
Perspectives

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IT IS STATING THE OBVIOUS TO SAY THAT the federal legislation known as the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, which became law in 2002, is among the most talked about educational policy documents in recent memory. Part of that interest can be gauged by the fact that Jack Jennings and Nancy Kober, both of the nonprofit Center on Education Policy, which is conducting a long-term study of the NCLB Act, judge it to demand “more of states and school districts than any previous federal education law” (2004). In addition to being such a presence for the policy and education community, the legislation has also received considerable media attention. By and large, media coverage has been critical of numerous aspects of the mandates associated with the NCLB Act as well as its implementation in schools, in school districts, and at the state and national level.

Strong criticism tends to prevail even when the legislation’s laudable intentions to raise the standards of public education in the United States are acknowledged. Thus, on the one hand the previous Secretary of Education, Rod Paige, who spearheaded much of this central domestic agenda in President George W. Bush’s first administration, characterizes the legislation as ensuring that “no child is ignored or excluded or disrespected, no matter where the child lives,” adding that, “justice requires that every school teach every child in America and in the world” (2004). On the other hand, criticism (a) targets what some people consider an unprecedented and dangerous level of top-down encroachment by the federal government into the traditionally local decision-making in U.S. education, (b) focuses on the overreliance on non-school-based, standardized forms of assessment that affect curriculum and instruction, and (c) excoriates the legislation as an unfunded mandate whose implementation further reduces educational options at a time when most communities and states already labor under serious fiscal constraints. Not surprisingly, then, such charac-

terizations of the NCLB Act have fueled a strong backlash among administrators and practitioners at all levels of the education enterprise and have mobilized opposition in communities and among parents.

For foreign language (FL) professionals the legislation would, at first glance, seem to be of lesser concern. FLs are included in the NCLB “core academic subjects,” but FLs are not included in the most controversial aspect of the legislation, namely its testing program. Testing applies only to English in terms of reading and language arts, mathematics, and science; it does not affect the nontested core content areas of FLs, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography. However, such a casual attitude toward the NCLB Act would seriously underestimate its extensive ripple effect throughout the educational system, and would ignore inherent links between student performance in English reading and language arts and the role of other (heritage/foreign) languages in students’ personal and academic lives and, ultimately, in their civic lives.

To explore those connections is the goal of this issue of *Perspectives*. It aims to provide an in-depth look at the consequences of the NCLB legislation for FL instruction in the United States, but also for any language instruction, including native language instruction—the “language arts” of K–12 education—and second language instruction in English. The column interprets the consequences of the NCLB Act broadly, ranging from those effects closely linked to educational issues, such as the danger of curricular constriction and program closings, to the consequences for teacher education. Ultimately, the contributors to the column explore the most appropriate professional response to the legislation. Perhaps this response will require a rethinking of the nature of the collaboration among diverse professional organizations in order to address the perennial problem of the self- and other-inflicted marginal status particularly of the FL field.

Marcia Rosenbusch, Director of a National K–12 Foreign Language Resource Center at Iowa State University, leads the discussion with her comprehensive overview position paper. Her

presentation leaves little doubt that the challenge of the NCLB Act is both a challenge of content and a challenge of the most appropriate strategic positioning which language professional organizations should seek in order to refigure the new educational policy environment in favor of languages. Just what the response should and can be remains to be determined. But Rosenbusch's presentation leaves little doubt that, if ever a policy issue demanded the FL profession's urgent attention, it is the NCLB Act.

As always, the subsequent commentaries round out our understanding of the issues. Margaret Busone, a high school French teacher, experiences the NCLB Act on the ground and recounts its effects on her students, on her school, and on her immediate civic community and the profession. In raising numerous concerns, she also asserts with renewed conviction the central role of language learning and teaching in the education of our children.

In the second commentary, Donald Freeman and Kathryn Riley, an academic researcher and a state education department policy expert, examine how the NCLB Act affects English language learners and how those effects might influence state educational policy. In the English language arts component of the NCLB Act, the mandated assessment of nonnative students' performance, that is, of the performance of English as a Second Language (ESL) learners, alongside that of native English speakers, foregrounds particularly well the complex consequences of the underlying interest of the legislation, namely public accountability of educational practice. As Freeman and Riley suggest, although some of its consequences may be uncomfortable, appropriate interpretation of the legislation demands careful scrutiny, both with respect to how it plays out in a particular state context—here Massachusetts—and also to the powerful challenges it poses for some of the profession's less than equitable and educationally less than defensible practices.

As a legislative initiative that had its roots in the general educational standards movement, the NCLB Act can be expected to relate closely to the Foreign Language Standards. However, from the perspective of a teacher educator who has been centrally involved in the Standards movement, Eileen Glisan finds its effects extraordinarily detrimental to FL teaching and learning. For that reason, she calls for vigorous grassroots action

that would overcome teachers' professional isolation so that, with no teacher left behind, the profession can support its own meaningful student standards, state-level forms of assessment, and licensing standards for teachers.

Lisa Cox presents her views based on her participation, as a member of a state board of education, in the national organization's call for action in response to the NCLB Act. She recommends activism and engagement, with an emphasis on elementary language instruction, as part of a non-negotiable educational core that is carried through for the entire K–12 curriculum, just as the Standards had envisioned.

Finally, Christine Brown draws on the long-term experience of a district-level language supervisor with extensive involvement in several professional organizations and in many of the recent initiatives of the FL field. She chooses to highlight less the challenges and more the opportunities arising from the NCLB Act for the FL field. To her, a particularly fruitful area of engagement would be to underscore the link between FL study and improved student performance in other curricular areas that have mandated state testing. For that reason, research evidence in support of such a claim should be expanded, thereby bolstering in the most persuasive way our demand for a central place in U.S. K–12 curricula as well as our indispensable role in the global preparedness of an American citizenry.

As an interested reader, I found the range of issues raised in these commentaries particularly far-reaching and thought-provoking. For that reason, I have added a postscript of my own to this particular issue of *Perspectives*.

The papers' authors speak eloquently and, not surprisingly, even passionately to the issues as they see them. It is up to the profession to give their representations careful consideration and also to respond to them with careful debate and carefully considered action.

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THE ISSUE

The No Child Left Behind Act and Teaching and Learning Languages in U.S. Schools

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This article provides a description of the key features of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act—accountability, testing, teacher quality, and scientifically based research—and characterizes concerns about the Act among the general public and the education community. It explores the consequences to foreign language education by examining 3 reports, 2 of which are based on surveys that assess the impact of the NCLB Act on foreign language education. Both surveys indicate that the NCLB Act has resulted in a decrease in instructional time for foreign languages, and one survey provides evidence that these decreases are greater in high-minority schools than in other schools. It explores the implications of the NCLB Act for the foreign language profession with regard to accountability and testing, teacher qualifications, and scientifically based research. Finally, it reviews the response of the profession to the NCLB Act, and although it praises the response by state foreign language supervisors, it criticizes the responses of national organizations and associations. The article recommends establishing a national coalition to address policy issues such as the NCLB Act.

The premise of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act is that our nation's schools are failing and, therefore, change is necessary. The purpose of the NCLB Act is to raise the achievement of all students in the nation and eliminate the achievement gap seen among students differentiated by race, ethnicity, poverty, disability, and English proficiency. Because this act redefines the federal role in education policy, which has traditionally been a state responsibility, it merits our attention as educators, parents, and citizens. In addition, because the NCLB Act has an impact on the teaching and learning of all core content areas, including languages, language educators need to be informed about it.

Although its goal of raising the achievement levels of all students is well-intentioned, the unintended consequences of the NCLB Act at the local, state, and national levels have led to much discussion, readily found in the media and the professional literature. For example, professional articles that address the impact of the Act on English-language learners, one of the subgroups identified by the NCLB Act as needing improved achievement, and on the challenges in testing them (Abedi, 2004; Solano-Flores & Trumbull, 2003), clearly show that the complexity of this topic may be worthy of its own position paper. Discussion is sorely lacking, however, on the consequences of the NCLB Act for modern and classical language education. This article, therefore, focuses on the impact of the NCLB Act on the

teaching and learning of modern and classical languages in U.S. schools. However, because the NCLB Act and the literature addressing it refer to all of these languages as *foreign languages* (FLs), I will use this term in the same way.

I will begin with a historical note on the NCLB Act and a description of its key features. I will then report the results and recommendations of two studies that examine the impact of the NCLB Act on K–12 FL education and the conclusions and recommendations of a national study group that considered the role of the arts and FLs in the curriculum of our nation's schools. I will close with recommended steps that I believe the FL profession should take at this historic moment in U.S. public education.

WHAT IS THE NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT?

The NCLB Act, which was signed into law in January, 2002 (PL 107–110), is the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The ESEA was first passed in 1965 with the goal of improving the U.S. educational system by providing better education for students in poverty through an increase in services to them. The ESEA provided federal funds for schools but did not require accountability in the use of those funds, a fact for which it has been criticized. The Center on Educational Policy (2003) clarified why accountability was not part of ESEA in

1965: "At that time, the federal role in education was marginal, most state education agencies had very limited authority and capabilities, and local people were extremely wary that more federal aid would bring federal control" (p. iv).

At about the same time as the first ESEA, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) was initiated as a federal testing program. The NAEP was to report on how the nation's students were performing on selected items at three grade levels (4th, 8th, and 12th). Brennan (2004) reported that there were fears that the NAEP might become a "high-stakes federal testing program"¹ as found in some countries of Europe. He explained that, "to help preclude that possibility, it was written into law that NAEP could not report scores for individual students" (p. 2). The NAEP evolved through the 1980s and early 1990s from a reporting of item scores to test scores and then, on a trial basis, to a reporting of scores that addressed achievement levels (below basic, basic, proficient, and advanced). The NAEP is currently used to confirm state NCLB testing results, which, according to Brennan, "is the *de facto* elevation of NAEP to a federally-mandated *high-stakes* testing program" (p. 9).

Through the NCLB Act, policymakers in Washington seek to raise academic achievement in the nation by requiring schools to assess all students on specified content areas and report their progress toward proficiency. The focus of the NCLB Act is on core academic subjects as defined in the law: "The term 'core academic subjects' means English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history and geography" (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). There are four key measures in the NCLB Act:

1. Accountability. States are required to establish a definition of student proficiency in the core academic subjects of reading/language arts, mathematics, and science through prescribed indicators and set a timetable to bring all students in all subgroups up to the defined levels of proficiency by 2013–2014. The school must report to parents their child's progress in each targeted academic subject annually, and the state is required to report the results of students' performance on the annual tests for every public school to parents and the community. Schools that fail to meet state-defined Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) toward their defined goals for 2 years are identified as needing improvement. Schools that have not met AYP after 4 years are subject to restructuring or reconstitution.

2. Testing. States must develop and administer annual tests that define the proficiency that all students are expected to reach in reading/language arts, mathematics, and science. States also must include a sample of students in fourth and eighth grade in a biennial NAEP in mathematics and reading to verify state assessments.

3. Teacher Quality. Public elementary and secondary school teachers who teach core content areas are required to be "highly qualified," which is defined as having full state certification (may be attained through alternate routes specified by the state), holding a bachelor's degree, and having demonstrated subject matter competency as determined by the state under NCLB guidelines. States are required to develop a plan by the end of 2005–2006 to ensure that every teacher is highly qualified to teach in his or her core content area.

4. Scientifically Based Research. The NCLB Act requires that all educational decisions be informed by scientifically based research as defined in the legislation. The NCLB Act funds for Reading First Grants, for example, are to be used for methods of reading instruction backed by scientifically based research.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE RESPONSE TO NCLB?

The NCLB Act has engendered controversy that is centered in part on the increased role of the federal government in educational policy. The majority of Americans believe that decisions about what is taught in public schools should be made at the local level by the school board (61%), rather than at the state level (22%) or the federal level (15%; Rose & Gallup, 2003). Results of a 2004 survey indicate that they also disagree with "the major strategies NCLB uses to determine whether a school is or is not in need of improvement" (Rose & Gallup, 2004, p. 42). For example, 83% of those surveyed believe that testing only in English and mathematics will not yield a fair picture of a school, 73% say it is not possible to judge a student's proficiency in English and mathematics on the basis of a single test, and 81% are concerned that basing decisions about school on students' performance in English and mathematics will mean less emphasis on art, music, history, and other subjects.

In the education community, there is support for high standards and high expectations for every child, but the NCLB focus on standardized testing is resulting in a narrowing of the curriculum and a "sorting of students" (Marshak, 2003, p. 229) and "could halt the development of truly significant improvements in teaching and

learning" (Lewis, 2002, p. 179). The National Education Association supports the NCLB Act in its goal but views it as an obstacle to improving public education because of its focus on "punishments rather than assistance," and "mandates rather than support for effective programs" (National Education Association, n.d.).

WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NCLB FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION?

The focus of the NCLB Act on high expectations for all students in reading/language arts, mathematics, and science has stimulated intense discussion in the media and professional literature on whether the achievement gap between majority and minority students can be closed and whether annual testing and accountability can facilitate change. Although little discussion has focused on how the implementation of the NCLB Act is affecting the nontested core content areas of the curriculum (FLs, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography), reports on the results of two surveys and the conclusions from a study group provide insight into this impact.

Council for Basic Education

The Council for Basic Education (CBE) surveyed almost 1,000 public school principals in Illinois, Maryland, New Mexico, and New York in the fall of 2003 and conducted focus groups of elementary and secondary school principals from across the United States to study the impact of the NCLB Act on student access to the liberal arts in elementary and secondary schools (von Zastrow, 2004). Approximately three quarters of the principals reported an increase in instructional time in reading, writing, and mathematics, all core content areas in which AYP is measured under the NCLB Act, and a decrease in time for the arts, elementary social studies, and FLs.

In low-minority schools,² about the same percentage of principals (11%) reported increases in instructional time for FLs as decreases (9%). In high-minority schools, however, 23% of principals reported decreases in instructional time for FLs, whereas only 9% reported increases. In the high-minority schools, 29% of the principals expected further decreases in the future and expected these decreases to be large. Only 8% of them expected increases and none expected these increases to be large. Differences between high- and low-minority schools also existed for the number of FL teachers and the professional development focused on

FLs. Principals of low-minority schools were more likely to report increases in the number of teachers and amount of time devoted to FL professional development; however, principals of high-minority schools reported more decreases than increases in both numbers of teachers and professional development time.

The results of the CBE study suggest that the NCLB Act threatens to "narrow the curriculum" (p. 25) by focusing on students' proficiency in reading/language arts and mathematics, the core content areas for which schools' achievement of AYP is currently determined. This focus has resulted in decreases in instructional time for the arts and humanities, including FLs. Because this trend is stronger in high-minority schools than in low-minority schools, it may lead to further inequities in U.S. schools by limiting access to the liberal arts to students in low-minority schools. The CBE study concluded that now is an opportune time to begin a national dialogue about the role of liberal arts in the curriculum and recommends that educators and policymakers take the following steps to assure a continued role for liberal arts.

1. Integrate the liberal arts into strategies for improving mathematics and reading skills.
2. Better prepare teachers to integrate the liberal arts into mathematics and reading instruction.
3. Incorporate standards and accountability systems into all liberal arts courses.
4. Maintain high goals for excellence in the liberal arts, and track progress towards those goals. (von Zastrow, 2004, p. 25)

These recommendations challenge the FL profession to explore the feasibility of integrating reading/language arts and mathematics content into courses at all levels of instruction. Examples of the reinforcement of language arts skills in K-12 FL classrooms can be found in thematic units based on culturally rich children's literature.³ The preparation of teachers in strategies for integrating FLs and reading/language arts currently exists in summer institutes⁴ and in teacher preparation programs.⁵ Making these examples better known to the profession would allow other FL educators to consider the integration of FL instruction with reading/languages arts and other academic content areas.

Encouraging state standards and accountability in FLs is a more challenging goal for a profession that is struggling to articulate programs across levels of instruction from elementary school through high school and postsecondary institutions. For

FL education, achieving accountability and tracking progress toward those goals at the school and district level are challenges in themselves. Programs that have achieved this goal should identify themselves and share their experience and expertise because they would serve as valuable exemplars for the profession and move us closer to being accountable at the state level.

Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages

In the spring of 2003, after hearing from states about cuts in FL programs, the Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (NECTFL) surveyed members by electronic mail to gather data on these cuts and the perceived reasons for them. Survey respondents represented 165 school districts from 10 of the 14 member states; however, 81% of the responses were from New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Maine (Rosenbusch & Jensen, 2005). The respondents reported several types of cuts.

1. Cuts in their school/school district FL program: 22%. These cuts affected all grades, K–12, but the largest number of cuts was in early elementary school.

2. A scaling back of the FL program (for example, in minutes per class or class meetings per week): 39%. This change occurred at all K–12 grade levels, but was reported most frequently for upper elementary school and middle school grades.

3. Elimination of language teaching positions at all grade levels for the 2003–2004 school year: 24%. Most of the positions were lost at the high school level.

4. One or more languages eliminated from the program in their school/school district: 22%. These languages included Chinese, French, German, Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Latin, Russian, Spanish, as well as American Sign Language and English as a Second Language.

In an open-ended question, respondents were asked what they believe to be the impetus for these changes. Of the 93% of respondents who answered this question, 75% identified multiple factors. They most frequently cited insufficient funds (43%), followed by lack of administrator support (18%), and state testing (14%), which they clarified to be testing of reading/language arts or mathematics, or both (as required by the NCLB Act to determine whether a school district has achieved AYP). A sampling of their replies shows the multiplicity and interrelatedness of fac-

tors, including the NCLB Act, behind the cutbacks (pp. 31–32).

Inadequate funding at the state and county levels.

The district wants to see improved scores on the math and reading assessments of this test [PSSA—Pennsylvania System of School Assessment] and that is where they put their money, time, and support.

At the middle school level, our administrator wanted to raise MEA [Maine Educational Assessment] scores in math, science, and social studies so he took time away from us and gave it to those programs.

I don't believe my superintendent is supportive of early language learning . . . I believe the impetus for scaling back was partly money but mostly ignorance [as] to the benefits of early language learning!

In the elementary grades, FL instruction will be scaled back to make more time to address No Child Left Behind mandates. Our schools are implementing new math/reading programs to improve assessment scores.

Based on the results of this survey, the authors recommended ways the profession can work together to "improve the role of foreign languages in the curriculum" (Rosenbusch & Jensen, 2005, p. 35):

1. Collect and report data to the profession, policymakers, and the public on foreign language programs at the district, state, and national levels.

2. Advocate for an articulated sequence of foreign language instruction that begins in early elementary school and continues uninterrupted through the postsecondary level.

3. Advocate for the inclusion of foreign languages and the arts in the K–12 curriculum.

4. Integrate foreign languages with reading/language arts, mathematics, and science to enhance student learning and to ensure the place of foreign languages in the curriculum.

5. Collaborate with teacher preparation programs to assure that well-prepared teachers enter and stay in the profession.

6. Stay informed about NCLB and other federal, state, and local policy issues that impact foreign language education.

7. Support the teaching of all languages, especially the less commonly taught languages.

8. Build support for foreign language education among students, teachers, administrators, parents, and the community.

These recommendations address ongoing needs that have been discussed in professional meetings, conferences, and publications, except for the fourth recommendation, which is a direct

result of the NCLB Act. This recommendation supports the first recommendation of the Council for Basic Education (von Zastrow, 2004) and takes it one step further by including science with reading/language arts and mathematics, because science will be the focus of schools in the near future as they comply with the NCLB Act. The first recommendation is also a direct result of the NCLB Act in that it expands to the district level the collecting and reporting of data that currently exist in the profession. Given that this is the level at which program cuts are first apparent, it is crucial that lead teachers or district supervisors track these data and make them known to the school, district, community, and state so that program cuts will not be "invisible" to the public.

National Association of State Boards of Education

In response to the NCLB Act, the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) formed a study group in 2003 to examine the status of the arts and FLs in the curriculum of the nation's schools. Their report drew two main conclusions: (a) There is substantial research on the benefits of including the arts and FLs in the curriculum, and (b) these content areas have been marginalized and are at risk of being dropped from the core curriculum (National Association of State Boards of Education, 2003).

The study group identified 10 recommendations for "state policy makers."

1. Adopt high-quality licensure requirements for staff in the arts and foreign languages that are aligned with student standards in these subject areas.

2. Ensure adequate time for high-quality professional development for staff in the arts and foreign languages.

3. Ensure adequate staff expertise at the state education agency to work in the areas of the arts and foreign languages.

4. Incorporate both the arts and foreign languages into core graduation requirements, while simultaneously increasing the number of credits for graduation.

5. Encourage higher education institutions to increase standards for admission *and* include arts and foreign language courses when calculating high school grade point averages.

6. Incorporate arts and foreign language learning in the early years into standards, curriculum frameworks, and course requirements. Also, encourage local school districts to incorporate the arts and foreign languages into instruction in the early years, whenever possible.

7. Advocate continued development of curriculum materials for the arts and foreign languages from the textbook publishing industry.

8. Incorporate *all* core subject areas, including the arts and foreign languages, into the improvement strategies promoted by the No Child Left Behind Act.

9. Urge the National Assessment Governing Board to increase the frequency in the administration of NAEP assessments for both the arts and foreign languages.

10. Urge Congress and legislatures to make a greater commitment to the arts and foreign languages. (pp. 17–25)

Of the three reports, the NASBE report provides the most specific recommendations and addresses each recommendation to a specific group (K–12 education, state department of education, institutions of higher education, textbook publishing industry, and the NAEP Governing Board). Several recommendations, although made to different entities, address the same outcome. For example, recommendations that would encourage students to study a FL for a number of years across levels of instruction include the encouragement of an early start (Recommendation [R] 6), the definition of core graduation requirements that specify increased numbers of credits (R4), an increase in the standards of admission for higher education (R4), and the inclusion of FL courses in the determination of high school grade point averages (R4). Key recommendations that affect state departments of education, but which would require the support of a unified and vocal profession to enact, include adequate staff expertise at the state education agency to work with the area of FLs (R3) and high-quality teacher licensure requirements (R1). Although it would be challenging to implement these recommendations, they would clearly strengthen FL education in the nation.

WHAT DOES NCLB TELL US ABOUT OUR PROFESSION?

Because of the intense national focus on the NCLB Act, this is an excellent time to reflect on where our profession is in terms of the key features of the NCLB Act: (a) accountability and testing, (b) teacher quality, and (c) scientifically based research. In this section, I review how the profession has responded nationally to issues highlighted by the NCLB Act and recommend related actions.

Accountability and Testing

FLs were not initially named a core content area in the nation's schools at the 1989 Education Summit in Charlottesville, Virginia, which led to the Goals 2000 legislation (Lafayette & Draper, 1996). But in a national collaborative effort at regional hearings on the proposed legislation,⁶ the profession successfully called for the inclusion of FLs. Because FLs achieved the status of core academic subject, federal funding was available to establish voluntary national student standards. In 1996, in a unique collaborative effort among nine organizations and associations,⁷ the profession established content standards for FLs that defined what K–12 students should know and be able to do and, in 1999, revised the standards to address kindergarten through postsecondary levels (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1999). The study of FLs is, therefore, equal to other core academic subjects in having established student standards, and many states have aligned their state FL standards with the national standards. Unfortunately, “their translation into the nation's classrooms has been limited” (Abbott, 2004).

Additional federal funds made possible the development of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Performance Guidelines for K–12 Learners (Swender & Duncan, 1998), which define anticipated performance outcomes for the communication goal of the student standards and criteria for assessment. To address how teachers can measure student progress toward the student standards and performance outcomes, the Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA) was developed (Glisan, Adair-Hauck, Koda, Sandrock, & Swender, 2003). More specifically,

IPAs were developed to meet the need for valid and reliable assessments that determine the level at which students comprehend and interpret authentic texts in the foreign language, interact with others in the target language in oral and written form, and present oral and written messages to audiences of listeners and readers. (p. 8)

As a profession, we have successfully developed assessments related to student standards. However, these assessments are not the kind of high stakes paper and pencil tests used for measuring accountability under the NCLB Act. Our profession needs to decide if we want FLs to be an academic subject area for which schools are held accountable under the NCLB Act as recommended by NASBE (R8). Considering the criti-

cisms of high stakes testing, would the gain in visibility and respect as a core academic subject be worth the negatives associated with accountability and testing reported for other content areas?

In 1999, the Center for Applied Linguistics worked collaboratively with ACTFL and the American Institutes for Research to develop recommendations for the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) for a NAEP examination in FLs. The assessment, first targeted for 2003, but now postponed until after 2006,⁸ will assess the Spanish language skills of representative samples of 12th-grade students who have learned Spanish in various ways over different amounts of time and will show the connection between time spent studying Spanish and achievement level (NAGB, 2003).

The first administration of the foreign language NAEP has been postponed, a delay that goes against the NASBE recommendation (R9) to increase the frequency of the NAEP assessment. Because the NAEP has already been developed and because it will provide “a pulse on language education at the K–12 level and on heightening the need for additional programs and funding for languages” (Abbott, 2004, p. 2), it makes sense for the profession to promote administering of the NAEP in 2006.

For FL immersion programs, the NCLB Act accountability provides a unique challenge. In state testing, immersion programs are required to adhere to the same schedule and content for reading/language arts and mathematics as the curriculum taught in English. Especially in the early grades, students in immersion programs learn content in the target language and may have little exposure to the English academic language that is used in the assessments. This problem is especially challenging when immersion students have learned to read in the target language but have not yet been introduced to the reading/language arts curriculum in English. Some immersion programs are seeking permission either to delay testing in English until the end of the grade level in which English is introduced in that program model (for example, fourth grade), or to translate the tests into the immersion target language in order to test reading skills in that language. The hope is that the immersion model, which so successfully teaches language, will not be jeopardized either by having to introduce English earlier in the immersion program, or by teaching reading in English before teaching it in the target language in order to meet the NCLB Act requirements for student assessment.⁹

One positive aspect of the accountability required of immersion programs by the NCLB Act is that the assessment results will provide valuable information about the performance of student subgroups in core content areas. Immersion programs, therefore, will have data on how well students who are differentiated by race, ethnicity, poverty, disability, and English proficiency are performing in reading/language arts, mathematics, and science. As a profession, we currently have limited data of this type.

Highly Qualified Teachers

To assure that teachers are "highly qualified," the NCLB Act defines varying requirements for both new and current public school teachers according to teaching level (elementary, middle, and high school). It is the state, however, that determines how those requirements will be met. Because state requirements for licensure are difficult to change once established, the fact that states must redefine licensure to meet the NCLB Act requirements provides a unique opportunity for change. This possibility is particularly relevant in light of the standards established in 2002 by the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) for the licensing of new FL teachers. The INTASC standards were designed to be compatible with the standards for accomplished teachers drawn up by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (2001) and to parallel the ACTFL *Program Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers* (Foreign Language Teacher Standards Writing Team, 2002) that have been approved by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE).

To use the INTASC standards to redefine state licensure requirements would synchronize licensure with current thinking about teacher qualifications. This change could mean, for example, that state FL teaching licensure requirements, which have traditionally been defined by credit hours, might require a defined level of oral proficiency as part of the "rigorous state academic subject test" (Academic Improvement and Teacher Quality Programs, 2004, p. 9) required by the NCLB Act for new middle school and high school teachers in each of the core academic subjects they teach.

In some states, the licensure for FL teachers has been established only for the secondary school level (Grades 9–12 or 7–12). Because colleges of education prepare teachers to meet state licensure requirements, without licensure in FLs for

the elementary school level, there is no incentive for colleges and universities to develop teacher preparation programs for this level of instruction. This is an opportunity, therefore, for the profession to work with the state professional standards commission to add licensure for the elementary school level, which would move the profession one step closer to the vision of an early start and continuous instruction in FLs through high school and postsecondary levels.

As we consider the requirements for preparing highly qualified FL teachers, this is also an opportune time to consider how well the languages for which we currently prepare teachers match our nation's needs. Individuals with a high level of proficiency are needed in a range of languages for business (Zens, 2004), national security, and "social well being, e.g., public health, international development, assimilation and social justice" (Center for the Advanced Study of Language, 2004, p. 1).

At the present time, Spanish is the language most studied at all levels, from elementary through postsecondary school (Rhodes & Branaman, 1999; Welles, 2003). Met (2004) clarified that "students who have gained significant skills in one foreign language have the ability to learn other languages more quickly than students who have never had foreign language training" (p. 215), yet opportunities to study other languages are limited. It would be beneficial to our national interest, therefore, to increase the number of elementary, secondary, and postsecondary programs teaching less commonly taught languages.

Because universities prepare K–12 preservice and inservice language teachers, as well as others who major or double major in languages, it is critical that higher education administrators and faculty recognize the importance of their role in preparing graduates who have competence in a broad range of languages and cultures. Phillips (2003) clarified this challenge for higher education by pointing out that tight budgets cause governing boards to create savings by cutting small programs—such as those of less commonly taught languages—by limiting the number of credit hours in bachelor's degree programs, and by eliminating FL requirements. To address this problem, Scott (2004) proposed that faculty at institutions of higher education work to bring about changes in university policies which will prioritize FL and international studies and work to establish partnerships between higher education, foundations, and the federal government. Lazio (2004) deemed it "incongruous" that agencies of

the federal government “spend hundreds of billions of dollars on military power” but do not fund education in critical languages: “I strongly urge Congress to significantly enhance resources under the Higher Education Act for foreign language education” (p. 5). The higher education FL community should aggressively explore innovative approaches to expanding academic programs that result in highly qualified teachers of commonly and less commonly taught languages for all levels of instruction from elementary through postsecondary education.

Scientifically Based Research

The NCLB Act requires that educational decisions be informed by “scientifically based research,” a requirement that is not in itself controversial. However, the definition of the phrase focuses on experimental or quasi-experimental design with a preference for random-assignment experiments as codified in the Education Sciences Reform Act (H.R. 3801). “Other research traditions—including case studies, qualitative analyses, historical inquiries, and surveys, for example—lie outside of this narrowed privilege” (Davis, 2003, p. 1). Researchers in the language profession need to become informed about the national dialogue on scientifically based research in education engendered by the NCLB Act because the standards for research are changing. Should future language research not be compatible with government views on educational research, FLs as a content area could become further marginalized.

The NCLB Act’s focus on research also brings to the forefront the question of our profession’s capability for providing research that can inform policymaking. In 1999, at a meeting of the New Visions project,¹⁰ the 30 invited national leaders identified research as one of five areas of critical importance to the profession.¹¹ In a paper based on the discussion of the working group on research, Chaves Tesser (1999) clarified an important role of research in the profession: “In order to achieve credibility with our stakeholders and to influence policy and planning, we must present empirical evidence from well-designed research studies” (p. 1). Today the type of research needed to convince policymakers of the value of maintaining FLs in a curriculum that has been narrowed by the NCLB Act is “scientifically based research” that provides statistical evidence that the study of a FL enhances cognitive functioning and results in improved student performance on tests of the core academic subjects of language arts/reading,

mathematics, and science. This research is not the type of research commonly found in our profession.

Response of the Profession to NCLB

National Organizations and Associations. In a review of Web sites for national FL associations and organizations¹² in August, 2004, no mention of the NCLB Act was found, except on the ACTFL Web site, which provided the text of the speech on the NCLB Act that then U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige delivered at the annual ACTFL conference in November, 2003. From this evidence, or lack thereof, it appears that the profession is not attending to the NCLB Act and has taken no stand on the matter. Nor is it clear that classroom teachers have knowledge of the NCLB Act, given that only 3 out of 165 respondents identified the NCLB Act by name in their responses to the NECTFL survey. Perhaps this finding is not surprising because their professional organizations have not kept them informed about the NCLB Act.

It is helpful to review what former Secretary Paige said in his speech to the profession at the ACTFL conference (2003). He began by declaring that “Foreign language instruction should be part of every child’s education.” He noted however, that “the law [NCLB] is blamed, by some, for threatening the existence of foreign language study in the schools.” He added that “some school administrators claim they have to shift resources to meet the law” to core academic areas for which the school must meet the AYP. Secretary Paige reported that he had “urged local school districts [to] include a wide and deep set of offerings in foreign languages because our students need a working knowledge of languages to compete in the future.”

As identified in the CBE and NASBE studies, the arts are another core content area that has suffered cuts as a result of the NCLB Act. The arts organizations have a history of effective collaboration nationally and made a concerted effort to urge the Secretary of Education to make it clear to schools that the arts should not be cut from schools because of the NCLB Act. Their collaborative effort resulted in the Secretary communicating with state commissioners of education in a July, 2004, memo to which he attached a letter directed to all school superintendents in each commissioner’s state that expressed concern about cuts in art education programs in the nation’s elementary and secondary schools. Secretary Paige concluded the letter as follows:

For both the important knowledge and skills they impart and the ways in which they help students to succeed in school and in life, the arts are an important part of a complete education. As we work together to implement the NCLB Act, let's ensure that all children have the opportunity to learn and to grow in and through the arts. (p. 2)

Why did the FL profession receive only a speech to the profession urging the teaching of FLs in our nation's schools, and the arts receive letters to every school superintendent in the nation? Following the example of the arts community, the FL profession should work collaboratively to achieve visibility in the nation's schools and communities and engender the support of students, teachers, administrators, parents, the community, and policymakers at the state and national levels for the study of FLs.

State Supervisors of FLs. State supervisors of FLs are playing a critical role in addressing the challenges that the NCLB Act presents to the FL profession.¹³ For example, Helga Fasciano, Second Language Consultant, and Dr. Fran Hoch, Section Chief, together with other consultants in the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI), worked with the NC State Board of Education and members of the NC General Assembly to respond to concerns expressed by state school administrators, teachers, and parents about the impact of federal and state legislation and policies on the ability of schools to provide the entire state curriculum, including K-12 FLs. In response, the NCDPI developed *The Balanced Curriculum* (2003), which advocates teaching all content areas of the curriculum, not just those that are assessed, and integrating content and skills across the content areas. This balanced curriculum exemplifies the type of curriculum integration encouraged in the recommendations of the CBE (von Zastrow, 2004) and NASBE (National Association of State Boards of Education, 2003), and resulting from the NECTFL survey (Rosenbusch & Jensen, 2004).

To explore how best to serve their membership in response to the NCLB Act, FL organizations and associations would be wise to turn to state supervisors of FLs for guidance. The key role these supervisors play emphasizes the importance of the NASBE Recommendation 3 to "ensure adequate staff expertise at the state education agency to work in the areas of the arts and foreign languages." For states that do not have a state supervisor of FLs, it is time for the profession to work across levels of instruction and through organiza-

tions to advocate the naming of a state supervisor of FLs.

CONCLUSION

I am reminded of a paper on the architecture of the FL profession. It noted that our profession has been successful in resolving problems but that "our tacit decision to leave the structure of the profession to chance has had consequences with which we must now contend" (Kline, 1999). After reviewing the profession's current architecture, Kline provided points to justify her call for change, including: "we need to increase our visibility outside the profession" and "we need to develop a national agenda" (p. 2). A national coalition of language organizations would provide the structure necessary "to consolidate efforts and work better together" and the profession then would have "clout" (p. 4). In spite of this vision, efforts to bring the profession together to create a coalition have not been successful.

Our professional organizations and associations have successfully collaborated in the past, as noted by Phillips (2003), who described the process by which several professional language association leaders¹⁴ were instrumental in creating consensus in the profession for the development and implementation of National Standards in spite of the "hesitancy about the profession's ability to achieve a consensus document" (p. 581). Maxwell (2003), however, clarified that Phillips's example is "one of *response*, rather than *leadership* in the policy arena." Furthermore, he stated, "The FL profession has a documented history of responding to policy initiatives, often as a defensive strategy or to prevent marginalization. It does not have a history of successful leadership, though not entirely through lack of trying" (p. 597).

It has been 3 years now that elementary and secondary FL teachers and district and state supervisors of FLs have been confronting the NCLB Act without any support from their professional organizations, let alone from a coalition of organizations. Other educational entities, however, have recognized the need for action and have examined the impact of the NCLB Act on the arts and humanities in our nation's schools. The fact that other professions took action can provide our profession with a number of examples of steps to consider in addressing the impact of the NCLB Act on FL education. Is it not, however, our responsibility to foresee problems, take action, and make our own recommendations for our own profession? Would this not be a key function of a coalition of language organizations?

Since enactment of the NCLB Act, there have been two more indications that this is a critical time for us to organize as a coalition to address policy issues. First, in June, 2004, the Department of Defense invited leaders with an interest in the language capabilities of our nation's citizens, including members of the FL education community, to begin a dialogue to define a national language policy. As an outcome of this conference a white paper is in preparation that "will outline reciprocal responsibilities within the federal and state governments, industry, education system, and research community for actions that would move the United States toward a language-competent nation" (Center for the Advanced Study of Language, 2004, p. 17).

Second, the November, 2004, issue of the *Phi Delta Kappan* focused on international education and called for "a rethinking of the intent of education in the 21st century" (Kagan & Stewart, 2004b, p. 196). Among their recommendations for building capacity for international education, the guest editors insist that "A K-16 pipeline for major world languages must be built" (Kagan & Stewart, 2004a, p. 234).

Important decisions about the future of language education in this nation are currently in discussion. I believe that the language profession should follow Kline's (1999) recommendation and form a national coalition of language organizations and associations, who, working together, can provide support for the profession as it addresses the NCLB Act and new policy issues. Although I do not disagree with those individuals whose voices have been heard in policy discussions to date, their voices should be backed by the profession. We will be stronger if we establish a national coalition and, rather than simply maintaining a defensive position, take a leadership role in defining the future of teaching and learning languages in U.S. schools.

NOTES

¹ The American Educational Research Association (n.d.) defines high stakes testing as achievement test results that carry "serious consequences for students or for educators" (p. 1).

² CBE reports that for this study, "low-minority schools" are defined as schools whose student populations are 50% or more white and "high-minority schools" are schools whose student populations are less than 50% white (p. 31).

³ Examples of high-school-level thematic units that reinforce language arts skills are *El canto de las palomas*

and *Le géant de Zeralda*. See: <http://www.educ.iastate.edu/nflrc>

⁴ An example of a summer institute is Language Content and Culture Connections: Mexico and the Zapotec Culture (<http://www.educ.iastate.edu/nflrc>) led by Dr. Mari Haas at the National K-12 Foreign Language Resource Center, Iowa State University in 2004.

⁵ Dr. Helena Curtain taught a university methods course at the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee that required preservice teachers to develop a content-related thematic unit.

⁶ J. D. Edwards, personal communication, September 3, 2004.

⁷ The standards development project was a collaborative effort of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, American Association of Teachers of French, American Association of Teachers of German, American Association of Teachers of Italian, American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese, American Classical League, American Council of Teachers of Russian, Chinese Language Association of Secondary-Elementary Schools/Chinese Language Teachers Association, and the National Council of Japanese Language Teachers/Association of Teachers of Japanese (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1999).

⁸ A footnote to the August 2, 2003, NAEP Schedule of Assessments retrieved September 2, 2004, noted that a resolution adopted by NAGB on "August 7, 2004, provides, in part, that 'the Governing Board [will] schedule the 12th grade Foreign Language assessment to be conducted after 2006.'"

⁹ Personal communication, August 19, 2004, with Rob Robison, Foreign Language Program Supervisor, Montgomery County Public Schools, MD.

¹⁰ Co-sponsored by the National K-12 Foreign Language Resource Center at Iowa State University and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.

¹¹ Along with Professional Development; Teacher Recruitment and Retention; Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Articulation; and Architecture of the Profession.

¹² I reviewed the Web sites of all of the organizations that collaborated with the standards development project (see note 7) as well as the Modern Language Association and the Joint National Committee for Languages-National Committee for Languages and International Studies.

¹³ All of the state supervisors of FLs I contacted in August, 2004, for information about the impact of the NCLB Act on FL programs in their states generously provided information about their work, which invariably demonstrated their dedication, creativity, and political savvy: Ruta Couet (SC), Helga Fasciano (NC), Mary Ann Hansen (CT), Janis Jensen (NJ), Paul Sandrock (WI), Deborah Robinson (OH), Vickie Scow (NE), Ann Tollefson (WY), and Elizabeth Webb (GA).

¹⁴ The association leaders were C. Edward Scebold (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages), Lynn Sandstedt (American Association of

Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese), Rebecca Valette (American Association of Teachers of French), and Helene Zimmer-Loew (American Association of Teachers of German).

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THE COMMENTARIES

Calling the Foreign Language Profession to Action

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In a well-intentioned desire to remedy the perceived ills of elementary and secondary schools, the federal government has imposed upon state and local governments its concept of reform. Unfortunately, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act is flawed on at least two counts. First, it relies on testing and grading of schools, the govern-

ment's attempt to bottom-line quantify a child's education like a sales record. Second, the legislation constitutes an unfunded mandate that is imposed on already financially beleaguered school districts and therefore triggers considerable and damaging pressures throughout the educational system.

Most Americans and many teachers know little more about the NCLB Act than that it seeks to improve school performance, a goal over which there surely is no disagreement. What parents often do not realize, however, is that the tests used to measure success are not geared to what children need to learn. For example, because mere facts are easier to assess than is analysis, a Wisconsin test asked students to identify the inventor of the periodic chart. Not assessed was what the periodic chart allows us to do. Facts are the building blocks for deeper thought, but real education, and hence valid assessment, should involve higher-level thinking and analytical skills. Meanwhile, teachers complain that much valuable class time is used to give tests or prepare students for test taking. This year's fourth graders in my district will be tested three times: once for their regular state test, once for a pilot state test, and once for a pilot national test. In addition, the school district bears a hefty price tag for such testing. Because our state legislature has imposed spending caps, the district must cut \$800,000 from the budget over the next 2 years. At the same time it must spend about \$70,000 a year on mandated testing, an amount which will only increase as new grade levels must submit to testing.

In other words, the NCLB Act has switched the focus of teachers, schools, and school districts from guiding and fostering student learning to making the grade on a test in order to prevent sanctions. Meanwhile, what students will learn in the future may be sorely curtailed by the schools' need to "pass the test" and by the practice of reallocating already limited funds to testing and remediation should test results fall short of expected goals.

Such negative consequences are beginning to be seen in the number of art and foreign language (FL) classes that have been cut because funds promised to local and state governments never materialized. Programs for gifted and talented students, differentiated education programs, and fine arts and FL programs are most easily targeted by the bottom-liners, given that they have no Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or protective population to save them from cuts. Thus, the NCLB movement could at the same time spell the descent to a sustainable level of mediocrity for successful schools and also loom large as an unattainable goal for schools whose culture cannot change because funding has been denied to them by today's fiscal realities. With school districts cutting staff and increasing class sizes as well as lowering budgets for materials and texts, even affluent districts can experience decline in quality.

My school was just named a Blue Ribbon school under the NCLB award program, but many of my colleagues wonder how long we can maintain that standard.

And yet, precisely because educators are exasperated with the NCLB Act and the standards it imposes by governmental mandate, our profession must take the lead in creating programs and standards that we consider to be appropriate for language study. Most states have curriculum standards and most language teachers have at least some knowledge of the ACTFL *Proficiency Guidelines*, the Oral Proficiency Interview, and the National Standards. But we can reap the benefits of those guidelines and standards only if local districts and professionals follow them and enable students to meet the kind of high expectations that the NCLB Act mandates for the areas already being tested. At present, FLs are not among the subjects tested. If they were, would we pass the test?

The answer is far from clear when one considers that, despite existing standards, some college FL programs still send inadequately prepared candidates to teach in the schools. Requiring future teachers to pass only a certain number of credits in specified courses that were selected by university faculty without input from practicing teachers in the field is no longer acceptable. Although literature courses are necessary to develop the future teacher's knowledge of culture and thought, they tend not to address the need for the teacher-to-be to speak and write the language competently. Literature teaching should be emphasized alongside language acquisition, so that both areas together will assure that graduates will have acquired the knowledge and skill levels that will enable them to teach successfully.

Similarly, a language teaching minor without another language as a teaching major is simply inadequate preparation for future teachers, as is judging FL competency by a prescribed number of college credit hours completed. In interviewing for FL teaching positions, my school district has often found candidates who lack the language abilities to teach above a second year in high school. At the same time, interviewees repeatedly say that fewer than half of the districts in which they interview conduct any part of the interview in the FL nor do districts request impromptu essays in which candidates demonstrate their language competence. If our professional standards are to have meaning and improve our profession and the image of our field, then teachers need to be able to function well above the levels that they teach, and language departments need to hire

teachers with high levels of oral and written competence that will enable administrators to assign them flexibly, according to program demands. In other words, as we prepare and hire our teachers and develop our curricula, we should adhere to already established teaching standards in order to assure the quality of our profession.

Assuring adequate teacher preparation is, therefore, a shared responsibility, and the teacher who may be unaware of the required level of competency may actually be the least culpable party though also the person most directly affected. Much higher responsibility lies with university language departments that require no proficiency exam for FL education majors or with education departments that bypass language department recommendations and requirements. Some colleges still certify students who have spent little or no time in a country where the FL is spoken. In these days of innumerable possibilities for foreign study, a minimum of 1 semester of study abroad is essential for teacher competence in a communicatively oriented classroom. Finally, those school administrators who hire new teachers are called on to be vigilant in assuring that only candidates who possess adequate skills are given the opportunity to teach. As educators, whether at elementary, secondary, or postsecondary levels, we need to play an active role, through our language organizations, our departments, our Departments of Public Instruction, and our school districts in establishing high standards and in developing training programs so that teachers can meet those standards.

FL teachers have not been the best promoters of their own field. We do well with FL events—fairs, posters, or ethnic displays—but we have not been able to “change hearts and minds.” Attitudes toward language study have not become more favorable. Even when language ability is being foregrounded as serving the national interest, FL study is subject to societal mood changes and, at best, tepid support. Many language professionals themselves still consider FL study as “not for everyone,” an attitude that both contributes to and is reinforced by the fact that most districts in this country begin language study in middle school, which is late by international standards. Were language study to start in grade school, it could begin to be viewed as another subject that serves a broad population, rather than merely as an academic

subject that takes up valuable curricular space. Colleagues in other disciplines view our presence in the overloaded middle school schedule as an unnecessary burden, and in high school, they categorize it as elitist, even though a department like mine teaches 75% of the student body at any one time. When administrators and school boards are plagued by hard times and budget deficits, they see our discipline as an “extra” to be cut, as did two districts in the northern suburbs of Milwaukee where one German and one French program disappeared completely this fall.

Because our country does not have a long tradition of educating the majority of its population in other world languages, our profession cannot count on built-in support from the general public. In 2003, a resolution was introduced in the Senate to designate the years 2004 and 2005 as “Years of Foreign Language Study.” Although that resolution was never officially passed by the Senate, ACTFL has launched an extensive initiative for celebrating The Year of Languages in the United States in a variety of settings, including elementary and secondary schools and post-secondary institutions, and through events taking place at the local, state, and national levels across America. These celebrations offer us perfect opportunities for reminding ourselves and others of the value of what we do. We must make people aware, through our professional organizations, our Departments of Public Instruction, and also through our own efforts at local levels, that studying a FL will enhance students’ ability to study other subjects, to master skills in other disciplines, and eventually to become more marketable and globally functional. In our schools, we must help colleagues in other disciplines realize that the study of FLs and cultures enables all students to enter a broader world of thought and consciousness than is otherwise possible. In our communities, we need to help other professionals—engineers, lawyers, scientists, business people—see that, despite the globalization of our economies, not everyone speaks English. Finally, in society at large, we must prove to leaders, from business to politics, that FLs deserve to be treated with more than benign neglect, rhetorical support, debilitating financial cutbacks, and devastating program closings, and that the “frills” we offer have become the “necessities” of our future national success.

When the Law Goes Local: One State's View on NCLB in Practice

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In her commentary on the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, Marcia Rosenbusch observes that although "the goal of raising the achievement of all students is well-intentioned," it is the "unintended consequences of the NCLB Act at the local, state, and national levels" that seem to have attracted most comment, particularly in the media. She goes on to say that, in particular, professional articles that deal with the impact of the NCLB Act on English language learners "clearly show that the complexity of this topic may be worthy of its own position paper" (p. 250). We certainly agree, but given the space and focus here, we do not intend these comments to be such a position paper. Rather, our intent is to discuss the impact of the NCLB Act from the perspective and experience of one state, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Although many opinions have been voiced about how English language learners (ELLs) fare under the NCLB Act, less attention has been paid to how the law is actually playing out in specific contexts. We offer these remarks because, although broader discussions and critiques of the law are important, we believe it is equally useful and relevant to examine the specific experiences of how the law is working locally, "on the ground."

We begin by clarifying that we are not writing as proponents of the law. We write from the perspective of a state education administrator (Riley) who has been charged with the implementation of the Title III NCLB requirements in Massachusetts, and a representative (Freeman) of a higher education institution, the School for International Training, that has been working closely with some 40 Massachusetts school districts as they implement both the federal and the state laws. We have found that since it was signed in 2002, the NCLB Act, in concert with the new state law that we discuss below, has been bringing about profound changes in the way in which most ELLs are educated in Massachusetts. Many of these changes were needed; most of them have created additional demands on school districts that are already seriously burdened.

We have organized our comments around five points: the context in which the law has "landed" at the state level, how its standards and accountability measures have played out, issues surround-

ing how English language proficiency is defined under NCLB, questions of the law's teacher quality provisions, and the potential impact of the consequences for school districts under the law.

HOW NCLB LANDED IN MASSACHUSETTS, OR "ALL POLITICS IS LOCAL"

Longtime Massachusetts Congressman and Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill is said to have observed that, in the final analysis, "all politics is local." It would be hard to find a domain of policy and practice in which O'Neill's observation is more apt than that of federal educational reform. Such reforms, because they interact with existing state policies and ongoing practices, are never pure, nor do they unfold just as they are intended to do. So, like other legislation, the NCLB Act did not develop and has not been implemented in a vacuum. Nationally, the NCLB Act built on the national curricular standards that had been started at the 1989 Charlottesville National Educational Summit. The summit process, which led, as Rosenbusch points out, to the articulation of curricular standards in what were defined as "core" academic areas, spawned the development of the National Foreign Language Standards (ACTFL, 1999) and the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) Standards (TESOL, 1997). In terms of ELLs, however, although the TESOL standards became influential nationally, they were not afforded the full status of the curricular standards in foreign languages and other fields. Thus, for ELLs, the Charlottesville summit and subsequent national reforms, as well as the work that followed on the state level, did not produce uniform expectations either for content learning or for English language proficiency. By extension, these reform processes did not set the clear expectations for teacher qualifications that the work in the core curricular areas did. Thus, in 2002, the NCLB Act became federal law amid a certain amount of ambiguity and confusion at the state and local levels over the teaching of ELLs.

Massachusetts presented an interesting case-point in the dynamic political and educational landscape in which the NCLB Act landed. The

state legislature had passed a comprehensive educational reform law, The Education Reform Act of 1993, implementation of which was already well underway when the NCLB Act became federal law. In addition, the state had had the oldest bilingual education law in the United States—passed in 1971 as The Transitional Bilingual Educational Law (M.G.L. c.71a)—which mandated transitional bilingual education in any school district that enrolled 20 or more limited English proficient (LEP) students who spoke the same first language. Although its implementation varied locally, the policies, procedures, and teacher qualifications under this state law were well established in Massachusetts. Then, in November 2002, a ballot initiative known popularly as “Question 2” or “the Unz Initiative” (after its principal backer, Californian Ron Unz) was voted to replace the Transitional Bilingual Educational Law with a new law requiring sheltered or structured English immersion. The new law required that sheltered English immersion be implemented in school districts the following school year, beginning in September 2003. As this deadline approached, most Massachusetts educators were uncertain about what sheltered English immersion was or what its practices “looked like” when implemented in the classroom. The policies and procedures that had guided the education of ELLs in the state for more than 20 years were no longer operational, and new policies and procedures for curriculum integration, student assessment, and teacher qualification had to be developed.

Thus, the NCLB Act landed in 50 different states, as it did in Massachusetts, in very different local- and state-level policy contexts. While the federal law clearly has had effects, these effects cannot be separated from the local contexts in which the law has been implemented. To talk about NCLB apart from these state and local environments simplifies, and potentially distorts, analyses of its impact. We argue that our understanding of how NCLB is working in practice would be considerably enhanced if such analyses examined the interactions in policy and practice among federal, state, and local levels.

STANDARDS AND ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES

Prior to the NCLB Act, existing legislation in most states emphasized compliance but contained very little on accountability. In Massachusetts, for example, the Transitional Bilingual Education Law described the elements of transitional bilingual education that districts were required to have

in place and the procedures that were to be followed. Annual English language proficiency assessments were required, and school districts were monitored to ensure compliance. However, neither that law nor other state laws governing the education of ELLs in Massachusetts set specific goals for their learning and achievement; likewise, none of these laws established accountability for or within school districts that were educating ELLs. The NCLB Act, in contrast, brought a strong dose of accountability to the mix. The federal law makes clear that states must have in place subject-matter standards. It also requires standards for English language proficiency and explicitly references speaking, listening, reading, writing, and comprehension as the five skill areas that must be addressed by these standards. This additional level of specification brought by the NCLB Act is both crucial and complicated: It is crucial because it names the skill and knowledge domains that ELLs must have in order to have access to and to understand subject areas taught in English; it is complicated because such “academic proficiency” is challenging to conceptualize and complex to assess.

In responding to the NCLB Act’s requirements to have in place standards for English language proficiency, states have drawn on several options. Some states have developed their own standards; some states have borrowed from existing work, such as the TESOL standards; and some states have created multistate consortia, such as the WIDA Consortium (named after the first three states involved: Wisconsin, Delaware, and Arkansas) or the Mountain West Assessment Consortium (see Zher, 2004; also Center for Applied Linguistics 2004), to undertake the task. Massachusetts took the first route when it constituted a working committee of English as a Second Language (ESL) professionals, selected from across the state, that met over a period of 2 years to develop a framework integrating English language competencies with state curricular standards. The resulting document, the *English Language Proficiency Benchmarks and Outcomes* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/benchmark>), approved by the Massachusetts Board of Education in June, 2003, provides a potential road map for access to subject matter covered by the state’s content standards and assessments.

In this area, NCLB has the potential to make a significant difference for ELLs nationally by promoting change at the state level. Because Title III of the NCLB Act mandates English language standards and Title I mandates that ELLs must be held to the same standards for subject-matter

knowledge as their English-fluent classmates, the law has the potential to promote leveling of the academic playing field. In terms of accountability, both Title I and the Title III in the NCLB legislation contain substantial measures directed at ELLs. Title I mandates that the performance of ELLs (who are referred to as *LEP students* in the language of the law) on state subject-matter testing be disaggregated as a subgroup when school and district determinations of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) are made. It also requires that the performance of the "LEP subgroup," as well as other subgroups, be reported separately.

The Title III legislation requires that each state set annual goals, called Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs), for ELLs. These objectives must include three targets: (a) for LEP students making progress learning English; (b) for LEP students achieving English proficiency; and (c) as noted above, for the performance of LEP students on the subject-matter tests required by Title I, which at this time include English language arts and mathematics. States are required to assess all LEP students annually for English language proficiency, using an assessment that is based on the state's English language proficiency standards expressed in terms of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Finally, states are required to report the performance of the ELLs in all districts receiving Title III funds as measured against the state's AMAOs (Abedi & Dietel, 2004).

The NCLB Act holds that there must be a definition of the content that is taught as well as a definition of the English language proficiency that LEP students need in order to gain access to that content. Furthermore, the law holds that standards and access need to be equitable for all students and, as further leverage, that the results for all students will be made publicly available. In this way, the federal law creates visibility for groups of students, such as ELLs, who had previously often been kept in the educational shadows. Given that public K-12 schooling is the only education that is comprehensively available in every locality in the United States, the law has the potential to strengthen access for ELLs under local education reforms, and where local reforms are silent on their education, the NCLB Act forces a degree of incorporation, visibility, and accountability.

ISSUES SURROUNDING HOW PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH IS DEFINED

The NCLB Act also forces another issue that has long been skirted in many locales. As mentioned previously, after 1989, and following the

lead of the TESOL Standards, some states introduced standards for ELLs. These efforts came in many forms, however, and they often had the de facto effect of setting different English language standards for ELLs, who were simultaneously learning both English and learning content in English, and for English-fluent classmates who were learning the content alone. Inasmuch as most state ESL standards differed from—and were not—English language arts standards, they tended to create classroom situations in which ELLs were taught English in ways that differed from the approaches and materials used in teaching their English-fluent peers. More important, that design had the potential, unintended consequence of holding ELLs back, because they first had to learn English in order to have access to content.

This duality between ESL and English Language Arts created a scenario in many locales in which ELLs learned English until they were judged able to learn content in English. While the ESL standards were supposed to be a bridge to the mainstream, they often did not accomplish that end. The NCLB Act rendered this entire scenario untenable because it requires assessment of—and thus accountability for—the academic progress of all students, including ELLs, on an annual basis. ELLs now need to be taught content while they are learning English, not after they have been judged to have English proficiency adequate to study content.

States are taking different approaches to this mandated integration of content and English language, approaches that are often shaped by local educational policies and reforms. In Massachusetts, the *English Language Proficiency Benchmarks and Outcomes* (ELPBO) incorporate standards, whole or in part, from the state's English Language Arts framework. The ELPBO also includes elements that specifically address the needs of ELLs, such as standards in speaking and understanding both social and classroom English, strategies for promoting English language acquisition, and standards that suggest best pedagogical practices. Thus, in principle, Massachusetts teachers who teach ELLs have a single road map that charts students' learning within the state content curriculum framework as these students increase their English language proficiency.

QUESTIONS OF TEACHER QUALITY

The NCLB Act recognizes that, if reform efforts are to succeed, classrooms that serve ELLs must be staffed with fully qualified and skilled teachers.

As we have said, in order for ELLs to achieve academically they need to be taught both English and content; in most contexts, this means learning content in and through English. This type of learning requires teachers who have the skills and qualifications to teach English to ELLs, as well as teachers who have the skills and qualifications to teach content to ELLs in English. While ELLs have had a legal right to be taught by teachers who are qualified to do so, the reality has often been that many states have not regulated teacher qualifications, or, if regulations have existed, they have not been widely enforced.

Regardless of NCLB, the time has clearly come to define important questions about teacher qualifications. For example, what skills and knowledge are required for teachers to teach content to ELLs effectively? How are these teacher competencies best assessed? Do current licensure regulations for ESL teachers adequately address the new reality in which ESL teachers must now teach language and content, often including material formerly taught primarily by English Language Arts teachers? In most states, grade-level and content-area teachers are increasingly responsible for teaching content to ELLs who are students in their classes; therefore, licensure requirements need to define the additional competencies necessary for teachers to do so effectively. In Massachusetts, efforts are underway to articulate such an endorsement.

Although it can be dislocating to require this new knowledge base of grade-level and content teachers whose professional lives are already saturated with other demands, it is difficult to argue that these competencies are not needed. If classrooms increasingly include a spectrum of students ranging from those who are English-fluent to those who are learning English, and if all students' academic progress must now be assessed, then teachers need to be equipped to provide instruction that meets these needs. This challenge is indeed complex, but it can ultimately benefit everyone. Indeed, it can be argued that improved instruction for ELLs, which includes learning tasks and learning environments that are well scaffolded, highly interactive, and more fully participatory, improves instruction for their English-fluent classmates (Freeman, 2004).

THE POTENTIAL IMPACT OF THE CONSEQUENCES THAT ARE PART OF THE LAW

Without doubt, the scope of the NCLB Act is broad and far-reaching. However, NCLB would arguably have less impact—and cause less dis-

cussion—were there not consequences attached to its requirements. For example, the requirement that the ELL subgroup, like other students, make AYP as measured by state-level assessments, coupled with the consequences that may come from not meeting these achievement goals, changes the educational climate in critical ways. If schools that do not make AYP receive and effectively use additional resources and support, then the law will have had positive consequences. If the English proficiency assessments developed and administered as required by the NCLB Title III legislation are solid predictors of academic success in general classrooms, then the law will have had positive consequences. If the assessments of subject-matter acknowledge and accommodate the ELLs who now must take them alongside their English-fluent peers, then the law will have had positive consequences.

If, however, struggling schools serving ELLs are punished for their AYP performance and are not given resources to allow improvement, and if assessments are “blind” to the effect that English proficiency has on the measurement of content knowledge, then the consequences of the law are likely to be ineffectual, if not detrimental, in improving the education given to ELLs in school districts.

Writing in the *Review of Education Research* on “Assessment Accommodations for English Language Learners: Implications for Policy-Based Empirical Research,” Abedi, Hofstetter, and Lord (2004) summarize the systemic reach of the NCLB Act:

States are responsible for developing challenging academic content and achievement standards, as well as statewide assessment systems for monitoring schools and districts to ensure that they are making adequate yearly progress toward educating all students to these high standards. The assessments, in addition to being technically sound and aligned with the state standards, must be valid and reliable as determined by “scientifically based research” and must meet various inclusion requirements, such as adaptations or accommodations for students with limited English proficiency (LEP) and students with disabilities. (p. 1)

There can be little disagreement that the law's primary impact is on measuring ELLs' English language proficiency and academic achievement, which, in turn, raises a systemic set of longstanding challenges in how ELLs are educated: What curricular standards will guide their instruction? In what language will content be taught and assessed? How will teachers be judged qualified to teach ELLs?

Unlike foreign languages, which, as Rosenbusch observes, have suffered as a curricular area under the law, the education of ELLs has become more visible and has been framed in more defined and accountable ways. Under the proper circumstances and with the necessary supports, this reform could represent real progress in creating nationally equitable public education for students, many of whom have "been left behind." Without positive local strategies, without targeted and judicious use of resources, and without solid ongoing commitments to change what has not worked, the promise for ELLs will not be realized, and they may fare no better, or, in fact may fare worse, than they have in the past.

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Leaving No Foreign Language Teachers Behind: A Grassroots Response

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Marcia Rosenbusch clearly outlines the perilous state of foreign language (FL) education due, at least in part, to compliance with the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, ironically prescribed as a cure for the nation's educational system, a cure designed to raise the achievement of all students. The current situation and an alarming portent of worse ripple effects to follow came about as the FL profession was seemingly asleep. Because we cannot afford to sleep much longer but must counter the negative effects of the NCLB Act, Rosenbusch argues for a consolidation of efforts across the architecture of the profession in order to raise the visibility of language teaching and learning. In other words, she proposes a top-down consolidation of efforts from the language organizations, which would have the "clout" that Kline (1999) cited as pivotal if our visibility outside the profession is to be increased.

Although bringing together language organizations, as Rosenbusch suggests, would seem to be a positive step toward forming a stronger professional front, this endeavor is doomed unless its purpose is to reach out to the grassroots level of the FL classroom and the FL teacher. It is time to confront the troublesome issue of why many

in our teaching ranks seem to be indifferent to how national policies such as NCLB affect us. My recommendation will turn the argument upside-down and explore what I believe to be a key area of concern—the current state of affairs at the level of the FL teacher in the classroom. A discussion from the standpoint of the classroom is necessary for two reasons. First, it is FL teachers themselves who are in the best position to advocate on behalf of language instruction and to defend language programs. It is time to devote our attention to helping teachers understand the key role that they play in promoting language study, in their interaction not only with students and parents, but also with school administrators and state and national leaders. Second, until such time as teachers move in the same direction as the FL profession (i.e., national coalitions) and demonstrate through their teaching and professional involvement that FL is indeed a core subject area, we have little hope of realizing our national initiatives that are under way and even less hope of combating the negative effects of the NCLB Act.

My discussion will focus on two questions that must be addressed as we contemplate unifying the profession from the bottom up in an attempt

to make our voices heard nationally in response to the detrimental effects of the NCLB Act on the FL profession: Why is the FL teaching force (i.e., classroom practitioners) so thoroughly disconnected not only from national educational policies such as NCLB, but even from its own national endeavors (e.g., standards)? and How can we work towards the type of “grassroots” team approach that is necessary to combat the harmful effects that the national agenda established by the NCLB Act could have on our profession? The answers to these questions may help us (a) explain our heretofore dormant state while in the throes of the NCLB Act, and (b) spark new ideas for moving classroom teachers and their practices in the same direction as our profession is headed. This type of grassroots, bottom-up, soul searching and plan of action, I believe, is essential for creating a single, unified professional voice that advocates effectively on behalf of FL teaching and learning on a national level. The necessary advocacy will be possible only when FL professionals are empowered by knowing that they are part of a team and are not working in isolation, in their teaching and in their professional engagement.

NATIONAL POLICIES AND CLASSROOM PRACTICE: TWO PARALLEL AND ISOLATED PATHS

The Rosenbusch paper points to significant progress in the FL profession in several areas that undergird the NCLB Act—for example, in accountability and testing in immersion programs and in the development of new teacher licensure requirements. Presumably, the creation of student standards and several sets of teacher standards has brought us closer than ever to holding programs accountable for what their students and teacher candidates should know and be able to do at key benchmark points in their FL learning and teacher preparation experiences, respectively. However, if our professional history has taught us anything, it is that new policies (i.e., standards, assessments), however brilliant they may be, can take decades to trickle down into actual classroom practice. To use the words of Dorwick and Glass (2003) from a previous *MLJ Perspectives* column, “The world of FL policy (e.g., Proficiency, National Standards) and the worlds of actual textbook materials and typical classroom practices are two parallel universes” (p. 593). Although there may be “vibrant pockets of faculty in languages and literatures and researchers working to implement . . . the Standards” (Phillips, 2003, p. 581) and other national policies, the masses of FL in-

structors from kindergarten through the postsecondary levels have not demonstrated equal fervor in moving forward in ways suggested by these policies. For example, Allen (2002) conducted a survey that examined teachers’ pedagogical beliefs and the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1999) in order to determine the extent to which the teachers’ beliefs were consistent with major constructs underlying the *Standards*. Of interest to our discussion are the following results of Allen’s survey:

1. Teachers who were members of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), a national language-specific organization (such as AATF), or their state language association expressed greater familiarity with the *Standards* than did those who held no memberships in language organizations at any level. Those who were members of two or more organizations had more familiarity with the *Standards*. Specifically, these teachers were more likely to believe (a) that FL instruction should be conducted in the target language; (b) that they should integrate the teaching of communication strategies, learning strategies, and critical thinking skills; (c) that assessment should include open-ended activities; (d) that students should have opportunities to use the language for real communication both within and beyond the school setting; and (e) that the teaching of culture is as important as the teaching of grammar and vocabulary.

2. Teachers working in urban school districts demonstrated a significantly higher level of familiarity with the *Standards* than did teachers from rural schools.

3. Ironically, teachers from states that have had extensive federal funding to sponsor professional development activities and whose language programs have been showcased as model programs did not express greater familiarity with the *Standards* than (or even as much familiarity as) teachers from states that have not adopted *Standards*-based state frameworks.

These findings confirm what some may consider anecdotal evidence about teachers’ beliefs and current classroom practices vis-à-vis national FL endeavors. First, membership and involvement in the profession are pivotal in keeping abreast of professional issues and new initiatives such as the *Standards*. Simply put, teachers who have chosen to remain on the periphery of the profession are clearly not as knowledgeable about, and most likely not as invested in, the direction of the profession. Second, teachers who work in more

isolated settings, such as rural school districts, may be very far removed from the core of professional activity and may not realize its implications for a long time, if ever. Third, it may be false to assume that the majority of teachers from states that are heavily funded and whose language programs are widely publicized are, in fact, familiar with or believe in the value of new professional endeavors. That is, in some cases, the publicized top-down efforts from the leaders of language organizations or states may not reflect what is really happening at the grassroots level of the teacher and the language classroom.

This disconnect between national policies and classroom practice has manifested itself in another way that is specifically related to the NCLB Act. As states and school districts increase required units of study for math and language arts/English, the number of electives decreases. Given that FLs are an untested core subject area, they have become de facto "non-core" and consequently, in the eyes of administrators and perhaps even the public at large, a dispensable subject area. Teachers of FLs who work in isolation, especially from the larger profession, often fail to be proactive in making their programs visible to parents and the community. Many teachers fail to react even when their programs are threatened, either because they feel powerless in the face of policies such as those resulting from the NCLB Act or because they simply do not know how to advocate on behalf of their discipline.

There is not sufficient space in this commentary to explore fully all the reasons why FL teachers choose isolation instead of following the well-considered path laid down by the FL profession. Part of the problem appears to be that we have allowed ourselves to accept and become comfortable with working in isolation from other FL professionals, our colleagues in other professions, and the teaching profession at large. Some teachers in rural schools comprise a FL department of "one," while other teachers must attempt to create a learning environment with the use of a cart of materials taken from room to room every 45 minutes; still other teachers must make do with textbook programs that are 2 decades old. Although there is truth in the belief that we have been marginalized as a profession, there is also truth in acknowledging that we have allowed this state to be thrust upon us and even have enabled it to persist through our own indifference. If many in our ranks have been asleep through the development of the *Oral Proficiency Guidelines*, student and teacher standards, assessment projects, and other national FL initiatives, is it any wonder that

we seem to be in a fog as far as the NCLB Act is concerned?

WORKING FROM THE BOTTOM UP: A GRASSROOTS APPROACH

Few people would argue that our profession has made great strides in the past several decades in the areas that Rosenbusch outlines, thanks to the hard work and dedication of many talented leaders in our field and their organizations. However, the real proof of the effectiveness of our national initiatives lies in the degree to which they affect language teaching and learning positively. We cannot afford to have language teachers working in isolation any longer if our goal is to have a united profession that is strong enough to combat the negative effects of the NCLB Act, such as the marginalization of FL to the status of a "frill" subject area, the lack of attention given to assessment of language students and programs, and even the elimination of language programs so that additional funding can be allocated to the subject areas that are being assessed as a result of the NCLB Act. In other words, we cannot leave the FL teacher behind.

Part of the problem with a top-down approach, as in the case of a national coalition, is that it places the power for change in the wrong place. For example, when an elementary FL program is being cut, national coalitions are not called upon to come to the rescue, and they seldom volunteer to do so. It is the teachers who must defend their programs and develop cogent arguments that will convince those with power outside our field. If there were enough professional support for the formation of a national coalition of language organizations, as Rosenbusch suggests, I believe it would be effective only if its key goal were to initiate a bottom-up grassroots project undertaken for the specific purpose of helping classroom teachers become more involved in the profession and thus become more aware of its direction and the negative effects of the NCLB Act on our own national agenda. A grassroots approach equips teachers with language and concepts to use when responding to cutbacks and policies that marginalize FL education.

How might such a grassroots endeavor be realized? First, as Rosenbusch suggests, the language organizations should collaborate with state FL leaders and other state officials who are in decision-making positions about issues such as the implementation of student standards, state-level assessments, and licensing standards for language teachers. For example, one way to help implement

the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC, 2002), and the ACTFL/NCATE (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2002) teacher standards is for language organizations and state FL supervisors to stress the importance of certifying only teachers who are able to speak the language at a satisfactory level. (On a personal note, I have been told by administrators in several state departments of education that they sense that the FL community is not very supportive of higher standards for teachers!) Second, school district FL supervisors and department heads should take more initiative in working with school administrators to provide professional development opportunities for teachers, review curricula regularly, assist in acquiring new instructional materials, and mentor and evaluate teachers in an ongoing manner.

Third, a strategy that holds much promise for effecting change at the classroom level is the concept of "teaching teams," proposed by the NCATE President, Art Wise, as an alternative to the antiquated 19th-century teaching system, which he called "egg carton organization." Under the old model, every teacher, working largely in isolation, replicated instruction for a group of students every year from the beginning to the end of a teaching career. Wise proposed the teaching-team concept used in medical, legal, and architectural settings, in which services are provided by experienced and novice professionals working together to accomplish a specific goal. Teaching teams would include (a) an accomplished professional, such as a National Board Certified FL teacher, who would lead the team, assisted by (b) another senior teacher, (c) two novice teachers committed to a teaching career, (d) two underprepared teachers who might not yet be committed to teaching as a career, (e) several half-time student teachers, (f) several interns who would work half-time as they completed their teacher preparation, and (g) a university faculty member who would also work half-time with the team and oversee the student teachers and interns.

Under Wise's model, the planning and delivery of instruction would involve all team members and would take the guesswork and anxiety out of instructional practice for faculty with less experience and knowledge. Another advantage of such teamwork is that novice teachers would receive a great deal of mentoring, not only in teaching, but also in becoming involved in the profession and learning about key issues facing the FL field. They would learn how to become advocates for language learning, taking their cues from more

experienced teachers and collaborating with fellow novices. Only when teachers are involved in professional development and collaboration with fellow teachers in a direct way do they become better able to articulate the goals and rationales of FL instruction. The idea of teaching teams is appealing because it leaves no FL teacher working in isolation and increases the likelihood that teachers will remain up-to-date with advances in teaching. Furthermore, it could be an effective mechanism for "keeping teachers awake" when national policies such as those brought about by the NCLB Act threaten the existence of FL programs.

All indications point to the grim prediction that the NCLB Act will continue to have a detrimental impact on FL teaching and learning in the United States. If we are to consolidate our efforts as a profession in response to Rosenbusch's suggestion, it is vital that our work begin at the level of the classroom teacher who has largely been left behind in the face of national top-down language initiatives. Through an approach that includes a real team effort—that is, more intensive and goal-oriented collaboration between and among language organizations, state- and district-level FL supervisors, department heads, and school administrators, as well as the formation of FL teaching teams—we can begin a grassroots movement that, we hope, will result in effective consolidation of professional efforts as we attempt to combat the harmful effects of the NCLB Act. In the process, we will begin to break away from the 19th-century egg carton organization of schools that Wise (2004) decried. More important, if we are successful, no FL teacher and no FL student will be left behind.

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Putting Foreign Languages into the Core Curriculum

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Marcia Rosenbusch provides an excellent history of the NCLB Act as well as an overview of the responses and concerns it has provoked. Her conclusion advocating a national coalition of language organizations to provide the needed structure to improve the status of foreign language (FL) education in our schools is well founded and an important next step. In this response, I would like to make some suggestions on how FL advocates, as part of a national coalition or as currently structured, might approach policymakers, particularly in the critical area of building FL programs in the early years. I believe that a focus on elementary language instruction is the most important response we can provide to the accountability movement, in general, and to the NCLB Act in particular.

I participated in the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) Study Group that produced the report, *The Complete Curriculum*. Although we were concerned with the threats the NCLB Act poses to both the arts and FL, it became clear that these threats play out rather differently in these two curricular areas. Schools have traditionally offered arts—usually music and visual art, less frequently theater or dance—to all students at the elementary level and have provided options in these arts for students at the high school level. As school programs are being cut back in response to the focus on accountability in reading and math, numerous arts organizations are stepping in to lobby for maintenance of their programs and are finding grants to support short-term residencies and other substitutes for school-funded programs.

Richard Deasey of the Arts Education Project, a participant in the NASBE Study Group, has suggested that embracing accountability at the eighth-grade level may be one of the best ways to provide support for existing arts programs. An

eighth-grade arts assessment required of all students can protect and maintain K–8 programs currently in the schools.

FLs, unfortunately, have few K–8 programs to maintain, and Rosenbusch provides the depressing, though not unexpected, data demonstrating cuts in these programs in 2002–2003. FL instruction simply does not have an established position in the curriculum of most elementary schools, nor does it have the same national constituencies or local organizations to provide support that seems to be available for the arts. In addition, where attendance at performances and participation in residencies can provide children with powerful experiences in the arts, it is not clear how similar short-term approaches can lead to meaningful learning in FL. The arts are unique among academic disciplines, I think, in teaching not just skills but how to appreciate the works of others. Short-term learning experiences do little to build skills but can provide the foundation for lifelong appreciation. These models do not easily apply to FL any more than they would to math, science, or economics.

What, then, can we do, and what is the most effective response to the undeniable threats posed by the NCLB Act? It is probably necessary for FLs to participate in the assessment/accountability movement in order to establish their bona fides as a part of the core curriculum. At the same time, we should not lose sight of the risks inherent in a movement towards accountability at the high-school level. Because of long-established traditions that see 2 years of FL study at the high-school level as a reasonable level of language learning, introduction of any required assessment runs the risk of focusing scarce resources on a shallow exposure for all students, in effect codifying an inadequate approach to FL learning. It thus becomes critical for FL advocates to show

policymakers how they can, and why they should, build articulated K–12 FL programs, with real energy going into the creation and maintenance of elementary programs. Growing concerns about U.S. students' understanding of an increasingly dangerous and unstable world can provide the basis for advocacy of a deeper, more meaningful approach to language learning, as can a growing understanding of the advantages of starting language learning at an early age. Americans can be too readily paralyzed by uncertainty about how to learn the current "critical language." They need to be reminded constantly that the learning of any FL at an early age provides the basis for later learning of languages critical to national security. Simultaneous development and support for valid and reliable assessments to be used at the eighth-grade level can also serve as the kind of anchor Deasey was thinking of in advocating assessment at that level in the arts.

The critical first step in this task has been taken. The National Standards in Foreign Languages Project has established K–12 content standards, and states have been adapting these standards for their own curriculum frameworks. Vermont's situation is typical, though not universal, in incorporating K–12 FL standards into its framework while having no clear plan for ensuring that schools—particularly elementary schools—actually provide the opportunity to learn to these standards.

Advocates of FL study need to approach education leaders in each state and ask them to outline a plan for implementing these curriculum frameworks. Professionals in the FL field can be helpful in suggesting models and steps for how this can be done while addressing the two major obstacles that continue to stand in the way: time in the school day, and the focus, under accountability legislation, on English language arts and math assessment results.

The critical argument to be made is that expansion of FL instruction in the early years will not compromise instruction in English language arts or math, and that results on tests with accountability implications under the NCLB Act will not suffer. Significant research to this effect exists (Met, 1998), and it needs to be publicized.

Alongside the concern for accountability results in language arts and math is the concern—shared by elementary teachers and principals—that, as valuable as FL study may be, there is simply no time in the school day to add another element to the curriculum. Policymakers want results on accountability measures and are skeptical of any group of professionals wanting a bigger piece of the curriculum.

Here it may be useful for FL advocates to team up with those groups advocating the infusion of international education into the curriculum. The States Institute for International Education, in particular, has pulled together teams of educators and policymakers from over half the states to build policies that will update the curriculum in a way that fosters global understanding (for information on the States Institute see its Web site: <http://www.internationaled.org/states.htm>).

The key to this movement is to convince policymakers not that our schools need to add another curricular area, but that the entire curriculum needs to be updated for a changing world and rethought from an international perspective. By making common cause with the movement for international education—and with social studies teachers, who have their own concerns about their place in the current accountability-driven curriculum—FL educators and advocates can present models of content-enriched programs to be implemented.

Technology, too, is a fruitful area with which FL advocates may wish to make common cause, because policymakers already see it as a necessary part of an updated curriculum. Advocates of FL study will serve their cause well if they show how these two areas can work together rather than compete with each other for resources. Particularly at the elementary level, where curriculum integration is common, well-trained FL teachers can provide substantial instruction in technology through use of email, threaded discussion groups and chats, Web design, and presentations to sister schools in other countries.

Unfortunately, it is not just policymakers who are dragging their feet. Elementary teachers, even if they believe in FL as part of an ideal curriculum, are resistant to introducing FL at a time when their schools are being held accountable for results in other areas. We are led inevitably to deeper concerns about teacher preparation. The issue is not simply the need to ensure that all states require K–12 certification in FL, though this is critical. We also need to ensure that all elementary teachers receive instruction in FL and global issues and training in how to work with FL teachers to integrate these areas into the curriculum.

In the elementary schools, FL study will not spring up overnight. What is crucial right now, though, is that FL advocates understand the issues the NCLB Act presents so that this time of ferment can become as much an opening as it is a threat. To create this opening, FL advocates

need to remind policymakers persistently that FLs are part of the core curriculum as defined by the NCLB Act, that they are part of most states' framework of standards, and that a plan must be developed—incremental though it may be—to implement those standards.

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Seize the Moment: How to Benefit from NCLB

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In her article, "The No Child Left Behind Act and Teaching and Learning Languages in U.S. Schools," Marcia Harmon Rosenbusch presents a compelling case for why all language educators in the United States should be involved in language advocacy and the development of federal initiatives in support of language education. As she identifies the NCLB requirements for accountability, annual testing, teacher quality, and scientifically based research, Rosenbusch is particularly concerned about their potential negative effects and calls on the national professional language organizations to form a coalition to promote language education in the United States.

Although I understand Rosenbusch's frustration with the NCLB Act and sympathize with the frustration of many language administrators and teachers and although I would not hesitate in the least to ask for a stronger "coalition of the willing" to promote foreign languages (FLs) in the United States, in my opinion, the many challenges of the NCLB Act at the same time provide incredible opportunities for the language education field. We need to recognize these opportunities and seize the moment because the window of opportunity is closing quickly as other fields engage us in a fierce battle over what will be the core of an American public school education in the early part of the 21st century. In the early 20th century, we entered the same battle with vocational education and lost. The result of that stinging defeat was the near death of modern language education in the United States for almost half of a century.

In order to avoid the mistakes of the past, how can we turn the tide on the NCLB Act and make it work to our advantage in states and local districts? The first step is to accept the fact that we as language teachers are almost always working outside the educational mainstream. Although we may bemoan the effects of the NCLB Act on our field, talking only among ourselves will not ensure a spot for us in the K–12 curriculum. We must work to understand the educational context

in which language education is taking place at this point in our nation's history and engage in meaningful dialogue and reform efforts with powerful allies outside our field. Robert Zais, a leader in the field in the 1980s, summed it up beautifully in an American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) priorities paper (1979) when he suggested that "language programs and faculty will be perennially buffeted by the winds of historical accident, having little effect on their own direction or that of the school and community" (p. 15) unless they begin to understand the broader educational context of their time in history. I agree that, as language teachers, we frequently allow ourselves to be buffeted by the winds of historical accident. From events like the launching of Sputnik to the tragedy of 9/11, and now to the effects of the NCLB Act, we constantly find ourselves in the response mode. We are left standing on the platform as the train pulls out of the station.

How can we move our programs forward when we are under the yoke of a massive educational reform effort that is not likely to be repealed before it is up for reauthorization? How can our programs not only survive but thrive under the testing and accountability mandates in the NCLB Act? First and most important, FLs are a part of the core curriculum in the No Child Left Behind Act. The hard work of the Joint National Committee for Languages, members of ACTFL, and the state language organizations that fought to make sure that FLs were a part of the elementary-secondary reauthorization legislation, helped to insure that languages, frequently excluded from federal K–12 legislation, were specifically cited within the core. Because languages have been designated as a part of the core subject areas, we should be moving to a position of dialogue with curriculum developers, principals, and superintendents about the role of language education in the tested curriculum. As a field, we need to demonstrate through scientifically based research that there is a positive

correlation between higher test scores in English language reading and writing, and perhaps even mathematics, and language study beyond English that begins in elementary school and extends over a long period of time.

On two separate occasions, once in the late 1980s (Lang, 1990; Rafferty, 1986) and more recently in 2003 (Taylor-Ward), researchers in the state of Louisiana have undertaken quantitative studies of students who have studied languages in elementary school. In particular, Taylor-Ward examined the relationship between student achievement and the study of FLs in the Louisiana Elementary School Foreign Language Program by comparing the performance of FL and non-FL students on measures of reading, language, mathematics, social studies, and science. The testing instruments used were the norm-referenced Iowa Test of Basic Skills, which Louisiana students take in Grades 3, 5, 6, and 7, and the Louisiana Educational Assessment Program for the 21st Century (LEAP21), a criterion-referenced test administered to students in Grades 4 and 8. Students in the treatment group were all students consecutively enrolled in FL programs in Grades 3, 4, and 5 in Foreign Language in Elementary School (FLES) programs that commenced in Grade 3 and continued at least through Grade 5. Control group students also came from consecutive Grades 3 through 5, but were enrolled in schools that had received waivers from the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education that released them from the mandate to offer a program of FL study, usually due to lack of funding for employing FL teachers. The result was that

the statistical procedures comparing both groups' performance on the fourth-grade LEAP 21 test indicated that the foreign language students significantly outperformed their non-foreign language counterparts on every subtest of the LEAP 21 test. This outcome was further evidenced when comparing foreign language students' LEAP 21 performance to their non-language peers after two years of program participation using the prior year's ITBS scores as covariates Performance in language subtests on both the fifth-grade ITBS as well as fourth-grade LEAP 21 was significantly higher for foreign language students than for non-foreign language students. (Taylor-Ward, 2003, pp. 148-149)

Critical for interpretation of the results of the study is that

after one year of foreign language instruction, there was no significant difference in students' ITBS scores, with the exception of science, which favored the non-foreign language students. However, after being enrolled in foreign language study for multiple years, the

foreign language students significantly outperformed their non-foreign language counterparts. (p. 162)

Taylor-Ward referred to these results to highlight the importance of both beginning language study early in the grades and for sustaining an uninterrupted sequence for multiple years.

Another similar study will take place this year as a part of a Title VI research grant recently awarded in Connecticut. Certainly, the National Association of State Supervisors of Foreign Languages, in collaboration with the National Association of District Level Supervisors of Foreign Languages, can work collaboratively to take the results from Louisiana and other research projects underway to their state testing experts for analysis. Those of us conducting this research need to publish the results in the publications most frequently read by school superintendents, curriculum supervisors, district and state level data analysts, parent leaders, and school board members. It goes without saying that we need to share this information within our field in the publications of all language organizations and at all conferences. Even more important, however, our research findings need to be placed into the hands of frantic school principals and school board members who at the very best are concerned with their schools' reputations in the community and in the state and who at the very worst face the prospect of becoming "failing" schools under the NCLB Act.

The prospect of becoming a failing school is a terrifying reality for many of the public schools in our nation. It is within this reality of possible failure that we must be empathetic with teachers and administrators in our schools. We must understand their educational context if we ever expect principals, superintendents, and boards of education to support our efforts of putting language education at the core in public elementary and secondary schools in the United States. The NCLB Act mandates that schools designated as "failing" (and it does not take too many failures to reach this designation) run the risk of losing federal funding. Teachers and administrators also know that if their school is so designated under the NCLB Act they will lose their jobs. Entire schools will be taken over by the state when their children continue to fail to perform. Principals, curriculum supervisors, and superintendents are so worried about test scores that the need for districts to achieve mastery on the tests has spawned an entire industry of testing consultants. In addition, there has been an explosion of materials that can be used by students to help them meet state goals in reading, writing, and mathematics, and

countless new workshops are offered on teaching to the tests and raising scores. The truth is that no amount of lobbying about the value of learning languages early in life really matters today in the public school educational context. The Secretary of Education can speak to language audiences and even personally visit every school superintendent in the nation about the value of the arts, but it will make no difference at all. Unless we can offer a course of study that proves through "scientifically based research" that FL study helps students perform well on annual assessments of reading, writing, and math, we should prepare to get out of the K–12 public school enterprise altogether.

I propose that we step forward with our research findings and offer to rescue our public schools. Here is our opportunity to use statistical analyses to show that language learning can have a positive impact on curricular areas with mandated state mastery testing. Principals, superintendents, and boards of education are desperate to find ways of improving test scores, especially for students who enter the schools without a command of English. Given that the country is experiencing its highest immigration level since the early 1900s, we certainly have many students within the schools who speak languages other than English. As FL teachers, we could help to improve the English language scores of those students by ensuring that they have the opportunity to study a language other than English beginning in elementary grades.

Language teachers would help to provide an alternative to the present "double dose of failure approach" that is used in many schools as they work with students for whom English is not a first language. The double dose of failure occurs when an English language learner does not progress or meet goals on standardized tests or classroom benchmarks. In line with prevailing thinking, English language learners who do not make adequate yearly progress on these tests, even if they have only been in the United States for 10 months, must compensate for that failure through a double dose of reading or remedial English. They are also prohibited from studying an additional language in grades K–12. With so many new English language learners in the public schools, districts are panicked about how to get these students to meet NCLB testing goals in English reading, writing, and mathematics. As language teachers, we could serve not only our profession but the entire school population in the United States by demonstrating that students who study a third language do extremely well on tests of English reading and writing. A curriculum that is focused on the build-

ing of general literacy and skills will improve students' English language literacy scores on state mastery tests and help students learn a third vital language. For that reason I propose that, given our present population in cities and in certain multilingual states in the United States, we figure out a way to embrace new English language learners as an important part of our school FL education—or else pull out of business.

The NCLB Act provides us with an incredible opportunity to claim our rightful place as an integral part of language arts in the K–12 curriculum. This should not be a difficult assertion because one of the major goal areas of our national standards, and of practically all of the state standards, has focused on the relationship between learning the target language and one's native language. Goal 4 of the National Standards, the Comparison goal, was created as part of the five goal paradigm to help students, teachers, curriculum developers, principals, and school administrators understand the relationship between learning a second or additional language and English. The framers of the standards, as well as the teachers who reviewed and later worked to implement state standards in their classrooms, explicitly made the connection between FLs and the English language arts curriculum in K–12. At this point in history, the real difference between FL and English language arts is that the latter has a K–12 articulated scope and sequence dictated by some of the largest publishers in the United States. Furthermore, English language arts has a natural braid made up of literature, vocabulary, reading skills, and the writing process (a braid very similar to our national language standards). However, in the English language arts continuum, the area of oral presentation is underrepresented, the very area in which language educators have considerable expertise. Elementary classroom teachers and English teachers in Grades 7–12 are scrambling for ways to insure that students have presentational skills and oral communication skills before they graduate from high school. Some districts and states are making oral presentational skill a part of state testing in English language arts. FL teachers can contribute to this area of language arts, by pointing out to school administrators and organizations that lie outside our field that for the last 35 years we have developed curricula to teach oral language skills and that we have 35 years of standardized, national proficiency testing experience in the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) tests that can evaluate students' interaction with native speakers of other languages, both in speaking and in writing. As a language profession, we

must bring these strengths to the entire education of the child. If we do not embrace this particular moment in time, another discipline will certainly rise up to provide K–12 experiences for students to develop the desired oral presentational skills.

Language teachers have another opportunity under the NCLB Act with the present national movement highlighting international education. The Asia Society, the U.S. Department of Education, and the American Forum, among other national groups, are leading this movement. Groups including our own language organizations are emphasizing that all students must develop a world-view and greater knowledge of international affairs beginning in the elementary schools. There is the distinct possibility that legislators may suggest that the NCLB Act be amended to include a test of geography knowledge and other international competencies. Our post-9/11 mania and the war in Iraq have heightened the level of awareness regarding Americans' international incompetence. It would be sad indeed if FLs were to be left out of that equation as well as the language arts equation.

How do we remedy these issues? The recommendations of the Northeast Conference report and collaboration with the state supervisors of FLs, as Marcia Rosenbusch has suggested, give a first blueprint for action to our profession. Beyond that, every language teacher and language professional at every level of instruction in the United States should support all the efforts of ACTFL in the broad coalition it has created to help launch the United States on its first official promotion of

language study. Many states and local districts are gearing up for this campaign under the direction of state FL organizations. In collaboration with the AATs, the regional conferences, and the state language organizations, ACTFL is working very hard to help create and sustain a national promotional effort unlike any we have ever seen before. We all need to unite to support it. Our future as a profession depends on its success.

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Reconsidering the Nexus of Content and Language: A Mandate of the NCLB Legislation

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Marcia Rosenbusch's comprehensive overview of the NCLB Act and its potential impact on language instruction in the United States and the accompanying commentaries by professionals in various arenas of education have sent me on a reflective journey. At the beginning of that journey was the hearty belief I seemingly shared with many language professionals, that the NCLB Act itself and its forms of implementation were so ill-conceived as to deny the attainment of the very educational goals that it espoused while also negatively affecting other aspects of educational policymaking and practice, most particularly foreign language (FL) teaching and learning.

Along the way, the certainty of that first judgment was undermined by evidence that demanded I acknowledge the complexity of the issue before me. Because of its ambitious agenda, the NCLB Act is linked to so many facets within the educational enterprise that it is difficult to disentangle cause and effect relationships. However, just such careful analysis is necessary for a fair assessment of its impact, including, most specifically, its impact on FL teaching and learning. In any case, as the commentaries indicate, evaluations of the NCLB Act not only reveal different vantage points but different contexts and forms of realization for its legislative mandates, which

can easily lead to different and even contradictory positive and negative consequences, intended and unintended.

Taking a step back from the immediacy of the NCLB Act to where I now stand, I am persuaded that greatest benefit will accrue to the language profession if the (at times) burdensome regime of the NCLB Act can encourage us to attend earnestly and honestly to long-standing conceptual friction points within our own field and to our own incongruities and disjunctures, as they are newly highlighted by the legislation. The kind of advocacy-like activism that several authors of the commentaries call for would then have an inward component that might complement, substantiate, perhaps even effectuate its agenda, within the profession, within educational policy circles, and, ultimately, in society at large.

Specifically, such inner-directed activism would respond to an unequivocal challenge to the language profession that is part and parcel of the NCLB Act. To accept it, the profession must first acknowledge the NCLB Act as a potentially beneficial educational policy within which are embedded elements of a language education policy for our contemporary world of globalization and multilingualism, and which accords a special position to English, both as a global language and as the national language of a multilingual and multicultural United States. Acknowledging these points, we are then called to shape a particular language educational policy. Following Lo Bianco's (2003) suggestion, we should do so "with arguments about effectiveness, evaluations of practice, participations in policy discussion in ways that are distinctive to the professional field, but interactive with bottom-up claims, top-down directions" (p. 288). He identifies such claims as representing interests that are both equality-oriented, thereby advocating economic- or citizenship-oriented language instruction, and also identity-oriented, focusing on culture-oriented language development. As we embark on those discussions, our professional distinctiveness, our efforts at mediating between competing claims, and our contributions to considerations of effectiveness in teaching practices will lead us to elaborate with considerably greater care than has been done in the past our position regarding the relationship between language and knowledge and, by extension, the relationship between any language learning in a schooled context—whether native or other languages—and the development of knowledge inside and outside that schooled environment.

Our professional concerns lie primarily with the schooled context, even as we recognize the consid-

erable role of language practices in diverse communities to which learners belong. Therefore, we would rightly foreground that educational knowledge is massively, though not exclusively, dependent on verbal learning and that, no matter what the educational goals in different subfields, education facilitates and supports a student's ability to make meaning while using ever-expanding resources, most particularly expanding language resources (see Halliday, 1993). Although we have described ourselves as being engaged in teaching languages and our students as being engaged in learning languages as a means of acquiring knowledge through languages, we have only begun to devise truly language-based interpretations of learning and proposals for pedagogies that might instantiate them. If such language-based approaches to learning would then evolve further, they can be expected to affect educational policy and to be translated into curricular and classroom practices at all levels of instruction, for all levels of the acquisition of academic literacy, and for all learners of all ages (see Martin, 2000; Schleppegrell, 2004).

By contrast, a telling example of the current deep-seated disjunctures in our stance toward content or knowledge and language is highlighted by Freeman and Riley in the case of Massachusetts. As a consequence of the NCLB Act, the state and, by implication, the language profession, is being asked to go beyond its own narrowly constructed interests in fostering "language learning" in order to meet the higher standard that such language learning, whatever the language, translate into subject matter learning. Furthermore, the state is being forced, quite literally, to deliver that proof not by pointing to compliance with various regulations and practices but by showing how its educational actions, particularly with regard to the education of English language learners, the ELLs, lead to the desired larger educational benefits as these are typically laid out in state curricular standards.

In the wake of that demand, a second disjuncture between our preferred self-representation and what we are able to deliver comes to light. Rather than sanctioning a presumption that, even if only tacitly, amounts to "first learn the language"—in this case English—"then learn academic content," the NCLB Act insists that English language learning be simultaneously about content learning. One may disagree with the harshness with which this demand is being put forward vis-à-vis minority populations and enforced through testing regimes to which potentially debilitating sanctions are attached in the case of

“failure.” One may decry what appears to be ignorance or inexcusable denial of the complexity and long-term nature of any language learning, and particularly learning the language of schooling, in the native language let alone a second language. But from inside the language profession, one can also no longer conceal the conflicted nature of our own positions and actions in the matter, a conflict that, as stated, points quite directly to a need for a sophisticated elaboration of the relationship between languaging, whatever the languages, and knowing, synchronically and developmentally, in short, the requirement to teach toward an academic literacy that is both linguistic and sociocognitive and is so not sequentially but inextricably simultaneously.

Just how critically important such a link is for all learning is tellingly demonstrated in Taylor-Ward’s study (2003) of the test scores attained by two student groups—a treatment group of students with sustained enrollment in Louisiana elementary FL programs and a control group of monolingual students—using as measurement tools the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), a norm-referenced test, and the Louisiana Educational Assessment Program for the 21st Century (LEAP 21), a criterion-referenced test. In her commentary, Brown rightly cites this study for its finding of favorable consequences of FL study for learning across the curriculum. However, closer analysis of both the scores themselves and, more important, teacher responses to questionnaires that investigated their perceptions of classroom practices promoting FL acquisition while reinforcing acquisition of skills in other content areas, reveals mixed results for an implicit, incidental, casual or, at best, additive link between language learning and subject matter knowledge.

For example, Taylor-Ward noted, “when examining student gains from the fourth to fifth-grade, the control group significantly outperformed the treatment group on reading measures” (p. 149) and surmised that teachers’ explicit emphasis on speaking abilities and negligible use of classroom practices that would “reinforce *reading, comprehending and responding to a range of materials*” (p. 150) could provide an explanation. With regard to scores on subject knowledge further removed from language study, she observed, “although the third-grade ITBS mathematics and social studies score favored foreign language students, by the fifth-grade, scores on these subtests favored non-foreign language students” (p. 158). Once more, it appears that the initial advantage held by FL students most likely dissipated due to limited emphasis on these curricular areas via FL

instruction. Her conclusions find ready support in the questionnaire responses that indicated that “seventy-eight percent ($n = 14$) of the teachers reported that they either never or occasionally collaborate with other faculty members in planning cross-curricular lessons” (p. 160).

Is the glass half empty or is the glass half full? After all, despite limited linking of language and content learning, FL students did turn in significantly better performances in the fourth-grade LEAP 21 test than their control group counterparts. To achieve even more favorable results, Taylor-Ward recommends that teachers familiarize themselves with the content and the format of both the ITBS and the LEAP tests and become more knowledgeable about “the effects of content-based foreign language instruction on academic achievement” (p. 167). Disregarding the test-driven practicality of the first recommendation, her second proposal clearly points to the heart of the matter, namely, the link between language and content requiring focused attention by the entire FL profession.

In other words, both educational situations, Massachusetts having to present evidence for content learning that meets curricular expectations by ELLs and Louisiana examining the outcomes of a state-mandated FL program for students in fourth through eighth grades, leave little doubt about the underlying problem. Tackling it would require a privileging of theories of language that understand the semiotic tool language as being central to knowledge creation. That means language is functional in terms of its uses, and not an arbitrary system of signs, much less a primarily formalist, rule-based, individual-cognitive enterprise.

Such a repositioning has recently gained currency in an emerging reimagined language teaching enterprise in the United States. On the theoretical level, we find gradual consideration of systemic functional linguistics (Halliday, 1994) as a way to capture the link between social and cultural factors and language, a link that, furthermore, seems remarkably translatable into pedagogical action (e.g., Christie & Martin, 1997; Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Johns, 2000; Schleppegrell, 1994). We also encounter this link in the functionalism inherent in the cognitive linguistics orientation elaborated by Langacker (1987, 1991), which considers the functions that language serves as foundational and not merely as subsidiary to describing its forms and, in emphasizing the semiological function of language, foregrounds the crucial role of conceptualization in interaction. Within Second Language Acquisition research that explicitly understands the

classroom not as the place where preexisting theories are “applied” but where the very issues worthy of being theorized would themselves arise, we observe increasing advocacy for sociocultural approaches to just such theorizing about language, flanked by Vygotskian notions of knowing, learning, and being (see, e.g., Lantolf, 2000). And, targeting teacher education, Freeman (2004) correctly points to the ethical responsibility of language teachers to enable learners to gain access to the various social languages that make up “language” and thereby enable them to gain agency within society.

Each one of these approaches foregrounds societal language use. Each one exposes illusions of the existence and stability of content separate from language. And each one has the potential to construe discourse in terms of what Martin (2000), whose work is here reminiscent of the work of the New London Group (1996), calls a “positive discourse analysis,” an approach that might “focus on how social subjects design change” (p. 122) as they “critique and renovate genres alongside mobilizing them to interrogate power relations in the culture” (p. 119).

Of course, proponents of the NCLB Act might argue that such an ability is their educational goal as well, and one that could be expanded within the NCLB framework to multiple languages—if that is what parents wish to pursue with some degree of activism. But here, too, a closer look invites differentiation, this time based on societal countercurrents with regard to language study. In a recent conference paper that explored issues of accountability, equity, and democracy in public schools within the context of the NCLB Act, Olneck (2005) foregrounded the frequently overlooked fact that Title III of this legislation, the “English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act,” effectively replaces the 1968 Bilingual Education Act (BEA). He adds that while the NCLB Act does not prohibit federal funding for bilingual education, it effectively ends “support” for such language programs. Even more relevant for this discussion (though detailing the reasons goes beyond the scope of my comments), he concludes that gauging the impact of legislation such as the NCLB Act is difficult, just as it is difficult to pin down the effects on language learning of California’s Proposition 227 and, much before that, of the BEA itself. Therefore, the consequences of the NCLB Act in and of itself, without also considering diverse flanking initiatives, might be considerably less quantifiable through test scores regarding language learning than initially pro-

jected. Instead, following Bourdieu and others, Olneck suggests that the greater effect might be in terms of the symbolic power that privileging certain words can exert in the construction of reality. Specifically, it is the symbolic power of authenticating American English as the “normal” language of American public education and, by implication, of American institutional and public spaces that can be expected to lead to a further cultural homogenization. The pivotal position of outcomes testing as the vehicle for that shift would then be a particularly instructive instance of the power of tests, inasmuch as they address not so much definable educational goals but carry expansive sociopolitical movements or even agendas, a reach that Shohamy has critically examined in her book, *The Power of Tests* (2001).

In that context, the remarkable absence of concerted opposition against the NCLB Act from Democratic lawmakers, even from the Hispanic Caucus, makes all the more apparent the contradictory positions taken by much of the American public, and not only White majorities but also minorities, toward bilingual education. Thus, in assessing U.S. government language policies in the wake of 9/11, Lo Bianco (2002) reminds us that the BEA began its life within the Civil Rights movement as an antipoverty law and never overcame the stigma of being attached to the poor. For that reason, it was not a central feature of the educational aspirations of mainstream America. Indeed, it was more a potential threat to the middle class, inasmuch as it might endanger national cohesion and, more recently and quite curiously, even national security. By contrast, the option of seeing language as “an esteemed cultural accomplishment, an investment in national capability” and, in a post-9/11 world, also as “a resource advancing national security and enhancing employment” (Lo Bianco, 2002) somehow was never carefully built up within the 34 years of the legislation’s existence or harnessed for a differentiated language education policy for the future.

Lo Bianco notes that, in the more recent case of California’s Proposition 227 drive and in the so-called Unz initiatives in other states, particularly Arizona and Massachusetts, it is easy to blame the moneyed interests of industry as thwarting such an enlightened stance toward multilingualism. But, might it also be possible to implicate the inability of the FL profession to present, for the decades of the existence of BEA legislation, a comprehensive and educationally transparent “content-oriented” argument for the presence of multiple languages in the curriculum as another factor contributing to the following, highly peculiar situation?

Uncle Sam wants Americans to learn foreign languages while Mister Unz closes down bilingual education. The Federal government abolishes the Bilingual Education Act but invests huge sums in foreign language teaching because American lives are endangered if too few are competent in foreign languages. (Lo Bianco, 2002)

For purposes of public education, language education policy, and public policy, not to mention political action, would a language-based theory of human knowing, that articulated content knowledge also in terms of language resources and not only as disciplinary "facts," have facilitated stating learning outcomes and achievements in ways more suitable to the goal of leaving no child behind? Could such specifications also have sustained forms of assessment and testing practices that the language profession—not to mention other members of the teaching profession—could judge as more compatible with what we know about language and learning than current approaches seem to do?

These are difficult questions to pose and impossible questions to answer. Of course, we have addressed certain aspects in particular environments—generally better in the primary grades than in subsequent years and, lamentably, least in postsecondary language education. But upon closer inspection, neither immersion nor bilingual education, neither content-based instruction nor languages across the curriculum, neither communicative language teaching nor the proficiency movement nor the Standards project, has provided principled answers that can sustain the link between acquiring content knowledge and learning a language to the levels of literacy needed in contemporary societies (see Byrnes, in press; Wesche & Skehan, 2002). As a result, we lack a coherent way to imagine education as learning to participate in a range of semiotic practices over extended curricular stretches or, perhaps, also over short instructional periods, as addressing younger learners in the grades and also college-age learners, in the context of what we call native language instruction or in what we refer to as heritage or FL learning (but see emerging efforts in Schleppegrell, 2004; Swaffar & Arens, in press).

It is both revealing and thought-provoking that the link between sociocultural context, knowledge, and language capacity and use should come to the fore in conjunction with English and English language learners and that it should do so in response to the accountability demands of the NCLB Act. The evidence that teachers and school systems are asked to present as proofs of learning within the guidelines of the NCLB Act may

be unjustified as posed, even counterproductive. But that should not keep FL professionals from the realization that we are called upon to present sufficiently specified, sufficiently theorized and researched, and sufficiently articulated educational praxes, in curriculum construction, in pedagogy, and in assessment that would bring all learners into schooled literacies in at least two languages—and to convince our critical publics that we are indeed able to do so. Perhaps this is the opportunity our field should discern in the No Child Left Behind Act and should pursue through it and with it.

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The Position of Heritage Languages in Language Education Policy

In earlier *MLJ* issues, *Perspectives* has provided overviews of the consequences of language education policies on teaching and learning languages in higher education, from both international and U.S. viewpoints. In the current issue, our *Perspectives* contributors have examined the impact of the U.S. federal No Child Left Behind Act on language teaching at all educational levels. The upcoming winter issue of the *MLJ* (89, 4, 2005) will again narrow the lens to examine the position of heritage languages in language education policy. A focus on this group of learners is important today because in all areas of language learning in higher education, minority speakers or heritage learners, or both, are greatly affected by language education policies, beginning with the very definition of which languages are even recognized as *heritage languages*.

In the next issue of *Perspectives*, Jim Cummins will present a position paper on “The Position of Heritage Languages in Language Education Policy.” Cummins, of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto, is well known for his long-term commitment to bilingual education and the complex negotiation of identities in contemporary pluralist societies. As usual, commentators will both expand on the issues raised by the position paper and add their own insights. The commentators for *MLJ* issue 89, 4, are Ofelia Garcia, Coordinator in Bilingual/Bicultural Education at Teacher’s College, Columbia University; Nancy Hornberger, of the University of Pennsylvania, who has devoted much of her research to the investigation of educational policy and practice for indigenous and immigrant language groups, compared across national contexts; Sifree Makoni, from the Pennsylvania State University, who will combine his expertise on multilingual communities in Africa and the United States with that of Pedzisai Mashiri of the University of Zimbabwe; Scott McGinnis, who has been an important voice for the language concerns of the Chinese heritage community; and Terrence Wiley of Arizona State University, who has done extensive research in immigrant and heritage language education engagement. These U.S. voices will be augmented by those of two European researchers, Kees de Bot, of the University of Nijmegen, who most recently collaborated on a study of the sociolinguistics of Bethlehem in order to develop appropriate language policies, and Durk Gorter, Professor of Frisian sociolinguistics at the University of Amsterdam and head of the Mercator Education Project within the European Union.

Through the *Perspectives* column, the *MLJ* looks forward to continuing the dialogue on language education policy and its effects on instructional programs and language learners. As always, we invite further comment from *MLJ* readers.

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