

New Visions Teacher Recruitment Issues Paper

Prepared by Paul A. García and Sheri Spaine Long

For the Working Group: Nancy Gadbois, Gordon Hale and Nancy Hernández

Tomorrow's foreign language teachers are already present in our classrooms and communities. Future foreign language teachers will come from elementary, middle, or high school language programs in districts that have established well-articulated, continuous K-12 foreign language sequences. They are undergraduate college and university students; they are adults seeking another career path. Some will be native speakers or foreigners who are new to the United States. Tomorrow's foreign language teachers will be from diverse backgrounds and heritages. Their preparations and experiences will enrich our profession. Foreign language teachers are needed in *quantity* and *quality*.

United States Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley recently stated that the nation will need 2.2 million new K-12 teachers in the next ten years. Included in this number are foreign language teachers. There are five basic reasons for the anticipated teacher shortage: (1) there will be a high number of teacher retirements; (2) there is a continuing decrease in foreign language education trainees; (3) there has been an increased interest in foreign language study due to shifting migration patterns world-wide, the demographic changes in the United States, and the oral communicative/proficiency emphasis in recent years; (4) there will be an increase in the overall student population K-12; (5) there is an increased demand to establish new foreign language programs at the elementary school level and to expand existing programs at other levels. School board recommendations, state-ordered regulations that require standards-based education, court-ordered mandates, and other legislative and local scenarios have increased demand for foreign language teachers at many levels and in many languages. The national document *Standards in Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century* (1996) and a variety of reforms on state and local levels have stimulated interest in early-start programs in foreign language study. As we begin the 21st century, there are no signs that the impending shortage will abate on its own. Resolution of the crisis is required if foreign language teachers are to continue to provide school children with the rigorous education needed to function within our global community.

It is our professional and individual responsibility to face the challenge of foreign language teacher recruitment now. The profession must seek solutions to the shortage through multiple avenues such as foreign language professional organizations, the preK-16+ education system, and society at large.

In order to recruit new foreign language teachers...

- We must identify and encourage tomorrow's foreign language teachers first from within the profession. This encouragement must come early, within our foreign language classrooms, and draw upon our present and

expanding student population.

- Foreign language teachers must collaborate with areas beyond our traditional academic borders and seek the expertise of those who have experience in the field of teacher recruitment. We must acquire knowledge and strategies designed to achieve our collective professional employment goals.
- Foreign language teachers must unite with influential forces outside the educational domain. We must work with parents, policy-makers, corporate leaders and members of the general public to begin to address the shortage. We need to find innovative ways of broadening the traditional pathways to foreign language teaching as a career. Appropriate financial incentives could be provided to relieve the crisis.

Within the educational domain we could:

- endow programs, fund campaigns and create scholarships for future foreign language teachers.
- promote, the offering of foreign languages for all students in the community including parents, politicians, school board members, students, and voters.
- educate the education field about the existing standards in foreign language education and the potential of the foreign language field to provide a pluralistic vision in educating future world citizens.
- educate students from kindergarten through higher education about the intrinsic and extrinsic rewards of foreign language teaching and the pedagogical profession.
- identify immersion and early-start programs and encourage them to partner with each other and other preK-16+ programs in recruitment efforts
- identify and publicize successful results in recruiting teachers.
- support future-teacher groups and initiatives, using models of already-established programs.
- establish after-school and in-school programs, summer camps, internships and apprenticeships for future foreign language teachers.
- identify individuals who are training for multi-disciplinary elementary teaching positions to continue foreign language training and earn an additional specialization or licensure/certification in a foreign language.
- In the short term, utilize existing international collaborations to bring foreign language teachers to the United States from their native countries.

Beyond the educational domain, we could:

- Support and encourage public and governmental funding to affirm quality foreign language teaching and enhance the professional stature of educators.

- Develop a strong and sustained public awareness campaign that promotes our profession's goals to the society at large.
- Educate external civic groups and community organizations about the immediacy of the foreign language teacher shortage and its impact on foreign language programs in the United States and society as a whole.
- Reformulate teacher preparation and professional development programs for teachers and alternative-path teacher candidates so that they meet high standards that assure that graduates possess essential skills.
- Research the factors that impact the attrition rate for foreign language teachers leaving the classroom and seek ways to address these factors.

The recruitment of foreign language teachers is a wide-ranging endeavor that has not often been contemplated by our profession in recent decades. Now, both junior and senior foreign language teachers should identify potential colleagues and replacements. Recruiting foreign language teachers should not be a solitary task. We must speak through a unified profession at the local, state, regional and national levels. Our recruits will be men and women from varied backgrounds who represent the racial, ethnic and socioeconomic diversity of our society at large. By forging alliances and establishing networks, foreign language professionals will initiate a unified, common response to the foreign language teacher shortage crisis. Clearly, there is no one solution for all situations. Well-planned foreign language teacher recruitment is essential to the future of the profession.

TEACHER RECRUITMENT

Synthesis and Significant Additions from the Board of Reviewers Comments

- Much can be learned from states that have been successful in "lateral entry" or attracting people who have had experience in other careers such as business, medicine, and law and who have interest in becoming teachers.
- New ways must be found to help educated refugees obtain teaching credentials in the U.S. Many are very qualified, but the process is difficult and sometimes impossible.
- While bringing teachers from abroad is a positive step, provision must be made for providing extensive training for these teachers in policies, procedures, instructional strategies, assessment, and methods for reporting to students and parents, etc. that may be lacking in their background. Without it, school systems will continue to be frustrated with the difficulty of integrating these teachers into the American educational system.
- The problem is bigger than the foreign language teaching profession. Foreign language educators must work to enhance the status of the entire teaching profession.
- There is no mention of the problem of declining public interest in and

funding for certain languages, including French and German, in some parts of the country.

TEACHER RECRUITMENT

Additions from Delegate Assembly and the New Visions Focus Session 1999 ACTFL Convention

I. Recruitment Ideas

- Establish a national agenda for teacher recruitment
- Develop a unified effort across language organizations to address the teacher shortage
- Increase the diversity among FL teachers by recruiting heritage speakers and students from varied ethnic backgrounds
- Research how other disciplines such as mathematics and science are dealing with the teacher shortage
- Establish a list of institutions that produce teachers and disseminate the list to personnel offices
- Develop a recruitment brochure and video about teaching foreign languages

II. Publicity Campaign to Publicize the Teacher Shortage

- Collaborative effort of ACTFL and other language organizations
- JNCL-NCLIS lobbying in Washington
- Presentations at FL conferences and non-FL conferences

III. Activities to Encourage New People to Enter the Profession

- Recognition of successful persons who speak and use foreign languages
- Recruitment of famous persons to serve as advocates for foreign languages
- California Language Teachers Association (CLTA) Model
- University of California-Santa Barbara provides a week-long workshop for in-service teachers each summer; workshop costs \$500.00
- Methods professors in California recommend their students to attend this week-long workshop
- CLTA provides scholarships for the selected student attendees
- Students rub shoulders with in-service teachers
- Students are enticed to become FL teachers

IV. Short Term Solutions

- Encourage recently retired teachers to return to the classroom to bridge the gap
- Encourage retired teachers to serve as supervisors and mentors for in-

- service teacher candidates and interns
- Use alternative certification to encourage heritage speakers and previous teachers to return to the classroom
- Develop certification programs that can be completed in two years or less
- Find ways for working students to complete certification programs on weekends and in the evening
- Recognize certification (or partial credit towards certification) from other countries
- Use Army personnel with language proficiency and graduates from the Defense Language Institute as foreign language teachers

V. Continuing Concerns and Needs

- Increase the number of teachers for the LCTs
- Increase the number of teachers for elementary programs
- Reduce the rate of attrition among foreign language teachers
- Increase the proficiency level of foreign language teachers
- Increase the ethnic diversity among foreign language teachers
- Increase teacher salaries comparable to that of other professions
- Lead the way to change to non-Carnegie based programs and institutions