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## Letter from the Editor

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It is hard to believe that we are closing out another year. Where has the time gone? We enjoyed a successful Fall Conference on the San Antonio River Walk. We had wonderful speakers, fantastic teachers, and a beautiful river to enjoy. Each time I attend the conference, I am encouraged and inspired by the passion and drive of our Texas World Language educators.

This is a wonderful issue of our TFLA Journal. Megan Whalon continues her session from the Fall Conference and shares with us so many practical tips for incorporating technology into the classroom. Meredith Clark brings us our advocacy updates and reminds us that World Languages in Texas are worth fighting for. Last, but certainly not least, Carolyn Gascoigne and Juliette Parnell bring us a course case study of how reading was systematically incorporated and studied in a university French classroom.

I also want to share that this is my last journal as Editor. I am stepping down as Director of Publications. I have very much enjoyed my time as Journal Editor. I have had so much joy bringing you the latest news and stories. As faculty in higher education, being part of TFLA and being part of this journal, has brought me back to my first educational passion: the classroom. Thank you for allowing me to be part of this wonderful organization and thank you for allowing me to be part of your lives. It has truly been an honor to work with the amazing world language teachers of Texas. I wish each of you a restful and relaxing winter break.

Best Wishes,

Lauren Oropeza Snead, Ed.D.

## TFLA Executive Board

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# Technology Tools For The 21st Century Classroom

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Megan Whalon

San Antonio ISD, San Antonio, Texas

Technology. It seems so scary but it doesn't have to be. Here are a few recommendations on how to effectively implement technology in your 21st century classroom.

- **Choose just a couple of tools to get comfortable with.** You do not need to use every tech tool out there. It is better to choose a couple of tools and implement them with confidence rather than trying too many new things. Students can become easily overwhelmed remembering too many logins, how to access multiple sites, and what the purpose is for each site. Also, be aware that technology is constantly changing and adapting. Be prepared for these sites to change and adapt to what users ask for and need.
- **Do things you can't do on paper.** It is tempting to turn worksheets into PDFs so students may write on them, but students benefit when you explore creative ways to use technology. Have students engage in listening activities, make videos, see new sights via virtual field trips, while also collaborating with their peers and other people from various countries.
- **Don't forget that paper activities and human interaction have as much value as ever.** As much as teachers want to take advantage of all the technology afforded to them, nothing substitutes the need for human interaction. Interpersonal speaking and writing are an integral part of a foreign language teacher's standards and these skills are not as easily acquired while sitting in front of a screen. Studies have shown that you remember more of what you read on paper than what you read on a screen (O'Malley, 2017). Do not throw away

things that work just to use technology for technology's sake.

That being said, I am going to give you my favorite technology tools while also offering suggestions on how I have used them. First off, I recommend that you find a Learning Management System (LMS) that you like. A Learning Management system is essentially an online classroom, a place where students can submit assignments and you can post materials and information. The LMS that I currently use is [Google Classroom](#). I find it to be very user-friendly. Plus, with the recent updates and addition of a classwork page, it is easy for students to find their needed assignments and material. The biggest reason I love Google Classroom is because I use Google Docs and Google slides, as it is very easy for students to collaborate in a doc or slide, or have a copy for themselves to edit. Google Classroom gives you the option to assign something to certain classes or individual students. I often give two different assignments based on a student's proficiency level. When students go to their Google Classroom they will only see the assignment that is required of them and do not realize they have been given an assessment which best meets their learning needs.

Another LMS that I have had great success with is [Seesaw](#). If you want a way for parents to be able to see everything, Seesaw is a great choice. Seesaw has ready-made activities or you can create your own. It is also simple to make videos in Seesaw and these same videos will be seen by only you. It is an effective tool which allows students to create videos which help to reinforce their speaking practice. Other viable options which allow for the similar results are Schoology, Canvas, and many

others as well.

There are some simple **websites** that make life easier for teachers. One is [classroomscreen.com](http://classroomscreen.com). This website allows you to add a timer, a clock, a random name picker, a text box, and many other useful items which allow for efficient lessons. My students really enjoy the options for sounds the timer makes. Their favorite is the Mario theme. [Flippity.net](http://Flippity.net) is another. It is a website that uses google sheets to make crossword puzzles, word searches, flashcards, quiz games, progress trackers, and many other things. Adobe Spark has three parts to it - page, video, and post. You or your students can create infographics, posters, videos and webpages.

[EdPuzzle](http://EdPuzzle) is one of my favorite sites for listening practice. EdPuzzle allows you turn any video into an interactive quiz. You have the ability to add questions, comments, audio, and crop videos. You can also assign EdPuzzle to students using Google Classroom and then track their progress throughout the video. Because every student is watching the video at their own pace and on their own screen, they are required to focus and truly listen. Students can listen to sections more than once until they receive the correct answer. You can either use videos from YouTube or you have the option to upload your own videos. I have a friend in Argentina who made videos for me and I was able to upload them to EdPuzzle as an authentic listening practice for my students.

Everyone needs accents and it feels as though it is different in each program and on every device. As an avid user of Google Docs, Easy Accents is a life saver for me. Easy Accents is an add-on which pulls up a sidebar of accents in over 20 languages. All you have to do is click on the accent you want and it shows up in your document. You can also put the document into Spanish, but I prefer easy accents because I often use more than one language and that tends to cause confusion.

[Nearpod](http://Nearpod) lets you create interactive presentations. These presentations can be teacher led or self-paced. The best part about Nearpod is that you can add in quizzes, polls, let students draw, collaborate on a board, and more. If you present about vocabulary or grammar topics, you can have the students follow along on their devices while also

having activities for them to complete throughout the presentation. You can also download their work afterwards to see how specific students responded. Nearpod has virtual field trips, which are interesting, even without virtual reality viewers. Students can scroll through the 360 view of the image.

This summer, [Flipgrid](http://Flipgrid) pro accounts became free for all educators. In Flipgrid, students can make videos and respond to each other. Teachers can choose to moderate the “grids” that they create, which means that you have to make videos “active” before they appear on the grid. A cool feature of Flipgrid is Gridpals. Gridpals let you connect with educators all over the world through social media. To use Gridpals, make sure your profile is up to date and you have a social media account (Twitter, Instagram or Facebook) linked to it. You can either choose to look at the map or scroll through the list and find a teacher who looks like a good fit for you. Reach out to these same teachers through social media and see if they would be interested in becoming #gridpals.

[Bookcreator](http://Bookcreator) is a great way for students to create e-books and audiobooks. Teachers can create a library and invite students to join. Once students have created books in your library, you have full edit access and can see in real time what they are working on. Students can create audiobooks by adding audio clips. Books can be published online to be shared with the school community.

Google Drawings is an underrated Google tool. Students can add images and text boxes to create posters, menus, etc. Teachers can use this program to create graphic organizers for notes, infographics and more. Google Drawings makes it very easy to manipulate and move objects, add text boxes, and put things exactly where you want them. If you are frustrated with moving verb conjugation boxes or vocabulary images in other programs, give Google Drawings a try.

Wordpress has an education site called [Edublogs](http://Edublogs). Teachers can create and manage student blogs. Teachers can edit the student blogs from their dashboards the same way the students can.

The blogs have the ability to be password protected. I had my students create travel blogs with pages for different information about their country.

[Gimkit](#) is an online quiz game created by high school students who were tired of playing Kahoot. You can create your own quiz or use a vocabulary set from Quizlet. It links to Google Classroom and teachers have the option of having students choose their names from a dropdown menu instead of letting them add their own names. During the game, students have the option to “go shopping” where they can purchase ways to make more money. There are several options for game play. The first option is timed. Students play the game and when the time is up, the person with the most money wins. The second option is race. The first student to reach a certain amount of money wins. The third option is all in. Everyone works together to reach a certain amount of money and the game is over when they reach that amount. Students can draw while they are waiting for everyone to log in, which is a fun little feature.

The last nugget I am going to share with you is [Señor Wooly](#). Señor Wooly is a Spanish teacher turned educational content creator with over 20 songs with pre-, during, and post-activities, readings, puzzles, and more on his website. It is a paid site with two level options. The first option gives you access to his songs. The Pro account, which is around \$80 for a year, comes with 150 students accounts and student activities that can be differentiated by proficiency level. The songs are catchy, fun, and comprehensible. It is worth every penny.

One last note that I want to touch on is digital citizenship. While utilizing all of these fun sites, students must be instructed that all digital content that is created will remain accessible to everyone forever. They need to be cautious of what is posted and what image they are purposely or accidentally promoting online. I always encourage my students to use their school accounts for school websites and their personal accounts for personal websites. In this current age of cyberbullying and having the ability to screenshot anything that is deleted, students need to be taught about appropriate online use. Take the time to talk to your students about how what they put online in high

school or middle school could haunt them forever. Many colleges check all of the social media accounts of future students in order to get a complete picture of the future student they would be admitting. Nearpod has free lessons on digital citizenship. Check these valuable lessons out and educate your students so they do not fall victim to social media mistakes.

In conclusion, if you are looking to expand your repertoire of technology tools for the 21st century classroom outside of Quizlet and Kahoot, check out any of these wonderful options. However, do not forget, you are the most important element of your classroom. These technology tools cannot and should not replace your knowledge, expertise and experience about what is best for your students.

### Resources

<https://classroom.google.com/>  
<https://app.seesaw.me>  
<https://www.senorwooly.com/>  
<https://classroomscreen.com/>  
<https://edpuzzle.com>  
<https://nearpod.com/>  
<https://flipgrid.com/>  
<https://edublogs.org/>  
<https://spark.adobe.com/>  
<https://www.gimkit.com/>  
<https://www.flippity.net/>

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O'Malley, S. (2017). There's No Easy Answer. Retrieved from <http://www.insidehighered.com/digital-learning/article/2917/08/16/which-better-reading-print-or-screen>

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# TFLA Advocates! Join the Advocacy Movement

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Meredith Clark, Ph.D.

TFLA Director of Public Outreach and Advocacy

Region 10 ESC, Dallas, Texas

TFLA Advocates! A Texas-sized amount of attention on accountability and standardized testing, while initially developed with good intentions to improve learning outcomes for our students, incurs damaging effects on disciplines other than math, English, science and social studies. Policymakers brand World Language study with the label of “other.” No one doubts the negative effects of this classification. Supervisors and department chairs of language programs constantly report a lack of funding, a dearth of common planning time, overloaded courses and a misplacement of students in classes that disregard the language acquisition process.

While droughts of financial and political support make headlines and permeate conversations among World Language educators, we have not addressed the psychological effects of this “otherness.” Accustomed to dodging obstacles thrown in our paths, World Language teachers and supervisors have developed skills to beautifully articulate what’s wrong with those who don’t advocate for us. The laser-light focus on the “core” has germinated an “us versus them” attitude. “They don’t care about us,” we utter when speaking about our administrators, our superintendents and our legislators. “We don’t matter.” “I live in an ‘English only’ community.” “Nobody cares.”

While comments such as these inherently express anger about the injustice of marginalization, they also reaffirm the “otherness” of World Languages. According to Milton J. Bennet’s *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity*, this “us versus them” attitude aligns

with an ethnocentric rather than an ethnorelative viewpoint. In being classified as “other,” and in confirming this label with our words, we’ve developed systems of thinking that undermine our purpose as World Language educators. Convinced that the enemy is out to get us, we’ve constructed a defensive position, one born out of fear and reactivity rather than a stance crafted from hope and creativity.

Moments of salvation shine through the cracks of the daily grind when we advocate for ourselves and learn together at the TFLA annual fall conference. Our knowledgeable and inspiring keynote speaker at TFLA 2018 in San Antonio, Dr. Juan Carlos Morales, challenged our thinking as educators. When we focus on what’s wrong instead of what actions generate success, we operate from a stance of “otherness,” confirming our slated marginality, choosing against optimism.

Expecting good things to happen stands as the most essential component to advocacy, and it is the most influential factor in challenging the defensive, “otherness” thinking developed over the past two decades. We accuse others of not caring; yet, our psychology has eroded our vision, and we have failed to reach across the aisle to build relationships and educate those who don’t understand us. We’ve been preaching to the choir for too long, and when we take the same sermon to a different congregation, we ponder at why they don’t echo our ideals.

Now we find ourselves in a unique moment in history. In the renaissance of our profession, we can embrace what works: shining the light of optimism and sharing our vision to educate those



whose life circumstances have not afforded them the ability to learn another language and study abroad. By focusing our energy on understanding our successes, we can reshape hardened thinking pathways that confirm our “otherness” and perpetuate monolingualism.

The Texas Foreign Language Association envisions a multilingual society where individuals use their language and multicultural skills to improve their lives, their communities, and the economic success of the state. It’s time to make our input comprehensible to those who have not heard it and to those who’ve listened but could not understand. Let’s share our optimism for the future and provoke a contagion of fervor for World Language education by building positive relationships with those within our sphere of influence to educate them and invite them to help us materialize our vision.

Are you intrigued by this vision? Would you like to play an integral part in achieving it? Join the Texas Foreign Language Association’s Advocates group. Members will collaborate to build a grassroots campaign to achieve two goals: the first, to educate members in our communities about the importance of World Language education and, the second, to educate our state legislators about World Language education with the goal of securing a position for a LOTE supervisor in the Texas Education Agency. As an Advocate, you will receive updates and invites to webinars where you’ll learn advocacy and leadership strategies. More information is available at [www.tfla.org/advocacy](http://www.tfla.org/advocacy).

According to Gregg Roberts, Jaime Leite and Ofelia Wade(2018), “Monolingualism is the Illiteracy of the 21-Century” (p. 116). Let’s focus on what works to tackle this challenge by sharing our vision of a multilingual state and by collaborating to serve the 5.4 million students in Texas. They count on us to support them. Closed mouths do not get fed, so let’s join forces to advocate.

Roberts, G., Leite, J., & Wade, O. (2018). Monolingualism is the Illiteracy of the Twenty-First Century. *Hispania*, 100(5), 116-118.  
[doi:10.1353/hpn.2018.0028](https://doi.org/10.1353/hpn.2018.0028)

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Bennet, M.J. (2014). *The Developmental Model for Intercultural Sensitivity*. Retrieved from <https://www.idrinstitute.org/dmis/>

# Cultivating Comfort and Interest in Online L2 Reading: A Course-Case Study

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Juliette Parnell, Ph.D., University of Nebraska at Omaha

## Abstract

As students spend more time reading online materials both as part of their coursework and as part of their daily lives, it is important that educators strive to understand the influence, if any, that the online reading environment has on students' overall interest in reading as well as their level of comfort with online reading. This need is especially keen for those reading in a second language (L2). To this end, the following pages describe an online introduction to reading course designed for English-speaking students of French at the post-secondary level in the U.S. Participants in the course were surveyed at the beginning and at the end of the course in question in order to measure the impact of the course on student interest in online reading in the L2 in general, as well as their interest in various text genres. Students' level of comfort with online reading in the L2 was also examined in this study.

As today's students spend more time engaged in online activities ranging from social media, to shopping, to gaming, to distance education, many students are essentially exchanging printed materials for online reading (Gascoigne & Parnell, 2016). According to Abidin, Pourmohammadi, Varasingham, & Lean (2014), as students become "increasingly involved in online activities, there is a need to study their online reading habits" (p. 165). And, as one would expect, studies examining various facets of the online learning process, including student habits, have materialized (Abidin et al., 2014; Gascoigne & Parnell, 2016; Lueck, 2008; Taylor, 2014; Xu, 2010). We would add, however, that as students spend more time online, there is also a need for educators to help students cultivate both an interest in and a level of comfort with L2 reading in the online environment.

Much like the extensive reading movement sought to promote reading for pleasure, the online L2 reading course described in the following pages also sought to encourage interest in and comfort

with online L2 reading. In addition to offering a new online course at the post-secondary level devoted exclusively to the L2 reading skill, the authors also sought to examine students' pre- and post-course reading preferences and measure their pre- and post-course interest in various L2 text genres.

## EXTENSIVE READINGS

Day and Bramford (1998) describe an extensive reading approach as one where students are encouraged to read as much as possible, individually and silently, on a range of topics and in a variety of genres. Hallmarks of this approach are that students are in charge of selecting what they want to read and are encouraged to read for pleasure and general understanding, as opposed to reading for intentional vocabulary or grammar mastery. In this approach, the teacher is a role model and a guide rather than an authoritarian. Additionally and notably, reading materials are kept within the linguistic competence of the students (pp. 7-8).

Bell (1998) identifies several potential roles

of extensive reading in language learning, to include,

1. A source of comprehensible input
2. Increased exposure to the language
3. Increased knowledge of vocabulary
4. Improvements in writing
5. Motivation for reading
6. Consolidation of previous learned language, and
7. Development of prediction skills (p. 1).

Extensive reading contrasts with more traditional reading activities, many of which can be described as intensive, such as skimming a passage for specific information or matching headings to paragraphs. During intensive reading, students are encouraged to look-up vocabulary words and tend to spend a large amount of time covering short passages, thereby processing a text “unidimensionally through the verbal code” (Tomlinson, 2000, p. 524). Simply put, intensive reading encourages careful reading for a precise understanding of a text.

While the general notion of extensive reading has been increasing in popularity over the past several decades, intensive techniques appear to have a stronghold on instructed reading activity in the first language (L1) and perhaps even more so in the L2. As Grabe (2009) notes, “teachers are not prepared to radically rethink how reading should be taught and learned” (p. 312) and relinquishing so much freedom and control to students in the age of high stakes testing is understandably daunting. Ultimately, due to challenges in implementation, as well as philosophy for some, extensive reading is “rarely included in formal L2 instruction” (Arnold, 2009, p. 341).

Albeit far from a true extensive reading format, the course described in the following pages borrows some characteristics from extensive reading. While our students did not select their own reading material, and while readings were discussed, we nevertheless took general inspiration from the goals of extensive reading. Specifically, we were drawn to the characteristics noted by Bell (1998), such as increased exposure to the target language and an aim to encourage students to read for pleasure and with increased frequency. Indeed, in order to cultivate a climate that encourages

reading for pleasure in the L2, and encourages students to access an endless supply of L2 materials online, extensive reading as a style of reading ultimately informed the creation of an online post-secondary course in reading in French where reading is “seen as a means to an end, with a focus on meaning and general comprehension” (Arnold, 2009, p. 341).

### THE COURSE

In order to introduce students to the L2 reading skill and provide reading practice before enrolling in L2 literature courses, including introductory literature courses, the Department of Foreign Languages at the University of Nebraska at Omaha recently decided to add a third-year reading course to the curriculum. This course was designed to serve as a bridge between the introductory and intermediate foreign language courses, which are primarily devoted to grammar and vocabulary, and the advanced content-focused courses. Moreover, with the hope of increasing enrollment by attracting students from beyond the immediate area, the course was also designed and offered online.

The course design was based upon the following research-based recommendations for L2 reading:

1. Introduce the students to the best practices and strategies on how to efficiently read in French. (Bernhardt, 2011; Nuttall, 1996)
2. Avoid unfamiliar topics (Zhao, Guo, and Dynia, 2013) since it can be a source of reading anxiety.
3. Find texts that share students’ interests, have a common background, or contain familiar words (Bernhardt, 2011; Nuttall, 1996)
4. Start with shorter texts and gradually increase their length (Bernhardt, 2011)
5. Choose descriptive and narrative texts rather than argumentative or expository text. Content is more important than form (Bernhardt, 2011).
6. Select prosaic texts at the beginning then move on to literary excerpts (Bernhardt, 2011)
7. Provide pre-reading activities (Zhao, Guo, and Dynia, 2013) to function as a reading guide.

The new reading course was offered in the Spring 2017 semester. It ran for 15 weeks and covered 11 texts. Course delivery took place through the online course management system Blackboard. The course centered around 11 readings of various genres

along with pre- and post-reading activities.

### Course Organization

Thirteen content folders were created and posted in Blackboard, one per reading along with one containing reading strategies and another for the final exam. Each reading folder was then divided into four subfolders.

The first subfolder: "Préparation à la lecture" (Preparing for the reading) contained general information about the text and pre-reading questions that were designed to encourage students to reflect on their own background knowledge related to the topic. Pre-reading questions also encouraged students to make predictions about the text and ideally arouse their curiosity about the reading. The initial preparation folder also contained a list of recorded target vocabulary that students could listen to. Finally, this subfolder concluded with grammar explanations related to the text.

The second subfolder contained the reading itself along with a short introduction to the reading, both in French.

The third subfolder housed a formative and optional self-assessment item. The purpose of this material was to provide immediate feedback to students before beginning any graded work. Given that Bernhardt (2011) has shown that multiple-choice and fill-in-the-blank exercises are not effective for assessing reading comprehension, we included an elective true-false quiz for each reading about the reading. This subfolder also contained a lengthier, and graded, set of comprehension questions described in more detail in the following pages.

The fourth subfolder was a link to a general question related to the reading that was posted in the discussion forum. Participation in the discussion forum was a way for students to earn extra-credit points.

### Course Readings

The course began with shorter readings and then gradually progressed to longer texts. Reading selections came from diverse genres such as folk tales, graphic novels, newspaper articles, poetry, theater, science fiction, and full-fledged literary texts. The goal was to expose students to an extensive variety of texts and genres in order to

prepare them for future literature classes.

The first two readings were excerpts from *Tintin en Amérique* and the graphic novel *Persepolis* in order to "gently" introduce our students to reading with the help of visuals. Next, we followed with a folk tale from Africa: *Les Hommes invisibles* and continued with the lyrics of a rap song *Ma lettre au Président* by the French artist Axiom. The fifth reading was the poem *Fidélité à l'Afrique* by Bernard Dadié, the seminal author from the Ivory Coast. The next selection was a 2016 article from *Le Figaro* on immigration in France. We then changed genres and chose a scene from the comedy, *Les poissons rouges ou Mon père ce héros* by Jean Anouilh. The 8<sup>th</sup> reading was the ending of the famous science fiction novel by Pierre Boulle, *La Planète des singes*. By then, it was hoped that students would be more comfortable in the class, and ready to begin literary selections. The 9<sup>th</sup> reading was the detective story, *Le Pavillon de la Croix-Rousse* by Georges Simenon. The penultimate text was *L'Aventure de Walter Schnaffs* by Maupassant and the course ended with Albert Camus' short story: *L'Hôte*.

### Assessment

In terms of formal graded assessment for this course, students were required to answer comprehension questions (subfolder 3) in French of which there were three types: literal, interpretive, and applied. For shorter texts, students were given a week to complete the questions, whereas with the longer literary selections they had up to three weeks to finish their task. The number of questions varied from 12 to 31 per reading. Spelling or grammar mistakes in written production were not considered, as we were more interested by their comprehension of the readings.

The bulk of the final grade (95%) was based on the average of the above comprehension question scores. Each of the readings was graded on the percentage of correct answers. The remaining 5% of the course grade was the final exam. In order to assess students' level of reading comprehension at the end of the course, we elected to administer a free recall protocol procedure (Bernhardt, 2011). To this end, a 225-word authentic French text was posted online with the following instructions: "The final has 2 parts: First, you need to read part 1. Part 1 is a short text in French. Read and take notes. The reading will only be available for 8 minutes. Then, in

part 2, you will have to summarize the text with as much information as possible in French or in English (you have the choice). Part 2 will not have a time limit. This test is used to assess your reading comprehension”.

Overall, students did well in the course. The average grade for the final was: 95.33%. At the end of the course, five students received an A+ (97-100), three earned an A (93-96) and two others earned an A- (90-92). Two students earned a B+ (87-89), one a B (83-85), one a D- and two students who dropped out of the class mid-semester failed the course.

### THE STUDY

To gain insight into the impact, if any, that participation in this course may have had on students' level of comfort with, and interest in, reading authentic texts in French, a pre- and post-course survey was administered to students on the first day of class, and again on the last day of class (See Appendix A). The survey was sent to students and then returned to the instructor via email.

#### The Survey

The survey contained fourteen ten-point Likert-type questions designed to measure students' comfort level with and interest in reading various genres of text in French. Seven questions sought to measure student comfort level, for example: “In general, how comfortable are you reading authentic texts in French?” Another seven questions focused on student interest levels: “In general, how would you rate your interest in reading authentic texts in French?” Beyond asking students to rate how comfortable (and interested) they were reading authentic texts in French overall, additional questions focused more specifically on the following genres: newspaper/magazine articles, comic books, short stories, novels, plays, and poetry. In addition to the fourteen Likert-type questions, the survey also contained the following open-ended questions:

- What do you hope to gain as a result of participating in this course?
- Have you ever taken an online course in French before?
- In general, do you prefer online or traditional courses?
- Do you feel that this course content is a good fit

for an online course?

- Do you feel that the course methodology is a good fit for this course?
- Do you feel that your initial objectives are met with this class?

#### Participants

Students in this course were mainly juniors and seniors (7 seniors and 6 juniors). However, there was also one freshman, one sophomore and one post-baccalaureate student. Of these students, two were French majors, six were French minors, two were majoring in International Studies, and others were using this class to fulfill a Humanities requirement. All students had either completed the second-year, two-course French sequence at the University of Nebraska at Omaha or elsewhere, or they had tested into the third-year level as the result of a placement exam.

#### Findings

Of the 16 students enrolled in the course, twelve students completed the pre-course survey, but only seven completed both the pre- and the post-course surveys and are therefore included in the following analysis.

For each of the seven Likert-type questions related to comfort, the average post-course score was higher than the average pre-course score. In other words, students' average level of comfort in reading authentic texts overall, as well as reading each specific genre (newspaper/magazine articles, comic books, short stories, novels, plays, and poetry) increased throughout the semester during which students were enrolled in the course. Paired T-tests showed that the increases in comfort levels from pre- to post-course survey both overall and for each genre reached significance.

Similarly, overall interest in reading authentic texts in French increased from the pre-to post-course survey. However, when we look at specific text genres, the change in interest level from pre- to post- survey varies dramatically. For example, interest in reading magazines/newspaper articles increased slightly (+.18), while there was no change whatsoever for interest in the reading of plays. Although not expected, several genres actually witnessed a reduction in student interest from the beginning to the end of the course. This

was the case for short stories (-.14), novels (-.43), and poetry (-.43). Unlike the questions related to comfort, none of the seven questions pertaining to student interest, whether an increase or a decrease, managed to reach statistical significance.

#### Discussion

One would hope that after spending a semester in an online course devoted to the L2 reading skill in French, students would end the course feeling more comfortable reading in French overall as well as more comfortable reading in the various genres that were covered throughout the course. Therefore, the increase in the students' pre- to post-comfort levels found in this survey is not entirely surprising. It is also comforting to know that these increases were in fact statistically significant. On the other hand, given the objectives of this course, it was discouraging to find that the increase in students' interest levels in reading in French overall did not reach significance. It is perhaps even more disappointing to see that student interest in reading the various genres covered throughout the semester decreased for the short story, the novel, and poetry, and remained unchanged for plays.

In terms of the open-ended questions posed at the beginning of the semester, three students stated that they hoped to gain confidence in reading French as a result of participating in the course, one student hoped to be introduced to a wider range of texts, two students hoped to improve their fluency, and two students cited vocabulary and cultural information as objectives. On the post-course version of the survey, students cited the same goals essentially verbatim. The only notable change was that only one student, as opposed to three, now cited gaining confidence as a goal. Of the seven students who completed both surveys, only two had completed an online course in French in the past and one had completed a hybrid course. The other four had only taken traditional face-to-face courses up until this point. At the time of the pre-course survey, two students said that they preferred online courses, three students preferred traditional courses, and two had no preference. Interestingly, students' reported format preference did not change from pre-to post-course survey.

All seven students responded that the course content was a good fit for the online format in both the pre- and post-course survey. Similarly, all seven students thought that the course methodology was a good fit for an online format in both the pre- and post-course surveys. Finally, all students reported that their original objectives were met with this course.

#### Conclusion

The online L2 reading course described aimed to encourage student interest in, and comfort with, online L2 reading. Student comments on open-ended questions at the beginning of the semester indicated that several students hoped to gain confidence in L2 reading as a result of the course. Open-ended comments on the post-course surveys, coupled with the statistically significant increase in average comfort levels overall and for each specific genre, suggest that this goal was indeed met. This information suggests that the course had an impact on students' level of comfort in L2 reading both overall and for specific genres. On the other hand, the course failed to have a significant impact, or even a positive impact in some cases, on students' level of interest in various genres.

In the spirit of extensive reading, where students are encouraged to read as much as possible, individually and silently, on a range of topics, and in a variety of genres (Day & Bramford, 1998), an important goal of this course was nevertheless met. As students build their confidence in and comfort with L2 reading, one more obstacle to extensive reading had been removed. However, to meet the goal of positively impacting student interest in L2 reading, more work on this course needs to be done. Extensive reading practice and research may hold additional insights and inspiration to this end.

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## Appendix A

### Reading Survey Averages

PRE	POST	CHANGE
In general, how comfortable are you reading authentic texts in French?		
<b>6.85</b>	<b>8.25</b>	<b>+1.4</b>
How comfortable are you reading <u>newspaper/magazine articles</u> in French?		
<b>7.28</b>	<b>8.14</b>	<b>+.86</b>
How comfortable are you reading <u>comic books</u> in French?		
<b>6.85</b>	<b>7.42</b>	<b>+.57</b>
How comfortable are you reading <u>short stories</u> in French?		
<b>7.28</b>	<b>8.14</b>	<b>+.86</b>
How comfortable are you reading excerpts from <u>novels</u> in French?		
<b>6.57</b>	<b>7.57</b>	<b>+1.0</b>
How comfortable are you reading <u>plays</u> in French?		
<b>6.42</b>	<b>7.57</b>	<b>+1.15</b>
How comfortable are you reading <u>poetry</u> in French?		
<b>6.71</b>	<b>7.42</b>	<b>+.71</b>
In general, how would you rate your <b>interest</b> in reading authentic texts		
<b>9.1</b>	<b>9.28</b>	<b>+.18</b>
How interested are you reading <u>newspaper/magazine articles</u> in French?		
<b>8.57</b>	<b>8.71</b>	<b>+.14</b>
How interested are you reading <u>comic books</u> in French?		
<b>8.71</b>	<b>8.57</b>	<b>-.14</b>
How interested are you reading <u>short stories</u> in French?		
<b>8.85</b>	<b>8.42</b>	<b>-.43</b>
How interested are you reading <u>novels</u> in French?		
<b>8.71</b>	<b>8.42</b>	<b>-.29</b>
How interested are you reading <u>plays</u> in French?		
<b>8.0</b>	<b>8.0</b>	<b>0</b>
How interested are you reading <u>poetry</u> in French?		
<b>7.85</b>	<b>7.42</b>	<b>-.43</b>

## Appendix B

### Course Syllabus

FREN 3060

Readings in French

Spring 2017

#### PREREQUISITES

FREN 2120 or 4 years of high school French or permission from the instructor.

#### GOALS

In this upper level class, you will learn to read a variety of French texts. You will expand your vocabulary knowledge and improve your reading fluency and comprehension level. You will be exposed to different genres and texts such as comics, news articles, song lyrics, poems, theater scenes and literary novellas. By the end of the class, you will be more confident in your reading abilities and be able to analyze a text in terms of its writing strategies and techniques. This class is a prerequisite to upper level literary classes.

#### METHODOLOGY

You will have to read 11 texts and do pre and post readings assignments. Each reading will have its own Blackboard folder, (on the left of the screen), where this work will be done. The pre-reading (preparation à la lecture) activities are there to help you with the reading, including a vocabulary list with words pronunciation. Thus, it is essential that you do the work in order to understand the reading. Post-reading exercises will help you with the comprehension questions. Each final reading assessment will take the form of answering comprehension questions in French to be posted on Blackboard.

#### ASSIGNMENTS

You need to go into the Questions de comprehension folder and click directly on the red Questions de comprehension to access the assignment page, where you will submit your work. You can either write your answers directly through Blackboard or write them into Word and upload it to Blackboard. Please make sure that you know the due dates for these assignments. (They are posted in this document and in Blackboard).

#### GRADING

Each text will have comprehension questions to answer in **French**. You will be graded based on a percentage of correct answers. For example: you have 8 correct answers out of 10 questions: your grade will be: 80% for this reading. **NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED.** If you are late, your grade will be zero for this assignment. The class grade will essentially be based on the average of these 11 grades (one per reading). There will also be a final, which will count for 5% of the final grade.

There will also be opportunities to receive extra-credit points by participating **significantly** in French to discussion boards. Each forum will have specific due dates and there will be worth .5 point each.

#### Grade Calculation

Average of Comprehension questions	95%
Final	5%

Extra-credit maximum 5.5 points (to be added to final average questions grade)

Grading scale for this class:

A+ = 97-100
A = 93-96
A- = 90-92
B+ = 87-89
B = 83-86
B- = 80-82
C+ = 77-79
C = 73-76
C- = 70-72
D+ = 67-69
D = 63-66
D- = 60-62
F = UNDER 60.

#### Online Translators

The use of online translators for your comprehension questions answers is a serious academic offense within the context of language classes. Faculty members do not accept work completed with the aid of online translators and will give a grade of F for the course if there is evidence that an online translator has been used. The case will also be reported to the Office of Academic and Student Affairs. Students who use online translators more than once are subject to severe disciplinary action.

#### Homework dates

You will have the choice of either sending me your assignments one by one at their specific due dates or sending me the week assignments by the last possible date (in red above). This way you can work at your own pace. Remember I won't accept assignments past their due dates. You can also work faster and send me assignments before their due dates as well.



**Appendix B**  
**Course Syllabus (page 2)**

**EMPLOI DU TEMPS (Course Schedule)**

**SEMAINES du (weeks of)**

Jan. 9	<i>Tintin</i> Due Jan. 16
Jan. 16	<i>Persepolis</i> Due Jan. 22
Jan. 23	<i>Les Hommes invisibles</i> Due Jan 29
Jan. 30 Feb. 6	<i>Ma lettre au Président et Fidélité à l'Afrique</i> Due Feb. 5 Article du <i>Figaro</i> "Chevènement - Sorel : mener un combat résolu pour continuer la France" Due Feb. 12
Feb. 13	<i>Les poissons rouges ou Mon père, ce héros</i> Due Feb. 19
Feb. 20	<i>La planète des singes</i> Due Feb. 26
Feb. 27	<i>Le pavillon de la Croix-Rousse</i> Due March 5
Mar. 6	<i>Le pavillon de la Croix-Rousse</i> Due March 12
Mar. 13	<i>L'Aventure de Walter Schnaff</i> 1ère partie Due March 19
Mar. 20	Vacances de Printemps (Spring Break)
Mar. 27	<i>L'Aventure de Walter Schnaff</i> 2ème partie Due April 2
Apr. 3	<i>L'hôte</i> Due April 9
Apr. 10	<i>L'hôte</i> Due April 16
Apr. 17	<i>L'hôte</i> Due April 23
Apr. 27	FINAL

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