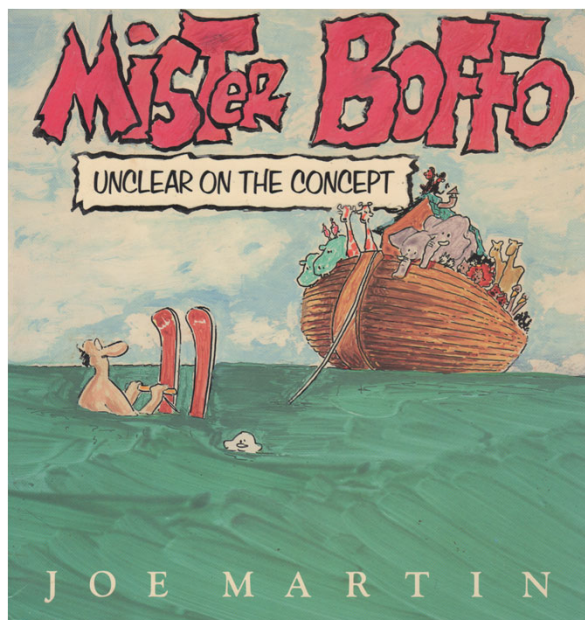


Application, Not Seat Time: Language Learning and Assessment Beyond the Language Classroom

Barbara Wright
Assessment Consultant and Professor emerita of German,
University of Connecticut
barbarawrightconsulting@gmail.com



Traditional Language Requirement for Graduation

- A given number of courses/credits is required
- Sometimes course level (e.g., “intermediate”) is specified
- Focus is on grammar, vocabulary; some conversation, culture, literature
- Passing grade accepted as indicator of proficiency
- AP, SAT scores, native fluency may be accepted as surrogates

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So . . .

- What are your current foreign language requirements for
 - Admission?
 - Graduation?
- What do you see as strengths, advantages of traditional language instruction?
- What are the minuses, disadvantages?

Plusses

Minuses

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The Big Squeeze



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What's happening to FL requirements?

- MLA 2012: entrance requirements *up* from 20.7% (1994-95) to 24.7% (2009-10)
- MLA: graduation requirements *down* from 67.5% (1994-95) to 50.7% (2009-10)
 - Lower enrollments in colleges of arts and sciences, more in professional schools
 - Fewer BAs, more professional degrees
 - In GE, more options, e.g., distribution requirements
 - Replacement by AP, SAT, other test scores
 - Student & faculty resistance to FL requirements
- FL requirements remain contested (e.g., Cornell, Princeton)
- Loss of FL majors, department closures continue

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Why fewer language requirements?

Truth and fiction . . .

- It's expensive for schools and students
- Students make little progress in 1, 2, even 3 or 4 semesters
- What's learned is quickly forgotten: a "waste"
- English is the global language
- Cultural learning in FL courses is overrated, available elsewhere
- FL has no relevance to professions, careers
- It's stressful, embarrassing for students
- US mindset: not "global"; FL marginal at best
- "I'm no good at languages"
- "Taking a hard language will pull down my GPA"

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What is "integrated" language acquisition?

- Applying the language in many settings, in and beyond the classroom
- Content-based as well as form-based instruction
- Connecting to other studies, e.g., major, minor, professional plans
- Connecting to personal development, civic activity, cultural awareness
- Ongoing use
- Documenting and reflecting on learning, making it life-long.

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A Language Integration Requirement

- Language skills reach a functional level (Definition of “functional” is flexible)
- Instructor-guided integration exercises
- Then independent application activities – minimum one per semester
- ePortfolio collects documentation, reflections
- Guidelines for documentation, other entries (e.g., self-assessment, reflection) provided
- Periodic review and feedback
- ePortfolio presented at time of degree audit (credits, grades TBD)

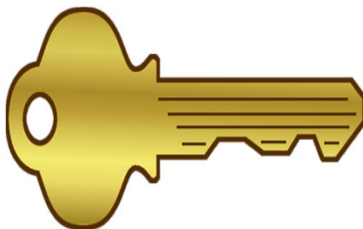
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What sorts of activities?

- Foreign language across the curriculum (FLAC) courses
- Literature reviews including FL sources
- FL newspaper articles read, summarized
- Research in the FL
- Online chats, blogs
- Service learning projects
- Internship projects
- Responsibilities in student government
- Work-related products
- Personal, recreational activities (films, podcasts, reading, etc.), family events

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The eportfolio: the key to documentation, assessment, of FL learning



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The ePortfolio – an essential tool for an integration requirement

- *Philosophically speaking . . .*
 - It's a high-impact practice
 - It's engaging for diverse audiences
 - Supports student agency, choice
 - Supports student responsibility for learning
 - Promotes self-awareness, self-assessment
 - Develops reflection
 - Supports identity development
 - Connects formal with informal learning, classroom with world

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The ePortfolio - an essential tool for an integration requirement

- *Practically speaking . . .*
 - Perfect for collecting artifacts, documentation
 - Popular, widespread
 - Student, faculty familiarity, acceptance already exists
 - Administrative support, budget already exists
 - Technology likely already in place
 - Can piggyback on existing programs, technology
 - Many eportfolio resources available, e.g.
 - Books, articles, conference presentations
 - Rubrics
 - Workshops
 - Campus expertise

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Implementation

- Determine students' incoming proficiency
 - Online proficiency testing
 - Individualized diagnosis
- Raise proficiency to functional level, e.g.,
 - Traditional coursework
 - Intensive summer language institute, immersion
 - Independent study
- Ensure a seamless transition from courses to application: provide introductory activities, allow students freedom to find, create others

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Implementation, cont.

- Provide guidelines for choosing, engaging in, documenting the activity, e.g., need to
 - address different aspects of language use
 - include range of evidence, e.g., video, work product, writing
 - demonstrate language development over time
 - Reflect on each activity
- Provide resources for the eportfolio, e.g.,
 - Technical requirements
 - rubrics for self-assessment,
 - rubrics for reflection essays
 - Timelines, feedback

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Implementation, cont.

- Provide ongoing support, feedback for students
- Provide development for faculty
- Start small, e.g., with pilot
- Communicate with stakeholders: e.g., students, faculty, gen ed committee, service learning program, employers, community members, etc.
- Listen, learn, improve

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FL Integration supports LEAP ELOs

- Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World
- Intellectual and Practical Skills, esp.
 - Inquiry, analysis
 - Critical, creative thinking
 - Information literacy
- Personal and Social Responsibility, esp.
 - Civic knowledge and engagement
 - Intercultural knowledge, competence
 - Foundations for lifelong learning
- Integrative and Applied Learning, i.e.,
 - Synthesis across studies

See B. Rifkin, 2012

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The Integrative Learning VALUE Rubric (with apologies)

- **Connections to experience:** the student synthesizes connections, deepens understanding
- **Connections to discipline:** synthesizes knowledge from more than one field of study or perspective
- **Transfer:** adapts and applies skills, abilities, theories, methodologies to new situations
- **Integrated communications:** chooses representations to convey interdependence of language, meaning, thought
- **Reflection and self-assessment:** demonstrates sense of self as learner, responds to challenges, envisions a future self

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ACTFL World-readiness Standards for Learning Languages

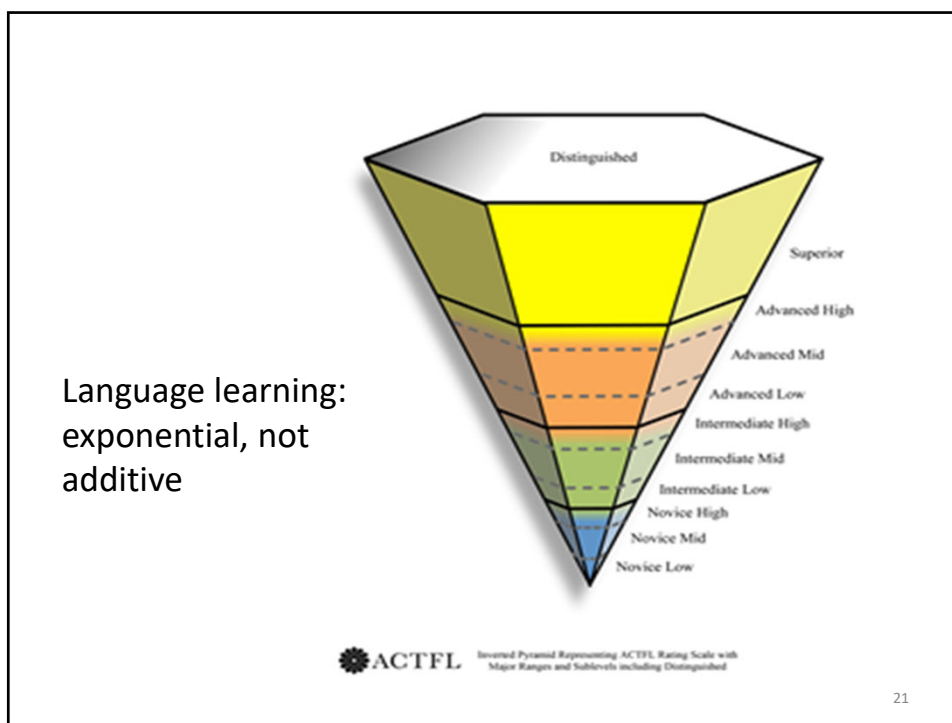
- **Communication**
 - Speaking, listening, reading, writing for diverse purposes
- **Cultures**
 - Cultural competence & understanding
- **Connections**
 - Connecting w/ other disciplines; acquiring information and diverse perspectives
- **Comparisons**
 - Developing insight into own language, culture
- **Communities**
 - Interacting with multilingual communities;
 - developing habit of lifelong FL learning

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ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines (2012): What users know & can do

- **Distinguished:** “a wide range of global issues and highly abstract concepts in a culturally appropriate manner” ... “highly sophisticated ... extended discourse”
- **Superior:** “communicate with accuracy and fluency ... on a variety of topics” [and] “both concrete and abstract perspectives” using “lengthy and coherent narratives”
- **Advanced:** “Autobiographical...as well as topics of community, national, or international interest...in major time frames” [with] “sufficient control of basic structures and generic vocabulary” [in] “oral paragraphs”
- **Intermediate:** “Create with the language when talking about familiar topics” ... “ask simple questions” [and] produce sentence-level language...typically in present.”
- **Novice:** “Short messages on highly predictable everyday topics” ... “primarily through isolated words and [memorized] phrases”

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Benefits of an integrated approach to FL requirements?

- Meaningful: connections, agency, identity
- Flexible re:
 - Activities
 - Focus (speaking, listening, reading, writing)
 - Proficiency level
- Maintains, enhances vocabulary, proficiency
- No additional course requirements

Drawbacks of an integrated approach?

- An added burden for students, faculty, other staff
- Requires a whole new infrastructure
- Imposes new costs
- Significant change: unsettling
- Easily gamed?
- Doesn't address all traditional objections to FL study
- No existing models?

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ePortfolios to document an integrative
FL requirement? What do you think?

I love it

I have my doubts

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Educational trends are with us

- HE aspiring to a “global” education
- Accepted need for extended practice: see writing
- Acceptance of interdisciplinarity
- Promotion of learning beyond the classroom
- Efforts to break down silos, breach borders:
 - Major/gen ed
 - Academics/student life/community
 - work/personal
- Widespread use, success of eportfolios
- Responding to needs of adult, returning, minority, veteran, other students
- Compatible with LEAP, EEQ

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