

A Decade of Research in Foreign Language Teacher Education

ELIZABETH BERNHARDT and JOANN HAMMADOU

FEDERALLY SPONSORED REPORTS SUCH AS *A Nation At Risk: The Imperative for Education Reform* and *High School: A Report on Secondary Education in America* cite the deplorable condition of US schooling. These reports have spawned reaction-statements such as *Tomorrow's Teachers: A Report of the Holmes Group* and *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century*, which may be summarized succinctly: the quality of education is dependent on quality teachers; therefore, major reforms in teacher education must be initiated.

The foreign language community is all too familiar with the crisis in education. The President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies, the National Advisory Board on International Education, and the National Endowment for the Humanities have all authored position papers calling for a renewed interest in and a revitalized perspective on foreign language learning in the United States. Yet these agencies have not addressed, in any depth, issues concerning the teaching of foreign language as they relate to *teachers* of foreign languages. Granted, many of these commissions have recommended that foreign language teachers be given opportunities for professional development through overseas experiences or through additional courses. The commissions have *not*, however, addressed the pre-professional development of these teachers. Specifically, they have failed to address the types of educational experience—both in terms of language and pedagogical content—these individuals receive as part of their teacher education programs.

THE PROBLEM

The Holmes Group, mentioned above, a consortium of deans of colleges of education throughout the United States, has cited seven obstacles to a deep and true understanding of problems in teaching and teacher education in the United States. First, the group cites (pp. 24–25) “overly simple solutions” whereby it is argued that “only the best and the brightest” should be permitted to teach; conventional wisdom indicates that if teachers were “smarter,” learning would improve. Second, the group cites “naive views of teaching,” whereby the general conception is that “any modestly educated person with average abilities can do it,” i.e., “teach” (p. 29). Third, “institutions unfit for teacher professionals” (p. 31) are cited as an obstacle. In other words, schools in general are not pleasant, “professional” places to work. Fourth, “the pitfalls of credentialism” (p. 41), including notions of competency testing and differentiated pay scales, are considered to be problematic. The fifth obstacle, according to the Holmes Group, is “problems in undergraduate liberal education” characterized by “a lack of curricular coherence and an avoidance of a core of enduring and fundamental ideas” (p. 47). The sixth is “inadequate professional education” that tends to be “restricted to a few university courses and a brief period of supervised practice in the schools” (p. 50). The seventh obstacle is “lack of demonstration sites” (p. 56) in which prospective teachers may see “superior” professionals at work and through which field professionals can contribute to the research base in education.

Using these seven issues as a backdrop to reform in teacher education, the Holmes Group has mounted a major effort toward reform and counts major universities, federal agencies, and private foundations in its support network. The

intent of the present paper is to begin to respond to some of the issues in teacher education as outlined by the Holmes Group from a foreign language perspective.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS & METHODOLOGY

Clearly, all academic ventures commence with a review of the literature. Hence, the research question for the present paper is, quite simply: *what comprises the research base on foreign language teacher education?* In order to answer the question, the authors examined journals, books, monographs, and references from the 1977-78 ACTFL Annual Bibliography devoted to foreign or second language education in the United States. Publications that attempt explicitly to direct *foreign language teacher development* were included in the data base. While the authors acknowledge the ultimate relevance to foreign language teachers of a broad scope of foreign language and foreign language education literature, the articles that comprise the actual data base deal directly with the questions: "What should foreign language teachers know? What should they do? How should foreign language teachers be prepared?" In other words, the articles considered to be part of the data base: 1) argue how foreign language teachers should be taught; 2) identify teacher behaviors to be encouraged; and/or 3) observe teachers with an intent to train them in a given model for all levels of foreign language teaching—elementary through graduate school.

After reading each article that contained one or a combination of these characteristics, we categorized each under one of seven descriptors: 1) global position statements; 2) teacher behaviors; 3) training of teaching assistants; 4) training of university professors; 5) inservice opportunities; 6) supervision; 7) methods course curricula. Below is a critical synthesis of the research on these topics. Following the synthesis is a set of recommendations stemming from it and responding to the concerns of the Holmes Group. Finally, a complete bibliographic listing is included.

GLOBAL POSITION STATEMENTS

Authors whose work may be characterized as addressing broad issues of foreign language teacher education generally either take the perspective of training vs. development, isolate specific skills which foreign language teachers

should possess, or offer concrete descriptions of current or future programs. Muyskens, for example, focuses on teachers' language skills and on strategies to elicit communicative practice. Similarly, DiPietro focuses on the use of "interactive scenarios"; both argue that teacher education programs should focus on such aspects. Grittner also emphasizes the importance of target language fluency as well as skills in planning and self-assessment. Larsen-Freeman argues for teaching four steps of a decision-making process, while Alatis sees a need for added emphasis on strategies of classroom management and discipline. Another perspective is taken by Hancock, who focuses on theoretical models for teacher education programs and discusses the implications of developmental/humanistic vs. behavioral/competency based models. He recommends that revisions in teacher education programs take such theoretical statements into consideration while Bailey and Elling describe the competency based system optimistically. Stern sees language teaching theory as the component of teacher education most needing critical examination.

A third perspective is taken by several authors, who briefly examine the current status of foreign language teacher education. While Jarvis and Bernhardt concern themselves with an analysis of the differences and similarities between foreign language teacher education and other types of teacher education programs, DeLorenzo provides an overview of the field in 1978. Joiner offers a variety of concrete suggestions for improved foreign language teacher education programs. Finocchiaro and Herold outline long-standing problems in foreign language teacher education and aspects of curriculum development while Fanselow examines an important attempt at evaluation of teacher education effectiveness.

A fourth perspective involves a focus on the educational format of preservice coursework. The role of research is a prime concern. Jarvis calls for collaboration between university researcher and classroom teacher; Brumfit insists that researchers explicitly address classroom applications of research; and Tucker calls for a research training component in teacher education. Clarke sees a need for redefining old terms such as "approach," Celce-Murcia and Coste argue for less lecture and more active student

involvement in preservice teacher education. Strevens provides a rationale for foreign language teacher education.

In general, the above research provides little direction for general teacher education programs, but a wider framework for research, but seem to be directed at specific matters. This is not to be directed at (60) or Wing. Both provide comprehensive statements on teacher development. In his public statements, Hancock takes an entire developmental approach to the education of teachers. He focuses on the depth of teachers' general knowledge, proficiency, instructional skills, and methods and language of learning as a process of teacher development of goals—professional.

Wing, too, offers a perspective on teacher education. She stresses competence as a fundamental characteristic of excellence in education and classroom research related to foreign languages. She stresses the characteristics of teaching and learning components that make up the overriding characteristics (60) and Wing's statement on the awareness of the second language and the non-prescriptive nature of their recommendations.

TEACHER BEHAVIORS

Another group of authors focuses specifically on the classroom behaviors of foreign language teachers. Most frequently mentioned are language fluency. Anagnostopoulou, Woloshin all emphasize the importance of fluency in terms of communication. Clarke considers the problem of fluency in the target culture. Brumfit and Knop consider the need for research from a different perspective on classroom management. Brumfit and Rossner focus on teacher education programs and lesson planning and

involvement in preservice classes. Finally, Strevens provides a rationale for preservice foreign language teacher training.

In general, the above statements are brief accounts of the current state of the art and offer little direction for genuine reform in teacher education programs. They are not set within a wider framework of teacher education research, but seem to rely on foreign language specific matters. This complaint, however, is not to be directed against work by Lange (59, 60) or Wing. Both provide coherent and comprehensive statements regarding teacher development. In his publications, Lange provides an entire developmental model for the education of teachers. He focuses on issues of selection, depth of teachers' general education, language proficiency, instruction of culture, knowledge of methods and language acquisition, a concept of learning as a process, and abilities in the development of goals—both instructional and professional.

Wing, too, offers a model for understanding teacher education. She examines teacher competence as a fundamental component in excellence in education and outlines current classroom research related to teaching foreign languages. She stresses the decision-making characteristics of teaching and outlines the myriad components that make up teacher competence. The overriding characteristics of Lange's (59, 60) and Wing's statements are their depth, their awareness of the scope of teacher education, and the non-prescriptive yet practical nature of their recommendations.

TEACHER BEHAVIORS

Another group of publications focuses specifically on the classroom behaviors of foreign language teachers. Not surprisingly, the most frequently mentioned "behavior" is target language fluency. Annandale, Kalivoda, and Woloshin all emphasize language skill. Annandale and Kalivoda speak to target language proficiency in terms of coursework, while Woloshin considers the problem in terms of residency in the target culture. Brumfit/Rossner and Nerenz/Knop consider the notion of teacher behavior from a different perspective, namely that of classroom management and lesson planning. Brumfit and Rossner argue that the focus of teacher education programs should be on daily lesson planning and on the execution of pre-

planned lessons before teachers are asked to plan on their own. Nerenz and Knop, on the other hand, focus on a specific finding of teacher planning research, i.e., that teachers spend considerable time in transition from one activity to another and that they should be taught strategies to decrease that time and to increase active learning time. D'Anglejan argues for the need of experiences helping language learners in non-academic settings. Finally, Altman, de Garcia/Reynolds, King, and Moskowitz focus on affective behaviors of foreign language teachers. They suggest either implicitly or explicitly that foreign language teachers should be trained in empathy, respect, and self-awareness in order to increase their classroom effectiveness. Similarly, Brown argues for encouraging the use of intuition and risk-taking.

Of concern within these articles is their failure to consider teaching as an activity which is both cognitive and affective, product- and process-based. In general, they are characterized by a behaviorist approach which focuses on discrete aspects in a day in the life of a teacher without considering the full context within which the act of teaching takes place.

TRAINING TEACHING ASSISTANTS

Since calls for TA training early in the decade (Hagiwara), the formation of training programs for teaching assistants has been a popular topic in foreign language education research. Characteristics of the assertions within this topic is that, in contrast to the statements mentioned above in which teacher educators have been fairly hesitant to outline specific programs and proposals for teacher education, no such hesitation exists among scholars who deal specifically with TA training. Barnett, DiDonato, Donahue, Franck/Samaniego, Goepper/Knorre, Henderson, Kaufman, Knop/Herron, Mansour, Russo, Schulz, Szymanski, and Toliver all outline training programs for TAs at various public universities throughout the United States.

Interestingly, TA training is the only area of foreign language teacher education extracted by the authors of this paper actually supported by an empirical data base. Studies by Ervin/Muyskens, Gibaldi/Mirollo, Nerenz, Herron/Knop, and Schulz provide survey data on the types and content of training programs cur-

has not been sufficiently explored beyond categorical-type systems.

METHODS COURSE CURRICULA

Only a small number of papers exist on curricula for foreign language methods courses. Clifford, Jorstad, and Lange discuss the effective use of micro-teaching in preservice programs. Horwitz argues for introducing instruments for identifying student beliefs about language learning and teaching into methods courses. Few writers take a broad perspective on methods courses. Petrick outlines a methods course for German and Keeler calls for learning centers for individualized instruction of teacher trainees. In two cases (Krashen, Long, 64) more theory and research findings are called for while Larson argues for clinical experiences. Meanwhile, Richards and Hino's survey points to a low correlation between courses previously studied and their perceived usefulness to teachers and Benseler and Schulz find no evidence that would call for one particular foreign language teaching methodology to be recommended over others.

The small number of papers on methods course curricula belies their importance, for this is the *only* coursework many preservice teachers have in foreign language education. The "inadequate professional education" criticized most vociferously by the Holmes Group seems to point to the weakness in the present state of the "methods course" and the sparse offerings that extend beyond it.

SUMMARY: WHERE ARE WE?

The above synthesis indicates the following. First, only seventy-eight articles have been published on the general topic of foreign language teacher education in the United States in the past ten years. In other words, very little concern has been demonstrated for a topic of monumental importance to the health and well-being of foreign language education in the United States. Second, on the whole, the writings which have been published indicate no theoretical framework for the statements they contain. Third, essentially no data exist on effective teacher education programs. Fourth, no genuine concern has been exhibited for the preservice education of foreign language teachers. Considering that most foreign lan-

guage instruction in the US takes place at the secondary level, this finding is interesting and simultaneously disturbing. Fifth, the articles indicate an unconscionable lack of awareness of the teacher education literature in general.

Figure 1 indicates that the foreign language teacher education literature draws from a relatively small pool of references. A perusal of the articles' sources indicates a reliance on "in-house, experiential" sources rather than on data-based studies. In fact, out of the seventy-eight articles in the database, only eight report the results of foreign language teacher education *research*. They are: Clifford, Jorstad, and Lange; DiPietro, Lantolf & Labarca; Ervin & Muyskins; Knop & Herron; Nerenz, Herron & Knop; Nerenz; Nerenz & Knop; Richards & Hino; Schulz. Notably, only the Nerenz and Schulz studies are cited frequently throughout the database.

Given that the foreign language specific database is so small, an expectation might be that foreign language teacher educators have relied on the general teacher education literature which appears in the American Educational Research Association's *Handbook of Research on Teaching*. However, as Figure 2 reveals, the general teacher education research has not made an impact on foreign language education. Of 129 possible sources in the last two *Handbooks*, only two *Handbook* researchers appear as references in the foreign language teacher education literature. A valuable source of information for foreign language teacher education has been ignored.

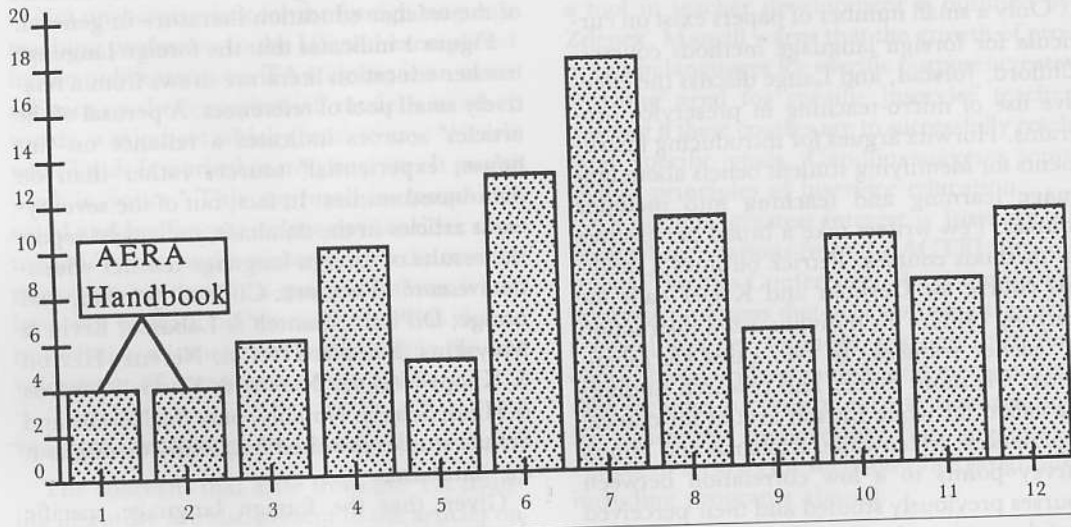
In other words, a succinct answer to the research question posed in this paper, *what comprises the research base in foreign language teacher education?*, is: the perceptions of experienced foreign language educators. Up until now, the field has relied on the discussions among experienced foreign language educators about the educational needs of foreign language teachers as the experts have perceived them, rather than on the principled collection of data and information.

A RESPONSE TO HOLMES

The relationship between the knowledge base in foreign language teacher education and the future of teacher education in general as exemplified by the Holmes Group movement is

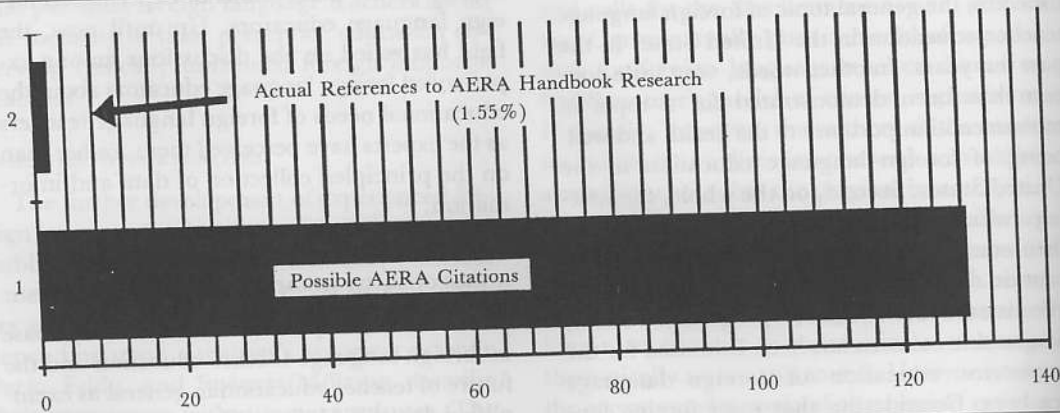
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FIGURE 1
Most Frequently Cited Foreign Language References



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|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Barak Rosenshine | 7. Gertrude Moskowitz |
| 2. John B. Carroll | 8. Anne Grundstrum Nerenz |
| 3. Frank M. Grittner | 9. Andre F. Paquette |
| 4. Michio P. Hagiwara | 10. Renate A. Schulz |
| 5. Gilbert A. Jarvis | 11. H. H. Stern |
| 6. Constance K. Knop | 12. Earl W. Stevick |

FIGURE 2
Foreign Language Education's AERA Research References



tenuous at best. For these issues as defined in the present research, however, more data are needed before any conclusions can be forthcoming.

Overly Simple Solutions
The idea of an "improved teacher" (Holmes, 1989) in language classrooms. The question, of course, what kind of teacher? For an effective teacher, Holmes notes, some of the "brightest" should be selected. In this regard, the selection process must clarify notions of what is best and address questions of the relative distribution of language teaching skills. Do all teachers have fluency in the language? Are all teachers able to exhibit? Some of these questions appear a bit heretical to some language professionals who believe that fluency is a prerequisite for teaching. Yet it is argued that many of the most particularly effective teachers in language instruction are like many of the language clearances in the language register in the language analysis of classroom practices. Perhaps some of these practices offer some insights.

Naive Views of Teaching
Some people believe that teaching is a matter of subject matter knowledge. One has control of the "interesting," learning language profession has a lot to say about *how* learning is brought about through instruction. Certainly, some studies (e.g., Long, 1983) have shown that this issue. Yet, studies of language classrooms in college classrooms and in recently commented on the conduct ethnographic studies and students interviewed in classrooms and to ask: *in foreign language classrooms "talk" "real" talk?*

Institutions Unfolding
The Holmes Report and its implications in schools have seen

tenuous at best. Examining the seven major issues as defined by Holmes in light of the present research base reveals that numerous data are needed before a sensible response can be forthcoming.

Overly Simple Solutions. The first obstacle to improved teacher education, according to Holmes, is indeed who should be placed in classrooms. The hidden question concerns, of course, what kind of "intelligence" is required for an effective public school teacher. As Holmes notes, some argue that the "best and the brightest" should be placed in classrooms. In this regard, the foreign language profession must clarify notions of the best and the brightest and address questions such as: *What is the relative distribution of skills necessary for effective foreign language teaching? To what degree must an educated teacher have fluency in the foreign language? What kinds of abilities with the language must teachers be able to exhibit?* Some of these questions may appear a bit heretical, for many foreign language professionals would argue that "total" fluency is requisite. Yet the profession has acknowledged that many native speakers are not particularly effective teachers of their own language. In like manner, many excellent users of language clearly do not control a classroom register in the language. A principled needs analysis of classroom language skills would perhaps offer some answers to these questions.

Naive Views of Teaching. In like manner, many believe that teaching involves imparting subject matter knowledge to students and that if one has control of the subject matter and is "interesting," learning will occur. The foreign language profession has not yet examined the issue of *how* learning occurs or *how* learning is brought about through the teaching process. Certainly, some second language professionals (e.g., Long, 63) have begun to examine this issue. Yet, studies of traditional foreign language classrooms in traditional liberal arts college classrooms and in public schools have only recently commenced. The profession needs to conduct ethnographic analyses of how teachers and students interact in foreign language classrooms and to ask: *What are the social roles involved in foreign language classrooms? To what extent is classroom "talk" "real" talk?*

Institutions Unfit for Teacher Professionals. The Holmes Report argues that "conditions of work in schools have severely hindered efforts to im-

prove the quality of teaching" (p. 31). This statement conjures images of obvious societal problems which are extant in schools, ranging from drug and alcohol-related difficulties to worn out and tattered classrooms and facilities to teachers' time being spent on patrolling restrooms and cafeterias. Specifically regarding foreign language teaching, the profession must address the issue of rewards. Language teachers, in contrast to literature teachers, are frequently regarded differently within the profession.¹ The profession therefore needs to consider questions such as *what would constitute a supportive stance toward the teaching of language?* Also important is *what social classroom environments are most conducive to language learning?*

The Pitfalls of Credentialism. Certification standards vary from state to state, and not all states have reciprocal agreements; what one state acknowledges as competence in foreign language teaching, another does not. While some institutions that offer credentials have foreign language professionals who instruct methods courses and who can certify competence in the foreign language, others do not: that is, it is possible to receive credentials in foreign language teaching without ever having been supervised by a foreign-language speaking professional or by anyone who has ever taught a foreign language in a secondary school. Questions to be addressed are: *How can the foreign language profession guarantee adequate supervision? How can the foreign language profession provide guidance in supervision for non-foreign language speaking administrators? If competency tests are adopted, will they measure what teachers need to know or what is currently taught? How can changes in time and needs be incorporated?* Also, *what are the unique foreign language teaching skills, and what is minimal competency in these skills?*

Problems in Undergraduate Liberal Education. Our purpose here is not to discuss the ramifications of a humanities-based education. The intent is, however, to highlight the implications of the undergraduate language major for future foreign language teachers. Many teacher education candidates complete a foreign language major which consists primarily of advanced literature courses. Moreover, many authors claim (see note 1 below) that these courses tend to be taught by professors of literature who rarely have training in pedagogy. Hence, most of the time of the undergraduate major is spent in ob-

observation of professionals who have little demonstrated interest or prior training in language teaching. An important question to pose, therefore, is: *How relevant are most undergraduate foreign language major courses to the daily professional lives of public school foreign language teachers?*

Inadequate Professional Education. Despite a belief that teacher certification in most states is characterized by a preponderance of education courses, the opposite is true. Many states require a minimal number of subject matter specific education courses. In light of recent public outcries regarding the lack of foreign language proficiency which most foreign language students exhibit, a re-analysis of the "methods" course is necessary. Research is needed which addresses questions such as: *What is an optimum amount of methods study? How can clinical field experience best be integrated with methods study? What is an appropriate sequence of topics for methods courses? How can foreign language teachers best be introduced to the concept of integrated rather than skills-based instruction?*

Lack of Demonstration Sites. The Holmes Group Report calls (p. 57) for the development of "exemplary school sites." In response, the foreign language profession needs to launch research which would address: *What variables in*

language teaching could be considered "exemplary"? What sorts of facilities could be considered "exemplary" in providing foreign language instruction? What is the most effective means of having all foreign language teachers gain access to "exemplary" professionals and facilities?

CONCLUSION

The foreign language profession in the United States has a long and arduous task ahead to meet demands for reform in teacher education. It would be disheartening to imagine the profession still facing the same seven obstacles enumerated by the Holmes Group at the end of yet another decade. Certainly, the "proficiency movement" has highlighted deficiencies in student outcomes and has posited a testing procedure to identify these deficiencies. The future needs to hold much more than a new test, however, if the foreign language profession is genuinely to use the nomenclature "profession." If we wish to solve the problems identified by investigators such as the Holmes Group, and respond to them with solutions that are tailored to the uniqueness of foreign language education, then the time has come for subject matter specific research in teacher education.

language teachers' complaints of lowly status may be reflected in the background of teachers appointed to coordinate undergraduate language programs. Among these directors responsible for languages courses only fourteen percent list their research area as applied or educational linguistics while fifty-nine percent list literature (Teschner).

NOTE

¹For references to the perceived dichotomy between language and literature teachers see DeLorenzo et al., DiPietro et al., Altman (2), Kalivoda, Rivers, and Woloshin. Lan-

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Fulbright

THE UNITED STATES announces details of a new Teacher Exchange Program. It involves a one-of-a-kind program at the elementary levels with summer 1988-89 over-see visits to Argentina, Brazil, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Netherlands, South Africa, and the United Kingdom. The

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Fulbright Teacher Exchange Program

THE UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY ANNOUNCES details of the 1988-89 Fulbright Teacher Exchange Program. The program involves a one-on-one exchange for teachers at the elementary, secondary, and postsecondary levels with suitable teachers overseas. The 1988-89 overseas exchange programs will involve Argentina, Australia, Belgium/Luxembourg, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Denmark, the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Iceland, the Netherlands, Norway, Panama, South Africa, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. The number of exchanges available

and the eligibility requirements vary by country.

The program also provides opportunities for teachers to participate in summer seminars from three to eight weeks in length. During the summer of 1988, seminars will be held in Italy and the Netherlands.

Applications will be available in the summer. The deadline for receipt of completed applications is 15 October 1987. For further information, write: Fulbright Teacher Exchange Program, E, ASX, United States Information Agency, 301 Fourth St., SW, Washington, DC 20547, (202) 485-2555.