Brazil’s Rise and Portuguese as a Strategic Foreign Language: Preparing Tomorrow’s Military Leaders

Dieter A. Waldvogel  
*United States Air Force Academy*

Ismênia Sales de Souza  
*United States Air Force Academy*

RESPONSES

Portuguese as a World Language for Future Army Officers

Rebecca L. Jones-Kellogg  
*United States Military Academy at West Point*

Sarah Martin  
*United States Military Academy at West Point*

Student Motivation in Learning Portuguese

Orlando Kelm  
*University of Texas*

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Brazil’s Rise and Portuguese as a Strategic Foreign Language: Preparing Tomorrow’s Military Leaders

Dieter A. Waldvogel
United States Air Force Academy

Ismênia Sales de Souza
United States Air Force Academy

Abstract: Brazil’s meteoric rise as Latin America’s economic superpower has prompted the United States government to reassess its strategic vision of South America and its relationship with Brazil. The next generation of US economic, business, political, and military leaders will likely be faced with a South American landscape heavily dominated by Brazil. The US Department of Defense (DoD) in particular has recognized the strategic importance of Brazil and the critical need for Portuguese language and culture training for military leaders involved in DoD missions in South America. This paper describes the reasons for adding Portuguese as one of the Air Force Academy’s eight strategic foreign languages and the future of Portuguese FL education for tomorrow’s military leaders.

Keywords: Air Force Academy, Brazil/Brasil, foreign policy/política estrangeira, military/militares, Portuguese/português

Portuguese is the seventh most important foreign language (FL) for English-speakers to learn, this according to a recent report by the British Council on International Education and Cultural Opportunities (Tinsley 2013) which reached this conclusion after considering a number of economic, geopolitical, and cultural factors. Likewise, Forbes magazine in 2014 ranked Portuguese as the sixth most important language for the future of international business (Morrison 2014). Moreover, the National Security Education Program (2015), a federal initiative designed to build a broader and more qualified pool of US federal employees with foreign language and international skills, lists Portuguese as one of the languages critical to our national security.

The Department of Foreign Languages (DFF) at the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA) in Colorado Springs added Portuguese to its FL curricula in 2007 and the program has been growing steadily ever since. Since its inception, the Portuguese FL program at USAFA has provided language education and acculturation training to over 1,200 young Air Force officers—shaping military leaders with a more global perspective and an awareness of the increasing importance of Portuguese as a FL in the United States and in the DoD in particular.

So why Portuguese? Over the past 20 years, while the economies of most Latin American countries have been shrinking, and in some cases going into recession, Brazil’s economy has tripled in size, earning Brazil the title of Latin America’s economic superpower by many foreign policy experts and business leaders. With a 2016 gross domestic product of over $1.7 trillion dollars, Brazil is currently the ninth largest economy in the world and is the United States’ ninth largest trading partner (Gray 2017). Brazil also occupies the world’s fifth largest landmass holding
twelve percent of the world's fresh water supply, and is home to the fifth largest population in the world.

Between 2000 and 2014, Brazil's conservative market-oriented macroeconomic policies helped grow its economy by 300 percent, from $657 billion in 2000 to over $2 trillion in 2014. Between 2014 and 2016, however, Brazil's hard monetary policies by Dilma Rousseff's administration caused the GDP to drop by 28% to $1.7 trillion in 2016. Despite this three year economic recession, the latest economic figures show an economy that bottomed out by the third quarter of 2016 and is currently showing signs of a slow recovery (Nassif 2017). According to government officials, Brazil's economy grew by 1% in the first three months of 2017, putting an end to the country's longest recession in history. In addition, a 2017 report by PricewaterhouseCoopers projects that by 2030, Brazil will still have the eight largest economy in the world—just behind Germany and ahead of Mexico—with a $4.4 trillion GDP.

From 2000 to 2015, Brazil's economy greatly benefited from trade agreements with China, Russia, India, its Latin American neighbors, and the African Union. Brazil's trade agreements with African nations in 2011, for example, were worth an estimated $20.6 billion (Bodman and Wolfensohn 2011) second only to China. Furthermore, between 2000 and 2009, Brazilian trade with other Latin American partner nations grew by over 253 percent. To put it in perspective, investments made in Mexico, the Caribbean, Central, and South America by Brazil's National Development Bank (BNDES) in 2010 reached $100 billion, exceeding investments made by both the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank combined (Bodman and Wolfensohn 2011).

Brazil's dramatic rise as a world economic power has earned them a seat among the G20, a forum with representatives from the world's top 20 economies. As a result, slowly but gradually, Brazil has been increasing its defense spending, a fact that has not gone unnoticed by the United States and other world powers. Although Brazil's defense spending has been historically low, perceived regional threats to its national security and natural resources in the Amazon, along with the responsibilities associated with hosting the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympic Games, swayed former President Rousseff's administration to increase military spending in recent years. As of 2016, Brazil had the thirteenth highest rate of defense spending in the world in terms of dollars spent ($23.7 B), just behind Australia. In fact, Brazil's defense budget currently accounts for over half of Latin America's total defense expenditures (Trinkunas 2014). Brazil has been able to take advantage of this newfound economic and military clout to campaign for a permanent seat at the United Nations Security Council and has taken a greater role in United Nations peacekeeping military operations, in Haiti primarily, where Brazil has led peacekeeping operations since 2004 (Trinkunas 2014). Despite the fact that for decades Brazil has had a military presence in the Amazon, in recent years Brazil has increased its military operations and training in this region, and has been conducting jungle warfare and defense training operations to protect its most precious commodity—the Amazon's minerals and vast supplies of fresh water. Many regional experts believe that Brazil feels threatened by other nations in the region who want to gain access to these natural resources. Some Brazilian military strategists believe that the United States poses such a threat; US officials, however, deny such claims (Romero 2014). This issue underscores the need for better communication and closer ties between our two governments.

The US federal government has taken notice of Brazil's current status as a major global broker. Former President Obama's administration acknowledged the need to renew bilateral relationships with Brazil. Thus, since 2012 the two nations have signed numerous agreements to work together on issues such as biofuels, defense, peacekeeping operations and nonproliferation, civil aviation and space, science and technology, educational exchanges, and food security (Bodman and Wolfensohn 2011). In 2012, President Obama and President Rousseff agreed to establish the US-Brazil Defense Cooperation Dialogue (DCD). According to the White House Office of the Press Secretary, "the DCD will facilitate strengthened cooperation between the US Department of Defense and Brazil's Ministry of Defense, and between our nations' militaries"
The DCD has resulted in a number of agreements between the two nations, including the US-Brazil Defense Cooperation Agreement, the General Security of Military Information Agreement, military exercises and exchanges, cooperation in Haiti, and humanitarian and disaster response operations. During a 2012 visit to Brazil’s Superior War College in Rio de Janeiro, then Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta called for closer military relations with Brazil and stated that “Our common interests are so great, and the possibilities that come from our cooperation are so tangible, that we must seize this opportunity to build a stronger defense partnership for the future” (2012). In 2015, former US Defense Secretary Ashton Carter and the Brazilian Defense Minister discussed the importance of expanding trade and defense technology cooperation and emphasized the opportunities for future joint development and production of defense technologies (DoD News 2015).

These new defense agreements and all future US-Brazil military cooperation, however, will require State Department and Defense Department officials, along with soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines, to have a high level of Portuguese language proficiency and regional and cultural expertise. Historically, the DoD has focused its language and acculturation training mainly on geopolitically and militarily strategic languages such as Russian, Arabic, Chinese, and more recently, Pashto. Portuguese, however, has never been of strategic significance, until now. DoD leaders have recognized the strategic importance of Brazil and the critical need for Portuguese language training for military leaders involved in defense, security, and peacekeeping operations in Latin America. Since 2002, the US and Brazilian armed forces have conducted a wide range of joint military operations and exercises requiring defense officials and military personnel with language skills, cultural understanding, and regional expertise to succeed in these operations. The US Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC) has been providing Portuguese language training to active duty and DoD civilian personnel from all branches of the US military for decades. It is apparent, however, that the demand for Portuguese speakers in the DoD will continue to outpace the supply. To address this growing need for military leaders with Portuguese language proficiency and culture awareness, in 2007 the US Air Force Academy added Portuguese to their FL curricula in order to train and educate our future military leaders in the language and culture of the second largest and fastest growing economy in the Western Hemisphere—Brazil. According to former US Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta,

Language, regional, and cultural skills . . . are critical to mission readiness in today’s dynamic global environment. Our forces must have the ability to effectively communicate with and understand the cultures of coalition forces, international partners, and local populations. (2011)

The mission of DFF at USAFA is to educate and train future Air Force leaders with these insights and skills needed to be effective military leaders in a global context. In 2007, USAFA added an eighth language—Portuguese—to its FL education curricula, and in 2015 the Academy welcomed its first exchange officer from the Brazilian Air Force as a Portuguese language and political science instructor. Currently, USAFA offers FL minors in eight languages: Spanish, French, German, Japanese, Russian, Arabic, Chinese, and of course, Portuguese. At its inception in 2007, the Portuguese program started with two Portuguese professors offering six sections of beginner level I Portuguese. Today, DFF’s Portuguese division consists of six instructors and professors, including the Brazilian exchange officer, offering twelve Portuguese language courses, from beginner level I to advanced special projects in level IV.

One factor that has contributed to the growth in the number of students interested in Portuguese as a FL at USAFA is the number of Spanish heritage speakers enrolled at the Academy. Research shows that there is an increasing demand for Portuguese from Spanish speakers in the United States. According to a survey study conducted in 2010, Portuguese language faculties from across the United States estimate that forty-five percent of Portuguese FL students are
Spanish speakers, compared to sixteen percent English-only speakers and eighteen percent Portuguese heritage speakers (Milleret 2014). An estimated ten percent of the 4,000+ cadets at USAFA are of Hispanic or Latino background and more and more of them each year show interest in learning Portuguese. For this reason, in 2008 USAFA started a Portuguese for Spanish Speakers course at the intermediate level and the demand for this course has been high. Between 2008 and 2016, DFF had 2,780 enrollees in Portuguese courses, of which 173 were enrolled in Portuguese for Spanish Speakers. Between 2008 and 2012, DFF had a total of 47 enrollments in Portuguese for Spanish Speakers—one section per semester. In the 2015–16 academic year alone, DFF had 44 students enrolled in the same course, an almost 200 percent increase.

Students (also known as cadets at USAFA) have the option of majoring in Foreign Area Studies (FAS), focusing their studies in a specific region of the world and minoring in a FL. The FAS major at USAFA consists of an interdisciplinary exploration of one of six geo-cultural regions of interest to the DoD: Africa, Europe, the Middle East, Asia, Slavic countries and Latin America. Students majoring in FAS with a focus in Latin America have the option of minoring in either Spanish or Portuguese. In order to receive a Portuguese minor, students must take a minimum of five courses (fifteen credit hours) at the intermediate, 200-level or above. Moreover, students must take a number of interdisciplinary courses in history, political science, economics, military strategic studies, and geospatial science—all with a focus in Latin America. The overall goal of the Academy’s FAS program is to produce well-rounded regional experts who understand the social, cultural, and geopolitical environment of each region within the larger global context in which these regions operate; these regional experts would have a moderate level of fluency in a specific FL and the cultural competency needed to be successful Air Force leaders in today’s global environment.

In addition to the academic work in the classroom, DFF and the International Programs Office at USAFA offer FAS majors and language minors the opportunity to enhance their language skills, cultural knowledge, and experience by traveling abroad through a number of different programs offered by the Academy: summer language immersions, a semester abroad, a semester exchange (with another foreign military academy), foreign military academy visits, and short-term cultural immersions. In the fall of 2017, USAFA and the Brazilian Air Force Academy started an annual cadet exchange program as part of a newly signed cadet exchange agreement between the two air forces. Portuguese learners at USAFA also have the opportunity to compete and be selected to spend a semester at the Pontifícia Universidade Católica in either São Paulo or Rio de Janeiro, or at the University of Porto in Portugal, where they enroll in pre-approved academic courses in the target language that satisfy the students’ academic major requirements at USAFA. Students also compete for one of the Academy’s Cadet Summer Language Immersion Programs (CSLIP) in Brazil or Portugal. During the month-long CSLIP, USAFA students study language courses at an accredited university or language school in either Brazil or Portugal. Students generally spend half of each day in the classroom learning new foreign language skills; the rest of the day they spend immersed in the culture and practicing the language. Each student on CSLIP is placed with host families in the country, and at the request of USAFA, these are usually families that do not speak English. USAFA’s short-term Cultural Immersion Program (CIP) is another opportunity for Portuguese students to spend time immersed in the language and culture of a Portuguese-speaking country. Through CIPs, Portuguese students and their faculty mentors work together to plan overseas travel from one to three weeks in duration. Students submit proposals that include a reading group or special topics course taught in the spring semester in which cadets study the culture or plan a project related to the country chosen for travel. This pre-travel preparation allows cadets to build on classroom knowledge during their time overseas. CIPs are generously supported by the George and Carol Olmsted Foundation, and more recently USAFA’s Class of ’81 Endowment (USAFA, 2015). Since 2007, the Academy has sent Portuguese language students on CSLIPs and CIPs to Brazilian cities such as Montes Claros (Minas Gerais), São Paulo (São Paulo), Recife (Pernambuco), Fernando de
Noronha (Pernambuco), Teresina (Piauí), and Rio de Janeiro (Rio de Janeiro), plus European cities such as Porto and Lisbon in Portugal. As far as Lusophone Africa, USAFA cadets have had the opportunity to travel to Mozambique, Cape Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Guinea-Bissau. Additionally, during Spring Break, many USAFA Portuguese students are also given the opportunity to visit the Brazilian Air Force Academy in Pirassununga, São Paulo, the largest Air Force Academy in Latin America. These visits offer USAFA students the opportunity to build lasting relationships with their peers in the Brazilian Air Force—relationships that will help build stronger ties between our two militaries. The travel abroad opportunities offered by USAFA help future Air Force leaders gain a broader perspective of the world in which we operate, a perspective that greatly enhances students' academic and personal growth, as well as their linguistic and cultural proficiency.

Portuguese language students at USAFA also have the opportunity to conduct scholarly research as undergraduate students with their professors in areas such as Portuguese linguistics, literature, and language pedagogy. One recently published study carried out by a USAFA Portuguese professor and a student looked at the linguistic interference between Spanish and Portuguese (De Souza, Lystrup, and Scharff 2013).

At the end of the language program, students minoring in Portuguese have the opportunity to take the Portuguese Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT). DLPT scores help Air Force officers qualify for a number of DoD international programs while on active duty, including entry into the Air Force’s Regional Affairs Strategist and Political–Military Affairs Strategist programs. DLPT scores are reported in terms of the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) scale. DLPT lower-range tests are intended to cover ILR levels 0+ (ACTFL Novice High) through 3 (ACTFL Superior). Upper-range tests are intended to cover ILR levels 3 through 4 (ACTFL Superior through Distinguished). Since the beginning of the Portuguese language program at USAFA, 100 percent of the students minoring in Portuguese have achieved a score between 2 and 3 in the DLPT, which is certainly a tremendous achievement considering the test’s difficulty and the cadets’ extremely demanding academic, military, and athletic schedule at USAFA. Upon graduation, young Air Force officers with FL proficiency qualify for a number of DoD international programs while on active duty, including entry into the Air Force’s Regional Affairs Strategist and Political–Military Affairs Strategist programs. DLPT scores are reported in terms of the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) scale. DLPT lower-range tests are intended to cover ILR levels 0+ (ACTFL Novice High) through 3 (ACTFL Superior). Upper-range tests are intended to cover ILR levels 3 through 4 (ACTFL Superior through Distinguished). Since the beginning of the Portuguese language program at USAFA, 100 percent of the students minoring in Portuguese have achieved a score between 2 and 3 in the DLPT, which is certainly a tremendous achievement considering the test’s difficulty and the cadets’ extremely demanding academic, military, and athletic schedule at USAFA. Upon graduation, young Air Force officers with FL proficiency qualify for the DoD’s Foreign Language Proficiency Pay (FLPP). The FLPP offers entitlements of up to $500 per month—depending on proficiency level—to those active duty members with a Portuguese language proficiency of at least 2/2/2 (IRL scale) in listening, reading, and speaking (Advanced in the ACTFL scale) as measured by the DLPT and Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI). Such monetary incentives underscore the importance the US Air Force and, in turn, the US government, places upon the development of language and cultural proficiency.

The Portuguese language and culture program at USAFA has been growing steadily over the past ten years, and its future continues to be bright. If recent trends continue, the economic, political, and military ties between the United States and Brazil will continue grow into the foreseeable future. As such, USAFA will continue to train and educate tomorrow’s military leaders to become “ambassadors” with international foresight, FL proficiency, and cultural and regional competence. Former President Barrack Obama affirmed the importance of the Academy’s language initiative “because in the 21st century, military strength will be measured not only by the weapons our troops carry, but by the languages they speak and the cultures they understand” (2009). There are many political and military leaders in the United States who truly understand the global challenges our nation faces and the critical need for government officials to include airmen, sailors, soldiers, and marines with the language, culture, and regional expertise needed to build stronger ties with our Latin American allies, including Brazil. DFF at USAFA will continue to educate and prepare future military leaders to successfully engage with our allies and to better understand our adversaries.

It will be interesting to see how the outcome of the current 2014–17 political and economic crisis will affect the growth of Brazil’s economy and its military, and whether it will impact in any way the political and military relationships between Brazil and the United States. President
Michel Temer, current embattled president of Brazil, is promising to bring public spending under control and increase GDP. On August 2, 2017, legislators narrowly voted against referring President Temer’s corruption case to Brazil’s Supreme Court. Political experts in Brazil are now confident that Temer will be allowed to complete his term as president which they view as positive in light of his reform agenda (The Economist 2017).

Portuguese language and foreign area studies students at USAFA, and DoD regional experts in general, must remain informed about current events in the region if they are going to play a significant role in future US-Brazil military relationships.

DISCLAIMER

The views expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the United States Air Force Academy, the Air Force, the Department of Defense, or the US Government. The release number is USAFA-DF-PA-286.

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Response 1 to “Brazil’s Rise and Portuguese as a Strategic Foreign Language: Preparing Tomorrow’s Military Leaders”

Portuguese as a World Language for Future Army Officers

Rebecca L. Jones-Kellogg
United States Military Academy at West Point

Sarah Martin
United States Military Academy at West Point

Keywords: Army/exército, MLA, Portuguese/português, United States Military Academy, World War II/Segunda Guerra Mundial

There is no denying that Brazil is still a major power player in Latin America and, in many ways, the world as well. However, Brazil’s meteoric economic rise after emerging fairly unscathed from the economic crisis that hit the world in 2007–08 was followed by a no less meteoric fall leading up to the 2016 Olympic Games. More recently, popular unrest and strikes have occurred as a direct result to the current government’s tightening of the federal budget; serious political scandals, to include the April 2016 impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff, continue to hamper the creation of an effective and stable government; and any hope for a quick resurgence in the economy is offset by occasional news reports of cities going bankrupt amid ongoing claims of government corruption. All of these events, while certainly not unique to Brazil, nonetheless present significant obstacles in Brazil returning in the near future to its most recent former economic glory. That said, like success, conflict can also be a driving force behind any increased interest in a country or culture and, therefore, the Portuguese language is just as strategic now as it ever has been, if not even more so.

At the United States Military Academy at West Point (Army), Portuguese has been considered an important language, if not technically labeled “strategic,” since World War II. While initially funded in 1942, the program effectively began with the addition of the first Brazilian Exchange Officer, Capitão Jorge Augusto Vidal, to the foreign language faculty in 1946. This position was important for many reasons. First, it represented an acknowledgment between the US and Brazilian governments (Truman and Dutra) of a reciprocal desire for the further strengthening of political and military ties between the two countries. As an exchange position, this agreement requires that one US Army Officer be sent to Brazil to teach at their Escola Superior da Guerra in Rio de Janeiro. The creation of this position was also a direct result of Brazil sending its famed Brazilian Expeditionary Force (Força Expedicionária Brasileira [FEB]) to fight alongside US/Allied forces in Italy from 1944–45, with the officer exchange symbolically reinforcing the ties that were forged between to the two nations on the battle lines. To date, 34 continuous Brazilian officers, ranking from Captain through Colonel, have taught Portuguese language and content courses to Army cadets at West Point.

Interest in the Portuguese language among cadets, much like their civilian counterparts, has been consistently growing over the past decade or two, although we have seen a stabilization
in our enrollments (roughly 150–160 every year in our first-year sequence) in recent years. According to the MLA Language Enrollment Database (1958–2013), students taking Portuguese language courses at the university level have more than doubled since 1986, from 5,021 students in 1986 to 12,415 in 2013, the most recent year available from the survey. Our program at USMA also encourages the global aspect of Portuguese, as it is spoken as an official language in now nine countries on four different continents. Our cadets take advantage of semester abroad opportunities in Portugal and Brazil, as well as short-term immersion experiences in Portugal, Brazil, Lusophone Africa (Mozambique and Cabo Verde to date) and Macau. With the ever-changing world and the uncertainties that come with it, Portuguese will no doubt remain a significant and strategic language for many years to come. As long as we retain our relationships with Portuguese-speaking countries, either through exchanges or immersion programs that provide opportunities for student interactions, we are creating opportunities for success for our future military leaders who are facing such an unpredictable future. And, whether they are assigned to Lajes Air Force Base in the Azores, or complete the Jungle School (Selva) with the Brazilian Army in the Amazon, the most important thing is that our future military leaders should be able to adapt their language skills to any future situation.

In summary, other Portuguese-speaking countries, such as the Sub-Saharan African nations of Angola and Mozambique, are also growing in importance due to their economic and political potential. It is essential to maintain previously established relationships, such as those that we currently have with Portugal and Brazil, through periods of economic and cultural advances as well as in times of turmoil and economic uncertainty. Brazil, regardless of its political or economic situation, will always remain of utmost strategic importance for future officers.

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**WORKS CITED**

Response 2 to “Brazil’s Rise and Portuguese as a Strategic Foreign Language: Preparing Tomorrow’s Military Leaders”

Student Motivation in Learning Portuguese

Orlando Kelm
University of Texas

The Air Force Academy has decided to add Portuguese as one of its strategic foreign languages, this in part because of a number of pragmatic, political, economic and social reasons. (And this is despite the fact that Brazil is currently suffering through a serious economic recession, political corruption scandals and massive civil unrest.) For the rest of us, what is our motivation in building and sustaining programs in Portuguese?

Notice that even this question shows a bias on perspective. Often in academic settings the stimulus for program development is teacher-centered or institution-focused. Rarely are learner needs or society demands the catalyst for program change. This is a delicate balance, which is no way minimizes the importance of the teachers, researchers or institutions. In the case of the Portuguese language, however, personal motivations that are learner-centered surpass all other reasons for learning the language. Learners of Portuguese by and large are self-motivated learners. To be honest, almost all learners of Portuguese ignore the typical promotional reasons that are given for learning Portuguese (e.g., seventh most spoken language, over 200 million speakers, former Portuguese colonies, etc.). None of these reasons is personal, and in learning Portuguese everything is personal. The following statements, typical of the types of reasons all teachers of Portuguese hear from students, illustrate why students want to learn:

- I study botany and every summer I go to the Amazon to search for new species of plants.
- As a geologist I’m currently learning to cut semiprecious stones. I hope to learn Portuguese to be able to buy stones when I go to Minas Gerais.
- I play in a band and we’ve been learning forró. It’s just awesome and it’s given me the bug to learn Portuguese.
- My mom is from São Paulo and I’ve always wanted to be able to talk to my relatives in Brazil.
- My parents were missionaries in Brazil and I hope to return and do the same.
- I am interested in alternative energy sources and Brazil is way ahead in sugarcane-based renewable energy.
- How come Brazilian soccer stadiums are so run down? I want to go to Brazil to study the reasons.
- I lived on the Peruvian border with Brazil. I’m amazed at how locals cross borders to take advantage of programs from both governments.
Brazillian jiu jitsu is unique among martial arts. I’m catching on, but I want to learn from personal trainers in Rio.

This list could go one with hundreds of additional entries.

If we believe in a student-centered approach to education, Portuguese language offers a gigantic opportunity. Our challenge is that it is difficult to create a program that centers on student needs and at the same time meets the perceived logistic and programmatic requirements that academic structures impose. Our reality is that tuitions, prerequisites, majors, credit hours, class size, grading restrictions, and a host of other factors diminish our effectiveness in meeting the needs of students, who already have specific goals associated with their Portuguese language learning.

What does all this mean? It means that we need to personalize the teaching of Portuguese. Allow students from the very beginning to shape their language learning to fit their goals. It means that “language for specific purposes” applies to every learner. It means that traditional programs should give way to individualized objectives. Even without full restructuring, there are simple things that we can do to move from an institutional model of teaching Portuguese to a learner-centered approach. First, at every level and in every course, create a syllabus that has enough flexibility to include student-generated content. Authorize students to choose their own topics and readings, even their own vocabulary. Second, allow students to build this content on an individual basis. That is to say, accept that not everyone needs to read and study the exact same material. Third, recruit students with marketing that promotes this individualized emphasis. For example, apprise science, communication, business, and humanities students of their ability to customize their Portuguese learning.

Educators in Portuguese, we occupy a privileged position among our peers. In thinking of the vision for the future of language acquisition, we have an opportunity to lead the way in student-centered learning. Kudos to The Air Force Academy for moving in this direction, and may the rest of us do likewise.

WORK CITED