

*Devoted to research and discussion about the learning
and teaching of foreign and second languages*

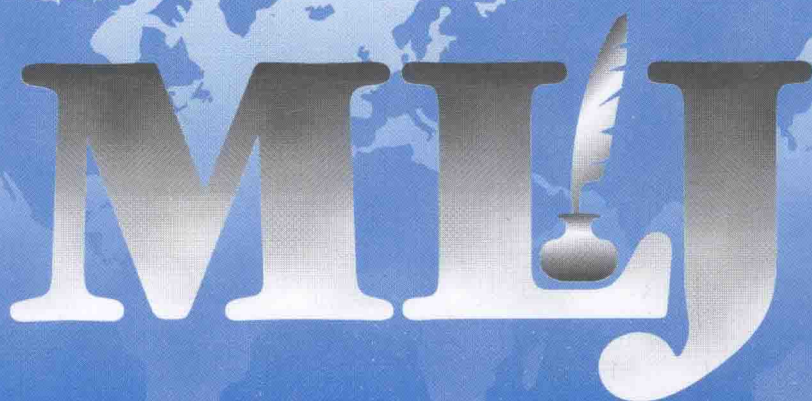
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Goals of Collegiate Learners and the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning*

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Sally, Dianna, and Narek
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Preface

ONE OF THE CORNERSTONE CONSTRUCTS FOR CHANGE INVOLVED IN FIRTH AND Wagner's (1997) reconceptualized approach to the study of second language acquisition (SLA) was a call for "an increased 'emic' (i.e., participant-relevant) sensitivity toward fundamental concepts, and the broadening of the traditional SLA data base" (p. 286). Their watershed contribution to the pages of the *Modern Language Journal* pointed out the need for rethinking parochial notions about the definition and operationalization of accepted constructs such as *native vs. nonnative speakers*, *language learner*, and *interlanguage* to include perspectives from an important contingent of SLA stakeholders hitherto ignored in the literature: the language learners themselves. This monograph by Magnan, Murphy, and Sahakyan provides those learners with an opportunity for their voices to be heard by investigating whether their goals for the acquisition of communicative and intercultural competence align with the goals set out in the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century* (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1996, 1999, 2006, hereafter Standards).

The lack of student voices in the conception of the Standards was chronicled by Davis (1997) and Lafayette and Draper (1996), who noted that the task force to create them was composed of 11 educators and a 20-member advisory board from government and the community, but without any student presence. This use of stakeholders outside the actual process of SLA for the creation and validation of the Standards, an essentially 'etic' approach, is now complemented by the 'emic' stance of Magnan, Murphy, and Sahakyan's monograph, the first research study to examine the Standards from the perspective of the learner, the ultimate insider to the language learning process.

The five standards (commonly known as the 5 Cs) set forth in the Standards document related to "five interlocking concepts, each one representing a domain of knowledge associated with language and expression" (Magnan, Murphy, and Sahakyan, p. 1 of their introduction): *Communication* (communicate in languages other than English), *Cultures* (gain knowledge and understanding of other cultures), *Connections* (connect with other disciplines and acquire information), *Comparisons* (develop insight into the nature of language and culture), and *Communities* (participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world). The Communication domain contains three content standards (a focus on interpretive, presentational, and interpersonal modes), while each of the other domains encompasses two content standards, for a total of 11 standards (Standards, 2006). In a Standards-based curriculum, these five domains would be seamlessly integrated into activities that facilitate the acquisition of communicative and intercultural competence in target language classrooms. However, during the implementation process, research has shown that educators have given more emphasis to some standards over others (ACTFL, 2011), with consequences that may be detrimental to the acquisition of tools that would assist language learners to become lifelong students of the target language and culture. The prioritization of these standards by both educators and students constitutes an important focus of the current study.

This monograph breaks new ground by identifying what foreign language students actually want to learn, their priorities for learning, and their expectations for success as language learners in the context of the Standards. In order to determine how these factors compare at different points in the learning sequence, Magnan, Murphy, and Sahakyan adopted a cross-sectional approach and gathered data from students at the beginning and end of the first four semesters of foreign language study (a typical sequence required by many colleges for their foreign language requirement).

An outstanding feature of this monograph's research design is its use of a large sample to bolster its validity. The data for this study were collected from a survey taken by 16,529 students at 11 postsecondary institutions in the United States, and from 200 interviews at two of these institutions to see how well their goals and expectations align with the Standards and how they prioritize the five Cs at those two points in time. In order to triangulate findings from the survey and the interviews, a mixed methods approach using both qualitative and quantitative data analyses was adopted.

For the most part, the authors found that the goals and expectations of foreign language students at both the beginning and end of the lower division two-year sequence align well with those of the Foreign Language Standards. However, in terms of their expectations, as students progress from first to second year, their initial optimism about attaining the goals set forth by the Standards is tempered with realism about their ultimate achievements and the timeline for meeting their goals. Nevertheless, as students approach the end of their fourth semester, they show greater individual agency, an enhanced understanding of the relationship between language and culture, and a heightened belief in the efficacy of coursework to help them attain their goals. In order to understand the alignment of learners' goals and priorities with the Standards throughout their undergraduate language learning experience, the monograph authors point out the need for this kind of study to be extended to include groups of language majors and minors in upper division courses.

Although students' goals and expectations for language learning were generally consonant with those of the Standards, learner prioritization of the Standards did not completely align with that of foreign language educators. While the literature on the Standards (e.g., ACTFL, 2011a, 2011b) has found that educators prioritize the Communication and Cultures standards at the expense of Comparisons, Connections, and Communities, the students in the present study placed the most value on the goal areas of Communities and Communication. The content areas most frequently chosen in these two domains were those that involved using the target language in social interaction and in building social relationships with individuals in the target culture.

Another unique feature of this monograph is its in-depth comparison of student goals and expectations in learners of both commonly taught (CTLs, e.g., French, German, Spanish) and less commonly taught languages (LCTLs, e.g., Arabic, Chinese, Russian). The data reveal that, although both groups valued the goals of the Standards, students in the LCTL group more strongly agreed that the majority of the standards represented their personal goals than did the CTL group. In addition, even though both groups' expectations were similar regarding the attainment of the Communication and Communities standards, students in the LCTL group had even higher expectations regarding their attainment of the Cultures, Connections, and Comparisons goal areas than their CTL counterparts. Thus, the monograph authors suggest that the Standards match the goals and expectations of LCTL students as well or better than those of CTL students, which counters any argument that the Standards cannot be adopted for lower level language learners across the board.

One of the most important contributions of this monograph is its focus on the use of the Standards for setting goals for language courses at the postsecondary level. Magnan, Murphy, and Sahakyan note that the application of the Standards for the development of foreign language curricula and goal setting has been limited primarily to elementary and secondary educational settings. This focus is not altogether surprising given the fact that the aforementioned task force that created the Standards was comprised mostly of educators who were either from K–12 environments or were postsecondary educators working in K–12 foreign language teacher education; no college-level educators in literary and cultural studies were included on the Standards task force (Davis, 1997). This task force composition, in part, may help to explain the relative lack of implementation of the Standards in postsecondary foreign language curricula, despite their purported focus on all levels of language study (K–16). The insights revealed in this monograph regarding the consonance of postsecondary learner goals and expectations with those set forth in the Standards provide support for the integration of these five domains and 11 content standards into the last four years of the K–16 sequence.

Despite the demonstrated alignment of the Standards with personal language learning goals and expectations of postsecondary students, the data in this study also point out areas in which learner goals are not addressed by the Standards. These shortcomings include the lack of emphasis on the acquisition of *fluency* (a goal expressed by many students) and the underlying assumption that language courses are composed only of students who have not been exposed to the language or culture outside their classroom. The current global multilingual reality—more and more language students in the United States and abroad come from multilingual and multicultural backgrounds and use language contingently according to the exigencies of the context (Kramsch, 2009; Kramsch & Whiteside, 2007; Lafford, 2007)—is not reflected in the Standards. For instance, the monograph authors note that students in this study identified an implicit assumption of the existence of primarily monolingual and monocultural learners in the Comparisons standards, which assumes no overlap between the native and target cultures.

Another unique feature of this monograph is that it looks at how students' views of the Standards fit with different methodological approaches to the teaching of foreign languages, such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) that focuses on face-to-face verbal interaction and literacy-based pedagogies that help students to develop reading and writing skills and to think critically about texts (see Byrnes, 2012, for a critical review of these pedagogies). Instead of prescribing the use of one approach over the other for implementing the Standards, the monograph authors engage readers in exploring how the high value students place on language use is reflected in either of these pedagogical approaches.

In sum, the authors of this monograph have provided the foreign language studies field with an invaluable model for eliciting student voices regarding their goals, priorities, and expectations for the acquisition of communicative and intercultural competence in an increasingly complex linguistic and cultural landscape. Recognizing that not everyone is on board with the application of the Standards at the postsecondary level, Magnan, Murphy, and Sahakyan present views that are critical of the Standards and their application as well as those that support the implementation of the Standards in foreign language curricula.

As already noted, the 'emic' stance taken by the authors has shown that students' goals and expectations coincide to a great extent with those proposed by the Standards; however, the data also show that language learners give a much higher priority to the Communities goal area (a prioritization also suggested by Magnan, 2008) than foreign language educators have done in the past. Learners' prioritization of both the Communities and Communication goal

areas provides support for implementing the call by the Modern Language Association (2007) to restructure collegiate foreign language programs to engage more meaningfully with communities in a 'changed world.' (See Byrnes, Maxim, and Norris [2010] for an example of curricular change to answer this call for restructuring foreign language curricula.) For instance, the increasing student demand for internships, community service learning (CSL), and languages for specific purposes programs at U.S. universities (Abbott & Lear, 2010; Lafford, 2012; Lear & Abbott, 2008; Long & Uscinski, 2012) is consonant with the results of the current monograph study, which show that students see their locus of learning as being both inside and outside the classroom. Moreover, learners in the current study demonstrated an interest in forming social networks with native speakers of the target language and in finding practical applications of their language skills, for example by participating in internships in study abroad and domestic community settings. Lafford (2013) proposes that SLA scholars undertake research on learners' strategies in these types of experiential settings in order to be able to prepare students better for the acquisition of the target language outside the classroom.

It is hoped that the learner perspectives on goal areas, priorities, and expectations for ultimate attainment of the Standards provided by this monograph study will inform and inspire curriculum designers, materials creators, and language educators in their fashioning of language learning experiences that are consonant with the needs and aspirations of their students. In particular, the availability of CSL and internship experiences can facilitate learners' attainment of the goals set out in the Communities standards that students prioritized (using the target language within and beyond a school setting and using the language for personal enjoyment and enrichment). Successful practical applications and development of learners' linguistic and intercultural abilities outside the classroom may spur them on to lifelong learning and more quality engagement with the multilingual and multicultural communities they will encounter.

Barbara A. Lafford,
Monograph Series Editor

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Goals of Collegiate Learners and the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning*

This monograph presents a national study about how the language learning goals of college students are reflected in the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1996, 1999, 2006). With a mixed method design, the study includes responses from 16,529 students at 11 postsecondary institutions across the United States, with interviews from 200 students at two of these institutions. The first research to examine learner perspectives with regard to the Standards, this study considers (a) whether college students have goals consistent with the Standards, (b) whether they expect to reach these goals during their formal language study, (c) whether these goals and expectations differ for first-year and second-year language students, (d) whether they differ for students of more and less commonly taught languages, (e) whether students understand the Standards and see the five goal areas as interrelated or in terms of hierarchies of priorities, and (f) how the Standards might encourage student reflection, especially regarding the relationships among language, culture, and thought. With the aim of promoting critical thinking about the Standards and their possible application at the college level, the monograph details the history of the framework, with discussion of its limited acceptance and use in postsecondary instruction, and considers what student perceptions tell us about how the Standards might fit with assumptions and characteristics of communicative language teaching and literacy-based approaches to language learning. In this discussion, the monograph examines shortcomings in the Standards framework, as seen through the lens of student perceptions.

Keywords: Standards; foreign/second language learning; learner goals; outcomes; expectations; beliefs; motivation

WHAT SHOULD STUDENTS KNOW AND BE ABLE TO DO AS A RESULT OF FOREIGN language study? Describing educators' best judgment of these abilities, the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* present five interlocking concepts, each one representing a domain of knowledge associated with language and expression. They are:

1. Communication: Communicate in a language other than English
2. Cultures: Gain knowledge and understanding of other cultures
3. Connections: Connect with other disciplines and acquire information
4. Comparisons: Develop insight into the nature of language and culture
5. Communities: Participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world.

According to the Standards document, these domains “provide the broader, more complete rationale for foreign language education that we have sought for decades but never managed to capture in words or in concept until now” (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 2006, p. 15, hereafter Standards). Although it is fair to say that the Standards, as a policy document, represent the greatest effort in U.S. history for setting goals for language learning across K–16 instructional levels, we might still question the suitability of this framework for all learners over such a long time span. With the diverse population of learners with changing needs in U.S. schools and colleges today, can we be confident that all students, at all levels, and studying all languages share these goals for their foreign language study, as the Standards imply? Moreover, the Standards have been considered more

appropriate for K–12 instruction than for the postsecondary level (H. Allen, 2009; H. Allen & Maxim, 2011; Byrnes, 2002b, 2012a; Magnan, 2008a; Paesani & H. Allen, 2012; Terry, 2009), making this blanket assumption for collegiate learners even more questionable.

This monograph presents a study from the perspective of the postsecondary student, an essential actor in the constellation of persons invested in the outcome of Standards-based education, whose voice is absent from the professional literature. The study examines to what extent the goals put forth in the Standards are consistent with the personal goals and learning expectations of postsecondary learners at two levels of instruction—beginners and those completing second-year courses, which is often taken as the end of the collegiate language requirement. Including learners of 31 languages, it also provides insight into the question of whether students of commonly taught languages (CTLs) and less commonly taught languages (LCTLs)¹ have different goals and expectations of meeting them.² The aim of this monograph is to offer survey and interview data about the goals of the Standards from the perspective of the postsecondary learner. The overriding questions are:

- RQ1. Do students readily see their personal goals in the five goal areas of the Standards?
- RQ2. Do they expect to meet these goals as part of their formal language study, and why or why not?
- RQ3. How do they read, or reread, each standard in conjunction with their own desires and beliefs about language learning?

Kern (2000) reminds us that, because communicating successfully in another language means shifting frames of reference, norms, and assumptions of what is possible to say, to do, and to feel, using another language effectively involves thinking differently about language and communication. In their role of setting goals for what students should be able to do with language, do the Standards provide an appropriate match with learners' personal goals? Especially in areas where they might not, could they help learners broaden their thinking about language and communication? As student voices in this study offer insight on the fit between learners' personal goals and their expectations of reaching them and the five domains of the Standards, they will also suggest where the Standards appear to stimulate learner thinking, perhaps even broaden it.

The research presented in the monograph thus aims to address the lack of transparency of the Standards for learners who, as social agents, want and need to perform certain actions in the language. In contrast to the Standards, the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) expressly set transparency to all stakeholders, including learners, as one of its primary objectives (Glover, 2011; North, 2009). Glover advises that the CEFR “aims to encourage language learners to think about what they do when communicating, and to think about what they can do to help themselves and others learn a language better” (p. 121). This statement rings of concern for active engagement and agency of the learner. It brings forth the question of whether, if students were made aware of the Standards, that document might serve them in similar ways.

To situate the study, it is useful in this introduction to consider briefly the four questions that informed the creation of the research design: Why look to students themselves, especially at the postsecondary level, when considering the appropriateness of the Standards' goals? Why consider the learners' expectations for reaching goals along with the importance of individual goals to them? Why begin investigation of postsecondary considerations with the first two years

of college study? Does the distinction between learners of CTLs and of LCTLs relate to how the Standards reflect the goals and expectations of these two groups? In the professional literature, the questions of learner goals and expectations for achievement are framed in discussions of learners' reasons for language study; attitudes, perceptions, beliefs about language learning; and theories of motivation for language learning and learner agency. Detailed presentation of each of these large, and sometimes overlapping, fields is not possible within the restricted framework of this introduction, or even the monograph as a whole. Rather, beginning with the introduction, the monograph will turn to insight from this broad literature to add understanding to and speculation about the findings.

WHY LOOK AT THE PERSONAL GOALS OF POSTSECONDARY LEARNERS?

L. Allen (2002a) believes that "a standards-based curriculum is guided by students' needs and interests" (p. 37). Can that be assumed if the profession has not investigated whether students need or want what the Standards prescribe? Given that learners' goal orientations are closely related to their language learning strategies or self-regulatory behavior (see Dörnyei, 2003, for a review), the profession needs to know whether learners' personal goals actually align well with the goals of the Standards. Research on the Standards has looked to educators, administrators, and community members to validate the goal areas (e.g., Bartz & Singer, 1996; Phillips, 1999; for an analytical summary, see Glisan, 2012); but this group is comprised of institutionally sanctioned outsiders who may not represent actual student goals (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). In fact, as the 591 entries in the ACTFL Standards publication database from 1997 to 2010 reveal (ACTFL, 2012b), and as Glisan (2012) points out, there was no research that asked students if these goals are meaningful to them.³ This lack reinforces the omission revealed by the ACTFL Decades of Standards Project (ACTFL, 2011a, 2011b) that the Standards have not been made transparent to students at the classroom level. Although those writing about the Standards echo national rhetoric for the *Educate America Act: Goals 2000* to say that the Standards "meet the needs of all students" (Jackson, 1996, p. 121), that argument is hard to sustain in the absence of direct evidence that students actually have goals in line with the goal areas of the Standards.

This neglect of the learner perspective perhaps flows from their absence on the task force that created the Standards. According to Davis (1997) and Lafayette and Draper (1996), the task force included 11 educators and a 20-member advisory board from government and the community, but not a single student at any level (National Standards, 2006).⁴ This composition was heavily K–12 oriented (Davis, 1997) because, along with the six members from K–12, the six members from postsecondary education worked primarily in teacher education, rather than in literary and cultural studies (Bartz & Singer, 1996). This composition underlines the neglect of the greater postsecondary level and of its learners in particular. This lack could undermine implementation of the Standards as a curricular framework, especially at the collegiate level. As Williams and Burden (1997) explain, "unless teachers have a sound grasp of what their learners see as important and meaningful, they will not possess all the information they need to make their courses truly motivational" (p. 205).

We might wonder then why students at any level have not been asked if the Standards reflect their goals. Given that the National Standards effort was an attempt to strengthen student outcomes in schools, there is a certain logic to having only teachers set the learning goals (see Jennings, 1996; O'Neil, 1993). However, this logic runs counter to notions about how a learner's personal investment in learning goals enhances motivation. Through ever-

expanding lenses that give an increasingly situated and dynamic perspective,⁵ decades of research on motivation have shown that (a) through interaction with the learning environment, a learner's interest and curiosity can become channeled and elaborated to develop into intrinsic motivation for further learning (Deci & Ryan, 1985); (b) learners' goals influence their affective response to the learning process and these emotions are the fundamental basis of motivation (MacIntyre, 2002; Noels et al., 2000); (c) goals and motivation frame how learners experience tasks (Spence-Brown, 2001) and how they decide whether to engage with target language speakers (MacIntyre, 2007); (d) past experiences and future expectations of success can be powerful factors for motivation or amotivation for future learning (Deci & Ryan, 1985) and for second language learning in particular (Dörnyei, 2003, summarized in Moeller, Theiler, & Wu, 2012); (e) success in reaching goals of foreign language learning brings about changes in identity (MacIntyre, 2002) and promotes autonomy and self-perceptions of competence (Noels et al., 2000); (f) goals and motivation relate to how learners see themselves as individuals and as connected to the target language community (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, on possible selves; Yashima, 2009, on International Posture); and (g) motivation is situation sensitive and fluctuates over time (Dörnyei, 2003; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2012).

Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) summarize the stance of the literature on student goal setting and teaching as follows: “[M]uch of the motivational advice offered to teachers in the educational literature boils down to the following general principle: Find out your students’ goals and the topics they want to learn, and build these into your syllabus as much as possible.” They further explain that learner goals affect learning performance because “[t]hey direct attention and effort towards goal-relevant activities at the expense of irrelevant or distracting actions; [t]hey regulate the amount of effort people expend in that people adjust their effort to the difficulty level required by the task; [t]hey encourage persistence until the goal is accomplished; they promote the search for relevant action plans or task strategies” (all quotes on p. 116).

It is clear that having goals consistent with established learning outcomes can empower learners (Arens, 2010a) by increasing their personal responsibility for learning, in accordance with their increased autonomy (Moeller et al., 2012).⁶ Especially at the postsecondary level, literate adults rely on their cognitive pathways and known sociolinguistic information about expression and behavior to guide their learning (Swaffar & Arens, 2005). Learner agency, as explained by van Lier (2008), can be seen to include concepts of motivation (especially intrinsic motivation [Deci & Flaste, 1995; van Lier, 1996]), willingness to communicate (Williams & Burden, 1997), and autonomy (Benson, 2001), all of which are hypothesized as favoring language learning (see also J. Brown, 2009, for a review). However, research on learner motivation and agency, which focuses on the social dimension of foreign language learning as well as on goal-setting (reviewed by Dörnyei, 2003; Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2012) might lead us to question the assumption that the Standards do, in fact, represent students’ goals, and to look for confirmation from the students themselves. Furthermore, research stressing the dynamic nature of motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011) brings forth the likelihood of differing responses to the Standards from students at different points in the instructional sequence.

Although the professional literature does not look directly at learners’ personal goals for language learning in terms of the Standards, it does offer ample evidence about the reasons students study foreign languages (for reviews, see Lantolf & Sunderman, 2001; Magnan & Tochon, 2001), about orientations that direct language learning (following Gardner, 1985,

and associates' seminal distinction between integrative and instrumental orientations), and about learner attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs about language learning (especially, Horwitz, 1981, 1985, 1987, 1988, 1990, and studies using her Belief About Language Learning Inventory, e.g., Kern, 1995; Kuntz, 1999; Rifkin, 2000; see also Thomas, 2010, and Wesely, 2012, for overviews). Overall, these studies, most of which were conducted with postsecondary learners, point consistently to interpersonal communication as an overriding goal for language learners. It would thus seem likely that, if college students were to prioritize the five goal areas, Communication would be first in importance for them, as it has been for educators in their pedagogical focus (ACTFL, 2011b; Troyan, 2012).⁷ It is to be remembered, however, that, according to the Standards document, the five goal areas are inseparably interlocked. Research has not shown whether learners recognize this interrelatedness or if they might view the goals only as ordered objectives to be fulfilled as subgoals in a greater learning process. Speaking generally, Dörnyei (2005) claims that "hardly any research has been done to examine how people deal with multiple actions and goals, how they prioritize between them, and how the hierarchies of superordinate and subordinate goals are structured" (p. 87). The monograph study will examine how postsecondary learner goals might result in hierarchies of the five goals areas, compare these hierarchies with those attributed to educators, and thus inform the discussion of similarities and differences between learner and educator priorities within the Standards framework. Drawing on student voices, it will further consider whether students also think about learning in terms of the interrelatedness of domains found in the Standards.

WHY ARE LEARNERS' EXPECTATIONS ABOUT ACHIEVING GOALS IMPORTANT?

In addition to knowing whether learners have the goals represented in the Standards, educators should understand whether students expect to achieve these goals during their formal language study or in some period following it. Indeed, as Glisan (2012) pointed out, the profession does not even know whether the goals of the Standards represent what learners can achieve in specific instructional contexts. Expectation of learning success is important, according to expectancy–value theories (cf. Keller, 1983), because learners will perform better if they expect to succeed, and conversely, they are unlikely to be motivated to aim for something they feel they will never achieve (Dörnyei, 2009; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Williams & Burden, 1997). Indeed, teachers have long known that unrealistic expectations can lead to frustration that fosters demotivation (Rifkin, 2006) and sometimes a decision to continue (Arnold, 2008; Fernández, 2008) or to abandon (Altman, 1985) language study. Cutshall (2012c), reporting in *The Language Educator* on an action study attributed to Roberson, offers a compelling example:

After about two years of language class, the [high school Spanish] students felt they hadn't learned what they wanted and so they would discontinue (...). We found that students were making this decision based on the fact that they had goals and they weren't achieved. (p. 34)

Where might learners' expectations come from? They are part of a learner's complex of beliefs and motivation that constitute his or her culture of learning (Bernat & Gvozdenko, 2005; Cortazzi & Jin, 2002).⁸ This personal culture of learning is influenced by national cultures, institutional, socioeconomic, racial, and other (sub)cultures, as well as a learner's individual

experiences (Arnold, 2008; Nikitina & Furuoka, 2007). Research demonstrates how motivation related to a learner's expectations lies in concepts related to that learner's past and future.

From the past, learners are affected by their perceptions of previous experiences in language learning, which they may bring to current situations through motivational retrospection (Dörnyei & Otto, 1998). Perceived success brings a positive emotional affect and optimism to learning (MacIntyre, 2002). Previous failure can stem from *learned helplessness* through previous instruction or negative life experiences (for discussion, see Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; MacIntyre, 2002) or from unrealistic or misinformed beliefs (Mantle-Bromley, 1995; Mori, 1999) that can foster low expectations and related low motivation (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991). Drawing on notions of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997), Daley, Onwuegbuzie, and Bailey (1999) and Cochran, McCallum, and Bell (2010) stressed how this perception of previous achievement or failure leads to attitudes of expectancy that are important predictors of future success or failure in foreign language learning.

Looking more toward the future, expectations for language learning can also come from others close to the learner. Dörnyei (2009) considers expectations of the learner's family, peers, and others in the learner's social environment as contributing to the possible selves that inform both learner goals and expectations. Drawing on the theory of possible selves (Higgins, 1987), Dörnyei explained how learners seek to reconcile notions of the ideal L2 self, the ought-to (or ought) L2 self, and the feared L2 self, that is, to pursue abilities that match an image of what the learner wants to become and images of what others think he or she should become, and to avoid realizing images of what he or she is afraid of becoming. According to MacIntyre, MacKinnon, and Clément (2009),

The strength of the concept of possible selves lies in its focus on the learners as applicable to education research contexts, its focus on who individuals plan to use language with apart from a specific cultural group, and its ability to integrate multiple, sometimes conflicting motives. (p. 58)

It is these multiple motives, and the expectations they bring with them, that educators need to understand in order to help learners set appropriate learning goals and expectations for achieving them.

In addition to a multiplicity of motives, it is also their complexity that is in question, a complexity that is bolstered by the interaction of motive and expectation. Seeing both as dynamic processes corresponds with the opening of the lens of motivation research to focus beyond what incites students to learn a language in the hope of building a positive learning outcome. That potential broadening is at the center of a possible selves framework. In the words of Kramsch (2009), the profession must come to look at "what makes students desire to escape the constraints of their native language and the boundaries of their native culture, and to develop an entirely different habitus" (p. 205). It must also examine how, and for what reasons, learners work through that process. Finding that the term *motivation* is too weak for this concept, Kramsch turns to the notion of learner *engagement*. Might the perspectives in the Standards contribute to understanding how and why students engage in language learning? Examining this question requires a wide range of learners with different backgrounds and personal goals, in different learning situations, and studying different languages. It is hoped that the monograph study, through its numerous and diverse participants seen through both a quantitative and a qualitative lens, can provide needed insight.

WHY INVESTIGATE THE FIRST TWO YEARS OF INSTRUCTION?

The first two years of college language study typically comprise the basic language-learning sequence, where there is typically a disproportionately large number of enrollments compared with advanced courses. According to the 2009 MLA report (Furman, Goldberg, & Lusin, 2010), these two years enrolled 83% of foreign language students in the highest enrolled 15 languages in a sample of four-year college institutions versus 17% in advanced (third- and fourth-year courses). Because the basic language courses and the advanced courses have traditionally quite distinct curricula, there have been many challenges to the “instructional culture shock” (Kern, 2000, p. 8) caused by the bifurcation of the undergraduate curriculum into these basic lower division courses and the upper division courses of advanced content study (see especially MLA, 2007). These first two years remain, nonetheless, critical in studies of learner goals and expectations because it is where, for many learners of less commonly taught languages especially, study begins. According to Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011), unrealistic expectations may be most concerning at the beginning stage of instruction, where they can function as “time bombs” because of the inevitable disappointment to follow (p. 17). This disappointment from goals unachieved is also inherent in the two-year language requirement corresponding to that basic sequence with its often lofty, unreachable outcome of a quasi-native speaker able to use the language professionally and personally (Arens, 2010b).

Although this two-year time span is relatively short, it still provides an opportunity to look at differences in motivation and expectation at two distinct points in the instructional sequence. The profession offers contradictory evidence about the stability of beliefs, motivation, and expectations over time, with some scholars showing how student beliefs are resistant to change (Nikitina & Furuoka, 2007; Peacock, 2001), and others revealing different beliefs, reasons for language study, and strength of motivation at different points of instruction (Busse & Walter, 2013; Horwitz, 1987; Kern, 1995; Murphy et al., 2009; Rifkin, 2000; Rubin, 1987). With regard to the difference in stability between goals and expectations, Csizér, Kormos, and Sarkadi (2010) suggest that goals seem the most stable, whereas attitudes and motivational behavior, which would be especially related to expectations, tend to fluctuate more.

Based on his review, MacIntyre (2007) describes how the motivational literature would support the notion of change: “The manner in which motivation affects language learning changes as the time frame under study changes” (p. 567).⁹ What is more, change would be assumed in the current dynamic view of motivation as fluctuating in response to personal, situational, and social variables. In longitudinal research, that change is fairly consistently toward a decline in levels of motivation as learners face increasing curricular, cognitive, and linguistic demands and pressures (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011).

The monograph study identifies and compares levels of both goal alignment with the Standards and learner expectation to meet them at the beginning of the first year of collegiate language study and at the end of the second year. Because the study is not longitudinal with the same learners, its aim is not to describe the dynamic system of how motivation evolves across levels, in response to instruction or any other socially regulated situations. The aim is more modest: to identify goals and expectation at two critical points in time in the instructional sequence, and to see whether and where they are similar and different, in terms of their consistency with a national framework purported to have the capacity to cause a sea change in instructed foreign language learning. Identification of any similarities and differences would comprise an initial step in seeing whether and how the Standards might fit with at least lower

levels of postsecondary education, and also serve as data for theorists working from various perspectives in motivation study who might wish to draw on them for furthering their thinking.¹⁰

WHY DISTINGUISH BETWEEN LEARNERS OF COMMONLY TAUGHT AND LESS COMMONLY TAUGHT LANGUAGES?

Clearly, the perspectives of learners is important, both as a general group—such as by levels—and even more so for specific student populations. When implementing a unified set of standards, however, individual difference in perspectives is troublesome because standardization theoretically requires that students have a similar set of beliefs and goals to each other (Foster, 1999). Foster, as well as Paesani and H. Allen (2012), have questioned having uniform standards with student populations that are not homogeneous in terms of their goals and expectations, especially when they are studying different languages, a difference augmented by tendencies of certain student populations to enroll in CTL courses and LCTL courses. In fact, Kramsch (2009) goes so far as to advise that the monolingual learner is a myth and that today's multilingual learners require a more ecologically sensitive pedagogy.

The motivation literature addresses the concern in terms of choices made by the learner, one fundamental choice being the choice of language to be studied or abandoned (MacIntyre, 2002). Research clearly shows differences in student attitudes with the language studied (Thomas, 2010). Investigation of these differences often focuses on the distinction between CTLs and LCTLs, although it is based on frequency of available instruction more than on something inherent in the languages and cultures themselves. Through research, as well as experience, the profession has come to believe that (a) students of LCTLs are more motivated and less nervous about language learning than students of CTLs (Bao & Lee, 2012); (b) students of CTLs and LCTLs take languages for different reasons, with students in LCTLs enrolling more often for reasons of personal interest, enjoyment, and curiosity (A. Brown, 2009c; Murphy et al., 2009); (c) students of LCTLs and CTLs hold different beliefs about language learning, which might be related to perceived higher levels of motivation among LCTL students (Kuntz, 1996; Rifkin, 2000); (d) students of LCTLs tend to be older and more advanced in their academic careers than students of CTLs (A. Brown, 2009c); and (e) students of LCTLs may respond to different external factors, including family and the nature of interaction with them, learning environment, and a more remote cultural context from the learner's native one (see Williams & Burden, 1997, for a discussion of these factors; see Carreira & Kagan, 2011, specifically for heritage learners). Although it is possible that the choice to study an individual language, or the difficulty of that language, rather than the language groups (CTL or LCTL), may be more important in shaping or predicting learner motivation (Rifkin, 2000), the rising interest in the Standards among LCTL educators encourages a close look at this language group variable. In fact, Larson (2006) noted that LCTL professionals have welcomed the Standards, an interest that is reflected in the 131 articles about a wide variety of specific LCTL languages in the ACTFL Standards database, which compares not so unfavorably with the 263 entries for French, German, and Spanish together or with the 141 entries for Spanish alone (H. Berman, personal communication, 12 September, 2012). Given this involvement with the Standards, LCTL languages may present opportunities for tackling some of the related outstanding questions in the theory of motivation and the praxis of foreign language education (Byrnes, 2005b).