The TalkAbroad case: addressing intercultural communicative competency in FREN311

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The TalkAbroad Case: Addressing Intercultural Communicative Competency (ICC) in FREN311
“Where the **tourist** remains essentially unchanged, the **sojourner** has the opportunity to learn and be educated, acquiring the capacity to critique and improve their own and others’ conditions”

--Michael Byram, *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence*, p. 2
The TalkAbroad Case: Addressing ICC in FREN311

I. FREN311 in the French curriculum at CSBSJU
II. American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) standards and recommendations
III. Benefits of and Motivations for use of interactive exchanges
IV. What is TalkAbroad?
V. Description of Project in FREN311: Studies in Language and Culture
   I. Quantitative Results and Content Analysis
   II. Benefits and Challenges Observed
VI. Going forth
VII. Conclusions
VIII. Q&A
FREN311 in the French curriculum

I. FREN111-211 sequence (proficiency)

II. FREN212

III. FREN311—Studies in Language and Culture (HM, IC)
CSB/SJU Intercultural Learning Goals

Students will demonstrate:

- a **level of understanding of another culture**, including the awareness that it is neither monolithic nor static.

- an **understanding that their perspective on the world is shaped in certain ways by their particular background**.

- an awareness that when we encounter another culture, we **filter the new experience through established perspectives**, which makes it more difficult to uncover our common humanity and the reasons for our differences.
“In order to understand and address global issues, it is important to understand the perspectives on the world that speakers of other languages bring to the table. By learning other languages, students develop respect and openness to those whose culture, religion, and views on the world may be different”.

--Introduction to *Partnership for 21st Century Skills*
World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages (W-RSLL)

The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) goal areas—the 5 Cs:

- Communication
- Cultures
- Connections
- Communities
- Comparisons
World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages (W-RSLL)

ACTFL—the three modes of communication:

- Interpersonal
- Interpretive
- Presentational
Benefits of Interactive Language Exchanges

- Recognition of learning and teaching in the 21st century
- Focus on learner, not on teacher
- Diversification, Differentiation, Personalization & Authenticity of FL teaching
- Motivating outside of the classroom
- Learning about other cultures & development of intercultural awareness/communicative competence (ICC)
- Experience of cooperative & collaborative learning
- Applicability & authenticity
Motivations and Objectives

- Rural Minnesota
- Lack pool of native speakers of French
- Desire for greater exposure to target language and culture outside of the classroom
- [Study Abroad]
Introduction to TalkAbroad: a pedagogy-specific proprietary software

Conversation practice with native speakers
Spanish, French, English, Mandarin, Arabic, German, Italian and Portuguese

- Safe
- Trained
- Recorded

Learn more

www.talkabroad.com
Introduction to TalkAbroad

View TalkAbroad Conversation Partners

Filter Available Conversation Partners

- By Date/Time
- By Country

Submit

Conversation Partners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nelson Vallerand</td>
<td>Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camille Leblanc</td>
<td>Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denise Rodrigues Marafona</td>
<td>France</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maureen Delabarre</td>
<td>France</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gwen Brouard-Foster</td>
<td>France</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chariene Arblade</td>
<td>France</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paterna YAO</td>
<td>Ivory Coast</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eya Said</td>
<td>Tunisia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fakhri Mabrouki</td>
<td>Tunisia</td>
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<td>Athar Chrigui</td>
<td>Tunisia</td>
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<td>Asma Chouki</td>
<td>Tunisia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Malek Abdelhamid</td>
<td>Tunisia</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Malek Abdelhamid

Name: Malek Abdelhamid
Country: Tunisia
Profession: étudiante en design

Contact Us
FREN311: Project Learning Goals

- Intercultural Learning Goals:
  - Awareness that culture is neither static nor monolithic
  - Discussion and reflection of Customs, Practices and Perspectives of interlocutors
Overall Study Questions

- Did students learn linguistic and cultural elements?
- Was there development of ICC?
FREN311: Project Description

- Three conversations of 30min & three deadlines
- No specific prompts assigned
- Final oral presentation (17% of grade)
FREN311: Addressing the W-RSLL

ACTFL—the 3 modes of communication:

• Interpersonal (pre-, during and post-)
• Interpretive (during)
• Presentational (post-)
Procedures & Data Collection

Pre-Conversations

• Collection of baseline information in Pre-Conversation Questionnaire and quizzes

Post-Conversations

• Student Debriefing
• Post-Conversation Questionnaire and quizzes
• Student Presentation
### Procedures

- Did students learn new cultural elements?

III. In this section, we would like to know your opinions about the following affirmations related to your perception of the cultural knowledge and competency of the country of your chosen TalkAbroad partner.

6 = I Strongly Agree with the affirmation  
4/5 = I Agree with the affirmation  
2/3 = I Disagree with the affirmation  
1 = I Strongly Disagree with the affirmation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I was aware prior to this study that my partner’s country is French-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>speaking.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. I can intelligently address one topic from the recent history of the</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>country of my interlocutor.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I can intelligently address one topic from the customs and traditions</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>of the country of my interlocutor.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. I am familiar with the gastronomy of the country of my interlocutor.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. I am familiar with the religion of the country of my interlocutor.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. I am familiar with the fashion trends of the country of my interlocutor.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
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Procedures

Identify Francophone Regions (shaded) on the map in 90 seconds
FREN311: Quantitative Results

Name
Francophone Regions
FREN311: Quantitative Results

Identify Francophone Regions on the map.
FREN311: Quantitative Results

General Cultural Knowledge Quiz
III. In this section, we would like to know your opinions about the following affirmations related to your perception of the cultural knowledge and competency of the country of your chosen TalkAbroad partner.

6 = I Strongly Agree with the affirmation
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<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I was aware prior to this study that my partner’s country is French-speaking.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I can intelligently address one topic from the recent history of the country of my interlocutor.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
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<td>3. I can intelligently address one topic from the customs and traditions of the country of my interlocutor.</td>
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FREN311: Quantitative Results

Recent History Interlocutor

Customs Traditions Interlocutor

Gastronomy Interlocutor
FREN311: Quantitative Results

![Graphs showing trends in Religion and Fashion topics across sessions.](image-url)
Les sentiments politiques

- L’avortement : illégal au Cote d’Ivoire
  - Le médecin doit aller au prison
- Des grands problèmes sociaux
  - Les différences entre les classes sociaux
    - Les riches et les pauvres : une grande séparation
    - La santé
    - L’éducation
- Les manifs
  - Pas comme en France!
  - « Ils portent des bus dans les rues! »

Debiah est un dessert qui est typiquement servi pendant le mois de Ramadan. Le mot “Debiah” est l’arabe pour “la bague de fiançailles”.

Couscous est un plat traditionnelle de la Tunisie. C’est très populaire dans les pays Maghreb. Il y a toujours un débat pour décider s’il est une céréale ou un pâte.
**MOROCCO**

**Le Maroc**

- Le Maroc a 35 millions de personnes
- La langue officielle du Maroc est arabe
- La religion principale du Maroc est l'Islam
  - 95% des marocains sont musulmans
- 50% parle français, 25% parle un peu de français

**La vie environnementale**

- Recyclage et compostage
- Le minimalisme
- Transport en commun
- La nourriture organique - TRÈS CHER!!
- Les vélos

**CANADA (QUÉBEC)**

**Les parcs nationaux**

Pas très populaire puisqu'ils sont loin des villes de l'est.
FREN311: Content Analysis
(open ended questions)

“[it was unexpected] just how fast it went by”. (Student #1, FREN311)

“I didn’t expect [my partner and I] to have so much in common and that was really cool”. (Student #2, FREN311)

“…allowing me to exchange cultures with a very intelligent and global-minded person”. (Student #3, FREN311)
“It was unexpected how much I learned from [my partner].” (Student #4, FREN311)

“I didn’t expect to learn more about the U.S.” (Student #5, FREN311)

“I learned about what wouldn’t necessarily be presented in a textbook/ a deeper understanding of social norms” (Student #6, FREN311)
Benefits

• A variety of different interlocutors available, ranging from different countries and cultures
• Student accountability and responsibility
• [Good tech support]
Challenges

• Time difference
• Cost
• Only option*: 30min conversations
• Technical difficulties (audiovisual, connectivity)
• [Regional varieties]

*TalkAbroad now offers 10min conversations
Going forth...

- FREN350: French Phonetics?
- Integrations Curriculum : Global Engagement
Global Engagement (GLO) Learning Outcome
Students develop awareness of their own and other cultures from outside the U.S. through experiences and develop strategies for adapting effectively and appropriately to intercultural situations.

General Course Description
In fulfilling the GLO requirement for the Integrations Curriculum, students will exercise responsibility, initiative, and judgment as they apply their knowledge and skills within intercultural situations in meaningfully adaptive ways. Through structured reflection, students will be challenged to move beyond the performance of the global engagement task to discover and internalize knowledge about themselves and the world around them in a way that is cyclical (think-act-reflect, repeat) and meaningful. […]
Concluding Remarks

- Interactive exchanges were effective in awakening cultural sensitivity and ICC.

- More intercultural curiosity in students and a greater awareness of the Francophone world, including customs, perspectives and practices.

- Developed confidence in L2/personal growth.

- As Adair-Hauck and Donato (2002) have suggested, in the interactive exchanges, the native interlocutor may:
  1. Challenge
  2. Support
  3. Empower the language learner.
Thank you! Merci!

“L2 development must be understood as essential to a full range of intercultural competence” -- Alvino Fantini


