

FOGGY BOTTOM CONFERENCE

REPORT

Research Study Conference
on Problems of State-Level Supervision
of Instruction in Modern Foreign Languages

August 1-13, 1960

The George Washington University, Washington 6, D. C.

prepared by

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in collaboration with

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with the assistance of

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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE

Office of Education
Washington 25, D. C.

Study Conference
for
State Supervisors of Foreign Languages

August 1-13, 1960
Washington, D. C.

Sponsored Jointly by the Science, Mathematics and Foreign Language
Section and the Language Development Section

Full-time Staff:

- Dr. Theodore Andersson, Conference Director
Chairman, Department of Romance Languages, The University of Texas
- Mr. Ralph Bassett, Professional Assistant
Supervisor, Foreign Languages, Portland Public
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- Dr. Mildred Boyer, Professional Assistant
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The University of Texas

Visiting Consultants (in addition to Washington personnel):

- Mr. Donald D. Walsh, Director, Foreign Language Program
Research Center, Modern Language Association of
America, 70 Fifth Ave., New York 11, N. Y. (August 2-3)
- Dr. Nelson Brooks, Associate Professor of French
Yale University, New Haven 11, Connecticut (August 4-5)
- Mrs. Andrea McHenry, Supervisor of Foreign Languages,
Houston Independent School System, Texas (August 8-9)
- Miss Mary Thompson, Director of Curriculum and Instruction,
Glastonbury Public Schools, Connecticut (August 10-11)

Conference Headquarters: Tompkins Hall of Engineering, George
Washington University, 725 23rd St., N. W. (between G and H
Streets)

First Meeting: Monday, August 1, 1960, at 8:30 a.m., in Room 202
Tompkins Hall

725 23rd Street

STATE SUPERVISORS CONFERENCE

August 1-13

Washington, D. C.

Alabama	Miss Joanna Breedlove
Alaska	Mr. Herbert E. Bruce
Arkansas	Miss Wilma Jimerson
California	Dr. Emil O. Toews
Colorado	Miss Dorothy Duhon
District of Columbia	Mrs. Marjorie Bowen
Florida	Mr. O. E. Pérez
Georgia	Dr. M. Gordon Brown
Hawaii	Dr. Erwin Gordon
Idaho	Miss Jane J. Scott
Illinois	Dr. Robert O. deVette
Indiana	Dr. George F. Smith
Louisiana	Mrs. Lavinia McNeely
Maine	Mr. Edward F. Booth
Maryland	Mrs. Genevieve Blew
Massachusetts	Mr. James Powers
Minnesota	Mr. Jermaine Arendt
Missouri	Mr. David J. Burns
Montana	Mr. Lester McKim
Nevada	Mr. Philip D. Smith
New Mexico	Mr. Joseph Michel
New Hampshire	Mr. André Paquette
New York	Mr. Edgar Moreau
Oklahoma	Mr. Robert O. Sumter
Oregon	Dr. Paul Arriola
Pennsylvania	Dr. Louise Logan
Rhode Island	Mr. Clarence E. Sturtevant
Tennessee	Mrs. Sara Whitten
Texas	Miss Ann Greer
Utah	Mr. J. Dale Miller
Vermont	Mr. Louis T. M. DesChenes
Wyoming	Mr. William L. Wells

Introduction

This report is being written in August 1960. Two short years ago, just before the passage of the National Defense Education Act, there were only two States, New York and Georgia, which had in their departments of education supervisors of foreign languages. New York has had at least one FL specialist since 1915 and now has six professionals responsible exclusively for providing guidance and leadership in foreign language instruction. Georgia appointed its supervisor in July 1958. The District of Columbia has had a department head or supervisor going back at least as far as 1918, and provision for a head of department was made in the Organic Act of 1906. Thanks to the encouragement and assistance provided by the National Defense Education Act, 37 States have now appointed at least one professional responsible for supervising foreign languages. Not all of these, however, are full-time appointments. In one or two cases a university professor has been appointed on a part-time basis to perform this function. In other cases, the supervisor is responsible for foreign languages and one or more other fields, usually science or mathematics. The modern foreign languages are lagging behind science and mathematics, each of which has supervisors in 44 States. Only 35 States have supervisors in all three fields.

Several of the State supervisors have been on their jobs for only a few weeks or months. One of the chief purposes of the present Conference was therefore to provide those supervisors who have so far been appointed with an opportunity to meet, become acquainted with one another, and discuss some of the problems of their new positions. Each State was invited to send one representative. Thirty-two States responded to the invitation. (See Appendix A: State Supervisors' Conference and State Supervisors for Modern Foreign Languages, August 1960). Others expressed interest but for one reason or another could not send a representative. In several cases, the State supervisor of foreign languages had already made plans for professional work, study, or travel. On the whole, the response of State departments of education and of State FL supervisors was most gratifying.

This report aims to describe how the Research Study Conference may have contributed toward the improvement of modern foreign language teaching in the United States. After a brief word concerning its origin and its double sponsorship in the Office of Education, we shall summarize the Conference itself and attempt an evaluation of its significance.

How the Conference Came About

Though unprecedented in many ways, the present Conference was not the first meeting of State supervisors. In August 1959 the Science, Mathematics, and Foreign Language Section of the U. S. Office of Education organized in St. Paul, Austin, Boise, Montpelier, Washington, and Atlanta six Regional Conferences for State Supervisory Personnel under Title III to discuss responsibilities of State supervisors. The Conference Summary, including a statement by Dr. Marjorie C. Johnston on "Trends in the Teaching of Modern Foreign Languages" contains much valuable information. (See Appendix B: Summary of Regional Conferences for Science, Mathematics, and Foreign Languages Supervisory Personnel.)

A second meeting, at the Palmer House in Chicago on December 29, 1959, in connection with the Seventy-fourth Annual Meeting of the Modern Language Association, brought together supervisors from 22 States as well as chairmen of State advisory committees for foreign languages from four States. The meeting had been organized chiefly by Dr. Marjorie C. Johnston of the Science, Mathematics, and Foreign Language Section of the Office of Education, but because of illness she could not preside at the meeting and her place was taken by Dr. Joseph C. Hutchinson of the same Section. On this occasion State supervisors received reports from Dr. John R. Ludington, Director, Aid to State and Local Schools Branch, Office of Education, and Dr. Kenneth W. Mildenerger, Chief, Language Development Section, Division of Higher Education, Office of Education, concerning activities under NDEA in the field of modern foreign languages. They also heard reports from Mr. Donald D. Walsh, Director of the Foreign Language Program Research Center of the Modern Language Association, and from Dr. Wesley Childers, Director of Research, Foreign Language Research Center of the MLA, concerning the services of the Center. Discussion at this meeting, though limited by time, sufficed to define further the problems which were to be discussed more extensively during the Research Study Conference in Washington. (For a full account of the Chicago meeting see Appendix C: Report of the Meeting of State Supervisors of Modern Foreign Languages, December 29, 1959.)

In July 1960, a series of five Regional Conferences for State Supervisory Personnel under Title III, NDEA, were held in Nashville, Topeka, Salt Lake City, Madison, and Albany. These again were organized by staff members of the Science, Mathematics, and Foreign Language Section of the Office of Education and served further to put the State supervisors in touch with up-to-date information and to discuss some of their common problems. (For a full account of the section meetings on foreign languages see Appendix D: Regional Conference Summary: Modern Foreign Language Group Meetings.)

The Research Study Conference on Problems of State-Level Supervision of Instruction in Modern Foreign Languages, August 1-13, 1960, is therefore

a fourth step in the effort by the Office of Education to place at the disposal of State supervisors of modern foreign languages information and materials necessary to enable them to carry out their leadership roles in their respective States. Chief credit for conceiving the idea of this Conference goes to Dr. Kenneth W. Mildenberger, but the Science, Mathematics, and Foreign Language Section of the Aid to State and Local Schools Branch of the Division of State and Local School Systems early expressed a desire to collaborate and shared equally with the Language Development Section of the Financial Aid Branch of the Division of Higher Education in preparing for the Conference and in supporting it financially. Once official approval was obtained for this unprecedented meeting, the staff members in these two Sections, assisted by Miss Esther M. Eaton, Foreign Language Specialist in the Instruction, Organizations, and Services Branch of the Division of State and Local School Systems of the Office of Education, and many others collaborated enthusiastically in order as far as possible to assure the success of the Conference.

Action and Recommendations

The following proposals represent the consensus of the Conference. Not necessarily every individual would agree completely to every detail in these proposals, but there was no serious dissent from anything contained herein.

The Conference approved unanimously of the recommendation of a special committee presided over by Mr. J. Dale Miller of Utah to establish the National Council of State Supervisors of Foreign Languages for the purpose of: 1) assuring continuing communication; 2) providing opportunity for considering FL issues; and 3) providing for exchange of information, ideas, and materials. Dr. Robert O. deVette of Illinois was elected Coordinating Secretary of the new Council. A first meeting of the Council was planned for the morning of December 29, 1960, in Hotel Sylvania in Philadelphia in connection with the Seventy-fifth Annual Meeting of the Modern Language Association of America. (See Appendix M: Establishment of the National Council of State Supervisors of Foreign Languages.)

A special committee under the chairmanship of Joseph Michel of New Mexico undertook to define the leadership role of the State supervisor of foreign languages under the following headings: Consultative and informational services to various professional individuals and organizations and to the general public; guidance and direction in developing leadership among teachers, stimulating activities, marshalling resources, and strengthening teacher training; coordination with other educational administrators; dissemination of professional information; administration of NDEA Title III and coordination with other titles of the NDEA; research; and self-improvement. In addition the committee recommended the Report of the Foreign Language Group Meeting of the Title III Regional Conference held in Nashville, Tennessee, July 11-12, 1960 as a valuable source document on the same subject. (See Appendix N: The Leadership Role of the State Supervisor of Foreign Languages.)

In order to study in more detail the leadership role of the State supervisor of foreign languages the Conference decided to create a special committee on the gathering, exchange, and dissemination of professional information, under the chairmanship of Dr. George Smith of Indiana. This committee pointed out the great need for exchanging information on such matters as research needed or in progress, experimental programs, reports, articles, bulletins, bibliographies, etc., concerned with foreign language developments. The committee therefore recommended 1) that the U. S. Office of Education continue to provide the State supervisors periodically with revised lists of its available publications having a direct bearing on foreign languages; 2) that the MLA Foreign Language Research Center also provide respective State supervisors of foreign languages with a similar list of its available publications; 3) that the National Council of State Supervisors of Foreign Languages establish a clearing house for the exchange of important FL information; 4) that the State supervisors of foreign languages encourage and support the publication of State newsletters to be distributed to all

FL teachers and principal administrative personnel in their respective States; 5) that State supervisors assume responsibility for gathering and distributing materials to FL teachers in their States; and 6) that the State supervisors take care to indicate clearly the source, availability, and price of all materials distributed. In addition the committee listed some vehicles for exchange and dissemination of information and some types of information needed. (See Appendix O: Gathering, Exchange, and Dissemination of Professional Information.)

Harried as the State supervisors are by equipment and textbook salesmen, they were particularly eager to agree on some criteria for the selection and best use of equipment and materials. A committee under the chairmanship of Dr. Robert O. deVette of Illinois submitted a report which stressed the importance of linguistically and culturally authentic models and the importance of high quality in reproduction equipment. In addition the entire Conference prepared a list of factors to be considered in the selection of materials and equipment. (See Appendix P: Criteria for the Selection and Best Use of Equipment and Materials, and Selection of Materials and Equipment.)

The public relations function of the State supervisor was also considered to be of enough importance to deserve study by a special committee. A committee chaired by Dr. M. Gordon Brown of Georgia submitted a report which emphasized the importance from a public relations point of view of a sound FL program, urged that some thought be given to increasing the teaching of the major neglected languages (MNLs), and that the State supervisor should undertake a continuing and well planned program of information to the educational profession, to parents and other citizens, and to civic and professional groups. The committee also endorsed and recommended to the Conference the Report of the Foreign Language Group Meeting of the Title III Regional Conference held in Nashville, Tennessee, July 11-12, 1960, as a valuable source document on this subject. (See Appendix Q: The Public Relations Function of the State Supervisor.)

Recognizing that improved understanding between East and West is of vital concern to us all and that some 75% of the world's people speak languages which are virtually ignored in American schools the Conference considered it of utmost urgency and importance that the major neglected languages (MNLs) be taught much more widely in our schools. To this effect a committee chaired by Dr. Erwin Gordon of Hawaii recommended 1) that a survey be made in each State to identify teachers now available to teach the major neglected languages; 2) that a careful search be made for other persons who with a little further training could teach such languages; 3) that colleges, universities, and especially teacher training institutions make broader provision, especially at the undergraduate level, for professional preparation in the major neglected languages; 4) that, however, instruction in the major neglected languages not be started unless schools are prepared to offer an adequate sequential program; 5) that each State make a special effort to stimulate interest in major neglected languages; 6) that States undertake to ascertain the extent of the public's desire to foster the study of major neglected languages and to satisfy this desire; 7) that reaffirmation be made of the intent of the NDEA to strengthen instruction in all

