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**The Cultural Component of the Arabic Summer Program at Middlebury College:**

**Fulfillment of Students' Needs and Expectations**

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**The Cultural Component of the Arabic Summer Program at Middlebury College:  
Fulfillment of Students' Needs and Expectations**

by

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**To the memory of my parents, may Allah bless their souls;**

**To my wife, Sandy,**

**for her patience, love and compassion;**

**To my lovely daughter, Zaynab;**

**To my brothers, friends and their families,**

**for their persistent support and encouragement**

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**The Cultural Component of the Arabic Summer Program at Middlebury College:  
Fulfillment of Students' Needs and Expectations**

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This study investigates the students' cultural needs and expectations of the Middlebury College Arabic Program during the summer of 2002. It also examines how the program, through its provision of a wide array of cultural activities, curricular and co-curricular, fulfills those needs and expectations. One hundred eighteen students and 22 teachers took part in the study, and a bi-methodical, quantitative and qualitative, approach was used to collect and analyze data.

The findings of the study indicated that social etiquette, role of religion, diglossic situation and politics top the list of the students' needs and expectations. Also, the study showed that there was a little variance across all levels in terms of their cultural needs and expectations. The study revealed that the Arabic School does a satisfactory job in



fulfilling students' cultural needs. However, it also showed that more planning, reevaluating of the activities and teacher training need to be done to achieve a higher rate of satisfaction and fulfillment. The study concludes by providing some recommendations that are peculiar to the study setting itself as well as the field of Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language in United States. It also includes a set of areas where further research is needed and the limitations of the study.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### OVERVIEW

Recently, culture integration has once more become a focal point for discussion in the pedagogy of foreign language education. Language educators have come to agree on the importance of integrating language and culture for the sake of promoting learners' communicative competence, cross-cultural understanding and global awareness (Heusinkveld, 1997, Omaggio, 1985). To be competent in a foreign language, learners need to learn the culture of the target language community. According to Ned Seelye (1991), communication is a social interaction much more than it is a linguistic exchange. It is communication that incorporates the verbal and the non-verbal, both of which are culturally bound. Lacking cultural competence may result in misunderstanding as well as ineffective and inappropriate communication. Every word connotes a cultural meaning, and successful communication is contingent on understanding the cultural allusions; unless students are learning the language in the context of the language culture, learning these referents becomes inevitable (Seelye, 1994 & Morain, 1983). Olshtain (1993) argues that learners' awareness of the sociocultural rules pertinent to speech community can minimize miscommunication regardless of knowing the language structure. The disconnection between culture and language can negatively influence students' proficiency and thus place them in linguistic and cultural challenges (Majdzadeh, 2002).



Although researchers and foreign language experts agree on the inseparability of language and culture, some teachers and students still believe that they can learn the language separated from its cultural context. Such a belief is not valid. Learners cannot learn the language without learning the culture of that language. Language occurs in a cultural context; culture becomes crucial in decoding language, whether its verbal or nonverbal messages (Seelye, 1991). Brooks (1964) describes the importance of culture by stating that "words count less than what they mean. The meaning of the word is, at bottom, the segment of personal or societal life to which it refers" (p. 204). Mantle-Bromely (1995) says that language and culture are inseparable. Moreover, she emphasizes that culture is "an act of becoming and therefore should be taught as a process" (p.437), and it should be assessed as a process (Moore, 1994). Developing cultural sophistication requires that students perceive language and culture as intertwined. They also must see that the language is a tool to explore other cultures as well as other subject matters (Lafayette, 1996).

The inseparability of language and culture in the foreign language classrooms has been discussed and agreed upon among language educators and teachers. Buttjes (1991) explains that the inseparability of language and culture spring from the following foundations: (1) language acquisition follows a universal sequence but differs across cultures, (2) becoming a competent language user is accomplished through language exchanges, social situation in particular, (3) societies differ in the way they orchestrate how children participate in certain situations which influences the contexts and functions of children's utterances, (4) the primary concern of

caregivers is socio-cultural knowledge and grammatical input, and (5) native speakers acquire the kinesics and paralinguistic patterns of their cultures.

According to Brown (1986), there are three types of language learning contexts in considering the relationship between second language learning and second culture learning. The first two refer to learning another language either within the culture of that second language or within the learner's native culture. The third type is called foreign language learning, where learners learn another language in their own culture "with few immediate and widespread opportunities to use the language" (p.34). For Brown, type three can produce variable degrees of acculturation – the process of adapting to a new culture – as learners learn the other language for different reasons: communicating with the people in another culture, fulfilling a foreign language requirement or gaining knowledge in the field of specialization. Others may learn the language for pure interest in the language or the speakers of that language. This results in a more culturally loaded situation.

The emphasis on teaching culture as an integrative part of the foreign language classroom has assumed an increased importance since the 1960s (Brooks, 1997; Nostrand, 1986; Lange, 1999; & Lafayette, 1978). New approaches, models, frameworks, strategies and techniques for the teaching and the assessment of learning/teaching culture were proposed. While these approaches and frameworks addressed the issue of defining culture initially, they began to focus on the goals and methods of teaching culture afterwards. Prior to 1960s, the emphasis of language teaching was centered on teaching grammar. The Grammar-Translation approach

focused on the grammatical rules of the language and neglected the pragmatic, sociolinguistic and cultural features (Moore, 1999). Students were presented with texts that only discussed aspects of the high target culture that basically included literary masterpieces. With the advent of Audio Lingual Method in the 1950s and 1960s, the focus of foreign language classrooms shifted to stressing aspects of popular culture such as the ways of daily life of certain people. Later in the 1970s, the proficiency-oriented approach replaced the Audio Lingual Method. The new approach emphasized the teaching of language in its appropriate sociological and cultural contexts, using authentic materials that are directed to the native speakers of the language.

Lafayette and Schulz (1997) explain that there are three approaches for the teaching of or about cultural patterns: total uncritical immersion into a culture, critical and analytical observation of recurring incidents, and guided observation of selected patterns in isolation. The first is unfeasible in a foreign language classroom. The second is usually used by anthropologists and social scientists. The third is the most common used approach by the majority of adults. They learn of or about culture through artifacts, dialogue, reading passage, culture capsule, and minidrama among other means.

Teaching foreign languages started to gain momentum when a presidential commission started to develop guidelines for the teaching of foreign languages in 1983 (Omaggio, 1983). Three years later, the official guidelines were published. The guidelines included sections on cultural competence as well as linguistic

performance. Nevertheless, the guidelines paid no attention to the teaching and assessment of culture (Moore, 1994). In 1998 and after much debate, the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) published the National Standards for Teaching Foreign Languages. The new standards included specific guidelines for cultural instruction, and they regarded culture as one of the five skill areas that foreign language learners need to acquire.

In practice, however, teachers are still struggling with integrating culture in their teaching. Part of the problem that makes teachers ignore or at least minimize the teaching of culture in their classroom is the inherent difficulties in culture instruction. Many researchers and educators have pointed and discussed these difficulties (see for instance Heusinkveld, 1993; Seelye, 1991; Halverson, 1991; & Allen, 1985). One of these important difficulties is the lack of consensus among educators on what the term *culture* means. The widespread definition of culture prior to the 1950s was the traditional definition that emphasized what some called big "C" culture. In this sense, culture meant the study of fine arts, literary masterpieces, history, etc. The other definition is the anthropological definition that viewed culture as the patterns or "ways of people" and their daily activities. Culture in this sense is referred to as small "c" culture.

Testing is another difficulty teachers still encounter in classroom. If the methodology of teaching culture has not kept steady pace with developments in teaching other language skills (Heusinkveld, 1997), assessing culture learning can be the aspect that has received the least adequate research and discussion. Culture is hard

to evaluate, and valid and reliable tests for assessing culture remain elusive and difficult (Moore, 1994, Valette, 1997). Most proposed tests designed to measure culture learning are standardized that may reduce the cultural, historical and geographical studies to the learning of disjointed, incomplete and sometimes inaccurate information which may lead to creating stereotypes and over generalizations (Nostrand, 1986). Profession has not yet succeeded in developing valid and reliable tests that measure the process of cultural learning, although, according to Moore (1991), an alternative form of assessment, namely portfolios, can be implemented to achieve the educational goals. A third difficulty is time. Researchers suggest that time is the greatest impediment that teachers encounter in culture instruction (Moore, 1994). If they do teach culture, then teachers would or believe they would have less time for teaching the required language content.

Attending to students' needs is not a new phenomenon in the field of foreign language classroom. Lepetit and Cichocki (2002) argue that language needs analysis is an approach that integrates students' needs, preferences and interests on the one hand, and the social and institutional contexts where learning occurs, on the other.

Designing language curricula that incorporate culture is a compromise between institutional policies and students' needs. Researchers investigated students' needs and desires in different arenas. For example, Dechert and Kastner (1989) examined whether beginning German textbooks catered to students' needs. Henderson (1980) reports on the students' evaluation of the introduction of culture units in beginning German classes in the University of Missouri. In their study at Flinders

University—Australia, Martin and Laurie (1993) investigated the students' perceptions, expectations of literature and culture study in an intermediate French course. Attitudes towards and beliefs toward culture were examined in Roberts' (1992) study conducted in the Michigan State University.

In the area of teaching Arabic as foreign Language (TAFL), little has been written on the importance of incorporating students' needs in designing language curricula. In a survey of who is taking Arabic in the Arabic language programs in the United States and Canada and the motivation that lay behind their decision, Belnap (1987) reported that 56.3 of the participants reported that they were taking Arabic to study the literature and culture, a factor that ranked first among 17 factors. Students were also asked to comment on what they had enjoyed while they were studying Arabic in their particular institution. Culture ranked second after the instructors.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The summer intensive Arabic program at Middlebury College, one of the top liberal arts schools in the country (Martin, 2003), is regarded as one of the most reputable programs nationwide. Martin goes so far as saying that it is “considered one of the world’s best and most rigorous Arabic language programs” (p. 5). At Middlebury, Arabic is taught within an immersion environment where learners immerse themselves in the target language whether inside the classroom or during their daily exchanges, interactions and co-curricular activities: cultural clubs, lectures, sports, etc. The Middlebury Language Schools, including the Arabic School, require

that students take a *Language Pledge* where they vow “to speak, read and write nothing but Arabic from the time they get up until they collapse into bed after hours of homework” (Martin, 2003, p. 6) throughout the nine-week intensive course, which is worth a full year of language instruction in other institutions (Useen, 2001). In an interview with St. Petersburg Times in 2003, Michael Katz, the Dean of Middlebury Language Schools explained the advantages of the *Language Pledge* over study abroad programs. He said, “Study abroad is so language polluted with *CNN*, the *International Herald Tribune*, and Internet cafes. This is a total immersion: We learn language by listening, reading, speaking and writing. The idea is that if you deluge a person with an input all day and night, the English sort of retreats” (Martin, 2003, p. 3). In the 2001 Middlebury Language Schools Brochure, Katz says that the *Language Pledge* “helps students focus on the acquisition of language skills, patterns of communication, and assume the *cultural perspective* (italics are mine) associated with the target language” (p. 2).

It is the philosophy of the Middlebury Language Schools to include and probably integrate culture in its intensive and immersive summer language programs including Arabic. This philosophy is evident in the College brochures and marketing advertisements. The 2001 brochure states that “students and language teachers return summer after summer for academic and *cultural enrichment* (italics are mine) unlike that offered anywhere else in the United States or abroad.”

Being part of the Middlebury Language Schools, the Arabic School adopts the same philosophy and attempts hard to enrich and broaden its cultural component in a

serious pursuit to produce learners who are both linguistically and cross-culturally competent, aware, understanding, conscious and sensitive. This commitment to the inclusion of culture is manifested in more than one facet of the program. It is demonstrated in the textbook series the Arabic School requires its students to use, namely *al-Kitaab fii Ta'llum al-'Arabiyya* published by Georgetown University Press. The book follows a communicative proficiency-based approach where culture is considered one of the modules that students need to master to be communicatively competent. In integrating culture with language, the authors of the book, Brustad et al., say that they adopt a broad definition of culture, one that incorporates daily activities, ways of speech, nonverbal gestures, history, civilization, and so on. The book attempts to introduce students to the Arab culture through, initially, cultural capsules in English and gradually replacing these capsules by longer Arabic texts or short films, according to the authors (Brustad et al., 1995).

Culture inclusion is also manifested in the co-curricular activities the Arabic summer program offers. These activities are considered an integral part of the program and not supplementary or a source of fun and amusement to the students. These activities include, for instance, joining Cultural Clubs. In an interview with Middlebury Magazine's (2003) correspondent Sally Johnson West, Mahmoud Abdalla, the Acting Director explains the philosophy of the clubs by stating that they

besides offering a much needed break from the classroom, also are intended to provide a window into culture of the Arab World. The cooking club, for instance, prepares and serves recipes learned from faculty members, who hail from all part of the Arabic-speaking world; the journalism club puts out a biweekly "wall" newspaper; the theater club stages a play at the end of the summer (West, 2003, p. 24).



Students also enrich their cultural awareness by reading Arabic newspapers, for example, *al-Hayat* (an Arab daily newspaper issued in London) and *al-Ahram* (Egyptian daily newspaper), watching Arab television channels via satellite such as *al-Jazeera* that airs from Qatar, and Arab movies from different Arab countries, attending weekly lectures that deal with culturally-related topics, among other activities that are intended to expose students to some important aspects of the Arab culture. Finally, it is also evident in the school's serious attempt to invite teachers from different Arab countries as representatives of their own respective yet diverse cultures.

In addition, The Arabic School organizes other activities. Among these is the Arabic Day where faculty members cook dishes and wear costumes that represent various Arab countries. Sport competitions are organized with other language schools. Field trips, students' parties and the talent show are also among the co-curricular activities.

In theory, this works well for the Arabic School. In fact, the Arabic School, I would claim, has been progressive and doing a great job in this regard compared with other language programs in the United States. According to Lange (1999), “although these resources and ideas (referring to definitions, frameworks, models, and standards for culture inclusion in foreign language classrooms) have existed for more than forty years, culture remains a superficial aspect of language learning in K-12 and post secondary language programs” (p. 58) and it is “included in the form of songs, food and games” (p. 113).

In practice, however, it seems that much more needs to be done in creating and translating this philosophy into more tangible practice, and to establish the desired balance between culture and the remaining language skills. In fact, regarding culture as one of the skills students need to master to be culturally proficient in the language according to the National Standards and to language educators, philosophers, and experts, makes it highly recommended, if not mandatory, on the part of any language program to maintain the assumed balance and the fair treatment for culture manifested in the language which has been neglected for so long.

I have worked as an instructor of Arabic at Middlebury College for the last four summers. While reviewing my students' evaluations for the summer of 2001, I noticed that some of my students were dissatisfied with the amount and/or the quality of the cultural component the program offered. Some expressed the need for more culture to be incorporated in the course syllabus. At that point, I thought students' cultural needs and expectations should be taken into consideration in designing or presenting any cultural material, and that the available cultural component should be tailored to such needs. I also thought that one reason that possibly led to this deficiency was the instructors' avoidance or negligence of teaching cultural topics consciously or unconsciously. Generally, the teachers at Middlebury do not include culture in their lesson plans or teaching syllabi. When they teach cultural aspects, they usually do so to serve a linguistic objective or to break the daily routine. This cultural facet of the program, like many others, has not been investigated before. It is

my belief that improving the cultural aspect of the program will undoubtedly better the overall language program and increase its already high prestige.

Students who enroll in the Arabic summer program at Middlebury come from different ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds as well as religious orientations. The majority of the students are college students aspiring toward a degree in Middle Eastern studies, comparative literature, mass media in the Arab world, and so on. Many students are Americans, but some are Arabs or Muslims, known as heritage speakers, often born and resided in America. These learn the language since it is the language of their religion or culture. Since students' academic orientations vary, their needs vary accordingly. Thus it is important that teachers direct their teaching to suit their students' needs. Ignorance or unfamiliarity of such needs can negatively impact the quality of instruction. Curricular development is in many ways contingent on those needs and expectations.

The best place to learn the target culture is living in the natural environment. The question remains whether Middlebury can provide an appropriate alternative for Arab countries. Useen (2001) comments on this by saying that despite the fact that an Arab city might be more authentic, it may be more intimidating for American students. In Middlebury, almost most of the faculty are of Arab descent. Those instructors are known as "sympathetic native speakers." While one may feel intimidated by the speakers of the language in an Arab town, he or she may make ridiculous mistakes, linguistically or culturally, and Middlebury would be the "incubator." Katz (2001) states that a Middlebury summer can prepare students for a

more successful experience in a study-abroad program through improving their language skills, deepening their cultural understanding and strengthening their confidence and learning strategies. Drawing on studies conducted by language acquisition researchers, Kuntz and Belnap (2001) say that there is evidence that shows that language programs abroad with native instructors are not necessarily better than those with expatriate or US-trained instructors. In this sense, the students of the Arabic summer program at Middlebury belong to Brown's third context type (Brown, 1986) and Lafayette and Schulz' third approach (Laffayette and Schulz, 1997). First they learn Arabic within their own culture. Second, they learn about Arab culture through artifacts, culture capsules, and movies among other techniques.

Students' cultural needs differ according to their backgrounds and goals for learning Arabic. While some students learn the language to study Arab music or master a musical instrument, others may want to live in an Arab country working for a company or for the State Department. In some cases, students may not be aware of their needs. Students' expectations also play an important role in a successful learning experience. Many students expect that they will learn a lot about the Middle East politics; another group may expect to learn about the daily life of an Arab in a particular Arab country. In theory, the Arabic summer program attempts to meet those diverse needs through the variety of lectures and activities, cultural and social events, Arab dinners and field trips, screening of films from different Arab countries, clubs devoted to cooking, music, calligraphy, theater, cinema, and live Arab television broadcasts and provide experience in all facets of Arabic language and

culture (Middlebury Brochure, 2001). But the question remains whether the program is capable of meeting all these needs and fulfilling those expectations in nine weeks, which is a short time.

It is also well-known that the image of Arabs in the west is engulfed in misconceptions and stereotypes (Al-Batal, 1990). Many students are aware of the false stereotypes and may come to Middlebury to examine these stereotypes while learning the target language in classroom, either by immediate contact with Arab instructors or by observing, reading and getting exposed to some aspects of the culture through films, lectures, or even lessons. It is important to investigate whether the Middlebury Arabic Language School students come with stereotypical images of Arabs. It is also important to examine if the Arabic summer program contributes significantly to diminishing those stereotypes and if so how.

## **PURPOSES OF THE STUDY**

The primary purpose of conducting this study is to investigate the students' cultural needs and expectations (if they have any and are aware of them), and how the Arabic summer program at Middlebury College, taking into consideration its intensity and relative shortness, satisfies the students' cultural needs and their expectations. Conducted during the summer of 2002, the study may serve as a tool for improving the quality and the quantity of the culture meant to be taught to the American students learning Arabic in American academic institutions. The study also highlights an area

that has not received much attention from researchers and curriculum developers. Hence, the purposes of this study are 1) to investigate the students' cultural needs and their expectations; 2) to examine whether the students are fully aware of those needs or not; 3) to investigate how the cultural component of the Arabic summer program fulfills the students' needs and satisfies their expectations; and 4) to examine how instructors view and teach culture in such an intensive course.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The questions that lead this research are 1) What are the students' perceived cultural needs? 2) What are the students' cultural expectations? 3) How and how well does the program meet those needs and satisfy such expectations? and 4) What implications can be drawn from the study to better the quality and the quantity of the cultural component of the program?

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The number of American students enrolling in Arabic programs for the purpose of being communicatively competent and understand the Arab culture has been and is expected to keep increasing due to various reasons, particularly with the recent direct military involvement in the Middle East. Commenting on this trend, even before the direct military involvement in Iraq, Dillon (2002) writes in the *New York Times*, "As the pursuit of Al Qa'eda and America's confrontation with Iraq intensifies, Arabic-speaking educators and Islamic organizations, as well as

universities and school across the nation, are straining to respond to requests by students and the public for information and instruction about the language and culture of Islam” (p 1). On the other hand, the number of those students who learn Arab for the sole goal of reading texts has been decreasing (Al-Batal, 1995). Universities and higher education institutions thus have expanded or established new Arabic language programs to cope up with the increasing number of students and the higher demand for learning Arabic. As the number of students increases, their needs, goals, desires and preferences of those students vary. It is the responsibility of the Arabic programs to meet those needs and fulfill such expectations.

A vast majority of research in the field has been done in the four skill areas of teaching/learning languages, namely reading, writing, listening and speaking. The area that has not yet received its due importance is the area of culture. Even more relevant is how it can be integrated in a language curriculum to prepare students to be communicatively and culturally competent. Younes (1990) says that finding the most efficient way to prepare students to function in such a diverse area has been the most problematic. Al-Batal (1995) says, “If students’ main concerns are communication and learning the culture and if most of them stay with us for two years, then what curriculum would best suit these realities?” (p. 5).

This study constitutes a serious attempt to answer part of this broad multi-faceted question. It is a study that investigated the students’ cultural needs and expectations in one of the best, if not the best, Arabic summer program in the United States and even in the world, as explained in Chapter 1. It addresses part of the

question as it primarily investigates the cultural component of the program. Its intent was not to investigate other language skills needed for communicative-based teaching environment.

An examination of the cultural component in traditional foreign language programs and textbooks (such as French, German, and Spanish) and the extent they meet students' needs has been the focus of many studies, very little has been done in the area of Arabic programs and textbooks. Belnap (1989) and Kenny (1992) are the only two studies I came across that dealt, to some extent partly, with this issue.

Al-Batal (1995), who is one of the pioneers who introduced the cultural component in Arabic language textbooks, states that

developing cultural proficiency in Arabic is still largely left to the discretion of the teacher, and while many teachers manage to fulfill their students' needs in this area, the lack of the systematic approach to the integration of language and culture costs time and energy, and results in inefficient programs and curricula. Developing such an integrated approach remains one of the most pressing challenges which the profession at the present time (p. 7).

There is no doubt that Brustad, Al-Batal, and Al-Tonsi's publication of *Al-Kitaab* series has been one of the few attempts to address the prescribed challenge. There is also no doubt that Middlebury College Arabic School has been doing a very fine job in integrating culture in its language program through its curricular and wide array of co-curricular activities.

Therefore, the significance of the study can be seen theoretically and practically. The study is significant for foreign language learning in that it will shed light on the importance and necessity of teaching and integrating culture in a foreign language classroom in a genuine pursuit that addresses students' cultural needs of an



important region of the world. The study also attempts to answer a very important question: What do Americans, students in particular, need to know about the Arab culture? The study will also examine the constraints that teachers encounter in teaching culture and what might be done to overcome those difficulties.

The study is significant in that it touches on an area that has not received much attention in the past. It also touches on a facet of a language that is gaining more momentum due to the September 11 tragedy, and the associated political and military developments.

From a practical perspective, the study will highlight the most basic areas of Arab culture American students are interested in learning about and how the Arabic summer program meets those needs. This will help the administration and instructors focus more on those areas in their teaching, syllabi design and lesson plans. The study is also important in highlighting whether instructors are aware of the most recent techniques in teaching and assessing culture. Moreover, the study will highlight the most important constraints that teachers encounter in teaching culture and the implications of these for future plans. It is hopeful that implications for teaching Arabic in Middlebury and for the area of TAFL in the United States can be drawn.

## **ORGANIZATION OF THE CHAPTERS**

In this chapter, I have stated the problem, rationale of the study, identified the research questions, and described the practical and theoretical justifications of the study. The remaining chapters of the study are outlined as follows. Chapter two

reviews the important studies that are relevant to the area of the current study. Chapter three describes the subjects, instruments, data collection and analysis procedures. Chapter four presents the results of the study. Chapter five discusses the findings of the study, draws conclusions, and attempts to explain the meanings of the results of the study in the general context of the research questions. Finally, recommendations along with limitations of the study are presented.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE**

In this chapter, I will review relevant studies that have investigated the importance of integrating culture in foreign language classrooms. I will also provide an overview of the relevant definitions of culture as they apply to foreign language instruction, the rationale of learning a target culture; and the most commonly proposed models, frameworks, strategies and techniques in teaching culture. Then I will discuss the difficulties of teaching culture and methods of cultural assessment. Before I conclude by explaining how relevant the students' and teachers' affective domain to the inclusion of culture in foreign language teaching, I will briefly describe the history, the status and the challenges of teaching Arabic in the United States.

#### **OVERVIEW**

Even though language teaching curricula seem to suggest that there is a clear distinction between linguistic knowledge (pronunciation, writing system, vocabulary and syntax) and cultural knowledge (systems of beliefs and ideas shared by the community members), no one, language experts in particular, denies that language cannot be separated from culture. Indeed one can uncontroversially argue that language of the community is a part of a manifestation of its culture (Bentahila and Davies, 1989; Moore, 1994; & Galloway, 1997), and that culture is an integral part of

teaching language (Crawford-Lange; & Lange, 1984). Seelye (1994) says, "Learning a language in isolation of its cultural roots prevents one from becoming socialized into its contextual use" (p. 10).

Words in isolation have no meaning. The meaning of the word or a string of words can be really found in its everyday use, and learning a language is meant to equip the learner with a powerful tool to construct a new culture (Walcott, 1986; Crawford-Lange and Lange, 1984; & Seelye, 1991). Suleiman (1993) stresses that language is a medium through which culture is articulated. Thus the task of language learners, Walcott explains, is to be able to decode which linguistic forms suit which situation, and many of these need cultural experience. Regardless of how subtle the inclusion of culture can be, language teaching/learning cannot be separated from culture teaching/learning, since "to study language without studying the culture of native speakers is a lifeless endeavor" (Crawford-Lang and Lang, 1984, p. 140).

To be proficient in a language, one must learn it in context, particularly its sociolinguistic and cultural context (Spinelli and Siskin, 1997 & Abrate, 1993) as the goal of proficiency is to enable students to function appropriately in the target culture as well as to be able to discuss their personal experience in the native culture. Chaput (1997) explains that the assumption that "culture is context" has moved to the forefront of discussions of culture in language instruction. Students need to have cultural knowledge in order to speak in a situationally appropriate register, to understand regional dialects, to make and understand references, and to correctly identify tone and intonation (Spinelli and Siskin, 1997). Insights into the political,

economic, religious systems cannot be obtained through the knowledge of the linguistic structure itself (Seelye, 1991). After all, "Language exists primarily for the transition of ideas—and ideas are the stuff of culture" (Morain, 1993, p. 405). Seelye acknowledges that many of the awkward mistakes that language learners make could be avoided by the inclusion of cultural connotations of the linguistic units. If the primary goal of language learning is being able to interact with target language (TL) speakers, cultural competence becomes essential to the process (Lee, 1997).

In 1972, Dell Hymes proposed the concept of communicative competence in which he emphasized that pure linguistic knowledge does not guarantee the ability to communicate effectively in a target culture. Hymes' notion states that grammatical competence is one component of the overall knowledge of native speakers. He points out that besides grammatical competence, communicative competence encompasses sociolinguistic and contextual competence. Hymes' definition comes as an immediate reaction to the Chomskyan sense of the term competence. Chomsky (1965) explains that being linguistically competent means being able to produce and understand an infinitive number of well-formed utterances in a specific language by an ideal speaker who is not influenced by slips of the tongue, lapses of the memory, and so forth. Chomsky distinguished between competence and performance. Competence referred to what one knows about the language while performance describes what one does with it.

Proceeding from Hymes' work, Savignon (1973) offers a definition of communicative competence in which he says that speakers can communicate

effectively if they utilize a broader range of resources that incorporate not only the vocabulary and structure of the foreign language but also the nonverbal language such as gestures, intonation, and facial expressions.

Canale and Swain (1980, 1983) drew on the works of Hymes, Savignon and others and presented a model of communicative competence that consisted of five components: (1) grammatical competence, (2) sociolinguistic competence, (3) discourse competence, (4) strategic competence, and (5) cross-cultural competence. Grammatical competence represents the mastery of the linguistic code. Sociolinguistic competence refers to the appropriate use of the grammatical forms in various contexts. Discourse competence addresses the cohesion of thought and in form by being capable of combining ideas. Strategic competence involves the use of verbal and non-verbal strategies to compensate for any gap in communication or in the learner's knowledge of the code or to avoid embarrassment due to inadequate knowledge. Finally, cross-cultural competence refers to the learners' ability to approach new cultures, adapt with any cultural differences presented verbally or nonverbally.

It is the types of "principles, patterns and strategies that tend to be studied under the headings of pragmatics, sociolinguistics or the ethnography of communication rather than those of syntax and semantics" (Bentahila and Davies, 1989, p. 101) that learners need to know to use in communication. They offer two instances where language and culture cannot be separated. The first example is routine formulas used to perform certain speech acts such as greetings, leave taking,

and so on. The second example is the strategies people use to perform speech acts such as conveying orders, requests, invitations, and so on.

Basing his argument on the schema theory, Suleiman (1993) explains that cultural knowledge is key in successful language learning. The premise of schema theory suggests that knowledge is contained in slots or in units called schemata. These schemata do not only include the knowledge itself, but also the necessary information of how this knowledge to be used (Markham and Latham cited in Suleiman, 1993). Suleiman discusses four factors that contribute significantly to the importance of integrating culture in language classrooms.

**Sociolinguistics.** The main objective of sociolinguistics is the investigation of language in its social context. It thus it transcends the traditional meaning of language that emphasizes phonological rules.

**Kinetics.** Suleiman says that this discipline focuses on nonverbal means of communication characterized by posture and movement, facial expressions, gaze and eye management, gesture and distancing. Kinesics suggests that the message of an utterance depends on both its linguistic meaning and the nonverbal cues that accompany it. By emphasizing the nonverbal means of communication, kinesics allows other determinants of meaning such as cultural information, which is to be incorporated in decoding any verbal message.

**Motivation and Social Distance.** According to Suleiman, Gardner and Lambert (1972) recognized two types of motivation: integrative and instrumental. Integrative motivation refers to the learners' willingness to identify with the target people and their culture. Instrumental motivation, on the other hand, concerns the learners' view of the target language as a means of career development or the accomplishment of practical goals. What concerns Suleiman in this research is that the observation that attempts at testing Gardner and Lambert's correlation between the type of motivation and foreign/second language acquisition led to the provision of culture-related factors as contributory elements in promoting or depressing the achievement of successful learning outcomes.

**Culture Shock and Culture Bump.** According to Suleiman, cultural shock occurs when learners find themselves in an unfamiliar and new culture. Brown (1986) identifies four phases of culture shock. The first is the excitement and euphoria of being in a new culture. The second is culture shock when the person feels that his identity and security may be threatened by new cultural differences. The third is characterized by culture stress and frustration. At this stage, some of the cultural differences may get resolved while others persist. Finally, the fourth stage represents full recovery. This stage is typified by either assimilation or adaptation to the new culture.

Similarly, culture bump occurs "when a person from a particular culture finds himself or herself in a different, strange or uncomfortable situation when interacting



with persons from other cultures" (Anchor, 1986, p. 170-171). In other words, it occurs when an individual has expectations of one behavior and gets something completely different.

Culture bumps are different from culture shocks in that they are instantaneous while culture shocks extend over a long period of time. Additionally, culture bumps can also occur at any time one is interacting with people of a different culture.

For some educators, nonetheless, the relationship between language and culture and the role of culture in language learning remains to be researched and articulated (Shanahan, 1997). This is due to, as Shanahan explains, the fact that the premise that culture is essential to language learning is based on feelings and nonquantitative and intuitional aspects of language learning.

### **CULTURE INSTRUCTION: A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

Prior to the 1960s, culture instruction tended to be sporadic, peripheral and lacking systemization (Heusinkveld, 1997, and al-Batal, 1991). Allen (1985) observes that the lines between language and culture were then more clearly drawn. The ultimate goal of language instruction was accessing the great masterpieces of civilization. Culture was viewed as the ultimate goal, a domain that was accessible to those who have attained linguistic competence. As such, second language learning focused on equipping students with linguistic competence rather than communicative competence.

During the late 1960s, teaching culture received a wider recognition, and teaching culture began to assume an increasingly important role in the practice of foreign language learning (Lafayette, 1978). Language educators and practitioners started to emphasize that there was an urgent need for more and better instruction in culture. With the advent of the Audio Lingual Method, a term created by Nelson Brooks, the prior perceived view of culture as the masterpieces of other civilizations was gradually challenged, and the emphasis shifted from studying the literature to focusing on speaking, on thinking, on valuing and in short on a new culture, i.e., the patterns of daily life and the value systems of people (Morain, 1983).

Yet, even with the current trends that emphasize the importance of teaching culture in foreign language classrooms, curricula continue to present culture “in snippets here and there, picked up through reading texts, or organized into separate courses under a label such as civilization” (Bentahila and Davies, 1989, p. 99). They contend that culture is still being regarded as a supplement used to stimulate learners’ interest or increase general knowledge. Moore (1996) recognizes that teaching techniques in teaching culture tend to focus on imparting bits and pieces of information about the target culture. “An information-centered, culture-teaching strategy implies that the culture under study is closed, final and complete” (Crawford Lange and Lange, 1985, p. 141). Kramsch (1981 & 1997) states that textbooks are still using stimuli-response methods to teach culture. She adds that students get exposed to another culture passively. She speaks of the necessity of making students aware of their own values and attitudes before asking them to understand the others’. To teach

culture for the sake of accomplishing linguistic proficiency, Kramsch says that teachers need to broaden their own knowledge of the culture to include studying the ways native speakers think and react in addition to the factual knowledge. Brooks (1968) points out that

as long as we provide our students only with the facts of history or geography, economics or sociology, as long as we provide them only with a knowledge of the sophisticated structures of society, such as law and medicine, or examples and appreciative comments on artistic creations, such as poems, castles, or oil paintings, we have not provided them with an intimate view of where life's action is, where the individual and the social order come together, where self meets life (p. 212).

Lee (1997) observes that L2 culture teaching should focus on helping learners understand and appreciate the target culture so that they feel comfortable interacting with its native speakers.

## **WHAT IS CULTURE?**

Everyone talks about culture, but nobody knows what it is.

(Shanahan, 1998, p. 451)

It was the anthropologists who first provided a definition of the term *culture*. Seelye (1991) refers to a study conducted by two well-known anthropologists, Kroeber and Kluckhohn, in which they examined 300 different definitions of culture. Nonetheless, they concluded that a common denominator could not be found.

With relevance to language teaching, Shanahan explains that there have been five approaches to the definition of culture. To Shanahan, Mathew Arnold's approach has been the most accepted. This approach focuses on culture with a capital "C"

which meant the study of great literature, music, ballet, etc. However, he says, Levi-Strauss came up with a new challenging notion of culture that emphasized culture with a small “c” which refers to the ways of life of a people. Mathew’s definition was dominant prior to 1960s as the ultimate goal for learning a second language was to access the masterpieces of the target cultures (Allen, 1985 & Omaggio, 1993). Brooks (1971) referred to this definition as the Olympian Culture to suggest the "heavenly origin" and the "divine inspiration" (Contents of museums, exhibits of pictures, displays of statues, musical orchestras, ballet dancing and lectures on literature and arts or “culture MLA” to refer to music, literature and art of a people).

Restricting the teaching of culture to art, history, and museum while, at the same time, aspects of daily life are ignored was challenged and condemned. Seelye (1984) blamed the monotony in the current language program and social sciences on this approach. Thus he presented a broader definition that incorporated not only the Olympian Culture, but also what Brooks (1971) calls the “Hearthstone Culture” or “Culture BBV” (beliefs, behaviors, and values). This is to suggest something that is primitive, elemental, close to the heart, yet old and conventional (control of the native language, do's and don'ts of daily life, etc.)

Omaggio (1993) says that hearthstone culture began to assume more significance after the advent of ALM in 1960s. And since proficiency and communication began to be emphasized in language teaching, the anthropological and sociological concerns began to gain more prominence over the philosophical

definition. New models emerged to capture the newer definition and its relevance to instruction.

In 1968, Brooks, who is regarded as an influential figure in raising the teachers' awareness of the importance and interrelatedness of language and culture (Seelye, 1991), proposed a definition of culture that he says is comprehensive and a synthesis of the scientific and humanist approaches. His definition is a five-tier one and the most important of these is Culture 4--patterns of living. Brooks highlights the anthropological aspect of culture where social patterns and the individual meet (Allen, 1985).

Jeringan and Moore (1997), citing Henden (1980), speak of culture as to what people do, how they react, what and how they eat, as well as their attitudes and beliefs. Seelye (1980) speaks of two different types of culture: surface culture and deep culture. Surface culture is a simple and overt demonstration of lifestyles. Deep culture, on the other hand, is more complicated and tackles peoples' attitudes, beliefs, ways of thinking and emotions.

### **WHEN TO TEACH CULTURE?**

In many cases, language classes constitute the sole opportunity students have to learn about the target culture. Thus, Seelye (1991) proposes that culture should be taught systematically, besides the purely linguistic concerns, and in the target language whenever students are available, and as early as possible in the language classrooms. Since the attrition is high at the end of the first two years of foreign

language classrooms, he recommends that teachers' efforts in teaching cultural understanding should be directed to lower level students and only a fraction to higher level students. Brooks (1997) agrees with Seelye's argument, and his rationale is similar. Brooks explains that unless the concept of culture is communicated to students at the earliest stage, a very small number of students will become aware of it. Students will not be able to understand the meanings of words and phrases unless they know systematically the meaning they attach to those words and expressions. Word meaning are usually contextualized and culturally bound.

#### **ADVANTAGES OF LEARNING TARGET CULTURE**

Language educators and experts have spoken extensively on the advantages of integrating culture in the foreign language classroom. Allen (1985) describes some other arguments that led language teachers to incorporate culture in their teaching. She says that teaching culture has a significant effect on students' motivation and interest. It enriches the knowledge of self and one's culture. It promotes international awareness, understanding and tolerance (see also Abrate, 1995). It is a means for accessing international masterpieces of literature and to contemporary press.

Loew (1981) argues that gaining cultural knowledge is essential to accurate communication, essential to positive interaction with target culture community, and creates a capability that can be applied by students in their contacts with other communities within their own language community and beyond that. Implementing this will enforce learners' cultural identity and enhance human relations. Allen

(1985), in discussing what she calls “the culture syllabus” emphasizes that the goal of teaching culture is not to force students to change their cultural identity, but rather to enable them understand the complexity of culture and that it is demonstrated in every way of life. Seelye (1991) stresses that in order for language learners to survive in a world where systems of values differ, he or she should be able to understand foreign people’s way of life.

Encouraging students' to recognize their own culturally determined behavior is also one of the outputs of learning about another culture. Abrate (1995) stresses that learners may resist what they accept as "true" or "false" as their assumptions spring from an internalized ethnocentric view of the world. Teaching culture equip the students with the necessary tools and knowledge that enable them to question those beliefs and accept others' ways of life and beliefs.

#### **APPROACHES AND TECHNIQUES FOR TEACHING CULTURE**

The history of teaching culture in the foreign language classroom has undergone various stages. The focus of the first stage was finding a comprehensive definition of culture. The second stage addressed the objectives of teaching culture. Finally, the third stage emphasized how culture should be taught and presented.

In 1960’s, Brooks viewed that the problem in teaching culture was finding a comprehensive definition of culture. He proposed a definition that included five tiers: Culture 1 stresses biological growth; Culture 2 emphasizes personal refinement; Culture 3 focuses on literature and the fine arts; and while the patterns of living

constitute the core of Culture 4, Culture 5 is the sum total of a way of life. For him, the most important definition in the early phases of second language learning is Culture 4, which focuses on the area where the individual and pattern of living meet (Allen, 1985).

The next stage in the history of integrating culture in language teaching was establishing a profile of culture. Many researchers envisioned that the problem in teaching culture was not in the definition but rather in the objectives (Morain, 1983; Nostrand, 1967; Nostrand and Nostrand 1971; Lafayette 1978 & Seelye, 1991). To capture the difficulty, Nostrand (1967) and Nostrand and Nostrand (1971) identified nine culturally relevant skills, or objectives, that can be developed in the language classroom. Lafayette and Schulz (1975) listed these objectives in order of their difficulty. According to Nostrand, culturally competent students should be able to:

1. react appropriately in a social situation;
2. describe, or to ascribe to the proper part of the population, a pattern in the culture or social behavior;
3. recognize a pattern when it is illustrated;
4. explain a pattern;
5. predict how a pattern is likely to appear in a given situation;
6. describe or manifest an attitude important for making one acceptable in the foreign society;
7. evaluate the form of a statement concerning a culture pattern;



8. describe or demonstrate defensible methods of analyzing a socio-cultural whole; and
9. identify the basic human purposes that make significant the understanding which is being taught.

Seelye (1984 & 1991) had the same belief. He looked deeper and outlined seven goals to make teaching culture instructionally systematized. These goals are Seelye's modified version of Nostrand's goals. Although Seelye admits that these objectives cannot be measured in the form they are presented in, he explains that they are stated in terms of student achievement rather than teacher process. He also says that teachers can base their instruction upon these goals to make their classroom purposeful. Seelye's cultural goals are identifying the:

1. sense, or functionality of culturally conditioned behavior;
2. interaction of language and social variables;
3. conventional behavior in common situations;
4. cultural connotations of words and phrases;
5. evaluating statements about a society;
6. researching another culture; and
7. attitudes toward other culture.

Motivated by the belief that culture was the weakest component of language curricula for it received unbalanced treatment in textbooks, and since teachers lacked first cultural knowledge and/or appropriate techniques for teaching it, Lafayette (1988) suggested what he described as a "simple" and "direct" approach for teaching

culture. He proposed a set of thirteen student-oriented cultural objectives as a guide toward a broader understanding and evaluation of choices of the cultural aspects that should be included in the various levels of instruction. Lafayette's approach postulates that culture instruction should yield students who can:

1. recognize and/or interpret major geographical features of the target country (countries);
2. recognize and/or interpret major historical events pertaining to the target country;
3. recognize major institutions
4. recognize and/or interpret major aesthetic monuments of the target culture, including architecture, literature, and the arts;
5. recognize and/or interpret active everyday cultural patterns (e.g., eating, shopping, greeting people);
6. recognize and/or interpret passive everyday cultural patterns (e.g., marriage customs, education, politics);
7. act appropriately in everyday situation;
8. use appropriate common gestures;
9. evaluate the validity of generalizations about foreign cultures;
10. develop skills needed to research (i.e., locate and organize information about) culture;
11. value different peoples and societies;

12. recognize and/or interpret the culture of foreign language related ethnic groups in the United States (e.g., Latinos, Franco-Americans); and
13. recognize and/or interpret the culture of additional countries that speak the foreign language (e.g., Canada, Haiti, Chile, Nicaragua).

Lafayette grouped these goals under five different categories (Allen, 1985 & Omaggio, 1993). Goals 1 through 4 refer to “culture with capital C”, goals 5 through 8 belong to “culture with small c” or the everyday cultural behavior and patterns, goals 9 and 10 are more related to the study of different cultures, goal 11 stands for the affective goal that can be accomplished by concentrating on one or more of the other 13 objectives, and goals 12 and 13 are connected to a specific language. By encompassing goals that are related to facts, affect, and process, Omaggio notes that Lafayette’s five categories represent a useful synthesis of objectives for teaching culture in language classrooms.

Allen (1985) did not deny the validity of Nostrand's or Lafayette's goals. However, she proposed that the ordering of both and the plausibility of their attainment in language classroom can be problematic. She adds that the two sets of goals fell short to address two issues: how to classify the elements of which culture is composed, and how to translate these goals into a coherently-sequenced curriculum.

To address these two issues and to allow for a systematic teaching of culture in the foreign language classroom, a number of proposals were made. In 1974, Nostrand developed a model for integrating culture in the language classroom based solidly on the work of sociologists (Morain, 1983). He suggested the Emergent Model

where he organized the human behavior into four subsystems: cultural, social, ecological and individual. In his categorization, he focused on patterns of behavior that are shared among individual in a certain culture. Omaggio (1993) observes that Nostrand's model was his attempt to describe a sociocultural system through interconnected phenomena. What Nostrand called "themes" represents the handles by which the system can be grasped, according to Omaggio. A "theme" for Nostrand was not just a topic; it was rather a concern that is emotionally loaded, and which affects the behavior of the carrier of culture.

According to Morain (1983), Nostrand's Emergent Model has proved to be an effective "handle" for other researchers who tried to get a grasp of a particular culture; she provides two instances of such studies. In the first study she cited, Eliot (1975) shows how students' cultural understanding can be deepened through personal involvement in a wide array of classroom activities. The second example is Carr (1980). After teaching his students the twelve "centers of value" encompassed in Nostrand's thematic approach, Carr asks his students for illustrations of the culture's value system in a French movie. In some instances, the students find out that the movie plot involves a dispute between several values. In others, they find out that the action involves one basic value from different angles.

Under the four subsystems in Nostrand's model, thirty topics are catalogued. For example, culture includes value system and kinesics, society incorporates conflict resolution and family structure, ecology encompasses technology and attitudes toward nature, and individuality concerns status and personality integration.

In his model, Nostrand also explained eleven experiential techniques for collecting information about culture and experiencing it such as minidramas, role playing, and native informants. He also described nine cognitive techniques, for instance, inference, bibliography and observation. Nostrand's Emergent Model has been a significant contribution to the teaching of culture in that it provided a conceptual structure where teachers can approach culture teaching thematically (Crawford-Lange and Lange, 1984 & Allen, 1985).

In designing a cultural syllabus, two other dimensions were emphasized. Lalonde (1985) says that in order to achieve a balance when developing a cultural curriculum, some sort of balance has to be maintained between "high" and "popular" culture. Lack of balance will shortchange students intellectually. Thus he suggests that students should be exposed to different characteristics of the target culture whether artistic or scientific. He also recommends maintaining a balance in textbooks when dealing with gender issues, socio-economic classes and the representations of both rural and urban life.

On the other hand, Patrikis (1988) has recognized the dangers of bias and ethnocentrism and cautioned against the "sins of commission" when presenting cultural material. The first of these sins is stereotyping where the image, aspect of a culture or its people is exaggerated. She emphasizes that teachers need to be able to distinguish between two things: the common traits and the fixed images of a people. The second sin is triviality that refers to minimizing or reducing the great amount of cultural richness of a people to what is considered "silly, out-of-date, or the quaint"

(p. 18), a tendency that results in the presentation of tokens of culture separated from their context. The third sin is “political bias.” This, Patrikis notes, is result of conscious or unconscious selection of cultural elements and the negligence of others. Relevant to political bias is the forth sin, dangerous incompleteness. This refers to the exclusion of a subculture or an important part of culture out of discussion.

### **The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)**

#### **Proficiency Guidelines**

The American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Provisional Proficiency Guidelines were first created by a large number of scholars and educators in 1982. It was the first time that ACTFL considered culture as one of the language skills (Omaggio, 1986). The Guidelines were statements pertinent to the development of generic and language-specific goals for culture. The guidelines describe learners' culture proficiencies at different six levels: (1) novice; (2) intermediate; (3) advance; (4) superior; (5) near-native; and (6) native (Morain, 1983 & Omaggio, 1993). Allen (1985) described these guidelines as unsound as they followed the same schema used to describe the four language skills. Moore (1994) adds that the guidelines did not address how to teach or test culture in the classroom.

In 1986, ACTFL reviewed its proficiency guidelines and proposed a set of proficiency guidelines for adult users. The new guidelines included sections on cultural competence as well as language performance. The Guidelines stipulate how well students should perform in linguistic and cultural domains (Herron et al., 1999).

These guidelines were the first serious step in developing a linguistic syllabus that views language proficiency as a progressive and cyclical process.

The ACTFL Provisional Proficiency Guidelines state that cultural proficiency can be measured in terms of three criteria: function, content or context, and accuracy. The division maintains the three-part division in measurement criteria of the language. Nonetheless, Allen (1985) observes that the Guidelines focus function more than content or accuracy.

In (1996), ACTFL set forth the Foreign Language National Standards as to what students should know and be able to do as a result of foreign language instruction. What is important is that the new Standards recognized the interrelatedness of language and culture, a connection that cannot be experienced unless by someone who possesses both. The new definition of culture that ACTFL adopted includes "the philosophical perspectives, the behavioral practices, and the products--both tangible and intangible--of a society" (p. 47.). The Standards state that

American students need to develop an awareness of other people's world views, of their unique way of life, and of the patterns of behavior which order their world, as well as learn about contributions of other cultures to the world at large, and the solutions to they offer to the common problems of humankind (p. 47).

Culture, according to the new Standards, incorporates the cultural products and practices which are derived from the cultural perspectives of a people. Products, on one hand, may be tangible, for instance, a piece of literature, or, on the other hand, intangible such as a dance or an oral tale. Practices refer to the patterns of behavior

accepted by a society and deal with aspects of culture such as the rite of passage and use of space. Finally, cultural perspectives refer to the culture's view of the world, meanings, beliefs, values and attitudes. To teach culture, the Cultural Goal, according to the National Standards, postulates that students should be able to

- demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices and the perspectives of the cultures studied; and
- demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the products and perspectives of the cultures studied.

In the area of communications, the goal is to enable “students demonstrate an understanding of the concept of cultures through comparisons of cultures studied in their own (p. 47).”

The new National Guidelines acknowledge the interrelatedness of culture and language. According to Lange (1999), the new definition regards that big "C" culture is inseparable from little "c" culture by interweaving the formal and the informal aspects of the daily life. According to him, this definition also

allows for enormous flexibility that honors what teachers bring to the classroom. It also honors the developmental level of learners in that teachers can adapt the outcomes of these levels. This definition permits the use of any document —be it an advertisement, newspaper article, or literary text—for cultural learning where appropriate. At the same time, the definition gives the author the opportunity to push the curriculum toward important elements of practices, products, and perspectives.” Lange concludes that “in this regard, there is important agreement on what culture to teach (p. 60).

However, Lange adds one important element to the previous definition, namely is the “impermanence of culture.” Lange explains that cultures change and do



not maintain a static nature. Thus teaching culture is related to the process of discovery rather than to learning the static facts and data.

### **The American Association of Teachers of French (AATF) National Commission on Cultural Competence**

According to AATF standards, there are two broad categories in culture instruction. The first category incorporates two competencies: Empathy and Ability to Observe and Analyze a Culture. The second refers to the Knowledge of French-Speaking societies such as France, Sub Saharan Africa, the Caribbean, and North Africa. The Standards provide four levels of competence under each category: Elementary, Basic Intercultural Skills, Social Competence, and Socio-Professional Capability. Within each stage of the four levels, the Standards list competencies in the following areas: communication in a cultural context, the value system, social patterns and conventions, social institutions, geography and the environment, history and literature and the art.

Lange (1999) states that, like the National Standards Project, the AAFT Standards emphasize that culture and language are inextricably connected. However, he adds that these standards have their drawbacks. Lange says that

the AATF statement of competencies is highly complex, extremely prescriptive, and very difficult for the classroom teacher to use. It is not clear that the four stages of competence function on a continuum. And there is over reliance of knowledge in the knowledge of French-Speaking Societies category (p. 60).

Lange concludes by saying that since the Project honors the interrelatedness of language and culture, there is a need for a type of learning that exhibits this relationship.

### **The Hypothesis Refinement Approach**

The Hypothesis Refinement Approach was proposed by Jorstad (1981). The goal of this seven-step process is to make students aware of the changing nature of culture, the inaccuracy of stereotypes, the source of cultural patterns and the recognition of similarities and differences (Crawford-Lange and Lange, 1985). This approach is a process that incorporates seven steps. These steps are: (1) perceiving a cultural aspect; (2) making a statement about the aspect; (3) gathering information from resources related to the aspect; (4) examining the information and resources, and describing; reporting and analyzing findings; (5) modifying and refining the statement; (6) examining a related aspect in the native culture using the previous five steps; and (7) comparing refined statements about native and target cultures, identifying similarities and differences.

### **CULTURE WITHIN LANGUAGE CURRICULA**

Several models have been suggested to integrate culture in language curricula: The Linear Model by Wilkins (1967), the communicative model (Savignton, 1972) and the integrative process model (Crawford-Lange and Lange, 1985).

### **The Linear Model**

This model is founded on pre-established goals that are reduced to learning tasks according to the input of the learner and the nature of the objectives (Banathy and Lange, 1972, cited by Crawford-Lange and Lange, 1993). The premise is that the build up of learning tasks within the goal leads to its mastery. Crawford Lange and Lange (1993) explain that this model regards culture as outside element that is not integrated in the language classroom although it can be a strand of learning.

### **The Communicative Model**

Crawford Lange and Lange say that this model transcends language learning as the learning of grammatical rules to include the cultural component or the social context. The situations in which grammar, function or notions are used provide the context for that use. However, the model does necessitate that a complete integration of the social contexts and the grammatical categories should be provided. What is more important, Crawford-Lange and Lange comment, is that the model still emphasizes the language and its development more than processing the language within a cultural context.

### **The Interactive Language/Culture Learning Process**

The model was a culmination of previous studies. This model allows for a full integration of language and culture (Crawford-Lange and Lange, 1985). It has the

potential, they explain, that it incorporates the communicative model and many other recommendations for language development that came for L1 and L2 acquisition research. The model proposes that cultural proficiency can be achieved by processing culture in the language. The eight-step model is interactive in that it integrates the target and the native languages, culture and perceptions. The stages are:

1. identification of a cultural theme;
2. presentation of cultural phenomenon;
3. dialogue involving target and native cultures;
4. transition to language learning;
5. language learning;
6. verification of perceptions (target and native);
7. cultural awareness; and
8. evaluating of language and culture proficiency.

### **STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING CULTURE**

In teaching language and culture in an integrative mode, it is important to recognize the usefulness and goal of designed activity (Omaggio, 1993). Lafayette (1978 & 1988) has proposed a set of suggestions to achieve such integration. Omaggio summarized them as follows:

## **The Lecture**

Lectures may have been the most common method for teaching culture (Omaggio, 1993). She says that lectures can be effective if teachers (1) keep them brief; (2) enliven them with visuals, realia, and accounts of personal experience, (3) focus on some specific aspect of cultural experience; (4) have their students take notes; and (5) use follow-up activities where students use the target language actively in a cultural context.

## **Native Informants**

The importance of native informants is complementary to the classroom teachers. In fact, Omaggio says, native informants can be sources for recent information about the target culture and linguistic models. In addition, native informants can be teaching assistants in university program who can be invited for informal discussions in the classroom on a cultural theme, or they may take part in an audio or visual interview or role play. To make the presentations or classroom visitation successful, Galloway (1981) recommends some tips that can be adopted before, during, and after the visitations.

## **Audio-taped Interviews**

Informal interviews with native speakers can provide information about the target culture. Omaggio provides some examples of taped interviewed done in French

by teaching assistants at the University of Illinois. Each interview focuses on a city of a country in the francophone World and involves prelistening and post listening activities.

### **Videotaped Interviews/Observational Dialogues**

Omaggio says that this type of interviews and situational role plays can be “excellent” in the provision of authentic linguistic interactions that encompass more than pure linguistic information or models. Besides being used to manifest linguistic occurrences, interviews can convey conventional gestures and other cultural aspects, for instance, body language and eye contact. Although, she says, such interviews can be prepared with partial scripts, they are best if prepared without scripts. Students are requested to observe both conventional linguistic expressions and certain behaviors where they watch videotaped materials.

### **Techniques for Teaching Culture**

Numerous techniques have been proposed to integrate culture in the class materials (Seelye, 1991; Lafayette, 1978; Morain, 1983; & Moore, 1996). The most wide-spread techniques are culture assimilators, culture capsules and culture clusters. Seelye says the first two were the most popular. Minidrams and Audio Motor Units are some of the other techniques.

### **Cultural Assimilators**

A culture assimilator, designed by three psychologists, is a good self-instructional source for learning cultural concepts (Seeley, 1984). It consists of a series of programmed episodes, each describing a critical incident of a cross cultural interaction. This incident is usually conflictual and may be easily misinterpreted. The source of the conflict on the part of the American is lacking the cultural framework that assists in understanding the incident. Students read the episode, and then choose a response from four plausible answers for the behavior that the episode has presented. Each answer contains cultural information and provides feedback as to why the answer was the correct explanation. Teachers then provide their students with appropriate feedback. Culture assimilators have three advantages. They are amusing, involving and can be more controlled in experimental settings.

### **Culture Capsules**

Designed by a foreign language teacher, Darrel Taylor, and an anthropologist, John Sorenson, culture capsules are the most common method in teaching culture (Halverson, 1991). Culture capsules are brief presentations or focused units dealing with particular and minimal differences between two cultures along with visuals, lecture notes or relevant realia that can be later filed away in stored for future reference. Culture capsules are normally followed by content related questions and appropriate student activities. Culture capsules can be prepared by the teacher or by the students outside the class, but they are orally presented during the class at the end

of the period, using visual aids. Culture capsules are techniques that can be used for independent study, in small groups or entire classes. To construct a cultural capsule, Lett (1977, cited in Omaggio, 1993) proposes a set of steps that include:

1. Selecting a topic of cultural contrast, coordinating it with topics being treated in the textbook;
2. Listing differences and similarities between target culture and home culture customs in relation to this point of contrast;
3. Defining student learning objectives;
4. Organizing and outlining specific content;
5. Writing the capsule in language that will be comprehensible to the students who will use it (i.e., at an appropriate level of proficiency);
6. Checking the accuracy of the content and language of the capsule with a native speaker and/or other colleagues;
7. Rewriting as necessary; and
8. Preparing or collecting appropriate multimedia aids (visuals, slides, clippings, realia, etc.).

To insure a systematic approach of culture instruction that avoids the "bits and pieces" presentation, the authors of culture capsules suggested cross-referencing as those capsules were created.



## **Culture Clusters**

Designed by Meade and Genelle Morain (1973), culture clusters are skits that consist of three or more culture capsules. The skit develops a related cultural topic (Seelye, 1984). The three or so capsules are then presented in a 30 minutes stimulation that integrates the different capsules on consecutive days. The skit is terminated by stimulation on the final day. This stimulation involves the students actively through summarizing the linguistic and cultural content of cluster. Omaggio (1993) says that the best way of creating a culture cluster is to select a focal topic and then to work backwards to arrive at its three or four components that can be considered culture capsules.

## **Audio Motor Units**

Audio Motor Units were developed primarily to teach listening comprehension. They are regarded as an adaptation of Asher's Total Physical Response technique (1969) in teaching languages. Audio Motor Units consist of a series of oral demands, some of which are cultural, to which students need to act physically after the teacher's miming of each action. As the units incorporate the linguistic, cultural, visual and psycho-motor experiences, they become more amusing and instructive.

## **The Cultoon**

This technique is meant to teach the visual aspect of culture through a cartoon strip. The teacher provides a description of the depicted cultoon and the students read it. The strip encompasses visual clues that are responsible for the incorrect assumptions about the characters. These clues demand visual literacy. The clues are revealed through class discussion which ultimately results in students becoming aware of the target culture symbols and signs.

## **Cultural Minidramas**

Cultural minidramas, developed by Raymond L. Gorden (1974), a sociologist from Antioch College, have proved popular for students and teachers alike (Morain, 1983). Minidramas present an instance of misunderstanding in a form of a dramatization. The goal of minidramas is to make students more sensitive to cross cultural miscommunication through three to five episodes, at least one of which involves a cultural misunderstanding. Each episode reveals more information, but the exact miscommunication is not revealed until the last episode. Minidrams usually provide cultural information in addition to provoking emotional responses. The drama is followed by an instructor-led discussion to help students find out the cause for misunderstanding. Minidrams are involving for students in two ways: solving the problem and staging the dramatization itself.

### **The Micrologue**

Developed by John Rassias, micrologues are texts selected by the teacher. These texts are read aloud to the students. Students listen and respond orally to questions about the content of the text, reconstruct it orally and ultimately write it as a dictation. Micrologues allow for the integration of language use and cultural knowledge (Allen, 1985), and they rarely take more than ten minutes.

### **Learning Activity Packages**

Learning Activity Packages were designed for self instructional units for individualized programs. These units can be easily developed to teach culture in traditional and individualized programs. They consist of a set of instructions for students and teachers, a set of objectives, a pre-test, several learning activities, self-tests and a post-test.

### **Comparison Method**

The starting point in this method is a presentation made by the teacher. This presentation incorporates one or more items in the target culture that are distinctively different from the source culture. The presentation is then followed by a discussion as to why these differences may result in difficulties or misunderstanding (Houghes, 1986).

## **Culture Islands**

Teachers can create culture islands in their classrooms by providing sets of posters, pictures, graphs, maps, signs and any sort of realia that help students create a mental image of the target culture. The purpose of these culture islands is soliciting questions from students in addition to attracting their attention (Houghes, 1986).

Morain (1983) says that all of these devices can be used to present cultural aspects for the first time, or to re-present material for review. Skilled teachers can pick and choose from these techniques to provide activities that suit any level of student achievement or sophistication.

## **PROBLEMS OF TEACHING CULTURE**

Teaching culture seems to be problematic, and accessible with difficulty. Heusinkveld says that teaching culture is the most subtle of curricular goals for 1) culture is hard to define; 2) it is difficult to evaluate cultural knowledge and 3) learning a language does not guarantee learning culture which is vast, subjective, subtle and unpredictable. Researchers have discussed numerous difficulties teachers encounter in teaching culture (for more details, see Heusinkveld, 1997; Seelye, 1991; Allen, 1985; & Grosse, 2001).

Halverson (1991) classified the difficulties of teaching culture into three categories: definitional, structural and cultural. The definitional refers to the distinction between capital "C" culture and small "c" culture. The structural difficulty is associated with the structure of the foreign language program. In another study,

Henderson (1980) classified these structural difficulties into three categories. First the cultural content in language textbooks does not go beyond "isolated cultural tidbits." Second, time allocated to study foreign language is limited and barely is capable of coping with the linguistic knowledge. Finally, supplementary materials and trained teachers are in short supply. Henderson adds that a fourth difficulty lies in that teachers need to deal with students who are ethnocentric and culturally-bound.

Time may be the most reported obstacle teacher encounter in culture instruction (Seelye, 1994; Allen, 1985; & Moore, 1996). Teachers seem to avoid teaching culture because of time constraints. When teachers have less time to teach the language sequence and the overcrowded curriculum, culture becomes the first component to be abandoned (Galloway, 1985), or teaching language skills reduces severely the time allotted for teaching culture (Heusinkveld, 1997). Seelye (1984) says that teachers justify this tendency by believing that students will be exposed to cultural input later in their language learning. However, he notes, that "later" never seems to come for the majority of learners. In her study, Moore (1996) found that insufficient time was the greatest impediment in teaching culture. "Insufficient time," she says, "accounted for the selection of teaching techniques that only expose students to cultural products and practices and ignored perspectives." And it also made them rely heavily on cultural notes in textbooks rather than authentic materials. An authentic material is one that is intended for the native speakers of the target language. Teachers may not select authentic materials as they are not glossed and may involve structure language learners did not previously encounter (Bacon, 1997).

Understanding these authentic texts requires that language learners decode the language, and more importantly the socio-cultural knowledge reflected in such texts (Garcia, 1997). Understanding authentic texts and using other techniques in teaching culture need more time and expertise. Seelye (1984) says that time is insufficient to do the in-class activities. While outside the class, students do not do the required activities.

Adequate and appropriate material and training are also among the difficulties teachers encounter in culture instruction. Allen (1985) explains that the material that integrates culture and language are of short supply. However, she says that the most important factor that makes teaching culture difficult is that teachers are not adequately trained and more importantly lack the knowledge about culture itself. Inadequate training results in the lack of effective teaching strategies necessary for integrating language and culture (Crawford-Lange, 1984). Thus they become afraid to teach it (see also Seelye, 1984 and 1988, & Mantle-Bromley, 1997).

In a study conducted by Moore and Jernigan (1997) that investigated how two college teachers taught Portuguese, the researchers found that teachers did not give enough time to discuss the cultural perspectives behind the products and practices in Brazil in which students were interested learning about. The authors argued that excluding the perspectives or what they referred to as "deep culture" may be due to the difficulty of explaining and discussing such perspectives. Teachers need to be adequately trained to teach culture through comparing the target culture with the source culture as the ACTFL National Standards (1993) recommend. This is not to

suggest that students need to understand the native pattern completely, rather, the authors explain, urging them to reflect.

Researchers criticized a fact-only approach in teaching culture. Seelye, for instance, argued that that teachers are not only requested to teach cultural facts, but they also assist students in acquiring the skills necessary for making sense of those facts when they are studying the target culture. Omaggio (1993) says that a “fact only” approach to the teaching of culture seems to be ineffective. Citing Jarvis (1977) and Galloway (1985), Omaggio says that facts, when relating to life, are in a dynamic movement. Thus data may not hold true across time, place and social classes. Secondly, such approach may enhance stereotypes rather than attempting to shatter them (Lange and Lange, 1984). Finally, a cognitive approach that ignores the philosophical in the teaching of culture may leave learners unprepared or incapable of adjusting to new cultural phenomenon or situations they encounter (Lange and Lange, 1984, Galloway, 1985).

The emphasis on the importance of teaching cultural perspectives springs from the fact that teaching culture involves students’ beliefs and attitudes, a dangerous area that some teachers prefer to avoid, and thus teaching culture becomes problematic. According to Galloway (1988), this is a “somewhat threatening, hazy and unquantifiable area” (p. 185). Bromely (1997) explains that culture is an emotion-loaded content and this is not easy to tackle. Since students are bound by their own culture, it is difficult to alter them. Students feel that their identity is threatened and might be lost for the sake of accepting and using new behaviors. Cited in Allen

(2000), Tedick and Walker (1996) refer to the difficulty of changing the conventional approach in teaching culture to one that integrates both language and culture. This is related to the fact that it is difficult to incur fundamental changes in people's beliefs, understandings, attitudes, and behaviors. Finally Galloway stresses that teaching culture is a slow process and there is always paucity in authentic cultural content.

Although textbooks are the main source of cultural information, they remain insufficient, and need to be enriched by supplementary material. Thus, Glisan (1996) explains that teachers cannot teach culture from textbooks. It is imperative, she continues, that teachers bring their own real-life cultural experiences to the classroom. Students need to see that language and culture are intertwined.

The aforementioned difficulties seem to be legitimate. However, are all of them convincing? Seelye (1991) responds to this valid question by stating that some of these are not convincing reasons. As for time, for instance, he says that if the teachers' objective is to produce inter-culturally-proficient students, then lack of time is not a sufficient reason to limit the teaching of culture to outside activities. Second, Seelye questions the possibility of exposing students to target culture later by asking when this will be done. In this regard, he explains that if the attrition rates increase in the higher levels, then fewer students will be granted the chance to learn culture. Finally, Seelye emphasizes that language and culture are not divorced from each other. If teachers are unaware of the cultural connotation of a word, this means that they do not know the meaning of the word regardless of their capability of pronouncing it or not. Students need to be taught the appropriate circumstances and



context of an utterance, since every language has extralinguistic cues such as intonation patterns and function words that do mean nothing in themselves. Seelye gives an example of the word "get" that has numerous possible meanings, but only in context, those meanings can be communicated. Seelye emphasizes that "knowledge of the linguistic structure alone does not carry with it any special insight into the political, social, religious, or economic system" (p. 7). Henderson (1997) also proposed an alternative that resolves this difficulty. She says that culture and vocabulary need to be integrated rather than dealt with separately to make efficient use of allotted time for teaching and preparation. Nonetheless, her approach nevertheless focuses on the area of vocabulary and culture.

## **TESTING CULTURE**

Most language experts and educators admit and agree that culture should be included in the foreign language curricula and that language cannot be separated from culture. However, only few instructors evaluate the cultural goals (Moore, 1994 & Valette, 1997), and/or culture is rarely included in testing (Lange, 1999). If some teachers do, they do so haphazardly by asking about discrete factual items in a standardized format (Lafayette and Schulz, 1997). Lafayette and Shultz (1997) and Lee (1997) note that very little has been written on testing culture. By delineating the objectives of teaching culture, Lado, the Nostrands, and Upsher laid the foundations of evaluation.

The importance of testing culture has its rationale. For instance, Brooks (1997) emphasizes the need for tests that will measure the progress that learners can make in the area of cultural awareness and sensitivity. If cross cultural understanding is an objective in the foreign language classroom, then assessment of culture is necessary to maintain the face validity of the language programs (Lafayette and Schulz, 1997). They add that testing culture is important as it gives language educators a feedback on the effectiveness of their instruction and the student learning. Finally they state that testing culture can be motivating to student interest and study. Lafayette (1978) states that “culture components should be tested as rigorously as language components, lest students assume that cultural knowledge has little or no impact on grades and consequently, not worthy of their attention in the classroom” (p.9).

Valid and reliable tests for assessing cultural skills in the classroom still remain elusive and difficult, and the profession has not yet succeeded in the development of tests that measure the process of cultural learning (Moore, 1997). Valid tests, Moore suggests, must be referenced against the skill, ability or whatever the instructional program purports to instill. She, moreover, says that teaching culture has been limited to measuring bits and pieces of information rather than insights or awareness of the core of a culture or a society. This was the main reason that led the Culture Section in the New York State Regents Examination to be dropped. The Section used to test discrete cultural facts. Thus it was easy to prepare and to score.

Students used to prepare for the exam at the last minute by memorizing lists of names, dates and places (Valette, 1997).

Part of the difficulty lies in that assessing knowledge of a culture is more difficult than testing language (Damen, 1987). Tests that are designed for this purpose lack clear statements, and also the selections of the categories that can be tested lack clarity as well (Born, 1975). Valette (1997) says that teachers are uncertain about their cultural goals and how to evaluate them. There is an agreement that in order to assess culture, teachers need to have defined goals and objectives (Valette, 1997; Seelye, 1991; & Lafayette and Schulz, 1997). Yet, the researchers differ in what teachers' goals should be in teaching culture. While Seelye, for instance, emphasizes that the change in the students' attitudes is the main goal for teaching culture, Valette, Lafayette and Schulz stress the importance of developing a greater knowledge and awareness of target culture. Valette adds three other goals. These are acquiring a command of etiquette of the target culture, understanding the values of the target culture and understanding the differences between the target and the learner's culture.

Besides the lack of agreement on the cultural goals, researchers differ on the time of the test. To measure the achievement of the different goals, Seelye and Valette suggest giving the students a pretest at the beginning of the course and a posttest at the end. The pretest establishes the baseline while the posttest shows the teachers the degree of progress the students have accomplished. On the other hand, Lafayette and Schulz suggest giving students only posttests. The format of such tests is a multiple choice one.

Traditionally, Lee (1997) argues that L2 cultural knowledge has been measured by discrete-point formats such as true-false, multiple choice, and fill-in-the-blank. Moore (1991) notes that the problem with these tests is that they are the type of tests that Seelye himself, she says, urges teachers to avoid because they create and perpetuate stereotypes and overgeneralizations. They also test students' reading comprehension more than their cultural knowledge.

New methods have been proposed to replace traditional approaches. The most important of these is the use of portfolios. Moore (1991) recommends that teachers use portfolios to evaluate culture. A portfolio is defined as any project that represents a collection of artifacts of the students' learning experiences assembled over time (Resnick and Resnick, 1992). Thus, portfolios have three main characteristics: (1) student involvement, (2) evaluation and reflection on the process over time, and (3) work collected over time. According to Moore, the implementation of portfolios is a twelve-step procedure that incorporates:

1. discussing what portfolios are with students;
2. deciding on the number of items;
3. discussing the format of the item;
4. selecting the topics by the students;
5. deciding on a time frame;
6. deciding on the modes of inquiry and research, for instance, interview and secondary sources;

7. developing a plan of activity for the successful accomplishment of the objectives;
8. identifying the needed resources;
9. deciding on the physical nature of the portfolios;
10. establishing criteria for grading in collaboration with the students;
11. organizing a schedule of conferences with the students; and finally
12. designing a form for the students to do their own evaluation.

Using portfolios as testing approach has its advantages. Moore explains that portfolios avoid regurgitation and reduce the volume of memorizing bits and pieces about culture. They also make the accomplishment of the educational goals more realistic. She adds that portfolios allow for self-directed work, self correction, greater autonomy, and longer time frames. Portfolios, furthermore, can encourage higher-level thinking and higher level writing skills. Finally, Moore says that this procedure is in tandem with the Holmes Group Forum's reform movement that calls for creating tomorrow's educators. In addition to these benefits, Lee (1997) mentions that portfolios support individual topics of interest, focus on the learning process rather than the products and encourage students to reflect on their own learning process.

To show the effectiveness of portfolios in culture instruction and how to use them, Moore reports on a project in two rural high schools in New York. Individually or in small group, students chose one or two topics from the topics provided in the syllabus and developed artifacts for their portfolios. The artifacts were research studies, oral histories, case studies or different types of group projects such as video

production, clay models and collages. The teachers helped the students in designing their projects, locating relevant material, and deciding on the format of the products that would go into the portfolios. The teachers also provided their students with self-evaluation forms to urge them to reflect on their projects.

### **TEACHING ARABIC IN THE UNITED STATES: A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

Arabic is an important language worldwide. According to Bakalla, (1981) and Nydell, (1996), Arabic language is not only a means of communication, but also a vehicle of renowned culture and civilization. It is the official language of 22 countries, spoken by more than 250 million people in the Arab countries. Millions more speak it in adjacent and other Muslem countries. Arabic is the sixth international language in the United Nations, first in Islamic World League and third in the Organization of African Unity.

Teaching Arabic in the United States dates back to over a century before the signing of the Declaration of Independence. According to McCarus (1987), Harvard was the first institution to add Arabic to the already instituted languages: Hebrew, Chaldaic and Syriac between 1654 and 1672. Harvard's motivation was theological, that is, the study of the Bible for purposes of exegesis that resulted from the Reformation in Europe in the sixteenth century.

Between 1883 and prior to 1950, Heath (1990) observes that teaching of Arabic was the specialty of philologists who were interested in Arabic because of their research that included classical documents written in Classical Arabic (CA). The

majority of these scholars were non-Arabs. Thus CA was stressed. Spoken Arabic, on the other hand, was ignored. Arabic was treated as a dead language, he adds, and the teaching of Arabic focused on the grammatical rules and memorizing lists of vocabulary (see also Allen, 1990). Thus, the Grammar-Translation method dominated. Students were initially introduced to grammatical rules and long lists of vocabulary. Then, they were requested to translate ancient texts in writing in both directions: to and from the target, Arabic, before advancing to deal with advanced texts.

With the advent of the Audio Lingual Method in teaching foreign languages in 1950s and 1960s, and in response to national needs of the United States in different parts of the world including the Middle East--those needs were realized after World War II when the USA became an unparalleled super power—a shift was made towards newer methods of teaching and establishing major area centers at the major universities, a tendency that also applied to other foreign languages in general. This trend was a result of realizing that skills of reading and writing that American learners acquired in the language program were not sufficient for possible communication. To respond to this deficiency, Heath (1990) and Allen (1992) say that the first response was an inclination toward teaching Modern Standard Arabic, MSA, rather than CA, since this was the favorite and widely-used variety of the native speakers of Arabic. The language programs that were already functioning at that point, particularly the Defense Language Institute and the Foreign Service Institute, did not provide the proper language training that the students needed. Thus, introductory materials to

MSA were attuned to develop reading skills, besides other skills, in the modern language programs. This reform was represented by modifying the texts the teachers were using rather than adjusting the pedagogical approaches for language instruction.

The second wave of reform which took place in the 1960s had three forms. According to Heath (1990), these forms have revolutionized the instruction of Arabic in the United States. First, a trend to focus on the colloquial dialects of Arabic emerged. Second, a new series of textbooks in MSA was developed, particularly a series of textbooks called *Elementary Modern Standard Arabic* (Abboud et al., 1975), with the first part published in 1968. The book is grammar-based and very well-organized. It focuses uniquely on MSA with case ending. The approach is not an accurate reflection of how language is used in Arab countries. Third, a consortium of eight universities established the Center of Arabic Studies Abroad (CASA) at the American University at Cairo, which is still active until today in 1967. The Center offers summer and full-year programs of intensive Arabic to qualified students. McCarus (1987) explains that CASA reflected the growth of the Arabic studies in the United States, with spaces for 15 full-year and 18 or 20 summer-only fellows. According to McCarus, the success of CASA is due to "high caliber, motivated students, competent and devoted instructors, devoted directors on both sides of the ocean, and great support from the host institutions and from the U.S Department of Education. McCarus adds that the one enabling factor to CASA's success was the fact that it was set up as an advanced-level language program. CASA is still prominent and active even today.



The introduction of proficiency-based approach into the Arabic classroom was still in its beginning stages in the 1980s (Allen, 1990). Teaching and learning Arabic then, he says, followed the pattern of other languages where the focus has been on the oral skills: listening and speaking. Few initiatives followed to introduce proficiency that encompasses the four language skills as well as the cultural domain in the classroom. Among these were the *Let's Learn Arabic* Project at the University of Pennsylvania (1986), the *Ahlan wa-sahlan* Project at the Ohio State University (1989), and the Middlebury College's School of Arabic *Proficiency-Materials* Project (1991). The proficiency movement, Heath (1990) explains, and these initiatives were part of a natural process towards functionality. Rammuny (1990) notes that the proficiency movement has made it essential for instructors of Arabic and textbook developers to (1) establish learning goals based on proficiency requirements, (2) identify the exact functions that students of Arabic need to master at the end of each level, and (3) modify Arabic materials and tests to meet the new demands.

The establishment of the ACTFL Provisional Proficiency Guidelines in 1982 (see Higgs, 1985, 219-26) has had a significant impact on the teaching of Arabic theoretically and practically (Al-Batal, 1995). Roger Allen began the Arabic Proficiency Guidelines in 1985 (Allen, 1985). Allen and a committee of teachers of Arabic revised these Guidelines and republished them in 1989 by ACTFL. At the practical level, Allen and Abdel Allouche (1988) devised a proficiency-based syllabus *Let's Learn Arabic* for teaching MSA.

The ultimate impact of the proficiency movement was echoed in the authoring of *Al-Kitaab* series (Brustad et al., 1995). The first volume of the book series introduces the Arabic alphabet and sounds. This introductory volume is followed by another three volumes. The philosophy of the series is based on the assumption that students can reach proficiency in Arabic on their own, and that the teacher's role is guidance and facilitation. The series integrates all the language skills as well as culture. Furthermore, the authors of the book bore in their minds the issue of authenticity in dealing with the linguistic reality in the Arab World where at least two varieties of the language are used by educated native speakers under different conditions, a situation referred to as diglossia (Ferguson, 1959), which is discussed in detail below. All textbooks thus include samples the Egyptian spoken dialect.

Another contribution to the TAFL is manifested in *Elementary Arabic: An Integrated Approach* project (Yale University Press, 1995), and then followed by *Intermediate Arabic: An Integrated Approach* that builds on the previous one. The philosophy of the book, as explained by Munther Younes, is to reflect the linguistic situation in the Arab World where MSA and spoken Levantine Arabic are both used but for different purposes and settings. What characterizes this series is its real endeavor to integrate culture and language. Thus the dialogues are authentic and depict the everyday life of the Arab people, particularly in Jordan. Furthermore, the reading and listening materials reflect in most of the times, an important cultural phenomenon such as a renowned figure, known historical place, country, song, and

son on. The series thus introduces learners to the Arab history, society and culture and teachers him/her the spoken language and MSA.

### **Culture in Arabic Textbooks**

Prior to the 1990s, the teaching of the Arab culture in language classrooms in the United States can be described as being sporadic, peripheral and lacking systematization (Al-Batal, 1988). Textbooks, in general, focused on grammar and the cultural component has been very limited. The assumption has been that students acquire culture at a later stage in their journey with the language, or that cultural knowledge can be acquired through other content courses such as Islamic Studies, Middle Eastern Studies, history, or by traveling to an Arab country. Al-Batal stresses that the addition of the cultural component to the language curricula was indispensable for the mere reason that some students get exposed to the Arab culture inside the language classes only. In addition, he says that there are many cultural aspects, such as polite expressions and forms of address, that cannot be completely understood outside their linguistic context.

Al-Batal, however, notes that Arabic textbooks are not completely void of culture. In fact many of them, he says, do encompass images of the Arab culture. Yet these are presented while a clear definition of cultural objectives is absent. It is not clear which level of linguistic or cultural proficiency students will reach by the end of first year or second year, per se. Al-Batal thus presents a set of eight objectives for the teaching of Arab culture for American students relying on Lafayette's goals which he

describes as “clearly stated and are comprehensive in their coverage of the various cultural aspects required in language classroom” (p. 445).

Besides these eight objectives that were mentioned earlier in the chapter, Al-Batal offers two other objectives that are particular to the Arab culture. These two objectives are:

1. the ability to recognize the main principles of Islam and the role it plays as a major component of Arab culture; and
2. the ability to use the appropriate level of language, i.e., Modern Standard Arabic (fusha) or colloquial (‘aammiyyah), depending on the conversational situation.

Al-Batal’s choice of these two objectives refers to the fact that they “represent the ultimate level of proficiency” instructors of Arabic hope their students will develop. The intensity and nature of the program play a significant role in setting the time frame required to achieve these objectives.

The notion that it is difficult to teach culture in a classroom setting applies to the Arab culture as well. Besides time constraints, and a lack of teacher training, there is the difficulty of assessment. In addition Al-Batal (1988) observes that it is also very impossible to talk about a homogeneous Arab culture. The extreme cultural diversity in the Arab World is imposed by the ethnic, religious, socio-economic, political and geographic extremes. Thus it will be difficult to make cultural generalizations, for instance, about women or even religious practices. It is also difficult to draw generalizations about daily life activities across Arab nations, such as shopping habits

due to the diverse types of economies, for example. The diglossic situation is also present and powerful in the Arab countries, i.e., the existence of at least two varieties of the language, one is spoken and the other is used in the media. Finally, Al-Batal stresses that time is another issue that makes it difficult to teach culture. Arabic is a language that needs time to acquire.

### ***The Diglossic Phenomenon***

Ferguson (1959) introduced the sociolinguistic term "diglossia" to refer to

... a relatively stable language situation in which, in addition to the primary dialects of the language (which may include a standard or regional standards), there is a very divergent, highly codified (often grammatically more complex) superposed variety—the vehicle of a large and respected body of written literature either of an earlier period or in another speech community—that is learned largely by means of formal education and used for most written and formal spoken purposes but is not used by any sector of the community for ordinary conversation (p. 336).

In the Arab World, this phenomenon exists at a large scale and is manifested by the coexistence of both the literary language and the spoken dialects. People speak the conversational dialect or what Ferguson calls the “low variety” when they are among their friends, at home or on the streets. They however use the standard “high” language in writing or in the media where the high variety is more appropriate.

Al-Batal (1992) describes Ferguson's distinction as a simplified one as it does not account for the various levels that exist between these varieties. Citing numerous studies that investigated the diglossic situation in the Arab countries, Al-Batal concludes that the situation therein is triglossic or multiglossic.

Ferguson cites various functions of diglossia. Among these are the

1. prestige where speakers regard the high language as superior to the low language;
2. literary heritage where a large number of literary works are written in the high language;
3. acquisition. In this sense the low variety is used by adults in speaking with their children. Thus it becomes the mother tongue;
4. standardization where there the grammatical studies of the high variety are numerous. Pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary are used with limited variation.
5. stability. Ferguson states that the diglossia persists for centuries and even longer. And to resolve the tension in the diglossic situation, people start to use a "relatively uncodified, unstable, intermediate forms of the language" (p. 332).
6. Grammar. High language has grammatical categories that are not present in the low language. It also has an inflectional system of verbs and nouns that is almost absent in the other;
7. lexicon. Ferguson notes that both varieties share a large amount of vocabulary. Yet they do have differences in form, usage and meaning; and
8. phonology. Ferguson says that it is difficult to draw generalizations about the phonological system between the two varieties, since the two can be too close such as it is the case in Arabic.

To enable teachers cope with the diglossic situation in the Arab World, several approaches have been proposed. Al-Batal (1995) briefly discusses these approaches and proposes an approach that he describes as a modified version of the Simultaneous Approach where students are introduced to both MSA and one spoken variety at the same time. For him, this is the "soundest" approach that attempted to deal with the diglossic dilemma. Al-Batal describes his proposed as one that reflects "in the classroom the diglossic situation (with its different varieties) as it exists in the Arab World today. It should introduce MSA as a variety that is mainly written but that is also spoken in a multitude of situations. It should also introduce an "Arabic dialect as a variety that is used mainly for daily life communication but also as a vehicle for some forms of literary expression (p. 298)." And this what he does along with Brustad,, and Al-Tonsi. in their textbook series, *Al-Kitaab Fii Ta'llum Al-'Arabiyya*.

### ***The Role of Religion***

The Middle East is the birth place of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, the latter being the most predominant religion. Yet, all Arabs identify with their faith whether they observe its guidelines or not (Nydell, 1996). The majority of the people are Muslims, and Islam seems to define the Middle East people and their communities. Islam has influenced almost all aspects of life for individuals and society.

As it is the case with the Arabic language as a unifying factor, Islam is another important one. The role of Islam can be seen at all levels—individual, family, community and even states. In order to understand the culture of the region, one needs to be aware of this fact.

The effect of religion is manifested in almost all aspects of life. It is taught in schools and language is full of religious connotations and expressions. Nydell (1997) points out that religion is expressed in car decorations, jewelry, miniature Qur'ans and pendants inscribed with Qur'anic verses or religious names.

Marriage and divorce are controlled by religious laws and practices. In only very few Muslim countries is civil marriage allowed. In most, marriage contracts must be performed by religious authorities. Divorce, custody of children, and inheritance are all controlled by religious law. In some countries such as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the penal system follows the Qur'anic and a specific interpretation of the prophet's instructions and commands.

Understanding or becoming familiar with Islam, its history, doctrines and effect on the Arabs' daily life is essential to understand the culture and the way people behave, interact and go about their daily businesses.

### **Arab Culture in the West**

In an informal survey of my students of beginning Arabic at the University of Texas in 2002, I asked them about their definition of an Arab, or what they thought an Arab was. Most of their answers came, as anticipated, stereotypical, biased and ethno-



centric. An Arab for some students was someone who speaks Arabic or who is from the Middle East (including Iran and other Muslim nations where the official religion of the state is Islam) or North Africa. For others, an Arab is someone who is terrorist, is hungry for violence, hates women and Christians, and is always willing to kill Americans. Other answers focused on the physical appearance: dressing funny, wearing robes and turbans or scarves, having a long beard and a big nose, having dark skin and hair, and speaking with a thick accent. An Arab woman, on the other hand, is someone who shows nothing but her face, is oppressed, is a prisoner in her home, and is lacking freedom.

In the West, the Arab culture has been demonized by misinformation and misrepresentation. The perception of an Arab (including Arab Americans) has become engulfed and rooted in negative misconceptions, such as the oil-rich, terrorists, Islamic fundamentalists, etc. Media reports of acts of political violence and popular commercial culture that are filled with negative images of Arabs are both responsible for these sentiments (Al-Batal, 1988, Wingfield and Karaman 2001). Arabs are blamed for violent acts that are perpetuated by small groups that share similar ethnicity or religion. It is as if

the Arab world – twenty two countries, the locus of several world religions, a multitude of several linguistic and ethnic groups, and hundred of years of history – is reduced to a few simplistic images. It is as though American society were to be portrayed solely in terms of cowboys, gangsters and Britney Spears (Wingfield and Karaman, 2001, p. 132).

In his encyclopedic survey which details stereotyping Arabs from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Shaheen (2001) has documented 900 Hollywood movies portraying

Arabs in negative and insulting ways. Even high profile films such as *GI Jane* or *Rules of Engagement* fell into the same trap. Shaheen contends that less than a handful of films portrayed positive images of Arabs. At the educational level, Wingfield and Karaman (2001) cite a study conducted by the Middle Eastern Studies Association (MESA). The study surveyed the image of Arabs and Islam in the history and geography textbooks in the American schools. The study found that topics such as desert, camels and nomads were over-portrayed. The study also suggested that these textbook were Eurocentric in their inadequate presentation of Arabic points on important topics such as the Arab-Israeli conflict. The study, furthermore, said that some textbooks link the religion of Islam to violence and intolerance, ignoring at the same time, its resemblances to Christianity and Judaism in many aspects.

Nydell (1996) says that there is a serious gap that needs to be filled in terms of understanding Arab culture. She notes that Westerners find very little material that enable them to understand the Arab culture, whether in English or in Arabic. Whatever is available is relatively old and some of the observations are no longer applicable to the Arab community(ies). She adds that there is a serious deficiency as to the attention given to the modern urban societies. Much of the attention was primarily given to the rural or nomadic communities.

Nydell says, "When Westerners and Arabs interact, especially if neither understands each other, they often come away with impressions which are mutually negative (p. xi)." In his book *Covering Islam* that was published immediately after the Islamic Revolution an Iran in 1979 and the American hostage crisis, Edward Said

(1981) discusses how the Middle East is portrayed in the West. He convincingly argues that modern Western media and what he terms the "invisible screen" work relentlessly to control and manipulate how Islam and Muslims should be perceived and presented. Said explains that the West has failed to capture the diversity of opinion and experience in the Muslim World, and there is no monolithic Islam but rather many Islams. Although Iran is a big Muslim country, Iranians are not Arabs. To cover the Revolution, 300 hundred reporters were flown to the Iranian capital. None of those, Said observes, understood the language, the history or the culture. Although 34 years has passed since the publishing of Said's book, the image of an Arab has and will probably remain the same for a long while.

#### **STUDENTS' NEEDS AND TEACHERS' ASSESSMENT OF CULTURE IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS**

Language needs analysis is an approach to curriculum development. Its core is the foundation of language content courses on the desires, interests, and wants of the students. It is essentially a student-centered approach that ties the content to the social needs. Lepetit and Cichocki (2002) say that this approach "views teaching and learning as a compromise between, on the one hand, the learning projects the students create for themselves and, on the other hand, the institutional and social contexts in which learning will occur" (p. 384). Citing many studies, Lepetit and Cichocki argue that needs analysis survey have contributed significantly to the organization of new curricula and review of already existing ones in Europe.

Attending to students' needs and wishes is not new to the practice of foreign language learning. Johnson (1937) wrote an article in which he describes the "New Curriculum" for the modern foreign language teaching in high school. Johnson proposed six tendencies that he recommended that foreign language teachers concern themselves with. Four of these points focus on the individual learner. These four tendencies are the:

1. school curriculum should incorporate all the experiences of children under the guidance of the teacher;
2. school curriculum need to assimilate and integrate child's previous experiences in order to gain functionality;
3. courses of study, assignment, teaching methods must be adapted to the broadly varying interests of individual students; and
4. recognition that students should have the opportunity to plan and assess all class activities as well as perform them.

Later, researchers have referred to these tendencies in designing foreign language curricula in different terms: individualized instruction (Steiner, 1971), individualization (Reineri, 1971), democratization (Grittner, 1975) or custom tailoring (Hunter, 1974). The premise of individualization is to design courses that are flexible and significant to students and their interests as well to make students responsible for large segments of their learning (Steiner, 1971). On the other hand, individualization does not entail that students work or should work on their own at all times, nor does it imply that instructors deal with students as separate individuals. It

rather indicates that students are dealt with as groups of varying needs, and that the teachers should be creative in designing materials that fulfill those interests.

Individualized instruction emerged as a reaction to lower rates of enrollment in foreign language education classes in high schools and institutions of higher education in the 1970s. To remedy the dropout problem, Reineri wrote: "If enrollments are to increase, we must build programs which meet student needs, i.e., which are significant to the particular group with which we are dealing" (p. 157). Belnap (1989) encourages instructors to be aware of their students' expectations in foreign language programs. They can do that, he says, either by tailoring the course to their needs, by helping them enroll in an independent study that bridges the gap in the course offered, or by bluntly informing them that the program will not gratify their prospects.

According Lepetit and Cichhocki (2002), educators need to examine their teaching programs and pedagogical materials and adjust them to meet the dynamic changes that occur within society. Thus, "language needs analysis is an approach of curriculum development that bases the content of language courses on the communication needs, wants and interests of the learners" (p. 384).

### **CATERING TO STUDENTS' NEEDS IN LANGUAGE PROGRAMS AND TEXTBOOKS**

Individualization of instruction can be adapted to tackle the different language skills and themes, including cultural competence. Beatie (1977) describes a ten-step study self-study method that aimed at developing reading materials in German. She

designed this course for those undergraduate students at Cleveland State University who wanted or needed to read. However, the small size of the group did not justify any university's designing a separate program for them. In designing the package, the researcher had to deal with three main difficulties: (1) accelerating the transition from decoding to reading, (2) minimizing the demand on the instructor, and (3) assuring that a minimum degree of grammar mastery is achieved. Although the main intention was the empowerment of student with no or little background in German to read quickly or efficiently, Beatie says that the program achieved other benefits. It provided a means for students who could not take course in German during that quarter to improve their reading skills and assure minimal loss in other skills. Also, she says, the method can be adapted to other languages.

Due to the lack of courses that fulfilled the students' interests in business Spanish at Florida International University, Grosse (1984) created a guide in which she reviewed twelve Spanish texts. Five of these texts included with business correspondence, and the other seven treated a broader array of business topics. The intention of the guide was helping instructors select appropriate texts and tailor them to their students' interests. Grosse explains that she selected those tests because they serve students of varying backgrounds in Spanish and business. Her reviews included three sections: general information, types of exercises and critical evaluation. Grosse recommends that the texts should be adapted to the different classroom situations to overcome the shortage in designed courses that meet the students' needs.

In their study, Dechert and Kastner (1989) examined the correlations between the cultural content of beginning German textbooks and students' interests and desires. The researchers initially surveyed the students' interests by generating a 99-cultural topics questionnaire and asking students to rate them on a five-point scale. Then, they investigated ten beginning German textbooks for the volume and the variety of the cultural topics. Collected data showed that small "c" culture topics rated highest. The study showed that the following types of students manifested more interest in learning culture than others: females, liberal arts students, and students with prior knowledge learning another foreign language. Several discrepancies emerged when students' preferences were compared to the textbooks cultural content. While students demonstrated high interest in daily life topics of the target culture such as social etiquette, value system and customs of ordinary life, textbooks did not pay much attention to these topics. Secondly, the textbooks emphasized topics, for example, transportation system and economics that the students ranked as being least needed. The researcher concludes that teachers should take students' needs as well as what teachers think students feel to know into consideration while teaching as most educators agree with the students ranking of the cultural topics. Furthermore, emphasizing students' interests can boost enrollment and minimize attrition rates.

Focusing on "adult" new generation of students that is expected to become the norm in the American universities in the twenty first century, Lively (1997) discusses the importance of adapting instruction to the needs of the new generation of students. Lively says that the interests of the new generation are different from those of older

generations. These students are "more interested in developing a meaningful philosophy of life, helping others, promoting racial understanding, and influencing social values" (p. 32). The mature generation of students then will eventually decide the teaching methods in classes, including language foreign language classes, and not the instructors. Curriculum and courses offerings will also be influenced by students' needs and orientations. Brooks (1988) explains that it was the students' power that changed the curriculum of the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP). The students felt frustrated as the language they were taught did not serve their objectives for foreign travel and America's international involvement in the 1960s. Students were interested more interested in the daily life styles more than the language and literature. The justification for Lively's proposal lies in the fact that the those mature students come with various agendas and needs such as meeting business responsibilities, developing personal skills, advancing careers, completing a degree, gaining personal enrichment, or establishing contact with other cultures for business of personal reasons. Adjusting curricula to meet students' needs and their interests can motivate enrollment and enliven courses, Lively concludes. At the same time, students will have the luxury of selecting the courses that meet their preferences and interests and fulfill their degree requirements at the same time.

Lack of culture in the textbooks used in the beginning German classes at the University of Missouri made it necessary to integrate culture units (Hendesron, 1980). The students' evaluations of these units revealed that 88% of the students agree that the introduction of these units facilitate the learning of a foreign language. Ninety per



cent of the students said that the culture units improved their comprehension abilities; 73% claimed that the units improved their speaking skills; and 61% claimed improvement in their speaking skills. As for reading skills, only 49% said culture units improved such skills. The emphasis on visual material, role play and oral interaction, and the scarcity of the written text could have contributed to this.

Culture units were also integrated in German language intermediate level classes at the University of Illinois by teaching assistants. The introduction of these units was a result of the poor ratings of courses and instructors (Lalande, 1985). The newly designed culture units were based on lectures, visual materials, and were mostly built around personalities. Subsequent evaluations of course and instructors were more satisfactory. The author attributes these results to the introduction to culture units. Analysis of oral interviews and survey data revealed also that the students' attitudes toward the culture units were positive.

Skubikowski (1985) stresses that the cultural content of Italian as one of the less commonly taught languages needs to be reassessed due the inadequacy of the instructional material, particularly "when attempting to impart an awareness of contemporary Italy" (p. 35). Since much of instructional material attempts to appeal to the largest audience of learners, that is of junior high and colleges, the cultural content of textbooks tends to be neutral and stereotyped. It is thus necessary to develop supplementary material that counterbalances this inadequacy. Hence, Skubikowski proposes three criteria. Citing Seelye, the author (1) cautions against an approach that deals with culture as bits and pieces of facts, and then testing students

using multiple choice question format, and (2) encourages an approach that focuses on how ideas, thoughts attitudes of a particular culture are shaped by the values, institutions and languages of that culture community. Finally, the researcher calls for more emphasis on the resemblances between the American and the Italian culture, because Italian culture in many ways reflects the American culture.

#### **STUDENTS' AND TEACHERS' ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS TOWARDS INTEGRATION OF CULTURE AND LANGUAGE**

Numerous studies have emphasized the significance of students' and teachers' affective domain, beliefs and attitudes in particular, about foreign language learning (e.g. Glisan, 1987; Roberts, 1992; Harlow and Muyskens, 1994; Chavez, 1995; & Kern, 1995). The studies showed that students regard that cultural awareness is an integral part of foreign language education. Additionally, they emphasize that culture should be within the students' affective domain.

Robert's study (1992) investigated university freshman students' attitudes towards the study of foreign language. The opinions that were collected from the students' articles that they wrote before choosing a foreign language revealed that revealed that 80% of the students wrote about the importance of learning a foreign language. More relevant to us here is that 80.6% of them agreed that the primary benefit of learning a foreign language is cultural awareness, followed by business (47.7%), travel, etc. Relevant to the cultural benefits arguments, minimizing ethnocentrism ranked highest (43.9%).

Other studies that investigated both the students' and the teachers' attitudes towards learning a foreign language revealed, to some extent, similar findings. For instance, Kern's study that employed Horwitz' Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) model showed that 38% agree or strongly agree on the importance of culture in speaking the foreign language in the pretest. In Mantle-Bromely's study (1995) of middle school students in a Foreign Language exploratory program, only 30% of the students had the same belief.

On the other hand, the teachers' beliefs seem to contradict somehow the students' beliefs about the importance of cultural understanding in learning a foreign language. In Kern's study, 25% agree or strongly agree. Fox's study (1994) that adapted the (BALLI) model revealed that 45.6% had the same attitude.

Belnap (1989) asked the students of Arabic enrolled at eleven Arabic language program throughout the United States and Canada about the reasons that lay behind their decision to enroll in Arabic classes, 36.8 (the highest score) of them said that literature and culture were the reasons behind their decision. Planning to travel or live in the Middle East come next (36.60), then talking to Arabs (29.2), researching original sources (20.2), etc.

At a narrower scale, Kenny (1992) investigated the motivations and attitudes of Arab-Americans learning Arabic at Fordson High School, a suburb of Detroit, in a pilot study. Twenty eight students participated in the study. They filled out a 31-item questionnaire. Kenny found that the most popular reason among these heritage students for learning Arabic was the ability to learn and read Qur'an (26 responses).

Learning about literature and culture came in second (22); talking to Arabs came third (18). The least popular reasons were for fun, to be able to use original sources in research, because they have Arab friends, and to prepare for a career.

## **SUMMARY**

In this chapter, I discussed the primary justifications for including the cultural component in foreign language classroom. I made it clear that culture is no longer viewed as an accessory to the foreign language classes, but rather an integral and indispensable component. I then discussed the different definitions of culture as initially proposed by language philosophers and anthropologists, and then adapted by language educators. Moreover, I explained the major historical changes culture instruction went through including the why and the what.

As my research focuses on the cultural component of the Arabic summer program at Middlebury, it was necessary to discuss the history, the status, the difficulties of teaching Arabic in the United States. Also, it was also important to touch on how the Arabs are perceived by the general public in the west.

I concluded my review by discussing numerous studies that dealt with the students' and teachers' affective domain with regard to how culture is viewed and treated in the foreign language classroom, and how important that students' needs and preferences be encompassed in designing and developing language curricula.

In the next chapter, I will discuss the design of my study, the participants, as well as data collection instruments and procedures.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEACH DESIGN**

This chapter will describe the study participants, and the data collection methods that were used in the study. It will also discuss how each method was utilized.

The current study employs a bi-methodical approach combining both qualitative and quantitative methods that investigate the cultural component of the Arabic summer program at Middlebury College, and the extent to which it fulfills the students' needs and expectations.

To accomplish the objectives of the study, I used a battery of different methods. I surveyed the students' cultural needs and expectations in the beginning of the program. At the end of the program, I conducted another survey to evaluate how those needs and expectations were fulfilled. I also interviewed two groups of students of varying proficiency levels as a follow up to the first questionnaire.

In addition, I also surveyed the instructors to determine what the instructors believe to be their students' needs and expectations. Further, I also conducted a focus group interview with the instructors. Then I conducted a content analysis of the textbook that the students use. Finally I observed some of the co-curricular activities of the program to highlight where the students' needs are met and to what extent and identify gaps if they exist. Due to time constraints, the study did not examine some of

other events that can be culturally-based such as the Arabic Day students parties, talent show, sport competitions and other informal social and cultural gatherings.

## **PARTICIPANTS**

The participants in this study were the students and instructors of the Arabic Program at Middlebury College of the summer of 2002. Since I taught in this school, I became familiar with the immersive environment of the program and the students' backgrounds. Thus the setting was accessible to me. The proficiency levels of the students vary. The students' linguistic background and the results of the placement test conducted at the beginning of the program determine those levels. Thus some are beginners; more are intermediate while others are advanced. Students' educational backgrounds in terms of academic degree sought and majors vary as well. However, Arabic is either a necessity or a requirement for the majority of them. The students' motives to learn Arabic are different. The motivation of the majority of the students is instrumental: completing a degree, finding a job, professional development, etc. For a few, the motivation is integrative, that is becoming part of the target community.

Most of the instructors who teach in Middlebury Summer Language School are native speakers of Arabic. Some are affiliated with US academic institutions while the majority come from other countries, primarily Arab countries, for the purpose of teaching at Middlebury. The majority of the instructors are of Egyptian descent, which is usually justified since Egypt is the largest Arab country and host of the Center for Arabic Studies Abroad (CASA); other Arab countries such as Morocco, Syria and Tunisia are represented to a lesser degree.

## **INSTRUMENTATION**

### **The Survey**

Surveys or questionnaires are data collection methods used to collect data from broad populations by asking them the same set of questions. There are two major reasons for using survey questionnaires. According to Gall et al., (2003), survey questionnaires are economically less cost effective, and data can be collected over a short period of time.

### ***Students' Questionnaire***

The students' questionnaire was administered twice. The first questionnaire that was administered during the second week of the semester incorporated three sections (see Appendix A). The first section asked the students to provide some demographic information: age, gender, and degree. It also inquired about (1) the level they were enrolled in, (2) their reason(s) for taking Arabic, (3) the reason(s) as to why they had selected Middlebury for their studies, (4) whether they had lived in an Arab community before, and (5) what they thought average Americans should know about Arab culture.

The second section asked students to describe their cultural needs, if they had any, i.e., what they needed to know about the Arab culture. The questionnaire provided them with twenty-six cultural themes. They had to report their answers on a 3-point- Licker scale: yes, probably and no. An open-ended question was provided should the students need to add other cultural needs. The third section asked about the

students' cultural expectations, if they had any, before they came to the Middlebury, what they expected to learn about the Arab culture, using the same scale. They were also asked to mention which aspects they had expectations for. The 26 cultural themes for both sections are identical. To avoid confusion and to ascertain that the two questions are different, the order of the items in the second section is different from their order in the first section.

The students' second questionnaire (see Appendix B) was conducted in the eighth and ninth weeks of the program. The questionnaire included two sections. The first focused on the extent to which the students' cultural needs were being fulfilled. The students had to report their answers on a 3-point Licker-scale: completely, partially, and not at all. The second section asked them about how the program met their expectations. They were asked to report their answers using the same scale. For each section, an open-ended question allowed the students to comment on any other cultural theme or aspect that they learned about or felt it was ignored.

Students responded to the questionnaire during their regular Arabic language classes. Because students vow to abide by the Middlebury College *Language Pledge*, I had to ensure permission to use English for the students to fill out the questionnaire from the Dean of the Language Schools and the Director of the Arabic summer program. I contacted the instructors of each class to get their approval for administering the questionnaire. As a result of time constraint and my teaching responsibilities, I administered some of the questionnaires, and I relied on other instructors to administer the others. Hence, administering the questionnaire was not



on the same day or during the same period. Prior to administering the questionnaire, I briefed the instructors on the nature and goals of the questionnaire. The students were informed about that as well. Directions were given and the students were told to ask questions for any clarification they needed. In writing their answers, students were assured that their names will remain confidential and that nobody except the researcher will have access to their responses. Most students completed the questionnaires in their classrooms in approximately twenty minutes. Some asked to take it to their rooms as they needed more than 20 minutes to complete it.

### ***Teachers' Questionnaire***

The teachers' questionnaire was administered once around the middle of the program. Teachers, especially those who teach in this program for the first time, needed some time to adjust and to get familiar with their students' academic backgrounds, their needs and their expectations. The survey had three sections (see Appendix C). For the first section, teachers were asked to provide demographic information about their gender, their home country, degree they obtained. They were also asked about topics related to the teaching of culture. They were asked whether they have had prior training in teaching culture, years of experience, how much time they devote for the teaching of culture, how they would describe their teaching of culture, i.e. the techniques and methods they used in culture instruction, and finally the constraints they encountered in teaching culture. The second section asked the teachers about what they thought their students' cultural needs and expectation were,

using an identical list of cultural themes and scales used for the students. The third section asked the teachers to provide information of what they thought their students' cultural expectations before coming to the Arabic School were.

All teachers completed the questionnaire. Some of the teachers did not know English. As such, I had to spend some time with them, at their convenience, to translate and clarify the questions to them. The instructors completed the questionnaire at their convenience.

### ***Cultural Clubs Questionnaire***

At Middlebury, cultural clubs constitute a big portion of the cultural exposure that the students receive. Joining those clubs is voluntary, and deciding on which clubs to create each year depends largely on student enrollment. To obtain a thorough and detailed idea of those clubs and what they offer, I met with the coordinators of these clubs. My interviews with them were semi-structured and focused on the activities of these clubs and how they are related to the Arab culture.

In addition, the Director of the Arabic School surveyed the Cultural Clubs. The goal was to examine the appeal, effectiveness and difficulties students encountered in the cultural clubs (see Appendix D). Since the survey was relevant to my study, the director asked me to analyze the survey, and gave me the permission to use the data for my study.

### ***Dialect Classes Questionnaire***

Dialects are one of the major sociocultural aspects of the Arab countries. Every year and based on students' needs and availability of representative instructors, the Arabic School offers a set of dialect classes. The norm is to have a class in Egyptian Arabic, Levantine Arabic and Moroccan Arabic. To inquire about the effectiveness of the classes in providing a perspective of the linguistic situation in the represented countries, I asked the students to complete a short questionnaire that inquired about the students' views of these classes, what they learned from them and whether a lot of culture was incorporated or not. I also asked them how those classes might be improved (see Appendix E).

### **Focus Groups Interviews**

Focus group interviews involve "addressing questions to a group of individuals who have been assembled for this specific purpose. The individuals are selected because they are well informed about the research topic" (Gall et al., 2003, p. 238). In our case, these individuals are the students who are the focus of the study and their instructors who may provide relevant information about the students. I used interviews as a data collection method for these advantages. According to Gall et al., focus group interviews stimulate participants to express feelings, beliefs and perceptions that they may not state if interviewed individually. Furthermore, this type of interviewing does not place interviewees in directive positions that may lead to embarrassment. Finally, interviews are adaptable which enable interviewers to probe deeper and obtain more information about the research questions.

### ***Students' Focus Group Interviews***

The focus group interviews were a follow-up to the questionnaire. Two students' focus groups were held. Participation was on a voluntary basis. I visited all classes and asked for volunteers. I made sure that all proficiency levels were represented. Nine students participated in the first interview. Another ten took part in the second. During each interview, I asked the same set of questions that dealt with issues related but not included in the questionnaire. Appendix (F) lists these questions. The interviews were conducted in English, digitally videotaped and then transcribed for analysis. In order not to violate the Language Pledge the students vowed to abide by, consent from the Dean of the Language Schools and the Director of the Arabic School was obtained to run the focus groups in English.

### ***Teachers' Focus Group Interview***

The teacher's focus group interview was administered with a number of teachers once during the seventh week of the program and once again after they had completed the questionnaire. I asked them questions that were closely related to the cultural component of the program. My intent was to conduct the interview in English. However, and as we started the interview, a number of teachers requested to speak in Arabic as they felt more relaxed to speak it and express their ideas. The interview was also digitally videotaped. Appendix (G) lists the interview questions.

## **Textual Analysis**

According to Gall et al., textual analysis falls under one category of qualitative studies. In this study, these textbooks comprise secondary sources – publications authored by writers who are not direct observers or participants, and not primary sources prepared by individuals who observed or participated in the event.

The textbook, *Al-Kitaab Fii Ta'allum Al-'Arabiyya*, the four-volume work, is used as a major source for the cultural content in the program. Teachers and students of all levels use the same textbook. The textbook is supplemented by materials prepared by the instructors. I analyzed the textbook for of the quantity, the clarity, the frequency and the thoroughness of the cultural content.

## **Observation**

To obtain a fuller picture of the cultural component of the course, I attended some of the weekly lectures and watched a few of the movies that the school provided. The emphasis of my visits was to ascertain whether those lectures and movies were authentic and presented culturally-related materials. I observed, watched, and took notes. I discussed the content of such activities with the students during the focus group interviews.

## **TRIANGULATION**

To ensure the validity of the findings of this qualitative study, triangulation was utilized. Triangulation refers to the use of multiple data collection methods, data

sources and theories in conducting a qualitative study as a tool to corroborate the findings of the study (Gall et al., 2003). In this study, questionnaires, interviews, textual analysis and observation as data collection methods were used to collect data about the same phenomenon.

### **GENERALIZABILITY**

Researchers have questioned the generalizability of the findings of case studies. In this study, generalizability can be questioned as well since the setting is rarely replicated. Middlebury is a unique institution. However, as the sample of the study involved the majority of the Arabic School students who come from different parts of the country, different institutions and different academic backgrounds, the findings can be generalizable to other samples or populations such as universities.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **FINDINGS**

This chapter is organized in the following way. First, I present the demographic data of the participating students, report the findings of their cultural needs, their expectations and their satisfaction rates as different levels and across all levels based on the two questionnaires the students completed. Second, I describe the demographic data of the teachers. I also present the results of their questionnaire as to what they think their students' cultural needs and expectations are. Third, I report the findings that emerged during the students' and teachers' focus group interviews, my interviews with the coordinators of the Cultural clubs and the instructors of the dialect classes. Finally, I analyze the cultural content in the textbook students are required to use.

#### **STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE**

##### **First Questionnaire**

The students' first questionnaire is divided into three sections. In the first section, students are asked to provide demographic information as to their age, gender, degrees, and so on. The second section asks the students about their cultural needs. Students are provided with 26 cultural aspects. For each, they either circle

“yes,” “perhaps,” or “no.” Finally, the third section asks the students about their cultural expectations. The format of this section is similar to the format of the second section except for the order of the cultural aspects. The first questionnaire was conducted during the second week of the course.

### ***Section One: Profile of Students***

In this section, I report the findings of the first section of the students' questionnaire that inquired about the students' demographic background.

**Number of Students.** The total number of students enrolled in the Arabic School during the summer course of 2002 was 134 distributed across five different proficiency levels: 1<sup>st</sup>, 1.5, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup>. According to the school's director at that time, this was the biggest enrollment figure the school has ever witnessed since the program was founded in 1982. One hundred eighteen students completed the first questionnaire whereas 113 students completed the second questionnaire.



**Gender.** Of the 118 respondent students in the pretest, 72 were females and 46 were males (see Figure 1). The overall gender distribution of the students according to their level of proficiency is found in Figure 2.

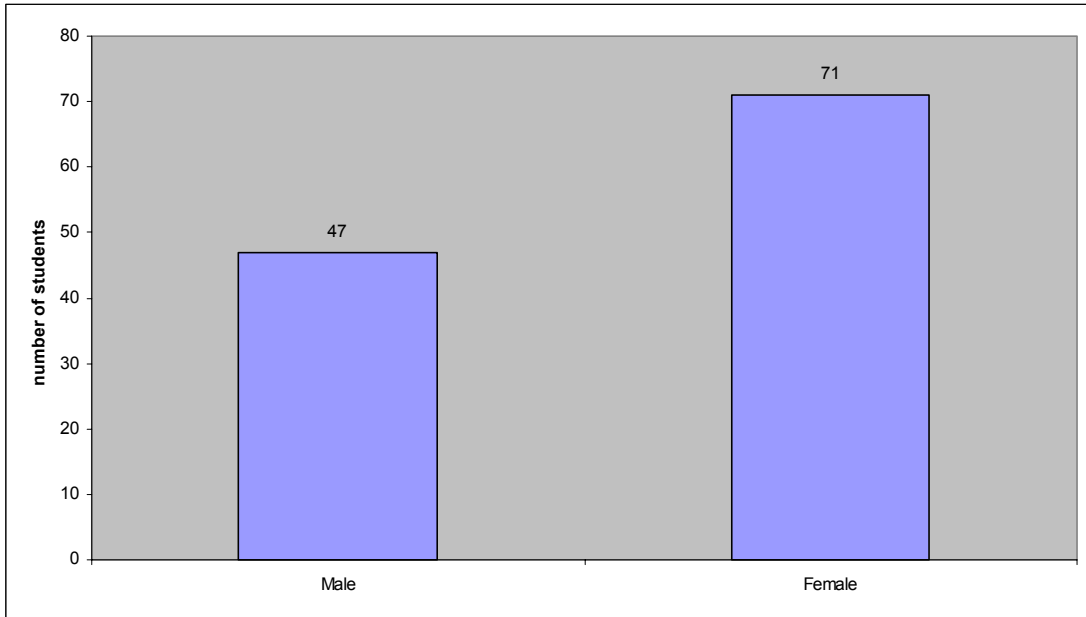


Figure 1: Students' gender distribution

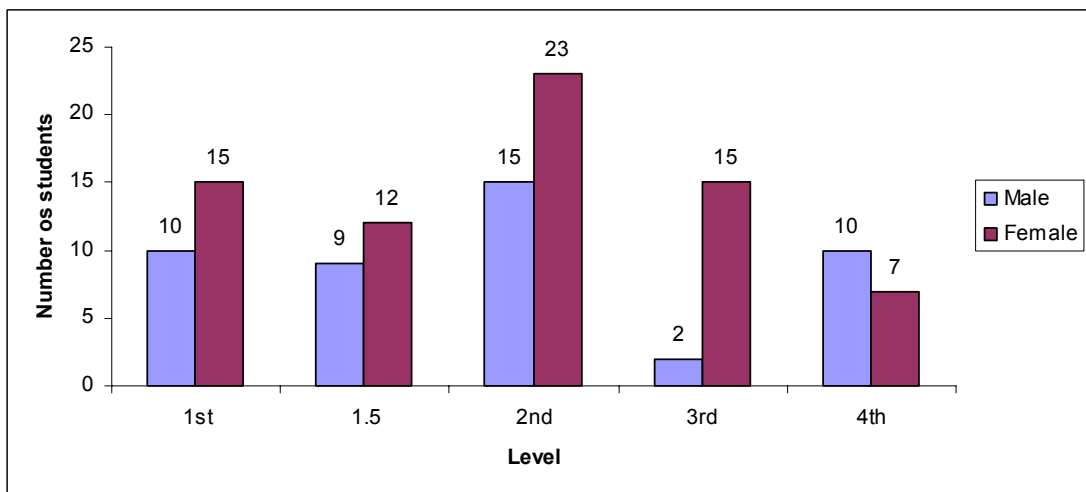


Figure 2: Distribution of students' gender per level

**Age.** The age of the enrolled students varied. While the age of the majority of the students (82%) ranged between 18 and 29, other students were in their 30s, 40s and even in their 50s (see Figure 3). The distribution of the students according to their age per each proficiency level is found in Figure 4.

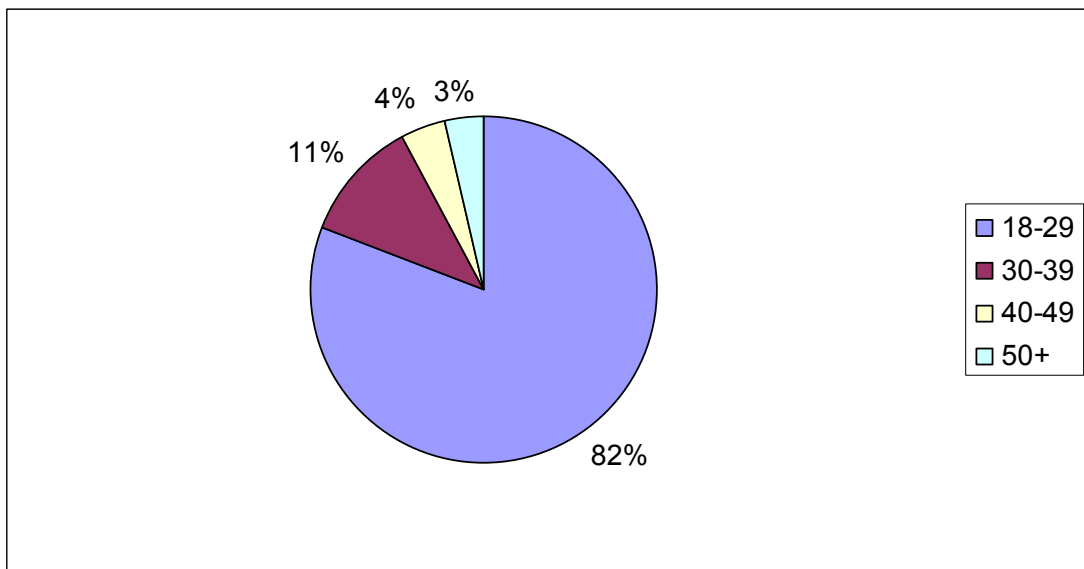


Figure 3: Distribution of students' age across all levels

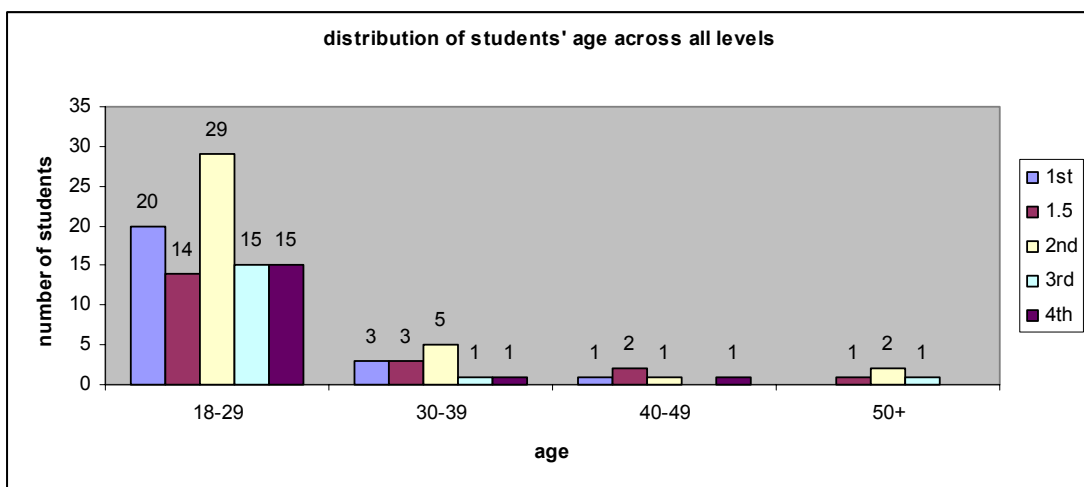


Figure 4: Distribution of students' age per level

**Academic Degrees.** Data revealed that most of the students were either students pursuing a degree or had already obtained one. The distribution of students according to the degrees they possess or were enrolled in at the time of the study is found in Figure 5.

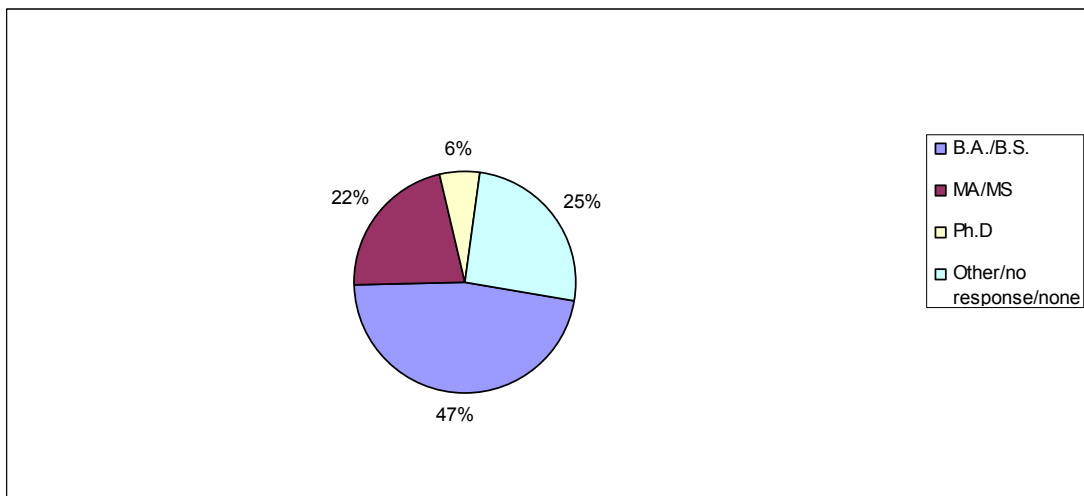


Figure 5: Distribution of students according to the degrees they already possess or they were enrolled in

**Proficiency Levels.** The Arabic summer program offers five levels of proficiency: 1<sup>st</sup>, 1.5, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup>. The school, during the reviewing process of the applications ensures, based on the information presented in each application, that each proficiency level will be fairly represented. The placement test that is conducted before classes commence is a further step to determine the proficiency level of each student and the number of students in each level. The distribution of students as to which level they were enrolled in is found in Figure 6.

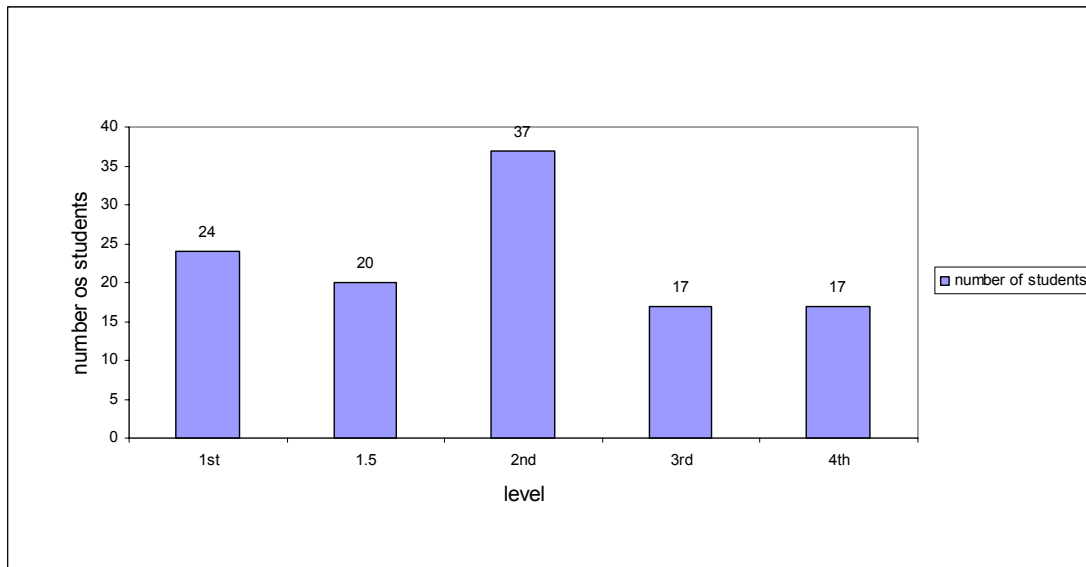


Figure 6: Distribution of students according to their proficiency levels

**Reasons for Studying Arabic.** Students come to Middlebury to study Arabic for various reasons. I asked the students about the reasons that lay behind their decision to enroll in the Arabic School. I then classified their responses into 10 categories. These categories are (1) understanding Arab culture, (2) interest in the Middle East, (3) tragedy of September 11, (4) persona reasons such as curiosity, (5) origin and nationality, (6) academic, (7) interest in language, (8) professional development, (9) fluency and communication, and (10) liturgical (religious motivations) such as studying religious texts. While academic reasons come in first, professional development second, liturgical comes in last. Figure 7 shows the number of students in each category per level, whereas Figure 8 demonstrates the overall percentages of students in each category.

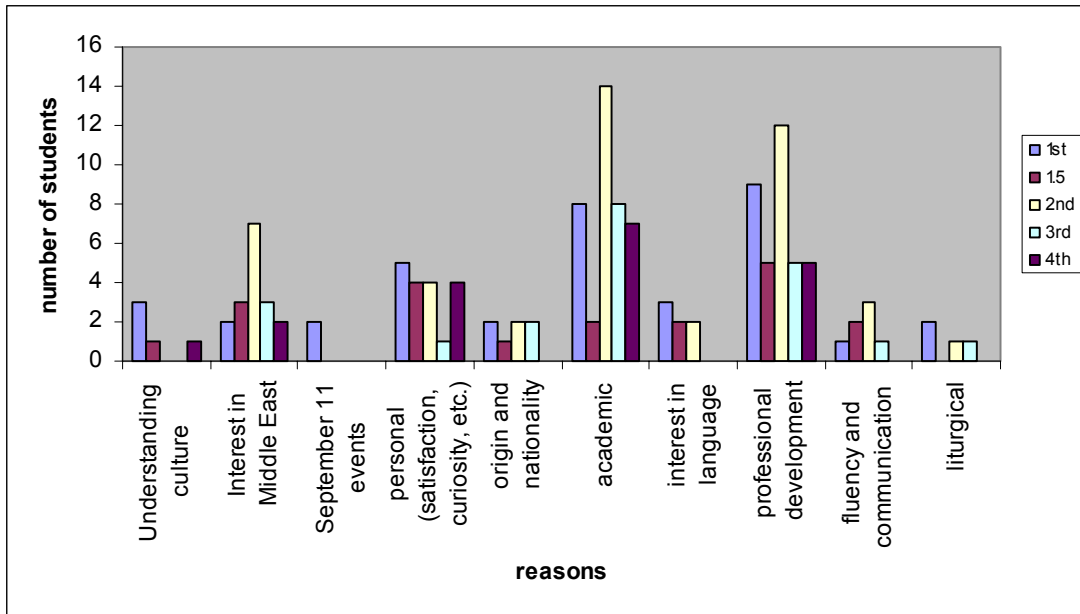


Figure 7: Distribution of students according to why they enrolled in the Arabic program

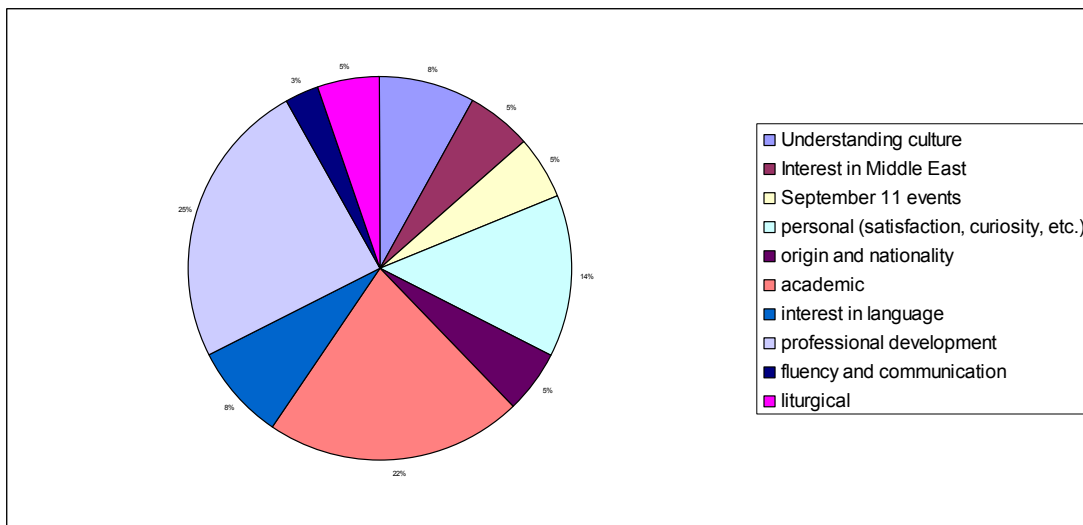


Figure 8: Percentages of students according to why they enrolled in the Arabic program

**Students' Prior Contact with Arabic-Speaking Communities.** Students were asked if they had spent any period of time in an Arabic speaking community in the US, or elsewhere, before they enrolled in the 2002 Arabic summer course. Out of the 105 students who responded to this question, 70 students said "yes." Half the number (35) said "no." See Figure 9.

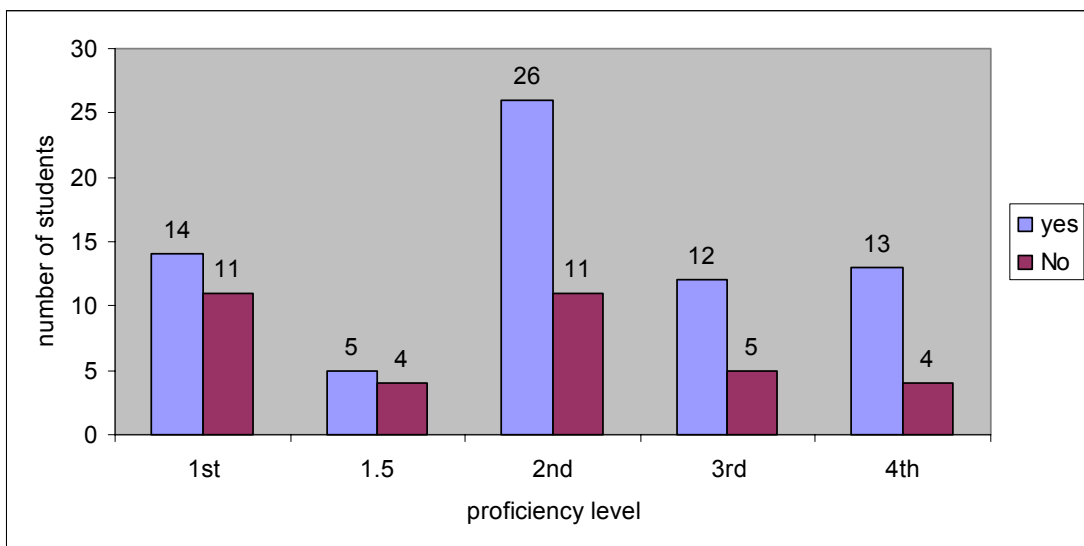


Figure 9: Distribution of students according to the time they spent in an Arabic-speaking community inside or outside the United States

**What Students Believe Americans Should Know about the Arab Culture.** To verify whether students learning Arabic have and the average Americans have similar cultural needs, the students were asked about what they believe average Americans should know about the Arab culture. This was an open-ended question. The distribution of the students' responses is found in Figure 10.

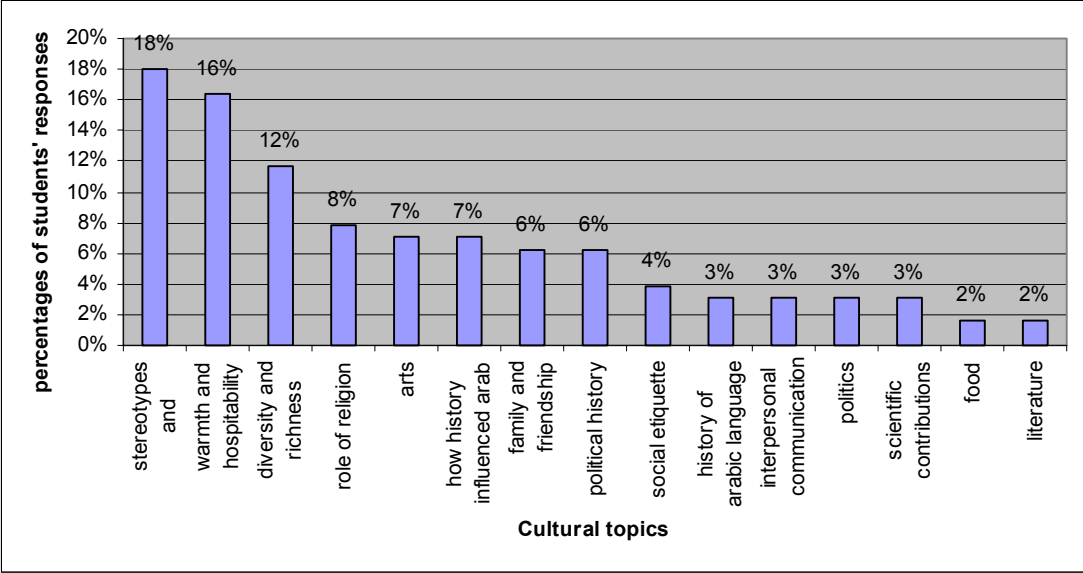


Figure 10: What students believe Americans should know about the Arab culture

**Section Two: Students' Cultural Needs**

**Level One.** As can be seen in Figure 11, the most frequent five needs Level 1 students reported were social etiquette (92%), role of religion (84%), how history and geography affect cultural practices (84%), current political situation (80%), and family life (80%). The least five frequent were transportation (4%), shopping habits (12%), school life (38%), education system (42%), and arts (46%).

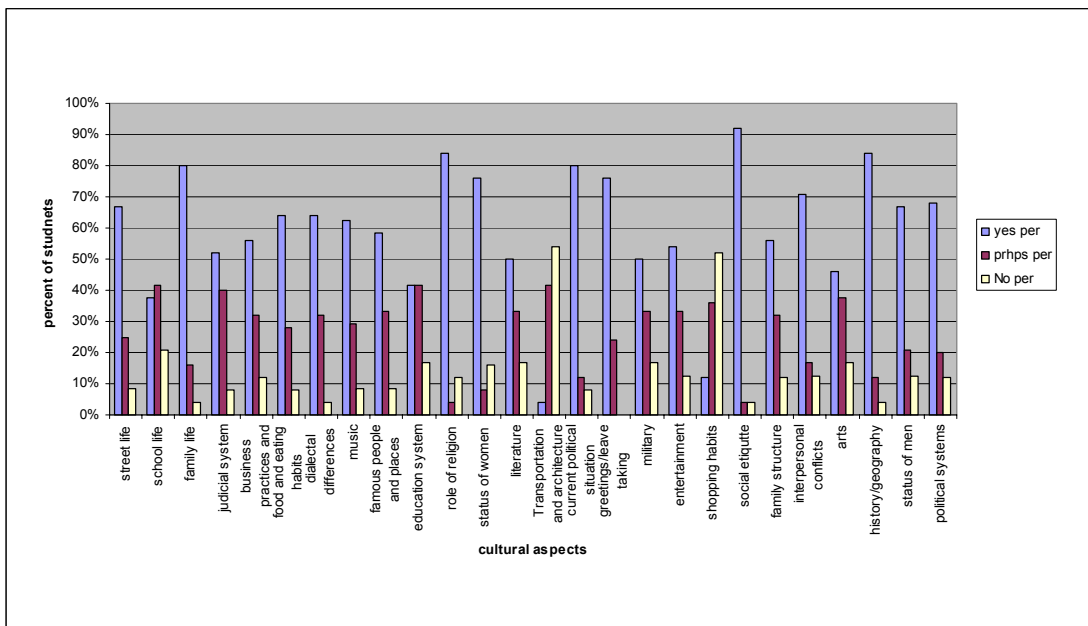


Figure 11: Level 1 students' cultural needs



**Level 1.5.** As can be seen in Figure 12, the most frequently stated five cultural needs for level 1.5 were how history and geography affect cultural practices (90%), social etiquette (86%), dialectal differences (86%), interpersonal and inter-group conflicts (81%), and current political situation (81%). The least frequent five needs were transportation (24%), shopping habits (40%), business practices and behaviors (43%), school life (48%), and education system (48%).

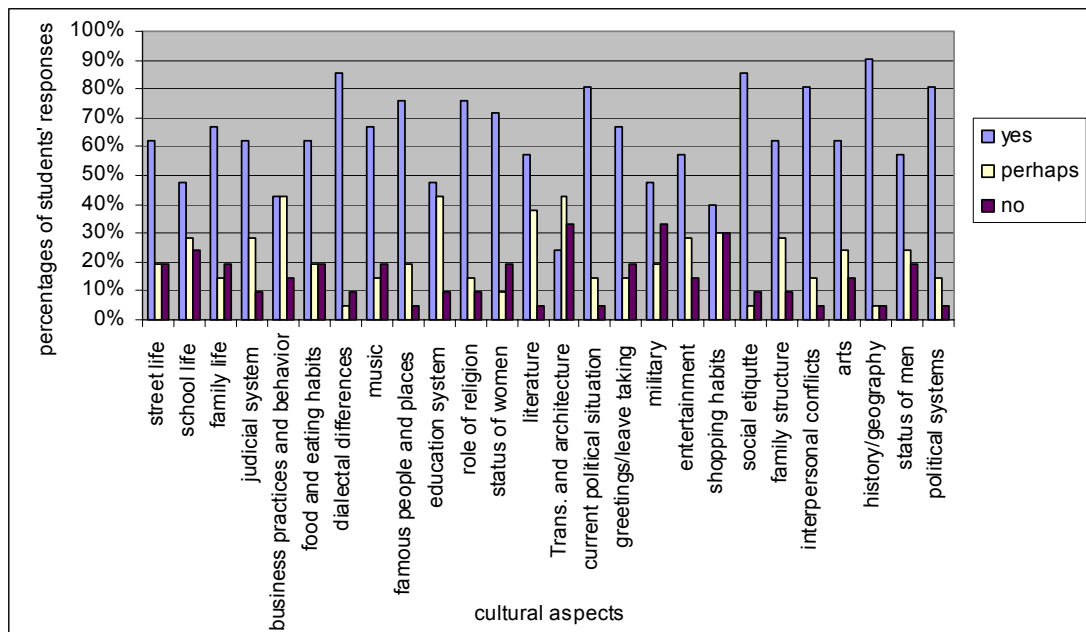


Figure 12: Level 1.5 students' cultural needs

**Level Two.** Figure (13) demonstrates the most and least frequent cultural needs for Level 2 students. The most frequent five needs were role of religion (87%), social etiquette (82%), political system (79%), greetings and leave taking (79%), status of women (79%), how history and geography affect cultural practices (76%). On the other hand, the least frequent five needs were transportation (11%), shopping habits (24%), school life (30%), role of military (31%), and entertainment and recreation (34%).

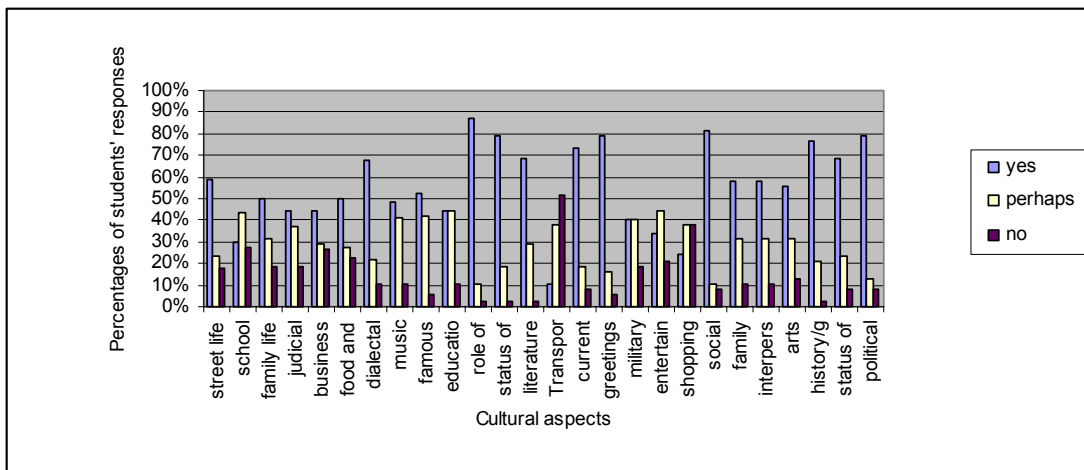


Figure 13: Level 2 students' cultural needs

**Level Three.** As can be seen in Figure 14, the most frequent five cultural needs for level 3 were how history and geography influence cultural practices (100%), interpersonal and inter-group conflicts (94%), political system (93%), current political situation (93%), and status of women (87%). On the other hand, the least five frequent needs were shopping habits (31%), judicial system (50%), business habits and behavior (50%), transportation (50%), and music as well as entertainment and recreation (60%).

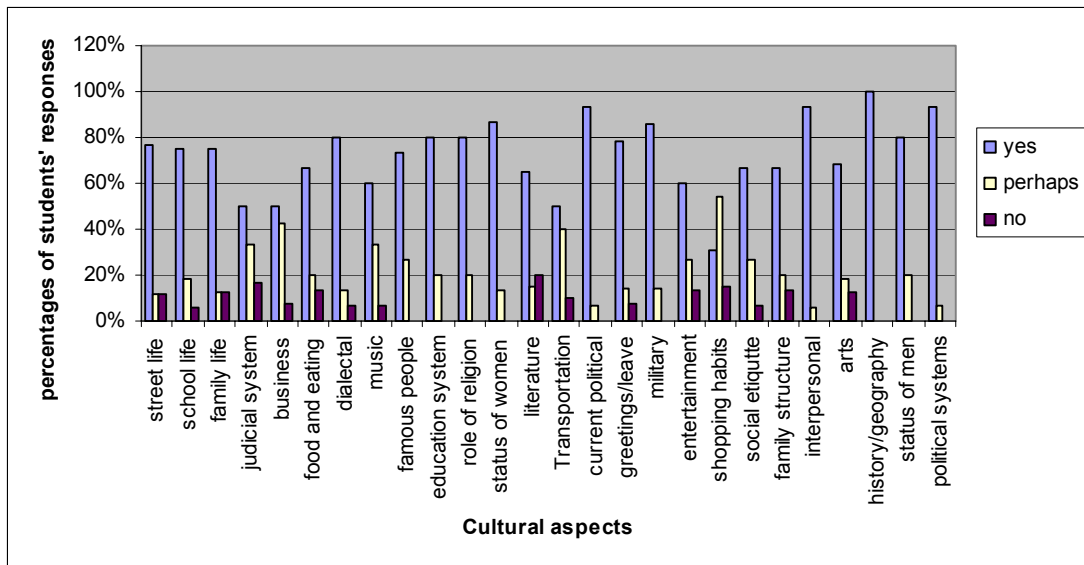


Figure 14: Level 3 students' reported cultural needs

**Level Four.** As can be seen in Figure 15, the most frequent five cultural needs for level 4 were politics (89%), political system, famous people and places, and school life (88%), status of men (87%). The least five frequent needs were transportation system (29%), shopping habits (35%), business practices and behavior (41%), judicial system (53%), and family life (59%).

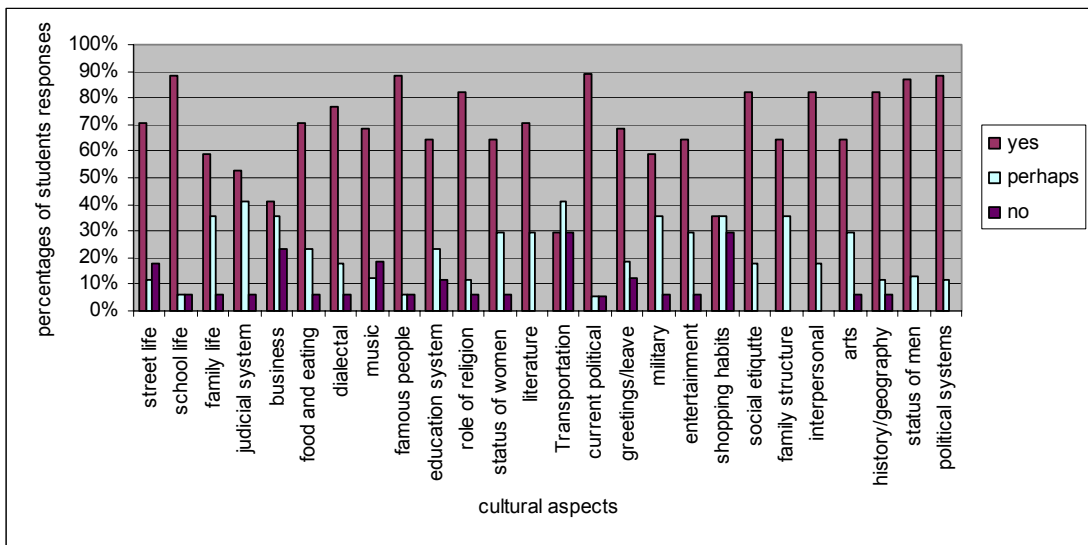


Figure 15: Level 4 students' cultural needs

**All Levels.** As can be seen in Figure 16, the most frequent five cultural needs for all five proficiency levels were how history and geography affect cultural practices (85%), social etiquette (83%), role of religion (83%), current political situation (81%), and political system (80%). On the other hand, the least frequently-mentioned cultural needs were transportation (18%), shopping habits (27%), business practices (47%), school life as well as entertainment and recreation (50%).

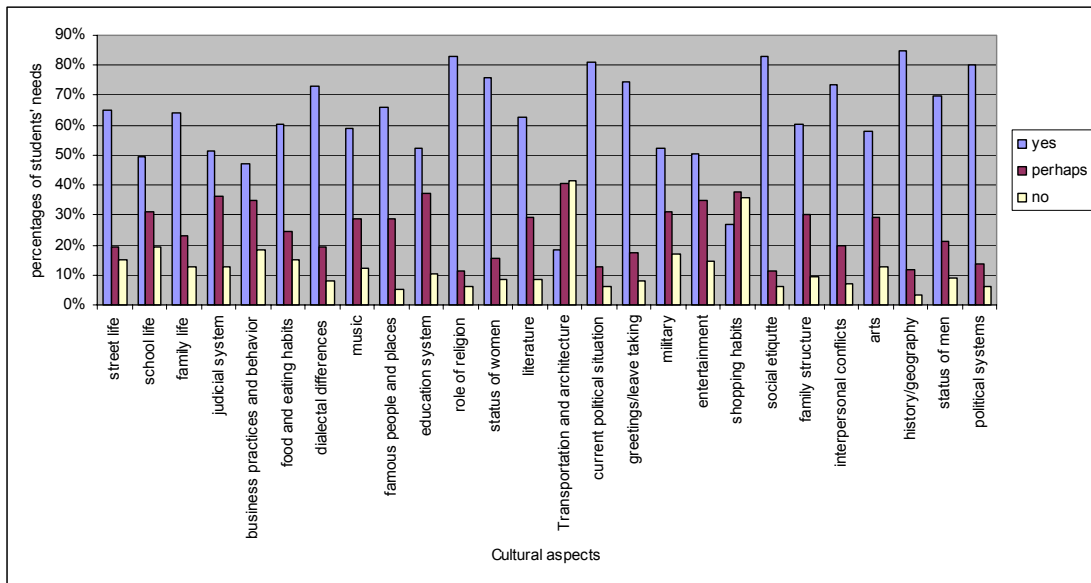


Figure 16: Cultural needs across all levels

**Additional Cultural Needs.** Question 27 of Section Two in the questionnaire asked the students to add any other cultural needs they had. Thirty two students responded to the question. Their responses can be summarized as follows.

Some students stated explicitly that they need to learn the language only in Middlebury while they “will focus on culture while living in the Middle East and

writing about it.” The majority, however, expressed their willingness to “absorb as much as possible.” They did that either by providing general replies or more specific ones. One student said, “I feel that all of the above (cultural topics included in the questionnaire) would be useful.” Students who had spent some time in an Arabic-speaking community were uncertain of their needs. One student describes his experience, “I spent 2 and ½ months in Egypt and I realize that Egypt isn’t the whole Mideast region, but I’m already here in the first week at Middlebury. I am faced with huge cultural schisms. I need to know more about .... I almost felt this would take a lifetime with lots of room for misunderstandings.”

Most of the replies, however, were more specific. Students added more needs that they would be interested in learning about. Some of the most frequent needs that did not appear in the questionnaire were: Arabs’ perception of the West, influence of Arabic on other languages, role of media, status of foreigners, Arab culture in immigrant communities in the West, medical and health care practices, and the degree of westernization among the Arabs.

Some students had real interest in some of the topics included in the questionnaire. These students wanted to over-stress those needs which included politics, diversity, political systems, the influence of classical Arab culture on the modern life, and so on.

One student raised the issue of what an Arab culture is. He expressed the difficulty of understanding the relationship between Arabic and Arab culture. The student commented, “The question presumes that there is, in fact, an “Arabic culture”

to be known—Jakarta is as important to my interest in the Arabic language as Cairo. The Arabic language is widely spoken and not merely by so-called Arabs. I suppose I have difficulty thinking through the relation of language and culture.”

**Summary.** This section summarized the students’ cultural needs in a graphic and written format. Although there were few differences between the different proficiency levels as to their needs, there were more commonalities. Students also added some topics they needed to learn about. These were not included in the questionnaire.

### Section Three: Students' Cultural Expectations

This section will report the students' most and least frequent students' cultural expectations (if any) of the Arabic program before their enrollment in the program.

**Level One.** As can be seen in Figure 16, the most frequent five cultural expectations for level 1 students were social etiquette (96%), greetings and leave taking (88%), music (75%), dialectal differences, and arts (67%). On the other hand, the least five frequent cultural expectations were transportation (8%), judicial system (13%), architecture (21%), business practices (25%), and school life (28%).

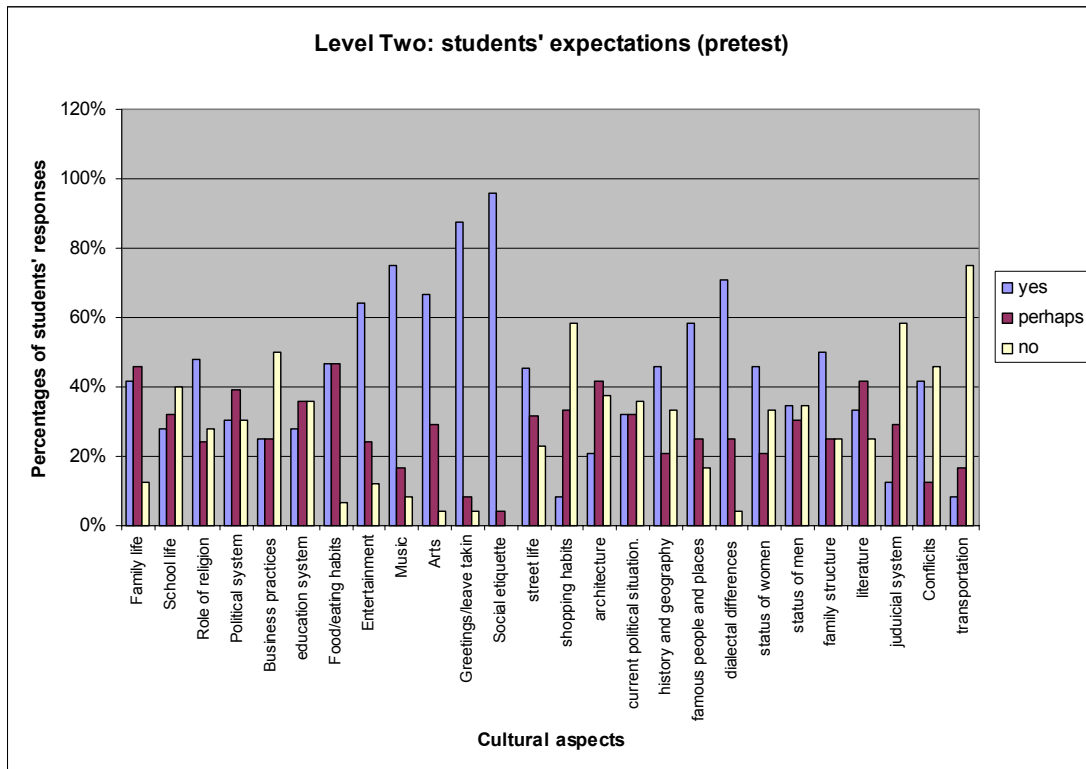


Figure 17: Level 1 students' cultural expectations



**Level 1.5.** As can be seen in Figure 17, the most frequent five cultural expectations for level 1.5 students were greetings and leave taking (85%), social etiquette (69%), food and eating habits (69%), famous people and places (65%), and entertainment and recreation (65%). On the other hand, the least five frequent expectations were status of men (13%), architecture (13%), transportation (13%), business practices (19%) and status of women (24%).

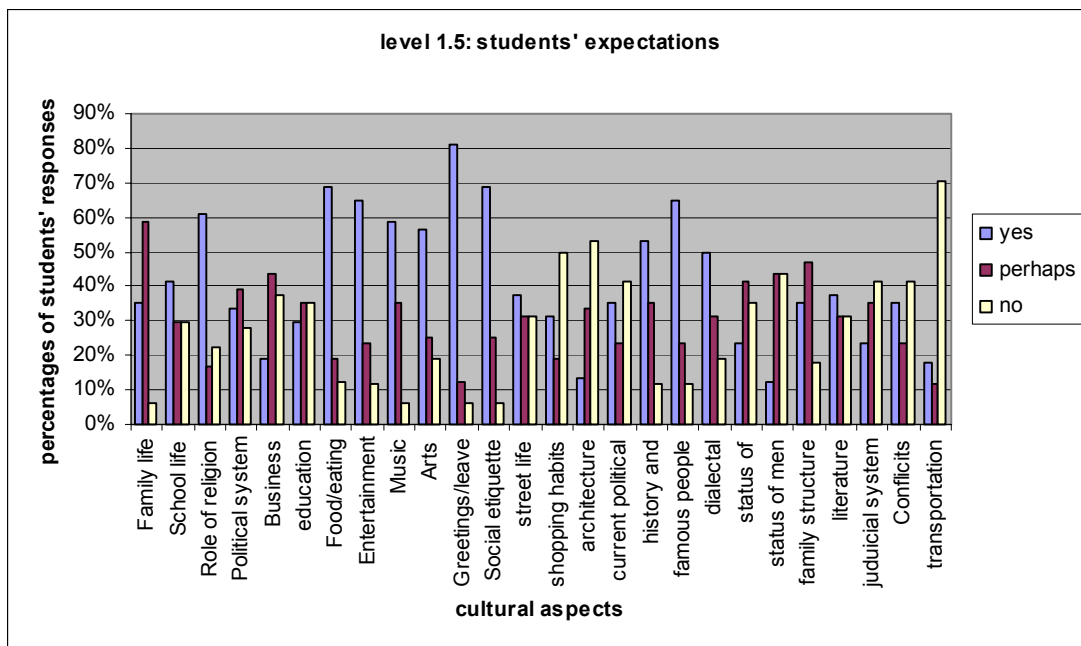


Figure 18: Level 1.5 students' cultural expectations

**Level Two.** As seen in Figure 18, the most frequent five cultural expectations for level 2 students were greetings and leave taking (85%), social etiquette (65%), famous people and places (63%), music (59%), and role of religion (59%). On the other hand, the least frequent five expectations were shopping habits (5%), transportation (11%), architecture (16%), status of mean, status of women, school life and judicial system (22%).

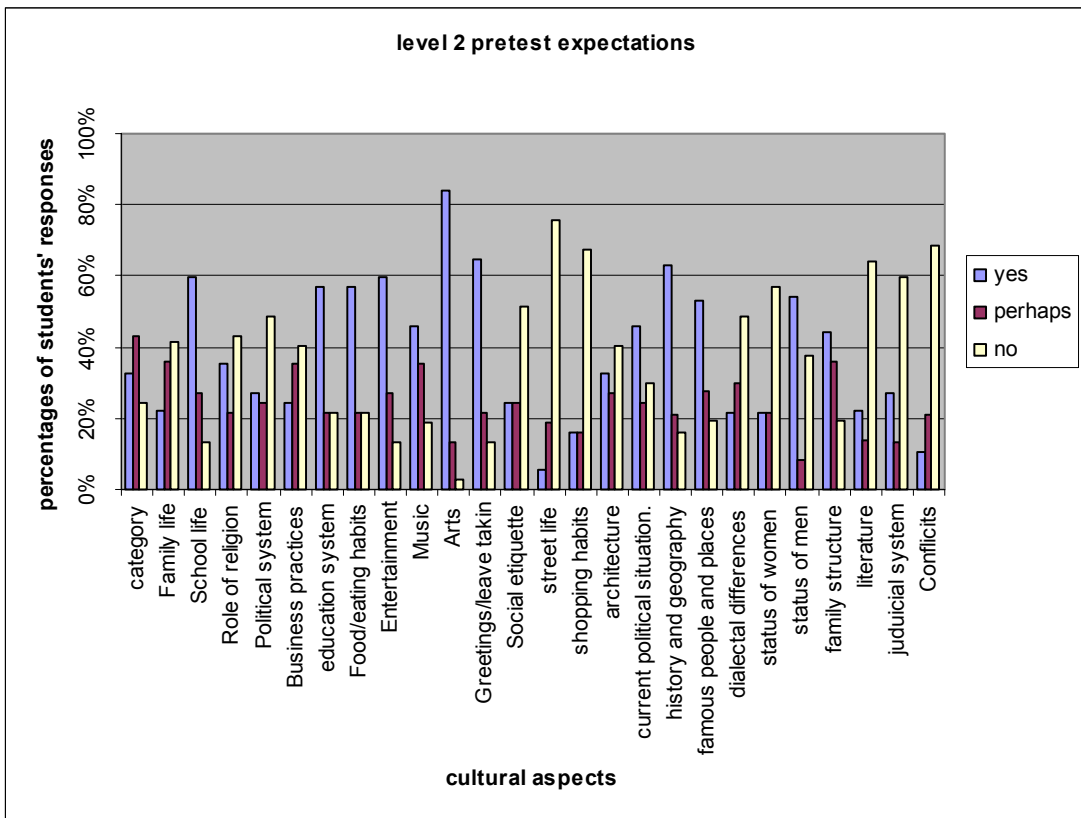


Figure 19: Level 2 students' cultural expectations

**Level Three.** As seen in Figure 19, the most frequent five cultural expectations for level 3 students were greetings and leave taking (88%), social etiquette (86%), dialectal differences (82%), literature (76%), and famous people and places (71%). On the other hand, the least frequent five cultural expectations were shopping habits, architecture, judicial system and transportation (6%), and business practices and behavior (13%).

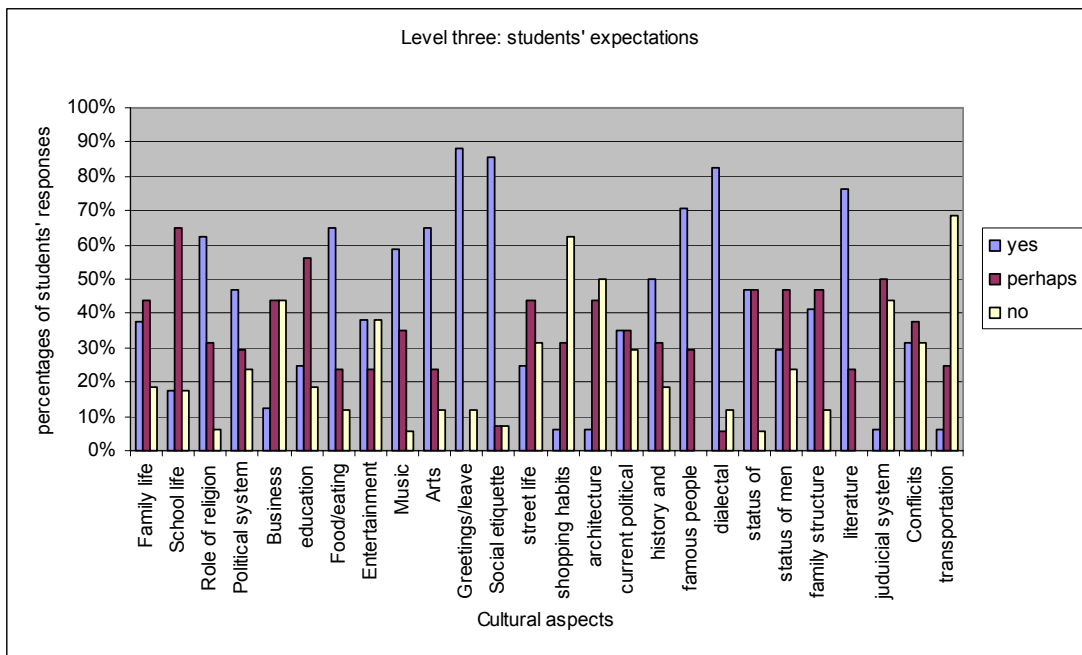


Figure 20: Level 3 students' cultural expectations

**Level Four.** As can be seen in Figure 20, the most frequent five cultural expectations for level 4 students were literature (82%), dialectal differences (82%), famous people and places (71%), current political situation (71%), and greetings and leave taking (71%). On the other hand, the least frequent five cultural expectations were shopping habits (12%), architecture (12%), judicial system (18%), business practices (24%), and transportation (24%).

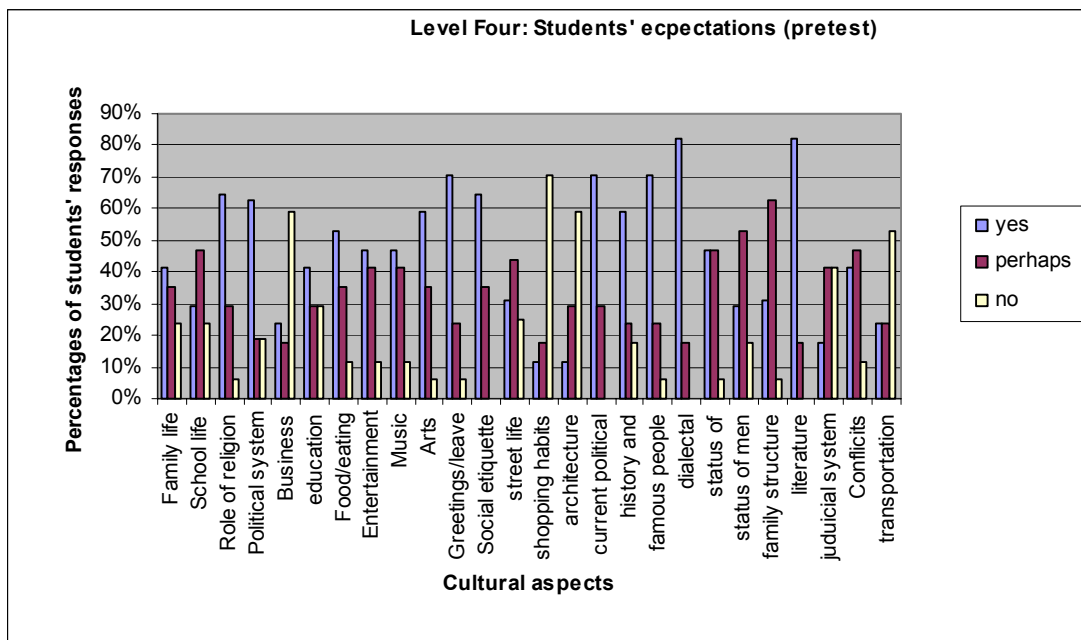


Figure 21: Level 4 students' cultural expectations

**All Levels.** As seen in Figure 21, the most frequent five cultural expectations for all levels of students were greetings and leave taking (83%), social etiquette (75%), dialectal differences (65%), famous people and places (65%), and music (61%). On the other hand, the least frequent five cultural expectations were shopping habits (11%), transportations (13%), architecture (15%), judicial system (17%), and business practices (23%).

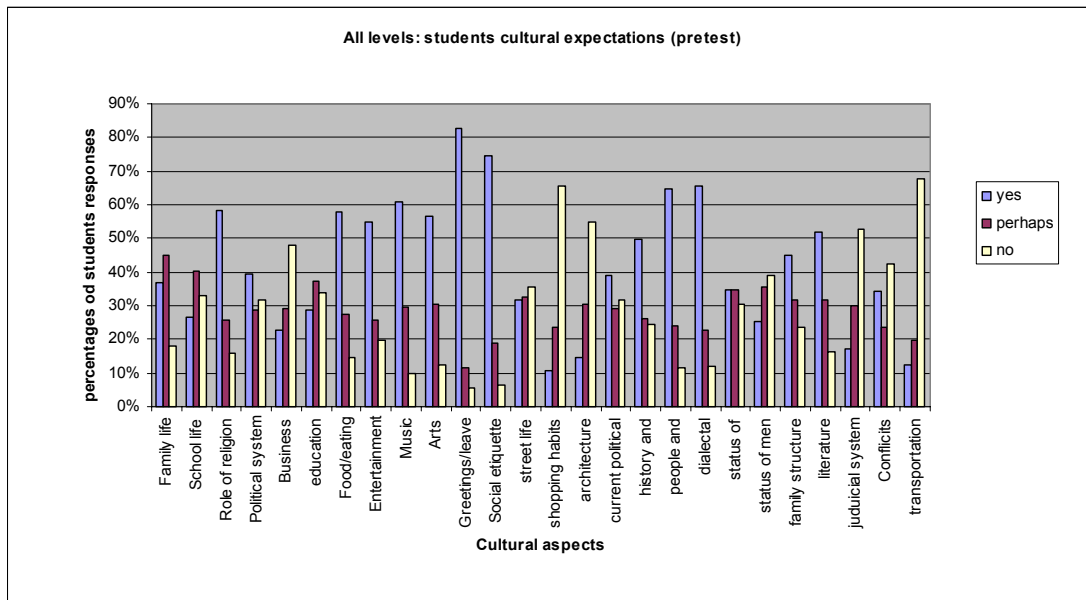


Figure 22: Cultural expectations across all levels

**Categories of Cultural Aspects.** For each cultural theme of Section Three in the students' first questionnaire, students were given the opportunity to list what aspects they were particularly expecting to learn or find in the Arabic program. Table 1 presents the findings of the students' responses.

No.	Themes	# of responses	Cultural aspects
1.	Family life	42	structure, costumes, daily activities, roles of members, interaction, importance to individual, power distribution, trends in family patterns, comparison with previous generations, family types, size, diversity, marriage practices, Arab vs. American, life style, values.
2.	School life	34	school types, types of students, students vs. teachers relations, expectations from students, courses, methodology, progress to college, structure, problem, privileges and socioeconomic classes, Arab vs. American, activities, curriculum organization.
3.	Role of religion	50	influence on language, daily life, governments and history, festivals, Moslems vs. Christians relations, ijtiḥad, diversity.
4.	Political system	30	types of governments, international relations, influence on daily life, expressions of view, politics vs. religion, regimes and people
5.	Business practices	23	structure, polite greetings, terminology, negotiation styles, ME vs. West, management, role of women.
6.	Education system	30	structure, expectations, degrees offered, levels, management, attitudes towards education, methodology.
7.	Food/eating	45	common food items, table manners, importance, vocabulary, favorites, festivals, typical meals, dietary styles.
8.	Entertainment	39	popular activities, social life, TV shows, films, famous singers and actors, arts, sports and regional allegiances.
9.	Music	46	styles, influence on daily life, language, famous singers, artists, instruments, geography, history and music.

10.	Arts	41	calligraphy, types, historical development, films, poetry, role of religion and tradition of arts, trends.
11.	Greetings/leave	43	common greetings, basic social dialogue, regional differences, courtesy expressions, polite and graceful language, introducing one's self.
12.	Social etiquette	48	verbal vs. non., polite and respectful, formal vs. informal, social norms, society expectations and protocols, social occasions, do's and don'ts, taboos.
13.	Street life	23	common functional language, day-to-day life, safety and common knowledge, what to wear.
14.	Shopping habits	9	language, Arab vs. American, regional differences, how to buy.
15.	Architecture	23	historical structures, religious influences, famous monuments, mosques, old vs. modern, descriptive words.
16.	Current politics	40	current news, Arab-Israeli conflict, vocabulary, foreign vs. domestic policies, criticism of US and Arab countries, historical ramifications.
17.	History/geography affect cultural practices	27	influences on language, fusha vs. dialect differences, colonization, discrepancies among Arabs.
18.	People/places	38	popular people, singers, actors, poets, historical places, musicians, writers, effect of famous figures on daily life, contributions to culture.
19.	Dialect differences	50	daily phrases, regional dialects, "best" dialects, do's and don'ts, differences.

20.	Status of women	39	costumes, restrictions, differences from west, freedom, w. in religion, w. vs. virginity, roles in society settings, rights, hijab, titles, what is expected from western women.
21.	Status of men	19	status, roles, masculinity, what is expected from western men.
22.	Family structure	22	role of children, organization, status of members, marriage, divorce, child care, family care for elderly, birth control, urban vs. rural, American vs. Arab.
23.	Literature	47	classical works, important writers, short stories, role of lit., genres, descriptive words, literary styles.
24.	Judicial system	17	structure, Arab vs. west, court types, penal system, legal vocabulary.
25.	Interpersonal/ Inter-group conflicts	20	major and presentation of conflicts in media, possible resolutions, causes, discourse, vocabulary.
26.	Transportation	10	forms, giving directions, fare negotiation, influence on daily life.

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Table 1: Aspects of cultural aspects students expect



### **More Cultural Expectations.**

Question 27 of Section Three asked students to list any other cultural expectations they had. 102 students replied to this question. I grouped their answers into distinct categories. The following is a summary of these categories.

**ABSENCE OF CULTURAL EXPECTATIONS.** As it is the case with the needs, some students, in fact very few, reported that they came to Middlebury with the sole purpose of learning the language. They had no cultural expectations whatsoever. One student commented, “I don’t expect much specific education about culture in a language class, other than that which goes hand in hand with language such as greetings.” Few others only needed to learn the language as they said they had a good understanding of the culture.

**PERCEPTIONS.** Many students, males and females, were more than eager to know much about how the Arabs perceive themselves and others. They were interested in knowing what a host community expects from them. One student inquires, “What is expected of me as a 25 year-old-man in the Middle East? Will I be respected? Can I argue with people much older than me? How can I get proper reverence and respect while maintaining freedom of expression?” Female students, in particular, were anxious to know how they would be perceived in an Arabic-speaking community. One female student asks, “How can I interact with Arabic-speaking people? I am especially interested in how Arabs might look at an American woman. Would I be able to visit

the Arab World by myself?” Another asked, “How can we as females travel in the Middle East, live there while making friends of both sexes without tarnishing one’s reputation?”

**Role of religion.** Another area that kept coming up in the written comments the students made was religion and related issues and concerns such as extremism, influence of religion on daily life, role of Islamic movements in secular states, the lived experience of Islam, and so on.

**Politics.** “What the hell is happening in Israel/Palestine and its implications?” one student wrote. Students, particularly at higher levels, were very well aware of the importance of this topic in the Middle East, and it was one of their utmost expectations. Besides the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the political problems, students expressed a desire to know how Arab leaders are perceived by their people, language as a political tool, among other concerns.

**Daily Life.** Both low level and advanced level students expected to see aspects of daily life taught in the program. Those students with lesser interest in learning about culture asked for a guide of do's and don'ts in the Arab social setting. More students were interested in knowing more about to function politely in the community, social expectations, how daily life in American is different from that in the Middle East, in addition to other aspects of the daily life.

**Diversity.** Students realize that there is no one Arab culture, and that there are non-Arab minorities such as the Berbers that have their own cultures. Thus some students critiqued any approach that would give that impression or fall short in overstressing this area. One student thinks "that it is important to make the distinctions between the Arab cultures. It seems at least so far, that it is talked about as one entity, but it is not. There are differences that need to be known especially for those w/ no background in the Arabic culture. Also there are cultures other than Arab culture that are from the Arabic speaking world. It would be nice to know about them." Since the topic is vast, students did not anticipate "a comprehensive introduction to it." Nonetheless, learning about the peculiarities of some of the countries was an appealing idea to the students. Still, some students are skeptical and question whether what they "learn at the Arabic School at Middlebury is really representative of Arab culture."

**Literature.** Some students came with an immense interest in learning about literature, genres, and its effect on current life and arts, history, and appreciation of its beauties. One student's comment that he is "particularly interested in any aspect of literature, literary production, its role in various countries, old and new authors, what styles they are experimenting with, particularly in contemporary fiction and poetry," the student continues, "In my past experiences, most teachers who are passionate about the language usually share a similar interest in literature."

Students also mentioned that learning about the Arab media, popular culture, health and medical care practices, names of famous people, places and popular figures.

### **Summary**

This section reported the students' cultural expectations in a graphic and a written form. The observed repetition in the written form has two main objectives: the inclusion of some students' written comments and highlighting some cultural expectations more than others. Overall, as one of the students believes, "The list (in the questionnaire) was long and comprehensive."

It is noticeable that many students come to learn Arabic with particular cultural expectation such as the cultural diversity in the Arab World, role of religion, social etiquette, literature and perception. On the other hand, some students come

with more general expectations, and they fine tune these expectations during the course of the program. Finally, few students come with pure linguistic expectations.

### **Second Questionnaire**

The second questionnaire was completed during the eighth and ninth weeks of the summer course. The objective of this questionnaire was to observe the extent to which the students believe the Middlebury Arabic summer program fulfilled their cultural needs and satisfied their cultural expectations. This part is divided into two sections. In the first section, I report the findings of how the Arabic summer program met the students' cultural needs in percentages. In Section Two, I report the findings of how the program satisfied students' cultural expectations in percentages as well.

**Section One: Students' Cultural Needs**

**Level One.** As can be seen in Figure 23, 13% of the students were completely satisfied with the program performance, 42% were partially satisfied and 45% were not at all satisfied. Figure 24 demonstrates the students' satisfaction in terms of their individual cultural aspects.

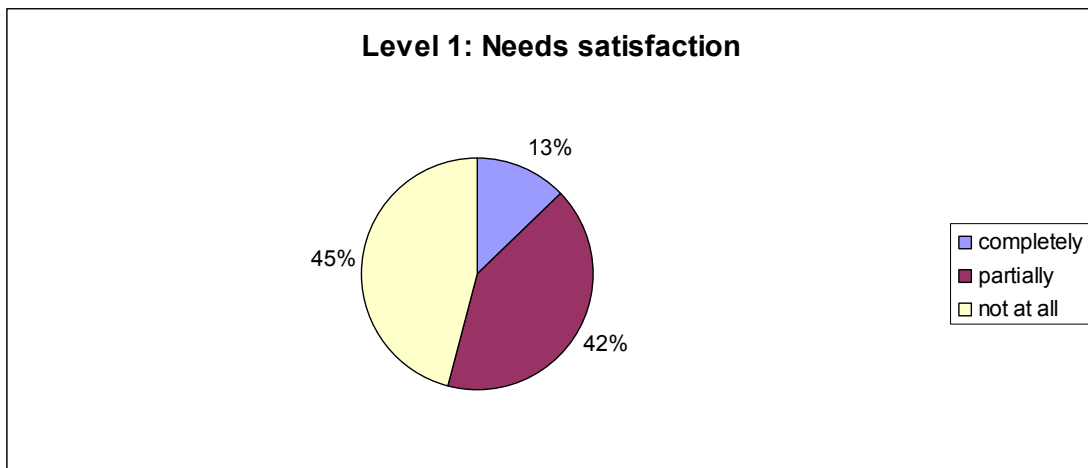


Figure 23: Level 1 Students' needs satisfaction rates

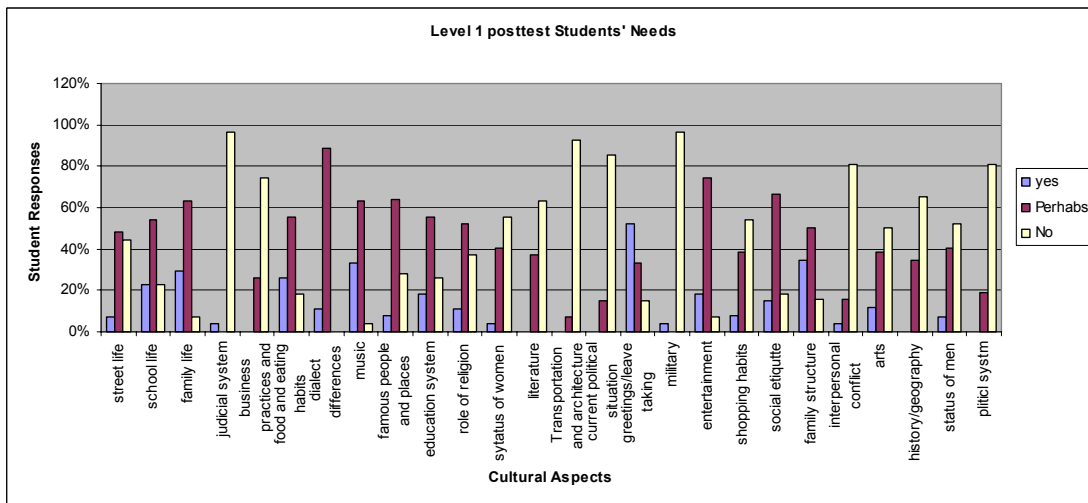


Figure 24: Level 1 students' needs satisfaction per each cultural aspect

**Level 1.5.** As can be seen in Figure 25, 13 % were completely satisfied, 52% were partially satisfied, and 35% were not at all satisfied. Figure 26 demonstrates percentages of students' satisfaction as to individual cultural needs.

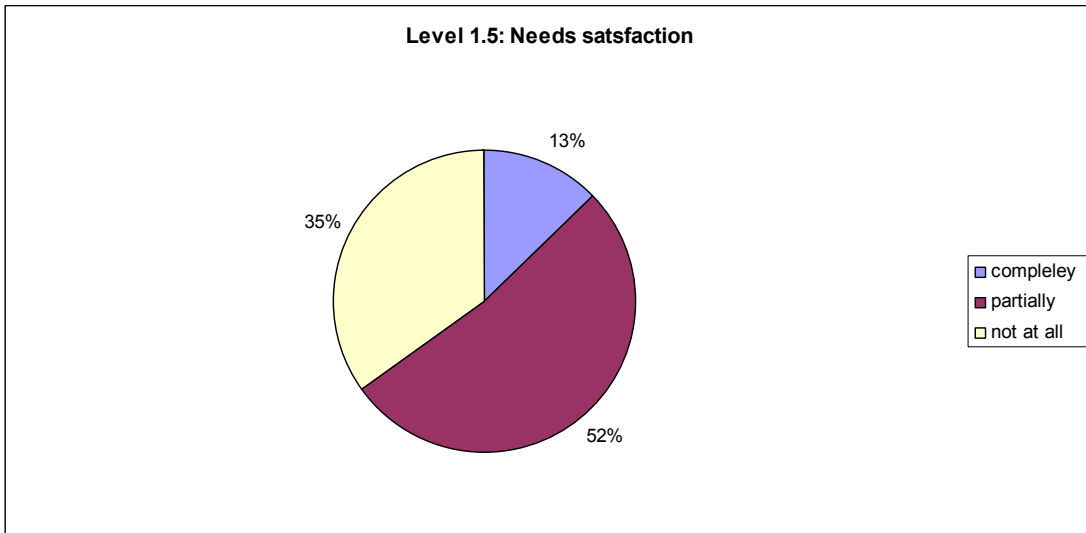


Figure 25: Level 1.5 students' needs satisfaction rates

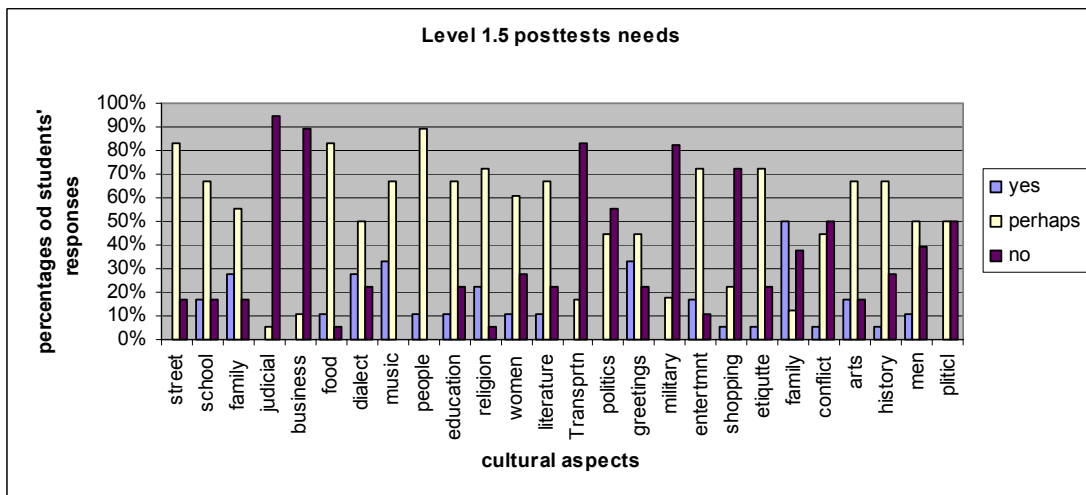


Figure 26: Level 1.5 students' satisfaction rates per each cultural aspect

**Level Two.** Figure 27 shows Level 2 had the lowest rate of complete satisfaction (9%). 60% were partially satisfied, and 31% were not at all satisfied. Figure 28 presents the students' satisfaction rates as to individual cultural aspects.

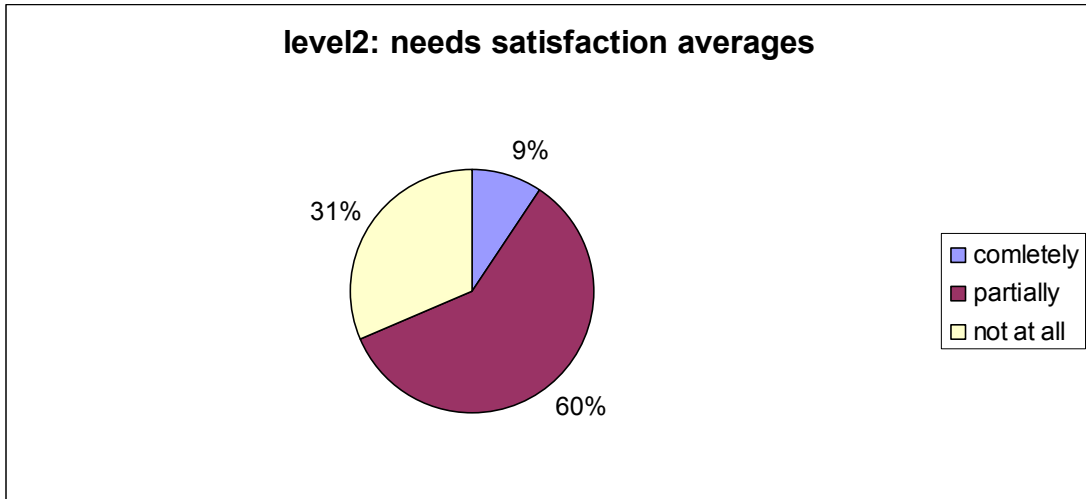


Figure 27: Level 2 students' needs satisfaction rates

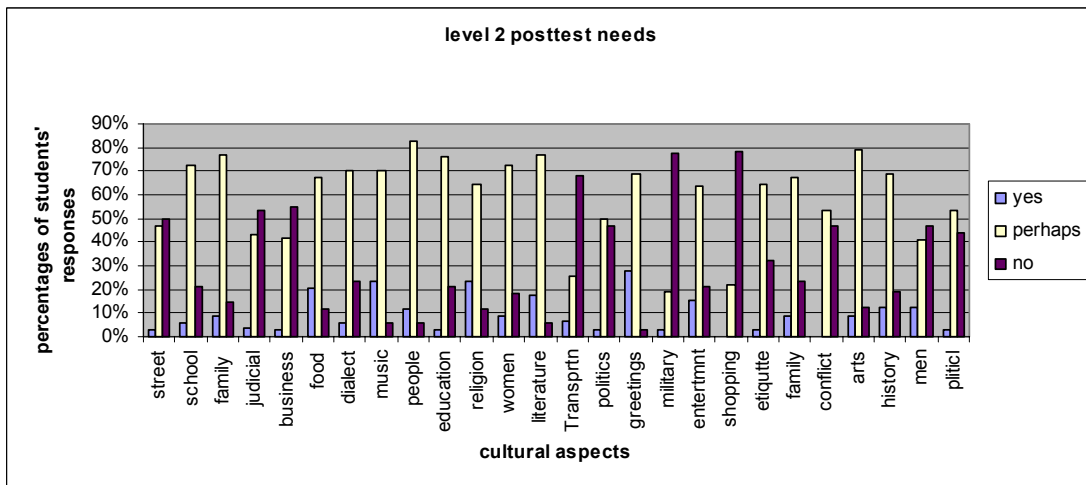


Figure 28: Level 2 students' satisfaction rates per each cultural aspect



**Level Three.** Figure 29 presents the overall satisfaction rates for Level 3 students. 13% were completely satisfied, 59% were partially satisfied and 28% were not at all satisfied. Figure 30 shows satisfaction rates as to individual cultural aspects.

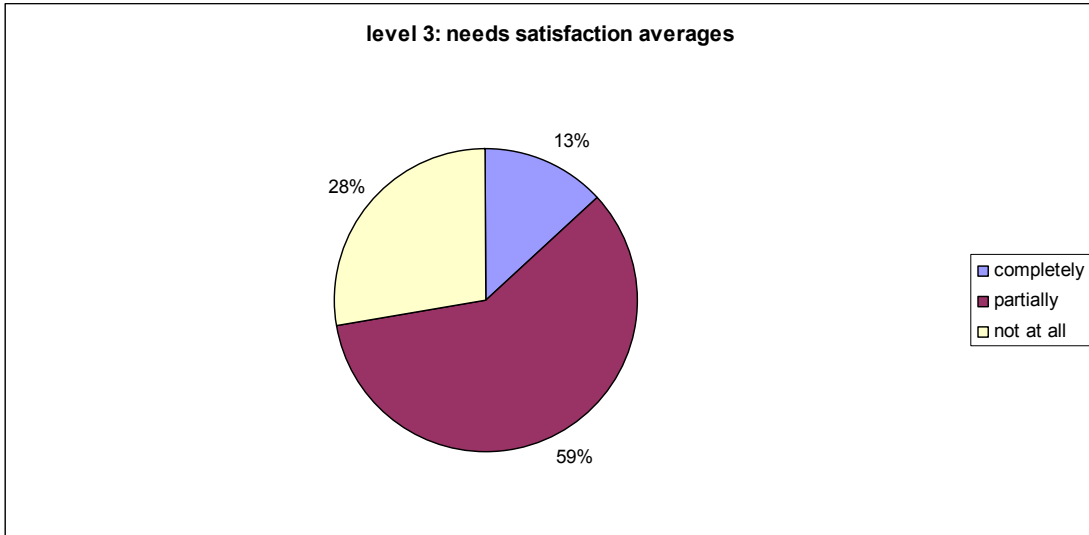


Figure 29: Level 3 students' satisfaction rates

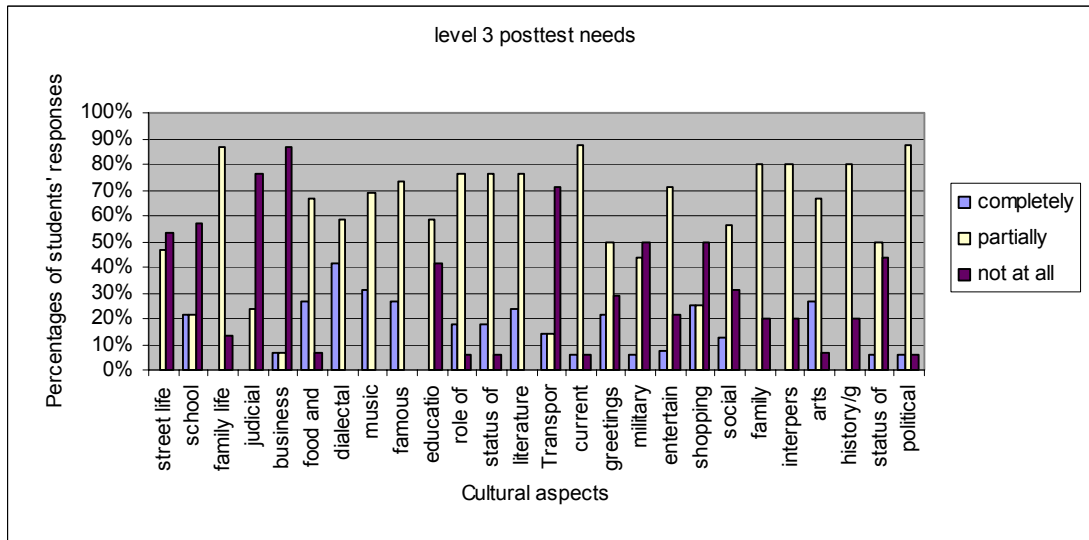


Figure 30: Level 3 students' satisfaction rates per each cultural aspect

**Level Four.** Figure 31 demonstrates that 16% of Level 4 students were completely satisfied, 51% were partially satisfied and 33% were not at all satisfied. Figure 32 represents the level's students' satisfaction rates as to individual cultural aspects.

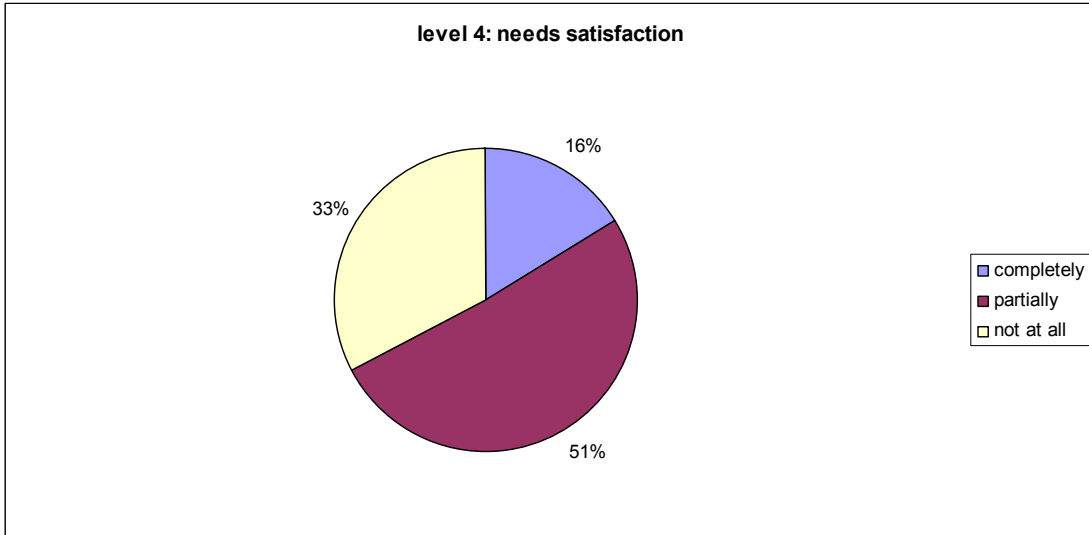


Figure 31: Level 4 students' needs satisfaction rates

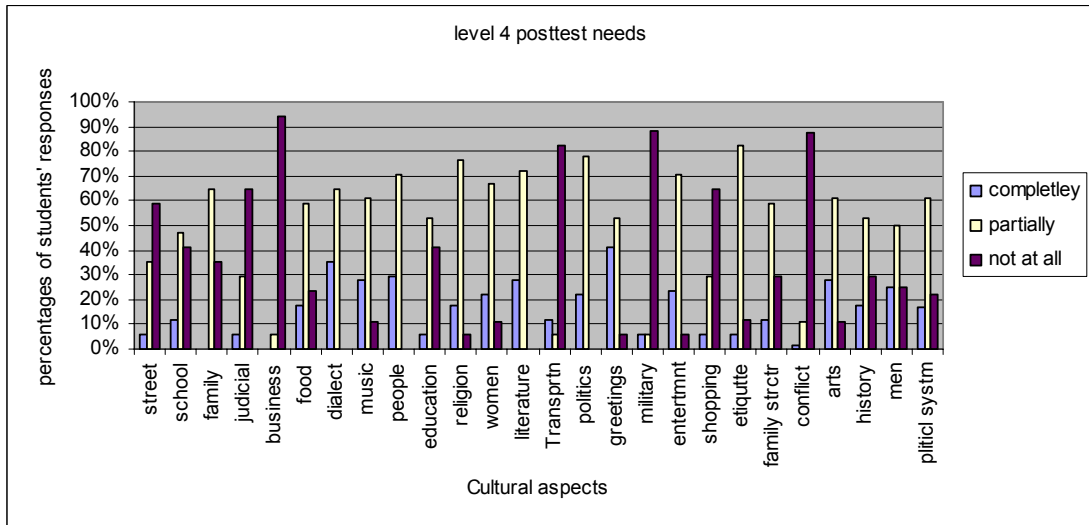


Figure 32: Level 4 students' satisfaction rates per each cultural aspect

**All levels.** Figure 32 shows that 12% of the overall student population was completely satisfied with the school performance, 53% were partially satisfied and 35% were not at all satisfied. Figure 33 shows the students' satisfaction rates per cultural aspect.

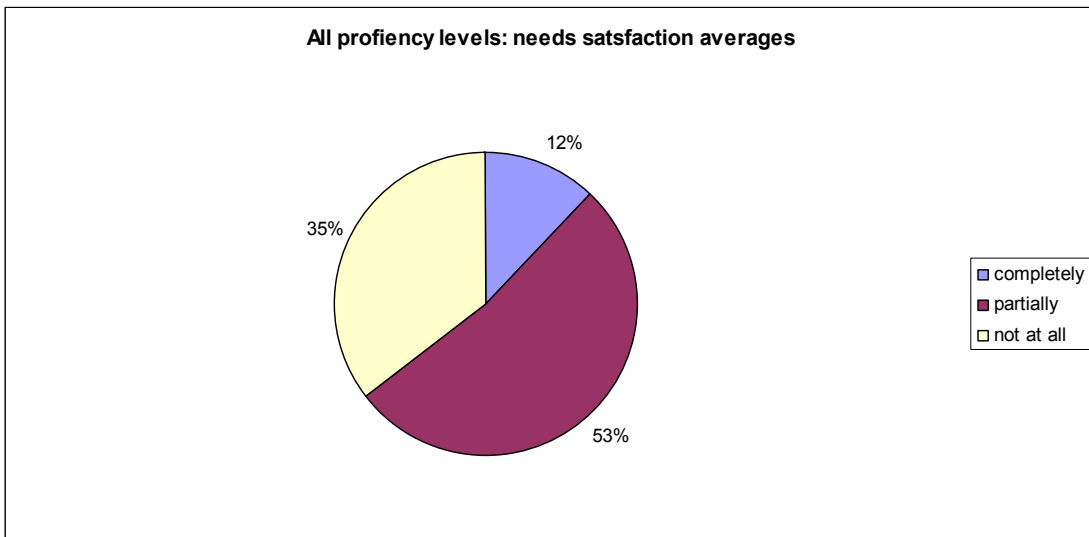


Figure 33: Students' cultural needs satisfaction rates across all levels

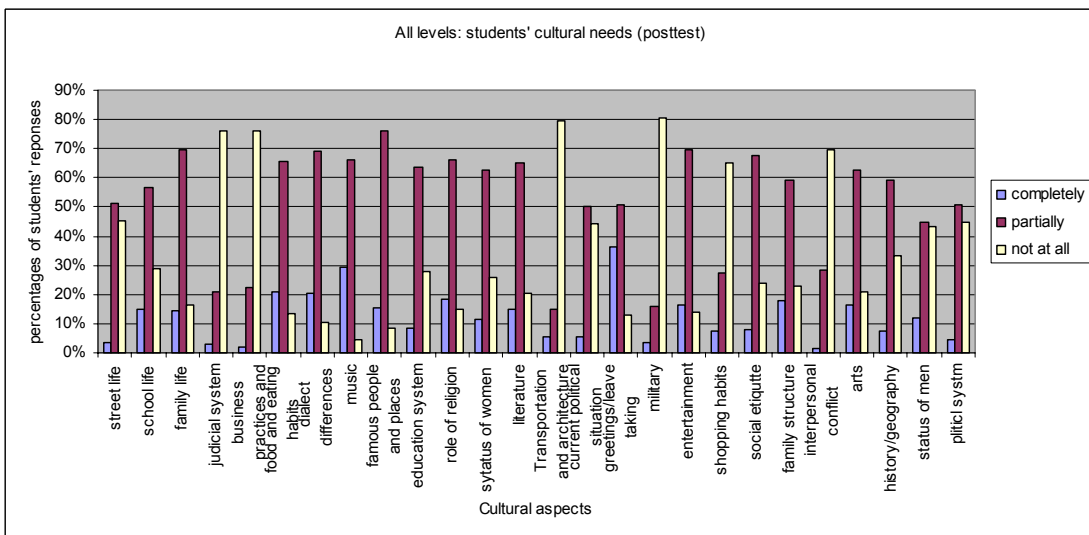


Figure 34: Students' cultural needs satisfaction rates per each cultural aspect

Table 2 summarizes the students' responses across all levels.

<b>Proficiency level</b>	<b>Completely</b>	<b>Partially</b>	<b>Not at all</b>
1 <sup>st</sup>	13%	42%	45%
1.5	13%	52%	35%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	9%	60%	31%
3 <sup>rd</sup>	13%	59%	28%
4 <sup>th</sup>	16%	51%	33%
All levels	12%	53%	35%

Table 2: Summary of students' needs satisfaction rates

**What Students Say.** In order to give a full picture of the students' rates of satisfaction as to their needs, I summarize, in this section, the students' written comments as they appeared in the questionnaire.

Some students stated explicitly their satisfaction with the program's performance as to some of their needs. One student said, "I was happy to learn more about cultural differences in the Arab culture and about the politics." Students mentioned that films and lectures played a significant role in this regard.

Few, particularly low level students, students, were aware of the difficulties that might have been an obstacle in meeting such needs. Overall, they were satisfied with what they have learned.

Others had some reservation about certain areas that were not given their due emphasis. Students emphasized two areas: politics and social etiquette. As for politics, students believe that the program has left out this area purposefully due to its

sensitive nature. Yet, the tendency is that “political issues should have been allowed in Middlebury.” In addition to politics, some students felt that “there was not enough emphasis on practical language,” and they believe that it was “important that the program provides some exposure to “greetings + leave taking” and “social etiquette” in general to the students.”

Some students mentioned that the program did not address at all the needs of cross-cultural understanding, and misunderstanding. Other areas such as religion and literature were more over-stressed.

There is still this population of students who did not show any interest in whether the program satisfied their needs or not. These students stated that they only came to Middlebury to learn the language, and they had no plans to travel or study in the Arab World in the near future.

**Summary.** In this part of Chapter 4, I reported the students’ satisfaction rates as to their needs in graphic and written forms. There were two types of graphs: one that demonstrated how far students were satisfied as to the individual cultural aspects, and another that presented each level’s overall rates of satisfaction: “completely,” “partially” or “not at all.”

**Section Two: Students' Cultural Expectations**

**Level One.** As can be seen in Figure 35, 18% of Level 1 students were satisfied with the school' fulfillment of their expectations, 38% were partially satisfied and 44% were not at satisfied. Figure 36 represents Level 1 students' satisfaction rates per individual cultural expectation.

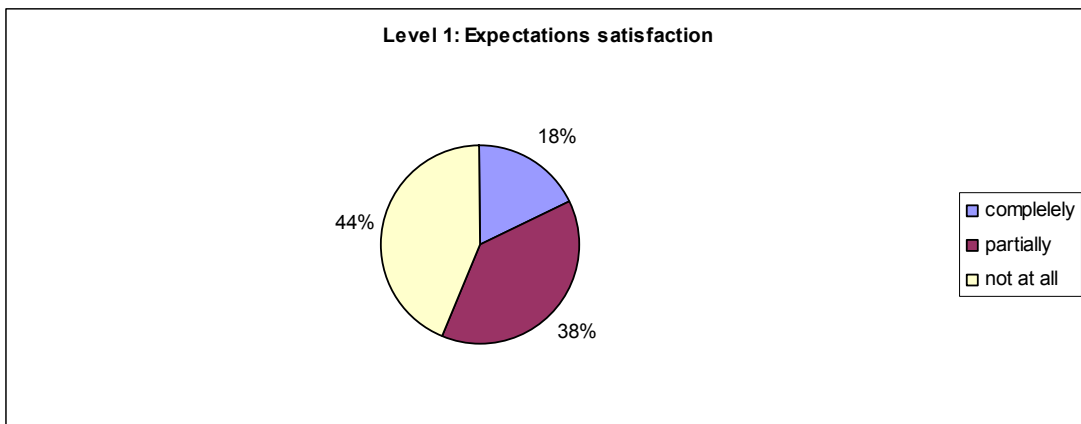


Figure 35: Level 1 students' cultural expectations satisfaction rates

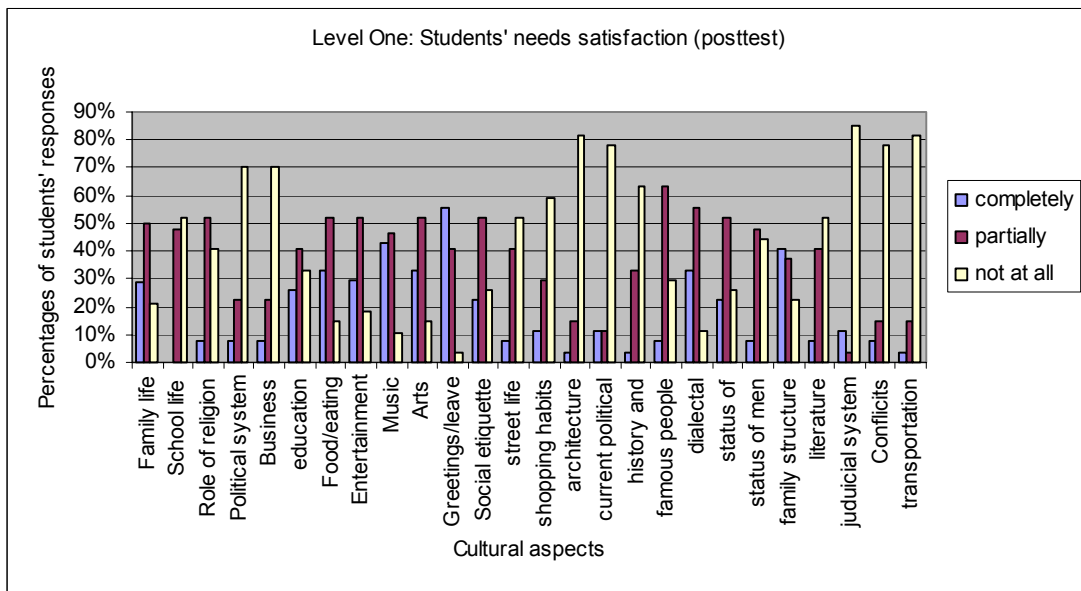


Figure 36: Level 1 students' satisfaction rates per each cultural aspect

**Level 1.5.** Figure 37 shows that 25% of level 1.5 students' cultural expectations were completely met, 44% were partially met and 31% were not at all met. Figure 38 represents Level 1.5 students' satisfaction rates as to individual cultural expectations.

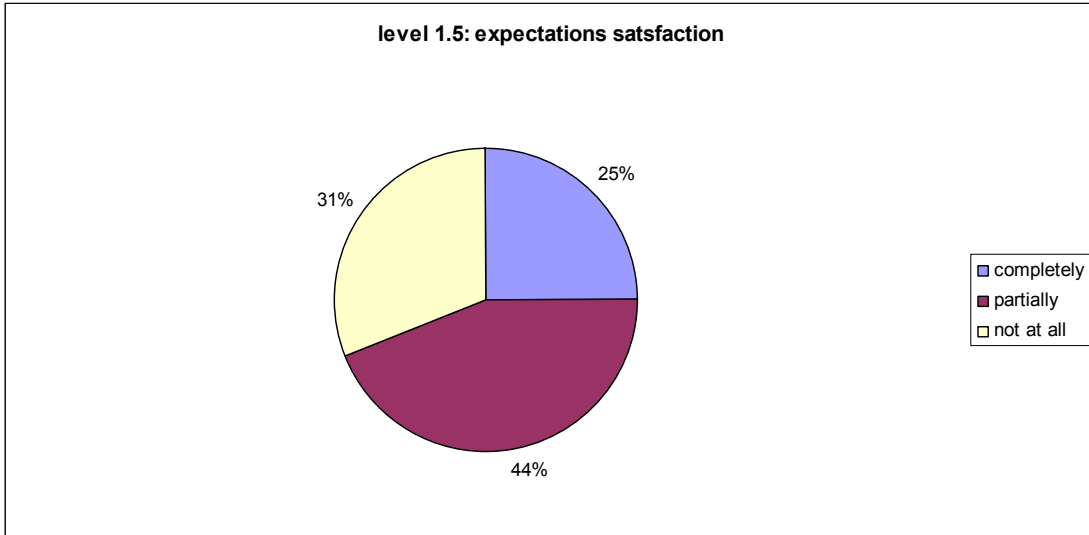


Figure 37: Level 1.5 students' cultural expectations satisfaction rates

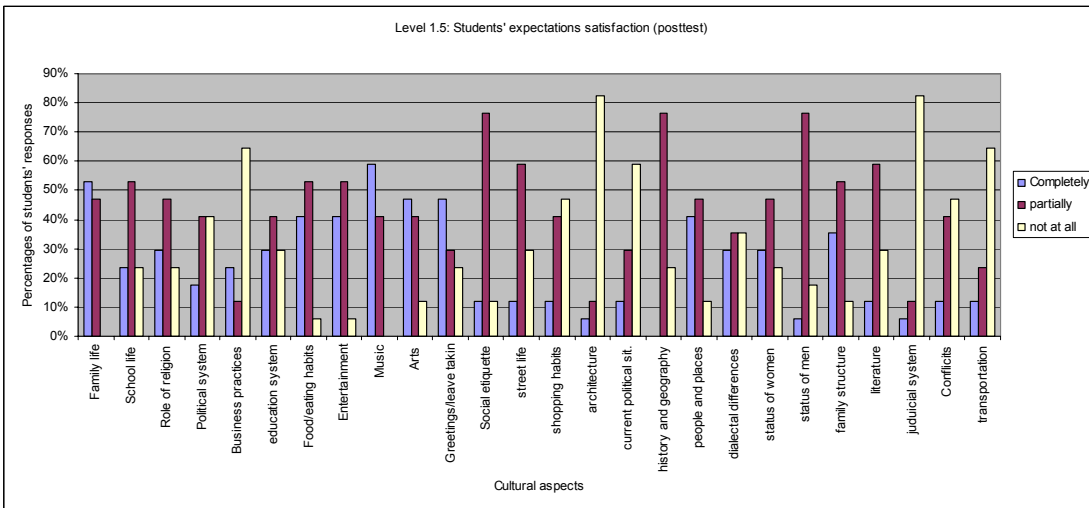


Figure 38: Level 1.5 students' satisfaction rates per each cultural aspect

**Level Two.** While 17% of Level 2 students were completely satisfied with the school performance, 55% were partially satisfied and 28% were not at satisfied (Figure 39). Figure 40 represents students' satisfaction rates as to individual cultural aspects.

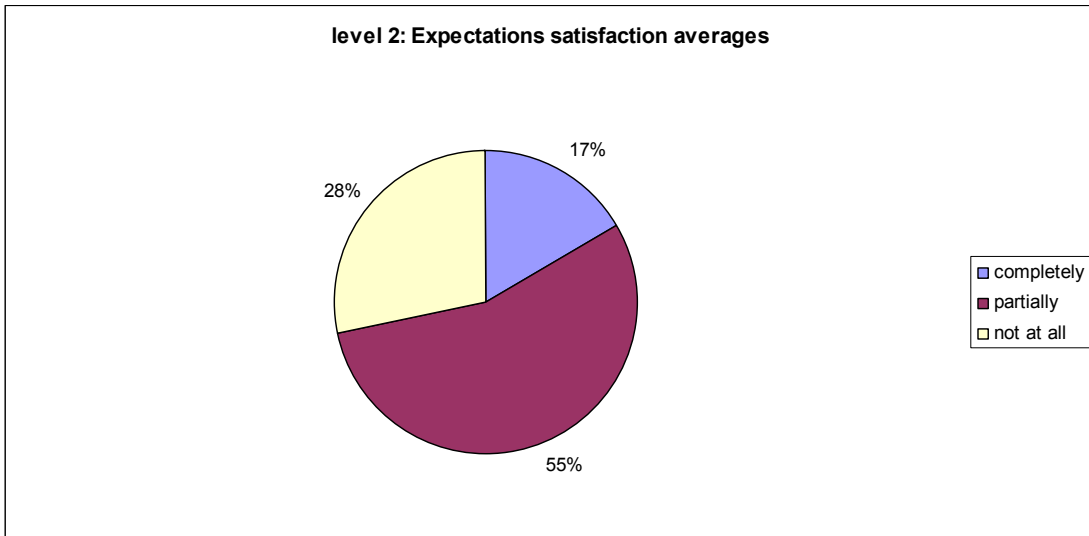


Figure 39: Level 2 students' cultural expectations satisfaction rates

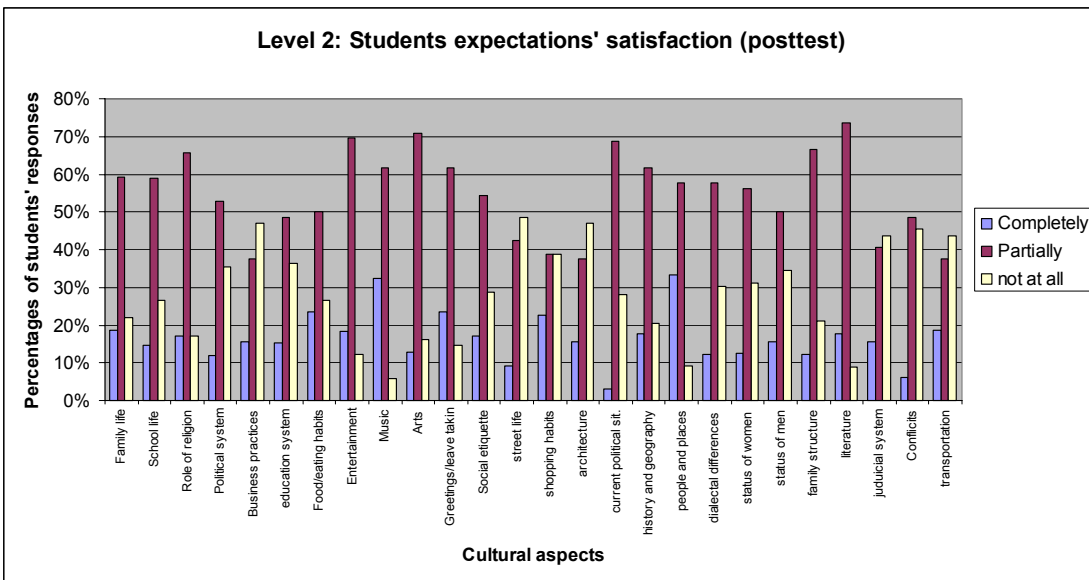


Figure 40: Level 2 students' satisfaction rates per each cultural aspect



**Level Three.** As can be seen in Figure 41, 27% of Level 3 students were completely satisfied, 54% were partially satisfied and 19% were not at all satisfied. Figure 42 represents the students' satisfaction rates as to individual cultural expectations.

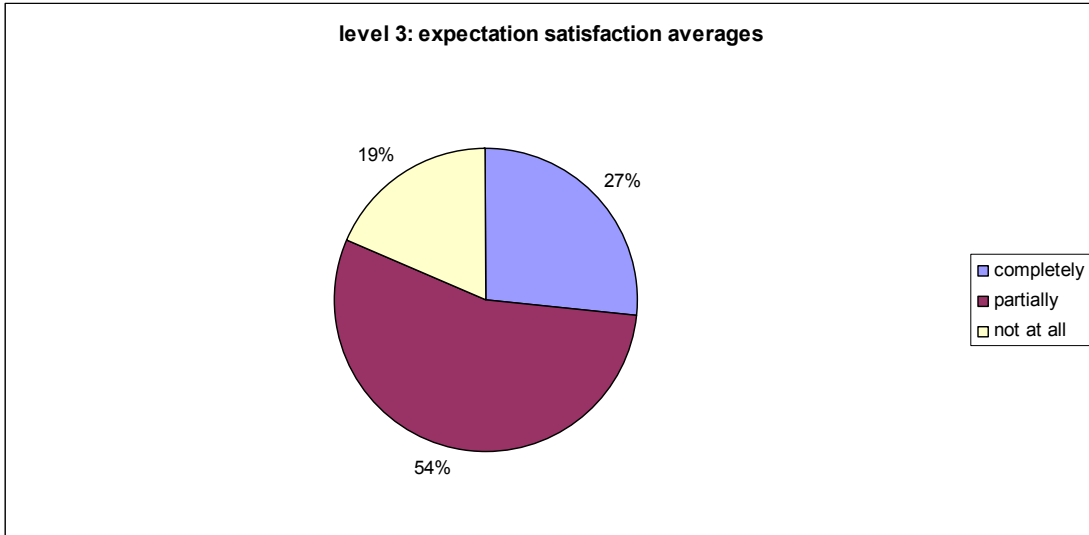


Figure 41: Level 3 students' cultural expectations satisfaction rates

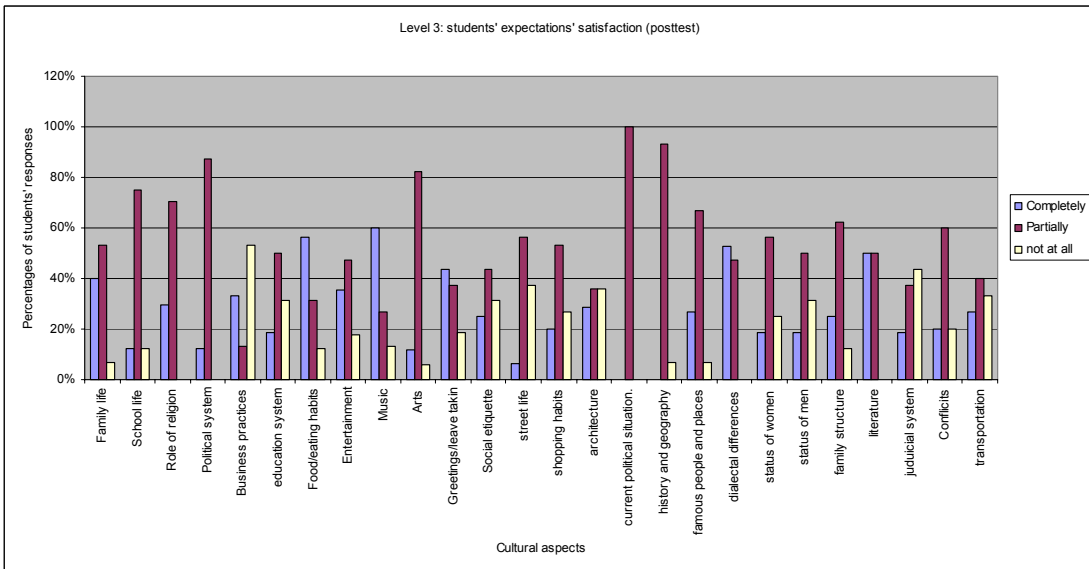


Figure 42: Level 3 students' satisfaction rates per each cultural aspect

**Level Four.** Figure 43 shows that 24% of Level 4 students were completely satisfied with school performance in fulfilling their cultural expectations, 47% were partially satisfied and 29% were not at all satisfied. Figure 44 represents the students' satisfaction rates as to individual cultural expectation.

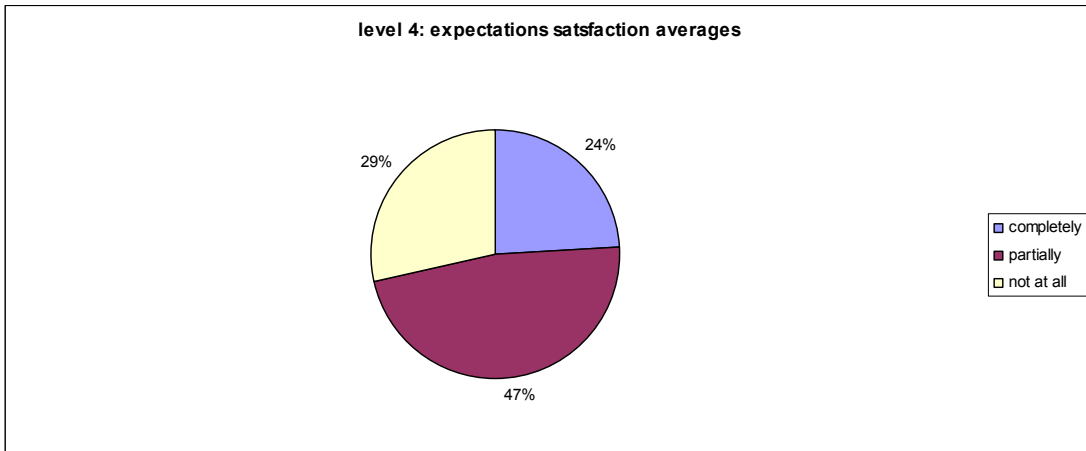


Figure 43: Level 4 students' cultural expectations satisfaction rates

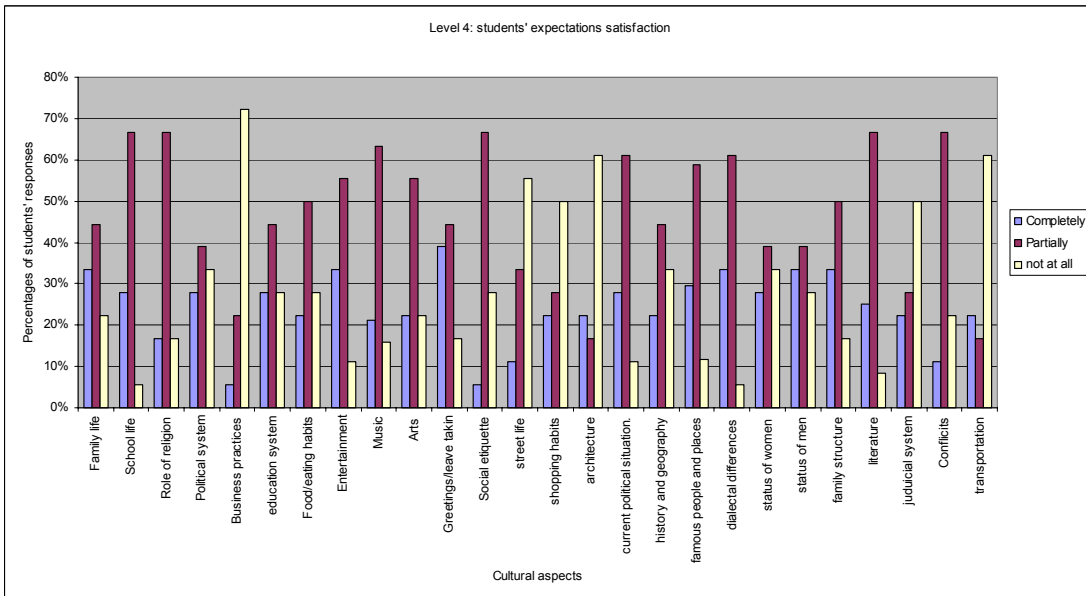


Figure 44: Level 4 students' satisfaction rates per each cultural aspect

**All levels.** Figure 45 represents students' satisfaction rates in all proficiency levels. 21% of the students were completely satisfied, 48% partially satisfied, and 31% not at all satisfied. Figure 46 represents the overall students' satisfaction rates as to individual cultural expectations.

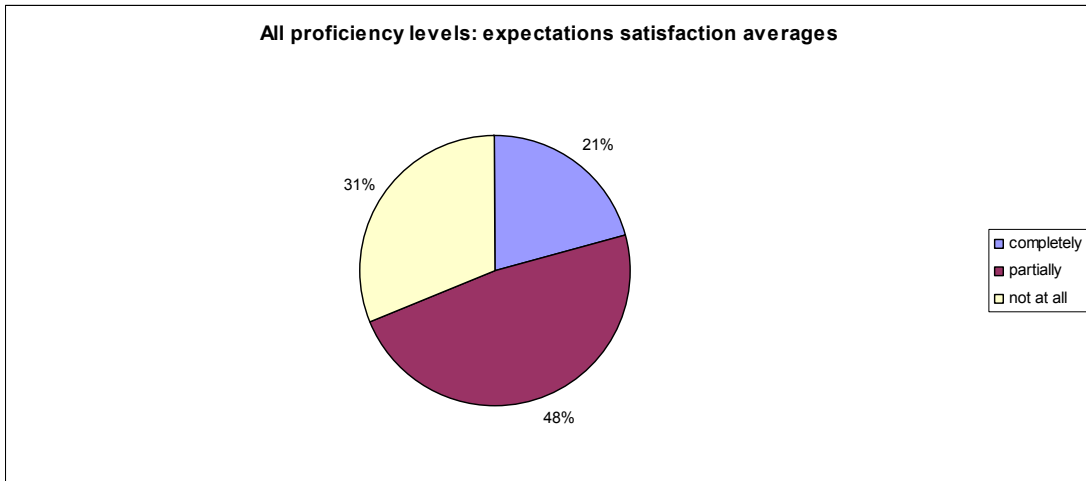


Figure 45: Students' cultural expectations satisfaction rates across all levels

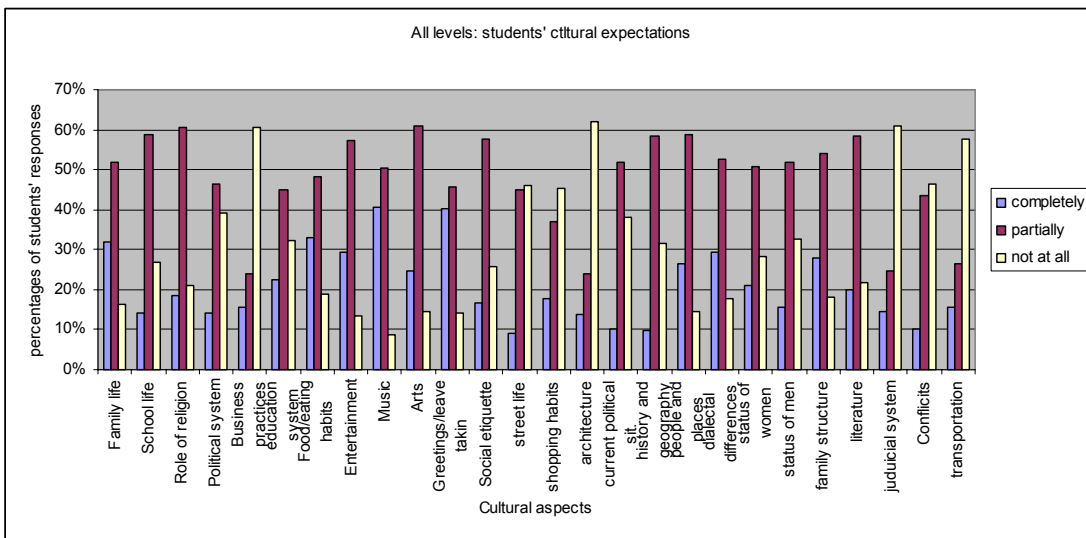


Figure 46: Students' cultural expectations satisfaction rates across all levels

Table 3 summarizes students' rates of satisfaction across all levels.

<b>Proficiency level</b>	<b>Completely</b>	<b>Partially</b>	<b>Not at all</b>
1 <sup>st</sup>	18%	38%	44%
1.5	25%	44%	31%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	17%	55%	25%
3 <sup>rd</sup>	27%	54%	19%
4 <sup>th</sup>	24%	47%	29%
All levels	21%	48%	31%

Table 3: Summary of students' cultural expectations satisfaction rates

**What Students Say.** In this section, I summarize the students written comments on their satisfaction rates as to their cultural expectations.

A majority of students were happy and realistic in their assessment of the program's job in fulfilling their expectations. One student comments, "I think Middlebury does a very good job exposing students to Arab culture ... some of my scores are low b/c I don't think this is the place to meet all the needs or expectations in this area." Another wrote, "I enjoyed the program and even though I am in level 1, I was happy that the program included so many cultural aspects."

A few students realize that the program cannot fully fulfill their expectations due to time constraints, low level of proficiency and the complex diversity of the Arab culture. "I think that there is not time and that being in level 1, the topics we can discuss are curtailed due to the pledge. I would like to know more, but do not know how could this occur without forfeiting the merits of the language pledge."

Finally, some students wished that there was more discussion of politics, government, judicial system, and military and less literature and religion.

**Summary.** In this section, I presented how well the students were satisfied with the program's performance in satisfying their cultural expectations. Two forms of data were presented: graphic and written forms. The graphic form incorporated two types of figures. The first presented students' satisfaction rates as to individual cultural aspects. The second type demonstrated the overall satisfaction rate per each proficiency level. On the other hand, the written form of presentation reported what the students said about their feelings satisfaction. The graphic forms are more representative of the students as they rely on the overall size of the sample, while the written form represents the comments made by a very limited number of students.

## **TEACHER'S QUESTIONNAIRE**

### **Profile of Teachers**

Twenty two teachers (11 males, 11 females) completed the survey. These teachers taught Modern Standard Arabic. Some of them taught dialect classes as well for the advanced levels. Pairs of teachers co-taught the same class of a total number of 12 classes for the entire course. Out of the 22 teachers, only two were non-native speakers of Arabic. Four instructors had BAs; fifteen had MAs and only three had

PhDs. Asked whether their degrees involved training in the teaching of culture, twelve teachers said "yes." The rest said "no."

The teachers were also asked about their experience in teaching Arabic. The distribution of the responses is found in Table 9.

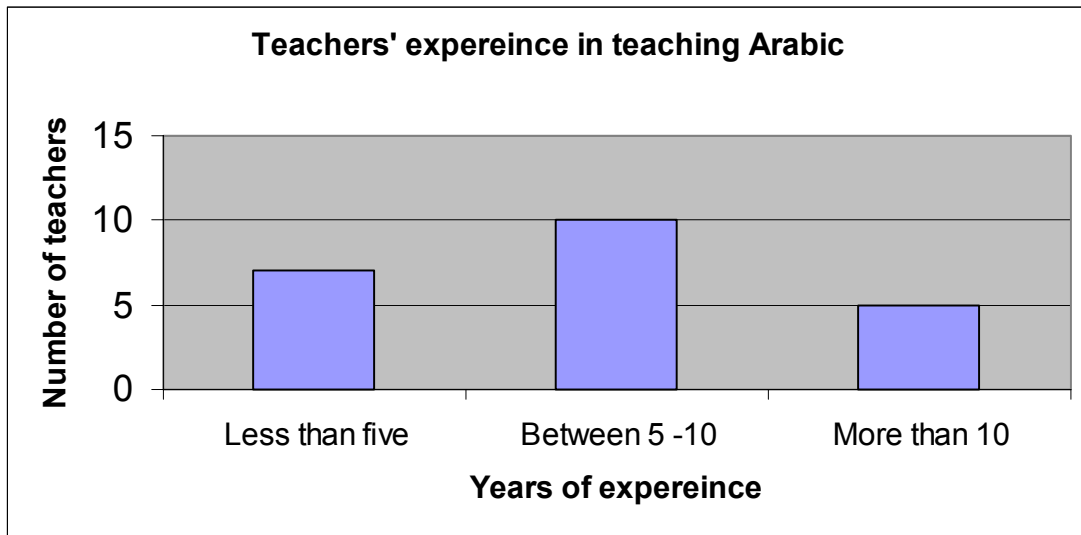


Figure 47: Teachers' experience in Arabic language teaching

The teachers were asked about the instructional time they devote to the teaching of culture. The distribution of the teachers' responses is found in Figure 48.

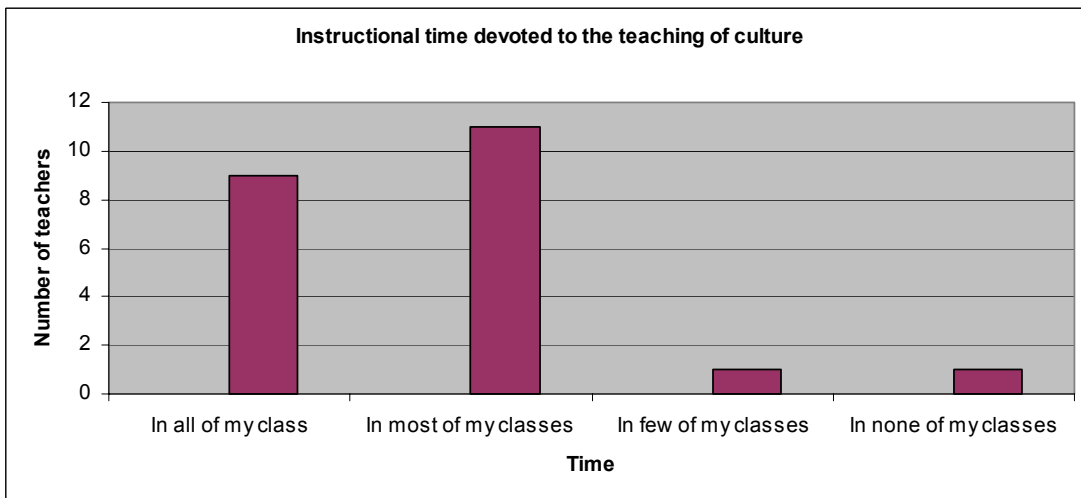


Figure 48: Distribution of instructional time teachers devote to culture instruction

The teachers were asked how they would describe how they teach culture. They were given eight categories of the most popular techniques used in culture instruction. A ninth open-ended question was also provided. The distribution of their responses is found in Figure 49.

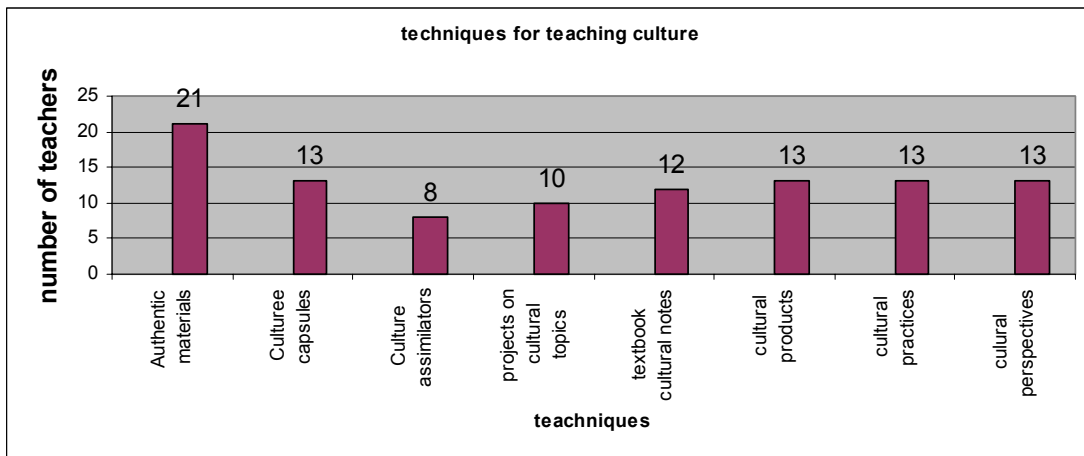


Figure 49: Techniques teachers use to teach culture

With regard to authentic materials, most of the teachers said that they use articles from newspapers, magazines and books, historical and literary texts, video-taped lectures or interviews, internet materials, songs.

Teachers were asked about some of the constraints they experience in teaching culture. The responses are found in Figure 50.

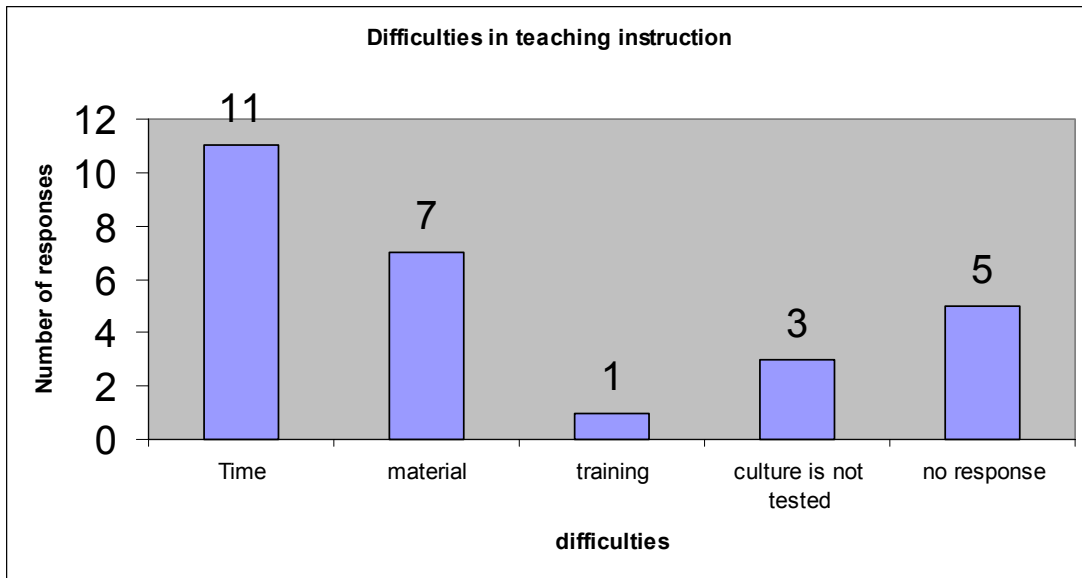


Figure 50: Constraints teachers encounter in teaching culture

### What Teachers Believe Their Students' Cultural Needs Are

As can be seen in Figure 51, the most frequently stated students' cultural needs according to the teachers were: music (95%), social etiquette (86%), role of religion (82%), arts (81%) and literature (77%).



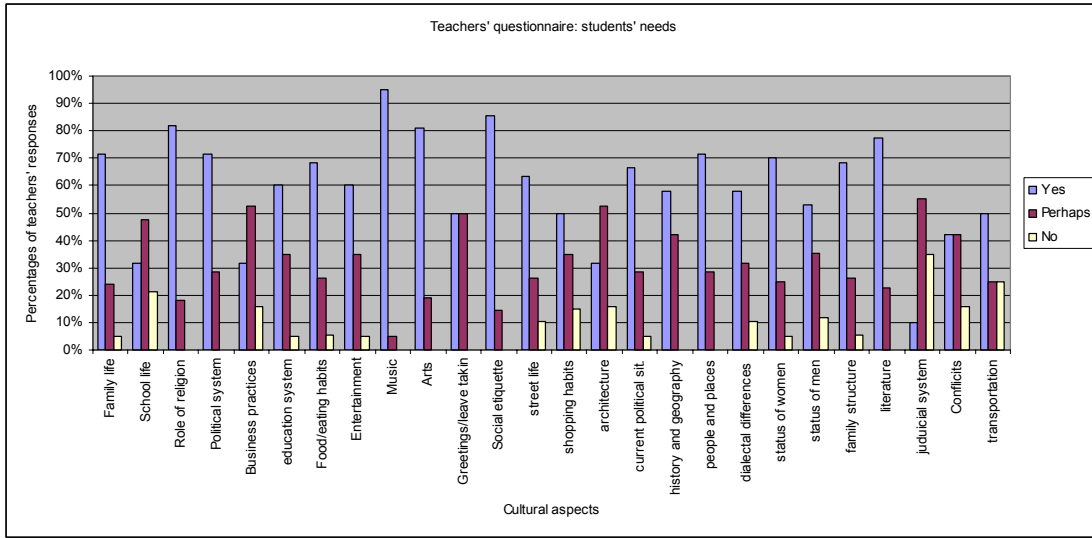


Figure 51: Students' cultural needs according to their teachers

### What Teachers Believe Their Students' Cultural Expectations Are

As can be seen in Figure 51, the most frequently stated students' cultural expectations according to teachers were: role of religion (95%), greetings and leave taking (95%), music (84%), social etiquette (80%), and food and eating habits (80%).

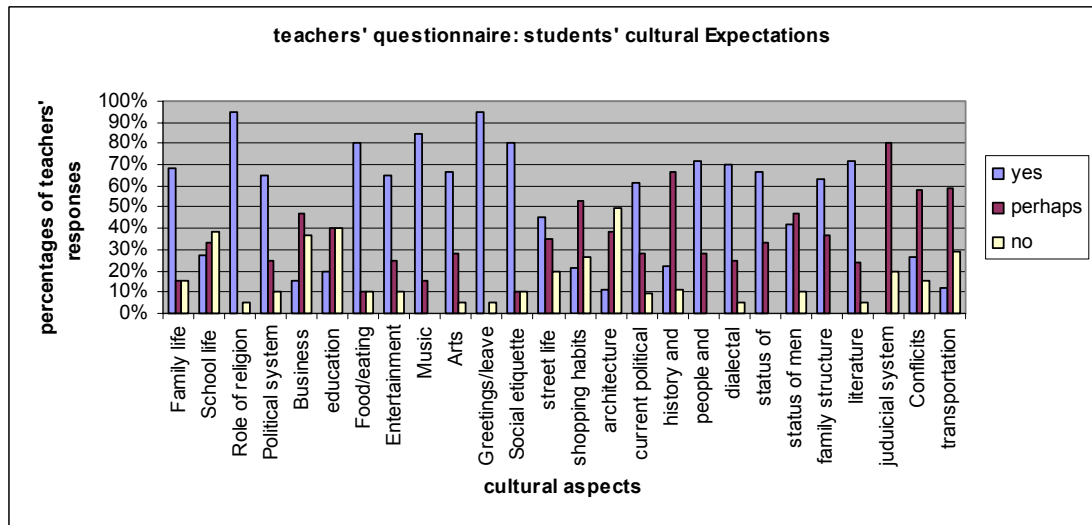


Figure 52: Students' cultural expectations according to their teachers

## **FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS**

### **Students' Focus Group Interviews**

This section reports the findings generated during the two focus groups I had with students. The focus groups were a follow up to the questionnaire. Appendix 3 provides the interview questions. During the interview, numerous topics emerged. I organized these topics into categories, and will discuss them accordingly.

#### ***Culture and Language Integration***

Some students still think--probably even insist--that they can learn the language separated from its cultural component. Culture for these students is something that is solely learned while living in the target culture community. One student explains that the "core of the program has been the language, and I think that is one of the reasons for its success." Culture (manners in particular) is "something that needs to be absorbed from the environment around you," and taking those manners out of their context is pointless. Another student who seems to have misunderstood the philosophy of the program says, "It's unfair from us to have expected to come here and learn how to conduct ourselves. I mean that's not what the label says. It's not a school of refinement. It's a school of language." Satisfied with what the program does in terms of culture, another student admits that culture is "a great vehicle for teaching language, but I don't think it's possible to teach culture when ninety percent of the people here are American."

The majority of the students, however, believe that it is important to include, even partly, culture in foreign language classroom even in low level classes. Thinking in two extremes where either the program focuses exclusively on language and completely ignores culture, or immerse the students completely in the culture, one student posits that it is very difficult to see where the right balance is. Looking at what the program does, however, the student concludes by saying that "the balance is about as good as it could be." Another student, who is a business student, rejects the assumption that language and culture are two separate entities, as some other students suggested. Body language, for instance, the student explains, is culturally bound. It is something that needs to be learned along with the language. Another one critiquing the idea of separation said, "... but language is communication and is eighty percent, according to research I read, eighty percent nonverbal. Therefore, if you're learning to communicate in language you have to do the nonverbal."

### ***High and Low Culture***

Some students are aware of the distinction between high (big "C") and popular (small "c") culture. Few students, mostly advanced levels students, posit that the program defines culture as high culture and to some extent underestimates the popular or street culture. For example, students argue that the movies they have watched were rarely popular among Arab speakers. They also say that the reading texts that they were given emphasize high culture much more than popular culture. Many students thus think that they will be prone to making a lot of mistakes in

etiquette that may very well be insulting to native speakers. To emphasize the importance of including popular culture in the classroom, one student admits that in her first visit to Qatar, she insulted a public relations manager, the office manager and the driver in her first day just because she did not understand, in that particular setting, the etiquette of handshaking. "Those kinds of things do not necessarily need to be exclusive of language training. They can be in fact a vehicle for language training," she says.

Students, nonetheless, have nothing against high culture. Yet, they propose that they can also be benefiting from total popular fiction that every Arab on the street in the Arab countries might read or know, which might not be totally of the highest language variety *fusha*, although in certain instances pop culture can be found in soap operas that use the *fusha*, particularly shows that premier in Ramadan, the fasting month. One student comments, "Popular culture is important to any society. It's arguably much more important than high culture." Students request that balance should be maintained between high and popular culture. Popular culture is much more important for the average Arab than the high culture. Some students are aware of the difficulty of showing these movies, especially in translation and "who is doing it and why they're doing it."

## ***Program Philosophy in Preparing Students to Become Communicatively-Effective***

### ***Speakers***

Students, especially high level students, agree that the program does a fine job in preparing them to communicate effectively with native speakers, particularly by exposing the students to the diglossic situation in the Arab countries. Students are fully aware of the tensions between the *fusha* (Modern Standard Arabic) and the *'aammiyyah* (spoken variety). While Arab speakers in general use the standard variety in the media and writing, they speak the local dialects on the street. To address this dilemma, the program supplements the major linguistic component that is done in the standard variety with few classes in the local dialects. In so doing, the students believe that the program is doing well.

The selection of the spoken dialects is primarily contingent on the availability of instructors and on students' demand and needs. Instructors agree on major guidelines of topics and themes to cover seven weeks of instruction before these classes commence in the second week of the program. Material selection and teaching method is up to the instructors. Only third and fourth level students are allowed to enroll in these courses.

I surveyed the students enrolled in the four offered dialect courses: Egyptian, Moroccan, Syrian and Palestinian. Twenty nine students participated in the survey. I asked them whether these courses helped them understand the respective culture of the country and how. Twenty three 23 students agreed. The rest were either uncertain or said to some extent.

The students replied that they benefited from these classes in learning about culture by (1) learning the community means of communication; (2) watching some movies and TV shows; (3) learning some expressions, proverbs and jokes used among Arabs in daily exchanges; (4) exchanging ideas with culture representatives. In this case, these are the instructors; (5) discussing popular topics in the culture such as role of women, marriage, historical events, and celebrations; and (6) enhancing understanding of a specific community and studying dialectal differences within one region. Besides these benefits, students added that the dialect classes comprised a break from their daily routine.

However, the students admit that it is difficult to learn much about the dialect in those classes that only met three times a week for less than an hour each session. More exposure in terms of listening is thus badly needed so that students may start thinking in the colloquial. Students say that they can talk about the colloquial dialects but cannot speak them. Students also admit that it is really difficult to learn about the Arab culture where the basic means of communication in the classroom is Modern Standard Arabic. They recommended that students need to be encouraged to speak it inside their regular classes or among themselves. Asking that Standard Arabic be prerequisite for colloquial, students say is the right way to go about solving this dilemma. The dialect is a possible channel to incorporate some aspects of culture specific to a certain region that students may visit or work at.

While this may apply on the students of most of the levels, it does not apply to the students of lower levels, particularly first and first and a half. These students

complain that their teachers overwhelm them with linguistic knowledge and neglect the cultural component. Students say that learning some basics about the Arab culture is plausible even with very rudimentary linguistic knowledge. It is shameful, one of the students says, that they only and accidentally learned that it is inappropriate to take food by the left hand in the Arab culture only towards the sixth week in the program. On the other hand, another student mentions that culture is not totally ignored. It is introduced in the early levels through the story line of the main text where they get familiar with the type of relationship between Maha, the main character in the story who by the way is an American from Egyptian descent, and her relatives in Egypt. I will discuss this facet of the program in a separate section when I analyze the cultural content in the required textbook.

### ***Misconceptions and Stereotypes of Arabs***

Students believe that they do not have as many as stereotypes about Arabs as the general public. They believe that their population is "self-selected who are open-minded," according to one student, and "willingly chose" a program such as Middlebury's. One student commented that there are degrees of stereotypes. There are those "big" stereotypes that one finds in the movies and TV shows, and there are those stereotypes that are a result of the lack of information, for instance, that all women in a specific country are veiled. These details, he says, can be addressed and the lack of information can be resolved by, for instance, being more exposed to the aspects of popular culture and the daily life of the peoples.

I also had an open discussion with the level 4 students about this topic. The discussion revealed why those students are different from the American public when it comes to stereotypical images. These students are aware of such images. Moreover, they know how and why they were created.

### ***Cultural Bias: Monolithic or Diverse Cultures***

Arab culture is not monolithic. Most of the students understand this fact. The complaint, however, is that Egyptian culture is heavily emphasized in the program, and to a lesser extent part of North African countries and Syria. For example, the whole story line of Part I of the textbook revolves around an American Egyptian woman and her relationship with her extended family in Egypt. A lot of the literature the students read is done by Egyptian writers. Most of the articles are about the political situation in Egypt. The first volume of the textbook even includes words from the Egyptian dialect that are not identified as colloquial. The students note that certain geographical regions in the Arab World are ignored if not forgotten. There seems to be a semi consensus among students that the Gulf region, for instance, is completely neglected although it constitutes a big part of the Arab World. None of the instructors is from a Gulf state, except one from Yemen. Most of the articles the students read are not about the Gulf or written by Gulf writers. There is no offering of any Gulf dialect in the colloquial classes.

In the textbook, only in Part III, one student mentions, there is a couple of articles about this region while Part I and II miss it completely. Book II includes some



articles about Syria. However, to some students, these were boring. Meanwhile, numerous students are interested in this region as they will eventually end up working or have a type of relationship there. One student refutes the stereotypical image of these countries as being backward. She says that excellent scholarship exists there and it would be nice to include them in the program.

Even when tackling other areas including Egypt, writers and instructors are not articulate about the extent to which a generalization from that area to another can be valid. One student mentions that she read at some point in the book that it is being rude for someone not to greet another if he/she sees him/her the first time in the morning. The student was questioning how much of what is being taught is going to apply and in which context or culture. Even with the suggestion that having a lecture that may cover what is appropriate and what is inappropriate, the student's suspicions were about the possibility of doing that without "being superficial about the distinctive culture within that large area of the world."

Nonetheless, students are aware of the rationale of this bias. A student says, "This is a sort of reflection of the Arab World. I mean not to say that it is the center of the Arab World, but I mean Egypt the largest Arab country, it's the center of culture ... there're a handful of people in the United States who study the Khaleej (Gulf)."

### ***Missing Cultural Topics***

As was shown in the questionnaire, the absence of politics or avoiding political debate was a big disappointment to students. They called it as a "big

mistake." In a region where politics is at the heart of culture, they felt that it is shameful that the Arabic summer program does not do a good job in that regard. Some of the students charge the program with presenting what is easy and appealing to the American culture in general. A student notes that teachers avoid political debates because these are areas of sensitive controversy. For them this is a mistake. In a classroom or even in a special club where students get along together and know how to talk well in politics, it is necessary to include this topic. An upset student hinted to what he called an "advisory" to avoid politics in the classroom. He says:

I can't imagine why. I can't imagine why. Because we're all adults here. I mean some of us are only twenty, but we still have ideas and we're still mature. It's not like I'm going to, you know, hate someone. I mean I understood this is academia we're all in, you know, we're in academia right now. That's what we do in academia-- we discuss ideas and we debate and try to you know *qami3* the word in English to try to censor no to try to censor cut that off is a mistake in any situation. I can't understand who at what point and why thought that was a good idea.

Another area that some students wanted to see in the program is the differences in interaction between Arab men and women. Students believe that this is very "practical", "helpful" and involves language issues. Men and women coming from the West need to be familiar with what is expected from them in the Arab culture especially on the street. A student comments, "there're things that are appropriate in social settings with men and there're things that are not appropriate in social settings with women." Most of what the students study are products of higher cultural levels, for example, discussing woman's rights. This does not prepare the students to function successfully and survive in dealing with the Average Arab, be it a man dealing with a man/woman or visa versa.

### ***Teachers' Role***

One of the major points that were raised during the interviews with the students is the importance of the teachers' role in enhancing the cultural component of the program. Student note that they learned more about a specific culture from their instructors inside or outside the classroom (including readings not necessarily from the textbook) more than planned events that were intended to teach or promote culture. It is a more fruitful way to even understand the cultural background of movies per se. One of the students says, "Professors here are wealth or probably the deepest wealth of knowledge about the culture, more so even than a planned movie or even... partly because they are dynamic ... you all agree... you're not static and you have very real experiences and then much more interesting."

### **Teachers' Focus Group Interview**

In this section, I report the major findings that emerged from the teachers' focus group interview. I met with more than a dozen teaches during the seventh week of the course. My interview was semi-guided by pre-prepared questions. The interview questions are found in Appendix (4). Although the interview started in English as I hoped it would, many teachers asked if they could speak in Arabic as it would be easier for them to express their opinions. The switch took place, and I had to translate the transcript into English. Below I explain the major topics that were discussed during the interview.

### ***Cultural Bias: Monolithic vs. Diverse Cultures***

Like students, teachers are aware that the Egyptian culture is heavily emphasized in the textbook. Two fronts emerged in discussing this topic. On the one hand, some teachers felt that they are confined by the material in the textbook (vocabulary and grammar) as they are required to cover a certain material throughout the course. Limiting themselves to the textbook meant teaching one culture as multiculturalism, except for some listening and reading articles where even the cultural component is not the focus, in its broad meaning is lacking. The bias lies in that all the characters, here the focus is on the introductory and the first volume of the textbook, are Egyptians, thus the monologues—language and content--in which the story is being told have the Egyptian flavor. As noted, some words from the Egyptian dialect are included without referring to them as dialectal words.

On the other hand, other teachers were more liberal in this regard where they treated cultural notes and topics in the book as themes and then commenting on them from the diverse national perspectives. One teacher quotes the authors of the book saying that the book is a framework and the choice of going about the cultural knowledge is the teachers' call. The teacher added that he did not present the cultural content that he was not familiar with. Instead, he replaced that with his own cultural equivalence.

One teacher brought another interesting issue where multiculturalism can be utilized. She said that teachers come from different Arab countries. In each class, two teachers from two different countries or cultural backgrounds co-teach. The

distribution, according to her, in this sense was just. Those teachers can discuss their own cultures in their classes, thus exposing students to different cultures at the same time.

As it is the case with some of the students, the heavy focus of Egyptian culture springs from the fact that Egyptian is the most widespread dialect in the Arab World as a result of its population and its being the center of movie and TV industry. It is expected thus that it would be understood anywhere in the Arab countries.

The question of cultural bias was not the issue for some teachers. The issue was more philosophical. One teacher wondered how it is possible to teach something that is vast and dynamic, an issue that received much attention from language educators and philosophers more broadly. For him cultures influence and get influenced by people. The only way of learning the culture is living it. Simply put, teachers cannot teach culture.

Another teacher says that the cultural content of the book is addressed to tourists. The cultural aspects have nothing to do with the modern Arab society. Most of the cultural content is historical, and needs to be revised and recycled frequently.

Another teacher critiques the third volume of the book as it targets the American students and attempts to please them. He says, "It is not necessary to convey an ideal image (about the Arab culture), as the students travel and see by themselves what the reality is." The book should be objective in discussing the cons and pros of the culture. The texts do not focus on the middle class. They also lack the

sense critical thinking that create debate such as democracy and Islam and Islamists. .  
It is thus expected that the teachers should have that sense of critical thinking.

### ***Movies***

The accusation, at least according to few teachers, that the book attempts to please the American student is evident in the movie selection. Indirectly said, the movies are selected to appeal to the American public. They do not reflect the reality of the Arab World nor historical events. Most of the movies are from Egypt and North Africa. Movies from the Gulf regions are rare, if they occur at all. This reaction is in accordance with some students' reaction. In the focus group, one student said that "it's bad for me to come here and to see how the people, the teachers, everyone discredits those countries in a lot of ways." Another student commented on the quality of the movies and said that he heard it more than once that the movies tend to be sad, depressing and negative. The student was questioning the message of those movies and indirectly insinuating that this may enhance or create a negative impact on the image of an Arab in the students' minds.

### ***How Do Teachers Teach Culture?***

The teachers of the lower level do not really teach Arab culture. If they do, it is embedded in the language. No period or part of it is allocated to teach about culture.

At the higher levels, teachers showed more interest in the teaching of culture and the methodology. As the cultural notes in the book are "superficial," one teacher said that she goes deeper into more details and discusses the cultural perspective of the products and practices. She also resorts to cross cultural comparison, keeping away from description and doing more analysis. She does this to break down, if any, the stereotypes the students may have about the Arab culture and who an Arab is.

Another teacher stresses the importance of objectives in his teaching methodology. His mission is not to defend culture and offer value judgments. For him, culture is a means to understand language and accomplish linguistic goals. Students are given complete freedom to express their opinions. The teacher's role is facilitative. In the same vein, some teachers teach culture through songs. However, the focus is on grammatical points.

While some teachers emphasize that culture needs to be taught through literary texts which are lacking in the textbook as most of articles are taken from newspapers, others object to this attitude and say that culture is not poetry or literature. It is the values of daily life. The advocates of literary texts say that it is possible to find the content of those newspaper articles in books that also provide a better language quality. One teacher says that the book has an orientalist orientation in this regard, as high quality literary texts are rare. An exception, according to this teacher, is the excerpts that are taken from "One Thousand and One Nights."

### ***Culture and Technology***

The teachers' overall impression is that the program does not emphasize technology in the teaching of culture. I may say here that the teachers were thinking of the computer and internet when referring to technology. The volume and type of assignments divert the students from extensive use of technology. One teacher, who is a big advocate of technology, says that the Arabic Language School is still behind in this field. Teachers do not prepare electronic lesson plans, do not assign homework based on electronic content, do not ask their students to communicate via email, send e-cards, etc.

Teachers who use technology in their teaching say that they request their students to read news and access authentic materials on the internet or collect more information about a topic that was brought up in the class. They do that to familiarize the students with the different ways a piece of news can be reported depending on the source and objective--who and why? In a way or another, language is the primary objective and not cultural awareness.

As for TV shows, teachers do not make any effort to utilize the Arab satellite networks shows or commercials that are available at school. Some, however, agree that even commercials are rich sources of culture as they are founded on the assumption that successful marketing is based on ideas that are cultural acceptable by the audience.



Some of the teachers explain that they encounter the following difficulties: time, inaccessibility of language lab due to distance or space and lack of technological awareness.

### ***Missing Cultural Topics***

Teachers mentioned that some of the cultural aspects that are absent in the program and could and should be touched on are:

1. the image of actual Arab women who works in agriculture next men;
2. the rich social and religious tradition, whether Islamic or Christian; and
3. arts.

Teachers critiqued some of the cultural components in the textbook. In the second volume of the book, one teacher explains that the cultural aspects emphasize the past and ignore the present.

### ***Teachers' Role***

Some of the teachers are aware that the textbook is a framework, and that it can be adjusted to meet the program demands and students' interests. To do so, these instructors proposed that an action plan needs to be laid out before the course commences. This plan requires that:

1. Teachers bring authentic materials;
2. School holds workshops designated to train teachers in culture instruction;

3. Teachers should update texts available in the textbook; and
4. School solicits culturally aware and sensitive teachers.

As for the Cultural Clubs, teachers requested a framework for such clubs should set forth. This framework will include:

1. Devising a certain method to increase enrollment and commitment;
2. Students should take part in developing the clubs and their philosophy that incorporates material, methods and objectives;
3. Providing necessary logistic material such as audio and visual aids, realia, and so on.
4. Dividing student according to their needs and interests and devising clubs that meets such needs;

### **TEXTBOOK ANALYSIS**

The Middlebury Arabic Language School uses *Al-Kitaab Fii Ta'allum al-'Arabiyya* as a required textbook in the five different proficiency levels. The book was authored by Kristin Brustad, Mahmoud Al-Batal and Abbas Al-Tonsi. It comes in four volumes, the first being an introductory volume that aims at teaching the Arabic alphabet and sounds. The book is a big improvement in the history of Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language in the United States. It is user-friendly and accessible for students and teachers. The book follows a proficiency-based approach as a guiding principle in its methodology and organization. Thus reliance on authentic materials is very well noticeable, particularly in Part II and Part III. Besides its

emphasis on integrating the four language skills, the book incorporates a cultural component through the authentic materials at all levels of instruction.

The first two volumes of *Al-Kitaab* (*Alif Baa: An introduction to Arabic Letters and Sounds*, and *Al-Kitaab*, Part I) appeared in 1995. Part II was published in 1996, and Part III appeared in 2001.

The publishing of the textbook was received with admiration and high expectations. Numerous reviews were written. Among them, in 1997, Eid reviewed the first two volumes. Khalidiyyeh (1997) reviewed the second volume of this textbook. Here, I focus on what the reviewers have commented on the cultural component of the textbooks in addition to my own comments and views.

### **Alif Baa: An Introduction to Arabic Letters and Sounds**

The purpose of the introductory book, as the authors (Brustad et al., 1995) indicate, is to introduce the students to some rudimentary vocabulary, commonly used phrases and expressions besides certain elements of Arab culture introduced through cultural notes in English. Examples of these are greetings and farewells, terms of address, forms of politeness and social etiquette, and some habits and customs. These notes are intended to help students engage, from the early stages of learning the language, in simple conversations that involve cultural knowledge and awareness.

The introductory book is composed of ten units, each of which includes cultural notes on certain aspects of the Arab culture, supposedly represented by Egyptian figures and terms. The cultural notes are written in English and they

comment on authentic materials that are presented in the book such as excerpts from newspapers, graphics, ads and video skits. In Chapter 5, for instance, the cultural note discusses the process of leave taking and the polite expressions that it involves. The note in Chapter 10 summarized the development of Arabic fonts with some illustrations and samples.

### ***Al-Kitaab Fii Ta'llum al-'Arabiyya, Part I***

*Al-Kitaab*, Part I incorporates twenty units. The organizing basis for these units is a story line. Eid (1997) explains that

the story is narrated on video in twenty segments corresponding to the twenty units of the volume. It revolves around two paternal cousins, Maha and Khalid, one living in the US and the other in Cairo. We are introduced to the two individuals and their families. We learn who their parents are, what their lives are like, their daily routines, their hopes, worries, problems and we see how they interact with their family and friends. Maha and her parents are preparing to visit her father's family in Cairo, where Khalid is making the necessary preparations to receive the guests. Both Maha and Khalid feel lonely in some ways. Their parents hope for a union between their two children but insist that it is up to Maha and Khalid, who know nothing about this plan. Volume I ends at this point in the story, thus leaving the students curious to find out what will happen to Maha and Khalid, the expectation being that their meeting in Cairo may provide the answer (p. 119).

Eid points out that the integration of these videos is a good attempt to resolve the diglossic situation in the Arab World, in this case the example is Egypt, for the students by enabling them to see what variety is used and in what situation. While Modern Standard Arabic is used primarily in writing (students can see this in the written texts in the book content), colloquial is used as a means of communication among the average persons for everyday interaction, for example, greetings, shopping

habits, ordering, and so on. While, for instance, story main characters introducing themselves to the audience (students in this case), use MSA, they use the local dialect when they interact with each other at school, at home and while eating.

The move from one variety to another appears very natural and is visually reinforced by the actual change in the scene from monologue to a dialogue, which works to the benefit of beginning students who cannot differentiate the varieties as yet (Eid, 1997, p. 121).

However, it is worth mentioning, based on my experience in teaching the book and the feedback I received from other instructors and students, that the students dislike the story after a short while. A colleague of mine wrote, "It is dull, and does not capture their interest. Furthermore, the ending *ma Ahla al-Quds* (how beautiful Jerusalem is!) comes out of nowhere and does not resolve the story. And rather than showing a Brooklyn house, the authors might have chosen an Egyptian house—this would be much more interesting to the students" (Personal communication, 2002).

The books' authors (Brustad et al., 1995) also argue that the book adopts a broader definition of culture that incorporates both the traditional and the anthropological definitions. Thus, they say that the story line reflects the language, concerns, customs, thoughts and ideas. In addition to the story, culture is introduced through culture capsules in the first half of Part I. The language used to present these notes is English. As students' proficiency progresses, these capsules are replaced by written texts, or pictures that introduce them to the language. The cultural notes in the textbook address features of Arab cultural products and practices such as Arabic names, family structure, currencies, a song, Qur'anic verses, some famous places and figures, food items, currency, prophets' family and so forth. These aspects are usually

presented through authentic materials taken from newspapers, magazines and books. These materials are integrated in the course which enables the students to see language in its cultural and sociolinguistic context, thus enabling them to widen their cultural awareness and increase their appreciation to the target culture. In many cases, there are follow-up drills to check students' understanding. In others, these cultural notes serve as the context for grammatical structures or new vocabularies.

### ***Al-Kitaab Fii Ta'allum al-'Arabiyya: A Textbook for Arabic, Part II***

*Al-Kitaab*, Part II, like Part I, regards culture as an inseparable part of the language. Khalidiyyeh (1997) notes that *Al-Kitaab*, Part II, introduces the learners of Arabic to the language and culture in a way that enables them internalize, practice and use the language effectively. It does that by integrating and connecting the language and cultural components, a move that ultimately enhances the acquisition process of the language. Each unit in this volume incorporates cultural notes written in English and Arabic. The topics deal with the historical, social, literary and political aspects of the Arab culture, providing the learners with the background knowledge and information that facilitate language learning. For instance, the book introduces the learners to some of the famous Arab and Muslim historical and literary figures such as *Ibn Batuta* in Chapter One and *Sati' al-Husari* in Chapter Nine. Other texts deal with political, social and literary aspects. The authors of the book suggest that instructors use these notes to urge their students to prepare oral and written presentations in an attempt to link culture with language. It is worth mentioning that

the commentaries and explanations of the cultural aspects come before the reading texts which enable students to understand those texts.

Each chapter in Part II starts with a picture as an advanced organizer that incorporates the theme of the lesson and more importantly captures a geographical, political or literary topic. This organizer prepares students for the learning process and stimulates their curiosity for knowledge (Khalidiyyeh, 1997). It is the role of the teachers to explain the significance of these pictures and how they are related to the culture.

### ***Al-Kitaab Fii Ta'allum al-'Arabiyya: A Textbook for Arabic, Part III***

In *Al-Kitaab*, Part III, introduction, the authors (Brustad et al., 2001) explain that the structure of this volume is similar to that of volume I and II, and that the underlying organizing principle is similar to that of volume II. Nonetheless, the authors point out that this volume is different from the previous volumes in that particular sections dealing with culture were not designated, although widening cultural knowledge is still a stated objective and a serious concern. They only included those notes when they deemed they were necessary. The authors' argument lies on the assumption that students, at this high proficiency level, are able to understand the cultural connotations embedded in the written texts on their own.

The authors explain that the selection of the reading texts represent the cultural reality in the different Arab countries. For example, the volume includes articles authored by well known, respected and prominent Arab intellectuals such as

*Yousuf Idris, Fahmi Howaide, Hisham Sharabi, and so on.* The selection is based on the assumption that students should be presented with authentic materials that were not only written by native speaker, but they also represent the cultural and linguistic situation in the Arab countries.

Most of the articles in Part III bring an element of culture. In Chapter Five, for instance, the article discusses the influence of oil on the make-up of the homes in the gulf region, an area that many students mentioned that it was lacking.

## **CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

### **CULTURAL CLUBS**

Each year and as part of its commitment to the co-curricular activities, the Middlebury Arabic Language School offers the students an array of Cultural Clubs to participate in. Students are urged but not mandated to only participate in one club at a time. In the year 2002, the program offered the following clubs: Theatre Club, Koran Club, Music and Singing Club, Radio Club, Dancing Club, Poetry and Calligraphy Club. These clubs tended to meet once a week for two hours. Instructors were given the freedom to select the day and the time of the meetings.

Around the middle of the course and to assess these clubs, the school administration surveyed the students in terms of the clubs they enrolled in, the challenges and difficulties they encountered and recommendations they suggested to improve these clubs. Sixty nine students, out of 134, participated in the survey. Only



4 students said that they did not join any of the clubs. The program director asked me to analyze the surveys and allowed me to use the findings in my research.

Furthermore, I conducted one-on-one interviews with the coordinators of the seven clubs. During the interviews, I asked the coordinators about their vision of each club, its activities, the difficulties they encountered, how it is related to the Arab culture, and their recommendations to improve them. In this section I report the findings of both the school's survey of the students as well as the interviews I conducted with the coordinating instructors in addition to some of the comments about these clubs that came up in the focus groups. The findings are grouped into distinct categories.

### ***Teachers' Preparedness***

In its brochures, the Arabic School describes briefly the objectives of the Cultural Clubs. However, most teachers come to Middlebury without being informed about the clubs they will supervise or participate in. This might be related to the fact that the school does not predict in advance the clubs that would receive the highest demand among the students, and therefore get established. However, some of the clubs such as the Calligraphy Club, Qur'an Club, and Cooking club are popular and get to appear on the list of the candidate clubs every year.

In the first class week and after the establishment of the most popular clubs among students, all teachers are assigned to run or participate in these clubs. Teachers are usually given the freedom to select their favorite clubs or the ones they feel most

fit to their skills and backgrounds and most comfortable with. On some occasions, the teachers' experience and their background decide. For instance, a calligrapher runs the Calligraphy Club. A talented actor may run the theater club. Teachers with no specific preference get assigned to clubs that may need more supervisors or those with a gap to fill.

It is up to the instructors then to create a vision and objectives, and prepare materials (if they are not available) for those clubs to be enacted and hopefully accomplish some goals they set for themselves. The School, within its logistic and financial abilities, usually supplies the clubs with needed materials. Lack in preset objectives, in addition to other factors, usually result in encountering difficulties and boredom on both the teachers and students. For example, 18 students joined the Cooking Club when it commenced initially. When I interviewed the coordinator in the seventh week, only 4 students were still active.

According to the survey results, the most popular clubs among students were the Calligraphy and Qur'an Clubs. In fact, these had the highest enrollment and students' levels of commitment. Because of the high enrollment, two sections were created for the Qur'an Club. One coordinator of the club was very pleased with the students and the tremendous progress they made. More students expressed their willingness to join these clubs had they been given a second opportunity. Since the calligraphy needed a professional to run it, only one section was established with a big number of participating students.

### ***Lack of Cultural Goals***

As one may anticipate, the name *Cultural Clubs* seems to suggest that a big volume of the target culture is being taught and involved. However, my interviews with the clubs coordinators revealed that this is not the case. In fact, many of these clubs served linguistic and recreational objectives much more than presenting cultural knowledge or understanding. For instance, the Media Club coordinator stated that the main objective of the club was to enable the students use the language in new forms and creatively. Assisting the students with their pronunciation and reading skills was the main goal of the Theater Club. The teacher had to do a lot of vocabulary and general meaning explanations to enable the students understand the play.

One of the participants in the Theater Club expressed his fondness for it and said it was "a lot of fun." Yet, the student said that he felt a lack of cultural content, at least, with the play they were doing at the time. Students, he explained, were not given any background information on when and why the play was written. The student was aware of the time constraints. Yet, speaking about the play, he said, would have been very beneficial. The main activity of the Cooking Clubs was to cook. Students were only exposed to the names of the items and recipes. In the Cinema Club, the students watched movies for almost an hour and 45 minutes. They had only 15 minutes to discuss the movie in its entirety.

This may not fairly describe the whole picture as some of the clubs indeed had some culture in them. The Calligraphy Club, for instance, familiarized the students with Arabic fonts and attempted to improve their taste of this deeply-rooted art in the

Arab memory and history. Besides this, the coordinator who is a professional calligrapher himself explained the practice of this art in the old days, the different instruments calligraphers used, and the importance of this art in the Arab history. In the Dancing Club, students were introduced to a couple of dance types, some songs from different Arab countries, and dance clothing. In the Cooking Club, students were introduced to some of the different national cooking recipes in some of the Arab countries.

### ***Lack of Coordination***

Lack of coordination is evident in the timing of the clubs. Time was number one difficulty almost all of the clubs encountered. For some clubs, timing coincided with students' time to sleep and relax, or with other co-curricular activities such as soccer games or movies. Most of the clubs met on Thursday on which students have their weekly exams. Students complained that the Dancing Club was extremely long, almost two hours of training.

As all students of all levels can join any club they desire, this created havoc for the instructors in terms of the language they could use and the depth of discussion that took take place. It was challenging for the Cinema Club coordinator to discuss the cultural themes of the movies with students from both lower and higher proficiency levels at the same time. The Qur'an Club was challenged as well. Thus creating two sections was based on students' proficiency level, but this did not resolve the issue completely.

The Radio Club had no instructor coordinator at all. The Bilingual Assistant who worked as a liaison between the students and the administration and some other students took the responsibility of the Club on their own.

Lack of coordination was also evident in the volume of homework students get assigned on the club day. Most of the instructors did not take this into their consideration. The students were forced to give priority to their homework over their club activities.

### ***Lack of Material and Necessary Equipment***

Some of the clubs lacked the necessary material, finance, and equipment. This shortage negatively influenced the performance level and success of some of the clubs. For example, the Dancing Club coordinator complained that reading material about dancing, its types, and significance were nonexistent. There were not enough copies of the Qur'an for all students in the Qur'an Club. Equipment for the Cooking Club was not sufficient. One student cynically comments on the lack of equipment, "This is really nice. It's great we're making *tabbouleh* (an appetizer in the Levant area) and what not, but we need knives. I am sorry. You can't cut onion with a table knife. It just doesn't happen." The Media Club also had some difficulties with technology as to word processing in Arabic.

### ***Recommendations***

To better the quality of the Cultural Clubs, enrollments and commitment, the students proposed the following:

1. To make them mandatory;
2. To meet at the beginning of the week, Saturday or after dinner in the evening;
3. Not to have any club on Thursdays;
4. To decrease the amount of homework on club day;
5. To prepare a syllabus for the clubs before the program commencement to avoid students any surprises and prepare them mentally and emotionally;
6. To be able to switch clubs after the mid semester break;
7. To enable students plan and make decisions in club organization;
8. Not to make all clubs open for all levels, for example, the Media Club does not suit students with low proficiency;
9. To diversify club activities and provide necessary material needed; and
10. To select recipes that do not take long time in the Cooking Club.

### **LECTURES**

Among the other co-curricular activities that the Arabic summer program offered were the lectures delivered by guest speakers from outside the school and, some times, by the school instructors themselves. The topics of these lectures varied, and they took place weekly. For instance, there was a lecture about calligraphy and its significance in the Arab countries in the past and the present. The lecture was done by

one of the school's instructors who is a professional calligrapher and the Calligraphy Club coordinator. Another lecture was entitled "Cultural Arabism and the Arab Nationalism." These two broad concepts were discussed in the light of two popular songs. A third, done by a scholar on Arabic music, discussed the Arab music and the most-used musical instruments.

Students had different reactions toward these lectures. Some of the students liked and enjoyed them. Others' responses were relatively negative as to the volume and content of such lectures. These requested that more needed to be done to improve this aspect of the program. For instance, in addition to their request to increase those lectures, they requested that the topics of these cultures need to be meticulously selected. One student mentioned that only one lecture, Arabic Calligraphy, was beneficial to him. Most of them however "were kind of like ... here ... here is my grand unifying theory" and that was it.

For the beginning levels such as 1, 1.5 and even 2, the problem seemed to be more difficult, although some of them found the lecture amusing and useful, as these still lack the linguistic competence that enables them to understand the content and details of these lectures. A level 2 student says, "I attended a lecture, and I didn't understand a thing at all. [because?] I'm in level two and the lecture was way above my head."

Students suggested that two or three lectures may be specifically directed to the low level students where the content and the language can be tailored to their competence levels. Some lecturers, the students say, know the content but do not

know how to express it in a language that very well suits the diverse competencies of the different levels. This may negatively impact their motivation to even attend those lectures, not to mention understanding them. An alternative for those lectures are lectures delivered by the instructors themselves. Instructors, students suggest, can give lectures on their countries of origin, a tendency that accomplishes two goals. These instructors are more familiar with students' levels and can use a language that is not very challenging to low level students. In addition, students will get a deeper insight into several Arab countries as different entities within the same geographical region. Another suggestion was to have an outline in Arabic, or in some cases, a brief oral presentation, before hand that may facilitate the understanding of the lecture.

## **MOVIES**

Movies are a great source of cultural understanding and knowledge. Besides the movies that students watch in the Cinema Club, the school shows weekly movies for the entire student body. The movies are subtitled. In many instances, these movies are Egyptian. Egypt, can be said, is the cradle for the movie industry in the Arab World. Most of the movies that are marketed are made in Egypt. The school, however, attempts hard to show films from other Arab countries. For instance, a documentary about *Mahmoud Darwish*, the renowned Palestinian poet was shown. Instructors usually assign their students homework based on the content of the movies, for instance, writing a summary of the movie. Usually, students watch the movie and leave. Students note that it "would be beneficial if we could talk about



them afterwards...and kind of process ...the movies" and "to give it them a context," and listen to the instructors' perspectives.

The selection of the movies was critiqued by the students. Students said that the movies they watched usually appealed to the West and are not what the Arab watch. One student said that the movies should be "one(s) from the inside and not from the outside... I think the selection of the movies can be radically altered."

## **SUMMARY**

In this chapter, I reported the findings of the study. I started with the students' first questionnaire in which I described the students' demographics, their cultural needs and finally their cultural expectations. I, then, described the findings of the teachers' questionnaire that included demographic information and what the teachers believe their students' cultural needs and expectations. Next, I reported the findings of the students' second questionnaire. This section incorporated the students' levels of satisfaction as to their needs and expectations. After reporting the findings of the questionnaires, I reported the findings of the focus group interviews with both the students and the teachers. A third section included an analysis of the textbook the student used in their classes. Finally, I reported the findings of the School's survey of the Cultural Clubs and my interviews with the clubs coordinators.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter includes two sections. In the first section, I discuss the findings of the study which I reported in Chapter 4. I discuss these findings and relate them to what has been talked about in the relevant literature. In the second section, I state the implications of the study for Middlebury College Arabic School as the primary setting of the study, and also the implications of the study for the field of Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language in general. I also provide some recommendations that are meant to improve the cultural component of the Arabic summer program in Middlebury. Finally, I conclude by a brief description of the limitations of the study and implications for future research.

#### **DISCUSSION**

In this section, I discuss the findings of the study in light of the research questions. The research questions of the study were (1) What are the Middlebury Arabic School students' perceived cultural needs (if they have any, and they are aware of them)? 2) What are the students' cultural expectations? 3) How and how well does the program meet those needs and satisfy such expectations? and 4) What

implications can be drawn from the study to better the quality and the quantity of the cultural component of the program?

It is cross-cultural awareness that creates learners who are communicatively competent and successful. The National Standards Project (Standards, 1996) and the AATF National Commission on Cultural Competence (Singerman, 1996) state that students need to be able to use the language in its appropriate context to achieve the prospected proficiency level. What this indicates is that students need to be aware of the cultural settings, and the limitations where a particular utterance is appropriate or not. It also implies that language occurs in a context, and understanding the context is indispensable in pursuing learning a foreign language. In order to produce such learners, both institutional policies and students' needs should be incorporated in developing language curriculum. In light of this, I discuss the research questions.

### **Students' Cultural Needs**

The findings of the study demonstrated that some students (less than 10%) still believe that they can learn the language separated from its culture. These students state that they come to the Arabic School to learn the language only, and not to spend time reflecting on the target culture. For these students, culture is something to be learned on their own, in other study areas, or in its target environment. Berman (2002) pointed out this tendency among some students, and said that teachers are aware of it. In this regard, it can be argued that those students do not understand the

relationship between language and culture, and hence they are not fully aware of their needs.

However, it is evident from the findings, that the majority of the students (90%) come to the program with specific cultural needs that go hand in hand with their objectives to learn Arabic. The findings of the present study revealed that particular cultural themes top the list of the 26 cultural aspects the students were asked to respond to by either saying "yes," "perhaps," or "no." Other aspects do not seem to be as important, even irrelevant. Analyzed data revealed that the overall student body was extremely interested in the following cultural areas: how history and geography influenced cultural practices (85%), social etiquette and role of religion (83%), current political situation (81%) and political systems in the Arab countries (80%). Students, however, were least interested in the transportation system (18%), shopping habits (27%), business practices (47%) school life and recreation and entertainment (50%).

The aforementioned most frequently stated needs are similar across most proficiency levels. In other words, if we examine the needs of each individual level, we will not see many major differences. Besides the most frequently cultural needs common across all levels, Level 1 students, for instance were interested in family life; Level 1.5 students expressed interest in dialectal differences; Level 2 and level 3 students had needs about the status of women. Only level 4 students had, somehow, I would argue, drastically different needs. Besides knowing more about famous people

and places which seems normal, the findings of the study showed that Level 4 students had specific needs about the status of men, and school life.

The interest in knowing the status of men and the school life that Level 4 students showed is interesting and it also has its own implications. First, it seems that these students had enough about the stereotypical images of the Arabs, especially women, and thus started to explore new areas. Another plausible explanation may be that as students progress in their studies of the language and become more specialized, their interests change accordingly, and so do their cultural needs. A final possible explanation may lie in the media's focus on certain aspects of the Arab culture, which influences the coverage of other areas negatively. It is at later stage that students begin looking into other aspects that are as significant and relevant to the daily life of the people.

Although knowing about the status of men, and school life did not come up in the focus group interviews, topics, particularly politics, social etiquette, dialectal differences and role of religion were the most frequent. When Al-Batal (1988) discussed Lafayette's goals for teaching culture, he explained that when it comes to the Arab culture, two more goals seem to be inevitable, the role of religion and the diglossic situation. Based on the findings of the study, it can be argued that a third dimension needs to be emphasized in integrating Arab culture in the language classroom, politics and the current political situation. The involvement of the US in the Middle East, the continuous struggle between Israel and the Arabs, and the importance of politics in the daily life of the average Arabs necessitate that any

Arabic language program that incorporates a cultural component needs to emphasize this area. As was reported in the findings, students were really frustrated about the lack of politics in the program, and one student called it a "big mistake." The advisory, which the students alluded to in the focus group, to avoid discussing politics in the classroom can be justified particularly when this was the first summer session to be held after the tragedy of 9/11. Politics is a sensitive subject, and teachers, especially who came from the Arab countries, did not want to introduce political debate. In addition, the College administration was aware of the sensitivity of addressing politics at that time, and how it might have created tense and uneasiness in the program. Hence the advisory to avoid such debates was issued.

Students' interest in learning about greetings and social etiquette is understandable and anticipated. However, the fact that all students across all levels reported that greetings and social etiquette were among their top needs has its implications. It is common, justifiable and expected that low proficiency level students list these as their top needs. However, it is difficult to understand that advanced students have the same needs, as it is expected that these students had learned and acquired these cultural basics in their early years of learning Arabic. Is this a major gap in the Arabic programs nationwide? How do these programs teach culture, or do they? Or is it a particular case that only applies to this particular group of students? Further research in this area might be necessary to answer these questions.

### **Students' and the Average American's Cultural Needs**

One of the interesting aspects the data revealed is the discrepancy between students' cultural needs and what they think the average American's cultural needs are. I already discussed the students' most frequently and least frequently needs. Figure (10) displays the students' responses as to what they think ordinary Americans should know about the Arab culture. Whereas politics, social etiquette, and the influence of history and geography on the cultural practices are some of the most students' frequently stated needs, misconceptions, stereotypes as well as the warmth and hospitality of the Arab culture are the two major aspects the students argued that their fellow Americans need to be aware of as to the Arab culture. Since the students are "self-selected," as some students indicated, their needs tend to be different. While the image of an Arab is rooted in misconceptions and negative stereotypical images (Al-Batal, 1988 & Shaheen, 2001), students seem to have managed, to a certain extent, to diminish those misrepresentations either by studying about the Arabs, visiting Arab countries or meeting with a lot of Arabs where those images were relatively shattered. This led to a broader, deeper and more reliable image of the Arabs and Arab culture in students' minds. This is not to say that those stereotypes disappeared completely, but rather it says that they are not the students' top priority anymore. On the other hand, the American general public is still a victim of what the media as a teaching machine portrays to them, and of the lack of information. Hence, their needs, according to the students, are different and what they should know is different as well. These findings reinforce the recommendation that

education and particularly including culture in Arabic language classroom is essential in shattering stereotypes.

### **Teachers' Beliefs about Students' Cultural Needs and Expectations**

In the Teachers' Questionnaire, teachers were asked to rate what they believe their students' cultural needs were. Surprisingly, teachers rated music as students' number one need while social etiquette, arts, role of religion, political system and famous people and places came next. As for students' cultural expectations, teachers believe that greetings/leave taking, role of religion, social etiquette, food and eating habits and music rated the highest. In a way, both teachers and students reported similar answers in terms of students' cultural needs and expectations. What is notable is that teachers rated music as students' first cultural need followed by more anticipated areas such as social etiquette, politics and role of religion, one would think. My belief is that teachers in this regard are either exaggerating or confusing the word *need* with *desire* or what students like to do. This is not to belittle the role of music in the cultural realm, but rather to say, based on students' motivation to learn Arabic, as demonstrated in Figure 10, that it contradicts students' motivation to learn Arabic where 25% of the students said that they learn Arabic for professional development, 22% for academic purposes and only 14% for personal satisfaction under which music can best be classified. It also contradicts what the students argued as to their most basic cultural needs such as social etiquette and politics. A plausible explanation to this may be that teachers confuse students' likes and needs.



Is it possible that teachers are not aware of their students' cultural needs? To some degree, I would say that many of them, particularly who did not experience a direct contact with American students before, are not. I would also argue that some of the teachers are not well aware of the role of culture in the classroom and what the definition of culture is, or even not aware of their own culture. As the findings indicated, some teachers do not teach culture at all, and if they do, they do that to boost students' motivation (Paige et al., 2003). Others may include it to serve a linguistic objective. Another group lacks proper training. Only few have a good grasp of the definition of culture and its significance in language classrooms. These factors were discussed in the literature. For instance, Paige et al. (2003) cited Byran et al. (1991) who identified three idiosyncratic orientations that determine teachers' contributions: (1) individual philosophy regarding language pedagogy in general; (2) nature of personal experience with the foreign culture (in our case, it is the diversity of the Arab culture and predominance of Egyptian culture in the textbook); and, (3) expectations regarding the learning potential of the class.

### **Students' Cultural Expectations**

Although a few students come with no cultural expectations whatsoever as was expressed in their comments included in the questionnaires or have reported during the interviews, most students come with some, if not many, cultural expectations. As expected, the students' high expectations revolve around the following cultural areas: greetings/leave taking, social etiquette, dialectal differences,

famous people and places as well as music. On the other hand, students come with least expectations with regard to transportation system, architecture, shopping habits, business practices and juridical system.

If we examine individual levels, however, we will find that there are differences in students' expectations. For instance, Level 1 students have high expectations about arts and least expectations about school life. Level 1.5 students expect to learn about food and eating habits as well as entertainment and recreation, but have lower expectations about the status of men. Level 2 students do anticipate learning about the role of religion but not about the status of women. Level 3 students expect to learn about literature but not school life. Finally, Level 4 students have high expectations about literature and politics. The students' written comments and what they stated in the interviews verified these findings.

It can be said in this regard that there are common cultural expectations among the students. Those are basically survival ones that any foreign language learner would expect to find in a foreign language classroom. The divide, however, is noticeable when we consider the individual expectations of each level. Level 3 and 4 students who might have chosen Arabic as their career or field of research do expect that the Arabic language program would provide them with literary and political knowledge. Lower proficiency levels have lower expectations as to these areas. It is thus important that the Arabic language program, if it opts to consider students' expectations in designing and teaching the cultural component of its curriculum to

tailor its cultural component to such expectations, taking into consideration the different levels of students' proficiency.

### **Program's Fulfillment of Students' Needs and Expectations**

Based on the findings of the study, it can be said that the program does a satisfactory job in fulfilling students' needs and satisfying their expectations. Although 12% of the students said that they are completely satisfied when it comes to their cultural needs, most of them (53%) were partially satisfied, and 35% were not at all satisfied.

The level 1 students in this study are the least partially satisfied students with the cultural content when it comes to their needs. The number one factor for this lack of satisfaction can be the minimized cultural input the teachers provide to the students as was reported in the results of the teachers' and students' focus group interviews and the questionnaire, where lack of cultural input was stated bluntly in the students' comments. L 1 teachers, at least whom I spoke with, on the one hand, explained that they do not teach culture due to the students' low proficiency levels and the time constraints. The students, on the other hand, complained about this shortage and thus were very disappointed and frustrated.

On the other end, level 3 and level 4 students have the highest level of partial satisfaction. Overall, more than 50% of the students were partially satisfied. The apparent decrease in Level 2 students' complete satisfaction can be the result of the teachers' and students' higher concern about the linguistic challenge they encounter when they finish Part I of the textbook and start Part II. It is agreed upon among

Arabic language teachers who use *al-Kitaab* as the required textbook in their classes that there is a relatively wide linguistic gap between Part I and part II, particularly in the volume of new vocabulary students and complexity of the reading passages. Students usually struggle to bridge the gap and create a smooth transition. Teachers, on the other hand, have no other choice but to spend more time on preparing their students to rise up to the challenge of Part II by providing them with supplementary reading materials. This may have a negative effect on the quantity and quality of the cultural content. It is the first thing teachers sacrifice in the normal situation. When they are met with a linguistically challenging one, culture even becomes less significant. Nonetheless, Level 2 students still hold the highest rate of partial satisfaction, which still tells that program's efforts are still rewarding.

As for a detailed description of the school performance with regard to the students' most frequent cultural needs, the picture is different. A quick look at Figure (33) reveals that the school did its best in the area of greetings and leave taking (36% complete satisfaction), while performed more poorly in satisfying students' needs in discussing politics (5%), social etiquette (8%), and how history and geography influenced cultural practices (7%). The same findings came up in the focus group interviews as well. Students were disappointed that politics was avoided; social etiquette, particularly the relationships between women and men were not covered in more detail. Even greetings at the introductory levels, Level 1 and 1.5, were not fairly treated.

As for students' cultural expectations and the overall satisfaction rates, the picture looks more encouraging (see Table 2). While the highest rate in students' needs complete satisfaction is 16%, the lowest satisfaction rate as to their cultural expectations is 18% and the highest is 27%. One would assume thus that the program may have a clearer picture of what the students expect but a less clear picture of what they need. The cultural content in the textbook, and the variety of the co-curricular cultural activities seem to suit students' expectations more than they meet their needs.

What may apply on analyzing the data in Table 1 may apply to data in Table 2. L 1 and Level 2 students have the lowest complete satisfaction rates. Meanwhile, L1 students have the highest rate of lack of satisfaction (44%), and L 2 students have the highest rate of partial satisfaction (55%). As for individual cultural aspects, students were most satisfied with the school's performance in greetings/leave taking (36%), and music (29%). On the other hand, the students were least satisfied in the following areas: interpersonal and inter group conflicts (4%) and business practices (5%).

### **Teachers' Difficulties in Culture Instruction**

As data revealed, time was the most compelling constraint teacher encounter in teaching culture. Lack of materials comes second. Lack of assessment comes third while lack of training trails the list. The findings seem to support the findings from other studies. Researchers have argued that culture is difficult, subtle and elusive. They also discussed that among the difficulties teachers encounter in culture

instruction were time, lack of training, lack of material and assessment (Heusinkveld, 1997, Seeley, 1994, Brooks, 1968, Tedick and Walker, 1996). In her study that investigated how teachers teach culture, Moore (1996) found that time was the most serious impediment in teaching culture.

The argument that time is a major constraint may be valid if culture is still regarded as supplementary and a source of amusement. However, when culture is regarded as a language skill by national organization such as ACTFL, AATF and language philosophers and educators such as Seeley, Nostrand, and Brooks, to mention some, then it should be treated in the same way other skills are treated if not more favorably. Seeley (1994) has argued against the time constraint difficulty. In a setting like Middlebury's, his argument can be more valid. Although the linguistic content teachers need to cover is tremendous, there will still remain time to teach culture when classes meet for five hours a day. Planned utilization of the co-curricular activities is another way of integrating culture and language. In this regard, classes need to be re-organized in a way that provides a context for the cultural content

### **Cultural Clubs: A Big Gap**

In terms of the Arabic School terminology, Cultural Clubs are part of the co-curricular activities. In this sense they are an integral part of the program and not complementary. The title *Cultural Clubs* suggests that the clubs are a rich source of knowledge about the Arab culture. And in fact, they should be. For instance, the Music Club has the potential of offering the students not only linguistic

characteristics but also other valuable cultural elements that are authentic and unique to the target culture in an enjoyable manner (Brooks, 1968). Also, music, songs and musical activities can foster the communication skills within the target culture. Music texts represent various cultural subjects and may introduce cultural differences. Music, furthermore, is a reflection of people's beliefs, ideas and attitudes (Failoni, 1997).

Another instance is the Cooking Club. The club can be used to develop contexts for studying geography, history, geography and social structure. Abrate (1997) explains that

food and related subjects provide an effective, inexhaustible means of introducing students to a "taste" of authentic culture whose benefits extend far beyond enjoyment of the items consumed. The aspects of culture which most affect communication are so commonplace as to be unconscious to native speaker, that is the attitudes, beliefs, habits, and behaviors particular to the group (p. 411).

Thus, a cooking club would not only emphasize food items. Incorporating eating habits, behaviors and perspectives is more than necessary and within teachers' reach.

Hence, one would anticipate a considerable amount of cultural content embedded, if not explicit, in these Cultural Clubs. My interviews with the students and clubs coordinators, however, revealed that the cultural content might be minimal, in some cases, and that a lot more needs to be done for the clubs to be culturally effective. It is no secret then that these clubs lack the vision, the planning, the objectives and to some extent the supplies and material. There is no doubt that there are limitations and constraints as was reported in the Findings section. However, the

clubs are a reality, and I would not imagine that the Arabic School would give up those clubs easily. On the contrary, the Arabic School has been attempting to improve these clubs, at least, as I can judge from my experience teaching there for the last four years. Yet and in order to be more effective, there is a need to revisit and restructure those clubs in a way that makes them worthy of two hours or so a week. There is a need to study the value and the desired objectives the school wants to achieve through them. The Cultural Clubs can be both a source of students' relief out of the stress they experience due to the intensity of the program, and of cultural awareness at the same.

Many students demanded to make these clubs mandatory. This demand may not be possible at least in the near future for legal reasons. The Arabic School commits itself to provide students with five content hours a day. Since the Cultural Clubs are not described as content hours in the School's publications, some students may object to regarding them mandatory and consequently assign them credit for enrolling and participating in the clubs activities. Two years ago, the College had to deal with such a case.

### **Dialect Classes**

The inclusion of dialect classes maybe one of the strongest aspects of the Middlebury Arabic summer program, as advanced level students are provided with the opportunity to learn about and to some extent use the most basic means of communication in the Arab countries. As mentioned earlier, only Level 3 and 4 students are permitted to enroll in these classes. The School tends to vary those



classes to cope up with the diversity of the dialects in the different countries and the students' preferences. The students' complaint that the Gulf region is not represented is valid. Yet, it is usually the availability of the instructors that represent the particular country or region that determines which dialect to be offered. The School's policy toward the Dialect Classes is not completely clear, particularly in terms of assigning credit to the enrolled students. What is more concrete however is that a syllabus for the classes is prepared before they commence. It is a unified syllabus that suggests what topics to be discussed and on what day. This makes the teaching process smoother, in contrast to the Cultural Clubs.

Although the dialects are the means of communication in the Arab countries and thus reflect a big magnitude of cultural content and connotations, the focus of the classes is primarily language. Some songs, TV shows, plays and popular proverbs are included in those classes in various degrees. Teachers' experience and material availability determine the inclusion rate of the cultural elements. Yet the priority is always given to the linguistic component. Thus a sort of balance between language and culture needs to be sought. Discussing the content of the presented material also needs to be given more importance. If classes in Modern Standard Arabic provide the students with an opportunity to view some aspects of the big "C" culture, the dialect classes can be a rich source for introducing students to aspects of the daily life of the Arab people. And indeed, students reported that they learned some aspects of the daily life, regional dialectal differences, and marriage practices in the Palestinian dialect class. They watched some movies and had discussion on the pragmatic

expressions in one of the Egyptian dialect classes and the Syrian dialect classes. The emphasis on one country rather than on the vast Arab World can be one of the most advantageous aspects of these classes. Students get to know more about their particular country of interest.

The Arabic School's undertaking in incorporating the dialects into its language program to address the diglossic nature of Arabic in the Arab countries is a serious step towards the integrity of language and culture in proficiency-oriented language classrooms and programs. The issue has been debated for a while. Unfortunately, Al-Batal (1995) explains that very little progress has been made.

From the findings that were reported in the previous section, time seems to be the most problematic. Meeting for three times a week for less than hour is not sufficient to discuss both the linguistic and the cultural aspects of the culture. Students also complained about using the spoken dialect, in some classes, to describe or discuss aspects of the daily life in the US.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The current study investigated the Middlebury College Arabic School students' cultural needs and expectations, and how well the program fulfills such needs and expectations. The study has showed that although there is a moderate rate of satisfaction among students, there is still a lot that needs, and hopefully, can be done in a manner that betters the quantity and quality of the cultural component of the program. The findings of the study do not imply, in any way, that only students' needs

should be taken into consideration in designing a cultural syllabus. Teachers are supposedly more aware of their students' needs. As such, their input is necessary in course development. Although the main focus of the study was Middlebury College Arabic Language School, the study has specific recommendations for that particular setting, and also it has general recommendations for the field of Teaching Arabic as Foreign Language in general.

### **Recommendations for the Middlebury College Arabic School**

According to the findings of the study and unlike the linguistic component of the program which is highly reputed, the cultural component of the Middlebury School Arabic summer program needs to be revisited and reevaluated, not only in terms of what is offered, but also in terms of how and why.

The Arabic Language School curriculum provides a relatively good amount of cultural content in an integrative manner. However, a complete vision of how to arrive to such integration that incorporates the cultural products, practices and perspectives, and that involve both the curricular and the co-curricular activities is, I believe, urgently needed, if Middlebury is to maintain its reputation as a leading program in foreign language instruction. To realize this vision the following recommendations may be instrumental and useful.

### ***Cultural Objectives***

As it is the case with the other language skills where specific goals are sought and described for each proficiency level, cultural goals need to be integrated in the course syllabus for each level. Teachers need to be aware that the cultural content is essential and indispensable in the language classroom, and that culture should be taught systematically in a fashion that accomplishes the prescribed goals for each level. Moreover, teaching culture should not be left to the teachers' discretion, or for the sake of amusement. Teaching culture should transcend the factual and practical level to tackle the cultural perspectives, a deficiency that is evident in the program. All teachers of all levels should realize that producing students who are communicatively and culturally proficient cannot be successful with the exclusion of culture, or teaching it when there is time or when the circumstances allow for it. In this regard, it should be emphasized that low level students need to be introduced to the target culture as early as possible since 70-80% of them may only stay for only two years and then leave. On the other hand, and since the program is essentially designed to also serve those students who commit themselves to a long term career in Arabic, those students' cultural needs should be taken into account when designing the syllabus, particularly discussing the current political situation, role of religion, how history and geography influence cultural practices, and so on, as discussed in Chapter 4. Some of the issues such as politics may and can be sensitive, and teachers may choose not to discuss them. However a better-quality course necessitates the

integration of those issues, probably with conscious caution that bears in mind all the ethnic, religious and political backgrounds of the teachers and students in the classroom. For those students who are interested in Arabic but in learning about the Middle East, Middlebury Arabic Summer Program may not be their best option. It is not within the program's reach to teach about non-Arab cultures although Arabic constitutes an important language in the community.

### ***Teacher Development***

There is no doubt that teachers are the best representatives of their own culture. Since most faculty members are Arabs and/or have studied and lived for a long time in Arab countries, students can learn about the Arab culture tremendously by contacting their teachers. Teachers' concerns should not only be focused on teaching vocabulary and grammar but rather emphasizing the cultural dimension of the language as well. Teachers need to include culture in their lesson plans and inside class activities.

Not all teachers who teach Arabic at Middlebury are well-trained in teaching culture. Recruiting well-qualified teachers for nine weeks for the summer may not be an easy task for the Arabic School administration. In fact, it is one of the greatest challenges it usually encounters. The challenge increased after the events of 9/11 as the Acting Director argues, due to the heightened level of fear among Arabs (Johnson, 2003). It is usually those instructors with no sufficient training background who may ignore the teaching of the cultural content even when it is existent in the

textbook. Even trained teachers may fall in the same trap. This trend may create a gap among the different levels, classes of the same level or even in the same class where pairs of teacher co-teach. It might be difficult for the school administration to request that teachers who are willing to teach in the summer program be appropriately trained in culture instruction. The alternative can be, as the school does with other language areas, the provision of on-site workshops in teaching culture by those teachers who had already received prior training or by experts in the field.

### ***Co-curricular Activities***

As was stated earlier, Middlebury offers a wide array of co-curricular activities for its students. Cultural clubs, movies, and lectures are the most significant of these for the study. The study has specific recommendations for each of these activities.

**CULTURAL CLUBS.** Cultural Clubs in the Arabic School can be a major source of cultural understanding and awareness for students in addition to being a primary source for linguistic enrichment. Those clubs have the potential to supplement the program with sufficient content in many cultural aspects students are in need of or interested in. In fact, if utilized properly, the clubs can assist in creating a culturally-rich environment that not only teaches the students the products and the practices of

the culture but also the perspectives that lay behind such products and practices. Not to mention that these clubs will contribute significantly to diminishing the stereotypical images students may have. To improve the functionality of the Cultural Clubs, the school needs to:

1. have a vision and philosophy for each club. The vision should incorporate the objectives, the material and the techniques;
2. look for ways that encourage, if not force, all students to enroll and participate in those clubs. Being optional belittle the role of the clubs;
3. select and establish clubs in which the students are interested and willing to effectively participate in. Based on this, surveying students' preferences before the clubs commence can be insightful;
4. allow students to switch clubs at a certain time so that students get exposed to more than one cultural theme or aspect in a broader manner;
5. select a time for the clubs that does not contradict with any other co-curricular activities or students' rest times;
6. provide in advance what is expected that each club will need as to materials and supplies;
7. reward the students or entire clubs for their accomplishments and progress;  
and
8. establish an archival procedure where all written, audio, visual products of the clubs can be kept, used and developed for following years.

**Lectures.** To improve the quality of the lectures that the School organizes, those lectures need to:

1. be delivered by competent and well trained lecturers who can address different proficiency levels at a time. In this regard, increasing the number of lectures presented by the school's teachers can serve the purpose;
2. direct cultural topics that enrich students' cultural awareness and present a balanced and realistic image of the Arab culture; and
3. address topics that are related to students' needs and interests. Filling the blank should not be the school's concern;

**MOVIES.** Although copy right issues and the provision of subtitled movies are two major challenges the school encounters, movie selection should have its philosophy. Movies need to represent different Arab countries, reflect the dynamic nature of the culture, and deal with topics that are of interest to Arabs, and not out-of-date. More importantly, movies should not create or enhance any misconceptions about the Arab culture. Students need to be provided with a background of the movies and given the opportunity to discuss the content and the cultural concerns in the movies with the teachers or among themselves after watching them. Movies should be presented in a manner that does not reinforce stereotypes of misconceptions.

**DIALECT CLASSES.** In 2002, Middlebury offered classes in Syrian, Moroccan, Egyptian and Palestinian. According to the results from the survey and in order to



enhance the cultural component in the dialect classes, more authentic, audio and visual materials are needed. Teachers need to utilize the satellite TV to present the students with spoken language used in its sociocultural context. Songs, dramas, and commercials are the best place to learn the dialect and the culture, besides they are a source of entertainment that breaks the daily routine. Offering a class to teach a gulf dialect is highly recommended.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TAFL: A PRELIMINARY APPROACH FOR TEACHING ARAB CULTURE**

Here, I present major guidelines for a preliminary approach to integrate Arab culture in the classroom. The approach is an adaptation of major works in the teaching of culture in the foreign language classroom, teaching Arab culture in particular. It is a proficiency-based approach that aims at producing students who are linguistically and culturally competent. It addresses the when, what, what for and how.

**WHEN?** Students of Arabic as a Foreign Language, like students of other foreign languages, should be exposed to culture as early as possible. A majority of American students learn Arabic for two years as a language requirement. Lack of exposure to the basics of the Arab culture in the classroom will put students at a disadvantage and will not contribute significantly to the diminishing the stereotypes that students may have acquired from the media and/or lack of information. Students who continue to

study Arabic should also continue learning about the Arab culture as most of these students end up working, living, or doing research in or about issues in Arab countries or Middle Eastern studies. Time should not be teachers' major concern. Lower linguistic proficiency, if culture is authentically integrated, should not be an impediment either.

**WHAT?** In his experimental module for teaching Arab culture, Suleiman (1993) stated that he was committed to the *integration*, rather than *inclusion* of culture in the anthropological sense, and not the sociological aspect of it. His interest in the anthropological sense springs from two factors: to balance the dominant bias in Teaching Arabic as Foreign Language TAFL in Europe and the States that favors the traditional sense, and to display the “full dynamic flow” for the culture so that learners become well-equipped to deal with any cultural shock. Suleiman’s rationale is soundly justified.

The current study demonstrated that students also need to learn about the traditional sense of culture as this fulfills some of their personal and academic needs. A good balance between the two senses is highly desirable. As was discussed in the literature, culture is a complete way of life that incorporates the traditional and the anthropological as well as the language. The inclusion of both domains guarantees that students at various levels will and should learn about the products, practices and perspectives of the target culture, as proposed by the ACTFL National Standards (Standards, 1996). Nonetheless, proficiency differences should be taken into account.

Although *Al-Kitaab* does a good job in presenting the students with cultural products, practices and perspectives, students at lower level are primarily presented with simple and basic cultural products and practices. The philosophical explanation is relatively, if not fully, ignored. Only at higher proficiency levels, students start to learn about cultural perspectives.

What interests me in Suleiman's Module is the fact that it is culture-based module through which language is introduced and taught. Suleiman seems to be criticizing the profession's (I mean TAFL) refrain from *integrating* culture and preferring that culture be *included* in the curriculum. This notion seems to contradict with what Brustad et al. (1995, 1996 and 2001) who basically included the culture as a separate thing.

Although teaching the dialect is indispensable, the most relevant issue that teachers need to be aware of is the ability of educated Arab speakers is to switch between the dialect and the standard without the difficulty. The facet is not addressed in the program and even any other program. It is crucial that this aspect be introduced and tacked and taught in the dialect classes.

**What for?** Several frameworks have been suggested as to the main objectives of culture inclusion in the foreign language classroom. In the field of TAFL, Al-Batal (1989) has adapted Lafayette's framework and added to it two more objectives that are peculiar to the Arab culture. These are:

1. the ability to recognize the main principles of Islam and the role it plays as a major component of Arab culture; and
2. the ability to use the appropriate level of language, i.e., Modern Standard Arabic (fusha) or colloquial ('aammiyyah), depending on the conversational situation.

Based on the findings of the study, I would imagine that another objective needs to be addressed. Students should be able to recognize the major political conflicts in the Middle East, and how these conflicts influence the daily life of every Arab, particularly when the US government is directly and/or indirectly involved in those conflicts and regions.

**HOW?** Many techniques and strategies have been proposed to teach culture. In teaching, what might be lacking, however, is the enactment of such techniques in a way that makes them operationalized and adds liveliness to the language classroom. The National Standards (Standards, 1996) stated that products, practices and perspectives of the target culture need to be included in the language classroom. Students need to be able to understand the relationships between products and perspectives, on one hand, and practices and perspectives, on the other. Training in

this area becomes inevitable. Suleiman (1993) comments that none of the already proposed and discussed techniques (see Chapter 2) directly applied to the materials they have included in their module of teaching Arab culture. Thus they did not use any of them.

In designing and presenting any cultural material, what Patrikis (1988) referred to as “four sins of commission” need to be taken seriously, particularly when the Arab culture is engulfed with misconceptions and stereotypes, and when so many Americans are ethnocentric when it comes to foreign cultures. To avoid the dangers of bias, images and aspects of Arab culture should be complete. For instance, extremism is not a common trait, and thus should not be exaggerated. Secondly, the richness, greatness and deep roots of the Arab culture should not be reduced to the insignificant, for instance, restricting the Arab culture to a group of people living with their camels in the desert without any traces of modern civilization does not really reflect the reality. Thirdly, images and aspects about Arabs should be complete, reliable and integrated. Thus, the Arab woman is much more than a veil and a housewife. Finally ignorance of certain elements of cultural themes or the diversity of the Arab culture, should be taken into account. Minorities are part of the Arab World and should be reflected on.

**Assessment.** Another dimension which needs to be seriously tackled is culture assessment. Even if teachers teach culture, they tend not to evaluate students' learning. Assessment is crucial in that it informs practitioners of the extent to which their objectives have been accomplished. It also tells them how effective their teaching and techniques have been. The setting, teaching environment, and proficiency levels are factors that need to be taken into account when evaluating culture. While they have been criticized, standardized tests may be appropriate for intensive short courses such as Middlebury's. Projects and portfolios, however, may be more efficient in all-year-long courses. Although Suleiman (1993) admits that assessment is crucial to culture inclusion, testing was absent from the module due to the lack of time.

#### **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

This study investigated the students' cultural needs and expectations in a very particular and distinctive setting that is, in many ways, different from the language programs elsewhere. It is intensive, immersive, involves the Language Pledge, and enjoys a highly reputable status. It also took place after the tragedy of September 11<sup>th</sup>. Thus, the findings and the conclusions of the study reflect that peculiar setting at that particular time, and cannot in many ways be generalizable to other settings, although they may reflect general tendencies that need to be examined thoroughly. Drawn implications and conclusions, however, might be applied in programs where immersion is the teaching approach.

Secondly, the study took place after the events September, 2002, and when the number of students' enrollment was the highest the school has ever witnessed. It is thus not certain whether the same results could have been obtained in the normal circumstances.

Lastly, as the US is currently and directly involved in the Middle East region, and the demand on studying Arabic and understanding the Arab culture are at the highest peak, future studies may yield new and different trends in the student population's cultural needs and expectations that fit the dynamic nature of culture.

#### **IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

This study is a first step in improving the program to better aid in fulfilling students' cultural needs and expectations. A study at a larger scale, however, could shed more light on such needs and expectations, and consequently improve the cultural content of textbooks and study materials. There is also a need for future studies to investigate what cultural aspects of the major cultural themes this study emphasized in which students are mostly interested.

The study demonstrated that many teachers do not teach culture for lack the proper training, it is of relevant significance to investigate how teachers of Arabic teach culture in the United States, if they teach it, the techniques they use and how that correlates with students' cultural competence. Since cultural capsules or notes are the primary techniques used in culture instruction in Middlebury, experimental

studies need to be done to examine the effectiveness of using other techniques at a larger scale.

Also, the current study did not specify precisely the sources the students most benefit from when it comes to cultural input. The study alluded to the types of these sources, but it did not measure the magnitude each source contributes with. Future studies may need to look at this aspect.

Finally, as this study did not involve direct observation of how and why culture is (not) taught in the classroom due to time constraints, absence of cultural component in teachers' lesson plans, as well as the researcher's teaching responsibilities, a study that involves direct observation is highly recommended to validate the findings of the current study.



## Appendix A

### Students' First Questionnaire

This questionnaire is meant to gather data on the teaching of culture, particularly students' cultural needs and expectations about the Arab culture at the Arabic summer program at Middlebury College, and how these needs and expectations are met.

Please take a few moments to complete the questionnaire.

Remember that all information will be treated with confidence.

#### SECTION ONE

##### *TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF*

1. What is your name? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What is your gender? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What college degree/s do you possess?
  - a. B.A.
  - b. M.A. /M.S.
  - c. PH.D/ED.D
  - d. other \_\_\_\_\_
5. For which Arabic course are you enrolled? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What is your reason for taking Arabic? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Why did you select Middlebury College?  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Have you spent any time in an Arabic speaking community in the US or elsewhere? Yes No

9. If yes, what do you think Americans should know about Arab culture?

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10. Where did you learn Arabic before coming to Middlebury?

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## SECTION TWO

*Tell us about your needs. What do you need to know about Arabic culture?*

Cultural aspects	Yes	Perhaps	No
1. Street life	Yes	Perhaps	No
2. School life	Yes	Perhaps	No
3. Family life	Yes	Perhaps	No
4. Judicial system	Yes	Perhaps	No
5. Business practices and behavior	Yes	Perhaps	No
6. Food and eating habits	Yes	Perhaps	No
7. Dialectal differences	Yes	Perhaps	No
8. Music	Yes	Perhaps	No
9. Famous people and places	Yes	Perhaps	No
10. Education system	Yes	Perhaps	No
11. Role of religion	Yes	Perhaps	No
12. Status of women	Yes	Perhaps	No
13. Literature	Yes	Perhaps	No
14. Transportation Architecture	Yes	Perhaps	No
15. Current political situation	Yes	Perhaps	No
16. Greetings/leave taking	Yes	Perhaps	No
17. Role of military	Yes	Perhaps	No
18. Entertainment and recreation	Yes	Perhaps	No
19. Shopping habits	Yes	Perhaps	No
20. Social etiquette	Yes	Perhaps	No
21. Family structure	Yes	Perhaps	No
22. Interpersonal and inter-group conflicts	Yes	Perhaps	No
23. Arts	Yes	Perhaps	No
24. How history and geography affect cultural practices	Yes	Perhaps	No
25. Status of men	Yes	Perhaps	No
26. Political system	Yes	Perhaps	No
27. Other	Yes	Perhaps	No

Please specify -----  
 -----  
 -----

**SECTION THREE**

*Tell us about your expectations. Do you expect to learn about these in your courses?*

<b>Cultural aspects</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Perhaps</b>	<b>No</b>
1. Family life What aspects?	Yes	Perhaps	No
2. School life What aspects?	Yes	Perhaps	No
3. Role of religion What aspects?	Yes	Perhaps	No
4. Political system What aspects?	Yes	Perhaps	No
5. Business practices and behavior What aspects?	Yes	Perhaps	No
6. Education system What aspects?	Yes	Perhaps	No
7. Food and eating habits What aspects?	Yes	Perhaps	No
8. Entertainment and recreation What aspects?	Yes	Perhaps	No

9. Music What aspects?	Yes	Perhaps	No
10. Arts What aspects?	Yes	Perhaps	No
11. Greetings/ leave taking What aspects?	Yes	Perhaps	No
12. Social etiquette What aspects?	Yes	Perhaps	No
13. Street life What aspects?	Yes	Perhaps	No
14. Shopping habits What aspects?	Yes	Perhaps	No
15. Architecture What aspects?	Yes	Perhaps	No
16. Current political situation What aspects?	Yes	Perhaps	No
17. How history and geography affect cultural practices What aspects?	Yes	Perhaps	No
18. Famous people and places What aspects?	Yes	Perhaps	No
19. Dialectal differences What aspects?	Yes	Perhaps	No

20. Status of women What aspects?	Yes	Perhaps	No
21. Status of men What aspects?	Yes	Perhaps	No
22. Family structure What aspects?	Yes	Perhaps	No
23. Literature What aspects?	Yes	Perhaps	No
24. Judicial system What aspects?	Yes	Perhaps	No
25. Interpersonal and inter-group conflicts What aspects?	Yes	Perhaps	No
26. Transportation What aspects?	Yes	Perhaps	No
27. Other	Yes		No

Could you list specific questions you would like to be able to answer about the aspects mentioned above or any other aspects of culture? -----

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## Appendix B

### Students' Second Questionnaire

This is the second questionnaire that is meant to gather data on how students' needs and expectations about Arab culture as it is presented at the Arabic program at Middlebury College are fulfilled and satisfied.

**Please take a few moments to complete the questionnaire.**

REMEMBER THAT ALL INFORMATION WILL BE TREATED WITH CONFIDENTIALITY.

#### Section One

Name:

Level and section:

#### SECTION TWO

*Tell us about your **needs** about the Arab culture. How has the program **fulfill** those needs?*

Cultural aspects	Completely	Partially	Not at all
1. Street life	completely	partially	not at all
2. School life	completely	partially	not at all
3. Family life	completely	partially	not at all
4. Judicial system	completely	partially	not at all
5. Business practices and behavior	completely	partially	not at all
6. Food and eating habits	completely	partially	not at all
7. Dialectal differences	completely	partially	not at all
8. Music	completely	partially	not at all
9. Famous people and places	completely	partially	not at all
10. Education system	completely	partially	not at all

11. Role of religion	completely	partially	not at all
12. Status of women	completely	partially	not at all
13. Literature	completely	partially	not at all
14. Transportation Architecture	completely	partially	not at all
15. Current political situation	completely	partially	not at all
Greetings/leave taking	completely	partially	not at all
16. Role of military	completely	partially	not at all
17. Entertainment and recreation	completely	partially	not at all
18. Shopping habits	completely	partially	not at all
19. Social etiquette	completely	partially	not at all
20. Family structure	completely	partially	not at all
21. Interpersonal and inter-group conflicts	completely	partially	not at all
22. Arts	completely	partially	not at all
23. How history and geography affect cultural practices	completely	partially	not at all
24. Status of men	completely	partially	not at all
25. Political system	completely	partially	not at all
26. Any other needs?			

Please specify: -----  
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**SECTION THREE**

*Tell us about your expectations. How has the program satisfy your expectations about the learning the following cultural aspects?*

<b>Cultural aspects</b>	<b>Completely</b>	<b>Partially</b>	<b>Not at all</b>
1. Arts	completely	partially	not at all
2. Status of women	completely	partially	not at all
3. Role of religion	completely	partially	not at all
4. Political system	completely	partially	not at all
5. Business practices and behavior	completely	partially	not at all
6. Education system	completely	partially	not at all
7. Food and eating habits	completely	partially	not at all

8. Entertainment and recreation	completely	partially	not at all
9. Music	completely	partially	not at all
10. Family life	completely	partially	not at all
11. Greetings/ leave taking	completely	partially	not at all
12. Social etiquette	completely	partially	not at all
13. Street life	completely	partially	not at all
14. Shopping habits	completely	partially	not at all
15. Architecture	completely	partially	not at all
16. Current political situation	completely	partially	not at all
17. How history and geography affect cultural practices	completely	partially	not at all
18. Famous people and places	completely	partially	not at all
19. Dialectal differences	completely	partially	not at all
20. School life	completely	partially	not at all
21. Status of men	completely	partially	not at all
22. Family structure	completely	partially	not at all
23. Literature	completely	partially	not at all
24. Judicial system	completely	partially	not at all
25. Interpersonal and inter-group conflicts	completely	partially	not at all
26. Transportation	completely	partially	not at all
27. Any other expectations and how they were satisfied?			

Please list: -----  
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## Appendix C

### Teachers' Questionnaire

This questionnaire is meant to gather data on the teaching of culture, particularly students' cultural needs and expectations at the Arabic program at Middlebury College, and how to what extent those needs and expectations are met. Your responses are essential to this study. Remember that all information will be treated with confidence.

Please take a few moments to complete the questionnaire.

1. What college degree/s do you possess? (Please circle your answer.)
  - a. B.A.
  - b. M.A./M.S.
  - c. PH.D/ED.D
2. Did your degree include training in the teaching of culture?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
3. How many years of experience do you have as a foreign language teacher?
  - a. Less than 5 years
  - b. Between 5 and 10 years
  - c. More than 10 Years
4. What category best describes the instructional time you devote to the teaching of culture?
  - a. In all/ most of my lessons
  - b. In some of my lessons
  - c. In few of my lessons
  - d. In none of my lessons
5. How would you best describe how you teach culture?
  - a. Use of authentic material in my lessons.

Explain: -----  
-----

b. Use of culture capsules

Explain: -----  
-----  
-----

c. Use of culture assimilators.

Explain: -----  
-----  
-----

d. I give students projects on cultural topics to research

Give Examples: -----  
-----  
-----

e. Use of cultural notes in textbook

Elaborate: -----  
-----  
-----

f. I teach about cultural products.

Give examples: -----  
-----  
-----

g. I teach about cultural practices.

Give examples: -----  
-----  
-----

h. I teach about cultural perspectives.

Give examples: -----  
-----  
-----

i. Any other?

Please elaborate: -----  
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j. Please attach one of your lesson plans in teaching culture (if applicable.)

6. What are some of the constraints you experience in teaching culture?

- a. I do not have enough time.
- b. I do not have enough material/resources to teach culture.
- c. I do not have necessary training for the teaching of culture.
- d. Culture is not tested so I do not teach it

7. What level do you teach?

- a. One            b. One and a half            c. Two            d. Three            E. Four

8. Tell us what you think students' cultural *needs* are. What do you think students *need* to learn about Arab culture in the program? **Please circle.**

<b>Cultural aspects</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Perhaps</b>	<b>No</b>
1. Family life	Yes	Perhaps	No
2. School life	Yes	Perhaps	No
3. Role of religion	Yes	Perhaps	No
4. Political system	Yes	Perhaps	No
5. Business practices and behavior	Yes	Perhaps	No
6. Education system	Yes	Perhaps	No
7. Food and eating habits	Yes	Perhaps	No
8. Entertainment and recreation	Yes	Perhaps	No
9. Music	Yes	Perhaps	No
10. Arts	Yes	Perhaps	No
11. Greetings and leave taking	Yes	Perhaps	No
12. Social etiquette	Yes	Perhaps	No
13. Street life	Yes	Perhaps	No
14. Shopping habits	Yes	Perhaps	No

15. Architecture	Yes	Perhaps	No
16. Current political situation	Yes	Perhaps	No
17. How history and geography affect cultural practices	Yes	Perhaps	No
18. Famous people and places	Yes	Perhaps	No
19. Dialectal differences	Yes	Perhaps	No
20. Status of women	Yes	Perhaps	No
21. Status of men	Yes	Perhaps	No
22. Family structure	Yes	Perhaps	No
23. Literature	Yes	Perhaps	No
24. Judicial system	Yes	Perhaps	No
25. Interpersonal and inter-group conflicts	Yes	Perhaps	No
26. Transportation	Yes	Perhaps	No
27. Would like to add more?	Yes	Perhaps	No

Please elaborate -----  
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**Section Three**

Tell us about students' cultural *expectations*? What do you think students *expect* to learn about the Arab culture at the Arabic program at Middlebury? **Please circle.**

<b>Cultural aspects</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Perhaps</b>	<b>No</b>
1. Family life	Yes	Perhaps	No
2. School life	Yes	Perhaps	No
3. Role of religion	Yes	Perhaps	No
4. Political system	Yes	Perhaps	No
5. Business practices and behavior	Yes	Perhaps	No
6. Education system	Yes	Perhaps	No
7. Food and eating habits	Yes	Perhaps	No
8. Entertainment and recreation	Yes	Perhaps	No
9. Music	Yes	Perhaps	No
10. Arts	Yes	Perhaps	No
11. Greetings and leave taking	Yes	Perhaps	No

12. Social etiquette	Yes	Perhaps	No
13. Street life	Yes	Perhaps	No
14. Shopping habits	Yes	Perhaps	No
15. Architecture	Yes	Perhaps	No
16. Current political situation	Yes	Perhaps	No
17. How history and geography affect cultural practices	Yes	Perhaps	No
18. Famous people and places	Yes	Perhaps	No
19. Dialectal differences	Yes	Perhaps	No
20. Status of women	Yes	Perhaps	No
21. Status of men	Yes	Perhaps	No
22. Family structure	Yes	Perhaps	No
23. Literature	Yes	Perhaps	No
24. Judicial system	Yes	Perhaps	No
25. Interpersonal and inter-group conflicts	Yes	Perhaps	No
26. Transportation	Yes	Perhaps	No
27. Would you like to add more?	Yes	Perhaps	No

Please specify -----  
-----  
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If you are interested in elaborating on any of your ideas presented here, please contact Ghazi Abuhakema, the Arabic school.

## **Appendix D**

### **Cultural Clubs Survey**

Please provide us with the following information.

1. Which cultural activity (club) did you start the summer with?
2. How many times did you attend the club?
3. Did you enjoy the club?
4. What was the reason(s)?
5. Was the club time appropriate for you?
6. If the time was not appropriate for you, what are your most appropriate day and time?
7. Did you quit the club?
8. What was the reason?
9. Do you want to be part of another club? What is it? Why?
10. Do you have any other suggestions for the cultural activities?

## **Appendix E**

### **Dialect Classes Survey**

1. Did the dialect class you are enrolled in help you understand more the culture of the country's dialect?
2. If your answer is yes, explain how?
3. If your answer is no, explain why?

## **Appendix F**

### **Students' Focus Group Interview Questions**

1. To be communicatively and interactively effective within the Arab culture, learners need to be culturally aware and well-prepared. How does the Arabic program deal with this issue?
2. Is it successful? Why (not)?
3. What type of cultural perspective or pattern does the program provide? Is it monolithic, one culture? Or is it of different patterns of the same culture? Elaborate.
4. Some say that there is a focus on the Arab culture in the East more than in the North African countries and other regions, what do you think of that? How does this orientation (if it exists) affect students' cultural awareness?
5. Students have their cultural needs and expectations. The Arabic summer program attempt to fulfill those needs and expectations. What are some of the main cultural aspects that the program falls behind to meet? Give examples.
6. How do you evaluate the program's cultural co-curricular activities such as movies and clubs?
7. What can be done to improve the cultural component of the program in its co-curricular or co-curricular activities to be in tandem with the developments and changes in the Arab culture?



## **Appendix G**

### **Teachers' Focus Group Interview Questions**

1. What type of cultural perspective or pattern does the program provide? Is it unitary, i.e. one culture? Or is it different patterns of the same culture? Elaborate.
2. What are some of the cultural aspects that the program, in your opinion, does not cover even though they should be incorporated and focused on? Give examples.
3. There are ways and techniques that are used to teach culture. Some of these are cultural capsules, using authentic materials, and so on. What do you think is/are the best technique(s) to teach culture in this environment?
4. Technology is becoming a powerful too in teaching languages. How can technology be incorporated to teach culture?
5. Based on your experience and interaction with the students, their cultural needs and expectations, what do you think can be done to improve the cultural component of the program to fulfill those needs, but at the same time maintain the balance and integrity of the different language skills?

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## VITA

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