**Assessment #8: Final Reflective Essay**

[FLPT 485]

TOPIC: “**Cultures, Linguistics, and Literatures:   
How do world language teachers develop their content knowledge?**”

Due: Last semester of your study, after student teaching, to be included in the Portfolio

Length: 3-5 pages, 12 point, double-spaced, 1-inch margins. Please write in English.

Think of your intellectual journey during your time at NIU and as a student of your target language.

* **Cultures**: How have you developed your understanding of the perspectives of people from your target cultures by studying their products and practices? What are some fundamental differences and similarities between your own culture and your target cultures?
* **Linguistics**: How have you developed your understanding of linguistic elements of your target language? How are they similar to and different from English? How does your target language vary between the textbook and real life, from place to place, or change over time?
* **Literatures**: How have you developed your understanding of the literature, art, and film of your target cultures? What kinds of nonfiction materials have you read/viewed?
* **Content knowledge in teaching**:How will you bring these three areas of content knowledge into your teaching? Which topics are approachable for novice-intermediate level students? How does including content knowledge in language classes prepare students to interact in the global community of the 21st century?
* **Going forward:** Given that it is impossible to know everything about teaching your target language and cultures, how will you continue to find ways to strengthen your linguistic, cultural and pedagogical knowledge as a teacher without your professors guiding you?

This reflective paper is to give you a chance to write from your point of view in connection with what you have learned about your target cultures. It is most important to reflect on you and your experiences.

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| **Rubric for Evaluation** | | | |
| **Criteria** | **Unacceptable = 1 pt** | **Acceptable = 3 pts** | **Target = 5 pts** |
| **Cultural Knowledge** | Candidate’s cultural knowledge is still developing.  Candidate charts or lists similarities and differences between the target culture and their own. Candidate mentions products or practices but is limited in connecting these with perspectives. | Candidate cites key perspectives of the target culture and connects them to cultural products and practices.  Candidates compare the target cultures to their own, or compare a series of cultures. | Candidate explains the target culture as a system in which cultural perspectives are reflected through products and practices. Essay distinguishes between general patterns and more limited contexts, between tradition and contemporary practice; or hypothesizes about cultural phenomena that are unclear. Candidate describes how various cultures are similar and different. |
| **Linguistics** | Candidate describes parts of the target language sound system (or understanding is incomplete), notice only aspects of morphology that are the subject of instruction, recognize that syntax differs between languages, and rely on instructional materials for language examples. | Candidates describe the target language sound system, diagnose their own pronunciation difficulties, notice patterns in morphology, understand major syntactic differences between languages, and are aware of discrepancies between language in instructional materials and contemporary usage. | Candidates demonstrate differences between phonological systems of the target and their native languages, correct their own pronunciation difficulties, can productively use morphemes, understand how syntactic patterns cause nuanced differences in meaning, and are familiar with contemporary language usage as a result of interacting with native speakers and exploring authentic materials. |
| **Literatures** | Candidates are aware of major literary texts and can identify main ideas of works read. They identify key ideas from nonfiction materials with support. | Candidates interpret literary texts that represent defining works in the target cultures, identifying themes, authors, and/or historical styles. They can determine the meaning of words from context and comprehend nonfiction materials. | Candidates interpret and synthesize ideas and critical issues from literary and other cultural texts that represent historical and contemporary texts and media. They interpret nonfiction materials from a number of disciplines and acquire language expressions from doing so. |
| **Content knowledge in teaching** | The application of content knowledge to teaching is addressed superficially or as an optional add-on to language classes. | Ways to use content knowledge in teaching are discussed, with some relevant examples from the student’s experiences. At least one benefit of teaching content knowledge is identified. | Paper presents insightful ways to include content knowledge in teaching, with attention to the proficiency level of the learners. Candidate articulates rationale and benefits (cognitive, social, academic, etc.) of using language to teach content. |
| **Going forward** | Paper views content knowledge as a subject already mastered. Candidate considers suggestions that mentors make regarding candidate’s own professional growth. | Candidate plans to continue maintaining and updating content knowledge. Candidate seeks out professional growth opportunities. | Candidate has systematic plans to maintain and update content knowledge through conferences, professional learning communities, professional journals, popular media, study abroad, travel, graduate study, and/or personal investigation online. |
| **Clarity and flow of writing and writing technique** | Introduction and conclusion are lacking. It is hard to know what the writer is trying to express. The paper is unorganized. Misspelled words, incorrect grammar, and/or improper punctuation are evident. | Topic is clear in introduction. Conclusion shows synthesis of ideas, most of which were supported in the body of the paper. Writing is generally clear, with a basic flow from one section to the next with limited repetition and in a logical order. Few (3) spelling, grammar, or punctuation errors are made. | Introduction lays groundwork for the direction of the paper. Writing is crisp, clear, and succinct. The writer supports ideas with examples and makes clear transitions between paragraphs. No spelling, grammar, or punctuation errors are made. The author was able to make specific conclusions based on personal experience. |

An average score of 3-5 (Acceptable-Target) is a passing score for this assessment.