

**Third Place in the French Classroom:
A Separate Space for a New Beginning?**

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Questionnaire

1. What nationality(ies) are you?
2. Where are you from?
3. What language(s) do you speak?
4. Why did you first begin to study French?
- 5. Do you feel like a different person when you speak French?**
6. Do you feel like a different person when you write in French?
7. What language(s) do you think in when you are in French class? Are you aware of it?
8. What language(s) do you think in when you are doing your French homework? Watching a movie in French? Listening to music in French?
9. Do you dream or have you ever dreamed in French?
- 10. Have you ever had a French teacher who called you by a French name? If so, did it make a difference in the way you thought about yourself or in the language(s) you thought in? In the way you related to others in the class?**
- 11. Do you find that you have the same relationship with your classmates when you speak to them in French than when you speak to them in English? How so?**
12. What do you think of being allowed to go back and forth between languages in class? Does it bug you? Does it help you? Why? Do you feel that it disrupts your identity(ies)?
13. Do you feel like you have to choose between one language or the other? And one identity or the other?
14. What, in your eyes, does it mean to be a French speaker? Do you feel like one? Why? Why not?
15. Do you think it's possible to feel like you belong (emotionally and otherwise) to more than one language at the same time? Why? Why not? What name would you give this "state of mind" / "state of being?"

French students' focus responses

1. What nationality(ies) are you?

Chinese, American, Taiwanese-American, Israeli-German

2. Where are you from?

China, U.S., Taiwan, Israel & Germany

3. What language(s) do you speak?

Mandarin, English, Taiwanese, Hebrew, German, Arabic

4. Why did you first begin to study French?

For the fashion, the food, going abroad, cultural experience, love, philosophy

5. Do you feel like a different person when you speak French?

S1: Yes. I feel more interesting. French is a cool language. It's the language of fashion and Paris and good food. So when I am in French class, I feel like I can talk to those people. **And my parents don't speak French, so it's like my own thing.** My parents are very strict and before I came to UCB, they really followed closely my school work. But now that I'm here, I can study what I want and they are not here to check up on me. **So I feel more independent when I speak French. And I think I am less afraid to take risks, or to talk about personal things.** Like in French 1 and 2, when we had to write papers about our lives and our past. I like doing that, and I feel like I can do that in French. **I don't feel like I am allowed to do that in Mandarin. Or in English.**

S2: Oui! At first it was because I couldn't really talk about more complicated things, more adult things in French. So I felt like I was a child in French. But now...hm...maybe it's because I spent time in France? So I have like a different experience to go back to in the language. **It's like the Tom from LA doesn't have the same experience as the Tom (pronounced the French way) from Paris.** I mean, it's always the same person obviously, but it's a bit different, you know? It's like it's more fun to be the French Tom than the American one.

S3: Sure. It's a whole new culture you're entering when you speak French. **It's a new world, with a new history, new priorities, new standards, new customs. And I am still relatively new to it, so I don't feel as...mature?...in French** as I do in English or my mother tongue for example. It's still all pretty new. Like when we discussed the PACS and marriage trends in France. I was unfamiliar with those and needed a textbook to help me discuss the issues, but in Taiwan, I am already familiar with all those trends and don't need a textbook to discuss them. **I just feel less...experienced when I speak French.**

S4: Oh yeah. It's a whole new language, which is a whole new culture, and so it's a different me. When I speak German, I am not the same person as when I speak Hebrew. The same way that when I speak to you, I'm not really the same person as when I'm talking to my friends. **It's like a difference in relationship. My points of reference are different in the different languages.** For example, most of the people I know in Germany are family members, and most of the people I spend time with in Germany are my cousins. So it's almost as if my German self doesn't know what it's like to go to school there, or work there, or have a world outside of my family in German. But in English...I know how to go to school in English, how to go to parties in English, how to talk about current TV shows in English, etc. It's like a cultural reference thing. I've been to France a few times, and I know a few people who live there, so I guess **my French personality is the one of a 20 year-old who likes to go out and see shows etc.**

10. Have you ever had a French teacher who called you by a French name? If so, did it make a difference in the way you thought about yourself or in the language(s) you thought in? In the way you related to others in the class?

S1: None of my professors here have called me by a French name, but I really wish they had! **It would be so much fun, to be able to pretend like you're really French. It would also make the class more real.** So that it doesn't feel like we're in French class at UCB, but more like it's our little group that meets every day to speak French and learn French and learn about French culture. Like a little social group.

S2: In FRE 1 and 2, the professor called me by my American name but she pronounced it with a French pronunciation. I actually really liked it. **It made me feel like I could be someone else.** It also made me feel almost more French. And it was so weird, if I ran into her outside of class, she would still call me that, even if we spoke English. **It was like, for her, I had this identity that was Tom** (pronounced the French way) **and not the American Tom.** Yeah, I guess it was a different identity. **And I guess it made a difference with the other students too, because it felt really weird to call them by their name and pronounce it in an American way. Like my friend Jennifer (Fr.) is still Jennifer (Fr.) and not Jennifer (US).** It sort of keeps things exciting, too. You know?

S3: In high school my teacher gave us French names. I was *Guillaume*. I really liked it, and **it definitely helped separate your everyday self from your French self.** I liked the separation, yes. It was fun. I wouldn't say I actually needed it though. I mean, I learned English without anyone giving me an English name, and I was very good at it. I say [my French and English selves] are two different selves, but in the end, they both grew up the same way. They have the same parents, they same birth date, the same history. It's just a difference in who they interact with. But deep down, they have the same...CV!

S4: My high school teacher let us pick a French name for ourselves I loved it. **It made it more exciting and real. It definitely made it easier to feel French and to become a French person. You know, all of a sudden, for an hour a day, you're not yourself anymore, but you're Jacques or Tristan. It's like a new beginning,** like a break. It's refreshing. And really fun!

11. Do you find that you have the same relationship with your classmates when you speak to them in French than when you speak to them in English? How so?

S1: **When I'm in class, definitely. But not outside of class. There are certain things I don't talk about in French.** Like the relationship I have with the other French students is about what we discuss in class. It's about French stuff. I can't talk to them in French about UCB stuff, unless we've talked about it in class. It just feels strange. It's also because of the context. It's like when you meet someone while you're studying abroad. Sometimes it just doesn't work if they come visit you at home once your time abroad is over. **It's a different context, and you're not living in the context that gave you things in common. You become a stranger to them. It's really uncomfortable!**

S2: I think that when we're in class our relationships are maybe more fake because it's a class, so there are things that we're not gonna talk about, and so there are things that we never talk about in French.

S3: Well, I guess if I said that my French self is different from my English self, then my relationship with my classmates is different depending on what language I speak to them. *Laughs* No, but I guess it is, yes. **I don't think I would really talk to my classmates outside of class in French. Because my French self is the self that's in the class. He's not the self that attends UCB or that goes to parties. It [is] a different world, with clear limitations. Cultural limitations and linguistic limitations. It [is] a bubble.**

S4: Definitely different relationships, but probably more because it's all in class rather than outside of class. I think with those who are bilingual it's the same relationship in French and English. Maybe not with the students who aren't bilingual. Because **it feels less authentic I guess.** Not for me, but for them.

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NB: The images and illustrations used in the slideshow were taken from the following website: <http://www.yankodesign.com/2008/08/11/the-third-space/>. They are photographs of an art project from the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich entitled "Third Space."