

# FLESNEWS

## NATIONAL NETWORK FOR EARLY LANGUAGE LEARNING

Volume 3, Number 2

Winter 1989-90

### Western Europe Stresses Early Language Learning

*Reinhold Freudenstein  
Philipps-Universität  
Marburg, Federal Republic of Germany*

A decision was made to conduct a survey in Western Europe on the situation of foreign language teaching and learning at the primary level (the first four years of formal education) at the first West European regional conference of the Federation Internationale des Professeurs de Langues Vivantes (FIPLV), or Modern Language Associations, held in Nantes (France) in August 1988. The aim of the survey was to provide information on foreign language teaching to children up to the age of ten, with special reference to the countries in the European Community (EC), in preparation for a statement by FIPLV on early foreign language teaching in Western Europe. The survey was conducted with the technical assistance of the Foreign Language Research Information Center at Philipps University in Marburg (Federal Republic of Germany).

The results of the survey were presented at a meeting of representatives of FIPLV in Sèvres (France) in April 1989. A number of issues raised at this meeting were relevant to early foreign language teaching and learning. The proposals that were made are summarized here.

It became clear that on the one hand there is widespread agreement on the advantages of early foreign and second language learning; on the other hand it is advisable to conduct further research into various aspects of children's language acquisition and into the process and context of language teaching at an early age before final recommendations are made for a common language policy in Western Europe after 1992.

#### The Present Situation

Except for Luxembourg, there is no compulsory foreign language teaching in primary education in the countries of the EC. In Luxembourg, German is offered from year one and French from year three. In France, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Netherlands, and in parts of Belgium foreign languages are offered on a voluntary basis usually from year three or four onward. In countries where primary education lasts for five, six, or more years, voluntary foreign language teaching is usually found in the curriculum from year five on. In

other words, with the exception of Luxembourg, there is no regular, obligatory foreign language instruction at the primary level in the countries of the EC.

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### ACTFL Identifies Elementary School Foreign Languages as National Priority

*Sheri Houpt  
Portland Schools  
Portland, Maine*

The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) identified the teaching of foreign languages in the elementary school as one of the thirteen important issues facing the language teaching profession in the 1990s. These issues were the focus of the second invitational Conference on Professional Priorities held as an adjunct to ACTFL's 1989 Joint Annual Meeting in Boston in November.

A position paper and reactions to the position paper were prepared for each issue by key leaders in the field prior to the conference. The position paper for the issue of foreign languages in the elementary school was written by Dr. Myriam Met, Foreign Language Coordinator of Montgomery County Schools, Maryland, and Nancy Rhodes, Chair of the National Network for Early Language Learning, Center of Applied Linguistics, Washington, DC. Reaction papers were invited

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## Notes from the Chair

The decade of the nineties is off to a great start. Foreign language learning is being revitalized across the nation, and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) has recognized language teaching in the elementary school as a priority for the 1990s. As Sheri Houpt points out in her article, ACTFL's November Conference on Professional Priorities was a catalyst for discussion and recommendations on early language learning. An ACTFL position paper, to be available later this year, will summarize these priorities.

It is significant that at the same time we are experiencing renewed interest in language teaching in the United States, Western Europe is facing a similar situation as interest grows in developing a common language policy. In the lead article, Reinhold Freudenstein of the Foreign Language Research Information Center (Philipps University) in West Germany describes a recent survey of elementary school language teaching in Western Europe. There is widespread agreement among educators there on the advantages of early language teaching, but more studies of language acquisition and teaching methodologies are necessary before final recommendations are made for a common language policy in Western Europe after 1992. Interestingly, the critical issues they are addressing are similar to the ones we are facing in the United States (continuation of instruction in secondary schools, integration of language instruction into the school curriculum, and determination of the appropriate age to begin instruction). We are delighted to have our first article from abroad, and we welcome closer ties with Europe as we address our common concerns.

Nancy C. Rhodes

## FLES| Strand is Feature at CSC

The Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages will hold its annual conference in Minneapolis March 15-18, 1990. As a special feature, a "FLES strand" will be one of three priorities emphasized in the workshops and sessions within the theme of "Twin Issues: Defining the Future and Making It Happen."

Having a FLES strand means that during every time slot on the program there will be a minimum of one session devoted to the topic of FLES. There also will be FLES workshops both pre- and postconference. Finally, a unique 90-minute panel will feature FLES experts who will discuss current trends and issues. Session topics will range from interdisciplinary planning and teaching of content through the second language, to teacher preparation, establishing FLES and FLEX programs, networking, and sharing of practical ideas as well as sources of materials.

If your interest is FLES, you are assured of a complete schedule of sessions devoted to this topic. For more information, contact: Jody Thrush, Madison Area Technical College, 3550 Anderson St., Madison, WI 53704.

*FLES\* NEWS* is a newsletter for educators interested in providing quality foreign language instruction for children. The newsletter provides information on classroom activities, resources, various teaching methods, recent research, upcoming conferences, and information on how to publicize elementary foreign language programs. *FLES NEWS* provides a means of sharing information, ideas, and concerns among teachers, administrators, researchers, and others who are interested in the teaching of foreign languages to young children.

*FLES NEWS* is published three times a year (fall, winter, and spring) by the National Network for Early Language Learning: Marcia Rosenbusch, editor; Nancy Rhodes, network chair. Executive committee members are: Carolyn Andrade (Ohio), Diane Ging (Ohio), Mari Haas, corresponding secretary (New York), Nancy Hess (New York), Melanie Klutts, recording secretary (Texas), Gladys Lipton, treasurer (Maryland), and Kathleen Riordan (Massachusetts).

Contributing editors for the newsletter by topic are: *Classroom activities* Donna Grundstad, Iowa City Community School District, 509 S. Dubuque St., Iowa City, IA 52240; *Conferences* Jane G. Graveen, Glastonbury Public Schools, Glastonbury, CT 06033; *Funding information and new legislation* Jamie B. Draper, Joint National Committee for Languages, 300 Eye St. NE, Suite 211, Washington, DC 20002; *Publicizing FLES* Carolyn Andrade, Cincinnati Public Schools, 230 E. 9th St. Cincinnati, OH 45202; *Research* Elsa Statzner, University of Minnesota, Second Languages and Cultures, 125 Peik Hall, Minneapolis, MN 55455; *French resources* Myriam Chapman, Bank Street School for Children, 610 W. 112th St., New York, NY 10025; *Spanish resources* Barbara McDonald, A. F. Doerfler School, 3014 W. Scott St., Milwaukee, WI 53215; *German resources* Patricia Pillot, Harding Elementary School, 2920 Burdette, Ferndale, MI 48220; *Teaching methods* Audrey Heining-Boynton, Foreign Language Education, CB 3500, Peabody Hall, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3500.

Subscription rate is \$8/year (\$12/year overseas). Please send your check to: Gladys Lipton, Treasurer, National Network for Early Language Learning, P. O. Box 4982, Silver Spring, MD 20914.

*FLES NEWS* wants to hear from its readers. Send letters to: Nancy Rhodes, *FLES NEWS*, Center for Applied Linguistics, 1118 22nd St. NW, Washington, DC 20037. Send contributions to be considered for publication to the appropriate contributing editors at the addresses listed above. Deadlines for information are: fall issue-May 1; winter issue-Nov. 1; spring issue-Feb. 1.

Readers are encouraged to make copies of this newsletter and share them with colleagues. Articles may be reprinted citing *FLES NEWS*, National Network for Early Language Learning, as the source.

\*Foreign Language in the Elementary School

## ★ ★ Foreign Language Awards ★ ★

The annual meeting of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) held in Boston in November 1989, recognized outstanding contributions to the foreign language profession. Several educators and researchers who work in early language learning were among those who received awards.

Marguerite Ann Snow, Assistant Professor of Education, California State University at Los Angeles, shared the ACTFL-MLJ Paul Pimsleur Award for Research in Foreign Language Education jointly with Dr. Russell N. Campbell, Professor of Applied Linguistics, University of California at Los Angeles, and Dr. Amado M. Padilla, Professor of Education, Stanford University.

Dora F. Kennedy, Supervisor of Foreign Languages, Prince George's County (MD) Public Schools, received the Florence Steiner Award for Leadership in Secondary Foreign Language Education.

## Conference Calendar

International, national, and regional conferences and workshops are previewed in this section of the newsletter. Please send information on conferences and workshops to the conferences editor.

### 1990 CONFERENCES

**March 15-18: Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (in conjunction with Minnesota Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages).** Marriott City Center Hotel, Minneapolis. Theme: "Twin Issues: Defining the Future and Making It Happen." Diane Ging, CSC-MCTFL Program Chair, Columbus Public Schools, 2200 Winslow Drive, Columbus, OH 43207.

**March 19-23: CALICO Annual International Symposium.** Baltimore, MD. CALICO, 3078 JKHB, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602 (801-378-7079).

**April 5-8: Southwest Conference on Language Teaching 7th Annual Meeting.** Holiday Inn Pyramid Hotel, Albuquerque, NM. Jan Herrera, SWCOLT Executive Director, 13355 Albion Circle, Thornton, CO 80241 (303-452-1308).

**April 19-22: Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.** New York City. Theme: "Shifting the Instructional Focus to the Learner." 1990 Northeast Conference Chair, P. O. Box 623, Middlebury, VT 05753.

**April 26-28: Second Language Acquisition and Foreign Language Learning II.** Urbana, IL. Bill Van Patten, Department of Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese, 4080 Foreign Languages Building, 707 S. Mathews, Urbana, IL 61801.

**May 3-5: Pacific Northwest Council on Foreign Languages 40th Annual Meeting.** Portland, OR. Ray Verzasconi, PNCFL Executive Secretary, Foreign Languages and Literatures, Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR 97331; (503-754-2289).

**May 3-6: The American Forum for Global Education Conference.** St. Paul, MN. The American Forum, 45 John St., Suite 1200, New York, NY 10038.

**May 10-12: Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers Annual Meeting.** Conference Centre, St. John's Newfoundland. Ihor Z. Kruk, President, CASLT, 369 Montrose St., Winnipeg, Manitoba R3M 3M1, Canada.

### SUMMER WORKSHOPS

**June 11-July 6: Fourth Summer FLES Institute.** Iowa State University, Ames, IA. For application or further information, contact: Dr. Marcia Rosenbusch, Director, Summer FLES Institute, Department of Foreign Languages, 300 Pearson Hall, Iowa State University, Ames, IA 50011 (515-294-4046).

**June 18-July 13: Methods for Teaching Foreign Languages in the Elementary School.** Concordia College, Moorhead, MN. Carol Ann Pesola, coordinator. For application information, contact: Office of Admissions, Concordia College, Moorhead, MN 56560. For grant information for German teachers, contact: Helene Zimmer-Luew, AATG, 112 Haddontowne Court #104, Cherry Hill, NJ 08034.

**July 8-14: National FLES\*Institute.** University of Maryland; Baltimore County. For further information and application, write: Dr. Gladys Lipton, Coordinator of Foreign Language Workshops, UMBC, Baltimore, MD 21228 (301-455-2109).

**July 9-August 10: Summer Language Institute (K-8).** Teacher's College, Columbia University, New York, NY. (Formerly held at Bank Street; new institute is tentative.) Mari Hass, Teacher's College, Columbia University, Box 11, New York, NY 10027. (212-678-3817). Session includes two weeks travel in Puerto Rico or Quebec. Session also available July 9-July 27 without travel.

Conferences Editor: Jane G. Graveen

## Teacher Preparation Project Underway in North Carolina

A project funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), and conducted by the Center for Applied Linguistics in collaboration with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction aims to improve the preparation of elementary school foreign language teachers at institutions of higher education.

A creative model for preparing teacher educators will be implemented based on the successes of current elementary school foreign language teachers. This preparation will be offered to teacher educators representing public and private universities in all eight educational regions of North Carolina. The shortage of teachers is more pressing in North Carolina than in any other state because a new law states that by 1993 all public school students in kindergarten and elementary school in North Carolina will be required to study a foreign language. The teacher educators will participate in the following activities: (1) an intensive seminar on FLES methodology, (2) direct observations of local FLES classes, (3) co-teaching with FLES teachers, and (4) collaboration with experienced FLES teachers in the development of a teacher-education curriculum. These teacher educators will then be responsible for incorporating the new material and methodologies into their universities' curricula and providing FLES instruction to undergraduate foreign language students preparing to become teachers.

As part of the goal of wider dissemination of FLES teacher-preparation models, this program, after revision, will be replicated with a second group of North Carolina institutions. In addition, the teacher-education curriculum and training model will be made available in the fall of 1990 to other districts and states interested in increasing and improving their elementary school foreign language programs. For more information, contact: Nancy Rhodes, Project Director, Center for Applied Linguistics, 1118 22nd St. NW, Washington, DC 20037.

# New Materials Are Available

## Videotape of Elementary School Foreign Language Programs

A new videotape on elementary school foreign language programs entitled *FLES\* Programs in Action* is now available. The videotape depicts goals and activities in FLEX, Sequential FLES, and Immersion. An accompanying brochure gives additional information on each type of elementary school program model, including expected outcomes, goals and long-range plans, results of research, and other topics.

The videotape, which is edited from videotapes produced at eleven schools or school districts, demonstrates a number of innovative ways in which children learn a foreign language. The videotape will be useful for in-service workshops, methods courses, study committees planning for the initiation of new programs, parents' meetings, articulation meetings, decision-makers' meetings, etc.

Developed through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, the videotape/brochure package may be ordered by sending a check for \$23.00 (made out to UMBC-MLL) to: Dr. Gladys Lipton, UMBC-MLL, Baltimore, MD 21228 (301-455-2109).

## Video Programs for Teacher Preparation

Five video programs for the preparation of elementary foreign language immersion teachers are currently available from Montgomery County Public Schools, Rockville, MD. These video programs are intended for institutes of higher education, school districts, and teacher trainers who are interested in teacher preparation for elementary foreign language programs. Each program is accompanied by a *Teacher's Activity Manual*. The programs currently available are: *What It Means to be an Immersion Teacher*; *Foreign Language Immersion: An Introduction*; *Second Language Acquisition*; *Negotiation of Meaning*; and *Planning for Instruction in the Immersion Classroom*. The video programs may be obtained by sending a check for \$25 (to cover the cost of duplication and distribution) made payable to Montgomery County Public Schools to: Foreign Language Coordinator, Department of Academic Skills, Montgomery County Public Schools, 850 Hungerford Drive, Rockville, MD 20850.

These video programs have been prepared as part of a 3-year immersion teacher preparation project funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Title VI, International Research and Studies Program. Future program titles will include: *Teaching Reading/Language Arts in Immersion Grades K-2 and Grades 3-6*; *Teaching Mathematics and Science in Immersion Settings* (available Spring 1990); *Teaching Social Studies in Immersion Settings*; *Teaching Culture Throughout an Integrated Curriculum*; *Evaluating Concept Mastery and Foreign Language Proficiency* (available Spring 1991).



## Content-Based Curriculum

A new curriculum, *French in the Elementary School: A Content-based Curriculum*, by April Anderson, is now available for teaching French to elementary school students at beginning and intermediate levels (grades 1-6). The curriculum combines language instruction with subject matter from the regular elementary school curriculum. Common themes such as numbers, animals, weather, and the family are combined with related content area topics in mathematics, science, social studies, and other areas.

The teacher-developed guide includes a description of the content-based approach, sample unit plans, program goals, vocabulary scope and sequence charts, 17 units (with black-line masters and worksheets for photocopying), sample content-based lessons, and a bibliography and resource list. It is 152 pages, 3-hole punched, and unbound, for easy access.

To order, send check (\$16 + \$3.50 postage and handling), made payable to ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics, to: User Services Coordinator, ERIC/CLL, Center for Applied Linguistics, 1118 22nd St. NW, Washington, DC 20037.

## Program Description Booklet

The Ohio Foreign Language Association has published a small volume entitled *Elementary School Foreign Language Programs: A Brief Look at Ohio*. Both small and large districts relate their history, the teaching materials they use, and the costs involved in their programs. Suggestions for program implementation are abundant. This 52-page booklet also includes a list of professional and parent organizations that have an elementary school focus. A 4-page bibliography is also included. To order a copy of this publication, send your name and mailing address together with a check for \$3.00, payable to the Ohio Foreign Language Association, to: Promotional Materials, 6 Angela Court, Oxford, OH 45056. Please include with your request the title of the publication.

## Resource Notebook

A resource notebook for teachers of German grades K-8, the *Loseblattsammlung*, is a collection of supplementary and classroom teaching materials for students and their teachers. The materials are organized around topics appropriate for students at each grade level. This notebook is developed by teachers and for teachers and will be available from the American Association of Teachers of German (AATG) for a nominal subscription fee by the end of the 1989-1990 school year. If you are interested in contributing to the *Loseblattsammlung*, please write for more information on format and guidelines to: Pat Pillot, Harding Elementary School, 2920 Burdette, Ferndale, MI 48220.

## Western Europe from page 1

Beyond the EC, early foreign language teaching has been introduced to the primary school systems of Austria, Finland, Ireland, Sweden, and Switzerland. In these countries, the conditions for early foreign language teaching and learning differ greatly, particularly as far as the beginning of instruction or the number of lessons per week are concerned. For example, in the Italian-speaking part of Switzerland, French is compulsory from year three, in most of the French-speaking cantons, German is compulsory from year four. The number of lessons per week varies between one and four.

## Advantages of Early Foreign Language Learning

Early foreign language teaching suffered a severe setback after the results of a British experiment were made available (Burstall et al. 1974). This study was restricted to testable knowledge and to external factors, such as accumulated lexical items, only. Although often misinterpreted, this study neither indicated nor implied that there are negative consequences from early foreign language learning. The study simply stressed the fact that a later start in foreign language learning produced certain results in a shorter period of time. This, of course, is true for any subject taught at school and should not be linked only to foreign language teaching and learning.

The following advantages have been drawn from research carried out in connection with foreign language teaching at the primary level as well as from personal observations.

- *Intellectual improvement.* Children who learn a foreign language at an early age tend to be superior to their monolingual peers in verbal and nonverbal behavior. Intellectually, children's experience with two language systems seems to give them greater mental flexibility, superiority in concept formation, and a more diversified set of mental abilities.

- *Mother-tongue improvement.* Children who start learning a foreign language early in life can understand their native language system better; they become conscious of the existence of language as a phenomenon. It is therefore false to argue negatively that learning a foreign language at the primary level interferes with the development of the mother tongue or even interrupts its acquisition. Since the basic development of one's mother tongue comes to an end by the age of four or five, there should not be any obstructing influence from other languages at the primary level. There is much evidence in favor of this argument from many bi- and multilingual children all over the world who obviously do not suffer in any way from knowing and using several languages effectively in their everyday communication.

- *Cultural gains.* Children who speak foreign languages tend to have a wider cultural outlook than monolingual children who often believe that their own culture and customs are the only ones that matter. Children may be safely exposed to other languages and cultures while quite young, even before they have identified with their first language and culture. The introduction of a foreign language helps children to develop tolerance toward people who are different, and in the long run contributes to mutual understanding among individuals and nations.

It must be noted, however, that positive cultural values can only result from favorable teaching situations leading to successful learning—small learning groups, suitable teaching aids, appropriate methodological approaches, and properly prepared teachers. If these conditions cannot be ensured, early foreign language teaching might easily be connected with negative experiences in a child's mind and produce unfavorable attitudes toward another culture. Therefore, every effort should be made, and financial means provided, to arrange for teaching and learning situations in which the foreign language can be taught in such a way that only positive attitudes result.

The advantages of early language learning in regard to cultural gains show that conventional objections to early foreign language teaching can no longer be accepted as valid. Teaching foreign languages to children at the primary level can support the growth of character and plays an important part in the development of the intellect. Early foreign language instruction

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# How Much Foreign Language Do Children Hear in Nonintensive Language Programs?

Elsa Statzner  
On leave from St. Paul, Minnesota  
Public Schools

In an effort to investigate what factors determine the extent to which teachers use the foreign language for lesson presentation, classroom management, and administrative tasks in nonintensive foreign language programs, the author and two foreign language teachers participated in a pilot study carried out during the 1988–1989 academic year in two urban elementary schools (one offering instruction in French and the other in Spanish). In both schools language instruction consisted of one 55-minute lesson per week for the entire academic year. All students received foreign language instruction during the homeroom teacher's preparation period. Nonintensive foreign language programs such as these, where instruction time is equivalent to one hour per week, are very popular in the elementary schools, according to Rhodes and Oxford (1987). An important issue for teachers of nonintensive foreign language programs is the extent to which they can use the target language in their classrooms. This issue, however, needs to be empirically explored.

## Background of the Study

*The Foreign Language Teachers:* Both teachers, who had taught more than four years, were certified in elementary education and had college majors in the language they were teaching. One of the teachers had an additional elementary school foreign language certification. Both teachers developed their own materials for their classes in spite of heavy teaching loads. The Spanish teacher taught Spanish to over 700 children weekly in grades K–6, while the French teacher (who taught only three days a week) had over 450 children in grades 2–6.

*Students:* Two combined second- and third-grade Spanish classes with 26 and 27 students, respectively, and two second-grade French classes with 30 students each, participated in the study. Both schools had mobile populations with students entering and leaving the school and the foreign language program throughout the year. Ethnically, the children in both schools were Caucasian, Black American, and Asian. The Spanish classes also included Asian, non-native speakers of English. According to the foreign language teachers, in both schools the children represented lower and middle economic groups. All classes were taught in the early afternoon and included both boys and girls. The four classes subsequently scored between the 45th and 50th percentile of the National Norm in Reading Comprehension of the California Achievement Test, according to the district's Evaluation Office (1988–1989 school year).

*Classroom Environment:* The large French classroom had been attractively redecorated and equipped with new furniture. In contrast, the Spanish classroom was smaller with older chairs of various sizes. Children often objected to sitting in the smallest "kindergarten" chairs. The walls of the Spanish classroom were lined with open cabinets used to store the teacher's materials. As a result, children who surreptitiously moved their chairs to take things out of the cabinets caused distraction during most classes. During the 1989–1990 academic year, a larger and newly equipped classroom was used for Spanish.

## Procedures

The study included two parts: (1) the teaching of a specially designed food unit to all classes; (2) an ethnographic methodology of classroom participant observation (21 observation hours), teacher interviews, and the production and transcription of audiotapes.

Since the teachers prepared their own materials, the study required the development of a unit that would standardize lesson content in both schools. The unit presentation was carried out during eight class sessions. The unit's objective, to increase the students' listening comprehension of the foreign language, required physical action as the response; no speaking, reading, or writing was required of the children. The unit's content was based on expressions related to being thirsty and hungry, such as asking students for lemonade or various shaped cookies. The unit was taught using activities such as group games, songs, and dialogues with puppets. (The teachers had previously experienced success with similar activities.) No new activities or cultural materials were introduced during the unit.

## Results and Discussion

*The Teachers' Use of the Target Language and English:* Several variables related to the teacher's target language use were identified. These variables are grouped according to (1) the teachers' use of the target language; and (2) the teachers' use of English.

1. *The Teachers' Use of the Target Language:* The first three classes of the unit were a transition period in which the teachers gradually increased their use of the target language. The teachers then used only the target language to communicate the unit's content. In addition, when reinforcing content-related performance, both teachers praised students in the target language, using words with cognates in English, for example, *excelente/excellent* (excellent). This unit was particularly suited for use with the target language because it did not involve any new activities or cultural materials that might have needed clarification in English. The food unit was also highly motivational for both second- and third-graders. Both teachers emphasized, however, that they normally do not have adequate time to plan individually tailored units such as this for the various age groups.

In spite of the fact that the target language that was understood by the children was limited, both teachers used it not only for teaching content and for student feedback, but also for classroom management in situations that the teacher considered mildly disruptive. For example, when the children became too enthusiastic during a game, the teachers said *Silencio, por*

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## Activities for Your Classroom

**Teachers:** Please submit a favorite classroom activity for publication in FLES NEWS by sending a description in the following format: title, objective, materials, and procedure. You may include any pictures or drawings as illustrations. Send with your name, address, and telephone number to Donna Grundstad, Classroom Activities Editor, Iowa City Community School District, 509 S. Dubuque St., Iowa City, IA 52240.

- Title:** Plastic Drop Cloth Floor Grid
- Objective:** Vocabulary practice.
- Materials:** 2" plastic tape (colored), 8' x 10' transparent plastic drop cloth, and plastic dishwashing scratch pads.
- Preparation:** Spread the drop cloth on the floor. Use the tape to mark off a grid of about 40 squares. Place pictures of previously learned vocabulary items under the squares of the grid. To keep the pictures in place, pockets can be made on the back of each square by cutting pieces of the same plastic the size of each square and taping 3 sides, leaving the top open to slide in the pictures.
- Procedure:** Students are instructed in the target language to toss 3 markers (plastic dishwashing scratch pads) in turn on the grid. The student then gives the words for the pictures that the markers landed on.
- Variations:** Use numbers in the grid and have students compute math problems in the target language.
- Have students command each other to stand on certain pictures (shoes off, of course).
- Have students direct another student to move across the grid by naming a series of pictures.
- Contributor:** Stanley (Charley) LaFrenz  
1718 Ave. D  
Fort Madison, IA 52627

- Title:** Fruit, Vegetable, Tennis Ball
- Objective:** Students practice description and review terms, such as name, age, colors, occupation, favorite sport, etc.
- Materials:** An old tennis ball or a fruit or vegetable such as an apple or potato for each child; pipe cleaners (legs/arms); fabric scraps, yarn, buttons; pins or glue.
- Procedure:** Students decorate their fruit, vegetable, or tennis ball with hair, a face, and other details such as a bow tie, and then describe their creation to a partner. The partner has to pick their particular fruit or vegetable out of a lineup. As a follow-up, several students get together to form a "family" and write a paragraph about the family they have created.

Example: A tennis ball with a big smile, orange hair, green eyes, glasses, big ears, carrying a baseball bat, and with the name Henri Puisvert on a name tag. The student who created Mr. Puisvert describes him, "He has orange hair and likes baseball." Students raise their hands to guess which one it is. The student who guesses correctly gets to describe his/her vegetable person next.

**Contributor:** Carrie Kouris  
2605 Carlisle Dr.  
Loveland, CO 80537

**Classroom Activities Editor:** Donna Grundstad

ACTFL Priority from page 1

from Madeline Ehrlich, founder of Advocates for Language Learning, Dr. Gladys Lipton, University of Maryland, Baltimore County, Carol Ann Pesola, Concordia College, Moorhead, Minnesota, and Kathleen Riordan, Springfield, Massachusetts Public Schools.

The papers served as the focus for discussion by the educators who were invited to meet with the authors of the position and reaction papers to examine the priority issue and to identify recommendations for the final priority paper. Chairpersons for the discussion for the area of elementary school foreign languages were Helena Curtain, Milwaukee Public Schools, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and Kathy Olson, St. Paul Academy and Summit School, St. Paul, Minnesota. Based on the discussion of foreign languages in the elementary school, seven areas of concern for the 1990s were identified: advocacy for early language programs by the foreign language profession, teacher preparation, availability and development of resources and materials, expanded opportunities for all students, articulation across levels, research, and technology.

At networking sessions held during the ACTFL Joint Annual Meeting, and which were open to all ACTFL participants, the priority recommendations were discussed and refined. At the networking session for foreign languages in the elementary school over 100 educators from across the nation met to discuss the seven areas of concern. Participants divided into discussion groups according to the area of concern in which they were most interested. The results of each discussion group were summarized verbally at the end of the networking session. These recommendations, together with the position paper and the reactions papers, will be used to develop the final position paper for the priority, which will be available later this year through ACTFL.

## Resources for Your Classroom

Barr-Harrison, P. & Kennedy, D. (1986). *ICAL (International Culture and Language) French*. Upper Marlboro, MD: Prince George's County Public Schools. Available from the authors' school at 14201 School Lane, Upper Marlboro, MD 20772.

The ICAL curriculum provides elementary school students at Prince George's County Public Schools with a series of linguistic and cultural experiences that are integrated with their social studies curriculum. It can, however, be used by all foreign language teachers concerned with extending children's cultural awareness. The curriculum is available for six languages: Japanese, French, Italian, German, Spanish, and Russian. A Latin component, which integrates the Language Arts curriculum, is also available.

The goals and the structure of each curriculum are similar. Students learn to say a number of communicative phrases and expand their vocabulary through short, self-contained lessons on diverse aspects of the culture of the target language. The French curriculum contains, in addition to such basic topics as greetings, numbers, etc., lessons on the geography of France, foods, fashion, and both a fairy tale and a folktale. There are also suggestions for songs and games. The curriculum is adapted to different ages. For the foreign language teacher who wishes to adopt part of this curriculum, there is a wealth of information. The culture notes on the food unit contain thirty-nine pages of material, culled from many sources and covering topics as various as French table manners, children's *gouter*, and Belgian cuisine. The lesson on fashion is equally complete. The folktale, "The Discontented Fish," comes from Africa, and the fairy tale is a Perrault classic. There is, thus, a wide range of in-depth material to supplement any French program.

*Recontre France/Amérique*. 3996 Mayflower Drive, Murrysville, PA 15668.

*Recontre France/Amérique* is a club that is a resource for French teachers. In existence for three years now, the club has subscribers in France, the United States, and Canada. *Recontre France/Amérique* seeks to promote contacts among Americans, Canadians, and French-speaking people throughout the world. These contacts are maintained through a newsletter that promotes exchanges of letters and visits, notices for houses to rent, travel tips, etc. Membership in the club will be useful to teachers looking for penpals or who wish to organize exchange programs for their students. If interested, send your request with your name and address and two first-class stamps to the address listed above.

**French Resources Editor: Myriam Chapman**

Hoffman, E. R. (1989). *FLES/FLEAMS project, Spanish curriculum*. Denver, CO: University of Denver. Available from Dr. Eleanor R. Hoffman, Project Director, Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, University of Denver, University Park, Denver, CO 80208.

This curriculum (units one-six) stresses listening comprehension skills through Total Physical Response activities. Speaking skills are introduced in later units (units seven-twelve will be published in 1989-1990), reflecting The Natural Approach philosophy of not requiring a learner to produce the foreign language until he/she feels willing and capable of doing so.

The first unit introduces the students to Esteve, the Stegosaurus. Esteve appears throughout the guide and is an integral part of many activities. Each unit includes an overview of activities, which indicates the basic skills (listening, thinking, etc.), Higher Order Thinking Skills (predicating, classifying, etc.), the content area (music, art, etc.), and the type of activity (game, puzzle, etc.). Many of the activities are hands-on activities that require certain materials such as crayons, scissors, glue, etc. There are activities for the younger child as well as for the older student.

The units touch on a wide range of topics from "Plans for the Birthday Party" to "An Airplane Trip to Mexico." Although the opportunities for oral communication are planned around TPR and The Natural Approach, the framework is flexible. Teachers have abundant opportunities to pursue their foreign language instruction in a style in which they are most comfortable.

This curriculum is available in French, German, Japanese, and Spanish. The price for each guide, including postage, is \$25.

Ervin, M. J. (1988). *A taste for language*. Howell, MI: Melting Pot Press.

*A Taste for Language* is a valuable resource book for pre-school and elementary school language instructors. The book offers guidelines and suggestions on where to start, what to teach, and how to motivate young language learners. The book contains hundreds of ready-to-use lessons and ideas and includes songs, cooking recipes, native dances, movement exercises, and culture capsules. Both Total Physical Response and The Natural Approach philosophies are incorporated into the book. Activities are written in English and Spanish but may be readily adapted to any language.

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**Spanish Resources Editor: Barbara McDonald**

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*favor/Silence, s'il vous plaît* (Silence, please); *Siéntate/Asseyez-vous* (Sit down). This use of the foreign language for management was interspersed with other common techniques, such as nonverbal cues, changes of voice level, class pace, or student activity. After a class during which the Spanish teacher had used Spanish exclusively, she noted that when the children were attentive and there were no outstanding behavioral problems, teaching the entire class period in Spanish worked very well.

2. *The Teachers' Use of English:* Although the teachers could use the target language to manage minor disruptive behaviors, when the Spanish teacher attempted to use the language during two consecutive class periods for content and for all management and administrative tasks, behavior problems that had been previously under control became intolerable (e.g., children lying on the floor, moving around the class, and leaving the classroom). Not surprisingly, many students were distracted by those who were misbehaving, and otherwise cooperative students became restless. After searching for nonverbal approaches to prevent potentially disruptive behavior and to reinforce positive behavior, it was concluded that it proved more efficient to use English for specific recommendations (e.g., "I can see many good listeners. Good listeners sit with their chairs flat on the floor and their eyes on the teacher"). In addition, the Spanish teacher concluded that her students grew tired of listening to the target language after fifteen or twenty minutes and that concise English phrases, such as "I can hear very good singers," helped children stay on task.

The French teacher used English to provide information about the day's activities, to announce the following week's plans, and to encourage appropriate behavior. The French teacher felt that eight-year-old children could not always remember from week to week what they were doing in the French class and, also, that they needed encouragement in a language they understood well. Children appeared eager to speak English during these special times.

Both teachers performed numerous tasks that were unrelated to lesson content, most of which required English. The teachers acted as counselors when students arrived with unresolved problems or when they argued, hurt themselves, or had accidents (like forgetting to go to the bathroom). They encouraged peer support and/or provided extra attention to students who had been absent, were new to the program, or whose native language was not English. In addition, there were also routine chores to be dealt with (such as processing parental or teachers' notes).

If not involved in this study, the teachers could have taken advantage of some of these "distractions" to provide alternate lesson content (e.g., talking about the snowstorm). Since both teachers attempted to follow the prearranged unit lesson plans, this was not possible. This lack of flexibility may have negatively affected class management, especially when holidays and assemblies extended the interval between foreign language classes from 7 to 14 days. In such cases, the Spanish teacher said that she would have preferred to relate class content to events of more immediate interest to the students.

Both teachers tended to believe that they used "too much English" in the classroom. They were pleasantly surprised when told that they addressed the class in English an average of only four times in a class period, or for about 10 minutes during each 55-minute class period.

*Unit Evaluation:* The unit evaluation consisted of two parts. The multiple-choice segment of the unit evaluation involved picture identification of words taught during the unit. The oral segment of the evaluation consisted of a game already played during the unit. During this game, the teacher asked each child individually to respond to statements such as *Tengo hambre. Dame una galleta redonda, por favor. J'ai faim. Je veux un biscuit rond, s'il vous plaît.* (I am hungry. Please give me a round cookie.) The child would respond correctly by selecting the appropriate object.

The children were much more enthusiastic about the oral segment of the test than about the written one. The oral test used the target language realistically and demanded more foreign language comprehension than the written one. Unfortunately, the four-question oral test, was extremely difficult to administer to so many students. The French teacher, because of lack of time, could only ask each child three of the four questions.

## Conclusions

There are two important conclusions to recognize and apply to the nonintensive foreign language classroom.

1. Use of the foreign language by the teachers depended not only on the age of the children and the type of unit taught, but also on the classroom environment. This environment included class profile, classroom facilities, and "distractions" that tended to diminish the children's attention. In certain situations, educational objectives were facilitated by the teachers' planned use of English; content, however, was always presented in the foreign language.

The classroom environment and class size may have a greater impact on the foreign language class than on other classes. Disruptions seem to be doubly serious in the foreign language classroom because not only is the lesson content interrupted, but the "language continuity" of the classroom is broken. To provide practice and to assess children's listening comprehension, the teacher needs to create opportunities for communication that require the children's individual interaction with the teacher. Large classes make it very difficult for teachers to carry out these important aspects of foreign language learning.

2. The teachers tended to overestimate the amount of English they used. This fact underscores the importance of an objective assessment of the relative use of the target language and English. Furthermore, due to limited class time, curriculum developers and supervisors should recognize the great flexibility teachers need in this type of program.

Programs that do not operate within ideal physical settings can still enjoy great success, as measured by student interest and parental support (e.g., the Spanish program described). The success of this program is enhanced by communication with the parents (through phone calls to the home, newsletters, open houses, and the community press), as well as open administrative support.

## Acknowledgments

The foreign language teachers, Dawn Molenaar and Katherine Korkowski, helped identify the questions to be addressed and developed the teaching plan. This classroom-based research could not have been carried out without their collaboration.

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Please address correspondence regarding this study to: Elsa Statzner, Graduate Student, University of Minnesota, Second Languages and Cultures, 125 Peik Hall, Minneapolis, MN 55455.

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contributes significantly to the multilingual society of the EC, whose citizens will need to know at least two foreign languages. There is much evidence to support the view that the process of learning other languages alongside the mother tongue must start at an early age if multilingualism is to be achieved.

Rather than continue to reproduce outdated prejudices about early foreign language learning, it would be more constructive to concentrate on those problems connected with early foreign language learning that have not yet been satisfactorily solved and therefore need further clarification.

## Problems To Be Addressed

The following questions and issues now need to be tackled at local, national, and international levels in order to achieve reliable results within a reasonably short period of time.

1. **The Problem of Continuity.** Although it is true that learning a foreign language at the primary level is in itself a worthwhile individual educational experience, many early language teaching projects have been discontinued in the past because of inadequate links between language learning in primary schools and in institutions of secondary education. After two or three years of learning a foreign language at the primary level, children had to start all over again with the same language when they moved to a secondary school. Their motivation and interest in language learning in general often declined in consequence. This lack of continuity also discouraged administrators from pursuing projects in early foreign language teaching.

In addition, teachers at the secondary level are rarely familiar with teaching techniques at the primary level. They often have a sense that the approach to foreign language instruction that they use with older children is the only effective way to success. They have received no guidance, either from empirical research or from their own preparation, with regard to ways of handling the language knowledge that children have previously acquired.

It is essential, therefore, to solve the problem of continuity. It should also be established that early language learning can remain a positive and gainful experience, even if there is no immediate continuation of language learning, or of learning the same language, as children change schools. Finally, new approaches to teacher preparation are necessary in order to enable foreign language teachers to be more flexible in different teaching situations. Future foreign language teachers must be able to instruct young children as well as older pupils and adults.

2. **The Question of the Number of Languages.** Luxembourg shows that it is not unrealistic to introduce more than one foreign language to children at the primary level. The Waldorf school system is an example of two foreign languages (English and French) being offered at the same time to all children from year one onward. There are countries outside Europe where it is the norm for children to have full command of two or three languages (as well as their mother tongue) by the age of ten. On the basis of these models, we need to know what the educational advantages and disadvantages are in regard to the number of languages to be learned by children in the European context. Europe after 1992 needs to have multilingual citizens. Language acquisition must therefore start as early as possible if it is not to be restricted to only one foreign language.

The introduction of foreign language learning at the primary school can also be regarded as a major contribution to a diversified language program offered during the years of compulsory education. Given due regard for local conditions, an early start need not be restricted to the major languages only; it can provide the time and the opportunity to acquire other languages later on.

3. **Language Awareness Before Language Learning.** We should also try to establish new models of language learning that could help to overcome the current inadequacies of early language instruction. There are programs in the United Kingdom that aim to introduce children to several cultures and languages (regional and national dialects, immigrant or foreign languages) at the same time. These programs promote a positive attitude toward languages in general. It might well be that various forms of this type of "language awareness" could be the best way of preparing pupils for a multilingual society. If children first learn to understand new values connected with languages spoken in their own country, they will probably be well equipped for choosing and learning a foreign language. They would be in a better position later on when they want to, or have to, speak other languages for professional or personal purposes.

4. **Language Studies in the Primary Curriculum.** One of the strong objections to early foreign language teaching is the risk of overloading the curriculum of primary schools. In many projects in the past, foreign languages have been simply added on to the regular timetable of the pupils and have thus intensified the feeling that foreign language learning is a time-consuming extra at the expense of free time. We need to know if there are other and better ways of integrating foreign languages into the primary school curriculum. There is a wide spectrum of possibilities: from ten-to-fifteen-minute modules daily to instruction in school subjects, such as music or physical education, through the medium of the foreign language (partial immersion).

## Notes from Washington

### Legislative Update—101st Congress

The Foreign Language Competence for the Future Act, HR 2188 and S 1690, is still pending in the House and Senate. This legislation, sponsored by Rep. Leon Panetta (D-CA) in the House and Sen. Christopher Dodd (D-CT) in the Senate, establishes five programs to help increase the quantity and quality of foreign language instruction in the United States: summer foreign language institutes for teachers, teacher incentive grants, foreign language institutes to meet business needs, grants for distance learning, and grants for critical language and area studies consortia. The House bill is authorized at \$110 million and the Senate bill at \$75 million plus "such sums as necessary" for the teacher incentive grants.

The Senate Subcommittee on Education, Arts, and Humanities held hearings on S 1690 on October 31, 1989. Among those testifying on behalf of the bill were Helene Zimmer-Loew, Executive Director of the American Association of Teachers of German and President of the Joint National Committee for Languages; Christine Brown, Director of Foreign Languages, Glastonbury Connecticut Public Schools; and Jeanne Wells Cook, Language Arts Specialist for the State of Mississippi. The subcommittee was repeatedly reminded of the importance of foreign language education to the nation's security and economic prosperity and was informed of a growing shortage of foreign language teachers, particularly in rural areas. The importance of federal aid as seed money for establishing and strengthening programs was also stressed. The highlight of the hearing came when Sen. Thad Cochran (R-MS), openly skeptical of the federal role in this area at the beginning of the hearing, announced that he would add his name as a cosponsor of the bill at the conclusion of the testimony.

In addition, Rep. George E. Sangmeister (D-IL) will be introducing legislation specifically for elementary school foreign language instruction. At this time the bill is in the drafting stage, but it is expected to include provisions for pre- and in-service training of elementary foreign language teachers, including study abroad. According to Jody Lenkoski, legislative assistant to Rep. Sangmeister, the bill will be introduced as soon as Congress returns at the end of January.

To encourage Congress to take up foreign language education in 1990, it is imperative that more members are made aware of the importance of the issue. The National Council for Languages and International Studies (NCLIS), the lobbying organization for the profession, urges you to write your representative and senators asking them to cosponsor HR 2188 or S 1690, as well as the Sangmeister legislation when it is introduced. For further information, contact NCLIS at 300 Eye St., NE, Suite 311, Washington, DC 20002 (202-546-7855).

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5. Language Learning at Preschool Level. Finally, research projects of a practical kind need to be conducted to discover if preschool foreign language learning can prepare and support language instruction at the primary level. A very early contact with several languages might possibly be the best means of paving the way for multilingual instruction at a later stage. Research should concentrate primarily on two questions: (1) What educational benefits are involved for the individual learner? (2) Can monolingualism be overcome in a natural way in situations that are meaningful to children?

#### **Recommendations**

On the basis of current professional knowledge and in view of the needs in a multilingual European society of tomorrow, the West European Modern Language Associations recommend support for all efforts that aim at introducing foreign language instruction at the primary level. The best way to proceed is,

perhaps, to start foreign languages in the third year of primary education during a transitional period in order to avoid sharp discrepancies between existing educational practices and necessary changes in the future. By the end of this century, however, children in the countries of the EC should have the opportunity to become involved in language learning activities earlier, as a normal option in the educational system.

There should be a joint educational action program of all countries in the EC because isolated projects cannot lead to satisfactory results if a general improvement of foreign language instruction in Europe is the goal. The provision of funds in support of early foreign language learning should not be used as an easy excuse for neglecting foreign language instruction in the later school years. The governments in the countries of the EC

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