

ACQUIRING 21ST CENTURY LANGUAGE SKILLS: A CASE STUDY ON
THE IMPACT OF TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENTS' SECOND
LANGUAGE SKILLS ON A WORLD LANGUAGE PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT

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The primary goal of this study was to identify how middle school language teachers bridge the skills acquired and strategies taught in an elementary school language program with the skills taught and practiced at the middle school level. The study will answer in detail this question: What perceptions do middle school teachers form regarding their students' language skills and how do these perceptions impact a world language program? By identifying the language teachers' current perceptions as they relate to their lesson design and delivery, school districts may find relationships between the teachers' perceptions of their students' language abilities and the program's perceived benefits or deficiencies. The researcher examined a middle school language program through the participation of language teachers from three middle schools in an urban setting. The findings indicate that teachers in the program can improve the delivery of their instruction by implementing strategies identified as necessary for the continued growth of the program and for students' acquisition of the language skills needed in the 21st century. Three themes derived from the findings and results of this study are: 1) collaborating with the teachers from the previous level; 2) using question and answer techniques and; 3) minimizing the amount of time used for review.

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I would like to acknowledge those who have encouraged me throughout this journey as I achieve dreams that I thought were beyond my reach. As a young boy not knowing the English language and experiencing much adversity as I acquired the academic skills needed for success, I can recall the faces of the individuals who provided me with the opportunities of success that gave me resilience and vision.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my children, Nicholas, Elisa, and Isabel Torres. May you always remember that you are defined by how you interact with people and that you should never let someone's perception of you determine your future success. Look around and you will always find someone who believes in you.

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CHAPTER 1 Introduction

Most children before the age of ten find learning a foreign language an enjoyable, interesting and challenging activity (Lipton, 2004, p.235).

The lesson begins with the teacher walking into the classroom, pushing her cart with bins of puppets, plastic food, and colorful pictures of the sun, clouds, rain, snow, and even a bin full of hats from various professions. She walks in singing, “Buenos, días, buenos días, cómo estas? Cómo estas?...”(Good morning, good morning, how are you? How are you?...to the tune of Are You Sleeping) They continue singing and responding while the teacher sets up for class. Once the song is over and the teacher is ready, the entire class stands up as the teacher pulls out the maraca, and they all say, “Uno, dos, tres, no más inglés (one, two, three, no more English).” While turning completely around. The teacher does this so her elementary students convert themselves into Spanish speakers for the duration of the lesson. She then proceeds to ask a variety of questions in Spanish from, how old are you? What is today’s date? What is your favorite color? What is your name? How many children are in class today? This is the warm-up to a lesson on parts of the body and how to say, I have a headache, stomachache, my arm, leg, foot hurts. After the students have acted out the new phrases through a partner activity, and demonstrated that they understand the information by acting out and responding to the pictures collected from Spanish magazines, the lesson ends and the children begin to chant, (uno, dos, tres, volvemos al inglés (one, two, three, we return to English).” As the teacher leaves the room the students sing... “Adios, la clase se acabó...”

In recent years, an increasing number of elementary school students have been participating in world language programs known as Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES), and through this experience, they acquire some proficiency in a second language. Currently there is only limited evidence showing that middle schools and their language teachers are prepared for teaching students who have been exposed to second language instruction in elementary school. This case study examined a school district to identify middle school language teachers’ perceptions of their students’ language skills. The following research question will guide this study: How do the teachers' perceptions

of the student's language skills impact their lesson design and delivery? The purpose of this study was to identify the variables that will lead to an efficient vertical articulation of second language programs and teaching strategies within the district where the study was conducted.

Many private schools, charter schools, and school districts have implemented FLES programs to enhance student achievement and to ensure student awareness of other cultures. Arizona and New Jersey have implemented foreign language study at the elementary level statewide. Hawaii, Louisiana, Texas, New York, and North Carolina require some form of foreign language study in the elementary school (Curtain & Pesola 1998). Many schools have implemented this program in order to meet the needs of the school, state, and/or school community.

The goal of the FLES program is to provide students with the communicative language skills needed to develop questions and statements about their likes, dislikes, hobbies, etc. (ACTFL, 1998). With these in mind, a world language teacher designs lessons to provide students with meaningful communicative-oriented lessons that are appropriate for their age and developmental level. Before the age of ten, most children find learning a foreign language an enjoyable, interesting, and challenging activity (Lipton, 2004, p. 235). The research on second language acquisition supports the need for a comprehensive language experience for all young children (Curtain & Pescola, 1998; Jensen & Sandrock, 2007; Lipton, 2004).

Students generally begin their secondary school language courses in 7th or 9th grade with an introduction of the course by the teacher and are provided with reasons why learning a second language is important for their future. Most of the students are

excited and eager to learn the language so they can use it with their friends and at home, and to demonstrate their skills and with the hope and possibility that they will be able to interact with native speakers and use the language successfully. Thoughts of travel to countries where they speak the language begin to enter their minds.

The student's willingness to learn the language is supported by the activities and lessons that the teacher designs on a daily basis. If the student walks out of the classroom being able to say a few words and phrases in the target language, the enthusiasm will continue. On the other hand, students can become frustrated if they have only been introduced to challenging grammar topics by a teacher who makes little use of the spoken language. If the student had been exposed to years of language study through a FLES experience, he/she may be confused about how different the secondary school grammar based language experience will be from the communicative based experience at the elementary school level (Bragger, 1998).

The goal of the standards based movement and the American Council on the teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) is to ensure all students have an opportunity to acquire the foreign language skills needed to be successful in the future. When it comes to second language instruction the goal is for students to begin their study in kindergarten and continue through the high school and even college. In the K-12 education system most public schools are grouped by elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools. The elementary curriculum is generally delivered in grades K through six while the secondary curriculum is delivered in grades seven through twelve. Although Dr. Gladys Lipton, director of the National FLES Institute, describes FLES as a program that is delivered in grades K through eight, this would illustrate a program that prepares

students for the secondary school program beginning in 9th grade. Through this study, the researcher will describe the secondary school language program as one that begins in seventh grade due to the portrayal of how the program is delivered at the study site.

World language teachers develop lessons based on standards developed by the American Council on the teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). The ACTFL standards have been introduced to teachers through conferences, workshops, and teacher preparation programs. Although these standards have been introduced to world language teachers, many have not embraced them in the way they were intended. Some states have decided to design and implement their own standards in language classrooms. The inconsistent use of standards has led some veteran teachers to focus only on grammar because they believe that without the firm understanding of the grammatical structures of the language, a student will not be able to avoid serious or embarrassing errors. In such classroom environments, significant language skills that students may have acquired elsewhere might go unacknowledged and undeveloped.

When secondary school language programs do not acknowledge the FLES experience in their curricula, FLES programs will be perceived as having no real value, which can directly affect funding. These funding concerns have made FLES programs vulnerable once again as they were in the early 70's (Lipton, 2004; WCASD, 2008). Since the passing of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law and its requirements for increased assessments, many school districts began to develop support programs for students who do not meet the state's proficiency requirements (Lipton, 2004; Torres, 2008; WCASD, 2008). These programs require funding, school scheduling time, and school resources. Language programs that are not mandated by the state must ensure

they are providing their students with the skills needed to enhance their overall learning and academic proficiency levels.

This qualitative research study was conducted by administering questionnaires, interviewing administrators, observing in-service foreign language teachers at the elementary and middle school levels, and by reviewing records. Through this study, the researcher analyzed data, drew conclusions, and made recommendations for effective program articulation. The researcher intends to contribute to the research that currently exists in this area.

This case study focused on five middle school language teachers from an urban school district in eastern Pennsylvania. The researcher's task was to identify how a teacher's perceptions of students' language skills impact his or her teaching and lesson design. School districts and language teachers will be able to use this information to better address the concerns they may have in vertically articulating their foreign language programs while acknowledging the contribution of the elementary school world language experience in a K-12 program. The study sought to thoroughly examine the factors and characteristics associated with a more efficient vertical articulation of a second language program and a common perspective for secondary school (grades 7-12) language teachers regarding their perception of the FLES program. When secondary school language programs and their teachers do not acknowledge the FLES experience in their curricula, FLES programs will be perceived as deficient. Programs that do not demonstrate value to the students and its local community will be subject to elimination in an economic recession.

Since middle school language programs are a continuation of the elementary FLES program, vertical articulation of curricula (defined below) ¹as well as teacher and student expectations must be aligned in order for students to acquire native-like language skills. The primary goal of this study is to answer in detail this question: What are the secondary school teacher's perceptions of a student's language skills and how might that perception influence his or her lesson design and delivery?

Specific questions that fall under this overarching question will be asked in order to identify specific descriptions of the teachers' teaching strategies and their perceptions relating to second language acquisition and the elementary language program. By identifying their current perceptions as they relate to the elementary school language program, school districts may find relationships between the teachers' perceptions of the program and the program's perceived benefit or deficiencies.

Statement of the Problem

Following the Soviet Union's 1957 launch of Sputnik, the world's first satellite, Congress passed and President Eisenhower signed into law the National Defense Education Act of 1958. The law accelerated the study of mathematics and science and helped improve foreign language teaching in our schools. (U.S. DOE, 2006)

Curtain and Pesola believe that in the 1960's "the boom for languages in the elementary schools lasted barely five years "(1994, p. 17). According to the Modern Language Association's 1961 survey, they found that some language teachers believed that FLES was a predictor of what real language learning would be like at the secondary level. Lessons focused on oral proficiency and communication in real-world situations.

¹ "Vertical Articulation" refers to the direction of the curriculum between levels of schools (Long, 1982; Wilson, 1988).

Failure to acknowledge the acquisition of language skills at the elementary level, such as oral communication will inhibit students' demonstration of those skills and students' ability to build upon them.

This study is a response to the implementation problems and funding obstacles found in FLES programs of the 1960s and 1970s. If programs do not initiate curricular and staff development reforms at the middle school level, the financial resources enjoyed by elementary school programs today may be diverted to other curricular areas.

According to Dr. Gladys Lipton, director of the National FLES Institute and author of the *Practical Handbook to Elementary Foreign Language Programs FLES** (2004) there are several reasons that FLES programs failed in the 1960s and 1970s. The reasons include, but are not limited to:

- failure of FLES programs to acquire the support of administrators and language teachers throughout the system;
- the secondary curriculum's failure to acknowledge the skills possessed by the children of FLES;
- impact on spending during an economic downfall;
- impact of federal and state mandates on a school system.

As a result, students were taught the same things at the middle school and high school levels that they had been exposed to or mastered at the elementary level. This study enabled the researcher to identify aspects of programs that failed in the past and to focus on the areas of success that will ensure that current elementary language programs continue to thrive even in challenging economic times. The success of these programs is crucial because they provide our students with 21st century skill sets (Aratani, 2006; Ascione, 2006).

Research Goals

The researcher's goal was to develop an understanding of how five middle school language teachers developed their lessons according to his or her perceptions of their students' second language acquisition skills. With this understanding, the researcher identified characteristics of the classroom environment and teachers' strategies that access the students' prior language experience and skills. The information gathered will provide teachers, administrators, and constituents the qualities of the student's experience in their acquisition of second language skills. The information gathered may also address whether the teachers are building upon and bridging the students' experiences or if they are approaching the secondary school program in a manner that is different from what the students have been exposed to.

There is limited research on the impact of FLES programs on middle school and high school language programs. Lipton (2004) recommends that middle and high school programs acknowledge the skills elementary students bring with them. FLES research has not provided recommendations or suggestions on program implementation at the middle school level. This study provides the school district research site with information on the perceptions that teachers have of the language skills students acquired prior to entering their classrooms. Information was gathered on the FLES implementation process and teacher perceptions of the program in a school district in the northeastern portion of the country where world language instruction is not required by the state's department of education. This program currently is at the intermediate stage of implementation, and it illustrates the challenges of implementing FLES in a K-12

program. Studying this program will ultimately permit its educators to plan and prepare for a vertically articulated K-12 language program. In an era where we must provide our students with the 21st Century skills necessary to compete in a global economy, skills learned in a second language classroom must provide our students with advantages they will need in the future.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study: What are the middle school language teacher's perceptions of their student's second language skills? How might the teacher's perceptions influence their lesson design and delivery?

The nature of this study required the researcher to examine the procedure and structure of the district's language program. This study is unique in that there is limited research in this area and the researcher aims to add to the literature on FLES programs and vertical articulation of foreign language curricula.

Significance of the Study

This case study examined a school district with many language teachers to identify how a teacher's perspective of the students' language skills gained while participating in the FLES program impacted the teacher's lesson design and delivery and in turn impacts the district's language program. This school district and its teachers may be able to use this information to better address concerns they may have in bridging the FLES experience with the middle school language program. The goal of the study was to examine the program and identify how the middle school language teacher designed and delivered second language instruction according to the teachers' perceptions of his/her students' language skills.

Many language theorists state the importance of starting language study early in a student's academic experience. Government studies also point to the benefits of learning languages at a young age to ensure mastery of the language (Curtain & Pesola, 1998; Lipton, 1994; Met, 1998).

Definitions

Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES) “is the overall term for all types of foreign language instruction in the elementary and middle schools K-8” (Lipton, 2004 p.1).

Vertical Articulation: For the purpose of this study, vertical articulation is defined as the curriculum developed within a particular subject area that meets the curricular needs of students in a program developed from the elementary school on to the high school (Lally, 2001; Lang, 1982; Wilson, 1988).

Communicative Competence is “the ability not only to apply the grammatical rules of a language in order to form grammatically correct sentences but also to know when and where to use these sentences and to whom” (Longman, 1992).

21st Century Skills: For the purpose of this study, 21st Century Skills will be defined as, the competencies needed to ensure the student will be able to function and “communicate efficiently and sensitively with others” in a global market, be it through personal face to face interactions or through communicative media (ACTFL, 1999).

Foreign Language/World Language: The term “foreign language” has been used for many years to describe second language learning in the U.S. Many programs have this term imbedded into their titles. The programs include Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES), and The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign

Languages (ACTFL). “World language” is currently used to describe second language instruction even though FLES and ACTFL have not changed their titles to accommodate this term.

Heritage Language Learners: The Center for Applied Linguistics defines heritage language learners as students learning a language where they have some exposure or proficiency in the language due to the home or community environment. These students can understand and/or speak the language being taught in the classroom.

World Language Programs in the U.S.: In the United States there are various ways a school can deliver a world language experience for the students they serve. Most public schools deliver instruction according to the makeup of their student population. Following is a description according to how the program was delivered in the school district study site.

- Elementary School:
 - According to The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language (ACTFL) and Dr. Gladys Lipton, director of the National FLES* Institute, characteristics of effective elementary school foreign language programs describe FLES as a program that provides students in the elementary school with the opportunity to acquire some proficiency in the language and its culture. It is recommended that a FLES program provide students with instruction in the target language two to three times per week for about 15-30 minute sessions. (ACTFL,1990; Lipton, 2004)

- Middle School:
 - 6th grade exploratory: Many FLEX programs provide students with the opportunity to acquire some language skill as they are introduced to a second language. Most schools use this opportunity to provide instruction a few times a week so students have a foundation of the language prior to studying or choosing the language of study in a secondary (7-12) program. At the study site, the 6th grade exploratory program was developed for students who have met state assessment proficiency requirements while the students who did not acquire proficiency received remedial support.
 - 7th and 8th grade secondary school program levels 1 - 2: Middle schools that offer a world language program to 7th and 8th grade students generally deliver instruction in one of two ways, a level one program can be delivered throughout a two year sequence with the 7th grade year being the level 1A program where the first half of a high school level 1 program would be delivered and in 8th grade the second half of a high school level 1 program would be delivered as 1B. Other schools with a FLES program may choose to deliver a first year program in 7th grade and a second year program in 8th grade so their students would have the option of entering the high school with two full years of high school credit and enter in a 3rd year program (ACTFL, 1999; Curtain & Pesola; Lipton, 2004; PDE, 2009).
- High School
 - Secondary levels 1-5/6: Public schools in the US generally provide students with a four year sequence of study in world languages beginning

with the first year in 9th grade and ending with the 4th year of a world language course in 12th grade. In Pennsylvania, if a high school chooses to teach world languages, they are required to teach at least one language for four years in duration and a second world language for at least two years in duration (ACTFL, 1999; Curtain& Pesola; Lipton, 2004; PDE, 2009).

Limitations

There are several limitations identified in this study. The study focuses on five middle school language teachers, how they perceive their students' language skills, and how these perceptions influence their lesson design and delivery. One limitation refers to the variety of their student's experiences. Some students had previous language experiences, whereas others did not. Some had participated in the district's FLES program. Some students who were proficient in reading and math on the 5th grade PSSA were able to participate in the 6th grade language program. Other students are heritage learners; 56.7% of students in the district are identified as Latino. These factors will impact the generalization of findings in this study.

Delimitations of the Study

Schools have implemented Foreign Language in the Elementary School programs to enhance the experiences of their students in acquiring skills provided by being exposed to a second language. One reason many schools provide instruction in a second language to their students, is to enhance their understanding of a new language while enhancing and strengthening the child's first language by making connections and comparisons. In communities where students are speaking another language at home, the school may

choose to adopt the instruction of the community's language so students can gain a greater understanding of not only their native language but also influence the strength of the English language. The community chosen for this study is an urban community where 56.7 % of the population is Latino. The researcher chose this district to conduct the study because of where the district was in the FLES implementation process. At the time the dissertation was written, the district was about to enter its complete implementation of the program in the elementary school and the effects of the program was about to fully impact the middle school language program. The researcher intentionally narrowed the study to one school district with multiple elementary and middle schools to see if the multiple sites would influence the information gathered from the subjects. Five teachers were chosen for the study from three of the four district's middle schools with various years of teaching experience within the study site.

The researcher chose to study the impact of FLES on the middle school language teachers because there is limited research on middle school language programs due to the focus on high school instruction and its data regarding advanced placement scores in languages and course selection patterns that impact student desire and readiness to be accepted into colleges. All eight of the middle school language teachers within the district were invited to participate in the study. Only five chose to consider the study by participating in a meeting with the coordinator of world languages and the researcher.

The coordinator of world languages welcomed the study in order to gain a different perspective as to how the district's program was being perceived by the teachers and how the study could enhance how the program was being delivered in the middle schools across the community.

Theoretical Base

Although one of the researcher's goals is to develop theory through this study, there are a few theories that may form a framework for the study. Understanding Second Language (L2) Theory will provide a foundation to ensure that the study is valid and that the research gathered will add to the current literature on FLES programs. Language programs are based on the belief that the earlier a child is exposed to a second language, the higher his/her ability to achieve fluency will be (ACTFL, 1999; Chomsky, 1959; Curtain & Pescola, 1998; Jensen & Sandrock, 2007; Lipton, 2004; Met, 1998; Mitchell & Myles, 2002; Schulz, 1998; Skinner, 1957). Teachers who understand second language theory and develop lessons based on second language learning methods should be able to provide language learners with the skills needed to acquire second language fluency. This theory will support the findings relating to the second research question: how might the teacher's perceptions influence their lesson design and delivery?

Culture of Resistance theories describe the feelings of those who are asked to change their behavior and to live outside of their comfort zone. Secondary teachers must accept the knowledge and skills students bring to their classes as a result of participation in a FLES program. Some believe that to be closed-minded in a time of change will lead to extinction (Bragger & Rice, 1998; Evans, 2001).

Twenty-first Century Skills are the competencies needed to ensure the student will be able to function in a global market, be it through personal face-to-face interactions or through communicative media. Skills needed for success in the 21st century include understanding multiple perspectives and cultural variants, effective communication, and

the ability to function within ambiguity (ACTFL, 1999; Friedman, 2005; Jensen & Sandrock, 2007; Marsh 1999; Prensky, 2005; Rennie, 1998; US DOE 2006).

Summary

The goal of this chapter is to provide an introduction to the research question and the intentions of the research study. Chapter Two provides a context through the review of literature relating to the topic of the study. Chapter Three provides an explanation of the research design chosen to gather the information observed and to describe the methodology used to conduct the study. Chapter Four provides the results of the study and chapter five provides a discussion on the findings along with recommendations for the study site and considerations for future study.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Research

The researcher reviewed books, newspaper articles, professional journals, and databases for information that would provide a foundation of research that would support the need for this case study. This chapter will be divided into three sections. The first section (1) will provide an overview of language learning methods and strategies, the second section (2) will provide details from empirical studies in the areas of world language instruction in the United States and studies relating to Foreign Language in the Elementary School programs and research (3) grouped by Global, National and Local perspectives.

Part 1: Language Learning Methods and Strategies

Language teachers generally rely on one or two language learning methods based on how they learned their second language or how they were trained as pre-service language teachers. Following are some of the methods used in classrooms during the time of the study.

The Grammar - Translation Method: Formally known as the Prussian method of teaching the elements of Latin. The goal of the teacher who uses this method is to study and learn the language in order to read and understand its literature or benefit from the mental discipline it provides. Foreign language teachers who use the grammar-translation method use the first language (i.e. English) as a reference system in acquiring the knowledge of the second language (Stern, 1983). Reading and writing are the major focus, accuracy is emphasized, and students are expected to attain high standards of translation skill. Grammar is taught deductively by learning the rules which are then

practiced through worksheets and written assignments. The grammar-translation method was widely used since 1840 to the 1940s in the study of French and German (Jensen & Sandrock, 2007).

The Direct Method: this method of learning a second language has been successful in language schools such as Berlitz. Only everyday vocabulary and sentences are taught. Grammar is taught inductively. Vocabulary is taught through demonstration, objects, and pictures. Titone believes that one should never translate, rather demonstrate. Never explain, instead act. The following principles were applied; never speak with single words, make sentences; never speak too much, make students speak much (Titone, 1968). It became difficult to teach the Direct Method in public schools because of the number of students in a class, it is much more successful in a small group environment.

The Natural Approach: This method was introduced as a response to the Grammar translation method and was further developed by Tracey Terrell and Stephen Krashen in 1977. The key principles of the Natural Approach are on communication rather than the form of the language being taught. Speech production comes slowly and is never rushed or forced on the learner. There is a natural progression of speech through the use of yes or no responses and one word answers, list of words, phrases and then sentences. Students are motivated to learn through the experiences provided by the teacher. Input is interesting and comprehensible; understanding is more important than speaking. Vocabulary development is more important than structural accuracy and low anxiety is good. The basis of this approach is that one acquires a second language naturally through three stages: 1) comprehension, 2) early speech and 3) speech emergence. In the comprehension stage (1), students acquire vocabulary through

physical responses, props, needs and classroom context. These experiences are important because they allow the student to develop an association with the new word or phrase. In the second stage (2), early speech is acquired after about ten hours of instruction. The learner begins to answer yes or no questions, responding to choice questions regarding classroom objects, or colors, etc. Questions which can be answered with a single word as well as when, where, and who type questions. At this stage students begin to acquire the confidence needed to maintain low anxiety about learning a new language. This will facilitate the learner to transition from one stage to the next with ease and confidence. The third stage (3) of the natural approach is called Speech Emergence. After multiple opportunities for input and multiple opportunities to produce language, speech production will begin to progress in quantity and quality. The language learner will be able to produce three words and short phrases, then longer phrases, and complete sentences when appropriate. The learner may also be able to take the language acquired to produce dialogues, extended discourse and even narration. Terrell and Krashen encourage the use of games of all sorts, problem solving using charts, tables, graphs and maps. With these tools students can give each other directions in getting from one location to another, determine when the train will arrive in order to get to a certain destination, even order from a menu. Students will eventually be able to participate in group discussions and skits with the use of the natural approach.

Total Physical Response: James Asher's Total Physical Response (TPR) is a method of teaching a foreign language in a physical way. It is not Simon says, but rather a form of sign language developed to provide second language learners with the opportunity to instantly respond to and understand the language being learned. Students

are able to quickly recall language by making connections to the actions that represent the words or phrases taught. The method is based on the fact that we learn language through physical responses before we begin to use oral responses. TPR is taught by teachers trained in this approach. Students are first introduced to commands, such as "sit down, stand up, turn around, raise your hand", etc. Students at first just mimic the teacher's actions while the teacher calls out the action in the target language. Students then quickly arrive at the point when they also repeat the command, phrase or vocabulary. The atmosphere of a classroom which uses TPR as an instructional method is one that is playful and interesting to students. The playful nature of this approach is very brain-compatible and relatively easy to incorporate into a lesson.

Part 2: Empirical Studies

The researcher will provide the findings of several empirical studies in this section in order to develop a framework for the importance of the study undertaken by the researcher. Laura R. Aldrich (2010), a graduate student at Marietta College wrote her thesis on *Spanish Language Enrollment Trends in the United States 1950-Present*. Throughout her thesis she provides various reasons for the growth of Spanish language enrollment among high school students in the U.S. She begins her research by sharing with the reader the story of immigration, population and fertility that led to a growth in Spanish speaking residents in the United States. She describes this dramatic increase by sharing a comparison from 1950 to 2008 gathered from the Census Bureau. In 1950 about 6,841 legal immigrants arrived per year from Mexico compared to about 190,000 per year in 2008. The number of immigrants coming from South America increased from 2,777 in 1950 to 98,600 people per year in 2008. By the year 2000 there were about

7,842,000 foreign born Mexicans living in the United States compared to 1,391,000 Chinese foreign born. The increase may have been impacted by the Immigration and Nationality Acts of 1952 and 1959. This legislation allowed for fiancés and relatives of alien residents and citizens of the United States to apply and gain entrance into the U.S. The goal of this legislation was to reunite families. Latinos continue to arrive in the U.S. looking for family members and communities where they feel welcomed and understood as a group of people. These communities hold on to their cultural roots and traditions. Due to the strong bonds the extended family and the language provide, many do not assimilate to the American culture as past groups of immigrants. Presently you will see many products, media stations, and newspapers in the Spanish language due to the strong influence of the Hispanic cultures that reside in the U.S. Aldrich (2010) also identified that the fertility rates of Latinos is much higher than non-Hispanic whites. The Hispanic fertility rate is 3.0 compared to the non-Hispanic white fertility rate of 1.8. This continual growth will provide students with a higher chance of interacting with Spanish speakers in community and professional environments. Students begin to realize that learning Spanish today may prove to be more useful than in years past.

In looking at the national high school enrollment trends from 1948 to 2000, the students enrolled in a foreign language has increased significantly. In 1948, 21.7% of all high school students enrolled in a foreign language while in 2000, 43.8% of high school students were enrolled in a foreign language. Our history as a nation has influenced the enrollment of students in world language classes. Sputnik influenced the teaching of Russian, World War II and the Cold War influenced the teaching of German, such as 9/11 influenced the teaching of Arabic and additional middle eastern languages. From

1970 to 1982 there was a decrease in enrollment of foreign language classes in the country. McKay and Wong (1988) describe it as "nativist times". Aldrich believes that during this time, Americans were negatively influenced by the Vietnam War and that the U.S. had lost its strength in the world. This loss of strength would influence a feeling of isolation in the world. At this time in our history Aldrich believes the discussion of making English the national language emerged.

Much research exists supporting the theory that early exposure to a second language promotes both language development and fluency (Chomsky, 1959; Curtain & Pesola, 1998; King & Mackey, 2007; Lipton, 2004; Malone, 2005; Marcos, 1998; Met, 1998; Mitchell & Myles, 2002; Schulz, 1998; Skinner, 1957). Unfortunately, due to the financial constraints many schools and school districts find themselves today, early language programs have been cut. Since the passing of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) accountability, testing, teacher quality, and scientifically based research and instruction, many schools have had to reallocate their resources to provide support programs for their students who did not meet the state's proficiency guidelines (Torres, 2008).

In 2000, enrollment in Spanish classes peaked at 68.8% of all foreign language enrollment numbers; French came in second with 18.3%. In a society where the number of Spanish speakers continue to increase and the need for learning languages becomes more realistic, it is crucial that world language teachers provide instruction that will ensure students are gaining the proficiency levels needed to use the language appropriately and with much success.

The College Board's report entitled "*2004 College Bound Seniors: A profile of SAT Test Takers*," demonstrated that there are certain profiles that can be determined by the students who take the SAT tests. Relationships have been confirmed that with the study of world languages comes a higher SAT score (College Board, 2004). The course taking patterns identified in this report on table 3.3, Pennsylvania 2004 college bound seniors received a mean score of 562 Verbal and 560 Math also had a course taking pattern of more than four years of foreign language study. Students who only met the minimum high school graduation requirements of most schools which are two years of language, received an SAT verbal mean score of 469 and an SAT math mean score of 470. Students who scored highest on the Math SAT studied Hebrew, Korean, Latin, or the Chinese language. Students who studied German, French, Russian and Spanish followed.

In 1996 all New Jersey public schools were required to provide instruction in world languages in both elementary schools and secondary schools. Content standards in world languages and a curriculum framework were developed based on the national world language standards by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL, 1999). According to the New Jersey Department of Education, "The vision of the standards is to prepare New Jersey students for the demands of an interdependent world".

In 2005, *A Report on the State of World Languages Implementation in New Jersey* was released. The New Jersey Department of Education's goal for students to study world languages was to prepare New Jersey students to

- "teach world languages for communication;

- heighten students linguistic and cultural awareness of their local, state, and world community;
- encourage interdisciplinary and workplace readiness connections that may involve business and community members as mentors and models;
- and prepare students for using a world language(s) in whatever career choices they make" (NJDOE, 2005).

By the 2003 -2004 school year Spanish became the language of choice for most school districts in the state of New Jersey, 90 percent of schools offered students the opportunity to study Spanish. This has been a trend across the country due to the availability of teachers and materials (ACTFL 2002). ACTFL reports that 68.70 % of public school students study Spanish followed by French with 18.30%.

After the 1996 requirement to teach languages in the elementary school, school districts began to identify qualified teachers who could develop programs and deliver instruction to elementary school students. At a time when very little curriculum materials were available for elementary school language programs, districts began to design curriculum that was not only relevant and provided students with the skills to acquire content standards, but they also had to ensure the lessons were appropriate for elementary school students. Secondary school teachers were asked to deliver the instruction at the elementary school level, but they realized that the teaching strategies used in many secondary schools would not work for the students in FLES programs. Teachers trained in elementary education with experience in the language being taught proved to be the better option for many school districts. The conditional certificates were used for teachers who were native speakers of the languages being taught allowing them five

years to acquire the content level certification to become highly qualified. These strategies were then altered with the passing of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Teachers would be required under NCLB to hold certifications in the content area they teach. In grades K-5, only 88.3 percent of world language teachers were highly qualified in New Jersey. This is attributed to schools that teach languages using media such as a video programs or computer technology. By 2003 904,637 students in grades K-8 were studying a world language.

An average of fifty minutes per week was allocated to world language instruction in grades K-5 in schools across the state. This is less than what ACTFL recommends for FLES programs. ACTFL recommends that students receive at least thirty minutes of instruction per session, three to five times per week. In grades six to eight, New Jersey students receive about 160 minutes of instruction per week in a world language across three to four sessions per week.

The 2005 report on the state of world languages in New Jersey demonstrated that:

- By adopting the world language standards led to a growth of programs across the state especially in elementary schools and middle schools.
- Even as a requirement to having a program, there are still some districts that have not yet fully implemented a K-8 world language program.
- The quality of a FLES program varies regarding time and frequency of instruction
- Spanish is the language of choice being taught in most elementary and middle schools.

- Some districts have developed partnerships with schools in other countries to support the world language initiative.

The New Jersey Department of Education has determined that "effective strategies" should be developed to foster the growth of K-8 world language programs and that it is necessary to create a compliance action plan to address districts that have not implemented a world languages program in grades K-8.

A dissertation by Carolyn Taylor Ward (2003), at the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, sought to find the relationship between elementary school foreign language study in grades three through five and the academic achievement on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) and the fourth grade Louisiana Educational Assessment Program for the 21st Century (LEAP 21) test. The purpose of her study was to determine the effects of the Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES) program in Louisiana on student achievement. The goal of the study was to identify the impact the elementary school foreign language program had on student scores in grades three, four and five. Students in Louisiana take two assessments, the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) and the Louisiana Educational Assessment Program for the 21st Century (LEAP 21). FLES teachers also participated in this study. The researcher wanted to identify how the teachers perceive the link between their instruction and the concepts presented to their students in their English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies classes. The treatment groups within this study are the schools that provide instruction in world languages in grades three through five. The control groups were the schools within the parish that received a waiver from the state board of education regarding the requirement to provide world language instruction in grades three

through eight due to the financial constraints and inability to employ foreign language teachers. The subjects within the study were the eighteen teachers who teach a world language in grades three through five. A comparison of students' test scores, the results of a teacher questionnaire and interviews were gathered. The finding of the study identified that third graders in the first year of the foreign language program did not have significantly higher scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills compared to the students who did not participate in a foreign language program in third grade. "Post hoc examination of univariate differences indicated that science was the only subtest yielding significant differences such that non-foreign language students outperformed their foreign language counterparts (Taylor-Ward, 2003, page 97)." The fourth grade treatment group outperformed the control group on the fourth-grade LEAP 21 test. The fifth grade treatment group outperformed the control group on the fifth grade ITBS language test. It is important to be clear that the ITBS test and the LEAP 21 test are very different assessments. The ITBS is a norm-referenced test focusing on specific skills; the LEAP 21 test is a criterion-referenced test whose content is based solely on the Louisiana content standards. The findings demonstrated that the treatment group's performance on the language subtests of both the LEAP 21 and the ITBS was significantly greater than the results of the control group. The findings of this study support the notion that foreign language study has a positive influence on the academic achievement of early language learners and that sustained exposure to languages makes a greater impact on student performance.

Part 3: Research grouped by Global, National and Local perspectives

The additional literature reviewed has been divided into three categories: global, national, and local perspectives of language acquisition themes. The themes are: second language acquisition; 21st century skills acquisition; program articulation, multicultural/diversity issues in schools; and the culture of resistance in the professional environment. These themes, which arose from the literature, support the study because understanding the benefits of second language acquisition and the need to understand other cultures are essential skills for the 21st century job market (Jensen & Sandrock, 2007). The culture of change and resistance will inform what the teachers may be experiencing as the students are ready to do more with the language.

Global Perspective

“After years of insisting that the world speak English, of grants and initiatives that established foreign language programs in fits and starts, Americans have awakened to a far more global playing field and the need for specialized languages, economists say. And nowhere is that more evident than with China”. (Aratani, 2006)

The global perspective of the literature reviewed indicates that the world in which our children will be working will not be one where they will only communicate with people living in their communities or even in the United States. Our children will need to have acquired certain skill sets to interact with people of many different cultures and languages (ACTFL, 1999; Branaman, 1998; Brown, 2001; Curtain & Pesola, 1994; Jensen & Sandrock, 2007; Wagner, 2008). A decade ago, students studying engineering in other countries could hope to someday live and work in the U.S. in order to earn a good living. Today, these engineers, whether they are trained in the U.S. or elsewhere, are able to live in countries of their choice and still earn a good living due to outsourcing,

which has become a popular financial strategy around the world. Many American companies have taken this route in order to reduce costs. Considering the cultural influence of other countries on the global market will also be essential to understanding the global impact (Friedman, 2005).

21st Century Skills: Many futurists agree that, within the next 5 to 10 years, schools currently teaching our children will have to change the way they teach because children are acquiring skills we never imagined 20–30 years ago. These “Digital Natives” will require more from our schools and teachers than is now being provided such as opportunities to work in diverse groups and develop their own learning rather than follow the teacher’s directions through lectures and lessons (Prensky, 2005). As educators, we are forced to ask how soon the courses and skills currently being taught will become obsolete. (Friedman, 2005; Gardner, 2007; Marsh, 1999; Prensky, 2005; US DOE, 2006)

According to the Asia Society, when current U. S. students graduate they will be:

- **Selling** to other countries
- **Buying** from other countries
- **Working** for international companies
- **Managing** employees from other cultures and countries
- **Collaborating** with people around the world in joint ventures
- **Competing** with people around the world for jobs and markets
- **Tackling** global problems such as climate change, diseases, and disaster recovery (Asia Society, 2008, p. 6).

As the United States moves into the 21st century, we become more aware of what is happening around the world. The devastation that occurs in other lands becomes more realistic due to the immediate media coverage that occurs today. The need for those who can speak the language of those suffering is heightened. Although many Americans still believe, there is no need to learn languages and study cultures, many students in other

nations continue to learn English and other languages before the age of 10, these multilingual students will have an advantage over monolingual Americans (Jensen & Sandrock, 2007; Marsh, 1999; U.S. DOE, 2006).

In an article published in 2003, The International Learning and Research Center describes how learning another language raises awareness of the multicultural world and enables students to gain insight into their own, as well as other cultures. As we educate our students, we must help them “avoid the judgment trap in their study of other cultures” and help them understand that “deep down, we are *not* all alike” (original emphasis); (Galloway, 1998, p. 130). Whether we take different roads in our learning and understanding of cultures or, like Alice in *The Looking Glass*, we begin to realize that we learn about someone’s culture “on its own terms” (Galloway, 1998) it is important that we step outside of our “comfort zone” in order to understand others. If our future depends on learning about cultures in order to interact with people from around the world, then understanding a second language will also allow our students to understand some of the intricacies of other cultures (International Learning and Research Center, 2003; Jensen & Sandrock, 2007; Phillips, 1998).

National Perspective

Second Language Theory: Some of the prominent language theorists agree that success in learning a second language depends on one’s ability in his/her first language, as well as the process one goes through in learning a language (Hakuta & Cancino, 1977).

My findings indicate:

- Early exposure to a second language promotes both language development and fluency. (Chomsky, 1959; Curtain & Pesola, 1998; Jensen & Sandrock, 2007;

King & Mackey, 2007; Lipton, 2004; Malone, 2005; Marcos, 1998; Met, 1998; Mitchell & Myles, 2002; Schulz, 1998; Skinner, 1957).

- All language learners go through the same process no matter when they begin to learn a new or second language (Harper & Williams, 1998; Lightbrown & Spada, 1999; Met, 1998).
- Understanding the process of second language acquisition will assist educators in forming clear and appropriate expectations of success depending on the person's first language ability (Fillmore & Snow, 2000; Gilzow & Branaman, 2000; Jensen & Sandroock, 2007; Mitchell & Myles, 1998; Pennycook, 2000; Pinker, 1994).
- Learning a second language will make it easier to learn a new language and will provide the learner with multiple perspectives in understanding and creative thought (Bottery, 2006; Jensen & Sandroock, 2007; Northwestern University, 2009).

Multicultural/Diversity theoretical underpinnings: This country was founded with a true commitment to diversity in religion. Through this, the U.S. has acquired skills of tolerance in order to live together with religious differences. "We believe that our diversity brings us a special strength and vitality (Hirsch, 1988 p. 95)." Most of the research in multicultural and diversity theory relates to the classroom. Schools should adapt these concepts of tolerance to the role of second language classes on multicultural and diversity education. Multicultural education encourages teachers to learn about and possibly to immerse students in another culture. In this way, students and teachers can understand the need for communicative language learning and the acceptance of differences (Hall, 1981; Jensen & Sandroock, 2007; Landsman, 2004). Teaching culture in the world language classroom as identified in the ACTFL standards, provides students and teachers with the opportunity to understand and learn about culture through meaningful lessons where cultural topics are infused within the curriculum. Teaching culture as part of the daily lessons rather than as a separate skill will allow students to make comparisons between their culture and the culture of the language being taught

(ACTFL, 1999; Jensen & Sandrock, 2007). This skill is vital if the U.S. is to maintain global and economic success (Freeman & Freeman, 2001; Friedman, 2005; Marcos, 1998; US DOE, 2006).

Culture of Resistance theories/ Change: Attitude toward language is an integral part of program development and acceptance. For example, the attitude toward language acquisition by politicians can impact language programs across the country. Federal, state, and local governments and school boards can ensure the success of language programs in schools at all levels (Curtain & Pesola, 1998; McGoarty, 1996). Robert Evans believes that many reforms fail because of the culture of the school. Teachers need to move beyond the status quo and venture into new territories (Deal, 1999; Evans 2001; Fullan, 2007).

Local Perspective

The state of Pennsylvania has yet to pass world language standards. According to a conversation with the state advisor on world languages, one of the major reasons they were not passed was that some legislatures believe that if the standards are passed as proposed, the expectation would be that all students, regardless of ability, would have to meet graduation requirements in world languages. At this time, too many districts appear not to have the resources to meet this expectation. The neighboring state of New Jersey not only mandates that all schools teach foreign languages to all students, but also that they identify statewide assessments to ensure students are acquiring the language skills needed for future success (N.J. Dept. of Ed., 1999). Currently, school districts in Pennsylvania are beginning to withdraw from the implementation and expansion of world language instruction in elementary schools. Many districts blame this decline on the

economy (WCASD, 2008), while others say the program does not work as it was designed and therefore has not produced the intended benefits.

Summary

This chapter provided an overview of second language learning methods. Methods incorporated into language classrooms across the country may differ. It is clear that the Grammar-Translation method of teaching a second language is used to develop strong translation skills, not oral proficiency. Alternate methods can be used in delivering engaging lessons that focus on communication rather than grammar. Communicative language approaches supported by the Total Physical Response method allow students to gain more useful language as they acquire second language skills needed for communication rather than memorizing a set of rules and vocabulary lists (Jensen & Sandrock, 2007).

The empirical research shared in this chapter supports the need to continue additional research on the topic of second language acquisition in the middle school. There are reports on the impact a FLES program has on student achievement and the College Board provided us with the relationship between high SAT scores of students who take more than four years of a foreign language study.

The case for acquiring 21st century skills such as learning languages and understanding cultures are vital skills in order for our current students to work, compete, and collaborate with people from around the world. These skills are necessary if our students are to be relevant in the future. Many countries understand this, and, for many years, have required English to be studied in schools from the primary through secondary levels. As Americans, we agreed that learning English was important for the world. The

key question for the future of American students is to change that perspective in order to maintain our strength as a nation. At this point, the researcher has reviewed many works of literature pertaining to FLES implementation. They all provide a framework from which to work in implementing a FLES program. They also indicate that, in order to have successful K-12 programs, vertical articulation of skills is important. What is lacking are recommendations on how to enhance the secondary (7-12) program to ensure a successful K-12 program that acknowledges the FLES experience and the evidence on how middle schools bridge the skills introduced at the elementary school to ensure they are built upon in the secondary school program (Lipton 2004, Curtain & Pesola 1998, Mitchell & Myles 1998).

CHAPTER 3

Methods and Procedures

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the methods and procedures employed in conducting this study. A description of the site and the subjects who participated in the study will be provided as well as the step by step procedures implemented in the study.

Assumptions and Rationale for a Qualitative Design

Maxwell (2005) describes a qualitative research design very clearly. He states that “design in qualitative research is an ongoing process that involves ‘tracking’ back and forth between the different components of the design, assessing the implications of goals, theories, research questions, methods, and validity threats for one another” p. 3 . Robert Yin (2003) believes that “case studies are the preferred strategy when ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context” (p. 1). This clearly describes the research topic: how the FLES implementation process influences the teachers’ perceptions of students’ language skills and how that perception impacts their approach to developing and delivering their classroom lessons. Throughout this study, I did not have control over the events that occurred in the classroom, observations were conducted in order to observe how the teacher implements his/her lesson and the components of the lesson that relate to the study.

Role of the Researcher

My role was to observe how teachers designed and delivered their instruction to students who have had some language experience prior to entering their classrooms. I asked questions through a questionnaire of five middle school language

teachers. I interviewed the program's coordinator and observed two FLES classrooms in order to understand the language expectations of the elementary school students. As a former administrator of a world language program, I implemented a FLES program and supervised the vertical articulation of a world language program in grades 1 through 12. A literature review has been conducted to identify trends that support the rationale for the study. Findings were organized and then analyzed to identify any trends that answered the research questions. I am aware of the possible preconceived ideas and biases about the program based on my knowledge and experience of a complete world language program. I minimized bias by observing events as they occurred and asked others for feedback to ensure I did not make assumptions regarding the data gathered through the study. The subjects interviewed were provided with transcripts to ensure that I had stated their ideas accurately.

Unit of Analysis

Five teachers from one school district in southeastern Pennsylvania were selected for the study. The school district is an urban, lower - middle class district with thirteen elementary schools, four middle schools and a high school campus. The student population of the district was comprised of 56.7% Hispanic, 22.1% African American, 18.2% Caucasian, and 3.2% Asian/other. The district employs 1,620 staff members including administrators, teachers, counselors, and support staff. The nine member Board of Directors governs the District and had an operating budget of 163 million for the 2009 -2010 school year. The poverty rate of the community is 81 % which included over nine hundred homeless students. The graduation rate of the high school campus is 65.27 %. 2,012 English Language Learners attend the district's schools where 26 native languages

are represented. This urban community is surrounded by a university on one side and farms on the other.

The teachers who participated in the study have been teaching a world language for less than ten years in this district. The teachers were teaching grades six through eight at three of the four middle schools. The coordinator of the world language program was interviewed and the teachers participated in completing a questionnaire and welcomed the researcher in for a classroom observation. Observations were also conducted at two elementary schools to identify which strategies language teachers use while delivering the FLES program.

Selection Process

Three school districts in Eastern Pennsylvania were considered for the study.

Considerations in selecting the school district to conduct my study included:

1. The number of middle schools the district had.
2. The number of middle school language teachers the district employed.
3. The number of languages taught at the middle school.
4. When the FLES program was implemented in the district's elementary schools.
5. Any additional information or characteristics of the population of the district that made the possible study site unique to the study.

The first district I reviewed had two middle schools and four language teachers. This district was not interested in making curricular changes to the middle school curriculum to acknowledge the skills acquired at the elementary school. The school district's total enrollment is 7,000 students across six elementary schools, two middle schools and two high schools. Although the administrator was very interested in

participating in my study, the district was not interested at this time to review the world language program.

The second district I approached about the study also had two middle schools and implemented the FLES program in 1998. The total number of language teachers teaching at the middle schools was six and the total school district enrollment was 5,000 students across five elementary schools, two middle schools and one high school. The district had just conducted its own review of the world language program and therefore was not interested in participating in an additional study.

The third school district in Pennsylvania that I approached to participate in the study was very interested in the outcome of the proposed research. The district had implemented the elementary world language program four years ago and was a much larger school district. The total student enrollment was 11,000 in 13 elementary schools, four middle schools and a high school campus comprised of two high schools. A total of eight teachers taught at the four middle schools. The administration welcomed me and agreed to participate in the study.

Subjects

A total of eight teachers teach the world language program at the four middle schools within the study site. All eight teachers were invited to participate in the study. The selection process for choosing the middle school language teachers who would participate in the study was based on self-selection. Of the eight teachers five were interested in participating and were willing to attend a meeting with the coordinator of languages and myself.

Five middle school teachers volunteered to participate in the study. The five

teachers attended a meeting with the coordinator of world language where she informed them of the proposed study. Those that were interested in participating informed the coordinator of their interest. I met with each interested participant to describe the research being proposed and answered questions from the potential participants. After the potential subjects had their questions answered, I asked if they were interested in participating in the study. The subjects agreed to participate and signed the consent forms (Appendices' A and B). The following subjects agreed to take part in the study.

Subject #1 Patricia

Patricia is twenty-three years of age and is in her second year of teaching. She is certified in teaching Spanish and holds a Bachelor's degree in education. Patricia was teaching seventh grade Spanish at the time of the study. She has not had any exposure to the district's FLES program and she has not received any training in teaching languages to elementary school students. Throughout her first year teaching, Patricia taught using the lecture and drill model of teaching languages, similar to the style she participated in as a student. After being employed by this district she enrolled in a graduate level course in education on second language acquisition strategies. She has changed her instruction to include the various language strategies taught to her by her instructors. At the time of the research she was including more technology into her instruction and authentic text found on the internet. Patricia was enthusiastic about participating in the study. She was aware of how difficult it is to find strategies that are specific for middle school students, especially in a differentiated setting. She has students who are new to the Spanish language, as well as heritage speakers of the language. There were also a few students who were English Language Learners and only spoke Spanish at home. Her lesson was

conducted in the technology lab. Students worked individually to develop a presentation using a movie maker program. The students interacted with each other asking for definitions of words and to share the projects as they developed their presentations. About 50% of the students in the class were heritage learners of Spanish. The teacher responded to students in the language they asked the questions. Exposure to the FLES program is not considered by this teacher because not all students come with that experience. Differentiation occurred according to heritage and non-heritage language learners. Heritage learners were asked to focus on the reading and writing skills of the class where non-heritage learners were first asked to focus on the oral skills of learning the Spanish language.

Subject #2 Louis

Louis is twenty-five years old and is in his third year of teaching Spanish at the study site. He has taught the 6th grade program for students who have met the state's proficiency scores in Reading and Math. He is currently enrolled in a graduate program in second language teaching and learning. The lesson observed was a 7th grade Spanish lesson. Louis teaches Spanish to students who have participated in the 6th grade program and those who have not participated in the program. He believes in teaching using multiple visuals to ensure students understand and can recall the vocabulary presented to them throughout the lessons. During the lesson, students were able to participate using the Spanish language. Louis is eager to participate in meetings that relate to second language acquisition strategies, he also uses the information and skills acquired in his graduate program to enhance his instruction. Due to the exposure to second language teaching strategies, he has changed his instruction to include more backward design

strategies. He now develops the assessments prior to introducing the unit and concepts to his students.

Subject # 3 Lavery

Lavery is 28 years of age and is in her 5th year teaching Spanish. She is certified in the teaching of Spanish and holds a bachelor's degree in secondary school language teaching. Lavery has been enrolled in a graduate program focusing on curriculum and instruction. In the past few years one of the classes Lavery has taught was the 6th grade reading support program for students who have not met proficiency on the state assessments. She is currently teaching Spanish for heritage learners. Her approach to teaching this class is similar to her approach to teaching the reading support program. She is interested in teaching the students how the language is constructed. Many of the students in her class can speak the Spanish language and they know how to speak it accurately, but their writing and understanding of the structure of the language is lacking. Lavery's classroom structure is designed for students to participate as much as possible. Each team of students received a handout to tally their classroom interactions in Spanish, this sheet would be turned in to the teacher at the end of the period to summarize the students' classroom participation points.

Subject #4 Nicholas

Nicholas is 40 years of age and is in his ninth year teaching Spanish for this study site. He holds a bachelors degree and a master's degree in education. Nicholas is always looking for additional opportunities to enhance his instruction. He attended conferences, seminars, meeting and takes courses in second language acquisition. He believes in the teaching of languages to young children but has not had the experience of teaching

elementary school students. Nicholas makes time to interact with the teachers who teach the students in the previous level. Although he spends about a month reviewing concepts from the previous course, he believes that the English grammar is not acquired by his students prior to them entering the eighth grade. When he teaches about Spanish grammar he makes an effort to review English grammar as well so students are able to build their grammar skills in both languages simultaneously.

Subject #5 Maria

Maria is 38 years of age and is new to the teaching profession. She is currently in her third year of teaching at the study site. She holds a bachelor's degree which she earned prior to her teaching career. Maria is a native Spanish speaker and designs her instruction to maximize student participation. Her instruction is organized through the use of word banks. The units of instruction are grouped according to the vocabulary students will need to ensure they are active participants throughout the lesson. The boards are covered with groups of vocabulary words and phrases students are required to use. Through meetings, seminars, workshops and courses, Maria designs her instruction with multiple activities that take from ten to twelve minutes to complete. Her goal is for her students to use the vocabulary needed to communicate effectively in the classroom. She believes in designing instruction according to the skills the students possess.

Program Coordinator

Karen is 30 years of age and is in her fourth year of overseeing the language program at the study site. Prior to her role as the coordinator of the language program, she taught French for eleven years at four different school districts. She currently holds a bachelor's degree in French and a master's degree in teaching foreign language. Karen is

certified in Supervision as well as a K-12 Principal. She has been accepted to a doctoral program where she will study educational leadership. Karen has served as the coordinator of the language program for the district after the inception of the elementary school language program. She was not a part of the process during the design of the program. Karen now coordinates the efforts to enhance the program at the elementary school, middle school and high school. She has been instrumental in bringing in the STARTALK program where students at the elementary level and middle school participate in learning Chinese from a guest teacher from China.

Procedures

Pilot Study:

Once the research tools were developed, such as the teacher questionnaire, the observation protocol and the interview protocol, I conducted a pilot study in a district where the elementary school FLES program had been implemented ten years prior to my research. In the Fall of 2009, I sent out the questionnaire to twelve language teachers and asked them to complete the questionnaire and to also provide me with some feedback on the questionnaire itself. Questions I posed about the questionnaire were; "Are the questions clear? Were you able to answer the questions with ease? Did the questions allow you to share your thoughts and experiences about teaching a world language course? Would you change any of the questions in order to provide me with clear information on how you design and deliver your instruction? Of the twelve teachers, seven responded to the questionnaire and provided me with valuable feedback. The information gathered allowed me to make changes to the instrument and to clarify my research questions.

The observation protocol was developed and used in my work as a world language supervisor. Multiple observations were conducted using the observation protocol I designed. As I observed language teachers the observation tool allowed me to gather information on the level of student engagement while using the target language with the teacher and their peers. Tallies were assigned to interactions where students and teachers communicated in the target language at three levels. Tallies were assigned to the Low Level if student reactions were identified as non-verbal responses to teacher input. Student interaction tallies were assigned to the Mid Level when students responded to verbal interactions with a canned phrase, utterance or one word responses. Tallies were assigned to High Level interactions where students and teachers interacted with verbal communication that included more than short phrases or utterances that resulted in asking and answering questions with complete sentences in the target language.

Interview questions were piloted with department chairs and facilitators to ensure accurate information was gathered that would lead to answering the possible research questions. Questions that did not prove to be successful or redundant were eliminated from the interview protocol.

Research Study Steps:

Step 1

Permission to conduct this qualitative study was acquired by the superintendent of schools. A letter was written to the Superintendent of Schools outlining the study and the specific components of the study. The researcher reassured the superintendent that participating in the research study would not interfere with the instructional process.

Step 2

Prior to the approval process of the Institutional Review Board approving the instruments, the researcher developed and piloted the instruments in order to validate them. A structured interview was designed for the coordinator of the language program. The interview questions were tested and shared with the committee to ensure clarity of the questions was achieved. A questionnaire was developed and revised to ensure the pilot group understood the questions. The seven teachers who piloted the questionnaire were asked to provide feedback regarding the word choice and the information the instrument requested. The feedback provided by multiple persons was considered and the instrument was revised. The observation protocol was used by the researcher during multiple teacher observations in his current position as a school administrator. The instrument was adjusted according to the information gathered in the testing phase.

Step 3

Middle school world language teachers were invited to attend an information meeting organized by Karen, coordinator of world languages for the School District of Las Rocas. Karen introduced the student investigator of the study to the potential subjects. Information about the study was presented along with specific details of the study in an informal setting, such as the teacher's classroom or office space. There were two components of the study that were asked of the teachers; to complete a questionnaire and allow for one classroom observation. A description of the questionnaire and the observation was shared. Potential participants were then provided with an opportunity to ask questions. Consent was acquired for those participants willing to be subjects in the study by signing the Consent Form. The informal meeting led to the subjects asking

questions about the researcher's background as well as the teachers sharing their story of how they arrived at teaching for this school district. By the time the meeting came to an end the teachers were confident and enthusiastic about participating in the study.

Step 4

Each subject was provided with a questionnaire to be completed within the window of the study. Most of the subjects completed the questionnaire within the first week, while other participants used the entire five week window to complete the questionnaire. Once the questionnaires were returned, the researcher began to analyze the information gathered through this process. The study also answered questions relating to how and why teachers participated in staff-development activities in order to acquire the new skill sets needed to instruct students coming in with previous second language skills.

Step 5

Observations of each subject's teaching were conducted within a five week window. Observations of the lessons provided examples of how the teachers chose to implement the strategies of early language instruction into their lesson design. The researcher did not have control over events. The researcher was looking for the teachers' perceptions of students' language skills and how these perceptions impacted their lesson design and delivery.

Observations were also conducted of the two elementary school Spanish classes. The teachers welcomed the researcher to the classroom and shared with him the handouts and descriptions of the activities the students were participating in.

Step 6

An interview was conducted with the coordinator of world languages. The

coordinator signed the consent forms and the Audiotape Consent Form. Once the coordinator was familiar with the process the interview was conducted. Two audio recorders were used and the researcher took notes of the structured interview.

In order to identify the organization's culture, the researcher, through interviews and observations, examined the school environment in which the teachers worked and how they experienced their professional teaching careers. The researcher spent multiple days at each site directly observing the teachers and the school culture.

Information was gathered through the collection of data by interviews, questionnaires, review of records, and direct observations of lessons. The researcher met with the coordinator who oversees the district's world language program in order to identify the FLES implementation process. The researcher met with the coordinator for an hour, a detailed interview was conducted and information was gathered regarding the coordinator's professional preparation, goals of the program and the staff development opportunities provided to the professional teaching staff.

Data Collection

Questionnaires were distributed to each subject participating in the study. Once the data were gathered through the questionnaires and observations, a data analysis chart was developed to identify the common strands that answered the research question.

The researcher began data collection by asking questions focusing on a topic. The first section established a context of the study. The interview investigated the types of FLES programs offered by the district and the district's beliefs concerning the benefits of learning a second language. This information provided significance and validity to the study. The next section examined a typical teaching day and how teachers develop their

lessons and delivered their instruction. The third section allowed the teachers themselves to describe their perceptions of students' skills and their progress in learning the language being taught.

Triangulation was acquired by using various methods of data gathering techniques. Interviews, observations, fixed choice and open ended questions as part of a questionnaire provided the researcher with data from various methods in order to answer the same research questions. Yin (2003) states that "the use of multiple sources of evidence in case studies allows an investigator to address a broader range of historical, attitudinal, and behavioral issues (page 98)." The following sources of evidence were collected during this study (Table 3.1).

Questionnaires:

In order to answer the first research question, what are the middle school teachers' perceptions of their students' second language skills? Fixed choice and open-ended questionnaires were administered to five middle school language teachers to identify the language skills of their students. Open-ended questions were asked of the five middle school language teachers in the questionnaire to identify the strategies they used in teaching a second language.

Participant Observations:

Observations of the FLES and secondary school classes were conducted to validate what they said during the interviews regarding teaching strategies. Two observations of the elementary schools were conducted to identify the strategies being used in FLES and five middle school observations to confirm the findings of the questionnaires.

Interview:

An interview was conducted with the coordinator of world languages. The interview was audio taped and the transcription was shared with the subject to ensure accurate information was gathered.

Review of Records:

A review of records was conducted in order to gather information on how the World Language Framework provided the teachers with the expectations to deliver a student-centered, communication-based instruction and interdisciplinary program with global connections for the students of the district. The program's Scope and Sequence was aligned with the national language standards and the states' assessment anchors, along with the expectations for teachers teaching the K - 12 program based on the skill categories of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. The FLES implementation Timeline provided the researcher with the sequence of how the elementary language program was implemented. The program began in 2006 and will completely impact the entire district by the year 2019. The Strategic Plan is a document that is required by Chapter 4 Regulations of the State Board of Education. This plan provided the state, community and its teachers with the activities developed by the community to ensure students are not only meeting the state's requirement, but also the community's belief that all students should be provided with similar experiences prior to their graduation from high school ready to contribute to society.

Table 3.1 Evidence collected during the study

Research Questions	Questionnaires	Observations	Interviews
What are the middle school language teacher's perceptions of their student's second language skills?	Fixed choice and open-ended questionnaires were administered to five middle school language teachers to identify the language skills of their students.	Participant observations: Observations of the FLES and secondary school classes were conducted to validate what they indicated in the questionnaire regarding teaching strategies.	An interview was conducted with the administrator. It was audio taped and the transcription was shared with the subject to ensure accurate information was gathered.
How might the teacher's perceptions influence their lesson design and delivery?	Open-ended questions were asked of the five middle school language teachers in the questionnaire to identify the strategies they use in teaching a second language.	Direct observations: Two Observations of the elementary school was conducted to identify the strategies being used in FLES and five middle school observations were conducted to confirm the findings of the questionnaires.	An interview with the coordinator was conducted to gather this information. The interview was audio taped and the transcription was shared with the subject to ensure accurate information was gathered.

Data Analysis

The researcher used the Constant Comparative method of data analysis to develop the categories and connections gathered through transcripts and data collection. The categories chosen reflect the purpose of the research and eventually led toward answering the research questions (Merriam 1998). Multiple sources of data were gathered and included, fixed-choice questionnaires, open-ended questionnaires, observations, and an interview.

Questionnaire:

A questionnaire was used to gather the teachers' perceptions of their students' language skills and to identify the strategies they used in planning their lessons. The questionnaire was administered to the middle school language teachers with a focus on middle school. The questionnaire was administered to gain an understanding and perspective of the teachers' perceptions of their students' language skills. The researcher also asked questions regarding the teacher's lesson planning and design. Information on the staff development activities the teacher has participated in was also gathered.

Observations:

Observations took place at various sites. The purpose of the observations was to identify observable behaviors in the FLES and middle school language classrooms. These observations focused on teacher/student interactions with regard to the communicative language skills being acquired and practiced. Observations at the elementary schools and middle schools were also used to identify the interactions between the teacher and students as they enhance/build upon the language skills introduced at the elementary school level. The researcher developed and validated an

observation protocol that tallied the number of student interactions and the levels of interaction using the target language at low, medium and high levels of engagement.

Interviews:

The program's coordinator was interviewed in order to gather background information and staff development opportunities provided to the teachers in the district. The data gathered confirmed the information acquired through the questionnaires and observations.

Methods of Validity Threats

Throughout the study, the researcher connected with participants to ensure the accuracy of the information gathered. Teachers completed the questionnaire and welcomed the researcher for an observation of a lesson in the classroom in order to gather rich data during the study. Maxwell believes that "rich" data will provide a "full and revealing picture of what is going on" (p.110).

The researcher conducted a review of records that included the World Language Framework, the Scope and Sequence of the curriculum goals, the FLES implementation timeline, and the district's current Strategic Plan. The researcher made comparisons and identified differences in the observations, interviews, questionnaires and research, conducted prior to and during the study.

Once the collection of rich data was complete, the researcher sought out supporting and contrary evidence within the case study in order to identify if it would impact the conclusion or if modification was needed. Subjects who dispute the hypothesis or differ from others despite having similar characteristics were analyzed carefully. Asking others for feedback throughout the study aided the researcher in

identifying possible bias in the interpretation of the data gathered (Maxwell, 2005, p. 112).

Using the documents reviewed; questionnaires, and interview, the researcher considered the perceptions of the FLES program through the perspective of teachers. Using the materials gathered, the researcher counted the occurrences of similar comments. Charts and graphs were developed to support the conclusions by identifying the number of instances themes came to light.

The researcher has chosen to study the impact of FLES on middle school teachers because it is a unique program implemented in some schools throughout the state and country. The researcher regularly checked with the subjects to ensure he was correctly interpreting their comments and information.

Strategies that ensured respondent validation such as triangulation, and comparison were some of the methods used during this study

Ethical Issues

The researcher acknowledged the possible biases that he may hold in respect to FLES implementation procedures. Twenty years in the education system has provided the researcher with the foundation to research this topic. The researcher has served as a FLES teacher, secondary language teacher, and administrator overseeing the implementation of a FLES program in the state of Pennsylvania. The researcher understands how the experience-based biases may impede conversations. As a former world languages supervisor, it would be unethical for the researcher to study the program and the teachers supervised because the subjects may not answer the questions honestly due to the professional evaluations the supervisor regularly conducts on the teachers.

By choosing a different school district, there was minimal risk to the study. Pseudonyms were used for the people interviewed and the schools observed. Fully informed subjects participated and confidentiality to the subjects was assured by using consent forms, and by following an interview protocol. The researcher ensured that the subjects would be provided with the opportunity to review the transcripts of the interviews and the opportunity to withdraw their remarks.

Methodology Summary

The study was conducted in a mid-Atlantic K-12 school district in the state of Pennsylvania with an enrollment of about 11,000 students. The participants in the study included five teachers at three middle schools and one teacher from each of two elementary schools. The primary subjects were the five middle school language teachers who volunteered to participate in the study, the two elementary school language teachers volunteered to have the researcher observe one of their lessons, and one administrator volunteered to be interviewed and provide documents that would support the study and aide in answering the research questions. Each of the subjects participated in the study voluntarily. The elementary school language teachers were asked to welcome the researcher into their classroom to observe a lesson in order to determine how the Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES) program was delivered at this particular school district. The purpose of the interview with the administrator was to determine how the world language program was delivered across the district and in particular the FLES implementation process.

The researcher developed a questionnaire to elicit demographic information from the middle school teachers and questions that would answer the research questions. The

questionnaire consisted of fixed-choice items to be answered in three ways: in a rating scale format, by multiple choice selections, and through open-ended questions. Each question in the questionnaire (Appendix E) was designed to allow the subjects to provide comments in case they wanted to give their answers in more detail.

Observations were conducted in each teacher's middle school language classroom as well as in two elementary language classrooms. An observation protocol (Appendix D) was developed to gather information that would answer the research questions regarding student interactions with the target language. Interactions were recorded by tallies on the observation form.

Participants

The response rate for the questionnaire by the middle school language teachers was 100%: all five teachers completed the questionnaire. Observations of seven language lessons were conducted: two elementary and five middle school lessons. An interview was conducted with the world language coordinator for the school district in order to understand how the world language program was delivered in each of the district's schools.

Three demographic information questions were developed in order to gain a greater understanding of the respondents' background information and teaching experience. Table 3.2 summarizes the grade levels and language that the subjects teach, and the number of years they have taught the language.

Table 3.2 *Demographic Information of Teachers*

Subject	Grade level	Language	Years of Teaching
1	Middle School (6-8)	Spanish	Less than 3 years
2	Middle School (6-8)	Spanish	Less than 3 years
3	Middle School (6-8)	Spanish	3-5 years
4	Middle School (6-8)	Spanish	3-5 years
5	Middle School (6-8)	Spanish	6-10 years

The demographic information was compiled after the questionnaires were completed. The subjects in the study completed the questionnaires anonymously. Two of the five teachers commented that they teach seventh grade or eighth grade Spanish only. Middle school language teachers in this particular school district may teach a combination of sixth, seventh, and eighth grade Spanish depending on the school's schedule. The sixth grade program at the study site currently provides second language instruction to those students who have achieved proficiency in reading on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessments (PSSA). The seventh grade program delivers instruction to students completing half of a secondary level-one program. The eighth grade students receive instruction on the second half of a level-one program. This provides them with the opportunity to receive their first year of high school language credit prior to entering the high school. The following demographic information was collected through the questionnaire (Table 3.2).

- All five teachers teach at the middle school level.
- All the teachers in the study teach Spanish at the middle school level.

- Two teachers have been teaching for less than three years, two teachers have been teaching between three and five years, and one teacher has been teaching for six to ten years.

Summary

This qualitative study was designed to examine the impact of a middle school language teacher's perceptions of students' language skills on their lesson design and delivery. One urban school district was studied. Five middle school language teachers completed a questionnaire in order to identify their perceptions of students' language skills. Observations of the elementary and middle school classes were conducted in order to understand the phenomenon and the organization's culture.

CHAPTER 4

Research Findings

Chapter 4 presents the results of the study. The objective of this analysis is to evaluate how five middle school language teachers design and deliver instruction that has been informed by the language skills their students acquired prior to entering their classrooms. Results are presented in three sections based on the information and data gathered. The first section provides information on response rates and respondent demographics. The second and third sections report the results according to the research questions. The results of a teacher questionnaire, observations of lessons, an interview with the language coordinator, and a review of documents complete the components of the study.

The primary goal of the study is to answer in detail this question: What perceptions do middle school teachers form regarding their students' language skills, and how do these perceptions impact a world language program? Answers to specific questions that fall under this overarching question will identify specific descriptions of the teachers' teaching strategies and their perceptions relating to second- language acquisition and the K-8 language program. The questions are:

- 1.) What are the middle school language teachers' perceptions of their students' second language skills?
- 2.) How might the teachers' perceptions influence their lesson design and delivery?

A questionnaire of fixed-choice and open-ended questions were administered to the five middle school teachers. Lesson observations of these teachers were conducted to validate the information gathered through the questionnaire. Two elementary school

Spanish language lessons were observed in order for the researcher to understand the type of language program being delivered in the elementary school. An interview with the coordinator of the language program for the district triangulated the information gathered through this study. The transcript of the interview was shared with the administrator to ensure accuracy. The administrator approved the transcript.

Physical artifacts such as the district's strategic plan, World Language Framework, its scope and sequence, and FLES Implementation Timeline were obtained to better understand the goals of the district in relation to the world language program. The researcher documented the stages of his research as it progressed and made modifications necessary to ensure that the information gathered effectively addresses the research questions.

Results

The previous section provided demographic information on the subjects of the study. The second portion of the questionnaire focused on answering the primary research questions. The following are the findings of the questions asked of the five subjects participating in the study. The goal of the questionnaire is to answer in detail the question: What perceptions do middle school teachers form regarding their students' language skills, and how do these perceptions impact a world language program? The supporting questions are: What are the middle school language teacher's perceptions of their student's second language skills? How might the language teacher's perceptions influence their lesson design and delivery?

Research Question #1: What are the middle school language teachers' perceptions of their student's second language skills?

Using a rating scale, the subjects were requested to determine their students' willingness to participate in class using the target language. The subjects were asked to state whether the students were *Reluctant*, *Somewhat Reluctant*, *Somewhat Willing*, *Willing*, or *Eager* to use the language being taught. Five types of interactions were identified (Table 4.1). The findings of this inquiry are as follows:

Table 4.1 Please rate how willing your students are to participate in class using the target language.						
	Reluctant	Somewhat Reluctant	Somewhat Willing	Willing	Eager	Response Count
A. Participate in class using the target language	0	3	0	2	0	5
B. Present on a topic using the target language	1	1	1	2	0	5
C. Ask questions using the target language	0	0	3	1	1	5
D. Answer questions using the target language in complete thoughts and sentences	0	0	3	2	0	5
E. Students work in groups using the target language.	1	1	0	3	0	5

Participates in class using the target language: Three of the five respondents indicated that their students are *Somewhat Reluctant* to use the target language in class, while two of the five respondents indicated that their students are *Willing* to use the language.

Present on a topic using the target language: Two of the five respondents indicated that their students are *Willing* to make presentations in Spanish, while three of the five ranged from *Reluctant* to *Somewhat Willing*.

Ask questions using the target language: Three of the five respondents indicated that their students are *Somewhat Willing* to ask questions in Spanish throughout the lesson. Two teachers reported their students are *Willing* and another teacher reported their students are *Eager* to use the language in asking questions in class.

Answer questions using the target language: Three of the five respondents reported that their students are *Somewhat Willing* to answer questions using Spanish, while two teachers reported their students are *Willing* to answer questions in Spanish.

Students work in groups using the target language: Three of the five respondents reported their students are *Willing* to work in groups using Spanish.

Two subjects commented on their responses. One teacher wrote that his/her students enjoy working in groups and are more willing to use the target language during the cooperative activities. Another teacher stated that his/her students only spoke the language when the teacher required a very specific answer in scripted form.

The teachers' perception of their students' willingness to use the target language is usually based on the tasks that a teacher requires a student to complete, tasks such as partner activities, group activities, or formal and informal presentations.

The second inquiry was designed to determine if the teacher feels the students in his/her class have the ability to complete various language tasks. The instruction to the teacher was: Please rate the ability of your students in completing the following tasks. The findings are as follows (Table 4.2):

Table 4.2 Please rate the ability of your students in completing the following tasks.

	Unable	Somewhat Able	Able	N/A	Response Count
A. Participate in class using the target language	0	2	3	0	5
B. Present on a topic using the target language	0	3	2	0	5
C. Ask questions using the target language	0	2	3	0	5
D. Answer questions using the target language in complete thoughts/sentences	0	2	3	0	5
E. Students work in groups using the target language	0	1	4	0	5

- Three of the five respondents believe their students are *Able* to participate in class using the target language.
- Three of the five respondents believe their students are *Somewhat Able* to present on a topic using the target language.
- Three of the five respondents believe their students are *Able* to ask questions using the target language.
- Three of the five respondents believe their students are *Able* to answer questions in the target language using complete thoughts and sentences.
- Four of the five respondents believe their students are *Able* to work in groups using the target language.

The third request asked the teachers to determine the length of time their students are able to converse with their peers using the target language. Two of the five

respondents believe that their students can converse for two to four minutes with their peers. One teacher believes that his/her students can converse for more than five minutes while another teacher believes his/her students can only converse for 30-60 seconds. One teacher commented that it depends on the activity and the amount of time the teacher allows for the completion of the activity. Another teacher wrote, "Ability varies by comfort level, whether or not they are heritage speakers and levels of self social adjustment. In other words, are they willing to make mistakes in front of their peers in furtherance of their own linguistic objectives"? Another Teacher indicated that many of his/her students were native speakers and spoke Spanish at home.

Question #4 asked if the teacher believes his or her students entered the course with the prior knowledge needed for success in the class. Three of the five respondents answered that they *did not* believe their students entered the course with the requisite language skills. Three teachers commented further. Their comments indicate that some students did not know enough English grammar to enable them to transfer and compare grammatical structures. Other students had not participated in the previous year's language course and, consequently, lacked a foundation for second language learning.

Research Question #2: How might the language teacher's perceptions influence their lesson design and delivery?

Survey question five was designed to collect responses that would answer the second main research question: How might the language teacher's perceptions influence their lesson design and delivery? The researcher is interested in identifying what information the teacher uses in determining the goals of the lesson. The results of questionnaire question five will determine how much time the teachers spend reviewing

previous concepts prior to teaching the assigned curriculum. The results indicate that 40% of the teachers spend four to five weeks reviewing material in the beginning of the school year. One teacher spends two to three weeks reviewing; another teacher spends more than six weeks reviewing previous material. The comments provided by the teachers indicate that students who had participated in FLES do not recall information because, “Their prior coursework has no relation to what is being taught at the middle school”. Another teacher commented that in a class with students who participated in the sixth grade program, two to three weeks of review were needed. A third teacher indicated that, with some groups, the review could take up to two months, so that the “transition to the new material is smoother”.

In order to determine how informed the teachers are regarding the students’ prior language experience within the district, the questionnaire asked if they collaborated with the teachers from the previous level of language instruction. Eighty percent of the teachers answered that they did not collaborate with the teacher from the previous level of language instruction. All five collaborate with the teachers teaching the same course as they do, and they all collaborate with the teachers receiving their students the following year. The comments indicate that some of the collaboration within the same level may occur in the teaching of culture if the classes are leveled according to native and non-native speakers. Collaboration with the next level occurs three to four times a year to ensure that students are prepared for high school and have the skills to pass the high school level one exam that would enable them to earn high school credit.

Question nine of the questionnaire was designed as a fixed-choice inquiry on a Likert scale. Teachers were given the opportunity to comment on their selection. The

instruction to the teachers was: *Please rate your belief that early language learning is essential in acquiring 21st century language skills. 10 indicates strong agreement; 1 indicates complete disagreement.* How strong is the teachers' belief that early language learning is essential for success in middle school, in high school, and for success in the future? The answer to this question would provide the researcher with the teachers' perspective on their approach to their lesson design. All five teachers believe that early language learning is essential for middle school language success as indicated by a rating of no less than seven. Three of the five teachers gave this topic a nine or ten rating. In indicating whether early language learning is essential for high school language success, the five teachers gave this topic a rating of six or higher. With regard to future success, all subjects rated this topic at eight or higher (Table 4.3).

Please rate your belief in that early language learning is essential in acquiring 21 st century language skills.										
	1 Disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 Agree
Essential for middle school language success	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	2
Essential for high school language success	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	2
Essential for future success	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	3

Questions 10 and 11 focused on staff development opportunities that pertain to early language learning and second language acquisition. Teachers chose from a list

provided by the researcher. The selections were: *Meetings, Workshops, Seminars, Webinars, Conferences, Courses, None, and N/A.*

With regard to early language acquisition, teachers were asked to select the staff development activities in which they have participated. Eighty percent of the teachers only participated in more meetings than other opportunities available. Courses were selected by forty percent of the teachers. One participant indicated that he/she had not received any staff development training in early language learning (Table 4.10).

With regard to second language acquisition, eighty percent of the teachers reported that they have attended more *Meetings* than other types of opportunities. Courses came in second and *Seminars* came in third place with two teachers participating in them as staff development activities on second language acquisition.

Open-Ended Questions

Four open-ended questions were posed to the teachers through the questionnaire in order to get a better understanding of their perceptions of the students' second language ability and readiness for the coursework they will be exposed to in the teacher's classroom. The following questions were asked of the teachers:

1. Has your lesson design changed in the past five to ten years, if so, how and why?
2. Has your instruction changed due to your students participation in the FLES program, if so, how and why?
3. Do you differentiate your instruction according to your students' prior experience with the FLES program, if so, how and why?

4. Do you believe your current students are More Ready, As Ready or Less Ready for the 21st century as the students you taught 5-10 years ago, how and why?

The researcher coded the responses to identify common themes among the responses and the major findings that led to answering the research questions. The results demonstrated that four out of five respondents do not consider the FLES program making an impact on their lesson design and delivery at this time. The following comments were given by the respondents:

- "No, FLES has not impacted my instruction."
- "No FLES is ever considered because of the varied exposure to it by my students."
- "No, there is no need since I have not seen students who have had experience with FLES be any farther ahead than students who have not received it."
- "No, I haven't really seen any students that have fully participated in the elementary program, or who have retained any of the information."
- "We basically start from scratch here in the middle school."

According to Dr. Gladys Lipton in the past, FLES programs failed because they did not acquire the support needed by the secondary school (grades 7-12) teachers, articulation with secondary school teachers was almost nonexistent and former FLES students felt as though they were beginning their second language study from the start and therefore made learning the language frustrating not only the students in their classes but also to their parents. One teacher indicated that FLES did provide his or her students with enough skills to differentiate his or her instruction for these students.

Four of the five teachers believed that the differentiation that occurs in their lessons is based on student ability with regards to their experience as a native or non-native Spanish speaker. The following comments were shared by the subjects to support this finding:

- "Yes! I have learned to modify and differentiate my instruction based on the group of students I have in the class."
- "Yes! One would have to, depending upon the students' prior knowledge and experiences."
- "My higher sections are required to do more work and work that is more difficult."
- "I differentiate based on language ability. Natives are challenged more."
- "There is more differentiating between native and non-native speakers rather than experience with the FLES program."

Native Speakers are provided with additional work and more challenging work than their peers non-native peers as described by the following comments:

- "Natives are challenged more and often given more freedom to express themselves. I tend to focus on writing and spelling with the natives, where as non-natives have to start from the beginning."
- "There is more differentiating between native and non-native speakers rather than experience with the FLES program."

According to Curtain and Pesola/Dahlberg (1994, 2008) students who interact with their native peers reach a higher level of native like pronunciation than those who interact with their non-native peers. Students who do not interact with their native like peers tend to do

more circumlocution in order to describe what they want to say where students who do interact with native peers are able to identify the words they are searching for while communicating.

The following information is provided according to the responses gathered by each open-ended question.

The teachers were asked if they had changed their lesson plans in the past five to ten years and, if so, how and why?

Four of five subjects reported that their lesson design has changed in the past five years. The one teacher who has not changed his/her lesson design stated that his/her lessons focus on “honing receptive skills and striving to get students to express themselves and their ideas in the target language”. Four of the teachers who participated in the study have changed their lesson design in the past five years in order to incorporate strategies that focus on communication and differentiation according to the student population enrolled in their class and skills the students had acquired before entering the classroom. The teachers referenced backward design, differentiated instruction, grammar, and technology as strategies they use in the classroom.

Teachers were asked if they had changed their instruction due to their students participating in the FLES Program, and if so, how and why.

The students currently taking language instruction at the middle school have not all participated in the elementary language program because the program had not been implemented in all the district’s elementary schools. According to the FLES Implementation Chart for the district, the program was implemented at 5 of 13 schools in 2006. By 2008, all 13 elementary schools implemented the program from grades 1

through 5 with a few beginning in Kindergarten. By 2011, all students entering the middle school will have had some form of language instruction that may impact teachers' lesson design and delivery. According to this questionnaire question, all teachers believe they have not seen an impact of the elementary school program on all of their students.

Teachers were asked if they differentiated their instruction according to their students' prior experience with the FLES program, and if so, to indicate how and why.

Four of five teachers answered this question. Since many of the students in their current classes have not all participated in the FLES program, teachers responded to the question by indicating how their methods differ according to the population of students they currently teach. Students in the honors sections have had the 6th grade exploratory Spanish program since they have achieved proficiency on the state's reading assessment in grades four and five. These students are provided with a more rigorous curriculum, and expectations for them are higher. Expectations are also high for students whose first language is Spanish. This differentiation may lay the groundwork for the students entering the program with a complete foundation in elementary language acquisition.

The teachers were asked to compare their current students' readiness for the 21st century with that of students they taught 5 to 10 years ago.

All five teachers responded. Three of five teachers feel that their students are more ready for the 21st century than previous students; 2 teachers believe that their students are as ready for the 21st century. None of the teachers thought that their students are less ready for the 21st century than prior students they had taught. The teachers indicated that their students acquired skills in cooperative learning, communication, and technology use.

Classroom Observations

Seven classroom observations were conducted during this study. Two were conducted at the elementary school level in order to determine the type of FLES program delivered. The FLES lessons were also observed in order to determine the language skills introduced and practiced by students at the elementary school.

The observations sought to identify three levels of *teacher to student* and *student to student* interactions using the target language: *high, medium, or low*. Two FLES lessons, two 7th grade Spanish lessons, and three 8th grade Spanish lessons were observed. The findings were calculated using average numbers of interactions per grade level. An average of 75 interactions using the target language occurred in a FLES lesson. There was an average of 28 interactions using the target language occurred in 7th grade lessons, and 43 in 8th grade lessons. These data suggest that there are more interactions in a FLES classroom than in the middle school classes. FLES students interact with their teacher and peers almost three times more often than their 7th grade counterparts. The findings show that 8th grade students interact at high levels of language communication, whereas their 7th grade counterparts communicate at low levels of language acquisition. Seventh grade students tend to prefer active, physical interaction over verbal communication.

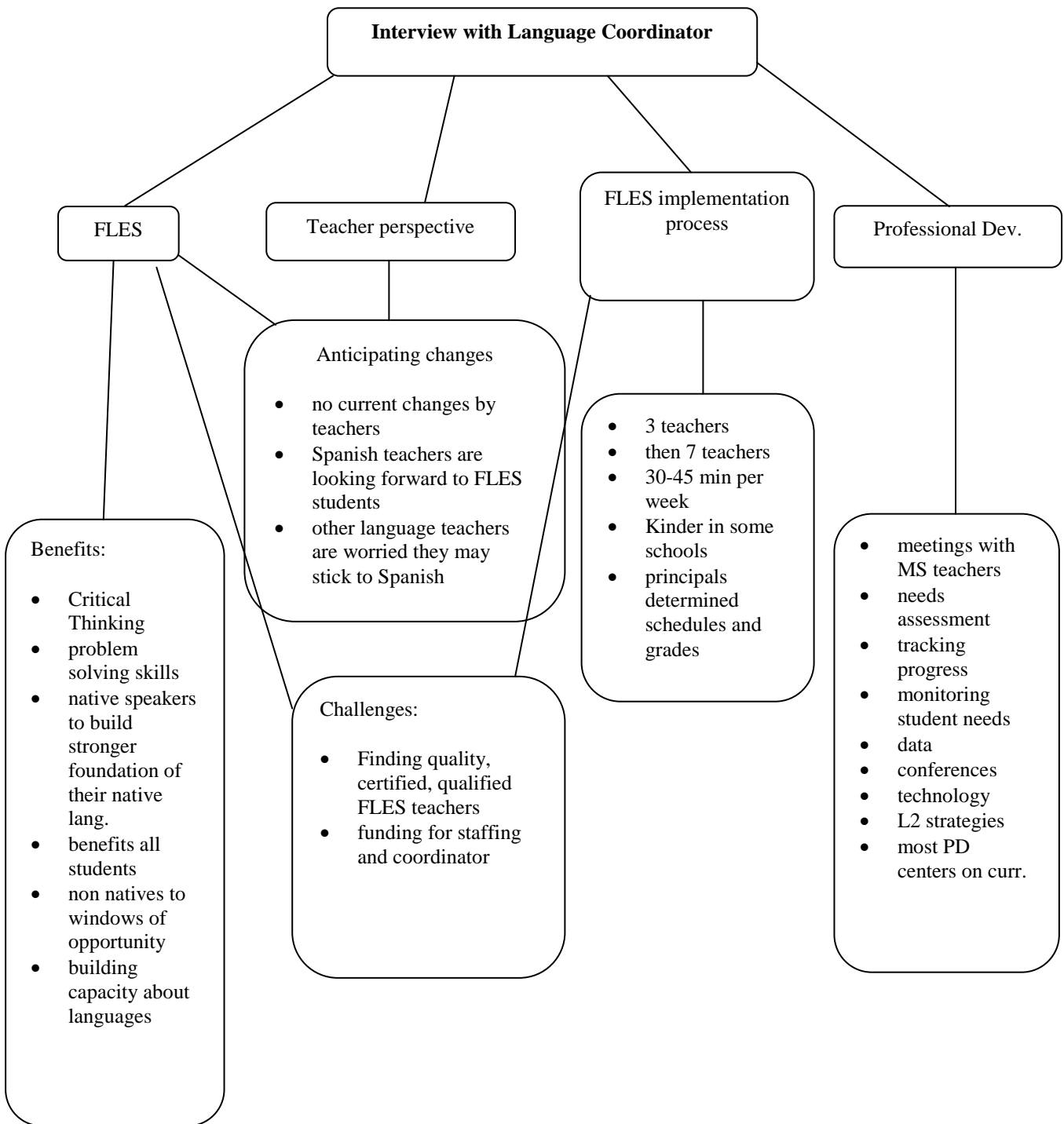
Table 4.4 Classroom Observations

Lesson by activities/ transitions (interactions represented by tallies)	Average Tallies of two FLES Lessons	Average Tallies of two 7th Grade Lessons	Average Tallies of three 8th Grade Lessons
High: Students are engaged in the lesson using the target language	29	1	20
Medium: Students respond in the target language using minimal language (words, short phrases)	12	5	14
Low: Students hear listen to the target language for comprehension, students respond through actions.	34	22	9
Mean interactions per lesson	75	28	43

Interview with Coordinator

The researcher interviewed the coordinator of the district's world language program. The interview was designed to triangulate the study by asking questions relating to the impact of the elementary school program on that district's secondary world language program. The interview was transcribed and shared with the interviewee to ensure accuracy. The language coordinator approved the transcription of the interview. The results of the interview were organized according to the study's research questions.

Table 4.5 Interview tree



Research Question #1: What are the middle school language teachers' perceptions of their students' language skills?

The administrator reported that middle school language teachers of Spanish approve of elementary Spanish being taught to all students in grades one through five, and in kindergarten in a few schools. The coordinator was asked about teachers' reports on their students' readiness for the middle school language program. Most teachers reported that their students showed little ability to connect their prior language experience with what was taught at the middle school. The administrator believes that this is because some students, depending on the elementary school they had attended, may not have been exposed to the FLES program, and that students with low state assessment program scores were provided with remedial reading and math instruction rather than the opportunity to participate in the 6th grade language program. Full implementation of the elementary language program will occur in the 2010-11 school year. According to the administrator, the middle school language teachers are "anticipating" that students will enter their classes with increased language readiness.

Research Question #2: How might the teachers' perceptions influence their lesson design and delivery?

The researcher asked questions relating to the middle school language teachers' perceptions of their students' language skills and how those perceptions may influence their lesson design and delivery. Have they made any adaptations to their instruction to meet the language needs of some of their students as they anticipate the arrival of more students with various language skills and experiences? The coordinator elaborated further on teachers commenting that they are "anticipating" the arrival of students who

have had experience in language at the elementary level. Teachers have not reported making changes to their current instructional design and delivery other than including more technology, understanding of national language standards, and providing the opportunity for some students to gain high school credit by passing the high school's level one exam. Differentiation currently occurs due to the number of native and non-native speakers in the class, as well as English language learners taking Spanish at the middle school.

Professional development has occurred in standards alignment, oral proficiency, technology, and progress monitoring. The administrator reported that specific changes to instruction will occur once students who have participated in the full implementation of the FLES program enter the middle school classes.

Review of Records

A review of records was conducted to identify any strands that would support the goals of the study. While reviewing the World Language Framework², the researcher has identified strategies noted during classroom observations. The framework describes the instruction as students working in groups and with partners asking and answering questions. The district's Scope and Sequence of the world language program provides it teachers with specific tasks aligned to national standards and state assessment standards. The scope and sequence demonstrates that students should be able to comprehend questions, but the use of some "simple and spontaneous language" is not required until the second year course at the high school. Following is a detailed description of each of

² The World Language Framework is based on the district's expectations to provided its students with a student-centered, communication-based program

the records reviewed and a table that organizes the information according to four themes identified by comparing the documents.

World Language Framework:

The framework provides the language teachers with clear goals on delivering student-centered, communication-based instruction. The framework communicates to the teachers of the study site that students should demonstrate level-appropriate proficiency in a world language. Students should become effective problem solvers, develop a broad perspective on global issues and make deductions and inferences about their native language through the target language. Examples of the student-centered, communication-based instruction activities provided in the framework are: paired communication activities, Total Physical Response (TPR) activities, simulation of authentic situations, written production, and project creation. Paired communication activities are those that require students to speak and listen to each other, opportunities to gain information. These paired activities can be short at first and then become more complex the more students know vocabulary and question words that aim to gain additional information. The TPR activities are the actions that students are taught which represent vocabulary and phrases. An example would be that in order to remember the word "shirt", a teacher would demonstrate to students the act of buttoning a shirt while using the word in the target language. Students would say the word and complete the action at the same time; this strategy will minimize the use of translation and maintain the lesson in the target language. Simulation of authentic situations allows students to mimic the situation being studied while maintaining communication in the target language. An example of a simulation would be the students acting out the conversation and situation of purchasing

groceries at the local market within the country and language being studied. Through simulations language teachers assist in the retention of vocabulary and communicative language needed to demonstrate gained proficiency in the language. The written production activity of a world language classroom would include students generating shopping lists, letters to family members, text messages, emails, essays, etc. Project creation provides students with opportunities to synthesize and evaluate written and oral production with the use of technology and authentic documents. The opportunities will provide students with examples of how they can use the language in a more complex manner in order to demonstrate their gained proficiency in the target language. The role of the teacher in a student-centered, communication-based classroom is identified as facilitator of instruction.

Scope and Sequence:

The Scope and Sequence reviewed by the researcher provides the teachers with world language - level expectations. This document is aligned to the national standards, Pennsylvania's assessment anchors are based on the skill categories of Listening, Speaking, Writing, reading, and culture. The scope and sequence is used by the teachers at each level to design activities and determine the skills students were introduced to prior to entering their courses. An example would be the grade or level a student should be expected to understand simple questions (FLES through level one), or that students are not expected to comprehend extended information regarding time and place until the level two program at the high school.

FLES Implementation Timeline:

The FLES timeline demonstrates when the program was first implemented and how the elementary schools chose to include this into their program. The first year of implementation in 2006 five of 13 elementary schools decided to include FLES into the elementary school experience. One school implemented FLES instruction from grades K through five, one school implemented Spanish instruction in grades one through five and three schools implemented Spanish instruction in grades three through five. Within the first year of FLES implementation, only a total of five schools had FLES instruction out of the thirteen elementary schools in the district. During the 2008-2009 school year all thirteen schools implemented Spanish instruction to students in grades one through five. Currently the students taking languages at the middle school have participated in at least one or two years of the FLES experience while they were in third, fourth and/or fifth grades.

Strategic Plan:

The district's strategic plan is a requirement by Chapter 4 education requirements. The plan describes the educational community realities, mission vision and shared values of the district. The plan consists of seven goals the district will work on throughout the 2009-2014 school years. Using the constant comparative method, the researcher identified themes throughout the strategic plan that were also found in documents such as the World Language Framework and the Scope and Sequence. The themes were comprised of lesson goals for real-world application, providing instruction in world languages to all students, use of technology, professional development goals, curriculum alignment and building relationships with students to get to know them as individuals.

Table 4.6 Review of Records (continued on pages 78 - 80)

Themes developed using Constant Comparative Method	World Language Framework	Scope and Sequence	FLES Implementation Timeline	2009-2014 Strategic Plan
<p>Elementary School Expectations - FLES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student-centered, communication-based instruction • Students demonstrate level - appropriate proficiency • Students become effective problem solvers • Students develop abroad perspective on global issues • Students make deductions and inferences about native language through target language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligns with national standards • K-6 expectations based on Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing • Curriculum aligned with PA eligible content for PSSA 	<p>Identifies the amount of instruction provided to each grade level and when the program would be fully implemented</p>	<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect lessons to real –world applications • Provide classes in world languages • Provide students with authentic learning opportunities through varied visual modalities • Support teacher in developing skill acquisition in unique needs of students • Use technology as a tool • Increase professional development opportunities • Align curriculum with standards

Table 4.6, continued				
Themes developed using Constant Comparative Method	World Language Framework	Scope and Sequence	FLES Implementation Timeline	2009-2014 Strategic Plan
Middle School Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student-centered, communication-based instruction • Students demonstrate level - appropriate proficiency • Students become effective problem solvers • Students develop abroad perspective on global issues <p>Students make deductions and inferences about native language through target language</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligns with national standards • 6-8 expectations based on Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing, and Culture • Curriculum aligned with PA eligible content for PSSA 	The Timeline provides the teachers with the understanding of how many schools provided students with an elementary language experience prior to them entering their course	<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect lessons to real –world applications • Provide classes in world languages • Provide students with authentic learning opportunities through varied visual modalities • Support teacher in developing skill acquisition in unique needs of students • Use technology as a tool • Increase professional development opportunities <p>Align curriculum with standards</p>

Table 4.6, continued				
Themes developed using Constant Comparative Method	World Language Framework	Scope and Sequence	FLES Implementation Timeline	2009-2014 Strategic Plan
High School Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student-centered, communication-based instruction • Students demonstrate level - appropriate proficiency • Students become effective problem solvers • Students develop abroad perspective on global issues <p>Students make deductions and inferences about native language through target language</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligns with national standards • HS expectations based on Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing, and Culture according to the level of the language student is enrolled (1-6). • Curriculum aligned with PA eligible content for PSSA 	The Timeline provides the HS teachers with information of when the students will arrive who have participated in the elementary school language experience.	<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect lessons to real –world applications • Provide classes in world languages • Provide students with authentic learning opportunities through varied visual modalities • Support teacher in developing skill acquisition in unique needs of students • Use technology as a tool • Increase professional development opportunities • Align curriculum with standards

Table 4.6, continued				
Themes developed using Constant Comparative Method	World Language Framework	Scope and Sequence	FLES Implementation Timeline	2009-2014 Strategic Plan
Strategies/ Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paired communication activities • Total Physical response activities • Simulation of authentic situations • Written production • Project creation 	Specific goals are identified by skill	The timeline provides the teachers with information on the possible language experiences the students have been exposed to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect lessons to real –world applications • Provide classes in world languages • Provide students with authentic learning opportunities through varied visual modalities
Role of the Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher acts as facilitator and guide 	Teacher as the designer of the instruction	Teacher is informed of the exposure students may have had to second language learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support teacher in developing skill acquisition in unique needs of students • Use technology as a tool • Increase professional development opportunities • Align curriculum with standards

Summary

This study explores how five middle school language teachers at three middle schools design and deliver their instruction according to the skills their students have when they enter their classrooms. The teachers formed their perceptions of the skills their students acquired while participating in the language programs from the grades and levels prior to the 7th and 8th grade program.

Questionnaire results reveal that the teachers who participated in the study have less than ten years of experience teaching a world language. It also reveals that students are willing to participate in class when the teacher provides opportunities for question and answer activities as well as small group activities. These strategies were also found in the lessons observed at the elementary school. Students at the middle school were reluctant to participate in class presentations and were hesitant to use the target language. The teachers observed that students entering their classrooms had acquired few language skills at the elementary level. Therefore, some-teachers spent up to two months reviewing concepts from the previous course prior to delivering the prescribed curriculum. The teachers also revealed that they had not had much communication with teachers from the previous level. Such communication would have enabled them to better understand the curriculum and language skills acquired by the students who had participated in FLES.

In a community where 60% of the population is Latino, only one class provided instruction in a bilingual setting. The researcher identified opportunities that teachers

may have missed in designing and delivering instruction that would benefit all students with prior language experiences.

Chapter five will provide a discussion of the findings along with their relationship to theory and the study's limitations. It will also offer recommendations for the district.

CHAPTER 5

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

In this final chapter, I provide a summary of the study, conclusions, and recommendations for future study.

The purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions that middle school language teachers have of their students' language skills and how those perceptions might influence their lesson design and delivery. The study focused on five teachers from one district's middle school language program. The five teachers teach Spanish at three of the district's middle schools. The teachers completed a questionnaire with fixed-choice questions and open-ended questions. Observations were conducted of their lessons and of the FLES program. An interview was conducted with the coordinator of the world language program in order to have a clear understanding of how the program was developed and delivered. A review of records was also conducted to support the study.

Summary

- The teachers begin the academic year reviewing material from the previous course for an average of four weeks prior to beginning teaching the prescribed curriculum.
- Most teachers indicated that they do not collaborate with the teachers who teach the previous level of the program.

- These data show that the middle school language teachers in this study do not believe that their students are ready for the course in which they are currently enrolled.
- In comparing the results of the teacher questionnaire, the researcher concluded that 40% of students were *willing* to present on a topic, while all students were *willing* or *somewhat willing* to ask and answer questions.
- Students were *able* or *somewhat able* to ask and answer questions in the target language for an average of 2-3 minutes.
- Classroom observations demonstrate that instruction at the elementary level engaged students and teachers in the target language almost three times as often as their 7th grade counterparts.
- Most of the professional development the teachers have participated in were meetings, courses and seminars.

Conclusions

The discussion begins with an overview of the findings that support early language learning that will enable students of this district to acquire skills needed for future success. Highly qualified teachers teach the program, and staff development opportunities were provided for teachers throughout the year. Understanding the global connections made through these lessons also provides the district's students with experiences through cultural connections and simulations as they achieve the goal of global awareness.

Research Question 1: What are the teacher's perceptions of their students' second language skills?

The teacher questionnaire was collected and analyzed. The teachers began the academic year reviewing material from the previous course for an average of four weeks prior to beginning teaching the prescribed curriculum. One teacher spends up to two months reviewing concepts taught in the previous course (Appendix H). This information is supported by reports from four of the five teachers who indicated that they do not collaborate with the teachers who teach the previous level of the program (Appendix I). In the comment section of the questionnaire, one teacher reported that the elementary program does not relate to the teaching delivered at the middle school. These data show that the middle school language teachers in this study do not believe that their students are ready for the course in which they are currently enrolled.

Research Question 2: How might the language teachers' perceptions of their students' language skills influence their lesson design and delivery?

The teachers' perceptions of their students' language skills compel most of the teachers to spend more time than necessary reviewing previous concepts. Teachers reported that once they began the instruction of the prescribed curriculum, students enjoyed and were successful with question and answer activities. The study identified strategies used to encourage second language learners as they acquire communicative skills. Students at the study site were *willing* and *able* to ask and answer questions with their peers. They enjoyed and preferred paired or small group language activities over presentations on curriculum topics.

In comparing the results of the questionnaire, the researcher concluded that 40% of students were *willing* to present on a topic, while all students were *willing* or *somewhat willing* to ask and answer questions. In answering the questionnaire question of how much time students were able to converse with their peers using the target language, the teachers reported that their students were *able* or *somewhat able* to ask and answer questions in the target language for an average of 2-3 minutes. The data from the classroom observations demonstrates that instruction at the elementary level engaged students and teachers in the target language almost three times as often as their 7th grade counterparts. Students in the elementary school language program had been engaged in lessons using the language rather than completing activities relating to the construction of the language. The interactions increased once they entered the 8th grade program.

Relationship of Results to Theory

The goal of the study was to identify theory that would be developed through the research process. Theory that emerged during the study was the perception of the teachers that real language learning begins at the secondary school level and that FLES programs do not provide the skills needed for success in the middle school. According to the information acquired and provided by the subjects in this study, most believe that in order to begin delivering their prescribed curriculum, they needed to spend a few weeks reviewing the concepts from the previous course for the students to participate and understand the concepts taught in the current course. Many programs that begin language instruction at the elementary school level do not change the secondary school programs to accommodate the knowledge and skill acquired in the FLES program. Changing the secondary school language teachers' understanding of these skills will address the

resistance of teachers who believe they must spend most of the first two months of instruction reviewing. Resistance theory in education suggests that teachers need to go beyond what they have been doing for years and to venture into new strategies. Failure to do so can result in the obsolescence of their teaching skills and strategies (Deal, 1999; Evans, 2001; Fullan, 2007).

Developing activities in the classroom that allow students to ask and answer questions in pairs and groups provides students with the opportunities to experience authentic language tasks that will afford them the confidence to communicate with people of other cultures thereby addressing the learning opportunities needed to acquire 21st century language skills and understanding of other cultures. Language courses that teach **about** the language without learning how to communicate **in** the language, may help a student understand how to read a menu or a map, but will not provide them with the experiences to communicate by making and correcting mistakes in the learning environment of the classroom. The skills acquired through Question & Answer activities allow the student to communicate effectively and to acquire the pronunciation needed for them to be understood.

Recommendations

The researcher examined a middle school language program through the participation of language teachers from three middle schools in an urban setting. The findings indicate that teachers in the program can improve the delivery of their instruction by implementing the following three strategies identified as necessary for the continued growth of the program and for students' acquisition of the language skills needed in the 21st century.

Three themes derived from the findings and results of this study are presented here: 1) collaborating with the teachers; 2) using question and answer techniques and; 3) minimizing the amount of time used for review. The questionnaire, open-ended questions, observations and the administrator interview informed this discussion.

It is evident that the middle school teachers developed meaningful activities to meet their lesson objectives. Lessons included the use of authentic tests, group activities, and the use of technology. Although the lessons were engaging and meaningful, the teachers seemed to be missing opportunities to encourage students to use language for communication. The teachers are “anticipating” the arrival of students from the elementary language program. Teachers will change their instructional design and delivery according to what these students bring to the new program. The researcher revealed that the foundation needed for learning a second language already exists in their classes. The foundation exists in the language skills students already exhibit. The populations currently enrolled in the middle school program consist of 60 % Latinos, some native Spanish speakers, students who have some exposure to the language through the implementation of the FLES program, and non-native students who have not participated in the FLES program. This population makes up a very diverse yet rich learning environment for all students in the class. Capitalizing on these strengths and channeling the various language skills through differentiation will provide the teacher and the program with the opportunities to enhance the district’s language program well before the students who participate in the complete FLES experience arrive at the middle school. Rather than waiting five years for the teachers to change their instruction,

making adaptations now will provide a smoother transition for the students and teachers of the district.

1) Collaboration with the teachers teaching the program at the elementary school

Based on the findings the researcher recommends that collaboration between teachers in the elementary and the middle school programs will help middle school language teachers better understand how the elementary school teachers deliver their instruction and how to access skills through similar strategies. Such collaboration will ensure that students at the middle school level begin their instruction by being asked to demonstrate skills which they have already been exposed to. Collaboration will also provide the middle school language teachers with a clear understanding of what the students can do with the language. The teachers can then share the communicative strategies used to demonstrate these skills. The elementary school teachers have developed pre- and post-tests to determine how much the students have learned throughout the year. Although the middle school provides the students with an opportunity to take the high school level one exam in order to acquire high school credit for the courses taught at the middle school, it would be beneficial to the students and teachers if they were also provided with information from the pos-test at the elementary schools as well. Also, developing a pre-test will reduce or eliminate the four to eight weeks of review that occurs at the beginning of the year at the middle school and in turn will provide the teacher with more time to deliver the prescribed curriculum.

Along with the collaboration between teachers from the elementary school language program and the middle school language program, the following activities should be considered:

- Middle school language teachers all visit a FLES lesson in order to identify strategies and techniques that provide students with the opportunity to use the target language in meaningful communication along with strategies that acknowledge the skills acquired and practiced in the elementary language program.
- Develop a database of lessons and activities that allow students to recall and practice the language skills acquired in the FLES program. This database can be shared with all teachers who need to better understand the types of learning experiences provided in the FLES program.
- Collaboration between the program coordinator and the elementary and middle school principals to ensure there is a common understanding of the expectations for teachers teaching a second language across the schools and levels. Using the *Observation Checklist for Administrators* developed by Greg Duncan and Ann Tollefson provides administrators who do not speak the language being observed with clear observable characteristics of a language classroom.
- Revisit the World Language Framework and the district's Scope and Sequence with the teachers because there is a contrast in what is expected with what was observed. The framework identifies the teacher as facilitator and the Scope and Sequence provides the teacher with the need for skill articulation across levels.

2) Using Q & A as a means to design and deliver instruction

Using question and answer techniques will provide the students with the opportunity to participate in class using the language in a non-threatening way, while

building communicative language skills and addressing the various levels of language acquisition among heritage and non-heritage speakers. Designing lessons where students ask and answer questions with the teacher and their peers will provide the students with the skill practice needed for communicative competence in the target language as referenced in communication of ACTFL standards (p. 41). Using questions in designing curriculum and lessons is supported by Backward Design, asking the big questions by keeping in mind the type of assessment that will be administered at the end and developing units and lessons based upon this approach. ACTFL states that students “learn by doing, by trying out language” (p. 41).

Based on the fact that students are willing and able to ask and answer questions in the target language, the questionnaire asked about the length of time students converse in the target language (Appendix G). The average time was two to three minutes. One teacher commented that some students are heritage speakers while another mentioned that it depended on the activity because some students are a bit more reluctant to speak in front of the class. With this additional information, the teacher responses indicated that the students would be able to regularly participate in question and answer situations in pairs rather than in front of the class. Differentiating the groups by self-selected partners and teacher-selected partners will allow heritage speakers and non-heritage speakers to converse in a comfortable environment free from feelings of being watched.

Implementing question and answer activities will provide students with communicative experiences needed for language development and will enable students to demonstrate their knowledge of the language and to participate fully in cultural simulations directed toward understanding the culture of the language being taught. By

clearly understanding the district's program and its articulation, and by providing meaningful activities within that program, language teachers can determine where they are on the language-learning continuum. They can learn strategies for the creation of lessons and instruction that will build upon the skills that their students bring to their classrooms.

3) Minimize the amount of time used for review at the beginning of the year

Teachers should limit the amount of time they spend on reviewing concepts from the previous courses by collaborating with the teachers of those courses. Findings demonstrated that many of the teachers spend an average of four weeks reviewing the previous curriculum prior to introducing the prescribed curriculum. It is recommended that teachers minimize the time spent reviewing at the beginning of the year; time that would be better spent efficiently developing activities that build language skills and effectively cover the prescribed curriculum. Developing opportunities to administer a pre-test such as the one used in the elementary school will give the teacher a clear picture of the skills the students currently acquire. Building upon the language skills obtained prior to the course they are enrolled in will provide students and the teacher with a more meaningful classroom experience.

Implications for Further Research

The results of the study have demonstrated that the students enrolled in this school system and who participate in the district's language program have skills that enable them to engage in more rigorous activities. Teachers have been exposed to various professional development activities, such as, differentiated instruction, communicative activities in the language classroom, understanding the ACTFL

standards, and the use of technology in the world language classroom. Using these strategies along with the recommendations provided will enhance their teaching and will provide students with a stronger, more meaningful experience.

Future research can be conducted as a longitudinal qualitative study using the tools that currently exists in the district such as the pre- and post- FLES assessments and the level one final exam to track the impact of the changes in acquiring a second language within the district's program.

Future research can be conducted to answer the following question: How might living or studying abroad influence the language teachers' lesson design and delivery? Answering this question can enhance the current study by identifying if there is an impact on the language teachers' teaching due to their experiences abroad.

Lipton (2004) and Curtain & Dalhberg (2008) call for further research in regards to the impact of learning a second language at an early age. Continued interest among language teachers and researchers will provide schools with the necessary evidence to ensure language programs in the elementary schools continue to grow rather than decline during economic downfalls in the country.

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APPENDIX A



Educational Leadership
 1301 Cecil B. Moore Avenue
 2nd Floor Ritter Hall 003-00
 Philadelphia, PA 19122

phone 215-204-8061
 fax 215-204-2743

Consent Form

TITLE: ACQUIRING 21ST CENTURY LANGUAGE SKILLS: A CASE STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENTS' SECOND LANGUAGE SKILLS ON A WORLD LANGUAGE PROGRAM

Principal Investigator: Vivian W. Ikpa, PhD, Associate Professor,
 Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, 215-204-6169

Student Investigator: Oscar Torres, Jr., M.Ed., Doctoral Student
 Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, 484-798-4036

We are currently engaged in a study on acquiring 21st century language skills in the middle school. As a middle school language teacher, you are invited to participate in this study. To help us gain further insight into this area we will ask you to complete an on-line survey via surveymonkey.com that will take about 15 minutes to complete and invite us into your classroom to observe a lesson.

The data you will provide will be recorded anonymously and your participation and anything you say during the session will be held in the strictest confidence.

We welcome questions about the study at any time. Your participation in this study is on voluntary basis, and you may refuse to participate at any time without consequence or prejudice.

Questions about my rights as a research subject may be directed to Mr. Richard Throm, Office of the Vice President for Research, Institutional Review Board, Temple University, 3400 N. Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA, 19140, (215) 707-8757.

Singing your name below indicates that you have read and understand the contents of this Consent Form and that you agree to take part in this study.

 Participant's Signature

 Date

 Student Investigator's Signature

 Date

Initials _____ Date _____

APPENDIX B



Educational Leadership
 1301 Cecil B. Moore Avenue
 2nd Floor Ritter Hall 003-00
 Philadelphia, PA 19122

phone 215-204-8061
 fax 215-204-2743

Permission to Audiotape

TITLE: ACQUIRING 21ST CENTURY LANGUAGE SKILLS: A CASE STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENTS' SECOND LANGUAGE SKILLS ON A WORLD LANGUAGE PROGRAM

**Principal Investigator: Vivian W. Ikpa, PhD, Associate Professor,
 Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, 215-204-6169**

**Student Investigator: Oscar Torres, Jr., M.Ed., Doctoral Student
 Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, 484-798-4036**

Subject: _____ Date: _____
 Log#: _____

I give Oscar Torres permission to audiotape me. This audiotape will be used only for the following purpose:

Research

This audio tape will be used as a part of a dissertation research study at Temple University. I have already given consent for my participation in the research study. At no time will my name be used.

Will I be audio taped?

I agree to be audio taped during the time period:

May -June, 2010

The data will be stored for three years after the project is completed. If it is to be stored longer additional approval must be sought.

Initials _____ Date _____



Educational Leadership
 1301 Cecil B. Moore Avenue
 2nd Floor Ritter Hall 003-00
 Philadelphia, PA 19122

phone 215-204-8061
 fax 215-204-2743

Permission to Audiotape

What if I change my mind?

I understand that I can withdraw my permission at any time. Upon request, the audiotape will no longer be used. This will not affect my relationship with Temple University, Oscar Torres, Jr. or his place of work in any way.

Other

I understand that I will not be paid for being audio taped.

For further information

If I want information about the audiotape, or if I have questions or concerns at any time, I can contact:

Principal Investigator: Vivian W. Ikpa, PhD, Associate Professor,
 Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, 215-204-6169

Student Investigator: Oscar Torres, Jr., M.Ed., Doctoral Student
 Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, 484-798-4036

TITLE: ACQUIRING 21ST CENTURY LANGUAGE SKILLS: A CASE STUDY ON
 THE IMPACT OF TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENTS' SECOND
 LANGUAGE SKILLS ON A WORLD LANGUAGE PROGRAM

Questions about my rights as a research subject may be directed to
 Mr. Richard Throm, Office of the Vice President for Research, 3400 North
 Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA 19140, (215) 707-8757.

Please print

Subject's Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Subject's Signature: _____ Initials _____ Date _____

APPENDIX C

Protocol for Interview

Thank you very much for allowing me to interview you for my dissertation research study. I very much appreciate you agreeing to be interviewed and for the time you are giving me. I have already explained to you the confidentiality safeguards and you have signed the consent form. Do you have any questions at this time?

This is a research project that fulfills requirements for my doctorate at Temple University. My focus is on the impact of Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES) programs on middle school language programs. I am particularly interested in how teachers feel about elementary language programs and how they see themselves adapting to the changes they will have to make in order to acknowledge the second language skills that students have acquired prior to entering the middle school.

1. Before we begin, I have told you a little bit about my research project. Do you have any questions at this point?
2. Could you give me a step-by-step chronology of how and why you decided to become a teacher? Perhaps you could begin by telling me about yourself, your career, and your education up to now, your background, and anything that you think would be helpful in understanding you (age, education, family, etc.).
3. Was there a person or event that influenced your decision to become a language teacher?
4. What are your thoughts about the World Language program in your district?
5. What are your thoughts about the FLES program in the district?
6. What benefits do you see FLES having on the students of this community?

7. Do you believe the students who participate in the FLES experience will experience obstacles to their learning as they transition from the elementary school program to the secondary school program? If so, how?
8. Do you believe the program will influence the high school? If so, how?
9. Do you believe the FLES program influences your teaching? If so, how?
10. What characteristics do you want to see in the students entering the program you teach?
11. Do you anticipate any challenges as the students enter your classes?
12. What else do you think is important for me to know about how the FLES program impacts the high school and your teaching?

APPENDIX D
Observation of the Lesson

This observation format is developed to identify the language skill level a teacher is requesting of the students in the class throughout the lesson.

Teacher/Subject _____ Course _____ Date _____

Lesson by activities/ transitions (interactions represented by tallies)	Introduction											Closure
High: Students are engaged in the lesson using the target language												
Medium: Students respond in the target language using minimal language (words, short phrases)												
Low: Students hear the target language for comprehension, students respond through actions.												

APPENDIX E

Acquiring 21st Century Language Skills

1. The language teacher's perspective

The goal of this project is to capture the language teacher's voice and perceptions as they plan and deliver instruction for today's language learners. How the teacher's understanding of their students' skills impact their lessons and ultimately the program.

You will be asked to answer a series of questions. The first few questions will be demographic questions relating to your teaching assignment. You will then be asked to complete a series of fixed choice questions and four open-ended questions. This questionnaire may take about 15 minutes to complete.

Feel free to add a comment to any of the questions if you feel you need to clarify your answer.

2. Teaching Assignment

Please enter information regarding your current teaching assignment.

1. What grade levels do you teach?

- Elementary School (Grades K-5)
- Middle School (Grades 6-8)
- High School (Grades 9-12)

Comment

2. Indicate the Language(s) you teach. (Choose all that apply)

- Arabic
- Chinese
- French
- German
- Italian
- Russian
- Spanish
- other

Comment

Acquiring 21st Century Language Skills

3. Please select the number of years you have been teaching a world Language.

- Less than 3 years
- 3-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years
- 21+ years

Comment

3. Research Questions

Please take a few minutes to complete these research questions. Feel free to add a comment if you wish to clarify or extend your answer.

1. Please rate how willing your students are to participate in class using the target language.

	Reluctant	Somewhat Reluctant	Somewhat Willing	Willing	Eager
A. Participate in class using the target language	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
B. Present on a topic using the target language	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
C. Ask questions using the target language	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
D. Answer questions using the target language in complete thoughts/sentences	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
E. Students work in groups using the target language	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comment

Acquiring 21st Century Language Skills

2. Please rate the ability of your students in completing the following tasks.

	Unable	Somewhat Able	Able	N/A
A. Participate in class using the target language	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
B. Present on a topic using the target language	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
C. Ask questions using the target language	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
D. Answer questions using the target language in complete thoughts/sentences	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
E. Students work in groups using the target language	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comment:

3. Please select how much time your students are able to converse with their peers using the target language.

- Up to 30 seconds
- 30-60 seconds
- 1-2 minutes
- 3-4 minutes
- 5 or more minutes

Comment:

4. Students entered my course with the appropriate prior knowledge needed for success.

- Yes
- No
- N/A

Comment:

Acquiring 21st Century Language Skills

5. How much time do you spend reviewing with your students concepts from the previous course?

- No time at all
- 1 week
- 2-3 weeks
- 4-5 weeks
- 6+ weeks

Comment

6. Do you collaborate with the teacher from the previous level?

- Yes
- No
- N/A

Comment

7. Do you collaborate with the teacher(s) teaching the same course(s) you teach?

- Yes
- No
- N/A

Comment

Acquiring 21st Century Language Skills

8. Do you collaborate with the teacher receiving your students the following year?

- Yes
 No
 N/A

Comment

9. Do you believe early language learning is essential in acquiring 21st century language skills?

- Yes
 No
 N/A

Comment

10. Have you participated in staff development activities relating to early language learning? If so, please select all that apply.

- No
 Meetings
 Workshops
 Seminars
 Webinars
 Conferences
 Courses

Other

Acquiring 21st Century Language Skills

11. Please identify second language acquisition staff development opportunities you have participated in within the past ten years

- Meetings
- Workshops
- Seminars
- Webinars
- Conferences
- Courses
- None
- N/A

Comment

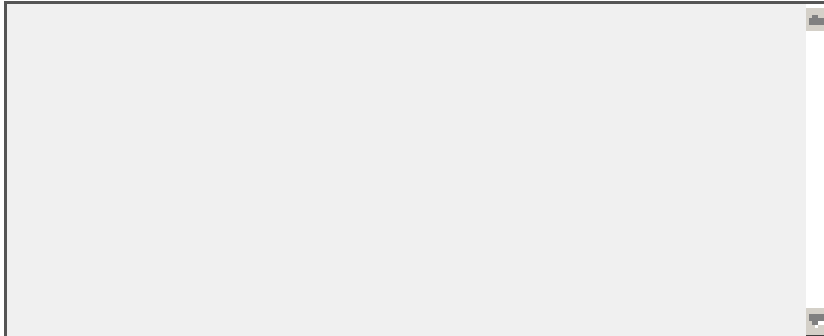
4. Open-ended Questions

Please answer the following questions with as much detail as possible.

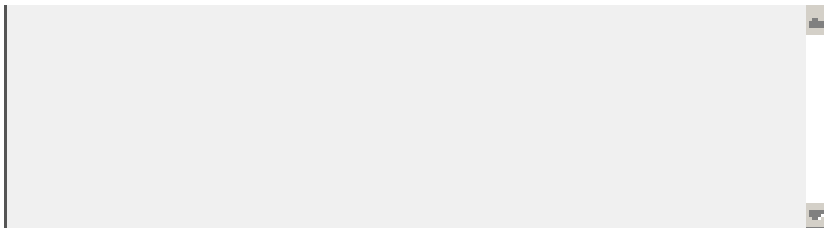
1. Has your lesson design changed in the past five to ten years? If so, how and why?

Acquiring 21st Century Language Skills

2. Has your instruction changed due to your students participation in the FLES Program? If so, how and why?

A large, empty rectangular text input area with a light gray background and a thin black border. It is intended for the respondent to provide a detailed answer to question 2.

3. Do you differentiate your instruction according to your students' prior experience with the FLES program? If so, how and why?

A large, empty rectangular text input area with a light gray background and a thin black border. It is intended for the respondent to provide a detailed answer to question 3.

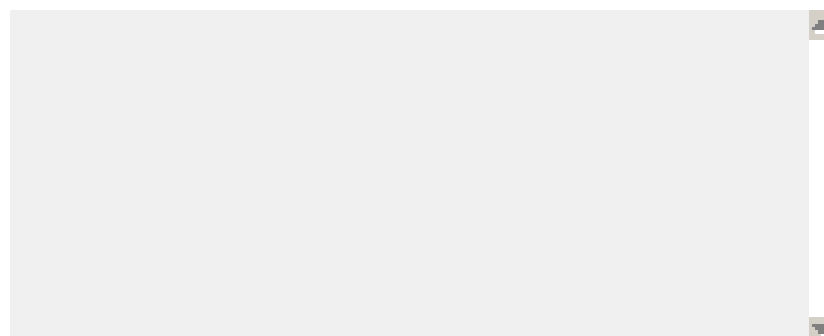
4. Do you believe your current students are **MORE READY**, **LESS READY** or **AS READY** for the 21st Century as the students you taught 5-10 years ago? How and Why?

More Ready

Less Ready

As Ready

How and Why?

A large, empty rectangular text input area with a light gray background and a thin black border. It is intended for the respondent to provide a detailed answer to question 4, specifically addressing the 'How and Why?' part.

Appendix F

Table 6.1

Question #1: What grade levels do you teach?

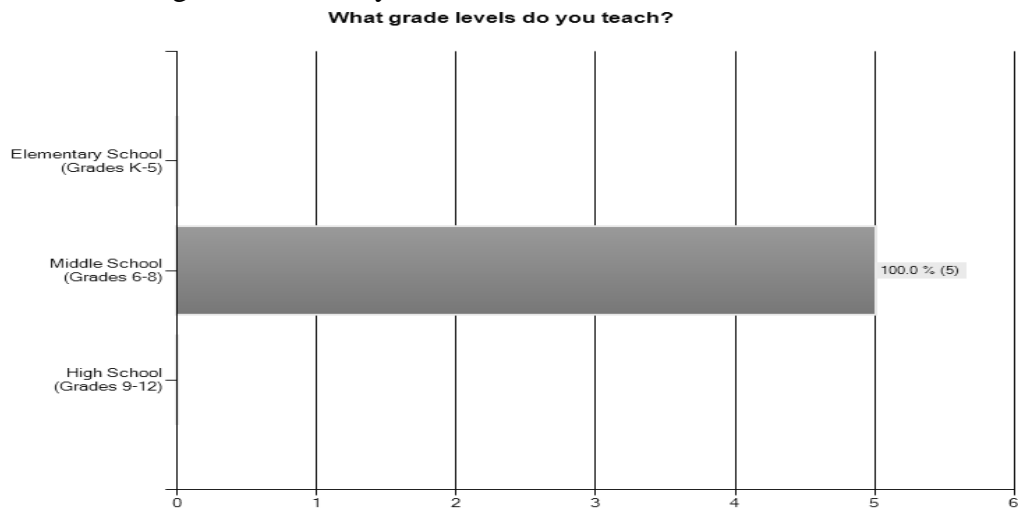
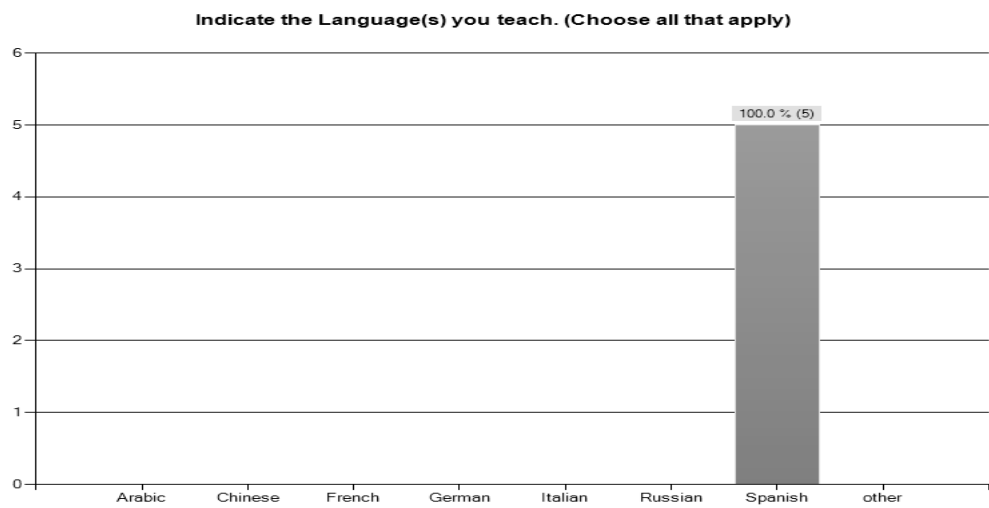


Table 6.2

Question #2: Indicate the language(s) you teach. (Choose all that apply)



Appendix G

Table 6.3

Question #3: Please select the number of years you have been teaching a world language.

Please select the number of years you have been teaching a world Language.

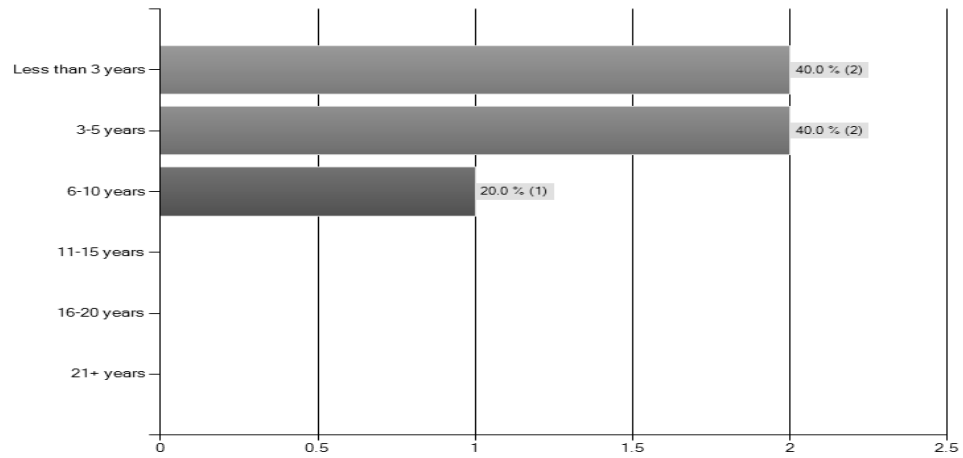
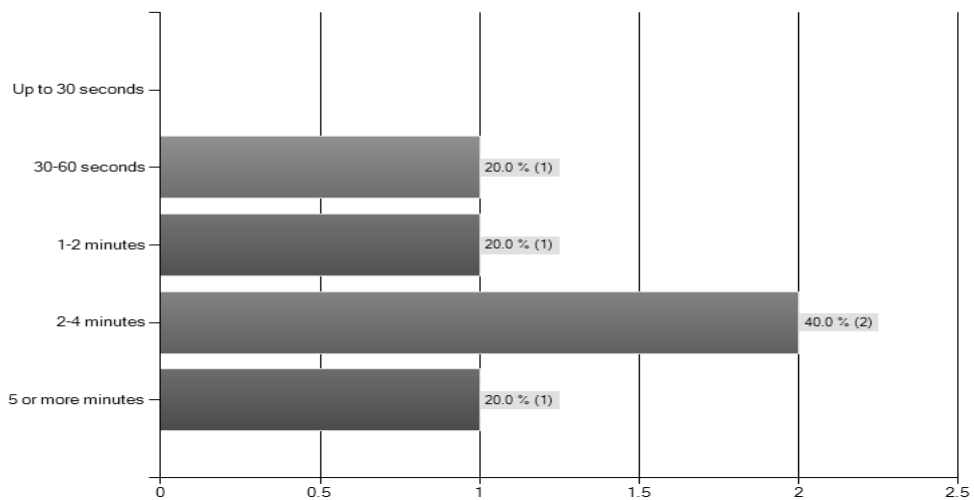


Table 6.4

Please select how much time your students are able to converse with their peers using the target language.



Appendix H

Table 6.5

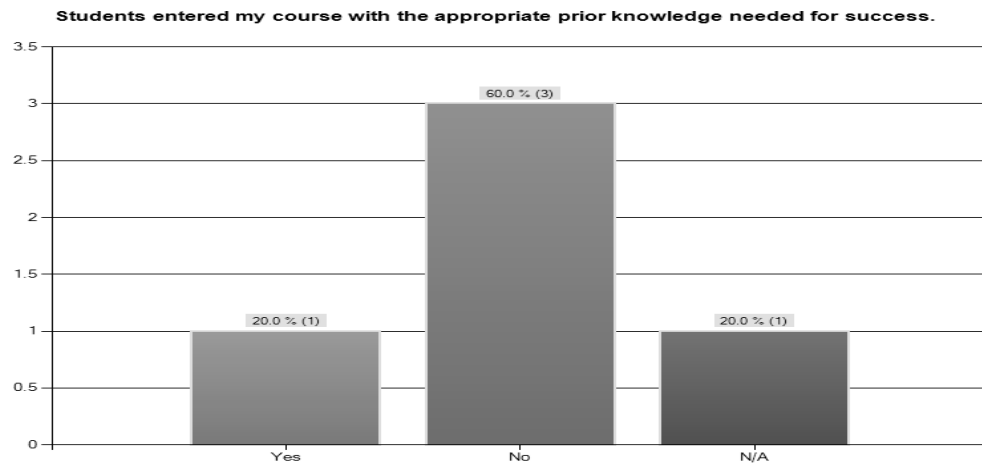
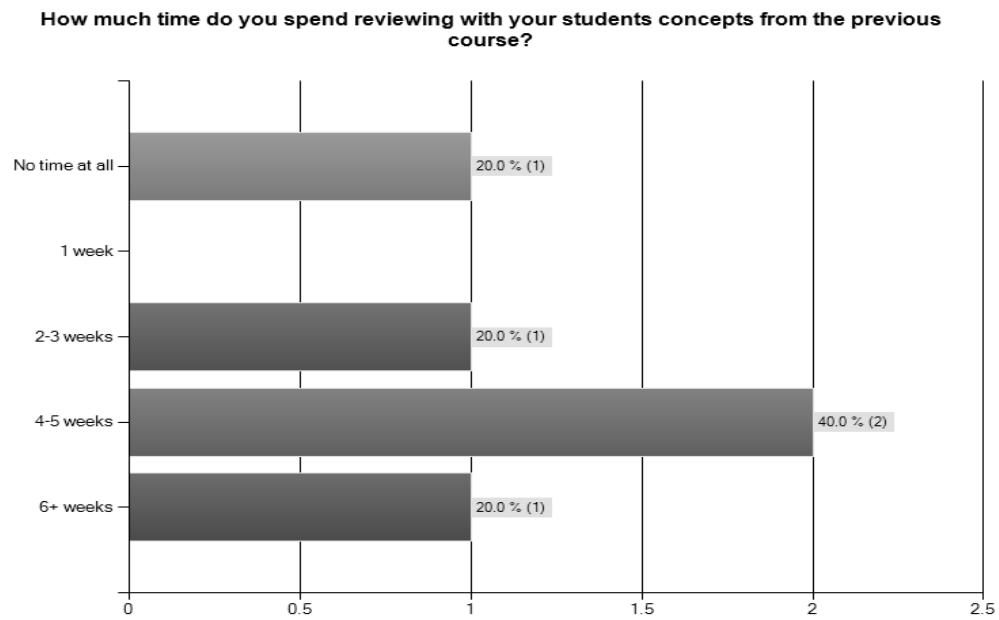


Table 6.6



Appendix I

Table 6.7

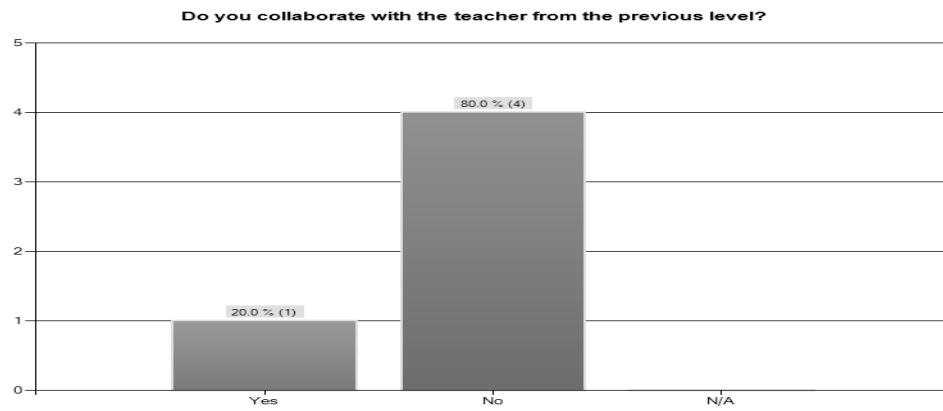
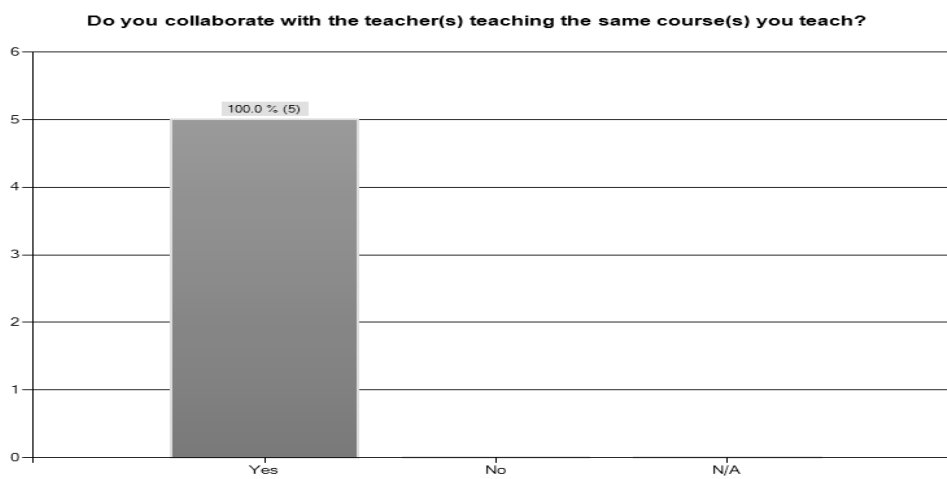


Table 6.8



Appendix J

Table 6.9

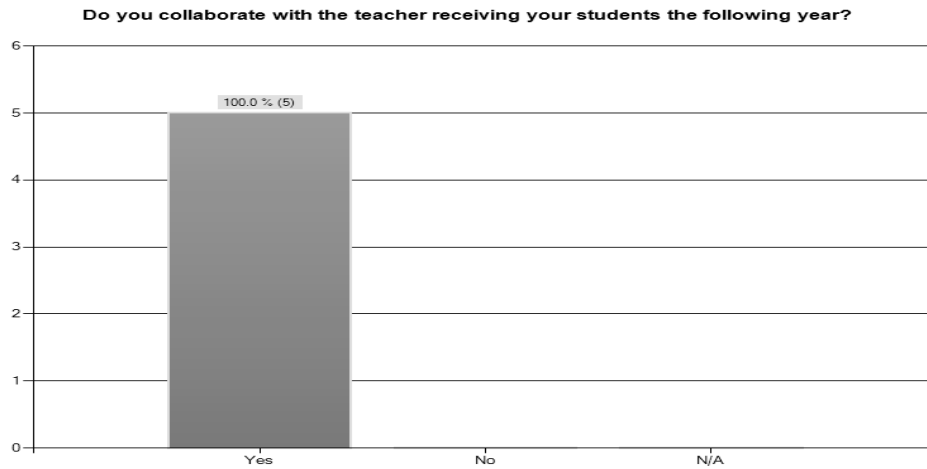
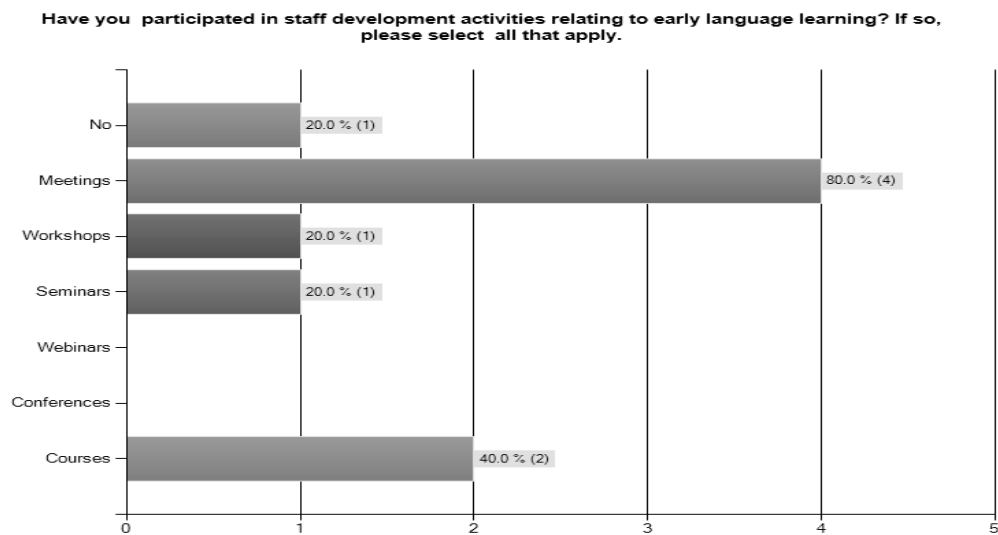


Table 6.10



Appendix K

Table 6.11

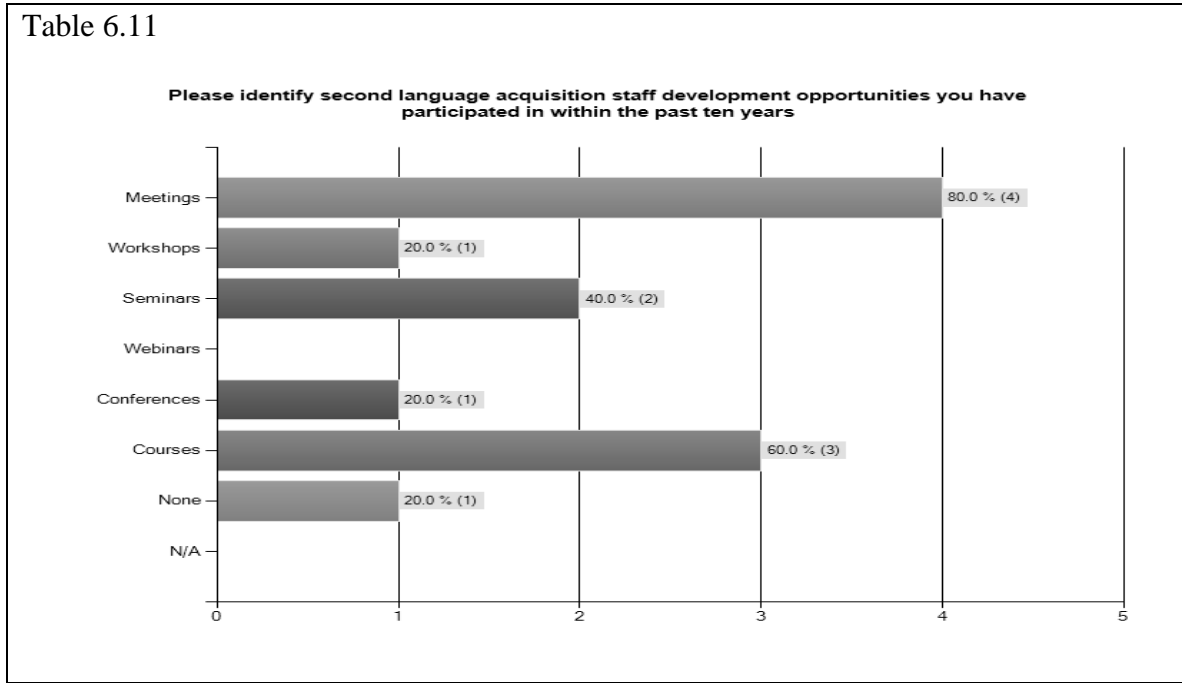
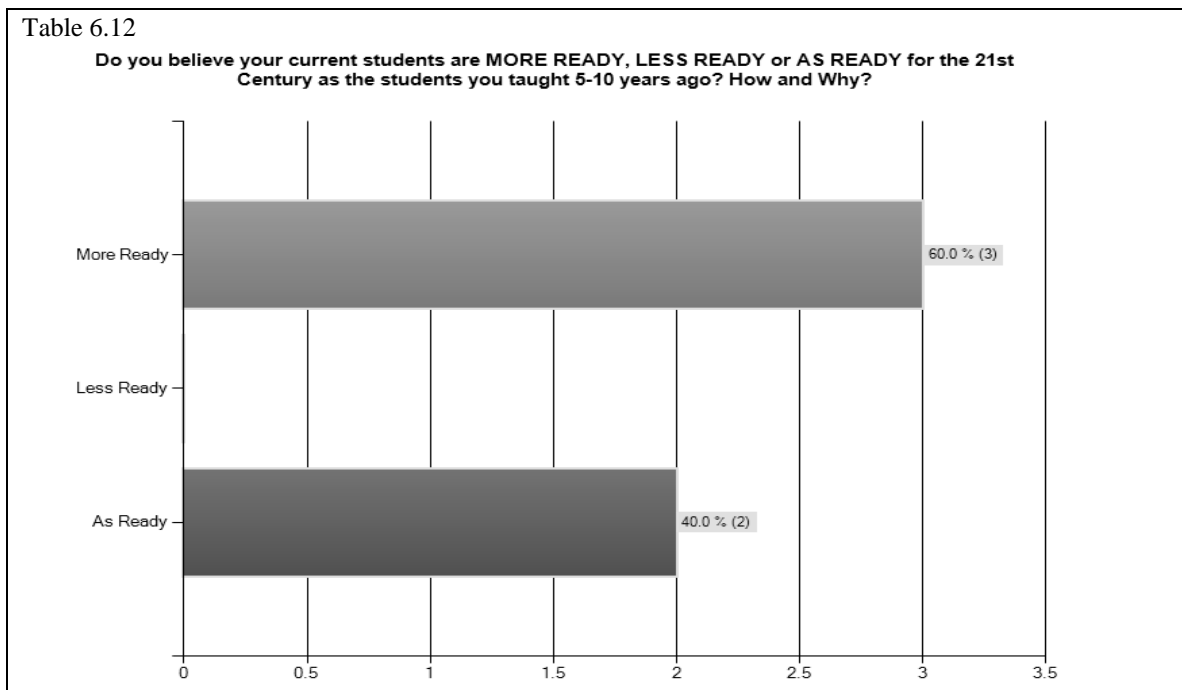


Table 6.12



Appendix L

Coded Responses

	Subject #1	Subject #2	Subject #3	Subject #4	Subject #5
AT- Use of Authentic Text					1-5-31 short story, play
Backward design		1-2-5 1-2-7 assessments		1-4-19	
C- communicative	4-1-3 4-1-5			1-4-16	
DI- Differentiated Instruction	1-1-1 3-1-1 prior knowledge	3-2-3 more work 3-2-4 more difficult	3-3-7 lang ability 3-3-7 challenged more	3-4-14 native /non native	
FLES	3-1-1 pos	2-2-2 neg	3-3-10 not considered	3-4-12 not considered	2-5-6 neg 2-5-11 start from scratch
GA- Group Activities	4-1-2				
GR- Grammar		4-2-6		1-4-19	1-5-26 1-5-30 1-5-31 1-5-33
HO- Hands on activities	1-1-4			1-4-16	
NS- Native Speaker			3-3-7 challenged more	3-4-14 native /non native	1-5-25 1-5-32
PD - Professional Development				1-4-17	
TE- Technology			4-3-10	1-4-21 4-4-16 4-4-17	
TL- Use of Target Language			1-3-10 1-3-12		1-5-37
other	1-1-3 Shorten activities	3-2-5 exploratory in higher sections 3-2-6 lower classes did not have exp	1-3-9 student express ideas 4-3-13 adv lang skills 4-3-14 real world		1-5-33 literacy 1-5-34 PSSA content

Appendix M

#1 Has your lesson design changed in the past five to ten years, if so, how and why?	
Subject	Response
1	Yes! I have learned to modify and differentiate my instruction based on the group of students I have in the class. I have also learned to shorten the activities to about 10-12 minutes as well as provide hands on activities that will encourage students to engage in tasks.
2	I implement backward design more frequently now than I did 5 years ago. Prior to teaching new material, I now frequently develop assessments.
3	Lesson design has not changed significantly. My focus has always been on honing receptive skills and striving to get students to express themselves and their ideas in the target language. The primary focus has always been to create a safe environment where students are comfortable enough to make mistakes as they try to communicate in Spanish.
4	Well, I have only been teaching a short time, but within the year itself it has changed drastically. In the beginning, I taught lecture style with some communicative and hands-on activities. As I began taking advanced course work and attended conferences, I found new ideas that could help me improve. Now I have a top-down approach (seeing vocabulary and grammar in context) and working backward toward the rules. It forces them to inherently acquire the language instead of drill and kill. I have also learned how to incorporate more technology into the classroom.
5	My lesson design has changed within the past five years because I went from teaching a mixture of native and non-native Spanish speakers to teaching only native speakers. I design my lesson to try to focus on the grammar portion and WHY certain things in the language are the way they are. Students have a base of vocabulary and know what “sounds right”, but do not know parts of speech or don’t know the rules behind what makes it sound right. Also, aside from just studying grammar I try to design my instruction where we study grammar in context of a short story or play. Many of my native-speaker students speak the language at home but cannot read or write it. We focus on literacy and then incorporate grammar within that context. Also, due to the push from the district to incorporate PSSA eligible content into the lessons, I sometimes feel as though I am teaching a Communication Arts class in Spanish. We identify similes, metaphors, imagery, etc. all in the target language.

Appendix N

#2 Has your instruction changed due to your students participating in the FLES program, if so, how and why?	
Subject	Responses
1	I'm not sure!
2	No, FLES has not impacted my instruction.
3	No.
4	No
5	No, I haven't really seen any students that have fully participated in the elementary program, or who have retained any of the information. It is really difficult because many of the elementary students only receive Spanish instruction for less than an hour, two times per week. When I see students in sixth grade they really do not connect anything they have learned in their brief exposure to the language in elementary school with the material here in middle school. We basically start from scratch here in the middle school.

#3 Do you differentiate your instruction according to your students' prior experience with the FLES program, if so, how and why?	
Subject	Responses
1	Yes! One would have to, depending upon the students' prior knowledge and experiences.
2	My higher sections are required to do more work and work that is more difficult. Most of the students in my higher sections have had exploratory Spanish. There are fewer students in my lower sections that have had significant Spanish experience.
3	I differentiate based on language ability. Natives are challenged more and often given more freedom to express themselves. I tend to focus on writing and spelling with the natives, where as non-natives have to start from the beginning. No FLES is ever considered because of the varied exposure to it by my students.
4	No, as I said in Question 2, there is no need since I have not seen students who have had experience with the FLES be any farther ahead than students who have not received it. There is more differentiating between native and non-native speakers rather than experience with the FLES program.
5	Skipped

Appendix O

#4 Do you believe your students are More Ready, Less Ready or As Ready for the 21 st century as the students you taught 5 – 10 years ago, if so, how and why?	
Subject	Responses
1	I think that instructional strategies have changed and have encouraged students to work more cooperatively with others as well as focus heavily on acquiring communicative skills. Reading and writing are still important, but the focus is shifting towards students developing survival skills through speaking the language.
2	Due to the lack of grammar instruction in the students' first language, which has been a consistent problem since I began teaching five years ago, I would say that my current students are as prepared as my former students.
3	I feel that I am more advanced in technology and language acquisition than maybe some of my other colleagues, and it is my hope that through some of my innovative techniques, I have better prepared them for more advanced language skills and for the real world.
4	Slightly more ready—I'm not sure exactly how you would define being "ready" for the 21 st century- Is this referring to technology or just an academic skill base? Either way- I have seen technology skills slightly improve within the last five years, but our limited district resources make it difficult to use these to their full extent. Also, as far as academic skill base I do not think students are ready for the 21 st century because of the amount of prior knowledge and life skills they lack.
5	Skipped