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The Who, What, Where, and How of Foreign Languages: A Study of Foreign Language Curricula At Four-Year Colleges In Mississippi

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Running Head: Who, What, Where, and How of Foreign Languages

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

THE WHO, WHAT, WHERE, AND HOW OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES: A STUDY OF
FOREIGN LANGUAGE CURRICULA AT FOUR-YEAR COLLEGES IN MISSISSIPPI

by

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A Thesis
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Who, What, Where, and How of Foreign Languages

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Abstract

This paper studies the eight four-year public universities within the state of Mississippi and their French and Spanish foreign language curriculums in order to compare their curriculums to those of The American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages' standards of the Five C's: communication, communities, culture, connections, and comparisons. The results are broken down into three sections by each college's overall rankings, each college's individual course offerings, and culture offerings. The data provides interesting results that shows that while a university may offer more or less foreign language courses, their curriculum did not necessarily reflect the standards that ACTFL describes as good standards for learning a foreign language.

Keywords: Five C's, ACTFL, curriculums, universities

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Chapter 1: Introduction

There is no denying that the world has become increasingly global over the years. People have seen remote areas of the world linked to those of bustling cities with the use of the internet or telephone. Areas that once took months of journeying can now be reached in a few days by airplanes, cars, or boats. With this in mind, people are now realizing that there is a world of opportunity outside of their own backyard; however, to understand and master these different areas, a person should have knowledge and understanding of different cultures and their languages. Within the United States there are more than one hundred and fifty languages spoken by more than one hundred different ethnic groups (Garcia, 2011).

Many college students now have more opportunities to learn not only a new language, but also to immerse themselves in a different culture. In the article, *Learning Spanish Today: A Research Guide*, Wyatt and Walsh discussed numerous ways to succeed in learning a different language such as with the use of computer programs like the Rosetta Stone or having easier access to bilingual speakers through the use of the internet (2011).

Based on my own high school curriculum, foreign languages do not seem to be high on the list of priorities. It was not until my high school years that I was introduced to a foreign language. Two years of Spanish at my high school on the Mississippi Gulf Coast was not enough to prepare me for learning Spanish at the university level. With these in mind, I asked myself if my university's foreign language curriculum is adequate in learning a foreign language as compared to other universities in the state of Mississippi

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and to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) an organization whose focus is on improving foreign language curricula in all levels of education.

The goal of this study is to examine whether the foreign language curriculum at university level in the state of Mississippi are aligned with the goals of The American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) intended for properly learning foreign languages and the advancement and growth of teaching and learning all types of languages across all academic fields (ACTFL, 2012). The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages consists of more than twelve thousand individual organizations that range from governmental organizations to elementary schools and colleges (ACTFL, 2012). ACTFL is the best organization to use to compare Mississippi colleges rankings with their foreign language curriculums. Due to their history of incorporating foreign languages into many school programs, ACTFL is one of the most important organizations for improving and changing foreign language curriculum.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

To find the issues with foreign language programs, one must start with the origin. Surprisingly, the curriculum for learning foreign languages within the United States dates back to the 1840s (Andersson, 1969). The problem faced is that there has been fewer contributions of research on the assessment of language programs as compared to the curriculum of other subjects within the American public school system (Andersson, 1969). America, compared to other countries, has negatively controlled the direction of learning “non-native” languages, whereas other areas in the world has viewed learning another language as an honored achievement that usually begins at the early grade levels (Andersson, 1969).

History of Foreign Languages in the American school system

Foreign language instruction in the elementary school systems also known as FLES began slowly in America with the formation of private German schools in areas such as Milwaukee, Wisconsin. These schools taught German at the elementary level, because new immigrants still thought it was important to maintain their customs and ways of life (Andersson, 1969). By 1865, there were around five thousand German schoolchildren enrolled in private schools compared to the seven thousand American schoolchildren who were enrolled in public schools (Andersson, 1969). Many Americans considered it a threat for this group of “Americans” not to embrace their new native tongues (Andersson, 1969). Because of their reactions, the state of Ohio passed a law on May 19, 1840 that allowed qualified teachers to work in German private schools allowing them to continue teaching German and to begin teaching English (Andersson, 1969). This

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was done with hopes of drawing German schoolchildren from the isolation of their privately run schools into mainstream American public schools. Because of this law, Cincinnati, Ohio was the first city to add the German language to its curriculum and was considered the first city in incorporating foreign language programs as part of American elementary schools (Andersson, 1969).

Many cities such as St. Louis, San Francisco, and Milwaukee went on to copy Cincinnati's program and provide FLES programs in their own public schools (Andersson, 1969). The German foreign language program was the spark that allowed FLES programs to expand. Schools not only taught German but also included French, Spanish, and even Latin. It was estimated that there was a successful enrollment and positive views of FLES programs; however, with the onset of World War I many FLES programs disintegrated from American elementary school systems and were replaced once again with English (Andersson, 1969).

From the years of World War I (1914-1918) to World War II (1939-1945), foreign language programs were not readily accepted. The German language was isolated due to the war between the United States and Germany, which only helped to reinforce the seclusion of America and the illogical viewpoints toward foreign languages by Americans (Andersson, 1969).

FLES programs emerged rapidly again with bias towards the German language after World War II (Andersson, 1969). Even though the United States' military saw the need to learn different languages, parents also began to realize that it would be important for their children to learn other languages (Andersson, 1969). Once again, FLES

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programs emerged and grew in popularity thanks to World War II and the need for Americans to be competent when interacting with different foreign language speakers.

By 1952, twenty-seven of the fifty states including the District of Columbia taught some form of a foreign language program from kindergarten to sixth grade (Andersson, 1969). The majority of these foreign language programs taught in elementary schools was Spanish, followed by French, and last was German and Italian (Andersson, 1969). During this period, there were positive reviews on learning a foreign language. A report prepared specifically for foreign languages called *Report on the Status of and Practices in the Teaching of Foreign Languages in the Public Elementary Schools of the United States* showed that children were more interested in other cultures and aspired to learn about different cultures (Andersson, 1969). In addition, minorities and ethnic groups received a feeling of pleasure in having others learn about their cultures (Andersson, 1969).

All over the United States, different states and cities began to implement their own foreign language programs that became more advanced than those from previous years. Some programs included that at Somerville, New Jersey, which people viewed as excellent. They began their school year in 1949 with students learning French in the third grade and Spanish the following grade (Andersson, 1969). From grades three to six, children would alternate from French to Spanish.

The Modern Language Association studied the growth of foreign language programs in elementary schools within their journal the *Foreign Languages in the Elementary Schools of the United States, 1959-1960* where they studied how many

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schools taught foreign languages. The study showed that 1,227,006 students of more than 8,000 elementary schools of all types such as public, private, or institutional were enrolled in a foreign language program (Andersson, 1969). There were FLES programs in every state of the country including the nation's capital.

PRESENT DAY FLES PROGRAMS

Foreign language in the elementary school systems (FLES) programs have been around for many years in the United States. The creation of this program has developed over the years to ensure that students are learning a foreign language in the best way possible. The presence and growth of FLES programs are seen in today's time. Many people today probably know of a head start, preparatory, or elementary school that has begun to introduce more in-depth foreign language programs into their students' learning environment.

FLES programs and organizations related to the support of foreign language programs have grown and expanded. There are now numerous "surveys" and "studies" conducted on what is the best way to grow and perfect FLES programs (Lipton, 2001). There is a known fact that FLES programs have developed into four major areas from Kindergarten to eighth grades (Lipton, 2001). The first area is *Sequential FLES* designed for third to sixth graders to learn one foreign language over a one-to-two year period (Lipton, 2001). Sequential FLES programs are given three to five times during a school week and, and these programs have thirty minutes dedicated for students to learn a new language; moreover, for kindergarteners they are allotted fifteen minutes (Lipton, 2001). Following Sequential FLES programs is *Sequential FLEX* where students study a

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language over two or more years and usually only one or two times during the school week (Lipton, 2001). The purpose of this FLES program is that students will be introduced to a culture and the language (Lipton, 2001). Another FLES program is *Exploratory* where students are educated about several languages; moreover, the main purpose as stated by the author is for “survival fluency in foreign languages and a basic cultural awareness” (Lipton, 2001). Finally, through *Dual Immersion Programs*, students are taught a variety of subjects within the foreign language they are studying (Lipton, 2001). Other names for this program include *Immersion*, *Partial Immersion*, or *Two-Way Bilingual Programs* (Lipton, 2001). FLES programs are here to stay; moreover, over the years there has been a movement to implement FLES policies by the federal government, which will officially make FLES programs a required part of every child’s curriculum.

Authors Donato and Tucker have some views to shed on the implementation of foreign language policies within the school district. Donato and Tucker worked with the Chartiers Valley School District located in Pennsylvania since 1995, where their foreign language program is still being used today (Donato & Tucker, 2007). Their organization the Foreign Language Program Committee has successfully implemented a foreign language program within this school district, which is recognized locally and worldwide for its great success (Donato & Tucker, 2007).

The success of this foreign language program is contributed to one foreign language as the base for students beginning in kindergarten and evolving as students move from kindergarten to fifth grade, fifth grade to seventh grade, and seventh grade to eighth grade (Donato & Tucker, 2007). Throughout these different school levels, students

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were constantly learning the base language, which at that time was Spanish; moreover, by their eight grade year, students had the option to take more in-depth classes on the Spanish language or learn a new language (Donato & Tucker, 2007). One of the successes behind the school district's foreign language program was that foreign language teachers helped to create the curriculum; moreover, persons who served on the Foreign Language Program Committee came from a wide variety of areas such as principals of elementary, "intermediate", and middle schools and even university professors (Donato & Tucker, 2007).

From their research, they have formed four areas for implementing successful foreign languages policies for FLES programs (Donato & Tucker, 2007). The first is to "Centralize Foreign Language Programs" meaning that foreign language programs should be a consistent part of the school district's overall curriculum (Donato & Tucker, 2007). To implement a uniform language curriculum correctly, school programs have to be designed by foreign language teams, with similar base curriculums taught by teachers from different grade levels (Donato & Tucker, 2007). In other words, school bylaws and foreign language programs should be united successfully.

The second area is to "Insist on Highly Specialized Teachers" which means that students can only learn at their best with highly qualified teachers (Donato & Tucker, 2007). The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) credits themselves here for their oral and writing proficiency tests to determine the qualifications of future foreign language teachers (Donato & Tucker, 2007).

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The third area is to “Enlist Community Involvement in K-12 Education” by having the encouragement and involvement of the local community (Donato & Tucker, 2007). Donato and Tucker (2007) also stated that there should be a policy of informing parents of what the organization’s objectives and ideal relationships are between their children’s education and the school district’s foreign language programs.

The final area is to “Assess Program Implementation and Impact Continually and Longitudinally” by studying the growth of the program from the implementation period and onwards by monitoring the impact of the program, such as utilizing end of the year tests as the authors have done (Donato & Tucker, 2007). These areas can provide the basis for implementing foreign language policies within school districts to ensure that all schools provide the same foreign language experience as the Chartiers Valley School District has done.

Policies Preventing Foreign Languages

Within the United States, there is a movement of either restricting or not expanding the needed laws for foreign language programs. This is due to the country having recognized the need for foreign language programs, yet it still has the mindset that one method works for all students (Garcia, 2011). It was not until 1974 that an important court ruling allowed nonnative English speaking students to receive individual instructions during their schooling until they were capable of understanding English (Garcia, 2011).

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When it seemed that the country was on a path to embrace learning different languages, the passing of the No Child Left Behind in 2001 changed the direction of many foreign language programs by focusing attention to other important areas of the school's curriculum (Garcia, 2011). This bill not only turned the path of learning foreign languages programs away from the 1994 Bilingual Education Act but also eliminated the word "bilingual" from the bill and all government agencies associated with it (Garcia, 2011). Buildings such as the *Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Affairs* had their names changed to the *Office of English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement for Limited English Proficient Students* (Garcia, 2011). Other buildings such as the *National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education* are now the *National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition and Language Instruction Educational Programs* (Garcia, 2011).

State governments do have the choice in what reforms they make to their state educational programs by either choosing to follow or not to follow goals that the Federal Government passes into laws (Garcia, 2011). The Federal Government is able to intimidate these states by refusing to disperse funding to states that do not follow their agenda (Garcia, 2011). Now, it would seem that many states are following the lead of the Federal Government by restricting foreign language programs.

States such as Arizona, California, and Massachusetts have enacted very limiting programs for teaching students called English Language Learners or ELLs. English Language Learners are students whose first language is not English, and schools place them in certain foreign language programs within the school system to improve their

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English language skills. Many states have been enacting very limited language programs for English Language Learners where Arizona's program is the most limiting (Garcia, 2011). Lawmakers in Arizona passed Proposition 203 in 2000, which called for a Structured English Immersion Model (SEI) that no longer gave ELLs in all school districts or charter schools to learn through a variety of methods (Garcia, 2011). The ending results resulted in there being only one type of program for ELLS to follow even though there was evidence to show that students do not learn by only one method (Garcia, 2011).

California is also known for their proposition called Proposition 227. Proposition 227 was passed in the summer of 1998 (Tórrrez, 2001). This passage completely took bilingual education out of all California schools. In the process, it has created chaos for teachers who still face the task of trying to teach English to non-native speakers (Arellano-Houchin, Flamenco, Merlos, Segura, 2001). The purpose of a transitional bilingual education was to allow students to feel less stressed in learning a second language by teaching them in their native language as they moved into the English language. With the passing of this proposition, it was now illegal to teach a student in their native language at any school district in the state of California (Arellano-Houchin, Flamenco, Merlos, Segura, 2001). Many viewed this proposition as unclear; moreover, with its passing, the proposition held educators and school personnel responsible for civil lawsuits if they did not comply by solely teaching English (Tórrrez, 2001). The results were strict compliances to Proposition 227, and any other language other than English was removed from being taught in schools.

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Proposition 227, other laws, and court cases have created controversy in questioning the place of bilingual education in the school system. Over the span of fifteen years, there has been an increase in the number of immigrants arriving in the United States (Garcia, 2011). Their children, more than likely, will become English Language Learners in a country that is forever changing its policies on the state of bilingual education and foreign language programs. When politicians, teachers, and school administrators understand the intricate problem of teaching English to non-native students and also students wanting to learn a foreign language only then can satisfactory programs become available (Valdes, 2001).

COLLEGE FOREIGN LANGUAGE CURRICULUMS

In the article *The Why (and How) of Assessing Student Learning Outcomes in College Foreign Language*, published in 2006, John L. Norris discusses foreign language curriculums at the college level and how much students are truly learning from these curriculums. He stated that colleges throughout the United States are examining their foreign language curriculums to see if students are actually learning what they should and to create a system to analyze areas that should be changed (Norris, 2006). Colleges are doing this in the hopes of increasing student-learning outcomes, because colleges are realizing that their foreign language programs are not at the levels they should be.

Norris (2006) stated that a major reason that colleges are beginning to examine their foreign language structures could be linked to the *No Child Left Behind* law, which starts from kindergarten and ends in the twelfth grade. *No Child Left Behind* administers tests to the different grades from elementary to high school where schools that perform

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better receive more funding and vice versa for schools that perform poorly (Norris, 2006). The results of *No Child Left Behind* are reaching the college level, because foreign language programs that are funded by the public are also being examined by external sources to ensure that they are performing to high standards (Norris, 2006).

The focus of Norris's article is to justify the reasons for studying Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) within foreign language programs, and his reasons are behind the idea of receiving a sound, liberal education (Norris, 2006). He stated that the outcomes for studying a foreign language program are "understanding of our culture and others," "acquiring helpful skills in another language," and "disposition to other languages" (Norris, 2006). Yet, the author questions whether these outcomes are being explained as beneficial or written off as another trip to study abroad in foreign countries or meetings where students gather around to eat different "cultural" foods. Norris stated that it might be time for colleges to examine their curriculums to ensure that the outcomes towards studying a foreign language are those that college students are actually receiving.

Foreign languages need to have assessments performed; however, many colleges' foreign language departments do not view assessments as needed (Norris, 2006). Colleges do not write these assessments with a serious manner; moreover, colleges do not take them seriously. Norris (2006) stated that it is time for foreign language departments to conduct assessments of their students by using the student learning outcomes to highlight any areas in their curriculum that would need changes. The author also wrote

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that there is confusion about understanding what an assessment is to that of an evaluation or a measurement. Norris (2006) defined an assessment as:

Assessment is the systematic gathering of information about student learning in support of teaching and learning. It may be direct or indirect, objective or subjective, formal or informal, standardized or idiosyncratic, but it should always provide locally useful information on learners and on learning to those individuals responsible for doing something about it.

Assessments should not be a subject matter shunned by college foreign language departments; moreover, these assessments need to evaluate programs, teachers, classes, and the curriculum of foreign language departments to ensure that they are working towards the advantage of students (Norris, 2006). Norris lays the foundation for the need to study the outcomes of foreign language curriculums. Some colleges have taken the step to make changes to any curricula such as creating classes that allow students to learn a foreign language in a different method.

These steps can be seen in some parts of the United States. *Chronicle of Higher Education* wrote an article on a professor at Belmont University who taught a new class for learning a foreign language. Dr. David Julseth, an associate professor of Spanish and the director of language at the university, believed that learning Spanish in a classroom is not the way for advanced Spanish students to learn (Chronicle of Higher Education, 2002). He designed a class called *Hispanics in the United States*, which included readings, discussions, lectures and community service requirements (Chronicle of Higher

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Education, 2002). The most important part of the class is that the class matched students to community service activities that helped Hispanics in different areas of their lives(Chronicle of Higher Education, 2002).These activities could be teaching English to first time learners or tutoring Hispanic students. Dr. David Julseth said that the class produced excellent results and showed that it is more beneficial for students to use their language skills in real world situations (Chronicle of Higher Education, 2002).

In this situation, Dr. Julseth saw problems against advanced college students who already have a basic understanding of the language but did not have any practice in using it in everyday life situations. He made the changes within the curriculum, and these changes brought great results to his students.

CONCLUSION

Learning a foreign language at the college level seems more like acquiring skills for a student's future job rather than a student understanding the concepts and structure of the language (Politzer, 1970). Students can fully immerse themselves in understanding the workings of a foreign language by studying in different countries. This will help the students to see how the foreign language applies itself in its proper context, but not many students are able to do this and need better resources at home (Politzer, 1970).

In addition, ACTFL explains that most colleges focus on grammar and vocabulary of a foreign language versus the communication. ACTFL explains that grammar and vocabulary composes the how of speaking a language and what to say but communication focuses on the why one speaks a certain part of a language, when the certain parts of a language should be used, and whom to speak certain aspects of a

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language with (ACTFL, 2013). The focus of today's foreign languages learners should be how to communicate successfully and properly with other foreign language speakers, and the vocabulary and grammar are simply the tools to aid in this process (ACTFL, 2013).

OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH GOALS

This project will help shed more light on the current foreign language curriculums and whether the classes offered are aligned with the Five C's of learning a foreign language laid out by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language. The five C's are communication, culture, comparisons, communities, and connections.

By communication, ACTFL means to communicate in other languages besides the speaker's native language such as students in conversational classes or classes that study the workings of the language.

By culture, ACTFL means that students should gather insight and experiences with other cultures through classes that study another language's lifestyle, traditions, arts, literature, and other cultural activities.

Comparisons mean that students should gain understanding of not only their culture and language but also compare their language with other languages and their cultures.

With connections, students should be able to connect with or study other disciplines through their own studies of a foreign language.

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Finally, students should be active in cultural communities at home and around the world such as volunteering or working with another cultural group while using the language studied.

There is a final category for grammar, which focuses on classes teaching the basics structure for learning a foreign language. This category is also important, because ACTFL states that grammar should not be the primary focus for learning a foreign language yet the tools the aid in the process.

The researcher is attempting to study if students are currently learning at the highest potential or are they not receiving a deep enough exposure and education into a foreign language. This project should discover if there is a need to switch the foreign language curriculum programs from the college level to those currently used at the elementary level or to other effective curriculums such as those laid out by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). It is important to keep in mind that this project is not to fix a college's curriculum but simply to see where Mississippi colleges stand with their curriculums, and their results will highlight the next step that needs to be taken within the state.

Chapter Three: Research Process

METHODOLOGY

This research project focused on collecting and analyzing the foreign language curriculums of four-year colleges in the state of Mississippi and comparing them to the “Five C’s for Learning a Foreign Language” set by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). The method of research for this project is quantitative.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The researcher studied the eight four-year public colleges in the state of Mississippi and the foreign language programs that each college offers. The two foreign language programs studied were undergraduate Spanish and French curriculums, since these programs have a higher chance of being available on the college catalog of the colleges in question. The researcher began by shifting through the chosen colleges’ curriculums and studying their foreign language programs and the classes offered under each program. Depending on the nature of the classes, they were coded according to four of the five areas of learning a foreign language proposed by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. In addition, there was one area for grammar. The categories in all included communication, culture, connections, grammar, and communities; moreover, classes were coded depending on the description given within the college’s course bulletin or catalog. Comparisons will not be included as a code,

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because comparisons is comparing and contrasting one's own native language to a foreign language, which happens within all foreign language classes students enroll in.

PARTICIPANTS

The researcher only included four-year colleges and not community colleges, because many community colleges only provide the basic foreign language academic curricula, which does not offer enough details for the researcher to study. Although, there are roughly twenty four-year universities in Mississippi, this research only focused on the eight public four-year colleges. The researcher examined the Spanish and French curriculums language programs at the following colleges: Alcorn State University, Delta State University, Jackson State University, Mississippi State University, Mississippi State University for Women, Mississippi Valley University, The University of Mississippi, and The University of Southern Mississippi.

INSTRUMENTATION

As mentioned above, the research is quantitative and all data collected was studied and ranked with the Microsoft Excel program. Each college's results were organized within three categories: Overall Ranking, Balanced Scorecard, and The Ratio of Literature to Culture Classes.

As mentioned before, these five different categories are communication, culture, connections, communities, and grammar. To code the classes, the researcher started with one specific college and began with its French curriculum by coding and placing that university's French class into one of the five different categories that the class was about

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given by the class description. For example, a class such as French grammar would be placed into the grammar category while a class about French literature would be placed in the culture category. This was done for the French curriculum and then repeated for the Spanish curriculum of that university, and then the researcher would analyze another college until both the Spanish and French curriculums were analyzed and coded for all universities. If needed, the researcher contacted the department chairs of the colleges in question to obtain further public information on their curriculums.

All colleges provide an updated college catalog every year. These catalogs usually have a description of each class, the level of the class, and the requirements as well as pre-requirements and hours of each class. The researcher looked for words within a course description for the courses analyzed that described communications, cultures, communities, connections, and grammar. The researcher could have placed classes into more than one category; however, the researcher attempted to narrow it down to only one category. Once all the Spanish and French classes were analyzed and sorted, then the data that was found was used to construct three different rankings.

The first ranking created by the data is the Overall Rankings which ranked each individual university first by their total French offerings and then by their total Spanish offerings. This ranking was done to see how close each individual public university's curriculum in Mississippi is to that of ACTFL'S standards on how to learn a foreign language using the four of the "Five C's". The researcher, using Excel, started with the communication category of the French curriculum and took all the classes of the communication category and divided it by the total number of classes offered by the

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specific college being studied. This was then repeated for the remaining four categories of that specific college until all colleges were averaged for their French and then Spanish curriculums. All college courses for French and Spanish were analyzed and ranked by how close their curriculum can be compared to ACTFL's standards. To compose the Overall Rankings, the percentages for only Communication, Culture, Communities, and Connections, four of the "Five C's, were added together and the sum of these four categories resulted in a college's overall ranking. Grammar was not analyzed in this ranking, because grammar is not included as part of the "Five C's" as to what ACTFL standards are for studying a foreign language.

The second ranking is the Balanced Scorecard Ranking. This was simply done by studying each specific university's curriculum of Spanish and French and finding the percentages of each category studied among the total courses. To obtain these results a college's total grammar course offering under Spanish would be divided by the total Spanish course offerings of that specific university, and the number obtained would be the average of grammar classes offered. This was then repeated for the remaining four categories. Each college's categories for grammar, communication, culture, connections, and communities were analyzed finding the total percentage for each category against the overall courses offered under each college's French and Spanish curriculum. This ranking would allow one to view a college's French curriculum and see if the college emphasizes more or less on grammar over communication. Since there are five categories, the goal is equality among the five categories.

Finally, the last ranking, the Ratio of Literature to Culture Classes Rankings, studied the ratio of literature to the total number of culture classes. The total amount of literature classes such as those classes focusing on poetry, books, or authors were analyzed against the total number of culture classes offered by the university; moreover, using Excel the researcher was able to achieve the ratio of literature and culture classes by one University for their French and Spanish culture classes. This was done by simply taking the total number of literature courses and dividing the literature classes by the total number of culture classes, which resulted in its ratio for that specific university. The reason that there is a ranking of literature to culture classes is due to the fact that culture is such a large section and literature is only a portion of what a culture produces.

DATA ANALYSIS

The question that the data attempted to answer is how effective current foreign language curriculums are at the public college level in the state of Mississippi as compared to the standards set by ACTFL. The data collected was then analyzed and ranked according to the closest colleges that meet these requirements for each of three rankings. The overall goal of analyzing the data was to find out where each public university ranked overall to ACTFL standard's and how balanced each foreign curriculum is within that university showing if there is a need to improve their curriculum.

The researcher is also interested in where The University of Southern Mississippi ranks compared to other Mississippi public colleges. While there is no set percentage that the researcher was looking for due to the nature of the study, a percentage as close to one

hundred is what the researcher desired in the Overall Rankings. In addition, the researcher desired a percentage of twenty percent in the Balanced Scorecard section of each college. Lastly, the researcher analyzed all courses in the literature category to discover if there is an equal ratio between literature and cultural classes.

LIMITATIONS

The major limitation faced in conducting the research is that the researcher is unable to view the syllabus for each class studied. While the college's catalog gives the description of a certain class, the syllabus gives a better-detailed picture of what areas a class covers; therefore, highlighting what category a class truly belongs in. Another limitation faced was that the researcher did not know if classes were still being taught even though it might still be on the college catalog. Regardless if a college or department provided other means of learning a foreign language, the researcher only viewed the French and Spanish college catalog of classes offered; therefore, this study might not include classes or credits for areas like studying abroad.

Chapter 4: Review of the Results

Overview of Results

The results from the research provided very interesting results of Mississippi public universities on their standards towards their foreign language curriculums. Colleges with fewer students surpassed universities that were highly rated and had more students. One has to keep in mind that the number of students who attend The University of Mississippi (Ole Miss) surpasses the number of students at Alcorn University or even The University of Southern Mississippi (Southern Miss); therefore, these colleges usually offer more courses and a variety of courses within their foreign language department.

Figure 1 and Figure 2 show the overall ranking of each college's total French classes and total Spanish classes as the courses relate back to four of the "Five C's" while Figure 3 and Figure 4 show the balance of a college's foreign language curriculum for Spanish and French. The researcher discovered that two of these universities do not offer a four-year degree and in all fairness should not be compared in the ranking with the six other universities that do offer a four-year degree.

The Balanced Scorecard of each college follows, and it shows equality among the Spanish and French classes offered by each college. A percentage of twenty percent shows that a college balances itself among its Spanish and French course offerings; however, the ACTFL states that there should be slightly more emphasis on the "Five C's" compared to grammar.

Finally, the ratio of literature to cultural classes is last. This simply shows how many literature classes are offered compared to total cultural classes. This section is important to view, because all colleges should offer a well-rounded curriculum. In addition, when it comes to learning a foreign language, culture is always the heart of the language. As mentioned earlier with the “Five C’s” of a foreign language, the literature of a culture is important, because it helps a student analyze the why’s and how’s from the writer’s perspective, which allows a student to ponder more on the written language and its deeper meanings.

Discussion of Overall Ranking by French and Spanish Curriculums

Figures 1 and Figure 2 below show the overall rankings of each college by their total French and Spanish course offerings. These figures only include the percentages of colleges that offer classes in communication, culture, communities, and connections. Grammar is not included within this ranking, because it is not considered an area to where foreign languages should be studied the most according to ACTFL’s standards. As one can see, Jackson State University ranks number one in both rankings. A more in depth description of each college is offered in the Balanced Score Card Rankings where both the college’s overall ranking and their individual equality or balance are analyzed. This allows the reader to gain a better understanding of how a college’s course offerings affect a college’s overall ranking.

Also, colleges such as Mississippi University for Women highlights that this study is not necessarily about the greater number of foreign language courses taught by an university but the alignment of their courses within communication, culture,

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connections, communities, and grammar. If a college focuses the majority of their classes within the areas proposed by ACTFL regardless if it's a total of ten or twenty classes, that college will have a higher ranking compared to a college that offers a small number of classes for the "Five C's" categories.

Figure 1: Overall Ranking of French Courses Offered By Universities

College	Rankings by Percentages
1. Jackson State University:	83.78%
2. Mississippi State University	82.14%
3. The University of Mississippi	81.82%
4. Mississippi University for Women	80.00%
5. The University of Southern Mississippi	74.07%
6. Delta State University	66.67%
7. Alcorn State University	54.55
8. Mississippi Valley State	0%

Figure 1

Figure 2: Overall Ranking of Spanish Courses Offered By Universities

Colleges	Rankings by Percentages
1. Jackson State University	85.29%
2. Mississippi State University	84.38%
3. Mississippi University for Women	83.33%
4. The University of Mississippi	81.63%
5. The University of Southern Mississippi	75.76%
6. Alcorn State University	63.64%
7. Delta State University	60.00%
8. Mississippi Valley State	0.00%

Figure 2

Discussion of Overall Rankings and Balanced Scorecards

The colleges that came in first and second place are Jackson State University and Mississippi State University. These colleges have one of the highest course offerings of the public universities. In addition, Jackson State University offers courses in all categories whereas Mississippi State does not. Jackson State University not only offers the most course offerings for foreign languages, but it is the fourth largest university with roughly 6,675 undergraduate students as of the fall of 2012. These findings show that a university with less than half of the students compared to those of the three largest universities is able to rank first in each category of French and Spanish. Lastly, Jackson State has succeeded over Mississippi State University with providing a larger quantity of classes focused in all the areas mentioned by ACTFL.

Because Mississippi State University is the second largest college in the state of Mississippi with 16,390 undergraduate students alone, it is not far behind with their course offerings; however, this study shows the importance of studying the Balanced Scorecard of the foreign language department of courses offered. The Spanish curriculum of Mississippi State University is aligned with ACTFL standards except for the area of communities, because the college does not offer any classes in this category of communities. This has been the primary factor that has limited Mississippi State University to that of a ranking below Jackson State University.

Both universities' curricula are aligned the most with ACTFL standards and the "Five C's" of a foreign language. Compared to the overall rankings, Jackson State not only offers a large variety of classes but also ensures that the four of the "Five C's" of

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language learning are adequately addressed in their curriculums while Mississippi State University lacks a complete curriculum in communities to maintain both first place rankings. As mentioned earlier, grammar was not included in Figure 1: Overall Ranking of French Courses Offered by Universities and Figure 2: Overall Ranking of Spanish Courses Offered by Universities.

Third place for French goes to The University of Mississippi. In addition for Spanish, The University of Mississippi ranked fourth. The University of Mississippi with 16,684 undergraduate students offers thirty-three courses for their French major versus forty-nine courses for their Spanish majors and is the largest university in the state of Mississippi. How can it be that a college that offers an extensive amount of courses can rank third or fourth? The answer is that the college does an excellent job in diversifying their Spanish curriculum; however, The University of Mississippi barely offers any classes for connections and communities. In addition, a large amount of their classes are for grammar as compared to their total course offerings, which are not factored in the overall rankings. If the college was able to offer more classes in one of the sections of the Four C's, this would have allowed them to rank third in both French and Spanish overall rankings.

Mississippi University for Women ranks fourth for French and third for Spanish. The number of graduate students attending Mississippi University for Women is 2,503. Viewing the results will show that Mississippi University for Women, while having fewer course offerings, is able to beat The University of Mississippi by having more diversified course sections, which allows them to have a higher percentage for the

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categories that deal with the “Five C’s” with their Spanish curriculum. This shows the importance of ensuring that a college’s course catalogs should include a variety of courses.

The University of Southern Mississippi, the third largest university with 13,658 undergraduate students ranked fifth for their French curriculum and fifth for their Spanish courses. The university offers a total of twenty-seven French and thirty-three Spanish classes. While the university offers fewer courses than larger colleges such as Mississippi State University, it focuses heavily on the section of communities compared to other universities and their offerings. In addition, with the size of the student body at The University of Southern Mississippi, they should be offering more courses for students on their campuses as compared to the amount offered by Mississippi State or even Jackson State University. One has to keep in mind that Alcorn State University and Mississippi Valley State University do not offer a major or minor in Spanish nor French meaning that The University of Southern Mississippi is actually at the bottom of the rankings among the six universities that do offer a four-year degree in Spanish and French.

With this said, The University of Southern Mississippi should focus less on grammar, because the majority of their curriculums have courses in this section. While the university does come in fifth, this can be explained by viewing the Balanced Scorecard, which shows that the college does not offer any classes for connections. This has made the college not nearly as aligned with ACTFL standards, because the university has failed to offer courses in all four categories of the “Five C’s”.

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Alcorn State University with 3,208 undergraduate students ranked sixth for Spanish and seventh for French. Even though Alcorn State University offers fewer total courses than a college such as Delta University, Alcorn State University offers more classes throughout its different sections by focusing more on the categories of communities and connections. Interestingly, Alcorn State University does not offer a major or a minor for a degree in foreign languages. These more advanced foreign language courses are provided for those with an English degree and want to specialize in a foreign language.

While Alcorn State University is still far from ACTFL standards, they have still managed to have a higher ranking than that of a larger university like Delta State University, mainly because they are able to offer at least one class in almost all sections, regardless of the limited amount of courses offered overall. Alcorn State University needs to offer more foreign language courses within their connections and communities sections, and this would improve their standards to those of what ACTFL recommends.

Delta State University ranks sixth in French and seventh in Spanish. The total undergraduate students at Delta State University are 2,756. The school has a lower ranking regardless of having more students than other universities, because the school offers only one class within the communication category for both curricula and none for the categories of connection and communities. Furthermore, the university has a lower ranking, because their grammar classes are not included in the overall ranking and the majority of their course offerings are for grammar. The college does attempt to focus on culture classes, but the college needs to align themselves more with ACTFL standards by

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equally offering classes among the “Five C’s” to be able to rank higher and be aligned with ACTFL standards.

Mississippi Valley State averaged the lowest course offerings, meaning that they offered the least amount of courses for Spanish and French, and subsequently ranked eighth place. Mississippi Valley State University is the smallest public university with only 2,168 undergraduate students. The university only offers courses in beginner and intermediate French and Spanish; moreover, the university does not offer a degree for foreign languages. The university is far from aligning themselves with ACTFL standards. The university needs to start with offering more classes for French and Spanish and eventually offer majors for French and Spanish. This will allow the university to offer students a higher standard for learning a foreign language.

For the total Spanish classes, culture was the dominating category with 60.71% of Spanish classes being in this category. Grammar was the next Spanish category that held the most classes with 26.79% followed by the communication category with 17.62%. Communities with 11% came fourth for the number of Spanish courses offered and last came the Connection category with 4.76%. These numbers were interesting especially with amount of Spanish cultural classes, 102, compared to the total number of Spanish grammar classes, 45. These results for the Spanish curriculum show that these public universities focus heavily on cultural classes followed by grammar classes with very little concentration for classes in the categories of communication, communities, and connections.

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For the French curriculums, the results were similar just with lower percentages. Culture was the leading category with 52.81% of French classes placed in this category. Grammar was the next highest category for French with 24.16% of all course offerings. Once again, the last three rankings were Communications with 12.92%, Communities with 7%, and Connections with 3.37% of French course offerings. The Spanish and French curriculum differed in the amount of courses offered, but culture and grammar had the most classes for both curriculums followed by communication, communities, and connections.

Overall, there were twenty-three French communication classes and twenty-nine Spanish communication classes for a total of fifty-two total communication classes. There were ninety-four French culture classes and one hundred and two Spanish culture classes for a total of one hundred and ninety-six culture classes being offered. For connection classes, there were six French courses and eight Spanish courses for a total of fourteen connection classes. The category for grammar was composed of forty-three French classes and forty-five Spanish classes for a total of eighty-eight grammar classes. Finally, the category for communities had twelve French classes and eighteen Spanish classes for a total of thirty community classes. For the total course offerings of French, which included all the classes for all the categories, there were one hundred and seventy-eight classes. For the total course offerings of Spanish, which included all the classes for all categories, there were two hundred and two classes.

Figure 3: Balanced Score Card: French Curriculum

University	Communication		Culture		Connections		Grammar		Communities		Total Classes
	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	
Jackson State University (French)	13.51%	5	56.76%	21	8.11%	3	16.22%	6	5%	2	37
Mississippi State University (French)	7.14%	2	67.86%	19	7.14%	2	17.86%	5	0%	0	28
The University of Mississippi (French)	18.18%	6	54.55%	18	0.00%	0	18.18%	6	9%	3	33
Mississippi University for Women (French)	20.00%	4	55.00%	11	0.00%	0	20.00%	4	5%	1	20
University Southern Mississippi (French)	11.11%	3	40.74%	11	0.00%	0	25.93%	7	22%	6	27
Delta (French)	5.56%	1	61.11%	11	0.00%	0	33.33%	6	0%	0	18
Alcorn (French)	18.18%	2	27.27%	3	9.09%	1	45.45%	5	0%	0	11
Mississippi Valley (French)	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	100.00%	4	0%	0	4
Total classes	12.92%	23	52.81%	94	3.37%	6	24.16%	43	7%	12	178

Figure 3

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Figure 4: Balanced Score Card: Spanish Curriculum

University	Communication		Culture		Connections		Grammar		Communities		Total Classes
	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	
Jackson State (Spanish)	11.76%	4	52.94%	18	8.82%	3	14.71%	5	12%	4	34
Mississippi State University (Spanish)	18.75%	6	59.38%	19	6.25%	2	15.63%	5	0%	0	32
Mississippi University for Women (Spanish)	16.67%	4	66.67%	16	0.00%	0	16.67%	4	0%	0	24
The University of Mississippi (Spanish)	18.37%	9	51.02%	25	4.08%	2	18.37%	9	8%	4	49
University Southern Mississippi (Spanish)	9.09%	3	36.36%	12	0.00%	0	24.24%	8	30%	10	33
Alcorn (Spanish)	18.18%	2	36.36%	4	9.09%	1	36.36%	4	0%	0	11
Delta (Spanish)	6.67%	1	53.33%	8	0.00%	0	40.00%	6	0%	0	15
Mississippi Valley (Spanish)	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	100.00%	4	0%	0	4
Total classes	17.62%	29	60.71%	102	4.76%	8	26.79%	45	11%	18	202

Figure 4

Ratio of Literature to Culture Classes

The last section simply discusses the ratio of literature to total culture classes offered. Culture was the biggest section of the research and is a category that has a variety of courses that can compose what is to be considered culture. Like many other sections of the research; the literature section should be balanced among itself due to it usually being the largest section among colleges. The majority of the classes tend to be balanced or slightly over balanced.

Alcorn State University only offers three cultural classes for French and two of them are literature classes. In addition, the university only offers four cultural classes for Spanish and two of them are literature classes. The college is slightly over balanced for French and balanced for Spanish, the foreign language department at the university needs to offer a wider variety of cultural classes. More improvements need to be given to Alcorn State University's cultural classes; moreover, while the school is small, they should begin to offer more foreign language classes in both curriculum sections to align themselves closer to ACTFL standards. Compared to Alcorn State University, Delta State University offers more literature courses in both French and Spanish but needs to offer more classes to match the number of students who attend the university. Jackson State University offers both more literature classes in Spanish and French than both Alcorn State University and Delta State University. Jackson State University has done remarkably well with their culture classes against ACTFL standards. Students have a decent pool of classes to choose from while learning a foreign language.

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Mississippi State University has also balanced the cultural classes that they offer. They are one of the few public universities that offer nearly a fifty-fifty balance for their culture and literature classes. As discussed earlier, the results showed that the primary focus for Mississippi State is within culture. The college offers more than thirty-five classes that focus on the culture of a foreign language and has ensured that the classes are equally balanced among the different cultural offerings such as literature.

Mississippi Valley State University has been the college that has lagged behind in this study. The college has yet to offer a major or a minor dedicated to foreign languages. The only language courses that students can receive are within the four basic French and Spanish classes. The college does not offer any literature classes to meet ACTFL standards, and it would be interesting to study if they try to make these discretions up through the basic foreign language classes that they do offer.

Mississippi University for Women has interesting results. For their French classes, they focus ninety percent of their classes on literature whereas their Spanish culture classes are balanced. Similar to other universities mentioned, Mississippi University for Women does offer a variety of foreign language culture classes and are closer to the ACTFL standards for courses that should be offered for culture.

University of Mississippi is also one of the few universities that not only offer a balance between their literature and culture classes but also offers a variety of classes. The university offers over forty college Spanish and French courses for culture. They are very well aligned with ACTFL standards for the section of culture. What is interesting is that the university offers more culture classes for Spanish than French. It would seem that

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a college as large as the University of Mississippi would be able to offer more than forty-three cultural classes.

Finally, The University of Southern Mississippi also had very interesting results for their culture offerings. Their cultural classes for French were very poor with only three of their eleven classes focusing on literature; however, their Spanish cultural classes are exactly balanced. This could be a result of the university having more Spanish students than French students; therefore, seeing more of a need to offer more literature classes for their Spanish students.

Figure 5: Ratio of French Literature to French Culture Classes

Alcorn State University (French)	2:3 or 66.67% are literature classes
Delta State University (French)	6:11 or 54.54% are literature classes
Jackson State University (French)	13:21 or 61.90% are literature classes
Mississippi State University (French)	11:19 or 57.89% are literature classes
Mississippi Valley State University (French)	Offers no cultural classes
Mississippi University for Women (French)	10:11 or 90.91% are literature classes
The University of Mississippi (French)	9:18 or 50% are literature classes
The University of Southern Mississippi (French)	3:11 or 27.27% are literature classes

Figure 5

Figure 6: Ratio of Spanish Literature to Spanish Cultural Classes

Alcorn State University (Spanish)	2:4 or 50% are literature classes
Delta State University (Spanish)	5:8 or 62.50% are literature classes
Jackson State University (Spanish)	9:18 or 50% are literature classes
Mississippi State University (Spanish)	10:19 or 52.63% are literature classes
Mississippi Valley State University (Spanish)	Offers no cultural classes
Mississippi University for Women (Spanish)	9:16 or 56.25% are literature classes
The University of Mississippi (Spanish)	13:25 or 52% are literature classes
The University of Southern Mississippi (Spanish)	6:12 or 50% are literature classes

Figure 6

Chapter Five: Conclusion

While it may seem that colleges with lower rankings are not in par with ACTFL, it could be that these are smaller colleges, hence the needs for their balanced scorecards to be studied. It is important to mention that Mississippi Valley State has the lowest ranking, because the college only offers the academic core requirements; in other words, it only offers the freshman and sophomore level classes in Spanish and French. This study showed that while a college can rank higher than one college, it is still important to study the course offerings among each college. Results can be skewed simply by assuming that smaller colleges such as Jackson State University are unable to offer decent foreign language curriculums.

These results suggest that many of these public universities need to examine their foreign language curriculum that is currently in place. While many of these colleges, suggest that they adhere to standards such as those by the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Language, their curriculums for Spanish and French does not suggest this. While many colleges are not doing poorly many of them could offer more courses in the areas that they are lacking.

While Mississippi still needs to advance its foreign language development, the research on public universities was impressive. Out of the eight public universities only three of them ranked below seventy percent. These three were Alcorn State University, Delta State University, and Mississippi Valley State University. Jackson State University has very impressive course offerings and so does Mississippi State University. These universities have done an excellent job in providing a curriculum for foreign languages

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that seems to give their students a wide variety of choices to learn about a language across different categories. Yet, there are universities, such as The University of Southern Mississippi and Mississippi University for Women, which could offer more courses, because they do have more students who need to be further challenged by ACTFL standards.

Jackson State University has shown that Mississippi colleges have the ability to design an in-depth foreign language curriculum regardless of the number of students on campus. It can be expected that a student will be able to receive an excellent education in a foreign language degree which offers a variety of courses to choose amongst. If these courses are designed to academically challenge a student, as enacted by ACTFL, is yet to be seen, and this lays the foundation for another study.

Future studies on this subject can study more comprehensively a college's course offerings. This study can study all foreign language courses offered by a university, how many different classes are there for each course, and what does each classes' syllabus specify will be covered. This type of study can give a more in-depth view of the structure of each college, therefore, giving a deeper view into the structure of all classes and eventually the foreign language department and university itself.

This study can reveal that while a college that is unable to offer courses in all the areas suggested by ACTFL; however, they are able to account for their shortcomings by giving a more in-depth teaching of a foreign language. I have taken Spanish classes where the teacher has combined numerous areas of a foreign language into one class allowing the students to receive more knowledge and understanding from one foreign

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language course. A more compressive and future study on college foreign language curriculums can also help to prove the opposite by showing that colleges who offer many courses may not be adequately furthering a student's understanding of a language.

Whatever the case one's opinion may be of this subject, foreign languages will continually be a part of the future and it is time those appreciate it by understanding the value it has by placing it with other esteemed college subjects.

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