

# Evaluation of Professional Development for Language Teachers in California

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**Abstract:** *The California Foreign Language Project (CFLP), established in 1988 by the California legislature, is a professional development program designed to improve and expand foreign language teaching in California while promoting access and equity within educational institutions for every student. As one of the nine content areas of the California Subject Matter Project, CFLP is a voluntary project that served 609 elementary, secondary, and postsecondary foreign language teachers from 43 counties in 1998/1999. This article describes the origin and rationale of the California Foreign Language Project and discusses the importance of professional development programs, a topic of growing interest given the nationwide focus on student performance and school reform. Finally, the components of professional development program evaluation, and specifically of CFLP's Evaluation Design, will be presented, along with the findings from the 1998/1999 program year.*

## Introduction

The importance of increasing students' foreign language abilities has been discussed in several influential documents on the condition of American education. Reports such as *The President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies* (1979), *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* (1983), and *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* (1999) have argued that American public schools should expand their focus on foreign language education. Former Secretary of Education Richard Riley stated that increasing foreign language instruction would help build a better workforce, ensure national security, and improve other areas of education (Pufahl et al., 2000). The California legislature recognized this need and in 1988 passed Senate Bill 1882, establishing the California Foreign Language Project (CFLP) as one of the nine content areas of professional development pro-

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grams (the California Subject Matter Projects [CSMPs]). The CFLP, a professional development program for language teachers, supports efforts to involve all language teachers in a supportive professional community that respects diverse ideas; provides opportunities for leadership; promotes linguistic and cultural competence; and advocates the retention, expansion, and articulation of foreign and indigenous language offerings across educational levels beginning in the elementary grades. CFLP also strives to promote access and equity within educational institutions for every student.

In this report, we describe the origin and rationale of the California Foreign Language Project. We also discuss the importance of professional development programs, a topic that has received increased attention due to the nationwide focus on student performance and school reform. Finally, the components of professional development program evaluation, and specifically of CFLP's Evaluation Design, will be presented, along with the findings from the 1998/1999 program year.

### California Foreign Language Project

During the 1980s, numerous reports described the poor performance of students in America's schools (e.g., *A Nation at Risk*, 1983). In response to these reports, the California legislature established several content area programs. One of these programs, the Foreign Language Curriculum Implementation Centers (FLCIC), laid the theoretical foundation for CFLP's current vision. The FLCIC program:

focused on assisting language teachers to reorient their language programs and lessons towards [proficiency-oriented instruction], to strengthen their own abilities to implement communication-based instruction, and to enable them to assist their colleagues in the implementation of communicative learning strategies. (Haro et al., 1994, p. 176)

The motivation behind the FLCIC project was to change the way that foreign languages were taught, that is, to shift the orientation from the audiolingual method to communication-based instruction (CBI). CBI, which California's Foreign Language Framework defines as "teaching that helps students to develop the skills necessary to produce and receive understandable messages," is found in programs that emphasize "an authentic exchange of meaning in the foreign language...[and] the language of instruction is the language being learned" (California State Department of Education, 1989, p. 7). CFLP, the project created in 1988 that originated from the former FLCIC, also ensures that participants are familiar with communication-based instruction and focuses on the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning*, a document that guides CFLP's efforts

in professional development for language teachers.

CFLP is a professional development program designed to improve and expand foreign language teaching in California while promoting access and equity within educational institutions for every student. As one of the nine content areas of the CSMP, CFLP has evolved into a voluntary project consisting of a central office and nine regional sites that organize workshops, seminars, and other professional opportunities. Moreover, legislation passed in 1998 (Senate Bill AB 1734) mandates that all CSMPs, including CFLP, focus more money and efforts on schools designated as "low-performing."<sup>1</sup> Thus, the focus of providing foreign language teachers with pedagogical knowledge based on promoting students' communicative skills, along with the increased focus on low-performing schools, forms CFLP's professional development goals of: (1) strengthening academic content knowledge, (2) developing teacher leadership, (3) serving low-performing schools and districts, (4) establishing partnerships with low-performing schools, (5) establishing and maintaining a professional community and teacher networks, and (6) evaluating student learning.

### The Importance of Professional Development Programs

Professional development programs are currently receiving more emphasis from both educational policy makers and researchers, and much of this emphasis arises from the importance given to comprehensive reform and school improvement. As Guskey (2000, p. 16) states, "High-quality professional development is at the center of every modern proposal to enhance education. Regardless of how schools are formed or reformed, structured or restructured, the renewal of staff members' professional skills is considered fundamental to improvement." Programs related to the implementation of the *Standards* have been documented in subject areas such as foreign language (Kemmis & Lively, 1995; Kemmis & Moran, 1996), mathematics (Svec, 1997; Snead, 1998), and science (National Academy of Sciences, 1996). Hawley and Valli (1999) state that professional development programs are a vital component of successful educational reform. As the American Federation of Teachers writes,

[W]ithout professional development school reform will not happen...The nation can adopt rigorous standards, set forth a visionary scenario, compile the best research about how students learn, change the nature of textbooks and assessment of students, and change all the other elements involved in systemic reform. [But]... unless the classroom teacher understands and is committed to the plan and knows how to make it happen, the dream will come to naught. (cited in Hawley and Valli, 1999, p.129)

## The Evaluation of Professional Development Programs

Although a considerable amount of literature on professional development exists, “researchers have tried unsuccessfully to determine the true impact of professional development in education” (Guskey, 2000, p. 32). Guskey argues that evaluations of professional development programs are often erroneous due to confusion about the criteria of effectiveness, a misguided search for main effects between programs, and a neglect of issues concerning the quality of components. Nevertheless, Guskey states that sound professional development evaluations include five components: (1) participants’ reactions to a workshop, program, or series of events; (2) participants’ learning of new skills, knowledge, and/or attitudes; (3) information on organization and support change; (4) participants’ use of new knowledge and skills; and (5) student learning outcomes. CFLP’s Evaluation Design incorporates several of these components to obtain a better picture of the program’s effectiveness.

### CFLP’s Evaluation Design

To evaluate how well each regional site implements professional development services that fulfill CFLP’s six goals, an Evaluation Design was established for each site so that it could collect information about its professional development activities. Sites are requested to construct an Evaluation Team to assist in the CFLP evaluation effort and establish a plan of events/activities for the upcoming year. Each site documents the implementation of their yearly plan by providing the CFLP central office with a site portfolio. The portfolio has three main sections: (1) site performance, (2) teacher performance, and (3) student performance.

In the first section of the portfolio, *site performance*, CFLP requires that sites provide program agendas, copies of handouts, materials used during program activities, and samples of written or technology-based materials created by participants during the programs offered. Sites are also instructed to submit videotaped samples that are representative of their program activities. At all CFLP professional development programs, participants are asked to fill out program evaluation surveys to assess how well each workshop program was delivered and how much each participant learned through their participation. Sites are asked to submit a summary of the participants’ evaluation results from each workshop. Finally, sites are to include a description of their efforts in collaboration with low-performing schools.

In the *teacher performance* section of the portfolio, regional sites are asked to provide: (1) sample lesson plans created by teachers who participated in the programs, and (2) videotapes (and accompanying lesson plans) of participants teaching a lesson in their own classrooms. The CFLP Evaluation Team developed a protocol<sup>2</sup> to examine how

well the lesson plans and videotaped classroom teaching samples reflect aspects of the proficiency-oriented language instruction, one of the goals of CFLP professional development programs.

The *student learning* section of the portfolio focuses on how the teaching practices of participating teachers influence student outcomes, and sites are requested to provide oral and written samples of student work. The sites assess students’ oral proficiency using the Classroom Oral Competency Interview (COCI) (California Foreign Language Project, 1993) and the Stanford Foreign Language Oral Skills Evaluation Matrix (FLOSEM) (Padilla & Sung, 1999) and student writing proficiency by means of the Classroom Writing Competency Assessment (CWCA) (California Foreign Language Project, 1996).

Sites are required to submit portfolios demonstrating evidence of meeting CFLP’s goals but are not mandated to use certain prescribed methods in their teacher development programs (e.g., a set number of workshops). That is, each site adapts its professional development series to more effectively meet the needs of its respective constituents. For example, many sites have focused attention on new foreign language teachers at the secondary level, whereas others have maintained a strong relationship with postsecondary foreign language educators. Sites also differ with regard to the total number of participants, number of languages represented, and geographic regions served.

CFLP’s current Evaluation Design has been modified from previous years to encompass evaluative elements on multiple levels. In the past, CFLP relied on participants’ workshop evaluations, briefings conducted between site-affiliated personnel and CFLP members, and observations made at site-sponsored workshops. However, the updated Evaluation Design calls for each site to assemble a Site Portfolio that best captures program activities and their effects on teacher and student performance throughout the program year. Regional site evaluation teams are instructed on how to organize the site portfolios to include specific evidence that demonstrates each site’s effectiveness in implementing its approved professional development program. Site portfolios are collected at the end of the program year and then analyzed by the CFLP evaluation staff. Each site receives a written feedback report based on the analyses of data from the site portfolio, including recommendations for improving program activities and data collection for the following year. The report is given to the site directors, evaluation liaison personnel, and other members of the site’s leadership team.

## Findings

### Site Performance

**Professional development workshop activities.** During

the 1998/1999 program year, the CFLP network statewide offered over 170 days of professional development program sessions for more than 600 language educators. Most of these programs focused on: (1) strategies for implementing proficiency-oriented language instruction, (2) assessment protocols, (3) lesson planning and design, (4) standards-based language education, (5) incorporating technology in language instruction, and (6) teaching language to heritage learners. In addition, regional sites held numerous leadership team meetings to plan and evaluate their programs.

According to information from the site portfolios, the most prevalent topic addressed by the CFLP sites was the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning*, which targets the areas of Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities (the “five Cs”). All nine sites offered participants information on the *Standards* either by creating workshops that specifically addressed them, and/or by using the *Standards* as the “organizing principle” of their workshop series. In fact, one site offered sessions pertaining to the *Standards* at all three of their workshops, and participants’ comments indicate that information about the *Standards* was well presented and informative. Another prevalent topic was information and instruction on using several student evaluation instruments endorsed by CFLP. More specifically, seven of the nine sites presented participants with information and instruction on at least one of three methods of student assessment: (1) COCI, (2) CWCA, and (3) FLOSEM.

Even though each site adapts programs and workshops to the needs of its participants, all nine sites reported that participants were pleased with the workshop presentations. Moreover, participants felt that the cumulative effect of the program activities enhanced their theoretical and pedagogical knowledge in foreign language education. As one participant wrote: “After two years... I fully understand and (am) able to apply the five-step lesson plans, literacy lessons, COCI, CWCA, and *Standards*. I will always enjoy going over my folders. I look forward to preparing more lessons.”

Several sites created workshops and grouped participants into tiers/strands based on the needs of their specific cohorts. Two sites offered workshops on the *Standards* that were designed specifically for new teachers, while other sites designed workshops/seminars that provided leadership team members with additional information and instruction, knowledge that is critical for team leaders to accumulate as they assist less-experienced foreign language teachers. As one team leader stated, “I will be mentoring teachers in San Francisco, and while I don’t feel like an expert, your workshop has given me a degree of confidence I lacked before.” Several sites have also incorporated workshops that assist language educators who teach Spanish for Spanish Speakers and the Less Commonly Taught

Languages (e.g., Chinese, Korean).

**Collaborative efforts with partnership schools.** The diversity of CFLP sites is reflected by the various types of collaborative efforts that were created between low-performing schools and CFLP affiliates. What is most evident is that in partnerships that empowered teachers from low-performing schools, the relationships were productive. For example, one site established a partnership with a middle school (three teachers) and its articulated high school (seven teachers) in which teachers, in collaboration with CFLP staff, were able to write a vision statement of their goals and objectives. CFLP also provided these teachers with workshops pertaining to the *Standards* and communication-based pedagogy. Another site established partnerships with teachers from one middle and two different high schools. In this middle school, teachers expressed a desire to meet with high school teachers in order to provide better student articulation, and this site was instrumental in arranging this meeting. Moreover, several teachers from this same middle school participated in the site’s CFLP-sponsored workshops and were sponsored with stipends to attend a California Language Teachers Association (CLTA) conference. This site also supported teachers from the middle school in writing a Middle School Demonstration Program grant and held a workshop on the *Standards* that included teachers from all three partnership schools.

While several sites had an impact on low-performing schools at the staff level, another site successfully implemented a relationship in which two participants from a low-performing school were provided mentoring from a CFLP-affiliate staff member, a more individualized endeavor that also produced positive results. As one of the participants wrote, “more importantly, I saw the peer coaching experience as a resource to ask questions, a place to feel vulnerable as well as nurtured, and a pat on the back for my hard work and dedication to the process of learning.”

Even though the above examples demonstrate that the collaborative partnerships have been effective, other sites have had difficulty in relating their services to the needs of some low-performing schools. The problems experienced by some sites are due to a disconnect between the types of services offered and the types of services teachers from low-performing schools felt would improve their performance. For example, one site formed a collaborative partnership with eight of the ten schools of a secondary school district and offered services that included: (1) training in *Standards*-based lessons with experienced teachers, (2) opportunities for teachers at the low-performing schools to observe experienced teachers delivering *Standards*-based lessons, and (3) peer coaching. Unfortunately, these services were not fully utilized by teachers at the eight low-performing schools because, “very few teachers were able to take advantage of these services extended to them.”

Another CFLP site established a partnership with one low-performing school; however, “teachers were invited to attend the *Standards* workshop series and other seminars on assessment instruments, but they failed to attend.” In these instances, sites did not receive input from low-performing schools and developed services that were not matched to the needs of these low-performing school teachers.

Finally, one site was able to secure partnerships with three low-performing high schools and offered three workshops focused on themes requested by representatives of the partnership schools. Evaluation summaries from both CFLP staff and low-performing school teachers indicate that the participants may not have met the participants’ needs. Since then, the site affiliates have responded by working collaboratively with partnership teachers to redesign their workshops so that they better address the needs of partnership-school teachers.

### *Teacher Performance*

To determine how the program activities influence participating language teachers in their classrooms, each site was asked to provide sample lesson plans of participating teachers and videotapes of participating teachers’ classroom instruction. Five hundred twenty-two (85.7%) participants were classroom teachers, and of those who indicated their teaching level and language taught, the majority taught at the high school level (77%) and taught Spanish (74%).

**Lesson plan samples.** In the portfolios, all nine regional sites provided lesson plans that incorporated workshop materials. Several CFLP workshops focused on providing participants with instruction on creating five-step lesson plans, with two elements (guided practice and comprehensible input) receiving the most emphasis. These two elements were generally the strongest components in participants’ lesson plans, an indication to CFLP sites that participants were implementing workshop materials. On the other hand, this focus on guided practice and comprehensible input has meant that other lesson plan elements (e.g., evaluation) have not been enriched and that CFLP affiliates should plan to integrate these elements into future workshops. Nevertheless, it is evident that participants are integrating workshop materials and are able to create lesson plans that follow a five-step, instruction-based sequence.

Some lesson plans successfully integrated one of the five Cs of the *Standards* into their lessons. However, many other lesson plans either did not include any of the *Standards* or failed to articulate explicitly which standard was incorporated. This may be because for many participants, the CFLP workshops served as their first in-depth study of the *Standards*. In addition, some sites focused more on certain standards than others. For example, the standard

of *Communities* was incorporated sporadically in the past in the workshop series and lesson plans. However, we now anticipate that, with more knowledge and practice, participants will be able to construct lesson plans that articulate and incorporate a wider variety of the national standards in their lesson plans.

**Classroom teaching videotapes.** According to CFLP site portfolio guidelines, each site is required to submit videotapes of at least two participants teaching in their classrooms with accompanying lesson plans. Only two sites met this criterion; five sites submitted videotapes of only one participant. The videotapes nevertheless do show some of the positive results of CFLP’s program activities. Overall, participants were able to create strong corresponding lesson plans and demonstrate an increased ability to implement key lesson plan components (e.g., comprehensible input activities) in their classrooms, with videotapes showing participants using comprehensible input strategies and guided practice activities. Moreover, the videotape samples show that simply constructing a good lesson plan does not necessarily translate into a solid lesson, a fact most evident in the videotapes of new teachers. Our findings show that new teachers need support in classroom management, language skills, incorporating the *Standards*, and sequencing of lesson plans.

In general, sites had difficulty securing videotapes of participants teaching in their classrooms. Site personnel offered two explanations for this shortcoming. First, many participants were uncomfortable with being videotaped because much of the workshop material (e.g., the *Standards*) was relatively new; thus they had not developed confidence in implementing the workshop materials. In addition, several sites reported that they had initially identified two volunteers, yet late cancellations by one of the participants meant that only one participant was available for videotaping. In the future, sites have been instructed to identify more than two participants who are confident in their teaching ability so that unforeseeable problems will not affect sites’ ability to meet the requirement.

### *Student Performance*

**Oral proficiency improvement measured by the Stanford FLOSEM.** Each regional site was asked to select at least two schools (one low-performing school and one other school) and to collect students’ oral proficiency data by means of the Stanford FLOSEM. Proficiency ratings were collected from at least one classroom for each level of the language taught at the school twice per year (once after the first month of instruction and again at the end of the school year). Although not every site was able to provide all of the required data, many sites were successful in collecting the FLOSEM data from various language programs with different instructional levels.

The Stanford FLOSEM assigns oral proficiency scores from 5 (earliest beginning level) to 30 (native-like proficiency). Oral proficiency scores were collected from Spanish, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Arabic, and ESL (English as a Second Language) classes and from many different instructional levels. A total of 1,160 scores were collected in the fall semester and 1,328 scores in the spring, and of these, two matched rating scores were available for 983 students. A paired *t*-test was performed for these 983 students' FLOSEM scores to determine if students' oral proficiency increased from first to second ratings. The mean score of the second FLOSEM ratings ( $M = 12.94$ ,  $SD = 6.37$ ) was significantly higher than that of the first ratings ( $M = 10.43$ ,  $SD = 6.51$ ). The mean difference was statistically significant;  $t(982) = -35.03$ ,  $p < .0001$ . This finding indicates that students made significant progress across all language levels in their oral proficiency during the school year.

**Oral and writing proficiency using the COCI/CWCA.** Each regional site collected oral and writing proficiency data from students in advanced foreign language classes (instructional levels 3 and 4 or higher) by means of the COCI and the CWCA. The sites were asked to submit 20 student samples of the COCI and CWCA from teachers in every language they served. Brief descriptions of the assessment instruments are as follows.

Learners in the *Formulaic Range* use unanalyzed chunks of language (words, phrases, some sentences). Learners in the *Created Range* break apart and analyze language chunks and recombine them to create their own sentences. Finally, learners in the *Planned Range* organize created utterances into paragraphs, expressing more complex meaning. Within each range, there are three levels. In the Low level, learners show minimal ability to sustain performance with the language type. The quantity and quality of the language type increase in the Mid level. In the High level, learners show unsustained ability to perform at the

next range.

The majority of the sites succeeded in collecting the data to meet this requirement. A total of 357 student COCI oral interview samples and 446 CWCA writing samples were collected. The regional sites were able to collect *both* oral and writing proficiency samples from only 272 students. The majority of student proficiency data was collected from either Spanish or French classes. Of the 357 oral samples, 166 (46.5%) were in Spanish and 115 (32.2%) were in French. The other language data included Japanese (8.1%), ESL (5.6%), and German (3.6%) samples. Regarding the writing proficiency data, 170 writing samples (38.1%) out of 446 were in Spanish and 132 samples (29.6%) were in French. There were also German (15.5%), Japanese (7.4%), and ESL (4.3%) samples.

Figure 1 presents the number of students whose COCI and CWCA ratings fall into each range (Formulaic, Created, or Planned) and level (Low, Mid, or High). Students' oral and writing proficiency varied from Formulaic Low to Planned High. However, many students were in the Created range and attained an average of Created Low/Mid for their oral and writing proficiency. According to the COCI and CWCA Manuals, students in advanced language classes (level 3 or higher) are expected to have proficiency ratings in the Created Low to Mid range. Of the 357 students, 239 (67%) achieved or exceeded the expected oral proficiency rating of Created Low or Mid, and 293 out of 446 students (66%) achieved at the expected level or higher in their second language writing proficiency.

The analysis of the COCI and CWCA results indicates that there was a significantly high correlation between oral proficiency and writing proficiency in a second language:  $r = .579$ ,  $p < .0001$ . For example, among the 272 students who were assessed on both the COCI and CWCA instruments, 72 students (26.5%) received equivalent ratings from both assessments, while 162 students (59.6%) had

**Table 1**

SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES IN STUDENTS' ORAL/WRITING PROFICIENCY  
BETWEEN HIGH- AND LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS

		Number	Mean	SD	Significance
Oral Proficiency	High-performing	173	4.82	1.56	$F(1, 355) = 1877.53^*$
	Low-performing	184	3.72	2.10	
Writing Proficiency	High-performing	202	4.66	1.86	$F(1, 444) = 2292.35^*$
	Low-performing	244	4.08	1.97	

\* Significance level:  $p < .0001$

COCI and CWCA ratings that differed by one or two levels (e.g., Created Low on the COCI with a CWCA rating of Created Mid or High). An examination of the correlation between COCI and CWCA by different languages indicated that there was a significantly high correlation in most of the language programs:  $r = .348, p < .0001$  for Spanish ratings with 117 students;  $r = .563, p < .0001$  for French with 115 students;  $r = .752, p < .0001$  for Japanese with 28 students; and  $r = .934, p < .0001$  for German ratings with 13 students.

Writing proficiency ratings ( $M = 4.43, SD = 1.79$ ) were, in general, significantly higher than the oral proficiency rat-

ings ( $M = 4.21, SD = 1.99$ ),  $t(271) = -2.12, p < .05$ . However, when the analyses were done separately for the different language programs, this significant difference was only found in the French language program. Students' writing proficiency in French ( $M = 4.63, SD = 1.66$ ) was significantly higher than their oral proficiency ( $M = 4.01, SD = 1.70$ ),  $t(85) = -3.63, p < .0001$ . In the other language programs (except ESL), the students' writing proficiency was consistently higher than their oral proficiency, but the difference was not statistically significant. On the other hand, the ESL program students' oral proficiency ( $M = 4.11, SD = 1.45$ ) was higher than their writing proficiency ( $M = 3.89$ ,

**Table 2**

SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES IN STUDENTS' ORAL/WRITING PROFICIENCY BETWEEN HIGH- AND LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS BY PROGRAM LEVEL AND LANGUAGE

			Number	Mean	SD	Significance
Oral Proficiency	Spanish 3	High-performing	27	5.00	2.04	$F(1, 61) = 385.96^*$
		Low-performing	32	3.59	1.29	
	French 3	High-performing	25	4.36	1.50	$F(1, 44) = 251.76^*$
		Low-performing	17	3.35	1.62	
French 4	High-performing	26	4.92	1.38	$F(1, 62) = 514.30^*$	
	Low-performing	34	4.38	1.71		
ESL 2	High-performing	10	4.50	1.72	$F(1, 20) = 118.21^*$	
	Low-performing	8	3.50	1.31		
Writing Proficiency	German 3	High-performing	27	4.07	1.69	$F(1, 61) = 363.43^*$
		Low-performing	32	3.16	1.22	
	French 4	High-performing	16	5.19	1.33	$F(1, 54) = 294.79^*$
		Low-performing	36	4.67	2.11	

\*Significance level:  $p < .0001$

**Table 3**

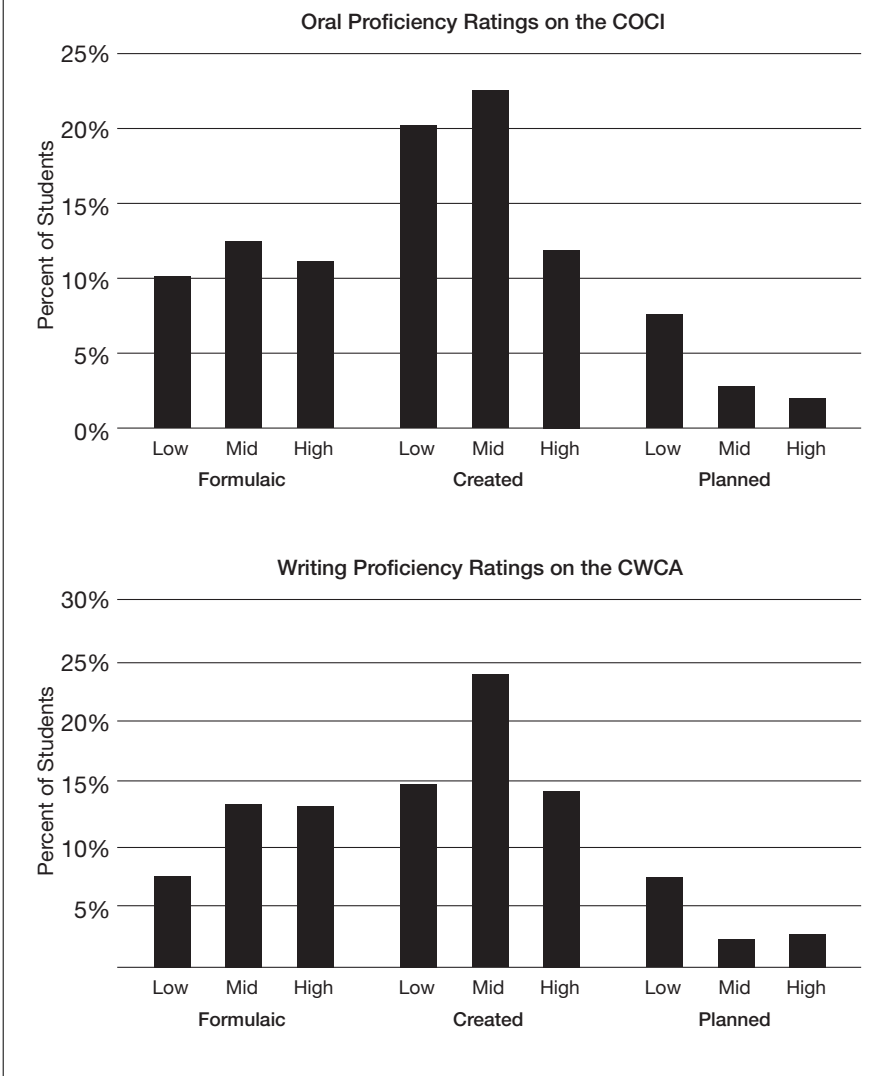
INSTANCES OF LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS OUTSCORING HIGH-PERFORMING SCHOOLS IN WRITING PROFICIENCY

		Number	Mean	SD	Significance
Spanish 3	High-performing	30	4.00	1.74	$F(1, 64) = 472.76^*$
	Low-performing	32	4.77	1.43	
Spanish 4	High-performing	56	4.75	1.74	$F(1, 81) = 652.30^*$
	Low-performing	23	5.20	1.04	
ESL 2	High-performing	9	3.44	1.67	$F(1, 19) = 138.25^*$
	Low-performing	8	4.38	0.92	

\*Significance level:  $p < .0001$

**Figure 1**

**ORAL AND WRITING PROFICIENCY RATINGS ON THE COCI AND CWCA BY PERCENT OF STUDENTS FALLING INTO THE VARIOUS PROFICIENCY CATEGORIES**



SD = 1.33), but the difference was also not statistically significant.

The difference between the low-performing and high-performing schools in terms of the students' oral and writing proficiency was examined. The results showed that student proficiency at the high-performing schools was significantly higher than at the low-performing schools (see Table 1).

Separate analyses by different language programs and different instructional levels demonstrated that the significant differences in oral and writing proficiency between the high- and low-performing schools were confined to a few

advanced levels of instruction, as noted in Table 2.

Finally, an analysis of student writing proficiency data revealed a surprising result. In writing proficiency, students from the low-performing schools significantly outperformed those from the high-performing schools in Spanish 3 and 4 as well as in ESL 2 (see Table 3).

**Discussion**

The evaluation results indicate that regional sites' programs met the majority of CFLP goals and objectives. For example, the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* was used as an organizing principle by virtually every site, indicating that CFLP's efforts are helping educate participants on proficiency-oriented instruction. Moreover, sites are required to have participants evaluate each workshop (*participants' level*) and include in the portfolio: (1) summaries of the survey information (both quantitative and qualitative), and (2) the site's responses to participants' needs and concerns. Written evaluations from participants indicated that overall the workshops were a positive endeavor. One participant wrote, "I will better serve my students so that they may be successful in learning language."

Sites also aspired to assess *participants' learning*, with instruments such as a Performance-Based Instructional Techniques Survey devised by one regional site. This survey, which served as an evaluative measure and learning/review guide, asked participants to rate their implementation of CFLP pedagogical approaches in each of the five lesson plan stages. In addition, language-specific group workshops

were utilized to help enhance teachers' language proficiency. Site portfolios also revealed that not all goals were met to the satisfaction of the sites or CFLP central office. For instance, teacher leadership development efforts were not provided during the 1998/1999 program year. This is due to the fact that many sites focused much more on incorporating the *Standards* in their program activities, assessing students' oral and writing proficiency, and for the first time on establishing partnerships with low-performing schools. In effect, not all the sites addressed teacher leadership development to the same extent in their yearly activities and site portfolios. Although sites have some flexibility as



to how they approach teacher leadership development, all sites are expected to include this in their teacher training. Finally, site portfolios indicated that service to low-performing schools/districts remained a challenge, as was including more teacher participants from these schools.

The success of CFLP's professional development program is most prominent when analyzing the final two areas of the evaluation design: (1) *teacher performance*, which addresses participants' use of new knowledge and skills in their teaching, and (2) *student performance*, which focuses on student learning outcomes. Lesson plans that were submitted from each site showed how well participants were incorporating what they had learned through participation in the site workshops. Despite the fact that not every site submitted the requested number of participants (2) teaching in their classrooms, the videotapes (and accompanying lesson plans) that were submitted indicated that participants were able to express new knowledge in their lesson plans and to incorporate this knowledge into classroom teaching. Results also indicated that CFLP's efforts have influenced students' foreign language abilities: On all three measures, students' language proficiencies increased during the school year.

Our results, along with information about teacher development, do not offer "proof" of CFLP's effectiveness, but do provide evidence that the program is having a positive impact on participating teachers and their students. Finally, while CFLP anticipates that student learning outcomes will remain fairly consistent in subsequent years, data from the 1998/1999 program year provides information on the effectiveness of its professional development efforts and indicators of areas that need improvement, such as gathering more teacher performance data.

An analysis of CFLP's professional development program indicates that the organization communicates consistent goals and objectives to its nine sites, while allowing the sites to address these goals as they see fit. CFLP's utilization of a site portfolio provides sites with the opportunity to describe their workshops and partnerships, giving both sites and CFLP evaluators the opportunity to work constructively and cooperatively to improve foreign language education in California. CFLP's Evaluation Design coincides with current research on the evaluation of professional development, with argues that evaluation should occur at different levels, including student learning (Guskey, 2000). However, what is most promising about CFLP's Evaluation Design is that it allows regional sites and CFLP evaluators to both plan and refine programs and activities to best serve participating teachers, most notably in service to low-performing schools. In the past, CFLP has had more experience in working with teachers and administrators from high-performing schools. The increased focus of service to low-

performing schools, however, has meant that CFLP and site affiliates have had to learn how to reach out, recruit, and offer relevant professional development programs to teachers and administrators from low-performing schools. To accomplish this, each site is permitted to coordinate partnerships with low-performing schools and teachers in whatever manner works best, depending on local circumstances.

Finally, while some details, such as the program goals and objectives, are specific to CFLP, developers of other professional development programs may use the model presented here to guide assessment of their own programs' effectiveness. CFLP's Evaluation Design can easily be generalized and/or modified to fit a specific context, especially when evaluating a program's impact on multiple levels; that is, the effect on participants *in their classrooms*, along with the impact on student learning. Moreover, readers can anticipate some of the difficulties that may arise and adjust their evaluation designs accordingly.

The need to increase students' foreign language abilities is not a novel idea. More than 20 years ago, educational scholars wrote that the "study of a foreign language introduces students to non-English speaking cultures, heightens awareness and comprehension of one's native tongue, and serves the Nation's needs in commerce, diplomacy, defense, and education" (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 26). The current focus on providing foreign language teachers with the pedagogical tools necessary to produce students capable of enhanced communication skills in a foreign language is especially important today, given America's presence in the global economy: "For American students, the ability to function competently in at least one language other than English will become increasingly important in the rapidly shrinking, interdependent world of the twenty-first century" (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1999, p. 39). The success of a professional development program lies inherently in teachers implementing new skills and knowledge and students benefiting positively from this exposure. With this overriding principle, CFLP strives to create an evaluation design that incorporates reflection and modification while best addressing educational needs.

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## Notes

1. The California Department of Education identifies a school as "low-performing" if scores on the Stanford Achievement Test-Version 9 (SAT-9) are in the bottom 40%. CFLP uses a school's SAT-9 scores in English/Language Arts.
2. The protocol can be obtained through the California Foreign Language Project.

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