Language Learning on Campus and Beyond – Heritage Languages, Independent Learning, and 21st Century Skills for All

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Abstract

Language skills and cultural knowledge are essential in a globalized and interconnected world, and in an increasingly multilingual society. US students lag behind in language learning, partly due to lack of access and opportunity, and educators can play a key role in empowering all interested students to develop their language skills. Language educators and college faculty can play a leadership role in support of heritages languages and heritage language learning, the development of independent study skills for all, and the development of free online language learning materials. Online programs can play a significant role in increasing access and affordability of language learning for all. Language educators can work both within their institutions and in partnership with language stakeholder groups, including parents, to increase sustainable motivation for languages, language learning, and language use, both in-person and online.

Keywords: independent learning, heritage languages, online learning

1. Introduction

Bilingualism has been referred to as a "superpower" and monolingualism the "illiteracy" of the 21 century; yet relatively few Americans can hold a conversation in a language other than English, and even fewer study a language other than English at the postsecondary level (Myers, 2022, para 1; Roberts et al, 2017, p. 116 McComb, 2001; MLA, 2019). Faculty can play a leading role in bringing about change, especially by supporting heritage languages and heritage language learning, independent learning, and online learning.

Language skills and cultural knowledge are part of the 21st century skills set, both globally and locally. There is a gap between supply and demand in terms of language skills in the US, and language educators in college and universities can play a key role in effectively addressing this US foreign language deficit (ACTFL, 2019; NAE, 2017, MLA, 2019; AMACAD, 2020; Stein-Smith, 2013). Within the framework of multilingualism as an essential skill, language learning is more accessible than ever before due to technology and the proliferation of online resources. With 70M Americans who speak another language in the home and millions more with one or more heritage languages in their family story, areas of focus include independent learning and heritage languages (Zeigler & Camarota, 2019).

Long a proponent of multilingualism, the United Nations observed an International Year of Indigenous Languages in 2019 and has proclaimed an International Decade of Indigenous Languages, 2022-2032 (UN, 2022), and multilingualism is considered the "language of the European Union" (European Parliament, 2022, para 1).

However, in the US, relatively few Americans speak a language other than English, and relatively few students have the opportunity to learn additional languages (McComb, 2001; AMACAD, 2017). On college and university campuses, a mere 7.5% of students are enrolled in a course in a language other than English (MLA, 2019). Overall, Americans "lag behind" in language learning (Devlin, 2018, para 1). Interestingly, many Americans regret not having had the opportunity to learn additional languages while in school, even as enrollment continues to decline (Agudo, 2020). Language educators and college faculty can leverage this paradoxical gap between this desire for language learning and the lack of opportunity to learn an additional or heritage language at the postsecondary level.

Language skills and cultural knowledge are needed in international relations and global citizenship, in the workplace, in our communities, and in humanitarian responses to international crises. In the US workplace, a gap between the supply of workers with language skills and the need for them has been demonstrated (AMACAD, 2020; ACTFL, 2019; NAE, 2017). However, the need extends beyond business and the workplace. In addition, as "information in the wrong language is useless," the need for language skills and cultural knowledge in an increasingly globalized and interconnected world is clear (TWB, 2022, para 1; AMACAD, 2020).

In addition to the concept of world languages and world language learning, generally considered as the learning of additional languages by Anglophone students in school, the concept of heritage languages and heritage language learning is just as important, perhaps even more so, but may not be mentioned as often, especially at the postsecondary level. A "heritage language learner" has been defined as "a person studying a language who has proficiency in or a cultural connection to that language" (Kelleher, 2010, p. 1).

It is not surprising that in the US, a nation of immigrants, most Americans have a language other than English in their background. However, due to assimilation and language loss – and the "melting pot" metaphor prevalent for much of our history - many of these heritage languages have been partially or completely lost. In the US, 70M speak a language other than English in the home (Americans, 2022; Zeigler & Camarota, 2019; Ryan, 2013). What may be most surprising, however, is that many Americans with a language other than English – a heritage language – in their family background no longer speak their heritage language, or speak it only to a limited extent, sometimes losing that language within a relatively short time due to assimilation, despite the proven benefits of heritage language maintenance and skills (ACTFL, n.d.)

Languages may be learned in many different settings and often are learned in a world where more than half the population is bilingual (Grosjean, 2010, 2020).   Within the context of a US foreign language deficit in a multilingual world and an increasingly multilingual society, it is essential to look beyond the campus and the classroom and connect with the potential for language learning within all our students.

Language educators and professionals in higher education can play an important role in effectively addressing this US foreign language deficit through developing online learning materials for their students and freely available online materials for all interested language learners, for working through their teaching, research, writing, scholarship, and professional engagement to advocate for and to promote language learning, and by developing connections between their campus language programs and local communities and cultural groups of mother-tongue and heritage language speakers.

The purpose of this article is to increase awareness of the importance of heritage languages, online education, and independent learning in effectively addressing the US foreign language deficit in a globalized world and an increasingly multilingual society. The methods used include a review of the relevant literature in order to increase not only an awareness of the extent of the language deficit, but also how language advocacy and advocacy partnerships, especially with parents and with heritage language speakers and communities, can increase language skills in the US. In addition, direct instruction in independent learning skills and expansion of online learning and resources can expand access and affordability.

2. Language Learning in Colleges and Universities in the United States

Language skills and cultural knowledge are essential in our personal and professional lives, and in our ability to effectively engage as global citizens. However, a mere 7.5% of postsecondary students are enrolled in a course in a language other than English, and foreign language programs have declined in recent years (ACTFL, 2019; NAE, 2017; Johnson, 2019).

Today's college and university students, belonging to what is often referred to as Generation Z, spend more time online, and are more accustomed to and comfortable with technology than previous generations, increasing the likelihood that they will accept and embrace not only online learning through traditional learning management systems (LMS), but that they will also seek out authentic cultural experiences through websites, social media, and freely available online educational resources (OERs) (Vogels, 2019; Parker & Igielnik, 2020). It is interesting to note that a recent survey has found that nearly half of respondents "wished they'd had more opportunities to learn languages" (Agudo, 2020, para 2).

Traditionally, it was widely believed that only children could successfully and effectively learn another language. However, people of all ages around the world have always learned languages as needed or as desired depending on their own circumstances and local conditions. Recent research has confirmed that language can indeed be learned – albeit differently – at any age (Hartshorne et al, 2018; Chacon, 2018). College and university students can and should be expected to reach an acceptable level of proficiency and fluency, even if they are beginning a new language in college. These findings open a wide array of possibilities for college and university language educators and students to undertake language studies with a degree of optimism not necessarily embraced in the past. These findings also confer a degree of responsibility for educators and learners to mobilize this optimism through the adoption of the broadest possible range of learning approaches and materials.

Although there are many reasons to study or to continue to study a language in college, including employment opportunities in business, government, the military, and education, along with cognitive and cultural benefits, in the US, only 7.5 percent of college and university students are enrolled in a course in a language other than English and the percentage is in decline (ACTFL, n.d.; MLA.2019).   Spanish and French are the two most widely studied languages, although French has shown the most dramatic decline in recent years. (MLA, 2019; Johnson, 2019). In addition, many of

the students enrolled in languages at the college and university level are enrolled at earlier, rather than at more advanced, levels. While this decline is not new, it has increased in recent years.

Recommendations have included changes to the undergraduate major, heritage language learning, multidisciplinary and joint programs, foreign language degree requirements, and development of courses and programs in response to student needs and interests (MLA, 2007; MLA, 2012; MLA, 2015; MLA, 2019). However, 10 years after the publication of the 2007 report, a survey showed that while the recommendations are widely known, little has been done to implement them (Redden, 2017).

Heritage languages, immersion, and online programs are on the rise, as has generally been study abroad (with COVID disruptions) (State, n.d.; NAFSA, n.d.). Interdisciplinary and specialized programs include Cultures and Languages Across the Curriculum (CLAC) & Foreign Language Across the Curriculum (FLAC), Centers for International Business Education and Research (CIBERs), created by Congress in 1988 in order to develop both "international understanding and competitiveness" (CIBERs, 2020), Global Engineering Programs, and the Language Flagship (ACTFL, n.d.) are examples of successful initiatives.

In alignment with the recommendation for colleges and universities to provide "multiple pathways" to the undergraduate foreign language major and with the concept of Languages for Specific Purposes (LSP), a number of programs exist in professional language studies in a wide variety of disciplines, (MLA, 2007, para 11). Examples of programs include the master's program in Professional French Studies at the University of Wisconsin and the initiatives launched by an external partner, in this case the French government, to train faculty to teach French for Professional Purposes in a wide variety of disciplines (Cultural Services, n.d; Cultural Services, 2021; CCI Paris Ile-de- France, n.d.).

College faculty can play a leadership role in language advocacy and the promotion of language learning especially in the development of curriculum and materials, and in their research, writing, and professional engagement.

3. Heritage Languages in Colleges and Universities in the United States

Although 70M in the US speak a language other than English in the home, the benefits of immersion learning are well-known, and dual-language immersion programs are increasing in number, more can be done to increase heritage language learning and to maximize the benefits of heritage language skills at the postsecondary level (Steele et al, 2017; Zeigler & Camarota, 2019; Fortune, 2019).

Within the context of the importance of language skills in the US, in 2022, Secretary of Education Cardona signed a memorandum of understanding with the government of Spain ensuring the teaching of Spanish language and culture in the US and the teaching of English in Spain (Cardona, 2022; Detailzero, 2022). Heritage language research has often discussed the areas of language policy, heritage language pedagogy, heritage speaker identity, and heritage language acquisition (Wiley et al, 2014).

It has been recommended that college and university foreign language departments identify heritage language speakers, encourage them to learn their heritage language and additional languages, and that they develop appropriate curriculum based on best practices (MLA, 2007). Heritage language programs are on the rise at the postsecondary level, and "universities are adapting their foreign language curriculum, in part to better prepare graduates for a globalized world where it pays to be professionally fluent in more than one language" (Wides-Munoz, 2013, para 3).

While it is important to frame the question of the role of heritage languages in effectively addressing the US foreign language deficit in terms of heritage language learning, independent learning, and online learning, it is equally important to consider the significance of heritage language learning in the lives of heritage language students. When questioned about their experiences in a university-level heritage language course in Spanish, the responses of three students included phrases such as "I felt more confident about my Spanish;" I was not content with the current ability that I had (before taking the heritage language course}"; "al principio no fue tan fácil porque el sólo hablar español no es suficiente para trabajar con el español. Esta clase me dio las herramientas que necesitaba" (Translation by author-at the beginning it was not so easy because only speaking Spanish is not sufficient in order to work in Spanish. This course gave me the tools I needed) (UW Heritage Language Track, 2015).

Challenges can include regional variations within a specific language, differing levels of proficiency, funding, and increasingly rapid rate of intergenerational language loss (Wides-Munoz, 2013; Brooklyn College, 2022; Fee et al, 2014). In addition, many heritage language learners do not have local language networks readily available (Sok, 2013).

College faculty can play a leadership role in safeguarding heritage languages through the development of programs and materials for heritage language learners, and especially through partnerships both locally and globally.

4. Online Language Learning in Colleges and Universities in the United States – Access and Affordability

Online learning has increased significantly in recent years, accelerated by the COVID pandemic, with more learners

taking online courses in the US and around the world (Smalley, 2021; Koksal, 2020; Friedman & Wood, 2022; Wood, 2022). Advantages of online programs include not only the flexibility and affordability of being able to take courses at a time that is in alignment with the life and work commitments of the learner, but also allows for the development of online study, work, and collaborative skills that are transferable to the workplace (Northeastern U, n.d.). Colleges and universities can also develop partnerships with other institutions to offer remotely languages that may not be offered locally.

Online learning has been part of the academic landscape for many years, offering learners the possibility of taking courses offered not only in faraway places, but also at a local college or university. While synchronous classes offer the traditional classroom meeting experience available from wherever you may be, asynchronous classes empower those with limited time due to work, as well as family and other obligations, to attend classes when they are able to. Perhaps even more importantly, online learning can increase affordability, as students no longer need to travel to and/or reside at a campus location, and they can continue to work while learning. Most importantly, students who may not be able to live on or to travel to campus due to a disability can pursue their studies from home. Examples include not only college and university classes, but also Pre-K—12 learning and weekend, summer, and afterschool programs for all ages. Online learning offers many benefits, including budget-friendly choices, flexibility and convenience, and options for every learning style. Online classes can be even better than in-person classes, and the metaverse and virtual reality are poised to transform higher education (Perry, 2022; Villasenor, 2022; D'Agostino, 2022).

It is essential to focus on the technological advances made in recent years that have made online learning experiences, including language learning, as good as - and even better than - in-person classes, and promise to continue, and to make them better known to learners, parents and communities, language stakeholders, and institutional decision-makers. Examples include advances in video-conferencing, new and emerging technologies that will make learning feel more real, online learning platforms, as well as an increase in freely available material online, including authentic language from a variety of sources along with the proliferation of open educational resources (OERs) (Salzman, 2022).

Even with the temporary softening in demand for higher education, as an inevitable bounce-back in a post-COVID world, the fundamentals for online education are strong (Nietzel, 2022; Diaz-Infante et al, 2022).   Every tailwind and trend are pointing to more online education, not less, and in every form. College courses, certificates, and digital badges alike will – invariably – be increasingly offered online versus in-person.

College faculty can play a leadership role in developing online programs for enrolled students who cannot or do not choose to travel to campus for traditional classes. In addition, the role of college faculty in developing opportunities for students to learn languages not taught on campus through online programs and partnerships with other institutions is of critical importance.

5. Independent Language Learning among College and University Students in the United States

Independent learning has been defined as *"a method or learning process where learners have ownership and control of their learning"* and can occur at any level of learning or in any environment (Livingston, 2012, para 1). College language educators can play a leadership role in facilitating independent language learning and ensuring that students have the skills to be effective independent learners and in developing online resources to support both independent learning skills and language learning at all levels. Independent language learning is not a new idea, but the proliferation of online language learning resources and materials has greatly enhanced the quality and quantity of freely available resources.

People of all ages have always learned languages under a wide range of conditions and circumstances. Language education has been increasingly influenced by the natural process of language learning, drawing from linguistics theorists like Chomsky and many others to make the language learning experience more authentic and effective. Language learning in colleges and universities takes place in on-campus and online classes, as well as through study abroad and experiential learning using authentic language in real-world situations (Risner, 2012).

Independent learning, often referred to as self-directed learning, relies on the motivation of the learner and on the self-management skills of the learner in sustaining the learning project to a successful outcome. These skills may include the ability to assess one's own progress and to reflect on one's learning, as well as to know when assistance is needed. Independent learning may take place in many different environments and at any age, but in higher education has often been associated with the adult learner. Adult learners are often described as motivated, goal-oriented, and preferring to learn through experience within the framework of adult learning theory known as andragogy, and many of these principles often apply to independent learners (Knowles, et al, 2020).

While still a valid approach for the adult learner, independent language learning is now increasingly associated with college and university students generally and with the proliferation of online programs and resources, including OERs (open educational resources) (Villasenor, 2022).In addition, independent language learning can empower students to learn languages not offered or otherwise available at their specific institution, and colleges and universities have embraced the

concept to varying degrees, with some even offering partnerships with other schools who offer the desired language or developing curated collections of online resources for independent learners.

College faculty can encourage and support independent learning among on-campus and online learners not only through the development of language learning materials for online learners, but also through direct instruction in independent learning skills both in-person and online.

6. The Role of Language Educators and Professionals in Developing Independent Language Learning in Higher Education

While the role of the teacher in independent learning may sometimes be underestimated, language educators and professionals, both within and outside academia, can play a critical role in supporting independent language learning in higher education (Harper, 2017). Areas of focus include expanding the undergraduate major beyond the traditional focus on literature to include multidisciplinary collaborations, courses, and programs (MLA, 2007). In addition, faculty can work to increase foreign language degree requirements and to fully implement those that exist, and to facilitate double majors, joint degree programs, and professional language studies (MLA, 2012; MLA, 2015; MLA, 2019). All of these initiatives can incorporate independent learning, reflecting the proliferation of authentic language and learning materials available online.

College and university faculty are ideally positioned to take on a leadership role in supporting student learning in the classroom and beyond – of languages both in the institutional program or not. Online classes, asynchronous learning, and mobile technology have set the stage for independent learning at the college and university level. Independent research experiences and projects can be devised to meet both learner and curricular goals.

College language educators may wish to include explicit and progressive instruction on independent learning focusing on skills based in purpose in language courses in order to elicit and support sustainable motivation while giving students the skills to take language learning beyond the classroom. In addition, faculty can work to include independent learning skills in freshman and general education courses. Beyond the classroom, faculty can work to develop partnerships with local K-12 language programs and with community partners.

Keeping the purpose of each language learner clearly in focus and empowering students to drive their own learning can go a long way to develop and maintain the sustainable motivation essential to a successful language learning outcome. The important thing to remember is that, while all students deserve the opportunity to study abroad, those who cannot – for a variety of reasons – can achieve comparable outcomes through independent and online learning, as well as through access to partnerships within the local community. Faculty may also wish to take the additional step of developing freely available online learning materials (OERs), empowering not only their own students, but language learners everywhere (Staben, 2019).

The question of language waivers has long been discussed, with implications including equity for students classified as LD, or learning disabled, who may not have the opportunity to study a foreign language, regardless of their ability to achieve (Sparks, 2016). Differentiated instruction is another area where faculty can make a difference, encouraging all interested students to consider language study in college and in supporting student success by employing a wide range of instructional strategies and using materials accessible to all learning styles. Specific recommendations have included added emphasis on the relationship between the written and spoken sound and multisensory instruction, etc. (Schwartz, 2021).

In any discussion of independent learning, it is important to remember that motivation is key to successful learning outcome. The reason of each learner for taking a language course in college and for learning a language is unique, individual, and personal, and it is important to reinforce awareness of each learner's purpose and of the steps being taken each day to achieve the goal of language proficiency or fluency in order to sustain motivation for the relatively long period of time needed to learn a language. For these reasons, it is important for the language educator to explicitly address on a regular basis the purposes that have driven the decision of each student to learn a language. It is also important to remember to focus on the tangible benefits and advantages of language learning that are most relatable to the majority of students, including the social and professional benefits of language skills, as well as the joy of multilingualism in general, and of the language they are learning in particular. These are areas where independent learning can freely occur and be supported by the proactive educator.

Beyond language learning, college and university language educators can add value for many learners to the language learning experience by developing programs that explicitly address language use and the usefulness of language skills and cultural knowledge generally as well as the benefits of the language being learned.

Language educators at all levels, but perhaps especially college and university faculty, may wish to develop pre-professional language skills through both curriculum and experiential learning. Curriculum can certainly include language and culture relative to specific areas including business, international relations, tourism, global health, etc., and can begin at a relatively early grade level, making K-16 partnerships and collaborations ideal. Experiential learning can include study abroad and virtual opportunities as well as experiences closer to home involving local communities of mother

tongue speakers as well as local companies and other organizations with frequent contact and transactions with other cultures. External partners can also be effective assets, with examples including the *Français des affaires/Français professionnel* initiative launched by the CCI and the French language job fairs sponsored by the Cultural Services of the French Embassy and local higher education partners (RFI, 2016, 2020; Cultural Services, 2021).

Co-curricular activities and other opportunities for language use on campus and in the community can foster and encourage independent language learning. College faculty can play a critical role in increasing awareness of the value of independent learning among college students and in developing relevant learning and language materials.

7. The Importance of Advocacy

Advocacy is important to the future of both world language and heritage language learning, in the classroom and beyond. Always important, it is especially needed due to the challenges facing both students and educational institutions following the COVID-19 global pandemic (Dorn et al, 2021).

Advocacy is data-driven, relying on research and data on the importance of language skills and language learning in the personal and professional life of the individual, as well as in the future of a globalized world and an increasingly multilingual US, and firmly rooted in our core values and belief in the importance of multilingualism and global citizenship skills for ourselves and our children. Advocacy has been defined as "persuading people who matter to care about your issue" (Daly, 2011, p. 15). Especially important at a time when relatively few elementary and middle school students have the opportunity to learn additional languages and when college and university programs have declined, it can play a significant role in strengthening an existing language program or in supporting and defending an at-risk program through "everyday" and "emergency" advocacy respectively (AMACAD, 2017; MLA, 2019; Johnson, 2019; Stein-Smith, 2021, p. 81).

A broad umbrella with room for many voices, advocacy offers an opportunity for leadership, which has been defined as "a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal," for language educators (Northouse, 2013, p. 5). However, in addition to advocacy initiatives and campaigns led by professional associations of language educators at the national, regional, state, and local levels, it is important to remember the importance of partnerships across languages and disciplines within academe, with language stakeholders in business and government, and with parents and communities. Parents, especially, can play a valuable role in supporting programs at risk, in advocating for new language programs, expansion of existing programs, and in the development and implementation of heritage language programs (Jaumont, 2017).

Advocacy can be considered a social movement, "small groups that are loosely connected but united by a share purpose" (Satell & Popovic, 2017). Broad-based and grassroots in theory and practice, advocacy includes a wide range of strategies and methods, including theory and best practice from disciplines such as marketing, public relations, change management, social movements, and the psychology of influence and persuasion. In addition, current and potential language educator-advocates vary greatly in terms of their advocacy skills, and available time and budget for advocacy. However, as there is room for all voices, every advocate has a valuable role to play, and collaborative advocacy partnerships with a broad range of language stakeholders are needed.

College faculty can play an essential role in language advocacy, bringing their expertise, experience, and scholarship into the process of K-16 language advocacy.

8. Current Trends and Future Directions – Increasing Accessibility and Affordability through Immersion Programs, Technology and Online Learning, and Independent Study

Drivers of language learning include the need for language skills and cultural understanding in an increasingly globalized and interconnected world and an increasingly multilingual United States. The good news is that immersion programs, with their many benefits for students, are on the rise in the US (Steele et al, 2017; Williams, 2019). Best practices for the current and future development of language learning include immersion programs, effective integration and use of technology in online language learning, and support of sustainable independent learning. Challenges, including accessibility and affordability, can be addressed by development of immersion programs in public schools and online, and by increased support for the independent learner on campus as well as for the non-traditional student through the development of free online advisement and language resources (OERs).

The role of heritage language speakers, parents, families, and communities is well known in K-12 language learning, but may not be as frequently mentioned in discussions of language learning in higher education. However, they remain incredibly important in terms of support and encouragement for language learning at the postsecondary level by heritage language learners, as well as for world language learners, The possibilities for community support and engagement include experiential learning, internships, as well as real-world use of authentic language in a variety of settings, as well as opportunities to build intercultural understanding. Examples of programs that embrace the local community of heritage

language speakers include Puerta al Futuro, Latino Promise, Hacer, and Avanza (FDU, 2022).

Immersion programs are generally discussed in terms of K-12 learning, but in addition to the traditional option of study abroad, immersion programs can be envisioned in local settings, in partnership with locally-based institutions and organizations, as well as online. These online immersion programs can also offer part-time and flexible opportunities with appeal for the non-traditional student, for a student whose major may not allow for a traditional study abroad experience, or for a student who simply cannot afford to leave paid employment for even a short-term study abroad program.

9. Conclusions – Affordability, Accessibility, and Autonomy

The US foreign language deficit has a negative impact both globally and locally, and college and university language faculty have a vital role to play in developing approaches to learning that expand affordability, accessibility and the autonomy of the language learner, especially through the development of programs, materials, and partnerships. Language programs include languages on campus and beyond and should address the needs of all learners – college students and those not enrolled in an educational institution, both heritage and world language learners, and students with a wide array of interests and learning styles.

Independent learning is an important part of the path forward, and the proliferation of authentic language and freely accessible learning resources and materials online (OERs) responds to the needs of enrolled students and of all those interested in acquiring language skills or in re-acquiring a lost or partially forgotten heritage language.

College language faculty have the expertise and experience to play a leadership role in the present and future of language learning and in the resurgence of language learning and multilingualism.

Consideration of independent language learning among college and university students must be considered within the framework of language learning in a globalized and interconnected world and within an environment where online and social media can play a positive role in encouraging motivation and engagement. It is also essential to take into consideration the needs of all learners – world language learners, English-speaking students learning additional languages; heritage language learners, with varying levels of cultural understanding and linguistic skills; and diverse learners with different educational backgrounds and learning styles.

Many Americans regret not having had the opportunity to learn additional languages, even as enrollments decline and programs are lost (Agudo, 2020; MLA, 2019; Johnson, 2019). Independent learning can facilitate language learning, making it more affordable and accessible, and by highlighting learner autonomy. It is important also to remember those not in the higher education system, many of whom may be heritage speakers or otherwise interested in languages and language learning. Most importantly, independent learning – with quality online resources (OERs) developed by faculty, is needed. Along with guidance and instruction in independent learning skills available to all, not only can college and university students, but all those interested in languages and language skills, develop the essential global competency of multilingualism.

By creating affordable pathways to language learning, accessibility for all interested students, and – most importantly – by empowering all students through the autonomy of independent learning, individualized learning at the pace of the learner and in response to learner needs and objectives, educators can strengthen their programs while effectively addressing the US foreign language deficit and empowering all language learners.

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