

**Georgetown University Invited Conference on Representing Foreign
Language Education at the Federal/National Level
Organized by Heidi Byrnes, Georgetown University**

Alumni House, Georgetown University

April 2, 2008

ATTENDEES AT CONFERENCE

Abbot, Marty	ACTFL
Arens, Katherine	University of Texas, MLA panelist
Bachman, Lyle	UCLA, AAAL panelist
Brecht, Richard	University of Maryland
Byrne, Richard	Chronicle of Higher Education
Christian, Donna	Center for Applied Linguistics
Connor-Linton, Jeff	Georgetown University
Davidson, Dan	ACTR
Edwards, J. David	JNCL
Eisen, Samuel	Department of Education
Elliott, Stuart	National Academies
Feal, Rosemary	Modern Language Association
Garrett, Nina	Yale University, Emerita
Gass, Susan	Michigan State University
Grella, Gail	Georgetown University Press
Horwitz, Elaine	University of Texas
Ingold, Catherine	National Foreign Language Center
Jackson, Frederick	National Foreign Language Center
Kern, Richard	University of California, Berkeley
Lemmon, Michael	National Defense University, AAAL panelist
Magnan, Sally	University of Wisconsin
Malone, Meg	Center for Applied Linguistics
Maxim, Hiram	Emory University
McGinn, Gail	DOD Senior Language Authority
McGinnis, Scott	Interagency Language Roundtable
Norris, John	University of Hawai'i
O'Connell, Mary Ellen	National Academies, AAAL panelist
Ortega, Lourdes	University of Hawai'i
Pfeiffer, Peter	Georgetown University
Phillips, June	Weber State University, ACTFL panelist
Porter, Catherine	SUNY Cortland, MLA panelist
Rhodes, Nancy	Center for Applied Linguistics
Sandrock, Paul	Wisconsin Deptmt. of Public Instruction, ACTFL panelist
Sanz, Cristina	Georgetown University
Schmidt, Richard	University of Hawai'i
Slater, Robert	National Security Education Program
Shays, Betsi	Department of Education
Van Lier, Leo	Monterey Institute for International Studies, MLJ Editor
Ver Bryck Block, Karla	Department of Education
Wasley, Paula	Chronicle of Higher Education
Zimmer-Loew, Helene	AATG

MORNING PLENARY SESSION

Heidi Byrnes' introduction and summary of work done so far

I. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS PRESENTED AT FOUR PANELS (ACTFL, MLA, Northeast Conference, AAAL)

FRAMING ASSUMPTION

- ❖ A claimed need for representation at the federal/national level is tied to the educational goal

The educational goal – high levels of FL abilities, cross-cultural awareness and area studies knowledge and expertise – **is paramount.**

Central avenue toward achieving that goal is for FL study with a strong cultural content component (“international education”) to be part of the educational core in K-12 education.

→ How does one get that kind of “curricular commitment”, given a very crowded curriculum? Problematic nature of “set-asides”

Higher education FL/IE work would change dramatically if such a basis existed; linkage would necessarily have to be much stronger than it currently is

K-12 and higher education are very different educational environments for FL/IE education; affirm and use their differences **in order to achieve the greater educational goal that would benefit all societal interests**

PROPOSALS

- ❖ Need for an interlocutor, advocate, coordinator for FL/IE professional concerns at the highest level of government, -- a “coordinated presence of FL/IS” at the federal level
That need exists from all sides, from the side of various government agencies, the academy, broad societal interests (e.g., business community, non-governmental agencies that operate internationally; think tanks; international development work, broadly conceived
- ❖ Central role of the Department of Education **embedded into other forms of representation, expertise, collaboration**
in order to “develop and implement an integrated strategy for FL and IE involving both K-12 and higher education.
- ❖ Various proposals for creating positions/coordinating bodies
 - Asst. Secretary for International Education and Foreign Languages
 - “U.S. Department of Ed. World Languages Coordinator” = National World Languages Coordinator
 - World Languages Oversight Board

- Strategic Education Resources Administrator: frame language and international studies as “education” but place outside the usual contexts, conceptualizing this more as an oversight entity
“Office of Language and International Outreach” (OLIO)
- ❖ Proposal for a policy-focused task force from within the profession whose task would be creation of a strategic plan oriented toward solutions not a reiteration of the problems
→ Can we consider ways of imagining that? Where, who, what time lines, how funded?
Aspects of what such a strategic plan would look like were mentioned by all panelists
- ❖ Creation of a policy and research “think tank”

Policy component, a kind of standing coordinating body. Standing committee at the National Academies? NAS Roundtable?
→ Where located, who participates, what charge?
Research component
→ NSF- type arrangement
- ❖ Create a development and implementation center

Compare with Council of Europe, “European Centre for Modern Languages” in Graz, Austria. “Practical” arm of COE language policy arm in Strasbourg

Curriculum and materials development (including technology-based), teacher recruitment, education, development
- ❖ Creating private-public partnerships

Federal government, foundations, professional organizations, education, and business communities – tied in with education at the federal, state, local levels
→ How might these be conceptualized? Who would be approached? Who does the approaching? What would be its goal/mission?
- ❖ Representation, Reporting, Accountability – by various parties toward various constituencies

- Biennial report outlining national needs in FL/IE
- Foreign Language Assessment and Technology Project
- ❖ Need for funding of all aspects of such proposals?

Particular need for funding of
- research

- implementation --- “continuous improvement” on the teaching and curriculum side; evaluate educational approaches toward FL and IE competence
 - data collection on programs
 - outcomes assessment
- Are there existing funds that could be pooled? (“Democratization” does not work)

SUMMARY STATEMENT

At the conclusion of the AAAL panel it seemed that, perhaps, even more important than the issue of representation is the need for a forum/context/gathering/task force that would engage – perhaps in a series of steps that might involve different groups – in the creation of a comprehensive language education policy and planning document that would involve as many stakeholders as can reasonably be handled.

Commentary on the above summary by Heidi Byrnes

Assumptions

Goal: determine what is worth talking about further, in depth, in order to continue the project. Also, need for a place to have this discussion toward a goal.

While the initial impetus for the project was the issue of representation at the federal level, the need for a comprehensive language education policy/planning seems to be rising to the fore. In any case, the need for being represented at the federal/national level is tied to education policy goals.

- need to make it an education issue not a FL issue at only;
- language knowledge, cross-cultural knowledge, and international knowledge;
- it's an education-oriented issue, broadly situated

FL area studies with strong content component as part of ed core in K-12. Higher ed can't do it alone; needs a base in K-12. This is an extensive curricular commitment. However, language study has been displaced in a lot of local curricula (Christine Brown, Northeast Conference panelist). So how do you do this, if not as "set-aside"?

ERGO: Move into core curriculum as FL *and* area studies:

- This would enable and require higher education work to change → articulation rethought. At present, higher education lacks a firm foundation of previous language and area studies work for its own educational mission and interests;
- Linkage in the future would have to be stronger than it is now. Basis of 3-4 years of language and area studies changes what higher education can do. Marty Abbott in NY said "there are only 3 states and DC that have a language requirement in K-12" --NY, Texas, and Michigan starts in 2016; 16 states have

some language study for one of the special diplomas. At best, that is an elitist statement about language study.

- K-12 and higher ed are different educational environments. But we keep having to do things that "don't belong there" at each level. Consider the opportunity costs of such an approach, -- costs in terms of money, costs in terms of quality of educational outcomes.

Proposals

- Interlocutor needed from all sides, including business, govt, society, academy, NGOs, etc. EVERYONE needs it
- DoEd has to play a role -- history suggests it needs to be embedded into other forms of expertise. Need to work with existing knowledge base. DED rotates in, needs an expertise that runs beyond politics, draw on other resources, run longer than a political cycle. Attention not only at the post-secondary, but at all levels
- Federal Level -- various names proposed. (OLIO is Christine Brown's); need for a strategic plan in the profession; first discussion at the panels, including fact-finding. But now need to take the next step.
- Next step is policy task force from the inside to set our own goals. The Standards discussion, for example, was ACTFL and Dept of Education. Within the framework of other standards projects, math, science, etc. June Philip ran that project, one of the most consequential projects for K-12 environment ever. Lyle Bachman at AAAL panel reminded audience that NDEA project started out as an MLA project originally (Riley Parker, MLA).
- Research think tank with policy component. Possibility of sitting within the National Academies structures was repeatedly mentioned and has been very favorably received. Various structural environments exist, e.g., Roundtable, forums, boards, etc.; these are all technical terms within the National Academies. Roundtable environment seems most appropriate because it is most inclusive. NSF within academy structure for research
- Development and implementation center (comprehensive European language policy created by the Council of Europe in Strasbourg; implementation center in Graz). See Common European Framework of Reference project.
- Public-private partnership
- Representation, reporting -- accountability (title VI report had a stipulation for a biennial report about national needs)
- Funding needs at all levels. A Sputnik moment that should be used for language and global knowledge. Argument for preparing a citizenry of a certain sort. Maybe we could make a similar argument for today, as was made in the 1960s for the sciences. Do we need a taskforce? What steps would be necessary? Layered approach to a policy and planning document, to assure that the process is inclusive but also moves forward.

II. WHOLE GROUP DISCUSSION OF KEY PROPOSALS AND DETERMINATION OF TOPICS FOR IN-DEPTH TREATMENT

Christian: What is a “Roundtable?”

Elliot: A roundtable brings people together from different areas/backgrounds. Academies become the organization that is able to invite the different groups for the discussion. Academies offer invites to bridge divides. A Roundtable can put together a workshop or panel to get groups together who've never been in the same room. The groups can then meet regularly (twice a year) with no set agenda and establish some continuity and conversation. It facilitates discussions that might not otherwise happen. Funding might be from the Academy as a kind of start-up; but thereafter funding would have to be secured from foundations/govt agencies.

A Board within the Academies structure consists only of academics who bring certain expertise; thus, a roundtable would bring people together who would not be on a Board or committee. Roundtables are also public rather than holding closed meetings.

Bachman: Academies could also engage in gathering information about policies from other countries; bring together relevant research – fact-finding is important on research and policy.

Arens: Discussions about national policies need to also include consideration of local implementation. We don't want an unfunded mandate.

Sandrock: National Standards is a national discussion and policy that then is implemented at each state and local level – heavily influenced by the national discussion. National vision drove the state standards, influenced by state consensus.

Ingold: Consider the excitement factor – getting parents and other stakeholders excited about FL and then take advantage of that. Need to move beyond the "Anglophone curse". Deciders are local parents; instrumental concerns predominate.

Garrett: But the excitement factor also needs to be kept in check unless there is knowledge and information on how to implement a policy. Cites example of wealthy school districts in tri-state region of CT, NY, and NJ, wanting Arabic in kindergarten with no understanding of what is involved in implementing such a program.

Norris: Concern about how all this will play out with people in higher ed (humanities, lit/cult faculty) who will need to change; not so sure change is possible.

Bachman: Any national policy needs to be aware of local needs and issues and must have buy-in from local communities.

Schmidt: Currently the country has no national language educational policy – but there is an urgent need for such a policy. How do we get one and in what form?

McGinn: Need for a voice; at present, the public does not value FL learning. Industry claims to value it; but the larger public is not so sure.

Malone: Three considerations: (1) get away from thinking we are in competition with other subject areas; (2) work on developing a vision of what language is; (3) determine the process which is to be followed.

Magnan: We are potentially headed toward focusing on just one FL, Spanish. What will language learning look like? One language? Multiple languages? One language building to the next?

Gass: Michigan's plan to require FL by 2016 gives the state time to work on a program.

Phillips: Teacher ed is key; counteracting false assumptions, flawed pedagogies/materials. Need to educate public about this.

Brecht: Not sure we need a language policy – need to distinguish between language policy and language education policy. Need to take this slowly and really consider all the issues carefully. Leave aside assumptions until the SLOW and CAREFUL discussion is done. Australians got policy in 80s, threw it out in 90s -- unintended consequences. Language policy is not language education policy.

III. DETERMINATION OF FIVE TOPICS FOR BREAK-OUT SESSIONS

Initially, a list of 7 topics was created:

- 1. Language policy
- 2. How do we engage a national discussion?
- 3. How do we create a teaching corps?
- 4. What are the important elements that need to be included?
- 5. How do we create advancedness?
- 6. How to get educational community together?
- 7. How do we get the needed curricular commitment?

Final list of discussion topics

	Moderator/Rapporteur
1) Lang education policy	Schmidt
2) National voices/discussion: dissemination, constituents, stakeholders	Abbott
3) Teaching corps	Zimmer-Loew
4) Elements of proposal, e.g., curriculum, advanced learner	Magnan
5) How do we get the education community together?	Feal

IV. REPORTS FROM BREAK-OUT SESSIONS

1) Policy group (Schmidt)

Assumptions

Needs

Constraints

What good things do we need? Expert consensus

→ Possible mechanisms for policy discussion/proposals

Determine what kind of policy is needed – a language policy or a language education policy

- important to distinguish public policy and other policies
- develop a framework (a la EU) rather than policy that includes goals. States have already done this as has Title VI report to some degree
- need to have everyone discussing the issues, using the same discourse
- mechanism to bring all those proposals together to identify gaps and develop a framework for addressing the gaps
- framework needs to be evidence-based; this would also uncover gaps in research

Why do we need a policy?

Coordination of resources is one reason for the need of a policy

Look at educational goal as a pyramid

At the top of the pyramid: “Advancedness”

Language in cultural context

International education context (define “international”);
perhaps a better term would be “global”

Need to assure a relationship to different national discourses

Notion of global literacy: What knowledge, skills, etc. makes up a globally informed person?

Scope: need for all languages

Scope: local parameters

States

Culture

→ Get state universities together

Elements: constituents of policy

Discussions frame the policy: educated cadre of experts

Later think about what aspects involve appropriations, Congress

What kind of policy? Public policy? Law?

Is Title VI a kind of public policy for language?

→ Perhaps a better term: **national language education framework**

How do we get the framework? Who should do this? How do we know when we have it?

Concern: “been there – done that”, e.g., New Visions project

But need for more encompassing framework, one that everyone can buy into

Articulation is more than filling in the gaps

See Title VI report re the ways “needs” are addressed; this provides an implicit framework

Schools looking for guidance; again a framework would be helpful
 Framework can provide arguments that need national buy-in

Learning one language makes it easier to learn others: evidence based statements need to be provided

Bring policy players together → National Academies Roundtable?

Why at the national level rather than the state level? Bring states together
 Framework can draw on what the states are already doing

Assemble the research

Proficiency – as a “portable credential”

How do we get framework and public policy together?

Four sources

Literature

Experts

Research

Stakeholders

2) **National voices discussion (Abbott)**

- Need for a national conversation, both top-down and bottom-up
 - o top-down: NA roundtable; work with allies in Congress; get ahead of curve preparing for next administration. Cadre of leaders: clear, compelling, consistent message that focuses on the worlds of our students
- targeted marketing – influence stakeholders
 - o no single audience, but school boards, school board associations, different depts. in higher ed, heritage communities, parents (“friends of foreign languages”), social services
 - o national student advisory council to inform educators
 - o tailor discussion: focus more on globalization and not so much on specific languages
 - o state of education in general – capitalize on other educational agendas; readiness and benchmarks
 - o involve media – natl. public awareness campaign
 - o natl. read-in
 - o putting a positive face on who we are as Americans, making every citizen a diplomat
 - o needs to focus on state & local level a la DOD summits in Oregon
 - o work with state lg organizations

- work with state summits
Asia Society; state institutes
state language organizations
Governors; world languages day
- work with commercial lg (proprietary) schools
- actual voice and message needs to be tailored to specific audiences and we need to understand their discourses and tailor ours to theirs
 - make sure we define our terms and understand how they are perceived by others

3) Teaching corps (reported by Phillips)

- Expectations
 - At every level of instruction students have the right to a teacher who
 - Is proficient to teach for communicative outcomes. That should require at least oral proficiency of Advanced Low
 - Has a knowledge base that enables the teaching of language in its cultural context
 - Is pedagogically competent to teach language and culture at the appropriate age or developmental level
- Policies to advance teacher education so that teachers can meet these expectations?
 - Paths/routes to teaching
 - A. Current teachers: professional development for proficiency in TL and building cultural awareness
 - B. Teacher education programs: meet NCATE standards
 - C. Alternative certifications: strengths are their lg abilities but they lack the pedagogy; assure language pedagogy and knowledge base
 - D. Higher education faculty: bridging gap between growing number of adjunct/instructor/part-time faculty and tenure track faculty
How does higher ed. assure that teachers meet expectations? How does one incentivize faculty development?
 - E. Process: View teacher education as a lifelong process, from novice to expert
- Funding mechanisms to support tchr ed that are effective and accessible

4) Elements (Magnan)

- Stakeholders
 - in addition to the well-known ones, there are the publishers, associations, including ancillary ones like principals or social science, state policy, higher ed, libraries (storage of info), consumers (particularly students), parents, business
- Training & Education – making the distinction between the two – we’re after education, not training. There is a certain tension.

- ground this in the broader mission of establishing global citizenry
- Mental map of our field(s)/disciplines
 - needs
 - storage of info – where, by whom
 - interactions within our fields
- Community
 - students & parents
 - heritage communities – lg norms
 - commercial lg schools
- Multiple pathways toward lg ed
 - multiple lgs
 - sharing lgs across institutions
 - lg clusters, e.g. learn Spanish then another Romance lg
- Critical junctures
 - tchr certification, prep of stdts and teachers for AP
- Curriculum, assessment, teacher training
 - a developmental process: principles → strategies → action → materials
 - heritage learners and study abroad & even study abroad in the US
- Lifelong learning
 - technology – being able to access the language long-term
 - portfolio as a resume a la Linguafolio in EU
- Research
- Advanced abilities
 - important to research what advancedness is
- Focus on graduate education, graduate student tchr development

Important: define terms: Internationalization? Globalization? Intercultural learning?

5) Getting the higher education community together (Feal)

- Members of the community:
 - MLA, AAAL, ACTFL, diverse AAT's, NCATE, etc. → all members of JNCL
- How to get key players to change?
 - provide incentives via Deans, accreditation
 - provide training (e.g., summer seminars)
 - outreach teams, workshops
- Take advantage of technology infrastructure globally – not technology to advance language instruction but use technology to provide access to information & to set up an infrastructure for publication, dissemination of info
- Seize the moment's rhetoric; take advantage of current focus on outcomes expectations to pursue this goal; reform (set goals, measure student learning, etc.)
- Engage wider ed community, i.e., faculty in other, non-language depts., to promote lg ed; need to support needs for students to study languages and international education

- Develop grad tchr development programs to provide appropriate teacher education for this changed paradigm; apprentice teachers need training on how to construct curricula, make pedagogical decisions (e.g., regarding testing, textbooks)
- Beef up lg entrance requirements to enter universities
- Higher education needs to be more involved in K-12, heritage community, ESL, bilingual education
- What kind of structure can bring these educational communities together? a reformed JNCL structure; the Roundtable, a national “language summit”

AFTERNOON PLENARY SESSION

Where do we go from here?

- *Perspectives* document will need to be ready to go to press in July
- Persuade Natl. Academies to call a roundtable; initial start-up funds might be available. But grants would need to be written to foundations and federal agencies. Twice yearly roundtables would run into \$100-\$200K, but then it increases when publications, workshops, etc. are tied into it
 - o funding sources could include companies interested in FL (e.g., Intel, Microsoft; also foundations, e.g., Ford, Spencer; also NEA “Partnership for Skills”)
 - o federal agencies, such as DoD or DoE
 - o Gates Foundation, Asia Society, Longview Foundation, Committee for Economic Dev)
- Look to transform JNCL significantly – a place where one could get expertise
 - o but JNCL does serve a purpose now so we don’t want to lose that
- Draft white paper for incoming administration by Nov 2008
- Develop planning/action group of 5-10 people to take all these ideas and pursue them by contacting all those involved – perhaps also have a larger advisory group that would stand by the action group.
- Draw from existing reports (MLA, CED, etc.) and synthesize key points
- In addition to synthesis report, plan on kick-off event to draw more attention to issues; create an “event” in conjunction with the newly launched NAS Roundtable in early December. Bring together reps from existing reports to show that there is a convergence among them
 - o MLA, ACTFL, AATG, NFLC, CAL, ILR will be on action group; also Bachman
- Draft questions for presidential candidates to consider
- Tasks for action group
 - o synthesize existing reports
 - o draw up timeline
 - o identify funding sources
 - o plan workshop committee for Natl Academies
 - o draft white paper (that could also be used to present plan to funding agencies)

