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Perceptions of in-service training needs and attitudes of foreign language teachers in Massachusetts.

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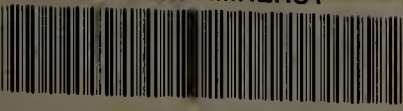
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PERCEPTIONS OF IN-SERVICE TRAINING NEEDS AND ATTITUDES
OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS IN MASSACHUSETTS .

A Dissertation Presented

by

KATHLEEN M. RIORDAN

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

September 1990

School of Education

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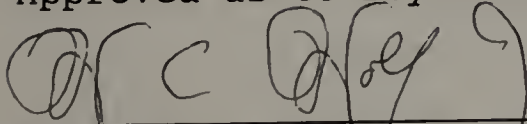
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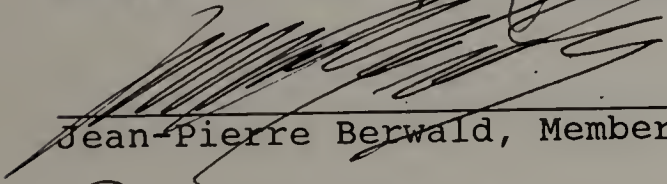
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KATHLEEN M. RIORDAN

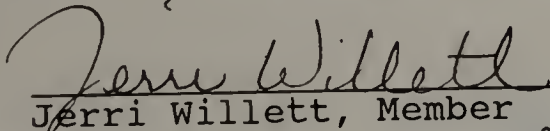
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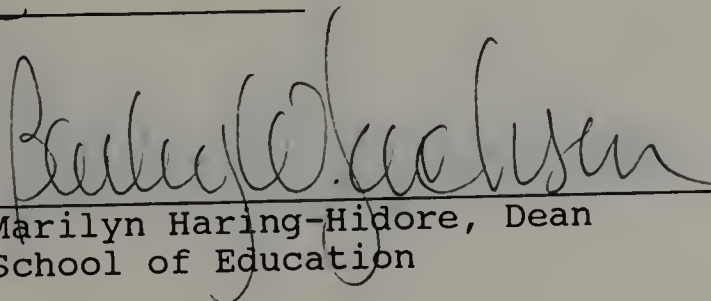
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DEDICATION

To my parents, Kathleen M. and William C. Riordan

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The completion of this doctoral dissertation would not have been possible without the help of many individuals. My sincere appreciation is extended to the foreign language teachers in Massachusetts involved in the study, for their willingness to take the time to respond to the survey instrument.

I am also genuinely grateful to the members of my dissertation committee for their guidance and encouragement:

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A special word of thanks to Mrs. Kathleen M. Riordan, my mother, for her ever-present support, faith, and love.

ABSTRACT

PERCEPTIONS OF IN-SERVICE TRAINING NEEDS AND ATTITUDES
OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS IN MASSACHUSETTS

SEPTEMBER 1990

KATHLEEN M. RIORDAN, A.B., COLLEGE OF OUR LADY OF THE ELMS

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Directed by: Professor William C. Wolf, Jr.

The general purpose of this study was to obtain information about foreign language teachers' instructional practices, evaluation procedures, and attitudes. The specific purposes were:

1. To obtain relevant demographic and attitudinal data pertaining to the in-service training needs of selected foreign language teachers.
2. To apply data obtained to in-service training program planning initiatives.
3. To study the relationships between demographic and attitudinal data obtained and in-service training program planning.

The study outcomes present a demographic profile which suggests a generally healthy climate for foreign language education in the state as evidenced by teachers' professional involvement, awareness of current practices, concern about issues, and agreement with a proficiency-oriented approach to foreign language education.

The data suggest areas of concern and future direction for officials of the state department of education and the state foreign language association as they do long-range planning to meet global and student needs in foreign language education, and to meet the specific needs of the foreign language teachers in Massachusetts. Officials of other state departments of education and foreign language associations might look to the results of this study to assess the professional growth and development needs of foreign language teachers.

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C H A P T E R I

THE PROBLEM

The American public in recent years has been besieged with reports on the state of education in this country. Recommendations in many of these reports suggest rather drastic changes which must occur within educational programs in general and teacher education programs in particular to improve upon education enterprise. Many of these reports focused upon ways to change or improve upon the preparation and sustenance of teachers. Verbs such as retool, retrain, and upgrade appear often in the literature. One might wonder if the writers are talking about persons or about cars of computer software.

One report, "The Report of the President's Commission on Foreign Languages and International Studies," suggests that a major overhaul of programs of foreign language instruction offered in American schools is needed (1979). Changes in foreign language teacher education - both at the pre-service and in-service levels - are delineated in this report. There are specific recommendations for in-service opportunities to include regional centers to help teachers maintain and upgrade their language competence and cultural awareness, and summer institutes where teachers would have the opportunity to revitalize their language proficiency in the target language.

A state report supports this same need. In 1988, the Massachusetts Department of Education published a report, "Principles and Models for Language Development," which was the result of the work of the Committee on Language and Culture (1988). This committee was charged by the Commissioner of Education with a review of foreign language, bilingual education, English as a second language, and related programs offered in Massachusetts. Among the Committee's concerns was the need for more comprehensive programs of in-service education for teachers in the three areas.

Typically, teachers recognize that in-service training is an important part of their professional obligation. This is as true of teachers as it is of doctors, nurses, accountants, engineers, or lawyers. These same teachers are less clear about selecting the most fruitful avenues of in-service training, given the extensive array of options available.

Another recommendation of the President's Commission was to "establish language proficiency achievement goals for the end of each year of study at all levels, with special attention to speaking proficiency" (1979, p. 42). Such a performance-based measurement goal would not be based upon seat time or years spent learning the language. Rather, it would relate to an individual's ability to perform certain tasks in the language. Committee discussions of a specific measurement tool - the Oral Proficiency Interview - led

naturally to the discussion of the need for different types of classroom activities to enable learners to use language more proficiently and in more real world situations.

In direct response to this recommendation, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) published, in 1982, the ACTFL/ETS Provisional Proficiency Guidelines, a series of descriptions of proficiency levels for speaking, listening, reading, writing, and culture in a foreign language. These guidelines were developed as part of a United States Department of Education funded project. It was hoped that the guidelines and resulting changes in classroom practices would help members of the profession to define reasonable goals for students. The guidelines offered the promise of a common yardstick around which professionals could design instruction and evaluation.

The process initiated by ACTFL has a precedent in the work of the Foreign Service Institute (FSI). During World War II, the United States government responded to the need for language competent personnel and began the United States Army Language School. At the end of World War II, Foreign Service Institute staff members continued the methods of language study developed during wartime to respond to immediate needs. They soon recognized a need to measure the results of their work. As a first step, FSI staff prepared a list of federal employees known to command language skills. Next, government employees were surveyed to ascertain the scope and depth of language capabilities

available "in house." Because language skills were considered vital to the conduct of foreign affairs, the Foreign Service was charged finally with developing a system to verify the usefulness of the language skills of government personnel.

The FSI staff developed a face to face interview test based on real world language tasks to address the verification challenge. This performance-based measurement of speaking skills, an oral interview, has been used by FSI staff for many years to evaluate and to rate the speaking proficiency of both civilian and military government employees. The evaluation continues to serve as one of the criteria for work assignments and/or for salary scale placements.

The Sputnik launch in 1957 led to the passage in the same year of the National Defense Education Act (NDEA). Education became a national interest and foreign languages were a targeted area. Government funded institutes were held where foreign language teachers learned about methodology, materials, and equipment. At about this same time, the Modern Language Association presented a list of competencies for foreign language teachers and developed a test battery for teachers and advanced students. This test battery might be viewed as a precedent for the Oral Proficiency Interview.

In the late 1960s, the Foreign Service Institute staff and later the Educational Testing Service staff were

involved in the training and testing of Peace Corps staff members. This project was a large-scale activity outside of the government. Some states also adopted this interview procedure as part of the certification of bilingual education teachers beginning in the 1970s. These certification programs were developed for some states by the Educational Testing Service (ETS). At this point, ETS staff began to share these developments with the wider professional field by making presentations at conferences and workshops.

FSI staff and college and university foreign language professors, in 1979, began to discuss the potential academic applications of the evaluation system during a series of workshops. The initial consideration of the use of a rating scale to measure the speaking ability of high school and college students occurred during these meetings. The concurrent and sometimes collaborative work of government, academic, and private sector language professionals set the stage for the 1982 appearance of the ACTFL/ETS Provisional Proficiency Guidelines.

The ACTFL/ETS version of the FSI guidelines was judged to be more suited for an academic environment because it expanded the lower levels of the evaluation scale, offering students more opportunities to progress from one level to the next. The ACTFL/ETS approach was closely tied to a need for different types of classroom activities. Classroom activities were called for that enabled learners to succeed

in real world language use. Such use could be measured by a performance-based evaluation system. Some obvious questions related to the ACTFL/ETS development needed to be faced. For instance, what classroom practices are suited to the ACTFL/ETS evaluation system? How will teachers become skilled practitioners of these classroom strategies?

The ACTFL/ETS developments occurred during a time of enrollment retrenchment in university programs of teacher preparation. Enrollment declines are related to the maturation and stabilization of persons teaching foreign languages. Given the accelerated change occurring in curriculum, instruction, and assessment, these mature teachers probably are in need of in-service programs to enable them to keep pace with the changes.

Evans (1989) suggests, in an article on teachers in mid-career, that information about demographic changes among teachers must be a part of all discussion on school change. He offers data that indicate that teachers have become veteran, middle-aged, and immobile. He cites Feistritzer (1986) who characterizes the teaching force as composed of people in middle to late career, who have been teaching in their current school for most of their professional lives. Their average age is approaching 50. Seventy-five percent have been teachers for at least 10 years; 50 percent for 15 years or more; and 50 percent have taught in one or two schools only.

One need only review statistics that describe the teacher population in Massachusetts to understand the seriousness of the teaching condition in Massachusetts. The Massachusetts State Department of Education released a report in 1987 pertaining to the status of teacher supply and demand in the state. This report suggests that the average teacher age in 1985 was 42 as compared to 36 in 1973. Proposition 2½ partially contributed to this aging of teaching staffs, because younger teachers with less service were the first to be released in most communities. The age of new hires has increased from 27 to 31 between 1973 and 1985.

The bulk of the current Massachusetts teacher workforce is now in the middle age category. After 1995, this group will be negatively affected by attrition and retirement. The authors of the Massachusetts report point out that the competition of higher salaries in border states will serve as a negative deterrent to attracting replacement teachers. One can only imagine the negative impact of Proposition 2½ throughout the 1980s and the current 1989 educational budget crisis on teaching candidates. As an example, this dissertation writer observed that 18 of the 60 foreign language teachers in her school district received termination notices in the spring of 1989. As of September 1989, three of the 18 had not received letters of recall to a position. It is likely that this group will not be recalled in the school system. Given the reduction in force

and seniority policies of the district, which resemble those of other districts, the majority of these impacted teachers are younger persons.

Concurrent with the growing maturity of the teaching workforce, a need exists for on-going professional growth opportunities in the foreign language field. Among the reasons for this need are the following:

1. The Massachusetts study suggests that the teaching staff is more mature than it was 10 or 15 years ago. Fewer teachers are recent college graduates who might have received training in the more current thinking and methodology.
2. The field of foreign language education has changed considerably in recent years. The field has been altered by research related to second language acquisition and English as a Second Language (ESL) in the United States and worldwide.
3. Foreign language classes today are quite different from classes of ten or fifteen years ago. Much of this change is due to the impact of the Proficiency Guidelines from the Foreign Service Institute and ACTFL/ETS.
4. Language teachers are expected to work with more varied instructional materials (in the form of curriculum guides, textbooks, non-print materials, authentic materials, computer software, video, etc.).

5. Language teachers are being called upon to meet the needs of a more diverse student body. These students bring diverse expectations and abilities to language classes.

For a large part of the teaching staff, these needs can be addressed only by in-service education programs which are well planned and well presented. The challenge is to find vehicles which offer such programs and respond well to these concerns.

This dissertation study gathered and reviewed demographic data about foreign language teacher respondents in Massachusetts. Additional data was gathered about the in-service education needs and preferences of these teachers. This dissertation writer believes that these data will be helpful to state agencies in Massachusetts and in other states, to state foreign language associations, and to the foreign language teachers' collaboratives as they try to help foreign language teachers respond successfully to the changing field of foreign language education. This dissertation writer believes that this study offers some answers to the following questions: where will these in-service teachers learn about new developments in their field? To which in-service vehicles will they have access? What topics are of concern to them?

Who are the foreign language teachers in Massachusetts? Which languages do they teach? How many years of language teaching experience do they have? At which grade levels do

they work? How professionally involved are they? What types of in-service education opportunities do they value? How familiar are they with current national thought in foreign language education? How do they feel about particular classroom practices?

These and other similar questions prompted the researcher to conduct a survey of Massachusetts foreign language teachers who are members of the Massachusetts Foreign Language Association.

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of the study is both to ascertain and to relate in-service training needs of Massachusetts Foreign Language Association members to changes taking place in foreign language curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Specific purposes to be addressed include the following:

- to examine relationships between Massachusetts Foreign Language Association membership data and training needs reported by members;
- to examine relationships between training needs reported by Massachusetts Foreign Language Association members and changes taking place in foreign language curriculum, instruction, and assessment; and
- to comment critically upon relationships established.

Significance of the Study

This dissertation writer chose foreign language teachers as the subjects of this study because of her work on a district, regional, state, and national level with foreign language teachers. This work has been in the areas of curriculum and materials development and also in the area of in-service education. This writer thinks that this study will meet state needs because neither demographic nor attitude type data are elicited often from foreign language teachers.

A recent example of the fact that this population is understudied is reported by Draper (1988) in an update on state initiatives focusing on foreign language teachers. This national survey attempted to document the extent of foreign language teacher shortages, the avenues being explored to curtail shortages, and opportunities and incentives available to attract new foreign language teachers, and to allow current teachers to maintain and to improve their language and teaching skills.

Surveys were sent to state foreign language supervisors or to their counterparts with an 84 percent response rate. The results indicate that 55 percent of the states keep no data on teacher supply and demand, particularly not in foreign language. The respondents based their answers on personal correspondence, phone calls from school districts,

number of advertisements for teaching positions, and requests for emergency certification in foreign languages.

The response from Massachusetts was that "The Commonwealth of Massachusetts keeps no data on foreign language teachers," (Draper, 1988, p. 12). As a result, Massachusetts has no data, not even informally gathered, on foreign language teacher shortages, on methods of combating any existing shortage, or on in-service education opportunities for foreign language teachers. Draper (1988) reports that, in many cases, the state foreign language association takes responsibility for much of the in-service education available to current foreign language teachers. Draper's data would seem to support the value of this study to foreign language professionals, to state agencies, and to the Massachusetts Foreign Language Association.

Perhaps the foreign language teacher population is under-studied nationally because it is a small one. Most schools and districts have fewer foreign language teachers than teachers in other academic disciplines. They are sometimes viewed as a special population. This is so because their students are often seen as college-bound, elite, and without problems. In many school districts, they are not involved with the total student population. As a result, they are not considered as part of the "regular" school program oftentimes. Foreign language instruction is viewed as a special category, outside of the educational mainstream, and apart from many professional concerns or

issues. Art and music teachers often find themselves in the same situation.

When school, district, or state department of education officials develop in-service educational programs, they often address generic education issues. Officials of these programs try to select topics apt to meet in-service training needs of the larger teacher population. Other than generic issues, it is rare to find topics planned to address the needs of foreign language teachers.

Galloway (1983) reports that the average foreign language teacher has a master's degree in literature, over eleven years of experience, tenure, and no plans to leave the field. She adds that foreign language teachers have limited opportunities for self renewal with access to only one foreign language staff development session per year. In the reports of the Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, Warriner-Burke (1989) reports that in-service opportunities are not adequate. She encourages colleges and universities to provide more opportunities for foreign language teachers to engage in intensive second language experiences. She expresses particular concern for teachers in small schools who rarely have access to language in-service opportunities. The isolation is further complicated by low salaries which make travel to other locations for conferences, etc., more difficult.

In the same Northeast Conference publication, Pesola and Anderson-Curtain (1989) address the issue of both pre-service and in-service training for elementary school foreign language teachers. These teachers, noted the researchers, have few institutional opportunities to prepare them for this particular task. There are even fewer in-service opportunities to assist teachers assigned to work at this level. The researchers express special concern about the needs of teachers who are expected to develop programs with no in-service support.

This dissertation writer has observed such in-service training realities for 20 years as a classroom teacher and curriculum director. Her observations stimulated an interest in the in-service education needs of foreign language teachers. What are their needs, how are needs addressed, and how are needs met? Questions such as these are not raised often in Massachusetts.

Foreign language instructors began to emphasize a more proficiency-oriented curriculum and teaching techniques during the 1980s. Professional talk focused upon ways to implement proficiency-based teaching techniques. Evaluation procedures emphasized students' language proficiency rather than their years or semesters of seat time.

Proficiency-based teaching and evaluation call for reconsideration of present classroom teaching and testing. What has been the impact of this national movement on foreign language teachers in Massachusetts? How much do

teachers know about this trend? How have teachers learned about this change? What do teachers think of the associated classroom teaching techniques? More of these kinds of data are called for to help Massachusetts foreign language teachers modify present professional practices in appropriate ways.

This dissertation writer believes that such data will assist the state foreign language association in meeting the ongoing professional growth needs of its members. The state association already has a history of planning conferences, workshops, and institutes for its members. Some of these professional growth programs were planned independently, while others were planned in collaboration with colleges and state agencies. In Massachusetts there are two very active collaboratives of foreign language teachers. Both of these groups plan in-service activities using a variety of funding sources. Both groups should find these data helpful in their future planning efforts. Officials of state agencies will also find these data helpful should they have the opportunity to plan professional growth opportunities for foreign language teachers. It is only through such planned programs of professional growth that foreign language teachers in Massachusetts and elsewhere will continue to improve the quality of their professional practice.

Phillips (1989) writes that foreign language teachers must take responsibility for the profession. She continues to say that "we must turn our discipline specific concerns

into solutions we can manage. Whining and commiserating about generic in-service programs and the poor isolated foreign language teacher solves nothing" (p. 37). She cites the need for and the role of aggressive state associations, collaboratives, consortia, and alliances in addressing the continuing in-service needs of foreign language teachers. The data provided in this study should help the foreign language professionals in Massachusetts and elsewhere to continue to assume responsibility for the quality of the foreign language programs offered in the state.

Definition of Terms

Terms to be used in this study are:

MaFLA - Massachusetts Foreign Language Association - a voluntary, state level, paid membership organization of foreign language professionals at all levels, K-university.

ACTFL - American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages - a voluntary, national, paid membership organization of foreign language professionals at all levels, K-university.

Oral Proficiency Interview - a structured interview used to evaluate the speaking proficiency of an individual using a performance-based protocol.

ETS - Educational Testing Service - a non-profit organization which develops educational tests for use at many educational levels all over the world.

Foreign Language Teachers' Collaborative of Western Massachusetts - a voluntary, Western Massachusetts based, paid membership organization of foreign language professionals at all levels, K-university.

FSI - Foreign Service Institute - a branch of the United States government with the mission to teach government personnel languages which they will need in their work abroad.

ACTFL/ETS Proficiency Guidelines - descriptors designed to characterize the language proficiency of an individual in the four skill areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The descriptors range from the most minimal acquaintance with the language to adult professional level skill.

FLES - Foreign Languages in the Elementary School - a general acronym to describe several program models offering foreign language learning opportunities to children in schools described as elementary schools.

In-service Education - a general term used to describe a variety of professional growth opportunities for practicing teachers.

Limitations of the Study

This study was conducted with a sample population drawn from the membership of the Massachusetts Foreign Language Association. As a result, the sample is a self-selected group because of its paid voluntary membership in a

professional association. The results of the study can be generalized to the entire K-12 membership of the association, but not to all foreign language teachers in Massachusetts. Other states may look to this study as informative about foreign language teacher attitudes and needs in general.

The study involves self reporting about opinions and attitudes. As in any study of this type, the researcher must accept the fact that some respondents may reply as they think an up-to-date professional should. These expressed attitudes may not always reflect their true opinions. Expressed attitudes, even when reflecting the respondents' true opinions, may not translate into classroom teaching practice.

C H A P T E R I I

REVIEW OF THE RELATED RESEARCH AND LITERATURE

Introduction

The review of literature is organized around the topic areas of: demographic information, national reports and state initiatives, proficiency levels of foreign language teachers, trends in teacher preparation, statements of need for in-service education for foreign language teachers, status of professional development opportunities, and models for foreign language teacher in-service education.

Demographic Data About Teachers

Officials serving the National Center for Educational Statistics of the United States Department of Education (1989) predicted public elementary school enrollment would increase by 7.3 percent between 1989 and 1993. During the same time period, public secondary enrollment would increase by 1.5 percent, they believed. A companion study (1989) reported by the same officials predicted an increase of 9.2 percent in the supply of public elementary school teachers, and a 4.4 percent increase in the supply of public secondary school teachers. Many of these students and teachers are currently enrolled and employed within American schools. Some of this national teacher work force is currently

employed in Massachusetts. A small number of studies have been obtained that address demographic characteristics of this teacher population.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts (1987) published a report prepared by the Massachusetts Institute for Social and Economic Research and the School of Education at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst which predicts that the overall Massachusetts teacher supply will be adequate through 1991 and will fall off after 1992 as student enrollment increases. The student enrollment will increase through 1995 and will vary by regions within the state.

This report describes the average teacher age as 36 in 1973 and 42 in 1985. The effects of the tax referendum known as Proposition 2½ reduced the participation of the young in teaching in Massachusetts sharply. The percentage of teachers in the 20-24 year old age range decreased 91.5% and the 25-29 year old range decreased 83.7% between 1973 and 1985. The report describes the teaching population as teachers with considerable teaching time (92%), returning teachers (3%), and newly hired teachers (5%).

The attrition issue is of considerable concern because of the impact of Proposition 2½ on younger teachers as noted above. There is additional attrition in the age groups of 50-59, 60-64, and 65 and over. The bulk of the Massachusetts teaching work force is in the middle age category, with attrition rates expected to increase after 1995 as this group reaches retirement age. Foreign

languages is one of the areas noted as having a high attrition rate. The number of new entrants into the teaching field in Massachusetts has failed to keep pace with attrition according to this study. This leads to an overall decline in the teaching work force. Proposition 2½ increased the numerical decline by increasing the number of terminations and depressing the hiring practices. This factor also increased the average teacher age.

Even though the foreign language area is identified as having a high attrition rate, the area was considered in this report as one in which there is no predicted future shortage, or, at minimum, a near term modest shortage. Chronic shortages were predicted in the areas of bilingual education. Initial personnel surplus followed by shortages in the 1990s were predicted for English, general science, mathematics, biology, chemistry, social studies, and vocational education. Some of the above groupings might seem surprising to some school district personnel officers. One must remember that these figures are statewide and may not represent the situation in a particular district or region of the state.

The Springfield Sunday Republican (1988) reported that 40 percent of the teachers in Massachusetts are older than 45, with only 6 percent under 30 years of age. In addition, 61 percent of the Massachusetts teaching staff is expected to retire within five years. Currently, 1,100 Massachusetts public school teachers retire annually. These figures were

provided by the Massachusetts Teachers' Retirement Board. The Retirement Board predicts that this figure will double in ten years.

The news article described the national teaching force as having an average age of 41 in 1986, an increase from a 36-year-old average in 1976. The average number of years of teaching experience was 15 in 1986, with 51.4 percent of the teachers having earned a Master's degree or higher.

Draper (1988, p. 12) reported that "The Commonwealth of Massachusetts keeps no data on foreign language teachers." One must review foreign language teacher demographic data on a national level rather than in Massachusetts. Draper's report for the Joint National Committee for Languages (JNCL) had as one goal the documentation of foreign language teacher supply and demand. Her research revealed that 55 percent of the states gather no official data on this question. State supervisor respondents indicated that their data were based on conversations with administrators in local districts and on requests for teaching certificate waivers. These state officials predicted that within five years their state would experience a shortage of foreign language teachers of 57 percent at the elementary level, and 62 percent at the secondary level. By 1993, the predicted shortage would be up to 69 percent.

What is known historically about the foreign language teacher population? In the early 1960s, Serafino (1961) reported on the professional activity of Connecticut foreign

language teachers. He described the respondents as having advanced degrees, with over 50 percent having earned a Master's degree. Ten percent of the respondents had participated in a federally funded institute and over 40 percent had attended some other type of institute or workshop within the previous five years. Over 50 percent had traveled to a target language country. The level of professional foreign language teacher association membership averaged somewhat less than one per respondent. Regular meeting attendance averaged at least one positive response teacher.

Twenty years later, Eddy (1980) described the foreign language teaching professionals as being female (68.6 percent) and having a Master's degree. Eddy's survey of 732 junior and senior high school foreign language teachers in the northeastern states indicated that 30.8 percent of the respondents were 45 or older. Most of the respondents did not obtain an advanced degree before beginning to teach. More than half (66.5 percent) of the group with ten or more years of teaching experience have a Master's degree. A substantial number (63.3 percent) of the teacher population have eleven or more years of experience.

Soon after the Eddy study, national survey results from 80 school districts in ten states were reported by Brickell and Paul (1982). Their survey revealed a foreign language teaching population that can be characterized as primarily female (75%), relatively young (50% between the ages of 25

and 35), well educated (55% earned a Master's degree), and experienced (50% studied in a target language country). In terms of teaching experience, 60 percent taught foreign language ten or fewer years.

Female domination of the foreign language teaching profession was apparent again in Fitzpatrick and Liuzzo's study (1989), with 73 percent of the respondents being female. Their survey relied upon the Foreign Language Annals, published by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, to contact subjects. Data provided by 412 respondents revealed fairly even distribution across community types with 26 percent indicating urban, 38 percent suburban, and 36 percent rural. This response group is graying, with 40 percent having 20 or more years of teaching experience. A self-selected group because of its membership in the national association (ACTFL), 79 percent of these respondents hold degrees beyond the Bachelor level. The most frequently indicated language teaching assignments were French, Spanish, and German, as was the case in the Eddy (1980) and Brickell and Paul (1982) studies.

A single state study was conducted in Idaho by Leverett (1989), which described the typical Idaho secondary foreign language teacher as a professional with 7-10 years of teaching experience who teaches three different courses. In this group, French teachers appeared to be the most active professionally, with 65 percent belonging to a professional foreign language association. Fifty-eight percent of the

German teachers and 45 percent of the Spanish teachers indicated membership in a professional foreign language association.

The foreign language teacher group would seem to be comparable to the generic teacher group described by Feistritz (1986) as a veteran, middle-aged, immobile group. His study indicated a teaching force composed of people in mid to late career, whose average age is 50. Seventy-five percent of the teachers in this group have been teaching for ten years, and 50 percent for 15 years or more.

National Reports and State Initiatives

A number of national reports have highlighted the need for practicing foreign language teachers to improve or maintain their language skills and to learn about and practice new methods of teaching. Allison (1986) reviewed recommendations beginning with Strength Through Wisdom: A Critique of United States Capability. This 1979 report of the President's Commission on Foreign Languages and International Studies recommended the establishment of intensive summer institutes for foreign language teachers, and regional centers for in-service activities. These institutes and centers would address language proficiency, target cultures, and methodology issues. The National Advisory Panel on International Education recommended in 1983 the creation of fellowships and exchange programs to address the need for improved language proficiency, teaching

skills, and more awareness and knowledge about other peoples and their cultures.

Allison (1986) reported that the bulk of the federal funds allocated to the foreign language areas has gone to universities and higher education resource centers with little going to address the foreign language teachers in grades K-12. Draper (1987) reported recent state in-service initiatives in numerous southern states with summer institutes, study abroad programs, methodology courses, and weekend seminars addressing personal language maintenance and improvement as well as innovations in methodology.

Proficiency Levels of Foreign Language Teachers

What does the term proficient mean when one speaks about foreign language teachers in the United States? Is there evidence to suggest the proficiency levels of foreign language teachers? Teachers' level of language proficiency is related to the need for opportunities to become more proficient and thus to the issue of the in-service needs of foreign language teachers. How do foreign language teachers improve and maintain their levels of proficiency?

Evidence is available from two major studies which addressed the question of language proficiency. In the 1960s, Carroll (1967) reported the results of a study of 2,782 college and university students who were declared language majors. The goal of the study, conducted in 1964 and 1965, was to draw conclusions about the state of foreign

language teaching as it affects those who specialize. Using a variety of instruments, this voluntary participation study reported conclusions that the linguistic competence of the majors was generally low and not impressive. Factors that seemed to have led to higher proficiency levels of some majors were: time in the target language country as the most significant factor, the beginning point of language study, parental use of the language in the home, language aptitude, and aptitude offset by hard work and practice. All language majors do not become teachers. It is reasonable, however, to assume that language teachers would be drawn primarily from a group of language majors.

The Carroll (1967) results were not considered in the Eddy (1980) study because no information on language proficiency was requested. Twenty years later, Hilton et al. (1985) conducted a major study at the Educational Testing Service addressing issues similar to those of the Carroll study. Using a self-reporting questionnaire, high school foreign language teachers were asked to indicate whether or not they could perform specific tasks in the language. The self ratings were confirmed by the evaluations of experienced oral proficiency interviewers. The response group of 436 French teachers self-reported average ratings of 2 on the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) rating scale. The response group of 442 Spanish teachers self-reported average ratings of 3 on the scale. The FSI scale defines a 2 rating as a person who can, at the low

end, satisfy routine social demands and limited work requirements and, at the high end, satisfy most work requirements and show some ability to communicate on concrete topics. A person rated as a 3 is, at the low end of the group, able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations. The FSI considers the 3 as indicative of minimal professional competence for government service. This is not a person who should negotiate government business of any complexity.

Hilton continued to describe the sample by indicating that the urban French teacher respondents had taught longer, traveled abroad more, and spoken more often with native speakers than their rural colleagues. More of the urban Spanish teacher respondents were born in a Spanish-speaking country or born of Spanish-speaking parents. They had taught longer, traveled abroad more, and spoke Spanish more often than any other group of respondents. The results showed a high correspondence of the self ratings and the expert ratings. This suggests considerable value of this type of study in the future. The high response rate of more than 92 percent suggests a teacher interest and willingness to participate. The research study established once again the relationship between life experiences and language proficiency. Living and travel in a target language country have a positive impact on language competence. The question remains as to whether one seeks out these experiences to

improve proficiency or because one is confident of one's personal language competence. This study suggests that formal language instruction has less impact on proficiency than these direct language use experiences.

Both of these studies spanning 20 years seem to clearly establish the value of study and travel experiences in target language settings as valuable in-service options for language teachers who wish to improve or maintain their language skills. The results of both studies would seem to suggest also that there is a need for language teachers to improve their language proficiency.

Two Texas projects offer additional data on the proficiency levels of prospective and practicing foreign language teachers. Hiple and Manley (1987) reported on the three-year effort in Texas to establish oral proficiency requirements for foreign language teacher certification. The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), the Texas Education Association which is the state agency in Texas, the Texas Foreign Language Association, and the University of Texas sponsored this project following the recommendations of the President's Commission on Foreign Languages and International Studies that foreign language teachers and students should have their oral language proficiency assessed. The United States Department of Education in 1983 funded the joint development of a model establishing an oral proficiency requirement for the certification of new foreign language teachers in Texas.

One project goal was to gather data on the oral language proficiency of college foreign language students as a means of projecting their progress and level at graduation. This projection would enable the state to set a reasonable level of performance for prospective teaching candidates. The speaking proficiency requirement was set at Intermediate High on the ACTFL scale as a result of a sampling of almost 400 undergraduates. The ACTFL scale is an academic version of the Foreign Service Institute scale and was developed first in 1982. An Intermediate High speaker is able to satisfy most survival needs and limited social demands. This rating was set as an initial and minimal certification requirement.

Armengal and Manley (1987) reported the results of a 1985 oral proficiency summer institute for Texas foreign language teachers held at the University of Texas at El Paso. A project goal was to help participants to upgrade and maintain their oral language proficiency. All of the participants improved notable during the four-week intensive experience, yet the interviewer ratings did not show considerable movement on the proficiency scale. Of the 29 participants, 14 were in French and 15 were in Spanish. Only two of the 18 pretested Intermediate range speakers moved in the Advanced category. The Advanced category speakers are able at the low end to satisfy routine social demands and limited work requirements, and at the high end they are able to satisfy most work requirements and show

some ability to communicate on concrete topics. The project was evaluated as having had very positive influence on teacher confidence and pedagogical knowledge and might well serve as a model for other institutions. These two reports offer additional evidence to suggest that there is a need to help foreign language teachers to improve and to maintain their oral language skills. Table 1 illustrates the rating scales in greater detail.

Trends in Teacher Preparation

New guidelines in some states for the initial certification of pre-service teachers address the need for in-service growth and development as ongoing activities in the life of a teacher. Galloway (1982) reported that North Carolina had incorporated an enrichment component as a competency of an in-service teacher. Foreign language teachers would be expected to involve themselves in activities to keep their language skills actively in use, and to continue to grow in their depth of knowledge about their academic discipline and pedagogy. These activities would continue to enrich the professional life of the teacher.

McFerren (1988) examined current teacher certification practices for language teachers in the United States and found recertification guidelines to be a growing trend. Standard certificate holders are required to renew their certificates on a systematic basis. The varying state

Table 1

Oral Proficiency Rating Scales

Government (FSI) Scale	Academic (ACTFL/ETS) Scale	Definition
5	Native	Able to speak like an educated native speaker
4+ 4 3+ 3	Superior	Able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations.
2+	Advanced Plus	Able to satisfy most work requirements and show some ability to communicate on concrete topics
2	Advanced	Able to satisfy routine social demands and limited work requirements
1+	Intermediate- High	Able to satisfy most survival needs and limited social demands

Continued on the next page.

Table 1, continued:

Government (FSI) Scale	Academic (ACTFL/ETS) Scale	Definition
1	Intermediate- Mid Intermediate- Low	Able to satisfy some survival needs and some limited social demands Able to satisfy basic survival needs and minimum courtesy requirements
0+	Novice-High	Able to satisfy immediate needs with learned utterances
0	Novice-Mid	Able to operate in only a very limited capacity
	Novice-Low	Unable to function in the spoken language
	0	No ability whatsoever in the language

Source: Judith E. Liskin-Gasparro. ETS Oral Proficiency Testing Manual. Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service, 1982.

policies generally involve course credits earned through participation in staff development activities. The lifetime certificate which was once common in all states has all but disappeared. Most states grant provisional certificates for up to five years. A teacher may earn a standard certificate with the completion of additional course work and favorable ratings based on classroom observations. This new practice places in-service education at the cornerstone of the standard licensing procedure for teachers. McFerren found this in-service component to be in practice in all regions of the country. This practice makes it clear to teachers upon entering the profession that continuing educational growth and development are a requirement for continued employment and certification.

Statements of Need for the In-Service Education
of Foreign Language Teachers

The need for foreign language teachers to have opportunities for professional growth has been addressed by report authors from within and outside the foreign language field. The National Governors' Association published America in Transition: The International Frontier in 1988, which emphasized the obligation of states to provide in-service teachers with continuing professional development in the areas of foreign language competence and international issues. Florida and California were highlighted as states with model programs in this area. The Council of Chief

State School Officers (1985) has stated the same need for language teachers to have opportunities to improve their language competence.

Strasheim and Lafayette (1985) authored a curriculum report for the National Association of Secondary School Principals which cited the importance of in-service growth for foreign language teachers and advocated funding for district and regional conversation clinics and classes, study abroad programs, and teacher attendance at a minimum of one state, regional, or national foreign language association meeting per year.

Is there a relationship between the availability of quality in-service education and quality foreign language programs? A study reported by Sims and Hammond (1981) answered this question clearly in the affirmative. The study identified 50 model foreign language programs across the nation. The characteristics and descriptors of these programs offer a wealth of evidence as to how one begins and maintains a quality program. Among the important characteristics observed in all of the model programs was a provision for in-service teacher education.

The foreign language profession has recognized the need for quality in-service education for some time. Evidence is found in a report of the Modern Language Association (MLA) Task Force on the Commonly Taught Languages (1978). The MLA report stated strongly that the "success of any foreign language program depends on the proficiency and skills of

the teachers. All language teachers need refresher courses and opportunities for skill development" (1978, p. 638). The report called for funds for teacher training fellowships and study abroad programs.

One of the themes of the Boston Regional Hearings of the President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies was the maintenance of the language skills of teachers. Cincinnato (1979) presented a committee report stating the need for federally funded institutes as in the 1960s, summer institutes, sabbatical year institutes, and study abroad programs. One year later, Grittner (1980) stated that education has not taken in-service as seriously as other professions. He continued to say that educators have approached in-service at random and without a plan. He encouraged the repetition of the successful model of residence and study abroad for language proficiency, and a diagnostic/prescriptive approach to address pedagogical needs. This approach would lead to a highly individualized in-service plan for each foreign language teacher.

At the same priorities conference, Jorstad (1980) emphasized the need for language teachers to improve language and culture skills and methodology. Jorstad's recommendation for the format of the in-service work was to focus on teacher self assessment with diagnostic/prescriptive methods. The in-service could be individualized based on methods issues using video tapes of classes for collegial discussion. The traditional types of in-service would

include district and university courses and workshops. Summer options would include institutes in the United States and abroad.

The need for in-service opportunities was highlighted in a university-based, a language association, and a state report. Cummins (1987) emphasized, in the university report, that guidelines for teacher competence have little meaning without in-service training which is the key to helping foreign language teachers to develop and maintain language proficiency. Murphy, Black, Goepper, and Loriot-Raymer (1987), writing for the American Association of Teachers of French (AATF), placed great emphasis on in-service education in a report pertaining to teaching standards. AATF officials recommended that local school districts assume the responsibility for funding opportunities for teachers to attend conferences, regional meetings and workshops, to visit colleagues, to participate in immersion and exchange programs, and to travel and study abroad. The group clearly supported these professional activities as equal in importance to formal educational programs. A group of foreign language, bilingual, and ESL professionals in Massachusetts prepared a joint report (1988) for the Commissioner of Education of the Commonwealth which strongly recommended in-service education as a means of helping these three groups of teachers to design and implement comprehensive language and literature development programs. These three groups of teachers need opportunities

to learn more about second language acquisition based on current research.

Concern about in-service education was evident in all of the strands of the National Priorities for the 1990s Conference of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (1989) held in Boston, Massachusetts. Papers and discussions on global awareness, emerging instructional technologies, reaching all learners, teacher education, elementary school foreign language programs, public awareness, and research priorities addressed the need for in-service teachers in the 1990s and beyond to have more and better opportunities to grow professionally. It is this professional teacher growth that will enable teachers to encourage student growth and development. This need seems to be recognized by those inside and outside of the foreign language profession.

Status of Professional Development Opportunities

Foreign language teachers' need for ongoing foreign language specific in-service opportunities in the areas of language proficiency and cultural awareness, and methodology for the improvement of foreign language education programs is documented in the work of Hulet (1970), Altman and Weiss (1970), Cloos (1970), Wolfe and Smith (1972), Andrews (1974), and Bailey (1977). The 1980s saw additional support statements by Hancock (1981), Paul (1981), Lange (1983), DiDonato (1983), Muyskens (1984), Jarvis and Bernhardt

(1984), Wing (1984), Higgs (1986), and Hammadau and Bernhardt (1987) on the same issue.

The literature contains reports describing the present status of professional development opportunities for in-service teachers. De Lorenzo (1978) reported that ten states in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions had functioning structures for in-service education and curriculum change. Teacher respondents complained that the in-service programs tied to these structures were too general and superficial, noted De Lorenzo. Eddy's survey report (1980) revealed that the most frequent in-service professional development activity for secondary language teachers was a regular academic year course. Other preferred modes were summer courses, workshops conducted by professional language associations at conferences, and personal travel and study abroad. The least popular experience was the district workshop. The value of professional association activity would seem limited for Eddy's respondents, because just under one half belong to one professional language organization. A little over one quarter belong to two organizations, and almost one-fifth belong to three national professional language organizations. The national foreign language organizations all publish journals which can be valuable in-service resources to teacher members who receive these publications as a part of their membership.

Brickell and Paul (1982) report that 50 percent of their survey respondents had traveled in the target language country. The national foreign language respondents expressed a need for in-service education devoted to advanced conversation experiences, audio-visual instruction, multicultural issues, and multilevel classes. Seventy percent of these teachers read one professional journal or newsletter each month and attend at least one language conference or meeting annually. These attendance figures are primarily for local activities. Travel abroad is an annual activity for 30 percent of the respondents and an irregular occurrence for 60 percent. Forty-five percent of the respondents have chaperoned student trips within recent years.

Galloway (1983) says that the average foreign language teacher has limited opportunities for self-renewal with many indicating access to only one foreign language staff development session per year. This gloomy picture is confirmed by a confidential mailed survey done by a publisher to determine in-service foreign language teachers' needs as part of a marketing study. Thirty-three percent of the respondents indicated that they had had no foreign language specific in-service opportunities in the past three years. The researcher participated in the review of this survey and thus became aware of the results. Draper (1988) reports that in many states the foreign language teacher

association is responsible for much of the in-service education available for current foreign language teachers.

Rhodes and Oxford (1988) surveyed by mail almost 3,000 principals and foreign language teachers. They reported that 53 percent of the elementary school and 69 percent of the secondary school foreign language teachers had participated in foreign language in-service education in the past year. When asked to indicate areas of concern associated with maintaining quality foreign language programs, the respondents identified in-service education as one of the six most serious issues. The authors concluded that

"given the rapidly changing field of foreign language education, including the relatively recent advances in communicative methodology, it would be wise for all foreign language teachers to participate in a consistent and coherent in-service education program, and not just in sporadic workshops and conferences."
(Rhodes & Oxford, 1988, p. 46)

The specific needs of elementary school language teachers are addressed in the results of an informal survey conducted by Lipton (1989). This survey sent to foreign language teachers, state foreign language specialists, teacher trainers, and principals and other administrators, suggested that teacher training is one of the respondent groups' three major concerns. Assistance is most needed in teacher methodology training according to these 229 respondents.

Pesola and Anderson-Curtain (1989) support the results of Lipton's survey and stress the need for in-service opportunities for elementary school foreign language teachers who

are often expected to first develop and then instruct in these elementary school programs. In the same Northeast Conference Report, Warriner-Burke (1989) states that the profession must find ways for foreign language teachers to study abroad. She speaks particularly of the needs of foreign language teachers in rural and isolated areas whose in-service needs are critical. Their isolation combined with low salaries make travel to the existing in-service opportunities more difficult. This group might be well served by the use of satellite television technology.

Models of Foreign Language Teacher In-Service Training

A variety of foreign language specific models of in-service education opportunities are described in the literature. Ramsey (1981) describes a federally funded global education summer institute in Nebraska for social studies and foreign language teachers and community leaders from nine mid-western states. The workshop goal was to help the participants to work in their own community on global citizenship issues. The National Endowment for the Humanities has funded workshops for foreign language teachers such as the summer institutes described by Eddy (1977) and Wipf (1980, 1985). These intensive workshop experiences in Washington and Indiana gave foreign language teachers the opportunity to work in the areas of culture, methodology, and language proficiency. Follow-up sessions occurred during the school year and gave participants an

opportunity to report on and share experiences. Pontillo (1983) describes a similar Illinois school year project to reach teachers in rural and isolated school districts.

DiDonato and Nollendorfs (1983) and Riordan (1989) describe workshops designed and presented at the Central States and Northeast Conferences on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. These two large regional conferences incorporate an in-service model of teachers teaching teachers. In this model, developed first by the Central States Conference and later adapted by the Northeast Conference, a selected group of foreign language teachers attend a specially designed segment of the conference program which prepares them to be in-service trainers of their local colleagues. This special training includes both the conference content and workshop presenter strategies. The goal of the conference planners is to disseminate current thinking to the broader field of language educators who are not always able to attend major conferences. Other national and regional associations' officials might view this model as effective for their constituents.

An interesting model of ongoing in-service education can be found in the foreign language collaboratives developed as part of the Academic Alliances in Foreign Languages and Literature. These groups of foreign language teachers in grades K-12, who meet regularly in a local area, are professionals who "take collective responsibility for the practice of the profession and the improvement in the

quality of their intellectual and professional lives" (Silber, 1987, p. 1). The collective goal is the mutual professional development of the members. This model is interesting in that it addresses the needs of teachers at all levels of instruction and relies on the expertise of the membership. The members assume the responsibility of planning to address their in-service needs. These language teacher collaborative groups are found in every state, with many states having several active groups. Meetings are held usually monthly or bimonthly with membership ranging from 20 to 100 language professionals at all levels of instruction. Some groups include members from as few as three different schools and colleges or universities, and others have representatives from as many as twenty institutions at different grade levels. These language professionals have taken on the advice to ". . . turn discipline specific concerns into solutions we can manage. Whining and commiserating about generic in-service programs and the poor isolated foreign language teacher solves nothing" (Phillips, 1989, p. 37).

This literature review establishes that there has not been a published study of Massachusetts foreign language teachers. Such a study is needed if one is to know who these teachers are, what their professional in-service needs are, and what they think of recent developments in foreign language pedagogy. The literature review documented a need and helped to establish the content and format of the study.

This study should help professionals to know more about Massachusetts foreign language teachers and to better address their professional development needs.

C H A P T E R I I I

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study was designed to accomplish the following purposes:

1. To administer a survey instrument to obtain relevant demographic and attitudinal data pertaining to in-service training needs of selected foreign language teachers;
2. to apply data obtained to in-service training program planning initiatives; and
3. to study relationships between demographic and attitudinal data obtained and in-service training program modus operandi in place.

The Procedures

The study was conducted in Massachusetts to obtain information about foreign language teachers' instructional practices and evaluation procedures, and attitudes. It was believed that information obtained across the state could be used to conceptualize in-service education opportunities for foreign language teachers in Massachusetts.

An overview of the survey process and analysis of teacher response data is reported in this chapter. Table 2

Table 2

Overview of Study Activities

Date	Activity
October 15, 1989	Information letters sent to 200 pre-college level foreign language teachers to describe the study and the survey procedures.
October 24, 1989	Survey packets mailed to 200 foreign language teachers. The packet included a cover letter, a survey form, a return addressed, stamped envelope, and a stamped, addressed response postal card.
November 14, 1989	Reminder postcards sent to 70 non-respondents.
November 30, 1989	A second complete packet mailed to 50 non-respondents.
December 15-20, 1989	Researcher prepared data from 166 respondents for computer analysis using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences.
December 21, 1989- January 5, 1990	Data analyses completed and summarized.

offers an overview of pilot study events. A discussion of study procedures follows.

The Sample

The researcher selected the study sample from the membership of the Massachusetts Foreign Language Association (MaFLA). MaFLA is a voluntary association of foreign language teachers in Massachusetts and represents teachers of all languages from elementary through university levels.

The Massachusetts Foreign Language Association has a total paid membership of about 1,400 members. The Association has an elected Board of Directors and officers. The association sponsors an annual meeting/conference attended by 100-1,200 persons. The conference program includes a materials exhibit and numerous workshop sessions on topics of interest to foreign language teachers. The association publishes a quarterly newsletter and sponsors the in-state observance of National Foreign Language Week. As the official state affiliate of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), the Association serves as part of a national network of foreign language educators. Within the state, the Association has been asked to represent foreign language teachers on a variety of committees and task forces of the Massachusetts State Department of Education in the areas of teacher certification, bilingual education, and second language and culture policy issues. In the area of in-service education opportunities, the Association has been either the sole or the joint sponsor of intensive teacher workshop opportunities in the areas of teaching for proficiency, total foreign language immersion experience, and language issues discussions among foreign language, bilingual, and English as a Second Language teachers.

The researcher wishes to state clearly that the membership in this association - as in any voluntary professional association - is a self-selected, active, and

committed group of professionals whose demographic description and attitudes may not be representative of the general population of foreign language teachers in the state. One may assume that this group is more aware of current trends and practices, and more involved professionally. Consequently, the demographic data and the attitudinal data drawn from this group cannot be generalized to the total population of foreign language teachers in Massachusetts. These data are intended to be generalized to the total pre-college teacher population of the Association. It is believed that the information gathered can be used to describe the general group and can be helpful in addressing the needs of the sample group and, to a degree, the needs of the total membership, of the foreign language teachers in Massachusetts and of foreign language teachers in other states.

The Massachusetts Foreign Language Association has a current membership of approximately 1,400 language teachers from elementary through college/university levels. For this research study, the researcher selected a random sample of 200 pre-college level language teachers. These 200 foreign language teachers were contacted by mail and asked to participate in the study. The total response group was 166 pre-college level teachers.

Survey Instrument Development

The survey instrument was developed to elicit personal demographic data from respondents, demographic data about respondents' schools/districts, and attitude data. The survey contains 26 items in Part 1 and 20 Likert Scale items in Part 2.

Most survey questions were written to require a response selected from printed choices. Some items included a category of "other" or a free response option. Some items offered the possibility of more than one response with instructions to check all that apply. Two items were rank order preferences.

Personal demographic data requested in items 1 through 4 -- address, gender, age, years of experience as a foreign language teacher, and degrees obtained. Items 5 through 10 addressed the nature of the respondents' current employment, with questions referring to language(s) taught, grade level(s), type of school and district, type of position, and geographic area in the state. The area of professional activity was attended to as well, as items 11 and 12 surveyed memberships in and attendance at meetings of professional language associations. Items 13 and 14 were designed to determine school district financial support of professional activity.

Researcher interest in participation in methods courses or workshops specifically addressing the grade level of the

respondents' current teaching assignment resulted in the inclusion of items 15 and 16. Of particular interest here were the responses of the elementary school and middle and junior high school teachers. Items 17 through 20 addressed the nature of school or district in-service education programs and covered the number of meetings, topic areas, and attendance requirements.

Respondents were asked to select and rank order their three preferred topic areas of in-service education for foreign language teachers from ten options as part of item 21. Topic selection was based upon the work of Cooper (1985), which highlighted issues of concern to foreign language teachers. Cooper (1985) reported the results of a 1983 mailed survey which solicited free responses from a wide variety of foreign language professionals about their concerns in foreign language teaching and learning. Cooper's results and results obtained from area and statewide teachers could be compared with the inclusion of item 21.

Respondents were asked to select and rank order their five preferred forms of professional development activities from 18 options as part of item 22. In this item, the researcher was seeking information about teacher preferences for types of in-service education activities.

Current interest in the concepts of teaching for proficiency and in the training of certified Oral Proficiency Testers led to the inclusion of items 23-26. These

items requested information about the respondents' familiarity with the concepts, the sources of this familiarity, and the total exposure time to the concepts. Respondents were asked also if they were certified testers and the language(s) of certification.

Part 2 of the survey instrument was based upon a Likert Scale of 20 questions. In each case, the respondents were asked to indicate a degree of agreement or disagreement with the statements. Of the 20 items included in the scale, five contained the word "not" which was underlined in each case. The statements covered a variety of classroom activities often included in foreign language teacher instructional planning. Some activities are associated with proficiency-based instruction, and other activities are associated with more traditional approaches.

The survey was printed on both sides of three pieces of paper. The researcher estimated a completion time of 15-20 minutes, which proved to be an accurate estimate in the pilot study.

Data Analysis

The survey data were gathered from 166 returned completed survey forms from the random sample group of 200. The researcher reviewed all of the completed surveys to become familiar with the responses and to consider emerging patterns. Data preparation by the researcher for computer

analyses using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) followed.

The survey data were organized for report purposes initially into group profile categories as follows:

- personal demographic information;
- employment information;
- professional activity;
- school or district financial support of activity;
- opinions about topics of in-service education;
- opinions about types of in-service education;
- awareness and exposure to the concepts of teaching for proficiency;
- number of certified Oral Proficiency Testers;
- Likert Scale responses to statements about classroom practices.

The second level of data organization was a comparison of responses to some Part 1 items with other Part 1 items. These comparisons offered the researcher the opportunity to profile certain subgroups of the total sample group, and to review similarities and differences. Among the differences, some are significant and some could have occurred by chance. The researcher attempted to focus on the significant differences.

The researcher prepared a profile of the subgroups for comparison purposes as follows:

- total years of foreign language teaching experience;

degree status;
language(s) currently taught;
grade level(s) currently taught;
kind of community;
degree of familiarity with concepts of teaching for
proficiency.

These profiles present an overview of the foreign language teacher respondents in the areas of demographic and descriptive data, in-service education opportunities, attitudes about classroom instructional practices, and familiarity with the concepts of teaching for proficiency. These data offer a description of Massachusetts foreign language teachers not available currently. This description will be helpful to the officials of the state professional association and the state department of education as they try to assist these teachers to grow professionally.

C H A P T E R I V

SUMMARY OF DATA OBTAINED

Introduction

Responses summarized on Part 1 and Part 2 of the survey instrument reveal demographic characteristics of the respondent group and perspectives of their attitudes toward foreign language instructional practices. The total respondent group consisted of 166 of the 200 pre-college level foreign language teachers in Massachusetts who were contacted. Frequency responses for all survey items are included in Appendix A. Synopses of these responses are reported in this chapter.

Part One Results

Responses to items in Part 1 of the survey instrument are reported and then discussed briefly in this section of Chapter IV. Salient information is offered and then put into perspective by the researcher. Each survey item is identified and then followed by subject response summaries as follows:

1. Your gender

130 Female 36 Male (22%)

Item 1. The gender ratio suggests that there are considerably more female foreign language teachers who

belong to the association. This ratio may represent the field as well.

2. Your age

9 21-30; 42 31-40; 74 41-50; 29 51-60; 12 61 plus

Item 2. Sixty-nine percent of the respondents are over 41 years old and 25 percent are over 51 years old. With one quarter of the respondents approaching retirement age within the next ten years, the profession would need to be concerned about possible teacher shortages in this field.

3. How many TOTAL years of experience do you have as a foreign language teacher? (Check one)

6 0-4; 20 5-9; 36 10-15; 44 16-20; 60 21 plus

Item 3. As a group, the respondents have considerable foreign language teaching experience with almost 63 percent of the respondents having 16 or more years of foreign language teaching experience.

4. Which is your most advanced degree?

30 B.A.; 95 M.A., M.A.T., M.Ed.; 41 Beyond Master Level

Item 4. More than 80 percent (81%) of the respondents hold degrees beyond the Bachelor's category. This figure suggests a high level of professional degree status with this group.

5. Which language(s) are you currently teaching? (Check all that apply.)

<u>79</u> French	<u>117</u> Spanish	<u>0</u> Arabic
<u>5</u> German	<u>1</u> Russian	<u>4</u> Other
<u>6</u> Italian	<u>0</u> Japanese	(Portuguese)
<u>16</u> Latin	<u>0</u> Chinese	

Item 5. The responses to the question on the languages which the teachers are currently teaching seemed to correspond with enrollment trends in the area with 70 percent (117 respondents) answering Spanish. The item total exceeds 166 because respondents were asked to indicate all that apply. The sample group included some persons who teach more than one language. There were 228 language responses for 166 persons.

6. At which grade level(s) are you currently teaching?

10 elementary 26 middle school 13 junior high
22 junior/senior high 109 senior high

Item 6. More than half of the respondents (109 of 66%) teach at the senior high school level. Thirty-nine teachers answered middle or junior high school, and ten answered elementary. The total exceeds 166 because some respondents teach at more than one level. Massachusetts has some regional schools for grades 7-12. In such schools, language teachers often teach one language across six grade levels. The low response for elementary school indicates the small number of programs at this grade level. This is a grade level which is often negatively impacted in times of budget cuts.

7. Which of the following best describes your school or district?

38 urban 109 suburban 17 rural

8. Which of the following describes your school?

125 public 30 private 11 independent

Items 7 and 8. Just under one quarter (23%) of the respondents describe their school or district as urban and 75 percent of the respondents teach in public schools.

9. What is your current position? (Check all that apply.)

- 134 full-time language teacher
- 21 part-time teacher of foreign language
- 3 full-time teacher with part-time language assignment
- 33 department chairperson
- 2 district supervisor/coordinator
- 3 other

Item 9. Most respondents (134) described themselves as full-time language teachers, with 33 of the group serving as department chairpersons.

10. In which geographical area of Massachusetts do you work?

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <u>66</u> Greater Boston | <u>30</u> Central Massachusetts |
| <u>19</u> Northeast | <u>16</u> Springfield Area |
| <u>31</u> Southeast | <u>3</u> Berkshire Area |

Item 10. These results suggest that almost one half (82) of the respondents live either in the Boston or Springfield areas.

11. Indicate the professional language associations to which you belong. (Check all that apply.)

- | | | |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------------------------|
| <u>49</u> AATF | <u>164</u> MaFLA | <u>18</u> Local Collaborative |
| <u>5</u> AATG | <u>52</u> ACTFL | <u>11</u> CANE |
| <u>4</u> AATI | <u>0</u> TESOL | <u>21</u> Other |
| <u>43</u> AATSP | <u>12</u> CAM | |

Item 11. Professional membership is quite high in this group. A total of 375 professional language memberships were indicated for 166 persons with the greatest number (164) being members of the Massachusetts Foreign Language Association (MaFLA), and 18 being members of a local collaborative. The membership in the AATSP is not high (43) when one considers the number of respondents who teach Spanish (117). It is possible that some of the 117 teachers of Spanish teach French and Spanish, with Spanish as their second teaching preference. The AATF membership is high (49) given that 79 teachers indicate French as a teaching assignment.

12. Please check the names of the organizations of which you have attended AT LEAST ONE MEETING in the past two years.

<u>28</u>	AATF	<u>2</u>	AATG	<u>2</u>	AATI	<u>16</u>	AATSP
<u>140</u>	MaFLA	<u>7</u>	CANE	<u>9</u>	CAM	<u>0</u>	TESOL
<u>2</u>	MATSOL	<u>27</u>	ACTFL				
<u>34</u>	Northeast Conference						
<u>31</u>	Local Foreign Language Teachers' Collaborative						

Item 12. Attendance at professional meetings appears to be a high priority among the sample group, with 140 respondents indicating attendance at at least one meeting of the Massachusetts Foreign Language Association in the last two years. At least one collaborative meeting was attended by 31 respondents in this time period. Thirty-four (34) teachers have attended at least one Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages in the past two years.

This figure is high when one considers that this meeting is usually held in New York City for a three-day period and can be fairly expensive. Twenty-seven (27) respondents have attended one meeting of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). This is a high figure for a national meeting and may be because Boston was the site of this conference in 1989. Attendance at language specific meetings was lower than at generic language meetings.

13. Does your school (or district) support financial your attendance at professional meetings (at least one per year)?

55 yes, fully; 53 yes, partially; 57 no

Item 13. The responding teachers seem to enjoy fairly good school or district support for professional activities with 108 teachers responding that their school or district fully or partially supports financially their attendance at a minimum of one professional meeting annually. The school or districts seem to support the professional growth and development of these respondents.

14. Does your school (or district) pay for your membership in professional language organizations?

24 yes, fully; 14 yes, partially; 128 no

Item 14. Seventy-seven percent of the respondents pay for their own memberships in professional associations with 38 having memberships paid by the school or district. Most professional associations require membership as a condition of attendance at conferences. These respondents are, in

effect, cost sharing their professional activities with their school or district.

15. Have you at any point in your career participated in a foreign language methods course or workshop for the grade level at which you are teaching?

148 yes; 18 no

Item 15. Almost all of the respondents (148) indicated that they had participated in at least one foreign language methodology course or workshop for the grade level at which they teach.

16. Please indicate the nature of the experience referred to in the previous question. (Check all that apply.)

87 methods course as a student
70 methods course while teaching (summer)
61 methods course while teaching (school year)
81 in-service workshop

Item 16. The nature of these methodology experiences was fairly evenly divided among the stated options. The 166 respondents indicated a total of 299 experiences, or 1.8 per respondent.

17. Does your school or district have a regular program of in-service education for teachers?

103 yes; 63 no

Item 17. More than one half of the respondents (103) indicated that their school or district has a regular program of in-service education meetings.

18. If you answered yes to question 17, please indicate the number of meetings held annually.

48 0-3; 33 4-6; 17 7-10; 6 more than 10

Item 18. The majority (81) of those teachers having access to regular in-service programs indicated that between 0 and 6 meetings are held yearly.

19. How many of these meetings are in the area of foreign language education?

6 75-100%; 1 50-74%; 7 25-49%; 91 0-24%

Item 19. Of these meetings, only seven respondents stated that between 50 and 100 percent of the meetings are in the area of foreign language education. This figure suggests that the in-service education meetings focus on generic education topics and issues.

20. Is attendance at these meetings required?

69 yes; 23 no; 14 unsure

Item 20. Forty-one percent of the respondents indicated that attendance at the in-service meetings is required.

21. Please select from the issues listed below the 3 topics which are most important to you as areas of in-service education. Rank order the 3 selected topics from 1 to 3 (1 = most important).

- teaching culture
- program development
- testing and evaluation
- grouping techniques
- multilevel classes
- oral proficiency
- language learning theory
- promoting and maintaining interest in language study
- instructional aids: computer, language lab, video
- student as learner

Item 21. The item asked the respondents to select and rank order the three most important topics of in-service concern. When one reviews the results, one finds the following order of importance:

Oral proficiency;

Promoting and maintaining interest in language study;

Program development;

Instructional aids;

Teaching of culture.

Massachusetts teachers seem to be interested in recent developments in teaching for proficiency. As teachers of largely elective subjects, language teachers must address issues of promotion and maintenance of student interest in language study, and program development. Interest in instructional aids may be in response to the emerging role of technology in education. Concern for the teaching of culture suggests that language teachers are interested in multiculturalism and the lifestyle of the speakers of the languages which they teach.

Cooper (1985) reported a rank order as follows from the respondents:

Testing and evaluation;

Promoting and maintaining interest in language study;

Language learning theory;

Oral proficiency;

Program development.

The only items not appearing among the first five concerns for both groups were: testing and evaluation (ranked first in the 1985 Cooper study) and language learning theory (ranked third in the 1985 Cooper study).

Cooper did not use a checklist format. His respondents were asked for a free response about professional concerns. Because of this difference in question style, one cannot draw firm comparisons from the results. One can say that the two groups seem to share some issues of professional concern.

22. Please select from the in-service activities listed below the 5 activity types which you consider to be the most valuable. Rank order your 5 selected activities from 1 to 5 (1 = most important).

TYPE OF ACTIVITY

professional reading

collegial discussions

district meetings

department meetings

Collaborative meetings

summer institutes/workshops

after-school workshops

advanced language classes

chaperoning of trips abroad

target language conversation with others

visits to classes of colleagues

videotaping of classes for review

state conference attendance

regional conference attendance

national conference attendance

methodology courses

general education courses

courses on contemporary culture

Item 22. Among the listing of possible types of teacher professional development the respondents rated as most valuable are: travel to target language country; summer institute/workshops; target language conversations; collegial discussions; visits to classes of colleagues; and state conference attendance. General education courses received the fewest favorable ratings. National conference attendance did not receive a very high rating.

23. How familiar are you with the concepts of teaching for proficiency?

45 very; 98 somewhat; 21 not very

Item 23. Most respondents (133) answered that they were either somewhat or very familiar with the concepts of teaching for proficiency.

24. How have you gained the familiarity which you indicated in question 23? (Check all that apply.)

106 professional reading

103 workshop attendance

98 discussions with colleagues

37 school and/or district meetings

26 college or university course

104 conference attendance

Item 24. Respondents indicated that they had gained this familiarity from professional reading, workshop attendance, collegial discussion, and conference attendance. College or university courses and school or district meetings were checked the least often. This response seems to suggest

that awareness of new trends in foreign language education is coming through professional association activities, collegial discussion, or personal reading, rather than through the established university courses or school/district in-service education programs.

25. What has been the TOTAL time of your exposure to the concepts of teaching for proficiency?

<u>66</u>	two days or less	<u>42</u>	3 days to 1 week	<u>47</u>	more than 1 week
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Item 25. About one quarter of the respondents (47) indicated that they had had one week or more of total exposure time to the concepts of teaching for proficiency. This figure is impressive when one considers that the group might be considered to be more professionally active than their colleagues and is self-selected by membership in a professional association. Proficiency concepts have been under discussion in the field for almost ten years. Yet, just over one quarter of the 166 respondents have had one week or more total of exposure time to a concept that requires considerable contact time and modification of classroom practices.

26. Are you a certified Oral Proficiency Tester?

<u>3</u>	yes;	<u>158</u>	no
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If yes, in which language(s)? 3 Spanish

Item 26. Three respondents indicated that they were certified as Oral Proficiency Testers. All are certified in Spanish. This certification program is a voluntary and rigorous training undertaking to certify testers to

administer the Oral Proficiency Interview as designed by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). The intensive four-day training program is expensive (\$595.00 est. for training, not including living expenses). The certification process requires the recording and rating of 25 follow-up oral interviews done by the trainee. Tapes and ratings obtained are reviewed by a trainer who determines whether or not the applicant has the skills required for certification. It is not assumed nor required that all foreign language teachers become certified interviewers. It is hoped that a geographic area will have an adequate number of trained testers.

Profiles of Respondents by Sub-Groups

In addition to the general profile of the sample group, the researcher summarized and reported data pertaining to specific characteristics of the sample. The categories included were: years of experience as a foreign language teacher; degree status; language(s) taught; grade level(s) of current teaching assignment; kind of community in which school is located; and familiarity with concepts of teaching for proficiency.

Total Years of Experience as a Foreign Language Teacher

What differences, if any, were found in the group when one looked at total years of foreign language teaching experience (item 3)? For this review, the researcher divided the total number into two groups: up to and

including nine years of experience (26), and 10 years or more of experience (140).

Seventy-seven percent (77%) of the teachers in the more experienced group have an advanced degree, with 54 percent of the less experienced group holding an advanced degree. This difference suggests that foreign language teacher access to an advanced degree comes later in the career.

As to language(s) currently taught by these two groups, the researcher will discuss Spanish and French, the most frequent responses. Both experience groups include a high percentage of Spanish and French teachers. This fact may be due to increasing enrollments in Spanish causing more hiring in Spanish, and more reassignments in Spanish. This response is impacted by the number of multiple language responses.

In Item 7, one sees that more experienced teachers (78%) work in suburban and rural schools than less experienced teachers (65%). This figure may suggest that urban schools hire less experienced teachers and/or that teachers with more experience move to suburban/rural locations.

There were no major differences between the two groups on the number of professional language association memberships (Item 11).

The more experienced group does seem more professionally active on the item of meeting attendance (12), averaging 1.86 meetings per respondent with the less

experienced group averaging 1.54 meetings per respondent. It is possible that this difference could be explained by the leadership role assumed more likely by senior staff members as chairpersons within a school/district. In many districts, chairpersons are required or expected to attend meetings as part of the job description. The chairperson may be the only district participant eligible for district funds for meeting attendance. Senior staff members are often given permission and funding priority. This priority system can work to the disadvantage of newer staff members for conference days, released time, and financial support.

What in-service issues are important to the two subgroups? Both groups rank oral proficiency, promoting and maintaining interest in language study, program development, and instructional aids as among the most important issues. For the less experienced group, the student as learner is also important. The more experienced group ranked the teaching of culture as of great interest.

If one views this response from a practical point of view, all teachers of elective subjects must be concerned about student interest. Student interest translates into course enrollments, which translates into staffing needs and positions. Less experienced teachers have reason to be concerned about student interest. However, all language teachers must address this issue to maintain course enrollments in the less commonly taught languages and in upper-level courses.

Both experience groups value summer institutes and workshops, travel to target language country, target language conversation with others, and visits to the classes of colleagues as types of professional development activities (Item 22). The less experienced group also rated courses on contemporary culture as important sources of professional growth. The more experienced group noted state conference attendance as important. The importance given to state conference attendance is consistent with the slightly higher meeting attendance figures for the more experienced group.

Summer institutes and workshops are among the few opportunities for foreign language teachers to participate in any in-depth foreign language specific professional development programs. State, federal, and private support for such programs has increased in recent years after many years of inactivity. Teachers seem to be responding favorably to this increase. These in-depth programs allow for serious treatment of issues.

Foreign language teachers' interest in opportunities to use their language skills outside of the classroom is addressed by the value given to travel to target language countries and target language conversations with others. These two types of professional growth activities seem to be generally well regarded by foreign language professionals who are anxious to use the language outside of the classroom in more real world settings. Types of professional growth

which were generally less appreciated by both groups were: district meetings, after-school workshops, national conference attendance, and general education courses.

Responses to Item 23 on familiarity with the concepts of teaching for proficiency reveal that more respondents in the more experienced group (30%) consider themselves to be very familiar with these concepts. Thirty percent (30%) of the respondents in the less experienced group indicated contact time of one week or more while 29 percent of the more experienced group indicated a contact time of one week or more. This similar response suggests that less experienced teachers are keeping as up-to-date on current trends as the more experienced teachers.

Advanced Degree Status

Item 4 on degree categories reveals that 136 respondents have earned a Master's or other advanced degree. Do holders of advanced degrees have different characteristics than holders of Bachelor's degrees?

When one considers grade level(s) of employment, between 28 and 30 percent of both degree groups teach in elementary, middle, or junior high schools. The holders of Bachelor's degrees average just over two professional language memberships each (2.06), while advanced degree holders average 2.36 memberships. The advanced degree holders, however, attend conferences slightly more often, with an average of 1.95 per respondent compared to 1.2 for those in the Bachelor's degree category.

In-service topics which were highly valued by both groups (Item 21) were: oral proficiency, promoting and maintaining interest in language study, and program development. The Bachelor's degree holders value also language learning theory and the importance of the student as learner, while instructional aids and the teaching of culture are important to advanced degree holders. Both groups consider summer institutes and workshops, travel to target language country, target language conversation with others, and collegial discussions as important types of professional development (Item 22). The Bachelor's degree holders also noted courses on contemporary culture as valuable in-service education, while the advanced degree holders valued visits to the classes of colleagues.

Forty-five holders of advanced degrees consider themselves as very familiar with the concepts of teaching for proficiency (29%). Forty-two members of this group indicated an exposure time of one week or more. Only 17 percent of the Bachelor's group consider themselves to be very familiar with the concepts, with the same percent having recorded one week or more of exposure to the concepts.

Language(s) Currently Being Taught

Do language teachers differ by language taught in any of the areas addressed in this survey? When describing this group by language(s) taught, it is essential to remember that 228 languages were reported by 166 respondents because

some respondents teach more than one language. This is a common practice in all types of schools. An applicant's ability to teach more than one language can be a true asset in the job market. Some schools prefer to hire language teachers with several certifications and/or proficiencies as insurance for possible shifts in enrollment patterns. In this section, only responses from teachers of French (79), Spanish (117), and Latin (16) will be discussed. Even though the Latin response group is small, it was the third highest response group.

The three language teacher groups are active professionally with the Latin teacher group recording the most professional language memberships and conference attendances. French teachers noted 2.18 memberships and 1.71 conference attendances. Spanish teachers noted 2.16 memberships and 1.72 attendances. The Latin teachers exceeded both groups, with 3.18 memberships including French, Latin, Spanish, and generic language associations. Latin teachers recorded the highest meeting attendance average, with 2.56 attendances per Latin teacher. These figures suggest a very high degree of professional activity in the Latin teacher group. It is possible that some Latin teachers also teach another language. This may account for some of the additional professional activity.

In the area of issues of professional concern for in-service education, the three groups agree on the importance of program development, oral proficiency, and the promotion

and maintenance of interest in language study. The teachers of French and of Spanish are interested in instructional aids. Teachers of Spanish and Latin share an interest in learning more about the student as learner, while teachers of French and Latin agree on the need for more knowledge about the teaching of culture.

The three language groups rated travel to target language country, summer institutes/workshops, and visits to classes of colleagues as valuable sources of professional growth. Teachers of French and Spanish valued also target language conversations. Teachers of French and Latin valued collegial discussions, and teachers of Latin and Spanish valued state conference attendance.

One sees again in this section the teachers' interest in opportunities to use their language outside of the classroom setting. It is interesting to note that the more traditional formats of in-service education using district meetings, workshops, and courses were not chosen often as preferred formats. General education courses, district meetings, and national conferences were chosen the least often by these three language group respondents.

Approximately one quarter of the three language groups (French - 23%, Latin - 25%, and Spanish - 27%) consider themselves to be very familiar with the concepts of teaching for proficiency. These responses are fairly consistent with the responses to item 25 about exposure time to these concepts. Twenty-four percent of the French teachers, 31

percent of the Latin teachers, and 26 percent of the Spanish teachers indicated exposure time of one week or more to the concepts. The three respondents who are certified are teachers of Spanish who are certified in Spanish. These three teachers would have had more contact time as part of their training for this certification process.

Grade Level(s) of Current Teaching Assignment

Do respondents differ by the grade level(s) of their current teaching assignment? In the area of professional involvement, the elementary and senior high school respondents record more professional language memberships (2.6 and 2.37 respectively). The elementary school foreign language teachers recorded more conference attendance (2.4) than any other category of respondent.

The elementary and junior/senior high school response groups recorded at least one methods course or workshop per person for the grade level at which they teach. The response from the elementary group is quite interesting in that such methods opportunities are rare for elementary school teachers. When one examines the type of experience considered (Item 16), one finds that no elementary teacher indicated a methods course as a student. All of the responses were post-college or -university education and were summer or after-school courses or in-service workshop activities. The elementary response group is small and might not be considered to be representative of the group. This information, however, is consistent with the

researcher's knowledge of the situation. In Massachusetts, this specific area of need is addressed regularly by the Massachusetts Foreign Language Association with the sponsorship of summer workshops and pre-conference workshops for elementary teachers. Teacher training programs at the pre-service level rarely address this grade level in foreign language methodology.

The only in-service topic of mutual interest for these five groups is oral proficiency. All teachers, except the elementary group, expressed considerable interest in promoting and maintaining interest in language study. The elementary and junior/high school teachers expressed interest in program development, and the elementary and middle school teachers shared an interest in the teaching of culture.

The five grade level groups valued summer institutes and workshops and state conference attendance as types of in-service education. All groups except the elementary level teachers expressed support for collegial discussions and travel to target language countries as sources of professional growth. It is not surprising that elementary school foreign language teachers did not rate collegial discussions as highly as other teachers. Elementary language teachers are often the only foreign language teacher in the school, in several schools, or even in the community. They do not often work with other elementary foreign language teachers except in larger programs, or in

larger communities. Because these teachers may not have regular contact with other language teachers, they may undervalue the significance of this type of professional growth activity. These teachers lead a somewhat isolated existence in that they cannot discuss their work regularly with knowledgeable colleagues as other teachers are able to do. The elementary teachers selected professional reading, district meetings, and Collaborative meetings as valued types of in-service activities. This is the only group which rated professional reading highly. This result is interesting when one considers that there are only two or three publications which address exclusively elementary issues. Elementary school topics and issues are not often found in general foreign language education publications.

Senior high school teachers rated visits to classes of colleagues highly. This high value may be because these teachers often work within the largest groupings of foreign language teachers. As a result, such visits are more easily arranged.

Kind of Community

In the category of kind of community in which the school is located, the responses were: 38 urban, 109 suburban, and 17 rural. In the areas of professional involvement, both the urban and suburban respondents recorded more than two professional memberships (2.24 for urban teachers and 2.39 for suburban teachers) with the rural average lower at 1.82. Meeting attendance is about

the same, with 1.59 for rural, 1.74 for urban, and 1.84 for suburban teachers. The three groups of foreign language teachers are fairly active professionals in the areas of memberships and conferences.

The three groups reported that their schools or districts have a regular program of in-service education. The figures ranged from 58 percent for urban teachers to 62 percent for suburban teachers, and 65 percent for rural teachers. Seventy-seven percent of the urban teachers reported that they have six or fewer meetings annually with 18 percent of these meetings reported as specific to foreign language education. A comparable number of suburban teachers (76%) reported having access to six or fewer meetings annually with only three percent of these meetings specific to foreign language education. Rural teachers reported more meetings annually with just under one half (45%) reporting six or fewer meetings annually. None of the meetings reported by rural teachers were designated as foreign language specific. These figures would seem to suggest that schools/districts are not meeting the subject area specific needs of their foreign language teachers. It would seem that these teachers must look outside of their districts to address their foreign language education concerns. The foreign language collaboratives and the state foreign language association would seem to have a major role to play in supporting foreign language teachers in this area of need.

Three topics are of shared professional concern for in-service education: oral proficiency, program development, and promoting and maintaining interest in language study. The three groups value mutually certain types of professional growth activities: summer institutes and workshops, travel to target language countries, target language conversations with others, and visits to the classes of colleagues. Urban and suburban teachers value collegial discussions. Suburban and rural teachers value state conference attendance. Urban teachers value visits to the classes of colleagues. It is not surprising that rural teachers value foreign language collaborative meetings because these regional in-state meetings offer some foreign language teachers their only regular contact with other language teachers. These meetings may be the most regular professional growth opportunity available to rural teachers. There was little support among respondents for district meetings, videotaping of classes, national conferences, or general education courses as sources of in-service education activities.

Familiarity with the Concepts of Oral Proficiency

When asked about their familiarity with the concepts of teaching for proficiency, 45 respondents indicated that they felt very familiar, 98 indicated that they were somewhat familiar, and 21 self reported as not very familiar. For the very familiar category, the most frequently noted sources for this familiarity were, in order of choice:

workshop attendance, conference attendance, professional reading, and collegial discussions. The respondents in the somewhat familiar category indicated the order of their sources of familiarity as conference attendance, professional reading, workshop attendance, and collegial discussion. The respondents in the not very familiar category indicated professional reading, collegial discussions, conference attendance and workshops as sources. School/district meetings and college or university courses were selected least often by all three groups of respondents. These figures suggest that most in-service teachers have learned about the concepts of teaching for proficiency outside of their school/district and after their pre-service education.

Of the 45 very familiar respondents, 67 percent indicated a total exposure time to teaching for proficiency concepts of one week or more, while only 16 percent of the somewhat familiar category have a total exposure of one week or more. Thirty percent of the somewhat familiar respondents indicated a total exposure time of three days to one week. Seventy-one percent of the not very familiar respondents have two days or less contact time. The self-reporting here seems to reflect reasonable expectations of familiarity based on contact time.

Additional Sub-group Results

The data revealed results about other sub-groups of respondents which are reported here.

Do public school foreign language teachers have different characteristics than private or independent school teachers? The data in this study do not offer a consistent picture of the three groups. Independent school foreign language teachers belong to more professional foreign language associations (2.72) than public (2.28) or private (2.2) school foreign language teachers. There may be a relationship here as to institutional support of memberships. Twenty-three percent of both independent and private school teachers indicated that their school supported fully or partially their memberships in professional associations. Only six percent of the public school teachers indicated such support. The membership average, however, suggests that public school teachers demonstrate considerable professionalism in this area, given the great difference in institutional support.

When one examines the data on attendance at professional foreign language meetings one finds that the average meeting attendance figure is higher for independent school teachers (2.27) than for either private (1.93) or public (1.72) school teachers. When one looks at these data in light of institutional support for conference attendance, one finds that 91 percent of the independent school teachers reported full or partial financial support for conference attendance. Eighty-six percent of the private school teachers indicated such support. Only 59 percent of the public school teachers indicated any financial support for

conference attendance. Teachers seem to attend more meetings when there is some institutional support. The professional membership and conference attendance data for public school teachers are good when one examines the figures in light of the lack of financial support provided by their institutions.

Does the role of the teacher in the school organization influence their professional involvement as measured by meeting attendance and memberships? This study seems to suggest that there is no difference based on role.

Classroom teachers reported a professional membership average of 2.28, with chairpersons/supervisors reporting 2.66. Classroom teachers reported attending 1.82 conferences, with chairpersons/supervisors reporting 1.83. One might have expected more professional activity on the part of chairpersons/supervisors than these data suggest.

Do the foreign language teachers in different parts of the state engage in different levels of professional activity? Boston area teachers reported the highest number of professional memberships (2.55). Northeast, southeast, and Springfield area teachers reported 2 or more memberships (2.26, 2.0, and 2.0, respectively). Central Massachusetts and the Berkshires area teachers reported the fewest memberships (1.12 and 1.67, respectively). Boston and Springfield area teachers reported attendance at more meetings (2.09 and 2.1, respectively) than other teachers. Area attendance figures in descending order are Northeast

(1.68), Central Massachusetts (1.43), Southeast (1.39), and Berkshires (1.33). Boston and Springfield area teachers seem to be the more professionally active in memberships and conference attendances than their colleagues in other areas. Some of this increased activity may be the result of the availability of more professional opportunities for foreign language teachers in these larger areas of the state.

Do foreign language teachers have access to a great deal of in-service education in Massachusetts? How much foreign language specific in-service education is available to foreign language teachers? The answers to both questions would seem to be not much. Of the 103 teachers (63%) reporting that their school/district offered a regular program of in-service education, 75 percent indicated six or fewer meetings annually. Eighty-three percent of the respondents reported that fewer than one quarter of the meetings were foreign language specific. These figures would suggest that school/district provided in-service education programs do not offer many opportunities to foreign language teachers to remain current in their field.

Part Two Results

The 20-item Likert Scale included statements designed to ascertain the respondents' attitudes about the value of certain classroom practices. These responses depict opinions of the sample group pertaining to practices associated either with the teaching for proficiency approach

or with more traditional approaches to foreign language learning.

The numerical ratings used in the data gathering are as follows:

SA = 1; A = 2; U = 3; D = 4; and, SD = 5.

The teaching for proficiency worded items address the issues of:

real communication in introductory levels (1),
role play activities (3),
personalized question activities (6),
listening for general ideas activity (8),
survey and poll-taking activities (10),
non-verbal response activities (11),
mini oral interviews (16),
personal interviews with reporting back (17),
success of communication used as evaluation tool (19),
and
evaluation procedures to include communication
activities (20).

Agreement with these items would suggest that the respondent is in agreement with the concepts and strategies of a proficiency-based approach. As Table 3 indicates, there was general respondent agreement with the pro-proficiency statements.

The items worded in a manner to suggest a more traditional grammar approach address the issues of:

importance of grammar mechanics (2),

Table 3

Teaching for Proficiency Statements (n = 166)

	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
1. Introductory level language classes should include activities involving real communication.	143 (86.1)	17 (10.2)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
3. Students can demonstrate language proficiency in structured role-play activities in early stages of language learning.	0 (0)	2 (1.2)	3 (1.8)	39 (23.5)	116 (69.0)
6. Personalized question activities are appropriate for introductory level language classes.	94 (56.6)	60 (36.1)	3 (1.8)	2 (1.2)	1 (0.6)
8. Activities which focus on listening for the general idea help students improve their listening comprehension skills.	66 (39.8)	88 (53.0)	5 (3.0)	1 (0.6)	1 (0)

Continued on the next page.

Table 3, continued:

	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
11. Non-verbal response activities are appropriate in foreign language classes.	36 (21.7)	88 (53.0)	21 (12.7)	12 (7.2)	4 (2.4)
16. Mini oral interviews can be used with success in early level classes.	61 (36.7)	93 (56.0)	6 (3.6)	1 (0.6)	0 (0)
17. Personal interviews with report back procedures are good techniques for language classes.	46 (27.7)	91 (54.8)	22 (13.2)	1 (0.6)	1 (0.6)
19. Teachers should evaluate communication activities by the success of the communication.	28 (16.9)	97 (58.4)	17 (10.2)	18 (10.8)	1 (0.6)
20. Teachers should include some communication activities in student evaluation procedures at all levels of instruction.	86 (51.8)	72 (43.4)	3 (1.8)	0 (0)	0 (0)

student ability to personalize in advanced classes only (4),
translation as the best evaluation of reading comprehension (5),
lack of value of native language paraphrasing (7),
student inability to respond freely to personalized questions in early levels (9),
importance of knowing every word in a reading selection (12),
student inability to speak about immediate surroundings at early levels (13),
lack of value of paired activities (14),
student inability to communicate until levels 3 or 4 (15), and
value of error correction.

Disagreement with these items would suggest that the teacher is in agreement with the concepts and strategies of a proficiency-based approach and in disagreement with a grammatical or traditional approach. As the following Table 4 indicates, there was general disagreement with the statements supporting a grammatical or traditional approach.

Responses to items 7, 10, and 18 resulted in the greater answer variation with more respondents selecting the Undecided category than in other items. Possible explanations for this occurrence include: lack of familiarity with the techniques listed (native language

Table 4

Traditional Grammar Approach Statements (n=166)

	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
2. In introductory classes students should focus only on the grammar mechanics of the language.	0 (0)	2 (1.2)	3 (1.8)	39 (23.5)	116 (64.9)
4. Students are <u>not</u> able to use language in a personalized way until they reach advanced classes.	2 (1.2)	1 (0.6)	5 (3.0)	54 (32.5)	98 (59.0)
5. Direct translation into the native language is the most effective way to evaluate reading comprehension skills.	1 (0.6)	7 (4.2)	13 (7.8)	77 (46.4)	62 (37.3)
9. Students are <u>not</u> able to give free responses to personalized questions in introductory classes.	0 (0)	7 (4.2)	8 (4.8)	77 (46.4)	68 (41.0)
12. Teachers must be certain that students are able to understand every word in a					

Continued on the next page.

Table 4, continued:

	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
reading passage before using it in a class.	0 (0)	1 (0.6)	3 (1.8)	74 (44.6)	83 (50.0)
13. Introductory level students are <u>not</u> able to speak about their immediate surroundings.	2 (1.2)	4 (2.4)	2 (1.2)	82 (49.4)	71 (42.8)
14. Paired student activities are <u>not</u> productive uses of language class time.	1 (0.6)	1 (0.6)	7 (4.2)	52 (31.3)	100 (60.2)
15. It is only after 3 or 4 years of language study that a student is able to begin to communicate in the language.	0 (0)	3 (1.8)	1 (0.6)	58 (34.9)	99 (59.6)

paraphrasing, survey and poll taking, error correction); or lack of clarity in the item writing.

Table 5 lists the greatest diversity of responses among respondents. Responses to Item 18 resulted in considerable spread of opinion among the 166 respondents. The question addresses the value of regular error correction and is one which continues to generate much discussion and disagreement among foreign language professionals. Those who espouse the concepts of teaching for proficiency tend to down-play the value of regular error correction as do less than one half (72) of the members of this group. About one third (56) of this group seems to believe that regular error correction is effective. Thirty-three respondents (19.9%) were undecided on this issue.

Because of researcher interest in responses by teachers with varying exposure time to the concepts of teaching for proficiency, the researcher compared the responses to Item 23 with the Likert scale responses. The researcher reviewed Item 23 in Part 1, which asks respondents to self report about their familiarity with the concepts of teaching for proficiency in relationship to the Likert scale items. Eighty percent of the respondents who see themselves as not very familiar with the teaching for proficiency concepts make pro-proficiency practice statements to 16 of the 20 items. Eighty percent of the somewhat familiar group make pro-proficiency statements to 17 items. Eighty percent of the very familiar group make pro-proficiency statements to

Table 5

Greatest Diversity of Response Statements

	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
7. Native language paraphrasing is <u>not</u> an acceptable way to evaluate reading comprehension.	4 (2.4)	19 (11.4)	33 (19.9)	71 (42.8)	33 (19.9)
10. Survey and poll-taking activities are suitable for introductory-level classes	35 (21.1)	61 (36.7)	50 (30.1)	10 (6.0)	4 (2.4)
18. The most effective way to prevent student repetition of grammatical errors is regular error correction by the teacher.	4 (2.4)	52 (31.3)	33 (19.9)	62 (37.3)	10 (6.0)

14 items. There appears to be a negative relationship between the amount of self-reported familiarity and the number of agreements with proficiency classroom practices in this comparison.

Table 6 outlines familiarity with proficiency concepts among respondents, and Table 7 outlines total exposure time to teaching for proficiency concepts among respondents. The researcher reviewed the relationship between responses to Item 25 in Part 1 and the Likert scale items in Part 2 of the survey. Item 25 asks the respondents to indicate their total exposure time to the concepts of teaching for proficiency with three categories of responses, less than two days, three days to one week, and one week or more. The researcher found that the three groups of respondents answered in a manner indicating their preference for pro-proficiency based instruction in at least 13 of the 20 situations. Eighty percent of the respondents made pro-proficiency based instruction statements to between 13 and 15 of the 20 Likert scale situations.

There are at least two possible explanations for this similarity of pro-proficiency based instruction responses from teachers who self-report varying degrees of exposure to and familiarity with the concepts of teaching for proficiency. One explanation is that respondents selected what they thought to be the "correct," "current," or "in fashion" response to the statements. The researcher does not know if these attitudes carry over into classroom

Table 6

Familiarity with Proficiency Concepts

Q23. How familiar are you with the concepts of teaching for proficiency?

45 very; 98 somewhat; 21 not very
 (36=80%) (78=80%) (17=80%)

	V	S	NV
L1	41*	96*	21*
L2	41*	94*	19*
L3	39*	92*	20*
L4	38*	92*	20*
L5	36*	84*	17*
L6	40*	92*	20*
L7	22	65	16
L8	38*	93*	21*
L9	37*	86*	20*
L10	27	56	13
L11	30	78*	15
L12	38*	95*	21*
L13	39*	92*	20*
L14	39*	91*	20*
L15	30	94*	21*
L16	39*	92*	21*
L17	37*	81*	19*
L18	18	49	5
L19	31	75	17*
L20	41*	95*	20*

* = pro teaching for proficiency concept responses

Table 7

Total Exposure Time to Proficiency Concepts

Q25. What has been the TOTAL time of your exposure to the concepts of teaching for proficiency?

<u>66</u>	2 days or less	(80% = 53)
<u>42</u>	4 days to 1 week	(80% = 34)
<u>47</u>	2 weeks or more	(80% = 38)

	2 days or less	4 days to 1 week	2 weeks or more
L1	66*	41*	44*
L2	64*	40*	33
L3	64*	38*	43*
L4	62*	40*	41*
L5	55*	37*	39*
L6	65*	36*	44*
L7	45	23	30
L8	62*	41*	42*
L9	63*	41*	38*
L10	35	28	27
L11	50*	32	35
L12	65*	40*	43*
L13	62*	40*	42*
L14	61*	38*	43*
L15	65*	40*	32
L16	52*	39*	43*
L17	53*	37*	38*
L18	26	21	22
L19	48*	34	36
L20	63*	41*	44*

* = pro teaching for proficiency concept responses

practice. Classroom observations would be one way to determine the agreement between the stated attitude and teaching practice.

A second explanation may be a function of the very fact of learning about new concepts and new teaching strategies. All responding teachers indicated a certain amount of exposure to the concepts of teaching for proficiency. In an introductory or familiarization workshop on these concepts, many of the proficiency based strategies would be mentioned and perhaps even explained in detail. As a result, even teachers with little familiarity with a teaching strategy would recognize it as a proficiency-based technique and may agree that it is a good method to use in classroom practice. This does not mean that they practice the strategy or that they know how to practice it. This in-depth knowledge would come only with more exposure to the concepts and to the classroom implications. It may be that only the more familiar teacher group both agrees with and practices the proficiency-based strategies.

Implications of the Study

A stated purpose of this study was the desire to profile the foreign language teacher respondents. Foreign language teachers in Massachusetts who are members of the professional association sampled can be described as:

female;

over 40 years old;

experienced foreign language teachers;
holders of advanced degrees;
teachers of Spanish;
teachers at junior/senior or senior high schools;
teachers in suburban schools;
public school teachers;
full-time foreign language teachers;
active members of professional language associations;
attenders at professional meetings;
participants in methods courses for current grade
level;
working in school districts with regular and required
attendance in-service meetings, with fewer than
one-quarter of the meetings specific for foreign
language teachers;
interested in the following as in-service education
topics: oral proficiency, program development,
promotion and maintenance of interest in
language study, instructional aids, and
the teaching of culture;
valuing the following types of professional growth
activities: travel to target language country,
summer institutes/workshops, target
language conversations, collegial
discussions, visits to classes of
colleagues, and state conference
attendance;

self-reporting as very or somewhat familiar (86%) with the concepts of teaching for proficiency; fairly equally distributed as to amount of exposure time to proficiency concepts; and in general agreement with teaching strategies of proficiency-oriented classrooms as evidenced by their responses to the Part 2 Likert scale items.

While this profile cannot be generalized to all foreign language teachers in Massachusetts, it does seem to suggest a generally healthy climate for foreign language education in the state as evidenced by teachers' professional involvement, awareness of current practices, concern about issues, and agreement with a proficiency-oriented approach to foreign language education.

What is the relationship between this descriptive demographic profile and the planning of in-service training for the foreign language teachers in the state? This group of teachers is active professionally both by association memberships and by meeting attendance. They also seem to have reasonably good district support for their professional growth. The professional development activities sponsored by the language associations seem to have the greatest potential for professional development specific to foreign language education and to the new concepts of teaching for proficiency. Most respondents do not have great access to foreign language in-service opportunities within their

school/district. They need continued access to the broader field of foreign language professional development activities.

In-service topics of interest to this group are oral proficiency, maintenance of interest in language study, program development, instructional aids, and the teaching of culture. The topic area of instructional aids is not specific to a subject area. This interest could be met by generic school/district in-service education on the topics of computer-aided instruction and video production and classroom use. Foreign language teacher involvement in in-service education on such topics would also help language teachers to become more a part of the total school environment.

Respondents expressed support for a number of types of professional activities. A good in-service program might combine visits to the classes of colleagues and state conference attendance with follow-up collegial discussions. This approach would blend the theoretical with the practical and could be offered to teachers of all languages.

The preferences for travel to target language countries and target language conversations with others speak to the desire and need for practice in adult language use on real world topics. Foreign language teachers need opportunities to speak the language with adults outside of the classroom. In this way, foreign language teachers improve and maintain their fluency. The Massachusetts Foreign Language

Association (MaFLA) has offered several series of total immersion workshops and the need seems to continue. These are not the types of needs which disappear. Language teachers at all levels of fluency seem to support these activities.

The interest in visits to classes of colleagues is not difficult to address if one is able to approach the teaching schedule with some creativity. Most teaching schedules offer some non-teaching time either unassigned or with a non-teaching day. A creative teacher, and a cooperative administrator might join forces to plan this type of professional growth activity. This in-service opportunity is present daily in many school situations, yet, in the experience of this researcher, it is underutilized. It assumes a high level of collegiality and professional respect on the part of the teachers involved. It also requires some creativity on the part of all involved.

The teacher respondents are generally in agreement with the concepts of teaching for proficiency. Given this predisposition, they would seem to be receptive to more in-service opportunities on this topic. MaFLA would seem to be a very likely organizing group for such foreign language specific in-service activities. The Association would be well advised to consider continuing to offer the types of in-service opportunities which they have sponsored in the past. These members seem to be in favor of both the topics

and the types of in-service activities which have been offered in the past.

The data suggest that state education officials and the officials of the professional associations in the state might be concerned about some of the demographic information. These officials might wish to do some long-range planning to address these issues:

the small number of teachers in the less commonly taught languages;

the advancing age of the teaching force;

the small number of teachers working at the elementary level because of the small number of programs at this level;

the lack of subject area in-service opportunities provided by school districts; and

the continuing need for in-service opportunities.

These issues, if not addressed, suggest that foreign language opportunities for students in Massachusetts will diminish in quality and in quantity.

C H A P T E R V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Statement of the Problem

The need for Americans to become more globally aware and sophisticated includes the need for more Americans to be more proficient in second and third languages. This task falls on the shoulders of the country's foreign language teachers, many of whom teach at the pre-collegiate level. Little is known about these teachers in a demographic sense. A knowledge gap exists also about their professional activities, their degree of continuing professional growth and about their attitudes about recent developments in foreign language pedagogy. It seemed worthy, therefore, to investigate the attitudes of Massachusetts foreign language teachers toward in-service education and recent theoretical and pedagogical changes in the field of foreign language education.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the study was to obtain information about foreign language teachers' instructional practices, evaluation procedures, and attitudes. One secondary purpose was to obtain relevant demographic and attitudinal data pertaining to the in-service training needs of selected foreign language teachers. Another secondary

purpose was to apply data obtained to in-service training program planning initiatives. A third purpose was to study the relationships between demographic and attitudinal data obtained and in-service training program planning.

Scope and Procedures

One hundred and sixty-six foreign language teachers who were members of the Massachusetts Foreign Language Association comprised the population of the study. A questionnaire developed and previously field tested by the researcher was designed for this study. The survey instrument included questions of a demographic nature and a Likert scale section to solicit attitudes about foreign language classroom practices.

Approximately 200 pre-college level foreign language teachers who were members of the Massachusetts Foreign Language Association received a mailed questionnaire along with a cover letter of explanation and a stamped, self-addressed return envelope. Of these 200 teachers, 166, or 83 percent, returned completed surveys. Returned questionnaires were reviewed, entered into the computer, and analyzed by the Statistical Package for the Social Studies. Statistical treatments included the use of percentages, comparison of selected demographic data, and comparisons between demographic data and Likert scale items.

Summaries and Conclusions

Reviewed first were the demographic data, which described the sampled foreign language teachers in Massachusetts who are members of the professional association as:

female;

over 40 years old;

experienced foreign language teachers;

holders of advanced degrees;

teachers of Spanish;

teachers at junior/senior or senior high schools;

teachers in suburban schools;

public school teachers;

full-time foreign language teachers;

active members of professional language associations;

attenders at professional meetings;

participants in methods courses for current grade level;

working in school districts with regular and required attendance at in-service meetings, with fewer than one-quarter of the meetings specific for foreign language teachers;

interested in the following as in-service education

topics: oral proficiency, program development, promotion and maintenance of interest in

language study, instructional aids, and
the teaching of culture;

valuing the following types of professional growth
activities: travel to target language country,
summer institutes/workshops, target
language conversations, collegial
discussions, visits to classes of
colleagues, and state conference
attendance;

self-reporting as very or somewhat familiar (86%) with
the concepts of teaching for proficiency;

fairly equally distributed as to amount of exposure
time to proficiency concepts; and

in general agreement with teaching strategies of
proficiency-oriented classrooms as evidenced by
their responses to the Part 2 Likert scale items.

While this profile cannot be generalized to all foreign
language teachers in Massachusetts, it does seem to suggest
a healthy climate for foreign language education in the
state, as evidenced by teachers' professional involvement,
awareness of current practices, concern about issues, and
agreement with a proficiency-oriented approach to foreign
language education.

The data suggest that state education officials and
officials of the professional association in the state might
be concerned about some of the demographic information.

These officials might wish to do some long-range planning to address these issues:

the small number of teachers in the less commonly taught languages because there are few programs at this level;

the advancing age of the teaching force;

the small number of teachers working at the elementary level because there are few programs at this level;

the lack of subject area in-service opportunities provided by school districts; and

the continuing need for quality in-service education opportunities.

The data suggest future directions which state education officials and professional association officials might consider as they plan in-service education activities for Massachusetts foreign language teachers.

This respondent group of teachers is active professionally both in association memberships and meeting attendance. They also seem to have reasonably good district support for their professional growth. The professional activities sponsored by the state language association seem to have the greatest potential for professional development specific to foreign language education and to the new concepts of teaching for proficiency. Most respondents do not have much access to foreign language in-service opportunities within their school/districts. They need

continued access to the broader field of foreign language professional development activities.

In-service topics of interest to this group of respondents are oral proficiency; maintenance of interest in language study; program development; instructional aids; and the teaching of culture. The topic area of instructional aids is not specific to a subject area. This interest could be met by generic school/district in-service education on the topic of computer-aided instruction, video production and classroom use, and the use of satellite-received foreign language programs. Foreign language teacher involvement in in-service activities on such topics would also help language teachers to become more a part of the total school environment.

Respondents expressed support for a number of types of professional activities. A good in-service program might combine visits to the classes of colleagues and state conference attendance with follow-up collegial discussions. This approach would blend the theoretical with the practical and could be offered to teachers of all languages.

The expressed preferences for travel to target language countries and target language conversations with others speak to the desire and need for practice in adult language use on real world topics. Foreign language teachers need opportunities to speak the language with adults outside of the classroom. In this way, foreign language teachers improve and maintain their proficiency. The Massachusetts

Foreign Language Association (MaFLA) has offered several series of total immersion workshops, and the need seems to continue. These are not the types of needs which disappear. Language teachers at all levels of fluency seem to support these activities.

The interest in visits to classes of colleagues is not difficult to meet if one is able to approach the teaching schedule with some creativity. Most teaching schedules offer some non-teaching time either unassigned or with a non-teaching day. A creative teacher, and a cooperative administrator might join forces to plan this type of professional growth activity. This in-service opportunity is present daily in many school situations, yet, in the experience of this researcher, it is underutilized. It assumes a high level of collegiality and professional respect on the part of the teachers involved. It also requires some creativity on the part of all involved.

The teacher respondents are generally in agreement with the concepts of teaching for proficiency. Given this predisposition, they would seem to be receptive to more in-service opportunities on this topic. MaFLA would seem to be a very likely organizing group for such foreign language specific in-service activities. The Association would be well advised to consider continuing to offer the types of in-service opportunities which they have sponsored in the past. These members seem to be in favor of both the topics

and the types of in-service activities which have been offered in the past.

Recommendations

Officials of the Massachusetts Foreign Language Association should, during the next several years, continue to:

sponsor high quality annual meetings/conferences with pre-conference workshop sessions of greater depth; sponsor total language immersion experiences and institutes for teachers;

sponsor pedagogy institutes on proficiency-based classroom practices;

co-sponsor study and living abroad experiences with private organizations and foreign government agencies;

co-sponsor workshop and institute opportunities with colleges and universities and state agencies;

inform its membership of study and living abroad opportunities using its publications;

inform its membership about privately and publicly funded institutes and workshops using its publications;

explore new and innovative opportunities to serve its membership and to help foreign language teachers to grow professionally; and

survey Massachusetts foreign language teachers on a periodic basis to determine professional development needs and interests.

Officials of foreign language associations in other states might look to the results of this study to assess the needs of its memberships in the areas of professional growth and development.

APPENDIX A
THE INTRODUCTORY LETTER

40 Dana St.
Springfield, Mass. 01104
October 15, 1989

Dear Foreign Language Colleague:

I am writing to request your help in a statewide survey of foreign language teachers who are members of the Massachusetts Foreign Language Association. This survey will provide me with a picture of the opinions of foreign language teachers about some issues in our field.

In a few days you will be receiving my survey. Please take the time to answer the questionnaire. Your assistance will help me to gather accurate information.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Kathleen M. Riordan
Past President of MaFLA

APPENDIX B
THE COVER LETTER

40 Dana St.
Springfield, Mass. 01104
October 24, 1989

Dear Foreign Language Colleague:

I would greatly appreciate your help. As you know from my letter last week, I am conducting a statewide survey of MaFLA members. By taking about fifteen minutes to fill out the enclosed questionnaire, you will be helping me to develop a picture of the opinions of foreign language teachers about some issues in our field.

You were selected at random from the membership of the Massachusetts Foreign Language Association and are part of a sample representing foreign language teachers in Massachusetts.

Your response is very important to me because it will enable me to obtain an accurate picture of the opinions of Massachusetts foreign language teachers on these issues. Please return the completed survey in the enclosed stamped and addressed envelope, and the separate postcard by NOVEMBER 15, 1989. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely yours,

Kathleen M. Riordan
Past President of MaFLA

Enclosures

APPENDIX C
THE SURVEY INSTRUMENT

FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHER ATTITUDE SURVEY

General Information

Please do not sign your name to the survey. Return the completed survey in the enclosed stamped, self-addressed envelope. Please sign and return the enclosed postcard by separate mail. This procedure will assure the anonymity of your response and enable me to follow up on non-respondents.

Thank you for your cooperation. If you are interested in a summary report of the project results, please indicate your interest on the postcard.

PART 1

Please complete the following part of the questionnaire by checking the appropriate responses.

1. Your gender Female Male
2. Your age: 21-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60,
 61 or more
3. How many TOTAL years of experience do you have as a foreign language teacher? (Check one)
 0-4, 5-9, 10-15, 16-20, 21 or more
4. Which is your most advanced degree?
 BA, MA, MAT, MEd, beyond Master level
5. Which language(s) are you currently teaching? (Check all that apply.)

<input type="checkbox"/> French	<input type="checkbox"/> Spanish	<input type="checkbox"/> Arabic
<input type="checkbox"/> German	<input type="checkbox"/> Russian	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please list)
<input type="checkbox"/> Italian	<input type="checkbox"/> Japanese	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Latin	<input type="checkbox"/> Chinese	_____
6. At which grade level(s) are you currently teaching?
 elementary, middle school, junior high,
 junior/senior high, senior high
7. Which of the following best describes your school or district?
 urban, suburban, rural
8. Which of the following describes your school?
 public, private, independent

9. What is your current position? (Check all that apply.)

- full time language teacher
- part time language teacher
- full time teacher with part time language assignment
- department chairperson
- district supervisor/coordinator
- other (please specify: _____)

10. In which geographical area of Massachusetts do you work?

- Greater Boston
- Northeast
- Southeast
- Central Massachusetts
- Springfield Area
- Berkshire Area

11. Indicate the professional language associations to which you belong. (Check all that apply.)

- AATF
- AATG
- AATI
- AATSP
- MaFLA
- ACTFL
- TESOL
- CAM
- Local Collaborative
- CANE
- Other (Please name) _____

12. Please check the names of the organizations of which you have attended AT LEAST ONE MEETING in the past two years.

- AATF
- MaFLA
- MATSOL
- Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages
- Local Foreign Language Collaborative
- AATG
- CANE
- ACTFL
- AATI
- CAM
- AATSP
- TESOL

13. Does your school (or district) support financially your attendance at professional meetings (at least one per year)?

- yes, fully yes, partially no

14. Does your school (or district) pay for your membership in professional language organizations?

- yes, fully yes, partially no

15. Have you at any point in your career participated in a foreign language methods course or workshop for the grade level at which you are teaching?

- yes, no

16. Please indicate the nature of the experience referred to in the previous question. (Check all that apply.)
- methods course as a student
 - methods course while teaching (summer)
 - methods course while teaching (school year)
 - in-service workshop
17. Does your school or district have a regular program of in-service education for teachers?
- yes, no
18. If you answered yes to question 17, please indicate the number of meetings held annually.
- 0-3, 4-6, 7-10, more than 10
19. How many of these meetings (from item 18) are in the area of foreign language education?
- 75 to 100%, 50 to 74%, 25-49%, 0-24%
20. Is attendance at these meetings required?
- yes, no, unsure
21. Please select from the issues listed below the 3 topics which are most important to you as topics of in-service education. Rank order the 3 selected topics from 1 to 3 (1 = most important).
- teaching culture
 - program development
 - testing and evaluation
 - grouping techniques
 - multi-level classes
 - oral proficiency
 - language learning theory
 - promoting and maintaining interest in language study
 - instructional aids: computer, language lab, video
 - student as learner
22. Please select from the in-service activities below the 5 activity types which you consider to be most valuable. Rank order your 5 selected activities from 1 to 5 (1 = most important).
- professional reading
 - collegial discussions
 - district meetings
 - department meetings

- Collaborative meetings
- summer institutes/workshops
- after school workshops
- advanced language classes
- travel to target language country
- target language conversations
- visits to classes of colleagues
- videotaping of classes for review
- state conference attendance
- regional conference attendance
- national conference attendance
- methodology courses
- general education courses
- courses on contemporary culture

23. How familiar are you with the concepts of teaching for proficiency?

very, somewhat, not very

24. How have you gained the familiarity which you indicated in question 23? (Check all that apply.)

- professional reading
- workshop attendance
- discussions with colleagues
- school and/or district meetings
- college or university course
- conference attendance

25. What has been the TOTAL time of your exposure to the concepts of teaching for proficiency?

- 2 days or less
- 3 days to 1 week
- more than 1 week

26. Are you a certified Oral Proficiency Teacher?

yes, no

If yes, in which language(s) _____

DIRECTIONS FOR PART 2

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the statements below by circling the most appropriate response. There are five possible responses:

Strongly Agree (SA) Agree (A) Undecided (U)
 Disagree (D) Strongly disagree (SD)

STATEMENTS	RESPONSES				
1. Introductory level language classes should include activities involving real communication.	SA	A	U	D	SD
2. In introductory classes students should focus only on the grammar mechanics of the language.	SA	A	U	D	SD
3. Students can demonstrate language proficiency in structured role-play activities in early stages of language learning.	SA	A	U	D	SD
4. Students are <u>not</u> able to use language in a personalized way until they reach advanced classes.	SA	A	U	D	SD
5. Direct translation into the native language is the most effective way to evaluate reading comprehension skills.	SA	A	U	D	SD
6. Personalized question activities are appropriate for introductory level language classes.	SA	A	U	D	SD
7. Native language paraphrasing is <u>not</u> an acceptable way to evaluate reading comprehension.	SA	A	U	D	SD
8. Activities which focus on listening for the general idea help students improve their listening comprehension skills.	SA	A	U	D	SD

- | | | | | | | |
|-----|---|----|---|---|---|----|
| 9. | Students are <u>not</u> able to give free responses to personalized questions in introductory classes. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 10. | Survey and polltaking activities are suitable for introductory level class. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 11. | Non-verbal response activities are appropriate in foreign language classes. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 12. | Teachers must be certain that students are able to understand every word in a reading passage before using it in class. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 13. | Introductory level students are <u>not</u> able to speak about their immediate surroundings. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 14. | Paired student activities are <u>not</u> productive uses of language class time. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 15. | It is only after 3 or 4 years of language study that a student is able to begin to communicate in the language. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 16. | Mini oral interviews can be used with success in early level classes. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 17. | Personal interviews with report back procedures are good techniques for language classes. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 18. | The most effective way to prevent student repetition of grammatical errors is regular error correction by the teacher. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 19. | Teachers should evaluate communication activities by the success of the communication. | SA | A | U | D | SD |

20. Teachers should include some communication activities in student evaluation procedures at all levels of instruction. SA A U D SD

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

APPENDIX D
THE REMINDER LETTER

40 Dana St.
Springfield, Mass. 01104
November 30, 1989

Dear Colleague:

As of today I have not received your completed survey of foreign language teachers in Massachusetts. I am taking the liberty of enclosing another copy of the survey form and a self-addressed stamped envelope for your convenience.

I hope that you will take 15 minutes to complete and return this survey. In doing so, you will help me provide a true picture of the opinions of foreign language teachers in Massachusetts.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Kathleen M. Riordan
Past President of MaFLA

Enclosures

APPENDIX E
THE SURVEY INSTRUMENT WITH RAW SCORE RESPONSES

Sample equalled 200 K-12 teachers; Responses = 166

FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHER ATTITUDE SURVEY

General Information

Please do not sign your name to the survey. Return the completed survey in the enclosed stamped, self-addressed envelope. Please sign and return the enclosed postcard by separate mail. This procedure will assure the anonymity of your response and enable me to follow up on non-respondents.

Thank you for your cooperation. If you are interested in a summary report of the project results, please indicate your interest on the postcard.

PART 1

Please complete the following part of the questionnaire by checking the appropriate responses.

1. Your gender 130 Female 36 Male
2. Your age: 9 21-30, 42 31-40, 74 41-50, 29 51-60,
12 61 or more
3. How many TOTAL years of experience do you have as a
foreign language teacher? (Check one)
6 0-4, 42 5-9, 74 10-15, 29 16-20, 12 21 or more
4. Which is your most advanced degree?
30 BA, 95 MA, MAT, MEd, 41 beyond Master level
5. Which language(s) are you currently teaching? (Check
all that apply.)

<u>79</u> French	<u>117</u> Spanish	<u>0</u> Arabic
<u>5</u> German	<u>1</u> Russian	<u>4</u> Other (please list)
<u>6</u> Italian	<u>0</u> Japanese	_____
<u>16</u> Latin	<u>0</u> Chinese	_____
6. At which grade level(s) are you currently teaching?
5 elementary, 26 middle school, 13 junior high,
22 junior/senior high, 109 senior high
7. Which of the following best describes your school or
district?
38 urban, 109 suburban, 17 rural

8. Which of the following describes your school?
125 public, 30 private, 11 independent
9. What is your current position? (Check all that apply.)
134 full time language teacher
21 part time language teacher
3 full time teacher with part time language assignment
33 department chairperson
2 district supervisor/coordinator
3 other (please specify: _____)
10. In which geographical area of Massachusetts do you work?
66 Greater Boston 30 Central Massachusetts
19 Northeast 16 Springfield Area
31 Southeast 3 Berkshire Area
11. Indicate the professional language associations to which you belong. (Check all that apply.)
49 AATF 164 MaFLA 18 Local Collaborative
5 AATG 52 ACTFL 11 CANE
4 AATI 27 TESOL 21 Other (Please name) _____
43 AATSP 12 CAM
12. Please check the names of the organizations of which you have attended AT LEAST ONE MEETING in the past two years.
28 AATF 2 AATG 2 AATI 16 AATSP
140 MaFLA 7 CANE 9 CAM 0 TESOL
2 MATSOL 27 ACTFL
34 Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages
31 Local Foreign Language Collaborative
13. Does your school (or district) support financially your attendance at professional meetings (at least one per year)?
55 yes, fully 53 yes, partially 57 no
14. Does your school (or district) pay for your membership in professional language organizations?
24 yes, fully 14 yes, partially 128 no

15. Have you at any point in your career participated in a foreign language methods course or workshop for the grade level at which you are teaching?

148 yes, 18 no

16. Please indicate the nature of the experience referred to in the previous question. (Check all that apply.)

87 methods course as a student
70 methods course while teaching (summer)
61 methods course while teaching (school year)
81 in-service workshop

17. Does your school or district have a regular program of in-service education for teachers?

103 yes, 63 no

18. If you answered yes to question 17, please indicate the number of meetings held annually.

48 0-3, 33 4-6, 17 7-10, 6 more than 10

19. How many of these meetings (from item 18) are in the area of foreign language education?

6 75 to 100%, 1 50 to 74%, 7 25-49%, 91 0-24%

20. Is attendance at these meetings required?

69 yes, 23 no, 14 unsure

21. Please select from the issues listed below the 3 topics which are most important to you as topics of in-service education. Rank order the 3 selected topics from 1 to 3 (1 = most important)

	1	2	3
<u> </u> teaching culture	11	16	17
<u> </u> program development	22	15	20
<u> </u> testing and evaluation	5	19	13
<u> </u> grouping techniques	5	11	10
<u> </u> multi-level classes	6	8	10
<u> </u> oral proficiency	58	32	23
<u> </u> language learning theory	8	7	7
<u> </u> promoting and maintaining interest in language study	31	20	28
<u> </u> instructional aids: computer, language lab, video	11	18	17
<u> </u> student as learner	15	15	12

22. Please select from the in-service activities listed below the 5 activity types which you consider to be most valuable. Rank order the 5 selected activities from 1 to 5 (1 = most important).

	1	2	3	4	5
___ professional reading	3	4	9	12	14
___ collegial discussions	15	16	12	9	8
___ district meetings	0	3	2	4	3
___ department meetings	10	6	8	11	4
___ Collaborative meetings	3	8	3	9	10
___ summer institutes/workshops	27	2	24	13	11
___ after school workshops	5	2	7	7	5
___ advanced language classes	3	11	6	6	6
___ travel to target language country	50	19	18	15	17
___ target language conversations	13	24	18	9	8
___ visits to classes of colleagues	8	10	20	15	74
___ videotaping of classes for review	2	6	5	5	6
___ state conference attendance	7	11	18	13	13
___ regional conference attendance	2	3	3	8	10
___ national conference attendance	1	4	2	4	5
___ methodology courses	13	4	2	7	8
___ general education courses	0	1	0	0	2
___ courses on contemporary culture	4	9	8	13	15

23. How familiar are you with the concepts of teaching for proficiency?

45 very, 98 somewhat, 21 not very

24. How have you gained the familiarity which you indicated in question 23? (Check all that apply.)

106 professional reading
103 workshop attendance
98 discussions with colleagues
37 school and/or district meetings
26 college or university course
106 conference attendance

25. What has been the TOTAL time of your exposure to the concepts of teaching for proficiency?

66 2 days or less
42 3 days to 1 week
47 more than 1 week

26. Are you a certified Oral Proficiency Teacher?

3 yes, 158 no

If yes, in which language(s) 3 certified in Spanish

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