



CAL*commentary*

Facilitated Interdependent Language Learning (FILL) in Action *Increasing Student Autonomy*

Michele Anciaux Aoki Nancy C. Rhodes Tom Welch

Table of Contents

Introduction _____	1
High School Students' Insights into How They Want to Learn Language _____	2
<i>Gathering Student Reflections</i> _____	2
<i>Conversations with Current Learners</i> _____	3
Facilitated Interdependent Language Learning ____	5
<i>What Is FILL?</i> _____	5
<i>Two Examples of Facilitated Interdependent Language Learning</i> _____	6
<i>FILL: Opportunities and Challenges</i> _____	12
Implications and Conclusions _____	13

Introduction

The teaching of world languages in the United States is facing challenges that call for creative and adaptive approaches. ACTFL (2022) projects that “by 2025, there could be a hiring gap of 100,000 teachers annually [across grade levels and subject areas]” (p.1). Changes in schools and student motivation, goals, and preferences contribute further urgency to expanding the options for language learning.

Competition for scarce resources in schools poses ongoing problems. Even in schools with well-established language programs, a sequential language

course may not fit into a student’s schedule, or an administrator may have difficulty justifying a teaching position when there is not a full schedule of language classes for the teacher to teach.

In some cases, a language may be dropped entirely because the school can’t justify paying the salary for a full-time teacher of the language (or perhaps no part-time teachers can be found). This may happen less often with Spanish, but occurs regularly with French, German, Latin, Japanese, Chinese, and especially “less commonly taught languages.” Of course, the COVID-19 pandemic also demonstrated the need to be able to make quick and dramatic shifts in thinking about what schools offer and what teachers teach (and how they teach).

Beyond the challenges in finding teachers and managing language offerings, there is the reality of a new generation of students who are interested in more independent learning and in learning a wider range of languages than the few that are generally taught in American public schools. Students are ready to take charge of their own language learning journeys. In response to the changing circumstances, innovative language teachers are exploring new ways of supporting more autonomous language learning for students.

The purpose of this brief is to share an innovative language learning approach within the school setting. Beginning with learner perspectives, the brief will share commentaries from students about how and why they want to learn languages. The discussion will then suggest how a “Facilitated Interdependent Language Learning” (FILL) approach could be a

promising alternative to traditional classroom language teaching, with examples from California and Wisconsin, addressing both the urgent need for changes in language instruction and the students' desire for more autonomy in language learning. Finally, the brief will explore some opportunities and accompanying challenges that go along with a FILL approach and encourage educators to think more expansively about their role as advocates for languages and learners.

High School Students' Insights into How They Want to Learn Language

Gathering Student Reflections

Schools have long struggled to equip students with the skills to understand and communicate effectively in other languages (Robinson et al., 2006). Major challenges facing the language teaching profession have hampered successful program development, including teacher shortages, teacher preparation, availability of language offerings for all students, community attitudes towards language learning, student motivation, and appropriate, personalized methods for helping students learn languages. Of interest to the topic of this brief are student attitudes towards language learning and teaching, and specifically how students want to learn language and what their motivations are.

The National Council of State Supervisors for Languages and its subcommittee dubbed the "NCSSFL Neural Network Group" were interested



in exploring strategies and methods for learning languages that best met student needs. They organized a student panel on the topic. The resultant exploratory article on learners' perspectives on the current state of high school language learning (Welch & Rhodes, 2021) highlighted *student motivation*, a desired focus on *speaking skills*, a need for more *interactive activities*, and students' interest in finding *resources beyond the classroom* to meet their needs.

While in the past teachers had nearly total control over world language resources, in the 21st century, this is no longer true. Thanks to technology and population diversity in communities, access to language resources is much more widely distributed. The students expressed a desire for more active participation in language learning. Whether in-class

interactive activities or, more often, individually discovered resources, activities that met their personal language needs were highly sought after. Students talked about the lack of personal relevance in their classroom, and their desire to learn language skills so that they could communicate with people they wanted to communicate with about topics that were of interest to them. Using a variety of technology applications, students found resources on their own to meet their individual goals. They used music, movies, television programs, YouTube® channels, websites, and other resources online to help them learn language. Some of the students were encouraged by teachers to learn on their own outside the curricular boundaries of the class.

Conversations with Current Learners

Scholars, students, and parents have been expressing concern over the American approach of classroom-based language instruction for decades (Lynch, 2021; Snow, 2017). Two senior high school students (whose names were changed for this article), one from the NCSSFL panel and an additional student, recently reflected on their Spanish classes over the past years.

Noah's Plan to Visit South America to Learn Spanish

Senior Spanish student Noah (Spanish 4), attending an urban technology magnet high school on the east coast, plans to take a gap year after graduation (he's already been accepted to college for Fall 2023) to travel to South America to learn Spanish. He says he wants to finally learn to speak Spanish after studying it since kindergarten and starting over again with beginning Spanish in high school. He'll study in an

immersion school at least 20 hours a week, live with a local homestay family, and travel around South America after language study. His goal is to get to the point where he can “understand most things and have good conversations.”

He felt that his school had a negative culture toward language learning because:

students are forced to take foreign languages, at least in all the schools I've been to. You've got no choice. And I get it. I think that learning another language is important [but] the result is you've got a lot of people in the class because they need to be there and just want to pass. And if there are some people in there like that [with that attitude], it lets all the other people, who kind of want to learn Spanish, off the hook, to where they're like, 'Alright I don't actually have to work too hard on this.' It's easy enough for me to just do what they're doing, and not put in too much work in the class and move on.

Noah hopes that his experiences actually using Spanish in South America this year will increase his language skills considerably and get him to the level where he wants to be.





Jennifer's Optimism and Disappointments

Senior Spanish student Jennifer (AP Spanish Literature), at a suburban public high school, reflected on her love of languages. She explained that the main way she has been engaging in Spanish this year was by finding and watching Spanish Netflix shows, YouTube® videos, and listening to music from Latin America and Spain on her own time.

It's just very hard, because as a student, I don't really have as much time as I want to be able to put into a language. So, if the time that I have in the classroom isn't really well scheduled and properly managed then I feel like I'm not going to be learning a lot.

Jennifer described her Spanish class experience this year in terms of a disconnect between her goals and how she is being assessed.

I feel like at this point Spanish is just another class where teachers are trying to get a metric out of us. A lot of what we do is just presenting, e.g., we do Google slide presentations and are graded on a rubric of what information we included and whether or not we said words correctly.

While students have been expressing their views and recommendations like these for years, the profession has had a difficult time responding, given the priorities of the educational system, competition for resources, and other factors. Taking these students' insights on language learning preferences as a guide, this brief will explore an alternative path for language learning that could address some of the issues. FILL programs address student concerns about their lack of voice and choice in traditional world language classes by adding an option which encourages active

participation in language learning and offers greater student autonomy and language possibilities.



Facilitated Interdependent Language Learning

What Is FILL?

The NCSSFL Neural Network Group became inspired to consider a new approach for language learning and teaching as members heard about innovative approaches being developed in California and Wisconsin and beyond the United States, as well. The approach goes by different names depending on where it originated, but the authors have used the phrase “Facilitated Interdependent Language Learning,” or FILL, to generically describe the approach. In brief, the strategy calls for one language teacher facilitating the learning of multiple languages within the same classroom.

The authors intentionally chose the word “*interdependent*” rather than “*independent*” to define FILL because the example classes illustrate the collaborative process of a teacher (facilitator of FILL) and learner (the student registered for the language

class) figuring out the *what* (which language) and *how* (which resources, use of class time, etc.) together. In that sense, the students in these school-based programs with FILL are not operating totally on their own. The facilitation of their learning by an experienced language teacher is critical in this approach.

It is important to emphasize that FILL is not an approach that allows a school to avoid a World Language requirement by putting students in a computer lab and having them run through a commercial software program or a purchased online language course that the school has chosen for them. It is also not the same as teaching multiple levels of the same language in the same class period with one teacher.

In a FILL environment, the choice of languages to be learned is determined by the students themselves. It usually depends on personal interest, personal connection, ethnic or heritage background, or plans for the future. Therefore, the languages being learned in any given year are somewhat unpredictable since new languages could be requested every year. While the teachers in this model are highly trained and qualified for teaching at least one language (other than English), they are not specifically endorsed or trained to “teach” the other languages. They call upon their expertise as language teachers and their personal experience as language learners to inform the process of facilitating the learning for the students. As a result, there is no way they can be the “sage on the stage” for each of the languages. As part of a successful FILL strategy, students learn to be self-directed and motivated to navigate their own learning

journeys to succeed in learning the language they've selected. Two examples below illustrate how this approach has worked in a "Language Lab" class in a charter school in California and in "Facilitated Language Study" classes in two school districts (urban and rural) in Wisconsin.

Two Examples of Facilitated Interdependent Language Learning

"Language Lab" Class in California

In the fall of 2021, Spanish language teacher Hugo Diaz-Rodil from Sierra Academy of Expeditionary Learning (SAEL) in Nevada City, California, met with members of NCSSEFL to share a new approach for language instruction that he was developing. In a post on the ACTFL Language Educators SIG, he had described his elective class, called "Language Lab," where students were learning a wide range of languages. He was looking to match his students with students proficient in those languages (including native or heritage language speakers) to give his students real-life experience using the language for communication.

In a virtual meeting with members of the NCSSEFL Neural Network Group (2021a), Diaz-Rodil answered questions about why he had decided to offer this approach and how it was even possible for a teacher of Spanish language to support so many languages. The information provided by Diaz-Rodil about the program is summarized next.

"Language Lab" at Sierra Academy of Expeditionary Learning (SAEL)

About the school

- Sierra Academy is a charter school grades 9-12 with [Expeditionary Learning](#), where students at the end of each semester present before an audience what they have created, a final product connected to all the core subjects.
- The school follows a project-based cross-curricular interdisciplinary model.
- The mastery-based approach uses hands-on learning, including fieldwork, with a focus on character (grit, collaboration, integrity, curiosity, etc.).
- Enrollment in fall 2021 was 170-180 students.
- Spanish is the only language offered in a traditional world language class; the first-year Spanish class begins in 10th grade.

About the "Language Lab" class

- It is an elective class where students can learn any language they choose. Languages chosen in 2021-22 were: ASL, French, German, Irish Gaelic, Japanese, Korean, Latin, Pashto, Russian, Spanish, Swedish, and Welsh.
- The number of students participating is about 20-25 from grades 9-12. (In 2021-22, 16 students completed the program.)
- Language Lab takes place Tuesdays and Thursdays for 1 hour and 20 minutes each time.
- The Language Lab elective was already in place before COVID, but during COVID, electives were dropped (in order to reduce time in front of the computer). As a result, school year 2021-22 was the second year of the course being offered.

How did students decide to sign up for "Language Lab"?

Students choose electives at the beginning of the school year (via a Google form). Teachers post information at the entrance to the school to "market" their electives, for example, "You want to learn languages from all over the world? Join my elective." There are no prerequisites for Language Lab. Students can sign up for successive years in order to

continue making progress in their language. One heritage language speaker of Welsh was able to complete a Coursera® course in Welsh and get a certificate of completion. Some 9th graders choose to sign up for Spanish because they don't want to wait until 10th grade to start. As a result, in 10th grade they can enroll in a higher-level Spanish class rather than starting at the beginning.

How are curricula selected for studying the languages?

While the students choose the language they want to learn, the role of Diaz-Rodil, as facilitator, is to research the content they will learn. He looks for online courses (OER, MOOCs, such as Coursera®, EdX®, The Open University®, etc.), many of which are university language courses, and selects them if they look appropriate. Usually, his students are able to audit the courses for free, but they could pay and get university credit if they wanted to. Other online tools that he has found helpful include:

- Duolingo® for many of the languages
- Edpuzzle® to assign videos about the different languages
- Quizlet™ study materials (to select materials for languages he does not know, Diaz-Rodil uses teacher ratings to help identify those that have been rated highest quality)
- YouTube® videos (e.g., Easy French, which includes subtitles)

When more than one course is available, he lets the students choose which one is the best match for them. Note that Language Lab is an elective and students receive elective credit, not world language credit, so the course curriculum does not require state approval.



How does the teacher do goal setting with the students?

The school uses Learning Targets for all their courses. The long-term Learning Targets are generic for all the languages. But to track short-term targets and accomplishments, students keep a “Language Learning Progress Log.” They are expected to enter something every day. (An example might be a screenshot of a completed Duolingo® lesson.) Diaz-Rodil also incorporates the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do statements. He took an ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI)® Familiarization workshop, which helped him understand the proficiency scale.

Who gives feedback to the students?

Once again, the key is flexibility determined by learner and teacher needs. Some of the online courses provide opportunities for feedback, but the course may be closed (available for auditing only), and then there's no feedback offered. Some of the online tools (like Duolingo® and Quizlet™) are designed to provide immediate feedback, but not for extended speech or writing. For languages with more than one student, students can provide feedback to each other.

Diaz-Rodil allocates some time for students to practice together, about 15 minutes twice a week. For languages with only one student, it is a challenge to provide real opportunities for mutual practice.

What opportunities do students have to use the language with native speakers or peers?

This has been a challenge. Diaz-Rodil is trying to find teachers who would be willing to have their students exchange conversation with his students in the various languages. Where he has multiple students learning a language (currently five are learning Japanese, for example), he can send them out into the hallway to practice what they've learned with each other. He is also trying to find guest speakers or students from the target language country who can meet online for the languages where just one student is learning them.

What about student motivation?

Student motivation is anecdotally seen to be higher, on average, than in traditional Spanish 1 or 2 because Language Lab is an elective, and students could choose other courses if they wanted to. Diaz-Rodil provides structure to keep the students engaged. There's always a "Do now" activity at the beginning of class, and during the week, he brings students together on occasion and plays videos about the cognitive benefits of language learning. He's always looking for resources to expand motivation. In addition, Diaz-Rodil invests time in creating a relationship with the students at the beginning of the course, so they'll know him. He recognizes that he's able to create a stronger connection in his traditional Spanish 1, 2, and 3 courses because he is able to share

more about his culture with those students since they're all learning Spanish.

What about communicating with parents about student progress?

Students at the school are expected to communicate with their parents and share progress results with them. In Expeditionary Learning, they have to communicate with their families about their learning, based on their goals. For Language Lab, that is mainly through the Language Learning Progress Log, which has a matching rubric provided. Diaz-Rodil provides feedback to the students as they are logging. Every two weeks they do a progress update.

If you had a wishlist for this course, what are some ways you'd like to take it to the next level?

Here is Diaz-Rodil's wishlist:

- Providing more opportunities for students to talk with speakers of the language from the country of origin or with people living in the U.S. who speak that language
- Adding more cultural aspects
- Resuming an assignment of reporting on news from the world (which was offered in the first year of the course)
- Offering recognition of students' achievements, such as badging (Note from the authors: Some students, especially heritage language speakers, may qualify for the Seal of Biliteracy or Global Seal of Biliteracy if language assessments are available.)

“Facilitated Language Study” at Madison East, Madison West, and LaFollette High Schools in Madison, WI and Plymouth High School in Plymouth, WI.

About the school

- Public high schools in Madison and Plymouth, WI
- In Madison, there is one class of FLS at East HS and one class at West HS, requiring two teachers. Next year, there will also be a class at LaFollette HS.
- In Plymouth, there is one class of FLS at Plymouth HS, requiring one teacher.
- The Madison student population is highly diverse. FLS students come from a variety of linguistic and cultural backgrounds as FLS gives them the opportunity to study non-European languages that connect with their heritage.

About the “Facilitated Language Study” (FLS) class

- It is an elective class where students learn a variety of languages in the same classroom, working collaboratively in language cohorts.
- The teacher is a certified teacher of a language, but not necessarily the languages offered in the FLS class.
- The class partners with community organizations to bring native speakers to meet with the students. These tutors complete background checks and volunteer their time to work with the students.
 - FLS in Madison, WI: the number of students participating is about 36 from grades 9-12. East HS has cohorts of Arabic, Ho-Chunk (also known as Winnebago, a native American language in the midwestern U.S.), Japanese, Korean, and Mandarin Chinese.
 - West HS has cohorts of Ho-Chunk, Italian, Japanese, and Korean.
 - LaFollette HS is planning to start a program next year with cohorts of German and another language yet to be determined.
- FLS in Plymouth, WI: the number of students is about 10-15 from grades 9-12.
- Current languages offered: Arabic, Japanese, Korean, and Russian.
- In Plymouth HS, FLS takes place every other day for 90 minutes as the class is on a block schedule.
- Students can earn elective credit in Wisconsin for FLS classes, but the transcript does not list the specific language(s).



“Facilitated Language Study” in Wisconsin

After learning about Diaz-Rodil’s “Language Lab” class in California, the NCSSFL Neural Network Group reached out to NCSSFL leaders across the country to search for more examples. We learned that in Wisconsin, a “Facilitated Language Study” (FLS) program has been underway for more than ten years, thanks to the efforts of two teachers. Claudine Clark of the Madison, WI public schools pioneered the effort in her state with ongoing support from her district and Pam Delfosse, Wisconsin State Supervisor for Languages. Clark’s experience and enthusiasm for the approach inspired her colleague, Laura Koebel, in a small, rural school in Plymouth, WI, to offer a similar program.

In a virtual meeting with members of the NCSSFL Neural Network Group (2021b), Clark and Koebel shared how their programs have led to some amazing success stories, not just from students going through the class, but from graduates who look back on the experience years later.

What does a class look like?

In Madison, coursework includes a mix of text-based activities and individual student work, as well as whole group cultural exploration lessons. Whole group lessons are teacher-led and include topics like music, cuisine, and traditions as well as presentations on study abroad and field trips to UW Madison to participate in language classes or attend World Languages Day. Students are able to choose from a variety of texts to anchor their study, and supplement them with individual activities and online authentic resources. Teachers have weekly check-ins with students to assess their work and provide guidance to help focus their study in all four skills.

Students meet with tutors from one to three times per week, depending on availability, either individually or with a few other students at their same level. The tutors' main role is to practice the language with the students, but they also provide guidance, answer questions, and provide cultural insights. Students are assessed through reflections, performance assessments, and projects, and teachers collaborate with the tutors to obtain accurate information regarding performance level guided by the use of rubrics.

In Plymouth, students use the same textbooks as nearby colleges with the thought that students may be able to test out of a semester at the university level, or at a minimum be familiar with the text and therefore more successful in university-level courses in these often challenging languages. If tutors are available through the universities, FLS students meet virtually once a week to review learning and culture

Are the Students in FLS Developing Proficiency?

In 2022, the AAPPL (ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages) was administered to all students in traditional level 3 and above language classes in Plymouth High School to assess standards-based language across the three modes of communication. The students tested also included a few students in the FLS course studying Japanese. The FLS "level 3" Japanese students performed similarly to the students in the school's traditional level 3 Chinese classroom, and their scores were above the national average as indicated by performance on the AAPPL assessment. The administrators are looking forward to seeing how the assessment data trend in the next few years.

questions. Students supplement the textbook with online resources and various texts. They work individually or in language cohorts. Assessments are similar to the Madison model. The Plymouth program takes advantage of being relatively close to two universities offering all of the FLS languages and arranges field trips to visit and observe college-level classes.

What do students think of Facilitated Language Study (FLS)?

We heard from several Wisconsin students, and a few of them stand out for the long-term benefits they've noted: a first year Arabic student, a third-year Japanese student, and a program graduate who had studied Arabic and Spanish. The first-year student of Arabic found that he could take more cultural trips in this class (than in a traditional language class) and he was able to find native-speaking tutors from local colleges. The student of Japanese described that her first year in FLS was one of her favorite years in a

What Wisconsin FLS Students Say ...

Japanese FLS

“Learning Japanese through FLS was my first experience learning a language besides Spanish or French and I was fascinated. I would chatter at my parents every night about how cool it was that Japanese verbs occur at the end of their sentences or how there isn't a verb for "to be." It changed the way I thought of language. I wanted to know how languages could be so different, how they formed, the structure behind them. It's why I decided to study Linguistics in college, first for a Bachelor's degree, then for a Master's. I can honestly say that I would never have gone into Linguistics if not for FLS.”

Russian FLS

“I plan to continue learning Russian, but not in FLS, as I am a senior. My plan for next year is to work on a Russian minor. If I have enough credits to do so, I will turn it into a major. My major is also related to language learning, as it is General Linguistics.”

language class because of the mixed grade-levels and opportunity for sharing of cultures (such as a winter break food exchange with all the languages). During COVID it was difficult to find tutors, but now there is a new facilitator who was able to locate four tutors for Japanese with a nice variety of people with different levels of language skill.

Another student from the Plymouth program had taken three years of Arabic through FLS and also learned Spanish. She shared that having tutors in the FLS program really prepared her for working through COVID, using Skype, for example. She is now studying at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, where she's continuing to study Arabic and Spanish, and has also entered the Russian Flagship program. She is now tutoring English learners in college, where she applies all of her skills for learning

independently. During the FLS program, she was able to engage in activities outside of school, such as visiting the University of Wisconsin and meeting professors there. These experiences helped shape her plans for the future, including her major in college and future career.

Another former student in FLS (2008-2012) is coordinating a summer virtual class for high school students to learn Hindi and Urdu. He is now a graduate student at the University of Minnesota in East Asian studies and is the main instructor for Urdu for the high school program. He was in the first Arabic FLS cohort at Madison East High School. While he didn't continue with Arabic study in college, he said the class left him with some of his fondest memories in high school, and Arabic was the foundation for him to learn Urdu in college.

If you had a wishlist for this course, what are some ways you'd like to take it to the next level?

Here is Clark's and Koebel's wishlist:

- Obtaining funding for language textbooks and for reliable connections for virtual language and cultural exchanges
- Facilitating a tutor network that expands nationally and globally through the use of virtual technology (The more tutor connections we have for the students, the better.)
- Providing training for tutors in proficiency and standards
- Connecting with other schools where our languages are being taught, both in the U.S. and abroad
- Obtaining funding for materials, as well as offering FLS classrooms as a great place to pilot

new learning resources for less commonly taught languages

- Hosting visits to the classroom (if supported by the district)
- Bringing this model to light for more schools through presentations and sharing

FILL: Opportunities and Challenges

The FILL approach addresses a range of issues focusing on the importance of giving students a voice in how they want to learn language in school (e.g., they want a strong focus on speaking skills, more interactive activities, and resources beyond the

classroom to meet their needs). One obvious challenge to the approach evident in all schools is how to provide students with enough access to fluent language speakers for communication practice on a regular basis, though we have seen this challenge wane as technology opens a range of non-traditional ways to access those connections.

As this discussion underscores, FILL is a new approach that presents a variety of challenges, but these are balanced by the opportunities it offers. Though by no means an exhaustive list, here are a few for consideration in Table 1

Table 1: Challenges and Opportunities for Facilitated Interdependent Language Learning

Challenges	Opportunities
One teacher has to manage multiple languages in one class.	Students get to pick languages that are of greatest interest to them.
Current teacher certification rules are not designed to “allow” this model of learning.	New rules could be defined where teachers who have credentials for at least one language can be allowed to facilitate other languages as well.
Traditional curriculum/learning materials “adoption” processes in districts or states would be impossible to implement.	If states and districts collaborated, a central repository of vetted courses and learning resources could be created that could be shared across the country.
Students could feel isolated from the language if they are the only one learning it in their class.	Students can connect with learners and native/heritage speakers of the language via technology.
Teachers facilitating these classes might be unsure of how to set goals (or learning targets) for autonomous learners.	The NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements (2017) and NCSSFL’s LinguaGrow™ (2020) could help guide goal setting, regardless of the language.
Students may not be used to taking responsibility for their learning.	Teachers meet student needs in this area on an individual basis, helping them learn how to set personal learning goals that are appropriate and manageable for them. (There is no one-size-fits-all curriculum.) The students gain skills in a FILL classroom that they can use throughout their education.



Implications and Conclusions

The challenges to developing proficiency in languages of the world are not new. For decades, there has been a shortage of certified teachers even for languages commonly taught in K-12 schools in the United States. The teacher shortage has been impervious to a variety of proposed solutions, despite the dedicated work of individual language teachers and professional organizations.

In addition, recent research into “deeper learning” and how the brain actually learns has opened up discussions about the importance of student voice and choice, and about the efficacy of personal goal setting (Moeller, Theiler & Wu, 2012). As a result, we are seeing a transition from a focus on teaching to a focus on learning.

FILL is a promising approach that addresses both the need for changes in language instruction and the

student desire for more autonomy. FILL is an emerging opportunity for schools that (1) are experiencing language teacher shortages, (2) have a mismatch between the languages students want to study and the language expertise of the teachers, (3) have an interest in teaching a wider range of languages and languages for special purposes, and (4) have students who are interested in becoming autonomous learners.

The examples of FILL shared by Hugo Diaz-Rodil in California and Claudine Clark and Laura Koebel in Wisconsin are not intended to be “models” prescribing how to implement a FILL program. Rather, they are approaches developed by innovative teachers who wish to address challenges they face in offering languages at their schools. The authors hope that these examples will inspire other language teachers to think more expansively about their role in the classroom and their role as facilitators of learning to advocate for all languages and all students. The

strategies used by these teachers can be adapted and expanded in a variety of ways by teachers to address students' specific language learning needs as well as their local department, school, and district considerations. FILL also offers administrators an alternative to cancelling language programs when they can't hire part-time teachers or schedule students into a limited number of classes.

The student experiences shared here show the long-term value of an approach like Facilitated Interdependent Language Learning (FILL). Students learn how to set goals and start on their path to becoming lifelong learners. Using a new set of creative and adaptive tools, students go beyond figuring out how to respond to instruction in the short term, and instead, increasingly exhibit the qualities of an autonomous learner.

References

ACTFL. (2022). *Educators Rising 2.0*.

<https://www.actfl.org/advocacy/educators-rising>

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. (2017). *NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements*.

<https://www.actfl.org/resources/ncssfl-actfl-can-do-statements>

Lynch, E. (2021, February). Foreign language classes suffer from lack of focus and real-world connection. *Berkeley High Jacket*.
<https://berkeleyhighjacket.com/2021/features/foreign-language-classes-suffer-from-lack-of-focus-and-real-world-connection/>

Moeller, A. J., Theiler, J. M., & Wu, C. (2012).

Goal setting and student achievement: A longitudinal study. *The Modern Language Journal*, 96(2), 153-169.

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/toc/15404781/2012/96/2>

National Council of State Supervisors for Languages. (2020). *LinguaGrow™*.

<https://ncssfl.org/linguagrow-linguafolio/>

NCSSFL Neural Network Group. (2021a).

Conversation with Hugo Díaz-Rodil about a facilitated interdependent language learning program in a California charter school. October 21, 2021. <https://youtu.be/3ywQN0IitdY>

NCSSFL Neural Network Group. (2021b). A

“facilitated conversation” about autonomous language learning. National Council of State Supervisors for Languages (Virtual) Annual Meeting, November 18, 2021.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M9HR0wkSVLw>

Robinson, J. P., Rivers, W. P., & Brecht, R. D.

(2006). Speaking foreign languages in the United States: Correlates, trends, and possible consequences. *The Modern Language Journal*, 90(4), 457-472. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.2006.00462.x>

Snow, C. (2017, August). The true failure of foreign language instruction. *The Conversation*.

<https://theconversation.com/the-true-failure-of-foreign-language-instruction-80352>

Welch, T., & Rhodes, N. (2021). Student voices: High schoolers' insights into world language learning. Center for Applied Linguistics. <https://cal.org/resource-center/publications-products/student-voices-high-schoolers-insights-into-world-language-learning>

About the Authors

Michele Anciaux Aoki, Ph.D., advocacy chair for the National Council of State Supervisors for Languages, is a former world languages program supervisor for the Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and international education administrator for Seattle Public Schools, and a lifelong advocate for less commonly taught languages.

Nancy C. Rhodes, CAL senior fellow, served as CAL's director of foreign/world language education for 18 years and currently works to develop teacher capacity to improve student language proficiency and academic performance.

Tom Welch, educational consultant, is a former French teacher, high school principal, and state foreign language supervisor at the Kentucky Department of Education. He currently advocates for increased opportunities for learning unbound by traditional limits of time or place.

Special Acknowledgement

Authored by members of the National Council of State Supervisors for Languages (NCSSFL) Neural Network Group (Michele Anciaux Aoki, Nancy C.

Rhodes, and Tom Welch) based on interviews with teachers and students from 2020 to 2022.

About CAL

The Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) is a nonprofit organization founded in 1959. Headquartered in Washington, DC, CAL has earned an international reputation for its contributions to the fields of bilingual and dual-language education, English as a second language, world languages education, language policy, assessment, immigrant and refugee integration, literacy, dialect studies, and the education of linguistically and culturally diverse adults and children. CAL's mission is to promote language learning and cultural understanding by serving as a trusted resource for research, services, and policy analysis. Through its work, CAL seeks solutions to issues involving language and culture as they relate to access and equity in education and society around the globe.

Suggested Citation

Aoki, Michele Anciaux; Rhodes, Nancy C.; Welch, Tom. (2022). Facilitated interdependent language learning (FILL) in action: increasing student autonomy. Center for Applied Linguistics.

© 2022, Center for Applied Linguistics. All rights reserved.

Trademarks and brand names used for software applications and other products referred to in this article are the property of their respective registered and/or common law owners.



© 2022, Center for Applied Linguistics.
All rights reserved.