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French and Spanish Teacher Experiences in Teaching Middle and High School Students
in One North Carolina School District: A Mixed-Methods Study

By
Maguy Techer Yancey

A Dissertation Submitted to
the Gardner-Webb University School of Education
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

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Approval Page

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Abstract

French and Spanish Teacher Experiences in Teaching Middle and High School Students in One North Carolina School District: A Mixed-Methods Study. Yancey, Maguy Techer, 2018: Dissertation, Gardner-Webb University, World Language Teachers/Middle School/High School/Experiences/Teaching

This study examined French and Spanish teacher experiences teaching middle and high school students in one North Carolina school district. The themes derived from the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Educator Questionnaire show several areas of concerns world language teachers face in the nation: large class sizes, lack of opportunities to enhance best practices and technology integration, teacher isolation, inadequate instructional material, limited resources, and limited funding.

This dissertation was designed to analyze the experiences of middle and high school teachers of French, Spanish, and Spanish for Native Speakers.

The researcher conducted a digital survey using the ACTFL instrument and personal interviews among middle and high school world language teachers.

The appropriate research method to study the topic of world language teacher experiences was the explanatory sequential mixed-methods design. The collection of both quantitative and qualitative data provided a more comprehensive study of world language teacher experiences in teaching middle and high school students.

Through the course of the study, the researcher found key findings in regard to French and Spanish teachers' experiences. An analysis of the data revealed six salient themes: student motivation, technology tools for teaching and motivating students, world language standards, professional learning communities, resources, and support. Recommendations for world language teachers, school and district leaders were also discussed to help with the areas of concern that world language teachers have experienced.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction to Modern Languages

“Modern language programs involve the study of languages that are a first or native language for a population somewhere in the world” (Standard Course of Study, n.d.b, p. 5). In North Carolina there are various languages that are studied as modern languages in K-12 schools: American Sign Language, Arabic, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Mandarin-Chinese, Russian, and Spanish. School districts and other states use additional labels for modern languages, such as foreign languages, world languages, second languages, or languages other than English (Pufahl & Rhodes, 2011).

The study of a foreign language is beneficial for all students. Bernadette Morris (n.d.), former foreign language consultant for the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) stated, “foreign language study enhances academic skills, raises Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores, and prepares students for careers” (para. 1). Studying a foreign language enhances cognitive development, mental flexibility, creativity, and critical and high order thinking skills (Standard Course of Study, n.d.b).

Machado-Williams (2007) conducted a study on the relationship between foreign language study and test scores on the English section of the American College Test (ACT). The study was comprised of 2,946 first semester college freshmen participants (2,482 studied a foreign language, 215 studied more than one foreign language, and 249 did not study a foreign language) at the University of Kansas in 2004-2005 and compared their ACT scores with their foreign language study patterns. The study indicated that the Cumulative Grade Point Average (Cum GPA) of students who studied foreign languages was 0.30 point higher than the mean of the Cum GPA of the students who did not study

foreign languages. In addition, the study indicated that regardless of the foreign language studied (French, Spanish, German, or nontraditional languages), students with the highest Cum GPA also had the highest mean of the ACT English scores.

Likewise, the study by Appiarius (2011) on the influence of foreign language instruction at the elementary level on student achievement in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics examined two groups of elementary school students in a suburban New York school district. In the study, 341 students took no foreign language class, whereas 351 students studied Spanish for 4 years. The students who took Spanish courses for a prolonged period achieved significantly higher mean scores than their peers in the 2009 ELA 5 and math 5 assessment.

Glick (2008) studied the effect of foreign language instruction in 10 elementary schools in the West School District in Pennsylvania. The results indicated that the study of a Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES) improved reading test scores on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA). In the study, 836 students did not study a foreign language, whereas 840 students were enrolled in the FLES program for 2½ years in 2006. The result of the investigation showed that third-grade students who studied a foreign language scored 33 points higher on average than their peers on the PSSA test in language arts.

Additionally, the study by Tobias (2012) on the effect of foreign language study on mathematics achievement on Tennessee middle schools found a positive effect of foreign language study on mathematics achievement in the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program Standardized Test (TCAP) in 24 middle schools from a large urban public school district. In the research study, 678 students did not study a foreign language, whereas 1,030 students studied Spanish. The result showed an increase in

student math test scores for the ones who studied a foreign language. The eighth-grade TCAP mean (0.1877) for the students who studied a foreign language was greater than the TCAP mean (-0.0960) for the students who did not study a foreign language.

The research demonstrated the benefit of studying a foreign language for a longer period of time (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages [ACTFL], n.d.b; Morris, n.d.). “High exposure to foreign languages facilitates the acquisition of language skills” (Eurydice, 2013, p. 9). In addition, studying another language gives students a greater appreciation of other cultures and a better understanding of people from different cultural backgrounds (Foreign Languages and Higher Education, n.d.; Learning Another Language, 2011; Morris n.d.; Standard Course of Study, n.d.b).

Knowing a foreign language enhances job opportunities, fostering closer partnerships with businesses around the world (Morris, n.d.). Companies constantly seek bilingual people to fulfill the increasing demand. Being bilingual is a skill that is needed in several professional fields such as global sales, industry, law, journalism, health care, social work, and federal jobs (ACTFL, 2010; Foreign Language, 2018; Morris, n.d.).

The National Security Language Initiative (NSLI) goal is to enhance the learning of critical languages: Arabic, Chinese, Russian, Hindi, Farsi, Korean, and Japanese (National Security Language, 2008). According to Abbott, Feal, and Looney (n.d.), the term critical language “can refer to languages deemed important to national security or to languages of key trading partners” (p. 4). These languages require more learning time for English speakers, especially in reading and writing, than the study of more closely related languages to English such as French or Spanish. The North Carolina World Language Essential Standards states that an intermediate low level in reading requires at least 540-600 hours in logographic languages versus 405-450 in alphabetic languages.

Furthermore, a similar level in writing requires 540-750 hours in logographic languages versus 405-450 in alphabetic languages (Standard Course of Study, n.d.c). The purpose of the NSLI is to expose critical languages to students from kindergarten through college in order to enhance communication in a language other than their own and to foster foreign partnership, collaboration, and understanding of other cultures (National Security Language, 2008). “As boundaries between countries are dissolving, the need for learning world languages has become a necessary component for connecting with the rest of the world and for producing an enlightened citizenship able to function in today’s global marketplace” (Standard Course of Study, n.d.b, p. 1).

Statement of the Problem

Former President Obama (2008) stated in a live streaming video during one of his campaigns in Powder Springs, Georgia, “You should be thinking about how your child can become bilingual ... We should have every child speaking more than one language ... If you know a foreign language, that is a powerful tool.” Likewise, the former U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan declared at the Foreign Language Summit in 2010, “A world class education requires students to be able to speak and read languages in addition to English” (Education and the Language Gap, 2010, para. 8).

According to national statistic reports, eight of 10 Americans speak only English. In contrast, 50% of teenagers in Europe are able to converse in a foreign language (Learning Another Language, 2011). The French Educational Government (Ministère de L’Education Nationale, n.d.) and Abbott et al. (n.d.) emphasized the oral practice of any world language taught as a top priority at all levels from elementary through high school. In other European countries, foreign language study is mandatory at an early age. For instance, in Belgium, students start learning a foreign language at the age of three in a

prekindergarten setting in public school (Eurydice, 2013; Rakocevic, n.d.). In most European countries (excluding Ireland and Scotland), all learners are required to study at least two foreign languages. Students start learning a new language between the ages of six and nine and subsequently will continue studying their second and third foreign language in middle and high schools (Rakocevic, n.d.). It is interesting to note that the third language Europeans choose is usually an oriental language (also called “critical language” in the U.S.) such as Russian, Chinese, Japanese or Arabic, as each of these languages is considered important for our global society (Pufahl & Rhodes, 2011). Compounding the issue of the lack of foreign language fluency among American students is the problem of a world language teacher shortage.

There is limited research on world language teacher shortage and attrition. Konanc (1996), who studied teacher attrition in North Carolina Public Schools from 1980 through 1996, reported that among all disciplines, foreign language teachers showed the highest rate of attrition: 21.25% after the second year, 37.89% after the fifth year, 48.36% after the tenth year, and 57.25% after the fifteenth year. Furthermore, the 2015 Georgia Public P-12 Teacher Workforce Report indicated a 44.7% attrition rate among world language teachers over a 5-year period from 2010 to 2015. Likewise, the U.S. Department of Education: Teacher Shortage Areas (2017) indicated that 36 states and the District of Columbia identified foreign language teacher shortages for K-6 education and 39 states for Grades 7-12 education in 2013-2014. “Foreign language teachers are needed in quantity and quality” (García & Long, 2004, p. 1).

Several factors contribute to the foreign language teacher shortage. There is a high number of retirements among baby-boomer generation teachers (Aaronson & Meckel, 2008). At the same time, there is a steady increase of student enrollment in

French, German, and Spanish classes in high school (García & Long, 2004).

Purpose of the Study

In order to compensate for teacher shortage and provide a short-term solution, several districts have been using the Visiting International Faculty agency (VIF), now called Participate, which is the largest recruiter in the U.S. since 1987, “with a mission to get at least one international teacher in every school in the US” (American Federation of Teachers, n.d., p. 17). VIF has placed the most exchange teachers. On average, 1,600 teachers from 50 countries are placed per year in more than 1,000 U.S. schools (American Federation of Teachers, n.d.). The program promotes cultural exchange for teachers for 3 years and exposure to another culture for U.S. students (American Federation of Teachers, n.d.; Teach in the USA, n.d.). Recently, due to the high demand and interest from school districts in global awareness and critical language studies, VIF is recruiting a larger number of Spanish and Mandarin-Chinese teachers. “We will continue to grow ... and some of that is obviously due to the shortage ... it certainly gives us opportunities” stated David Young, Co-Director of VIF in North Carolina (Sack, 2001, para. 8).

Correspondingly, to mitigate the increased demand of world language study and a shortage of language teachers, the College Board and the Confucius Institute headquarters in Hanban, China, established a partnership with the National Council of State Supervisor for Languages (NCSSFL) and the Chinese Language Association of Secondary Elementary Schools to create a Chinese Guest Teacher Program. This successful program is the largest Chinese visiting teacher program in the U.S. It recruits 300 Chinese instructors every year to teach in U.S. schools for 3 years. Since 2007, the College Board has brought more than 1,000 Chinese language culture teachers to

classrooms across the nation (Chinese Guest Teacher Program, n.d.).

There is also a market for learning foreign languages online due to the increasing demand from students, parents, and other stakeholders and a decreasing number of highly qualified foreign language teachers. Rosetta Stone and Middlebury Interactive entered the marketplace in education. Micklos (2013) found that “20,000 schools have integrated Rosetta Stone into their curriculum since 1991; Middlebury serves 170,000 students in 1,200 schools.” The programs are comprised of online instruction, videos, and authentic cultural immersion. “We have a good understanding of the best ways to teach a language” (Micklos, 2013, para. 7), stated Jane Swift, Middlebury’s CEO. Likewise, the language software Rosetta Stone has implemented a coaching support that allows synchronous conversation with the learners (All About Live Tutoring, n.d.).

The North Carolina Virtual Public School (NCVPS) started its foreign language program in 2006. Enrollment has increased since its first year of operation: Approximately 10,000 students in North Carolina have enrolled in the virtual school from 2007 to 2016 (NCVPS Annual Report 2015-2016, n.d.). Currently, NCVPS offers different levels of the following languages: Arabic, Russian, Mandarin-Chinese, Japanese, Latin, Spanish, French, German, and honors courses for French, German, Latin, Mandarin Chinese, and Spanish (NCVPS Course Catalog, n.d.).

VIF/Participate, Guest Teacher Programs, and online programs bring short-term relief to the world language teacher scarcity in the U.S. For the long term, schools must focus on preparing teachers to remain in the classroom, take advantage of the rich supply of native and heritage language speakers in the U.S. who can become teachers, and strengthen the world language programs (Abbott et al., n.d.; Longview Foundation, 2008). Furthermore, there is no “pipeline” of students graduating from high schools with

a critical language background; and the number of other modern language graduates is limited (Longview Foundation, 2008). Language policy analyst Rachel Hanson stated in an interview, “You can’t expand language education if you don’t have the pool of teachers to teach it; and if the students aren’t learning the language and becoming proficient, they won’t become teachers” (Friedman, 2015, para. 12).

The purpose of this study was to examine French and Spanish teacher experiences in teaching middle and high school students in one North Carolina school district. Moreover, the themes displayed on page 9 derived from the ACTFL national survey showed several areas of concerns world language teachers face in the nation. ACTFL is a national organization that was founded in 1967 to enhance teaching and student learning in K-16 in foreign languages. The organization is comprised of

more than 12,500 language educators and administrators from elementary through graduate education ... From the development of proficiency guidelines to its leadership role in the creation of national standards, ACTFL focuses on issues that are critical to the growth of both the profession and the individual teacher. (ACTFL, n.d.a, para. 1)

The ACTFL Educator Questionnaire world language teachers across the nation completed from fall 2013 to fall 2016 (on average 1,488 educators completed the survey every semester) show five emerging themes on the problems world language teachers face:

1. Large class sizes.
2. Lack of opportunities to enhance “best practices” and technology integration.
3. Teacher isolation.
4. Inadequate instructional material/limited resources.

5. Limited funding/decreasing budget.

Table 1

ACTFL Educator Questionnaire Data (2013-2016)

Item	Fall 2013	Spring 2014	Fall 2014	Spring 2015	Fall 2015	Spring 2016
<u>Top professional development need of educators in %</u>						
Classroom management	5.8	6.0	6.5	7.7	6.8	7.6
Curriculum design	14.3	14.7	14.6	14.6	13.8	15.1
Increased language proficiency	16.6	16.6	17.8	16.9	20.2	18.7
Instructional strategies	18.2	17.1	15.3	15.6	18.9	17.8
Technology integration	38.9	39.2	40.1	38.8	34.7	35
Other	6.2	6.4	5.8	6.4	5.6	5.7
<u>Types of support world language educators need most in %</u>						
More opportunities for professional development	26.4	26.5	26.7	27.3	28.0	28.8
More chances to network with colleagues	19.2	18.7	17.0	17.6	18.0	17.2
More information about “best practice” in the language classroom	25.5	25.4	27.0	26.0	26.1	25.2
Help with classroom management strategies	3.0	3.0	3.9	4.3	3.0	3.8
Opportunity to increase my language and cultural proficiencies	18.7	19.5	19.0	17.9	18.0	17.5
Other	7.3	6.9	6.3	6.9	7.0	7.5
<u>Challenges world language educators face in %</u>						
Large class sizes	46.9	48.0	49.2	48.3	51.9	52.2
Limited resources	41.1	41.7	40.9	41.4	51.9	41.4
Isolation from teachers who teach the same language	32.2	32.2	25.2	38.0	35.1	33.8
Inadequate instructional materials	21.5	22.7	25.2	26.3	28.5	29.0
Limited funding/ decreasing budgets	49.1	50.2	52.1	50.5	54.7	52.7
Other	11.6	11.4	14.4	15.2	13.7	14.4

Too often, teachers work in isolation when in fact they need appropriate time to collaborate with colleagues to address student needs and grow in the teaching profession. There is a need for more world language instruction and for a strong curriculum from the elementary level in modern languages (Longview Foundation, 2008). Furthermore, the New World Language Essential Standards emphasize student oral skills by moving from merely translation of texts to understanding, interpreting, and using more elaborate structures in order to carry out a conversation with a native speaker or present information to an audience in the target language (Standard Course of Study, n.d.c). Likewise, schools and districts must provide support for teachers to instruct toward linguistic and cultural proficiency, develop a strong K-12 curriculum, and use available technology tools to enhance world language programs (Heining-Boynton & Redmond, 2013; Pufahl & Rhodes, 2011).

The Significance of the Study

The study on the experiences of French and Spanish teachers is significant because it informed districts of the need for allocating resources and providing support to enhance teacher best practices, as the ACTFL national world language teacher survey indicated. The study revealed factors that may have impacted world language teacher self-efficacy, leading to teacher retention.

Setting

The study took place in an eastern North Carolina school district. The total population in this district is 124,355, and the median household income is \$41,161 (North Carolina Department of Commerce, n.d.). It has a total of 33 schools (elementary, middle, and high schools) and 19,761 students. There are 25 world language (French, Spanish, and Spanish for Native Speakers) teachers in the county: One teacher teaches

French at the high school level, while the rest of the teachers teach Spanish and/or Spanish for Native Speakers in high school. Spanish is the only foreign language taught at the middle school. Ten former and current Participate teachers teach either French, Spanish, or English Learner (EL), or a combination of two languages. Nobody teaches three languages.

Table 2

Years of Experience (Study Participants)

Number of Years	Number of Teachers
First-Year Teachers	1
1-5	2
6-10	3
11-15	9
16-20	6
21-25	2
26-30	2
31 +	0

Table 3

Number of World Language Educators Who Teach EL/French/Spanish

	Male	Female
<u>EL and Spanish</u>		
Middle School	2	3
High School	1	2
<u>Spanish</u>		
Middle School	1	2
High School	4	7
<u>Spanish for Native Speakers</u>		
High School	1	1
<u>French</u>		
High School	1	0

Research Question

How do world language teachers describe their experiences regarding teaching middle and high school students?

Research Method

The research method that was appropriate to study the topic of world language teacher experiences was the explanatory sequential mixed-methods design. As Creswell (2014) stated, “all methods [have] bias and weaknesses” (p. 14). The explanatory mixed-methods design was a two-phase research design that began with quantitative data collection and analysis, followed by qualitative data collection and analysis that led to an overall interpretation of the data. The initial phase (Phase I) was designed to address the ACTFL Educator Questionnaire. The second phase (Phase II), which was the world language teacher interview, was designed to explain in more depth the results from Phase I. As Creswell indicated, “the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data neutralize the weaknesses of each form of data” (p. 15) and provided a more comprehensive study of world language teacher experiences.

Dissertation Preview

The purpose of this study was to examine and analyze French and Spanish teacher experiences in teaching middle and high school students in one North Carolina school district. The educational literature review further helped determine themes and trends in the research study. The ACTFL Educator Questionnaire provided a thematic framework for the study.

Chapter 2 explores the research literature on world language teachers and factors that impacted their self-efficacy, perceptions of administrative supports, and needs.

Chapter 3 discusses the explanatory sequential mixed-methods design that

addressed the world language teacher experiences in teaching middle and high school students. Both “quantitative and qualitative approaches provided a more complete understanding of the research problem” (Creswell, 2014, p. 4). The chapter explains the various steps for selecting the participants and collecting the quantitative and qualitative data.

Chapter 4 presents the findings from the quantitative and qualitative data gathered by the researcher on the experiences of world language teachers.

Chapter 5 interprets the quantitative and qualitative data and discusses its relation to other research found in Chapter 2. This section also includes the researcher’s recommendations for further study and further practice with world language teachers.

Limitation

The study focused on world language teachers from a single rural county in which the researcher works and resides.

All world language teachers were invited to participate in the study voluntarily. The background of the participants was rich: The Participate teachers were from Central America, South America, and Europe. The rest of the participants were from the United States. Their teaching experience varied from 1-29 years. Some teachers taught one language such as French or Spanish but had multiple grade levels in their classes (for instance, Grades 9-12). Other educators taught multiple languages and grade levels (for example English Learner/Spanish Grades 6-8, English Learner/Spanish Grades 10-12, French Grades 10-12, and Spanish/Spanish for Native Speakers Grades 10-12).

Definition of Terms

ACTFL. American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, the National Foreign Language Association (Standard Course of Study, n.d.a).

Advanced placement (AP). High school program that provides access to high-quality education, accelerates learning, rewards achievement, and enhances both high school and college programs; usually refers to course which follows curriculum of the College Board and may lead to credit at a college or university (Standard Course of Study, n.d.a).

Assessment. Collection and organization of data on student progress in achieving set objectives. Data collected can consist of observations, grades, or anecdotal records (Standard Course of Study, n.d.a).

Data. Facts and statistics collected together for reference or analysis (Oxford Dictionaries, n.d.).

Learning styles. Preferred style of learning of student (Standard Course of Study, n.d.a).

LinguaFolio. Formative assessment tool for language learning (Standard Course of Study, n.d.a).

Multilingual. Having more than one language (Standard Course of Study, n.d.a).

Portfolio. Collection of student work exhibiting student effort, progress, or achievement. In a foreign language, a portfolio could include work samples, projects, performances, audio and/or videotapes (Standard Course of Study, n.d.a).

Product. A tangible representation of the culture (Standard Course of Study, n.d.a).

Proficiency. Ability to communicate effectively in both oral and written forms in the cultures where the language is spoken. Proficiency is made up of three components: function, content, and accuracy (Standard Course of Study, n.d.a).

Reflection. According to Dewey (2012), “Active, persistent, and careful

consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and the further conclusions to which it tends, constitutes reflective thought” (p. 5).

Target language. Language being learned (Standard Course of Study, n.d.a).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine French and Spanish teacher experiences in teaching middle and high school students in one North Carolina school district. This chapter reviews the research concerning world language teacher standards, technology integration, assessments, professional learning community (PLC), and reflection.

Through the exploration of these major themes, the groundwork for the purpose of this study is further explained and postulated.

World Language Essential Standards

The NCDPI collaborative team revised the Standard Course of Study in World Languages. The new standards were approved by the North Carolina State Board of Education in the fall of 2010 and fully implemented in the state in 2012 (Standard Course of Study, n.d.b).

The New World Language Essential Standards are comprised of four standards, three strands and 11 language proficiency scales as shown below.

Standards

1. Interpersonal Communication: person-to-person communication.

Interpersonal skills are used in informal, one-on-one or small group conversations. Students can ask for clarification when needed and negotiate with each other during the conversation. Most interpersonal communication involves everyday topics, like greetings, instructions, directions, current events, class discussions, news about family and friends, social events, requests for information and academic discourse.

(Standard Course of Study, n.d.b, p. 3)

2. Interpretive Communication: listening and reading.

Interpretive skills involve receiving information in a situation where meaning cannot be negotiated. Students hear or see the message and respond based on their interpretation. These messages could be about any topic and come from a wide variety of sources and media: textbooks, newspapers, signs, websites, news broadcasts, television, radio programs, lectures, and presentations-live and recorded. (Standard Course of Study, n.d.b, p. 3)

3. Presentational Communication: speaking and writing.

Presentational skills involve preparing information to be shared with an audience, either through speaking or writing. Students have time to draft, revise, and practice presentations that show their use of language. These presentations vary from somewhat informal, such as a quick report to the class on an article, to quite formal, which might be a culminating project involving a multimedia display with a speech. (Standard Course of Study, n.d.b, p. 3)

4. Culture: comparing students' culture and target culture.

Learning about culture means building an understanding of the practice, perspectives and products of a society. The practices involve patterns of social interactions, such as how people are greeted or how respect is shown. Perspectives are the values, beliefs, ideas, and attitudes that are an integral part of life. Products are the books, foods, laws, music, games, etc., that are created and used within the society. (Standard Course of Study, n.d.b, p. 4)

Strands

1. Connections to Language and Literacy:

The world language being studied, referred to as the target language, helps students develop a greater understanding and insight into the nature of language and culture, including their native or first language. These comparisons, along with the three communication modes, blend together to focus students on language and literacy. (Standard Course of Study, n.d.b, p. 4)

2. Connections to Other Disciplines:

Studying a world language involves making connections with other academic disciplines, formally and informally. Within the communication skills, the language arts of reading, speaking, and listening are utilized. As students learn about numbers and currency, mathematics and economics are included. All of social studies is part of culture, as are the arts, health, physical education, and science. Career and technical skills in these areas are also drawn on, and technology is woven throughout world languages as a resource for materials and a means of expression and presentation.

(Standard Course of Study, n.d.b, p. 4)

3. Communities:

“Students preparing for success in the 21st Century need to access knowledge and information from other communities, and use that information to function well with people from diverse backgrounds” (Standard Course of Study, n.d.b, p. 4).

Proficiency scales

1. Novice low
2. Novice mid
3. Novice high
4. Intermediate low
5. Intermediate mid
6. Intermediate high
7. Advanced low
8. Advanced mid
9. Advanced high
10. Superior
11. Distinguished

It is important to notice that the world language standards have similar framework and proficiency scales as the national standards (Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century, 2012). According to Swaffar (2006), “this model provides a framework for identifying appropriate tasks and stages in teaching content and reasoning processes as integral components of language learning” (p. 248). “Proficiency levels are correlated to course exit expectations. Teachers work to grow students within a proficiency level and help them attain the next level through performance tasks” (Administrator Guide, n.d.b, p. 1). The proficiency scales described are not organized by grade level (i.e., Language 1, Language 2) as they were in the past but by proficiency levels showing what students should know and be able to do in listening, reading, writing, and speaking (ACTFL, n.d.a; Byrnes, 2007; Magnan, Murphy, Sahakyan, & Kim, 2012; Reeves, 2009; Standard Course of Study, n.d.b). The standards show the

shift of studying a foreign language moving from traditional teaching with memorization of root words and grammatical rules to a language proficiency-based learning due to changing needs in our global societies (ACTFL, n.d.a; Byrnes, 2007; Standard Course of Study, n.d.b).

Additionally, in October 2014, NCDPI released an official guide for administrators that is helpful for classroom walkthroughs and pre and post conferences with the teachers. The guide is believed to give administrators a greater understanding of the world language daily practices.

The Administrator Guide does not take the place of the North Carolina Educators Evaluation System (NCEES) evaluation tool, but it is designed to be used as a resource to support the evaluation tool and to deepen understanding about meaningful instruction in world language classrooms. (Administrator Guide, n.d.a, para. 1)

In 1986, the ACTFL issued the language proficiency guidelines to measure competency in the four domains of speaking, reading, writing, and listening. Federal funds were allotted in 1993 to allow a group of world language practitioners to write the K-12 national standards. As a result, the World Language National Standards were released in 1996 and then a vast majority of states created their world language standards using the national standards framework and proficiency guidelines for K-12 students (ACTFL, n.d.a). A study by Berry (2016) revealed that teachers had difficulty incorporating the world language standards in their teaching and expressed concerns about allocating time to include standards-based activities in their curriculum due to the lack of training for world language teachers.

Standard of Culture

Qu (2010) argued in her article that “understanding a language involves not only knowledge of grammar but also ... culture” (p. 58). She stated that a language is deeply ingrained in culture (Qu, 2010). The standard of culture must be taught cautiously to avoid misconceptions and to encourage students to be more tolerant. By studying culture in a foreign language class, student awareness of their own culture is enhanced. In her article, she described the tools and resources world language teachers should use to address the standard of culture:

- Describe and explain culture
- Experience culture through language use
- Dialogues and mini dramas
- Role-playing
- Songs and dances
- Pictures
- Films
- Bulletin board
- Inviting native speakers (Qu, 2010).

The standard of culture embraces the relationship of the product (i.e., books, foods, music, games); the perspective (i.e., attitudes and values); and the practice (i.e., patterns of social interaction). It is important for teachers to skillfully expand student awareness of the target culture, to compare it with their own, and to also be sensitive to the diversity in their classroom (Byrnes, 2007; NBPTS, n.d.; Reeves, 2009). Altstaedter and Jones (2009) studied a project-based assessment on the standard of culture in a U.S. college comprised of 14 Spanish students with a language proficiency level ranging from

novice low-to-mid to evaluate if it would increase student awareness of the foreign language culture. Since the students did research on targeted websites about Argentina, the study revealed that the students had a greater awareness of Hispanic culture through the WebQuest project. Furthermore, the study by Bateman (2004) comprised of 54 first year university Spanish students found that the study of culture fostered understanding and reduced stereotypes among students who took the course for personal interest or to meet a graduation requirement.

Sun (2013) stated that the standard of culture is a difficult standard to teach: It requires longer periods of study time to display an awareness and understanding of the culture of the target language. In her article, Sun addressed the distinctive forms of greetings between Chinese and Western culture by mentioning that “the Chinese usually greet each other by [saying] Where are you going? Have you eaten yet? How much is your salary” (p. 373)? These types of greetings show “concern and intimacy” toward the other person in comparison to the Western culture which uses forms of greetings referring to “the weather condition and a fine day” (Sun, 2013, p. 373). Furthermore, Sun reported that teaching cultural awareness in the classroom was critical and had to be taught carefully as language and culture were strongly connected with one another.

Kramsch (2006) echoed that there is a need to prioritize culture to enhance interaction among students; however, Byrnes (2007) argued that when teachers attempt to teach the standard of culture, the environment in which they teach does not necessarily provide the tools they need to enhance the target culture. Schulz (2007) claimed, “The profession has no tradition of assessing cultural understanding in the context of language instruction either at the pre-collegiate or collegiate level” (p. 10).

A study by Yang (2013) revealed that the modern language instructors where the

study took place did not prioritize teaching the standard of culture. The instructors did not seem to teach their students the connection between the language and its culture. By knowing the culture of the language, students would show appropriate behavior in a cultural setting. The finding of the study showed that the modern language instructor uses the communicative approach more to teach the language than the cultural approach. Berry (2016) echoed the importance of proper training for world language teachers to increase their cultural awareness and give them appropriate tools to teach the standard of culture and the differences between the target culture and one's own culture.

A study by Colarossi (2009) revealed a lack of precision and comprehension to address cultural competence. The study of three institutions located in the Midwest of the United States on the Italian language showed that the programs focused on textbook materials did not have a general definition of culture and that the teachers had limited cultural resources to demonstrate this standard in the classroom. Furthermore, the studies of Yang (2013) and Berry (2016) echoed that teachers seemed to have their own definition of culture and it was not fully embedded in the language instruction.

A study by Byrd (2007) revealed that language preservice teachers needed to have strong preparation to teach the target culture to their students. By being more prepared, teachers will help their students enhance their cultural awareness and avoid clichés and stereotypes of the target language. The study also showed the importance of assisting preservice teachers on the use of technology to teach the standard of culture.

A study by Waite (2006) revealed that world language teachers should receive support from their department to learn more about teaching the standards of culture and communication of the target language. For Spanish classes, they should have the opportunity to investigate the different cultures of the Spanish-speaking world. By using

the world language standards and scaffolding techniques to teach the standards of communication and culture, teachers will receive the needed support to teach it properly to their students in order to enhance their cultural awareness and increase their understanding of a different culture in our global society.

Standard of Communication

According to Kramersch (2006), the pedagogy has changed in world languages by enhancing a more interpersonal mode of communication in a group or with another partner while moving away from grammatical rules. Likewise, the teacher role has changed to become a facilitator in the student learning process. Similarly, a study by Sarroub (1999) on the language framework in Nebraska that involved a case study of six K-12 teachers showed that the language teachers acknowledged that the standard of communication was easy to teach in comparison with the other language standards and they felt confident to use it in the classroom and teach their students the communicative skill; however, Schulz (2006) argued that student proficiency levels in the standard of communication are deficient due to lack of time using communicative language skills in the classroom and lack of opportunities to interact with more advanced learners in the language to increase their language skill. He stated that students should also have the opportunity to take a language class continuously in order to maximize their language proficiency (Schulz, 2006).

García and Blanco (2000, as cited in Potowski & Carreira, 2004) indicated that teachers should demonstrate an adequate language proficiency level if they teach a Spanish class for native speakers. Correspondingly, the National Board Standards show that world language teachers “appropriately handle communicative tasks that present complications or an unexpected turn of events [and] they are understood by native

speakers unaccustomed to dealing with non-natives” (NBPTS, n.d., p. 22).

Strand of Communities

Magnan et al. (2012) argued that the strand of communities is the most important. In addition to this, Long (2005) indicated on a postsecondary study of introductory Spanish students that the strand of communities was more challenging to teach than the other foreign language standards, as it requires the students to use the target language “in Spanish-speaking communities at home and around the world” (p. 159). The ACTFL survey on foreign language standards showed that 1,299 K-16 instructors acknowledged that the strands of communities and connections were challenging to teach. Correspondingly, the study by Sarroub (1999) discussed earlier showed that language teachers from the case study found the strand of communities challenging to teach and felt they needed more support in the classroom; however, Thorne (2009) emphasized that the communities strand enriches interaction with people from different backgrounds and cultures by prompting students to learn more beyond the classroom setting and, as a result, to practice the language in a more natural environment. He also believed that this strand may be challenging to demonstrate in areas where there are no native speakers of the target language. Berry (2016) echoed that local communities may not be available to address the strand of communities of the target languages but suggested that teachers may choose other sources such as the use of technology to overcome this challenge and provide their students with activities and experiences that will address it.

Technology

The ACTFL survey shown in Chapter 1 indicated that world language teachers needed professional development in technology integration. Teachers need adequate training to acquire the essential skills and use of Web 2.0 tools in their classroom

(Arnold, 2013; Beriswill, Bracey, Sherman-Morris, Huang, & Lee, 2016). Technology integration can generate a significant amount of frustration, particularly if it is instituted without clear goals, careful planning, and appropriate staff training (Lezotte & McKee, 2002). Wildner (2000) stated that in order for teachers to use technology in the classroom, they need to know how to use it.

The study by Bustamante and Moeller (2013) on technology integration in a German classroom indicated that technology is not being used effectively or creatively. The study showed challenges German instructors faced while incorporating technology in their lesson due to limited numbers of computers and blocked sites teachers wanted to use for the task. Furthermore, during the process, teachers felt overwhelmed and frustrated as they received multiple emails from participants and spent more time grading the assignment online.

Professional development in technology tends to focus on technology tools and does not show pedagogical content. This type of training will not support teachers in becoming effective users of technology in the classroom (Mishra & Koehler, 2006).

Jones-Kavalier and Flannigan (2008) referred to the E-generation as digital natives in comparison with older adults –the digital immigrant—who were not exposed to new technology. Teachers have to develop not only the technology skills to use the tools but also the pedagogic skills to develop teaching materials and activities (Moore, 2006). Furthermore, Moore (2006) emphasized the need to enhance teacher technical skills by showing them ways to use the capabilities of the technology and create distance-learning programs that focus on technology integration for teachers.

McKee (1999, as cited in Oxford, 2004) stated that a vast number of educators still struggle with technology in their classroom due to a lack of training in technology

integration or fear of utilizing a tool that may not fit their teaching approach. In addition, limited access, funding, and resources may challenge technology use in foreign language instruction (McKee, 1999, as cited in Oxford, 2004; Wildner, 2000).

The Benefit of Using Web 2.0 Tools in the Foreign Language Classroom

O'Bannon (2008) defined Web 2.0 as "Change in the way we use the Internet for productivity, collaboration and information sharing" (p. 1). Web 2.0 in language learning is still scarce, and research shows gaps regarding how teachers use technology in the classroom and its correlation with student growth (Beriswill et al., 2016; Wang, 2005).

The literature review indicated that professional development in technology is beneficial for teachers and enhances their confidence to use it more in the classroom. It is a tool for active learning (Shriner, Clark, Nail, Schlee, & Libler, 2010; Zhu, 2010). The use of technology in the classroom gives the teacher the ability to monitor student work and offer real time intervention and differentiation in learning instruction for all students (Lezotte & McKee, 2002; O'Neill, 2001; Qu, 2010). Furthermore, the use of computerized practice tests and repeated drills allows students to receive immediate feedback (Lezotte & McKee, 2002). Technology is also a communication tool between teachers and parents: Teachers can post assignments and other resources on their Web pages for their students, track student progress, and involve parents in the learning process (Lezotte & McKee, 2002). The use of technology is also an excellent way to enhance teacher collaboration by sharing lesson plans, teaching strategies, and classroom resources with other foreign language teachers (Lezotte & McKee, 2002).

Computer technology allows for interactions with native speakers by promoting more advanced learning for teachers and students, not only linguistically but also culturally (Lezotte & McKee, 2002; Moore, 2006). Furthermore, Cole and Gauvain

(2005) emphasized Vygotsky's theory of the Zone of Proximal Development which stated that the novice language learners benefit from interaction with more advanced learners. Moore (2006) echoed this theory, indicating in his study the benefit of using technology tools with novice and advanced learners to improve their language skills.

A study by Chen (2011) on the use of technology in language courses with 315 English learners located in two universities in Taiwan revealed that the technology integration in the English language course in addition to giving the students the proper social experience engaged them more in the study of the language and motivated them more to learn it. The data showed an increased student engagement in classroom activities through technology integration. The use of technology integration improved student learning abilities by increasing their knowledge in the language and culture. The study reveals that students felt more confident to use the language in real-life settings.

A study by Yang (2013) revealed that using Web-based sources to supplement classroom instruction enhanced student learning of the Chinese language, grammar, vocabulary, reading, and writing in and outside the school environment. The Web-based approach gave the students more freedom in their learning and differentiated classroom instruction. It could be implemented as a classroom learning tool but also as a self-learning tool for students outside the classroom setting.

A study by Van Orden (2010) revealed that teachers who integrated digital technologies in their daily lesson plan and curriculum enhanced their use of technology and creativity to improve teaching and student learning. The study showed that they gained more experience and planned more lessons and classroom activities with embedded technology tools to maximize their teaching and student learning. A study by Bartoszesky (2004) echoed Van Orden's finding. Her study on the use of Web-based

materials in postsecondary language curriculum and instruction in foreign languages showed a correlation between technological knowledge and hours of use. Teachers who felt very comfortable navigating through the Web were more likely to spend more time online looking for educational materials to find resources to enhance their teaching and student learning.

A study of a virtual exchange on language skills and intercultural competence by Schenker (2012) showed a correlation between the use of technology and student motivation and learning. The study of American college students in a third year German course and German high school students in an advanced eleventh grade English class over the course of 12 weeks showed that the students who used the online communication tools (videoconferencing, emails, and blogs) to participate in communication tasks with their exchange students improved their language skills and cultural awareness. Students increased their motivation in learning the German language and culture.

Neville (2010) emphasized the benefit of 3D environments for the foreign language class because the tool can “simulate real world sociocultural spaces” for the learners to experiment (p. 466). Hertel (2002) said the Internet and simulation software offer the opportunity to learn from the real world; providing updated information, visual aid, and animation to enhance student learning.

Additionally, Qu (2010) stated that computer software programs could make teaching more interesting and increase student motivation. It could provide a high level of interactivity through games. She explained the benefit of using computers in the foreign language classroom to enhance speaking skills. Computers offer students digital opportunities to listen to native speakers with different accents and speech as well as utilize voice recording software (Qu, 2010).

The study by Al-Jarf (2004) found that the use of technology as a resource in addition to traditional classroom writing instruction was significantly more effective than teaching solely with textbooks. The study sought to find out if the integration of a Web-based course in a traditional English as a Foreign Language class for struggling college writers significantly improved the writing skills of low-ability students. By practicing reading and writing skills online through Blackboard, the struggling students enhanced their English grammar and vocabulary. The control group, comprised of 51 students, was given traditional English writing instruction from textbooks, whereas the experimental group, comprised of 62 students, used Web-based learning in addition to the traditional English writing instruction. The study revealed that the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group. Web-based learning has proven to increase student English writing quality as well as increase motivation and self-esteem by using external links inside and outside the classroom setting for additional practice in skills such as sending email and using word processing. Student writing skills increased significantly, as they made fewer errors than the control group.

In another study, Hertel (2002) described an intercultural email exchange at the college level in which U.S. students in a beginning Spanish class and Mexican students in an intermediate English as a Second Language class corresponded weekly for one semester. The study revealed that this student-centered activity changed student cultural attitudes by increasing their cultural awareness and motivated the students in the Spanish language. Technology resources helped build cross-cultural groups in the U.S. and Mexico, strengthening student collaboration, communication, and an appreciation of another culture.

Technology Sources for the Foreign Language Classroom

Troxell Castleberry and Evers's (2010) article on technology integration in the modern language classroom mentioned several digital tools to enhance teaching and learning: Blogs, Epals, Wiki, Webquest, Publisher, Google map, and Podcast. In addition, Long (2005) suggested the following ideas to enhance communication in the foreign language classes: videos, DVD clips, email messages, and chat rooms.

Shulman introduced the idea of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) in 1986. This idea led to the framework that Mishra and Koehler (2006) provided called Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK), which that integrates technology, pedagogy, and content. The TPACK framework emphasizes the interactions between content, pedagogy, and technology. According to Mishra and Koehler, these components are essential for developing good teaching practices, as they provide a comprehensive understanding of discipline-based concepts using pedagogical strategies and technology tools to teach content. Bustamante and Moeller (2013) echoed that professional development in technology empowers teachers to incorporate technology in their classroom with pedagogical and content perspectives in mind to maximize student learning.

Purpose of Assessments

Assessments are used to guide instruction, show evidence of student progress, and evaluate teaching. They provide multiple measures and opportunities for learners to demonstrate what they know, understand, and do with the language (Hadley, 2007). While designing proper instruction for learners, it is important to be aware of student needs, interests, and motivation for an optimum level of achievement and performance of the learning goals (Crooks, 1988; Hattie, 2012).

Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) stated, “Teachers assess ... to monitor student learning and make necessary adjustments in instruction, both for individual students and for entire classes, and ... to assign grades to students following some period of instruction” (p. 245). Assessments help educators drive their instruction and identify what needs to be done to enhance student success (Sandrock, 2010). They are used to adapt teaching and learning (Hattie, 2012). According to Hattie (2012), teachers grow in their profession when they reflect on the assessments to evaluate student understanding or misinterpretation of the lesson. Assessments help teachers reflect on the effectiveness of their teaching (Gocer, 2008; Hattie, 2012).

“Summative assessments refer to those assessments that are generally carried out at the end of an instructional unit or course of study for the purpose of giving a grade or otherwise certifying student proficiency” (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2007, pp. 275-276). A summative assessment is an assessment instrument that measures what students have learned up to a particular point in time; it measures student progress towards the learning goals (Hattie, 2012; Marzano, 2010; Sandrock, 2010). Likewise, Qu and Zhang (2013) stated that summative assessments provide teachers valuable data to help guide their instruction.

These assessments come in different formats: They can be “written work products, oral presentations, interviews, projects ... tests, and quizzes” (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2007, p. 294). Summative assessments show what students can do on their own at the end of a unit of instruction (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2007).

Assessments help instructors enhance their teaching and evaluate areas of improvement to maximize student learning (Douglas, Ainsworth, & Almeida, 2007). It is

important for educators to align formative assessment – teaching during a unit – and summative assessment – end of a unit achievement (Douglas et al., 2007; Hattie, 2012; Sandrock, 2010). If assessments are poorly constructed or not aligned with instruction, little learning will occur in the classroom (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2007; Marzano, 2010).

There are diverse types of assessments to enhance student learning in a foreign language classroom: authentic assessments known as “situational assessments,” real-life scenarios, and performance-based assessments in which students practice with another person the language and culture in communicative tasks. There are also project-based assessments, open-ended questions, role-play realistic situations, writing samples, interviews, journals and learning logs, retelling a story, tests, portfolios, self- and peer assessments, teacher observations, and checklists (Gocer, 2008; Sandrock, 2010); however, Gocer (2008) indicated that traditional assessments such as memorization of vocabulary and grammar are not proven to be helpful to improve the language performance of students.

Formative Assessment

The term “formative evaluation” was first used in 1967 by Scriven (as cited in Black & Wiliam, 2003) to describe ongoing assessments designed to enhance the curriculum, teaching, and learning. Furthermore, Black and Wiliam (1998) defined formative assessment as “encompassing all those activities undertaken by teachers and by their students, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged” (pp. 7-8). Formative assessments are ongoing assessments (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Hattie, 2012; Wiliam, 2011). These diverse assessments are used in the classrooms regularly to improve student learning and

close learning gaps (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2007; Marzano, 2010; Kingston & Nash, 2011; Popham, 2005; Sandrock, 2010).

Black (2003) suggested five key strategies with regard to formative assessments:

1. Clarify the learning outcome.
2. Create relevant classroom tasks.
3. Use feedback to enhance student learning.
4. Increase student ownership and responsibility in the learning process.
5. Collaborate with other students.

Furthermore, formative assessments used in world language may include the following teaching activities:

1. Participating in dialogues or spontaneous conversations.
2. Role-playing specific situations.
3. Writing short descriptions.
4. Interpreting messages (Standard Course of Study, n.d.c).

However, Douglas et al. (2007) said that these assessments might be challenging for educators, as little guidance is provided to help the teachers in applying strategies more efficiently in the classroom. Sandrock (2010) echoed that teachers feel overwhelmed with assessment practices due to lack of time to evaluate or score all assessments; furthermore, educators have difficulties using clear criteria to assess student work (Douglas et al., 2007). Effective formative assessments involve a constant change in instructional practices for teachers (Marzano, 2010). Educators must be skillful in using strategies to drive their instruction to improve student learning, to address student needs, and to reflect on the results of their assessments (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2007).

Formative assessment enhances autonomy in learning among students. It builds student confidence towards their learning goals and helps monitor their progress (Hattie, 2012). This type of self-assessment “leads to self-monitoring of performance” (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2007, p. 291). It allows students to think of the criteria and apply them to their work by focusing on what they need to improve. It increases student responsibility in their learning process and enhances collaboration between teachers and students (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2007). Likewise, Black and Wiliam (1998) emphasized the importance and benefit of using formative assessments in the classrooms to improve teaching and learning. Formative assessments drive teacher instruction by addressing student needs (Black & Wiliam, 1998).

LinguaFolio

LinguaFolio is a formative assessment tool for the students to document and reflect on their learning and cultural experiences with the language (Clarke, 2013; LinguaFolio – NCSSFL, n.d.; Popham, 2005). Members of NCSSFL developed the language portfolio in 2002. The student portfolio is the result of the collaboration with members of the Council of Europe, European Ministries of Education, and State Departments of Education representatives in the United States (LinguaFolio – NCSSFL, n.d.). In 2008, the states of Kentucky, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia piloted this student language portfolio (LinguaFolio – NCSSFL, n.d.).

LinguaFolio comes from the European Language Portfolio framework (ELP). It is comprised of three sections: language biography, dossier, and language passport. LinguaFolio is comprised of proficiency goals that follow the ACTFL guidelines with its levels of language competency and communications modes (LinguaFolio – NCSSFL, n.d.). There are two types of LinguaFolios available for language learners: LinguaFolio

Junior, a self-assessment instrument more suitable for elementary and middle school students, and LinguaFolio for high school students (Van Houten, 2006). E-LinguaFolio is the electronic version of LinguaFolio. It is a digital portfolio that has the capability to store a lot of materials such as audio and video files. It helps students document their progress and share their language learning with their teachers (Adams-Bullock & Hawk, 2001). LinguaFolio is an excellent tool for developing self-assessment and reflective learning skills and strategies (Little, 2009; Van Houten, 2006). Self-assessment increases student motivation, builds knowledge awareness, and keeps students engaged in deep learning (Little, 2009; Van Houten, 2006). Self-assessments help teachers individualize their lessons based on the goals the students and the instructors have identified. Self-assessments give teachers the necessary information to choose activities that match the different learning styles of their students (LinguaFolio – NCSSFL, n.d.).

Intercultural encounters are an important part of LinguaFolio. Interculturality is the ability of people from different cultures to interact and use authentic language in a way that demonstrates knowledge and understanding of other cultures (LinguaFolio – NCSSFL, n.d.). LinguaFolio enhances student motivation in learning a foreign language and helps students gain new cross-cultural experiences through practice (Clarke, 2013). With LinguaFolio, the learners become more autonomous and reflect on their learning (Schärer, 2000; Ziegler & Moeller, 2012).

Several studies were conducted on LinguaFolio. Clarke's (2013) study examined the relationship between goal setting and achievement to determine if a study of a foreign language that included the use of LinguaFolio as a formative assessment increased student academic achievement. The study was comprised of 618 students (454 LinguaFolio students and 164 students who did not use LinguaFolio from three high

schools in Nebraska between 2006 and 2010). The study revealed that students who used LinguaFolio as a formative assessment instrument had a higher GPA and ACT scores and increased their academic achievement in math, science, English, and reading. The goal setting in LinguaFolio promoted the development of student self-regulation skills. In fact, goal setting has been shown to increase student achievement (Moeller, Theiler, & Wu, 2012).

A study on LinguaFolio conducted by Moeller et al. (2012) in which 47 school districts were included in the pilot research revealed the positive impact of goal setting on student achievement. This 5-year longitudinal quasi-experimental study explored the relationship between LinguaFolio goal setting and student achievement in high school Spanish language classrooms. The finding from the study indicated that LinguaFolio students benefited from the goal-setting process throughout the entire duration of the foreign language learning experience. Between 2005 and 2009, the researchers recruited 21 teacher participants and their 1,273 individual students. These 21 teachers represented 23 Nebraska schools. The results revealed a consistent gain in goal setting and reflection from Spanish 1 through Spanish 3. Furthermore, the study showed the favorable impact of self-assessment and the benefit of implementing LinguaFolio as an assessment tool to promote articulation in the K-16 language programs. The overall implication of this study suggested that LinguaFolio can serve as a useful tool for promoting self-regulation in learners through structured goals (Moeller et al., 2012).

Ziegler and Moeller (2012) further investigated the effect of LinguaFolio intervention on student motivation, learning, achievement, and the development of student ability for self-regulation in learning. The quantitative study, comprised of 127 first-year students from nine Spanish classes who served as the experimental group, used

LinguaFolio as a learning tool in the Spanish curriculum. The control group was the three French classes comprised of 41 students. The study revealed a correlation between self-assessment and student higher scores. The results of the study revealed that students increased their motivation in the learning and improved self-regulated learning. The research showed that using LinguaFolio as a teaching and learning tool produced positive outcomes in foreign language learning.

Additionally, the study by Thill (2011) examined the impact of using an electronic portfolio for learning a foreign language with 62 Spanish 4 students in a high school. The experimental group used the electronic portfolio for 7 months, while the control group did not use LinguaFolio and proceeded with regular classroom activities. The study revealed that students who used LinguaFolio were more motivated in learning the language. This assessment tool helped them monitor their progress and enhanced their language learning by using goal setting. During the portfolio process, students improved their language and cultural skills.

Furthermore, Schärer (2000) provided a final report on the ELP on a 2-year pilot meta-analysis project comprised of 30,000 students from 16 different countries and 1,800 teachers who participated in the pilot program. This report analyzed questionnaires completed by both instructors and students from various countries assessing the ELP. It revealed that 68% of the learners felt the time spent on keeping an ELP was time well spent; 70% of the teachers found that ELP was a useful tool for the learners; 78% of teachers considered that the ELP was a valuable instrument for the teachers; and 70% of students found the ELP helped them assess their competence (Schärer, 2000); however, the final report also revealed the importance of training the teachers and the students to use the ELP and LinguaFolio pedagogic tool to maximize its effectiveness (Schärer,

2000).

Likewise, Moeller's study indicated a need for additional investigation such as training requirements for instructors interested in integrating the self-regulation process and the relationship between specific intervention tools and student self-regulation (Moeller et al., 2012). Teachers and students need time and good preparation to experience success with LinguaFolio (Moeller et al., 2012). One of the greatest challenges for instructors utilizing LinguaFolio in their classrooms is how to integrate it into their daily classroom exercises, as it can be time consuming (Popham, 2005; Van Houten, 2006). There is no formula to integrate LinguaFolio formative assessment in the classroom, as each class is unique with its own characteristics and challenges (Douglas et al., 2007; LinguaFolio – NCSSFL, n.d.).

PLC

A PLC is comprised of a group of teachers who collaborate and work on a strategic plan to enhance student learning (DuFour, 2006). According to Eaker, DuFour, and DuFour (2002), there are three major themes that emerge from the PLC framework: a strong sense of collaboration among teachers with a shared mission, vision, values, and goals; collaborative teams that work independently to achieve common goals; and a commitment to continuous improvement with a clear focus on results. DuFour (2006) and Huffman and Hipp (2003) echoed that the structure of a PLC supports the school goals and focuses on the learning of each student as well.

In order for the schools to develop high performing collaborative teams, teachers no longer work in isolation. Collaboration with colleagues on a regular basis is embodied in their school culture. A PLC fosters cooperation, emotional support, and personal growth as educators work together to achieve what they cannot accomplish alone

(DuFour, 2006; Eaker et al., 2002). When teachers have a sense of a strong professional community in their workplace, collaboration and pedagogical improvement can exist among the teachers (Moeller, Mickelson, Stearns, Banerjee, & Bottia, 2013). School staff can assist students more efficiently by working with each other on problems and collectively making decisions on how to address key situations regarding student achievement and engagement.

An early childhood longitudinal study on mathematics achievement by Moeller et al. (2013) illustrated the strong connection between the sense of a professional community and student achievement. The study shows that students who studied with teachers who had a strong sense of professional community, felt valued, and collaborated with their colleagues to enhance their teaching benefited more than students who had teachers with a weak sense of professional community where the focus was not necessarily on student needs. The result of the study showed that students displayed a higher growth in their math scores due to teacher collaboration with other colleagues, classroom observation, and sharing best practices to address student needs, in comparison to students who displayed a lower math score and studied with teachers who reported a weak professional community.

“Collaboration is no longer a choice; it is a necessity ... to address the increasingly diverse and sometimes daunting needs of the students “ (Fattig & Taylor, 2008, p. 3). Through collective thinking and a shared vision, a PLC will help teachers achieve common goals to enhance student learning (DuFour, 2006, 2010; Eaker et al., 2002; Senge, 2012). In a PLC, teachers provide support to one another. They focus on student learning by analyzing data; and they share resources and strategies to achieve goals that are specific, measurable, and attainable in order to increase student growth

(DuFour, 2006, 2010; DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Eaker et al., 2002). When teachers believe all students can learn, the following questions are asked at their PLCs: What do we want the students to learn? What are the strategies that need to be implemented if they did not master the intended outcome? What do we do when they experience difficulty? What is the plan for the students who mastered the concepts? What do we do when they are already proficient (DuFour, 2006, 2010; Eaker et al., 2002)? The process of collective inquiry helps teachers seek best practices (Eaker et al., 2002) by focusing on needed areas for learning and monitoring the students (DuFour, 2010).

DuFour (2010) argued that the challenge for educators is to create a community of commitment. “Providing time for collaboration does not lead to improved results unless people are focused on the right issues” (DuFour, 2006, p. 3). The collaborative time does not ensure engagement in deep discourse about how to achieve the school goals more effectively unless educators accept their responsibility to work together as true professional colleagues to achieve their goals successfully (DuFour, 2010). Furthermore, a curriculum focus in a PLC will allow teachers to decide together what students should be able to do as well as what not to teach. According to DuFour and Eaker (1998), “curriculum design has increasingly become an issue of identifying what content to exclude” (p. 163). The key component to establish a curricular focus is to make sure the curriculum focuses on significant learner outcomes (DuFour, 2010).

DuFour (2006) stated that too often when administrators make new improvement initiatives, they tend to focus on the “how” without explaining the “why” to their staff. To address the “why,” teams are most effective when they are clear about the results they are to achieve by having the desired outcome in mind. Furthermore, Senge (2012) echoed this statement by emphasizing the importance of a shared vision in a learning

organization. He stated that a learning organization cannot exist effectively without a shared vision. (Senge, 2012). Additionally, DuFour (2010) stated that school personnel needs training and support to be effective collaborators in PLCs.

For a successful PLC, administrators must provide proper training to their staff and help them focus on the school's goals by making sound decisions to increase student learning (DuFour, 2010). Administrators should provide time and structure in the school schedule for collaboration and data-driven discussion with additional information and feedback to make the necessary improvements to achieve the school goals. In addition, clear guidelines and boundaries should be provided to help support teacher focus on goals, curriculum, best practices, and student achievement (DuFour, 2010). To implement a successful PLC, administrators should be viewed as leaders of the school who provide time for collaboration in the school day. PLCs should operate with team norms for collaboration that is guided and driven by team talk about specific and measurable performance goals. The team should have access to all relevant information so that the primary focus is on student learning. The teachers focus together on measurable goals to monitor student progress and align best practices and resources for the fundamental purpose of learning for all students. As a result, teachers develop teaching strategies for students to build on their strengths and address their weaknesses in the learning process (DuFour, 2010). DuFour (2010) also suggested the importance of providing quality time for teachers built in the school day and year to collaborate with their colleagues.

Mark Edwards (2014), the superintendent of the Mooresville Graded School District in North Carolina, stated that his teachers did not participate well in the digital initiative PLC in the past, due to the lack of time to be able to collaborate and their lack

of confidence to share with other colleagues. In order to develop teamwork and collaboration among teachers, 8 early release days were built in the school year so the time in the afternoon was dedicated to professional development, collaboration, reflection, planning, and data analysis at the school and district levels to enhance student learning as a true PLC model (Edwards, 2014).

A team structure in a PLC must be vertically aligned with different grade level teachers who teach above and below the students. Furthermore, groups of teachers can use technology allowing to connect with colleagues from other districts, states, and countries, allowing teachers to work together in teams based on their areas of expertise (DuFour, 2010). For instance, a team organized by grade level or subject areas may be responsible for identifying curriculum outcomes, assessing student achievement, selecting instructional materials, planning and presenting staff development programs, participating in peer observation, and coaching other teachers (DuFour, 2010). By implementing a team concept based on shared students, these teams could focus on curriculum content and on the needs of a common group of students (DuFour, 2010).

In order to enhance best practices, teachers study with their colleagues, focus on instructional strategies to address student needs, and use data to make decisions about their teaching. Teachers should also read and reflect on book talks as well as do research on teaching. In addition, they should visit other schools that have proven to achieve the goals set (Eaker et al., 2002; Huffman & Hipp, 2003). “This quest for “best practices” – collective inquiry – is one of the most fundamental cultural shifts that occurs as schools become a true PLC” (Eaker et al., 2002, p. 20). As a result, teachers who become leaders lead within and beyond the classroom. They contribute to a community of learners and influence colleagues to enhance their educational practices to increase student learning

(DuFour, 2010; Huffman & Hipp, 2003).

When teachers collaborate and learn from their colleagues, professional growth occurs (Eaker et al., 2002). Similarly, DuFour (2010) echoed that an outcome of collective learning in a PLC is the emergence of teacher leadership where a shared vision is developed to address student needs.

A case study by Graham (2006) investigated the relationship between PLC activities and teacher improvement for core middle school teachers. The study showed that the principal built time in teacher schedules by grouping them in subject area teams and providing a PLC structure to enhance their teaching. It appeared that the groups focused more on student learning and used student achievement data to improve teaching and increase student learning.

A study of educator perceptions on the impact of PLCs by Kastner (2015) showed the importance of a team with a shared vision and values in PLCs. The data from the study showed an increase in more collaborative practices among teachers who have a shared commitment to student learning. Not only did the participants value the opportunity to build on their individual skills, they also valued the skills from other teachers to enhance student learning. As a result, teacher isolation in the classroom decreased to allow for more collaboration on instructional practices.

A study on the impact of participation in a PLC by Michelen (2011) showed the importance of teacher commitment to student success. The PLC was organized by grade level twice a week with administrative support. The professional relationship increased as teachers felt part of a group and were committed to collaborate to improve student learning.

A study on the PLC impact on science teachers by Carpenter (2012) echoed the

importance of a shared vision and values by giving the group a structure and directions to conduct a successful PLC in order to gain ideas in pedagogical practice. It was demonstrated that the lack of direction along with a lack of consistency resulted in teacher frustration and decreased their productivity, which in turn affected pedagogical practices. A study on PLC protocol by Greene (2015) also showed the effectiveness of a PLC when the team collaborates, focuses on data, and receives support from its administrators. It also reiterated the importance of shared values and a shared vision.

A study on PLC teaching, learning, and understanding by Early (2012) showed the positive impact teacher collaboration has on learning and culture. In PLCs, teachers examined their student work and implemented new strategies to improve student learning. There was also a collegial relationship that included respect, trust, and established norms as part of the school expectations supported by the principal. In addition, a PLC study by Lew (2006) showed the principal of the school as a change facilitator for the implementation of a successful PLC. In Lew's study, the principal supported his staff in using diverse teaching strategies to support student learning.

Reflection

The word reflection comes from the Latin word *reflectere*, which means to bend back (Dictionary.com, n.d.). Marzano stated, "Reflective practice is highly esteemed and widely used in many professions" (Marzano, Boogren, Heflebower, Kanold-McIntyre, & Pickering, 2012, p. 4). Doctors, nurses, and lawyers reflect on their practice. By doing so, they are "skilled practitioners through their work" (Loughran, 2002, p. 34). In the profession of education, reflective practice implies "teacher thinking, meditating or pondering" (Rushton & Suter, 2012, p. 1). Jay and Johnson (2002) acknowledged that

Reflection is a process, both individual and collaborative, involving experience

and uncertainty. It is comprised of identifying questions and key elements of a matter that has emerged as significant, then taking one's thoughts into dialogue with oneself and with others. (p. 76)

The theoretical framework from Dewey (2012) and Schön (1983) on reflective practice goes deeper into reflective thinking where practitioners investigate a problem and find a solution (Bell & Aldridge, 2004; Farrell, 2004, 2015). Dewey defined reflective thought as “active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends” (p. 5). Additionally, Schön suggested two categories of reflection: reflection in action which is “making decisions about events in the classroom as they happen” (Farrell, 2004, p. 28) and reflection on action which is “thinking about one's teaching after the class; giving reasons for one's actions and behaviors in class” (Farrell, 2004, p. 28). Furthermore, Farrell (2004) stated that “Reflective practice is a systematic and structured process in which we look at concrete aspects of teaching and learning with the overall goal of personal change and more effective practice” (p. 27).

Reflective practice in second language education is scarce, even though the literature review shows examples of reflective practices teachers can use to enhance their teaching; however, there is no existing framework for teachers to utilize when reflecting on their teaching (Farrell, 2015).

Some educators may feel overwhelmed and feel isolated in their classroom; they may not find the time to reflect on their teaching, as they may perceive reflective practices as another task added into their daily teaching job (Clarke, 2014; Farrell, 2015). Reflective practice takes time, as it requires educators to analyze their own teaching practice and use alternatives to enhance it for the benefit of their students (Eby, Herrell,

& Jordan, 2006; York-Barr, 2006). Farrell (2004, 2015) argued that highly motivated teachers still find ways to use their creativity to reflect on their own teaching practice. He further stated that school administrators must plan and understand the need for their staff to reflect on their teaching. Through reflective practice, teachers can enhance their instructional tools to support all students (Eby et al., 2006). Without using any type of reflection to analyze classroom activities and instruction, teachers accept the current state of their school instead of being agents of change (Eby et al., 2006; Farrell, 2015; Pollard, 2014).

Reflective practitioners constantly investigate problems that occur in the classroom and solve them by using and analyzing data and adjusting their teaching practices to improve student learning. This active process is not based on feelings but is concrete and data oriented to find possible solutions (Eby et al., 2006; Farrell, 2004, 2015).

Jay and Johnson (2002) suggested three dimensions of reflective thoughts:

- “1- Descriptive: Describe the matter for reflection.
- 2- Comparative: Reframe the matter for reflection in light of alternative views, others’ perspectives, [and] research.
- 3- Critical: Having considered the implications of the matter, establish a renewed perspective.” (p. 77)

Several researchers show diverse examples of reflective practices to enhance teaching through collaborative reflection: journal writing, observing other colleagues in the classroom, listening to others, and self-reflection through video and audio, reading about teaching, and collaborating with other colleagues (Farrell, 2004, 2015; Pollard, 2014; York-Barr, 2006). A study by Wright (2008) showed that when teachers used

video recording in their classroom to reflect on their teaching, it helped them focus more on an area of improvement. In the study, the teachers chose a standard and a goal they wanted to focus on and videotaped their teaching where the selected standard could be observed. The study revealed that this practice helped them focus on their self-reflection and analyze their classroom instruction in more depth. By using the video to enhance teaching, teachers were empowered to reflect and analyze areas of improvement to improve their teaching practice. The video provided more evidence and data to use to improve the lesson.

A study by Wilson (2013) revealed that teachers acknowledged the benefit of reflective practice, as some teachers modified their lessons and teaching practices to meet student needs and improve their learning. Through the use of self-reflection journals for almost a full school year, teachers enhanced their classroom practices by videotaping their classes and then revising their assessments and classroom strategies to maximize student learning. The self-reflection journal on their teaching practice enhanced their differentiation within classroom instruction.

A study by Beal (2017) revealed that teachers enhanced their teaching practice through a portfolio that included components of collaboration, feedback from their colleagues, and use of video. In the study, the six participants engaged in self-reflection by collaborating with their peers. They learned about other teaching practices and skills from their colleagues as well as received feedback from them. The study showed that the components of the portfolio on teacher collaboration were very valuable for the teachers who learned from their colleagues. Just like the study by Wright (2008), the video component of the teacher portfolio with the ongoing teacher collaboration gave teachers the opportunity to view one another's teaching in a nonthreatening environment and learn

about others' teaching practices, thus enhancing their own teaching.

A study by Lamkin (2015) on the use of video to enhance teaching helped the participants in self-reflection. The video was a great learning tool as they collaborated and received feedback from their colleagues. The video as a self-reflection tool gave the participants evidence to improve on their teaching as well as acknowledged the good teaching moments that occurred in their classroom. The video gave them insight into their own teaching practices and student learning. The study revealed that it was more meaningful for the participants to have videos of several lessons instead of a single lesson in order to maximize their self-reflection and grow professionally.

Last, a study by Robinson and Kelley (2007) on utilizing role-playing activities with digital videos with preservice educators revealed that those who participated in role plays, viewed their videos (ground in actual events), and reflected on their practice were more likely to change their teaching practice in the future. The video tool enhanced their self-reflection. The other group, those who did not view the streaming videos after their role play, did not reflect as well on problems that happened in the classroom and were less likely to change teaching in the future (memory events).

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standard VIII on Teacher Reflection states,

Accomplished teachers of world languages continually analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of their instruction in order to strengthen their teaching and enhance student learning. For accomplished teachers, every classroom experience provides an opportunity for reflection and improvement. No matter the success of an activity or lesson, the reflective professional believes it can be improved or altered to more effectively meet students' needs. For example, teachers might

initiate and participate in face-to-face or virtual study groups to reflect on their teaching practices. Effective reflection stimulates a teacher's creativity, guides personal growth, contributes to content knowledge and classroom skills, and enhances student learning. (NBPTS, n.d., p. 43)

The North Carolina Educator Evaluation System (NCEES, n.d.) Standard V: Teachers Reflect on Their Practice states,

Teachers analyze student learning. Teachers think systematically and critically about student learning in their classrooms and schools: why learning happens and what can be done to improve achievement. Teachers collect and analyze student performance data to improve school and classroom effectiveness. They adapt their practice based on research and data to best meet the needs of students. (p. 11)

When teachers reflect on their own teaching and share best practices with other colleagues, they become expert teachers and improve their teaching skills (Marzano et al., 2012).

Several studies were conducted on reflective practices. The study of perceptions of reflective practice by James (2007) revealed that the interviewees had different interpretations on the meaning of critical reflection. The common response from the participants was that reflection means looking back in order to make adjustments to enhance teaching and student learning. The study revealed that some participants focused more on weak performance in the reflection process while others expressed the need for additional time for their reflective practice. During the interview process, the staff felt that reflective practice is too broad. They also agreed on using different reflection tools such as online logs, diary-style entries, dialogue with other learners, and

paper-based journals.

A case study by Jarvis, Dickerson, Thomas, and Graham (2014) on teacher reflection in Malaysia and the United Kingdom revealed that when both groups engaged in dialogue about their professional practice and learned about the personal, professional, and cultural values and beliefs that shaped their pedagogies, teachers developed a better sense of self-reflection. The language teachers openly shared their experiences and practices and were willing to learn from one another in order to enhance their pedagogical skills in a nonthreatening environment.

A case study by Rodman (2010) sought to discover how the repeated use of teacher reflection throughout teacher preparation experience can be useful in encouraging growth and improving pedagogical knowledge and teaching performance among preservice teachers. The teachers examined what they discovered about teaching through reflection and how it affected their pedagogical skills. The study revealed that through reflection, preservice teachers noticed how it had an effect on their pedagogical skills and by being a reflective practitioner, it improved teaching skills.

The study by Palmer (2012) on the National Board certification portfolio process and its influence on teacher reflection revealed that 13 of 15 teachers from the study acknowledged being more reflective practitioners while going through the National Board portfolio process. The time spent while doing the portfolio allowed them to reflect on their classroom teaching. By using videos to record their teaching practice as one of the requirements of the portfolio, they identified problems to reflect upon and adjusted their teaching practices by revising their lesson plan, classroom assessments, and the delivery of their lesson in the classroom.

Conclusion

The reviewed research showed that world language teachers needed help and support in teaching different levels in the language using the World Language Essential Standards to enhance communication skills and cultural awareness of the target language. Furthermore, the review showed the gaps in utilizing different technology tools and assessments to enhance teaching and learning in world language classrooms. Finally, the literature review showed gaps in world language teacher collaboration and reflection to maximize teaching and student learning.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to examine French and Spanish teacher experiences in teaching middle and high school students in one North Carolina school district. This chapter describes the research methodology of this study by discussing (a) the mixed-methods research design, (b) the ACTFL Educator Questionnaire, (c) the research question, (d) the participants and setting, (e) the measuring instruments, (f) the protocol for data collection, (g) the protocol for data analysis, and (h) the role of the researcher.

Explanatory Sequential Mixed-Methods Design

The research method chosen to study the topic of world language teacher experiences in teaching middle and high school students was a mixed-methods design. The mixed-methods methodology is fairly new, formed in the late 1980s with increased popularity in the 1990s due to its focus on social science (Creswell, 2014). The mixed-methods approach is a strong methodology since it draws on the different perspectives of both qualitative and quantitative methodology. The explanatory sequential mixed-methods design was a two-phase research design that began with quantitative data collection and analysis, followed by qualitative data collection and analysis that led to an overall interpretation of the data. The initial phase (Phase I) was designed to address the ACTFL Educator Questionnaire. The second phase (Phase II), which was the world language teacher interview, was designed to explain in more depth the results from Phase I. As Creswell (2014) stated, “all methods [have] bias and weaknesses” (p. 14). While this design utilized a divergent quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis, the interpretation of both data separately explored “how the qualitative results help expand or explain the quantitative results” (Creswell, 2014, p. 225). By combining the

two divergent sets of data, the explanatory sequential mixed-methods design provided a comprehensive analysis of the research problem (Creswell, 2014). As Creswell indicated, “the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data neutralize the weaknesses of each form of data” (p. 15). The explanatory sequential mixed-methods research design was used to maximize interpretation of the data of world language teacher experiences in teaching middle and high school students.

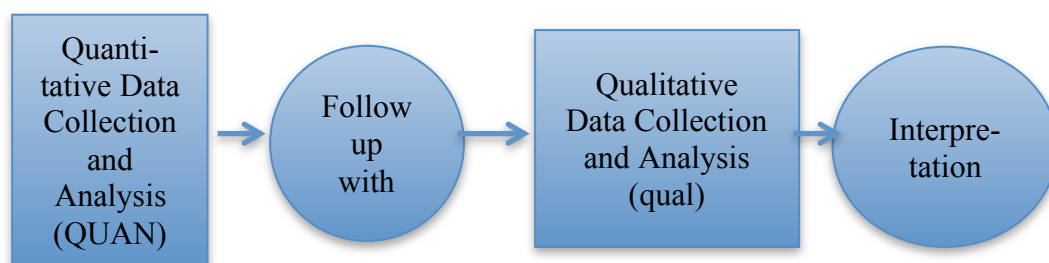


Figure 1. Visual Model for the Explanatory Sequential Mixed-Methods Design (Creswell, 2014, p. 220).

Validity of Survey Instrument

The primary purpose of the ACTFL Educator Questionnaire was to identify and gauge world language teacher needs in the classroom and their experiences in teaching middle and high school students. ACTFL is a national organization that was founded in 1967 to enhance teaching and student learning in K-16 in foreign languages. The organization is comprised of “more than 12,500 language educators and administrators from elementary through graduate education” (ACTFL, n.d.c, para. 1). “From the development of proficiency guidelines to its leadership role in the creation of national standards, ACTFL focuses on issues that are critical to the growth of both the profession and the individual teacher” (ACTFL, n.d.c, para. 2). The research and development teams of myOptions and ACTFL have forged a partnership since 2006 and collaborated

to create the Educator Questionnaire. Both organizations meet regularly to enhance their respective program. MyCollegeOptions is a “non-profit organization that offers the nation’s largest college and career planning programs” (ACTFL, n.d.c, para. 3). ACTFL “is dedicated to the improvement and expansion of the teaching and learning of all languages at all levels of instruction to examine the state of foreign language education in the United States in high schools” (ACTFL, n.d.c, para. 4). On the Educator Questionnaire, world language teachers “were asked to share their attitudes and opinions on foreign language education, their experiences in the classroom, and their future plan regarding foreign language education” (ACTFL, n.d.c, para. 2). Every semester and every year ACTFL creates a summary of the findings. Peggy Jansen (personal communication, February 26, 2018), high school liaison at myCollegeOptions, stated, “The purpose of the ACTFL and myCollege Options research data is to build upon their program that is updated every year to help promote and enhance world language educators in their classrooms in the United States.”

Phase One - Quantitative Research

A digital survey (Appendix A) was used to collect information of world language teachers who taught in middle school and high school. The researcher created a digital version using Google Forms and emailed the link to the world language director. The world language director shared the link with the world language teachers in the district. The email (Appendix B) included the purpose of the study and the impact of participation and also guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity for all participants. The participants completed the consent form for research (Appendix C). For the quantitative data, the participants were asked to complete the ACTFL Educator Questionnaire. The researcher received permission to use the ACTFL survey instrument (Appendix D). On the survey,

a question was asked for voluntary participation in the qualitative group interview where the world language teachers were prompted to provide their name and contact information. At the conclusion, survey data were digitally collected and saved until the survey window closed (2-week period). All information was kept confidential to the extent allowed by law and university policy.

Measuring Instruments

The measuring instruments for this dissertation study consisted of two parts: the questionnaire and the focus group interviews. The ACTFL Educator Questionnaire deemed to be appropriate and applicable for this study. The world language participants were able to submit their responses electronically. The researcher received permission from ACTFL to utilize the ACTFL Educator Questionnaire for the study (Appendix E).

There were three separate groups for the group interview with no more than 10 participants per group. The group interviews were face to face at the central office and recorded.

Phase Two – Qualitative Research

Teachers who indicated their willingness to participate and provided their contact information were contacted to conduct a group interview at the central office after school. The researcher used stratified random sampling: Three groups with no more than 10 participants per group were formed based on their teaching location – central, eastern, and southern parts of the district. In order to enhance organic conversation and validity of the data, the groups were comprised of middle and high school teachers. To further the explanation of the ACTFL Educator Questionnaire, each participating world language teacher from the district where the study took place was able to participate in a semi-structured interview (Appendix F). The 30- to 50-minute interviews were conducted

either face to face or via FaceTime or phone call. The group interview process occurred after the collection and analysis of the ACTFL Educator Questionnaire data. The purpose of the group interviews was to explore, explain, and clarify the responses obtained from the ACTFL Educator Questionnaire. The group interviews were recorded using an audio recording device and then transcribed into text. The responses from the group interviews were copied to Microsoft Word documents for text analysis. The qualitative data were read to identify emerging thematic categories. The world language participants were told in advance that the group interviews would be recorded for accuracy in transcription during the process.

Data Reduction

The quantitative data were exported from the online survey in a Google Form and copied to an Excel spreadsheet for descriptive statistic calculations and the development of tables and bar graphs. The qualitative data from the group interviews were prepared for input in NVivo (qualitative data analysis computer software) for text analysis and thematic coding. The qualitative data from the group interviews were analyzed to identify emerging thematic categories. The frequency of themes in the world language participant responses were counted and calculated as part of the quantitative descriptive statistics.

Data Display

Descriptive statistics from the quantitative data from the ACTFL Educator Questionnaire were organized in tables. The qualitative data from the world language teacher semi-structured group interviews were displayed by emerging themes in correlation with the survey data. Thematic coding was organized in tables representing theme distribution and world language participants. The themes from the group

interviews displayed in tables were fully explained.

Data Connection and Interpretation

Data connection occurred with the qualitative collection of data for Phase II building on the quantitative data results from Phase I. The data responses from the ACTFL Educator Questionnaire generated themes for the semi-structured group interview process. The analysis and interpretation of the quantitative and qualitative data connection were conducted to address the overall results. The results provided further clarification and explanation of the quantitative ACTFL Educator Questionnaire data results. The researcher reviewed the quantitative and the qualitative data to explore and develop a richer and more complete explanation of the data.

Data Analysis and Reporting the Findings After the Study

The quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed separately. Subsequently, the researcher used a side-by-side comparison approach of these two databases with a joint display of data in the form of graphs and tables for the research (Creswell, 2014).

The researcher read the responses from the surveys and used NVivo software for the qualitative data. The researcher was able to analyze emerging themes from the ACTFL Educator Questionnaire and world language teacher group interviews in the study. Once the data were synthesized, the researcher shared and discussed the findings from the study with the world language director and the participants.

Research Question

How do world language teachers in middle school and high school describe their experiences of teaching and student learning?

Number of Participants

Twenty-five world language middle school and high school classroom teachers

from a district located in eastern North Carolina were eligible to participate in the study. The researcher conducted a group interview comprised of three groups with no more than 10 participants per group. The group interviews were conducted at the central office and after school.

Demographics of Participants

The participants in the study were the world language teachers from a rural school district in eastern North Carolina. The district currently has nine middle schools and eight high schools where the Spanish language is taught. The researcher would like to clarify that French is taught in one high school only. The teachers for the study were not selected randomly: All world language teachers were invited to participate in the study voluntarily. The background of the participants was rich: The Participate teachers (teachers who come and teach in the United States for 3-5 years before returning to their home country) were from Central America, South America, Europe, and Eastern Europe. The rest of the participants were from the United States. Their teaching experience varied from 1-29 years. Some teachers taught one foreign language such as French or Spanish but have multiple grade levels in their classes (Grades 10-12). Other teachers taught multiple languages and grade levels (for example English Language Learner-Spanish, Grades 6-8; English Language Learner-French-Spanish, Grades 10-12; French, Grades 10-12; and Spanish-Spanish for Native Speakers, Grades 10-12). Table 4 represents the years of experience for the potential participants.

Table 4

Years of Experience (Study Participants)

Number of Years	Number of Teachers
First-Year Teachers	1
1-5	2
6-10	3
11-15	9
16-20	6
21-25	2
26-30	2
31 +	0

Research Ethics

World language teachers in this study were willing participants who agreed to complete the survey and be interviewed for research purposes. Participants were able to sign a Consent Form for Research (Appendix C) acknowledging that they participated in the study voluntarily, anonymously, and without personal gain or evaluation measures.

Details regarding the purpose and procedures of the research were fully disclosed, and participants had the opportunity to withdraw during the process at any time. The survey and the qualitative interviews from the participants with their names and locations were kept confidential at all times. The Gardner-Webb University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the research and helped ensure that the research code of ethics was followed during the process.

Role of the Researcher

It was the researcher's responsibility to plan and implement the research including, but not limited to, receiving district and university permission to conduct the research, distributing and collecting the surveys, conducting the interviews, analyzing the data, and maintaining the research code of ethics.

Conclusion

The explanatory sequential mixed-methods approach chosen for this study utilized a two-phase research design that began with quantitative data collection and analysis followed up with qualitative data collection and analysis, leading to a more complete description and explanation of the data. The study was designed to clarify and explain the results from the quantitative survey instrument. The survey instrument was intended to collect data on world language teacher experiences in teaching middle and high school students. This instrument captured the true essence of world language teachers who teach middle and high school students in one North Carolina school district. The ACTFL Educator Questionnaire was followed by a semi-structured group interview with selected world language participants. Data analysis consisted of data reduction, data display, and data connection and interpretation.

Chapter 4: Results

This study investigated world language teacher experiences in teaching middle and high school students in one North Carolina school district. In this chapter, the results from the quantitative and qualitative analysis are presented. The procedure outlined in Chapter 3 is followed for the quantitative data (questionnaire) and the qualitative data (interviews). The quantitative data collected from the ACTFL Educator Questionnaire responses are presented in the form of bar graphs with the percentage for the “select one” response and for the “select as many as apply” responses. The qualitative data are organized by salient themes from the world language teacher interviews. The term respondent (R) is followed by a number for each world language teacher who volunteered for the study. The researcher conducted three focus group face-to-face interviews. In addition, one FaceTime interview and one phone call interview were conducted for the participants who were unable to attend one of the focus group sessions. The analysis of the data followed the explanatory sequential mixed-methods design explained in Chapter 3. The quantitative data from the ACTFL Educator Questionnaire helped describe the experiences of world language teachers. The qualitative data of teacher interviews helped give further insight into the quantitative data. When the qualitative data were analyzed, six salient themes emerged from the world language teacher interviews: (a) student motivation, (b) world language standards, (c) PLCs, (d) technology, (e) resources, and (f) support.

The researcher was granted permission to conduct the research study (Appendix G). As a result, the researcher met with the world language director at the central office on April 12, 2018 to discuss the research study. The world language director emailed all world language teachers and asked them to attend a face-to-face meeting on April 26,

2018 with the researcher and the world language director. As a result, the researcher met with 17 world language teachers from the district where the study took place. The meeting took place from 4 to 5 p.m. on April 26, 2018 in a high school media center the world language director reserved for this purpose. Twenty computers with Internet access were available for the teachers to complete the Participant Google Form (Appendix A) and the ACTFL Educator Questionnaire (Appendix E). Three additional teachers who were unable to attend the meeting completed the Participant Google Form and the ACTFL Educator Questionnaire on April 27, 2018. With the permission of the world language director, the researcher provided a letter describing the study to the world language teachers during the meeting (Appendix B). The letter was also sent via email to all world language teachers with two URLs for them to complete: one for the consent form for research and one for the ACTFL Educator Questionnaire in a Google Form. The 20 total responses from the Educator Questionnaire were included in the final analysis of this study.

Qualitative data were collected during the focus group face-to-face interviews after school from 4 to 5 p.m. on May 7, 2018, May 9, 2018, and May 14, 2018 at the central office in a conference room the world language director reserved for this purpose. A total of 11 world language teachers participated in the focus group interviews (two teachers on May 7, 2018, six teachers on May 9, 2018, and three teachers on May 14, 2018). One teacher participated in a FaceTime interview on May 7, 2018, and one teacher participated in a phone call interview on May 14, 2018. All interviews were recorded with a voice-recording device and transcribed.

With regard to years of experience, one respondent (R3) had less than 5 years of teaching experience, three respondents had 6-10 years of teaching experience, two

respondents had 11-15 years of experience, five respondents had 16-20 years of experience, and two respondents had 26-30 years of teaching experience. According to these data, 69% of the respondents had more than 10 years of teaching experience overall in teaching a world language; however, three teachers were from the exchange visitor programs Participate or Educational Partners International; therefore, this was their first year teaching in the U.S. Five male teachers and eight female teachers participated in the interviews. Of 13 respondents, five teachers had a bachelor's degree (38.4%), and eight teachers had a master's degree (61.5%). No respondents had obtained a doctorate degree.

Table 5

Participant Demographics

World Language Respondents #	Overall years of Experience	Gender	Degree Level
R1	16-20	Male	Master's
R2	16-20	Female	Master's
R3	0-5	Male	Bachelor's
R4	11-15	Male	Bachelor's
R5	16-20	Female	Master's
R6	6-10	Female	Bachelor's
R7	26-30	Female	Master's
R8	6-10	Male	Bachelor's
R9	16-20	Female	Master's
R10	16-20	Female	Master's
R11	11-15	Female	Bachelor's
R12	26-30	Male	Master's
R13	6-10	Female	Bachelor's

Quantitative Research

The purpose of the ACTFL survey instrument was to obtain information about world language teacher experiences, needs, and support. The 11 components of the

ACTFL Educator Questionnaire were presented in the form of either multiple-choice responses with “select all that apply” or “select one” response. Question 1 was the only question that allowed a short typed response due the nature of the question as shown on Figure 2.

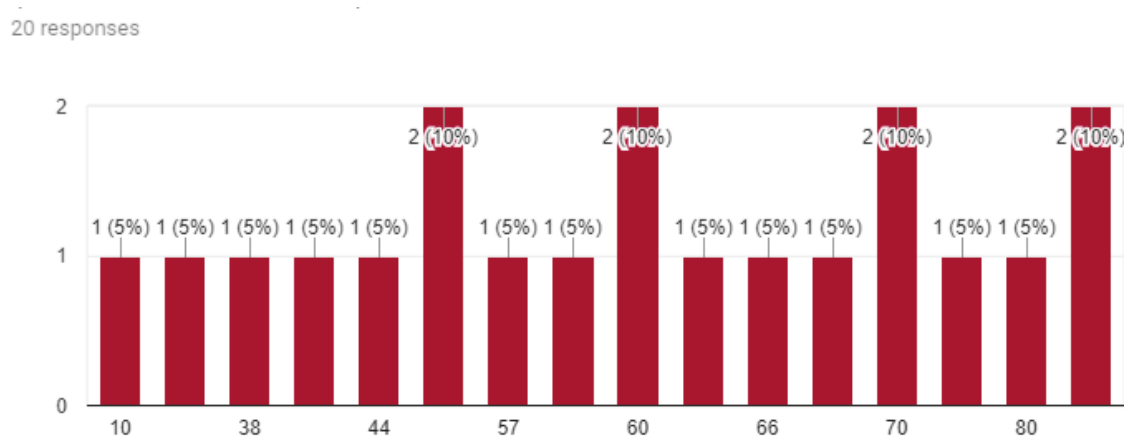


Figure 2. How many students have you been assigned to teach this semester? (Please specify number).

The class sizes vary based on the language. The number of students vary from 10, if the teachers are also teaching EL (English Language) classes that are not part of this study, to 80 students per semester. The Spanish classes are the largest in comparison with French (only one teacher teaches French).

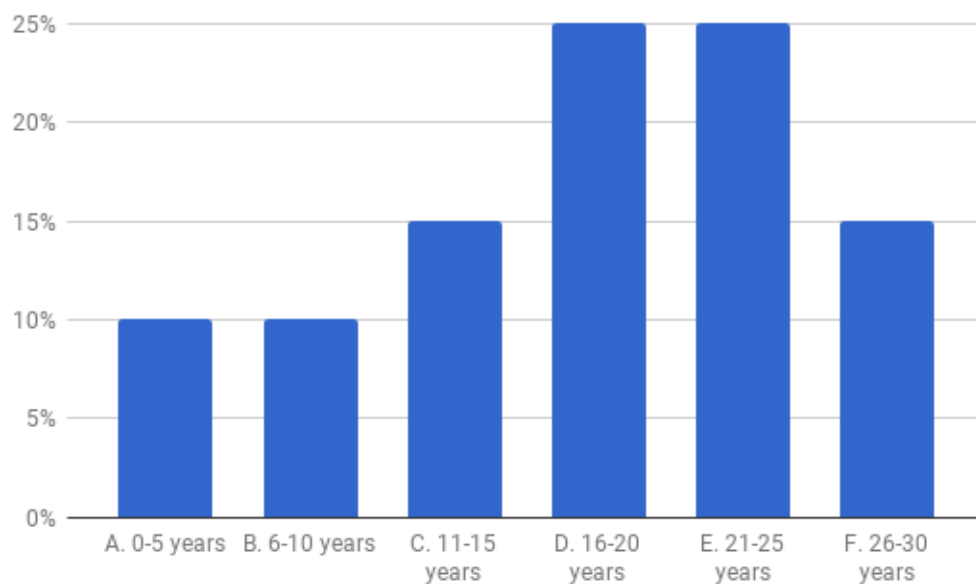


Figure 3. How long have you been teaching?

Participant teaching experience ranges from less than 5 years to 30 years. There are 20% of teachers with less than 10 years of experiences, 40% between 10-20 years of experience, and 35% between 20-30 years of experience.

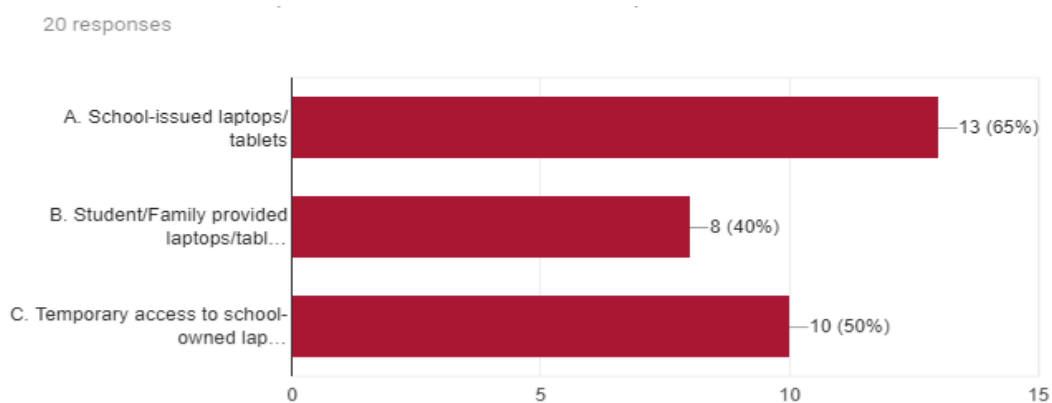


Figure 4. Please describe your students' access to Web-connected technology in the classroom. (Select as many as apply).

The vast majority of the participants (65%) have access to technology at their schools with either Chromebooks, iPad carts, or access to computers in the media center;

40% of the students use their cell phones and/or bring other electronic devices such as iPads, tablets, and laptops.

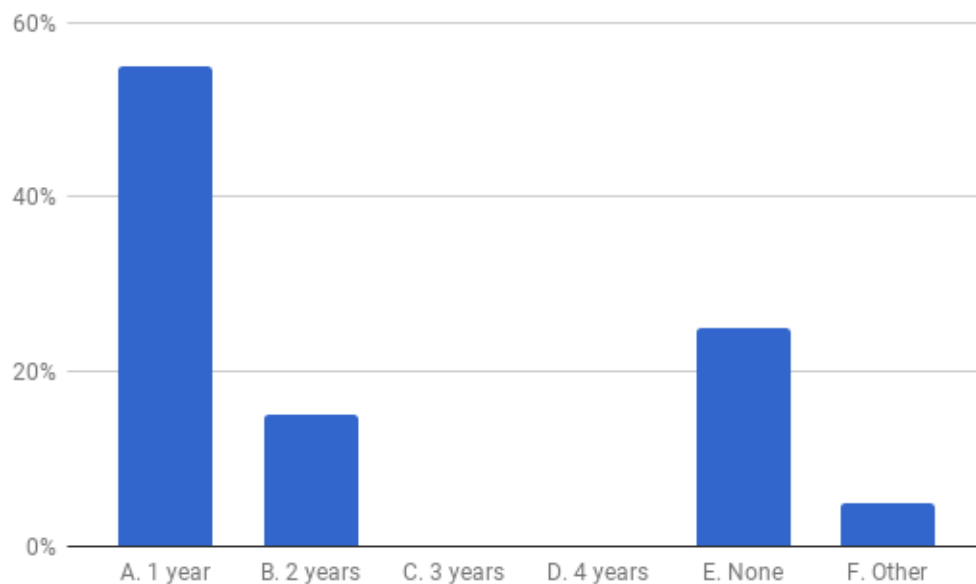


Figure 5. How many years of world language study does your school require for graduation?

Schools encourage students to take a foreign language. Twenty-five percent of the participants said their students were not required to take a world language to graduate; 15% of the participants said their students need to take at least 2 years of a world language; and 55% of the participants said their students must take a least 1 year of world language study.

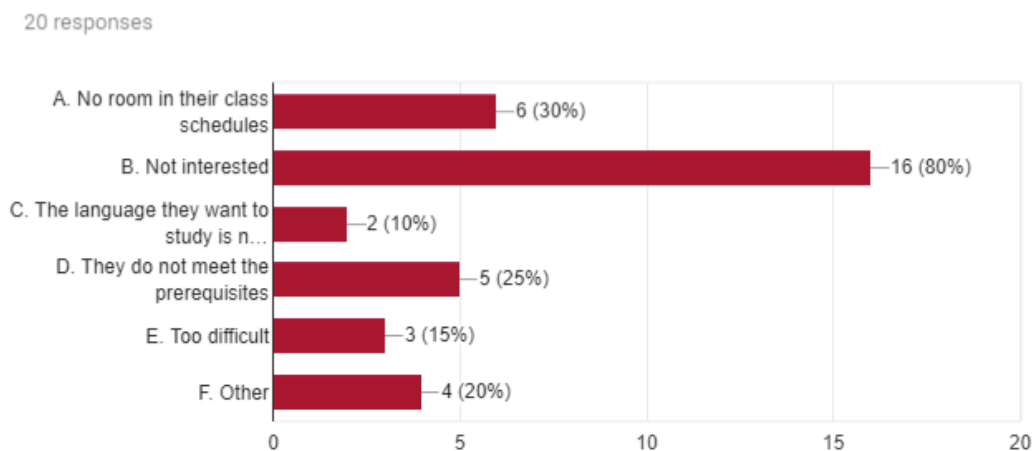


Figure 6. What is the primary reason you think students do not persist in their world language study in high school? (Select as many as apply).

Eighty percent of the participants said that the students are not interested in learning a world language; and 30% said there is no room in their class schedules. Furthermore, 25% of the participants said their students do not meet the prerequisites; and 10% said the language their students want to study is not offered at their school.

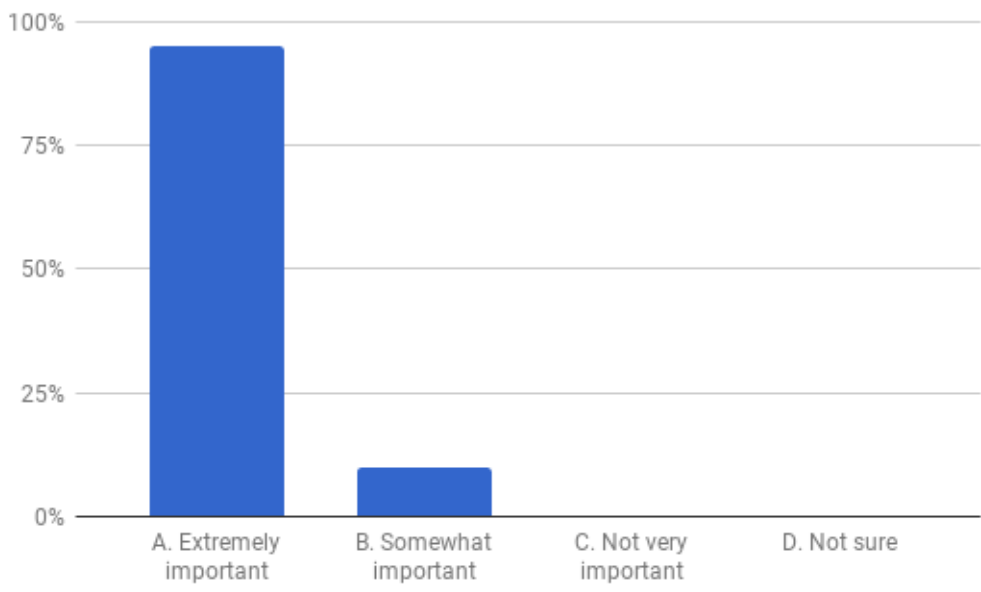


Figure 7. How important do you believe world language will be to the future careers of your students?

Ninety percent of the participants said studying a world language was extremely important, whereas 10% said it was somewhat important.

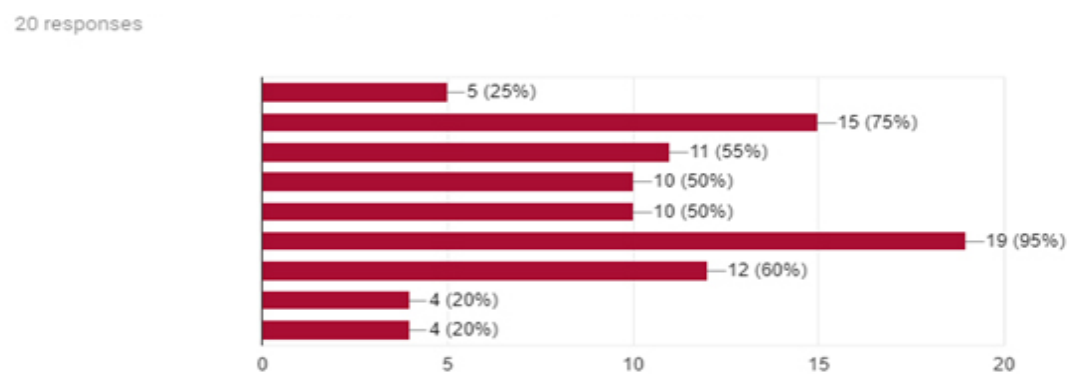


Figure 8. Please indicate the methods you currently use to maintain or expand your language proficiency. (Select as many as apply).

Ninety-five percent of the participants said that they use Web/Internet resources to maintain or expand their language proficiency. Sixty percent use texts, 55% participate in online webinars and cultural activities in the community, and 50% travel to a country where the target language is spoken.

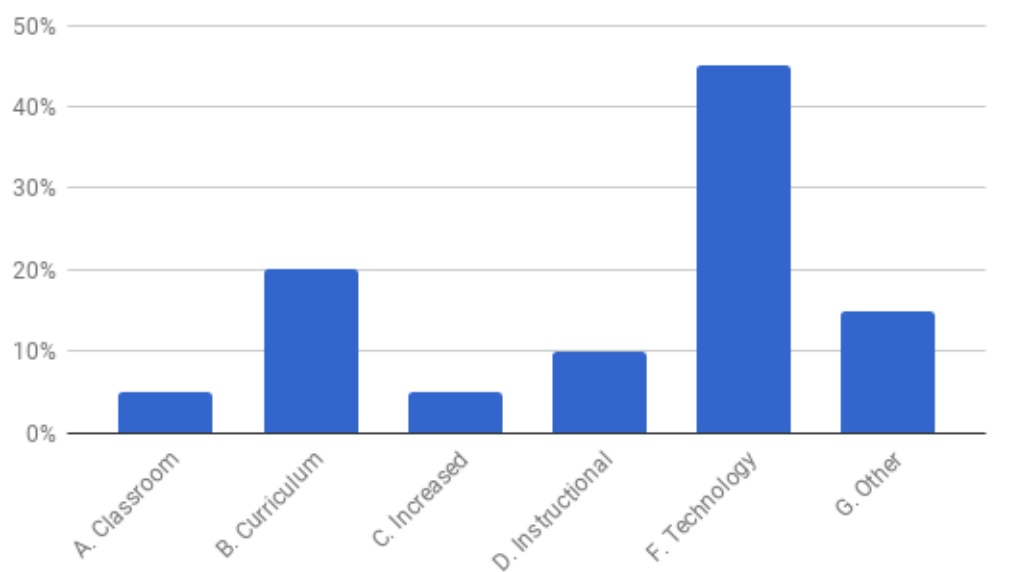


Figure 9. What is your top professional development need?

Forty-five percent of the participants would like to have professional development on technology integration, 20% on curriculum and design, 10% on instructional strategies, 5% on classroom management, and 5% on increased language proficiency.

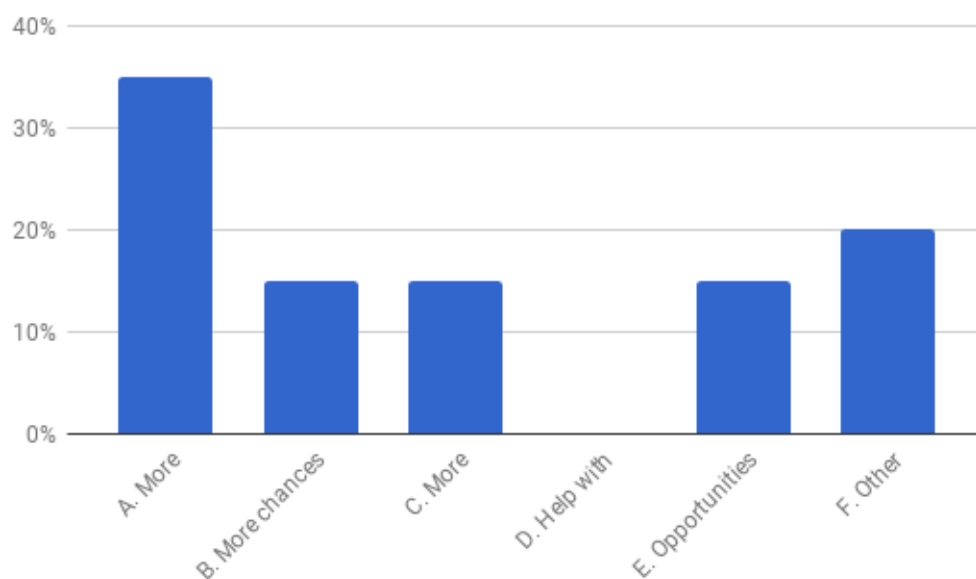


Figure 10. As a world language teacher, what type of support do you need the most?

Thirty-five percent of the participants would like to have more opportunities for professional development, 15% would like to network with colleagues, 15% would like to receive more information on best practices, and 15% would like to have more opportunities to increase their language proficiency.

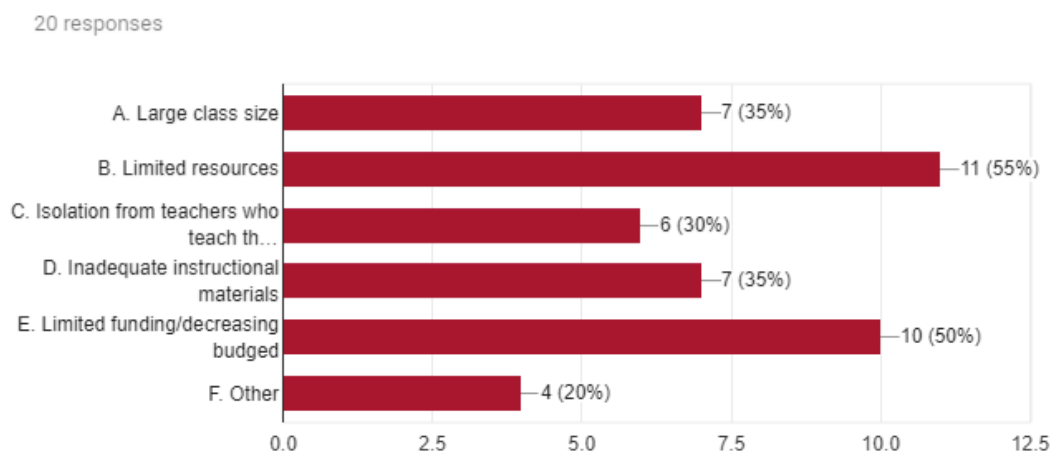


Figure 11. What challenges do you face as a world language teacher? (Select as many as apply).

Fifty-five percent of the participants said they have limited resources, 50% stated limited funding, 35% said they have inadequate instructional materials, 35% said teaching large classes was challenging, and 30% said they felt isolated from other world language teachers.

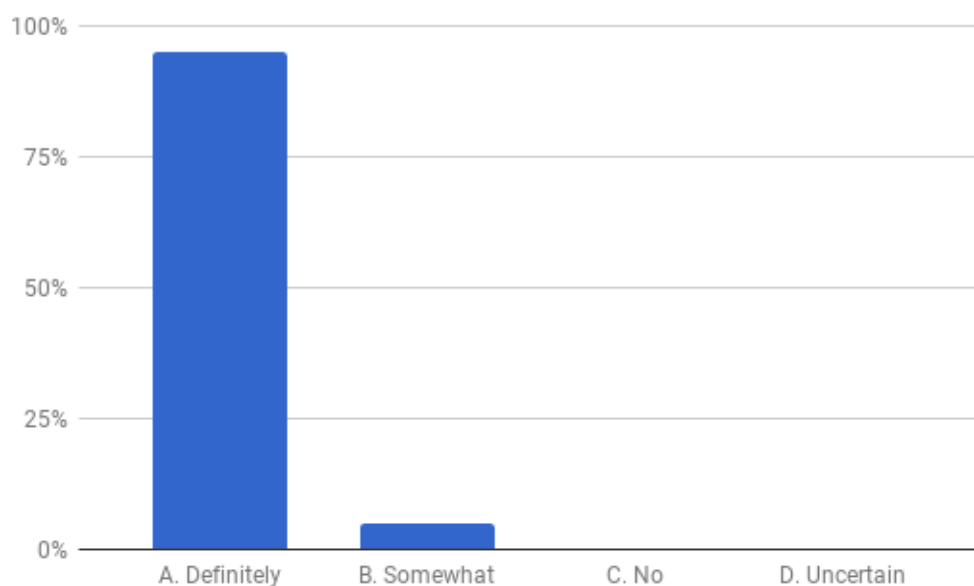


Figure 12. Do you consider advocating for world language education to be part of your job?

Ninety-five percent of the participants said they advocate for world language education, whereas 5% said they somewhat advocate for world language.

Qualitative Research

Thirteen participants were available for interviews. The interviews were semi-structured to promote organic conversation for the study. Questions were drawn from common themes found in the literature review, which had significant impacts on world language teachers, and from the ACTFL Educator Questionnaire. As mentioned earlier, there were six salient themes from the interviews: (a) student motivation, (b) world language standards, (c) PLCs, (d) technology, (e) resources, and (f) support. Each respondent was identified by a corresponding number ranging from 1 to 13. Table 6 reflects the number of times the respondents referred to a particular theme during the interview.

Table 6

Theme Distribution by Respondent

	Respondent number												
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
World Language Standards	6	8	4	8	0	2	5	3	4	4	3	4	2
PLCs	3	2	3	8	2	3	2	2	2	1	4	2	3
Technology	5	3	6	3	4	1	1	1	4	4	6	4	4
Resources	1	1	10	2	2	2	1	1	3	2	5	5	3
Support	1	2	5	5	2	2	3	2	0	0	2	2	4

Student motivation. There were different responses regarding student motivation ranging from “really motivated” to “do not want to learn a language.” R1 said, “Students are really interested in speaking a different language. They seem to really want to play with the language. They seem to really want to communicate. They are very excited.” In addition, R3 responded, “If they see you motivated, if they see your passion, it is contagious. They will get motivated. I find things to motivate them.” R11 added, “I teach fifth grade for the first time. Learning a language increases their motivation. I did not think it would have worked so well. They are learning fast. It was a good experience.” Some teachers, however, complained about student lack of motivation. R4 claimed that “motivation is a concern,” while R5 and R6 emphasized that many students were enrolled in their classes because there were no other electives available for them. R5 said, “I have students that do not want to learn Spanish. It is very difficult to work with them. This is a problem although we help them get motivated. It is difficult.” R6 echoed, “If you have six students who want to study Spanish and fourteen who do not, it is hard.” Two teachers, R2 and R9, built relationships with students in order to increase their motivation in the classroom. R2 said, “Sometimes situations affect

them, their performance. I like to talk to them and see how they feel and what is affecting them. I want to motivate them and engage them.” R9 added, “I like to connect with my students and be involved in their lives. They are doing a good job.”

World language standards. There were commonalities on the standards during the interviews. R1 and R4 said the standards are “too broad, too general.” R4 said she tried to use more advanced language standards because the ones that pertain to her particular class level are “so basic.” The three new teachers expressed the need to be more familiar with the world language standards. They needed time to adapt to a new country, new culture, and new standards.

R10 said the standard of culture is challenging and asked, “How do I explain Cinco de Mayo in Spanish?” R2 emphasized the importance of the standard of culture by stating, “To me it is important to share the culture, their own language and the cultures in general. I teach vocabulary based on the standards with the intercultural pieces.” She added, “The standard on oral production (interpersonal, interpretive and presentational) is challenging for students.” R3 said, “I try to use communicative situations for them to use the language in different ways.” For R3, the speaking and writing production is challenging because of the “limitation of time.” Likewise, R7 described “the interpersonal and the presentational modes of communication” as challenging since “they do not want to talk in front of others because they do not want to make mistakes.” Oral production is a challenge for R7 and R10 who said the standard for speaking the language is challenging but they find the way to teach it. Furthermore, R3 stated that the standard of communities is challenging “because it requires students to use the language beyond the classroom walls.” R4, R10, R13, and R14 also agreed that the standard of communities is challenging. R10 added, “I do not think we do a good job. That is my

weakness. It took me several years of teaching to finally look at this difficult standard.” For R11, the standards of connection and communities are challenging; but R12 added in the discussion that to address this standard, she works with teachers from other subject areas at her school. For R13, the standard of communities is challenging.

PLC. During the interviews, there were various responses about PLCs. The vast majority of respondents held a meeting once a month with other elective teachers at their school. Only two respondents held a meeting once a month with other world language colleagues at their school. R2 said, “I meet with my department regularly.” R6 said, “I have a PLC with my colleague once a month.” R12 added, “I work with teachers from other subject areas in PLCs.” Two teachers hold a meeting with other teachers from across the curriculum every day in the morning before classes start. They work together and share strategies during this allocated time. R1 said,

Since I am the only world language teacher at my school, I meet daily with my other colleagues in the morning. We share ideas across the curriculum. Because of scheduling and time constraints, I cannot meet with the world language department.

R7 is also the only world language teacher at his school and meets with other colleagues every morning; however, the participants would like to have regular world language meetings and share ideas within their department.

R3 claimed,

I do not remember having a meeting this year for world language. There are meetings that are not related to world language. We have a meeting every month, getting information required by the principal. It is not really talking about us.

They are not relevant. I think that district wide we do not really have meetings.

We do not have basic guides for the standard. At this time, we do not have a real PLC. We have a group of people from the school but we are not working together and helping each other.

R4 echoed, “I have to meet after school with a bunch of people I do not know.

Sometimes I feel the meeting is a waste of time.” R3 added,

We have a once a month meeting. We do not share, and administration priorities are EOC classes. So the rest of us are trying to figure out what to do. We did not have training. It is a toxic PLC.

Furthermore, R5 stated, “I would like to have more meetings with other world language teachers.” R13 added, “We have not met but once this year for world language. I am the only Spanish teacher and feel isolated. We feel lonely.” In addition, R7 claimed, “We need to have more meetings county wide.”

Technology. The vast majority of teachers used and taught with technology. R2 said, “At the beginning I was not using technology, but now I like using technology in the classroom. I had to get used to my classes first. I have access to technology, Internet based, Google classroom for tests, quizzes online.” R3 said,

I work with projects with technology. My students can use their cell phones. I have Apple TV; we use the media center every two weeks or once a week.

Students use their cellphones to do projects, do research, and record themselves in speaking activities.

R4 added,

I have online folders for each of my students. They create projects with Google Slides; this motivates them. I use Google classroom and cool Apps on Google Drive. I use dialogue and we create videos. I try to incorporate technology for

them. I use technology on final projects, research papers, websites, research group activities, and presentations. I create videos. I integrate technology with every project we do. I have a Smart Board in the classroom, and we do have iPad carts and a Bright Links board.

Moreover, R9 and R10 said that this year they integrated more technology in their curriculum. R5 argued,

Talking about technology at our school, we have all the technology that you can think of, that you can expect, but the students don't take advantage of it. I use Google Classroom. I love technology so all of my topics are introduced by using technology.

She said that she wished her students could see the opportunities of using a variety of devices they have available that not all schools have. R7 said she tried to differentiate her instruction through the use of technology. She stated, "I use video clips, canvas, take my students to the computer lab ... we do Power Point Presentations, create Webpages and use Websites as a resource." R11 added,

We use technology for presentations ... technology, yes, but not all the time. I do Power Point Presentations. I have computers and use the computer lab. My students do presentations. I work with them on the speaking portion. We need to balance technology and traditional paper and pencil tasks.

R12 added, "I have chrome books, so I integrate technology once a week or every two weeks." R1 claimed,

I want to say that all the kids have cell phones, and we have an iPad cart that we can borrow. I have used Adobe software to create commercial services for the school, and my students use technology for research.

Resources. R3 said,

We have old textbooks but the students have always used this resource to refer to if they need it. We have enough resources we do not need more resources. There are so many resources. With online resources we have too many. The resources are out there. We have computers.

R4 added, “The textbooks are very old, but the literature part is good. I have to pull out information from other sources for my classes.” R5, R6, R11, and R13 claimed, “We have the same old textbook.” Furthermore, R7 added, “More digital resources are needed to promote some degree of positive learning.” R9, R10, and R11 said they need different materials and they need updated textbooks with reproducibles. R1 claimed, “I got myself six different books and picked information from each of them because, of course, we do not have any books either.” In addition, R9 purchased six additional language books for her classes.

Support. All but two teachers emphasized they needed more support from the school and the district. R2 stated, “I had a mentor this year but not from the world language department. I would like to have more meetings with other world language teachers and learn from them.”

R3 said,

I have a passion to teach. I speak with guidance, but I still get students who do not want to take the class and are placed in my class ... two levels of world language are a joke. People do not take us seriously. For the last three years, I do not feel we are welcomed ... there is a lack of respect to our professionalism. They should listen to our things, but they do not ... I try to work with the school counselors and ask for the advanced students to be placed in upper level classes.

They tell me that we do not have levels 3-4 available so little by little you have less students asking for advanced level classes. I can have Spanish 3-4 students in my classroom and teach them independently.

R5 echoed, “They need an elective class and are put in Spanish, I do not know why.” R4 claimed, “We used to have support from the district, but now we do not get any kind of support ... There is no support.” R8 added, “I just changed to another school where the administrators are more supportive. I did not have a good experience before, so I transferred.” R4, said “I wanted to attend AP Spanish training to grow my program but there was no funding. I would like to work with my other colleagues to think of ideas to make our program stronger.” Last, R1 said he has positive support from his administrator.

In addition to the six major themes that emerged from the interviews, the participants discussed four subthemes: (a) training, (b) elementary and high school continuum, (c) *LinguaFolio*, and (d) field trips and community involvement.

Training. R4 added, “We did not have training on world language standards.” Since she teaches EL and Spanish, she always chose training in EL. She claimed, “We did not have any type of training.” R7 echoed, “As a new teacher, it needs to be emphasized how to teach the standards. I need training to teach the standards.” R2 added, “I would like to receive a type of training on classroom management, culture, and connecting with other world language teachers.” In addition, the three new teachers highlighted the need to receive training on teaching the standards.

Elementary, middle, and high school continuum. R3 argued, “It is not fair that some counties have world language in elementary but not us anymore. Things will change if we have world language in elementary schools again.” R4, R11, R12, and R13

echoed, “I would like world language in elementary school again.” R11 added, “I think we should have Spanish again at the elementary level so when the students go to middle school we can work with them more.”

R11 claimed,

I will fight for my Spanish classes. They can earn credit in 8th grade for high school. The problem is that when they go to high school they cannot take it in 9th grade and must wait until 11th grade and they lose it ... and then they have to take it online, and that is a problem because they want to work with a teacher. It is hard for them to learn a language on a computer. I want my kids to take Spanish in 8th grade and push the language forward. As a middle school teacher, we need to find ways to speak with high school counselors and world language teachers. I have done it before. When I spoke with another high school teacher, she said, “Your kids are good ... They know grammar and vocabulary. They can speak Spanish.” I want to continue preparing my kids for high school.

LinguaFolio. Only four teachers indicated they knew about LinguaFolio. R4 said,

I am familiar with some of the concepts but could never find the time to start using it in my classes. I think we need someone who can help us start this process and show us how to navigate through the modules so we can feel confident to use it well in the classroom.

R10 added, “I do not use LinguaFolio but I heard about it”; however, the teachers who were not familiar with this tool wanted to know more about this formative assessment and asked for clarification on LinguaFolio and how to receive the resources online.

Field trips and community involvement. R7 stated,

To limit yourself in the classroom is not enough. You can do field trips and travel aboard. One day they are going to be leaders of the world, and they need to know their neighbors. We need to find ways to get more parent involvement and increase student motivation through field trips.

Three other teachers agreed on the idea to provide more field trips in order to give students more exposure and motivate them to study the language.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to gauge current perceptions of world language teacher experiences to help districts determine ways to better prepare world language teachers. The researcher used the explanatory sequential mixed-methods design to examine the themes that were present in the literature and to probe into the experiences of world language teachers who teach middle and high school students.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Recommendations

Introduction

In this chapter, a summary of the findings for the research question is discussed. This section also includes the researcher's interpretation of the study, its limitations, and recommendations for further study and practice with world language teachers.

Restatement of the Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine French and Spanish teacher experiences in teaching middle and high school students in one North Carolina school district. The literature review showed that world language teachers need support in teaching different levels of the language using the World Language Essential Standards to enhance communication skills and cultural awareness of the target language. Furthermore, the research review showed areas of divergence in world language teacher collaboration and reflection to maximize teaching and student learning.

Teacher responses collected from the ACTFL National Educator Questionnaire and focus group interviews conducted showed several areas of concern world language teachers face:

1. Student motivation.
2. Technology tools for teaching and motivating students.
3. World language standards.
4. PLCs.
5. Resources.
6. Support.

Research Question

How do world language teachers describe their experiences regarding teaching

middle and high school students?

Review of the Methodology

A mixed-methods design was used to answer the research question, “How do world language teachers describe their experiences regarding teaching middle and high school students?”

The explanatory sequential mixed-methods design was a two-phase research design that began with quantitative data collection and analysis, followed by qualitative data collection and analysis that led to an overall interpretation of the data. The purpose of the ACTFL survey instrument was to obtain information about world language teacher experiences, needs, and support. The 11 components of the ACTFL Educator Questionnaire were presented in the form of bar graphs with the percentage for the “select one” response and for the “select as many as apply” responses. Question 1 was the only question that allowed a short typed response due the nature of the question. Quantitative data were collected using a Google Form. Twenty teachers completed the Educator Questionnaire over a 2-day period.

The qualitative data were organized by salient themes from the 13 world language teacher interviews. The term respondent (R) was followed with a number for each world language teacher who volunteered for the study. The researcher conducted three focus group face-to-face interviews over a 2-week period. In addition, one FaceTime interview and one phone call interview were conducted for the participants who were unable to attend one of the focus group sessions. The interviews were semi-structured to promote organic conversation for the study. Questions were drawn from common themes found in the literature review that have significant impacts on world language teachers and from the ACTFL Educator Questionnaire.

Interpretation of the Findings

Through the course of the study, the researcher found key themes with regard to French and Spanish teacher experiences in teaching middle and high school students in one North Carolina school district. There were six salient themes from the results of the study: (a) student motivation, (b) technology tools for teaching and motivating students, (c) world language standards, (d) PLCs, (e) resources, and (f) support.

Student Motivation

The results of the study revealed that there were different responses regarding student motivation ranging from “really motivated” to “do not want to learn a language.” R1 said, “Students are really interested in speaking a different language. They seem to really want to play with the language. They seem to really want to communicate. They are very excited.” In addition, R3 echoed, “If they see you motivated, if they see your passion, it is contagious. They will get motivated. I find things to motivate them.” R11 supported the previous statement by saying, “I teach fifth grade for the first time. Learning a language increases their motivation. I did not think it would have worked so well. They are learning fast. It was a good experience.” Furthermore, several teachers agreed with the idea to provide more field trips in order to give students more exposure and motivate them to study the language; however, 80% of the teachers complained about the student lack of motivation. R5 and R6 emphasized that many of their students were enrolled in their classes because there were no other electives available for them. R5 said, “I have students that do not want to learn Spanish. It is very difficult to work with them. This is a problem, although we help them get motivated. It is difficult.” R6 echoed, “If you have six students who want to study Spanish and fourteen who do not, it is hard.”

Technology Tools for Teaching and Motivating Students

The vast majority of teachers used and taught with technology in their classroom. They integrate technology in their classes on a regular basis, go to the computer lab at least once a week or once every 2 weeks, and use iPad carts on a regular basis to enhance their teaching and to increase student motivation. They found that using diverse technology tools helped them monitor student work and differentiate classroom instruction through grammatical reviews, games, and online collaboration with their peers while working on collaborative projects. Furthermore, the use of voice recording tools motivated students to speak the language more. R3 said,

I work with projects with technology. My students can use their cell phones. I have Apple TV. We use the media center every two weeks or once a week.

Students use their cellphones to do projects, do research, and record themselves in speaking activities.

R 4 added,

I have online folders for each of my students. They create projects with Google slides; this motivates them. I use Google classroom and cool Apps on Google Drive. I use dialogue and we create videos. I try to incorporate technology for them. I use technology on final projects, research papers, websites, research group activities, and presentations. I create videos. I integrate technology with every project we do. I have a Smart Board in the classroom, and we do have iPad carts and a Bright Links board.

R7 stated, “I use video clips, Canvas, I take my students to the computer lab ... We do Power Point presentations, create webpages and use websites as a resource. My students do presentations. I work with them on the speaking portion.” Last, R1 claimed,

I want to say that all the kids have cell phones, and we have an iPad cart that we can borrow. I have used Adobe software to create commercial services for the school, and my students use technology for research.

These findings are consistent with previous research. The literature review indicated that integrating technology in the classroom is beneficial for teachers and enhances their confidence to use it more in the classroom. It is a tool for active learning (Shriner et al., 2010; Zhu, 2010). The use of technology in the classroom gives the teacher the ability to monitor student work and offer real-time intervention and differentiation in learning instruction for all students (Lezotte & McKee, 2002; O'Neill, 2001; Qu, 2010). Furthermore, the use of computerized practice tests and repeated drills allows students to receive immediate feedback (Lezotte & McKee, 2002).

The literature review showed a correlation between the use of technology and student motivation and learning through online communication tools such as videoconferencing, emails, and blogs with other exchange students to increase their motivation in learning the language and culture (Schenker, 2012). Additionally, computer software programs could make teaching more interesting and increase student motivation through games. It could provide a high level of interactivity through games. Computers offer students digital opportunities to listen to native speakers with different accents and speech as well as utilize voice-recording software (Qu, 2010).

World Language Standards

The results of the study showed commonalities on the world language standards with previous research. Two teachers said the world language standards are “too broad, too general.” R4 said she tried to use more advanced language standards because the ones that pertain to her particular class level are “so basic.” The three new teachers

expressed the need to have more time for training in order to be more familiar with the world language standards while adapting to a new country and a new culture. The finding seemed to be confirmed in previous research that revealed teachers had difficulty incorporating the world language standards in their teaching and expressed concerns about allocating time to include standards-based activities in their curriculum due to the lack of training (Berry, 2016).

Standard of Culture

During the course of the study, several teachers expressed the concern to teach the importance of the standard of culture. R10 said the standard of culture is challenging and asked, “How do I explain Cinco de Mayo in Spanish,” while R2 emphasized the importance of the standard of culture by stating, “To me it is important to share the culture ... I teach vocabulary based on the standards with the intercultural pieces.” These findings are consistent with previous research. Sun (2013) stated that the standard of culture is a difficult standard to teach: It requires long periods of study time to display an awareness and understanding of the culture of the target language. Furthermore, she reported that teaching cultural awareness in the classroom was critical and had to be taught carefully, as language and culture were strongly connected with one another. Furthermore, Kramersch (2006) emphasized the need to prioritize the standard of culture to enhance interaction among students. Last, Berry (2016) echoed the importance of proper training for world language teachers to increase their cultural awareness and give them appropriate tools to teach the standard of culture and the differences between the target culture and one’s own culture.

Standard of Communication

The results of the study revealed that half of the teachers said the standard of

communication is challenging for students because of their lack of confidence as well as the limitation of time they have to use oral production with other students with a higher level of proficiency. R7 described “the interpersonal and the presentational modes of communication” as challenging since “they do not want to talk in front of others because they do not want to make mistakes.” This finding seemed to be confirmed by the previous research of Schulz (2006) who argued that student proficiency levels in the standard of communication are deficient due to lack of time using communicative language skills in the classroom and lack of opportunities to interact with more advanced learners in the language to increase their language skill.

Strand of Communities

The results of the study revealed that six of 13 teachers stated that the standard of communities is challenging because it requires students to use the language beyond the classroom setting. R10 echoed, “I do not think we do a good job. That is my weakness. It took me several years of teaching to finally look at this difficult standard.”

This finding seemed to confirm what was found in the literature review. The research indicated that the strand of communities was more challenging to teach than the other foreign language standards, as it requires the students to use the target language in their community and that teachers need more support to find ways to teach it (Long, 2005; Sarroub, 1999). Another review revealed that local communities may not be available to address the strand of communities of the target languages but suggested that teachers may choose other sources such as the use of technology to overcome this challenge and provide their students with activities and experiences that will address it (Berry, 2016).

PLC

The result of the study showed that teachers expressed the importance of having a PLC for the world language department on a regular basis in order to improve their teaching practices by looking at their student data and increase their learning in the language. The vast majority of the world language teachers meet once a month with teachers from other departments at their school. R1 said,

Since I am the only world language teacher at my school, I meet daily with my other colleagues in the morning. We share ideas across the curriculum. Because of scheduling and time constraints, I cannot meet with the world language department.

All of the participants expressed the desire to meet, as they mentioned “isolation” and “loneliness” within their school and department. They wished to have regular meetings to connect with one another to learn more about the world language standards and to share ideas within their department. The finding seemed to be consistent with previous research on PLCs. The literature review emphasizes that regular collaboration with colleagues must be embodied in the school culture. A PLC fosters cooperation, emotional support, and personal growth as educators work together to achieve what they cannot accomplish alone (DuFour, 2006; Eaker et al., 2002). When teachers have a sense of a strong professional community in their workplace, collaboration and pedagogical improvement can exist among the teachers (Moeller et al., 2013). In a PLC, teachers provide support to one another. They focus on student learning by analyzing data; and they share resources and strategies to achieve goals that are specific, measurable, and attainable in order to increase student growth (DuFour, 2006, 2010; DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Eaker et al., 2002). The process of collective inquiry helps teachers seek best

practices (Eaker et al., 2002) by focusing on needed areas for learning and monitoring the students (DuFour, 2010).

Resources

The results of the study revealed that 55% of the participants said that they have limited resources, 50% stated limited funding, and 35% said they have inadequate instructional materials. Additionally, the results of the study revealed that teachers needed new resources to be able to teach more effectively in their world language classes. They also needed support to advocate for the world language department and to meet with their colleagues from the world language department to strengthen their program and curriculum. All of the teachers claimed to have “the same old textbooks.” They emphasized the need for different materials and new textbooks with reproducibles for their classes. R3 said, “We have old textbooks, but the students have always used this resource to refer to if they need it ... We have computers.” R4 added, “The textbooks are very old, but the literature part is good. I have to pull out information from other sources for my classes.” Furthermore, R7 added, “More digital resources are needed to promote some degree of positive learning.” Two teachers purchased six books as teaching resources for their classes. R1 claimed, “I got myself six different books and picked information from each of them because, of course, we do not have any books either.”

Support

The results of the study showed that the vast majority of the teachers needed support in the world language standards. This finding is consistent with previous research: World language teachers should receive support from their department to learn more about teaching the standards of culture and communication of the target language. By using the world language standards and scaffolding techniques to teach the standards

of communication and culture, teachers will receive the needed support to teach it properly to their students in order to enhance their cultural awareness and increase their understanding of a different culture in our global society (Waite, 2006). Furthermore, the results revealed that teachers needed time and support to implement *LinguaFolio* in their classroom. The results of the study showed that only four teachers knew or were familiar with the positive outcomes of *LinguaFolio* as an assessment tool for the students to document their learning and cultural experiences with a foreign language. Even those four were not comfortable using it with their students to increase their motivation and learning.

R4 stated,

I am familiar with some of the concepts but could never find the time to start using it in my classes. I think we need someone who can help us start this process and show us how to navigate through the modules so we can feel confident to use it well in the classroom.

The finding suggests that teachers may need more time and training on *LinguaFolio*, as previous research supports the benefits of this formative assessment tool. The research supported teacher concerns about time constraints regarding using *LinguaFolio* in the classroom as a teaching and learning tool. It may be a lengthy process to train the teachers to effectively use its components, which are proven to produce positive outcomes in foreign language learning by increasing student motivation through self-regulated learning (Ziegler & Moeller, 2012). This finding seemed also to follow the finding from the literature review: Teachers and students need time and good preparation to experience success with *LinguaFolio* (Moeller et al., 2012). One of the greatest challenges for instructors utilizing *LinguaFolio* in their classrooms is how to integrate it

into their daily classroom exercises, as it can be time consuming (Popham, 2005; Van Houten, 2006).

Teachers also needed support to advocate for the world language department and to meet with their colleagues from the world language department to strengthen their program and curriculum. All but two teachers emphasized they needed more support from the school and the district. R2 stated,

I had support from my mentor but would like to receive feedback from my principal on what I need to improve upon. Since I am new, I am learning from a new culture and a new place ... Also, I would like to have more meetings with other world language teachers and learn from them.

R3 claimed,

I have a passion to teach. I speak with guidance, but I still get students who do not want to take the class and are placed in my class ... two levels of world language are a joke. People do not take us seriously. For the last three years, I do not feel we are welcomed ... there is a lack of respect for our professionalism. They should listen to our things, but they do not ... It is not fair that some counties have world language in elementary but not us anymore. Things will change if we have world language in elementary schools again.

R5 echoed, "When the students need an elective class, they are put in Spanish; I do not know why." Furthermore, R4 added, "We used to have support from the district, but now we do not get any kind of support ... There is no support." Last, R11 claimed,

I will fight for my Spanish classes. They can earn credit in 8th grade for high school. The problem is that when they go to high school they cannot take it in 9th grade and must wait until 11th grade and they lose it ... and then they have to take

it online, and that is a problem because they want to work with a teacher. It is hard for them to learn a language on a computer. I want my kids to take Spanish in 8th grade and push the language forward.

Future Studies

More research on world language teachers describing their experiences regarding teaching middle and high school is needed. Additionally, further research on how world language teachers address the World Language Essential Standards in their classrooms, how they use technology to enhance their teaching and student learning, and how they reflect on their teaching practices is also desired. This study revealed several ideas for future research. First, increasing the number of world language participants to gauge their teaching experiences could continue this study. This study would be appropriate to be conducted in a bigger district to compare and contrast the results from the ACTFL Educator Questionnaire and teacher focus group interviews. Second, a study should be conducted on additional themes that emerged from the world language teacher interviews. For example, how middle and high school world language teachers use the formative assessment *LinguaFolio* to enhance student learning and increase student motivation and ownership in the language would be an excellent area of study. Furthermore, a study on how field trips and community involvement enhance student learning a foreign language would be another appropriate area of study. Third, this study would be suitable to be conducted with other subject area (academic and elective) teachers as well as in elementary, middle, or high school settings. Investigating other teacher experiences on their use of the Standards Course of Study, technology, and assessments in the classroom as well as participation in PLCs and self-reflection of teaching practices to enhance student learning would be another excellent research study

to explore. Likewise, creating a focus group interview with academic teachers, EL (English Learner) teachers, and elective teachers may enhance an investigation on teacher experiences. Fourth, another study on how academic and elective teachers participate in PLCs to share best practices to enhance teaching and student learning is another area for further research. Fifth, a research study on teacher perceptions and experiences in a dual language immersion setting would be an appropriate area of study to investigate. Sixth, a study should be conducted to assess the connection between the six themes found in this study (student motivation, standards, PLCs, technology, resources, and support) and their impact on teacher effectiveness and student achievement.

The Significance of the Study

The study on French and Spanish teacher experiences in teaching middle and high school students in one North Carolina school district was significant because it confirmed the need for allocating resources and providing support to enhance teacher best practices and effectiveness. Furthermore, the study revealed factors that impacted world language teacher self-efficacy, leading to teacher retention. The research study may be used to help world language teachers and administrators enhance collaboration and seek solutions to promote world language programs in K-12 in order for the students to attain a higher level of language proficiency, to create honors and AP world language courses, and to provide time and capacity for world language teachers to collaborate effectively in order to grow in the teaching profession and enhance their student learning.

Recommendations for World Language Teachers and School and District Leaders

1. School and district leaders should provide world language teachers with up-to-date resources and materials to support their teaching in the classroom.

Purchasing digital materials that have the capacity to be used on smart boards,

computers, laptops, iPads, smartphones, along with some traditional hard copy teaching materials might be an appropriate option to help world language teachers enhance differentiation for the diverse language levels the students may have in the classroom. Fifty-five percent of the participants said they have limited resources, and 50% stated limited funding. Furthermore, R7 added, “More digital resources are needed to promote some degree of positive learning.” R9, R10, and R11 said they need different materials and they need updated textbooks with reproducibles.

2. School and district leaders should provide new world language teachers who come from exchange programs with professional development on classroom management, culture, teaching in the U.S., and how to effectively use the World Language New Essential Standards to help them be more successful in the first year. R2 added, “I would like to receive a type of training on classroom management, culture, and connecting with other world language teachers.” In addition, the three new teachers expressed the need to be more familiar with the world language standards. They needed time to adapt to a new country, new culture, and new standards. Berry’s (2016) study also revealed that teachers had difficulty incorporating the world language standards in their teaching and expressed concerns about allocating time to include standards-based activities in their curriculum due to the lack of training for world language teachers.
3. School and district leaders should provide time and capacity for highly experienced world language teachers to work with new world language teachers to help them in their first year of teaching and provide them with

additional support. R2 stated, “I had a mentor this year but not from the world language department. I would like to have more meetings with other world language teachers and learn from them.”

4. World language teachers from middle and high school, school counselors, and school leaders should enhance collaboration to place native speaking students and other advanced students in upper world language classes earlier in their high school track to promote student proficiency in a foreign language by allowing them to take honors and AP world language courses. R3 said,

I try to work with the school counselors and ask for the advanced students to be placed in upper level classes. They tell me that we do not have levels 3-4 available so little by little you have less students asking for advanced level classes. I can have Spanish 3-4 students in my classroom and teach them independently.

R11 echoed,

As a middle school teacher, we need to find ways to speak with high school counselors and world language teachers. I have done it before. When I spoke with another high school teacher, she said, “Your kids are good ... They know grammar and vocabulary. They can speak Spanish.”

I want to continue preparing my kids for high school. I would like them to continue learning Spanish in 9th grade and not to wait until 11th grade.

Schulz (2006) echoed that students should have the opportunity to take a language class continuously in order to maximize their language oral proficiency.

5. World language teachers and school leaders should advocate more for their

world language program by attending AP training in world language to strengthen the world language program and build honors and AP world language programs within their schools. Thirty percent of the participants said there is no room in student schedules to take an upper level class in world language. Ninety percent of the participants said studying a world language was extremely important, and 95% of the participants said they advocate for world language education. R4 said, “I wanted to attend AP Spanish training to grow my program but there was no funding. I would like to work with my other colleagues to think of ideas to make our program stronger.” During the interviews, the researcher discovered that none of the teachers attended AP French/Spanish training.

6. World language teachers should use the formative assessment *LinguaFolio* to enhance student motivation and strengthen student cultural awareness and speaking skills in another language. *LinguaFolio* is an excellent tool for developing self-assessment and reflective learning skills and strategies (Little, 2009; Van Houten, 2006). Self-assessment increases student motivation, builds knowledge awareness, and keeps students engaged in deep learning (Little, 2009; Van Houten, 2006). Likewise, self-assessments help teachers individualize their lessons based on the goals the students and the instructors have identified. Self-assessments give teachers the necessary information to choose activities that match the different learning styles of their students (LinguaFolio – NCSSFL, n.d.).

Furthermore, intercultural encounters are an important part of *LinguaFolio*. Interculturality is the ability of people from different cultures to interact and

use authentic language in a way that demonstrates knowledge and understanding of other cultures (LinguaFolio – NCSSFL, n.d.). LinguaFolio enhances student motivation in learning a foreign language and helps them gain new cross-cultural experiences through practice (Clarke, 2013). With LinguaFolio, the learners become more autonomous and reflect on their learning (Schärer, 2000; Ziegler & Moeller, 2012).

7. School and district leaders should allocate time for world language teachers to participate in PLCs tailored for world language teachers. This would allow world language teachers to learn from their colleagues, share ideas, and strengthen best teaching practices to enhance student learning. One result of the study surprised the researcher: All teachers mentioned that the technology tools they used in their classrooms helped improve their teaching and student learning; however, none of the teachers mentioned online collaboration with their world language colleagues as a way to learn and share ideas on best practices. The literature review confirmed that the use of technology is also an excellent way to enhance teacher collaboration by sharing lesson plans, teaching strategies, and classroom resources with other foreign language teachers (Lezotte & McKee, 2002). R5 stated, “I would like to have more meetings with other world language teachers.” R13 echoed, “We have not met but once this year for world language. I am the only Spanish teacher and feel isolated. We feel lonely.” In addition, R7 claimed, “We need to have more meetings county wide.” R3 claimed,

I do not remember having a meeting this year for world language. There are meetings that are not related to world language. We have a meeting

every month, getting the information required by the principal. It is not really talking about us. They are not relevant. I think that district-wide we do not really have meetings. We do not have basic guides for the standards. At this time, we do not have a real PLC. We have a group of people from the school, but we are not working together and helping each other.

8. School and district leaders should utilize the world language administrator guide (from NCDPI) as a support tool for world language teachers in the classroom to enhance teacher effectiveness. In October 2014, NCDPI released an official guide for administrators that is helpful for classroom walkthroughs and pre and post conferences with the teachers. The guide is believed to give administrators a greater understanding of the world language daily practices.

The Administrator Guide does not take the place of the North Carolina Educators Evaluation System (NCEES) evaluation tool, but it is designed to be used as a resource to support the evaluation tool and to deepen understanding about meaningful instruction in world language classrooms.

(Administrator Guide, n.d.a, para. 1)

9. District leaders should create and promote world language programs early in elementary schools to allow students to attain a higher proficiency level in a foreign language by giving them the opportunity to be bicultural and bilingual in order to be better equipped for their future careers. R7 stated, “In order for the students to speak another language with proficiency, they will need to begin at an early age. Therefore, foreign language instruction in elementary

school is key.” R4, R11, R12, and R13 echoed, “I would like world language in elementary school again.” R11 added, “I think we should have Spanish again at the elementary level so when the students go to middle school we can work with them more.”

Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study was to gauge world language teacher perceptions and experiences to help districts determine ways to provide a support system for them that will lead to an increase in teacher effectiveness, teacher retention, and student achievement. Recommendations have been provided to help with the areas of concern world language teachers have experienced. The researcher used the explanatory sequential mixed-methods design to examine the themes that were present in the literature and to probe into the experiences of world language teachers who teach middle and high school students.

Limitations of the Study

First, one limitation of the study was that the research focused on French and Spanish teachers from a single rural county. Second, another limitation was a lower participation rate of world language teachers in focus group interviews (52%) in comparison with the completion of the ACTFL Educator Questionnaire with 80% of participants. Third, a limitation of the study was that the focus group interviews took place during the busy month of May: Some teachers from the early calendar were about to conclude their school year. Also, some teachers from Participate/EPI exchange programs were making plans to return to their home country and/or were almost ready to transition to teach in another state for the following school year. Perhaps, more participants would have attended the focus group interviews if they were facilitated

earlier. Fourth, another limitation was that the ACTFL Educator Questionnaire had six questions that gave the teachers the option to choose “other” among the various multiple-choice responses; however, there was no space for the participants to specify this choice. Additional quantitative data would have been available if participants were able to type their answers beside the option “other” for more clarification.

Conclusion

The results of the study on French and Spanish teacher experiences in teaching middle and high school students revealed that 95% of the participants said they advocate for world language education, and 90% claimed that studying a world language was extremely important for them and their students. The world language teachers who participated in the study were enthusiastic to share their experiences, express their concerns, and brainstorm possible ways to enhance their program. R7 stated,

To limit yourself as a teacher in the classroom is not enough. We need to work together and find ways to improve our teaching expertise and to share ideas with each other. We need to collaborate more and grow our programs. We need to find ways to do more field trips for our students, give them more exposure to work with students from other countries, and motivate them to study the language. One day they are going to be leaders of the world, and they need to know their neighbors.

As former President Obama (2008) stated, “You should be thinking about how your child can become bilingual ... We should have every child speaking more than one language ... If you know a foreign language, that is a powerful tool.”

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Appendix A
Participant Google Form

French and Spanish Teachers' experiences in teaching middle and high School students in one North Carolina school district: A Mixed-Methods Study

Please indicate whether you would like to participate in a world language study.

* Required

What is your name? *

Your answer

Where do you teach? *

Your answer

I would like to participate in the study conducted on French/Spanish teachers' experiences in teaching middle/high school students. *

Yes

No

SUBMIT

Appendix B

Email to Participants

World language teachers' email

Dear world language educators,

My name is Maguy Yancey, and I am a doctoral candidate in the Educational Leadership Program at Gardner-Webb University. You are invited to participate in a study titled "French And Spanish Teachers' Experiences In Teaching Middle And High School Students In One North Carolina School District: A Mixed-Methods Study," which I am conducting for my dissertation research. My passion for world languages and world language education prompt me to do a study on your experiences in teaching French, Spanish, and Spanish for Native Speakers in middle and high school.

If you would like to participate, please complete the following Google Form:

<https://tinyurl.com/yautnr9n>

Instructions for completing the survey are provided on the link. There is no monetary compensation for participating.

Any information obtained in connection with this study will be kept private. Your name or school will not be identified in my study. Your decision to accept or decline participation for this world language study will not affect you in any manners. You may stop participating at any time should you decide to withdraw from this study.

If you have any questions or concerns, at any time during this study please contact me at maguyyancey@wcps.org or Dr. Stephen Laws at slaws@gardner-webb.edu.

I appreciate your participation.

Maguy Yancey

Doctoral Candidate

Appendix C
Consent Form for Research

**Consent Form for Research
Gardner-Webb University
College of Education**

By signing this consent form, I:

1. Voluntarily agree to participate in the study entitled: French and Spanish Teachers' Experiences Teaching Middle and High School Students In One North Carolina School District: A Mixed-Methods Study.
2. May not personally benefit from this study, but the knowledge gained may benefit others.
3. Am free to refuse to participate and to withdraw from the experiment at any time without prejudice to me.
4. Understand my participation and all documents gained from the study will not be used in an evaluative manner.
5. Acknowledge that records from this study will be kept confidential and, if applicable, pseudonyms will be used in the final document.
6. Agree to complete the ACTFL Educator Questionnaire.
7. Agree to participate in a face-to-face or online 15-30 minute group interview.

If you have any questions regarding this study, you may contact Maguy Yancey by phone (919-394 0886) or by email (maguyyancey@wcps.org) or Dr. Stephen Laws by email (slaws@gardner-webb.edu).

Printed Name of Participant

Signature of Participant





Date

Signature of Researcher

Date

Appendix D

Permission to use ACTFL Educator Questionnaire

 **Yancey, Maguy** <maguyyancey@wcps.org> Jan 11   

to Peggy ▾

Hello Mrs. Jansen,





I hope this email finds you well.

I am currently working on my EDD on world language teachers' perception and self-efficacy in teaching middle and high school students in my district. I would like to know if I have permission from ACTFL to use the survey questions for my chapter 3 methodology and make a comparative analysis of the findings at the national level and in my district. My professor and I spoke about that possibility yesterday. My study is a quantitative and qualitative mixed methods.

Thank you for letting me know if you will need to speak with me...

Sincerely,

Maguy Techer Yancey, NBCT
Assistant Principal

 **Peggy Jansen** <peggy@nrccua.org> Jan 12   

to me ▾

Hello Maguy. We give you permission to use the questions for your study.

Let me know if you need anything further.

Sincerely,

Peggy Jansen

High School Liaison

myCollege Options®
[3651 NE Ralph Powell Road](#)
Lee's Summit, MO 64064

Toll Free: [877-409-6366](tel:877-409-6366)
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Appendix E

ACTFL Educator Questionnaire

ACTFL
American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages

Educator Questionnaire

1. How many students have you been assigned to teach this semester? (Please specify number)
2. How long have you been teaching? (Select one)
 - A. 0-5 years
 - B. 6-10 years
 - C. 11-15 years
 - D. 16-20 years
 - E. 21-25 years
 - F. 26-30 years
 - G. 31 + years
3. Please describe your students' access to web-connected technology in the classroom. (Select as many as apply)
 - A. School-issued laptops/tablets
 - B. Student/Family provided laptops/tablets/smart phone
 - C. Temporary access to school-owned laptops/tablets by request
4. How many years of World Language study does your school require for graduation? (Select one)
 - A. 1 year
 - B. 2 years
 - C. 3 years
 - D. 4 years
 - E. None
 - F. Other
5. What is the primary reason you think students do not persist in their world language study in high school? (Select as many as apply)
 - A. No room in their class schedules
 - B. Not interested
 - C. The language they want to study is not available
 - D. They do not meet the prerequisites
 - E. Too difficult
 - F. Other

6. How important do you believe World Languages will be to the future careers of your students? (Select one)
 - A. Extremely important
 - B. Somewhat important
 - C. Not very important
 - D. Not sure

7. Please indicate the methods you currently use to maintain or expand your language proficiency. (Select as many as apply)
 - A. Attend immersion sessions at conferences or summer institutes
 - B. Interact with native speakers in my community
 - C. Participate in online webinars or learning modules
 - D. Participate in culture activities in my community
 - E. Travel to a country where the target language is spoken
 - F. Use web/internet resources
 - G. Use texts
 - H. Participate in videoconference sessions
 - I. Other

8. What is your top professional development need? (Select one)
 - A. Classroom management
 - B. Curriculum design
 - C. Increased language proficiency
 - D. Instructional strategies
 - E. Technology integration
 - F. Other

9. As a World Language teacher, what type of support do you need the most? (Select one)
 - A. More opportunities for professional development
 - B. More chances to network with colleagues
 - C. More information about “best practices” in the language classroom
 - D. Help with classroom management strategies
 - E. Opportunities to increase my language and cultural proficiencies
 - F. Other

10. What challenges do you face as a World Language teacher? (Select as many as apply)

- A. Large class sizes
- B. Limited resources
- C. Isolation from teachers who teach the same language
- D. Inadequate instructional materials
- E. Limited funding/decreasing budgets
- F. Other

11. Do you consider advocating for World Language education to be part of your job? (Select one)

- A. Definitely
- B. Somewhat
- C. No
- D. Uncertain

Appendix F

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

The researcher will begin asking about education level and years of experiences teaching French or Spanish.

1. Based on the ACTFL Educator Questionnaire that you completed, please tell me about your experiences teaching French or Spanish at your current school?
2. Do you teach one level or multiple levels of French or Spanish in your classrooms?
3. How do you use the World Language Essential Standards? Are there any standards that seem challenging?
4. Do you have access to technology in your class? If so, how do you integrate technology in your lessons?
5. Do you attend regular PLCs with other world language teachers? With other colleagues?
6. Do you use Linguafolio in your classrooms? If so, how do you use it?
7. What types of support do you need for your professional growth and to enhance the world language department if applicable?
8. Do you have any further issues that have not been identified?

In order to best represent your ideas, this interview will be recorded with the voice-recording device. While your answers may be quoted, there will be no identifying features used in the research nor will the voice-recording device be heard by anyone but me, the researcher. You have been selected based on your indication that you would be open to discuss your experiences teaching French or Spanish in middle/high school. This interview will be 15-30 minutes and will be semi-structured in order to promote organic conversation for the study. Thank you for agreeing to participate.

Appendix G

Letter to the Superintendent

March 23rd, 2018

Superintendent

RE: Permission to Conduct Research Study

Dear Superintendent:

I am writing to request permission to conduct a research study within the County Public School District. I am currently enrolled in the EDD program at Gardner-Webb University in Boiling Springs, North Carolina. The title of the study is “French and Spanish Teachers’ Experiences in Teaching Middle and High Schools Students in One North Carolina School District: A Mixed-Methods Study.”

I am requesting permission to invite world language teachers to anonymously complete an electronic survey (attached). Additionally, I am seeking your authorization to conduct a group interview with world language teachers (attached). All information will remain private, and at no time will the name of the county, schools or world language teachers be identified in reports, papers or publications.

If approval is granted, a cover letter (attached) and a copy of the digital survey will be emailed to the World Language Director to distribute to the world language teachers. Participants will complete the electronic survey no later than April 23rd, 2018. The survey process should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. The survey results will be combined for the dissertation and will remain strictly private. No cost will be incurred by the county, the schools or the participants.

Your approval for me to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated and I will be glad to answer any questions or concerns that you may have.

If you agree, kindly sign below and return the signed form to me in the enclosed self-addressed envelop.

Respectfully,

Maguy Yancey
Doctoral Candidate

Approved by:



Print your name and title here.

D. A. [unclear]

Signature

5/5/18

Date