unscrambling Words • Multiple-choice Questions • Odd One Out • Word Connections • Tic-Tac-Toe • Crossword Puzzle

students chose a word from a list and described it until their classmates could guess it.

Several recycling activities were carried out during Cycles 2 and 3. The Hangman activity involved guessing the secret target words based on their spelling. The definitions of several words were elicited from students as soon as they guessed them. Word Walls were also another resource to recycle words. Throughout these two cycles, students were asked to add target words to these Word Walls and explain the connection among words. Multiple-choice questions were another recycling activity. In this activity, students were asked to select synonyms, antonyms, and words related to the target vocabulary. The last activity done both during Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 was Odd One Out. In this activity, students were given sets of three words and were asked to choose the one that did not belong to the set. Students were supposed to justify their choices in groups.

Some activities were only done during Cycle 3. In one of the activities, students had to guess the target words, whose letters were not in order. Students also completed an activity in which they were supposed to make word connections by brainstorming words related to the target vocabulary. Students needed to explain why they chose certain words. In the Tic-Tac-Toe activity, students played this game by completing sentences with the most appropriate word. Finally, students were also asked to complete a crossword puzzle in which they were given a sentence or a definition and were supposed to guess the target word.

My perception of students' vocabulary retention in each cycle was different. In Cycle 1, students were able to remember some vocabulary from the Walkabout activity. However, it struck me that these words were not necessarily targeted words. I perceived that some students, especially in Cycle 2, could not retain the meaning of some targeted

words and struggled with words, such as *errands* and *chores* that were close in meaning. Even though students struggled with the same words in Cycle 3, I noticed that students' vocabulary retention in this cycle was, to a certain extent, more successful based on their performance during the recycling activities. In addition, I observed that that students in Cycle 3 were able to make more connections among words because they had participated in word connection activities, namely the Word Wall and Odd One Out. My general perception was that students' understanding of the meaning of the words was better than their ability to use the target vocabulary, and this was true across all three cycles. I noticed that students remembered several targeted words in activities because some context for the words had been provided.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

Discussion of Learner Data

In Chapter 6, teacher and learner perceptions of Cycles 2 and 3 are discussed in light

of the literature reviewed for this research study. First, the findings of learner and teacher

data are problematized. Additionally, at the end of Chapter 6, I discuss limitations to the

current research study and offer suggestions for future research.

Content and Language Integration

The notion of learning language by studying content is an uncommon pedagogical

concept for most English as a foreign language (EFL) instruction as it is taught in Niterói,

Brazil. Because it is not a typical methodology and none of my students had ever

experienced it before, it was instructionally challenging to implement. During the

interviews at the end of Cycles 2 and 3, some of the EFL students that I worked with

were able to clearly articulate that they attended a course that focused on both language

and content, whereas other students were unaware of this fact. Instead, the latter group

tended to regard the linguistic items that I taught as the main content in Cycles 2 and 3.

For example, Participant 2 in Cycle 2 had to be asked the question about content and

language integration in several different ways before he expressed that culture was the content of the course. Content and language integration could have been overlooked due to my instruction during the course. Alternatively, students' previous experiences learning foreign languages might have influenced their perceptions of the integration of language and content. Participant 2 may have overlooked the importance of content in the course because of the tradition of foreign language teaching in Niterói, Brazil. Niterói public and private school teachers have a long tradition of teaching English grammar, and most English learners are a product of that system. Private language centers usually target the four skills—reading, writing, listening, and speaking—and subscribe to different teaching methodologies, ranging from audiolingualism with its focus on drills and language structure to communicative approaches with its emphasis on speaking and communication. Oral communication tends to be emphasized over other language skills in private Brazilian language centers.

In this Brazilian educational context, it is unusual to find language centers where foreign languages are taught through specific content. In making this claim, it is not my intention to claim that cultural facts and relevant information about English-speaking countries are not part of the curriculum of English language centers in Niterói. My point is that language centers do not develop their curricula with content as the organizing principle and language objectives that are derived from specific content objectives.

Students who participated in Cycles 2 and 3 are a product of this Brazilian educational context and have been influenced by previous experiences learning EFL. Their perceptions have been shaped by their past educational experiences and their own individual background knowledge and expectations for the course. Therefore, it was not

surprising to encounter students, such as Participant 2, who struggled with the idea that specific content, such as culture, could be the organizing principle of a language course.

Some participants expressed a desire to do more activities that would help them practice their English speaking skills. Students were biased toward practicing speaking because of the importance that many language centers in Niterói give to the ability to speak the target language. Teaching students how to express themselves orally in the target language is a valid goal; nonetheless, knowledge of the target culture and cross-cultural awareness are necessary and ought to be included in language programs for students to be truly able to communicate effectively in a foreign language (see Piasecka, 2011).

While some participants had a clear orientation to improving their spoken English and did not seem to pay attention to the content portion of the course, others, especially 2 students in Cycle 3, observed that there was depth to the content in the course they attended. Their attention to characteristics of course content could be related to the fact that they were more experienced language learners who had studied other foreign languages throughout their lives. The structure of the course in Cycle 3 with its focus on an understanding of American culture may have stood out in contrast to their previous experiences in other foreign language courses.

Students' observations of content depth is a positive finding because content-based instruction is supposed to promote a deeper understanding of content, allowing students to become experts in a given topic as they improve their language skills. According to expertise research, which supports CBI (see Grabe & Stoller, 1997), learners are expected to be aware of their increasing knowledge of an area through their participation in a series

of challenging activities. The fact that Participants 9 and 10 in Cycle 3 noticed such depth suggests that their awareness of the different aspects of the target content was increasing. They would not have stated that the theme was *recurrent* or *deep* had they not been learning content in Cycle 3.

As a teacher, I also learned about what it takes to develop conceptual understanding in depth. I had intended to cover several topics on culture in the course, and had given my plan to the students. However, my plan was far too ambitious, and I also discovered that it took more time than I anticipated to cover the topics in depth. Several students commented that they would like to learn about the other types of relationships in the United States. Some students regretted not learning about all cultural topics that I had planned, whereas others showed interest in continuing to study the other topics about American culture on their own. This is another positive finding. Participants' interest in learning on their own resonates with one of the goals of content-based instruction, to encourage students to become autonomous learners. The fact that some participants stated that the content was *appealing*, *real*, and *enriching* is further evidence that they found the content relevant and interesting. They would not have asked me to provide them with more readings had they not been interested in the content of the course.

Students may also have enjoyed the content of Cycles 2 and 3 because they could build on their previous knowledge of American culture and Brazilian culture. Brazilian students are generally exposed to American culture through mainstream media (e.g., movies, music, news); consequently, participants had their own views of the target culture prior to attending the course. While they were able to express their views of American culture and learn new information by attending the course, they also made use

of their knowledge of Brazilian culture to make cultural comparisons. Students used their background knowledge to contribute to class discussions and their ability to do this may have encouraged them to learn more about American culture.

Participant 7's interaction with the target content (e.g., moving out of one's parents' house, gaining independence) during Cycle 2 was quite revealing as he made several comments that showed how the content could have applied to his own life. His journal entries displayed his appreciation of some American values discussed in Cycle 2, demonstrating that the target content was possibly meaningful and relevant to him. As a Brazilian young adult, Participant 7 considered adopting some of these values because he perceived them to be positive. The American values introduced during the course might have resonated with him due to the possible expectations of a young adult who goes to college in Brazil and may be thinking about his future plans. Although fostering American values was not a goal of the course, it was surprising to observe that the theme had an impact on Participant 7, inspiring him to reconsider his own values. Participant 7 revealed openness to some of the values from the target culture.

An analysis of student data revealed a contrast between how they perceived their experience with the content in the course in Cycles 2 and 3 and their experiences in other classes using the content in language textbooks. The content in the course in Cycles 2 and 3 was regarded positively; however, students' general opinions of the content in language textbooks was not positive. Some students stressed that textbooks generally presented fictional information or did not always contain interesting texts. The content of Cycles 2 and 3, on the other hand, was perceived to be real and appealing by most participants. Their comments serve as a reminder to me about the importance of knowing the student

population and the educational context in order to decide which content to teach and materials to use (see Graves, 2000). Such an understanding enables me to make choices that are justified by students' needs and interests. I am not proposing that commercial textbooks should no longer be used at language centers or that the textbooks adopted by the language center where participants take English classes are not relevant to them. Instead, I am suggesting that teachers and curriculum designers must take great care in selecting course materials, especially about the target culture, and that teachers should not rely solely on the textbook but find readings and texts to supplement the content introduced in the textbook.

Tolerance toward American Culture

In addition to improving students' knowledge of relationships in the United States, another goal of Cycles 2 and 3 was the development of tolerance toward and acceptance of American culture. However, several students displayed some resistance to some of the ideas about the target culture during in-class activities, which may have been influenced by the role the United States plays in the world's political scenario. At the same time they expressed resistance to American culture, they expressed that cultural tolerance was an important attitude; there appeared to be a mismatch between what some students said and what they could actually do. For instance, even though some students were not willing to accept that leading an individualist life, like several Americans do, could be a logical decision, they stated that it was essential for people to be tolerant towards other cultures. Therefore, the experience with Cycles 2 and 3 suggests that the development of one's tolerance is a challenging enterprise because perceptions are deep-seated and are a result

of one's life experiences.

Teachers should not expect that students will automatically demonstrate openness to changing their deep-rooted views about a given culture. Instead, a more realistic goal would be to create a systematic approach to developing students' cultural tolerance in which students' awareness of cultural differences would be gradually increased. Once students gained awareness of some differences, they would engage in class activities that would help them accept and perhaps even appraise differences among cultures (see Piasecka, 2011), which seems to be the crux of intercultural competence. If cultural differences are not brought to light and if tolerance is not encouraged in foreign language courses, students may not have a chance to reconsider various stereotypes of the target culture. Without such an emphasis on culture, students may learn how to communicate in the target language, but they will not develop intercultural competence, which includes the ability to effectively interact with native speakers of a given language and culture.

<u>Vocabulary Learning</u>

Teaching vocabulary that was related to the course theme was another focus of Cycles 2 and 3. Participants made positive remarks about the target vocabulary. The reasons for this positive perception could be related to their comments about vocabulary depth, meaningfulness, and the type of words chosen for the course. Additionally, a few participants made a connection between the target vocabulary and the theme of the course. For example, Participant 9 noticed that vocabulary words derived from content as she pointed out that the words made more sense to her after they were related to the specific theme. Students' awareness of the relationship between language and content is

desirable in a content-based classroom because focusing on the way vocabulary fits into a theme will likely lead learners to make more connections between words, which is believed to be conducive to vocabulary learning and retention.

Some participants identified the benefits of learning vocabulary as a means to facilitate grammar improvement. Immediately after Participant 10 described how language learning had taken place in this course, he expressed a desire to continue studying grammar in the future: "Of course I already bought. . . three grammar books by Oxford…"[1] His comment on his purchase of grammar books signals that he valued the study of grammatical structures, but could also indicate that an explicit focus on grammatical structures was felt to be missing in Cycle 3. The foreign language classes at the Niterói language center attended by Participant 10 include substantial work on new grammatical structures. I am not suggesting that grammar teaching be omitted from language classes. Knowledge of grammatical structure is an important component of communicative competence, namely, grammatical competence (see Canale & Swain, 1980); therefore, it is necessary for communication in a foreign language. Due to time constraints, vocabulary was the only language item that I was able to teach while developing a deeper understanding of content. With more time, I could have expanded the language foci. When I had tried to include multiple language foci in Cycle 1, it felt a bit chaotic. Furthermore, my initial expectation was that students would have a basic knowledge of English grammar, which would allow them to participate in class activities.

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[1] Participant 10: É claro que eu já comprei... três gramáticas da Oxford...

Vocabulary-learning Strategies

In Cycles 2 and 3, I began focusing on learning strategies and added vocabulary-learning strategies (VLSs). While all the VLSs were viewed in a positive light, VLS 1, namely, the vocabulary notebook, was chosen as the favorite strategy by most participants. The vocabulary notebook may have been the preferred strategy due to the straightforwardness of its instructions. Even though the creation of a vocabulary entry involved multiple steps (see Folse, 2004), these steps could have been familiar to students. By looking up words in the dictionary and receiving some teacher guidance, students were able to successfully employ this strategy in class.

Students' perception of the difficulty of VLS 2 could be due in part to the fact that this strategy was not nearly as practiced as VLS 1 during Cycles 2 and 3. Students were given instructions on how to use this strategy, but did not have a chance to use it multiple times due to time constraints. In addition, VLS 2 is a strategy that seems to require more time to be mastered because not only are there multiple prefixes and suffixes in English, but also some of them are arbitrary and need to be memorized. Differentiating prefixes from roots that contain prefix-like beginnings also seems to require more time because it is believed to be challenging for intermediate English students.

Comments about VLS 2 were quite surprising in that some students stated that the ability to analyze word parts is a personal endowment or talent. Such a belief could be another reason why this strategy was perceived to be more complicated. My impression is that their perceptions could have been different had more time been devoted to this strategy. If participants had done more exercises involving this strategy, they could have perceived VLS 2 differently.

Additionally, the analysis of word parts in particular might work better for analytical learners, so there might have been individual differences that came into play when students learned about and used VLS 2. However, the relationship between learning styles and the vocabulary-learning strategies used in Cycles 2 and 3 is beyond the scope of this project, but definitely something that could be investigated in the future. In this study, strategy instruction aimed to give learners options of strategies that they could use to learn vocabulary in the course and potentially after it. Students were allowed to choose the strategies that they liked as one of the premises of this study is that there is not a best single strategy to learn vocabulary (see Folse, 2004). Some might work for some people; some might work for others.

Helping students make connections between knowledge of word parts in their native language and word parts in the target language should be encouraged by language teachers. In Cycles 2 and 3, students demonstrated that they could draw on what they knew about Portuguese affixes to learn how to analyze word parts in English. This study, supported by CBI research, aligns with the view that suggests that language learners can transfer skills used in their L1 to their foreign language learning. Consequently, it is crucial that teachers choose strategies that can be transferred and employed in other learning situations so that their use is maximized and promotes as much learning as possible.

By encouraging students' use of their L1 knowledge to employ VLS 1 and VLS 2, I am not advocating that teachers translate words or sentences or that instruction be delivered in students' L1. The objective of teaching VLSs is to help students learn and retain vocabulary; therefore, if their L1 knowledge is useful to achieve such an objective,

it should be used.

Students commented on the difficulty of VLS 3, which could also be due to lack of enough practice. This strategy was the last one introduced in Cycles 2 and 3, and students did not have ample time to employ it in either cycle. In addition, not every word lends itself to the use of a mnemonic strategy. It may be extremely challenging to find a word in the students' L1 whose pronunciation resembles the pronunciation of certain target words (see Folse, 2004). Participant 2 addressed this limitation for VLS 3, which is further evidence to confirm the results available in the literature.

Notwithstanding its perceived drawbacks, VLS 3 was described as *fun* and *creative* by some participants. The fact that the keyword technique resonated with some students aligns with Folse (2004) when he argues that there is no best VLS and that students should use strategies that they like and that work for them. It was quite surprising to see how enthusiastic some participants were when they were asked to draw pictures that connected target words and keywords in Portuguese. Their ideas were original and showed different ways of connecting vocabulary. Their appreciation of VLS 3 suggests that these students could use it when learning vocabulary in the future.

Based on participants' responses in the initial questionnaires, none of the three VLSs taught in Cycles 2 and 3 was part of their repertoire of strategies, which resonates with Rodrigues' (2007) findings that there is little emphasis on vocabulary strategy instruction in foreign language classes in the Brazilian schools and language centers that he investigated. The present study calls for the inclusion of strategy teaching as part of regular curriculum in language programs. It is believed that by attending this course, learners were able to identify possible strategies that they could employ in order to

continue learning English vocabulary on their own, which aligns with one goal of content-based instruction: to help learners become autonomous and keep on learning language and content beyond the classroom setting.

Learners' Intrinsic Motivation

In Cycles 2 and 3 I used a variety of learning activities to target language and content. A few participants commented on the relationship between the variety of activities and their increased motivation to take the course, which suggests that they were generally satisfied with the course activities. In this case, their motivation may be interpreted as intrinsic, capitalizing on an interest that they naturally bring to class. Different types of activities might also have peaked their curiosity because they were not part of a routine. As no textbook was followed in Cycles 2 and 3, students could not anticipate the activities that they would do in class, which probably brought an element of surprise to these cycles.

Another reason why the motivation of some students may have increased during the course might be how challenging some activities were. Even though students struggled with a few activities during Cycles 2 and 3, they were successfully able to carry out others. Several activities placed greater demands on cognition (i.e., involved higher-order thinking skills) as students analyzed texts and compared and contrasted cultures. Other activities involved students in tasks that they may have never completed in English. For example, Participant 1 had never spoken English in front of a class, and she did it when she participated in an Instant Expert activity, an activity in which she summarized a text about American culture in order to explain it to the entire class. This activity not only

placed higher demands on the students' cognition but also involved meaningful communication because the activity involved sharing new information with their classmates. Based on one of her journal entries, it is possible to surmise that Participant 1's opportunity to do a new and challenging activity may have given her a sense of achievement.

The content of Cycles 2 and 3 might also have been motivating for some participants because while students were learning new information about the target culture, they could draw on their knowledge of their own culture as well. The topics of in-class discussions did not seem to be unfamiliar to participants as they focused on everyday situations and relationships. Students were encouraged to share their own experiences with their peers and appear to have enjoyed interacting with each other. By relating new information to their background knowledge and sharing personal stories, students might have felt motivated to come to class in Cycles 2 and 3.

<div align="center">Discussion of Teacher Data</div>

Experience with Action Research

The opportunity to participate in three action research cycles as a teacher and researcher reinforced my belief that teachers can improve their understanding of teaching methodologies and approaches by immersing themselves in real classrooms and designing their own courses. Although higher education institutions can provoke useful scholarly discussions about language teaching and learning, and education, it is experience as a teacher that determines the teacher's level of expertise. Participation in this action research project taught me how to learn from my own teaching as I

systematically reflected on how my courses could be improved.

As a graduate student, I have had the privilege of taking several applied linguistics courses that addressed some of the components of lesson planning and course design. In some of these courses, I was able to create projects, curricula, and activities to teach language and content that aligned with my beliefs about language and language learning. Nevertheless, only when I taught my own content and language integrated course was I able to truly experience content-based instruction in action and understand on a deeper level the conceptual model that I had been taught.

This research study showed me that teachers can benefit from teaching the same course multiple times because students' responses to and performance in a course can be very informative and can guide teachers through the process of refining course design. Implementing these three action research cycles raised my awareness of the iterative nature of course design and allowed me to refine different components of course design in each cycle. The changes reflect the importance of devoting a substantial amount of time to course design because of its impact on the teaching and learning experience of the subjects involved.

Material Selection and Content Learning

Through the selection of resources for Cycles 1, 2, and 3, I learned that the materials chosen for a content-based course can influence the amount of content that students learn through in-class activities. Students appeared to learn more about relationships in the United States during Cycles 2 and 3 because of the materials assigned during these cycles. Compared to *Dear Abby* letters and snippets of TV series in Cycle 1, excerpts

from cultural guides and snippets from a TV documentary more effectively drew learners' attention to core values present in American society. Additionally, as interpersonal relationships were described both in the cultural guides and in the documentary, these sources contained more vocabulary words related to the field of relationships, which ultimately facilitated the process of target vocabulary selection.

As a teacher in the classroom, my ability to choose course resources that contained clear cultural values improved from one cycle to the next. American cultural values appeared to be implicit in the *Dear Abby* letters and TV series used in Cycle 1. The selected *Dear Abby* letters placed an emphasis on advice to solve relationship problems, but did not focus on core cultural values as much. Furthermore, snippets of TV series may not have explicitly shown the cultural values that motivated characters to behave in a specific way. Students had to deduct underlying perspectives included in the more authentic *Dear Abby* letters and TV series. That would have been easier for a higher level, but with intermediates, a more explicit presentation of the targeted cultural perspectives was necessary.

I am not claiming that *Dear Abby* letters and snippets from TV series are not helpful resources to teach American culture. In fact, I consider them to be excellent resources to teach both content and language. However, for the purposes of achieving the objectives for this course, most of the letters and snippets that I selected for Cycle 1 did not lend themselves to teaching American culture. These shortcomings prompted me to search for better resources for Cycle 2 in light of my course goals and objectives. Due to the difficulty of finding an appropriate movie or TV program that could be used in these cycles, I decided to make a documentary in which Americans and foreigners were

interviewed and commented on their perceptions of American and Brazilian cultures. The documentary was much more explicit in dealing with cultural values.

Based on my experiences in this study, I argue for a careful selection of course resources. Going through these action research cycles provided me with enough experience to evaluate my participants' engagement with the materials selected for each cycle. I hope that the results of my action research study will encourage other teachers to devote time to investigating students' interaction with the resources selected for their courses. Even though some teachers may not have the autonomy to select their own classroom materials, it is still advisable that they assess the effectiveness of resources and suggest changes if necessary.

When course goals and objectives cannot be met by using authentic sources, teacher-generated sources could provide an alternative. The documentary used in Cycles 2 and 3 was produced for the purposes of this research study. Interviewees commented on their perceptions of relationships in the United States by answering questions that targeted the content of this course. The use of such compilation of perceptions helped students to effectively achieve the overall purpose of the course, which was to develop their cross-cultural understanding of the similarities and differences between American and Brazilian interpersonal relationships.

Maybe sequencing the classroom materials could also promote the desired results. Students could be taught cultural values explicitly through the excerpts from the cultural guides and segments of the documentary. Afterwards, they would identify these values in *Dear Abby* letters and snippets of TV series. However, a longer course would be necessary to use all these resources.

Designing Content Activities

The experience of creating activities with the selected course resources showed me that my own understanding of American culture changed during the three action research cycles. Several activities in Cycle 1, to a certain extent, struck me as repetitive and did not promote deep content learning, which could be partly explained by the fact that I was also educating myself about the content of Cycle 1. In Cycles 2 and 3, because my knowledge of the target content had increased and I had gone through the experience of teaching this course before, I felt that I was better prepared to foster a deeper understanding of content. In addition to having more suitable resources, my ability to create content-based activities and to help learners identify important cultural values improved during Cycles 2 and 3. My increased knowledge of content in conjunction with the selected resources also allowed me to ask better questions about American culture, which helped learners discover relevant cultural information.

I have received less training in content-based instruction than other traditional language teaching methodologies, which may explain why teaching content posed more challenges than teaching language in these cycles. Additionally, teaching culture was challenging because this was the first course that I had taught in which culture was the organizing principle driving the curriculum.

Content-area teachers take courses related to their field of study and do not struggle with content expertise. Despite their interests in specific cultures, foreign language teachers, including myself, may not know enough about the cultures of the countries where their language of interest is spoken. Therefore, it may be necessary for language teachers to boost their knowledge independently in order to be able to teach classes on

culture. Reading different books and articles on relationships in American culture was crucial for my preparation to teach this course. I also learned new information from the resources selected for the students, especially from the cultural guides and the documentary, which presented American culture as a mosaic of subcultures with recurrent trends.

Integration of Lesson Plan Components

An analysis of my lesson plans in each cycle suggests that integrating the three components of content-based instruction—content, language, and strategies—was initially a demanding task for me as well. In Cycle 1, the three components of the course were, to a certain extent, not in sync. Content, language, and strategy instruction were present, but they were not in fact completely integrated. In other words, the components were included in Cycle 1, but they did not seem to be mutually dependent on one another. Students learned about family relationships in the United States while they learned language (grammar, vocabulary, and transition words) that would help them write *Dear Abby* letters about relationship problems. Strategy teaching was limited to a one-time activity that students completed in order to outline their letters. It was as though learning about American culture was only a way of learning the format of a *Dear Abby* letter, which students could have learned without any focus on the target culture. I now see that the linguistic features present in these letters could have been taught and practiced, the genre could have been explained, and students could have written their texts without an explicit emphasis on interpersonal relationships in the United States.

In Cycles 2 and 3, the focus was clearly on content, and there was a clear purpose for

learning about different types of relationships in the United States. Students were expected to develop some cultural awareness during these cycles that could potentially lead to the development of improved tolerance toward American culture. Both the language component (i.e., theme-related vocabulary) and the strategy component (i.e., vocabulary-learning strategies) were believed to help students describe relationships in Brazil and in the United States, which might have promoted cross-cultural awareness. The course design in these cycles exhibited a more coherent plan that addressed the three components of CBI in order to achieve one common goal: to enable students to compare and contrast Brazilian and American cultures.

Development of Intercultural Tolerance

Even though the development of students' tolerance toward the target culture was planned for Cycles 2 and 3, these cycles ultimately did not accomplish this goal. The fact that most students were not able to show tolerance during classes does not suggest that they are intolerant people or that they are not able to develop tolerance. Conversely, based on students' performance in activities and my own observations of these lessons, course design needs to be improved in order to foster the possible development of intercultural tolerance.

In Cycle 2, the vast majority of students did not seem prepared to discuss intercultural tolerance in English. Most students lacked the appropriate vocabulary to express tolerance and to exemplify it. Students' proficiency may have prevented them from fully expressing their views on the topic. In Cycle 3, students were perceived to be more fluent and have a larger vocabulary repertoire than those in Cycle 2. My impression was that the

latter students would be able to have a discussion about tolerance; therefore, my approach to the topic in Cycle 3 was very similar to the way it was taught in Cycle 2. The only difference was that throughout the Cycle 3 course I tried to raise participants' awareness of the fact that no culture was superior to others. Although students were able to articulate their opinions better in this last cycle, they were only able to express their level of tolerance at that time. No development or change of attitude could actually be verified over the course of Cycle 3.

These two experiences indicate that there should have been a gradual progression of activities for students to develop skills and language to discuss cultural tolerance, which could have included work on the necessary vocabulary prior to activities involving the demonstration of feelings about the target culture. A possible gradual development of tolerance may have bridged the gap between students' proficiency level and the requirements for a discussion on this topic. It is important to bear in mind that implementing these changes in course design may not translate into tolerance or empathy toward other cultures. Cultural perceptions are deep-seated, and consequently, though students' cross-cultural awareness may raise as a result of classroom activities, they may never completely accept the target culture.

Tension among Content, Language, and Strategy Instruction

In terms of vocabulary teaching, I observed a difference in target language word choice in the three cycles. The fact that the target vocabulary of Cycles 2 and 3 was more related to the course theme than the target vocabulary of Cycle 1 may be attributed to better planning on my part. Not only were better theme-related words selected for Cycles

2 and 3, but there was also more room for in-class vocabulary practice because grammatical structures and transition words were not specifically targeted in Cycles 2 and 3. I do not claim that teachers should only target one language area per course. Instead, based on my experience with action research, I reiterate Graves' (2000) position that course content and language objectives should be created according to the length of the course. Although there was some improvement in planning from Cycle 1 to Cycle 3, further improvement is necessary relative to the creation of even more realistic objectives with a specific time frame in mind.

I should have provided for more in-class opportunities for students to use the target vocabulary because they would possibly have improved their vocabulary retention through student's application of the new words in activities in the beyond stage of lesson planning. However, in Cycles 2 and 3, it seems that the amount of time that I spent on vocabulary teaching reflects my anxiety about addressing the three components of content-based instruction. The tension between my desire to pay more attention to students' vocabulary development and my desire to introduce different aspects of course content was clear, especially in Cycle 2. In Cycle 3, as the pace of the course increased and more lessons were added to the course, I was able to teach content, recycle the target words more often, and add more activities to the beyond stage of the lessons. Moreover, based on my experience with Cycle 2, I had expectations about the amount of content that could be included in Cycle 3.

Other teachers may feel a similar tension between how much material they can reasonably expect to cover in relation to students' actual learning during a course. Several teachers may face situations in which they are required to cover an entire textbook or

teach a specific number of topics or items by a certain deadline. However, this research study made me reconsider my own beliefs as they related to this traditional coverage perspective because the implementation of these three action research cycles taught me that achieving student-oriented performance objectives should play a more important role in the curriculum. If student-centered performance objectives are not met and students do not learn new information in a given course, teachers may want to revise their course design because covering topics or textbook pages may not accomplish the desired objectives. Course design ought to be flexible enough so that teachers can provide additional help with course material in case students need it. The idea of moving ahead with content without assessing students' understanding does not align with action research or the course design process.

Still, in the realm of vocabulary instruction, students' difficulties with some vocabulary words in Cycles 2 and 3 might be explained by the fact that some of them had similar meanings, which may have interfered with students' vocabulary retention. For example, some struggled with word pairs—such as *errands* and *chores*, or *look out for* and *raise*—replacing one word with the other one in the pair. The similarity between the words in each pair and their simultaneous presentation may have prevented students from appropriately learning to use them because these words might have competed with each other, which may have had a counterproductive effect on students' vocabulary learning. A better alternative for teaching these word pairs would be to focus on and practice one word from each pair and preteach the other words so that they did not hinder comprehension of the course readings. Another possibility would be to teach each word in these pairs separately, allowing spaced time between the introduction of each word in

the pair in order to avoid confusion.

Some written definitions of the target words in course activities also needed to be revised because students' encounters with unknown words likely affected their vocabulary learning. This action research project showed me that some pre-intermediate and intermediate English learners may not have benefited from reading definitions as decoding these definitions required a larger vocabulary repertoire. Therefore, definitions should be tailored to students' proficiency level, and even the definitions from dictionaries designed for foreign language learners may need to be adapted in order to maximize learning.

Strategy Instruction

The process of implementing my content and language integrated course design in three action research cycles provided me with an invaluable opportunity to teach different learning strategies. Before working on this research study, I had never placed an intense emphasis on strategy instruction in my language courses. As a foreign language learner, I had never been formally taught strategies to learn foreign languages either. Based on my little experience teaching and learning strategies, I expected strategy instruction to be initially challenging.

My understanding of strategy teaching considerably improved over the course of these action research cycles. In Cycle 1, students were presented a strategy by which to outline a text, which was not in fact a strategy to learn languages *per se*, but could help students write logically organized *Dear Abby* letters. My observation of Cycle 1 lessons and my own teaching journal entries suggest that practice and modeling of this strategy

were missing. Students had little contact with the target strategy, which may have affected their perception of the usefulness of writing an outline of a text and the possible application of this strategy to their studies.

Strategy instruction in Cycles 2 and 3 was, to a certain extent, more faithful to Echevarría's (2007) steps to teaching strategies. All the three VLSs were identified and their use was modeled and practiced to some degree. These strategies became part of the classroom routine and their integration with the other components of the course was more evident. Additionally, students' awareness of the applicability and usefulness of these strategies beyond the classroom setting may have been raised.

Despite my perceived improvement in providing instructions on the use of some strategies and drawing attention to the connection between the target VLSs and students' overall language learning enterprise, VLS 2 and VLS 3 could have been practiced more, especially the former strategy. In spite of the fact that some affixes were taught and students did some exercises that involved identifying prefixes and suffixes and analyzing word parts, more practice would be necessary for students to make use of VLS 2 to expand their vocabulary repertoire.

My experiences in this research study reinforce the need for teachers to choose strategies carefully for content-based courses as training students to become independent learners who take ownership of their learning is part of the agenda of content-based instruction. The decision about the most appropriate strategies for a course should take into account students' proficiency levels as well as the content and length of the course. Including too many strategies in a short period of time may be counterproductive because students might not have enough opportunities to practice any of them.

Based on the fact that learners need be provided with various opportunities to practice learning strategies (see Echevarría, 2007), I would teach fewer VLSs in a 1-month course, but learners would employ them consistently in class. I would probably avoid VLS 2 during a shorter course due to the number of English affixes and the specificity of English morphology, which makes this strategy time-consuming. VLS 1 and VLS 3 would be maintained because my impression is that the steps to these mnemonic strategies could be learned faster. Even though VLS 3 has some limitations, the presentation and practice of this strategy may draw students' attention to the possibility of using pronunciation and imagery as a way to learn vocabulary in a foreign language. Both auditory and visual students may benefit from this strategy because of its combination of sound and image. Furthermore, VLS 3 allows students to use their creativity to draw original pictures and retain the target word in their memories.

When target words do not facilitate the use of VLS 3, students may be able to rely on the use of VLS 1, which is believed to have fewer limitations and allow learners to connect target words to synonyms or antonyms, a translation, and a context in which the target word occurs. In addition, the benefit of promoting vocabulary retrieval may inspire students to use this strategy beyond the classroom setting.

Action Research and the Importance of Course Design and Planning

Instead of identifying areas that need improvement in course design and recognizing the significant part that course design plays in learning, teachers may feel tempted to blame students for whatever is not successful during a course. Some teachers attribute any failure to students' lack of effort, interest or intelligence; reflective teachers, instead,

ought to first investigate whether any component in the course design needs improvement before jumping to oversimplified conclusions.

Overall, this opportunity to conduct action research allowed me to experience content-based instruction in action through an iterative process of redesigning a course. Through practice, I was able to critically evaluate my own performance as a teacher and students' response to each cycle as well as understand the importance of each component of course design. My own reflection on the entire project and the actual course redesign were meaningful learning experiences during the implementation of the first content-based course of my teaching career. Moreover, I experienced the use of content-based instruction at a language center in Niterói, Brazil. I realized that it may be possible to teach a content and language integrated course to students who are still not advanced learners of a foreign language. Although the use of more scaffolding techniques may be required, intermediate learners are able to participate in activities that involve content, language, and strategies.

These cycles also served as a reminder about the importance of creating course goals and objectives that are realistic, achievable, and measurable. As for my goals and objectives related to the development of intercultural tolerance, I learned that some goals may be too ambitious for a 1-month course. In this case, a better alternative would be to refine the goals and objectives related to the development of intercultural tolerance in such a way that they can be achieved within the expected time frame.

This present study reinforces the need for teachers to know exactly what they would like their students to learn in a course. Such goals and objectives should guide teachers' decisions regarding the organization of content and the selection of course materials. The

implementation of these action research cycles helped me decide on a more logical transition from one course topic to the next even though not all the planned topics were actually taught. Furthermore, this experience was meaningful in that better materials were selected and created for the course.

Although my original plan was to introduce different types of relationships in the United States, I had to make the decision to focus on fewer types of relationships in the United States in order to foster a deeper understanding of content. Had I not decided to limit the scope of the course in Cycles 2 and 3, students would not have learned different values that influence several American families in a deeper fashion. If they had just seen an overview of the four types of relationships in the U.S., it would not have been a content-based course as no depth of content would have been fostered.

One might wonder how regular teachers could possibly be able to (re)design their own courses in Brazil, a country where often teachers have extremely busy schedules and teach several different classes per week. One possibility would be to allow these teachers to target fewer levels and provide them with enough time and flexibility to be creative and personalize their courses. It is understandable that school administrators may want their staff to have experience teaching as many levels/courses as possible. However, encouraging teachers to focus on specific levels/courses and allowing them to refine them is likely to be beneficial for students' learning. From the teachers' perspective, being able to reflect and improve course design by repeating the same levels/courses may help them develop more autonomy in the classroom, which may promote a more critical use of course resources.

In this study, I do not argue that Brazilian teachers are not critical users of course

resources. Instead, I state that the hustle and bustle of the lives of some Brazilian teachers may prevent them from spending more time on course design.

Educating Language Teachers about CBI Methodology

As a language teacher who had never taught a course in which content was the main organizing principle, I faced some challenges when designing and teaching my first content and language integrated course. This experience with CBI in action could be informative to other language teachers who decide to design and implement content-based courses.

First, my personal content knowledge was of prime importance because I had to make instructional decisions about how to explore the theme of the course in a deeper fashion. As I realized that what I knew about American culture was not enough for me to teach a course on interpersonal relationships in the U.S., I had to devote a significant amount time to boosting my own knowledge of this theme by reading books, articles, theses, and dissertations. Other language teachers may also realize that they are not knowledgeable about the content about which they are supposed to teach, which may require that they either pair up with a content teacher or educate themselves independently. In the private language center setting in Niterói, the latter solution appears to be more likely.

A more thorough understanding of interpersonal relationships in the United States allowed me to select better resources to use with students during the course because I knew to which aspects of American culture I would like to draw students' attention. Even though *Dear Abby* letters and snippets of TV series can be excellent resources to teach American culture, the participating students first needed more informative resources (i.e.,

cultural guides, documentary, and graphs) in which the cultural perspectives were more explicit. Due to time constraints, it was not possible to make use of all the aforementioned resources, so in Cycle 3 I decided to use excerpts from cultural guides, segments of the documentary, and graphs based on my students' proficiency levels and needs. This decision was crucial to raise students' awareness of cultural differences between Brazil and the United States.

Additionally, selecting appropriate classroom resources was far from an easy task. Other teachers may also struggle to choose the right materials for a course. Action research allowed me to try out different resources, which helped me conclude that the participating students would benefit from resources that presented cultural values more explicitly. Other teachers could benefit from using action research to investigate how certain resources help students achieve the objectives for a course.

Another challenge that I experienced involved the design of students' performance content and language objectives. After this multicycle action research project, it became clear to me that the development of intercultural acceptance was an extremely ambitious goal for a 1-month course that was also supposed to address language and strategies. Even though in theory I knew that goals and objectives needed to be measurable, achievable, and realistic, action research provided me with an opportunity to try to help students achieve content objectives, some of which turned out to be unrealistic for a short period of time. This example can serve as a reminder to other teachers about the importance of taking into account multiple factors (e.g., duration of the course, learners' needs, educational context) before designing specific course goals and objectives.

The integration of the three components of CBI (i.e., content, language, and learning

strategies) can also be challenging for teachers who are new to content and language integration. As language is not the only objective in content-based courses, language teachers may feel that the pace of their lessons is slower than in traditional language classes; however, CBI is not time-driven. Moreover, more components indeed have to be addressed in a content and language integrated course.

In addition, more activities are expected to be cognitively demanding in content-based courses as teachers are to promote students' higher-order thinking skills. Students might notice that several activities are challenging, so it may be helpful to explain CBI methodology to them so that they understand that they are taking a course that aims to promote depth of content and their content and language expertise.

Notwithstanding all the challenges that CBI methodology poses to teachers who do not have much experience with the CBI model, it can be very rewarding to teach content and language in the same course as I believe that content adds more meaning to language activities completed in class. With appropriate planning and content expertise, language teachers can teach content and language integrated courses.

<p style="text-align:center"><u>Limitations to the Study</u></p>

This three-cycle action research study is the result of my interpretations of data collected from students and my own observation about the implementation of a content-based course. As a constructivist, I construct my understanding of teaching with my students, and I argue that my results reflect the way I interpreted participants' co-construction of knowledge through classroom interaction. Therefore, data were filtered through my own lenses, which are influenced by my personal experiences as a graduate

student and as a foreign language teacher and learner. Because I have attended Brazilian schools and earned a bachelor's degree and a specialist's degree from Brazilian higher education institutions, my perceptions of the educational system in Brazil also play a role in shaping my understanding of the data that were obtained in each cycle. It is believed that other researchers who had different educational experiences and who subscribe to other research paradigms might interpret the data collected for this study in a different fashion.

There are a number of limitations to this research study because several factors may have restricted students' perceptions of the courses that they attended. The variation in course length and the duration and frequency of classes during Cycles 1 to 3 is thought to be one of these factors. In Cycle 1, students attended two 90-minute classes once a week with a 15-minute break between them. The course had a total of 10 lessons. In Cycle 2, students attended two 2-hour classes twice a week and the course had a total of 11 classes. In Cycle 3, students attended a 2-hour class every weekday and the course had a total of 13 lessons. These differences may have led to different student perceptions of CBI because of the variation in their exposure to this instructional model.

One factor that may have affected students' vocabulary learning and perception of the language component of the course was the fact that most students did not complete any of the assigned homework. These assignments were meant to provide students with additional opportunities to create sentences with target vocabulary as well as practice VLS 1 and VLS 2. The completion of these assignments could have given students a better understanding of how to use new vocabulary and apply VLSs to their own vocabulary learning. I recognize that students were not required to take the course and

had limitations on their time.

The content of students' journal entries might have been influenced by their participation in the course. For example, if they came late to a certain class, their perceptions of that class would be restricted to the activities in which they participated. Additionally, some students either wrote very little in their journals or skipped some journal questions. More data would have been obtained had students completed their journals more carefully and thoroughly.

Individual learner differences are also believed to limit the scope of the results of this study. Participants' age and background knowledge seemed to influence learners' contributions to class discussions. Furthermore, their different proficiency levels to a certain degree limited the participation of some students, who would probably have fully expressed themselves if they had been more proficient speakers of the language. Even though some students were placed in pre-intermediate and intermediate English classes, my impression was that they were only novice learners based on the *ACTFL proficiency guidelines* (2012).

Some external factors may have also had an impact on learner participation during data collection. Federal university teachers were on strike in Brazil in the summer of 2012, which means that most college-level classes were cancelled at these institutions. Classes at the language center, which is located inside one Brazilian federal university, were maintained. However, not only did this strike affect students' participation and registration in the course during Cycle 1, but it also decreased students' overall attendance at the language center.

Another external factor that influenced learner attendance was the political scenario

in Brazil in the summer of 2013. Several political protests happened in various Brazilian cities, and some Cycle 2 participants informed me that they had missed classes due to their engagement in the political protests. Other classes from Cycle 2 had to be cancelled due to the fact that some protests took place near the language center.

Further Research

This research study may lend itself to the future investigation of students' actual vocabulary learning. A quantitative analysis of students' vocabulary retention could be included in the present research methodology because such information would cast light on student and teacher perceptions of vocabulary learning. Both data could be compared in order to probe to what extent students' actual learning and perceptions match, which could possibly inform other teachers of ways to raise students' awareness of their own progress.

As vocabulary knowledge comprises several areas, by the end of the course students would complete a series of tests to verify their knowledge of vocabulary form, meaning, and use. A picture identification test would be administered to elicit the pronunciation and spelling of target words. In addition, a matching exercise would be used to examine students' knowledge of the meaning of the target words. Students would also complete a fill-in-the-blank exercise to demonstrate their knowledge of target word use.

Students' perceptions of American culture before and after the content-based course could also be examined. Prior to the course, students could complete a questionnaire that elicited their perceptions of the American cultural values that would be discussed in class. At the end of the course, students would answer the same questions, but they would also

be asked whether the course content had any influence on their possibly new perceptions of American culture. Moreover, an analysis of participants' tolerance prior to and at the completion of the course could be studied. Through an initial and final questionnaire, students could express how they would handle possible situations that involved intercultural communication (e.g., a conversation between an American and a Brazilian in which the former said that his/her daughter moved out at the age of 18) at different moments of the course.

Another possible study could involve the investigation of learners' use of VLSs after 1 year that they attended the course. Students could be interviewed and asked about the steps that each VLS entails and the strategies that they still used. Furthermore, they would be asked to employ and justify the use of these VLSs in order to learn new words.

It would also be relevant to run a learning styles inventory with future students and then present them with a number of strategies from which to choose based on their learning styles. For example, VLS 2 is the type of strategy that would appeal to field-independent, analytical learners. In the present study, it is believed that students' perceptions of the VLSs taught in the course might have been influenced by their learning styles.

This M.A. research study demonstrated that content-based instruction, culture teaching, and vocabulary learning are fruitful areas for further investigation. This study calls for more action research to address these topics and understand how they can be actualized in EFL classrooms.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

The overall purpose of this M.A. research study was to investigate learners' and
teacher's perceptions of a content and language integrated course in an English as a
foreign language (EFL) setting in Brazil. This design of this action research project is
supported by findings from different areas of research, such as training studies
(Echevarría, 2007; McGroarty, 1992), course design (Graves, 2000), vocabulary
instruction and development (Folse, 2004; Nation, 2001), teaching culture (Moran, 2001),
and the study of learner and teacher perceptions (Richardson, 2003).

After the experience of teaching a course in Cycle 1 that focused on specific content
(i.e., interpersonal relationships in the U.S.) and language (i.e., writing skills) in Brazil in
summer 2012, I wanted to refine the course and teach it again in the future. This decision
led me to conduct a multicycle action research project. My experience as a teacher in the
first cycle of the course and my reflections on students' performance led me to revise the
course and prioritize vocabulary instruction to prepare students to compare and contrast
American and Brazilian cultures. This focus on vocabulary instruction is supported by
Folse (2004) and Nation (2001), who claim that substantial second language (L2)
vocabulary knowledge leads to better communication. More specifically, Rodrigues

(2007) has argued that vocabulary teaching needs improvement in the Brazilian schools that he investigated and that teachers should provide students with instruction on vocabulary and vocabulary-learning strategies (VLSs). Informed by my experiences in Cycle 1 and the literature reviewed after Cycle 1, I revised the course. Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 courses, both conducted in Summer 2013, addressed theme-related vocabulary and VLSs instead of writing skills, but the content of Cycle 1, which focused on culture, was maintained.

Learner data were collected using multiple tools. In order to analyze perceptions of a content and language integrated course and each of the components of content-based instruction (CBI), participants, who enrolled for these courses on a voluntary basis, completed an initial questionnaire and periodic journals. In addition, different participants were interviewed at the end of the specific courses they attended (i.e., courses in Cycles 1 through 3). Learners' class discussions on cultural tolerance were videotaped during Cycles 2 and 3. Together with their journals and interviews, these discussions allowed me to observe learners' recognition of the importance of tolerance for intercultural communication.

Teacher data were collected from videotaped lessons and teaching journals completed after each lesson of the three cycles. Such data were obtained to further my investigations and remind me of the challenges I faced while teaching culture and vocabulary, as well as record my perceptions of CBI and students' vocabulary learning.

Learner data demonstrated that while some students were able to articulate that they learned both content and language in the course, others did not seem to give importance to the targeted content. Rather, they referred to language as the prominent content of the

course. The latter students may have been influenced by their experiences learning a foreign language in private language centers in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, which do not tend to follow a content-based curriculum. Alternatively, their perceptions could have been the result of my instruction during the course in Cycles 2 and 3.

Students' positive perceptions of content and language integration indicate that they may have found the course content compelling, which could be in part due to their familiarity with the topics and the possibility of building on their previous knowledge of American culture. Even though participants seemed to have a positive experience with course content, learner data suggest a possible mismatch between their views on the importance of cultural tolerance and their behavior when they were asked to demonstrate tolerance. I found that several students showed resistance to certain values from American culture during some class activities.

VLS 1, a vocabulary notebook, was participants' favorite VLS in Cycles 2 and 3; some participants commented on its contribution to vocabulary learning and expressed interest in continuing to use it after the course, which aligns with a CBI objective: the promotion of learners' autonomy. VLS 2, an analysis of word parts, was usually perceived as a difficult strategy that required talent. VLS 3, the keyword technique, was also perceived as difficult, but some participants defined it as a creative and fun strategy. I believe that learners experienced difficulty in using VLS 2 and VLS 3 due to the limited time I provided for in-class practice. Learning how to analyze word parts may require more time than learning how to create a vocabulary notebook. Moreover, VLS 2 is a strategy that might work better for analytical learners, so there might have been individual differences that influenced learners' perceptions of the strategies taught in the

course. Based on learners' comments, their positive perceptions of VLS 3 may demonstrate that this strategy, which combines imagery and sound, may have resonated with some participants because of their interest in drawing.

Teacher data revealed that I had difficulty in fostering a deep understanding of culture in Cycle 1. The selection of more appropriate resources for Cycles 2 and 3, as well as my increased content knowledge, allowed me to design better activities to explore content. In addition, the targeted vocabulary for Cycles 2 and 3 had a clearer connection to the target content than the vocabulary taught in some activities of Cycle 1. Based on the observation of the videotaped lessons, my holistic perception was that several learners recalled numerous target words when clues (e.g., word definitions) were provided during vocabulary activities in these cycles. In contrast, some students struggled to use target vocabulary during conversations.

My challenges in addressing content, language, and strategies simultaneously during the same course could have been the result of my few experiences in teaching content-based classes. As a language teacher, I have received more training in how to develop learners' language skills. Some of the challenges I faced could also be due to the need for better planning, but the multicycle action research project offered me a chance to revisit my course design and make appropriate changes. The implementation of this course during Cycles 1 through 3 showed that course goals and objectives needed to be revisited and that there was room for improvement because some (e.g., immediate development of tolerance) might have been too ambitious or unrealistic given the length of each cycle.

Students' attendance, punctuality, and proficiency were limitations to the present action research study because they affected data collection and students' ability to

express their opinions during in-class activities. In addition, external factors—a strike in Brazilian federal universities and political protests—seem to have influenced learners' enrollment and attendance. Notwithstanding these limitations, the opportunity to conduct action research allowed me to critically examine my own teaching practices and even outline ideas for a possible Cycle 4 with goals and objectives that better align with classroom activities and learners' needs.

<div align="center">Final Considerations</div>

Content-based instruction can be very challenging for teachers that have only recently started to use it as an instructional model. My experience designing and implementing a content-based course suggests that theory and practice should be mutually dependent. It is of prime importance to know the theory that supports CBI, as well as to understand how to operationalize the components through cognitively demanding tasks. However, theoretical knowledge does not translate into an automatic ability to teach a content-based course. To teach real content-based courses, teachers need to experience the three CBI components in action, which can in fact inform theory. The process of implementing the course design also informs how students perceive instruction that combines content and language objectives.

Action research also helps teachers become more critical users of class resources due to its emphasis on teachers' observations, reflections, and subsequent actions. As a language teacher, my understanding of the course design and the importance of course materials in fostering learning has changed over the years. My initial approach was to strictly follow textbook units; now I am a more selective user of textbook tools. This

multicycle action research project allowed me to select and create materials specifically suited to a content-based course in a specific context. Additionally, during this process, I analyzed and decided whether these materials ought to be maintained or replaced in future cycles.

Action research can also reduce the pressure on teachers to design excellent courses on their first attempt. In a way, it allows teachers to make mistakes in the course design process because such "mistakes" usefully guide teachers through the revision of course design. I argue that teachers should be given the chance to teach the same courses and be encouraged to refine course design based on their experiences with course resources and student feedback. Because I learned relevant information about my own instructional practice and student engagement in the course, I believe that other teachers might similarly benefit from conducting action research.

As I finish this graduate program, I am convinced that teaching well-planned courses is a complex endeavor. I entertain thoughts about how to continue to make progress. After conducting my M.A. action research study, I realize that my approach to course design has changed and that it will never be the same as it was when I started teaching. Instead of considering course design as a complete and static product, I will regard the design of my courses as a work in progress, thus leaving room for improvement based on the ongoing investigation of and reflection on my teaching practices. This approach to course design will help me continue investigating my own classrooms through an ongoing analysis of teacher and student perceptions.

APPENDIX A

INITIAL QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONÁRIO (*QUESTIONNAIRE*)

Oi! Meu nome é Vítor de Souza e sou estudante de mestrado na Universidade de Utah, EUA. Meu projeto de mestrado é relacionado ao ensino de língua inglesa no Brasil. Por favor, preencha o questionário abaixo em português.

Obrigado pela participação neste projeto!

Hi! My name is Vítor de Souza and I am an MA student at the University of Utah, U.S.A. My MA project is related to English teaching in Brazil. Please fill out the questionnaire below in Portuguese.

Thank you for participating in this project!

Part 1:

1. Como você estuda para as aulas de inglês? Quais aspectos da língua você prioriza quando estuda?
   How do you study for your English classes? What aspects of the language do you prioritize when you study?

2. O que você aprende nas aulas de inglês?
   What do you learn in your English classes?

3. Você acha que é possível aprender inglês através do aprendizado de conteúdo interessante? Se sim, dê um exemplo. Se não, explique por que não.
   Do you think it is possible to learn English by learning interesting content? If so, give an example. If not, explain why not.

Part 2:

1. Qual é seu nível de inglês (básico, intermediário, avançado, etc.)?
   What is your level of English (basic, intermediate, advanced, etc.)?

2. Há quanto tempo você está estudando inglês?
   How long have you been studying English?

3. Por que você estuda inglês?
   Why do you study English?

4. No momento da conversação em língua estrangeira, qual é o fator que lhe traz mais dificuldades para expressar suas opiniões?
   When talking in a foreign language, which factor makes expressing your opinion more difficult?

5. O que você acha que é fundamental aprender em uma aula de língua inglesa?

What do you think is crucial to be learned in an English class?

6. Você estuda vocabulário? Se sim, como você faz para estudá-lo?
   Do you study vocabulary? If so, how do you study it?

7. Você faz listas de palavras para estudar o vocabulário? Se sim, como você faz essa lista?
   Do you make wordlists to study vocabulary? If so, how do you make this list?

8. Você geralmente estuda o vocabulário de uma aula para a outra? Por quê?
   Do you usually study vocabulary from one class to the next? Why?

9. Você considera o vocabulário um fator importante da aprendizagem? Por quê?
   Do you consider vocabulary an important factor for learning? Why?

10. Você acredita que seria útil lhe ser ensinado diferentes estratégias para aprender o vocabulário? Por quê?
    Do you think it would be useful to be taught different strategies to learn vocabulary? Why?

11. Como vocabulário é ensinado no PROLEM?
    How is vocabulary taught at your language school?

12. O que acha da maneira pela qual o vocabulário é ensinado?
    What do you think about the way in which vocabulary is taught?

13. Como que você gostaria que o vocabulário fosse ensinado?
    How would you like vocabulary to be taught?

14. Você se considera um aprendiz visual (precisa ver para aprender algo) ou um aprendiz auditivo (precisa escutar para aprender algo)?
    Do you consider yourself a visual learner (you need to see in order to learn something) or an auditory learner (you need to listen in order to learn something)?

15. O que significa saber uma palavra?
    What does knowing a word mean?

Part 3:

16. O que você acha da sociedade norte-americana e da forma como as pessoas (familiares, namorados, cônjuges, amigos, colegas de trabalho, etc.) se relacionam nos Estados Unidos?
    What do you think about American society and the way people (family members, boyfriends and girlfriends, spouses, friends, colleagues, etc.) relate to each other in the United States?

APPENDIX B

ORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Você estudou para este curso fora da sala de aula? Por quê (não)?
   (Did you study for this course outside of class? Why (not)?)

2. O que te motivou a fazer este curso?
   (What motivated you to take this course?)

3. O que você aprendeu nesse curso?
   (What did you learn in this course?)

4. O curso atingiu as suas expectativas? Por quê (não)?
   (Did the course meet your expectations? Why (not)?)

5. Você falou com outras pessoas sobre este curso? O que você disse a eles?
   (Did you talk to other people about this course? What did you tell them?)

6. Você diria que é possível aprender um conteúdo específico e uma língua estrangeira
   ao mesmo tempo? Como isso seria possível?
   (Would you say it is possible to learn content and a foreign language at the same time?
   How would this be possible?)

7. Quais foram as atividades mais úteis neste curso? Por quê?
   (Which were your favorite activities in this course? Why?)

8. De que maneira o ensino de vocabulário neste curso foi semelhante ou diferente das
   outras aulas de língua que você faz ou já fez?
   (In what ways was vocabulary teaching similar to or different than other language
   classes you're taking or you've taken?)

9. Você acha que aprender estratégias para o aprendizado de vocabulário é uma
   atividade útil? De que maneira ela é útil?
   (Do you think that learning vocabulary-learning strategies is a useful activity? In what
   ways is it useful?)

10. Quais das estratégias—caderno de vocabulário, análise de partes de palavras e a
    "keyword technique"—você pretende usar no futuro?
    (Which of these strategies—vocabulary notebook, analysis of word parts, and the
    "keyword technique"—do you intend to use in the future?)

11. Você pode explicar como cada estratégia funciona?
    (Can you explain how each strategy works?)

12. Após ter feito este curso, o que significa saber uma palavra para você?
    (After taking this course, what does knowing a word mean?)

13. Quais palavras novas você acha que aprendeu neste curso? Quais ficarão com você?
    Por quê?

(Which words do you think you learned in this course? Which ones will stay with you? Why?)

APPENDIX C

TEACHING JOURNAL QUESTIONS

1. Briefly describe the lesson.

2. What were your personal teaching goals for the lesson?

3. What were the performance objectives for the students? (i.e., statements about what students would be able to do at the end of the lesson?)

4. What were the instructional activities and learning strategies that you used?

5. How did these activities and strategies help students achieve the performance objectives?

6. What problems did you encounter in teaching the lesson?

7. In your opinion, what was most effective part in your lesson? How do you know if was effective?

8. In your opinion, what was least effective in your lesson? How do you know it was ineffective?

9. If you could teach the lesson again, what would you do differently?

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