

למודתה ופורה מן המורה ליהודים — אברהם לוי

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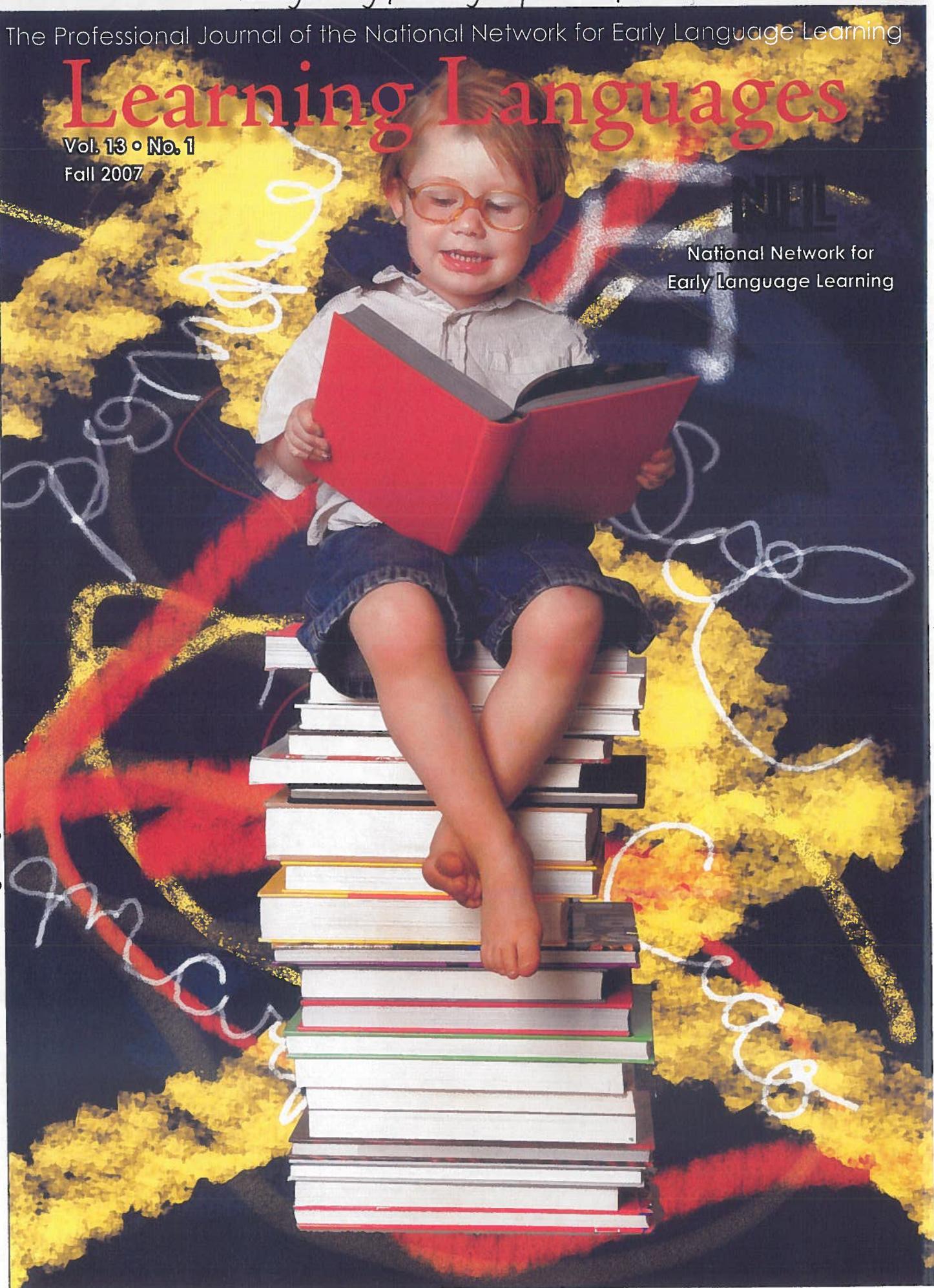
# Learning Languages

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National Network for  
Early Language Learning

*"I have always imagined that paradise will be a kind of library." — Jorge Luis Borges*



מחברת המאמר: ד"ר חגית גורן, מרכז המחקר והחינוך לגן הילדים, אוניברסיטת תל אביב

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# Learning Languages

Volume 13 • Number 1

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# 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](http://www.nnell.org) or email NNELL at [nnell@wfu.edu](mailto:nnell@wfu.edu)*

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# Learning Languages

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# President's Notes

## Dear NNELL Members:

Welcome to the fall 2007 edition of *Learning Languages!* The theme of this issue, literacy development in the context of second language learning, was first discussed two years ago, as mandates for adequate yearly progress in reading and math under the parameters of the *No Child Left Behind Act* took center stage in the American educational arena. As you peruse this issue, you will find articles dealing with the integration of literacy and content area instruction in an elementary immersion program, the use of literacy strategies in middle school foreign language instruction, program inception and maintenance, and current research in the field of early second language learning.

This fall, NNELL celebrates 20 years of advocating for early language learning and helping to maintain quality elementary second language programs. Our special celebration at American Council of Teachers of Foreign Language (ACTFL) Convention in San Antonio, Texas will bring together NNELL's past and present leaders in a special tribute to elementary second language learning. I hope that this special event will increase awareness of the importance of early second language learning and the potential contributions it can make to the education of each of our nation's children.

At the 2006 NNELL Summer Institute, Dr. Carol Ann Dahlberg, NNELL's first President, facilitated a workshop on thematic tools for second language instruction. At the end of this wonderful presentation, Carol Ann poignantly reminded attendees of her impending retirement, and of the fact that she considered those in attendance to be her *nachwuchs*, or "those who shall carry on the work." How fitting it is now, after 20 years of NNELL leadership in the field of second language instruction, to reflect on the work NNELL has accomplished and to envision the wonderful accomplishments that lie ahead.

Twenty years ago, NNELL was just beginning its mission. Pioneers in the field of second language education, e.g., Dr. Carol Ann Dahlberg, Dr. Helena Anderson Curtain, and Dr. Mimi Met, began to forge a new path for FLEX, FLES and immersion teachers to follow. Today, NNELL offers good old-fashioned networking among its individual and organizational members. This path, though sometimes circuitous and obstacle-ridden, has led to a clear vision for elementary foreign language instruction in the United States. The creation of model programs in the 70s and 80s led to development of the National Standards for K-12 Foreign Language instruction, and the consequent development of standards-based assessments.

Increased awareness of the benefits of early second language education in context of well-articulated, long sequences of instruction has been fostered by NNELL. Member, Dr. Carolyn Taylor-Ward, has contributed her entire doctoral dissertation, entitled, *The Relationship Between Elementary School Language Study in Grades Three Through Five and Academic Achievement on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills and the Fourth Grade Louisiana Educational Assessment Program for the 21st Century Test* to the NNELL web site at [www.nnell.org](http://www.nnell.org). NNELL members such as Ana Lomba, our former Advocacy Chair, and Robert Raymond, Co-Chair of the ACTFL Language Learning for Children Special Interest Group (LLC SIG), are turning their energy toward the completion of doctoral programs and eventual dissertations focused upon the field of early second language learning. As the saying goes, "Take a look at us now!"

Thank you, Carol Ann, for taking the helm of NNELL in its first year. Thanks to all those who have followed in her footsteps as leaders of NNELL and the foreign language profession. Thank you, NNELL members for your undying devotion to the cause of early language learning in the United States and beyond. To those who have come



Terry Caccavale  
NNELL President

before, our undying gratitude, and to our *nachwuchs*, "those who shall carry on", our pledge of allegiance to the wonderful cause of early language learning.

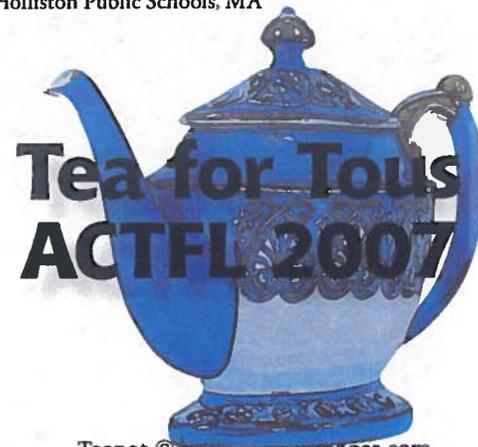
As the fall months indicate a change of seasons, so, too, does the 20th Anniversary of NNELL mark a change in the future direction of elementary second language instruction in the United States. We wait with anticipation for the fruits of our labors as the field of early second language learning rises to national prominence alongside the fields of literacy and mathematical skill development. Together, we will carry on the work of early language learning and continue to contribute to the development of the global citizenry in our pre-K-8 classrooms. Together, we will help others to understand how learning a second language at an early age contributes to the development of adequate yearly progress and measurable gains in all core curricular areas.

*Happy 20th Anniversary  
NNELL!*

Respectfully yours,

*Terry*

Therese Caccavale, NNELL President  
Holliston Public Schools, MA



NUEVO

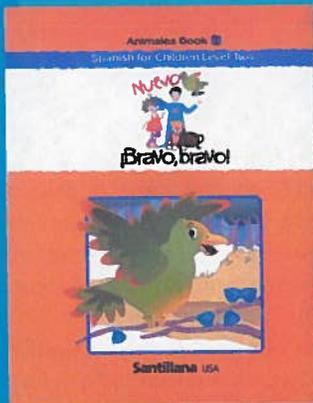


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**Santillana** USA

# Developing Literacy in Young Japanese as a Heritage Language Learners

Dr. Masako Douglas. California State University, Long Beach

## Introduction

This article compares language acquisition and schooling of young Japanese heritage language (JHL) learners in the U.S. with Japanese as a native language (JNL) and Japanese as a foreign language (JFL), and suggests instructional approaches to assist JHL speakers in their literacy development. The first Heritage Languages Conferences, held eight years ago, increased attention to HL education. Thereafter research and publications on heritage language education (Peyton, Ranard, & McGinnis, 2001); (Webb, 2000), and JHL (Douglas, 2005; Douglas, In-press; Kataoka, Koshiyama, & Shibata, 2005) have been on the rise.

The first generation of Japanese immigrant parents initiated education of Japanese heritage language (JHL) learners before World War II to maintain and develop their children's reading and writing skills in Japanese. They established community-based Japanese language schools affiliated with religious or independent organizations. JHL education like other heritage languages (HL), especially less commonly taught languages, has been outside of public education. Educators, researchers and policy makers have paid little attention to this parallel education (Douglas, 2005).

## How JHL, JNL, and JFL are Different

The way that children acquire JHL, JNL, and JFL and the nature of the language requires differing pedagogical approaches. Nakajima (1998) emphasizes the clear distinction of a heritage language from a mother tongue. She states that immigrant children, at an early stage of their language development, acquire the language of their parents as a mother tongue. Japanese be-

comes a heritage language as schooling and social contacts shift to the dominant language. Despite the difference between JHL and JNL, most parents and teachers at JHL schools view their children's Japanese language as a mother tongue. This lack of a distinct JHL perspective can negatively affect the heritage learner's development. JHL is different from JFL in distribution of proficiency across communication modes. JHL students who begin language study with advanced or higher proficiency in oral skills may have elementary literacy skills.

## Similarities between JHL and JNL

There are some similarities and differences in the process of acquisition of JHL and JNL, and differences in JFL from JHL and JNL. In both JHL and JNL acquisition, personal, social and physical needs motivate children to use Japanese in their daily life. JNL and JHL speakers have developed oral language during the infant and toddler years before literacy skills are introduced.



There is a distinct difference between JFL and JHL and JNL. Young students acquire JFL in a formal setting such as FLES, FLEX or immersion programs. As

is typical in foreign language study, students who begin learning JFL come to the class with little linguistic competence or cultural understanding. Their language development by a formal learning as described in the ACTFL proficiency guidelines (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language, 1999) proceeds from simple to complex. Although the progress varies among learners, proficiency levels are not as widely distributed among native speakers as across heritage students. Japanese foreign language learners feel less urgency to use Japanese in their life to fulfill their needs.

## Literacy in the JNL Environment

JHL and JNL learners do not develop oral language to the same degree; this consequently affects the development of literacy skills. Uchida (1996) conducted a longitudinal study of literacy development in young JNL children from pre-school through elementary school. She found that native children were capable of producing a coherent oral narrative by the time they completed pre-school. She also found that preschooler's acquired *hiragana* (one of three writing systems in Japanese) which is syllable based, from their environment, without being taught at school or home. However, Uchida found that preschooler's written narratives were premature. She explained that their underdeveloped literacy skills, e.g. encoding ability and fluency in writing, limited their ability to write. According to Uchida, once the children entered elementary school in the first grade and started their formal literacy training on a daily basis, their ability to write narratives significantly increased.

As Uchida's research shows, development of oral language precedes literacy

# g Speakers Language

development; further, a solid foundation of the oral language is imperative for literacy development.

## JNL and JHL Literacy

Japanese native children have a strong oral language foundation by age 5 or 6; Japanese heritage language development varies widely depending on their language environment. Children from homes where only Japanese is spoken may develop their oral language closer to a level of JNL children. Children from homes where two or more languages are spoken have less exposure to Japanese and less development of their oral language. This variety results in a wide range of oral and written narrative development.

Nakajima (1998) assessed Japanese language ability of Japanese-Canadian adolescents, who had studied Japanese at Saturday schools for 10 years. Analyzing their ability in conversation, reading and writing, Nakajima found that the quality of the conversation ability among the students varied from using English pausing words to mixing languages.

Reading ability of these JHL adolescents ranged from grade 3.1 to grade 5.2 (average of 4.1) equivalent of elementary school children in Japan. Nakajima also found that JHL adolescents' compositions lacked knowledge of paragraph organization, age-appropriate vocabulary, and a distinction between formal and informal style.

## JNL Parents

## JHL Children

## JFL 3<sup>rd</sup> Generation

## Parental Misconceptions

Parents of Japanese heritage language learners who acquired Japanese as a mother tongue and were educated in Japan, believe that their children should learn Japanese, especially for literacy, in the same way. At the JHL school where I developed curriculum, two thirds of the children who completed pre-school level transfer to Japanese supplementary schools for returnees to Japan, instead of continuing their education at the JHL school. Perhaps parents prefer to send their children to the Japanese schools that adhere to the identical curriculum developed in Japan, regardless of the differing educational needs of their children. This parental view of Japanese language education also makes it difficult to implement alternative curricula based on theory and research in fields relevant to young JHL learners.

Children's acquisition of JHL is influenced by varied parental expectations. Douglas, Kataoka and Kishimoto's (2003) study found that the expectation on the development of Japanese language by parents who plan to stay in the U.S. permanently, is varied widely while parents who plan to return to Japan expect their children to develop Japanese language proficiency to the highest level, "capable to function in Japanese at a work place". Work place communication requires high level of so-

ciocultural competence and a variety of literacy skills. In the same study, Douglas, Kataoka and Kishimoto found that Japanese language use at home by parents varies from "go with the flow" to "consciously try to speak in Japanese." When the exposure to Japanese is limited, it results in incomplete acquisition of Japanese.

Parents expect correct Japanese from their children all the time. Nakajima (1998) explains that parents who have acquired Japanese as a mother tongue do not understand why their children make many mistakes in Japanese and why they cannot express simple ideas; parental feedback tends to be negative, which discourages children from learning Japanese.

## JHL Education in the U.S.

Two types of schools provide Japanese language education in the U.S., both outside of public education. The *hoshuukoo* (Japanese supplementary schools) were established for children who return to Japan after a short stay. Their curriculum is identical to the one developed by Japanese government for mother tongue education. Japanese immigrant parents established JHL schools before WW II to educate their children. The rapid acculturation of the third generation has forced a shift from JHL learning to JFL learning. The immigrant schools have been revising their

curriculum to accommodate JFL. Schools with the goals intended to reach JNL or JFL do not accommodate the needs of young JHL learners.

### Instructional Approaches to Develop Literacy of JHL

Unlike JNL education, which focuses on development of academic language and literacy skills, JHL instruction needs to concurrently develop oral language - both basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) (Cummins, 1992) - and literacy skills. Douglas (2005) constructed a theoretical framework for young JHL learners' education. I have proposed to use developmentally-appropriate pedagogy (Douglas, 2005) and educational practice that takes into account differences in age, growth patterns, and cultural orientations (Krogh, 1997). My theoretical framework consists of Standards-based curriculum to continue learning and development with individualized, student-centered curriculum that encourages an inquiry-based approach and hands-on activities.

Integration of language standards and subject matter standards enables teachers to provide children with individualized instruction suited to their level and development. Individualized, student-centered curriculum enables heritage language instruction to be relevant to the students' interests and the developmental level in cognitive, social and emotional domains (Draper & Hicks, 2000; Giacone, 2000; Miller, 2000). An inquiry approach fosters higher order thinking skills, including formulating and testing hypotheses, inferring, and reflecting (Joyce & Weil, 1986). Hands-on activities provide students with concrete experiences that assist them in understanding what they are learning.

### JHL Literacy Skills

Development of the oral language is imperative for subsequent literacy development. However, oral JHL development varies among children. Thus, JHL literacy education should include different in-

structional strategies from JNL literacy education. I summarize the principles for JHL literacy curriculum as follows:

1. Concurrent development of oral language and literacy
2. Reading and writing taught in connection with authentic, communicatively functional activities
3. Effective orthography instruction

### Concurrent development of oral language and literacy.

In JHL education, curriculum needs to expand oral language ability in both interpersonal communication and academic language, and at the same time develop literacy skills based on their existing oral language. For example, at an initial stage of writing, a teacher encourages children to write what they say to gain fluency in encoding, the process of transforming sounds into written texts.

### The Connection between Literacy and Communication

In a traditional JNL curriculum, reading and writing are taught as separate skills. However, when we examine the process of reading and writing, the following essential similarities between these two skills emerge:

1. The author and the readers construct meaning in collaboration. Readers interpret the author's intention and the author writes for a specific audience.
2. To clarify meaning, readers reread texts and writers rewrite texts.
3. Reading and writing develop at three levels: emergent literacy (development of the concept of reading and writing), early literacy (phonological awareness, decoding or encoding skills), and fluent literacy

(interaction with an author, readers and texts, to make a sense from print).

4. To be proficient in reading and writing, readers and writers need to orchestrate low-level literacy skills and high-level literacy skills (Grabe, 1999).

JHL instruction benefits from activities that connect reading and writing so that children can transfer literacy concepts and skills.

Reading and writing in traditional JHL curricula have been limited to language arts, and often lacked authentic and communicatively-functional activities. Contrary to this trend in JHL and JNL literacy education, recent research found that teaching reading and writing for authentic and communicative purposes contributed to an increase in literacy ability of children (Purcell-Gates, Duke, & Martineau, 2007). All subject matters have unique functions and communicative purposes for reading and writing that require literacy instruction in their own light. Literacy training should not be limited to language arts courses.

### Effective orthography instruction.

To be literal in Japanese means learners must master three writing systems: *hiragana* and *katakana*, which are syllable-based writing systems, and *kanji* (Chinese characters). *Hiragana* is used for inflecting parts and particles, words that show the relationship of a word, a phrase, or a clause to the rest of the sentence. *Katakana* is used for foreign words, names of plants and animals, and onomatopoeic expressions. *Kanji*, ideograms that represent meanings, are used for nouns and stems of the verbs and adjectives.

Low-Level Literacy Skills	High Level Literacy Skills
Word Recognition Orthographic Processing Phonemic & Phonological Coding Morphemic & Morphological Coding	Scanning for Information in the Text Activating Prior Knowledge Responding Affectively Creating Individual Interpretations Inferring the Genre Understanding the Structure

*Hiragana* is the first writing system that children learn, followed by *katakana* and then *kanji*. Because of the one to one matching between *hiragana* letter and its sound, learning how to decode hiragana is less challenging. However, without oral vocabulary knowledge, children do not understand the meaning of the word simply by decoding it. Therefore, it is important that children develop oral language and increase their vocabulary so that they understand the words that they decode.

Learning *Kanji* is one of the challenging tasks for all learners. Learners need to know the pronunciation and meaning of each *kanji* character, and be able to write it with appropriate stroke orders. Despite these cognitively demanding tasks, *Kanji* instruction tends to rely on rote memorization of 1006 characters in grades one through six. Learning *kanji* by rote memorization without any relevant context is extremely ineffective for retention in JHL where children are not exposed to any environmental print in their daily life. In her research, Douglas (2004a) found that using *kanji* learning strategies by JHL children, especially mnemonic association to sound of *kanji* is more effective than rote memorization to retain characters over a long period. Douglas (2001; 2004b) also suggests several strategies to learn *kanji* which take into consideration developmental differences. The book also proposes internet sites and software programs for learning *kanji*.

## Conclusion

Young learners of Japanese heritage language need a solid foundation of oral language to develop strong literacy skills. Considering the limited hours of instruction at JHL schools, oral language and literacy skills rely on a joint effort between the JHL school and parents. JHL schools that help parents understand the nuances of JHL development, will help students read and write more fluently in their heritage language.

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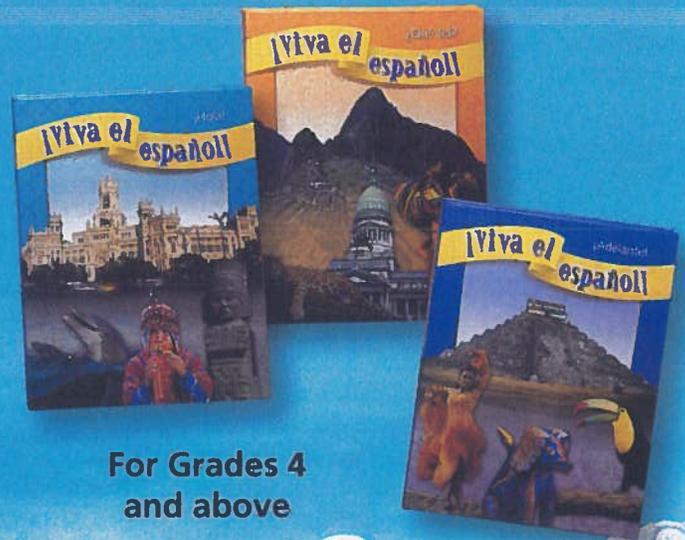
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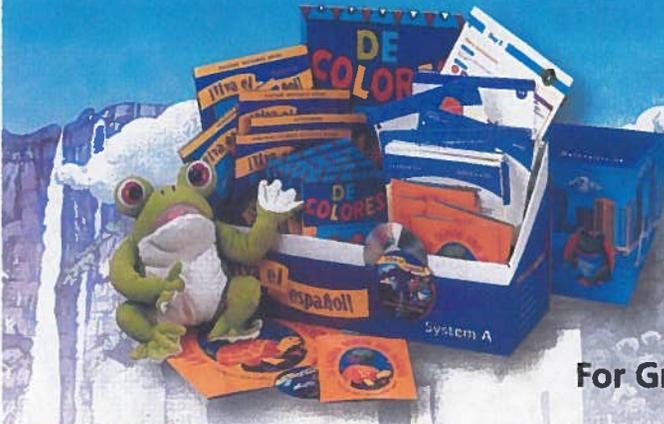
Masako O. Douglas is an associate professor of Japanese at California State University, Long Beach. She earned her doctoral degree in education from the University of Southern California. Her research focuses on acquisition and pedagogy of Japanese as a heritage language for young learners and college students. She is also interested in the theory and practice of teaching Japanese as a foreign language. She has presented and published papers on acquisition of literacy skills by learners of Japanese as a heritage and foreign language, community-service learning, content-based language learning, and curriculum design, instructional activities and their effectiveness.

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# Chocolate

## Reading Across the Five C's

Jody Schnieder, Woodlands School, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

### A Tantalizing Look at Language and Literacy

Reading skills and literacy have long been a critical focus in education. Our colleagues outside of world languages often overlook the contributions of content-related second language instruction to literacy. We can identify parallel practices and processes from language arts that can strengthen reading skills and foster literacy in the secondary and native languages. Inspired by Woodlands' all-school theme, Saving the rainforest and chocolate, Milwaukee Public Schools reading resource consultant, Sandra Ruesink, and I coordinated a thematic unit applicable to all languages and adaptable to any level. We chose chocolate, a tantalizing high-interest topic, rich in culture connections and confectionery delights, to engage students and teachers.

### Language Learning Objectives

The reading and literacy focus of a unit that centers on chocolate can provide a context for using the interpretive mode of the communication standard from the *National Standards in Foreign Language Education* (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language, 1999). Less direct, but equally relevant, are the bridges across the C's. The main objectives for this unit were to (1) use reading strategies to process target-language content, (2) demonstrate reading comprehension of text in the target language and (3) apply knowledge learned from interpretive activities in situations related to the other foreign language standards.

### Materials

We chose M&M's chocolate candies as a "teaser" to introduce the unit. Most students are familiar with them, and the web site ([www.mms.com](http://www.mms.com)) provides target-language narratives describing historical facts and amusing trivia. Students were provided with a variety of target-language texts about M&M's, chocolate from rainforest to grocery store as well as target-language stories, poems and songs with reference to chocolate. Other materials include individual "fun size" packages of M&M's, target-culture chocolate recipes, chocolate bar wrappers and chocolate samples.

### 6 Reading Strategies that Work

Sandra Ruesink, the reading resource consultant, and I chose six reading strategies to help students process reading, reinforce specific reading skills and demonstrate interpretive mode competencies. *Tea Party*, *Say Something*, *NICK List*, *RAFT*, *Word Book* and *Concept Frame* not only help students process and understand what they read but also activate language for speaking. While these strategies can be applied to readers of all ages, it is important to emphasize that the cognitive demands and language

complexity of the text and tasks must be adapted to address learners' developmental needs and language proficiency levels. Modifications may be required to supplement, simplify or enhance text as well as to design activities and assessments that elicit a wide range of responses, from one word to complete sentences.

While the six reading strategies highlight the interpretive mode, they can also segue into activities or assessments that feature other modes and standards. There is no inherent order to the strategies; however, *Tea Party*, *Say Something* and the *NICK List* should be completed first and in sequential order for this unit. The others can be used, as you feel appropriate. We list the strategies under the mode of communication from the National Standards (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language, 1999).

### Interpersonal Communication

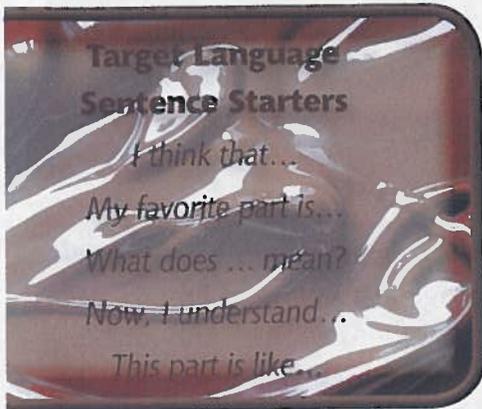
"Students engage in conversations, provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions." (ACTFL, 1999, p. 4)

### Tea Party

Reading Skill: Making Predictions

To introduce the unit, choose a short, simple authentic target-language reading about cocoa, chocolate or chocolate product. Locate a descriptive passage that has as many sentences as there are students. Photocopy the passage and cut out each sentence. Give one sentence strip to each student. Allow students two minutes to read sentence strips to one another. After listening to each sentence, students verify understanding or ask for clarification in the target language. When time is called, students guess the topic.

(This activity may be simplified by substituting a word or list of words for the sentence strips.)



### Say Something

Reading Skills: Using prior knowledge, monitoring reading

The students read one of the target-language narratives from the M&M's web site. Partners take turns reading sentences aloud. After each sentence, reader stops and

the listener reacts in the target language. For novice learners you can display a list of sentence starters on the overhead or post them in the room.

### Presentational Communication

"Presents information, concepts, ideas prepared for an audience of listeners or readers." (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language, 1999)

### RAFT

Reading Skills: Summarizing, Identifying the main idea, Identifying different viewpoints

RAFT is a strategy to strengthen student understanding of their role as a speaker or writer, their audience, the format of their work and the content of the reading. Students express themselves, orally or in writing, in a presentation from a viewpoint other than that of a student, to an audience other than the teacher and in a creative situation. After reading the M&M's narrative, students prepare their presentation using information they wrote on the previous NICK list activity. They take on the Role of a M&M or a chocolate bar from a target culture. They speak or write to an Audience of chocolate candies on a grocery store shelf. They present in the Format of a monologue or diary on the Topic, "My trip as an M&M to target-language culture or "What you should know about me as a chocolate bar from..."

### Interpretive Communication

"Students understand and interpret written and spoken language on a variety of topics." (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language, 1999, p. 4)

### NICK List Chart

Reading Skills: Summarizing, Identifying the main idea

Give students the entire M&M's narrative, condensed for the previous *Say Something* activity, and a copy of the *NICK List* template shown below. Have them fill in the chart as they read the narrative. The notes column should contain facts about the narrative. In the comments column they should list their reaction to the narrative. They should list important vocabulary in the key words column.

Notes	Comments	Key Words



### Culture

"Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the products and perspectives of the culture studied." (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language, 1999, p. 4)

### Word Book

Reading Skills: Recognizing words and phrases, Monitoring reading

New Words		
Cognates	Familiar Words	Familiar Phrases
5 Illustrated Words and Phrases		

1. Duplicate and give students a word book graphic organizer, available for download at [www.nnell.org](http://www.nnell.org). Students look up a chocolate recipe from a target culture online or in a target-language cookbook. They fill out the Word Book as they read the recipe.
2. Students compile their recipes and make an illustrated chocolate cookbook. You can provide a template to help scaffold novice-level students.

### Connections

"Students reinforce and further their knowledge of other disciplines through the foreign language." (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language, 1999, p. 4)

### Math

Give each student a "fun size" package of M&M's, a sheet of graph paper and colored markers. Students make a color-coded bar graph of the M&M colors in their fun pack. You can also combine class totals for each color to determine the approximate percentage of each color produced.

### Science

Students research cocoa beans (where they are grown; how they are processed) and design an illustrated game accentuating facts that they read. This could be a trivia or "Jeopardy"-type game with cards and game board or a board game with markers and dice modeled after games commonly played by the students.

### Social Studies

Students make a world map highlighting areas where chocolate is produced or make a time line of chocolate in history. To create a culture link, students can research details of how chocolate was introduced in the target language culture and present it in the form of a storyboard.

### Language Arts/Music

Students recite, sing or write a poem or song about chocolate.

### Technology

Students access [www.mms.com](http://www.mms.com) in target language to find information on specific M&M "characters", i.e., Red, Yellow.

### Drama

Students personify chocolate in a role-play activity.

### Art

Students make an illustrated book showing something they learned in the chocolate unit. See the assessment that follows.

### Comparisons

"Students demonstrate understanding of the nature of language through comparisons of the language studied and their own." (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language, 1999, p. 4)

### Concept Frame

Give students wrappers from M&M's and candy bars from two target cultures. They compare facts and fill out information requested in the first three columns on the chart. They will fill out the fourth column in communities activity that follows.

	Ingredients	% Cacao	Nutritional Values	Tasting Notes
M&Ms				
Belgian Chocolate				
Swiss Chocolate				

### Communities

"Students use the language both within and beyond the school setting." (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language, 1999, p. 4)

### Chocolate Tasting Party

Have a chocolate-tasting party. (Provide white chocolate or other alternative for students with dietary restrictions.) Give students samples of the chocolate compared on their Concept Frame in the Comparisons activity. Also provide them with a list of descriptive words (i.e., smooth, creamy, brittle, intense, mild, bitter, sweet, delicious, disgusting), which they will use to write "tasting notes" in the "Taste" category. The "party guests" share their opinions with each other.

Students prepare recipes from the chocolate cookbook in the Culture activity. After sampling them, they tell whether they like or do not like them or which one they like best/least. You can also order custom-imprinted M&M's from [www.mms.com](http://www.mms.com) with target-language sayings for students to read aloud.

### Assessment

Upon completing the chocolate unit, students make an illustrated pop-up book or accordion book writing at least ten simple facts in the target language that they learned about chocolate. They share books with classmates and make a list of at least five additional facts they read in classmates' books.

## Resources for Handcrafted books

Teach students how to make books before doing assessment. Teacher and student-friendly resources include, *How to Make Pop-Ups* by Joan Irvine, illustrated by Barbara Reid, William Morrow & Co, 1988, ISBN 0688079024 and *Making Books That Fly, Fold, Wrap, Hide, Pop Up, Twist, And Turn: Books for Kids to Make* by Gwen Diehn, Lark books, 2006, ISBN 178-1579903268

## Conclusion

Reading and literacy affect student achievement in both English and in a second language. As political pressure pushes educators to prioritize reading programs over other curricula, we can show our colleagues and educational decision-makers that second language reading experiences can reinforce literacy in both English and the target language. Studies indicate that there is a transfer of literacy skills from one language to another (Cloud, Genesee, & Hamayan, 2000); Armstrong and Rogers showed that students studying a second language score as well or better in reading on standardized achievement tests than their peers who have had no second language experience (1997). Garfinkel and Tabor have shown a high correlation between foreign language study and improved reading scores for children of average and below average intelligence (Garfinkel & Tabor, 1991). By applying and adapting tools that foster literacy in their first language, we hope to motivate and challenge our students as they become more confident and competent in the target language.

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Jody Schneider has been teaching French, grades pre-K-8, at Woodlands School, Milwaukee, WI for 22 years. She is a member of the Wisconsin FLESFEST planning committee and the Wisconsin Association for Language Teachers (WAFLT) Board. Jody is also a research advisor at Cardinal Stritch University in Milwaukee, WI and was a member of the Writing Task Force for Wisconsin's Planning Curriculum for Learning World Languages. She is a frequent presenter at foreign language conferences and is co-author of *Chanter et parler à notre zoo* © 2008, 1989.

This new feature introduces products that may interest early language educators.

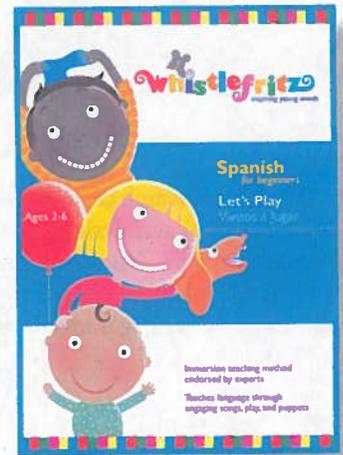
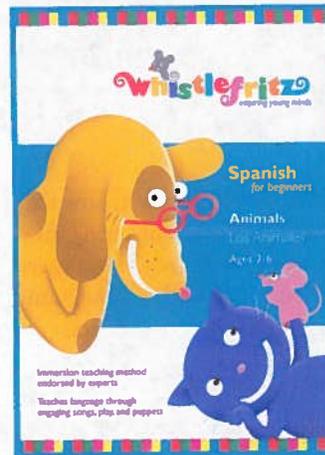


## Whistlefritz DVDs – Vamos a jugar, Los Animales

These live-action videos feature children and puppets acting out Spanish songs and interacting with the attractive guide, Maria. She uses natural language to present simple vocabulary in the context talking about body parts (*Vamos a jugar*) and animals. The only part of the DVD in English is the menu that lets you choose to play the video, set it to repeat, or play the songs. *Los animales* won the National Parenting Center's 2007 Seal of Approval. *Vamos a Jugar* has won a 2007 iParenting Media Award, Creative Child Magazine's Preferred Choice award, and an endorsement by the Coalition for Quality Children's Media.

## Strengths

The entire video is in Spanish, but Maria and the puppets make the language comprehensible to small children. The bright colors of the case and video are attractive to children.



## Best Audience

Young children who want to listen to Spanish at home will enjoy the DVDs. Classroom teachers could use them when a FLES teacher is absent to support their Spanish.

## Ordering Information

The DVD is \$19.99 available at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)



## Cantin le voyage (CDs for ages 5+)

In this series of audio CD's, Catin travels around the French-speaking world to meet children, learn about the culture, sing local songs, and tell authentic legends. They help children learn about other cultures and begin to appreciate their nuances. Take an audio journey to Tahiti, Louisiana, Martinique, Mali, Morocco, Senegal, Vietnam, Guadeloupe, Tunisia and Haiti.



Cantin the narrator has a deep, but gentle voice that entices children into the stories. The stories and songs offer an authentic glimpse into the cultures' products, practices, and perspectives. Each CD includes a booklet with pictures of food, friends, maps, and the stories.

### Best Audience

Intended for native speakers of French, the CD's work will in immersion settings. With a few pre-reading activities and a bit of scaffolding novice-high and intermediate students will be able to understand these authentic stories.

### Ordering Information

Each CD is 16€. Visit [www.cantinlevoyageur.com/boutique/index.php](http://www.cantinlevoyageur.com/boutique/index.php)



V-me (pronounced veh-meh), is the first national Spanish-language television network presented by public television stations. V-me, a 24-hour digital broadcast service carried on basic digital cable in major markets across the country and via satellite, represents a new network for US Latinos. They offer engaging programs for children and a companion web site. V-me focuses on providing quality pre-school programming in Spanish that is appropriate for a variety of bilinguals and early Spanish learners. The network devotes 36 hours a week to creating a healthy, positive environment, where preschool children can learn and have fun in Spanish. Programs include *Jim de la luna* (Lunar Jim), *Las Tres Mellizas Bebes* (The Baby Triplets), *Los Pies Magicos de Franny* (Franny's Feet), *Connie La Vaquita* (Connie the Cow), *Plaza Sésamo* (Sesame Street). They also provide intriguing nature programs in Spanish. You can listen to several songs by *Las Tres Mellizas Bebes* and download coloring books at [www.v-me.tv](http://www.v-me.tv). Contact your cable or satellite company for more information.

## Training Our Future Elementary World Language Teachers

Dr. Jean Hindson of the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse, has produced a video that explains and demonstrates the essential concepts of teaching foreign language to children. The scenes of second language instruction in elementary classes show how teaching children is inherently different from teaching adults. The elementary Spanish and German teachers use their classroom to reveal classroom routines in the target language, Total Physical Response (TPR), Total Physical Response Storytelling (TPRS), games as a learning tool, and songs. Dr. Hindson advocates and demonstrates using the Natural Approach questions as a way to keep instruction in the target language as much as possible.

### Best Audience

The video provides a concise overview of the big ideas that practicing or pre-service elementary foreign language teachers must keep in mind. Secondary foreign language teachers who are making a career change to the elementary level, will benefit from the practical ideas and theoretical concepts that underlie them.

### Ordering Information

The DVD (90 minutes) costs \$12.50 and includes shipping. Contact Dr. Jean M. Hindson at the Department of Modern Languages, 315 Graff Main Hall, 1725 State Street, La Crosse, WI, 54601 or at [Hindson.jean@uwlax](mailto:Hindson.jean@uwlax).



### I Love Mandarin! NI HAO

The Sponge, a children's language center in Seattle offers Mandarin, Japanese, Spanish and French to babies and toddlers. To help families practice Mandarin at home they developed a CD of traditional songs and original dialogs that are simple but engaging. Titles include *Hello Friends*, *The Enormous Radish*, *Babies on the Phone*, *A Couple of Weird Tigers*, *Looking for Friends*, *Let's Eat*. The accompanying guide describes Mandarin pronunciation, final sounds, and tones so that parents and teachers can help children to begin to communicate. Each dialogue includes Hanyu pinyin, Chinese characters and English translations. There are interesting culture notes throughout the guide: "Bon appétit! In many cultures there's a set phrase before eating. In China, before a meal, the host or cook will say to the diners, *bu yao ke qui* (don't be polite.) That's the signal that it's okay to dig in." The CD and booklet cost \$19.95. Contact Jackie Friedman Mighdoll for details at [shop@spongeschool.com](mailto:shop@spongeschool.com) or (425) 274-5188.



“Beg, borrow, share and adapt” has been my motto since the day I stepped into my first teaching job with a certification to teach high school Spanish. The principal who hired me to teach Spanish in his elementary school told me there were no materials for the program, but that he expected me to instruct students in first through fifth grades for a half-hour every day. He wisely advised me to ask the “regular classroom teachers” for anything I needed. I became quite the scavenger as I traveled from room to room to teach my classes, always on the look out for instructional ideas that I could adapt for my Spanish classes.

# High Stakes Testing + Mid Reading and Writing

Vicki Welch Alvis, Autrey Mill Middle School

## Collaboration between Language Arts and Foreign Language

During the past school year, 21 years later, this strategy took on new urgency. My school system’s fourth and fifth grade foreign language program had just ended due to budget cuts. I moved on to teaching sixth grade Spanish, also at risk. In my school system, students who scored in the 70th percentile or higher on a standardized reading test were able to take a yearlong sixth grade foreign language class instead of reading. In my particular middle school 206 students took a yearlong Spanish course, 25 took a yearlong French course, and 132 took a reading course in English. My school’s principal pointed out that the students taking Spanish would need to score well on the reading portion of the Georgia Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) in order to provide data indicating that the sixth grade foreign language program was not jeopardizing students’ progress in reading. In addition to placing an emphasis on students’ reading abilities, my school’s faculty set school-wide expectations for writing across the curriculum and posted the list in every classroom at the beginning of the year. Both of these provided a clear directive to enhance literacy instruction in sixth grade Spanish classes. Since I followed many of my students from fifth grade to the sixth, a natural first step was to build upon students’ prior knowledge and experiences from their elementary Spanish classes. The middle school concept (Shrum & Glisan, 2005) lends itself to my original survival tactic of “beg, borrow, share and adapt.” I was able to collaborate with Spanish teachers and reading/language arts teachers.

## Prior Literacy Development

Last year students entered sixth grade Spanish classes from my county’s now defunct foreign language in the elementary school (FLES) program that had provided daily French or Spanish instruction for thirty minutes in fourth and fifth grades. Sixth

grade students’ prior literacy development in Spanish had blossomed in the print-rich FLES environment. Fourth and fifth grade thematic units centered on texts such as songs, poems, stories, pattern books, riddles and proverbs that afforded students meaningful repetition of high frequency language. For example, fourth grade students presented physical descriptions of themselves, their own monster designs

and edible skeletons as a part of the *Criaturas creativas* (Creative Creatures) thematic unit. The unit helped students progress in their writing from copying and illustrating a body parts song in rebus form to labeling a class bar graph of eye color. After reading a teacher-created pattern book about hair, students drew self-portraits and completed a guided writing for a Who am I? riddle book. Students requested the riddle books all year, since they viewed it as a fun way to use their newly acquired language.

### Pattern Book “Hair!”

long hair  
short hair  
red hair  
brown hair  
black hair  
blonde hair  
straight hair  
curly hair  
wavy hair  
bald!

**Soy niño. Mis ojos son de color verde. Tengo el pelo corto, rubio y ondulado. Soy alto y llevo pantalones, una camisa y zapatos.**

Fourth-grade students designed and described monsters following a teacher-created pattern book, *My Best Friend*. Students orally described a picture of a monster orally as I wrote it down.

Students used the monster's description as a model for their own monster creation. Students proudly presented their monsters and descriptions to classmates on a projector using a document camera. Next, I used exaggerated movements, actual ingredients, and a Gouin series with "six to eight statements" in a "logical sequence of actions" (Curtain & Dahlberg, 2004, pp. 51-53) to assemble skeletons from bone shaped candies. After watching me pantomime the actions and say the statements, the students began to mimic the motions. Later, the class began to say and do

wide writing expectations: complete sentences, appropriate punctuation, capitalization, formal spelling and legibility, yet some students lacked experience in checking their work for mechanics. The students followed a writing checklist to write clues to their identities, such as age, physical description, neighborhood, sixth grade team name, favorite class, schedule information, favorite classroom activity and favorite after school activity. Students also wrote questions for their postcard recipients. Teachers exchanged postcards between classes. Students were eager to read and write

# Whole School Collaboration = in 6th Grade Spanish

the actions. At this point, students were ready to read, sequence, and act out the statements from the series to prepare and enjoy their skeleton sweets. Students followed up the tasty activity by sequencing, writing and illustrating each step of the Gouin series so they could recreate it at home.

## Reading and Writing for Real Purposes

My colleague on the sixth grade team, Elizabeth Ferree, and I teamed up with other teachers daily to provide reading and writing opportunities that built on students' prior knowledge and experiences, supplied new learning experiences aligned with our school system's sixth grade foreign language curriculum, and reinforced Georgia performance standards in reading and language arts. We worked with reading and language arts teachers formally in weekly meetings and informally during lunch or hallway discussions. The reading teachers on the sixth grade team shared starter activities in English ("Appetizers" from Gourmet Curriculum Press, Inc.) for supporting the reading curriculum and standards, with instructions to make use of the activities in English and adapt them to reading selections in Spanish. Language arts teachers shared strategies for teaching students to edit written work and performance assessments with rubrics that I explained in Spanish to the students.

We planned a thematic unit entitled *Mi escuela ideal* (My Ideal School) for the fall semester as a broad review of the language that students brought with them from elementary school. To take advantage of the social nature of eleven and twelve year-olds, we asked students to write, illustrate and exchange postcards signed only with "your secret classmate." We emphasized the school-



in Spanish to meet their own communication needs: determining their secret classmate's identity and telling about themselves. As Elizabeth and I created performance assessments and rubrics to provide on-going opportunities for writing in each thematic unit, the writing process in Spanish class began to evolve:

1. Students read the writing prompt or task description, discuss the scoring rubric, and view a writing sample.
2. They brainstorm for necessary vocabulary and compile their thoughts in a list, outline or graphic organizer. Before some writing tasks, students write and share answers to guiding questions to use the structures that will be required in the upcoming task.
3. Students work independently or with partners to create first drafts and to draw appropriate illustrations.
4. As students work, we hold one-on-one conferences to coach students as suggested by Wiggins and McTighe (1998). We help students to revise and amplify their writing with regard to content, use of extensive and appropriate vocabulary, clarifying meaning, and organizing their ideas by having students read their work aloud and asking additional guiding questions.
5. Once the students begin the writing process described in the above steps, the teacher uses an overhead transparency to display examples of student work. From these examples, the students find and correct mechanical and grammar errors, problems with word choice, organization, or sentence structure.
6. Students publish their final drafts, read them aloud, and display them for the school community.

7. The teacher gives specific feedback about students' strengths and weaknesses on the scoring rubric based on the ACTFL Performance Guidelines (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 1999)

Step 5 proved to be an engaging warm-up activity. To vary the difficulty of the task, students work in groups, pairs, or individually. They often view finding errors as a game. Students enjoyed seeing their own work on the transparency. This gave me the idea to use student writings and illustrations as the context and content for tests and quizzes.

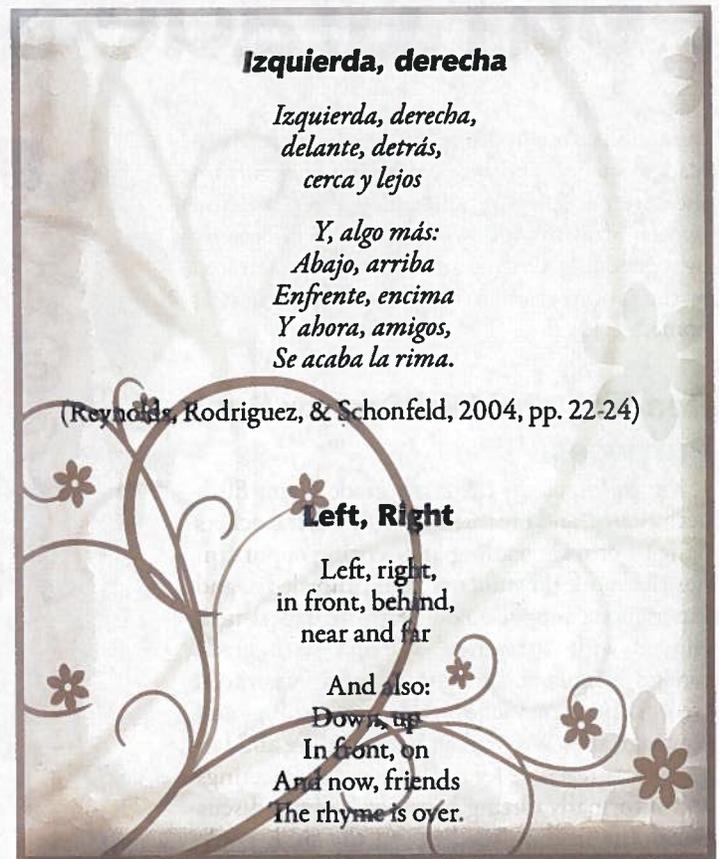
Elizabeth and I were interested in finding different types of texts, authentic ones and those created specifically for learners, to reinforce basic literacy skills and equip students with functional chunks of language, "memorized and unanalyzed phrases of high frequency" (Curtain & Dahlberg, 2004, pp. 48-49) and to serve as writing models. During the *Mi escuela ideal* unit, students read about different school schedules in Hispanic countries. They were interested in holidays and vacation time since Mexican and Central American countries celebrate independence during a month in which we had a break from school. My students and I celebrated in class by learning and illustrating a poem:



Students repeated each line of the poem and read it chorally and individually. Once every student could accurately recite the poem, I began to cover up one or two words at a time while individual students recited the poem and supplied the missing words. Excitement grew as I covered up more words of the poem, and students vied to be the *poeta premiado* (award-winning poet) to recite the poem from memory. At home, students recited the poem and shared their illustrations with a parent. We used the

poem as a model for language structures: expressing possession, literary device personification, and use of object pronouns.

During the thematic unit, *Mi casa es su casa*, students created riddles that described the location of exterior features and rooms of a house. This recycles the language functions of descriptions and the house vocabulary. A catchy rhyme with hand gestures helped students to express location.



Just as they did with the poem *Septiembre* (September), students memorized the rhyme in class and then recited it at home for parents. This time, students choreographed motions for the rhyme.

To write their riddles students followed the version of the writing process that we had developed for Spanish class. When students brainstormed for the necessary vocabulary, they thought in terms of categories such as housing materials (e.g. brick, glass, wood), shapes, and colors. The riddles gave students their first practice in providing supporting detail in writing. Students wrote

and illustrated the answer to the riddle inside a folded a piece of paper and wrote clues on the outside of the paper.

### ¿Quién soy yo?

*Yo estoy fuera de la casa. Estoy cerca de o lejos del patio. Soy verde en la primavera o rojo, amarillo o marrón en el otoño. ¿Quién soy yo?*

### Who am I?

I am outside the house. I am near or far from the patio. I am green in spring or red, yellow, or brown in autumn. Who am I?

*Un árbol (a tree)*

### ¿Quién soy yo?

*Estoy dentro o fuera de la casa y soy un rectángulo o cuadrado. Soy un círculo, un óvalo o un triángulo, también. Soy de vidrio y tengo una amiga. Ella se llama las cortinas. Estoy en la pared.*

### Who am I?

I am inside or outside the house, rectangular or square. I can also be a circle, oval, or triangle. I am made of glass and have a friend. Her name is curtains. I am in the wall.

*Una ventana (a window)*

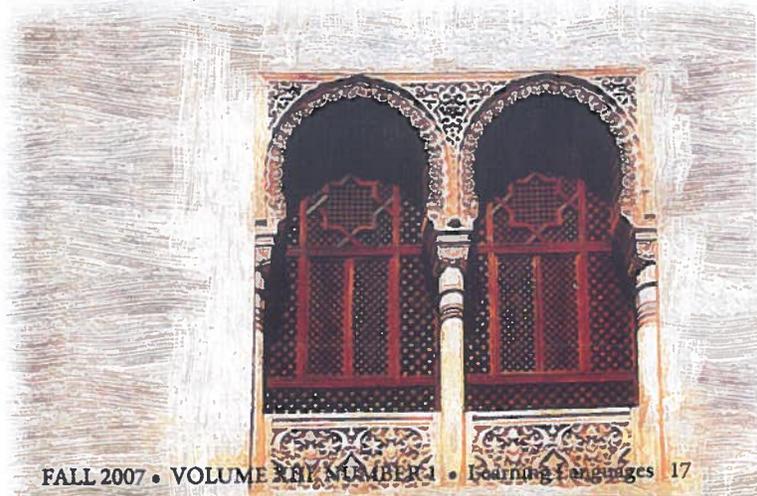
To prepare for our next writing task during our *Buen Provecho* (Bon appétit) unit, we followed a web question for a virtual trip to Granada, read teacher-created PowerPoint presentations and passages from textbook ancillaries. Before students read, they answered questions to link their background knowledge to the topics. Next, they scanned for familiar expressions and made predictions about the reading based on the vocabulary and pictures. Students read along as individual student volunteers read aloud, stopping periodically for question/answer or thumbs up/thumbs down comprehension checks. The textbook readings closely resembled passages on standardized tests and lent themselves easily to the types of comprehension and inference questions from English reading classes. I facilitated a connection between the readings and the current thematic unit by having students respond to open-ended prompts, "Pretend you are..... Based on the reading tell ....."

Students' next writing task was to tell the story of an imaginary family trip to Granada, Spain by creating a layout of scrapbook pages. The checklist required that students...

1. Use information from the web quest, PowerPoint presentations and readings to write a story about an imaginary family visit to Granada.
2. Begin with a topic sentence that captures readers' attention
3. Use a variety of verbs correctly and add supporting details to tell what...
  - you do in Granada
  - you and another family member do in Granada
  - your mom, dad, sister, cousin, etc. do in Granada
  - your mom, sister, etc and another member of the family does in Granada
  - your family (mi familia + 3° persona singular del verbo) does in Granada
4. Provide some interesting information and descriptions about the sights of Granada.
5. End with a good summary statement about the trip.
6. Add an appealing title.
7. Illustrate the story with "photos" from the trip.

Students made respectable first attempts at writing a narrative:

*¡Hola! Bienvenidos a Granada. Yo miro la Alhambra. Mi mamá y yo nadamos en la Costa del Sol. Mi papá, mi mamá y mi hermana miran el Patio de los Leones. Mi mamá, mi hermana y mi tía bailan el flamenco. Mi familia, mi prima y mi perro descansan en una habitación. Mi papa y yo esquiámos en la Sierra Nevada. ¡Yo amo Granada! ¡Adiós, Granada!"*



The imaginary trip opened the door to include a writing prompt in the unit's summative assessment.

When you arrive home from Granada, the first thing that you do is read your e-mail. You have 25 e-mails from your pesky friend Benito asking you, "¿Te gusta la comida en Granada?" You are anxious to read e-mail from other friends, so you answer him in Spanish right away. Write at least six complete sentences in Spanish to tell what food(s) you like, do not like and love. Also, tell that you like a food, but you like another food more. Be sure to mention at least three typical foods from Spain.

Performance tasks involving reading and writing continued after standardized testing in April. Our final thematic unit was *El mundo es mi comunidad* (My World is My Community). During the unit, students created publicity brochures to express and support their personal opinions regarding the best and worst of local businesses e.g., restaurants, stores, libraries, banks. Students finished the school year by creating flap books to tell where they and others were going to go and what they were going to do on an ideal summer day. Not surprisingly, students responded enthusiastically to the assignment. For example, one boy wrote:

*En mi día ideal, yo voy a la playa para jugar. Yo voy a comer una hamburguesa y muchas frutas. Yo voy a llevar un traje de baño y protectante de sol. Yo voy a nadar en el océano.*

## Results

Georgia's standardized test scores for the past school year made headlines on July fourth, and I was heartened to see my sixth grade students' Georgia Criterion Referenced Competency Test data for reading. Sixth grade reading test scores showed small changes, yet remained consistently high. The percentage of students who did not meet expectations on the reading portion of the test dropped from 3.4% in 2006 to 1.8% in 2007.

Results for my own instruction were more dramatic. Working with sixth grade reading and language arts teachers and my Spanish teaching colleague on the sixth grade team led me to incorporate learning experiences for literacy development into daily instruction. By the end of the school year, the integration of activities to encourage students to read and write in Spanish led to more balanced instruction and an assessment program that allowed students growing opportunities to demonstrate all three modes of communication: interpretive, interpersonal, and

presentational (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 1999). Teaming across subjects empowered me to use Spanish instruction as "a vehicle for reinforcing the academic skills required by the regular curriculum" (Curtain & Dahlberg, 2004, p. 249) while empowering students to use their new language as a tool for thinking and learning. My school's implementation of the middle school teaming concept was a positive experience for me, and I look forward to continuing to develop a shared vision of success for all students.

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# The Foreign Language Assistance Program (FLAP)

Rebecca Richey, Foreign Language Assistance Program

The Foreign Language Assistance Program, also known as FLAP, holds the distinction as the only federally funded program that exclusively targets foreign language instruction in elementary and secondary schools. Funded under Title V of No Child Left Behind, FLAP provides 3-year grants to states and local school districts to establish, improve, or expand innovative kindergarten through grade twelve model programs.

The program began in 1988 when Congress passed the Foreign Language Assistance Act, directing the Secretary of Education to make grants to state educational agencies for foreign language study in elementary and secondary schools. Today FLAP funds 15 grants to states and 122 grants to local school districts to support a broad range of activities, including classroom instruction, professional development, teacher recruitment, curriculum development, student assessment, program evaluation, and parent involvement with a current program budget of \$23,780,000. Grants to local educational agencies range from \$50,000 to \$300,000 each year and support programs that show the promise of continuing beyond the period of federal funding and demonstrate approaches that can be disseminated and duplicated in other local educational agencies. Similarly, grants to state educational agencies range from \$50,000 to \$400,000 per year, and support systemic approaches to improving foreign language instruction in the state.

Consistent with the principle of local flexibility under No Child Left Behind, FLAP permits schools and states to choose instructional approaches that best meet local needs. FLAP programs represent a variety of models and approaches, including foreign language exploratory programs (FLEX), foreign language in the elementary school (FLES), secondary advanced placement coursework, immersion, two-way immersion, content-based programs, and programs for heritage language learners.

Regardless of the instructional approach, FLAP gives special consideration to applicants who address any of the following priorities:

- creating intensive summer foreign language programs for professional development
- linking foreign language speakers in the community with schools
- promoting the sequential study of foreign languages for students beginning in elementary school
- using technology effectively
- promoting innovative activities such as content-based instruction or immersion
- collaborating as a consortium of state and local educational agencies.

## The Grant Process

FLAP grants are awarded through a competitive, discretionary grant process. Panels of foreign language experts score the application narratives based on established selection criteria published in the Federal Register. These criteria guide applicants in developing an application narrative, and addresses areas such as the quality of the program design, personnel, the need for the program, and the quality of evaluation.

FLAP is a cost-sharing program; grantees must match 100% of proposed federal funds with state or local funds each year of the grant. School districts that are able to demonstrate financial hardship may request a waiver for all or part of the matching funds. However, states are not eligible for matching cost waivers.

## National Security Language Initiative

When the President established the National Security Language Initiative (NSLI) in 2006, FLAP gained prominence as an essential component of K-16+ education to prepare foreign language speakers. NSLI was designed to dramatically increase the number of Americans learning critical foreign languages through new and expanded programs from kindergarten through university and into the workforce. Foreign language learning is important for Americans to engage foreign governments and peoples, especially in critical regions; a population of multilingual citizens can encourage reform, promote understanding, convey respect for other cultures, and provide other nations an opportunity to learn more about America and its citizens.

To address these needs, the Secretaries of State, Education and Defense, and the Director of National Intelligence developed a comprehensive national plan to expand U.S. foreign language education beginning in early childhood and continuing throughout formal schooling and into the workforce with new programs and resources.

The most recent FLAP competitions in 2006 and 2007, refocused by NSLI, awarded competitive priority points to applicants that proposed foreign language instruction in critical foreign languages—specifically in Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Russian, and languages in the Indic, Iranian, and Turkic families. The priority also required that instruction would be primarily during the school day to increase the likelihood that students would attain proficiency. The majority of grants funded in these years proposed to address critical foreign languages (58 of 70 grants in 2006, and 31 of 52 grants in 2007). Of those that planned instruction in critical languages, the majority proposed Chinese. Examples of current state and local programs follow:

### **Peng You Project: Mandarin for Real Life Purposes**

For example, the Cambridge Public Schools in Massachusetts have received a FLAP grant for the *Peng You* (Friends) project that will deliver Mandarin foreign language to two elementary (K-8) school sites and one secondary (9-12) site. The project will improve an existing program to make curriculum more comprehensive and provide custom designed professional development. The secondary program will be a new addition to the sequence. The project and curriculum designs are supported by scientifically based research and the five C's of the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning: communication, cultures, communities, connections, and comparisons. The project also includes effective use of technology for pen pal connections to international students who are native speakers of Chinese.

## Education for Global Citizenship

The Lansing School District in Michigan received a grant for a bilingual elementary language program that seeks to expand and build an early elementary Mandarin Chinese immersion program. It will incorporate the Education for Global Citizenship, a new immersion model that incorporates the best educational practices of both eastern and western educational systems.

1. Create a K-5 self-sustaining, elementary immersion program
2. Promote academic achievement and Chinese language acquisition with 75% of students meeting government Performance and Results Act measures in reading, writing, speaking, and understanding Mandarin Chinese
3. Provide meaningful, integrated, and authentic Chinese language and cultural learning opportunities
4. Develop and maintain curriculum and professional development
5. Foster meaningful relationships between the school and community organizations and community members.

### **Acquiring Arabic**

The school district of Dearborn, Michigan proposes to teach Arabic as a foreign language in two schools, expanding one current K-5 program and establishing a new program for students in grades 4-8 at another school.

The program model will provide direct foreign language instruction, seamless movement from one proficiency level to the next, and focus on escalating proficiency in Arabic. The direct instruction uses research-based "best practices," developmental skill sequences, and levels of proficiency achievement to determine advancement. The model also calls for integration of technology in instruction and learning, creating Arabic language curriculum and assessments, peer coaching, professional development, community partnership, and establishing a parent lending library.

### **Arabic in Iowa**

The Mid-Prairie Community Schools designed a Project entitled *Foreign Language Instruction for Primary Students*. The purpose of the project is to increase Arabic language proficiency and



cross cultural competence for K-5th grade students, and provide professional development training in foreign language methodology and language acquisition strategies for all teachers serving those students. The program will include strategies that best meet the identified needs for improved teaching to maximize student achievement in the core academic subjects and increase language proficiency in Arabic.

### Long Sequence Russian Program in Tennessee

The Memphis City Schools will implement a K-12 continuum of Russian Language instruction at three schools. Memphis will build upon the successful program at Craigmont High School by expanding the middle school program and implementing an elementary school program. The current exploratory course offered in grades 6-8 will be updated to a bridge program that allows middle school graduates to enter advanced level courses when they enter high school.

### Chinese and Russian for Young Learners

A FLAP grant will support the Critical Need Language Initiative 2007-2010 in the Glastonbury Town School District in Connecticut. The Glastonbury Public Schools will improve and expand its Chinese and Russian language programs with a focus on professional development, curriculum and assessment, and updated technology. The programs will extend into elementary grades three through eight and the district will improve horizontal and vertical articulation between the course offerings at the middle school and high school to allow students the opportunity to participate in Chinese or Russian via distance learning.

### Highly Qualified Teachers

Finding highly qualified foreign language teachers, particularly teachers of critical foreign languages, continues to be a national challenge. In comparison with traditional foreign languages, there are far fewer teachers fluent in critical languages and fewer teacher training institutions producing new teachers of critical

languages. To help meet this need, FLAP district and state grantees are encouraged to establish partnerships for teacher recruitment, professional development, and certification.

### Assuring Global Competitiveness

The Fairfax County Public School district in Virginia and its university partners will produce five items:

1. Complete grade 1-6 Chinese and Arabic FLES curriculum
2. Virtual Chinese and Arabic courses for middle and high school students at schools that do not offer these languages
3. An electronic version of the LinguaFolio USA
4. A model of 1-16 articulation plans with local universities, including Chinese and Arabic teacher recruitment projects, student mentoring and summer language camps
5. An initiative to facilitate replication of the project that includes guidance materials to share with other districts and states

### Critical Language Fellows

The Wisconsin Department of Education will use a competitive process to name *Critical Language Fellows* and prepare them to be highly qualified teachers by developing pathways for certification. In years one and two, the program will prepare teachers in Mandarin; the third year, a new cohort of teachers will be prepared to teach Arabic. The project will develop new programs by planning with districts committed to matching grant funds. However, a competitive priority will be given to districts wishing to begin instruction in the elementary grades. Members of the heritage-speaking community will be trained to coach heritage language students to use and improve their language skills. The project will create a consortium of collaborating partners to implement a competency-based teacher certification model for Chinese and Arabic language teaching.

### Conclusion

The U.S. Department of Education understands that developing new foreign language programs and expanding existing programs represents a challenge to many districts and states. Clearly, there is a dearth of highly qualified foreign language teachers and even fewer teachers are fluent in critical languages. The resources of the Foreign Language Assistance Program are here to support local school districts and state educational agencies as they address the challenges and build a foundation for success in foreign language education.

# Lafayette School District

Nicole Boudreaux, Lafayette School District

## Background

Few people know that the original text of the 1803 Louisiana Purchase included provisions for the people of Louisiana to be allowed to keep their native French language as means of communication. However, one of the first orders given by Union General Butler after taking over New Orleans toward the end of the Civil War was to forbid the use of French in public places. Decades later, the Louisiana Constitution (1921) prohibited the use of French in all public places, including schools, and for legal transactions. While French remained spoken in many homes, especially among Cajuns, the feeling grew that Cajun French was not good French and that it was a lack of education to speak French.

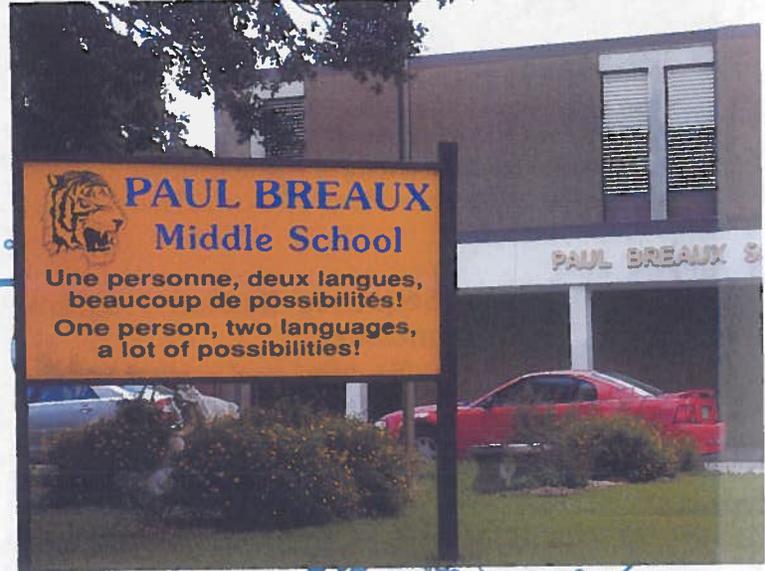
Fast forward to the end of World War II when G.I.'s from Louisiana found that they could communicate quite well with their Cajun French in Europe. They brought back a new "Cajun Pride"; the first sign of the "Cajun Renaissance". This renewal of ethnic pride peaked in 1969, when the Louisiana Congress declared the state officially bilingual, created Council for the Development of French in Louisiana (CODOFIL), and passed a law requiring that French be taught in elementary schools statewide.

## History of Immersion Education in Louisiana

From 1969 to the late 1980's, most French programs in schools were based on a traditional foreign language instructional model, usually offering 30 minutes a day of French language instruction in elementary grades, increasing to 50 minutes a day in middle school. Contingent on funding and political swings over time, programs expanded from Kindergarten to 8th grade, or contracted to 4th through 8th grade. Some even got federally funded under the Bilingual umbrella, using the argument that some Cajun students' first language was French, not English. These short lived programs could be considered the ancestors of immersion, as students were taught their subjects both in French and in English.

The first substantial French immersion program – still in existence today – opened in 1986 in Lake Charles, near the Texas border, at the urging of outsiders brought there by the oil boom, many of whom wanted their children to take advantage of the bilingualism evident in the area. Today, ten school districts have immersion programs in a total of 32 schools, making Louisiana the state with the largest number of immersion programs.

Lafayette, Louisiana opened its first three immersion schools in 1992, in reaction to a grass roots movement of Cajun families, mainly young parents whose own parents spoke French and wanted to provide their children with the linguistic heritage miss-



ing from their own education. Today's French immersion student population is more diverse and includes 950 students from grades Pre-K through 8th in four elementary schools and one middle school. This number does not include former immersion students in high school who are enrolled in French IV, V, and VI, and usually test out of 15 to 18 hours of college-level French. In Lafayette's partial immersion model, instruction is in French with an English language arts teacher coming into the classroom for a period of 90 minutes per day (120 minutes daily in 1st grade). While physical education or weekly programs such as library time, computer lab or music may take place in English, guidelines for Lafayette school district aim at 220 to 240 minutes per day.

- Since 2005, the Lafayette French immersion program has been part of the district's desegregation plan mandated by the U.S. Justice Department. This means that entering immersion students at the Kindergarten level are selected through racially based lotteries at each school site. Electronic applications are available beginning in November preceding a child's entry into Kindergarten; the lottery takes place in early February. The four elementary schools offer seven sections of kindergarten through third grade, with a maximum of 22 students per class. This number was increased temporarily in 2005 to accommodate refugees from immersion schools in hurricane-devastated areas. As attrition is an important issue, late entrants are encouraged to the end of first grade. The district does not select students based on intelligence, academic achievement or other criterion of this type, and there is no screening at beginning of kindergarten. However, late entry students are screened by the lead teacher or the involved French and English language arts teachers to make sure they can handle the difficulty of catching up with their immersion peers, and parents are encouraged to hire a tutor to facilitate the transition. Exit requests are accepted only after an exit meeting where problems are discussed

# ct: French Immersion Program

and other solutions are offered. Transfers from one school to another are also accepted after evaluating the reasons for the transfer, in order not to negatively affect the balance of programs..

Due to attrition, the district consolidates 4th and 5th grade classes into five or six sections at two schools. All immersion students attend one Middle School for 6th, 7th, and 8th grades where they are required to schedule three classes taught in French, French Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies, to remain in the program.

Most of the district's French immersion teachers are "Foreign Associate Teachers", recruited abroad by CODOFIL and the State Department of Education. These teachers must hold a valid elementary teaching license in their country, the equivalent of a bachelor's degree, and a minimum of three years experience. After obtaining J1 visa (valid for three years), they receive a special foreign certification and are classified as highly qualified. If they choose to remain beyond the three year period, the district may sponsor them for an H1B visa (valid three years, renewable once) and the state will extend their special certification for three years. Beyond this, teachers can be sponsored by the school district for Resident Alien status (green card) and work with the State Department of Education and local universities to qualify for permanent certification. The Lafayette School District is fortunate to have retained many such teachers. The program also attracted a few local teachers with a Cajun French as a first language who perfected their language at the university level and abroad.

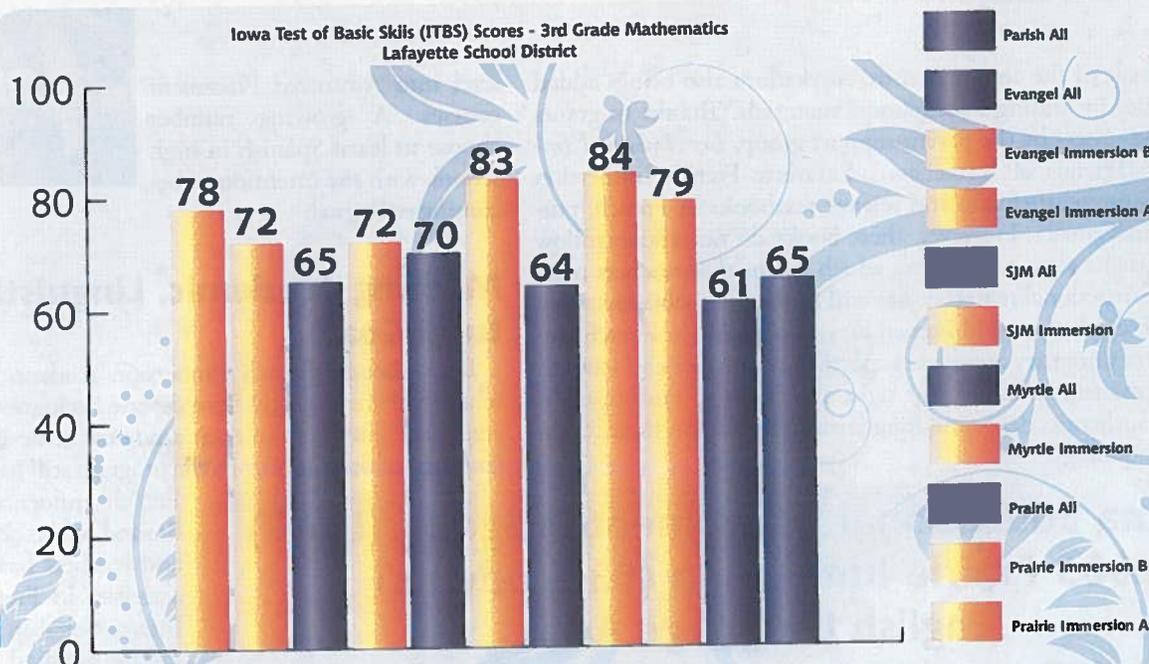
## Challenges and Benefits of Immersion Education

While it is difficult to be an elementary teacher, an immersion elementary teacher needs excellent teaching

skills and native-like fluency. In addition to their language and teaching skill, foreign associate teachers bring a diversity of cultures to Louisiana students. A Lafayette immersion student might start in Kindergarten with a Cajun teacher, move to 1st grade with a Belgian teacher, then to a Canadian teacher in 2nd, a Haitian teacher in 3rd, and a Nigerian teacher in 4th grade! The diversity of instructional staff helps students meet the combined goals of cultural understanding, target language proficiency and academic achievement.

Lafayette's immersion program has evolved over the years. Now, we are meeting the challenge of accountability and the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) initiative from the federal government. The state of Louisiana also mandates a very detailed comprehensive curriculum in four core subjects: math, language arts, science, and social studies. In earlier grades, teaching skills in these four content areas in a foreign language does not lend itself to this "one-size-fits-all" plan of instruction. Within the comprehensive curriculum's scope, Immersion teachers are given special permission by the district to adapt the scope and the depth of the objectives in each unit to fit their setting, but each day the balancing language and content teaching becomes more difficult. Although all district statistical data from standardized test results for the past ten years show that immersion students consistently outscore their non immersion peers, some administrators are still calling for an increase in English Language Arts instruction, thereby threatening to cut daily target language instruction to the bare minimum.

Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) Scores - 3rd Grade Mathematics  
Lafayette School District



The issue of the comprehensive curriculum also brings added difficulties in finding instructional materials. Thanks to grants and fund-raisers by the parent-support group, *Les Amis de l'Immersion* (Friends of Immersion), Lafayette French Immersion students use mathematic and science textbooks in French, purchased in Canada. However, these books do not always follow the Louisiana state curriculum, which means that teachers must create instructional material that will fit the exact objectives. No textbook can be found in French for social studies or French language arts since they are subjects particular to American schools. This permanent search for the right material does push teachers into an authentic, deep, and long-term reflection on their teaching methodology.

level into Advanced Placement courses. A growing number choose to learn Spanish in high school, with the intention of becoming trilingual.



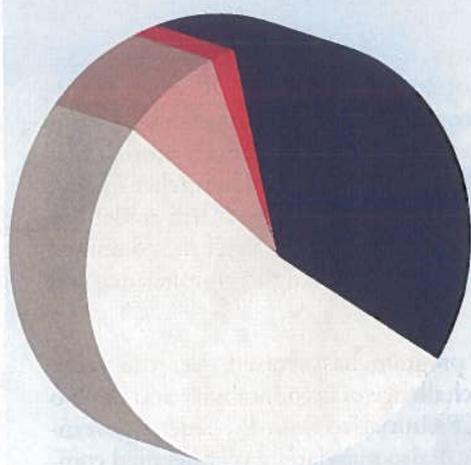
### Meeting Academic, Linguistic, and Cultural Goals

Even though French immersion students in the Lafayette schools are increasingly from diverse backgrounds and their parents more interested in their academic achievement than in the language of their ancestors, the program still has a strong heritage

French influence. French is not limited to the classroom. Students and teachers have access to many activities in French. The Festival International in the spring brings several hundred thousand visitors to the town. The *Grand pique-nique de l'Immersion* (Great Immersion Picnic) unites immersion students from throughout the state at a different location every year. They also visit the heritage parks at Vermilionville or the Acadian Village and retirement homes where many residents speak French. Students seem to gain a strong Francophone identity, reinforced by the multiculturalism of their teachers. The program is reaching its goals in academic achievement as defined by the Louisiana Education Assessment Program, which satisfies

administrators and parents and creates bilingual students, which thrills teachers. Its biggest success may be its multiculturalism that it helps students prepare for the 21st century.

## Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP) 2005 Prairie Immersion (63 Students) English Language Arts

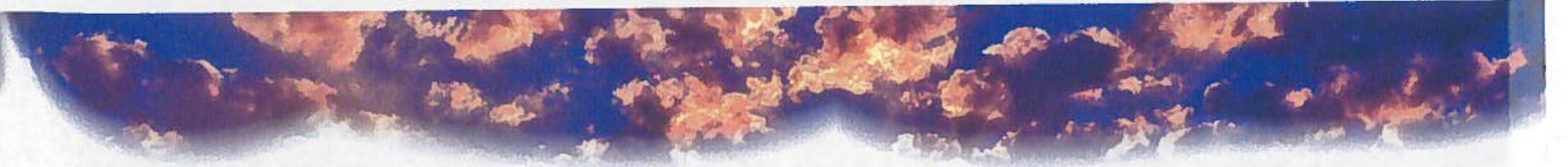


- Unsatisfactory 0%
- Approaching Basic 2%
- Basic 38%
- Mastery 52%
- Advanced 8%

As shown above, studies of standardized test results for all four content areas in English show excellent academic achievement among immersion students as a group. Formal evaluation of fluency in the French language is kept at a minimum during the early years for financial reasons. At 3rd grade students take the Student Oral Proficiency Assessment (SOPA) from the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL). In 5th grade students are evaluated on their writing proficiency. The aim is to evaluate the immersion program rather than the individual students. At grade 7, 100% of students pass a French I credit and earn one high school Carnegie unit in French. Similarly, 98% of students pass a French II credit exam at the end of the 8th grade. Those earning a high score on their French II credit exam are offered a placement exam into French IV, and usually continue their studies at high school



Nicole Boudreaux is the president of the Consortium of Immersion Schools in Louisiana. She is Lafayette Parish's lead foreign language immersion teacher. Ms. Boudreaux has researched the results of French Immersion on achievement. She has translated the book *You are Sunshine* by Shirley Porter with and Zachary Richard. The book was given to first- and second-graders in the Lafayette Parish School System's French Immersion program.



# Linking Language and Literacy: The Legend of the Bluebonnet

Dianne M. Nault, Holliston, MA

## School Setting

As a second grade teacher in the French Immersion Program in Holliston, Massachusetts, I have been involved in the field of second language acquisition for over 20 years. I teach the second grade curriculum in French to children, all day, and every day. These children come from English-speaking parents and home environments, but once they enter my classroom, they are “immersed” in the second language. Since our Immersion program begins at the Kindergarten level, my students are now in their third year of second language learning. At this level, they are considered “functionally fluent”; they still make grammatical/syntactical errors and sometimes search for the “precise” word, or use circumlocution to express their needs. However, they function well in daily curricular and communicative tasks.

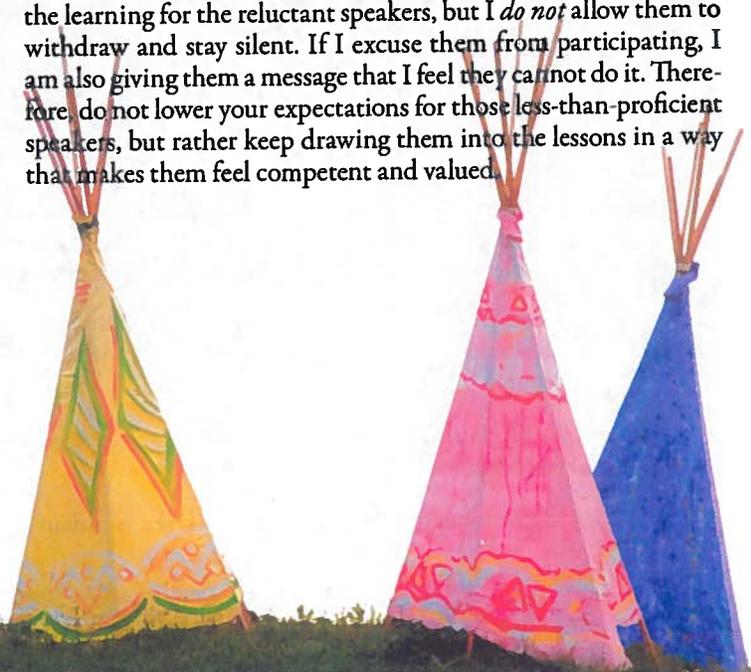
My school system requires that my Immersion classroom achieve as closely as possible the same curricular objectives as the “traditional” English classrooms. Therefore, all grade two classes are expected to complete units of study on various Native American tribes and their respective cultures as part of our Social Studies curriculum. Included in this study are several Native American folktales. The Legend of the Bluebonnet is one of the required readings for all second graders. In this case, the English text must be paraphrased in the target language for the students in my Immersion classroom. To facilitate their understanding, I cover the English text with a sheet of paper and rely mainly on the illustrations and my own interpretation to convey the meaning. Despite the fact that this text is not authentic, I look forward to presenting this story every year. This folktale has proven to be an excellent springboard for class discussions on Native American cultures, family life and the theme of personal sacrifice for the greater good. The lessons have provided many opportunities for my students to enrich and enhance their oral and written skills in the target language.

## Meaningful Communication

Two of the major challenges of second language acquisition are keeping the language and the lessons meaningful and making these lessons accessible to all learners by carefully orchestrating the learning experiences. This can be more challenging when teaching Social Studies which relies so heavily on text that often contains difficult and sometimes unusual vocabulary. Research and anecdotal experience show that teaching language in context is much more effective than teaching about language in isolation.

The need to communicate and connect with others, to understand and be understood, is basic to human nature. Vocabulary lists, verb charts, memorization of dialogs do not produce proficient speakers because the language is being taught for the language’s sake, devoid of context or meaning. Better results will be achieved by contextualized lessons, always keeping the lessons in the target language, never translating or asking the children to translate back into English what has been presented, and by tailoring the content of the lessons to support all learners.

Second language teachers should not worry about the children knowing every word in the lesson. In most cases, the teacher is the best and most effective language model in the classroom. Use your role in the classroom to your students’ advantage. Think aloud, keep talking and let the children see you work through the lesson. If you have enough visual/concrete support, if you use lots of repetitive language and if you are not afraid to be a “ham” (body language and tone speak volumes to children!) they will get your message. Keep your objectives simple and your interactions meaningful. Little steps forward encourage the children to keep going and to stay engaged in the lesson. If the students see themselves as successful learners, they will be motivated to continue. Do not hesitate to include those children who are not yet proficient speakers and may not be able to produce target language in full sentences. These students have receptive language skills that are sufficient to comprehend the story. I *do* need to scaffold the learning for the reluctant speakers, but I *do not* allow them to withdraw and stay silent. If I excuse them from participating, I am also giving them a message that I feel they cannot do it. Therefore, do not lower your expectations for those less-than-proficient speakers, but rather keep drawing them into the lessons in a way that makes them feel competent and valued.



## The Legend of Bluebonnet

In immersion programs, language is not directly taught, but rather embedded into the content of a lesson. The target language is the medium of the lesson, not the object of the instruction. We find themes in children's literature in my classroom and share children's stories as a means of teaching target language. A story provides a language experience and encourages students to participate actively in the lesson. Children are also more apt to learn and retain ideas and language from the context of a story and picture books.

The following is an example of using the context of a children's story to teach the target language. The entire lesson is conducted in French (teacher and students) and is designed to be done during the literacy block over a period of several days.

*Lesson objective:* (Interpretive, Interpersonal and Presentational Communication): Children will listen to and discuss a story and then write their own stories based on the children's book, 'The Legend of the Bluebonnet' by Tomie dePaola.

### Story Summary

An orphaned young girl from the Plains Indian tribes must sacrifice her most precious possession (her warrior doll) in order to save her village from famine and death.

### Anticipatory Questions

Teacher shows the book to the class and asks questions in the target language to access prior knowledge and establish text-to-text connections to set the stage for the reading.

- What is a legend?
- Do you know any other legends, for example the story of Johnny Appleseed?
- Do you know this author? Have you read other books by Tomie dePaola, for example *Strega Nona*?
- From the cover illustration, what tribes are depicted here?
- What do you already know about these people? (They hunted buffaloes, rode horses, lived in teepees, lived the central regions of the U.S., banded together in large tribal groups)
- Look at the young girl on the cover. How is she dressed? Is she wearing modern clothes?
- Does she look happy? Why do you think she is unhappy?

## Listening and Discussion Phase

I read the text to the class. Since this book is written in English and I do not have a French copy available, I must paraphrase the story in French. I do not translate the words but rather retell the story in a more global sense. I cover the English words as I read. Using the illustrations in the book itself and illustrations I draw on large chart paper, I highlight the main points of the story in French to support and enhance the children's comprehension.

After reading the book, I invite the children to help me complete a large graphic organizer called a story map to identify *les personnages principaux, la mise-en-scène, l'intrigue, la résolution du conflit/fin de l'histoire* (main characters, story setting, problem and solution/conclusion.)

Then, I focus on certain key words in the text to discuss the story in more depth and guide students to make text-to-self connections. As a preface to the writing stage, students also interact in French, *knee-to-knee* i.e., facing each other, close enough to touch knees.

- What does the word "precious" mean?
- Can you give me an example?
- Why was the warrior doll "precious" to the girl?
- Do you have a "precious" possession?
- Turn to your nearest neighbor and share what that a precious possession might be. Be sure to describe it and tell your partner why it so important to you.
- What is a sacrifice?
- Why was the girl willing to sacrifice her doll?
- How do you think she felt afterwards?
- Why did the others in the village refuse to make a sacrifice?
- How did they feel?
- How would you feel? Why?

## Writing Stage

### Prewriting

#### Brainstorming

I use a graphic web on large chart paper to demonstrate how to brainstorm a story about "My Most Precious Possession." I explain to the children that the subject should be an object, not a person or pet.

1. I complete my own story web using my silver charm bracelet, a gift from my two children on my last birthday. I use this

concrete object to demonstrate my thinking process as I fill in the parts of the web.

- In the center of the web, I put the name of my most precious possession. Branching out from the center, I add connections: a detailed description of this object, where it came from, when I received it and why, what makes it special to me, reasons that it is my most precious possession.
- Children then follow my model to create a story web.

#### First draft

Now the students incorporate and expand the ideas from the web into full sentences and simple paragraphs. I model the first draft on large chart paper. I transform the notes and words from the story web to write the three main parts of the story in complete sentences: the beginning (name the possession and introduce the topic), the middle (describe the object and give supporting details), the end (explain why this object is precious and make a concluding statement to finish). Then, the children write their first draft for their stories.

#### Editing and Revising

Students divide into pairs, exchange their stories, read and peer edit their first drafts using a simple editing checklist that I designed. I expect the children to offer suggestions, point out spelling and grammatical errors, ask questions and encourage each other to improve their stories. Using this information, the children revise their first draft and rewrite their stories, they then conference with me to complete the final draft of their stories.

**Editer : Ma possession la plus précieuse**

Le destinataire \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

L'éditeur \_\_\_\_\_

Le titre de l'objet \_\_\_\_\_

Trouvez les éléments suivants dans la rédaction

- une phrase principale pour commencer
- 3 bonnes phrases ou plus dans chaque paragraphe
- des bons mots de vocabulaire
- plusieurs détails ou idées sur le sujet
- une bonne conclusion pour finir

\_\_\_\_\_

- une belle majuscule au début de chaque phrase
- la ponctuation à la fin de chaque phrase
- les mots bien écrits, bien espacés
- les phrases complètes
- une belle écriture

\_\_\_\_\_

**Examinez le tout qui couronné.**

Je peux lire cette rédaction. Oui Non Un peu

Je peux comprendre cette rédaction. Oui Non Un peu

Cette rédaction a des \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Sur le verso, écrivez des commentaires pour améliorer cette rédaction.

#### Final Draft and Publishing

Children complete their final drafts of their stories and incorporate an illustration of their most precious possession that is incorporated into one big book. I invite the children to read the stories in front of the whole class or to share their stories together in pairs. You may wish to post the stories on the bulletin board for display. We celebrate our achievements by presenting the class

book at our parent open house and inviting students to share oral reading of their stories.

### Conclusion

The story-based approach described here can be applied to any other children's literature since it provides the opportunity to cover several curricular objectives at once. This particular story reinforces concepts on the Native American tribes from our Social Studies Curriculum. It also enhances the development of the children's literacy skills. The students improve their oral language skills with the meaningful discourse in the classroom. This lesson supports the development of written language skills. The children work through the entire writing process: prewriting, brainstorming activities, organizing ideas, writing a first draft, editing and revising, presenting the final story to the class. Using stories to teach the target language is a powerful, authentic and meaningful way to reach and engage students in any classroom.



Dianne M. Nault earned a B.A. in French at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. She has also studied gifted and talented education at the postgraduate level at Framingham State College in Massachusetts. She has taught French immersion in the Holliston Elementary Schools since 1983, currently at the second grade level at the Sam Placentino Elementary School in Holliston. She mentors teachers who are new to immersion. Dianne has presented workshops on immersion techniques and methodology including at Massachusetts Foreign Language Association. She received

a scholarship from the French government to study French language and pedagogy at a summer institute at the University of Besançon.



# A Thematic Unit: *La Peineta Colorada*

Dr. Lori Langer de Ramirez, Herricks Public Schools

*La Peineta Colorada* is another title in the wonderful collection of thematic units produced by the National K-12 Foreign Language Resource Center at Iowa State University (<http://nflrc.iastate.edu/>). Michele Montás and Luz Cannon designed the unit for middle school students "...at the novice-high to intermediate-mid level of proficiency on the Student Oral Proficiency rating scale", the unit contains detailed lesson plans centered around the picture book *La Peineta Colorada* by Fernando Picó and María Antonia Ordóñez (1991) that will expose students to cultural perspectives in a deep and holistic way. The story revolves around a runaway slave named Carmela in Puerto Rico. When she is found hiding under Vitita's house, the two women embark on an adventure to escape from the bounty hunter who wants to return Carmela to her owner. The story is appealing for adolescent students who are especially interested at this stage of their lives in themes of freedom and fairness. The topics addressed - family, friendship, social traditions and women's roles in society - are thought provoking and will allow students to explore themes that have relevance and meaning to both current sociopolitical issues and their own lives.

The authors of the curriculum unit provide teachers with two simplified versions of the text of the story - one in the present tense and one in the past tense. This adapted text makes the otherwise challenging story accessible for middle and high school students of Spanish. The standards-based activities that complement the text are varied and interesting. The unit contains graphic organizers, vocabulary

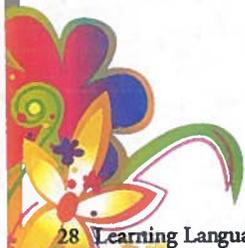
cards and story maps in the form of photocopiable handout sheets. The included rubrics can be used to assess student progress throughout the unit. The authors also detail interdisciplinary connections to geography, social studies, music, art and language arts.

The thematic unit centered on *La Peineta Colorada* is a valuable resource for teachers of Spanish at all levels. The activities and materials contained in the unit are flexible enough with FLES students or high school seniors. Teachers will appreciate the thorough lesson plans and thoughtful treatment of the topics. Students will love the activities and the story.

### Ordering Information

Order the thematic unit at the National K-12 Foreign Language Resource Center (<http://nflrc.iastate.edu/>)

Picó, F., & Ordóñez, M. A. (1991). *La peineta colorada*. Caracas, Venezuela: Ediciones Ekaré.



# Janet Glass

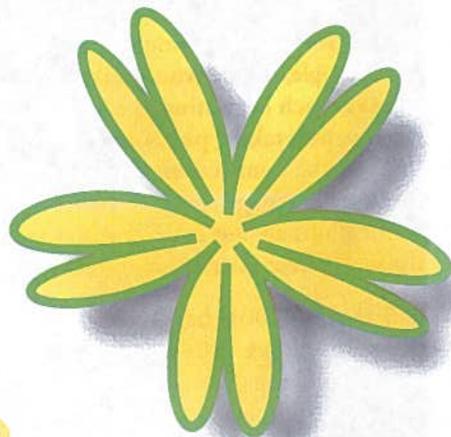
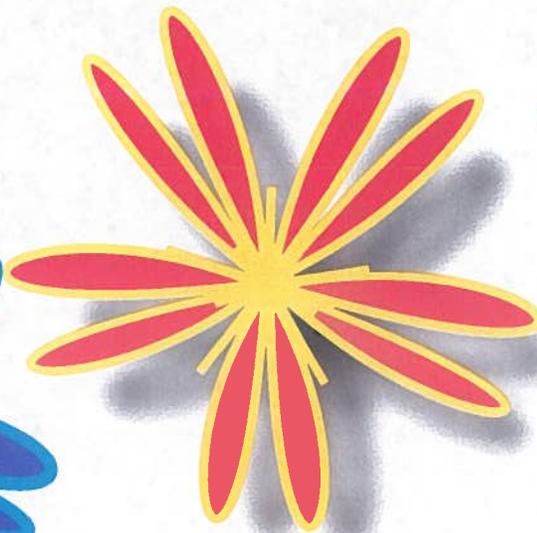
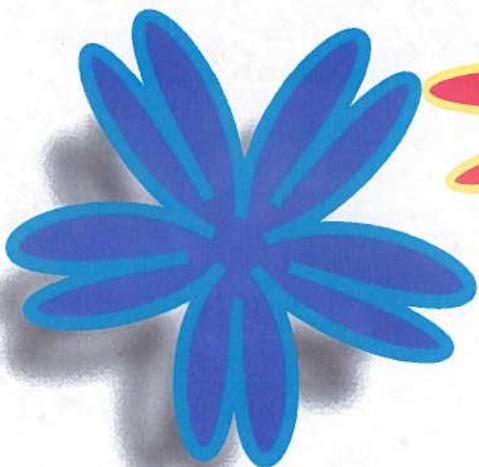
## ACTFL's Teacher of the Year



France.

Congratulations to Janet Glass, ACTFL's 2008 Teacher of the Year! A longtime member of NNELL, Janet has served the organization in various capacities, including State Representative, Northeast Regional Representative, and Secretary/Treasurer over the last fifteen years. Her work in the elementary second language classroom at Dwight Englewood School in New Jersey and her work as a second language teacher educator at New Jersey City University have earned her

a wonderful reputation as someone who promotes an early start in a long-sequence and well-articulated foreign language program, and works tirelessly to help others realize this vision. Her intensive use of the target language through interactive storytelling and her adaptation of the theory of Backward Design to foreign language instruction at the Pre-K-8 level have made her a well-recognized name in the field of early foreign language education. This award is truly well-deserved. Janet's unassuming manner and ultimate professionalism will surely serve her well as she takes her message about early foreign language education around the country during the course of 2008. NNELL is extremely proud to have supported her nomination for this award. *Felicitades, Janet!*



# The Correlation between Early Learning and Native Language

Therese Caccavale, NNELL President

It has long been the assumption of many in the field of second language teaching that learning a second language helps to promote and enhance native language skill development, and that this correlation is direct and positive. Language professionals have assumed that learning a second language directly supports the development of better skills, overall, in one's first language. Evidence supports the assertion that students who study a second language score higher on verbal sections of the SAT than students who do not. A review of the current research related to second language acquisition in children can offer new insights into this seemingly direct relationship.

## Enhanced Native Language Vocabulary

Advocates for early second language learning have long stated that learning a second language helps to develop one's native language skills in the area of vocabulary. Recent research (Bialystok, 2001) on additive bilingualism (learning a second language following the initial development of first language skills) suggests that vocabulary in each language develops separately, and that vocabulary knowledge does not automatically transfer from one language to another. Students of two languages need scaffolding via discussion in order to make these connections between languages. Once these connections are made, the outcome of learning two languages does result in better vocabulary knowledge, especially if the second language is related in some way to the first. For example, a child who speaks English as a native language and learns French beginning in early childhood when vocabulary development is taking place on a grand scale (2-6 years) would more easily make connections between English words derived from romance language roots, in particular, from French. Still, these connections are not entirely automatic and need to be scaffolded through direct instruction in making connections.

Bialystok (2001) has stated that one area of enhanced cognitive performance exhibited by bilinguals is the area of cognitive problem solving. Therefore, children who are better able to think creatively (problem solving) would be better able to make the connections between first and second languages, and would eventually demonstrate enhanced development of first language skills. This development, however, may not be the direct result of L2 to L1 transfer, as much as it is the result of increased problem-solving ability, which, as a cognitive task, is transferable across linguistic domains. Taylor-Ward (2003), in a reprise of the original Louisiana study (Rafferty, 1986), found that by grade five, students who had studied a foreign language significantly outperformed their non-foreign language peers on the language portion and other subtests of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS). Although

this research yields an outcome of increased native language performance in elementary students who study a second language, it does not necessarily demonstrate that this connection is linguistic in nature. Further research such as Taylor-Ward's on additive second language learning will help to clarify the relationship between second language learning and native language skill development in elementary students.

## Enhanced Concepts of Print

Bialystok (1997) has also theorized that bilingual children can read earlier, because they are able to recognize and act upon the symbolic relations between letters/characters and sounds without having visual objects to represent the objects described in writing. Bialystok notes that bilingual children know sooner that writing carries meaning, and that pictures are not necessary to understanding word meaning. This concept is transferable across languages, according to research findings. Bialystok states that by age four, bilingual children have progressed more than monolinguals in understanding the symbolic function of written language. She concludes that learning a foreign language at a very young age can clearly benefit children's reading abilities.

## Assimilation and Accommodation: Piaget's Theory as It Relates to L2 Learning

Piaget's theory (Piaget 2000; Atherton, 2005) describes the application of schema (prior knowledge) to the learning of new material as an *assimilative* process. The concept of assimilation can be used to refer to learning a second language that is linguistically related to one's native language. Once native French-speakers know the meaning of *pied* (foot), it is likely that they will be able to associate the meaning of words such as *pedestrian*, *pedestal*, etc. in English to the meaning of the French word, given appropriate scaffolding (Vygotsky, 1986) of these connections in the classroom. Making these connections between languages is

# Early Second Language Acquisition Skill Development

considered to be a type of cognitive problem solving as defined by Bialystok (2001). Learning a new language that lacks a linguistic connection to one's native language may be considered more of an *accommodative* process, as proposed by Piaget. *Accommodation*, according to Piaget, is the process of cognitively "making room" for new information in the brain without the benefit of schema, or prior knowledge. For example, trying to connect meaning between English words and Chinese characters is a different type of task from the French-to-English connection. This accommodation of new information is also considered to be a type of cognitive problem-solving activity, and seems to enhance cognitive abilities of children learning two languages from an early age. According to Bialystok (2001), the cognitive advantages that result from the development of bilingualism at an early age seem to diminish in adolescents and adults undergoing the same bilingual development. This is important to note when determining the starting point of an additive second language program in school settings.

## Critical Age Hypothesis

Recent research in second language acquisition has renewed interest in the *Critical Age Hypothesis* first put forth by linguist Eric Lenneberg (1967). Bialystok and Hakuta (1994) revisit the critical age hypothesis and compare the second language acquisition process in children to the fable of The Tortoise and the Hare where "slow and steady wins the race." Reprising the findings of Snow and Hofnagel-Hoehl (1978), who found that adults outperformed children in the initial stages of language-specific (morphological/grammatical) skill development, Bialystok and Hakuta theorize that adults and older adolescents will both outperform younger children in the initial stages of second language acquisition. However, children who begin learning a second language and continue over a long sequence will outperform both adolescents and adults who begin later in life and continue their study for the same period. Bialystok and Hakuta also note that the perception that young children "soak up languages" could be related to the multimodal and global methodologies used with young children as opposed to the more analytical approach frequently employed by middle and high school teachers.

The development of a native-like accent (pronunciation and intonation) seems to be linked to the window of opportunity, or critical age, before the onset of adolescence, rather than to an exact numerical age. Research by Gardner and Lambert (1972) on adult learning identifies attitude and motivation in second language learning as being even more powerful, in certain cases, than the role of some age-related factors. They define *integrative motivation* as the motivation to become non-distinguishable from native speakers of the language, and *instrumental motivation* as

the motivation to learn enough of the second language to meet personal or business-related goals. These motivational factors may account for the fact that some people are able to learn a second language with a native-like accent after the onset of puberty.

## Increased Performance on Standardized Tests

Both the original Louisiana Study (Rafferty, 1986) and subsequent replication of this study (Taylor-Ward, 2003) found that students who study a foreign language significantly outperform those who are not involved in second language study on all subtests of standardized achievement tests. Saunders (1998) examined the performance of third grade students enrolled in a Georgia elementary school foreign language program. She compared students who had not received any foreign language instruction with younger students who had received four years of instruction, five days each week, for thirty minutes per day. Students in the foreign language program scored significantly higher on the math portion of the ITBS than the students who had had no foreign language instruction, but more math instruction during this time. These quantitative studies document the positive effects of second language study on standardized test performance. Further research in the field of additive second language learning should help to clarify which aspects of early second language learning lead to these desirable results. It is entirely possible that if early second language learning is considered to be a *cognitive*, rather than a *linguistic* exercise, students' enhanced cognitive ability would translate into overall higher achievement test scores. A third study conducted by Blanchard and Nelson (2007) explores the possible links between second language study and achievement on standardized tests in English and math at the tenth grade level, as defined by results on Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment Test (MCAS). The results of this long-term study indicate that the longer students study a foreign language, the higher their level of achievement on standardized tests, with significant differences occurring after two to three years, with even more appreciable differences after seven years of instruction. This highlights the importance of early start-up programs, as traditional middle to high school foreign language curricula seldom represent such long sequences of instruction.

## Brain Research and Second Language Acquisition

Dr. Ellen Bialystok (1997, 2001) and her colleagues at York University in Toronto, Canada are currently conducting comprehensive research on the effects of second language acquisition on overall cognitive development. One area of particular interest to researchers is the development of problem solving, or critical thinking skills, which seems to be enhanced by the second lan-

guage acquisition process. A good source of information on the brain and second language learning is the website created by Kennedy of the University of Idaho at [www.teresakennedy.com/research.htm](http://www.teresakennedy.com/research.htm). Hall Haley (2007) has examined the concept of multiple intelligences as it relates to diverse second language learners. Brain researchers note connections between problem-solving activity and the development of creases in the grey matter of the human brain. If second language acquisition in children is considered to be a problem solving activity, it makes sense that we tend to see measurable differences in achievement between those children pursuing the study of a second language at an early age in long-sequence programs (Taylor-Ward, 2003; Blanchard & Nelson, 2007) and those children who do not study a second language.

### Language and Cognitive Development

Vygotsky (1986) theorized that learning a second language requires higher-order thinking skills, whereas the development of first language skills is a more of a rote process. He noted that as soon as children know one language, learning another language invites them to compare and contrast the two systems. According to Bloom's Taxonomy (1956), rote learning falls into the lowest category of intellectual behavior, called *knowledge*. Comparing and contrasting, on the other hand, fall into the fourth category on the upward scale, called *analysis*. Vygotsky's observation may indeed account for the fact that researchers such as Bialystok (2001) have found that the cognitive skill that seems to be the most enhanced by learning a second language is critical thinking, or problem-solving. If vocabulary skill development is considered to be an exercise in problem-solving (figuring out word meanings), then it stands to reason that becoming a better problem-solver would not solely benefit mathematical skill development, but would assist in overall vocabulary development as well.

### Phonological Skill Development

Research on early literacy (Chard & Dickson, 1999) indicates the importance of phonological skills to the overall acquisition of literacy skills in children. It is now assumed that global phonological knowledge, not just specific phonetic knowledge, leads to better literacy skills in children. Since children are "bathed" in the sounds and syllables of their native language from the very day they are born, they become very familiar with the pronunciation and intonation patterns of that language. Research on phonological skill development has also shown that children who hear to the sounds and intonation patterns of other languages during this pre-school language development period actually learn to segment words in their native language more easily. This ability to detect foreign words and phrases leads to increased attention to the sounds of their own language, and therefore greater overall phonological awareness. Greater phonological awareness leads to better literacy skill development in one's native language in the early years of formal reading instruction.

### Summary

A review of the literature on early second language learning indicates that bilingual children and monolingual children who begin the study of a second language at an early age and are enrolled

in continuous, long-sequence programs can benefit in measurable ways in terms of both mathematical and literacy skill development. Although many research studies indicate that second language instruction results in higher achievement in both literacy and mathematics, it is important to remember that researchers find the highest correlation between second language development and critical thinking, or problem solving skills. While the application of better problem solving skills may result in increase language arts achievement, this correlation may not be entirely direct, and may be the secondary result of increased cognitive ability.

As research in second language acquisition has grown in its complexity, some underlying aspects of long-held beliefs have become clearer in their relative importance to the second language acquisition process in children. As with any field related to human development, our knowledge and beliefs continue to grow and change. The process of foreign language learning in native English-speaking children is an area in which there is a paucity of research. Quantitative and qualitative studies in this domain will continue to elucidate the process and benefits of early language learning. The National Network for Early Language Learning (NNELL) is an organization dedicated to the promotion of quality second language learning on the part of all children, Pre-K to grade eight.

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Therese Sullivan Gaccavale is the K-12 Foreign Language Specialist of the Holliston, MA Public Schools. She is also the president of NNELL.

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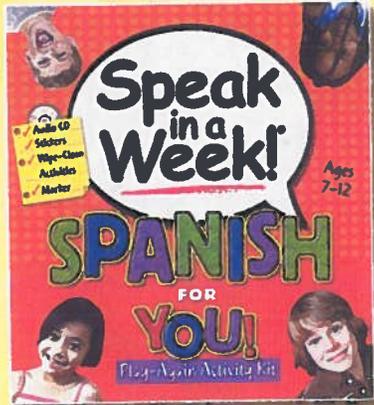
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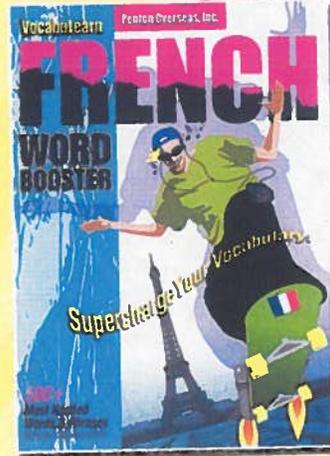


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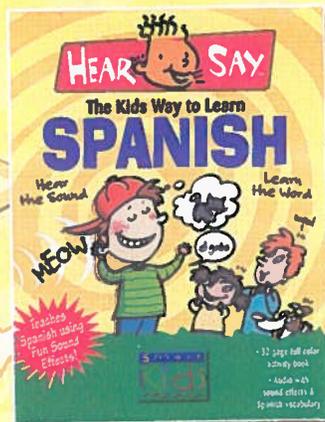
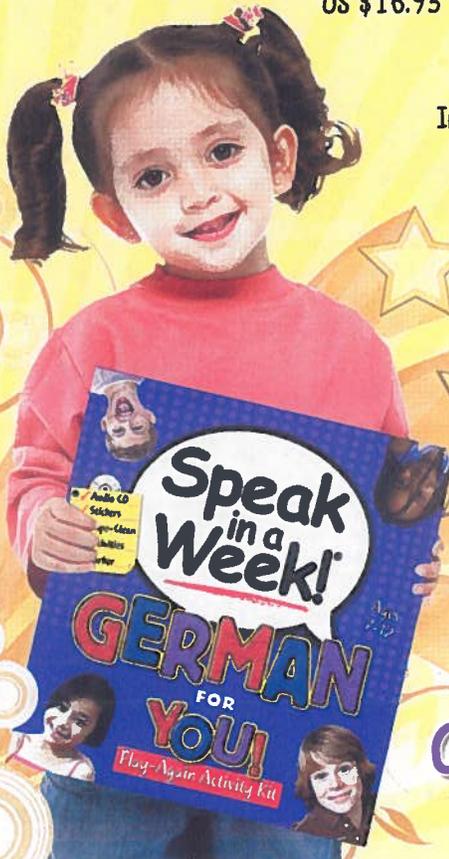


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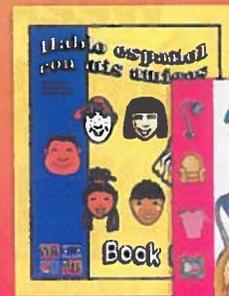
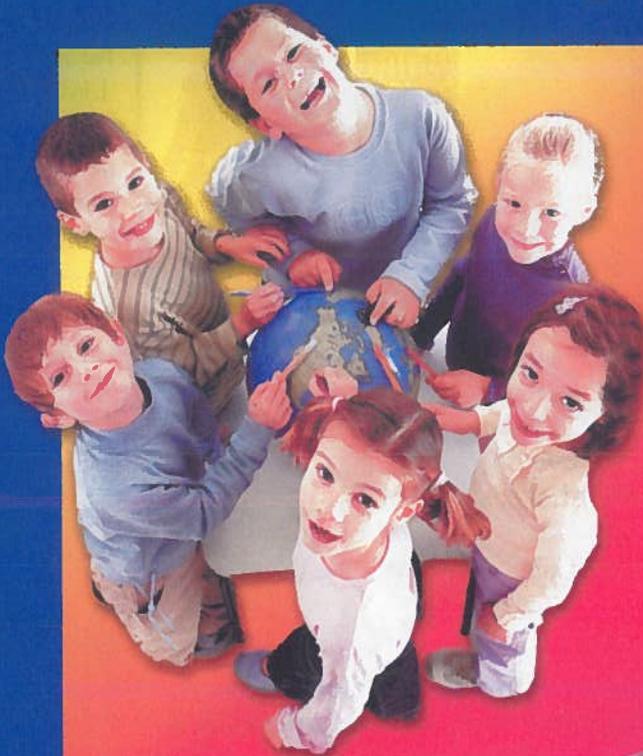
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# Language Legislation

J. David Edwards, JNCL-NCLIS Executive Director

## College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007

The College Cost and Reduction Act of 2007 was passed in both the House of Representatives and the Senate. It was signed by President Bush on Thursday, September 27, 2007 and became Public Law No. 110-84. The purpose of this legislation is to increase college financial aid and reduce loan costs in order to make college more affordable. "The legislation will do more to help students and families pay for college than any federal effort since the 1944 GI Bill and comes at no new cost to U.S. taxpayers." (<http://edworkforce.house.gov/>)

Of particular interest to language professionals, this bill would provide student loan forgiveness to borrowers who serve in areas of national need as early childhood educators, nurses, foreign language specialists, librarians, certain highly qualified teachers, child welfare workers, speech language pathologists, National Service participants, and public sector employees. It also would establish a TEACH Grant program providing tuition assistance to undergraduate and graduate students who commit to teaching a high-need subject in a high-need school for four years.

The chairman of the House Committee on Education and Labor, Rep. George Miller, offered the following comments regarding the College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007:

"Today is a momentous day for students and families struggling to pay for college. This bill will help ensure that no qualified student is prevented from going to college because of the cost. With the College Cost Reduction and Access Act signed into law, millions of students will receive much needed help to pay for college. I am extremely proud that the Democratic Congress has provided the greatest investment

to help students and parents pay for college since the GI bill and has delivered on our promise to make college more affordable and accessible for families. This legislation shows how the Congress and the President can work together to accomplish important things on behalf of American families."

## America COMPETES

On August 9, 2007, the President signed into law the America Creating Opportunities to Meaningfully Promote Excellence in Technology, Education, and Science Act. The purpose of this legislation is to invest in the innovation and education to improve the competitiveness of the U.S. in the global economy. The America "COMPETES" Act is an updated version of last year's National Competitiveness Investment Act introduced by Senators Frist and Reid. This legislation is a bipartisan response to the National Academies' "Rising Above the Gathering Storm" report and the Council on Competitiveness' "Innovate America" report. In addition to expanding AP and IB programs and funding for math, science, engineering, and technology, the America COMPETES act would develop and implement programs for bachelor's and master's degrees in critical foreign languages with concurrent teaching credentials.

It would expand critical foreign language programs in elementary and secondary schools in order to increase the number of students studying and becoming proficient in these languages.

## Foreign Language Education Partnership Program

To amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to establish a partnership program in foreign languages. The Secretary of Education would be given the authority to make incentive payments

to eligible partnerships to "develop and maintain model programs that support articulated language learning in kindergarten through grade 12". The funds may be used for program design and teaching strategies according to best practices and available research, curriculum and materials development, national assessment development and enhancement, teacher in-service and pre-service program development, and recruitment incentives for new teachers and students. The funds can also be used to provide opportunities for maximum language exposure for students, dual-language immersion programs, scholarships for study abroad opportunities, activities that encourage whole-school and community involvement, effective and innovative use of technology, and certification and alternative certification programs.

Further, a model program is exempt from receiving funding under this program unless it contains a research and evaluation component that would collect data regarding the effectiveness of each activity of the language program and the effect of each activity on the language proficiency of the students. This data would be analyzed and made public under standardization guidelines determined by the Secretary.

A partnership that is awarded incentive funding under this program for one fiscal year would have the opportunity to continue funding for the three succeeding fiscal years if proven effective. This requirement may be waived by the Secretary if the program relates to critical languages or if the year is used primarily for planning rather than program implementation.

Incentive payments for this bill would be appropriated in the amount of \$50,000,000 for fiscal year 2008.

# National K-12 Foreign Language Resource Center

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<http://www.nflrc.iastate.edu>

## MISSION

To improve the nation's capacity for teaching and learning languages at all levels by building a strong foundation in elementary and secondary schools.

## INITIATIVES

### For Early Language Learning:

Provide Ñandutí and NELL Web sites and Ñandú listserv;

Collaborate in partnership to develop online assessment of listening, speaking, reading, writing.

### For Mandarin Chinese FLES and Two-Way Spanish Immersion:

Provide teacher training on instructional strategies;

Develop curriculum, instructional materials, and language scope and sequence;

Conduct longitudinal research of student progress in language proficiency, student progress in academic subjects, and student attitudes toward other cultures and languages.

National K-12 Foreign Language Resource Center

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# 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.)
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- *Research* (e.g. quantitative or qualitative studies that have direct implica-

tions to early language learning, etc.)

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

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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.

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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.

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