NEW TRENDS IN FRENCH SECOND LANGUAGE (FSL) EDUCATION IN ONTARIO AND THEIR IMPACT ON TEACHER EDUCATION

Prof. Dr. Marie J. MYERS
Queen's University
Kingston, CANADA

ABSTRACT

New curriculum guidelines for FSL (2011) will most likely only be implemented starting September 2012. First discussed in 2009, the advocated new grammar approach and the heavy cultural content have subsequently created a number of reactions, the most recent required another set of consultation meetings. In addition the new assessment perspective, in line with the European Common framework of references for languages, although seen as favorable for learning meets with a set-in rigidity. Needless to say, some of the stakeholders foresee great expenditures associated with new recommendations because of teachers who will have to be given upgrading courses among other things. Also interesting is the fact that some of the recommendations, not yet voted in for implementation, are already receiving very positive feedback and have even been implemented in some school boards, for instance a Grade 9 Beginner French course (corresponds to the 9th year of schooling in Canada). It appears that audiences are receptive to formulations that fill identified learning gaps. We will also discuss how plans to implement best practices can meet with resistance. A study was conducted to investigate a number of aspects connected to the new implementations. Findings will be reported and recommendations made.

Key Words: New grammar; culture teaching; impact of assessment *Can Dos*.

SITUATIONAL CONTEXT

This study was carried out in the province of Ontario, in central Canada, on new trends for French as a second/foreign language education. French is one of the official languages in bilingual Canada, the other being English. New curriculum guidelines are being implemented and there are various reactions to the new contents as well as resistance.

Canada is a country with a large population of newcomers which means many cultures and many languages are in contact; for instance in Toronto, the largest city in Ontario, on Saturday mornings there are up to 26 different heritage languages classes held because in Canada we believe in sustaining as much as possible the languages of the country of origin as they provide a foundational base on which further language and educational developments can thrive.

Here educational matters are a provincial responsibility. In the province of Ontario we experience regular changes in the ruling political party which makes changes in Educational programs easy to implement as each new group in power attempts to improve upon the previous situation. Programs are reviewed regularly and new curriculum guidelines are published after intensive consultations and reviews over a number of years with the involvement of all possible stakeholders.

After the decision was made to review the French Curriculum guidelines three years ago, The Ministry selected two subject specialists to lead the process along with their on-site personnel. Among the first steps, consultation meetings were scheduled with regional specialists from universities and with a view to linking new developments with the latest research publications in the field and gaining information and know-how of researchers in charge of French teacher education. Following these, the leading committee worked on a draft which was then distributed widely for further discussions and consultations. Amendments to the proposed documents were made after all recommendations judged to be relevant were taken into account but also endorsed or vetoed by Ministry personnel, principally with a look at costs involved. Following this, a team of writers worked on a more detailed draft. More consultation meetings took place including teachers and university specialists alike, after which the complete final draft was to be elaborated.

It has taken three years already and the publication of the new documents is expected for the Fall of 2012. In the meantime drafts were circulated and information videos were placed on-line as well as additional advertizing was carried out in the form of placing on-line the filming of exemplary classroom practices using the newly advocated approaches (OMLTA.org).

With a large population of newcomers, there are many cultures in contact due to immigration policies and there are also very different views expressed as regards curriculum implementations both on the part of teachers in schools and the future teachers at Faculties of Education. Multiple views imply multiple forms of understanding and different ways of apprehending the recommended contents.

In addition, traditional linguistic and socio-cultural competence developments aiming at preparedness for diverse student populations in the schools are no longer able to encompass the large array of diversified backgrounds from which student populations originate. In the light of the influx of newcomers to Canada who, often until now, were not familiar with either of the country's official language, English or French, innovative ways to see to language education were a must.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION TO THE STUDY

This study was carried out in the context of a teacher education course with 5th year university students at a University with a Faculty of Education in Ontario. The teachers in training have to come to grasp the different degrees of difficulty and the different amounts of detail involved in acquiring professional know-how (Berger 1972; Banks & Banks 2007; Skehan 1998; Slavin 1995) and at the same time understand that these have to be weighted accurately. In researching the relative importance of how people make their interpretations, especially around implementing new ways of teaching (Anderson 1985; Bygate 1987; Forster 1989; Goodman 1990; Rivers 1981; Stern 1983), one has to acknowledge that they always are only tentative, with constant fluidity and flux surrounding any situation. This 'professional' socialization process can be compared to the Acculturation Model (Brown 1980: 129) during which learners undergo a phase of adjustment to the new culture, namely the culture of teachers. The adjustment usually occurs through what Brown (1980: 129-144) identified as four stages: Exposure, Shock and Resistance, Recovery, and Adjustment. All of these fall within a regular action-reaction communication process leading to the acceptance and the swap of linguistic and cultural aspects of Native Language or Teaching Culture, what I consider here to be the observed teaching experience when the future teachers were pupils in schools and Target Language or Teaching Culture (TLC), the culture which the university course instructor is trying to inculcate. This fits the constructivist approach in knowledge building. In the case of this study we are applying these concepts to second language (namely French) language teachers and we can call the acculturation process the Target Professional Culture (TPC). This may imply a change of beliefs so as to develop professional judgment in light of the new curriculum guidelines imposed by the Ontario Ministry of Education for French as a second language for 2012.

16

Accepting new beliefs leads to transformation and there is no going back. It also involves continuous effort. In teaching, one needs to move beyond basic curricular aspects to gain an understanding of human difference and mostly accept and make-do with diverse ways of being and otherness. Dialogue and interactive ways of developing awareness and contact with others, especially the teachers in the field during the practice teaching placements, was expected to promote the necessary understanding. The question was then, if some of the associate teachers in the schools are not up-to-date as regards the new implementations, how would our students benefit from their input and through what means would we have proof that the outcomes were of the type deemed to be desirable in the profession? Key in communication is not limited to identifying the differences and difficulties but going beyond in the exploration to find the elements that are hard to internalize. So it was of crucial importance to have the students reflect on their experiences in schools and see how these corresponded to the outcomes desired by both the university instructor and the expectations of the Ministry of Education.

Some theoretical insights

Teachers' discourse and culture in language classes have always been an interesting topic for educational researchers because of their wide scope of use and their cultural diversity (Danesi & Perron 1999; Searle 1994; Swan 1985), which is often influenced by the clash of two language and cultures; First Language Culture (FLC) and Target Language Culture (TLC). Cultural integration into language classes is so important that there are those who would emphasize the idea that teachers should not only be language specialists but also culture professionals who are able to build cultural bridges between a First Language (FL) and a Target Language (TL) (Willems 2002). It is true that in many ways, both are involved in a communication process that determines those cultural aspects that can be considered shareable and exchangeable between the two existing cultures in the classroom; a two-way language communication transaction between the two cultures (Morlat 2009; Schulz 2007; Seelye 1976; Steele & Suozzo 1994; Zarate 1986). Such values constitute what I would call a language business transaction that deals with shareable daily consumed cultural goods, i.e., cultural tradable commodities between the transmitter and the receiver. It is inevitable that communication between two languages involve intercultural communicating as well, which, in turn, would mean that both teachers and learners would have to find common ground on factors of cultural differences and similarities, i.e., determine those cultural aspects of both languages that are shareable, interchangeable, and meaningful for both teachers and learners in any communication instance in language classes. Such kinds of differences and similarities exist in every language: the tone of voice, appropriate topic of conversation, expressions, and speech act functions like apologizing, suggesting, complaining, refusing, etc., all of which are in constant and continuous reciprocal validation and integration that help the creation of a neutral common area for sharing and exchanging cultural commodities. Building on the above arguments, one could definitely state that language is the linguistic manifestation of culture and culture is the behavioral manifestation of language. The two are considered as twins conjoined by cultural commodities which one cannot separate without risking or compromising the significance of either language or culture (Brown 1994: 164). Furthermore, there is the idea that the presentation of an argument in a way that sounds fluent and elegant in one culture may be regarded as clumsy and circular by members of another culture. For example, Latinos or Arabs are used to what I call a pre-request preparation discourse before asking for something or some service, such as greetings, asking about work, family, and friends, and only after would they venture into the main topic. Americans consider such linguistic pre-request interaction as a waste of time and that if one needs some service, one should directly ask for it. Such differences could help either of the communicating groups to condition their linguistic behavior according to the target culture by identifying what is considered as valid and of cultural value in both cultures in order to allow for a clear and efficient cultural transaction. Whatever the value of transaction in cultural commodities between the learners-traders may be, it is undeniable that language is the channel of communication with which such shareable commodities are transmitted and exchanged. Both cultures agree to communicate through language which, in turn, determines the significance value to the traded cultural aspect through linguistic interchanges. Such interchanges help convert the intangible collective linguistic and non-linguistic behavior of both cultures into a concrete valuable tradable behavior that is accepted, assimilated and

17

exchanged by both (Barton & Tusting 2005; Olson 2003; Wenger 1998). This process, which can be referred to as *"socialization of language,"* prepares the individual for the linguistically and non-linguistically accepted patterns of a target culture.

Prescribed curriculum innovations

The targeted professional developments to come under scrutiny in this study are namely the new grammar approach, 'cultural teaching' and the Can-Do approach for the assessment of skill development and competence in performance.

The talk is about the 'new grammar' approach, with grammar seen in the context of language use in authentic texts.

Culture teaching takes on a foundational role in second language teaching as evidenced in the new French Curriculum guides (Ministry of Education forthcoming).

Evaluating student competencies is no longer haphazard but carefully aligned on the European Reference Framework for Languages (Conseil de l'Europe 1996; McNamara &McNamara 1996) , although adapted to the Canadian context based on what students *Can-Do*. That includes different perspectives on learning, not with one learner set against another (Lado, 1957; 1961), but with true evaluation set against a backdrop of criteria allowing autonomous progression with each student measuring personal progress and learning over time.
These aspects imply a lot of changes and with change, our attitude towards a situation will depend on our perception of the situation. Students are required to put on "new lenses" as if looking at everything for the first time.

Description of the study

There were 25 participants in the course for Secondary French teacher preparation in this study from September 2011 to the end of April 2012. The duration of the course was 15 weeks with two times two and a half hours per week of class meetings with, in-between placements in the schools to gain practical experience. Students' expectations and learning needs greatly varied among the students because of the diversity of their backgrounds. Currently there is a great demand for teachers of French but not any longer for other teaching specialties. For this reason a lot of students who did not plan to become French specialists, but have Fine Arts, Geography, etc. as their other teaching specialty decided to enroll in French for better employment opportunities. In this study we analyzed the answers to open-ended questions administered to all the participants. No names were entered on the answer sheets and anonymity was maintained. All participants gave written permission for the results to be used in the analysis and for the summary of results. The questionnaires were administered for the purposes of articulating a distinctive professional knowledge base for FSL teachers with the hope to identify a break from what they observed in schools during their school teaching practice and a way to articulate personalization in these learning professionals by having a look at where they were at the end of the course**.** The three areas under scrutiny that are reported here are the 'new grammar' approach, cultural teaching and the 'Can-Do' perspective on assessment. The answers were coded using the participant number out of 25, the question number and sub-question numbers. For instance 22/3/a stands for participant paper number 22, answer to question 3 subsection a.

The 'New Grammar Approach'

The students were made to understand that children's natural communication skills need to be sustained, developed and directed at continually seeking to expand in order to meet the challenges of constantly having to adapt to difference. It would enable them to approach interaction with the purpose of coming to an understanding and acceptance. They understood that the same thing was expected of them as they had to model those very interactive aspects in a Social Action Approach (Banks 1997). The decisions to be made were around the best way to teach communication in an intercultural second language classroom.

18

Everyone may not equally attempt to participate and some people will need to be encouraged. From situated cognition as a theoretical model (Wenger 1998; Lave and Wenger 1991; Barton and Tusting 2005) we learn that everyone is not at the centre of things and has to be helped to come in from a peripheral positioning. This can be achieved according to these researchers with co-operation and lateral interactions, through the development of action-based and knowledge-based competencies with reflectivity at the centre. Along the same lines of thinking, Olson's (2003) model aims at achieving a 'meeting of minds' through the development of joint intentionality in the classroom context. Such a framework could prove to become operative, on a larger scale as well, around common concerns. He suggests that through on-going discussions around goal setting which eventually will lead to joint intentions, learners will embrace the same objectives, and in finding common ground, learning and communication will be facilitated.

Individual differences play a part and so does the person's education. Given the various complex aspects coming into play at the same time in such a course, there is a need for strategizing if one expects to achieve the necessary preparedness in future teachers. The necessary building blocks have to be put into place, getting the students to put effort into understanding, and other such ways of facilitating successful communication need to become the foundations on which to build a solid base.

FINDINGS

To the question: 'Are you looking forward to the New Grammar Approach' (Question 3), the answer was mostly "yes" or in one case "Yes" with a smiley face Emoticon : expressing emotion with typographical symbols (11/3/a). Another "Yes" (20/3/b) was underlined twice with the following addenda "it will be very difficult to implement, easier said than done" (20/3/a).

As regards numbers of participant answers, twenty out of twenty five felt positive about implementing the approach for example 2/3/b; 6/3/b; 8/3/b &c; 18/3/c; 21/3/b&c; 23/3/b… This is evidenced also by comments such as these: *a more interactive way* (2/3/a*), I believe it will be very useful* (3/3/a), *I am looking forward to understanding it more in depth and applying it* (4/3/a), *Personally, I think it is great for engaging the students* (11/3/c).
I like the [new] approach as it keeps French fun and most importantly useful while still enabling [the learners] to know grammar (22/3/c).

I like it because of the contextualization (13/3/c).

Many students had mixed feelings, with three of them showing a lack of understanding of this approach, the reasons for which could be varied (absence, traditional mind-set, low comprehensibility in French): no answer (19/3) ; *Assuming students will just pick it up is naive and in reality they just end up not knowing what they are talking about* (16/3); [there is a conflict] *in 'Core French teaching but in immersion, not so much* (10/3/b/c); *I think it depends on the program. For students with an extensive background in French, I would say that it works well* (10/3/c).

Six participants were very positive about the change but 12 identified significant conflicts in the schools. 22/3/a/b reflects the hesitation in the best way: [I am looking forward to the new grammar approach] *but with reservations as to its effectiveness with new learners*.

The new way to teach grammar in communicative contexts was somewhat in conflict with what 22 students observed in schools, but not too much of a conflict was reported.

19

It was applied but some elements of grammar were still taught: effective use of both [grammar approaches] (22/3/b). This was one student's opinion. This student was clearly still 'in-between' old and new curriculum guidelines, having a hard time with letting go of traditional ways of teaching. On the positive side, we can say that this student is open to an eclectic approach, and was opening-up to the new approach.

Another student comments: *It was "somewhat" in conflict with what I observed in schools* (12/3/b). However notes the same student, *One associate [teacher] focused on the Common European Framework [of reference].* Another participant identified an area of conflict resulting from the fact that *it is difficult for experienced teachers to change their teaching styles* (13/3/b).

In a similar way of thinking another student writes, *A lot of older teachers are hesitant to adapt this new method because of a lack of resources. However, there are some who are already using this method* (17/3/b).
All in all, we identified that the development of professional judgment was in-line for most of the students towards a favorable "intake" of the new directives. We also witnessed that a small number of students were really set in their ways, with a strong mind-set and not open to a change of beliefs.

The 'Cultural Approach'
Given the importance in the world today of socio-cultural aspects, the need was felt to make students aware of socio-pragmatics and aspects of pragmalinguistics for French as a second language. It reflects a process of the accommodation and gradual integration of similar or different concepts shared by both cultures. Such concepts are impregnated with relations between language and culture which are also reflected in the relation between the form and the content of a language, its beliefs, values, and needs of both the learner and teacher. In line with this way of thinking the Ministry guidelines incorporate culture teaching across the new French second language curriculum. One question was related to cultural teaching with language described as the linguistic manifestation of human behavior and culture as patterned behavior to be learned through a familiarization of the achievements of its native speakers.

FINDINGS

20 out of 25 students were strongly in favour of the culture approach. Out of the five dissidents, one participant was undecided about the value of a cultural approach, another appeared not to have understood the concept underlying this new approach, as evidenced by the words, *sounds good, the more 'content-based learning', the better* (23/4/c).

Some conflict was felt and evidence in three comments *I hope the cultural content will be varied and not only focused on France* (1/4/b). In fact the Ministry document starts by advocating a knowledge of the local and regional French culture as every Canadian province is a home to groups of francophones, followed by provincial, national and only later international and world French cultures. It appears that this student might only have had access to texts on the culture of France and perhaps resents this fact.

Another example illustrates some resistance on the part of a local classroom teacher when a student practitioner attempted to integrate culture, *While teaching French , I felt like I had to rush through anything that wasn't grammar and I had to justify any cultural components* (14/4/b).

One similar comment was made by another student about teaching culture, who wrote, *It shouldn't always be left until last* (17/4/b).

Overall, because of the pupils' interest in the teaching of cultural content, the participants realized that there were fewer student behaviour problems than when just teaching aspects to due with the language.

CAN-DO: new perspectives on assessment

One concern is also over the definition of knowledge which needs to shift. Knowledge is usually to be seen in a French second language class as knowledge, skills and attitudes. Anderson presents the distinction between procedural (know how) and declarative knowledge (to know). However, we believe that beyond these categories there needs to be another one stated explicitly: showing in practice that you can apply the know how by adding to Bygate's (1987) "Skill getting and skill using" the intermediate stage of learning which entails comprehending how to apply for enhanced professionalization. Indeed "knowing how to" does not necessarily mean that you are able to perform, however in the teacher education programme this aspect is covered during practice teaching in school settings.

Performing tasks along a number of criterion referenced items is the advocated approach in order to certify that learners have acquired real life abilities.

FINDINGS

15 students expressed positive views on the Can-Do approach to assessment in statements such as the following; *it fits with differentiated teaching and learning styles* (3/5/c).

One student had mixed feelings and stated, *There are a lot of things students cannot do, but know. That's why it's so important to differentiate in your teaching and evaluation* (10/5/b).

It was understood as being a better strategy as evidenced by these words, *better for learning, worse for assessing/ordering students* (23/5).

Other participants, based on the following comments, were still grappling with this assessment notion, and wrote, *I just don't understand how to assess like this and how to make it fair* (6/5/c); *…not base it on what they can do, how will they ever get better*?" (7/5/b); *I find there is no challenge for students if the focus is on what they can do* (13/5/a*), It is very easy for the quality of the work being produced to slip below grade expectations* (20/5/b).

Nine participants did not understand or fully master the concepts involved as suggested by statements like the following, *This is an ok method for low-achieving students, but is a lot of work for the teacher to reach all students. I think it is unrealistic and disregards any learning/ achievement goals* (16/5).

These students were somewhat caught in the conflict between traditional ways of evaluating that they understood and were familiar with, and the needed change in mental representation tied to the new approach. What was in fact positive is that they were convinced that assessment had to be carried out well in order to measure learning. This concept is not at all in contradiction with the new perspective, yet somehow these participants appear to be quite demanding teachers with high expectations for their pupils which could be somewhat unexpected today because of the requirement of high grades for all students hoping to enter universities. These participants clearly gauged the importance of feedback to pupils and the connections between measurement and learning. They just did not quite understand that the Can-Do approach is by no means synonymous of slacking off. Perhaps the videos they were shown, samples of applications meant for summative assessment, filmed by the Ministry of Education, available at OMLTA.org could have given them that impression when looking only at incomplete examples.

DISCUSSION

The problem addressed here is how, in a teacher preparation course, to get the students to integrate the theoretical research sufficiently into or connect it, to personal practice for automatic or very readily available

21

use. This is necessary to get an idea of their state of preparedness. Since it is generally accepted among researchers that people do not act on what they think their beliefs and behaviours are (Zhao 2008; Myers 2009), in order to allow for exploration and interpretation of knowledge.

From the understanding of the literature we also gleaned the awareness of the need to search beyond the domain of action-knowledge when time is available. Because there is a distinction between awareness of tacit knowledge, there is a need to subject it to critical scrutiny and then one also has to be able to articulate it.

A number of contexts of "developing professionalization" were explored and presented through specific questions with findings and examples given.

It is necessary to understand that professional knowledge is not amenable to be encapsulated for representation in linear verbal expression. It is more in the domain of instant recognition, favouring an ability to read situations often bypassing words in order to be effective.

All in all 80% of the students showed an attitude open to change in all areas although they might initially been having difficulties with their early beliefs. In teacher preparation courses we usually are faced with students who already had some school placements, helping teachers in the field in a practical way but not having been taught the underlying concepts tied to their practice. It appeared that some of these students were resistant to "new" things as if in a way of saying "I already know it all", "I was in schools and the teacher let me teach", "I do not need to learn anything else".

Schön's (1983; 1987) distinction of tacit knowledge, "knowing in action" to "knowledge in action" is certainly of value to our investigation as we are addressing issues around "competence in performance" and but we are more interested in the "performance of competence" or competent implementation.

So what needs to be paid attention to?
1. Assess if the contents were reflected upon and theorized to varying degrees and with varying significance for current practice.
2. Assess the selection of public knowledge by the learning professionals from the wider base of public professional knowledge through encounter during their professional education and independent personal reading reflecting personal interest and experience by social interchange with fellow professionals and evaluate which portion of the above will have a significant chance to be used in practice.
3. Assess ways of integrating the theoretical knowledge sufficiently into and/or connect it to personal practice to make it automatic or very readily usable.
Very seldom and only when time is available are persons likely to search beyond the domain of action knowledge.
4. Check into what knowledge is used in a deliberate matter, justified and explained while other knowledge is more intuitive and only includes varying amounts of self-awareness.
5. More importantly assess personalization of professionalization, i.e., for each person identify the components of a certain public knowledge that is integrated into action-based knowledge by learning professionals showing the variation between the different levels of professionalization.

In training for professional programs it is crucial to re-transpose the theoretical knowledge and thus instructors have to require students to articulate it differently in context and be forced to make the effort to comprehend: this is key where new trends and innovations are concerned especially if these have to be fast-tracked, an inevitable situation in today's competitive world.

Implications for practice and policy

Developing professionalization is situated in areas of complex theory. How to assess or rather verify the future professionals' ways of articulating their competence in performance and understand it both from the level of "professionalization at work" and how it is interiorized in the person.

Perhaps the definition of professionalism has to be revisited. Inappropriate definitions still centre round Bernstein's (1971) ideology with social control of expertise. Rueschemeyer (1983) suggests it to have "relative freedom from interference based on unique expertise, moral integrity, confidentiality and protection from political abuse". Moreover in the past, inter-professional relations were generally absent except for the assertion of supremacy of the so-called true professions over the newcomers (Eraut 2001: 4). In our need for diversification, this attitude is no longer an option. Our future teachers were collaborating with classroom teachers during their field placements yet perhaps the experienced teachers, who were not always aware of the new trends in the field, did use their power over the teachers in training.

How is expertise acquired? It is crucial to develop professional knowledge and competence. In the multicultural multilingual Canadian society and in today's new knowledge economy, these have become acute problems, especially with teachers not prepared to teach the students in the new knowledge economy.

There is a responsibility in accountability of instructors of such courses to advance professionalism. So as regards learning professionals in training we are investigating how far transformation is possible. It is essential for young professionals to be able to articulate their distinctive knowledge base. Yet being able to do something in the field, while they are in front of a group of pupils, is the central requirement. Because of the added complexity communication in ever-changing methodological contexts entailed, continuous effort was required. This had to be imparted to the students in the university curriculum course through awareness raising mechanisms.

The research literature also shows that people do not know what they know or rather people have difficulty articulating that knowledge into propositional form. Perhaps using questionnaires similar to what was done in this study may make students more aware of their own internalization of know-how. It is clear that this should be carried out more often during the academic year, rather than wait till the year ends like what was the case in this investigation.

A number of researchers have looked at competence in performance through dialogue analysis which should be pursued and perhaps we will get around the problems around professional competence which are mixed in problems of truth, uncertainty and good judgment according to Kant.

CONCLUSION

We hope through this study to have contributed to future teachers of French understanding of professionalization at work. Our results were not conclusive regarding Olson's (2003) suggestions that discussions around goal setting will eventually lead to joint intentions, with the hope that learners will embrace the same objectives, and find common ground, thus facilitating learning and communication. This was observed among the students with many not fully subscribing to intended curriculum changes. They came to understand that they had to reckon with impacts of cultural influences on meaning-making, situational contexts and their own selves.

Moreover, and as mentioned earlier, each culture has its own unique individual behavioral pattern, linguistic or otherwise, so does teaching. However, learning a foreign language and culture will not necessarily mean changing the learner's behavior and injecting new ways and values of life into the already established behavior

23

pattern of the learner as indicated by Lado (1957; 1961: 110). The aim is to increase people's awareness and equip them with a better preparedness for the future.

All in all the future teachers participating in this study demonstrated a readiness to the changes as advocated by the Ministry of Education of Ontario. The new grammar approach avoids the situation of students only doing grammar exercises during class without speaking a word of French. Culture learning is in order for an increase in learner motivation and to increase one's awareness of difference as well as an attempt to become more accepting. Hence the cultural approach is key. 'Can-Do' as the advocated assessment strategy is in line with McNamara and McNamara's (1996) and the European Union (1996) scales and in addition, in schools, emphasizes the importance of autonomous learning and of taking charge, both crucial for lifelong learning. These are some of the parameters underlying course delivery under the new Ministry curriculum guidelines.

IJONTE's Note: This article was presented at 3rd International Conference on New Trends in Education and Their Implications - ICONTE, 26-28 April, 2012, Antalya-Turkey and was selected for publication for Volume 3 Number 3 of IJONTE 2012 by IJONTE Scientific Committee.

BIODATA AND CONTACT ADDRESS OF AUTHOR

Marie J. MYERS (Doctorate in Psychology of Language, Communication and Pedagogical Intervention, Université de Strasbourg, France) gives courses at the B.Ed level (French and English Second/Foreign Languages, Elementary to Advanced) and at the graduate level (Language and Communication, Language Learning/ Teaching Research). Her research interests include language development and assessment (with and without the latest computer technologies) from curricular, cognitive and cultural perspectives; pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics; the grammar of pictures.

She also has experience as a classroom teacher (France and Canada) and chair of languages (Canada and Germany) and has given graduate courses in Singapore, Australia, Malaysia and VietNam.

She began her work in Linguistics at the University of Strasbourg, a center of very active language research and language policy development because of the proximity of the European Council and Parliament.

A Canada Council Doctoral Fellowship brought her to Canada where she conducted research for the Languages Bureau and the University of Ottawa. She participated in the Vive Le Français textbook series with Addison-Wesley from 1976-1985. She was a member of the National Study of Core French Language Syllabus Team in Canada.

Before coming to Queen's in 1992 she was a Tenured Associate Professor in the French Department at Dalhousie University.

Prof. Dr. Marie J. MYERS
Queen's University
Kingston, CANADA
E. Mail: myersmj@queensu.ca

REFERENCES

Anderson, John (1985). *Cognitive Psychology and its Implications.* New York: Freeman.

Banks, James and Banks Cherry (Eds.) (2007). *Multicultural Education: issues and perspectives.* Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Barton, David & Tusting, Karen (2005). *Beyond Communities of Practice.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Berger, John (1972). *Ways of Seeing.* London: BBC and Harmondsworth Penguin.

Bernstein, Basil (1971). Class, Codes and control, Vol 1, *Theoretical Studies Towards a Sociology of Language.*Boston, MA: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd.

Brown, H. Douglas (1980). *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
Bygate, Michael (1987). *Speaking.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Conseil de l'Europe, Conseil de la Coopération Culturelle, Comité de l'Éducation (1996). *Les Langues vivantes: apprendre, enseigner, évaluer: Un Cadre européen commun de référence. Projet 2 d'une proposition de cadre,* p.45, Strasbourg: Éditions du Conseil de l'Europe.

Danesi, Marcel and Perron, Paul (1999). *Analysing Cultures*. Bloomingdon and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Eraut, Michael (2000). Non-formal learning and tacit knowledge in professional work. *British Journal of Educational Psychology 70(1),* 113-136.

Forster, Kenneth (1989). Basic issues in lexical processing. In William Marslen-Wilson, (Ed.), *Lexical Representation and Process.* Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Goodman, Jane Y. (1990). The development of initial literacy. In Ron Carter (Ed.)*Knowledge about Language,* 135-144, London: Hodder and Stoughton.

Lado, Robert (1957). *Linguistics across Cultures: Applied linguistics for language teachers.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Lado, Robert (1961). *Language Testing.* London: Longman.

Lave, Jean and Wenger, Etienne (1991). *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

McNamara Tim and McNamara T.F. (1996)*. Measuring Second Language Performance.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ministry of Education (forthcoming). *French Curriculum Guidelines*. Toronto: The Queen's Printer.

Morlat, Jean Marcel (2009). *L'approche interculturelle en classe de Français Langue Étrangère* (on-line) www.edufle.net/jean-Marcel-Morlat, Retrieved April 20, 2012.

Myers, Marie J. (2009). Accommodation through different lenses: innovative orientation in intercultural education. In Marie J. Myers, *Looking for the Common Thread in connected sub-cultures,* Panel presentation at IPra, Melbourne*.*

Olson, David (2003). *Psychological Theory and Educational Reform.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rivers, Wilga M. (1981). *Teaching Foreign Language Skills.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Rueschemeyer, Dietrich (1983). *The Sociology of the Professions.*London: Macmillan.

Schön, Donald (1987). *Educating the reflective Practitioner.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Schön, Donald (1983). *The reflective Practitioner: How* Professionals *think in Action.* New York: Basic Books*.*

Schulz, Renate A. (2007). The challenge of assessing cultural understanding in the context of foreign language instruction*, Foreign Language Annals, 40,* 9-26.

Searle, John (1994). *The Rediscovery of the Mind.* Cambridge: MIT Press.

Seelye, H. Ned (1976). *Teaching Culture: Strategies for Foreign Language Education.* Lincolnwood Il: National Textbook Company.

Skehan, Peter (1998). *A cognitive Approach to Language Learning.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Slavin, Robert (1995). *Cooperative learning: Theory, Research and Practice*. New York: Prentice Hall.

Steele, Ross and Suozzo, Andrew (1994). *Teaching French Culture.* Lincolnwood Il: National Textbook Company.

Stern, H.H. (David) (1983). *Fundamental Concepts in Language Teaching.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Swan, Michael (1985). A critical look at the communicative approach. *English Language Teaching Journal pt 1, 39 (1),* 2-12.

Wenger, Etienne (1998). *Communities of Practice.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Willems, Gérard M. (2002). *Politique de formation des professeurs de langues en faveur de la diversité linguistique et de la communication interculturelle.* Strasbourg: Conseil de l'Europe.

Zarate, Geneviève (1986). *Enseigner une Culture étrangère*. Paris: Hachette, coll. Recherches et Applications.

Zhao, Yuanlin (2008). Classroom Communication and the Teaching of Chinese in Canada. Unpublished Masters Thesis. Queens University, Canada.