

Increasing Enrollment in Foreign Language Teacher Training Programs

Scott Kissau, *University of North Carolina at Charlotte*

Abstract

The critical shortage of foreign language teachers in the United States is well documented, and it was recently reported by ACTFL (2017) to be the worst on record. Exacerbating this shortage is declining enrollment in foreign language teacher training programs that serve as a pipeline to the profession. Even more troublesome, in response to declining enrollment, many programs that prepare the next generation of foreign language teachers are being closed (Garcia, Moser, & Davis-Wiley, 2019). To help address the inadequate supply of qualified foreign language teachers in the United States and to maintain program viability, faculty in the Cato College of Education at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNC Charlotte) embarked upon a multi-year initiative to increase enrollment in a graduate program for aspiring foreign language teachers. In this article, they share some of the recruitment strategies they employed and the success they experienced in the endeavor.

The critical shortage of qualified K-12 teachers is well documented in the United States (Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas, 2016; U.S. Department of Education, 2017). According to a report by the United States Department of Education (2017), the national shortage is

According to a report by the United States Department of Education (2017), the national teacher shortage is particularly acute in high-need areas, including foreign language instruction.

Scott Kissau (Ph.D., University of Windsor, Ontario) is Professor of foreign language education, Chair of the Department of Middle, Secondary, and K-12 Education, and Interim Associate Dean in the Cato College of Education at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. He is the author of over 40 published peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters. Dr. Kissau was the recipient of the Cato College of Education Award for Excellence in Teaching in 2011 and Research in 2012. He was named the Higher Education Teacher of the Year by the Foreign Language Association of North Carolina in 2015, and in 2016, was honored by ACTFL with the Anthony Papalia Award for Excellence in Teacher Education.

NECTFL Review, Number 85, March 2020, pp. 11-28. © 2020 by Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.

particularly acute in high-need areas, including foreign language instruction. Exemplifying this shortage, Skorton and Altschuler (2012) reported that approximately one-quarter of elementary schools in the United States and one-third of middle schools were unable to find enough foreign language teachers. More recently, a study initiated by the United States Senate and the House of Representatives found that 44 states could not fill all foreign language teacher vacancies (Commission on Language Learning, 2017, p. ix), and ACTFL reported the shortage to be the worst in over 25 years of record keeping (ACTFL, 2017).

Swanson (2010, 2012a, 2012b) identified five principal causes of the foreign language teacher shortage in the United States. According to the researcher, the “tsunami” of baby boomers retiring (Swanson & Mason, 2018, p. 252), coupled with increasing enrollment in K-12 foreign language programs, has led to teacher vacancies across the country. Exacerbating this shortage, federal legislation, such as No Child Left Behind, has made it challenging for school districts to find “highly qualified” foreign language teachers and has diverted funding to prioritized subjects, such as math and science (Swanson & Moore, 2006, p. 8). Swanson and his collaborators (Swanson, 2012b; Swanson & Mason, 2018; Swanson & Moore, 2006) also contend that a myriad of negative, and sometimes inaccurate perceptions, (e.g., low pay, low status, poor working conditions) have stigmatized the profession and have steered aspiring foreign language teachers away from choosing the career. For example, in their study investigating the perceptions of 106 high school students studying Spanish in five rural schools, Swanson and Moore (2006) found that many students had inaccurate perceptions about the teaching profession and that those perceptions tended to dissuade them from considering becoming a foreign language teacher. The number of foreign language teachers leaving the profession is equally problematic. Swanson and Huff (2010) reported that attrition rates among foreign language teachers exceed the 17% to 30% range reported for all classroom teachers within their first five years in the profession (Guha, Hyler, & Darling-Hammond, 2016).

While multiple factors are contributing to this critical shortage (Swanson, 2010, 2012a, 2012b), declining enrollment in teacher training programs that serve as a pipeline to the profession represents a significant obstacle in trying to address it. According to a report by the Learning Policy Institute (Sutcher et al., 2016), teacher education enrollment dropped 35% from 2009 to 2014. Between 2010 and 2014, enrollment in traditional university-based teacher preparation programs declined by 31% in the United States (American Association of State Colleges and Universities, 2017). While no national statistics are available specific to foreign language teacher preparation programs, recent research by Kissau, Davin, and Wang (2018), combined with reports of foreign language teacher training programs closing due to insufficient enrollment (Garcia, Moser, & Davis-Wiley, 2019), suggest similarly dramatic declines.

While multiple factors are contributing to this critical shortage declining enrollment in teacher training programs that serve as a pipeline to the profession represents a significant obstacle in trying to address it.

Increasing Enrollment in Foreign Language Teacher Training Programs

Contributing to declining enrollment in traditional teacher training programs is increasing competition from the growing number of alternative licensure programs that often lower the minimum standards required to teach, can be completed more quickly than traditional programs, and at a lower cost (AASCU, 2017). While only six percent of the nearly half million candidates nationwide in teacher preparation programs in 2012-2013 were enrolled in alternative, non-university-based programs (AASCU, 2017), this percentage is expected to rise in coming years. In Texas, where legislation is in place allowing private, for-profit programs to prepare teachers, alternative programs comprise 50 percent of new teacher certificates (Granados, 2017).

Faced with declining enrollment and increasing competition from cheaper and faster alternative licensure programs (Granados, 2017), faculty in the Cato College of Education at UNC Charlotte embarked upon a multi-year initiative to increase enrollment in a graduate program for aspiring foreign language teachers. In this article, they share some of the recruitment strategies they employed and the success they experienced in the endeavor.

Recruitment Strategies

At a time of critical shortage of foreign language teachers and declining enrollment in foreign language teacher training programs, there is little research that sheds light on what motivates individuals to pursue the profession. To guide and inform their recruitment initiatives, foreign language teacher education faculty at UNC Charlotte surveyed foreign language teacher candidates across the United States to better understand what drew them to the profession. Further, to better understand what might be deterring people from the profession, the faculty also interviewed a small group of undergraduate foreign language majors who were not interested in pursuing a teaching career (see Kissau et al., 2018). The findings of this research, combined with data and feedback collected from school partners, program completers, teacher mentors, and teacher education faculty, helped to shape the design and implementation of a variety of recruitment strategies aimed at increasing enrollment in a graduate certificate program for aspiring foreign language teachers. These strategies involved programmatic changes, strategic partnerships, and advertising.

At a time of critical shortage of foreign language teachers and declining enrollment in foreign language teacher training programs, there is little research that sheds light on what motivates individuals to pursue the profession.

Programmatic Changes

To address feedback from program completers, make the program more competitive with alternative licensure programs, and expand the pool of potential applicants, foreign language program faculty decided to make a number of programmatic changes to the graduate certificate program in foreign language education. These changes included re-designing the curriculum, modifying the primary means of instructional delivery, providing more structured opportunities for clinical experiences in K-12 foreign language classrooms, adding additional

language tracks, and offering the option of a streamlined master's degree for candidates who wished to pursue an advanced degree.

Curricular re-design. Over a 2-year period (fall 2016-spring 2018), program faculty participated in the collection and analysis of data from a variety of sources including (1) a day-long summit with school partners to seek their input in regard to how the program could better meet their needs and the needs of their foreign language teachers; (2) program completer exit surveys to gauge completer satisfaction with the quality of their preparation; (3) focus group interviews of candidates, faculty, supervisors, and mentor teachers to shed light on both program strengths and limitations; (4) and candidate performance on performance-based assessments, such as the Oral Proficiency Interview and edTPA, to better understand where candidates do well and where there is room for improvement. Guided and informed by this data collection and analysis (see Appendix A), in summer and fall 2018, a taskforce of program faculty embarked upon a re-design of the curriculum in the seven-course (21 credit-hour) graduate certificate program for foreign language teacher candidates. The outcome was a more streamlined (16 credit-hour) program that candidates could begin (starting summer 2019) at multiple entry points (summer, fall, spring) and complete in one year (see Figure 1). Responding to feedback from both program completers and mentor teachers that candidates lacked confidence in their ability to apply what they learned in the coursework (see Appendix A), the program adopted a less theoretical and more practice-based approach that focused on a set of high-leverage teaching practices (HLTPs) that included facilitating target language comprehensibility, designing and conducting oral interpersonal tasks, and focusing on cultural products, practices, and perspectives in a dialogic context (see Glisan & Donato, 2017) with opportunities for candidate rehearsal and coaching. In further response to feedback from school partners, candidates, and mentor teachers (see Appendix A), the re-designed program consisted of a year-long internship¹ in an urban school setting and aimed to better prepare candidates to manage their classrooms, analyze student assessment data, and meet the needs of diverse students in urban schools.

Instructional delivery. According to the Director of the teacher licensure office at UNC Charlotte that admits approximately 300 teacher candidates per year into its graduate certificate programs for aspiring teachers, prospective applicants want to know how long a program will take to complete and how much it will cost them. Supporting this claim, during focus group interviews (see Appendix A), several candidates expressed concern about the high cost of completing their licensure program. In response, an important goal of the above-mentioned re-design of the graduate certificate program for foreign language teacher candidates was to make it more affordable. While the above-mentioned reduction of total credit hours helped in this pursuit, to further reduce costs and make the program more competitive with less expensive alternative licensure programs, the decision was made to change the method of instructional delivery. Starting fall 2019, the traditional on-campus program was offered in a strictly distance education (i.e., online and/or off-site) format, reducing total costs of tuition and fees from over \$8,000 per candidate to approximately \$4,000.

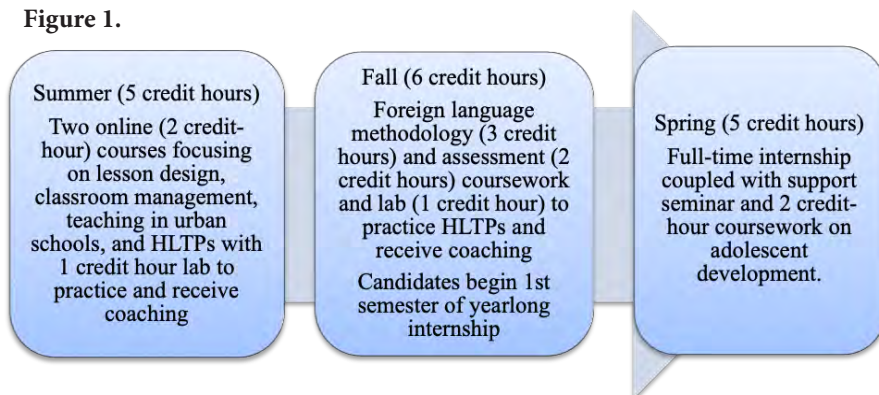
Increasing Enrollment in Foreign Language Teacher Training Programs

Addressing initial faculty concerns expressed during focus group interviews about the impact of this change (see Appendix A), steps were taken to maintain program quality and ensure adherence to a practice-based approach to instruction. For example, although several of the required courses in the re-designed program were to be conducted entirely online, the program also involved multiple labs, where candidates met with their peers and instructors off-site (e.g., at a local school) to participate in the modeling and rehearsal of skills and to receive feedback from instructors (see Figure 1). To ensure that candidates received quality feedback, all lab instructors completed training on effective “in-the-moment” coaching strategies. More specifically, each summer the Cato College of Education at UNC Charlotte held a Teacher Education Institute (TEI) for teacher education faculty, university supervisors, and mentoring K-12 teachers. During the TEI, participants were familiarized with and practiced several coaching strategies (see Roberts, 2017). The *Sideline Strategy*, for example, involves the mentor teacher or university supervisor using h21`124` and gestures or providing written feedback on a whiteboard for the candidate to see and immediately respond to during instruction. Another strategy, *Huddling*, involves the mentor or supervisor pulling a candidate aside while students are working in groups or independently to whisper brief feedback and/or game-plan next moves.

Further, faculty responsible for the development and instruction of all online courses in the re-designed program were incentivized to get each course Quality Matters certified. Quality Matters is a nationally-recognized program subscribed to by universities across the country to assure the quality of online education. To be Quality Matters certified, a course must score a specified number of points across 42 review standards.

In addition to significantly reducing costs incurred by students (i.e., tuition, fees, driving, parking), adopting a distance education mode of instructional delivery made the program more convenient for the many working adults who take graduate courses and allowed it to draw potential students from a much wider geographical area across the state. While the mandatory labs that characterized the re-designed program still involved face-to-face instructional meetings, these meetings were scheduled on select Saturdays throughout the semester, allowing for candidates to drive in for the day from locations across the state.

Figure 1.



NECTFL Review 85

The re-designed program described above represented a significant change from the previous initial licensure program that was delivered on-campus. Table 1 summarizes the differences between the former and re-designed graduate initial licensure program for foreign language teacher candidates.

Table 1. Former vs. Re-design Initial Licensure Program

Former Program	Re-designed Program
One semester full-time internship in K-12 school (some candidate choice in setting)	Two-semester (year-long) internship in an urban setting
21 credit hours	16 credit hours
On-campus instruction	Distance Education (online instruction with off-site labs)
\$8,381 (approximate main campus rate for tuition and fees)	\$4,011 (approximate distance education rate for tuition and fees)
Exclusively 3 credit-hour coursework	Combination of 1, 2 and 3 credit-hour courses
Diversity course focusing on race	Equity course focusing on urban schooling, including race, English learners, poverty, and students with special needs
Course on reading across content areas	Greater classroom management preparation
Clinical experiences in K-12 schools varied according to instructor	Infusion of HLTPs throughout coursework
	Two 1 credit-hour labs to rehearse HLTPs and receive feedback from trained coaches
	Inclusion of content-specific assessment course
	QM certified courses
	More structured sequence of required clinical experiences that were connected to coursework

Clinical experiences. The findings of the aforementioned research conducted by program faculty to guide their recruitment initiatives underscored the motivational influence of both love of the language and the opportunity to work with children that is afforded via a career in teaching (see Kissau et al., 2018).

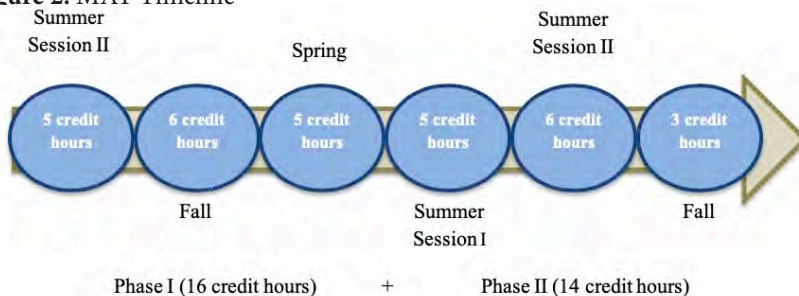
Increasing Enrollment in Foreign Language Teacher Training Programs

With this in mind, program faculty ensured that all required coursework provided candidates with multiple opportunities to spend time in K-12 foreign language classrooms, immersed in the language, and working with children. In this pursuit, faculty developed a logical progression of meaningful clinical experiences that are connected to coursework. For example, in the first semester course focusing on educational equity in urban schools (see Figure 1), candidates are asked to work one-on-one assisting an identified English learner, special needs, or gifted student and to write a brief report describing the work, student progress, and recommendations for continued student improvement. In the second semester foreign language assessment course (see Figure 1), teacher candidates are asked to seek approval from the mentoring teacher to score a set of student work samples, score the work, and provide each student written feedback on strengths and areas for improvement. Completion of these checklists ensures that candidates are provided with experiences that align with what initially drew them to the profession (i.e., the opportunity to work with children and use the target language) and also serves to meet accreditation standards established by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP, 2013) that require teacher preparation programs develop a sequence of meaningful clinical experiences for teacher candidates that are connected to coursework.

Adding language tracks. Ensuring that candidates have adequate content knowledge in the intended language of instruction prior to admission to the program² allowed for yet another program change that expanded the pool of potential candidates and responded to feedback from school partners pertaining to the lack of licensure options for teachers of less commonly taught languages (see Appendix A). Given that (1) UNC Charlotte only offered graduate-level foreign language coursework in Spanish, causing German and French teacher candidates to transfer in coursework completed at other universities, and (2) feedback from program completers indicated they were not always provided a lot of opportunity in their content courses to further develop their oral proficiency (see Appendix A), program faculty decided to remove the mandatory 3 credit-hour content course from the program of study. No longer including this mandatory language, literature, or civilization course in the course sequence allowed the program to focus strictly on enhancing candidate pedagogical skills and to add multiple licensure pathways for aspiring teachers of less commonly taught languages (e.g., Chinese, Arabic, Japanese, Cherokee, Russian). Prior to this change, no university-based teacher preparation program existed in the state for many of these languages, requiring prospective teachers to seek alternative licensure routes that often led to only a regionally-approved license to teach. While few candidates may seek licensure in one of these less commonly taught languages, the distance education format of the re-designed program offered the potential to reach them throughout the state³.

Advanced licensure. An additional strategy employed to increase enrollment in the initial licensure program for aspiring foreign language teachers was to offer the opportunity for program completers to earn an advanced license (master's degree) in an abbreviated time frame (see Figure 2, next page). Upon completion of the 16-credit-hour initial licensure program (Phase I), candidates could

Figure 2. MAT Timeline



choose to complete 14 credit hours of additional online coursework (Phase II) to complete the Master of Arts in Teaching (M.A.T) with a concentration in foreign language education. The opportunity to earn a master’s degree by taking only a small number of additional courses helped distinguish the program from some alternative licensure programs.

As shown in Figure 3 on the next page, the M.A.T. is a 30 credit-hour program leading to the advanced “M” license in a variety of concentrations (e.g., mathematics, science, teaching English as a second language, and foreign language education). Initial coursework in the M.A.T. program (5 credit hours) was intended to be foundational, aligned with partnering school district needs, and shared across all concentrations. The next six credit hours were more specialized and intended to prepare candidates to become instructional leaders in their chosen content area (i.e., foreign language instruction). The final three credit hours consisted of an elective and were tailored to the individual needs of the candidates and/or their schools (e.g., working with English learners or students with special needs).

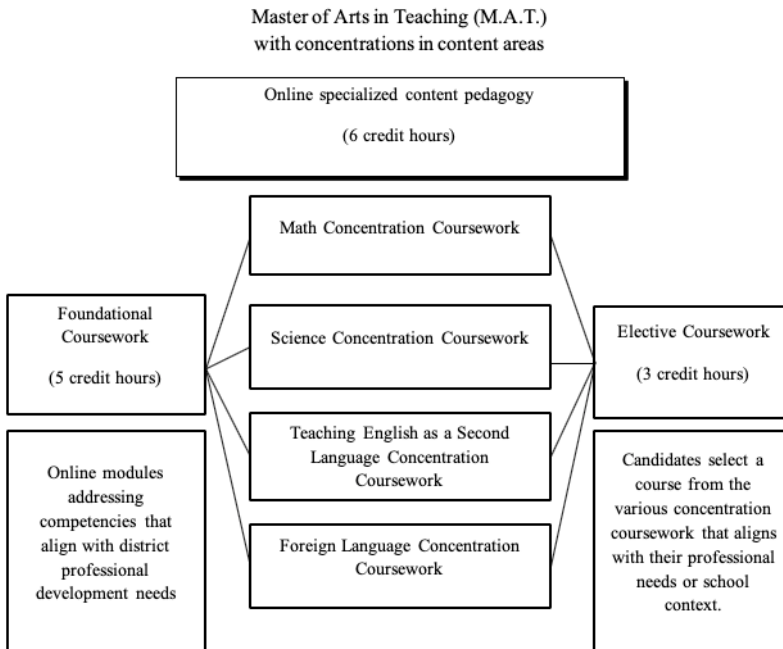
Strategic Partnerships

Recognizing the need for help in increasing program enrollment and that multiple organizations and stakeholders have a vested interest in teacher preparation programs, faculty in the foreign language teacher program sought to forge strategic partnerships. More specifically, in their efforts to recruit aspiring foreign language teachers, they sought support from other foreign language stakeholders, school districts, the Department of Languages and Culture Studies at UNC Charlotte, UNC Charlotte’s graduate school, and external funding agencies.

Foreign language stakeholders. Forging strategic partnerships with organizations like Teach for America that work with aspiring foreign language teachers offers opportunities to draw potential candidates. Teach for America (TFA) is an organization that recruits university graduates to teach high-need subject areas (e.g., Spanish, bilingual education, and English as a second language) in urban schools across the country (Teach for America, 2019). While TFA recruits new teachers, it is not a licensure program. Once a cohort of new teachers has been recruited to a region, TFA familiarizes them with the variety of licensure programs available to them in that region, and allows the recruits to choose the program

Increasing Enrollment in Foreign Language Teacher Training Programs

Figure 3. M.A.T Coursework



that best meets their needs. In fall 2018, program faculty met with representatives of the regional TFA chapter to market their convenient, cost-effective, and streamlined program and provide promotional materials to share with their TFA recruits. While TFA cannot endorse a particular program, faculty hoped that by familiarizing the TFA representations with the many benefits of the program, they might promote it among their foreign language teacher recruits who were still exploring licensure program options.

Foreign language faculty also formed a partnership with the state's department of public instruction that had recently applied for a STARTALK grant to offer intense, summer professional development to aspiring teachers of Chinese and Arabic. Terms of this partnership included offering completers of the professional development the opportunity to use the STARTALK training as a substitution for three credit hours (2 credit-hour course on instructional planning and 1 credit-hour co-requisite lab) toward completion of the 16 credit-hour re-designed graduate certificate program (see Figure 1). By recognizing the training completed during the STARTALK program, and as a result further reducing total program cost and time to completion, foreign language teacher education faculty hoped to lure many of these teachers into the program.

School districts. Building strong relationships with local school districts that hire foreign language teachers is another potentially fruitful strategy to increase enrollment in graduate teacher training programs. Due to the shortage of foreign language teachers, districts often hire unlicensed candidates to fill vacancies and

give them a period of up to three years to complete teacher training. Capitalizing on this pool of potential candidates, foreign language teacher education faculty used the strong relationship they forged over many years with a neighboring school district to negotiate a mutually beneficial partnership. The district agreed to inform prospective, un-credentialed foreign language teachers about the redesigned graduate teacher training program, and foreign language faculty in the program, in turn, offered a high-quality licensure program that is convenient, affordable, time-sensitive, and tailored to the unique needs of the urban district.

Department of Languages and Culture Studies. Although this foreign language teacher training program falls under the responsibility of the college of education, steps were taken to build stronger ties with the Department of Languages and Culture Studies in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences as a recruitment strategy. While hundreds of students enroll in upper-level language courses each semester in the Department of Languages and Culture Studies at UNC Charlotte, only a small number express interest in becoming foreign language teachers and pursue teacher training. To address the disciplinary divide reported in multiple studies between teacher training programs and departments of languages and literature (Cox, Malone, & Winke, 2018; Glisan, Swender, & Surface, 2013; Kissau, McCulloch, Salas, & Pyke, 2011; Modern Language Association, 2007) and recruit more foreign language teacher candidates, teacher education and language and literature faculty collaborated on multiple internal grant opportunities. One such opportunity led to the design and implementation of an undergraduate French course intended to introduce French majors to the requisite skills and responsibilities associated with being a K-12 French teacher (see Kissau et al., 2011). Another collaborative grant proposal led to the development of a proficiency-based course for Spanish majors intended to help candidates reach the minimum expected level of oral proficiency (Advanced Low) required of aspiring foreign language teachers (see Kissau, Davin, & Wang, 2019). Teacher education faculty also collaborated with the chair of the language and literature department to recruit potential foreign language teachers. This collaboration led to the identification of a critical capstone seminar completed by all undergraduate foreign language majors in their final semester prior to graduation. Each semester, foreign language teacher education faculty members visit this capstone seminar to familiarize the students with the many reasons to consider pursuing a career as a foreign language teacher and the graduate teacher training offered on campus that could help them achieve that goal.

Graduate school. Program faculty leveraged the support of their graduate school to recruit new teacher candidates. Graduate schools often have funds to support graduate students and projects that align with the institution's mission. Helping to address the critical shortage of foreign language teachers in a large urban school district aligns well with the Cato College of Education's mission at UNC Charlotte to prepare highly effective teachers who have a positive impact on children and schools in urban settings. With this in mind, program faculty sought and obtained support from their graduate school to earmark funds to provide tuition support to cohorts of aspiring teachers. With this commitment

Increasing Enrollment in Foreign Language Teacher Training Programs

from the Graduate School, foreign language teacher education faculty members at UNC Charlotte have been able to offer tuition support to candidates who enroll in their certificate program. This funding not only serves as an effective recruitment strategy but also responds to concerns expressed by candidates about the high cost of pursuing teacher licensure (see Appendix A).

External funding agencies. Developing partnerships with external grant funding agencies that promote cultural exchanges and immersion experiences for aspiring and practicing teachers is yet another way to potentially increase enrollment in foreign language teacher training programs. With this in mind, foreign language teacher education faculty at UNC Charlotte have partnered with the Office of International Programs on campus to submit successful grant proposals to bring cohorts of English teachers from non-English speaking countries (e.g., Brazil, Saudi Arabia) to campus to hone their English skills and learn more about the American education system. Depending on the length of their stay and program goals, many of these international visitors have enrolled in graduate coursework for aspiring foreign language teachers to learn more about how languages are taught in American schools. While this influx of international students has not led to an increased number of certified teachers in the state, their presence has helped to boost enrollment in program coursework for aspiring teachers, thus helping to maintain program viability.

More recently, foreign language program faculty were part of a grant-writing team that submitted a successful grant to fund an opportunity for a select group of aspiring teachers to receive a living wage while completing their licensure requirements at UNC Charlotte. The grant project focuses on recruiting teachers in under-staffed subject areas (e.g., math, science, foreign language, and English as a Second Language) and placing them in high-need schools. Selected candidates in the program will receive a living wage stipend that covers the full cost of tuition, textbooks and supplies, and additional expenses. Program leaders have set a goal of recruiting 36 teacher candidates over a 3-year period (12/year), approximately six of which will be foreign language teachers (two/year).

Marketing

Once the programmatic changes were in place and the strategic partnerships formed, the faculty sought opportunities to better promote the re-designed program. In this pursuit, they participated in various recruitment events and enhanced their program website.

Recruitment events. University campuses often host events that draw prospective candidates to campus and thus present opportunities for recruitment. Some of these events align well with foreign language teacher education. For example, each year UNC Charlotte holds International Education Week intended to support internationalization and exchange efforts on campus. To encourage greater participation during this week, small grants of up to \$1,000 are available to faculty wishing to host an internationally-themed event on campus. Touting the international nature of speaking and teaching another language, foreign language teacher education faculty have routinely taken advantage of this opportunity

to apply for and receive funds to host an event promoting a career as a foreign language teacher. To generate interest and attract attendees to the hour-long session, the event is advertised broadly, grant funds are used to bring in guest speakers (e.g., the Foreign Language Coordinator for a local school district), and offer a raffle of related prizes (e.g., free registration to the state foreign language teacher conference). Language and literature faculty are also encouraged to bring their students. Program faculty have also attended career fairs and open house events where they advertised their program, promoted a career as a foreign language teacher, and familiarized attendees with the demand for qualified foreign language teachers. Admitted Students Day is yet another event attended by program faculty. During this event, program faculty encourage undergraduate foreign language majors to consider a career as a teacher and familiarize them with their teacher training program.

Program Website. The influence of online advertising cannot be understated. According to a report by Hanover Research (2014, p. 3), “among the most important tools for social and online marketing is an effective and intuitive website.” In recognition of the influence of online advertising, program faculty worked with instructional technology specialists in the college to update the content of their foreign language teacher training program website and make it more attractive, informative, and user-friendly. One related strategy was to work with faculty in the Office of Distance Education to create a promotional video featured on the program’s landing page. The three-minute promotional video highlighted many of the aforementioned features of the re-designed program (i.e., convenience, affordability) while also providing personalized commentary from former students and employers. Program faculty also used the website to address some of the concerns among perspective teacher candidates that emerged during their study investigating the motivational draws and deterrents related to becoming a foreign language teacher (see Kissau et al., 2018). After learning that some potential foreign language teachers are deterred from the profession due to fear of failing challenging and costly licensure tests, the decision was made to not only infuse greater candidate preparation for these assessments into the program (e.g., support seminars, practice tasks, and workshops), but also to advertise high candidate pass rates on the program website.

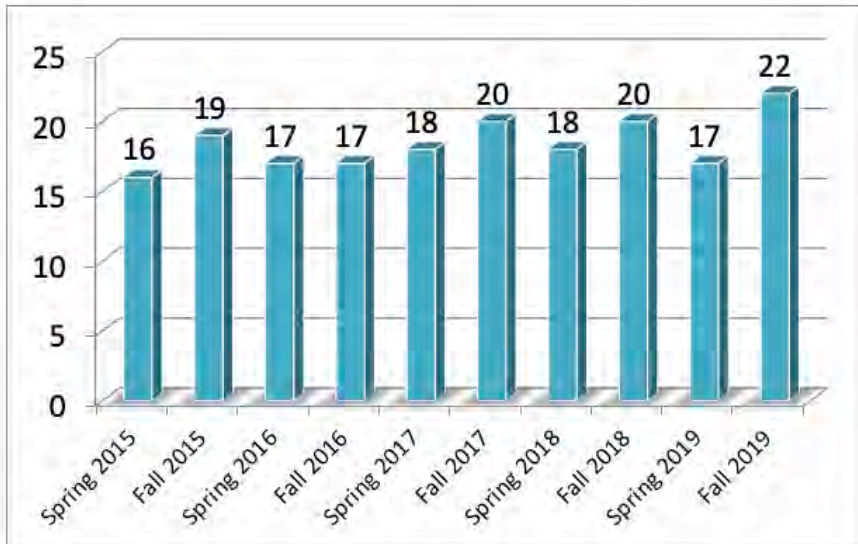
Successes

Data collected each semester from UNC Charlotte’s Office of Institutional Research afforded foreign language teacher education faculty the opportunity to examine the impact of the above-mentioned recruitment strategies on program enrollment. As evidenced in Figure 4, enrollment in the graduate certificate program in foreign language teacher education has increased from 17 in spring 2019 to 22 in fall 2019 (+29%). Bolstering these numbers and further contributing to the sustainability of program course offerings was a small grant-funded cohort of 12 Saudi English as a foreign language teachers completing an immersion experience on campus in 2019 to enhance their English skills and learn student-centered language teaching strategies. While graduate school policies⁴ and student

Increasing Enrollment in Foreign Language Teacher Training Programs

visa restrictions that limit online instruction prevented these teachers from enrolling in the graduate certificate program and online courses, the cohort did provide sufficient enrollment to offer a separate, face-to-face section of two of the required program courses (foreign language methodology and foreign language assessment) specifically for the Saudis. As a result, while many foreign language teacher training programs are being discontinued due to insufficient enrollment (Garcia et al., 2019), the Saudi cohort provided sufficient enrollment to offer two sections of program courses.

Figure 4. Enrollment - Graduate Certificate in Foreign Language Education



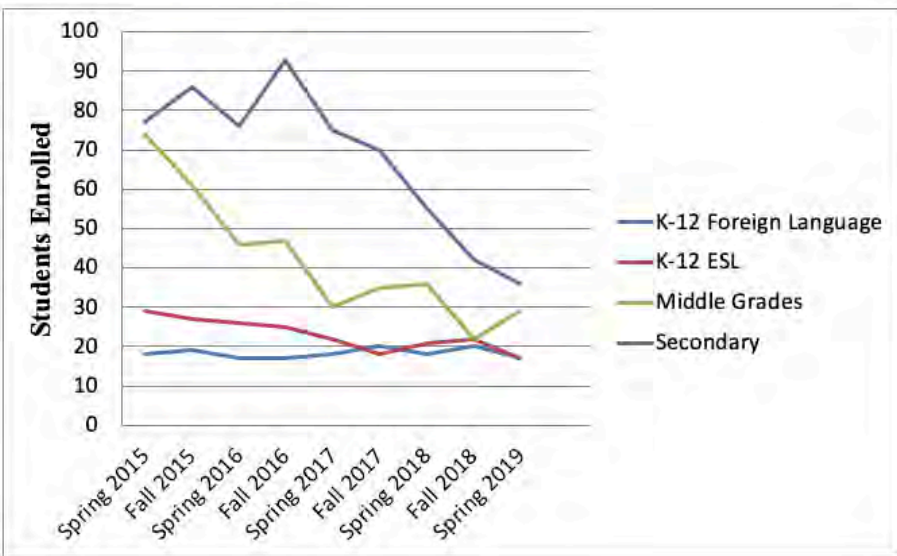
While the number of candidates in the program remains small and the increase in enrollment modest, comparison with other initial licensure programs for graduate students at the same university suggest that the foreign language teacher training program enjoyed greater success in sustaining enrollment than other graduate certificate programs across the college. For example, enrollment in the graduate certificate program for aspiring English as a second language teachers declined from 29 in Spring 2015 to 17 in Spring 2019 (-41%), and enrollment of middle grades teacher candidates decreased from 74 to 29 (-60%). During this same time frame, the number of teacher candidates in the graduate certificate program for foreign language teachers increased slightly from 16 to 17 (+6%). As shown in Figure 5 on the next page, of the four graduate-level, initial licensure programs, only the program for aspiring foreign language teachers experienced growth in enrollment during the time period (2015-2019).

Discussion and Directions for Future Research

At a time of declining enrollment in foreign language teacher training programs across the country and the subsequent closure of many programs that prepare

aspiring foreign language teachers (Garcia et al., 2019), the recruitment strategies presented above appear to have been beneficial in helping to maintain, and even increase enrollment. It is noteworthy that during a period (2015-2019) when enrollment in some graduate programs dropped precipitously (e.g., secondary education), enrollment in the graduate certificate program for aspiring foreign language teachers increased by more than 37%, from a low of 16 in 2015 to 22 in 2019. While impressive, this finding should be considered cautiously. When working with small numbers, even slight enrollment growth can result in a significant percentage increase.

Figure 5. Graduate Certificate Enrollment by Licensure Area



An additional limitation to consider when interpreting the study’s results is that they do not establish a specific correlation between enrollment growth and the implementation of the strategies described above. In other words, none of the strategies were individually assessed to ascertain their impact on enrollment. To identify which of the many strategies employed by the foreign language teacher education faculty at UNC Charlotte were most impactful in enhancing enrollment, and thus serve to further guide and inform recruitment initiatives, future research might focus on individual recruitment strategies or survey teacher candidates enrolled in a foreign language teacher training program to see which recruitment strategies drew them to the program.

It should also be noted that many of the recruitment strategies outlined above are still in their infancy, and thus their full impact has yet to be seen. The re-designed program, for example, that offers a convenient, affordable, and streamlined path to licensure for aspiring foreign language teachers was just launched in summer 2019. Since many school districts attempt to fill teacher vacancies in the late summer and early fall each year, it is possible that many foreign language teachers were

Increasing Enrollment in Foreign Language Teacher Training Programs

hired too late to apply for summer or fall admission to the re-designed program. A longitudinal study tracking enrollment in subsequent semesters to see the impact of the recruitment strategies over time would be informative. Involving multiple institutions in the implementation of the above-mentioned strategies and monitoring their enrollment patterns and trends would also strengthen the results.

Conclusion

Despite these limitations, the study's results are important and should be considered. While waiting a year or two to monitor enrollment trends at UNC Charlotte and involving other institutions in the project might serve to strengthen the study's findings, the profession cannot afford to wait. It is worth repeating that the shortage of foreign language teachers has been reported as the worst on record (ACTFL, 2017) and that it is being exacerbated by declining enrollment in teacher training programs. Steps need to be taken now to recruit more aspiring foreign language teachers to the profession. To help address the inadequate supply of qualified foreign language teachers in the United States and to maintain program viability, foreign language teacher educators should consider the many recruitment initiatives outlined above. When viewed holistically, the data suggest that these strategies were beneficial in maintaining, and even increasing enrollment in a graduate program for aspiring foreign language teachers at UNC Charlotte that had, in recent years, experienced a significant decline in enrollment in teacher training programs.

It is worth repeating that the shortage of foreign language teachers has been reported as the worst on record (ACTFL, 2017) and that it is being exacerbated by declining enrollment in teacher training programs. Steps need to be taken now to recruit more aspiring foreign language teachers to the profession.

Notes.

1. During the first semester of the year-long internship, candidates were expected to complete 30 hours of clinical experiences in the same classroom in which they would complete the full-time internship the following semester.

2. To be accepted into the program, all graduates of an accredited university could demonstrate adequate content knowledge in their intended language of instruction via (1) an undergraduate degree majoring in the intended language of instruction; (2) an undergraduate degree with the equivalent of a major in the target language (i.e., a minimum of 24 hours of post-secondary coursework); or (3) a passing score on the corresponding Praxis Subject Assessment or a score of Advanced Low or higher on ACTFL's Oral Proficiency Interview and Writing Proficiency Test.

3. To avoid difficulty finding clinical placements and student teaching internship sites, candidates seeking licensure in a less commonly taught language were required to be practicing teachers in the licensure area. In other words, to be eligible for the program, a candidate seeking a license to teach Arabic, would have

to already be employed as an Arabic teacher, but not yet licensed. Such candidates would complete clinical experiences and the required internship semester in their own classroom.

4. To be eligible for admission to a graduate program at UNC Charlotte, international students from non-English-speaking countries are required to demonstrate English proficiency on the TOEFL. Since participants of the grant-funded Saudi cohort had not completed the TOEFL, they were not eligible for admission to the Graduate Certificate in Foreign Language Education. Instead, they applied to complete two of the required courses as post-baccalaureate, non-degree-seeking students.

References

- ACTFL, (2017). Educators rising: Recruiting world language teachers. Retrieved from <https://www.actfl.org/news/press-releases/educators-rising-recruiting-world-language-teachers>
- American Association of State Colleges and Universities, (2017). *Preparing teachers in today's challenging context: Key issues, policy directions and implications for leaders of AASCU universities*. Retrieved at <http://www.aascu.org/AcademicAffairs/TeacherEdReport.pdf>
- Commission on Language Learning. (2017). *America's Languages: Investing in language education for the 21st century*. Retrieved from <https://www.amacad.org/publication/americas-languages>
- Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). (2013). CAEP accreditation standards. Retrieved from http://caepnet.files.wordpress.com/2013/09/final_board_approved1.pdf
- Cox, T., Malone, M., & Winke, P. (2018). Future directions in assessment: Influences of standards and implications for language learning. *Foreign Language Annals*, 51, 104-115.
- Garcia, P., Moser, K., & Davis-Wiley, P. (2019). Facing reality: A survey of methods instructors' perspectives on world language teacher development. *Foreign Language Annals*, 52, 165-182.
- Glisan, E., & Donato, R. (2017). *Enacting the Work of Language Instruction: High-Leverage Teaching Practices*. Alexandria, VA : The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages
- Glisan, E., Swender, E., & Surface, E. (2013). Oral proficiency standards and foreign language teacher candidates: Current findings and future research directions. *Foreign Language Annals*, 46, 264-289.
- Granados, A. (2017). The impact of alternative teacher prep in Texas, North Carolina. Retrieved from <https://www.ednc.org/2017/06/29/alternative-teacher-prep-comes-north-carolina/>
- Guha, R., Hylar, M. E., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2016). *The teacher residency: An innovative model for preparing teachers*. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.

Increasing Enrollment in Foreign Language Teacher Training Programs

- Hanover Research (2014). Trends in higher education marketing, recruitment, and technology. Retrieved from <https://www.hanoverresearch.com/media/Trends-in-Higher-Education-Marketing-Recruitment-and-Technology-2.pdf>
- Kissau, S., Davin, K., & Wang, C. (2018). Aspiring world language teachers: Their influences, perceptions, and commitment to teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 78, 174-182.
- Kissau, S., Davin, K., & Wang, C. (2019). Enhancing Teacher Candidate Oral Proficiency through Interdepartmental Collaboration. *Foreign Language Annals*, 52, 358-372.
- Kissau, S., McCullough, H., Salas, S., & Pyke, G. (2010). "A total disconnect:" Disciplinary divides and the teaching of French. *NECTFL Review*, 66, 30-47. Available at <http://www2.dickinson.edu/prorg/nectfl/review66.pdf>
- Modern Language Association. (2007). *Foreign languages and higher education: New structures for a changed world*. Retrieved from <https://www.mla.org/Resources/Research/Surveys-Reports-and-Other-Documents/Teaching-Enrollments-and-Programs/Foreign-Languages-and-Higher-Education-New-Structures-for-a-Changed-World>
- Roberts, J. (2017). *Coaching teacher candidates: 4 things we learned*. Deans for Impact. Retrieved from <https://deansforimpact.org/coaching-teacher-candidates-4-things-learned>
- Skorton, D., & Altschuler, G. (2012). America's foreign language deficit. *Forbes*. Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/collegeprose/2012/08/27/americas-foreign-language-deficit/#170d332e4ddc>
- Sutcher, L., Darling-Hammond, L., & Carver-Thomas, D. (2016). *A coming crisis in teaching? Teacher supply, demand, and shortages in the U.S.* Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.
- Swanson, P. (2010). The shortage of America's foreign language teachers: A review of the literature. *Journal of Teacher Recruitment and Retention*, 1, 1-17.
- Swanson, P. (2012a). Second/foreign language teacher efficacy: Multiple factors and their relation to professional attrition. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 68, 78-101.
- Swanson, P. (2012b). The congruence of vocational interests and the workplace environment: Reducing the language teacher shortage. *Language Teaching Research*, 16, 519-537.
- Swanson, P., & Huff, R. (2010). Georgia's rural foreign language teachers' sense of efficacy and how it relates to teacher attrition. *World Languages and Cultures Faculty Publications*, 54, 1-34.
- Swanson, P., & Mason, S. (2018). The world language teacher shortage: Taking a new direction. *Foreign Language Annals*, 51, 251-262.
- Swanson, P. & Moore, A. D. (2006). Changing student misperceptions about foreign language teaching: A research-based approach to improving recruitment practices. *The NECTFL Review*, 59, 6-27.
- Teach for America. (2019). Teach for America is looking for promising leaders to take on educational inequity. Retrieved at <https://www.teachforamerica.org>

NECTFL Review 85

U.S. Department of Education (2017). *National teacher shortage areas 1990-91 through 2017-2018*, Washington, DC: USDOE Office of Postsecondary Education.

Appendix A. Key Findings from Program Data Collection and Analysis

Data Source	Finding
School Partner Summit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates are not always well prepared to work in urban settings. • Some candidates lack sufficient proficiency in the target language. • There is no licensure option for teachers of less commonly taught languages (Chinese and Japanese).
Program Completer Exit Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates lack confidence in their ability to meet the needs of English learners, and children with special learning needs (e.g., gifted students and students with learning difficulties). • Candidates want greater preparation in managing their classrooms, differentiating instruction, integrating technology to enhance instruction, and using student data to guide and inform instructional decision-making.
Focus Group Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates and mentor teachers recommend greater opportunity for teacher candidates to practice and apply what they learn in their coursework and more opportunity to spend time in K-12 schools. • Mentor teachers suggested candidates receive greater classroom management preparation. • Candidates expressed concern about the limited opportunities provided in language and literature coursework to practice their language skills. • Candidates expressed concern about the high cost of completing the licensure program and crave the convenience of online instruction. • Faculty expressed some concern about the quality of online instruction and their lack of training in developing online coursework. • Faculty and supervisors reported that too many topics are addressed in coursework at the expense of candidate mastery of critical teaching skills.
Performance-based Assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost half of all foreign language teacher candidates struggle to reach Advanced Low proficiency on the OPI. • Candidates do well on Task 1 of edTPA (Planning for Instruction) and struggle to meet expectations on Task 3 (Assessing Student Learning).