

and concerns among teachers, teacher educators, parents, program administrators, researchers, policymakers and others interested in the early learning of world languages.

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Learning Languages serves the profession by providing a medium for the sharing of information, ideas,

research, and concerns among teachers, teacher educators, parents, program administrators, researchers, policymakers and others interested in the early learning of world languages.



Learning Languages embodies NNETL's commitment to promote opportunities for all children to develop a high level of competence in at least

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Anniversary Cover



Barbara Caldwell, Ph.D., crafted the cover illustration for this anniversary issue. Barbara is an associate professor in the Department of Art and Design at Iowa State University. She is an artist who enjoys celebrating human dignity and diversity in her work. Her photographs, drawings, and paintings, which create "global portraits," have been published and exhibited internationally. Barbara is also a devoted art educator who shares her ability to foster authentic creativity and cross-cultural connections through her pluralistic approach. She has received numerous awards for excellence in multicultural art education, including the Iowa Art Educator of the Year Award, Illinois State University alumni Hall of Fame, Higher Education Level Art Educator of the Year (Western Region), The Polster Teaching Award, and Distinguished Contribution to the Field of Art Education in Iowa. Barbara continues to be inspired by nature and her global family of students, friends and pets.

NNELL

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.

NNELL is a member of the Joint National Committee for Languages-National Council for Languages and International Studies (JNCL-NCLIS).

For more information, visit the NNELL Web site at www.nnell.org or email NNELL at nnell@wfu.edu

Celebrating 10 years of Learning Languages

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Dear NNELL Members:

Fall greetings to all! I am sure that when you sit down to read this issue of *Learning Languages*, you will have enthusiastically begun the new school year by providing exciting early language learning experiences for your students. You may also have met with parents at "Back to School" events and shared with them the goals of your program as well as the many advantages their children will have as young students of languages and other cultures. NNELL seeks to continue to provide you with resources to both enrich your classroom and to foster professional growth.

Over the past months, NNELL has been working hard to renew itself. Like each of us, successful organizations transform themselves many times in an effort to fine-tune their vision and goals, tap into new ideas, and seek new ways to meet members' needs. Over the past years, NNELL's success as an organization has been a result of the good leadership of caring and talented professionals whose focus was on the right prize: helping to promote excellence in the early learning and teaching of languages. While official leadership is important, leaders can at times find themselves as locomotives with no train cars attached. However, NNELL has been fortunate to have an Executive Board made up of exceptional professionals, most of whom work full-time jobs, yet volunteer many hours of their time to further the vision of the organization. Most importantly, NNELL has also been blessed with a passionate

and active grassroots network of K-8 teachers whose commitment is beyond question. This tenth anniversary issue of *Learning Languages* is a tribute to the NNELL family who has worked tirelessly to create new paths on the road to significance for early language learning.

As part of the fall president's message, I would also like to report on NNELL's progress in meeting its goals and objectives for 2004-05.

1. **Strengthening the Network.** NNELL held its first Summer Institute for State and Regional Representatives at the National K-12 Foreign Language Center at Iowa State University. This institute will occur every summer during the month of July. A report by Ruth Dunn appears on page 4.
2. **Disseminating Quality Print and Electronic Publications.** Beginning with this issue of *Learning Languages*, our journal will have a new format and issues will have a thematic focus with guest editors who are experts in the themed area. You undoubtedly have visited our redesigned website. In addition to a variety of new features, the website will also provide online resources that complement the themes found in *Learning Languages*.
3. **Shaping Recommendations on Education Policy.** In the issue you will find the "Positions of the National Network for Early Language Learning" developed by the Executive Board with input received by members at state, regional and national

conferences. NNELL's positions have been sent to key education policymakers to provide a context for future discussions.

A new NNELL goal for 2006 will be to provide professional development opportunities for NNELL members. I am pleased to announce a series of regional workshops in 2006 (see page 3 for details).

Finally, we are hoping to see you all at the ACTFL 2005 Annual Meeting and Exposition in Baltimore, Maryland, November 18-20. NNELL is a co-sponsor of this year's conference—a wonderful way to demonstrate our support of ACTFL's continuing work for our profession, especially during the 2005 Year of Languages.

At the various NNELL-sponsored sessions, we look forward to hearing about Year of Languages celebrations in the states, especially those during the month of October, which is focused on early language learning.

In the meantime, please don't hesitate to contact us if we can be of any help to you in furthering the goals of early language learning.

Best regards to all,

Janis

Janis Jensen, NNELL President
New Jersey Department of Education

have fun! be challenged! explore!

2006 Regional Professional Development Workshops



NNELL is pleased to offer regional professional development workshops co-sponsored by the National K-12 Foreign Language Resource Center at Iowa State University. NNELL would also like to acknowledge the assistance of members of the National Council of State Supervisor for Languages with this project. Regional workshops will be expanded in 2007 in an effort to offer increased professional learning experiences to early language educators in our network.

Using Assessment as an Advocacy Tool for FLES, Dual Language or Immersion Programs

Are you interested in:

Making language learning transparent to parents and administrators?

Discovering a new way to motivate students?

Helping students become reflective learners?

Celebrating language learners' backgrounds and intercultural experiences?

Finding out about new ways to document student progress in language learning?

Then, join us to discover assessment as a powerful tool that will enhance your teaching, enrich students' learning and promote your program.



Jacqueline Bott Van Houten, Ph.D., is World Language and International Education Consultant at the Kentucky Department of Education. Jacque is a former language teacher with experience from the elementary through university levels. She serves on the Central States Conference Board of Directors and ACTFL's National Assessment Committee. In November, she will become president of the National Council of State Supervisors for Languages.

Registration

\$45 for NNELL members. Nonmembers who join NNELL when they register for the workshop will receive a 50% discount on membership: the total cost for workshop registration and new membership is \$60.

To register, print out the workshop application from the NNELL website: <http://www.NNELL.org> and mail the completed application with a check or purchase order payable to NNELL to:

**Dr. Mary Lynn Redmond, NNELL Executive Secretary
P.O. Box 7266, B201 Tribble Hall,
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Northeast Region

January 21, 2006 In Holliston, Massachusetts

Site Coordinator: Terry Caccavale, NNELL Vice President
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February 4, 2006 In Edison, New Jersey

Site Coordinator: Janis Jensen, NNELL President
janis.jensen@doe.state.nj.us or 609-777-4658

Southeast Region

February 11, 2006 in Cary (near Raleigh), North Carolina

Site Coordinator: Helga Fasciano, NNELL Member and Second Language Consultant NCDPI
hfascian@dpi.state.nc.us or 919-807-3865

January 28, 2006 In Lexington, South Carolina

Site Coordinator: Ruta Couet, NNELL Member and Foreign Language Consultant, SCDOE
rcouet@sde.state.sc.us or 803-734-8383

General Information

All workshops are five hours in length and include continental breakfast, lunch and workshop materials. Sessions begin at 9:00 a.m. and conclude at 3:00 p.m.

Professional Development Certificates will be provided by NNELL

No refunds will be offered.

Workshops that are cancelled due to weather will be rescheduled.

**Registration Deadline
January 3, 2006**

2005 NNELL Summer Institute for State and Regional Representatives

Ruth Dunn

Let me start with a message to my fellow state and regional reps: If you missed the 2005 NNELL Summer Institute, you missed a whale of a good time. If you were there, you know that NNELL (and maybe Iowa State) won't be the same!

For two and a half days, 33 members of NNELL representing 23 states met at Iowa State University to network, discuss the craft of teaching world languages to young learners and consider the future direction of NNELL. Participants included state and regional reps, executive board members, appointed leaders of NNELL initiatives, an ACTFL representative, and representatives of the sponsoring entities including Santillana U.S.A., Wright Group/McGraw Hill, and the National K-12 Foreign Language Resource Center (NFLRC) at ISU. NNELL President, Janis Jensen, and Marcia Rosenbusch, Director of the NFLRC, which hosted the event, welcomed us upon our arrival. Terry Caccavale, NNELL Vice-President, reminded us that our NNELL community is only as strong as each of its members. We brainstormed ways to boost membership and to strengthen communication within and beyond our profession and we crafted a list of roles and responsibilities. Later in the Institute, we sat down in pairs to consider collaborative projects for advocacy or membership across states or regions.

Kay Hoag and Mary Lynn Redmond, Political Action and Advocacy Co-chairs, moderated a session dedicated to advocacy. Two important messages were (1) be sure your curriculum is articulated and integrated with the school's other curricula; and (2) face-to-face contact is the most effective means of promoting your program. In that vein, we saw wonderful celebratory activities for the Year of Languages (YOL) such as the Connecticut COLT Rhyme Celebration and a festival of languages and cultures in Fair Lawn, New Jersey, both captured on videotape. Ginny Staugaitis, Northeast Regional Rep, shared a scrapbook documenting her school's yearlong celebration, along with videotaped segments. Lynette Fujimori, Pacific Northwest Regional Rep, shared advocacy on a big scale with TV public service ads promoting foreign language education produced by her state.

It's not too late to do something for YOL! Marty Abbott, Director of Education at the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), reminded us that YOL would continue right into 2006 and continue for a decade with the theme "Discover Languages." Also in 2006, ACTFL will launch a new publication called "The Language Educator." It will include news for and about members as well as information on legislation, methods and practices for levels K-16.

One afternoon Lori Langer de Ramirez, NNELL Past-President, and Janet Glass Secretary/Treasurer, focused on using folktales and themes to build children's language and cultural knowledge. Janet also took us through a rapid induction course in Backward Design for the elementary world language teacher.

There were two unforgettable events. After our farewell dinner, many of us reconvened at Maple Hall (our dormitory lodging) to entertain each other with songs, dances, lesson ideas and anecdotes of those teaching days that didn't go so well! The last morning, Janis surprised us with an appearance by "Senator Smith" (Maria Wyatt, Florida State Rep) who came to hear our views on early language learning. We found ourselves stymied by the Senator's strong, but naive views against world language education. That was an eye-opener! Effective dialogue and counter-arguments are definitely on the agenda for next summer's institute. Which brings me to...

How did the Institute benefit NNELL members?

- You have a state or regional representative who is now armed with more resources and ideas to help you with your teaching, starting and maintaining elementary language programs and promoting what you do to the greater community.
- The Institute will become an annual event, and we urged the leadership to include all NNELL members at some time in the future.

So stay tuned!

“Intelligent” Errors: Kanji Writing as Meaning Making for Japanese FLES Learners

Akiko Mitsui, Yoko Morimoto, G. Richard Tucker and Richard Donato

Introduction

This paper is another installment in the ongoing project on early language learning in a Japanese FLES program, conducted by ELLRT (Early Language Learning Research Team): Richard Donato and G. Richard Tucker with graduate students from Carnegie Mellon University and the University of Pittsburgh.* The Japanese instructor in this FLES program, Yoko Morimoto, has been a teacher-participant providing an insider's perspective. Since 2002, the research team has extended its focus to literacy learning. Chinen, K., Igarashi, K., Donato, R., & Tucker, G. R. (2003), for example, studied literacy recognition, attitudes toward the program and self-assessment of oral proficiency. Takahashi, E., Donato, R., & Tucker, G. R. (unpublished manuscript) examined kanji knowledge development in terms of recognition of meaning and sound extraction. In the present study, the focus moves to literacy production, particularly kanji writing. During the 2003-4 academic year, we investigated the types of errors that are produced by early language learners in comparison to those produced by Japanese-speaking children. Our qualitative error analysis led us to recognize and try to understand the development of early language learners' personal systems for kanji writing.

Literacy for Japanese FLES learners

The meaning of literacy is indeed complex, since reading and writing themselves are multifaceted activities with many meanings. Literacy, or reading and writing, has been considered by some to be a technology—a special one, which allows us to expand our knowledge, to organize our thoughts and to raise our consciousness to a more abstract level (Ong, 1986; Goody, 1977). On the other hand, literacy can also be considered a cluster of social practices such that the meaning of reading and writing can vary depending on, and reflecting the needs of, the community (Street, 1984; Gee, 1996).

Against this background, this study will consider “literacy” for Japanese FLES learners in the following way. Writing a single kanji is just the beginning of the process of learning to control the Japanese writing system, first of all as a target tool for creating meanings for expression for themselves, to peers and to the instructor as a social community. Though the potential power of literacy is vast, including learning new information, reading for understanding, organizing one's thinking and creating meanings in written form, the FLES learners in this study were just beginning to acquire literacy skills. Indeed, since there were limitations on the exposure to Japanese texts for various reasons (such as program type, class time and so on) and all learners examined for this study

were beginners, they only had the opportunity to begin to write kanji based on their exposure to them in class and on the instructor's explanations of written forms.

For this reason, the study examined how learners produce kanji in the early stages of their literacy development, given that producing a comprehensible kanji is one aspect of an individual's emergent literacy. The analysis was focused on the ways learners control the new writing system, kanji, and the ways they expressed this control to create meaning in kanji. Understanding how kanji production develops is important for early literacy instruction and for understanding learners' processes for creating written text even at the single word level, since learning writing is learning how to make meaning in the target writing system, not simply memorizing and reproducing the target written forms.

Literature review

Learning kanji and pedagogy

L1 learners' experience with the target language is different from that of L2 learners (Koda, 1994). The types of exposure, such as oral and visual, the amount of exposure, the skills already acquired when learners begin learning kanji writing and, indeed, the way of learning Japanese are all very different.

As a matter of established practice, the strategies of kanji

* This research was supported, in part, by a grant from the International Research and Studies Program of the U.S. Department of Education to G. Richard Tucker and Richard Donato.

writing instruction for Japanese-speaking children are mainly kinetic-based, involving repeated writing practice, and shape-based, drawing attention to the shapes of the parts in various kanji. For learners in lower grades, instructors teach kanji by: 1) demonstrating the writing of target kanji, 2) explaining the construction of the kanji in terms of its parts or shapes, 3) counting the strokes, 4) *kusho* (finger writing in the air), 5) having learners copy the model kanji and 6) repeated writing practice in class. In higher grades, kanji is taught by assigning repeated writing practice as homework (The National Institute for Japanese Language, 1994).

On the other hand, many strategies for kanji writing instruction for L2 learners are visually oriented (see Shimizu, 1997 for an examination of instructional materials used in North America). The decomposition of kanji (Heisig, 1986) and compositional feature-focused teaching using pictographs, katakana composites and semantic composites (Yamashita & Maru, 2000) have been proposed as effective strategies. Although empirical studies are still lacking, memory aids, such as pictures, keywords and stories, have also been proposed as tools to help learners make effective associations. Further, in a recent study, *kusho* (finger writing in the air) was also proposed as a kinetic memory aid for L2 kanji learners (Kuriya, 2004). However, the L2 learners in these studies were college students; the case of early language learners appears not to have been studied yet.

Errors in writing kanji

Because of the unique focus of the present study—on errors in the production of single kanji by beginning language learners—many of the frameworks for error analysis familiar from the literature on literacy were not easily applicable. For instance, Goodman, Watson and Burke's (1987) miscue analysis is designed for examining errors in the oral reading of texts, but the FLES learners' ability to read out loud was not the focus of this study. As for analyses of errors specifically focused on writing kanji, some researchers have investigated various influences such as semantic and phonological factors (Hatta, Kawakami & Hatasa, 1997; Hatta, Kawakami & Tamaoka, 2002) on L2 learners' production. The characteristics of errors as they vary with learners' first languages have also been examined (Okita, 2001). Again, though, the L2 learners in these studies have been college age; not early language learners. Further, these studies have focused more on two- or three-character compound words. Single kanji have not been the focus of these studies. Learning single kanji and learning compound words are not the same. When a single kanji is introduced, the reading is usually in *kun*, that is, the Japanese-origin pronunciation. The single kanji and its reading directly indicate a single semantic meaning of a Japanese-origin word. On the other hand, the reading of many compound words is in *on*, the Chinese-origin pronunciation. The *on* reading of a single kanji from a compound word does not directly yield a single semantic meaning. Further, the reading itself can change depending on the other

kanji connected before or after the single kanji. The meaning of compound words is of course related to the meaning of the single kanji contained, but not in a straightforward, mechanical way (Morton, et al, 1992). Many basic- and elementary-level vocabulary items for early language learners are written in single kanji, and even when compound words are included, such as *sensei* (teacher: 先生), they are still directly connected to topics familiar to the students. Because many basic and elementary-level vocabulary items for early language learners are written in single kanji, we believe that it is worth studying the learning of single kanji as well as of compound words, since the processes involved may be different.

As for previous comparative studies on kanji writing errors between L1 and L2 learners of Japanese, shape-based kanji errors in handwriting by native-speaking Japanese have been found (e.g., Hatta, Kawakami & Tamaoka, 2002; Hatta, Kawakami & Hatasa, 1997; Kuriya, 2004). However, these studies have also focused on kanji errors in compound words which consist of two kanji; studies have not been carried out on errors in writing single kanji. The study by Yamada (1995), though it included single kanji writing errors, examined only L1 Japanese primary school children. This study also found shape-based errors as well as semantic errors. Therefore, we believe there is value in examining errors in writers of different age groups as well as in L1 and L2 groups, since such a study may provide insight into L2 learners' developmental patterns in handwriting kanji in comparison with the developmental patterns of L1 learners.

The study

This study analyzed the errors in kanji which were produced by three groups of children: sixth grade learners of Japanese in a FLES program in the U.S., and two groups of Japanese-speaking children in a Japanese school (in second and third grades; and fifth and sixth grades). The study was conducted to answer the general question, "What can the sixth grade learners in this Japanese FLES program do with kanji production?" More specifically, the following questions were raised: 1) what does writing kanji mean for the children in this FLES program and 2) how does their experience in the classroom influence their kanji learning? Data from Japanese native-speaking children were also collected to obtain a baseline.

Participants and research settings

The participants in this study were 8 learners of Japanese in a Japanese FLES program in Pennsylvania, and 18 native-speaking Japanese children in a public elementary school in Japan.

The FLES learners

The learners of Japanese were all in the sixth grade in the same class, taught by one instructor—a native speaker of

Japanese who has been teaching in this FLES program for more than ten years. One cycle of the Japanese class was offered 40 minutes per day from Monday to Friday over six weeks. The students participated in two cycles per year, and the time between the two cycles was twelve weeks.

Because the school curriculum had recently been changed, the instructor was required to deal with mixed groups of students who had very different background experiences learning Japanese. Some had begun to learn Japanese in kindergarten and had been studying with the instructor for seven years, while others had just started to learn Japanese in grade six. Further, eight of sixteen students in the group were identified by the school as children who needed special attention¹. The instructor, who also participated as a researcher in this study, designed the Japanese course for this year, focusing on cultural themes and introducing language through cultural themes and activities. For example, when the tea ceremony was a theme of the unit, students learned a kanji character, tea (茶), as they experienced the tea ceremony. When *kakizome* (special New Year's calligraphy) was a theme of the unit, they practiced calligraphy with brushes, and then they learned the kanji character for "brush" (筆). Since brushes are made of bamboo, the instructor could introduce the radical for "bamboo" (竹), which is one of the components of the kanji character for "brush." As kanji were introduced within this framework, learners were encouraged to write them. Writing kanji, as well as reading kanji, had been set as a literacy goal for the students this year. Because writing kanji was equally new for all learners, the instructor thought it could bring them together by filling a gap they all shared, despite their diverse experiences studying Japanese.

Japanese-speaking children

The native-speaking Japanese children attended the same public elementary school in Japan, and the same public after-school program. Eleven second- and third-graders and seven fifth- and sixth-graders participated in this study at the after-school program. All of them were born in Japan and live in Japan. They learn kanji in their classroom as well as outside of the classroom. None of the children who participated in this study had received training in special techniques for learning kanji in order to prepare for entrance examinations for private middle-schools.

Data collection and analysis

Two types of data from both sites were collected for this study: 1) students' performance on a kanji test, and 2) observation notes by the researchers during test-taking. The kanji

test was given to the early FLES learners as a group at school by the researchers, using one forty-five minute class period. Observation by the researchers during this test-taking time provided data for the particular study, although they had also visited the classes several times before the test was given.

In contrast, the kanji test was given to Japanese-speaking children at the after-school program (one at a time, due to the constraints of the location) by one of the researchers. The observations of children were also done by the researcher one at a time. Because of this individual test-taking environment, many children talked to the researcher about what they were thinking during their test-taking, and those words were recorded as observation notes by the researcher.

In the writing task, students were asked to write entire kanji corresponding to meanings given in English that they had learned. The kanji test consisted of four tasks: 1) kanji completion, 2) writing, 3) recognition and 4) guessing (sections 2 and 3 were omitted from the test given to the Japanese-speaking children, as explained below) (see Appendix 1). The first two tasks involved kanji production, either of parts of kanji or of entire kanji. In the kanji completion task, learners were asked to fill in missing parts of four characters (radicals) with pencils to complete the kanji. The kanji for this task were carefully chosen from among kanji unknown to children in both sites. Unknown kanji were selected in consultation with the instructor for the FLES children, and by consulting the Japanese (*kokugo*) textbooks and one of the parents for the Japanese-speaking children. However, since the radicals themselves were familiar to the children from other characters, this task can be considered to be an application of their knowledge.

The recognition task invited learners to recognize the meanings of six kanji that had been learned in class. For each learned kanji given, students were asked to choose the correct meaning from four items written in English. The recognition task and the writing task were not given to the Japanese-speaking children, since the focus of this study was not on how well Japanese-speaking children could reproduce learned kanji.

Finally, the guessing task was designed to examine to what degree learners can guess the meanings of unknown kanji, using their knowledge of semantic symbols such as radicals. Learners were given four unknown kanji which contained familiar semantic keys, and were asked to choose one meaning out of four items written in English or, in the case of the test given to Japanese-speaking children, illustrated with pictures.

In addition, two other types of data were collected at the FLES site eight months after the first data collection to obtain a longitudinal perspective: 1) a follow-up interview with some students and 2) an interview with the instructor. The three students for this interview were chosen based on the results of analysis of the errors they made on the four tasks

¹ The data from the eight students who were identified as in need of special attention were not included in this study, since the kinds of needs were varied and complex. Though there seemed to be some differences between the special needs students and the others, we do not feel we have enough information to generalize about them.

(discussed further below); they were identified as the most significant and/or unique when we considered the meaning of writing for the learners. The follow-up interviews with the students were semi-structured, and consisted of six questions (see Appendix 2). In the follow-up interview, the researcher asked each student to write one particular kanji, as well as a favorite kanji. The kanji which the researcher asked them to write were ones on which they had made errors in the earlier writing task. The follow-up interview with the instructor was also semi-structured, consisting of four questions (see Appendix 3) related to the results of analysis of learners' mistakes.

The data were analyzed in terms of types of errors as well as patterns of answers for the various tasks. The test data led us to an initial categorization of the types of errors, and the observational data, which were analyzed qualitatively, gave us multiple perspectives on the target errors so as to allow us verification of the initial categorization. The responses were separated into three groups: Japanese-speaking children in grades two and three (native speakers of Japanese: J G2/3), Japanese-speaking children in grades five and six (J G5/6), and FLES students (early Japanese language learners: EL).

Findings

After examining all data from multiple perspectives, we categorized the types of errors made by each group and found systematic patterns of errors on the kanji test by the students. In addition, data from follow-up interviews with the instructor and with the early language learners were analyzed to inform our understanding of the findings from the test data. The types and patterns of errors tell us to what degree and how these early language learners use their knowledge for writing kanji.

Types of errors

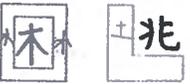
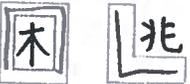
The errors which were found in the kanji completion task were qualitatively analyzed along with the observation notes by the researcher and the instructor's comments. Nine types of errors were identified.

Type 1 errors are those in which the radicals were written as mirror images, or the correct radicals were written with bad shapes. "Bad shape" means here that, though the writing can be recognized as the correct radical rather than a different one altogether, it is written in such a non-standard way that the shape would not be recognized if the evaluators did not know the target kanji.

Type 2 errors are those in which part of a kanji was repeated without meaning. Type 3 errors are the ones in which the kanji was completed with a part of a different kanji. They fell into four sub-categories.

Type 3(1) errors are cases where one stroke is added to the correct radical. Type 3(2) errors involve completing kanji

Figure 1

		Types of Error	
1	Completing with a bad shape (opposite direction)	EL*	
2	Meaningless repetition	EL	
3	Completing with part of another kanji		
	(1) Additional stroke to the correct radical	EL	
	(2) Application of learned kanji	EL	
	(3) Similar shape of kanji		
	a. Additional stroke	J	
	b. Wrongly positioned stroke	J	
	(4) Guessing		
	a. Radicals which still have close meaning (e.g. whale—water sanzui)	J	
	b. Radicals which have completely unrelated meaning	J	
4	Making up own kanji	EL	
5	Expressing semantic meaning using features of kanji (e.g., multiple shapes mean "a lot")	EL	
6	Expressing meaning with a picture	EL	
7	Others: hard to understand	J	
8	Creating radicals from the shape of blanks	J	
9	Playing (just drawing a picture); meaningless	J	

* EL: Early language learners
J: Japanese-speaking children

Table 1

Occurrence of error types: Early language learners vs. Japanese-speaking children

Type	Visual				Kanji Structure-based				Semantic	Indeterminate			N/A**	Total	
	1	3(1)	3(3)	4	2	3(2)	5	6	3(4)a	3(4)b	7	8	9		
EL	3(2)*	1		2	2	4(2)*	1	1						2	14
J G2/3			5						5	10	2	6	1		29
J G5/6			1						2	4					7

* Two errors by EL learners were classified as both type 1 and type 3.

** N/A indicates no answer (left blank).

with radicals which are incorrect, but which came from the kanji that students had learned in class and showed up on the kanji test. The shape of the blank was not a hint for the writers. For example, though *kusakanmuri* (a radical of characters for plants) can only complete a character on the top, some students wrote it into a blank located on the left side. Type 3(3) errors involve incorrect radicals that have a similar shape with the radical of the target kanji. In this case, two types of errors were further subcategorized: a) an additional stroke was added or a stroke was missing; and b) a stroke was wrongly positioned. Type 3(4) errors involved incorrect radicals, which are a) semantically related to the target kanji, but nevertheless not correct; or b) totally unrelated to the radical of the target kanji. However, the participants likely guessed the radicals because the chosen radicals share the shape and location of the blanks in one kanji structure, and as a consequence they put a familiar radical into a blank in which it fit well. Indeed, during the test, some students gave explanations to the researcher about how easy it was for them to find the "correct" radicals by considering the shape of the blank and justified their own answers in this way. Filling in a radical that is semantically related to the target kanji (Type 3(4)a) is considered a creative error, though again, the first hint for students was the shape and location of the blanks.

Type 4 errors were cases in which participants wrote non-existent kanji, but had intended to write correct kanji. The shape was almost correct, but as we see in the sample (see Figure 1), because one stroke was misplaced, the radical looked as though it had been newly invented.

On the other hand, Type 5 and 6 errors were ones which expressed meaning to readers. Type 5 errors expressed meaning through the structural features of kanji. As we see in the sample, the learner tried to express the meaning "a lot" by repeating the same shape. (For example, three trees (木) actually do mean woods (森) in kanji, and the learner tried to replicate this effect.) Type 6 errors expressed the writer's meaning by a picture. These two are considered "intelligent" errors, because they reveal the student's knowledge of the meaning of a kanji structure.

Type 7 errors were ones that are totally irrelevant to the target kanji and which do not mean anything for readers. In this vein, Type 8 errors involved completely creative and non-existent radicals, where the participants invented the radicals based on the shape of the blanks. Type 9 errors were ones in which the participant drew an irrelevant picture, being unable to guess what might be correct.

Patterns of errors

Distinctive patterns emerged in each group from the analysis of the occurrence of each type of error on the kanji completion test and the percentages of correct kanji in the kanji guessing test across the three groups of the students.

Occurrence of each type of error.

The occurrence of errors by type and student group is shown in Table 1. The chart shows clear differences in terms of error types among the three groups, particularly between early language learners and Japanese-speaking children.

The errors in the kanji completion test fell into four categories: visual errors, kanji structure-based errors, semantic errors and indeterminate errors. Types 1, 3(1), 3(3)a/b, and 4 were identified as visual errors; all of these visual errors were only observed in early language learners' errors, except Type 3(3), which were observed only in Japanese-speaking children's errors. Types 2, 3(2), 5 and 6 were identified as kanji structure-based errors, but which still involve an application of learners' knowledge of the structure of kanji. All of them were only observed in early language learners. Type 3(4)a errors were identified as semantic errors, and were observed only in Japanese-speaking children's errors. Lastly, Types 3(4)b, 7, 8 and 9 were identified as indeterminate errors whose sources we cannot trace, whether they be associations with meaning, visual structures, or shapes of parts of kanji. These types were only observed in Japanese-speaking children.

In terms of visual errors, the types of kanji-writing errors made by early language learners reflect tendencies that

Table 2

Percentage of correct responses on guessing task

	J (G2/3)	J (G5/6)	EL
薪 (charcoal)	55.0	86.0	75.0
鮭 (salmon)	73.0	86.0	87.5
浜 (beach)			87.5
跳 (to jump)	36.0	86.0	
田 (rice field)			37.5
穴 (hole)	55.0	100.0	
Total (%)	55.0	89.0	71.9

EL: Early language learners
J: Japanese-speaking children

might derive from experiences when they first learned English handwriting; they also reflect their knowledge about kanji structures and how to make meaning with kanji. Type 1 errors, putting a stroke in the wrong place or in the opposite direction, appeared in early language learners' answers only when the answer was *kusakanmuri* (grass radical). This type of error can be observed in English-speaking children's alphabet handwriting errors (Kress, 2000). In the same vein, Type 3(1) errors, an additional stroke, which we can also find in alphabet handwriting errors (Kress, 2000), were found only among the early language learners. Without relation to English handwriting errors, Type 4 errors show an attempt to write the right shape, although the directions of each stroke in the radicals were wrong. Interestingly, all types of visual errors demonstrate the writers' knowledge of kanji: they consist of straight sharp lines.

Early language learners show a tendency to express meanings using kanji structures, as we see in all the types of kanji structure-based errors. This shows their knowledge of kanji structure, which can be summarized as follows: they grasp the ideas that 1) one kind of kanji structure involves multiple repetitions of the same shape; 2) a part of kanji can be used in other kanji; 3) a structure involving multiple shapes means "a lot" (of whatever the shape signifies); and 4) a part of a kanji represents a part of its meaning.

On the other hand, the types of errors made by Japanese-speaking children show their tendency toward shape dependence when writing kanji. Visual errors of Types 3(3), semantic errors (Type 3[4]a) and all indeterminate errors (Type 3[4]b, 7, 8, 9) were observed only in Japanese-speaking children, and more frequently among the second and third graders. Although the sources of errors were realized differently, the key source of these errors was the shape of the blanks.

This tendency supports the results from previous studies of kanji writing errors, in which Japanese native speakers' errors tend to be shape-based (e.g., Hatta, Kawakami & Hatasa, 1997; Yamada, 1995).

Two similarities were identified in the error patterns of native Japanese speakers and FLES students: 1) completing kanji with part of another kanji (Type 3 errors) were found in all groups (but in different sub-types), and 2) errors involving additional strokes: completing kanji with the correct radical, but adding an additional stroke (Type 3[1]) in early language learners, and completing kanji by filling in a radical with a shape similar to the correct one (Type 3[3]) in Japanese-speaking children.

Percentages of correct kanji

Table 2 shows the patterns of errors in the guessing task by group membership. In this task, although the sample is too small for the result to be analyzed rigorously, it is suggestive that early language learners identified the radical "fish (魚)", which is used in 鮭 (salmon), slightly better than Japanese-speaking students. It may be that, even though Japanese-speaking children were familiar with the kanji and the concept of fish, they did not apply it in new contexts as early language learners did. Further, this chart shows that early language learners could guess the meaning of complex kanji from the radicals, but they could not guess the meaning of simple kanji as well (where there is only one part, such as 田 (rice field)).

Table 3 shows the patterns of errors in the kanji completion task by group membership. In this task, when Japanese-speaking students tried to fill in radicals they already knew, they tended to base their responses simply on the shape of the blank without considering meaning, though some paid attention to "related words," but they did not categorize the meanings. For instance, they reported to the researcher during the test that they didn't think of "potato" as belonging to "plants." Thus, the way they associated radicals with meanings was incorrect.

Japanese-speaking children paid attention to the names of the radicals, such as *sanzui* (a radical for water) and *kusakanmuri* (a radical for plants), but this did not mean that they attended to their meanings. For example, when they were thinking about how to fill in a blank, they mentioned

Table 3

Percentage of correct responses on kanji completion task

J (G2/3)	J (G5/6)	EL
47.3 %	80.0 %	56.3 %

EL: Early language learners
J: Japanese-speaking children

the names of radicals, but not their meanings.

J G3 boy

Hey, it's not *tehen* [a radical for "hand"], right? I wonder if it is *sanzui* [a radical for "water"] ...

It is true that they use drill books daily to learn kanji, and the information about those radicals is given in the book. However, students reported that such information was rarely taught in class. It may be helpful to know it for some examinations and, therefore, cram schools (which participants in this study did not attend) teach the names of radicals and their meanings in a different way from elementary school. Nevertheless, again, the errors made by Japanese-speaking children in this study tended not to reflect a grasp of the meanings of radicals, but mostly of their shapes.

This tendency by Japanese-speaking children to make shape-oriented errors supported the results of previous studies of kanji writing errors by Japanese native speakers (e.g., Hatta, Kawakami, & Hatasa, 1997; Yamada, 1995; Kuriya, 2004). Although previous studies have focused on writing kanji in compound words, not on single kanji, the findings of this study suggest that even writing a single kanji is shape-dependent.

Follow-up interviews

Interestingly, early language learners could reproduce their own kanji almost identically eight months later when the second round of data was collected. They could not only reproduce them, but they could also explain the kanji to the researcher in the interview, as well as the way that they had tried to remember the kanji.

a) About kanji "oil"

Alan: ...Looks like an oil factory or oil can.

Researcher: Hmm, then, what are those dots on both sides?

Alan: Umm, oil squirting out.

Alan commented on his favorite kanji, 木 (tree): he does not see the Chinese character in nature, but he sees nature in the Chinese character. The instructor was also asked how she taught kanji in her class. She reported that giving one explanation is much more effective than writing the same kanji 500 times. Indeed, she gave unique explanations for each kanji in context. Her goal was to create an impression and an impact on the students, using the shared background knowledge in a context familiar to the students, such as the katakana parts in kanji and the following story:

b) Instructor's way of explaining kanji "oil"

For oil, it's "sanzuihen" [radical of kanji 'oil'], and related to water. Um...well...I guess, you know, it's like something

spouting out. I guess I talk about it. Also, "ta" is the kanji for rice field. So oil is suddenly spouting out from the rice field. When someone was cultivating the field, coincidentally he got to the place where the oil was. It could happen in the U.S., you know? Someone suddenly becomes a millionaire. So I gave this kind of explanation, and told them a joke-y story about how in Japan the oil spouted out when someone was cultivating the field.

Unlike other Japanese teachers who may prescribe rules about kanji formation, this instructor, in addition to explaining how kanji are formed, engaged the students' creative thinking by inviting them to observe and explain their own views on kanji formation. In the interview, she mentioned *students' input* about how kanji is constructed. When she gave her explanations, a couple of students always suggested their own way of seeing kanji, saying, "Can I think of this as a wave, instead of water?" Then, new explanations were co-constructed with peers, beginning with the instructor's explanation. She assumed that the Alan's way of memorizing the kanji "oil" could be one of the co-constructed ideas which students suggested.

Conclusion and implications

What we learned from this experience

This analysis provided several observations regarding what early language learners were able to do in writing kanji. First, they understood the structure and functions of kanji, which had become new *systems* for them to express meanings. They appear to have developed their own system for understanding as well as for reproducing kanji. For decoding, they took a semantic approach and, indeed, inferred the meaning of unknown kanji using their own systems. This supports Chinen, *et al.*'s (2003) findings that students processed kanji either visually or semantically. They made errors, but those errors were intelligent and systematic. In other words, the errors were not random, unlike the errors by Japanese-speaking children who relied on more practical hints such as the shape of blanks and did not rely on their knowledge of kanji structures and functions.

Additionally, early language learners constructed their own meaning creatively and expressively using their systems. When students faced an unknown kanji, early language learners tried to express the meaning, even by drawing a picture, while Japanese-speaking children just filled in whichever shape they guessed. The errors by early language learners were not simply "incorrect answers," but showed purposeful behavior; we may prefer to call them "intelligent errors" rather than simple mistakes. Brown (2000) differentiates between mistakes and errors: "a mistake refers to a performance error that is either a random guess or a 'slip,' in that it is a failure to utilize a known system correctly... [A]n error, a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflects the competence of the learner"

(p. 217). The types of errors made by early language learners were more systematic than the ones made by Japanese-speaking children, which may reveal the competence of early language learners in kanji production.

This finding suggests that we should pay attention to learners' errors to see their stages of development, and draw on this understanding to support their continuing language growth. In this FLES program, new explanations emerging from discussion with peers may lead the students to better understanding and more effective learning. Providing opportunities to engage in this sort of process may also be suggested for Japanese-speaking children to learn kanji effectively. The teacher-participant in this study reflected afterwards on how the study helped her to see how the learners actually learn kanji. At the same time, she recognized the importance of kanji production. The next time she teaches kanji, she will look for tendencies in each student's errors, and may point them out. In a future study, it would be interesting to find out if there are any relationships between individual learners' imaginative or participatory activities and remembering kanji: might it be that the more imaginative the learners or the more participatory, the more effectively they remember kanji?

Teachers' awareness of types of errors in kanji production emerges as an important cue to help early language learners learn kanji positively and effectively. This awareness helps teachers to give positive feedback to the learners. Since learning kanji is hard for learners who read and write using an alphabetic system, positive feedback from teachers is essential for learners. In addition, different types of errors in kanji show the learners' level of literacy development in kanji. As a diagnostic technique, monitoring learners' errors may help the teacher to assess learners' developmental stages. Meanwhile, teachers may reflect on their own teaching of kanji to learners by examining the types of errors produced in their own classroom. For implementation of these ideas, the development of benchmarks is needed and is the logical next step for our research team.

The experience of learning to write kanji provides early language learners with access to new ways of making meaning. Focusing on the process of kanji learning allows them to deal with kanji in context and gives them opportunities to co-construct new ways of making meaning. Also, it encourages them to develop their own systems of understanding and producing kanji, which are powerful strategies for kanji learning. From the point of view of articulation with higher-level education as well, it would be very helpful to implement this approach, focusing on the process of kanji learning, in early Japanese language learning education.

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Appendix 1

Four tasks of kanji test

1) Kanji completion

For early language learners

Please fill in the blank with a correct radical.

potato = 干

lake = 胡

woods = 木

bright = 月

For Japanese-speaking children

□に入れよう。漢字を書いてみよう。

くじら 京

いも 芋

ほね 骨

こまる 木

にげる 兆 げる

2) Writing

For early language learners

Please write the following words in kanji: 1. flower

2. oil

3) Recognition

For early language learners

Please circle the one that is the correct meaning of the given kanji.

菊*

a. flower

b. grass

c. stem

d. chrysanthemum

4) Guessing

For early language learners

Please circle the one that is the correct meaning of the given kanji.

鮭

a. bear

b. salmon

c. mouse

d. bird

For Japanese-speaking children

次の漢字の意味は何でしょう。一つえらんで○をしよう。

鮭

1.



2.



3.



4.



* We gave hand-written kanji for early language learners, since they were not familiar with printed kanji.

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Appendix 2

Follow-up interview sheet for FLES students

Name: _____

- | | | | |
|----|---|-----|----|
| 1. | Do you remember taking this test (showing the test they took)? | Yes | No |
| 2. | Do you remember these kanji? | Yes | No |
| 3. | Could you tell me why you wrote like this (pointing at focused kanji)? | | |
| 4. | Did your teacher tell you a story about it or did you learn it in a story? | | |
| 5. | Could you write your favorite kanji for me (if they have one)? | | |
| 6. | Have you ever practiced kanji on your own when you are not in class (at home, for example)? | Yes | No |
- If yes, Could you tell me a little bit about this?
-

Appendix 3

Follow-up interview questions with the FLES instructor

1. What kinds of strategies did you use for teaching kanji to your students?
生徒たちに漢字を教える際、どのようなストラテジーを使いましたか。
 2. Could you tell me how you taught kanji? Please give me examples.
生徒たちにどのように漢字を教えましたか。具体的な例を挙げて教えてください。
 3. Do you feel certain strategies are more useful than others for teaching kanji?
漢字の教え方について、より効果的な教え方というのがあると思いますか。
 4. What have you gained from your participation in this project on analyzing the kanji of your students? Have you learned anything that might influence what you will do differently in the future?
先生の生徒たちの漢字を分析したこのプロジェクトに参加したことで、得たことは何ですか。今後の漢字の教え方について、何か影響を受けたことがありますか。
-

Positions of the National Network for Early Language Learning (NNELL)

The National Network for Early Language Learning is an educational community providing leadership in support of successful early language learning and teaching. Since its inception in 1987, NNELL continues to be an invaluable resource for educators, parents and policymakers in advocating K-8 programs of excellence in second language education.

National Language Conference White Paper (2005)

The National Language Conference "Call to Action" acknowledges the urgent need for a cogent plan to provide opportunities for all students to effectively participate as U.S. citizens in the global community by gaining proficiency in world languages and a greater understanding and respect for diverse world cultures. The success of this plan must be accompanied by policies, programs and legislation that guarantee the establishment and maintenance of long well-articulated sequences of language study beginning in the early grades. Participation of a variety of stakeholders from public and private sectors on a national coordination council overseen by a cabinet-level appointee will serve as an organizational entity for the development and implementation of a plan that will foster systemic reform in world language education nationwide.

No Child Left Behind Act (2005)

The inclusion of Foreign Languages as a core academic subject area in this Act sends a strong message about the importance of second language education in the U.S. The development of literacy skills in both a first or second language is dependent on the establishment of quality instructional programs. As such, all elementary school students should have access to high quality, ongoing and systematic world language instruction to take advantage of children's special capacity for language acquisition. Long sequences of language study should become an integral part of early schooling when the integration of content and language learning occurs easily as does the development of positive attitudes towards people who speak other languages and represent other cultures.

In the 21st century, languages and cultures are intertwined and citizens worldwide can instantly communicate without regard to national borders. Education must keep up with this forward movement. A sound, basic education calls for an update to the current public education system and includes the study of languages and cultures as part of the core curriculum in grades K-8 and beyond.

Thank You

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National K-12 Foreign Language
Resource Center
www.NFLRC.iastate.edu

The story of Learning Languages and how it came to celebrate its 10th anniversary is closely entwined with the story of NNELL itself. "Once upon a time. . ." there was a small group of foreign language educators committed to early language learning who met sporadically at regional and national conferences. They realized one fall that their numbers were growing and that the time had come to take action. They arranged to meet at the Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington, DC on a snowy January weekend in 1987 to make plans for the future.

Celebrate Learning Languages

Marcia H. Rosenbusch

Out of this meeting NNELL came into being, focused on facilitating communication among educators and providing information to enhance public awareness about early language learning. Was this the start of Learning Languages? In one sense, yes, because the newsletter established at that time, FLES News, defined the content and style that the journal later enhanced. A key feature of the newsletter was that it was "written by and for educators involved in the teaching of foreign languages to young children" (FLES News Provides Vital Forum, Fall 1987). In that first newsletter was a message of congratulations from the President of ACTFL, Jacqueline Benevento, and subsequent issues included thanks from NNELL to its friends who helped fund the newsletters, first distributed free of charge. These friends included foreign language teacher associations (AATs), publishers, regional and state foreign language organizations and even a college (NNELL Thanks its Friends, Winter 1987–88).

What kind of content did FLES News include over its eight years of publication? "Resources for Your Classroom" and "Activities for Your Classroom" were two of the most popular features in every issue. The "Conference Calendar" provided national and regional conference and summer workshop information and "Notes from Washington" provided information about federal funding opportunities, legislation



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and policy. "Notes from the Chair" evolved into "Notes from the President" after NNELL transformed itself from a network into an organization with elected officers (Rhodes, Fall 1990).

Special features included articles summarizing the findings of research studies such as Naomi E. Holobow's (Fall 1988) "The Effectiveness of Partial French Immersion for Children from Different Ethnic and Social Class Backgrounds" and Karen M. Foster and Carolyn K. Reeves' (Spring 1989) "FLES Improves Cognitive Skills." Additionally, the newsletter included articles on advocacy, international language education, program design, teacher preparation and policy, for example, "Governors Recommend Foreign Language and International Studies" (Editor, Spring 1989).

In examining issues of FLES News it is interesting to note the emergence of new teaching methodologies and the student standards:

- Content-related instruction – Sonia S. Torres-Quiñones' (Spring 1990) "An Integrated Approach: Teaching Physical Education and Healthful Living Concepts through Second Language";
- Culture – Mari Haas' (Spring 1991) "Project SALTA: Spanish through Authentic Literature and Traditional Art"; and
- Student Standards – (Author, Winter 1992-93) "Standards Proposed for Foreign Language Education."

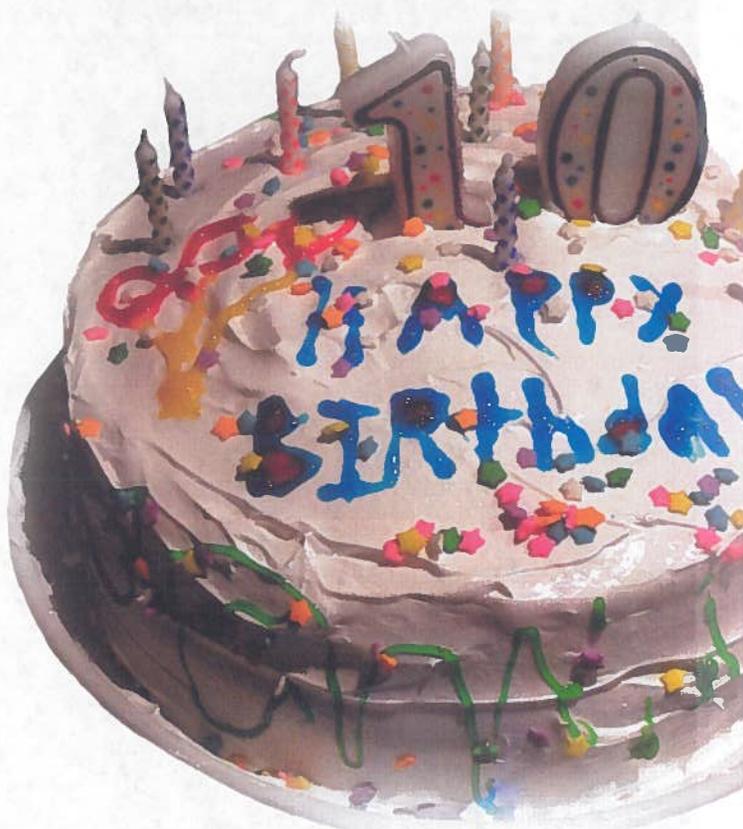
There is more, however, to the story of NNELL's involvement with the foreign language student standards. NNELL published its first political action statement as an organization in FLES News (Winter 1993-94), "NNELL Statement to the Student Standards Task Force." In its statement, NNELL urged the Task Force to "define a framework for the future" by preparing the student standards for grades four, eight and twelve, instead of just for grades eight and twelve, as they had been considering. In fact, the Standards Task Force Chair, Christine Brown, later noted that NNELL's statement had caused the Task Force to reconsider its plans. Task Force members decided to visit long-sequence K-12 foreign language programs and did decide to create K-12 student standards (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1996), which later became K-16 standards (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1999).

NNELL moved from newsletter to journal format in the fall of 1995 with the publication of the first issue of *Learning Languages*. In that issue NNELL clarified the role of the journal in the organization:

Learning Languages is the official publication of NNELL. It serves the profession by providing a medium for the sharing of information, ideas and concerns among teachers, administrators, researchers and others interested in the early learning of languages. The journal reflects NNELL's commitment to promoting opportunities for all children to de-

velop a high level of competence in at least one language and culture in addition to their own.

The journal continued the content found in FLES News and added articles on technology in the Fall 1995 issue such as Margaret Reardon's "Traveling to South America on the Internet" and on action research with Emily Francamono's "Teacher as Researcher: Motivating an Eighth Grade Spanish Class." Reflecting the changing emphases in the profession, the "Activities for Your Classroom" section, which had included in each activity the objectives, materials and pro-



cedures, began to include targeted student standards in the Spring 1997 issue and assessment in the Fall 1997 issue. As assessment became a focus in the profession, it also became the topic of articles such as Peggy Boyles' (Fall 1998) "Scoring Rubrics: Changing the Way We Grade" and Jan Kucerk's (Winter 2000) "Let's Assess: Connecting Students, Parents, and Teachers."

Articles on advocacy also flourished. A favorite is Virginia Gramer's (Spring 1999) "Advocacy for Early Language Education: A School Board Presentation." This article included photographs of students from the time when they were in fifth grade in Hinsdale, Illinois's French or Spanish program and photographs of what they were doing at the time of the article with the foreign language skills they had continued to develop in high school, college and graduate school. One student, Richard Acker, even wrote his MA thesis in interna-

tional relations and public policy at Princeton in French!

New editors brought a fresh look to *Learning Languages* in fall 2002, with brighter cover colors, a new layout and the inclusion of many photographs. Teresa Kennedy, Editor, and Mari Haas, Assistant Editor, continued the familiar content but strengthened emphasis on research with articles that included more statistical analyses, such as Linda M. Gerena's "Dual Immersion: A Driving Force for Language Policy Reform and Transformation" (Fall 2002). Resources were expanded to include Japanese, Latin and Early Childhood and were enriched with reviews of books, videos and websites. A feature that began in fall 2004 increased emphasis on international news, "International News on Young Language Learner" by Réka Lugossy, University of Pécs, Hungary and in spring 2005, by Marianne Nikolov of the same university.

Now in 2005, NNELL is pleased that Julio C. Rodriguez has provided a fresh look for the journal and has served as the editor for this tenth anniversary issue of *Learning Languages*. Julio served for four years as Associate Editor of the *Journal of Computing in Teacher Education*. Currently he is the Instructional Support Specialist heading the Foreign Language Learning Resource Center in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures at Iowa State University (ISU). Julio has a M.A. in English/Applied Linguistics and is completing his doctoral degree in Instructional Technology in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at ISU.

As you can see from this issue of the journal, *Learning Languages* has a new look and new organization and promises to continue to serve NNELL members in innovative ways that reflect the changing nature of the profession and



our more technology-proficient world. The story of *Learning Languages* continues... in other words: *¡Y colorín, colorado, este cuento no se ha acabado!*

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Nancy Rhodes, who served as NNELL Executive Secretary from 1987 to 2003, was the unofficial and invaluable mentor to me as editor of *FLES News* and *Learning Languages*. I take this opportunity to thank her for her expertise and for her commitment to making *Learning Languages* an invaluable resource for the profession. Thank you, Nancy!

Marcia H. Rosenbusch

Minneapolis and Brittany: A Cultural Exchange Revisited

Janine Shelley

In 1996, *Learning Languages* published an article describing a cultural exchange that occurred from 1991 to 1993 between Breck School, a private school in Minneapolis, and Paul Dukas School, a high-needs school in Brest, France. Much of that exchange was carried out through online telecommunications using the Minitel*. The result of a two-year communication exchange was the production and presentation of a student-written multicultural play. Students from Paul Dukas School in France visited Minneapolis to present the play with American Breck students. The article concluded: "it should be stressed that Bardy and Malgorn (the teachers involved) spent an extraordinary amount of personal time and energy from their first debate about whether to begin an exchange between students of such diverse backgrounds to the final production of the bilingual multicultural play. They created an international classroom that encouraged student communication in the target language. They nurtured in their students an appreciation of differences and similarities for other cultures." Technology was the vehicle for students' communication, but it was the pedagogy that successfully transformed communication into a viable and effective learning environment.

When the editor of *Learning Languages* requested a follow-up to this article, a first concern was how to contact the two teachers who were the focus of the original article: Mireille Bardy, the French teacher at Breck School in Minneapolis, Minnesota; and Michel Malgorn, the English teacher at Paul Dukas School in Brest, France. "Googling" produced a phone number that led to Bardy and an e-mail address that led to Malgorn. I include in this article, therefore, a summary of my conversation with Mireille Bardy and excerpts from the e-mail received from Michel Malgorn. I also include reference to how pedagogy supports communication and how appropriate use of technology can increase student learning. I conclude with links to several online collaboration resources available today to teachers who would like to explore the possibility of creating their own international classrooms.

Renewed Communication with the Teachers

Telephone Conversation with Mireille Bardy

Bardy left teaching in the foreign language classroom several years ago and is currently working in mental health care.

How did this experience affect your students?

Bardy: Several students continued with French that would

not have otherwise. The experience opened students' eyes to how the world lives differently and shaped their views of the world around them

Were your students able to visit Paul Dukas students in France?

Many of the students who participated in the exchange visited Brest, France, during their senior year in high school, four years later. When they arrived in Brest, the students were welcomed with a reception at the city courthouse. They also met Michel Malgorn, his colleagues and many of the students who had visited them in Minneapolis. Unfortunately the magic of the experience in Minneapolis was not recreated. When the French students visited Minneapolis, they were able to leave behind their different socio-economic background and differences in culture. In Minneapolis Brest students, many of them Arabs, were accepted for themselves, as children from a foreign country, not "lab kids," underprivileged students. At that time, differences between the two groups of students was not as evident. However, when Breck students, most from wealthy highly educated families, visited Brest, the gap between their different cultures was more evident than it had been four years before and caused an awkwardness that hadn't existed before. Brest students dealt with a day-to-day violence unfamiliar to Breck students. Because of Brest students' high poverty level, Minneapolis students were housed with families other than those of the students who visited them. Therefore their visit resembled more that of a student exchange opportunity than former friends meeting again.

* The term *Minitel* originated as the name of a computer terminal used to access French data services. Minitel now represents the services in videotext format that are accessed. This form of telecommunications requires a computer, a modem, and telecommunications software or a Minitel terminal. The user has access to on-screen information by a variety of services.

Do you think today's technologies better enable exchanges such as yours?

Bardy: Technology is being used in schools as a communication tool, one that provides global access. However, the power of e-mail and other communication venues are not available to all students. All students do not have access to the collaboration and communication possibilities that technology can support. All children should have the opportunity to reach out to other children and space in which to express and experiment with ideas. In the twelve years since the exchange between the two schools our country has not solved the problem of the widening technological gap between the haves and have-nots. In today's political environment, one that is becoming more violent, an exchange like the one they experienced might not be possible.

E-mail Exchange with Michel Malgorn

Michel Malgorn, like Bardy, is currently working in the mental health profession. He is working with psychotic and autistic children.

Describe how you believe your students grew linguistically during the exchange.

Malgorn: Students who started with writing only a few words of English scattered in French sentences ended up with full sentences in basic English, including French words for unknown specialized vocabulary or U.S. cultural notions.

Describe preparations for the trip to Minneapolis.

Malgorn: It required a tremendous amount of work and financial responsibilities, trip costs, funding the passports for all students and visas for the students, mostly young Arabs, close in time to the first Gulf War.

Do you know how this exchange impacted your students in the future?

Malgorn: One student, a young girl, went back twice to Minneapolis to take drama courses in the summer. Others showed an unusually strong fluency in English in secondary school.

How did the exchange affect your professional life?

Malgorn: I left Paul Dukas Primary and took a sabbatical year during which I attended courses at Brest University College. There, I wrote a master's degree [thesis] in linguistics on the theme: "Communication Technologies and Second Language Acquisition."

Did you replicate the communication exchange with other classes?

Malgorn: A couple of years later, a new class, younger children, communicated via fax with a special education class in the city of Brest, exchanging news, experiments, feelings, math problems and so on. This experience was replicated

with special needs students who communicated by internet with another special needs class in the center of France. Results of a study of this exchange showed that the majority of the 12 students involved improved their writing skills. Students who wrote to someone they knew (a penpal's face on a digital picture) had more incentive to write and were motivated to express themselves in written words. The more they wrote, the more they became expert in writing and spelling. Self-esteem and constructive feedback (with the teacher as a helper) were at work all the time. These experiences fostered the relationship and confidence between teacher and students in the classroom.

The Power of Technology in the Classroom

It is important to remember that the technology used in 1991 was Minitel. The online exchange between the two teachers and their students occurred before "e-mail" was an everyday word, before every classroom had at least one computer, and before the universal use of the internet. The common communication channel at that time was a phone line and a 12- or 24-baud modem and a fax machine.

In the ten years since the article was published, considerable research has been done on brain-based, or the cognitive approach to learning. *How People Learn* (Bransford, 1999), an important resource in this area, describes how the use of technology by teachers and students can affect student learning.

Technology in the classroom can:

- Bring exciting curricula based on real-world problems into the classroom;
- Provide scaffolds and tools to enhance learning;
- Give students and teachers more opportunities for feedback, reflection, and revision;
- Build local and global communities that include teachers, administrators, students, parents, practicing scientists and other interested people; and
- Expand opportunities for teacher learning.

Reflecting on the project, the information exchange and the play created with collaboration between two classes, it is obvious why the experience was successful both in motivating students and in improving their general language skills. This project meets all five criteria for effective use of technology in the classroom:

Bring exciting curricula based on real-world problems into the classroom

The subject of the children's play was directly based on real-life problems that the Brest students faced being immigrants in a new country. Minneapolis students needed to know about their local history to complete the project. Students also needed to know how to construct and present a play

for a bilingual audience and plan for visitors from another country.

Provide scaffolds and tools to enhance learning

The initial goal of the project was communication in the target language. The Minitel provided teachers and students an efficient means to exchange information. Minitel provided them online synchronous communication that enabled them to nurture relationships between the two classes

Give students and teachers more opportunities for feedback, reflection, and revision

The ability to easily share information over electronic connections, fax, e-mail, and synchronous chat, provided students and teachers with a creative environment where they were able to build their play together.

Build local and global communities that include teachers, administrators, students, parents, practicing scientists and other interested people

The project created a global community shared by students from the U.S. and France, their teachers, their parents and their schools.

Expand opportunities for teacher learning

The comments above from Mireille Bardy and Michel Malgorn are evidence of the teacher learning offered by the exchange experience.

The success of the project did not depend on sophisticated technology. Technologies required of this project were video, fax, e-mail, and an online chat environment. A project like this could be easily replicated in schools today that have the most basic e-mail service.

Conclusion

One of the powerful aspects of this exchange was its focus on direct communication. A communicative approach to language learning motivates the student to use the target language in a meaningful way.

Today, it is much easier to access the technology to replicate an exchange like the one between Breck and Paul Dukas schools, but as described in *How People Learn (1999)*, technology is only a vehicle that provides teachers tools they need to expand a student's world. The power of the tool lies in how the tool is used in the classroom and the lesson design that encourages student interaction.

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Resources for Student Exchanges

Ten to twelve years ago, finding a school with which to create an exchange was difficult. Today, it is much easier. There are several organizations that support high-quality collaboration environments. They include the following:

Northwestern University Collaborative Project (<http://collaboratory.nunet.net>) provides project consulting, training, technical advice, and Web-based resources and services to K–12 teachers and their students who are interested in using internet technologies to advance education.

The Global Schoolhouse (www.gsh.org), sponsored by Microsoft, links kids around the world, creating a "connected" learning community. The site includes educational resources that are available to parents and teachers, while kids and teens are exposed to contests, online publications and cyberfairs that have been created just for them. Schools can register themselves at this site, and technology planners can find examples of schools that use technology effectively when searching for ways to improve the technology implementation process at their own school.

ThinkQuest (www.thinkquest.org) is an international student competition sponsored by the Oracle Education Foundation. Teams of students and teachers are challenged to create websites on educational topics and compete for exciting prizes. The completed websites are published in the ThinkQuest Library, a rich learning resource used by millions. Many projects have been developed by collaborative teams from different countries.



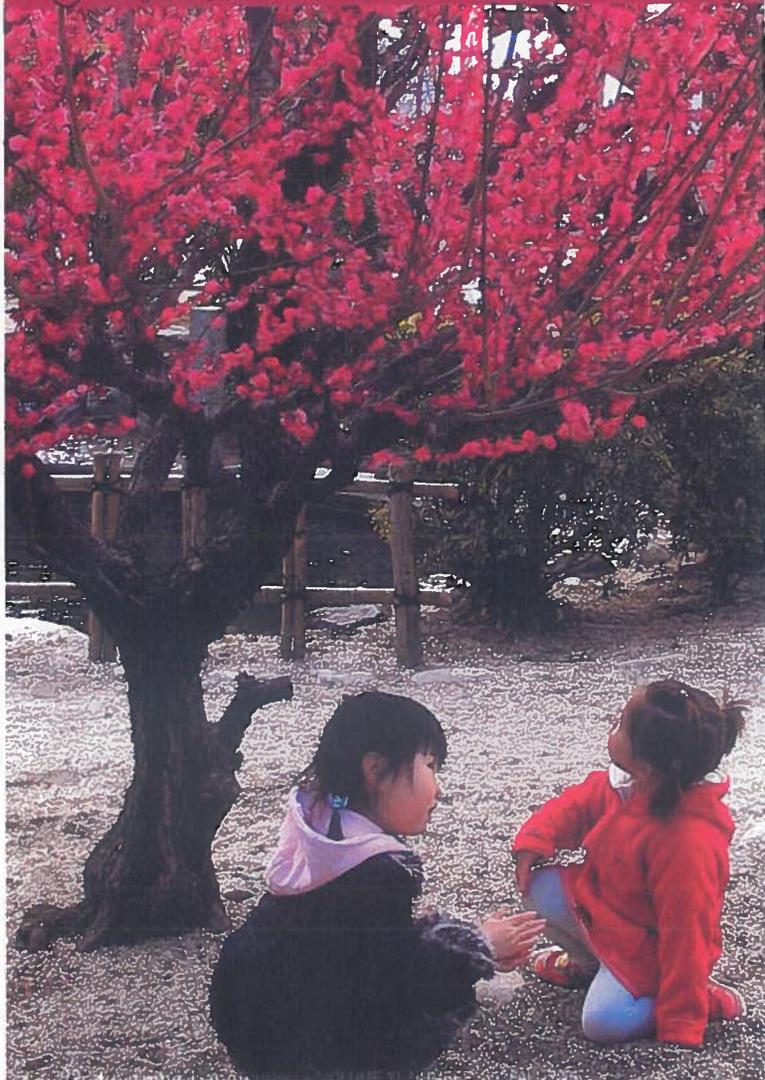
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Learning Languages: A KWL Chart

Myriam Met

The tenth anniversary of Learning Languages provides an opportune moment to reflect on what we know, what we wish to know and what we hope the next decade might bring to early language learning. In the tradition of best practices in elementary school classrooms, I've organized my reflections into a KWL chart: what I know, what I wonder about and what we might learn in the exciting years to come.

© Photograph by Rudolf Ammann



What we KNOW

We *know* that early language learning is brain compatible. The last decade has provided concrete evidence of the value of beginning at an early age, and in particular, the value of learning two languages. Extensive research into brain growth and development, made possible in part by new technologies, has demonstrated that the young brain is uniquely poised to learn many languages. While later language learning is certainly possible, the processes of language learning in young children are different from those when languages are formally studied by adolescents and adults. Older learners are likely to use different parts of the brain. Moreover, recent research has shown that there is no developmental disadvantage when children are exposed to more than one language from a very young age. In fact, young language learners have more gray matter in their brains than do young monolinguals.

We *know* that now more than ever, language competence is vital to the well being of our nation, and that the very high levels of language proficiency that are needed cannot be attained in short periods of time. We also *know* that because language competence takes a long time to develop, and time is a scarce and precious commodity in schools, we need to make every minute and every hour of instruction count. Fortunately for our nation, and for our profession, research in second language acquisition has provided powerful new insights into how language learning proceeds, and how that knowledge can be exploited in instructed settings. Most importantly, we *know* that early language educators tend to use highly effective instructional practices that are likely to result in language growth.

We *know* that early language educators are dedicated professionals. These professionals often work in isolation. Unlike most elementary teachers who have several colleagues in their own buildings who are teaching (or who have taught) the same content and/or grade levels, foreign language teachers are usually the only ones in their school and often teach multiple grade levels. We also *know* that the leadership that NNELL has provided early language teachers over the last decade has supported their work in numerous ways. NNELL's publications provide rich resources in terms of theory and practice. NNELL sessions at state and regional conferences have reduced the isolation of classroom practitioners. The annual NNELL swapshop at ACTFL usually hosts a sell-out crowd. The growth of NNELL from a small network of early language educators in the late 1980s to a strong, vibrant organization that clearly meets the needs of its constituency is proof of what we *know*: early language educators are highly committed to their work.

What I WONDER

While we know more than ever about language acquisition and effective language instruction, many questions remain to be explored. For some of these questions, hints of answers are beginning to emerge; for others, the field is ripe for exploration. Many of the questions I have were first raised in an article Nancy Rhodes and I co-authored for *Foreign Language Annals* in 1990, and so may seem familiar to those who have read them before.

I wonder... What are the comparative outcomes of increased minutes per week over fewer years vs. a longer sequence with fewer contact hours? For example, how do learner outcomes compare for students who have two 30-minute sessions per week beginning in kindergarten as opposed to students who receive instruction in five 30-minute sessions per week beginning at grade 3?

I wonder... What is the role of formal grammar instruction in early language learning? Should grammar be taught? When? How? How much?

I wonder... What data do we have to support our belief that integrating content from the school curriculum enhances growth in language proficiency?

I wonder... Is there a difference in learner outcomes when curriculum is based on thematic units that may not be tied to the school curriculum (e.g., a unit on 'The Circus' or centered around an authentic folktale) as opposed to a unit that only draws on grade level appropriate content?

I wonder... What would we find out if we had assessment tools that are finely tuned to measure how well students understand what they hear? Because we have always measured our successes by what students can produce, we may have inadvertently given short shrift to the substantial and significant gains students make in understanding the target language as spoken by native speakers at native-like rates of speech. *I wonder*, too, how we could communicate this important accomplishment to parents and the public so that they would see the value of early language learning beyond simply what students can say.

I wonder... Where is the point at which the use of technology (at least in its current form) provides diminishing returns? Schools are finding remarkable successes using video, multimedia and other technology resources as primary delivery systems or as complementary resources to teacher-delivered instruction. When current technological resources serve as the primary delivery system (e.g., videotapes or satellite broadcast), is there a point where students need increased face-to-face interaction in the target language in order to continue to progress at the same rate as previously?

I wonder... What effect does the presence of heritage speakers have on the language skills of immersion students? We know from extensive research that students in foreign language immersion programs have near-native listening and reading proficiency, but their oral and written output is not native-like. Given the large number of native speakers built into the design of dual language (two-way immersion) programs, *I wonder*, is there an ameliorative effect on the L2 (second language) oral and written proficiency of the English speakers?

I wonder... Are there developmental stages at which young learners are more receptive to or capable of understanding cultural perspectives?

I wonder... Are there predictors of success for early language learners? How do age, aptitude, motivation and personality interact? Does program design moderate the effects of any or all of these variables?

What I LEARNED

As users of KWL charts know, the last column —what I learned— is completed long after we have first brainstormed what we already know and what we would like to know. Careful research, hard work, collaborative investigations and guided inquiry result in new learnings to be summarized as the unit of study nears completion.

Our unit is just getting started. A decade from now, let us hope that together we will provide a lengthy summary of all that we have learned, all that we have wondered, and be able to reflect positively on our progress. As Nancy Rhodes and I concluded in our 1990 article, our work "...should lead to a decade in which we grow both older and better" (Met & Rhodes, 1990).

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She has been a president of the National Association of District Supervisors of Foreign Languages and a founding member, and later president, of NNELL.

Learning Languages, Language Learning: Reflections on an Anniversary

Carol Ann Dahlberg

At about the same time that I was invited to write this article, I was seated at a dinner with a colleague, a language teacher I had just met. She commented on the third edition of *Languages and Children*, the textbook we would be working with together over the coming ten days. “Whatever happened to Pesola?” she asked, “She was an author for the first two editions, but you are listed this time—Dahlberg.” I explained to her that Pesola and Dahlberg are the same person, that only the name had changed. Yet that conversation left me wondering: what else has changed in these past ten years? What really happened to Pesola? And what has this decade meant to our profession, as well?

The name change that my dinner partner noticed reflected a new identity for me. It represented a new marriage, a new status as grandmother and a new living situation. It was a very happy change. In 1995, *Learning Languages* was also a name change that reflected a new status. Instead of a relatively informal newsletter, *FLES News*, our new journal became a place for scholars to share their findings, as well as for teachers to share experiences. The status of “journal” created a new space for serious exchanges about early language learning. This, too, is a very happy change.

Learning Languages celebrates ten years of publication with this issue. A ten-year anniversary is one of those significant milestones that provide occasion for celebration, for looking back and for reflection. As I look back at our profession over the past decade, I am amazed at the remarkable changes that have taken place in such a short period of time. How much we have done together, how much has changed, how much has remained the same—how many challenges remain! These are some of the changes that hold special significance for me.

Standards for Foreign Language Learning

In the first issue of *Learning Languages* in Fall 1995, there was only one mention of Standards—an announcement of a report available from an International Conference on Standards and Assessment, held the preceding summer at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. That fall was the real beginning of the impact of Standards for Foreign

Language Learning in the 21st Century (1996), the final version of which was presented at ACTFL that November. Shortly afterward, Eileen Lorenz, the newly-elected NNELL president, announced Standards, political action and teacher-based research as the major goals for the year.

As I have often commented to other teachers, the Standards represent for me the single most important development in language teaching in my professional lifetime. It is especially significant for the NNELL family that they created a bold vision, both within and beyond the profession, of a long sequence of language instruction for all learners, beginning in kindergarten and continuing through grade twelve and beyond. Together we are challenged by new ways of thinking about communication—interpersonal, interpretive, presentational—and stronger linkages to the community and to the general curriculum in the Communities and Connections goals. We are finding ways to strengthen the role of Culture in all of our teaching, and we are trying to help our students develop the concepts of culture and of language through the Comparisons goal. I know that my understanding of language teaching has been deepened and broadened by the Standards.

The ACTFL Performance Guidelines for K-12 Learners (1998) have given further guidance and support for teachers, as they outline expectations for student performance at three levels in a Standards-based teaching and learning environment. Together the Standards and the Performance Guidelines give us meaningful and practical resources for planning curriculum and evaluating student progress. Many states and school districts have used these resources as models for local documents. When we add to these guidelines the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Integrated Performance Assessment (2003) a Standards-based model for designing assessments that mirror and guide instruction, we have the most complete and integrated guidance ever available for language teaching and learning.

I believe that we have now come closer to agreement about what is important and what is realistic in language education than at any time in our history. By 2005, every K-12 language textbook series claims consistency with the Standards and includes references to the Standards throughout the teacher materials. Catalogs of supplementary materials also indicate the goals and the standards that their materials are designed to address. Developers of curriculum and materials cannot afford to ignore the Standards, the Performance Guidelines, or the incorporation of performance assessments.



All of this has happened in just ten years.

Technology

Technology has changed our assumptions and our practice in very dramatic ways over the past decade. I remember that ten years ago many of our colleagues in summer workshops were uncomfortable with e-mail or had to learn to use it. Now virtually every teacher has an e-mail address, and some have two or more. When Helena Curtain and I wrote the manuscript for the first and second editions of *Languages and Children*, we had to meet to exchange our work, or send things in the U.S. mail, usually on a floppy disk. For the third edition, published in 2004, we exchanged our work almost instantly via e-mail attachments. I will submit this article to the editor in the same way.

In 1995, I couldn't teach or make any kind of presentation without using stacks of transparencies for the overhead projector. In 2005, I can't make a presentation without using PowerPoint® and a digital projector. My stacks of transparencies are safely filed away. I now can find research, images, information, news in another language and almost anything else on the internet—I regularly purchase books and even electronics on the Web. Ten years ago such riches and opportunities were unthinkable.

Technology has influenced our connections to professional resources and colleagues in other ways as well. We can access the website for the ACTFL, or NNELL or any other professional organization that interests us, and there we can register for conferences, access resources and even locate contact information for colleagues. Many of us have web pages or web logs (blogs) for ourselves or for our schools, where we can share ideas, resources, pictures and even information for and by our students. NNELL's website (www.nnell.org) contains a wealth of information and resources. We also communicate using listservs, such as Nandú and FL-Teach, where teachers can share ideas, ask and answer questions, offer encouragement and advice and alert one another to opportunities and resources. Even the most isolated early language teacher no longer needs to feel alone!

Marc Prensky (2001) has pointed out that in the world of technology, our students are the natives and we are the immigrants. As we test the possibilities of what we are now learning to do, with our students often leading the way, I can't even imagine what the next ten years will make possible for all of us.

Advocacy

Advocacy is one aspect of our shared profession that in some ways has changed very little over the past ten years. Early language teachers and parents have always needed to be advocates for their programs. Although the challenge may be ongoing, the context has changed a good deal. Ten years ago we were energized by the Standards vision of a K–12 language sequence, and the brain research popularized in 1996 and 1997 underscored the value and appropriateness of early language learning. We focused this energy on establishing new programs, supported both by research and by national priorities. Advocacy at that time meant gaining public support for ever-expanding language opportunities.

By the end of the decade, however, an era of budget cutting and realignment of resources has largely halted the surge of program growth at the elementary school level. The 2001 No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, although it nominally includes languages among basic subjects, has caused many school districts to cut back or cut out early language programs in favor of increased time for reading and mathematics. Advocacy has become an essential part of the job for all early language teachers, simply to keep their programs alive and intact. In a feature article in *Learning Languages* 9(2) (Spring 2004), Marcia Rosenbusch and Laurie Sorensen identify "Threats and Strategies to Counter Threats," a series of stories dramatizing the importance of advocacy in our current educational climate.

2005: The Year of Languages has been a major national effort to raise public awareness about the importance of language learning. This campaign, the first of its kind in our profession, invites strong participation from all of us. Its focus for October 2005 is Early Language Learning.

Methodology

Creative teachers continue to devise, refine and adapt strategies for language teaching. Elementary school language teachers need to be especially creative, since appropriate materials for K–5 are still in short supply. In the Connections goal area of the national standards, these elementary school teachers definitely have led the way. Ten years ago the integration of language and content from the curriculum was already firmly in place at the K–5 level, and by 2005 this integration has become well-established at all grade levels and into the college and university.

I like and admire the dynamism of the people in our profession, who take good ideas from every source and make them their own. In 1995, for example, TPR (Total Physical Response), a method developed by James Asher, was a popular strategy with dedicated and enthusiastic practitioners who discovered that they could use TPR keep their students active, engaged and using the target language. The Natural Approach (1983), developed by Stephen Krashen and Tracy Terrell, was based on many of the same ideas and influenced both language teachers and textbook writers.

In 2005 there is great excitement about TPRS (Total Physical Response Storytelling, or, more recently, Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling), a strategy developed by Blaine Ray. Ideas and success stories are exchanged on *Ñandú*, FLTeach and special listservs just for TPRS enthusiasts, in much the same way that TPR was energizing us ten years before. As with TPR and other good ideas, each practitioner contributes her or his own embellishments and experiences, and the potential of the strategy continues to grow.

Sometimes the surging popularity of a strategy is discounted as “just another bandwagon,” but I have long been a believer in bandwagons. I have learned a lot from climbing on them and giving them a test drive. They often challenge our assumptions and jiggle our paradigms; the creativity and enthusiasm generated by a bandwagon can encourage us to try something new, and perhaps to uncover new dimensions for our teaching. While there are surely dangers if we believe we have found the ultimate method or strategy, the insights gained from each new “bandwagon” can enrich our repertoire and help us to provide more effective (maybe even magical!) learning environments for our students. TPR was such a bandwagon for me, and I expect to experience similar challenges and stimulation from TPRS, as well as from other energizing approaches as they appear over the next ten years.

The Challenges Continue

This short list of changes over the past decade is certainly incomplete, and any such list would be outdated even before it could be printed. I might cite the movement in many states toward K–12 licensure for foreign language teachers, often without adding to the curriculum or providing substantive preparation and background in early language learning. I might have included backward design, or curriculum mapping, or performance assessment, or SOPA, SOPI, and ELLOPA tests of oral language proficiency. I might have mentioned the growth of two-way immersion programs, or the developing interest in Chinese and Arabic, or multiple intelligences and brain research. All of these present both challenges and opportunities for our profession, and for each of us individually.

Throughout my professional career I have felt a special

affection for and a close bond with early language teachers. Our community has been remarkably supportive of one another, generous with ideas and unselfish in leadership and service. Over the past ten years, and dating back to the 1987 beginning of NNELL, we have developed an organization that can guide our joint efforts toward the shared vision expressed on the editorial page of *Learning Languages 1:1* and every issue since: NNELL’s “commitment to promoting opportunities for all children to develop a high level of competence in at least one language and culture in addition to their own.”

Realizing this vision, in the face of the challenges and opportunities of the next ten years, will require the best efforts of every one of us. Let us pause to celebrate where we have been and where we are now. And then let us keep working together to build a multilingual, multicultural future for our children!

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Carol Ann Dahlberg was a founding member of NNELL and its first president (1991-92). She recently retired as Professor of Education at Concordia College, Moorhead, MN, where she taught methods courses for languages and for secondary education. She is co-author of *Languages and Children: Making the Match*, now in its 3d edition (2004), and she has received national awards from ACTFL and AATG. She works nationally and internationally as a consultant and workshop leader for early language learning.

Review of World Languages: A Chapter of the Curriculum Handbook

Jacque Bott Van Houten

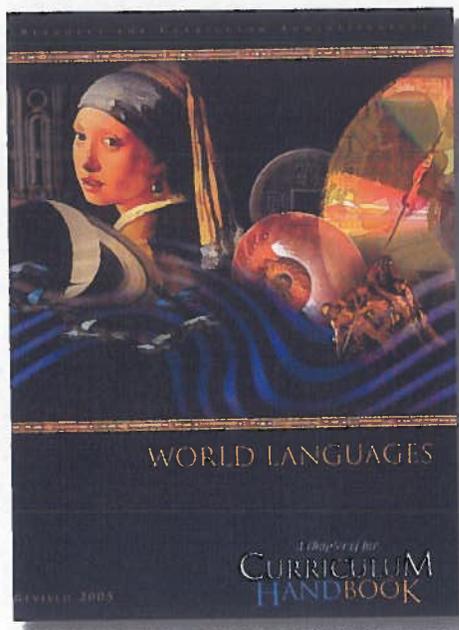
Don't be deceived by the traditional cover of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development's (ASCD) newest Curriculum Handbook "chapter," which is published as a stand-alone book, on World Languages. This 135-page revision is as up-to-date an account of the trends and challenges in world language instruction as one would expect to find in a book written by two leaders in the field. Paul Sandrock, American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) president, and Janis Jensen, former National Council of State Supervisors For Languages (NCSFL) president and current president of NNELL, have authored a practical and efficient resource book that world language educators of all levels, as well as administrators, will want to have.

Well aware of changing contexts, Sandrock and Jensen situate us in the redefined contours of world language teaching and learning. In this easy-to-read resource, they remind of us of the tools with which we are equipped, the networks that support us and the realistic expectations learners can aim to achieve. Finally, they prepare us for specific situations we may encounter by anticipating our questions and offering comprehensive resources—all from a learner-centered perspective.

Immediately, we're informed of a noticeable switch from "foreign" to "world languages" in the title of this educational mainstream publication. The term "world languages" is clearly defined, in the "Overview" section, as it relates to global issues, the local community and the classroom. The authors explain who is studying languages today, when language instruction should take place, what is being studied and how instruction is being delivered and assessed. Then, by referencing the 2001 No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act and drawing upon critically important advocacy literature, such as the National Association of State School Boards of Education's (NASBE) *The Complete Curriculum* (2003), von Zastrow's *Academic Atrophy* (2004) and other writings, they skillfully situate world languages in the context of American educational curriculum, before calling for a new framework for thinking about learning languages.

Readers will find the heart and soul of the book to be the

section on "Major Trends and Issues," where details are provided about national and international influences shaping world language trends. The discussion centers on student performance and underscores the importance of how the redefined roles of content, culture and the teacher can facilitate learning and document progress. There is notable emphasis on realistic goal setting within the framework of the three modes of communication, standards and the ACTFL Performance Guidelines (1998). Model performance assessments are described, as well as the *LinguaFolio* self-assessment/reflective learning tool, which serves to document students' progress (Moeller, Scow, & Van Houten, 2005). Language teachers from primary grades through the postsecondary level who adapt this approach to their instruction, may not only see improvements in learning, but will reap the benefit of a more natural curriculum articulation.



The discussion on content integration and focus and embedded culture will answer teachers' questions about how to address an ever-widening option of topics and what teachers can expect students to do in the target language. Teachers who are uncomfortable in their changing role may feel more certain after reading the book's descriptions about the sequence of rigor in instructional activities, the supportive role of textbooks and technology, the importance of a spiraled curriculum and, perhaps, in one of the clearest explanations I have ever read, the concept of backwards design.

"Flexibility" is an attribute the authors suggest administrators apply when making policy decisions about scheduling, delivery modes, combined multi-year courses, credit-giving, moving beyond a single linear sequence, multiple entry points, language maintenance and more. Once again, this accentuates putting the student at the center. When the learners' best interests are at the forefront, such decisions are more likely to be based on ethics rather than efficacy or economics.

In the "Question and Answer" section, attention is given to addressing specific learners' needs. Here, readers will find suggested adaptation strategies for exceptionally able

ELC²

Student teachers and children are making friends

students and students with disabilities, as well as considerations for heritage-language students. Charts of sample middle school schedule options, Bloom's Taxonomy for world language learning and an Instruction and Assessment Rubric will also prove beneficial to readers.

To be sure, this book does more than comment generally on world languages in the curriculum. It provides details, examples, clear explanations, advocacy tools and specific resources that will be invaluable to language educators of all levels. The only low note is that currently this book is only available to ASCD institutional members. Later in 2006, however, this book will be made available to the public.

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When designing a foreign language methods course, one important consideration should be the manner in which theory is connected with practical experiences, thus giving students an opportunity to use newly-gained knowledge in an actual classroom setting. This is even more essential when it comes to teaching young children. Most students who take a FLES methods course have never taught children before. Moreover, there are often mixed feelings: some students are eager to work with children, while others have a high level of anxiety.

Most children in Delaware's public schools are not exposed to foreign languages until they reach the seventh or eighth grade. By that time they have passed *the critical period*: the years before the onset of adolescence when children are much more likely to acquire native-like proficiency and pronunciation. As a result of this late introduction of foreign languages, learning a different linguistic code becomes a struggle. Foreign languages appear to be a sudden and disconnected "add-on" to the core curriculum and are often considered a waste of time.

Another aspect of this dilemma is the lack of suitable teaching/practicum placements for those foreign language pedagogy students who are seeking certification in FLES. A practicum in the form of an after-school FLEX program can serve both the students, who get a unique learning opportunity, and the children, who are exposed to a foreign language in a relaxed and fun environment.

Background

In the fall of 2003, the University of Delaware (UD) announced the fall 2004 opening of its Early Learning Center (ELC), a state of the art child care facility serving children age 6 weeks to 12 years in various programs and settings. At the same time, the Department of Foreign Languages called for a major overhaul of its existing FLES methods course. An idea was born.

The concept was to have foreign languages for children taught by language students, thus creating a mutually beneficial cooperation between the Department and the ELC. In the spring of 2004, the UD Global Citizenship Fellows Program awarded \$1000 to the initiative in order to purchase instructional materials. The plan was to introduce an after-school Spanish program that would run 60 minutes, once a week, for the duration of the fall semester. The students tak-

Early Language Contact *at the* Early Learning Center

around the world and getting to know themselves better.

Iris Busch and Erin Blackson

ing the FLES methods course would work with the group of after-school fifth graders at the ELC.

Based on the following three criteria, Spanish was chosen as the language of instruction. First, all but one student in the methods course were Spanish majors. (The one exception was studying Italian.) Additionally, the largest non-English speaking community in Newark speaks Spanish. It was safe to assume that several children at the ELC had Spanish-speaking family members. Finally, Spanish is offered in all of Delaware's junior and senior high schools.

guage learning. It was crucial for the student teachers involved to make a great first impression upon these children in their first Spanish classes so that they would grasp the importance of learning languages and hopefully continue their foreign language education throughout their lives.

Although the curriculum and the lesson plans provided consistency for the content taught, the fact that the children would be exposed to many different teaching styles was also a factor of concern.

The Course

The course "Methods of Teaching Foreign Languages in the Elementary Schools" is a three-credit course designed for both graduate and undergraduate students. The course meets for three hours once a week. The textbook is *Languages and Children: Making the Match* by Curtain and Dahlberg (2004), which provides the framework for the course with its historical, theoretical and practical elements. In addition to addressing the various chapters of the textbook, the fall 2004 course included the practicum portion at the ELC. Each student taught and observed twice during the 15-week course. For the teaching sessions, the students worked with a partner and were supervised by the methods course instructor and classroom teachers. During every session at the

ELC, four students were working: two teaching and two observing. This required the students to sign up for four Thursdays during the semester in addition to the regular course meeting time on Tuesdays. They needed to complete their teaching sessions after having observed the session taught the week before. Moreover, their second teaching session needed to occur considerably later than their first one. To accommodate this, the graduate students volunteered to teach the second and third sessions after having observed the first session, which was taught by the methods course instructor.

Teaching was based on a curriculum and lesson plans (provided by the methods course teacher) specifically designed



The Challenge

When the ELC opened its doors in the fall of 2004, not all of the programs were up and running. As it turned out, in September, only four fifth graders were enrolled for after-school care at the ELC. Furthermore, there were only a total of 15 school-age children altogether. Nevertheless, it was decided to start the Spanish program and to include all of the eligible and willing school age-children, ranging in age from 6 to 11 years.

For the majority of the children, this would be their first encounter with a second language, an experience that could potentially shape their life-long perceptions of foreign lan-

for the program (short term FLEX, ten-year-olds and their life experiences and interests, focus on listening and speaking, lots of culture and hands-on activities). Although the students were provided with the appropriate lesson plans, they were required to make necessary adjustments and to use their own creativity, to give the lesson plan their own "handwriting."

A major part of the experience was the time for reflection after the teaching session. Students were asked to provide a written protocol about their preparation, methods and techniques used, as well as an overall assessment of their own work and of the children's reactions and participation. The students who observed the sessions also provided feedback and handed in an observation report. Each meeting of the methods course started with a discussion of the ELC class. This dialogue was particularly valuable, since it allowed all students in the course an insight into each teaching session of the ELC, and guaranteed a level of necessary consistency for the children.

A Graduate Student's Perspective

During the fall of 2004, I had the privilege to participate in the short-term FLEX program at the Early Learning Center (ELC) in Newark, Delaware. The children at the ELC were always excited and enthusiastic to have visitors in their classroom. They would greet us with an upbeat exclamation of *¡Hola!*—our introductory phrase each time we arrived. All the material that was taught and all the activities were centered on the theme "Making a Friend in a Spanish-Speaking Country." Thus, the focus was on making introductions, identifying and using colors, describing states of being, describing themselves, as well as various aspects of the target culture. For a typical lesson the children were seated on a rug in the classroom. The children transitioned to worktables at the front of the room for activities such as drawing and craft projects, e.g., creating a passport (complete with a real passport photo) for a future trip to a Spanish-speaking country, or writing a letter to a Spanish-speaking friend. When planning an ELC lesson, we tried to think of creative ways to engage all children, since our goal was to make this experience fun for them and to make it appeal to six- and eleven-year-olds alike. For example, when integrating mathematics into the lesson through counting and graphing the children's ages, we designed a human graph. Each age was written on an index card and placed across the x-axis, and children who fell into that specific age category stated their ages in the target language and took their places in the graph behind the appropriate index cards.

Two major characters were utilized throughout the course: Pablo, the Chihuahua (particularly important for the younger children), and Yordi, a ten-year-old boy from the Dominican Republic. Pablo was introduced very early on through the use of giant stuffed Chihuahua and a song, *Un perro grande tengo yo* (I have a big dog) set to the tune of the childhood favorite, *B-I-N-G-O*. The children loved to sing this song, and it was useful in keeping order during transitions. In an effort to introduce Latin American culture, Yordi was presented via several video clips depicting his everyday life. Among other activities, the children were asked to compare their lives with Yordi's, and to develop Venn diagrams. The children wrote him letters and he "responded" with some help from our coordinator, Dr. Iris Busch.



One of the final lessons focused on a virtual field trip to Mexico. The children received a letter from Pablo the Chihuahua, inviting them to visit. They boarded an "airplane," passed through "customs" with their "passports," and were able to visit Pablo. The simulated plane ride, passing through customs and entering Mexico made the experience very realistic for the children. I am hopeful this will inspire them to continue with their study of Spanish and eventually to travel to a country where Spanish is spoken.

Our sessions at the ELC came to an end in December 2004. To celebrate the fantastic progress the students had made, Dr. Busch helped us to organize a *fiesta*. The children walked the red carpet to receive a certificate of participation

and a small gift, played with a piñata that “Yordi had sent” in a big package, and danced to salsa and merengue music. The fiesta was the perfect way to reward the students for completing the course and continue to integrate the Spanish theme. All children went home with a thick folder that was filled with all of their writing, drawing and craft projects.

As a result of the practical experience I gained in the ELC program, I was able to understand the need for advocacy for early language learning, something I would have never ascertained through simple book and classroom instruction. Throughout the semester, I witnessed a transformation of the ELC children. Although some of the children seemed shy and skeptical in the beginning, soon all children were wholly engaged in our lessons. They were enthusiastic about learning and trying out new things. The children practically jumped out of their seats to help a teacher or answer a question. Their reactions were measurably different from the majority of undergraduates I have taught, most of whom take Spanish only to fulfill a requirement. Since the college environment is usually calmer, more routine and even more predictable, the children definitely challenged me as an educator through their inquisitive, energetic and persistent spirits. It was impressive to hear their almost perfect pronunciation; they repeated words and sentences without hesitation, retaining them effortlessly. Learning Spanish seemed to empower them. The ELC children were afforded the opportunity to learn Spanish and hopefully discovered yet another avenue in which they could express themselves and hone their talents. Every child should be so fortunate.

Conclusion

At the end of the semester, all students and children agreed that the Spanish program had been a huge success and were sad to say *Adiós*. The practicum students considered the ELC experience invaluable to their education and regretted not having had more teaching and observation sessions. Even those students who hesitated in the beginning felt comfortable around the children and thoroughly enjoyed working with them by the time their second teaching session approached. The fact that the methods course and the practicum went hand in hand and depended on each other allowed the students to immediately try out, implement and reflect upon their newly gained knowledge and skills. The ELC children never seemed to have a problem with the ever-changing student teachers. In fact, it was just the opposite. They were always excited to greet the students and proudly used their Spanish by asking, *¿Cómo te llamas?* (What’s your name?). The staff at the ELC kept telling us that the children walked into the classroom on any given day and greeted ev-

eryone with *¡Hola!*, and that they spoke and sang in Spanish just for fun. The Spanish class created a sense of community for the group, something that made “our children” special. This was of particular importance in a center that had just recently opened its doors.

One unforeseen challenge was the classroom setup. The class was held in a multi-purpose room where the children did their homework, ate, played, took naps and kept their personal belongings. The student teachers sometimes lost the attention of the children who became distracted by the objects displayed in the room, or by parents arriving early to pick up children. The next FLES methods class will be offered in the spring of 2006. By then, the class at the ELC will be more homogenous, allowing the practicum students to target one particular age group. Hopefully, a special classroom will be available for the Spanish class.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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A FRESH LOOK

Janet L. Glass

“Where can you find rhyme, history, magic and movement in a ritual that is centuries old?”

(Glass, J.L., 1994, p.4)

This question began an article in FLES News in the Winter 1994-95 issue. More than a decade ago, I was determined to use materials that were authentic and age-appropriate in my Spanish elementary program. Few such products were commercially available, so I took the initiative to create my own. A Dodge Foundation-National Endowment for the Humanities fellowship funded my trip to Cuernavaca, Mexico, to videotape children engaged in “*rondas*,” songs with accompanying movement or games. Since then, hundreds of children in my classroom have learned to play “*Víbora de la mar*” and other games.

In this anniversary issue of Learning Languages, what better time to take a fresh look at a ten-year-old project and evaluate the results of this grant. What has it meant to my students and to my own professional growth? How have the interests stated in the article interacted with changes in the field? In what ways were my goals met or unmet? What observations still stand? What more needs to be done?

Looking back to 1994, I can see that my attention to authentic materials and culture were on a parallel course with the foreign language education field in general. The ACT-FL Standards for Foreign Language Education were being shaped to include culture as one of its central goals and the term “authenticity” was frequently in play. How this could apply to the elementary classroom was still in debate. Could original works be adapted and still be authentic? Given that many elementary programs had so little instructional time, how could we justify teaching cultural vocabulary that was not of practical use in children’s lives? I grappled with these questions as I observed the children learning the game songs. I looked for how much they enjoyed the *rondas*, how much of the vocabulary they acquired, and what they learned and understood about the culture from participating in the game songs. Some of the games, such as “Listones” took so much effort to set up for so little learning that I dropped them. Others, such as “*Víbora de la mar*,” “*Arroz con leche*,” and “*La rueda de San Miguel*,” became staples in my classes. The movements seemed to be fun for the students. The rhyme made the words catchy; the fantasy engaged their imagination, and the themes could be made to fit into a thematic unit or connect to another lesson.

For example, one opportunity for cross-curricular integration came when a third-grade teacher had her students read “The Most Beautiful Place in the World.” The characters in the book are Guatemalan and the grandmother makes a

living by cooking and selling “*arroz con leche*” (rice pudding). At the same time the students discussed the book in their language arts class, one of the parents brought in rice pudding for the class to eat. In Spanish class, I then taught the students the song and movements to “*Arroz con leche*,” a Guatemalan version of this circle game. Through the lyrics they learned what skills were then considered important in



a wife “*que sepa coser, que sepa bordar*” (who knows how to sew, who knows how to embroider). They also learned that royalty was a force in society “*yo soy la viudita, la hija del rey*” (I’m the little widow, daughter of the king). The children enjoyed being the one chosen to stand in the center and to be able to choose, eyes closed, the next one to stand in the circle. Although I did shorten the song, I still considered it to be original and authentic. I did not expect the students to remember or understand all the words. Instead, I selected out the vocabulary that I thought would be most useful and planned additional practice around it. For me as a non-native speaker, being able to offer *rondas*, songs, games, rhymes or poems from the Latino culture of children, significantly expanded the teaching resources immediately available to me.

As this repertoire of *rondas* enhanced my professional growth as a teacher and benefited the learners in my class-

room, it also was the aim of the granting institutions that the information be disseminated and benefit the field at large. I took this responsibility seriously and it marked the beginning of my role in trying to inspire my fellow teachers to look for culture-rich materials. In order to put the *rondas* in a context, I designed thematic units around children's literature and used songs, poems, *rondas*, games and rhymes to expose the students to a cultural theme while teaching communication skills and literacy in the target language. Never losing sight of proficiency as a goal, I tried to model these thematic units for teachers. I advocated adapting original works and tried to help those with scant resources and limited time. Through institutes held in New Jersey, presentations at regional and national language conferences, contributions to LISTSERV lists and as a regular presenter at the National FLES Institute of Texas, I have been fortunate to be able to share my own growth and exchange ideas with dedicated professionals. My professional growth as a mentor was one of the unexpected results of my passion for this and other cultural projects.

Another sharing took place on a recent trip to Mexico. I was chatting with a driver on the long road from San Miguel to Guanajuato and told him about the *rondas* project. He lit up with interest and nostalgia as we sang the songs and recited the rhymes together in the car. I told him that I had found that Mexican children were losing bits of their history to Disney and other contemporary influences. He agreed and said that his own children probably did not know the rhymes and songs we had just sung. In my original piece, I speculated that the *rondas* were "slowly disappearing after centuries of life" (Glass, J.L., 1994, p. 4). Despite anecdotal evidence of this in Mexico, there is very good news. There has been an explosion of authentic materials available since the article was written. The Internet alone, with its capabilities of storing and moving text, audio and video files, has already preserved much. In addition, there is a great deal more available now through publishing companies, book and media importers and foreign language resource centers. Access has only increased as the field has focused on its importance.

In taking a fresh look at the project a decade ago, I reflected on whether my goals had been met. I had set out to videotape and research children's *rondas*, teach them to my students and share them with my colleagues. These goals had been accomplished. However, what "enduring understandings" had my students come away with in the ten years of teaching them culturally authentic pieces? What big question did it answer? What were the students able to do as a result? How did I know? In framing the learning goals this way it made teaching these materials a later step in the planning. A first step would be to hook the students into wondering what was fun for Latino children to play. Next I would devise a performance assessment. This would aim to demonstrate the understanding that children growing up in Mexico play games that are centuries old and are specific to the history in Latino culture. In that respect, they are different from U.S. games. However, Mexican children enjoy rhyme, movement and exercising their imaginations. In that respect they are the same as children and games everywhere. Exactly what that assessment would look like calls for future planning. As the language profession turns its attention to evaluation, I expect there will be more and more models for performance assessments. These models will be simulations that show that students will be able to transfer what they know to a new setting. That setting will ideally reflect some aspect of behavior in the real world.

So now we know where we can find "rhyme, history, magic and movement in a centuries-old tradition." We also have a wellspring of other cultural materials from the Internet and media importers. Our next challenge is to shape our learning goals with precision and align them with compelling evidence of the students' performance. Authentic materials are an essential part of the next steps but, on taking a fresh look, so are authentic tasks for our students.

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Sample video of the *rondas* available to NNELL members at www.NNELL.org



Janet L. Glass (jguanaj@aol.com) teaches grades 3-5 at Dwight-Englewood School, NJ. She has been teaching K-12 Spanish for 30 years. She also taught Second Language Acquisition, Spanish Children's Literature and Teaching Methods at the graduate level. Janet has received three NEH grants and awards for Creative Teaching, the Teaching of Culture and Outstanding Contribution to Foreign Language Education. She is a frequent presenter at conferences.

Asking Permission in Class

Jessica Haxhi



Overview

During FLES classes, students inevitably have to use the bathroom or pencil sharpener, or get a tissue or drink. At the beginning of every school year to introduce and review these expressions in Japanese, we use a skit in which the teacher plays a student. The more dramatic you are in playing the student, the better!

National Student Standards Addressed

Communication

1.1 Students begin to learn to ask permission to address common needs in the classroom.

1.2 Students understand and interpret the teacher's dramatization of asking permission for common classroom needs in the skit and understand words for classroom items relating to those needs.

Objective

Students will begin to become familiar with how to ask permission such as "May I get a tissue?"

Assessment

Informal observation/comprehension checks: Do students comprehend the main idea of the skit (asking permission)?

Materials

Japanese/English sign indicating the language being used in the classroom (already introduced).

1. Cards, each with a picture: a toilet, a tissue box, a pencil sharpener and a water fountain. Put the toilet picture on the board or wall. If you don't have a drinking fountain or sink in your room, put the drinking fountain picture on the wall also. You need a real tissue box and pencil sharpener in your room, as always!
2. Pictures of school in Japan or the target culture.
3. Student desk and chair in the front of the room with a paper and pencil on it.

Procedure

1. Show pictures of a school in Japan and tell students: We are at school in Japan. We speak Japanese (show Japanese/English sign).
2. Establish the words "teacher" and "student" by pointing to students in school pictures. Then, point to each of your students and say "student." Point to yourself and say "teacher." Repeat.
3. Declare that you are now a "student." (I usually put my hair in a ponytail on top of my head as I "become" the student.)

4. Classroom Expressions skit as follows: (Act out needing each thing very dramatically.)

- a. Sit down at the prepared desk (perhaps flinging your hair like a student might). Begin working as though you were a student. Write something on the paper, then start coughing. Raise your hand and in a student voice use the expression "May I get a drink?" Halfway cover your mouth and change your voice to that of an adult and have the "teacher" say "Yes, you may." Go and get a real drink or pretend to at your picture of the fountain. Return to your seat.
 - b. Write something on your paper. Slowly begin to fidget, as if you need to go to the bathroom, until you can't "stand" it anymore! Raise your hand and use the expression "May I use the toilet?" Halfway cover your mouth and change your voice to have the "teacher" say "Yes, you may." Go to the toilet picture and pretend to flush and wash your hands. Return to your "student" seat.
 - c. Write something on your paper and begin to sniffle. Sneeze loudly. Raise hand and use the expression "May I get a tissue?" Halfway cover your mouth and change your voice to have the "teacher" say "Yes, you may." Take a tissue and make a blowing sound as though you were blowing your nose. Get up and throw the tissue away. Return to your seat.
 - d. Write something on your paper and break your pencil. Raise hand and use the expression, "May I use the pencil sharpener?" Halfway cover your mouth and change your voice to have the "teacher" say "Yes, you may." Model how you would like students to use the pencil sharpener. (I have a 7-second limit on an electric one). Return to your seat.
 - e. Pretend to be bored (wave to kids, play with your hair). Use each expression to ask permission to again get a drink, etc. Halfway cover your mouth and change your voice to have the "teacher" say "No you may not." Pretend that you are upset about it by your expression, but you continue to do your work.
 - f. Actually need a tissue or other by sneezing or breaking your pencil. Use the appropriate permission request. Halfway cover your mouth and change your voice to have the "teacher" say "Yes, you may."
5. Take a bow, and become the "teacher" again (take your hair down) and go over the new class expressions using the picture cards of water fountain, toilet, tissue, and pencil sharpener.

Jessica Lee Haxhi (pictured above) has been teaching Japanese for 13 years. She is currently teaching grades 3-5 and Pre-kindergarten at Maloney Interdistrict Magnet School in Waterbury, CT. She is past president of the National Council of Japanese Language Teachers (NCJLT). Jessica has a B.A. in Comparative Area Studies from Duke University, a M.A. in Education from St. Joseph College, CT.

The Year of Languages at Washington Primary School: Promoting World Languages Through Collaboration

Virginia Staugaitis

I am a FLES teacher in a small public elementary school in western Connecticut. Working together last year with classroom teachers, parents and members of the community, I was able to use the national public relations campaign of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), *2005: Year of Languages*, as a vehicle to expand students' learning opportunities, achieve professional development requirements and promote the value and importance of world languages and the FLES program.

Each year teachers in our school district are required to submit professional development goals for the upcoming school year. Collaboration with colleagues is strongly encouraged whenever possible. Since I am the only FLES teacher in our building it has been necessary over the years to partner with classroom teachers when selecting such goals and planning special learning projects. This requirement has actually been helpful in establishing a sense of partnership and support for FLES. The active engagement of classroom teachers is, I believe, an essential ingredient for success.

Over the years I had had a number of very positive experiences working with our first grade teacher (Katie O'Neill) on collaborative projects, including those associated with professional development goals. Given our history of collaboration and her special talents and interest in world languages, I anticipated that focusing on the *Year of Languages* as a project and as a professional goal would be both exciting and fun. When I approached her, Katie jumped at the opportunity to work together.

Together, we decided to establish a number of different ways by which all of our students could actively participate in the nationwide celebration of *2005: Year of Languages* throughout the entire 2004-2005 school year. In addition to Spanish, which is taught to all students (K-5) on a daily basis, we set out to introduce each grade to an another world language and culture each month. During September we selected a target language for each grade level based upon resources and special talents readily available within the school and from members of our community. For example, one of our third grade teachers speaks Portuguese and was able to introduce students to different aspects of the culture of Portugal. Two parents shared their experiences with the culture of Brazil to enhance the lessons on Portuguese.

The target languages selected by grade level and month for our year-long celebration included:

- Kindergarten: Spanish (May)
 - Grade 1: French (October-November)
 - Grade 2: Chinese (February)
 - Grade 3: Portuguese (April)
 - Grade 4: German (December)
 - Grade 5: Italian (January)
 - Grades K-5: American Sign Language (March)
- At the beginning of each month as a new language was introduced, "guest speakers" were invited to come to the school and to talk about their culture. Sometimes they would read a simple picture book in the target language and/or teach a song or even teach flamenco dance steps. They would also introduce words, greetings, colors, numbers and phrases from a "pre-made packet" of grade-level appropriate language and cultural materials that we provided and that they then gave to the students to take home. It was not at all unusual to have teachers from other grades bring their classes to learn about additional languages. Teachers were as excited as students about our project!

Katie and I divided up responsibilities for organizing activities based upon our interests, strengths and talents. This approach facilitated the management of our year-long task. For example, I recruited the guest speakers and took care of the publicity (notifying teachers, parents and the community of events and activities). Katie created colorful bulletin boards and engaging morning announcements in the language of the month.

Some of our activities included:

- **Celebrating Languages 2004-2005 Bulletin Board.** The bulletin board located at the main entrance to the school highlighted the target language each month and included a map of the country, two pictures of children speaking "hello" and "welcome" and the flag and cultural pictures (usually obtained from the internet). In addition, a second bulletin board was decorated each month with artwork from Katie's first grade students and included special phrases from the target language.
- **YOL T-shirts.** In September, students and staff were offered the opportunity to purchase special t-shirts that celebrated the *Year of Languages*.
- **Morning Announcements.** Every morning selected students would greet the school over the PA in the language of the month and read a "Did you know?" fact about the country and the language being explored that month.
- **Words and Phrases.** Each month, students learned to say words, common phrases, numbers, colors and greetings in our target languages.
- **Public Library.** Throughout the year, we worked with the local public library to make available books in other languages and post notices about our "guest speakers" as

a means of inviting the community to join us in our celebration.

- **Door Decorations.** In January, teachers decorated their classroom doors to reflect the culture of their target language using flags, posters, etc.
- **Special Subject Area Teachers.** Special subject area teachers conducted activities throughout the year.
- **Music:** A spring 2004 concert in which songs from different countries were performed by students helped to kick off the YOL celebration. All students also learned to sing “Hello to All the Children of the World” for our June 2005 culminating activity.
- **Physical Education:** The theme for our 2005 Field Day was “Adventures around the World: An International Field Day”. Games that were representative of different countries were enjoyed by students, including *jai-alai*, *bocci*, catching the dragon’s tail, car racing, etc.
- **Art:** Students made cultural art projects and posters for the YOL which that were placed throughout the school.
- **Parent/Teachers’ Organization (PTO).** We collaborated with the Fine Arts Committee of the PTO to sponsor special assemblies such as Hansel and Gretel (Germany), Chinese Dancers and Caribbean musicians.

Publicity for our YOL celebration included newspaper articles, the principal’s monthly school newsletters, flyers about our guest speakers, announcements on the local educational television channel and the state language organization’s (CT COLT) website.

It is important to note that our “Year of Language” project evolved over time. Not all of the activities we had originally planned came to fruition but things we had not originally thought about took place. For example, I had started to take some limited photographs of guest speakers and bulletin boards. It soon became evident however, that photos were an excellent means of documentation of the project (“a picture is worth a thousand words”). More and more photographs were taken and then blended together with music from around the world into an engaging photo DVD that we presented to the entire student body as an end of year tribute to the students, teachers, parents and community members. The effect of the DVD was incredible! It brought students, teachers, staff

and community together in a shared experience. It promoted the FLES program and reinforced the importance of learning and appreciating different languages and cultures. Most importantly, it demonstrated the power of collaboration and partnership.



Looking back I have asked myself the following? Was it difficult at times? Yes. Was it hectic? Sometimes. Was it exciting and fun? Without a doubt. Was it worthwhile? Definitely! And, yes, I achieved my professional development goal for the year—and much, much more.



Virginia Staugaitis is a Spanish FLES teacher at Washington Primary School, Washington, CT. She received her BA Degree in Italian and Spanish at St. John’s University, NY and holds a Connecticut Professional Teacher’s Certificate in Elementary Education. She has taught both regular elementary and world language classes and has presented workshops on Early Language Learning at State and Regional Conferences. Virginia is a former Board member of the CT Council of Language Teachers and served as the NNELL State Representative of Connecticut. Currently, she is the Northeast Regional Representative for NNELL.

WWW/Watch

Ingrid Pufahl

The past decade has seen a dramatic increase in early foreign language instruction throughout the country, and yet, sharing ideas with and getting feedback from other colleagues in the profession can still be difficult. A FLES teacher in rural Maine sums up the feelings of many of her colleagues: "I teach by myself, and though I have colleagues I can call, I sometimes feel isolated." Another teacher, who has taught Spanish for years in middle school, is asked to teach Kindergarteners and doesn't know where to start. Both are clamoring for advice from peers who understand their challenges and can help them with specific suggestions. Fortunately, communication tools such as LISTSERV® lists (see note below) may provide a timely and convenient space for online interaction and the collection of information on a broad range of issues relevant to the profession.

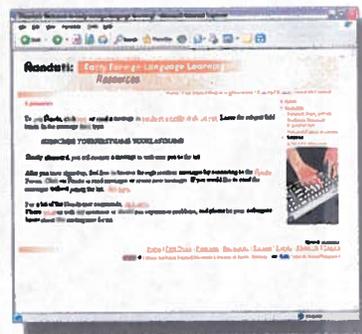
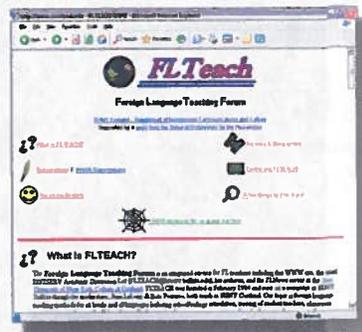
LISTSERVs, or electronic mailing lists, allow subscribers to use those lists to share messages through e-mail or the Web. Subscribers post a message to the list via e-mail or through a webpage, which is then distributed to all other subscribers or list members. Similarly, replies are sent to members' e-mail boxes, or they can be read online. Fadia Hadim, a 3-6 grade French teacher in suburban Cleveland, OH, identifies five typical uses of Listservs: 1) to share teaching strategies and ideas; 2) to receive feedback on how those strategies were implemented and impressions on how they worked; 3) to solicit and receive advice on issues related to everyday practice, ranging from classroom management to (early) language learning advocacy; 4) to become informed and keep abreast of the current developments in policies that affect the profession; and 5) to share and reflect on successes and frustrations within a community of practice.

Two e-mail lists that are of particular interest to foreign language educators are Ñandú and FLTeach. Ñandú is part of an integrated resource for K-8 language learning that includes the Ñandutí website. The majority of its 680 members are K-5 foreign language specialists (primarily Spanish), in addition to a very active group of preschool language teachers, school administrators, university teachers and graduate students. Topics usually revolve around teaching strategies and classroom activities for specific content (alphabet, animals), locating teaching materials (songs, crafts, books, websites), questions such as how to advocate early language programs, issues related to language learning pedagogy (native speakers in the FLES class, special-needs children, discipline, story-telling and TPRS) and recommendations

for professional development (summer programs, teacher certification).

Because postings do not require prior approval by the moderator, responses are sometimes instantaneous. As the moderator of Ñandú, I am always impressed by how quickly and with how much detail members will respond to each others' questions, how they share their opinions, their frustrations, and their successes. The online archive, which can be browsed and searched without subscription, organizes messages in chronological order by date, author and subject line, including all replies. This archive provides an alternative way to read postings without subscribing to the e-mail list.

FLTeach is an integrated resource that includes a LISTSERV list, archives, a news bulletin and a website. Its over 4,500 members are teachers at all levels, administrators and professionals interested in foreign language teaching. This broader audience is reflected in the topics discussed: foreign language teaching methods for all levels and all languages including school/college articulation, training of student teachers, classroom activities, curriculum and syllabus design. More academic discussions about language structure and literature are also present. Although Spanish dominates, teachers of other languages are well represented (German, French, Latin, Italian). In addition to its searchable online archive (by date, subject, key word and author), FLTeach has a terrific FAQs section. This section contains a number of particularly useful messages from previous common discussion threads, including advice to new teachers, oral participation, the first day of school, class size, TPRS, etc. FLTeach requires approval of messages by the list moderators, Jean LeLoop or Robert Ponterio, both at SUNY Cortland, New York.



*The term LISTSERV is a registered trademark name for L-Soft's computer program used to manage e-mail lists (www.lsoft.com). L-Soft discourages the use of the term LISTSERV in a generic way. To refer to generic lists, use the terms LISTSERV lists or e-mail lists instead.

Related Resources

FLTeach: www.cortland.edu/flteach/

Listservs around the World: www.lsoft.com/lists/listref.html

Ñandú: www.cal.org/earlylang/nandu.htm

Ñandutí: www.cal.org/earlylang/

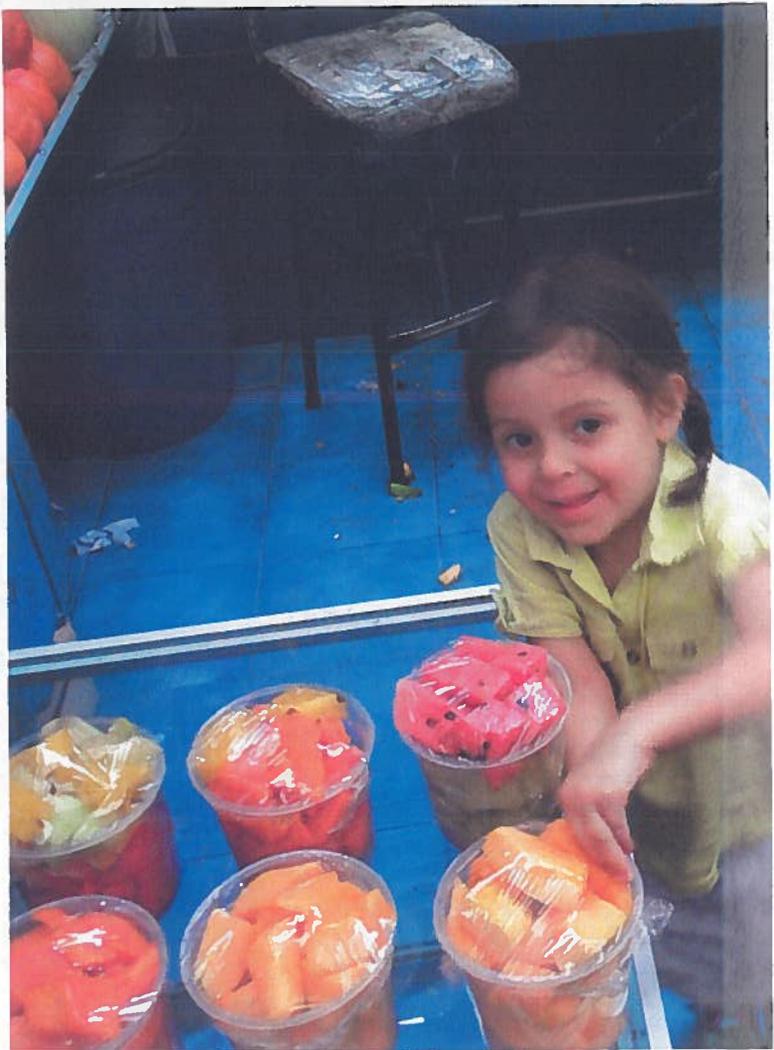
Lesson Planning for Once-Per-Week Spanish

Linda Smrokowski

If you have ever taken a leave from teaching, you might or might not have had a chance to reflect on the job you just left. I left Holy Trinity School's once-per-week second language program after nine years to spend a year overseeing the renovation of our home. The year stretched into two years, which gave me time to consider which aspects of my teaching at Holy Trinity were best suited to a once or twice per week program. As of fall 2005, I am now in a new school teaching Spanish five days per week to 7th and 8th graders. Because many once or twice per week programs continue to exist and many devoted teachers find themselves in these programs facing a particular set of challenges, I hope to share ideas that worked for me at Holy Trinity. One such idea is to write very detailed lesson plans.

- Use the top page (p.1) for writing your step-by-step plan. Use the inside left page (p.2) to note special information you need to refer to during class, e.g. questions for an oral quiz or detailed instructions for a game. The inside right page (p.3) is for two sets of notes, one titled "Next time" which are your notes for any activities to include in the next session. The second set, "Soon" is for your ideas for

Your students might not be seniors enrolled in a college seminar but planning a lesson for a once per week language class is like preparing for a once per week college course. You want to squeeze in as much learning as possible. To keep continuity from session to session, you want to remember how you phrased things the last time. A week is a long time in terms of what the teacher as well as the students can forget. You don't want to forget to bring to class any teaching materials you need. If the room is unavailable until the start of class, you need ways to quickly set up the learning environment. Let's assume that you teach your exploratory language "seminar" once or twice a week in an elementary or a middle school. You most likely teach without a textbook and therefore need tricks for keeping a vast array of papers and props organized.



I suggest it is worth the time to write a very detailed lesson plan, especially if you teach several "seminars" to different classes during the week and need to keep a lot of lessons straight. My lesson plans are so detailed that for the "target language only" portion of a class, I practically write a script. This way I present things just as I intend to present them. I want my beginning students to hear mostly familiar Spanish prompts from me, without too much *ad lib*. Another reason for writing a detailed plan is that, unlike college, my school has no passing time between periods. The classroom is occupied by another teacher until the start of class and so I need a checklist to help me set up quickly.

Here are some tips for an effective lesson plan:

- Devote a single sheet of paper to each class period, card stock if possible. Fold it in half and place the long side up and down. It is now a mini-book with four pages: a top page, 2 inside pages and a back page.

activities that you want to include over the next several weeks. These notes you jot down as thoughts strike you, either while writing the lesson plan or right after teaching the class. If it's nearly a week before you write the next plan, you'll find you have all your thoughts right there at

hand and next week's plan should take shape quickly.

- Devise a standard heading for the top page such as:

Grade 6
E 1 17 de febrero del 2004
Session #24
Day #138



The session number reminds me to be realistic. Although it's mid-February, we have only had 24 class meetings so far this year. The "Day #" means what day it is in the school year. I keep track of this because I write the number on the board to use in our opening conversation routine.

- Write close to the heading any reminders to individual students, e.g., "Carlos to schedule make-up exam."
- Now list top to bottom the activities of the lesson. Use quote marks or highlighting to indicate any target language remarks that you want to be sure to phrase a particular way.
- Next to some activities you might want to draw a box

inside which you write word for word any data that you need to copy onto the chalkboard right before class. If, instead, the information is on a poster that you've prepared ahead of time, then draw a graphic symbol or icon of the

poster—this reminds you to slap it up on the wall before class and also to refer to it while you're teaching.

- Put a code such as "AP" next to any of the boxed-in information or poster icons to mean that you will require students to copy this information verbatim into their apuntes (notes). Putting "AP" on your plan also reminds you during set-up to write that same "AP" code on the board next to the information. This will then cue students to copy down only those items with the "AP" code.
- Turn the top page sideways. Along one of the long edges, write or draw any items that you need to have available in the classroom for this particular class. I made up icons for CDs, audiocassettes, books, handouts and maps so that my eye can quickly scan whether I have set out the needed items. For example, in a typical class I might need two audiocassettes, one map, one set of handouts and one set of graded papers to return.

As with anything you practice repeatedly, writing highly detailed lesson plans becomes easy and fast. Once it is routine, you will find that you save time, wrack your brain less and forget fewer things. You will also conduct a smoother class. By filing away each plan chronologically, you'll have a valuable record to consult when it comes time to plan next year's lessons.

Linda Smrokowski studied foreign language methods under Constance Knop at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, earning a B.S. in Education, an M.A. in French, and many graduate hours in German and Spanish. She is currently teaching middle school Spanish and would love an excuse to learn Chinese. She worked for IBM in the 1980s and now has three children at home, one with special needs.

Spanish But Once a Week — ¡Caramba!

While on a leave after nine years of teaching, I had time to reflect on my own practice, which had to meet the challenges particular to a once- or twice-per-week program. A visit to another school is a great way to find ideas that you can use in your own classroom. I invite you to take a virtual tour of Holy Trinity School's exploratory Spanish classes online at www.NNELL.org.

This feature, by Linda Smrokowski, is available at the NNELL website, www.NNELL.org.



J. David Edwards, Ph.D.

JNCL-NCLIS Executive Director

The Senate Appropriations Committee has completed work on their Education spending bill in July 2005. Unlike the Administration and the House of Representatives which would eliminate the Foreign Language Assistance Program (FLAP), the Senate Committee heartily approved \$25 million for FLAP. This would be a \$7.1 million increase over present funding. Report language notes that the increase is to go to "school districts with poverty rates of 15% or more, to help the highest-need elementary schools within such districts establish foreign language instruction programs." Funding for international education and foreign language studies of \$106.8 million is identical to last year's appropriations and the Presidential and House requests (Title VI is \$92.5 million; Fulbright-Hays is \$12.7 million and IPPP is \$1.6 million).

Other programs that have been level-funded or close include: Fund for the Improvement of Post-secondary Education (\$162.2 million); Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need (\$30.4 million); English Language Acquisition (\$675.8 million); and Javits Gifted and Talented (\$11 million). Improving Teacher Quality was level-funded (\$2.9 billion). Civic Education received a slight increase (\$30 million), Star Schools was increased slightly as well (\$21 million) and Educational Technology was cut by \$71 million to \$425 million. For a chart comparing the President, House and Senate appropriations, please visit the JNCL-NCLIS website. It is expected that a conference to reconcile differences will take place in September.

The House Education and the Workforce Committee finally completed work on reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, HR 609, the College Access and Opportunity Act of 2005 which includes HR 509, The International Studies in Higher Education Act (Title VI) previously approved by the Subcommittee on Select Education. It passed by a party-line vote of 27 Republicans to 20 Democrats. As reported earlier, a number of improvements recommended by the language, international education, and higher education communities were accepted. However, the final bill still retains an International Higher Education Advisory Board, although somewhat modified and toned down.

A number of amendments dealing with languages and international education were offered during the mark-up, including one by Representative Rush Holt (D-NJ) that would have created a new \$15 million program to study science and technology in a foreign language. The Holt amendment was defeated by a 22 to 26 vote with two Republicans, Vernon Ehlers (R-MI) and Thomas Price (R-GA) voting for it.

On the other hand, Representative Holt was successful in having foreign languages included in Title IV, section 427, Loan Forgiveness for Service in Areas of National Need. Loans will be forgiven for foreign language specialists "in an elementary or secondary school as a teacher of a critical foreign language" or "in an agency of the United States Government in a position that regularly requires the use of such criti-

cal foreign language." To view HR 609, the College Access and Opportunity Act, please visit our website.

A new bill, S.1376, the Teaching Geography is Fundamental Act has been introduced by Senator Thad Cochran (R-MS). This bipartisan legislation is co-sponsored by Senators Stevens (R-AK), Warner (R-VA), Burns (R-MN), Dodd (D-CT) and Akaka (D-HI). S. 1376 is "to improve and expand geographic literacy among kindergarten through grade 12 students...by improving professional development programs..." S. 1376 can be accessed through our website.

Finally, a number of new bills such as Senator Daniel Akaka's National Foreign Language Coordination Act, Representative Rush Holt's National Security Language Act, and Senator Joseph Lieberman's United States-China Cultural Engagement Act remain under discussion as even more legislative initiatives are being developed. For speeches, press releases and to read bills please go to our website. We will keep you posted.

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ERRATA

On page 12 of the Spring 2005 issue of Learning Languages, Christian Earnhardt's school should have been St. Paul the Apostle Catholic School in Spartanburg, not Lexington School.

Learning Languages

Submission Guidelines

Learning Languages, the journal of the National Network for Early Language Learning (NNELL), 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 World languages. Learning Languages embodies 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.

In an effort to address the interests of the profession, Learning Languages publishes both scholarly articles and invited features. Both types of submission must demonstrate the author(s)'s awareness of language learning theories and early-language learning classroom practices.

Scholarly Articles (2,000-5,000 words)

Scholarly articles are evaluated by at least three members of the board of reviewers through a process of blind review. Reviewers evaluate these articles on the basis of content, originality, information accuracy, clarity, and contribution to the field. These articles are clearly identified as Refereed Article in the journal.

Scholarly articles report on original inquiry and cite current and relevant research and theory as a basis for making recommendations for practice. Scholarly articles in the areas listed below will be given equal consideration:

- *Advocacy and Leadership* (e.g. analysis of national trends or policies, effective leadership and advocacy models, etc.)
- *Practical* (e.g. exemplary implementation of an early language learning program model, innovative approaches to teaching, etc.)
- *Research* (e.g. quantitative or qualitative studies that have direct implications to early language learning, etc.)

- *Theoretical* (e.g. guidelines for practical application anchored in the literature, etc.)

Features (1,000-3,000 words)

Features are evaluated by at least two readers, one of which is a member of the NNELL Executive Board, and the editor. Features address subjects of appeal to early language teachers, administrators, researchers, and others interested in the early learning of World languages. They may include teacher-to-teacher advice on issues affecting the profession, descriptions of successful advocacy initiatives, or selected invited contributions on topics of interest to the profession.

Activities (800 – 1,500 words)

Descriptions of successful language learning activities are expected to provide the following: a) language learning goals; b) applicable standards; c) materials; d) a description of the procedures, and e) assessment plan. Please keep in mind the diversity of languages represented in our readership in your examples and illustrations.

Student Work

Authors are encouraged to enclose student work with their submissions. However, written permission from the student(s)'s parents or legal guardians must be sent to the editor before any student work can be published. Permission from the parent or legal guardian must include the student's name, age, school, and the teacher's name, address, telephone, and e-mail address (if available).

General Guidelines

To be considered for publication, all manuscripts must be accompanied by written notification from the author(s) containing: 1) a statement indicating that the manuscript is not being considered for publication elsewhere either in print or online; 2) contact address for all authors; and 3) clear designation of a contact author. Authors are responsible for the accuracy of the information

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All submissions (snail or electronic mail) must include the word processing file of the manuscript in document format (.doc) or rich-text format (.rtf). You may insert graphics in your word processing file to indicate location, but all graphics should also be supplied as separate files using a standard format (preferably .tiff, .bmp, or high resolution .jpeg). Use APA guidelines to indicate placement of graphics in the body of the manuscript.

Electronic Submission

Create a new e-mail message addressed to LearningLanguages@gmail.com. In the body of the message, type in or paste the information in the cover letter. Attach all corresponding files and send your message.

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Check if you are a World Languages Other than English National Board Certified Teacher

Year Received _____

Mail this form and your check (or money order) to Dr. Mary Lynn Redmond at the address below.

Dr. Mary Lynn Redmond, Executive Secretary
National Network for Early Language Learning
P.O. Box 7266 / A2A Tribble Hall
Wake Forest University
Winston-Salem, NC 27109

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

