

The imaginary trip opened the door to include a writing prompt in the unit's summative assessment.

When you arrive home from Granada, the first thing that you do is read your e-mail. You have 25 e-mail from your pesky friend Benito asking you, "¿Te gusta la comida en Granada?" You are anxious to read e-mails from other friends, so you answer him in Spanish right away. Write at least six complete sentences in Spanish to tell what food(s) you like, do not like and love. Also, tell that you like a food, but you like another food more. Be sure to mention at least three typical foods from Spain.

Performance tasks involving reading and writing continued after standardized testing in April. Our final thematic unit was *El mundo es mi comunidad* (My World is My Community). During the unit, students created publicity brochures to express and support their personal opinions regarding the best and worst of local businesses e.g., restaurants, stores, libraries, banks. Students finished the school year by creating flap books to tell where they and others were going to go and what they were going to do on an ideal summer day. Not surprisingly, students responded enthusiastically to the assignment. For example, one boy wrote:

*En mi día ideal, yo voy a la playa para jugar. Yo voy a comer una hamburguesa y muchas frutas. Yo voy a llevar un traje de baño y protector de sol. Yo voy a nadar en el océano.*

## Results

Georgia has standardized test scores for the past school year made headlines on July fourth, and I was heartened to see my sixth grade students' Georgia Criterion Referenced Competency Test data for reading. Sixth grade reading test scores showed small changes, yet remained consistently high. The percentage of students who did not meet expectations on the reading portion of the test dropped from 3.4% in 2006 to 1.8% in 2007.

Results for my own instruction were more dramatic. Working with sixth grade reading and language arts teachers and my Spanish teaching colleague on the sixth grade team led me to incorporate learning experiences for literacy development into daily instruction. By the end of the school year, the integration of activities to encourage students to read and write in Spanish led to more balanced instruction and an assessment program that allowed students growing opportunities to demonstrate all three modes of communication: interpretive, interpersonal, and

presentational (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 1999). Teaming across subjects empowered me to use Spanish instruction as "a vehicle for reinforcing the academic skills required by the regular curriculum" (Curtain & Dahlberg, 2004, p. 249) while empowering students to use their new language as a tool for thinking and learning. My school's implementation of the middle school teaming concept was a positive experience for me, and I look forward to continuing to develop a shared vision of success for all students.

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# The Foreign Language Assistance Program (FLAP)

Rebecca Richey, Foreign Language Assistance Program

**The Foreign Language Assistance Program, also known as FLAP, holds the distinction as the only federally funded program that exclusively targets foreign language instruction in elementary and secondary schools. Funded under Title V of No Child Left Behind, FLAP provides 3-year grants to states and local school districts to establish, improve, or expand innovative kindergarten through grade twelve model programs.**

The program began in 1988 when Congress passed the Foreign Language Assistance Act, directing the Secretary of Education to make grants to state educational agencies for foreign language study in elementary and secondary schools. Today FLAP funds 15 grants to states and 122 grants to local school districts to support a broad range of activities, including classroom instruction, professional development, teacher recruitment, curriculum development, student assessment, program evaluation, and parent involvement with a current program budget of \$23,780,000. Grants to local educational agencies range from \$50,000 to \$300,000 each year and support programs that show the promise of continuing beyond the period of federal funding and demonstrate approaches that can be disseminated and duplicated in other local educational agencies. Similarly, grants to state educational agencies range from \$50,000 to \$400,000 per year, and support systemic approaches to improving foreign language instruction in the state.

Consistent with the principle of local flexibility under No Child Left Behind, FLAP permits schools and states to choose instructional approaches that best meet local needs. FLAP programs represent a variety of models and approaches, including foreign language exploratory programs (FLEX), foreign language in the elementary school (FLES), secondary advanced placement coursework, immersion, two-way immersion, content-based programs, and programs for heritage language learners.

Regardless of the instructional approach, FLAP gives special consideration to applicants who address any of the following priorities:

- creating intensive summer foreign language programs for professional development
- linking foreign language speakers in the community with schools
- promoting the sequential study of foreign languages for students beginning in elementary school
- using technology effectively
- promoting innovative activities such as content-based instruction or immersion
- collaborating as a consortium of state and local educational agencies.

## The Grant Process

FLAP grants are awarded through a competitive, discretionary grant process. Panels of foreign language experts score the application narratives based on established selection criteria published in the Federal Register. These criteria guide applicants in developing an application narrative, and addresses areas such as the quality of the program design, personnel, the need for the program, and the quality of evaluation.

FLAP is a cost-sharing program; grantees must match 100% of proposed federal funds with state or local funds each year of the grant. School districts that are able to demonstrate financial hardship may request a waiver for all or part of the matching funds. However, states are not eligible for matching cost waivers.



## National Security Language Initiative

When the President established the National Security Language Initiative (NSLI) in 2006, FLAP gained prominence as an essential component of K-16+ education to prepare foreign language speakers. NSLI was designed to dramatically increase the number of Americans learning critical foreign languages through new and expanded programs from kindergarten through university and into the workforce. Foreign language learning is important for Americans to engage foreign governments and peoples, especially in critical regions; a population of multilingual citizens can encourage reform, promote understanding, convey respect for other cultures, and provide other nations an opportunity to learn more about America and its citizens.

To address these needs, the Secretaries of State, Education and Defense, and the Director of National Intelligence developed a comprehensive national plan to expand U.S. foreign language education beginning in early childhood and continuing throughout formal schooling and into the workforce with new programs and resources.

The most recent FLAP competitions in 2006 and 2007, re-focused by NSLI, awarded competitive priority points to applicants that proposed foreign language instruction in critical foreign languages—specifically in Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Russian, and languages in the Indic, Iranian, and Turkic families. The priority also required that instruction would be primarily during the school day to increase the likelihood that students would attain proficiency. The majority of grants funded in these years proposed to address critical foreign languages (58 of 70 grants in 2006, and 31 of 52 grants in 2007). Of those that planned instruction in critical languages, the majority proposed Chinese. Examples of current state and local programs follow:

### *Peng You* Project: Mandarin for Real Life Purposes

For example, the Cambridge Public Schools in Massachusetts have received a FLAP grant for the *Peng You* (Friends) project that will deliver Mandarin foreign language to two elementary (K-8) school sites and one secondary (9-12) site. The project will improve an existing program to make curriculum more comprehensive and provide custom designed professional development. The secondary program will be a new addition to the sequence. The project and curriculum designs are supported by scientifically based research and the five C's of the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning: communication, cultures, communities, connections, and comparisons. The project also includes effective use of technology for pen pal connections to international students who are native speakers of Chinese.

## Education for Global Citizenship

The Lansing School District in Michigan received a grant for a bilingual elementary language program that seeks to expand and build an early elementary Mandarin Chinese immersion program. It will incorporate the Education for Global Citizenship, a new immersion model that incorporates the best educational practices of both eastern and western educational systems.

1. Create a K-5 self-sustaining, elementary immersion program
2. Promote academic achievement and Chinese language acquisition with 75% of students meeting government Performance and Results Act measures in reading, writing, speaking, and understanding Mandarin Chinese
3. Provide meaningful, integrated, and authentic Chinese language and cultural learning opportunities
4. Develop and maintain curriculum and professional development
5. Foster meaningful relationships between the school and community organizations and community members.

### Acquiring Arabic

The school district of Dearborn, Michigan proposes to teach Arabic as a foreign language in two schools, expanding one current K-5 program and establishing a new program for students in grades 4-8 at another school. The program model will provide direct foreign language instruction, seamless movement from one proficiency level to the next, and focus on escalating proficiency in Arabic. The direct instruction uses research-based “best practices,” developmental skill sequences, and levels of proficiency achievement to determine advancement. The model also calls for integration of technology in instruction and learning, creating Arabic language curriculum and assessments, peer coaching, professional development, community partnership, and establishing a parent lending library.

### Arabic in Iowa

The Mid-Prairie Community Schools designed a Project entitled *Foreign Language Instruction for Primary Students*. The purpose of the project is to increase Arabic language proficiency and

cross cultural competence for K-5th grade students, and provide professional development training in foreign language methodology and language acquisition strategies for all teachers serving those students. The program will include strategies that best meet the identified needs for improved teaching to maximize student achievement in the core academic subjects and increase language proficiency in Arabic.

## Long Sequence Russian Program in Tennessee

The Memphis City Schools will implement a K-12 continuum of Russian Language instruction at three schools. Memphis will build upon the successful program at Craigmont High School by expanding the middle school program and implementing an elementary school program. The current exploratory course offered in grades 6-8 will be updated to a bridge program that allows middle school graduates to enter advanced level courses when they enter high school.

### Chinese and Russian for Young Learners

A FLAP grant will support the Critical Need Language Initiative 2007-2010 in the Glastonbury Town School District in Connecticut. The Glastonbury Public Schools will improve and expand its Chinese and Russian language programs with a focus on professional development, curriculum and assessment, and updated technology. The programs will extend into elementary grades three through eight and the district will improve horizontal and vertical articulation between the course offerings at the middle school and high school to allow students the opportunity to participate in Chinese or Russian via distance learning.

## Highly Qualified Teachers

Finding highly qualified foreign language teachers, particularly teachers of critical foreign languages, continues to be a national challenge. In comparison with traditional foreign languages, there are far fewer teachers fluent in critical languages and fewer teacher training institutions producing new teachers of critical

languages. To help meet this need, FLAP district and state grantees are encouraged to establish partnerships for teacher recruitment, professional development, and certification.

## Assuring Global Competitiveness

The Fairfax County Public School district in Virginia and its university partners will produce five items:

1. Complete grade 1-6 Chinese and Arabic FLES curriculum
2. Virtual Chinese and Arabic courses for middle and high school students at schools that do not offer these languages
3. An electronic version of the LinguaFolio USA
4. A model of 1-16 articulation plans with local universities, including Chinese and Arabic teacher recruitment projects, student mentoring and summer language camps
5. An initiative to facilitate replication of the project that includes guidance materials to share with other districts and states

## Critical Language Fellows

The Wisconsin Department of Education will use a competitive process to name *Critical Language Fellows* and prepare them to be highly qualified teachers by developing pathways for certification. In years one and two, the program will prepare teachers in Mandarin; the third year, a new cohort of teachers will be prepared to teach Arabic. The project will develop new programs by planning with districts committed to matching grant funds. However, a competitive priority will be given to districts wishing to begin instruction in the elementary grades. Members of the heritage-speaking community will be trained to coach heritage language students to use and improve their language skills. The project will create a consortium of collaborating partners to implement a competency-based teacher certification model for Chinese and Arabic language teaching.

## Conclusion

The U.S. Department of Education understands that developing new foreign language programs and expanding existing programs represents a challenge to many districts and states. Clearly, there is a dearth of highly qualified foreign language teachers and even fewer teachers are fluent in critical languages. The resources of the Foreign Language Assistance Program are here to support local school districts and state educational agencies as they address the challenges and build a foundation for success in foreign language education.

## Resources

The following resources include previously published closing date notices and application packages, designed to assist applicants in preparing applications for funding under FLAP.

The FLAP program is administered by the Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA). [www.ed.gov/offices/OELA](http://www.ed.gov/offices/OELA)

FLAP Information on the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition (NCELA) [www.ncela.gwu.edu/oela/OELAprograms/4\\_FLAP.htm](http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/oela/OELAprograms/4_FLAP.htm)

Find and apply for Federal Government Grants at [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov)

Grants and Contracts Overview [www.ed.gov/fund/landing.jhtml?src=rt](http://www.ed.gov/fund/landing.jhtml?src=rt)

Forecast of Funding Opportunities — The Department of Education Discretionary Grant Programs at [www.ed.gov/fund/grant/find/edlite-forecast.html](http://www.ed.gov/fund/grant/find/edlite-forecast.html) and click on chart 1