Integrating Focus on Form in L2 Content-Enriched Instruction Lessons

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Abstract: *The model of content-enriched instruction focuses on the integration of grammatical and lexical forms within content to beginning-level learners (Ballman, 1997). This study used quantitative data to examine the efficiency and application of this model for second- and third-semester college French. It specifically responds to the following question: Which type of focus-on-form instruction through a content-enriched instruction lesson is more effective for learning second language (L2) grammar, vocabulary, and cultural content in intermediate French L2 classes? The three instructional treatments administered were planned focus on form, incidental focus on form, and focus on meaning. The findings point to positive significance mainly toward the planned focus on form treatment, in grammar, vocabulary, and culture. This encourages a more concrete integration of content and form at low-intermediate levels.*

Key words: *content-enriched instruction, culture, focus on form, second language learning and teaching*

Language: *Relevant to all languages*

Introduction

Communicative language teaching, as a methodological approach, encourages the use of realistic messages in order to present language features (Brown, 1994, 2000; Cook, 2001; Omaggio, 1983; Omaggio Hadley, 2001; Savignon, 1972, 1983, 1991, 1997). Yet the reality of language courses often seems to differ from the original goal of fostering the development of communication strategies (Cook, 2001). One example of this divergence of practice is the presentation of cultural items during the early years of second language (L2) learning. As Ballman (1997) and Shook (1998) have pointed out, many beginning language textbooks present culture in the first language (L1), therefore missing the opportunity to use culture to teach the L2. This reflects a tendency to separate and isolate the two aspects of the message: culture and language. However, research has shown that combining a focus on language forms with a meaningful message produces more positive results in learners' output than if instruction is focused on forms alone (Doughty & Williams, 1998; Long, 1991; Long & Robinson, 1998; Swain, 1985, 1991, 1996, 2001). Teaching methodologies and curricula have been designed to integrate meaning and forms. For instance, one major methodology–content-based instruction (CBI)–has emphasized the integration of content and linguistic compo-

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nents at advanced levels of L2 instruction. However, it is not clear if the same findings from previous research on upper-level content-based instruction (Brinton, Snow, & Wesche, 1989; Davison & Williams, 2001; Mohan & Beckett, 2003; Short, 1999; Snow & Brinton, 1997) would be obtained in early levels of L2 instruction.

Given the lack of research on the effects of integrating content and language forms at early levels of instruction, this study investigated the effects of the integration of grammatical and lexical forms within a cultural content. Specifically, this article focuses on 1) the integration of language structures (i.e., grammatical and lexical items) into cultural lessons at the early levels of French L2 classes, and 2) the types of instruction that promote the acquisition of those same structures.

Teaching Content and Form in the Foreign Language Classroom

Approximately 30 years ago, CBI emerged in immersion and bilingual programs in response to strong needs to combine content and language instruction (Cook, 2001; Musumeci, 1993; Savignon, 1972, 1983, 1997; Snow & Brinton, 1997; Swain, 1985, 1991, 1996, 2001). Many studies (Met, 1991; Pica, 2002; Swain, 1996, 2001; Swain & Lapkin, 2000) were conducted showing how the forms of a language could be taught through a specific content, such as social sciences, mathematics, history, and psychology. Results have shown that CBI can be effective, but only if learners are made aware of their language use. Immersion programs in Canada and bilingual programs in the United States have employed this technique primarily from kindergarten through high school (K–12) levels and also in college curricula, targeting foreign students, immigrants, and others who have the desire to learn an L2 intensively (Kowal & Swain, 1997; Rhodes, Christian, & Barfield, 1997; Snow & Brinton, 1997; Swain, 1985, 1991, 1996, 2001; Swain & Johnson, 1997).

One essential drawback of CBI is pointed out in studies showing that learners do not completely acquire the intended forms. The subject matter of content courses takes over the entire objective of the class, burying language under meaning. Short (1999) and Swain (1985, 1988, 1993) discovered that simply learning in context, without precise focus on the language form, would not help learners attain the expected proficiency level. Through a large-scale observation, Short (1999) noticed that learners seemed to lack accuracy in language form. To address this problem, she offered parameters for integrating language and content. For instance, she suggested making a connection between the material and students' prior knowledge and personal experiences. Additionally, Short suggested that offering multiple ways of checking learners' newly acquired content knowledge might have positive implications.

CBI has been shown to be effective at all levels of language learning, especially in immersion-type programs. However, this method is not easily applicable to all levels and types of instruction. In most beginning and intermediate L2 courses, other types of language programs—more specifically, general-purpose courses at the college level—do not specify course content. Most language textbooks have thematic chapters in which the aim is to acquire the four skills (speaking, writing, reading, and listening) by teaching the language in a communicative way, while using different themes to ensure lexical diversity. Yet, there is generally no overall focus on a given domain of content, as it is understood in CBI curricula. The diversity of the thematic chapters in a general-purpose course allows learners to receive an overview of everyday lexis. However, if communicative ability in the L2 is the goal, then content-based foci also may be beneficial if integrated into the L2 lower-level sequences. Davison and Williams (2001) believe that one justification for integrating content and language in the classroom is that it follows the "current 'communicative' trends in language teach-

ing that emphasize the meaningful use of language in appropriate contexts in the language classroom" (p. 53) and that "content presented through a second language improves second language proficiency and delivers content knowledge and skills just as efficiently as L1 instruction (Brinton et al., 1989; Wesche, 1993)" (p. 53).

Generally speaking, the CBI method has seldom been used in beginning-language programs at the college level. Ballman (1997) proposed an alternative to presenting content early on: *content-enriched instruction*, which integrates the instruction of grammar and vocabulary within content. In particular, Ballman refers to culture, as it is most commonly found at beginning-level L2 courses and is a flexible and integrative component for a curriculum not fully focusing on content; however, other types of content could be interchangeable. In content-enriched instruction, content makes up only a fraction of the total set of course objectives, rather than being the sole objective; the course is not content-based, but occasionally utilizes the methodology of content enrichment. To integrate culture within a language class, Ballman suggests a four-stage model lesson plan that facilitates the incorporation of culture, grammar, and vocabulary. The first stage is called *setting the stage*, where learners receive some type of warm-up using their existing knowledge. The second stage, *providing input*, presents the cultural, grammatical, and lexical information through an oral lesson supported by visual media; this part is the essential component of the lesson for providing input. *Guided participation*, the third stage, encourages learners to work with partners on tasks that focus on the new features and provide additional input. The fourth stage is the *extension activity*, where learners are encouraged to use all the new knowledge in a combined activity. The outcome allows for more open-ended and creative answers.

Choosing the proper content to cover an entire course syllabus might be problematic at lower levels due to lack of language skills. In most cases, literature is offered at the more advanced stages, as many instructors seem to feel that students' cognitive and proficiency levels need to be advanced in order to handle this content with sufficient sophistication (Ballman, 1997; Shook, 1996). However, scholars (to name a few: Byrnes & Kord, 2002; Frantzen, 2002; Shook, 1996) propose that some literary texts also can be presented at the beginning stages of language teaching. Redmann (2005) suggests using an interactive reading journal to instill in students a sense of literary analysis from the beginning levels of instruction, which better prepares learners for more successful comprehension. For Ballman (1997), culture is a rich focus that can involve numerous subjects.

One major critique of the content-enriched instruction approach, and one that motivated this study, is that no experimental studies have examined the efficacy of this type of instruction in lower-level L2 classrooms (Shook, 1996). Even though content-enriched instruction calls attention to the cultural, grammatical, and lexical information related to a specific topic, the same concern remains about CBI regarding production accuracy, with no apparent experimental research proving otherwise. The pedagogical approach that may help resolve part of the issue on the lack of accuracy is the use of focus on form, as it may direct learners' attention to language form. Emerging from the notion of communicative competence and aiming to address the issue of accuracy, focus on form is a perspective that seeks a balance between meaning and form in L2 instruction, and that content-enriched instruction could easily encompass in its curriculum.

Ellis, Basturkmen, and Loewen (2001, 2002) define focus on form as "the treatment of linguistic form in the context of performing a communicative task" (2002, p. 419). For Ellis et al. (2001, 2002), the form consists not only of grammar but also of phonology, vocabulary, and discourse. Ellis (2001) defines form-focused instruction, or focus-on-form instruction, as "any planned or incidental instructional activity

that is intended to induce language learn-ers to pay attention to linguistic form" (pp. 1–2). More precisely, he categorizes form-focused instruction as being one of three types. The first is called *focus on forms*, which refers to the sole focus on linguistic forms without implementing any meaningful context. The second and third types, under the category of focus on form, have been of greater interest to research-ers (Doughty & Varela, 1998; Long & Robinson, 1998; Williams & Evans, 1998). *Planned focus on form* (or *proactive focus on form*, Ellis et al., 2001) draws learners to the forms through enriching the input, for instance through input flooding or input enhancement, while bringing mean-ing to the language. The instructor selects in advance the form that will be in focus and the manner and the tasks to intro-duce it. The following example, in which an instructor of a planned focus-on-form lesson explains the function of a relative pronoun, is excerpted from the transcript of the current study:

Example 1:
Instructor: *Aujourd'hui, c'est une république dans laquelle il y a un président élu démocratiquement, alors ici, vous voyez aussi 'une république dans laquelle' parce que "république" est un nom féminin et puis singulier alors, donc on utilise "dans laquelle" or "in which" or "at which." Et depuis 2000, le Président est Abdoulaye Wade. A propos de l'économie, la monnaie sénégalaise s'appelle le Franc CFA.*
[Today, it is a republic in which there is a democratically elected president, so here, you also see "a republic in which" because "republic" is a femi-nine noun, and singular at that, so we use "in which" or "in which" or "at which." And since 2000, the President is Abdoulaye Wade. About the economy the Senegalese money is called the CFA Franc.]

The last type, *incidental focus on form*, arises when a problem of communication or

of form occurs in unfocused tasks, defined as "communicative tasks designed to elicit general samples of the language rather than specific forms" (Ellis et al., 2002, p. 421). This type of focus on form is exemplified in the following dialogue between another instructor and a student, which was taken from the video recording transcripts of the current study:

Example 2:
Student: *"élu" est-ce que c'est le passé com-posé de "elect"?*
["elect" is it the past tense of "elect"?]
Instructor: *Oui, le sens en anglais, c'est "elect," mais le mot en français c'est "élire."*
[Yes, the meaning in English is "elect," but the word in French is "to elect."]

In the rest of this study, *focus on form* will be defined based on Ellis' (2001) termi-nology. *Planned focus on form* and *incidental focus on form* will be defined based on Ellis et al.'s (2001) and Ellis et al.'s (2002) defini-tions, respectively.

Abundant *focus-on-form* research shows that drawing learners' attention to form within a meaningful context facilitates L2 learning (Doughty & Williams, 1998; Ellis, 2001; Long, 1991; Long & Robinson, 1998; Muranoi, 2000; Nassaji, 1999; Samuda, 2001; Swain, 1998; Williams & Evans, 1998). One suggested way to bring learn-ers' attention to the targeted form is by using noticing techniques, such as input enhancement (Doughty & Williams, 1998; Eubank, Seliker, & Sharwood Smith, 1995; White, 1998). A large body of research has examined both CBI and focus on form; however, the combination of both in one research project has not been seen frequent-ly, especially in regard to the lower levels of foreign language instruction.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Content-enriched instruction, an approach that bases its teaching on the integration of form and meaning, could lead to problems of accuracy in learners' production, just as

CBI does (Swain, 1985, 1993, 1996, 2001; Swain & Lapkin, 2000). Since no research on this has been done thus far, this study addressed the following question: Which type of focus-on-form technique through a content-enriched instruction lesson is more effective for learning L2 grammar, vocabulary, and cultural content in intermediate French L2 classes?

This study tests the prediction that integrating focus on form into content-enriched lessons, supported by input-enhanced material (Sharwood Smith, 1991, 1993) and presented through proper explanations from the instructor (i.e., planned focus on form) is most effective at facilitating the acquisition of the target language forms. Along with explicit teaching of language form, the presence of input enhancement will increase the likelihood of form acquisition; however, incidental focus-on-form instruction, responding only to problems and questions raised by the students, still should allow learning. Finally, I hypothesize that the absence of input enhancement and of any kind of focus-on-form instruction (planned or incidental) will be the least effective method for form acquisition. It is expected that under the condition of focus on meaning, only content will be noticed and acquired.

Methodology

Participants

At the beginning of data collection, 258 undergraduate students enrolled in second- and third-semester French courses at a large American university in the midwest agreed to participate in this study. One hundred six students were removed from the analysis because of high pretest scores (above 90% of the total score), missed treatments, or tests. The remaining participant pool consisted of 152 learners between the ages of 17 and 38 (mean = 20.12). Following Magnan's (1986) operationalization of participant oral proficiency level, the second-semester learners' proficiency (N = 60) represented learners who were hypothesized to be between the range of

Novice-Mid and Intermediate-Mid (ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines–Speaking, 1999), while third-semester learners (N = 92) were hypothesized to be between the range of Intermediate-Low and Intermediate-High. The participants were recruited over three class sessions (spring, summer, and fall).

Fifteen instructor participants who were native or near-native speakers of French took part in the study. Each instructor taught one class, except for two who taught two classes, resulting in a total of 17 classes in this study. All 17 hours were video-recorded. All but one of the instructors were graduate teaching assistants (the other was a lecturer) in the French department of the same large midwestern university. They were pursuing or had pursued graduate study in fields such as French studies, French linguistics, second language acquisition and teaching, advertising, and English literature. In order to properly match instructors to the treatments based on their teaching style, the researcher observed each one and decided to which treatment condition each should be assigned.

Target Structures

Following Williams and Evans' (1998) guidelines, the comparative and superlative forms of adjectives were chosen for the second-semester learners, and the complex relative forms used as objects of prepositions and derived from lequel [which] (e.g., pendant lequel [during which]) were chosen for the third-semester learners. Indeed, the forms 1) differ somewhat from English, 2) are infrequent in spoken input, though they are occasionally found in literary works, 3) do not contribute significantly to the general meaning of the sentence in which they appear, and 4) could be misinterpreted by the learners since the structures require a careful understanding of the context. As a result of the organization of the textbook used in the second- and third-semester courses, the students had not encountered those grammatical forms prior to the exper-

iment, which was supported by the results of the pretests.

The targeted lexical items were selected for their significance in relation to the countries of the cultural lesson. The pretests also clearly verified participants' absence of knowledge of the vocabulary before the experiment took place.

Materials and Lesson Plans

The teaching materials covered Belgium for the second-semester French courses, since it is one of the European francophone countries often overlooked during cultural presentations and in textbooks. In the third-semester French courses, the country of Senegal was chosen for its primary role in francophone Africa. The content for both levels consisted of the geography of the country; its population, currency, government, politics, weather, and cuisine; its celebrities in music and/or literature; and its comic book characters, holidays, and traditions. All this information was on transparencies. Along with the transparencies and additional visual materials (comic books; currency; maps; and photos of monuments, landscapes, and people[1]), recordings of singers (Jacques Brel, Renaud, Youssou N'Dour), and poems of a Senegalese poet (Léopold Sédar Senghor) were included on sheets distributed to the learners.[2] The pretests proved that the learners had very little or no previous cultural knowledge of the two countries.

The lesson plans (see Appendix A for an example of a planned focus-on-form lesson plan) were created following Ballman's (1997) suggestions of lesson planning for content-enhanced instruction. They consisted of four sections. The first section was a short warm-up with suggested questions for the instructors to ask their students to bring attention to the topic (i.e., *setting the* stage). This was followed by an instructor-fronted presentation of the content (i.e., *providing input*). The third part of the culture lesson had a listening task based on songs and an oral reading task based on poetry for Senegal (i.e., *guided participation*). The first

three sections were conducted mainly in the target language; however, instructors were not told to do so in order to let them use their personal style. The video recordings allowed for checking instructors' linguistic behavior. In the last section of the lesson, students in groups of two or three were asked to write a picture-based production activity (i.e., *extension activity*).

Tests Design

Three tests (see Appendix B for examples) were created, following the same format with practically identical content, and designed according to test specification principles (Davidson & Lynch, 2002). All tests presented discrete-point items and one open-ended writing item. The pretest began with seven questions testing cultural knowledge, seven word translations testing vocabulary, and seven items testing grammar through sentence fillers (called focused grammar in the results section). The second part of the pretest asked the participants to produce a short paragraph following a given topic (on the topic of their last vacation break) to test the application of their acquired grammatical knowledge (called production grammar in the results section) in a more communicative context. After the administration of the pretest, it was observed that the addition of distracters would be beneficial in order to avoid an overgeneralization of the example given in the instructions; three distracters then were added to the focused-grammar portion of the posttests for each level. Therefore, the two posttests contained the same seven questions for each test assessing the cultural knowledge questions, the same seven word translations testing vocabulary, and the same 10 items testing focused-grammatical items through sentence fillers. The distracters did not receive any point value. The last section of the tests required the students to write a short essay with different composition topics for each test. On all three tests, the identical items were shuffled to avoid a recall of the answers' order. The tests were scored according to

TABLE 1			
Characteristics of the Instructional Approaches			
	Planned Focus on Form	Incidental Focus on Form	Focus on Meaning
Content	Yes	Yes	Yes
Form Focus	Yes	Yes	No
Enhanced Forms	Yes	No	No

a partial-credit scale. To verify the validity of the data, a subset of the test data was scored by another researcher (agreement rate = 99.8%).

Analysis

The research question was analyzed through a series of multivariate general linear model posthoc tests to compare the effects of instruction types between groups. The alpha level was set at .05 for all statistical tests. The independent variable of this study was the type of instructional method, which had three levels: planned focus on form, incidental focus on form, and focus on meaning. There were three dependent variables–learners' scores on cultural knowledge, grammatical knowledge, and lexical knowledge–with all scores resulting from the pre- and posttests.

Treatment Design

In order to compare the integration of language and meaning, the instructional procedures were planned focus on form, incidental focus on form, and focus on meaning. The planned and incidental focus-on-form definitions are from Ellis (2001), Ellis et al. (2001), and Ellis et al. (2002). It is important to mention that in all three treatments, an input flood was provided since the learners had visual support (transparencies), as well as the instructors' verbal presentations. Because it was present for all groups, the factor of input flood was not studied as a potential effect. The instructional approaches, summarized in Table 1, are described in more detail below.

The planned focus-on-form group was given materials enhancing lexical and grammatical forms using bolding and color (see Appendix A for an example of enhanced material). The instructors for this group knew in advance what forms were the targets of instruction because the researcher had explained briefly what was to be presented. Instructors were encouraged to cover the enhanced information. As an example of what a focus-on-form event would be, the following abstract was recorded from one of the instructors' actions, while covering a grammatical feature that was enhanced on the material:

Example 3:

Instructor: *Bruxelles, la ville la* plus *important* . . . *La* plus *importante, ça veut dire, c'est ce que l'on appelle superlatif.* [Brussels, the most important city . . . The most important, it means, it is what we call superlative (said with insistence of the voice on *plus*).]

The second group was the incidental focus-on-form group. The material for this group contained the same information on culture, lexis, and grammar, but no enhancement was present on the transparencies. The instructors for this group were told to present the content material, explain problematic areas, and answer students' questions. The focus on form was a reactive (i.e., incidental) focus on form, meaning instructors alone provided the feedback requested by learners or motivated by what instructors believed to be important. The following example, taken

from one instructor's discourse, illustrates what could occur during an instance of incidental focus on form:

Example 4:
Instructor: *Voilà les moules-frites.*
    [Here are the mussels-fries.]
Student: What's *moules?*
    [What's mussels?]
Instructor: *Moules?* Mussels.
Student: Fries and mussels!

The third group was the focus-on-meaning group. The instructors were told to present only the information that was included on the transparencies. A typical example would be to cover the information without clarifying the targeted lexical and grammatical forms.

Procedure
The cultural lesson took place about two months after the semester had started and was presented during the regularly scheduled cultural days on the syllabus. The participants filled out a consent form and a language background questionnaire. Figure 1 provides an overview of the timeline. The experiment that occurred during the summer session followed similar procedures, except that the time periods between the tests and the experiment day were shortened. Each class was video recorded to

ensure that the instructor followed the prescribed instructional method.

FIGURE 1

Overview of Procedure for FR102 and FR103 Courses

Day 1	Pretest
Day 10	Culture lesson
Day 11	Posttest 1
Day 24	Posttest 2
Following weeks	Interviews with instructors

Results

The next four tables (Tables 2, 3, 4, and 5) summarize the descriptive data (total number of participants–n–in each group, mean scores, and standard deviations–SD) for the vocabulary, focused-grammar (i.e., fill-in-the blanks), production-grammar (i.e., composition), and culture sections of the tests for the second- and third-semester students.

The research question investigated the types of focus-on-form instruction that were more effective for learning L2 grammar, vocabulary, and cultural content. The analysis was based on a series of posthoc tests to compare the effect on acquisition of the different types of instruction (focus on meaning, planned focus on form, and

TABLE 2

Descriptive Data for Each Second- and Third-Semester Group for All Tests on Vocabulary

	Second-Semester Students				Third-Semester Students			
	Posttest 1		Posttest 2		Posttest 1		Posttest 2	
	X	SD	X	SD	X	SD	X	SD
Planned focus on forms	3.23*	1.3	2.77*	1.56	2.04*	1.47	1.68*	1.43
Incidental focus on form	2*	1.33	1.72*	1.22	1.24*	1.2	1*	1.13
Focus on meaning	2.21*	1.12	2.02*	1.16	1.14*	1.14	0.91*	1.06

TABLE 3

Descriptive Data for Each Second- and Third-Semester Group for All Tests on Focused Grammar

| | Second-Semester Students | | | | Third-Semester Students | | | |
| | Posttest 1 | | Posttest 2 | | Posttest 1 | | Posttest 2 | |
	X	SD	X	SD	X	SD	X	SD
Planned focus on forms	17.63*	7.8	18.33*	7.95	18.25	8.92	14.14	7.73
Incidental focus on form	9.37	8.73	10.33	6.1	17.49	7.16	16.01	7.5
Focus on meaning	13.9*	8.09	12.62*	5.33	17.28	7.4	15.44	6.43

TABLE 4

Descriptive Data for Each Second- and Third-Semester Group for All Tests on Focused Grammar

| | Second-Semester Students | | | | Third-Semester Students | | | |
| | Posttest 1 | | Posttest 2 | | Posttest 1 | | Posttest 2 | |
	X	SD	X	SD	X	SD	X	SD
Planned focus on forms	9.77*	4.98	6.4*	5.42	8.19*	5.91	8.02*	5.28
Incidental focus on form	2.38	3.77	4.13	5.51	7.38*	5.4	6.11	4.78
Focus on meaning	6.26*	6.03	8.99	4.9	7.08	6.06	6.64	5.27

TABLE 5

Descriptive Data for Each Second- and Third-Semester Group for All Tests on Culture

| | Second-Semester Students | | | | Third-Semester Students | | | |
| | Posttest 1 | | Posttest 2 | | Posttest 1 | | Posttest 2 | |
	X	SD	X	SD	X	SD	X	SD
Planned focus on forms	6.71*	1.55	6.2*	1.48	3.22*	1.81	2.9*	1.42
Incidental focus on form	5.22	1.26	4.81	1.13	2.88*	1.8	2.45*	1.6
Focus on meaning	5.58*	1.77	5.15*	2.96	3.02*	1.36	3*	1.53

TABLE 6

Tests Between Groups of Second-Semester Participants on Vocabulary

	Posttest 1		Posttest 2	
Comparing:	*SD*	Sig.	*SD*	Sig.
Planned focus on form to focus on meaning	0.344	0.012*	0.373	0.113
Planned focus on form to incidental focus on form	0.505	0.048*	0.548	0.141
Incidental focus on form to focus on form	0.482	0.901	0.523	0.837

TABLE 7

Tests Between Groups of Second-Semester Participants on Focused Grammar

	Posttest 1		Posttest 2	
Comparing:	*SD*	Sig.	*SD*	Sig.
Planned focus on form to focus on meaning	2.332	0.255	2.401	0.054
Planned focus on form to incidental focus on form	3.380	0.046*	3.479	0.064
Incidental focus on form to focus on meaning	3.215	0.344	3.310	0.769

incidental focus on form). In all groups and for all grammar, vocabulary, and cultural sections, the pretests (not shown in the following results) revealed that all learners had comparable knowledge before the treatments occurred.

Second-Semester Learners

Table 6 presents the data for the acquisition of vocabulary, comparing all treatment groups of the second-semester learners. On posttest 1, there were significant differences between the mean scores, except for between

focus on meaning and incidental focus on form. By posttest 2, all of the significant differences observed at posttest 1 disappeared for the second-semester learners.

Table 7 presents the data analyzed for the focused-grammar section of the tests. On posttest 1, the only significant mean difference occurred between the planned focus-on-form group and the incidental focus-on-form group, where the planned focus-on-form group performed significantly better. No differences were found among the other groups. However, after posttest 2, no signifi-

TABLE 8

Tests Between Groups of Second-Semester Participants on Production Grammar

	Posttest 1		Posttest 2	
Comparing:	SD	Sig.	SD	Sig.
Planned focus on form to focus on meaning	1.577	0.075	1.502	0.756
Planned focus on form to incidental focus on form	2.270	0.005*	2.162	0.547
Incidental focus on form to focus on meaning	2.167	0.182	2.064	0.830

TABLE 9

Tests Between Groups of Second-Semester Participants on Culture

	Posttest 1		Posttest 2	
Comparing:	SD	Sig.	SD	Sig.
Planned focus on form to focus on meaning	0.453	0.041*	0.486	0.070
Planned focus on form to incidental focus on form	0.665	0.072	0.714	0.135
Incidental focus on form to focus on meaning	0.635	0.830	0.681	0.904

cant difference was perceived among any of the second-semester groups on the focused-grammar component.

The data for the production-grammar component for second-semester students are displayed in Table 8. On posttest 1, the planned focus-on-form group performed significantly better than the incidental focus-on-form group, and on posttest 2, all groups had nonsignificant scores.

Table 9 gives the analysis of the data on culture. On posttest 1, the planned focus-on-form group scored significantly higher than the focus-on-meaning group

(p = .041). However, there were no significant differences between the incidental focus-on-form group and the focus-on-meaning group, or between the incidental and the planned focus-on-form groups. With posttest 2, there was only a slight observable trend between planned focus on form and focus on meaning, with the former having slightly higher scores. However, the effect is weak and does not represent statistically significant evidence for any gains.

In summary, the second-semester data show that each time statistical significance occurred during posttest 1, the planned

TABLE 10

Tests Between Groups of Third-Semester Participants on Vocabulary

	Posttest 1		Posttest 2	
Comparing:	SD	Sig.	SD	Sig.
Planned focus on form to focus on meaning	0.355	0.035*	0.337	0.064
Planned focus on form to incidental focus on form	0.320	0.039*	0.304	0.070
Incidental focus on form to focus on meaning	0.316	0.947	0.300	0.955

TABLE 11

Tests Between Groups of Third-Semester Participants on Focused Grammar

	Posttest 1		Posttest 2	
Comparing:	SD	Sig.	SD	Sig.
Planned focus on form to focus on meaning	2.363	0.911	2.037	0.799
Planned focus on form to incidental focus on form	2.178	0.935	1.877	0.580
Incidental focus on form to focus on meaning	1.958	0.994	1.688	0.939

focus-on-form group showed significantly higher scores. On posttest 2, no significant differences in scores between treatments were retained and all groups were comparable.

Third-Semester Learners

Table 10 displays the data analyzed for the vocabulary part on the three tests for the third-semester learners. The results for posttest 1 show that vocabulary was significantly better assimilated by the planned focus-on-form group, as compared to those of the focus-on-meaning group and the incidental focus-on-form group. Looking at the results for posttest 2 for vocabulary, we see a similar result as happened with the second-semester students: The significant difference that had emerged in posttest 1 disappeared, however a trend for significance remained present. This result can be cautiously interpreted as evidence that the effect was still slightly noticeable after a two-week delay.

Table 11 presents the data analyzed for the focused-grammar section. For posttest 1 and posttest 2, no statistically significant differences emerged between any of the groups.

TABLE 12

Tests Between Groups of Third-Semester Participants on Production Grammar

	Posttest 1		Posttest 2	
Comparing:	SD	Sig.	SD	Sig.
Planned focus on form to focus on meaning	1.690	0.789	1.492	0.624
Planned focus on form to incidental focus on form	1.520	0.856	1.342	0.919
Incidental focus on form to focus on meaning	1.436	0.976	1.267	0.777

TABLE 13

Tests Between Groups of Third-Semester Participants on Culture

	Posttest 1		Posttest 2	
Comparing:	SD	Sig.	SD	Sig.
Planned focus on form to focus on meaning	0.481	0.983	0.429	0.944
Planned focus on form to incidental focus on form	0.433	0.715	0.387	0.482
Incidental focus on form to focus on meaning	0.428	0.825	0.382	0.280

Table 12 gives the results for the production-grammar component for third-semester learners. On the production-grammar tests, there was no significance between all groups for posttest 1 and posttest 2.

Finally, the data for the cultural component are analyzed in Table 13. It can be seen that after the experiment, the groups did not perform significantly differently. The delayed test did not show any sign of significant difference between the treatments, meaning that they all had similar effects on the learners when tested two weeks after the experimental lesson.

To summarize the findings, these analyses illustrate that the experiments in second- and third-semester groups resulted in immediate improvement. For the second-semester learners, even though the results do not show gains in every component of the tests, the treatment that led to predominantly higher scores on the majority of the tests for vocabulary, focused-grammar, and production-grammar was the planned focus-on-form treatment. This treatment explicitly focused attention on the gram-

matical and lexical items, and the planned focus-on-form learners appear to have learned these items better than the learners in the other treatment groups. However, the focus-on-meaning treatment and the incidental focus-on-form treatment do not show any significant difference between them, meaning that both treatments produced statistically similar scores. Those results do not show up for the third-semester participants, whose only instance of significant difference was with the planned focus-on-form group that performed significantly better on the vocabulary component of posttest 1. In the other components of the tests, no significant differences appear between or among treatments.

Discussion and Conclusions: The Effectiveness of Content-Enriched Instruction and Focus on Form

The research question—Which type of focus-on-form technique through a content-enriched instruction lesson is more effective for learning L2 grammar, vocabulary, and cultural content in intermediate French L2 classes?—raised some discussion regarding the effectiveness of content-enriched instruction with the integration of focus on form. The results analyzing the efficiency of the treatment are clear. For both second- and third-semester groups, any significant differences in the data are found with the planned focus-on-form treatment. This finding constitutes support for using planned focus-on-form in a content-enriched instruction setting: The introduction of language forms (lexical and grammatical) appears to be beneficial to the learners at the same time they are learning the culture. Even though the effects are not statistically significant by the time of the second posttest, the technique nonetheless seems to be a promising way to introduce or review the forms in a meaningful context. The idea that recognizing vocabulary is necessary for comprehending meaning could explain the fact that the planned focus-on-form treatment of both second-

and third-semester learners outperformed the other treatments, including incidental focus on form. Norris and Ortega (2000) mention that explicit teaching appears to improve the noticing of forms. Their meta-analysis shows that treatments that include a focus on form are more effective than treatments that do not, and that the explicitness of the focus on form is an important factor. In addition, for the group performing better on the grammar-production task among the second-semester learners, a significant difference appears: The planned focus-on-form group had significantly higher mean scores than the two other groups. Their opportunity to notice the targeted forms seems to have increased the likelihood of integrating those forms in the context of a communicative productive task, as the production-grammar task results demonstrated. Again, this supports Norris and Ortega's study, as the planned focus-on-form group was able to notice not only the vocabulary, but (in the case of the second-semester learners) also the grammatical features. Because vocabulary was textually enhanced and closely linked to the meaning of the presentation, the learners in the planned focus-on-form group acquired the vocabulary better than the other two groups. The instructors who saw the enhanced forms integrated in their materials were encouraged to focus on the targeted forms by giving a synonym, a translation, or a paraphrase, or by stressing them with their voice. For example, one instructor translated the words *amère* [bitter] and *course* [race]. In this case, input enhancement did have a positive effect on teaching (by instructors noticing the forms to focus on) and possibly learning. Researchers (Sharwood Smith, 1993; VanPatten, 1993, 1996, 2003a; Wong, 2004) encourage input enhancement to help learners distinguish between meaning and form because meaning might initially be easier to process for learners.

My initial hypothesis on learning stated that 1) the incidental focus-on-form instruction provided by instructors or brought up

by students would still foster learning; 2) with the absence of enhanced forms, focus-on-form became incidental and noticing measurably decreased; and 3) with the absence of incidental focus on form, learners would have little chance to notice the forms at all, as the meaning would become the sole focus of instruction. The results of the study showed that responding to learners' questions or focusing some attention on form without planning ahead of time (i.e., incidental focus on form) does not seem to make a difference compared to just focusing on meaning. Importantly, the videos revealed that instructors' feedback in the incidental focus-on-form and focus-on-meaning groups was very similar: In both conditions, instructors focused attention on lexical forms they apparently thought would be difficult. In any case, the data do not support this part of the initial hypothesis. Apparently, if the learners or instructors do not raise specific grammatical problems, no incidental grammatical focus on form is made. Instructors who focus on meaning might decide to also focus on specific forms for their students to notice or in response to an error. Planned focus on form, with the support of input enhancement and clear instructions to target language form, allows the instructors to remember to bring students' attention to particular grammatical and lexical forms, while still presenting a meaningful content. It could then be argued that the success of input enhancement, in the case of this study, could also be based on instructors noticing the forms to focus on due to the bolding and coloring of target forms.

Another issue that is essential to point out is that even though culture was not being enhanced in the text (although there were pictures illustrating the cultural content), the planned focus-on-form groups of the second semester performed better on the cultural component, meaning they retained more information than the other two groups. This might be because learners realized that they had to concentrate on several aspects of the language (culture,

vocabulary, *and* grammar). As for the third-semester learners, results showed that all learners had comparable scores, implying that the integration of grammatical and lexical forms did not hinder acquisition of cultural knowledge.

Implications
This study shows that input enhancement provokes favorable results; this technique may be useful when presenting new content or new forms to learners. In this particular study, learning of vocabulary, grammar, and culture information occurred. Even though new content might distract learners from noticing forms, the results of this study show that presenting enhanced grammatical or lexical items for the first time might be worthwhile, offering learners an initial connection with the language forms. Previous research on the acquisition of linguistic form suggests that forms have to be presented within a meaningful message to be noticed and learned (e.g. Doughty & Varela, 1998; Doughty & Williams, 1998; Ellis, 2001; Ellis et al., 2001, 2002; Long, 1991; Spada, 1997; Williams & Evans, 1998). In order to increase the probability of noticing through content and encourage the flow of attention, enhancing forms is promoted (Doughty & Williams, 1998; Sharwood Smith, 1991, 1993; Wong, 2004). Enhancement can be done in many different ways (e.g., textual, visual, physical, verbal) and instructors can expand their imagination in many directions to help learners notice meaning and form. Furthermore, if input enhancement causes the instructors to focus on form, this might be a good technique to use to guide them in a specific teaching style.

This study has supported the idea of integrating forms within content, not just because the forms are learned, but also because the content appears to be assimilated. Content-enriched instruction can use a vast range of possible topics: cinema (dramas, comedies, cartoons), literature (novels, short stories, plays, poetry), cultural elements specific to a country

(school systems, driving laws, sports, cuisine), history, geography, and so forth. All these themes can be of great value for the learners, because through them, they can learn not only language, but information about the numerous cultures of the world. Matching the appropriate forms with a specific content might be a difficult task but is necessary to ease the acquisition of both. The language form could be introduced and reviewed through different content to provide a variety of learning contexts and longer exposure. Diverse activities, matching different learning skills, can be created to help learners develop those skills.

The design of a syllabus, with the integration of content-enriched instruction, can be done at different levels, from lower to higher levels of college language classes. Using Ballman's (1997) four-step model (i.e., setting of the stage, providing input, guided participation, and an extension activity), instructors should carefully plan their content-enriched instruction lessons, assuring smooth continuity between sections and enhanced forms. With the help of instructors, teacher educators could work toward that goal so the scope of materials can be theoretically based, while being practical for language classrooms.

Researchers have raised the issue of the role that focus on form plays in language learning. Long (1991) and Ellis (2001) claim that focus on form refers to a combination of form and meaning, as opposed to focus on meaning and focus on forms. It can happen incidentally or it can be planned. However, one issue needs to be raised: How much focus should be on meaning and form in order not to hinder one another? In other words, what is a beneficial balance between meaning and form? This is a challenge that has not been examined in theory. Focus on form has had support from many researchers; however, developing a model for its application in a diversity of contexts (e.g., college L2 classes, immersion classes, content-based courses, etc.) could be an important initiative in the understanding of focus on form and its applications in language learning.

Additionally, VanPatten (2003a, 2003b) believes learners attend to meaning before attending to forms. If the input contains too much information, its processing may be overloaded and learners will give priority to meaning. This study weakly supports VanPatten's belief. A large amount of new input was given at the time of the experiment, and the working memory of one of the groups of learners (the second-semester incidental focus-on-form group) seems to have been overloaded since some grammatical forms did not get processed as intake. However, furthering our understanding of learners' input processing will be necessary if we are to increase learning in the presence of meaning and form.

Along with the previous implications, this study suggests that there are many more opportunities for further research in this area. Due to lack of evidence, empirical research is needed to shed light on the effectiveness of content-enriched instruction at both the college and secondary school levels. Content-enriched instruction, with the use of focus on form, appears to have positive overall effects on the acquisition of meaning and form, and could be beneficial for language learners and their instructors to view a specific content while being introduced to or reviewing grammatical and lexical forms.

Limitations
This is one of the first empirical studies on the effects of content-enriched instruction; therefore, a few limitations warrant discussion. First, replications, with new content and forms and at different levels of instruction are necessary to lend support to the new findings.

Another major limitation is based on the duration of the experiment. Due to curricular constraints, the experiment lasted 50 minutes. Normal instruction of particular linguistic items is often presented to the learners and practiced over several days. Positive results nonetheless were observed;

this is an encouraging sign both for this study and for future research projects.

Finally, when examining the differences between treatment types, the scores from posttest 2 raise an important issue for both levels: There is a lack of long-term effect between treatments. The significant differences between the planned focus-on-form treatment and the other two groups, noted on posttest 1, disappeared after two weeks. This lack of sustained advantage for the planned focus-on-form group may have been related to the short exposure to the target forms. In their extensive study, Norris and Ortega (2000) looked at the length of exposure and noticed that language instruction seems to have a long-term effect. In the 78 studies Norris and Ortega reviewed, the more explicit treatments had an average length of exposure of at least three hours. This study provided a short period of exposure with a small number of form instances, which may not have been sufficient for the planned focus-on-form group to sustain its initial advantage. It is important to remember that most textbooks allow for longer exposure of grammatical and lexical form within each chapter and throughout the textbook. Furthermore, the explicitness of teaching might make a difference in learning and retention, and often depends on the techniques used in the textbooks.

Conclusions

This research project raises different aspects of language teaching and learning. Teachers need to be able to clearly understand the techniques designed for content-enriched instruction. Presenting form while still focusing on meaning is not a natural skill, and instructors may need further instruction. Comprehending how learners process form in a communicative context is also essential if we are ever to know the amount of planning necessary for an efficient content-enriched instruction lesson. Since in this study, focus on form, with the support of input enhancement, was shown to help learning and possibly teaching, developing material that promotes content and

form with the purpose of fulfilling content-enriched instruction objectives is warranted. From the conclusions, many areas with regard to instructors' behavior and learners' language processing remain to be investigated. However, this study has supported a methodology that encourages the integration of content, grammar, and vocabulary. Recently, I had the opportunity to interact with high school teachers who mentioned they had practiced the same concept as content-enriched instruction, though without following a specific procedure. They said the knowledge that research could back up their teaching methods was encouraging, and learning a specific approach to content-enriched instruction was helpful and constructive. Clearly, we need to look further into content-enriched instruction and to develop materials for its application.

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Notes

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APPENDIX A

Lesson Plans with Focus on Form: Belgium

1. Setting the stage (3 minutes maximum):
   Teacher: To start the lesson, ask general questions to your students about their knowledge of Belgium. For example:

   Où est situé la Belgique? [Where is Belgium located?]
   Quelles langues parle-t-on en Belgique? [Which languages do people speak in Belgium?]
   Que savez-vous de particulier sur ce pays? [What do you know in particular about this country?]
   Connaissez-vous d'autres petits pays où l'on parle français? (la Suisse, le Luxembourg, le Burkina Faso, . . .) [Do you know other small countries where people speak French? (Switzerland, Luxembourg, Burkina Faso, . . .)]

2. Providing input (20 minutes maximum):
   Teacher: Below is the information you should cover, with the help of the transparencies and the other materials (pictures and music). Use the pictures to illustrate the content of the transparencies.

   Use the transparencies and other materials to make this presentation.

La Belgique[1]

La géographie:
   La Belgique se trouve au Nord-Est de la France (cf. carte de Rendez-vous), *sur la Mer du Nord* (cf. photo 1) [Belgium is situated to the northeast of France (see map in Rendez-vous), on the North Sea (see photo 1)]
   Il y a deux régions principales avec deux langues officielles:
   [There are two main regions with two official languages:]

- *la Flandre où l'on parle flamand (hollandais)*
  [Flanders, where Flemish (Dutch) is spoken]
- *la Wallonie où l'on parle français.* (cf. carte linguistique)
  [Walloon, where French is spoken (see linguistic map)]

La capitale, Bruxelles, est bilingue. [The capital, Brussels, is bilingual.]

Bruxelles est la ville la plus (+++) importante de l'Europe parce que c'est la capitale de l'Europe. (photos 2, 2b, 2c)
[Brussels is the most important city in Europe because it is the capital of Europe.]
La Belgique est aussi (=) grande que l'état de Maryland. Donc elle est relativement petite!
[Belgium is as large as the state of Maryland. So it is relatively small!]
La population est aussi (=) grande que celle du Michigan (environ 10 millions).
[The population is as large as that of Michigan (about 10 million).]

Voici quelques photos d'une autre ville belge appelée Bruges. Bruges est une très jolie ville qui est plus (+) petite et rustique que Bruxelles. Il y a des canaux. (Cf. photos 3, 4, 5, 6, 6b)
[Here are a few pictures of another Belgian city called Bruges. Bruges is a very pretty city that is smaller and quainter than Brussels. There are canals.]

La monnaie:
[Currency:]
   La monnaie belge est la même que la monnaie européenne, c'est-à-dire que c'est l'Euro (€). (cf. le billet en Euro)
   [Belgian money is the same as European money, meaning that it is the Euro. (see the Euro bill)]

La monarchie:
[Monarchy:]
   Teacher: Ask your students: *à votre avis, quel genre de gouvernement y a-t'il?* [To your knowledge, what type of government is there?]

   En Belgique, il y a une monarchie depuis 1830, donc il y a un roi. Il s'appelle Albert II. (cf. photo 7)
   [In Belgium, there has been a monarchy since 1830, so there is a king. His name is Albert II.]

   Le roi n'a pas tous les pouvoirs. En réalité, c'est le Premier Ministre, Guy Verhofstadt, qui est la personne politique la plus (+++) importante.
   [The king does not have all the powers. In reality, it is the Prime Minister, Guy Verhofstadt, who is the most important political person.]

Les religions:
[Religions:]
   Les religions en Belgique sont le christianisme, l'islam, le judaïsme, et d'autres religions moins populaires. La religion la plus (+++) répandue est le christianisme, en particulier le catholicisme (95%).
   [Religions in Belgium are Christianity, Islam, Judaism, and other less popular religions. The most widespread religion is Christianity, in particular, Catholicism (95%).]

Le climat:
[Climate:]

> *En général, en Belgique, il fait **plus (+)** chaud en hiver **que** dans le Midwest.*
> *Mais il fait **moins (-)** chaud en été **que** dans le Midwest.*
> [In general, in Belgium, it is warmer than in the Midwest in the winter. But it is less warm than the Midwest in the summer.]

La cuisine:
[Cuisine:]

> **Teacher: Ask your students:** *quel genre de cuisine trouve-t-on en Belgique?*
> [What type of cuisine can one find in Belgium?]
> *Les Belges aiment la bonne cuisine (comme les Français!), mais ils aiment aussi beaucoup manger (comme les Allemands!). (cf. photo 8)*
> [Belgian people like good cuisine (like French people!), but they also like to eat a lot (like German people!). (See photo 8)]
>
> *Un plat typique de la Belgique est **les moules-frites**. Attention, les frites sont d'origine belge, pas française! (cf. photo 9)*
> [A typical dish in Belgium is mussels and fries. Be careful, fries are originally from Belgium, not France!]
>
> *Les endives sont d'origine belge et font partie de nombreuses recettes.*
> [Endives are originally from Belgium and are part of many recipes.]
> *Une autre spécialité belge: **les gaufres** . . . avec de la crème Chantilly. (cf. photo 10)*
> [Another Belgian specialty: waffles . . . with whipped cream.]
> *Il y a une grande variété de fromages mais elle est **moins (+)** grande **qu'** en France.*
> [There are a large variety of cheeses but it is less than in France.]
> *La bière belge est aussi très populaire.*
> [Belgian beer is also very popular.]

La musique belge:
[Belgian music:]

> **Teacher: Ask your students:** *Est-ce que vous connaissez des chanteurs belges?*
> [Do you know of any Belgian singers?]
>
> *Il y a aussi des célébrités francophones originaires de la Belgique.*
> [There are also francophone celebrities of Belgian origin.]
> *En musique, par exemple, il y a Jacques Brel qui était très populaire dans les années 50.*
> [In music, for example, there is Jacques Brel who was very popular in the '50s.]
> *Renaud est aussi un chanteur très populaire et il est **plus (+)** contemporain **que** Jacques Brel. (cf. extraits de chansons)*
> [Renaud is also a very popular singer and he is more contemporary than Jacques Brel.]
> *En général, les jeunes préfèrent Renaud parce qu'il chante sur les problèmes de la société.*
> [In general, the youth prefers Renaud because he sings about social problems.]
> *Les chansons d'amour de Jacques Brel sont parmi **les plus (+++)** populaires dans la musique de langue française.*
> [Jacques Brel's love songs are among the most popular in French music.]

Les personnages imaginaires:
[Imaginary characters:]

> *Il y a aussi des personnages de bandes dessinées qui sont "nés" en Belgique. (montrer les BD)*
> [There are also comic book characters that were "born" in Belgium. (show the comic books)]

> *Par exemple, "Tintin et Milou" raconte les aventures d'un jeune homme et de son chien.*
> *Les "Schtroumpfs" sont des célébrités internationales qui sont aussi belges.*
> [For example, "Tintin et Milou" is about the adventures of a young man and his dog. The Smurfs are also international characters who are also Belgian.]

> *Parmi les francophones, c'est "Tintin et Milou" qui sont <u>les plus</u> appréciés <u>(+++)</u>, surtout parmi le public adulte.*
> [Among the francophones, "Tintin et Milou" are more appreciated, especially among the adult public.]

Les fêtes belges:
[Belgian holidays:]

> *En Belgique, il y a bien sûr des fêtes nationales qui sont soit religieuses, soit civiles.*
> [In Belgium, there are of course national holidays that can be either religious or secular.]

> *La Saint-Nicolas, qui est décembre, est <u>plus (+)</u> populaire <u>que</u> Noël.*
> [Saint-Nicholas, which takes place in December, is more popular than Christmas.]

> *Il y a aussi la fête nationale: le 21 juillet.*
> [There is also the national holiday: July 21st.]

3. <u>Guided participation</u> (12 minutes maximum):
   Oral activity

   - During this activity, you will replay two extracts of songs from Jacques Brel and Renaud.
   - Give the words of the songs (sheets provided).
   - Play the extracts a first time, asking students to try to follow.
   - Play the extracts a second time, asking students to try to listen for the types of feelings the singers attempt to emit.
   - Ask students to give you adjectives or nouns that could describe those feelings. Write them down on the board.
   - Using the answers on the board, ask students to give their opinion making comparisons between the two songs, using the vocabulary on the board (or other words they know).

   > *Quelle chanson préférez-vous? Pouquoi?*
   > [Which song do you prefer? Why?]
   > *Quelles comparaisons pouvez-vous faire entre les deux chansons?*
   > [What comparisons can you make between both songs?]

4. <u>Extension activity</u> (minimum 20 minutes):
   <u>Written activity</u>–see "Ha! La Belgique!" section below for instructions to students

- Ask students to break into groups of 2 or 3. Hand out the envelops with the pictures. Ask them to follow the instructions.
- Collect their written activity at the end of class.

Thank you **very** much for being willing to help me with my study. You are **SO** kind!

Ha! La Belgique!

Mettez-vous en groupe de 3.
[Form groups of three.]

Maintenant, vous allez imaginer un voyage en Belgique. Voici les photos que vous avez prises avec votre appareil photo digital. Choisissez-en 5 à 7. Et à partir de ces photos, écrivez (en discutant avec votre groupe) une description de 8 phrases minimum de votre voyage. Vous pouvez choisir le présent ou le passé (passé composé ou imparfait). Mais attention! Il est important de faire quatre (4) formes du comparatif (more . . . than, less . . . than, as . . . as) et du superlatif (the most, the least).

[Now, you will imagine a trip in Belgium. Here are some photos that you took with your digital camera. Choose 5 to 7 of them. From these photos, write (while discussing with your group) a description of your trip with a minimum of 8 sentences. You can choose the present or past tense *(passé composé ou imparfait)*. But be careful! It is important to **use four (4) forms of the comparative (more . . . than, less . . . than, as . . . as) and of superlative (the most, the least).**]

> *Par exemple* [For example]: The visit at the museum was *less* interesting *than* the one at the sea.

En résumé:	- *décrivez votre voyage en Belgique en français*
	- *à partir de 5 à 7 photos*
	- *au présent ou au passé*
	- *8 phrases minimum*
	- *utilisez le comparatif* (more . . . than, less . . . than, as...as) *ou le superlatif* (the most, the least)
[In summary:	- describe your trip in Belgium in French
	- using 5 to 7 photos
	- in the present or past tense
	- minimum of 8 phrases
	- using comparative (more . . . than, less . . . than, as . . . as) or superlative (the most, the least)]

Vous pouvez utiliser les idées suivantes pour vous guider: villes, activités, temps (weather), *durée* (length of trip), *nourriture, vêtements, votre opinion du voyage, différences avec les Etats-Unis.* [You can use the following ideas to guide you: cities, activities, weather, length of trip, food, clothing, your opinion on the trip, differences with the Unites States.]

> *Bon voyage!*
> [Have a good trip!]

Note for Appendix A:

1. Words that are in bold are focused cultural items. Words that are underlined and in bold originally appeared in blue and are focused lexical items. Words that are underlined twice and in bold originally appeared in red and are focused grammatical items.

APPENDIX B

Pretest, Posttest1, Posttest II: Belgium

La Belgique! [Belgium]

This activity contains 25 questions, divided in three categories: The first one (7 questions) concerns facts about Belgium, the second one (17 questions) concerns the French language, while in the third one you are asked to write a short paragraph. If in the first two categories, if you do not know an answer, simply leave the answer blank.

I. Culture
Fill in the blanks with a short but clear answer in English:

1. Approximately how many inhabitants does Belgium have?_____
2. What are the two official languages of Belgium?_____
3. What is the name of the Belgian currency?_____
4. What is the date of the Belgian national holiday?_____
5. What is the name of the King of Belgium?_____
6. What is the name of a famous Belgian singer (past or present)?_____
7. What is one comic book that finds its origins in Belgium?_____

II. Language

A. Translate the following words into French:

8. king   _____
9. comic book   _____
10. waffle   _____
11. mussels and french fries _____
12. Flemish   _____
13. powers   _____
14. holidays   _____

B. Below are sentences comparing different facts about Belgium. Complete the sentences by filling in the blanks with an appropriate French expression. In formulating your answers, use the provided English translations.[1]

> *Example: Les trains européens sont <u>confortables et rapides</u>.*
> (European trains are **comfortable and fast**.)

15. *Bruges est* _____ *et admirée par les touristes.*
(Bruges is very beautiful and admired by tourists.)

16. *L'hiver belge est* _____ *l'hiver du Midwest.*
(The Belgian winter is **warmer than** the Midwest winter.)

17. *Noël est* _____ *la Saint-Nicolas.*
(Christmas is **less popular than** Saint-Nicholas.)

18. *La population de la Belgique est* _____ *la population du Michigan.*
(The population of Belgium is **as large as** the population of Michigan.)

19. *La bonne cuisine est* _____ *les Belges.*
(Fine cuisine is **essential for** Belgians.)

20. *Les jeunes belges pensent que la musique moderne est* _____.
(The young Belgians think that modern music is **the most** interesting.)

21. *La Belgique est* _____ *les Etats-Unis.*
(Belgium is **smaller than** the United States.)

22. *La bière belge est* _____ *la bière allemande.*
(Belgian beer is **as good as** German beer.)

23. *Le chocolat belge est* _____.
(Belgian chocolate is **the most delicious.**)

24. *Le premier ministre est* _____ *politiques.*
(The Prime Minister is **central in** politics.)

III. Spring Break
Spring Break was only last week. What did you do? In a paragraph of a minimum of seven (7) sentences, describe what you did and where you went, making at least **four (4)** comparisons with a previous vacation you have had (i.e., briefly state which one of the two vacations was better? why? etc.). Make sure you use the **comparative** (i.e., **more . . . than, less . . . than, as . . . as**), or the **superlative** (i.e. **the most, the least**). Use the past tense (*passé composé* or *imparfait*) in your sentences.[2]

In summary: Write at least 7 sentences, making 4 comparisons in the past tense by using the comparative and/or superlative.

Notes for Appendix B:
1. The pretest did not include the distracters added in Section II B in posttest I and posttest II. The items in Sections I and II were shuffled for each test.
2. The scoring for this section went as follows: 4 points total per form present in the writing, divided as: 1 point for correct form of the comparative or superlative, 1 point for correct agreement adjective, 1 point for correct meaning regarding the preceding preposition, and 1 point for trying.