A Transformative Learning Approach:
Supporting Reflections in Foreign Language Curriculum

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Abstract

With the 'curricular turn' in FL higher education in the United States (i.e., 2007 MLA Report), the need to develop well-articulated models for language study that address the development of deep transcultural competence, alongside advanced literacy abilities, has become more pressing. In this presentation, we will introduce how 'structured reflection' (a term originating in service learning and referring to a host of guided reflective practices) can be an effective tool for supporting language and intercultural learning in the Chinese and Italian language classrooms, helping learners to decenter themselves from their existing assumptions and values as they try on, engage with, and respond to their learning processes and cultural perspectives that may be very different from their own.

Drawing on the reflections written by students in Chinese and Italian language and culture classes, this presentation will illustrate how structured reflection can provide space for foreign language learners to shift their initial frame(s) of reference and approach moments of real transformative learning (Mezirow et al., 2009). It will also discuss how their learning of Chinese and Italian languages and cultures have benefited from this ongoing reflective journey. In addition, this presentation will share ways of developing structured reflection prompts, evaluating and assessing reflection, and integrating reflection into the curriculum.

Keywords: *structured reflection, student reflections, assessment.*