# Developing a peer mentorship program for world language educators in Pennsylvania

Rich Madel, *Plymouth Whitemarsh High School (PA)*

## Abstract

Responding to concerning reports regarding common world language classroom practices failing to meet a communicative standard (Burke, 2011; 2014), acknowledging the critical shortage of teachers in the United States, and reacting to the call by Madel (2020) to leverage teacher leadership to promote pedagogical development within the field, this article describes the planning, development, and implementation process of a peer mentoring program for world language teachers in Pennsylvania. This program was designed with the specific intention of supporting novice teachers while simultaneously providing meaningful leadership opportunities for experienced teachers, both design aspects expected to impact retention efforts according to a review of the literature. Opportunities to evaluate the program's effectiveness empirically are also explored.

*Keywords: peer mentoring; teacher leadership; teacher retention; teacher attrition; foreign language education*

This article describes the multiple facets of developing a dynamic peer mentorship program for world language educators in the state of Pennsylvania. The rationale for such a project, the chronological phases of developing a program to meet the state's specific needs and professional context, and opportunities to evaluate the program's efficacy empirically as it relates to key criteria and established literature are also discussed. While this description indicates the process relative to the particular needs of the Pennsylvanian context, details here are intended to provide a tangible guide for organizations that may benefit from developing similar programs within their own settings.

## RELATED LITERATURE

### Project Rationale

World language education is rich with potential benefits for both teachers and students alike (e.g., Fox, Corretjer, & Webb, 2019). Nonetheless, there are areas of concern for the

current and future wellbeing of the discipline that make the project described in this article timely, relevant, and responsive to the field's needs. First, in spite of the best efforts of leading second language pedagogues and researchers for some decades, many classrooms are still promoting approaches to language learning that fail to meet a communicative standard. In her observations from the field, Burke (2011, 2014) described consistent practices that are characteristic of world language classrooms: (a) a heavy emphasis on non-contextual explicit grammar teaching and practice; (b) abundant use of translations; (c) use of English subverting ACTFL's (2010) 90% target language recommendation; and (d) an abbreviated exploration of target language cultures. The result of these classroom practices is often that students lose interest and abandon language study well before achieving functional proficiency (Commission on Language Learning, 2016, 2017; Pufahl & Rhodes, 2011; Wesely, 2010).

The second concern is only showing signs of increasing gravity. That is, the field is experiencing a critical shortage of world language teachers in the United States. This phenomenon has been well documented (Sutcher, Darling-Hamming, & Carver-Thomas, 2016; Swanson & Mason, 2018; U.S. Department of Education, 2016) and was reported by ACTFL (2017) to be the worst on record. For many educational contexts, the COVID-19 pandemic only exacerbated these concerns (e.g., Carver-Thomas, Leung, & Burns, 2021; Dugger, 2021; Moser & Wei, 2021). Furthermore, Murphy, DeArmand, and Guin (2003) found that world language teaching positions were the most difficult for schools to fill. In Pennsylvania, the rate of teacher certifications has declined by two-thirds between 2010 and 2015 (Benshoff, 2016). According to data published by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (2021), world language-specific certifications have experienced an alarmingly parallel change: a 65% decline of Instructional I certificates[1] issued by the state from 2010 through 2020 (see Table 1). By comparison, Rodriguez and King (2020), as cited by Madel (2022a), noted a -44% trend in world language education degrees conferred in the United States from 2009-2019. As a result, retaining teachers who do enter the field is of critical importance especially in the face of an equally problematic challenge. Namely, Swanson and Huff (2010) showed that attrition rates among world language teachers exceed the 17% to 30% range reported for all classroom teachers within their first five years in the profession.

**Table 1**
*World Language Educator Certificates Issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (2021)*

| School Year | Instructional I Certificates Issued*† |
|---|---|
| 2010-2011 | 368 |
| 2011-2012 | 264 |
| 2012-2013 | 318 |

---

1. The Pennsylvania Department of Education (2022) offers two levels of certification. Level 1 certification, known as Instructional I certificates, is the initial certification awarded and is valid for a limited number of services years until the educator completes specific requirements, at which time the Instruction I certificate may be converted to an Instructional II certificate.

| 2013-2014 | 270 |
| --- | --- |
| 2014-2015 | 216 |
| 2015-2016 | 186 |
| 2016-2017 | 107 |
| 2017-2018 | 128 |
| 2018-2019 | 127 |
| 2019-2020 | 127 |

*Frequency totals include certificates issued as in-state, out of state, and add-on.
†Languages represented: ASL, Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Latin, Portuguese, Spanish, Turkish, and Urdu.

Acknowledging the realities presented by the practices that undermine language programs' communicative goals (Commission on Language Learning, 2016, 2017; Pufahl & Rhodes, 2011; Wesely, 2010) coupled with the field's ever-pressing challenge of teacher shortages and attrition (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2021), The Pennsylvania State Modern Language Association (PSMLA), the commonwealth's leading professional organization for language educators, determined that Pennsylvania would benefit from implementing a peer mentorship program as a means to (1) support novice world language educators and (2) elevate the status and voice of experienced teacher leaders. Relative to the former point, Podolsky et al. (2016) acknowledged the invaluable role that peer mentoring plays in effective new-teacher support. Specific to world language educators, Mason (2017) showed the significance that connections with other world language teachers play in language teacher retention. More broadly, studies focusing on teacher leadership (e.g., Ingersoll, Dougherty, & Sirinides, 2017; Teach Plus, n. d.) have shown that providing experienced teachers with meaningful new responsibilities and roles can impact the likelihood that a teacher chooses to remain in the profession.
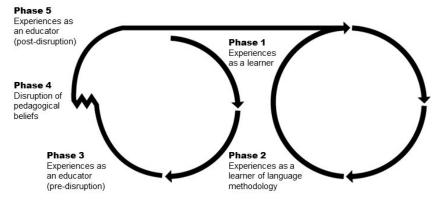
### Teacher Leadership as a Pedagogical Change Agent

A peer mentorship program is recommended specifically by Madel (2020) as a means to break the cycle of pedagogical transference through generations and leverage teacher leadership, experience, and expertise to support colleagues in their professional development as communicative language teachers. This conclusion derived from a study of over 600 language teachers in the United States to understand the relationship between the participants' perception of what influenced their classroom practices and their value of instruction that regards accuracy over communication. On one hand, Madel found that language teachers left to their own devices transfer teaching practices in a cyclical fashion and largely uninterrupted throughout generations. That is to say that throughout three consecutive phases of an educator's development (i.e., experiences as a language learner, experiences as a learner of language methods, and experiences as an educator), they are influenced by variables that associate statistically with practices that tend to value

a more explicit, accuracy-driven approach to language learning. Namely, the variables that correlated positively with less-than-communicative practices were: (1) how they were taught themselves, (2) their college-level methodology courses, (3) language textbooks, (4) accuracy-focused assessments, and (5) an intuitive sense of "what works" in the classroom. Considering the sense of silo and isolation that teachers often experience (Dussault et al., 1997; Dodor, Sira, & Hausafus, 2010; Ostovar-Nameghi & Sheikhahmadi, 2016), Madel suggested that the omnipresence of these influences in the world language teaching context perpetuate a generational cycle of a grammar-driven approach to language learning as exemplified by Burke (2011, 2014).

On the other hand, Madel (2020) identified other variables with an inverse association of accuracy-driven practices that have the potential to disrupt the aforementioned cycle of pedagogical transference. This alternative cycle, referred to as the Disrupted Cycle of Pedagogical Transference (D-CPT) and seen in Figure 1, shares the initial three phases as previously mentioned but suggested a fourth phase during which pedagogical beliefs are challenged. In this phase, variables that associated with more communicative practices include second language acquisition research and/or materials based in such, membership in online professional learning networks and traditional in-person communities, formal world language-focused professional development, and a teacher's overall sense of self-efficacy. These variables share a qualitative likeness characterized by the invaluable role of teacher leadership. To that end, Madel joined others (e.g., Swanson, 2010) to call for the development of structured relationships between novice educators in the field and experienced teacher leaders to further support their successful growth as communicative language teachers.

**Figure 1**
*The disrupted cycle of pedagogical transference (D-CPT) (Madel, 2020)*



The Cyclical Nature of Language Pedagogy Development and Transference: The Disrupted Cycle

**PROJECT DEVELOPMENT**

As a result of the rationale outlined above, PSMLA approved the development of a peer mentoring program as part of the Mead Leadership Fellowship offered by the Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (NECTFL). Consistent with the charter of the NECTFL Mead Leadership Fellows Program to support individuals in the development of a project that contributes to the world language teaching profession and advances quality language instruction, this proposed project sought to focus its support on both the profession

at large as well as on effective, research-based classroom practices. NECTFL's support for this project was critical in that its network houses exemplary peer mentorship programs already in implementation and, as such, the organization was well suited to facilitate the proposed fact-finding process and program development stages described below. For example, Madel (2020) identified the Foreign Language Educators of New Jersey's (FLENJ) model specifically as an exemplar for state organizations to promote more structured collaboration among world language educators. FLENJ described their opportunity as one that is "designed to support novice world language teachers over a three-year period and, in doing so, help develop leadership in New Jersey's world language teaching community" (FLENJ, 2019, para. 1).

The project proposed an action plan to develop the program that consisted of three phases (see Table 2). Each year consisted of a specific phase of development that provided a sequential primary focus beginning with a research phase, followed by a program development phase, and ending with the program implementation phase. Each of these phases are described below.

**Table 2**

*Action Plan Describing the Phases of Development to Design and Implement the PSMLA Peer Mentorship Program*

| Year | Primary Focus | Steps |
|---|---|---|
| I | Research | Research and identify needs of novice world language teachers in Pennsylvania. |
| | | Develop interview and evaluation protocol for mentor programs currently implemented. |
| | | Contact associations and organizations to identify and evaluate successful elements of mentorship programs. |
| II | Program Development | Develop program proposal for PSMLA approval and identify supports needed. |
| | | Present/propose program to PSMLA leadership. |
| | | Share research and program proposal at NECTFL. |
| | | Develop research design/methodology to evaluate program efficacy. |
| | | Identify/Recruit novice and experienced teachers. |
| III | Program Implementation | Collect baseline data from recruited teachers. |
| | | Partner mentor/mentees. |
| | | Organize orientation/induction event. |
| | | Facilitate mentorship communication and support. |
| | | Identify/Recruit novice and experienced teachers for new cohort. |
| | | Collect Year 1 data from participants to evaluate efficacy of intervention. |

## Phase 1: Research

During the first year of program development, informal research was conducted to understand the unique needs of novice world language educators in the state of Pennsylvania. In doing so, the author utilized his personal network to ensure that those most knowledgeable of the needs of novice language teachers had input in the process. Indeed, six university professors responsible for their respective institution's world language-specific

credentialing program responded to the question: "From your experiences working with teacher candidates, what are the areas of greatest need for our newly credentialed language teachers?" The responses overwhelmingly echoed the need for additional support related to classroom and behavior management above all else.

In addition to researching the needs of novice world language teachers in the state of Pennsylvania, mentor programs that were already being implemented within the NECTFL region were reviewed and evaluated. In particular, peer mentor programs were identified as a part of the Connecticut Council of Language Teachers, the Foreign Language Association of Virginia, the New York State Association of Foreign Language Teachers, and—as previously mentioned—FLENJ. Reviewing publicly available information and speaking with knowledgeable representatives of the programs and associations revealed a variety of qualitative differences among the programs already implemented. For example, while most programs appeared to be one year in length, FLENJ's peer mentoring fellowship seeks a three-year commitment. Other notable differences included frequency, modality (i.e., virtual, hybrid, or in-person), and content of mentor/mentee meetings. While some programs were geared toward informal networking, other programs established a protocol of logged exchanges between participants.

## Phase 2: Program Development

After collecting information regarding the needs of novice world language educators with the insight provided by those who work most closely with teacher candidates in differing contexts throughout the state and also reviewing programs already in existence, an initial program draft was developed. The following describes the program's expressed intentions by PSMLA (2022):

> The Pennsylvania State Modern Language Association (PSMLA) Peer Mentoring Program is designed to support novice world language teachers while simultaneously recognizing and further developing teacher leadership among experienced Pennsylvania world language educators. PSMLA members with fewer than three years of teaching experience are invited to apply to be mentees. Mentor applicants are also expected to be PSMLA members and should have at least eight years of experience teaching a world language. (para. 1)

Four goals were identified relative to the program's impact on world language education in Pennsylvania:

1. Support novice world language teachers in the development of successful communicative language teaching practices;
2. Support teacher retention efforts;
3. Recognize and elevate the presence of world language teacher leaders;
4. Introduce novice world language teachers to PSMLA and encourage a continued relationship with the organization, its leadership, and professional learning community.

In developing specific aspects of the program, it was clear that key determinations needed to be made regarding (1) the length of participation for mentors/mentees, (2) the frequency and modality of interactions between participants, and (3) the support focus for mentees. These aspects and their rationale are described individually below.

### Length of participation

While a three-year program like that of FLENJ would almost certainly produce tangible dividends for the participants, the organization determined that the length of commitment might appear too daunting to recruit new participants into a program that has not yet

established a reputation in the state. As a result, the intended length of commitment for both mentors and mentees was decided to only be one year. Recognizing the benefit of novice teachers having exposure to multiple experienced classroom practitioners, PSMLA also decided that mentees can be afforded the opportunity to re-apply for an additional year of involvement as a means of extending their participation and placement with an additional mentor.

## Frequency and modality of interactions

Considering the relative short nature of a single year of participation, mentor/mentee pairs are expected to interact synchronously at least once a month. These interactions are logged and submitted for review in three distinct intervals during the year. Submitting evidence of mentor pairs' interactions serves to ensure appropriate participation and also provide opportunities to offer additional support in accordance with the pair's expressed concerns. While face-to-face interactions afford certain benefits to interpersonal relationships and exchanges, the vast size of Pennsylvania and the burden that would be placed on participants made requiring exclusive in-person interactions a challenge. States or organizations with a smaller geographic footprint would have more latitude in establishing expectations for in-person engagement. Instead, the singular in-person meeting would take place during the state's annual conference held traditionally in the fall. It was determined that the mode of all other interactions could be coordinated between the mentor/mentee pairs at their discretion.

## Support focus for mentees

The foundational focus of support for mentees concerns their pedagogical development as effective communicative language teachers. To provide focused but also varied support, the year-long mentorship program splits the experience into three district phases wherein each third has a specific practice-related emphasis for mentor/mentee pairs. Considering the unanimous feedback provided by the university leaders most experienced with world language teacher candidates, the first phase focuses on classroom management and routines in the target language. To begin each phase, the partners work together to establish a SMART goal and identify observable and measurable evidence of the mentee's progress (see Brown, Leonard, & Arthur-Kelly, 2016). The acronymic goal setting template guides the pairs to develop specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-bound objectives. Upon reflecting on the first phase's goal, actions, and evidence toward the attainment of the goal, the second phase allows mentor/mentees to develop a subsequent goal that either continues the first phase goal or establishes a new goal relative to the personalized needs of the individual mentee.

The cycle continues once more: For the last third of the program experience, mentorship pairs develop a goal grounded in the work or experience of further professional learning. The Association determined particularly valuable considering the work by Madel (2020) that showed a relationship between engagement with world language-specific professional learning opportunities and/or second language acquisition research with an increased value for communicative language teaching practices. Mentorship pairs have the option to either attend a professional learning experience together and develop a goal related to the topic or they can ground their work in a publication that is provided to all participants that specifically connects second language acquisition research to classroom practices (Henshaw & Hawkins, 2022).

A complete month-by-month timeline of the year-long program as it was developed including the various program activities within each phase can be seen in Table 3.

**Table 3**

*Timeline Describing the Chronology of the One-Year Peer Mentoring Program*

| PHASE | MONTH | PROGRAM ACTIVITY |
|---|---|---|
| **Program Planning** | **July** | • Mentor and mentee applications are reviewed<br>• Mentor/Mentee pairs are created<br>• Acceptance communications are distributed<br>• Collect participant baseline data |
| | **August** | • Recognition letters sent to program members' schools and supervisors<br>• Virtual program kickoff meeting (late August)<br>  • Establish Phase 1 Goal |
| **PHASE 1**<br>*Focus*:<br>*Classroom management and routines in the target language* | **September** | • Mentor-mentee collaboration<br>  • Minimum 1 synchronous contact (virtual or in-person)<br>• Continue Phase 1 Goal |
| | **October** | • Mentor-mentee collaboration<br>  • Minimum 1 synchronous contact (virtual or in-person)<br>• PSMLA Fall Conference<br>  • Special closed PSMLA Peer Mentoring Program session during Conference<br>• Continue Phase 1 Goal |
| | **November** | • Mentor-mentee collaboration<br>  • Minimum 1 synchronous contact (virtual or in-person)<br>• Continue Phase 1 Goal<br>• Submit contact log/Phase 1 Goal Reflection |
| **PHASE 2**<br>*Focus*:<br>*Progressive development related to individual needs of participants* | **December** | • Mentor-mentee collaboration<br>  • Minimum 1 synchronous contact (virtual or in-person)<br>• Establish Phase 2 Goal<br>  • Option 1: Progressive development of Phase 1 Goal<br>  • Option 2: Establish new goal target/focus |
| | **January** | • Mentor-mentee collaboration<br>  • Minimum 1 synchronous contact (virtual or in-person)<br>• Continue Phase 2 Goal |
| | **February** | • Mentor-mentee collaboration<br>  • Minimum 1 synchronous contact (virtual or in-person)<br>• Virtual meeting to share expectations to ground Phase 3 Goal in professional learning or book study<br>• Continue Phase 2 Goal<br>• Submit contact log/Phase 2 Goal Reflection |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **PHASE 3**<br>*Focus:*<br>*Grounding*<br>*practice in*<br>*professional*<br>*learning* | **March** | • Mentor-mentee collaboration<br>   • Minimum 1 synchronous contact (virtual or in-person)<br>• Establish Phase 3 Goal in coordination with book study or professional development experience (e.g., PSMLA Spring Workshop) |
| | **April** | • Mentor-mentee collaboration<br>   • Minimum 1 synchronous contact (virtual or in-person)<br>• Continue Phase 3 Goal |
| | **May** | • Mentor-mentee collaboration<br>   • Minimum 1 synchronous contact (virtual or in-person)<br>• Continue Phase 3 Goal |
| **Program Planning** | **June** | • Virtual Program Closure Meeting<br>• Collect program efficacy data and feedback<br>• Submit contact log<br>• Submit Phase 3 Goal Reflection<br>• Submit Act 48 Reflection<br>• Participation certificates shared<br>• Act 48 credit submitted<br>• Application deadline, June 30 |

As noted in Table 2 above, the final steps of the program development stage were to establish specific criteria that could be used to evaluate the program's effectiveness and engage in a messaging campaign to solicit participation in the program by the state association's members. Research opportunities grounded in this experience are described in a subsequent section of this article.

### Phase 3: Program Implementation

The final phase of the development process to establish the PSMLA Peer Mentorship Program is characterized in large part by putting into action the preceding plans and decisions. First, upon accepting participants into the program as mentors or mentees, baseline data are collected in order to establish the initial points of comparison to inform the program's efficacy and its impact on individual participants. As shown in the chronology outlined in Table 3 above, mentor/mentee pairs are made before the traditional school year begins. As such, the end of August indicates the commencement of the year-long program with a virtual event to orient all members to the program's goals and expectations and also provide an opportunity for mentor pairs to establish their first phase SMART goal. Throughout the year mentees develop personalized goals with the support of their mentors, record logs of monthly synchronous interactions, submit evidence of participation, and meet both in-person and virtually at various intervals. The program ends with a final program meeting, a collection of post-intervention data to explore the program's effectiveness and suggest improvements before repeating the process and beginning the program anew.

### Evaluating the Efficacy of Pennsylvania's Peer Mentoring Program

As a result of well-documented evidence to support the value of peer mentorships in teacher development (e.g., Mason, 2017; Podolsky et al., 2016), there is a healthy amount of literature regarding general experiences pertaining to participation in peer mentoring programs. One study, in particular, aligns with the goals and context of PSMLA's Peer Mentoring Program and can serve as a guide to evaluate its impact on the participants. Kissau and King (2015) investigated the perceived benefits of a newly initiated peer

mentoring project between 27 graduate student mentors and 27 mentees who were completing the final requirements of the participating institution's licensure program. Their study's research questions and data collection method that invited both qualitative and quantitative analysis would be well suited to be replicated in this new context. The questions they posed to investigate, while simple, were fundamental: (1) To what extent do mentees perceive the mentoring relationship to be beneficial? and (2) to what extent do mentors perceive the mentoring relationship to be beneficial? The results of the study suggested that a peer mentorship experience between world language teachers can be a mutually beneficial experience. The authors also provided aspects of the program that they believe facilitated the positive experience: a nonjudgmental, supportive, and collaborative partnership and biographic commonalities such as age and amount of previous teaching experience.

Further, to understand if a program such as PSMLA's Peer Mentoring Program has an impact on teachers' pedagogical development, a pre-test/post-test design can be utilized during the initial and final data collection opportunities described above. Madel's (2020) construct to determine teacher's overall value of explicit grammar instruction was proven to correlate strongly with a teacher's perceived pedagogical focus between accuracy and communication (r = .56, n = 597, p < .001). The pre-test/post-test intervals can also be used to collect data regarding the program participants' perceived likelihood to remain in the profession, thus informing the program's efficacy related to teacher retention. To provide additional insight regarding a variable discussed in this paper, outcome means can be compared according to groups based on length of program participation (i.e., one year versus two years).

Involvement in the PSMLA Peer Mentoring Program also provides opportunities to qualitatively reflect on the goals that mentor and mentee pairs develop. This content analysis can provide insight on the perceived deficits of novice teachers and also determine worthwhile interventions as a result of the collaborative effort. Considering the work by Swanson (2010) that underscored the relationship between teacher attrition rates to the perceptions of low teacher self-efficacy, trends in pairs' goal setting may suggest ways that teacher preparation programs and new teacher induction experiences can better anticipate the challenges that novice teachers may face.

### Conclusion

This paper presented the state of language teaching in the United States and, specifically, Pennsylvania as it pertains to the need for a peer mentoring opportunity geared toward new and experienced world language educators. As a result, the PSMLA Peer Mentoring Program was developed as described above. The facets of its development were explained in detail so as to encourage other organizations to consider the implementation of like programs in an effort to support teachers entering the field and provide worthwhile leadership opportunities for educators that have amassed valuable classroom experience. Lastly, this articled described opportunities for further research to evaluate the program and contribute to the discussion related to the value of the peer mentorship experience for both mentors and mentees alike, especially as it pertains to the context of world languages.

The development of the project detailed in this paper indicates certain immediate and tangible next steps for PSMLA. These tasks include a cycle of implementation and participant/organizer feedback to make adjustments and modifications to best meet the needs of the novice and experienced world language educators that contribute to the program. As substantial pre- and post-intervention data are collected, empirical results will be explored and shared with the field. Lastly, successful peer mentoring programs

require a constant pool of participants to maximize its impact on the field and to reinforce a favorable reputation that, in turn, attracts future participants. Informational content about the program (e.g., Madel, 2022b) assists in raising awareness, but expanding the message to include perspectives from participants will help to further validate the experience. As such, the Association intends to elevate the program's presence at community events, such as local workshops and conferences, and on member communication platforms, such as e-mail newsletters, social media, and other publications .

## REFERENCES

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). (2010). Use of the target language in the classroom. Retrieved from https://www.actfl.org/guiding-principles/use-target-language-language-learning

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). (2017). *Educators rising.* Retrieved from https://www.actfl.org/advocacy/educators-rising

Armstrong, P. W., & Rogers, J. D. (1997). Basic skills revisited: The effects of foreign language instruction on reading, math, and language arts. *Learning Languages, 2*(3), 20-31.

Benshoff, L., (2016, September 19). In face of PA. teacher shortage, staffing services struggle to meet demand for substitutes. *WHYY.* Retrieved from https://whyy.org/articles/outsourcing-no-solution-for-pennsylvanias-substitute-teacher-shortage/

Brown, G., Leonard, C., & Arthur-Kelly, M. (2016). Writing SMARTER goals for professional learning and improving classroom practices. *Reflective Practice, 17*(5), 621–635.

Burke, B. M. (2011). Rituals and beliefs ingrained in world language pedagogy: Defining deep structure and conventional wisdom. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 2*(1), 1-12.

Burke, B. M. (2014). Forty years after Savignon, how far have(n't) we come? Students' perspectives about communicative language teaching in the 21st century. In. S. Dhonau (Ed.), *Unlock the gateway to communication* (pp. 113-138). Selected Papers from the 2014 Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. Richmond, VA: Robert M. Terry, Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.

Carver-Thomas, D., Leung, M., & Burns, D. (2021). *California teachers and COVID-19: How the pandemic is impacting the teacher workforce.* Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute. Retrieved from https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/california-covid-19-teacher-workforce

Commission on Language Learning. (2016). *The state of languages in the U.S.: A statistical portrait.* Cambridge, MA: American Academy of Arts & Sciences. Retrieved from https://www.amacad.org/multimedia/pdfs/publications/researchpapersmonographs/State-of-Languages-in-US.pdf

Commission on Language Learning. (2017). *America's languages: Investing in language education for the 21st century.* Cambridge, MA: American Academy of Arts & Sciences. Retrieved from https://www.amacad.org/multimedia/pdfs/publications/researchpapersmonographs/language/Commission-on-Language-Learning_Americas-Languages.pdf

Dodor, B. A., Sira, N., & Hausafus, C. O. (2010). Breaking down the walls of teacher isolation. *Journal of Family & Consumer Sciences Education, 28*(1), 1-12.

Dugger, S. (2021). COVID-19 and the risk of teacher attrition in the United States. (Doctoral dissertation, Austin Peay State University.)

Dussault, M., Deaudelin, C., Royer, N., & Louiselle, J. (1997). *Professional isolation and stress in teachers.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago.

Foreign Language Educators of New Jersey (FLENJ). (2019). Mentoring fellowship. Retrieved from http://flenj.org/mentoring-fellowship/

Fox, R., Corretjer, O., & Webb, K. (2019). Benefits of foreign language learning and bilingualism: An analysis of published empirical research 2012-2019. *Foreign Language Annals, 52*(4), 699-726.

Henshaw, F. G., & Hawkins, M. D. (2022). *Common Ground: Second language acquisition theory goes to the classroom.* Hackett Publishing Company.

Ingersoll, R. M., Dougherty, P., & Sirinides, P. (2017). *School leadership counts.* Santa Cruz, CA: New Teacher Center. Retrieved from https://www.scsvntp.com/uploads/3/7/3/5/37354959/richard-ingersoll-school-leadership-counts.pdf

Kissau, S. P., & King, E. T. (2015). Peer mentoring second language teachers: A mutually beneficial experience? *Foreign Language Annals, 48*(1), 143-160.

Madel, R. (2020). Understanding the cycle: Identifying influences on world language teachers' value of grammar instruction. (Doctoral dissertation, Saint Joseph's University)

Madel, R. (2022a, February 12). Developing a peer mentorship Program for world language educators. In J. Carlino (Chair), *Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.* New York.

Madel, R. (2022b). Introducing the PSMLA Peer Mentoring Program. *Pennsylvania Language Forum, 11*(1), 21-25.

Mason, S. (2017). Foreign language teacher attrition and retention research: A meta-analysis. *NECTFL Review, 80,* 47-68.

Moser, K., & Wei, T. (2021). COVID-19 and the pre-existing language teacher supply crisis. *Language Teaching Research, 00*(0), 1-36.

Murphy, P., DeArmand, M., & Guin, K. (2003, July 31). A national crisis or localized problems? Getting prospective on the scope and scale of the teacher shortage. *Educational Policy Analysis Archives, 11*. Retrieved from http://epaa.asu.edu.ezproxy.sju.edu/epaa/v11n23

Olsen, S.A., Brown, L.K. (1992). The relation between high school study of foreign languages and ACT English and mathematics performance. ADFL Bulletin, 23(3), from ERIC database.

Ostovar-Nameghi, S. A., & Sheikhahmadi, M. (2016). From teacher isolation to teacher collaboration: Theoretical perspectives and empirical findings. *English Lanaguage Teaching 9*(5), 197-205.

Pennsylvania Department of Education. (2021). *Act 82 of 2018: Report on educator preparation and certification.* Retrieved from https://www.education.pa.gov/DataAndReporting/Pages/Act82.aspx

Pennsylvania Department of Education. (2022). *Level II Certification.* Retrieved from https://www.education.pa.gov/Educators/Certification/CertFAQs/Pages/LevelII.aspx

Pennsylvania State Modern Language Association (PSMLA) (2022). *PSMLA Peer Mentoring Program.* Retrieved from https://psmla.org/psmla-peer-mentoring-program

Podolsky, A., Kini T., Bishop, J., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2016, September). Solving the teacher shortage: How to attract and retain excellent educators. *Learning Policy Institute.* Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED606767.pdf

Pufahl, I., & Rhodes, N. C. (2011). Foreign language instruction in U.S. schools: Results of a national survey of national and secondary schools. *Foreign Language Annals, 44*(1), 258-288.

Rodriguez, J., & King, J. (2020). *Issue Brief: Degree Trends in High-Demand Teaching* Specialties. Washington, DC: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.

Stewart, J. H. (2005). Foreign language study in elementary schools: Benefits and implications for achievement in reading and math. Early Childhood Education Journal, 33(1), 11-16.

Sutcher, L., Darling-Hamming, L., & Carver-Thomas, D. (2016, September 15). A coming crisis in teaching? Teacher supply, demand, and shortages in the U.S. *Learning Policy Institute.* Retrieved from https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/coming-crisis-teaching-brief

Swanson, P. (2010). Efficacy and language teacher attrition: A case for mentorship beyond the classroom. *NECTFL Review, 65*(1), 48-72.

Swanson, P., & Huff, R. (2010). Georgia's rural foreign language teachers' sense of efficacy and how it related 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.

Teach Plus. (n.d.). *Proving what's possible: School year 2012-13 annual report.* Boston, MA: Author.

U.S. Department of Education. (2016). *Teacher shortage areas nationwide listing 1990-91 thru 2010-11.* Retrieved from http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/pol/tsa.doc

Wesely, P. M. (2010). Student attrition from traditional and immersion foreign language programs. *Language and Linguistics Compass, 4*(9), 804-817.

---

**Rich Madel** (Ed.D., Saint Joseph's University) is a distinguished teacher of Spanish and the Chairperson of the Department of World Languages in the Colonial School District in Plymouth Meeting, Pennsylvania. Rich was named the PSMLA Teacher of the Year in 2018 and NECTFL awarded him a Mead Fellowship in 2021. He is a regular contributor to the field's professional learning opportunities at state, regional, and national levels.

---