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UNIVERSALIZING GLOBAL LEARNING IN THE 21ST-CENTURY ACADEMY

The Role of Critical Language Teaching and Learning in Creating Global Professionals

--The road ahead will be long. Our climb will be steep. —

Ling Gao “GaoLing” LeBeau, Associate Director
Chinese Flagship Center, School of Global and International Studies
Indiana University Bloomington

Goal

- Advance participants' understanding of the significance of critical foreign language teaching and learning, particularly its role in creating global professionals in U.S. higher education, and ask participants to share thoughts for further research

Objectives

- Explore the dynamics shaping the increase in student enrollment census in critical language courses in U.S. higher education;
- Identify the significance of a few national initiatives;
- Outline issues and recommendations for future development.

Outcomes for Roundtable Discussion

- Participants will be able to:
 - Obtain a brief history of critical foreign language education in the U.S. higher education;
 - Understand how the critical languages are defined in the U.S. higher education and what they are;
 - Analyze national data about critical language enrollments and the current status of critical language education;
 - Critique issues related to critical language education.

Significance of the Topic

- When higher education professionals argue about the importance of internationalization, they often focus on international student and scholar mobility, institutional partnership, curriculum internationalization, study abroad. Foreign language education is usually not on the indicator list.

Perspectives Guiding the Discussion

- “Foreign languages in the United States have never enjoyed a place of prominence in the formal education system” (Brecht & Rivers, 2012, p. 263).
- The ratio of enrollment in foreign language courses to overall college and university student enrollments remains unchanged since 2006 and significantly lower than five decades ago.

Data, Evidence, and Resources Related

- Modern Language Association (MLA) - the most authoritative foreign language enrollment data source in the U.S.
- Federal government reports, hearings, and white papers

Brief History of Critical Foreign Language Education in the U.S. HEIs

- Before the World War I
 - English and the colonial languages
 - Foreign language learning for national security
- World War II
 - foreign language education underwent rapid expansion, for the military and intelligence needs of the war
- In 1958, National Defense Education Act (NEDA)
 - in response to the Soviet launch of Sputnik
 - Chinese, Japanese, Russian, Arabic, Hindi, were designated as the most neglected languages in the U.S
 - National Defense Foreign Language (NDFL) fellowships
 - Title VI of the Higher Education Act
- In early 1990, National Security Education Act (NSEA) was signed into law
- After Sept. 11, USDOD invests more heavily in critical language and culture training programs

Framework of U.S. language policy

- language policy in defense and attack (Brecht & Rivers, 2012)
 - Practical: decentralization of U.S. education system ; limited role of federal government in determining educational policy
 - Immanent: U.S. is constantly involved in multiple conflicts in the world and military engagements
 - Theoretical

Definition of Critical Languages

- Brecht and Walton' taxonomy (2002)
 - Three criteria: enrollments, institutional availability, and strength of field architecture
 - Data from the Fall 1995 MLA
 - Five groups
 - Group One: The Principal LCTLs
 - Group Two: The Less Commonly Taught LCTLs
 - Group Three: The Much Less Commonly Taught Languages
 - Group Four: The Least Commonly Taught Languages
 - Group Five: The Rarely (Never) Taught Languages

Urgent Needs of Critical Languages

- National security, economic competitiveness, and domestic well-being, as reflected in
 - white papers: “A Call to Action for National Foreign Language Capabilities”, “Strategic Perspectives on Developing Language, Regional and Cultural Capabilities”, by the U.S. Department of Defense
- Political, economic, social, and communication (Brecht & Walton, 2002)

Current Status of Critical Language Education in the U.S. Higher Education

- National Security Education Program (NSEP), originated from David L. Boren National Security Education Act (NSEA) of 1991
- A Call to Action for National Foreign Language Capabilities (USDOD, 2004)
- National Security Language Initiatives (NSLI), 2006
- Hearing on “A National Security Crisis: Foreign language Capabilities in the Federal Government” before the Senate Subcommittee, 2012

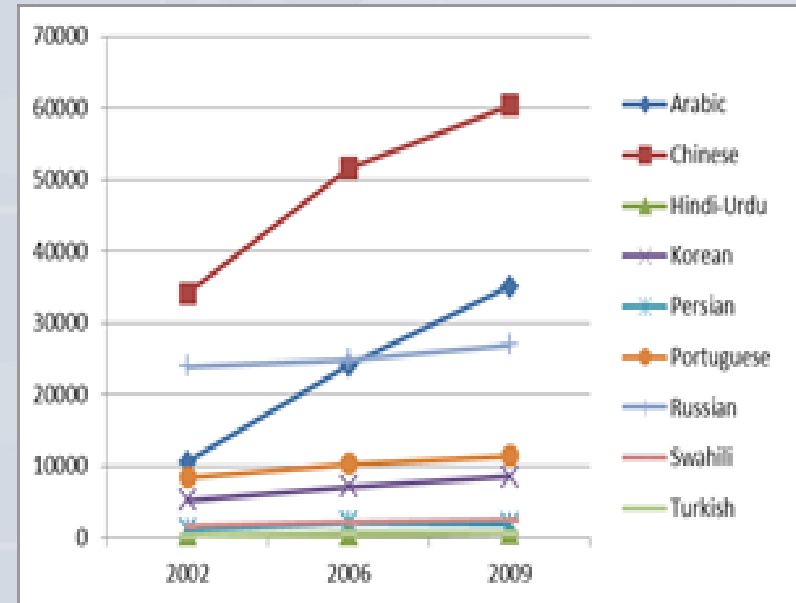
Enrollment Data in HEIs

Table 1. Critical Language College Course Enrollments in the U.S., 2002 v. 2009

	2002	2009	% Change
Arabic	10,584	35,083	231%
Chinese	34,153	60,371	77%
Hindi-Urdu	427	639	50%
Korean	5,211	8,511	63%
Persian	1,117	1,897	70%
Portuguese	8,385	11,392	36%
Russian	23,921	26,883	12%
Swahili	1,593	2,488	56%
Turkish	314	638	103%

Source: Enrollments in Languages Other Than English in United States Institutions of Higher Education, Fall 2009(MLA)

Figure 1. Trend in Critical Language College Course Enrollments in the U.S.



Enrollment Data in High Schools

Table 2. Less commonly taught languages (LCTL) taught in U.S. high schools in 2010

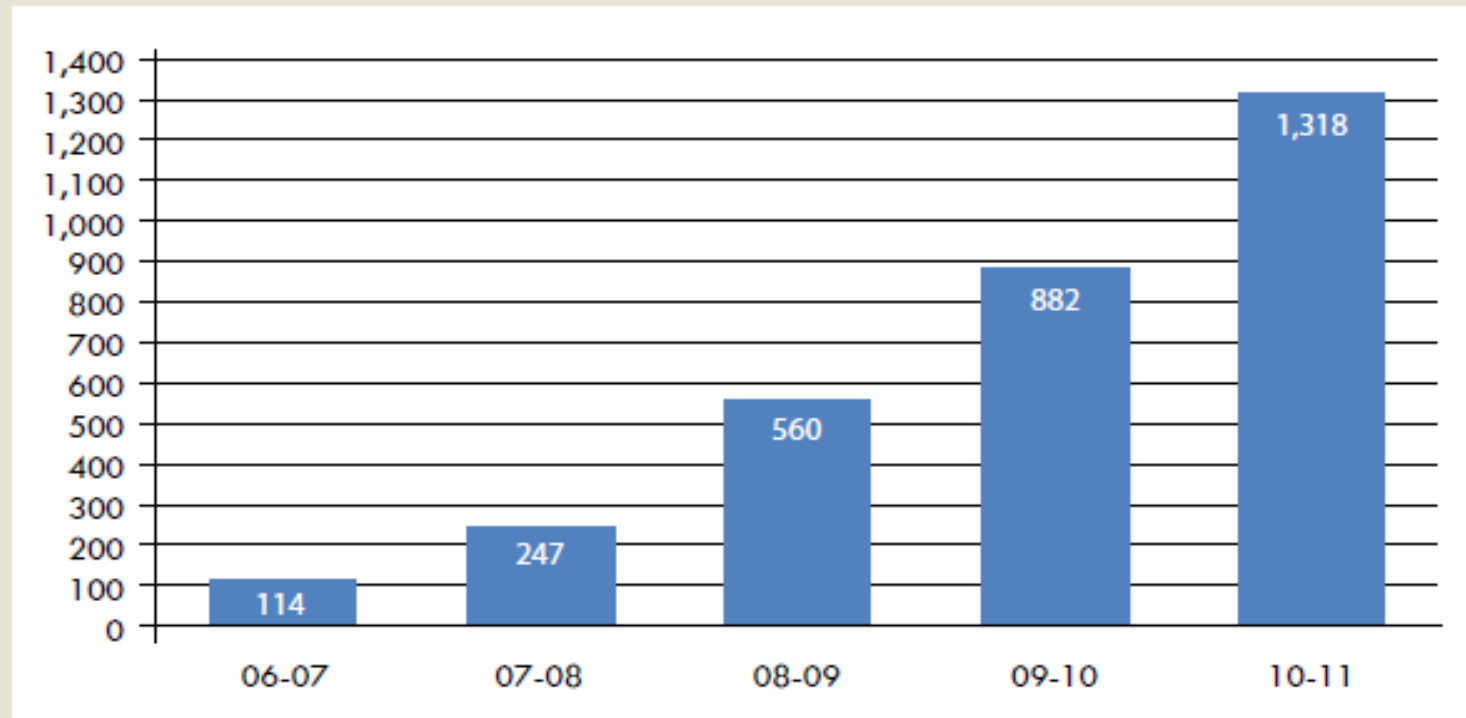
Language	Chinese	Russian	Arabic	Korean	Turkish	Persian
Number of High School Students Enrolled	117,300	16,000	17,350	3,700	600	118

Source: American Councils for International Education, 2010

Enrollment Data from the Language Flagship

Table 3. The Language Flagship enrollments in the U.S., 2006 v. 2011

TOTAL FLAGSHIP ENROLLMENT (UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE)

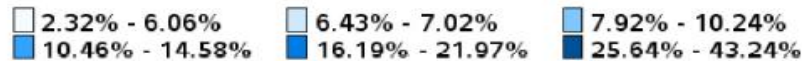
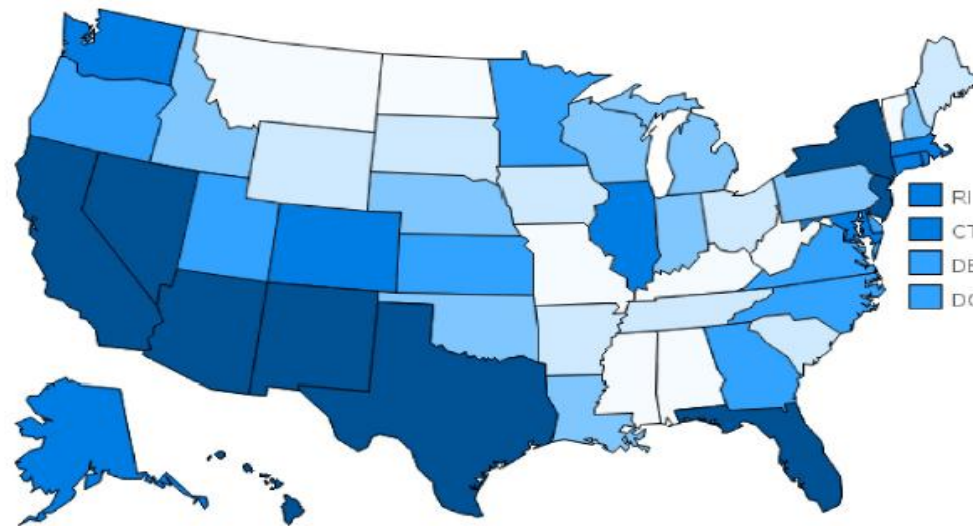


Source: 2011 Language Flagship report

Mapping the Nation - Linking Local to Global

(Is the U.S. Ready for a Global Future?)

Total Languages other than English



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USDemographics Languages Spoken at Home: % Speaking Total Languages other than English

Source: <http://mappingthenation.net/map.html>

Issues and Recommendations (1)

- Decentralized Language Capacity Sectors
 - five language capacity sectors: academic, federal, private, heritage, and overseas (as cited in Brecht 2007) are decentralized that there is no single authority coordinating those efforts.
 - Brecht (2007) recommends establishing an U.S. Office of Language Policy
- Discontinuous Foreign Language System
 - This learning process should be “seamless, incremental, and principled” (Lambert, 1994, p. 128)
 - A Call to Action asks “local, state, and Federal agencies and education administrators should coordinate foreign language requirements and resources throughout the educational system, from Kindergarten through advanced degrees” (p. 11).

Issues and Recommendations (2)

- Teacher Preparation
 - separation of ESL and foreign language teachers; pedagogical content of preparation program as status quo; language learning as divorced from the learning of teaching: isolation of student teaching experiences; disconnect between liberal arts and education faculty (Tedick , 2009, pp. 264-265).
 - A Call to Action asks “Strengthen teaching capabilities in foreign languages and cultures”
- Curriculum Development and Research
 - “language across the curriculum” ; “The first university that penetrates the natural sciences with such a cosponsored foreign language-laden course will have achieved a major coup” (Lambert, 1997, p. 89)
 - need for understanding the processes of adult foreign language acquisition and language assessments at advanced levels
- Overseas Immersion Programs

Recommended Questions for Group Discussion

1. MLA data argues that the percentage of student enrollment in foreign language classes in the U.S. remains the same since 2006, but still much lower than five decades ago. What factors may have contributed the enrollment declination?
2. How to define “global professional”? Besides foreign language proficiency, what other skills should a global professional obtain?
3. How can a higher education institution develop a environment to encourage foreign language instructors and instructors across disciplines to work collaboratively?
4. What other issues do you think exist in the critical language education of U.S. higher education?

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Thank You!

Ling Gao “GaoLing” LeBeau

llebeau@indiana.edu