



The 2010 Forum Conference/Charlotte

“Sprechen Sie Englisch?”

A Critical Conversation About Second Language
Instruction and Cultural Proficiency in Study Abroad

Panelists

Bill Anthony, Northwestern University

Jeanette Owen, American Councils for International Education

David Patton, American Councils for International Education



"Sprechen Sie Englisch?"

- 10:45 Introduction
- 10:50 Opening Remarks - Anthony
- 10:57 Practitioner's Perspective - Owen
- 11:05 Big Picture - Patton
- 11:15 Roundtable Discussions
- 11:40 1-Minute Reports /Selected Tables
- 11:45 Q & A / Discussion: Next Steps?
- 12:00 Conclusion



“Sprechen Sie Englisch?”

“The United States can be characterized
as the home of the brave
and the land of the monolingual.”

-Rose Lee Hayden

“Toward a National Foreign Language Policy,” 1979
(As cited in U.S. Senator Paul Simon’s book,
The Tongue-Tied American, 1980)



“Sprechen Sie Englisch?”

American humorist Dave Barry once observed,
“Americans who travel abroad for the first time are often shocked to discover that, despite all the progress that has been made in the last 30 years, many foreign people still speak in foreign languages.”



“Sprechen Sie Englisch?”

Gallup Poll -April 6, 2001

by Chris McComb

“About one in five Americans believe that it is essential to speak a second language in general and an additional 50% of the population believe that knowledge of a foreign language is a valuable skill but is not necessarily essential. Nearly one-third -- 30% -- feel that it is not too important or not important at all to speak a second language.”



“Sprechen Sie Englisch?”

The Chronicle of Higher Education March 6, 2009

“Study of Foreign Languages Should Not Be a Zero-Sum Game”

Stephen Brockmann

“The rise of globalization suggests that the United States needs to radically increase the study of foreign languages and cultures...”

Although foreign-language study has become somewhat more popular in recent years, its overall decline remains striking...

One reason for the decline of foreign-language study in America is probably the lingering, albeit often unacknowledged, belief that globalization will ultimately lead to a world in which everyone—or everyone who matters—speaks English.”

“Sprechen Sie Englisch?”

From the President of a German University:

“Most of the more than 1,000 European Universities offer English language courses. In some fields it is a requirement, partly to further students’ English proficiency and partly to prepare them for a semester abroad... [!] a similar number of schools offer at least part of their curriculum in English, especially in the first half of a BA program. This is particularly true in Scandinavia, Holland, Germany, but also in Hungary and Poland....”

From the European University Association, Brussels:

“The introduction of master’s programs, together with the increased interest in attracting international students has sparked a movement toward more English taught programs in Europe.”

"Sprechen Sie Englisch?"

From The CABLE *Exclusive*:

GAO report: State Department language skills dangerously lacking

Posted By [Josh Rogin](#) Tuesday, September 22, 2009

About a third of Foreign Service officers in jobs that require language skills don't have the proficiency required to do their jobs, hurting America's ability to advocate its interests around the world, according to a new report by the Government Accountability Office.

"We cannot effectively sway our allies or adversaries if we do not speak their language," said Sen. Daniel K. Akaka [Hawaii], Chair of the Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs Oversight of Gov't Management subcommittee, which commissioned the report. "

Staffing hardship posts will always be a challenge, but President Obama has called on the United States to re-engage the world and State must fix these chronic foreign language and staffing shortfalls."

"Sprechen Sie Englisch?"

(DAYTON, OHIO) July 11, 2008 4:53 PM

From CBS News' Maria Gavrilovic

"I don't speak a foreign language. It's embarrassing!" Barack Obama exclaimed today at town hall meeting here. Obama, who often touts his time growing up overseas, made the confession while speaking about the importance of teaching foreign languages in schools. Obama came under fire by conservative groups earlier this week, after he said that more Americans should learn a foreign language.

At town hall meeting in Powder Spring, Georgia on Tuesday, Obama said, *"It's embarrassing when Europeans come over here, they all speak English, they speak French, they speak German. And then we go over to Europe and all we can say is merci beaucoup, right?"*

"Sprechen Sie Englisch?"

"Effective communication and successful negotiations with a foreign partner--whether with a partner in peacekeeping, a strategic economic partner, a political adversary, or a non-English speaking contact in a critical law enforcement action --requires strong comprehension of the underlying cultural values and belief structures that are part of the life experience of the foreign partner."

Dr. Dan Davidson, President of the American Councils on International Education

(Special Spring 2010 Issue of *Foreign Language Annals* on Study Abroad)

"Sprechen Sie Englisch?"

Top 15 Languages Learned in the U.S.

(From: MLA survey of Fall 2006 Enrollments in US institutions of higher education)

1. Spanish 52%
2. French 13%
3. German 6%
4. American Sign Language 5%
5. Italian 5%
6. Japanese 4%
7. Chinese 3%
8. Latin 2%
9. Russian 1.6%
10. Arabic 1.5%
11. Ancient Greek 1.4%
12. Biblical Hebrew 0.9%
13. Portuguese 0.7%
14. Modern Hebrew 0.6%
15. Korean 0.5%



"Sprechen Sie Englisch?"

Open Doors 2007-08
Term-Length and Study Abroad

*"56.3% of the 262,416
U.S. students abroad
studied on short-term programs."
[<8 weeks]*

“Sprechen Sie Englisch?”

ACTFL Study by Jamie B. Draper and June H. Hicks, May 2002
Enrollment in Foreign Language Courses...

K-6	5% of students (6.4% in '94)
Junior High	14.7% of students (16.2% in '94)
High School	43.8% of students (42.2% in '94)

*[From Frontiers, Fall 2008 “Does Language Matter?”
Emily Mohajeri Norris and Michael Steinberg*

55% of high school seniors plan to study abroad in college
92% of high school seniors believe study abroad programs
are the best way to learn or improve in a second language.]

Undergrads **8.7% of students in 2002**; highest since
1972 and ca. 18% growth between 1998-2002.

MLA Report, Fall 2002

"Sprechen Sie Englisch?"

U.S. Foreign Language Majors Abroad (Open Doors 2009)

1987-88	Ranked # 3	14.8% out of 62,000 students =
	9,176 students	
1998-99	Ranked # 6	8.1% out of 129,770 students =
	10,511 students	
2007-08	Ranked # 6	6.2% out of 262,416 students =
	16,269 students	

Foreign Language Majors Not Keeping Pace with the Pack:

The number of foreign language majors studying abroad grew 77%. But the total number of students studying abroad grew 323% -- or more than 4-x faster.



"Sprechen Sie Englisch?"

MLA Survey, November 2007

"Students are nearly five times more likely to be enrolled in a 1st- or 2nd-year course than in advanced language study.

While increasing numbers and proportions of students are taking introductory language classes, the majority do not pursue the advanced study necessary to achieve fluency."



“Sprechen Sie Englisch?”

“Successful College and University Foreign Language Programs, 1995-99: Part 2”

‘Program Features Associated with Rising Enrollments in Advanced Courses and with Increasing Numbers of Majors’
Association of Departments of Foreign Languages, Winter Spring, ’04

“Five features show a very strong correlation with increasing enrollments...Study abroad correlated more strongly than any other program feature with increasing enrollments at introductory levels....The correlation of growth in study abroad with growth at advanced levels is also very strong...”

“Sprechen Sie Englisch?”

“Too many schools, colleges and private organizations offer a pseudo-immersion in a second culture, often claiming the gaining of skills and understanding that only true immersion can bring. Since one type of program costs about the same as the other, let the wise student—and his parents—beware. Find out just how much opportunity there is going to be for the student to revert to English, to read English newspapers, to be taught by English-speaking instructors, and to travel superficially in and out of several cultures. If your goal is to become more fluent in a second language and to understand another culture in some depth, then choose wisely.”

*Cynthia Parsons, “Warning on Study Abroad: Beware the Superficial,”
Christian Science Monitor, 5 February, 1979*

*(Cited in U.S. Senator Paul Simon’s book, The Tongue-Tied American,
1980)*

“Sprechen Sie Englisch?”

MLA Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages Report, 2006:

Foreign Languages and Higher Education: New Structures for a Changed World.

“Four-year language majors often graduate with disappointingly low levels of linguistic ability. Opportunities to study abroad and to do course work in the target language are eroding in favor of short-term study in which courses are in English.”

“We ...encourage departments to set clear standards of achievement for undergraduate majors in speaking, reading, writing, and comprehension and to develop the programming necessary to meet these standards....[and] we continue to advocate the following priorities for language departments and programs: Insist on study abroad whenever possible and require courses in the target language. Push administrators to develop financial aid support for study abroad. Provide appropriate courses for students returning from abroad.”



“Sprechen Sie Englisch?”

“Language and communication are at the heart of the human experience. The United States must educate students who are linguistically and culturally equipped to communicate successfully in a pluralistic American society and abroad. **This imperative envisions a future in which ALL students will develop and maintain proficiency in English and at least one other language...**”

Statement of Philosophy

Standards for Foreign Language Learning (1996)

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)

“Sprechen Sie Englisch?”

There is compelling evidence that to reach the professional proficiency level in a foreign language as well as to develop the cultural skills that are associated with this level, students must participate in intensive and rigorous programs of overseas study.

The Language Flagship/National Security Education Program (NSEP)

The Center for Applied Linguistics recommended in 2007:

“...to increase the number of second language proficient individuals in the U.S., the country needs to increase the number of immersion and other innovative language programs that aim at developing high levels of proficiency.”



Forum on Education Abroad 2010

SECOND LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION AND CULTURAL PROFICIENCY IN STUDY ABROAD

***JEANETTE OWEN
AMERICAN COUNCILS FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION***



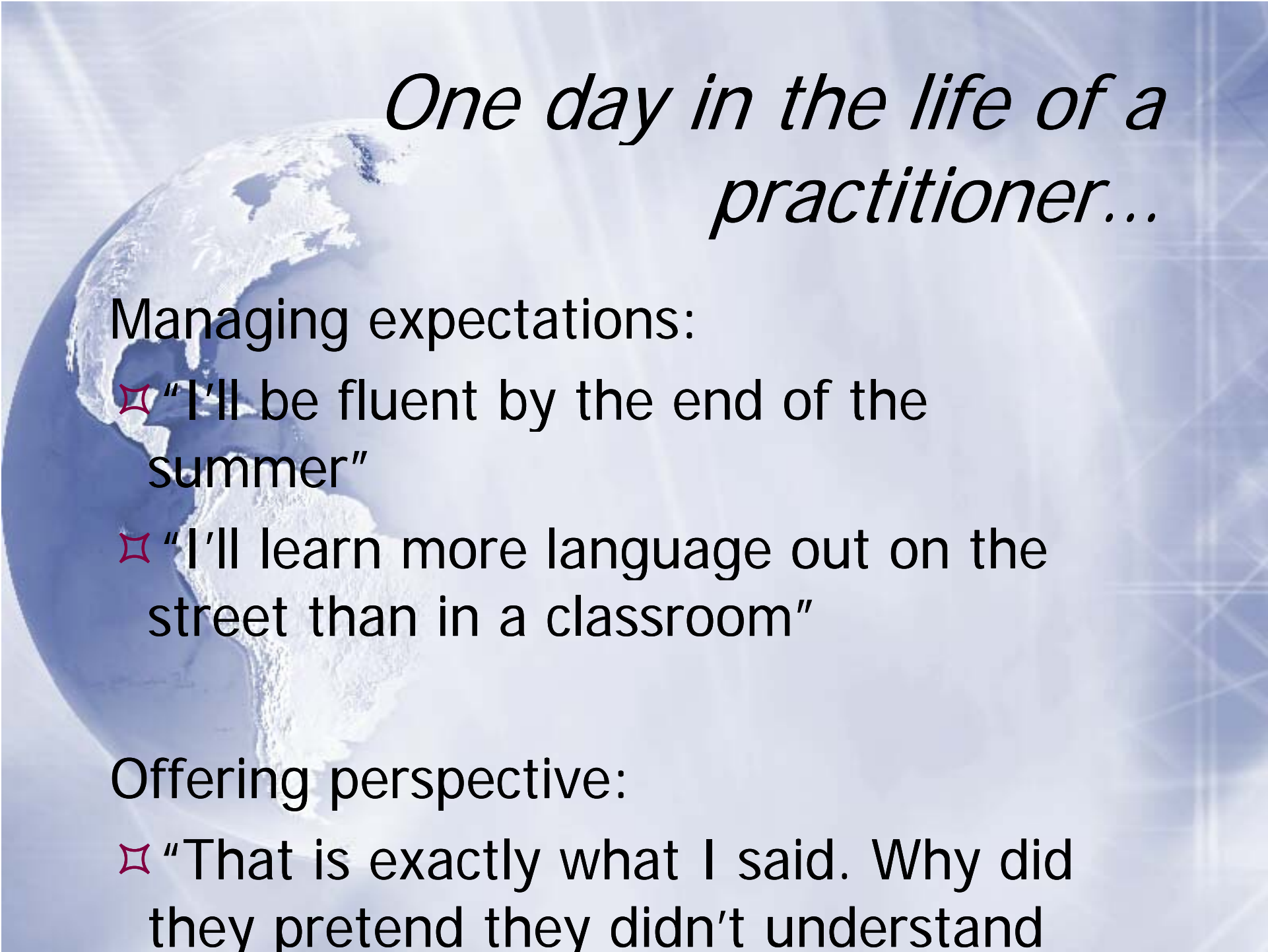
Setting the context for one practitioner:

- ✧ Increased funding for language-intensive programs
- ✧ Increased emphasis on language programs for non-language majors
- ✧ Increased interest in less-commonly taught languages (LCTLs) and regions



For the typical U.S. student:

- ✧ Students taking intensive language programs are often not proficient enough at the outset to manage the host-country educational system.
- ✧ The educational system may not be designed to accommodate a one-term or one-year student.
- ✧ Recreating the U.S. model overseas



One day in the life of a practitioner...

Managing expectations:

- ✧ "I'll be fluent by the end of the summer"
- ✧ "I'll learn more language out on the street than in a classroom"

Offering perspective:

- ✧ "That is exactly what I said. Why did they pretend they didn't understand"



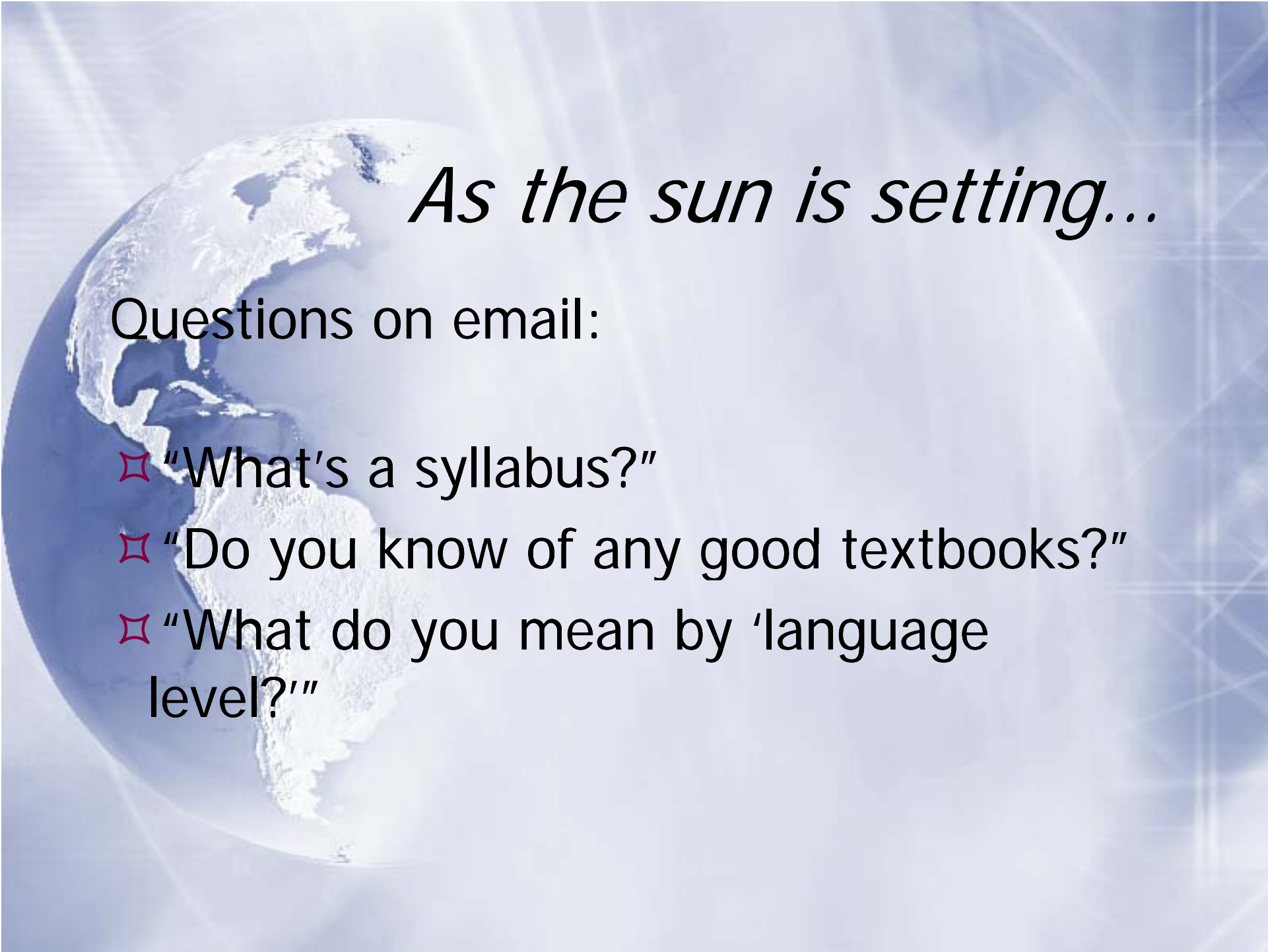
Later that day...

Managing another set of assumptions:

- ✧ "American students are disrespectful"
- ✧ "American students are lazy"

Developing new perspectives:

- ✧ "Why don't they learn what I tell them to?"
- ✧ "Why do they keep asking for grades?"



As the sun is setting...

Questions on email:

- ✧ "What's a syllabus?"
- ✧ "Do you know of any good textbooks?"
- ✧ "What do you mean by 'language level?'"




Reflections at the end of the day

- ✧ Are we doing a good job?
- ✧ Is there a better way to do this?
- ✧ What resources are available to inform the process?

- ✧ Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad
- ✧ National Standards for Foreign Language Learning

National Standards for Foreign Language Education

- ✧ “Defining *content* standards—what students should know and be able to do—in foreign language education.”
- ✧ American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages
- ✧ AATF, AATG, AATI, AATSP, ACL, ACTR, CLASS, and NCJLT-ATJ
- ✧ U.S. Department of Education
- ✧ National Endowment for the Humanities



*Learning Language in the
Overseas Context*

*The Forum on Education
Abroad*

March 25, 2010

Dr. David P. Patton

Dr. Dan E. Davidson

American Councils for International Education

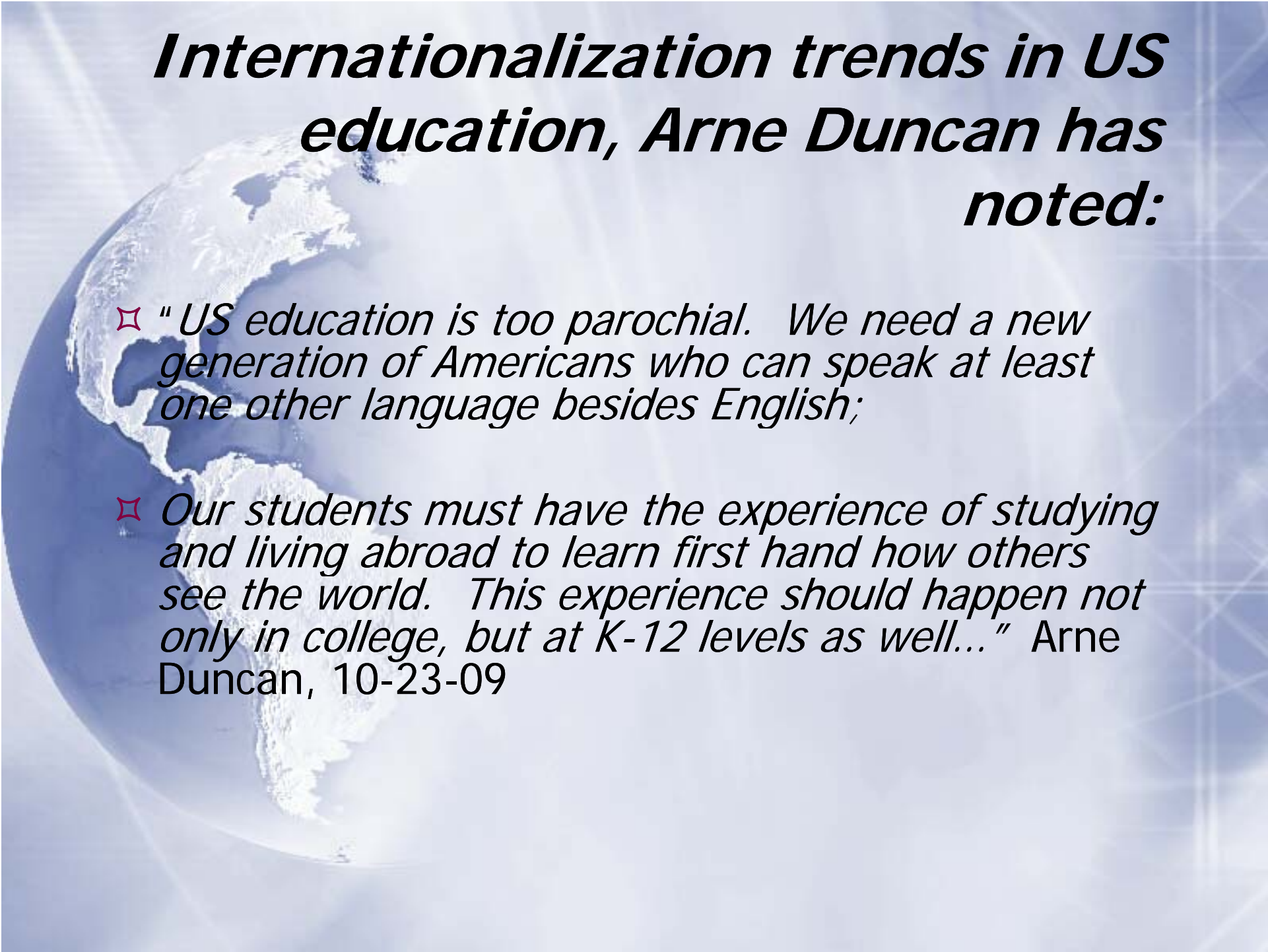


American Councils

American Councils for International Education was founded as a national professional membership association for language and area professionals.

Since 1974, American Councils has focused on the development of SLA in America through:

- the design and implementation of exchange and training programs, professional development activities;
- over 8,000 exchange programs for US high school, undergraduate and graduate students;
- SA programs in Russia & Eurasia, Central Asia, South Asia, Middle East and Africa;
- curriculum and test development;
- research and evaluation.



Internationalization trends in US education, Arne Duncan has noted:

- ✧ *"US education is too parochial. We need a new generation of Americans who can speak at least one other language besides English;*
- ✧ *Our students must have the experience of studying and living abroad to learn first hand how others see the world. This experience should happen not only in college, but at K-12 levels as well..." Arne Duncan, 10-23-09*



Microsoft: Competencies most sought in HR recruitment

- Communication and interpersonal skills, including negotiation skills. (Professional level [L3] or higher)
- Intentional Learners 'who can adapt to new environments, integrate knowledge from different sources and continue learning throughout their lives'.

Teaching for Proficiency – The Organizing Principle

ACTFL/ILR Correlations

0- Novice

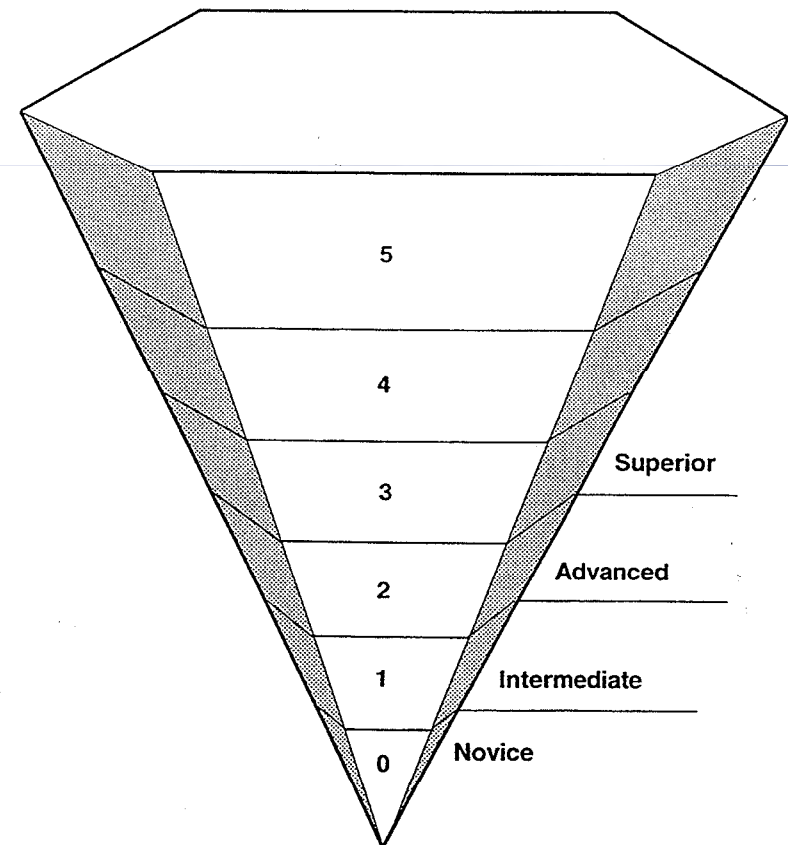
3- Professional level
communication

5- Educated native
speaker

Russian in the Classroom

L2 = 700-750 hrs

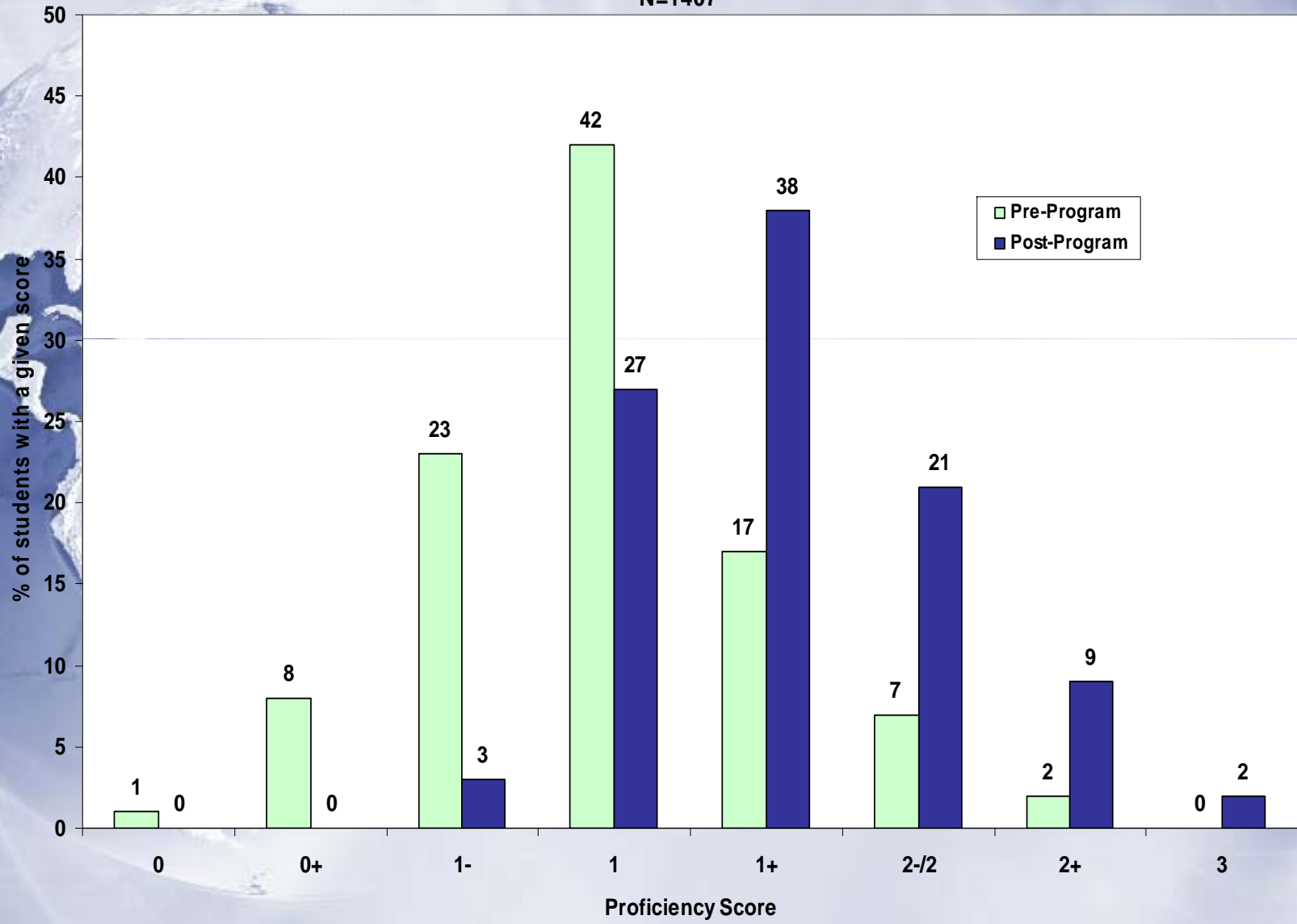
L3 = 1320-1600 hrs



Comparison of Pre- and Post-Program Oral Proficiency Scores

Semester Students Through October 2005

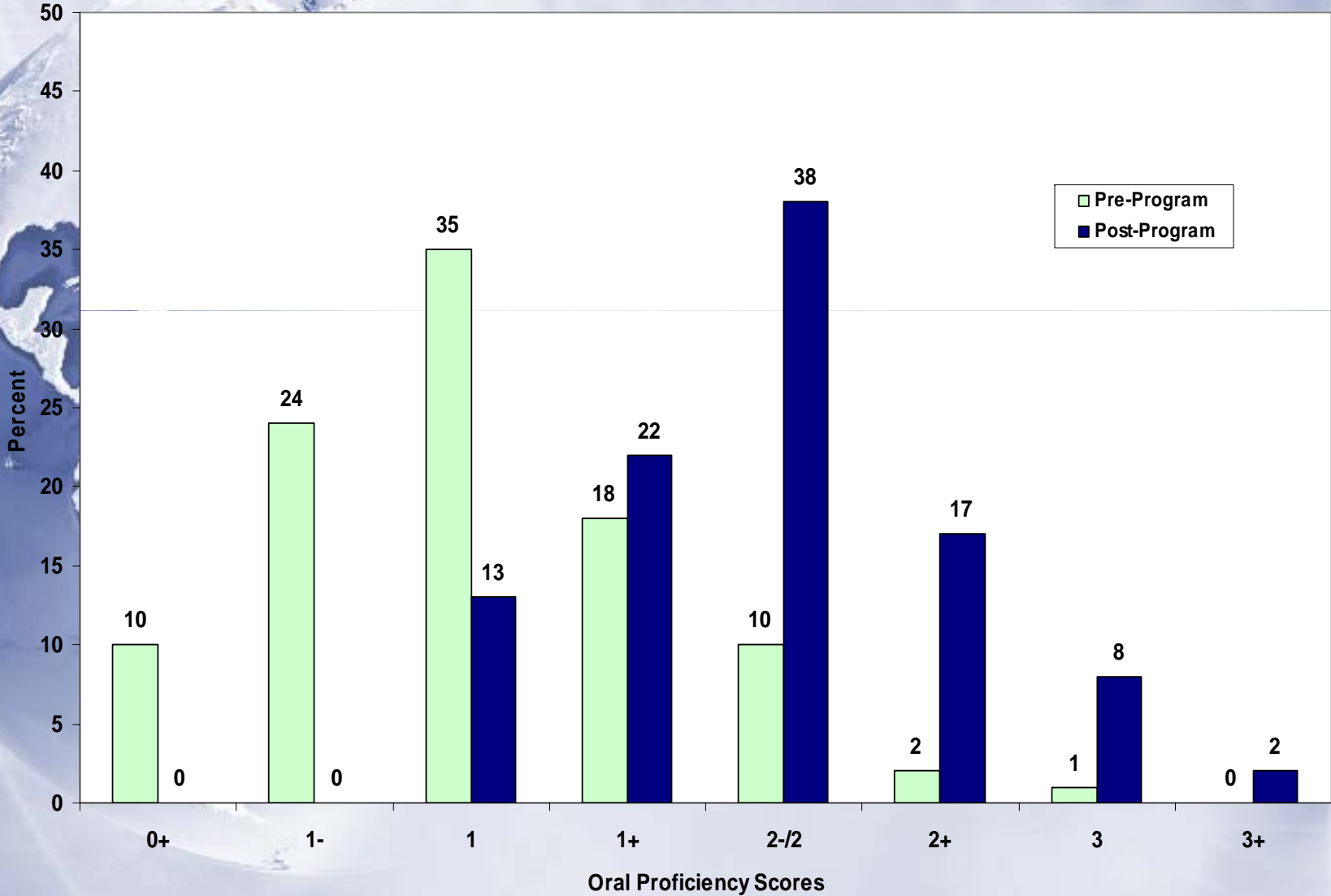
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Comparison of Pre- and Post-Program Oral Proficiency Scores

Academic Year Students Through October 2005

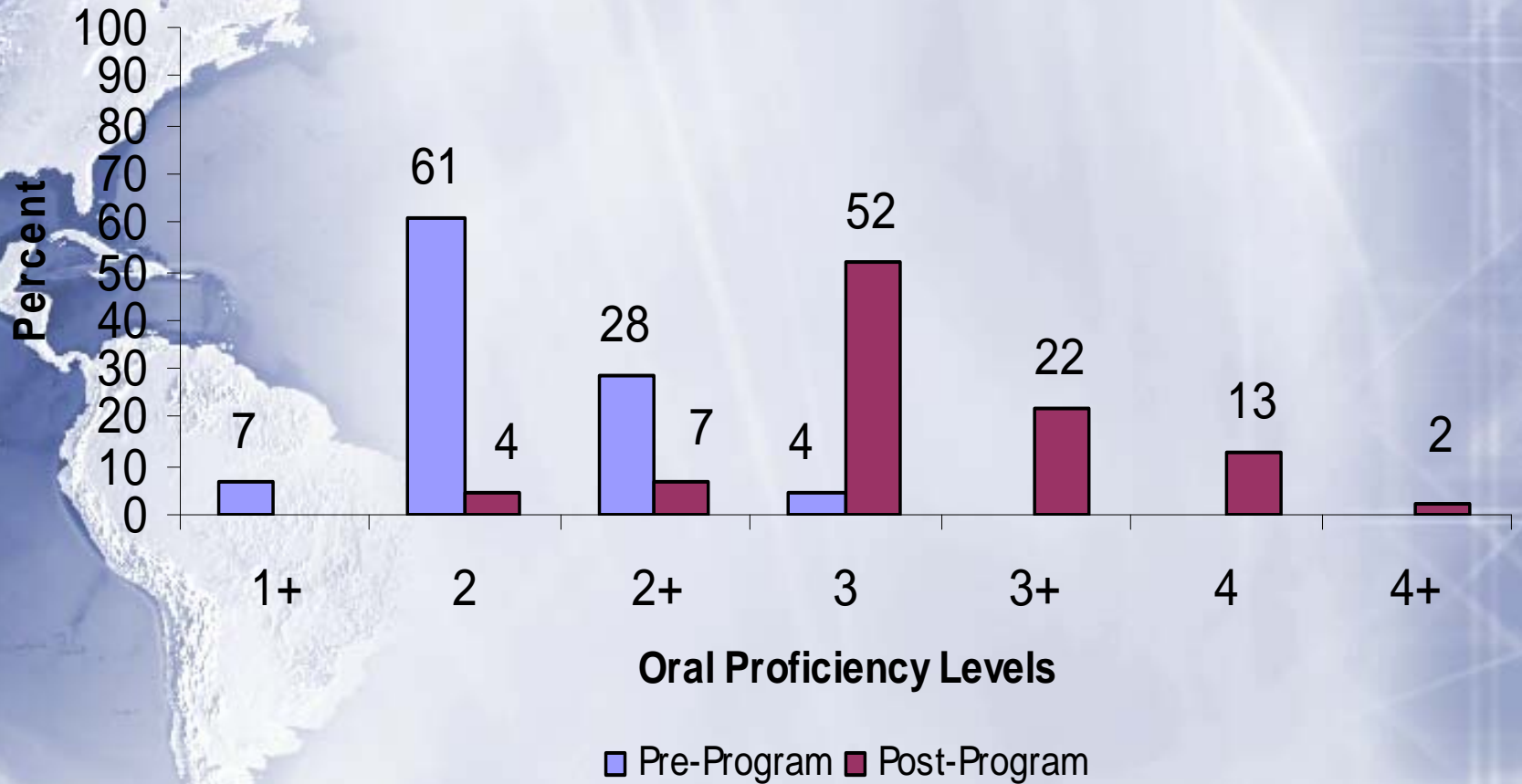
N=208



Flagship-Level 2 to 3 (and above):

September 2005 to Present – 513 Reports	Weekly Average
Formal language learning classes	14.4
In homework and other preparation for formal language learning classes	1.2
Internship or specialization coursework	4.8
Language tutorial sessions	3.1
Professional/or academic reading	3.1
Academic Total	26.6
Cultural events	2.4
Host family	7.7
In public transportation or while shopping	3.2
Other	10.6
Reading for pleasure	2.9
Reading the press	2.5
Russian radio or television	4.7
With friends	8.9
Other Activity Total	42.9
Totals	69.5

Comparison of Pre- and Post- AY Program Oral Proficiency Scores 2004-2008 (N=46)



Note. * ACTFL OPI scores were converted into ILR scores; post-program OPI scores from FSI were used for students receiving a U.S. government fellowship.

Recommendations

- ✧ Encourage but do not overestimate the impact of short-term SA programs in producing measureable gains.
- ✧ Promote long-term SA (9-12 months) to contribute substantially to acquisition at high-levels of proficiency for a range of learners.
- ✧ Articulate complementary standards for SA and US-based classroom instruction.



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