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## Effects of foreign language learning in elementary school on students' future educational and career choices

Amy Weiss Narea

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**DePaul University**

**School of Education**

**Effects of Foreign Language Learning in Elementary School  
on Students' Future Educational and Career Choices**

**A Dissertation in  
Educational Leadership**

**by**

**Amy Weiss Narea**

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**Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirement  
For the Degree of  
Doctor of Education**

**June 2004**

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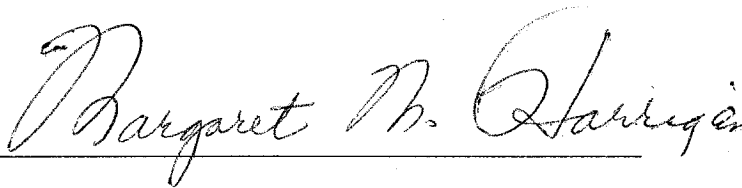
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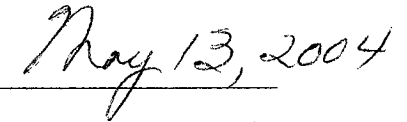
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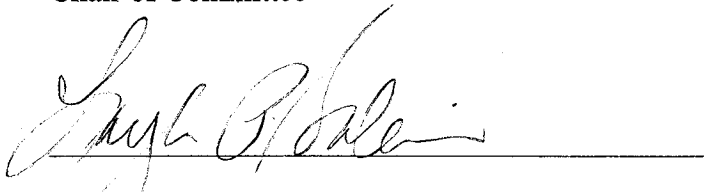
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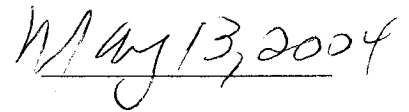
  
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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between learning a foreign language in elementary school and students' future educational and career choices. Adult alumni of two urban public magnet schools were surveyed about Foreign Language in Elementary School (FLES) experiences, about high school and college foreign language learning experiences, and about their employment experience. The data from the alumni of a foreign language magnet school (FLES) were analyzed with respect to the relationship between the amount and types of elementary foreign language learning experiences on subsequent academic and occupational choices, as well as in comparison to respondents from a demographically and geographically proximate magnet school (non-FLES) where the focus was on math and science, and a foreign language was not available. The same survey, with forced-choice and open-ended questions, was administered to both the FLES and the non-FLES groups. Six FLES participants were also interviewed to reflect upon their own foreign language education and to consider its relevance to their school, work, travel and life experiences. Common themes that emerged were the appreciation of different cultures and the acknowledgement of intangible benefits that accrued to foreign language learners. The analysis of the results revealed a small statistical difference with regard to more advanced foreign language study and greater career impact for FLES participants than for non-FLES respondents. The FLES participants' interviews illustrated the positive effect that elementary foreign language learning has had on their citizenship in a multilingual, multicultural, global society.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

At the dawn of this millennium, society has reawakened to the recognition that it must adopt a global perspective as it searches for new solutions to economic and social problems. This recognition may be one of the first steps toward the United States acknowledging the importance of increased study of foreign languages beginning at the elementary school level. To be in a position to benefit from resources that might be made available to schools, as well as to be able to influence the design of future educational programs, it is vital to examine the effectiveness of early foreign language learning.

Being involved with elementary foreign language instruction for the past three decades has convinced this researcher that it is an issue of vital national interest. As principal of a foreign language academy for two decades where students begin second language acquisition in kindergarten, and as a teacher of bilingual and second language instruction for the preceding decade, along with personal experience growing up in Mexico literate in Spanish and English, the early acquisition of multiple languages has long been a passion. Working in a multilingual and multicultural environment has intrigued the researcher about issues of foreign language acquisition by children and how this special knowledge may have affected their lives, primarily in the arenas of education and employment.

A personal interest in this question developed because of work with children in the Chicago Public Schools. Since 1985, LaSalle Language Academy, a Chicago public elementary magnet school, has graduated eighth graders who have had up to nine years of foreign language instruction. However, to date minimal data have been collected on the effectiveness of this educational initiative. Because students at LaSalle are diverse

racially, ethnically, and economically, they represent a broad cross section of urban American society and form a diverse sample population.

### **A. Statement of the Problem**

**How Does Foreign Language Learning in Elementary School Influence Students' Future Educational and Career Choices?** Providing an answer to this question may serve as a response to national debates regarding the merits of expanding foreign language programs for young children. The research hypothesis to be tested is that participation in a foreign language in elementary school (FLES) program has a significant effect on students' lives as reflected in the academic courses they pursue and the employment they obtain. If foreign language learning and experiences are initiated early, contemporaneously with reading and math, the language learning will become a habit of mind and an integral part of the child's development. As a result, alumni of an elementary foreign language program with two or more years of early foreign language study should have greater enrollment percentages in high school and college language courses than students who initiated foreign language learning later in their schooling or not at all. Furthermore, surveys and interviews of alumni now in the workforce would reveal the degree to which they considered the elementary foreign language experiences relevant to their current language skills, their work responsibilities, and their daily lives.

Although prevalent throughout Europe, early foreign language study is encountered infrequently in the United States. Lack of adequate funding may be a primary explanation that accounts for the paucity of elementary foreign language educational programs. Beyond funding issues, U. S. policies of nationalism and

isolationism, as well as an arrogant confidence in the rest of the world's willingness to communicate in English, have contributed to the establishment of few programs for foreign language in elementary schools (FLES) in this country. Another major problem that arises is how to evaluate the effectiveness of early foreign language educational learning at the elementary school level. If sufficient significant data and research were available to illustrate students' success, then it might be possible to garner greater financial and political support for elementary foreign language programs that would make this benefit available to more young school children in the United States.

The question of how foreign language learning in the elementary school influences students' future educational and career choices is one that has evolved from working with children who have been studying a foreign language for many years. In numerous conversations with alumni of the LaSalle Language Academy program in Chicago, young adults have discussed how they continued foreign language study in high school and college, and they described work situations where they found themselves using a foreign language. Interest in finding a way to document the effectiveness of the language academy curriculum has prompted research that could be illustrative of the program's positive influence on youth. The purpose of the study would be to ascertain whether students who begin learning a foreign language in elementary school are likely to continue foreign language study in high school and college, as well as to pursue a career where foreign language knowledge is important to successful job performance.

## **B. Definition of Key Concepts**

Over the past two decades, research has been conducted on a number of foreign language programs. Studies, surveys and program inventories have been initiated to begin to document availability and quality of foreign language instruction in the United States. A review of the literature serves as a foundation for future investigation of the issue and an analysis of the benefits of foreign language study in elementary school. For purposes of this study, elementary language learning is considered as beginning the formal study of a foreign language at the elementary school level, anytime from kindergarten to seventh grade. The focus is on programs that begin prior to the eighth grade since seventh and eighth grades are usually classified as *Junior High School*, and as such, often reflect a secondary school, rather than an elementary school, approach. However, even programs introduced in the seventh grade are considered as elementary school foreign language programs when age-appropriate pedagogical principles are applied. Since seventh graders would be able to complete at least two years of study in the elementary school setting, they were included in this study.

Although the term *foreign language* is primarily used to refer to the study of any language other than English in the United States, the term *world language* has begun to surface in the literature with increasing frequency, since *foreign language* may have xenophobic connotations. Many research references to *modern language* learning are also relevant to this study. *Second language* is another related term that surfaces in the literature. At times, *second language* could appear as a synonym for foreign language, but usually, second language or *L2* is used in the context of bilingual programs (Lipton,

1944). In this document, *foreign language* will be the principal terminology used and may encompass all these terms.

### **C. Types of Elementary Foreign Language Programs**

Currently, throughout the United States, there are three primary types of elementary foreign language programs, commonly known as Foreign Language Experience/Exploratory (FLEX), Immersion, and Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES). The program titles and definitions are generally based on the amount of time devoted weekly to foreign language instruction. The overarching term generally applied as a category that encompasses all types of foreign language elementary school programs is FLES\*, pronounced “FLES star,” which differentiates it from the particular FLES program (Lipton, 1944). Clear definitions of the three predominant types of programs are provided by Miriam Met, who has served as foreign language coordinator for the Montgomery Public Schools in Maryland (Met, 1990).

*Foreign Language Experience/Exploratory* (FLEX) programs offer a sketchy introduction to the study of foreign languages for a brief period of time. The language may be presented as part of a unit or during a grading period, but not as an articulated, ongoing program (Met, 1990). FLEX programs are the most economical because a small number of teachers can provide exposure to foreign languages for a large number of students. Consequently, FLEX curricula account for approximately 40% of the elementary foreign language learning experiences and are among the most common in the United States. However, because of their cursory introductory nature, FLEX programs are considered to be of only limited value. (Met, 1990)



In contrast, *Immersion* programs range from *Partial* to *Dual-Language* Immersion to *Total* Immersion programs, where the foreign language is used throughout the school day to teach part or all of the curriculum areas. In Immersion programs, the goal is to master the curriculum content in the foreign language (Met, 1990). Dual-Language Immersion programs where Spanish and English are the two languages taught often represent the intersection of two groups with different political agendas, supporters of bilingual programs for minority students and proponents of foreign language programs for mainstream, affluent students. A program is defined as dual-language immersion when English-speaking or *Anglo* children are taught together with non-English speaking minority children for content area subjects as well as for language (Valdes, 1997). The two types of bilingual programs credited with resulting in greatest academic success for students are bilingual maintenance and dual-language immersion (Katz, 2000). Although Immersion programs are generally recognized as a highly effective way to learn a foreign language, perhaps because of its high cost and the paucity of trained immersion teachers available, few of these programs are currently operational throughout the U.S. According to a national survey conducted in 1988, only 15% of the existing elementary foreign language programs were classified as Immersion programs (Met, 1990).

Although the focus of this paper is on foreign language study, there is also a large body of relevant research from bilingual education. Many principles from the literature on second language learning apply, although the term *second language learning* usually arises in the context of bilingualism and refers to a minority immigrant group learning the language of the majority culture. Another related term is the concept of *biliteracy*, a goal of *bilingual maintenance* programs, where individuals master reading and writing in both

their native or heritage language, as well as in a foreign language or the language of the country in which they are living (Tse, 2001). Biliteracy and bilingual maintenance programs are generally associated with greater prestige and higher academic achievement than *transitional bilingual programs*, where students may be taught in their native language only for a few years until they are able to function in an all-English instructional program (Tse, 2001). Although biliteracy may be an outcome for some students enrolled in foreign language programs over an extended period of time, the majority of current foreign language programs have resulted in students developing only the most basic skills (Alalou, 2001), (Jesness, 2002).

Frequently, students' skill level in a foreign language is discussed by considering their *proficiency* in the foreign language. The concept of language proficiency refers to how well a student functions in a language. A person who is defined as proficient in a foreign language is one who has achieved a relatively advanced language skill. In contrast to *fluency* in a foreign language, which might be developed simply by being born or living in a foreign country, proficiency is generally achieved through study, training and practice of the subject. Although there is no nationally standardized measure used to determine foreign language proficiency, many educational institutions have created their own assessment instruments that are used to place students in particular foreign language courses. In this study, participants were requested to assess their own level of proficiency at the end of elementary school, high school and college, wherever they studied a foreign language. Because no test was relied upon, students merely evaluated themselves along a continuum of feeling not proficient to very proficient.

Most common across the U.S. are the programs known as FLES, *Foreign Language in the Elementary School*. To qualify as a FLES program, students are expected to participate in foreign language classes for periods of 15 to 50 minutes of instruction, either several times per week or daily, over a period of two or more years (Met, 1990, p.434), (Lipton, 1994). FLES goals focus on oral and aural proficiency, including listening, speaking, reading, writing and culture. The LaSalle Language Academy program, as part of the Chicago Public Schools' Language Academy Magnet School initiative, qualifies as a FLES program and serves as an illustration of how this type of program functions.

#### **D. Description of LaSalle Language Academy Foreign Language Program**

Initiated in 1978 as an elementary magnet school as part of the Chicago Public Schools' voluntary desegregation program, the LaSalle Language Academy had one of the nation's earliest comprehensive FLES programs. From kindergarten through eighth grade, LaSalle offers students daily classes in French, German, Italian or Spanish. Class periods vary in length from 30 minutes in primary grades, to 40 minutes for grades three through six, and 50 minutes for grades seven and eight, four or five times per week. In the primary grades the focus is on songs, games and interactive activities, while reading, writing and grammar are introduced in later grades. Classes are taught primarily in the target language, developing the aural, oral and written skills of the students. Students are expected to become proficient in one foreign language, but they are simultaneously involved in a variety of multicultural activities related to all four foreign languages. In seventh and eighth grades, many of the students participate in the two-week foreign

exchange programs, hosting a foreign student and being hosted overseas by a family from France, Germany, Italy or Spain.

The LaSalle Language Academy FLES is a well-established and sought-after educational program, with more than 800 applicants annually for 60 kindergarten places, and an equal number or greater number of applicants for only a handful of first through eighth grade openings. Acclaimed as an exemplary elementary foreign language program by former U.S. Secretary of Education William Bennett in *James Madison School: A Curriculum for American Students*, (Bennett, 1988), LaSalle might logically be considered to have an effective elementary foreign language program. However, to date, no actual study has been conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of this prototype of early foreign language study. Consequently, the review of existing literature on elementary foreign programs yields insight and direction on how to develop and conduct doctoral level research on “Effects of FLES on Students’ Future Educational and Career Choices.”

While LaSalle Language Academy certainly provided fertile ground in which to conduct new research about elementary foreign language learning, it was deemed desirable to identify a control group with which the LaSalle target population might be compared. To evaluate the effects of participating in a FLES program on students’ future educational and career choices, finding a comparable group of students who did not participate in a FLES program was essential. Since LaSalle Language Academy was one of the Chicago Public Schools’ magnet schools, the selection of another neighboring CPS magnet school where foreign language was not the focus became a logical choice.

### **E. Description of Newberry Academy for Mathematics and Science Program**

Initiated in 1979 as one of several Chicago Public Schools' magnet schools to promote voluntary desegregation, Newberry Academy for Mathematics and Science enhanced student learning with additional class time in both math and science and with related laboratory experiences. Like LaSalle, the school followed the general Chicago Public Schools' curriculum, supplemented by its magnet program focus. Students were selected from city applicants meeting desegregation guidelines that permitted from 15% to 35% non-minority, or White enrollment, and from 65% to 85% minority enrollment, which included Black, Native American, Asian/ Pacific Islander and Hispanic students.

The control or comparison group selected for this study consisted of alumni of the Newberry Academy because they were demographically similar to the LaSalle alumni. Although their education programs were considered comparable, there was one major differentiating characteristic. While the Newberry students did not have foreign language study as a daily component of their elementary school curriculum, the LaSalle students did. Using the terminology of this study, the main distinguishing variable between the two groups was that LaSalle students did participate in a FLES program, and Newberry students did not participate in a FLES program.

### **F. Limitations of the Study**

There are several limitations to the study with respect to the sample availability of data. Because the study depended on the passage of time in order to evaluate the effects of the FLES program, current locating information was unavailable on many program participants. The sample was contacted the schools' Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

directories that were ten to fifteen years old, and many addresses were no longer valid due to the population's mobility. Furthermore, addresses in the directories were for the elementary school students' parents, and since the respondents had all reached the aged of adulthood, it was to be expected that many participants would not be living at home; for the surveys to reach them, their parents would have needed to forward the mail.

Because both the target group from LaSalle Language Academy and the comparison group from Newberry Math and Science Academy were alumni of two of Chicago's premier magnet schools, the population might not have been economically representative of all Chicago Public Schools' students, since both school had somewhat lower poverty rates than the CPS overall. According to information provided to principals from the Illinois State School Report Cards, LaSalle's poverty level was determined to be approximately 25%, Newberry's was approximately 50%, and CPS (Illinois School District 299) was more than 90% poverty, as measured by the number of students qualifying for free or reduced price meals. However, because the magnet schools have operated under federal desegregation guidelines, the study did contain a strong element of racial and ethnic diversity. Although the population was strictly urban, the diverse student population allowed for comparisons to be made with students from diverse communities. Even though most of the sample population had graduated from elementary school a decade earlier, in many cases insufficient time had elapsed to allow for extensive employment experience.

Another limitation of the study was the survey instrument on which respondents self-reported their recollections and experiences. While some of the questions elicited clearly objective, quantifiable data, others requested subjective responses that may have

been influenced by the wording of the inquiry. Despite these limitations, the survey provided a vehicle to collect information from non-FLES and FLES program participants.

#### **F. Nature and Order of Presentation of the Study**

The study began with the data from the questionnaires that were mailed to the sample of 660 alumni of two CPS magnet schools. The information from the 86 respondents was presented following the order of the questionnaire. Subsequent to the presentation of quantitative information, qualitative issues were discussed from the questions that permitted short answerers. Finally, to provide greater social dimension to the data, representative narrative was incorporated from interviews with FLES alumni.

Responses to each of the 55 variables were presented to provide a global perspective. Following the order of questions on the survey, data was described from the parts on elementary, high school, and college foreign language study. After the educational component, answers to questions about career choices and employment experiences were discussed. Items about demographic data were asked, answered and analyzed at the end of the quantitative section. Although frequencies were analyzed in response to each question, a more thorough statistical analysis was performed in this study only on those items with direct bearing on the research question.

Just prior to the conclusions, qualitative questions were briefly considered. Although there were six questions requiring short answers, their subjective nature prompted overlapping responses, depending upon how the participant interpreted the question. Responses from the subjects who were interviewed were presented last and provided colorful commentary to the foreign language in elementary school experience.

## II. REVIEW OF EXISTING LITERATURE

### A. Historical Context and Prevalence of Foreign Language Programs

Knowledge of a foreign language has traditionally been considered a hallmark of a well-educated person. It was essential to advanced academic work at the college level, both as a requirement for graduation from a liberal arts college and for pursuit of the doctorate of philosophy. According to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), statistics for “Foreign Language Enrollments in the U.S. Public High Schools, 1890-1994,” indicated that 32.7% of U.S. public high school students studied a modern foreign language at the beginning of the twentieth century, and the percentage rose to a high of 35.9% in 1915 (Foreign, 2002). However, the decline began with the onset of World War I and continued downward to only 16.4% by 1958. This period of descending high school foreign language enrollment contrasted with a parallel phase of increasing elementary school foreign language program development, during the period beginning in 1898 and ending in 1958 (Lipton, 1998). Gladys Lipton, one of the leading national advocates of foreign language programs in elementary school, analyzed their growth and development in *“A Century of Progress,” A Retrospective on FLES\* Programs: 1898-1998*. She divided FLES advancements into three periods: 1898 to 1958, 1958 to 1978, and 1978 to 1998. Although enrollment in public high school foreign language classes generally correlated closely to developments in FLES\* programs, during the mid-1950’s high school foreign language decreased while elementary foreign language programs rose (Lipton, 1998).

The term “FLES\*” is pronounced “FLES star,” and was popularized in the mid-1950’s as an over-arching category for all foreign language in elementary school



programs (Lipton, 1998, p.76). After the 1980's when FLES became associated with a particular type of program, FLES\* was introduced to refer to any elementary school foreign language program from third to fifth grade, carried out between one and five times per week and lasting for 15 to 90 minutes. With many variations in design and lack of consensus on program goals, the general evaluation of FLES\* was that most students learned little foreign language, and programs failed to meet expectations (Lipton, 1998).

However, in response to the Sputnik satellite launched by the USSR in the late 1950's, U. S. attention focused on the need to make educational improvements, in general, and specifically, in mathematics and science. In addition, the passage of the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) in 1958 made funds available to schools for more foreign language programs, since greater knowledge of foreign language was viewed as an important education measure relevant to concerns about the national defense (Lantolf, 2001). As a result, more money for foreign language instruction became available, and language laboratories constructed in schools throughout the country increased from 100 in 1957 to 2,500 in 1961 (Lantolf, p. 85). Foreign language programs were revitalized and experienced rapid growth in the United States (Lipton, 1994). Positive effects were measurable at the high school level with enrollments rising to 25% of the high school students by the early 1960's (Foreign, 2002). Furthermore, the Title VI provision of the NDEA made funds available for teacher training, a necessary component of improving foreign language education (Lipton, 1998).

Ironically, rather than provide for continued growth, the NDEA funding in the 1960's did not translate to expansion of foreign language programs in the 1970's. Perhaps in reaction to the lack of earlier program consistency, the Modern Language Association

had created rigid guidelines for foreign language programs that seemed to have a deleterious effect. Insisting on a requirement of at least 100 hours of listening and speaking only, as well as an avoidance of reading and writing, enrollment in foreign language programs once more declined. By the mid-1970's, foreign language enrollments once more plummeted to barely one-fifth of all high school students (Foreign, 2002).

The third period, beginning in 1978, was described by Lipton as “the resurgence or renaissance of FLES\* programs” (Lipton, 1998, p. 81). Funds once again were made available nationally for language instruction. Passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 1978 allowed for both bilingual and foreign language programs to proliferate. Title VII of this act specifically provided funds for the creation of innovative programs, as well as for staff development, and there appeared to be a dawning of a new age in foreign language instruction. According to Lipton:

(M)any new FLES\* programs grew in the 1980's; these programs were characterized by a number of different options in program models, delivery systems, and philosophies. Although there are few up-to-date statistics, there are FLES\* programs in approximately 17% to 20% of all elementary schools (Kindergarten through grade 8) in the country (Lipton, 1994, p.3).

In the 1980's, public high school student enrollments in foreign language also began to climb steadily, nearly doubling from the low 21.3% in 1982 to 40.6% in 1994 (Foreign, 2002). At the elementary school level, too, improvements were made in foreign language programs consistent with results from studies of several successful FLES exemplary programs. In 1993, the first Monday in March was declared to be “National FLES\* Day, coinciding with the start of Foreign Language Week (Lipton, 1998).

Increases in foreign language program creation and student enrollment could be attributed to numerous factors ranging from the economy, political pressures, and even a

more sophisticated public awareness of the increasingly global nature of society. In a recent article in *Education Week*, Jerry Jesness, a special education teacher in Texas, commented on the growing national support for foreign language study (Jesness, 2002). He interpreted the University of California president's decision giving greater admissions considerations to the Scholastic Achievement Test II (SAT II) as an endorsement of the importance of foreign language knowledge since this was one of the areas tested by the SAT II. Recognizing that the decision would favor students who knew Spanish, Chinese, or other Asian languages, opponents of Affirmative Action decried the measure as an attempt to revert to traditional Affirmative Action policies and strategies specifically aimed at increasing the enrollment of minority students in universities.

The California debate over the value of bilingualism and foreign language learning was also evident in California's recent passage on a new law prescribing parameters for bilingual education in the state. Commonly referred to as "Proposition 227," the new legislation essentially required that Limited English Proficient (LEP) students be taught primarily in English, i.e., in an English Immersion Program, as expeditiously as possible (Schnalberg, 1999). However, the emphasis on the SAT II standardized foreign language tests suggested a policy shift to more highly value foreign language proficiency for college admissions. In contrast Proposition 227's goal to limit bilingual programs, the effect of giving added weight to the SAT II tests could lead to the expansion of high school and elementary foreign language programs (Jesness, 2002).

In the aftermath of the 2001 terrorist attacks, *Chicago Tribune* reporter Robert Becker noted that college foreign language enrollment in the U.S. in 2002 rose to 1.4 million students, an increase of 17.9% since 1998. In the article "Language boom sweeps

colleges,” Becker noted that the greatest increase was in Arabic languages. However, the need for augmenting cultural understanding spurred the growth in all foreign languages, with Spanish, French and German continuing as most popular (Becker, 2003).

Although the study of foreign language at the elementary school level is still a relatively rare phenomenon, it has steadily increased over the past two decades. In 1988, a national study of foreign language programs in the elementary schools in the United States indicated that such programs were operational in 22% of the schools surveyed, as compared with only 10% at the beginning of the 1980’s (Rhodes, 1988). The increase in elementary foreign language programs could be attributable in part to the establishment in 1987 of the National Network for Early Language Learning (NNELL) and Advocates of Language Learning (ALL), two organizations devoted to promoting foreign language learning for children. Both groups had been instrumental in supporting legislation that expanded elementary foreign language learning in the United States, and their newsletters were a valuable source of information, as well as a professional development resource, for teachers and parents involved in foreign language programs for young children. In addition, the American Council on Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) was vocal in support of early language learning, while criteria were being established for designing and evaluating elementary foreign language programs.

Research conducted in the late 1980’s and early 1990’s presented strategies for initiating additional and strengthening current elementary foreign language programs. Marcia Rosenbusch, editor of *FLES News National Network for Early Language Learning*, outlined prime considerations for program development. Her recommendations included substantial planning and the formation of a steering committee. After

evaluating foreign language programs currently in existence, Rosenbusch urged that new developments in foreign language instruction be explored. She further advocated broad dissemination of information and garnering support for new foreign language initiatives. Clearly articulating the philosophy, goals and objectives, along with a sensible program structure and schedule, she presented critical components of successful foreign language programs. She concluded that attention to curricula, instructional materials and selection of teaching staff would help insure strong and viable programs (Rosenbusch, 1991).

Although there appeared to be a decline of foreign language programs in the 1970's, since 1980 foreign language study is increasing steadily in the United States, not only at the elementary, but also at the high school and college levels (Foreign, 2002). One of the arenas of greatest growth during the 1980's was the Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) program at the university level (Grosse and Voght, 1991). LSP courses and programs were those defined as undergraduate foreign language courses related to specific careers, emphasizing communication skills and linguistic accuracy (p. 181). While in 1979, only 31% of the 218 university foreign language departments responded that they had LSP courses or programs, by 1989, 62% of the 569 university foreign language departments surveyed indicated that they had established LSP courses or programs. The result was an increase in enrollment in foreign language courses at universities throughout the nation. While it could be assumed that the increasingly global nature of society was a core reason for the increase, elementary foreign language learning experiences could also help explain this trend, if the hypothesis of this study was correct that students who participated in a FLES program had a higher percentage of enrollment in high school and college foreign language courses than the general U.S. population.

For a review of the historical and political realities of the elementary foreign language education in U.S., with the development of elementary dual language programs at its center Valdes (1997), presented an interesting perspective. Her premise was that the burgeoning growth of dual-language programs in the last few years might be attributed to an alliance between bilingual and foreign language educators. She suggested that the proliferation of dual-language programs was due in part to the passion of bilingual educators working with language-minority students coupled with the resources that followed middle-class non-minority students whose parents believed that knowledge of a foreign language offered children an advantage in the workplace. Valdes urged caution, however, that interests of the more affluent children should not supersede the compensatory concerns for the minority students (Valdes, 1997).

Tse analyzed the concept of a *language shift*, when individuals lost fluency in a heritage language as they gained dominance in English. She explored the conditions under which individuals were able to achieve and maintain biliteracy (Tse, 2001). Like Valdes, Tse noted that there had not been equal opportunities for diverse social groups to develop mastery of more than one language in this country. She stated:

Differential power among societal groups translates into both implicit and explicit language policies. ... although the economic, social-cultural, and political benefits of bilingualism are generally recognized, only one portion of the population is encouraged to develop proficiency in more than one language: the English monolingual majority. HL(Hispanic Language) students, on the other hand, are encouraged to lose their bilingual potential (Met, 1994, p. 680).

Despite past discrimination, Tse suggested that a more equitable solution might be achieved if future generations were encouraged to become bi-literate. Conditions important to the development of bi-literacy were substantial support from peers, home, the community and the school in order to promote the mastery of both the English and the

non-English language (Tse, 2001). Consequently, it was imperative to identify and analyze the components of a successful, literacy enriched foreign language curriculum.

### **B. Effective Elements of Elementary Foreign Language Programs**

To rectify the some of the problems that had previously hindered elementary foreign language efforts, educators began to publish articles about the hallmarks of successful programs. Having acknowledged that in prior decades FLES\* had promised greater proficiency than was possible without clear guidelines, Gladys Lipton provided the definition of a FLES program model that provided realistic goals, along with sufficient flexibility to be adopted by diverse communities. Lipton explained:

Sequential FLES is the term used to describe elementary school foreign language programs of two or more years, with a systematic development of functional language and cultural skills related to themes, topics and interdisciplinary approaches. Good theme-related fluency is expected, based on time and frequency of instruction (Lipton, 1994, p.1).

In addition to the development of the FLES program model, the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Language (ACTFL) developed a new set of national foreign language standards in 1996. From the standards, five foreign language goals emerged, commonly called “the five C’s”: Communication, Culture, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities (Lipton, 1998). Research revealed that elementary foreign language programs that were considered effective incorporated these elements.

To enable the students to master the knowledge components of foreign language in the cognitive domain, it was recommended that educators attend to social and emotional needs, the affective domain, as well (Garnett, 1998). Not only was it necessary for teachers to provide students with opportunities to develop different levels of thinking skills, they also needed to address the five hierarchical levels of the affective domain:

Receiving, Responding, Valuing, Organizing, and Characterizing by a Value (Garnett, 1998, p. 375).

According to Garnett, elements essential to a successful FLES program included characters or activities that excited student interest and captivated their attention. Students needed to respond to a character, exemplified by Garnett as a storybook puppy named Spot, in a manner that prompted communicating in the target language. Responding to the character, students engaged in communication by listening, speaking, reading or writing activities, nationally recognized as the critical components of any language program, be it English or a foreign language. Through the introduction of a puppet, toy or charming personality, the affective domain was integrated with the cognitive domain to enhance foreign language instruction.

Because values were of central importance in the affective domain, teaching about the cultures of the people who spoke each foreign language was a goal of effective FLES programs. Learning about the family life and common cultural interactions enabled students to understand and appreciate different values, as well as to make connections with individuals from different countries. According to Garnett, by interpreting the literature and enabling children to understand what values are important, the FLES experience results in positive changes in human behavior (Garnett, 1998).

Familiarizing students with foreign language names also strengthened their ability to make positive connections with other cultures. An element common to many successful FLES programs has been assigning foreign language names to students to assist them in identifying with the culture of the language they were studying. Addressing an attitude that prevailed in the United States until the late 1900's, Iranian-American



writer Firoozeh Dumas described her own experiences as a recent immigrant to California in the 1970's. She noted:

My name, Firoozeh, chosen by my mother, means "Turquoise" in Persian. In America, it means "Unpronounceable" or "I'm Not Going to Talk to You Because I Cannot Possibly Learn Your Name and I just Don't Want to Have to Ask You Again and Again Because You'll Think I'm Dumb or You Might Get Upset or Something (Dumas, 2003).

When the FLES curriculum addressed the affective domain, it became possible to counter negative perceptions of foreign values. As Garnett concluded, "when the young learners are exposed to a new idea, concept, activity, they generally approach it with an 'open mind'; the reception is positive and, therefore, the response is usually positive" (p. 377).

The popularity of elementary foreign language programs grew, increasing by almost 10% in the decade leading up to 1997. According to a report by Rhodes and Branaman (1998), ACTFL statistics indicated that 31% of elementary school students in the U.S. in 1997 studied a foreign language. The expansion of elementary foreign language refocused attention on the need for qualified foreign language teachers certified to teach at the elementary school level, as well as on the need for teacher preparation programs to help insure that the need could be met. In response, a summer institute was established at Iowa State University, through a federally funded grant to the National K-12 Foreign Language Resource Center in 1994. The institute was designed to improve elementary age-appropriate instructional methodology, as well as to promote interaction between university professors involved in teacher preparation and practicing kindergarten through sixth grade foreign language teachers (Rosenbusch, Kemis and Morgan, 2000).

Institute participants were surveyed to determine the effectiveness of the program, as well as to establish priorities for methodology courses for the preparation of

elementary foreign language teachers. Three findings of the study were the importance of incorporating child development theory, the integration of foreign language with each school's core curriculum, and the acknowledgement of the value of parental involvement (Rosenbusch, et al., 2000, p. 308). Furthermore, the participants in the institute expressed recognition of the benefit of collaboration between the university teacher preparation programs and the professional practice of elementary foreign language teachers (Rosenbusch, et al., 2000).

The close correlation between successful implementation of the FLES program and adequate teacher preparation was documented in another study, "*Companeros*": *A Teacher Preparation Partnership Model for Teaching FLES* (Ernst-Slavit, Wenger & Statzner, 1998). The study presented a solution for improving teacher training, especially acknowledging the chronic shortage of funds for education in general, and for foreign language education, in particular. As part of the certification process, the authors presented a summary of a three-year partnership between a university and a public elementary school. College students majoring in elementary education gained clinical experience in a FLES methods course by directly delivering a FLES program to children (Ernst-Slavit, 1998). Through the "Companeros" program, the university collaborated with the public school teachers, and a semester-long FLES program was provided without cost to the school or children. The seminar for the teachers introduced them to FLES methodology and techniques, and they received immediate opportunities to practice the pedagogical skills they were learning. Using strategies consistent with Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences, as well as ACTFL's "five C's," the pre-service teachers integrated curricular content objectives with the *Standards of Foreign Language*

*Learning: Preparing for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. With a primary goal of the program being to promote communicative competence, the teachers presented the content in a context that maximized students' opportunities to interact with the teachers and each other in the target language (Ernst-Slavit, 1998).

Isabel Dulfano suggested an alternative approach to FLES instruction applicable to situations where there were insufficient funds to sustain a full-fledged FLES program (Dulfano, 1997). Similar to the "Companeros" program described by Ernst-Slavit, Dulfano promoted the partnership between a university and an elementary school district. In her modification of the FLES program model, Dulfano designed the Foreign Language Alternative Mastery Example, with the acronym FLAME. Recognizing the reality of severe budget cuts in many school districts, her program was offered to parents at a low cost for an extra-curricular enrichment. The course was supervised by a Spanish professor from the local college, but taught by education majors interested in gaining practical experience and an endorsement to teach a second language. Even though less extensive than an optimal FLES program, the 11-week FLAME program contained sequential vocabulary developed through weekly themes in hour-long classes (Dulfano, 1997). Not only did the FLAME program seek to enhance acceptance of cultural differences, it based its curriculum on promoting meaningful communication for a variety of functional purposes.

Parental involvement was inherent in the FLAME program, not only because they were expected to pay a small fee and to make arrangements to transport their children home from the extracurricular program, but because it counted on their support to want their children to enroll. The role of parents as partners in elementary foreign language

education was a recurrent theme for successful FLES programs, especially because of the age and vulnerability of the participants. Sylvia Muir delineated an additional area where parental support is vital to success in *IDEA: Parents Are Partners in FLES\** (Muir, 1996). Writing about a Spanish FLES program in Texas, where language and cultural differences segregate the Mexican community, she noted that one key element of FLES programs that could help bridge the language and cultural divide. Muir maintained that the assignment of homework projects where students needed access to community resources outside their textbooks would entail recruiting their parents as partners. Student interaction with their parents, along with their parents' support throughout the learning process, could be a motivational factor in enabling students to succeed. As the author noted, "Interest in the world grows along with respect and understanding of the people whose language is being shared." (Muir, 1996).

While foreign language fluency was a goal of the FLES program model, an expected outcome was foreign language proficiency. Students who participated two or more years in a sequential FLES program were expected to be somewhat proficient, which meant they would be able to function in the foreign language in certain situations (Schrier, 1996). For proficiency to occur, the FLES program required a sequential framework, a research-based design, and opportunities for students themselves to find practical applications for what they were learning in the classrooms (Schrier, 1996). Contradicting the notions that FLES programs were superficial or supplementary, the national foreign language standards promoted the development of an articulated, sequential FLES program.

When the concept of articulation arose in foreign language education circles, it was commonly used to refer to the progression of learning from one program to another (Long, 1996). For FLES purposes, elementary school teachers communicated with high school teachers to insure the articulation of the elementary program with the high school curriculum. However, the term also was applied to program coordination from elementary to middle school, junior high school to high school, or high school to college. Similar to the idea of good articulation in the context of speech and language development, good FLES program articulation involved clear communication of ideas and objectives, as well as description of curricular design. In addition to the sequential and expressive elements of articulation, Long applied the concept of articulation to how a foreign language program interacts with the surrounding community (Long, 1996). She suggested that the FLES program should be designed to link what the children were learning in school with the needs of the greater community.

Leslie Schrier provided a prototype of how an articulated FLES program could connect the school district to the surrounding community in Iowa (Schrier, 1996). She attributed the new foreign language standards with redirecting the educational focus from simple concerns for cultural enjoyment or strict mastery of grammar to a holistic effort to facilitate cross-cultural communication. Beyond interfacing the FLES program with the elementary language arts, math, science, social studies and art curricula, Schrier advocated the extension of foreign language learning into the community, which she categorized as a service-learning curriculum. The model she proposed was created in a mid-western town where FLES Spanish students were matched with Hispanic seniors of limited English skills who lived in the community and needed assistance. Assisted by a

university mentor, the elementary school students developed shopping lists for the senior citizens and assisted them with purchasing needed groceries. The FLES program prototype provided a sequence of activities that allowed students to use the vocabulary learned in class for a real-world situation. The notion that the language learning served a functional purpose and involved compassionate interaction inspired greater motivation among the students (Schrier, 1996).

Along with the gradual growth of FLES programs nationwide, national and state policies on elementary foreign language evolved. Marcia Rosenbusch, at the University of Iowa, one of the eight states where elementary foreign language study was mandated in the 1990's, conducted a study on the impact of national and state policies (Rosenbusch, 2002). She collected data from the 1979 President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies and from the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) in Washington, DC, as well as from universities and state departments of education. Her conclusions were that two policies had a strong positive effect on elementary foreign language programs: (1) state licensure endorsement for elementary foreign language teachers, and (2) grant funding that required elementary foreign language programs to be curricular rather than extra-curricular (Rosenbusch, 2002).

In a recent *Chicago Tribune* article on the subject of foreign language programs in Illinois elementary school, reporter Leslie Mann contrasted the expansion of language programs in the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) with a trend toward cutting foreign language programs in other school districts in response to budget shortfalls. According to CPS officials, the six elementary language academies in existence a decade ago had burgeoned into foreign language instruction programs in 121 schools by 2003 (Mann,

2004). Whereas Chicago's public schools in Illinois school district 299 had been able to use discretionary funds from grants and a variety of CPS sources to fund elementary foreign language, elementary schools in many other districts had found it necessary either to charge parents or to form partnerships with universities to provide for extracurricular foreign language programs.

In the article, Nancy Rhodes, a nationally recognized FLES advocate and the current director of the Center for Applied Linguistics, referred to the need for assessment data to show how foreign language education influences educational progress. Mann noted a study supportive of that issue conducted by the College Board renowned for administration of the SAT college entrance examinations. Evaluating the performance of 1.4 million high school students in 2003, the College Board found that "those with the equivalent of four or more years (of high school foreign language) scored about 18 percent higher in their verbal scores than those with two years (Mann, 2004, p.3). In addition to verbal support by diverse educational leaders throughout the country, it appears that there is an emerging body of statistical data attesting to the effectiveness of foreign language programs for promoting educational achievement.

### **C. Effectiveness of Foreign Language Programs**

Subsequent to establishing elementary foreign language programs, there remained the need to evaluate program effectiveness. Audrey Heining-Boyton, in the department of Curriculum and Romance Languages at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, was instrumental in developing the FLES Program Evaluation Inventory (FPEI) (Heining-Boyton, 1991). She designed an instrument that could easily be administered to

a cross-section of individuals involved with elementary foreign language instruction, including students, parents, teachers and administrators. Because evaluation was one of the priority goals identified at the 1989 ACTFL conference on national concerns about foreign language education, the development of the FPEI was of major significance in this field. Furthermore, since it solicited responses from all major constituents, the FPEI was valuable for the planning of expansion of FLES programs.

Heining-Boyton administered the FPEI in two North Carolina school districts to more than 20 FLES teachers, 40 administrators, 400 classroom teachers and 7,000 primary students. Because the survey was brief and usually completed in school faculty meetings, PTA meetings, or during class periods, there was better than an 80% rate of return, thereby ensuring that results could be considered representative of the majority's views on the program effectiveness. Anonymity was ensured to individual respondents since names were not requested on questionnaires, yet individual schools were identified numerically in order to permit attempts to remedy program conditions that elicited negative responses.

Although developed and initially administered in North Carolina, the FPEI was designed to gauge program effectiveness across the nation. Programs could be deemed to be effective when a majority of respondents expressed agreement or strong agreement to data correlating highly to important components of the program, including "(1) Qualified teachers, (2) Goals and Objectives, (3) Pedagogy, (4) Articulation, (5) Homework, grades and evaluation, (6) Parent support" (Heining-Boyton, 1990, p. 433). Since the pilot program being evaluated was a primary grade program, and the students responding to the survey of the FLES program were kindergartners and first graders, the questions were



phrased appropriately for their age level. The children expressed agreement or disagreement with smiling and frowning face symbols. The results of the FPEI survey administered in North Carolina in 1990 were highly favorably. Among classroom teachers, 85 to 99% of the respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that the FLES teachers were effective, reflecting high support and interest for the elementary foreign language program. Among the kindergarteners and first graders studied, over 90% rated their experiences positively (Heining-Boyton, 1990, p. 436). The study was significant because it was one of the first attempts to measure young children’s attitudes towards foreign language instruction.

Another study of elementary school students’ attitudes towards foreign language learning was conducted through the University of Idaho (Kennedy, Nelson, Odell & Austin, 2000). The authors’ hypothesis was that children participating in a FLES program would develop better attitudes toward foreign language learning, and would subsequently have greater motivation to continue with the acquisition of a second language, than would their non-FLES peers. In this study in 1996, the FLES Attitudinal Inventory was administered to 49 third grade students in two rural Idaho schools (Kennedy et al., 2000, p. 282). The students’ attitudes were compared using a factorial analysis of variance (ANOVA) in the areas of general attitudes toward school, difficulty in language acquisition, desirability of language acquisition, culture and self-efficacy. Students responded “yes, maybe, or no” to a series of 22 questions, and the results indicated that that experimental FLES students had a higher positive score in all subscale areas than the control non-FLES group (Kennedy et al., 2000). However, the study was limited to the analysis of the third graders’ attitudes, and whether or not the positive FLES attitudes

actually affected their decision to continue with foreign language study in secondary school was a question that the authors raised for future research (Kennedy et al., 2000).

Whereas the FLES attitudinal study concerned the affective domain, a Canadian study entitled “Setting Students Up for Success: Formative Evaluation and FLES” addressed issues in the cognitive domain of foreign language learning (Vandergrift, 2000). Focusing on fourth through sixth graders learning French in a Canadian school, French teachers affiliated with the University of Ottawa designed a formative evaluation instrument to assess students’ foreign language skills and to give students feedback through a variety of activities. Adapting a model for “engaged learning” from the United States, and in sharp contrast to traditional grammatical tests associated with “Core French” learning methodology, the Canadian study presented students with tasks like writing an advertisement or making an oral presentation or describing animals’ diets. The results of the study indicated that both teachers and students reacted positively and that the activities were effective not only to evaluate progress, but also to motivate learning (Vandergrift, 2000).

Working with students at the seventh, eighth and ninth grade levels in Canada, researchers from the University of Ottawa conducted a study entitled “Sex and Age Effects on Willingness to Communicate, Anxiety, Perceived Competence, and L2 Motivation Among Junior High School French Immersion Students” (MacIntyre, Baker, Clement & Donovan, 2003). The researchers found that students’ Willingness to Communicate (WTC) in a second language (L2) was influenced negatively if they experienced anxiety communicating in their native or first language (L1). Furthermore, congruent with the preponderance of female foreign language teachers, there were twice

as many girls as boys enrolled in the foreign language classes in the study, and that the girls received higher scores in the WTC scale used in the study. (MacIntyre et al., 2003) Using analysis of variance (ANOVA) results, the study found that boys showed little variance from seventh to ninth grade, while girls scored significantly higher on the WTC in ninth grade than they did in seventh grade. The researchers suggested that consideration of various psychological variables might be important in evaluating the effectiveness of elementary foreign language programs, especially when adolescents were participants in the programs (MacIntyre et al., 2003).

A study conducted with high school students several decades earlier showed a statistically significant positive relationship between FLES program participation and performance on foreign language tests in high school (Brega, 1967). At the time of the study, authors Evelyn Brega and John Newell of the University of Florida noted that despite widespread vocal support for teaching foreign language in elementary schools, there was a paucity of research to support the practice. Through Brega's involvement in the Lexington, Massachusetts, public schools, she designed and conducted a study to evaluate the effects of studying a foreign language in elementary school on high school foreign language achievement.

Two groups of eleventh graders were identified who were studying French III with the same instructor. One group, called the Continuing French group, had initiated the study of French in seventh grade, and the other one, the FLES group started in third grade. From the total population of 55 Continuing French and 76 FLES program participants, 54 students were randomly selected. The group in the study consisted of 21 Continuing French and 19 FLES, and it included 21 males and 33 females. The Modern

Language Association (MLA) French Examination (Advanced Form) was administered to both groups. The mean scores of the Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing sections of this test were compared for the two groups of students. Because previous Intelligence Quotient (IQ) tests had shown that the FLES group had a slightly higher IQ than the Continuing French group, the study controlled the IQ variable through an analysis of covariance (Brega, 1967, p. 409). Even controlling for the IQ variable, the mean scores of the FLES group were higher on all four sections of the MLA tests. It was found to be statistically significant to the .01 level, meaning that the difference would be attributable to chance in less than one case out of one hundred and was a statistically significant difference. The results of the study attested to the lasting effect of FLES program participation on foreign language achievement in high school (Brega, 1967).

The same year as the Brega and Newell study, results were published on a nationwide study of "Foreign Language Proficiency Levels Attained by Language Majors Near Graduation from College," conducted by John Carroll (Carroll, 1967). Of the estimated 12,000 college seniors majoring in foreign language in the United States in 1965, 2,784 students were identified as the sample for the study. Four instruments were used, including a foreign language proficiency test from the MLA, a professional preparation test and two questionnaires evaluating experiences and attitudes. Different items were analyzed to determine which had a significant effect (Carroll, 1967).

Two experiences in particular were found to have a high correlation with the language proficiency skill level of the participants in the study. The significant factors were (1) travel abroad and (2) when the initiation of the study of foreign language occurred. Carroll found that those who had traveled to a French, Spanish or German

speaking country scored higher on the test. College seniors who had briefly visited or spent a summer abroad scored an average of five points higher, and those who had studied abroad for a semester or a year scored an average of ten points higher than seniors who did not. Similarly, those who had initiated a foreign language in elementary school scored an average of seven points higher than students who began their study of foreign language in college. However, despite the higher scores for FLES participants in French and Spanish, for German students who started their foreign language in elementary school, their scores on the MLA proficiency tests were actually lower than for students who had started in college. Consequently, Carroll cautioned that although the study provided positive results for FLES participation, it was somewhat dependent upon the language of study and that it might be beneficial to initiate the study of different foreign languages at different times (Carroll, 1967, p. 137).

Research that was especially relevant for analyzing the relationship among influential factors on the study and usefulness of foreign language acquisition was conducted through the Spanish department at Temple University in Philadelphia (Holmquist, 1993). This study surveyed the attitudes and achievement levels of 215 university students at six course levels of Spanish, three lower levels and three advanced. Of the 30 survey questions, Holmquist found that those concerning “previous FL study experience, foreign travel experience, and numbers of Spanish-speakers known,” resulted in significant correlation with achievement levels (Holmquist, 1990, p35). As might have been predicted, students in lower level classes reported little prior experience with foreign language study, travel or acquaintance with foreign-language speakers, specifically Spanish-speakers, in this study. Students at higher levels reported

significantly more experience with prior foreign language study, travel and acquaintance. The most noticeable difference, for example, was that 45.6% of lower level students reported no previous travel to a foreign country, while only 10.6% of higher-level students indicated that they had never traveled to a foreign country (p.35).

Attitudes in the form of expressed motivational statements for learning a foreign language also distinguished lower from higher-level students. Students in the higher-level courses reported greater personal motivation, as in wishing to vacation in Latin America or willingness to consider amorous relations with a Spanish-speaker. In contrast, less advanced students expressed interests of a more practical nature, such as the belief that “being bilingual is a great career advantage” (Holmquist, 1990, p.36). He further described those students who pursued a more advanced level of foreign language study as having “integrative” attitudes, where students were concerned with incorporating the language into their daily life, as is their interest in communicating with people of other cultures. Students still at the beginning levels of Spanish indicated attitudes that were more “instrumental” in nature, for example, stating that they believed learning Spanish was important for getting ahead in a chosen occupation or for meeting academic requirements (p. 37).

Holmquist (1990) found similar results with respect to achievement in foreign language study as represented by students’ grades. Although he found few grades below A’s and B’s at the advanced levels, he found more C’s, along with a few D’s and F’s at the lower-level courses. The three questions that served as the best predictors of grades were: (1) vacationing in a foreign country, (2) perceived ease or difficulty with learning a foreign language, and (3) advantage of being bilingual (p. 40). Performing multiple

regression analysis on these questions, Holmquist was able to determine that there was a correlation between attitudes and achievement in foreign language study (p .41).

In this study, Holmquist (1990) formulated the hypothesis that foreign language learning in a school setting could be interpreted as a social psychological phenomenon, defined as “the backgrounds and attitudes students bring with them to the task of language learning” (Holmquist, 1990, p. 35). He found that achievement correlated positively with selected social and psychological elements, such as travel to a foreign country or acquaintance with Spanish-language speakers. He concluded that foreign language learning could be enhanced by fostering integrative attitudes in foreign language learners. Holmquist’s study appears particularly relevant to the proposed study on the effects of foreign language study in elementary school. Holmquist’s findings suggest a strong connection between early foreign language experiences and travel with later study of foreign language at the university level. Both studies would strengthen recognition of the importance of foreign language learning as part of a well-rounded education and its value for understanding the significance of world events.

#### **D. Impact of Foreign Language Study on Education and Career Choices**

Similar findings were evident in research conducted at Waverly Community Schools in Lansing, Michigan (Roberts, 1992). Roberts reviewed essays written by freshmen entering college in which they expressed their reasons for wishing to study foreign language at the university level. Their stated reasons included:

FL study being helpful in American business -- particularly for competition in the global marketplace; enhancing the enjoyment of travel and reducing its possible dangers/discomforts; as a vehicle for establishing peace and harmony in increasingly interdependent world; and as a means of

preparing for the job market (p. 275).

In the study there were 703 freshmen entering Michigan State University in the fall of 1990, divided into two groups. The first group consisted of 364 freshmen who were tested in June 1990, and the second group had 339 freshmen tested in July. Roberts considered six factors which included: Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT) scores or Academic Collegiate Test (ACT) scores, amount of prior FL study, sex, racial/ethnic heritage, initial declared major, and anticipated FL study at the university level (p. 275).

In contrast to the 30-item structured survey and multiple regression of Holmquist's quantitative analysis, Roberts' study, in which she asked each student to write an essay, was more qualitative by design. She analyzed and coded responses based on themes that emerged in the students' writing on a topic related to foreign language learning. Students were asked to select their topic for an essay from the following list:

June 1990:

- (A) Foreign language study should be required of all students in order to make them citizens of the world.
- (B) Computer language is more important than foreign language in enabling people to communicate with citizens of other cultures.
- (C) Sign language should be included in the curriculum as a language option.

July 1990:

- (A) Since other peoples speak English as well as their native languages, there is no need for Americans to learn another language.
- (B) Americans should learn at least one foreign language because ...

Despite the difference in essay titles, responses were similarly coded to insure the validity and reliability of the research methodology. In both groups, approximately 60% of the students wrote on the foreign language topic, and all students that chose the foreign language topic, June A or July B, defended it positively (p. 277). Of those students, 80% indicated that cultural benefits were influential in their expressed interest in FL study,



while 47.7% indicated that business interests weighed paramount in the decision. The students who placed a greater importance on computer study than on FL study, tended to be in the “low or developmental English language ability groups” (p. 280). In another finding similar to Holmquist’s, Roberts indicated that over 40% of those students with the least amount of prior FL study more commonly indicated job-related motivational factors in foreign language learning, as opposed to only 13% of the high and honors students. Roberts (1992) concluded that the positive response of students for foreign language study held encouraging implications for proponents of expanding foreign language programs.

In contrast to increases in high school students’ enrollment in foreign languages, colleges and universities in the mid 1990’s had been experiencing a decline, which prompted review of university curriculum goals and program content (Alalou, 2001). At the University of Delaware, Alalou contrasted the stated curricular objectives with student interests in a study involving 525 students of French, German and Spanish. While the university maintained its traditional perspective that foreign language study was relevant to intellectual growth and advanced research, students were more focused on practical applications. While there were some differences in emphasis among the three languages, the common themes that emerged were that students enrolled in foreign language because of “(1) students’ emotional ties to the languages; (2) their interest in acquiring communicative skills; and (3) their future plans to use the languages for career purposes” (p. 464).

Despite the prevailing social and cultural motivation for studying a foreign language in college, a recent article by Andrea Coombes in the business section of

*Chicago Tribune* highlighted employment considerations relevant to foreign language learning (Coombes, 2004). Because of the rapid rise of Spanish-speaking communities across the United States, combined with the fact that 20% of the U.S. population now speaks a language other than English, as well as the inevitability of growing globalization in industry, Coombes addressed the urgent need for developing an American multilingual workforce. She focused not only on the need for communication in different languages, but also on the importance of comprehending cross-cultural differences. Discussion of issues with the director of a cross-cultural consulting firm and with a university professor of international business accentuated the advantages of job seekers with proficiency in more than one language. Regardless of which second language were studied, the article noted that employment candidates with foreign language proficiency could market their ability to better understand different viewpoints and their familiarity with a global perspective as an asset to prospective employers (Coombes, 2004).

In a study by Marsh and Yeung, "Coursework Selection: Relations to Academic Self-Concept and Achievement," at the University of Western Sydney, Macarthur, Australia, researchers found a strong correlation between self-concept and courses selected at the university level (Marsh & Yeung, 1997, p. 691). Of the 216 students surveyed, students selected courses based on prior positive academic achievements, as well as according to their academic self-concept. Specifically, with relation to the study of foreign languages, students who had a good perception of their language learning abilities were more likely to want to register for foreign language courses. While Marsh and Yeung's hypothesis might seem obvious, the fact that it was confirmed in the study

provides a strong rationale that early foreign language experiences should be positive, clearly articulated and effective in order to promote future advanced language study.

Writing for the *Chicago Tribune* newspaper, columnist Mary Schmich affirmed the social advantages of studying a foreign language, whether inside or outside the school environment. She commented on the fact that in the world in 2003, there were approximately 874 million Mandarin Chinese speakers, 366 million speakers of Hindi, 358 million Spanish speakers, and 341 million speakers of English (Schmich, 2003). Regardless of which foreign language was studied, and personally with her own school experiences learning French, she noted that “any language that opens you up to a different culture and people, to different sounds and rhythms, to different ways of formulating thoughts, turns you into a slightly different person. It makes you newly aware of yourself and the world” (Schmich, 2003). As an adult, she had recently begun to study Spanish when it was offered at her workplace, the *Chicago Tribune*. She observed that not speaking the language in Chicago meant that she lacked the ability to communicate with one-quarter of the population of Chicago, and the language barrier inhibited communication with people who worked with her and for her. She confessed to an assumption that many immigrants were unwilling to learn English, but discovered the greater complexity of the situation as she struggled to learn Spanish as an adult. Schmich concluded:

(F)oreign languages bridged the gap. That’s what language is: a bridge. A bridge between your thoughts and your words, between your words and other people. The more bridges you have, the easier it is to explore and understand, even if it’s just Chicago neighborhoods (Schmich, 2003).

Knowledge of a foreign language would appear to be an asset within the social milieu, as well as in the educational environment and throughout the world of work.

### **III. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY**

The methodology used in this study of the effects of foreign language in the elementary school on future educational and career choices was both quantitative and qualitative, integrating statistical data from surveys with interviews and case studies. There was an interpretation of the survey results regarding high school and college foreign language course enrollment, as well as work experience and career choice, considering how those correlated to experiences with learning a foreign language in elementary school. Through interviews, individuals who studied a foreign language in elementary school were able to tell their stories as a means of illustrating how early foreign language learning and experiences affected their lives.

Justification of this research methodology stemmed from the ready availability of a population who engaged in foreign language learning at the elementary school level and who were willing to share an analysis their experiences. Because of the need to publicize educational initiatives that work, the time and energy spent to research the issue might translate into expansion of foreign language opportunities in elementary schools. The significance of the study would be to focus public attention on elementary foreign language learning initiatives which promote success in education and employment. The decade selected for study insured that respondents would be an adult population, making them a more accessible sample than young children, as well as allowing for sufficient time to elapse for some advanced educational study and career choices to occur.

In the quantitative analysis, statistical data was used to measure the effect that foreign language in elementary school (FLES) experiences had on students' future educational and career choices. From all the alumni of LaSalle Language Academy and

Newberry Math and Science Academy since their inception in the late 1970's, graduates from the decade of 1985 to 1996 who were listed in their schools' PTA directories were selected as the sample. This sample group of young adults was surveyed, focusing on their enrollment in advanced high school and college foreign language courses and study experiences, as well as on their work experiences. Their reported enrollment in advanced foreign language courses in high school and college served as a reflection of their commitment to gaining further foreign language proficiency. Data from the experimental or target group that had FLES experiences were compared to data from a control or comparison group that did not study a foreign language in elementary school, identified as non-FLES. In addition, the number of years respondents studied a foreign language in elementary school were considered to see whether their duration of their elementary school study of foreign language had an effect. A Likert scale was used to compare attitudes related to foreign language study. Its use allowed for the analysis of the impact of the FLES educational opportunities in relation to advanced study and career choices.

The qualitative component evolved from the open-ended questions on the survey and from interviews with selected young adults who evaluated their own early foreign language experiences and reflected on their relevance to their current career paths. In preliminary informal discussions with the researcher, alumni of the language academy had expressed an interest in discussing the impact of their elementary foreign language learning experiences. According to prevailing current educational thought, the students' own reflections about their learning are essential to authentic assessment. Consequently, there is merit to providing an opportunity for individuals to share their perceptions about the value of their own early foreign language experiences as an assessment measure.

### **A. Sample: Selection and Characteristics**

The population to be studied consisted of LaSalle Language Academy alumni, who did participate in the elementary foreign language program, and Newberry Academy alumni, who did not participate in a FLES program. It included those who attended these schools from the inception of their magnet programs in the late 1970's to the present year of 2004. The students selected for the sample were those who attended these Chicago public elementary magnet schools and graduated eighth grade between 1985 and 1996 and whose names were listed in their respective school's PTA directory. This decade of the population was chosen for the sample because beginning with those who graduated in 1985 ensured the availability of respondents who were FLES participants for three or more years after the program was established. The ending year of 1996 was selected to ensure that the sample would have had sufficient time to complete high school and attend college, if they chose to do so, as well as to have had several years of work experience. In addition, with a sample that graduated eighth grade in 1996, the age of participants would be 21 or older, thereby eliminating the need for parental consent for their participation in the study.

As principal of this elementary foreign language magnet school for the past 20 years, the researcher was fortunate to have access to a large sample of the population of these schools. Reaching a sample population of students who graduated from LaSalle is simplified because of available information from a compilation of student directories from past years. Although current contact information was not available for every graduate, the school and the LaSalle PTA had organized two annual alumni reunions in early November and late May. Updated address information for some alumni was kept in

a database when alumni responded to invitations to events. According to the PTA student directory information, there were approximately 570 graduates of LaSalle between 1985 and 1996, and there are almost 330 names and addresses in the PTA database for these years. Since these were students who had received mail about the annual alumni reunions, they might have maintained at least minimal contact with LaSalle and formed a strong pool of candidates likely to respond to a survey. The accessibility of information for this group also made it a sample of convenience.

Data from this group was compared to data from a similar population of alumni from the Newberry Math and Science Academy, a demographically and geographically proximate school where students did not learn a foreign language in their elementary years because the focus was on math and science instead of a foreign language. Both schools were Chicago public elementary magnet schools established in the late 1970's and operated under the auspices of the CPS Office of Equal Educational Opportunity's Options for Knowledge programs. Obtaining the comparison group sample population from Newberry was possible because their parent organization also maintained contact information for alumni. Although the population of Newberry alumni was somewhat larger than that of LaSalle, it was anticipated that fewer Newberry alumni could be contacted since the PTA ceased publishing their student directories in 1990, and even the most current addresses available were more than ten years old. Furthermore, it could be expected that fewer Newberry alumni might be motivated to return the survey since they had not participated in an elementary foreign language program, and therefore, might have had significantly less interest in the topic. The Newberry sample was chosen to correspond to the age and experience demographics of the LaSalle sample.

To respond to the research question “*How has elementary foreign language learning affected students’ advanced foreign language study and career choices,*” it was necessary to identify a sample that had graduated from elementary school at least five years earlier and at least five years after the introduction of the foreign language elementary program curriculum. A sample population that had graduated from elementary school at least five years earlier would also be over the age of 18, enabling them to give informed consent to participate in the survey and eliminating the need for parental permission to participate. These parameters provided a time frame for respondents who might have had substantial experience with FLES, with secondary and post-secondary schooling, as well as with opportunities for employment and decisions about career paths to follow. Since the FLES program at LaSalle Language Academy was initiated in 1978, the sample included graduates from 1985, continuing forward through the classes from the subsequent decade, closing the sample with graduates from the class of 1996. To promote confidence in providing honest answers to the survey questions, respondents were guaranteed that their anonymity and privacy would be preserved.

Both LaSalle Language Academy and Newberry Academy were established in response to a federal judicial consent decree in the 1970’s to voluntarily desegregate Chicago Public Schools, and there continued to be a remarkably diverse student population at each school. The students were selected through a computerized citywide lottery. Though the lottery varied slightly at each school in the different minorities selected in the process, the same basic procedures were followed to insure that the spirit and intent of the federal desegregation guidelines were met and upheld.



At LaSalle, each entering kindergarten class consisted of approximately 60 students, 50% boys and 50% girls to ensure gender equity. Racial and ethnic diversity was achieved by selecting approximately (1) 33% White, (2) 30% Black, (3) 2% American Indian, (4) 12% Asian, and (5) 23% Hispanic at LaSalle. At Newberry, although the percentages within each minority group varied, the CPS desegregation guidelines limiting non-minority enrollment to 35% and minority enrollment to between 65% and 85% were also adhered to strictly. Although the actual respondents to the survey might not mirror those percentages exactly, the sample was racially diverse. Furthermore, although economic diversity was not factored into the lottery, the school populations were between 25 and 40% low income, as determined by the number of students qualifying for free and reduced price meals. There were slightly higher poverty levels at Newberry. Because students were not selected based on a test at either school, it was initially a random sample with regards to academic potential. An optional request was made to respondents in the survey to provide demographic background information to allow for a variety of statistical operations and comparisons among groups.

Although the actual sample was not entirely random, since the survey was sent to all alumni for whom address information was available, it could be considered a sample of convenience. It was anticipated that less than 50% of the graduates from the target population would even receive the initial letter since many families might have moved in recent years. The sorting mechanism was that only alumni who lived or had family remaining at the directory address, as well as alumni who kept the schools informed of address changes, or alumni whose friends provided the schools with new addresses, could be included in the sample population. While there might be some bias against

respondents of a lower socio-economic status due to a high mobility factor, that bias could be off-set by upwardly mobile respondents who might similarly be disposed to move to a better neighborhood or out of the city. Becker's (1998) distinction between *random* sampling and *theoretical* sampling, where selection of the sample might have increased the probability of a particular result, could be explored in the future to see whether it impacted on the dissertation research.

## **B. Measures**

### Independent Variables

The independent variables in this study were the number of years of student participation, their experiences in, and their attitudes toward, elementary foreign language study. Usually, referred to as Foreign Language In Elementary Schools (FLES), it has been generally defined as two or more years of elementary foreign language study, three or more class periods per week, with language proficiency as a goal. (Lipton, 1994) An additional independent variable was the experience of the student in the school's overseas exchange program in which students, accompanied by their teacher, spend two weeks living with a family in a foreign country. Students' attitudes towards FLES instructional elements were also measured.

### Participation in FLES

With alumni of LaSalle's elementary foreign language program essentially as the sample group, the independent variable was participation in this FLES program. Since no new students were accepted in eighth grade, all members of the sample would have participated in the FLES program from two to nine years. One survey question asked for

the number of years of elementary foreign language study in order to evaluate whether length of time in FLES program might be an influential factor. The survey question was:

How many years did you study this foreign language in elementary school?

#### Experiences in FLES

A few survey questions requested participants to recall various FLES activities and rank order them in importance. There were several categories of experiences listed, as well as an open ended selection of "Other," where students could write in a FLES experience they considered significant. Forced choice selections included foreign language songs, games, books, culture videos, conversation, food activities, field trips, projects, speakers, exchange student visits, and overseas travel. Students were asked:

Did you travel overseas with your class elementary school?

Rate parts of your FLES experiences on a scale of 1 to 5.

#### Attitudes toward FLES

The student's attitudes toward their FLES experience were measured on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from very positive, somewhat positive, neutral, somewhat negative, to very negative. The same Likert scale was used for several questions in the survey, in order to allow for statistical comparisons. The question was:

How would you rate your elementary school foreign language experience?

#### Control and Intervening Variables

Control variables were whether the student grew up in a bilingual family or in a family where a foreign language was spoken by the parents. An intervening variable might be whether the student achieved proficiency in a foreign language, as indicated by achievement of a grade of A or B. Also, which foreign language was studied in

elementary school might be a factor influencing students' attitudes and could be analyzed in a partial correlation. Relevant survey questions were:

What foreign language did you study in elementary school?  
What grades did you receive in foreign language in elementary school?  
Did you grow up in a family that spoke a language other than English?  
Was it the same language that you studied in elementary school?

### Dependent Variables

The dependent variables in this study were taking foreign language to an advanced level in high school, advanced study in college, study and travel abroad, and use of foreign language in work situations. Several questions in the survey related to each of these variables. Responses to the questions were coded categorically when appropriate, but preferably, numerically, when possible, to allow for quantitative analysis.

### Advanced FL Level in High School

The first dependent variable of advanced foreign language study in high school was measured through data provided about enrollment and grades in classes beyond freshman year, level of foreign language proficiency attained, and possible enrollment in a second foreign language. This information would be compared to data about advanced foreign language study from the control group that had not participated in an elementary foreign language program for two or more years. Some comparisons could be made with the general U. S. high school and college population based on statistical information available from the U.S. Department of Education, from foreign language teacher organizations, and from related studies of enrollment in high school and college foreign language courses. On the current survey, questions included:

Did you study a foreign language in high school?  
If yes, did you study the same in high school as in elementary?  
Which foreign language did you study?

In what year of the foreign language were you placed?  
How many years of this foreign language did you study?  
Did you take an advanced placement foreign language class?  
Did you study a second foreign language in high school? Which one?

#### Attitude toward Foreign Language Study in High School

Attitude toward foreign language studied in high school was measured primarily on a five-point Likert Scale similar to the one used for attitude questions relating to FLES. Students were queried about how they would rate their high school foreign language experience. Students were asked about their grades in high school foreign language classes to analyze both the students' degree of proficiency as well as to see whether there was a positive correlation between the grades received and the advanced level of foreign language reached. These questions were stated:

What grade(s) did you generally receive in foreign language classes?  
How would you rate your high school foreign language experiences?

#### Foreign Language in College

At the college level, the dependent variables of advanced achievement were measured by placement in a class beyond the introductory level, taking more than two semesters of the same foreign language, enrollment in another foreign language, and study abroad. Questions relating to college foreign language study were:

Did you attend college?  
Did you study a foreign language in college?  
Which foreign language(s) did you study in college?  
How many semesters (or quarters) did you study this language?  
Did you study abroad during college?  
If so, in which country did you study?  
Did you participate in any post-graduate study outside the United States?

### Attitude toward Foreign Language Study in College

Students' attitude toward foreign language study in college would be indicated using the five-point Likert scale described above. Another measure of high academic achievement and proficiency was indicated by students receiving grades of mostly A's and B's in the foreign language courses. These survey questions were:

What grades did you receive in your foreign language courses?  
How would you rate your college foreign language experience?

### Foreign Language and Career Choice

With respect to career choice and experiences, dependent variables were the extent to which knowledge of foreign language was useful at work, the frequency of use of foreign language at work, and whether or not a foreign language was required for employment or specified in the job description. Again, when possible, data were measured numerically, using a five-point Likert scale. Career questions inquired:

How many years work of experience do you have?  
In which fields have you worked? (Mark all that apply)  
Do you use foreign language in your work?  
How helpful is knowledge of a foreign language helpful in doing your work?  
Was knowledge of a foreign language required or helpful for being hired?  
How do you use a foreign language at work?

### Demographic Variables

The final component of the survey was be an optional section requesting demographic data about the respondents. Information requested included:

Age; Gender; Race; Marital Status;  
Educational Level (highest grade completed in school)  
Employment Status; Family Economic Status while in elementary school  
Respondent's Annual Income (five categories, rather than actual amounts)

When available, the demographic information would provide a picture of the respondents who participated in the elementary foreign learning program.

## Open-ended Questions and Semi-structured Interviews

Responses to the open-ended questions, along with reflections from the semi-structured interviews, provided the material for the qualitative analysis. It was anticipated that the actual interview protocol would be brief, although sufficient to prompt reflections by respondents about their FLES experiences. The open-ended questions consisted of:

- A. What is your earliest memory about learning foreign language?
- B. What did you enjoy most in your foreign language classes?
- C. What was most difficult for you in your foreign language classes?
- D. What was most the valuable part of studying a foreign language?
- E. How did learning a foreign language in elementary school influence your life?
- F. Please share your reflections about your elementary foreign language experience?

While everyone who received the survey had the option of completing the open-ended questions to provide qualitative data, it was anticipated that only a few participants could be interviewed personally, either by the principal investigator or by an independent interviewer. For purposes of this study, six students of different years and of diverse backgrounds were selected to provide commentary about participants' FLES experiences.

In the survey cover letter, former students were invited to contact the principal investigator by telephone, letter or e-mail if they were willing to be interviewed. The first six that responded were selected as a sample. It was decided that should any additional responses be received, interviews would be scheduled and held for future research.

The semi-structured interviews contained four sections with several general questions in each section. The questions in part A. SCHOOL were:

- What FLES language did you study? How many years? When did you graduate?
- Did you study a foreign language in high school? How much was required?
- What was something you learned in your FLES class that affected your learning in high school?
- Did you study a foreign language in college? How much was required?
- Was there a talent you discovered about yourself in elementary school that led you to particular courses in high school or college?

The questions in part B. WORK were:

Describe your career path and what type of work you have done.  
Give an example of a work experience where foreign language was useful.  
How would you see your self using foreign language in the future.

The questions in part C. TRAVEL were:

Did you travel with your class at LaSalle?  
Have you had another opportunity to travel overseas?  
Was your earlier study of foreign language helpful when you traveled?

The questions in part D. LIFE were:

What is your earliest memory about learning a foreign language?  
What was the most valuable part of studying a foreign language?  
How did learning a foreign language in elementary school influence your life?

The purpose of the interviews was to elicit similar information from the respondents as did the questionnaires, but to allow them to express themselves orally, rather than in writing. The format allowed individuals to explain their answers with greater detail. The narrative responses encouraged alumni of the school to elucidate on the effect the FLES program participation had on their subsequent educational and employment experiences.

This information from the open-ended questions and interviews provided a broad range of advantages or disadvantages or early foreign language study as perceived by the sample. Respondents who wished to do so could add explanations, comments or value judgments regarding the value of foreign language learning as it relates to their lives. The qualitative portion allowed for a more colorful story to be told than would be revealed by quantitative analysis alone.

### **C. Methods of data collection: Procedures**

Methods of data collection included both surveys and semi-structured interviews. Initially, a small, representative sample was selected composed of alumni who attended a



reunion in May 2002 at LaSalle Language Academy. Incorporating necessary changes based on suggestions from the test sample group, the survey was mailed to the target population of LaSalle alumni from the classes of 1985 to 1996. Although the surveys were not identified with names, and anonymity was assured, the surveys were numbered for coding and tallying purposes. From the large group of survey respondents, a smaller sample was to be interviewed for profiling in the case studies. Respondents interested in being interviewed were asked to give their names and telephone numbers or e-mail addresses so that they could be contacted.

To help strengthen the likelihood of having a significant sample of respondents, a self-addressed, stamped envelope was mailed with a letter explaining the nature and purpose of the inquiry along with the actual survey to all alumni from that decade. The letter, survey and return envelope were mailed to alumni during the summer. A few more surveys were mailed during the fall and winter when alumni visited the school or provided new address information. When requested, surveys were also e-mailed to alumni via the internet. At the time the survey was completed, respondents were given an opportunity to submit personal reflections of their elementary foreign language learning experiences, as well as indicate whether they would be willing to participate in a follow-up survey or interview for information beyond the qualitative component.

#### **D. Analysis Plan**

The analysis plan was to analyze the responses to the survey questions and to conduct a multiple regression study. Responses were coded, computed and graphed. The data was reviewed to discern any patterns of association between independent and

outcome variables. A linear association was anticipated, with the independent variable of the early foreign language learning, the FLES experiences, having a positive impact on advanced foreign language study, as well as on employment and career choices. A chi-square analysis would permit the determination of which variables were significant in predicting higher levels of foreign language learning and professional use.

The higher number of years of FLES, along with a positive FLES experience, would be a positive predictor on the outcomes of more advanced foreign language study in high school and in college, as well as of a career choice or job where foreign language was used. Similarly, low values of FLES would be associated with lower levels of foreign language study in high school and college, and have little correlation with jobs where foreign language knowledge is necessary. Results from students in the control group with no FLES experiences were anticipated to reveal significantly lower enrollment in advanced foreign language classes and less use of foreign language in the workplace.

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) would serve to illustrate how respondents self-reported their FLES experiences. Low, medium or high values should correlate accordingly with further foreign language study and types of careers selected. In this case, a Multiple Analysis of Variance, a MANOVA might also be appropriate since a three-level independent variable was being evaluated with respect to its effects on three levels of the dependent variables. With the demographic data provided by respondents, further analysis could indicate differences by gender, race or socioeconomic factors.

### **E. Limitations of the research design**

Limitations of the research design included the recognition that, although the sample would be ethnically and economically diverse, it nonetheless represented a non-random, convenience sample. It may be assumed that the sample is a group of urban youth whose parents believed in the importance of elementary foreign language study and obtained this opportunity for their children. Consequently, there may be some issues of generalizability of the results for other population samples. Hopefully, however, the case studies will provide insights that reflect universal concerns about how elementary foreign language learning might be a motivating factor in future educational and career choices.

The hypothesis for this study was that early foreign language learning would lead to greater integration of foreign language with advanced study and career choices. Should the research data suggest a negative relationship between early foreign language study and advanced foreign language study in high school and college, then different avenues could be explored to determine what other benefits might ensue from early foreign language learning. In either case, this study will shed some light on the value of at least one type of FLES program and may focus the attention of curriculum designers, schools of education, state boards of education, and governmental agencies on elementary foreign language initiatives that promote success in education and employment.

#### **IV. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA**

The study focused on the effects of foreign language learning in elementary school on future educational and career choices. The hypothesis was that students who initiated the study of a foreign language in elementary school would engage in the study of foreign language to a greater and more advanced degree in high school and college than their peers who did not study a foreign language in elementary school. Surveys were mailed to alumni of two Chicago Public Schools' elementary magnet programs, one that included foreign language and one that did not, to analyze their foreign language learning experiences. Of the 662 surveys mailed, 154 were returned as undeliverable, and 88 surveys were completed and received by the principal researcher.

##### **A. Foreign Language in Elementary School (FLES) Experience**

The first section of the survey, Part A, inquired about the students' foreign language experiences in elementary school. Its purpose was to ascertain who had participated in the FLES program and who had not, or in other words, who constituted the FLES group and who was in the non-FLES group. For the FLES group, Part A also sought to establish their attitudes towards the FLES program.

The first question asked which language had been studied in elementary school. Students who answered "None" were instructed to proceed to the following section. All respondents indicated that they had studied French, German, Italian, Spanish or None. Although there was an answer choice of "Other" with space to indicate which one, no responses made this selection. Table 1 below represents the responses to the first question and provides an overview of the respondents in this study.

Of the 88 respondents, 77.3% had studied French, German, Italian or Spanish in elementary school for two or more years and formed the FLES participant group (Table 1). Spanish was studied by 36 or 40.9% of the students, more than twice the number of the second most popular language, French, which was the language of 14 or 15.9% of the respondents. Italian included 12.5% and German accounted for 8.0% of the respondents, with 11 students from the Italian and only seven from the German program. Although the numbers are small, they correspond with enrollment statistics for the past 20 years at LaSalle Language Academy where, historically, approximately 40% of the students elect Spanish, 27% choose French, 18% study Italian, and only 15% take German. There were 20 surveys, 22.7% of the returned questionnaires, that were received from respondents who had studied no foreign language in their elementary school.

*Table 1 Foreign Language in Elementary School*

Elementary Foreign Language	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
None	20	22.7	22.7
French	14	15.9	38.6
German	7	8.0	46.6
Italian	11	12.5	59.1
Spanish	36	40.9	100.0
Total	88	100.0	

The second question inquired for how many years the foreign language had been studied in elementary school (Table 2). Rather than a forced-choice answer, there was a short line provided on which respondents could write the number of years. Responses ranged from zero to nine years for all respondents. Where a respondent had indicated “None” for the previous answer, or had indicated participation in an extra-curricular foreign language program, the number of years was recorded as “0.”

For purposes of this study, the operational definition of a FLES program has been established as one in which students participate in a program for **two or more years** of daily foreign language study in elementary school. One survey was received from a LaSalle alumnus who had attended the school for only one year; the data from this one survey was not included since the respondent qualified neither as a FLES participant nor as a member of the comparison group. The survey results included 68 respondents who had studied a foreign language for two or more years in elementary school. These 68 respondents, 77.3% of the total, were the FLES program participants. This was the sample group that had attended LaSalle Language Academy and had studied a foreign language from two to nine years. There were 20 respondents, 22.7% of the sample, who formed the non-FLES control or comparison group. These were the respondents who attended Newberry Mathematics and Science Academy, those who did not study a foreign language in elementary school or who studied it as an extracurricular activity (Table 2).

*Table 2 FLES Program Participation*

FLES Program	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Non-FLES	20	22.7	22.7
FLES	68	77.3	100.0
Total	88	100.0	

On the question regarding the number of years of foreign language studied in elementary school, 20 respondents, 22.7%, indicated that they had zero years of foreign language in elementary school, referred to throughout the survey as the non-FLES group. (Table 3) The remaining 68 respondents, 77.3%, noted that they had studied a foreign language from two to nine years in elementary school, and they are considered the experimental or target FLES group for the study (Table 3).

Eight respondents, 11.8% of the FLES total, marked that they had studied a foreign language in elementary school for two years, which was considered the minimum experience necessary to be considered a FLES participant. While only three respondents indicated that they had studied a foreign language for three years, 25 respondents, 36.7%, indicated that they had studied a foreign language in elementary school for three to eight years. The largest cluster of responses was 35, or 51.5%, who had studied a foreign for all nine years of their kindergarten through eighth grade elementary school experience. Two of these groups, those with the least foreign language study of only two or three years, the duration of a typical junior high program, in contrast to those who studied a foreign language for their entire eight or nine years of elementary education, might be expected to show the greatest variation, if analyzed separately.

*Table 3 Number of Years of Foreign Language in Elementary School*

FLES Program	Number of Years of FLES	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Non-FLES	0	20	100.0	100.0
FLES	2	8	11.8	11.8
	3	3	4.4	16.2
	4	7	10.3	26.5
	5	3	4.4	30.9
	6	2	2.9	33.8
	7	3	4.4	38.2
	8	7	10.3	48.5
	9	35	51.5	100.0
	Total	68	100.0	

Four questions on the survey addressed respondents' perceptions of the quality of their experiences learning a foreign language in elementary school:

3. How many years did you study a foreign language in elementary school?
4. How would you rate your foreign language proficiency after elementary school?
5. How would you rate your elementary school foreign language experience?
6. Rate the impact of your FLES experience using the scale below from 1 to 5.

The responses to these questions will offer some insight into how alumni of the elementary foreign language program perceived their experiences and whether the quality of their experiences may have an impact on future study and professional use of a foreign language. This data will also be used in conjunction with the qualitative component of this survey where respondents provide more detailed, narrative reflections on their elementary foreign language experience. On the four questions listed above, the respondents provided answers on a 5-point Likert scale, with "1" being the lowest or most negative rating and "5" as the highest or most positive rating.

There were 68 respondents who reported their foreign language grades from elementary school (Table 4). None of those who had studied foreign language in elementary school reported that their grades had been mostly D's and F's, and only three, 4.4%, marked that their grades were mostly C's and D's. Another relatively small number, 20.6% indicated mostly B's and C's. Two larger, almost equally divided groups indicated mostly higher grades, with 39.7% marking mostly A's and B's and 35.3% marking almost all A's. In summary, only 25.1% of those who had studied a foreign language in elementary school reported the lower range of grades with B's, C's, and D's, while 75% reported the higher grades of mostly A's and B's. No answer was given by 20.2% of the respondents, which corresponded to the comparison group (Table 4).



*Table 4 Foreign Language Grades in Elementary School*

FLES Program	FLES Grades	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Non-FLES	No answer	20	100.0	
FLES	mostly C&D	3	4.4	4.4
	mostly B&C	14	20.6	25.0
	mostly A&B	27	39.7	64.7
	mostly A's	24	35.3	100.0
	Total	68	100.0	

In assessing their own foreign language proficiency at the end of elementary school, 68 respondents again provided information (Table 5). Of the total, 8.8% indicated that they were “Not Proficient,” and an additional 14.7% felt they were just a “Little Proficient.” A bit more than a quarter of the students, 26.5% marked the middle level of “Somewhat Proficient. The greatest number, 24 students or 35.3% felt that they were “Proficient,” and 10 more, 14.7% indicated great confidence in their language skills at the end of elementary school by marking “Very Proficient.” In fact, half of the respondents, 50% felt that they had high foreign language proficiency, while only 23.5% felt minimally proficient in their foreign language after their elementary school study.

*Table 5 Foreign Language Proficiency in Elementary School*

FLES Program	FLES Proficiency	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Non-FLES	No answer	20	100.0	
FLES	not proficient	6	8.8	8.8
	a little	10	14.7	23.5
	somewhat	18	26.5	50.0
	proficient	24	35.3	85.3
	very proficient	10	14.7	100.0
	Total	68	100.0	

Whereas the previous question on proficiency inquired about respondent’s foreign language speaking, reading and writing skills, the following question probed respondents’

feelings about the overall elementary foreign language experience. The same 68 respondents from the previous two questions rated their elementary language experiences, on the 1-to-5 Likert scale. Only 1.5% reported a very negative or negative experience, while 13.4% said theirs was satisfactory. (Table 6) By contrast, 38.2% felt their language learning experience was positive, and 42.6% noted theirs as very positive. When the latter two were added together, 80.8% seemed to think that their elementary foreign language learning experiences were positive or better. (Table 6) What the respondents mean as a positive experience is clarified in their extended responses later in the survey.

*Table 6 Foreign Language Experience in Elementary School*

FLES Program	FLES Experience	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Non-FLES	No answer	20	100.0	
FLES	very negative	1	1.5	1.5
	negative	4	5.9	7.4
	satisfactory	8	11.8	19.1
	positive	26	38.2	57.4
	very positive	29	42.6	100.0
	Total	68	100.0	

Another elaboration on the respondents' perceptions of their elementary language experience related to the perception of the materials and activities for foreign language instruction. Respondents were asked to rate the impact of books, songs, games, culture videos, conversation, food activities, field trips, projects, speakers, student exchange visits and overseas travel on their FLES experience. They marked their responses from Very Negative (1) to Very Positive (5) for each item. These responses were then averaged for a single score rating from "1" to "5" for their perceived impact of the FLES instructional materials on their elementary school foreign language experience.

Two fewer respondents, 66 rather than 68, provided data about FLES materials, and none marked “Very Negative” for this question. (Table 7) Overall, only 3.0% felt the materials were negative, and 24.2% rated them as satisfactory. On the other hand, 42.4% thought the materials were positive, and 33.3% responded that they were very positive. When the four categories are condensed into only two, the results are even more striking. Where only a very small percentage 27.2% evaluated the instructional components as negative or satisfactory, more than three-quarters or 75.7% evaluated the FLES materials as positive or very positive (Table 7).

*Table 7 Foreign Language Materials in Elementary School*

FLES Program	FLES Materials	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Non-FLES	No answer	20	100.0	
FLES	negative	2	2.9	3.0
	satisfactory	14	20.6	24.2
	positive	28	41.2	66.7
	very positive	22	32.4	100.0
	Total	66	97.1	
	No answer	2	2.9	
	Total	68	100.0	

Because the LaSalle Language Academy, where the respondents engaged in their elementary foreign language learning, has an overseas travel and student exchange program, one question addressed that experience specifically. Students were asked whether they had traveled overseas in elementary school. Of the 68 total number of valid responses to this question, representing those who had studied a foreign language in elementary school, exactly 52.9% indicated that they had traveled overseas in elementary school, and 47.1% indicated that they had not (Table 8).

*Table 8 Overseas Travel in Elementary School*

FLES Program		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Non-FLES	No	2	10.0	100.0
	No answer	18	90.0	
	Total	20	100.0	
FLES	No	32	47.1	47.1
	Yes	36	52.9	100.0
	Total	68	100.0	

The remaining three questions about elementary foreign language learning related to the respondents' home circumstances. When questioned whether they had grown up in a family that spoke a foreign language, 36.8% of those surveyed indicated "Yes," that they did grow up in a family where a foreign language was spoken. The following question probed whether it was the same foreign language that they studied in elementary school, and question yielded only 23 "Yes" responses, that 27.7 % of the FLES participants studied the same foreign language that was spoken in their home. To the question whether respondents had any relatives that spoke the language they studied in elementary school, 34.8% answered in the affirmative.

## B. High School Foreign Language Study

The initial query on the section of the survey regarding high school foreign language study is “Did you study a foreign language in high school?” Respondents who answered “No” were instructed to skip the remainder of the high school foreign language section and to proceed to the following section. Regardless of whether or not they had studied a foreign language in elementary school, everyone surveyed responded either “No” or “Yes” to this question. Of the 88 respondents, only six did not study a foreign language in high school. (Table 9) A remarkable percentage of both groups, 91.2% of FLES program participants and 100% of non-FLES did study a foreign language in high school (Table 9).

*Table 9 Foreign Language Study in High School by FLES Group*

FLES Program	Foreign Language Study in High School	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Non-FLES	Yes	20	100.0	100.0
FLES	No	6	8.8	8.8
	Yes	62	91.2	100.0
	Total	68	100.0	

The survey requested information about the number of years of French, German, Italian, Spanish or other foreign language studied by each respondent. Because some respondents took more than one foreign language in high school, even though the total marked for the languages was 88, this included six who had taken more than one language, along with six others who had taken no foreign language at all (Table 10). For both the FLES and non-FLES groups, the foreign language taken most frequently was Spanish, and the second most popular was French. Within the FLES group, the ratio of Spanish to French students was 3:2, while for the non-FLES, the ratio was 3:1 of Spanish

to French students. In the FLES group, there were two students of German and one of Italian, while in the non-FLES group there was none for either language. Three students from each group studied a foreign language other than French, German, Italian or Spanish in high school (Table 10).

*Table 10 Number of Years of Years Foreign Language in High School by FLES Group*

FLES Program		Years H.S. French	Years H.S. German	Years H.S. Italian	Years H.S. Spanish	Years H.S. other lang.	Years H.S. total F.L.
Non-FLES	N	4	0	0	14	3	20
	Missing	16	20	20	6	17	0
FLES	N	24	2	1	37	3	68
	Missing	44	66	67	31	65	0

The subsequent series of questions on the survey requested that respondents mark the number of years they had studied French, German, Italian, Spanish or “Other” foreign language, and whether they had studied that language to the Advanced Placement level. When the responses were tabulated, the number of years was recorded for each language (Table 11). If the Advanced Placement or “A.P.” level was marked, it was considered that respondents had reached a fifth year, and the response was marked as a “5.” Generally, if a student reached either the fourth or fifth year of foreign language in high school, he was considered to have pursued a course of foreign language study to an advanced level. In addition to the tally of the number of years of a specific language, the total number of years of high school foreign language was recorded for each respondent so that groups could be compared more easily.

The first inquiry was for the study of French, and 28 of the 88, 32.3% of the total respondents had studied this language in high school. (Table 11) Of the FLES program participants who studied French in high school, only 4.2% took one year, and 8.3% took

two, and 12.5% took three years. However, 50% took four years, and another 25% reached the fifth year A.P. level. Adding together those who studied French for four or five years, 75% total studied French to an advanced level. In the non-FLES group, the reverse occurred, because 75% took the minimum of only one or two years, and 25% took a third year. Since none took a fourth or a fifth A.P. year, it can be concluded that none of the non-FLES studied French in high school to an advanced level (Table 11).

*Table 11 Number of Years of High School French by FLES Group*

FLES Program	Years of H.S. French	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Non-FLES	1	1	5.0	25.0
	2	2	10.0	75.0
	3	1	5.0	100.0
	No answer	16	80.0	
	Total	20	100.0	
FLES	1	1	1.5	4.2
	2	2	2.9	12.5
	3	3	4.4	25.0
	4	12	17.6	75.0
	A.P.	6	8.8	100.0
	No answer	44	64.7	
	Total	68	100.0	

To determine whether or not there was a significant difference in the amount and extent of French studied by FLES and non-FLES respondents, the mean number of years was compared for the two groups. For the FLES group, the mean number of years of French studied was 3.83 which was 1.83, almost two years more than the mean of 2.00 for non-FLES (Table 12). Because the standard deviation is 1.2 and is relatively small in relation to the range, it can be said that the distributions are homogeneous.

*Table 12 Comparison of Means- Number of Years of High School French by FLES Group*

FLES Program	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Non-FLES	2.00	4	.816
FLES	3.83	24	1.049
Total	3.57	28	1.200

To assess the strength of the association between FLES program participation and the number of years of high school French pursued by students, a linear regression provided additional information. Because **Pearson's  $r$**  was .545, it signified a moderate, positive association between FLES program participation and the number of years of high school French. The  $r$ -squared value of .270 suggested that FLES participation could predict the level of French language reached in high school in 27% of the cases. Because the significance level was .003, which exceeded the standard of .05, FLES program participation was significant in determining the number of years of high school French taken by respondents (Table 13).

*Table 13 Regression Analysis for Number of Years of H.S. French by FLES Group*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.545(a)	.297	.270	1.025

a Predictors: (Constant), FLES Program

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	11.524	1	11.524	10.962	.003(a)
	Residual	27.333	26	1.051		
	Total	38.857	27			

a Predictors: (Constant), FLES Program

b Dependent Variable: Number of years H.S. French



German and Italian accounted for only three respondents out of the 88. Two studied German in high school, one for one year and one for three years. The one respondent who studied Italian in high school did pursue it to the fifth year A.P. level. The noticeably small number of students taking German or Italian in high school is indicative of the fact that offering these two languages in high school is quite rare.

By contrast, a very large group, 51 out of 88 or 57.9% of the total, responded that they had studied Spanish in high school. (Table 14) Of those who had participated in the FLES program, only a minimal 5.4% said that they studied Spanish for only one year. A larger group 32.4% marked that they had studied it for the required two years. Taking a third year to exceed the minimum were 16.2% of the FLES group. However, 16.2% also took a fourth year and 29.7% took a fifth or AP year, for a combined total of 45.9% of the FLES group who took Spanish to an advanced level in high school. (Table 14)

Within the non-FLES group, 50% completed two years of Spanish sufficient to meet the general two-year high school foreign language requirement. An additional 21.4% took a third year of Spanish to exceed the minimum, and only a small group, 28.6% took a fourth year or fifth year to reach an advanced level, approximately half the percentage or one-quarter the number of the FLES group (Table 14).

*Table 14 Number of Years of High School Spanish*

FLES Program	Number of Years of High School Spanish	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Non-FLES	2	7	35.0	50.0
	3	3	15.0	71.4
	4	2	10.0	85.7
	A.P.	2	10.0	100.0
	No answer	6	30.0	
	Total	20	100.0	
FLES	1	2	2.9	5.4
	2	12	17.6	37.8
	3	6	8.8	54.1
	4	6	8.8	70.3
	A.P.	11	16.2	100.0
	No answer	31	45.6	
	Total	68	100.0	

By comparing means or the average number of years of Spanish taken by the groups in the sample, the data show that FLES students took an average of 3.32 years in high school, while non-FLES took only 2.93 years. The comparison indicates that FLES students took an average only .41 or less than half a year more of Spanish in high school than their non-FLES companions (Table 15). Because of the minimal difference, it appeared that FLES was not a significant factor in determining the number of years of Spanish studied in high school (Table 15).

*Table 15 Mean Number of Years of High School Spanish by FLES Group*

FLES Program	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Non-FLES	2.93	14	1.141
FLES	3.32	37	1.355
Total	3.22	51	1.301

Six students, 8.6% of the total, marked "Other" on the survey, indicating that in high school they had studied a different language, such as Latin or Japanese. (Table 16). Of these six, there were four non-FLES and two FLES students each who marked

“Other.” Of the non-FLES, one took one year, two took three years, and one took four years. Of the FLES group, one student indicated two years, and the other indicated four years of a language other than French, German, Italian or Spanish. The two languages that students wrote in as “Other” were Latin and Japanese. No students in this “Other” group indicated that they had taken any other language to the A.P. level (Table 16)

*Table 16 Number of Years of Other Foreign Language in High School by FLES Group*

FLES Program	Number of Years of Other H.S. Foreign Language	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Non-FLES	3	2	10.0	66.7
	4	1	5.0	100.0
	No answer	17	85.0	
	Total	20	100.0	
FLES	1	1	1.5	33.3
	2	1	1.5	66.7
	4	1	1.5	100.0
	No answer	65	95.6	
	Total	68	100.0	

The data for the number of respondents taking a foreign language in high school was combined across the five foreign language classifications to focus on the number of years of total foreign language taken by each respondent. Of the FLES program respondents, only 8.8% took no foreign language and 2.9% took only one year of high school foreign language for a combined total of 11.7%. Two years of foreign language constituted the amount for 17.6% of the FLES group, and 14.7% took exactly three years. One-fourth, 25% of the group took four years, and another 25% took a fifth year of foreign language, for a total of 50% in this category. Adding together to this group another 5.8% who took six or eight years, there was a total of 56.8% FLES who took a foreign language in high school to an advanced level (Table 17).

Within the group of non-FLES program respondents, 45% took the minimal two years required of foreign language. Another 25% studied foreign language for a third year. Of the non-FLES, 20% took a fourth year and only 10% more took a fifth year, for a total of 30% non-FLES who studied foreign language in high school to an advanced level in high school (Table 17).

When the two groups were compared, the difference was apparent. Because the purpose of this study was to analyze the effects of FLES program participation, the data was split into two groups, those who did not and those who did participate in a FLES program (Table 3). Continuing with the definition of FLES program participation as having studied a foreign language in elementary school for two or more years, 77.3% of the respondents were FLES participants and 22.7% were not. The number of years of total foreign language taken in high school by these two groups is compared in the table below (Table 17).

*Table 17 Number of Years of Total Foreign Language in High School by FLES Group*

FLES Program	Number of Years of Total H.S. For. Lang.	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Non-FLES	2	9	45.0	45.0
	3	5	25.0	70.0
	4	4	20.0	90.0
	5	2	10.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	
FLES	0	6	8.8	8.8
	1	2	2.9	11.8
	2	12	17.6	29.4
	3	10	14.7	44.1
	4	17	25.0	69.1
	5	17	25.0	94.1
	6	2	2.9	97.1
	8	2	2.9	100.0
	Total	68	100.0	

To determine whether participating in the FLES program has an effect on the amount of total foreign language studied in high school, an analysis of variance, or a one-way ANOVA test was performed on the data. The analysis revealed that the mean total number of high school foreign language for FLES students was 3.49 and 2.95 years for non-FLES. By comparison, FLES students took .54 or just over one-half year more total foreign language in high school than non-FLES participants (Table 18). For each group, the minimum was zero years and the maximum was five years of foreign language. However, with the significance at .20 not meeting the .05 threshold, it is only of moderate significance for establishing that FLES is a determining factor in predicting the amount of foreign language studied in high school (Table 18).

*Table 18 Group Differences in Mean Years of High School Total Foreign Language Between Non-FLES and FLES Groups*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Non-FLES	20	2.95	1.050	.235	2.46	3.44
FLES	68	3.49	1.775	.215	3.06	3.91
Total	88	3.36	1.648	.176	3.01	3.71

**ANOVA**

Number of Years of H.S. Total Foreign Language

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4.428	1	4.428	1.642	.203
Within Groups	231.935	86	2.697		
Total	236.364	87			

In order to evaluate whether some of the FLES experiences affected advanced study of foreign language in high school, the data from the question asking respondents whether they traveled overseas with their elementary school class was considered. The average number of years of high school foreign language taken by students who answered

“Yes” to this question was 3.94 while for those who said “No,” the mean was 3.0, which was .96 or almost a full year less of high school foreign language than those who did travel overseas with their elementary school class (Table 19). The ANOVA showed a *p* value of .022 associated with the *F* ratio of 5.464. This indicated that it was significant at the .022 level, supporting the premise that participation in overseas travel in elementary school was a significant predictor of the number of years of high school foreign language, since there were only two chances in one hundred that the difference in means occurred by chance (Table 19).

*Table 19 Analysis of Variance of Difference in Mean Years of H.S. Foreign Language Between Overseas Travel and No Overseas Travel Experience in Elementary School*

Overseas Travel	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
No Overseas Travel	35	3.00	1.985	.336	2.32	3.68
Overseas	36	3.94	1.372	.229	3.48	4.41
Total	71	3.48	1.755	.208	3.06	3.89

**ANOVA**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	15.829	1	15.829	5.464	.022
Within Groups	199.889	69	2.897		
Total	215.718	70			

The hypothesis of this study was that students who had taken a foreign language in elementary school would take more advanced foreign language in high school and college. Advanced foreign language in high school was defined as four or more years of high school foreign language. To test the hypothesis, a chi-square test was performed, comparing the percentage of FLES and non-FLES participants with the percentage of participants who took four or more years of high school foreign language, to determine

whether there was a pattern of association between the variables (Table 20). The data revealed that 38 or 55.9% FLES took four or more years compared to only 30% non-FLES who took four or more years of foreign language in high school. Because the Pearson's  $r$  had a value of .217 and a significance of .042, better than the .05 level of significance necessary, it was possible to reject the null hypothesis. There was enough evidence to rule out the idea that the association had occurred by chance, and sufficient evidence to determine that there was a positive association between participation in FLES and taking advanced levels of foreign language in high school (Table 20).

*Table 20 Chi-Square Analysis of Four or More Years High School Total Foreign Language and FLES Program Participation*

		FLES Program		Total
		Non-FLES	FLES	
Less than 4 Years	N	14	30	44
	% within FLES Program	70.0%	44.1%	50.0%
More than 4 Years	N	6	38	44
	% within FLES Program	30.0%	55.9%	50.0%
Total	Count	20	68	88
	% of Total	22.7%	77.3%	100.0%

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.141	1	.042
N of Valid Cases		88	

The data from the surveys was analyzed to determine whether the number of years of participation in a FLES program had an effect on the number of years of foreign language taken by respondents in high school. Regression analysis was conducted to assess the strength and direction of the association. The mean number of years of elementary foreign language study was 5.36, and the mean number of years of high

school foreign language study was 3.36. The Pearson's  $r$  at .206 confirmed that there was a positive association, and that the more FLES a student had, the more foreign language in high school he was likely to take. However, the  $r$ -squared of .042 indicated that the number of years of FLES was likely to be able to predict the amount of high school foreign language in only 4% of the cases, or only a very low probability of four chances out of one hundred. However, the positive association that existed was significant to the .054 level, which did meet the .05 threshold for significance (Table 21).

*Table 21 Regression Analysis for the Number of Years of FLES and the Number of Years of High School Foreign Language*

**Descriptive Statistics**

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Number of Years H.S. Foreign Language	3.36	1.65	88
Number of Years of FLES	5.36	3.74	88

**Correlations**

		$r$	.Sig.
Pearson Correlation	Number of Years H.S. Foreign Language Number of Years of FLES	.21	.027

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.206	.042	.031	1.62

**Regression**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	10.014	1	10.014	3.805	.054
	Residual	226.350	86	2.632		
	Total	236.364	87			

When the means for the number of years of high school foreign language were compared to the number of years of FLES, there was a positive correlation overall, although some participants with fewer years of FLES took more foreign language in high school. The mean for respondents with two years was 3.00 years, and the mean rose to



3.67 for those with three years of FLES. However, for respondents with four years of FLES, it dropped to 3.29 and for respondents with five years, the mean dropped again to 2.67, and for those with 6 years, it dropped again to the lowest average of only 2.0 years of high school foreign language. The mean for respondents with seven years of FLES also remained at a low 2.33 years of high school foreign language. When the two highest years of FLES were reached, the mean for respondents with eight years of FLES to 4.00 and for respondents with nine years of FLES, it remained high but was slightly lower at 3.77 years of high school foreign language (Table 22).

*Table 22 Mean Number of Years of Years of High School Foreign Language by Number of Years of FLES*

Number of years of FLES	Mean Years HS For Lang	N	Std. Deviation
0	2.95	20	1.05
2	3.00	8	1.60
3	3.67	3	1.15
4	3.29	7	2.87
5	2.67	3	1.15
6	2.00	2	.00
7	2.33	3	2.52
8	4.00	7	1.41
9	3.77	35	1.68
Total	3.36	88	1.65

The hypothesis stated that FLES participants' positive elementary foreign language experiences would also be a positive predictor of advanced foreign language in high school. The data indicated that the FLES participant who had a *very negative* experience only took one year of high school foreign language, while respondents who rated their experience as *negative* or *satisfactory* had an average of 3.25 years, and participants who rated their FLES experience as *positive* or *very positive* was 3.58 or 3.59

as their average number of years of high school foreign language. When the *very negative* and *negative* are averaged together, their mean was 2.80, which was .78 or three-fourths of a year less than the three and a half years for those who rated their FLES experience as *positive* or *very positive* (Table 23).

*Table 23 Mean Number of Years of High School Foreign Language by Rating of Elementary FLES Experience*

FLES Program	Rating of FLES Experience in Elem	Mean Years HS Foreign Lang.	N	Std. Deviation
FLES	very negative	1.00	1	
	negative	3.25	4	2.22
	satisfactory	3.25	8	1.83
	positive	3.58	26	1.86
	very positive	3.59	29	1.68
	Total	3.49	68	1.77

Although the respondents' own assessment of their FLES experiences as positive or negative appeared to have little effect on high school foreign language, several of the other FLES factors presented a more positive association. Respondents who traveled overseas with their FLES class had a mean of 3.94 years of high school foreign language, almost a full year more than the 3.0 mean for respondents who did not travel overseas (Table 24).

*Table 24 Mean Number of Years of High School Foreign Language by Overseas Travel in Elementary School*

Overseas Travel Elementary	Mean Years HS Foreign Language	N	Std. Deviation
No Overseas	3.00	35	1.99
Overseas Travel	3.94	36	1.37
Total	3.48	71	1.76

Similarly, grades in elementary foreign language classes displayed a positive association with the amount of high school foreign language study. FLES participants

with mostly C's and D's took an average of only 1.67 years. As grades improved, respondents took more foreign language in high school: those with mostly B's and C's took 2.36 years; those with mostly A's and B's took 3.33 years, and those with mostly A's had a mean of 4.54 years of high school foreign language (Table 25).

*Table 25 Mean Number of Years of High School Foreign Language by FLES Grades in Elementary School*

FLES Grades in Elementary School	Mean Years of H.S. For. Lang.	N	Std. Deviation
mostly C&D	1.67	3	2.08
mostly B&C	2.36	14	1.39
mostly A&B	3.33	27	1.59
mostly A's	4.54	24	1.56
Total	3.49	68	1.77

In addition to the number of years participants studied a foreign language in high school, the question was asked whether they studied the same foreign language in high school as in elementary school. In total, 63 FLES respondents answered this question, 33.3% were "No," and 66.7% were "Yes" (Table 26). Consistent with the definition of the non-FLES group, none of them had taken the same foreign language in high school because they did not study a foreign language in elementary school. However, of the respondents who did study a foreign language in elementary school (Table 1), there were twice as many who studied the same foreign language in high school and elementary school, compared to those who studied a different foreign language.

*Table 26 Same Foreign Language in High School & Elementary School by FLES Group*

FLES Program		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Non-FLES	No	14	70.0	100.0
	No answer	6	30.0	
	Total	20	100.0	
FLES	No	21	30.9	33.3
	Yes	42	61.8	100.0
	No answer	5	7.4	
	Total	68	100.0	

In conjunction with the question regarding taking the same foreign language in high school as in elementary school, respondents were asked in which year of the foreign language they were placed. There were 40 responses to this question. Of these respondents, 22.5% indicated that they were placed in the first year of the foreign language, while 60% noted that they had been placed in second year and another 17.5% were placed in third year of their foreign language. When those placed in the second and third year are added together, 77.5% of those who studied a foreign language in elementary school were placed in at a higher level and, essentially, were eligible to receive high school credit for their elementary foreign language experience (Table 27).

*Table 27 High School Foreign Language Placement*

FLES Program	Year of H.S. Foreign Language Placement	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Non-FLES	No answer	20	100.0	
FLES	1st year	9	13.2	22.5
	2nd year	24	35.3	82.5
	3rd year	7	10.3	100.0
	Total	40	58.8	
	No answer	28	41.2	
	Total	68	100.0	

Three questions in this part of the survey addressed respondents' perceptions of the quality of their experiences learning a foreign language in high school.

15. What grades did you receive in high school foreign language classes?
16. How would you rate your foreign language proficiency after high school?
17. How would you rate your high school foreign language experience?

These comparatively subjective high school questions echoed similar questions asked about elementary foreign language experiences.

Regarding their recollection of high school foreign language grades, 81 respondents provided information (Table 28). Since 82 out of the 88 total respondents did study a foreign language in high school (Table 9), only one represented a FLES participant that did respond to the question about high school grades. According to those who reported their grades, only one FLES participant indicated mostly D's and F's, and four indicated mostly C's and D's for a cumulative 3.2% indicating lower grades. In the category of mostly B's and C's, 14.8% marked these mid-range grades. Students who received mostly A's and B's equaled 39.3% and those receiving mostly A's equaled 42.6, for a total of 81.9% FLES participants receiving high grades in high school foreign language classes (Table 28).

A slightly lower percentage of non-FLES, 70%, reported receiving mostly A's and B, while 20% received the mid range grades of B's and C's; only 10% reported mostly C's and D's for their high school foreign language grades (Table 28).

*Table 28 Foreign Language Grades in High School by FLES Group*

FLES Program	Foreign Language Grades in High School	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Non-FLES	mostly C&D	2	10.0	10.0	10.0
	mostly B&C	4	20.0	20.0	30.0
	mostly A&B	8	40.0	40.0	70.0
	mostly A's	6	30.0	30.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	
FLES	mostly D&F	1	1.5	1.6	1.6
	mostly C&D	1	1.5	1.6	3.3
	mostly B&C	9	13.2	14.8	18.0
	mostly A&B	24	35.3	39.3	57.4
	mostly A's	26	38.2	42.6	100.0
	No answer	7	10.3		
	Total	68	100.0		

All 82 respondents who took a foreign language in high school did respond to the question where they evaluated their proficiency at the end of this secondary school course of study. Of the 62 FLES, only 3.2% rated themselves as “not proficient,” and another 6.5% rated themselves as “a little proficient,” for a cumulative total of 9.7% with lower ratings. The middle range response of “somewhat proficient,” was the answer of choice for 33.9% of those who answered. Marking themselves as “proficient” was another third, 35.5% of the respondents, while those who felt “very proficient” accounted for 21% more. The FLES respondents who evaluated themselves as proficient and very proficient after high school foreign language study accounted for 56.5% of this group. (Table 29)

The confidence in their own foreign language proficiency after high school was much lower for the non-FLES group. Considering themselves not proficient was 25% of the non-FLES, another 30% felt only a little proficient, for a total of 55% non-FLES who reported minimal proficiency after high school. One-fifth, 20% non-FLES indicated that they were somewhat proficient; only 15% said proficient and 10% marked very

proficient, to total only 25% non-FLES who felt proficient after high school foreign language study. (Table 29)

*Table 29 Confidence in Foreign Language Proficiency after High School*

FLES Program		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Non-FLES	not proficient	5	25.0	25.0
	a little	6	30.0	55.0
	somewhat	4	20.0	75.0
	proficient	3	15.0	90.0
	very proficient	2	10.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	
FLES	not proficient	2	2.9	3.2
	a little	4	5.9	9.7
	somewhat	21	30.9	43.5
	proficient	22	32.4	79.0
	very proficient	13	19.1	100.0
	No answer	6	8.8	
	Total	68	100.0	

When asked to make a value judgment about their high school foreign language experience, 62 FLES responded, and 6 marked no answer. (Table 30) Three respondents, 4.8%, believed they had suffered negative or very negative experiences. The description of satisfactory was found apt by 24.2%. However, 25.8% thought positive and 45.2% thought that very positive was the appropriate description. On the whole, 70% FLES responded that their foreign language learning experience in high school had been positive or very positive. (Table 30)

Of the non-FLES, with no elementary experience foreign language as a comparison, 60% rated their high school foreign language as positive and 40% rated it very positive (Table 30).

*Table 30 Foreign Language Experience in High School*

FLES Program	Rating of H.S. Foreign Language Experience	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Non-FLES	positive	3	15.0	60.0
	very positive	2	10.0	100.0
	No answer	15	75.0	
	Total	20	100.0	
FLES	very negative	2	2.9	3.2
	negative	1	1.5	4.8
	satisfactory	15	22.1	29.0
	positive	16	23.5	54.8
	very positive	28	41.2	100.0
	No answer	6	8.8	
	Total	68	100.0	

The final question in the high school foreign language part of the survey was the query whether or not the respondents had traveled overseas with their language class in high school. When the similar question was posed regarding travel overseas with their elementary school foreign language class to those studied a foreign language in elementary school, 36 respondents, 52.9% answered affirmatively (Table 8). However, the response was quite different when respondents were asked about high school travel. Of the total 88 surveys returned, 80 held an answer to this question. Even among the FLES group, 93.4% responded “No.” Only four respondents, 6% said “Yes,” that they did travel overseas with their language class in high school. Of the non-FLES group, none had traveled overseas with his or her class in high school. (Table 31)



*Table 31 Overseas Travel in High School by FLES Group*

FLES Program	Overseas Travel	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Non-FLES	No	19	95.0	100.0
	No answer	1	5.0	
	Total	20	100.0	
FLES	No	57	83.8	93.4
	Yes	4	5.9	100.0
	No answer	7	10.3	
	Total	68	100.0	

Having reviewed each of the variables relating to high school foreign language separately, through model building it was possible to determine whether particular variables were useful in predicting how FLES affected future educational and career choices. A multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine which variables, if any, were useful predictors (Table 32). The data indicated that only foreign language grades in elementary school were significant at the .0001 level, which exceeded the necessary .05 significance level, to be effective as a predictor of the number of years of foreign language taken in high school. Both the number of years of FLES and elementary foreign language proficiency could predict the number of years of high school foreign language in approximately one-quarter of the cases, which was not statistically significant. Although there was a positive association for all three variables, only grades were significant as a predictor (Table 32).

*Table 32 Multiple Regression for FLES Variables on Number of Years of High School Foreign Language*

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.526	.277	.243	1.54

a Predictors: (Constant), Foreign Language Proficiency in Elementary School, Number of Years of FLES, Foreign Language Grades in Elementary School

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	58.389	3	19.463	8.163	.0001
	Residual	152.596	64	2.384		
	Total	210.985	67			

a Predictors: (Constant), Foreign language Proficiency in Elementary School, Number of Years of FLES, Foreign Language Grades in Elementary School

b Dependent Variable: Number of Years High School Total Foreign Language

Model		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		Beta		
1	(Constant)		-1.188	.239
	Number Years of FLES	.049	.447	.657
	FLES Grades	.449	3.884	.0001
	Foreign Language Proficiency after Elementary School	.131	1.142	.258

a Dependent Variable: # years high school total foreign language

### C. College Foreign Language

The third part of the questionnaire related to foreign language study in college. Beginning by asking the question whether they did attend college, the survey instructed the respondents to “skip to part D” if they did not. Of the 88 total, only five respondents marked that they did not attend college, while 83 responded that they did. Similar instructions were provided for the second question, asking if respondents had studied a foreign language, and to proceed to part D if they did not. No answer was marked for the four who did not attend college (Table 33).

Of the 20 total non-FLES, there was one that had marked no answer because he had not gone to college (Table 33). Of the 19 valid responses, 42.1% did not study a foreign language in college, while 57.9% did. However, of the 64 respondents who had participated in a FLES program and had gone to college, only 25% did not, while 75% did study a foreign language in college (Table 33).

*Table 33 Foreign Language Study in College by FLES Group*

FLES Program	Foreign Language taken in college	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Non-FLES	no	8	40.0	42.1
	yes	11	55.0	100.0
	No answer	1	5.0	
	Total	20	100.0	
FLES	no	16	23.5	25.0
	yes	48	70.6	100.0
	No answer	4	5.9	
	Total	68	100.0	

The following question requested that respondents indicate how many semesters of foreign language they studied in college of French, German, Italian, or Spanish. There was also the option of marking “Other,” and a space in which to write which foreign

language that was, and how many semesters they had studied it (Table 34). The chart indicates how many respondents had taken from one to eight semesters of each language. The “Missing” designation is the remainder of recipients who did not mark that language. As indicated in Table 34, 16 respondents studied French, four studied German, seven studied Italian, 30 studied Spanish, and eight studied an “Other” language in college. However, when considering the amount of foreign language studied in college, the percentage for each language was: 29.1% French, 7.3% German, 12.7% Italian, 54.5% Spanish, and 14.5% “Other” (Table 34).

*Table 34 Number of Semesters of Each Foreign Language Studied in College*

	# semesters col. French	# semesters col. Germ	# semesters col. Ital	# semester col. Span	# semesters col. Other	# semesters col. total FL
N	16	4	7	30	8	81
Missing	65	77	74	51	73	0

Semesters, rather than the years, of college foreign language were counted because, generally, one semester of college language is considered to be the equivalent of one year of high school foreign language. Consequently, the number of semesters could be compared to the number of years of foreign language studied by respondents. Of the respondents who did study a foreign language in college, some studied more than one language. The tally of the total number of semesters of foreign language study included more than one language for those particular respondents. The total number of semesters of foreign language studied was recorded for each respondent so that groups could be compared more easily.

The first language considered was French, the second most popular language chosen by those who studied a foreign language in college. Of the FLES group, 20%

took only one semester and another 26.7% took two semesters, for a total of 46.7% who took one or two semesters only. (Table 35) Of the 53.3% who took three or more semesters, 13.3% took three semesters, another 18.3% took four, 6.7% each six or eight semesters of college French. (Table 24) Of the non-FLES group, 50% took two semesters, and 50% took three semesters; however, none took more than three semesters of college French. If four or more semesters could be considered a large amount or an advanced level of college foreign language, the results are significant where comparing the FLES to the non-FLES group of students. The data indicated that 40% of FLES, compared to 0% non-FLES, took a large amount of college French or took French to an advanced level in college, demonstrating a significant difference between the groups (Table 35).

*Table 24 Number of Semesters of College French by FLES Group*

FLES Program	Number of Semesters of College French Taken	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Non-FLES	2	1	5.0	50.0
	3	1	5.0	100.0
	No answer	18	90.0	
	Total	20	100.0	
FLES	1	3	4.4	20.0
	2	4	5.9	46.7
	3	2	2.9	60.0
	4	2	2.9	73.3
	5	1	1.5	80.0
	6	1	1.5	86.7
	8	2	2.9	100.0
	No answer	53	77.9	
Total	68	100.0		

Third and fourth in popularity were Italian and German, respectively. Only four respondents stated that they had studied German: one for one semester, two for two semesters and one for three semesters. Of the total, 75% took German for only one or two

semesters. Of the seven who studied Italian, 71% took one or two semesters only, even though 14.3% took four and 14.3% took seven semesters of Italian in college.

Spanish was the language most frequently studied by college students, selected by 54.5% of the respondents who studied a foreign language in college. Of the 27 FLES who noted that they studied Spanish, 14.8% took one semester and 25.9% took two semesters, adding up to 40.7% who took two or fewer semesters (Table 36). Of the 59.3% that took three or more semesters, 22.2% took three, and 11.1% took four semesters. Only 3.7% took, but a high percentage, 22.2%, took eight semesters of college Spanish (Table 36).

Among the non-FLES group, similar to the FLES, 42.9% took only one or two semesters, and 14.3% took three semesters, to account for 57.1% of the total non-FLES group. In the higher levels, 28.6% took four semesters and 14.3% took six, but none advanced to the eight semester high total of 22.2% of the FLES group (Table 36).

*Table 36 Number of Semester of College Spanish by FLES Group*

FLES Program	Number of Semesters of College Spanish Taken	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Non-FLES	1	1	5.0	14.3
	2	2	10.0	42.9
	3	1	5.0	57.1
	4	2	10.0	85.7
	6	1	5.0	100.0
	No answer	13	65.0	
	Total	20	100.0	
FLES	1	4	5.9	14.8
	2	7	10.3	40.7
	3	6	8.8	63.0
	4	3	4.4	74.1
	5	1	1.5	77.8
	8	6	8.8	100.0
	No answer	41	60.3	
	Total	68	100.0	

The group that studied a different language consisted of eight respondents, one non-FLES and seven FLES. Of the FLES, 71.4% took only one or two semesters of the language, and 14.3% each took three or four semesters (Table 37). The one non-FLES took only one semester. Of these eight respondents, three took an Asian language: two studied Japanese, and one took both Mandarin Chinese and Vietnamese. Two other respondents marked Portuguese, while one each marked Setswana, Swahili and Bamana.

*Table 37 Number of Semesters of Other Foreign Language in College by FLES Group*

FLES Program	Number Semesters of Other College For.Lang.	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Non-FLES	1	1	5.0	100.0
	No answer	19	95.0	
	Total	20	100.0	
FLES	1	1	1.5	14.3
	2	4	5.9	71.4
	3	1	1.5	85.7
	4	1	1.5	100.0
	No answer	61	89.7	
	Total	68	100.0	

The number of total semesters of foreign language taken in college by the FLES and non-FLES groups is compared in the table below (Table 38). Considering the “Yes” FLES program participants revealed that only 21.9% studied no foreign language in college, but 79.1% did study a foreign language in college. Respondents were equally divided among those who took one or two semesters, with 12.5% in each category. Those who fulfilled a minimal college foreign language requirement of only one or two semesters accounted for 25% of the total. However, 53.1% of FLES participants exceeded the minimum by taking three or more semesters, and 42.2% took four or more semesters. Proceeding to an even more advanced level, 7.8% took five semesters, 3.1% took seven, and 12.5% took the maximum, eight semesters of foreign language in college (Table 38).

Within the “No” group, the non-FLES respondents, 42.1% studied no foreign language in college, and only 57.9% did, 20% less than the FLES group. Looking at those who took one or two semesters accounted for 10.5% and 21.5% respectively, or a combined 32% who completed a minimum requirement of foreign language. Only 25% studied three or more semesters of foreign language, with 10% taking three years, 10% taking four years, and 5.3% taking six semesters to achieve a proficient or advanced level of foreign language (Table 38).

*Table 38 Number of Semesters of Total Foreign Language in College by FLES Group*

FLES Program	Number Semesters Total College Foreign Language	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Non-FLES	None	8	40.0	42.1
	1	2	10.0	52.6
	2	4	20.0	73.7
	3	2	10.0	84.2
	4	2	10.0	94.7
	6	1	5.0	100.0
	No answer	1	5.0	
	Total	20	100.0	
FLES	None	14	20.6	21.9
	1	8	11.8	34.4
	2	8	11.8	46.9
	3	7	10.3	57.8
	4	10	14.7	73.4
	5	5	7.4	81.3
	6	1	1.5	82.8
	7	2	2.9	85.9
	8	8	11.8	98.4
	16	1	1.5	100.0
	No answer	4	5.9	
	Total	68	100.0	

To evaluate the extent to which FLES program participation had an effect on the amount of foreign language taken in college, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed on the variables. Considering the *F* ratio of 6.007 and its associated *p* value of .016, FLES program participation appeared to be very significant in determining



how much foreign language was taken in college. With a likelihood of only 16 chances in 1000 that the difference in mean could be attributed to chance, it was possible to disprove the null hypothesis. With FLES respondents having studied an average of 3.28 semesters of total foreign language in college, and non-FLES having a mean of only 1.50 semesters, the FLES participants took an average of 1.78 semesters of college foreign language or one and one-half more semesters of college foreign language than non-FLES group, an average of more than twice as much (Table 39).

*Table 39 ANOVA: FLES Group Differences in Mean Number of Semesters of Total College Foreign Language*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Non-FLES	20	1.50	1.762	.394	.68	2.32
FLES	64	3.28	3.088	.386	2.51	4.05
Total	84	2.86	2.921	.319	2.22	3.49

**ANOVA**

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	48.348	1	48.348	6.007	.016
Within Groups	659.938	82	8.048		
Total	708.286	83			

The following three questions in the part of the survey pertaining to college paralleled questions numbered 3, 4, and 5, in the elementary part and 15, 16 and 17 in the high school part. These questions concerned respondents' views of the quality of their foreign language learning experience.

23. What grades did you receive in your college foreign language courses?
24. How would you rate your foreign language proficiency after college?
25. How would you rate your college foreign language experiences?

As in the two prior parts, the selected responses for these questions corresponded to a five-point Likert scale, with “1” being the lowest and “5” the highest.

Of the FLES responses, there were no respondents who indicated receiving mostly D’s and F’s, and only 2.2% of the FLES respondents noted mostly C’s and D’s. A small percentage of the group, 17.4%, marked mostly B’s and C’s, or mid-range grades. The two largest groups received better marks, with 32.6% stating mostly A’s and B’s and 47.8% claiming mostly A’s, for a total of 80.4% FLES receiving high grades (Table 40).

Among the non-FLES respondents, 9.1% said they had mostly C’s and D’s, and 27.3%, more than one-fourth, reported mid-range grades of B’s and C’s. In the mostly A’s and B’s, there were 45.5% and another 18.2% with mostly A’s, for a total of 73.7% in the higher range of grades (Table 40). Essentially, there was little difference in the grades that the FLES and non-FLES in their college foreign language courses (Table 40).

*Table 40 Foreign Language Grades in College by FLES Group*

FLES Program	Grades in College Foreign Language Courses	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Non-FLES	Mostly C&D	1	5.0	9.1
	mostly B&C	3	15.0	36.4
	mostly A&B	5	25.0	81.8
	mostly A's	2	10.0	100.0
	No answer	9	45.0	
	Total	20	100.0	
FLES	mostly C&D	1	1.5	2.2
	mostly B&C	8	11.8	19.6
	mostly A&B	15	22.1	52.2
	mostly A's	22	32.4	100.0
	No answer	22	32.4	
	Total	68	100.0	

All 59 respondents who took a foreign language in college marked a response evaluating their own foreign language proficiency after studying this subject. A small

percentage of the FLES group, 2.1%, felt that they were “Not proficient,” and 4.2% marked “A little,” for a total of 6.3% indicating low proficiency (Table 41). With the designation “Somewhat,” 16.7% marked the middle level of proficiency. Reflecting greater confidence, 45.8% marked “Proficient,” and 31.3% answered “Very proficient.” Adding together these last two responses, a very high 77.1%, almost four-fifths of the FLES group considered themselves proficient or better after college (Table 41).

Within the non-FLES group, a higher percentage, 18.2% felt that they were not proficient, with 27.3% claiming to be only a little proficient, for a total of 45.5% non-FLES in the lower range of proficiency. There were another 18.2% placed themselves in the somewhat proficient category. Only 36.4% said they were proficient or better, less than half the FLES percentage placing themselves in the higher categories (Table 41).

*Table 41 Foreign Language Proficiency in College by FLES Group*

FLES Program	Proficiency in College Foreign Language Courses	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Non-FLES	not proficient	2	10.0	18.2
	a little	3	15.0	45.5
	Somewhat	2	10.0	63.6
	Proficient	3	15.0	90.9
	very proficient	1	5.0	100.0
	No answer	9	45.0	
	Total	20	100.0	
FLES	not proficient	1	1.5	2.1
	A little	2	2.9	6.3
	Somewhat	8	11.8	22.9
	Proficient	22	32.4	68.8
	Very proficient	15	22.1	100.0
	No answer	20	29.4	
	Total	68	100.0	

Evaluating the quality of their college foreign language learning experience, 58 answered the question, and 30 did not answer. (Table 31) Of the FLES who did respond,

only 4.3% rated their language experience negative or very negative. The remaining responses were divided almost equally into thirds, with 31.3%, finding their experience satisfactory, 33.3% positive, and 31.3% very positive. In effect, slightly less than one-third found the experience just satisfactory, while almost two-thirds, 64.6%, had a positive or very positive foreign language learning experience in college (Table 42).

Only 50% of the non-FLES group responded to the question about their foreign language experience in college. However, the results of the survey on this small non-FLES group were very similar to the FLES. There were 10% non-FLES who had a negative experience, and 20% said it was positive. Adding together the 40% positive and 30% very positive, 70% of the non-FLES reported a positive or very positive foreign language learning experience in college (Table 42).

*Table 42 Rating of Foreign Language Experience in College by FLES Group*

FLES Program	Rating of Foreign Language Experience in College	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Non-FLES	Negative	1	5.0	10.0
	Satisfactory	2	10.0	30.0
	Positive	4	20.0	70.0
	very positive	3	15.0	100.0
	No answer	10	50.0	
	Total	20	100.0	
FLES	very negative	1	1.5	2.1
	Negative	1	1.5	4.2
	Satisfactory	15	22.1	35.4
	Positive	16	23.5	68.8
	very positive	15	22.1	100.0
	No answer	20	29.4	
Total	68	100.0		

The remaining items in the college part of the survey questioned whether respondents had studied abroad during college or whether they had done post-graduate

study outside the United States, and if so, in which countries. The response for this latter part were coded according to language, with “1” to French, “2” to German, “3” to Italian, and “4” to any Spanish-speaking country. Once again, “5” was used for “Other.” Since a line was provided on which to write in the name of the country, the individual countries could also be identified for related issues of interest (Table 43).

From the total 88 respondents to the survey, 52 FLES and 12 non-FLES answered this question. Within the FLES group that responded, 18 respondents, or 34.6% did study abroad. In the non-FLES group, only four respondents, or 33% of those that answered this question, reported studying abroad during college. While the percentages for both the FLES and non-FLES groups were higher than the 6.7% that traveled overseas with their class in high school, (Table 31), they were lower than the 52.9% (Table 8) that traveled overseas with their class in elementary school (Table 43).

*Table 43 Study Abroad in College by FLES Group*

FLES Program	Study Abroad in College	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Non-FLES	No	8	40.0	66.7
	Yes	4	20.0	100.0
	No answer	8	40.0	
	Total	20	100.0	
FLES	No	34	50.0	65.4
	Yes	18	26.5	100.0
	No answer	16	23.5	
	Total	68	100.0	

The concluding questions in the college part of the survey inquired about the foreign countries where respondents studied at the post-secondary level. There were only 20 respondents who specified in which countries they had studied. Of the FLES group, 12.5% went to France, 6.3% went to Germany; 18.8% went to Italy, and 12.5% marked “other.” Half the FLES group, 50%, marked that they had studied in a country where

Spanish was spoken. Within the non-FLES group, 50% went to Italy, 25% went to a Spanish-speaking country, and 25% marked “other” for their study abroad (Table 44).

*Table 44 Foreign Country of Study Abroad in College by FLES Group*

FLES Program		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Non-FLES	Italy	2	10.0	50.0
	Spanish speaking	1	5.0	75.0
	other	1	5.0	100.0
	No answer	16	80.0	
	Total	20	100.0	
FLES	France	2	2.9	12.5
	Germany	1	1.5	18.8
	Italy	3	4.4	37.5
	Spanish speaking	8	11.8	87.5
	other	2	2.9	100.0
	No answer	52	76.5	
	Total	68	100.0	

Beyond considering the significance of any of these variables individually, building a model permitted an analysis of which FLES variables could be viewed as significant predictors for determining how many semesters total of foreign language might be taken in college. The three variables considered were the number of years of foreign language taken in elementary school, foreign language grades in elementary school, and the students’ self-assessed foreign language proficiency in elementary school (Table 45). When a multiple regression was conducted, and the variables were entered stepwise, it was found that only elementary school grades at .103 level were even a little significant, although not reaching the .05 standard. Despite not meeting the threshold, .10 does suggest some sign of a trend and might have been a significant as a predictor for the number of semesters of college foreign language if there had been more respondents. Although there were also positive correlations between the number of years of elementary foreign language and proficiency as predictors of the number of semesters of college foreign language, neither of these met the .05 standard level of significance (Table 45).

*Table 45 Stepwise Regression of FLES Variables on the Number of Semesters of Total College Foreign Language*

Descriptive Statistics				
		Mean	Std. Deviation	N
	Number Semesters Total College Foreign Language	3.28	3.088	64
	Number Years Elementary Foreign Language	7.13	2.585	64
	Foreign Language Grades in Elementary School	4.14	.814	64
	Proficiency in Elementary School Foreign Language	3.36	1.173	64

Correlations					
		Semesters Col Foreign Lang.	Years Elem. For. Lang.	Grades Elem. For. Lang.	Proficiency Elem. Foreign Language
Pearson Correlation	Number Semesters Total College Foreign Language	1.000	.168 (.092)	.245 (.024)	.221 (.039)
	Number Years Elementary School Foreign Language		1.000	.12 (.173)	.184 (.073)
	Grades in Elementary School Foreign Language			1.000	.345 (.003)
	Proficiency in Elementary School Foreign language				1.000

(Significance level in parentheses)

Model Summary										
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.312	.097	.052	3.007		.097	2.150	3	60	.103

a Predictors: (Constant), Proficiency in Elementary School Foreign Language, Number Years Elementary School Foreign Language, Grades in Elementary School Foreign Language

Stepwise Regression						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	58.328	3	19.443	2.150	.103
	Residual	542.609	60	9.043		
	Total	600.938	63			

a Predictors: (Constant), Proficiency in Elementary School foreign language, Number Years ge in Elementary School Foreign Language, Grades in Elementary School Foreign Language  
b Dependent Variable: Number Semesters Total College Foreign Language

Coefficients				
Model		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.	Correlations
		Beta		Zero-order
1	(Constant)		.382	
	Years of Elementary For. Lang.	.121	.336	.168
	Elementary For. Lang. Grades	.188	.155	.249
	Elementary F.L. Proficiency	.134	.315	.221

a Dependent Variable: Number Semesters Total College Foreign Language

#### **D. Career Choices and Employment Experiences**

The part of the survey addressing career choices and employment experiences contained six questions. Although the first question simply requested an objective numerical answer of the number of years work experience from each respondent, it also necessitated a clustering of the data in order to categorize the amount of work experience so that groups could be compared. The remaining questions were clearly more subjective in nature, relating to fields of employment and the usefulness of a foreign language in the work environment. Responses to these questions in this section were considered for both quantitative and qualitative purposes.

To quantify the extent of their employment background, respondents were asked how many years of employment experience they had (Table 46). Of the 86 respondents who answered this question, 16.7% FLES said they had zero years to one year, or **minimal**, work experience. Reporting from two to four years was 36.4%FLES, which could be considered to have a **moderate** amount of work experience. Responding with five to nine years of work was 31.8% of the FLES group, for an **extensive** amount of work experience. An additional 15.1% of FLES reported between ten and twenty years to qualify as a **maximum** category. Of the non-FLES group, 15% had **minimal**, 50% had a **moderate** two to four years of work, and 35% had between seven to nine years, **extensive** work experience. None of the non-FLES reported more than nine years of employment for the **maximum** amount (Table 46).



*Table 46 Number of Years of Work Experience – Categorical Recode by FLES Group*

FLES Program		Years Work Experience	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Non-FLES	Minimal	0 to 1	3	15.0	15.0
	Moderate	2 to 4	10	50.0	65.0
	Extensive	5 to 9	7	35.0	100.0
	Total		20	100.0	
FLES	Minimal	0 to 1	11	16.2	16.2
	Moderate	2 to 4	24	35.3	51.5
	Extensive	5 to 9	21	30.9	82.4
	Maximum	10 to 20	12	17.6	100.0
	Total		68	100.0	

On the question inquiring about where respondents had worked, they were asked to mark all that applied so that complete data would be available. However, for purposes of this study, only general information about employed was relevant. Wherever it was possible to cluster responses, only one employment field was recorded. For example, if both business and banking were marked, only business, the more general category, was recorded. Where it was noted that the respondent had worked more in one field than another, only one was marked. However, where the respondent indicated three or more fields of employment, the designation “Multiple” was charted. More specific data was available in the surveys, should that information be deemed useful for future study.

The study indicated that respondents were employed in a vast array of fields, although the same fields were most popular with both non-FLES and FLES participants. Within the group of non-FLES participants, 18% of the group was employed in business, 16.9% in education, and 17.3% in social service (Table 47). The next largest percentage of 9.2% was medicine, and 6.2% each in retail/sales and “other,” or multiple fields (Table 47). The non-FLES respondents found similar fields very attractive, with 20% in

business, 15% in education and 10% in social service. However, there were also 10% who were in retail/sales, and 30% replied that they worked in multiple fields (Table 47).

*Table 47 Field of Employment by FLES Group*

FLES Program	Field of Employment	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Non-FLES	business	4	20.0	20.0
	education	3	15.0	35.0
	government	1	5.0	40.0
	law	1	5.0	45.0
	retail/sales	2	10.0	55.0
	social service	2	10.0	65.0
	hospitality	1	5.0	70.0
	multiple fields	6	30.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	
	FLES	arts	1	1.5
business		12	17.6	20.0
education		11	16.2	36.9
government		2	2.9	40.0
law		1	1.5	41.5
media		1	1.5	43.1
medicine		6	8.8	52.3
publishing		2	2.9	55.4
retail/sales		4	5.9	61.5
social service		8	11.8	73.8
transportation		2	2.9	76.9
other		4	5.9	83.1
military		3	4.4	87.7
real estate		3	4.4	92.3
music		1	1.5	93.8
multiple fields		4	5.9	100.0
Total		65	95.6	
no answer		3	4.4	
Total		68	100.0	

With regard to the frequency of their foreign language use at work, FLES program participants reported that they used foreign language slightly more than non-FLES participants. Within the group that did study a foreign language in elementary school, 55.6% indicated that they almost never used a foreign language at work, but 44.4% did use foreign language. Of the FLES group who did use a foreign language at all, 6.3%%

indicated that they used it every month, and 17.5% reported using it every week, and 20.6% reported using it every day or almost always (Table 48). Among the non-FLES program participants, 85% said that they almost never used foreign language at work. Of the 15% non-FLES who did use a foreign language at work, 5% reported that they used it every week and 10% said they used it every day. When the two groups are compared, a total of 38.1% FLES, compared to only 15% non-FLES, reported that they used foreign language at work weekly, daily or almost always (Table 48).

*Table 48 Frequency of Foreign Language Use at Work by FLES Group*

FLES Program	Frequency of Foreign Language Use at Work	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Non-FLES	Almost never	17	85.0	85.0	85.0
	Every week	1	5.0	5.0	90.0
	Every day	2	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	
FLES	Almost never	35	51.5	55.6	55.6
	Every month	4	5.9	6.3	61.9
	Every week	11	16.2	17.5	79.4
	Every day	7	10.3	11.1	90.5
	Almost always	6	8.8	9.5	100.0
	Total	63	92.6	100.0	
	No answer	5	7.4		
	Total	68	100.0		

To determine whether the difference in percentages between the groups was significant, the data from this question was subsequently regrouped and recoded into three categories to facilitate crosstabulation and to use a chi-square analysis comparing the frequency of use of foreign language at work between the FLES and non-FLES groups. In category (1) Almost Never, there were 17 out of 20 non-FLES and 35 out of 63 FLES. In Category (3) Weekly, Daily, Almost Always, there were only 3 out of 20 non-FLES and 24 out of 52 FLES (Table 49). The *p* value of .053 indicated that the difference between the groups was significant, since the probability that these results

could have occurred by chance were 53 out of 1,000, meeting the .05 significance threshold. The chi-square analysis confirmed that participation in the FLES program had a significant effect on the frequency of foreign language use at work (Table 49).

*Table 49 Chi-Square of Frequency of Use of Foreign Language at Work by FLES Group*

Frequency of Foreign Language Use at Work	FLES Program		Total
	Non-FLES	FLES	
Almost Never	17	35	52
Monthly		4	4
Weekly, Daily, Almost Always	3	24	27
<b>Total N</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>83</b>

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.860	2	.053
N of Valid Cases	83		

Despite their differences in frequency of use, the respondents varied little in their reporting of how useful they thought knowledge of a foreign language was for their work (Table 50). Within the FLES group, 23.8% said it was irrelevant, and 20.6% said it was rarely useful. Considering foreign language somewhat useful was 20.6%, while another 34.9% thought it was very useful or essential. A similar percentage to FLES, 25% of the non-FLES found foreign language irrelevant, and another 35% non-FLES considered it rarely useful. Only 15% of the non-FLES group noted that foreign language was somewhat useful, and 25% of non-FLES respondents thought that knowledge of a foreign language was very useful or essential at work (Table 50).

*Table 50 Usefulness of Foreign Language at Work by FLES Group*

FLES Program	Usefulness of Foreign Language at Work	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Non-FLES	irrelevant	5	25.0	25.0	25.0
	rarely useful	7	35.0	35.0	60.0
	somewhat useful	3	15.0	15.0	75.0
	very useful	4	20.0	20.0	95.0
	essential	1	5.0	5.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	
FLES	irrelevant	15	22.1	23.8	23.8
	rarely useful	13	19.1	20.6	44.4
	somewhat useful	13	19.1	20.6	65.1
	very useful	15	22.1	23.8	88.9
	essential	7	10.3	11.1	100.0
	no answer	5	7.4		
	Total	68	100.0		

The degree to respondents perceived that foreign language was required for employment elicited similar responses from both FLES and non-FLES participants. In approximately half the cases, 51.6%% of the FLES, but more than two-thirds or 70% of the non-FLES job-seeking candidates, knowledge of a foreign language was unimportant (Table 51). A slightly larger percent of job-seekers with FLES, 23.5%, than of non-FLES, 15%, perceived that knowledge of a foreign language a little helpful or somewhat helpful for gaining employment. Similarly, 12.9% FLES and 15% non-FLES perceived that foreign language very helpful in gaining employment. However, while none of the non-FLES responded that knowledge of a foreign language was required for being hired, 9.7% of the FLES group reported that knowledge of a foreign language was required for their employment (Table 51).

*Table 51 Perception of Foreign Language Required for Employment by FLES Group*

FLES Program	Foreign Language Required for Work	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Non-FLES	Unimportant	14	70.0	70.0
	A little, Somewhat Helpful	3	15.0	85.0
	Very Helpful	3	15.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	
FLES	Unimportant	32	47.1	51.6
	A little, Somewhat Helpful	16	23.5	77.4
	Very Helpful	8	11.8	90.3
	Required	6	8.8	100.0
	Missing	6	8.8	
Total		68	100.0	

To determine whether or not there was an association between FLES program participation and knowledge of a foreign language in gaining employment, the data was cross-tabulated and the chi-square was considered. When this test was performed on the data, the *p* value was .301, which meant that there were 30 chances out of 100 that these results were due to chance. Since that percentage did not meet the .05 threshold of significance, the null hypothesis was not disproved. There was insufficient evidence to establish an association between knowledge of a foreign language and gaining employment (Table 52).

*Table 52 Chi-Square of Foreign Language Required for Employment and FLES Group*

FL Required for Employment	FLES Program		Total
	Non-FLES	FLES	
Unimportant	14	32	46
A little, Somewhat Helpful	3	16	19
Very Helpful	3	8	11
Required		6	6
Total	20	62	82

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.659	3	.301
N of Valid Cases	82		

The last question in the survey section concerning career choices and employment experience was an open-ended question asking respondents “How do you use a foreign language at work?” The responses were evaluated and grouped into eight clusters of responses:

- (1) Talk to clients/employees
- (2) Translating
- (3) Writing
- (4) Travel/Work abroad
- (5) Telephone
- (6) Instruction
- (7) Varied uses
- (8) Future use

Half the non-FLES and half FLES program participants responded to this question. Of the FLES group that responded to this question, only 7.7% said they did not use a foreign language, while a much larger percentage of non-FLES, 33.3%, did not use it. (Table 39) Among those who did use foreign language, 30.8% FLES and 44.4% non-FLES noted that they used it to talk to clients or employees (Table 53). Within the FLES group, 7.7%, compared to 22.2% non-FLES, claimed that they used their language knowledge for translating. However, non-FLES reported no other uses, while 53.8% FLES did. In the FLES group, 2.6% found foreign language useful for writing, 5.1% for travel, 15.4% used it for instruction, and 20.5% perceived that it had varied uses. An additional 7.7% of FLES participants responded that although they did not use foreign language in their work they thought they might use it in the future (Table 53).

*Table 53 How Foreign Language Is Used at Work by FLES Group*

FLES Program	How Foreign Language Is Used at Work	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Non-FLES	not used	3	15.0	37.5	37.5
	talk to clients/employees	3	15.0	37.5	75.0
	translating	2	10.0	25.0	100.0
	no answer/N/A	12	60.0		
	Total	20	100.0		
FLES	not used	3	4.4	7.7	7.7
	talk to clients/employees	12	17.6	30.8	38.5
	translating	3	4.4	7.7	46.2
	writing	1	1.5	2.6	48.7
	travel	2	2.9	5.1	53.8
	telephone	1	1.5	2.6	56.4
	instruction	6	8.8	15.4	71.8
	varied uses	8	11.8	20.5	92.3
	not now/future use	3	4.4	7.7	100.0
	no answer/N/A	29	42.6		
Total	68	100.0			

To determine whether there was an association between FLES participation and how foreign language is used for employment, the data was crosstabulated and the chi-square was considered. To disprove the null hypothesis that there was no association between FLES and foreign language use at work, it was necessary to find that there was less than a .05 probability that the results were due to chance. In this study, however, the *p* value was .099, slightly higher than the .05 threshold, and indicating that there were practically ten chances out of one-hundred that the results were due to chance and, consequently, not clearly significant. Although insufficient to strongly disprove the null hypothesis, there was established a weak association between FLES program participation and foreign language use for employment (Table 54).



*Table 54 Chi-Square of How Foreign Language Is Used for Employment by FLES Group*

		FLES Program		Total
		Non-FLES	FLES	
How Foreign Language is Used at Work	Not Used	3	3	6
	Used for Employment	17	65	82
Total		20	68	88

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.727	1	.099		
N of Valid Cases	88				

### **E. Demographic Data**

Near the end of the survey, respondents were requested to provide demographic information. The data provided information about the entire sample, as well as within the groups of non-FLES and FLES participants in order to evaluate whether the effects of the FLES program vary significantly according to age, sex, race, economics and education. Although this section of the survey was specifically labeled as optional, the vast majority of respondents completed all of this section, and all respondents at least noted their year of graduation from elementary school.

Because the sample selected for study spanned the decade of elementary school graduation from 1985 to 1996, all respondents were at least 21 years of age. This youngest age of 21 accounted for 5% of non-FLES and 16.7% of FLES. (Figure 40) Respondents age 22 made up 30% of non-FLES and 12.1% of FLES, while those age 23 comprised 20% non-FLES and just 3.0% of FLES. However, when combined, the younger 21-to-23 aged respondents account for 55% non-FLES and 31.8% FLES. The remaining 45% non-FLES group was age 24 and 25, while the same two ages formed 31.8% of the FLES group. The oldest FLES respondents were 26 to 33 and accounted for the remaining third of the FLES program group, but there were no corresponding non-FLES respondents in this age group (Table 55).

*Table 55 Respondent's Age by FLES Program*

FLES Program		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Non-FLES	21	1	5.0	5.0
	22	6	30.0	35.0
	23	4	20.0	55.0
	24	5	25.0	80.0
	25	4	20.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	
FLES	9	1	1.5	1.5
	21	11	16.2	18.2
	22	8	11.8	30.3
	23	2	2.9	33.3
	24	12	17.6	51.5
	25	9	13.2	65.2
	26	2	2.9	68.2
	27	4	5.9	74.2
	28	5	7.4	81.8
	29	6	8.8	90.9
	30	2	2.9	93.9
	31	2	2.9	97.0
	32	1	1.5	98.5
	33	1	1.5	100.0
	No answer	2	2.9	
Total	68	100.0		

Elementary school graduation occurred when students successfully completed eighth grade in each of the two schools these students attended. The year of elementary school graduation was relevant because the respondents were located by use of their school's PTA directories which were organized by class. Since the FLES program was initiated at the experimental group's school in 1978, the sample was selected beginning with the graduating class of 1985 to insure that respondents could have participated in the FLES program for at least three years after the program was well established. In addition, the year 1996 was selected as the final year for the sample to allow respondents to have at least completed high school, as well as college or several years of employment.

The earliest year of elementary school graduation for non-FLES was 1991, and it accounted for only 5% of the respondents. (Table 41) However, from 1992 and 1993, there were 25% and 20% non-FLES respectively, to total 45%, or almost half of the non-FLES respondents. Of the remaining half, the most recent classes of 1994 had 5% and 1995 had 45%, the largest non-FLES single class of respondents (Table 56).

Within the FLES program group, more classes were represented beginning 1985, which had 2.9% of the respondents. Subsequently, 1986 through 1988 had 13.2%, and 1989 had 11.8%, for a total of 32%, just under one-third of the FLES respondents from the 1980's. (Table 56) Another third, 35.4% of the FLES respondents, came from the classes of 1990 to 1993, with 13.3% from 1990 and 1991, 10.3% from 1992, and 11.8% from 1993. Of the remaining third, there was 13.2% from 1994, and the most recent classes of sample graduates, 1995 had 10.3% and 1996 had 13.2% FLES (Table 56).

*Table 56 Year of Graduation from Elementary School by FLES Group*

FLES Program		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Non-FLES	1991	1	5.0	5.0
	1992	5	25.0	30.0
	1993	4	20.0	50.0
	1994	1	5.0	55.0
	1995	9	45.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	
FLES	1985	2	2.9	2.9
	1986	3	4.4	7.4
	1987	2	2.9	10.3
	1988	4	5.9	16.2
	1989	8	11.8	27.9
	1990	5	7.4	35.3
	1991	4	5.9	41.2
	1992	7	10.3	51.5
	1993	8	11.8	63.2
	1994	9	13.2	76.5
	1995	7	10.3	86.8
	1996	9	13.2	100.0
	Total	68	100.0	

All but one respondent to the survey did mark “Male” or “Female,” and the far greater number of surveys returned by both non-FLES and FLES groups were from females. (Table 57) Of the FLES group, 32.8% were male and 67.2% were female; in the non-FLES group, 35% of the respondents were male and 65% were female, so that approximately one-third of all surveys came from males and two-thirds were from females (Table 57). These percentages reflected the fact that LaSalle had traditionally a higher percentage of females than males, although Newberry had the reverse (Table 57).

*Table 57 Respondent's Sex by FLES Group*

FLES Program	Gender of Participants	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Non-FLES	Male	7	35.0	35.0
	Female	13	65.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	
FLES	Male	22	32.4	32.8
	Female	45	66.2	100.0
	Total	67	98.5	
	No answer	1	1.5	
	Total	68	100.0	

Both the non-FLES and FLES Program sites of Newberry Mathematics and Science Academy and LaSalle Language Academy, both magnet schools, had multi-ethnic populations for the study sample because they were organized under the 1978 Federal Consent Decree to promote desegregation within the Chicago Public Schools. Under this Consent Decree, the magnet schools were supposed to have a range of between 15% and 35% non-minority, or White, and between 85% and 65% minority, which included Black, American Indian, Asian and Hispanic. Although the percentages varied slightly between the schools, as well as in the percentages of responses, the returned surveys did reflect the racial and ethnic diversity.

Within the group of FLES participants, the surveys returned were from 56.3% White and 43.7% minority, of which 15.6% were Black, 4.7% were Asian, and 23.4% were Hispanic. There were no surveys received from American Indians from either the FLES or the non-FLES respondents. Within the non-FLES group, 45% of the respondents were White. There were 5.3% Black, 42.1% Asian, and 5.3% Hispanic to total 52.6% minority (Table 58).

*Table 58 Respondent's Race by FLES Group*

FLES Program		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Non-FLES	White	9	45.0	47.4
	Black	1	5.0	52.6
	Asian	8	40.0	94.7
	Hispanic	1	5.0	100.0
	No answer	1	5.0	
	Total	20	100.0	
FLES	White	36	52.9	56.3
	Black	10	14.7	71.9
	Asian	3	4.4	76.6
	Hispanic	15	22.1	100.0
	No answer	4	5.9	
	Total	68	100.0	

Additional demographic data solicited from respondents regarded marital status, educational level, employment status, elementary school lunch status and current income. In their marital status, 86.6% of the FLES group was single, 10.4% was married, and 3% was separated. Of the non-FLES, 89.5% was single, 10.4% was married (Table 59).

*Table 59 Marital Status by FLES Group*

FLES Program	Marital Status	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Non-FLES	Single	17	85.0	89.5
	Married	2	10.0	100.0
	No Answer	1	5.0	
	Total	20	100.0	
FLES	Single	58	85.3	86.6
	Married	7	10.3	97.0
	Separated	2	2.9	100.0
	No Answer	1	1.5	
	Total	68	100.0	

Information about respondents' educational level was particularly relevant to responding to the question whether participation in a FLES program had an effect of students' future educational choices. Of the FLES respondents, only 6% reported that high school graduation was their highest educational level (Table 60). A combined total of 18% marked that they had between one and four years of university. While 58.2% marked their highest level of education as college graduation, an additional 17.9% had graduate degrees, for a total of 76.1% FLES college graduates. Of the non-FLES group, 5% had not graduated from high school, and 20% had completed between one and four years of university. The 70% non-FLES college graduates did correspond closely to the FLES figure, but only 5% had graduate degrees. There was no significant difference between FLES and the non-FLES in the percentage of college graduates (Table 60).

*Table 60 Educational Level by FLES Group*

FLES Program	Educational Level	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Non-FLES	Did not graduate	1	5.0	5.0
	High School.			
	U 1	1	5.0	10.0
	U 3	1	5.0	15.0
	U 4	2	10.0	25.0
	College grad	14	70.0	95.0
	Grad degree	1	5.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	
FLES	High School Grad.	4	5.9	6.0
	U 1	1	1.5	7.5
	U 2	4	5.9	13.4
	U 3	1	1.5	14.9
	U 4	6	8.8	23.9
	College grad	39	57.4	82.1
	Grad degree	12	17.6	100.0
	No answer	1	1.5	
	Total	68	100.0	

To code the data from the survey, a numerical value was given to each answer on the section regarding respondents' highest level of education. Not graduating high school was equivalent to 11 years, graduating high school was 12 years; each year of college was one additional year, so that four years of college without graduation was 16 years. College graduation was valued at 17, and having a graduate degree was equivalent to 18 years, for comparison purposes. When the average educational level of the FLES group, 16.63 years was compared to the non-FLES mean of 16.0, the FLES participant had approximately two-thirds of a year more education than non-FLES, or phrased differently, the mean for FLES participants was closer to college graduation than the mean for non-FLES (Table 61). Because the standard deviation was small for both groups, however, the distributions were more homogeneous than heterogeneous.



*Table 61 Mean Educational Level by FLES Group*

FLES Program	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Non-FLES	16.35	20	1.631
FLES	16.52	67	1.551
Total	16.48	87	1.562

Beyond educational information, respondents were asked about their employment status. On this question, data for FLES and non-FLES was very similar. FLES program participants reported that only 6.2% were not working. Those who worked summers accounted for 7.7% and those working part-time were 16.9%. When added together, 20% FLES work working summers only or part time. In the non-FLES group, 5.0% were not working, 35% was working part time, just slightly higher than FLES. Reporting that they worked full time were 66.2% FLES and 65% non-FLES (Table 62).

*Table 62 Employment Status by FLES Group*

FLES Program	Employment Status	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Non-FLES	not working	1	5.0	5.0
	work part time	6	30.0	35.0
	work full time	13	65.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	
FLES	not working	4	5.9	6.2
	work summers	5	7.4	13.8
	work part time	11	16.2	30.8
	work full time	43	63.2	96.9
	other	1	1.5	98.5
	5	1	1.5	100.0
	No answer	3	4.4	
	Total	68	100.0	

Information about elementary school lunch status was requested to determine respondent's family income. Families of students who received free and reduced meals qualified as poverty level. Of the FLES group, 10.8% qualified for free lunch and 9.2%

qualified for reduced prices. A total of 20% FLES were considered at poverty level, while 80% were not, which coincided with the actual LaSalle population. Of the non-FLES, 5% received free lunch and 15% had reduced prices. Consequently, 20% non-FLES respondents qualified as poor. Although poverty statistics were equivalent for the FLES and non-FLES groups who responded to the survey, in actuality, the non-FLES school had higher poverty than the FLES school had (Table 63).

*Table 63 Lunch Status in Elementary School by FLES Group*

FLES Program	Lunch Status	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Non-FLES	Free	1	5.0	5.0
	Reduced	2	10.0	15.0
	Paid	17	85.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	
FLES	Free	7	10.3	10.8
	reduced	6	8.8	20.0
	Paid	52	76.5	100.0
	No answer	3	4.4	
	Total	68	100.0	

For the current income status, respondents were requested to indicate whether their income fit into one of several categories. Within the FLES group, 31.7% reported annual income less than \$20,000, 35% had between \$20,000 and \$40,000; 21.7% had income between \$40,000 and \$60,000, while 11.6% had income \$60,000 or higher. (Table 48) Of the non-FLES group, 35% had annual income less than \$20,000, 35% had income between \$20,000 and \$40,000; 30% had income between \$40,000 and \$60,000, and none had income \$60,000 or higher. (Table 46) Although there was a higher percentage of FLES in the lowest income level below \$20,000, there was also a higher percentage of FLES in the higher income levels over \$60,000. Overall, the income of the FLES group appeared to be slightly higher (Table 64).

*Table 64 Respondent's Income by FLES Group*

FLES Program		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Non-FLES	<20000	7	35.0	35.0
	20-40000	7	35.0	70.0
	40-60000	6	30.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	
FLES	<20000	19	27.9	31.7
	20-40000	21	30.9	66.7
	40-60000	13	19.1	88.3
	60-80000	5	7.4	96.7
	>80000	2	2.9	100.0
	No answer	8	11.8	
	Total	68	100.0	

At this juncture in the study, the importance of the demographic data has been primarily to establish the diversity of the population and the sample group. The influence of particular demographic characteristics may certainly have had an effect on the results, and the details of the demographics merit consideration as intervening variables. However, at this time, analysis of demographic data has not been performed extensively and may need to be considered in future research. The nature of this study has been to focus on the FLES- related variables in order to evaluate whether participation in a FLES program has affected students' future educational and career choices.

## **F. Open-Ended Questions**

The first open-ended question inquired of those surveyed “What was your earliest memory about learning a foreign language?” In response, participants in the study alluded to a broad spectrum of activities traditionally associated with FLES programs. A small number of respondents described elaborate stories associated with their early recollections, while almost all others expressed themselves with just a few words or phrases. No answer was given by 32 respondents, which included 18 FLES and 14 non-FLES participants.

From the group of 50 FLES participants who provided an early recollection, the most frequently mentioned concepts were singing songs (14), colors (10), and with eight responses each, kindergarten, their teachers, and foods, including fruits and vegetables. Half a dozen times, respondents spoke of learning their numbers or telephone numbers or counting games, and an equal number recalled the visuals or posters teachers held up as students recited their daily routine stating the date and weather. The question also elicited single memories of foreign language names, faces, pen-pals, phrases, dancing and the classroom environment. Altogether, they painted a pleasant picture of elementary language learning. A few respondents recalled:

I remember learning the colors that year, and my mother using flashcards of numbers to help me memorize my phone number in Spanish, of course. I can still speed through that phone number!

I remember counting for my mom at home in French and showing her what we learned at school.

I remember sitting on the floor in kindergarten and getting our Spanish names.

Looking at faces and describing them, and singing songs  
My first memory was an Italian assembly we put on in kindergarten.

In contrast to the plethora early childhood memories of FLES students, the non-FLES group often referred to secondary school classroom experiences. Their recollections included French Club, role play, memorizing words and phrases and study abroad. Six non-FLES respondents did mention hearing a foreign language spoken in their family, and five out of the group noted that their home language was Japanese. Several from this group also remembered learning foreign language from television or in an after-school program. In general, the FLES recollections lacked the emotion and detail of the FLES participants' responses.

When alumni answered the second question "What did you enjoy most in your foreign language classes?" all 49 FLES respondents shared a positive component of the elementary foreign language program. Most frequently mentioned were cultural aspects (14), describing enjoyment of different cultural activities. Closely following culture, oral communication ranked high in popularity (10), as students spoke of how much they enjoyed conversation, dialogs, plays, and speaking with others who knew or were learning a foreign language. Special events and celebrations (8) were an understandable favorite, including assemblies and holidays, and when food was incorporated, another four were joined to this category. Five respondents specifically mentioned traveling overseas with their classes, and two other spoke of traveling later in life and using the language they had learned in school. Isolated mentions of field trips, interaction with exchange students, games, videos and literature evoked favorable memories for FLES participants. For the non-FLES respondents who initiated the study of foreign language later in life, the most positive aspect was the culture (4), with several other individuals mentioning teachers, music, movies, television, and traveling. Three non-FLES

respondents indicated that they disliked the experience and nothing was enjoyable.

However, only 18 FLES and six non-FLES gave no answer to this question of what they found enjoyable about learning a foreign language. As several FLES respondents wrote:

I loved being immersed in another language and culture for 45 minutes every day

My favorite was international day when we tasted food from every culture studied

Speaking the language and gaining experience in getting over making mistakes in front of my peers and just giving it the old college try – getting over stage fright.

My teacher always spoke in the foreign language. I looked forward to hearing her speak and singing German songs with her.

The third short-answer question asked “What was most difficult for you in foreign language classes?” As with the previous question, 18 FLES and six non-FLES left this question blank, although they were not always the same respondents. Five did write that nothing was difficult or that language learning came easily to them, and another two wrote that they could not remember. Among those who were willing to reveal their frailties, the most common difficulty, for 12 FLES students, encompassed conjugating verbs, verb tenses and verb meanings. Six specifically cited grammar as a stumbling block, six more struggled to speak or converse in the target language, and four more found oral comprehension challenging. Three respondents who started FLES in third or fourth grade, rather than in kindergarten or first grade, noted that they experienced difficulties catching up with their class. The same occasional complaints surfaced once or twice each from both non-FLES and FLES participants; these included writing, reading, memorizing vocabulary, and textbook learning. However, non-FLES participants who started foreign language later in life more frequently cited not understanding vocabulary

(5) and pronunciation (4) as challenging than did their FLES counterparts. Several comments about personal difficulties included:

Students who studied the language since kindergarten knew much more than me when I transferred to my school in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. It was a little hard to catch up.

In the beginning, I couldn't understand all that was being said and not being able to participate because I was shy for not having enough vocabulary and for making grammar mistakes.

Since elementary school, foreign language classes have come very easily. In grade school, it was staying out of trouble that was difficult.

In response to the fourth query, "What the most valuable part of studying a foreign language?" respondents cited dozens of benefits ranging from concrete skills they acquired to esoteric values. By far, the most frequently mentioned benefit involved the benefit of appreciating different cultures, mentioned by 28 respondents, more than half of the 53 FLES students that responded to this question. More than a quarter of the respondents, about 16 of them, mentioned something about how studying a foreign language augmented their ability to speak, converse or communicate with others. The third most valuable aspect for respondents revolved around travel. Whether instilling an interest, prompting them to travel, or the ability to speak when traveling, ten respondents mentioned travel. A few expressed their regrets by commenting: "I wish I'd studied harder," or "I didn't appreciate it at the time." The vast majority, however, held positive recollections about their elementary foreign language learning, which they expressed by calling their FLES experiences: "Enjoyable, fantastic, fun, wonderful, special, enriching, enhanced experience, and I loved it!" Only 15 out of the total FLES provided no answer. Participants elaborated on how they thought their FLES experiences were valuable:

Opening up a whole new world of culture, customs and different ways of thinking about concepts. Also increasing and improving job opportunities.

Traveling and meeting people from different countries. Feeling comfortable around foreigners. It made me choose to continue studying languages.

The most valuable part of learning a foreign language is my ability to communicate with relatives in other countries.

It has broadened my cultural knowledge of the world. I feel I can help people here in the U.S. who have a language barrier and only speak English.

As the questions progressed, the penultimate solicited a more philosophical answer by asking the question “How did learning a foreign language in elementary school influence your life?” Since this question was primarily addressed to FLES participants, those were 54 FLES responses and only two non-FLES answers to the question. The most frequent response, mentioned on 18 surveys, referred to promoting their future foreign language study. Respondents noted that they felt it gave them confidence to study foreign language in college and motivated them to continue studying foreign language later in life. Whether they described the feeling as “opening doors,” “opening new worlds” or giving them “new ways to look at the world,” thirteen participants described the experience as expanding their horizons. An equal number of respondents alluded to the enriching cultural experience, that it awakened in them awareness, understanding, and appreciation for learning about different cultures. Eleven participants associated learning a foreign language in elementary school with their desire to travel, their actual travel experiences or their studying, working and living abroad. Only one specifically acknowledged that it helped for employment, but many attributed it to enriching their lives. Respondents proclaimed that learning a foreign language in elementary school “made me feel special,” “was an enjoyable, enriching experience,” “became a part of me,” “improved my English,” gave “lifelong friendships,” “a role



model,” and was a “bridge of understanding for people of different cultures.” FLES

individuals commented:

It opens another world. I taught me cultural facts that I otherwise would not have learned. It also made me feel a special connection to France and French since it came into my life at such a young age.

It built a bridge of understanding for me in my dealing with Spanish-speaking people in Chicago, Peru, Mexico and Cuba.

It was very important because I use my foreign language constantly in my job and learning it in elementary school made me continue through high school. I perfected it at college, and it opened up many job opportunities for me.

However, the two non- FLES answers were actually laments. They said:

“I wish I had a chance to take it in elementary school,” and “It might have helped me in high school.” All responses acknowledged that foreign language had life-long influence.

On the sixth and final open-ended question, respondents were able to offer some concluding thoughts. They were invited to “share your reflections about your elementary foreign language learning experience.” Of the 45 total who wrote a reflection, approximately half, 24 FLES participants wrote that it had enhanced or enriched their lives, and eight noted the influence of the teachers. Four of five each considered opportunities to travel or interest in travel, enhanced communication, and a desire for their children to have the same experience. Three alumni each said that the FLES experience “helped me learn,” while several others noted that it “gave me role models,” “lifelong friendships,” and “made me feel special.” A few again referred to their propensity to continue language learning, the foundation it gave them, and their regrets at not having been able to take greater advantage of the opportunities they were offered.

Various FLES participants elaborated on the general theme:

I truly did not appreciate how much I learned as a result of FLES until I started my current job as a physical therapist in a hospital. It was amazing how much I remembered and how much I enjoy using my Spanish whenever I can. It was a great experience.

It gave me confidence that helped a lot in taking a new language at an older age. It also made me feel “special” when I met other kids who hadn’t learned a foreign language.

I am currently in Thailand about to start two years of service for the Peace Corps. Before joining the Peace Corps, I was living in Chile for about 1 ½ years teaching English as a second language. My interest in travel was greatly sparked by my experiences at LaSalle and further explored in college with a government and international affairs major.

When alumni of the FLES program were able to provide more detailed responses to the open-ended questions, they demonstrated the effects of their elementary foreign language experiences. Respondents’ narratives described trends that were not as visible in the quantitative results. Although the numeric survey responses revealed a small measurable advantage in the quantity of advanced foreign language studied, the qualitative component presented the FLES benefits in a more holistic context.

## **G. Interviews**

Through the semi-structured interviews FLES program participants were able to provide more detailed accounts of their elementary foreign language learning experiences. Their extended responses helped to explain trends in the results for the statistical data. The descriptions of their FLES experiences provided vivid examples of how learning a foreign language in elementary school affected their lives. An added advantage to the interviews was that they provided testimony to the degree a FLES program enabled participants to express themselves with confidence years after graduation.

Half of the FLES participants interviewed were from the 1990's, and half were from the 1980's, so that they represented a range of graduation years, as well as experiences within the program. It also helped insure that their experiences were not an anomaly attributable to one particular year. However, one-third of those interviewed were alumni from 1993, a class that had graduated from elementary school exactly a decade ago, and for that reason, might have felt particularly responsive when asked to reflect on their FLES experiences.

In addition, the group interviewed reflected the total pool of respondents because of the number of years that they had studied a foreign language in high school: One-half of the interviewees, similar to the 42% of those surveyed, had participated in nine years of FLES. From the next highest volume of respondents, those with eight, four or two years of FLES, there was one interviewee each. All four of the languages taught at LaSalle were represented, with the majority having taken Spanish. This greater representation of Spanish mirrored the fact for the entire school population since its

inception as a foreign language magnet school in 1978, as well as the enrollment figures for the study of Spanish throughout the United States.

Even though there were only six interviews conducted, it was a demographically diverse group. Two-thirds of those interviewed were minority from different racial backgrounds, similar to the actual demographics of LaSalle Language Academy. Two-thirds of the respondents were also female, which corresponded to the higher percentage of females who returned the questionnaires, as well as to the enrollment statistics reported in Chicago Public Schools' desegregation reports from the decade of the study. (Chicago, 2000) Half of the group was single, and half was married. All alumni interviewed had graduated college and had some work experience as a basis for their reflections.

Each of the interviewees took a foreign language beyond the minimum required, whether their school had a requirement of none, two or four years. Only one interviewee had three years in high school, while the rest took foreign language all four years. Half indicated that they had taken the Advanced Placement level for their language, and half mentioned taking a second foreign language. Everyone interviewed took a foreign language in college, with only one taking the minimum two years or four semesters required; all the rest took advanced courses beyond the minimum, and one took the maximum of eight semesters of foreign language.

Whether discussing a having a better accent, pronunciation or preparedness, the interviewees described the special advantages that they felt their elementary school foreign language experiences afforded them with future language study.

Zora: Languages are really easy for me, so these were my light courses. I would get up early, work on Italian exercises and go to Italian class in the morning, and then French class, and then I could focus on other things in the afternoon.

Wanda: I like to talk a lot, so I guess you could say I discovered that I had verbal ability ...and a talent for student government. LaSalle led me to further study in Spanish, and then, maybe student government led me to the law.

Florence: Even though I was only at LaSalle for two years, I caught on very fast. I think that because I already knew Spanish, I did really well with a third language. When I got to college, I was placed in entry-level Italian. It was pretty easy, and I passed with flying colors.

Alexa: I really liked words and writing and language, so I chose a college where I could continue with my French. ... I placed into a pretty advanced level and received two years credit.

Alex: I think LaSalle motivated me to learn more. Is willingness to learn a talent? I suppose it is...it made me more of a Renaissance person.

Tom: I learned to try new things and was exposed to other cultures – to embrace differences and to not be afraid. The excitement that came with always learning something new continued through high school, college, and into the workplace.

In the part of the interview specifically concerning work, respondents elaborated on how foreign language related to their employment. Even when their jobs did not regularly require knowledge of a foreign language, former FLES participants found a way to integrate their skills. Each interviewee offered a different model for this process:

Alexa: Writing and language are always a part of my life. When I have to write about something, it's like trying to learn somebody else's language. I was writing a fundraising proposal for a business administration program, and I wrote it with an intention of having someone else understand their language.

Florence: Being in social work, I have a lot of exposure to predominantly the Latin culture, so my own language, Spanish is really more useful in my work environment than the Italian I studied in elementary school. However, I feel comfortable knowing that I have had a third language experience.

Alex: My career path has been always in investments. I have not had to use my foreign language at work, although I spoke Spanish a few times on the phone. I see Spanish as being useful in the city.

Zora: I use it working in the office, when we are doing business in Europe, sometimes it's a lot easier. I was talking to this German guy, and he was really hard to understand, and I asked if he spoke French; and then it was a lot easier.

Also with a client in Thailand, and no one could understand, and I asked if he spoke French, and the client did, so it went much better.

Wanda: I used my Spanish as a flight attendant, primarily because I did two flights to Mexico. My law firm is trying to expand into South America, so I'll use my Spanish, then. I actually talked to Brazilian attorneys at our law firm at a legal meeting, and I'm sure I'll be doing more of that.

Tom: The company that I am currently working for has subsidiary companies throughout the United States and overseas. ... We have had visitors from Korea and Venezuela, and I see firsthand how beneficial and how much of an asset it is to know a foreign language, especially in the business world. ... It demonstrates that you are not closed off to other cultures, but that you are willing to learn more about things that may be foreign and new to you ... and may ultimately lead to a fruitful outcome for both parties.

Although each anecdote appears to be isolated, grouped together they are representative of how FLES participants have relied upon their foreign language skills to create avenues for advancement in their evolving professional careers.

Supporting the hypothesis that when foreign language learning is initiated early, it became a part of each student's life, the alumni interviewed provided evidence of the high value they ascribed to this special knowledge. Unique to each individual, their foreign language experiences were universally valued for the way they enhanced their global perspective. Each respondent communicated an appreciation for the opportunity:

Zora: Knowing other languages opens a lot of the world for you. Americans have a weird syndrome: they think they are the center of the world. But knowing another language humbles you a little bit because no, you are not the center of the world. Yours is not necessarily the best culture. Learning another language makes you open to a lot more, and it opens new doors. More just a skill, it gives you understanding of where you fit into the world.

Alex: Learning a foreign language taught me to relate to others even if they are different. ... When you are exposed to other cultures at a young age, you keep your eyes open to what's around. You look beyond your immediate environment and try to understand others and what's happening in the rest of the world.

Wanda: Honestly, I became a world traveler and to this day, I use Spanish to get different job opportunities. I always list it on my resume. I married a French guy.

His mom is staying with us for awhile, so I'm learning French. Learning another language is invaluable. My children will follow in my footsteps, hopefully, at LaSalle.

Florence: In elementary school, you have a curiosity and you retain things you learn at that age. You are more likely to pick it up. I gives children a sense of other things that are out there and exposes them to culture early so that they can build upon that learning and start to appreciate other cultures. It was a great learning experience because I was exposed to a different culture than the one that surrounded me.

Alexa: It is another avenue for learning. Building cultural bridges is very important. ... It builds support for an urban child living in a diverse urban setting. It helps make connections with people who are different from you. It is how language skills transfer into life skills, helping you connect with different populations and other countries. It gave me an interest in global politics and other cultures that didn't ever go away.

Tom: I think that the most valuable part about studying a foreign language is the fostering of critical thinking and analysis. ... (It) forces you to think about what you are saying and the context ... the way an inflection can alter how another person perceives your meaning. ...I believe language, like the arts, is an outward expression of a person's character. It has the amazing capacity to mold a person's character into something even better than what one might expect.

Without exception, the alumni interviewed perceived that learning a foreign language enriched their lives. They clearly believed that it improved their ability to communicate with others, whether speaking in a foreign language or in English. The FLES participants connected their elementary foreign language study with school, work, travel and life experiences. They attached cultural significance to their classroom learning. The interviews revealed how students' FLES experiences helped shape an optimistic vision of a multicultural, integrated, global society.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

### **Discussion**

Amidst ongoing debate in the media, on college campuses, and within international congresses over the effects of globalization, the importance of improving cross-cultural communication has surfaced as an issue of strategic and economic importance. One solution periodically proposed for improving global communication is the expansion of foreign language instruction, especially in the United States. For an educator involved in elementary foreign language, second language and bilingual education over more than three decades, the concept of early foreign language learning would appear to be an agenda item meriting immediate worldwide attention.

Beyond the researcher's intense personal belief in its importance, the issue of how foreign language learning in elementary school affects students' future educational and career choices seemed a relevant topic for study in view of current concerns on how to solve global problems. Having served for two decades as principal of LaSalle Language Academy, a Chicago Public Schools (CPS) magnet school with foreign language taught from kindergarten through eighth grade, the researcher had access to hundreds of adult alumni of an elementary foreign language program. LaSalle Language Academy, with its racially, ethnically and economically diverse population, provided a hospitable environment for a study on the effects of elementary foreign language learning. A neighboring CPS magnet school, Newberry Mathematics and Science Academy, where foreign language was not part of the daily curriculum, offered fertile ground for a comparison group. Although focusing on only a minute segment of the population, a study spanning a decade of students who engaged in daily foreign language study in a



public urban elementary school offered an opportunity to contribute to the literature on effective educational initiatives.

The hypothesis was that participation in a foreign language in elementary school (FLES) program would have a positive effect on students' lives as reflected in the future academic courses they pursued and the employment they obtained. Beginning with a population sample of approximately 600 alumni from two of the Chicago Public Schools' magnet schools, the study analyzed the data of 88 respondents to a survey, three-fourths from the target school LaSalle Language Academy and one-fourth from the comparison school Newberry Math and Science Academy. The purpose of the dissertation research was to add to the available information about foreign language and second language learning by reviewing existing studies, as well as by adding insights from data gathered through questionnaires and interviews. While the data from this small study was quite exclusive, it did yield some findings that were worthy of consideration.

The review of the existing literature revealed a paucity of research on the effects of FLES program participation with relation to achievement of proficiency, as well as on future educational and career choices. While there was substantial descriptive information about the development and types of elementary foreign language programs, there was little written about their effectiveness. The current study provides data to help contribute to the literature regarding attitudes and effects of elementary foreign language learning from the mid-1980's to the present, as reported by alumni of the LaSalle Language Academy and the Newberry Mathematics and Science Academy programs.

When analyzed and interpreted, the responses from the surveys and interviews led to recognition of the effectiveness of elementary foreign language learning for participants who attended LaSalle Language Academy because they continued to study foreign language to a more advanced level in high school and college and because they used foreign language more frequently in their careers than did their peers who had not studied a foreign language in elementary school. Although only moderately statistically significant, the study provided quantitative data on the effects of initiating foreign language learning in elementary school. The data demonstrated that there was a positive correlation between the amount of foreign language studied in elementary school with the amount and the level of foreign language studied in high school and college, and to a lesser degree, it showed how foreign language was used in the world of work. In addition to yielding quantifiable statistical data, the research revealed qualitative data through open ended questions and interviews that allowed FLES participants to express in their own words the impact that early learning of a foreign language had on their lives after graduating from eighth grade at LaSalle Language Academy.

One prominent study did assess attitudes of kindergarten and first graders toward their elementary foreign language experiences (Heining-Boyton, 1991), concluding that over 90% of these young students viewed their experiences very positively. Similarly, over 80% of the LaSalle alumni recalled their experiences as being positive or very positive. The results from the study of LaSalle alumni were consistent with results from the University of Idaho study (Kennedy et al., 2000) which indicated that third grade FLES students developed better attitudes towards language acquisition, culture and self-efficacy than did their non-FLES peers. Given the opportunity to discuss their learning

experiences in greater detail in the short answers and interviews, respondents described how they were motivated by songs and games and international foods in their FLES classes and revealed positive attitudes towards their language learning experiences. Motivating students to achieve and to earn good grades was important since the analysis of the data revealed that good FLES grades were the most significant predictor of who would take more foreign language courses in high school.

Because one of the major studies that found a positive correlation between FLES program participation and high school foreign language study was conducted more than 35 years ago (Brega, 1967), the current study could be particularly useful in engendering new support for FLES. With a heightened awareness of benefits accruing to FLES program participants, additional funding could be requested through grant proposals at the local, state or federal level for an expansion of foreign language programs in elementary schools. Similar to the finding in the Brega study that the FLES participants scored higher than continuing French students on Modern Language association exams, the current study found that FLES students earned higher foreign language grades in high school than did non-FLES students. In addition, 56.5% of FLES participants, compared to only 25% non-FLES students, felt proficient in their foreign language after high school. The results of the current research were consistent with other studies where high achievement in particular academic studies boosted students' self confidence and motivated them to continue to pursue a particular discipline.

The positive association between FLES participation and advanced academic achievement has considerable implications for elementary, secondary, and university level curriculum planning. While enhancing academic achievement has continually been

a goal of educational policy-makers, it is of utmost importance today where the contemporary legislation commonly known as the “No Child Left Behind” Act mandates educational improvement for all children in the United States, and especially for students in low performing schools. Although primarily concerned with progress in reading and mathematics, promulgators of the legislation could be advised to consider adoption programs that promote scholastic advancement.

Congruent with the goal of raising academic achievement, findings from two Canadian studies of middle school students reflected greater motivation for academic learning and integration of higher level thinking skills when students participated in FLES French programs (Vandergrift, 2000), (MacIntyre et al., 2003). Because FLES program participation promotes reading, writing and communication skills, it engages student interest in achieving proficiency in various school subjects, as well as in advanced foreign language courses. Consequently, adopting a successful educational initiative from a high performing school, such as LaSalle, to benefit students in a low performing school could well be of interest to educators concerned with how to make “No Child Left Behind” a reality, improving education for all children.

Although it would have been desirable to have a greater number of participants in the study, the 88 respondents provided valuable information from which several conclusions may be drawn. Of the total 88 surveys returned, 68 respondents were FLES participants, 20 or respondents were non-FLES participants. Within the FLES group, defined as those with two to nine years of foreign language study in elementary school, three-fourths (75%) reported that they received grades of mostly A’s and B’s, half (50%) described themselves as proficient, and four-fifths (80.8%) confirmed that learning a

foreign language in elementary was a positive experience. This quantitative data supports the assertion that the attitude of FLES participants towards their elementary foreign language learning was positive.

The affirmative nature of the FLES experience not only became a motivating factor in the pursuit of foreign language to an advanced degree, but may also have contributed to the high educational level attained by the participants. The 94.1% of FLES respondents who went to college and their 100% graduation rate from high school is a sharp contrast to the 42% high school drop-out rate currently reported for the Chicago Public Schools. However, since the non-FLES group also had very high percentages, 95% for both high school graduation and enrollment in college, it might be concluded that both magnet school programs, as well as a special characteristic of survey respondents, could be correlated with the high educational achievement.

Another similar characteristic shared by both the FLES and the non-FLES group was the high percentage of both groups that enrolled in foreign language classes in high school. According to statistics provided by the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), in 1994, only 40.6% of all American high school students were enrolled in foreign language classes (Foreign, 2002). However, in this study, 91.2% of the FLES group and 100% of the non-FLES group were enrolled in high school foreign language classes, more than double the national enrollment. While FLES program participation may have been an influential factor for the FLES group, it clearly could not have been a factor for the non-FLES group. On the other hand, since there was only a very small group of non-FLES respondents to the survey at all, it might be concluded that the sample of the population that did respond was a group that had a special interest in

the topic of foreign language and was more inclined than the rest of the population to take that subject in school. The demographic data also revealed that both groups of respondents showed evidence of reaching high educational levels. Their high enrollment in high school foreign language courses could be viewed as consistent with high school students committed to exceeding a minimal two year foreign language graduation requirement or to taking foreign language classes even though none was required for graduation from their high school.

Data from the surveys regarding the correlation between the study of a foreign language in elementary school and the study of a foreign language in high school to an advanced level also yielded a positive conclusion. Among the 91.2% of the respondents who studied a foreign language in high school, the average number of total years of foreign language studied by FLES participants was more than a half-year higher than for non-FLES participants. Although the difference in means was small, with the FLES mean of 3.49 years, and the average for the non-FLES group of 2.95 years, there were significant differences between the FLES and the non-FLES groups in other aspects of their secondary school foreign language study.

In contrast to the high percentage, 77.5%, of FLES participants placed in a second or third year foreign language class upon entering high school, all non-FLES students reported starting foreign language at the first year entry level for high school. Furthermore, while 56.8% of the FLES group advanced to fourth year or Advanced Placement foreign language classes in high school, only 30% of the non-FLES group advanced to the fourth or Advanced Placement level. Through a chi-square test, the analysis of data revealed that this difference was of statistical significance, confirming

that there was a positive correlation between FLES program participation and the level of achievement in high school foreign language classes.

With the increasingly competitive nature of the college admissions process, evidence of advanced levels and good grades in their foreign language study could benefit students, positively affecting their choices of which colleges admitted them and where they might attend. In addition to scores from standardized tests, university admissions officers report that they seriously consider students' academic transcripts, reviewing them for both grade point averages and the degree of difficulty of courses taken. Because the data revealed that FLES participants took more advanced foreign language courses and received higher grades in their foreign language courses, their high school transcripts would reveal their academic acceleration and might endow them with an advantage in their bid for admission to a college that valued such a background.

The FLES program participation was a significant factor in predicting more foreign language study in college. While almost four-fifths of the FLES group studied a foreign language in college, less than three-fifths of the non-FLES students studied a foreign language in college. When the number of semesters of total foreign language in college was considered, the mean for FLES participants was 3.28 semesters, more than twice the average for non-FLES respondents, which was 1.50 semesters. Of even greater significance, 42.2% FLES took four or more semesters, while only 15.8% non-FLES students studied four or more semesters of foreign language in college. The statistical evidence supports a conclusion that FLES participation had a positive correlation with advanced foreign language study in college.

Student enrollment in both a greater number and more advanced college foreign language courses could imply multiple benefits for the educational community and society. Higher enrollment in university level foreign languages courses would mean an increase in the portion of the population interested in becoming more adept at cross-cultural and international communication. To counter a prior trend of declining enrollment in college foreign language courses, the data from this study suggests that an increase in the number of FLES educated students entering college would result in increased enrollments in more advanced college foreign language courses. Offering a greater number and variety of college foreign language courses could serve as both a recruiting tool for colleges and universities, as well as a means of tapping multiple talents within the foreign language faculty. By enrolling more students primed to pursue foreign language students to an advanced level, faculty already on staff in a university's Modern Language Department would be able to teach a greater variety of courses, and possibly allow the more advanced students to assist in researching issues of interest to faculty with the goal of publishing more journal articles and enhancing the prestige of the university.

Despite the appearance of a weaker correlation between FLES program participation and career choices than there was with educational choices, knowledge of a foreign language was still of considerable importance. For both the FLES and non-FLES respondents, the most popular fields were business and education, followed by government and social service, to account for almost half the respondents. In order to gain employment, 38.5% of the FLES group and 30% of the non-FLES group reported that knowledge of a foreign language was useful. However, 9.7% of the FLES respondents indicated that knowledge of a foreign language was required for their jobs,



and since there were zero non-FLES in this category, it appeared that additional employment opportunities were available to FLES participants. Essentially, this latter group that included bilingual teachers both in this country and abroad, along with people working in government, social work, medicine and businesses with international connections, had access to jobs unavailable to the non-FLES group.

Although less than half of each group reported using foreign language at work more than monthly or weekly, former FLES participants did report using foreign language more frequently than did the non-FLES respondents. More than one-third, 35.3% of the FLES cohort said they used foreign language at work weekly, daily, or almost always, compared to only 15% of non-FLES group. One-third of FLES, compared to one-quarter of non-FLES group, also reported finding that knowledge of a foreign language was very useful or essential in performing work responsibilities. The data supports the hypothesis that by initiating a foreign language at an early age, FLES program participants were more likely than their non-FLES peers to make foreign language a part of their lives and to find avenues for its use.

Both groups indicated that when they did use a foreign language at work, most frequently it was to talk with clients, customers or colleagues and, occasionally, for translating. However, the FLES group reported a wide variety of additional uses for foreign language at work, including: communicating with patients, students, parents, musicians, and warehouse employees; writing with clarity for different audiences, travel outside the United States for business purposes, talking on the telephone with Spanish-speaking clients, targeting marketing campaigns for Spanish-speaking audiences, conducting instruction in different languages, and a greater propensity to use it in

multiple aspects of their work responsibilities. In summary, the results permit the conclusion that while knowledge of a foreign language was somewhat useful for gaining employment and on the job for approximately one-third of each group, participation in a FLES program was a moderately significant factor with respect to broader use of foreign language in the employment environment.

In this age of globalization, there is a great need for multilingual citizens who can communicate with populations from different cultures because manufacturing plants are often overseas, intergovernmental agencies must address the needs of diverse populations, and education of immigrant groups can be more effective with knowledge of multiple languages. People who are proficient in more than one language are at a distinct advantage, not only because their foreign language experience might make them eligible for jobs where knowledge of a foreign language is required, but also because familiarity with different cultures might make them more responsive to the exigencies of managing a multicultural workforce. Consequently, having studied a foreign language in elementary school, as well as in high school, could mean improved language proficiency which would be considered an asset in obtaining employment where knowledge of a foreign language was required and for climbing the corporate ladder. In a tight economy, the advantages of FLES participation for a high school graduate who did not attend college might even be sufficient to make him competitive with a college graduate who did not have foreign language proficiency.

Several recent studies conducted with college students found that attitudes of former FLES participants motivated them positively to take advanced foreign language courses in college (Holmquist, 1993), (Roberts, 1992). Their findings suggested that

students who took the advanced courses more frequently identified social or cultural reasons, rather than interests related to employment or professional advancement. Similarly, within the current study, the most frequently cited perceived value of foreign language learning related to cultural considerations. However, the focus on social and cultural reasons could result in tangential economic benefits for students, even if not immediately apparent. Knowledge about different languages and cultures would make employees involved in business more astute about cultural influences in decision-making and the in the negotiation process. Through enhanced cultural understanding and sensitivity, employees with FLES experience would be more likely than others to recognize cultural bias or values that would have impact on business transactions. As a result, the educational background of former FLES participants would make them especially valuable employees for both local and international companies.

Through respondents' explanations of what they considered to be most valuable about their FLES experience, they revealed how knowledge of a foreign language may also have been partially responsible for their professional advancement. Respondents' comments that their elementary foreign language opened the world to them and gave them an international perspective would be considered a definite asset for the 20% of the survey respondents that worked in business- related arenas. The mention by many FLES participants of their facility for conversing and communicating in another language corresponded well to skills highly valued by employers. Furthermore, the discussion of heightened cultural awareness by more than half the respondents would be advantageous for various field of employment.

The effects of foreign language learning were most vividly illustrated in the qualitative data provided in the open-ended questions and in the interviews. In a large majority of cases, on 43 of the 66 surveys with responses to the open-ended questions, cultural considerations were cited as a valuable part of learning a foreign language in elementary school. One-third of the those who provided qualitative information discussed travel interests and experiences as an appreciable benefit. In addition, more than 20 respondents each praised their FLES experiences for augmenting their ability to communicate, for opening new worlds, for promoting future foreign language studies and for providing enjoyable, enriching experiences. The trends revealed through respondents' narrative comments clearly extolled the advantages of initiating the study of a foreign language in elementary school.

The response to the question of how foreign language learning in elementary school influenced future educational and career choices was revealed more in the qualitative, than in the quantitative data. As former FLES students expressed their views about their participation in the program, they endorsed the program for the skills it helped them develop. As one respondent summarized his reflections:

My experience in elementary school has given me the ability and desire to adapt to different ways of life and assess new situations quantitatively. Whether at home or in a new place, I feel confident that I can adjust to what is happening. More concretely, since graduating from college, this desire has driven me to live and work as an ESL (English as a Second Language) teacher in Chile and now as a teacher trainer in Thailand for the Peace Corps. Learning a foreign language from a young age also influenced my decision to major in political science and international affairs during college.

On the FLES students' responses to the open-ended questions, they repeatedly referred to how their elementary experiences motivated them to continue their foreign language

learning, how it expanded their awareness of diverse cultures and introduced them to different ways of viewing the world.

By contrast, the non-FLES respondents repeatedly referred to the difficulties they encountered with pronunciation and memorization of language structures in high school and college. More than half who responded to the open-ended questions expressed regret that they had not had the opportunity to initiate learning a foreign language earlier in their lives. The non-FLES respondents rarely mentioned an interest in travel or a desire to help them communicate more with diverse populations.

The methodology of this dissertation inquiry expanded on information from existing studies on the related topics in foreign and second language learning. Through the interviews, there was an opportunity to present students' views, in their own words, on the value of starting foreign language study at an early age, especially with respect to the development of international perspectives essential to survival in a global society. The study of foreign language learners continues to be of interest and have tangential application to students of bilingual education, as well as to curriculum developers from diverse disciplines. Even though bilingual education is most often associated with immigrant students' efforts to become proficient in English, the dominant language in the United States, the bilingual instructional program may incorporate many of the same principles of FLES and foreign language learning. Consequently, analysis of the positive elements of FLES program participation may hold promise for solving some of the challenges confronting educators working with English language learners.

One limitation of this study was the small number of responses received from the non-FLES or comparison group. The low rate of return from the non-FLES group may

have been attributable to their lower interest in the topic than those who did participate in the FLES program. While over 20% of the FLES sample returned surveys, only 7% of the non-FLES group responded to the survey. With a total of only 20 non-FLES responses, even a small number of responses could translate to a large percentage. Consequently, when comparisons were made with the FLES group, it was possible for a much higher number to find their FLES experiences positive, but when percentages or means were compared, the difference appeared to be of a minor statistical significance.

Beyond the numbers, FLES participants vividly described the effect that learning a foreign language had on their lives. They spoke in terms of a “bridge to understanding,” “a new way to look at the world,” “an enriching experience,” and something that “became a part of me,” in order to convey the significance of participating in the program. The assertion by multiple respondents that FLES was something they would choose for their own children served as a testament to the enduring importance they placed on learning a foreign language in elementary school.

Analyzing the effects of early foreign language learning on students’ future academic courses of study and career choices offered a possible solution to the problem of how to promote greater foreign language learning in this country. To add to the literature on this subject, both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered. The quantitative component of the study analyzed the impact of elementary foreign language learning experiences on enrollment in high school and college foreign language courses, as well as how it related to work and career choices. The qualitative research was presented through open-ended questions and interviews, reflections, and narratives of language academy alumni. Participants in the study identified themes and trends of how

they perceived their early language learning experiences and how these affected future academic and professional decisions.

Because of a continuing relationship with many alumni of LaSalle Language Academy, the researcher enabled some of these young adults to tell their stories and to share examples of how learning a foreign language in elementary school enhanced their educational opportunities and success in the world of work. Their insight might offer some direction for future educational planning and programs. In contrast to many national trends, learning a foreign language in elementary school provided proof of a positive nature about a program that has worked well in one Chicago Public School for the last two decades of the past millennium and into the present millennium. Annually, hundreds of visitors, primarily parents seeking public school options for their children, attend LaSalle Language Academy's Open House and visit the classrooms. Further attesting to the popularity of a FLES program in an urban public school, two thousand apply annually to have their children admitted to the school, half for the 58 kindergarten openings and the other half for fewer than 20 openings in first through eighth grade. The tremendous number of families seeking this experience for their children could promote proliferation of FLES programs. The quantitative and qualitative results of this study lend support to the efficacy of initiating the study of a foreign language in elementary school.

Respondents' voices offer evidence and commentary on how their lives are evolving after graduating from LaSalle Language Academy. Anecdotes and stories provide a roadmap for students seeking educational models for the future. Perhaps their testimony to the effectiveness of their FLES program participation may evolve into a proliferation of elementary foreign language programs throughout the nation.

## **Recommendations**

Because of the lower than anticipated rate of response to the survey, the question arose whether a higher response rate would have yielded results of greater statistical significance. Well beyond the determined deadline for the surveys to be returned, they continued to be received, and an ongoing stream of visiting LaSalle alumni offered to participate in the study. While too late to be included in the current study, future research might lead to more significant findings were it possible to enlist a larger sample of both FLES and non-FLES respondents.

Extending beyond the borders of LaSalle Language Academy and Newberry Mathematics and Science Academy, further study might include alumni of all six of the Chicago Public Schools' language academies. Their results might be analyzed in comparison to alumni of a broad cross-section of other CPS magnet schools, scholastic academies, and diverse neighborhood schools in order to better evaluate the effects of FLES program participation. Even in other urban or suburban school districts, conducting a similar survey might either corroborate or refute the findings of this small study.

Having gathered a significant amount of demographic data for this study, future research might be expanded to consider whether race, gender, age or income level modified the effects of FLES experiences on students' future educational and career choices. In order for the results to be measurable, however, it would be necessary to insure a larger sample of both the FLES and the non-FLES populations. While the demographic data gathered for the current study provided interesting information about the sample, it seemed to be insufficient to make significant comparisons between the



groups. However, interesting demographic comparisons about FLES effects could be made with larger sample population.

In an era when effective educational initiatives are urgently needed, FLES programs might provide a solution if they did indicate an ability to overcome differences in family income. If the study could be conducted to determine whether FLES programs were equally successful with children raised in affluence or poverty, educators might find the results worthy of consideration for funding and implementation. Regardless of income level, respondents in the current small study appeared to rate their experiences positively. However, additional research could be conducted to determine whether the effects of FLES were significant in overcoming a family background of poverty.

The present study initiated the process of gathering information about effective instructional strategies used in the FLES program. Several studies were also identified in the review of literature that supported the view that student learning increased when they were actively engaged in the learning process. Consequently, future research might address these instructional issues and provide an analysis of how FLES methodology might be expanded to enhance learning for all students.

As part of a grand scheme or a small scale, researching the effects of elementary foreign language study could yield interesting insights about how children learn. Only if such a study were conducted in a much larger arena would its results be considered for changing schools nationwide. However, even the intimate nature of a survey of 88 alumni of two CPS magnet schools can illustrate the positive effects of foreign language learning in elementary school on students' future educational and career choices, and it can serve as inspiration for an educator engaged in the process of transforming a local school.

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## APPENDIX

### **Effects of Foreign Language Learning in Elementary School on Students' Future Educational and Career Choices**

July 26, 2003

Dear Newberry and LaSalle Language Academy Alumni:

My name is Amy Weiss Narea from DePaul University, as well as principal of LaSalle Language Academy. I am writing to ask you to take part in a research study because I am trying to learn more about how elementary foreign language study influences future educational and career choices. Because you were enrolled as a student in an elementary magnet program, you are being asked to participate. This study involves your responding to a questionnaire with 50 items asking about your experiences learning a foreign language, as well as *if* and *how* you use a foreign language in your work. Participation in the study should take from 15 to 30 minutes.

If you agree to be in this study, please complete the questionnaire and return it in the pre-addressed, postage-paid envelope within 30 days, if possible. Most questions are answered by filling in a blank or a bubble. On the last page of the questionnaire there is another optional part with six short answers. You may write your response in this section. There is also the possibility of being interviewed at LaSalle Language Academy, where you may respond orally to a similar set of six questions. The interview will be conducted by an impartial interviewer who has no connection to LaSalle. However, if you prefer and if you make the request, I will conduct the interview.

There may be minimal anticipated risks to the individual that may result from participation in the research. For example, you may experience discomfort being asked personal questions; if you are uncomfortable answering any question, you may skip it. Your name will not appear anywhere in the survey itself. If you consent to be interviewed a fictitious name will be used. Anonymity and confidentiality are guaranteed.

There are no benefits to the individual from participation in the research. However, the value of the study would be to provide information to people concerned with education about the benefits of beginning the study of a foreign language in elementary school. If you do not want to be in this study, you do not have to participate. Remember, being in this study is entirely up to you and no one will be upset if you do not want to participate. Even if you change your mind later and want to stop, you may withdraw your agreement to participate without any consequences.

All information that you provide in this research study will be kept strictly confidential and any report of this research will not identify you personally in any way. You can ask any questions that you have about the study. If you have a question later that

you did not think of now, or if you would like to be interviewed, you may write to me at LaSalle Language Academy, 1734 N. Orleans, Chicago, IL 60614, or call (773) 534-8470 or contact me via e-mail at [anarea@students.depaul.edu](mailto:anarea@students.depaul.edu). You may also contact me to request results of the survey.

For confidentiality and to guarantee anonymity, you are not asked to sign a consent or write your name anywhere on the survey. The act of returning the completed questionnaire in the pre-addressed, stamped envelope serves as your consent and acknowledgement of understanding.

In accordance with the procedures of the university, I am fulfilling the Investigator's Responsibility: I have fully explained the nature and the purpose of the above described research procedures and the risks and benefits involved in its performance. I have attempted to answer, and will continue to answer, all questions to the best of my ability.

I appreciate your consideration of participating in this survey *on Effects of Foreign Language Learning in elementary School on Future Educational and Career Choices*. And, as we say at LaSalle Language Academy, *merci, danke, grazie, gracias* and thanks!

Sincerely,

Amy Weiss Narea

---

Please tear off this bottom portion and return it with the questionnaire.

*Please answer these four questions to indicate your understanding of the purpose, risks, and benefits of this study.*

Do you understand the purpose of this study?  Yes  No

Do you understand that your data will be included in the study results?  Yes  No

Do you understand that you may stop participation at any time?  Yes  No

Will you benefit directly from participating in this study?  Yes  No

*Do not sign this survey; please return it anonymously in the envelop provided.*

## Questionnaire

In order to help further understanding of *how elementary foreign language study influences future educational and career choices*, please complete this survey.

In appreciation for your participation, *merci, danke, grazie, gracias* and thanks!

### A. FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (FLES) EXPERIENCE

1. What foreign language did you study in elementary school?  
 French    German    Italian    Spanish    Other \_\_\_\_\_  
 None (If none, skip the questions in this section and go to part B.)
  
  2. How many years did you study a foreign language in elementary school? \_\_\_\_\_
  
  3. What grades did you receive in foreign language in elementary school?  
 1. mostly D&F    2. mostly C&D    3. mostly B&C    4. mostly A&B    5. mostly A's
  
  4. How would you rate your foreign language proficiency after elementary school?  
 1. Not Proficient    2. A Little    3. Somewhat    4. Proficient    5. Very Proficient
  
  5. How would you rate your elementary school foreign language experience?  
 1. Very Negative    2. Negative    3. Satisfactory    4. Positive    5. Very Positive
  
  6. Rate the impact of your FLES experience, using the scale below from 1 to 5.
- |                        | Very Negative            | Negative                 | Satisfactory             | Positive                 | Very Positive            |
|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
|                        | 1                        | 2                        | 3                        | 4                        | 5                        |
| Books                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Songs                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Games                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Culture videos         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Conversation           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Food activities        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Field trips            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Projects               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Speakers               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Exchange student visit | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Overseas travel        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other _____            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
7. Did you travel overseas with your class in elementary school?    No    Yes
  
  8. Did you grow up in a family that spoke a foreign language?    No    Yes
  
  9. Was it the foreign language you studied in elementary school?    No    Yes
  
  10. Do you have relatives who speak the language you studied?    No    Yes



**B. HIGH SCHOOL FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUDY**

11. Did you study a foreign language in high school?  No  Yes  
 (If No, skip the questions in this section and go to part C.)

12. Mark which foreign language(s) you studied, for how many years each, and if you took the Advanced Placement (AP) exam. (Mark all that apply.)

French	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> AP
German	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> AP
Italian	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> AP
Spanish	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> AP
Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> AP

13. Did you study the same in high school as in elementary? No Yes  
 (If No, skip to question 15.)

14. If you studied the same foreign language in high school as in elementary school, in which year of that language were you placed?  1st  2<sup>nd</sup>  3<sup>rd</sup>

15. What grades did you receive in high school foreign language classes?  
1. mostly D&F 2. mostly C&D 3. mostly B&C 4. mostly B&A 5. mostly A's

16 How would you rate your foreign language proficiency after high school?  
1. Not Proficient 2. A Little 3. Somewhat 4. Proficient 5. Very Proficient

17. How would you rate your high school foreign language experience?  
 1. Very Negative  2. Negative  3. Satisfactory  4. Positive  5. Very Positive

18. Did you travel overseas with your language class in high school?  No  Yes

**C. COLLEGE FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUDY**

19. Did you attend college? No Yes  
 (If No, skip to part D.)

20. Did you study a foreign language in college? No Yes  
 (If No, skip to part D.)

21. Mark which foreign language(s) you studied in college, and for how many semesters (or quarters) you studied each language.

French	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
German	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
Italian	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
Spanish	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 8

23. What grades did you receive in your college foreign language courses?  
1. mostly D&F 2. mostly C&D 3. mostly B&C 4. mostly A&B 5. mostly A's

24. How would you rate your foreign language proficiency after college?  
1. Not Proficient 2. A Little 3. Somewhat 4. Proficient 5. Very Proficient

25. How would you rate your college foreign language experiences?  
1. Very Negative 2. Negative 3. Satisfactory 4. Positive 5. Very Positive

26. Did you study abroad during college?  No  Yes  
If Yes, in which country? \_\_\_\_\_

27. Did you do post-graduate study outside the United States?  No  Yes  
If Yes, in which country? \_\_\_\_\_

#### D. CAREER CHOICES AND EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCES

31. How many years of work experience do you have? \_\_\_\_\_

32. In which field have you worked? (Mark all that apply.)

<input type="checkbox"/> Arts	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Retail/Sales
<input type="checkbox"/> Banking	<input type="checkbox"/> Law	<input type="checkbox"/> Social Service
<input type="checkbox"/> Business	<input type="checkbox"/> Media	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> Computer Technology	<input type="checkbox"/> Medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> Travel
<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Publishing	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

33. How often do you use a foreign language in your work?  
Almost Never Every Month Every Week Every Day Almost Always

34. How useful is knowledge of a foreign language in doing your work?  
1. Irrelevant 2. Rarely Useful 3. Somewhat Useful 4. Very Useful 5. Essential

35. Was knowledge of a foreign language required or helpful for being hired?  
1. Unimportant 2. A Little Helpful 3. Somewhat Helpful 4. Very Helpful 5. Required

36. How do you use a foreign language at work? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### E. DEMOGRAPHIC DATA (Optional Information)

1. Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex:  M  F

2. Year of graduation from 8<sup>th</sup> grade:  
1985 1986 1987 1988 1989 1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995

3. Race: 1 White 2 Black 3 American Indian 4 Asian  Hispanic

4. Marital Status: Single Married Separated Divorced
5. Educational Level:  Did Not Graduate High School  H.S. Grad  
U1 U2 U3 U4  College Grad.  Grad degree
6. Employment Status: Not Working Work Summers only  
Work Part-Time Work Full-Time Other\_\_\_\_\_
7. Lunch status in elementary school:  Free Reduced  Paid
8. Respondent's Annual Income:  
<\$20,000 \$20-40,000 \$40-60,000 \$60-80,000 >\$80,000

*Part F is also optional. If you do not wish to write in the answers below, you have finished the survey. If you are willing to write a short response to the questions below, the additional information is most welcome. Again, thank you for your time and cooperation.*

**F. OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS and SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW**

1. What is your earliest memory about learning a foreign language?
  
2. What did you enjoy most in your foreign language classes?
  
3. What was most difficult for you in your foreign language classes?
  
4. What was the most valuable part of studying a foreign language?
  
5. How did learning a foreign language in elementary school influence your life?
  
6. Please share your reflections about elementary your foreign language experience.

*Do not sign this survey; please return it anonymously. Please be aware that by returning the completed survey you indicate your understanding that this is for a university research project and that your data will be included in the results of the study.*

## FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL EXPERIENCE INTERVIEW

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### A. SCHOOL

- 1. What language did you study at LaSalle? How many years? When did you graduate?*
- 2. Did you study a foreign language in high school? How much was required?*
- 3. What was something you learned in your elementary foreign language class that affected your learning in high school?*
- 4. Did you study a foreign language in college? How much was required?*
- 5. Was there a talent you discovered about yourself in elementary school that led you to particular courses in high school or college?*

### B. WORK

- 1. Describe your career path and what type of work you have done.*
- 2. Give an example (or two) of a work experience where foreign language was useful.*
- 3. How would you see yourself using foreign language in the future?*

### C. TRAVEL

- 1. Did you travel with your class at LaSalle?*
- 2. Have you had another opportunity to travel overseas?*
- 3. Was your earlier study of foreign language helpful when you traveled?*

### D. LIFE

- 1. What is your earliest memory about learning a foreign language?*
- 2. What was the most valuable part of studying a foreign language?*
- 3. How did learning a foreign language in elementary school influence your life?*

## FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL EXPERIENCE INTERVIEW

Name Zora Anderson

Date February 15, 2004

### A. SCHOOL

1. *What language did you study at LaSalle? How many years? When did you graduate?* I took French at LaSalle for 9 years. I graduated eighth grade in 1993.

2. *Did you study a foreign language in high school? How much was required?* Yes, I took French all four years of high school. I was placed in 2<sup>nd</sup> year honors, and I continued to take it for all four years, but my high school didn't have AP, so it was just a 5<sup>th</sup> year. I went to Whitney Young and then IMSA (Illinois Math and Science Academy). I think only two years were required.

3. *What was something you learned in your elementary foreign language class that affected your learning in high school?*

There were a lot of good students at IMSA, and some were great at grammar, but I think I had a better accent because I'd been speaking it since I was five. I never had any intonation and pronunciation problems. There were two French teachers at IMSA, and one was a native speaker; but the other, she was really good and lively, but I think she learned French later, like maybe starting in college, and she got really close, but she just never got the pronunciation and intonation quite right.

4. *Did you study a foreign language in college? How much was required?*

Yes, I always took foreign language. At Yale, it was really intense, total immersion; two full years were required, and because the language classes met 5 days a week, each course counted as a credit and a half. When I got to college, I was a little tired of French, like, how much subjunctive can you take? So, I always wanted to go to Italy, so I decided to switch to Italian, and I took that for 3 ½ years. I also took French for two years, and I also took a year of Spanish my senior year.

Languages are really easy for me, so these were my light courses, compared to Franklin geometry, and some of my other courses. I would get up early, work on exercises at 7:30 and go to Italian class at 8:30 in the morning, and then French class, and then I could focus on other things in the afternoon.

5. *Was there a talent you discovered about yourself in elementary school that led you to particular courses in high school or college?*

You remember, I won the French award in 8<sup>th</sup> grade? Not everyone gets to take a foreign language in grade school, so that was pretty cool. It was fun, and because I started so early, it became intuitive.

In college, I was a Mellon fellow. I had a Mellon grant for three years and my thesis was "Effects of Commercialization on the Political Subtexts of Carnal in Trinidad and New Orleans." It was a lot of fun to travel, and sometimes I got to use my French, like when I was interviewing older people and it was easier for them to talk in Creole or French, and I could understand. It wasn't all the time, but it was still a part of it.

## B. WORK

### *1. Describe your career path and what type of work you have done.*

Well, how I got my job was kind of a fluke. I had a boyfriend who was living in New York, and he suggested I get an internship on Wall Street so I could live in the city. So, I got a summer internship at Merrill Lynch, and at the end of the summer, they wined and dined me and offered me a job and gave me a signing bonus, so that was cool. When I went back to college for my senior year, my professors couldn't believe it. They thought for sure I would go into academia, since I was a Mellon fellow and was always doing research and languages. They didn't know I was secretly a math nerd, and that I really loved my job.

### *2. Give an example (or two) of a work experience where foreign language was useful.*

Well, in New York, I use it in cabs all the time. A lot of the drivers are Haitian, and I speak it with them. And, if we work after 9:00pm, we go home in hired car, and a lot of the drivers speak French.

I use it working in the office, when we are doing business with Merrill Lynch in Europe, sometimes it's a lot easier. I was talking to this German guy, and he was really hard to understand, and I asked if he spoke French; and then it was a lot easier. Also, with a client in Thailand, and no one could understand, and I asked if he spoke French, and the client did, so it went much better. And sometimes, I help my boss; he's from Pittsburgh, and only speaks English, so when they need someone in the office for French or Italian, and even sometimes Spanish, they get me.

My first job, when I was in high school, was selling shoes at Nine West in the Century Mall. One time, a group of French tourists came in, and I waited on them, even helping them convert shoe sizes, and I sold like 12 pairs of shoes! It was my best day at work.

### *3. How would you see yourself using foreign language in the future?*

I just bought an advanced French grammar book, and it's been really fun getting back into it. I listen to a lot of opera, and it's so much better when you understand. I live near an big arts movie house in New York, so it's great to know the language for those films.

In New York, sometimes tourists will stop and ask me for directions, and I'll try to gauge from their accents and ask if they speak Italian or French. They really appreciate it and try to take me out to dinner or offer me rewards. It's really fun.

## C. TRAVEL

### *1. Did you travel with your class at LaSalle?*

I went to France in both 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade. But, in high school and college, I just didn't have the time.

2. *Have you had another opportunity to travel overseas?*

After Freshman year in college, I went to France with my parents. They had friends who taught urban studies and art history at the university in Paris, and we went to visit them. They showed us around everywhere. The urban studies professor had brought his students to Chicago one summer, and I had helped them in the city. I remember, I helped this one graduate student buy his first pair of Nike's. We also went to Belgium, and that was great, because I even got to see where my father's family bakery was.

3. *Was your earlier study of foreign language helpful when you traveled?*

I remember I had to do all the talking and translating for my family the whole time. At first, I really enjoyed it. But then, my mother would say, "Tell them this for me," and by the end, I was almost a little resentful and became a bit "passive aggressive." That was the only other time I traveled overseas, but I'd love to go again.

#### D. LIFE

1. *What is your earliest memory about learning a foreign language?*

I remember Mme Arnold (the kindergarten French teacher,) holding up this board every day when we would sit in the circle. And, we would tell what day it was and what the weather was, "Il fait beau. Il pluit," like that. That's how we began every class. It was fun.

2. *What was the most valuable part of studying a foreign language?*

I think, it sounds kind of corny, but it makes you a better person. Knowing other languages opens a lot of the world for you. Americans have a weird syndrome: they think they are the center of the world. But knowing another language, it humbles you a little bit, because no, you are not the center of the world. Yours is not necessarily the best culture. Learning another language makes you open to a lot more, and it opens new doors. More than just a skill, it gives you understanding of where you fit in the world.

3. *How did learning a foreign language in elementary school influence your life?*

Our class was like a family, and we had great opportunities that I don't think we would have had otherwise. More kids from our class spent time traveling than anyone I know. I don't think that happens just by chance. Like K.C.B., he was just a disgruntled kid, and he hardly appreciated Spanish when he was in school, but he just got back from spending six months traveling all over Europe, and he said it was the best thing that ever happened to him in his life. And A.D.M, she was just a little kid from the south side, but because of LaSalle, she continued language all through high school and college. Now, she's a geologist and she's traveled to Haiti and Fiji, and I think she's comfortable going anywhere because she knows other languages. And H. and J, they were just in Spain together; that can't be an accident that there's such a concentration of people who travel. It wouldn't have happened if they didn't know another language, but because we do, we think, "I can do this" and we do it.

## FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL EXPERIENCE INTERVIEW

Name Alex Casey

Date February 17, 2004

### A. SCHOOL

*1. What language did you study at LaSalle? How many years? When did you graduate?*

I took Spanish for nine years, graduating from LaSalle in 1989. I also studied French for one year when I was at LLA, going to Lincoln Park High School before school each morning in eighth grade.

*2. Did you study a foreign language in high school? How much was required?*

I studied Spanish for three years and German for one year at St. Ignatius. They required four years of a foreign language. I placed out of first year Spanish because of my background at LaSalle.

*3. What was something you learned in your elementary foreign language class that affected your learning in high school?*

A lot of factors in my elementary foreign language class were beneficial. LaSalle taught me to open up to other cultures and to learn a lot of different ideas. It's not something I can quantify. I learned things I wouldn't otherwise have been exposed to. Learning another language gets you ready for high school.

*4. Did you study a foreign language in college? How much was required?*

I studied more German at Georgetown – two years. Two years of a foreign language was required.

*5. Was there a talent you discovered about yourself in elementary school that led you to particular courses in high school or college?*

I think my elementary school experience motivated me to learn more. Is willingness to learn a talent? I suppose it is ... Social Studies with Ms. Markewycz (at LLA) was so fascinating. I learned that things happen on so many levels. I learned that from her. She made me more of a Renaissance person.

### B. WORK

*1. Describe your career path and what type of work you have done.*

My career path has been always in investments. I started in operations talking to investors and helping with parts of their accounts, moved into sales, and now, investment and portfolio analysis.

*2. Give an example (or two) of a work experience where foreign language was useful.*

I have not had to use my foreign language at work although I spoke Spanish a few times on the phone.



3. *How would you see yourself using foreign language in the future?*

I see Spanish as being useful in the city. In Chicago and other big cities, there are so many Spanish-speakers. I plan to use it in the future for traveling. I would like to learn Italian for a trip to Florence and Rome. Basically, I understand how language works so I can pick up the basics of Italian quickly. My wife and I were planning to go to Tuscany this summer, but now with the boys, I'm not sure. I do have an Italian computer program I plan to use.

C. TRAVEL

1. *Did you travel with your class at LaSalle?*

I traveled to Leon, Spain, in seventh grade at LaSalle.

2. *Have you had another opportunity to travel overseas?*

I went to England when I was sixteen and to Ireland when I was 22, just out of college.

3. *Was your earlier study of foreign language helpful when you traveled?*

I was only in English-speaking countries.

D. LIFE

1. *What is your earliest memory about learning a foreign language?*

My earliest memory about learning a foreign language was singing "De Colores" in Spanish class when I was at LaSalle.

2. *What was the most valuable part of studying a foreign language?*

The most valuable part of studying a foreign language was being exposed to other cultures – Mexico, South America, Spain, all Spanish-speaking countries with different cultures, and to be open to new ideas. You realize America is just one place, with one set of ideas.

3. *How did learning a foreign language in elementary school influence your life?*

Learning a foreign language taught me how to relate to others even if they're different. Just being open to new things, I know I've said this before, but it is so important. Today, a lot of Americans have no clue about what the rest of the world experiences. When you are exposed to other cultures at a young age, you keep your eyes open to what's around ... You look beyond your immediate environment and try to understand others and what's happening in the rest of the world.

## FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL EXPERIENCE INTERVIEW

Name Wanda Jackson

Date February 17, 2004

### A. SCHOOL

*1. What language did you study at LaSalle? How many years? When did you graduate?*

I studied Spanish for nine years at LaSalle. I graduated in 1993.

*2. Did you study a foreign language in high school? How much was required?*

I studied Spanish for four years at St. Ignatius. Two years were required. I took three, then one year of AP Spanish, since I placed out of my first year.

*3. What was something you learned in your elementary foreign language class that affected your learning in high school?*

I learned the difference between Spanish spoken in various countries. I learned about different cultures and different ways of thinking. I developed a love for language and traveling.

*4. Did you study a foreign language in college? How much was required?*

I studied Spanish for two years at Florida A&M. None was required.

*5. Was there a talent you discovered about yourself in elementary school that led you to particular courses in high school or college?*

I discovered a talent for memorization in elementary school, and for public speaking. I like to talk a lot, so I guess you could say I discovered that I had verbal ability... and a talent for student government. LLA led me to further study in Spanish and then, maybe, student government led me to the law.

### B. WORK

*1. Describe your career path and what type of work you have done.*

I was a flight attendant, then worked at a small law firm, then McDonald's legal department. Now, when I graduate from law school at Northwestern, (May 2004), I'll work for Sonnenschein, Nath, & Rosenthal.

*2. Give an example (or two) of a work experience where foreign language was useful.*

I used my Spanish as a flight attendant with American Airlines primarily because I did two flights to Mexico. I actually helped translate legal documents from Uruguay at McDonald's.

*3. How would you see yourself using foreign language in the future?*

My law firm is trying to expand into South America, so I'll use my Spanish then. I actually talked to Brazilian attorneys at our law firm at a legal meeting, and I'm sure I'll be doing more of that.

### C. TRAVEL

1. *Did you travel with your class at LaSalle?*

I went to Madrid, Spain, in seventh grade at LaSalle.

2. *Have you had another opportunity to travel overseas?*

I studied in Spain last semester (2003) in Toledo. I also went to Italy, to Rome, and to Florence last semester. I've traveled in Paris, Amsterdam, and England with friends in college during my junior and senior years. And, I went to Ghana on a trade mission sponsored by Chicago State University.

3. *Was your earlier study of foreign language helpful when you traveled?*

My earlier study of foreign language was helpful because we used the basics more than anything else – ordering food, in hotels, and for directions.

### D. LIFE

1. *What is your earliest memory about learning a foreign language?*

My earliest memory – I remember Sra. Cunningham (LLA) taking us to the Spanish room and teaching us colors. I always thought it was interesting. I liked learning Spanish.

2. *What was the most valuable part of studying a foreign language?*

Learning about different cultures was most valuable – learning to have an open mind. K Hearing and seeing different languages and cultures in school assemblies, on the bulletin boards ... Just knowing French, Spanish, Italian and German existed, and having friends studying those languages opened my mind to new things I did not know existed before. It opened my life to so many opportunities I would not have had otherwise.

3. *How did learning a foreign language in elementary school influence your life?*

How did it influence my life? Honestly, I became a world traveler and to this day, I use Spanish to get different job opportunities. I always lit it on my resume. I married a French guy. His mom is staying with us for awhile, so I'm learning French. Learning another language was invaluable. My children will follow in my footsteps. Hopefully, at LaSalle.

## FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL EXPERIENCE INTERVIEW

Name Alexa Jones

Date January 28, 2004

### A. SCHOOL

*1. What language did you study at LaSalle? How many years? When did you graduate?*

I studied Spanish for 8 years. I started in first grade and graduated in 1986.

But, starting in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, I went to Lincoln Park High School for Early Involvement French and studied French for two years.

*2. Did you study a foreign language in high school? How much was required?*

I went to Lane Tech and placed into 2<sup>nd</sup> year French and took French for 4 years, all the way to the AP level. I did get credit for the first year, so basically, had 5 years of French.

*3. What was something you learned in your elementary foreign language class that affected your learning in high school?*

I took French all four years. I never went back to Spanish, but I wish I had the opportunity to develop both and to be bilingual in Spanish. In high school I mixed a lot of Spanish in with the French. I still remember a lot of words and phrases in Spanish. When you start so young, it really stays in your head a long time.

*4. Did you study a foreign language in college? How much was required?*

I went to Northeastern Missouri State, which is now called Truman State University, and they had a really strict language requirement. They required 4 semesters. I placed into a pretty advanced level and received two years' (semesters) credit.

*5. Was there a talent you discovered about yourself in elementary school that led you to particular courses in high school or college?*

I really liked words and writing and language, so I chose a college where I could continue with my French. NMS had a strong language program with writing across the curriculum. We had reading and report writing all in French. The classes were taught completely in French, and we were expected to be conversational. It was a lot more intense than in elementary school.

### B. WORK

*1. Describe your career path and what type of work you have done.*

I always loved writing, and that's good for any career. I have been writing fundraising proposals for the international chapter of a foundation. Most of the other countries were English-speaking, so I never got to use my French. But the writing and the language are always a part of my life. I want to do some other kinds of writing.

2. *Give an example of a work experience where foreign language was useful.*

I do a lot of writing, and I think my experience with French is a big influence. When I have to write about something, it's like trying to learn somebody else's language. I was writing a fundraising proposal to a foundation for a business administration program, and I wrote it with an intention of having someone else understand their language.

3. *How would you see yourself using foreign language in the future?*

I am confident that if I went back and started taking Spanish again, a lot would come back to me. When I'm in the grocery store and hear people talking Spanish, I can understand some things they say

### C. TRAVEL

1. *Did you travel with your class at LaSalle?*

I was devastated because I did not get to go with my class in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. My parents and I had discussed it when I was in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, but since the trip was right around the time of the high school entrance exams, we decided I would wait until 8<sup>th</sup> grade. And then, there was the terrorist attack, and the trip got cancelled, so I didn't get to go.

2. *Have you had another opportunity to travel overseas?*

I traveled after graduation from college for one month with a friend, backpacking. We were in Amsterdam, Belgium, France, Germany and Spain.

3. *Was your earlier study of foreign language helpful when you traveled?*

Well, I was pretty shy about holding conversations, but I liked that I could pronounce words, read street signs, and ask directions. When I was in Spain, I could understand a lot. I also used my Spanish skills when we went to Mexico on vacation in high school. We went four or five times, I think. It feels empowering to know another language.

My brother took Spanish at LaSalle and then at Whitney Young High School. He didn't graduate from LaSalle, but he still took six more years of Spanish at Whitney, so he got pretty good. He's studying electrical engineering in Virginia, and he works as a bank teller, so he does use his Spanish. He also has a lot of Spanish-speaking friends and he talks to them all the time in Spanish.

### D. LIFE

1. *What is your earliest memory of learning a foreign language?*

My earliest memory is of learning my phone number. My mother made flash cards and held them up for me to practice. I can still recite my phone number and colors in Spanish I remember I wanted more. We re-learned a lot year to year and didn't move as fast as I wanted. I loved Early Involvement French at Lincoln Park since it was more intense.

I loved talking in Spanish, learning about Spain, about culture and dancing flamenco. I remember we all had Spanish names. It seemed so silly to me. My own name had no translation, so I was called "Gabriela." I didn't like that; it felt like a different identity.

*2. What was the most valuable part of studying a foreign language?*

It is another avenue for learning. Building cultural bridges is very important. It sinks into your whole life. Not many people have the opportunity to study another language as a child. When I worked in Oregon, they had extra fine arts classes, but no foreign language. It's not a part of many children's education. Knowing another culture is so important.

Looking back, I was aware at the time of class differences between Lincoln Park and the Projects, especially in math and reading. But, in Spanish, when we were all studying something new together, it builds bridges across the divide of economic disparity. It didn't happen much in other classes, but it helped get to know kids different from you when you are all starting at ground zero.

*3. How did learning a foreign language in elementary school influence your life?*

I liked studying a foreign language because I love language and words and reading. It builds support for an urban child living in a diverse urban setting. It helps make connections with people who are different from you. It's how language skills transfer into life skills, helping you connect with different populations and other countries. It gave me an interest in global politics and other cultures that didn't ever go away.

## FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL EXPERIENCE INTERVIEW

Florence Hernandez

August 28, 2003

### A. SCHOOL

*1. What language did you study at LaSalle? How many years? When did you graduate?*

I studied Italian for two years. I graduated from LaSalle in 1992.

*2. Did you study a foreign language in high school? How much was required?*

My high school did not have Italian, so I took Spanish. I was placed in the AP Spanish classes that were a little more focused on literature and history, as well as many presentations and papers. I think only 2 years was required, but I took three years of Spanish, including AP.

*3. What was something you learned in your elementary foreign language class that affected your learning in high school?*

I was used to more speaking and audio-visuals, which they very rarely brought in to high school. In high school, it was a lot more book-oriented. If they used audio-visuals, it was a more advanced level.

*4. Did you study a foreign language in college? How much was required?*

When I got to college, I was placed in entry-level Italian. It was pretty easy, and I passed with flying colors. They just required one year.

*5. Was there a talent you discovered about yourself in elementary school that led you to particular courses in high school or college?*

Even though I was only at LaSalle for two years, I caught on very fast. I think that because I already knew Spanish, I did really well with a third language.

### B. WORK

*1. Describe your career path and what type of work you have done.*

*2. Give an example (or two) of a work experience where foreign language was useful.*

Being in social work, I have a lot of exposure to predominantly the Latin culture, so my own language, Spanish, is really more useful in my work environment than the Italian I studied in elementary school. However, I feel comfortable knowing that I have had a third language experience.

3. *How would you see yourself using foreign language in the future?*

Whenever I hear Italian in public, I listen up. It makes me smile. It's unfortunate that it's not more of a dominant language within Chicago so that I could keep speaking it on a daily basis, like I did at LaSalle and in college.

C. TRAVEL

1. *Did you travel with your class at LaSalle?*

No, but I wish I could have.

2. *Have you had another opportunity to travel overseas?*

Ever since LaSalle, I have wanted to travel and see more of the world.

3. *Was your earlier study of foreign language helpful when you traveled?*

D. LIFE

1. *What is your earliest memory about learning a foreign language?*

I remember in-class lunches with the foods of the culture. They were fun and helped you learn the vocabulary and more about the culture. Dialogue activities were common, as well as flashcards, which influenced me to remember the information.

2. *What was the most valuable part of studying a foreign language?*

Because of my time at LaSalle, I feel confident that I can tackle a foreign language. I am aware that there's a lot of time and effort that comes into studying a foreign language. You have to study conjugations, vocabulary, and make word associations, but I know I can do it. It's something I'm good at.

3. *How did learning a foreign language in elementary school influence your life?*

In elementary school, you have a curiosity and you retain things you learn at that age. You are more likely to pick it up. It gives children a sense of other things that are out there and exposes them to culture early so that they can build upon that learning and start to appreciate other cultures. It was a great learning experience because I was exposed to a different culture than the one that surrounded me. I was from a fairly closed Hispanic community, and learning Italian made me want to travel and see more of the world.



## FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL EXPERIENCE INTERVIEW

Name Tom Sato

Date March 4, 2004

### A. SCHOOL

*1. What language did you study at LaSalle? How many years? When did you graduate?* I studied German at LaSalle Language Academy all 9 years, kindergarten through eighth grade. I graduated in 1989.

*2. Did you study a foreign language in high school? How much was required?* In high school, I continued my studies in German for all 4 years, freshman through senior year. For the academic program that I was enrolled in, 4 years of a foreign language was required, as well as a senior thesis on a major literary piece of German literature.

*3. What was something you learned in your elementary foreign language class that affected your learning in high school?*

Exposure to another culture other than your own, especially at a young age, can really broaden your horizons. It encourages you to try new and different things – whether it's learning a greeting in German, or even trying a German dish that you've never tasted before. I learned to try new things and was exposed to other cultures –to embrace different things and not to be afraid. The excitement that came with always trying to learn something new carried on through high school, college, and even in the everyday workplace.

*4. Did you study a foreign language in college? How much was required?* Unfortunately, in college I did not study a foreign language. Although the school offered courses in various foreign languages as electives, it was not a requirement within the curriculum of my major. No language was required in college.

*5. Was there a talent you discovered about yourself in elementary school that led you to particular courses in high school or college?*

In elementary school, I found that I enjoyed drawing, so I tended to gravitate towards the creative arts. This continued on into high school, and as computers became more accessible to students, I dedicated a great deal of study to computers. And in college, I came to a synthesis of the two when I took courses in computer graphics and the development of interactive media.

### B. WORK

*1. Describe your career path and what type of work you have done.*

After graduating from LaSalle in 1989, I attended Lincoln Park High School, graduating in 1993. I studied at the University of Illinois at Chicago and graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in computer information systems. After graduating, I worked full-time for several years in the computer industry.

I decided to go back to school full-time to study computer graphics, but still worked part-time within the computer field. I graduated in 2003 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Electronic Media and Visualization. I am now working as a computer network administrator for a manufacturing company in Chicago.

2. *Give an example (or two) of a work experience where foreign language was useful.*

The company that I am currently working for has subsidiary companies throughout the United States as well as overseas. As the company continues to grow and expand, new opportunities present themselves for practicing a foreign language.

We have had visitors from Korea and Venezuela, and I see firsthand how beneficial and how much of an asset it is to know a foreign language, especially in the business world. Being able to discuss business in the customer's own language can build an immediate rapport, and may ultimately lead to a fruitful outcome for both parties.

For example, just this past month we had a meeting with representatives from a company in Japan to discuss a possible business alliance. Although my Japanese is rusty, I was asked by the company president to take part in the meeting. It was an opportunity that probably wouldn't have been there had I not known Japanese.

3. *How would you see yourself using foreign language in the future?*

As business has truly become global market, it's important to recognize the usefulness and importance of knowing another language. It demonstrates that you are not closed off to other cultures, but that you are willing to learn more about things that may be foreign and new to you. By staying in a comfort zone of a strictly English-speaking environment, one may become complacent about trying new things, and may miss so many opportunities granted by the knowledge and use of a foreign language. I hope to use whatever knowledge I have about German and Japanese to conduct business as well as in my personal pursuits.

## C. TRAVEL

1. *Did you travel with your class at LaSalle?*

Yes, our German class (6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> grade, I believe) had a foreign exchange trip to Germany. It was a great experience to be able to travel there and live with an exchange family. We were able to attend classes with them and visit many museums and historical landmarks. It was very close to a total immersion in German culture. I would highly recommend this type of program for anyone studying a foreign language. Learning from textbooks and teachers within the classroom is an essential part of learning a foreign language, but actually living in another country for even a brief period of time ingrains a bit of the culture in of you.

2. *Have you had another opportunity to travel overseas?*

Unfortunately, I have not had another opportunity to return to Germany. I have traveled to Japan several times for both business and vacation purposes. (And every time I go back to Japan, there were times when I struggled trying to communicate, and I wanted to kick myself for not studying more in school!)

3. *Was your earlier study of foreign language helpful when you traveled?*

Most definitely. It changed my perspective. It's cool to try to converse with people in their language, rather than just being The American who speaks only English all the time. Even if you know just a few greetings or phrases in another language, if you at least make an attempt at conversation, people appreciate the effort. Although English is used the world over, and a lot of street signs, menus, etc., are already in English, but the challenge of trying to speak another language in a totally foreign setting was admittedly at times frustrating, but more often than not, simply exciting! I studied German, but if I have another opportunity to learn a language, it would be Spanish because you can use it so many instances in everyday life.

## D. LIFE

### *1. What is your earliest memory about learning a foreign language?*

Growing up in a Japanese-American household, I was exposed to two languages at a very young age. I remember trying to speak with my grandparents, and of having my parents teach me proper grammar and word usage. I have found that in my own life, the active usage of a language can also strengthen bonds between the older and younger generations, and in some ways helps keep cultural traditions alive.

My earliest memory of learning German is of me sitting in Frau Pradella's class in third or fourth grade singing in German.

### *2. What was the most valuable part of studying a foreign language?*

I think the most valuable part about studying a foreign language was the fostering of critical thinking and analysis. The placement of verbs in a sentence is often different for different languages, so speaking a foreign language actually takes a lot of thought, even though it may seem to come naturally to some. I've found it to be beneficial in refining the way I speak and write, as I searched for that perfect translation of a specific word.

Studying a foreign language forces you to think about what you're saying and the context. It's amazing the way an inflection can alter how another person perceives your meaning. Even in that short time between your thinking about what to say and actually saying it, your brain is just going crazy so that your words will be coming out as you intended. It forces you to be selective in your word choices, and in the end, it makes you that much better in how you express yourself to others. Speaking a foreign language makes you conscious of making so many connections.

### *3. How did learning a foreign language in elementary school influence your life?*

There have been numerous studies, and it is widely accepted that a great deal of a person's learning occurs during the early years. Especially with foreign languages, young children, if exposed to another language early on, can absorb it like a sponge. As we grow older, it's a little bit more difficult to pick up another language from scratch.

For me, learning both Japanese and German during the elementary school years played a large part in how I subsequently approached learning other subjects. It taught me that I can learn in a classroom, but also need to interact with others and in different settings in order to get a more complete learning experience. It taught me that repetition and daily practice of a language can reap tremendous benefits, and if not utilized often enough, can be forgotten. I believe language, like the arts, is an outward expression of a person's character. But I also think it has the amazing capacity to mold a person's character into something even better than what one might expect.

It made me aware that speaking other languages made the world shrink. In a sense, in business, the world seems to be getting smaller. Foreign language use also expands awareness. The fact that a company spreads out and works with other cultures, entertaining forming partnerships and alliances with other countries shows that they are smarter and aware of the bigger picture – that we are all part of one economy, interdependent.

## CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

### **Effects of Foreign Language Learning in Elementary School on Students' Future Educational and Career Choices**

1. My name is Amy Weiss Narea from DePaul University.
2. I am asking you to take part in a research study because I am trying to learn more about how elementary foreign language study influences future educational and career choices. Because you were enrolled as a student in an elementary magnet school program, you are being asked to participate. This study involves a brief interview asking about your experiences learning a foreign language, as well as *if* and *how* you use a foreign language in your work. Participation in the study should take about 30 minutes.
3. If you agree to be in this study, you will be contacted to schedule an interview within 30 days. The interview will consist of ten brief questions about your elementary foreign language learning, what you recall about your classes, which activities you especially enjoyed, what skills you acquired and how these may be applicable to your current situation, in an educational or professional context. The interview will be take place at LaSalle Language Academy, 1734 N. Sedgwick, in Chicago, or if you prefer, at a coffee shop located two city blocks from the school. An impartial interviewer, who has no connection to LaSalle, will conduct the interview. However, if you prefer and make the request, I will conduct the interview.
4. There are no anticipated risks to the individual that may result from participation in the research. Although you are requested to return the signed consent form in order to be interviewed, your name will not appear anywhere in the study and a pseudonym, or fictitious name, will be used. Anonymity and confidentiality are guaranteed.
5. There are no benefits to the individual from participation in the research. However, the value of the study would be to provide information to people concerned with education about the benefits of beginning the study of a foreign language in elementary school.
6. If you do not want to be in this study, you do not have to participate. Remember, being in this study is entirely up to you and no one will be upset if you do not want to participate. Even if you change your mind later and want to stop, you may withdraw your agreement to participate without any consequences.
7. All information that you provide in this research study will be kept strictly confidential and any report of this research will not identify you personally in any way.
8. You can ask any questions that you have about the study. If you have a question later that you did not think of now, or if you would like to be interviewed, you can call me at

LaSalle Language Academy in Chicago, (773) 534-8470 or contact me via e-mail at [anarea@students.depaul.edu](mailto:anarea@students.depaul.edu). You may also contact me to request results of the study.

9. Signing your name at the bottom means that you agree to be in this study. You will be given a copy of this form after you have signed it, if you request a copy.

10. In accordance with the procedures of the university, I am fulfilling the Investigator's Responsibility: I have fully explained to (participant's name) \_\_\_\_\_ the nature and the purpose of the above described research procedures and the risks and benefits involved in its performance. I have answered all (and will continue to answer all) questions to the best of my ability. I will inform the participant of any changes in the procedures or risks and benefits if they should occur during or after the course of this study. Upon request, I provide a copy of the consent form for the participant.

Investigator's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Consent: I have been satisfactorily informed of the above described procedure with its possible risks and benefits. I agree to participate in this research study. If I have any questions regarding my rights as a participant in this research study, I may request to speak to the Coordinator of the DePaul University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Research Participants by calling (773) 325-2593. I understand that my participation in this research study is voluntary and that I am free to stop participating at any time, without any consequences, even after signing this form. I have been offered a copy of this form.

Name of Participant \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

DPU-IRB approval number: AW061302EDU-C1

**Amy Weiss Narea 2815 N. Racine Chicago, IL 60657 (773)871-6037**

**EDUCATION**

- 9/98 – 6/04 DEPAUL UNIVERSITY, Chicago, Illinois  
Illinois Certificate for School Superintendent  
Doctorate in Educational Leadership  
*Phi Kappa Phi*
- 8/79 – 6/83 ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY  
CHICAGO-KENT COLLEGE OF LAW, Chicago Illinois  
Juris Doctor
- 9/77 – 6/79 NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY, Chicago, Illinois  
Illinois Certificate in Educational Administration and Supervision
- 6/73 – 8/74 NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY, Evanston, Illinois  
Masters of Arts in Teaching  
*Phi Delta Kappa*
- 9/69 – 5/73 BRYN MAWR COLLEGE, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
Bachelor of Arts, *cum laude* with Honors in Sociology

**EMPLOYMENT**

- 9/73 – Present CHICAGO BOARD OF EDUCATION, Chicago, Illinois  
Principal's Certificate; Teacher Certificate; Bilingual Endorsement
- 1/84 – Present LASALLE LANGUAGE ACADEMY, Principal
- 11/79 – 12/83 KANOON MAGNET SCHOOL  
Assistant Principal; Bilingual Program Coordinator
- 9/75 – 11/79 ROBERT BURNS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
Bilingual Program Coordinator; Teacher: 5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grades

**AWARDS**

- May 2000 Outstanding Leadership Award – Chicago Principals' Association  
May 1996 Master Principals Award – Chicago Public School & LaSalle Bank

**COMMUNITY SERVICE**

- 2002 – Present DePaul University – Professional Education Council  
1996 – Present Art Resources in Teaching – Board of Directors  
1973 – Present Bryn Mawr College Club of Chicago – Board of Directors  
1994 – 1996 Memononee Club for Boys and Girls – Board of Directors

**PERSONAL DATA**

Fluency in Spanish; proficiency in French;