

Learning Languages

The Journal of the National Network for Early Language Learning

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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/nnell

Submissions: Deadlines are: fall issue—May 1; winter issue—Nov. 1; spring issue—Feb. 1. Articles, classroom activities, and materials 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, context, objectives, targeted standards, materials, procedure, and assessment. Include pictures or drawings as illustration, if available. Send with your name, address, and phone number to the Classroom Activities editor listed below.

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Notes from the President



Great news! U.S. Secretary of Education, Richard W. Riley, has announced that he is dedicated to seeing that 50% of the students in the United States will be studying a foreign language in elementary school by the year 2010. In addition, Secretary Riley promises advocacy from the Department of Education to help ensure that a greater percentage of U.S. students begin foreign language study in elementary school and continue that study through middle and high school. Due to the efforts of JNCL-NCLIS (Joint National Committee on Languages and the National Council for Languages and International Studies), NNELL, and other advocates for early language learning, more financial help is on the horizon for elementary school foreign language programs. We believe that this year's funding for the Foreign Language Assistance Program (FLAP) will be increased by \$4M and that funding in future years will increase dramatically. Congratulations to J. David Edwards, JNCL-NCLIS, the hard-working members of NNELL, such as Kay Hewitt and Mary Lynn Redmond, and many other tireless advocates. Advocacy does pay off!

Speaking of advocacy, words such as *dedicated, filled with energy, selfless, and able to leap tall buildings in a single bound* come to mind when I think of the participants in the summer NNELL conference held in collaboration with Glastonbury public schools at the University of Hartford, Connecticut, in July 1999. Thanks to funding from FLAP and the support of the Glastonbury school administration, many of NNELL's state and regional representatives, as well as interested participants and guest speakers,

attended a conference entitled "Advocacy, Articulation and Curriculum Development." It provided a stimulating environment for the discussion of advocacy for elementary school language programs. The discussion focused on the question, Who are the internal and external advocates for language learning at our local, state, regional and national levels?

Representatives from 25 non-language education groups also were invited to attend the conference. Although not all could send representatives, those that did found the conference exciting and returned to their organizations with a renewed commitment to champion the cause of early language learning. Extensive follow-up questionnaires have been distributed to organizations that could not send representatives. Results will be available in a later issue of *Learning Languages*. The questionnaires asked administrators and leaders of these organizations to help us identify areas of our advocacy that should be strengthened and improved. Most of the organizations contacted appear to be open to further collaboration with NNELL and other language groups.

Participants at the conference heard from school superintendents, principals at every level of instruction, school board members, curriculum directors, state department of education leaders, university professors and presidents, and experts in the fields of the arts and humanities. Secretary Riley sent Heidi Ramirez (Department of Education) to give a presentation on the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. (Ed: See information on this act in *Learning Languages* 4[3], pp. 16-19.)

J. David Edwards (JNCL-NCLIS) spoke about strategies for working with Congress and the Administration. All speakers delivered the message that language teachers, supervisors, and professional language organizations need to advocate more strongly for long-sequence programs. Support for these programs is present but not well cultivated.

U.S. Department of Education officials and school administrators encouraged us to celebrate our successes by sharing anecdotes about our graduates. Graduates from Glastonbury encouraged us to maintain our efforts to support early language learning because of the pay off in language proficiency and a promising future for our students. One student in particular, Joseph Kiebish, valedictorian for the class of 1999 in the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University, Washington, DC, spoke eloquently about his language-learning experiences in elementary through high school. (*ED: See excerpts from Kiebish's speech in this issue.*) Kiebish encouraged all participants at the conference to hold fast to their dreams of a linguistically competent citizenry, able to understand the world of the twenty-first century, and ready to make significant contributions to the quality of life in the United States and abroad.

Dr. Humphrey Tonkin, President Emeritus of the University of Hartford, spoke about the rationale that we should use to advocate for longer and earlier sequences of language learning. Dr. Tonkin suggested that reliance on economic need as a rationale for learning languages may not serve us well in the long run because English continues to be perceived as the language of commerce. More challenging, however, was his view that the way a person develops as a human being is influenced by the intersection of language, thought, and identity. He urged us to put forth multiple reasons for early language learning, with the understanding that many parents are motivated

both by their children's potential economic future and their ability to define a future in which they can find deeper meaning to their existence in society and on this planet.

In addition to presentations and discussions with non-language educators, conference participants talked and planned into the wee hours of the morning. They celebrated at some of Hartford's cultural jewels, relaxed, and enjoyed getting to know each other better. State and regional representatives returned home with a promise to provide three updates during the year about how they are advocating for language learning outside our traditional professional organizations. Their first reports were due October 15, and I will share the results at the NNELL networking session in Dallas.

Also, as a result of Glastonbury's FLAP grant, we will be hosting a Web site linked to the NNELL and CAL Web sites. We will post advocacy ideas, the text of advocacy documents, and updates from the conference. We will also begin to publicize phases two and three of our grant—curriculum development and articulation in grades K–12. Watch for the Web address in a future issue of *Learning Languages*.

Finally, I want to thank you for your hard work on behalf of NNELL and early language learning. Our field would not be at this exciting milestone were it not for the zealous commitment of elementary language teachers in the United States. As my tenure as president draws to a close, I feel very proud to be a language teacher. Best of luck in 2000!



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Our field would not be at this exciting milestone were it not for the zealous commitment of elementary language teachers in the United States.

Poverty, Race, and Foreign Language Immersion: Predictors of Math and English Language Arts Performance

Refereed Article

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In the United States in the last thirty years, foreign language immersion has become an accepted pedagogical approach for teaching second languages in schools throughout the world. Moreover, research indicates that not only do students immersed in a second language achieve command of that language with near-native fluency, but also schooling in a second language does not have adverse consequences for subjects studied in their native language, and often enhances performance in it (Lambert & Tucker, 1972; Bankens & Akins, 1989; Campbell, 1984; Lapkin & Swain, 1984; Snow, 1992). However, most of the research in this area has been done with middle and upper-middle class students, with relatively little attention paid to how foreign language immersion programs might benefit children in high poverty schools (Hollobow, Genesee, & Lambert, 1991). For example, an important question usually overlooked in immersion research is whether being educated in a non-native lan-

guage contributes to or detracts from the academic performance of low socioeconomic status (SES) children in their native language. The current study attempts to answer this question among French immersion students in 13 Louisiana elementary and middle schools.

School Language Immersion Models

There are typically two models of immersion. These include total immersion, where the vast majority of the instruction is in the target language (usually with only reading in the native language), and partial immersion, where only part of the instructional day (usually 50% and up) is in the target language (Snow, 1990). Immersion programs all share the goal of producing fluent speakers of the target language and a belief that immersion is the most efficient and most natural way to teach a second language. The research supports this perspective (Adiv, 1980; Campbell, Gray, Rhodes, & Snow, 1985; Gray, 1986; Theberge,

1990) and has moved on to focusing more on measuring the indirect effects of this teaching method.

North American French immersion as an elementary school curriculum started in 1965 in the village of St. Lambert, Quebec, a Montreal suburb. The "St. Lambert Experiment" was started by English parents who wanted to give their English-speaking children a chance to compete economically in their officially bilingual country (Lambert & Tucker, 1972). In many ways, Louisiana can relate to the French Canadian experience. Its history is dominated by the French influence, but like parts of Canada outside of Quebec, it has become isolated from the French-speaking world. In the southwestern part of the state, known as Acadiana, as much as 50% of some parishes (counties) speak French, though these individuals are largely over 50 years of age (Henry & Bankston, 1999). In the recent movement to save French, it quickly became evident that teaching French as a second language (thirty to fifty minutes a day) was not going to ensure the survival of the language in Louisiana. Though these classes exposed children to some of the rudiments of French (greetings, songs, counting, colors, etc.), it simply was not enough time to develop speaking proficiency or fluency in the language. Individual parishes, which have the same boundaries as the school districts, began to look for more viable alternatives.

History of French Immersion in Louisiana

In 1971, St. Martin Parish received a federal grant to begin a bilingual program where daily instruction was divided equally between French-speaking and English-speaking teachers. Located deep in the heart of Acadiana, it was an appropriate place to launch school French immersion, where fully 60% of the local community still reported speaking French in 1990 (U.S. Bureau of the Census,

1990). Louisiana now has French immersion programs in the parishes of St. Martin, Calcasieu, Assumption, Lafayette, Acadia, Orleans, and St. Landry. In total, 21 schools currently offer French immersion to approximately 3,000 students.

It is difficult to summarize the teaching methodology used in Louisiana's various immersion programs, as it varies from parish to parish, and even school to school. One thing they all have in common is a heavy reliance on native French-speaking teachers, mostly from Belgium, France, and Canada. These "Foreign Associate Teachers" do not have to have special foreign language training, or meet Louisiana teacher certification requirements. Additionally, there is a fairly strong "heritage" element to all of Louisiana's French immersion programs, since one of the primary reasons for developing them in the first place was to help preserve French-speaking in the state. Thus, they often incorporate elements of the state's heritage to help reinforce the language. For example, in Lafayette parish, immersion students were paired with French-speaking senior citizens in a nursing home, with whom they visited and conversed in French. Other immersion activities may include demonstrations or lectures delivered to the students in French from local Francophone artisans. Where French immersion has moved into the secondary level, less time is usually allocated to instruction in French. All programs include teaching some English language arts. A common arrangement at the elementary level is to offer science, social studies, math, and perhaps even physical education and art in French, while teaching reading in English (Boudreaux, 1998).

French Immersion and Academic Performance

Evidence from Louisiana's largest and longest-running French immersion program, in Calcasieu Parish, indicates that children in the program are

In total, 21 schools currently offer French immersion to approximately 3,000 students.

Thus, the need for a comprehensive study of immersion programs in Louisiana has become stronger, in view of their popularity, and in view of the increasing number of parents wanting to involve their children in such programs.

scoring higher on the state's mandated standardized tests than those in the district not participating in the program (Bankens & Akins, 1989). However, student demographic factors, such as poverty status, gender, and race, were not controlled for in the program's evaluation.

Both Canadian and American research on language immersion programs have often overlooked student demographic factors such as SES and race when evaluating the effectiveness of their programs. In Louisiana, not only is immersion research which utilizes sociodemographic information essentially nonexistent, but with only a few exceptions (i.e., Boudreaux, 1998), the state is even lacking strong empirical research on the effectiveness of its French immersion programs in general. Thus, the need for a comprehensive study of immersion programs in Louisiana has become stronger, in view of their popularity, and in view of the increasing number of parents wanting to involve their children in such programs. Moreover, in a state where 23.6% of the population lives in poverty (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1994), and 45.5% of the public school population is comprised of African American students (Louisiana Department of Education, 1996), the need to control for these factors when determining the effects of school language immersion becomes paramount. The current study attempts to overcome both deficits in language immersion research by conducting statistically rigorous research using testing and demographic data from a large sample of Louisiana's French immersion students.

Methodology

The study population includes 1,941 immersion and non-immersion students in grades 3, 5, and 7 from 13 Louisiana schools in 4 parishes offering French immersion programs. All were in the southern part of the state. Of these students, 302 were in immer-

sion programs which offer from 35% through 77% of the daily instruction entirely in French. No schools offered 100% (full) French immersion, as every immersion student was taught at least reading in the English language. With very few exceptions, students entered their French immersion programs in either kindergarten or first grade. In the study, 82% of students are white and 18% are African American. Of the immersion students, 277 are white, and 25 are African Americans. Two mismatches should be noted here. The percentage of African American students in immersion (8%) is less than the percentage of African American students in the 13 schools in the study (18%). In addition, neither percentage reflects the high (46%) percentage of African American students in the general student population of Louisiana public schools. These discrepancies can both be explained in part by the fact that the Louisiana French renaissance movement—the major force behind the creation of French Immersion in Louisiana—was originally a movement primarily among white “Cajuns” (descendants of Acadians from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick deported to Louisiana in the years 1755–1800; for more information on the Louisiana French renaissance, see Caldas, 1998). Many of the schools chosen for French immersion had a majority of these white Cajun parents. The Creole movement (Creole referring to French-speaking African Americans in Louisiana) has been quieter. In the last three years, however, efforts have been made to correct the under-representation of African American students in immersion programs. Two parishes have since opened French immersion programs in primarily African American schools. Future studies should show an increase in African American participation in lower grades. In any event, these demographics—African American and white—underscore a heritage dimension to these immersion programs which sets them apart from

foreign language instruction disconnected from the children's backgrounds.

Dependent Variable

All Louisiana public school students in grades 3, 5, and 7 are administered the state standardized Louisiana Educational Achievement Program (LEAP) criterion referenced test in April of each year. Test results from spring 1997 are being used in this study. The LEAP test has two main components at these grade levels: English Language Arts and Mathematics. Each component included 60 to 70 multiple-choice items. The dependent variable is the percent correct on each of these components. Since special education students may test under different circumstances than regular education students, they were not included in the study. Given that there were no identifiable special education students in the French immersion population, and since special education students tended to score much lower than average, excluding them from our analyses inflates the non-immersion LEAP test averages. Thus, all of our findings are conservative.

Independent Variables

The following independent variables were used:

- *Student Grade:* Students' grade levels were 3, 5, or 7. Analysis of covariance, a statistical procedure to determine linear relationships between categorical and other variables (Yoshinori Kamo, personal communication, May 19, 1999) revealed that this categorical variable had a somewhat weak (though statistically significant) negative linear relationship to the English language arts test scores, and a very strong negative linear relationship with math scores. We therefore felt justified entering grade level as an interval-level numeric variable in all regression analyses.
- *Student Race:* Since the vast majority of the students were either white or African American (only three students

were another race), and we wanted to create a dichotomous (dummy) variable for race to be used in regression, we excluded all other races. Whites were assigned a value of "1" and African Americans were assigned a value of "2."

- *School Poverty Level:* Each student was assigned the percent of his/her school's population which participated in the federal free/reduced-price lunch program. (Schools cannot release data on individual students in the free/reduced-price lunch program.) Earlier studies have determined that school SES in Louisiana is almost as highly correlated with individual student achievement as is an individual's own SES (Caldas & Bankston, 1997). Thus, it is reasonable to expect that a child attending a school with a high percentage of students receiving free lunch is likely to come from a home with a relatively modest income, given that assignments to a school are based on residential boundaries (even if he/she is not himself/herself eligible for free lunch). School percentages ranged from 9% to 72%, with almost two-thirds of all students in schools with 35% free/reduced lunch or less.
- *Percent Student Time in French Immersion (French):* Each French immersion student was assigned a value representing the percent of time spent in his/her school's immersion program. Immersion programs in Louisiana are individually set up by local school boards according to their preferences, their finances, and their own unique circumstances. As a result, no two programs are the same, especially when it comes to the length of daily instruction in French. These percentages were verified by conferring with school administrators at each of the 13 immersion schools. Values ranged from 30% to 77 %, with 83% of all immersion students spending 50% or more of their school day in French.
- *Gender (dichotomous dummy variable):* Males were assigned a value of "1," females a "2."

Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) multiple regression (forced entry) was used to predict the dependent variables—English language arts and math LEAP scores—using the inde-

pendent variables grade, race, school poverty status, gender, and time spent in French immersion. This statistical technique allows us to determine the effect of French immersion, while controlling for other important factors that have been determined to have an influence on school achievement (Caldas, 1993).

Results

Table 1 includes univariate statistics of the study population on the English language arts (hereafter just "English") portion of the LEAP test. The sample is divided into students in low poverty schools (50% or fewer students in free/reduced-price lunch program) and high poverty schools (greater than 50% students in free/reduced-price lunch program).

We see that among immersion students overall, both African Americans (average 87.5% correct) and whites (average 89.6% correct) score higher than African American and white non-immersion students (average of 78.4% and 85.6% correct, respectively). Overall immersion and non-immersion African Americans' scores are lower than their white counterparts. In high poverty schools, the divergence of English scores between immersion and non-immersion students *among* the races is not only greater (88.1% versus 76.6% for African Americans; 89.2% versus 82.8% for whites), but African American immersion students actually score higher in poor schools than they do overall. Whereas in poor schools African American immersion students' mean score is only about a point lower than whites, non-immersion African American students' mean score is more than six points lower than their white counterparts. Finally, immersion students do better than non-immersion students at each of the three grade levels.

Table 2 includes univariate statistics of the study population on the math portion of the LEAP test.

We see that among immersion

students overall, both African Americans (average 90.4% correct) and whites (average 89.5% correct) score higher than African American and white non-immersion students (average of 74.6% and 82.3% correct, respectively). As with English, the gap between non-immersion African Americans and whites is fairly large (seven points). However, immersion African Americans actually outscore immersion whites (1 point gap). Importantly, however, the math gap between immersion and non-immersion students, for both African Americans and whites, is almost double the English gap. Math scores decrease for all student categories as grade level increases. Still, immersion students do better than non-immersion students at each grade level. Interestingly, though non-immersion African American students do worse than their white counterparts, those in French immersion outscore their white immersion counterparts in both the third and fifth grade, though the number of African American immersion students is quite small.

Table 3 shows bivariate, Pearson correlation coefficients between the study's variables.

Here, we see that both English and math scores correlate moderately high ($r = .516^{***}$), as we would expect on two measures of academic achievement. Also, English correlates positively with French immersion ($r = .144^{***}$), though math has an even stronger correlation with time spent in immersion ($r = .212^{**}$). Thus, as instructional time spent in French immersion increases, so do both English and math scores, though the relationship with rising math scores is even greater. However, both English and math scores are negatively correlated with poverty ($r = -.243^{***}$; $r = -.121^{***}$) and race ($r = -.228^{**}$; $r = -.195^{***}$). This means that students in higher poverty schools and African Americans score less well on both academic measures. Interestingly, though there is only a small, positive

... immersion students do better than non-immersion students at each of the three grade levels.

Table 1. Average Percent Correct: English Language Arts Scores by Race, Poverty, and Grade

| | IMMERSION | | Non-IMMERSION | |
|-------------------------|---|--|---|---|
| | African Americans N = 25 | Whites N = 277 | African Americans N = 319 | Whites N = 1320 |
| ALL | \bar{X} = 87.5% SD = 8.7 | \bar{X} = 89.6% SD = 8.4 | \bar{X} = 78.4% SD = 14.1 | \bar{X} = 85.6% SD = 11.7 |
| High Poverty Schools | \bar{X} = 88.1% SD = 9.0 N = 20 | \bar{X} = 89.2% SD = 9.0 N = 93 | \bar{X} = 76.6% SD = 14.7 N = 194 | \bar{X} = 82.8% SD = 13.7 N = 389 |
| Grade 3 | \bar{X} = 86.7% SD = 9.0 N = 18 | \bar{X} = 89.1% SD = 8.7 N = 141 | \bar{X} = 76.2% SD = 15.4 N = 110 | \bar{X} = 85.3% SD = 11.9 N = 458 |
| Grade 5 | \bar{X} = 85.4% SD = 9.2 N = 4 | \bar{X} = 89.7% SD = 8.5 N = 98 | \bar{X} = 74.6% SD = 13.9 N = 87 | \bar{X} = 83.9% SD = 12.4 N = 438 |
| Grade 7 | \bar{X} = 94.9% SD = 1.3 N = 3 | \bar{X} = 91.5% SD = 6.8 N = 38 | \bar{X} = 83.0% SD = 11.6 N = 122 | \bar{X} = 87.6% SD = 10.4 N = 424 |

Table 2. Average Percent Correct: Mathematics Scores by Race, Poverty, and Grade

| | IMMERSION | | Non-IMMERSION | |
|-------------------------|---|--|---|---|
| | African Americans N = 25 | Whites N = 277 | African Americans N = 319 | Whites N = 1320 |
| ALL | \bar{X} = 90.4% SD = 9.64 | \bar{X} = 89.5% SD = 9.9 | \bar{X} = 74.6% SD = 16.9 | \bar{X} = 82.3% SD = 15.0 |
| High Poverty Schools | \bar{X} = 90.1% SD = 10.16 N = 20 | \bar{X} = 90.9% SD = 9.3 N = 93 | \bar{X} = 75.8% SD = 14.7 N = 194 | \bar{X} = 80.8% SD = 16.2 N = 389 |
| Grade 3 | \bar{X} = 94.2% SD = 4.4 N = 18 | \bar{X} = 93.8% SD = 6.7 N = 141 | \bar{X} = 85.5% SD = 10.7 N = 110 | \bar{X} = 91.4% SD = 9.1 N = 458 |
| Grade 5 | \bar{X} = 88.4% SD = 11.3 N = 4 | \bar{X} = 86.8% SD = 10.3 N = 98 | \bar{X} = 74.7% SD = 14.0 N = 87 | \bar{X} = 82.0% SD = 13.2 N = 438 |
| Grade 7 | \bar{X} = 70.1% SD = 2.1 N = 3 | \bar{X} = 80.5% SD = 10.6 N = 38 | \bar{X} = 64.4% SD = 17.2 N = 122 | \bar{X} = 72.8% SD = 16.0 N = 424 |

Table 3. Pearson Product Moment Correlations

| | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|--------------------------------|---------|----------|---------|----------|----------|---------|
| 1. Percent Correct: Lang. Arts | .516*** | -.243*** | .144*** | -.228*** | .069** | .095*** |
| 2. Percent Correct: Math | | -.121*** | .212*** | -.195*** | -.522*** | .010 |
| 3. School Poverty | | | -.012 | .253*** | -.094*** | -.008 |
| 4. French Immersion | | | | -.099*** | -.197*** | .077*** |
| 5. African American Race | | | | | .036 | -.038 |
| 6. Grade | | | | | | -.007 |
| 7. Gender | | | | | | |

p < .01 *p < .001

As daily time in French immersion increases, English scores tend to increase as well.

correlation between English scores and grade level, the association between math scores and grade level is negative, and the strongest coefficient noted: $r = -.522^{***}$. Thus, as grade level increases, math scores dip markedly. Still, since there are no excessively large correlations between any of the study variables, we can safely include them all in a regression equation with no need for concern over multicollinearity problems.

Table 4 includes all major factors in four regression models that predict both English and math scores.

Standardized regression coefficients (β) are used to determine the unique effect of each independent variable on the dependent variables English and math. Values range from -1 to 1, and, since standardized, can be compared one to another. We turn first to English, where the best predictor of scores, a moderate one, is school poverty ($\beta = -.194^{***}$): as school poverty level increases, English scores decrease. The second-best predictor is student race ($\beta = -.165^{***}$), indicating that African American students tend to score lower in English, controlling for

the other factors. The third factor in magnitude of influence on English scores is French immersion, which has a small to moderate ($\beta = .141^{***}$) effect. As daily time in French immersion increases, English scores tend to increase as well. So, we see that French immersion does have a positive association on this measure of school achievement, holding constant the study's other factors. School grade has a relatively small, positive association with English scores ($\beta = .085^{***}$), with the association of gender and English being the weakest ($\beta = .077^{***}$): females tended to score slightly better than males in English. Overall, this regression model explains only about 12% of the variance in English test scores ($R^2 = .116^{***}$), suggesting that there are other important factors that could help predict English scores.

Turning to our first math regression model, we see that unlike English, the best predictor of how students did in math was grade level ($\beta = -.510^{***}$): as grade level increases, scores fall precipitously. The second-best predictor of scores was school

poverty ($\beta = -.137^{***}$). As with English, the association between math and race is negative (African Americans do less well, *ceteris paribus*), though the effect is somewhat smaller ($\beta = -.132^{***}$). The association of French immersion and math scores is also smaller than with English, though it is positive ($\beta = .100^{***}$). Recalling that the Pearson correlation coefficient for math and French immersion ($r = .212^{***}$) was higher than for English and French immersion (.144^{***}), we can now see that it is due to the much higher proportion of students in grade 3 (where they score better) than in grades 5 and 7. Finally, gender has no statistically significant relationship with math scores. The math regression model explains almost three times as much variance in math scores ($R^2 =$

.328^{***}) as the English model explains. However, it appears that it is the strong negative association between grade level and math scores that accounts for much of this difference.

In Regression 2, we entered a fifth variable to our two models, French by School Poverty Status, in order to see whether the effect of French immersion on English and math scores might vary depending on the poverty status of the school (an interaction effect). Considering English first, we see that indeed this interaction variable has a small to moderate positive effect on English test scores ($\beta = .139^{**}$). This indicates that at higher levels of school poverty, French immersion has a *greater* positive influence on English scores. In the Regression 2 math model, the French immersion/poverty interaction variable

... at higher levels of school poverty, French immersion has a *greater* positive influence on English scores.

Table 4. Standardized Regression Coefficients with Standard Errors (in parentheses) of French Immersion and Control Variable Effects on Academic Achievement

| | ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS | | MATH | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| | Regression 1 | Regression 2 | Regression 1 | Regression 2 |
| French Immersion | .141 ^{***} (.013) | -.016 (.032) | .100 ^{***} (.014) | -.025 (.035) |
| School Poverty | -.194 ^{***} (.013) | -.218 ^{***} (.014) | -.137 ^{***} (.015) | -.161 ^{***} (.016) |
| Race | -.165 ^{***} (.706) | -.163 ^{***} (.705) | -.132 ^{***} (.775) | -.130 ^{***} (.774) |
| School Grade | .085 ^{***} (.162) | .085 ^{***} (.162) | -.510 ^{***} (.178) | -.510 ^{***} (.178) |
| Gender | .077 ^{***} (.520) | .077 ^{***} (.519) | -.007 (.571) | -.007 (.570) |
| French by Poverty | | .139 ^{**} (.001) | | .139 ^{**} (.001) |
| Adjusted R ² | .116 ^{***} | .119 ^{***} | .328 ^{***} | .331 ^{***} |
| N | 1941 | 1941 | 1941 | 1941 |

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

exerts exactly the same magnitude of effect on math scores ($\beta = .139^{**}$), indicating the same thing: the effect of French immersion on math scores is greater in high poverty schools, controlling for all independent variables.

Discovering this differential effect of French immersion on both English and math scores, we bifurcated the sample into low poverty schools and high poverty schools. Next, we ran regression models for both low poverty and high poverty schools, for both English and math scores. We decided to keep our independent variable "school poverty" in these models, acknowledging that it would now have a more restricted range. This allows us to see if attending the "poorest" of the low poverty schools, or the "poorest" of the high poverty schools continues to negatively affect academic achievement among more homogenous groupings of students. Table 5 shows the standardized regression coefficients for these runs.

Considering English first, we see that French immersion has an effect on English test scores that is markedly stronger in high poverty ($\beta = .177^{***}$) than in low poverty ($\beta = .122^{***}$) schools. Moreover, and importantly, in high poverty schools the effect of French immersion surpasses in magnitude the effect of race ($\beta = -.165^{***}$) on English scores. Thus, we can say that in poor schools, time spent in French immersion eclipses the association between race and English test performance. However, we see that even after reducing the range of the variable poverty by roughly half, being in the poorest of the low poverty schools, and being in the poorest of the high poverty schools has the strongest association—a negative one—with English scores.

The effect of French immersion on math scores is also noticeably stronger in high poverty ($\beta = .126^{***}$) than in low poverty ($\beta = .085^{***}$) schools, though the coefficients are smaller than in the English model. Importantly, however, in high poverty schools

French immersion ($\beta = .126^{***}$) becomes almost as good a predictor of math scores as race ($\beta = -.130^{***}$). The negative effect on math scores of being in the poorest of the low poverty schools ($\beta = -.142^{***}$) is smaller than in the English model ($\beta = -.223^{***}$), and being in the poorest of the high poverty schools has no statistically significant association with math scores, as it does with English scores. Grade level has a stronger negative influence on math scores in high poverty schools ($\beta = -.577^{***}$) than in low poverty schools ($\beta = -.447^{***}$), and in part accounts for the greater explained variance in this model ($R^2 = .415^{***}$) than all the other models. However, another reason for the increase in explained variance of high poverty schools is the strength of the relationship between French immersion and math scores, since the effect of all other factors except school grade decreased in magnitude from the low poverty schools to high poverty schools model. It should still be noted, however, that more than half of the variance in math scores, and 89% of the variance in English scores remains unexplained, suggesting that there are important factors we have not accounted for.

Conclusions

Students in the French immersion programs in the 13 schools included in this study do significantly better on both the state standardized tests in English language arts and math, than do their non-immersion counterparts, irrespective of their race, grade, gender, or their school's poverty status. Moreover, the more time spent in a French immersion program, the greater the level of academic achievement. This is especially true in English language arts, suggesting a link between learning a foreign language and doing well in one's native language. On closer examination, we discovered that French immersion had a differential effect on academic achievement, returning significantly

Moreover, the more time spent in a French immersion program, the greater the level of academic achievement.

greater dividends in schools with higher levels of poverty. Once again, the pay off was greater in English than in math. Since these programs do not intentionally select on student SES, and since French immersion students in poor schools are themselves more likely to be poor, this is a significant finding. This finding becomes even more singular when we see that average scores of African American immersion students in high poverty schools are actually higher than those of African American immersion students in low poverty schools. This is counterintuitive, and will require more investigation on our part to adequately answer. We also see that in high poverty schools, the influence of French immersion on test scores rivals the influence of race, and is second only to grade level in predicting math scores. This is an important finding, especially given the strong association

between race and achievement test scores in Louisiana (Caldas & Bankston, 1998).

Why this academic boost? Some research suggests that multilinguals may actually have more highly developed cognitive abilities than monolinguals (Ben-Zeev, 1977; Bialystok, 1988; Caldas & Caron-Caldas, 1997; Diaz, 1983; Hakuta, 1986; Lambert & Tucker, 1972; and Peal & Lambert, 1962), though some point out that the research is not conclusive (Jarvis, Danks, & Merriman, 1995). Since those in French immersion programs spend much of their school days together, creating their own mutually reinforcing peer environments, the individual-level cognitive boost from French immersion could be magnified at the group level, providing an antidote to the poverty level of the rest of their school peers.

... French immersion had ... significantly greater dividends in schools with higher levels of poverty.

Table 5. Standardized Regression Coefficients with Standard Errors (in parentheses) of French Immersion and Control Variable Effects on Academic Achievement: By School Poverty Status

| | LOW POVERTY SCHOOLS | | HIGH POVERTY SCHOOLS | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| | Lang. Arts | Math | Lang. Arts | Math |
| French Immersion | .122*** (.015) | .085*** (.018) | .177*** (.025) | .126*** (.024) |
| Poorest | -.223*** (.031) | -.142*** (.038) | -.187*** (.100) | -.041 (.094) |
| Race | -.171*** (.946) | -.147*** (1.16) | -.165*** (1.10) | -.130*** (1.03) |
| School Grade | .136*** (.180) | -.447*** (.221) | .090* (.331) | -.577*** (.312) |
| Gender | .077** (.574) | -.013 (.707) | .072* (1.00) | .001 (.946) |
| Adjusted R ² | .106*** | .288*** | .107*** | .415*** |
| N | 1245 | 1245 | 696 | 696 |

* < .05 **p < .01 ***p < .001

We are cautiously optimistic that our research could have important implications for helping raise the academic achievement levels of both African American and white students in high poverty schools. Based on our findings, we suggest that school officials may want to explore the possibility of recruiting more low SES students for language immersion programs. Our findings suggest that in poor schools immersion programs may have even greater potential for raising achievement in the student's first language (e.g., English), even though he/she spends more time in classrooms where learning is taking place in a second language. We advise caution though, as the strength of our findings is somewhat moderate and suggests that more research in the area of foreign language immersion, academic achievement, and school poverty is warranted. If our results can be replicated elsewhere, it would lend support to our findings that students in foreign language immersion programs housed in high poverty schools may benefit in two ways: they may not only have higher achievement levels in their native language, but they learn to fluently speak a second language as well, with all the attendant benefits of being bilingual. Given the great consternation among educators over the poor academic performance of low SES students, and low SES schools, foreign language immersion programs may offer school districts another alternative to address the negative academic consequences of poverty.

... foreign language immersion programs may offer school districts another alternative to address the negative academic consequences of poverty.

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— NNELL Election Results —

NNELL has played a critical role in establishing a voice and force for the early language movement.

We are happy to announce that Carine M. Feyten, associate professor of foreign language education and chair of the secondary education department at the University of South Florida, Tampa, Florida, has been elected second vice-president for a three-year term, and Lori Langer de Ramirez, second language chair, Herricks Public Schools, Long Island, New York, has been elected to serve as secretary for a two-year term.

Carine Feyten

Carine is originally from Belgium and is fluent in five languages. She teaches undergraduate, masters, and doctorate-level courses in foreign language, teacher education, and second language acquisition. She has been involved in teacher preparation in K-12 and post-secondary levels for over ten years. She has been an active advocate for early language learning and piloted one of the first elementary foreign language methods courses in the state of Florida. She has published extensively in the area of K-12 teacher preparation, second language acquisition, and technology. Carine was the NNELL Regional Representative for the Southern Conference region, and the 1998 chair of the Teacher Development Special Interest Group for the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, past president of the Florida Foreign Language Association, and the founder of Suncoast Academic Alliance in Florida in Foreign Languages and Literatures.

In a statement to the organization upon her nomination, Carine stated that she believes that early language learning is finally coming of age. She noted that the field has been steadily gaining momentum and recognition over the last several years as the research community, together with practitioners in the field, have been

refining what we know about best practices and optimum conditions for early language acquisition. Carine believes, however, that as we enter the new millennium there are still many unanswered questions related to the issues of teacher preparation, teacher burnout, the role of technology in instruction, etc. She notes that, "NNELL has played a critical role in establishing a voice and force for the early language movement. Today, in times of rapid change, the dynamic responsiveness of our organization to these questions and to the needs of our constituency is essential." Carine is honored to serve as an officer, to contribute to the energies of the "wonderful and nurturing people who are active in NNELL," and to help take the organization to a new era.

Lori Langer de Ramirez

Lori has been teaching for eight years, and has taught Spanish to grades 5-12, French to seventh graders, and ESL to adults. She has served as coordinator of a FLES and middle school program and is currently chair of second languages for a public school district on Long Island. Lori holds a master's degree in applied linguistics from Queens College and a doctorate in curriculum and teaching from Teachers College, Columbia University, where she also teaches as an adjunct professor of education. She has presented numerous workshops at state and national conferences. She has been the recipient of several National Endowment for the Humanities grants (to study in Mexico, Colombia, and Senegal), an American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese fellowship for graduate study, and a grant from the Council for Basic Education. Her areas of interest in teaching and research are literature in the language classroom, especially stories from the oral tradi-

tion, and content-based methodology. She has served NNELL for the past two years in the capacity of secretary and was nominated to run for a second term.

In her nomination statement, Lori noted that linguists have long debated the existence of what is called a "critical period." The earlier a child begins to learn a language, the more successful he or she will be at acquiring it fully. The brain is, in effect, pre-wired (as Noam Chomsky posits) for the reception of grammar information at an early age. To Lori, these facts have been supported in her experience in teaching young children. She notes that, "these energetic, appreciative, and excited students are gifted with the ability to absorb every bit of Spanish I can throw their way. Together we explore language as a

means of sharing ideas, feelings, and philosophies of a culture. Through a foreign language, our perception of the world has been transformed and broadened. This is one of the reasons why I love to teach young students. They are open to language as communication, language as play, and language as life. And once they get going, there's no limit to what they can learn."

As secretary for NNELL, Lori will continue to work in support of early language education and, in this way, she hopes to give back some of what she has been given by her students. She has enjoyed the opportunity to serve as an important part of NNELL which, in Lori's opinion, has done so much already to promote awareness of early language learning.

"We should begin teaching foreign languages in our elementary schools. . ."

On September 15, 1999, U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley delivered his Annual Back-to-School Address, entitled "Changing the American High School to Fit Modern Times." In it, Riley focused on our need to update the role of high schools in our changing society and improving the education and training of our teachers. He stressed high achievement by high school students through tougher core courses, mandatory exit exams, and the study of a foreign language. Among his comments was the following:

I believe that in this new economy every high school student should be close to fluent in a foreign language when he or she graduates. We should begin teaching foreign languages in our elementary schools, and then in middle schools and high schools. English is a beautiful language and every American student must be a master of it. English is surely a world language. But learning a foreign language exposes young people to new cultures and new horizons and helps them understand English better.

— Richard W. Riley

Introductory Note: Tara Gentry participated in the NNELL summer conference through a scholarship provided by the National K-12 Foreign Language Resource Center at Iowa State University. Tara, who is a junior and is preparing to teach K-12 Spanish, was asked to write a newspaper article about the conference that would provide publicity for NNELL and stimulate interest in early language learning. She wrote the following article, which was sent to conference participants who were NNELL state and regional reps. They requested that the article be published in their local newspapers.—The Editor.

Meet a Foreign Language Advocate

*Tara Gentry
Student
Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa*

... Joe can
now confidently
communicate
in both
languages,
despite being
hearing
impaired from
birth.

You don't know Joe.

You don't know that in third grade Joe started learning Spanish daily in his elementary school and that four years later he began Russian in junior high.

You don't know that Joe can now confidently communicate in both languages, despite being hearing impaired from birth. Nor do you know that he accredits much of his success to his elementary Spanish teachers, saying that their enthusiasm pushed him to enjoy foreign languages and to want to learn more.

Nor do you know that Joe Kiebesch is a 1999 valedictorian of Georgetown University.

Kiebesch was the keynote speaker for the National Network for Early Language Learning (NNELL) conference "Advocacy, Articulation, and Curriculum Development," sponsored by Glastonbury Public School District at the University of Hartford in Connecticut July 10-12.

The school district in Glastonbury, a middle-class Hartford suburb of 28,000 people, is unique in offering a K-12 foreign language program since the 1950s.

All first through fifth grade students study Spanish, and in grade six, students can elect to switch to the study

of French. In grade seven, students may add Russian and in grade nine, Latin. Nine years ago the opportunity was instituted to begin Japanese in kindergarten at a magnet school operated with East Hartford, Connecticut. At Glastonbury High School, Japanese is also offered through two-way interactive television with area high schools and Manchester Community Technical College. The average per-pupil expenditure annually in the Glastonbury school district is \$7,415.

As a result of the grant from the Foreign Language Assistance Program to the Glastonbury Public Schools for advocacy and curriculum development for K-12 foreign language education, 70 people, including state and regional reps from the National Network of Early Language Learning, attended the invitational NNELL conference. Among them was [NNELL state or regional rep's name and his/her position in NNELL were inserted here]. The National Network for Early Language Learning is dedicated to the promotion of foreign language instruction for all students, kindergarten through eighth grade, supports articulated programs, and works for the improvement of public awareness and support for early language learning.

Many ask out of curiosity, "Why isn't high school enough?" Perhaps you had a brief encounter with foreign

language in high school from which all you remember are the endless lists of conjugated verbs and fixed expressions such as “¿Dónde está el baño?”

It takes more than the national average of two years to develop proficiency in a second language. The emphasis in today's foreign language education is on starting early and continuing study for many years to build communication skills in the language and cultural competence. Studies suggest that the practical advantages of foreign language proficiency include increased job opportunities, cultural awareness, enhanced ability to communicate in English, higher standardized test scores, and increased self-esteem, not to mention recently recognized cognitive advantages, especially when there is an early start to language learning.

The Glastonbury Public Schools have demonstrated the commitment to long-sequence programs, and the proof of their success rests in the proficiency of students who have graduated from the program. Joe Kiebish is great evidence that early language learning should be made available for all students in K–8 be-

cause all will be citizens in an increasingly globalized world.

Kiebish summed up the appeal of the NNELL conference powerfully at his keynote's close:

Foreign languages, and deep understanding of the respective cultures, open a link to other countries and enable us to build better political, corporate, and personal relationships; however, they cannot just be high school or college requirements. It is important to start at the elementary school level and to make them living and useful, not simply words on a page in a textbook. Beginning a foreign language early gives students many, many more advantages.

If you would like to find out more about supporting early language learning in your community, contact [NNELL state or regional rep's name and address were inserted here] or check out the following websites: National Network for Early Language Learning: www.educ.iastate.edu/nnell, or the Center for Applied Linguistics' Nandutí, Early Foreign Language Learning: www.cal.org/earlylang.

Excerpts from Joe Kiebish's Keynote Speech at the NNELL Summer Conference

I am a hearing-impaired person.
What does that mean?

- It is very difficult to comprehend what is going on while watching Univision.
- I was the favorite target of a phonetics teacher in Russia when she made me repeat difficult Russian words several times so that I would be able to pronounce them to her liking.
- I got remarks in Russia such as, “you speak terribly,” because what I thought I said was not what the other person heard.

I could easily have had college foreign language requirements waived because of a “disability.”

My hearing loss could have been a strong incentive not to learn one, and certainly not two, foreign languages. However, my experiences with my elementary school Spanish teachers pushed me to enjoy foreign languages and to want to learn more. Their enthusiasm and desire to teach started me on a path that has created the person I am today.

Who am I besides simply a hearing-impaired person?

I am a 1999 graduate of Georgetown University's School of

My hearing loss could have been a strong incentive not to learn one, and certainly not two, foreign languages.

Now that I
am looking for
a job, I am
using my
international
affairs and
foreign
language
background to
the fullest.

Foreign Service and have been involved in numerous activities in college. I was a resident assistant for two years in a freshman dorm. I volunteered at the Coast Guard Historian's Office. I have been to Russia twice and will be going to Mexico for the second time next week. . . . I am also the product of Glastonbury's public school system and its foreign language program. The early opportunities to learn languages have given me a comprehensive background that has given me an edge over many of my college classmates.

. . . Why would anyone bother teaching elementary school students a foreign language if they can elect to study it in middle and high school?

Starting early allows students to gain a better grasp of the language. To use a personal example: Glastonbury's language program perhaps prepared me too well for college. I was placed in a second-year Russian class (although I could have gone into third-year Russian) and easily made it through the Russian classes offered. Another Glastonbury High School student was in the same Russian classes with me for several years in college. We could not help thinking about how our classes at Glastonbury were harder and more challenging than the ones in college. When I studied in St. Petersburg for the summer, I was placed in the highest-level class offered (which had four graduate students in it). . . .

Even though I had not studied Spanish since a senior in high school, I was able to remember a surprising amount when I went to Mexico over Christmas break to do community service work. I was able to speak confidently and "hang out" with our counterparts in Mexico despite the fact I did not study Spanish in college. Several of my friends asked me where I had learned Spanish. When I told them I started in third grade, they thought I had gone to a private school.

This early, continuous, and rewarding study of a foreign language

can bring even more benefits besides allowing students to have a comprehensive background. At the university level, this allows for many more opportunities for research, volunteering, and learning that they would not have otherwise had. Learning a language at only the high school and university levels can give a basic background. But, continuous study since elementary school gives students the opportunity to understand much more because it is more firmly imprinted in their minds.

Here are some examples: I wrote a paper on aids to navigation in Russia under Peter the Great and was able to use several Russian and Polish sources. . . . I also completed a senior project on illicit drugs in Peru and was able to include Spanish-language documents from the Peruvian government and NGOs: I was not limited to obviously biased U.S. government reports. . . . When I go there [to Mexico] next week I will have an advantage over my professor because he does not know Spanish. Now that I am looking for a job, I am using my international affairs and foreign language background to the fullest. Not only is this listed on my resume, but it features prominently in my cover letter. I am not limited to simply English and can prove to possible employers that I may have an edge over other applicants. The world is much more interdependent and a strong knowledge of international affairs and at least one foreign language is crucial. When applying to places such as the National Institutes of Health, Drug Enforcement Agency, and other private and government agencies, I make sure I stress these points. In addition, even for jobs in the United States, this ability is a plus since not everyone speaks English.

These early opportunities to learn Spanish and Russian gave me a distinct advantage over those who either did not know the languages or who started them in high school or college. I had the fortune of being able

to start in elementary school. . . .

It is easy to live in a world dominated by American English and the American culture and forget that about 95% of the world's population does not live in the United States. Foreign languages and a deep understanding of the respective cultures open a link to other countries and enable us to build better political, corporate, and personal relationships. They are also

critical in being able to help, and work with, people in the United States who do not know English. However, foreign languages cannot just be a high school or college requirement. It is important to start at the elementary school level and to make the languages living and useful, not simply words on a page in a textbook. Beginning a foreign language early gives students many, many advantages.

Apply for a Grant for Your Program!

The Joint National Committee for Languages—National Council for Languages and International Studies (JNCL–NCLIS) invites you to use its Web site, www.languagepolicy.org, to find out about grant possibilities for your school district. To find grant information on the Web site, which is constantly updated, use the "Grants" button.

In the near future JNCL–NCLIS expects information on the Foreign Language Assistance Program (FLAP), a grant program of interest to school districts that have or are planning an elementary school foreign language program, for the year 2000 to become available. As soon as it is, it will be posted on their Web site.

In 1999, approximately \$6,000,000 was awarded in the FLAP grant competition, for which grants were due February 23, 1999. In 2000, this amount will be increased to \$8,000,000. The average award for school districts in 1999 was estimated at \$105,000 and the range of awards was \$35,000–\$170,000. For 1999, 54 awards were granted. To find out which school districts received

FLAP awards in 1999, contact JNCL–NCLIS at info@languagepolicy.org.

The description of the Foreign Language Assistance Program for 1999, which is expected to remain the same for 2000, follows:

The program provides discretionary grants to local education agencies to pay for the federal share of the cost of innovative model programs that establish, improve, or expand foreign language study for elementary and secondary school students. The program also provides grants to state education agencies that promote systemic approaches to improving foreign language learning in the state.

Stay informed about FLAP and other grants and help your school district receive funding to carry out innovative initiatives to begin a new elementary school foreign language program or enhance an ongoing one.

For more information contact JNCL–NCLIS, 4646 40th St., NW, Suite 310, Washington, DC 20016-1859; 202-966-8477; Fax: 202-966-8310; E-mail: info@languagepolicy.org; Web site: <http://www.languagepolicy.org>.

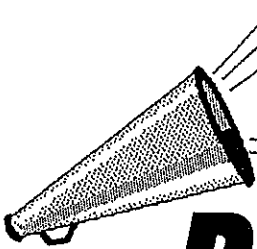
In Memoriam

Several weeks ago, the National Network for Early Language Learning received the sad news that a long-time friend, Jane Graveen, passed away after a short battle with cancer.

In 1949, Jane began her education career at Miami University, where she studied Spanish and education. After receiving her bachelor's degree, she enrolled at the University of Wisconsin to obtain her master's degree. Upon completing her master's, Jane taught Spanish at the secondary level in Wisconsin, New Jersey, and Connecticut. In 1981, Jane went to Glastonbury and began teaching foreign language in the elementary school. Jane became a lead teacher for the language program in 1989 and remained so until her retirement in 1996.

From 1983 to her retirement, Jane held positions on several education boards, including Public Relations Chair for the National Network for Early Language Learning, Secretary for COLT (Connecticut Language Teachers Association), and Newsletter Editor for COLT. In 1990, she received a Connecticut Celebration of Excellence Award for her classroom creativity.

Jane has done so much for elementary school foreign language learning that her memory and enthusiasm will never be forgotten. Although the work that she began will be carried on, Jane Graveen will be greatly missed in the profession.



Call for Papers

The **ERIC**® Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics invites you to submit papers, reports, curricula or other materials for inclusion in the **ERIC**® database.

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Updated Resource Information

In the Spring 1999 issue (Volume 4, Number 3) of *Learning Languages*, please update the ordering information for the Spanish materials described on page 31, *Canemos con los niños hispanos* Series (Vol. I *¿Dónde vas, Carbonerito?*, Vol. II *Amapolas y Patitos*, Vol. III *Arroz con Leche*): Grupo Cañaveral, Inc.; P.O. Box 521866; Miami, FL 33152; 305-480-0022; 888-226-8273; Fax: 305-480-0023; E-mail: info@hispanicmusic.com; Web sites: <http://www.hispanicmusic.com>; <http://www.grupocanaveral.com>; <http://www.josemarti.org>.

Integrating Foreign Language and Science through Technology

*Marcia J. Pastorek with Lisa Craig
Trinity Episcopal School
New Orleans, Louisiana*

Integrating any area of the curriculum with technology in a meaningful way takes time and patience. Integrating two distinct areas of the curriculum with technology takes much more time and much more patience. The results, however, can be awesome. Both teachers and students reap immeasurable rewards.

Reinforcing Science in French

This special project began as a simple integration of French and science in a lower-school setting (grades 1–4) through collaboration between Lisa, the science coordinator, and me, the French coordinator. I had been teaching the body parts (head, shoulders, knees, and toes) in French in the first grade when, in the teachers' lounge, I heard Lisa talking about recording body sounds (hearts, stomachs) in the first grade. After discussing the possibilities for collaboration, we decided to teach a class together. The start of the project was challenging since Lisa knew no French and I had very little knowledge of science, but our persistence won out and we taught our first integrated lesson on the human body.

As we reflected on our shared lesson, we realized that we could combine efforts and team-teach French and science. So my "body parts" lesson grew to include heart, lungs, brain, etc., and a French color game dealing with the blood flow evolved. The digestive system, the brain, and the senses also became topics for our shared unit. To prepare

my lessons I looked at Lisa's lesson plans and simplified them, modified them, and taught the lessons in French. The students became very excited about these lessons, which reinforced and extended their science lessons.

The time arrived when Lisa and I wanted to try teaching a more extensive French-science lesson together. We arranged to have a long afternoon class for this project. First, we had students draw exact replicas of their bodies by lying down on butcher paper and having a partner trace their outline. They then drew the main organs on their paper bodies in varied colors. We then gave them mailing labels on which were written the French words for the organs and told them to place the labels on the appropriate organs; for example, they placed *le coeur* on the heart. Later the students added hair, eyes, etc., in order to personalize their life-sized figures. These figures made a wonderful French and science display in the library.

As the weeks turned into months, Lisa and I began looking for additional science activities that could be taught in French. Some of the lessons we designed include nutrition, planets, properties of matter, insects, light and sound, and the water cycle.

Integrating French, Science, and Technology

We arrived at the day when we were ready for a bigger challenge. What to do next? We decided that

The students became very excited about these lessons, which reinforced and extended their science lessons.

We decided that creating a project using technology would add a new learning dimension for students . . .

creating a project using technology would add a new learning dimension for students, but we knew that the type of technology used had to be geared to the elementary school level. We decided to work with the second grade curriculum and began to develop a project that integrated French, science, and technology. In order to secure sufficient time for the classes, the support of fellow teachers and administrators was important to us. It was not difficult, however, to enlist their support since research suggests the importance of project-based learning (Buck, 1999; Gardner, 1993; ISTE, 1999; Wiggins & McTighe, 1998).

Since the second graders had become acquainted with animal habitats and animal adaptations during their science classes in first grade, we chose these topics as the focus of the project. We held several planning sessions in order to develop a detailed outline of the project. It was evident that other areas of the curriculum, such as social studies and language arts, would also be a natural part of the project. Once we had developed complete and clear procedures, we were ready to begin the project.

The following are the steps students completed in the project:

1. Heard the French teacher read *The Mixed-up Chameleon* by Eric Carle in French and discussed the story both in English and French.
2. Discussed in English the idea of what a defenseless animal is with the assistance of both teachers.
3. Learned French for key vocabulary terms.
4. Drew a defenseless animal on paper.
5. Shared their pictures with the class and named their animals in either English or French.
6. Drew pictures of their defenseless animals on the computers using KidPix Deluxe.
7. Saved two copies of each picture in their files.
8. Received official assignments

(ambassador, consul, etc.) to a Francophone country and discussed these assignments in English.

9. Used globes and atlases (both English and French) assisted by the teachers to find the location of their assigned Francophone countries.
10. Discussed (first in English, then in French) the continents, weather, habitats, flora, and fauna of these countries.
11. Grouped themselves according to assigned countries and answered questions in English about the weather, habitat, and characteristics of the animals that live in each country. Later, with teacher assistance, answered similar simple questions in French.
12. Created a list of defenses animals would need to survive in their new environment. Learned the names for these defenses in French, for example, a sticky tongue, *une langue collante*.
13. Packed a suitcase with all the defenses an animal would need for a trip to the Francophone country. They drew the suitcases on KidPix and drew the defenses inside the suitcases. All the defenses were labeled in English and French.
14. Worked on the second saved copy of their animal and drew on it the defenses they had chosen to take along.
15. Drew the new habitat around the adapted animal.

We then placed all the students' works into a slide show using KidPix. There were three slides for each student: 1) defenseless animal, 2) packed suitcase, 3) new adapted animal. We worked with the students to help them choose the desired transitions and sound effects for each set of slides. Students individually recorded a brief comment about their slides onto the slide show.

That could have been the end of the project but we decided to take the project one step further. For this final step we used the program Quick

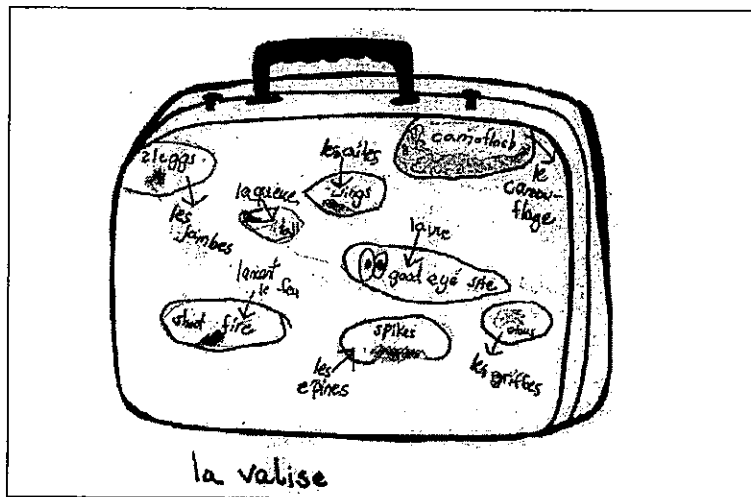


Figure 1. La valise

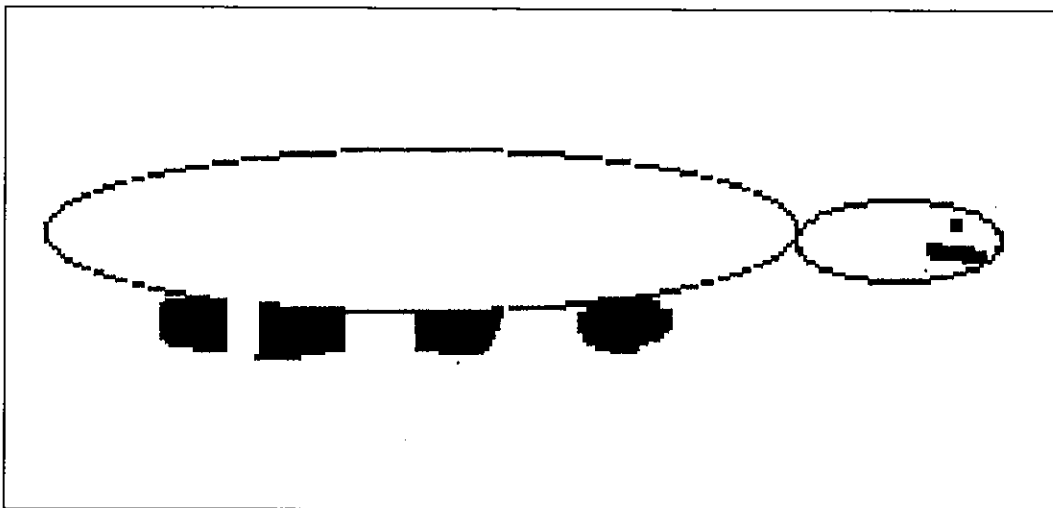


Figure 2. The animal without defenses

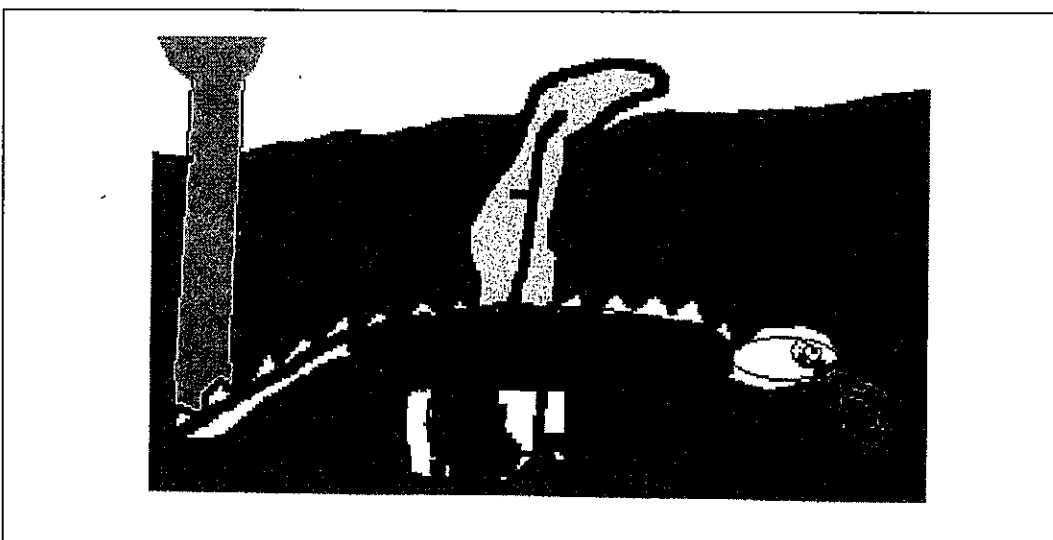


Figure 3. The animal with the following defenses: claws, shell, spikes, color change, eye shades, and "venom teeth"

Drawings are by Andrew K. Tyler, Grade 3; Marcia Pastorek, French Teacher

Morph 1.1 by Broderbund to show on the computer screen the animals morphing from defenseless to adapted. To complete this final step, we:

1. Took the picture of each defenseless animal and placed it in Quick Morph under picture one.
2. Took the picture of each adapted animal and placed it in Quick Morph under picture two.
3. Selected the option that creates a movie.

By connecting the computer to the TV with a video adapter, students were able to watch their animals morphing. Some of the students chose to add a voice-over both in English and French. We then presented the slide show and the movie to the students and their parents at a special presentation.

Conclusions

This project was certainly something the students will not soon forget. Although much time and patience were required, the results were outstanding. Ultimately we decided that the journey itself had been the final reward, not just for the students but also for the teachers. Examples of this project may be viewed at <http://www.trinityno.com>. On the menu at

Ultimately we decided that the journey itself had been the final reward, not just for the students but also for the teachers.

this site, select "Classes" then "Lower School" and "Frience"—the term we created to indicate a science lesson taught in French.

References

- Buck Institute for Education. (1999). *Project based learning*. Novato, CA. Retrieved October 18, 1999 from the World Wide Web: <http://www.bie.org/pbl>.
- Gardner, H. (1993). *Multiple intelligences: The theory in practice*. New York: Basic Books, Harper Collins Publishers.
- International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE). (1999). Research projects. Eugene, OR. Retrieved on October 18, 1999, from the World Wide Web: <http://www.iste.org/Research/index.html>.
- Wiggins, G., & McTighe, J. (1998). *Understanding by design*. Alexandria, VA: The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD).

For more information, contact Marcia J. Pastorek, Trinity Episcopal School, 1315 Jackson Ave., New Orleans, LA 70130-5199; mpastorek@trinityno.com or Lisa Craig, lrcraig@trinityno.com.

Congratulations, Virginia!

The Joint National Committee for Language included the article "Advocacy for Early Language Education: School Board Presentation" by Virginia Gramer (*Learning Languages* 4[3], Spring 1999, pp. 4–8) in the September 1999 mailing to all JNCL-NCLIS members. In an accompanying letter, J. David Edwards, Executive Director, called the article "superb."

A Page from NNELL's Photo Album:
The 1999 Summer Conference
Glastonbury, Connecticut



Joe Kiebesh, keynote speaker for the conference, with his parents



Christy Brown addresses conference participants



Incoming president, Myriam Met (center), and other participants listen to a conference speaker

Activities for Your Classroom

Fruit and the Five Senses

Audray K. Weber
Cushing Elementary
Kettle Moraine School District
Delafield, Wisconsin

Context:

This science unit teaches about the five senses, provides practice in math skills (preparation and interpretation of graphs, counting and comparisons), teaches about cultural products (unfamiliar tropical fruit), as it enhances Spanish language skills. The unit, which requires at least three 30-minute class periods, was designed to be taught in Spanish to students in an early elementary program (kindergarten through third grade).

Objectives:

At the end of this unit the students will be able to:

1. Name the five senses and tell the information the five senses give us.
2. Identify familiar and unfamiliar fruit by color, size, and shape.
3. Express whether they like or dislike the taste of each fruit.
4. Graph their favorite fruits.
5. Work together to create sentences that interpret a graph of fruits.

Targeted Standards:

Communication

- 1.1 Interpersonal Communication. Students provide and obtain information about the fruits and the senses.
- 1.2 Interpretive Communication. Students understand and interpret oral questions and commands and written information on graphs.

Cultures

- 2.2 Products and Perspectives of Culture. Students learn about fruits common in tropical climates.

Connections

- 3.1 Making Connections. Students reinforce and further their knowledge of fruits, the senses, and graphing through the foreign language.

Materials:

1. World map.
2. Various plastic fruit and/or pictures of fruit.
3. Supplied by the students: various common fruits such as pears, cherries, oranges, lemons, raspberries, strawberries, watermelon, bananas, grapes, pineapple, kiwi; tropical fruits that are not so common, such as papaya, guava, and mango.
4. Knife, cutting board, platters, large bowl, napkins, paper plates, paper cups, and wet and dry dish cloths for quick clean up.
5. Large piece of butcher paper with blank graph drawn on it.
6. Reusable shower curtain with a graph grid drawn on it with black permanent marker.
7. Markers, paper cutouts of fruits, and glue stick or masking tape.

Procedure:

Day One

Using the plastic fruit or fruit pictures ask students to name the color and size of each fruit. Ask them if they

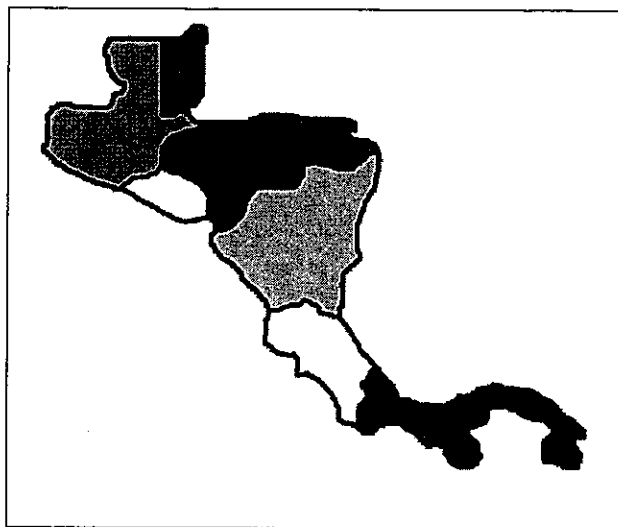
have ever tasted the fruit and if they like its taste. Begin with just a few fruits at first and when students demonstrate understanding, add others until all the common fruits are introduced. Next, introduce fruits grown in tropical climates. On the map show some of the Central American countries where these fruits are grown. Using a Venn Diagram, have students sort the fruit into different categories, such as fruit with/without seeds, circular/not circular shape, big/small, grows on a tree/vine/plant, etc.

Send a letter home to parents to tell them that during the next class period students will be learning about fruit and the five senses. Ask parents to send one or two common as well as uncommon fruits to use in the lesson. Explain that the students will share and eat the fruit when the lesson is done. Also ask for parent helpers for the next two class periods.

Day Two

Graph fruit that students bring to class by having them place it on the shower curtain graph (e.g. all apples go in the squares of the "apple" row). Have students help title and label the graph. Ask students to tell you about the graph. To help them, ask questions such as "How many pineapples do we have? How many more apples than lemons are there? Do we have any pears? How many fruit do we have in all?" Record these responses for the students to see.

Cut one of the fruits into bite-sized pieces while you talk to the students about the size of the fruit, its color, and shape. Describe its texture as hard/soft and its taste as sweet/sour. Tell students whether you like its taste. Tell them where the fruit grows and how it grows. After you have cut the first fruit, have a student give a piece to each student. Use commands to tell students how to help, "Mary, stand up and pass out the napkins, please." Tell students not to eat the fruit yet. As you continue describing and cutting fruit, have parent helpers or students pass



it out. Count the fruits you cut up. Review by asking students to point to the fruits on their plate that you describe.

To begin a review of the five senses, have students point to their eyes and tell them to look at the fruit with their eyes. Ask them what they see. Next have students point to their nose. Tell students to smell the fruit with their eyes closed and raise their hands if they can smell the lemon/banana/watermelon. Now have students touch the fruit with their eyes closed. Can they find by touch alone the banana/papaya/apple? Ask them which fruits are hard/soft. Tell students to listen to the fruit with their ears. Of course, they can not hear anything. Have students eat the fruit and listen as they eat to find out if they can hear differences in sounds as the fruits are chewed. Also remind them to think about what the fruit tastes like: "Is it sweet/sour? Do you like the taste?"

As students help you clean up, continue talking about the fruit. Tell them how many fruits you have left over. Name the fruits as you put them into a bag. Ask the students about the color, size, and shape of the fruit they are viewing.

Day Three

Using the butcher paper graph, have students pick a paper picture of their favorite fruit and tape or glue it onto the graph. After this is done, encourage

Have students eat the fruit and listen as they eat to find out if they can hear differences in sounds as the fruits are chewed.

students to tell you about the graph by asking: "Which fruit was the class favorite? How many students picked it? What was the least favorite? Did anyone pick it? How many students picked apples and pears as their favorite? How many more picked bananas than papayas?" Record the responses to these questions on the bottom of the graph.

Pointing to the parts of the body, ask the students questions about what we do with each of the five senses. Write on chart paper: *Con nuestros ojos vemos. Con nuestras orejas escuchamos. Con nuestros dedos tocamos. Con nuestras narices olemos. Con nuestras bocas gustamos.* (With our eyes we see. With our ears we hear. With our fingers we touch. With our nose we smell. With our mouth we taste.) Illustrate, or have students illustrate, each with a picture of the related body part.

Do a Gouin series (Curtain & Pesola, 1994, p. 111) about making a

fruit salad. Have students make a pretend fruit salad with hand motions as you go through the Gouin. Afterward, give each student a paper cup of the real fruit salad to enjoy. (Before class, ask parents to help you clean and cut up the leftover fruit to be used in a fruit salad.)

Assessment:

Provide each student with a written copy of the writing used on Day Three describing what we do with each of the five senses. Have students draw a picture of the body part referred to for each sense. Collect the papers and check for understanding. When you return the papers to students, have them place the papers in their Spanish portfolios.

References:

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

European Union Wants People to Be Trilingual

The following news was released by the Associated Press and published in many of the nation's newspapers on October 20, 1999:

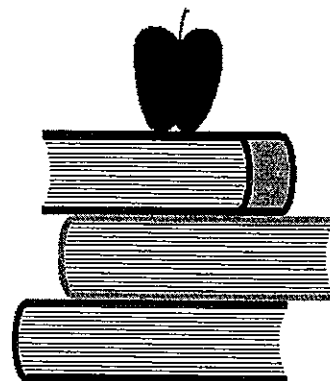
The European Commission has declared 2000 the "European Year of Languages" as part of a drive to encourage all residents to speak at least two languages besides their own.

"The ability to speak one or more foreign languages opens up new opportunities for Europeans," said Viviane Reding, the European Union's commissioner for culture, education, and sport.

Reding said learning more languages would enable citizens to take advantage of their right to live and work in any of the 15 EU nations as enshrined in the Union's founding charter.

Reding said \$13.8 million was available for the language campaign.

Classroom Resources



French

Tibo, G., & Tremblay, S. (1996). *Le dodo des animaux*. Québec: Héritage Jeunesse.

Available from Sosnowski Language Resources, 58 Sears Road, Wayland, MA 01778; 800-437-7161; Fax: 508-358-6687. Cost is \$8.95 for paperback and \$16.95 for hardbound.

This fantasy book explores how animals might get a good night's sleep. The author invents a different setting for each animal: the giraffe needs many pillows to support its head, mice sleep on bunk beds, the lion sleeps—still wearing its crown—on a royal bed. Although the text is probably too difficult for young American learners, the illustrations lend themselves to imaginative language. Children six through eight years old will find the pictures intriguing and can use their imagination to invent their own text.

German

Delafosse, C., & Grant, D. (1994). *Meyers Kleine Kinderbibliothek*. Mannheim: Brockhaus AG.

Available through International Book Import Service, Inc., 161 Main St., PO Box 8188, Lynchburg, TN 37352-8188; 800-277-4247 or 931-759-7400; Fax: 931-759-7555; E-mail: ibis@ibiservice.com; www.ibiservice.com.

The popular *First Discovery Books*, published by Scholastic, Inc., have been translated into German and are published by Brockhaus AG under

the title of *Meyers Kleine Kinderbibliothek*. These little books are a favorite among first and second graders who are learning German. The books address many varied science topics in simple language. Between each page is a see-through plastic page, that allows students to see phenomena "before and after." Topics included in the series of books are eggs, weather, lady bugs, colors, cars, under-the-ground, elephants, airplanes, a knight's castle, flowers, birds, apples, mice, houses, ships, farms, dinosaurs, rivers, honey bees, jungles, big and small, trees, the circus, tools, and numbers. The books are extremely well-suited for research of school topics addressed in the first and second grade curriculum. The *Meyers Kleine Kinderbibliothek* discovery books are very helpful as a classroom resource and lower elementary students will enjoy reading them.

Latin

Sweet, W. E. (1996). *Artes Latinae* (Text). CD-ROM version, Lyon, J. and Sonkowsky, R. P. Wauconda, IL: Bolchazy-Carducci.

Available from Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, Inc., 1000 Brown St., Unit 101, Wauconda, IL 60084; 847-526-4344; Fax: 847-526-2867; E-mail: latin@bolchazy.com. Cost is \$212 plus shipping for the CD-ROM for Level 1 or \$270 plus shipping for the complete Level 1 set.

As early language learning programs become more prevalent and qualified teachers become more difficult to find, the option of Latin as a

second language emerges as a viable option, not only for school districts but also for home schoolers. This CD-ROM version of Waldo Sweet's popular *Artes Latinae* approach to learning Latin provides an easy-to-follow course that is suited to students age 10 and above. The course uses programmed instruction, which generates continuous, active response on the part of the student. This material is particularly appealing to home schoolers because a highly motivated and capable student can follow the program without the supervision of a qualified Latin teacher. The methodology of the original text by Sweet was designed to break the learning process down into bite-sized bits and structure it carefully according to a system of continuous spiraling of content and feedback to the student. A student who progresses successfully through the two disks will have a solid command of the basics of Latin, roughly the equivalent of two years of high school Latin.

Users of the CD-ROM version must have an IBM compatible computer (or a Power Mac with SoftWindows 3.0), Windows 3.1 or later, a CD-ROM drive, sound capability, and a VGA monitor. Planned upgrades include Medieval Latin pronunciation (American Scholastic and Restored Classical are available now), ability to record the user's pronunciation for comparison with the author's, glossary, electronic version of the graded reader, and electronic version of the cultural filmstrips. A Macintosh version is also planned. Free demo disks may be requested from the publisher.

While basic in its blackline drawings and stark text, this CD-ROM version of *Artes Latinae* is a great start for interactive instructional materials that will help provide individualized programs for independent study, remediation, or multilevel classes.

Guest Reviewer for Latin Resources:
Marty Abbott, Fairfax County Public
Schools, Fairfax, Virginia

Spanish

Johnson, J., Morigaki, K., & Smith, J. E. (1998). *¡Abrapalabra! Libro de palabras e imágenes*. Carmel, CA: Hampton-Brown Books.

Available from Hampton-Brown Books, Box 223220, Carmel, CA 93922; 800-333-3510. Cost is \$40.00 for the big book, \$8.00 for the small book, and \$30.00 for the Teacher's Guide and Activity Card Pack.

¡Abrapalabra! Libro de palabras e imágenes is an excellent book of "pictures and images" (or picture dictionary) for grade PreK–4 students. This book is organized by themes, including: *los animales*, *los opuestos*, *el clima*, *¿Cómo crecen?*, *día y noche*, *los números*, and *las casas*. Each page is clear, not too busy, and colorfully illustrated with photos or drawings that have a border indicating the theme along one edge. The book is available in a big book format and a small student book. The featured language is primarily vocabulary words and phrases. Often a question is posed at the top of the page, such as: *¿Dónde viven?* *¿Qué hacen las familias?* *¿Qué necesitan los perros?* The pages titled *Las cosechas* include illustrations of crops, as well as small photos of a wheat field, an orchard of oranges, a pumpkin patch, and a rice paddy. The *Las estaciones* pages ask *Es otoño, ¿dónde está Nico?* and show Nico in school (*en su asiento*) in *septiembre* and smelling the turkey (*en la cocina*) in *noviembre*. The *Las casas* pages are illustrated with photos of houses from around the world and their different purposes (*la casa transportable*, *las casas de adobe*, *el yurt*, *la carpa*). The labels under each animal *casero* also include some of the animal's attributes, *la tortuga/el caparazón*; *el loro/las plumas*, *la garra*, *la cola*; *el hampster/ los bigotes*.

Also available as a companion to *¡Abrapalabra!* is a wonderful Teacher's Guide and Activity Card Pack. This set of 28 laminated cards measuring 8 1/2" x 11" contains activities to build vocabulary, language, and phonics skills. Each card extends one of the *¡Abrapalabra!* themes. Most of the activities ask the students to think critically as they complete a fun task. The cards have an illustration on the front and directions for the teacher on the back that suggest activities for vocabulary, language, and phonics. The *Los animales* card has photos of eight different animals on the front. The vocabulary activities ask the students to identify the animals on pages 2 and 3 of *¡Abrapalabra!* and to role-play their actions; find the animals with whiskers, tails, ears, and humps; and identify animals with specified characteristics (*grande, largo*) and describe them. Each activity suggests questions for the teacher to use: *¿Es esto un caimán? ¿Es esto un delfín? ¿El lobo tiene pezuñas? ¿Qué otros animales tienen pezuñas?*

The language section suggests playing a game called *¿Qué ves?* in which the students name the animals on the front of the card. Then the teacher or a student connects two animals with a Wikki Stix (wax strip) and asks, for example, *¿En qué se parecen el tigre al elefante? (Ambos tienen cuatro patas)* and *¿En qué no se parecen? (El elefante tiene trompa y el tigre no tiene trompa)*. Finally, the phonics section asks the students to find animals whose names begin with certain letters; for example, "o" would be *oso polar*. Other students can then find other words that begin with "o" (*orejas, ojo*). And for the last activity the teacher asks the students to draw an

oso polar using circles and to label body parts such as *las orejas* and *los ojos*.

The *Los bicharrachos* card shows the simple, labeled steps to make a spider out of an egg carton cup and a pipe cleaner, as well as a butterfly from a pipe cleaner with a piece of tissue paper. Activities include identifying which animal lives in webs, which animal is green with eight legs; writing animal riddles; and naming animals, *Eduardo el escarabajo y Ana la araña*. Other cards have activities such as a board game based on the city, using colors and shapes to make pictures, creating a *Lotería* game, making paper-bag puppets, filling a wheelbarrow with crops, and creating a cumulative story (*Yo soy el granjero Pablo. Tengo brocolí en mi caretilla. Or Yo soy la granjera Manuelita. Tengo trigo en mi caretilla*, etc.). Even more activities include filling an empty room with cards of furniture, and "dressing" a stuffed bear by naming the clothing it would wear in different types of weather. The phonics section progresses from initial vowel sounds to initial consonant sounds, to clapping out the number of syllables in words and finding other words with the same number of syllables.

With a little creativity, *¡Abrapalabra!*, along with the activity cards, could be used as a way to organize several years of the elementary school foreign language curriculum. These materials include basic vocabulary, nicely illustrated themes that are interesting to students, and activities that ask the students to think and create, using their language in meaningful ways. The *¡Abrapalabra!* materials would be a worthwhile addition to any existing program.

Spring 2000 Conferences

February 24–26, 2000

Southern Conference on Language Teaching and Alabama Association of Foreign Language Teachers. Wynfrey Hotel at Riverchase Galleria, Birmingham, AL. Lynne McClendon, SCOLT Executive Director, 165 Lazy Laurel Chase, Roswell, GA 30076; 770-992-1256; Fax: 770-992-3464; E-mail: lynnemcc@mindspring.com.

March 10–13, 2000

Central States Conference-Cruise. San Juan, Puerto Rico. E-mail: rmcheatham@ualr.edu.

March 16–19, 2000

Southwest Conference on Language Teaching. Salt Lake City, UT. Audrey Cournia, 1348 Coachman Dr., Sparks, NV 89434; Fax: 702-358-1605; E-mail: Acournia@compuserve.com.

April 13–16, 2000

Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. Washington, DC. Northeast Conference, Dickinson College, P.O. Box 1773, Carlisle, PA 17013-2896; 717-245-1977; Fax: 717-245-1976; E-mail: nectfl@dickinson.

Summer 2000 Courses and Workshops

July 5–15, 2000

Temas Añejos: Recurring Themes in Ancient, Colonial, and Modern Latin America. Iowa State University, Ames, IA. Marcia Harmon Rosenbusch, National K–12 Foreign Language Resource Center, N131 Lagomarcino Hall, Iowa State University, Ames, IA 50011; 515-294-6699; Fax: 515-294-2776; E-mail: nflrc@iastate.edu.

July 24–August 3, 2000

K–6 Foreign Languages: Leading the Way with Teacher Preparation. Iowa State University, Ames, IA. Marcia Harmon Rosenbusch, National K–12 Foreign Language Resource Center, N131 Lagomarcino Hall, Iowa State University, Ames, IA 50011; 515-294-6699; Fax: 515-294-2776; E-mail: nflrc@iastate.edu.

August 5–13, 2000

New Technologies in the Foreign Language Classroom. Iowa State University, Ames, IA. Marcia Harmon Rosenbusch, National K–12 Foreign Language Resource Center, N131 Lagomarcino Hall, Iowa State University, Ames, IA 50011; 515-294-6699; Fax: 515-294-2776; E-mail: nflrc@iastate.edu.

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.

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