



Chapter 11

K-12 WORLD LANGUAGE PROGRAMS IN CURRENT PRACTICE



The first part of this chapter highlights five extended-sequence world language programs that exist in different states throughout the country. The first four programs are described in *Critical Issues in Early Second Language Learning* (Met, 1998a); the fifth program is discussed in a 1995 issue of *Perspective*, published by the Council for Basic Education. The type of information given in the following program descriptions varies, but the insights provided are invaluable to teachers, program planners, parents, and administrators. The objective is to cite special features of each program that have contributed to a long-term success record in world language education. Many of these features are separate, yet invariably they are interrelated. Key themes such as *collaboration, advocacy, and visionary leadership* (among others) continually resurface in discussing the maintenance of quality world language programs.

Following these five program descriptions is a listing of elementary and middle school model world language programs selected by the Center for Applied Linguistics. Contact information is provided.

SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

Kathleen M. Riordan

Springfield is a mid-sized urban center of 150,000 residents in western Massachusetts. The Springfield Public School district serves 23,535 students of diverse racial, ethnic, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. The district offers a rich instructional program, as well as programs for students with special needs and students who are enrolled in a transitional bilingual education program. The school system is intensively engaged in many aspects of education reform, including curriculum development, assessment, and school governance.

Springfield moved aggressively to implement a K-12 articulated program for all students. They began in 1995 with foreign language as part of the general curriculum for all students in Grades 1-2 and 7. In September 1996, the program expanded to Grades 1-3, 7-8, and 9. The following year included all students in Grades 1-4, 6-8, and 9-10. This growth pattern will continue until all students are involved in the program in Grades K-12. This work could not have been begun or sustained without the leadership and support of the superintendent of schools, members of the Springfield School Committee, and the Foreign Language Curriculum Committee.

Content-based curriculum and learning outcomes were developed by foreign language specialists and general and special education elementary teachers in a summer 1995 workshop. The curriculum was built on the themes and concepts at each grade level. At the same time, the building principals were developing an instructional schedule, with foreign language classes meeting for three 30-minute sessions each week. Curriculum development work will be ongoing as the program evolves.

At the elementary level, some schools selected Spanish as their language of choice. Several schools offer a choice of French and Spanish; one offers French only; one, Chinese or Spanish; one, Russian, French, or Spanish; and one offers French, Spanish, or Chinese. Students study the chosen language for the entire K-5 sequence. Students are offered the option at the end of Grade 5 to continue in Grade 6 with the language currently studied, or to begin either French, Spanish, or Chinese as a new language of study. Choice is important, given that most students did not have the opportunity to

choose in elementary school. This will be the students' only opportunity to move out of the sequential program. They will have the opportunity to study an additional language at the high school level. Students who select a new language at Grade 6 will bring with them the metacognitive language learning skills even if they move to a language very different from the one previously studied.

The keys to the survival and success of the Springfield program include being flexible, seizing opportunities, creating opportunities, nurturing allies, and becoming part of the solution rather than the problem.

CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA

Madeline Ehrlich

The Culver City Spanish immersion program has been in existence for 25 years. A Japanese immersion program has also been in effect for 5 years. The local chapter of Advocates for Language Learning (ALL) is the driving force behind this program. Parents and teachers working together in an organized way have had a vital role to play in the maintenance of this successful language program. The support given to the program by the ALL organization has effectively demonstrated to the school board the importance of world languages for their children. The Culver City chapter of ALL has for many years sponsored a successful monthlong exchange program for fifth and sixth graders. This program is done in collaboration with two private schools in Guadalajara, Mexico. They are now establishing a similar exchange for the Japanese immersion program. The chapter also publishes an informative monthly newsletter for the community. Some of the funds raised by ALL are awarded in the form of scholarships to graduating high school seniors through a community scholarship program. Candidates for the funds plan to pursue a career using their second language skills.

Recently, Culver City celebrated 25 years of its immersion program. The ALL chapter held festivities to commemorate this milestone and dedicated a large sculpture of a boy and girl holding a globe. It is entitled "Language Opens the World to Us." It stands at the entrance to the elementary language school and makes a symbolic statement to the community that this program is meaningful: *Acquiring a second language is a real asset and its importance is valued.*

ELMHURST, ILLINOIS

Cheryl Kopecky and Rosemarie DiOrio

The goals of the Elmhurst District 205 world language program are stated in the district's mission statement: "to develop the student's ability to communicate, in both oral and written form, at a level of proficiency commensurate with the length of exposure to the study of the language. In addition, the student will acquire knowledge and appreciation of the culture of the peoples of the target language."

Foreign language is offered four days a week for 15 minutes in Grades 2-3. In Grades 4-5, the time is extended to 20 minutes. In an already crowded curriculum, foreign language is considered an

extension of whole language learning. The four-day schedule was agreed upon because of other curricular demands, as well as financial decisions. Spanish is the only language taught in Grades 2-5. Students have the option to switch to French at Grade 6 as both French and Spanish are taught at the middle school. At the high school, students may choose Spanish, French, German, Latin, or Italian.

The primary certification for the Spanish teachers in Grades 2-5 is for elementary classroom instruction. Proficiency in the language is a requirement, but language coursework and experience are secondary factors. These teachers are highly aware of the variety of strategies necessary for effective instruction with young children. A shift toward cognitive constructivism as the dominant learning theory is reflected in their classrooms. In addition to certification, interviews by the hiring principal and the foreign language coordinator helped identify individuals with a high energy level, enthusiasm, well-developed organizational skills, and the interpersonal skills needed to work with other staff members.

The Grade 2-12 Foreign Language Committee is currently developing a framework representing the articulated curriculum through the elementary, middle, and high school. Essential to the development of the framework are classroom visits within the district by teachers of different levels. This document will serve as the basis for the development of local benchmark assessments to assist in monitoring student proficiency and program effectiveness. Assessment at the elementary level is embedded in everyday classroom activities. Teacher observation plus exercises with established rubrics are used to evaluate specific goals.

This program has continued to enjoy positive participation and support due to several factors. A part-time coordinator provides leadership for the elementary school foreign language teachers and for a Grade 2-12 Foreign Language Committee, which addresses curriculum development and articulation. Weekly planning meetings have created a team spirit and enthusiasm. Positive public relations were promoted by the coordinator with visits to PTA meetings of each elementary school, advocacy with the press for informative coverage of the program's activities, and newsletters to parents.

FERNDALE, MICHIGAN

Irma Torres

World languages have been taught at the elementary level in the Ferndale Public Schools since 1981. All students in Grades K-8 have been included in daily language instruction in either French, German, or Spanish, according to the language assigned to their school. The proficiency-based program has since evolved into a sequential program for students in 1st through 12th grades. Grade 1 meets once per week for 30 minutes; Grades 2-3 meet for three 20-minute sessions; Grades 4-6 meet for three 30-minute sessions; and Grades 7-8 meet 45 minutes, five times per week.

Few students in the Ferndale district are native speakers of the languages taught; most are English speakers and learn the foreign language as a second language. The teachers report that children for whom English is a second language and for whom English is already well-established seem to do very well in the foreign language classroom setting.

In Ferndale's eight elementary schools, policies for inclusion are relatively similar. If the foreign language teacher has questions about a child's ability to participate, the teacher initiates a discussion with the classroom and/or resource room teachers to become acquainted with the special services the student receives and to seek advice on strategies for working with the student.

As the program was phased in at the lower elementary grades, foreign language teachers found that most children at this level who had disabilities were able to attain an adequate level of language acquisition in spite of physical, emotional, or learning disabilities. This was probably due to the fact that most of the work was done orally and supported concretely by visuals and manipulatives. Teachers continue to adjust and modify their teaching when working with these children. Ferndale's experience clarifies that there is no need to limit the participation in foreign language classes of children with disabilities. The teachers strongly believe that inclusion is very important.

A K-12 PROGRAM IN EASTERN CONNECTICUT

Christine Brown

Since 1957, foreign language instruction in the elementary school of one eastern Connecticut community has been an integral part of the language program. Currently, all students study Spanish 15 minutes a day, five days a week, in Grades 1 through 5. In Grade 6, French is offered 22 minutes a day, five days a week. FLES open houses are scheduled once a year and all parents are invited to attend classes. FLES report card grades are also given. Students may begin the study of Russian in Grade 7, and Latin in Grade 9. The extended-sequence Spanish and Russian programs have been in existence for over 30 years.

Six teachers are employed full-time to teach the FLES program in five schools. One full-time and one half-time teacher teach all of the sixth grades, which are located in one building. The primary program cost is teacher salary. Due to creative use of materials and supplies, the annual cost (without salaries) is approximately \$3,000. All teachers are certified in Spanish, and three of the six teachers are also certified in elementary education. Every Wednesday afternoon, school is dismissed at 12:30 p.m., which enables the FLES teachers to plan and coordinate lessons and special activities.

Teachers are selected on the basis of not only their proficiency in Spanish but also their willingness and demonstrated ability to work with young learners. The commitment to the program goes well beyond foreign language instruction. FLES teachers must understand the total school curriculum and be able to support and elaborate on concepts and information introduced in every other area of the curriculum. They must also be willing to teach in a variety of locations, write and adapt materials, assume supervisory duties, and be willing to learn how to teach all students regardless of aptitude or special learning needs.

For the last 40 years, this program has had the unique and consistent oversight of a foreign language specialist from the elementary grades through Grade 12. Another important element has been the coordination of the program. Language teachers from all grade levels meet monthly to discuss districtwide events and priorities. The curriculum is reviewed with cross-representation from all levels of language instruction as well as community members, classroom teachers, and administrators from

other disciplines. All textbook selection and curriculum design is undertaken by teachers representing elementary, middle, and high school.

Most recently, teachers have been writing collaborative departmental examinations for Grades 5-12. Teachers will also create a common scoring mechanism for grading student examinations. In these exams, students will listen to native speakers in real-life situations, read articles from authentic sources, and write in response to a real-life event or activity. Teachers will conduct speaking interviews with students at all levels and then exchange classes to interview students to ensure a common grading standard. Prior to and following testing, teachers will meet to make sure the test represents advancing skills and that themes used at one level are not repeated at another. This type of planning ensures that students will move from level to level and build on skills rather than just repeating low-level skills at every stage of instruction. The testing will also provide the students with a match between what the curriculum promised and what they actually learned.

All curriculum documents developed for each grade level are shared at parent open houses and with students at the beginning of every school year. Teachers explain to students that the skills they will be learning and the topics that they will be covering are not necessarily the same skills and topics reflected in their textbook; the textbook is only one tool to meet the systemwide goals. If students move into the more advanced levels of language, no single textbook can provide them with all that they will need to become more proficient speakers of the language.

To help students see the progress they have made from elementary through high school, portfolio assessment is used. This includes long-term documentation of student work through projects, video- and audiotapes, and writing samples. The district hopes eventually to keep these student samples in an electronic portfolio so that students can present them for placement at the college and university level in addition to, or in place of, taking the college placement test.

MODEL EARLY FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAMS**1998***Compiled by Lucinda Branaman & Jeniffer Locke**Center for Applied Linguistics*

The following early foreign language programs were selected as model programs in elementary and middle schools by the Center for Applied Linguistics through two U.S. Department of Education-funded projects. They were selected from a nominated pool of approximately 100 programs nationwide. The competition was open to schools with one of four program models: FLES (Foreign Language in the Elementary School), content-based FLES, immersion, or middle school programs. The seven models selected include four content-based FLES programs, one partial immersion program, one middle school immersion continuation, and one middle school FLES continuation. No regular FLES (non-content-based) programs were selected because the majority of the FLES programs nominated were actually content-based. Each of the seven programs was visited by CAL staff for two days. The visits included classroom observations, collection of background data about the program, and interviews with students, teachers, staff, administration, and parents.

The programs selected met 11 major criteria as well as the need for an even geographic and language distribution. The programs needed to be: (1) based on the national foreign language standards, (2) evaluated regularly, (3) producing outcomes that meet their program goals, (4) accessible to all students, (5) communicating and coordinating across content areas, (6) reflective of a diversity of social and economic status, (7) articulated from elementary through middle and high school, (8) at least four years old, (9) willing to share their curriculum, (10) offering professional development, and (11) supported by the community.

A complete description of these models, with suggestions on how to start your own program, will be published by 1999. Please check the CAL Web site (www.cal.org) for announcement of the availability of the publication.

CONTENT-BASED FLES

school EPHEBUS ROAD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
language French, Grades 1-5
district Chapel Hill-Carrboro Public Schools, NC

contact Carol Orringer
 Foreign Language Teacher
 Ephesus Road Elementary School
 1495 Ephesus Church Road
 Chapel Hill, NC 27514
 (919) 929-8715

school BAY POINT ELEMENTARY MAGNET SCHOOL
language Spanish, Grades K-5
district Pinellas County Public Schools, FL

contact	Carmine Zinn	Jan Kucerik
	Foreign Language Supervisor Pinellas County School Board 302 4th Street, SW Largo, FL 34640 (813) 588-6072	Foreign Language Teacher Bay Point Elementary Magnet School 2051 62nd Avenue South St. Petersburg, FL 33712 (813) 893-2398

school SUMMER AVENUE & ARMORY STREET SCHOOLS (visited)
language French (Armory) & Spanish (both), Grades K-5
district Springfield Public Schools, MA

contact Dr. Kathleen Riordan
 Foreign Language Director
 Springfield Public Schools
 195 State Street
 P.O. Box 1410
 Springfield, MA 01102-1410
 (413) 787-7111

school LARCHMONT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
language Spanish, Grades 1-6
district Toledo Public Schools, OH

contact Lori Winne
 Director of Foreign Languages
 Toledo Public Schools
 425 Jefferson Avenue
 Toledo, OH 43604
 (419) 255-3276

Maria Martinez
 Foreign Language Teacher
 Larchmont Elementary School
 1515 Slater Street
 Toledo, OH 43612

PARTIAL IMMERSION

school RICHMOND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
language Japanese, Grades 1-5 (K is optional)
district Portland Public Schools, OR

contact Deanne Balzer
 Resource Teacher
 Richmond Elementary
 2276 SE 41st Avenue
 Portland, OR 97214
 (503) 916-5325

MIDDLE SCHOOL FLES CONTINUATION

school GIDEON WELLES MIDDLE SCHOOL
language French, Japanese, Russian, and Spanish, Grades 7-8
 Spanish continuation from Grades 1-6
 French continuation from Grade 6
 Japanese (elective) continuation for K-6 magnet program
 Russian (elective) starting in Grade 7

district Glastonbury Public Schools, CT

contact Christine Brown
 Directory of Foreign Languages
 Glastonbury Public Schools
 232 Williams Street
 Glastonbury, CT 06033
 (860) 652-7954

MIDDLE SCHOOL IMMERSION CONTINUATION

school	ANDREW JACKSON & GREENBELT MIDDLE SCHOOLS
language	French immersion, Japanese, Russian, and exploratory languages, Grades 7-8 French immersion continuation from Grades K-6 One semester Japanese or Russian and one exploratory semester (German, Japanese, Latin, Senegalese culture, Spanish & Swahili) Grade 7 One year (Level I) German, Japanese, Latin, Russian or Spanish, Grade 8
district	Prince George's County Public Schools, MD
contact	Pat Barr-Harrison Supervisor of Foreign Languages Prince George's County Public Schools ISSC 9201 East Hampton Drive Capitol Heights, MD 20743 (301) 808-8265