group is "first and second generation bilinguals" (p. 4). This group has limited proficiency in both English and Spanish. The third group represents immigrant students who are fluent Spanish speakers with limited English and who come from various countries. In many cases immigrant students speak colloquial Spanish and formal education has been sporadic (Pino 1997).

Heritage language programs present challenges to those who try to develop a curriculum, assess the language level of the heritage learner, and provide meaningful instruction to the diverse groups. There are few models and limited materials for the various learners in these programs who may have learning disabilities or who are gifted. In heritage language classes, one would expect and does find the same conditions and concerns as in regular foreign language classes. Even when conditions are satisfactory, program planners must still be concerned with the training of teachers, scheduling of classes, and finding appropriate textbooks and materials to help implement the curriculum. It is easy for educators to theorize what should be done. It is difficult however, for teachers and coordinators in schools to actually maintain the integrity of heritage language courses once they have been formulated and put in place. These are the realities of the classroom. The good news is that help is on the way.

Brecht and Ingold (1998) provide information on the initiatives that began when the National Foreign Language Center (NFLC) and the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) collaborated on devising an "education system" that would help heritage language programs and communities. The objectives of the initiative are to

1. Initiate and support dialogue among policy makers and practitioners on both the need to address heritage language development and the most effective strategies for doing so.
2. Design and implement heritage language development programming in pre-K–12, community colleges, and college and university settings and foster better articulation among those settings.
3. Provide support in terms of policy, expertise, and resources for heritage community systems wherever they exist, and support their development where they do not.
4. Encourage and support dialogue leading to collaboration, resource sharing, and articulation between formal education systems and the nation's heritage community language schools and programs.

5. Encourage and support research, both theoretical and applied, on heritage language development and on related public policy issues (Brecht and Ingold, 1998, p. 2).

In addition to the NFLC and CAL initiative, there is a task force that is looking at heritage speakers, their needs and solutions to age-old problems. This task force, according to Lewelling and Peyton (1999), is part of the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP). They also report that there is a Special Interest Group (SIG) for heritage-language speakers in ACTFL, a newsletter, and a listserv (listproc@cornell.eduSUSCRIBESNS-L, p. 2).

Teacher Preparation and Staffing Issues

While our student clientele is diverse, diversity in qualifications infiltrates the teaching staff that one finds in today's foreign language classroom. With fewer trained teachers available and a greater demand to accommodate the growing numbers of students registering for foreign language to meet more stringent graduation requirements, more and more systems are turning to neighboring counties, the Internet, and international agencies, to complete their staffs. It is not unusual for the school year to begin with vacancies in this now-recognized "critical area." Some colleges and universities have cut back their teacher training programs due to a shortage of interested students. Other institutions of higher education, however, experiencing their own shortages in professors to teach the courses, are turning candidates away. Staffing and budgetary concerns in higher education are thus creating shortages at the lower levels of education. Many school districts are finding the need to hire recent retirees to fill slots that would otherwise go vacant or to turn to distance learning programming offered via satellite or intra-system broadcasts. Still others are hiring adults with minimum competencies in the subject area and little or no formal training in teaching. The result is ironically a teaching force of varying abilities, experience, and instructional training that is placed in classrooms where student diversity warrants the need for higher ability, wider experience, and more training than in the past.

Table 2. Characteristics of Diverse Learners				
Any one of the characteristics below may contribute to lack of success in foreign language classes and most of the recommended strategies to help learners in one group will work with other groups. Pacing instruction and using learner strategies will help all students help themselves. Below are a few points that will help teachers begin the process of planning appropriate activities for their learners.				
The Learner	*Characteristics*	*Recommended Strategies*		*Resources*
At-Risk	failing grades low socio- economic status problems in the home	use of technology cooperative group settings music visuals learning centers		Sparks et al., (1992) Check with special education teachers at your school
Learning-Disabled	eye/hand motor disorder attention deficit reversal of letters difficulty in following instruction problems in processing first language	multisensory modalities role playing music modalities manipulatives visuals color coding change of activity every 15 minutes alternative assessment		Hammeken, P.A. (1995) *Learning Disability Quarterly*
Physically Challenged	hearing loss visual impairment motor impairment	Multisensory modalities for all students incorporate visuals and allow someone to use ASL Include cassettes and pairing activities with another student		*Journal of Speech Language and Hearing Research*

ESL	another language is the first language instead of English sometimes shyness in particpating	audio cassettes videos of situations interviewing role playing all modalities clarifying strategies graphic organizers	ERIC database for ESL *NABE News* ESL Literacy Education, Center for Applied Linguistics
Talented and Gifted	potential for high achieve-ment inquisitive analyses situations capable of doing work assigned sometimes bored with class	allow students to be creative in writing and performing use magazines and higher-level thinking strategies in questioning allow students to become experts on a topic	*Gifted Child Quarterly,* National Association for Gifted Children, Washington, DC
Heritage Speakers	Speaks English but also speaks another language in the home. The student learned the language in the US basically at home and on the weekend.	Begin discussions about offering courses for heritage languages such as Chinese, Korean, and Spanish, if there are enough students. If students are enrolled in classes outside school settings, one should be prepared for questions about credits.	National Foreign Language Center, Washington, DC ERIC Digest

While the lack of qualified teachers is an issue in some districts, the issue in others is how their limited teaching staff will be used. Fewer qualified teachers in these districts leads to greater numbers of students in each classroom. Budget considerations are also restricting teacher al-lotments in some school systems, and it is not unheard of for middle and secondary principals to receive fewer than three new teaching positions a year. Rising enrollment figures are addressed with an eye toward filling

the core subject areas of English, mathematics, science, and social studies first. Sadly, foreign language is not designated a core area in every public school district. Thus, administrators faced with such a dilemma will use their meager allotments to accommodate courses that all students must take, not those that are only "open to all." This is true especially where qualified candidates cannot readily be found for non-core teaching positions.

It is indeed ironic that during this period of low unemployment, a booming stock market, and low inflation that overcrowding of public schools is the norm, rather than the exception. When such conditions are widespread, budget considerations at the state and local levels are most often blamed. Sometimes the blame can be attributed to greater numbers of students registering for particular courses. Quite often this situation stems from the absence of a sufficient number of qualified or certified teachers that are needed. This is especially true at all levels for Spanish courses. As construction costs and school-age population figures rise, many school systems are relaxing the lower pupil-teacher ratios that were put in place just a few years ago. The same factors create crowded conditions when school boards mandate the conversion of resource space and even supply closets to classroom space. While the pupil-teacher ratio under these conditions may be more in keeping with the ideal, the limitation of space itself will affect the teaching climate.

The Impact of Classroom Organization on Instruction

The diversity of students and instructors within a classroom setting is also matched by the diversity in scheduling models. The cookie-cutter approach to the organization of classroom time has undergone major changes in recent decades. No longer does every classroom in this nation operate under a daily schedule of six to seven periods lasting from fifty to fifty-five minutes each. The number of different plans being followed across the nation, throughout individual states, and even within individual school systems is diverse in its own right.

During the 1990s poor comparisons with educational counterparts throughout the world led the American public high school and its feeder schools to undergo major structural renovations. Among the issues addressed first was the scheduling of instructional time during the school

day (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1984). Schedules have a great impact on the effective use of personnel, space, time, and resources. Schedules either help with the delivery of instruction or create problems for this delivery (Canady & Rettig, 1995). Proponents of education reform scrutinized earlier versions of modular scheduling from the 1960s. The resulting curriculum delivery system, revamped with an eye toward little unscheduled time for students and large, consistent blocks of time carved out for classroom instruction, emerged as what today is termed block scheduling. The premise behind this form of classroom scheduling focuses on "in-depth instruction and extended learning sequences as opposed to practices characteristic of the traditional model" (de Lopez, 1996, p. 1) and is already in place. A variety of block-scheduling models is being used across this country and in schools around the world. All of them have in common that there are fewer classes per day but substantially more time for instruction in those classes.

The 4x4 block plan allows for the completion of a year's worth of content in one semester. Students take four different courses per semester, eight per year. Each course covers the content of a traditional year-long course. Compression of content is made possible by a format that allows the four classes to be taught every day for ninety minutes: twice the time allotted per day per course under the traditional scheduling model. At the end of the semester a student will have completed and earned credit for a full year's work. Advocates of this plan reason that if you give double the time per day for instruction, you can complete the task in fewer total days. Thus, instructional depth, not breadth is emphasized. At the end of a semester, students select four new courses and repeat the process. This results in the possibility of students taking eight courses per school year, thus making more room for electives and/or the completion of ever-increasing graduation requirements.

Another very popular version of scheduling involves six to eight classes spread out over alternating days throughout a full year. Names under which these forms of block scheduling are identified include the rotating block, alternating block, flexible block, eight-block schedule, A-B block, odd-even block, day 1/day 2. Each has in common that the majority of classes offered are not taught daily. The time allotted when the classes meet ranges from ninety to one hundred minutes, or double the time associated with the daily traditional class schedule. These varieties of block classes are not compressed within one semester like the 4x4 block plan, but rather operate over an entire year. As with the 4x4 block, how-

ever, students can wind up with eight credits earned per school year. Over a period of four years in a high school setting students at schools using block scheduling will earn up to thirty-two credits. Students at more traditional schools will earn from between twenty-four to twenty-eight credits (six to seven per year for four years).

Numerous variations of the 4x4 and alternating block scheduling models exist. One of the many hybrids of these two models incorporates elements of both block and traditional classroom organizational plans. Here, all eight classes meet each Monday, Wednesday, and Friday for forty-five minutes. On Tuesdays the three odd periods meet in blocks of ninety minutes to one hundred minutes each; the three even periods meet on Thursdays. Thus, there are longer blocks each week for each class as well as shorter periods. All classes meet at least four times a week and allow for the inclusion of the same variety in the use of instructional strategies that is offered in other forms of block scheduling. For foreign language this alternative addresses critics' concerns with the need for language to be used more than two to three times a week.

Changes in the organization of school time naturally affect the individual teacher. At the beginning of the block scheduling movement, the more astute teacher recognized that with more courses offered to students per year would come more classes to teach and even more preparations than with traditional scheduling. On the 4x4 block plan, instructors teach three to four classes every day, not the traditional six to seven associated with traditional scheduling. On the A-B alternating block plan there could be as few as two classes taught per day to four sections. Recommendations from various professional organizations addressed the need to limit the number of classes taught per day or per year. The Virginia Education Association went on record as stating that "no teacher should be required to teach more than five classes per year for which graduation credit is awarded" (VEA, 1994, pg. 11). Adherence to such recommendations varies from building to building as evidenced by the variety of comments posted by educators on web sites devoted to block scheduling issues. (LeLoup & Ponterio, 1998). Most, but not all, schools that use block scheduling counter the addition of a course taught with the addition of time devoted to planning. Administrators are also becoming more mindful of the number of preparations a teacher undertakes annually. Teachers, too, are realizing that they, like the students, have two nights with the alternating block format to get ready for the next class. Both disadvantages and advantages for instructors are associated with a change in the set-up of the school day.

With a change in the manner in which the school day runs have come specific concerns for planning these longer periods of time. There is no teacher undertaking block teaching for the first time who has not questioned how to use effectively the additional time in each class. Many surmise initially that teaching two fifty-minute lesson plans per block will do the job. This "quick fix" leads almost immediately to burn-out for student and teacher alike. With no time to assimilate or process information between two lessons taught back-to-back, frustration becomes the real lesson of the day. Varied activities combining active learning on the part of the student must be incorporated to enhance motivation and generate the in-class practice for second language instruction to occur. Teachers who have completed no more than the first several days of block classes will tell you that additional time means additional planned activities. The length of the instructional time at one sitting requires that activities be varied and changed often. It is equally important that the learning styles represented by the individuals in the room be addressed in the strategies used by the instructor. By giving attention to the variety and appropriateness of classroom activities used, the instructor will spark interest for everyone during every class.

Time spent in planning different activities incorporating action on the part of the student also ensures effective learning with fewer discipline issues. Chaos or even mutiny can be predicted if an instructor relies on a full block of lecture. The sound of snores is equally predictable if that same instructor relies on a video library to while away the time. The way to avoid either of these scenarios lies in planning and correlating a variety of clearly defined instructional sections per class period. Limit the formal introduction of the day's major topic(s) to ten or fifteen minutes. Proceed then to an investigative activity utilizing cooperative learning or a structured search of the Internet for thirty minutes, followed with reports from each team. Tie everything together via a closure activity that incorporates an assignment to reinforce the objectives covered during the period. Such a plan of action results in the class becoming one of active, rather than static learning. Teachers find that they deal with far fewer discipline problems in classrooms where students have ownership in the learning process. This is true not only in schools where traditional scheduling is in place, but is even more evident in schools where there is block scheduling.

For the second language teacher in a block situation there are additional concerns that most other disciplines do not face. One such concern is that of time employed in using the target language. However, with block

scheduling there is the problem of lapses between instructional blocks. Schools on a 4x4 classroom scheduling pattern should allow levels one and two of a language to be taken back-to-back or, at most, with only an intervening summer between the two. Such was the concern voiced in a recent doctoral study where French I students in traditional, 4x4, and alternating block classes were studied (Wallinger, 1998). Without such attention, first- and second-year students may not have the foundation and realize the initial success needed to sustain them in higher levels. Teachers may need also to offer extensive review of these levels at the start of the next courses in the sequence.

Review, likewise, is of great importance to the teacher of second language courses on the alternating A-B schedule. Here, however, the review occurs briefly at the start of each class period. It links lessons to each other whether the gap is one intervening day (Monday to Wednesday to Friday) or over several intervening days (Thursday to Monday or even longer when a Monday holiday occurs in the schedule). Special considerations in scheduling courses and in designing lessons from one day to the next address the problems of continuity associated with block scheduling.

The variety of available scheduling models from which administrators can choose indeed alters the second language classroom at the turn of the century. While some models seem to pose fewer problems for teacher and student alike, each one offers a change and new challenges for all parties involved. The strength of the schedule may lie not in what is implemented, but in the new ideas generated as lessons are planned, strategies are designed, and technologies are accessed for the attainment of the prescribed instructional objectives. Our classroom can in reality be more conducive to learning as a result of the organizational model used in structuring its time.

Curriculum Development and Implementation

In the twenty-first century, foreign language leaders will continue to ask school districts to align their curricula with national standards and the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines. In addition to the Proficiency Guidelines, ACTFL has developed "Performance Guidelines for K–12 Learners." All these documents help frame the goals and objectives for foreign language education in K–12 programs in the United States. The national assessment by the National Assessment Educational Progress Board will assess the

Spanish of twelfth graders in the nation in 2003 and the focus of the assessment will be based on the national goals and standards.

The five national goals are Communication, Culture, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities. The Communication goal, which will frame the national assessment, focuses on three modes: Interpersonal, Interpretive, and Presentational. These modes help teachers focus the performance tasks for learners in the classroom. Therefore, curriculum planners and writers have been asked by foreign language policy makers and leaders to develop objectives in K–12 foreign language programs that allow all students to gain knowledge and develop proficiency in a second language. Experts in the field believe that if the focus of national standards guides the development of a curriculum, it will ultimately help develop the skills of students in becoming proficient as they communicate. Many of the language-specific associations — French, German, Japanese, Spanish and Portuguese — firmly believe that using the standards and the proficiency guidelines will continue to shape the direction of second language learning in the United States.

The diversity of learners described earlier in the chapter requires a curriculum that gives a variety of opportunities to the learners. Therefore, a curriculum with performance objectives should have performance tasks to help guide foreign language instruction. These tasks may be assessed in a variety of ways in order to ensure that all of today's diverse learners will be successful when they complete a sequence of study.

McTighe (1998) advocates when developing performance tasks for a performance-based curriculum including goals, objectives, and ten other components: performance outcomes, student indicators, assessment tasks, characteristics, developing tasks, criteria for evaluating performances, valid and reliable measures, standards for learning outcomes, communication of results, and support to help students achieve and perform. One of the crucial factors in reaching all students is the ongoing assessment of what they know and what they can do in the language. In classrooms, testing is the vehicle most often used by the teacher to measure what students have learned in a specific class, chapter, or unit of study. Paper-and-pen tests do not always substantiate that students can speak in real-life situations, nor do they assess the performance of diverse learners with their different modes of learning. Therefore, it is important to add other ways of assessing learning.

Alternative assessment is another way to allow diverse learners to demonstrate that they know the content and can function well in the target language. Alternative assessment includes the process (e.g., cooperative