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A MULTILITERACIES FRAMEWORK FOR COLLEGIATE FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Reconsidering Goals, Objectives, and Assessment From a Multiliteracies Perspective

Thus far in this book you have explored the theoretical underpinnings of the concept of literacy in the Introduction and the pedagogical framework for multiliteracies instruction in Chapter 1. You now possess a basic understanding of the focus of foreign language (FL) instruction in a multiliteracies approach—text-based literacy events and meaning design—and how such a focus can be organized to structure student learning using the four pedagogical acts. As explained in the Introduction, carrying out FL instruction consistent with the multiliteracies approach entails goals, objectives, instructional techniques, and assessments that differ from those used in lower-level FL courses grounded in communicative language teaching (CLT) and, by extension, those that typically dominate commercially produced textbook materials. In addition, given the frequently disparate goals of lower-level language courses versus advanced literature and culture courses, the multiliteracies approach can close the pedagogical gap between them and create a more coherent curriculum.

This chapter builds on the foundation we have laid thus far and expands on the practical applications of multiliteracies instruction. Specifically, we explore (1) how goals and objectives can be articulated in a manner consistent with this framework, and (2) how assessment practices relate to classroom teaching and learning to function within this framework. This chapter also serves as the basis for further discussions of instruction and assessment in subsequent chapters related to areas such as the teaching of Available Designs (e.g., grammar, vocabulary, background knowledge, conventions) and language modalities (e.g., reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing).

The chapter begins by explaining why goals and objectives are a critical part of FL instruction even though explicit attention to them may be minimized during one’s early teaching experiences. In addition, the difference between a goal and an objective is described, along with how they relate to various components of the collegiate FL curriculum. Next, we explore relationships
among goals and objectives, instruction, and assessment, and we define different types of assessments and their purposes. The remainder of the chapter explores strategies for creating goals and objectives for FL learning consistent with the multiliteracies approach as well as the question of how instruction can be coherently linked to assessment. By the end of this chapter, you will have experience in writing goals and objectives for student learning from a multiliteracies perspective, and you will see how assessment can be used to measure student learning en route to developing FL literacy.

1. CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

To begin our discussion of the role of goals and objectives in FL teaching and learning, we start with what may seem like an unlikely comparison: travel. Imagine two types of travelers: The first one is spontaneous, touring through Europe on a multi-country rail pass that does not require the traveler to make strategic choices as to where he or she ends up each day or what the final destination may be. This way of traveling affords much flexibility as to what is done and seen during the journey, since there are no constraints and plans can be changed depending on the tourist's mood, energy level, and other conditions. The second traveler, however, operates differently, traveling through Europe in a GPS-equipped car with a set end destination in mind as well as definitive plans for what he or she visits daily and what progress has been made toward the end destination. The advantages of this style of travel are that the tourist has planned the trip in advance and can focus his or her energies on the pleasures of the journey itself rather than on making decisions each day.

In many ways, the spontaneous rail-pass traveler and the deliberate GPS-reliant traveler are an apt comparison for the teacher who delivers instruction without explicit goals and objectives in mind versus the teacher whose instruction is informed by explicit goals and objectives. In fact, many FL teachers, particularly those new to the classroom, find themselves operating much like the spontaneous traveler—making instructional decisions on a day-to-day basis and looking ahead only to the content to be covered in the immediate future—rather than having a more long-term perspective on what needs to be taught by the end of the course and a specific idea of what will be accomplished during each lesson and unit leading to that point. Why is this the case? First, novice FL teachers typically are not responsible for setting the curriculum for their courses. In many introductory and intermediate collegiate FL courses, a language program director is the person charged with that task, including writing course syllabi and setting course goals and objectives. Second, lower-level FL courses normally are shaped by commercial textbooks, which have been called "the bedrock of syllabus design and lesson planning" (Kramsch, 1988, p. 63). Thus, the textbook itself typically dictates the themes, linguistic functions, vocabulary, and grammatical content covered in a course, as well as the order in which they are taught. In addition, textbooks often feature unit-level objectives, either in the table of contents or on the first page of each chapter. For
these reasons, new teachers may not initially see the necessity for individual reflection on overarching goals and objectives, given that their program and textbook appear to provide structure and direction for what should be taught and learned.

We contend, however, that just as careful advance planning with a GPS device maximizes the deliberate traveler's enjoyment of the journey, a clear vision of goals and objectives and how they relate to one's language program, course, units within a course, and lessons within a unit maximizes the effectiveness of FL teaching and student learning outcomes. That is to say, an explicit understanding of goals and objectives contributes to instructors possessing a coherent view both of how parts of the language program relate to the whole (i.e., the relationship of the course to the larger curriculum) and of how classroom instruction and assessment should be carried out to target lesson, unit, and course goals and objectives. Moreover, for students, goals and objectives serve as a road map that indicates what elements of FL study are viewed as important by their program and teacher. Thus, making goals and objectives explicit is an indirect means of communicating your beliefs about FL teaching and learning and of making your approach to FL teaching tangible for your students. Finally, from a programmatic perspective, as Byrnes, Maxim, and Norris (2010) have pointed out, creating statements of "valued and realistic learning outcomes for each of the stages of the undergraduate curriculum" is necessary for collegiate FL departments to "implement appropriate, articulated educational action for the entire program in terms of curriculum building, pedagogical approaches, and assessment practices" (p. 4). Therefore, determining goals and objectives for lower-level courses contributes to the overall coherence of the undergraduate FL curriculum. Before moving on to a detailed discussion of the role of goals, objectives, and assessment in multiliteracies instruction, complete Learning Activity 2.1

**LEARNING ACTIVITY 2.1**

**Reflecting on Beliefs and Experiences Related to Instructional Goals and Objectives and FL Learning**

Take a moment to reflect on the following two questions and jot down your responses to them based on your beliefs and experiences as both a FL learner and instructor.

1. Think back to your experiences as a FL learner. Was the way in which instruction was organized more similar to the spontaneous rail-pass traveler (i.e., you were not aware of explicit instructional goals and objectives) or to the deliberate GPS-reliant traveler (i.e., instructional goals and objectives were clear to you)? How did you experience this as a learner? Explain your response and cite specific examples of learning and instruction.

2. Now think about your beliefs and experiences as a FL instructor. Are you more apt to resemble the spontaneous rail-pass traveler or the deliberate
GPS-reliant traveler in terms of how you might approach establishing goals and objectives? What advantages and disadvantages do you see to your approach?

1.1 Defining and Articulating Instructional Goals and Objectives

The first step to a clear vision of the role of goals and objectives in one's teaching is to understand the difference between the two, a distinction that may not be readily apparent given that the terms are often used interchangeably in non-pedagogical contexts (e.g., My number one goal/objective for our trip to Mexico was to relax!). Goals, which serve as organizational principles for FL programs or courses, are general statements of educational direction or intended outcomes, often articulated in broad terms. Objectives, sometimes referred to as learning outcomes, relate to a course, a unit within a course, or a lesson within a unit; they are specific statements about how goals will be achieved and what students will be able to do as a result of instruction (Graves, 1999; Hall, 2001; Shrum & Glisan, 2010). Thus, goals and objectives are in a hierarchical relationship to one another, such that several specific objectives may contribute to one broader goal. According to Graves (1999), one way to think about the goal-objective relationship is analogous to a journey: "The destination is the goal; the journey is the course. The objectives are the different points you pass through on the journey to the destination" (p. 76). An example of a course-level goal for students in an introductory-level FL course is to demonstrate awareness of practices associated with the target culture that relate to course themes. Related unit-level objectives for a chapter on everyday life might include (1) being able to describe in speech or writing how members of the target culture spend their free time (e.g., a brief recorded message or short email) with sufficient comprehensibility to be understood by a native speaker accustomed to communicating with non-native speakers; and (2) being able to compare in speech or writing eating habits of people in their culture versus the target culture (e.g., a short conversation or short letter) with sufficient comprehensibility to be understood by a native speaker accustomed to communicating with non-native speakers.

How goals and objectives are formulated is an important consideration. Notice that in the example above, the goal is broad, but not vague. The alternative "Students will learn about culture" is an example of a vaguely worded goal. Clarity in writing statements about student learning is essential because the clearer these statements are, the easier it is to plan classroom activities and the more likely students will understand and meet instructors' expectations (Hall, 2001). Also note that the sample objectives provided in this section contain three key elements:

1. a description of the actions or behaviors showing the skills or knowledge to be learned (e.g., being able to describe how members of the target culture spend their free time);
2. the conditions of performance (e.g., in speech or in writing); and
3. the degree of expected performance (e.g., largely comprehensible to a sympathetic native or near-native speaker). (Hall, 2001)

Further, each sample objective is defined in terms of observable student behavior; the objectives do not state that students will understand or appreciate cultural practices, but that they will describe and compare cultural practices using the FL. Indeed, well-designed objectives should be articulated using action words such as classify, compare, contrast, create, critique, define, design, describe, evaluate, explain, give examples, identify, list, name, recognize, and summarize.

The same principles for writing instructional objectives at the course level apply to the unit (i.e., chapter or module within a course) and lesson levels: Objectives should still contain the three elements described earlier, focus on observable student behaviors, and use action words to describe the behaviors. What distinguishes unit- and lesson-level objectives from course-level ones is the degree of specificity, with objectives at the unit level being more specific than those at the course level, and with lesson-level objectives being even more specific than unit-level objectives. For example, in relation to a course-level goal for students to be able to use the FL effectively in written presentational communication (i.e., presenting information, concepts, and ideas to listeners or readers) in a unit on family, a lesson-level objective might be written as follows: Students will be able to demonstrate the relationships of the members of their immediate family to themselves in a graphic organizer (e.g., family tree) using simple vocabulary. As a second example, in relation to a course-level goal for students to develop awareness of how the FL functions with a focus on knowledge critical for speaking and writing in the present time in relation to course themes, a lesson-level objective in a unit on housing might be written as follows: Students will be able to use various prepositions of location to compare their bedroom in their parents' home to their bedroom where they live at the university in a short email to a friend. Characteristics of instructional goals and objectives at the course, unit, and lesson level are summarized in Table 2.1.

As we discuss in the next section, establishing lesson-level objectives should precede selecting content for the actual lesson or deciding what types of instructional activities will be used to structure classroom learning. Now complete Learning Activity 2.2, which will give you an opportunity to practice writing instructional objectives at the lesson level.

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**LEARNING ACTIVITY 2.2**

**Articulating Instructional Objectives for FL Learning**

Based on the definitions and examples of instructional goals and objectives provided in this section, write one unit-level objective and one lesson-level objective for each of the three introductory-level FL course goals listed below. While writing your objectives, remember to include Hall's (2001) three required elements and to use action words that define objectives in terms of observable
student behaviors. Select one of the following themes for which you will write the objectives: university life, food, or travel. Refer to an introductory-level FL textbook for this activity, using a chapter related to the theme that you have chosen as a starting point for writing unit-level objectives and locating potential ideas for lesson content.

Course Goal 1: Students will be able to use the FL effectively in oral interpersonal communication about course themes.

Course Goal 2: Students will be able to use the FL appropriately in presentational communication to produce texts of various genres that relate to course themes.

Course Goal 3: Students will be able to participate in interpretive communicative activities in the FL, including understanding the main idea and some details of audio and videotexts of various genres that relate to course themes.

Next, compare and discuss the objectives you have written for each goal with those of a classmate, offering feedback to him or her on how each one has been formulated. If possible, work with someone who has chosen the same theme as you. Make changes to your objectives based on the feedback that your classmate provides.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 2.1 Characteristics of Instructional Goals and Objectives</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Program- and Course-Level Goals</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hierarchically superior to instructional objectives, written before objectives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- General statements of educational direction or intended outcomes articulated in broad terms
- Specific statements about how goals will be achieved and what students will be able to do as a result of instruction
  - Contain (1) a description of the actions or behaviors showing the knowledge or skills to be learned, (2) the conditions of performance, and (3) the degree of expected performance
  - Defined in terms of observable student behavior
  - Expressed in a way that maximizes clarity
  - Often expressed as “Students will be able to . . .” + action words (e.g., compare, critique, define, describe, evaluate, explain, list, recognize, summarize)
1.2 Conceptualizing the Relationship Among Goals and Objectives, Instruction, and Assessment

As previously stated, a parallel can be seen between instructional goals and the destination of a journey, between a course and related pedagogical practices and the journey itself, and between instructional objectives and different points along that journey. But where does assessment fit into this scheme? And how does assessment relate to goals, objectives, and instruction? Returning to the idea of the deliberate GPS-reliant traveler, we can see an analogy between the use of the GPS device and assessment because both involve a process of collecting data. In the case of the GPS, data include information such as current location and distance remaining toward a specific destination and, in the case of assessment, the process entails gathering information on student learning and performance. Processes that are related (but not synonymous) with assessment include evaluation, or assigning a value, interpreting, and judging the results of assessment; and grading, or reporting the results of assessment to the learner with a letter, numeric, or percentage grade. According to Kern (2000), these processes are significant in terms of what they communicate about a FL course: “What is evaluated reflects the de facto curriculum, and how it is evaluated reflects the de facto philosophy of learning and teaching, regardless of what the teacher or course description says” (p. 267). As a result, assessment practices that focus on discrete points of grammar on a written examination, for instance, reinforce the notion for students that the goal of the course and the curriculum is acquisition of grammar, even if classroom teaching practices or course goals and objectives reflect a CLT or multiliteracies approach.

The notion of backward design (Wiggins & McTighe, 2011) captures the relationship among goals and objectives, assessment, and instruction, and it conceptualizes the order in which each of those elements should be planned to maximize student learning. Just based on the wording—backward design—you may already intuit that this involves doing things in a different order from the traditional path: planning day-to-day instruction and selecting course content prior to setting goals and objectives and making decisions about assessment. The three chronological stages of backward design are (1) identifying desired results through the establishment of instructional goals and objectives; (2) determining assessment evidence to decide if the desired results identified in Stage 1 have been achieved; and (3) planning learning experiences and instruction. Thus, the learning sought (i.e., goals and objectives) is clarified prior to thinking about assessment evidence; finally, the means (i.e., type of learning opportunity, structures for learner participation, materials and other resources) to the end are designed (Hall, 2001; Wiggins & McTighe, 2011).

What are the advantages of planning curricula based on the notion of backward design? According to Wiggins and McTighe (2011), this process helps avoid the problem of treating the textbook as the curriculum rather than as a resource, and of creating isolated classroom activities with no clear purpose in relation to goals and objectives. In fact, both of these challenges are common in collegiate FL courses, in particular in lower-level language courses. Given
the likelihood that you are using a textbook based on CLT, which remains the predominant approach in commercial introductory- and intermediate-level FL pedagogical materials, backward design may serve as a useful way to weave together instructional priorities and textbook resources for teaching and learning in line with the multiliteracies approach.

1.3 Identifying Types of Assessment and Their Uses

In the previous section, we recommended setting instructional goals and objectives using a backward design model as the first of a three-stage process that culminates in planning day-to-day instruction. Although the third stage, everyday instructional planning, may be familiar, the second stage, determining assessment evidence to decide if goals and objectives have been achieved, may not be familiar. Like establishing goals and objectives, assessing student learning may be largely determined at the program level because many introductory- and intermediate-level FL courses are multi-section, and common assessment tools are often used across sections of the same course. Nonetheless, it is important to possess a general understanding of the various types of assessment, the forms they may take, and the rationale for their use. In addition, it is likely—whether you are aware of it or not—that you are already making decisions about informal assessment in your classroom, and it is probable that in the future you will have greater autonomy and need to know how to design assessments for courses that you teach that fit with your instructional approach, goals, and objectives. Beyond the individual course level, assessment can also contribute to shaping curricular development and instructional improvement, as well as to greater specificity in identifying student learning outcomes (Byrnes, Maxim, & Norris, 2010).

Reflection on the varied types and uses of assessment is a critical element of designing FL courses and curricula. As Shrum and Glisan (2010) explained, today's view of assessment involves more than administering tests and assigning grades; instead, it may entail one or more of the following: "understanding the language learning process, determining the difficulties students may experience and misconceptions that they may have, and documenting students' language development over time" (p. 395). Thus, rather than being limited to evaluating learner achievement, assessment is now used to provide feedback on learning and improve learner performance. One way to think about the various types of assessment is according to their purposes, which can be characterized as diagnostic, formative, or summative. These are defined as follows:

1. **Diagnostic assessment** occurs before instruction to identify students' strengths and weaknesses or to place them at an appropriate instructional level (e.g., entrance exam, placement exam, standardized test);

2. **Formative assessment** occurs during instruction to help teachers identify areas of learner difficulty so instruction and assessment can be adjusted as necessary and learning and performance can be improved (e.g., concept map to illustrate students' understanding of a topic, audio journal entry to summarize students' reaction to a text);
3. **Summative assessment** occurs after an instructional sequence such as a chapter in a textbook or at the end of a course to determine the extent to which learners have met instructional goals and objectives or mastered content (e.g., written midterm examination, end-of-semester project).

The assessment plan for a FL course usually involves both formative and summative statements.

Determining which forms of assessment to include depends on one's instructional goals and objectives and the relative importance of the various language modalities and content focus. For example, a course with a strong emphasis on oral communication might place heavier weight on formative assessments, such as in-class participation, and less emphasis on summative assessments, such as formal essays. Similarly, a course might feature both traditional and alternative assessments, a distinction related to the nature of these assessment tools. **Traditional assessment** usually involves discrete-point criterion-referenced tests to evaluate student knowledge of the FL, whereas **alternative assessment** entails performance-based activities used within the context of instruction to show what students can do with language (Hall, 2001; NCLRC, 2013). Whereas a traditional assessment such as a written vocabulary quiz focuses on the products of learning, alternative assessments like teacher observations and student demonstrations center on both the processes and products of learning (Hall, 2001).

Among various forms of alternative assessment, **portfolios**, which involve a systematic, longitudinal collection of work from multiple sources that represents a student's development and achievements, have become a favored practice in U.S. FL education in recent years (NCLRC, 2013). Distinguishing portfolios from more traditional forms of assessment is that students participate in both the selection of content and reflection on the process of learning and the evidence of learning in their portfolio. Examples of items that might be included in a portfolio include lists of student goals and other self-assessment records, digitally recorded oral speech samples, journal entries, drafts of written portfolio artifacts, analyses of cultural products, practices, and perspectives, and teacher feedback (Shrum & Glisan, 2010). The advantages of this form of alternative assessment have been confirmed by recent research on student goal setting and achievement using portfolios (LinguaFolio), which revealed a positive relationship between FL reading, writing, and speaking outcomes and creating goals, action plans, and reflections (Moeller, Theiler, & Wu, 2012). However, as Kern (2000) noted, portfolio assessment requires more than adding a new tool to established practices for assessment and evaluation; rather, it involves significant shifts in teachers' and students' roles and how work is prepared and evaluated. Therefore, it should be understood that implementing portfolio assessment effectively is a recursive process that takes time to realize.

Finally, it is also useful to keep in mind that a certain fluidity exists when labeling assessments, and that whether a particular assessment tool serves a formative or summative function may vary according to course goals and objectives. Poehner (2007) explained it as follows:
The summative-formative distinction pertains to the reasons for conducting the assessment rather than the instruments or tasks employed . . . . Traditional assessments, including multiple-choice exams and open-response essays, as well as so-called alternative assessments, such as portfolios, projects, and presentations, can all serve a summative or formative function depending on how their results are used. (pp. 323-324)

Now that you have been introduced to the various types of assessments and examples of each, complete Learning Activity 2.3, which focuses on brainstorming elements of an assessment plan, before moving on to pedagogical applications of the concepts discussed thus far in the chapter.

**LEARNING ACTIVITY 2.3**

**Using Backward Design to Choose Assessments That Fit Course Goals and Objectives**

After rereading the course goals and related instructional objectives that you wrote and revised in Learning Activity 2.2, now plan what assessments can be used to determine if those goals and objectives have been achieved. Be sure to include more than one type of assessment (formative, summative, traditional, alternative). In addition to making a list of the assessments, write a brief rationale statement for the use of each (e.g., To determine if Goal 1, Objective 2 has been reached, Assessment A will be implemented because . . . ). As you did in Learning Activity 2.2, share and compare your assessment components with a classmate, offering feedback on your partner's ideas and noting his or her ideas about your own assessment plan.

**2. PEDAGOGICAL APPLICATIONS**

Up to this point in the chapter, you have been introduced to the definitions of instructional goals and objectives, types of assessment, and backward design, a means of bringing coherence to FL teaching and learning and assessment of learning outcomes. We now turn to the issue of how these elements can be aligned in a manner consistent with the multiliteracies framework. Related questions include the following: (1) What should instructional goals and objectives focus on to facilitate literacy development? (2) How might instructors move beyond a focus on functional communication toward a broader view of language competencies when writing instructional goals and objectives, particularly in lower-level FL courses? (3) What role do FL texts play in the articulation of instructional goals and objectives from a multiliteracies perspective, particularly in lower-level courses? and (4) How does assessment facilitate students' literacy development? Before we discuss answers to these questions, complete Learning Activity 2.4.
LEARNING ACTIVITY 2.4
Mapping Relationships Between Multiliteracies Concepts and Instructional Goals and Objectives and Assessment

Part 1. The Introduction and Chapter 1 introduced you to a number of key concepts for multiliteracies instruction, both in terms of its theoretical underpinnings and its implementation in the classroom. Reflect on each of the multiliteracies concepts listed on the left-hand side of the table and decide which one(s) relate(s) to the focus of the four questions listed above, briefly explaining their relationship. Fill in only those boxes where you do see a relationship—leave the remainder of the boxes empty. You may want to revisit definitions of the five multiliteracies concepts by re-reading relevant sections of the Introduction and Chapter 1 before proceeding.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions of literacy</th>
<th>Defining the Focus of Goals and Objectives</th>
<th>Moving Beyond Functional Communication and Articulating the Role of Textual Learning</th>
<th>Identifying the Role of Assessment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Principles of literacy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meaning design</td>
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<td>Available Designs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pedagogical acts</td>
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</table>

Part 2. Read the remainder of this chapter (i.e., until you reach the “Final Considerations” section) and then return to this activity, revising your answers in the table based on what you have read and how it has changed your understandings of the concepts in the table.

2.1 Defining the Focus of Goals and Objectives for Literacy Development

Although you have been introduced to how one goes about writing instructional goals and objectives for FL learning, the question still remains as to what the content of such statements should be in a program that prioritizes development
of students’ FL literacy. Indeed, designing goals and objectives in a way that reflects the theoretical underpinnings of the multiliteracies framework can be challenging, especially for novice teachers still in the midst of gaining a basic understanding of our expanded notion of literacy and of theoretical and pedagogical concepts such as those in the table in Learning Activity 2.4.

An additional challenge is that learning outcome statements in FL textbook materials often reflect the concepts and objectives of CLT and emphasize the development of functional abilities to communicate personal opinions and everyday needs. An example of this tendency can be seen on the opening page of an introductory-level French textbook chapter about everyday life and leisure activities, whose objectives read as follows: “You will talk about the weather, your recreational activities, and your routine. You will also learn to describe your abilities and express plans and wishes” (Terrell, Rogers, Kerr, & Spielmann, 2009, p. 73). This example reveals a heavy emphasis on oral interpersonal communication with no mention of interpretive (i.e., understanding written and spoken language in relation to course themes) or presentational (i.e., creation of written and spoken language in relation to course themes) communicative objectives. A perusal of the chapter reveals a focus on presenting and practicing linguistic functions for communicating about everyday life and leisure activities, accompanied by related lexical and grammatical elements (e.g., sports and leisure vocabulary, verbs for describing everyday activities and one’s routine). Although the chapter does incorporate several short texts (a poem and three author-created texts about French culture), the texts do not serve interpretive purposes or act as the starting point for exploring how chapter themes are instantiated in the French-speaking world. Rather, the texts provide contextualized examples of targeted forms and linguistic functions and serve as a means of practicing the skill of reading, albeit reading of highly controlled passages. Thus, their use supports the assumption that understanding a text's language must come before understanding its meaning (Swaffar & Arens, 2005). Writing plays a minor role in the chapter, with the exception of a final activity that asks students to complete a letter to a French student who will attend their university, giving him or her advice on what clothes to pack, taking into account the climate, seasons, and typical university activities.

How might a focus on literacy as a curricular and course goal reorient the learning outcomes and content of the chapter described above? Kern (2004) explained it this way:

An overarching goal of literacy can provide a unifying focus by drawing students’ attention to the interactions among form, context, and function in all their uses of language—whether they are speaking, listening, reading, or writing . . . a focus on literacy removes the artificial separation of skills and content. (p. 7)

Regardless of the curricular level or course focus, Kern (2004) identified several common goals for a literacy-based curriculum: (1) preparing learners to interpret multiple forms of FL use in multiple contexts; (2) fostering communicative ability in the FL while also emphasizing the development of the ability to analyze,
interpret, and transform discourse; (3) integrating communicative approaches to FL teaching with more analytic, text-based approaches; (4) incorporating a range of texts that broadly represent the signifying practices of a society; (5) paying attention to the relationships among particular textual genres, their purposes, and conventions of reading and writing in specific contexts; (6) problematizing discourse and providing learners with guidance in the thinking that goes into reading, writing, and speaking appropriately in specific contexts; (7) focusing on linguistic, cognitive, and social dimensions of language use in an integrated way; and (8) encouraging students to take an active, critical stance to the discourse conventions that we teach them.

A logical starting point for using these overarching literacy-oriented goals to determine curricular and course goals and objectives is to reflect on the nature of literacy as a linguistic, cognitive, and sociocultural concept. As Kern (2000) pointed out, individually, any one of the three dimensions gives just a partial view of literacy, whereas, taken together, the three dimensions complement one other and elucidate literacy’s multidimensional character.

Traditionally, instructional goals (and, in particular, those of lower-level collegiate FL courses) have aligned most closely with the linguistic dimension of literacy, given the preoccupation with the acquisition of morphological, lexical, and syntactic features of the FL. Limiting instructional goals to linguistic elements deprives students of the opportunity to experience language in its range of uses and to deepen their understanding of the connections between language and culture (Kern, 2000). As you learned in the Introduction to this book, in the multiliteracies framework an expanded vision of the linguistic dimension of literacy includes the traditional focus of FL instruction, but also goes beyond it to include relationships between oral and written language and across different genres, language varieties, and styles. The cognitive dimension of literacy, or the mental strategies and processes that influence how learners construct meaning from texts, is the second element to be explicitly incorporated into instructional goals. Targeting this dimension means embracing a view of language learning not as mere decoding and encoding of information, but as engaging in a complex meaning-making process that, for language learners, requires more than knowledge of the code (i.e., grammar and vocabulary). Rather, it also involves having students learn strategies related to interacting with texts, including raising their awareness of the culturally situated nature of meaning making with texts, and facilitating goal setting, planning, and revision as they move from comprehension to production of texts. Finally, instructional goals should target the sociocultural dimension of literacy, or the conventions for creating and interacting with texts that are considered appropriate by a given discourse community. In other words, learners must be taught to navigate and evaluate cultural perspectives and communicative norms associated with the literacy practices of the FL discourse community (Kern, 2000).

After determining the focus of curricular or course goals, the next step in designing student learning outcomes is consideration of instructional objectives. Grounding objectives in the multiliteracies framework requires turning to the seven principles of literacy and the concept of meaning design, which “provide [guidance] in identifying what and how to teach, in order to support a general...
goal of reflective communication” (Kern, 2002, p. 22). (Reflective communication is informed by an awareness of the situated nature of language use.) Furthermore, the literacy principles of language use, conventions, and cultural knowledge, which form part of the Available Designs or resources students learn when interacting with FL texts, are taught in conjunction with the principles of interpretation, collaboration, problem-solving, and reflection, which are the learning processes in which students engage (Kern, 2000). By embracing these notions, instructional objectives shift from an emphasis on functional communication and the acquisition of language forms, “to the development of learners’ ability to interpret and critically evaluate language use in a variety of spoken and written contexts” (Kern, 2000, pp. 304-305). The question still remains, however, as to how instructional objectives for FL learning can be written to incorporate the seven principles of literacy and meaning design and also avoid falling back into a functional skills orientation.

2.2 Moving Beyond Functional Communication and Articulating the Role of Textual Learning in Writing Goals and Objectives

Orienting one’s instructional goals and objectives to carry out multiliteracies instruction involves an expanded view of literacy and, by extension, of communication, language use, and textual learning. Thus, it is necessary to re-envision the way that we as teachers articulate learning outcome statements to reflect the multi-dimensional nature of literacy, the seven principles of literacy, and the act of meaning design. As such, two specific elements of instruction that can be particularly challenging to re-envision are the roles of communicative language use and textual learning.

One preoccupation of multiliteracies instruction is reconciling the separation of teaching language as a means of communication from the teaching textual analysis, as typically seen in lower-level language courses versus advanced content-focused courses (Kern, 2000). In language courses, the consequences of this bifurcation may de-motivate students and limit their learning if the course is devoid of intellectually challenging content. Instead, aiming to reconcile this separation that impacts both ends of the curriculum, Kern argued for synthesizing these goals by “enveloping the ‘textual’ within a larger framework of the ‘communicative’” (p. 5).

So how might we go about operationalizing this somewhat abstract idea of weaving together the communicative and the textual in writing instructional goals and objectives? To begin, doing so requires a reconceptualization of the CLT “four skills” orientation (speaking, listening, reading, and writing), given that this orientation leads to articulating goals and objectives related to discrete knowledge and behaviors rather than the interrelated language abilities (Kern, 2000). Instead, we foreground an integrative notion of communication in which linguistic modalities overlap and take on new dimensions. For example, reading and writing play roles not as mere support skills, but rather as cognitive and social processes that function as “a crucial hub where language, culture, and thought converge” (Kern, 2003, p. 48). Consequently, reading and writing facilitate students engaging in real literacy events through acts of text-focused
meaning design. In other words, rather than function as ends in and of themselves, reading and writing now serve as means to other literacy-oriented ends.

As you learned in the Introduction, the National Standards for FL Learning offer a curricular vision that shares similarities and differences with the multiliteracies framework. One area of similarity is relevant to our focus on writing instructional goals and objectives. Arens (2008) offers the following explanation:

The Standards emerge as a heuristic for interactions among the many aspects of the post-secondary curriculum, because they point the way to advanced literacies, beyond conversational language and past the marginalization of everyday culture often instantiated in traditional literary studies. Most specifically, the Standards outline how to join literary, cultural, and language studies and overcome the language/literature split . . . by stressing content-based instruction to be assessed for both content and language. (p. 35)

Beyond this shared view of the interwoven nature of language and content, the Standards’ goal areas include a conceptualization of communication consistent with multiliteracies instruction:

The Communication standard highlights language but does so by placing individual communication within the media, pragmatic, and sociocultural norms of a culture. It focuses not just on how to make messages in words but also how to send them, who they can be sent to or received from, and what status obtains for them. (Arens, 2010, p. 323)

In other words, communication is defined not only in terms of its linguistic dimension, but also in terms of its sociocultural dimension, including the literacy-oriented principles of language use, conventions, and cultural knowledge. In addition, within the Communication standard, language use is envisioned in a way that “explicitly move[s] us away from an orientation toward the four skills of listening, reading, speaking, writing . . . toward a focus on interpersonal, interpretive, and presentation modes—these latter two modes being clearly issues of literacy” (Kern, 2004, p. 8). Like Kern, Arens (2008) also named interpretive and presentational modes of communication as “critical to advanced problems of language literacy,” citing examples such as register, complex language use, and politeness (p. 38).

Thus, the Standards provide concepts to articulate areas of student learning not based on linguistic skills but on specific, contextualized uses of language. Most clearly associated with multiliteracies instruction, interpretative communication is consistent with an interwoven notion of language use and textual content broadly conceived as well as the literacy-based learning processes of interpretation, collaboration, problem solving, and reflection. As Kern (2008) explained, the goal is not for students to arrive at normative, native-like interpretations, but to explore multiple meanings and understand the situated nature of their interpretations based on their attitudes, beliefs, and experiences.
In addition, presentational communication and the related notion of sharing information and ideas with an audience of listeners or readers reflect the design metaphor and the view of communication involving writer-reader and speaker-listener relationships. It is perhaps interpersonal communication and its emphasis in the Standards on the expression of feelings, emotions, and opinions that requires the most reinterpretation for multiliteracies instruction. Instead of focusing on students expressing their personal opinions about themes that may or may not be anchored in texts (e.g., explaining what you like to do for fun on the weekend), the multiliteracies framework shifts toward students’ personal readings of texts based not only on feelings and opinions, but also on interpretive constraints associated with specific types of texts (Kern, 2000, 2008). As an example, in an introductory-level FL course, rather than designing a lesson limited to a functionally oriented objective of students describing preferences for weekend activities, the lesson might involve activities that build toward interpretive communication and identifying similarities and differences between their own preferences for weekend activities and those of members of the FL culture based on published survey results. This re-imagined notion of interpersonal communication is consistent with the learning processes of interpretation, collaboration, problem solving, and reflection.

In addition to redefining the role of communicative language use and its relation to instructional goals and objectives, the multiliteracies framework demands a different conceptualization of the role of textual learning in comparison to pedagogical approaches such as CLT. Texts no longer serve as springboards for practice of vocabulary and grammar or appear periodically (e.g., at the end of a textbook chapter) as a means of conveying cultural facts. Instead, they function as a vehicle for communicative language use and cultural inquiry as students analyze, interpret, and transform discourse and relate the world of the FL culture to their experience and thinking (Kern, 2000). These ideas may already be apparent to you in light of the discussion of the various modes of communication described in this section and the relation of each mode to textual learning. What may be less obvious to you, however, are the consequences of integrating this vision of textual learning into instructional goals and objectives. If, as Kern (2000) argued, texts are more than something to talk about, how should they be mapped onto student learning outcomes? What principles should be used to guide text selection?

Swaffar and Arens (2005) offered a succinct explanation of the role of textual learning in students’ literacy development: “Students need to see the patterns of messages within cultural contexts of communication, textuality, and negotiation, to manage them and their implications in various situations” (pp. 40–41). But what sorts textual messages should be taught and on what basis? According to Byrnes, Maxim, and Norris (2010), text choice should be “first and foremost educational choices about what students can and should learn at a particular stage of the curriculum” rather than “motivated by a claimed responsiveness to student interest” (p. 59). Taken at face value, this statement seems counter-intuitive, insomuch that when attempting to map textual content onto a curriculum primarily focused on language development, teachers often turn first
to texts that are relevant to students' cultures and identities based on their thematic content and perceived accessibility (e.g., contemporary music, videotexts, advertisements). However, as Arens (2010) explained, “the use of non-literary texts relevant to our students' interests and lives may exacerbate the famous gap between lower and upper divisions by taking one kind of culture for the lower division and another for the majors” (p. 321). This is not to say that non-literary texts should not play an important role in language courses; rather, that textual choice should not be guided primarily by considerations of thematic relevance to students' lives.

Instead, instructional goals and objectives should target the teaching of specific textual genres relevant to the FL and its discourse communities. Once again, by foregrounding the concept of genre, described in Chapter 1 as structuring culturally embedded communicative situations in a highly predictable pattern, the notion of integrating language use and content emerges since genres exist at the intersection of linguistic expression and social convention (Swaffar & Arens, 2005). Put differently, “genres perform acts of culture” (Arens, 2008, p. 45). Genre-focused textual learning sensitizes students to the logics (or obligatory and optional textual moves) associated with specific text types and how those logics impact meaning, a topic to be explored in greater detail in Chapters 5 and 6 in relation to the modalities of reading and writing.

A logic for guiding text choice in multiliteracies instruction that can be useful for articulating student learning outcomes is the notion of primary versus secondary discourses, or socially situated ways of using language and signs (Gee, 2011). Whereas primary discourses are often familial and private, involving meaning making in the home and with peers, secondary discourses are public and often formal, entailing language use in groups and institutions such as school, work, or religious entities. Byrnes, Crane, Maxim, and Sprang (2006) described the roles primary and secondary discourses play in a multiliteracies-oriented introductory-level FL curriculum:

The majority of texts that represent Level I belong to the sphere of primary discourses characterized by informal communication between intimates on topics of common knowledge like personal information, food, housing, and travel. The most prominent and frequent genres on this level are casual conversations, picture stories involving narration about aspects of personal life, cartoons, and personal narratives. Nevertheless, already at this level, students are familiarized with genres that stand at the middle of the continuum of primary to secondary discourses and are introduced to secondary genres used in the discourses of public life such as ads for housing and travel found in newspapers, various service encounters, newspaper feature articles, and statistics on health care. (p. 93)

Notable in this description is that although text themes and types mesh well with students' lives and interests, this is not the basis for their choice. Rather, a principled selection is made based on a larger progression from texts reflecting
primary discourses in lower-level language courses to texts reflecting secondary
discourses in advanced-level courses. By identifying which genres will be used
as models or topical bases for speaking and writing tasks in instructional units
within a curricular level, unit- and lesson-level objectives (e.g., for interpretive
communication) can be clarified and potentially used as a mechanism to bring
about coherence across various sections of the same course.

At this point, before moving on to a discussion of assessment in multilit-
eracies instruction, it may be helpful to synthesize the ideas explained in this
section regarding the articulation of instructional goals and objectives with a
concrete illustration. To do so, recall the example of an introductory-level FL
unit on everyday life and leisure activities, whose stated objectives included (1)
talking about the weather, recreational activities, and personal routines; and
(2) describing abilities and expressing plans and wishes. To better orient these
objectives for multiliteracies instruction, concepts including the principles of
literacy, meaning design, the modes of communication, and genre could be
incorporated. A revised and expanded version of those objectives might read as
follows: Students will (1) describe their daily activities and routines and com-
pare them to those of people their age from the FL culture; (2) understand and
produce short personal narratives about their plans and wishes for everyday
life; and (3) present information to peers regarding weather and recreational
activities in locales where the FL is used. To realize these objectives, students
could analyze linguistic, schematic, audio, visual, and gestural Available Designs
found in several textual genres (e.g., blog posting, personal ad, video weather
report, survey) and interpret, collaborate, problem-solve, and reflect on the
texts used. Meaning design would be emphasized as students move from ana-
lyzing language use and content in texts to creating their own texts. Do note
that a certain degree of overlap exists in the functionally based objectives and
the multiliteracies-oriented ones. However, the revised objectives are grounded
in the three modes of communication, can be realized only through analysis of
FL texts, and weave together communicative language use and textual learning
in a way that the functionally based objectives do not.

Before moving on to consider assessment within the multiliteracies frame-
work, complete Learning Activity 2.5, which gives you an opportunity to apply
what you have learned about writing instructional goals and objectives focused
on literacy development.

**LEARNING ACTIVITY 2.5**

**Redesigning Instructional Goals and Objectives for Multiliteracies
Instruction**

Rewrite the following goals and objectives to reflect the premises of the
multiliteracies framework. Incorporate concepts such as the dimensions and
principles of literacy, meaning design, the modes of communication (interper-
sonal, interpretive, presentational), and genre into your revised statements. In
addition, think about the role that communication and textual learning will
play in the goal and objective statements. This activity may entail combining or reorganizing some of the objectives listed below. Note: Your objective statements need only contain a description of the behaviors demonstrating the knowledge or skills to be learned.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Goals</th>
<th>By the end of this introductory-level language course, students will acquire basic skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing and develop a basic awareness of the cultures being studied.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Course Objective 1: Speaking | A. Students will acquire the basics of pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammatical structures necessary for the expression of introductory needs and basic courtesy formula.  
B. Students will produce vocabulary relevant to the student's own environment and interests and to the culture(s) being studied. |
| Course Objective 2: Listening | A. Students will acquire vocabulary sufficient to comprehend basic information and expressions relevant to introductory needs and basic courtesy formula.  
B. Students will comprehend spoken language in situations where the context aids understanding. |
| Course Objective 3: Writing | A. Students will write meaningful sentences that include idiomatic expressions and reproduce memorized material in a meaningful way.  
B. Students will supply basic information (biographical, travel, etc.).  
C. Students will write short compositions. |
| Course Objective 4: Reading | A. Students will develop basic strategies and skills for reading non-technical texts of moderate difficulty.  
B. Students will work with a variety of reading materials. |
| Course Objective 5: Culture | A. Students will begin to be aware of cultural similarities and differences, cultural practices, and the relationship between language and cultural identity.  
B. Students will acquire some knowledge of the geography of the country/countries being studied.  
C. Students will be exposed to cultural realia. |

### 2.3 Understanding the Role of Assessment in Multiliteracies Instruction

Although familiarity with the types and uses of assessments and the relation of assessment to instruction and learning outcomes is a useful starting point, a key question remains: Namely, what is the role of assessment in multiliteracies instruction? Once more, you will find that aligning instructional practices, in this case assessment, with the multiliteracies framework involves a shift in thinking from traditional approaches, which typically focus on summative tests and mastery of discrete forms or skills. Kern (2000) explained that although the goal of assessment in multiliteracies instruction entails familiar foci, such as knowledge of grammar and vocabulary and the ability to use the FL to fulfill specific
communicative functions, it also goes far beyond those components. Assessment in a multiliteracies framework involves evaluating how learners interpret and produce meaning, understanding how learners analyze texts and the knowledge they gain from that analysis, and encouraging learners to reflect on form-meaning relationships, communicative intent, and links between language and culture. According to Kern (2000), this view of assessment boils down to measuring students' ability to think critically and creatively through language use. Evident in this conceptualization of assessment is the inclusion of the three dimensions of literacy—linguistic, sociocultural, and cognitive elements—and the idea that assessment practices, like instructional practices and goal setting, target the integration of language use and textual content to facilitate the design of meaning.

The following principles should be heeded when designing a literacy-based assessment and evaluation plan for a FL course or curriculum: Assessment should be (1) based on a broad view of language and literacy, (2) multidimensional in nature, and (3) interwoven with teaching and learning (Kern, 2000). Regarding the first principle, assessment practices have traditionally lagged behind instruction such that even when teaching goals and classroom activities have centered on expanded notions of communicative abilities, assessment has been carried out with narrowly conceived tools that do not always align with instruction and targeted learning outcomes. Street (1997) argued that this should not be the case in multiliteracies instruction:

Assessment that reduce[s] literacy to a few simple and mechanistic skills fail[s] to do justice to the richness and complexity of actual literacy practices . . . We need curricula and assessment that are themselves rich and complex and based upon research into actual literacy practices. (p. 84)

In other words, assessment cannot be a one-shot venture in which students' literacy development is evaluated narrowly based on a single instance of comprehension or production; instead, students should have multiple opportunities to design meaning in the FL and demonstrate control of new Available Designs introduced through instruction. In addition, assessment should mirror "actual literacy practices" (Street, 1997, p. 84), so it should be meaningful and contextualized, reflecting language use in discourse communities.

In relation to the second principle, the need for a multidimensional notion of assessment, instructors should use a variety of language and literacy activities rather than rely solely on tests (Kern, 2000). In so doing, we gain multiple perspectives on our students' performance, including tools that target new understandings of multiple textual genres and involve both individual and joint performance through interpretation, collaboration, problem solving, and reflection. In practice, this may entail formative assessments such as written journals, concept maps, or self-assessment of oral participation alongside summative assessments like written quizzes or small-group writing or performance projects. It is important to note that the multiliteracies framework does not involve doing away entirely with traditional assessment tools like form-focused mechanical practice.
activities or exams; rather, they play a smaller role in the overall assessment plan (i.e., they are weighted more lightly than work such as projects or portfolios) and are used for formative purposes (Kern, 2000).

In addition, the third principle for multiliteracies-focused assessment urges that it not be divorced from teaching and learning. This notion is consistent with a larger trend in the FL profession during the past two decades that takes the concept of washback (i.e., that good tests will promote good instructional practices) a step further to seek a more intimate relation between instruction and assessment (Bachman, 2000). The multiliteracies framework is particularly well suited for carrying out such pedagogically oriented assessment for at least two reasons. First, the concept of meaning design, which forms the backbone of multiliteracies instruction, and the related notion of the Redesigned are consistent with the idea of the pedagogy–assessment relationship involving a process of creating and interpreting textual meaning and products. Second, the pedagogy at the heart of the multiliteracies framework (i.e., the four pedagogical acts of situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing, and transformed practice) includes multiple opportunities for use of varied assessment tools within the context of instruction, namely in relation to transformed practice activities. As described by the New London Group (1996), transformed practice can be understood as a return to situated practice with the following purpose:

[To help learners] show that they can implement understandings acquired through Overt Instruction and Critical Framing in practices that help them simultaneously to apply and revise what they have learned. In Transformed Practice we are offered a place for situated, contextualized assessment of learners and the learning processes devised for them. (p. 87)

Examples of how the four pedagogical acts can be used to structure assessment can help to clarify these concepts. Returning to the illustration of an introductory-level FL unit on everyday life and leisure activities, whose revised objectives include students (1) describing their daily activities and routines and comparing them to those of people their age from the FL culture; (2) understanding and producing short personal narratives about their plans and wishes for everyday life; and (3) presenting information to peers regarding weather and recreational activities in locales where the FL is used, we now add a plan for both formative and summative assessment. Formative assessment components include the following:

- Situated practice. In relation to Objectives 1–3, students complete matrices to check comprehension of texts related to unit themes; in addition, in relation to Objectives 1 and 2, students write brief journaling assignments that expand on text-based activities; finally, students participate in self-assessment of oral participation in class using a rubric as well as written reflection in their native language;
- Overt instruction. For lexical items and grammatical points related to Objectives 1–3, students complete online machine-scorable workbook
assignments to verify comprehension of new structures; in addition, for text-based pre-reading activities, students prepare graphic organizers to activate schemata and vocabulary related to text themes:

- **Critical framing.** In relation to Objectives 1 and 2, students reflect on similarities and differences between practices and perspectives in their own culture versus the FL culture as viewed in texts introduced in class; these written reflections are part of journaling activities but, unlike the situated practice part of these assignments, they are written in the student’s first language;

- **Transformed practice.** In relation to Objectives 1 and 2, students present either personal information or ideas about a classmate in short writing assignments and digital recordings modeled on written and videotexts analyzed in class.

In addition to these formative assessment tools, two summative assessments are used, which are described in Table 2.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summative Assessment Format</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oral Assessment</td>
<td><strong>Situated practice / Transformed practice:</strong> Students work in pairs to describe a detailed travel itinerary for an ideal vacation (weather, activities, daily routine, and plans) in one location where the FL is used; classmates listen and ask questions, eventually voting on the location they judge most interesting to visit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written Assessment</td>
<td><strong>Critical framing:</strong> Students respond to pre-listening questions in English about daily life in their culture versus the FL culture. <strong>Situated practice / Critical framing:</strong> Students watch and respond to comprehension questions on a videotext of brief interviews on the street wherein three speakers of the FL describe everyday life and recreational activities in their culture; an expansion question asks students to compare their own daily routine to one of the individuals in the videotext in a short paragraph using the FL. <strong>Situated practice:</strong> Students read two travel guide excerpts and complete comprehension activities related to both the textual genre and the content of the texts. <strong>Transformed practice / Overt instruction:</strong> Students select a travel destination among those introduced in the travel guide excerpts and write an e-mail message wherein they ask a friend to join them on a vacation there, including detailed description of weather, activities, and plans. Before writing their e-mail message, as a pre-writing activity, students brainstorm useful vocabulary and action verbs and present those lexico-grammatical structures in a graphic organizer.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In summary, this plan reflects each principle of literacy-oriented assessment. In its scope, it represents a broad vision of language and literacy and a multidimensional view of evaluating students’ comprehension and use of the FL. Traditional and alternative assessment tools are used, and assessment is conducted both in class and at home and includes individual and collaborative activities. Traditional tools for assessment find new roles; for example, mechanical language practice is relegated to a minor role outside class whereas the written examination is redefined using the four pedagogical acts. Finally, a common thread running throughout the assessment plan is the central role of texts in weaving together instructional and assessment activities; in fact, they are often one in the same. To further solidify your understanding of the relationships among assessment, text-based learning, and instructional goals and objectives from a multiliteracies perspective, complete Part 2 of Learning Activity 2.4.

3. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In this chapter, we have defined instructional goals and objectives and their relevance for FL teaching and learning, described various types and purposes for assessment, and established the relationship among student learning outcomes (i.e., goals and objectives), assessment, and instruction as posited in the notion of backward design. In addition, we presented arguments that speak to the importance of establishing carefully articulated goals and objectives for FL instruction and of crafting an appropriate assessment plan that is well aligned with learning outcomes for teachers and students, and determined in light of larger curricular considerations.

The second half of this chapter delved into the challenging question of how instructional goals and objectives and assessment practices are instantiated in the multiliteracies framework. Building on knowledge about literacy development to which you were introduced in the Introduction and Chapter 1, we established the relevance of several literacy-oriented concepts (dimensions of literacy, principles of literacy, meaning design, modes of communication, textual genres) for writing student learning outcome statements and aligning assessment and instructional practices. Based on a number of illustrations and your participation in Learning Activities in this chapter, you should now be more familiar with differences between CLT-oriented and multiliteracies-based instruction and assessment and the shift in pedagogical thinking that is necessary to put the multiliteracies framework into practice.

The treatment of instructional goals and objectives and, to a greater extent, assessment offered in this chapter is only an introduction to these critical elements. Subsequent chapters will solidify and expand your understanding of how these components function in the context of different areas of instruction—the Available Designs of grammar and vocabulary (Chapter 3), oral language use (Chapter 4), meaning design centered on the modalities of reading, writing, and listening/viewing (Chapters 5 through 7), and development of new literacies through Web 2.0 tools (Chapter 8). It is our intention to foreground the
discussion of instructional goals and objectives and assessment practices to underscore their importance and potential contribution for maximizing students’ literacy development.

4. TRANSFORMING KNOWLEDGE

4.1 Reflective Journal Entry

After reading the current chapter and completing the related Learning Activities, you most likely have a different understanding of the multiliteracies framework and its relevance for FL teaching and learning than you did previously. Return now to Learning Activity 1.5 in Chapter 1, in which you completed a concept map that illustrated how key components of the multiliteracies framework fit together. How have your understandings of the relationships among the concepts in your map changed? Are there any new concepts that you wish to incorporate, particularly in relation to instructional goals and objectives and assessment practices? The goal of this activity is for you to revise your concept map to reflect the evolution of what you know about multiliteracies instruction.

4.2 Researching the Role of Goals, Objectives, and Assessment in Text-Based FL Learning

As you have learned to this point, FL texts play a critical role in both multiliteracies instruction and assessment practices. In his 2008 article entitled “Making connections through texts in language teaching,” Kern argued for the importance of textual analysis for both meaning design and making connections between language and culture as well as with other disciplines. Included in the appendix of the article (pp. 380-386) are sample projects that illustrate how text-based activities can be integrated with course themes such as media, colonialism, cultural transmission, and crime. First, read Kern’s article (see References for publication information), including the Appendix. Next, select one of the following projects from the Appendix—1, 2, 3, or 5—and review its goals and procedures. Next, reflect on the following questions in relation to the project:

1. What types of unit-level objectives would align with this project?
2. Which multiliteracies concepts and instructional practices do you see embodied in the project? Explain how these concepts are put into practice.
3. How well would this project fit into the curriculum of the FL course that you are teaching and what revisions to the project would you make if you were to include it in your course (and why)?

Finally, based on your responses to these questions, prepare a report in which you (1) describe how this project instantiates multiliteracies instruction and assessment practices, and (2) critique the suitability of the project for your educational context.
Key Resources

This web site contains links to the Georgetown University undergraduate German program’s ongoing curricular renewal project, which is literacy and genre oriented and task based. The site includes curricular goals, level-specific objectives, assessment practices, and course syllabi.

Chapter 5, “Planning Instruction and Assessment,” contains a discussion of instructional planning at the course, unit, and lesson level and an explanation of the role of goals and objectives in FL teaching and learning. An overview of assessment is presented, including dimensions of assessment, traditional and alternative assessment tools, and principles for designing effective assessment tools. The pedagogical approaches foregrounded in this chapter are both Standards and literacy based.

Chapter 9, “Evaluating Learners’ Performance,” presents an overview of principles for assessment and evaluation practices in literacy-based FL teaching. Discussion includes issues of validity and reliability in assessment, a model for assessment and evaluation of reading and writing, and examples of scoring rubrics.

For Further Reading