

**DO OUR KIDS HAVE AN ATTITUDE?
A CLOSER LOOK AT FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS
IN THE UNITED STATES**

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Abstract

Literature on the topic of attitude in second language acquisition is reviewed, and the connections between (1) attitudes towards the target language and the target culture, (2) motivation, and (3) the success or failure of second language acquisition are explored within the context of secondary foreign language education in the U.S. The conclusions that U.S. student attitudes are generally ethnocentric, and that these negative attitudes towards other cultures can prove profoundly detrimental to the acquisition and/or maintenance of L2 communicative skills, are drawn based on the review of literature. Based on these conclusions, curriculum changes for U.S. language classes are recommended, namely the expansion of the role of culture in language instruction and the addition of intercultural communication training to the curriculum.

After eight years as an instructor of adult ESOL learners, the author began teaching Spanish in the secondary school system; from the very first day, the most striking differences between the two classrooms were the unmistakable and pervasive lack of motivation in American foreign language students and their derogatory, condescending attitude towards the target cultures (all Spanish-speaking cultures in general, but especially Mexican culture)¹. As time progressed, other alarming trends surfaced: The grades of students in the school's foreign language classes were much lower than these same students' GPAs; in fact, at least half of students put forth just enough effort to pass, which seems odd because nearly 100% were college-bound. Students very often failed to acquire the language even if they passed the classes, and, just a few weeks or months after foreign language courses, most did not remember enough to carry on a simple introductory conversation. The thought often surfaced in foreign language faculty meetings that these phenomena were somehow related to attitude². In short, teachers were instinctively recognizing the concept that occurred to Robert Gardner in 1956, that even for students with everything else in their favor – language aptitude, age, adequate input and a capable, enthusiastic instructor – “if you didn't like the other language community, you could never really learn their language” (Gardner, 1991, p. 43). If the intuition of classroom teachers is any indication, the problem Gardner identified nearly 50 years ago still persists among foreign language students today. And so, the quest begins, the struggle to determine whether or not U.S. adolescents truly do have an attitude problem. Do they, indeed, harbor negative attitudes towards the cultures associated with the languages they study? If so, what are the causes of those attitudes? What toll could ethnocentrism be taking on the effectiveness

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² Attitude encompasses a wide variety of feelings in second language learning, including attitude towards one's ability as a student, attitude towards the classroom setting, etc. For the purposes of this paper, however, attitude refers specifically and only to a language learner's feelings towards and opinions about the target culture and the target language.

of foreign language education in the United States? And finally, how might teachers combat their students' ethnocentric attitudes inside foreign language classrooms?

STATE OF THE UNION: CURRENT RESEARCH IN THE FIELD

One cannot delve very deeply into the area of social and affective factors without running up against Schumann's acculturation model. Schumann (1978) believed that acculturation – a term he used to include social factors like attitude, integration, and social dominance, and affective factors like motivation and ego-permeability – is *the* causal variable in second language acquisition, while all other factors such as age, aptitude, input and instruction simply moderate (i.e. help or hinder) the learning process. There are, however, two obvious difficulties in applying Schumann's model to the current issue. The first is that Schumann (1978) himself makes it very clear that the acculturation model is meant to explain second language acquisition in a natural setting only, not in a classroom setting and certainly not in a foreign language classroom setting (p. 27). The second is that, based upon the mounds of empirical evidence since Schumann developed his model, a position as extreme as his, which fails to account for aptitude and other factors, is not generally accepted by other researchers in the field (Gass & Selinker, 2001; Skehan, 1989).

At the same time, it is generally acknowledged that factors such as motivation and attitude can be important variables in second language acquisition. Motivation, of course, has been shown time and again to have a strong relationship to the success or failure of language learners. Ehrman and Oxford (1995) determined that motivation was second only to aptitude in strength of correlation to language learning outcomes. Attitude is likewise important, because it can be a reason for that motivation, or lack thereof. As far back as the 1950's, researchers were beginning to see attitude as productive of or restrictive of motivation to learn languages (Lambert, 1963). MacIntyre et al. (2001) conducted an analysis to find the overlaps among four different models of motivation for second language learning, and "Attitudinal Motivation" emerged as the first and strongest factor. Gardner (1985) presents empirical evidence that clearly demonstrates a relationship between attitude, motivation, and proficiency. Furthermore, qualitative studies like those of Syed (2001) also show the importance of attitude in motivation for second language acquisition, reporting that, "when initially asked as to why they were learning Hindi, the participants mentioned a number of academic and personal reasons.... But what really ties it all together for them is a love and appreciation for the culture" (p. 135).

Much recent research has related this area of SLA more specifically to formal instruction. Masgoret et al. (2001) declare that attitudes and motivation are "key factors that influence the rate and success of second language learning in the classroom" (p. 281). Gardner (1985) claims that the social milieu, or cultural beliefs, that help form integrative motivation³ influence both formal (classroom) and informal (natural) contexts equally, and Anderson (2000) even argues that attitudes shaped by this social context are the most important factors in determining the success of formal classroom language instruction. An example of this relationship is a study of unsuccessful classroom language learners by Nikolov (2001). In this qualitative study, when 87 participants who had failed in their efforts to learn Russian in school were asked which cultures they found interesting or attractive, only one interviewee mentioned Russia. Since a consistent lack of positive attitude towards Russia was prominent amongst these unsuccessful students, a connection between attitude and *unsuccessful* language learning experiences seems to be indicated: It is logical that students in this study, just like my students, would fail to learn the language of a people they find neither interesting nor attractive. Moreover, there also exists a relationship between positive attitudes and *successful* language learning: Lalleman's (1987) study of Turkish immigrant children learning Dutch in the classroom found positive and significant correlations between Dutch proficiency and both social and psychological orientations towards Dutch society.

³ Integrative motivation is a term, coined by Gardner and his colleagues, that denotes a desire to interact with or become part of a target culture, caused by appreciation for that target culture, and causing incentive to learn the language of that culture.

In a general way, the attitude/language-learning success connection might be explained by Krashen's (1982) Monitor Model, which suggests that language is acquired through an affective filter. This filter, which is constituted in part by attitude, many times has the power to either permit or block language input from reaching the part of a learner's brain that acquires language. Knowing that attitude can facilitate or impede second language acquisition, however, is not enough. In the past 15 years, researchers have begun to concentrate on determining exactly *how* attitudes affect language learners. What they have discovered is that the effects are more pervasive than one might assume, and that they range from cognitive to social in nature. All of the following have been shown with empirical evidence to have a strong positive relationship to attitude (i.e. a positive attitude towards the target culture occurs along with willingness to do these activities, while a negative attitude strongly correlates with refusal or avoidance of them):

1. *self-correcting errors* – Integrative motivation promotes systematic “error correction and subsequent language development” in classroom language learners (Skehan, 1989, p. 57).
2. *using inductive reasoning* – Students with integrative orientation are more likely than others to form hypotheses about structures in the L2 (Skehan, 1989).
3. *participating in the classroom* – Students who begin language studies with high integrative motivation have proven to volunteer more answers in class and otherwise participate more often and more enthusiastically than those with low integrative motivation (Gardner, 1991).
4. *learning vocabulary* – The speed with which language students learn paired-associate vocabulary has been shown to be directly linked to scores on Gardner's Attitude Motivation Index, the AMI (Skehan, 1989).
5. *seeking out or taking advantage of situations for practice* – According to Gardner (1991), “high levels of integrative motivation will be responsible for people choosing situations that will permit them to improve their second language” (p. 50). Similarly, negative attitudes cause evasion of speakers of the target language, and thus diminished input (Gass & Selinker, 2001). Clément (1986) adds that attitudes determine not only the quantity but also the quality of contact.
6. *learning and using pragmatics* – LoCastro (2001) recounts anecdotal evidence that associates refusal to accommodate to L2 pragmatic norms with negative attitudes towards the target culture.
7. *adapting to a new system of phonology* – One of the first areas of linguistics to be associated with integrative motivation, mastery of phonology has been shown to have a statistically significant relationship with positive attitudes towards the L2 and its speakers (Pavlenko, 2002). Avery and Ehrlich (1992) agree that a desire or a lack of desire to identify with members of the second language culture “largely determine[s] success or lack of success in achieving native-like pronunciation” (p. xiv).
8. *cognitively restructuring linguistic systems* – Instead of forming a ‘pidginized’ interlanguage as those with negative attitudes often seem to do, students with integrative orientation are more willing to learn new syntactic and morphological elements and incorporate them into their L2 speech (Skehan, 1989).
9. *continuing in language study after it is no longer mandatory* – Gardner (1991) also presents evidence that attitude is very positively related to the pursuance of language study, and that integrative motivation is a stronger predictor than even language aptitude of whether or not students will continue to take classes or drop out.

Some would argue that, in the relationship between attitude and second language acquisition, it cannot be definitively proved that one causes the other, but only that they sometimes occur together (Skehan, 1989). Evidence does exist, however, that points to a causal relationship. After presenting evidence from Oller and other researchers who criticize Gardner's claims of a attitude/acquisition connection, Skehan (1989) goes on to argue that the weight of evidence seems to be on Gardner's side –

that attitude and motivation truly do appear to be causal factors of SLA based on empirical data. Gass and Selinker (2001) agree: “It makes sense that individuals who are motivated will learn another language faster and to a great degree. Furthermore, numerous studies have provided statistical evidence that indicates motivation is a predictor of language-learning success” (p. 349). They then proceed to validate attitude as one cause of motivation (Gass & Selinker, 2001). Gardner (1991) presents a logical argument as well – individually, the above-listed correlations of specific behaviors in language learning and attitude could probably be explained away, but, taken as a whole, they constitute a formidable case for a causal relationship.⁴

Can we extend all of this evidence of attitude’s effect on formal second language learning to *foreign* language learning in the classroom? Some researchers seem to assume that attitude is less important in this area because they believe that the chief motivations of typical foreign language students are instrumental, as opposed to the often integrative motivations that many second language learners exhibit (Skehan, 1989). Yet, many researchers have documented very high correlations between instrumental and integrative orientations in motivation (MacIntyre et al., 2001); the two very often coexist in learners, even in the classroom. Furthermore, Dörnyei and Clément (2001), in the presentation of an immense study including over 4,000 13-14 year-old foreign language learners in Hungary, make a very convincing argument for the importance of attitude in foreign language learning:

Our results also confirm the uncontested superiority of integrativeness as a predictor of language choice relative to other motivational scales: The regression analyses revealed that the bulk of the variance in language choice explained by motivational factors was, in fact, due to the impact of the integrativeness factor. Furthermore, what is even more remarkable, we obtained exactly the same pattern when examining the association between attitudinal/motivational measures and the other criterion measure in our study, intended effort. (p. 423)

Pavlenko (2002) even goes so far as to assert that integrative motivation is a more powerful force than instrumental motivation because an absence of integrative motivation can outweigh instrumental motivations that do exist, halting or severely retarding language learning. This idea explains very well what MacIntyre et al. (2001) refer to as the “seemingly contradictory behavior” of people whose low level of effort does not match their professed instrumental motivation (p. 468). It seems that even when students know they need to or should learn a language (instrumental motivation), if they don’t *truly* want to do so because they have no respect for or appreciation of the target culture (lack of integrative motivation), they are likely to fail.

Ultimately, then, as a result of their negative attitudes towards target cultures, and through the previously listed means by which harm is done to their language learning processes, language students with low integrative motivation usually find themselves faced with one or both of these consequences: 1) retardation or prevention of acquisition during study, and 2) accelerated attrition after cessation of study. Pavlenko (2002) gives several examples from various qualitative studies of the effects of negative attitudes towards speakers of the target language on second language proficiency. One of these examples is the case of women who perceived target cultures as sexually-harassing and blamed their subsequent aversion to contact with native speakers for their lack of oral competence relative to the male students in their class. Empirical evidence is provided by Skehan (1989), who reports that language students with low scores on Gardner’s Attitude Motivation Index, which specifically measures attitude towards the target culture and the target language, receive lower grades.

Even if students manage to gain significant levels of proficiency despite their problems with attitude, however, they still have yet another obstacle to overcome – attrition. Foreign language attrition, like that of first languages amongst immigrants, is a direct result of the discontinuance of practice. A

⁴ This evidence does not disprove, however, the possibility that the causal relationship could also sometimes work in the opposite direction, with effective language learning behaviors causing successful language learning, in turn leading to positive attitudes towards languages, cultures, and the language learning process.

conscious or unconscious choice to avoid native speakers of the language very often causes such a lack of use (de Bot & Hulsen, 2002). In fact, Gardner et al. (1987) discovered that attrition in oral skills, which usually require interaction with members of the target culture, was more severe than for written skills, which do not. Furthermore, attitude and motivation were implicated as causes for second language retention/attrition. Their study indicates that students with negative attitudes are reluctant to interact with native speakers, and as a result they are bound to suffer more attrition than students with positive attitudes.

Yet, on a positive note, since attitude and motivation are independent of intelligence or aptitude, and since (unlike aptitude) attitude can be improved on the individual level, not having a special talent for languages does not preclude a person from learning a foreign language. If the subtractive process described above is reversed by improving attitudes, those nine areas damaged by negative attitudes would be enhanced instead, and the results would be progress and retention rather than attenuation and attrition (Lambert, 1991). It is quite possible to develop positive attitudes towards target cultures in a foreign language classroom setting (Lantolf, 1999), thus increasing motivation, thus enriching language acquisition behaviors, and thus ultimately fostering proficiency (Mantle-Bromley, 1997).

CASE IN POINT: THE U.S. FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

Clearly, attitude can account for individual differences in the foreign language classroom, but the cause of the problem may vary in different countries and cultural settings. In this section we will turn to the specific setting of the United States, (1) examining the foreign language classroom as a reflection of values commonly held in the U.S., (2) discussing the cultural and linguistic superiority complexes with which most U.S. foreign language students enter the classroom, and (3) exposing the failure of the current foreign language curriculum to change these negative attitudes.

The Root of the Problem: Ethnocentrism

Ethnocentrism, as defined by Bennett (1993), is the assumption that everyone sees reality exactly as people in your culture do. He includes a number of attitudes within this broad term, including total denial of cultural differences, the perception of differences as faults in others (or oneself), and the minimization of the importance of differences. Xenophobic behaviors, negative stereotyping, and discrimination are all actions that are directly attributable to ethnocentrism (Rogers & Steinfatt, 1999). With the exception of those in the minimization stage of ethnocentrism, people who are ethnocentric usually either avoid contact with ‘different’ people, or become defensive of their own point of view and their way of life when confronted with people who are different (Bennett, 1993).

Lambert (1963), one of the first researchers in this field, recognized that the basic ethnocentric nature of human beings is what shapes the negative attitudes towards foreigners that can wreak such havoc with the foreign language learning process. Negative attitudes are caused by an ethnocentric ‘us/them’ comparison, the final result of which is usually a cultural superiority complex, where people see themselves as normal and anyone who is culturally different as deficient. Gardner (1985) blames these negative attitudes on social milieu, or the native culture’s view of another specific group or foreigners in general, since many people who view another culture negatively do so despite a total lack of contact with that culture. As Skehan (1989) puts it, attitudes towards foreigners are usually “formed under the influence of parents, the home environment, and the native culture” (p. 52). For this reason, we are well-justified in inspecting the U.S. for ethnocentric trends, as students will carry the attitudes they have developed at home and as a part of their society into the foreign language classroom.

Unfortunately, evidence of ethnocentricity abounds in the United States, historically as well as in modern times. Rogers and Steinfatt (1999) document many examples of discrimination, and even genocide, on the part of the U.S. people and their government; the very notion of ‘manifest destiny’, or the perceived right of the U.S. to take possession of Native American and Mexican lands perfectly illustrates the ethnocentricity of our nation. But the U.S. didn’t discriminate only against people they found already living here: Each new generation of immigrants, after dissolving into the great ‘melting

pot', began discriminating against the next wave of immigrants arriving from a different part of the world (Rogers & Steinfatt, 1999). And today? It seems that anti-immigrant sentiment has not gone out of fashion (Ogulnick, 2000). Though many discriminatory practices have been made illegal, the cultural value that causes suppression of minorities in the United States has remained intact – it is a basic intolerance of difference (Schiffman, 1996). One has only to listen to students in a typical U.S. classroom talk to realize that Americans today have a fear of being overrun by immigrants who come to 'steal their jobs' and 'get all the benefits intended for *real* Americans'. Even our use of the word *American* to describe ourselves is innately ethnocentric, "since culturally the 'anglo' culture is a minority among the nations of the Americas" (Condon, 1986, p. 86). It would seem that safe to conclude that most students enter foreign language classrooms in the United States sure of their superiority over the target culture.

In addition to a cultural superiority complex, though, it seems that U.S. foreign language students are prone to suffer from a linguistic superiority complex. Just as their society has taught them to view culturally different people in a negative light, it has taught them to depreciate the foreign languages they are studying. In the author's classroom, students view English as easier, more logical, more useful, and on the whole simply *better* than other languages, and they fail to see foreign languages as valuable assets. Some might say that with high school students, failing to see value in the curriculum is par for any course, but, in the case of foreign languages, our society in general seems to agree with them:

...antipathy to any expanded role for 'foreign' language in American life is strong, and allied perhaps to xenophobia, racism and other unsavory attitudes, it does not wish to tolerate something that it sees as dangerous, untrustworthy, expensive, perhaps even un-American. When 'foreign' languages are perceived to be too much of a drain on the public purse, for example when schools face budget cuts, they are eliminated. I interpret this to mean that knowledge of a language other than English is not an essential component of an American public education. (Schiffman, 1996, p. 247)

No wonder that, in the experience of the author, the vast majority of students constantly voice their resentments at the foreign language requirements⁵, that advanced classes are often cancelled because there are not enough students who want to continue beyond the first two compulsory courses, and that exceptionally few students take Spanish as an elective rather than as part of the core curriculum required for their graduation.

Compounding Factors: Dominance, Geography, and Llinguistic Policies

Citizens of the United States are, of course, far from alone in their ethnocentric attitudes. Most of the world feels and behaves in similar ways. We here in the U.S. do, however, struggle under the weight of other impediments that may complicate matters for language students. The first of these concerns dominance. Following Schumann's (1987) lead, de Bot and Hulsen (2002) indicate that social power and majority status must be considered in motivation for second language acquisition. The United States has a distinct disadvantage when it comes to both integrative and instrumental motivation – the first for reasons related to ethnocentrism as discussed above, but the second because English enjoys not only majority status within the United States, but also world dominance, as it has become the "language of international communication" (Alptekin, 2002, p. 60). Anderson (2000) proposes that, with regard to Great Britain, the world-wide acceptance of English as a lingua franca "has served to confirm notions of superiority and to encourage the view that if you speak English there is little need to learn other languages" (p.55). The situation in the U.S. is very similar – since English is the socially dominant language, its speakers in the U.S. naturally find it difficult to motivate themselves to learn other languages (Gass & Selinker, 2001;

⁵ In response to a recent assignment of an argumentative essay, nearly half of the author's Spanish 2 students wrote on 'why foreign language should not be required curriculum', perfectly demonstrating their lack of motivation for second language learning and the lack of importance they place upon it

Dörnyei & Csizer, 2002; Mantle-Bromley 1997). To quote the author's students, "We don't need to learn Spanish; those Mexicans should have to learn English!"

Geographically, the U.S. is also disadvantaged with regard to language exposure. Unlike many nations in the world, who share borders with multiple countries of different linguistic backgrounds, the United States is relatively isolated, linked to only two other countries by land. Even one of these two is largely English-speaking, so in reality the U.S. can claim only one strikingly dissimilar neighbor, linguistically speaking. Judging by the author's experiences as a classroom language teacher, the effect this geographical isolation can have on language learners is to distance them psychologically from people of other cultures, people who speak languages other than English, thus diminishing any pressing need to learn another language: To many Americans, the rest of the world is a world away, not next door, and they simply cannot conceive of the sort of contact with non-English-speakers that would necessitate their knowing other languages.

Finally, we have grown up in the United States under the restrictions of an unofficial one-language policy (Schiffman, 1996). Teddy Roosevelt effectively summed up our government's attitude when he said, "We have room for but one language here, and that is the English language" (Ogulnick, 2000, p. 4). Currently, the English Only Movement is "an extension of such deeply rooted biases in American society" (Syed, 2001, p. 131). Schiffman (1996) purports that Americans view English as the only language that is *not* foreign, regardless of the fact that millions of United States citizens are native speakers of so-called foreign languages. The bottom line is that we are products of a culture "where multiple languages are not valued and [are] even suppressed" (Mancuso & Rodgers, 2000, p. 152). Unlike the rest of the world, "where more than a half of the inhabitants are... either bilingual or multilingual", the United States denigrates bilingualism and languages other than English (Pavlenko, 2002, p. 279).

An Inadequate Tool: Current Foreign Language Curriculum

Evidently, our children are entering our foreign language classrooms predisposed to negative attitudes towards both the target culture and the language they will be attempting to learn. The question becomes, then: What is the curriculum in our classrooms doing to change these negative attitudes? The answer, regrettably, is: Not much. The problem is that superficial contact with another culture, like tourist experiences and the average foreign language class in the U.S., actually tends to increase ethnocentrism and negative attitudes towards the target culture (Rogers & Steinfatt, 1999). Superficial contact only highlights cultural differences, which are usually seen in a negative light, without explaining them in the context of the other culture, so cultural misunderstanding increases with such contact. Valette (1986) faults foreign language teachers and curriculum for this phenomenon, pin-pointing specific areas of cultural dearth in the language classroom:

1. Culture is often a polarized comparison of the native and culture targets in an 'us and them' format, where one appears better or higher than the other.
2. Teachers are usually uncertain of specifically what their goals are as concerns culture and may not have fully refined their own view of the target culture.
3. Few teachers test to ensure that students are reaching cultural goals, and, even if they do, tests are apt to be poorly designed (testing only concrete facts and discrete information with multiple choice or true/false questions).
4. Culture in the foreign language classroom is likely to be sketchy and shallow – in other words, not enough of it is taught, and the wrong type of information is taught. Students are generally exposed to only superficial cultural information like geography, food, art, music, and history, which are simply not enough to teach them to understand, appreciate, and respect the target culture.

This last problem area, the superficiality of culture taught, is further explained by the iceberg conception of the nature of culture, where such details as dress, music, and fine arts appear above the

surface while below the surface remains hidden ‘deep culture’ – the nine-tenths of culture, including values, ideals, conceptions, and communicative norms, that are much more important for understanding what people say and how they act (Ratlu & Rodgers, 1984). It is this ‘hidden’ culture that is not being fully (if at all) addressed in our foreign language classrooms. Instead, U.S. foreign language teachers reduce culture to what Kramsch (1991) calls “the four Fs” – “foods, fairs, folklore, and statistical facts” (p. 218), which is why most students remain monocultural and ethnocentric even after years of foreign language study, failing “to develop intercultural understanding” (Lantolf, 1999, p. 29). Students retain their negative attitudes because they are not taught differently (Byram & Risager, 2002).

CALL TO ARMS: A NEED FOR CURRICULUM CHANGE

So, students in the U.S. seem to be entering the classroom already burdened with the disadvantage of negative cultural attitudes that are bound to get in the way of their language learning, and the current foreign language curriculum doesn’t seem to be very effective in combating these negative attitudes. Yet, this sequence of events is not inevitable. Not only does research (Hahn, 1997) suggest that negative attitudes can be combated, real life provides examples of people engaged in just such a battle: Cortazzi & Jin (1999) point out that in some countries, Great Britain, for instance, developing positive attitudes is a large part of formal, standardized foreign language curriculum. In fact, Great Britain’s Department of Education and Science (1990) lists encouraging “positive attitudes to foreign language learning and to speakers of foreign languages and a sympathetic approach to other cultures” as one of the seven primary purposes of foreign language instruction (p. 3). Later, the same national curriculum document proclaims that the “promotion of understanding of and respect for other cultures is one of the most important aims of modern language studies” (p. 36). Another example is Israel, where most students are required by law to learn Arabic in order to improve attitudes towards a culture that is politically, religiously, and sometimes even physically in direct conflict with their own (Inbar et al., 2001). The intercultural focus of foreign language programs in other parts of the world suggests the question: What improvements could be made in U.S. foreign language curriculum, to the purpose of consciously changing attitudes? As we will see, researchers and educators appear to agree on two strategies to produce changed attitudes, and therefore improved language learning – broadening the definition of culture that is addressed in the classroom, and explicitly teaching Intercultural Communication to students.

Current textbooks on second language teacher pedagogy do address culture, but usually only minimally. Brown (2001), for example, briefly mentions cultural differences in reading and writing, and suggests that teachers “familiarize learners with the target language culture” as a way of increasing intrinsic motivation (p. 81). As one can see from the failure of the current curriculum, this general and vague treatment of culture simply will not do. According to Lawes (2000), treating culture superficially is likely to simply reinforce the negative, stereotypical attitudes that students already have. Instead, culture learning should become inextricable from language learning in the classroom (Brooks, 1997; Galloway, 1997; Hinkel, 1999). To accomplish this integration of culture with learning, Valette (1986) suggests broadening cultural goals in the foreign language classroom beyond geography and history to include four essential areas:

1. developing a greater awareness of and a broader knowledge about the target culture;
2. acquiring a command of the etiquette of the target culture;
3. understanding differences between the target culture and the students’ culture;
4. and understanding the values of the target culture (p. 181).

In this way, teachers can begin to address details that Ratlu and Rodgers (1984) place ‘below the water level’ on the cultural iceberg model, information like ordering of time, notions about logic and validity, patterns of superior/subordinate relations, and preference for competition or cooperation, information that will help students make sense of the cultural differences they perceive.

Action needs to be taken in three directions if we are to achieve this broadening and deepening of cultural instruction in the classroom. First, textbooks need to be more carefully chosen to reflect cultural goals (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999). Just as one would not expect teachers to competently and effectively teach grammar without appropriate materials, one cannot have such unrealistic expectations of teachers when it comes to teaching culture. Since most available materials treat culture superficially (Lafayette, 1997) and from an ethnocentric perspective (Galloway, 1997), textbooks and other teaching materials desperately need to be evaluated as resources for culture in addition to language. Secondly, teachers need to have access not just to *what* should be taught, but to *how*. According to Hinkel (1999), culture is missing from the classroom because it is missing from teachers' education: Although culture is generally acknowledged as important for language learning, "training in pedagogy rarely addresses the many influences of culture on language learning and teaching" (p. 7). Thus, teachers desperately need training in the pedagogy of teaching culture (Brooks, 1997), as could be provided by texts such as Seelye's (1973) *Teaching Culture: Strategies for Foreign Language Teachers* and Robinson's (1981) *Issues in Second Language and Cross-cultural Education: The Forest Through the Trees*. And finally, as Starkey (2002) argues, cultural awareness development "should start at the outset of language learning and be continually reinforced throughout the stages of learning" (p. 109); in other words, culture should be not only broadened and deepened but also lengthened within the curriculum.

Despite the importance of teaching culture, research indicates that it alone may not be enough to change ethnocentric attitudes (Brière, 1997). Bennett (1993) notes that ethnocentrism, not intercultural sensitivity, is the natural state of human nature, having characterized most of human history, and that altering negative attitudes can be very problematical. Rogers and Steinfatt (1999) account for the difficulty: "Ethnocentric attitudes are firmly entrenched in cultural norms and thus are extremely difficult to change" (p. 224). Usually it is only positive (and usually lengthy) contacts with other cultures that can change ingrained negative attitudes (Clément et al., 1977), and even then results are not guaranteed. In their Peace Corps volunteer training manual, McCaffery and Edwards (1981) claim that simply being in contact with other cultures is not enough, that explicit training in intercultural skills is usually necessary for the development of acceptance and adaptation. Mantle-Bromley (1997) justifies this need for intercultural training by explaining that most foreign language students are not ready for cultural learning; they must be prepared to learn about the culture associated with the language they are studying by first changing existing negative attitudes towards that culture, or towards other cultures in general. For this reason, experiential education in intercultural communication is the generally considered to be the most consistently and predictably effective means of changing ethnocentric attitudes (Bennett, 1993; Lafayette, 1997; McCaffery & Edwards, 1981; Rogers & Steinfatt, 1999). Valdes (1986), explaining the success of the experiential method, claims that explicitly teaching intercultural communication to language learners allows them to accept themselves and others as cultural beings: "Along with this acceptance of a people comes acceptance of their language and a greater willingness to let go of the binding ties of the native language and culture – a willingness to enter, at least to a degree, into what can be the exciting adventure of another language and culture" (p. vii).

CONCLUSION

As a teacher of foreign languages, it can be disheartening to see how slowly things change in the world of education. Those who have the power to make decisions about curriculum in the public school system seem never to have considered the effects of ethnocentric attitudes on second language acquisition, and, I fear, it may be many years before the stacks of evidence grow too high to be ignored. Therein, perhaps, lies the root of our troubles: Our children's attitude problem is a result of the culture in which they have been raised – the same culture that molded those who are designing foreign language curriculum for our classrooms. It is not the young alone who have an attitude problem! In light of this information gap, those with an understanding of the problems and solutions associated with attitude and foreign language education, the author included, have a responsibility to share it, not just in publications read by other researchers, but amongst the educators who should be using such knowledge in their

classrooms and with administrators who can institute the curriculum changes that are called for so desperately. Hahn (1997) suggests that we are missing a golden opportunity for changing societal attitudes in the language classrooms of the world. In fact, some researchers even argue that intercultural communication skills are of paramount importance in today's world – that they, and not necessarily competence in a foreign language, should be the goal of modern foreign language instruction (Morain, 1983). In short, this call to arms in the foreign language classroom must be sounded louder than it apparently has been in the past: It must be heralded; it must be heard. It must be *heeded*.

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