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COLLOQUIUM AGENDA

NEW GOALS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Center for the Advancement of Language Learning  
and  
University of Minnesota  
September 15-16, 1995

Friday, September 15, 1995

- 2:30 Welcome and Opening Remarks  
Center for the Advancement of Language Learning -- Nina Garrett  
University of Minnesota -- Ray Wakefield  
Colloquium Introductions -- the issues and the participants

*New Perspectives on an Old Problem*

- 3:15 Small group discussions:  
Discuss curriculum principles suggested at the Brown Colloquium:  
Implications for governance needs

- 4:15 Break

- 4:30 Round-table: Reports from group sessions and further discussion.

- 5:30 Reception *Wesman Art gallery*

Saturday, September 16 1995

- 8:30 Coffee and pastries

9:00 *Current Models of Governance*

- 9:15 Small group discussions:  
Current governance models: advantages and disadvantages  
Do we need to tweak or to break current models to fit our needs?

- 10:30 Break

- 10:45 Round-table: Reports from group sessions and further discussion.

- 12:00 Lunch

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**Saturday, September 16, 1995 (continued)**

- 1:30 *A New Paradigm*
- 1:45 Small group discussions:  
What governance principles are needed to support programs in advanced language studies?  
If grant money were available to help set up such programs, how would you spend it?
- 3:00 Break
- 3:15 Round-table: Reports from group sessions; summarizing principles, suggesting grant guidelines.
- 4:30 *Where do we go from here?*  
Round-table discussion  
What do we call this initiative?  
Topics for further Colloquia  
Electronic discussion  
Funding opportunities  
Consortia
- 5:00 Adjournment

## Topics for Discussion

### *New Goals in Foreign Language Education*

How would we structure a foreign language program in which the goal of the major (or of intensive language study accompanying a concentration in another field) was advanced levels of proficiency in language and culture?

*The curriculum* -- How would we design upper-level courses to reach advanced levels? Would the typical lower-level courses need to be changed? To what extent would we want to follow current models of "language across the curriculum" or "language for special purposes" or "content-based instruction"? What kind of curriculum is implied by "international education"? How would we build in study-abroad and/or intensive immersion experiences in the country? What role might self-instruction play? What advantages could interactive technologies offer? What kind of materials development effort would be required? How would such a program be scheduled? How long a program of study would be required, and how would that fit with concomitant study of other fields? What kinds of testing and evaluation, both of the students and of the program itself, would need to be built in?

*The faculty and the discipline* -- What faculty competences would be required to staff such a program? How would we train such teachers? What intellectual and disciplinary paradigm would validate such an approach to language study within a liberal arts education? What research would faculty in such a program carry out, and on what basis would they earn promotion and tenure? Or would we want to locate such a program outside the concept of a liberal arts education, with non-tenure-track instructors? What relationship would obtain between such a program and the conventional literature major, area studies concentrations, international education programs, or linguistics-based approaches to less commonly taught languages? Could such a program support the commonly and the less commonly taught languages alike, even if advanced levels in the latter took students longer to achieve?

*The students* -- Would such a program need to be selective as to the students enrolled, with an emphasis on certain backgrounds, aptitude, motivations, or goals? What kinds of counseling and attention to learning strategies, cultural sensitivity, the language learning process, etc., would be needed?

*Political and financial considerations* -- Where would such an initiative come from, and what administrative and disciplinary support would it require? What kinds of faculty competence would be needed, and what research agenda (and reward structure) would be appropriate for them? What would it cost to start up and to maintain such a program, and where could we look for the necessary funding?

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**Summary**  
 CALL Academic Colloquia  
 on  
*NEW GOALS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION*

***Purpose of the Colloquia***

CALL's goal in sponsoring these Colloquia is to provide an ongoing forum in which educators and administrators interested in innovations in foreign language study can discuss what steps might be taken to establish foreign language programs or majors aimed at *student attainment of advanced levels of proficiency in language and culture*. Many FL teachers and administrators have long been aware of the urgent need, and some institutions are already active in developing new approaches to FL programs, but the traditional values and structures of the discipline continue to make such initiatives difficult. CALL hopes that these Colloquia will lead to heightened visibility for current advanced language programs, with increased information about and cross-institutional sharing of curriculum models, materials, research results, etc. Especially in the development of programs in the less commonly taught languages, increased communication and cross-fertilization between academic and government language programs would be of great benefit to both. We hope that building a coherent and focused effort will lead to backing from funding agencies that would set up grant competitions supporting new initiatives.

At each of these Colloquia CALL tries to bring together administrators, department chairs, and professional leaders who can produce changes in governance and in curriculum, faculty involved in the teaching of languages, literature, area studies, language for special purposes, international studies, study abroad programs, less commonly taught languages, second language acquisition theory, teacher training, materials development, technology, and self-instructional programs.

***First Colloquium: George Mason University, July 20-21, 1994***

The discussion at the George Mason Colloquium laid out the complex problems that tend in the academic world to militate against a curriculum focus on advanced language proficiency. The current academic value structure almost universally privileges the study of literature and downplays the academic validity of teaching language. Participants contributed insights about institutional and disciplinary constraints on change and on feasible initiatives that could begin change.

***Second Colloquium: University of California at Berkeley, September 9-10, 1994***

At Berkeley one of the major issues was the difference between the goals of FL programs at major research universities and at other postsecondary institutions. There is a widely perceived tension between teaching for the intellectual values of the liberal arts curriculum in the former and teaching language and culture for their pragmatic value in the latter. Relating to this was the issue of whether standards for the language curriculum should be dictated by student goals or by the [more conservative] values of the profession. This evolved into a discussion of how to find theoretically and pedagogically motivated compromises between these demands. There was also considerable discussion of (1) the

need for change in the way academic foreign language programs are designed and governed; (2) the need to address the demands of dissatisfied students and of faculty in other disciplines; and (3) the need for a variety of tracks and approaches to advanced language programs (for FL majors, for majors in other fields with functional FL needs, etc.). In addition, it was agreed that we need to find a name for the overall initiative that will appropriately focus attention on new approaches to this long-standing problem.

***Third Colloquium: Brown University, March 10-11, 1995***

The Brown Colloquium focused on curriculum design issues. At the upper levels we need a variety of intensive language, culture, and content-domain courses to bring students to levels both of functional language ability and of cultural understanding that will allow them to be substantively productive in their chosen field. If language learning is to be intensified and extended, many resources and experiences beyond the classroom will need to be exploited. We must find ways of connecting the language curriculum with other content areas that do not subordinate the learning of language to the learning of some specific content. The importance of technology in extending, intensifying, and connecting the curriculum was emphasized at every turn. There was strong agreement that the learning of language and culture must be recognized as having disciplinary validity as Second Language Acquisition, and that without this recognition language programs were likely to be devalued as service operations.

***Fourth Colloquium: University of Minnesota, September 15-16, 1995***

This Colloquium will focus on governance issues. What kind of department and institutional structures would best support the kind of curriculum suggested at the Brown Colloquium?

***Follow-up Activities***

CALL is in the process of establishing an electronic bulletin board through which all participants, and interested others, may continue the discussions begun with the Colloquia. In time, we hope to set up an electronic database of information relating to the topics of the Colloquia -- information on institutions which are developing strong language programs, model curricula, syllabi, materials being used, reports and descriptive publications, research on these programs, funding opportunities, etc.

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## Curriculum Guidelines

These principles were distilled from the Brown Colloquium discussions in March.

*We want a curriculum which:*

**1. establishes language learning as central to multicultural education.**

A true understanding of people and culture cannot be separated from language, and this language-based understanding is essential for multicultural education. Language is not just a tool for learning other content, subordinate to other disciplines; what language supplies is primary; it can provide students with a basis for FLAC or area studies, but can't be accounted for or taken over by those programs. The discipline of second language acquisition cannot be dispersed among or absorbed into other fields.

**2. integrates language, culture, and content at all levels of learning.**

Even at elementary levels, culture (in its broadest sense) can and should be a primary content domain; even at advanced levels, language itself is cultural content. Other disciplinary content -- business, literature, health, agriculture -- can be introduced whenever students are ready for it. (In some cases supplementary self-instructional materials on the vocabulary and conventions of a specific content area may be sufficient.)

**3. offers individualized programs growing out of basic linguistic and cultural competence.**

Diverse student backgrounds and goals demand flexible program design, but all students need basic language and cultural competence as a foundation on which to build their individual programs.

**4. develops and integrates a wide variety of learning experiences and resources.**

The language learning experience should be intensified by including much more time outside the classroom -- study abroad, immersion, contact with native speakers on campus and in the community, community internships, etc., should all be fully exploited. Advanced technologies are of enormous importance to language learning at every level and for every content domain by bringing learners into direct interactive contact with authentic primary materials as well as pedagogical materials.

**5. redefines responsibilities and develops collaborative relationships.**

Students have to take more responsibility for their own learning; students and teachers alike must learn how to make this work. Collaboration among students, among teachers, and among institutions is crucial to intensifying language learning.

**6. intensifies and extends functional language use.**

Students of both commonly and less commonly taught languages should be brought to high levels of proficiency in those skills and those content domains they feel will be most useful to them, but they should have a solid basis in all skills and in cultural knowledge for further development as desired later.

7. prepares students for lifelong learning.

Students, teachers, and materials must explicitly develop techniques and capabilities for long-term maintenance of language proficiency and for continued learning outside the classroom, whether in-country or not, as well as techniques for extending the learning of one language to that of other related ones.

8. articulates processes, goals, and benchmarks.

Assessment and self-assessment depend on students' clearly articulated knowledge not only of what they are expected to learn, but also of how to learn it, and how to assess whether and how well they're learning it, and what they can actually do with it.

9. establishes Second Language Acquisition -- broadly conceived -- as the intellectual basis of the discipline and the basis for integrating language learning into other disciplines.

SLA must be recognized as a discipline with its own theoretical paradigms and with intellectually rigorous research agendas; it is the discipline of which language teaching is the applied arm. The work of language faculty who publish in this field -- be it in sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, discourse analysis, or cultural studies -- can be evaluated by criteria as valid as those used in evaluating work in literature, linguistics, etc.

*A CURRICULUM MODEL FOR THE NEW PARADIGM*

This a preliminary sketch of a possible curriculum for a postsecondary FL program designed to bring students to high levels of proficiency in language and culture. It is not a fully worked out plan or even a statement about priorities; it's intended only as pump-priming, suggestions to get the thinking going. Not all of these need be full-semester courses; some might be modules for students to do as independent study, or combined with others in a semester course. Some items would be optional, others required.

**The Foreign Language Major**

**A. Core curriculum for all tracks** (Students who demonstrate proficiency in any of these areas will be exempted.)

1 Technological proficiency -- word-processing (including multilingual fonts), dictionaries and other on-line tools, text management and analysis (i.e., concordancing), multimedia and hypermedia, network management, Internet, World Wide Web and other communications, etc.; includes term project in student's second language.

2. (first year) Intensive language preparation for any track of the curriculum, achieving **Intermediate high (?)** in at least three skills (skills = speaking, listening, reading, writing, translation, advanced grammar/vocabulary).

3. Language learning styles and strategies, esp. for self-managed instruction.

4. Immersion and/or study abroad (summer camps, Middlebury, exchange programs, "Maymester" total immersion, etc.) -- minimum of four weeks, preferably full summer or semester.

5. Overview (in English) of history, /c/C/ulture, politics, contemporary social issues, etc. of the countries/cultures of the second language, and of immigrant cultures of the language in the US.

6. Strategies for post-classroom maintenance, refresher/relearning, and moving to related languages (i.e., from Spanish to Portuguese, from German to Dutch).

**B. Four tracks**

- 1. Literature
- 2. Linguistics
- 3. Foreign Language Pedagogy
- 4. Language-Career Specialization

1. **Literature.** In addition to conventionally offered courses:

- a. contemporary thought and intellectual issues, cultural studies
- b. folklore and children's literature
- c. contemporary literature



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2. **Linguistics.** In addition to conventionally offered courses:
- sociolinguistics
  - psycholinguistics
  - second language acquisition (SLA)
  - contemporary language -- non-standard varieties/accents, slang, current idioms and word-coinage, syntactic change
  - comparative/contrastive linguistics of the second language and related LCTLs
  - advanced structure, advanced vocabulary-building, differences between oral and written language

3. **Foreign Language Pedagogy.**

- several courses from Linguistics track, possibly in a combination/overview
- several courses from Literature track, esp. those suggested above
- methodology, esp. focusing on use of technology and authentic materials
- history of and policy-making in FL education
- curriculum design and evaluation
- testing
- instructional technology -- design, authoring, development
- TESOL (as a minor?)
- practice teaching

4. **Language-Career Specialization.** e.g., business, law, medicine, engineering, environmental studies/agriculture, translation and interpretation, social services, religion, journalism/communications, science/technology, cultural studies, information and library sciences, politics and history, economics, government (foreign service, Peace Corps, etc.)

**Advanced level, domain-and-language-specific:**

- language use:
  - vocabulary, idioms, special usage
  - listening comprehension
  - writing
  - reading comprehension, skimming and scanning
- reference works and tools
- communications (telephone, Internet, radio/TV, newspapers, professional lit)
- culture, interpersonal relations, politics of the profession, contemporary issues
- content courses in relevant departments
- internships

**Other curriculum issues or components --**

- heritage language students (programs for other special populations)
- specific curriculum-integrated ways of following up on study-abroad
- different expectations for students in the much more difficult languages (i.e., in the government's Category 3 (c.f. Russian, Turkish, Finnish, Hindi) or Category 4, c.f. Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Arabic)?