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The three numbers of the new journal contain these articles: "Content-Related Teaching Through Distance Learning: A Viable Alternative?" (Zoe E. Louton); "Teacher as Researcher: Motivating an Eighth Grade Spanish Class" (Emily Francomano); "Traveling to South America on the Internet" (Margaret Reardon); "U.S. Joins Global Language Education Study"; "Events in Europe: A Focus on Germany" (Helena Curtain); "The Bayeux Tapestry: A Medieval Document Inspires Students" (Armelle Webster); "Legislative Update--104th Congress, First Session" (Cindy McMillan); "NELL Endorses National Standards"; "Standards for Foreign Language Learning"; "Atlanta Superintendent Strongly Supports National Standards" (Benjamin O. Canada); "Standards for Foreign Language Learning: One District's Experience" (Elizabeth Rieken); "Proficiency-Oriented Testing: Reality Therapy" (Peggy Boyles); and "Bilingualism in Early Childhood Education: What Do We Know? What Do We Do?" (Laurie Makin). Professional notes, classroom activity ideas, samples of children's classroom creations, notes on classroom resources for French, German, and Spanish instruction, and a professional calendar are also included in each issue. (MSE)

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# Learning Languages

The Journal of the National Network for Early Language Learning

Fall 1995  
Vol.1 No.1

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*Learning Languages: The Journal of the National Network for Early Language Learning* is the official publication of NNELL. It serves the profession by providing a medium for the sharing of information, ideas, and concerns among teachers, administrators, researchers, and others interested in the early learning of languages. The journal reflects NNELL's commitment to promoting opportunities for all children to develop a high level of competence in at least one language and culture in addition to their own.

In an effort to address the interests of the profession, both practical and scholarly articles are published. Practical articles describe innovative approaches to teaching and to the administration of effective language programs for children. Scholarly articles report on original research and cite both current research and theory as a basis for making recommendations for practice. Scholarly articles are refereed, i.e., reviewed anonymously by at least three readers. Readers include members of the NNELL executive board, the editorial advisory board, and invited guest reviewers who have expertise in the area. Refereed articles are identified as such in the journal. Write to the editor at the address below to request a copy of author guidelines for preparing articles.

**Submissions:** Deadlines for information are: fall issue—May 1; winter issue—Nov. 1; spring issue—Feb. 1. Articles, classroom activities, and materials offered for review may be submitted to the appropriate contributing editor (see below). Send announcements, conference information, and original children's work (such as line drawings, short stories, and poems) to the editor. Children's work needs to be accompanied by written permission from the child's parents or guardians and must include the child's name, age, school, and the teacher's name, address, and telephone (add fax and e-mail address, if available).

Submit a favorite classroom activity for the "Activities for Your Classroom" section by sending a description of the activity that includes title, objective, materials, and procedure. Include pictures or drawings as illustration, if available. Send with your name, address, and phone number to the Classroom Activities editor listed below.

*Editor*

Marcia H. Rosenbusch  
Department of Curriculum and Instruction  
N157 Lagomarcino Hall  
Iowa State University  
Ames, IA 50011  
mrosenbu@iastate.edu

*Editorial Assistant*

Sue Ryan Weiss

*Cover Design*

Gary Blum

*Classroom activities*

Diane Fagin Adler  
North Carolina State University  
Dept. of Foreign Languages and Lit.  
Box 8106  
Raleigh, NC 27695-8106  
adlerd@social.chass.ncsu.edu

*International news*

Helena Curtain  
University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee  
10523 W. Hampton Ave.  
Milwaukee, WI 53225  
hcurtain@csd.uwm.edu

*French resources*

Myriam Chapman  
Bank Street School for Children  
610 W. 112th St.  
New York, NY 10025

*Research*

Elsa Statzner  
National - Louis University  
1209-A Central St.  
Evanston, IL 60201  
mruggero@nwu.edu

*Teaching methods*

Gilda Oran  
Bloomsburg University  
of Pennsylvania  
3540 Green St.  
Harrisburg, PA 17110  
oran@planetx.bloomu.edu

*Spanish resources*

Susan Wolter  
Wright Middle School  
6894 N. Park Manor Dr.  
Milwaukee, WI 53224

*Funding info./New legislation*

Joint National Comm. for Languages  
1118 22nd St. NW  
Washington, DC 20037

*German resources*

Gertie Kessler  
Orange Hunt Elementary School  
6820 Sydenstricker Rd.  
Springfield, VA 22152  
kesslerj@csa.delta1.org

# **NELL** Learning Languages

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Volume 1, No. 1 Fall 1995

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## *Notes from the President*



*This has been  
a busy and  
interesting  
year for me...*

Welcome to the inaugural issue of *Learning Languages*. Congratulations to Marcia Rosenbusch, Editor, who has done an incredible job of orchestrating the change from *FLES News*, NNELL's newsletter for eight years, to this journal. As a journal dedicated to early start, long sequence foreign language programs, we envision that *Learning Languages* will help fill an important information void in our field.

NNELL's Executive Board hopes that more educators and policy makers will take notice of the relevance and growth of our profession symbolized by this important change from newsletter to journal, as well as of the priorities that NNELL has identified for the future:

- 1) Public awareness and support of early start, long-sequence programs;
- 2) Better K-12 articulation and a unified voice in the foreign language profession in the context of a long sequence of instruction; and
- 3) Increased pre- and in-service teacher preparation efforts and opportunities for teachers to continue their professional development.

We know that this publication will provide even more information to you and we believe that you will continue to use the ideas, research, and information it contains to enrich your language teaching. The new format is exciting, especially the new international section and refereed research articles. We expect to receive more scholarly articles from those who are conducting research in K-8 language

classrooms as well as practical articles from teachers. When you see exciting language research, teaching, and learning going on in your school, district, or university, please encourage those involved to submit articles to *Learning Languages*.

We thank all four of the excellent candidates in the NNELL elections. I would like to welcome our new NNELL board members: Susan Walker, Second Vice-President, and Mercia Foster, Secretary. Susan has added her expertise to NNELL since the beginning of the organization. Mercia, also a founding member of NNELL, has been teaching language for many years in Iowa.

In November I will hand over the reins of NNELL to Eileen Lorenz of Montgomery County Public Schools in Maryland, who will continue the theme of teacher-based research in K-8 language classrooms.

I would like to thank all of the Board members for their support and enthusiasm, as well as all of the NNELL members I have met at networking sessions around the country. Thanks for the opportunity to be an integral part of such a vibrant network of language educators!

*Mari Haas*

**Mari Haas**  
Teachers College  
Columbia University  
Box 201  
New York, NY 10027  
e-mail: mbh14@columbia.edu

# Content-Related Teaching Through Distance Learning: A Viable Alternative?

Refereed Article

Zoe E. Louton

Project Director

Beatrice and Filley School Districts

Beatrice and Filley, Nebraska

A proliferation of successful programs in the past decade reflects a growing public awareness of the benefits of including foreign language in the elementary school curriculum. As varied in type as the school systems to which they accommodate, successful programs usually have two elements that are generally agreed upon as desirable: 1) a trained language teacher, and 2) content-related materials and activities that integrate foreign language instruction into the core curriculum.

Yet, the majority of small and/or rural districts do not have the financial resources to initiate and implement early language programs. Many are doing well to offer the requisite college preparatory courses at the high school level. Thus, foreign language opportunities at the elementary level, the ideal level for initiating foreign language instruction, remain out of reach for many schools.

Distance learning programs have responded to such instructional vacuums in many subject areas, including some initial efforts in basic foreign language video instruction for elementary students. The focus of these programs, however, is primarily instruction in language, whereas a content-related design integrates the language instruction and the content of other core curricular subjects. This design provides comprehensible input (Krashen, 1982), and is focused on real language in use (Omaggio

Hadley, 1986). In addition, students use the language to learn content instead of simply learning the language itself (Mohan, 1986). A content-related program ensures that the instruction and materials are appropriate to grade level, and are meaningful and real to the children. Additionally, this type of program helps the classroom teachers in further reinforcement of content.

Clearly, a content-related program offers many advantages for communicative language learning. Is it possible, however, to design an elementary school language program that is content-related, integrates well with the classroom core material, and is delivered by distance technology without the assistance of a language specialist in the classroom? How effectively can the lessons be implemented by the classroom teacher who lacks the expertise of the language teacher? What degree of proficiency can be expected of pupils in such an alternative method of foreign language learning?

An experimental program in Nebraska, *Content-related FLES through Distance Learning*, which was begun in September 1994, attempts to address these questions. The project is funded by a Federal Foreign Language Assistance Program grant, with supplemental funding provided by the Cooper Foundation, a private foundation in Nebraska. The pupils involved are from the Beatrice and Filley School Districts, a cooperative unit formed for

*The majority of small and/or rural districts do not have the financial resources to initiate and implement early language programs.*

the purpose of the project. The city of Beatrice (population 12,300) has four elementary schools, each having two classrooms per grade level. The village of Filley (population 167) located 15 miles from Beatrice has one elementary school with two grades per classroom. These schools serve as a representative sample of many similar school districts away from urban centers. Such districts lack the resources, money, and language specialists to provide early language learning opportunities for their students.

### **Description of Project**

The purpose of the project is to develop and deliver a three-year, content-related, integrated German language program to the five Beatrice/Filley elementary schools beginning at grade three. The program seeks to develop language proficiency, heightened cultural sensitivity, and effective integration of language study with core curriculum content. The classes are held three times a week for 15 minutes at the classroom teacher's discretion during regularly scheduled class time. The technological features for the first year include video presentations and telephone connections to each classroom from a telelinguist. In the second year, Internet communication and interactive multimedia applications on the computer to reinforce the video presentations are planned.

The major components of the program are described here.

*Video lesson units are prepared by Filley staff, designed on themes from the core curriculum subject matter, and prerecorded by fluent speakers.*

The videos form the primary unit of instruction for the German classes. They are all in German and vary in the length and method of presentation. Some are brief and can be used for

one lesson, such as a video on the alphabet which includes children in groups of one to three who form the alphabet letters with their bodies and depictions of alphabet figures that move.

Another video that extends over three or four lessons shows a native speaker reading aloud in German and showing the story of "The Three Bears" from a Big Book. As she reads she points to the pictures that illustrate the words and actions of the text. Because the video is edited by computer, sound clips (such as a baby bear giggling) and color appropriate to the page are inserted, thereby making the story more meaningful and heightening student interest.

A longer video, entitled *Besuch vom Weltraum* (Visit from Outer Space), comprises enough material for three weeks of lessons. The story line deals with a reporter who follows up on a report of a UFO landing. She discovers the aliens (hand puppets) and needs to teach them some basic German words and phrases to communicate. The aliens eventually become homesick and leave. A sequel video concerns the reporter and a space pet the aliens have left behind. She discovers the pet, which she takes home, but the pet soon disappears. She searches through many community institutions (third grade curriculum): grocery store, school, library, drug store, and even a pet store. Eventually she finds it asleep on her sofa. The aliens soon return to take their pet back home.

The video stories are divided into episodes, permitting them to be viewed in small segments of three to five minutes. The teacher and students view the video lesson together, after which the teacher continues the instruction using materials and activities that carry out the video lesson. Lesson plans for the teachers are prepared by the project coordinator,

and are adjusted according to input from the classroom teacher, as to timing and subject themes, to maximize reinforcement of core subject matter.

The lesson plans implement elements from the video and involve the children in activities that integrate into the rest of the curriculum. For example, in one video episode the reporter teaches the alien puppets to count to ten. The classroom teacher then has the pupils complete simple arithmetic problems and play a board game. Depending on the amount of material in a lesson, the teacher might choose to repeat an episode for two or three sessions, varying the accompanying activities.

The children have additional opportunities to learn the lesson material because the teachers have chosen to integrate elements from the lessons throughout the day. German numbers, for example, are used not only during the German class, but whenever convenient during other activities.

*Lesson practice and activities are supervised by the classroom teachers who are being prepared to be lesson facilitators.*

The group of twelve teachers from Beatrice and two from Filley includes not only the third grade teachers who initiated the project, but also the fourth and fifth grade teachers who will be involved as the initial third grade classes advance to the next levels. Classroom teachers are responsible for the day-to-day management and operation of the classes, including the on-going assessment of the students.

The classroom teachers involved receive preparation in German as well as in the use of the project materials and lesson presentations. A special course at the local college has been

designed specifically for this purpose. The design incorporates instruction in basic German (text: Moeller, Liedloff, Winnifred, Kirmse, and Lalande, 1992) and foreign language methodology (text: Curtain and Pesola, 1994). Outside experts in language and methods visit the classes periodically and serve as consultants. The classes for teachers serve to advance basic language facility and knowledge of structure and usage, as well as to provide a forum for problem identification and resolution. These classes are intended to bring the teachers/facilitators to novice-mid level of proficiency during the three-year period of the grant.

*A fluent speaker of German communicates with the teachers and students by speaker telephone (telelinguist).*

The telelinguist, who works out of the Nebraska Department of Education offices in Lincoln, Nebraska, calls each teacher's class twice weekly for 15 minute sessions. These sessions provide an opportunity for the elementary students to use the language skills they are developing in real and meaningful communication with a fluent speaker. The telelinguist draws pupils into conversation by using a child-centered question format, with students answering individually or as a group.

The topics of conversation during the speaker phone calls are usually based on the lessons currently being studied, but questions are also drawn from review vocabulary and previously covered topics. All responses are accepted, with the telelinguist restating or rephrasing the response if corrections are needed.

In order to further encourage student language acquisition, networking is taking place with elementary school pupils in Braunschweig, Germany—Omaha's sister city. During

*The children have additional opportunities to learn the lesson material because the teachers have chosen to integrate elements from the lessons throughout the day.*



*...fear of foreign languages, so often evidenced by adult learners, soon dissipated (among the classroom teachers).*

this first year, the pupils made initial contact sending cards and letters. Internet communication between the groups will begin during the second year. Considerable preliminary preparation is necessary for the Internet component, since elementary students in German schools normally have no classroom contact with computers. This will, however, provide a means of communication for the students that is immediate, practical, reality-based, culturally broad, and meaningful, since they will experience authentic language and culture. *ED: See the related article on p. 13.*

During the second and third years of the project, computer software and an interactive multimedia component based on the lesson units will be added to facilitate communicative competence and linguistic proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

### **Evaluation**

On-going evaluations of the project will be conducted by the individual school districts and the project coordinator. These will include simple evaluation forms on students' learning of the video content, attitudinal surveys of students, parents, teachers, and administrators using the FLES Program Evaluation inventory, a global rating instrument developed by Heining-Boynton at the University of North Carolina (1990).

The foreign language curriculum materials will be evaluated by Ali Moeller, an outside expert in curriculum development and foreign language instruction from the University of Nebraska. Dr. Moeller will complete a curriculum analysis to assess whether the curriculum interfaces with the state and national standards. She will also conduct proficiency testing of the students in the four skills using a modified form of the Oral Proficiency Interview.

Additional authentic measuring systems, such as portfolio assessment, anecdotal records, and student journals, will assess development of language and cultural proficiency as well as determine whether the students view content areas as interconnected rather than as mutually exclusive. In order to evaluate the reliability of portfolio assessments, a panel of three evaluators (a teacher educator and two practicing German teachers) will also evaluate the portfolios. To begin the process, the panel will meet to establish the initial criteria. They will then independently run a test evaluation on one or two portfolios in order to establish inter-rater reliability. When this reliability has been established, the panel will rate all portfolios according to the predetermined criteria.

The evaluation will address the extent to which the project objectives and activities were implemented, the effectiveness of the project's activities in achieving the objectives, and student outcomes as a result of the project's activities.

### **Project Progress**

During the first year, as expected, the project director has seen foreign language sessions emerge that differ somewhat from typical language classes taught by an on-site foreign language specialist. One major difference reflects the teachers' lack of language expertise. The classroom teachers do not have the necessary skill levels to use the target language exclusively during the language sessions. Moreover, the pace is slower and the intensity is less than is possible when sessions are led by specialist teachers who would be able to maintain a constant interchange of communication in the target language for the length of the session. As a counter to this disadvantage, however, the teachers do not restrict their use of

German to the 15 minute class session, but rather use it throughout the day. They integrate the language wherever applicable into the presentation of the other subjects being taught. In this way they treat foreign language instruction in much the same way as they do the other core subjects.

The teachers/facilitators themselves are experiencing a change in perception, which increasingly emphasizes the uniqueness of foreign language study and how it can enrich the person as well as the general teaching environment. At the onset of the project, the field of foreign languages was indeed foreign for the majority of the group. Only four of these teachers had previously studied a foreign language for two years in high school (one in French, one in Spanish, two in German). The other ten had no foreign language background experience.

During the first weeks, some teachers appeared to be reluctant about the training sessions. A few even complained to their administrators that the work was "too hard" and that they did not have time for this preparation in addition to their committee work. One teacher reported she felt like she was pulling a ball and chain.

Fortunately, after about four weeks there was a noticeable change in attitude and receptiveness. The teachers began to press their principals to purchase German/English dictionaries and also bought teaching aids from catalogues with their own money. They began to seek innovative ways to use German in their teaching—often coming to the training class with mini-units they had developed on their own.

This dramatic change became the topic for discussion in the weekly teacher preparation class where time is allowed for problem identification and remedial strategies. The teach-

ers expressed their initial reluctance by comments such as, "It was so different from any other course I had taken"; "I was afraid of making a mistake (in German)"; "I felt so ignorant"; "Foreign language learning is so different; I had nothing to refer back to." This fear of foreign languages, so often evidenced by adult learners, soon dissipated. The teachers reported they were surprised and delighted when they realized that they were understanding the foreign language. More importantly, they saw that their pupils were learning the foreign language quickly and felt that they were an effective part of the process. On a more subtle level, they felt their own horizons broadening. As one teacher said, "I feel so much more a part of the world!"

The teachers and the telelinguist have completed simple evaluation forms on students' learning of the material taught during the video episodes. These evaluation forms address the areas customarily taught in first year foreign language instruction: numbers, alphabet, colors, greetings and farewells, giving and asking for names, giving own address, classroom items, body parts, and telling time. The evaluation forms are designed to be completed in a minimum amount of time.

The initial evaluations by the teachers, the telelinguist, and the project director indicate that the pupils have acquired language facility that they are pleased to use at every opportunity in and out of the classroom. Surprisingly, many of the fourth and fifth grade teachers introduced the German materials into their classrooms even though the first year of the project design did not yet involve them. This exemplifies the tendency of classroom teachers to constantly search for increased educational opportunities for their pupils.

*An unexpected outcome is the reaction of the teachers, who have felt enabled to present the material across the curriculum.*

*We view the comments and observations by the teachers/facilitators as a crucial element in affirming the project's success.*

We are pleased that the consensus of opinions by the participants at this early stage has been encouraging as to the outcome of the first stage of the project and we plan to report progress on the project to the profession. Meanwhile, we welcome contacts with others: Zoe Louton, Filley Schools, PO Box 87, Filley NE 68357; 402-662-3595; e-mail: zlouton@esu6.esu6.k12.ne.us

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### First Ever Joint Conference

Advocates for Language Learning (ALL)  
and

Second/Foreign Language Acquisition by  
Children (SLAC)  
(in Conjunction with ACTFL)

November 15-17, 1995

Conference Center & Marriott on the Campus  
California State University  
Fullerton, California

### "Getting Our Children Ready for Tomorrow"

Sample Session Topics:

- Integrating International Studies and Foreign Language into the Curriculum K-6
- Incidental Learning vs. Direct Teaching of Vocabulary in an Immersion Program
- Becoming a Scientist: Integrating Science and the Foreign Languages
- Integrating Children's Literature in the Spanish Classroom
- Energize your Classroom through Song and Play
- Keys to Successful FLES/FLEX Programs in 1995
- Technology and K-12 Language Learning
- FLES Meets the Seven Intelligences
- Towards Positive Testing
- The Current Situation and the Needs of Teacher Training in Japanese Immersion Education in the US
- Parents Can Make a Difference: French Immersion in Canada and Canadian Parents for French

### Order K-8 Culture Resource Manuals

Montgomery County Public Schools, Rockville, Maryland is pleased to announce the availability of two resource manuals that focus on an integrated approach to the teaching of language, culture, and content. *Teaching Culture in Grades K-8: A Resource Manual for Teachers of Spanish* and *Teaching Culture in Grades K-8: A Resource Manual for Teachers of French* contain a scope and sequence of objectives for teaching culture in kindergarten through grade 8, as well as instructional activities developed by teachers.

These manuals are a product of a three-year project supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities. All orders must be accompanied by a check for \$15 (to cover the cost of printing and shipping) made payable to Montgomery County Public Schools.

Send letters of request to: Eileen Lorenz, Department of Academic Programs, Montgomery County Public Schools, 850 Hungerford Drive, Rockville, MD 20850.

# Activities for Your Classroom

## Jigsaw Geography

Kathy Stevens  
Garden City Public Schools  
Garden City, Michigan

### **Objective:**

Students will demonstrate knowledge of geography by fitting together a map of South American countries as in a jigsaw puzzle.

### **Vocabulary:**

- Countries of South America;
- Capitals of countries of South America;
- Bodies of water surrounding South America plus the Amazon;
- Direction words: north (*norte*), south (*sud*), east (*este*), west (*oeste*);
- Comparative adjectives: bigger (*más grande que*), smaller (*más pequeño/a que*);
- Where is ...? (*¿Dónde está ...?*), What is the capital of ...? (*¿Cuál es la capital de ...?*)

### **Materials:**

- Large poster board map of South America, cut up into individual countries and laminated;
- Individual labels for each country, capital, and body of water;
- Yarn

### **Procedure:**

First prepare the large map pieces by projecting a transparency image of a map of South America onto a poster board mounted on the wall. Using different colored markers, outline the individual countries on the poster board. Indicate the capital city of each

country using a large dot. This dot also differentiates the front side of a puzzle piece from the back.

Cut up the map into countries. Laminate each piece. Create individual labels for country names, capitals, and bodies of water.

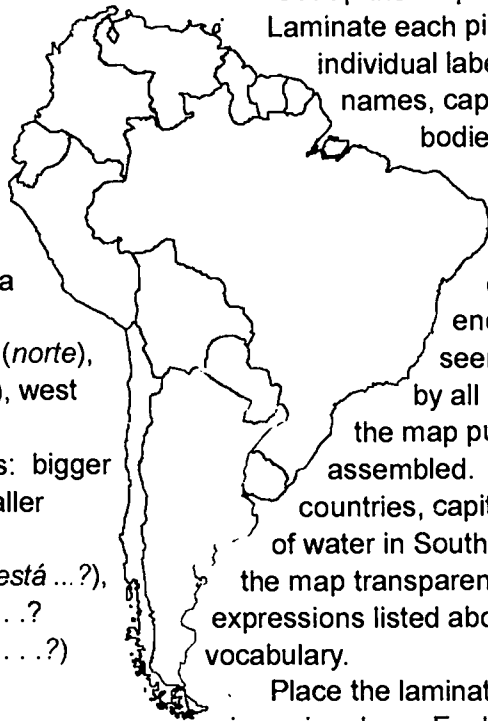
Laminate each. Be sure to make the countries large enough to be seen on the floor by all students when the map puzzle is being assembled. Introduce the countries, capitals, and bodies of water in South America using the map transparency. Practice expressions listed above in the vocabulary.

Place the laminated country pieces in a bag. Each student chooses one. The first student places her country on the floor. The second student places his country on the floor, describing its relationship to the previous country (see vocabulary).

Continue until all countries have been placed and described. Direct students to label each country, capital, and body of water with laminated place names using the questions listed in the vocabulary.

When the map is complete, use the yarn to create the Equator!

*Jigsaw puzzles can make learning geography fun!*



# Teacher as Researcher: Motivating an Eighth Grade Spanish Class

Emily Francomano  
The Day School  
New York, New York

I want to tell you about the exciting results of a teacher research project I completed last year. I was introduced to the idea of the teacher as researcher while I was a participant in Project Puma, a National Endowment for the Humanities grant-funded project at Teachers College, Columbia University. My research project was done in connection with an assignment in which we were to create a curriculum unit that used subject content (the history and culture of Mexico) and writing activities to teach Spanish.

I created a unit for an eighth grade class based on the Zapotec story, *La mujer que brillaba aún más que el sol*, adapted from a poem by Alejandro Cruz Martínez. I chose this story because it is beautiful, both linguistically and visually. As a person who loves Spanish, and loves writing and reading Spanish, I really hoped that my students would start to feel that same kind of love for the language, develop some ownership of the language, feel better about themselves, and really have some fun with the language while they were learning.

Unfortunately, the class did not feel like successful language learners; in fact they felt as if they had been labeled the "slow" group. Not surprisingly, their in-class behavior and engagement had been problematic throughout the fall. I decided that after winter vacation when they came back, the class would be completely different. I would use an entirely different style of teaching that involved only speaking in Spanish in the class-

room on my part and the students' parts. My research questions centered around my students' reactions to a new methodology in the classroom in which each lesson was focused on the story. Would their motivation and engagement increase? Would they develop a more intuitive sense of spoken and written Spanish?

As I taught the unit, I recorded my thoughts in a journal, audio- and video-taped some of my lessons, evaluated and compared my students' work, and conducted interviews with some of my students. The teaching strategies I used included:

- presenting the vocabulary with visuals from the story;
- having the students practice the vocabulary by answering questions about the story and writing original sentences;
- conducting shared readings of the story;
- having students act out the story;
- completing a story map of the characters, setting, problems, and solution;
- writing and illustrating original stories; and
- making a video of the students reading their stories.

I started each class making my students swear that they would speak only Spanish in class, "*Doy mi palabra de honor...*" (I pledge my word of honor....) They would come in, shake my hand, and say, "I'm not going to speak any English today." That really helped because before, I had to constantly remind them, "We're not

*I really hoped that my students would start to feel that same kind of love for the language...*

speaking any English today." I have a sign, "*Hablamos español ahora* (We're speaking Spanish now)/We're speaking English now," which helped somewhat, but the oath helped a lot more. They started to do their own language policing. "*¡Tú estás hablando inglés, cállate!*" (You're speaking English, shut-up!) Even though this was not exactly polite, it was a very meaningful exchange of language.

I found that motivation just soared and there was a markedly higher level of engagement in the classroom. Consequently, classroom management became much easier. The students really enjoyed reading a story. I often had them sitting on the floor in a circle, as in kindergarten, and made the class as fun as possible. They loved writing their own stories, making them into books, and making a video.

During reflective interviews, most students responded that the class was now more interesting and fun. Many students felt that they had become more successful in communicating in Spanish. They really were able to

communicate meaningfully to one another and to me. I noticed the biggest improvement in oral skills, especially in the asking of questions.

With the changes I made in my teaching, my students experienced a new level of motivation. I know that I will keep on teaching my students in this new way. And I know now that I can complete a meaningful teacher research project!

...motivation  
just soared...

### References

Cruz Martínez, A., & Olivera, F. (Illustrator). (1991). *La mujer que brillaba aún más que el sol*. San Francisco, CA: Children's Press.

*Editor's Note: The curriculum unit described will be included in the Project Pluma teachers' resource guide, which will be available in the fall of 1996. To request a complimentary copy, send your name and address to: Mari Haas, Teachers College, Columbia University, Box 201, New York, NY 10025.*

## Standards and Assessment Conference Report Available

On March 30-April 1, 1995, the School of Education at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill hosted the International Conference on Standards and Assessment (ICSA).

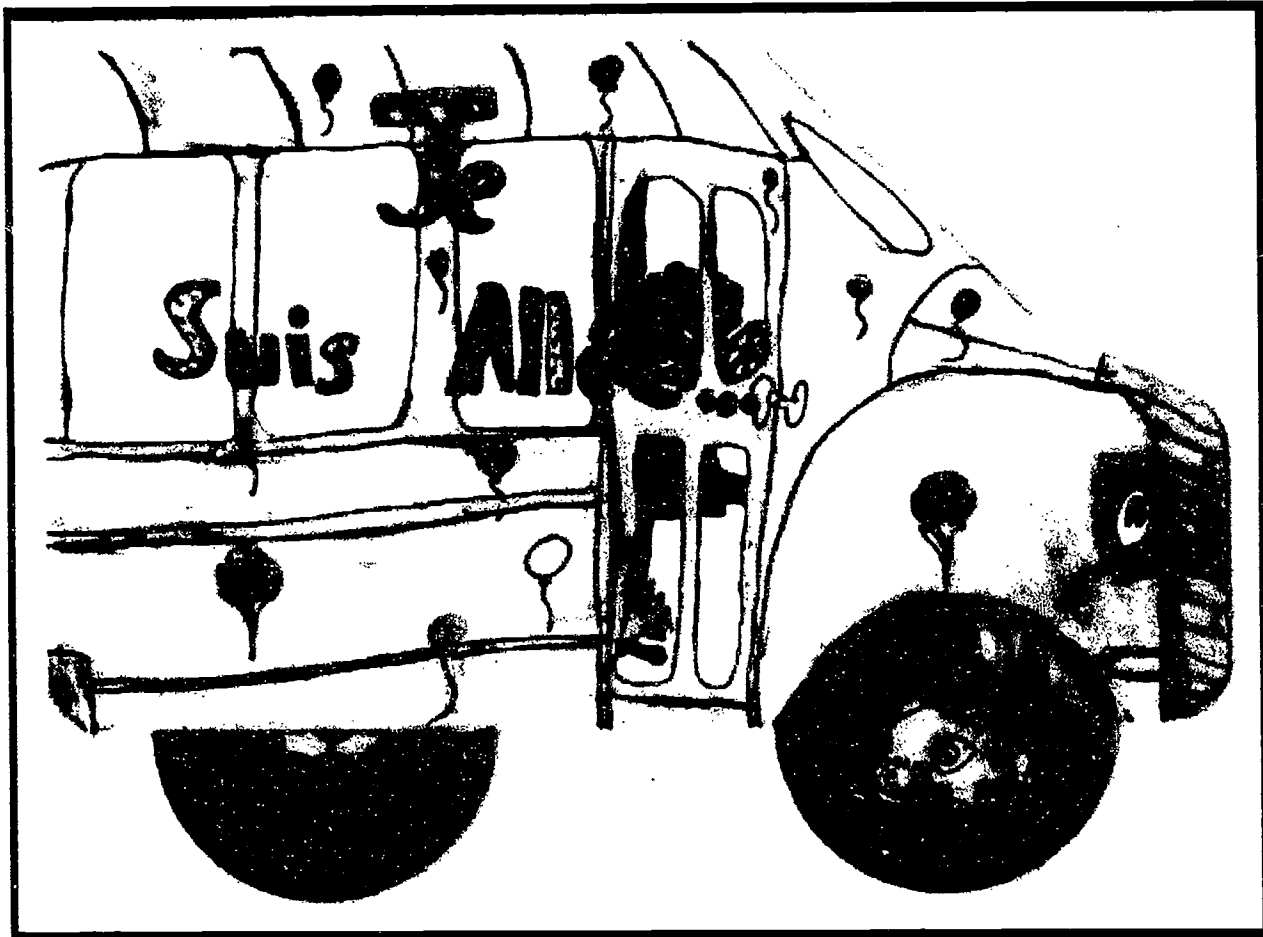
This first-ever meeting brought together K-16 educators, state department coordinators, U.S. Department of Education officials, policy makers, and representatives from all of the content area standards projects.

The three-day event offered participants six internationally-known keynote speakers, six preconference workshops, and over 60 concurrent sessions. Thirty-five states and two foreign countries were represented.

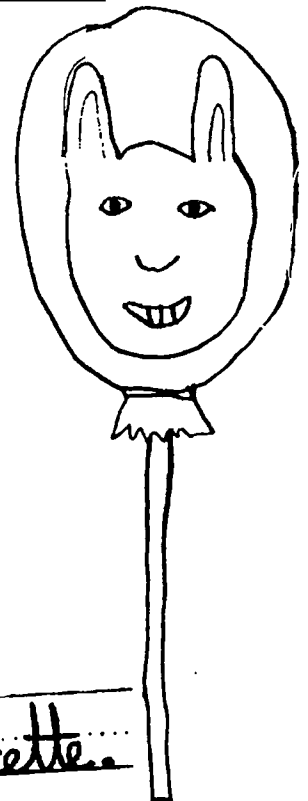
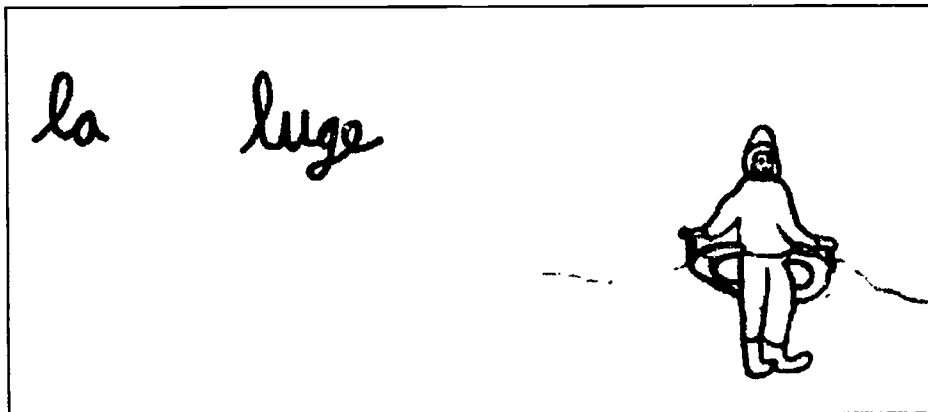
Participants had the opportunity to network with representatives from all levels of the standards and assessment movement. Fascinating ideas were shared regarding numerous projects at local, state, and national levels.

The *ICSA Report*, a refereed journal with articles that represent a wide view of the conference, is now available. For information regarding the purchase of the *ICSA Report*, contact Dr. Audrey Heining-Boynton, *ICSA Report* Editor, CB#3500 Peabody Hall, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3500.

# Children's Classroom Creations



Erin Robinson  
Grade 5  
Renbrook School  
West Hartford, CT  
Pat Clark, French Teacher



*Editor's Note:* The cover and two pages from Erin's delightful book are included in Children's Classroom Creations. Erin's book is based on the *Un Litre de Crème Alogée*, which is one of three stories in the Big Book, *Dix Kilomètres à Pied*, published by Addison-Wesley, 1 Jacob Way, Reading, MA 01867; Phone: 800-447-2226 or 617-944-3700. Shaped books are available from Perfection Learning Corporation, 1000 N. 2nd Ave., Logan, IA 51546; Phone: 712-644-2831.

*une soucette.*

# Traveling to South America on the Internet

Margaret Reardon  
Pocantico Hills Public School  
North Tarrytown, New York

**W**e often hear that in our increasingly interdependent world it is vital for our students to be able to communicate in languages other than English. We are also urged to help our students develop an understanding of other cultures. For seventh grade students learning Spanish at the Pocantico Hills Public School in North Tarrytown, New York, corresponding with students in Latin America via the Internet was the perfect way to personalize the students' school language learning experience. This experience not only encouraged students in their continued study of Spanish, it motivated them to learn about other cultures.

This experience came about when the school librarian and I (the Spanish teacher, with very little computer or electronic mail experience) participated in a federally-funded grant, *Focus on Information Technologies*, through our local Bureau of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES). This grant offered us a chance to write a curriculum unit that used the Internet to connect our students with students in Spanish-speaking countries. This program was especially interesting to us because South America had been designated as the focus for the seventh grade Spanish curriculum for that year. The students in our school who participated in this project had studied Spanish for three and a half years.

And so our adventure on the Internet began. First, we searched the

Internet for links with schools in Latin American countries. We went down many unexplored paths and hit many dead ends. I traveled to Paraguay by night and Chile by day trying to get electronic mail addresses. When we discovered ListServs (electronic bulletin boards on the Internet where people from all over the world ask questions that anyone reading the board can respond to through electronic mail), we sent out messages about our project and received many responses. We were connected with teachers in Argentina, Peru, and Colombia and were exhilarated when we received responses from them such as the following:

*Peggy, no te imaginas el interés que ha despertado el correo electrónico en el colegio...quiero que me confirmes si vamos a intercambiar información pronto... Alfredo*

We wanted our students to learn more about Latin America and to practice their Spanish skills as they conversed electronically with the students from that continent.

We first identified the schools with which we would correspond: a Jewish school in Argentina, a Jesuit school in Peru, and a Missionary school in Colombia. Next, we divided the students into three groups. Each group researched one country on the Internet and on CD-ROM's available at our school. We asked students to learn general information about the countries as well as information about any current political instability. The students made flags, maps, and travel

*Peggy,  
you can't imagine  
how much interest  
electronic mail has  
caused at  
school...please  
confirm if we are  
going to exchange  
information soon...  
Alfredo*



*The librarian was amazed at their desire to use perfect Spanish.*

brochures in their Spanish class and described their country in writing. They were also to take part in four electronic mail exchanges, after which a video reporting on the experience was produced at the local cable television station, culminating the unit.

In the first electronic mail exchange, students wrote an autobiography; in the second, a description of their school; next they described where they lived; and finally, they wrote about their favorite pastimes, music, and sports. Before each exchange we brainstormed ideas they might include. Each student then

wrote a rough draft of a message, which I helped them correct.

When we went to the library, where the Internet connection is located, the students worked in pairs to type their messages to their keypals in Argentina, Peru, or Colombia. One student dictated and watched the monitor for errors while the other typed. The librarian was amazed at their desire to use perfect Spanish.

The following are examples of electronic mail messages sent and received during the project. All correspondence was in Spanish. English translations are provided:

---

*ED: Please note that diacritics and non-English punctuation are not used on the Internet. The messages received have not been edited, except for the removal of last names.*

*Querida Naomi:*

*Somos alumnos de 6B del colegio TARBUT. Nos llamamos, Yael, Federico, Nicole, Lola, Yael K. Todos vivimos en departamentos grandes. En el grado nos llevamos muy bien. Salimos a muchos lados juntos y nos divertimos mucho. Tenemos familias muy grandes, entre ellos tios, abuelos, hermanos, madres y padres. Nos gustan mucho los deportes y en los recreos jugamos al hand-ball, foot-ball, volley-ball, tennis. En el colegio estudiamos 3 idiomas, Ingles, Hebreo y Castellano. Nos gusta mucho comunicarnos contigo y queremos saber mas acerca de tu vida. Esperamos mas noticias tuyas. Un beso.*

*Federico, Lola, Yael, Nicole y Yael K.  
Buenos Aires, Argentina*

*Dear Naomi:*

We are 6th grade (6B) students at TARBUT High School. Our names are Yael, Federico, Nicole, Lola, Yael K. We all live in big apartments. At school we get along very well. We go out a lot together and we have fun. We have big families, among them uncles and aunts, grandparents, brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers. We like sports a lot and during recess we play handball, football, volleyball and tennis. At school we learn three languages, English, Hebrew and Spanish. We would really like to keep in touch with you and we would like to know more about your life. We hope to receive more news from you. A kiss.

Federico, Lola, Yael, Nicole & Yael K.  
Buenos Aires, Argentina

Hola, Federico, Lola, Yael, Nicole,  
Yael K.

Gracias por tus dos cartas. Me gustan mucho. Mi escuela es pequeña. Mi clase favorita es matemáticas. El profesor de matemáticas se llama el Sr. S. Es mi profesor favorito. Me gusta la clase de español. La profesora se llama Sra. Reardon.

Es su escuela pequeña, mediana o grande? Llevan uniformes? Donde comes el almuerzo? Cuales sus clases favoritas? Tienen un piano? Son Uds. populares? Tienen abuelos, bisabuelos y tios? Por favor, escribame otra vez.

Tu amiga  
Naomi  
N. Tarrytown, NY

Hello, Federico, Lola, Yael, Nicole,  
Yael K,

Thank you for your two letters. I liked them a lot. My school is small. My favorite class is mathematics. My math teacher's name is Mr. S. He is my favorite teacher. I like my Spanish class. My Spanish teacher's name is Mrs. Reardon.

Is your school small, medium, or large? Do you wear uniforms? Where do you eat lunch? Which are your favorite classes? Do you have a piano? Are you popular? Do you have grandparents, great grandparents, uncles and aunts? Please write me again.

Your friend  
Naomi  
N. Tarrytown, NY

Hola me llamo Sebastian, estoy en 3 de sec "A" (9º grado), tengo 15 años me gusta hacer morey SURF, ir a fiestas, conocer gente mis mejores amigos son Diego, Hernan, Joela y Valery, no soy muy estudioso, soy de estatura baja, mis ojos son pardos, pelo castaño oscuro, tengo una casa grande y tambien otra en una playa privada que se llama "Lapa Lapa," espero que me escribas pronto chau

Sebastian  
Lima, Peru

Hello, my name is Sebastian, I am in the 3rd year of secondary school "A" (9th grade), I am 15 years old and I like to do morey SURFing, go to parties, and meet people. My best friends are Diego, Hernan, Joela and Valery, I am not very studious, I am short, my eyes are light brown, my hair is light brown. I have a big house and also another house at a private beach named "Lapa Lapa." I hope you write to me soon, bye.

Sebastian  
Lima, Peru

*Hola, Magali, Diego, Matias, Luciano y Uri*

*Hola! Me llamo Bethány. Recibi tu carta interesante. Pues, Estoy en el septimo grado. La escuela se llama Pocantico Hills. Voy a la escuela a pie o por coche. En mi escuela no podemos masticar chicle, correr en los pasillos, ni llevar gorras.*

*Estudio ciencias, estudios sociales, matematicas, ingles, español 1, arte, education fisica, y tecnologia. Me gustan mas o menos. Como les gusta estudiar ingles? Hablan Uds. el hebreo muy bien? A que hora va y sale de la escuela? Bailas ballet en tu pais? Te gusta? Me gusta mucho. Escribame pronto.*

*Hasta luego,  
Bethany  
N. Tarrytown, NY*

Hello, Magali, Diego, Matias, Luciano and Uri,

Hello! My name is Bethany. I received your interesting letter. I am in 7th grade. My school is called Pocantico Hills. I walk to school or go by car. At my school we cannot chew gum, run in the hallways or wear caps.

I study Science, Social Studies, Mathematics, English, Spanish I, Art, Physical Education, and Technology. I sort of like them. How do you like studying English? Do you speak Hebrew well? What time do you go to school and leave school? Do you ballet dance in your country? Do you like it? I like it a lot. Write me soon.

See you later,  
Bethany  
N. Tarrytown, NY

*Hola!*

*Mi nombre es Joann. Yo tengo 15 años. Yo soy de Corea. Vivo en Bogotá, Colombia. Estudio en E. Camino Academy. Estoy en 9º grado. Tengo 4 hermanas. Hace 1 mes estoy en Colombia. Hablo 4 idiomas: Español, Ingles, Coreano, y Portugues. He vivido en Brasil, Paraguay, Portugal, y Corea. Mi deporte favorito es baloncesto. Mi color favorito es el azul, y mi comida favorita es pizza.*

*Joann  
Bogota, Colombia*

Hello!

My name is Joann. I am 15 years old. I am from Korea. I live in Bogota, Colombia. I study at El Camino Academy. I am in 9th grade. I have four sisters. I have been in Colombia for one month. I speak four languages: Spanish, English, Korean, and Portuguese. I have lived in Brazil, Paraguay, Portugal and Korea. My favorite sport is basketball. My favorite color is blue and my favorite meal is pizza.

Joann  
Bogota, Columbia

*Que tal Bethany, me llamo Flavio tengo 16 y estoy en ultimo año me gusta mucho la musica grunge como Pearl Jam etc, contestame pronto Chau*

*Flavio  
Lima, Peru*

How are you Bethany, my name is Flavio I am 16 years old and I am in my last year [of secondary school]. I like grunge music very much like Pearl Jam etc. Answer me soon. Bye.

Flavio  
Lima, Peru

The students were very excited about the project. Before school and during lunch I would be greeted in the hallways with, "Would you check my message? I just want to make sure my Spanish is perfect." "Do you have a message for me?" and "May I read my message to the class?"

The librarian and I were very satisfied with the results of the project. The students were incredibly motivated, practiced their Spanish in a real context, and learned about the culture of the people who speak Spanish in Argentina, Peru, and Colombia. They were amazed at how similar they are to their South American peers.

Here are some guidelines for replicating a project like this:

- You need at least one computer with a modem and a connection to an electronic mail system.

- Record all of the paths you take when you look for information on the Internet, so that the next time you know what steps you have taken before.

- Have specific goals, activities, and outcomes in mind before you begin. Preplanning helps the project run smoothly.

- Set specific beginning and ending dates for the project with the teachers in the target country. This will help avoid the long wait for responses.

- Make sure you ask the sister school for additional information (besides their electronic mail address) such as mailing address, phone number, and FAX number in case you want to send anything through other channels later.

- Try to exchange messages with students of similar ages to your students.

- Plan adequate time for the students to use the computers. If you only have a limited number of computers that access the Internet, you will need a great deal of time for all of the students to be able to send their messages.

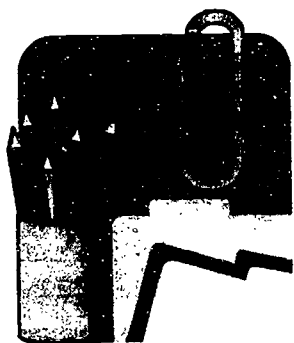
I encourage you to explore the Internet with your students. I believe that you, too, will find that your students will love using the language they have studied to communicate with their peers in other countries. Here are some helpful resources to help get you started:

EDNET:  
[ednetmgr@educ.umass.edu](mailto:ednetmgr@educ.umass.edu)

KIDSPHERE:  
[KIDSPHERE-request@vms.cis.pitt.edu](mailto:KIDSPHERE-request@vms.cis.pitt.edu)

KIDLINK via web browser at  
<http://www.kidlink.org>

*The students were so interested in Latin America that they asked the principal if they could go on a class trip to Mexico!*



# Classroom Resources

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## French

Carter, D.A. (1992). *Dans un Bois Très, Très Sombre*. Toulouse, France: Editions Milan.

Fox, M. (1990). *A ton avis?* France: Kaleidoscope.

Available through Children's French Book Store, 1486 Gainforth Ave., Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4J1N5; 416-465-3015.

Here are two books which make for wonderful lessons at Halloween time. Both books are adaptations from English, but they are so engaging and so rich in possibilities that I use them without any qualms in my classes.

David Carter's book, *Dans un Bois Très, Très Sombre*, is a recounting of that classic, scary story, *In a Dark, Dark Wood*. This book has spooky illustrations and a simple repetitive text that builds suspense as it goes along. The pay-off is a terrific ghost that actually pops out of the last page. This is a book that children of all ages can enjoy. I read it to my beginning French students in sixth grade, but younger children will like it as well. As a follow-up activity, my students create their own "*Dans un(e)* (noun) *très, très* (adjective)" book with text and illustrations that they share with the class.

Mem Fox's *A ton avis* is more controversial. This book has complex, surreal illustrations that teachers and students may find disturbing, intriguing, or howlingly funny. My seventh and eighth grade students love it. The text invites the reader to look at the pictures of a very strange witch and to

guess what kind of person she really is. It all comes out well in the end, but along the way the reader is treated to hilarious pictures of the witch's lifestyle, including a witches' brew, witch hats, and a variety of witchy animals. There is a lot for students to talk about in this book and it certainly stimulates the imagination. Since the humor is quite sophisticated, (the witch wears buttons that say "idiot grin" and "hot bats") the book will appeal especially to older elementary students. Definitely weird, but definitely fun!

## German

Wilkes, A., Schindler, N. (1992). Duden: *Mein erstes Wörterbuch*. Mannheim: Dudenverlag. \$21.95.

Paschmann, M., Teichmann, D. (1991). Duden: *Bildwörterbuch für Kinder*. Mannheim: Dudenverlag. \$17.95.

*Langenscheidt Picture Dictionary*. German/English. (1992). Maspeth, NY: Langenscheidt. \$14.95 (Paperback); \$19.95 (Hardcover).

All are available from Delta Systems Co., Inc., 1400 Miller Parkway, McHenry, IL 60050-7030; 800-323-8270; Fax: 815-363-2948.

If you are a teacher interested in using the four components of a communicative classroom—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—these books provide an invaluable resource. Students using them will gain cultural knowledge and will have lots of fun looking at the illustrations, in addition

to listening to, speaking, reading, and writing the words. The books are an excellent reference for journal writing. They can be placed in a Writing Center for students to use as they look up words and expressions.

*Mein erstes Wörterbuch* contains 60 full-color pages with photographs of real German scenes and objects that are labeled in German. Topics include clothing, the body, things in the house, things in the garden, colors, shapes, numbers, food and drinks, sports, school, toys, zoo, farm, weather, and shopping, just to name a few.

*Bildwörterbuch für Kinder* also consists of 60 pages with full-color scenes surrounded by smaller pictures showing articles from within the scene. Topics include the house, family, city, school, farm, seasons, shops, traffic, playground, clothing, hospital, and many more.

In both of these books the scenes and items are labeled only in German and use the appropriate article with the nouns. *Bildwörterbuch für Kinder* uses illustrations, while *Mein erstes Wörterbuch* shows photographs.

*Langenscheidt Picture Dictionary* uses the German and English word for each illustration. It contains 3,336 terms and helps students acquire vocabulary and dictionary skills. The full-color illustrations show actions and ideas suitable for the young reader. The words are arranged in alphabetical order. Nouns are used with the appropriate German article.

All three books contain a German index which makes it easy for students to look up a specific word. These books are a terrific resource for a German reading/writing program. They are best for students who are beginning to read and for students in first or second grade immersion classes.

## Spanish

García Lorca, F. (1986). *Federico García Lorca para niños*. (3rd ed.) Martin, E. (Ed.). Madrid: Ediciones de la Torre.

Available from Ideal Foreign Books, Inc., 132 - 10 Hillside Ave., Richmond Hill, NY 11418; 718-297-7477. Cost is \$13.95.

Introduce your students to Spanish language poetry with *Federico García Lorca para niños*. This book, which is one in a series on Spanish poets, gives you 32 pages of background on García Lorca and over 50 poems for children. Many poems are short and very appropriate for elementary and middle school classes. The longer poems can be used with more advanced students or immersion students. Some poems lend themselves to choral recitation while others, to illustration by the students. Students might also imitate García Lorca's style in creating their own Spanish poetry. You will find this book to be an excellent resource for introducing authentic Spanish poetry to your students.

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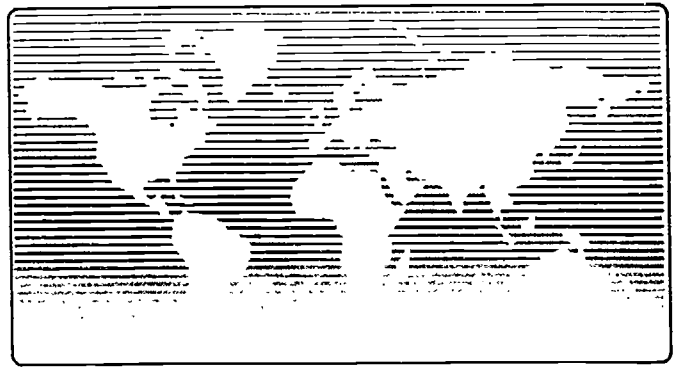
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# U.S. Joins Global Language Education Study



*It is important  
that the U.S.  
be involved in  
cooperative  
efforts of this  
nature -  
Paul Simon*

**T**he United States is participating in the first phase of an international comparative survey of language education conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). This survey, coordinated by the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL), is similar to the recently conducted survey measuring U.S. students' mathematical and scientific abilities and comparing them to those of other students in other countries. Over 30 countries are participating in this study.

The study will contribute significantly to our understanding of language education in the U.S. and around the world, and will provide a basis for suggesting improvements in our educational system. As U.S. Senator Paul Simon observed, the study "will give us an opportunity to better gauge where the U.S. stands in relation to other nations in this important area. It is important that the U.S. be involved in cooperative efforts of this nature."

In the first phase, CAL will report on the teaching of Spanish, French, German, Japanese, and English-as-a-Second Language. This phase of the study will also include conducting research on the social, political, and educational context in which language education is carried out. The gathering of data for Phase One has been completed and country representa-

tives met to share results in June 1995. Phase Two is much more extensive, and will involve the testing of students and collection of data on student proficiency and on the kinds of teaching that go on across the country. The research will result in identifying model programs and describing them through case studies.

Support for CAL's participation in Phase One is provided by the Spencer Foundation, Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP), the American Association of Teachers of German (AATG) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). At present, funding is available for U.S. participation in the first phase of the study only.

The national language education profile that the U.S. is preparing for the international study will be available as a separate report, to be published by the National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education (NCBE) in winter 1995.

The IEA, founded in 1969 under the auspices of UNESCO Institute of Education in Hamburg, has conducted over 15 international comparative studies. The Council of Chief State School Officers serves as the U.S. representative to the IEA by designation of the Board of International Comparative Studies in Education.

# Events in Europe: A Focus on Germany

Helena Curtain  
University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

*The world of early language learning within our own country is fascinating and it is heartening to see the attention that such programs are currently being given. Because this same interest is surfacing in other parts of the world, a column focusing on the international aspects of early language learning is inaugurated in this issue. I invite you to send items of international news to me for possible inclusion in this column. Thank you.*  
Helena Curtain

Concerns related to early language learning in other parts of the world are very similar to the concerns found in the United States. This article reports on information related to early language learning in Germany.

The Association for Modern Language Teachers in the state of Baden-Württemberg (1989) called for long sequences of instruction beginning as early as possible, along with more emphasis on communicative, activity-oriented language teaching and increased teacher training. Steinbach (1993) in Saxony Anhalt, one of the new states in the eastern part of Germany, gave strong reasons for a long sequence of instruction: fosters tolerance, an openness towards others, and the ability to understand other points of view; integrates children from other countries into the German school system; starts lifelong learning in the area of language instruction; and allows today's students to adjust to the new Europe as it continues to develop into a community.

Piepho (1992) discussed the need for German children to learn other languages early and described appropriate conditions for early language programs:

- Early language learning should not simply be mandated as another subject in the elementary school, but should be formulated in an entirely new way.
- The decision as to which language to teach and how the program should be organized should be made on a school-by-school basis by parents and teachers.
- The financing of programs must be secured before programs are started.
- There is a need for coordinated support for early language learning programs, including the provision of a curriculum, materials, teacher handbooks, and in-service opportunities, so that individual schools have the resources needed to implement quality programs.
- The emphasis on early language learning should be made clearly visible in the school.
- Opportunities should be provided for teacher exchanges and visits to countries where the target language is spoken so that teachers can learn the language needed for everyday school life.
- Children must have opportunities to use their language skills in real contexts with speakers of the language.
- Children's growth in their lan-

*80 percent of the children in the Third World grow up learning two or more languages.*



guage learning should be assessed even if the early language learning program does not give grades.

The *Kinder lernen europäische Sprachen* (Children Learn European Languages) association advocated the start of foreign language learning in grade three of primary school and identified a developmentally appropriate and activity-oriented approach as a logical first step in this direction (Gompf, 1990). The organization based its advocacy on The Hamburg Agreement of 1964, which recognized as an educational right of every individual in Germany, the command of at least one foreign language. The *Kinder lernen europäische Sprachen* association argued that competence in at least one foreign language is an indispensable occupational minimum qualification in view of the close cooperation of the European states in the European Common Market.

The association indicated that the requirement to start foreign language study at grade five (ages 10/11) in all German schools was not being fulfilled and urged the restructuring of the German school system to allow for primary school language instruction.

Among the aims of the association are the following (Gompf, 1990):

1. Promote knowledge about the early start of foreign language learning in the primary school by systematically collecting and widely publicizing arguments and information concerning developments in this field.
2. Promote publicity in the media supporting foreign languages in the primary school.
3. Inform parents about the prospects for earlier foreign language learning in the European context.
4. Inform and motivate teachers and their professional organizations at all school types and levels.

5. Urge opinion- and decision-makers in executive and legislative bodies and in political parties at federal and state levels to facilitate early foreign language study.

6. Organize workshops, conferences, and symposia to deal with the theoretical problems and practical experiences related to an early start in foreign languages at the primary level.

7. Contribute to teacher training and the spread of modern, developmentally-appropriate teaching strategies and materials.

8. Promote and support relevant research on foreign language teaching for the younger learner.

9. Act as a distributor of information on early foreign language teaching and learning.

10. Promote contact and cooperation with institutions following similar objectives in Germany and the whole of Europe.

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## **American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)**

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**Anaheim, California**

### ***NNELL Annual Meeting***

### ***FLES Swapshop Breakfast***

Saturday, November 18th, 1995  
4:45 - 6:00 pm  
Orange County Salon 2  
Marriott Hotel

Sunday, November 19, 1995  
8:00 - 9:30 am  
Pacific Ballroom B  
Hilton and Towers Hotel

During this session you will meet the officers of NNELL, who will provide a short report on the year's activities and discuss plans for future work. Afterwards, session participants will have the opportunity to explore topics of interest and concern to early language learning educators in a small group format.

The small group sessions will be facilitated by the NNELL regional representatives. During this time, new teachers will be able to dialogue with experienced teachers, while those with experience will explore topics meeting their interests and concerns. One topic already suggested for the agenda is "Building support for early language programs through advocacy." Send suggestions for discussion topics to Eileen Lorenz, NNELL First Vice President, Montgomery County Public Schools, 850 Hungerford Drive, Rockville, MD 20850; e-mail: [elorenz@umd5.umd.edu](mailto:elorenz@umd5.umd.edu)

Join your colleagues for a full American breakfast to discuss effective teaching techniques and resources in the K-8 classroom.

Bring 200 copies of a one-page teaching activity to share. Include the following information in the activity: your name and address, language and grade level, lesson topic, objectives (language, content, thinking skills, culture, key vocabulary), materials, description of activity, and assessment. Publishers' FLES materials will be on display.

Swap Shop coordinators are Marcia A. Spielberger, Georgia Department of Education, and Mary Lynn Redmond, Wake Forest University. Publishers' Displays coordinator is Mary Bastiani, Portland (OR) Public Schools.

*Note: Tickets may be purchased on site on a space-available basis. Contact ACTFL (914-963-8830) for further registration information.*

# Calendar

## November 15-17, 1995

Joint Conference of Advocates for Language Learning (ALL) and Second Language Acquisition by Children (SLAC), Fullerton, CA. Paul Garcia, 5530 Oak St., Kansas City, MO 64113; 816-523-1939.

## November 18-20, 1995

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), Anaheim, CA. ACTFL, 6 Executive Plaza, Yonkers, NY 10701-6801; 914-963-8830; Fax: 914-963-1275.

## March 12-16, 1996

National Association For Bilingual Education, Orlando, FL. NABE, 1220 L St., NW, Suite 605, Washington, DC 20005-4018; 202-898-1829; Fax: 202-789-2866; E-mail: NABE1@aol.com

## March 28-31, 1996

Central States Conference and Kentucky Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, Louisville, KY. Jody Thrush, CSC Executive Director, 3550 Anderson St., Madison, WI 53704; 608-246-6573.

## April 11-13, 1996

Southwest Conference on Language Teaching; Albuquerque, NM. Joann Pompa, Executive Director; Mountain Pointe High School; 4201 E. Knox Road; Phoenix, AZ 85044; 602-759-8449.

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### CAL Publishes Valuable Resources

The 1995 updated list, "Total and Partial Immersion Language Programs in U.S. Schools," including 187 schools teaching nine languages, is now available free of charge from the Foreign Language Education and Testing Division of CAL.

The 600-page revised "1995 Directory of Two-Way Bilingual Programs in the United States," by Donna Christian and Anna Whitcher, is available for \$30 (plus \$3 postage and handling) from the National Center for Research on Cultural Diversity and Second Language Learning at CAL.

To order the directories, write to: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1118 22nd St. NW, Washington, DC 20037.

### Teaching Methods Editor Solicits Articles

The editor of the Teaching Methods section of *Learning Languages* encourages readers to submit both practical and scholarly articles on successful strategies for meeting the various challenges facing the K-8 language teacher in the school situation. Articles may also address innovative approaches to the preparation of pre-service and/or in-service K-8 language teachers. An important goal of this section of the journal is to offer articles that will broaden teachers' perspectives and encourage excellence in early language learning. Please send your articles to Gilda M. Oran, Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania, 3540 Green St., Harrisburg, PA 17110; 717-232-1118; Fax: 717-232-9175.

# ***NNELL Executive Board***

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mbh14@columbia.edu

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Rockville, MD 20850  
elorenz@umd5.umd.edu

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Department of Education  
Box 7266, Reynolda Station  
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redmond@wfu.edu

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Foreign Language Education  
CB #3500 Peabody Hall  
Univ. of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3500  
alheinin@email.unc.edu

## ***Executive Secretary***

Nancy Rhodes  
Center for Applied Linguistics  
1118 22nd St. NW  
Washington, DC 20037  
nancy@cal.org

## ***Membership Secretary***

Guadalupe Hernández-Silva  
Center for Applied Linguistics  
1118 22nd St. NW  
Washington, DC 20037  
lupe@cal.org

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---

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Maureen Regan-Baker  
22 Pearl St.  
Stonington, CT 06378

## ***Membership and Publicity***

Virginia Gramer  
Monroe School  
Foreign Language Office  
210 N. Madison  
Hinsdale, IL 60512

## ***Political Action***

Gilda Oran  
Bloomsburg University  
of Pennsylvania  
3540 Green St.  
Harrisburg, PA 17110  
oran@planetx.bloomu.edu

## ***Publisher Liaison***

Annette Lowry  
Foreign Language Dept.  
Fort Worth ISD  
100 N. University Dr., Suite 221  
Fort Worth, TX 76107

## ***Central States Conference Rep.***

Debbie Wilburn-Robinson  
Ohio State University  
276 Cunz Hall  
1841 Millikin Rd.  
Columbus, OH 43210  
dwilburn@magnus.acs.ohio-state.edu

## ***Pacific Northwest Council Rep***

Jo Ann Olliphant  
11004 11th St. SW  
Tacoma, WA 98498

## ***Northeast Conference Rep.***

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225 Clinton Ave.  
Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522

## ***Southern Conference Rep.***

Carine Feyton  
University of South Florida  
College of Education  
EDU 306H, Tampa, FL, 33620-5650  
feyton@madonna.coedu.usf.edu

## ***Southwest Conference Rep.***

Joseph Harris  
Harris Bilingual Immersion School  
501 East Elizabeth  
Fort Collins, CO 80524

# Membership Form

Please enroll me as a member of the National Network for Early Language Learning (NNELL) and send me a one-year subscription to *Learning Languages*. I am enclosing a check for \$15.00. (Overseas rate is \$20.00.) Make checks payable to NNELL.  
NO PURCHASE ORDERS PLEASE.

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Center for Applied Linguistics  
Attn: Nancy Rhodes, Executive Secretary  
1118 22nd St. NW  
Washington, DC 20037

Marcia H. Rosenbusch, Editor  
*Learning Languages*  
Department of Curriculum and Instruction  
N157 Lagomarcino Hall  
Iowa State University  
Ames, Iowa 50011

# Learning Languages

The Journal of the National Network for Early Language Learning

Winter 1996  
Vol. 1 No. 2

*Learning Languages: The Journal of the National Network for Early Language Learning* is the official publication of NNELL. It serves the profession by providing a medium for the sharing of information, ideas, and concerns among teachers, administrators, researchers, and others interested in the early learning of languages. The journal reflects NNELL's commitment to promoting opportunities for all children to develop a high level of competence in at least one language and culture in addition to their own.

In an effort to address the interests of the profession, both practical and scholarly articles are published. Practical articles describe innovative approaches to teaching and to the administration of effective language programs for children. Scholarly articles report on original research and cite both current research and theory as a basis for making recommendations for practice. Scholarly articles are refereed, i.e., reviewed anonymously by at least three readers. Readers include members of the NNELL executive board, the editorial advisory board, and invited guest reviewers who have expertise in the area. Refereed articles are identified as such in the journal. Write to the editor at the address below to request a copy of author guidelines for preparing articles.

**Submissions:** Deadlines for information are: fall issue—May 1; winter issue—Nov. 1; spring issue—Feb. 1. Articles, classroom activities, and materials offered for review may be submitted to the appropriate contributing editor (see below). Send announcements, conference information, and original children's work (such as line drawings, short stories, and poems) to the editor. Children's work needs to be accompanied by written permission from the child's parents or guardians and must include the child's name, age, school, and the teacher's name, address, and telephone (add fax and e-mail address, if available).

Submit a favorite classroom activity for the "Activities for Your Classroom" section by sending a description of the activity that includes title, objective, materials, and procedure. Include pictures or drawings as illustration, if available. Send with your name, address, and phone number to the Classroom Activities editor listed below.

*Editor*

Marcia H. Rosenbusch  
Department of Curriculum and Instruction  
N157 Lagomarcino Hall  
Iowa State University  
Ames, IA 50011  
mrosenbu@iastate.edu

*Editorial Assistant*

Sue Ryan Weiss

*Cover Design*

Gary Blum

## Contributing Editors

*International news*

Helena Curtain  
University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee  
10523 W. Hampton Ave.  
Milwaukee, WI 53225  
hcurtain@csd.uwm.edu

*Classroom activities*

Diane Fagin Adler  
North Carolina State University  
Dept. of Foreign Languages and Lit.  
Box 8106  
Raleigh, NC 27695-8106  
adlerd@social.chass.ncsu.edu

*French resources*

Myriam Chapman  
Bank Street School for Children  
610 W. 112th St.  
New York, NY 10025

*Research*

Elsa Statzner  
National - Louis University  
1209-A Central St.  
Evanston, IL 60201  
mrugge:o@nwu.edu

*Teaching methods*

Gilda Oran  
Bloomsburg University  
of Pennsylvania  
3540 Green St.  
Harrisburg, PA 17110  
oran@planetx.bloomu.edu

*Spanish resources*

Lori Langer de Ramirez  
166 Nichols Ave.  
Brooklyn, NY 11208  
Lor1Langer@aol.com

*German resources*

Gertie Kessler  
Orange Hunt Elementary School  
6820 Sydenstricker Rd.  
Springfield, VA 22152  
kesslerj@csa.delta1.org

*Teaching with Technology*

Jean W. LeLoup  
Visiting Professor  
HQ USAFA/DFF  
2354 Fairchild Drive, Suite 6H63  
USAF Academy, CO 80840-6244  
LeLoup.JW%DFF%USAFA  
@dimail.usafa.af.mil

*Assessment*

Peggy Boyles  
Foreign Language Coordinator  
Putnam City Schools  
5401 NW 40th St.  
Oklahoma City, OK 73122  
pboyles@ionet.net

*Funding info./New legislation*

Joint National Comm. for Languages  
1118 22nd St. NW  
Washington, DC 20037  
76306.535@compuserve.com

# Learning Languages

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The Journal of the National Network for Early Language Learning

Volume 1, No. 2 Winter 1996

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## *Notes from the President*

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*Each of us  
shares the  
mission...*

Nineteen ninety-six marks the ninth anniversary of the founding of the National Network for Early Language Learning. Over these past nine years, NNELL's membership has increased to over 600. Each of us shares the mission of sustaining and improving foreign language education in general, with a particular emphasis on kindergarten through grade eight (K-8).

In November 1995, when the NNELL Board Meeting convened in Anaheim, California, officers, regional representatives, and committee chairs worked together to identify shared successes and areas of concern to the NNELL membership. As we looked at where we have been and plan to go in the future, we identified three goals for this year:

- \* Political action initiatives
- \* Standards for foreign language learning at the national and state levels
- \* Teacher-based research.

*Political Action.* The current political climate is one in which educational policy, goals, and funding are being closely scrutinized. Throughout the nation many K-8 foreign language teachers are working to defend programs that are under attack because of budget shortages or a lack of understanding about the advantages that students derive from learning a second language. Under the leadership of Mary Lynn Redmond and Kay Hewitt, the Political Action Committee will work with regional, state, and local representatives to distribute legislative

updates, provide information about national issues impacting foreign language education, and suggest strategies for developing action plans to organize K-8 foreign language colleagues in communicating a unified message to decision makers.

*Standards.* The final version of the Standards for Foreign Language Learning were presented at the inaugural session of the American Council for Teachers of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) in November. NNELL salutes our colleagues who spent many hours developing and revising the standards with invaluable input from professionals. It is our professional duty to develop a deeper understanding and knowledge about these (our) standards.

Further, members of NNELL must become involved in initiatives to develop state standards to ensure that the K-8 perspective is accurately represented. NNELL will be working with ACTFL to distribute information and promote understanding of the foreign language standards.

*Teacher As Researcher.* Teacher-based research is a relatively new tool in the field of foreign languages. It is an approach that allows us to explore and reflect on what goes on in our classrooms. By collecting and examining data about issues of interest, we have a first-hand opportunity to investigate these issues and share the results with our colleagues. Under the leadership of Mari Haas, this initiative began last year and will continue to

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**NOTES** Please turn to Page 7

# The Bayeux Tapestry: A Medieval Document Inspires Students

Armelle Webster  
The Country School  
Madison, Connecticut

For many language teachers, the opportunity to spend six weeks in a foreign country devoted solely to studying literature, art, history or languages and visiting the places that inspired these, is the stuff of dreams. For National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Summer Fellows, this experience becomes a reality. The research plan all applicants propose can be tailored and focused as they wish; the whole package is personalized to their unique needs and dreams.

## Research on the Bayeux Tapestry

As a 1994 Macmillan-NEH Summer Fellow, I had the opportunity to spend six intense and rewarding weeks in Normandy, France, and in England, devoting my time to research on the Bayeux Tapestry and William the Conqueror and developing appropriate lessons on the topic for my middle school French students and other students in the school.

The Bayeux Tapestry is a unique embroidery dating back to the 11th century that is the only work of its kind to have survived since the early Middle Ages. The Tapestry depicts the Conquest of England by William, Duke of Normandy, culminating in the Battle of Hastings in 1066. It is made of a strip of linen 230 feet long and 20 inches wide, embroidered – not woven as its name suggests – using eight different colors of woolen yarn, skillfully used to create an effect of perspective. This picture story, probably

meant for an illiterate public, is supported by captions in Latin that succinctly clarify the events depicted.

This oversized comic strip unfolds as a colorful and exciting tale of hunting, feasting, friendship, oaths of allegiance, treachery, and intrigue. It ends in a furious battle scene with flashing swords, somersaulting horses, and the death of Harold with an arrow through his eye. It shows the building of a fleet to transport 7,000 men and 3,000 horses across the British Channel to England, and the gathering of supplies such as food, armaments, and tools. It shows ships plowing the seas and knights riding to battle. The tapestry also shows Haley's Comet in the English sky perceived as an omen of misfortune for England.

As I was planning my study, I proposed to follow the footsteps of William and started in Falaise, his birthplace. On the *Place Guillaume le Conquérant* in front of the ruins of the original *chateau* where William was born, the impressive bronze statue of William on his horse dominates. It miraculously remained intact during the heavy bombing of the town of Falaise during the Second World War.

I visited Caen, William's favorite residence, where he had two abbeys built in order to be allowed by the Pope to marry his cousin Mathilde. I went on to Lessay in the Cotentin Peninsula and enjoyed an organ concert in the very abbey built by William. I then explored the picturesque chateau of Pirou, a small-sized Norman strong-

*An NEH fellowship is a very special way for teachers to update and enhance the curriculum while renewing their energy and enthusiasm.*

*As an amateur historian, I felt honored that my fellowship gave me a serious profile that allowed me to meet and converse with experts on the Middle Ages.*

hold where a modern version of the Bayeux Tapestry, telling of the invasion of Sicily by the Normans, is exhibited.

I also saw the *Mont Saint Michel*, a monastery built on an island which is depicted on the Bayeux Tapestry with its treacherous quicksand. I went on to *Sainte Suzanne* where William, in his attempt to conquer the whole of France, met his match and after three years of futile attacks made peace with the lord of the fortress. There, the Museum of Medieval Costume gives a precise and informative view of the clothing worn by William and his soldiers.

Later, I proceeded on to England to the town of Battle, the site of the famous Battle of Hastings at which William became King of England. In London, I visited Westminster Abbey where William's crowning took place.

In the town of Reading, I discovered an intriguing Victorian version of the Bayeux Tapestry made by the Wardle family, who took great care in making an exact copy of the Tapestry, while censoring the crude details to avoid offending the Victorian taste of the time.

In Bosham, near Hastings, I made contact at The Penny Royal Theater with a playwright who is the author of *King Harold*, a recent play based on the events in the Tapestry. I was struck by the fact that the Tapestry is still very present in many artists' creative minds.

A pharmaceutical company, Bayer, provided me with a paper copy of their very own six feet long *Bayer Tapestry*, commemorating the 130th anniversary of the Bayer company. It is both original and amusing.

I returned to France and traveled back to Bayeux where my main contact was the Director of the *Centre Guillaume le Conquérant*, Madame Sylvette Lemagnen. She had very kindly provided me with an appropriate

bibliography on the subject at the time that I was still only considering applying for an NEH Fellowship. She made me feel welcome, gave me free access to view the original 11th century embroidery and provided me with valuable contacts with local scholars.

A few blocks away, *Les Ateliers de la Reine Mathilde* is a museum-workshop that teaches the embroidery stitch of the Tapestry as well as the local traditional art of lace making. The director is knowledgeable and helpful and in order to show me the Bayeux stitch, she supplied me with a mini tapestry kit (complete with linen cloth, naturally dyed wool, and a needle) and put me to work.

While I am not yet an expert embroiderer, I have clearly gained a better understanding of the effort and artistry involved in an endeavor such as the 230 foot long embroidery. My modest attempt at the Bayeux stitch is only ten inches wide but my little Norman ship is taking shape.

The Bayeux Tapestry contains all the ingredients that make a good story for students of all levels. Although it is a 900-year-old document, the story is still as vivid and touching as any contemporary tale. It is also visually exciting and provides an authentic and realistic look at life in the 11th century. It is an ideal subject for an interdisciplinary study as it branches out into a number of equally interesting themes.

### **Lessons Developed from the Tapestry**

Back at school in September, I used my renewed energy to get my students as excited about the early Middle Ages and the Bayeux Tapestry as I was. At my school, French is introduced at the kindergarten level and taught in all classes until eighth grade. Latin is introduced at the seventh grade level.

Thanks to a complete series of slides purchased in Normandy, I

introduced the Tapestry in French to my eighth graders who also translated the Latin captions with the help of the Latin teacher, and thus followed the story line. Later, the students were organized in groups and supplied with a long strip of tan burlap cloth, crayons, and markers and embarked on their own narrative epic in the style of the Tapestry. The theme and language of the captions were chosen by each group independently. The results of this activity were varied and equally interesting.

One group drew a typical day at school with Latin captions while another group illustrated the American novel they were studying in English class in a comic strip form. Some students invented a story for children, drew it on the cloth and completed it with a story line in French. One other "tapestry" depicted the 40 year history of our school, following an interview of the school headmaster. Another use of the burlap cloth was the creation of short copies of key scenes in the Tapestry such as the oath of Harold to William. The cloth was stapled onto a flat piece of wood, copying the exact width of the original tapestry, with a length of only two feet. These copies are quite persuasive and decorative.

These original and always humorous creations decorated the walls of the school lunch room for several weeks and were scrutinized and commented upon by many students.

Giant posters were made in class by projecting enlarged photographs with an overhead projector onto a large sheet of poster board tacked to the wall. The students then

completed their posters by adding appropriate French vocabulary to them. The students had fun making the posters and the results were striking and produced excellent eye catchers for the bulletin board.

A vivid class discussion clearly brought to light a number of interesting questions that became the subjects of fascinating research projects. While such subjects as 11th century ship building, weapons and food were investigated, one student researched Haley's Comet and mathematically checked to see if the "hairy star" had actually been seen in the English skies in 1066, knowing that it last appeared in 1984. He also was interested in reading through ancient literature to see if Haley's Comet had always been considered a bad omen when it appeared in the sky every 76 years. He quickly came to the conclusion that the question would be more appropriate as a Ph.D. thesis!

A student who is an excellent horse rider wanted to investigate the animals depicted on the Bayeux Tapestry and compare the riding gear of 1066 with modern equipment. She produced an informative paper in French in book form with illustrations.

One student was interested in fashion and hairstyles on the Tapestry and compared the clean-shaven faces



Emily Blanchard  
6th Grade - 12 years old

*My students gradually realized that the mystery of the Tapestry is in fact part of its charm, and that it is still generating conflicting views from scholars today.*

of the Normans with the thin mustaches of the Saxons. Another student compared medieval tools with modern ones and was struck by their resemblance.

One boy focused on Aesop's Fables in the borders of the Tapestry and discovered that the fable of the Fox and the Crow appears in three different places. He speculated that the cheese was probably a symbol for the crown of England, passing from Harold's hands to William's.

The findings were shared in French with the whole class, which benefited from everyone's work. Many puzzling questions remained unanswered, however, and my students were intrigued by the fact that one could study a subject that is still surrounded by mystery.

Some wooden shields and axes were made in woodshop classes. One particularly musical student recorded a tape of medieval music that complements the Tapestry. All this creative effort culminated in an exhibit entitled "The Normans are Invading the Country School," showing nasal helmets, shields, posters of warriors in chain mail, and the students' own narrative tapestries.

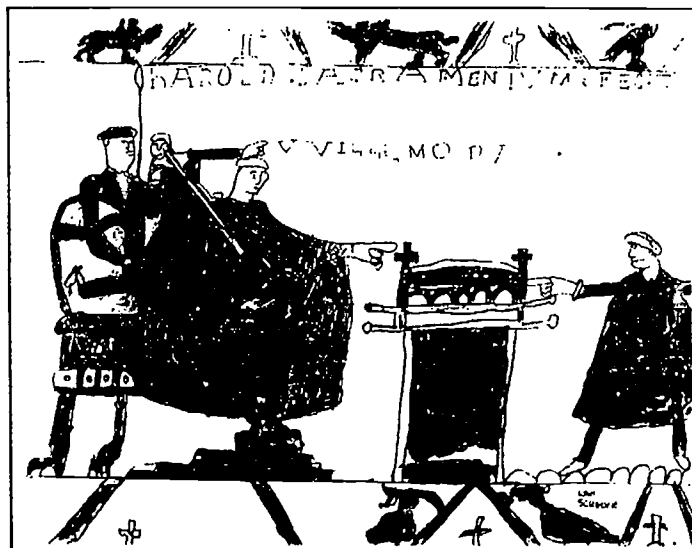
The exhibit sparked the interest of younger students who in turn wanted to know about the story on the Tapes-

try. I visited the third grade class and presented a slide show telling them in English the story of William and Harold. They became excited and I realized that the rhythm of the narrative of the comic strip-like-story provided suspense, tension, moments of relief, and a sudden acceleration culminating in the final violence of the battle scenes, and was very appealing to them. After many questions, each student made a free drawing of a scene they liked. I gathered each picture, laminated them and bound them together in chronological order. This book is a touching treasure.

The theme of the Conquest of England and of the creation of the Bayeux Tapestry seems to have excited the imagination of creative writers, particularly the 20th century historical novelists. Interestingly, each of the recent following novels takes a different perspective on the events of 1066. In *The Striped Ships* by Eloise McGraw (1991), two Anglo-Saxon children witness the events of the Conquest of England and get involved in the embroidery work of the Bayeux Tapestry. In *Odo's Hanging* by Peter Benson (1993), the reader experiences the events and the creation of the Tapestry through a young Norman's eyes. Finally, in *L'Oiseau de Lune* by Lars Bo (1993), the story

presents a young Viking's point of view and involvement in the making of the Tapestry. Each of these novels provides excellent reading for teenagers and adults alike. My eighth graders have been encouraged to read one of these novels for extra credit or extra pleasure!

Another recent work of fiction worth mentioning here is *The Invention*



Whit Scudder  
6th Grade - 11 years old

of Truth by Marta Morazzoni (1993), who focuses on the act of creation and on the vision, the sustained effort, and good leadership that are necessary to create a unique work of art such as the Bayeux Tapestry.

After six weeks of research in Normandy, I felt ready and eager to bring the Bayeux Tapestry closer to my students in Connecticut and to make it accessible for them to enjoy as a wealth of clues and information on medieval life. Its extraordinary freshness appeals to their imagination and makes the Tapestry an excellent subject of exploration for students.

### Note

Books, slides and reproductions of the Bayeux Tapestry may be mail-ordered from:

**Centre Guillaume le Conquérant**  
Tapisserie de Bayeux  
Rue de Nesmond  
Bayeux 14400  
France

### Acknowledgment

I am grateful to the NEH for allowing me to study such a rich subject. Being a 1994 Macmillan-NEH Summer Fellow gave me a stature without which I would not have gained access to libraries, archives and scholars on the Bayeux Tapestry. My fellowship was an intensive but rewarding experience which set the pace for the year ahead.

### References

- Benson, P. (1993). *Odo's Hanging*. London: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd.
- Bo, L. (1993). *L'Oiseau de Lune*. Caen: Presses Universitaires de Caen.
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- Morazzoni, M. (1993). *The Invention of Truth*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

### NOTES

*continued from Page 2*

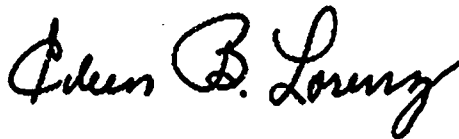
promote involvement of K-8 foreign language teachers in shaping foreign language education.

These three goals touch all of us individually in our classrooms and collectively as members of NNELL. Each of us has a responsibility to become better informed and remain knowledgeable in these areas. We must use the results of these efforts to help us deliver the best foreign language education possible for our students.

I invite each of you to become active in NNELL. Our strength and voice as an organization that represents K-8 foreign language teachers will become stronger with each contribution.

You can begin by attending a NNELL Networking session at a regional or state conference where colleagues will help you identify how to become involved in areas of interest. NNELL offers many opportunities for each of us to make a contribution to our profession. Finally, I urge each of you to recruit at least one colleague to join NNELL. Together we can make a positive impact on the K-8 foreign language teaching profession.

I wish each of you continued growth in all your personal and professional endeavors during this school year and I hope that you will share your many successes with your colleagues in NNELL. I invite you to contact me personally with your successes, ideas, and concerns.



**Eileen B. Lorenz**  
Academic Programs  
Montgomery County Public Schools  
850 Hungerford Drive  
Rockville, MD 20850  
e-mail: elorenz@umd5.umd.edu

*These three goals touch all of us...*

## Activities for Your Classroom

# — Drawing Conclusions: — Inventors and Inventions

Kathy Gruyaert, Core French Teacher  
Colborne Street School  
Strathroy, Ontario, Canada

Elaine Marentette, French Consultant  
Middlesex County Board of Education  
Hyde Park, Ontario, Canada

### **Objective:**

Students will practice the skills of reading and induction (forming conclusions based on information about inventions) as a model for drawing conclusions about their own inventions.

### **Materials:**

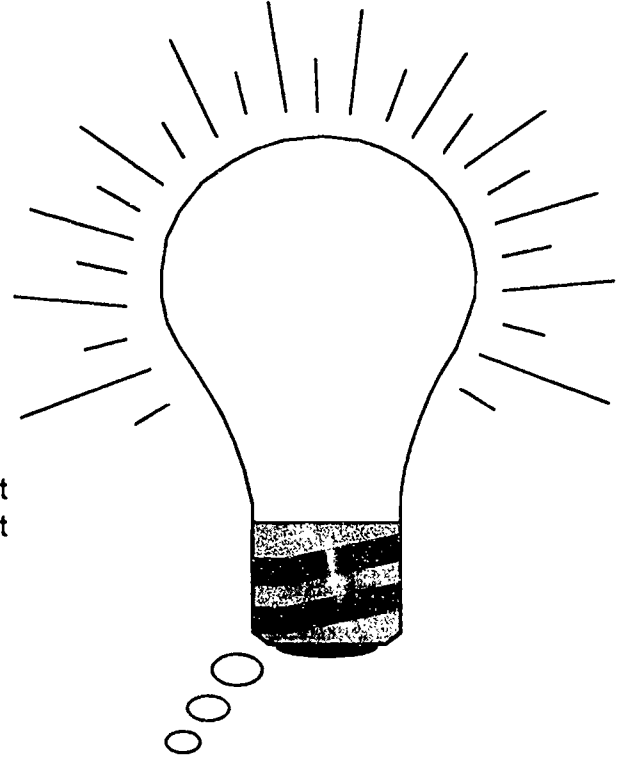
Inventors and inventions grid. (See sample grid on next page.)

### **Procedure:**

Students will read the grid horizontally and make conclusions based upon that information. Next, students read the grid vertically to make conclusions about:

- the inventors (*Qui?/Who?*),
- the dates of inventions (*Quand?/When?*), and
- the changes made to inventions (*Changements?/Changes?*).



Finally, students share their conclusions orally. As a follow-up activity, students prepare a similar grid for their own class based upon the inventions they have made. They engage in further conversation about inventors, inventions, successes, failures, etc.



Thème: Le défi

Issue Principale: L' invention

Qu'est-ce que nous pouvons conclure?

L'invention	Qui?	Quand?	Changements?	Conclusions	Examples of Conclusions Students Gave in French
Liquide correcteur	Betty Graham (américaine)	1951	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pour les poly-copies</li> <li>• pour l'encre</li> <li>• dans un tube en forme de stylo</li> <li>• couleurs</li> </ul>		Betty must have made a lot of mistakes. The changes indicated a new need.
Le téléphone 	Alexander Graham Bell (canadien)	1876	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sans corde</li> <li>• cellulaire</li> <li>• télécopieur</li> <li>• à commande vocale</li> <li>• visiophone</li> </ul>		The number of changes shows it has been a useful invention (but needed to be modernized).
Velcro	Georges de Mestral (suisse)	1948	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ?</li> </ul>		Nothing has changed, so it was a good invention.
Les jeans	Levi Strauss (américain)	1860	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1950-juste pour les hommes auparavant, mais aussi pour les femmes maintenant</li> <li>• couleurs</li> </ul>		Very few changes show they've been popular for a long time.
Le crayon 	Nicolas Conté (français)	1795	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• avec une gomme</li> <li>• mécanique</li> <li>• en couleurs</li> </ul>		A very useful old invention with few changes.
Conclusions					
Examples of Conclusions Students Gave in French	A lot of inventors are males and are varied nationalities.	The years are all different, therefore there are inventions happening all the time.	Inventions change as needs change.		



# Legislative Update - 104th Congress, First Session

*Cindy McMillan*

*Joint National Committee for Languages (JNCL)*

*National Council for Languages and International Studies (NCLIS)*

*Washington, DC*

*Join with others in your professional organizations to take steps to influence public policy as it relates to language education.*

The frenetic pace surrounding "the first hundred days" and the legislative fixation on the "Contract with America" dominated the Congressional agenda early in this session. Once that agenda was declared "completed," fiscal matters took center stage.

For NNELL members concerned with education in general and languages more specifically, the session has been an anxious one. Education reform measures begun in the 103rd Congress have been endangered, and the Department of Education, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and exchange programs have all come under fire. Rescissions threatened many language programs, and the uncertainty surrounding the budget/appropriations process leaves program administrators wondering if the money they have been promised will indeed be forthcoming. Throughout much of this period, the Administration and minority party have had all they could do just to avoid the new majority's steamroller.

Perceived as a somewhat peripheral issue in relation to the fiscal crisis, English as the official language legislation has begun moving quite quickly in this Congress. The House has held two hearings on the issue and the Senate held their first on December 6th with another scheduled for February 6th.

The NCLIS continues its advocacy on behalf of the language profession in all of these matters. Pending legislation, mentioned in this summary, will likely have an impact on the

language profession.

Join with others in your professional organizations to take steps to influence public policy as it relates to language education: write letters to your members of Congress, make phone calls, visit elected officials, write letters to the editor, and offer op-ed pieces for your local papers. Past successes are no indication of how current decisions will be made, and without vocal support, many important programs of interest to JNCL-NCLIS members may be drastically reduced, if not eliminated.

## **Education Reform**

A number of Congressional members campaigned on so-called "reform" agendas in last year's election. Nevertheless, education reform is clearly under assault in this Congress. Education policy at the federal level is currently in tandem with the trends toward anti-reform and draconian budget cuts we have witnessed in the states.

There are six bills pending this session which propose to eliminate either the Department of Education, federal funding for standards, the National Education Goals Panel (NEGP), the National Education and Standards Improvement Council (NESIC), or a combination thereof. In addition, "Emergency Supplemental" and "Additional Supplemental" rescissions packages have made education reform programs primary targets.

## **Rescissions**

There have been two rounds of

rescissions in this Congress. After much negotiation, the first was signed into law by the President in April, and the second was vetoed in June. As Congress did not have enough votes to override the veto, there was no more action on that bill. Many education programs that were slated for elimination survived the process, but the attempted cuts were reintroduced in the appropriations bill later in the session.

### **Budget Process**

The rescissions were merely the prelude to the budget showdown between the Administration and Congress that culminated in a 21-day government shutdown which has yet to be resolved. As of January 18, 1996, there has been no budget agreement and six appropriations bills are outstanding, including Labor, Health and Human Services (HHS), and Education.

If there is no agreement on these bills before January 26, one of two things could happen: Congress could pass another Continuing Resolution, or the government could undergo another partial shutdown. In subsequent Continuing Resolutions, Republicans wish to pursue a "targeted appropriations" strategy that would fund some programs and not others. If this is the case, many foreign language and exchange programs could be in jeopardy. Recognizing that the budget reconciliation bill will, to some extent, set national priorities for the next seven years, the President remains committed to social programs like Medicare and education, while the Republicans are standing firm on their goal to balance the budget and provide tax cuts.

At this point, the President has offered a seven-year balanced budget using the Congressional Budget Office figures, but negotiations have broken down because the budget

does not reflect GOP priorities. It remains to be seen if an agreement will be reached shortly or if this conflict will carry through the election year.

### **Appropriations**

Work on the 13 appropriations bills for Fiscal Year (FY) 1996 became even more difficult when it was linked to the Republican wish to force the President into a budget agreement that would balance the budget within seven years. The House passed its version of a Labor, HHS, and Education appropriations bill that included reductions worth \$3.5 billion in August. Democrats in the Senate have threatened to filibuster education appropriations as reported by the committee because of the drastic reductions, and Republicans have not been able to muster the votes to bring the matter before the full Senate. There are major differences between the House and Senate version of this bill, so the conference between the two is expected to be arduous.

Meanwhile, the Administration is threatening to veto the bill because it slashes funding for the President's reform efforts. As of January 18, the Department of Education is operating under a Continuing Resolution that provides appropriations at whichever is lower: pending House or Senate appropriations figures for FY1996 or FY1995 spending levels. In cases where a program would be eliminated, it will receive 75 percent of the FY1995 level. It has been speculated that there will be no Labor, HHS, or Education appropriations bill for FY 1996, and that all spending for this fiscal year will depend on a series of continuing resolutions such as the one the Department is currently operating under.

### **English as the Official Language**

There are seven bills that would make English the official language of

*Many education programs that were slated for elimination survived the process, but...*

*On a more positive note, Rep. Jose Serrano (D-NY) has introduced an "English Plus Resolution"*

the U.S. government. Hearings on the House side were very partisan in nature, and there were no opposition witnesses in the first Senate hearing.

In addition, proposals to drastically reduce federal funding for domestic discretionary programs would have adverse effects on the ESL and bilingual education communities. There are significant decreases in funding proposed for Education for the Disadvantaged, Bilingual and Immigrant Education, and Adult and Vocational Education.

On a more positive note, Rep. Jose Serrano (D-NY) has introduced an "English Plus Resolution" that would counter the official English legislation with pro-active language calling for competency in English and languages other than English.

These are the major issues pending in the Second Session of the 104th Congress. But other legislation, such as reauthorization of adult and vocational education that seeks to consolidate programs and send the money in the form of block grants to the states, changes to the National Security Education program, and an attempt to abolish the United States Information Agency and the Agency for International Development, among others, is likely to have an impact on the profession as well.

NCLIS will continue to monitor developments and provide timely information to its members. Individual members must work with professional organizations to use this information in a way that will have a positive impact on the public policy process.

#### **Note**

NELL is an active member of the Joint National Committee for Languages (JNCL) and the National Council for Languages and International Studies (NCLIS).

## **Elementary School Guide Offered by Ohio FL Association**

The Ohio Foreign Language Association has prepared a guide to provide Ohio educators with information about early start foreign language programs.

The publication is designed to assist parent, teachers, administrators, curriculum specialists, and school board members in making decisions about early foreign language programs. A concise review of the literature and answers to frequently asked questions are also provided.

Since Ohio students in the future may have to demonstrate competence in a foreign language in order to graduate, the guide provides a valuable resource to Ohio educators considering the value of an early start. The guide, however, is a helpful resource for anyone interested in an early start to the study of languages.

Among questions addressed in the guide are: "In what grade should elementary programs begin?" and "What language(s) should elementary children study?" Complete references are included at the end of the guide for the information and references cited.

To order the guide, contact:

Deborah Wilburn Robinson, Editor  
OFLA FLES Committee Chair  
Ohio State University  
249 Arps Hall  
1945 N. High St.  
Columbus, OH 43210

E-mail: [dwilburn@magnus.acs.ohio-state.edu](mailto:dwilburn@magnus.acs.ohio-state.edu).

Request the "Ohio Foreign Language Association FLES Guide." Cost is \$1.00 per copy (5 1/2 X 8 1/2 inches; 12 pages).

## Network for Foreign-Born Parents Formed

An Arlington, Virginia, mother of two, Alice Rasmussen, recently established The Foreign-Born Parent Network (FBPN) and newsletter for the purpose of establishing a forum for exploring strategies parents can use for raising their children to be citizens and leaders in a multicultural world.

Rasmussen, herself, grew up in several cultures: she was born in Vietnam; as a young child she lived in Laos, then moved to France; after marriage, she moved to the U.S. Her dominant language is French, but she also speaks Lao, Vietnamese, English, and Spanish.

She is passionate about her belief that foreign-born parents have a responsibility to teach their culture and language to their children as a way of preparing them to live in a multicultural world. She points out that bilingualism provides children a unique gift that ensures them a better chance at success in the "global marketplace."

She developed a French immersion program for her own children. They are now not only skilled in French, but have recently begun asking their mother to teach them Spanish.

Rasmussen also believes that parents need to take an active role in helping their children resist bias against other cultures. She teaches a course in global human resources at George Washington University in Washington, DC, and a class on marketing across cultures in Fairfax and Arlington Counties, VA. Because of her teaching experience, Rasmussen is able to provide provocative information in the FBPN newsletter aimed at convincing parents of the need to take a proactive role in the education of their children.

Rasmussen's ideas have found strong support among parents who are encouraged to dialogue with the

editor and founder of the network about issues discussed in the newsletter. For example, in the second issue of the newsletter, subscribers are asked to respond to the dilemma facing foreign-born parents who find that the standards of their children's American school are lower than that to which they were accustomed in the country where they were schooled. Readers are asked, "What would you do next?" According to Rasmussen, responses will be included in the next issue of the newsletter.

Subscription rates for individuals and families are \$35/year for the six issues of the newsletter. Varying subscription rates are offered to public schools, non-profit, and commercial institutions.

For more information contact:

Alice Rasmussen  
The Foreign-Born Parent Network  
2700 N. Wakefield St.  
Arlington, VA 22207-4131  
Phone: 703-812-8716  
E-mail: arasmus1@gmu.edu

*"I have been waiting for a resource like this one for years!"*

*"I support what you do!"*

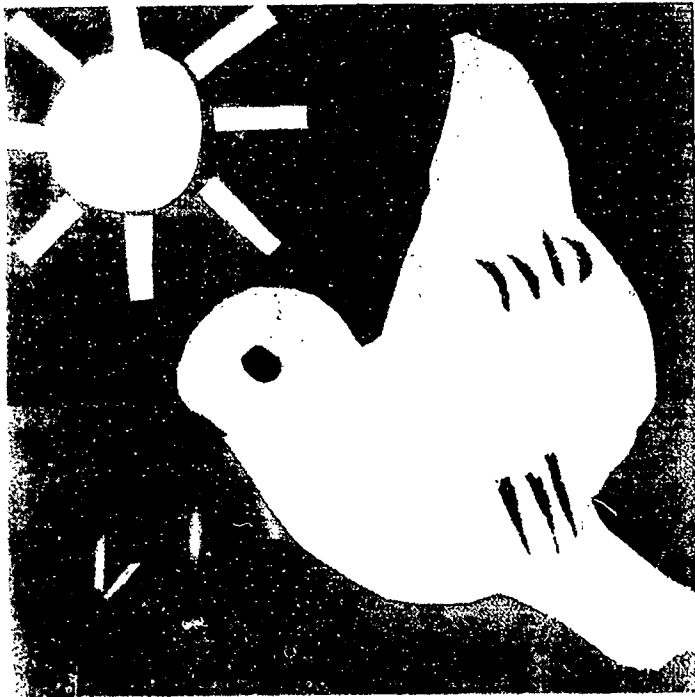
*(comments from parents published in Issue No. 2 Nov/Dec, 1995 p. 1.)*

### Effective Assessment Instruments Invited for Publication

*Learning Languages* announces a new feature on *Assessment* that will begin in the Spring 1996 issue. Readers are invited to submit effective assessment instruments they have developed for publication in the journal.

Additionally, there is interest in publishing a variety of scoring rubrics for different skill areas and/or assessment projects. Please send your submissions to: Peggy Boyles, Contributing Editor for Assessment, Putnam City Schools, 5401 NW 40th, Oklahoma City, OK 73122 or by e-mail to pboyles@ionet.net.

# Children's Classroom Creations



*Este pájaro es un colibrí.  
Es muy pequeño y de muchos colores.  
Tiene alas.  
Vive en la selva tropical.*

This bird is a hummingbird.  
It is very small and has lots of colors.  
It has wings.  
It lives in the tropical rain forest.

**Madelyn Puente**  
Grade 3  
Glastonbury Public Schools  
Glastonbury, CT  
Jane Graveen, Spanish Teacher

This illustration is part of a book written and illustrated by third graders as part of an interdisciplinary unit taught with the collaboration of the classroom, art, and Spanish teachers.

Since the children were studying tropical rain forests in their classroom, in the Spanish class they learned related vocabulary and expressions. Having already explored domestic animals, the students could describe in Spanish special features of the rain forest animals, e.g., paws, tail, wings, etc. The writing activity followed a structured pattern practiced orally, then in writing.

The art teacher taught the children a colorful collage technique for illustrating the animals, birds, insects, or reptiles. When the book was all assembled, it was color copied, a parent printed out the student script, and the students read their book while they were being videotaped.

Jane Graveen

## **NNELL Seeks Publicity Chair**

NNELL invites members to apply for the position of Chair of Public Relations. Duties of the Chair will include preparation and distribution of print and non-print information about early language learning and materials to promote NNELL membership.

The Public Relations Chair must attend the NNELL Executive Board meeting which is held each year at the ACTFL Annual Conference. The next meeting will be held on November 21, 1996, in Philadelphia.

Please send letters of application to: Eileen Lorenz, Academic Programs, Montgomery County Public Schools, 850 Hungerford Drive, Rockville, MD 20850; 301-279-3911; elorenz@umd5.umd.edu.

## Integrating Language and Content: Lessons from Immersion (EDO-FL-96-04) *National Center for Research on Cultural Diversity and Second Language Learning*

This Digest is based on a report published by the National Center for Research on Cultural Diversity and Second Language Learning, *Integrating Language and Content: Lessons from Immersion*, by Fred Genesee. Copies of the report are available from NCRCDLL, 1118 22nd St. NW, Washington, DC 20037.

One of the most interesting innovations to emerge in second language education during the last three decades is the language immersion program. In this method of language instruction, the regular school curriculum is taught through the medium of a second language. The first immersion programs were developed in Canada to provide English-speaking students with the opportunity to learn French, Canada's other official language. Since that time, immersion programs have been adopted in many parts of North America, and alternative forms of immersion have been devised. In the United States, immersion programs can be found in a number of languages, including French, German, Spanish, Japanese, and Chinese.

With the purpose of highlighting the lessons to be learned from immersion, this Digest presents selected findings from research carried out to evaluate the effectiveness of immersion programs in Canada and the United States. These lessons are related to the importance of (1) integrating language with content instruction, (2) creating classroom environments that are discourse-rich, and (3) systematically planning language instruction along with content instruction.

### Language Integration Over Isolation

The first lesson to be learned from immersion is that when second language instruction is integrated with instruction in academic content, it is more effective than teaching the language in isolation. Proficiency in the target language is not a prerequisite to academic development; rather, language learning results from using language to perform authentic communicative functions.

During the last 10 years, there has been a shift away from teaching language in isolation to integrating language and content instruction. There are at least four reasons for this shift. First, language is acquired most effectively when it is learned for communication in meaningful and significant social situations. The academic content of the school curriculum can provide a meaningful basis for second language learning, given that the content is of interest or value to the learners.

Second, the integration of language and content instruction provides a substantive basis for language learning. Important and interesting content, academic or otherwise, gives students a meaningful basis for understanding and acquiring new language structures and patterns. In addition, authentic classroom communication provides a purposeful and motivating context for learning the communicative functions of the new language. In the absence of content and authentic communication, language can be learned only as an abstraction devoid of contextual or communicative substance.

A third reason for the shift toward language and content integration is the relationship between language and other aspects of human development. Language, cognition, and social awareness develop concurrently in young children. Integrated second language instruction seeks to keep these components of development together so that second language learning is an integral part of social and cognitive development in school settings.

Finally, knowing how to use language in one social context or academic domain does not necessarily mean knowing how to use it in others. The integration of second language instruction with subject content respects the specificity of language use. For example, evidence indicates that the way language is used in particular academic domains, such as mathematics (Spanos, Rhodes, Dale, & Crandall, 1988), is not the same in other academic domains, such as social studies (Short, 1994).

A variety of integrated approaches to second language teaching have been developed. Immersion is a specific type of integrated instruction. The primary focus of immersion is not language learning but academic instruction. Immersion programs have proved to be successful; the academic achievement of immersion students is comparable to that of students educated through their native language. This indicates that the students in immersion programs acquire the second language skills they need to master the academic skills and information appropriate for their grade level.

### Opportunities to Use the Target Language

The second lesson to emerge from research on immersion is that approaches that provide opportunities for extended student discourse, especially discourse associated with activities selected by individual students, can be particularly beneficial for second language learning.

Research on French immersion programs in Canada has shown that immersion students often perform as well as native French-speaking students on tests of French reading and listening comprehension. However, they seldom achieve the same high levels of competence in speaking and writing. Although functionally effective, the oral and written skills of immersion students indicate a number of shortcomings. Immersion students' grammar is less complex and less redundant than that of native speakers and is influenced by English grammar. The available studies suggest that this results, in part, from learning environments in which there is a lack of opportunity to engage in extended discourse.

The solution to the shortcomings in immersion students' productive skills seems to lie in the use of methodologies that

apply techniques to practice language forms with a communicative approach. "Such tasks and activities will meet the same criteria as is demanded of the communicative teaching of grammar: purposefulness, interactivity, creativity, and unpredictability" (Clipperton, 1994, p. 746).

Activity-centered immersion programs, particularly those that focus on individual choice of learning activity, achieve high levels of second language proficiency even in the productive skills. Stevens (1976) compared students who worked on self-selected activities in collaboration or consultation with other students and who were expected to make oral and written reports in the target language on their work with students who all worked on the same teacher-directed activities at the same time and in the same way. Although students in the activity-centered program used the target language for only 40% of the school day, they attained the same levels of target language speaking and reading proficiency and almost the same levels of reading and writing proficiency as the students in the teacher-centered program, which provided all instruction in the target language. The success of the activity-centered classes can be attributed to two main factors: 1) students had regular opportunities for extended discourse; and 2) students were highly motivated because they used the target language in situations of personal choice.

In sum, the use of instructional strategies and academic tasks that encourage increased interaction among learners and between learners and teachers is likely to be beneficial for second language learning.

### Effective Curriculum Design

The third lesson to be learned from immersion is that the integration of language and academic objectives should be carefully planned, providing for the presentation, practice, and application of specific language forms that are necessary for discussing different academic content. If integrated instruction is not planned systematically, teachers may use strategies that are not optimal for promoting full second language development. Swain (1988) examined how immersion teachers used French to teach a variety of academic subjects. The study found that teachers used a functionally restricted set of language patterns, corrected content more often than linguistic form, and were inconsistent in their corrections of linguistic form. These results suggest that in an effort to make academic material as comprehensible as possible, immersion teachers might be adopting communication strategies that rely on linguistic skills their students already have, and students may not be challenged to learn new language skills. In order to develop the students' language skills fully, immersion teachers must progressively model more complex language and use instructional activities that demand more complex language skills from students.

Instructional strategies and tasks must be carefully selected so that students use and learn targeted aspects of the language. Without such systematic plans, teachers may provide inconsistent or even random information about language forms. A systematic focus on the structural aspects of the language greatly enhances learning of targeted grammatical features.

Increased attention to language forms does not mean less focus on communication and meaning. Salomone (1992) reports on an immersion program in the United States that "exemplifies current trend of all second language instruction: using the

second language rather than knowing about the language, with bilingualism as the ultimate instructional goal" (p. 9). However, having verified a lack of accuracy and a continued "fossilization" in the students' speech, teachers in the program studied by Salomone incorporated systematic planning and explicit teaching of the grammar and vocabulary component of the syllabus. This strategy greatly improved the results. Other studies describe the specifics of direct language instruction in an immersion context (e.g., Clipperton, 1994; Laplante, 1993) or show the benefits of identifying the semantic and syntactic features and language functions and tasks that are part of the academic language for a content area and incorporating them in the design of lesson plans (Short, 1994).

### Conclusion

Experiences in immersion classes illuminate the practice of second language teaching and indicate effective ways of attaining high levels of academic content mastery and target language proficiency. Evaluations of a variety of immersion programs suggest at least three elements of general relevance for second language instruction: 1) instructional approaches that integrate content and language are likely to be more effective than approaches in which language is taught in isolation; 2) an activity-centered approach that creates opportunities for extended student discourse is likely to be beneficial for second language learning; and 3) language objectives should be systematically targeted along with academic objectives in order to maximize language learning.

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## Research Notes:

# Language Learning and the Developing Brain

"Gray Matters: The Developing Brain" is a public radio program that was recently broadcast by Public Radio International and produced in association with the Dana Alliance for Brain Initiatives, an independent, non-profit organization made up of over 140 of the nation's leading brain scientists. The content of the program, which focused on how the young brain develops into a "reading, writing, and rollerblading 10-year-old," and which addressed early language learning, is reported here.

The child's brain is different from the adult brain in that it is a very dynamic structure that is evolving. A two-year-old child has twice as many synapses (connections) in the brain as an adult. The young brain must use these connections or lose them. Thus, failure to learn a skill during a critical or sensitive period has important significance. According to Dr. Michael Phelps, Chairman of the Department of Molecular and Medical Pharmacology of the UCLA School of Medicine, the learning experiences of the child determine which connections are developed and which will no longer function.

Dr. Patricia Kuhl, a Speech Scientist at the University of Washington, reports that babies are born "citizens of the world" in that they can distinguish differences among sounds (temporal, spectral, and duration cues) borrowed from all languages. They are ready to learn any language they hear, but by six months of age, they start to specialize in their native language.

Dr. Susan Curtiss, Professor of Linguistics at UCLA, who studies the way children learn languages, notes that in language development there is

a window of opportunity in which the child learns the first language normally. After this period, the brain becomes slowly less plastic and by the time the child reaches adolescence, the brain cannot develop "richly and normally any real cognitive system, including language."

The four- or five-year old learning a second language is a "perfect model for the idea of the critical period." According to Dr. Curtiss:

...the power to learn language is so great in the young child that it doesn't seem to matter how many languages you seem to throw their way....They can learn as many spoken languages as you can allow them to hear systematically and regularly at the same time. Children just have this capacity. Their brain is just ripe to do this....there doesn't seem to be any detriment to... develop(ing) several languages at the same time.

When children wait until high school to start studying a foreign language, the job is much harder. The task now involves learning the rules of grammar, translating, reading, and trying to develop language learning strategies. The task is a different one than it was for the young child in the sensitive period for language learning. Brain plasticity has been lost, the number of synapses has greatly reduced, and the brain no longer has the same facility to restructure itself that it had when the child was young.

"Gray Matters: The Developing Brain" is available from: Wisconsin Public Radio Assoc., The Radio Store, 821 University Ave., Madison, WI 53706-1497; 1-800-652-7246. Audio-cassette (for 40-minute program) \$8.00; transcript \$6.00; shipping \$3.00.

*"Even in late childhood...one cannot learn a first language fully or naturally or normally."  
(Dr. Susan Curtiss)*





# Classroom Resources

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## French

Doucet, M. B. (1992). *Le Hoogie Boogie*. Louisiana French music for children. Cambridge, MA: Rounder Record Corporation.

*Available from Rounder Record Corporation, # 1 Camp St., Cambridge, MA 02140; 1-800-443-4727. Cost is \$15.00 for CD and \$9.50 for audio tape.*

This recording is an interesting compilation of Cajun music for children that invites them to move, stamp their feet, and clap their hands. Children will enjoy learning the Hokey Pokey Louisiana-style. There are many cute songs, but also many touching and culturally fascinating ones. I especially like the ones about the *cocodrie* and the *maringouins* (crocodiles and mosquitoes).

Several songs appear to be old French and English folk songs that have achieved a Cajun transformation. Not all of the songs are appropriate for very young children, but there is enough variety here to satisfy a broad range of students. This recording is particularly good for extending students' awareness of the francophone culture of Louisiana.

## German

Transparency Set E 706, Fruits and Vegetables.

*Available from Teacher's Discovery, 2741 Paldan Dr., Auburn Hill, MI 48326; 1-800-Teacher. Cost is \$19.95.*

This transparency set of fruits and vegetables is a very colorful visual that can be used in elementary and upper grade German classrooms. The transparencies are useful as a class warm-up, an introduction, practice, review, and assessment of vocabulary. In addition, using this transparency set can be an invaluable tool for developing dialogue and discussion.

The fruit and vegetable transparency set consists of 28 full-color transparencies, 28 transparencies of word overlays, two situation transparencies, and one transparency showing fruits and vegetables to be cut out. Also included for duplicating are blackline masters and exercises. The picture transparencies, with the 28 vegetables and fruits, show actual photographs of the items and look very real. The German word overlay transparencies use the appropriate articles in front of the singular and plural nouns.

Placing a background transparency such as the dining room or the cafeteria on the overhead projector, the teacher can build situations using the characters and the cut-out fruits and vegetables. Teacher and students can develop a dialogue, write stories in their German journals, use the situations during math for various graphing activities, pattern works, and addition and subtraction problems.

The transparencies are also a great tool to use in the integrated learning classroom. For example, they could be used in science and health in a unit on nutrition or seeds and bulbs. The activity sheets can be

duplicated and used for categorizing, showing preferences, or listing ways to serve fruits and vegetables.

This transparency set can be used in all elementary and upper grades since the activities can easily be adjusted to the appropriate grade level. Other transparency sets available from Teacher Discovery include clothing, body parts, and household and classroom objects.

## Spanish

Haas, M. (1996). *The Language of Folk Art*. New York, NY: Addison-Wesley.

Available from Longman Publishers, 10 Bank Street, White Plains, NY 10606-1951; 1-800-552-2259. Cost for each component: \$49.33 for posters, \$10.60 for activity book, and \$26.60 for teacher's guide.

*The Language of Folk Art* is an exciting trip through Latin America using its rich and varied crafts as a departure point for language exploration. The program, which can be adapted for almost any level of language study, includes eight full-color posters of different examples of folk art, two student activity books, and a teacher's guide, all of which can be purchased separately.

The eight units in the program are based on the following culturally-rich pieces of realia: an *arpillera* (appliqué wall-hanging) from Peru; a wooden truck filled with Andean people from Bolivia; a *vejigante* mask from carnival in Puerto Rico; a band of wooden animal musicians from Mexico; a miniature Andean kitchen from Venezuela; an *arpillera* from Chile; papier-mâché Day of the Dead skeletons from Mexico, and carved animals from a New Mexican folk tale.

The posters are beautiful and will

attract student interest as soon as they are displayed in your classroom.

Lessons, which revolve around the posters, are fun and varied and provide ample room for individual teacher style and the differing needs and learning styles of students. The language that flows naturally from the lessons is authentic and content-based, which serves to motivate the students.

A wealth of fascinating information about the art featured in the posters is provided in the Teacher's Guide. Used with any level, this program will prove motivational and exciting both for you and your students as you journey through the language of Latin American folk art.

### Journal Adds New Section: "Teaching with Technology"

*Learning Languages* is pleased to announce a new feature on the use of technology in foreign language teaching and learning, entitled "Teaching with Technology." Information on communications technologies, as well as reviews of computer programs and applications used to enhance foreign language education will be featured.

The main focus, however, will be on articles written by language teachers who have successfully incorporated these technologies into their instruction. *Learning Languages* invites informative articles about practical applications of communications technologies in the classroom, as well as teachers' experiences with, and their perspective on, different technologies as they relate to foreign language learning.

Send submissions to: Jean W. LeLoup, Visiting Professor, HQ USAFA/DFF, 2354 Fairchild Drive, Suite 6H63, USAF Academy, CO 80840-6244 e-mail: LeloupJW%DFF%USAFA@dfengmail.usafa.af.mil

## Spring 1996 Conferences

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### March 28-31, 1996

Central States Conference and Kentucky Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, Louisville, KY. Jody Thrush, CSC Executive Director, 3550 Anderson St., Madison, WI 53704; 608-246-6573.

### April 11-13, 1996

Southwest Conference on Language Teaching and New Mexico Organization of Language Educators, Albuquerque, NM. Joann Pompa, SWCOLT Executive Director, Mountain Pointe High School, 4201 E. Knox Road, Phoenix, AZ 85044; 602-759-8449, ext. 3036; Fax: 602-759-8743.

### April 18-21, 1996

Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, New York City. Rebecca Kline, Northeast Conference, Dickinson College, Carlisle, PA 17013-2896; 717-245-1977.

## Summer 1996 Courses and Workshops

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### June 16-July 12, 1996

Methods for Teaching Foreign Languages in Elementary and Middle School, Concordia College, Moorhead, MN. Carol Ann Pesola, Concordia College, Moorhead, MN 56562; 218-299-4511; or AATG, 112 Haddontowne Court #104, Cherry Hill, NJ 08034-3668; 609-795-5553; Fax: 609-795-9398; E-mail: 73740.3231@compuserve.com.

### July 23-28, 1996

The National FLES\* Institute, University of Maryland, Baltimore County, MD. Gladys Lipton, Modern Languages and Linguistics, University of Maryland, Baltimore County, MD 21228; 301-231-0824; 410-455-2109; Fax: 301-230-2652; E-mail: glipton@mcimail.com or lipton@umbc2.umbc.edu.

### July 23-August 2, 1996

Culture and Children's Literature: France and Mexico, Iowa State University, Ames, IA. Marcia H. Rosenbusch, National K-12 Foreign Language Resource Center, N157 Lagomarcino Hall, Iowa State University, Ames, IA 50011; 515-294-6699; Fax: 515-294-2776 or 6206; E-mail: nflrc@iastate.edu.

### July 31-August 10, 1996

Seminar on Teaching German at the Elementary and Middle School Level, Plymouth State College, NH. Gisela Estes, Department of Foreign Languages, Plymouth State College, Plymouth, NH 03264; 603-535-2303; or AATG, 112 Haddontowne Court #104, Cherry Hill, NJ 08034-3668; 609-795-5553; Fax: 609-795-9398; E-mail: 73740.3231@compuserve.com.

## Fall 1996 Conference

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### September 25-28, 1996

Third European Conference on Immersion Programs, Universitat de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain. Deadline for submitting papers is April 15, 1996. Institut Europeu de programes d'immersis, Provenca, 324, 1r., E-08037 Barcelona, Catalonia; Phone 011-34-3-4588700; Fax 011-34-3-4588708.

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---

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Eileen Lorenz  
Montgomery County Public Schools  
850 Hungerford Dr.  
Rockville, MD 20850  
[elorenz@umd5.umd.edu](mailto:elorenz@umd5.umd.edu)

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Wake Forest University  
Department of Education  
Box 7266, Reynolda Station  
Winston-Salem, NC 27109  
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[mbh14@columbia.edu](mailto:mbh14@columbia.edu)

## *Executive Secretary*

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Center for Applied Linguistics  
1118 22nd St. NW  
Washington, DC 20037  
[nancy@cal.org](mailto:nancy@cal.org)

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Center for Applied Linguistics  
1118 22nd St. NW  
Washington, DC 20037  
[lupe@cal.org](mailto:lupe@cal.org)

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---

## *Bylaws*

Maureen Regan-Baker  
22 Pearl St.  
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## *Membership*

Virginia Gramer  
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Foreign Language Office  
210 N. Madison  
Hinsdale, IL 60512

## *Political Action*

Kay Hewitt  
Lexington Elementary School  
116 Azalea Drive  
Lexington, SC 29072  
[les@scsn.net](mailto:les@scsn.net)

## *Central States Rep.*

Debbie Wilburn-Robinson  
Ohio State University  
249 Arps Hall  
1945 N. High St.  
Columbus, OH 43210  
[dwilburn@magnus.acs.ohio-state.edu](mailto:dwilburn@magnus.acs.ohio-state.edu)

## *Pacific Northwest Rep.*

Jo Ann Olliphant  
11004 11th St. SW  
Tacoma, WA 98498  
[jolliphant@ups.edu](mailto:jolliphant@ups.edu)

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Harriet Barnett  
225 Clinton Ave.  
Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522

## *Southern Rep.*

Carine Feyten  
University of South Florida  
College of Education  
EDU 306H, Tampa, FL 33620-5650  
[feyten@typhoon.coedu.usf.edu](mailto:feyten@typhoon.coedu.usf.edu)

## *Southwest Rep.*

Elena Steele  
Clark County School District  
Department of Foreign Language  
Curriculum and Instruction  
601 N. 9th St., Office 31  
Las Vegas, NV 89101

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Washington, DC 20037

Marcia H. Rosenbusch, Editor  
*Learning Languages*  
Department of Curriculum and Instruction  
N157 Lagomarcino Hall  
Iowa State University  
Ames, Iowa 50011

# Learning Languages

The Journal of the National Network for Early Language Learning-

Spring 1996  
Vol.1 No. 3

*Learning Languages: The Journal of the National Network for Early Language Learning* is the official publication of NNELL. It serves the profession by providing a medium for the sharing of information, ideas, and concerns among teachers, administrators, researchers, and others interested in the early learning of languages. The journal reflects NNELL's commitment to promoting opportunities for all children to develop a high level of competence in at least one language and culture in addition to their own. See the inside of the back cover for more information on NNELL.

In an effort to address the interests of the profession, both practical and scholarly articles are published. Practical articles describe innovative approaches to teaching and to the administration of effective language programs for children. Scholarly articles report on original research and cite both current research and theory as a basis for making recommendations for practice. Scholarly articles are refereed, i.e., reviewed anonymously by at least three readers. Readers include members of the NNELL executive board, the editorial advisory board, and invited guest reviewers who have expertise in the area. Refereed articles are identified as such in the journal. Write to the editor at the address below to request a copy of author guidelines for preparing articles.

**Submissions:** Deadlines for information are: fall issue—May 1; winter issue—Nov. 1; spring issue—Feb. 1. Articles, classroom activities, and materials offered for review may be submitted to the appropriate contributing editor (see below). Send announcements, conference information, and original children's work (such as line drawings, short stories, and poems) to the editor. Children's work needs to be accompanied by written permission from the child's parents or guardians and must include the child's name, age, school, and the teacher's name, address, and telephone (add fax and e-mail address if available).

Submit a favorite classroom activity for the "Activities for Your Classroom" section by sending a description of the activity that includes title, objective, materials, and procedure. Include pictures or drawings as illustration, if available. Send with your name, address, and phone number to the Classroom Activities editor listed below.

*Editor*

Marcia H. Rosenbusch  
Department of Curriculum and Instruction  
N157 Lagomarcino Hall  
Iowa State University  
Ames, IA 50011  
mrosenbu@iastate.edu

*Editorial Assistant*

Sue Ryan Weiss

*Cover Design*

Gary Blum

## Contributing Editors

*International news*

Helena Curtain  
University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee  
10513 W. Hampton Ave.  
Milwaukee, WI 53225  
hcurtain@csd.uwm.edu

*Classroom activities*

Diane Fagin Adler  
North Carolina State University  
Dept. of Foreign Languages and Lit.  
Box 8106  
Raleigh, NC 27695-8106  
adlerd@social.chass.ncsu.edu

*French resources*

Myriam Chapman  
Bank Street School for Children  
610 W. 112th St.  
New York, NY 10025

*Research*

Elsa Statzner  
National - Louis University  
1209-A Central St.  
Evanston, IL 60201  
mruggero@nlu.edu

*Teaching methods*

Gilda Oran  
Bloomsburg University  
of Pennsylvania  
3540 Green St.  
Harrisburg, PA 17110  
oran@planetx.bloomu.edu

*Spanish resources*

Lori Langer de Ramirez  
166 Nichols Ave.  
Brooklyn, NY 11208  
Lor1Langer@aol.com

*Teaching with Technology*

Jean W. LeLoup  
Visiting Professor  
HQ USAFA/DFP  
2354 Fairchild Dr., Suite 6H63  
USAF Academy, CO 80840-6244  
LeLoupJW%DFP%USAFA  
@dfmail.usafa.af.mil

*Assessment*

Peggy Boyles  
Foreign Language Coordinator  
Putnam City Schools  
5401 NW 40th St.  
Oklahoma City, OK 73122  
pboyles@ionet.net

*German resources*

Gertie Kessler  
Orange Hunt Elementary School  
6820 Sydenstricker Rd.  
Springfield, VA 22152  
kesslerj@csa.delta1.org

*Funding info./New legislation*

Joint National Comm. for Languages  
1118 22nd St. NW  
Washington, DC 20037  
76306.535@compuserve.com

# Learning Languages

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The Journal of the National Network for Early Language Learning

Volume 1, No. 3 Spring 1996

## Standards for Foreign Language Learning

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## Notes from the President

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*We ask you to share with us examples of your work in the classroom that relate to foreign language standards, your students' work, or events of note in your district or state.*

The arrival of spring brings renewed energy and growth all around us. We hope that as you read *Learning Languages*, you will find articles and information that renew your energy and spark interest for continued professional growth.

This issue celebrates an historic event—the completion of the Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century. NNELL was an early supporter of the standards movement and provided valuable input into the standards development process.

We would like to thank Dr. Benjamin O. Canada, Superintendent of Schools, Atlanta, Georgia, for allowing us to share his inspiring remarks at ACTFL on the significance of foreign language standards. Dr. Canada is a member of NNELL and we warmly welcome his support for early language learning. Be sure to read his remarks and share them with administrators in your district.

You will find Gwinnett County (Georgia) Public Schools' experience as a pilot site for the standards project of great interest as you explore how the standards interface with your school district's curricular framework.

In the area of growth, NNELL welcomes Kay Hewitt as Chair of the Political Action and Advocacy Committee, and Evelyne Armstrong as Chair of the Public Relations Committee. Kay has been hard at work with First Vice President Mary Lynn Redmond to gather information and strategies for political action. Evelyne is formulating an action plan to help us reach out to

community members, colleagues, administrators, and the business community. Please contact Kay or Evelyne to become involved in their important work.

If you have been to a NNELL Networking session in the last month, you have received your NNELL Button that shares this message—"Learning Languages begins with NNELL." Many thanks to Mari Haas, Past President, who worked very hard to make sure that these buttons appeared on our lapels so quickly.

Congratulations to the Education Office, Embassy of Spain on the inaugural meeting of *Círculo de Amigos de la Lengua Española* (CALE). This is an exciting initiative to continue the growth in knowledge and understanding about the Spanish language and cultures.

In this issue we are delighted to share the success of Hudson (New York) Middle School's Italian and Spanish program. NNELL's membership is growing and our collective wealth of professional knowledge and experience is invaluable and should be shared with the profession.

As we enter into the last few months of the school year, I hope that this is a successful and rewarding time for you.

*Eileen B. Lorenz*

**Eileen B. Lorenz**  
Academic Programs  
Montgomery County Public Schools  
850 Hungerford Drive  
Rockville, MD 20850  
e-mail: elorenz@umd5.umd.edu

# NNELL Endorses National Standards

NNELL, along with 41 other organizations, has officially endorsed the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century*.

The standards represent an unprecedented consensus on the part of educators, leaders of government, business and industry, and the public at large regarding the rationale and role of foreign language instruction in the American educational system.

By endorsing the standards, NNELL sends a strong message to policymakers from the statehouse to the school board that foreign language education is an important part of every child's education, and that students can meet these standards if given the appropriate instructional time to achieve them.

NNELL provided input to the members of the standards task force early in the process, urging that the standards be developed for students in all grades—kindergarten through twelfth.

NNELL's statement, which was also published in *FLES News*, then the newsletter of NNELL, is reprinted below.

## *NNELL Statement to the Student Standards K-12 Task Force*

The National Network for Early Language Learning believes that student standards for foreign languages will significantly impact foreign language education well into the 21st century. It is imperative that these standards speak not only to the foreign language programs in existence today, but that they also define a framework for the future. To establish standards only at eighth and twelfth

grades, but not at fourth grade, would be to limit the future of the profession to current practices.

The foreign language profession has declared that a high level of proficiency is an important goal for foreign language education. It is clear that to achieve more than a novice or intermediate level of proficiency requires many years of study in long, articulated sequences of intensive quality instruction. Forward-looking schools across the nation have successfully articulated K-12 sequences of instruction. To ignore the invaluable contribution these schools have made to the profession, and the enhanced level of proficiency attained by continuous quality foreign language education K-12, would be to ignore the future. Standards must be developed for programs that provide continuous education in foreign languages from kindergarten through twelfth grade.

The National Network for Early Language Learning urges the Student Standards K-12 Task Force to contemplate the historic significance of the standards they are defining. The ability of our nation's most valuable resource, our children, to participate fully and effectively as world citizens in the 21st century is clearly at stake.

*Reprinted from FLES News Volume 7, Number 2, Winter 1993-1994, p. 7*

*By endorsing the standards, NNELL sends a strong message . . . that foreign language education is an important part of every child's education.*

# Standards for Foreign Language Learning

## Communication

*Communicate in Languages Other Than English*

**Standard 1.1:** Students engage in conversations, provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions.

**Standard 1.2:** Students understand and interpret written and spoken language on a variety of topics.

**Standard 1.3:** Students present information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics.

## Cultures

*Gain Knowledge and Understanding of Other Cultures*

**Standard 2.1:** Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the culture studied.

**Standard 2.2:** Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the products and perspectives of the culture studied.

*Reprinted with permission from the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). To receive a copy of the standards (cost \$20), write to:*

ACTFL  
6 Executive Plaza  
Yonkers, NY 10701-6801  
Phone: 914-963-8830

## Connections

*Connect with Other Disciplines and Acquire Information*

**Standard 3.1:** Students reinforce and further their knowledge of other disciplines through the foreign language.

**Standard 3.2:** Students acquire information and recognize the distinctive viewpoints that are only available through the foreign language and its cultures.

## Comparisons

*Develop Insight into the Nature of Language and Culture*

**Standard 4.1:** Students demonstrate understanding of the nature of language through comparisons of the language studied and their own.

**Standard 4.2:** Students demonstrate understanding of the concept of culture through comparisons of the cultures studied and their own.

## Communities

*Participate in Multilingual Communities at Home and Around the World*

**Standard 5.1:** Students use the language both within and beyond the school setting.

**Standard 5.2:** Students show evidence of becoming life-long learners by using the language for personal enjoyment and enrichment.

# Atlanta Superintendent Strongly Supports National Standards

Dr. Benjamin O. Canada  
Superintendent  
Atlanta Public Schools, Georgia

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**Note:** To celebrate the unveiling of the Standards for Foreign Language Learning, Dr. Benjamin O. Canada, Superintendent of Atlanta Public Schools, shared his support and enthusiasm for foreign language learning programs. His remarks are included here so that members of NNELL who were not present at the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages Conference in Anaheim, California, November, 1995, might learn of his inspiring thoughts.

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I would like to say that I am particularly proud and pleased to be in the midst of so many outstanding educators who share the belief of a saying we use frequently in Atlanta: "If it's good for children, then make it so." So, I welcome you to a part of the Make-It-So Team for all of America's children.

I would like to share a couple of thoughts with you as we reflect on the standards for foreign language learning and assessments in the foreign language area. What do standards mean to us as superintendents? More importantly, what do they mean to the children of America?

First, I need to ask, how many of you remember the little nursery rhyme that we sang in kindergarten about the eensy weensy spider? All right! I would like you to stand, so we can join together to recite the *Eensy Weensy Spider* poem and think about what this spider did. Here we go (with accompanying gestures):

*The eensy weensy spider  
went up the water spout.  
Down came the rain  
and washed the spider out.  
Out came the sun  
and dried up all the rain,  
And the eensy weensy spider  
went up the spout again.*

If you think about the words of the poem, they describe a very tiny, little spider. The poem does not talk about a daddy long legs or a tarantula; it describes a tiny, little spider. And what did this little spider do? It went up a water spout. I would like you to visualize with me a water spout—long, dark, and narrow. Imagine that you are looking up a water spout and at the very top you will see light, but you do not know where it is coming from.

This little spider decided that it was going to go up the water spout, not knowing what it would encounter on the way. There could have been other spiders waiting to gobble it up. That spider had no idea of what to expect, but he knew he wanted to climb up to that light. Suddenly, it started to rain, and what did the water spout do? It did what all good water spouts are supposed to do. The water spout collected the rain and washed the spider back down and out. And I can imagine that, as the water came rushing down the spout, it went bang, bang, bang, and the spider got beat up. But what does the song say the spider did? After the rain came, the spider warmed up and dried out, up it went, back up the spout towards the light one more time.

*What do standards mean to us as superintendents? More importantly, what do they mean to the children of America?*

*You as teachers, and we as administrators and superintendents, have a big role in making sure that they are wrong. We must be willing to stand firm with our beliefs.*

When it comes to the standards for foreign language learning and the assessments, our ability to get America to buy into them is going to require each and every one of us to have the tenacity and the spirit of the tiny, little spider. We may get beat up. Some will say that we do not have the people to carry out the standards and assessments; others will say that we do not have the resources to follow through. And probably there will be some that will say that not all children can appreciate and learn languages.

All children can learn, and they can learn multiple languages, but we need to start language learning early in the elementary grades rather than waiting until the middle or high school years.

As we go through the strategic planning process of empowering our communities and engaging them in the decision-making process, we must also remember that community members may need to be educated about the fact that the ability to speak a second language is not something extra. It is a part of a quality basic education.

Today in Atlanta, we have more than 50 percent of our elementary schools offering language study beginning in kindergarten. Within three years, we intend to have language study in all of them.

How do we go about making sure that our communities know about the importance of language learning? We all need to set a plan, and keep thinking about that tiny little spider. We cannot give up, but must become more resolved to say, "I am going to the top and I am going to take my students and all of the other students who could be forgotten with me." And know that there are some of us who would stay with you, protect you, and promote you. I am awfully proud and pleased to ask you to join with me in congratulating the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages Task Force for having the vision to come up with truly world class standards.

I leave you with a final thought. Always ask yourselves the question: "Is it good for children?" If the answer is yes, then go with the speed and tenacity of the spider to make it so.

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## Spanish Embassy Organizes CALE

The first *Círculo de Amigos de la Lengua Española* (CALE) in the United States was founded in Washington, DC in March 1996. The event, hosted by the Education Office of the Embassy of Spain, gathered over a hundred people of various nationalities and professional backgrounds.

The aim of this new association is to promote the use of Spanish as well as to stimulate interest in all of the cultures sharing it as a common language.

An interim board of directors, which is in charge of organizing and

consolidating the association, was elected from among the 32 people who volunteered. Another 28 people offered to be part of various committees. A series of CALE chapters will be founded soon all across the country.

If you would like further information or you would like to organize your own CALE chapter in your area, you may contact: CALE, Embassy of Spain Education Office, 2375 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20037; 202-728-2335; Fax: 202-728-2313; E-mail: [rosa@spainembedu.org](mailto:rosa@spainembedu.org).

# Standards for Foreign Language Learning: One District's Experience

*Elizabeth Rieken  
Instruction Coordinator, Foreign Language/ESOL  
Gwinnett County Public Schools  
Lawrenceville, Georgia*

**T**he summer of 1994 has little to distinguish it in most people's memories here in our part of the country . . . just another long, hot one outside of Atlanta. Yet for a group of foreign language educators in Gwinnett County, Georgia, that summer will always be recalled as the beginning of our involvement in the development of the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning*.

We are fortunate to work in a school system where shared decision-making is the norm, and teachers have a leading role in shaping the direction of our instructional programs in every subject area. A standing committee of 10 foreign language teachers from grades K-12 serves as an advisory council, assisting me (the program coordinator) in constantly assessing the program and planning improvements.

In the summer of 1994, we were hard at work on a comprehensive improvement plan for the next five years when the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages announced the need for school systems to become pilot sites for the next phase of standards development. All of the council members agreed that we should apply. The council had reviewed previous drafts of the standards and had sent input to the 11-member task force charged with developing the standards, so the opportunity to become a pilot site seemed a natural next step. In addi-

tion, we knew we could gain an extraordinary amount of information that would help us in our efforts to improve our own program.

Summer was fading quickly, and preparation for the new school year occupied everyone's minds. Shortly after students returned to classes, the news came—we were chosen as one of six pilot sites. The task force chose the pilot sites to represent school districts that varied in size, geographic location, and program type. We represented a large, changing, urban-suburban county district in the southeast.

Our 70 schools serve 84,000 students, with more than 4,000 new students and 500 new teachers joining us each year. A growing number of students participate in language study each year (41,500 in 1995-96), in a variety of programs: both sequential FLES and FLEX at the elementary level, both FLEX and sequential study at the middle schools, and sequences of two to five years (plus some advanced placement [AP] classes) in French, German, Latin, Spanish, and Japanese at the high school level.

Although this sounds like an impressive number of students engaged in language study with an equally impressive variety of offerings, the numbers do not show the fragmented nature of the offerings. Through the process of site-based management in our district, schools have wide latitude in making curricular decisions, and local schools determine

*Shortly after students returned to classes, the news came—we were chosen as one of six pilot sites.*

*One of our greatest hopes for the pilot study process was that it would help us discover some ways to bring unity to the many foreign language efforts going on in the district.*

which languages to offer at which grade levels as well as which program model to use. One of our greatest hopes for the pilot study process was that it would help us discover some ways to bring unity to the many foreign language efforts going on in the district.

Through conversations with the two task force members assigned to our pilot site (Genelle Morain of the University of Georgia, Athens, and Denise Mesa of Sabal Palm Elementary School in North Miami Beach, Florida), we planned the specific activities the group would undertake to gather the information needed by the task force. We would respond to such questions as:

- Is there anything missing from the standards document that we think should be included in a comprehensive, exemplary language program?
- How do the goals of the standards interface with our state and local frameworks?
- What are we doing now that supports the standards?
- What would we need to change to more fully implement the standards? What resources would we need?
- How do the standards look in the classroom?

The improvement council was not large enough to represent a true cross-section of the foreign language teachers in the district, so we invited other teachers to participate. Twenty-eight teachers served on the pilot study group, representing all school levels, all languages, and all program models in the district.

All 28 teachers probably had similar thoughts as they made their way one early morning in November to the first meeting in a remote and

relatively unpopulated area of the county; perhaps something like, "I know it's hard to find meeting space, but this is really ridiculous!" "What are the standards, anyway, and why did I agree to do this?" "They'll probably tell us we have to throw out everything we're doing and start over. . . again!" "Standards . . . I know just where I'll put them—on the top shelf of my storage closet, next to the other dusty curriculum guides."

Doubts intensified as the teachers arrived at the site only to find that the worst had happened—the coffee was not ready! But any doubts and fears were soon alleviated as we listened to Genelle Morain's fascinating account of the task force's process that had brought the standards to this point. We soon came to understand that the standards are not a required curriculum nor a particular method. Rather, the standards represent the thinking of thousands of foreign language professionals across the country, defining what students should know and be able to do at various levels of study.

Over the next several months, the pilot study group, guided by our task force facilitators, addressed the first four questions through careful reading of the standards document and much discussion among the group members. Teachers have little time to talk with others at their school level; it is even more unusual for elementary, middle, and high school teachers to have time to discuss issues of common concern across all levels. The time set aside for the pilot study allowed this all-too-rare communication to occur.

We examined the application of the standards to the classroom through the keeping of "teaching logs." (Figure 1 shows the format we used for this task, which was a revision of a format developed by the Springfield, Massachusetts, pilot site.) The logs encouraged us to reflect on our prac-

tice and to analyze our units and lessons in light of the standards. Some of the activities described in the teaching logs became learning scenarios in the final standards document. One of the elementary scenarios appears at the end of this article.

By the end of the pilot study process, the group had come to these conclusions:

- The standards are a very thorough picture of what is desirable in foreign language education.
- Each school level (elementary, middle, and high) has a unique and important contribution to make towards implementation of the standards. In the typical two-year sequence of high school language study, students are not likely to

*The standards are for the present, but they are also a guide for the future, suggesting programs of greater breadth and depth than exist in most schools today.*

### Teaching Log

---

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_

Language \_\_\_\_\_ Level \_\_\_\_\_

Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Program Type (FLEX, Sequential FLES, Sequential FL in MS or HS) \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Students in Class \_\_\_\_\_

Goal Addressed by the Activity: \_\_\_\_\_ Standard Addressed by the Activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Activity	
Procedure	Materials
How Students Were Assessed	
Reaction - How I Thought It Went	
Reaction - What Students Thought	
What I Learned (What might be changed next time.)	
This activity did/did not support the standard identified. Why?	

Figure 1. Gwinnett County Public Schools, National Standards in Foreign Language Education Pilot Study Teaching Log.



*We learned more about the "state of the art" in foreign language learning, discovering that the standards both validated our work and challenged us to do more.*

attain all of the standards. However, students can achieve more of the standards in all five goal areas if instruction begins in the early grades and continues through the high school years.

- Our state and local curricula currently include some of the standards but not all. Goals 1 and 2 (Communication and Culture) are clearly addressed in our frameworks. Although many teachers address goals 3 (Connections), 4 (Comparisons), and 5 (Communities) in their classrooms, our official curricula do not address these explicitly.
- Many classroom practices, as described in the "teaching logs" the pilot teachers kept, do support the standards. In many cases, teachers can build on what they are currently doing. Teaching logs tended to describe activities that fit under goals 1 and 2, with some evidence of goal 3. Goals 4 and 5 appear to be the most challenging to address in our present programs given the time teachers have for instruction.
- Implementing the standards will require a different view of the role of the text book as it exists today; "the text as script" will not work! Elementary teachers have long known this, but middle and high school programs have sometimes been tied to texts to a greater degree than is beneficial. As the standards are implemented, we will need multiple resources; technology is one way we acquire some of those resources.
- In order to move toward implementation of the standards, communication is imperative: among teachers, among school levels, and among university and public school personnel. Articula-

tion is a major challenge we must address, and articulation can only happen when all levels understand and appreciate the role each level has to play. The standards provide a basis upon which the various stakeholders (teachers, students, parents, administrators, and university personnel) can begin the communication that is critical to building an articulated program.

By participating in the Standards for Foreign Language Learning Pilot Study, we experienced a process that we can use in the future as we approach our foreign language program review in the district. The pilot study experience was especially valuable to us because it gave teachers from kindergarten through grade 12 a chance to talk. The communication was so positive that we plan to create other opportunities for this interaction to occur.

We found that the standards can help us establish a common vocabulary with various audiences, as well as a "common yardstick" with which we can measure the quality of a program. This is especially important in a site-based management system such as ours.

In all, we feel that the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century* (1996) can be a practical tool for school districts that want to make their language program the best it can possibly be. We think our participation in the pilot study will help us move in that direction.

## References

- National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project. (1996). *Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century*. Lawrence, KS: Allen Press.

**Note:** This classroom scenario was developed by Gwinnett County elementary school foreign language teachers as an example of lessons that address the themes of the standards. It is included here with permission from ACTFL.

## Classroom Scenario

### Targeted Standards

- 1.2 Interpretive Communication
- 1.3 Presentational Communication
- 2.2 Products of Culture
- 3.1 Making Connections
- 5.1 School and Community

### Dinosaurs

Kindergartners at Rockbridge Elementary School are learning about dinosaurs with the typical fascination that this subject holds for young students. To complement their study of this topic, their teacher, Señora Matos, develops an activity for their FLES Spanish class with the cooperation of the art teacher. The students use construction paper to create a "Jurassic Mountain" in the classroom. In Spanish, they learn the words for tree, mountain, and other elements of their newly created environment.



However, the teacher and students realize that something is missing: the dinosaurs. Students are asked to bring dinosaurs to school, and on the next day their "Jurassic Mountain" and two other tables are covered with dinosaurs. After learning the vocabulary in Spanish, the students identify and describe the dinosaurs and classify them by size, color, and other characteristics (gentle, fierce, etc.). Students then make brightly colored papier-mâché dinosaurs as well as dioramas reflecting the appropriate habitat for their dinosaurs. At the end of the week, Señora Matos has 21 diverse dinosaur dioramas to be shared with the school community.

### Reflection

- 1.2 Students understand the presentations of their classmates.
- 1.3 Students present information about their dinosaurs to fellow students.
- 2.2 Students use art media and colors that reflect Hispanic culture.
- 3.1 Students reinforce and further their knowledge of prehistoric life.
- 5.1 Students use the language within the school setting.

This scenario could occur in any language with beginners at any grade level. The content would depend on the setting. The scenario might be played out using such topics as mythical figures, medieval artisan shops, or signs of the Chinese calendar in cooperation with teachers from various disciplines. The curricular weave is highlighted in the classification aspect of the activity in which students use critical thinking skills to organize and classify the dinosaurs. By encouraging students to ask and answer questions of each other, a focus on Standard 1.1, Interpersonal Communication, could be added to this activity (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1996, p. 75).

# CAL Conducts National Foreign Language Survey

*The results of the survey will provide a picture of how K-12 foreign language education has changed since the 1987 survey.*

Are you in need of up-to-date information on what is going on nationally with foreign language instruction? The Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) can help. It is conducting a national foreign language survey that will provide current, much needed information about foreign language programs and instruction in elementary, middle/junior high, and high schools in the United States. The study, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, will replicate the landmark survey of foreign languages conducted by CAL in 1987.

The two major goals of the study are to provide a comprehensive, scientifically-accurate national portrait of foreign language education at the elementary and secondary levels and to produce information on foreign language education on a state-by-state basis.

The survey will address current patterns and shifts in enrollment, teacher training and qualifications, language and program offerings at various levels, foreign language curricula and instructional materials, assessment, sequencing, funding, successful program characteristics, foreign language educational reform, and major issues facing the field.

In October 1996, the survey will be sent to a randomly-selected sample of principals at approximately five percent of all public and private elementary, middle/junior high, and high schools in the U.S. The results of the survey will provide a picture of how K-12 foreign language education has changed since the 1987 survey. With foreign languages now a part of the core curriculum in the Goals 2000: Educate America Act legislation, it will be especially interesting to look at current levels of foreign language enrollment.

The survey results will also inform states as they implement versions of the new national standards in foreign language education in their schools, and provide information about how schools are addressing this kind of educational reform. Detailed case studies of six elementary and middle school program models and a directory of K-8 sample language programs by state will also be compiled as part of the project. To be included in the directory, watch for the mini-questionnaire in the fall 1996 issue of *Learning Languages*.

The survey results will be available from CAL in 1997. For more information on the project, or to sign up to receive the survey results when available, please contact Nancy Rhodes ([nancy@cal.org](mailto:nancy@cal.org)) or Lucinda Branaman ([lucinda@cal.org](mailto:lucinda@cal.org)) at CAL, 1118 22nd St. NW, Washington DC 20037 (202-429-9292).

## Job Openings

The Little Earth School in Santa Fe is looking for a full-time Spanish teacher for its program which incorporates Spanish into the regular curriculum for four through eight-year-olds. To apply, contact: Ellen Souberman, 321 W. Zia Road, Santa Fe, NM 87505; 505-988-1968.

Because it has received support to increase the length of the Spanish class period at each grade level, Pilgrim School is seeking applicants for a full-time elementary school Spanish teacher position. To apply, send a resume to: Kathy Lee, Pilgrim School, 540 South Commonwealth Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90020; E-mail: [Kpasalee@aol.com](mailto:Kpasalee@aol.com).

# Activities for Your Classroom

## Puppet Meteorologists

Linda Kenoyer  
Lighthouse Point, Florida

### Objective:

Students will demonstrate their knowledge of weather expressions by dressing a puppet in clothing appropriate to the weather and by stating the weather orally.

### Materials:

- puppets
- hat
- scarf
- sunglasses
- umbrella

### Procedure:

At the start of each class, three "meteorologists" (weather predictors) are selected to do the weather check. They choose puppets and articles of clothing and go outside to check the weather conditions. They then dress the puppets accordingly.

Upon their return, students take turns asking each puppet: *¿Qué tiempo hace?* (What is the weather?) The meteorologist students respond for their puppet according to the daily weather conditions. Possible responses are:

<i>Hace sol.</i>	(It is sunny.)
<i>Hace frío.</i>	(It is cold.)
<i>Hace calor.</i>	(It is hot.)
<i>Está lloviendo.</i>	(It is raining.)



# Proficiency-Oriented Testing: Reality Therapy

Peggy Boyles  
Putnam City Schools  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

In a recent cartoon in the Sunday newspaper, a couple stares incredulously as the waiter serves them a roller skate and a cuckoo clock as their main entree. The attractive woman remarks to her mortified dinner date, "Well... so much for your two semesters of French!" The young man obviously came from a foreign language experience in which real-life experiences were not the focus of instruction.

Because instruction has been traditionally broken up into small units, there has been a tendency to focus on only one aspect of language production at a time, such as isolated vocabulary lists or grammar. In this situation it was very easy to forget that the vocabulary words and points of structure were not ends in themselves, but rather parts of a larger picture of language use.

In designing new proficiency-oriented testing formats, teachers are reminded that grammatical accuracy is of no value if it cannot be used to carry out real-life tasks as an inherent and natural activity.

More and more, both instruction and assessment are based on encouraging students to go beyond the structure and context of classroom instruction. Students are now assessed on how well they can perform in the language in real-life situations. In creating proficiency-oriented tests for classroom use, certain characteristics should predominate.

When designing test items, the teacher should try to design items that:

- are not isolated, but in a context
- encourage personalized answers
- reflect synthesized, composite knowledge
- focus on what the student knows, rather than on what the student does not know
- recycle language from previous units or chapters
- allow divergent responses
- are interaction based
- reflect real life tasks.

One example of this type of test might be in the format of a student leaving a message for a friend on an answering machine. This context is authentic in many cultures and can, therefore, be perceived as a natural task a student might encounter in the target culture. For the "Leave A Message Test," each student receives a set of message cards. To begin, the student hears the recorded message on the "answering machine."

For example, a message in French might be "*Vous entendez de la musique de Coolio.....et aussi le son de ma voix. Veuillez laisser votre message après le bip sonore. Merci!*"

In Spanish, the students might hear, "*En este momento no puedo contestar el teléfono. Por favor, deja tu recado a la señal.*" In German, students will respond to "*Hör mal! Ich bin für zwei Wochen im Urlaub. Ich rufe wieder an, nachdem ich zurückkomme.*" At the end of the

*...grammatical accuracy is of no value if it cannot be used to carry out real-life tasks as an inherent and natural activity.*

message, there is the familiar beep sound, which signals the student to begin talking.

Students respond on tape and design their message according to the written instructions on one of the message cards in their set. So that students will receive no vocabulary clues, instructions are written in English. For example, one choice for a response might be:

1. Greet the person.
2. Give your name.
3. Describe yourself physically.
4. Tell the person who your teacher is at school.
5. Ask the person a question about school.

In designing test items, it is important that students have options in choosing their response. In this example, there is a wide range of acceptable answers, and the student's choice of vocabulary and grammar are tied directly to a language function.

The administration of oral tests in a large group setting is often the discouraging factor that causes teachers to forgo consistent and regular speaking assessments in their classrooms. Individually testing each student in the class, even though it might be a very small speaking sample, is often time consuming. However, even with the inherent difficulties of oral testing, teachers want there to be a match between learning activities and testing activities.

Random grading is one option. With a set of 3 x 5 cards, the teacher can arbitrarily select students to evaluate while the answering machine tape is playing. All students could participate in the test, but only some of the students would actually be graded that day.

Additionally, if students are

accustomed to working in cooperative learning groups, one student in the group could tape record the responses of other students in the group for the teacher to evaluate later.

Modern language labs can allow a teacher to divide the class into groups and record one group of student speaking samples, while another group completes a listening comprehension assessment.

The issue of scoring speaking tests can cause concern for both teachers and students. In an academic world where students have always been assessed on their mastery of course materials, it is perceived as "unfair" to use questions or situations not specifically taught since the last test.

Certainly there is an element of subjectivity in evaluating a student's speaking ability, but that should not cause teachers to turn away from this type of testing. Several different areas might be evaluated within a speaking sample.

For example, coverage of an assigned topic and comprehensibility from the evaluator's standpoint might be scored on a basis of 0-5. Even enthusiasm and effort can be evaluated if the teacher models this behavior for the students. The range and appropriateness of vocabulary could be assessed, as well as pronunciation. Some areas of scoring might even be double weighted, such as student effort. It is completely up to the teacher to decide what and how to value the components in any given assessment.

Encouraging children to use language in purposeful, meaningful ways in both classroom activities and assessments will produce students 10 years from now who can eat exactly what they order in a restaurant!

*In designing test items, it is important that students have options in choosing their response.*

# The Teddy Bear Test:

## An Example of a Proficiency-Oriented Test

**T**he universal appeal of teddy bears engages students of all ages in communicative activities designed to practice language skills in an imaginative way. Whether in elementary or middle school, students easily relate to the thematic concept of teddy bears. The issues of ethnicity, gender bias, and age appropriateness disappear as students work together to explore their creative side.

Remembering that good activities make good assessments, and good assessments make good activities, the *Teddy Bear Test* has evolved from a repertoire of successful classroom activities to its present assessment format. By participating in a world of "bear talk" throughout the school year, students can easily imagine themselves in similar, real-life situations.

After all, how different is it to think about humans or bears on rainy afternoons with nothing to do, or about their conversations around a campfire?

While moving away from simple memorization of isolated words and high-frequency phrases, students start to understand and

are able to answer direct questions in which cognates are included and are supported by visuals. As students begin to recycle what they have learned, albeit with virtually no variation from the way it was initially learned, they can start to respond to direct questions in a more creative and personalized way.

### Sample Speaking Format

Oral descriptions of visuals comprise probably the most appropriate conversation stimulus at the novice level, not only because they provide a psychological prop, but because they facilitate conversational tasks for students. In the speaking section of the *Teddy Bear Test*, students see several different pictures of bears engaged in various "real-life" activities. Accompanying the illustra-



Figure 1. "Cher Bear".

tions, such as those shown in Figures 1 and 2, are three questions for each picture. The first two questions are specific, objective questions about the picture. The third question attempts to personalize the situation for the student. Students attempt to answer each question in an oral interview in the time provided by the teacher.

For example, in Figure 1, students might be asked a forced-choice question such as: "Are the bears singing in a band or listening to a concert?" When the questions are laced with cognates in the target language, students can readily select the correct answer from the choices given. On a more personal level, students could be asked to discuss their favorite kind of music and music group.

Clearly, there are no right or wrong answers to the more open-ended type of questions. If encouraged to do so in classroom activities, students can use circumlocution for legitimate responses to questions concerning the location or actions of the bear. For example, in Figure 2, students might be asked to describe what the bear does for his profession. If the student wants to say that he is a senator, but is unable to produce the word, he or she might talk about the bear working in an office in Washington, DC.

### Sample Listening Format

In the listening section of the test, students employ the strategies learned in classroom activities to selectively listen for clues to help them discern the central focus of a conversation. Students are given a composite of nine bear pictures, and must listen to a tape recording of several short "bear" conversations. Students match each conversation to



Figure 2. "Senate Bill Bear".

its corresponding picture. For example, which bear would be saying, "I don't like to read all day. I prefer to walk outside" (Figure 1 or Figure 2?).

The purpose of the *Teddy Bear Test* is to provide a thematic context for synthesizing novice-level vocabulary in a proficiency-oriented test and to provide an opportunity for students to personalize answers in a testing format. If the teacher frequently uses teddy bear visuals in his or her class to have students talking about generic topics such as clothing, weather, emotions, likes and dislikes, etc., then students will be prepared to respond to similar pictures on the assessments.

A direct, positive benefit to both teachers and students in a proficiency-oriented testing environment is that students are rewarded for what they do know, and are not penalized for what they do not know.

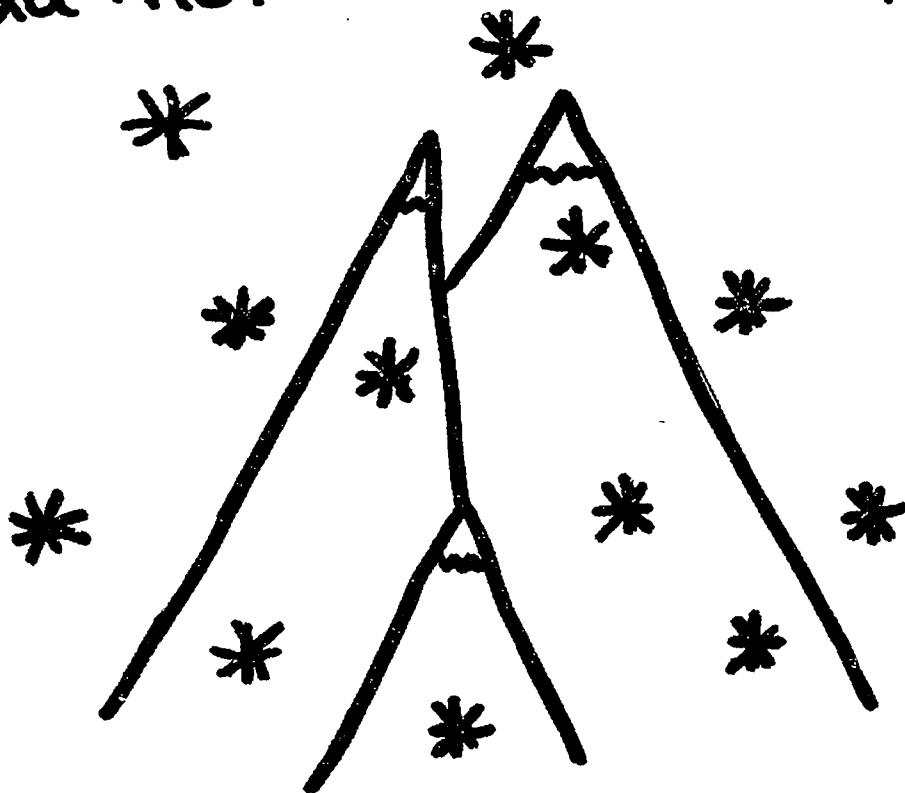
**Note:** *The original Teddy Bear Test was written and piloted by Peggy Boyles, Foreign Language Coordinator for the Putnam City Schools in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. In a revised format, it is currently used as part of the fifth grade exit assessment.*



# Children's Classroom Creations

La météo

Nicole



Laura Trettel (Nicole)  
Grade 5  
Clear Springs Elementary School  
Minnetonka, MN  
Kay Triden, French Teacher

Voici Colorado

C'est aujourd'hui lundi, le 10  
avril

Il fait froid.

Il neige.

Il fait  $-10^{\circ}$  centigrade.

# **NNELL Initiates Plans for Political Action and Advocacy Committee**

The National Network for Early Language Learning has initiated plans for the Political Action and Advocacy Committee under the leadership of Mary Lynn Redmond, First Vice-President, and Kay Hewitt, Committee Chair. At the 1995 NNELL annual business meeting held November 15 at the ACTFL Conference in Anaheim, California, the executive board formalized the goals of the committee.

The committee's tasks will be to unify efforts on the national level to promote foreign language study in kindergarten through grade twelve and to serve as a liaison with NNELL state foreign language political action committees. The committee will also offer assistance in the promotion of language study at the state and local levels and support for programs that may be in jeopardy of elimination or reduction.

The goals of the NNELL Political Action and Advocacy Committee are three-fold: 1) to keep abreast of policies and changes brought about through federal government action that may impact foreign language study and to keep state foreign language political action committee leaders informed of these decisions; 2) to promote the study of foreign languages K-12 through ongoing advocacy projects, e.g., contact with local, state, and national policy- and decision-makers to inform them of the importance of foreign language study, participation as speakers at Parent Teacher Association functions, school board meetings, and other community activities; and 3) to assist the state political action and advocacy committee chairs in their efforts to promote foreign language study and to encourage support at the local and state levels, e.g., letter-writing campaigns to

urge support for programs facing potential crisis and coordination of advocacy sessions at state conferences and at local meetings.

NNELL is working with state level political action committees and is in the process of implementing committees in states where there is currently no political action group in place. An information packet that includes advocacy tips and sample letters for presenting concerns to state and national legislators may be obtained from Kay Hewitt (address below).

NNELL invites members who wish to participate in political action and advocacy at the state or national level, as a member of the NNELL Political Action and Advocacy Committee, to contact Kay Hewitt, Committee Chair, or Mary Lynn Redmond, NNELL First Vice-President.

## **NNELL Political Action and Advocacy Committee**

Kay Hewitt, Chair  
Lexington Elementary School  
116 Azalea Drive  
Lexington, SC 29072  
803-359-4123  
*les@scsn.net*

Mary Lynn Redmond  
First Vice-President  
Wake Forest University  
Department of Education  
Box 7266, Reynolda Station  
Winston-Salem, NC 27109  
910-759-5347  
*redmond@wfu.edu*

Jane G. Graveen  
60 Applewood Lane  
Glastonbury, CT 06033  
860-633-6233

Lauren Schaffer  
Ashland High School  
201 South Mountain Avenue  
Ashland, OR 97520  
541-482-8771

Gilda Oran  
Bloomsburg University  
of Pennsylvania  
3540 Green St.  
Harrisburg, PA 17110  
717-389-4236  
*oran@planetx.bloomu.edu*

# NNELL Welcomes Two New Chairs

Evelyne Armstrong—Public Relations

Kay Hewitt—Political Action/Advocacy Committee

NNELL is pleased to announce that Evelyne Armstrong, French teacher at Charles Wright Academy in Tacoma, Washington, has been appointed Chair of Public Relations; and Kay Hewitt, French teacher at Lexington Elementary School in Lexington, South Carolina, has been appointed Chair of the Political Action and Advocacy Committee.

Ms. Hewitt received a B.A. in French from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and a Master's in Education from the University of South Carolina. She has taught French at the elementary and secondary levels for 13 years and was a pioneer in the implementation of the foreign language program in the elementary grades in the Burlington (NC) Public Schools.

Ms. Hewitt brings her expertise to the well-established elementary foreign language program at Lexington School District One in Lexington, South Carolina. Her enthusiasm for teaching was honored by her election as the school's "1995-96 Teacher of the Year." She is also one of two "honor roll" teachers in the district for her outstanding achievements and contributions to the field of teaching.

Dr. Armstrong received her doctorate in education/second language curriculum and instruction from Union Institute. She has taught French at the elementary and middle school levels for eleven years and language methodology for two.

Dr. Armstrong is an administrator and visionary as well as an educator. At Charles Wright Academy she developed the Odyssey of the Mind program and trained coaches for it, in

addition to establishing and coordinating exchange programs. For the summer program at the school, Dr. Armstrong developed, directs, and coordinates the French Immersion Day Camp as well as directs and coordinates its counterpart in France—the American Immersion Day Camp. In addition, she has published teaching materials and workbooks for the interactive teaching of language in context. In honor of her work with the French and American Day Camps, Dr. Armstrong has received a grant from the French Ministère de la Jeunesse et des Sports.

NNELL warmly welcomes Dr. Armstrong and Ms. Hewitt, two highly qualified and influential women in their field, to their new committee appointments.

## Members!



*This colorful button is available at NNELL networking sessions at no cost to you. Wear your button and let others know that you are a member of NNELL.*

## **Elementary School Foreign Language Teacher Preparation Needed**

Foreign language teacher preparation for the elementary school level must be addressed if the language profession is to play a role in ongoing educational reform, according to a report on the results of a 1995 national survey conducted by the Joint National Committee for Languages (JNCL) and the National Council of State Supervisors of Foreign Languages (NCSSFL). Three questions on the survey were designed to gather data on teacher shortages, teacher education, and specifically, on elementary level teacher education programs.

Most of the 30 state foreign language supervisors who responded noted that in their state there was a need for more teacher training, especially for the elementary school level.

Only four states reported specific plans for training elementary school foreign language teachers: Delaware, Missouri, Texas, and Wisconsin.

Indiana, Massachusetts, and Maine reported that they are in the process of planning how to address this need. Louisiana and Virginia clarified that individual institutions of higher education develop their own teacher preparation courses.

For more information about this survey, contact:

JNCL-NCLIS  
1118 22 St. NW  
Washington, DC 20037  
Phone: 202-466-2666  
Fax: 202-466-2892  
E-mail: 76306.535@compuserve.com.

A NELL brochure is now available which includes a brief overview of the benefits members receive as well as a membership form.

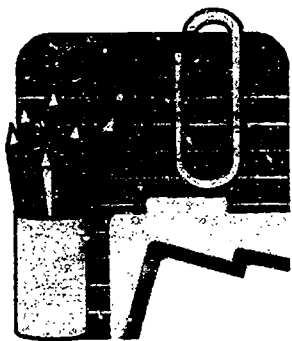
## **National Network for Early Language Learning**

# **NELL**

**NELL is  
a national organization  
dedicated to the advocacy  
of foreign language instruction  
for all students,  
kindergarten through 8th grade,  
and to the support of the educators  
who teach those students.**

If you would like to receive copies of the NELL brochure to distribute to potential members in your school district, community, or state, write to:

**National Network for Early Language  
Learning  
Nancy Rhodes, Executive Secretary  
Center for Applied Linguistics  
1118 22nd St. NW  
Washington, DC 20037**



# Classroom Resources

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## German

Hill, E. (1983). *Flecki und die Uhr*. Esslinger im ÖBV, Esslingen: Schreiberverlag. \$4.50.

Spirin, G. (Illust.), Esterl, A. (Trans.), & Martin, C. (1992). *Jon & der gläserne Berg*. Esslinger im ÖBV, Esslingen: Schreiberverlag. \$23.50

*Both books are available through Klett Edition Deutsch, Christiane Fredrickson, 7327 Woodrow Drive, Oakland, CA 94611; Tel and Fax: 510-339-2721.*

In the first book, *Flecki und die Uhr*, the main character is Spot, a very popular little dog, whose German name is "Flecki." Books about this little dog's adventures have been favorites of children for years. Eric Hill, the author, was born in London in 1927 and first published this book in 1983. It was translated to German in 1984.

In this book Flecki learns how to tell time. The book follows Flecki through the day, from the time he wakes up until he goes to bed, as he does different things every hour. The words are simple and easy to read and the illustrations match the printed word. *Flecki und die Uhr* is a reading and coloring book. Other Flecki reading and coloring books are available about counting, the alphabet, and the year. In addition to reading and coloring books, regular Flecki reading and picture books are available in German about a variety of topics. The Flecki books are a terrific resource for students in first or second grade

immersion classes as well as for students in other types of elementary school foreign language programs.

The second book, *Jon & der gläserne Berg*, is based on the American fairy tale, *Boots and the Glass Mountain*, by Claire Martin. It is retold by Arnica Esterl and illustrated by Gennadij Spirin. Spirin's illustrations are a work of wonder. He paints pictures with a very fine brush, making them full of details and precision. Looking at the pictures one can see and feel the magic of this fairy tale.

*Jon & der gläserne Berg* is about a poor, but smart and courageous young man who wins the hand and heart of the lovely princess. This is a great story with superb illustrations. It appeals to all ages of students, from elementary to high school.

## Spanish

Simons, M., & Maley, P. (1993). *Motivando la lectura, actividades de razonamiento en torno a la literatura: Grados 1-3 y Grados 4-6*. Eugene, OR: Spring Street Press.

*Distributed by Edumate, 2231 Morena Blvd., San Diego, CA 92110; 619-275-7117; Fax: 619-275-7120.*

For any teacher who has wanted to incorporate children's literature into the foreign language classroom, but has worried about what activities to use after reading a story, this set of books offers an exciting answer.

*Motivando la lectura* is a collection of black-line masters of graphic organizers that can be copied and used with any story or book. Because the graphic organizers help to arrange the information from a story into a visual format, these activities will appeal to the variety of learning styles that are encountered in the classroom. Based on the whole language and literature-based reading programs, these motivational activities help the teacher monitor the student's understanding of the reading in a fun and non-threatening way.

The books are separated into two levels, grades 1-3 and 4-6, but this division may not be appropriate for every foreign language situation. It seems advisable to equate the label "grade" with level of language study, e.g., grade one is equal to beginning level Spanish. The graphics may seem too immature for students in junior high and high school, but they quickly begin to enjoy the activity and work to organize what they are reading.

These books provide a sound structure on which to build good reading skills in any language. Because students enjoy stories that offer language and culture in context, the graphic organizers are an excellent way to extend your language teaching and take advantage of the wealth of children's literature that is becoming available in many languages.

3476, Fax: 516-434-3217. Cost is \$18.95 for hard cover and \$12.95 for paperback.

*Enfin*, an important resource for elementary French teachers, is a book and a tape of traditional rhymes, games, and counting songs for children. The rhymes are organized around various themes and are sung by an adult and French children. There are songs for going to the market and for the farmyard, animal rhymes, and rhymes for inside the house, in the fields, and at the cafe.

The songs and rhymes are illustrated with delightful drawings of children and animals and all the key elements are labeled so that children can identify them. Each song or rhyme is repeated and a graceful version of *Nous n'irons plus au bois* is used as a theme to carry the listener from one page to the other.

As usual in traditional material, teachers may find that the version of a song they have varies slightly from the one in the book. The fact that there are many variations of the rhymes that have evolved through time only confirms their authenticity.

A guide at the end of the book explains how to play the games and what the rhymes mean. This book and tape should be in the collection of every elementary teacher who wants to transmit the special culture of French children in the classroom.

## French

Dunn O. Aggs, P. (Illus.) (1995). *Un, Deux, Trois, My First French Rhymes*. Hauppauge, NY: Barrons Educational Series.

Available from Barrons Educational Series, 250 Wireless Blvd., Hauppauge, NY 11788; 800-645-

# Bilingualism in Early Childhood Education

## What Do We Know? What Do We Do?

*Refereed Article*

Laurie Makin  
Institute of Early Childhood  
Macquarie University  
Sydney, Australia

### Introduction

Over the last 50 years, changes in patterns of immigration to English-speaking countries such as Australia, the United States, Canada, and England have resulted in huge demographic changes. Lo Bianco (1994, p. 19) states:

In 1975 there were 4.2 million displaced people in the world—that is people in the phase of transition from one physical location of citizenship to another. In 1984 the figure had increased to 24 million people and the rate of increase was itself increasing dramatically.

In Australia, census figures stated that 25 percent of school children speak a language other than English at home. In the U.S., 2.3 million children are categorized as limited English proficient (LEP) (Fitzgerald 1995).

These changes in the school-age population necessitate a re-examination of education in these countries, starting with early childhood education, i.e., programs designed for children from birth to eight years of age.

This article is based on the language education situation in Australia. However, the issues are similar to those in other parts of the world and much of the research impacting upon educational programs has international recognition. It is hoped that this

article will stimulate increased dialogue between early childhood educators in the U.S. and Australia.

### What Do We Know?

Since the 1920s and 30s, when bilingualism was thought to be an aspect of children's development which negatively affected their academic prowess and their social competence (Makin, Campbell, & Jones Diaz, 1995), evidence has grown that, on the contrary, bilingualism can enhance cognitive development and give children access to social experiences closed to monolingual children.

Many children have the potential to become bilingual during their education. However, this potential is often not realized. As far back as 1953, a UNESCO report stated:

It is axiomatic that the best medium for teaching a child is his mother tongue. Psychologically, it is the system of meaningful signs that in his mind works automatically for expression and understanding. Sociologically, it is a means of identification among the members of the community to which he belongs. Educationally, he learns more quickly through it than through an unfamiliar linguistic medium (cited in Djite, 1994, p. 16).

For native English speakers in

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ences closed  
to monolingual  
children.*

these countries, mother tongue or home language education in the early years is a commonplace pattern. If a new language is met in the context of education, it is most commonly introduced at a later stage (for example, in the upper primary or secondary school years) and is not the primary medium of teaching. But what of the early education undertaken by children whose home language is a language other than English? There are many areas in which what research suggests, and what practices exist, are at odds.

Research never proves anything definitively. However, as evidence from carefully designed and replicated studies builds gradually, we begin to get indications of what is the best knowledge available at the current time. This best knowledge is what we have available to us to guide our thought so that research is translated into action. So, what is our "best knowledge" at the moment?

First, we recognize the central importance to language learning of social interaction (Halliday 1975, Bruner 1983, Vygotsky 1987, Rogoff 1990). No one chooses to learn a new language in order to be able to use the subjunctive mood or the past perfect tense. People choose to learn languages for reasons such as interacting with others, furthering their career prospects, or widening their experiences. To emphasize the importance of the sociocultural context in the process of language learning is not to deny the constructivist view of development, but to complement it. Snow (1992) argues that a sociocultural orientation is particularly critical in bilingual education.

Second, we recognize the interconnectedness of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Such knowledge is reflected in approaches to literacy development as different as the Language Experience Approach

(Ashton-Warner 1980), Whole Language (Brown & Mathie 1990), and the Genre Approach (Derewianka 1990). Children are most ready to learn to read in the language which they speak most fluently. Australia's language policy for the 1990s, *Australia's Language*, states clearly (Dawkins, 1991, p. 79): "International and Australian evidence suggests that, where possible, literacy should be established first in the child's first language."

Third, we know that language learning is inextricably interwoven with other factors such as language status, group membership, socioeconomic advantage, and political power. Thus, young children from low status minority language backgrounds who are also socio-economically disadvantaged are at risk (Cummins 1989, Bialystok & Cummins 1991, Moll 1992).

Fourth, we know that operating in two language systems can help children's metacognitive and metalinguistic development, cognitive flexibility, and divergent thinking (Hakuta 1986). However, this is not an inevitable function of bilingual development (Bowel 1988). Much research suggests that benefits accruing from bilingualism are greater when children are fluent in both languages (Janssen & Pauwels 1993).

Fifth, we know that it takes a long time—between 4 and 7 years—to become fluent in a new language, and that the time needed increases in relation to the difference between the two languages, e.g., Asian and European languages.

Sixth, we know the importance of home-school partnerships if children are to be given optimal chances for academic and social success. Parents are generally experts when it comes to their own children. Teachers are expert educators. A "we" orientation on both sides is critical if children are to be given their best chance.

*No one chooses to learn a new language in order to be able to use the subjunctive mood or the past perfect tense.*



## What Are Our Current Practices?

What are we currently doing in early childhood education programs for children between the ages of birth and eight years? With some notable exceptions, we do the following.

We run English-only programs, ignoring the languages and experiences which children bring to school. There may be ESL (English as a Second Language) support, but it is usually minimal, leaving children struggling as learning becomes less contextualized. There may be foreign language programs, but they too are often minimal and may not differentiate between the needs of native speakers and of new learners. Children may therefore be left with limited fluency in any language at levels beyond the survival stage.

We teach children whose home languages are languages other than English to read and write first of all in English, even though both the language and the experiences reflected in texts may be unfamiliar to the children.

We assess in English. "Without bilingual skills, teachers are trying to find the best high-jumper by seeing who's best at running" (Mills in Mills & Mills 1993, p. 10).

We often act as if speaking a language other than English at home is a problem to be remedied rather than a resource to be developed. Children may be categorized as "non-English speaking background" or LEP, terms which, as Diaz Soto (1991) reminds us, identify limitations, not strengths.

In our teacher training programs we largely ignore the languages which pre-service teachers bring to tertiary teacher education programs (Makin 1992). Thus we lose the opportunity to assist these students in using their languages and experiences in the early childhood field for the benefit of children and their families.

We, often unwittingly rather than uncaringly, replace children's home languages with English so that their potential bilingualism is lost or at best under-developed. At the same time, we introduce language learning programs that are only designed for monolingual English speakers and that do not capitalize on the bilingual skills some children already have.

We treat our young native English speakers differentially and preferentially by building upon their existing bases of knowledge and experience in a way which we do not do for children whose home languages are languages other than English.

## Summary

All of our children need the best that we can do for them, particularly in the first years of their education when the foundations for future success are either established or not established. The central importance of these early years is paid lip service in many government policy documents, e.g., *Australia's Language* (Dawkins 1991, p. 39) reminds us that:

Students who have not made adequate literacy development by the end of the third year of primary school are generally unable to make up the gap later in school.

A number of innovative practices which are supportive of linguistic and cultural diversity have been introduced in recent years, both in the U.S. and in Australia—immersion programs, intergenerational literacy programs, bilingual programs, foreign language programs, and so on. However, we have also seen the rise of backlash movements such as "English Only" in the U.S. and calls for restricted immigration quotas in Australia. Even where innovative practices do exist, the number of children who access them is in the minority. Until the rhetoric is better matched with the

reality, our bilingual children are at risk.

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## **NNELL Position Statement on English-Only Movement**

*The Executive Board of the National Network for Early Language Learning developed and voted to endorse this statement in March of 1996.*

*Individuals  
who are profi-  
cient in more  
than one lan-  
guage are rich  
human re-  
sources that  
benefit U.S.  
social and  
economic  
development.*

WHEREAS the National Network for Early Language Learning considers that all children should have opportunities to develop a high level of competence in at least one language in addition to their own as a critical component of United States education;

WHEREAS the National Network for Early Language Learning considers movements to promote the exclusive use of English in the United States as counterproductive to the diversity and richness of the many cultures that make up the mosaic of the U.S. society;

WHEREAS the National Network for Early Language Learning recognizes the importance of multilingual/multicultural participants in U.S. society, especially in business and social interactions, and as citizens of the world;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the National Network for Early Language Learning hereby reaffirms its advocacy for the teaching and learning of more than one language for all children in the United States and its belief that the English language is not threatened by the presence of multilingual members of U.S. society. Individuals who are proficient in more than one language are rich human resources that benefit U.S. social and economic development.

## **Apply for a 1997 NEH Summer Fellowship**

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Fellowship Program for Foreign Language Teachers K-12 invites applications for the 1997 summer fellowship program. Fellowships of \$3,750 will be awarded to teachers for the pursuit of professional development abroad.

Fellowship winners will spend six summer weeks in a foreign country improving their linguistic skills and developing humanities-related projects that will enhance their classroom teaching. The applications for the summer of 1997 are due October 31, 1996; fellowships will be awarded subject to approval of funding.

For information or an application form, contact: Naima Gherbi, Associate Program Director, NEH Fellowship Program for Foreign Language Teacher K-12, Connecticut College, 270 Mohegan Ave., New London, CT 06320-4196; 860-439-2282; Fax: 860-439-5341.

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## Integrating Foreign Language and Content Instruction in Grades K-8 (EDO-FL-95-07)

Helena Curtain, Milwaukee Public Schools &amp; Mari Haas, Teachers College, Columbia University

Content-based instruction is a method of teaching foreign languages that integrates language instruction with instruction in the content areas. In this approach, the foreign language is used as the medium for teaching subject content, such as mathematics or social studies, from the regular classroom curriculum. The method is receiving increasing attention because it allows schools to combine the goals of the second language curriculum and the regular curriculum, making language learning the vehicle for strengthening general skills and knowledge. "Language is not just a medium of communication but a medium of learning across the curriculum. The goal of integration is both language learning and content learning. Content-based classrooms are not merely places where a student learns a second language; they are places where a student gains an education" (Mohan, 1986, p. 8).

Not only does the content-based language class complement the regular classroom curriculum, it becomes an integral part of the entire school program. The success of language immersion programs (where subjects are taught entirely in the foreign language) has stimulated interest in using content-based learning in other types of elementary and middle school foreign language programs that have traditionally been organized thematically around vocabulary topics. Incorporating subject content in early language programs puts language into a larger, more meaningful context and provides situations that require real language use. Genesee (1994) suggests that traditional methods often disassociate language learning from the rest of the student's day as well as from cognitive, academic, and social development. Content-based instruction is part of an integrated approach that brings these domains together. The benefits of studying language through subject content are evident in students' language and content acquisition.

In content-based instruction, students become proficient in the language because the focus is on the exchange of important messages, and language use is purposeful. The language that students use comes from natural situations, such as a science unit on the solar system or a social studies lesson on the geography of a country.

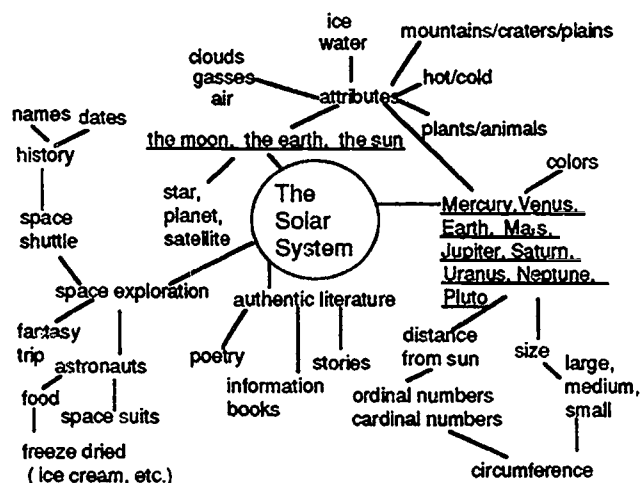
### Planning for Content-Based, Thematic Teaching

In thematic teaching, the curriculum is organized around a thematic center that can originate in the classroom, the school, the environment, or the target culture. Activities that teach language concepts along with the content are interrelated and are planned to fit within the framework of a lesson or thematic unit. Such an integrated, holistic approach is based on the premise that when students are engaged in meaningful activities they acquire language, including writing, as naturally as they learned to walk and talk.

The thematic center may be a curriculum area, such as the Middle Ages; a word like "inside"; a theme such as houses; or a story in the target language. Webs or semantic maps are an ideal way to brainstorm curriculum activities based on these themes. A web graphically shows how the activities and the target language are interrelated. Caine and Caine (1991) indicate that facts and skills presented in isolation need more practice and rehearsal to be stored in the brain than

does information presented in a meaningful context. The web maps out the context in which second language learning is combined with subject content and cultural learning in an integrated language process. Webs can be organized in different ways (e.g., free form, by content discipline, by multiple intelligences). The following web and chart are examples of thematic or content-based planning.

### A Free-Form Web



### Planning a Unit on Puerto Rico Using Multiple Intelligences (Gardner, 1993)

**Boily-Kinesthetic.** To introduce vocabulary about Puerto Rico, ask the students to take a picture or item representing something about Puerto Rico out of a magic box. Ask students to point to the item, pass the item, put the item on the table, put it on a part of the body, etc.

**Spatial.** Give students a graphic organizer with a circle in the center that says "Puerto Rico" and spokes coming out from the center. Have the students fill in each spoke with one aspect about Puerto Rico.

**Linguistic.** As students take each item out of the magic box, describe the item to them. "This is a *coqui*. It is a small frog that only lives in Puerto Rico. It sings, '*coqui, coqui, coqui*.'" Write a Language Experience Story about Puerto Rico using the language used to describe the items from the magic box.

**Musical.** Teach the song *El Coqui* to the students.

**Logical-Mathematical.** Have students use a small picture of a *coqui* to measure the distance between places on the map (1 *coqui*=10 miles) and calculate how long and wide Puerto Rico is, how far it is from Ponce to San Juan, etc. \*

**Interpersonal.** Divide the class into pairs with one partner as A and the other as B. Give each pair an A and B pair sheet. Have them "read" their sheets to each other to practice the vocabulary illustrated on the sheet and to decide if their sheets are the same or different.

**Intrapersonal.** After tasting typical foods from Puerto Rico, make a graph of the food students like and dislike.

\* activity by Eileen Lorenz, Montgomery Co. Public Schools (MD)

Pesola (in progress) has developed a curriculum planning framework for the integration of language and content based on the thematic unit. In her model, the dynamic relationships among language, academic content, and culture interact so that all three elements form the core of the language lessons. She describes a comprehensive framework to follow in the planning process, including (1) a thematic center; (2) outcomes for language in use, content, and culture; and (3) activities, assessment strategies, materials, and classroom setting. Making choices in all three areas of language, content, and culture, and maintaining a balance among them is the fundamental basis of this model. Part of Pesola's framework is the Unit Plan Inventory, which is outlined below. It shows the many aspects of planning that must take place for successful language and content integration in a unit on architecture.

### *Planning for a Content-Based Unit on Architecture Using the Unit Plan Inventory*

**Language in Use.** Describing, giving information, asking for information.

**Subject Content.** Architecture, geography, seasons, weather.

**Culture.** Doors and windows of a target country and students' home town.

**Vocabulary.** Colors, shapes, sizes, materials (wood, stone), architectural details (ironwork, balcony, ornate), geographical terms (snow, rain, sun, clouds).

#### **Grammatical Structures**

- Verbs in command form--open, close, touch, point to.
- Verbs in present tense--to be, to see, to think, to paint.

#### **Essential Materials**

- Photographs from both target and home cultures of doors and windows, geographical landmarks, and seasons.
- Paper, ruler, tape measures, paints, markers.
- Map of target country.

#### **Activities**

- Introduce vocabulary through Total Physical Response (TPR) sequence with photos of classroom doors and windows.
- Sort photos by doors/windows, target country/home town, size, shape, material, color.
- In pairs, estimate then measure doors and windows in classroom.
- Use TPR sequence of map geography, seasons, and weather of target country and home town.
- In small groups, paint the original window with a view in the target country or home town.
- Describe a window in writing or orally.
- Display windows in the classroom, have students choose the window they like the best and write why they like it.

#### **Assessment**

- Observe students' participation, assess for understanding.
- Observe students' participation, assess for accuracy and pronunciation.
- Assess for participation, use of target language, and accuracy.
- Assess for inclusion of all elements, presentation, and participation in group project.
- Evaluate written paragraph for accuracy and meaning.
- Evaluate student writing for coherence, interest, and accuracy.

*Based on and adapted from a unit prepared by Pam Morgan,  
Renbrook School, West Hartford, CT.*

## **Suggestions for Planning Lessons that Integrate Language and Content Instruction**

When planning for the integration of language and content instruction, the distinctive characteristics and needs of young students found at each level of cognitive and educational development must be considered. Who are the students? What is the range of their social and cognitive development? What are they interested in? Second language acquisition research informs us about the value of teaching strategies such as providing comprehensible input, planning many listening activities, and giving the students numerous opportunities to use their language and to negotiate meaning.

The following are suggestions for planning lessons that integrate language and content in early language programs:

1) Become familiar with the regular classroom curriculum by observing your students' regular classrooms, reading the school's curriculum guide, talking with the teachers about their curriculum and to the students about what they are studying.

2) Plan to integrate content that you are interested in and will take time to research. Start on a small scale and select only one or two topics from the regular curriculum. Think in advance about the units you would like to plan so that when you are traveling or attending conferences you can begin to collect resources to enrich your units.

3) Use a web or a curriculum planning format that promotes the integration of language, content, and culture.

4) Design interesting activities for the students that do the following:

- use the students' prior knowledge and personal experience;
- ask students to work in a variety of groupings (whole class, individually, in pairs, and small groups);
- use holistic strategies that integrate listening, speaking, reading, and writing and naturally connect language and content;
- challenge the students to think critically; and
- address the students' multiple ways of learning.

## **Conclusion**

Incorporating content-based instruction into elementary and middle school foreign language classrooms is a way of providing a meaningful context for language instruction while at the same time providing a vehicle for reinforcing academic skills. Teaching through content is fun and worthwhile for both the students and the teacher. Although it takes more time to plan and create materials for content-based instruction, the results are well worth the effort.

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### June 16-July 12, 1996

Methods for Teaching Foreign Languages in Elementary and Middle School, Concordia College, Moorhead, MN. Carol Ann Pesola, Concordia College, Moorhead, MN 56562; 218-299-4511; or AATG, 112 Haddontowne Court #104, Cherry Hill, NJ 08034-3688; 609-795-5553; Fax: 609-795-9398; E-mail: 73740.3231@compuserve.com.

### June 24-28, 1996

*Temas Actuales: Libros en Español para Lectores Jóvenes—el Desarrollo Emocional* (in Spanish), California State University, San Marcos, CA. Isabel Schon, Center for the Study of Books in Spanish for Children and Adolescents, California State University, San Marcos, CA 92096-0001; 619-750-4070; Fax: 619-750-4073; E-mail: ischon@mailhost1.csusm.edu.

### July 1-13, 1996

Teaching Foreign Languages to Young Students, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, NY. Mari Haas, Teachers College, Box 201, 525 West 120th St., New York, NY 10027; 212-678-3817; Fax: 212-678-3085; E-mail: mbh14@columbia.edu.

### July 8-12, 1996

Current Issues: Books in Spanish for Young Readers (in English), California State University, San Marcos, CA. Isabel Schon, Center for the Study of Books in Spanish for Children and Adolescents, California State University, San Marcos, CA 92096-0001; 619-750-4070; Fax: 619-750-4073; E-mail: ischon@mailhost1.csusm.edu.

### July 8-13, 1996

Teaching Foreign Languages to Young Students 2 (For returning teachers), Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, NY. Mari Haas, Teachers College, Box 201, 525 West 120th St., New York, NY 10027; 212-678-3817; Fax: 212-678-3085; E-mail: mbh14@columbia.edu.

### July 23-28, 1996

The National FLES\* Institute, University of Maryland, Baltimore County, MD. Gladys Lipton, Modern Languages and Linguistics, University of Maryland, Baltimore County, MD 21228; 301-231-0824; 410-455-2109; Fax: 301-230-2652; E-mail: glipton@mcimail.com or lipton@umbc2.umbc.edu.

### July 23-August 2, 1996

Culture and Children's Literature: France and Mexico, Iowa State University, Ames, IA. Marcia H. Rosenbusch, National K-12 Foreign Language Resource Center, N157 Lagomarcino Hall, Iowa State University, Ames, IA 50011; 515-294-6699; Fax: 515-294-2776 or 6206; E-mail: nflrc@iastate.edu.

### July 31-August 10, 1996

Seminar on Teaching German at the Elementary and Middle School Level, Plymouth State College, NH. Gisela Estes, Department of Foreign Languages, Plymouth State College, Plymouth, NH 03264; 603-535-2303; or AATG, 112 Haddontowne Court #104, Cherry Hill, NJ 08034-3688; 609-795-5553; Fax: 609-795-9398; E-mail: 73740.3231@compuserve.com.

### August 5-9, 1996

*La Literatura en Español Dirigida a los Lectores Infantiles y Juveniles* (in Spanish), California State University, San Marcos, CA. Isabel Schon, Center for the

Study of Books in Spanish for Children and Adolescents, California State University, San Marcos, CA 92096-0001; 619-750-4070; Fax: 619-750-4073; E-mail: [ischon@mailhost1.csusm.edu](mailto:ischon@mailhost1.csusm.edu).

**August 12-16, 1996**

*Temas Actuales: Libros en Español para Lectores Jóvenes ¿Traducción o interpretación?* (in Spanish). California State University, San Marcos, CA. Isabel Schon, Center for the Study of Books in Spanish for Children and Adolescents, California State University, San Marcos, CA 92096-0001; 619-750-4070; Fax: 619-750-4073; E-mail: [ischon@mailhost1.csusm.edu](mailto:ischon@mailhost1.csusm.edu).

**August 12-23, 1996**

Immersion in the Global Context: Theory and Practice, Simon Fraser University, British Columbia, Canada. Norma Evans, Faculty of Education, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada V5A 1S6; 604-291-3389; Fax: 604-291-3203; E-mail: [nevans@sfu.ca](mailto:nevans@sfu.ca).

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## Fall 1996 Conferences

**September 25-28, 1996**

Third European Conference on Immersion Programs, Universitat de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain. Deadline for submitting papers is April 15, 1996. Institut Europeu de programes d'immersis, Provenca, 324, 1r., E-08037 Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain; Phone 011-34-3-4588700; Fax 011-34-3-4588708.

**October 31 - November 2, 1996**

Canadian Association of Immersion Teachers: At the Crossroads of Tomorrow, Winnipeg Convention Centre, Winnipeg, Ontario, Canada. Donald Teel, 960 Wolseley Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R3G 1E7, Canada; 204-786-4796; Fax: 204-783-7607; E-mail: [deteel@minet.gov.mb.ca](mailto:deteel@minet.gov.mb.ca).

**November 22-24, 1996**

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, Philadelphia, PA. ACTFL, 6 Executive Plaza, Yonkers, NY 10701-6801; 914-963-8830; Fax: 914-963-1275.

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## Submissions Sought for Teaching with Technology

Readers are encouraged to send submissions for the new *Teaching with Technology* feature of the journal. This section will publish articles written by language teachers who have successfully incorporated technologies into their instruction at the K-8 level, as well as information on communications technologies, reviews of computer programs, and applications used to enhance foreign language education. *Learning Languages* invites teachers to submit informative articles about practical applications of communications technologies in the classroom, as well

as their experiences with, and their perspective on, various technologies as they relate to foreign language learning.

For further information or to submit an article, contact: Jean W. LeLoup, Visiting Professor, HQ USAFA/DFF 2354 Fairchild Drive, Suite 6H51, USAF Academy, CO 80840-6244; E-mail: [LeloupJW%DFF%USAFA@dfmail.usafa.af.mil](mailto:LeloupJW%DFF%USAFA@dfmail.usafa.af.mil)

After June 1, 1996, use the following address: Jean W. LeLoup, ICC Department, SUNY/Cortland, PO Box 2000, Cortland, NY, 13045; E-mail: [LeLoupJ@syncorva.cortland.edu](mailto:LeLoupJ@syncorva.cortland.edu).

NNELL is an organization for educators involved in teaching foreign languages to children. The mission of the organization is to promote opportunities for all children to develop a high level of competence in at least one language in addition to their own; to provide leadership, support, and service to those committed to early language learning; and to coordinate efforts to make language learning in programs of excellence a reality for all children.

NNELL works to accomplish this mission through activities that improve public awareness and support of early language learning; 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.

NNELL holds its annual meeting at the fall conference of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. Its officers are elected by members through a mail ballot election held annually in the spring.

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[elorenz@umd5.umd.edu](mailto:elorenz@umd5.umd.edu)

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Wake Forest University  
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Box 7266, Reynolda Station  
Winston-Salem, NC 27109  
[redmond@wfu.edu](mailto:redmond@wfu.edu)

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525 W. 120th St., Box 201  
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[mbh14@columbia.edu](mailto:mbh14@columbia.edu)

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Nancy Rhodes  
Center for Applied Linguistics  
1118 22nd St. NW  
Washington, DC 20037  
[nancy@cal.org](mailto:nancy@cal.org)

### *Membership Secretary*

Guadalupe Hernández-Silva  
Center for Applied Linguistics  
1118 22nd St. NW  
Washington, DC 20037  
[lupe@cal.org](mailto:lupe@cal.org)

### *Learning Languages Editor*

Marcia Harmon Rosenbusch  
N157 Lagomarcino  
Iowa State University  
Ames, IA 50011  
[mrosenbu@iastate.edu](mailto:mrosenbu@iastate.edu)

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Stonington, CT 06378

### *Southern Rep.*

Carine Feyten  
University of South Florida  
College of Education  
EDU 200B, Tampa, FL 33620-5650  
[feyten@typhoon.coedu.usf.edu](mailto:feyten@typhoon.coedu.usf.edu)

### *Publisher Liaison*

Patty Rierson Hans  
The Wellington School  
3650 Reed Rd.  
Columbus, OH 43212  
[hans@Grendel.wellington.org](mailto:hans@Grendel.wellington.org)

### *Political Action and Advocacy*

Kay Hewitt  
Lexington Elementary School  
116 Azalea Dr.  
Lexington, SC 29072  
[les@scsn.net](mailto:les@scsn.net)

### *Southwest Rep.*

Elena Steele  
Clark County School District  
Department of Foreign Language  
Curriculum and Instruction  
601 N. 9th St., Office 31  
Las Vegas, NV 89101

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Evelyne Armstrong  
Charles Wright Academy  
7723 Chambers Creek Rd. West  
Tacoma, WA 98467  
[evelynearm@aol.com](mailto:evelynearm@aol.com)

### *Pacific Northwest Rep.*

Jo Ann Olliphant  
11004 11th St. SW  
Tacoma, WA 98498  
[jolliphant@ups.edu](mailto:jolliphant@ups.edu)

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Debbie Wilburn-Robinson  
Ohio State University  
249 Arps Hall  
1945 N. High St.  
Columbus, OH 43210  
[dwilburn@magnus.acs.ohio-state.edu](mailto:dwilburn@magnus.acs.ohio-state.edu)

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*Learning Languages*  
Department of Curriculum and Instruction  
N157 Lagomarcino Hall  
Iowa State University  
Ames, Iowa 50011