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Foreign Language Policies, Research, and Educational Possibilities

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Introduction: Toward Achieving 21st Century Competencies in Additional Languages

With the intense globalization and human migration taking place within the Asia-Pacific region as well as beyond it, an appreciation of multiple languages and cultures and an ability to communicate effectively with people across languages, cultures, communities, and new digital media is crucial. To that end, high quality foreign language (FL)[1] skills, communicative competence, and intercultural sensitivity must be nurtured in 21st century global citizens. Many economies understand this principle much better than we do in Canada, the United States, and other English-dominant Western economies, where it is often assumed that knowledge of English, clearly the dominant language of international business, higher education, information and communication technologies, popular culture, and diplomacy, is not only sufficient but is somehow transcendent. English is without question a critical global language, one that provides access to opportunities of all kinds. As Graddol (2006), a well respected applied linguist, observes:

> [a]n "English factor" is found in virtually every key macro trend: whether it is business process outsourcing (BPO), the rise of urban middle classes around the world, the development of new communications technology such as the internet, the global redistribution of poverty, the changing nature of news media, or the reform of education in universities and schools (p. 20).

Complacency about other linguistic capabilities may be seriously misguided, however, given global competition from new generations of highly competent, cosmopolitan, bilingual and multilingual speakers in other parts of the world. The success rate of English-dominant APEC economies in producing functionally bilingual citizens and workers, even in officially bilingual countries such as Canada (Duff, 2007), has not been as impressive as it has in countries where English is being learned as an additional or lingua franca language. Graddol depicts an interesting tension between what he calls Global English and the ascendance of other world languages. He predicts that the "English factor" may well change in the future with the growing number of users of Chinese and other languages online, improvements in online access to other fonts and scripts and other inexpensive communication tools, such as Skype, and the influence of more widely available TV broadcasting and online news reporting in Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, and other languages. All other things being equal, the current competitive edge of monolingual English-speakers and their economies may be seriously challenged and undermined by the growing population of talented bilinguals and multilinguals in developing economies such as India, Brazil, China, and Russia. Speakers in the latter regions may not speak the standard

[1] Although I use the term "foreign language" (FL) throughout this paper as a shorthand, it is a misnomer nowadays given the prevalence of many such "foreign" languages in our own communities and homes. "Additional language" or "international language" are more neutral terms.

varieties of English traditionally spoken in Canada, the US, or the UK, but rather may be fluent users of an established regional lingua franca version of English, as well as other languages. Already many non-English-dominant economies are able to produce goods and provide outsourced services and high-value research and development (R&D) activities—some of them in English (e.g., in call center work, English tutoring, English-mediated higher education)—must more cheaply and efficiently than traditional native speakers of English and that trend is expected to continue. Quoting from Davis (2003), Graddol reports that "[w]hile English is a major language, it only accounts for around 30% of the world Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and is likely to account for less in the future. Neglecting other languages means ignoring quite significant potential markets" (cited in Graddol, 2006, p. 62). Furthermore, in urban centers in English-dominant societies, more service providers and professionals will in the future require proficiency in other languages in order to address the needs of a more linguistically and culturally diverse domestic clientele (e.g., Chinese or Spanish speakers in American hospitals or speakers of a nonstandard variety of English; Duff, 2005; Graddol, 2006). That is, the ability to communicate in English *and* other languages will become more necessary. Yet the study of additional languages in English-dominant APEC economies has been declining as foreign language requirements are dropped or relaxed at the same time as they are becoming more stringent in other, non-English-dominant economies.

Various educational organizations have helped learners successfully achieve high levels of language proficiency in English and other additional languages in the East and the West by invoking the many personal, professional, societal, and economic benefits associated with it (and thus motivating learners to invest in language learning) and by developing exemplary instructional methods and curriculum suitable for a range of language learning purposes and contexts.

In addition to the many other documented benefits of FL learning, research has demonstrated quite convincingly that under the right conditions, the complex intellectual activity of learning another language has important cognitive dividends for learners as well as other potential dividends. Becoming bilingual generates increased metalinguistic and cognitive ability; thus learning another language *under the right conditions* is a form of cognitive as well as socio-cultural enrichment (Genesee, 1987). What, then, are the *right conditions* for successful FL learning? This paper discusses some of the issues related to second or foreign language education that frequently arise as countries contemplate policy reforms and as researchers and educators grapple with the challenges of improving language instruction. English and Mandarin Chinese are focal languages considered here because of their strategic importance in the Asia-Pacific region and the sheer number of speakers of those languages globally as a mother tongue, an additional language, or as a lingua franca. However, this Anglo-Sino focus should not take away from the importance of education in other community or indigenous languages, official languages, and additional international languages deemed both strategically and symbolically important for particular economies and their populations.

Developments in Language Teaching Methods: An Overview

FL teaching has gone from one methodological extreme to another over the past century. Up to the mid-20th century, grammar, reading and translation skills, and an appreciation of classical and modern literary texts were generally emphasized. After World War II, a pedagogical shift occurred that saw greater attention paid to practical oral skills. Nevertheless, teaching methods favored rote oral grammatical pattern drills, memorization, and the repetition of stock expressions (Brown, 2000; Byrnes, 1998; Hadley, 2001). Even now, particularly at the high school and postsecondary levels, the vestiges of the grammar-translation method and mechanical audiolingualism are still evident in all too many classrooms and on high-stakes national paper-and-pencil FL tests despite all that we have learned in the interim. Knowledge *about* language (and especially about grammar and vocabulary) in such contexts is unfortunately equated with proficiency *in* language, that is, the ability to use language effectively to communicate with others. In the late 1970s, the influx of migrant workers and new immigrants in many parts of the world whose primary needs were to communicate and become better integrated within their new communities again brought about changes in language teaching and assessment. Survival in another culture necessitated addressing the practical, transactional needs of the learners in their everyday lives—and not the niceties of grammar and the study of texts.

The communicative, task-based approach to language teaching that resulted is still valued today. However, it too has evolved, to accommodate the needs of new populations of learners and in response to insights gleaned from nearly 30 years of language teaching experience and research. What has become clear is that most learners need some attention to language forms and functions in natural discourse contexts, either through explicit or implicit grammatical instruction. Simply practicing conversational skills or writing without any formal instruction (whether through self-access or classroom teaching) or correction is unlikely to lead to high levels of proficiency. Rather, learners are likely to become fluent, but ungrammatical, language users.

Language education in--and for--the 21st century presents new challenges and opportunities and also new learning tools and methods. The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) in the United States has identified five intersecting goals of FL education ("5 Cs"): *communication, cultures, connections, comparisons*, and communities (see Appendix 1):

- fostering *communication* within and across cultures (oral and written);
- encouraging the development of deep *cultural understanding* and insight;
- forging *connections* with other disciplines and information sources;
- facilitating metalinguistic and metacultural understanding by *comparing* one's own and the target language;
- making connections with multilingual *communities* of target-language speakers near and far and becoming lifelong learners.

Knowledge and skills required for workers, students, and informed, engaged citizens now involve oral and written proficiency and an ability to mobilize knowledge for different purposes and audiences. It also involves different genres or types (or registers) of language use. Building

on the foundation of orality and literacy in people's home languages, we must assist them to become proficient users of additional languages who are also competent users of new media and digital learning technologies. Embracing new technologies, moreover, increases exposure to authentic language use and cultural norms and values and to information and communities elsewhere and thus motivates learners as well. Therefore, for today's multilingual and knowledge-based economy, balance is needed between contextualized, accuracy-oriented grammatical instruction and fluency-building communicative activities. This is achieved through language-awareness activities concerning language structure and through well-designed, engaging, and meaningful practice-oriented activities. As recent initiatives in Europe's highly influential Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) indicate, language teaching must be *action-oriented* and must develop students' strategies for effective intercultural communication and interaction with others (Little, 2007).

Well-researched and widely implemented innovations in FL curriculum (cf. Hadley, 2001; Pufahl, Rhodes, & Christian, 2000; Warschauer, 2000) in the latter part of the 20th century and early 21st century have included the following:

- content-based and immersion (or two-way bilingual) FL teaching at all levels;
- "intensive" language programs in Grade 5 or 6 of elementary school for half a year of communicative language study (Lightbown & Spada, 2006; Netten & Germain, 2004)
- coursework in "languages for specific purposes," such as business, that not only teaches language but also socializes students into the culture(s) of international business or other professions;
- proficiency-oriented, communicative teaching (Hadley, 2001);
- task-based and project-based language teaching;
- service learning opportunities linked with credit-bearing coursework: using a FL to assist speakers of the language in real situations of need (e.g., using Mandarin in a Canadian community to assist newcomers from China with limited English)
- study-abroad and other mobility programs (e.g., DuFon & Churchill, 2006; Freed, 1995; Kinginger, 2008);
- computer-assisted language learning (CALL) and "intelligent" CALL involving creative, interactive new digital learning tools and tutors, and (often) opportunities to join virtual multilingual learning communities;
- distance learning;
- effective, age-appropriate FL programs for young children (i.e., not just secondary school and postsecondary students, the primary instructional population earlier);
- effective heritage-language programs building up home-language competencies to provide a strong foundation for subsequent language learning, including advanced-level proficiency in the heritage language;
- integrative, functional, multi-skill, and multifaceted approaches to assessment that stress what students actually *can do* in the languages they know, rather than what they *cannot do*, that provide *direct measures* of oral and written production, and that capture their own accounts and evidence of their proficiency (e.g., through multimedia personal learning portfolios; Little, 2007);

- intercultural language teaching that does not essentialize or stereotype a given language or culture and its people but rather raises in students a critical, postmodern awareness of their own culture(s) and identity(ies) and how contact with other cultures and peoples enables them to move beyond their own cultural and personal reference points toward others (Kramsch, 1993).

Optimal language teacher education has devoted considerable attention to (1) ensuring that teachers understand and can implement curricular approaches and alternatives such as those listed above, as appropriate in their contexts; (2) ensuring that teachers reach threshold levels of oral and written proficiency in the language they will teach; and (3) ensuring that teachers have a sound understanding of linguistics and, specifically, of the language they will teach, and are able to integrate that linguistic knowledge into their teaching and materials.

Priorities, Practices, and Contexts for FL Education: International and Heritage Languages

Over the past fifteen years, some significant changes have taken place in FL education policies and practices in North America, Europe, Asia, and on other continents around the world. These changes are associated with large-scale political and economic reforms, shifting immigration patterns, perceived national security issues and priorities, especially since September 2001, the establishment of new regional alliances (e.g., new countries joining the European Union); and of course the increasing significance of a small number of lingua franca languages such as English and Mandarin.

The phenomenal current interest in Mandarin FL education has been well publicized in the news media recently, such as the *Globe and Mail*, *Time Asia Magazine*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Sydney Herald*, and *Newsweek International*.[2] Since 2004, the National Office of Chinese Language Council International (also known as "Hanban"), based in Beijing, has established over 200 Confucius Institutes worldwide—in Asia, North America, Europe, the Middle East, Australia, and elsewhere--to promote the teaching, learning, and testing of Mandarin as a FL for business and other purposes (e.g., tourism, academic study). Mandarin Chinese is therefore gaining momentum internationally as a more widely studied language by students from non-Chinese ethnic backgrounds. Using Chinese government information, Graddol (2006) reports that approximately 30 million people are studying Mandarin as a FL worldwide but that the number will soon rise to 100 million. It is being acquired and used by many tens of thousands of Chinese children in diaspora contexts worldwide as well as by FL learners. For example, recent North American census data reveal that "Chinese" (all dialects) is now the most widely spoken home language after English and French in Canada and after English and Spanish in USA (Duff, 2006). Its local presence adds to the utility of learning Chinese as a valuable community language as well as a language for international communication. In Vancouver, Canada, alone, 2500-3000 students a year enroll in Mandarin language courses at the University of British Columbia; children can learn Mandarin and English at a public Mandarin-English

[2] Sample headlines and summaries of recent articles can be found on the Asia Society (New York) website: http://internationaled.org/news.htm#PCChinese which has logged recent media coverage about Mandarin.

immersion/bilingual elementary school; and there is growing demand for instruction in Mandarin in other public schools, trends reported elsewhere as well (e.g., in Toronto, New York, and Los Angeles). South Korea presently trades more with China than with the USA, and this has fueled an expansion in Mandarin teaching and learning among Koreans, according to Graddol (2006).

Thus, the population of Mandarin learners worldwide represents a complicated mixture of ethnic Chinese (heritage) students, students from other Asian backgrounds whose languages share some orthographic features with Mandarin (e.g., Chinese characters), and non-Asian learners. The changing profile of language learners in our "FL" classes has important implications. Using materials developed for monolingual English speakers with heritage-language learners who already have certain levels of oral skills, cultural knowledge, and/or literacy, or mixing students with significant prior FL learning histories with those who are true beginners is highly problematic as many schools and universities are finding. Where numbers of students and educational budgets warrant it, careful placement testing and tracking of students according to their linguistic needs and backgrounds is essential and teaching materials and objectives should carefully take into account these differences in profiles, goals, identities, and capabilities (e.g., Li & Duff, in press; Kondo-Brown & Brown, 2008). In addition the teaching methods and materials should be appropriate to the contexts in which the language is being taught. Currently, a large number of Mandarin FL teachers in China are traveling to the West to learn how to teach in a way that is more compatible with Western communicative approaches that international/study-abroad students in Chinese regions and Western learners in their own home institutions can relate to well.[3]

Currently, much of the official impetus and funding for FL study and research in the U.S., including the study of Mandarin, comes from national security concerns, under the auspices of Homeland Security (see e.g., Brecht & Rivers, 2001). After Sept. 11, 2001, when security agencies found highly proficient speakers of certain Middle Eastern and Southwest Asian languages to be in short supply, the FBI and other agencies began to recruit students and highly proficient speakers of non-European languages to professions requiring knowledge of those languages. An unfortunate consequence of the rhetoric supporting FL learning and research in the U.S. is that FLs and their speakers constitute a potential threat to the nation's well-being rather than a cultural and cognitive resource worthy of study for their own sake. This stance is evident, for example, in the U.S. National Flagship Language Initiative Pilot Program, to develop high level proficiency in what have previously been "less commonly taught languages": Arabic, Chinese, and Korean. Like other national foreign language research and resource initiatives, the Flagship programs are receiving substantial funding from either the defense establishment or from federal security agencies. There has been a concomitant interest in tapping into or building upon the existing linguistic resources in the country, namely immigrants who have some degree of proficiency in a wide range of languages, rather than trying to build up new FL resources from beginning levels (Brecht & Ingold, 2002). Research is now also beginning to study heritage-language learners in comparison with non-heritage students, especially in terms of their ultimate

[3] The University of British Columbia has just established a new Centre for Research on Chinese Language and Literacy Education, supported by Hanban, with the goal of spearheading new research but also assisting with additional in-service and pre-service education for Mandarin language teachers from China.

levels of FL attainment, identity issues, and so on (Brinton, Kagan, & Bauckus, 2008; Kondo-Brown & Brown, 2008).

Importantly, nearly all existing FL curriculum and teacher education materials in Canada and the United States assume that "FL" learners are by and large monolingual English speakers with little knowledge of the languages, literacies, and cultures they are studying. This assumption is no longer valid though. That is not to say that heritage language education is not worthwhile; rather, it is commendable and has many advantages for learners, their families, and for society. But new research shows that the research and instructional methods, materials, and priorities for heritage language learners may need to be very different from those of non-heritage learners and that programs are most effective when students are placed in appropriate tracks (heritage or non-heritage) (Li & Duff, in press; Duff, 2008).

Also, just because teachers happen to be native speakers of the FL to be taught does not mean that they will be effective teachers, which is commonly assumed in some FL educational settings (e.g., English teachers in Asia). Standards movements for FL teachers—with respect to determining and improving criterion proficiency levels and also teaching methods, are underway for both English and Mandarin. In many countries, such as in Europe, the preparation of FL teachers is much more rigorous, lengthy, and prestigious than it is in Canada or the United States (Pufahl et al., 2000). Also, study-abroad, work-abroad, and other forms of internships in Great Britain and continental Europe increase students' FL proficiency and confidence using the FL for general communicative and pedagogical purposes. In-service and continuing professional development programs for teachers to further develop their skills are considered important and are more available in Europe than in North America (Tucker, 2001; Pufahl et al., 2000). These are areas in which improvements are therefore warranted.

Age-related Language Learning Issues

While some recent reforms in FL education internationally have been very positive, fostering functional trilingualism in European Union member countries, for example, research suggests that other reforms have been implemented with insufficient attention paid to the implications for teacher education, for selecting teaching methodologies suitable for learners at different ages and with learning objectives that are markedly different from those of past generations.

A major change internationally has been the trend, often in response to intense parental, societal, and economic pressures, to lower the age at which students first begin to learn a FL at school (Duff & Bailey, 2001; Snow, 2001; Lightbown, 2001; Tucker, 2001). Whereas in many countries, including my province in Canada (British Columbia), the study of FLs in the past was mandatory from secondary or junior high school (e.g., age 14), increasingly students from as early as the first, third or fourth grade must begin their FL study. This downward push can be justified for affective and cognitive reasons. It is generally believed that there is a critical or "sensitive" period for optimal language learning, and particularly for FL pronunciation, ending around the age of puberty, and it is also thought that younger children are more open to other languages and cultures and are less self-conscious about their own FL production than older children and adolescents are (Lightbown & Spada, 2006; Ellis, 1994). Also, in countries where

at least two FLs must be studied, earlier exposure to one language allows room in the curriculum for exposure to the second FL later and possibly for content-based (or bilingual) education in two of the language at higher levels. In Luxembourg, where the study of two FLs is mandatory, students start learning German or French from age 6 (Pufahl, et al., 2000). In Morocco, compulsory French instruction now begins in Grade 2 and English instruction in Grade 5. Some countries that have changed the age of first FL learning to Grade 3 are now lowering it to kindergarten or Grade 1. In countries where English is normally the first FL to be studied (e.g., Austria, Spain, Thailand, Italy), it is often introduced from as early as Grade 1 (age 6) (Pufahl et al., 2000). In many cases, this early FL teaching amounts to one hour per week or less.

However, the age at which FL learning commences and the intensity, duration, and quality of FL instruction, the status of the FL course itself within the school curriculum, and students' metalinguistic efficiency are all variables that must be taken into account when changing policies of this nature and evaluating the effectiveness of earlier FL instruction (Lightbown, 2001; Tucker, 2001). Indeed, several scholars (e.g., Lightbown & Spada, 2006; Marinova-Todd, Marshall & Snow, 2000) have written about the "myth" of the "earlier the better" principle in FL learning, noting that a shorter but more intensive FL learning experience in the later elementary years may be just as effective if not more so than a so-called "drip-feed" method of instruction over many years when children are younger, less cognitively developed, receive too little instruction to make much of a difference, and may have teachers who themselves are not highly proficient (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). Although Pufahl et al. (2000) reported that the advice of 22 educators from 19 countries (e.g., Australia, Brazil, Canada, Thailand) to U.S. FL policy-makers was that FL education *should* be started earlier—in elementary school not middle school or high school—they also noted that if that is the case, FLs must be designated as core subjects with a similar status to mathematics and reading and that teachers must be well trained, programs well funded with small enough class sizes, and the curriculum well articulated with clear descriptions of threshold levels or learning benchmarks for language use in daily life (as in the case of the Common European Framework of Reference; Council of Europe, 2001; Little, 2007). Reducing the age of English FL learning, as has been witnessed recently in South Korea, often has as a consequence tremendous competition among students wishing to excel in the language from even earlier levels (especially when their own teachers' English and training in FL teaching methods may be less than optimal), resulting in expensive extracurricular private-sector tutoring (e.g., "English Villages") that many parents feel obliged to send their children to. In other countries, students may avail themselves of extensive tutoring if there is a perceived mismatch between the school FL curriculum and high-stakes school-leaving or university-entrance examinations.

Policies such as the earlier introduction of FL instruction are often conceived without consideration for how university faculties of education will manage to prepare sufficient numbers of well-qualified, highly proficient teachers at the targeted age/grade levels to implement such policies effectively (Phillips, 2003). Using materials and methods designed for older students with much younger ones is ill-advised. Furthermore, expecting students to read in a language they do not yet speak often sets them up for failure (Snow, 2001). In Europe, a number of researchers and teacher educators have banded together to successfully document

ways of improving the teaching of English and other FLs to young children (Cameron, 2003; Nikolov & Curtain, 2000).

Rosenbusch (1995) reports that "the minimum amount of time recommended for an elementary school foreign language class is 75 minutes per week, with classes meeting at least every other day". Others have recommended at least 30 minutes a day, everyday, long enough for students to engage in meaningful activities (see also the *ACTFL Performance Guidelines for K-12 Learners*, Swender & Duncan, 1998).

Of course the time needed for successful language acquisition also depends on the relationship between students' first language and the FL. Grammatical, orthographic, and phonological differences between students' first and target FLs have implications for the time in which the FL can reasonably be mastered. Although conducted with adults, a study at the (American) Foreign Service Institute some years ago (Liskin-Gasparro, 1982) compared how many hours it took English-speaking adults to achieve various levels of proficiency in very different types of FLs. They found, for example, that average-aptitude learners in the intensive programs reached 2+ ("advanced" level) on a 5-point scale after 24 weeks (720 hours) when learning Spanish, Italian or Portuguese; but that to reach comparable levels of proficiency in Hindi, Indonesian, Thai, Vietnamese, and even German, it took about 44 weeks (1320 hours); and in excess of 44 weeks (up to 92 weeks, or 2760 hours) for Chinese, Japanese or Korean. This finding cautions us to have realistic expectations about student learning outcomes with typologically unrelated FLs (such as English and Mandarin), given the number of hours students normally are instructed in those languages.

Thus, the goals and context of an educational program and the typological similarities or differences between students' home language and the FL being studied are important factors in deciding on the age issue and the total number of hours of instruction necessary to reach mandated levels (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). If native-like proficiency is not sought, then introducing the FL in late childhood may be quite sufficient, depending of course on students' motivation, teachers, and so on. Experiencing several years of rather minimal language instruction and then finding oneself back in classes with beginners in secondary or postsecondary programs is highly undesirable. Regardless, more longitudinal research is needed to study this issue, looking not only at FL learning outcomes but also school retention, subject matter proficiency, and continuation to higher education (Tucker, 2001).

Research shows that while the promotion of FL education--and second languages, such as English, in immigrant-receiving, English-dominant countries--is associated with potential gains in students' cognitive, sociocultural, and linguistic development (Genesee, 1987), FL education should not be undertaken at the expense of students' indigenous/home languages and their prior literacy development in those languages (Snow, 2001); that is, it should be an additive as opposed to subtractive learning experience for them (Tucker, 2001). In addition, considerable research shows that the same immigrant students require many years of English-as-a-second language support in order to attain the level of academic language proficiency of their native-speaker peers (Cummins, 2000), although they are often mainstreamed or transitioned into English-medium programs prematurely, after one year of ESL coursework, for example.

Research Agendas

A number of recent FL research agenda documents provide a helpful starting point for analyzing national and regional FL language education priorities (e.g., Duff & Bailey, 2001; Lambert, 2001; "Perspectives" essays on language policy issues in the *Modern Language Journal* since 2003). In 2001, Lambert, Director of the National Foreign Language Center at the University of Maryland in the United States, identified seven priorities for FL instructional reform and related research in the US, based on comparisons with innovations in Europe and with his earlier review of FL instructional needs in the US (Lambert, 1987). The seven areas included the following:

- evaluating language competency;
- articulating instruction across educational levels and the different contexts in which FLs are taught;
- increasing the range of languages taught and studied;
- achieving higher levels of language skills;
- promoting language competency and use among adults;
- expanding research and maximizing its impact on FL teaching and learning;
- assessing and diffusing new technologies in instructional practice …

(p. 347)

The following sections expand on some of these points, adding related recommendations from other language education scholars both inside and outside the United States (e.g., Pufahl et al., 2000) with respect to policy, research, and practice.

Assessment/Evaluation

Several concerns related to assessment/evaluation are that there is little coordination internationally in assessment or testing initiatives. Lambert (2001) observed, and many would agree, that the widespread adoption of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) proficiency standards, testing protocols, and rating scales in the U.S. has helped standardize and modernize language teaching methods there, particularly at the postsecondary level. The emphasis on oral proficiency and on the ability to speak about a range of topics accurately and fluently on the Oral Proficiency Interview has motivated teachers and students to pay more attention to oral skills in their courses and less on textual translation than was previously the case. However, according to Lambert, more coordination between FL curriculum development and evaluation in the US and in Europe should take place.

For example, under the direction of the Council of Europe (2001), an impressive, functional approach to task-based teaching and assessment has been developed in Europe for at least 20 foreign languages across a wide range of proficiency levels. The Common European Framework for Languages (CEFL) is now guiding language teaching policies and assessment in most countries in the European Union. Yet it is not well known in North American FL education or policy circles. (However, a recently edited section of the *Modern Language Journal* (Winter 2007) provides a very good introduction to CEFL (Little, 2007) and a number of commentaries and critiques by European experts regarding its implementation and its connection with pedagogy and curriculum.) As noted earlier in this report, the action-oriented "can do" ideology

underlining the CEFL, the use of language portfolios prepared by students, and a hands-on approach to assessment have been highly consistent with a 21st century orientation to and appreciation of practical language competencies. For example, below I show three levels of "can-do" statements taken from the CEFL:

Examples of "CAN-DO" Levels from CEFL
(http://www.alte.org/can_do/general.cfm)

Levels	Listening/speaker	Reading	Writing
C2 – Level 5	CAN advise on or talk about complex or sensitive issues, understanding colloquial references and dealing confidently with hostile questions.	CAN understand documents, correspondence and reports, including the finer points of complex texts.	CAN write letters on any subject and full notes of meetings or seminars with good expression and accuracy.
B1 – Level 2	CAN express opinions on abstract/cultural matters in a limited way or offer advice within a known area, and understand instructions or public announcements.	CAN understand routine information and articles, and the general meaning of non-routine information within a familiar area.	CAN write letters or make notes on familiar or predictable matters.
A1 – Breakthrough level	CAN understand basic instructions or take part in a basic factual conversation on a predictable topic.	CAN understand basic notices, instructions or information.	CAN complete basic forms, and write notes including times, dates and places.

The Canadian Language Benchmarks (http://www.language.ca/pdfs/clb_adults.pdf) is another assessment tool, in this case for adult second language learners of official languages in Canada. It too focuses on "what students can do."

A common concern in language education and assessment across APEC economies (and elsewhere) is that far too often there is a glaring mismatch between curriculum and assessment, whether for in-class achievement testing or for overall proficiency testing. Whereas the curriculum stresses oral communication and the effective negotiation of meaning, assessment tools may be much more traditional, structural, pen-and-paper type assessment tools that do not reflect the curriculum and instead measure decontextualized grammatical knowledge or translation skills which may be easier to score. This situation leads to *negative washback* from the test; in response to pressures to have students perform well on the test, teachers teach to the test rather than to the curriculum even though the two may be fundamentally different. Unfortunately, this problem of negative washback is widely reported in relation to high-stakes testing across APEC economies, including Canadian schools, often to little effect. A common justification is that assessing students in a more integrative, communicative way that takes into account both oral and written abilities as well as grammatical competence or cultural sensitivity is impractical (time-consuming, logistically complicated, expensive) and subjective.

In recent years, in part because of criticism about the negative effects of high-stakes English language tests on English language education, TOEFL and Cambridge exams have undergone extensive modification and research both to improve the tests and to encourage positive washback practices. Now, for example, the internet-based TOEFL test has obligatory spoken and written components and there is a greater integration of skills.

Other developments in assessment include those conducted by an automated telephone system (e.g., PhonePass, a short 61-item, 10-minute oral test), or on the computer or internet (the new internet-based TOEFL), or that involve computer-adaptive testing that responds to students' performance on earlier test items in the selection of subsequent items in an appropriate difficulty range.

No thorough cross-national comparisons of student attainment in FLs (to my knowledge) have been conducted. However, the following two tables contain data published by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) in the U.S., for the new internet-based TOEFL, and by the University of Cambridge Syndicate in the UK for the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). Both tests are commonly taken by students in APEC economies seeking to pursue higher education through the medium of English. I have excerpted or highlighted APEC economy results for the years shown (not all data were available).

TOEFL Internet Based Test Results Sept 05-Dec. 06:
Section score (scaled) means by selected geographic regions and by native country
(Source: ETS, 2007, pp. 10-11)[4]

Native Language	Number of Examinees	Reading/25	Listening/25	Speaking/25	Writing/25	Total/100
Chile	830	23	24	21	21	89
PR China	20,450	20	19	18	20	76
Hong Kong	2,763	18	21	19	22	80
Indonesia	1,875	19	21	19	21	80
Japan	17,957	15	17	15	17	65
S. Korea	31,991	17	19	17	19	72
Malaysia	920	22	23	20	24	89
Peru	1437	20	22	20	20	82
Philippines	5,882	20	22	22	21	85
Russian Federation	2,922	20	23	22	21	85
Singapore	144	25	25	24	26	100
Taiwan	10,022	16	18	17	19	71
Thailand	3,886	17	19	17	18	72
Vietnam	2,320	17	17	17	19	71

[4] ETS (Educational Testing Service). (2007). TOEFL® Test and Score Data Summary for TOEFL Internet-Based Test: September 2005-December 2006 Test Data. Retrieved Jan. 7/08 from http://www.ets.org/Media/Research/pdf/TOEFL-SUM-0506-iBT.pdf.

IELTS Mean band score by most frequent countries or regions of origin (Academic)

Note: 4/5 of test takers took the Academic rather than General test in 2006.
9 bands

(Selected APEC economies indicated in yellow font)

International English Language Testing System (IELTS)[5]

	Listening	Reading	Writing	Speaking	Overall
Bagladesh	5.58	5.38	5.38	5.62	5.55
China	5.47	5.80	5.23	5.39	5.53
Germany	7.44	7.23	6.75	7.26	7.23
Hong Kong	6.70	6.75	5.91	6.06	6.42
India	6.30	5.82	5.79	6.10	6.07
Indonesia	6.10	6.27	5.43	5.83	5.97
Iran	6.04	5.96	5.81	6.31	6.09
Japan	5.87	5.86	5.33	5.80	5.78
Korea	5.87	5.87	5.36	5.72	5.77
Malaysia	6.93	6.85	6.13	6.41	6.64
Nepal	6.34	5.79	5.71	5.88	5.99
Nigeria	5.65	5.84	6.22	6.93	6.22
Pakistan	5.83	5.58	5.49	5.86	5.75
Philippines	6.68	6.27	6.18	6.74	6.53
Russia	6.49	6.48	5.98	6.68	6.47
Sri Lanka	6.27	5.97	5.93	6.39	6.21
Taiwan	5.52	5.81	5.23	5.66	5.62
Thailand	5.82	5.89	5.28	5.70	5.74
United Arab Emirates	4.99	5.10	4.86	5.43	5.16
Vietnam	5.59	6.01	5.56	5.70	5.78

Of course, these data only capture the mean scores of some of the highest-achieving students in those economies, specifically those who seek opportunities for further study (typically graduate study) abroad. They do not indicate the levels of typical school leavers.

In the teaching of Chinese, the standardized HSK Proficiency Test, loosely modeled on an older version of TOEFL, is becoming more widely used both inside and outside of Chinese regions for learners of Mandarin. However, there has been insufficient research on its reliability and validity with heritage-language learners in North America (many of whom take it to demonstrate that they satisfy additional-language requirements).

Articulation Issues

Most analyses of modern language education in Canada, the United States, and other countries (e.g., Britain), underscore problems of articulation between language teaching at the elementary, secondary and postsecondary levels. That is, there is too little attention paid to how instruction at one level relates to the next or how students with previous FL coursework will be incorporated into the system, for example at university (e.g., Pufahl et al., 2000; Lambert, 2001). With the recent increase in numbers of students in *elementary* school foreign language programs, the need for articulation with secondary or high school curricula is all the more acute. Similarly,

[5] Managed by University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES), with British Council and IDP Australia. Retrieved Jan. 8/08 from http://www.ielts.org/teachersandresearchers/analysisoftestdata/article382.aspx

articulation between coursework for heritage language (HL) background students and coursework for their non-HL counterparts is needed. For example, if these groups are segregated for the first two years of study but then are merged in the third year of university, the curriculum should be made equally accessible to both groups and not cater primarily to the HL students (Li, 2003; Li & Duff, in press).

Another articulation issue in North American contexts is that university students may be assigned to first-year (elementary) courses regardless of their high school FL studies. In contrast with the European situation, therefore, the curriculum tends to be bottom heavy. It is oriented toward basic as opposed to advanced levels of proficiency. Students do not spend enough quality time (i.e., total hours) building up a substantive knowledge of any given FL. Research by Higgs and Clifford (1982) more than 25 years ago concluded that most FL majors at American universities graduate with a "2+" (or "terminal 2") rating on a 5-point proficiency scale, a finding that does not seem to have changed in the interim. The criticism of underachievement and low standards holds true for some Canadian FL policy documents and curricula as well, where the goals of language education seem to more attitudinal and cultural than linguistic (Reeder et al., 1997).

The combination of this tendency with the one requiring FL coursework in only the first or second years at most high schools and universities, if at all, means that the number and type of advanced-level courses (i.e. not just FL literature courses) is very limited and students are given little credit for their past FL learning. Indeed, Lambert (2001, citing statistics from Draper & Hicks, 1993) reports that the majority of FL students in the U.S. are in first year courses only; less than 10% in 1994 were enrolled in Level 3 or higher courses; and 3% or fewer graduating high school students have taken advanced FL/literature courses in French, German, or Spanish (Spanish being the most commonly taught FLs in the U.S).

Another articulation issue is evident in Asian countries that have recently introduced communicative language teaching stressing games and oral skills at the elementary school level but then revert to a very traditional grammar-based or translation-oriented approach at the junior high school level. Students are often very dismayed by the contrast in approaches, curriculum, and then the means by which they are ultimately assessed (e.g., grammar-based paper-pencil standardized tests) for high school graduation or university entrance.

Lifelong Language Learning

Lifelong learning will be increasingly important in the 21st century for economic, social, and personal reasons. That being the case, we must recognize and enhance the cumulative effects of language study across a range of educational and work experiences. For both commonly taught (e.g., French, Spanish) and less commonly taught FLs in North America (Mandarin, Japanese), greater opportunities must be provided for adult vocationally-oriented language learning for various professions, whether with the government or private sector. In addition, autonomous and other (e.g. distance/electronic, study-abroad/immersion) formats for adult learners should be developed and made more readily accessible to prospective students in both urban and rural environments to allow them to continue their FL study according to their current needs and

interests. Knowledge attrition (forgetting) is a very real problem in language learning when people no longer study or use the language, and especially when students' original levels of FL achievement have been only modest. With additional exposure and instruction, however, their prior learning may be retrieved and supplemented. Lifelong language/culture learning is particularly important for the ongoing professional and linguistic development of language teachers themselves. Continuing professional education to develop language proficiency as well as teaching methodology must also be available to teachers, preferably enabling them to reside in cultural and linguistic contexts in which the language they instruct is used.

Digital Learning Technologies: Beyond Traditional Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL)

In the past, computer-assisted language learning (CALL) often constituted an expensive but novel alternative to the traditional language laboratory; it was a new means of practicing old-fashioned decontextualized mechanical pattern drills. However, digital tools have changed greatly allowing many new possibilities (e.g., Murray, 2000; Warschauer & Kern, 2000). Now computer technologies in stand-alone or "blended" (face-to-face and online) learning environments are being used in the following ways:

- linking students and communities of FL users via the internet (e.g., Skype or email)
- facilitating asynchronous and synchronous discussion forums, chat rooms, blogs, wikis, bulletin boards in courses; involving both written messaging and (increasingly) oral messaging as well
- providing oral lesson materials or exercises or facilitating dialogue journals by means of podcasting
- allowing students to control the speed of recorded speech, see images connected with texts, consult online reference materials and links, and notice aspects of the text that may have been highlighted for instructional reasons (e.g., noticing new forms)
- providing access to current, authentic materials in the FL (newspapers, travel information, editorials, hypertexts) and interesting, up-to-date activities through the use of WebQuests and other digital tasks and texts
- providing access to different information texts useful in the preparation of reports and presentations
- allowing students to produce e-portfolios and i-movies of their own abilities
- developing and using linguistic corpora and concordancing programs for inductive learning about grammar and vocabulary use based on actual usage
- providing cultural contexts for students and exposing them to different varieties of the target language through online multimedia (e.g., DVDs)
- linking teachers who wish to share ideas and resources for teaching languages
- providing intelligent tutorial systems that provide feedback and guidance to learners
- integrating interactive white boards that allow teachers to store and retrieve displays from previous classes
- engaging students through age- and level-appropriate video games in the target language

- assisting with reference materials such as translation, dictionaries, grammar and spell checking and other more mechanical electronic functions
- providing a new platform for standardized and criterion-referenced assessment (e.g., Internet-based TOEFL; computer-adaptive language testing)
- (in the future) providing formative/summative automated feedback on written compositions

CALL obviously represents a large, lucrative/expensive, and potentially dynamic environment for FL education and for teacher education. Some of the most impressive features of CALL and Web- and Internet-based learning are as follows: (1) students' exposure to meaningful, current texts and learning tools in the target-language (oral and written) can be greatly enhanced and can be directed by the students' own interests and needs; (2) learners can be linked to other users (and learners) of the FL, thus increasing their motivation as well as opportunities to negotiate meaning and multiple registers of discourse through their existing or shared linguistic means; (3) many of the materials can be accessed with minimal cost to the user, provided that computers with internet access are available; and (4) through firsthand encounters with multimedia and other human/material resources, students have more opportunities to engage with their own and other cultures more deeply and more immediately. In these ways, students engage in the "5 Cs" described earlier from ACTFL guidelines.

Some advances in the use of technology for language teaching in Europe follow:

- In Denmark, students use English (their FL) to communicate with schools in countries where English is either the first language or a FL but where students' proficiency is comparable to that of the Danish students (e.g., the Netherlands).

- In Spain, through the COMENIUS initiative, more than 100,000 Catalonian students participate in EU-sponsored programs that create school partnerships that network students from three schools in three different European countries; collaborative projects include project diaries, Web sites, CD-ROMS, and one or more of the FLs of each participating school is used (Pufahl et al., 2000). Networks work on projects related to environmental issues, for example.

The cost-benefit ratio of technology and issues of accessibility to technology in resource-poor countries must be examined more closely; furthermore, the advantages of technology use over more traditional tools must be demonstrated. In addition, ways in which teachers can maximize the benefits of technology must be examined. Doughty and Long (2003b) outline a number of FL teaching principles with recommendations for regular FL classroom implementation and CALL implementation. They urge students to be be actively engaged in using language for transactional purposes, rather than simply as decoders of existing, static texts. Based on extensive research in second language acquisition over the past two decades, Doughty and Long stress the importance of providing "rich input" to FL learners, many opportunities to produce language ("output") actively orally and in writing, strategically providing corrective feedback (from a teacher or peer—research shows that peers working collaboratively more often than not provide correct feedback to one another), providing instruction on accurate grammatical

structures in meaningful discourse contexts, enabling cooperative/collaborative learning, and emphasizing that learners with different types of aptitude, motivation, and at different ages may acquire the FL at different paces and in different manners (e.g., highly analytic vs. highly synthetic or chunk-based); therefore, opportunities for autonomous language learning through the use of technology should cater to the learners' styles and needs.

Finally, pragmatic aspects of language learning are often overlooked in FL education and research. As important as reasonably accurate pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary are, so too is effective FL pragmatics, or the expression of politeness, through speech acts expressing gratitude, making requests, complaints, or apologies, and so on, and framing one's oral and written discourse at the appropriate level of formality for the context and using appropriate genres.

Content-based, Theme-based, and Immersion FL Education

In many FL curriculum guidelines (e.g., in British Columbia, US Standards, Council of Europe, 2001), language learning has multiple components including learning how to express oneself orally and in writing with other speakers of the FL, engaging with creative works in the FL, and gaining new information (e.g., through the internet). Project-based learning approaches also emphasize content and, in some cases, the integration of FL learning with the learning of other subject matter (e.g., mathematics, social science, science); an example would be a unit on South American rainforests that includes discussions of the weather, animal life, geography, people, economic activity, deforestation, and so on, depending on the level of students.

Much successful FL instruction that goes beyond basic communicative methodology deals with content (e.g., environmental issues, sociolinguistics) in a more sustained way than is often reflected in international FL textbook series, embedding the learning of language within a larger educational context, where issues--and not just stereotypes--can be examined and explored. In Europe, content and language integrated learning (CLIL) is being emphasized to a greater extent than before, especially as students now first start learning English at a younger age and after several years are ready to learn more challenging content and not just continue with communicative interaction activities to practice greetings and other transactions in the FL.

One obvious area of content-based language teaching that is widely practiced is Business English—which can focus equally on business-related language and communication but also can explore such business topics as advertising, branding, import-export business, family business, customer service, starting up a business, and so on, and thereby deepen students' knowledge of the field (e.g., Naunton's, 2005, textbook *ProFile* in the Oxford University Press Business English series). Students also work on grammar (dealing with business content), writing and speaking for different business purposes and audiences, and analyze case studies of particular business practices or problems, much as they would in a business course. Multimedia and digitized materials are also used. Using case-based language teaching methods in this manner helps socialize students into the "culture(s)" of business locally and internationally.

There are many variants of content-based learning, but one relatively new approach is immersion or bilingual education (as it is called in Europe), for which Canada is well known. FL immersion allows students to begin learning a FL from as early as kindergarten in an experiential-communicative way, with highly proficient teachers delivering not only language instruction but also the rest of the curriculum through the medium of the FL. In Canada, the FL immersion normally involves French as a FL, for which the most trained teachers, funding, materials, demand, and political will exist; there are Mandarin and other immersion programs (e.g., Ukrainian) in public schools in Vancouver, Edmonton, and Toronto. French immersion, both in its early and late-immersion models (from Grade 6), remains a very popular choice for hundreds of thousands of Canadian students a year, and not only those whose first language is English.

The results of nearly four decades of French immersion research in Canada and, more recently elsewhere (e.g., English in Japan and the Netherlands; Spanish in Hungary; French, Spanish, and Japanese in USA; Swedish in Finland) attest to the success of this model in producing graduates who are more proficient in French than those studying the FL as a regular subject, and whose English (or L1) skills and competency in other subjects are not compromised as a result of this FL immersion experience; on the contrary, they often outperform their monolingual peers in first-language literacy and subject matter (Canadian Parents for French, 2003; Johnson & Swain, 1997; Harley, Allen, Cummins & Swain, 1990). Notwithstanding the massive public and academic support for immersion, research shows that this model works successfully only if certain basic conditions are met: excellent teacher education, teachers with high levels of FL proficiency, and the availability of suitable curriculum materials and support in the FL. In other words, money and careful planning are needed (Duff, 1997). In the United States, immersion education and its variants (e.g., two-way immersion/bilingualism where students learn each others' languages, e.g., English-Spanish) have spread from early implementation in a suburb of Los Angeles to schools in Minnesota, Oregon, Maryland, and elsewhere, to literally hundreds of schools and the results to date have been very encouraging (Center for Applied Linguistics).

Task Planning and Design

Two other areas of current research and curriculum development in FL education are connected with (1) coherent and comprehensive task (or instructional activity) design and (2) the extent to which students' first language should be used by teachers and students in FL classrooms. A number of applied linguistics scholars see "method" as less helpful a construct in FL curriculum design than looking at the sequencing of interrelated tasks, with careful attention paid to the skills and subcomponents of tasks (e.g., planning a trip to a city in another country; proposing a business plan for the redevelopment of a prime piece of land) and how they relate to prior learning. Tapping into students' existing linguistic and nonlinguistic knowledge prior to having them undertake tasks, engaging them in problem-solving with peers, and then planning presentations or written products are all important. Also important is having them do relevant follow-up activities (often involving other skills, such as writing, as opposed to listening/speaking only) following the original task to consolidate and extend their linguistic and content knowledge (Skehan, 1998; Hadley, 2000).

Research and Curricular Innovation

The establishment of a National Foreign Language Center and a number of other Title-VI language research and resource centers in the U.S. over the past decade (e.g., in Maryland, Hawaii, Minnesota, Pennsylvania), in addition to the existing Center for Applied Linguistics, has greatly facilitated research, innovation, and dissemination related to FL learning in North America. Projects have started to investigate differences in ultimate attainment possible for heritage vs. non-heritage language learners and much more attention is being paid to curriculum development for traditionally less commonly taught languages (i.e., non-European languages like Mandarin) and for advanced-level learners. A significant amount of current research is also examining study-abroad FL learning experiences and students' educational attainment in comparison with study-at-home language students (Lambert, 2001; Freed & Collentine, 2004). The applied linguistic academic community has also produced many recent handbooks and comprehensive volumes summarizing the state of second language acquisition research (Doughty & Long, 2003a). Much of this research, however, has concerned English as a second/foreign language at the college level and is highly technical. A plethora of current scholarship in Europe and Asia is examining the role of English as a lingua franca and the implications of various regional or national "World Englishes" or English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) for education, assessment, standards, and intercultural communication and comprehensibility, especially in the Asia Pacific region (e.g., Kirkpatrick, 2007).

A generation of research on the teaching and learning of Chinese has examined the challenges of teaching written Chinese (pinyin or another romanized script vs. simplified characters vs. traditional characters) to learners whose first language uses an alphabetic orthography. Some recent scholarship, for example, recommends that students gain a solid foundation in oral Mandarin and a romanized orthographic system such as pinyin before being required to read and write Chinese characters (Everson, 2007; Koda, 2005). When, in what sequence, and in what manner to most effectively teach aspects of Chinese literacy has therefore been a primary concern of researchers and teachers because of the complexity of Chinese literacy. Other current research on Chinese as a second, foreign, or heritage language, at the University of California and elsewhere is examining the effective use of Mandarin corpora for contextualized grammar teaching and for raising the linguistic awareness of both Chinese language teachers and learners. A final area of productive research involving Chinese has examined how learning Chinese as a heritage language is closely associated with identity issues—how it enhances learners' self-esteem, social ties, as well as perceived economic and academic opportunities (He & Yiao, in press).

Equity Issues: Language Education, Educational Access, and Social Mobility

FL teaching/learning has sometimes been considered a domain in which females have certain linguistic advantages over males or one that attracts more female learners and teachers than males. A special issue of the journal *TESOL Quarterly* in 2004 addressed some of the myths and trends related to gender and English language education internationally (Davis & Skilton-Sylvester, 2004; Schmenk, 2004). While there may be an apparent overrepresentation of female language learners and teachers in some developed economies, particularly at lower levels of

education (with correspondingly low pay and status for teachers), a significant gender gap exists internationally in literacy achievement and access to education, including in English and other languages in developing economies. According to Australia's AusAID (2007),[6] 26 million children do not attend school in the Asia-Pacific region, of whom 16 million are girls, many of them in rural regions and from marginalized ethnic or minority groups, according to the World Bank (2007). The urgent goal of reducing this gender gap and increasing access to education (and language education) has been embraced by APEC economies. However, many scholars in development stress that what is needed is not just access to education but access to *high quality* (language/literacy) education that provides good employment prospects, mentoring, and role models for the girls and young women in society and in that provides positive representations of girls and women in instructional materials such as textbooks. Increasing girls' and young women's education, literacy, and employment prospects in turn positively affects their health, safety, and welfare (e.g., EQUALS, 2004). World Bank (2007) sources report that "[e]ducated girls are more likely to enter the work force, earn higher incomes, delay marriage, plan their families, and seek an education for their own children."[7] Higher rates of education among adolescent girls, moreover, reduces the risks of harassment, sexual exploitation, and disease (especially HIV/AIDS; Rihani, 2007).

A final, related, point is that even in immigrant-receiving countries such as the United States, Canada, and Australia, gender disparities may also exist in access to English language education for immigrants. This issue has two primary sources: (1) home-culture norms related to women's education and integration in society and into the paid labor force; (2) women's traditional responsibilities caregivers in the home or as unskilled or low-skilled workers supporting their spouses and children that may significantly delay their access to language education and other vocational or professional training (e.g., Duff et al., 2002). The provision of childcare, subsidies, and language education in the workplace (e.g., in garment factories) may in some cases assist these women to gain access to language education and greater independence in society.

Conclusion

This paper has highlighted current issues in FL policy, research, and instructional practice. Although standards and common assessment metrics have been discussed, most scholars concede that a single method or approach to FL education would not be appropriate for very different FL instructional situations or policy contexts. With growing transnationalism, mobility, and the global flow of goods, services, and knowledge (as well as people), we must move beyond methods that were designed primarily for guest workers and unskilled immigrants, on the one hand, or for classical scholars, on the other hand. Policy and curriculum must be decided within each socio-educational context, given an economy's history, resources, and aspirations. However, we should learn from one another's experiences with FL education, reform, and research. Indeed, some themes are quite universal: the importance of cross-program articulation, assessment, teacher education in both FL proficiency and appropriate teaching methods and

[6] Retrieved Jan. 7/08 from http://209.85.173.104/search?q=cache:NxfPCmVPf2MJ:www.ausaid.gov.au/keyaid/education.cfm+worldbank+english+language+education+girls+Asia-Pacific&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=1
[7] World Bank (2007). Most out-of-school girls from excluded minority groups.

materials; consideration for the timing, duration, intensity and content of FL teaching; the effective and engaging use of technology and other media; and the need to pay attention to the skill areas most needed by students for their ultimate FL purposes. In addition, it is imperative that more quantitative and qualitative longitudinal research on FL education be conducted internationally across a wide range of languages and programs. Most of all, the public must recognize that languages are of vital importance to contemporary societies and economies and that FL learning can expand people's horizons and opportunities immeasurably and increase the likelihood of their participation in the changing global economy.

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Appendix 1

Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the United States (Standards, 1996)

Communication

Communicate in Languages Other Than English

Standard 1.1: Students engage in conversations, provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions.
Standard 1.2: Students understand and interpret written and spoken language on a variety of topics.
Standard 1.3: Students present information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics.

Cultures

Gain Knowledge and Understanding of Other Cultures

Standard 2.1: Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the culture studied.
Standard 2.2: Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the products and perspectives of the culture studied.

Connections

Connect with Other Disciplines and Acquire Information.

Standard 3.1: Students reinforce and further their knowledge of other disciplines through the foreign language.
Standard 3.2: Students acquire information and recognize the distinctive viewpoints that are only available through the foreign language and its cultures.

Comparisons

Develop Insight into the Nature of Language and Culture

Standard 4.1: Students demonstrate understanding of the nature of language through comparisons of the language studied and their own.
Standard 4.2: Students demonstrate understanding of the concept of culture through comparisons of the cultures studied and their own.

Communities

Participate in Multilingual Communities at Home & Around the World

Standard 5.1: Students use the language both within and beyond the school setting.
Standard 5.2: Students show evidence of becoming life-long learners by using the language for personal enjoyment and enrichment.