

# Learning Languages

The Journal of the National Network for Early Language Learning

Fall 1998  
Vol.4 No.1

*Learning Languages: The Journal of the National Network for Early Language Learning* is the official publication of NNELL. It serves the profession by providing a medium for the sharing of information, ideas, and concerns among teachers, administrators, researchers, and others interested in the early learning of languages. The journal reflects NNELL's commitment to promoting opportunities for all children to develop a high level of competence in at least one language and culture in addition to their own. See the inside of the back cover for more information on NNELL.

In an effort to address the interests of the profession, both practical and scholarly articles are published. Practical articles describe innovative approaches to teaching and the administration of effective language programs for children. Scholarly articles report on original research and cite both current research and theory as a basis for making recommendations for practice. Scholarly articles are refereed, i.e., reviewed anonymously by at least three readers. Readers include members of the NNELL executive board, the editorial advisory board, and invited guest reviewers who have expertise in the area. Refereed articles are identified as such in the journal. Write to the editor to request a copy of author guidelines for preparing articles, or retrieve them from NNELL's website: [www.educ.iastate.edu/currinst/nflrc/nnell/nnell.html](http://www.educ.iastate.edu/currinst/nflrc/nnell/nnell.html)

**Submissions:** Deadlines are: fall issue—May 1; winter issue—Nov. 1; spring issue—Feb. 1. Articles, classroom activities, and materials offered for review may be submitted to the appropriate contributing editor (see below). Send announcements, conference information, and original children's work (such as line drawings, short stories, and poems) to the editor. Children's work needs to be accompanied by written permission from the child's parent or guardian and must include the child's name, age, school, and the teacher's name, address, and telephone (add fax and e-mail address, if available).

Submit a favorite classroom activity for the "Activities for Your Classroom" section by sending a description of the activity that includes title, objective, materials, procedure, and standards addressed. Include pictures or drawings as illustration, if available. Send with your name, address, and phone number to the Classroom Activities editor listed below.

*Editor*

Marcia H. Rosenbusch  
Department of Curriculum and Instruction  
N131 Lagomarcino Hall  
Iowa State University  
Ames, IA 50011  
[mrosenbu@iastate.edu](mailto:mrosenbu@iastate.edu)

*Editorial Assistants*

Sandra McJimsey  
Sheila Dietz  
Trina Garman

*Cover Design*

Gary Blum

## Contributing Editors

*International news*

Helena Curtain  
University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee  
10523 W. Hampton Ave.  
Milwaukee, WI 53225  
[hcurtain@csd.uwm.edu](mailto:hcurtain@csd.uwm.edu)

*Classroom activities*

Jeanette Borich  
Terrace Elementary  
310 N.W. School Street  
Ankeny, IA 50021  
[jembo@yahoo.com](mailto:jembo@yahoo.com)

*French resources*

Myriam Chapman  
Bank Street School for Children  
610 W. 112th St.  
New York, NY 10025

*Research*

Elsa Statzner  
National - Louis University  
1209-A Central St.  
Evanston, IL 60201  
[mruggero@nwu.edu](mailto:mruggero@nwu.edu)

*Funding info./New legislation*

Joint National Comm. for Languages  
1118 22nd St. NW  
Washington, DC 20037  
[76306.535@compuserve.com](mailto:76306.535@compuserve.com)

*Spanish resources*

Mari Haas  
Teachers College  
Columbia University  
525 W. 120th St., Box 201  
New York, NY 10027  
[mbh14@columbia.edu](mailto:mbh14@columbia.edu)

*Teaching with Technology*

Jean W. LeLoup  
ICC Department  
SUNY/Cortland  
P.O. Box 2000  
Cortland, NY 13045  
[leloupj@snycorva.cortland.edu](mailto:leloupj@snycorva.cortland.edu)

*Assessment*

Peggy Boyles  
Foreign Language Coordinator  
Putnam City Schools  
5401 NW 40th St.  
Oklahoma City, OK 73122  
[pboyles@ionet.net](mailto:pboyles@ionet.net)

*German resources*

Gertie Kessler  
Orange Hunt Elementary School  
6820 Sydenstricker Rd.  
Springfield, VA 22152  
[jkessler@erols.com](mailto:jkessler@erols.com)

# Learning Languages

---

The Journal of the National Network for Early Language Learning

Volume 4, No. 1    Fall 1998

---

## Articles

- 4    **Attention! Are You Seeking a Position  
with Excellent Long-term Benefits? Be an Advocate!**  
Mary Lynn Redmond
  
- 11   **National Town Meeting Energizes Support for Early Language Learning**
  
- 15   **Bring Back Childhood Bilingualism: The Case of Louisiana**  
Stephen J. Caldas
  
- 24   **Total Physical Response Storytelling:  
A Communicative Approach to Language Learning**  
Valeri Marsh
  
- 29   **Scoring Rubrics: Changing the Way We Grade**  
Peggy Boyles

---

## Features

- 2    **Notes from the President**
  
- 3    **Wake Forest University Offers Master's Programs in French and Spanish Education**
  
- 9    **NNELL Election Results**
  
- 10   **NNELL Member Named Amity "Friend of the Year"**
  
- 23   **Note New Addresses for NNELL**
  
- 27   **Children's Classroom Creations I**
  
- 28   **Texas Educators Form a Unique Alliance: The Texas-Spain Initiative**
  
- 33   **Classroom Resources**
  
- 35   **Children's Classroom Creations II**
  
- 36   **Calendar**

---

*Learning Languages* (ISSN 1083-5415) is published three times a year (fall, winter, and spring). Membership dues for NNELL, which include a subscription to the journal by academic year, are \$20/year (\$25 overseas). Please send your check to: Nancy Rhodes, Executive Secretary, NNELL, Center for Applied Linguistics, 4646 40th St. N.W., Washington, DC 20016-1859. Copyright © 1998 by the National Network for Early Language Learning.

## *Notes from the President*

---



NNELL has made significant strides in the past two years to ensure that we are better prepared to meet the challenges of young learners in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The NNELL volume *Critical Issues in Early Second Language Learning: Building for Our Children's Future*, edited by Dr. Myriam Met, NNELL's second vice-president, has addressed many issues that school districts and educators face in providing quality second language programs for elementary students. Its overwhelming success has been most encouraging. Our sincere thanks go to Mimi and the authors for their outstanding work.

In September, NNELL members played important roles in the National Town Meeting held in Washington, DC, which was organized by the National Foreign Language Center. Discussion centered around the obstacles and opportunities related to beginning an articulated and sustained language program in the early school years (*Ed: See the related article in this issue*).

NNELL's long-range planning committee, chaired by former president Eileen Lorenz, is finalizing plans for NNELL's future and will report at the next executive board meeting. Because of growing interest in advocacy, I have named Dr. Mary Lynn Redmond, immediate past-president, co-chair for Political Action and Advocacy to assist Kay Hewitt (*Ed: See the advocacy article by Redmond in this issue*).

Plans are well under way for the annual executive board meeting at the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) in Chicago, November 19–22, 1998. Again

we will have a booth in one of the Exhibit Halls throughout the conference. We are very grateful to ACTFL for this opportunity. Please visit the booth for information about NNELL and early language learning and to meet NNELL's officers and members.

Our annual membership meeting is scheduled at ACTFL for Friday, November 20, from 8:30–9:45 a.m. If any members have suggestions or concerns they would like to have considered, they can forward them to me or Christy Brown, president-elect. We sincerely hope that you will join us for this meeting.

On Saturday, November 21, NNELL will sponsor the popular FLES Swapshop breakfast. Teachers can exchange teaching activities and view materials displayed by publishers who specialize in K–8 resources. Mari Haas, former president of NNELL, is assisting Patty Hans in organizing this year's breakfast. Please remember to pre-register for the Swapshop. You will need to bring 250 copies of a one-page teaching idea or activity to share, which is formatted to include your name, address, language, grade level, topic, and lesson procedures.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate and welcome our newly elected board members: Dr. Kathleen M. Riordan of Springfield, MA, as second vice-president, and Marcia Pastorek of New Orleans, LA, as treasurer. I would be remiss if I did not express my sincerest gratitude and thanks to Dr. Mary Lynn Redmond, immediate past-president. She is truly dedicated and an inspiration to us all.

Also, I would like to extend my sincere congratulations and best wishes to Christine Brown, of Glaston-

bury, CT, who will serve as NNELL president in 1998–99. She is a joy to work with, very articulate, and will help NNELL move forward under her strong leadership and expertise.

As my term ends, I thank you for the opportunity to serve you. I also want to praise your sustained efforts and commitment to the support of early language learning. The value, benefits, and rewards of our commitment far exceed the time we give to the profession. I look forward to

continuing to work with you—NNELL's dedicated leaders and members—in support of our goals.



Susan P. Walker  
Foreign Language Department Chair  
Parkway Northeast Middle School  
181 Coeur de Ville Drive  
Creve Coeur, MO 63141  
E-mail: spwalker@stlnet.com

## Wake Forest University Offers Master's Programs in French and Spanish Education

Wake Forest University offers Master's degree programs in French and Spanish Education. The Master Teacher Fellows (MTF) Program is designed for academically talented and professionally committed students who have a baccalaureate degree in French or Spanish and no prior course work in teacher education. Fellows are awarded a full-tuition scholarship and a stipend for the fourteen-month period of study. Upon completion of the program, Fellows will have earned the MA. Ed. and the K–12 "A" and "G" North Carolina teaching licenses.

The second Master's program is the MA. Ed. Program. It is designed for candidates who already hold a North Carolina Class A K–12 License in French or Spanish. The program can be completed on a full-time or part-time basis (late afternoon and summer courses). The goal of the MA. Ed. Program is to strengthen the teacher's expertise in the classroom through advanced course work in language, literature, and culture; methodology; and research. These courses will provide ample opportunities for the teacher to apply new knowledge in the classroom setting. Scholarships, assistantships, and fellowships are available. Full-time teachers pay one-half tuition.

For further information, contact Dr. Mary Lynn Redmond, Associate Professor of Education, P.O. Box 7266, Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC 27109; 336-758-5347; E-mail: redmond@wfu.edu.

# ATTENTION! Are You Seeking a Position with Excellent Long-term Benefits? Be an Advocate!

*Mary Lynn Redmond  
Associate Professor of Education  
Wake Forest University  
Winston-Salem, North Carolina*

**A**s early foreign language learning gains attention nationally and the public looks more seriously at the academic and personal benefits of a long sequence of language study, elementary school foreign language specialists may find themselves called upon more frequently to take the role of the advocate. To help them become more effective in promoting early language learning, the following strategies are offered.

**Strategy 1: Take every opportunity to inform parents, administrators, and the local community about the foreign language program and your students' accomplishments.**

The foreign language specialist can play an important role as an advocate by raising public awareness about foreign language study and helping the school and community recognize excellent foreign language instruction. An important way to begin this process is to send home student work samples to inform parents about current topics being studied, to paint a clear picture of the connections between language learning and the elementary curriculum, to clarify how learning processes develop through language study, and to demonstrate student progress. In addition, the foreign language specialist can write articles for the school newsletter informing school administrators, other teachers, parents, and the community about the purpose and content of the program, the anticipated language

outcomes, and how the program articulates with upper level foreign language study.

**Strategy 2: Clarify the nature of the foreign language curriculum and its connectedness to the elementary school classroom.**

The foreign language specialist will want to help the public understand that, in the foreign language program, language concepts are taught in the context of the elementary school curriculum. Math, science, social studies, language arts, and other content areas provide the source for themes of the units and lessons taught in the foreign language class. It is important to emphasize the link between the language class and the elementary school curriculum because most people still have the image of language learning as that of learning lists of words, translation, and repetition and drills focused on language structure.

Modeling a lesson to an audience of parents and community members is an excellent strategy. It helps them understand the excitement of learning interesting content taught in the language and the feasibility of doing so when the teacher uses techniques (such as objects, gestures, facial expressions, and active learner participation) to make meaning clear. It is important for the audience to know, for example, that the focus of the foreign language class is not on students learning to count by rote from 1 to 30, 50, or 100; rather, they learn to count

It is important to emphasize the link between the language class and the elementary school curriculum. . . .

objects and to use counting in meaningful contexts. Using an example from a unit on the market could be helpful in demonstrating that students use their counting skills in real-life situations; e.g., "I would like six tomatoes." The foreign language specialist can emphasize that activities carried out in a meaningful context result in better understanding and retention of the language.

**Strategy 3: Show parents and the community the skills attained and the purposes for the language learned.**

Seek opportunities for children to demonstrate their language skills to parents and the community. Remember, however, that the perspective the audience gains about the value of the foreign language program will be shaped by what they observe. Because many adults do not know about recent findings in brain research and language acquisition, they may view a carefully selected song as a fun activity but one that is not a necessary part of education. And, if a member of the audience happens to be a school board member or politician involved in determining the future of the program, an image of children singing songs at a PTA program may ultimately lead to the conclusion that language study is not needed in the curriculum.

In such settings, it is better to have students use language that is "real," not rehearsed or memorized. You must carefully plan what you will have the children share so that the audience can readily observe the skills attained and clearly understand the purpose of the language learned. For example, several children could read aloud a Big Book, or individual books they have created, and then answer the teacher's or classmates' questions. If the class has done a science experiment that has been a joint project with the grade level classroom teacher, the foreign language specialist could select students at random to describe the experiment in simple

language. A song could then be used as a culminating activity, but the teacher should make clear to the audience its relevance to the language and content learned.

**Strategy 4: Invite guests to visit your classes to observe the children "in action."**

Special occasions such as cultural events and PTA programs are a good way to reach a number of people at once, but don't overlook the everyday opportunities. Parents, principals, and others in the community can best gain understanding about foreign language learning by observing day-to-day classes. Seeing classes "in action" may also help observers appreciate the way in which language study addresses various learning styles.

Extend an open invitation and suggest that guests come to several classes throughout the year so that they can see students' progress over time. It is also a good idea to invite reporters from the local newspaper and television stations to feature a story or series of articles about the program so that the local community can see what is involved on a daily basis. This can help the public understand that foreign language is an integral part of the curriculum.

**Strategy 5: Assess students' progress both informally and formally and make parents aware of the results.**

It is not easy to maintain an individual record of progress for each student when the foreign language specialist teaches many children. Without a tangible product that shows what children are able to do in the foreign language, however, it is difficult for others to understand and support the teacher's efforts no matter how great they are. There are many possible ways to show a student's progress, and in the elementary grades, it is extremely crucial to show ongoing language development—or, in other words, what the child is accomplishing.

Parents, principals, and others in the community can best gain understanding about foreign language learning by observing day-to-day classes.

The foreign language specialist can work with the classroom teacher to maintain a compilation of products from the foreign language class in the student's portfolio. Or, the specialist may find it more manageable to keep a portfolio for each student. Contents may range from language samples to many different kinds of work products. For the pre-reader, these may be listening discrimination activities and semantic maps based on pictures. For the emergent reader, they may be little books, illustrated stories, or poems that are student published.

The important point is to be able to show observable growth over a period of time that both the specialist and parents can monitor. Taking the time to include a variety of products to show progress can prove to be both a positive public relations strategy and a way for the specialist to document and evaluate the strengths (and weaknesses) of the program.

**Strategy 6: Keep politicians, school board members, and other decision-makers informed about your program.**

On the local level, include policy-makers together with parents on the list to receive the school newsletter and invitations to visit the foreign language classes. Letters of invitation in themselves create an excellent way to communicate news about the program and emphasize the benefits of early language study. Legislators, school board members, the school superintendent, and other elected leaders can be invited to submit an article for publication in the state foreign language association's publication or can be asked to deliver an address at the annual meeting. They can also be included on the association's mailing list so that they receive the same correspondence that the membership receives. Whether or not the individual is a true supporter of languages, the invitation to write a feature article accompanied by a personal photograph is hard to turn down, and consequently,

this can become a strong way to encourage support while informing elected officials about the program.

**Strategy 7: Thank your supporters!**

Write letters to decisionmakers such as school board members, the governor, the state superintendent, and the local school superintendent to thank them for supporting language study and to encourage their continued support. Even if they do not realize that they have done something worthy of praise, a thank-you letter may "plant a seed" about foreign languages that may prove helpful to the program's future.

**Strategy 8: Change the mindset of those who studied a language unsuccessfully.**

There is always an opportunity to promote early language learning with people we encounter on a daily basis. Unfortunately, while many people may have the idea that learning a language at an early age is an interesting endeavor, most have little knowledge of the learning processes that are enhanced through language study. It is important to present the "vital statistics" about learning languages when the moment presents itself. These benefits include the development of critical thinking skills, acute listening skills, enhanced imagination and creativity, as well as better communication skills and greater opportunities for living and working in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In other words, languages are a tool for life!

Several versions of an informational speech, or talking points, can be very handy. The person in line at the grocery store who has heard about the elementary grades program and wants to know more may be willing to listen for two minutes, while the school board chair may be attentive for five minutes or longer. Be prepared at any time and on any occasion to adapt the talking points to the audience and the kind of information that is needed.

Many people may be intrigued to

... the invitation to write a feature article accompanied by a personal photograph is hard to turn down. . . .



learn that early language study enhances cognitive ability and taps thinking processes in the brain that affect other learning processes. (Begley, 1996; Caine, & Caine, 1991; Nash, 1997; Winslow, 1997). They may find it interesting that language learning in general has changed immensely since the 1970s, and may ask, "Well, if students don't conjugate verbs, then just what do they learn?" This can be a wonderful opening to a conversation that may really change the person's understanding of foreign language study.

**Strategy 9: Network with colleagues and unify efforts in grades K–16.**

One of the most beneficial ways to make foreign languages in the elementary grades more visible is to come together with colleagues and unify efforts for successful program implementation. The annual state meeting of the foreign language association is a perfect setting for foreign language specialists to collaborate and to network with colleagues who teach more advanced levels. The foreign language profession has long faced the challenge of bridging the gaps between the elementary, middle, high school, and post-secondary levels. We stand to strengthen our mission by working together and understanding the K–16 sequence. Foreign language collaboratives for teachers in grades K–16 and in-service meetings in the school district provide a forum for sharing ideas and concerns and for offering resources and support. Partnerships between K–12 and university instructors benefit both students and teachers.

**Strategy 10: Establish regular planning sessions with both elementary classroom teachers and K–12 foreign language colleagues.**

By participating in grade level meetings, the foreign language specialist can become a part of the school "team" and will have the opportunity to help the elementary grade teachers see how he or she is reinforcing concepts

taught in the various subject areas of the curriculum. Consulting with each other on a regular basis will help form a positive partnership. Many elementary grade teachers want to be involved in the foreign language program and will offer assistance willingly. Those who are less enthusiastic about the program may simply need time to understand how the specialist is helping the classroom teacher by linking the foreign language to math, science, social studies, language arts, etc.

The specialist can keep the classroom teacher informed about what is taught in the foreign language classes and, by doing so, help promote the program. The same holds true for creating a well-articulated program in grades K–12. Teachers at the elementary, middle, secondary, and post-secondary levels should all be advocates for foreign languages at all levels. In-service meetings where K–12 foreign language teachers come together can include a time for teachers to discuss curriculum, share ideas for articulation between and among grade levels, and develop strategies for promoting the program in the community. Foreign language teachers at every level can benefit greatly by networking with colleagues. The elementary school foreign language specialist can be particularly instrumental in improving the continuity of the program by working to increase enrollment in language study at the upper levels.

**Strategy 11: Use your state conference to organize advocacy efforts.**

Many state associations, including North Carolina, Ohio, Texas, and Wisconsin, have formed political action and advocacy committees to promote language study in their states. This is critical to foreign language programs, especially in states that do not have supervisors or coordinators to assist language teachers. All language teachers can contribute to advocacy efforts by attending advocacy meetings at the state conference,

Many elementary grade teachers want to be involved in the foreign language program and will offer assistance willingly.

gathering advocacy materials at the booth in the exhibits area to use at the local level, and by staying informed about issues that may impact foreign language programs. K-12 foreign language specialists can help each other by writing letters of support for programs that may be in jeopardy.

### Conclusion

This is an exciting time for the foreign language profession, and it is the optimum time to create awareness about early language study.

This is an exciting time for the foreign language profession, and it is the optimum time to create awareness about early language study. As parents and the community become knowledgeable about the opportunities children will have in a rapidly growing global community if they attain a high level of proficiency in a foreign language, they will realize the importance of beginning language study early. Perhaps the next time a parent says, "I took two years of Spanish in high school and can't speak a word," you'll be prepared to respond: "Well of course you can't, and here's why. . . ."

### Sample Advocacy and Political Action Resources

The materials listed below provide effective strategies and reliable information for advocates to use. By drawing on these and other resources, you will be well prepared to play a strong advocacy role.

*Advocacy 101 Packet.* (1997). Joint National Committee for Languages/ National Council for Languages and International Studies. 4646 40th St. NW, Washington, DC 20016-1859; 202-966-8477; E-mail: 76306.535@compuserve.com.

*Advocacy for FLES\* Packet.* (1997). Baltimore: National FLES\* Institute, University of Maryland, Baltimore County, MD. Gladys Lipton, Director, Department of Modern Languages, 1000 Hilltop Cir., Baltimore, MD 21250; 301-231-0824; Fax: 301-230-2652; E-mail: lipton@umbc2.umbc.edu.

Begley, S. Your child's brain. *Newsweek*, 19: 55-61, February 19, 1996.

Caine, R., & Caine, G. (1991). *Making connections: Teaching and the human brain*. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. 1703 Beauregard St., Alexandria, VA 22311-1714; 703-578-9600.

Cohen, P. (1995). Understanding the brain. *Education Update*, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 37 (7), 1, 4-5.

Curtain, H., & Pesola, C. A. (1994). *Languages and children: Making the match*. (2nd ed.). White Plains, NY: Longman.

*Gray matters: The developing brain* (1995). Madison, WI: Wisconsin Public Radio Association. Produced in association with Dana Alliance for Brain Initiatives; order tapes through 1-800-65BRAIN, transcript and real audio available on [www.dana.org](http://www.dana.org).

Met, M. (Ed.). (1998). *Critical Issues in Early Second Language Learning: Building for Our Children's Future*. Glenview, IL: Scott Foresman-Addison Wesley.

Nash, J. M. (February 3, 1997). Special Reports: Fertile Minds. *Time*, 149 (5): 49-56.

*National Network for Early Language Learning Advocacy Packet*. Contact Kay Hewitt, NNELL Advocacy Committee Chair, Lexington Elementary School, 116 Azalea Dr., Lexington, SC 29072; 803-736-1916; E-mail: leslib@lex1.k12.state.sc.us

Public Schools of North Carolina. (1997). *Foreign Languages: The Road to Success in a Global World—Information for School Counselors*. Contact Dr. Fran Hoch, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 301 North Wilmington St., Raleigh, NC 27601-2825; 919-715-1797; E-mail: fhoch@dpi.state.nc.us

Sylvester, R. (1995). *A celebration of neurons: An educator's guide to the human brain*. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

*Why FLES\*?* (1996). Brochure available from AATF. Contact Gladys Lipton, President, 1000 Hilltop Cir., Baltimore,

MD 21250; 301-231-0824; Fax: 301-230-2652; E-mail: lipton@umbc2.umbc.edu.

*Why, how, and when should my child learn a second language?* (1997). Free Brochure. Contact ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics, ACCESS ERIC, 2277 Research Boulevard, 7A, Rockville, MD 20850-3172; Tel: 1-800-538-3742; E-mail: acceric@inet.ed. gov.

Willis, S. (Winter 1996). Foreign language learning to communicate in the real world. *Curriculum Update*. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Winslow, R. How language is stored in the brain depends on age. *The Wall Street Journal*, Thursday, July 10, 1997, Section B, 1, 6.

---

## **NNELL Election Results**

---

We are happy to announce that Dr. Kathleen Riordan, Director of Foreign Languages at Springfield Public Schools, Springfield, Massachusetts, has been elected second vice-president for a three-year term, and Marcia Pastorek, Trinity Episcopal School, New Orleans, Louisiana, has been elected treasurer for a two-year term.

Kathleen is responsible for curriculum development and professional development for the K-12 foreign language program in 43 schools. She has published in journals and professional books in the areas of program development, K-12 curriculum, and teacher development. Kathleen is a founding member of NNELL and the National Association of District Supervisors of Foreign Languages. She is a past president of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages and the Massachusetts Foreign Language Association. She serves as a continuing member of the Massachusetts World Language Curriculum Frameworks Committee and the Massachusetts World Language Assessment Committee.

Kathleen believes that in the ten years since NNELL was founded, the organization has helped develop, expand, and strengthen early language opportunities for children. Although the quality of instructional programs is improving, she feels that much more can be done. Kathleen is pleased to have the opportunity to contribute to NNELL's goal for all children to have

excellent foreign language instruction.

Marcia is the Foreign Language Coordinator at Trinity Episcopal School in New Orleans. She also teaches French in grades 1-4. During her career, she has taught at all levels from kindergarten to post-secondary. Her graduate studies include work at Université Catholique de l'Ouest in Angers, France, the University of New Orleans, and Nicolls State University.

Marcia has directed a children's summer French immersion camp, has written and directed several children's French plays, and has published children's stories. A National Endowment for the Humanities Foreign Language Fellow, Marcia recently received a grant to write, produce, and present a play about the Acadian migration in Louisiana. She is a regular presenter at state and regional conferences, is actively involved in the Louisiana Foreign Language Teachers Association, and is a past president of the Louisiana Chapter of the American Association of Teachers of French.

Marcia finds it both challenging and rewarding to be involved in teaching a foreign language to young children. She feels that it is important for us to provide quality foreign language instruction to all children, particularly as we move toward the 21<sup>st</sup> century and face an increasingly diverse and multicultural world. She looks forward to assisting NNELL in its commitment to support early language learning.

## **NNELL Member Named Amity "Friend of the Year"**

Amity, an organization that is committed to advocacy and service in support of language education and cultural awareness, has presented its 1997-98 "Friend of the Year" Award to Kathy Olson-Studler. A NNELL member, Kathy teaches elementary-level Spanish at St. Paul Academy and Summit School in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Kathy's history with language education began in high school when she first studied Spanish. At that time, she not only learned Spanish but also became acquainted with students from various Spanish-speaking countries. Although Kathy continued to study Spanish in college, she had not thought of becoming a Spanish teacher. As she recalls, "It wasn't until my brother Paul invited his girlfriend and her family from Peru to our home that my Spanish skills were put to the test." It was then that Kathy realized she could successfully communicate in Spanish. Experiences such as these encouraged her to study in Mexico and Spain and to make visits to Puerto Rico, Guatemala, Costa Rica, and Colombia.

Kathy first inquired about the Amity Program after graduate school and has been a supporter ever since. Among other things, Amity brings native speakers of world languages directly to American schools. In 1981, when Kathy began teaching at St. Paul Academy and Summit School, Marlen Bonilla, an Amity Scholar from Colombia, came to assist in Kathy's fourth grade Spanish classes. Kathy appreciated

Marlen's help in creating educational materials, yet was most impressed by the effect this young woman had on the children. For many, Marlen was their first exposure to a native speaker. In the presence of their new Colombian friend, it became clear why one would want to learn Spanish.

Over the years, St. Paul Academy and Summit School has hosted over two dozen Amity Scholars from various countries, both at the elementary and secondary levels. Kathy acts as coordinator to the four Amity Scholars who are selected each year to assist in grades K-6. While stating that the scholars' efforts to share their culture adds authenticity to the language program, she clearly does not see the students as the only ones to benefit: "I have learned so much from these scholars. They have not only helped me to be more tolerant and open to other cultures, but have taught me to respect individual work styles, personalities, and interests. We have been enriched by the presence of these young people. Each has contributed something unique to our school and community."

A devoted advocate of early language education, Kathy is passionate about teaching Spanish to people of any age. She has taught elementary, middle and upper school students and, on occasion, adults. She sees culture as an invaluable part of her teaching—hence her dedication to the Amity Program, and our highest esteem for her.

---

For more information about Amity, contact: Amity Institute, 10671 Roselle St., Suite 101, San Diego, CA 92121-1525; 619-455-6364; Fax: 619-455-6597; E-mail: [mail@amity.org](mailto:mail@amity.org); Website: [www.amity.org](http://www.amity.org).

# National Town Meeting Energizes Support for Early Language Learning

"I went to France and could understand *everything!*" testified a fifth grade French immersion student, who was applauded enthusiastically by those attending the first-ever national town meeting on early language learning. The National Foreign Language Center (NFLC) at The Johns Hopkins University sponsored the two-and-a-half-hour event. Held on September 11, 1998, in Washington, DC, the meeting attracted approximately 150 attendees. David Maxwell, Director of the NFLC, welcomed participants. The program included U.S. Representative Sam Farr, who gave the keynote address, a panel discussion featuring four national leaders in early language learning, and U.S. Senator Paul Simon, Chair of the NFLC Board, who had initiated the town meeting idea and gave the closing address.

The panel discussion, entitled *Starting Early: Issues and Obstacles*, was the heart of the meeting. Sprinkled with audience comments and questions, the discussion was lively and probing. It was expertly moderated by Tara Sonenshine, Senior Advisor, U.S. Institute of Peace. She posed challeng-

ing questions to panel and audience members and solicited input from students, parents, school administrators, and teachers in attendance. The National Network for Early Language Learning (NNELL) was well represented on the panel—three of the four panelists are NNELL members: Christine Brown, Director of Foreign Languages, Glastonbury Public Schools, Connecticut; Helena Curtain, Assistant Professor, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee; and Fred Genesee, Professor of Psychology, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec. The fourth panelist was Werner Rogers, Executive Director, Georgia Public Broadcasting and a former state school superintendent of Georgia.

## Support of Parents

An important focus of the discussion was public awareness and parental support. Panelist Brown noted that foreign language educators have a public relations problem of "immense proportions." Most parents do not understand foreign language learning because they did not have experience with a second language until late in

... foreign language educators have a public relations problem of "immense proportions."



Dora F. Kennedy, retired foreign language supervisor of Prince George's County Public Schools, Maryland, greets Senator Paul Simon after his closing address, while panelist Dr. Helena Curtain looks on.

... scientific evidence on language learning demonstrates that the human brain is not designed to learn only one language.

their schooling and that experience was nonintensive. One parent reported that she has found that many parents are afraid early language learning will "mess up" their children's minds.

Panelist Curtain described the "monolingual ethos" in this country—where people do not appreciate the gift of languages and bilingualism. Panelist Genesee agreed, explaining that some parents fear that if the brain's capacity is expended on learning a second language at an early age, children will not have sufficient capacity to learn other school subjects such as science and mathematics. He pointed out that all scientific evidence on language learning demonstrates that the human brain is not designed to learn only one language. Young children have a particular skill for sorting out languages and can indeed learn more than one language at the same time.

Genesee also reported that many researchers have studied how children learn a foreign language. Their findings have led to major innovations in the teaching of foreign languages. He

described the most effective way to *teach* a foreign language as being the way that young children *learn* a foreign language. Panelist Curtain characterized effective teaching strategies as immersing students in the language and integrating language, content, and culture in the curriculum.

### Need for Funding

When asked by the moderator about the "mine fields" in establishing early foreign language programs, panelist Rogers noted that budget constraints are a major one. School boards may ask those who propose an elementary school program what should be cut from the current curriculum to add the foreign language program. He noted that school boards "shoe horn" in what they want to, but there has to be a strong case for any new program.

From the audience, Charlie Ricks, Principal at Henderson Elementary School in Prince William County, VA, clarified that to implement an immersion program in their school no additional cost for teachers was necessary. When openings became available, they simply hired teachers with



Members of the distinguished panel include, from left, Fred Genesee, Helena Curtain, Werner Rogers, and Christine Brown.

the target language capability. He noted that there is, however, an additional cost to obtain teaching materials in the target language. In his district, a U.S. Department of Education grant helped meet such costs.

Panelist Brown advocated sustainable funding for early language programs to prevent whimsical changes in viewpoints from threatening the stability of programs. In his address, Senator Simon acknowledged that money is a problem and added, "we really ought to have a little federal assistance."

### **Need for Teachers**

Another challenge identified by Rogers is the inadequate supply of qualified teachers. To address this problem, he proposed support for both pre-service and in-service teacher preparation programs.

Curtain emphasized the importance of treasuring our nation's language resources as one way to address the teacher shortage. Stuart Gothold, Assistant Dean of the School of Education at the University of Southern California, reported that over 50% of the students in Los Angeles speak another language and are ready to capitalize on learning in two languages. In response to Gothold's question about how to encourage preservation of a first language that is not English, Genesee described dual language programs. In these programs, approximately half of the students speak English as their first language and half speak a language that is not English. Students learn from each other, as well as from the teacher. This results in the preservation of the non-English language, the learning of a second language, and the learning of English.

### **Benefits of Early Language Learning**

When asked by the moderator how to measure the dividends of early language learning, Brown reported on information gathered in a question-

naire completed by high school graduates of Glastonbury Public Schools, Connecticut, which has provided a foreign language program in elementary school through twelfth grade for 40 years. Some respondents reported that they had placed out of all of the foreign language requirements at the university level, others chose to complete further language study in upper level university courses. Respondents indicated that they have used the foreign language in their work, for humanitarian activities, and in politics.

A fifth grade student in a partial-immersion program (mathematics and science are taught in Spanish) proudly told meeting participants that her cousin, who is a high school student of Spanish in another state, calls her periodically for help with Spanish homework assignments. In other testimony, a parent whose son is in a partial-immersion program has found that children in this program are "soaking in the foreign language and the culture" and noted that this is "so natural and beautiful."

Elana Shohamy, Director of Research for the National Foreign Language Center, reported on a study in Israel in which first and second grade Israeli children were taught Arabic. When these children's attitudes toward speakers of Arabic were compared to other Israeli children's attitudes, the difference was "unbelievable." Shohamy concludes that an important benefit for beginning the study of a foreign language early is that it changes attitudes and reduces negative feelings toward speakers of the language taught.

### **Need for Advocacy**

Rogers was asked, Where do we go from here? In response, he stressed that local, state, and national policymakers need to be made aware of the benefits of early language programs. Genesee supported this idea by noting that the advantages of successful programs should be made part of

... local, state, and national policymakers need to be made aware of the benefits of early language programs.

NNELL urges  
*all* members to  
accept this chal-  
lenge and follow  
through with  
concrete actions.

public consciousness. Wilga Rivers, Professor Emerita, Harvard University, took this idea one step further, encouraging all foreign language programs to support each other by sharing their successes. She advocated the development of a strong public awareness campaign that would "spatter the whole 50 states with highlights of models of success" in early language learning.

In his closing address, Senator Simon noted that "our biggest problem is indifference." He urged Town Meeting participants to help change that. He asked them to indicate their willingness to take the following steps and to report back on the results of these actions:

- Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper in support of early language learning.

He noted that letters to the editor are the most frequently read part of the newspaper and are, therefore, an effective way to influence public opinion. He encouraged letter writers to include research-based facts such as, "students who take another language do better in English."

- Invite 6–10 people into your home to brainstorm ways to promote foreign language education.

He clarified that, of the 15 or so ideas generated, you will have at least 5 good ideas for action.

Senator Simon challenged the group to take action because "this group right here can make a difference to the United States of America."

The NNELL members in the audience have accepted Senator Simon's challenge and are moving ahead with their responses. In turn, NNELL urges *all* members to accept this challenge and follow through with concrete actions. NNELL asks that you inform Kay Hewitt, Political Action and Advocacy Committee Co-Chair, of actions and results in your community. Contact her at: Kay Hewitt, Lexington Elementary School, 116 Azalea Dr., Lexington, SC 29072; E-mail: leslib@lex1.k12.state.sc.us

**Notes:** Nancy Rhodes, Executive Secretary of NNELL, served on the planning committee for the Town Meeting. This report was prepared by Marcia Harmon Rosenbusch, Editor, *Learning Languages*.

Taurean Major, a fifth grade student in the French immersion program in Prince George's County Public Schools, Maryland, testifies about the benefits of his language learning experiences.





# Bringing Back Childhood

## Bilingualism: The Case of Louisiana

Stephen J. Caldas, Ph.D.  
Dept. of Educational Foundations and Leadership  
University of Southwestern Louisiana  
Lafayette, Louisiana

### Historical Overview

The current fear among some Americans—that English is threatened as our predominant language—is older than the country. As early as 1753, the venerable Benjamin Franklin expressed concern over the degree of German spoken in Pennsylvania (Castellanos, 1992). Language xenophobia in the United States has waxed and waned depending on such factors as immigration, war, the perceived threat of communism, and the economic climate. The English-only movement in the 1990s has been closely linked to the most recent wave of massive non-English-speaking immigration to the United States, which began in the 1980s as literally millions of new immigrants flocked to the United States. This influx marks the largest movement of people to North America since the first decade of the twentieth century. Evidence that language xenophobia has reached a fevered pitch in the United States is shown in actions such as a court decree handed down by a state district judge in Texas. The judge ruled that it was child abuse for a Hispanic mother to speak only Spanish to her daughter within the home (*Woman ordered*, 1995).

English has traditionally been viewed as a primary tool for assimilating new immigrant groups into American society (Gordon, 1964). Indeed, English was seen as an essential factor in achieving the “melting pot.” Theodore Roosevelt put this sentiment bluntly just after the greatest wave of

immigration ever to the United States: “We have room for but one language here, and that is the English language, for we intend to see that the crucible turns our people out as Americans, of American nationality, and not as dwellers in a polyglot boarding house” (cited in Edwards, 1994, p. 166).

Moreover, the popular American view has typically been that proficiency in English and abandoning one’s non-English native language go hand-in-hand. We see this attitude in the American government’s historical treatment of Native Americans. In a model government boarding school established for Native Americans in Pennsylvania in 1879, students were forbidden to speak their native tongues and were punished when they did (Portes & Schaufli, 1994; 1996).

The English-only mania has not been limited to Americans. As colonial missionaries in Africa, our English cousins not only banned African languages in the universities they founded on that continent, but they even forbid drum language, a form of communication that reproduced native speech tones (Gaines, 1996).

### Educational Issues

Hand-in-hand with the perspective that monolingualism is somehow superior to bilingualism, is the belief by some that bilingualism hinders academic achievement (discussed in Makin, Campbell, & Jones Diaz, 1995; Portes & Schaufli, 1994; 1996). Once again, this perspective is not uniquely American. As far back as the

... the popular American view has typically been that proficiency in English and abandoning one’s non-English native language go hand-in-hand.

... a body of research is emerging that suggests that multilinguals may actually have more highly developed cognitive abilities than monolinguals.

1920s, the Danish linguist Jespersen (1922) argued that bilingualism was a disadvantage because a child could learn neither language as well as he could learn just one. Jespersen justified his position by speculating that learning two languages unnecessarily taxed the brain. Reynold (1928), a German, stated that bilingualism leads to language mixing and language confusion, which in turn results in a decreased ability to think clearly.

This perception lingered some forty years later, as evidenced by Weisgerber's (1966) stance that bilingualism was detrimental in part because humans were basically monolingual, and that being bilingual was like trying to belong to two religions at the same time. Even the Association of (English-speaking) Catholic School Principals of Montreal published an official statement as recently as 1969 that read: "We are of the opinion that the average child cannot cope with two languages of instruction and to try to do so leads to insecurity, language interference, and academic retardation" (Association of Catholic Principals of Montreal, 1969, p.12).

Importantly, however, there seems to be a much older belief that speaking more than one language is an advantage. For example, in the 1600s, the philosopher John Locke advocated teaching English children a second language (preferably French) as soon as they learned English, around age three (from "Some Thoughts Concerning Education" as cited in Ozmon & Craver, 1995). After they learned the second language, which he believed should take only a year or two, Locke proposed that they should commence learning a third tongue. Benjamin Franklin, in spite of his concern over German-speaking Pennsylvanians, credited his ability to speak French as a major advantage in his life (Franklin, 1932).

Contrary to the belief that speaking more than one language is somehow damaging to thinking processes, a

body of research is emerging that suggests that multilinguals may actually have more highly developed cognitive abilities than monolinguals (Ben-Zeev, 1977; Bialystok, 1988; Caldas & Caron-Caldas, 1996; Diaz, 1983; Hakuta, 1986; Lambert & Tucker, 1972; and Peal & Lambert, 1962). Some researchers, however, point out that the research is not conclusive (Jarvis, Danks, & Merriman, 1995).

Balkan (1970) discovered that early bilinguals (before age four) scored significantly higher on tests of numerical aptitude, verbal flexibility, perceptual ability, and general reasoning than either later bilinguals or monolinguals. Peal and Lambert (1962) noted that bilinguals who were matched with a control group of monolinguals performed significantly better than the monolinguals on both nonverbal and verbal IQ tests. They stated, "It appears that our bilinguals, instead of suffering from mental confusion or a 'language handicap' are actually profiting from a 'language asset' " (p.15). Scott (1973) found that bilingual English-Canadians demonstrated greater "divergent thinking" than a control group of monolinguals. Carringer (1974) reported that Spanish-English bilinguals scored higher than a control group of monolinguals in all aspects of creativity, verbal and figural fluency, flexibility, and originality.

The complete linguistic assimilation of immigrant groups in the United States does not necessarily ensure that they will perform better in English schooling. For example, second-generation bilingual Vietnamese in New Orleans are having more success in school than fellow immigrants who speak only English (Bankston & Zhou, 1995). Moreover, these students not only outperform their linguistically assimilated counterparts, but they also do better on standardized tests than native-born Louisianians (Bankston, Caldas, & Zhou, 1997). Though linguists are still pondering why the en-

hanced cognitive functioning occurs, one intriguing theory links the superior academic performance of bilinguals to their earlier and greater awareness of the arbitrariness of language—apparently liberating their thinking processes (Ianco-Worrall, 1972).

Why is it important to establish a possible strong link between multilingualism and higher cognitive functioning? One reason is that if such a link truly exists, it may compel educators not only to tolerate bilingual children, but also to foster bilingualism as a way of helping individuals to develop to their fullest intellectual capacities. In addition, if there is a bilingual advantage, as the evidence seems to increasingly suggest, then there is yet an additional benefit to those educational programs whose aims are to preserve, maintain, and re-establish the speaking of a second language among young people.

### The Language Revival

Despite the language xenophobia of some, there is an ethnic revival in the United States, with a new-found interest in reviving and maintaining non-English languages (Lowy, Fishman, Gertner, Gottesman, & Milan, 1985). This American "revival," incidentally, may simply be part of a larger global "ethnic revival," of which there are many examples of preserving and passing on endangered languages. These include efforts to preserve Gaelic in Ireland, to ensure the hegemony of French in Québec, and to save Welsh in Wales. Of course, the re-establishment of Hebrew in Israel following a 2000-year lapse is perhaps the best success story about reviving a language and enshrining its usage in everyday life. This language revival movement has also visited Louisiana.

### The Case of Louisiana

Louisiana has traditionally been a bilingual state. Indeed, it is the only state in the union that is *officially* French-English bilingual (Mazel,

1979). In 1990, roughly 25% of the population of 4.3 million Louisianians identified their ancestry as French, Acadian, or French Canadian, and more than 260,000 Louisianians indicated that they spoke French at home (U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1990).

France claimed the territory of Louisiana in 1682, and French settlers began arriving in a steady stream shortly thereafter. The largest single migration of French speakers to Louisiana occurred from 1759 to about 1785, when thousands of exiled Acadians began arriving in what was then a Spanish colony. They had been expelled from areas of Canada now called New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, in part because they refused to become model English subjects and refused to abandon their language and religion. These *Cajuns*, a derivation of the word *Acadian*, and other French-speaking Louisianians maintained their French language even after the colony was purchased from Napoleon by the United States in 1803 (Louisiana was again temporarily French from 1800 to 1803). In 1806 there was another massive migration of French-speaking individuals to Louisiana, this time about 9,000 Creoles, 6,000 of whom were Black, fleeing the revolution in Haiti (Brasseaux & Conrad, 1992). Louisiana's first governor, monolingual English-speaking William Claiborne, lamented, "not one in fifty of the old inhabitants appear to me to understand the English language" (cited in Crawford, 1992, p. 40). When Louisiana became a state in 1812, it was the first and last state admitted in which native English-speakers were in the minority (Crawford, 1992).

Many of the French-speaking communities in Louisiana were tight-knit, and located in isolated, lowland areas of the state. They clung tenaciously to their language and heritage, referring to the English-speaking settlers who began arriving in the state as *Les Américains*, well into the twentieth century. Throughout the

Louisiana has traditionally been a bilingual state.

nineteenth century and until about 1920, entire communities in South Louisiana were filled with White Cajuns and Black Creoles, who coexisted happily while speaking no English. When the legendary Huey Long campaigned for governor in 1924 and 1928, he needed the aid of a French interpreter when he gave his stump speeches in the Southwest region of Louisiana called Acadiana (Williams, 1969).

### French Language Threatened

Following the end of World War I, isolationist and anti-foreign sentiment in the United States was particularly strong. There was a movement throughout state legislatures to limit the teaching of foreign languages in schools. In the midwest, in states such as Nebraska, this sentiment was primarily anti-German (Alexander, 1980; Crawford, 1992). In Louisiana, this sentiment was decidedly anti-French. The Louisiana state legislature responded to this popular sentiment by passing legislation making it illegal to teach in French in Louisiana schools (Mazel, 1979). This marked the decline of the language in what is still an officially bilingual state.

Numerous older Cajuns have shared with me their experiences of being physically punished and mentally humiliated for speaking French while on school grounds. One Cajun woman described how a Catholic nun ridiculed her on a regular basis for her thick French accent at school (Mme. Blanchard, personal communication November 1, 1992). She was also punished for using the French word *mais* which she habitually used to preface her sentences. She was forced to write the phrase "I will not say *mais* in school," hundreds of times, and often wrote the phrase even before she was punished—because she was sure she would slip up and say it anyway. Others told of being paddled, kneeling on rice, or of having to put their nose in the corner of the classroom for speaking French

at school. Some told of whispering to each other in French, lest a school official overhear them, and punish them.

Those who spoke French in Louisiana during this period of anti-foreign passion were made to feel inferior to English-speaking Louisianians. The daughter of an elderly French-speaking woman explained that her mother so closely associated the French accent with ignorance that she could not understand why bilingual Cajun governor Edwin Edwards was not ashamed to speak publicly with such heavily accented English (Sue Starling, personal communication, November 12, 1991). Moreover, many Cajuns came to believe that not only was their English substandard, but so was their French. To this day, it is hard to initiate a conversation with a French-speaking Cajun or Creole without first hearing an apology for the way they speak. Their conversations often begin, "I don't speak the good French, *non*," or "*Je parle pas le bon français*." What many Louisiana French-speakers have never been told, however, is that their way of speaking is unique and has been classified as a language—an indigenous language of Louisiana (Daigle, 1984).

### Resurgence of French Pride

During the last thirty years, there has been a transformation in the way the Cajun French culture and language are viewed. Where there was once hostility to native French speakers, there is now a sense of urgency to preserve the threatened language (Caldas & Caron-Caldas, 1992; Lowy, Fishman, Genner, Gottesman, & Milan, 1985). This is due in part to the formation of a state government agency called The Council for the Development of French in Louisiana (CODOFIL) in the 1960s. Its primary goal is to promote French speaking in Louisiana for the "economic, cultural, and tourist benefit of the state" (Elaine Clément, personal communication,

Where there was once hostility to native French speakers, there is now a sense of urgency to preserve the threatened language.

November 6, 1997).

CODOFIL initiated a major push to teach French in all elementary schools. Hundreds of French teachers have been brought into the state from Francophone countries. In 1995, for example, Louisiana brought 25 teachers from France, 85 from Belgium, 14 from French-speaking Canadian provinces, and 5 from other Francophone countries (Boudreaux, 1995). Moreover, French immersion programs have sprung up in several Louisiana parishes, where thousands of Louisiana children are now instructed primarily in French. Thus, though practically an entire generation of French speakers was lost due to official and unofficial harassment of French speakers, a new generation of French-English bilinguals is emerging—and, incidentally, flourishing academically (Bankens & Akins, 1989).

The resurrection of French in Louisiana is occurring within the greater, emerging worldview that maintaining minority languages is a social justice imperative of government (Corson, 1992). Furthermore, governments can no longer justify refusing students' dual language instruction on pedagogical grounds. There is an accumulating body of research that points to the effectiveness of foreign language immersion programs in not only teaching a second language (Genesee, 1987; Lambert & Tucker, 1972), but, as mentioned earlier, in promoting higher cognitive abilities in children (Swain & Lapkin, 1985).

The bilingual-academic performance hypothesis has been bolstered by studies that indicate that students in language immersion programs score as well as or better than their monolingual schoolmates, even though they receive all of their subject matter instruction in the second language (Boudreaux & Caldas, 1998a, 1998b; Campbell, 1984; Lambert & Tucker, 1972; Lapkin & Swain, 1984). The same success has been noted for two-way bilingual programs, which are operating in a total of 204 U.S.

schools, and which are primarily focused on Spanish-English (Christian, Montone, Lindholm, & Carranza, 1997). (Two-way bilingual programs are much like Louisiana's French-immersion programs, differing principally in that they include students from the target language background [e.g., Spanish] as well as English.)

There is much to learn from the Louisiana experience. For one, it is not English speaking in America that is threatened. What is threatened is the bilingualism that many children bring to school. Like the Cajuns of the 1920s, some bilingual children of the 1990s are still made to feel inferior to their monolingual counterparts.

### **Language Use at Home**

On a personal note, the author and his wife's extensively documented family experience of trying to rear three bilingual children has been that it takes continuous, concerted effort to ensure that children become proficient in the non-English home language (Caldas & Caron-Caldas, 1992, 1997). The English language has been the easy part—and it plays second fiddle to French in our home.

In spite of the fact that we have spoken to our son in French since birth, have immersed him in other French-speaking cultures and French-speaking schools, and have taken every opportunity to glorify his French-speaking heritage, we have not been able to isolate him from the influences of the prevalent adolescent American peer culture. This became painfully clear to us when we asked our son if he spoke French with other French-speaking students in his middle school. His answer was an unequivocal, flat, "no." His reason? "It's not cool" (John Caldas, personal communication, March 21, 1997).

To us, it is crystal clear: in spite of our best efforts to gallicize him, our son has turned out to be a pretty typical all-American boy, albeit a bilingual one. Our 10-year-old twin girls, however, who have been in a

... maintaining minority languages is a social justice imperative of government.

. . . we are perhaps witnessing an important key to revitalizing French in our state: the growth of school French immersion programs.

French immersion program since 1995, not only speak significantly more French in the home, but have a more favorable attitude toward bilingualism (at least for the moment), than does our son (Caldas et al., 1998). Thus, we are perhaps witnessing an important key to revitalizing French in our state: the growth of school French immersion programs.

To suggest that it is somehow criminal to speak to children at home in a language other than English is itself ridiculous, bordering on the absurd. This kind of thinking has not perpetuated English as the dominant language of the United States. *Au contraire* (sorry, judge), it has fueled the irrational xenophobia that has periodically swept the country and continues to endanger our rich linguistic heritage.

What is the antidote to this kind of irrationality? First of all, knowledge of the facts, and the dissemination of that knowledge, is helpful. It is well documented that the vast majority of immigrants to the United States are eager to learn English. Indeed, second generation children are not only competent speakers of English, but no longer even prefer to speak the native language of their immigrant parents (McCollum, 1993; Portes & Schauffler, 1994).

What about situations like Louisiana's, where children fluent in English are being taught in French and are thus attaining fluency in the second language while learning the regular school subject matter? Quite simply, if preservation of the second language is the goal, then there is probably no better way to ensure its survival. Moreover, there is a plethora of research reports that point to the academic competence, and even supremacy, of the bilingual products of immersion programs (Bankens & Akins, 1989; Boudreaux & Caldas, 1998a, 1998b; Christian, 1994; Snow, 1990).

## Conclusion

Louisiana has come full circle: from a predominantly French-speaking

state, to an officially bilingual one, to one that was aggressively extinguishing its French, and finally to one that has decided to preserve its French-speaking heritage. It is accomplishing this by teaching elementary school children in French immersion schools the state-mandated academic curriculum in French. These children are not only becoming proficient bilinguals, but they are thriving academically (Boudreaux & Caldas, 1998a, 1998b).

An important challenge now facing the state's various immersion programs is how to continue the success of the elementary school programs into the higher school levels. Research suggests it could take as many as eight years of extensive exposure to the second language for a child to achieve native-like proficiency in that language (Collier, 1987, 1988). Most of Louisiana's programs, which have been adding one French immersion grade per year, have currently reached grade seven. If the goal of these programs is a balanced bilingual, then immersion programs need to be extended upward into the middle schools, and perhaps even up through the high school level. Adolescence poses a formidable challenge to maintaining a minority language, as students feel strong societal and peer pressure to conform linguistically (Christian, 1994; Landry & Allard, 1991). Getting children to spontaneously speak a non-English language with their teenaged American peers is perhaps the ultimate test of success for any program dedicated to preserving a foreign language on American soil. Hopefully, Louisiana's gallic stubbornness will help provide the edge that will no doubt be needed to help it pass this important linguistic milestone on the way to preserving its rich linguistic heritage.

## References

- Alexander, K. (1980). *School law*. St. Paul: West Publishers.
- Association of Catholic Principals of

- Montreal. (1969, June). A brief to the commission of inquiry on the position of the French language and on language rights in Quebec. Montreal, Canada.
- Balkan, L. (1970). *Les effets du bilinguisme français-anglais sur les aptitudes intellectuelles*. Bruxelles: Aimav.
- Bankens, B., & Akins, D. (1989). *French immersion comparative data Stanford 7-plus achievement test at Prien elementary school* (Research Report No. 90-017-422-04). Lake Charles, LA: Calcasieu Parish School Board.
- Bankston, C., Caldas, S. J., & Zhou, M. (1997). The academic achievement of Vietnamese American students: Ethnicity as social capital. *Sociological Focus*, 30, 1.
- Bankston, C. L., & Zhou, M. (1995). Effects of minority-language literacy on the academic achievement of Vietnamese youths in New Orleans. *Sociology of Education*, 68, 1-17.
- Ben-Zeev, S. (1977). Mechanisms by which childhood bilingualism affects understanding of language and cognitive structures. In P. A. Homby (Ed.), *Bilingualism: Psychological, social and educational implications* (pp. 29-55). New York: Academic.
- Bialystok, E. (1988). Levels of bilingualism and levels of linguistic awareness. *Developmental Psychology*, 24, 560-567.
- Boudreaux, N., & Caldas, S. J. (1998a, March). *A comparison of French immersion and non-immersion LEAP test results*. Paper presented at the 1998 annual meeting of the Louisiana Educational Research Association, Shreveport, LA.
- Boudreaux, N., & Caldas, S. C. (1998b, April). *Foreign language immersion: A key to success on standardized tests*. A paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, CA.
- Boudreaux, R. (1995, March 26). Acadiana may be more French than we think. *The Sunday Advertiser*, p. D-1.
- Brasseaux, C. A., & Conrad, G. R. (1992). *The road to Louisiana: The Saint Domingue refugees*. University of Southwestern Louisiana (Lafayette): Center for Louisiana Studies.
- Caldas, S. J., & Caron-Caldas, S. (1992). Rearing bilingual children in a monolingual culture: A Louisiana experience. *American Speech*, 67, 290-296.
- Caldas, S. J., & Caron-Caldas, S. (1996, April). *A case-study in family French-immersion and academic achievement*. A paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New York, NY.
- Caldas, S. J., & Caron-Caldas, S. (1997). Cultural influences on French/English language dominance of three bilingual children. *Language, Culture, and Curriculum*, 10, 139-155.
- Caldas, S. J., Caldas, S. C., Caldas, J. T., Caldas, S. V., & Caldas, V. S. (1998, April). *Language immersion and cultural identity: Do real Americans speak only English?* A paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, CA.
- Campbell, R. N. (1984). The immersion education approach to foreign language teaching. In *Studies on immersion education: A collection for United States educators* (pp. 114-143). Sacramento: California State Department of Education.
- Carringer, D. (1974). Creative thinking abilities of a Mexican youth. The relationship of bilingualism. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 5 (4), 492-505.
- Castellanos, D. (1992). A polyglot nation. In S. J. Crawford (Ed.), *Language loyalties: A source book on the official English controversy* (pp. 13-18). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Christian, D. (1994). *Two-way bilingual education: Students learning through two languages*. Santa Cruz, CA:

- National Center for Research on Cultural Diversity and Second Language Learning.
- Christian, D., Montone, C. L., Lindholm, K. J., & Carranza, I. (1997). *Profiles in two-way immersion education*. McHenry, IL: Delta Systems and Center for Applied Linguistics.
- Collier, V. P. (1987). Age and rate of acquisition of second language for academic purposes. *TESOL Quarterly*, 21, 617–641.
- Collier, V. P. (1988). The effect of age on acquisition of a second language for school. *New Focus*, No. 2. Washington, DC: The National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education.
- Corson, D. (1992). Bilingual education policy and social justice. *Education Policy*, 7, 45–69.
- Crawford, J. (1992). *Hold your tongue*. New York: Addison-Wesley.
- Daigle, J. O. (1984). *A dictionary of the Cajun language*. Ann Arbor, MI: Edwards Brothers.
- Diaz, R. (1983). Thought and two languages: The impact of bilingualism on cognitive development. In E. W. Gordon (Ed.), *Review of research in education* (Vol. 10, pp. 23–54). Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.
- Edwards, J. (1994). *Multilingualism*. New York: Routledge.
- Franklin, B. (1932). *The autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* (Compiled and edited, with notes, by J. Bigelow). New York: Walter J. Black.
- Gaines, J. H. (1996). The talking drum. *Journal of Black Psychology*, 22, 202–222.
- Genesee, F. (1987). *Learning through two languages: Studies of immersion and bilingual education*. New York: Newbury House.
- Gordon, M. M. (1964). *Assimilation in American life*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hakuta, K. (1986). *The mirror of language*. New York: Basic Books.
- Ianco-Worrall, A. (1972). Bilingualism and cognitive development. *Child Development*, 43, 1390–1400.
- Jarvis, L. H., Danks, J. H., & Merriman, W. E. (1995). The effect of bilingualism on cognitive ability: A test of the level of bilingualism hypothesis. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 16, 293–308.
- Jespersen, O. (1922). *Language. Its nature, development, and origin*. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd.
- Lambert, W. E., & Tucker, G. R. (1972). *Bilingual education of children: The St. Lambert experiment*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.
- Landry, R., & Allard, R. (1991). Can schools promote additive bilingualism in minority group children? In L. Malavé & G. Duquette (Eds.), *Language, culture and cognition* (pp. 198–231). Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters.
- Lapkin, S., & Swain, M. (1984). Research update. In *Language and society: The immersion phenomenon* (Vol. 12, pp. 48–54). Ottawa, Canada: Commissioner of Official Languages of Canada.
- Lowy, E. G., Fishman, J. A., Gertner, M. H., Gottesman, I., & Milan, W. S. (1985). Ethnic activists view the ethnic revival and its language consequence. In J. A. Fishman, M. H. Gertner, E. G. Lowy, & W. G. Milan (Eds.), *The rise and fall of the ethnic revival: Perspectives on language and ethnicity* (pp. 283–301). Berlin: Mouton Publishers.
- Makin, L., Campbell, J., & Jones Diaz, C. (1995). *One childhood, many languages*. Sydney: Harper Educational.
- Mazel, J. (1979). *Louisiane: Terre d'aventure*. Paris: Laffont.
- McCollum, P. (1993, April). *Learning to value English: Cultural capital in a two-way bilingual program*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Atlanta, GA.



- Ozmon, H. A., & Craver, S. M. (1995). *Philosophical foundations of education*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Peal, E., & Lambert, W. (1962). Relation of bilingualism to intelligence. *Psychological Monographs*, 76, 1–23.
- Portes, A., & Schauffler, R. (1994). Language and the second generation: Bilingualism yesterday and today. In R. G. Rumbaut & S. Pedrazgo (Eds.), *International migration review* (Vol. 28, pp. 640–661). New York: Wadsworth.
- Portes, A., & Schauffler, R. (1996). Language acquisition and loss among children of immigrants. In S. Pedraza & R. G. Rumbaut (Eds.), *Origins and destinies: Immigration, race, ethnicity in America* (pp. 432–443). New York: Wadsworth.
- Reynold, D. (1928). In *Bieler Jahrbuch — Annales Bienneses II*, 105.
- Scott, S. (1973). *The relation of divergent thinking to bilingualism: Cause or effect?* Unpublished research report: Montreal, Quebec: McGill University.
- Snow, M. A. (1990). Language immersion: An overview and comparison. In A. M. Padilla, H. Fairchild, & C. Valadez (Eds.), *Foreign language education* (pp. 109–126). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Swain, M., & Lapkin, S. (1985). *Evaluating bilingual education: A Canadian case study*. Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters.
- U.S. Department of Commerce. Bureau of the Census. *1990 STF-3A Magnetic Computer Tape*. Washington: Bureau of the Census.
- Weisgerber, L. (1966). Vorteile und gefahren der zweisprachigkeit. *Wirkendes Wort*, 16 (2), 73–89.
- Williams, T. H. (1969). *Huey Long*. New York: Knopf.
- Woman ordered to speak English*. (1995, August 29). *The Daily Advertiser*, p. A-5.

## Note New Addresses for NNELL

(Changes are in bold type)

Nancy Rhodes  
Executive Secretary, NNELL  
Center for Applied Linguistics  
**4646 40th St. N.W.**  
**Washington, DC 20016-1859**

Marcia Harmon Rosenbusch, Editor  
*Learning Languages*  
Department of Curriculum and Instruction  
**N131 Lagomarcino Hall**  
Iowa State University  
Ames, Iowa 50011-2205

# Total Physical Response Storytelling: A Communicative Approach to Language Learning

Valeri Marsh  
Phoenix, Arizona

With a natural  
language-  
acquisition  
process,  
fluency is  
promoted.

Language teachers for years have relied on Total Physical Response (TPR) as an effective method for long-term retention of vocabulary. Popularized in the 1960s and 1970s by Dr. James Asher (1986), TPR enables students to acquire vocabulary in a manner similar to how a child learns his or her first language. All language input is immediately comprehensible, often hands-on, and allows students to pass through a silent period whereby they build a comprehension base before ever being asked to speak. Once language is internalized, production emerges, thus distinguishing TPR from traditional "listen-and-repeat" methods.

In a TPR lesson, teachers model actions that students then mimic as they hear, in the target language, vocabulary words combined with commands. As a particular action is associated with each vocabulary word or phrase, students rapidly and naturally acquire language, while establishing long-lasting associations between the brain and the muscles. Students who learn language via TPR will not soon forget it. Yet TPR, when used exclusively, has three serious limitations:

1. It focuses on the imperative mode, generally excluding the rest of the target language's sentence forms.
2. It uses primarily single-item vocabulary words or short phrases.
3. It fosters passive language skills.

As a result, teaching exclusively with TPR does not allow the learner to develop the narrative and descriptive modes needed for meaningful communication. In addition, TPR teachers and students eventually tire of execut-

ing commands and thus tend to run into the proverbial "TPR wall"—until now!

TPR Storytelling (TPRS), which was developed in the 1980s and 1990s by Blaine Ray of Bakersfield, California, provides the critical vehicle—storytelling—for utilizing and expanding acquired vocabulary. High-interest stories contextualize the vocabulary, enabling students to hear and see a story and then to act out, retell, revise, and rewrite it. Traditionally, we often implore our students to "think *in* the target language," overlooking the fact that they have not yet mastered enough language to do so. By using easy-to-follow stories and pictures, we can provide students with the basis they need to "think *in*." In addition, the nature of stories offers endless variety in the classroom. Students add humor, creativity, and originality to their own versions of the stories. By taking ownership in this way, students are highly motivated to share these stories with other students, thereby gaining valuable practice in communication.

TPRS provides benefits additional to those resulting from traditional language teaching approaches. Through consistent and comprehensible exposure to grammatically correct language, students develop an "ear" for language. With a natural language-acquisition process, fluency is promoted. Students no longer edit their speech and interrupt their message to think about grammar rules—a reason language production in traditional classes is typically low and slow. TPRS eliminates the need for memorization of lengthy vocabulary lists and complex grammar rules, formidable

stumbling blocks for most students. In contrast, remembering a story line, especially one students hear, see, and act out, is natural and virtually effortless. The low level of stress with TPRS also enhances fluency, invites participation, and increases motivation.

Although formal grammar instruction in TPRS is delayed, teachers at two different schools have reported that several years of test results indicate that grammar is, nevertheless, successfully acquired early in the program (J. Nielson, personal communication, April 1997; B. Ray, personal communication, September 17, 1998). In spring 1993, at my own school—Phoenix Country Day School, Arizona—middle school students in a pilot pre-Spanish I introductory TPRS program actually scored above the national average on the Level One National Spanish Exam, a discrete-point grammar test given to high school students who have completed one year of Spanish I. Equally remarkable are the results being achieved at the high school level, both in Advanced Placement Test scores and enrollment for language study (Seely, 1998).

How can a teacher replicate these results? A brief outline of the sequence of steps for using TPR Storytelling in foreign language classrooms follows.

### **Step One: Use TPR, TPR Practice, and Scenarios to Teach Vocabulary**

The teacher uses TPR to teach a small group of words. After introducing a word and its associated action, the class gains additional comprehensible input by “playing with” the vocabulary in TPR practice. Using gestures, manipulatives, pictures, and familiar vocabulary, the teacher further reinforces new vocabulary by giving students a series of commands they execute and short scenarios they act out.

For example, in a beginning-level story from the textbook *¡Cuéntame más!* (Marsh & Anderson, 1993), the

following vocabulary items are taught via TPR: coyote, sees, bird, wants to eat, grabs, offers. Sample commands might include the following:

Eat.  
Eat a big plate of spinach. (Yuck!).  
Eat four ice cream cones. (Yum!).  
See a small bird and a big coyote.  
Grab the coyote.  
Offer it to the student on your right.  
Offer that student a big bird.  
Grab a coyote and put it on that student's head.

After practicing the vocabulary with short commands, the students act out a scenario while the teacher narrates it. A sample scenario might look like this:

There is a tiny bird. (“Student bird” takes a bow and says “tweet tweet.”)  
There is a big coyote. (“Student coyote” takes a bow and “howls.”)  
The big coyote has four sandwiches.  
The tiny bird wants to eat the sandwiches, so the coyote offers the bird two sandwiches.  
Yum!

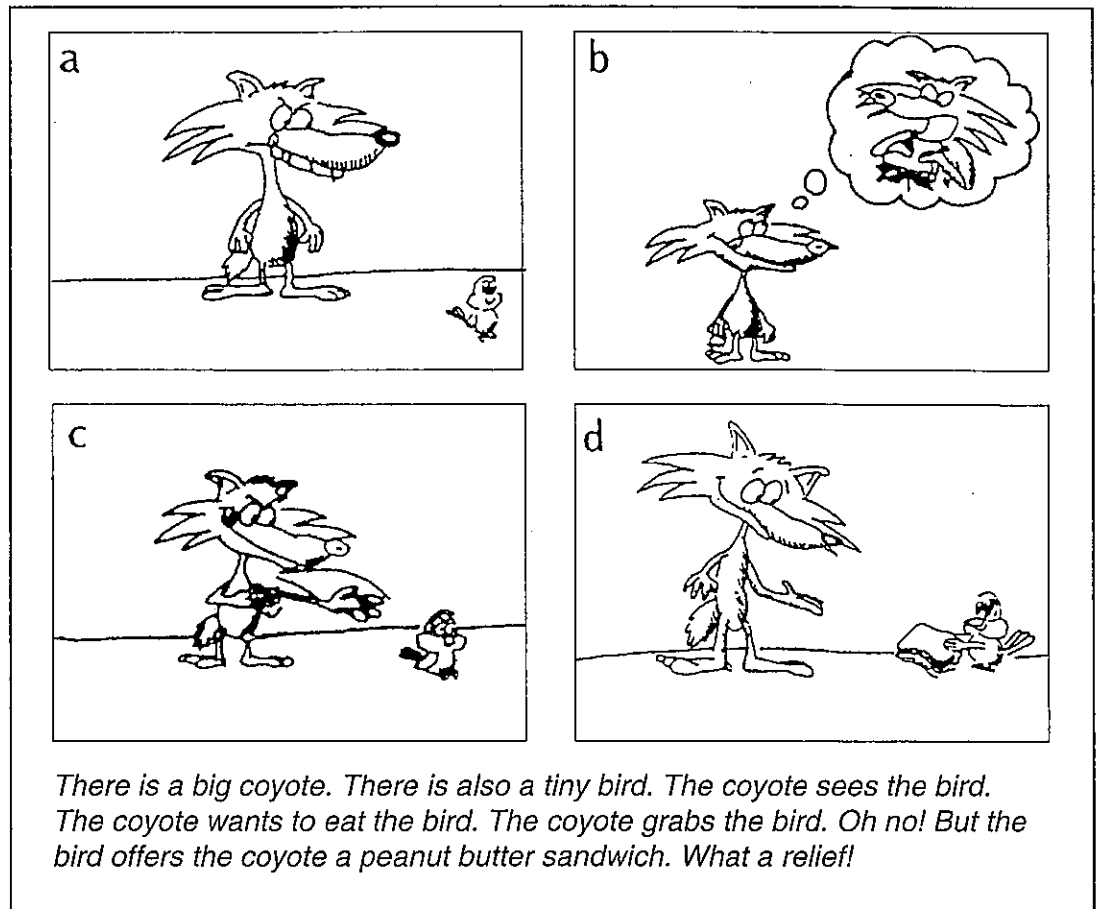
### **Step Two: Students Produce and Practice Vocabulary Words**

Once students have internalized vocabulary words through TPR practice and scenarios, the class divides into student pairs to practice producing the words. One student in the pair reads the word and the other gives the corresponding gesture, then they switch roles. Next, one student gives the gesture and the other says the corresponding word.

### **Step Three: Teacher Presents a Mini-Story, Which Students Retell and Revise**

Using student actors, puppets, or pictures from the text, the teacher then narrates a mini-story containing the targeted vocabulary words. The mini-story and illustrations corresponding to the vocabulary words presented earlier appear in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Mini-Story to Teach Vocabulary



The teacher uses a variety of techniques to increase exposure to the story and to help the students start telling it:

1. Pause in the story to allow students to fill in words or act out gestures.
2. Make mistakes and let the students correct them.
3. Ask short-answer and open-ended questions, for example: Is the coyote big or little? Who does the coyote grab? What is the coyote's name? Where does it live?

Once the story is internalized, students then retell it to a partner.

Once the story is internalized, students then retell it to a partner. Students may tell the story from memory or may use illustrations or guide words written on the board as cues. The class then reconvenes and student volunteers retell the story for the other students to act out. The teacher may also help the class revise the story, changing a few details about the plot or characters to create a new revision to the original story line.

#### **Step Four: Teacher Presents a Longer Story, Which Students Retell and Revise**

Mini-stories are designed by the teacher to prepare students to narrate, read, and write a longer story that uses the vocabulary from the mini-stories. When the entire group of mini-stories has been mastered by the class, the teacher then repeats Step Three to introduce the longer story. Once this story has been presented and acted out, it is reinforced with readings and exercises from the textbook. As with mini-stories, students build upon the longer story, using their existing language skills to embellish the plot, personalize the characters, and create revisions.

#### **Step Five: Students Use New and Old Vocabulary to Create Original Stories**

The teacher then gives students opportunities to capitalize on their creativity by writing, illustrating, acting

out, and sharing their own original stories. Additional activities the teacher may wish to include are: drama, creative writing, videotaping, creating student booklets, contests, group/pair work, etc.

## Conclusion

These are the simple steps at the heart of a comprehensive methodology that helps students rapidly acquire, internalize, and produce sophisticated language in a fully communicative approach. TPRS is being used with growing numbers of students at all levels, in foreign language, ESL, and bilingual classes with unparalleled success.

**Notes:** More information about TPRS training, materials, and test results can be obtained by contacting TPR

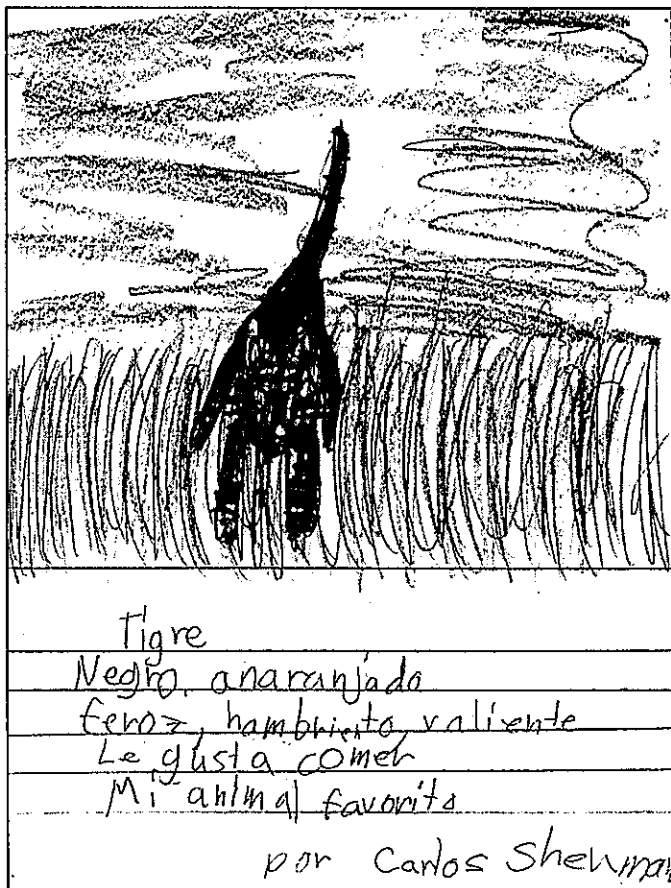
Storytelling Network & Workshops:  
800-877-4738, tprisfun@aol.com, or  
www.tprstorytelling.com.

The author thanks Carol Gaab and Contee Seely for assistance in reviewing this article.

## References

- Asher, J. (1986). *Learning another language through actions: The complete teacher's guidebook* (3rd ed.). Los Gatos, CA: Sky Oaks.
- Marsh, V., & Anderson, C. (1993). *Cuéntame más*. Phoenix: CW Publishing.
- Seeley, C. (1998). *TPR is more than commands—At all levels* (2nd ed.). Berkeley, CA: Command Performance Language Institute.

## Children's Classroom Creations I



**Corey Sherman**  
Grade 4  
Glen Urquhart School  
Beverly Farms, MA  
Barbara Kelley  
Spanish Teacher

## *Texas Educators Form a Unique Alliance: The Texas-Spain Initiative*

---

A partnership between Texas and Spain is under way to promote educational, economic, and cultural exchange through language teaching and learning. The alliance, called the Texas-Spain Initiative, represents a unique instance in which Texas public schools have joined with the cultural ministry of an overseas country to improve and expand the teaching of language and culture.

The new Languages Other Than English Center for Educator Development (LOTE CED) at the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) in Austin is collaborating with three organizations to coordinate the activities of the Texas-Spain Initiative. Organizations include the Texas Education Agency, Spain's Ministry of Culture and Education, and Texas's State Board for Educator Certification. Several programs are planned in connection with the Texas-Spain Initiative. Present and future activities include Summer Institutes in Spain, a Visiting Teacher Program, a Teacher Assistant Program, Spanish Academies in Texas Schools, and student and teacher exchange programs.

The 1998 Summer Institutes were the first activities that the LOTE CED facilitated. As part of this program, more than 50 Texas Spanish-language and bilingual educators traveled to Spain this past July for professional development in Spanish language, culture, and literature. Of the 50 teachers who went to Spain, 34 Texas K-8 bilingual teachers traveled to Madrid to attend a three-week course on children's literature, and 21 Texas high school Spanish-language teachers went to Salamanca for courses on Spanish language and culture. "Using what they have learned from the courses, the teachers will share their experiences by providing professional

development opportunities to other Texas teachers in their districts," says Sylvia Juárez, Texas-Spain Initiative Coordinator.

Also this past summer, approximately 50 teachers from Spain traveled to Texas to take a variety of teaching positions in Texas public schools for periods of one to six years. "The demand for teachers in Texas is always high," says Lillian King, Director of the LOTE CED, "This Visiting Teacher Program is a great opportunity to answer the demand while giving students the opportunity to learn language and culture from natives of Spain."

The LOTE CED provided the teachers from Spain with a week-long orientation to Texas and its education system. "We wanted to prepare these visiting teachers from Spain for life in the United States. The orientation helped them understand the school system in Texas and fostered their awareness of cultural differences in classroom practice, such as classroom management techniques or parental involvement," says Sylvia Juárez.

The Texas-Spain Initiative also includes a teacher exchange program, which is a one-year post-to-post exchange of positions between Texas teachers and teachers from Spain. Four teachers are participating in the teacher exchange program this year. In addition, the LOTE CED will coordinate exchange programs for students and teaching assistants. Plans for these programs are currently under way.

Lillian King and Sylvia Juárez invite educators to learn more about the Texas-Spain Initiative and the new LOTE CED at SEDL. Contact them at 512-476-6861, or by E-mail: [leking@sedl.org](mailto:leking@sedl.org) and [sjuarez@sedl.org](mailto:sjuarez@sedl.org).

# Scoring Rubrics: Changing the Way We Grade

*Peggy Boyles  
Putnam City Schools  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma*

Outside a classroom in an elementary school, a passerby overheard a student who was taking a test ask the teacher, "Should we answer what is right or what we think you think is right?" This incident indicates that students may view a test as an exercise in "guessing what the teacher wants" in order to get a good grade.

In the culture of American schools, students have grown accustomed to being graded on the number of "right" or "wrong" answers they give on a test, such as correctly spelling a list of words or accurately matching pictures to corresponding words or phrases. Students' scores on such a test are an objective count of the number of right answers. This type of scoring is readily understood by students and is easily graded by the teacher because it requires minimal analysis and interpretation.

As teachers implement performance-based assessments into their classrooms, however, they struggle to provide students with a clear, objective description of a superior, good, or average performance and to translate each student's performance into an objective grade in the grade book. O'Malley and Valdez Pierce (1996) propose that in order to make teacher judgment valid and more reliable, a scoring scale referred to as a rubric or a scoring rubric be used. In this method, numerical values are associated with performance levels. The authors clarify that the criteria for each performance level of a rubric must be precisely defined in terms of what the student must do to demonstrate skill or proficiency at each level.

Scoring rubrics minimize ambiguity

by defining a concrete way to grade varied tasks. Rubrics can be developed for oral interviews as well as for student-made vocabulary games. In addition, by making known the scoring rubrics before students begin the task, teachers offer students a clear understanding of what criteria must be met and what level of performance students must achieve to earn a certain grade. Accordingly, students can use rubrics to assess their performance in preparation for the teacher's assessment.

Teachers often are concerned that assigning an objective, numerical grade to a subjective activity such as a face-to-face, paired conversation would be unfair or biased. Others worry that, if challenged, they might not be able to document the grade given with concrete evidence such as that provided by a traditional paper-and-pencil objective test. Upon reflection, however, teachers will realize that many things that they evaluate both inside and outside of the classroom are subjective, yet are nevertheless reviewed and rated. To elicit the maximum performance from students, the teacher will model a strong performance, give "anchors" or examples of outstanding work, and provide students with time to practice.

There are two principal types of rubrics: holistic and analytic. Five basic steps are helpful in designing a rubric:

- 1) Determine the type of rubric,
- 2) Determine the range of the scores possible,
- 3) Describe the criteria for each score or rating,

Scoring rubrics minimize ambiguity by defining a concrete way to grade varied tasks.

- 4) Share the rubric with a small group of students for their feedback and revise if necessary, and
- 5) Standardize the process with a set of anchors or samples.

A *holistic rubric* is used to give students a single score based on several criteria. For example, using a holistic rubric to score an oral description of a photograph, the criteria could be: overall vocabulary use, comprehensibility, and preparation (see Figure 1). The sample scoring rubric in Figure 1 contains three levels, Emerging, Developing, and Expanding, each of which addresses the three stated criteria and requires a slightly more demanding performance. Because teachers need to score a student's performance according to the overall category, not by the individual criteria within each category, different teachers might score the same student differently because of their varied interpretations of the descriptors.

An *analytic rubric* is used to give students a score on each of several criteria, which are then added together for the final score. The analytic rubric is advantageous to students because it provides them with greater feedback on their performance. For example, when grading a face-to-face conversation between two students using an

analytic rubric, the teacher might rate and score students at different levels (1, 3, or 5 points) for each of the criteria (see Figure 2). There is even a greater possibility with the analytic rubric than with the holistic that different teachers might score the same student differently because of their varied interpretations of the increased number of descriptors.

Criteria may be weighted (given higher possible scores) to reflect the emphasis the teacher has placed on them in instruction. In many instances, the parts that are more recently acquired are given a greater weight in the scoring. In the Paired Conversation Rubric, in Figure 2, for example, the criteria of "Language Use," might have been assigned a range of scores of 5, 7, 9 points, if the teacher had wished to provide greater emphasis on it in scoring.

In determining the spread of scores for a new rubric, it is best to start with a limited range of points. For example, a simple 1 = low, 2 = average, and 3 = high is less discriminating than a 1–8 point range, but often makes it easier for students to understand their score. The descriptors that correspond to each score should be clear enough for others to use without explanation and should address the full range of student responses.

The analytic rubric is advantageous to students because it provides them with greater feedback on their performance.

Figure 1: Sample Holistic Scoring Rubric for Oral Description of a Photograph

<p><b>3 Expanding</b></p> <p>Uses varied and interesting vocabulary from previous and current lessons. Communicates message with few grammatical errors. Demonstrates careful preparation.</p>
<p><b>2 Developing</b></p> <p>Uses limited vocabulary from previous and current lessons. Communicates message with some difficulty because of grammatical errors. Demonstrates some preparation.</p>
<p><b>1 Emerging</b></p> <p>Uses a few words from previous and current lessons. Does not communicate message effectively. Demonstrates little or no preparation.</p>



Figure 2: Paired Conversation Rubric

Criteria	1 point	3 points	5 points
Language Use	Heavy reliance on English.	Frequently inserts an English word.	Can "talk around" an exact word in order to maintain conversation in Spanish.
Ability to Sustain Conversation	Can say only one or two things about the topic. Unable to go into another conversational topic.	Topic changes often and unnaturally. Can say only one or two things about each topic.	Chooses and sustains one conversational topic throughout (e.g., family).
Conversational Interaction	Interaction is like a "dead tennis ball." No conversational reaction to what is said by partner.	Limited conversational reaction to what is said by partner. Responds, but quickly moves to an unrelated question or statement.	Natural interaction between partners. Each responds by following up on what the other person says.
<b>Scoring:</b>	A = 15 points; B = 11–13 points; C = 5–9 points; D = 3 points		

It is advisable to pilot the rubric with a small group of students, and to revise it if necessary. If all students receive high scores, for example, the rubric may be too easy and the expectations too low. Conversely, if there are no high scores, the rubric may be too difficult, not clearly defined, or not descriptive of the task. It is also possible that if all scores are low the directions may have been misinterpreted or the task is very different from the usual assignments in class. Perhaps most important to the success of rubrics in the classroom is the use of "anchors," or sample pieces of work, to show as concrete examples to students to clarify each level of performance for the task.

In many cases, it is possible to include students in determining the criteria for a scoring rubric. For example, when students are asked to list the elements of a board game that make a game "fun," the teacher has the basis for designing a scoring rubric for student-made games for portfolios or class projects. For example, in a middle school class, students stated that games were more fun when they

required the use of strategies, rather than having a game based only on chance. The rubric in Figure 3 emphasizes the use of both language and cultural awareness, but also includes some of the elements described by the students.

Today more teachers are developing rubrics to communicate better with their students about the progress they are making in the foreign language classroom. Marie Erickson, a Spanish teacher from the Midland Public Schools in Midland, Michigan, shares a scoring rubric for third grade students (see Figure 4). The rubric was developed by a small group, in which Erickson participated, at the 1998 Teacher Partnership Institute sponsored by the National K–12 Foreign Language Resource Center at Iowa State University. The rubric was designed to evaluate students' oral presentations about their families.

As teachers enter into the "area of judgment" in regard to student work, they need the explicit criteria of a rubric to help them rate the quality of students' finished products. Students need rubrics to help them distinguish

Figure 3: Board Games Scoring Rubric

<b>Garage Sale Game</b> 1 point	<b>"Games" Magazine Winner</b> 3 points	<b>Milton Bradley Game</b> 5 points
<b>CRITERIA:</b>		
<u>Game Board</u> Only in "draft" form. Needs more development.	Colorful game board with correct spelling of most words.	Visually attractive and accurate game board with prepared game cards.
<u>Markers</u> No cultural or thematic connection.	Culturally appropriate to theme.	Cultural artifacts that fit the theme.
<u>Vocabulary</u> Uses only one vocabulary group (like color vocabulary in "Candy Land").	Uses at least three vocabulary groups (like people, weapons, and rooms in "Clue").	Uses more than three vocabulary groups.
<u>Conversational Strategies</u> Players use little conversation. Outcome left to chance.	Players read questions from card to obtain information.	Players ask questions and elicit varied answers. Must interact with others to win the game.

Figure 4: Family Descriptions

<b>Family Sketch</b> 2 points	<b>Family Photograph</b> 4 points	<b>Family Portrait</b> 6 points
<b>CRITERIA:</b>		
<u>Vocabulary</u> Uses 1 word to describe family members.	Uses short phrases to describe family members.	Uses complete sentences to describe family members.
<u>Creativity</u> Uses only spoken words, no visuals.	Uses 1–2 visuals; shows pictures and actions to clarify words.	Uses 3 or more visuals, actions, or props.
<u>Quality</u> Difficult to understand presentation.	Clear, but no additional information.	Interesting; very clear; detailed information.

between acceptable and unacceptable performance. This process lays the groundwork for setting standards. As students see exemplary work and help design class rubrics, their own standards increase and they have an investment in their assessment outcomes.

## Reference

O'Malley, J. M., & Valdez Pierce, L. (1996). *Authentic assessment for English language learners: Practical approaches for teachers*. USA: Addison-Wesley.

# Classroom Resources

---

## French

Bojanowski, N. A., (Text), & Laverdère, B., (Illustrations). (1997). *Si j'étais un animal*. Quebec, Canada: Les éditions du Raton Laveur.

Available from Sosnowski Associates, 58 Sears Road, Wayland, MA 01778; 800-437-7161. Cost is \$7.95, plus shipping.

This is another delightful book published in Canada in the *Raton Laveur* series. The collection is geared to children in the 3- to 8-year-old range. The text is developed around the concept of "*si j'étais*" (if I were) and the pros and cons of being what you are not. The narrator imagines himself an animal and fancies he would then be allowed to do many things that are forbidden to a little boy. But, of course, he would also forego things he does enjoy. The moral is clear: use your imagination but remain true to yourself.

What I particularly like is the use of rhythm and rhyme in the text and the vivid, unusual, colloquial verbs. The illustrations are Dr. Seuss-ish and could easily inspire students to write and draw "*Si j'étais*" books of their own. Even older students, fifth to eighth graders, could enjoy playing with the conditional tense and create interesting storybooks without the burden of conjugating verbs fully.

Davis, A., (Text), & Petricic, D., (Illustrations). (1997). *La grosse patate*. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Les éditions Scholastic.

Available from Sosnowski Associates, 58 Sears Road, Wayland, MA 01778; 800-437-7161. Cost is \$8.99, plus shipping.

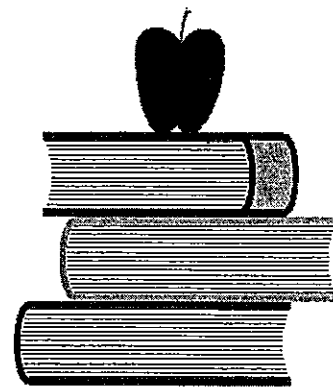
This little book reads like a folktale. Indeed, the dedication, by the illustrator, Dusan Petricic, is to his mother and father who told him the tale of the enormous potato many years ago. It is the story of a farmer who plants a potato that grows and grows into the biggest potato plant ever. When the time comes to pull the potato out of the ground, the farmer needs the help of his wife, then his daughter, the dog, the cat, and finally the mouse. Together, they manage to pull the enormous potato out and the whole village is invited to cook and feast on it. When the entire potato has been eaten, so is the story finished.

This is a story with simple language, much repetition, and a format that will be familiar to all children from well-known stories such as *The Old Woman Who Swallowed a Fly* to *The Farmer in the Dell*. They will enjoy the illustrations and the arrangement of illustrations and text on the page. This is an appealing book that can easily be read by the teacher, pantomimed by the students, adapted by older students, or turned into a folktale-type sketch for presentation to parents.

Smith, D. (1991). *Trouve-moi! Un livre pour jouer à cache-cache*. Paris: Albin Michel Jeunesse.

Available from Sosnowski Associates, 58 Sears Road, Wayland, MA 01778; 800-437-7161. Cost is \$17.50, plus shipping.

This is an interactive book in which the object is to find a hidden little cut-out figure. The very young child can hide the figure behind any number of cute picture-flaps: behind the ele-



phant, under the gorilla's foot, in the clouds. The fun is in asking a friend to find the figure. The French text is basic and translates to: Peek-a-boo, where am I? Under the giraffe? Behind the penguin? In the mouth of the lion? This is an amusing way to use and teach prepositions since the simple phrases are repeated in many different contexts. Surprisingly enough, my older students, sixth and seventh graders, enjoyed playing this game among themselves. Perhaps it was the novelty of being allowed to act like younger children. Isn't that one of the pleasures of learning another language? The illustrations are bold, colorful, and simple, with plenty of surprise flaps entertain the children.

## German

Jung, H. (Ed.) (1963). *Spielbare Witze und Sketche für Kinder*. Niedernhausen/Taunus: Möller Verlag.

Available through International Book Import Service, Inc., 2995 Wall Triana Highway, Huntsville, AL 35824-1532; 800-277-4247; Fax; 256-464-0071; E-mail: [ibis@IBIService.com](mailto:ibis@IBIService.com). Cost is \$6.00.

Teachers will find this book to be a great help in making the learning of German fun, since it contains enjoyable games, plays, jokes, and sketches for students of all age levels. It will help teachers learn to integrate simple jokes into the German class, as well as show them how to make the sketches that are included come to life by using simple props and costumes.

*Spielbare Witze und Sketche für Kinder* contains a variety of short sketches, lasting from two to twenty minutes, that can easily be dramatized by beginning students. Most of the props needed can be found at home or in school. The sketches are divided into topics such as "Family and Play," "At the Doctor's Office," "Shopping," and "In a Restaurant."

Students of all ages will enjoy these sketches. The sketches will

enhance students' language learning by simulating real-life situations in which they can use their new language skills.

## Spanish

Líscano, H. & Galué, G. *Infantiles*, Vol. 1 & 2. Caracas: Arce Records C.A.

Available from Edumate Educational Materials, 2231 Morena Blvd., San Diego, CA 92110; 619-275-7117; Fax: 619-275-7120. Cost is \$15.98, for each CD (Volumes 3 and 4 are also available.)

Volume 1: *Don Pepito; El negrito pon; Mambrú; María Moñito El elefante del circo; Los pollitos; El barquito; Patico - Patico; La casita; La trompeta; Pom pom; ¡Qué pequeño el mundo es!; A la rueda rueda; La vaca lechera; Cumpleaños feliz; Payasito; Pinocho; A la víbora de la mar, El chorrillo; Con real y medio; La manzana; Arroz con leche; Los dientes; Duérmase mi niño.*

Volume 2: *Matarilerilerón; Los Chimichimitos; Looney Tunes 1; La cucaracha; En la granja de mi tío; Aserrín, aserrán; Popeye; Tengo una muñeca; Que la baile; Si tu tienes muchas ganas; La marcha de las letras; El ratoncito Miguel; Looney Tunes 2; Tralala; Juguemos en el bosque; Chinito; ¡Ay qué noche tan preciosa!; La estrella azul.*

This two-volume compact disk (CD) set from Venezuela is full of traditional songs, musical rhymes, and game songs for children. The music is upbeat, fun, and engaging. In fact, the songs have been running through my head for days. The beautiful voices of children and adults are clear and easy to follow (which is important because the CDs include no transcription of the words). Volume 1 has 24 songs and Volume 2 has 18. Many are old favorites such as *Los pollitos*, *A la víbora de la mar*, *Juguemos en el bosque*, and *Matarilerilerón*. The CDs also include

songs and rhymes that were new to me including *El chorrito*, *Con real y medio*, and *A la rueda rueda*.

#### *El chorrito*

Allá en la fuente había un chorrito, se hacía grandote se hacía chiquito.

(2x)

Estaba de mal humor pobre chorrito tenía calor. (2x)

Allá en la fuente las hormiguitas van a lavarse las antenitas. (2x)

Estaban de mal humor las hormiguitas tenían calor. (2x)

#### *Con real y medio*

Con real y medio, con real y medio, con real y medio compré una chiva.

(2x)

La chiva tuvo un chivito.

Con real y medio, con real y medio, con real y medio compré una gata.

(2x)

La gata tuvo un gatico.

Tengo la chiva, tengo el chivito, tengo la gata, tengo el gatico y siempre tengo mi real y medio.

(The same verses repeat with more

animals, *una lora, una mona, una pata* until the last line includes all of the animals.)

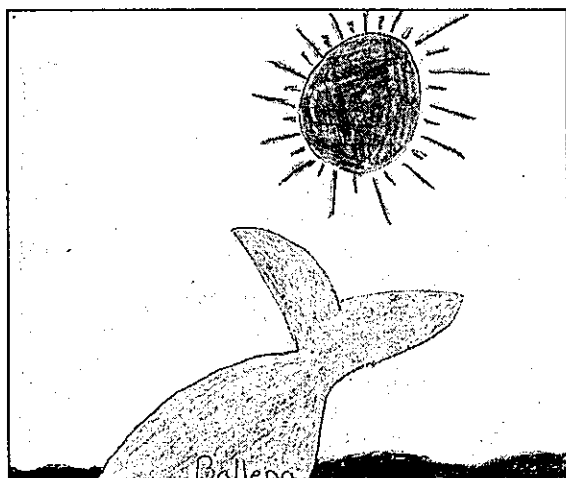
#### *A la rueda rueda*

A la rueda rueda de pan y canela, dame un besito y vete a la escuela, si no quieres ir, acuéstate a dormir.

The traditional songs in Spanish are interspersed with traditional songs from the United States (sung in Spanish), including *Qué pequeño el mundo es*, *En la granja de mi tío*, *Popeye*, and *Cumpleaños feliz* (Ay qué noche tan preciosa, the Venezuelan birthday song is also included), as well as the music from Looney Tunes. This charming collection will be a welcome addition to your music resources and the instrumentals will add a little spice to the songs you already know.

**Note:** There are two songs, one on each CD (*El negrito pon* and *Chinito*) that, although traditional, may be perceived as promoting stereotypes.

## Children's Classroom Creations II



Ballena  
azul, gris  
rápida, deslizante, grande  
le gusta nadar  
Mi animal favorito  
Por Sirena Sherrill

#### **Serenea Sherrill**

Grade 4

Glen Urquhart School

Beverly Farms, MA

Barbara Kelley

Spanish Teacher

## Fall 1998 Conferences

### **November 20–22, 1998**

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, Chicago, IL.  
ACTFL, 6 Executive Plaza, Yonkers, NY 10701-6801; 914-963-8330; Fax:  
914-963-1275; E-mail: actflhq@aol.com.

## Spring 1999 Conferences

### **March 11–13, 1999**

Southern Conference on Language Teaching, Virginia Beach, VA. Lynne McClendon, SCOLT Executive Director, Fulton County Board of Education, 165 Lazy Laurel Chase, Roswell, GA 30076; 770-992-1256; E-mail: lynnemcc@mindspring.com.

### **April 7–10, 1999**

50th Anniversary Conference, Pacific Northwest Council for Languages, Tacoma, WA. Ray Verzasconi, Oregon State University, Kidder Hall 210, Corvallis, OR 97331; 541-737-2146; Fax: 541-737-3563.

### **April 8–11, 1999**

Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages; New York, NY. Northeast Conference at Dickinson College; PO Box 1773, Carlisle, PA 17013-2896; 717-245-1977; Fax: 717-245-1976; E-mail: nectfle@dickinson.edu.

### **April 8–10, 1999**

Southwest Conference on Language Teaching, Reno, NV. Audrey Cournia, Executive Director, SWCOLT, 1348 Coachman Dr., Sparks, NV 89434; 702-358-6943; Fax: 702-358-1605; E-mail: acournia@compuserve.com.

### **April 15–18, 1999**

Central States Conference on Language Teaching, Little Rock, AR. Rosalie Cheatham, CSC Executive Director, Division of International and Second Language Studies, University of Arkansas at Little Rock, 2801 S. University Ave., Little Rock, AR 72204; 501-569-8159.

NNELL is an organization for educators involved in teaching foreign languages to children. The mission of the organization is to promote opportunities for all children to develop a high level of competence in at least one language in addition to their own. NNELL provides leadership, support, and service to those committed to early language learning and coordinates efforts to make language learning in programs of excellence a reality for all children.

NNELL works to accomplish this mission through activities that improve public awareness and support of early language learning. NNELL facilitates cooperation among organizations directly concerned with early language learning; facilitates communication among teachers, teacher educators, parents, program administrators, and policymakers; and disseminates information and guidelines to assist in developing programs of excellence.

NNELL holds its annual meeting at the fall conference of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. Its officers are elected by members through a mail ballot election held annually in the spring.

NNELL is a member of JNCL-NCLIS (Joint National Committee for Languages/National Council for Languages and International Studies). Visit the NNELL website at: [www.educ.iastate.edu/nnell](http://www.educ.iastate.edu/nnell)

## ***NNELL Executive Board***

---

### *President*

Susan Walker  
Parkway Northeast Middle School  
181 Coeur de Ville Drive  
Creve Coeur, MO 63141  
[spwalker@stlnet.com](mailto:spwalker@stlnet.com)

### *First Vice-President*

Christine Brown  
Glastonbury Public Schools  
232 Williams St.  
Glastonbury, CT 06033  
[cbrownglas@aol.com](mailto:cbrownglas@aol.com)

### *Second Vice-President*

Myriam Met  
Montgomery County Public Schools  
850 Hungerford Dr.  
Rockville, MD 20850  
[mmet@umd5.umd.edu](mailto:mmet@umd5.umd.edu)

### *Secretary*

Lori Langer de Ramirez  
166 Nichols Ave.  
Brooklyn, NY 11208  
[fjl17@columbia.edu](mailto:fjl17@columbia.edu)

### *Treasurer*

Marty Abbott  
Fairfax County Public Schools  
7423 Camp Alger Ave.  
Falls Church, VA 22042  
[74553.211@compuserve.com](mailto:74553.211@compuserve.com)

### *Past-President*

Mary Lynn Redmond  
Wake Forest University  
Department of Education  
Box 7266, Reynolda Station  
Winston-Salem, NC 27109  
[redmond@wfu.edu](mailto:redmond@wfu.edu)

### *Executive Secretary*

Nancy Rhodes  
Center for Applied Linguistics  
4646 40th St., N.W.  
Washington, DC 20016  
[nancy@cal.org](mailto:nancy@cal.org)

### *Membership Secretary*

Guadalupe Hernández-Silva  
Center for Applied Linguistics  
4640 40th St., N.W.  
Washington, DC 20016  
[lupe@cal.org](mailto:lupe@cal.org)

### *Learning Languages Editor*

Marcia Harmon Rosenbusch  
N131 Lagomarcino Hall  
Iowa State University  
Ames, IA 50011  
[mrosenbu@iastate.edu](mailto:mrosenbu@iastate.edu)

## ***NNELL Appointments***

---

### *Membership*

Alicia Vinson  
Maxwell Elementary  
301 Woodland Ave.  
Lexington, KY 40508  
[avinson@ukcc.uky.edu](mailto:avinson@ukcc.uky.edu)

### *Political Action and Advocacy*

Kay Hewitt  
Lexington Elementary School  
116 Azalea Dr.  
Lexington, SC 29072  
[leslib@lex1.k12.state.sc.us](mailto:leslib@lex1.k12.state.sc.us)

### *Southern Rep.*

Jan Kucerik  
Bay Point Elementary School  
2152 62nd Ave., South  
St Petersburg, FL 33712  
[jkuce@aol.com](mailto:jkuce@aol.com)

### *Publisher Liaison*

Patty Ryerson Hans  
The Wellington School  
3650 Reed Rd.  
Columbus, OH 43220  
[hans@wellington.org](mailto:hans@wellington.org)

### *Pacific Northwest Rep.*

R. William Carlstrom  
Edmonds Cyberschool  
7821 224th S.W.  
Edmonds, WA 98026  
[rwcarrist@whidbey.com](mailto:rwcarrist@whidbey.com)

### *Southwest Rep.*

Michael Nettleton  
Smoky Hill High School  
16100 E. Smoky Hill Rd.  
Aurora, CO 80015  
[mnettle@worldnet.att.net](mailto:mnettle@worldnet.att.net)

### *Public Relations Chair*

Evelyne Armstrong  
Charles Wright Academy  
7723 Chambers Creek Rd. West  
Tacoma, WA 98467  
[evelynearm@aol.com](mailto:evelynearm@aol.com)

### *Northeast Rep.*

Janet Glass  
Dwight-Englewood School  
315 E. Palisade Ave.  
Englewood, NJ 07631  
[glassj@d-e.pvt.k12.nj.us](mailto:glassj@d-e.pvt.k12.nj.us)

### *Central States Rep.*

Penny Armstrong  
Pittsburg Community Schools  
510 Deill Street, P.O. Box 75  
Pittsburg, KS 66762-0075  
[pennywebb@aol.com](mailto:pennywebb@aol.com)

# Membership Form

Please enroll me as a member of the National Network for Early Language Learning (NNELL) and send me a subscription to *Learning Languages* (receive all three issues for the 1998-1999 academic year). Enclosed is a check for \$20.00. (Overseas rate is \$25.00.) Make checks payable to NNELL.

NO PURCHASE ORDERS PLEASE.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title or Grade Level \_\_\_\_\_

School or Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Check whether this address is \_\_\_\_\_ Home \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Check if this is a renewal \_\_\_\_\_ Check if this is an address change from last year

Mail this form and your check to:  
National Network for Early Language Learning  
Center for Applied Linguistics  
Attn: Nancy Rhodes, Executive Secretary  
4646 40th St. N.W.  
Washington, DC 20016-1859

Marcia H. Rosenbusch, Editor  
*Learning Languages*  
Department of Curriculum and Instruction  
N131 Lagomarcino Hall  
Iowa State University  
Ames, Iowa 50011-2205

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED