



**NATIONAL COUNCIL OF STATE
SUPERVISORS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

Position Paper

NEW DIRECTIONS IN THE PREPARATION OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS

PREPARED BY

**JACQUE BOTT-VANHOUTEN
KRISTIN HOYT-OUKADA
VICKIE SCOW**

DEBORAH W. ROBINSON, EDITOR

May 20, 2003

**The positions or opinions stated in this paper represent those of the NCSFL
and do not reflect those of the state agencies with which the authors are
affiliated. For further questions or comments, contact the authors at:**

Jacque Bott-VanHouten jvanhout@kde.state.ky.us

Kristin Hoyt-Oukada khoyt@doe.state.in.us

Vickie Scow yscow@nde.state.ne.us

NEW DIRECTIONS IN THE PREPARATION OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS

Introduction

The National Council of State Supervisors of Foreign Languages (NCSSFL), a professional association of leaders in the field of elementary and secondary foreign language education, endorses the emergent and promising output/performance-based model of integrated foreign language teacher preparation and ongoing professional growth. NCSSFL's position on the preparation of foreign language teachers is linked to the student national *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* within the field of foreign language education, and shares the vision of the accreditation procedures of the *National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)* as well as the *Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC)* model standards for performance-based teacher licensing. Further, NCSSFL supports the rigorous standards for accomplished teaching as endorsed by the *National Board for Professional Teacher Standards (NBPTS)*. Finally, NCSSFL backs the current reforms being promoted nationwide in the arena of teacher preparation, licensure, and professionalism.

A Time of New Direction

Before the 21st century was officially ushered in, discussion and rhetoric in educational circles was already abuzz with intense dialectics centered around the new millennium and the changing needs to be addressed in preparing our nation's students to face the information society (A Nation at Risk, 1983; Carnegie Task Force, 1986; Holmes Group, 1986; Hudelson & Faltis, 1993). As a result, the present era is witness to a great deal of national reform efforts in education. The standards movement, gaining momentum at national, state, and local levels, represents America's most readily identifiable response to the outcry of the past two decades for more and better-prepared high school graduates.

The current public sentiment, supported by research, indicates that teacher expertise is a critical factor in student achievement, thus propelling teacher preparation closer to the top of the national agenda (Zumwalt, 2000b; Minner, 2001; Ranbom, et al., 2001). Accordingly, the standards movement boasts not only numerous subject-specific student standards preK-16, but also standards for the accreditation of teacher preparation programs (*NCATE*), teacher initial licensing standards (*INTASC*), and teacher professional standards (*NBPTS*).

It has become increasingly evident to educational researchers and policy makers, however, that the reforms being promoted in the arena of teacher preparation, licensure, and professionalism must also address the striking demographic and social changes that presently make up the American landscape. There is a growing diversity of America's school-age population in terms of cultural, ethnic, socioeconomic, linguistic, and academic background (Kreeft Peyton, 1997). There is a mounting shortage of prepared

teachers to face the present and emerging needs in our nation's classrooms (Zumwalt, 2000a). And there is a resulting widespread presence of individuals teaching foreign language across the nation that either lack teaching credentials or have obtained licensure through alternative methods.

Highlights of the New Direction

The emergent model for teacher preparation which represents a significant philosophical shift from the traditional teacher training model, is highlighted in the following:

- A model of seamless professional preparation and growth: an uninterrupted continuum beginning with preservice teacher development and continuing with ongoing professional development (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996)
- Integration of theory and practice: the blending of course content and teaching experiences, initiated from the outset of the teacher preparation program and continuing throughout all subsequent phases (Blair, 2001)
- Accreditation of teacher preparation institutions: an output model, based on standards of performance, replacing the traditional input model, based on prescribed coursework leading to teacher licensure (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2001).

The foreign language profession finds itself in the midst of formulating and proposing numerous goals and initiatives to forge pathways toward an improved model of foreign language teacher preparation. Some salient features are summarized below:

- An expanded foreign language teacher preparation model, highlighting (1) vertical alignment of preK-16+; (2) partnerships with ESL and bilingual education preparation programs; and (3) joint ventures between foreign language departments and colleges of education (Kreeft Peyton, 1997)
- Learner-centered preparation, standards-based preparation and licensure, and performance-based preparation and licensure (NBPTS, 2001; INTASC, 2002; NCATE, 2002)
- The integration of technology throughout content courses and foreign language pedagogy, instruction, and practice
- Exposure to and experience with advocacy for foreign language education
- Explicit opportunities for the development of reflective practice leading to action research
- Professional portfolio building that commences at the outset of a teacher's career
- Focused coaching/mentoring of teacher candidates and new teachers
- Broadly-based teaching experiences in elementary, middle, and high schools in diverse communities and settings
- Total immersion experiences in the target language and culture
- New corollary foreign language teacher preparation models, i.e., specialized preparation programs for native speakers, temporary certification, and career changers.

A Blueprint for the New Direction

Today, all states are facing the challenge of how to staff foreign language classrooms with qualified licensed teachers. For more than a decade, colleges and universities have experimented with numerous and varied programs to meet the changing needs and to address the states' concerns for licensure and recertification. While no one prevailing model has emerged, several trends have influenced what foreign language teacher preparation looks like.

The three program designs most common today are: (1) the traditional four-year bachelor s degree program with early field observation and practicum, culminating in a semester-long student teaching experience; (2) a four-year bachelor s degree with a language major, followed by a one-year education master s degree with a student teaching experience; and (3) a six-year bachelor s/master s degree with a paid year-long school internship. Within some of the program models is the professional development school, where inquiry and practice co-exist and where new teachers are prepared and mentored collaboratively by university faculty and classroom practitioners.

Regardless of the particular program model or type, the prevailing focus on the learner has significantly impacted teacher preparation because of its influence on instructional and curricular initiatives. This present emphasis on student learning is further evidenced in federal legislation as well as the curricular leadership provided by state educational agencies. Guided by research on the brain and emerging constructivist and cognitive learning theories, the educational reform movement has shifted the focus from teaching to learning. From this conceptual framework, many Departments of Education have revised or developed statewide assessment systems, programs of study, content and performance standards, guidelines, benchmarks, and scholastic reviews/audits. Many states have also created, or are in the process of creating, their own foreign language standards or frameworks. The vast majority of these are based on the vision of the national *Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the Twenty-first Century*: What students should know and be able to do in a multicultural world and in a global economy. These standards documents have not only impacted strongly curriculum planning in local school districts, but have also provided the impetus and direction for change in teacher preparation programs. Accordingly, teacher candidates rely on university programs for adequate delivery of content knowledge as well as for preparation in pedagogical skills, a preparation to support K-12 student academic standards.

The initiative with the greatest impact on teacher preparation is that proposed by *NCATE*, articulated in the six standards required for schools of education. These standards address both “candidate performance” regarding learning outcomes as well as “unit capacity” in terms of the components of teacher education programs that support candidate learning. *NCATE* calls for improved teacher preparation and more rigorous standards by proposing performance-based accreditation that is awarded based on results that demonstrate what teacher candidates know and are able to do. Clearly, foreign

language teacher preparation programs necessitate a collaborative relationship between colleges of education and foreign language departments in colleges of humanities.

In partnership with *NCATE*, the *American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)* has developed standards for foreign language teacher preparation that address *NCATE* standard #1, outlining the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to be an effective foreign language teacher. These standards are organized into six topic areas as follows: (1) language, linguistics, comparisons; (2) cultures, literatures, cross-disciplinary concepts; (3) language acquisition theories and instructional practices; (4) integration of standards into curriculum and instruction; (5) assessment of languages and cultures; and (6) professionalism (www.actfl.org and follow links to “special projects: NCATE standards”).

Recruitment, selection, and licensure of new teachers are pressing issues with state Departments of Education, many of whom have responded by crafting teacher quality plans to rethink, reorganize, and enhance their teacher preparation programs. Licensing agencies, also faced with the challenge of responding to the short supply of and increasing demand for teachers, have reworked requirements for licensure, many based upon the *INTASC* model standards for performance-based teacher licensing. The *INTASC* standards are expressed in the form of ten principles articulating the common core of new teachers’ knowledge, skills, and dispositions essential to support quality learning experiences (www.ccsso.org/pdfs/ForeignLanguageStandards.pdf).

In terms of foreign language teacher preparation, increased attention to detail in articulating performance-based standards has necessitated (1) the identification of language proficiency levels for initial licensure and recertification; (2) assessment instruments for teaching performance and language proficiency, (3) foreign language-specific professional development for recertification; and (4) certification options preK-12. To that end, *INTASC* has drafted model standards for licensing beginning foreign language teachers and *NBPTS* has developed a national certification program for teachers of World Languages other than English (WLOE).

An Agenda for the New Direction

The challenge of accommodating the need for teachers nationwide without forfeiting high standards for teacher preparation requires innovative approaches. No one teacher preparation model can serve the needs of our diverse population, but clearly stating what we expect teachers to know and be able to do can steer the choices for program design toward meeting that goal. The profession has reached broad-based consensus on the following essential elements of any program:

- Sound scrutiny of the academic components of the preparation program
- Blending of theory and practice in the teacher candidate experience
- Collaboration among the various stakeholders
- Prospects for mentorship
- Occasions for field experience in a variety of levels, communities, and settings

- Sufficient time and opportunity for teacher candidates to become proficient in their language and to develop pedagogical skills

A proactive approach needs to be taken by the federal government, state departments of education, institutions of higher learning, and foreign language professional organizations to develop means to recruit and retain qualified foreign language teachers. In attempting to alleviate the shortage of foreign language teachers, the focus of current recruitment efforts has shifted to include non-traditional candidates, including mid-life career changers or native speakers aspiring to become teachers. Many higher education institutions have tried to accommodate non-traditional students by providing alternative methods to meet endorsement requirements, reconfiguring courses to make them meaningful in an abbreviated amount of time. Recruitment and retention will continue to be formidable tasks as schools compete with government and businesses who are actively recruiting foreign language teacher candidates and practicing teachers away from the classroom to utilize their skills and knowledge of the target language in international affairs and in the marketplace (Johnson, 2000; US Government Accounting Office, 2002). Promises of higher salaries and less extended workdays make these offers appealing to foreign language teachers. It will take an aggressive effort among government and educational policymakers and the business community to influence prevailing attitudes toward (a) the necessity for internationalized education and (b) the inclusion of foreign languages in the model. Such an awakened consciousness would valorize the profession of foreign language teaching and all but eliminate the problems of recruitment and retention.

There is a need for various pathways to teaching in order to attract more qualified candidates to the profession and to respond to the diverse lifestyles of today's professionals (Johnson, 2000; Grant, 2001; Okamoto, 2001). States adopting alternative certification routes to attract native speakers and mid-career professionals into teaching are mindful that the fast track and endorsement programs they propose: (1) include adequate pedagogical preparation for the wide spectrum of teaching possibilities; (2) determine and capitalize on native speakers' and expatriates' proficiency in the target language; and (3) do not short-change potential teachers or their future students. It bears noting that many state and local agencies have signed contracts for international visiting teachers as a short-term solution to the foreign language teacher shortage. While this does not directly affect teacher preparation programs, it does affect delivery of instruction. If state and local educational agencies choose this option, they have an additional responsibility to provide some type of professional support for these teachers to facilitate an efficient and effective adaptation to the American educational context.

How teacher candidates are prepared to demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to help all students learn is determined by the content of their courses, the modeling of appropriate instructional techniques by their own teachers, and their experience with the target language and culture. Preservice foreign language teacher programs should facilitate the development of language proficiency and cultural competency. Teaching candidates should be encouraged, and whenever possible, financially supported, to extend their academic preparation to include study in a country

where the target language is spoken. Candidates should also be prepared for alternative modes of delivery, including: online courses, distance learning, and video course facilitation. In addition, an orientation to service learning should be considered for inclusion in foreign language teacher preparation programs, as working in the community with diverse groups supports the national student standards goal of “communities” and builds cultural competence.

Conclusion

The needs of future foreign language teachers will continue to evolve, but certain factors will remain the same. There will be enduring emphasis for foreign language teachers to attain a high level of proficiency and a deeper understanding of the knowledge and skills needed to develop student competency in the language and culture of study. As school districts will remain focused on school improvement, with standards, assessment, and accountability providing direction, foreign language teachers clearly need to be adequately prepared to plan curriculum, diversify instruction, and implement a variety of assessments to meet the needs of students preK—16 through the development of articulated foreign language programs.

Taken as a whole, there are many factors influencing teacher preparation reform, yet NCSSFL holds that:

- The increased use of certification tests, rigorous cut scores, and the threat of institutional penalties for teacher preparation programs failing to meet standards should increase accountability.
- Portable credentials, fast-track licensing, and other non-traditional pathways toward teacher licensure may aid in addressing the teacher shortage.
- The sum of reforms in teacher preparation may produce better teachers and may result in the desired changes in student performance in the classroom.

References

- American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) (2002). *American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) standards for the preparation of foreign languages teachers*. Yonkers, NY: Author.
- Blair, J. (2001, November 7). Total immersion. *Education Week*, 21(10), pp. 42-46.
- Bowler, M. (2001, October 10). Assessing certification. *The Baltimore Sun*. [On-line]. Available: <http://www.sunspot.net/news/>.
- Byard, K. (2001, December 3). Alternative licensing attracts new teachers. *Akron Beacon Journal*. [On-line]. Available: <http://www.ohio.com/mld/beaconjournal/>.
- Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as Profession. (1986). *A nation prepared: Teachers for the 21st century*. New York: Carnegie Corporation of New York.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (1999). *Teacher quality and student achievement: A review of state policy evidence*. University of Washington: Center for Study of Teaching and Policy.
- Curtain, H. (2000, November 25). *New Visions teacher development issues paper*. ACTFL's New Vision Project.
- Fowler, R. C. (2001). What did the Massachusetts teacher tests say about American education? *Phi Delta Kappan* 82(10), 773-780.
- Freeman, D., & Johnson, K. (Eds.) (1998). Reconceptualizing the knowledge base of language teacher education. *TESOL Quarterly*, 32.
- Freeman, D., & Richards, J. (Eds.) (1996). *Teacher learning in language teaching*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Goodnough, A. (2001, June 19). A class of teaching fellows preparing to learn on the job. *New York Times*. [On-line]. Available: <http://www.nytimes.com>.
- Grant, F.D. (2001, January). Fast-track teacher recruitment. *School Administrator*. [On-line]. Available: <http://www.aasa.org>.
- Guntermann, G. (Ed.) (1993). *Developing language teachers for a changing world*. Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company.
- Hess, F.M. (2002). Break the link. *Education Next*. [On-line]. Available: <http://www.educationnext.org>.

Holloway, L. (2001, August 14). Foreign teachers receive a short course on the city. *New York Times*. [On-line]. Available: <http://www.nytimes.com>.

Holmes Group. (1986). *Tomorrow's schools: A report of the Holmes Group*. East Lansing, MI: Holmes Group.

Hudelson, S., & Faltis, C. (1993). Redefining basic teacher education: Preparing teachers to transform teaching. In G. Guntermann (Ed.), *Developing language teachers for a changing world* (pp. 23-42). Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company.

Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium. (1995). *Next steps: Moving toward performance-based licensing in teaching*. Washington D.C.: Council of Chief State School Officers.

Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium. (November 2001 draft). *INTASC model standards for licensing beginning foreign language teachers: A resource for state dialogue*. Washington D.C.: Council of Chief State School Officers.

Johnson, S.M. (2000, June 7). Teaching's next generation. *Education Week*, 10 (39), pp. 33, 48.

Kreeft Peyton, J. (1997). Professional development of foreign language teachers. Center for Applied Linguistics: *ERIC Digest*.

Minner, S. (2001, May 30). Our own worst enemy: Why are we so silent on the issue that matters most? *Education Week*, 20(38), p. 33.

Moore, Z. (Ed.) (1996). *Foreign language teacher education*. New York: University Press of America.

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. (1994). *What teachers should know and be able to do*. Detroit, MI: Author.

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. (2001). *World languages other than English standards*. Detroit, MI: Author.

National Commission on Excellence in Education. (1983). *A nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform*. Washington, DC: US Department of Education.

National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. (1996). *What matters most: Teaching for America's future*. New York: Author.

National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. (2002). *Professional standards for the accreditation of schools, colleges, and departments of education*. Washington D.C.: University of Virginia.

National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project. (1996). *Standards for foreign language learning: Preparing for the 21st century*. Lawrence, KS: Allen Press.

Okamoto, L. (2001, December 14). Alternate teacher licensing on agenda. *Des Moines Register*. [On-line]. Available: <http://www.dmregister.com>.

Ranborn, S., Maurer, M., & McLean, D. (2001, May 16). On eve of historic education legislation, new study finds teacher quality tops Americans' concerns. *National Teacher Recruitment Clearinghouse*. [On-line]. Available: <http://www.recruitingteachers.org>.

Richards, J.C. (1998). *Beyond training*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Tedick, D.J., & Walker, C.L. (2000). Bilingual education, English as a second language, and foreign language education: Movement to a center. In D. Birckbichler & R.M. Terry (Eds.), *Reflecting on the past to shape the future* (pp. 223-44). Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company.

United States Government Accounting Office (GOA). (January, 2002). *Foreign languages: Human capital approach needed to correct staffing and proficiency shortfalls*. Washington DC: Author.

Zumwalt, K. (2000, October 15). The recruitment and preparation of teachers – Part One: The teacher shortage. *Teachers College Record*. [On-line]. Available: <http://www.tcrecord.org>.

Zumwalt, K. (2000, October 15). The recruitment and preparation of teachers – Part Two: Teacher quality. *Teachers College Record*. [On-line]. Available: <http://www.tcrecord.org>.

