



**New messaging and a new spokesperson for
world languages and their place in higher
education**

Janice M. Aski and April D. Weintritt (OSU)

Janice M. Aski: Director of the Italian Language Program and Director of Italian Undergraduate Studies at OSU.

I have a dual specialization in Historical Italian/Romance Linguistics and World Language Pedagogy. I am a co-author, with Diane Musumeci, of the first-year Italian text, *Avanti!*

April D. Weintritt: Assistant Director of the Italian Language Program at OSU.

I also specialize in World Language Pedagogy focusing on critical, intercultural language learning and how language learning aligns with new SOTL research in general educational frameworks. I have earned an Inclusive Teaching Endorsement at OSU and I'm currently part of a Meaningful Inquiry cohort with colleagues from across the university.

Overview

- I. The problem and proposed solution
- II. A definition of intercultural competence
- III. How intercultural competence is developed in the language classroom
- IV. New messaging and a new spokesperson for the incorporation of intercultural competence into all language programs

I. The problem

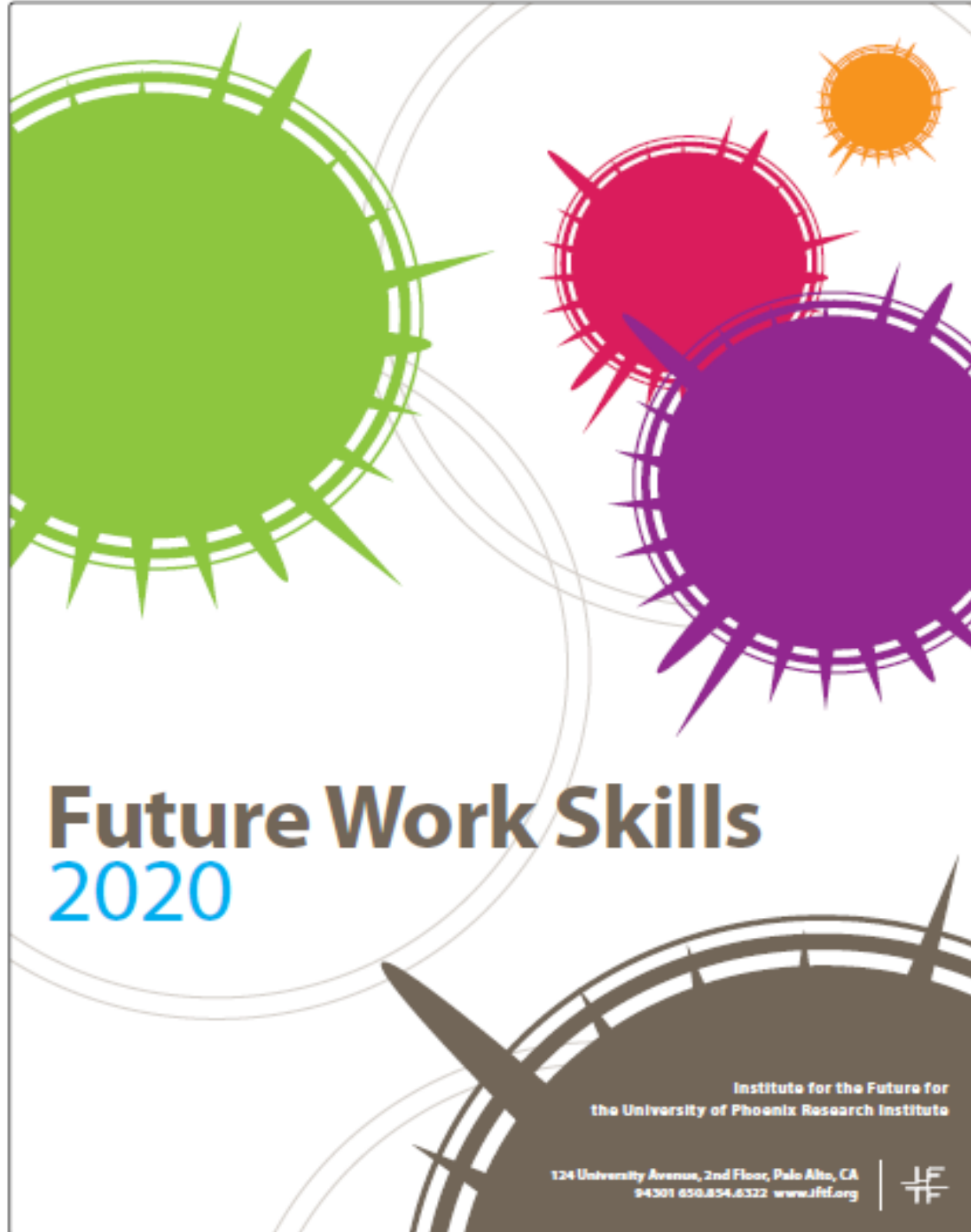
A. Enrollments and program cuts

- 1. Declining enrollments:** 15.3% decline between 2009-2016 (MLA language enrollment census);
- 2. Program closures and losses of majors:** 651 foreign language programs were cut at universities and colleges across the U.S. from 2013-2016 (Looney and Lusin, Executive Summary);
- 3. World Language Requirement cuts:** University of Buffalo, Wayne State University College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Suny Albany, Bowling Green State University, The Columbian College of Arts and Sciences at the George Washington University

B. Expectations and Messaging

1. You study a language at school to learn how to speak it.
(How well?)
2. Speaking a world language will get you a job. (Will it?)
3. Those who learn languages participate more effectively and responsibly in our interconnected world. (Do they?)

Intercultural
competence is
rated 4th of the top
10 skills needed to
work in the future



The proposed solution

- Strategic embedding of intercultural activities into the curriculum starting at the elementary sequence;
- New messaging on the transferable skills developed while learning *any* new language in curricula that include this work

II. A definition of intercultural competence

A. What it is not

1. Teaching **only** language (cliché: language is culture, culture is language)
2. Teaching **only** cultural *knowledge* (products and practices)

Moloney, Harborn, Fielding (2016):

“...teachers frequently believe that they are ‘doing intercultural’ if they are teaching static culture thus essentializing both culture as an entity and essentializing the activity of intercultural pedagogy.”

B. One definition

Intercultural competence is a lifelong process that includes the development of the **attitudes** (respect and valuing of other cultures, openness, curiosity), **knowledge** (of self, culture, sociolinguistic issues) **skills** (listen, observe, interpret, analyze, evaluate, and relate), and **qualities** (adaptability, flexibility, empathy and cultural decentering) in order to behave and communicate effectively and appropriately to achieve one's goals to some degree.

Deardorff (2006: 254)

C. Nomenclature

1. Confusing terminology

intercultural sensitivity, cross-cultural effectiveness, intercultural skills, cross-cultural adaptation, global competence, multicultural competence, cross-cultural relations, cultural proficiency, intercultural agility, cultural intelligence

2. Intercultural competence vs. intercultural communicative competence

Byram (2008): “a model of intercultural competence becomes a model of intercultural communicative competence when the objectives include the acquisition of linguistic, sociolinguistic and discourse competence.”

We assert that:

The learning of **any new language is essential
for the development of intercultural
competence as defined by Deardorff (2006).**

III. How intercultural competence is developed in the language classroom

Degrees of intercultural competence can be achieved in the language classroom *if*:

- A.** The course is taught in the target language (full-immersion)
- B.** Intercultural competence is explicitly taught

A. Features of full-immersion language learning that contribute **uniquely to intercultural competence**

Byram's (1997:16) psychological skills

- a. to tolerate ambiguity in communication and tolerate the anxiety this generates;
- b. the ability to be mindful and cognitively aware of the process of communication rather than the intended outcome of said communication;
- c. to adapt to the behavior and expectations of others;

a. Tolerating ambiguity and the anxiety this generates

- not understanding everything one hears during an interaction;
- one's willingness to tolerate ideas and propositions that run counter to one's own belief system or structure of knowledge;

“It's hard to imagine...a person who sees everything in black and white with no shades of gray being successful in the overwhelming ambiguous process of learning a second language” Brown (2014:118).

- “the tendency to perceive ambiguous situations as desirable” (Budner, 1962, p. 29).

Final exam question 1102: Reflect on your TalkAbroad experience and what you learned about Intercultural Competence from that experience.

1. My TalkAbroad partner, my peers, and myself all saw completely different scenarios when viewing the image we were given earlier this semester. This has really taught me that even though I may interpret a situation one way, an individual from a separate background viewing that exact same situation may interpret it completely differently. I can also mention that prior to each TalkAbroad experiences I have been super nervous and anxious about it, but I have found each of my partners to be very pleasant, kind, and willing to move slowly with me as my brain sluggishly attempt to conjugate verbs correctly. I've truly enjoyed my talking sessions!

2. From my experience with TalkAbroad I have learned quite a bit about intercultural competence. First thing is it is very uncomfortable, however that is not a bad thing, in fact it's quite the opposite. A major part of intercultural competence is being uncomfortable with something you have lesser knowledge about and overcoming that is one of the biggest parts of intercultural competence.

- b. being mindful and cognitively aware of the process of communication rather than the intended outcome of said communication;**
- c. adapting to the behavior and expectations of others**

My talk abroad companion was very good at listening and guiding me through speaking the Italian language. It was here that I really realized that listening skills and usual tonality were not only vital to just understanding what my partner was saying, but connecting with my partner and “putting myself in her shoes” on a slightly deeper level. What I mean by this is that **it takes so much more effort to listen and keep focus, and therefore be interculturally competent, in an interaction that is in a language that you don’t fully understand** but it made me applaud all the time and effort that people put into becoming interculturally competent in another culture.

Two more features of full-immersion language learning that contribute uniquely to intercultural competence:

d. cultural humility and decentering practice

e. negotiation of identity

d. Cultural humility and decentering practice

“Cultural humility is a distinctive and desirable way of comprehending cultural differences; successful intercultural communication can only occur by questioning the primacy of our own perspective. Cultural humility refers to respecting the validity of the other person’s culture and accepting the creative tension of holding two different perspectives simultaneously” (Guskin 162).

d. Cultural humility and decentering practice

- 1) Language difference (Gadamer, 1960)
- 2) Politics of diversity (Holliday, 2016)
- 3) Politics of language

“[...] a politics of language may also be involved where participants identify each other as either native- or non-native-speakers of the language. Such identifications influence perceptions of speakers’ legitimacy and thus the legitimacy of their contributions and interpretations (Liddicoat, 2016b; Liddicoat and Tudini, 2013). Such construction of self and other in relation to the language(s) being used raise potential issues of power in intercultural interactions that can profoundly shape how such interactions take place and how they are understood by participants” (Liddicoat, 2020, p. 23)

Final exam question 1102: Reflect on your TalkAbroad experience and what you learned about Intercultural Competence from that experience.

1. My talk abroad was very helpful in teaching me about int[er]cultural competence. **Because you are talking to a native Italian speaker in a talk abroad, you go in knowing that they are a better Italian speaker than you.** In that regard, you are put into **a situation of vulnerability** because you aren't able to speak the language at a very high level. Because of this, **there's things you can't express when talking to your partner** but they help you out and teach you how to say them in Italian. These TalkAbroads help you in terms of intercultural competence because they help you immerse yourself in the language and learn some culture at the same time.

2. I learned that when two people from two extremely different parts of the world take time to really listen to each other a conversation that would once cause nervousness and fear becomes a comfortable talk between friends. This conversation was extremely different from the last time I talked with this exact same person, but this time I trusted her to understand that I'm slightly outside of my own comfort zone talking in a second language and not my native tongue. Not only does intercultural competence stretch to thinking about others but also yourself, if you are able to understand and have compassion for other cultures you must eventually trust them to reciprocate that to you.

In 2018, The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine:

“The need to cultivate more robust cultural and ethical commitments to empathy, inclusion, and respect for the rich diversity of human identity and experience. Truly robust knowledge depends on the capacity to recognize the critical limitations of particular ways of knowing, to achieve the social relations appropriate to an inclusive and democratic society, and to cultivate due humility” (p. 54)

e. Negotiation of identity

“[E]very time language learners use the foreign/additional language [...] they are not only exchanging information with their interlocutors; they are also constantly organizing and reorganizing a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world. They are, in other words, engaged in identity construction and negotiation” (Norton, 1997, p. 410).

“In order for us to know ourselves, we have to know the Other.” Jhumpa Lahiri

B. Explicit teaching of intercultural competence

Webinar 2: WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2020 4:00 PM EST

Incorporating intercultural training into elementary language courses

Janice M. Aski and April D. Weintritt (Ohio State University)

Webinar 3: WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2020 4:00 PM EST

Integrating intercultural perspective into all levels of language courses

Tatjana Babic Williams and Annalisa Mosca (Purdue University)

Sources for integrating ICC into the full-immersion language classroom

IV. Teacher training

V. A video series by the new spokesperson for value and necessity for world language learning

IV. Teacher training


<https://www.canvas.net/browse/osu/courses/foreign-language-teaching>

Browser tabs: (1 unread) - janiceaski@yahoo.co x | Jhumpa Lahiri on How Learning e x | Purposeful, Interactive World Lan x

Address bar: Not secure | canvas.net/browse/osu/courses/foreign-language-teaching

Canvas Network

Offer a Course | About Us | Take a Course | Login



PURPOSEFUL, INTERACTIVE WORLD LANGUAGE TEACHING (HE)

Self-paced

COURSE DATE: Ongoing	DURATION: 9 weeks	COMMITMENT: 2 hrs/week
REQUIREMENT: None	COURSE TYPE: Self-paced	CREDENTIAL: None

Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the time as 5:46 PM.

V. Jhumpa Lahiri

<https://www.mheducation.com/highered/ideas/jhumpa-lahiri>

The screenshot shows a web browser with three tabs: an email tab, a tab for 'Jhumpa Lahiri', and a tab for 'Purposeful, Interactive World Lan'. The address bar shows the URL 'mheducation.com/highered/ideas/jhumpa-lahiri'. The website header features the McGraw Hill logo, navigation links for 'PreK-12', 'Higher Ed' (which is underlined), and 'About' with a dropdown arrow. On the right, there are links for 'Get Support', 'Sign In', and 'Cart (0)'. A search bar is also present with the placeholder text 'Search by ISBN, Title, Author, Keyword'. Below the header, a dark navigation bar contains links for 'Browse by Discipline', 'Learning Solutions', 'Ideas & Events', and 'Log In to Product'. The main content area has a large red graphic on the right side. The text on the page reads: 'Jhumpa Lahiri' followed by a yellow underline, and then a paragraph: 'McGraw Hill is thrilled to partner with Pulitzer Prize-winning author, Jhumpa Lahiri, to create a video series about how learning a new language helps us to develop the skills we need to thrive in our interconnected world.'

(1 unread) - janiceaski@yahoo.co x M Jhumpa Lahiri x Purposeful, Interactive World Lan x +

mheducation.com/highered/ideas/jhumpa-lahiri

McGraw Hill

PreK-12 Higher Ed About v

Get Support v Sign In Cart (0) v

Search by ISBN, Title, Author, Keyword

Browse by Discipline v Learning Solutions v Ideas & Events Log In to Product v

Jhumpa Lahiri

McGraw Hill is thrilled to partner with Pulitzer Prize-winning author, Jhumpa Lahiri, to create a video series about how learning a new language helps us to develop the skills we need to thrive in our interconnected world.

Works cited

Atamanova, I. & Bogomaz, S. 2011. “Language learning through content: What can help university students develop their communicative competence in a professional field?” In *Global encounters: Pedagogical paradigms and educational practices*, edited by B. Swaffield & I. Guske, 93-105. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Brown, Douglas 2014. *Principles of language learning and teaching: A course in second language acquisition*. White Plains, NY: Pearson.

Byram, Michael. 2008. *From Foreign Language Education to Education for Intercultural Citizenship*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Chapelle, C. and C. Roberts. 1986. “Ambiguity Tolerance and Field Independence as predictors of proficiency in English as a second language,” *Language Learning*, 36: 27–45. (Cited by Dewaele and wei 2013).

Deardorff, Darla. 2006. “Identification and Assessment of Intercultural Competence as a Student Outcome of Internationalization,” *Journal of Studies in International Education*, vol. 10: 3: 241-266.

DeWaele Jean Marc and Li Wei. 2013. “Is multilingualism linked to a higher tolerance of ambiguity?” *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, 16.1” 231 240.

Guskin, Alan. 2015. “Cultural Humility.” In *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Intercultural Competence*, edited by Janet Marie Bennett, 162-164.

Guskin, A. 1991. “Cultural humility: A way of being in the world,” *Antioch Notes*, 59.1: 1–11.

Guskin, A. 2010. “Viewpoint: A way of being in the world: Reflections on the Peace Corps, 50 years later.” *The Michigan Daily*. Retrieved October 13, 2020 from <http://www.michigandaily.com/content/viewpoint-way-being-world-reflections-peace-corps-after-50-years>

Holliday, A. 2016. “Revisiting intercultural competence: Small culture formation on the go through threads of experience,” *International Journal of Bias, Identity and Diversities in Education (IJBIDE)*, 1.2: 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.4018/IJBIDE.2016070101>

Kramsch, Claire. 2013. “Culture in foreign language teaching,” *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research* 1.1: 57-78.

Liddicoat, Anthony and V. Tudini. 2013. “Expert-novice orientations: Native speaker power and the didactic voice in online intercultural interaction.” In *Intercultural Communication in the New Era*, edited by F. Sharifian & M. Jamarani, 181-197. New York: Routledge.

Liddicoat, Anthony. 2016. “Native and non-native speaker identities in interaction: Trajectories of power,” *Applied Linguistics Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1515/applirev-2016-0018>

-----, “Critical Perspectives in Intercultural Language Learning.” *ELIA (Estudios de lingüística inglesa aplicada)*. Mon. I, pp. 17-38. <http://dx.doi.org/10.12795/elia.mon.2019.i1.02>

Meyer, Meinert. 1990. “Developing Transcultural Competence: Case Studies of Advanced Foreign Language Learners.” In *Mediating Languages and Cultures*, edited by Dieter Buttjes and Michael Byram, 136–158. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2018. *The Integration of the Humanities and Arts with Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine in Higher Education: Branches from the Same Tree*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. doi: <https://doi.org/10.17226/24988>.

Norton, B. 1997. “Language, identity and the ownership of English,” *TESOL Quarterly*, 31.3: 409-429.

Oxford, R. and M. Ehrman. 1992. “Second language research on individual differences,” *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 13: 188–205. (Cited by Dewaele and wei 2013).

Rubin, J. 1975. “What the ‘Good Language Learner’ can teach us.” *TESOL Quarterly*, 9: 41–51. (Cited by Dewaele and wei 2013).

-----, 2008. Reflections. In C. Griffiths (ed.), *Lessons from good language learners*, pp. 10–15. Cambridge:Cambridge University Press. (Cited by Dewaele and wei 2013).

Seravalle, V. 2011. *Native, non-native and near-native accent: The mediating role of identity in performance vs. perception*. Ph.D. dissertation, Royal Holloway, University of London. (Cited by Dewaele and wei 2013).

Spitzberg, B. H., & Changnon, G. 2009. “Conceptualizing intercultural competence.” In *The Sage handbook of intercultural competence*, edited by Darla Deardorff , 2–52. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.