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Report on bilingual, foreign language and cultural education in the state of Utah

Linda Alder, Curriculum Coordinator, Utah State Office of Education, July 1999.

Utah is very happy to be a new member of the cooperative program between Spain and U.S. States and would like to take the allotted time to outline factors which affect bilingual, foreign language and cultural education in the state and to acquaint seminar participants with Utah's program.

***Life Skills** – As an "umbrella" over curriculum in the state of Utah is the* Life Skills *document. This document serves as a portrait of what a well-educated person should know, be able to do, and be like. The document serves as a guide for developers of curriculum and assessment and for classroom teachers. Currently, benchmarks are being developed to be used in assessing the attainment of skills throughout a student's school career. In addition, Special Education benchmarks are being developed that may be used to assess the progress of students whose abilities are below beginning levels.*

The Life Skills *document focuses on specific student attainment in the areas of Lifelong Learning, Complex Thinking, Effective Communication, Collaboration, Responsible Citizenship, and Employability. Indicators that apply to the study of Foreign Language and culture are embedded in several sections of the document. The Life Skills document has been well accepted among parents, educators and the business community.*

***Core Curriculum** – The Core Curriculum consists of standards, objectives and indicators that describe the minimum to be taught to students in the state of Utah. The Core contains content and process, but not teaching strategies. It is assessable through multiple measures, is based on the Life Skills, infuses Character Education principles and is developmentally appropriate. Core Curriculum areas are Language Arts, Healthy Lifestyles, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science and Fine Arts. Specific credit in each of these areas as well as elective credit is required for high school graduation. The study of culture is a major part of the Social Studies Core. The Core and additional curriculum information may be accessed on the Internet at* www.usoe.k12.ut.us*.*

***Foreign Language Standards** – While the study of Foreign Language is not a requirement in the Core Curriculum, students participate at a high level in the study of French, German, Japanese, Russian and Spanish. In addition, a smaller number of classes in American Sign Language, Chinese, Italian, Latin, and Portuguese are taught in the state.*

The Utah Foreign Language Standards *provide a framework for educators to improve foreign language learning opportunities for every student. The standards are based on the belief that language and communication are at the heart of the human experience and express a commitment to a future in which all students will develop and maintain proficiency in English and at least one other language. Utah's unique location continues to attract an ever-increasing number of national and international visitors and businesses. Such an increase demands a work force which has the knowledge and skills to*

communicate effectively. The state considers its mission to include the education of students who will be able to communicate linguistically and culturally, both at home and abroad.

The Utah Foreign Language Standards *consist of five goals supported by standards and detailed with progress indicators benchmarked for Beginning, Developing and Expanding learning levels. The standards are designed to describe language learners at any age including rare programs in elementary grades.*

***Utah Foreign Language Enrollment** – Utah Foreign Language Enrollment has increased from 15% of secondary students in the 1980-81 school year to 34% of secondary students in 1998-99. In the past school year 62.1% of Foreign Language students were enrolled in Spanish classes, 18.4% were enrolled in French classes, and 12.3% of students participated in German classes. All other languages taught accounted for the remaining 7.2% of students.*

***English as a Second Language and Bilingual Endorsements** – Utah offers specialized endorsements to teachers in English as a Second Language and Bilingual Education. Training is conducted by the State Office of Education in cooperation with local Universities.*

***Future Development** – Plans are underway to expand the International Education program in Utah. A newly formed steering committee will meet this summer to initiate activities to enhance the teaching of languages, culture and the arts in all subjects and grade levels. Particular focus will be training opportunities for teachers of Foreign Language, Social Studies and Fine Arts.*

A new version of the elementary Social Studies Core Curriculum is under development. The new Core will feature Connections, an emphasis on a different continent at each grade level. Both of these projects promise to enhance knowledge of languages and cultures among teachers.

Annex 1:

Goal One: Communicate in languages other than English

Students obtain and provide information, express feelings and emotions, engage in conversations, and exchange options.

Students understand, interpret, and respond to written and spoken language on a variety of topics.

Students present information, concept, and ideas to listeners and readers for a variety of purposes.

Goal Two: Gain knowledge and understanding of other cultures

Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the perspectives and practices of cultures studied and use this knowledge to interact effectively in cultural contexts.

Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the perspectives and products/contributions of the cultures studied.

Goal Three: Connect with other disciplines and acquire information

Students reinforce and expand their knowledge of other disciplines through the target language.

Students acquire information and recognize viewpoints available through the target language and its cultures.

Goal Four: Use comparisons to develop insight into the nature of language and culture

Students recognize that languages have differences in words, expressions, and sentence structure. They compare and contrast target language patterns with their own.

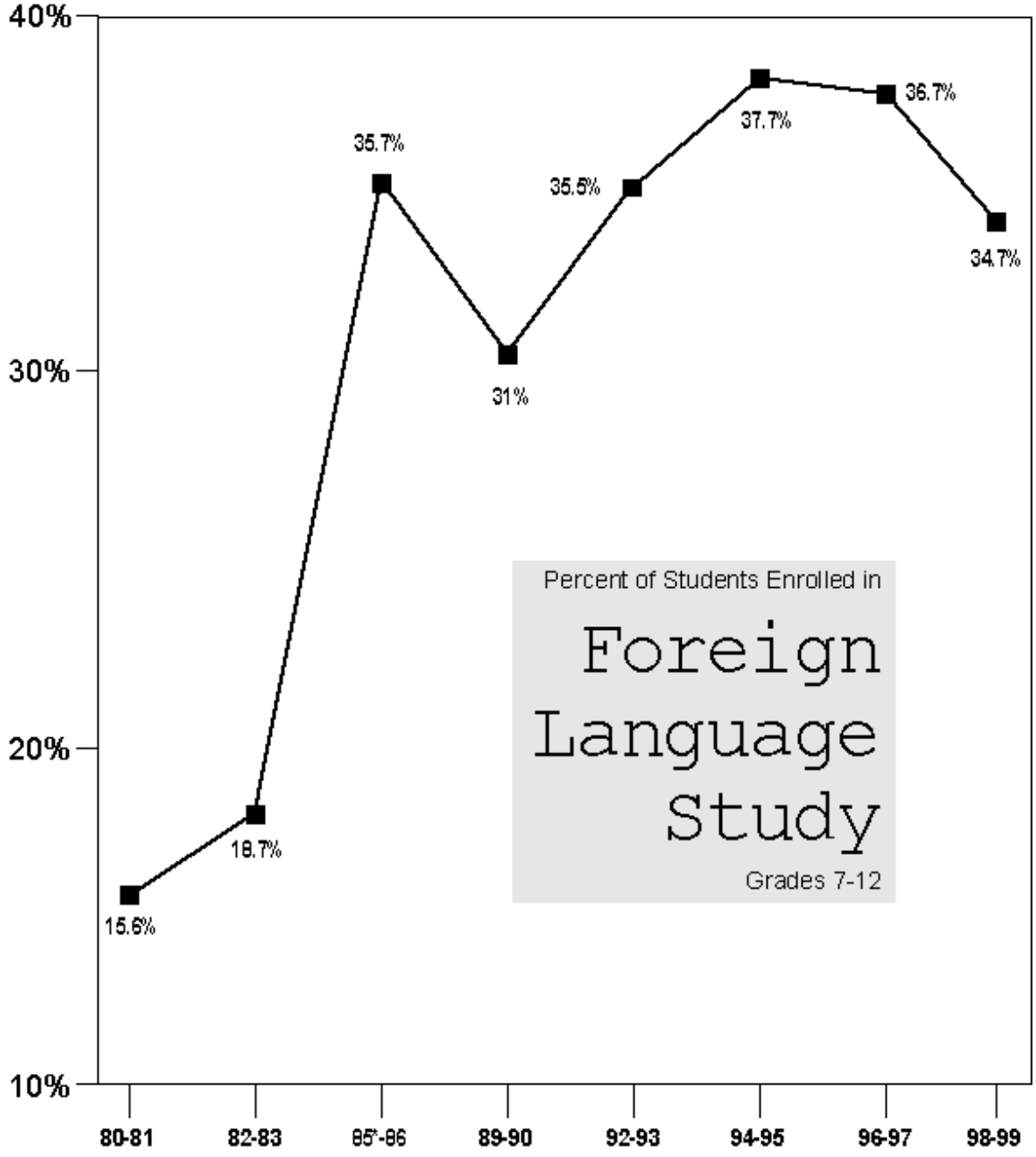
Students recognize that cultures use different patterns of interaction. They compare and contrast the cultural patterns of the target language to their own.

Goal Five: Participate in multilingual communities

Students use language skills and cultural knowledge to connect with local, national and international communities.

Students develop skills of lifelong learners by using language for personal development.

Annex 2



*1985 was the year that the University of Utah admission requirement of two years of foreign language study was implemented.

Annex 3

Utah Foreign Language Enrollment

BY LANGUAGE

