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STUDENT TEACHING AND THE FSM FORCE A CHANGE.

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THE TRAINING OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS HAS FAILED TO KEEP PACE WITH THE CHANGE FROM TRADITIONAL TO MODERN METHODS OF LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION IN THE SCHOOLS. TO MAKE COLLEGE PROFESSORS AWARE OF THE QUALIFICATIONS NOW NECESSARY FOR LANGUAGE TEACHERS AND THE NEED TO REDESIGN COLLEGE PROGRAMS, ATTENTION HAS BEEN CALLED TO THE RECENT PROGRESS THE PROFESSION HAS MADE IN DESCRIBING TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS, DEVELOPING PROFICIENCY TESTS, AND ESTABLISHING GUIDELINES FOR TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS. AS A PART OF ANY PLAN TO DEVELOP A MORE REALISTIC PROGRAM, METHODS TEACHERS MUST ACCEPT THE NEW OBJECTIVES AND EMPHASES IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING, BECOME PROFICIENT IN THE USE OF THE NEW METHODS AND MATERIALS, AND TRAIN STUDENT TEACHERS TO USE THE MATERIALS EFFECTIVELY. THIS ARTICLE WAS PUBLISHED IN "THE DFL BULLETIN," VOLUME 6, NUMBER 3, MARCH 1967. (AM)

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# Student Teaching and the FSM Force a Change

by Louise Hubbard  
District of Columbia Public Schools

The emergency period in the teaching of foreign languages continues. The transition from the traditional approach to modern methods of language teaching seems scarcely to have begun. The problem facing the profession is all the more disturbing because great expectations have failed to materialize. Yesterday's future language teacher who was to become today's competent teacher is instead swelling the ranks of those being retrained at the NDEA Institutes. The beginning teacher in the secondary school — the recent college graduate — is prepared neither to teach language for communication, nor to use it effectively himself. Representative of the general pessimism is Elton Hocking's statement: "Evidently the massive effort to retain teachers is a losing one: the colleges and universities are turning out ill-prepared teachers faster than the Institutes can retrain them."<sup>1</sup> The failure to turn out qualified teachers is attributed directly to the college and university foreign language professor. This is a serious indictment of the foreign language departments of institutions having a teacher-preparation program. We can expect, however, that conditions will soon improve. The vehicle for this change is the student teaching experience. The use of the fundamental skills method by the student teacher inspires and motivates him and the classroom teacher. The impact of this motivation can be extended to the college teachers of foreign languages who do not understand their role in the preparation of the new teacher.

Persistent efforts have been made to bring college professors to an awareness of the qualifications necessary for modern teachers of foreign languages. In 1955 the Modern Language Association formulated "Qualifications for Secondary School Teachers of Modern Foreign Languages," clearly delineating seven areas of language teaching competencies and establishing levels of proficiency. In 1961 the MLA made available "Foreign Language Proficiency Tests for Teachers and Advanced Students." With these tests the proficiency of the advanced student in each of the seven areas can be measured. As a further aid for colleges and universities in their preparation of teachers of modern foreign languages "Guidelines for Teacher Education Programs in Modern Foreign Languages" were recommended in 1965.

One of the features of such programs is student teaching under expert supervision. We picture the ideal of the student teacher, competent in audiolingual skills, gaining experience in using the fundamental skills method under the guidance of a master teacher. This may become the general practice, for experiments are being conducted and suggestions advanced to make more effective use of the practical training period. Many of these programs, however, are on the graduate level. The present undergraduate student teaching situation in foreign languages in the public school system is often far from the ideal. Yet within the scope of the limitations of the diversified programs of undergraduate student teaching there is a

stimulus to increase proficiency. Its action is evident in spite of unsatisfactory conditions, such as the following, which are characteristic of this transition period in the teaching of foreign languages.

The student teacher may not have experienced language learning from a retrained teacher. His first introduction to the new approach may have been in his methods class. This course, as recommended in the "Guidelines for Teacher Education Programs in Modern Foreign Languages," is a "study of approaches to, methods of, and techniques to be used in teaching a modern foreign language. There is instruction in the use of the language laboratory and other educational media."<sup>2</sup> In this course the student must become acquainted with modern theories of second language learning, with teaching materials and the tests and measurements of language skills; he must develop an understanding of effective presentation of cultural information. In addition he is expected to develop sufficient mastery in the use of the techniques of the fundamental skills method to be able to keep his class to acceptable levels of progress. The student who has learned the foreign language by the traditional approach does not have the background of experience in teaching a foreign language which facilitates teacher retraining. He may be slow in developing the ability to use the techniques, tools and materials effectively.

Many college teachers of foreign language method courses have only a theoretical acquaintance with the audio-lingual approach and are unable to train the student adequately in the use of the fundamental skills method. All secondary teachers do not yet accept this method as an effective means of teaching languages. Of those who do, all are not yet retrained. Over one-third of the secondary teachers have attended NDEA Institutes; many of these are in need of additional training. As each student qualifies for student teaching, however, he must be placed. Sufficient teachers, expert in the fundamental skills method, as well as total classroom management are not always available.

All secondary school administrators are not convinced of the need for separate classes for pupils entering secondary school with a background of elementary school instruction in foreign languages. The student teacher may be presented with a problem the classroom cooperating teacher has difficulty resolving — a class composed of pupils who are complete beginners



**TEACHING (Cont.)**

the composition of the courses, and the type of instruction used. Specific areas which can be implemented to eliminate student deficiencies in language skills are pinpointed. Definite suggestions for procedure are offered.

No college professor of foreign languages can be unaware of the revolution in language teaching, nor of the length of this transition period. As a member of an institution with a teacher-preparatory program, he must assume the responsibility to prepare the modern teachers needed by the profession. His involvement with the experiences of student teachers using modern methods can be the instrument for acceleration of the production of well-trained modern teachers of foreign languages.

<sup>1</sup>Eldon Hocking, "The Schools Take Over Foreign Languages," *Journal of Secondary Education*, XXXIX (1964), 243-250.

<sup>2</sup>*Publications of the Modern Language Association*, LXXXI, No. 2 (May, 1966), A-2, A-3.

**Election Notice**

"Ballots for the second annual election of the NEA Department of Foreign Languages will be sent to all active DFL members as of February 28, 1967, on March 1, 1967. Ballots must be returned by March 31, 1967, in order to be counted.

The slate of candidates for the 1967 election include: Vice-President, Elementary and Senior High School; Regional Directors in Regions 1, 3, 5, and 7. The following DFL members are serving on the Nominations and Elections Committee: Helen E. Shelton, Washington State Office of Public Instruction, Chairman; Anthony Gradisnik, Milwaukee Public Schools; Katherine McCormick, Jerrson County (Colo.) Public Schools; and Ernest J. Mazzone, Massachusetts Department of Education.

**Have You Read?**

*A Blueprint for Greater Foreign Language Teaching Articulation* by Lester W. McKim. — 1965. 10¢.

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