The Perceptions of College Foreign Language Students Concerning their High School Foreign Language Preparation

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THE PERCEPTIONS OF COLLEGE FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUDENTS
CONCERNING THEIR HIGH SCHOOL FOREIGN LANGUAGE PREPARATION

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of
Marshall University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education
in
Curriculum and Instruction
by
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Marshall University
April 26, 2017

Keywords: foreign languages, articulation
I hereby affirm that the following project meets the high academic standards for original scholarship and creative work established by my discipline, college, and the Graduate College of Marshall University. With my signature, I approve the manuscript for publication.

Project Title: The Perceptions of College Foreign Language Students Concerning Their High School Foreign Language Study

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of college students studying a foreign language concerning their high school foreign language study experience. In particular, the study examined students’ beliefs about factors that may have contributed to a successful transition into the study of foreign languages in college. The population consisted of college students from post-secondary schools in West Virginia who took a foreign language class. Students completed a survey designed to obtain grade point average data, language course completion history, type of language studied, in addition to subjective perceptions about effects of academic preparation, motivation, and overall feelings of success in foreign language study. Additionally, they rated the level of agreements for various statements concerning their high school FL experience. Data were analyzed by comparing mean scores of Likert-scale items, and by the general content of free responses. Results showed that minimal differences existed in perceptions for students who studied abroad. Factors such as high language choice and availability most heavily influenced language choice in college. However, language choice itself was not a significant effect on responses.
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife, children, family, and friends, who have all stood by me and believed in me throughout my educational journey. I have had both successes and setbacks; the support I received was unwavering through both. To my parents, you have instilled in me the drive to want to succeed at all things, and to be humble and receptive during my setbacks. Your high expectations and involvement in my education led me down the path toward lifelong learning. To my brother, you have been my champion and friend since we were children. You always found ways to turn frustrating situations into positive learning experiences. To my grandparents, you have been like a second set of parents to me; you have always checked in on me to make sure I have had everything I needed, even as an adult! To my mother-in-law and father-in-law, thank you tremendously for encouraging me every step of the way. To my two beautiful children, Lucas and Natalie, I look forward to the day when you can read this yourself and give me your own criticism. Last, but certainly not least, I dedicate this dissertation to my loving wife, Shainna. You have endured many nights of frustration while you helped me make time to write, study, or attend class. You have been my rock throughout my doctoral studies, and you truly have the patience of a saint!
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professor in today’s universities. This valuable information will help me to understand how K-12 and college faculty can better work together to reach their goals in education.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Foreign language (FL) study in the United States, along with the rest of the “standard” curriculum, has undergone significant change within the past 50-60 years. These changes are reflected in the teaching methodology, the motivation for FL study in the curriculum, as well as the recent data for FL study enrollment (American Council for Teaching of Foreign Languages, 2009). While there are certainly other contributing factors affecting FL curricular change, these three factors exemplify the change at a glance, allowing educators to examine the trends on a more holistic level.

TEACHING METHODOLOGY AND MOTIVATION

The teaching of FLs in modern education has largely developed from the teaching styles of the military. This is to say that drill and repetition initially dominated instruction, as it was believed that proficiency was attained through practice. As such, errors were viewed as problematic and detrimental to the language learning process. Teaching in this style is known as the audio-lingual method (ALM). With the outbreak of World War II, soldiers and foreign workers alike needed a quick way to learn a language for common, everyday tasks. During class, only the first language of students (L1) was used in instruction, as the explanation of grammar was considered to be the primary focus of the ALM.

By 1960, researchers such as Noam Chomsky (1980) began to question the validity of the ALM. Chomsky theorized language learning as something that required autonomy and control on the part of the learner. This required metacognitive knowledge of the language, or its structure, and its phonetic properties. This “Cognitive Code” approach emphasized the scholarly study of language over its “natural” use in everyday situations. The educational reforms of the
1960s helped facilitate this ideological shift, as educators reexamined curricula in all areas in order to adapt to the changing social and political climate (Rivers, 1981).

In the late 1970s, researchers such as Stephen Krashen eschewed the Cognitive Code methodology for a more natural approach for the learner, consisting of using the target language in an authentic and meaningful context (Krashen, 1974). He questioned the validity of classroom language teaching as a bona fide path to high-level language acquisition. He agreed, however, that FL teaching in the classroom setting was the most common, so educators should focus on ways to capture elements of a natural setting.

In the following decade, Krashen’s theories lead to the development of the Communicative Approach. This methodology posits that students should use the target language (L2) for meaningful tasks that are relevant to them in contexts that are not artificially contrived or created for the sake of drill. For example, instead of using drills that rely on repetition of the targeted form without much regard for the plausibility and/or realistic nature of the language content, a teacher using the Communicative Approach would try to have students create scenarios where the target form is used in context. The Communicative Approach is prevalent today, and is widely used by language instructors all over the world (Savignon, 2002). This approach has been facilitated greatly with the advent of the Internet and mobile devices as efficient ways to communicate globally. Because students can communicate with native speakers who live in a region where the target language is prevalent, it is possible to use the L2 to communicate meaningfully and in a more natural way.

**Recent Data for Student Enrollment at the K-12 Level**

On the national scale, the American Council of Teaching Foreign Languages (ACTFL) conducted a three-year survey to gauge language change throughout the United States between
the 2004-2005, and 2007-2008 school years (2009). The study found that overall student enrollment percentages increased slightly from 18% to 18.51% in the three-year period, with West Virginia actually showing a significant increase of 24% (47,101 to 58,630). Despite the increase in enrollment in West Virginia between 2004 and 2008, enrollment in the following years showed a different trend. According to the West Virginia Foreign Language Teacher’s Association (WVFLTA), between the 2008-2009 and 2010-2011 school years, the overall number of students taking foreign languages classes in West Virginia decreased approximately from 60,000 to 42,000, or 30%. However, while enrollment decreased in popular language courses such as Spanish (-28%), French (-47%), and Latin (-53%), German (-4%) saw little change at all. In addition, languages such as American Sign Language (ASL) and Italian emerged, albeit in small numbers. While Japanese saw a large decrease of approximately 73%, Chinese doubled its enrollment through the Guest Teacher Program, which allowed foreign students to live in West Virginia in order to teach secondary students about their language and culture.

The Difficulty in the High School-College Transition

The transition for students between high school and post-secondary courses is challenging (from here the blanket term “college” will be used to include post-secondary education including community college, vocation school, universities, and other post-secondary institutions). In addition to an increase in the difficulty level of the courses, students are also faced with the challenges of time management, having acquired intrinsic motivation, and managing their overall workload.

Ideally, students entering college have acquired the prerequisite knowledge and skillset necessary to continue as seamlessly as possible with their studies. According to a 2012 report by
the American College Testing Corporation (ACT), 67% of students met the college benchmark in English, 52% in reading, 46% in mathematics, 31% in science, and only 25% in all four subjects. While these numbers may seem to indicate a dire situation in education, the report mentions that students have made gradual gains within the past few years, especially in math and science.

In order to combat the lack of preparedness of incoming college freshman, many schools offer courses in remediation that students are required to complete successfully in order to qualify for credit bearing courses, particularly in math and English. Unfortunately, this is costly and time-consuming for both students and schools. Some schools may allow students to take a placement test in some subjects after finishing high school but before starting college. These tests vary in style and delivery, but most aim to create a uniform standard by which students are measured.

In the absence of a placement test, schools may elect to place students according to seat time, or the amount of time students have spent studying a subject. For example, a student may be placed into level-three chemistry because he/she has completed two courses in chemistry in high school. It is important to note that the notion of time here is a relative term, and usually adjusts for the different length of courses for students whose schedules differ from high school to high school (i.e. block schedule vs. traditional 7-period schedule). This method does not take into account students’ current knowledge at the time of matriculation, but rather what they have demonstrated in a previous setting, such as high school.

When students are not required to take a placement test or prove their seat time in a subject, they may elect to begin studying a subject at a level in which they feel most comfortable. Unfortunately, students may then opt for an easier class that covers material with which the
student is already rather familiar. For example, a student who has already completed calculus in high school may elect to take college algebra in order to have an easier class. In FL classes, in particular, this can be problematic. Students who elect to start in courses that are below their appropriate level are sometimes referred to as false beginners. These students may often dominate discussions and skew the teacher’s perception of students’ progress with the material.

Despite the presence of the aforementioned strategies for placement, students sometimes do not start studying a subject at the level that best fits their subject background and academic readiness. This repeating of courses and content is known as academic redundancy.

Redundancy is a financial and academic burden on both students and the colleges that they attend. This is particularly problematic in foreign languages (FLs), as standards are not always consistent in terms of assessment used for student placement and for the creation of common curricula. While West Virginia colleges have used the aforementioned methods of placing students in appropriate FL classes upon their matriculation, the differences among the institutions only guarantee an institution-specific standard. While FL courses often serve as elective requirements in many student majors, some colleges may think that using FL courses as bona fide areas of concentration is not a priority; as a result FL departments may do little more than get students ready to move on to other degree requirements. An effort to alleviate some of this problem would be to strengthen the vertical articulation between high school and college courses. Vertical articulation is the process of aligning classes that precede and follow one another in a series, such that students may transition from one class to the next as seamlessly as possible. This can be especially difficult when courses span different schools and/or different educational systems (i.e. high school vs. college). Successful vertical articulation in FL courses involves high school and college FL educators collaboratively developing FL curricula and
assessment tools that align with one another. A more common background between the two levels would alleviate some of the serendipity that occurs within the classrooms and at the macro-curricular level. In addition to vertical articulation, strong horizontal articulation between courses at the same level is important in standardizing curriculum. Horizontal articulation is the process of aligning classes at the same level in a series such that parity exists in the overall general requirements and objectives of the courses. This may be attempted at the institutional level, but not necessarily among different schools. While it may not always be feasible to adopt a Common Core equivalency for all FL students at a wide scale, current standards attempt to guide educators under a general umbrella of goals and objectives.

The Coalition of Foreign Language Organizers (1995) claims that articulation occurs (effectively) when language teachers communicate and collaborate across levels and disciplines, acknowledge common goals and principles, focus on the learner and the curricular content, and takeS into account the variety of student accomplishments across various levels of education. Does effective articulation occur between the high school and college levels in West Virginia schools? While this is certainly not an all-or-nothing ideal, it is important to examine the factors that are present, in addition to factors that may need to be addressed in FL programs. It is hopeful that a better understanding of these factors will encourage educators to improve FL programs through curriculum that is better aligned with the needs of students at both the high school and college level. This will create a seamless transition between high school and college FL studies, thus saving students and educators time and money.

**STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Students at the college level may not be consistently prepared for the FL courses they must take to satisfy requirements for their majors or other programs of study. They often start
coursework at the beginning level for a language that they have previously studied in high school. A successful transition for FL students to the post-secondary level may include tightly aligned curricula between both levels. This includes high levels of school and teacher investment in the success of FL students, the ability for students to take upper-level FL courses in high school (level three or higher), and diversity in language choice for high school students.

This study will examine college FL students’ perception about the extent that their high school foreign language classes prepared them to be successful in collegiate foreign language study. Participants will report information regarding their experiences in high school FL study, including factors such as academic rigor, administrative support for FL programs, teacher/counselor involvement in student planning for college FL study (i.e. informing students about minimum requirements, possible FL scholarships, and possible academic/career uses for FL).

**RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. What are the differences between males and females in how they perceive that their high school FL experience affected their overall success in college FL study?

2. Do students who have studied abroad have different perceptions about their high school FL experiences than those who have never been “immersed” in another culture for a period of time?

3. How do perceptions of students studying different languages compare to one another?

4. Does the length of time between when students take a high school foreign language class and a college foreign language class (in the same language) have an effect on students’ perceptions of their high school foreign language experiences?
Operational Definitions

1. **Horizontal Articulation:** course interconnectivity such that there exists parity in terms of academic standards and curricula among courses of the same level.

2. **Vertical Articulation:** course interconnectivity such that there exists sequential order between courses that immediately precede or follow one another in a series.

3. **Seat time:** an assessment tool used for the placement of students in courses based upon the amount of time (e.g. number of courses/units) they have been studying that particular subject.

4. **Placement test:** for FL, an exam used to place students in the appropriate language course based upon their performance. These exams may or may not assess the same indicators of acquisition, including speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

**IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY**

While success can be an abstract and a difficult concept to measure, understanding students’ perception of success is important in knowing what factors provide the most benefits to students. The purpose of this study is to examine perceptions about how students from various high school FL study backgrounds gauge their success with FL classes. Information obtained from these data may help classroom teachers and curriculum designers to work together toward better common assessment, the creation of more diverse types of FL courses offered to students, and better tailoring of FL programs to the needs of students. It is important, then, to translate these students’ perceptions into workable goals for educators to use when discussing the improvement of FL courses.

**LIMITATIONS**

Because the study focuses on West Virginia colleges and universities, data may not be indicative of national trends. In addition, the concept of success is inherently subjective when
basing it upon the opinions of students participating in the survey. As a result, it may be difficult to find a true standard that accounts for both students’ wants and (perceived) needs. This is to say that because the vast majority of students enrolled in introductory college FL course are not curriculum specialists or teachers themselves, their perceptions about what is needed may not align with best practices and overarching goals of experienced educators.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

When examining the nature of FL programs, it is important to consider the effects of the historical, pedagogical, and theoretical implications of FL study and teaching of what one may consider to be “best practices” in the field. Because FL curricula do not exist in a vacuum, it is equally important to consider the roles that FLs have on the traditional curriculum at large.

THE EFFECTS OF FORMAL INSTRUCTION ON SLA

In the field of second language acquisition (SLA), many scholars are heavily divided regarding the role of formal instruction and its effectiveness on language acquisition. This is not to say that researchers think that instruction has a negative influence on students in the foreign language FL classroom, but rather that some believe that acquisition exists independent of and regardless of formal instruction. For those who subscribe to the theories that discount the role of instruction, there are varying levels of dissent: some believe that instruction is completely ineffective, while others concede that it may play a role, albeit somewhat insignificant.

One of the most prominent critics of the role of formal instruction in SLA is Stephen Krashen. He posits in his acquisition-learning hypothesis (ALH) that acquisition is different from learning. (1982, pp. 5-12) This separation goes against the notion that language is something that can be practiced or gained through repetition (DeKeyser 2010). For Krashen, acquisition hinges upon the concept of subconsciously processing language while the person is
not aware of his or her newfound knowledge. On the other hand, he defines learning as a conscious process in the mind where the person processes rules, grammar, and forms of error correction. Krashen equates the latter to formal instruction and bases his criticisms on their almost synonymous relationship. Because he believes that learning is not an efficient form of gaining knowledge of a language, what does Krashen suggest must happen in order to promote acquisition?

Krashen’s first requirement for acquisition is known as comprehensible input (CI). CI deals with the notion that not all input can be used for acquisition by students. The term intake is used to describe the portion of input that can be absorbed by the student on the way to acquisition. More specifically, CI must be knowledge that is just beyond what students have already acquired, or $i+1$. The mentality of $i+1$ is akin to athletes’ pushing themselves just beyond their normal capabilities in order to gain strength, speed, or accuracy. Krashen posits that learners follow specific acquisition orders, regardless of instruction or practice (Bailey, Madden, and Krashen, 1974). This belief echoes previous research in the development of L2 in children by Dulay and Burt (1974). Because of this order, $i+1$ CI could be thought of as hinging between what has recently been acquired, or $i$, and what would logically follow next in acquisition order, or $i+1$. In addition, Krashen asserts that the students’ affective filter (AF) must be lowered to allow input to be taken in. AF is defined as the negative emotions associated with language acquisition, such as self-doubt, anxiety, or overall boredom. These emotions inhibit the instructor’s ability to give effective CI to the student and lower the amount of input overall eligible to be understood. Krashen offers that students’ AF may be lowered by sparking interest, encouraging student interaction, and helping to maintain high self-esteem by learners in the classroom. Once these two main criteria are met then acquisition is possible.
If formal instruction is based upon Krashen’s concept of learning, how may language instructors hone their classrooms in order to get their students to acquire the language—instead? Is this even possible? According to Krashen, language instructors, while they may never hope to provide the ultimate language acquisition environment, must provide comprehensible input that students may not otherwise receive. In addition, learning may be restricted to a small subset of rules that are a) learnable, b) portable, and/or c) not yet acquired. This is to say that formal instruction must be viewed as a supplement to natural contexts rather than a replacement. Instructors must acknowledge that classrooms are acquisition-poor contexts; this will encourage them to maximize strategies to strengthen the students’ monitor model (MM). The MM is a system where the learner checks internally for errors and understanding before speaking.

Krashen (1982) lists three conditions for students to use the MM in the classroom: know the rule, focus-on correctness, and have time to use the monitor. Despite the knowledge of these three key elements, each tenet has with it inherent difficulties in practical usage. For example, even the best students do not know every single rule, nor is every rule taught in every textbook or by every teacher. In addition, for students to have time to use the monitor implies a metalinguistic knowledge of the form, thus detracting from more communicative information in conversation. Because only writing exhibits 100% competence, we must acknowledge that even the best speakers do not acquire certain aspects of the language, leading to a de facto ceiling effect for language students. While the order of acquisition cannot be changed, Krashen says that the speed through which learners pass each stage varies from person to person. With this in mind, it may be concluded that formal instruction does not do much for acquisition-rich contexts because of the relatively narrowed scope of goals, interaction, and overall input provided in a classroom setting.
A third viewpoint about the nature of classroom effectiveness focuses on the learner’s intentional mental processes when attempting to acquire the L2. Richard Schmidt introduced his Noticing Hypothesis (NH) in 1990 based upon cognitive psychology: Cognitive psychology makes two primary assumptions: Human cognition can be tested with the scientific method and internal mental processes are made up of rules and algorithms in information processing models. Within the cognitive framework of NH, Schmidt states that language cannot be acquired without first being noticed (Lightbown and Spada, 2006). However, noticing does not guarantee acquisition, but merely serves as a starting point. This means that acquisition is in fact a conscious process which is enacted by the learner. Noticing implies awareness, which in turn allows the students to process the input. Schmidt’s 1990 NH stems from an earlier article, Schmidt and Frota (1986), where the authors claimed that “those who notice most are those who pay attention most…” (Schmidt, p. 144, 1990). Again, Schmidt places the role of acquisition primarily in the hands of the students. In other words, it is up to students to notice L2 input that is given to them in order to begin the process toward acquisition. However, this places a large burden on language instructors, as it implies that they may only indirectly effect L2 acquisition. In addition, SLA researchers argue that awareness is difficult to measure, thus challenging to implement effectively. Based on the Noticing Hypothesis, it may be concluded that instructors must give as much CI as possible, engaging students and encouraging them to be proactive with their own L2 acquisition. In addition, instructors may do well to teach competency strategies to students in order to maximize awareness in the language classroom.

On what perhaps may be labeled as the opposite end of the spectrum from Krashen’s view of the almost futile nature of formal instruction are researchers such as Hatch (1983), Pica (2005), Gass (2006), and Long (1997). As a whole, these researchers subscribe to what Long
(1996) refers to as the Interaction Hypothesis (IH). This hypothesis asserts that the conditions for acquisition are maximized when interaction takes place in the L2. In addition, a breakdown in communication may be a good condition, as well, because of the opportunity for learners to negotiate for meaning. In the language classroom, these sorts of interactions produce modifications of speech that help to make input more comprehensible, to provide learner feedback, and to force students to modify their speech. Long concluded that instruction can be useful for many types of learners, from children to adults and beginning to advanced students. Notably, Long finds that instruction is in fact beneficial in both acquisition-rich and -poor environments. One can say that Long preferred taking parts of Krashen’s MM and improving it to prevent formal instruction from contradicting its findings.

While the question of whether formal instruction is indeed effective in language classrooms is arguable, Krashen, Schmidt, and Long all agree that context-rich input is necessary for acquisition in general. Given the fact that formal instruction is, and most likely will be, the prevalent method of SLA for students of all types, perhaps it is less important to ask if formal instruction is effective but rather than how formal instruction can be made effective. In other words, faced with the reality of a pre-defined classroom setting with limited acquisition-rich contexts, instructors must strive to optimize their little time permitted with students. Whether it is by noticing or subconscious knowledge, second language acquisition in language classrooms depends on instructors’ willingness to implement and continue using comprehensible input for students.

**FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE**

After considering the effectiveness of teaching FL in the formal setting, it is necessary to question how the theoretical framework laid by Krashen is being implemented in FL classrooms.
In the K-12 classroom, teachers are considered to be experts in their content area. While there may or may not be other teachers in a school who share the expertise in a given subject, administrators are charged with helping teachers apply more generalizable pedagogical practices in the classroom. This is to say that teachers may often be given the choice as to the nature of the instructional style within their classroom. In FLs, this may be compounded by the fact that the language being taught may not be one with which other members of the school are familiar. Therefore, it is a difficult task for an observer of a FL classroom to give content-specific and FL-strategy-specific feedback to the teacher.

ARTICULATION BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE FOREIGN LANGUAGE COURSES

While the theory and pedagogy behind teaching FLs are essential factors in examining the type and quality of education that FL students receive, it is equally important to analyze the curricular factors that connect the sequence of these courses. The connectivity between these courses, or the *articulation*, is important in the successful construction of a FL program (Statement of Articulation, 1995). This concern is certainly not a recent topic in FL education, Irving Putter (1955) outlines the reasons for concern among both high school and college educators. He posits that the lapse of time between when students take a FL course in high school, and then in college, may be detrimental to student success in the college FL course. His 1953 study examined the GPAs and success/repeat rate of students enrolled in a college FL course. His results showed a general decline in performance with an increase in time-lapse for students. Interestingly, Putter found that students who started in high school, *regardless* of when, did significantly better in their college FL courses than students who began their study for the first time in college. From this it can be ascertained that FL instruction in high school has
some effect on how students do in college FL classes. While it is difficult to suggest the degree and level to which this relationship exists, it may be important to discover how students perceive this effect through their own recollections of what has helped them the most to be successful.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

The following chapter presents methods that will be used to analyze data obtained from the author’s survey (2016) given to students. This survey analyzed perceptions that college FL students have about their high school FL experiences.

Four-year colleges often require students to take either two or four courses in a foreign language, depending on the nature of their degree (i.e. B.A. vs. B.S.). While community colleges are predominantly two-year schools, students may take some or all of a required FL course sequence at the community college for a future Bachelor’s degree at a four-year school. The number of courses taken at the college level may play a role in student success rate, but the assumption is that the secondary background of the student will still largely influence student success.

The transition between secondary and post-secondary studies is always challenging for students. For foreign language instructors at the high school level, one hopes that students may enter the realm of college foreign language study prepared to continue where they have left off in high school. Unfortunately, this is not always the case, as students face many challenges in this transition (Chermers, Hu, & Garcia, 2001).

Foreign language competency measurement is not an exact science, as there are several facets to language “fluency,” such as oral comprehension, written comprehension, oral production, and the ability to apply linguistic knowledge to everyday situations. Many universities have relied upon a placement exam, which aims to find where students best fit in the college-level courses (Bernhardt, Rivera, & Kamil, 2004). However, universities vary in their strictness in employing the placement requirements resulting from their exams. As a result, students may opt to take a lower class than the one in which they have tested. This not only fails
to challenge the student adequately, but also adds *false beginners* to the lower-level class. False beginners are students who enroll in introductory courses, but who are not new to the content. The reasons for false beginners enrolling in the introductory courses include wanting a class that is less challenging, having forgotten some of the content from the subject, and the lack of an alternative course in which the student may enroll. False beginners maybe problematic in a FL class because the ones who truly are beginners in the language must contend with students who have varying levels of acquisition, thus creating an imbalance in the classroom for the instructor and students alike (Arnold, 2007).

**PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

In order to ease the transition from high school FL classes to college FL classes, it is important to examine aspects of the high school FL curriculum that have the greatest impact on students in the college setting.

This study examined college FL students’ perceptions about the role that their high school foreign language experience played in their success in college foreign languages courses. Within this role, the survey hopes to derive the primary fundamental qualities of a successful high school FL program, about preparing students for post-secondary FL education.

**RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. What are the differences between males and females in how they perceive that their high school FL experience affected their overall success in college FL study?
2. Do students who have studied abroad have different perceptions about their high school FL experiences than those who have never been “immersed” in another culture for a period of time?
3. How do perceptions of students studying different languages compare to one another?
4. Does the length of time between when students take a high school foreign language class and a college foreign language class (in the same language) have an effect on students’ perceptions of their high school foreign language experiences?

**RESEARCH DESIGN**

This is an ex post facto, quantitative survey research design with no active manipulation of the variables, other than for the passive or demographic variables noted subsequently (Mertler, 2015; Creswell, 2005). No active variables were introduced which would alter, change or influence the perceptions of the respondents (Wiersma, 2000). A written questionnaire method was chosen because it would likely require less time, be less expensive, and allow access to a larger sample size, considering other types of data collection plans (Gay, Mills & Ariasian, 2008). In this case, the survey questionnaire was utilized to obtain information from respondents regarding their perceptions of a given set of descriptors relative to their high school and college preparation in foreign languages (FL). As noted, a corollary measure was included in the design to investigate relationships between the passive variables, such as gender and type of high school FL studied.

Data collection was a “one shot” method used to elicit response from a purposeful sample of participants at a prescribed point in time (Frankel 2012, McMillan, 2012). The data collected from the survey was appropriate for testing the related research questions as it examined the perceptions of high school students about their level of preparation in FL and its subsequent effects on effectively continuing to study foreign language in college. The target population was restricted to college and university matriculates who were currently studying a foreign language in colleges and universities in central and southern West Virginia. That delimitation was planned as the study was concerned about the potential patterns and relationships of FL study by
students in a mainly rural, geographical region. Procedures for follow-up of non-responders by repeated emails were planned in the design (Dillion, 2000). The data collected from the survey were appropriate for testing the related research questions. Because respondents only had access to a link provided by a third-party contact at the university, such as a program director or department chair, direct follow-up with participants was not possible. However, contacts from each school were sent reminder e-mails to distribute the survey link, in addition to following up concerning any possible technical or logistical concerns.

Because success is not easily operationalized in a research setting, it is more feasible to measure students’ perceptions about their success. This study examined various factors pertaining to students’ high school FL experience (independent variables) that may have influenced their perception of success (dependent variable) in college FL study. Within the student population, there were different curricular paths examined. One group consisted of students who plan to complete/have completed a two-course FL sequence in college, as part of their major requirements. Another group consisted of students who will complete/have completed a four-course sequence in college, as part of their major requirements. A third group consisted of students who plan to complete/have completed nine or more courses (or equivalent) as part of a FL minor or major. Within each group, male and female students were also compared as a corollary measure. Some students had prior experience in a foreign country where a language other than English is spoken. This will be noted as a possible confounding variable.

**Population**

This study surveyed college students in West Virginia who have finished at least one course in the required language sequence at the college level. Survey links were sent out to the
following schools: Alderson Broaddus University (ABU), Bluefield State University (BSU), Concord University (CU), Davis & Elkins College (D&E), Fairmont State University (FSU), Glenville State College (GSU), Marshall University (MU), Shepherd University (SU), University of Charleston (UC), West Liberty University (WSU), West Virginia State University (WVSU), West Virginia University (WVU), and West Virginia University Institute of Technology (WVUIT).

The planned population of the study was 100 students. A confidence level of 95% was established to indicate a margin of error, plus or minus five. Fortunately, more than 60 students completed over 50% of the survey. Because certain categorical variables, such as language choice, gender, and high school, are present by design, it was important to seek out a relatively high number of subjects. A larger sample size helps yield more useful distributions for the factors within the demographic variables. Having a larger sample also helps to ensure that the data are reliable and representative of the population, thus facilitating data analysis (Wimmer, 2010).

Procedures

Students received an invitation to participate in the survey via e-mail. Qualtrics was used to create the survey, which is based upon Bryan Pickens’s original instrument, as seen in Appendix A. Students answered by clicking on certain items within the questions to indicate their preferences, as well as pertinent background information. The end of the survey asked students to type short responses to open-ended questions in the boxes provided.

Instrumentation

The survey initially consisted of seven general questions regarding the background information of the student, including, gender, age, and language studied. The second portion
consisted of Likert-scale questions, asking students to rate their level of agreement with a number of items.

The Likert method, a widely-used and flexible technique, was selected because it provided a response system based on an “agreement –disagreement” continuum for collecting numerical data by degrees from respondents (Mertler, 2007; Stanley & Hopkins, 1972). It was also appropriate, given that respondents were “self-reporting” perceptions (a latent variable) regarding their FL experiences, thus providing degrees of freedom that best described their reactions to survey statements. Finally, when needed, Likert values can be totaled across participants creating interval-like data thus allowing the use of parametric statistical analysis (Wiersma, 2000). The final portion of the survey consisted of short free-response questions asking students to elaborate on some of their views regarding their high school FL experience.

Data Analysis

The current study used both quantitative and qualitative-like data in an attempt to obtain a broad spectrum of information from students about their overall experiences in their high school FL program. Data from the multiple-choice and Likert scale questions were used to categorize students by pertinent information as to how they responded in the next section. The free response questions were analyzed and codified to reflect the general types of answers that students gave.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

This chapter describes and analyzes the data that has been collected from the study via the survey. The survey contains information pertaining to participants’ perceptions of the quality of their high school foreign language classes and its effect on their success in college foreign language classes.
**Population**

The population of this study consisted of 83 current and former college foreign language students, all of whom had taken at least one foreign language class in high school. While the survey software recorded any attempt to take the survey, surveys where respondents did not answer any questions past the initial agreement were discarded. The original aim of the study was to target current college students, but the survey was then disseminated to individuals who met the basic aforementioned criteria. This was an unforeseen consequence of the delivery of the survey as a link to third parties, as opposed to surveys that are delivered directly to specific participants. This allowed the study to evolve and consider the opinions of participants who may not have had the advantage of recent foreign language experience. The participants who may have been out of school a long time may not contribute to the original questions in the originally intended manner, but the expectation was that their information can be used to find commonalities amongst a wide variety of former FL class learners. Also, the expanded population aided in getting a more representative number of responses, in addition to a wider variety of opinions.

**Data collection**

All surveys were distributed via an Internet link that guarded individuals’ anonymity. Responses were accepted between April 2016 and August 2016. Instructors, department heads, and other related faculty of several West Virginia colleges were contacted via e-mail asking for their help in distributing the survey to students. Respondents were permitted to omit questions or end the survey at any time. A lack of a response was treated as missing data for the purpose of analysis (Wiersma, 2000). While this caused a few participants to give somewhat incomplete
information about their experiences, the responses they did complete undoubtedly added to the overall details of the population.

The demographic data revealed that 16 (19.28%) of the respondents were male and 67 (80.72%) were female. In addition, 63 respondents (75.90%) graduated high school in West Virginia, while 19 respondents (22.89%) graduated in the United States in another state, and one respondent (1.20%) graduated high school outside of the United States. In terms of cultural background, 30 respondents (36.14%) described the community in which they were raised as rural, 48 respondents (57.83%) described their community as suburban, and five respondents (6.02%) described their community as urban. The respondents’ high school graduation year ranged from 1967 to 2015, with the median year being 2009. Finally, four (4.82%) respondents said that they either did or currently do speak a language besides English at home, while the remaining 79 respondents (95.18%) did speak or do speak English at home.

**Data analysis**

Because of the nature of the survey, both qualitative and quantitative analyses were done on the data collected. Research questions that were examined used combined analyses of Likert-scale questions and open-ended responses from Part Two and Part Three, respectively. For Part Two, respondents were asked to mark the level of their agreement with statements about both their high school and college foreign language experiences. The responses “Strongly disagree,” “Disagree,” “Somewhat disagree,” “Neither agree nor disagree,” “Somewhat agree,” “Agree,” and “Strongly agree” were assigned values from one to seven, respectively. A seven-point continuum was chosen over the typical five-point numerical scale to provide respondents a greater frame of reference for identifying and refining their perceptions, and hopefully to aid the researcher in interpreting the results more accurately. A higher value on the scale indicates a
more positive perception. Scores were summed across the items for the respondents in order to create an overall perception “score,” thus approaching interval-like scaling (Trochim, 2006). In order to calculate reliability of the instrument, Chronbach’s alpha model was used, which yielded an estimate of .597. This is considered to be a medium level of reliability in social and behavioral research (Pallant, 2010). The open-ended responses in Part Three were analyzed using descriptive statistics in order to find common answers among participants.

**MAJOR RESULTS**

*Question 1:* What are the differences between males and females in how they perceive that their high school FL experience do college affected their overall success in college FL study?

Mean scores were calculated on the Likert-scale portion of the data to compare the level of agreement that males and females had in each of the seventeen questions. The previously mentioned values between one and seven were used to indicate “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree,” respectively. The responses from males indicated that they mostly *agreed* with being satisfied with their performance in college foreign language classes ($M = 6.08$), having a teacher who was adequately qualified to teach their class ($M = 5.86$), and having successfully learned the vocabulary taught in class ($M = 5.80$). Conversely, males *disagreed* mostly with having been given few opportunities to write in the language ($M = 2.67$), having technology being used as a central component of their classrooms ($M = 3.20$), and their high school foreign language class not having prepared them for college foreign language classes ($M = 3.69$).

Based upon responses from female respondents, females mostly agreed with their teacher being adequately qualified to teach their class ($M = 5.94$), the college foreign language class they were placed in being appropriate for their skill level ($M = 5.72$), and their being satisfied with their performance in college foreign language classes ($M = 5.64$). Females mostly disagreed
about technology being a central component of their foreign language classes (M = 2.38), being
given few opportunities to write in the target language (M = 3.09), and about their high school
foreign language classes not adequately preparing them for college foreign language classes (M
= 3.24). These responses are shown in Table 1.

Table 2 gives the results of the independent samples t-test for measuring the equality of
means between male and female responses. Of the 17 questions compared in the data, there are
no statistically significant differences (p <.05).
Table 1

Perceptions of Effectiveness of Foreign Language Class Descriptive Statistics for Male and Female Perceptions of Effectiveness of Foreign Language Classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effectiveness of Foreign Language Class</th>
<th>Male Mean</th>
<th>Male SD</th>
<th>Female Mean</th>
<th>Female SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. my teacher spoke primarily in the target language (i.e. Spanish, French).</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>1.957</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>1.957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. the quizzes, tests, assignments and other kinds of assessment were NOT rigorous.</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>1.981</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>1.810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. my teacher thoroughly explained the requirements needed to be successful in foreign language study at the college level.</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>1.993</td>
<td>4.72</td>
<td>1.984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I acquired study habits that adequately prepared me for the study habits required in my college foreign language classes.</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>2.253</td>
<td>4.42</td>
<td>2.165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. technology was used as a central component of teaching and learning in my foreign language classes.</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>1.781</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>1.603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. there were very few opportunities for advanced students to continue language studies (i.e. German 3, German 4, and German 5) beyond the basic college entry requirements.</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>1.813</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>2.165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I became aware of how I might use a foreign language in my future plan of study and/or career.</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>2.193</td>
<td>4.73</td>
<td>1.939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. my teacher was adequately qualified to teach my class.</td>
<td>5.86</td>
<td>1.167</td>
<td>6.02</td>
<td>1.537</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I learned a lot about the norms, values, and traditions of other cultures.</td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>1.499</td>
<td>5.32</td>
<td>1.642</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I was given many opportunities to speak in the target language.</td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>1.737</td>
<td>5.15</td>
<td>1.921</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11. I was given very few opportunities to write in the target language.  
   |  |  |  |  |
   | 2.67 | 1.676 | 3.05 | 1.872 |
12. I successfully learned the grammar taught in my class.  
   |  |  |  |  |
   | 5.43 | 1.158 | 4.95 | 1.591 |
13. I successfully learned the vocabulary taught in the class.  
   |  |  |  |  |
   | 5.80 | .941 | 5.59 | 1.451 |
14. the college foreign language class I was placed into was appropriate for my skill level in the language.  
   |  |  |  |  |
   | 4.85 | 1.994 | 5.77 | 1.463 |
15. I am able to communicate as well as or better than my classmates in the target language  
   |  |  |  |  |
   | 5.77 | 1.481 | 5.04 | 1.804 |
16. I am satisfied with my performance in college foreign language classes.  
   |  |  |  |  |
   | 6.08 | .862 | 5.63 | 1.329 |
17. my high school foreign language classes did NOT adequately prepare me for my college foreign language classes.  
   |  |  |  |  |
   | 3.69 | 2.175 | 3.14 | 2.088 |
Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Male and Female Perceptions of Effectiveness of Foreign Language Classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effectiveness of Foreign Language Class</th>
<th>Male Mean</th>
<th>Female Mean</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. my teacher spoke primarily in the target language (i.e. Spanish, French).</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>.773</td>
<td>-.336</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. the quizzes, tests, assignments and other kinds of assessment were NOT rigorous.</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>.767</td>
<td>.595</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. my teacher thoroughly explained the requirements needed to be successful in foreign language study at the college level.</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>4.72</td>
<td>.939</td>
<td>-.204</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I acquired study habits that adequately prepared me for the study habits required in my college foreign language classes.</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.42</td>
<td>.647</td>
<td>-.644</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. technology was used as a central component of teaching and learning in my foreign language classes.</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>.308</td>
<td>1.401</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. there were very few opportunities for advanced students to continue language studies (i.e. German 3, German 4, and German 5) beyond the basic college entry requirements.</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>.067</td>
<td>-.109</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I became aware of how I might use a foreign language in my future plan of study and/or career.</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>4.73</td>
<td>.489</td>
<td>-.696</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. my teacher was adequately qualified to teach my class.</td>
<td>5.86</td>
<td>6.02</td>
<td>.717</td>
<td>-.364</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I learned a lot about the norms, values, and traditions of other cultures.</td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>5.32</td>
<td>.639</td>
<td>-1.404</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I was given many opportunities to speak in the target language.</td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>5.15</td>
<td>.539</td>
<td>-.905</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I was given very few opportunities to write in the target language.</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>.423</td>
<td>-.723</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Rating</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>t value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>I successfully learned the grammar taught in my class.</td>
<td>5.43</td>
<td>4.95</td>
<td>.386</td>
<td>1.060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>I successfully learned the vocabulary taught in the class.</td>
<td>5.80</td>
<td>5.59</td>
<td>.221</td>
<td>.540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>the college foreign language class I was placed into was appropriate for my skill level in the language.</td>
<td>4.85</td>
<td>5.77</td>
<td>.096</td>
<td>-1.886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>I am able to communicate as well as or better than my classmates in the target language</td>
<td>5.77</td>
<td>5.04</td>
<td>.582</td>
<td>1.349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>I am satisfied with my performance in college foreign language classes.</td>
<td>6.08</td>
<td>5.63</td>
<td>.093</td>
<td>1.138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>my high school foreign language classes did NOT adequately prepare me for my college foreign language classes.</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>.833</td>
<td>.849</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part Three of the survey asked respondents to answer short-response questions about their perceptions of high school foreign language classes. “Why did respondents take a foreign language class in college?”. For males the most popular reasons were that it served as a requirement for a non-foreign-language degree ($N = 7$), that it helped with content in their major ($N = 1$), and because that they took the class in high school ($N = 1$). Females also had indicated that the class was a requirement for a non-foreign-language degree as the most popular response ($N = 22$). The next most popular answers were for career and/or life opportunities ($N = 7$), and that they enjoyed learning the language ($N = 5$). Tables 3 and 4 show the full results:
Table 3. Descriptive Statistics for Males for the Question “Why did you take a foreign language?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-FL Degree requirement</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>70.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helped with content in my major</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Took in HS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study abroad or travel</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics for Females for the question “Why did you take a foreign language?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-FL Degree requirement</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>46.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career/Life Opportunities</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoyed learning</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FL minor</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanted to improve my ability in the language</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helped with content in my major</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Took in HS</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FL major</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarship requirements</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Become a FL teacher</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The second question asked respondents why they chose the language they studied. Males’ most popular responses that they took the language in high school ($N = 4$), that they were interested in the language or culture ($N = 3$), that they wanted to travel to where the language is spoken ($N = 2$), and that they thought the language would be easy to study ($N = 2$). Females had similar popular answers: They took the language in high school ($N = 15$), they wanted to communicate with native speakers of the language ($N = 11$), they were interested in the language or culture ($N = 9$), and they thought it would be easy ($N = 8$). Table 6 and 7 show the responses for both males and females:
Table 5. Descriptive Statistics for Males for the Question “Why did you choose to take this particular a foreign language?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Took in HS</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interested in language or culture</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanted to travel where language is spoken</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was a popular choice</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Want to communicate with native speakers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thought it would be easy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would be helpful in my field of study</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have family members who speak the language</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics for Females for the Question “Why did you choose to take this particular a foreign language?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Took in HS</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>24.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Want to communicate with native speakers</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interested in language or culture</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thought it would be easy</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thought it would be useful to my career</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanted to travel where language is spoken</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most convenient to take</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thought would be useful in general</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanted to try language different from HS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would be helpful in my field of study</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanted to improve my skills in the language</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Available online</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents suggested the language</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's my native language</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not like the alternative choice</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The third free-response question asked respondents to list what was most helpful to them in their high school foreign language classes. For males, the most common themes were learning the grammar (N = 3), practicing speaking in class (N = 2), and practicing writing in class (N = 2). Females also agreed about learning grammar (N = 9) and practicing speaking class (N = 7). However, their third most common choice was studying vocabulary (N = 5). Coincidentally, the same number of students (N = 5) found little to nothing helpful in their high school foreign language classes. Table 8 and 9 show the reader the complete list of responses by both males and females:
Table 7. Descriptive Statistics for Males for the Question “What aspect of your high school foreign language classes did you find most helpful?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning the overall grammar</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practicing speaking in class</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practicing writing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little or nothing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying vocabulary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a very knowledgeable instructor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immersion in class</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repetition</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom activities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using translation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The class was rigorous</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having previous FL experience in another language</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8. Descriptive Statistics for Females for the Question “What aspect of your high school foreign language classes did you find most helpful?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning the overall grammar</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practicing speaking in class</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little or nothing</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying vocabulary</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a very knowledgeable instructor</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immersion in class</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning songs</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching videos</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing good study skills</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being exposed to the native speakers or culture</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practicing reading</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having quality textbooks or workbooks</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repetition</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing research or projects</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom activities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using authentic texts or media</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practicing writing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The class was rigorous</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having access to advanced courses</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The overall course content</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The fourth question in this portion of the survey asked students what they would like to have changed in their high school foreign language classes. Males equally indicated ($N = 2$) they would like to have had more speaking in the language, more of an emphasis on grammar, and more cultural learning. Females also preferred more speaking in the language ($N = 12$), but by a large margin compared to other choices, wanting more of an emphasis on grammar ($N = 5$) but also expressed wanting little or no change ($N = 5$). Table 10 and 11 show the responses of males and females:
Table 9. Descriptive Statistics for Males for the Question “What aspects of your high school foreign language course(s) do you feel could be changed or improved to prepare students better for college foreign language study?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More speaking in the language</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More of an emphasis on grammar</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More cultural learning</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little or no change</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More teaching in the language</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More writing in the language</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less busy work</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More applications to the real world</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10. Descriptive Statistics for Males for the Question “What aspects of your high school foreign language course(s) do you feel could be changed or improved to prepare students better for college foreign language study?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More speaking in the language</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More of an emphasis on grammar</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little or no change</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More cultural learning</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More teaching in the language</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More writing in the language</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many aspects should be changed</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More rigor or in-depth study</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More opportunities to take different languages</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More technology use</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More creative use of the language</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More opportunities for advanced studies</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More opportunities for field trips or studying abroad</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More projects of presentations</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More reading in the language</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fewer arts and crafts</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More exams or quizzes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More homework or study outside of class</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More info about college FL study</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More opportunities for individual practice</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More interaction with native speakers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More overall classroom practice</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The initial results of the free response items distinguished by gender were very speculative and inconclusive given the disproportion of males and females (17 to 66) who replied (Wiersma, 2000). As a corollary analysis, these numbers were combined, which resulted in a total of 83 participants. Obviously, the variability abounds in a free response to open-ended inquiry, and it is difficult to isolate substantial themes or patterns (Trochim, 2016). Consequently, in each case, the researcher is remarking for the most part about those items with item frequencies greater than 10 within each of the four following questions:

Regarding “why did you take a foreign language?” the most frequent reply was that it was a requirement for non-FL degree majors (70%). A small proportion (15%) replied that it might be useful for career opportunities.

In response to “Why did you choose to take this particular foreign language?” A frequency of 19 indicated, “took it in high school” (27%). Sixteen percent reported: “wanted to communicate with native speakers” and 12 percent “thought it would be easy.”

For the question “What aspect of your high school foreign language classes did you find most helpful?” learning overall grammar was reported by 12 participants (16%), and nine (12%) indicated “practicing speaking in class.”

Regarding the question, “What aspects do you feel should be changed or improved to prepare students better for college FL study?” Fourteen (19%) indicated “more speaking in class” and seven (10%) noted more emphasis on grammar. Twelve other respondents expressed the latter concern about grammar when responding to a previous question about what was most helpful in their high school FL classes. When combined, about 25% of respondents mentioned learning grammar.
Although the percentages reported here were predominantly not proportionally significant, and notwithstanding the variability, several aspects surfaced. Primarily, these high school students study FL in college because it is a requirement in non-FL majors. Similarly, they took a particular FL in college because it was taken in high school. In addition, they indicated that learning the grammar of the language is an important and helpful aspect. This appeared again in the open-ended inquiry when replying to what might be changed or improved for college FL study.

**Question 2:** Do students who have studied abroad have different perceptions about their high school FL experiences than those who have never been “immersed” in another culture for a period of time?

In analyzing the results of this question, the data were divided into two groups: *Students who studied abroad* (SA) and *Students who did not study abroad* (NSA). As with the comparison of results by gender, the first section of Likert-style questions was analyzed by comparing means to see how strongly respondents from each group rated the agreement of each question. The responses “Strongly disagree,” “Disagree,” “Somewhat disagree,” “Neither agree nor disagree,” “Somewhat agree,” “Agree,” and “Strongly agree” were assigned values from one to seven, respectively.

Respondents in the SA group most agreed with the statement that their teacher was adequately prepared to teach their class (M = 5.93), that they successfully learned the vocabulary taught in the class (M = 5.77), and that they were satisfied with their performance in college foreign language classes (M = 5.55). Conversely, the statements disagreed with most were that they were given very few opportunities to write in the target language (M = 2.14), that their high school foreign language classes did not adequately prepare them for their college foreign
language classes (M = 2.82), and that technology was used as a central component of teaching and learning in their foreign language classes (M = 2.93).

The NSA respondents most agreed with the statement that their teacher was adequately qualified to teach their class (M = 6), that they were satisfied with their performance in college foreign language classes (M = 5.76), and that the college foreign language class they were placed into was appropriate for their skill level in the language (M = 5.74). The NSA group most agreed with the statements claiming that technology was used a central component of teaching and learning in their foreign language classes (M = 2.61), that they were given very few opportunities to write in the target language (M = 3.16), and THAT their high school foreign language classes did not adequately prepare them for their college foreign language classes (M = 3.34). When the two groups were compared using an independent samples t-test, one response, (stating that students had been given very few opportunities for writing), showed a statistically significant result (p = .09). The results of the independent t-test are listed in Table 11.
Table 11. Independent Samples t-Test Results for Students Who Studied Abroad and Students Who Did Not Study Abroad Perceptions for Foreign Language Classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Study Abroad Mean</th>
<th>Non-Study Abroad Mean</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. my teacher spoke primarily in the target language (i.e. Spanish, French).</td>
<td>4.86</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>.684</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>.184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. the quizzes, tests, assignments and other kinds of assessment were NOT rigorous.</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>-1.196</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>.699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. my teacher thoroughly explained the requirements needed to be successful in foreign language study at the college level.</td>
<td>5.14</td>
<td>4.59</td>
<td>.945</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>.144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I acquired study habits that adequately prepared me for the study habits required in my college foreign language classes.</td>
<td>4.86</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>.993</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>.764</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. technology was used as a central component of teaching and learning in my foreign language classes.</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>.646</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>.483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. there were very few opportunities for advanced students to continue language studies (i.e. German 3, German 4, and German 5) beyond the basic college entry requirements.</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>-.666</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>.187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I became aware of how I might use a foreign language in my future plan of study and/or career.</td>
<td>5.36</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>1.484</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>.076</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. my teacher was adequately qualified to teach my class.</td>
<td>5.93</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-.163</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>.906</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I learned a lot about the norms, values, and traditions of other cultures.</td>
<td>5.29</td>
<td>5.17</td>
<td>.245</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>.851</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10. I was given many opportunities to speak in the target language.  
   $t = 5.14$, $df = 5.03$, $p = .194$, $S = 72$, $F = .293$

11. I was given very few opportunities to write in the target language.  
   $t = 2.14$, $df = 3.16$, $p = -1.916$, $S = 73$, $F = *$.009

12. I successfully learned the grammar taught in my class.  
   $t = 5.38$, $df = 4.97$, $p = .896$, $S = 71$, $F = .736$

13. I successfully learned the vocabulary taught in the class.  
   $t = 5.77$, $df = 5.6$, $p = .405$, $S = 71$, $F = .721$

14. The college foreign language class I was placed into was appropriate for my skill level in the language.  
   $t = 4.82$, $df = 5.74$, $p = -1.761$, $S = 63$, $F = .062$

15. I am able to communicate as well as or better than my classmates in the target language.  
   $t = 5.45$, $df = 5.13$, $p = .556$, $S = 63$, $F = .392$

16. I am satisfied with my performance in college foreign language classes.  
   $t = 5.55$, $df = 5.76$, $p = -.511$, $S = 63$, $F = .232$

17. My high school foreign language classes did NOT adequately prepare me for my college foreign language classes.  
   $t = 2.82$, $df = 3.34$, $p = -.747$, $S = 62$, $F = .578$

*significant at the $p < .05$ level
**Question 3.** How do perceptions of students studying different languages compare to one another?

This particular question examined whether students’ primary choice of language to study related to their perceptions of their high school foreign language experience. When examining language choice of students, the Likert-scale responses in Part 2 were first compared using a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) test. The results indicated a statistically significant difference (p < .05) for the following items: *technology was used as a central component of teaching and learning in my foreign language classes* (p = .032), *I learned a lot about the norms, values, and traditions of other cultures* (p = .023), and *I successfully learned the vocabulary taught in the class* (p = .038). Because of the number of language groups that were examined, the sample sizes of each group were very small. Therefore, the free-response questions were not analyzed in further detail for these groups. The results of the ANOVA test are shown in the following table:
Table 12. Descriptive Statistics for Analysis of Variance among Respondents’ Language Choice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of time since last FL class</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. my teacher spoke primarily in the target language (i.e. Spanish, French).</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>9.543</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.363</td>
<td>.364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. the quizzes, tests, assignments and other kinds of assessment were NOT rigorous.</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>20.892</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.985</td>
<td>.875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. my teacher thoroughly explained the requirements needed to be successful in foreign language study at the college level.</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>20.908</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.987</td>
<td>.749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I acquired study habits that adequately prepared me for the study habits required in my college foreign language classes.</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>38.800</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.543</td>
<td>1.196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. technology was used as a central component of teaching and learning in my foreign language classes.</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>39.872</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.696</td>
<td>2.370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. there were very few opportunities for advanced students to continue language</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>48.727</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.961</td>
<td>1.671</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
studies (i.e. German 3, German 4, and German 5) beyond the basic college entry requirements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Between Groups</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>α</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. I became aware of how I might use a foreign language in my future plan of study and/or career.</td>
<td>23.086</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.298</td>
<td>.825</td>
<td>.570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. my teacher was adequately qualified to teach my class.</td>
<td>26.841</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.834</td>
<td>1.945</td>
<td>.077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I learned a lot about the norms, values, and traditions of other cultures.</td>
<td>40.832</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.833</td>
<td>2.524</td>
<td>.023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I was given many opportunities to speak in the target language.</td>
<td>30.270</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.324</td>
<td>1.244</td>
<td>.292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I was given very few opportunities to write in the target language.</td>
<td>29.600</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.229</td>
<td>1.298</td>
<td>.265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I successfully learned the grammar taught in my class.</td>
<td>22.163</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.166</td>
<td>1.422</td>
<td>.212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I successfully learned the vocabulary taught in the class.</td>
<td>26.296</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.757</td>
<td>2.288</td>
<td>.038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. the college foreign language class I was placed into was appropriate for my skill level in the language.</td>
<td>9.843</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.406</td>
<td>.514</td>
<td>.820</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
15. I am able to communicate as well as or better than my classmates in the target language.  
Between Groups: 27.392, 7, 3.913, 1.309, .263

16. I am satisfied with my performance in college foreign language classes.  
Between Groups: 17.063, 7, 2.438, 1.655, .139

17. My high school foreign language classes did NOT adequately prepare me for my college foreign language classes.  
Between Groups: 33.000, 7, 4.714, 1.078, .390
Question 4. Does the length of time between when students take a high school foreign language class and a college foreign language class (in the same language) have an effect on students’ perceptions of their high school foreign language experiences?

When students begin taking a college foreign language class, their history in studying that language may play a significant role in their success. To examine this question, two related items were analyzed. “When is the last time took a high school class in the foreign language you studied?” “When was the first time you took a college foreign language class in the same language? A difference score was calculated by adding four to the second question value and then subtracting the first question value from that amount. This score indicated the length of time between the classes taken by the student and was represented by a corresponding new variable. An ANOVA test was obtained for the 17 Likert-scale questions to test the significance. The results showed statistically significant results (p < .05) for one item, I became aware of how I might use a foreign language in my future plan of study and/or career (p = .038). Because of the number of groups created according to time elapsed, the sample sizes in each group were relatively small. Therefore, a more in-depth examination of the free-response questions was not done. The results from the ANOVA test are displayed in the following table:
Table 13. Descriptive Statistics for Analysis of Variance among Respondents’ Length of Time between High School and College Foreign Language Classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of time since last FL class</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. my teacher spoke primarily in the target language (i.e. Spanish, French).</td>
<td>16.315</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.263</td>
<td>.834</td>
<td>.532</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. the quizzes, tests, assignments and other kinds of assessment were NOT rigorous.</td>
<td>20.843</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.169</td>
<td>1.142</td>
<td>.351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. my teacher thoroughly explained the requirements needed to be successful in foreign language study at the college level.</td>
<td>34.492</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.898</td>
<td>1.799</td>
<td>.130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I acquired study habits that adequately prepared me for the study habits required in my college foreign language classes.</td>
<td>14.581</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.916</td>
<td>.585</td>
<td>.711</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. technology was used as a central component of teaching and learning in my foreign language classes.</td>
<td>4.980</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.996</td>
<td>.324</td>
<td>.896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. there were very few opportunities for</td>
<td>14.093</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.819</td>
<td>.653</td>
<td>.661</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
advanced students to continue language studies (i.e. German 3, German 4, and German 5) beyond the basic college entry requirements.

7. I became aware of how I might use a foreign language in my future plan of study and/or career.

8. my teacher was adequately qualified to teach my class.

9. I learned a lot about the norms, values, and traditions of other cultures.

10. I was given many opportunities to speak in the target language.

11. I was given very few opportunities to write in the target language.

12. I successfully learned the grammar taught in my class.

13. I successfully learned the vocabulary taught in the class.
14. the college foreign language class I was placed into was appropriate for my skill level in the language.

15. I am able to communicate as well as or better than my classmates in the target language.

16. I am satisfied with my performance in college foreign language classes.

17. my high school foreign language classes did NOT adequately prepare me for my college foreign language classes.

*significant at the $p < .05$ level
CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter, the study is examined overall in terms of purpose, procedures, and findings. Findings from the previous chapter will be discussed in relation to the critical questions and pertinent hypotheses. Recommendations are given about the implications of foreign language curriculum, pedagogy, and future as a bona fide subject in liberal arts studies.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to gauge college students’ perceptions of how their high school foreign language experience influenced their success, preparedness, and overall satisfaction with their college foreign language classes. Recent trends in foreign language study have shown a decline in enrollment in West Virginia, despite regional and national efforts to revitalize various aspects in education (American Council for Teaching of Foreign Languages, 2009). In the theoretical domain, researchers such as Stephen Krashen doubt the effectiveness of foreign language classroom study in its current format as a viable way for students to acquire a new language. However, teachers can maximize what little opportunities they have with students in the classroom by engaging them with comprehensible input that is meaningful and accessible. Unfortunately, a disconnect may exist between secondary and post-secondary foreign language study in terms of articulation, curriculum, and classroom best practices. The following sections briefly touch on the research questions and pertinent responses. The complete list of responses is located in the appendices.

Question 1: What are the differences between males and females in how they perceive that their high school FL experience affected their overall success in college FL study?

The difference between male and female perceptions were studied by examining both the 17-item Likert-scale and the free-response portion of the survey, The Likert scale was numerically
keyed from one to seven, where one meant that respondents *strongly disagreed*, and seven indicated that they *strongly agreed*. To examine these effects, the means of the response values were calculated and compared between male and female respondents. Notwithstanding no statistically significant differences between the two groups, the overall results may suggest how respondents answered overall in particular categories.

Males most agreed about being satisfied with their performance in college foreign language classes, having a teacher who was adequately qualified to teach their class, and having successfully learned the vocabulary taught in class. Females, most agreed that their teachers were adequately qualified to teach their class, that the college foreign language placement class they were placed in was appropriate for their skill level, and that they were satisfied with their performance in their college foreign language classes.

Overall, the results of the Likert-scale items indicated that respondents were generally satisfied with the quality of the instruction received in their high school foreign language classes. Regarding the skills taught in the class and retained, they strongly agreed about having successfully learned the content from the class. The only exception was the use of technology where respondents mostly disagreed with its being adequate as a central component of their foreign language classes. While this question very generally touches on the prevalence of technology in the classroom, the response suggested that there is a disconnect between what students expect in terms of modern technological practices and what is actually provided. In future studies, it may be informative to see how these opinions change between the high school and college settings.

In terms of college foreign language study, respondents very strongly indicated that they were placed in a course whose content reflected their skill in the language. However, they felt
somewhat that their high school foreign language classes did not adequately prepare them for their college foreign language classes. Despite the differing opinions between the first two questions, respondents overall felt satisfied with the performance in their college foreign language study.

In addition to the Likert-scale portion of the study, free responses were examined for males and females. In response to why they took a foreign language class in college, the majority of respondents in both groups indicated that the class was fulfilling a requirement related to their (non-foreign-language) degree. Female responses varied more than males but that may be attributed to the disproportions of female (67) to male samples (16). In response to why respondents studied the language chosen, both groups primarily responded that they took the language in high school as a primary reason for choosing the language in college. Both groups also listed their interest in communicating or learning about the native culture as a major factor for choosing the specific language.

In short, students primarily take a foreign language because of it being required, and choose a specific language because of familiarity with that language. While these findings may not be surprising, it emphasizes the fact that students may solidify their language choice in high school, opting to continue studying that language for possibly no other reason than facility of continuing (successfully) with the same content in college. In addition, many students who take college foreign language classes are not foreign language majors, so they may not be particularly motivated, or even interested, in the language being studied. Consequently, it is important to consider the ramifications of offering only one or two language options in high school. Even though colleges may offer a greater variety of language choices, students may not pursue these languages in college because of the lack of availability of the language previously in high school.
The third free-response question asked students to list what was most helpful in their high school foreign language classes. Both males and females felt that learning about grammar was the most helpful aspect, followed by practicing speaking in class. However, the third-most popular choice for both groups indicated that little to nothing was helpful to them. This strong contrast suggests that respondents were polarized about their high school foreign language experiences. For the students who had no positive comments, perhaps they either did not feel that the grammar and speaking were helpful in their classes, or possibly that their classes lacked the quality instruction reflected in the other respondents’ comments.

The fourth free-response question allowed respondents to express what aspects of their high school foreign language experiences they felt should be changed or revised. Both groups felt that there needed to be more speaking in the language. Females gave this answer more than twice as much as the next answer, feeling that there needed to be more of an emphasis on grammar. Males agreed with the statement about grammar equally as much as the first statement about needing more speaking. Overall, these answers echoed what respondents indicated in the previous question, that speaking and grammar instruction were helpful, but possibly underutilized in class.

While research exists about the effect of gender on foreign language learning, results are still inconclusive. Although males sometimes used a particular strategy more than females, females often used a greater variety of strategies in language learning (Oxford and Nyioks, 1989). Conversely, more recent research has shown the opposite in terms of which gender tends to use strategies in a certain way (Tercanlioglu, 2004). More research needs to be done in order to parse any results that favor one gender over the other.
**Question 2**: Do students who have studied abroad have different perceptions about their high school FL experiences than those who have never been “immersed” in another culture for a period of time?

To examine the effects of studying abroad on student perspectives, two groups were created: those who studied abroad (SA), and those who did not study abroad (NSA). As with the gender groups, these two groups were compared in terms of their response on the Likert-scale questions. SA students most agreed that their teacher was adequately prepared to teach, that they successfully learned the vocabulary taught in class, and THAT they were satisfied with their performance in college foreign language classes. NSA students also most agreed that their teacher was qualified to teach their class and that they were satisfied with their overall performance in college foreign language classes; however, the NSA group indicated that they felt THAT the college foreign language class they were placed into was appropriate for their skill level in the language.

The independent t-test conducted on the two groups showed a statistically significant result for the statement that there were few opportunities for writing in the target language. SA students mostly disagreed, while NSA students only slightly disagreed with the statement. As previously mentioned, Stephen Krashen posits that acquisition depends upon the concept of subconsciously processing the language while the person is not aware of his or her newfound knowledge (1982, pp. 5-12). He also emphasizes the importance of comprehensible input (CI), where the language is used in purposeful and meaningful ways. Studying abroad is a way that students can be immersed in the language and culture where they stay. Many studying abroad may only be given a relatively short amount of time during their experience to dedicate to writing, in particular if the experience is in a non-classroom setting. This may explain why SA
students feel that their writing in class was insufficient to prepare them for more advanced language study. While their communicative and vocabulary knowledge may have been strengthened during their study abroad experience, their writing skills may seem to be lacking by comparison.

*Question 3.* How do perceptions of students studying different languages compare to one another?

The third research question examined whether the language choice of respondents had an effect on their responses to the questions in the survey. Since there were multiple language choices for respondents, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to compare the mean scores of the Likert-scale question responses. The results of the analysis showed statistically significant differences for the following responses: *technology was used as a central component of teaching and learning in my foreign language classes*, *I learned a lot about the norms, values, and traditions of other cultures*, and *I successfully learned the vocabulary taught in the class*.

In terms of technology in the classroom, students in nontraditional languages such as Arabic and Japanese strongly agreed with this statement, while more traditional languages scored lower on the item. However, a Korean student also rated this item very low, so it is difficult to relay the commonness of the language with the proliferation of technology. Interestingly, however, of the more common languages (French, Spanish, German, and Italian), French students scored this item significantly higher than students in other more common languages. It is difficult to conclude what sets French apart in this survey from other languages. One possible interpretation is that French remains the second most studied foreign language behind Spanish in
West Virginia, so teachers may be attempting to innovate their curriculum to stay statistically “relevant” with Spanish.

In analyzing the item concerning norms and culture, the results are even less consistent, even after one considers the statistical significant difference. Arabic and Latin students rated this category the highest of all the languages. Perhaps this is because both languages reflect cultures that are largely unfamiliar to the traditional, Caucasian, Protestant student in West Virginia. Many Arabic-speaking countries practice Islam, a religion that is not prominently seen in West Virginia. Latin, while it represents a “dead language” no longer spoken, was the language of the Roman Empire, and largely today, the Catholic Church. Students studying Latin may have been exposed to a large amount of history and culture where the availability of authentic speech is lacking today.

The third item about successfully learning the vocabulary in class had predominantly high scores for all languages, except for sign language. It is difficult to compare sign language to other languages, as there are separate dynamics with culture, translation, and politics embedded in the language. It may be important to exclude sign language from future studies that compare students studying the other types of languages listed.

**Question 4.** Does the length of time between when students take a high school foreign language class and a college foreign language class (in the same language) have an effect on students’ perceptions of their high school foreign language experiences?

This question examined respondents’ time between their last year of high school foreign language study and their first foreign language class in college. A score was calculated by subtracting values corresponding to variables representing the two points of time when the respective foreign language classes were taken. An ANOVA was obtained on the ratings given
by respondents for the 17 Likert-scale questions. A statistically significant difference was observed for one question: *I became aware of how I might use a foreign language in my future plan of study and/or career.* While the data do not show a linear relationship in terms of time in between high school and college foreign language study and rating of the Likert-scale question, there appears to be more inner-group variance in ratings as the length of time increases. Conversely, respondents who had a relatively short period between their high school and college foreign language study gave ratings evenly from one to seven. The disparity in opinion for respondents with longer gaps in between their studies could be due to polarizing reasons for students taking a college foreign language class after several years have passed. For example, students who rated that they felt confident in their knowledge of future plans for the language may have gone back to taking a foreign language class specifically for a given major or career path that the student was deliberately pursuing. Conversely, students who rated their knowledge of future foreign language usage low may have waited to take a foreign language class in college until it became an imminent requirement for an area of study not related to foreign languages. These students may not have preferred to take a foreign language class, if given the option, and may have felt the class was not related to their future plans.

**CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY**

The purpose of this study was to examine respondents’ perception of what factors in their high school foreign language classes affected their college foreign language experience. The four research questions in the study compared responses among various groupings, including gender, language choice, study abroad experience, and length of time between respondents’ last high school foreign language class and first college foreign language class. Based upon the findings in the survey, one can make the following conclusions:
1. **Students pursue a particular language largely based upon availability of the language early in their foreign language study.**

Many respondents answered that their language of choice in college was due to it being the language they studied in high school. In addition, some respondents specifically said that only one language (usually Spanish) was offered at their high school. As previously described, the number of students taking foreign languages in West Virginia has seen a significant decrease within the past decade. While Spanish has always held a commanding lead in terms of the percentage of foreign language students studying the language, the cutting of foreign language options and programs across West Virginia has given Spanish more of a *de facto* status as the language choice in many high schools. While the prevalence of Spanish is certainly not a negative aspect itself, the *lack of choice* in high schools was shown to decrease the likelihood that students would pursue a different language in college. While it is to be expected that colleges will have more robust foreign language options than the majority of high schools, languages that are not frequently studied in West Virginia high schools, such as Chinese, Japanese, or Korean do not have the same resources to grow and solidify as bona fide language programs at the college level. Because there is a much smaller chance that students of these languages enter college programs with a background in the language, there is less vertical mobility within the language classes. To help these languages grow, it would be beneficial then to encourage the inclusion of non-traditional language programs at the high school level. While this may prove difficult for schools with decreasing budgets for programs outside of the core classes, a good first step may be for educators to insist upon a *minimum* of two language options at the high school level. Offering additional choices to students will increase the likelihood that
they will pursue various options once they enter college, as it seems that students are not likely to
experiment with a new language once they begin a track with a particular language.

Because employing foreign language teachers in more non-traditional language areas is
perhaps not feasible in rural contexts, educators may have to explore other options. With the
advent of the Internet and social media, people are finding more and more ways to stay
connected. While adoption is sometimes slower in the K-12 system, social media and always on
connectivity are becoming more ubiquitous each year. In rural school districts, educators are
turning to conference and distance learning to supplement situations where an on-site teacher is
not possible. What are the effects of implementing foreign language classes online?
Unfortunately, there have not been many conclusive studies of the differences between online
and on-site foreign language instruction in the K-12 setting, because online programs have not
always been required to report underachievement (Lin and Warschauer, 2015). However, a 2001
study by Cavanaugh showed that foreign languages was the only subject area that yielded
negative effects. More research must be done to analyze the specific effects of online research
and how its role in future curricula may be beneficial to students. However, research conducted
using college foreign language students has shown that online classes are on par with offline
counterparts. In addition to online courses, students now may use self-paced language programs,
such as Duolingo, to enhance their classroom learning. Vesselinov and Grego (2012) found that
students studying 34 hours of Spanish via Duolingo performed on par with having completed the
first semester of Spanish in college.

2. Students feel that they are not proficient enough in grammar to have a strong grasp on
the language they are studying.
When respondents were asked about what they liked or not about their high school language experience, many indicated that they would have liked more grammar instruction in their classes. Over the past few decades, educators have emphasized different strategies for teaching language, and specifically, grammar. As Krashen discussed, students must engage with the second language (L2) in meaningful ways for them to maximize their acquisition (1983). In other words, the grammar must be a phenomenon that exists not only in formal instruction, but as a natural part of the language.

When students use both their native language (L1) and their L2, they engage in code switching. In order to promote students to engage with the language, Glenn Levine encourages the use of markedness, or the specific and explicitly defined roles given to L1 and L2. If instructors mark the L2 as the default language, students are more likely to acquire the grammar more organically than with translation instruction (Levine, 2004).

3. *While high school and college foreign language programs have an interconnected relationship in terms of students’ educational experience, there is still a disconnect between the two that inhibits best educational practices from being implemented in the classrooms* (Davis, 2015)

One of the initial goals of this study was to assess the relationship between high school and college foreign language programs in West Virginia. While articulation between and among different programs and classes is important for consistent and high-quality curricula, this study does not assess these relationships directly. Instead, the opinions of students were used to find subjective points from which to begin more in-depth discussion. From analyzing the data from the survey, four questions primarily focused on the results of college foreign language study, regarding how the high school counterpart prepared the student. When asked about placement,
students mostly agreed that they were put into the appropriate class for their skill level (M = 5.58 of 7). In addition, students agreed about as much that they were satisfied with their performance in college foreign language classes (M = 5.72 of 7). When asked if they acquired study habits that adequately prepared them for their college foreign language classes, students were somewhat unsure whether they agreed or not (M = 4.34 of 7). When asked if they felt their high school foreign language classes did NOT prepare them for their college foreign language classes, students were also somewhat unsure (M = 3.25).

The disconnect between high school and college foreign language programs is related to the lack of coordination that exists among high school foreign language programs themselves. This is to say that foreign language programs at the high school level fall short of being standardized in a way that is meaningful at the post-secondary level. While college placement tests are designed to address some of these issues, this solution is implemented well after the initial problem begins. While the West Virginia Department of Education has content standards and objectives (CSOs) to guide high school foreign language curricula (2016), these merely serve as basic guidelines, and do not always give exact expectations for high school foreign language courses. In addition, because foreign languages are not part of the core subjects, their assessment may not be a priority at the general curricular level.

Unfortunately, the problem of articulation between high school and college is not new. Putter (1955) theorizes that the primary problem lies in “…the effect of time lapse between work taken at the secondary level and the resumption of the language in college. Should they [counselors] advise students […] to postpone [taking language courses]? This necessarily entails a sacrifice […] the crowded program in the last two years of school […]” (p.123).

Unfortunately, the difficulties that Putter presents for inserting foreign language courses in the
high school curriculum have not changed in 60 years. Even with the elimination of programs such as shop, home economics, and the lessening of a focus on other electives, foreign languages still must compete for valuable time in a student’s plan of study.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

To address several of the issues discussed in this paper, further research is necessary. While the findings in this study have pointed to several points of discussion on the topic of strengthening the articulation between high school and college foreign language classes, it is also important to address the quality of both levels. Articulation is not a single, tangible variable, but rather a gamut of variables; measuring these variables may provide educators with information concerning relative levels of the attainment of articulation. Therefore, the conclusions concerning articulation in this study pertain more so to the various components that lay the framework for what well-articulated FL programs may entail. Future studies may address and more closely define what a well-articulated FL is, possibly using findings in this or similar studies.

While this study examined the *perceptions* of students, it could beneficial to measure the *success* of students in their college foreign language classes. Future studies may accomplish this by defining more concrete measures to demonstrate success as a quantifiable variable. Measuring success may also require a more homogenized population, controlled by institution or academic path.

Participants also considered technology to play an important role in foreign language education. The term *technology* is an omnibus term in this study; future research may be done to parse the different and specific types of technology used, such as social media, virtual classrooms, or accessibility of Internet-connected devices to students. With the proliferation of
online-based foreign language classes in West Virginia, research could compare the different
types of distance education and their effectiveness versus one another and traditional in-person
classes.

From a pedagogical standpoint, more research is needed about the type of teaching done
in the classroom. For example, for students who listed vocabulary as something that really
helped them learn the language, it may be beneficial to compare different vocabulary-acquisition
theories. In some classrooms, teachers may use a more traditional translation approach, while
more “progressive” teachers may use immersion techniques to teach students.

CONCLUSION

Foreign languages are a key part of the curriculum for students from all backgrounds and
fields of study. Students not only learn to communicate with people from other cultures, but also
learn about diversity, improve their own language skills, and position themselves to excel in
school and in future careers. This study examined students who have progressed from high
school to college foreign language courses, and their perceptions about that transition. The
results of the study indicated several key aspects of high school foreign language study that may
be examined more closely to gauge their effectiveness in educating and preparing students for
their college foreign language study. Aspects such as gender, language choice, studying abroad
experience, types of instruction received, and time elapse between high school and college
language classes were some of the factors examined.

The goal of addressing these areas is to highlight the need to strengthen both horizontal
articulation within foreign language programs of the same level, in addition to vertical
articulation between high school and college foreign language classes. In order to address
articulation directly, it is important for educators to discuss how students perceived their
academic transition. Better communication and transparency among educators of all levels will help students become well-rounded, open-minded scholars of the 21st century.
REFERENCES


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doi:10.1111/modl.12234_1


APPENDIX A: SURVEY COVER LETTER
Dear Student,

My name is Bryan Pickens and I am currently a doctoral candidate at Marshall University. I need your help to complete a study of high school-college foreign language experiences, which is being conducted as part of the requirement for completing a doctoral dissertation. Your opinions are very important to the success of the study.

Because you are enrolled in a foreign language class at your university, you have been selected to complete a survey regarding your opinions about foreign language study while in high school and how these have prepared you to be successful in collegiate foreign language study.

The survey is designed with items to examine various features about studying and learning foreign language while in high school. The information gathered from the research will give high school and college foreign language educators valuable insights into improving foreign language study for students in both levels.

The survey should take approximately fifteen minutes to complete. Please give thoughtful answers to the questions provided. Be assured that the information provided will be completely confidential and non-identifiable. The study will examine results as a group, as no respondents will be personally identified.

Please accept my thanks in advance for completing and returning the survey in a timely manner. If you have any questions or concerns please contact me…

Bryan M. Pickens

Doctoral Candidate in Education
APPENDIX B: SURVEY CONSENT FORM
If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research participant you may contact the Marshall University Office of Research Integrity at (304) 696-4303.

By completing this survey you are also confirming that you are 18 years of age or older. Please print this page for your records. If you choose to participate in the study you will find the survey by clicking the link below.
April 15, 2018

Samuel Securro, Ed.D.
Elementary and Secondary Education, MUGC

RE: IRBNet ID# 895202-1
At: Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/Behavioral)

Dear Dr. Securro:

Protocol Title: [895202-1] The Perceptions of College Foreign Language Students Concerning Their High School Foreign Language Preparation

Expiration Date: April 15, 2017
Site Location: MUGC
Submission Type: New Project APPROVED
Review Type: Exempt Review

In accordance with 45CFR46.101(b)(2), the above study and informed consent were granted Exempted approval today by the Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/Behavioral) Designee for the period of 12 months. The approval will expire April 15, 2017. A continuing review request for this study must be submitted no later than 30 days prior to the expiration date.

This study is for student Bryan Pickens.

If you have any questions, please contact the Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/Behavioral) Coordinator Bruce Day, ThD, CIP at 304-696-4303 or day50@marshall.edu. Please include your study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.
APPENDIX D: SURVEY INSTRUMENT
PART I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION. Please complete the following informational items. Remember that all responses will be completely confidential.

What is your gender?
- Male (1)
- Female (2)
- Other (3)

Where did you graduate high school?
- In West Virginia (1)
- Outside of West Virginia, but within the United States (2)
- Outside of the United States (3)

What year did you graduate high school?

Which best describes the community in which you grew up?
- Rural (1)
- Suburban (2)
- Urban (3)

Do/Did you speak a language other than English at home? ______________________
- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Which language(s)?
- Language 1 (1)
- Language 2 (2)
- Language 3 (3)

After the current semester, how many semester hours of college credit will you have completed?
Did you take a placement exam before enrolling in a foreign language class at your college/university?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Have you ever participated in a study abroad experience?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Where did this experience take place?

Which best represents your high school or college standing at the time of the experience?

- Freshman in high school (1)
- Sophomore in high school (2)
- Junior in high school (3)
- Senior in high school (4)
- Freshman in college (5)
- Sophomore in college (6)
- Junior in college (7)
- Senior in college (8)
- Graduate/Professional student (9)

What was the length of your stay?

- One week or less (1)
- Between one and two weeks (2)
- Between two and three weeks (3)
- Between three and four weeks (4)
- Between one and two months (5)
- Between two and three months (6)
- Longer than three months (7)

What was the primary language that you spoke during the experience?
PART II. FOREIGN LANGUAGE COURSES. Please complete the following items about the foreign language (FL) courses you have COMPLETED in both high school and college combined. Start with the most recent language studied first.

Which language did you study?

☐ Arabic (1)
☐ Chinese (2)
☐ French (3)
☐ German (4)
☐ Italian (5)
☐ Japanese (6)
☐ Korean (7)
☐ Latin (8)
☐ Portuguese (9)
☐ Russian (10)
☐ Spanish (11)
☐ Other (12)

Please write the name of the language not listed above.

How many courses have you COMPLETED in this language?

What is the last year of high school in which you took a foreign language course in this language?

☐ Freshman year (1)
☐ Sophomore year (2)
☐ Junior year (3)
☐ Senior year (4)
☐ I did not take a course in this language in high school. (5)
What is the first year of college in which you enrolled in a foreign language course in this language?

- Freshman year (1)
- Sophomore year (2)
- Junior year (3)
- Senior year (4)
- During graduate school (5)
- I did not take a course in this language in college. (6)

Did you study any other languages?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Which other language did you study?

- Arabic (1)
- Chinese (2)
- French (3)
- German (4)
- Italian (5)
- Japanese (6)
- Korean (7)
- Latin (8)
- Portuguese (9)
- Russian (10)
- Spanish (11)
- Other (12)

Please write the name of the language not listed above.

How many courses have you COMPLETED in this language?
What is the last year of high school in which you took a foreign language course in this language?

- Freshman year (1)
- Sophomore year (2)
- Junior year (3)
- Senior year (4)
- I did not take a course in this language in high school (5)

What is the first year of college in which you enrolled in a foreign language course in this language?

- Freshman year (1)
- Sophomore year (2)
- Junior year (3)
- Senior year (4)
- During graduate school (5)
- I did not take a course in this language in college. (6)

Did you study any other languages?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Which other language did you study?

- Arabic (1)
- Chinese (2)
- French (3)
- German (4)
- Italian (5)
- Japanese (6)
- Korean (7)
- Latin (8)
- Portuguese (9)
- Russian (10)
- Spanish (11)
- Other (12)
Please write the name of the language not listed above.

How many courses have you COMPLETED in this language?

What is the last year of high school in which you took a foreign language course in this language?

- Freshman year (1)
- Sophomore year (2)
- Junior year (3)
- Senior year (4)
- I did not take a course in this language in high school (5)

What is the first year of college in which you enrolled in a foreign language course in this language?

- Freshman year (1)
- Sophomore year (2)
- Junior year (3)
- Senior year (4)
- During graduate school (5)
- I did not take a course in this language in college (6)

PART III. SURVEY ITEMS. Please indicate the level of agreement or disagreement for each survey item using the following rating scale. If you had more than one foreign language teacher or language in high school, think of your most recent teacher/language first. RATING SCALE. 1= Strongly Disagree 2= Disagree 3= Somewhat Disagree 4= Neither Agree or Disagree 5= Somewhat Agree 6= Agree 7= Strongly Agree N/A= Does not apply

How many DIFFERENT foreign language teachers did you have in high school?

- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 or more (4)
Part A. Most Recent High School Teacher
During my foreign language class(es) in high school…
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree (1)</th>
<th>Disagree (2)</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree (3)</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree (4)</th>
<th>Somewhat agree (5)</th>
<th>Agree (6)</th>
<th>Strongly agree (7)</th>
<th>N/A (8)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>my teacher spoke primarily in the target language (i.e. Spanish, French). (1)</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>the quizzes, tests, assignments and other kinds of assessment were NOT rigorous. (2)</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>my teacher thoroughly explained the requirements needed to be successful in foreign language study at the college level. (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>I acquired study habits that adequately prepared me for the study habits required in my college foreign language classes. (4)</td>
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<td>Technology was used as a central component of teaching and learning in my foreign language classes. (5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>There were very few opportunities for advanced students to continue language studies (i.e. German 3, German 4, and German 5) beyond the basic college entry requirements. (6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>I became aware of how I might use a foreign language in my future plan of study and/or career. (7)</td>
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<td>Statement</td>
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<tr>
<td>I learned a lot about the norms, values, and traditions of other cultures.</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>I was given many opportunities to speak in the target language.</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was given very few opportunities to write in the target language.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I successfully learned the grammar taught in my class.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Part A. Second Most Recent Teacher

During my foreign language classe(s) in high school…
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (1)</th>
<th>Disagree (2)</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree (3)</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree (4)</th>
<th>Somewhat agree (5)</th>
<th>Agree (6)</th>
<th>Strongly agree (7)</th>
<th>N/A (8)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>my teacher spoke primarily in the target language (i.e. Spanish, French). (1)</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>the quizzes, tests, assignments and other kinds of assessment were NOT rigorous. (2)</td>
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<td>my teacher thoroughly explained the requirements needed to be successful in foreign language study at the college level. (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>I acquired study habits that adequately prepared me for the study habits required in my college foreign language classes. (4)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
technology was used as a central component of teaching and learning in my foreign language classes. (5)

there were very few opportunities for advanced students to continue language studies (i.e. German 3, German 4, and German 5) beyond the basic college entry requirements. (6)

I became aware of how I might use a foreign language in my future plan of study and/or career. (7)

my teacher was adequately qualified to teach my class. (8)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I learned a lot about the norms, values, and traditions of other cultures. (9)</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I was given many opportunities to speak in the target language. (10)</td>
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<tr>
<td>I was given very few opportunities to write in the target language. (11)</td>
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<td>I successfully learned the grammar taught in my class. (12)</td>
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<td>I successfully learned the vocabulary taught in the class. (13)</td>
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</table>

Part A. Third Most Recent Teacher  During my foreign language classe(s) in high school…
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (1)</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

<p>| Part A. Fourth Most Recent Teacher During my foreign language classe(s) in high school… | | | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (1)</th>
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<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Score 1</th>
<th>Score 2</th>
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<th>Score 11</th>
<th>Score 12</th>
<th>Score 13</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>I learned a lot about the norms, values, and traditions of other cultures. (9)</td>
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<tr>
<td>I was given many opportunities to speak in the target language. (10)</td>
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<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>
PART B. College Foreign Language Classes  After having completed a college foreign language class, I feel that…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (1)</th>
<th>Disagree (2)</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree (3)</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree (4)</th>
<th>Somewhat agree (5)</th>
<th>Agree (6)</th>
<th>Strongly agree (7)</th>
<th>N/A (8)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the college foreign language class I was placed into was appropriate for my skill level in the language. (1)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I am able to communicate as well as or better than my classmates in the target language (2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>I am satisfied with my performance in college foreign language classes. (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>my high school foreign language classes did NOT adequately prepare me for my college foreign language classes. (4)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Briefly respond to the following questions in your own words.

Why are you taking a foreign language class at your college?

Why did you choose to study the particular foreign language you are studying?

When answering the next two questions, think about the kinds of instructional materials provided, the kinds of teaching methods, class activities, technology utilization, the content of the courses, grading and examinations, course requirements and assignments (in and outside of class), and teacher expectations.

What aspects of your high school foreign language course(s) were MOST HELPFUL to you when taking your college foreign language courses?

What aspects of your high school foreign language course(s) do you feel could be changed or improved to prepare students better for college foreign language study?

Is anything else you would like to comment on pertaining to your foreign language study experience?

☐ Yes (1) ________________
☐ No (2)
APPENDIX E: CURRICULUM VITA
Bryan M. Pickens
200 Eureka Road
Charleston, WV 25314
304-561-4414
pickens38@marshall.edu

EDUCATION

Marshall University  South Charleston, WV
Doctor of Education, Curriculum and Instruction, 2017
  Primary emphasis: School Culture
Education Specialist, Curriculum and Instruction, May 2015
  Primary emphasis: School Culture
Post-Baccalaureate Teaching Certificate, July 2013
  Primary emphasis: French (5-adult)

The Ohio State University  Columbus, OH
Master of Arts, French, December 2011
  Graduate Interdisciplinary Specialization in Second Language Studies
  Other coursework: Modern French culture, French cinema, French literature
  French and Italian Graduate Student Association
  Presented at academic conferences at University of Kentucky, University of Alabama, and University of Cincinnati

West Virginia University  Morgantown, WV
Master of Arts, Foreign Languages, May 2008
  Primary emphasis: French and Linguistics
Bachelor of Arts, Foreign Languages, May 2006
  Primary emphasis: French
  Study Abroad: Les Sables d’Olonne, France, May –July 2006
  Lived with a host family, took two French courses, and created French-language podcasts for virtual class
Bachelor of Arts, Mathematics, May 2006
  Minor: Computer Science
  Honors: University Honors Graduate, Cum Laude, Dean’s List, President’s List, West Virginia PROMISE Scholar

WORK EXPERIENCE

Kanawha County Schools, Riverside High School  Belle, WV
Mathematics/French Teacher
August 2016 – Present
Teach introductory French to students in grades 9-11
Teach algebra 3 and pre-calculus to both college-bound and career-bound seniors
Senior class sponsor member

**Boone County Schools, Scott High School**
Madison, WV

*French/Spanish Teacher*
October 2011 – June 2016

- Taught introductory French to students in grades 9-12, including dual-credit
- Taught independent French class to honors/AP students
- Former Soccer Club and International Scholars Club sponsor
- Assistant girls’ soccer coach (2012 season)
- Took students to Costa Rica for a cultural learning experience (2013)
- Faculty Senate treasurer (2014-2015)

**Tutor Doctor, LLC**
Columbus OH

*Tutor*
August 2011 – October 2011

- Tutored students of all ages
- Subjects: Math, French, Spanish, physics, ESL, English, computer applications, and ACT/SAT prep
- Trained a Columbian business executive in professional and conversational English

**The Ohio State University, Dept. of French and Italian**
Columbus, OH

*Graduate Teaching Associate*
Sept 2008 – August 2011

- Taught undergraduate French levels 1-4 and intense combination courses
- Worked in the Individualized Instruction Center one-on-one with students who attended class on a flexible, non-traditional schedule
- Helped lead Café+, a French conversation table, five times per week
- Tutored students on a walk-in basis

**West Virginia University, Dept. of Foreign Languages**
Morgantown, WV

*Graduate Teaching Assistant*
August 2006-May 2008

- Taught undergraduate French levels 1 and 2.
- Helped lead French conversation table
- Participated in French Club activities, such as Spring Spectacular and WV French Teachers’ Conference

**Independent Contractor**
Various

*Translator, interpreter, tutor, and teacher*
Feb 2005 - Present

- Taught home-schooled students high school French
Interpreted for a local high school for an ESL Haitian student taking standardized tests
Translated for a North American toy company
Tutored students ages 5-18 in math, English, ACT/ACT prep, and creative writing for Tutoring Club
Tutored and mentored other tutors in math for an online company, Tutor.com
Tutored undergraduate math up to Calculus 4 for WVU Math Learning Center
Taught algebra and geometry for Upper Bound Summer Program

OTHER SKILLS

Languages:

- English – Native
- French – Advanced/professional fluency
- Spanish – Conversational fluency
- Portuguese – Conversational competence
- Italian – Basic competence
- German – Reading knowledge
- Mandarin Chinese – Beginner knowledge

Miscellaneous:

- Permanent teaching certifications in French (5-adult) and mathematics (5-adult)
- Programming experience in C, C++, Perl, and Python
- Advanced experience in Microsoft Office
- Experience in handling technology and logistical needs for several hundred people in a conference setting