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Integrating Language and Literature: Teaching Textual Analysis with Input and Output Activities and an Input-to-Output Approach

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Abstract

The Modern Language Association report and Profession issue from summer 2007 (Geisler et al., 2007) are highly indicative of the increasingly debated concerns in the profession surrounding (1) the traditional division of foreign language curriculum between “language” and “literature” and (2) the instruction of textual analysis (or practice of close reading) in the student-centered literature classroom. In this article, I discuss the need in the profession to address the contemporary problems inherited from the traditional “language-literature” divide and postulate the use of close reading as a tactic to overcome this traditional divide. This article specifically addresses the issue of “why” and “how” to teach students textual analysis meaningfully and communicatively in the foreign language classroom and then proposes and demonstrates the use of input and output activities as a pedagogical strategy.

Keywords

close reading, input and output activities, integrating language and literature, literacy, teaching methods

Disciplines

Educational Methods | Language Interpretation and Translation | Modern Languages | Other Languages, Societies, and Cultures

Comments

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Abstract: The Modern Language Association report and Profession issue from summer 2007 (Geisler et al., 2007) are highly indicative of the increasingly debated concerns in the profession surrounding (1) the traditional division of foreign language curriculum between “language” and “literature” and (2) the instruction of textual analysis (or practice of close reading) in the student-centered literature classroom. In this article, I discuss the need in the profession to address the contemporary problems inherited from the traditional “language-literature” divide and postulate the use of close reading as a tactic to overcome this traditional divide. This article specifically addresses the issue of “why” and “how” to teach students textual analysis meaningfully and communicatively in the foreign language classroom and then proposes and demonstrates the use of input and output activities as a pedagogical strategy.

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Introduction

The Modern Language Association report and Profession issue from summer 2007 (Geisler et al., 2007) are highly indicative of the increasingly debated concerns in the profession surrounding (1) the traditional division of foreign language curriculum between “language” and “literature” and (2) the instruction of textual analysis (or practice of close reading) in

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the student-centered literature classroom. It is not my objective in this article to engage theoretically in these two issues. Rather, in this article, I wish to make a solid case for the need in the profession to address a few of the contemporary problems inherited from the traditional “language-literature” divide. In addition, I wish to introduce into the same discussion a “language-literature” issue that continues to plague many college-level foreign language instructors: the questions of “why” and “how” to teach students textual analysis meaningfully and communicatively while at the same time maintaining a focus on language acquisition. I specifically discuss this issue of “why” and “how” in relation to a third-year introductory foreign language “literature” course and also touch on more general implications of teaching textual analysis meaningfully and communicatively beyond its traditional literary context.

Grounding this article in Kern’s (2000) “literacy-based” approach to the teaching and learning of reading and writing in the second and/or foreign language classroom, I discuss below the place for input and output activities and an input-to-output approach in the “literature” course. Kern’s approach adopts the perspective that reading and writing ought to be viewed as intertwined and integrated processes. Overlapping this concept with the format of controlled input and output activities and an input-to-output approach, I specifically discuss several roles this “coordinated approach” (Kern, 2000) may play in the teaching and learning of close reading in any language acquisition-oriented and content- or text-based foreign language classroom. In general throughout the foreign language profession, but especially in French, activities focusing on language acquisition are not widespread strategies adopted in upper-division literature and cultural studies courses (Frantzen, 2002). Yet I

propose that they especially when accompanied by close reading and a process-writing approach may play a useful and helpful role in such academic settings.

Close reading and academic writing remain critical practices that most literature and cultural studies instructors value and emphasize in their courses. Yet many literature and cultural studies instructors who are not training graduate teaching assistants tend to be unfamiliar with input and output activities and an input-to-output approach to second language (L2) learning. In the latter half of the discussion in this article, I call for and demonstrate the use of input and output activities and an input-to-output approach specifically as one manner (1) to introduce students to the practice of textual analysis and critical thinking development in the target language, (2) to articulate critical interpretation through standardized academic stylistic or rhetorical writing conventions, and (3) to keep target language acquisition in focus at all times in the teaching of foreign language literary texts. Although I discuss my input-to-output approach and provide sample input and output materials in relation to courses occurring generally in the fourth through the sixth semester of the major/minor sequence, this approach and the sample materials would be suitable with modification and adaptation in lower-level French classes and foreign language classes other than French. I begin now with a brief look into why it has come about in the profession that activities focusing on language acquisition are not widespread strategies in upper-division literature and cultural studies courses.

A Brief History of the Language-Literature Divide

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Byrnes (2007) summarized this language-literature division as a “pointless distinction between language instruction and content instruction” and interpreted this distinction as arising from “a long-standing tradition in Western thought of separating language from knowledge” (p. 38). Ancient Greek philosophy considered language an act of naming rather than of human meaning-making. This view remained relatively unchanged until the 20th century. In much more recent times, structuralists spoke of language as arbitrary and unrelated to the very shaping of knowledge, which they understood as preeminent to language. With Bakhtin (1981), post-structuralists and others challenged this position and postulated the theory of understanding language as a culturally embedded form of human meaning-making, or semiosis. Thus, it was not until relatively recently that knowledge started to be seen as symbiotically linked to language patterns. In other words, language becomes a way of knowing, “a construer of reality, not just as its representer...it does not represent reality; it simply construes a model of reality” (Hasan, 1996, p. 53). In relation to the foreign language/literature classroom, this divide between the acquiring of language and the learning of content has become known as the “lang-lit split” (Scott & Tucker, 2002, p. xvii).

Throughout the foreign language profession within the last 30 or so years, the lang-lit split has very often pitted “language instructors” against “literature instructors” and has brought with it a category of controversies that Kord and Byrnes have found most frequently expressed in “fearful comments by literature professionals on the increasingly uncertain status of literature in upper-level FL instruction” (2002, p. 36). Many scholars explain these fearful comments as a common pervasive fear among “literature professors” that stems from the worry that classes targeting communicative competencies are replacing classes that

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target so-called knowledge, like literature and cultural studies classes. Kord and Byrne concluded that the scholarship on the teaching of literature “frequently engages in pursuits that would be considered outdated and methodologically questionable in literary scholarship” (2002, p. 37; e.g., questions regarding plot and author biography). On the other hand, Kord and Byrne asserted that “language acquisition in the literature classroom is not targeted, but implicit” (2002, p. 37). In common literature classroom practice, so-called knowledge is often defined initially as comprehension and later as recall of facts (i.e., reading is followed by comprehension questions, plot summaries are followed by cultural or literary history context questions, and content questions and stylistic analysis draw on background knowledge with regard to author, history, and culture in an attempt to contextualize the literary work). Foreign language study generally takes a back seat.

In this type of setting, the foreign language generally functions as the mode of classroom communication and as the language of the readings but rarely as a topic of study itself. Thus in common literature classroom practice, “knowledge” does not typically involve “the instruction of interpretive, analytical, and discourse capabilities” (Kord & Byrnes, 2002, pp. 37–38). As a result, Kord and Byrnes explained that very frequently, the refusal to integrate linguistic and literary competence in a literature course results in a “communicative breakdown” in which instructors allow students to revert to their first language and all attempts at L2 exposure disappear (2002, p. 38). It goes without saying that all foreign language/literature instructors wish to avoid at all cost communicative breakdown and abandonment of L2 exposure. Yet the divide commonly persists.

Toward a Model of Integrated Language and Literature Teaching and Learning

In her work, Frantzen (2002) has focused on the role literature plays in dividing the lower-level courses from the upper-division courses in foreign language programs. Frantzen defined the lower-level language/upper-level literature division as “an artificial separation between language-focus and literature courses [that] remains in place in many foreign language departments at universities across the country” (2002, p. 109). Frantzen concluded that, in practice all over the United States, literature is found in upper-level classes and overt language instruction in lower-level and advanced grammar and composition courses. Frantzen has advocated and demonstrated ways in which, while using the instruction of foreign language literature as the focal point, “the instruction of literature might be altered in both undergraduate language and literature courses so that the use of literature will provide contexts for meaningful classroom dialogues” at all levels of the foreign language classroom (2002, p. 109).

For beginning levels, for example, Frantzen argued that research has demonstrated that authentic literary and other reading materials, in addition to their well-recognized value as input, can serve as one type of meaningful context in which to practice and present structures and vocabulary. For intermediate levels, Frantzen underlined the importance of literature’s ability to engage students with understanding narrative structure as well as linguistic features. For advanced grammar and composition classes, Frantzen showed how instructors may enrich these courses by using literary texts and their interesting topics for class discussion and writing assignments, thereby creating additional opportunities to practice speaking and writing in the target language. Moreover, instructors may find a

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literary text incorporating the structures and vocabulary being studied and use them to provide meaningful contexts in which to examine grammatical structures for the important meanings they convey.

With literary texts so apparently rich in language, content, culture, form, structure, affective values, critical thinking and engagement, and so forth, why does this distinction exist and persist in many foreign language programs? Bernhardt proposed one answer by calling attention to the fact that “while the phrase ‘language learning and teaching’ is a perfectly idiomatic expression in contemporary pedagogical circles, the phrase ‘literature learning and teaching’ seems somehow awkward and hollow” (2002, p. 195). She concluded that the language curriculum has been profoundly influenced by research on human language development and has, by and large, adapted its curriculum accordingly; whereas the literature curriculum, in contrast, overwhelmingly remains focused on texts as objects. For Bernhardt, it is this focus on texts (or content) and not on students (or human language development) in relation to the teaching and learning of foreign language literature that may explain the lack of abundant research in the area. By extension, Bernhardt (2002) considered that the focus on texts as objects may also explain why this language-literature divide remains so well rooted in foreign language departments and curricula. Bernhardt concluded that beginning instructors generally turn to the model to which they have been exposed at their graduate institutions and follow this model in their new teaching appointments (2002, p. 200). Bernhardt maintained a central thesis that graduate students must master three concepts. They must learn that they are to teach students, not literature. They must understand the linguistic and conceptual framework with which individual

students arrive. And they must learn to see that the acts of language and literature teaching are far more alike than they are different. With these three concepts in place, instructors may start to present implicitly to students the concept of knowledge as symbiotically linked to language patterns in literary texts and in other kinds of texts read in other types of content-based courses.

Bernhardt's postulations, along with Frantzen's (2002) and Byrnes's (2007), effectively favor the design of courses at all stages of the language program curriculum that integrate language and literature in meaningful and communicative ways with a focus on the student and his or her language acquisition. This approach should not only draw on students' background knowledge and expand their cultural horizons through literary content, in their view, but it should also draw students' attention to the formal properties of language on display or contextualized in any given literary text. Textual analysis or the practice of close reading allows students to simultaneously attend to lexical and grammatical form as well as contextually, conceptually, and critically negotiate its meaning. In the following section of this article, I turn to the different roles that textual analysis, or close reading, may play in foreign language curricula.

A Rationale for Close Reading: Borrowing a Bit From Critical Literacy and English Departments

Fecteau concluded in her study on first- and second-language reading comprehension of literary texts that "there seems to be a consensus that the traditional 'transmission model' of literature teaching does little to foster direct engagement with the text or to develop

students' literary competence" (1999, p. 475). The "transmission model" echoes Bernhardt's aforementioned observation that graduate students generally think they will simply employ the model to which they have been exposed at their graduate institution. Thereby, beginning instructors often transmit their learned model of graduate literature instruction (in which "texts" are the object and focus of study) to undergraduate literary curriculum. This, in turn, also speaks to the model of instructors transmitting their knowledge or interpretation of the given literary text to their students, which is quite often the model of literature instruction practiced in many graduate classrooms. However, the issue is not just limited to the model of instruction employed in the classroom but also concerns students' use of class time.

In relation to literature learning and teaching, Bernhardt advocated for a "time on task" approach, which refers to the total amount of time spent learning to do a task. This approach also focuses on the nature of that task. Bernhardt called for students to spend significant amounts of time reading and interpreting literature as part of this time-on-task approach. This does not mean spending separate time on lots of grammar exercises and then reading and discussing literature, nor does it mean passively listening to the instructor's or someone else's interpretations of the literary material. The time-on-task learning approach literally calls for students to "spend significant time doing whatever good readers of literature do" (Bernhardt, 2002, p. 201). "What good readers of literature do" takes many different forms both inside and outside the foreign language/literature classroom and postulates that students' time on task with the text should help groom them into able learners and readers.

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“What good readers of literature do” often includes completing: pre-/post-reading exercises, guided interaction activities, interpretive tasks, annotative activities, and so forth while reading a given text. For instructors, this time-on-task approach calls on foreign language educators to play various supportive roles; e.g., presenting reading strategies, allowing students to interpret and discuss their understanding of a text, and providing appropriate feedback. What is clear is that, in all instances, “what good readers of literature do” is engage directly and actively with the text. Frantzen suggested that one method of engaging students more directly with the literary text would be “to employ techniques that give students more control over the material” (2002, p. 116). Frantzen pointed out that these techniques already occur at lower levels of instruction but have been slow to make their way into literature anthologies directed at the advanced level. Yet Frantzen warned that these aforementioned staples of teaching foreign language reading at the lower levels should not be overlooked at the advanced level, for despite the label, the language proficiencies of the majority of the students in advanced-level courses are not really advanced. Frantzen cautioned that these students still need guidance to help them extract meaning from the literature they now read. Iyer described the importance of critical analysis or close reading of a text as “an integral part of literacy learning” (2007, p. 161) and situated text analysis as one of the processes involved in literacy, along with code breaking, text participation, and meaning-making (p. 162). Close reading, specifically in the form of literary or critical textual analysis, manifests one important technique that does engage students more directly with the literary text and provides ample time on task to attend to lexical and grammatical form while interpreting meaning.

Close reading activities and follow-up discussions that extend into writing activities might also call attention to gaps in students' cultural background knowledge. After identifying these gaps through a discussion of a close reading, educators may consequently be able to fill them with additional instruction. Thus, not only is text analysis a critical part of literacy learning, as Iyer (2007) argued, but it may also function as a kind of evaluative tool to measure for content and/or linguistic comprehension across different levels of meanings.

In its most basic definition, close reading is the “observ[ation of] facts and details about the text” (Kain, 1998, para. 1), but it is also a much more subtle and complex skill that involves “making yourself sensitive to all the nuances and connotations of language as it is used by skilled writers” (Johnson, 2004, para. 2). This latter definition can mean anything from a text's particular vocabulary, sentence construction, and imagery to the themes the text treats, the way in which the story is being told, and the view of the world it offers. Thus, close reading involves “almost everything from the smallest linguistic items to the largest issues of literary understanding and judgment” (Johnson, 2004, para. 3). Given the range of content items raised and skills and abilities called upon when conducting and articulating a close reading, the practice of close reading has the potential to make for more perceptive and critical thinkers who often bring these sensitivities and sense of language and language use awareness to their oral and written expression.

In relation to language and language use awareness, Johnson (2004) suggested four levels across which close reading occurs. First, there is a linguistic level, in which readers pay

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attention to the surface linguistic elements (vocabulary, grammar, syntax) and note elements of the writer's individual style (figures of speech). The linguistic level is largely descriptive. Second is a semantic level, in which readers take into account at a deeper level what the words mean (denotations and connotations). The semantic level is cognitive. Third, there exists the structural level, in which readers note the possible relationship between words (linguistic or semantic) within the text. The structural level is analytic. And fourth is the cultural level, in which readers note the relationship of any elements of the text to things outside it (for example, other writings, social or cultural history, or to other academic disciplines). The cultural level is interpretive. Johnson (2004) concluded that in engaging in a close reading practice, students account for grammar, vocabulary, figures of speech, literary devices, tone, and style.

Kain (1998) noted that when conducting a close reading, students first annotate the text by underlining or highlighting key words and phrases that strike them as surprising or significant, or that raise questions. Second, students interpret their annotations by looking for patterns in what they have annotated and by asking "how" and "why" questions about what they have noticed. Thus, one may add a fifth level of meaning across which close reading occurs. Since students are asked to annotate what they have noticed in the text, the exercise is inherently also personal, as students will individually notice different key words, phrases, and patterns. Thereby, the personal level is subjective. All should agree that these five levels of meaning are well suited to the meaningful and communicative goals of the language classroom as

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well as to where these goals overlap with the creation and sharing of knowledge in the literature classroom.

Gallop (2007) attested that this approach of close reading in literary studies, as described above by Johnson and Kain, constituted the norm in English departments three decades ago. These days, however, Gallop has worried about the fate of close reading as new and recent literary critics move into the realm of historicism, where close reading has been replaced by archival research as the norm. Gallop found that close reading was “the most valuable thing” English departments ever had to offer not because close reading or textual analysis is “necessarily the best way to read literature but because it . . . is a widely applicable skill, of value not just to scholars in other disciplines but to a wide range of students with many different futures” (2007, p. 183). Gallop contended that students trained in close reading have been known to apply it to diverse sorts of texts newspaper articles, textbooks in other disciplines, political speeches and thus “to discover things they would not otherwise have noticed” (2007, p. 183). Gallop concluded that this “enhanced, intensified reading” also carries important ramifications for many different kinds of professions and in a wide variety of workplaces (e.g., journalism, advertising, marketing, human resources, etc.) Thus, close reading is not only a widely applicable skill but also a highly valued one in both academia and the professional world.

With the disappearance of the learning and teaching of the practice of close reading in the English literature classroom, Gallop saw a return to a transmission model in which professors in the undergraduate classroom must feed the cultural-historical background to

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students who are not themselves going to an archive. She maintained that “close reading made possible active learning; historicism returns us to an older, more authoritarian model of transmitting preprocessed knowledge” (2007, p. 184). For Gallop, close reading in the literature classroom meant that students could not just take knowledge produced elsewhere or by someone else and parrot back the ideas. The communicative foreign language classroom (whether having traditional language orientation or content orientation or, more recently, an integrative orientation blending language and content) would also clearly represent a real alternative to this traditional authoritarian model in very much the same way as described by Gallop.

As this multilayered literature review has shown, there is much room in both research and professional practice to breakthrough this pointless lang-lit split (Byrnes, 2007). I have described the communicative breakdown in literature classrooms that results from the refusal to integrate linguistic and literary competence in the classroom (Kord & Byrnes, 2002). Frantzen (2002) articulated this split as an artificial separation and suggested the use of literary texts for providing authentic contexts for meaningful classroom dialogues and to present, discuss, analyze, and practice grammatical structures. I have also discussed postulations on the practice of critical literary analysis of a text as an integral part of literacy learning (Iyer, 2007). Bernhardt (2002) insightfully remarked that literary curriculum remains focused on texts as objects and not on human language development in relation to literature, and Frantzen (2002) advocated giving students more control over the reading material. I have noted how this “control” may take form in the practice of close reading or textual analysis, which involves student engagement with the linguistic, semantic,

structural, cultural, and personal layers of the material (Johnson, 2004). Finally, I have also observed that close reading makes possible active language and active content learning and is a widely applicable skill (Gallop, 2007). In encompassing the model of close reading or textual analysis as identified thus far in this article, I propose in the remainder of this discussion how instructors can overlap textual analysis with input and output activities and an input-to-output approach while meeting a number of different objectives, including those of language acquisition, target-language critical thinking development, and what has traditionally been considered “upper-level cultural content/literary analysis” learning outcomes.

An Input-to-Output Approach to Textual Analysis

In taking a cue from Katz’s (2002) conclusion that Lee and VanPatten’s (2003) *Making Communicative Language Teaching Happen* describes a theory of foreign language pedagogy that has the potential for effective application in the literature classroom, I agree that input and output activities and an input-to-output approach can “not only lead students to discover the general meaning of a ‘literary text’ but can help [students] become aware of underlying themes, various literary devices, and other elements that enrich literary works” (Katz, 2002, p. 155). By extension, I propose that input and output activities and an input-to-output approach can also effectively help students conduct and articulate accomplished textual analyses of a variety of texts. Although I only demonstrate in this article the application of input and output activities in relation to prose specifically the novel an instructor may adapt any of these activities to other literary genres (poetry or theater) and other kinds of artistic, cultural, and media texts (e.g., film, plastic arts, photography,

advertising, periodicals, etc.) by substituting the appropriate critical devices and vocabularies as specific to the kind of text under critical analysis.

In following Katz's lead, as I illustrate below in relation to literature, input and output activities can be utilized to assure students' basic comprehension of the literary text. Eventually, input and output activities can facilitate students' ability to analyze critically the literary text and articulate their critical literary analysis in either oral or written modes of communication. Therefore, both input and output activities and an input-to-output approach especially when coupled with textual enhancement can be employed "to take students to a deeper level of understanding and to an appreciation of the richness of the literary work" (Katz, 2002, p. 158), all the while maintaining a focus on language acquisition in upper-division courses.

As Katz underlined, "comprehending the meaning of the words on the page [or input] is only one part of studying a literary text" (2002, p. 159), and Katz cited Scott (2001), who explained that a major goal of most literature courses focuses on students' ability to see the text as a creative work with layers of meaning (Katz, 2002, p. 159). In her heuristic series of steps to ensure excellence in reading and successful integration of literature in the foreign language classroom which follows Lee and VanPatten's (2003) input-to-output approach to language instruction, Katz (2002) noted that the instructor must lead students to an awareness of the structures that may impede their comprehension and help them focus on these constructions in order to understand the text's general meaning. The instructor must then provide a great deal of input about the general meaning of the texts and about the

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literary themes that the students will discover at a deeper level of analysis before asking them for oral or written output.

Katz stated that only “once students have grasped the intricacies of the literary work and have recognized the techniques used by the author are they prepared to create output at the discourse level” (2002, p. 159) in other words, the articulation of their discoveries of deeper meanings of the text. Katz suggested that students should begin with basic tasks and move to more complex ones after they have understood the structures at hand. I wish to suggest that the students’ discoveries of the intricacies of the literary work, the techniques used by the author, and the deeper meanings of the text in Katz’s approach may be facilitated by the pedagogical technique or strategy of textual enhancement.

Research on textual enhancement shows that this technique may be effective in helping learners to notice enhanced forms and in some cases to also make form-meaning connections from the enhanced input so that they can eventually use the forms in production (Wong, 2005, p. 61). In this context, textual enhancement is linked specifically to target language items and focuses on grammatical form and form-meaning connection-making. I suggest that instructors may utilize this technique in upper-level classrooms to focus on form and meaning. However, as I show below in the sample input activities featuring textual enhancement, which I created for teaching the novel *Pierre et Jean* by Guy de Maupassant, I am applying this technique to lexical items. Yet it would seem to stand to reason that this enhancement technique, as a “priming activity,” may help draw students’ attention to the new critical vocabularies they are learning.¹

Pierre et Jean and Sample Input/Output Instructional Activities

The Focus Student Edition of Guy de Maupassant's short novel, *Pierre et Jean* (Angelini & Rochester, 2007), proves an excellent starting point when responding to Katz's (2002) heuristic series of steps to ensure excellence in reading and successful integration of literature in foreign language classrooms. This edited edition of the novel includes several sections: introductory notes about the background of the text, the author, and literary history; notes on the language and style of the author's writing; an introduction to the general themes and importance of the setting; and helpful L2 language and culture notes to facilitate students' comprehension of the text and its deeper levels of meaning. This edition also includes an abundance of meaningful and communicative activities and discussion questions, a bibliography and filmography of work published in relation to de Maupassant, and a list-formatted vocabulary presentation of literary terms needed for conducting and articulating a textual analysis. The notes and activities either directly respond to Katz's steps (i.e., leading students to an awareness of the structures that may impede their comprehension) or may be easily adapted to fit input and output activity formats, as I illustrate below. I do not wish to imply that the utilization of input and output activities and an input-to-output approach is bound only to this specific edition of this particular novel. The activities and approach I am discussing in this article may be applied to the instruction of any literary work. I mention this specific edition of this novel in this discussion because it is an easier text from which instructors may teach thanks to the extensive instructional support materials that Angelini and Rochester have created and

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provide within the edition itself. As I discuss below, their supporting content has provided some background information to several of the showcased activities.

The novel narrates the story of two brothers, Pierre and Jean, and the family rupture that ensues when the young brother (Jean) inherits a large sum of money upon the death of a male family friend. This launches Pierre into an investigation into the past, in particular his mother's past, in an attempt to understand why Jean alone received this inheritance. Pierre's investigation provokes anger, jealousy, feelings of betrayal, family tension, and sibling rivalry. The novel questions the concept of "truth" and the consequences brought about with the unwelcomed arrival of such information. This novel is deeply psychological and treats concepts such as heredity, middle-class social values and practices, and the role of society and money in one's life and sense of happiness. It is an intellectually challenging and interesting work. In my experience teaching this short novel, my students have responded enthusiastically to the accessibility of this text. The themes and situations treated in the novel have resonated well with them, and they have had much to say about the story, the characters, and de Maupassant's literary devices.

I developed the following input and output activities when teaching this novel with the three-fold goal in mind of (1) introducing students to the practice of textual analysis and to the prose genre in French nineteenth-century literary tradition, (2) guiding students to learning how to express their higher-level or critical thinking through standardized academic language and stylistic conventions, and (3) keeping language acquisition in focus at all times. In most cases, I took the information and vocabulary items that are featured in the

following sample exercises from this aforementioned edition of *Pierre et Jean*, but I also adapted some additional language and lexical items featured in the following sample activities from *Tâches d'encre* (Siskin, Krueger, & Fauvel, 2004). I provide examples below of both input and output activities and present them in an input-to-output manner. Readers should note that when they encounter English-only text in the following sample activities, this was done intentionally to save space in the article. In actual classroom practice, only the target language is used in the following activities. In addition, only one example appears for each exercise. Readers should be able to get a sense or feel for the kinds of activities I am proposing in this article but note that students would require longer activities with more examples in actual instructional practice. Once sufficient class time is spent working through these various exercises, students should then be prepared to move on to drafting their first versions of their *explication de texte*.

Exercise 1: Helpful Vocabulary (Input)

This activity should occur after the students have read the introductory notes in the text in order to test for reading comprehension. Or alternatively, it could be conducted as a guided interaction activity for students to complete as they read the introductory notes. Students are instructed to circle the appropriate answer that finishes the sentence. The exercise serves several functions: (1) it presents critical vocabulary helpful to students for talking about or analyzing a novel, (2) it leads students to focus on literary terms and their definitions, (3) it introduces students to basic background information concerning the text's genre and author's intentions, and (4) it begins to draw students' attention to and

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have them think about specific important literary devices and concepts that they will encounter in the text.

Pierre et Jean est . . . [Pierre et Jean is . . .] A. une autobiographie [an autobiography]; B. un chef-d'oeuvre [a masterpiece]; C. un conte de fé'e [a fairy tale]; D. une biographie [a biography]

After students have completed the activity and the class has corrected it together, the instructor should have feedback on what further review, explanation, or practice students require regarding the vocabulary.

Exercise 2: Background Review (Input)

This activity is a more detailed continuation of the first activity. This second activity should also occur either after the students have read the text's editors' introductory notes or as a guided interaction activity when students are reading the introductory notes. The information glossed in this activity is all expressed in the introductory notes. The targeted background information items are textually enhanced with bolded and italicized font. Students are to match corresponding information from the first half (the numbered sentences) with its second half (the lettered sentences). The exercise (1) continues to introduce students to basic background information about the text and its author but at a deeper level, and (2) helps students situate the text in French literary history by asking students to recognize corresponding literary movements.

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1. Realism as a literary tendency, of which Maupassant was a contemporary, wants to paint only the “real” or the “true,” especially by taking as its contexts the industrial era, values and behaviors of the bourgeoisie, injustices and miseries sustained by the poor and prefers . . . C. . . . to expose the scenes of daily life and the ridiculousness and faults of bourgeois society.

After students have completed the activity and the class has corrected it together, the instructor should have feedback on what further review, explanation, or practice students require with these concepts. This exercise could also be used as a review activity after reading the novel to help students think about the text as a whole and/or as a preliminary-thinking activity before students start composing their critical literary analysis.

Exercise 3: Helpful Analytical Vocabulary Review (Input)

This activity begins with several statements concerning factual information about the text, its author, and the context surrounding the text. The targeted analytical vocabulary items are textually enhanced with bolded and italicized font. Students are required to read the statements hopefully noticing the target analytical vocabulary and then respond if they agree with the statements or not. If they agree, they circle *Oui* [yes]. If they do not agree, they circle *Non* [no]. The exercise serves (1) to present new vocabulary in meaningful contexts related to the text; (2) review factual information about the text, its author, and its surrounding context; and (3) to begin introducing students to the practice of textual analysis by guiding them to recognize and think about the deeper levels of meaning at work

in this literary text without having to produce the meaning but rather by reacting to the content expressed in the exercise.

La figure de style du monologue intérieur peut révéler les pensées intimes d'un personnage. Oui Non [The stylistic device of the interior monologue can reveal the intimate thoughts of a character. Yes No]

After correcting this activity together as a class, the instructor should have feedback on what further review, explanation, or practice students require regarding the critical vocabulary and should have confirmation as to whether students are comprehending basic elements of the text and basic approaches to textual analysis.

Exercise 4: Useful “Explication de Texte” Vocabulary (Input)

This activity continues where Exercise 1 left off: engaging students with the critical literary terms, concepts, and terms needed to execute an explication de texte or critical literary analysis. This activity pushes students to a greater understanding of literary devices by asking them to move beyond basic denotative definitions of these terms to judgments or comprehension of the quality of these literary devices and their employment and effect in literary texts. Students must circle the textually enhanced adjective that logically finishes the sentence. Students should complete this activity after they have mastered the literary terms in their most basic definition, function, and application. This activity helps students reach more sophisticated levels of literary analysis and deeper levels of textual meaning and helps encourage more nuanced critical thinking.

Un thème créateur/traditionnel est passé dans les habitudes, dans l'usage; est fondé sur la transmission de doctrines religieuses ou morales, de légendes, de coutumes de génération en génération. [A creative/traditional theme is passed through habits, through usage; is founded on the transmission of religious or moral doctrines, of legends, of customs from generation to generation.]

Exercise 5: Textual Considerations (Input-to-Output)

This activity begins to move students toward production. It reviews basic plot information of a particular scene from the novel and draws students' attention to significant characters or moments in the scene. The follow-up questions push students toward output at the sentential level and limited critical analysis. Students are asked to process the basic factual information for deeper literary meaning. Only after they have had sufficient input should students be led to begin making these discoveries on their own. Students must (1) choose the correct response that answers the basic plot question and then (2) generate theories about the deeper meanings of this textual detail.

What is the most admired room in Jean's new lodging? A. the large conference room; B. the dining room; C. the bedroom; D. the windowed gallery or corridor – What function or symbolism does this particular room have that the other rooms mentioned in the novel do not have?

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After completing this exercise, students should be more comfortable with the practice of close reading or at least more comfortable with understanding strategies for close reading (i.e., examining pertinent textual details that carry significant literary meaning).

Exercise 6: Helpful Vocabulary for Talking About *Pierre et Jean* (Input-to-Output)

This activity continues to guide students toward production but without yet forcing them to produce the critical literary vocabulary. In this exercise, students only finish the sentences with logical information from the novel, about its author, or concerning its background. The critical literary vocabulary is textually enhanced to increase the chances of students noticing these items.

À travers les monologues intérieurs de Pierre, le lecteur constate facilement . . . [Through Pierre's interior monologues, the reader easily observes . . .]

As with Exercise 5, this activity also guides students toward making discoveries of deeper literary meaning on their own as well as to recall basic, factual information concerning the text and specific literary devices. After completing this exercise, students should continue to feel more comfortable with the practice of close reading or at least more comfortable with understanding strategies for close reading (i.e., how to support their thinking with textual evidence), and they should also gain a sense of confidence in their ability to write academically about a literary text. In effect, students could return later to this activity when writing their essay-styled literary analysis.

Exercise 7: Personal Reflections (Output)

For this activity, students are required to pose a series of questions to a partner or a group of classmates. The questions are open-ended and force students to reflect critically or analytically about the text in relation to each specific question as well as to output orally at the discourse level. They must draw on textual evidence to support their reflection. Students are required to take notes on their interlocutor's reflection and then indicate their dis/agreement. Students are given the opportunity to begin a short discussion if so desired. Students share factual, meaningful, and analytical information throughout the activity and have the opportunity to negotiate, qualify, challenge, debate, and defend their personal reflections. As with the previous two exercises, this activity pushes students toward the discovery of deeper meaning in the text.

Is Pierre glad to be named doctor of the "Lorraine?" Justify your answer with specific examples. _____ Agree Disagree

Advantages and Disadvantages of Input and Output Activities for Teaching Textual Analysis
Katz (2002) raised the point that the preparation of these input and output activities to teach literature is time-consuming and labor-intensive for the instructor - a clear disadvantage. I concede this point, but I agree with Katz that this "type of approach . . . enables students to interact more actively with the text and to discover its many layers of meaning through such interactions" (2002, p. 168) whilst maintaining language acquisition in focus at all times clear advantages. I have also found in my experience, as did Katz (2002), that the input activities that students do both before and after reading lead students

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to gain an appreciation of literary style and language and help them pick up on many of the deeper meanings of the work (2002, p. 168). I sense that this appreciation on the part of the students is amplified by the integrated role both reading and writing play in making students aware of the deeper meanings of the literary work.³

This integrated role or overlapping relationship of reading and writing in the literature classroom returns this discussion to Kern's literacy-based approach. For Kern (2000), it was the overlap that most clearly differentiates a literacy-focused curriculum from traditional curricula. In his model, reading and writing overlap not only in the sense that students write formal essays about what they have read but also when students use writing to represent concretely their thoughts and interpretations (i.e., reading journals), write their own version of a topic or theme before reading the target text (i.e., prediction), and write reflections in their own reading processes (e.g., experiences, difficulties, insights, etc.) (2000, p. 132). Kern's model also includes students reading to improve their writing when they attend to linguistic, rhetorical, or stylistic elements in reading and writing and students actively and critically reading their own and their peers' writing in the editing process (2000, p. 132).

Kern (2000) summarized the notion that enhanced skills and a greater awareness of language itself, of discourse processes, and of literacy practices are the anticipated goal of working in these areas of overlap. He concluded that in this respect, "an overarching goal of literacy cannot only bridge the traditional divisions among the 'four skills' . . . but also bridge the gap that too often separates the teaching of language from the teaching of

literature” (p. 132). As the previous discussion of activities has illustrated, input and output activities, an input-to-output approach, and the practice of close reading prove quite conducive and amenable to a literacy-based approach to the learning and teaching of foreign language literary texts in the upper divisions. However, Schultz (2002) proffered the intermittent incorporation of systematic analysis (i.e., close reading) throughout the literary unit so as to focus only on the significant passages that the instructor feels are important to emphasize. Thus, instructors must plan to add some additional preparation time so that they may first find the significant passages before they begin to prepare the activities.

Schultz (2002) suggested that this systematic analysis can also be moved from the individual out to a small-group format in which students work together, asking and answering questions in their assigned section. Afterward, the student groups present their synthesized or collective findings and analytical/interpretive group summary of these findings to the rest of the class, thereby developing both critical thinking and oral presentation skills in the target language. The group format may also help the instructor develop input and output activities. Katz (2002) proposed that after reading a text, small groups could work together developing lists of true and false assertions about the text and answering other groups’ assertions. Katz also suggested that the small groups could find examples of literary elements, such as irony, ambiguity, allusion, imagery, symbolism, tone, alliteration, and various figures of speech and determine together the contributions of these literary elements to the text. Instructors could certainly note their students’ findings for future use as prime content in creating input and output activities.

Although Schultz found that the responses to close reading techniques in general are overall “very positive” (Schultz, 2002, p. 24), when dealing with entire texts, close reading (in particular its intensity and orientation for details) is “neither practical nor maintains student interest over a prolonged period” (Schultz, 2002, p. 24). Therefore, intermittent employment of this technique is encouraged. However, the value of close reading of literature as a “widely applicable skill” for discovering “things they would not otherwise have noticed” (Gallop, 2007, p. 183) merits reflection and consideration. Judicious use of close reading within the context of an input-to-output approach presents in a number of compelling ways a potential avenue for developing a more coordinated instructional practice that integrates language literacy and literary appreciation and interpretation.

Conclusion

Of course there are many different approaches, techniques, and strategies for the learning and teaching of foreign language literature in the communicative classroom. The input-to-output approach and design of input and output activities as discussed and illustrated in this article, which are adapted from lower-level grammar instruction, are not only limited to their role in providing support for students who still need help with language and language skills development in the upper levels. In my experience, the input-to-output approach and input and output activities also have the potential to make for more sensitive and critical readers of texts and more sophisticated speakers and writers of L2 literature and cultural studies.

In the words of the 2007 MLA Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages, “The two-tiered configuration [of foreign language programs] has outlived its usefulness and needs to evolve” (Geisler et al., 2007, p. 3). It was my goal in this article to make a solid case for the need in the profession to address the contemporary problems inherited from the traditional two-tiered “language-literature” divide and propose a potential concrete solution for today’s foreign language instruction. In the modeled activities included in this article, literature was used to challenge students’ imaginations and help them arrive at alternative ways of seeing, feeling, and understanding. Students learned critical language awareness, interpretation, historical and political consciousness, social sensibility, and aesthetic perception, all the while simultaneously keeping language acquisition in focus. These characteristics all respond to the curricular and programmatic revisions called for in the 2007 MLA report on foreign languages.

Concerning language acquisition, much empirical work has been done on the effects of input-based and output-based activities on grammatical development in L2 acquisition (e.g., Benati, 2001; Farley, 2001; Morgan-Short & Bowden, 2006; VanPatten & Cadierno, 1993). It is my hope that this article will stimulate research on how input-to-output-based activities may also enhance the learning and teaching of language and literature in upper-division L2 classes. I also hope that this article will stimulate additional research on and experimentation with the new structures recommended by the 2007 MLA Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages.

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Notes

1. See Barcroft (2004) and Rott (2007) for more reading on recent research findings on L2 vocabulary acquisition.
2. For excellent instructional materials for the learning and teaching of an explication de texte, see Chapter Seven of Siskin et al.'s *Tâches d'encre* (2004).
3. In extending this perception into the research realm, readers may wish to see Ruiz-Funes (1999, 2001).

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