



# Help Them Learn A Language Deeply

François Victor Tochon's  
**Deep Approach to World  
Languages and Cultures**

*Deep University Press*

## WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING...

François Tochon, a recognized leader in the renewal movement for “foreign” language education in the United States and beyond, provides a leap forward within the next mainstream of language education. His proposal of a self-determined apprenticeship of language learning recognizes the interface between government policies and classroom practices that has long been ignored in the field, to the detriment of the disenfranchised. Practitioners and scholars alike can benefit from the vision he brings, even as our field begins to benefit all of society in meaningful ways.

**—Terry A. Osborn, Author of “World Language Education for Social Justice”, Dean, College of Education, University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee**

I am often asked by Chinese students why their efforts and the time they have spent studying English have not given them the results they expected. As an English teacher, I have been frustrated by my lack of a satisfactory answer until I met Dr. Francois Tochon. Now I have the answer: Deep Approach. The conception of a self-determined apprenticeship in languages is a revolution against traditional language teaching methodology, which merely views a second language as a boring academic subject instead of a pleasant practical skill.

**—Gao Mingle, Director, English Education Center, Center for Linguistic Theory, and China Association of Language and Education, Beijing Language and Cultures University, China**

Tochon’s conceptualization of the deep approach to the study of world languages, unlike most changes in foreign language education, is not simply a change in approach or methodology. It is far more fundamental than this – it is, indeed, a paradigm shift, that requires us to rethink virtually everything that we assume about the teaching and learning of languages. It is also one of the most exciting, creative and powerful ideas to emerge in our field in decades, and creates incredible opportunities for all of us.

**—Timothy Reagan, Author of “Language, Education, and Ideology” and “The Foreign Language Educator in Society” (with T. Osborn), Dean of the Graduate School of Education, Nazarbayev University, Kazaksthan**

The advocates for an effective U.S. policy for teaching and learning world languages could benefit from reading this critical contribution. Tochon's conceptualization of a "deep approach" is both timely and profoundly better for preparing learners for the globally interconnected realities they live now. Tochon provides viable options that show authentic language learning is profoundly connected to shaping thinking and social actions, as well as to further language and literacy learning. No longer can world language education be confined to merely a show of empty linguistic performances, rather needs to be directed more towards building performances that truly put language to work on addressing sociocultural realities, forging ahead in the spirit of Dewey, Vygotsky, & Freire.

**—Theresa Austin, Professor, Author of “Content-Based Second Language Teaching and Learning”, School of Education, University of Massachusetts, Amherst**

François Tochon's new book, *Help Them Learn a Language Deeply!*, is at once brilliant and humble. Tochon's humility enables him to transcend the arrogance that has traditionally permeated foreign language literature studies and relegated foreign language teaching to a sub-disciplinary status in the academy. Tochon's humility allows him to transcend the arrogance of disciplinary rigidity and status hierarchies while unabashedly embracing an interdisciplinary approach to language analysis and teaching that factor in cross-cultural variables. He convincingly argues for "methodologies associated with language arts and first language literacy [that] must now be integrated into the second/foreign language classroom for a deeper, integrated apprenticeship of languages and cultures. What makes *Help Them Learn a Language Deeply!* unique is the author's profound understanding of culture that goes beyond the elitist and often reductionist view of culture that, with rare exception, continues to dominate literary studies and to reproduce dominant values throughout the field of foreign language education.

**—Donaldo Macedo, Author of “Literacies of power: What Americans are not allowed to know”, Chair, Department of Applied Linguistics, University of Massachusetts, Boston**

I find F. V. Tochon's book innovative and progressive, as well as original in the field of motivation and language learning. The proposed techniques and strategies enhance and stimulate effective learning; they are a great contribution to the complex field of motivation. I am sure that it will be welcome among educators and useful for language teachers and learners. Congratulations on the achievement!

**—Daniel Madrid, Chief Editor of *Porta Linguarum*, Faculty of Education, University of Granada, Spain**

In order to communicate genuinely with most others and benefit from alternative ways of viewing the world, we need to learn languages. François Tochon describes the richness of language learning, how language is woven into culture, values and action. Even better, he provides a clear and systematic approach to deep language learning. Language learners and teachers will benefit greatly from this book.

**—Stanton Wortham, Author of “Learning Identity: The Joint Emergence of Social Identification and Academic Learning”, Associate Dean, University of Pennsylvania**

François Victor Tochon has written an extremely important book. His Deep Approach to language learning / teaching provides the basis for developing a revolution in the teaching of second or foreign languages. His book sets forth the theoretical foundation for the deep learning approach, solid evidence that shows that the deep learning approach works, and most important practical and understandable guidelines on how to implement deep language learning. It is also consistent with Kurt Lewin’s five-stage action-learning framework. The book is valuable for those in the language field but also for general readers who want to gain an introduction and overview of the field.

**—Bertha Du-Babcock, Department of English for Business, City University of Hong Kong, China**

Tochon makes a powerful case for dynamic language learning. His lively, visionary book explains how reproductive, boring approaches can be replaced by empowering processes for teachers and learners. Tochon’s writing embodies the reflective, interactive learning that he advocates and charts so lucidly.

**—Robert Phillipson, Author of “Linguistic Imperialism” and “English-Only Europe?”, Copenhagen Business School, Denmark**

As a language research, teacher, learner, and user, I realize the value of Professor Tochon's work and the improvement it will bring to language education. The Deep Approach will change the relationship between teachers and students as they become real partners, sharing in the fun while progressing through language learning. Let's start an adventure of language learning and get to know the world better!

**—Ronghui Zhao, Chief editor of the book series “Foreign Language Strategy Studies”, Director, Institute of Linguistic Studies, Shanghai International Studies University**

In his latest book, *Help Them Learn a Language Deeply: The Deep Approach to World Languages and Cultures*, Professor Francois V. Tochon once again provides practicing language teachers, and, indeed, the profession-at-large, invaluable perspectives on the nature of the language learning process and beyond. In articulating the Deep Approach, it reflects the powerful dynamic potential that mastering language and cultivating cultural understanding represent to the world today, namely the hopeful prospect of "what a self-determined apprenticeship of languages could change in terms of the resources we provide to students, the way we consider evaluation, proficiency, and the role our discipline can play for internationalizing the mind and building peace" -- an aspiration truly to be pursued with energy, resourcefulness and commitment.

**—Gina Lewandowski, Middle School Teacher of French  
Spanish and ESL, Madison Metropolitan School District,  
Wisconsin, USA**

Acquisition of language skills occurs when students proactively learn the target language through appropriate and adequate facilitation by their teachers. The Deep Approach, as applied in this book, enables teachers and students to flexibly and meaningfully collaborate on language learning tasks, which will lead to the acquisition of language. This book shows clearly how language teachers can approach their instruction through the framework illustrated in this book. I would like to thank Professor Tochon for publishing this outstanding book, which is sure to revolutionize language instruction in the coming years.

**—Yuanshan Chuang, Director of Netpaw and APAMALL, Kun  
Shan University, Taiwan, ROC**

The Deep Approach is a new way to understand the World of languages; the learner is key as the engine to get motivated through the role played individually and with other peers as well as being an active part in the design of the Curriculum. The Deep Approach fosters a critical attitude in learners that has been consigned to oblivion for many years and that will provoke a change in the vision of key aspects such as culture, human rights or social justice. We lecturers do need to get immersed in this new and Deep Approach.

**—José Luis Ortega-Martin, Professor, Director of In-Service  
Training, Foreign Language Education, University of  
Granada, Spain**

As teachers and learners of languages we attend to language but we ignore what lies beyond—a complex of physical, spatial, interactional, institutional, political, and historical contexts that are present at every communicative moment. In deep learning, learners break free from such a narrow focus on language to develop skills that allow the creation of meanings in many different semiotic modalities that are embedded in context.

**—Richard F. Young, Author of “Discursive Practice in Language Learning and Teaching”, Professor, Department of English, University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA**

Language learning in the contemporary era is complex, globally situated, and mediated by a wide array of fluid social practices, hybrid cultural environments, and emerging communicative modalities. Tochon’s incisively argued volume acknowledges all of this and does a number of things very well: It highlights opportunities for the articulation of agency, is sophisticated in its treatment of culture and motivation, and relativizes historically constructed barriers between first and additional language learning. This book is innovative, insightful and an invaluable resource for students and teachers engaged in any aspect of language learning and teaching, applied linguistics, and world languages education.

**—Steven L. Thorne, Department of World Languages and Literatures, Portland State University (USA), and Department of Applied Linguistics, University of Groningen (Netherlands)**

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# Help Them Learn a Language Deeply

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Deep University Press

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## Also by François Victor Tochon

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*The Deep Approach: World Language Teaching for Community  
Building*, with D. Hanson. Atwood Publishing

*The Foreign Self: Truth Telling as Educational Inquiry.*  
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## Why the Deep Approach?

Immersing yourself in the Deep Approach to world languages and cultures will help you to:

- Understand how self-motivation could be the best incentive for deep language learning,
- Provide themes, motives, templates and incentives for self-directed learning and self-determination,
- Empower the student to be the curriculum builder by scaffolding possibilities and making the instruction flexible,
- Emphasize the learning process rather than pre-determined outcomes,
- Encourage individualized, peer-oriented, and project-based learning by focusing on cultural contents, value creation and social action,
- Consider grammar as story-telling about language, and
- Use formative, deep evaluation of integrated skills.
- Focus on value creation: highlight critical issues related to the respect of cultures, language status and discrimination, the colonial mindset and social justice, and linguistic human rights for peace building.

The Deep Approach establishes a link between language education policies and an open curriculum design focusing on values and creative proficiency in action rather than imposed outcomes. It places the learner as the curriculum builder.

The concepts I present in this book have been published in French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Vietnamese, but only some of them have been available in English. The reason why I could not transfer these concepts into English previously was the lack of a framework that could make the whole model intelligible to the Anglophone reader. I also wanted to test my hypotheses on American soil, which has now been accomplished through a large 4-year federal grant from the U.S. Department of Education. I am indebted to my outstanding colleagues and friends of the University of Wisconsin-Madison for their intellectual stimulation. Teaching and researching in an environment where close to 80 languages are being taught is quite an experience.

I am particularly indebted to graduate students, many of whom have been teachers and language instructors, who have read drafts of this book since 2009, have implemented the Deep Approach in their practice and have given me invaluable feedback. A forum was created on the Deep Approach website for K-12 teachers and collegiate language instructors who wanted to share their experiences with the new approach.

I am also thankful to many colleagues for having invited me to present keynote lectures and give workshops on the approach at the following places: the Conference of the National Council for Less-Commonly Taught Languages (NCOLCTL); at the European Conference on Education Research (ECER) in Berlin; Startalk language teacher education at PENN; Boston University; the Language Institute of the University of Columbia; CelCAR and the Turkish Flagship Program at Indiana University-Bloomington; the World Conference on Teaching Turkish in Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan); the Language Center of the University of Chicago; and many universities abroad, such as Granada (Spain); Porto (Portugal); Lyon, Marseille and Reims (France); Akershus-Oslo (Norway); Queensland and Griffith in Brisbane (Australia) Shanghai International Studies University and Shanghai Normal; Zhejiang and Zhejiang Normal; Beijing Languages and Cultures; and Beijing Foreign Studies University; Nanjing (China); NCKU and MUST (Taiwan).

Since January of 2000, I have been working at the University of Wisconsin-Madison as professor in a department of Curriculum & Instruction that has been consistently ranked first in the nation since 2001 according to the U.S. News and World Report; I also give one course a year in the Department of French & Italian, most usually to train teacher assistants to new approaches in the field. I headed the World Language Education program from September of 2001 to June of 2007, and then Graduate Studies in World Language Education.

Researchers in my department usually do not do mainstream research, but prepare what will be tomorrow's mainstream. I trust that this book presents the mainstream of tomorrow. This will be the type of apprenticeship that we will be facilitating in the coming decade due to the nature of economic and technological change, of population changes, of increasing internet resources, and the backlash against the view imposed by narrow-minded economists and politicians alike who support short-term interests in terms of standardized performances, gains, profitability, international mimicry, and shallow education.

The Deep Approach is being tested in many American colleges and in Turkey at Yildiz Technical; Bosphorus and Istanbul Şehir in Istanbul; Çanakkale; METU in Ankara; and Suleyman Demirel in Isparta, as well as in many countries such as China.

Deep University supports a deep approach to learning with online Summer courses and a Graduate Certificate in Deep Education. See:

❖ <http://www.deepuniversity.com/graduatecourses.html>

❖ The Deep Approach website is here:  
<http://www.deepapproach.com>



❖ As an example, the resources we created for the Turkish language are here:  
<http://deepapproach.wceruw.org/>



The Deep Approach team publishes a newsletter and Book Series for authors who investigate the approach. We are on Twitter, and we have a Facebook group.

- ❖ Our Facebook group is here:  
<http://www.facebook.com/groups/deep.approach/>



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# Preface

## What Deep Language Learning Entails

*I started my career teaching German to sixth graders in a French-speaking middle school. I had been teaching for about a month when one day, the assistant principal made a surprise visit to my class, unannounced. We had pushed all the chairs, desks, and tables into the corners of the classroom, and I was sitting on the floor in a circle, with the 16 kids in the class. I was holding a pen, presenting it to my child next to me, telling him in German: “This is a pen.” “Ah, this is a nice pen,” he was to respond. “Yes, this is a beautiful pen, I like it”—and he had to give the pen to the next student using the same sentences. We would continue with a variety of objects, then mix the objects and go in both directions at the same time, which caused some ruckus and laughter because the children were hearing competing messages.*

*After class, the assistant principal asked me why I was not using the textbook he had given me for the class, titled **Wir Sprechen Deutsch**. I told him I was not aware the textbook was a requirement. He also said that sitting on the floor might generate bad habits and the parents might complain. German was not an optional discipline in Switzerland and if my students did not succeed with State exams, it would be difficult for them to move on to high school. I then skimmed the textbook. Many chapters looked boring and made learning look like a mere repetitive practice. Nonetheless, there was something good about them: the chapters were organized by themes. In the next class, I listed the themes on the chalkboard, and asked the students to choose the theme they preferred. We formed groups that would specialize in one thematic chapter, would learn it, find other German resources on that topic (there was no internet at the time), create tasks for an educative project, and teach the chapter to their peers.*

The Deep Approach was born. It took me years to conceptualize the new process and convey what a self-determined apprenticeship of languages could change in terms of the resources we provide to students, the way we consider evaluation, proficiency, and the role our discipline can play for internationalizing the mind and building peace. This book is an introduction to this action-based, deep learning approach to other languages and cultures, which can increase sensitivity toward human history, our environment and the role of Education for a better society. As action is used here for value creation, and language apprenticeship, this approach can be considered trans-actional: it implies reflecting on the way of acting, with tasks being subordinated to transdisciplinary projects. This in turn will facilitate a new approach to the earth and history through education starting with the vehicle of language.

Experienced language teachers as well as specialists in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and foreign language education (FLE) might be surprised and even amazed when reading this book with its number of iconoclastic ways of handling the field, which I need to justify here. Our understanding of what a language is has taken on a new *complexity* that I wish to address. The frontier between first and second languages becomes blurred in a multilingual society. I will rarely allude to “second/foreign languages”; if I do, it will be in terms of world languages—any language of the world—which includes English<sup>1</sup>.

In this book, speaking of language learning at large will be to emphasize that nowadays language classes are often a mix of native speakers, heritage language and bilingual students, some of whom

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<sup>1</sup> English as a foreign language (EFL) or Teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) should be considered a different field from English as a Second Language for English Language Learners (ESL/ELL). EFL, in general, is proposed for secondary schools in countries that speak other languages than English. ESL addresses issues related to immigrant children in English-speaking countries, which generally relates to early childhood education and elementary education, more rarely to secondary school and post-secondary settings. Moreover, EFL is evolving towards English as Lingua Franca (ELF), with a focus on multilingual, non-native speaker communication practices. This new orientation can help reconceptualize world language education at large, as the purpose of a lingua franca (such as Turkish for Turkic countries) implies a focus on meaning rather than on form (Willis & Willis, 2007).

already speak two languages at home. Teachers must adapt to a large variety of contexts. Knowing who the students are is of utmost importance to find a good fit between who they are, what their interests and learning needs are, and how they will learn. Additionally, methodologies associated with language arts and first language literacy must now be integrated into the second/foreign language classroom for a deeper, integrated apprenticeship of languages and cultures. This goes along with the *Modern Language Association's* emphasis on the need to better integrate literature with language learning. As well it is a reaction against the marginalization of foreign language education (Reagan, 2002): the family of language education needs to unite forces.

Apprenticeship will be the term I shall use: learning languages in action, by doing, which will imply cross-cultural pragmatics and a critical reflection on values and linguistic capital. In the forthcoming chapters, the reader may recognize the influence of the works of Pierre Bourdieu, John Dewey, Henry Jacottot, Charles S. Peirce, Ivan Illich, Jean Lave, Henri Lefebvre, Jean-Louis LeMoigne, Edgar Morin, Basarab Nicolescu, Jacques Rancière, Donald Schön, and; closer to the Second Language Acquisition and world languages reader, Dick Allwright, Michael Byram, Rod Ellis, Ofelia García, Claire Kramsch, Ryuko Kubota, B. Kumaravadivelu, Donaldo Macedo, Terry Osborn, Robert Phillipson, Tim Reagan, Elana Shohamy, Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, Dave and Jane Willis, and Anna Wierzbicka. I am in agreement with late Leo van Lier and Richard Young on the need to reframe applied linguistics within the broader scope of applied semiotics—the science of meaning making—, a thesis I have been defending since I was editor of the *International Journal of Applied Semiotics* and president of the special interest group in educational semiotics of the American Education Research Association.

I am indebted to all of these researchers, yet what I am presenting here is unique and different. I also express my gratitude towards numerous experienced teachers and teaching assistants whose feedback, experiences and conversations were illuminating. Particular thanks go to language teachers such as Suzanne Mingo, Mary-Alice Sicard and Gina Lewandowski who have provided feedback on early versions of this manuscript to increase its readability towards the K-12 teacher



community, and to the doctoral students whose comments stimulated me to improve this text during the last four years.

The attempt here was to define what could be the next main stream. I have tried to meet the challenge of gathering modern and postmodern trends within an integrative framework that describes their included middle. Rather than keeping with a dualistic view of paradigmatic wars, Lupasco's principle of the included middle, or third space, integrates apparently opposed elements at a higher (still relative) level. As well, the flexible and adaptive model I propose is in a sense a consequence of numerous contacts with language policy research, as it is an expression of what could be done to deepen language curriculum and instruction in ways that are respectful to language and culture differences. The bibliography at the end of the book demonstrates that the argument is well informed and up-to-date. Yet, I apologize for the number of researchers in language policies and world languages that I could not review for lack of space. They will be the focus of other works.

In this book, I reconceptualize language learning in two ways: first, as an expression of dynamic planning prototypes that can be activated through self-directed projects. Second, the proposal is an attempt at integrating structure and agency to meet deeper, humane aims. The dynamism of human exchange is meaning-producing through multiple connected intentions among language task domains. Here, language-learning tasks have a cross-cultural purpose which then become meaningful within broader projects that meet higher values and aims such as deep ecology, deep culture, deep politics and deep humane economics. Applied semiotics will be a tool beyond the linguistic in favor of value-loaded projects that are chosen in order to revolutionize the current state of affairs, in increasing our sense of responsibility for our actions as humans vis-à-vis our fellow humans and our home planet. In this respect, this book presents a grammar for deep instructional planning that is also, a grammar for action. Understanding adaptive and complex cross-cultural situations will be the prime focus of such a hermeneutic inquiry.

I suggest that students use thematic organizers to guide their projects. A thematic organizer is a specific subject-matter focus that

matches students' self project and interest and will serve as a pivot to build self-determined, educative actions. The study of how experienced teacher organize their curriculum revealed that they not only use thematic organizers but also instrumental organizers or *skillers* and experiential organizers that I called *actualizers*. These aspects are developed in this book. Organizers have no meaning without the complex, associated dynamics of the situation. Handling connections across language tasks, I suggest, will be a matter of the teacher's experience in the field, i.e. in the classroom. The concept of curriculum organizers comes from field pragmatics: their understanding emerged from more than three hundred visits and classroom observations I have made, as well as interviews with teachers on their instructional planning during the last twenty-five years in different countries such as Argentina, Belgium, Canada, China, Ecuador, France, Japan, Peru, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, the United States, and Vietnam.

I feel the time is now ripe for clarifying the stakes of language *complexity*—that language is plural rather than one—and self-directed learning in the world language arena. Therefore it is timely as well as new. What is new here is the emphasis on the deep transformational dynamics of learning—in which learners become social activists for other languages through the interactive practices of wisdom pertaining to various cultures. Thematic organizers transcend their structural definition and soon become flexible, pragmatic ways of guiding students' choices without reifying the concepts enacted in the projects, which are like personalized standards. Thus pragmatic organizers come from the field and transform the field into wor(l)d maps.

Here is what makes this approach distinct:

- ❖ The students are placed in charge of building their own curriculum and projects to achieve their own desired expertise, using accountability measures through instructional agreements.
- ❖ The basis of the students' curriculum building is the teacher's provision of literary and multimedia resources organized adaptively. The teacher becomes expert in scaffolding and facilitating feedback.

- ❖ Knowledge is not a ‘thing’ that can be taught as an object: it is understood as deep, subjective and intersubjective, inseparable from the identity process. Depth is defined in opposition to the commodification and commoditization of knowledge. Educative projects are open and become ways of preventing knowledge crystallization and sedimentation. Rather, it is about situated knowledge in action.
- ❖ The focus is on deep processing, not standardized outcomes similar for all. There is room for diversity and flexibility, non-native speaker comfort, code-switching, and unique perspectives.
- ❖ It targets transdisciplinary values for a more sensible and wiser world—this way language learning becomes the means toward conflict resolution, ending war and poverty, re-greening the planet, and turning to politics for the human. Yet, rather than a dualistic view, the principle of the included middle (or third space) is applied, through which two apparently opposed elements can be integrated at a higher (still relative) level.

The Deep Approach is a convergence of what worked best in earlier approaches. Its holistic scope allows for more student autonomy and works for the planet and society while working on the language.

The instructional principles I believe in for teachers are to:

- Go by the results of motivation research, and provide incentives for self-directed learning and self-determination.
- Help students build their curriculum through their own literacy-based thematic units, indexing all language modalities to each other. As an instructor, merely scaffold possibilities; make your landscape as flexible as possible for the student to choose, select, and frame on his or her own. Use online modules rather than a textbook or supplement with a large variety of multimedia resources for blended learning.
- Emphasize process rather than outcomes; refer to instructional organizers in forward planning rather than goals or outcomes in a backward planning.

- Encourage individualized, peer-oriented, and small group project-based learning, focusing on cultural content and social action;
- Give primacy to text. Consider grammar as storytelling about language; target extensive reading/viewing and intensive writing/recording.
- Use deep formative feedback and empowerment evaluation. Integrate self-evaluations and peer-evaluations.
- Focus on value creation: highlight critical issues related to the respect of other languages and cultures, language status and invisible or open discrimination, the colonial mindset versus principles of social justice, and linguistic human rights for peace building.

In summary, understanding the Deep Approach is seeing Education and schooling in an “avant-garde” way!



# Chapter 1

## Deep Apprenticeship is Reflective, Adaptive, and Self-Determined

*Because of exam-oriented education, students have become rootless.* (Liu, 2010)

*This chapter scaffolds understanding about a series of premises that are crucial for a good grasp of the breadth and scope of the Deep Approach project.*

When I started teaching, the reference model for teacher planning was to use well-defined objectives. Nowadays with outcomes-based standards, the situation has not changed much: the teacher is in a position to direct and control learning through a prespecified curriculum and a textbook. Curricula are usually imposed by the foreign language department, the program coordinator, or the head teaching assistant.

In the early 1970s, I read Robert Mager's book on "Preparing Instructional Objectives" and was baffled that he could claim that, once outcomes are clear and the sequence of instructional goals is on paper, not much is left to do as a teacher. This present book can be considered a response to Mager. It shows how much is left to do if you target responsive practice. Planning travel on the basis of a roadmap and moving forward adaptively may be as important as knowing the goal. I illustrated this point in a short story that I presented in China at a workshop on the Deep Approach at the beginning of the Year of the Rabbit<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The Chinese version, 什么是深度反思性学习？ is here: <http://www.deepapproach.com/chinesestory.html>

## **Why Having Clear Goals Derived from Backward Planning is a Myth**

*Once upon a time, there was a rabbit, who, after saving eight gold coins, was preparing to seek his fortune in the world. Before leaving, he sought the advice of a wise, old rabbit, who told him this: “Don’t listen to advice; think for yourself, and think deeply.”*

*Our rabbit, baffled by the old rabbit’s advice, leapt from field to field, deep in thought. He stopped for the night at the top of a hillock where he could admire his surroundings. In the morning, as soon as he opened his eyes, he saw he was not alone. A weasel was staring at him.*

*“Good morning, rabbit! Where are you off to?”*

*“I’m thinking of how I can go and seek my fortune.”*

*“You are a lucky rabbit. I will guide you on your journey. You need a clear starting point, a goal, and a method.”*

*The weasel instructed him to make a backward map that began at his destination. The lesson lasted several days. When she felt he was ready, the weasel cried, “Perfect! You owe me three gold coins.”*

*The rabbit found himself alone, disheartened at being poorer, but now he knew how to set a goal based on a starting point composed of clear outcomes, which made him very proud of himself. He started on his first goal: that by the end of the day, he should be able to reach the hill about five miles off in the distance without spending another coin.*

*Poor rabbit! A group of children from the village pestered him so much that he had to avoid the village, which took him in the opposite direction of the hill! During his escape, he lost one gold coin. After a pensive journey where he thought deeply about the unexpected, he finally approached the hill, but he was stopped by a river that would most certainly keep him from his destination on the far-off hill. He sighed sadly, heartbroken, and camped for the night. As he opened his eyes in the morning, he saw he was not alone. A beaver was staring at him.*

*“Hello, rabbit! Where are you off to?”*

*“I’m thinking of how to seek my fortune.”*

*“You are a lucky rabbit because I’m going to teach you how to walk. You can’t get anywhere if you don’t know how to walk. You can move to the left, you can move to the right, you can navigate by sight or by sound. But you must first breakdown your journey into pieces and handle them one at a time.”*

*The rabbit pondered on this for a while and recognized in the words of the beaver the advice of the weasel, but the beaver’s advice seemed more brilliant. He groaned hesitantly, “But how much will this cost, my friend?”*

*The beaver was so persuasive that the rabbit devoured his lessons. He learned how to divide the journey into individual steps in order to get a feel for it. His schooling lasted several days. When he felt the rabbit was ready, the beaver announced, “You have finished your lessons. You owe me three gold coins.”*

*The rabbit found himself alone, disheartened at being poorer by three gold coins, but he now knew how to breakdown an outcome into parts and find the solution to each individual problem. The beaver had given him charts, rubrics, testing forms and every instrument imaginable. The rabbit decided to cross the meadow, towards a ribbon of smoke that rose in the distance. He started off, applying what he had learned, taking extra care not to spend another coin.*

*Poor rabbit! He knew everything about backward planning, but he stopped after each leap, not knowing how to proceed with the next step or tool to use, or how to compare the earlier leaps with the later ones. Nothing was as he expected. Each blade of grass, each stream terrified him. Another gold coin disappeared when he lost his footing, the rabbit being too absorbed in his charts. And he lost hours milling over each step of the way, weeping the whole time. Nothing of his journey was predictable, so he found himself reduced to improvisation.*

*Suddenly, he remembered the wise old rabbit. He realized the weasel and beaver were wrong. No longer bound by one theory or another, he felt free! He frolicked as he pleased, deciding spontaneously what followed each leap. He reacted in the moment. He understood that a weasel or a beaver couldn’t teach a rabbit how to move as a rabbit,*



*and he was angry to have paid dearly for his lessons. His past came back to him. In comparing the attitude of the wise old rabbits he knew, he saw the common link. Flexible, old rabbits laid the pathway by adapting to the circumstances, without useless instruments.*

*As night fell without a hitch, he approached a large fire. A man sitting there stared at the rabbit hungrily.*

*“Hello, rabbit! Where are you off to?”*

*“I’m reacting to my surroundings, so I can seek my fortune.”*

*“You are a lucky rabbit. I’ll let you in on a secret: you’ve reached the end of your voyage. If you break the spell, you will be master of time and space. Jump into the fire, it’s the only way to seek your fortune.”*

*The rabbit, wiser than before, sat to reflect deeply on this for himself, also thinking of the old rabbits, who were terrified of men. “All advice is an illusion, only take what is useful.”*

*From his experiences and deep thoughts, our friend the rabbit had developed his own strategies. He understood that there was no knowledge for everyone. He declined the invitation and went on his way, certain to find his fortune.*

*The moral of this story: If one doesn’t think profoundly, having goals doesn’t help. Backward planning before experience itself is delusive.*

In the story, the wise old rabbit represents the Deep Approach—a way for students to self-guide their learning. The beaver is an earlier model of structured planning—it costs a lot but... The weasel presents the backward planning of more recent pedagogy...similarly costly and time-consuming and ...The man in the story who tells the rabbit to jump in the fire could be interpreted as the extreme version of teaching for the test that many teachers face today. The way that best fits the young rabbit’s path is forward planning on the go, focusing on content input and output as a process, not a pre-specified, restrictive goal.

Note that, in this book, I use the words ‘input’ and ‘output’ in a way that matches the definitions provided by Curriculum Theory because of its focus on organizing open apprenticeship activities. From a Curriculum

perspective, instructional units can be planned as conceptual entries through forward planning (input focus in planning) or as measurable outcomes through backward planning (focusing on outputs in planning). In contrast to this definition, SLA researchers differentiate the ‘structured input activities’ of processing instruction (Cardieno, 1995; VanPatten, 2004) considered since Krashen (1985), Gass (1997) and Carroll (2001) as being superior to instruction that was traditionally based on language production (or output) through drilling practices. However, there are other ways of making good use of output than drills. For example, open expression may reinforce self-evaluation and increase proficiency.

Swain (1985) proposed the output hypothesis suggesting that L2 production could affect acquisition, which was supported by Skehan (1998), Ellis (2003) and Toth (2006), among others. The idea was that production “pushed” learners from the “semantic processing” that comprehending input entails to the “syntactic processing” required to encode meanings (Swain, *ibid*, p. 249). The idea that production (output) helps acquisition is now well accepted (Swain, 2000): it (1) pushes learners to note the gap between what they want and can say; (2) provides opportunities to express oneself, test and encode meanings and get feedback; (3) routinizes encoding procedures; (4) allows learners to develop their own voice; and (5) generates reflective meta talk with increased awareness about the language. This book proposes an approach in which scaffolded production in open projects chosen by the learners becomes the key to language acquisition. Within this perspective, learning by doing in the production mode redefines acquisition in terms of apprenticeship.

### **Principles We Can Take from this Story**

*THERE ARE NO WORTHY OUTCOMES WITHOUT DEEP THOUGHT.* Learners often feel that they are taught by theories that ignore contextual difficulties. For example, standardized models are often created off-practice, and can lead to neglecting adaptive qualities, necessary for working with others in co-created contexts. Such a theoretical ideal is partly unsustainable in the reality of the classroom. At the very least, it deserves to be complemented.

*PEDAGOGY IS A LANGUAGE OF PRACTICE.* In order to understand language learning in practice, a body of research should study the thoughts of students when they plan their learning, and as they work to realize their projects. Self-directed, project-based learning is under-researched. The results of this research paradigm would lead to a vision of a new way of teaching for proficiency, directly inspired by the reflections and practices of students' spontaneous actions and genuine projects.

*REFLEXIVE LEARNING ADAPTS ITSELF TO STUDENT PROJECTS.* Reflexive apprenticeship represents a dynamic process: students reflect in the moment and make decisions for projects that play a mediating role in the apprenticeship of the language. Deep pedagogy places reflection in the foreground.

*DEEP TEACHING REQUIRES FLEXIBLE PLANNING.* Learning is much more complicated than assimilating easily digestible content, taxonomically organized according to a Cartesian ideal that breaks difficulties into smaller chunks. Students can conceive plans for their own that are flexible. Learning is a negotiated process that gives a sense to the resources in organizing them in educational projects relatable for the students, allowing for the instructional material's integration.

*DEEP LEARNING IS REFLECTIVE AND DOES NOT REQUIRE A NORMATIVE FRAMEWORK.* Contrary to models, which impose normative frameworks, complete with fixed outcomes, reflective pedagogy does not respond to a focus on prescriptive rigor. It includes the capacity for the student to adapt the academic goals in reference to a moving context applied to projects, drawing on a repertory of knowledge, which allows the anticipation of problems and assuring a personal progression. Deep, reflective teaching is an open form of scaffolding and feedback centered on the process of learning. The goal is autonomous, creative reflection and action while developing proficiency.

As an example illustrating this last principle, here are the reflections of Jingjing, a World Language teacher who received a copy of the aforementioned rabbit story, which had been translated into Chinese for the "Rabbit Year":

After his experiences with the weasel and the beaver, the little rabbit finally understands that “all advice is an illusion, only take what is useful” and finds his fortune. This story reminded me of similar ideas in Chinese philosophy. Chinese philosophy presents several education principles. The first principle is “inexpressible”. One teacher was once asked: “What is the first principle?” He answered: “If I were to tell you, it would become the second principle.” That means if a principle can be told in the process of teaching, it cannot be the useful knowledge to learn. In the fable, the old rabbit told the little rabbit not to listen to advice and think for himself, this act can be interpreted as an understanding of inexpressible education.

Then, the method of cultivation is also non-cultivation. In some aspects of Chinese philosophy, to do things without deliberate effort seems to be the best way to achieve goals, and the adequate confidence in oneself is equally important. So actually, learning does not impose a normative purpose, and sometimes, the teachers should wait for the students to learn reflexively, like the old rabbit did. The old rabbit did not tell the little rabbit any details about the journey and didn’t tell him what should be done step by step as the weasel and the beaver did. But the little rabbit carried the first advice with him on his journey. The old rabbit teacher used the non-cultivation to some extent and successfully let the little rabbit find the most suitable way for himself.

This example illustrates the importance of and the unforeseeable turns in the Deep Approach process and its inexpressibility. Chinese philosophical thought supports the non-normalizing aspect of the Deep Approach, as would do recent philosophical explorations, such as Jacques Rancière’s (1991) study of the need for students to find their own learning path.

Obviously, the attempt at describing the indescribable is a complex endeavor. In Eastern philosophy, one way of approaching such depth is inspired from what depth is not. Here is a little survey to grasp the Deep Approach by what it is NOT. Note which points strike you as important.

1. Directive teaching and controlled learning do NOT lead to language proficiency.
2. Backward planning is NOT the easy way to language fluency.
3. The emphasis on oral communication has been at the cost of depth in language learning.
4. The place of grammar is neither clear nor balanced in current language teaching methods.
5. Language tasks rarely target sociocultural situations in their context.
6. Language courses rarely provide exposure to the regional and social varieties of the target language.
7. Deep culture and cross-cultural pragmatics are minor topics in language classrooms.
8. The way we teach cultures in a language classroom context is commonly not respectful of their varieties and complexity.
9. New technologies are rarely used in the language classroom to make students self-sufficient in their learning.
10. The teacher rarely works as a facilitator and the students almost never build their curriculum and their progression themselves.
11. Language programs do not adapt to students' determination.
12. Situations in which students freely build up on their projects represent a very minor part of what most foreign language departments propose.
13. Most languages courses are based upon extrinsically motivated activities.
14. Depth is more important than coverage in most languages courses.
15. Evaluation is rarely helpful and empowering in language classrooms.
16. Literature is not well integrated in language courses.

What, how and why should students learn? Is it better for them to learn rules by rote or to express their creativity? Is the post hoc focus on form(s) the final say on what should be enacted in a classroom context? Should they be storing information in their memory or be encouraged to find answers for themselves? The current context of education does not allow much freedom for reflective activity that respects the natural flow

of learning. These approaches may be complementary, and it becomes a matter of affirming their respective merits. This directly concerns the management of instructional content. Planning is, in large measure, responsible for the way in which our students' lives are organized. A highly structured plan risks developing automatism, whereas a project with more complexity may trigger something like an awakening. All these questions require a closer study and serious reflection. What are the underlying values that are being targeted?

While in the United States it is legitimate to believe that the emphasis on the 5 Cs standards (Communication, Comparisons, Connections, Cultures, and Community) within their presentational, interpretive and interpersonal aspects constitutes an advancement over previous methods in the promotion of foreign language learning—an emphasis that is now shared across K-12 grade levels as well as college instruction—the European Reference Framework for Foreign Languages has developed in the community of language instructors a sense that the communicative functions of the language are not sufficient and must be put into situated action. Indeed, it indicates that linguistic communication competences must be re-thought within broader competences whose contexts and conditions may vary to mobilize strategies adapted to the tasks that need to be accomplished (CECR, 2001, p. 15). Richer (2009) posits that this new, post-communicative framework based upon action theory must be understood more as a rupture from the past, rather than a simple, soft and cosmetic move away from the usual communicative jargon. It offers a perspective that is eclectic and post-methodological because its focus is the take-over by the learners of their teaching, whatever means can concur to develop the needed, situated proficiency in its context. More than an “actional” turn, this framework represents a turn towards self-direction and the acknowledgement that the language instructor cannot do much if the learner is not actively part of the decision-making process.

Thus from the somewhat simplistic perspective of communicational competences emerges a new panorama of what needs to be done for the complex action/project competence, a process which presents the major challenge and paradox of having to be explored and perfected in large part *without the teacher*. The whole turn challenges one basic premise

that was taken for granted by generations of language instructors: that language classes should be planned by the teacher (and by extension with the close guidance, supervision, curriculum and agreement of the foreign language department). To understand how revolutionary the move is and why it deserves the denomination of post-method, let us consider a minute what instructional planning is. Indeed the linking of research on language learning in action and field practice, especially for teachers in training, is vital.

### **The Limits of Instructional Planning**

Instructional planning has so far been at the core of the life of language teachers. It is highly influenced by textbooks, and therefore, represents market forces over individual empowerment. Textbooks, as well as teacher planning, present anticipation of instructional events, an organization of content that precedes interaction. In this sense, planning is an evolutionary fiction that projects itself beforehand onto unpredictable future interactions of instructional life. Thus, planning is a conceptual simplification of reality. Its models marry diverse theories to produce a concrete, practical action.

At the moment of instructional action, planning has, to a great extent, a transformational face because it must respond to immediate situations whose referents are past experience and prior knowledge. To be sure, this knowledge may appear hybrid and any work on planning courts the danger of applying different epistemological frames onto an action that a learner will explain using terms from a cross section of theories. Curriculum planning, then, has its own way of knowing, is an epistemology of synthesis with the risk of artifice. Its legitimacy resides in convergence and the pragmatic fusion of ideas. It would be a mistake to fault planning for slighting the roses when it blends them with the marigolds and dahlias; the florist creates art out of the harmony of confrontation. Accessed by metaphor, pedagogical relations transcend the realm of behaviors; they can be guided only by an approximate estimation, a project. Planning lies on this side of the meaning constructed from experience; it is a way to make sense of things. It conscientiously fuses these many theories, which apprentices (students)

amalgamate at will to understand and to deepen their understanding. The quintessence of planning resides in the common denominator; and some risks are associated with reductive meanings. Concepts, with use, become divorced from their pragmatic contexts and become trite. Abstractions become objects of discourse. This *thingification* makes them meaningless.

Research on language learning in action should hereafter be linked to field practices. The investigations into the categories and constructs used by language students to organize learning experience ran counter to the predominant normative trend. Nonetheless, the number of studies in this area of research has increased steadily. Enthusiasm for the description of actual practices is explained in part by the recurring problems encountered by master program designers and innovators who attempt to prescribe changes without coming to grips with the importance of teachers' and students' knowledge, beliefs, values and interests in the instructional process. Innumerable practical problems arise from the deliberate ignorance of working mental models, and of the rationales of situated practice (Lave & Wenger, 1990). Other practical problems are related to teachers' training: experienced teachers advise education students to leave theory aside when they are in the field, i.e. the classroom; and in higher education, teacher training is practically nonexistent. The approach that I propose may remedy this situation, which can be attributed to partial irrelevance of training models and their frequent lack of connection with practice, unless intensive practicums are organized in close connection with methods courses.

Another issue is the novice teacher's inherited mindset. Teachers are meant to teach. A teacher must be interrupted in some way to leave room for student self-determination and decision-making. Teachers make huge efforts to adapt their syllabus in a way that will fit the comfort level of their class. However, such attempts are limited as long as the student is not part of the planning process. In the classroom, the written program is transformed into an active one and the interpretation of the curriculum is crucial in choosing what to teach. This interpretation is a part of the genesis of a learning plan. But how can a teacher interpret content from the perspective of twenty or so students? It must be close to the students' mental models for them to be able to grasp it. Any training that does not



take into account the practical problems related to the adaptive transfer, by each learner, of abstract contents into action is doomed for failing to use the full resources of the learner. Therefore we first need to address how to stimulate engagement and language development in the classroom through strategies we learned from motivation research and SLA research that point to the inadequacy of the present approach.

In principle, education is an applied science. Problems are generated the moment theory loses touch with the learners. For this reason, instructional models should draw closer to field practice. Mixed studies, conjugating ethnomethodological analyses, experiential approaches, teacher professional stories, action research, case studies and experimentations should pave the way for the conception of methodologies that reflect more closely the wisdom of practice. This work pursues this intent inasmuch as it is the product of video study groups (Tochon, 1999), participatory action research (Tochon & Ökten, 2010) and ethnomethodological research on the experience of seasoned teachers. Its models were verified by exploratory practice (Allwright, 2003), by virtue of the connection between theory and its field integration. They correspond to the latest developments in world language education and Second Language Acquisition, but more importantly, they work in practice.

### **Survey of the Book's Chapters**

In this book, a rather rigorous description is undertaken—this being characteristic of any attempt at verisimilitude and trustworthiness, if not generalization—of what is happening in expert language instruction (Tsui, 2003). Instructional planning in practice equates to describing the un verbalized, implicit dimension of teaching.

*Chapter 1* was an introduction to the nuances required for transdisciplinary action and value creation in instructional design. That said, planning has its limits, as shown in the second chapter.

*Chapter 2*: « A compelling chapter » expressed a teacher. « Absolutely vital to forming an understanding of the theoretical bases of the Deep Approach. » A number of curriculum researchers and theorists proposed to define instructional outcomes in a way that would make

assessments comparable. However models born from Cartesian logic are often inadequate relative to language-situated competence, they do not account for all its complexity. The deep learning process, defined as apprenticeship, gives rise to a variety of outcomes that cannot be anticipated. Therefore, evaluation is open and focuses on creative work.

*Chapter 3* addresses the critical roles of text to language learning and its correlate, project-based learning, clearly key features of the Deep Approach. Because they directly challenge deeply embedded orally-based conversational learning practice, they are introduced directly and without equivocation. I indicate how and why text and the writing process should be the primary focus of deep language learning. Writing is used as a form of expression that leaves a trace where analysis and reflection are used as tools to encourage further improvement. Writing precedes oral exchange. Oral exchange must be considered the by-product of reading and writing in the language, as reading and writing are the seats of knowing.

*Chapter 4:* As Kurt Lewin emphasized, there is nothing more practical than a good theory. A number of researchers have designed educational classifications integrating the cognitive, the socio-affective, and the psychomotor aspects of learning. Their levels have some important points in common: the first level is usually related to the mastery of disciplinary content and is confined to the short term; the second level concerns thinking strategies and instrumental skills that can be transferred from one subject area to another; and the third level pertains to the long term, representing transdisciplinary competences in concrete situations. The articulation of the discipline/interdiscipline/transdiscipline levels supports transversal approaches, i.e. a better relation between the subject areas and a social application of contents.

*Chapter 5:* An inquiry conducted with some thirty teachers suggests that, contrary to the principles established by most planning models, seasoned practitioners do not sequence their lessons linearly but by integrating task domains. This integration allows the simultaneous attainment of a variety of outcomes, not just one. The characteristics of the Deep Approach and its core principles are highlighted.

Chapter 6: “An important chapter for the teacher so that she can

develop the global perspective needed for facilitating and guiding the student on the various levels.” In the Deep Approach, the learners are in charge of their own learning; they are, in large part, in charge of the curriculum decisions, such as planning educative projects, choosing themes, films, and texts, as well as grammar complements they need for their projects. The teacher becomes an advisor or counselor and facilitator and provides extensive feedback. Thus, what articulates teaching and learning is intensive viewing and its conversational feedback, extensive reading, and extensive writing workshops for individual and group projects. A series of examples are proposed.

*Chapter 7:* Self-determination and the awareness of one's own way of knowing and learning is the cornerstone for the possibility of deep apprenticeship. When students are allowed to plan their own productions, they organize their knowledge autonomously and develop their reflectiveness. In an educative production, the students are brought to evaluate themselves. The path to self-evaluation is acquired gradually, by experience. Studying the directives develops a working methodology as well as reflexive aptitudes. In the final learning phase, evaluative metacognition becomes a fundamental competence.

*Chapter 8:* The deep process can't be reified. In the internationalization of the mind, value creation is of utmost importance. This positioning first suggests that it is no longer possible nowadays to think disciplinary without re-connecting content to the issues that we live as a world, a society, not only as inhabitants but as members and partners of planet Earth. Language is the conduit for connecting humanity across states, and peace building across cultures. Therefore language study should not be constructed for the exclusive purpose of proficiency: it can foster the wisdom, courage and compassion of cosmopolitanism for peace. This “Deep Turn” in language education goes with Ikeda's (2010a) suggestion of changing the standards model toward 6Cs standards with the overarching C of Cosmopolitanism.

Make no mistake: the age of methods has passed, but of course, the teachers remain (Reagan & Osborn, 2002). The rigor of the arguments posed in this work should not overshadow the fact that a methodology blends with the teacher's knowledge. Any application is an individual,

unique, non-reproducible experience. Thus, a planning synthesis is an arduous, controversial task that too often skirts the context and the student-teacher relationship. The aim of this work is not to oversimplify the realities of learning but to lead the reader to reflect upon them in a way that helps reconceptualize one's practice.

Many language instructors are used to teaching in a way that involves decontextualized exercises, which have proven ineffective for Second Language Acquisition. Empty slot exercises, vocabulary and morphologic manipulation, and an overemphasis on formal aspects of the language are most often developed at the cost of meaning, communication, and depth. They make learners passive, as the teacher makes the curriculum decisions. Therefore, the first step to a deeper approach is for teachers NOT to teach. Teaching as usual must be interrupted. Then what are the teachers doing? This book is a response to this question.



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## Author's Biosketch

**Dr. Francois Victor Tochon** is a Professor in the Departments of Curriculum & Instruction and French & Italian at the University of Wisconsin-Madison where he headed World Language Education for 6 years. He was born in Geneva, Switzerland. He has a Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics (Université Laval) and a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology (Ottawa University), and received the equivalent of Honorary Doctorates from two universities in Argentina and Peru. Prof. Tochon was the co-editor and Chief editor of the International Journal of Applied Semiotics. Briefly on the Board of the Semiotic Society of America, he worked on intercultural semiotics and was the president of the special interest group of Semiotics in Education of the American Educational Research University, looking for deeper ways of organizing teaching and learning. In 2009-2011, Prof. Tochon received an award from the U.S. Department of Education to create, research and evaluate personal learning environments for a “deep approach” to languages and cultures, with a focus on Turkish. It allowed his research team to format an innovative interface between language policies and classroom curricula and practices. In 2007-2008, he was awarded grants from Spencer and Tubitak—National Science and Technology Foundation of Turkey—to study ways to internationalize Education through e-portfolios, world languages and intercultural semiotics. With twenty-five books and more than hundred fifty articles and book chapters to his credit, Prof. Tochon has also been Visiting Professor in several universities including Akershus (Norway), Arizona, Brussels (Belgium), Freiburg (Switzerland), Granada (Spain), Lyon, Paris V Sorbonne, Nanterre, Reims, Rennes, West Indies (France), Arizona and Princeton (USA), Rio Cuarto (Argentina), Yildiz (Turkey), etc. He is currently published in 11 languages among which English, French, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, Turkish, and Vietnamese, and forthcoming translations are planned for Chinese. Among his books are: "The Foreign Self: Truth Telling as Educational Inquiry" (Atwood); *Tropics of Teaching: Productivity, Warfare, and Priesthood* at University of Toronto Press. His article “The Key To Global Understanding: World Languages Education. Why Schools Need to Adapt” published in the *Review of Educational Research* (79/2) received the 2010 Award of Best Review of Research from the American Educational Research Association (AERA). He received the 2012 Award of International Excellence from the University of Granada, Spain. Professor Tochon is President of the International Network for Language Education Policy Studies (INLEPS):

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