

The Journal of the National Network for Early Language Learning

# Learning Languages



# NEL

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*Learning Languages: The Journal of the National Network for Early Language Learning* is published in the fall and spring as 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 promote 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 back cover for more information on NNELL.

**Articles Published:** Both practical and scholarly articles are published. Practical articles describe innovative approaches to teaching and the administration of effective language programs for children. Submit all practical articles to editor Mari Haas. Both practical and 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. Submit all scholarly articles to editor Teresa Kennedy. Write to the editors to request a copy of author guidelines for preparing articles or retrieve them from NNELL's Website ([www.nnell.org](http://www.nnell.org)).

**Submissions:** Deadlines are: Fall issue—May 1; Spring issue—Jan 1. Feature articles, classroom activities, and materials may be submitted to the appropriate Contributing Editor. 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. 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). Send announcements, conference information, and original children's work (such as line drawings, short stories, and poems) to the editors.

**Private entities** seeking to announce professional development opportunities and other services and schools or school districts wishing to advertise employment opportunities should send information electronically to [tkennedy@uidaho.edu](mailto:tkennedy@uidaho.edu). The price for each announcement (quarter page ad) is \$50. Please make the check payable to NNELL and send to Dr. Teresa Kennedy, College of Education, University of Idaho, Moscow, ID 83844-3080.

**PLEASE CHECK FOR UPDATED INFORMATION ON THE NNELL WEBSITE.**

# Learning Languages

The Journal of the National Network for Early Language Learning

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## Notes from the President

**F**all is a colorful and dynamic time of year as changes take place in the colors of the trees and the colors of the autumn harvests. At the same time, changes are taking place in NNEL that reflect the colorful and dynamic nature of NNEL.

It is appropriate that at this time of year I take this opportunity to announce a major change in our organization. The NNEL headquarters is moving! As of November 20, 2003, the NNEL offices will be moving from the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) in Washington, DC, to the Education Department at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, NC. Plans are underway to make the transition as smooth as possible for all involved. Please rest assured that your questions will continue to be handled in an expeditious fashion, and NNEL's services that you have come to know (the *Learning Languages* journal, the website, the ACTFL FLES Swapshop, advocacy efforts, other NNEL activities at the ACTFL conference, etc.) will continue to be offered without a hitch. Whenever you have any questions about NNEL, please visit our website at [www.nnell.org](http://www.nnell.org), where you will find up-to-date information.

Nancy Rhodes, from the Foreign Language Education Division at CAL, has played a critical role in the leadership of NNEL since its inception. She was elected chair of the network at its first meeting in 1987 and was subsequently appointed executive secretary in 1991 when NNEL became a membership organization. She'll be passing the baton to Mary Lynn Redmond at the NNEL board meeting on November 20, 2003.

I would like to give you a little background of NNEL's history at CAL. As many of you know, CAL has played a key role in NNEL since the beginning. A logical host because of its long-time interest in promoting early foreign language education, CAL organized and hosted NNEL's planning meeting in January 1987 at the CAL offices then located at 1118 22<sup>nd</sup> St., NW, Washington, DC. Twenty-five educators from 16 states, all of whom had attended a networking session at the ACTFL Conference the previous year, met to discuss the organization of a network that would facilitate communication among early lan-

guage teachers. Welcomed by Dick Tucker, the President of CAL at the time, those gathered were inspired to think creatively and "outside the box." At the end of the two-day meeting, the National Network for Early Language Learning was born. Subsequent CAL Presidents Sara Meléndez and Donna Christian also strongly supported the activities of NNEL and continued to facilitate the hosting of NNEL meetings and other activities. CAL's Director of Financial Services, Earl Staubs, has also been a great friend of NNEL, with his office cheerfully providing bookkeeping and other financial services. NNEL also collaborated with other CAL initiatives. In 1993, CAL's ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics invited NNEL to be a partner, and NNEL began working closely with the Clearinghouse to help build the ERIC database and disseminate resources.

Throughout NNEL's 16-year history, its mission has dovetailed closely with CAL's, which made the NNEL-CAL collaboration such a good one. CAL has conducted a wide range of research studies addressing early foreign language education and has provided many of the resources that NNEL uses to promote language education. Without a doubt, NNEL would not be where it is today without CAL. Thank you, CAL, and we hope to stay in close touch!

As NNEL plans to continue its strong link with CAL, we are broadening our support system through relocating the NNEL headquarters to Wake Forest University (WFU), Winston-Salem, North Carolina — only a few hours away from CAL. Mary Lynn Redmond, Ed.D., Past President of NNEL, will become the new NNEL Executive Secretary. Nancy Rhodes and Mary Lynn Redmond have been working closely to ensure a smooth transition. Mary Lynn's years of outstanding service and leadership in the advancement of NNEL's mission are strengthened by her service to an outstanding institution — NNEL's new home. Foreign languages are historically at the forefront of a liberal arts education at WFU. With WFU's philosophy that all graduating students are proficient in foreign languages and cross-cultural understanding, WFU is a natural match for NNEL!

A special thank you goes out to both Nancy Rhodes and Mary Lynn Redmond for their incredible past and future contributions to NNEL!

To bring my tenure as NNELL President to closure, I would like to share with you a thought from an insightful presentation I attended this summer. At the AATSP Annual Meeting held in Chicago, I was fortunate to hear Carlos Davis, Ph.D., CEO and President of Santillana USA Publishing Company, address AATSP members. His early language learning included Italian and English in addition to the Spanish language of his native Argentina. Carlos Davis noted the following: "For the most part, our (U.S.) schools do not incorporate global perspectives in their curricula." It is through the professional efforts of NNELL members that this tide is being reversed. All early language educators are indeed integrat-

ing "global perspectives" into their classrooms. For the young children in our schools who benefit from early language learning, the fall and the school year are colorful and dynamic times. Children in early language programs are learning about "global perspectives" that contribute to an enriched linguistic and cultural understanding of the world community.

It has been a privilege and an honor for me to serve NNELL in the role of president. I wish you the best during this school year!

Martie Semmer  
NNELL President

*All early language educators are indeed integrating "global perspectives" into their classrooms.*

## Editorial Announcement: *NNELL Changes Number of Journal Issues*

In this climate of ever-tightening budgets, the NNELL Board has been looking at ways in which NNELL can save on expenses while still providing the high quality services that members have come to expect. In this vein, after much discussion, the Board has voted to reduce the number of yearly issues of *Learning Languages* from three to two. Although you will receive one fewer issue a year, the number of pages per issue has increased so that the total number of pages per year (approximately 80-90) is greater than the number of pages per year before 2002 (approximately 75). The plan is for future issues to be published in the fall and spring (no winter issue), starting in the 2003-04 school year.

Our rationale is the following: (1) preparing 2 issues a year instead of 3 will save NNELL a lot of expense on production,

editing, and postage, and (2) members will receive the same number of pages per year, if not more, in the new format.

Most importantly, as an almost all volunteer-run organization, NNELL can strive harder to have the fall and spring issues in your hands in a timely fashion. As hard as we try, it has always been a challenge to produce a third issue and get it to you before the end of school in June.

We hope you find that this new plan accommodates your professional needs and that the new format and design that the journal has implemented this past year are to your liking. As always, please feel free to contact NNELL president, Martie Semmer, or *Learning Languages* editor, Teresa Kennedy, if you have any questions or concerns about this decision or any other NNELL matter.

## NNELL ELECTION RESULTS

Our wonderful colleague Helena Curtain was unanimously elected Second Vice President, effective November 2003, under the presidency of Lori Langer de Ramirez. Helena will be on the executive board of NNELL for a three-year term to progress as follows: She will hold the position of Second Vice President in 2003-2004, First Vice President in 2004-2005, and finally President in 2005-2006. In her role as Second Vice President she will provide leadership in the area of networking and communication with the state and regional representatives and will attend all NNELL board meetings. Helena has had a long association with NNELL. Her statement and biography are printed below.

### STATEMENT OF HELENA CURTAIN

NNELL has been and continues to be a powerful force for teachers of early language learners. As one of NNELL's founding members, I would like to serve our organization as it continues its mission to provide advocacy and support for our profession and for our teachers. As president of NNELL, I would work to keep the organization strong and to explore ways to increase networking opportunities, especially in the area of sharing materials among teachers. I would like to give service to NNELL because I am so grateful for the many professional opportunities for growth and for meeting wonderful people that it has provided me.

I have been involved in early language learning in both immersion and FLES programs in the Milwaukee Public Schools and in my work

with teacher seminars and workshops both nationally and internationally. I would be proud to serve in a leadership role in NNELL.

### BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION: HELENA CURTAIN

Helena Curtain has over 25 years of experience as a foreign/second language educator and has taught at the elementary school, middle school/junior high and high school levels. She was Foreign Language Curriculum Specialist for the Milwaukee Public Schools for many years and in that capacity coordinated and supervised elementary, middle and high school language programs. She is currently an assistant professor at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and is responsible for the Foreign Language and ESL teacher education programs. She is the author of various articles dealing with language instruction and the co-author (with Carol Ann Pesola Dahlberg) of *Languages and Children: Making the Match*. Helena Curtain is active professionally and has received both state and national awards for her service to the language teaching profession. She has also served as a speaker, consultant and visiting professor both nationally throughout the United States including Alaska and Hawaii; and internationally in Austria, Ecuador, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Peru, the Philippines, Poland, Spain, Taiwan, Thailand and Turkey.

# Special Feature from the NNELL President

## *The State of the Profession*

*Our profession has moved from the philosophy that foreign language education is for the cream-of-the-crop secondary students headed for college to foreign language education is for all students of all ages—with an emphasis on a well-articulated, early language education that continues through middle school, high school and the university as part of the core curriculum.*

In April 2003, Rebecca Kline, Executive Director of the Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (NECTFL), invited me to speak on behalf of NNELL as part of a panel that presented at the NECTFL plenary session. In five short minutes, my task was to address the following questions: From NNELL's perspective, what is the state of the profession and what are NNELL's concerns regarding the future of foreign language education? How does National Board Certification for World Languages Other than English (WLOE) affect our profession? I would like to share my remarks with you.

"The profession is transforming itself." Christine Brown, a past NNELL President and the ACTFL Immediate Past President, made this statement at a meeting of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) World Languages Other than English (WLOE) Standards Committee, whose purpose was to develop standards for accomplished teachers of students ages 3-18+. Our profession has moved from the philosophy that foreign language education is for the cream-of-the-crop secondary students headed for college to foreign language education is for all students of all ages—with an emphasis on a well-articulated, early language education that continues through middle school, high school and the university as part of the core curriculum. This ideal and necessary scenario for all foreign language students leads to the level of proficiency needed for the multilingual, multiliterate, multicultural real world.

NNELL has seen the advancement of Pre-K-16 foreign language education in multiple languages in recent years, beginning with the national K-12 student standards *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* followed by the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) Standards, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) Standards and the World Language Standards. NNELL members have played key roles in the development of these national Pre-K-12 initiatives. These national initiatives define foreign language education—beginning in the early grades—for the world of today and tomorrow.

During this current dynamic transformation, NNELL is well aware of the challenges facing early language education, the component to

which NNELL dedicates and concentrates our efforts. From NNELL's perspective, the two greatest challenges include the following:

1. Many foreign language education professionals do not understand that early foreign language education is an essential subject in the core curriculum.
2. Beyond the foreign language profession at the local, state and national levels, policymakers do not understand that early foreign language education is an essential subject in the core curriculum.

In my role at the National K-12 Foreign Language Resource Center (NFLRC), Iowa State University, as WLOE National Board Certification Project Facilitator, I find that NBPTS National Board Certification for WLOE teachers is the one initiative rooted outside the foreign language profession that has the potential to strengthen Pre-K-12 foreign language education. This in turn will result in elevating the status of the foreign language teaching profession in the eyes of our schools and communities. However, WLOE NBC is in danger if we, the professionals, do not pull together to encourage and support WLOE teachers to become candidates by December 31, 2003.

I would like to close with an excerpt from a letter written by Vicki Welch Alvis, a 2002 Early and Middle Childhood (EMC) Spanish National Board Certified Teacher and NNELL member from Georgia:

"As a new National Board Certified Teacher in Early and Middle Childhood (EMC) World Languages Other than English, I would like to share with you the impact of the certification process on my teaching. As a result of preparing the portfolio entries and reviewing for the assessments, my teaching is immensely more focused. I find that I formulate goals and objectives for Spanish instruction with greater ease. I continually reflect on my own practice in order to make changes to benefit my students."

This excerpt from Vicki's letter to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) reflects NNELL's vision not only for Early and Middle Childhood foreign language teachers, but also for ALL Pre-K-16 foreign language education professionals.

# Learning a Language:

*When is the ideal time to learn a language?*

## Most school children start too late.

*Here's why.*

Jennifer Reid Holman

### STARTING EARLY

**F**our-year-old Alexandra Demers talks to her toy animals in Japanese. At snack time, she spontaneously shifts to French: "Jus de pomme, s'il vous plait." ("Apple juice, please.") Lindsay Swan, age 8, shows an ability to carry on a basic conversation in French without the slightest English accent. Both have been students since the age of 2 at the Language Workshop for Children in New York. They are part of a growing number of children — many barely out of their toddler years — enrolled in language schools and programs across the country.

Sound like parents pushing their kids toward over-achievement? Not entirely, say educators and child development researchers. "In the past decade or so, we've learned a tremendous amount about the best way to teach foreign languages so kids develop a real proficiency for using them," says Christine Brown, director of foreign languages for the Glastonbury, Connecticut, public schools and chairperson of the National Standards Task Force on Foreign Language Education. "From both a practical teaching standpoint as well as the latest research, we now know that the better learner is one who starts early — at least before age 10."

Even public schools are embracing the trend toward earlier foreign language education. In the not-so-distant past, most offered foreign language as an elective, generally starting in junior or senior high school.

Thanks to the Goals 2000 education initiative and the input of thousands of teachers, Brown's task force recommended that all children have the opportunity to study foreign languages in elementary school, ideally starting in kindergarten or first grade. Heeding that call, 24 states report teaching foreign languages in public elementary schools with enrollment in these programs up 18 percent from 1990 to 1994, according to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.

"In terms of benefits, the research is pretty conclusive that students exposed to foreign lan-

guages in the elementary and preschool years have a much higher level of success in other studies," says Eileen Glisan, a Spanish and foreign language education professor at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. "They develop greater problem-solving skills, perform better in their native language, and become more open to other cultures."

### BRAIN WAITING TO BE PROGRAMMED

Some of this insight into the benefits of language training has come from brain and linguistics researchers who have recently identified a "window of opportunity" during which learning a language comes easiest.

According to neurobiologists, a newborn's brain is like a new computer waiting to be programmed. Some of the brain's basic functions, such as breathing and heartbeat, are fixed in place while a baby is still in the womb. But trillions of other connections in the brain are just waiting to be made, or programmed in, during the first years of life. Some of these early connections govern such skills as the ability to see and distinguish faces and objects, to master basic motor skills, and to learn languages. These early childhood experiences also represent the skills most likely to stick with us for life. As a result, say some researchers, an immature brain may offer certain advantages for acquiring a second or third language.

"The power to learn language is so great in the young child that it doesn't seem to matter how many languages you throw their way. They can learn as many as you allow them to hear systematically and regularly at the same time," says Susan Curtiss, linguistics professor at the University of California, Los Angeles.

After a certain period, however, which most researchers say is about age 9 or 10, some basic connections can no longer be made in the brain. In essence, the window of opportunity to easily acquire multiple languages gradually shuts. In fact, children who have never learned even a first language by this age, due to hearing problems, for

*"From both a practical teaching standpoint as well as the latest research, we now know that the better learner is one who starts early — at least before age 10."*

Christine Brown  
Past NNELL  
President and  
ACTFL Immediate  
Past President

instance, will generally never be able to speak their native language well.

"What seems to happen is that during the course of childhood the brain becomes slowly less plastic," says Curtiss. "And by the time the child reaches puberty, the brain has become significantly less plastic and is not able to restructure itself.

"Consequently," Curtiss says, "the mind as well as the brain in essence becomes rigid and cannot develop richly and normally any real cognitive system, including language."

This doesn't mean you can't learn a second language as a teenager or adult. Motivation and necessity are also powerful learning forces, say educators. "But your likelihood of mastering a new language with as much ease at that point or of ever speaking it like a native are almost nil," says Francois Thibaut, director of the Language Workshop for Children in New York, who has taught foreign language to children and adults for 25 years.

That, in part, explains the recent rush of some parents to enroll infants as young as 6

months in foreign language workshops. Yet, the notion that an early start is the magic bullet to mastering a foreign language remains controversial.

## DEVOTE AMPLE TIME TO LEARNING

"When we're talking about learning a language at a school as opposed to learning it in a multilingual home or play environment, the emphasis on starting very early is not as important as some might think," says Patsy Lightbown, professor of applied linguistics at Concordia University in Montreal. "Another important ingredient is devoting enough time to it. Twenty minutes, three times per week is not a very effective way to acquire a language, no matter when you start."


Public school teachers are also embracing this theory. Last year, Brown's national education task force developed standards that completely revamp the teaching of foreign languages. Instead of conjugating verbs and rote memorizing vocabulary lists a few times per week, as students have done for years, the focus is now on immersing children in actually communicating in the language every day.

Students may listen to stories on tape, learn songs, or watch movies and newscasts in the language they are studying. Spanish students, for instance, may be guided through a science project or play a math game in that language. With a little experience, French students may be asked to use the Internet to correspond with students in France or to write and act out a play in French.

"The idea here is not just to teach them about the rules of the language but to get students actively involved in using it right from the beginning," says Brown. "Kids soak up language by osmosis, and it's a very effective approach — particularly when it's taught through a variety of activities. After all, that's the way we learn our own language."

Access this story online at:  
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### SPANISH TEACHER SCHOLARSHIP LINGUISTIC IMMERSION PROGRAM




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# International News on Young Language Learners – *Here we go around the world!*

Dr. Marianne Nikolov  
University of Pecs, Hungary

**T**housands of children learn a variety of modern languages around the world. In this section, *Learning Languages* provides readers with insights into a smorgasbord of programs, resources covering international language programs, as well as recent and upcoming events. Currently, most activities relate to English as a target language and the **European Year of the Languages 2001 (EYL)**.

**The European Union and the Council of Europe** are extremely active in promoting early start modern language programs. **The European Centre for Modern Languages in Graz, Austria**, has a range of publications and an edited volume on the state of the art in 18 countries from Austria to Australia (see Nikolov, M. & Curtain, H. (eds.) (2000). *An Early Start: Young Learners and Modern Languages in Europe and Beyond*. Graz: ECML). For more information on European language policy, events and publications please visit [www.ecml.at](http://www.ecml.at), or [www.coe.int](http://www.coe.int), or [www.elearningeuropa.info](http://www.elearningeuropa.info).

Results of a **worldwide survey** are available on primary English language teaching to children under the age of 11 years. The study was designed by Shelagh Rixon (Centre for English Language Teacher Education, University of Warwick, U.K.). For more details, visit <http://britishcouncil.org/english/eyl/index.htm> where you can also find further information on key questions and articles on EYL.

**Estonia, Poland, Russia, and the Ukraine** have recently developed a shared English curriculum to meet needs in these countries. As English has become a compulsory school subject for young learners, twelve experts from these four countries designed a core curriculum and assessment tools in Moscow, Russia, in August, 2003. Interested readers can find out more from [natalia.shulgina@britishcouncil.ru](mailto:natalia.shulgina@britishcouncil.ru) or at <http://www.britishcouncil.org/english/eltecs/index.htm>.

**The Centre for English Language Teaching, University of Stirling, Scotland**, has conducted an informative study, "From a Language Policy to Classroom Practice: The Intervention of Identity and Relationships," based on the context of a national policy to increase access to modern foreign/second languages at the primary level. This study, reported by Michael P. Breen, presents the reflections of voluntary generalist primary

teachers on their experiences while introducing a language program that was new to the curriculum. The paper reveals several tensions within the local implementation of policy and offers implications for the wider introduction and interpretation of new policies in the language curriculum. See the full article in *Language & Education*, Volume 6, No 4.

**Irish primary schools** can boast of a well documented national project on teaching French, German, Italian and Spanish. A detailed research report has been published: Harris, J. & Conway, M. (2002). *Modern Languages in Irish Primary Schools: An Evaluation of the National Pilot Project*. Dublin: Institiuid Teangeolaíochta Éireann. For more information, please visit [www.ite.ie](http://www.ite.ie).

**Australian experts** also contribute to our field of interest. A three-year research project has been launched to validate Australian ESL bandscales. Also, Penny McKay (Queensland University of Technology) has sent good news on testing. She is writing a volume on *Assessing Young Learners* to be published by Cambridge University Press.

"**What We Can Learn from Foreign Language Teaching in Other Countries**," by researchers Ingrid Pufahl, Nancy Rhodes and Donna Christian, discusses findings from a study conducted by the Center for Applied Linguistics. Data were collected on foreign language teaching practices in 19 countries, with a primary focus on the question of "What do you think are three of the most successful aspects of foreign language education in your country?" Responses from 22 educators and a review of comparative education reports suggest the following recommendations for effective foreign language instruction:

- Start language education early.
- Conduct long-term research.
- Provide stronger leadership.
- Identify how technology can improve language instruction.
- Improve teacher education.
- Develop appropriate language assessments.
- Designate foreign language as a core subject.
- Take advantage of the sociolinguistic context.

For a complete report, see [www.cal.org/ericcll/countries.html](http://www.cal.org/ericcll/countries.html)

## **Call For Proposals—**

A conference will be held at the International Youth Library, Schloss Blutenburg, Munich, Germany, on how real (authentic) picture books can be used in early programs. The dates are 19-21 November, 2004. Short proposals for empirical studies to be discussed at the conference should be sent as an attachment to Janet Enever [j.enever@london.met.ac.uk](mailto:j.enever@london.met.ac.uk) by 30 November, 2003. The event is designed to allow for a year to implement small scale research.

Do you have international news to share? Send information to [nikolov@nostromo.ptt.hu](mailto:nikolov@nostromo.ptt.hu) so that NNELL members will be up to date on news about language learning around the world!

# Observing Progress and Achievement of Beginning Students in a Fourth-Grade Spanish FLES Program

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*It became clear that knowledge of what constitutes reasonable expectations of early language learners' proficiency within various FLES models is much needed in the field of second language learning and teaching.*

## PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

I started teaching Spanish in grades 4-8 in 1997 at Manhattan Country School (MCS), a small Pre-K-8<sup>th</sup> grade independent school in New York City. My first couple of years teaching Spanish, I relied on the textbook as the curriculum and assumed that students were making good progress if their performance was acceptable on exams and if they worked toward using Spanish in class. In 1999, I began to move away from textbook instruction and adopted content-centered curricula in order to align my teaching and MCS's Upper School (4-8) Spanish FLES program with the *National Standards for Foreign Language Learning* (1996). I began to use thematic units and teaching methods that put greater emphasis on the development of language proficiency through the teaching of culture and content. As I thought about what I wanted the students to be able to do, and considered my own intuitions about what students knew, I began to wonder what students could be reasonably expected to do (in terms of their proficiency) at each grade level. I sought some answers in the *ACTFL Performance Guidelines for K-12 Learners* (ACTFL, 1998).

As I read through the *Performance Guidelines*, I realized that the structure of our Spanish FLES program did not resemble any of the described program models used to arrive at the proposed performance expectations for students at varying levels of language study. In our program, we met twice a week, not three to five times, we started to work on developing proficiency skills in grade 4, not Kindergarten, and our classes were about 45 minutes long, not 50-55. In the end, the *Performance Guidelines* left me with many questions and a great desire to determine the performance levels that we could reasonably expect from the young students in our Spanish FLES classes at different points in the program.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The question then became, "What levels of language proficiency could a group of beginning

fourth-grade students attain after their first year in our Spanish FLES program, a content-centered, immersion-like class that meets for 45 minutes twice a week?" I specifically wanted to observe the students' ability to understand and interpret spoken Spanish (such as following instructions), the students' ability to obtain and provide information (such as negotiating classroom routines), and the students' ability to present information in Spanish (in various oral, reading, and written tasks).

When I looked at the literature, I found an evolving research base in second language acquisition identifying the various levels of proficiency that students can attain in language programs at the high school and university levels (Tschirner and Heilenman, 1998; Glisan and Foltz 1998). The only study I found that dealt with young students and recorded students' achievement in a target language was a study conducted by Donato, Antonek, and Tucker (1996) on a 5<sup>th</sup> grade class studying Japanese in a FLES program.

It became clear that knowledge of what constitutes reasonable expectations of early language learners' proficiency within various FLES models is much needed in the field of second language learning and teaching (Shohamy, 1998). I wanted to address this need for our school and hoped that in the process I could contribute to the field of second language learning and teaching through this study.

With the help of my mentor Dr. Mari Haas, my school, and a grant I received from the National K-12 Foreign Language Resource Center in Ames, Iowa, I began to sketch out a plan of action to record and describe my 4<sup>th</sup> grade students' language gains during the 2000-2001 school year.

## SPANISH CURRICULUM

The unit I used for this study is designed around a thematic focus of *arpilleras*<sup>1</sup> in Perú. This unit is from the *The Language of Folk Art: An Introductory Spanish Course Language, Content and Culture* (Haas, 1996). I chose this thematic unit for several reasons. First, this unit is content-based, culturally rich, and is organized around

a communicative syllabus rather than a grammatical syllabus. Thus, it helped me to align my curriculum with the National Standards and to focus my instruction on proficiency-based activities that would support the language development of my students. Through the unit activities, students were able to share their ideas, share original descriptions, and exchange opinions about *arpilleras*. The theme of *arpilleras*, and folk art in Perú, relates closely to, and supports, two central parts of the regular 4<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum: an immigration study in social studies (that culminates with a quilt-making project) and a farm curriculum<sup>2</sup> at the school's farm in Roxbury, New York. This unit also addresses geography, food, plants, animals, and some aspects of life in Perú. Finally, I felt this unit was particularly appropriate for the age group. Fourth-grade students have a growing interest in the communities around them and are often enthusiastic about discussing and comparing their world with that of people from other places (Borich, 2001).

Throughout the unit, I used many objects, props, gestures, realia, visuals, authentic poems, songs, and games to support and enhance our study of *arpilleras*. I emphasized comprehension and recognized students as active participants in the process of language acquisition. I introduced them to various communication strategies in order to help them seek clarification and to support our interaction in the target language from the start. One of the fundamental strategies students learned was what Curtain and Pesola (1994) call "passwords." "Passwords<sup>3</sup>" are commonly used expressions and chunks of language students need to negotiate routines and common interactions in the classroom (for instance: *¿Puedo ir al baño? ¿Puedo tomar agua? No entiendo. Repite, por favor. No sé*). After the initial presentation of the "passwords," I posted them on a bulletin board where they were easily accessible to students. In addition to the strong emphasis on comprehension and speaking, I introduced basic reading and writing activities. Students learned about culture primarily through handling authentic artifacts (such as *arpilleras*) and working towards discovering their use and significance in the target culture. I designed activities to appeal to many different learning styles and to capture young learners' attention by incorporating themes and exercises that are age appropriate.

An extensive appendix to this article has been placed on the NNELL website in the *Members Only* section due to its length <[www.nnell.org](http://www.nnell.org)>. For a summary of the scope and sequence of the

*arpillera* unit as I presented the material to the fourth graders, see Appendix A (posted online).

## DATA COLLECTION AND FINDINGS

At MCS, there is only one class per grade. The 2000-2001 4<sup>th</sup> grade class consisted of 19 students. I collected data from all students, but decided to randomly select 8 fourth-grade students whose data I would analyze for this project. I assigned a number (1-8) to each of the participants in order to preserve the students' anonymity. Following Tschirner and Heilenman's (1998) recommendation to provide rich descriptions of participants' background, the fourth-grade teacher and I developed detailed descriptions of each of the students selected for this project. See Appendix B (posted online) for the participants' detailed descriptions<sup>4</sup>.

I chose to use several tests to record the students' language gains over the course of the year. Donato (1998) points out that assessing the young learner requires multiple perspectives, and no single measure or test is capable of providing a profile of achievement and proficiency. Following Donato's recommendation, I decided to use a pre- and post-test FLES Student Oral Proficiency Assessment (SOPA) interview (1996), an oral proficiency assessment developed by the Center for Applied Linguistics. I also used a pre- and post-test student self-assessment questionnaire, an achievement test at the end of the year, and my informal journal notes. I developed the achievement test and the student self-assessment questionnaire. The primary source of data consists of the results from the FLES SOPA interviews. However, I also used the results from the vocabulary achievement test and the self-assessment questionnaire<sup>5</sup> to support the results of the SOPA exam. Finally, I included anecdotes from a journal where I recorded daily observations of students' performance. I will describe the findings from each of the instruments in turn.

**FLES Student Oral Proficiency Assessment (SOPA)** The SOPA exam is designed to probe the highest level of listening comprehension and speaking ability of students in FLES programs (grades 1-4). The test consists of an interview in four parts in which students work in pairs to perform different tasks: Identifying and Naming Objects, Answering Informal Questions, Describing, and Giving and Following Instructions.

The SOPA interview was administered twice: once at the beginning of the year in September of 2000, as a pre-test to establish the students' level of listening comprehension and speaking fluency at the start of the study, and a second time the last

*The FLES Student Oral Proficiency Assessment (SOPA) interview and an oral proficiency assessment exam developed by the Center for Applied Linguistics.*

*The students used vocabulary consisting of specific words related to the topic areas studied during the year, high-frequency expressions,*

week in May of 2001, as a post-test, to determine the students' oral proficiency and listening comprehension at the end of the year. The SOPA interviews were administered only to the eight students who had been selected for the study. During the first administration, students were asked to work with basic vocabulary words/objects (colors, numbers, names of fruits, classroom objects) that may have been familiar to them from a brief introduction to Spanish in earlier grades. During the second administration, students were asked to identify and work with objects and manipulatives related to the *arpillera* unit they studied.

The director of our school, Michéle Solá, conducted the interviews, and Dr. Mari Haas served as the rater. Michéle Solá was previously the Spanish teacher at MCS for 15 years and Dr. Haas has formal training in the administration of the SOPA test. While Michéle gave instructions, posed questions, and elicited language responses from the students, Mari took notes on the language students understood and/or produced and gave them a rating using the SOPA rubric. At the end of the four parts, Michéle and Mari compared notes and came to a consensus about each student's rating. The SOPA rubric uses a six-level scale ranging from "junior novice low" to "junior intermediate high." Students received global ratings based on their level of fluency, the extent of their vocabulary base, and their comprehension skills. We adapted the rating scale to include three new levels: below junior novice low, junior novice low/mid, and junior novice mid/high. For an explanation of the adaptations see footnote 6 and 7. These adaptations were necessary to capture more accurately the level of proficiency that each student displayed during the pre- and post-test interviews. The results are summarized in the table below.

**Table 1.**  
Results of the SOPA Pre- and Post tests

Ratings	Sept 2000	May 2001
Below Junior Novice Low	7	
Junior Novice Low	1	
Junior Novice Low/Mid <sup>6</sup>		1
Junior Novice Mid		1
Junior Novice Mid/High <sup>7</sup>		6
	8 students	8 students

See Appendix C (posted online) for a more detailed summary of the results.

In September none of the students was able to get past the second part of the interview. The students were able only to identify and name some of the objects and vocabulary words used

for the test. They were also able to answer some informal questions, but they were not able to answer many of the informal questions posed (such as *¿Te gusta ver la televisión?*), nor were they able to move on to describe things in Spanish or to give or follow instructions. All of the students relied strictly on translation to deal with L2 deficiencies. Seven students were found to have such limited knowledge of Spanish that they were rated as being Below the Junior Novice level. These results indicated that the 8 students chosen for the study were true beginners. From these results, I was also able to establish that these students did not know the specific language (vocabulary, "passwords," verbs, commands, or content) they were going to encounter throughout the year.

In May, all students were able to complete the four parts of the interview. All exhibited communication strategies, other than translation, when handling difficulties in communication. Some of the mechanisms that were observed during the interviews included nonverbal mechanisms (pointing, using their bodies to illustrate what they meant or to indicate they did not understand), using sounds to indicate what they meant ("tweet tweet" meaning bird), requests for repetition ("repite"), and requests for words they did not know or could not remember (*¿Cómo se dice \_\_\_\_?*) Self-correction was also evident in many of the students' utterances ("no muchacho...muchacha" when referring to a female doll).

Of the 8 students, 6 students received a rating of Junior Novice Mid/High, 1 student (Student 3) received a rating of Junior Novice Mid, and 1 student (Student 4) received a rating of Junior Novice Low/Mid. During the May administration it became apparent that the students were able to understand simple questions, most statements, many commands in familiar topic areas, and some new sentences with strong contextual support. When they required repetition, they were able to request it. With the exception of Student 4, during the May administration it was also evident that the students' vocabulary base had increased significantly. The students used vocabulary consisting of specific words related to the topic areas studied during the year<sup>8</sup>, high-frequency expressions, and other longer, memorized expressions. Student 4 had difficulty recalling and producing language on her own, but she was able to understand and follow others with more ease. All the students attempted to create sentence-level speech, by putting together two or three words and phrases, but the sentences lacked grammatical accuracy (verb missing, not conjugated, wrong conjugation, wrong or missing articles, or wrong

number/gender agreement of nouns). Many of the sentences students produced were in the command form. Students used prepositions (such as *enfrente de*, *al lado de*) and conjunctions (such as *y* and *con*) to connect and form sentence-level utterances. With the exception of Student 3 and Student 4, the utterances of the rest of the students showed signs of originality. For example, when Student 8 was asked “¿Qué fruta prefieres?” (Which fruit do you prefer?), he replied “Me gusta todo frutas” (I like all fruits.) The utterances produced by Student 3 and Student 4 consisted mostly of two parts: a verb phrase in the informal command form and a noun phrase (*toca la fruta*, *traza el mapa*).

The results of the second SOPA interview indicate that all the students made significant progress in their ability to understand and to express themselves in Spanish in certain familiar and thematic tasks. The results also indicate that 6 of the students seem to have made greater language gains than the other two. In their 1996 study, Donato, Antonek and Tucker tested 28 children, looking at their pattern of language development in terms of L2 competence and knowledge, and found that the pattern of growth was not uniform. They suggested that discrepancies in the pattern of growth (or language gains) among students point to “the inherent variability of development among students during the acquisition process” (p. 516). Donato, Antonek, and Tucker refer to this apparent variability in language development as “the idiosyncratic nature of growth.” The results of the SOPA interviews in this study support Donato, Antonek and Tucker’s finding.

**Self-Assessment Questionnaire** During class time, all students completed an age-appropriate adaptation of a Self-Assessment Rubric, developed by Janis Antonek (1998), to assess oral proficiency in children. I administered the questionnaire twice: once in September of 2000, as a pre-test to establish how students felt about their language ability and their knowledge base of the vocabulary and content we were about to study. I administered the questionnaire as a post-test in June of 2001 to determine the language gains students’ perceived in their own comprehension and speaking skills. For a sample questionnaire, see Appendix D (posted online).

In the questionnaire I asked students to provide information about the language(s) they spoke at home and to record their general level of comfort performing various tasks in Spanish related to the content and curriculum of the *arpillera* unit. During the first administration

of the questionnaire, I introduced the questionnaire, read through the first three items, answered questions, and let the students move at their own pace. This proved to be chaotic. Students asked many of the same questions several times, some students finished before others, and my reassuring each student to assuage their anxieties proved difficult under those conditions. During the second administration, I decided to set the pace at which the students moved from item to item. After introducing each item, I clarified any questions students posed, encouraged them to be as honest as possible, and often found myself working to placate anxieties related to test taking and/or their sense of disappointment at “not being perfect in Spanish yet.”<sup>9</sup> Students had 1-3 minutes to record their responses for each item. We paused after each item so that the whole class worked through the questionnaire together.

The first questionnaire contained 20 items with a 4-point verbal scale for responding. The responses ranged from “I’m learning—but I don’t really know this yet” to “I really know this!” The questionnaire also included an “example” column where students could record language they knew was appropriate to perform a given task. During the first and second administrations, I encouraged students to give examples of the language they would use if they were fairly confident they could perform a task in Spanish. Students recorded their responses by putting a check mark in the appropriate box. The administration of the first self-assessment questionnaire lasted approximately 40-45 minutes.

The second questionnaire contained 30 items: the original 20 questions with an additional 10. I reworded the 4-point verbal scale for clarification based on the questions students posed during the first administration. For example, I changed the first response from “I’m learning—but I don’t really know this yet” to “I don’t really know this yet.” The last response changed from “I really know this!” to “I really know this! And I can do this.” In the original questionnaire I stated some items broadly. The new 10 items were more specific and were directly related to the content of the one unit we worked on in the course of the year. In addition, there were some questions I did not include in the first questionnaire that I wanted to address in the second. The ten new items do not have a counter score to compare them to in the analysis; however, I found that the responses students recorded for the new items suggested high levels of comfort and lent support to some of the patterns that emerged in the original 20 items. The administration of the

*The results of the second SOPA interview indicate that all the students made significant progress in their ability to understand and to express themselves in Spanish in certain familiar and thematic tasks.*

second self-assessment questionnaire in June 2001 lasted approximately 50-55 minutes.

Since the aim of my study was to describe the language gains young students made over the course of their first year learning Spanish in a FLES program, I focused on the answers recorded for the first twenty items in the questionnaires, the items that had counter scores.

The quantity of data from the questionnaire was substantial. I decided to synthesize the data by assigning numerical values to the 4-point verbal scale responses. This method of synthesis allowed me to summarize the results in charts that demonstrated the participants' perceived growth over the course of the year.

I assigned a numerical value of 1 to the lowest response in the scale, "I don't know this yet, but I am learning." I assigned a value of 2 to the next response and continued in ascending order up to the numerical value of 4 for the highest level response in the scale, "I really know this! And I can do this." I used Microsoft Excel to create a database containing the numerical values corresponding to the answers each student recorded on the questionnaires. I then added the scores and arrived at a subscale score for each of the participants. The scores could range from a minimum of 20 (if the answers to all questions were 1 = "I don't know this yet"), to a maximum of 80 (if the answers to all questions were 4 = "I really know how to do this!"). The greater the score, the greater the students' sense of accomplishment. The greater the students' sense of accomplishment, the greater the students' reported growth regarding their language ability. The greater the difference between the September score and the June score, the greater the language gains students' perceived in their own comprehension and speaking skills over the course of a year. If there was no difference between the two scores, that would indicate null growth.

With this method of synthesis, I got a global view of the students' perception of their performance over the course of a year. In order to capture some patterns that emerged in the questionnaire responses, I used Microsoft Excel to generate a bar chart for each participant. I used the same numerical values I mentioned above to generate a chart. Each chart showed the September and June scores for each item side by side. I began by looking at the results of the global charts. I later found two patterns that emerged in the analysis of the bar charts.

**Self-Assessment Questionnaire - Global Charts** I labeled the charts summarizing the global results for each participant, "Growth of Com-

fort" charts. This title captured the students' growing confidence in their ability to perform various tasks in Spanish which could only be achieved through gains in their language ability. In these charts, I considered a score of 40 and below to be that of a junior novice low speaker. I considered a score of 41 to 60 that of a junior novice low/mid speaker. I consider a score of 61 and above that of a junior novice-mid to mid/high speaker.

In September the scores for 7 of the 8 students ranged between 24 and 40 points, with the exception of Student 5 whose score was 48. Student 5 was also the only student who was found to be squarely in the junior novice low level of proficiency during the first SOPA interview. In September, 7 out of the 8 participants reported being unfamiliar with the language and content of the unit of study and uncomfortable performing the majority of the communicative tasks listed on the questionnaire. Student 5 reported a greater sense of ability and familiarity with the language and some of the content. The students' responses to the questionnaire in September support the results of the SOPA interviews. Both results indicated that 7 out of 8 students were true beginners lacking experience with the target language, while one student (Student 5) felt more comfortable and demonstrated some novice ability in the target language.

A comparison between the scores in September and the scores in June indicate that five students made significant gains by doubling or nearly doubling their scores, and three made notable gains in their scores, increasing by 16 to 28 additional points. The same comparison suggests that because the results reported in June are notably greater than those in September, all the participants experienced significant growth in their comfort level with the target language, in their ability to understand Spanish, and in their ability to use the target language within predictable topic areas. Some of the participants reported greater linguistic growth and stronger confidence in their ability to perform tasks in Spanish than others.

**Self-Assessment Questionnaire - Bar Charts** The bar charts revealed that overall the 8 students reported marked gains in language ability and an increased or sustained level of confidence in performing the majority of the communicative and content-related tasks listed in the items.

No two students reflected similar patterns of growth across items. When taken together there is very little or no uniformity in the patterns of answers across students' questionnaires. However, at least 4 to 6 students reported significant gains in confidence and ability in four items. Table 2 below summarizes these data.

*A comparison between the scores in September and the scores in June indicate that five students made significant gains by doubling or nearly doubling their scores, and three made notable gains in their scores, increasing by 16 to 28 additional points.*

**Table 2.** Items of Significant Gains.

Items	Sept Score	June Score	Participants
8. I can tell you the letters of the alphabet in Spanish.	1	4	2, 3, 7, 8
9. I can name different parts of a map (countries, oceans) in Spanish.	1	4	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
11. I can tell you what an "arpillera" is.	1	4	1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
12. I can tell you the names of different trees in Spanish.	1	4	1, 2, 3, 5, 7

This cluster of answers suggests that half of the students or more felt most comfortable using the language they learned to describe (in a form of a list) the subject they studied. The students' answers to the items that focused on communicative tasks such as expressing needs, sharing personal opinions, and giving instructions were much more varied in the levels of comfort and language growth they reported. These results can be a function of the focus of the class instruction, the type of language activities in which students participated, the students' learning styles, and/or the kind of language functions that were stressed over the course of the year. This finding seems to illustrate the idea that the shape and content of the curriculum and instruction can have a strong effect on the breath and range of the students' language abilities.

In the analysis of the bar charts I also found that there were 8 items where 1 to 3 students scored themselves lower in June than in September. Those items were items 1, 2, 4, 10, 14, 16, 18, and 20. Items 14, 16, 18, and 20 I did not address in our curriculum. It seems natural that some of the students would reverse their scores to reflect their lack of familiarity and comfort with information they have not studied formally. The reversal in items 1, 2, 4, and 10 was peculiar. I addressed each of these items in the curriculum. The reversal in the four items seems to point to the fact that not all the students will master the same material at the same rate. But it also points to the students' ability to reflect on their own progress, to evaluate their level of comfort and ability, and to adjust their self-assessment as they grow familiar with what various tasks require in the target language.

**Achievement Test** All students completed one of two versions of a 30-item Spanish Vocabulary Test with a writing component<sup>10</sup>. I constructed the vocabulary test using adaptations of activities students had completed in class. I also used adaptations of assessment tasks I found in *The Language of Folk Art*, the curriculum guide I used during this study. One of the sample tasks included in the Achievement Test has been placed

at the end of this article. The entire Achievement Test can be seen in Appendix E (posted online).

The purpose of the vocabulary test was to test students' comprehension skills (both listening and reading) and to evaluate what students could do in writing with the language they studied. The test consisted of four parts: listening, reading, grammar, and writing. The test lasted approximately 45-50 minutes. Each student received a pencil, a marker, a crayon, and a test consisting of two double-sided sheets of paper on which they were asked to record their answers. As the test administrator, I set the pace at which the students moved from section to section. After introducing each section, I presented the directions to the students in Spanish, clarified any questions students had, and gave them 5-10 minutes to complete each section. We paused after each section so that the whole class worked through the sections at the same time.

Each participant's reported score is the number of correct answers out of 30 from parts 1 through 4, and the number and quality of sentences written by each student. Beginning with the results of the listening comprehension exercise, I will report the scores for each section in turn. You will find a full transcript of each student's responses to the writing section and a more detailed table summarizing a breakdown of the scores for each section in Appendix F (posted online).

In the *Listening Section* students could receive a maximum of 10 points: one point for each correct response. In this section students received a sheet of paper with 15 pictures. They were asked to listen to a set of instructions and record what they heard on the appropriate picture. Five students received scores of 10. Two students received scores of 9. One student received a score of 8. Table 3 summarizes these results.

The scores for the Listening Comprehension exercise suggested the students made significant gains in their ability to understand and interpret spoken Spanish (such as following instructions). These scores suggested that the participants were



*Although the focus of my curriculum for beginning students is on the development of listening and oral skills, the results of the reading comprehension exercises are significant because they seem to suggest that students use their listening comprehension skills to support their emerging reading skills.*

able to understand simple statements and commands in familiar topic areas and some new sentences with strong contextual support. Many of the students requested repetition or slower speech before they were able to record their answers on the appropriate picture. I repeated each command a maximum of three times, if requested, in Spanish.

In the two *Reading Sections* students could receive a maximum of 10 points: 5 points per section. Students received one point for each correct response. In the reading sections students had to respond to a written prompt or a question rather than a verbal command. In one of the reading sections I asked students to read a set of 5 instructions and to record what they read on a map of the Americas. In the second reading section I asked students to answer 4 "either/or" questions and to illustrate a phrase. For instance, one of the questions was "¿La piña es agria o dulce?" (Is the pineapple sour or sweet?) To which some students answered: "agria; es agria; Es las dos." One of the illustration commands was "Dibuja un árbol." (Draw a tree.) Next to the command I drew a box with an arrow pointing to it so that students would render their drawings inside of the box.

The scores for the reading sections indicate that two students performed at the same level of ability as in the listening section; receiving a score of 10 points. Four students performed at a lower level of ability receiving total scores ranging from 6 to 9 points. Two students performed at a slightly higher level of ability receiving a score of 9 points. The scores for the reading exercises indicate students made significant gains since the beginning of the year in their ability to interpret written Spanish. These scores suggest that the participants were able to understand simple statements, questions, and commands in a familiar context. At the beginning of the year, many of the students were not able to derive meaning from written language nor carry out instructions presented in writing. These findings are summarized in Table 3.

Upon closer examination of the errors made by the students whose performance was lower in the reading comprehension section than on the listening comprehension exercise, the majority of errors seemed to be errors in content knowledge rather than errors in comprehension. That is to say, students seem to understand what the task required of them (using a crayon vs. a pencil, to draw or to write information on a map), but they were confused about the exact area on the map on which to perform the task. For instance, Students 1, 3, and 4 confused the coastline for the border, but they understood that they needed to use a marker to trace that area on the map. Student 3

confused Colombia and Perú on the map, but the student understood what to draw in the country. Student 4 confused the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, but she knew what to render on the ocean. Finally, Students 4 and 6 confused the east and west on the map, but they understood what to write on the map. The analysis of these errors seems to indicate that the lower scores do not necessarily reflect the reading comprehension ability of the students but the students growing and fluctuating ability to demonstrate mastery of map concepts. This difficulty to discern whether an error is an error in content knowledge or a language error can be problematic when teachers use content-based instruction to assess students' progress.

Although the focus of my curriculum for beginning students is on the development of listening and oral skills, the results of the reading comprehension exercises are significant because they seem to suggest that students use their listening comprehension skills to support their emerging reading skills. Hence the responses in the reading section lend support to the findings in the listening comprehension section.

In the *Grammar Section* students could receive a maximum of 10 points: one point for every correct response. In the this section, I gave students five familiar nouns and asked them to fill in blanks with "un vs. una." Once they filled in the blanks with the appropriate indefinite article, I then asked them to turn each noun phrase into the plural. For instance one of the test items in this section was "\_\_\_ uva" (\_\_\_ grape). I expected students to fill in the blank with "una." The students then had to change the noun phrase "una uva" into "unas uvas" to receive full credit. Table 3 summarizes the results for the grammar section.

These results suggested that 5 out of the 8 participants made significant gains in their emerging awareness and understanding of one grammar concept in Spanish, the concept of gender and number agreement. Three of the participants seemed to be lacking a clear understanding of the concept of gender and number agreement in Spanish. However, even the errors show a fundamental awareness of the concept of number and gender agreement. For instance, if we examine one of the most frequent errors "unos sols" we can see that the understanding of gender and number agreement is present but the actual knowledge of when to add "-s" vs "-es" is absent. Ultimately, both the errors and the correct responses in the grammar section of the test point to significant growth in the students' awareness of one aspect of the linguistic system in the target language.



**Table 3.** Correct responses for 10 questions by listening, reading and grammar exercises.

	Listening exercise Correct Responses	Reading exercise Correct Responses	Grammar exercise Correct Responses
Student 1	10/10	8/10	9/10
Student 2	10/10	10/10	9/10
Student 3	9/10	7/10	6/10
Student 4	9/10	7/10	3/10
Student 5	10/10	10/10	7/10
Student 6	10/10	9/10	10/10
Student 7	10/10	6/10	8/10
Student 8	8/10	9/10	9/10

Finally, in the *Writing Section* of the exam, I presented students with a picture of an *arpillera* and I asked them to answer four questions in writing: What do you see? What does it have? Where are the objects? What is the *arpillera* like? The goal of this exercise was to encourage students to use the language they had learned to describe an *arpillera* in writing. I did not score students' responses using a discrete point system, but rather, I recorded the number of sentences each student produced and studied the quality of the sentences they wrote. A summary of the number of sentences the participants generated, ranging from 1 to 7 sentences, is summarized in Table 4. Some students generated lists while others wrote in paragraph form. The lists of sentences students generated were made up of state-

ments that repeated the same Subject and Verb and added a new noun phrase in each new sentence. For instance, Student 4 wrote seven sentences by repeating "*Esto arpillera tiene una casa*," six times, each time replacing the noun phrase "*una casa*" with a new noun phrase. Other students wrote in paragraph form and used a variety of verbs, nouns, and prepositions to generate their description of the *arpillera*. Some responses showed signs of originality in the way students recombined familiar language to form novel phrases. Some of the sentences were somewhat complex. Table 4 below summarizes the findings for this section of the test and a full transcript of the students' sentences can be found in Appendix F (posted online).

**Table 4.** Results of the Writing Exercise.

	Sentences Generated	Quality of Sentences Generated
Student 1	3	- <i>"esto arpillera tiene"</i> repeated with different objects -signs of originality
Student 2	4	- <i>"esto arpillera tiene/es"</i> with different objects -prepositions, numbers
Student 3	2	- <i>Arpillera encima de Perú</i> - <i>"Que arpillera tiene"</i> with <i>"y"</i> and 4 objects
Student 4	7	- <i>"esto arpillera tiene"</i> repeated with different objects 7 times.
Student 5	3	- <i>"1. Esto arpillera es enfrente de la blanco papel"</i> -uses <i>tiene</i> /prepositions -signs of originality
Student 6	6	- <i>"Esto arpillera tiene/esta"</i> also <i>"el muchacha esta/flores esta"</i> with prepositions & object
Student 7	1	-erased <i>"esto arpillera"</i> wrote <i>"que tiene dos llamas y una muchahcha y..."</i>
Student 8	1	-numbered each - <i>"2. Esto arpillera tiene una muchacha y un casa, y un sol."</i>

*Overall the results of the Achievement Test indicate that this group of students made significant language gains in their listening, reading, and writing skills.*

The results of the writing exercise suggested that students made significant gains in their ability to use high-frequency expressions and other memorized expressions with reasonable ease when attempting to create sentences in a predictable context. These findings do not directly demonstrate the students' emerging ability to produce and sustain sentence-level speech in the target language. Nevertheless, they lend support to the students' profiles of significant linguistic growth when taken together with the results of the rest of the Achievement Test, the results of the SOPA interviews, and the results reported in the self-assessment questionnaires.

Overall the results of the Achievement Test indicate that this group of students made significant language gains in their listening, reading, and writing skills.

**Journal Notes** After each class, I spent 15-30 minutes writing classroom observations. The goal of the journal was to record global "field notes," based on students' class participation, to capture aspects of students' linguistic growth that might otherwise go unnoticed.

In each entry, I recorded the date, the time of the class, the number of minutes per class, and the number of minutes of instruction in Spanish and in English. The data I gathered in the notes provided a clear context in which to understand the significance of the progress students made over the course of the year. The information related to the instructional time and the language of instruction was in fact the most important data I gleaned from the journal entries and is recorded in Table 5.

The information about the quality and length of the instructional time enabled me to take a serious look at the reality of my practice in comparison to what I set out to do in the classroom. The program is allocated 60 sessions per year.

However, in 2000-2001 we only met 51 times. Some of the discrepancy is due to unexpected school events (when the class had to be cancelled), holiday events, or teacher absence. In an average year, the 4<sup>th</sup> grade Spanish class is allocated approximately 45 hours. In the year of this study, I met with the students a total of 38.25 hours. This was a surprising fact. I had never systematically studied the actual number of contact hours that I had with my students. 45 hours a year, and in the year of the study 38.25 hours, is a very small amount of time for a Spanish FLES program that has the development of language proficiency as a central goal. What was even more remarkable and sobering was the actual amount of time I spent teaching and working with the students strictly in Spanish, namely, 25.6 hours. This information became significant when I considered the students' performance in each of the tests and their strong sense of achievement reflected in the self-assessment questionnaire in spite of the limited amount of time in the target language.

Upon a closer look at my notes, and at my practice, patterns emerged that began to explain my apparently frequent language shifts. I came to realize that the time I spent in English, which was roughly equivalent to a fourth of each class, served one of several purposes: scaffolding of routines to help students anticipate the structure of a particular class, clarifying new activities when explanations in Spanish did not help the students, helping students transition from one activity to the next, and to deal with nagging classroom management issues. A journal entry from October 3, 2000, illustrates this point:

10/3/00

English and Spanish in intervals to explain instructions and to introduce new activities I use English. Also there have been a lot of social dynamics going on with this group that continue to disrupt the rhythm of class.

**Table 5. Summary of Instructional Time for the 2000-01 Academic School Year**

Number of Days Class in Session	<b>51 days</b>
Number of Minutes Allocated per Session	<b>45 minutes</b>
Number of Hours Allocated to the Program	<b>38.25 hours</b>
Number of Minutes Recorded Working with Students Strictly in Spanish	<b>1540 minutes</b> (Average of 30 minutes per session) 66.9% of class time in Spanish <b>33.1% of class time in English<sup>11</sup></b>
Total Number of Instructional Hours in Spanish	<b>25.6 hours</b>

However, later in the school year as I began to realize my frequent shifts in language, I began to work at helping students use the context, visual illustrations, and the target language to figure out what they needed to do.

3/6/01

The students continue to use passwords with ease and are much more tolerant and comfortable in moments when they don't understand. The guesses that they take are more on target than at the beginning of the year. It is as if they are getting used to using the immediate context to figure out words they don't know rather than being at a total loss.

The rest of the observations I recorded were based on the progress I observed in class participation, the emerging use of communication strategies, the level of comfort students exhibited with Spanish, classroom management issues, and the structure of various lesson plans. These notes were general observations of the progress I observed in the entire class and were not specific to the participants in this study. For this reason, I only transcribed and categorized a few excerpts that illustrated some of the language gains of all students in the class, including those studied, made over the course of the year. I found that most notes fell under one of two major categories: level of comfort or strategies and language development. For the purpose of this study, I focused on the excerpts that demonstrated where the students started at the beginning of the year, in terms of language skills, and where they were in the middle and at the end of the year.

In September, the majority of the class, including the participants, displayed minimal skills or no skills with Spanish.

9/12/00

They [the students] were a little nervous about staying in Spanish and asked if they could and I could speak sometimes in English.

9/14/00

Some [students] asked if saying "salud" or one-word responses to their doormen in Spanish counted as speaking Spanish at home.

Most students expressed high levels of anxiety about their lack of ability to understand Spanish. Their questions about what constituted speaking Spanish, one-word salutations to their doormen or friends, indicated to me that the students had had minimal or no functional experience with Spanish. These observations supported the results of the SOPA interview in September. In addition, the observations confirmed the students' responses in September to the self-assessment questionnaires, in which they indicated

they were unfamiliar with the vast majority of the tasks listed on the rubric.

By mid-year students had become fairly comfortable with listening to Spanish and responding verbally or physically to instructions. While the majority of their utterances consisted of one-word sentences, many students had begun to produce longer stretches of sentences.

2/15/01

Passwords are used regularly and now mostly without looking at the bulletin board.

The students are increasingly negotiating meaning in Spanish using "*repite, no sé*" and today they learned "*necesito ayuda*."

They are beginning to handle longer stretches of sentences with greater ease. For example, "*Traza el continente al este del océano Atlántico*."

It is interesting to watch the students processing each chunk of language—they make physical movements (nodding with their heads) as they pause at each phrase or important chunk of information in a longer sentence. For instance, "*Traza—el continente—al este—del Océano—Atlántico*."

They are also beginning to respond in longer sentences. When I asked them "*¿Dónde está —and a country or capital?*" instead of just giving a single word answer, some are beginning to use "*— está en —*" to produce a longer sentence. This has come about after we began doing more reading and writing exercises with the card game<sup>12</sup>.

When producing answers, students tend to pause at each meaningful interval of information: "*El mar Caribe—está—(al) norte de—Sur América*."

By mid-year some students had begun to show some signs of creativity by combining and recombining various elements they were familiar with to produce novel sentences.

04/26/01

As they commented on each other's work the students asked for more words (such as "floating") to then incorporate them in questions they had about other designs. Their comments ranged from: "*No entiendo las flores flotando*." To "*Me gusta todo/Me gusta la sol/Me gusta colores*."

One student did not add any color at all in his *arpillera* and another student wanted to find out why so she said: "*No entiendo arpillera blanca y negro solo*." I added "*es interesante la arpillera en blanco y negro solamente, pero* [I said to the student] *pregunta ¿por qué?* (while I moved my shoulders up and down). The student who had designed it asked: "*¿Cómo se dice* "because?" So I said "*porque*"—he then turned around to the student that asked the question and repeated to her "*porque*." To which all of us responded in silence and saying "ok."

*What was even more remarkable and sobering was the actual amount of time I spent teaching and working with the students strictly in Spanish, namely, 25.6 hours.*

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*Young students stand to make significant gains in language proficiency with limited instructional hours when language teaching is integrated with content and culture in the beginning stages of language learning.*

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By the end of the school year, there were a great variety of responses from students, but some tended to revert back to the one-word answers.

5/29/01

During a classification exercise with fruits using a graph, they answered in one word sentences while I repeated in longer phrases [the questions were mostly yes/no and either/or questions].

The students' one-word answers may result, in part, from the types of questions that I or other students posed. But the movement toward greater proficiency combined with a "few steps back" also points to the apparent cyclical nature of language learning. This regression in language growth also suggests that students needed more time and more challenging experiences with the language to move toward a higher level of proficiency.

In the end, the analyses across the four sources of data (SOPA interviews, Self-Assessment Questionnaire, Achievement Test, Journal Notes) gave me ample evidence of significant growth related to the students' ability to understand and interpret spoken Spanish (such as following instructions), the students' ability to obtain and provide information (such as negotiating classroom routines), and the students' ability to present information in Spanish (in various oral, reading, and written tasks) within predictable topic areas. A table summarizing the results across the main sources of data (the SOPA rankings, the Self-Assessment responses, the Achievement Test scores) can be found in Appendix G (posted online).

## CONCLUSION

In this study, I sought to address one question: What level of language proficiency could we reasonably expect from a group of young students after their first year of study in a content-centered immersion-like Spanish FLES program? I specifically wanted to look at the progress made over the course of a year by a group of 4<sup>th</sup> grade students learning Spanish for the first time. The data indicate that all 8 students included in this study made steady gains in their ability to understand and interpret spoken Spanish (such as following instructions), in their ability to obtain and provide information (such as negotiating classroom routines), and in their ability to present information in Spanish (in familiar reading and writing tasks). Over the course of the year, the students made continuous progress along what Donato, Antonek, and Tucker (1996) call "the proficiency continuum." The children moved from being a nervous, listening audience to be-

ing confident and active vocal participants who could use a whole range of memorized phrases, single word answers, and some creative sentences to interact in communicative ways in Spanish. Much like the children in the Donato, Antonek, and Tucker study, the participants in this study did not show the same learning curve nor was their linguistic growth identical. But all of the children showed a significant improvement in their ability to use Spanish for communicative purposes in a familiar classroom context.

The findings in this project were of greater value when I considered them in the context of our Spanish FLES program. The children in this study made significant improvement in their linguistic ability in spite of the limited instructional time. The data show that the Spanish program was allocated 38.25 instructional hours for the 2000-2001 school year. The data also show that, out of those 38.25 hours, the children and the teacher spent a total of 25.6 hours in the target language, and yet all the children moved from controlled "yes-no" answers to phrase-level utterances, many also showing creative output.

While these findings are not generalizable, because of the small subject sample and other confounding factors I did not control for, they seem to point to the effectiveness of using meaningful, content-centered curriculum when teaching with limited instructional time. In her project on "Learning through Dialogue Journal Writing: A Cultural Thematic Unit," Borich (2001) points out that her study "provides evidence of how a meaningful curriculum, taught in limited instructional time, can surpass the minimum goals expected of an exploratory foreign language program in an elementary school and can reinforce the standard course of study..." The findings in this study provide further evidence of the apparent effectiveness of thematic units in FLES programs and the ability of students to surpass minimum proficiency expectations when presented with meaningful contexts in which to acquire and practice language skills. Young students stand to make significant gains in language proficiency with limited instructional hours when language teaching is integrated with content and culture in the beginning stages of language learning.

Our challenge now is to carry out more studies in order to learn from each other's experiences and to find the applicability of the *Performance Guidelines* in each of our programs. Only through more research will we be able to draw a clearer picture of the language performance we can expect of students of different ages, at various points in the K-16 spectrum, and in various FLES programs.

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An extensive appendix to this article has been placed on the NNELL website in the Members Only section < [www.nnell.org](http://www.nnell.org) > .

V. Describe la arpillera en español.

¿Qué ves?    ¿Qué tiene?    ¿Dónde están los objetos?    ¿Cómo es la arpillera?



An excerpt from Appendix E—  
Sample Achievement Test – Page 4

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> *Arpilleras* are a type of patchwork tapestry. They are usually made by women and depict scenes from everyday life. They are made of cloth and wool, are stitched together, and are usually adorned by a knitted border.

<sup>2</sup> MCS owns a farm in Roxbury, New York (about three hours north of New York City). The fourth-grade class takes two-week long trips to the farm where they begin to learn how to run a farm, how to work with animals, how to weave, and how to think and contextualize the impact of environmental issues in the Roxbury area.

<sup>3</sup> The concept of “passwords” harkens to what Hakuta (1976) called “prefabricated patterns” in the case study of a Japanese child learning English. “Prefabricated patterns” refer to the patterns of expression that early L2 learners use to enable themselves to get around particular situations without having to have specific knowledge or understanding of the underlying grammatical structures.

<sup>4</sup> During the course of the year Student 4 began to display some difficulties with reading, writing, and decoding text in English. She was tested and was later diagnosed with learning disabilities affecting language intake and decoding. I included her data. She was aware of her learning disabilities and actively looked for ways to support her learning. This student was one of the most highly motivated students in the class.

<sup>5</sup> Even though the use of students’ reflections and observations may be considered by some as a questionable source of data, I decided to include the answers students’ recorded on self-assessment questionnaires as data. It is important for students to have the opportunity to be involved in assessing their own progress. The feedback students can give us on their own learning can help us understand students’ achievement. In this study, I wanted students to be involved in the process of providing information to construct the profiles of their performance. In order to form a holistic picture of the students’ achievement, the students’ voices needed to be part of the assessment process.

<sup>6</sup> A Rating of “Junior Novice Low/Mid” indicates that while some elements of the student’s fluency can be placed in the “Junior Novice Low” level many of the student’s utterances are beginning to show the signs

of functional communicative ability evident in the utterances of students who rank at the “Junior Novice Mid” level.

<sup>7</sup> A Rating of “Junior Novice Mid/High” indicates that while the student’s fluency can be placed in the “Junior Novice Mid” range many of the student’s utterances are beginning to show the signs of originality and ease evident in the utterances of students who rank at the “Junior Novice High” level.

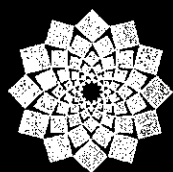
<sup>8</sup> See the Scope and Sequence Appendix A (posted online) for a summary of the unit and the language studied.

<sup>9</sup> The process of walking young students through a self-assessment questionnaire can be a demanding and delicate task. I find that many assessment tools, but especially a self-assessment tool, can work like a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it can show students all their potential and it can serve to give students an opportunity to take control of their own learning. It can build ownership and confidence in their achievement. But on the other hand, it can also end up hurting students’ sense of accomplishment by highlighting all the things they don’t know yet. I found that with enough positive reinforcement and concrete explanations of the purpose of the questionnaire and what their responses reflected (namely their potential for growth), many of my students were able to use the questionnaire as an opportunity to display what they knew and to take charge of their language growth by becoming a partner with me in their learning.

<sup>10</sup> In our classroom, since the children sit in close proximity to each other around tables, I constructed two versions of the same vocabulary test to guard against the possibility of students copying each other’s work.

<sup>12</sup> In this activity, the teacher uses four sets of cards; each set is color coded. One set contains the names of the continents, another set the names of countries, another the names of capitals, and the last set the names of bodies of water, mountain ranges and any other geographical features studied in class. The teacher writes on the board the phrase “*está en*” and places a card from one set on the right side of the phrase and a card from another set on the left side of the phrase. Each time a new sentence is formed (ex: Buenos Aires *está en* Argentina.) Each time a new set of cards is used the students are asked to read the sentence and to decide whether it is true or false. Many reading, writing, and pair exercises can be designed around this activity. For more details see Haas, 1996.

# Building Our Strength through Languages: A National Priority



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### Thursday, November 20

NNELL Board Meeting, 1:30 - 6:00 p.m. Marriott, Room 303.

### Friday, November 21

WLOE National Board Certification: Familiarization Session and Introduction to the 10 Assessments, 9:30 - 10:45 a.m., Convention Center Room 108-A.

NNELL - FLES SIG Networking Sessions and Meetings, 1:30 p.m. - 2:45 p.m., Convention Center Room 201-C.

FLES SIG Panel on Advocacy, 4:15 - 5:30 p.m., Convention Center, Room 105-B.

FLES SIG Celebrations and Culminating Activities are NOT a Waste, 5:45 - 7:00 p.m., Convention Center, Room 105-B.

### Saturday, November 22

FLES Swapshop Breakfast, 8:00 - 9:30 a.m., Marriott, Grand Ballroom, Salon E. (*Page 43 provides information about the group Cantare who will perform for us!*)

*Note: Many of you are speakers and completed a Speaker's Registration form. Remember to add the FLES Swapshop Breakfast to your registration and join colleagues for breakfast, network with other Pre-K-8 teachers, review publishers' FLES materials, as well as collect many activities for your classroom.*

NNELL Q&A Session: Focus on Research, 4:30 - 5:45 p.m., Convention Center, Room 201-C.

### Sunday, November 23

NNELL Board Meeting  
8:30 - 11:30 a.m., Marriott, Room 404.

*Note: Please check the final program for last-minute changes.*

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# ACTFL Announces

## *The Year of Languages in the United States: 2004-05*

*The leadership of ACTFL will call on all foreign language educators, both association members and non-members, to participate in this campaign that will benefit students and language programs throughout the United States.*

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Under the guidance and stewardship of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), the 2004-05 school year will be celebrated as The Year of Languages across the United States. These celebrations will take place in a variety of settings, including elementary and secondary schools and postsecondary institutions as well as at events at the local, state and national levels across America. As the universal representative organization for foreign language educators, ACTFL is eminently qualified to coordinate a campaign that will positively influence the full range of language programs in U.S. schools and communities and the students these programs are designed to serve. The campaign plan will capture the attention and interest of students with the involvement and assistance of teachers, administrators, state, local and federal legislators and government officials, businesses and, perhaps most important, parents. The goal of The Year of Languages celebration is to advance the concept that every American should develop proficiency in both English and another language.

The need for an ambitious effort to promote the value of language learning is clear. Such learning offers social, cultural, academic and workplace benefits that will serve students all their lives. Americans live and compete in a world of diverse cultures and races, a world where competence in more than one language is an essential part of communication and understanding. Our ability to understand and be understood by other nationalities can only enhance our own national security. We do business with many countries and we rely on their citizens as consumers of U.S.-produced goods and services. Just as important, our country welcomes new citizens from diverse cultures from many nations. We live, work and play with these "new Americans" and our ability to understand their diverse cultural and social backgrounds is key to our expanded role as citizens of the international community. We must be able to communicate with and learn from these people for whom English is not a native language. Finally, the disciplines learned during the study of foreign languages

endow students with cognitive, analytical and communication skills that carry over into many other areas of their academic studies and future success. That success, in fact, will deliver valuable dividends to the businesses and organizations for which they work.

The Year of Languages will be highlighted by activities not only in schools across the country, but in legislative houses and community venues as well. ACTFL and related organizations will offer guidelines and products for use by schools and local organizations to plan special events for the purpose of increasing interest in language programs throughout the school year. Promotional kits containing in-school special event suggestions, prototypes for proclamations for local governments to officially recognize the celebration, and sample press releases for local media promotion will be sent to school administrators. ACTFL will promote the Year of Languages to national general interest and education media outlets. ACTFL will also offer a variety of items and brochures to distribute to students and parents promoting the value of language learning.

The success and long-term impact of The Year of Languages campaign will rely heavily on the support and involvement of local foreign language teachers, guidance counselors and school administrators. These educators are on the front lines and have ready access to the ultimate target audiences – students and parents – whom this effort is designed to reach. The leadership of ACTFL will call on all foreign language educators, both association members and non-members, to participate in this campaign that will benefit students and language programs throughout the United States. No less important will be the support and sponsorship of those who will most benefit from the positive results of this campaign. Companies that rely on foreign trade, businesses that need future employees with greater multilingual skills and multi-cultural understanding, and government organizations that must have greater communication skills with other countries all must play a role in ensuring the success of The Year of Languages.



## Background

The United States Congress has designated the years 2004 and 2005 as the Years of Languages in the United States. The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages will observe this celebration during the 2004-05 school year.

Senators Christopher Dodd (D-CT) and Thad Cochran (R-MS) have worked together to draft a resolution seeking sponsorship among senators and representatives to celebrate the multilingual heritage of the United States and to create an atmosphere in which Americans understand the value of learning a foreign language for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The Year of Languages in the United States will parallel events and celebrations that have already taken place in other parts of the world. The year 2000 was designated the Year of Languages in Europe and since that time, Europeans have been celebrating one week of language promotion every year. The year 2006 has been designated the Year of Languages in China and Chinese citizens are reportedly excited about the opportunity to learn additional languages to prepare for the Olympics that will be held in Beijing in 2008.

The United States has a history of multilingualism. Since the founding of the nation, other cultures and other languages have played an integral part in the development of our democracy. In fact, the democracy in the United States could not have been founded without the multilingual capacity of citizens such as Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, as well as many others who served as ambassadors to France and helped to solidify the funding necessary for the War of Independence. Jefferson himself was fluent in French and could communicate and read in several additional languages.

For more than two hundred years, Americans have continued this tradition of valuing other cultures as successive waves of immigrants settled in the United States seeking democracy and freedom from oppression in their homelands. While coming to the United States, immigrants of all nationalities and races have experienced the importance of becoming Americans and learning English, while at the same time they maintain a cultural tie to many other parts of the world through an appreciation for their deep cultural roots. Through local and regional festivals, artistic performances, heritage language

learning opportunities, as well as through many ethnic customs and foods that are shared across our diverse cultures in the United States, Americans continue to celebrate their diversity in many different ways.

At the same time that we recognize the importance of appreciating one another in our nation, it is increasingly clear that Americans need to be prepared to the highest level to understand the world and to live in a world where mutual respect and understanding prevail. Recent events in our history point to the devastating effects of not knowing or understanding other languages and cultures.

American parents whose children will enter the work force in the twenty-first century are increasingly aware of the importance of global travel and of the access to knowledge that technology will provide across cultures and across languages. They are also aware of the challenges and opportunities involved in living and raising children in a diverse nation and world. Parents throughout the United States, regardless of their socio-economic status, are clamoring to have languages added to the early curriculum. At the same time, schools and colleges are finding it difficult to create new programs due to ever-present budget realities. New and innovative approaches to having children learn languages need to emerge in both public and private schools, as well as in the proprietary language schools.

Americans of all ages are studying languages. From middle schools through high schools and postsecondary institutions to elder hostels, adolescents and adults of all ages are requesting that language courses be part of the curriculum and offerings in schools and adult education programs.

This year of celebration of languages will serve also as a look to the future for American youth who will be entering the work force at a time when international understanding, cross-cultural awareness and linguistic capacity are increasingly important for their success as Americans and as citizens of the broader world. It is not easy to negotiate contracts, enter into business relationships, start friendships or deal with adversarial encounters if one does not understand the languages and the cultures of the rest of the world.

Our nation values linguistic and cultural diversity, international education and learning lan-

*The United States Congress has designated the years 2004 and 2005 as the Years of Languages in the United States.*

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*Celebration of the Year of Languages will provide many opportunities for Americans to understand the language learning process.*

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guages. It is time to celebrate our historic and important ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity and future.

Celebration of the Year of Languages will provide many opportunities for Americans to understand the language learning process. Americans will be able to attend national and international events devoted to the importance of other cultures and other languages. Also, at the same time as Americans are looking outward at ways to acquire new languages, they will be celebrating the indigenous languages that have formed an important part of the American fabric. The Year of Languages will help us to identify speakers of our indigenous languages and the rich cultural heritage and traditions that they bring to the founding of the United States.

The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages in collaboration with the United States Department of Education, the United States Congress and the United States Department of State is encouraging all language organizations, business groups and international economic councils, chambers of commerce in the United States, United States embassies abroad, foreign consulates and embassies in the United States and international governments to join with us to form an exciting array of activities that will provide Americans with a new and fresh perspective on the value of learning other languages.

We anticipate that the Year of Languages will be the launch pad for many future activities that will take place on an annual basis in the United States. We encourage international exchanges to be highlighted and expanded. Student and adult exchanges will be encouraged, as well as virtual exchanges of students, scholars and professionals. We will support an ongoing list of activities through a website devoted to the Year of Languages that will be hosted by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages and other collaborating organizations.

## FORMING A YEAR OF LANGUAGES INFRASTRUCTURE

Under the auspices of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages and the United States Department of Education in collaboration with the United States Congress, a national council will be formed that will help direct programs at a national level for the Year of Languages. The national council will have an honorary chair and approximately twenty-five honorary members. A small staff that will be housed at the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages will support the council.

The honorary council chair will be a person of high visibility and immediate recognition within the United States. This individual will be a person who in his/her day-to-day work will foster international and linguistic collaboration.

Members of the honorary committee will include a balance of leaders of business and industry; members of the education community from pre-kindergarten to post-secondary university and college levels; members of the proprietary language communities whose schools and institutions that have at their core teaching foreign language for business, practices and international careers and public policy makers from the state and federal levels such as members of the National Association of State Boards of Education and the Chief State School Officers.

The committee will also include members of Congress, of the Department of State, the Department of Education, the media, and the ACTFL Executive Council as well as representatives from language teaching groups in the United States.

In addition to a national council, each state will be encouraged to form its own state council. The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages will use its delegate organizational structure and work that they have already undertaken with state representatives from the National Network for Early Language Learning and the elementary special interest groups related to ACTFL to form some initial state coalitions. The states will also appoint an honorary chairperson and the state honorary chairpersons can be supported by the statewide language teachers organization in collaboration with state departments of education. The commissioners of education will be solicited to help each state form its coalitions and the presidents or executive directors of the state language organizations will be called upon to help provide voluntary support for the initiatives. State organizations would be formed by January 1, 2004 and would be encouraged to meet at least five times prior to the official celebrations of 2005. The state commissions, just as the national, would include representatives of business and industry, any consulates or embassies that exist within the state, international roundtables, the world affairs councils of the states, representatives from pre-kindergarten to college and university as well as community college and proprietary language schools. Private and parochial school representation will also be sought on the statewide committees. Ethnic groups and religiously affiliated language groups will be encouraged to be participants on the state committees, as will any political or elected offi-

cials — local, regional or statewide — who would be willing to take the lead. State governors will be encouraged to be the honorary chairs of their respective state organizations but ultimately commissioners of education in collaboration with state language groups would help to select the honorary chairs.

The national organization will be formed first. All of the members of the national organization will be appointed by October 15 and will be announced simultaneously during International Education Week and at the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages national conference in Philadelphia. The national group will meet prior to or immediately following the ACTFL conference in Philadelphia and will generate a position paper that will be distributed to all of the states, the governors, the commissions of education, and the state foreign language organizations prior to January 1. The national organization will compile activities that occurred in the European Union and will discuss activities with counterparts in China to assess what national activities that have taken place in other countries might be appropriate for the United States but also what activities will be unique to the United States.

The purpose of the national and the state committees will be to help generate activities that are appropriate to be carried on at the national and state levels as well as to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas among groups that have traditionally not shared their thoughts on the importance of language learning. The committees would meet five times during 2004 to talk about actual events that would take place, and ways of publicizing and getting media coverage for those events.

The national and state committees will look at how language learning and learning about other cultures could be promoted in general. State coalitions will coincide with an important report about foreign language learning in the states that is being prepared by the National Association of State Boards of Education. These five

meetings will provide an opportunity for the stakeholders in international education and language education to discuss ways of promoting language learning in kindergarten through the adult education level. One of the myths that will be dispelled by the statewide coalition will be that language learning is a simple and easy process that can be accomplished in a year or two. It is the goal of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages to provide a lifelong opportunity for Americans to start languages early and to continue them in an articulated sequential fashion throughout their lifetime, adding the study of more challenging languages as students get older, and as the work force and cultural changes of the twenty-first century may demand. Certainly, the increased activity within our hemisphere and focus on other continents other than the North American continent make it essential that all American children have experiences learning at least one language early in life so that they have the mental and affective flexibility to pick up other languages that may be more in the strategic or economic interest of the United States.

The state committees will be asked to appoint a staff person who will file a report with the national committee following each of the state's coalition meetings. These reports of activities will then be published on the national website and will form a basis of activities that other states may use or borrow.

Press relations and production of informational material will be coordinated by ACTFL headquarters. ACTFL will work with the Education Writers Association in Washington, D.C., to ensure that the events of the year are widely publicized in the education community. All materials will be available in downloadable format on the ACTFL website < <http://www.actfl.org> > .

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#### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Resolution 170—Designating the Years 2004 and 2005 as “Years of Foreign Language Study” by the 108<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, has been posted up on the NNELL website <[www.nnell.org](http://www.nnell.org)>.

# NELL

## NNELL Photo Album

*A young dancer from the "Grupo Guadalupano de Danza" during the Guelaguetza dance presentation in Ocotlán de Morelos.*



*Cheryl Jogan (PA), Kim Dahlquist (UT), Michael Donnelly (PA), Sarah Thompson (TX), Shauna Thorton (TX), and Elvida Esparza Henry (CO) at the farewell dinner.*



*Mary Ann Blue, Mari Haas, and Cindy Weill at the farewell party.*



*NNELL Publisher Liaison and Membership Chair, Pamela Valdés, trying on a "huipil de tapar" at a textile demonstration.*



*Evangelia Diamantopoulos (MA), Susan Quintyne (NY), Sandi Lich (GA), Cheryl Jogan (PA) analyzing artwork by Rodolfo Morales in the Galería Arte de Oaxaca.*

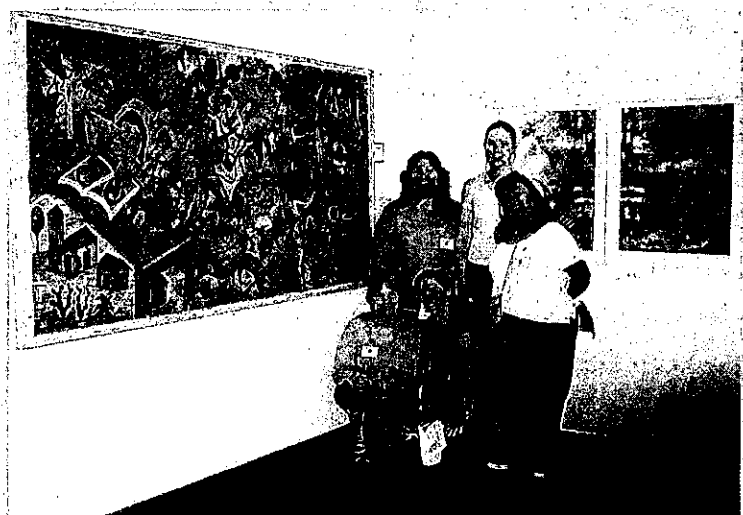


Artist, Leovigildo Martínez, signing children's books and catalogues of his work in his studio.



Storyteller, Mary Ann Blue and Project Coordinator Cindy Weill, with a mandrill carved by Armando Jiménez.

*This issue of NNEll's Photo Album documents the summer institute, La Realidad Mágica de Oaxaca, supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. See page 30 for more information about the institute!*



Lucy Vargas (NJ), Karen Lichtman (NY), Elvida Esparza Henry (CO), Vera Fakhouri (CT), and Laura Cantor (NY) posing next to the painting they analyzed.



Learning Languages Spanish Resources Editor, Mayra Sánchez Negrón, talking to ceramic artist Carlomagno Pedro Martínez.



Marlene Kurtz watching Pamela Centeno (CO) present her culture collage.

# La Realidad Mágica de Oaxaca

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*The summer institute, La Realidad Mágica de Oaxaca, supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, was a rich and colorful learning experience for the twenty-five K-8 Spanish teacher participants.*

The summer institute, *La Realidad Mágica de Oaxaca*, supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, was a rich and colorful learning experience for the twenty-five K-8 Spanish teacher participants. The goal of the project was to give these elementary and middle school teachers, who teach language and subject content in Spanish, the knowledge and understanding of the history and culture of Oaxaca, Mexico; practice with their language and writing skills; and the ability to create thematic and interdisciplinary curriculum units. The project began at the end of June and continued for five weeks of classroom study of the history and culture of the Oaxaca Valley, visits to artisans, work with a storyteller and a poet, and visits to archeological sites, markets, and museums. Using the content and cultural insights gained through their study, the teachers began to plan and write thematic units to use with their Spanish classes.

The history and culture of the Zapotec and Mixtec people from the valley of Oaxaca demonstrates a civilization rich with ancient tradition, blended with the influences brought by the Spanish in the 1500's to create a unique contemporary culture. From the inspiring landscape and archeological sites to the many religious and secular festivals shaped by the syncretism of indigenous and Hispanic beliefs, Oaxaca has always been a place that combines myth and magic in its everyday reality. The history of Oaxaca is visually illustrated in the ruins of Monte Albán and Mitla, the paintings of the great Oaxacan-born artists Rufino Tamayo, Francisco Toledo, Rodolfo Nieto, and Rodolfo Morales. Artists today continue to express their worldviews and preserve the myths of their ancestors in woven tapestries, clay figures, black pottery vessels, sculptures, and carved wooden animals. Mexican writers, including Andrés Henestrosa and Elena Poniatowska, have preserved the legends of the Zapotecs and the worldviews of the Mestizos (people of indigenous and Hispanic descent) of Oaxaca respectively. There are also many bilingual children's books in Spanish and English with stories told and illustrated by Oaxacan artists, including *La mujer que brillaba aún más que el sol*, *La estrella de Angel*, *El cuento del conejo y el coyote*, and *La luna fue a la fiesta*.

After the teachers created personal culture collages, the history and culture classes set the institute experience in motion. The study plan for the history and culture sessions was divided into seven themes: Land and Sky; Life and Death; Truth and Deception; Conquest and Colonization; Daily and Ceremonial Life; The Feminine and The Masculine; and Zapotec

and Mexican Identities. Each theme was guided by one or more essential questions. Professor Ruth Borgman of Columbia University imparted her vast knowledge to the group using three main texts, *Cantares de los vientos primerizos* by Javier Castellanos Martínez, *Los hombres que dispersó la danza* by Andrés Henestrosa, and *Mito y Magia Oaxaca: Pasado y Presente* (Exhibit catalogue of legends illustrated by Oaxacan artists) produced by the Palo Alto Cultural Center. The study was supplemented with magazines such as, *Arqueología Mexicana: Monte Albán*, *Alfonso Caso y la Tamba 7* and *México Desconocido, Monte Albán y los zapotecos*, *Paisajes de la Historia III*. A visit to Monte Albán, the main Zapotec ruins near Oaxaca city and to the Museo Cultural Santo Domingo, illustrated these sessions. In Monte Alban, guide Rolando Cortés added his insights about this ancient civilization to the teachers' growing knowledge base. Dr. Borgman asked the teachers to work in small groups to reflect on reading passages, present stories through role plays, and write about one of the aspects of history and culture they had studied.

Woven though the classroom sessions were stories, expertly told by professional storyteller and Spanish teacher in Dallas, Texas, Mary Ann Blue. Ms. Blue also worked with the teachers on the art of storytelling, including choosing, learning, collecting, and editing stories for use in the Spanish classroom. She discussed the advantages of telling stories in the classroom and the roots of the different genres of stories. The teachers were captivated by Ms. Blue when she told stories including *El niño y los tres chivos* (*The Boy and the Three Goats*). The story came to life when, serendipitously, on our next outing, we saw three goats in a field grazing in a field. Another thread of the institute was the visits to artists and galleries. Marlene Kurtz, an expert on the Oaxacan artists and artisans and Spanish teacher at Princeton Day School, began this study began with a discussion framed by the question, *What is folk art?* Later the teachers visited several folk art galleries to preview pieces created by some of the artisans we would later visit in their homes/studios. Our first visit was to the small town of Arrazola and San Martín Tilcajete on the outskirts of Oaxaca City. There we visited Manuel Jiménez, the pioneer of the art of woodcarving in Oaxaca in the 1950's. We watched as Don Manuel carved and his sons, Angélico and Isaías, painted the wooden animals. We also visited Moises and Armando Jiménez, grandsons of Don Manuel, who demonstrated their craft and the painting techniques of their wives, Oralia and Antonia. Other workshops of carvers (Epifanio Fuentes and family, Jacobo and

María Ángeles, Jesús Sosa and others) offered unique painting and carving techniques and distinct worldviews. We spent the afternoon at the home of the Navarro family, watching Crispina and her mother, sisters, and young cousin weave using backstrap looms. As a special treat, Señora Navarro served us delicious tamales.

Ceramic artist Angélica Vásquez, of Santa María de Atzompa, demonstrated the intricate technique of “pastisaje” she uses to create angels, mermaids, and detailed large female figures—some from myths and others from real life. She uses only natural tones of clay in her work. Angélica told us the story of *La serena* (The Mermaid) as we watched her create a mermaid. Angélica is committed to telling the stories of strong women through her work.

As preparation for visiting with several painters, the teachers visited art galleries in Oaxaca and in small groups analyzed the work of many of our artists. Our first visit was to the studio of artist and childrens’ book illustrator, Leovigildo Martínez. His paintings and murals are filled with bright colors and patterns, flying women, men wearing masks and walking on stilts, moons, suns, and whimsical childrens’ toys. Each painting has a story behind it and he shared the story of *Juan Cenate*, remembered from the tales his mother told him as a child. At the end of his visit we were treated to warm bread from the ovens of Leo’s father, a baker, and delicious Mexican hot chocolate. Another painter and children’s book illustrator, Fernando Olivera, visited us at our beautiful residence, Las Bugambilias. He discussed the meaning of several of his bold and colorful prints on the walls of the B & B. He also told us the story of *Las mujeres de Cuchinaca*, soon to be published as a children’s book. The group also visited the studio of Felipe Morales, another Oaxacan artist, whose work depicts themes of everyday life, processions, and Oaxacan landscapes and dreams, in order to see his work and hear him describe the different paintings.

In Ocotlán de Morelos we visited the Aguilar family who produce brightly colored clay figures of Mexican women, Freída’s, street walkers, mermaids, skeletons, and scenic life in the pueblo. In the large patio of Josefina’s home and studio, the group watched as she effortlessly created a figure, of a woman. Her son, Demetrio, also showed the group his work, complicated skeleton figures, and discussed his worldview. Later we were able to walk to the homes of Josefina’s sisters, Guillermina, Concepción, and Irene, all ceramic artists. Later in the institute one group of teachers returned to interview Josefina and her family for their thematic unit. Another group attended the dances during the Guelaguetza (two weeks of traditional dance presentations in Oaxaca City) of a group of young dancers directed by Irene. In the nearby town of Ocotlán del Valle we visited the Ex-Convento renovated by the artist Rodolfo Morales. Maestro Morales, as he was known to his students, was a celebrated Oaxacan artist whose life work was to give back to his

community. He financed this effort of by renovating historic buildings and starting children’s programs, with the proceeds of his paintings. The beautiful building also houses a museum dedicated to the work of the artisans from the area. Many of the teachers visited Morales’ home and studio that includes a gallery of his work, the offices of his foundation, a computer lab for the local children, and a colorful Mexican tiled kitchen. Before returning to Oaxaca city there was time to visit the Friday market in town.

Our last two fieldtrips were to Teotitlán del Valle, the weaving village and to San Bartolo de Cuatpec, a village of black clay. In Teotitlán we visited the home of Fidel Cruz and María Luisa Mendoza, both from weaving families. María Luisa demonstrated the preparation of the natural colors used to dye the yarn for the rugs. Fidel showed us the process of dying the yarn and weaving. Once again we were treated to a feast of *chapulines* (fried grasshoppers), tamales, and local mezcal. Our last visit, to San Bartolo, was to the home and studio of the Pedro family, black clay ceramic artists. Siblings Carlomagno, Magdalena, and Adelina demonstrated their craft and discussed their reasons for doing it: Carlo creates skeleton figures and scenes, Magda, makes figures of women in traditional *huipiles*, and Adelina, produces angels and mermaids. We also learned about the construction of the new *Museo de Arte Popular*, a project supported by Carlomagno.

The second to last week of the institute ended with several visits to archeological sites and museums with poet, children’s book author, and educator Jorge Luján. In Mitla and Yagul, the teachers wrote poetry using different formats suggested by Sr. Luján. The first, in the Mixteca site of Mitla, was a “haiku” pattern used by Mexican poet, José Juan Tablada. The second, called a *Tanka*, we wrote in Yagul. In the Museo Tamayo, the artist’s pre-Columbian collection, the teachers wrote poems that included a pattern of repetition of stanzas. And, in *El Museo de Arte Contemporáneo*, we heard and wrote *poemínimos*, a structure developed by Mexican poet Efraín Huerta. Jorge shared his many children’s books with the group, including, *La X mágica de México*, a book that uses artifacts from the National Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City as the starting point for poetry and describes techniques for poetry writing using each piece. He also sang some of the children’s songs he has written during a session on Mexican songs and games with Xochitl Jiménez, a Oaxacan elementary school teacher.

The last week of the institute found the teachers writing their thematic units, revisiting artists and artisans, collecting resources, and conferencing with professors. One group of teachers visited the home and studio of Luis Valencia, another Oaxacan visual and ceramic artist, to learn hands-on about his techniques for working in clay. The intense five-weeks came to a close with a lively *fiesta de despedida* (farewell party) on the rooftop patio of Las Bugambilias.

*During the five weeks of this project the teachers worked on strategies for using and writing thematic units in the classroom. The units are filled with history, culture, stories, artwork, and photographs of the Oaxaca valley.*

These thematic units will be available to download from the project website in January.

The teachers reflected in their weekly evaluations on what they had learned and what they planned to use in their classrooms. The latter included: the geography and history of Oaxaca, storytelling, insights about Zapotec and Oaxacan Culture, creating webs with the students, art based activities, making a personal culture collage, TPR, information about textiles and crafts, planning thematic units, legends, poems, writing poetry with students, the process of dying yarn with *cochinilla* (an insect that grows on the nopal cactus plant and provides a bright red color when dried), the legends, *El murciélago* (The Bat) and *El caparazón de la tortuga* (The Turtle's Shell), Mexican songs and games, various art forms including architecture (Monte Albán, Mitla, Yagul) and painting (Leovigildo Martínez), integrating reading lessons for language acquisition, what ceramics mean to the Oaxacan culture, how to edit stories for classroom use, art and it's meaning, students designing their own *tapete* (rug), and possibly presenting a *Guelaguetza* (traditional dance program).

During the five weeks of this project the teachers worked with Project Director Mari Haas on strategies for using and writing thematic units in the classroom. The units are filled with history, culture, stories, artwork, and photographs of the Oaxaca valley. They also include detailed plans for teaching Spanish using this content. These thematic units will be available to download from the project website in January <unidadesmagicasdeoaxaca.com>. Check the Fall issue of *Learning Languages* for the site address.

The *Realidad Mágica* Participants are FLES, Middle School, Bilingual, and Dual Immersion Teachers: *Jorge Arboleda*, NYC; *Jenny Barchfield*, NYC; *Jessica Bohne*, Roseville, MN; *Diana Melfi Bonilla*, Rio Rancho, NM; *Crystal Brock*, Athens, GA; *Laura Cantor*, NYC; *Isabel Castro*, Wayne, NJ; *Pamela Centeno*, Colorado Springs, CO; *Kim Dahlquist*, Salt Lake City, UT; *Evangelia Diamantopoulos*, Framingham, MA; *Michael Donnelly*, Doylestown, PA; *Vera Fakhouri*, Westport, CT; *Stephanie Foster*, Midland, MI; *Elvida Esparza Henry*, Colorado Springs, CO; *Cheryl Jogan*, Abington, PA; *Sandi Lich*, Cumming, GA; *Karen Lichtman*, Bedford, NY; *Mayra Sánchez Negrón*, Milwaukee, WI; *Susan Quintyne*, Albertson, NY; *Sarah Thompson*, Richardson, TX; *Shauna Thorton*, Houston, TX; *Pamela Valdés*, Indianapolis, IN; *Lucy Vargas*, Paterson, NJ; *Miguel Vicente*, Springfield, MA; *Christine Wells*, Colorado Springs, CO.

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*Los pájaros de la cosecha/The Harvest Birds*. Blanca López de Mariscal (Illustrations by Enrique Flores), San Francisco: Children's Book Press, 1995.

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*La mujer que brillaba aún más que el sol*. Alejandro Cruz Martínez (Illustrations by Fernando Olivera), San Francisco: Children's Book Press, 1987.



# The West Des Moines FLES Program Curriculum

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The West Des Moines FLES Program curriculum is standards- and content-based. It is designed to complement and enhance the regular classroom curriculum. As students progress in language comprehension, reading and writing skills are also introduced. The main focus of the curriculum, however, is communication. Beginning with first grade, students learn to communicate in a practical, conversational manner. As with most FLES programs, there is no textbook to guide the teaching of language, content, and cultural themes determined as important. Therefore, all themes and units have been teacher-created. The West Des Moines FLES Program encompasses students in grades 1-6, meeting twice a week in 30 minute sessions. Classes are taught almost entirely in Spanish, focusing on the natural theory of language acquisition.

The West Des Moines students have been assessed twice with the SOPA, the Student Oral Proficiency Assessment, during the nine years of the program's existence. The data gathered after the first administration in 2000 have helped the teachers better develop and strengthen the curriculum in regard to communication. The FLES teachers have developed more meaningful activities and opportunities for students to develop their communication skills in Spanish. At the start of the program, teachers used pre-determined dialogues to help learn vocabulary.

They have now progressed to Partner Informational Gap activities that allow for more creativity in the language. The ultimate goal is to provide the students with the tools necessary to eventually create their own conversations with little or no teacher guidance. Growth has been observed in the students' language production. The students feel very empowered when they are able to participate in these communicative activities without help from a teacher.

The data from the second SOPA assessment in 2002 has reinforced how critical spiraling is to a successful foreign language program. At this time, West Des Moines FLES teachers are carefully examining the current units and developing activities which allow the "basics" to be spiraled throughout the entire curriculum. Over the past few years an invaluable tool has been created: the Scope and Sequence for the Language and Cultural Objectives. It holds FLES teachers accountable for what the students should know by the end of the year in each grade level. It also allows teachers to demonstrate how they articulate and coordinate communication skills for grades 1-6.

This scope and sequence is a "work-in-progress." The teachers of the West Des Moines FLES program are continuously making changes and adjustments to the curriculum and the scope, as the needs of the students are constantly changing.

*The ultimate goal is to give the students the tools necessary to eventually create their own conversations with little or no teacher guidance.*

## FLES Program Scope and Sequence

I: Introduced (new learning); R: Reviewed; M: Mastered

Language Objectives: First through sixth grade						
Objective	Grade Level					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>I. Expressive Vocabulary (content-obligatory)</b>						
A. Colors: rojo, anaranjado, amarillo, verde, azul, morado/violeta, blanco, negro, café/marrón, gris, rosado.	I,M	R	R	R	R	R
B. Days of the week (días de la semana): lunes, martes, miércoles, jueves, viernes, sábado, domingo.	I,M	R	R	R	R	R
C. Months (meses): enero, febrero, marzo, abril, mayo, junio, julio, agosto, septiembre, octubre, noviembre, diciembre.	I	R	R	M	R	R
D. Shapes (formas): el círculo, el rectángulo, el cuadrado, el triángulo	I,M	R	R	R	R	R
E. Weather (el tiempo): hace frío, hace calor, hace fresco, hace sol, hace viento, está lloviendo, está nevando, está húmedo, está nublado	I	R	M	R	R	R
F. Body parts (partes del cuerpo): la cabeza, los ojos, las orejas, la boca, la nariz, las manos, los pies, los hombros, el pelo, los brazos	I	R	R	M	R	R
G. Adjetivos: mucho, poco, grande, pequeño, cansado(a), fantástico(a), excelente, alto(a), bajo(a), viejo(a), joven, mayor, menor, rubio(a), moreno(a), pelirrojo(a), ¿Cómo eres?	I	R	R	R	M	R
H. Expressions: ¿Cómo estás?, ¿Cómo se dice...?, muy bien, bien, así así, más o menos, mal, muy mal, buenos días, buenas tardes, adiós, hasta... sí, no, tengo hambre, tengo sed, tengo frío, tengo calor, Ay caramba/ay de mí, cumpleaños feliz, necesito..., puedo...(tomar el agua, ir al servicio), Soy (de)..., Estoy..., pobrecito(a), Que lástima, que interesante, Vivo en..., gracias, por favor, de nada, lo siento	I	R	R	R	M	R
I. Numbers: 1-100 (special emphasis 10-20)	I	R	R	R	M	R
J. Landforms: las montañas, el desierto, el océano, el río, la selva, las llanuras, el bosque, la península, el golfo, el ecuador, el lago, el valle, la costa	I	R	R	M	R	R
K. Geographical locations: el océano Pacífico, Atlántico, Índico, Ártico, África, Antártida, América del Norte, América del Sur, Europa, Asia, Australia, el norte, el sur, el oeste, el este, el noreste, el noroeste, el sureste, el suroeste, el continente	—	I	M	R	R	R

The main focus of the curriculum, however, is communication. Beginning with first grade, students learn to communicate in a practical, conversational manner. As with most FLES programs, there is no textbook to guide the teaching of language, content, and cultural themes determined as important. Therefore, all themes and units have been teacher-created.

Objective	Grade Level					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
L. Time: Son las... (to the hour, half-hour, quarter-hour), Es la, Ayer fue, Hoy es, Mañana es, la fecha es...( day, month, year).	I	R	R	R	M	R
M. Family: la Mamá, el papá, el/la hermano(a), el/la abuelo(a), el/la tío(a), el/la primo(a), la madre, el padre, el perro, el gato, el pez.	—	—	I,M	R	R	R
N. School vocabulary: el lápiz, la hoja de papel, las tijeras, los marcadores, la silla, el escritorio/pupitre, los crayones, el pegamento, los lápices de color, el bolígrafo, la pluma, la puerta, la bandera, la ventana, la maestra, el televisor, el mapa, la computadora, la pizarra, la carpeta	I	R	R	R	M	R
O. Letters of the alphabet (ch, ll, ñ, rr)	—	—	I,M	R	R	R
P. Foods: las frutas, los vegetales, la carne, las proteínas, los productos de leche, el pan, los granos, el agua, las otras	I	R	M	R	R	R
Q. Community: el mundo, el continente, la ciudad, el estado, el país, la casa, la escuela, la iglesia, el (super)mercado, la calle, el apartamento, el parque, el hospital, el restaurante, la oficina	—	—	I,M	R	R	R
R. Professions: el/la bombero(a), el/la camarero(a), el/la doctor(a), el/la cartero(a), el/la policía, el/la dentista	—	—	I,M	R	R	R
S. Clothing: la camisa, la camiseta, los pantalones, la chaqueta, el sombrero, los zapatos, los pantalones cortos, el suéter, los calcetines, las sandalias, los mitones, las botas, el abrigo, la ropa interior	I	R	R	R	M	—
<b>II. Grammar</b>						
<b>A. Punctuation</b>						
1. Students will recognize the different usage of question marks and exclamation points in Spanish and in English.	—	I	R	R	R	M
2. Students will recognize the different quotation marks in Spanish.	—	—	I	R	R	M
<b>B. Capitalization</b>						
1. Students will recognize the difference in capitalization rules of the days of the week and the months of the year in Spanish and English.	I	R	M	R	R	R
2. Students will recognize that only the first word is capitalized in book titles.	—	—	I	R	M	R
<b>C. Agreement</b>						
1. Adjective with a person: fantástico(a)	I	R	R	M	R	R
2. Gender of a person: amigo(a), chico(a)	I	R	M	R	R	R
3. Gender of a noun and its adjective agreement	I	R	R	R	M	R
4. Singular/plural	I	R	R	R	R	M
<b>D. Verb Usage</b>						
1. Students will be able to correctly use the third-person singular and plural forms of ser in a complete sentence: • when describing objects, surroundings, and family members. • when comparing and contrasting landforms of México with Iowa. • when stating the nationality or ethnicity of family members.	I	R	R	R	M	R
2. Students will correctly use the third-person singular form of estar when stating the location of the continents, states, and various land regions or landforms.	—	I	R	M	R	R
3. Students will be able to correctly use the first-person and second-person singular of ser when stating nationality, and describing oneself.	—	I	R	R	M	R
4. Students will be able to correctly use the first-person singular form of estar when describing their state of being.	I	M	R	R	R	R
5. Students will be able to use the first-person and second person singular form of the verb tener, and certain other verbs (vivir).	I	R	M	R	R	R
6. Students will use the correct singular and plural form of gustar to express likes and dislikes.	—	—	I	M	R	R
7. Students will use the correct third-person singular and plural forms of tener to describe possession.	I	R	R	R	M	R
8. Students will correctly use "hay" ( there is or there are) in a sentence.	—	I	R	R	R	M
9. Students will correctly use the expression: me duele(n).	—	—	I	R	R	M
<b>III. Functions</b>						
Objective	1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>A. Socializing</b>						
1. Greeting: Students will initiate and respond to greetings and leavetaking expressions: ¿Cómo estás?	I	R	M	R	R	R
2. Thanking: Students will use please and thank you when making requests, and will respond to thank you with "you're welcome."	I	R	M	R	R	R
3. Introducing: Students will be able to perform basic introductions: ¿Cómo te llamas?, age, birthday	—	I	R	R	M	R
<b>B. Exchanging Information</b>						
1. Identifying • Students will be able to name all content-obligatory vocabulary.	I	R	R	R	R	M

2. Asking for and giving information	I	R	M	R	R	R
• Students can respond to personal inquiries using the first person singular forms of ser and estar.	I	R	R	R	R	M
• Students can name the city, state, and country where they live: ¿Dónde vives?, ¿De dónde eres?	—	I	R	M	R	R
• Students can ask and respond to the question, How old are you? (¿Cuántos años tienes?)	I	R	M	R	R	R
• Students can ask and respond to: ¿Qué hora es? ¿Cuál es la fecha de hoy?, ¿Qué día es hoy?	I	R	R	M	R	R
3. Describing	I	R	M	R	R	R
• Students can describe the weather using complete sentences.	I	R	R	R	R	M
• Students can describe objects and food using a variety of adjectives.	—	I	R	R	M	R
• Students can describe themselves and their families.	—	I	R	R	M	R
4. Stating necessity and need	—	I	R	R	M	R
5. Expressing likes and dislikes: Me gusta(n), no me gusta(n) Students can express whether they like or dislike a food.	—	—	I	M	R	R
<b>C. Getting things done</b>						
1. Requests	I	R	R	R	R	M
• Students can state necessity and need.	I	R	R	R	R	M
2. Reacting to offers/requests/suggestions	I	R	M	R	R	R
• Students can respond to the commands: levántense, siéntense, formen una fila, formen un círculo, vengan aquí, escuchen, repitan, and saquen, caminen, corran, salten, den la vuelta, indiquen, toquen, párense.	I	R	M	R	R	R
3. Students can give certain commands to their peers.	—	I	R	M	R	R
<b>Objective</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
D. Organizing and Maintaining communication	—	—	I	R	M	R
• Students will be able to correctly use, ¿Cómo se dice ___ en español?	—	—	I	R	M	R
<b>Culture Objectives: First through sixth grade</b>						
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Grade Level</b>					
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>I. The Arts</b>						
1. Students will be able to identify colors and shapes in representative arts and crafts from target cultures.	I	R	R	R	R	M
2. Students will be able to sing along with authentic songs from the target cultures.	I	R	M	R	R	R
• Students will be able to recognize latino music.	I	R	R	R	R	M
3. Students will be familiar with authentic poems, rhymes, and stories of the target cultures.	I	R	R	R	R	M
4. Students will be familiar with authentic dances and gestures from the target cultures.	I	R	R	R	R	M
<b>Objective</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>II. Daily Life Patterns</b>						
1. Students will be familiar with the target culture's calendar.	I	R	M	R	R	R
2. Students will be able to identify how peers celebrate birthdays in target cultures.	I	R	M	R	R	R
3. Students will recognize selected national holidays of the target cultures.	I	R	R	R	R	M
4. Students will use greeting and leave-taking behaviors appropriate to the target cultures.	I	R	M	R	R	R
5. Students will have the opportunity to taste selected foods from the target cultures related to holidays and celebrations.	—	—	I	R	R	M
6. Students will be able to identify immediate family members in the target language.	—	—	I,M	R	R	R
7. Students will recognize the importance of the extended family in the target culture(s).	—	—	I	R	R	M
8. Students will compare and contrast the climate of the target culture with our own, and recognize the effect climate has on daily life patterns.	—	I	R	R	R	M
9. Students will compare and contrast communities of the target cultures with their own.	—	—	I	R	R	M
<b>Objective</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>III. History and Geography</b>						
1. Students will become familiar with different forms of written communication typical of ancient civilizations native to the target culture(s).	—	I	R	R	R	M
2. Students will be able to distinguish Central America from North and South America.	—	—	I	R	R	M
3. Students will be able to locate the seven countries of Central America, not including México.	—	—	I	M	R	R
4. Students will practice the Maya system of numbers 1-30, and addition to ten.	—	I,M	R	R	R	R

*This scope and sequence is a “work-in-progress.” The teachers of the West Des Moines FLES program are continuously making changes and adjustments to the curriculum and the scope, as the needs of the students are constantly changing.*

**Key:**

I= Introduced (new learning)

R= Reviewed

M= Mastered (by end of the year)



# National Language Policies and Activities

*J. David Edwards, Ph.D., Executive Director*

*Joint National Committee for Languages/National Council for Languages and International Studies*

The summer has shaped up to be a very hectic and frenzied time at JNCL-NCLIS. There is considerable activity taking place around reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, the National Security Education Program, attacks by the extreme right on Title VI of HEA, defense and intelligence language concerns, the Department of Education's Strategic Plan, and Appropriations for FY 2004. Information elaborating on many of these issues can be found on the JNCL-NCLIS website at [www.languagepolicy.org](http://www.languagepolicy.org).

In the beginning of July, the House and Senate Appropriations Committee finalized their proposed Appropriations request for FY 2004. There are considerable differences between the Administration, the House, and the Senate on the amounts for a number of programs such as FLAP, Star Schools, Language Acquisition State Grants, International Education and Foreign Language Studies, FIPSE and NEH. At this point, we are guardedly optimistic that the higher House or Senate figures will prevail in the conference committees. Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, however, is an entirely different matter. Despite attacks by a researcher at the ultra-conservative Hoover Institution and a recent subcommittee hearing on possible bias in Title VI, both education committees seem to be relatively content with the higher education community's recommendations of only minor changes in Title VI improving study abroad and outreach. For more information, please visit the JNCL-NCLIS website.

For HEA, the battle will be joined concerning the bigger issues of student aid, loans, and teacher education. The House has already begun developing a series of three or four bills that will address higher education piecemeal during the 108<sup>th</sup> Congress. The Senate, on the other hand, appears content to await the creation of an Administration bill. Getting ready for the 2004 presidential campaign, it seems likely that

the Bush Administration will employ the same strategy as was used with the No Child Left Behind Act stressing accountability, access, quality and cost.

On a very positive note, the Department of Education's recent Strategic Plan contains a number of objectives dealing with world languages and international education. Objective 2.5 states, "Improve U.S. students' knowledge of world languages, regions, and international issues and build international ties in the field of education." Objective 5.6 reads, "Increase the capacity of U.S. postsecondary education institutions to teach world languages, area studies, and international issues." Objective 2.4 dealing with improved teacher and principal quality includes, "develop and implement a plan for recruiting international teachers to increase the number of qualified teachers prepared to teach in dual-language programs." The entire strategic plan may be accessed from the "What's New" section of the JNCL/NCLIS web site.

On other fronts, the Department of Education intends to continue with its plan to dismantle the current ERIC Clearinghouses, including the one dealing with languages and linguistics. This is in spite of thousands of letters, among them dozens from members of Congress, urging the Department to retain the present format. Attempts to move the National Security Education Program are unlikely to be realized any time soon. In appropriating \$8,000,000 for NSEP for FY2004 the Senate Appropriations Committee noted in report language: "... Because of NSEP's demonstrated, longstanding success, and the increasingly evident and critical shortages in foreign language proficiency in the Department of Defense, the Committee does not support the proposed transfer of the program to the Department of Education, or to the Central Intelligence Agency. The Committee applauds DOD's willingness and preparation to continue its management of the program." The Foreign Language

Assistance Program received 263 applications and will award approximately 80 grants for next year. Our gratitude to everyone who applied since these numbers help us make the case for increased funding for FLAP.

The Goldman Sachs Foundation has announced the creation of Prizes for Excellence in International Education to put "the world into world-class education." They will make five \$25,000 grants annually. For more information, see the "Grants and Professional Development" section of our web site.

Finally, Senators Christopher Dodd (D-CT) and Thad Cochran (R-MS) introduced Senate

Resolution 170 (S. Res. 170) declaring 2004 and 2005 as "Years of Foreign Language Study." While S.Res.170 does not, for political reasons, exactly resemble the "Year of Languages" that was initiated at the ACTFL conference in Salt Lake City, we look forward to working with ACTFL, the field, other educational and international organizations, the Departments of State and Education, and Congress in getting national attention for languages in the upcoming years. To obtain a copy of the resolution and up to date information on events in Washington, please visit the JNCL-NCLIS website at [www.languagepolicy.org](http://www.languagepolicy.org)

## National Advocacy Survey

*Marcia Harmon Rosenbusch, Ph.D.*

*Director, National K-12 Foreign Language Resource Center  
Iowa State University*

Marcia Rosenbusch, representing the National K-12 Foreign Language Resource Center at Iowa State University, is conducting a national survey on advocacy that will be distributed by email to early language educators. **The results of this survey will be presented as part of the Early Language Learning Panel on Advocacy, a session sponsored by the ACTFL FLES SIG at the 2003 ACTFL conference, entitled "FLES SIG Panel on Advocacy" and will be held at 4:15 - 5:30 PM Friday November 21 in Convention Center 105-B.**

The purpose of this survey is to gather stories from the field about challenges that have threatened the existence of early language learning programs and to identify effective strategies that have countered these challenges and built strong and enduring programs. Additionally, suggestions will be sought from respondents for ways that national organizations could assist programs in effectively countering these challenges.

To receive the survey, email [mrosenbu@iastate.edu](mailto:mrosenbu@iastate.edu) and a survey will be sent to you immediately. You can preview the survey on page 31 of the Spring 2003 issue of *Learning Languages*.

## NNELL President Martie Semmer Wins ACTFL Steiner K-12 Award

NNELL is pleased to announce that our 2002-03 President, Martie Semmer, has won the ACTFL Florence Steiner Award for Leadership in Foreign Language Education, K-12. Martie is known in her home state of Colorado and throughout the United States for her advocacy work on behalf of foreign language programs for all students, K-12, her teacher training and her mentoring of hundreds (thus far!) of foreign language teachers through the National Board Certification process. As NNELL's President, Martie has played an integral role in bringing elementary foreign language education to the forefront of both state and national educational agendas.

The comments made in her official letter of nomination were echoed by individual comments made by dozens of people with whom she has worked in the past, including nationally known experts and new candidates for National Board Certification. Martie is known for her sharing and caring ways, and we as an organization have benefitted greatly from her wisdom and experience. **Congratulations, Martie! This award could not have been given to a more worthy candidate!**



## Foreign Languages Left Behind?

*Dr. Catharine Keatley, Associate Director, NCLRC*

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### *The No Child Left Behind (NCLB)*

*Act lists a number of subjects as "core academic*

*subjects." These include "English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography."*

A recent statement was issued by Education Secretary Roderick Paige, clarifying the inclusion of foreign languages as a core academic subject in the No Child Left Behind Act, and the hiring of "highly qualified teachers" to teach these core subjects. The statement is posted online at <http://www.ed.gov/News/Letters/030324.html>

There is a danger that, in many school districts around the country, the attempt to comply with the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) (2001) of the U.S. Department of Education is depleting the resources of foreign language programs in the public schools. David Edwards of the Joint National Council on Languages (JNCL), whose job it is to represent the interests of the foreign language community to the U.S. government, says there is a "disaster waiting to happen" if we do not work as a community to intervene before the damage is done.

### BACKGROUND OF THE ACT

The NCLB was designed to ensure that all our children are provided with a good education, and to hold schools accountable for the education the students receive. Accountability is determined by the establishment of standards for learning in specific subject areas. Students' performance on tests based on these standards determines the evaluation of the schools' quality. This evaluation has serious repercussions for the schools. Districts and schools that fail to make adequate yearly progress toward state proficiency goals for their students will first be targeted for assistance, then be subject to corrective action, and ultimately, restructuring.

NCLB Act lists a number of subjects as "core academic subjects." These include "English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography." Beyond being listed as a core subject, there is little specific mention of foreign language education in the NCLB.

The focus is on student performance in language arts and in math. The Act requires that states oversee the administration of testing of students beginning in grade 3 in language arts and math.

### IMPACT OF THE ACT ON FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

There is mounting evidence that the impact of NCLB, including high stakes testing in reading and mathematics, has resulted in a number of state and district boards concentrating their efforts and resources in the subject areas to be tested to the detriment of other subjects, such as foreign languages.

Pam Kolega, State Foreign Language Supervisor for Pennsylvania, reports that she sees evidence of a negative impact of the NCLB in her state. According to her figures, the number of students studying foreign languages in the Pennsylvania public schools has decreased for the first time in 12 years since the passing of the Act. Ms. Kolega attributes this decrease to districts cutting exploratory language programs and to guidance counselors advising students to enroll in remedial reading and math instead of foreign language. While Ms. Kolega empathizes with the schools' desire to comply with the No Child Left Behind Act, she feels this should not be done at the expense of foreign languages.

### IMPACT OF THE ACT ON TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

Because foreign language is a "core subject," foreign language teachers are subject to the *No Child Left Behind* requirements for Highly Qualified Teachers. This legislation requires that "states must develop plans with annual measurable objectives that will ensure that all teachers of core academic subjects are highly qualified, which means

- a. that they have state certification (which may be alternative state certification),
- b. hold a bachelor's degree,

- c. and have demonstrated subject area competency.”
- All new hires in Title 1 programs after the start of the 2002-2003 school year must meet these requirements.
- All existing teachers must meet these requirements by the end of the 2005-2006 school year.
- School districts must use at least 5 % of their Title 1 funds for professional development to help teachers of core subjects become highly qualified.

Some school districts have found it difficult to meet the requirements for foreign language teachers in elementary schools in 2002-2003 because new hires must already have state certification. It is important that all foreign language teachers understand they must meet these requirements by 2005-2006.

#### WHAT YOU CAN DO TO KEEP FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING GROWING IN THE SCHOOLS

1. Explain the exact status of foreign language teaching in the *No Child Left Behind Act*: foreign language is a core subject. A number of foreign language state and district supervisors have reported that their boards do not understand that foreign language is one of the core subjects in the *No Child Left Behind* legislation. Title IX - General Provisions, Part A - Definitions, Number 11 clearly states that foreign language is a core subject. This means that foreign language teachers are subject to the same requirements for “highly qualified teachers” as all other core subject teachers, and can expect to have a portion of Title 1 funds devoted to their professional development to meet these requirements by 2005-2006.
2. It is important to remind states, districts and school boards that the U.S. Department of Education has made foreign language education a national educational priority. U.S. Secretary of Education, Rodney Paige, in a speech to the States Institute on International Education in the Schools, November, 2002, said:  

“But we are ever mindful of the lessons of September 11<sup>th</sup> that taught us that all future measures of a rigorous K-12 education must include a solid grounding in other cultures,

other languages, and other histories. In other words, we need to put the ‘world’ back into ‘world-class’ education.”

3. Remember that there is a “washback” effect in literacy achievement from foreign language study to language arts. So, in effect, foreign language study adds to students’ learning in language arts and English.

Christine Brown, past president of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), explains that the mind is not like a pie, with one segment devoted to native language literacy, another to math, and another to foreign language. Rather, skills are transferred across subject areas and reinforced in different disciplines. Literacy skills learned in foreign language study, especially for young students acquiring literacy, can reinforce emerging literacy skills in their native language and even provide students with deeper cognitive and metacognitive understandings of how language works and its relation to literacy. Ms. Brown reports that in her district, Glastonbury, Connecticut, the foreign language teachers work directly with the language arts and social studies teachers to ensure that the foreign language curriculum supports and enhances the students’ overall literacy skills. They call this the “triple helix of curricular articulation,” and it works. Their elementary students’ language arts skills are among the highest in the country, while every elementary student in the district studies a foreign language as a core course.

4. Work at state and regional levels to support foreign language study. Teachers, administrators, and parents need to work together to ensure that foreign language instruction is not weakened by the *No Child Left Behind Act*, but rather used to strengthen the important goals of this legislation.

*This means that foreign language teachers are subject to the same requirements for “highly qualified teachers” as all other core subject teachers, and can expect to have a portion of Title 1 funds devoted to their professional development to meet these requirements by 2005-2006.*

To access the *No Child Left Behind Act* in PDF format, visit: <http://www.ed.gov/legislation/ESEA02/107-110.pdf>.

For an easy-to-understand explanation of the Act, visit: <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/reference.html>

For more information about the National Capital Resource Center, visit <http://www.nclrc.org/>



# Reflections on Technology Use

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How often do we reflect on our practice? One of the standards from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards for Teachers of World Languages is for accomplished teachers to become reflective practitioners to support student learning. Evidence of these reflections includes artifacts such as journals and teaching portfolios, which are becoming standard in teacher education programs across the U.S. and Europe (NBPTS, 2003; Candlin, 2001). Teachers are asked to evaluate critically the ways they teach, the strategies and materials they use, the innovations they adopt, and the ways in which they are developing as professionals. Think about how computer technologies have enriched your professional life and the language learning experiences of your students.

We hear accounts of how elementary school foreign language teachers' lives are structured, and how using technology is almost out of the question. Foreign language teachers often travel between schools without a home-base and can easily identify barriers that prevent them from integrating computer technologies into their instruction. We can begin by reflecting on the complex issues surrounding how children develop cognitive, cultural, and linguistic competence in school and home environments that are increasingly technologically enhanced. To contribute to the knowledge and understanding of the relationship between technology, content, and pedagogy, an analysis of the learning environment (including task properties, settings, contexts, and the structure of technology-enabled activities) will provide us a framework for evaluating the contribution computer technologies can make to the development of children's linguistic and cultural competence.

Based on current theories and research advances in Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL), experts suggest that teachers first consider what strategies allow CALL to facilitate learning before asking students to work on CALL activities. Teachers' reflections would then contribute to the advancing of CALL in the direction of the learner. This can be achieved by moving the learner variables to the center of future discussions on CALL conceptualization, and by documenting how CALL activities and strategies affect not only language proficiency but also

critical thinking skills, creativity, problem solving, and sociocultural competence when CALL is integrated across content areas.

In regard to how CALL interacts with the second language learning processes of young learners, there are still several questions that have not been answered. Some of the reasons for the lack of answers are due to the absence of applied research in the field of elementary school foreign language learning. Donato, Tucker, Wudthayagorn, & Igarashi (2000) have addressed this issue, and proposed that everyone in the early foreign language teaching profession must contribute "to the much needed research base on FLES, in particular concerning student achievement and attitudes in the later elementary years" (p. 377). How then, are we going to fit the integration of computer technologies into this puzzle?

By reflecting on our practices, we would become more aware of what questions we want to answer. By carefully crafting our own teacher-led research agendas, we would be able to contribute to what Donato and his colleagues have requested. New methods of conducting research by focusing on content and task-based activities, problem solving, and critical thinking using technology-enhanced materials, have been demonstrated to promote L2 acquisition and cultural awareness (Chapelle, 2001; Kern & Warschauer, 2000; Müller-Hartman, 2000). Kern and Warschauer (2000) argue that task-based, problem-solving activities are essential for L2 acquisition. Research on cognition and language development demonstrates that L2 learning is beneficial for children's cognitive development (Gonzalez, 1994). What remains to be seen is the evidence provided by the use of inquiry-based activities, such as WebQuests, to promote young language learners' cognitive, cultural, and linguistic competence. However, based on Chapelle's (2001) criteria for judgmental evaluation of CALL activities, inquiry-based activities may hold potential to promote L2 learning. In addition, Levy (1997) has shown evidence from his research on design and development practices of CALL indicating how the influence of teachers over CALL usage has helped advance CALL design, research, and practice.

In order to frame our future research on CALL, we can begin by looking at how our class-



room practices and our use of computers, or lack there of, focus on constructs that come from research conducted on applied linguistics, second language acquisition, and instructional design. For an excellent argument on how crucial *modified input* and *negotiation of meaning* are to *task-based activities* in CALL environments, see Chapelle (1998). For research showing how elementary school-age children and teachers work in technological *problem-solving* contexts, we may consult the work of O'malley and Valdez Pierce (1996) and of Gustafson and Rowell (1998). Scholars from "Project Zero" at the Harvard Graduate School of Education (Perkins, 1994) have published results from several research studies that aim at teaching children to develop creativity and *critical thinking* skills, and have advised teachers on how to incorporate and foster critical thinking skills in the curriculum (Perkins, 1994). Müller-Hartman (2000) reports on the effects of network-based activities on *intercultural learning* by young learners and contends that tasks used in electronic networks should support learners' individual and cultural diversity, as well as four aspects of multicultural learning (attitude, knowledge, skills, and critical cultural attitude). The author proposes that to better understand the process involved in network activities, researchers are needed in all participating sites, and that research teams are preferred over work conducted by a single researcher.

Perhaps one way of advancing the research base on elementary school foreign language learning could come from the work we do based on these constructs. The dissemination of our activities that are based on reflections would certainly help smooth the transition for students from pre-collegiate to collegiate language learning contexts where network-enhanced, and experiential-based language and culture learning are becoming the norm.

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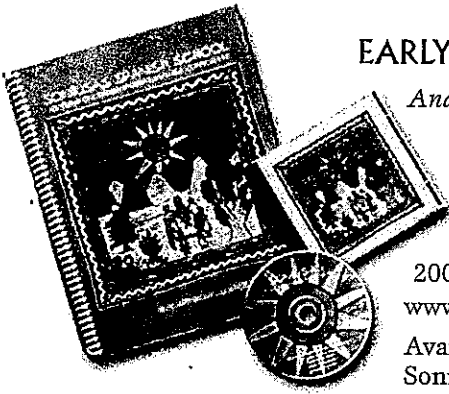
## NNELL WEBSITE UPDATE

A few pointers about the *Members' Only* pages on the NNELL website: This section of our website contains a detailed *Members Directory*, a section on *Advocacy* including tips on letter writing, making media contacts, networking, testifying, making visits to legislators, as well as suggestions on how to influence policymakers. In addition, the *Members' Only* section contains an interactive *Message Board* detailing job openings around the nation, a *Classroom Activities and Lesson Plans database*, *Archived Articles* from *Learning Languages* and a complete section on how to *Build an Early Language Learning Program*. In order to access the Members Only section, you will of course need to become a member of NNELL. Please note, your username is your surname. Please email me to obtain your password.

For future ease of use, we are currently refining our membership database as well as the way in which members can access the members' pages. Once this database is complete, all NNELL members will be emailed their passwords. We look forward to seeing you online!

Tony Erben, Ph.D., NNELL Web Editor, [terben@tempest.coedu.usf.edu](mailto:terben@tempest.coedu.usf.edu)

# Classroom Resources



## EARLY CHILDHOOD RESOURCES

Ana Lomba

Lindner, Blue and Brooks. *Sonrisas Spanish School: An Early Childhood Spanish Language Curriculum.*

Austin, TX: Sonrisas Spanish School, 2003. ISBN: 0-9721657-1-1. Cost: See [www.sonrisas.biz/Components/pdf/orderform.pdf](http://www.sonrisas.biz/Components/pdf/orderform.pdf)

Available from:  
Sonrisas Spanish School  
1206 W. 10<sup>th</sup> St  
Austin, TX 78703  
512-480-9994  
[www.sonrisas.biz](http://www.sonrisas.biz)

Sosnowski Language Resources  
58 Sears Rd  
Wayland, MA 01778  
1-800-437-7161  
[www.sosnowskibooks.com](http://www.sosnowskibooks.com)

Teachers Blue and Brooks Lindner know how difficult it is to find ready-to-use, developmentally appropriate materials for early childhood. That is why they decided to combine their teaching experience and create a comprehensive curriculum based on a mix of their favorite methodologies—TPR, the Natural Approach and the Waldorf Foreign Language Approach.

The result, *Sonrisas Spanish School*, is a fine curriculum that offers a first introduction to basic theory and methodology as well as a great variety of hands-on activities for children Pre-K–3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

The curriculum is divided into thematic, literary, and holiday lesson plans. Each lesson in the curriculum includes short activities (mainly songs, crafts, and games) for the different personalities and learning styles. In addition, book readings are also suggested to expose the children to authentic situations where the target vocabulary is being used. However, the selection of these books is not always helpful, as the language in some of them is complex and not suited for the needs of young children learning Spanish.

### SAMPLE ACTIVITIES FROM THE LESSON ON THANKSGIVING “LOS BUENOS MODALES.”

1. Bring in various items used in setting a table, and a hand puppet.
2. Tell your class, in Spanish, that you and your puppet have very good manners. When he

asks for things, he always says “por favor.” When he receives things, he always says “gracias.” When he gives things he always says “de nada.” Tell your puppet “Dame el plato, por favor.” Have your puppet pick up the plate and hand it to you. When you receive it say “gracias.” And then have your puppet say “de nada.”

3. Have your puppet ask for something using good manners. Go through each item modeling good manners.
4. Ask students if they would like to use their good manners in Spanish to ask your puppet for something. Help students use the proper vocabulary. (p. 135)

### CREATIVE PROJECT “EL PAVO”

Students will make a Thanksgiving turkey in the shape of their hand.

#### Session One

1. Show students a finished turkey and tell them they are going to make their own.
2. Have students trace one hand on the construction paper using a crayon.
3. Have students cut out their traced hand.

#### Session Two

1. Show students the finished turkey again. Point out “las plumas,” “la cara,” “los pies,” and “la barba [wattle].”
2. Have students glue feathers onto the fingers and the wattle onto the thumb.
3. Label the turkey with the word “gracias.” (p.136)

*Sonrisas* has several appendices that include the words to the songs, authentic assessment information, illustration templates, an art supply list and an introductory letter to parents. Class-to-home communication is also built into the program through home reports with vocabulary lists, songs and reading suggestions for each lesson.

The accompanying CD is formed by traditional English and Spanish songs, as well as invented ones. The voices have a near native accent. Unfortunately, the constructions are sometimes incorrect in Spanish, like “Moscas en la leche vete de aquí” instead of “váyanse de aquí” or “iros de aquí,” and “debajo de un botón era un ratón” instead of “había.” In general, however, the songs are well written and fun.

## FRENCH

Marilyn Sable



**CHANTONS-LET'S SING (in French and English).** Traditional French Songs with Michael Parent and Greg Boardman

Available from:

Michael Parent, 21 E. Kidder St.,

Portland, Maine 04103; 207-879-0401;

Cost: \$15.00 for each CD, postage included.

*Chantons, Let's Sing* is a charming collection of traditional French, Franco-American, French-Canadian, and Cajun folk songs for children and their families. The songs are sung in both French and English by Michael Parent and Greg Boardman, who also plays the fiddle. Many of the songs may sound familiar to French speakers, but there are new twists on traditional lyrics and music. Non-French speakers will also appreciate these songs and perhaps learn some French in the process.

Selections include *Du nanane*, *Planter des choux*, *Monter sur un éléphant*, *Mon Papa*, *Si mon moine*, *Le coq est mort*, *Bonhomme*, *Bonhomme!*, *Un crapaud*, *Frère Jacques*, *La bastringue*, *Hier au soir*, *Michaud est tombé*, *Bonsoir, mes amis*, and *Do do p'ti bébé*.

So, *Monter sur un éléphant* or two and learn to count; plant and replant those *choux* with your heart and soul among other body parts; dance *la polka* despite your *Papa*; put on your dancing feet and do the *bastringue*; bid your friends good-night in *Bonsoir mes amis*; fall asleep to the Cajun lullaby *Do do p'ti bébé*. Words to all the songs are included with the CD, so sing, sing, sing!

## GERMAN RESOURCE

Marianne Zose

Schneider, Monika.

**Bewegen und Entspannen im Jahreskreis.**



Available from:

Verlag an der Ruhr, 1996

ISBN 3-86072-244-1 (Book + CD)

[www.verlagruhr.de](http://www.verlagruhr.de), [www.amazon.de](http://www.amazon.de)

Cost: 16,00 Euros

*Bewegen und Entspannen im Jahreskreis* is an easy-to-follow collection of 15 short stories suitable for students in Kindergarten and elementary school. They reflect on the four seasons, starting with fall.

Three additional chapters concentrate on very important events in a child's life: his/her birthday, a morning ritual, and a journey into the world of ghosts. Music and movement, rhythm and repetition are the main focus of this early literary program. The language used is simple, the sentence structure short. The author combines innovative melodies and rhythms with a variety of exciting activities that will help children to develop skills in listening, speaking, role playing, interaction with peers, pantomime voices and sounds by using their bodies and minds.

### (Herbst - sample description)

"Der Herbst ist da" tells the story of a hedgehog's life in the fall. After relishing a juicy pear and a delicious apple, he gets caught by a cold wind and an unpleasant rain. A short while later the land is covered by dense fog. As fast as he can, the little hedgehog tries to make his way back to his warm and cozy home. This segment can be acted out in many different ways: role play, drawing, pantomime etc.

### (Durch das ganze Jahr - sample description)

"Hallo, guten Morgen" is a wake-up call to various body parts (mouth, eyes, forehead, cheeks, arms, legs, etc.

Guten Morgen, lieber Mund!

Guten Morgen, liebe Augen! ... Children are invited to wake up their eyes by rubbing them and stretching (example).

Monika Schneider, the book's author, discusses the importance of observing the seasons involving children in all senses as well as activity and exercise. A sedentary lifestyle in young people will have negative health consequences. Therefore, it is of great importance that teachers provide ample opportunities for "fitness breaks" that create an exciting and healthy learning environment.

## JAPANESE RESOURCES

Ikuyo Suzuki



Friedman, Ina. 1984. **How My Parents Learned to Eat.** Houghton Mifflin Company, 2 Park St., Boston, Massachusetts (School & Library Binding). ISBN 0395353793 Hard Cover, \$10.50 Paperback, \$5.95 Reading level Age 4 - 8.

This book, deemed a Reading Rainbow selection, captures the nuances of the Japanese culture while presenting a funny story that goes beyond simple table manners. It all begins when an American sailor meets a Japanese girl in Yokohama, Japan. The story humorously describes their courtship, bringing to light many cultural differences. It especially highlights the sailor's fear of inviting her to dinner because he is afraid of going to a Japanese restaurant and having to use chopsticks while eating.

This book not only provides students with a great heart-warming story, but also provides the framework for in-depth discussions regarding many multicultural issues. For example, I use this book to introduce and discuss various types of foods found in the world while focusing on different table manners that people use in their own countries. It also allows my international students to present different ideas about their cultures as well as invites participation from their parents.

I would like to share some learning activities associated with using chopsticks that have been very successful in my classroom. The materials that you need are paper plates, paper cups, disposable chopsticks, and small snacks like popcorn, jelly beans, or M&Ms. If possible, use candies made in Japan and small Japanese cultural objects. Disposable chopsticks are available at any general supermarket in the Asian section, and cost approximately \$1.50 - \$2.00 for a set of 20. After teaching the Japanese numbers from 1 to 10, provide each student with a small portion of popcorn on paper plates. Students can practice counting in Japanese while picking up popcorn one by one with their chopsticks, and eating is the reward! Using candy like jelly beans and M&Ms also combines counting, practicing colors and learning how to use chop sticks in a fun way. I call out different directions like "akai jelly beans o futatsu totte kappu ni irete" (pick up 2 red jelly beans and place them in the cup). After they have completed the task, they can use their chop sticks to take the candies out of the cup, eating their prize in the end. My students also love that I let them have the disposable chop sticks to take home to use at dinner with their families!

Another activity that my students enjoy is when I divide the classroom into two teams, and the students take turns sending a representative from their group to the front of the classroom for our *Chopstick Competition*. I place a bowl on the table in front of the room with jelly beans, or any small objects they can practice picking up, and set two sets of chop sticks beside the bowl. I have student volunteers call out different numbers from 1-10, and whichever student successfully picks up the specified amount first, wins one point for the team. For example, when the announcer says "roku" (six), the two students compete to see who can pick up the number of whatever object I have placed in their bowl first. The rest of the students support their team by counting out loud in Japanese. Mathematics can also play a fun role in this activity. For example, the teacher can ask the students "ni tasu san wa?" ( $2 + 3 = ?$ ), allowing small groups of students to work together to gather 5 objects in a pile with their chop sticks. I hope that you enjoy using these activities in your Japanese classroom!

## LATIN RESOURCES

Natali Miller

Wilson, Martha. *Latin Primer I* (revised edition 2001), *Latin Primer II* (revised edition 1993), and *Latin Primer III* (2nd edition 1997). Moscow, ID: Canon Press. Both student and teacher editions are available from Canon Press at <http://www.canonpress.org>

Book	Grade	ISBN #	Cost
Latin Primer I (Student)	3	1885767412	\$17
Latin Primer I (Teacher)	—	1885767315	\$17
Latin Primer II (Student)	4	1885767439	\$17
Latin Primer II (Teacher)	—	1885767447	\$17
Latin Primer III (Student)	5	1885767323	\$20
Latin Primer III (Teacher)	—	1885767331	\$20

Due to a recent resurgence of interest in teaching Latin to children (whether at the high school, middle school, or even elementary school level), several supplementary Latin resources have been developed of late. However, it can still be a struggle for the Latin teacher to find the perfect beginning text for young students. I would heartily recommend the Latin Primer series by Martha Wilson to be used as the main classroom text for elementary Latin students. This series has been used effectively in both private and public schools for about ten years now.

The Latin Primer series is based on a pedagogy using the trivium, an approach developed in the medieval period and improved by Dorothy Sayers (also famous for her Lord Peter Wimsey mystery stories). In this approach, each subject is viewed as being divided into three levels: the grammar level (the building blocks of that subject), the dialectic level (how those building blocks are put together), and the rhetoric level (how the subject can be best expressed or discussed). Obviously these three distinctions are not watertight categories, but they do provide helpful areas of focus for the teacher. In her essay "The Lost Tools of Learning," Sayers added the notion that as children develop, in their early elementary years, they are well-suited to learn the grammar of each subject; in other words, they love to sing the multiplication tables, to learn the basics of handwriting, to learn how to read and spell and so on. As they get older, they become more and more interested in putting these elements together; and thus, in middle school they begin to learn more complex math problems and the basics of composition. In high school, they enter the rhetoric stage, and yearn to express themselves in their writing, in speeches, and even in how they dress.

It is easy to see how the trivium approach is easily adaptable to teaching a language. In Latin, it is important to learn the endings of nouns and verbs before attempting to translate basic sentences. And,

if teachers are wondering how young is too young to start teaching Latin, Sayers suggests in her essay that "Latin should be begun as early as possible—at a time when inflected speech seems no more astonishing than any other phenomenon in an astonishing world." The Primer series, therefore, focuses on the grammar and then the dialectic stages of learning. It includes oral chanting as a very effective, natural means of memorization. The books are also appropriately paced for young children. There are many opportunities for review, crucial in learning any language. The Primers are also suitable for a teacher who has additional supplementary material.

Latin Primer I is designed for 3rd grade students, introducing concepts in the following areas: Latin vocabulary, English derivatives from Latin, English and Latin grammar, Latin paradigms, Latin quotes, simple translation, and some Roman history. In her introduction, Wilson explains to the student that learning Latin is quite useful even though it is no longer a spoken language. Over fifty percent of English words are derived from Latin, and the five Romance languages (Italian, French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Romanian) are descended from it. The student edition includes weekly vocabulary/chant lists, as well as weekly worksheets. The teacher's edition has the answer keys for each worksheet and four exams plus answer keys. It also contains helpful grammatical explanations, games, and tips for each week's lessons.

Latin Primer II, written for 4th graders, is divided into nine units, reviewing nouns and verbs, and then covering the accusative, adjectives, the future tense, questions, commands, the imperfect tense, 3rd Declension nouns, and so on. Students learn additional vocabulary words and chants. The teacher's edition again includes grammatical explanations and answer keys for the weekly worksheets. It also has lesson plans for the nine units with nine exams (and answer keys).

Latin Primer III begins with a thorough review (the first three units) so that the 5th graders can go back over what they learned in the previous two years. Students will expand their knowledge of case usage, tenses, prepositions, and the 3rd conjugation. The book ends with another review. Like the first two teacher's editions, the Primer III Teacher's Edition contains word lists, teaching tips, crossword puzzles, worksheet answer keys, and exams with answer keys.

Over the years, many teachers have discovered the Primers, and have learned just how lasting Wilson's methods are. I was fortunate enough to begin learning Latin in the 3rd grade, and remember how much fun it was to chant all of those endings. My siblings and I would even show off our Latin chants to our grandparents! I was able to take those building blocks and move on to study Latin in high school and college as well as French and German in college. I realized over and over again the benefits of starting language learning early on using an effective program.

## SPANISH

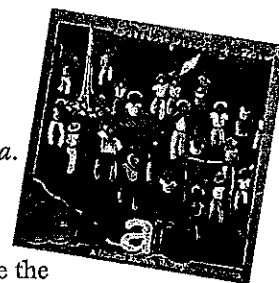
Mayra S. Negrón

Cantaré. *Baila para gozar*:

*A Musical Journey Through Latin America.*

<http://www.cantaremusic.com/>

**Cost: CD \$15.00 / Cassette \$10.00**



Because the group *Cantaré* has agreed to provide the entertainment at NNELL's FLES Swapshop at the 2003 ACTFL conference in Philadelphia, and because their music came highly recommended, I am reviewing their CD, *Baila para gozar*, to give you a sneak preview of their work. Being a teacher who enjoys a variety of music, I tend to have two wide collections of music: one for the classroom and the other for personal enjoyment. As I gather my thoughts for writing this review, I face a dilemma: where do I keep this CD?

When I listened to it for the first time, I immediately enjoyed the melodies, the pleasant vocals, and the rhythms, and I caught myself dancing to some of the tunes. There are songs from El Salvador, Bolivia, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Brazil, Mexico, Peru, Cuba, Argentina, and Puerto Rico. A brief explanation of the history each song, along with the lyrics, is included with the CD. The music will appeal to adults as well as kids of all ages.

After listening to the music a few times, the teacher in me came alive and I began to see the educational possibilities for the music. Pure and simple enjoyment of good music in Spanish is a treat I save for my kids for special occasions. *Baila para gozar* certainly fits the criteria. I'll list some teaching possibilities:

- *Buenos días*, the first song included, is great for teaching about the different Latin American countries, greetings, and the family. It has an instrumental section that a teacher can use to point to different countries on a map and have the students respond by mentioning the country.
- *El monigote*, a beautiful song from Venezuela about a rag doll, can be used when comparing these rag dolls with their larger namesakes in Mexico.
- My kids will definitely try the extended tunes of *La araña*, a traditional song from Huatesco, Mexico, when we study spiders this October.
- *Las plenas*, with plena rhythms and a collection of catchy chants sung during carnival in Puerto Rico, has enough rhythm and repetition that kids will be singing the chants long after you have stopped the music. Beware!

Should you keep this CD in your classroom collection or in your car? Buy two, I would suggest. You can visit their webpage at [www.cantaremusic.com](http://www.cantaremusic.com), read more about the group, listen to some tracks, and buy the CD. Also, do not forget to buy your ticket for the NNELL FLES Swapshop at ACTFL where you can hear the *Cantaré* singers live.



# Classroom Activity

*Dental Awareness: K-6 Service Learning for El Día de los Muertos.* An On-going Collaborative Service-Learning project with Ignacio Ramirez Gúzman School in México.

Dr. Teresa Kennedy, Jessica Sharrard & Iñigo Serna  
The Idaho FLES Program, Moscow, Idaho

**Language:** Spanish

**Grade Level:** Grade 5

**Lesson Topics:** El Día de los Muertos, proper dental hygiene and community service-learning.

**Need for the Project:** Students in other countries often do not have access in their public schools to information and products that promote good dental hygiene. However, most schools in the United States do have access to this information through volunteers from the medical community who visit elementary classrooms during the academic year.

**Description:** This project provides the students participating in Idaho FLES classrooms with the opportunity to be involved in a community service project to collect toothpaste, tooth brushes, floss, and other products from local dental offices and create an informational pamphlet to share what they have learned about good dental hygiene with students from a Spanish-speaking country. Idaho FLES classrooms have participated in this project for the past three years with Ignacio Ramirez Gúzman School in México directed by University of Idaho pre-service education students in collaboration with students in local 5<sup>th</sup> grade Spanish classrooms. The overall goal of this educational unit is to reinforce and enhance material covered in other areas while practicing the Spanish language in a service-learning setting.

1. Learning of cultural and geographical aspects of México.
2. Comparison of the cultural differences between El Día de los Muertos in México and Halloween in the United States.
3. Learning basic language skills regarding dental hygiene, the use of selected reflexive verbs and vocabulary in Spanish as related to the topic of dental hygiene.
4. Reaching into the community and communicating with peers in a Spanish-speaking country.
5. Gaining experience in collaboration by participating in a service-learning project.

## Project Objectives:

1. Integration across the curriculum: Language and culture are combined with health and geography to promote international collaboration and cross-cultural learning.
2. Provide meaningful activities through which students can learn and practice the Spanish language as well as improve skills in their first language.
3. Complete a community service project that will positively affect two different countries and lead to an improved multicultural/global understanding. The project provides a means of improving the affective qualities of today's students including attitudes toward sharing resources, caring about students in other nations, and actively doing something to benefit others in need.
4. Advocacy through Community Involvement. The students work together to collect supplies from local dental agencies to send to Ignacio Ramirez Gúzman School in México. Their work also serves as a means of educating the community about other countries that do not have the information and supplies we have easy access to in our everyday life. Everyone involved in the project is indirectly affected through the awareness of this issue.

**Final Product:** Completion of the service-learning project with a school in México requires students to use their Spanish language skills in an active, meaningful manner.

**Materials:** Realia from Dentist offices, poster boards, paper, markers, scissors, glue.

**Standards:** Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, Communities.

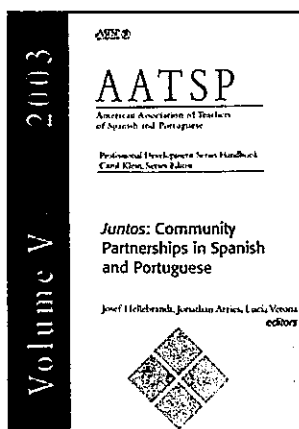
**Assessment:** Both formative and summative evaluation measures are utilized during the process of creating informational pamphlets, survey information is gathered throughout the project and discussed as a class, and oral and written activities are conducted and monitored.

## Simultaneous Steps:

1. In the Health classroom, the school nurse visits to provide information about proper dental maintenance. It is especially meaningful to schedule this visit before the traditional Halloween custom of going "Trick or Treating". Students discuss the main food groups and learn vocabulary regarding oral hygiene in both Spanish and English.
2. In the Social Studies classroom, students are discussing the geography of México.
3. In the Spanish classroom, the teacher discusses El Día de los Muertos.

- a. Comparisons are made regarding U.S. cultural variations.
  - b. Vocabulary regarding the cultural activities practiced in both countries is reinforced through TPR activities.
  - c. Vocabulary supporting the food pyramid is discussed.
  - d. Dilemma surrounding dental hygiene, including limited access to needed supplies in remote areas of México and South America is discussed.
4. The community service project involves students in an active manner (i.e., students must look in the telephone book, etc. to find the addresses and names of local dental offices that are contacted). Students write and send letters to local dental offices asking for donations for their service-learning project (tooth paste, tooth brushes, floss, and other dental supplies).
  5. A letter is sent home to parents explaining the project to promote parental involvement.
  6. Various lessons are conducted in Spanish utilizing TPR to acquire vocabulary, learning songs that use the vocabulary and writing informational pamphlets for their peers in México.
  7. Surveys are completed by students in all classrooms (both U.S. and Mexico), parents, and participating dentists to monitor outreach of the project.
  8. Students bundle up the supplies and booklets to mail to México before Christmas.

**Additional Resources:** For more service learning projects conducted by Idaho's foreign language educators visit [http://ivc.uidaho.edu/iatlc/projects\\_service.html](http://ivc.uidaho.edu/iatlc/projects_service.html). Complete lesson descriptions containing supplemental materials can be downloaded from the website. Also see the AATSP Service Learning website at [http://ivc.uidaho.edu/programs/AATSP\\_ServiceLearning/](http://ivc.uidaho.edu/programs/AATSP_ServiceLearning/) for many projects currently being conducted in other states.



### Sample Pamphlet:

#### La Buena Nutrición y el Aseo Dental

Muchas de las comidas que te ayudan a crecer sano y fuerte, también te ayudan a tener unas dentaduras y encías sanas como:

- Los lácteos, te proveen de calcio y vitamina D para ayudarte a mantener fuertes tus dientes y tus huesos.
- Las frutas y verduras, te proveen con vitamina C y otras vitaminas las cuales son esenciales para mantener encías sanas.
- Los panes y cereales, te dan la vitamina B, la cual es buena para crecer, y hierro para una sangre sana.
- Las carnes, te proveen de hierro y proteínas para una buena salud en general, también tienen magnesio y zinc para tus dientes y huesos.

Aquí están algunos consejos para una dentadura sana:

- 1) Cepillarse los dientes 2 o 3 veces al día.
- 2) Pasarse el hilo dental cada día.
- 3) ¡NO comer muchos dulces!
- 4) Y si comes dulces, cepíllate los dientes lo más pronto posible.

Para: Los estudiantes del 5<sup>o</sup> año de la escuela primaria Ignacio Gonzáles Guzmán.  
De parte de: Los estudiantes del 5<sup>o</sup> año de la escuela primaria McDonald.



Muchas gracias a las oficinas Dentales de Moscow, Idaho y Pullman, Washington por sus donaciones generosas.

For additional information regarding service-learning projects in the language classroom see Hellebrandt, J., Arries, J., Varona, L., & Klein, C. (Eds.). (2004). *JUNTOS: Community partnerships in Spanish and Portuguese*, AATSP Professional Development Handbook Series, Vol. 5. Boston: Heinle.

# World Languages Other Than English National Board Certification

*By Martie Semmer, WLOE National Board Certification Project Facilitator  
National K-12 Foreign Language Resource Center, Iowa State University\**

## INTRODUCTION

The following is a two-part article on World Languages Other than English (WLOE) and National Board Certification (NBC). During the past two years, changes have taken place that affect National Board Certification for Early and Middle Childhood (EMC) WLOE teachers. For this reason, Martie Semmer recently talked with Keith Cothrun, WLOE Representative to the NBPTS Board of Directors, in order to provide you with an update regarding EMC WLOE and NBC. In addition, since EMC WLOE National Board Certified Teachers will soon celebrate their first year anniversary, Martie also invited Vicki Welch Alvis, EMC WLOE/Spanish NBC Teacher, to give us some insights as to what the NBC candidacy process and the title National Board Certified Teacher have meant to her. I hope that you will find Keith's and Vicki's knowledge and insights of value in your professional career in early language education.

During the summer, a notice first appeared on the NBPTS Website at [www.nbpts.org](http://www.nbpts.org) regarding "low demand certificates." Because of low numbers of EMC WLOE candidates in the first six months of 2003, these certificates have been suspended until further notice. A portion of the notice reads as follows:

*...Decisions about closing registration are not value judgments on any subject area and are based strictly on candidate demand. These decisions were made in accordance with the following previously published announcement:*

*"NBPTS reserves the right not to offer an assessment, not to score an assessment after it has been offered, and/or not to render certification decisions if, in its discretion, NBPTS determines that low candidate volume may result in psychometric or financial problems. In the event that a problem arises due to insufficient candidate volume or with respect to any aspect of an assessment or scoring system that is not adequately resolved, in the judg-*

*ment of NBPTS, such that a valid certification decision can be made within an appropriate time period, NBPTS will offer full fee refunds to affected candidates."*

There are collaborative efforts underway between the foreign language profession and NBPTS to adapt the current WLOE National Board Certification process in order to encourage teacher candidacy within all levels and multiple languages. Both the foreign language profession and NBPTS would like for appropriate adaptations to take place in the near future so that eligible WLOE teachers can plan to become candidates. The best source of current information is the NBPTS Website at [www.nbpts.org](http://www.nbpts.org).

## INTERVIEW WITH KEITH COTHRUN ON WORLD LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH (WLOE)

Keith Cothrun, Member of the Board of Directors for the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), answers questions about National Board Certification for World Languages Other than English. Keith teaches German at Las Cruces High School, Las Cruces, New Mexico, and is President-Elect of ACTFL. Questions of interest to Pre-K-8 foreign language teachers have been posed by Martie Semmer representing NNELL and Facilitator of the WLOE National Board Certification Project, National K-12 Foreign Language Resource Center, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa.

**NNELL Q. #1: What WLOE certificates are currently available? In which languages can Early and Middle Childhood (EMC) WLOE teachers apply?**

Keith: National Board Certification is currently available in French, German, Japanese, Latin and Spanish. Teachers of French, German and Spanish can be certified at the EMC level.



**NNELL Q. #2: What are the challenges facing NBPTS that may affect EMC WLOE Certification?**

Keith: There have been very few candidates in this certification field during the last two cycles of candidates, and that's been quite disappointing. Those very low numbers have created both a financial concern and a psychometric concern for NBPTS.

**NNELL Q. #3: What will happen to the first-time candidates who apply between January 1, 2003 and December 31, 2003 if there are not enough EMC WLOE candidates?**

Keith: According to the *2003 Guide to National Board Certification*, if the National Board determines that there is an insufficient number of candidates, NBPTS will offer a full refund to affected candidates.

**NNELL Q. #4: In a press release from NBPTS dated March 6, 2003, there was mention of a "staggered schedule" for certificates with low numbers of candidates. Would you explain what the "staggered schedule" is and what it means for EMC WLOE teachers?**

Keith: NBPTS took these steps after examining a variety of solutions to address those certification areas in which there is currently low demand. The WLOE EMC certificate fits into this category as there have been fewer than 100 candidates over the past two certification cycles. The board decided that offering such certificates on an alternating schedule is a cost-effective and fiscally responsible way to ensure that the assessment process will continue to reach the overwhelming majority of the teaching profession. The board of directors also affirmed that this decision is not a value judgment of any subject area and is based strictly on market demand. Based on numbers, it appears to me that the EMC certificate for WLOE would most likely be offered on a three-year cycle. For instance the certificate might be offered in 2003 and then again in 2006. This would not have any effect on continuing candidacy. A candidate who goes through the process in 2003 but is not certified would still be able to resubmit materials during the 2004 and/or 2005 cycle.

**NNELL Q. #5: What is the future for EMC WLOE National Board Certification?**

Keith: The future depends on us—and the demand that teachers of languages in pre-K

through 8 settings place on the certificate. The future is bright if the profession rises to the challenge and classroom teachers participate in this incredible professional development experience. Those teachers need support in order to be successful—support and encouragement from colleagues at all levels of instruction. I realize that the certificate has only been available for a short time, but the lack of candidates has sent a message to NBPTS that language teachers aren't interested in professional certification. We need to do everything we can to change that message.

**NNELL Q. #6: What needs to happen in order for the EMC WLOE certificates to survive in the future?**

Keith: Well first of all, parents, students, teachers, administrators, policy makers and citizens have to understand that every child needs language instruction every day throughout their school experience, and that every child deserves a National Board Certified Teacher in every subject area. The certification process requires teachers to demonstrate their content knowledge, pedagogical skills, how they work collaboratively with parents, and how all those factors combine to increase student learning. The process alone creates better teachers, and better teachers create better learning experiences for students.

**NNELL Q. #7: Keith, *Learning Languages* readers appreciate your taking the time to help us better understand NBPTS challenges and resulting policies regarding National Board Certification for Early and Middle Childhood World Languages Other than English. In closing, what advice will you share with *Learning Languages* readers regarding National Board Certification in EMC WLOE?**

Keith: I think we have to be united in our efforts to advocate for a National Board Certified WLOE teacher in every child's life every single day. NBPTS standard #14 for WLOE is the standard on *Advocacy*. "Accomplished teachers of world languages other than English advocate both within and beyond the school for the inclusion of all students in long-range, sequential programs that also offer opportunities to study multiple languages." We, as a profession, have to unite behind this ideal—and we have to do it now.

## LETTER FROM VICKI WELCH ALVIS, NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFIED TEACHER

Dear Colleagues:

Recently I accompanied my husband to his appointment with a new doctor. Following the exam the doctor cordially made a point to come into the waiting room and speak to me. When my husband and I left the office, we immediately shared our great surprise in how very young the doctor appeared to be. The next words from my husband were, "Don't worry, he's board certified." Despite the fact that we both felt my husband had just been treated by Doogie Howser, we were completely reassured by a single credential, the doctor's board certification.

As a teacher recently certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) in World Languages Other than English, I would like to share with you the impact that being board certified has had on my teaching practice, and, most importantly, on my fourth and fifth grade students. Through preparing the written portfolio entries and reviewing for the assessments required in the certification process, my teaching has become immensely more focused. I find that I formulate goals and objectives for Spanish instruction with increasingly greater ease. In response to the high standards set out by NBPTS, I have begun to communicate my expectations to parents and students by way of newsletters along with a web page prior to beginning any new unit. This serves to hold my students and me more accountable. As a result, I am more conscious of and conscientious in regularly assessing and communicating student progress. Most importantly, the National Board certification process has led me to continually reflect on my own practice in order to make changes to benefit my students. I take great pleasure in classroom scenes like fifth grade students working in pairs to prepare an oral presentation, while carefully checking off criteria (written totally in Spanish) on a rubric I have created. Seeing students this engaged in a classroom activity provides me with "clear and convincing evidence" that students are now as invested and involved in increasing and demonstrating their skills in Spanish as I am.

Observable results like this serve to underscore the necessity to continue support for the current National Board certificates in World Languages Other than English (WLOE) and to increase certificates for lesser-taught languages. During the past two school years the children I teach demonstrated that they instinctively knew the benefits of acquiring a second (or third!) language when they wrote letters to state officials requesting funding for an elementary foreign language program that provides instruction in Spanish, French, German and Japanese. Students wrote that the state budget should include this program because, "Languages grow your brain...you can learn more in general... you can make more friends...children should learn more languages because there aren't just Americans in the world...when you are little you remember a lot of languages...learning a language builds character...it makes us more ready for middle school...it makes a big difference in our future...most people long to learn a second language...it will give children more opportunities to learn second and third languages...people from different countries can unite and understand each other."

If National Board certification in WLOE is limited to only one or two languages taught to only one level of students, ultimately we are limiting opportunities for children, like my students, who sincerely believe in the ideals of being multilingual and living as global citizens. Unfortunately, limiting WLOE certification for early and middle childhood teachers and for teachers of lesser-taught languages is a very real possibility because so few teachers in this field are pursuing National Board certification.

I am writing to encourage teachers of World Languages other than English on all levels to apply for National Board certification. Many states and local school districts offer financial and mentor support throughout a teacher's National Board candidacy. To see what your state offers and to read and download all information regarding what is required for the certification process, go to [www.nbpts.org](http://www.nbpts.org). Be creative in making the certification process fit your needs and schedule. If you are pursuing a graduate degree, ask that your course of study include your work toward National Board certification. If you are considering relocating for retirement, check the NBPTS website for incentives offered by "warm climate states." Request prior approval from your school district to have your efforts in preparing your National Board portfolio count as required staff development hours.

In closing, I want to emphasize that becoming a National Board Certified Teacher provides educators with significant recognition and prestige and, in many cases, financial remuneration from states and local school districts. Hand-in-hand comes something that is highly valued yet often more elusive for foreign language educators. National Board certification can serve as a major piece in the advocacy puzzle, resulting in increased appreciation of and validation for K-12 foreign language programs on the part of parents, administrators and policy makers.

Sincerely,

Vicki Welch Alvis, NBCT, Spanish Teacher, grades 4 & 5, State Bridge Crossing Elementary School, Alpharetta, GA

Note: Hints and tips for WLOE NBC candidates can be found on the National K-12 Foreign Language Resource Center Web site at [www.educiastate.edu/nflrc](http://www.educiastate.edu/nflrc). Plan to attend WLOE NBC sessions at the 2003 ACTFL Annual Meeting in Philadelphia.

# BOOK REVIEW

Dr. Mari Haas

Chamot, A. U., Anstrom, K., Bartoshesky, A., Belanger, A., Delett, J., Karwan, V., Meloni, C., & Keatley, C. (2002). *The elementary immersion learning strategies resource guide*. Washington, DC: National Capital Language Resource Center.

To order the guide for \$13.50, [info@nclrc.org](mailto:info@nclrc.org)

The National Capital Language Resource Center,  
2011 Eye Street, NW, Suite 200,  
Washington, DC 20006

Have you been interested in the concept of "learning strategies," but haven't been able to find information suitable for elementary school students? The search is over. The publication, *The Elementary Immersion Learning Strategies Resource Guide*, researched and written by veteran learning strategies expert Anna Chamot, along with a team of elementary school language teachers, administrators, and specialists, will explain all of the steps you need to enhance student language learning in your classroom. The guide is written for elementary school immersion teachers but is applicable to all models of language teaching in grades K-8. The guide is

"...premised on the belief that students can become more effective and efficient learners if they are provided the proper learning tools and instructed how to use them. These tools are learning strategies, that is, the mental processes and actions that students use to help them complete learning tasks. By becoming familiar with the tools that they use to learn, students can improve their language learning abilities." (Chamot, et al., p.1).

Within the guide you will find the answers to the questions, *What are learning strategies?* *What is learning strategy instruction?* and *What strategies are important for elementary immersion students?* Each of the six chapters in the guide is divided into two sections, *Master It* and *Apply It*. Concepts related to strategic thinking and learning strategies are explained in the *Master It* section, while teaching tips, sample lessons, and assessment tools are found in the *Apply It* section. The guide begins with an introductory chapter that defines immersion instruction and gives suggestions on how to use the guide.

Chapter 2, *Preparing for Learning Strategies Instruction*, gives short answers to the above questions and includes a chart, as well as definitions

and examples, of the 28 learning strategies described in the guide. The *Apply It* section discusses how to prepare students to focus on *how* they learn. It gives teacher tips such as, "Encourage students to understand the strategies they already use and to learn to use new ones" (p. 22). The chapter also asks teachers to reflect on their own beliefs and practices about language instruction and to create a learner-centered classroom by trying these activities: (1) Self-reflection: students reflect on learning; (2) Goal-setting: students set personal learning goals; (3) Self-assessment: students assess their own learning abilities and strategy use. Sample questionnaires are included for these tasks.

*Understanding and Using The Metacognitive Model*, Chapter 3, describes metacognition as, "...the ability to reflect on one's own learning and thinking" (p. 26) and lists the four steps in the Metacognitive Model. The steps are planning, monitoring, problem-solving, and evaluating. This chapter also provides a story to share with the class that introduces the students to the Metacognitive Model. Chapter 4, *Scope & Sequence for Learning Strategies Instruction*, provides a tool for selecting the strategies that are appropriate for different grade levels. The research study that led to the book drew several conclusion: (1) All immersion students, regardless of age or ability, use learning strategies to complete language tasks; (2) Younger and older students use some different strategies; (3) Younger and older students use the same strategies in different ways (p. 37). The scope and sequence, found in chart form in this chapter, helps you decide which strategies to integrate with your instruction in each grade level (K-6). It lists the strategies in the *Introduce* column, gives suggestions for applying a known strategy to a different content or language task in the *Review* column, and explains how to introduce a more sophisticated use of a known strategy in the *Expand* column. The chapter also provides a chart called, "How Strategies Are Used in Various Content Areas." The chart lists the strategies, the purpose for using the strategy, and ideas for activities in science, social studies, language arts, and math.

Now that you have sufficient background information on using learning strategies in your classroom, the guide continues with information

*Because students usually focus on what they learn in class, not how they learn, the authors use methodology in the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach as a tool for teaching learning strategies in classrooms.*

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about lesson planning. Because students usually focus on *what* they learn in class, not *how* they learn, the authors use methodology in the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) (Chamot & O'Malley, 1994) as a tool for teaching learning strategies in classrooms. The first step is to write a lesson plan based on the scope and sequence, the content, and the curriculum. This plan is accomplished during 5 phases of instruction: Preparation, Presentation, Practice, Evaluation, and Expansion, using the CALLA approach. In the Preparation stage you activate the students' background knowledge about a learning strategy. Next, in the Presentation phase, you introduce the new learning strategy. The Practice phase allows the students to practice using the strategy. Students' self-evaluation of how well the strategy worked for them is the fourth phase. Ideas for designing self-evaluations include using class discussions and learning strategy checklists. Finally, in the Expansion phase, students work on relating and transferring the use of strategies to other content, tasks, and aspects of their lives. The *Apply It* section of this chapter describes how to write each phase of the lesson plan.

And, as a wonderful bonus, Chapter six gives many examples of learning strategies lessons for different languages, grades, and subject areas. Last, but not least, in the Appendices you will find Stories for Strategic Thinkers, Learning Strategies Lesson Planning Forms, Worksheets for Learning Strategies Instruction, and other useful information and visuals.

"The goal of learning strategies instruction is for students to become independent learners with the ability to use strategies aptly in a variety of contexts" (p. 4). The authors suggest that teachers, "Immerse students in the language of strategies. Seek out opportunities at all times for mini-strategies lessons and for sharing individual student's strategy use with others" (p. 54). *The Elementary Immersion Learning Strategies Resource Guide* gives you step-by-step information on how to make these goals a reality in your classroom. (Don't be concerned if you order a guide and the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition arrives as the authors are already working on a revised version.) You can see sample pages, lesson plans, visuals, and charts at < [www.nclrc.org](http://www.nclrc.org) > .

See the NNELL website <[www.nnell.org](http://www.nnell.org)> for up-to-date information regarding all NNELL activities.

Address: <http://nnell.org/>

National Network for Early Language Learning

Center for Applied Linguistics - Improving learning outcomes through better understanding of language and culture. CAL

HOME ABOUT NNELL OFFICERS JOURNAL RESOURCES MEMBERSHIP MEMBERS ONLY

**HOME**

Welcome to the National Network for Early Language Learning's (NNELL's) Home Page.

NNELL is an organization for educators involved in teaching foreign languages to children.

Browse through the NNELL Web site to learn more about the organization and to know more about how we can help you.

**NEWS FLASH!**

•Martie Semmer, President of NNELL has won the 2003 ACTFL Florence Steiner Award for Leadership in Foreign Language Education, K-12!

"As Martie's shepherd for this award, I can tell you that never in my life have I seen such overwhelming response to a request for support for a candidacy! Martie's work

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# NELL *Past Issues of Learning Languages Available!*

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Volume	Key Articles
Volume 1: Fall 1995- Spring 1996	Content-related Teaching Through Distance Learning: A Viable Alternative Teacher as Researcher: Motivating an Eighth Grade Spanish Class The Bayeux Tapestry: A Medieval Document Inspires Students Bilingualism in Early Childhood Education: What Do We Know? What Do We Do? Standards for Foreign Language Learning
Volume 2: Fall 1996-Spring 1997	Minneapolis and Brittany: Children Bridge Geographical and Social Differences through Technology Student Reasons for Studying Language: Implications for Program Planning and Development A Case for Foreign Languages: The Glastonbury Language Program But I Only Have E-Mail- What Can I Do? Block Scheduling For Language Study in the Middle Grades: A Summary of the Carleton Case Study Basic Skills Revisited: The Effects of Foreign Language Instruction on Reading, Math, and Language Arts
Volume 3: Fall 1997-Spring 1998	The National Network for Early Language Learning (NNELL): A Brief History, 1987-1997 A Perspective on the Cultural Perspectives The Américas Award: Authentic Children's Literature in Your Classroom Culture and Children's Literature: Standards-Based Thematic Units Survey Results: Language Instruction Increases in U.S. Elementary Schools Developing the Language of Mathematics in Partial-Immersion: The Ladder to Success
Volume 4: Fall 1998-Spring 1999	Attention: Are You Seeking a Position with Excellent Long-term Benefits? Be an Advocate! Bring Back Childhood Bilingualism: The Case of Louisiana Designing and Implementing an Innovative Foreign Language Program: Reflections from a School District-University Partnership International Schools: The Challenges of Teaching Languages Overseas Advocacy for Early Language Education: A School Board Presentation Organizing a Language-Immersion Day for Middle School Students
Volume 5: Fall 1999-Spring 2000	Poverty, Race, and Foreign Language Immersion: Predictors of Math and English Language Arts Performance Meet A Foreign Language Advocate Let's Assess: Connecting Students, Parents, and Teachers Content-Based Language Learning: Why and How? Español para ti: A Video Program That Works Language and Culture Through SALSA
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Volume 7: Fall 2001-Spring 2002	Japanese at Mimosa Elementary School A Successful Keypal Project Using Varied Technologies Promoting a Language-Proficient Society: What You Can Do Teaching Beginning Learners without Using Textbooks Japanese Immersion: A Successful Program in Portland, Oregon National Board Certification Available for Teachers of World Languages Other Than English In-Vision: Technology Strategies for Rural Schools
Volume 8: Fall 2002-Spring 2003	Dual Immersion: A Driving Force for Language Policy Reform and Transformation Looking Across Time: Documenting Middle School Japanese FLES Students' Attitudes, Literacy and Oral Proficiency Engaging Children in Language Learning: Princeton Regional Schools Creating Innovation with Immersion, Technology and Principles of Distance Education: Elementary School Teachers Learning Spanish The Bilingual Paradox: How Signing-Speaking Bilingual Children Help Us Resolve It and Teach Us About The Brain's Mechanisms Underlying All Language Acquisition National Language Policies and Activities Update: National Board Certification for Teachers of World Languages Other than English

# Calendar

## *2003 Conferences*

**NOVEMBER**    **NOV. 21-23, 2003**  
American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Conference  
Marriott & Pennsylvania Convention Center, Philadelphia, PA  
[www.actfl.org/](http://www.actfl.org/)

## *2004 Conferences*

**MARCH**    **MARCH 18-20, 2004**  
Southern Conference on Language Teaching (SCOLT) and  
Alabama Association of Foreign Language Teachers Conference  
Adam's Mark Hotel, Mobile, Alabama  
[www.valdosta.edu/scolt](http://www.valdosta.edu/scolt)

**MARCH 25-27, 2004**  
Southwest Council on Language Teaching/New Mexico Organization of Language Educa-  
tors (SWCOLT/NMOLE) Joint Conference  
Chile Tres! Languages, Literacy, Leadership  
Hyatt Regency Downtown, Albuquerque, New Mexico  
<http://www.swcolt.org>

**APRIL**    **APRIL 1 -3, 2004**  
**Central States Conference**  
Hyatt Regency, Dearborn, MI  
[www.centralstates.cc/2003conference.html](http://www.centralstates.cc/2003conference.html)  
\*Check out the Central States website for a complete listing of state conferences! Click on "Links."

**APRIL 15-18, 2004**  
The Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (NECTFL)  
Listening to Learners  
Marriott Marquis Hotel, New York City  
[www.dickinson.edu/nectfl/overview04.html](http://www.dickinson.edu/nectfl/overview04.html)

**JULY/AUGUST**    **Dates to be announced**  
We are presently working on organizing a National Network of Early Language Learning Conference!  
Check the NNELL website in February for details, [www.nnell.org](http://www.nnell.org)



An organization for educators involved in teaching foreign languages to children.

**MISSION:** Promote opportunities for all children to develop a high level of competence in at least one language in addition to their own. This is accomplished through activities that improve public awareness and support of early language learning.

**ACTIVITIES:** Facilitate cooperation among organizations directly concerned with early language learning; facilitate communication among teachers, teacher educators, parents, program administrators, and policymakers; and disseminate information and guidelines to assist in developing programs of excellence.

**ANNUAL MEETING:** Held at the fall conference of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.

**OFFICERS:** Elected by members through a mail ballot election held annually in the spring.

**JNCL-NCLIS MEMBER:** NNELL is a member of the Joint National Committee for Languages-National Council for Languages and International Studies.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:** Visit the NNELL Web site at: [www.nnell.org](http://www.nnell.org) or e-mail NNELL at [nnell@cal.org](mailto:nnell@cal.org).

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