

Episode 7: Kathleen Stein-Smith on Language Learning and Global Citizenship

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>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: You're listening to Making Learning Universal, conversations about engaging diverse perspectives, collaboration, and complex problem-solving in Higher Education on campus, online, in local communities, and abroad. I'm your host Stephanie Doscher, Director of Global Learning Initiatives at Florida International University and co-author of "Making Global Learning Universal: Promoting Inclusion and Success for All."

>> KATHLEEN STEIN-SMITH: I don't know if we are ever really as mono lingual as we like to think, but I will say geography at a certain point, especially if it's in the 20th Century, the first half of the 20th Century, people couldn't travel as they can today, we didn't have the telecommunications that we have today, so maybe there was that illusion of living in sort of an English-only world. I kind of think we've always been in an English-plus world. Maybe though just our public conversation has not been aware of it our chosen to address that.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: That was Kathleen Stein-Smith, Associate University Librarian and Director of Public services at Fairleigh Dickinson University. Kathleen is a passionate language advocate and educator. And she possesses expert knowledge on the U.S. foreign language deficit and the rule of multilingualism in global citizenship. I found our talk inspirational and highly informative. It is densely packed with practical ideas faculty and Administrators across the instruction can use to promote language learning for all. Be sure to check out the show notes for links to the organizations, initiatives, and research reports Kathleen talks about in this episode.

>> Today I would really like to start with my most burning question, Kathy, which is, your work in the field of language acquisition, language learning, global competency, how does that intersect with your work as a librarian at your institution? Could you kind of make the connection between those two things?

>> KATHLEEN STEIN-SMITH: Oh, you know, absolutely. I have worked as a librarian for decades in public libraries and in academic libraries and what I find is that I actually use language every day, sometimes several times a day, sometimes many times a day, in assisting students, sometimes even in delivering a library instruction session, in talking to parents, in talking with prospective students. And during my years in public library, I actually was very fortunate, early on in my career, I was the very first Bilingual Public Library Director in my home state. And while there are many bilingual positions nowadays, at that time, that was really, I think, a very forward-looking decision made by my little hometown who recognized the need for library services and programming to all age groups, to little ones, to high school students, to senior citizens, and also in Spanish. And so that position was being bilingual in English and Spanish. And so in that position, which I occupied for almost a decade, I actually was mandated and was able, was blessed, to be able to create not only Spanish language collection, but Spanish Language Services and outreach to my community. So that was probably, in terms of creativity, probably the most opportunity I've had as a librarian ever to truly be creative, to truly build something new and needed for my town, for my hometown, in terms of bilingual services. Now I have to admit after that, I went back to academic libraries, where I've been for decades and I'm also blessed because sometimes on my campus, which is really a typical campus, it is

like traveling the world. So on any given day I can meet students from very variety of country. I've had the opportunity certainly to speak Spanish to students, prospective students, parents, and also to work with the Spanish language programs at our University. Some that are traditional Spanish transition programs to English and others that are focusing on different groups of students, perhaps Generation 1.5. So I've had that opportunity, but, also, I've met students from around the Francophone world, you know, not only students from France, but we've had students from Vernay, we've had students from Coupe d'une voie, from Quebec, of course, and from many other countries where French is either the official language or a very prevalent language. So I've been able to actually not, within the library setting, actually teach the language, but actually use the language to help people, which is kind of what I go to work every day hoping to do.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: That's -- okay, so you're tying, if I hear you correctly, you're tying kind of the mission of your work which is to connect to people, connect people to information, and the utility of having that language facility to be able to fulfill your mission.

>> KATHLEEN STEIN-SMITH: Absolutely.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: And so that begs the question, which came first for you, the language learning because you have your own facility with French and Francophone culture and the librarianship, where you're a librarian and you said to yourself, I need to go and learn language? Or were you more into language and then found your way to librarianship?

>> KATHLEEN STEIN-SMITH: You know, I was, from really, from my earliest childhood, I was exposed to a multi-lingual environment where I was raised in the New York area. I was raised in a community that was primarily Spanish speaking. So my earliest experience was as a child in the park, I heard Spanish. I liked it later on in school, I studied it. I also had the opportunity at home, I had a grandma and a great aunt who spoke German to me. And I confess, I really today, I speak very, very little German, but nature takes its way as the older generation passes, but I did take German for a while in school as well. I went to [indiscernible], but I took an opportunity in school to take languages like Latin and Italian growing up. And as a college student, I was a -- I was a French major and I had sort of what they called in those days an informal Spanish minor.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: Mm-hmm.

>> KATHLEEN STEIN-SMITH: Major. And you know, we took family vacations up to see friends in Quebec, so I heard lots of French. And so I did have, at a certain point, decide to go to Quebec to continue my studies, based on, you know, my experience of Quebec, but also my desire to have a more, I guess, immersive French language experience. So I did an Honor's BA and a Master's Degree at the University of Laval in Quebec City and worked for a while as a high school/middle school French and Spanish teacher. And at a certain point, my home state was, I guess, redoing its curriculum and foreign languages were not a requirement and so I basically was thinking about something else to do for a living. I was still very young starting out. And librarianship seemed to combine the best of both. And there are -- it's a setting where you can work with students and help people, but also it's a setting where you have people speaking different languages and books written in all kinds of languages and I was blessed, while I was in library school, I went to Columbia, and I was blessed and I was able to do my internship in the branch of the New York Public Library that specialized in foreign language collection, providing

those collections to the branch system. It's different now, this was a long time ago, but they had 84 languages in their collection and the library staff there spoke all of them.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: Wow!

>> KATHLEEN STEIN-SMITH: They were an impressive group of people to work with. So a little while working in academic libraries early in my career and then really for the past 15-20 years. I've also taught language as an adjunct. And so I'll teach language in Culture classes, I've taught International film classes, I've taught, you know, classes about languages as they're used in diplomatic relation, and I've enjoyed doing that. And then at a certain point, my University where I'm employed had for many years as their mission to be a leader in global education. And my institution was actually, to the best of my knowledge, was the very first institution to sign on to the U.N. Academic Impact. And so I thought, you know, what a wonderful opportunity. I kind of had all these languages in my life, sort of coming and going at different times, what a wonderful opportunity to make my personal language life connect with the institutional mission, which I believe in whole -- believed in at that time and believe in still wholeheartedly. So I decided to do a Doctorate. And my field of research of my dissertation was actually Current Language Ethic Global Competency. And while I have to admit it was a very interesting trajectory, while there is so much data out there about how language can facilitate global communication, global understanding, can communicate effective problem-solving in transnational settings, nonetheless, there was not as much -- sometimes not as much connectivity between global educators and foreign language teachers as probably as I had hoped or imagined. And so part of my work going forward has been to strengthen those connections and sometimes create those relationships.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: I don't want to interrupt you, but I just want to tell --

>> KATHLEEN STEIN-SMITH: Yeah, yeah, please.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: -- how fantastic it is that you're sharing your trajectory and drawing these connections between your work as a librarian, as a conduit, as a connector of information, of disciplines, your work as a language learner and language teacher, and then, also, the global piece. My background, I don't know that I've shared this with you, but I was actually a children's book librarian for six years and our Office of Global Learning Initiatives was -- our first office was in the library. And I felt it was so natural. It turned out that we had a University librarian --

>> KATHLEEN STEIN-SMITH: Yes.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: -- as one of the first global learning faculty members creating a course called "How We Know What We Know." And he also became the Chair of our Global Learning Curriculum Oversight Committee. We have a Global Learning Librarian, and as turns out, a librarian at FIU also started our now annual Language Day. So the connections between global education, languages, and librarianship are -- it makes sense to me and it's natural, but I hope that our conversation today, we can kind of shed some light on this so that our listeners, whether they're faculty, whether they're students, whether they're staff can also think about, how can we connect our work to the work of librarians? And I also hope that this will draw even more librarians to realize how much their own growth, their development, their expertise can be brought to bear on a global learning initiative.

>> KATHLEEN STEIN-SMITH: You know, I did not know the piece of your background that you actually were a librarian -- are a librarian. I had read about your role with the Global Studies Center. But I think it is so important that we bear in mind that languages are used certainly for communication and to express ideas, and ideas are best understood, and this is no disrespect intended to translator. I'm a loyal member of the American Translators Association, but they are sometimes best conveyed and best understood and most meaningful when you do not have the avail of a translation. Where you can really appreciate the original. I also think that in a role as an educator and as a librarian, sometimes all too often research is restricted to those resources that happen to be in English. I mean, I know we have Google Translate and all kinds of translation softwares, but if you look at research that is promulgated in the Anglophone world, all too often the references are almost entirely in English. And there's a whole world of thought and research and creativity out there that if you don't think about the other languages that aren't on our radar, that you don't necessarily -- you shortchange yourself and you shortchange your research. I know one of them thing was a fascinating experience that I heard in working in a global learning setting was the MLOW Program, Many Languages One World. And that program was an initiative of the U.N. Academic Impact and ELF and ran for four years. And it basically, it was an essay contest where students from around the world, anybody, full-time College or University student, wrote an essay on things related to the role of multilingualism in the development of global citizenship values and the global citizen mindset. And we got some fascinating essays that came in from around the world. They were evaluated by people by the U.N. and other places and I typically became involved when, I guess, finalists were chosen. So there would be Skype interviews with finalists and that was just to ensure that, I guess, the finalists also had the oral and conversational skills that they would need in presenting at the U.N. in the target language. But it was so interesting, eventually I would get to the meet the students, all of them, and then work specifically with the French language winners. And we would work on a U.S. campus, we were all living together for about a week, on presentations that the students would then deliver at the U.N. And it would either be on the principles of the Academic Impact or on the U.N. sustainable development goals. It would be an assigned goal and the group would work together on that. And it was very interesting to observe, to be able to guide, but also to learn from these International students, wonderful students from everywhere, and how they approached research. And their approach to research was not necessarily targeting English language resources or maybe their mother tongue resources, they are a truly global approach. Now bear in mind these winners, I believe, if memory serves, the last time they did a survey, I think the average was they spoke 4.1 languages each.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: Wow!

>> KATHLEEN STEIN-SMITH: So they were truly multi-lingual students. But I think moving forward in a globalized world where we have to communicate and do research and solve problems like climate change and all the others, the complex issues, I think having that ability to communicate directly in a variety of languages and to also access the best in terms of information and research on any discipline, any subject area, is very important and something that possibly our American students, by and large, our U.S. students, miss out on. I know right now, my own thinking is really, how can we mobilize -- maybe mobilize isn't the right word, but how can we awaken and perhaps encourage the conversation on language? Possibly talking to people about global issues and global education. Also, possibly talking about people's own personal cultural identity. What is my personal history? Where did I come from? My parents? My grandparents? My family? And that could take you certainly to languages, either Native American languages, European languages, or languages from other parts of the world. And I

think that's also a way tying our heritage to the world might be a way to also awaken that interest among our students, their parents, their communities, you know, our society generally.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: Just now when you were articulating some of the advantages that you saw that the students who participated as finalists in the U.N. Project had, their ability to access information that others who did not have the same language facility, it was a gap for them. It was almost like part of the world was dark to them. The way you describe that really gets right at kind of our thinking about the need for language facility, multiple language facility brought to bear on solving and analyzing complex problems. So we define global learning as a process that involves diverse people, collaboratively, analyzing and addressing complex problems that transcend borders. And so language facility is needed not just to engage in that collaborative process to be able to communicate and exchange information, but also to access information that can be brought to the table. What I just heard you saying because that begs the question of, do individuals need multiple language facilities? Or do we need multiple individuals working on the same problem to have the facility amongst them? Or is it something kind of both? Like why do we need one individual -- this is a genuine question that I have -- why do we need one individual to have access to multiple languages within themselves versus gathering many people around the table who speak different languages and are able to bring what they know to the table and use things like Google Translate or translators? What are the advantages for a person for themselves not to be monolingual?

>> KATHLEEN STEIN-SMITH: You know, that's a great question. It's something I think about a lot. And, actually, so have a lot of other people. I mean, personally, I just think life is much more interesting and it's a lot more fun because you can have good times, you can appreciate music, I can get out there and you can read poetry, you can participate in conversations that may not be in your mother tongue, but I'm just one person. But there's really a whole literature out there about the benefits of language. And certainly foreign language educators and others have talked about this. Psychologists have done their work. Neuroscientists have done this work. And, I mean, if you want to talk about the benefits to the individual of being bilingual or multi-lingual, whichever term you prefer, there are certainly personal benefits, cognitive benefits. Bilingualism -- the use of more than one language, I won't say bilingualism, but regular use of more than one language has been shown to stave off dementia. There's literature that links multilingualism with creativity, with creative problem-solving, with rational decision-making, with tolerance, for ambiguity, comfort rather than fear in unfamiliar situations. I mean, and the benefits go on and on. And they come from a variety of disciplines, all of this research. It's neuroscientists, it's language educators, it could be people in the world of diplomacy and International affairs. So, I mean, the benefits are there. The one thing that I observed -- I observe it among the students on my campus, but I also observe it in the among the MLOW winners, is that a conversation might start between maybe two students, young people, and then somebody else will come along and the language of the conversation shifts. It goes from language one to language two. And then maybe a few additional people come by and it will go into some language that might serve as a [indiscernible] for them. It could be English, it could be Spanish, it could be French, whatever. And then as the group evolves, you know, either students in the library or students walking on campus and/or students socializing, that ability to be fluid enables really a broader conversation. More ideas into the mix.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: What you're saying reminds me of an episode of "The Durrells in Corfu," [laughter] which is on PBS.

>> KATHLEEN STEIN-SMITH: Uh-oh.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: And I was watching this past Sunday and the daughter of the family is traveling by train from England back to Greece. And she enters into the train car and then there are already in the car, I think, four or five different people. So she says hello to the person sitting next to her. And he answers back hello, but in Italian. And she looks around the car and she is making this judgment based on people's appearances, based on the way they're dressed, but she proceeds to say hello to each of the different people in the car using a different language. German, Greek, and Spanish. And then she makes the comment, oh, how very European.

>> KATHLEEN STEIN-SMITH: [Laughter]

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: She has a big smile on her face, right? The fact that she's in this car with all of these people and she has a basic facility to at least be able to say hello to everyone. And this is taking me also back to your own projectory -- or trajectory, you said that one of the things that had an impact on you was growing up in New York and your ears were comfortable, your ears were used to hearing lots of different languages. In Miami, that's also similar. LA, maybe Boston, maybe there are other small towns increasingly around the U.S. where that's the case, but there's still a lot of the U.S. where people are simply not used to hearing in their ears other languages. I wonder if you have any comments about that. Like, how we can kind of close the gap in places where people's ears just aren't used to hearing different sounds?

>> KATHLEEN STEIN-SMITH: You know, I think you really bring up an extremely important point and, you know, I think for a big part of our history that -- that distance from places where other languages were spoken played an important role. But you do have to think about it. If you look at the history of our country, bilingual education and multilingualism, it's not as new of concept as we think. If we go back to the 19th Century, for example, there were bilingual schools out in the Midwest. They were schools that functioned in German and other languages. And so I think sometimes we oversimplify, we sort of look maybe at a version of America that we have that might be a snapshot. And, also, that might be a version of America that we would taught. Children growing up in the United States, traditionally when you learned about American history, we typically didn't learn about it through the lens of our past as a British colony. And our de facto official language, although not an official-official language of English. And I'm not sure that that ever really -- the fact that you've never heard other languages or you don't frequently hear other languages, I'm not -- number one, I'm not sure that is actually has true of representation of the U.S. as we might think it is. I think there have been other languages here for a long time. Much of our south, southwest, for, I guess, 400 years, there certainly has been a strong presence of Spanish. In much of New England, Louisiana, the Mississippi Valley there were the strong presence of French. And then more recently in the 19th Century, certainly what sometimes I now hear referred to as the German Belt in this country. Number one, I don't know that we were every really as monolingual as we like to think, but I will say geography, at a certain point, especially I think in the 20th Century, the first half of the 20th Century, people couldn't travel as they can today. We didn't have the telecommunications that we have today, so maybe there was that illusion of living in sort of an English-only world. I kind of think we've always been in an English-plus world. Maybe though just our public conversation has not been aware of it or chosen to address that.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: Well, I was wondering, like, because I know that you are very concerned with closing this language gap. Is that something that you think is really needed in

terms of our public conversation? Whether that public conversation is the public conversation of the classroom, of the University, of a small community, we may not have control over the national conversation, but to the extent that we have control over our local conversation or we can contribute to or influence our local conversation, would you say that kind of public advocacy for multilingualism, inviting other linguistic traditions into that public conversation, is that part of what we need to do close this gap?

>> KATHLEEN STEIN-SMITH: I absolutely believe that. Foreign language educators have done a wonderful job for as far back as I've read, the past 50-60 years. Foreign language educators and their professional associations have done a wonderful job. They are dedicated professionals. The organizations are wonderful advocates at the national, the state, the local level. There's a national campaign right now launched by ACTFL, which is called Lead with Languages, they've done really a great job, but I do think we as foreign language educators, that we need the help of the broader society. We need partners. We need collaborators. We need potential allies. And I think probably a core group that I'm not sure that as educators we have spoken to enough are parents and communities. There's nobody who loves their child more than the parent. And languages, language learning, cultural learning, there's no disadvantage for a child in learning another language or more than one language from the earliest grade level. There is nothing really that's been scientifically demonstrated that it's only beneficial to the child. I think when parents understand that, they, at the local level, can begin to be very powerful advocates for their children. Their advocacy is based in love and there's nothing more powerful than that. Now all parents are aware of the fact that knowing one or more additional language is beneficial in so many ways. So I think reaching out to parents, communities, where other languages may be spoken or where Anglophone parents might be desirous of their child having an additional advantage. There's even research that will show that bilingualism especially benefits our lowest income children. And there have been several studies done on that. So I think bilingualism is good for the heritage language learner, the globally-minded, internationally-minded parent, but also for the parent, which is really all parents, who want their child to have a better life than they have. And I think what you said about starting at the local level is very, very important. We can all do that. We can all be active in our community. We can organize an International fair. We can organize a language table at our library. We can work through our organizations to bring other languages into our conversation. At the same time though, we do have to be involved in the political conversation and, you know, sadly, there's the old saying, if you're not at the table, you're on the table. And that's a reality that I think all -- I mean, global educators find, language educators, I mean, everybody generally, you have to be part of that conversation. And I think all -- you know, so many of our state associations have Advocacy Committees and Public Advocacy Committees. I've heard dedicated educators talk about postcard campaigns, letters to elected officials, and all of that is needed. And, also, I think we have to get behind our national campaign. We do -- there is ACTFL that represents foreign language educators nationally. There is also [indiscernible] CRN class that is actually a lobbying organization, also in Washington, that represents both language educators and also other language enterprise stakeholders, including Language Services companies, for example. And I think we do have to act at all levels. The problem is time.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: Right.

>> KATHLEEN STEIN-SMITH: Your typical foreign language teacher teaches all day, meets with students, meets with parents, has extracurricular activity, has only 24 hours in the day, and I think that is where organizations can help. For example, in the AATF we have the commission

on advocacy. It's a great group of people. And maybe we're at the point in our careers that we have a little bit of time that we can devote to getting the word out, providing information, writing letters, that maybe the busy classroom teacher doesn't have and cannot do. But everyone can do something. And, you know, you can attend a meeting. You could start a Facebook page or blog. You can -- if you are so inclined, you can certainly become a change agent. You can run for your local School Board at that local level.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: Are you aware of any student advocacy efforts? Because so far we've been talking a lot about, you know, Administrators, Government, Non-Government, yeah, but to what extent are students advocating or have they been, you know, supported to advocate for themselves?

>> KATHLEEN STEIN-SMITH: You know, I often read in my own -- just my own local area about recent school graduates, recent high school graduates, running for local Board of Education. Now, for example, that's certainly a form of public advocacy. I know, for example, in Higher Education institutions, there are Student Government organizations, there are all kinds of student groups who certainly can advocate. I think students, really parents and students, are your most powerful advocates. The sense that they are really -- parents you speaking out of love for their child, but the student and it's so important to listen to students. They will often tell you what you need if only you will listen.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: Right, right.

>> KATHLEEN STEIN-SMITH: And I do think that students have the potential to become powerful advocates for languages. I'm sure there are cases where languages, students have requested it. Student also vote with their feet. In a new language is offered and students register for it, that language is going to stay on that campus.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: I'm thinking about faculty who are listening to this podcast, a lot of our listeners are classroom teachers, they're working in disciplines, they're not teaching languages, but can you recommend anyways that a faculty member in almost any discipline might be able to bring languages, elevate the issue in their own courses?

>> KATHLEEN STEIN-SMITH: Oh, you know, absolutely. There's just so much that a faculty member can do. I mean, there are, I mean, very, you know, obvious easy things to do, simple things to do. Organizing a trip, organizing internships abroad for students. But, also, there are things that you can do that don't involve travel because not every student has the means to travel. You could -- it's so easy for faculty members to talk to each other, to talk to colleagues in another discipline, to perhaps and, you know, there's the flexible, let's just say you are teaching a three-credit class in Health Care Administration. Okay, you could add an additional credit, for example, for students who engage in discussion, for example, of reading in one or more target languages. About, for example, I don't know, the role of French in global healthcare throughout the Francophone niche. You could be teaching a Marketing class or a Business Management class and you could bring in German or Spanish or Chinese. You could partner with a Language Professor and perhaps have an additional for credit module where students will read and discuss and do research using a different language that has relevance to the discipline. Obvious partners, I'm thinking of History and Art, but it works across the disciplines. Healthcare, engineering it can work, that is certainly something that faculty members can do. They can talk together and work out the specifics of a model that interests them. I know there's an interesting organization called CLAC, Cultures and Languages Across the Curriculum. They talk about --

they have wonderful things going on. You can encourage double majors. For example, a student that may arrive at the College or University level perhaps very strong in a foreign language that they either speak or they studied in high school, but want to major in another field, double majors. Actually, according to the MLA, foreign languages are the single most popular double major out there. There are also joint programs and they can be five-year programs, perhaps leading to a Master's Degree in International Relations, but also with a foreign language major or a world language major, whichever term you prefer. There are a lot of things that faculty can do in their role as individuals talking to each other and developing interdisciplinary collaborations. There are, also, these other types of things that faculty can do in their role in University and College governance. And that leads me to this, and I know I never like to really talk about languages in any type of coercive way because it truly is a gift to have another language or other languages in your life, but nonetheless, all faculty members can certainly talk about foreign language requirements. Now in the most recent MLA report on the requirement that I've seen, about half of Colleges and Universities have a foreign language requirement. According to -- there's an ACTA survey, a smaller sample size, that actually put that at about 12%. So faculty who want to strengthen languages on their campuses can certainly also strengthen and enforce existing foreign language requirements.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: So --

>> KATHLEEN STEIN-SMITH: Now in the report that -- just if I may finish.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: No, go right ahead.

>> KATHLEEN STEIN-SMITH: The report that recently came out from the MLA, they did their enrollment survey, which typically, I guess, come out about every three years, and there was a report, a preliminary report was issued, I think it was in 2016, and noted some decline in the languages. And the final report, the full report, was issued in the middle of this year, and actually that report found that we were really in the midst of a decline over all, but there were programs that were really being very successful. And, now this part, this is my opinion, this is not the MLA, but in my thinking, it was programs that followed the recommendations of the LMA report. The 2007 report, Foreign Languages and Higher Education. The two recommendations from that report were to stress translanguingual and transcultural competence. And the other recommendation that I cite is to offer multiple pathways to the major. Now programs that have done this, offer multiple pathways, whether through double majors, interdisciplinary collaborations, five-year Master's programs, whatever it might be, this tended to be among the more successful. Now this, as I said, this is my impression from the reading of the report and my following of the news of what is going on.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: That was really an important point because curriculum design, the multiple pathways in, we can have an upselling or even a, you know, a majority of our faculty may really want, in terms of governance, to make a requirement, but it's -- it can be a design issue, right? So we need multiple ways in, but we also have to think about the way out for students in terms of graduation requirements. So in our state and -- which is Florida, and I know in a number of other states, we have these performance funding frameworks under which our institutions are operating. And our institution, as well as all of the other State Universities in Florida, are -- it's really incumbent upon us to get students in and out as soon as we can. And for that reason, there's been a negative pressure where there's been a pressure to get rid of language requirements. It slows people down, especially those students who are in the STEM disciplines. And, you know, I'm curious when you were talking about it needing to be a really a

multi-party advocacy effort, I'm curious if anyone is advocating to the state legislature this, perhaps, unintended consequence that will have negative blowback on our State's economy. I mean, we are at a global crossroads. We need people to have their degrees, but we also need these hard skills of language and cultural competence in order to create political, social, and economic relationships with the countries with which we trade and do business.

>> KATHLEEN STEIN-SMITH: You know, I think you've really -- I wish I could have expressed that point as well as you did. I think that's really very valid. And there are actually two, I think, questions. The first question is the relationship of foreign language skills to the workplace. And there's a lot of information out there. There are two wonderful reports. There's a report Not Lost in Translation that was published by the New American Economy in 2017, found a demand for foreign languages had doubled in the five-year period between 2010 and 2015. And then the ACTFL report that was published just, I guess it was May or June, June, I think, of 2019, making Language Our Business, pointing out to the need for languages. And it's not just one language and it's not just one career area. Both of these reports find it's many languages and it's all kinds of jobs and in all parts of the country. You know, you can look at statistics on the 11 million or so U.S. jobs that depend on foreign exports. You can look at the over half a million Americans who work in the U.S. for multi International corporations. There are wonderful figures out there. And I know I have a colleague on the AATF Commission on Advocacy, Dr. Bob Peckham. He is really a master at finding those wonderful statistics and diving deep into even very, very local data. So, yes, I think that is really an argument that can be made. And I think it is being made. You know, part of what I do as a language advocate, I go to as many gatherings of foreign language educators as I can. Because I like to talk to people in different parts of the country and hear what their concerns are and also hear what their ideas are, but the concerns are different in different states. As you say, there are different state legislatures and legislative frameworks. And what I find is -- what I'm hearing is that really in quite a few states, the State Professional Language Associations, they are going to their state capitals and they are making their case. And I think that's wonderful. Personally, I sometimes also just, me being me, I like to take a long-term viewpoint and I think while we have to do all of these things now, today, and all of us. Advocacy is a broad umbrella and there's room for every voice. There's room for every interest, every subject interest, every specific language, or grade level interest, but I think we have to look to the future. And I think a way of addressing this need to have students complete college in a certain number of semesters and be ready for the career market, the workplace, I think is this whole idea of an early start to final education. You know, we have talked about it, foreign language educators call it SLES. Foreign language in the elementary school and that's traditional, learning a language as a subject, but we also talk about it immersion. We talk about dual language immersion. We talk about really K-12 or pre-K-12. And I think looking to the future how great it would be if as many students as were interested, if all of our students had the opportunity to start studying one or more languages when they're at an early age, that means they have certainly more years in school to develop proficiency and fluency. They also, they have certain ways and abilities to learn a language that we don't have as we grow older, although we can always learn another language. But I think that idea of giving children the opportunity, all children, in public schools, not just opportunities for certain select groups of children, I think is important because then if you look down the road, 12 years later, you're going to have students entering college who are going to have proficiency, whether you would use the European or ACTFL terms to describe proficiency, intermediate, high, whatever that might be, or have fluency, then actually at the college level, imagine talking to faculty, the possibilities then increase exponentially because the students are arriving at about age 18 with proficiency and fluency and they can use that language to do things. To join volunteer programs, to help some place in the world. I mean, many students come to me, they want to do things, go places,

and change the world and help the world, but they don't really have the language skills to do it. And while you can learn a language beginning in college, you can do it successfully, it's going to take a little bit longer. You have other pressures. You know, there's always the credit load, the course load, the major courses, time to graduation, time to the workplace, but if you have that language skill by the time you arrived on the college campus, what courses or all the things that could be offered and could be done, the collaborations and partnerships and the joint programs, it would really be, you know, radically different from what it is today. So I think, also, educators at all levels, you know, even those who are in the Colleges and Universities should actually be worrying and advocating for the youngsters who right now are in preschool because that is the future and that opens the door to amazing possibilities.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: This by way of closing because possibilities is a perfect way for us to close our conversations today, so on that note of the possibility for the future, Kathy, can you recommend any resources, any experiences, any books, films, artworks, songs, anything that you can imagine that could help spark that passion for other languages, for learning other languages, for hearing other languages, for teaching them? Anything that has been specifically or particularly transformative for you that you might recommend to others?

>> KATHLEEN STEIN-SMITH: You know, absolutely. And I think that is the whole key to the question and I'm so glad you asked it. You know, everybody's different. We all have different interests, we all have different goals, and one thing I often hear from people who -- students and other people who travel, they'll often say, oh, I went to whatever destination X and I was so bored. And I'm thinking, how could you be bored? All right? And then they go on and they say, oh, well, we spent the whole time going to museums. Or conversely, we spent the whole time at the beach. Or we spent the whole time touring. And the point of it all is that every language and every culture has everything for everybody. Languages and cultures are the quintessential examples of interdisciplinarity. They are the life. But I always think students at the end of a class and there's an interesting author, his name is Livermore, and he has a concept called cultural intelligence. And it's got four quadrants. And the second quadrant is knowledge. Okay? And then quadrants three and four really concern execution and strategy. And what I'll often say to them at the end of the course is, you know, we've had our 15 weeks together and now we're not going to be seeing each other anymore. You can always come and see me, I'll be on campus, but we're not going to be meeting to talk about these interesting issues. So what can you do? It's pointless if you just came to class for 15 weeks and then that's it. The thing is you want to continue learning about other languages and other cultures. And, of course, you can travel, you can study abroad, you can look for a job abroad or a volunteer opportunity, you can join the Peace Corps, these are all wonderful ways to do that, but what if that's not necessarily something that you can do right now? Well, you can make other languages and other cultures part of your daily life. It is really so easy. You know, you can get up in the morning and listen to a news report in another language or about another part of the world. You know, there's lots of news, International news, even if you don't have a language, there's lots of International news that's available in English. If you have another language, even better. You can certainly learn another language. You can -- there are ways to learn languages online. You do it basically at your time. There are apps. There are local language tables, local meet-up groups to learn languages if the language learning is what's interesting to the person. And then, honestly, you can certainly read. You can read about whatever it is about another culture that interests you. Getting back to the people who go touring, I'll often find that the person who spent the whole time on the beach never goes to the beach when they're at home. They go to museums, they go to galleries, they go to lectures, but they didn't do that when they went to their tourist destination.

The person who loves sports, for example, why not if you're traveling or if you're sitting at home you can see all of these things on broadcast and online media, follow the sports in another country. Follow the food scene. Follow the art scene. I attended a great session last week at a state conference about learning a language through art. And art was the broad definition, it included graffiti. You know, whatever it is that you personally are interested in, that exists in other cultures.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: Kathy, I love that!

>> KATHLEEN STEIN-SMITH: I think that's the way to start.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: I love that! I love how you --

>> KATHLEEN STEIN-SMITH: Thank you.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: -- just made that connection. It's we're learning about others, but we don't necessarily have to learn about other things. We can start with the things we care about and simply explore those things in other cultures, in other languages. That the way in to others is through ourselves. [Laughter]

>> KATHLEEN STEIN-SMITH: And college professors can even design travel study on a variety of different themes.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: I love that! Yeah, why not have a study abroad that just -- that has to do with just sports, has to do with fashion, whatever it is --

>> KATHLEEN STEIN-SMITH: Politics, whatever it is that a particular person or group is interested in. There's a world -- I think they're wonderful pathways for everybody into cultural awareness.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: Fantastic! I think that's a terrific way to -- a terrific note to leave our listeners with, that the way to others is kind of through ourselves. I so appreciate you spending some time talking with me today, Kathy, and answering some of my, maybe they sound silly questions.

>> KATHLEEN STEIN-SMITH: Not at all.

>> STEPHANIE DOSCHER: But super important to me. I really appreciate it. Thank you.

>> KATHLEEN STEIN-SMITH: Thank you so much, Stephanie, and you know, keep up the good work.

[Music]

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