EXPLORING FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (FLES) TEACHERS' ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS ABOUT ASSESSMENT AND ASSESSMENT PRACTICES IN THE ELEMENTARY WORLD LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

by

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of
Doctor of Philosophy
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Exploring Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES) Teachers’ Attitudes and
Perceptions about Assessment and Assessment Practices in the Elementary World
Language Classroom

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved husband Iván, my three wonderful children Sheila, Iván Manuel, and Annia, and my lovely grandchildren for all their love, patience, and support. It is also dedicated to all the Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES) teachers.
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<tr>
<td>ACTFL</td>
<td>American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages</td>
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<td>API</td>
<td>Assessment Practices Inventory</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAL</td>
<td>Center for Applied Linguistics</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAPQ</td>
<td>Classroom Assessment Practices Questionnaire</td>
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<tr>
<td>CLT</td>
<td>Communicative Language Teaching</td>
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<tr>
<td>CoP</td>
<td>Community of Practice</td>
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<td>CAEP</td>
<td>Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation</td>
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<tr>
<td>FLES</td>
<td>Foreign Language in the Elementary School</td>
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<td>FL/WL</td>
<td>Foreign Language/World Language</td>
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<tr>
<td>IPA</td>
<td>Integrated Performance Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCLRC</td>
<td>National Capital Language Resource Center</td>
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<td>NCATE</td>
<td>National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>NSFLEP</td>
<td>National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>PALS</td>
<td>Performance Assessment for Language Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFLLL</td>
<td>Standards for Foreign Language Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEAC</td>
<td>Teacher Education Accreditation Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VoIP</td>
<td>Voice over Internet Protocol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WRSLL</td>
<td>World Readiness Standards for Learning Languages</td>
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EXPLORING FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (FLES) TEACHERS’ ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS ABOUT ASSESSMENT AND ASSESSMENT PRACTICES IN THE ELEMENTARY WORLD LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

Olga I. Corretjer, Ph.D.

George Mason University, 2016

Dissertation Director: Dr. Rebecca K. Fox

In the past 25 years, assessment in foreign/world language (FL/WL) education has acquired new relevance in the US as well as worldwide, as the WL community focuses on student performance based on standards, proficiency, and communicative language learning. Specifically, classroom assessment practices are of special interest since they provide a more suitable assessment method for young language learners (1st – 8th grades). Equally, research on classroom assessment has suggested that the assessments best suited to guide improvement in student learning are the ones that teachers administer in their classrooms, because they offer immediate diagnostic feedback to both teacher and learner, and tend to enhance student motivation. At the heart of the matter is research on teacher beliefs that implies the strong influence these might have on the educational choices teachers make in their classrooms, including their assessment practices. Even though there is an extant body of research emphasizing the role of classroom assessment
practices in FL/WL education, studies regarding the beliefs of elementary FL/WL teachers about assessment and assessment practices have been scarce. This study therefore explores Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES) teachers’ attitudes and perceptions of assessment as revealed in their beliefs about the role and importance of assessment, and how/if these beliefs inform the pedagogical choices they make in the elementary WL classroom.

A mixed method approach was used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data to provide a rich, in-depth contextual analysis. The data collection procedures included an electronic survey and one-on-one interviews conducted with participant volunteers. The study had a national scope as it included responses on an online survey of 128 FLES teachers in the continental US, Alaska, and Hawaii, and 14 virtual semistructured follow-up interviews.

The findings of this study suggest the participating teachers’ perceptions of assessment were varied and demonstrated different levels of understanding. These perceptions were expressed in terms of their views of the purpose/importance of assessment, the role of assessment in the FLES classroom, and the teachers’ opinions about classroom assessments. Findings also indicate that the FLES teachers use an extensive variety of assessments, falling in the formative, summative, and performance-based domains. These were interactive in nature and the integration of technology appeared to be an important factor in the participants’ classroom assessment practices selection. In addition, knowledge about WL learning and teaching, goals and objectives in WL teaching, and personal background appear to contribute to the formation of the
FLES teachers’ beliefs and practices regarding assessment in the elementary WL classroom. Findings also indicated that participants had knowledge of and the ability to implement standards-based assessment practices but faced unique challenges which influenced their pedagogical choices. The generalizability of the study’s findings offer insight on the importance of tailoring language teacher preparation programs and professional development initiatives to reflect the needs of specific teacher populations (Crandall, 2000).

Based on the foundations of this research, implications and suggestions are formulated that appeal to all stakeholders, including FL/WL teacher educators, policy makers, state departments of education, school districts, school administrators, and FLES teachers. Language teacher preparation programs would benefit from revising their coursework/curriculum content to verify they include and integrate assessment components which address all levels of instruction, specifically at the elementary school level. It is imperative to form partnerships between school districts and institutions of higher learning to establish initiatives in the form of professional development opportunities which address the special needs of FLES teachers, particularly classroom assessment practices suitable for elementary school students. It would also be advantageous if the FLES teacher community engages in the creation of public reflective spaces with the purpose of sharing language teaching knowledge, practice, and ideas.
Chapter One

Assessment of student foreign language and second language (L₂)¹ learning has acquired new relevance increasingly since the late 1990s, as the world language community focuses on standards, proficiency, and communicative language teaching (CLT). Assessment has received increasing attention in the US, as well as worldwide (Black & William, 2005). As schools across the globe are initiating foreign/world language (FL/WL) instruction beginning in the elementary school settings, they are seeking viable ways to assess young language learners’ oral and written proficiency (Curtain & Dahlberg, 2016; McKay, 2006). In FL/WL teaching and learning, the teacher’s collection of information in the classroom through the use of a variety of assessment strategies plays a critical part in how second language students process their L₂ acquisition and augment their own language competencies.

According to Sariçoban and Hasdemir (2012), assessment in FL/WL teaching and learning should include the kind of criteria that allows educators, teachers, and other stakeholders to observe and evaluate the teaching and learning process, to see student progress in the learning of the new language as clearly as possible, in order to provide sensible feedback of the needs, skills, and abilities to students, parents, and

¹ The use of the term foreign language refers to both foreign language and second language, unless otherwise specified. A foreign language is a language used in a country other than one’s own, while a second language (L₂) refers to any language learned after the first language or mother tongue (L₁).
administrators. Ultimately, FL/WL assessment not only provides teachers and students important information about what students are learning, but it also serves as an instrument to keep the public informed on student performance and achievement in the target language (TL), provide information relating to language learners’ school-wide achievements, and serves as a foundation for public policy (e.g., legislation and recommendations).

While the importance of classroom assessment on student learning has been acknowledged (Cheng, Rogers, & Hu, 2004; Purpura, 2009; Yang, 2008; Yin, 2010), how elementary foreign language teachers perceive assessment and assessment practices in their classrooms has not been the focus of recent empirical investigations. Even though many researchers have emphasized the role of classroom assessment practices in foreign/world language education (Cherry & Bradely, 2004; Colby-Kelly & Turner, 2007; Llosa, 2007; Perrone, 2011), the studies dealing with the beliefs of early foreign/world language teachers about assessment and assessment practices have been scarce. This study contributes to the body of knowledge on how Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES) teachers interpret assessment and assessment practices, how their beliefs about assessment and assessment practices might impact their pedagogical practices, and how they connect assessment and instructional practices. Additionally, this study explores how FLES teachers’ perceptions about assessment shape their identification of its purpose and role in the classroom, and how their personal and educational experiences may influence their assessment beliefs and practices.
Specifically, this research investigates FLES teachers’ attitudes and perceptions about assessment and assessment practices in the elementary FL/WL classroom. Teacher belief researchers (Belbase, 2012; Calveric, 2010; Cohen & Fass, 2001; Fang, 1996; Kane, Sandretto, & Heath, 2002; Nespor, 1985; Pajares, 1992; Suah & Ong, 2012) have asserted the fact that teacher beliefs influence the decisions teachers make in the classroom. Teacher belief literature has also asserted the complex nature of beliefs and how they tend to permeate in every aspect of human life (Barcelos & Kalaja, 2011; Borg, 2003; Busch, 2010; Hüttner, Dalton-Puffer, & Smit, 2013; Kissau, Algozzine, & Yon, 2012; Kocaman & Cansiz, 2012; Negueruela-Azarola, 2011; Nishino, 2012; Özmen, 2012). Furthermore, classroom assessment researchers (Allen, Wichterle Ort, & Schmidt, 2009; Guskey, 2003; Lyon, 2011; Stiggins, 2001; Zhang & Burry-Stock, 2003) have noted that the assessments best suited to guide improvement in student learning are the ones that teachers administer in their classrooms as opposed to the standardized assessments usually administered at the local, state, and national levels. Additionally, these researchers have indicated that classroom assessment is perhaps the single most common teacher professional activity, with teachers devoting approximately from 33% to 50% of their professional time assessing students in their classrooms (MacBeath & Galton, 2004; Stiggins, 1991).

The current research serves as a vehicle that aids in gaining a deeper understanding about how FLES teachers interpret assessment in their world language classrooms, what their perceptions about assessment are, and what classroom assessment practices FLES teachers report they use in the WL classroom. Last, the study investigates
how FLES teachers perceive their assessment practices informing the pedagogical choices they make in the elementary world language classroom.

Rationale

A large body of research on assessment and assessment practices in world language education has disclosed the intricate nature of the process. There are a variety of assessment practices that have different purposes and student outcomes in mind. More importantly, as a FLES teacher herself, the researcher is aware of the possibility that beliefs and perceptions might influence the educational choices teachers make in their classrooms, including their assessment practices (Belbase, 2012; Calveric, 2010; Cohen & Fass, 2001; Kane et al., 2002; Nespor, 1985; Pajares, 1992). Kagan (1992) discussed the implications of research on teacher beliefs about the nature of teaching and teacher education and concluded that “this piebald form of personal knowledge lies at the very heart of teaching” (p. 85). This suggests the possibility that learning more about the forms and functions of teacher beliefs could assist teachers, through the articulation of and reflection on their beliefs, to become more aware of the meaning and impact these beliefs might have on their classroom practices, thus making them more effective in their teaching.

By the same token, this study provides much-needed empirical evidence exploring the complexities of FLES teachers’ beliefs and classroom assessment practices due to the scarcity of research on the topic. Of the plethora of research available on FLES, very little current research addresses FLES teachers’ beliefs, and most importantly, their attitudes and perceptions of assessment and assessment practices in the
elementary FL/WL classroom. In addition, most of the research conducted on FLES either employs a qualitative (case study) approach or has a quantitative focus. This study presents an interactive mixed method approach which offers a broader, more in-depth examination of the phenomenon of study by combining both quantitative and qualitative data analyses (Bazeley, 2010, 2012; Freshwater, 2013; Greene, 2007; Maxwell, 2013; Maxwell & Loomis, 2003; Weiss, Kreider, Mayer, Hencke, & Vaughan, 2005).

A search of the research performed in the last 20 years on the topic (1996-2016) was conducted using several databases, such as Education Research Complete, ERIC, and PsycINFO. The search was narrowed to include literature, dissertations, and empirical studies published in peer-reviewed journals. Search terms used included: “FLES,” “FLES teachers,” “FL teachers’ beliefs,” “FL teachers’ beliefs + assessment,” and “elementary FL teachers’ beliefs + assessment practices,” among others. On many occasions, the Smart Text Searching feature, which conducts refined search findings based on keywords, had to be employed to enhance the search of terms because no results were found. Of the research reviewed, the most recent examined the relationship of FLES and academic achievement (Donato, Tucker, Wudthatyagorn, & Igarashi, 2000; Glick, 2008; Hostler Steward, 2005, 2008; Schuster, 2005; Taylor, Feyten, Meros, & Nutta, 2008; Taylor & Lafayette, 2010; Winne, 2007); explored FLES teacher training models (Carracelas-Juncal, 2005; Vuchic & Robb, 2006); examined language education policy (Kubota & Catlett, 2008; Raymond, 2012; Vuksanovich, 2009); investigated assessment practices in FLES (Davin, Troyan, Donato, & Hellman, 2011); studied student attitudes toward FLES (Heining-Boyton & Haitema, 2007; Wesely, 2012); and explored the
beliefs of FL teachers (Altan, 2012; Kissau et al., 2012; Lü & Lavandenz, 2014). Only one dissertation study was found relating to the topic, but it was quantitative in nature and investigated regular elementary school teachers’ assessment beliefs and practices (Calveric, 2010). Based on this information, the researcher feels that this mixed method study fills the existing void in the literature in regard to perceptions about assessment and assessment practices in the context of the FLES teacher and the elementary WL classroom.

**Research Study Goals**

This study identifies personal, practical, and intellectual goals that guide its design and implementation. According to Maxwell’s (2013) interactive approach to research, it is vital to have a clear understanding of the goals motivating a particular research study in order to reduce the possibility of deviating from the initial intent and not using time and effort in an optimal way. Such goals help delineate the research questions that the researcher wants to answer by conducting the study. These goals also exert a direct influence on the perspectives adopted by the researcher and provide a source of valuable insight, theory, and data information of the phenomenon at hand.

Maxwell (2013) defines personal goals as those that motivate the researcher to conduct a study. They include the desire to improve or change a situation about a certain topic. On the other hand, practical goals are focused on accomplishing something, meeting some desired need, or achieving some objective. Finally, Maxwell (2013) describes intellectual goals as those focused on gaining a better understanding of a determined phenomenon, trying to figure out what is going on and why, or answering
some question that prior research has not adequately addressed. The research questions framing and guiding this study pursue staying true and answering such goals in a systematic way.

**Personal goals.** As a personal goal, this study sought to understand more about the complex phenomenon of teacher beliefs, particularly with a focus on the area of assessment practices in their elementary FL/WL classroom. Specifically, the researcher sought to explore in-depth FLES teachers’ attitudes and perceptions about assessment and assessment practices and how they might influence the pedagogical choices they make in their FL/WL classrooms. Fang (1996) mentions in a review of teacher belief research that “teachers’ theories and beliefs represent the rich store of general knowledge of objects, people, events, and their characteristic relationships that teachers have that affect their planning and their interactive thought and decision, as well as their classroom behavior” (p. 49).

The researcher has worked in the elementary FL/WL area for more than 20 years. During this time, she has noticed many varied forms of assessments and assessment practices that have been used by fellow FLES teachers. In an effort to understand more about these pedagogical practices and the ideas and perceptions that play a role in teachers’ decisions about assessment, the researcher wanted to investigate what contextual factors may influence FLES teachers’ attitudes and perceptions about assessment and assessment practices, or support FLES teachers in enacting assessment practices in the FL/WL classroom in ways that align with the goals and standards of language learning, and promote suitable student outcomes. Reflecting on past experiences, the researcher
formulated several questions: Did the attitudes and perceptions about assessment practices inform or influence in some way the instructional choices and decisions made? Have classroom assessment practices employed measured the young students’ language performance and development adequately? What contextual factors might have influenced such decisions? In addition, there is a sense of curiosity about how the perceptions and interpretations FLES teachers have about assessment and assessment practices impact their teaching practices, pedagogical choices, and attitudes.

The paradigm shift which has transpired in foreign/world language assessment practices in response to second language acquisition research and the publication of the National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project’s (NSFLEP) *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* (SFLC) (1999, 2006), currently known as World Readiness Standards for Learning Languages (WRSLL) after their September 2013 revision (2014), accentuate a move from the conceptualization of assessment as an activity to take place at the end of instruction (old paradigm) to planning before instruction takes place. The planning process focuses on what learners should be able to do at the end of an instruction period (backward design planning) and determines what assessments would be most appropriate to measure student progress, language performance, and proficiency. This new paradigm shift affects how assessment practices are envisioned in foreign/world language education. In the new assessment paradigm, emphasis is placed on assessing student progress through the use of multiple measures, summative and formative, focusing on performing authentic tasks and integrating technology. In addition, the roles of teacher and learner are expanded in the new
assessment paradigm. Teachers inform students of desired targeted performance prior to administering assessments and provide feedback and coaching for improvement. In return, students have multiple opportunities to demonstrate knowledge and skills in language development, and are actively involved in assessment planning and decision making (Shrum & Glisan, 2016). Learning more about teachers’ beliefs and language teaching and learning could shed light on how to improve teacher preparation programs to better prepare language teachers in assessing student progress and performance.

It is essential to transition from the emphasis of students’ mere low-level recall of vocabulary functions and manipulation of grammatical features of a language to a performance assessment approach which focuses on teacher/student communication and asks students to use language authentically (authentic use of language) (Sandrock, 2010). The traditional approach to language learning has often lowered language instruction to a focus on form, while performance assessment can measure student language use in real-life situations, emphasizes the process, and elevates communication in the target language to an activity with a real purpose. It is important to determine if/how FLES teachers perceive the need to transition within this new paradigm shift. There is also an importance to learn more about FLES teachers’ attitudes and perceptions about assessment, what types of assessment practices they use, and what role they attribute to assessment in the FL/WL classroom. All the aforementioned inquiries have guided this study in the context of both foreign/world language practitioner and researcher.

Practical goals. Teaching and assessment should go hand in hand in order to truly advance student learning. It is an empty exercise to assess student learning without
providing a way to adjust teaching in response to the information gleaned from assessment in order to diagnose student needs, improve student motivation to learn, and to evaluate instruction. The investigation of assessment and assessment practices highlights the complexity of this task. It includes a broad spectrum of activities including designing paper-pencil tests, the developing and administering of performance assessment measures, grading, interpreting test scores, communicating assessment results, and using assessment results in decision making (Suah & Ong, 2012). This collection of evidence can be accomplished by observation, the confirmation of comprehension through performance assessments which bring language learning “to life,” and the recognition of possible learning gaps (Brualdi, 1998). It is because of the aforementioned reasons that the researcher wishes to investigate further how FLES teachers’ perceive assessment and how their assessment practices might inform the pedagogical choices they make in the elementary world language classroom.

**Intellectual goals.** Exploring foreign/world language teachers’ attitudes and perceptions about assessment and assessment practices is fundamental so that appropriate action can be taken to improve the assessment skills of both preservice and in-service foreign/world language teachers through revamped teacher education program curricula and enhancement of professional development opportunities. Foreign/world language teachers who develop useful classroom assessments, provide corrective instruction, and give students additional opportunities to demonstrate success can significantly improve their language instruction, as well as facilitate high levels of student motivation to learn a world language in a nonthreatening nurturing learning environment. All of these practices
should emphasize the fulfillment of foreign language standards and the development of language proficiency and communicative competence (Shrum & Glisan, 2016).

A body of literature has revealed that a majority of teachers, in general (not only language teachers), endorse and value assessment as an integral component of the educational process, yet feel ill-prepared to assess student learning properly. Teachers feel they possess inadequate “language assessment literacy” due to frail preservice training in educational measurement, and often express a desire to augment their knowledgebase on the topic (Alkharusi, 2012; Guerin, 2010; Koh, 2011; Mertler & Campbell, 2005; Popham, 2009, 2011; Volante & Fazio, 2007). Researchers add that teacher familiarity or unfamiliarity with assessment measures directly impacts what goes on in the classroom (Hughes, 2003; Inbar-Lourie, 2008; Malone, Swender, Montee, Gallagher, & Wicher, 2008; Popham, 2009, 2011; Stiggins, 2001; Taylor, 2009). In other words, according to the literature, if teachers are “assessment literate,” most likely their classroom assessment practices will reflect better skills and confidence levels at creating and using assessments, and interpreting the evidence these assessments might present in order to adjust the instructional process and learner outcomes (Popham, 2009, 2011). All of the aforementioned key points help substantiate the importance of making professional development geared to improve assessment literacy, fundamental in the professional preparation of teachers (Coombe, Troudi, & Al-Hamly, 2012). In the FL/WL context, teachers who are knowledgeable on how to utilize multiple assessment measures to assess their students, and employ real-life performance tasks that include the three modes of communication, are more likely to improve classroom instruction and student motivation,
while promoting curricular development (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003; Shrum & Glisan, 2016).

This study’s purpose is to present a more in-depth understanding of the complexity of language assessment in world language (WL) education. There is also a desire to further understand how FLES teachers’ beliefs about assessment and assessment practices inform the pedagogical choices they make in the elementary world language classroom. It is also of vital importance to identify the factors which might influence FLES teachers’ beliefs and perceptions about assessment and influence their choice of determined practices in their teaching and learning. The intellectual goals of this inquiry, based on Greene’s (2007, pp. 96-97) list of inquiry purposes, are to add to the knowledgebase on FLES teachers’ attitudes and perceptions about assessment and assessment practices used in elementary world language classrooms; understand complex phenomena; and have a personal, social institutional, or organizational impact.

Statement of the Problem

Previous research on (WL) education has touched upon different trends in foreign language teaching methodology and their influence on language assessment in the classroom (Adair-Hauck, Glisan, Koda, Swender, & Sandrock, 2006; Campbell & Duncan, 2007; Glisan, Uribe, & Adair-Hauck, 2007). However, research into the assessment of young foreign language learners in the United States is rather limited, as evidenced by a search on current literature conducted by the researcher on the topic (Campbell & Duncan, 2007; Cherry & Bradely, 2004; Curtain & Dahlberg, 2016). Likewise, it is vital and imperative to encourage the practice of developmentally
appropriate language assessments to measure the goals and objectives articulated by the Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century (NSFLEP, 1999), currently known as WRSLL after their September 2013 revision. Of equal importance is a call for more robust and targeted assessment practices which incorporate both the written and oral domains utilizing the three modes of communication (the interpretive, the interpersonal, and the presentational communication modes).

This research study explores aspects of the complexity of teacher belief in the context of how FLES teachers perceive assessment and assessment practices in the elementary world language classroom. The study also examines how FLES teachers’ attitudes and perceptions about assessment and assessment practices inform their decision-making process and might influence their judgments about lesson content, materials, learning tasks, learner outcomes, and overall language performance (Rea-Dickins, 2004).

**Background of the Problem**

With the publication of the NSFLEP’s Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century (SFLL) in 1996, language professionals and language education in the United States could finally rely on content standards specifying skills and knowledge that high school students needed to acquire by graduation (Campbell & Duncan, 2007). This publication helped solidify language instruction and aided language professionals in communicating concerns and charting the direction language instruction should take across levels. The 11 standards cover 5 broad goal areas: communication, connections, comparisons, communities, and cultures (the five Cs). The
communication standards are based on a framework of three modes (interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational) instead of the four discrete skills areas (speaking, listening comprehension, reading comprehension, and writing) previously employed in traditional language teaching methods (Campbell & Duncan, 2007; Shrum & Glisan, 2016).

![Diagram](image)

*Figure 1. Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction’s Planning Curriculum for Learning World Languages (2002). Reprinted with permission.*

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction’s Planning Curriculum for Learning World Languages (2002) diagram (Figure 1) is used in this study as an illustrative example of the interconnectedness between the five goal areas and three communication modes, thus emphasizing how communication takes place in the fluidity of “cultures.” The diagram is included in this section because it serves as a visual that emphasizes the interrelatedness between the five Cs. The focus is on what students can
do with the language they are learning. In the world language classroom, standards influence the curriculum, assessment, and instruction. The three purposes of Communication (interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational) form the heart. Culture is always embedded in the instruction. Connections, Comparisons, and Communities enrich the learning activities. The performance standards inform the assessments that show students their progress toward higher levels of proficiency in using the target language.

As a result of the foreign language learning national standards movement, foreign/world language professionals developed language assessments that were more communicative in nature. The term “standards-based performance assessment” was coined to refer to proficiency-based assessment rooted in the national standards which focus on how the learner functions in the target language in real-life contexts, in other words, what real-life tasks he or she can perform (McNamara, 2007).

The standards-based performance assessment approach emphasizes interpersonal and presentational speaking and writing tasks that incorporate both standards-based curriculum and learner’s interest and motivation (Campbell & Duncan, 2007). This approach adds to the value of performance-based assessment practices. Additionally, standards-based performance assessments can offer valuable feedback, both to the teacher and learner, on how well they are doing in reaching a determined language learning goal.

Rita Oleksak, the 2007 past president of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), stated the need to present a clear assessment framework for national assessment literacy. Her view on assessment as a bridge that links curriculum
and drives instruction emphasizes the importance of providing data (evidence) that is needed to help inform our leaders in government, business, and academia about the need to expand K-16 foreign language programs. She encouraged foreign language professionals, as well as all stakeholders, to become involved in the discussion of topics relating to assessment literacy practices (Oleksak, 2007).

Of equal importance is to consider beliefs in language teaching and learning because research has suggested the significance of pupils’ and teachers’ educational beliefs and assumptions for their classroom conduct and ways of relating to each other (Kalaja & Barcelos, 2003). Beliefs are socially constructed, interactively sustained, and time-bound assumptions about the roles and duties of the participants in the interactive teaching–learning process (Borg, 2011). In addition, beliefs and attitudes shape teachers’ perceptions about possible courses of action in a given situation, without the teacher being consciously aware of such hidden source of influence (Altan, 2012). In order for a teacher to explore her or his teaching and professional identity as an educator, the teacher needs to develop awareness of the educational beliefs that guide her or his actions (Busch, 2010). Finally, research on elementary foreign/world language teachers’ attitudes and perceptions about assessment and assessment practices has repercussions for professional preparation programs and the development of educational initiatives.

**Research Questions**

This study explores the attitudes and perceptions of FLES teachers about assessment and assessment practices in world language education. It also seeks to provide empirical research based directly on elementary foreign/world language school teachers,
The research questions guiding this study are the following:

1. How do FLES teachers perceive assessment and assessment practices in the elementary world language classroom? What do they perceive as the purpose of assessment?

2. What types of classroom assessment practices do FLES teachers report they use in the elementary world language classroom?

3. How do FLES teachers understand their assessment practices informing the pedagogical choices they make in the elementary world language classroom (i.e., planning, instruction, instructional material selection, classroom activities)?

The first question is designed to understand the importance FLES teachers attribute to the role of the assessment process in the WL classroom. It also seeks to understand what FLES teachers consider to be the purpose of assessment. The second question intends to identify the different kinds of assessments FLES teachers report they use in the world language classroom and how they are used (choices FLES teachers make). The third question serves as a “connector” between the first two questions (how FLES teachers “connect” assessment and instructional practices) and seeks to identify possible areas of synergy and tension between FLES teachers’ beliefs and assessment practices they report using.
Significance of the Problem

The relationship between teachers’ beliefs and practices is a complex one. In recent years the topic of language teachers’ beliefs has attracted considerable interest, mostly in the form of case studies in particular contexts (Basturkmen, 2012). This study offers an alternative to the trend by proposing a mixed method approach to the exploration of FLES teachers’ attitudes and perceptions about assessment and assessment practices in the elementary WL classroom. Also, the study has the potential to contribute to the field of FL/WL education on how teachers practice and what they think about assessment and assessment practices in FLES.

Likewise, the study of assessment of young language learners is not a unique need in the US classroom context. Research on assessment of young language learners in the global context has remained fairly active and has been recently undertaken in other countries, specifically in the European Union. For example, Rea-Dickins (2000) reports on the assessment of foreign language learners at the elementary level in the contexts of Austria, Norway, and Italy. Likewise, in Australia, McKay (2006) pointed out that foreign language teachers who teach young learners are not highly skilled in assessment practices and that there is a particular lack of professional development opportunities available to them.

Recent research also indicates that there is worldwide diversity of foreign language teaching, learning, and assessment practices at the elementary school level (primary level). In the Netherlands, for example, Edelenbos and Vinjé (2000) report on the National Assessment Programme in Education (PPON) which measures the level of
performance on school subjects at the end of Dutch primary (elementary) education. They compared two assessments years (1991 and 1996) of English as a foreign language and concluded that time emerged as a rather stable and significant variable in foreign language teaching and learning.

Additionally, in Slovenia, Brumen and Cagran (2011) investigated foreign language teachers’ experiences, understandings, attitudes, and expertise in regard to the assessment of foreign languages at the primary level in three Eastern European countries: Czech Republic, Croatia, and Slovenia. Their research indicated that the majority of teachers had not received additional teacher training in assessing pupils’ foreign language development and they expressed a need for additional teacher training in assessing young learners. In all three countries the traditional belief prevailed that teachers are those who are the most responsible for assessment.

However, in the US, research studies on elementary FL/WL teachers’ experiences, attitudes, and perceptions in regard to assessment and assessment practices have not been that prevalent, as mentioned previously while discussing the findings of a search of current research on FLES. Specifically, there has been a lack of research on elementary foreign/world language teachers’ assessment practices, particularly on FLES teachers’ attitudes and perceptions of the assessment practices they use in their classrooms and how these attitudes and perceptions might influence their teaching practices and pedagogical choices. The findings from this study will contribute to a deeper understanding of US FLES teachers’ attitudes and perceptions about assessment.
The findings will also provide insight on the assessment practices teachers report using in world language elementary education.

Given the abundance of research indicating that teachers’ pedagogical choices and classroom practices are influenced by their personal beliefs (Borg, 2003; Freeman, 2002; Williams & Burden, 1997) and that these beliefs are susceptible to change (Barcelos & Kalaja, 2003), it would be useful and informative to explore what FLES teachers’ attitudes and beliefs about assessment and assessment practices in the elementary world language classroom are and what types of classroom assessment practices they report they use in their foreign language teaching.

Additionally, this topic offers fertile ground for conducting research due to the lack of studies available that deal with the complexity of assessment in the elementary world language classroom. Although a large body of literature has discussed teachers’ beliefs/perceptions about assessment and assessment practices in the contexts of classroom assessment practices and teachers’ self-assessment skills (Frey & Schmitt, 2010; Zhang & Burry-Stock, 2003); development of teachers’ knowledge, beliefs, and expertise (Lyon, 2011); alternative assessment practices (Frey & Schmitt, 2010); and teacher classroom assessment and grading practices (McMillan & Nash, 2000), a search of empirical research studies conducted in the US on FL/WL teacher’s attitude and perceptions about assessment and assessment practices in the elementary setting contexts, revealed a very limited number, as previously mentioned. Consequently, this study offers the opportunity to extend the knowledgebase on this topic and address the important role assessment and assessment practices play in elementary world language education.
The findings from this study could also provide valuable information to FLES teachers, since the answers they provide to the questions in the survey could contribute to a better understanding of their assessment beliefs and of their needs with respect to professional development aimed at improving their assessment pedagogies and practices. Additionally, this study has strong potential to positively contribute to the expansion of the body of research in FL/WL education with young learners, especially due to the fact that in the US, the existence of FLES programs is not widely prevalent. With theory and research on second language acquisition reaffirming the many benefits of speaking a foreign language in today’s globalized world, and the advantage of starting early, it is essential to understand as much as possible about the assessment practices surrounding young language learners (Gopnik, Meltzoff, & Kuhl, 2001; Raizada et al., 2010; Serdyukov, 2010). The findings from this research study will also direct attention to assessment needs and practices in foreign/world language education, address how teachers’ attitudes and perceptions can inform professional development opportunities, and assist teacher education leaders in implementing and designing appropriate professional development initiatives. Most importantly, the findings from the study hold the potential to provide a strong ground to understand language teachers’ needs in regard to ongoing professional development that could better prepare them to meet the many challenges they face as they assess their students’ foreign/world language development and performance.
Summary

This chapter presents personal, practical, and intellectual goals for conducting this study on FLES teachers’ attitudes and perceptions about assessment and assessment practices in the WL elementary classroom. The chapter identifies the significance of the problem, teachers’ perceptions of assessment practices in their FLES classrooms, and focuses on the necessity to understand teachers’ attitudes and perceptions regarding assessment and assessment practices in the elementary WL classroom. Previous research has indicated that teachers’ beliefs stem from teachers’ own experiences and function as the filter and foundation of a new knowledgebase. In addition, teacher belief also appears to impact professional growth because of the self-defined and self-directed characteristics of its development. Research findings have suggested that teacher belief is highly individualistic in nature, that teachers hold strong personal epistemologies about which effective classroom assessment practices they will use, and that such classroom assessment practice choices are mostly based on their own experience as learners.

The next chapter will present the theoretical underpinnings grounding this study: the standards movement, foreign/world language assessment, classroom assessment practices in foreign language education, and teachers’ attitudes and beliefs. It also includes an introduction to the FLES program teaching model and a précis of the literature on FLES programs’ history to provide background knowledge on the topic.
Chapter Two

This chapter presents a review of literature pertaining to research findings on teacher beliefs, teachers’ perceptions about assessment, and teachers’ beliefs and language about teaching and learning. Additionally, it includes a description of the FLES teaching model characteristics to provide background knowledge. It also presents a historical overview of FLES programs in the United States offering a glance at the past century of FLES, thus highlighting the trajectory of FLES programs in the US and the various factors contributing to its failures and successes. According to Thompson, Christian, Stansfield, and Rhodes (1990), this historical trajectory accentuates the fact that the relevance or irrelevance of the teaching of foreign languages in the elementary school in the US has been influenced by outside events.

Four principal theoretical areas inform this study. First, research findings on teachers’ attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions highlight the need for further study on FLES teachers’ attitudes and perceptions about assessment and assessment practices in the context of the elementary school classroom. Next, the standards’ movement will provide a backdrop (context) to the study by emphasizing the integrative and communicative perspective of language development. The third section discusses assessment in foreign/world language education within the context of the recent paradigm shift which has transpired in assessment practices in today’s foreign/world language education. The
The final section will introduce the most commonly used assessment practices in the elementary world language classroom.

**Historical Overview of FLES Programs in the US**

**The FLES program model.** While there are many types of programs in the US for early language learning, such as total immersion, two-way immersion, and partial immersion, the focus of this study was on the FLES program. The Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES) model incorporates a content-based instructional approach to foreign language teaching. This program model provides elementary students in Grades 1 through 6 with learning opportunities in a language other than English. Most of the programs deliver instruction three to five times a week for class periods of 20 minutes to an hour. According to Curtain and Dahlberg (2015), the focus of FLES programs is on “language learning with the integration of culture and content objectives.” In addition, in most cases, it adopts a content-related/content-based approach to language learning based on and expanding upon the regular elementary school curriculum. According to Curtain and Dahlberg (2015) this model is viewed as the most economical and feasible way to initiate young language students on the path to communicative competence in a foreign language.

**Historical perspective of FLES programs in the US.** Ever since colonial times, foreign language instruction has been a part of the elementary school program in several regions of the United States (Curtain & Dahlberg, 2016). These practices, however, were not implemented without encountering any opposition from state and territorial officials. Likewise, they were not made available to all students without regard to social class or
economic status. Most of the time, only a selected section of the population enjoyed the benefit of learning a foreign language at the elementary school level.

After the end of World War II, a renewed interest in FLES resulted in prospering nationwide FLES programs in the 1950s and 1960s. In 1952, the U.S. Commissioner of Education Earl J. McGrath, while at an international education meeting in Beirut, was deeply embarrassed by the fact that he was the only monolingual representative at the assembly (Thompson et al., 1990). Upon his return to the US, in his keynote address at the Central States Modern Language Teachers Association, he stressed the importance of speaking another language for any profession and the necessity to start early in language learning:

The citizens of other nations excel ours in using foreign languages, and the principal reason for this superiority is that they have the opportunity to study languages early in their lives in the school system…. Only a small percentage of American children have an opportunity to begin the study or use of a language other than their own before they enter high school. Yet it is a psychological fact that young children learn languages easily…. My proposal then is that there be complete reconsideration of the place of foreign language study in American elementary education. (Andersson, 1969, p. 95)

Before McGrath’s address, only seven new FLES programs had been organized in the US. By 1954, there were 100 programs established. Subsequently, in 1958, the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) added modern languages in its funding of elementary and secondary instruction along with mathematics and science (Andersson,
1969). After this period of growth, during the late 1960s and early 1970s, FLES programs experienced a decline. Rosenbusch, García-Villada, and Padgitt (2003) mentioned possible factors responsible for periods of high interest and decline of FLES programs in the US including the lack of well-prepared teachers, the lack of well-defined and articulated curriculum, budget cuts, and fading of importance of FLES from the public eye.

The 1980s and 1990s experienced a period of gradual increase in the number of elementary school foreign language programs due to reports by various national and state commissions and organizations that advocated for early language learning (Met & Rhodes, 1990). Enrollments in early language programs increased and so did the public opinion on proper implementation of FLES programs. This new resurgence of interest in FLES culminated with the drafting of the national standards for foreign language learning (K-12) in 1996. This time, foreign language educators wanted to guarantee that past mistakes were not going to impact foreign language instruction in a negative way, and that the discipline would enjoy of a core set of standards that would provide educators, business leaders, government, and the community with a definition and role of foreign language instruction in American education. The NSFLEP’s Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century (SFLL) (currently World Readiness Standards for Learning Languages), revised in 1999, provided a significant new focus for curriculum and program planning. The standards brought a new sense of professionalism to world language education. Additionally, the standards have helped created a vision of a long sequence of language instruction for all language learners (Curtain & Dahlberg, 2016). In
1997, a survey conducted by Rhodes and Brannaman (1999) indicated a 10% increase in the number of FLES programs offered in the US from 1987 (21%) to 1997 (31%).

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 in Title IX, Part A, § 9101 (2002), finally established foreign languages as a core curricular content area along with English language arts, math, science, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography content areas. Nonetheless, instructional emphasis continued to be placed on curricular areas that factored in state educational accountability programs. In early 2006, President G. W. Bush launched the National Security Language Initiative (NSLI), a plan to strengthen national security and prosperity in the 21st century through education, placing special emphasis on developing foreign language skills. The aim of NSLI was to dramatically increase the number of Americans learning critically needed foreign languages, such as Arabic, Chinese, Russian, Hindi, and Farsi, through new and expanded programs, such as STARTALK (2008), transitioning from kindergarten through university and into the workforce.

Several factors have influenced the overall implementation of FLES programs across the nation. Some of these include political agendas, US–foreign diplomatic relations, and military conflicts. The trend in FLES policy also seems related to the need to communicate effectively with the country’s current enemy (Schleicher & Everson, 2006). A surge in Russian language programs immediately followed the launch of Sputnik in 1957 (Andersson, 1969; Schleicher & Everson, 2006). Likewise, the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, again impacted the need to infuse FLES policy with initiatives to offer instruction in Arabic and Urdu. Currently, the
US is at war against “terrorism” in Iraq and Afghanistan, therefore the demand for Arabic has once more increased. Many school districts across the country (for example, Fairfax County Public Schools, VA) now offer instruction in Arabic as one of the languages in their FLES program.

**Conceptual Framework**

According to Maxwell (2013), the conceptual framework of a study is a key part of the design. It is a system of concepts, assumptions, beliefs, theories, and expectations that supports and informs the research. Maxwell (2013) emphasizes as well that the conceptual framework of a study is primarily a “conception or model of what is out there that you plan to study, and of what is going on with these things and why—a tentative theory of the phenomena that you are investigating” (p. 33).

The subsequent sections provide the areas informing the study. These include research on teachers’ attitudes, perceptions and beliefs; the foreign language standards movement; language assessment; and assessment practices in foreign/world language education.

**Teachers’ Attitudes, Perceptions, and Beliefs**

This section presents a précis of the literature on research conducted pertaining to teachers’ attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs and how these might influence pedagogical decisions they make in their teaching and learning. Two subsections expand on recent research: one on teachers’ beliefs and language teaching and learning, the other on FLES teachers’ attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs, to offer a more focused perspective of the purpose of the study.
A large body of research on teachers’ attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs suggests that teachers’ beliefs and perceptions influence the educational choices teachers make in their classroom, including the assessment practices they use (Belbase, 2012; Calveric, 2010; Cohen & Fass, 2001; Fang, 1996; Kane et al., 2002; Nespor, 1985; Pajares, 1992; Suah & Ong, 2012). Kagan (1992) discussed the implications of research on teacher beliefs for the nature of teaching and teacher education and concluded that “this piebald form of personal knowledge lies at the very heart of teaching” (p. 85). Learning more about the functions of teacher beliefs could assist in better understanding how to help teachers become more effective at teaching. This is particularly important in the foreign/world language context in which students are learning how to communicate and perform in a language different than their native one.

Additionally, research on teachers’ beliefs and practices has suggested that beliefs are considered to have a personal component, and they might be called “personal theories.” Beliefs act as a filter and define what a teacher considers to be important or negligible information. Pajares (1992) refers to beliefs as “messy constructs which travel under the alias of attitudes, values, judgments, axioms, opinions, perceptions, etc.” (p. 309). Pajares (1992, pp. 324-326) proposed 16 essential assumptions about the origin, nature, and roles of beliefs, which Muthanna and Karaman (2010) summarized as follows:

1. Beliefs are conceived in early stages by reasoning processes, passing of time, and schooling experiences and have a tendency to self-perpetuate.
2. Beliefs can strongly affect behaviors of individuals and how they plan and make decisions.

3. Beliefs and knowledge are overlapping terms or constructs.

4. Teaching beliefs are better established and developed in the undergraduate programs.

5. Beliefs formed early in childhood are difficult to change during adulthood.

Several additional characteristics of beliefs can be extracted from a review of the literature. First, teachers’ beliefs are all pervasive; once they are formed they are hard to change (Belbase, 2012; Kagan, 1992; Woods, 1996). Second, beliefs shape instructional behavior (Calveric, 2010; Zheng, 2013). In the context of teachers’ belief systems, when teachers change, they may not abandon particular belief systems all together, but rather replace them with more relevant ones. Research exploring teachers’ beliefs has also suggested that teachers’ experiences when they were students affect their belief system and the way they teach (Belbase, 2012) and that cooperative teachers’ beliefs and practices shape student teachers’ beliefs and pedagogical practices (Rozelle & Wilson, 2012). Last, research on teacher beliefs has found that conflicting beliefs can coexist in one teacher and lead to conflicting educational practices (Horwitz, 1988; Wang, 2000).

Current research has also explored teachers’ beliefs and instructional practices from the perspective of various domain-specific fields. For example, in the technology integration field, various researchers have investigated the relationship between teachers’ beliefs and their technology integration practices (An & Reigeluth, 2011; Cullen & Greene, 2011; Kim, Kim, Lee, Spector, & DeMeester, 2013; Song & Looi, 2012).
Findings from their studies suggest that the integration of technology into the classroom is related to teachers’ positive attitudes toward technology (Spanos, Hansen, & Daines, 2001). In addition, in the science domain, research on teachers’ beliefs has implied that beliefs are more influential than knowledge in discerning how individuals frame and organize tasks and problems, are strong predictors of behavior, and teachers’ beliefs are very influential in the adoption of innovative science teaching approaches (Alghamdi & Al-Salouli, 2013; Bryan, 2012; Feyzioğlu, 2012).

Other researchers have explored the relationship between teachers’ attitudes toward science knowledge, beliefs about inquiry, and science classroom teaching practices (Lucero, Valcke, & Schellens, 2013; Mansour, 2013; Markic & Eilks, 2012; Saad & BouJaoude, 2012; Savasci & Berlin, 2012; Vázquez-Alonso, García-Carmona, Manassero-Mas, & Bennàssar-Roig, 2013). Their research findings suggest that virtually every aspect of teaching is influenced by the complex web of attitudes and beliefs teachers hold.

Correspondingly, teacher beliefs research conducted in the mathematics domain has investigated how teacher beliefs about student motivation, teaching, learning, assessment, and the curriculum act as filters in their decision-making processes (Belbase, 2012; Kayan, Haser, & Bostan, 2013; Turner, Bogner, & Christensen, 2011). The research of Leatham (2006) posits an alternative framework for conceptualizing teachers’ beliefs which views teachers as sensible rather than inconsistent beings. Thus, he argues research often assumes teachers can easily articulate their beliefs and that there is a one-on-one correspondence between what teachers state and what researchers think those
statements mean. He explored such phenomenon in the context of mathematics teacher education.

Conversely, in the literacy/reading domain research on teachers’ beliefs has indicated that teachers’ participation in reading and writing routines in their classrooms was related to their literacy beliefs, particularly their belief in the importance of various literacy skills to children’s reading and writing development, and their beliefs about effective literacy instruction (Bingham & Hall-Kenyon, 2013). Stellakis (2012) posits that it is not an exaggeration to argue that kindergarten teachers’ perceptions and beliefs about early literacy seem to be of vital importance to the children’s literacy development.

Research on other literacy-related topics, that is, the connection between teachers’ beliefs and instructional practice, implies that teacher beliefs and their classroom instruction are often inconsistent (not aligned) due to external factors, such as the pressure to conform to a particular school philosophy and/or government mandates. Findings also suggest that the transfer from teacher preparation courses input to practice is greatly affected by teachers’ prior knowledge and beliefs (Kuzborska, 2011; Powers, Zippay, & Butler, 2006).

**Teachers’ Beliefs and Language Teaching and Learning**

In the context of language teaching and learning, research has emphasized the significance of investigating teachers’ educational beliefs and assumptions, based on the fact that beliefs often represent opinions and ideas that FL teachers have about the task of teaching and learning a second/foreign language (Kalaja & Barcelos, 2003). Also, findings from research on second language or foreign language teachers’ beliefs support
the view that teacher beliefs have a powerful influence on classroom practices, frequently dictating teachers’ behaviors, decision making, and pedagogical choices (Altan, 2012; Bullock, 2011; Debreli, 2012; Hüttner et al., 2013; Hsiao & Yang, 2010; Inozu, 2011; Kocaman & Cansiz, 2012; Li, 2013; Nishino, 2012). However, such correspondence between stated beliefs and planned aspects of teaching has received some opposition based on the caveat that context and external constraints could mediate the relationship between teachers’ stated beliefs and their practices (Basturkmen, 2012).

In addition, other studies pertaining to preservice and in-service language teachers’ beliefs revealed that intensive professional development initiatives or second language acquisition teacher education courses have a considerable impact (shift) on language teachers’ beliefs (Borg, 2011; Busch, 2010; Özmen, 2012;). Borg (2011) examined six in-service language teachers’ beliefs about language teaching and learning participating in a professional development course. Drawing on a database composed of semistructured interviews, coursework, and tutor feedback, the study suggested that the course had a significant positive impact on the language teachers’ beliefs. The course allowed language teachers to become more aware of and to better articulate their beliefs. It also permitted language teachers to focus on ways of developing classroom practices which reflected their beliefs. In addition, language teachers experienced shifts in prior beliefs they held about aspects of language teaching and learning. In contrast, Busch (2010) performed a large scale ($N = 381$) mixed method study investigating the effects of an introductory second language acquisition (SLA) course on beliefs of preservice teachers enrolled over a three-year period at a state university in the US. Pre-to-post
Paired sample t-tests revealed significant changes in beliefs in several areas, such as length of time for acquisition, the role of culture, the role of error correction, and difficulty of language acquisition. The qualitative component of the study (written postcourse explanations) revealed that preservice language teachers attributed their precourse beliefs to language learning experiences they had in high school and postcourse changes in their beliefs to the SLA course content and experiential activities. The findings imply how preservice teachers’ beliefs evolve within the context of a professional education course and have practical implications for course design and evaluation in teacher education programs.

In a similar vein, Stergiopoulou (2012), compared experienced and inexperienced foreign language teachers’ beliefs about language learning and teaching. His focus was on the factors that influence the shaping of teachers’ beliefs and on the needs of experienced teachers for additional training. His findings indicated that the context of work played a pivotal role not only in the shaping of beliefs but also in aiding change in belief systems. Similarly, Kissau et al. (2012) explored foreign language teachers’ beliefs of four demographic groups: experienced and inexperienced teachers, teachers with L2 teacher training and those without, teachers of different foreign languages, and immersion and traditional teachers. Findings of the large-scale mixed method study (N = 222) revealed that while survey responses were similar in each of the comparisons, interview data emphasized that members of each group faced unique challenges that influenced their beliefs and classroom practices. The study highlights the importance of incorporating contextual factors into future research related to teacher beliefs.
Barcelos and Kalaja (2011) point out in their review of literature on beliefs about SLA that since the introduction of a sociocultural approach to research on beliefs about SLA (1990s), it has been realized that teacher beliefs are dynamic, increasingly complex, fluctuating, and contradictory. Barcelos and Kalaja (2003) explain that the focus of research within this framework (sociocultural approach) is on “how beliefs develop, fluctuate, and interact with actions, emotions, identities, or affordances and how they are constructed within the micro and macro-political contexts of learning and teaching languages” (p. 282). Finally, Barcelos and Kalaja (2011) call attention to the fact that once beliefs turn into mediational means, they can have an effect on teachers and their actions. To summarize, Barcelos and Kalaja (2011) emphasized beliefs to be: fluctuating, complex and dialectical; related to the micro and macro political contexts and discourses; intrinsically related to other affective constructs such as emotions and self-concepts; significant-other oriented; influenced by reflection and affordances; related to knowledge in intricate ways; and related to actions in complex ways. Most recent research on the topic of language teachers’ beliefs draws on this contextual approach.

In a literature review on the topic, Gabillon (2012) revisits foreign language teachers’ beliefs and illuminates the complex nature of second language (L2) teacher beliefs and belief formation processes by addressing Moscovici’s (1984) social representations theory. Gabillon (2012) argues that Moscovici’s social representations theory and Abric’s (1989) central kernel theory offer a theoretical foundation to explain differing aspects of L2 teacher beliefs. Teacher beliefs viewed from Moscovici’s (1984) social representation theory maintains that the belief appropriation process is a complex
and intricate one. When individuals are confronted with a new idea they perceive it as a “threat” to the sense of continuity, and this fear forces individuals to make the unfamiliar explicit. The social representation theory centers on the concept of “core beliefs.” This process is what Moscovici (1984) coined as belief appropriation process. On the other hand, the central kernel theory exposed by Abric (1989) states that each belief is composed of “stable schemes” and peripheral schemes are formed around these central kernels. The stable schemes dominate the meaning of the peripheral elements, and the core beliefs have a stronger resistance to change than the newly formed peripheral schemes.

Additional current research has highlighted other stances related to teacher beliefs and language teaching and learning. Some of these stances include: language ideology and positioning (instead of beliefs) concerning the goals in teaching and learning a foreign world language (De Costa, 2011), personal beliefs (viewed as conceptualizing activity) in relation to theoretical knowledge and pedagogical practice (Negueruela-Azarola, 2011), fluctuation in beliefs about teaching and learning a foreign language permeated by changes (Peng, 2011), and beliefs related to teacher knowledge in intricate ways (Woods & Çakır, 2011).

**FLES Teachers’ Attitudes, Perceptions, and Beliefs**

While research conducted on teachers’ beliefs and teachers’ beliefs and language teaching and learning has been prolific, the area of FLES teachers’ beliefs has remained relatively under researched. Given the wealth of research indicating that teachers’ instructional decisions and classroom practices are influenced by their personal beliefs
(Altan, 2012; Barcelos & Kalaja, 2011; Borg, 2003; Busch, 2010; Hüttner et al., 2013; Inozu, 2011; Kissau et al., 2012; Kocaman & Cansiz, 2012; Negueruela-Azarola, 2011; Nishino, 2012; Özmen, 2012), it is informative to explore FLES teachers’ attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs about assessment and assessment practices. In addition, a large number of studies on the topic have been case studies or qualitative in nature. Therefore, this study employs a mixed method design which offers the benefit and advantage of both types of data collection processes.

In the context of foreign/world language teaching, it is significant to explore how FLES teachers perceive assessment and assessment practices in their teaching and learning, because the inquiry might shed light on the teachers’ “personal theories” which might influence their assessment practices. It is the researcher’s desire to investigate the phenomenon of teachers’ beliefs in the context of foreign/world language education from the perspective of FLES teachers’ beliefs and attitudes about assessment and, to explore possible ways to improve FLES teachers’ assumptions and implementation of assessment practices in their teaching. Even though research on teacher beliefs has been robust since the late 1980s, studies on foreign language teachers’ perceptions about assessment and assessment practices have been very limited. To the researcher’s knowledge, there is not current research focusing on FLES teachers’ attitudes and perceptions about assessment and assessment practices.

**Standards Movement**

The standards movement embodied a major effort to set goals for language instruction across the United States and across multiple instructional levels (K-12)

Including the foreign language student and teacher standards in this section is essential since both offer a background on where assessment and assessment practices fit within foreign/world language education. Additionally, they represent one important area that informs the conceptual framework of this study. The standards also accentuate the importance of language teachers knowing and practicing language performance assessments that offer a balanced system of assessment which matches assessment strategies to their purpose, links standards through assessment to curriculum and instruction, and uses performance assessments to provide useful feedback and motivation to students (Sandrock, 2010).

**Standards for FL learning in the 21st century.** Student standards describe what students “should know and be able to do” in the foreign language context (NSFLEP, 2006, p.13). The *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* (SFLP) (NSFLEP, 1996, 1999, 2006) posit that all the linguistic and social knowledge necessary for human-to-human interaction is encompassed in the following 10 words: “knowing how, when, and why to say what to whom” (p. 2). They are divided into 11 content standards and 5 goal areas or 5 Cs (Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities). According to Magnan et al. (2012), the framework of interrelated goals has helped states institute standards for language learning, helped teachers set learning goals, and helped students achieve them. In addition, they provide
language students with the knowledge and information they need in order to achieve language competence successfully. Magnan et al. (2012) further pointed out that the standards provide a basis for the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages/National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (ACTFL/CAEP) Program Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers, Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium Standards, and models for assessment such as the Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA). (p. 171)

The Standards have had a major impact on language teaching and student learning in the United States. A recent survey of the foreign/world language profession conducted by ACTFL revealed that 80% of language teachers follow a local or department curriculum based on the National Standards and 78% of teachers reported following state standards, which in turn were based on the National Standards (ACTFL Task Force on Decade of Standards Project, 2011b, p. 3). Also included in the survey were 591 scholarly publications about the Standards, including their instructional applications indicating their considerable diffusion in the foreign/world language educational field (ACTFL Task Force on Decade of Standards Project, 2011a, pp. 3-4).

On September 25, 2013, the SPLL were revised once more, changing their name to World Readiness Standards for Learning (ACTFL/CAEP, 2013). This revision reflects current changes to the educational landscape, such as Common Core State Standards, College and Career Readiness, and 21st Century Skills (NSFLEP, 2014). Since this study was conducted utilizing the previous descriptions of the five domains and the prior name
(i.e. Standards for Foreign Language Learning), SFLL will be the term employed through this dissertation. A more detailed rendering of their revised content is available at http://www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/WorldReadinessStandardsforLearningLanguages.pdf

**ACTFL/CAEP Program standards for the preparation of FL teachers.** The nationally recognized foreign language teacher standards, ACTFL/CAEP Program Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers (2013), define the body of knowledge, skills, dispositions, and experience a prospective, as well as competitive and effective world language teacher must acquire and demonstrate. July 1, 2013 marked the *de facto* consolidation of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and The Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC), making the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) the new sole specialized accreditor for educator preparation. CAEP represents more than the unification of two organizations. It represents the creation of an agent of change in the midst of an accrediting system (CAEP, 2013).

Several sets of nationally recognized world language teacher standards delineate the body of knowledge, skills, dispositions, and experience that a prospective teacher must acquire and demonstrate in order to be considered a competent and successful world language teacher (Ingold & Wang, 2011). These include those developed by the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC),² the National Board for

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² The INTASC Principles can be accessed at http://www.ccsso.org/Resources/Publications/Model_Core_Teaching_Standards.html.
Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS),\(^3\) and the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), in cooperation with ACTFL.\(^4\) These standards address different stages of teacher development and align well with one another (Ingold & Wang, 2011). For the purposes of this study, the ACTFL/CAEP (formerly NCATE) Program Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers (2013) will be emphasized. They consist of six main content standards: standard one, language proficiency: interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational; standard two, cultures, linguistics, literatures, and concepts from other disciplines; standard three, language acquisition theories and knowledge of students and their needs; standard four, integration of standards in planning, classroom practice, and use of instructional resources; standard five, assessment of languages and cultures—impact on student learning; and standard six, professional development, advocacy, and ethics.

Of particular importance and relevance to this study are Standards 3, 4, and 5. Together they encompass the knowledge, skills, and dispositions foreign language teachers must demonstrate in the areas of understanding language acquisition and creating a supporting classroom, developing instructional practices that reflect language outcomes and learner diversity, understanding and integrating standards in planning and instruction, and selecting and designing instructional materials. Furthermore, Standard 5 is intimately related to the conceptual framework of this study. It emphasizes knowing assessment models and using them appropriately, reflecting on assessment and adjusting

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\(^3\) The NBPTS Core Propositions can be accessed at http://www.nbpt.org/the_standards.

\(^4\) The ACTFL/CAEP program standards for the preparation of foreign language teachers are available online at http://www.actfl.org/professional-development/actfl-caep.
instruction accordingly, and interpreting and reporting assessment results (student performances and outcomes) to all stakeholders and provide opportunity for discussion (Ingold & Wang, 2011).

Research on Teachers’ Perceptions and Beliefs About Assessment

There has been extensive research addressing the topic of how teachers perceive assessment in the course of their teaching and learning in various domain-specific fields. For example, Brown (2004) and Brown and Hattie (2009) have identified four major conceptions that teachers appear to have regarding the purpose of assessment: improvement of teaching and learning, school accountability, student accountability, or assessment as being irrelevant. Brown’s (2004) work has also suggested that teachers’ pedagogies can be affected by their beliefs about learning and teaching, and the purposes and practices of assessment. By contrast, the work of Calveric (2010) was based on such tenets and suggested that despite the study’s elementary teachers’ limited exposure to assessment training, they valued assessment for the improvement of teaching and learning the most.

Numerous studies have outlined the basics associated with the perception of assessment for improving learning and teaching (Black & William, 1998; Brown, 2003, 2004; Delandshere & Jones, 1999; Popham, 2009). The qualitative work of Delandshere and Jones (1999) aimed at identifying elementary teachers’ beliefs about assessment. Findings indicate intricate inconsistencies between teachers’ beliefs and practices and suggest that teachers’ beliefs about assessment, in the mathematics context, are shaped by functions and purposes of assessment, the official curriculum, and how teachers
understand learning and learners. Conversely, Remesal’s (2007) research chronicled assessment in the Spanish educational context through the use of qualitative techniques to interview 30 primary and 30 secondary school teachers. In addition, a content analysis was conducted of assessment artifacts determined by participants to be representative of their typical classroom assessment practices. Analysis of the data revealed assessment conceptions similar to the previously noted research performed by Brown (2004), including a marked distinction between primary and secondary teachers’ conceptions of assessment.

Winterbottom et al.’s (2008) research documents that teacher trainees’ conceptions of assessment may be influenced by prior experiences and understandings which will affect what they learn and put into practice in their own classrooms. Their study examined the values and practice in relation to assessment of 220 trainee teachers studying for a Postgraduate Certificate in Education, an initial training and education course, at the University of Cambridge, UK. Findings suggest that the trainees’ assessment values and practices were underpinned by three factors: making learning explicit, promoting learning autonomy, and performance orientation. Also, gaps between trainees’ assessment values and reported practices implied that, in general, they were doing less in practice that they thought optimal for promoting learning.

Equally, Karp and Woods (2008) examined how preservice teachers perceive and implement assessment in the physical education context. The mixed methods study employed a sample of 17 preservice teachers. Data gathered documented the teachers’ previously held beliefs and conceptions, current perceptions of assessment concepts, and
perceptions of assessment and student learning during the implementation of a high school physical education program. Findings suggested that shaping critical and authentic assessment experiences in teacher preparation programs deserves increased attention and deliberate planning if substantial shifts in assessments beliefs are to be made.

Research performed by Scott, Webber, Aitken, and Lupart (2011), in connection with the Alberta Student Assessment Study (ASAS) in Canada, explored optimal assessment theory, policies, and practice that inform educational decision making, educational leadership practices that support effective student assessment, and professional development frameworks that enhance the capacity of educators in classroom assessment. Findings indicated that even though improving assessment has received a lot of attention, teachers still have misconceptions about terminology, principles, and pragmatics which undermine teacher confidence about assessment and making sound decisions about students’ progress.

By contrast, Sach’s (2012) research investigates how teachers actually perceive formative assessment, including the range and nature of such perceptions. Findings implied a wide range of perceptions about formative assessment among teachers. Particularly, they acknowledged the value of formative assessment in promoting learning. However, findings also suggested that perhaps teachers were less confident than they claimed when putting assessment strategies into place.

Having identified recent research on teachers’ perceptions and beliefs about assessment in different contexts, the next section will expand upon current literature on language assessment.
Language Assessment

As stated before, language assessment, with specific reference to attitudes and perceptions of FLES teachers about assessment and assessment practices in the elementary language classroom, is still in its nascent stage. Literature on assessment asserts the fact that traditionally, educators have used assessment “to find out what students have and have not learned, presented as letter grades or numerical scores to later calculate quarter or semester grades…teachers constantly struggle to balance using assessment to capture and describe what students have learned” (Sandrock, 2010, p. 1). Some studies on teachers’ perspectives and practices in assessing young language FL learners (Brumen & Cagran, 2011; Sariçoban & Hasdemir, 2012) have indicated that these traditional methods of assessment, such as paper-and-pencil tests, seem to prevail and that the use of other more current (authentic) types of assessment (i.e., performance assessments and language portfolios,) is not that prevalent.

Rea-Dickins (2004) posits that since teachers are “agents of assessment” and are faced with numerous challenges as they make decisions about lesson content and sequencing, materials, learning tasks, and so forth in order to assess their students’ progress and language performance (outcomes), it is important to understand and learn more about the assessment practices language teachers use in the course of their teaching and explore if/how they relate teaching and assessment consistently. Additionally, it is relevant to this study to find out if “traditional methods of assessment” take precedence in FLES teachers’ assessment practices as revealed by their self-reported classroom
assessment practices usage and how these assessment practices might inform the pedagogical choices they make in the elementary WL classroom.

The national SFLL have significantly shaped language assessment practices at the K-16 levels during the last decade and will continue to do so for years to come (Magnan et al., 2012). World language educators must utilize them as guidelines that will aid them in delineating performance tasks so that will allow language students use the target language in authentic situations in a meaningful and purposeful way. Additionally, instruction and assessment should be integrated seamlessly in the educational process while providing multiple modalities in which students can demonstrate mastery of skills and language functions. Such measures should include both formative and summative assessment protocols (Shrum & Glisan, 2016). It is of vital importance to also incorporate student participation in the assessment process in order to empower them and integrate them as active components in the language development progression, as well. Moreover, WL educators must be cognizant of, utilize, and deeply understand the use of manifold assessment practices and ways to document language competence at multiple levels.

**Foreign/World Language Education Paradigm Shift**

**Instructional planning perspective.** The current paradigm shift for foreign/world language instructional planning which has occurred as a result of L2 research, the publication of the *SFLL*, and experiences in the classroom, has impacted the way language teachers conceive and conduct learner assessments. Several sources (e.g. Glisan et al., 2007; Jacobs & Farrell, 2008; Shrum & Glisan, 2016) have touched upon the topic of the current paradigm shift taking place in FL/WL education. From the
instructional planning perspective, this change emphasizes objectives stated in terms of what learners should know and be able to do with the language, rather than the acquisition of grammatical knowledge as provided in a textbook. In addition, interdisciplinary and cultural connection, along with an integration of cultural and academic content take precedence over the “old” content which was not standards-driven and offered unconnected bits and pieces of cultural information.

Last, in this new foreign/world language paradigm, assessment evolves from an activity whose primary purpose was to evaluate student achievement, to an ongoing activity closely related to instruction. The primary purpose of assessment is to verify student progress in meeting the standards, provide continuous feedback, and improve instruction.

**Assessment practices perspective.** The paradigm shift in assessment practices brings to the forefront the creation of authentic performance-based assessments that go beyond traditionally used paper-and-pencil formats. The essential role of assessment is to provide feedback to learners on their progress in order to improve student learning, to connect assessment with instruction so that the two are intertwined, and to use assessment findings to strengthen instruction (Glisan, Adair-Hauck, Koda, Sandrock, & Swender, 2003; Jacobs & Farrell, 2008; Liskin-Gasparro, 1996; McNamara, 2001; Poehner & Lantolf, 2003; Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2002; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). Performance-based assessment practices strengthen the relationship between the teacher and student, and enhance students’ interest and pride in ownership while engaged in communicating in the target language. They also require students to integrate content and process. In
summary, according to Thompson (2001), the most salient changes within the paradigm shift in foreign/world language instruction and assessment include “the move from an almost exclusive focus on components of language—grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation—to a focus on the development of communicative proficiency—the ability to communicate in the target language in real-life contexts” (p. 1).

**Assessment Practices in Foreign/World Language Education**

This section outlines assessment practices most commonly used in the foreign/world language classroom (i.e., alternative assessment, performance-based assessment, Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA), portfolios, Performance Assessment for Language Students (PALS), and dynamic assessment (DA)). Their inclusion offers background knowledge about assessment and assessment practices in the context of foreign/world language education and the FLES classroom. These assessment practices represent current trends that emphasize language learning outcomes in which students not only demonstrate knowledge about the foreign language, but also what they can do with such knowledge. They are discussed in the next seven subsections.

A concise discussion of current language assessment practices also provides a theoretical backdrop into which we can situate the inquiry sought in this study. It serves as a foundation for this investigation of how FLES teachers’ perceive assessment and assessment practices in the elementary classroom; what types of classroom assessment practices they self-report they use; and how they understand their assessment practices informing their pedagogical choices. According to Shrum and Glisan (2016), language teachers who practice assessment simultaneously with instruction provide students with
better opportunities to optimize their performance and development in the target language.

All of the aforementioned tie in with the goal of this study, which is to explore FLES teachers’ attitudes and perceptions about assessment and the assessment practices FLES teachers report they use in their elementary foreign language classrooms. Consequently, this research study has the potential to suggest what attitudes and perceptions FLES teachers hold about assessment and assessment practices. It also offers the possibility of expanding the knowledgebase on how FLES teachers see their assessment practices informing the pedagogical choices they make in their elementary world language classrooms. Both areas of foreign/world language educational research have not been the focus of recent sustained investigation.

**Alternative assessment.** Alternative assessment is an interactive process between the teacher and student (Tulou & Pettigrew, 1999) and is often characterized by not emphasizing a paper-and-pencil test approach. An alternative assessment approach in the language classroom employs elements such as an “authentic task,” a scoring rubric, and feedback (Sandrock, 2010). Alternative assessments are integrative in nature because the learner uses more than one skill at a time to perform a specific task, since often a task requires communication (interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational modes) with other students or the teacher (Ferro, Sanchez, Thompson, & Abare, 2004).

**Performance-based assessments.** In the old assessment paradigm the process of assessment is narrowly viewed as a way of rendering value judgments about students’ work or motivation (Shrum & Glisan, 2016). The current assessment paradigm places
emphasis in shifting assessment from being a judgmental activity to becoming an informational one. That is, assessment is an evidence-gathering information process in which the teacher and student are involved in a dialogic interchange which highlights, recognizes, and celebrates successes; identifies areas where improvement is needed; and describes levels of proficiency for the benefit of planning and articulation (Curtain & Dahlberg, 2016). According to Liskin-Gasparro (1996), in performance-based assessments learners are required to use their repertoire of knowledge and skills to create a product or a response, either individually or collaboratively.

**Performance Assessment for Language Students (PALS).** The researcher has been fortunate to work for a school district (Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS), Virginia) distinguished nationally as a precursor of performance assessment practices. The Performance Assessment for Language Students (PALS) is an exemplary illustration of a county project whose purpose was to design, implement, and evaluate performance tasks and abilities of language students (Fairfax County Public Schools, 2011; Tulou & Pettigrew, 1999). Created by a task force of language teachers, it places students in real-life situations in which they need to use the target language. The tasks, along with the scoring criteria, were designed to actively engage language students in real-world situations, have more than one correct answer, offer rewards for skill development, and let students know how their performance will be evaluated before they become engaged in the task (Shrum & Glisan, 2016).

**Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA).** ACTFL designed the Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA) in response to the need for measuring student progress in
attaining the competencies described in both the national standards and the ACTFL Performance Guidelines for K-12 Learners (ACTFL, 1998) within authentic contexts. The IPA project was funded under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, International Research and Studies Program. The model was helpful to language teachers because it provided a model to help them evaluate student development of the knowledge and skills detailed in the standards for learning languages (Sandrock, 2010). Additionally, it provides world language teachers with an array of resources they can use to make significant shift to standards-based performance–guided communicative language teaching (Adair-Hauck et al., 2006).

Portfolios. Portfolios are a form of alternative/authentic assessment in which a student’s progress is measured over a period of time in various language learning contexts. Portfolios can include evidence of specific skills and other items at one particular time and language performance and progress over time, under different conditions, in all four modalities (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) or all three communication modes (interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational). Using a combination of testing instruments lends validity and reliability to the portfolio (National Capital Language Resource Center [NCLRC], 2004). They give the learner the responsibility of assessing their own progress, making decisions about work samples that best represent the attainment of the standards, and providing feedback to teachers about instruction (McLeod & Vasinda, 2009). Through the explicit teaching of strategies such as goal-setting, self-evaluating, using one’s background knowledge, monitoring, and cooperating, teachers can help students develop life-long skills for learning (NCLRC,
2004). However, Delett, Barnhart, and Kevorkian (2001) note that even though language educators are familiar with the benefits of portfolios, many teachers report difficulties implementing them successfully due to technical and logistical obstacles, including managing their time. Other researchers report similar findings (Herman, Gearhart, & Asherbach, 1996; Padilla, Animao, & Sung, 1996).

**LinguaFolio® and LinguaFolio® Junior.** LinguaFolio® is a portfolio assessment instrument designed to support individuals in setting and achieving their goals for learning languages and tracking their progress toward achieving such goals. Suitable as either a physical or an electronic portfolio, it includes three basic components: biography, dossier, and passport. This three-fold approach, based on the European Language Portfolio, enables language learners of all ages and levels to document their language learning as they move along the continuum toward greater proficiency (National Council of State Supervisors for Languages [NCSSFL], 2012). In developing *LinguaFolio Virginia*, a team of educators aligned the self-assessment criteria to the proficiency and performance guidelines of ACTFL, the European Language Portfolio, the Virginia Standards of Learning, and the U.S. National Foreign Language Standards. The addition of Kentucky to the consortium of states led to the ongoing development of an elementary/middle school version, LinguaFolio, Jr., based on LinguaFolio Kentucky!, piloted in Kentucky elementary and middle schools since 2003.

**Dynamic assessment (DA).** The term dynamic assessment (DA) was coined by A. R. Luria (1961), Vygotsky’s colleague, and later popularized by Israeli clinical, developmental, and cognitive psychologist Reuben Feuerstein (Poehner, 2008). DA is
neither an assessment instrument nor a method of assessing but a framework for conceptualizing teaching and assessment as an integrated activity. DA is characterized by reconceptualizing classroom interactions and contending that teaching and assessment should not be distinct undertakings, but must be integrated as a single activity that seeks to understand learner abilities by actively supporting their ongoing development.

Teachers function as “joint problem solver/mediators” in assisting learner performance rather than as independent observers of learner behavior (Poehner & Lantolf, 2010). DA is based in the Vygotskian notion of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) which postulates the uniquely human potential to exceed our present capabilities by working in cooperation with others whose dialogic interaction mediates us to higher levels of functioning.

**Instruments Measuring Teacher Assessment Knowledge and Practices**

It is worth mentioning the prevalence of various instruments to measure teachers’ knowledge of assessment practices. Example of these instruments include the Teacher Assessment Literacy Questionnaire (TALQ) (Plake & Impara, 1992), the Assessment Practices Inventory (API) (Zhang & Burry-Stock, 1997), the Classroom Assessment Practices Questionnaire (CAPQ) (Cheng et al., 2004) and a teacher questionnaire on perceptions about classroom-based formative assessment designed by Colby-Kelly and Turner (2007). For this research study, the researcher designed a survey on FLES teachers’ attitudes and perceptions of assessment based on the API by Zhang and Burry-Stock (2003), the CAPQ by Cheng et al. (2004), and the teacher questionnaire developed by Colby-Kelly and Turner (2007). A more in-depth description of these instruments,
how they have been used, and what findings they have reported will follow in the next chapter on methods.

**Summary**

This chapter presented research pertaining to teachers’ beliefs, teachers’ perceptions and beliefs about assessment, and teachers’ beliefs and language teaching and learning. It also described FLES programs and presented a brief historical perspective of their inception in the US. It offered a discussion on the standards (both teacher and student), their influence on foreign/world language education in the US, and provided a theoretical foundation for the implementation of this study. It showcased different prominent assessment practices currently used in WL education, highlighted their most salient characteristics, and provided students’ benefits. Also, it illustrated the importance of gaining a greater understanding of teachers’ assessment beliefs and practices since such understanding can contribute to the development of relevant professional development aimed at improving teachers’ assessment pedagogies and practices, leading to greater educational success. Finally, it mentioned various instruments designed to measure teachers’ knowledge of assessment practices. The next chapter will present the research methods that were used in this study.
Chapter Three

This research study seeks to explore FLES teachers’ attitudes and perceptions of assessment and assessment practices in the elementary foreign/language classroom. The research questions guiding the study are:

1. How do FLES teachers perceive assessment and assessment practices in the elementary world language classroom? What do they perceive as the purpose of assessment?

2. What types of classroom assessment practices do FLES teachers report they use in the elementary world language classroom?

3. How do FLES teachers understand their assessment practices informing the pedagogical choices they make in the elementary world language classroom (i.e., planning, instruction, instructional material selection, classroom activities)?

This chapter describes the methods utilized in the research study, including the design of the study, setting, sampling, participants, instruments, and procedures. The research study used a mixed methods approach to include qualitative and descriptive quantitative procedures and analysis. This venue was chosen because using a combination of research approaches (i.e., quantitative, qualitative) provides opportunity to examine the phenomenon from different perspectives and methods (Creswell, 2008).
This combination of approaches also offers a chance to engage in a dialogic approach between the qualitative and quantitative methods while trying to understand the complexity of the social phenomena being studied, in this case, FLES teachers’ perceptions of assessment and assessment practices (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Freshwater, 2013; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2003; Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007; Maxwell & Loomis, 2003; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

Greene (2007) posits “the value of mixed methods inquiry for the overall purpose of better understanding social phenomena, which are inherently complex and contextual” (p. 14). Both topics, teacher beliefs and assessment, have been characterized as very complex and intricate processes (Baird, 2010). Additionally, as Greene (2007) stated, “a mixed methods way of thinking is generative and open, seeking richer, deeper, better understanding of important facets of our complex social world” (p. 20). Ultimately, since mixed methods social inquiry includes a variety of methodological traditions, inquiry designs, methods for data collection and analysis, and forms of interpretation and reporting, it promotes a dialogic engagement with difference. It is the researcher’s intent to engage in this “conversation” to assert the importance those different points of view might bring into the exploration of social phenomena.

This study used qualitative research methods to obtain rich data that facilitated the unraveling and interpretation of FLES teachers’ beliefs about assessment and assessment practices. Conversely, descriptive quantitative procedures facilitated the organization and description of data obtained from a sample of observations including the presentation of distributions, measures of central tendency (e.g., the mean), and frequencies in tables and
graphs (Adèr, 2008; Newton & Rudestam, 1999). In addition, researcher analytical memos provided reflective data and in-depth expansion of responses provided in the survey and in the semistructured interviews.

Several goals motivated this research study. One is to add to the knowledgebase on FLES teachers’ beliefs and attitudes, their self-reported assessment practices in the FLES classroom, and explore how FLES teachers understand their assessment practices informing their pedagogical choices. Another goal is to have a personal, social, or institutional organizational impact. Last, an additional goal of this study is to better understand the complex phenomena of FLES teachers’ beliefs about assessment and assessment practices.

**Background to the Study: National Context and Current Movements in World Language Education**

As described in Chapter 2, this research took place within the context of the paradigm shift that has transpired in assessment practices in today’s world language instruction. The shift has been the result of current second language acquisition research, and the implementation of the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* (SFL), commonly referred as the “5Cs” and the National Standards for Foreign Language Education Project (NSFLEP, 2006). It also aligns with the knowledgebase that world language teachers must know and deeply understand multiple authentic assessment practices and ways to document language competence at multiple levels (Shrum & Glisan, 2010). Additionally, the ACTFL *Program Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers* (2002), submitted for approval August 15, 2013, to the
CAEP State Partnership and Content Areas committee (formerly the NCATE Specialty Area Studies Board), is a component of the conceptual framework of this study.

**Sampling**

After receiving approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at George Mason University (Appendix A), a SurveyMonkey® online survey was sent as an email to an anticipated purposeful sample size of 100-1,000 FLES teachers using three foreign/world language LISTSERVS (to be described further in Procedures). This sampling strategy was chosen because it is an approach in which particular settings, persons, or activities are selected deliberately in order to provide rich, deep information about the phenomenon of study that could not be accessed from other choices (Maxwell, 2013). Patton (2015) argues that it is crucial to select “information-rich” cases for in-depth study since they provide the researcher with information about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research. The operational definition of FLES teacher used in the study refers to Foreign Language in the Elementary School teachers in the US who teach a FL/WL to students in first to eighth grades. The lessons they conduct should range between one to five times a week for class periods of 20 minutes to an hour duration.

From the initial 128 participants who completed the online survey, the researcher secured a purposeful sample of 14 FLES teachers to perform semistructured interviews. These interviews were conducted via Skype®, which is a Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) that enabled the researcher to obtain participants across the US. The criteria for selection of participants for the semistructured interviews was FLES teachers who
completed the section at the conclusion of the online survey stating their desire to participate, and who provided an email address as a point of contact. From these email addresses, the researcher selected and communicated with participants who differed in gender, age, educational background, world language they teach, and years of experience teaching FLES. This information was already provided by the participants at the outset of the online survey (see Appendix B, Section A, Background Information). The participants’ information, such as region of US, age, gender, years of teaching experience, educational degree, teacher training program, WL taught, school setting, and approximate number of students/grades currently teaching, is presented numerically and visually in Appendix C, Interview Participants’ Profile.

**Setting and Participants**

The participants for the quantitative component of this study (survey), were a group of FLES teachers who are members of and appear in three FL/WL LISTSERVS: the National Network on Early Language Learning (NNELL), Ñandutí, and the Foreign Language Teaching Forum (FL Teach) of the University of New York (SUNY) Cortland. The researcher communicated with the NNELL, Ñandutí, and FL Teach executive boards to explain the research study in more detail. The participants for the qualitative component of the study (semistructured interviews), consisted of survey respondents who volunteered to participate (by including their email addresses) in the second phase of the study, the interviews.

For the purpose of this study, an “early career” participant is defined as having between 1 and 5 years of FLES teaching experience, a “mid-career” as having between 6
and 10 years of experience, and an “experienced teacher” as having 11 to 20+ years of experience. A brief description of the three LISTSERVS used in the study follows.

NNELL’s mission is to provide leadership to advocate for and support successful early language learning and teaching. It was founded in 1987, and provides valuable information for parents, educators, and policy makers. Ñanduti is a comprehensive resource site on foreign language teaching and learning in Grades Pre-K to 8. It is a combined effort of the private nonprofit organization the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) and the National K-12 Foreign Language Resource Center at Iowa State University. CAL was founded in 1959 and is based in Washington, DC. Its mission is to improve communication through better understanding of language and culture. Last, FL Teach was founded in February 1994 by moderators Jean LeLoup from the US Air Force Academy and Bob Ponterio from the SUNY, Cortland, Modern Languages Department. It is an integrated service for FL teachers dedicated to encouraging communication, sharing, and collaboration at all levels. The broad discussion topic is foreign language teaching methods for any level of instruction in all languages. Specific areas of discussion include school/college articulation, training of student teachers, classroom activities, curriculum, and syllabus design. Students in teacher preparation programs, teachers both new and experienced, administrators, and other professionals interested in any aspect of foreign language teaching are invited to participate in their discussions.

**Data Collection**

The data collection sources used in the study were a validated online researcher-created survey (i.e., SurveyMonkey®), semistructured interviews, and researcher
analytical memos. The term “validated” specifically refers to the programming of the response format option which online survey software usually offers. This feature indicates to respondents when they have not answered the question using the intended programmed format and will allow them to make the necessary corrections before proceeding with the survey completion (Fink, 2013).

The data collection for the survey component of this study consisted of Likert-style questions, with subsequent one-on-one semistructured interviews conducted with 14 participants. In addition, an interactive-with-probes approach was incorporated as part of the semistructured interviews. The researcher aligned the questions included in both instruments with the FL/WL student and teacher standards, and the research questions guiding the study.

**Research design.** The conceptual framework of this study is supported by the foreign language standards movement (both K-12 student and ACTFL/CAEP teacher standards), the FL/WL paradigm shift (instructional and assessment perspectives), the assessment practices in FL/WL education, and previous studies of teachers’ attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs. These comprise, according to Maxwell (2013), “the system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and theories that supports and informs your research” (p. 33). See Appendix D for the Research Design Matrix.

The purpose of this study is to obtain a deeper, broader understanding of the phenomenon of beliefs with regard to assessment and assessment practices reported by FLES teachers. The research design follows the integrated mixed methods design model referred to as “blending,” which according to Greene (2007) uses “two or more different
methods to assess varied facets of the same complex phenomenon, representing the mixed methods purpose of complementarity” (p. 126). Within the purpose of complementarity, a mixed methods study seeks broader and more comprehensive understanding of different facets of a phenomenon. Greene also mentions that in a complementarity mixed methods study, results from different methods serve to elaborate, enhance, deepen, and broaden the overall interpretations and inferences from the study. The survey data provided a better understanding of FLES teachers’ perceptions about the role and importance of assessment, and their reported classroom assessment practices. Moreover, the data collected from the semistructured interviews (see Appendix E, FLES Teacher Interview Protocol) offered the opportunity to identify in-depth information not captured in the survey. Figure 2 depicts the triangulation of the three data sources employed in the study.

Figure 2. Triangulation of data sources in this study.
Instruments. SurveyMonkey®, an online software program, was chosen for the following reasons: (a) it offers a validated platform, (b) has multiple layers of security and firewalls, (c) data can be downloaded in multiple forms and directly into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences computer software (SPSS), (d) respondents can be tracked, and (e) the service was available to the researcher at a minimal cost.

Instruments informing online survey design. The online survey (Appendix B) is based on three sources: the Assessment Practices Inventory (API) created by Zhang and Burry-Stork (2003), the Classroom Assessment Practice Questionnaire (CAPQ) designed by Cheng et al. (2004), and a teacher questionnaire on perceptions about classroom-based formative assessment practices developed by Colby-Kelly and Turner (2007). A description and background of each instrument, what they attempt to measure, what findings they reported, and how they were employed in the development of the online survey used in this study will follow.

Assessment Practices Inventory (API). The Assessment Practices Inventory (API), originally created in 1994, was designed to examine the effects of measurement training and teaching experience on teachers’ perceived assessment competency (Moss, 2013; Zhang, 1995). It consists of 67 items, each of which describes an assessment practice. The items cover a broad spectrum of classroom assessment practices including constructing paper-and-pencil test and performance measures, interpreting standardized test scores, communicating assessment results, and using assessment results in decision-making processes (Zhang & Burry-Stock, 1997). In the API, the participants are asked to report their perceived assessment competency on a 5-point Likert scale with 1 meaning
“not at all skilled” and 5 meaning “highly skilled.” Information is also collected on
demographic variables concerning the number of years the teachers had taught and the
number of measurement courses taken. The instrument was piloted twice with in-service
teachers and revisions were made based on the teachers’ feedback and item analyses
(Zhang, 1995). Several measurement researchers (Alkharusi, 2011; Alkharusi, Kazem &
Al-Musawai, 2010; Yu & Frempong, 2012) have referenced the API in their studies.
Their topics of study included teachers’ classroom assessment skills, authentic
assessment versus traditional assessment approaches, and traditional versus computer-
mediated approaches to teaching educational measurement. Findings suggest that to
adequately prepare teachers for the task of classroom assessment, more attention should
be given to educational measurement instruction. Also, research results imply an existing
tension between current assessment trends. On one hand, one trend sees assessment as
becoming larger in scale, where national exams are increasingly common and many
countries feel the imperative to participate in international comparative studies; on the
other hand, there is a trend that sees smaller or individual types of assessment (authentic
assessment) favored not only in academic discourse, but also in classroom practices and
policy agendas (Yu & Frempong, 2012).

*Classroom Assessment Practices Questionnaire (CAPQ).* The Classroom
Assessment Practices Questionnaire (CAPQ), designed by Cheng et al. (2004), consists
of five parts illustrating major constructs in classroom assessment: purposes of
assessment and evaluation, methods of assessment and evaluation, procedures of
assessment and evaluation, opinions about assessment and evaluation, and a section on
demographic information. Cheng et al. (2004) performed a comparative survey in the ESL/EFL context. The findings demonstrated the complex and multifaceted roles that assessment plays in different teaching and learning settings and provided insights about the nature of assessment practice in relation to the ESL/EFL classroom teaching at the higher education level. Even though the CAPQ has been mostly used in EFL/EFL contexts (Cheng et al., 2004; Cheng, Rogers, & Wang, 2008; Shohamy, Inbar-Lourie, & Poehner, 2008; Sun & Cheng, 2013), other researchers have based their investigations on its framework. For example, Gonzales (2012) used the CAPQ as a springboard to develop his own assessment measuring instrument, the Classroom Assessment Practices Survey Questionnaire (CAPSQ). It consists of 60 items that are sorted according to thematic similarities. The item content of the CAPSQ was derived from interview data and used a 5-point Likert-type response scale describing frequency (1 = never to 5 = always) of performing an assessment activity. Gonzales (2012) investigated four major assessment purposes using factor analyses: assessment of learning, assessment as learning, assessment for learning, and assessment to inform. Findings imply that assessment as learning is translated into practice when teachers assess students by providing them with opportunities to show what they have learned (performance-based); assessment of learning is best implemented when teachers make use of assessment results to guide instructional and educational decisions; assessment to inform learning is an important component in the assessment continuum since it provides information to parents, students, schools, and other stakeholders regarding students’ performance in class (Gonzales, 2012).
**Teacher questionnaire.** The last instrument the researcher used to design the online survey is a teacher questionnaire developed by Colby-Kelly and Turner (2007). This instrument elicits perceptions about classroom-based formative assessment practices and consists of 51 items in 4 sections: assessment and students, assessment and teachers, assessment and learning, and course assessment needs. The questionnaire also employed a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree. Colby-Kelly and Turner (2007) used a mixed method approach to investigate teacher and student perceptions of formative assessment in the L2 classroom setting. Findings from teachers’ interviews and questionnaire data suggested that teachers strongly supported the use of formative assessment practices in their classrooms. Other findings pointed out that teacher–student feedback with a motivational component appears to be useful to some language learners and may benefit learning as a result.

**Electronic online survey.** All the aforementioned instruments informed the design of the online survey used in this study. The researcher was selective in the incorporation of items based on how their content aligned with the research questions driving the study (see research questions earlier in this chapter). For example, the survey format, topic organization, and questions dealing with purpose/importance of assessment, methods of assessment, pedagogical choices after assessment, and time spent on assessment (Appendix B, Sections B, C, D, F) were adapted from the CAPQ developed by Cheng et al. (2004). Additionally, the teacher questionnaire on perceptions about classroom-based formative assessment designed by Colby-Kelly and Turner (2007) informed questions on formative, summative and performance assessment practices (Appendix B, Sections C1,
C2, C3). This incorporation stemmed from the fact that formative assessment, as opposed to summative assessment, which most likely occurs at the end of a lesson or course, is crucial in delineating learners’ continuous progress (Boston, 2002). According to Shrum and Glisan (2016), formative assessment “is designed to help form or shape learners’ ongoing understanding or skills while the teacher and learners still have the opportunities to interact for the purposes of repair and improvement within the instructional setting” (p. 401). Likewise, performance assessments require students to use language in real-life situations, thus enhancing the learner’s “genuine acts of communication…the teacher then can focus on what really counts by providing feedback to students based on this evidence of their authentic use of language” (Sandrock, 2010, p. 2). Last, items included in the online survey relating to opinions about assessments (Appendix B, Section E), were adapted from the API designed by Zhang and Burry-Stock (2003).

The survey’s objectives were to collect demographic information of participants, to identify FLES teachers’ perceptions and attitudes about assessment and assessment practices in WL education, and to explore FLES teachers’ self-reported classroom assessment choices they make. The pilot study, which will be explained in more detail in the section on procedures, included three FLES teachers who consented to participate in both the online survey and follow-up interview. The researcher visited the office of World Languages of a school district located in the Northern Virginia area and explained her research study to the coordinator in order to solicit participants who were currently teaching FLES.
The online survey took participants approximately 15-25 minutes to complete. It consisted of six sections (Appendix F): Section A is demographic information (i.e., gender, age, years of experience, grade level teaching assignment, level of education, and FL they teach); Section B is comprised of 15 Likert-type items scored on a scale from 1 to 4 (1 = least important and 4 = very important) which address the purpose/importance of assessment; Section C includes 25 Likert scale items scored on a use scale from 1 to 4 (1 = not at all used and 4 = used often) based on methods of classroom assessment practices; Section D includes the option select the answer or specify the category of “other” which applies to questions relating to pedagogical choices after assessment and feedback; and Section E is composed of 11 Likert scale items scored on a scale from 1 to 4 (1 = strongly disagree and 4 = strongly agree) focusing on opinions about classroom assessments. Last, Section F included a question about the time participants spend on assessment and at the end, asked participants to add their personal comments or any additional information. Appendix F, Online Survey Components, contains a visual and examples of questions from the online survey.

As a monetary incentive, two random drawings of two gift cards were conducted among respondents in order to increase the response rate, both for the online survey and follow-up interviews. The incentive for the completion of the online survey was $100.00 VISA card. The incentive for volunteering to participate in the follow-up interviews was a $50.00 VISA card. The respondents had the opportunity to decide, at the conclusion of the survey, if they desired to participate in the follow-up interview by providing their email addresses as a point of contact. If a winner did not respond to the email notification
within 10 days, he or she forfeited the gift certificate and an alternate winner was randomly selected using the Randompicker® independent drawing application platform.

Semistructured interviews. One-on-one semistructured interviews using the FLES Teacher Interview Protocol (Appendix E) were arranged during the March 2014 - April 2014 timeframe. A purposeful sample was used, taken from the participants who completed the online survey section coupon located at the end, in which they volunteered to participate and provided their email addresses for contact information. The teacher interview protocol (Appendix E) emphasized the individual participant’s insight on assessment, perceptions of the role of assessment, and the reported classroom assessment practices most used their elementary WL classrooms. The interviews utilized a dialogic retrospection format (Nevin & Cardelle-Elawar, 2003). The interviews were conducted via Skype® and transcribed by the researcher as soon as they were completed in order to preserve the accuracy of the data in the researcher’s mind. Triangulation of the data obtained from the online survey, interviews, and researcher analytical memos were analyzed in order to explore the research questions.

Procedures

The next four subsections describe IRB approval and instrument test, the pilot study, interviews, and respondents’ reporting.

IRB approval and instrument test. After receiving approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at George Mason University, and from NNELL, Ñandutí, and FL Teach to use their LISTSERVS, the researcher conducted a pilot test of both instruments. A consent form which appeared at the beginning of the online survey was secured from
each participant. At the conclusion of the survey, the respondents selected if they would like to participate in a one-on-one interview. If so, they provided an email address as a point of contact. Due to the possible variability of the respondents’ state of residence, there was the option of conducting the interviews using a VoIP such as Skype® or Iphone Facetime®.

**Pilot study.** The researcher requested pilot study participation of at least three FLES teachers who worked in a Northern Virginia school district. A meeting with the World Language coordinator of this school district was conducted to explain the research study in more detail. Volunteers were asked to complete the online survey and to participate in the interview. A member check ensured the participants had the opportunity to critically analyze their responses and offer feedback. The researcher analyzed/examined the results for alignment and complementarity of instruments. The revised instruments were sent back to the pilot study participants for additional feedback.

**Interviews.** The second stage of the study involved scheduling the semistructured interviews. The researcher initiated contact with respondents who volunteered to participate in this phase of the study by providing their email addresses as point of contacts. Using the “FLES Teacher Interview Protocol” (Appendix E) a semistructured interview via Skype® or Facetime® was arranged with the participants. During the course of the one-on-one interview, the researcher employed informant feedback (member checks) by restating and summarizing the information provided by participants.

**Respondents’ reporting.** How respondents report their answers or opinions about certain issues is an important component of a research design and was handled with much
detail (Corden & Sainsbury, 2006). Every effort was made to protect respondents’ confidentiality. For example, in the online survey, data was collected anonymously by having a third party assign a code to each respondent. For the semistructured interviews, the identity of the respondent was protected by using pseudonyms, in case a name might have been a component of the email address. In the results, all names are pseudonyms.

In addition, the researcher strove to build rapport with the interviewees in order to maximize obtaining honest and open responses. During the interview and transcription processes, the researcher employed member checks or informant feedback to ensure that participants had the opportunity to critically analyze their responses, both during and at the conclusion of the interviews. Transcriptions of the interviews were sent by email to the each of the participants. A week was allotted for them to respond back with any issues or concerns about their answers to the interview questions. The response rate was very favorable (93%), as 13 of the 14 interviewed participants responded with input. Also during the interviews, the researcher restated or summarized information and then questioned the participants to determine the accuracy of their responses. This practice enhanced the trustworthiness, credibility, and validity of the study. Also, in the qualitative component of the study (interviews), one way of reporting participants’ responses was through the use of verbatim quotations. The overall goal of this process was to provide findings that are reliable, original, and authentic (Corden & Sainsbury, 2006).

The timeline of data collection was as listed in Table 1.
Table 1

*Timeline of Data Collection*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Events</th>
<th>Time Frame</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pilot Study</td>
<td>Feb - Mar 2014</td>
<td>Online (via email and Skype)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronic Survey Completion</td>
<td>Feb - Jun 2014</td>
<td>Online (via web access)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant One-on-One Interviews</td>
<td>Mar - Jun 2014</td>
<td>Skype/Facetime</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Data Analysis**

The sequence of the data analysis process included using the research questions as guides to first analyze the survey data, second analyze the interview data, and last search for patterns, commonalities, or differences between the two. A more detailed description of the procedure will follow.

**Quantitative data.** The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 17, computer program was employed to compile and analyze the quantitative data collected from the survey. Descriptive statistics were used to organize and analyze the data collected from the self-reported responses. These analyses included FLES teachers’ responses on the purpose and importance of assessment and different types of assessment practices they reported they use in their FLES classrooms. Specifically, research questions one and two were analyzed using frequencies, means, standard deviations, and percentages (Table 2).
Table 2

Research Questions and Data Analyses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Quantitative Data Analysis</th>
<th>Qualitative Data Analysis</th>
<th>Online Survey Questions*</th>
<th>Interview Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. What types of classroom assessment practices do FLES teachers report they use in the elementary WL classroom?</td>
<td>Descriptive statistics: Means, Standard Deviations, Frequencies, and Percent</td>
<td>Categorizing and connecting strategies</td>
<td>Section C: C1-C3</td>
<td>Questions: 7, 8, 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How do FLES teachers understand their assessment practices informing the pedagogical choices they make in the elementary WL classroom?</td>
<td>Descriptive statistics: Means, Standard Deviations, Frequencies, and Percent</td>
<td>Interconnecting codes/categories; Constant Comparative Method</td>
<td>Section D: 1-2 Section F: 1-2</td>
<td>Questions: 1, 2, 3, 6,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *Section A of the online survey consists of demographical information questions; therefore it was not included in this table.

Qualitative data. Maxwell’s (2013) qualitative data analysis strategies, such as researcher analytical memos, open and axial coding, and categorizing and connecting strategies, were used to analyze the qualitative data (Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Maxwell & Miller, 2008). Because of the massive amount of data produced by the interviews, NVivo10 qualitative research software (QRS, 2010), was used primarily as a data management tool and not for data analysis purposes. Additionally, Glaser and Strauss’s (1967) constant-comparative method was employed in the data analysis process. This
method, which is the forerunner of grounded theory, involves making comparisons at each level of analysis including data with data, data with codes, codes with codes, codes with categories, categories with categories, and categories with concepts (Charmaz & Henwood, 2008). The constant-comparative approach to data analysis consists of several stages (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The first stage is open coding whereby the researcher scrutinizes data and breaks them down into thematic categories. This was followed by axial and selective coding, which involved the researcher examining each code in turn to explore its nature through a process of constant comparison of data, held within each code, and comparing it to other categories. Furthermore, according to Bogdan and Biklen (2007), the constant comparative method provides for a much more fluid search for themes or meanings that recur in the data that can lead to the identification of categories.

By utilizing the constant comparative method to analyze the qualitative data, the researcher worked with emerging categories (coding) which delineated incidents, which were constantly compared with previous incidents according to their similarities and differences. The whole process can be depicted as a “spiral,” building upon previous categories based on their dimensions, properties, relationships, conditions, and consequences (Butler-Kisber, 2010). The spiral is hermeneutic, as it is revisited constantly. The researcher did not necessarily derive a general theory on the phenomenon studied from this whole process, but rather a general proposition (generality). The collection of qualitative data provided a rich, in-depth data source to gain a better understanding of FLES teachers’ attitudes and perceptions about assessment and assessment practices in the elementary world language classroom.
Researcher analytical memos were written after conducting and transcribing each interview, paying special attention to surprising events that were not anticipated. These included notes on nonverbal behavior, and situational cues as well as the researcher’s comments, questions, and thoughts. These researcher memos served as preliminary analytical records. It was of vital importance to begin the transcription process right after an interview was completed due to the fact that the information was still fresh in the researcher’s mind.

The coding process began with listening to digitally recorded interview tapes before reading the transcripts. This allowed the researcher the opportunity for analysis while paying attention to what was heard and develop tentative ideas about categories and relationships. Researcher analytical memos were composed on these listening activities. Next, the researcher read the interview transcripts to identify codes, categories, and finally themes. A list of emic codes was generated from the transcripts obtained from the participants’ interviews. This assured that the participants “own” words were captured in essence, thus providing them with a “voice.” Subsequently, through the constant comparative method, the researcher sought to identify connections among these different categories and themes. As Maxwell and Miller (2008) describe, the intent should not be to focus on similarities that could be used to sort data into categories, but to look for relationships that connect statements and events into a coherent whole. Maxwell and Miller (2008) refer to this process of integrating categorizing and connecting strategies as “moves” a researcher makes while doing an analysis. At one point in the analysis, the
researcher can take either a categorizing step, looking for similarities and differences, or take a connecting step, in the search for actual connections between things.

**Time Period**

The explanation of the study’s time period offers an opportunity to identify milestones such as meetings held with stakeholders to explain the study in detail, completion of the pilot study, data collection process, data analysis, and report writing. According to Glesne (2014), its main purpose is as an organizational tool for all the important aspects of the research project. Appendix G delineates the time period of the main events for this research study.

**Validity**

Miller (2008) posits that it is overly simplistic—and indeed inaccurate—to refer broadly to the term validity as the “goodness” or “soundness” of a research study, due to the innumerable conceptualizations of the term that have emerged depending on the research methodologies and paradigms that guide a given research project. Ultimately, he maintains that the validity of all research is heightened by ensuring that research procedures remain coherent and transparent, research results are evident, and research conclusions are convincing.

Moreover, according to Patton (2015), a key element of improving validity in a study is dealing with what are known as “deviant” findings, that is, findings that do not fit with the conclusions of the study. Patton states that it is of the utmost importance to make sure the researcher takes a detailed look at such deviant findings and accounts for why they differ. Explaining this will strengthen the analysis. Moreover, on the subject of
triangulation, Patton (2015) cautions that it is a common misconception that the goal of triangulation is to arrive at consistency across data sources or approaches; in fact, such inconsistencies may be likely given the relative strengths of different approaches. In Patton’s view, these inconsistencies should not be seen as weakening the evidence, but should be viewed as an opportunity to uncover deeper meaning in the data.

Validity threats. Creswell (2008) posits that validity threats may jeopardize a research study’s conclusions due to the possibility of data drawing inappropriate inferences. Departing from such a premise, some limitations of this dissertation study included the possible reactivity (social desirability) on behalf of the three participants selected for the pilot study. The participants were FLES teachers who worked in the same school district as the researcher. Knowing that the researcher was also a FLES teacher and colleague might have influenced the way these participants answered the survey and interview questions with responses they found “most appropriate” and which did not reflect their authentic way of thinking about the issues at hand. Likewise, being a FLES teacher and WL professional imposed a researcher bias on the analysis and interpretation of “what is really” going on. The researcher was cautious about not allowing previous experiences and beliefs “contaminate” the data interpretation and analysis processes. This prerogative offered an opportunity for the researcher to serve as a “voice” for a group of professionals that is underrepresented in today’s educational landscape: the FLES teachers. The researcher checked for this by performing triangulation of data. Merriam (2009) notes that data triangulation lends further credibility to study results.
The possibility of self-report bias presented itself as an additional limitation of this study. This is plausible due to the nature of the sources used to collection data (information)—the interviews and the online survey. The responses provided by the respondents answered specific questions that deal with their feelings, attitudes, and perceptions about assessment and assessment practices they use in teaching a FLWL. As Mitchell and Jolley (2010) argue, self-report through a survey requires participant motivation, therefore there is the potential for a biased sample with only those participants with the greatest interest responding or completing the whole survey. In addition, the participants’ responses might reflect answers which they consider will portray them in a good light, as highly qualified language teachers, and not necessarily what they truly believe or actually do in relation to assessment and assessment practices in their classrooms. Maxwell (2013) argues that what is important is not trying to minimize the effect of “bias,” but rather understand how bias affects the validity of the inferences the researcher draws from the data and explaining this in a transparent manner.

**Summary**

This chapter has provided an overview of the study’s implementation and information on its procedures. Maxwell’s (2013) interactive research design was employed to conduct the study, as well as, Glaser and Strauss’ (1967) constant-comparative method of data analysis. The research questions guided the research methods, data collection and analysis, research instrument development, and cautionary measures to deal with validity threats. Additionally, this chapter provides a research time
period for the pilot study, quantitative and qualitative data collection, data analysis, and final report writing.
Chapter Four

This study investigated perceptions about assessment and assessment practices in the elementary WL classroom from the FLES teachers’ perspective. A mixed method design was utilized to examine what FLES teachers consider as the purpose of assessment, the different self-reported types of classroom assessments that FLES teachers use, and how FLES teachers understand their assessment practices informing the pedagogical choices they make in the elementary WL classroom. The results obtained from this research were derived from data collected through an online survey, distributed broadly to teachers around the US, and semistructured individual interviews. This chapter will first offer findings from the survey demographics which present important participant background information and contributed to the overall analysis of data. The findings are organized according to the following three overarching research questions:

1. How do FLES teachers perceive assessment and assessment practices in the elementary world language classroom? What do they perceive as the purpose of assessment?

2. What types of classroom assessment practices do FLES teachers report they use in the elementary world language classroom?

3. How do FLES teachers understand their assessment practices informing the pedagogical choices they make in the elementary world language classroom
(i.e., planning, instruction, instructional material selection, classroom activities)?

The quantitative and qualitative findings as they relate to each research question are presented after the overview and participant demographic information sections.

**Participation Response**

The initial participant recruiting procedure of sending invitational emails to three national FL/WL LISTSERVS did not generate the anticipated desired results, as only 30 completed surveys were returned in a period of three weeks. Due to the national scope of this study, the researcher sought to enhance the participant recruiting process by sending personalized emails to specific FLES teachers in specific school districts nationwide. A total of 700 recruitment emails were sent out, followed by two-week reminder emails, resulting in a total of 135 completed surveys returned. Seven of these contained more than 10% missing data (incomplete); therefore, they were excluded from overall results. The final number of surveys used to analyze the quantitative data was 128 ($N = 128$). The response rate was 18.2%, which aligns with the adequate rate of return for online surveys of 10% to 20% as noted by several researchers (Baruch & Holtom, 2008; Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2009; Fink, 2013; Nulty, 2008).

**Demographics of Participants**

This section reflects the demographics provided by the study’s 128 survey participants. According to Lee and Schuele (2010), demographic information provides background data regarding research participants and is necessary for determining whether the individuals in a particular study are a representative sample of the target population.
for generalization purposes. Interview participants were culled from the survey responses as detailed above. Survey and interview participants’ demographic information are presented independently in an effort to gain a deeper, in-depth understanding of the educational experiences and professional lives of the FLES teachers who participated in this research.

**Regions of US.** Forty of the 50 U. S. states were represented in the 128 survey responses (Appendix H). In order to provide a regional view of the responses, the US was divided in four general areas: (a) the Northeast Region, with responses from Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont; (b) the Southern Region, with responses from Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia; (c) the Midwest Region, with input from Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, and Wisconsin; lastly, (d) the West Region, with responses from Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, and Washington. The Northern region had 37 participants (29%), the Southern region had 49 participants (38%), the Midwest region had 25 participants (20%), and the West region had 17 respondents (13%).

As part of the online survey, the participants filled out a section on demographics (Appendix B, Section A). The variance in years of teaching experience provided the researcher interesting insight into the participants’ perceptions of assessment in the FLES classroom and will be further discussed within the individual sections on research questions.
Appendix I shows the demographic information of the survey participants. Of the 128 \(N = 128\) survey participants, 119 were female (93%), and 9 were male (7%). According to the results of the demographic question relating to age, 41.4% of the FLES teachers were 46 years and above, 12.5% were between the age of 41 and 45, 13.6% were between 36 and 40, 13.3% were between 31 and 35, 11.7% were between 26 and 30, and 5.5% were between the age of 20 and 25 years old. As reported in both the quantitative (survey) and qualitative (interviews) data, 53 of the 128 teachers (41.4%) that participated in the survey and 9 of the 12 teachers (64.3%) who conducted interviews were 46+ years old.

While 54.7% of the FLES teachers attended regular four-year teacher preparation programs, 19.5% reported participating in alternative teacher preparation ones. In addition, 12.5% became teachers by switching careers, 7.8% participated in an accelerated teacher preparation program, and 5.5% became teachers through a combination of the previously mentioned teacher preparation program options. The level of education of the teachers shows that 27.3% held bachelor’s degrees, 69.5% had completed a master’s degree, and 3.2% had a doctoral degree.

The three world languages most taught in the FLES programs where the participants worked were: Spanish (58.6%), French (15.6%), and Chinese (9.4%). Even though other less commonly taught languages (LCTL) besides Chinese, such as Arabic (3.1%), German and Russian (0.8% each), Greek (1.6%), and Latin (0.8%) were represented in the study, their incidence was rather low. Equally, Portuguese and Italian,
both represented (0.8%) of the participants and Japanese (1.6%) was embedded as a WL taught along with Spanish, French, Italian, and Chinese in two participants’ responses.

Table 3 contains frequencies and percentages of years of experience teaching FLES. The responses were as follows: 15 teachers with 1 year of experience ($n = 15$), 12 teachers with 2 years of experience ($n = 12$), 11 teachers with 4 years of experience ($n = 11$), 10 teachers with 7 years of experience ($n = 10$), and 9 teachers had between 3 to 10 years of experience ($n = 9$). The highest numbers of years of experience reported were 21+ years ($n = 5$). In addition, 37 teachers reported having between 11 to 20 years of experience teaching in a FLES program ($n = 37$). The mean for number of years of teaching experience was $M = 8.17$, $SD = 6.19$.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Frequency (N = 128)</th>
<th>Frequency Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21+</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Mean = 8.17, $SD = 6.19$. 

84
**Interview participants.** A subset of the survey group volunteered to participate in follow-up interviews: 14 FLES teachers, 2 male and 12 female. Appendix I summarizes the demographic information of the interview participants. Collectively, they represent 11 states (Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Carolina, Virginia, and Washington). Three participants were teaching FLES in Virginia, two in New Jersey, and nine were spread out as one per each of the remaining nine states.

The findings derived from the survey and interviews, according to each research question, are presented in the following sections. As noted earlier, all names used are pseudonyms.

**Research Question 1**

**How do FLES teachers perceive assessment and assessment practices in the elementary world language classroom? What do they perceive as the purpose of assessment?** The response to Research Question 1 is addressed in two ways. The findings are drawn from survey Likert scale and open-response items, and interview data. Both survey and interview data were analyzed separately to answer the question. First, the data indicate that the teachers’ self-reported perceptions of assessment and assessment practices are diverse. Ranking of the purpose of assessment indicates that the FLES teachers rate the purpose of assessment as a way to obtain information on students’ progress very important. Secondly, representative themes which emerged from interview data provide insight into the multiple approaches the teachers use to describe their perceptions of assessment in their teaching practice. Primarily, these perceptions revolved
around three salient themes: the *purpose and importance of assessment*, the *role of assessment in the FLES classroom*, and FLES teachers’ *opinions about assessment*. These emerging themes are presented in further detail below.

**Purpose and importance of assessment.** To investigate the FLES teachers’ perceptions of the purpose and importance of assessment, the researcher employed both survey and interview findings. This approach provides a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of investigation, in this case, what the teachers considered to be the main reason and significance of assessment in their FLES classrooms. These findings will be further discussed next.

**Survey findings.** The purpose and importance of assessment was addressed through the survey Likert scale items findings, and the interviews. Section B of the survey (Appendix B) included 14 items related to the purpose of assessment which the participants had to rank in order of importance. Teacher values were on a 4-point scale with 1 for *Least Important* and 4 for *Very Important*. The participants’ response options, in addition to mean and frequency percentages of their responses, are provided in Table 4.
Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Least Important</th>
<th>Somewhat Important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) To plan my instruction</td>
<td>4 (3.1)</td>
<td>10 (7.8)</td>
<td>40 (31.3)</td>
<td>74 (57.8)</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) To group my students for instructional purposes in my class</td>
<td>18 (14.1)</td>
<td>38 (29.7)</td>
<td>40 (31.3)</td>
<td>32 (25.0)</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) To motivate my students to learn</td>
<td>15 (11.7)</td>
<td>25 (19.5)</td>
<td>37 (28.9)</td>
<td>51 (39.8)</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) To obtain information on my students’ progress</td>
<td>2 (1.6)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>43 (33.6)</td>
<td>83 (64.8)</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) To diagnose strengths and weaknesses in my own teaching and instruction</td>
<td>1 (0.8)</td>
<td>7 (5.5)</td>
<td>38 (29.7)</td>
<td>82 (64.1)</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) To provide feedback to my students as they progress in the learning of a foreign language</td>
<td>5 (3.9)</td>
<td>11 (8.6)</td>
<td>40 (31.3)</td>
<td>72 (56.3)</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) To diagnose strengths and weaknesses in my students</td>
<td>2 (1.6)</td>
<td>11 (8.6)</td>
<td>53 (41.4)</td>
<td>62 (48.4)</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) To prepare my students for standardized tests they will need to take in the future</td>
<td>61 (47.7)</td>
<td>29 (22.7)</td>
<td>18 (14.1)</td>
<td>20 (15.6)</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) To make my students work</td>
<td>60 (46.9)</td>
<td>26 (20.3)</td>
<td>26 (20.3)</td>
<td>16 (12.5)</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) To formally document growth in learning</td>
<td>9 (7.0)</td>
<td>17 (13.3)</td>
<td>57 (44.5)</td>
<td>45 (35.2)</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11) To determine the final grades for my students</td>
<td>26 (20.3)</td>
<td>30 (23.4)</td>
<td>45 (35.2)</td>
<td>27 (21.1)</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12) To assess student progress in the attainment of standards</td>
<td>16 (12.5)</td>
<td>19 (14.8)</td>
<td>64 (50.0)</td>
<td>29 (22.7)</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13) To provide information to the central administration (school district, state agency)</td>
<td>40 (31.3)</td>
<td>24 (18.8)</td>
<td>45 (35.2)</td>
<td>19 (14.8)</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14) To provide information to an outside funding agency</td>
<td>90 (70.3)</td>
<td>19 (14.8)</td>
<td>11 (8.6)</td>
<td>8 (6.3)</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. N = 128. Mean scores range from 1 to 4, calculated based on the following conditions: 1 = least important, 2 = somewhat important, 3 = important, and 4 = very important.*
The teachers in this study rated the following items at “very important,” suggesting that these might be of significant consideration when determining the purpose of assessment: Item 4 ($M = 3.62, SD = 0.58$), Item 5 ($M = 3.57, SD = 0.64$), Item 1 ($M = 3.44, SD = 0.77$), and Item 6 ($M = 3.40, SD = 0.81$). However, the teachers rated the following as “least important,” implying that these might not be significant considerations when determining the purpose of assessment: Item 14 ($M = 1.51, SD = 0.90$) and Item 8 ($M = 1.98, SD = 1.12$). In addition, the teachers rated it less important to make students work ($M = 1.98, SD = 1.09$) and as a means to provide information to central administration (school district or state agency) ($M = 2.34, SD = 1.07$). These responses suggest that the FLES teachers who participated in this study value assessment as a tool that enables them to make informed decisions about their students’ learning, as well as their own teaching and instruction, but do not necessarily consider its main purpose to be to assist in providing information to administrative-level sources.

Moreover, the teachers rated important the purpose of assessment as a way to assess student progress in the attainment of standards ($M = 2.83, SD = 0.92$) and as a means to formally document growth in learning ($M = 3.08, SD = 0.87$). Interestingly, the teachers rated assessment somewhat important to group their students for instructional purposes in their classrooms ($M = 2.67, SD = 1.00$) and as a way to determine the final grades for their students ($M = 2.57, SD = 1.04$).

**Interview findings and discussion.** The researcher integrated the data analysis from both the survey and the interviews. The survey data provided concise ideas about the teachers’ views on the purpose of assessment, but components of their responses to
the survey still required greater in-depth exploration. Data from the 14 follow-up interviews provided such depth. When asked what they understood as the purpose of assessment in FL/WL learning and teaching, the teachers’ responses prominently revolved around statements such as: to guide and inform their instruction, to diagnose strengths and weaknesses in their students and their own teaching, and to verify language learning attainment level. Beatrice emphasized the purpose of assessment by stating “well to see what the students have learned, what levels they have accomplished, and to see if I’m doing the right job or not.” Four out of the 14 interviewees described the purpose of assessment in terms of measuring performance-based tasks, as in Tatiana’s views that “assessment for me demonstrates their performance at that moment not so much their proficiency level, but their performance.” Chelsey further indicated that, “most of my assessments are oral, auditory, and performance-based where students perform in the target language, like a skit or something like that.” Likewise, Elma commented that assessment is a key element in WL education and that the implementation of performance-based assessments in her Arabic classroom is ongoing and the center of her student evaluations.

In addition, 2 of the 14 interviewed teachers described the purpose of assessment as being multidimensional. Their views made reference to statements such as: to drive their instruction and to inform the teacher, as well as the students, regarding what they can do with the language. This is exemplified in Neil’s remark, the purpose of assessment is multifaceted…the big thing is to inform my instruction and to show me how well I’m doing as an educator to get across what
I’m teaching…and of course, we want to know what the students’ capabilities are as well.

Magda provided an alternative interpretation that focused on the purpose of assessment as being twofold: “to let the students know what he/she can do, and to let the teacher know what he/she can do…and also if assessment is used correctly, it should drive instruction.”

By examining both the survey and the interview findings, these results provide interesting insight into the teachers’ perceptions of the purpose of assessment in the FLES classroom. In this case, the data suggest that the teachers viewed the purpose of assessment as a way to obtain information on students’ progress and diagnose strengths and weaknesses in their own teaching and instruction, therefore guiding their instruction.

Presented next are the results of the second theme that unfolded during the analysis of the interview data: participants’ views of the role of assessment in the FLES classroom.

**Role of assessment in the FLES classroom.** The findings and discussion on what teachers perceive as the role of assessment were informed by qualitative data from the interviews. Specifically, interviewees were asked what role assessment played in their FLES classrooms. Responses made by the teachers were varied and generally positive in nature, indicating the role of assessment in their classrooms as vital, beneficial, and of most importance. However, not all the teachers addressed it the same way: two out of the 14 teachers made reference to the role of assessment as being in the “background” and not that important in their FLES classrooms. For instance, this representative quote from Nelson, an early career Latin FLES teacher, captured that well:
I think of assessment as more in the background in my classroom because I have 300 students and the more assessments I have, the more I have to grade…but of course Latin is different to other foreign languages…I definitely would like to eventually move assessment more to the foreground.

Overall, the teachers’ responses on the role of assessment fell under the following four main categories: assessment as a student motivator, assessment as a guide/map, assessment as a cohesive agent embedded in teaching, and assessment as an indicator of student learning. These categories are further discussed next.

**Assessment as a student motivator.** Literature on assessment has emphasized the important role assessment has in enhancing student motivation through student involvement in the assessment process (Petre, 2014; Sandrock, 2010; Woylek, 2005). Three of the 14 interviewed teachers expressed they viewed the role of assessment as a student motivator. This perspective is echoed in Mandy’s words during the interview:

I am taking a class on WL assessment…and before, I really thought the role of assessment was to guide my instruction…from this class I’m learning that assessment, when done correctly can really also motivate students…now I have a wider view of the role of assessment…as a motivator to inspire my students to become better independent learners and being able of having an intrinsic motivation.

Sandra’s remark captured this sentiment in a different way; she viewed the primary role of assessment as a motivator because it stimulates students to get more involved in their own learning. She added, “If they [students] know what they are going to be assessed in
they put forth more effort, thus enhancing their overall performance…that is why I always share with them [students] the educational goals and involve them in self-assessment activities.” Tatiana’s comment reflected the role of assessment as a catalyst agent which helps promotes intrinsic motivation: “assessment is important because it can demonstrate to the students how much they are growing and learning and that becomes the intrinsic motivation besides the, ‘I got an A, and I don’t remember this anymore.’”

As noted by a study performed by Bernard (2010), academic motivation needs to be examined not as a separate component of instruction, but in the context of classroom activities. She states that motivation about the FL/WL language is found to be of particular importance in predicting students’ outcomes. The aforementioned comments expressed by the teachers in regard to the role of assessment as a “motivator” mirror this view.

**Assessment as a guide/map.** Sandrock (2010) stated,

> teaching a unit without clear targets in mind is like starting to drive without a road map…in teaching, with a road map and with clear end-of-unit assessments, every activity in the classroom will lead toward that target…and the teacher will know when the students have truly learned the knowledge and skills that are the focus of the unit. (p. 11)

Data from the interviews provided teachers’ responses that described the role of assessment as a guide/map offered direction to their teaching and was essential in their planning and instruction. Elma’s comment seems to capture the overall feel for the “assessment as a guide/map” category:
assessment in general is a key element in the class because it gives like a “true map” for the road to the teacher…for me…I cannot move from A to B if I did not have this map in front of me. So I think that assessment is like a tool to help me figure out how my direction should go, like a map.

This assertion was further expanded upon by Morgan’s remark in which she mentions that assessment is important because it guides the actions she performs in the course of her teaching. She commented,

I do use it to guide my questions. I’m making sure if students look lost, then I’ll change what I’m doing and go back and redo things…it [assessment] guides the lesson in that way. It also guides what I will have them [students] do.

These quotations reflect how these two teachers regard the role of assessment as an essential tool that provides direction to the teaching and instruction that takes place in their WL classrooms.

Assessment as a cohesive agent embedded in teaching. The importance of bringing about a seamless connection between instruction and assessment in order to maximize student performance and better inform instruction has been addressed by several authors (Katz, 2012; Lambert & Lund, 2007; McNamara, 2001; Sandrock, 2010; Shrum & Glisan, 2016). This was palpable during the interviews in several responses the teachers provided regarding the role assessment played in their FLES classrooms. For example, 2 of the 14 interview participants defined the role of assessment in terms of being a cohesive agent and embedded with instruction.
Krista described this as she commented: “it’s cohesive and unified with the
instruction…if I don’t have those [informal classroom assessments], I don’t know where
the instruction is going to go…so it goes right along with me planning my lesson.”
Chelsey’s view of the role of assessment as being embedded with instruction is captured
in the following statement: “so probably it’s in the background, it’s not the first thing that
you would notice right away but it’s blended in with the instruction…it’s sort of a silent
partner.” Morgan further expressed this seamless connection when she described that
assessment was always happening in her FLES classroom in a nonartificial or
premeditated way: “It’s always in the back of my mind…keeping track of which students
answered what, who’s doing this, who got it correct…to me, it’s just part of everyday,
it’s happening every day because it’s natural.”

Assessment as an indicator of student learning. According to Öz (2014), it is
crucial to view assessment and student learning as inseparable, and to emphasize
assessment as a valuable tool for supporting student learning in the planning/instruction
process. During the interviews, 3 of the 14 participants made comments related to the role
of assessment as an indicator of student learning. This is illustrated in Sandra’s comment:

I think one of the important things is to check and see how much the students are
really learning, what they can do with the language. I think it is beneficial to the
students so they know where they stand and what they need to work on.

Lisa expanded by mentioning the active role feedback has in the whole
teaching/assessment process:
I think for me it’s to check in with the students to see what they are getting out of it. Are they learning the vocabulary I’m teaching and can they put together the words…turning them into phrases and matching the ideas, such as pictures or gestures or whatever we are learning?... So it lets me see if they are understanding what I’m doing and if they are retaining any of it.

Finally, Janice shared that assessment is indicative of both student and teacher learning. She added that assessment gives the teacher a perspective of what the students have learned and gives indications [to the teacher] of needed student feedback, as well as whether the lesson might need to be re-taught or modified. Next, the third salient theme which emerged from the analysis of data will be discussed: opinions about assessment and assessment practices in the FLES classroom.

**Teachers’ opinions about assessment and assessment practices in the FLES classroom.** Teachers’ opinions about assessment in their FLES classrooms were expressed primarily through two sources: both quantitative and qualitative data collected from survey questions and qualitative data from the interviews. These opinions gave insight on how the FLES teachers might conceive assessment and provided the researcher with baseline information about the different ways teachers conceptualize assessment practices in their classrooms. Following, the survey findings will be discussed.

**Survey findings.** The survey (Appendix B, Section E) contained 10 items that asked the teachers to rate their level of agreement with statements related to classroom assessments. These were designed to collect data related to the teachers’ opinions about what they consider to be the most appropriate classroom practices in the FL/WL FLES
classroom. It was also intended to determine what classroom assessments the teachers considered more effective and were most likely to use in their FLES classrooms. The list of statements was adapted from the 67 descriptors utilized in the API designed by Zhang and Burry-Stock (2003). From their research, Zhang and Burry-Stock (2003) argued that teachers differ in their assessment practices due to the nature of classroom assessment delineated by teaching levels. Teacher response values for this question were on a 4-point scale with 1 for *Strongly Disagree* and 4 for *Strongly Agree*. Table 5 shows the level of agreement through the mean scores and frequency percentages obtained for each statement.

Among the 128 participating teachers, 78.9% strongly agreed that varied assessment methods should be used continually (*M* = 3.73, *SD* = 0.60), 72.7% strongly agreed with the statement that teacher and student should share an understanding of assessment goals (*M* = 3.67, *SD* = 0.60), and 69.5% strongly agreed that the teacher needs to use authentic materials and situations in the target language (*M* = 3.62, *SD* = 0.67). Conversely, 65.6% strongly agreed that comprehension check questions are useful to confirm student understanding. Interestingly, 60.9% and 60.2% strongly agreed with “teacher should assess oral proficiency often” (*M* = 3.50, *SD* = 0.71) and with “teacher feedback being effective in promoting learning” (*M* = 3.54, *SD* = 0.64) respectively. Less than half of the teachers (48.4%) strongly agreed with the statement that student self-evaluation fosters learning (*M* = 3.34, *SD* = 0.77), and (46.1%) somewhat agreed that classroom assessments focusing directly on student development are best (*M* = 3.34, *SD* = 0.70).
Table 5

**Teachers’ Opinions About Classroom Assessments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Classroom assessments focusing directly on student development are best</td>
<td>3 (2.3)</td>
<td>8 (6.3)</td>
<td>59 (46.1)</td>
<td>58 (45.3)</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Teacher and student should share an understanding of assessment goals</td>
<td>2 (1.6)</td>
<td>3 (2.3)</td>
<td>30 (23.4)</td>
<td>93 (72.7)</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Varied assessment methods should be used continually</td>
<td>2 (1.6)</td>
<td>4 (3.1)</td>
<td>21 (16.4)</td>
<td>101 (78.9)</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Teacher should assess oral proficiency often</td>
<td>2 (1.6)</td>
<td>10 (7.8)</td>
<td>38 (29.7)</td>
<td>78 (60.9)</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Teacher needs to use authentic materials and situations in the target language</td>
<td>3 (2.3)</td>
<td>4 (3.1)</td>
<td>32 (25.0)</td>
<td>89 (69.5)</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Asking students, “What do you think I want you to learn from this lesson?” is useful</td>
<td>6 (4.7)</td>
<td>28 (21.9)</td>
<td>43 (33.6)</td>
<td>51 (39.8)</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Comprehension-check questions are useful to confirm student understanding</td>
<td>2 (1.6)</td>
<td>5 (3.9)</td>
<td>37 (28.9)</td>
<td>84 (65.6)</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) Student self-evaluation fosters learning</td>
<td>4 (3.1)</td>
<td>11 (8.6)</td>
<td>51 (39.8)</td>
<td>62 (48.4)</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) Student peer review feedback is useful learning</td>
<td>8 (6.3)</td>
<td>26 (20.3)</td>
<td>60 (46.9)</td>
<td>34 (26.6)</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) Teacher feedback is effective in promoting learning</td>
<td>2 (1.6)</td>
<td>4 (3.1)</td>
<td>45 (35.2)</td>
<td>77 (60.2)</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. N = 128. Mean scores range from 1 to 4, calculated based on the following conditions: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = somewhat disagree, 3 = somewhat agree, and 4 = strongly agree.*

Data from one open-response survey item, which asked teachers to report additional opinions they might have about classroom assessments, revealed the teachers
valued classroom assessments which were student-centered and emphasized achievement for the majority of students regardless of their proficiency level in the target language. Evidence of this is shown in the following remark made by a Spanish teacher, “Assessment goals in elementary classes should be achievable for every student in the class that year, not just for those who have prior experience in Spanish.” Another teacher added, “We should continue developing strategies and assessments that are more student-centered.” Other teacher responses disclosed feelings of frustration when assessing their students. As one teacher noted, “it’s hard to prepare them effectively and thoughtfully when you have 120 students each week.” Still another teacher elaborated, “There are too many assessments in the elementary level. Whatever happened to the original FLES model which was based on having children gain an understanding and love for the culture and foreign language being taught?” Conversely, it also became evident through their responses that some were grappling with their mixed feelings about classroom assessments in their FLES teaching. For example, one teacher stated, “I wish I could say that my feedback was even more effective but I fear some students don’t pay it as much attention as I might like, to their own detriment on the next one.”

**Open-response survey findings.** Additionally, Section G of the survey asked the teachers to add any personal comments or additional information they would like to share about their FLES classroom assessment practices. A total of 47 responses were collected. Some representative responses which made reference to the continuous and flawless connection between instruction and assessment included: “students are constantly assessed, whether formally or informally, to ensure that learning is taking place” and
most of what I do is centered around assessment, most of which is performance-based: planning for it, teaching the necessary skills, creating rubrics, checking in with the students, grading any written work, etc. As I tell my students when they ask, are you assessing us on this? I’m always assessing!”

A teacher pointed out, “my assessments are done daily through classwork, through homework, and 50% of the grade within a term is based on participation…so assessment is taken into consideration with every class activity and lesson.”

Other comments made by the teachers included the benefits of teaching various grade levels in terms of assessment:

things I see in the upper grade levels [5th, 6th] help me know what to look for and prepare for in the lower grades…many are informal, such as I hear how we sing a song together, or notice what questions they are asking and what answers they are giving orally during class.

Other responses alluded to their classroom assessments as being more individualized in nature. A teacher elaborated, “My assessment is ongoing and individualized. Students develop proficiency at their own pace when presented with compelling, contextualized, comprehensible input. My end-of-term comments tell what a student can do in the language and what strategies he/she uses.”

Interview findings and discussion. The findings which unfolded during the interviews provided greater specificity about how the FLES teachers perceive assessment in their classrooms. Even though the teachers’ opinions reflected great diversity, they
clustered around four main areas: assessment with the “end in mind,” use of informal/formal assessments, time limitedness, and changing views of assessment.

*Assessment with the “end in mind.”* Half of the interviewed teachers (seven) mentioned they employed Wiggins and McTighe’s (2005) “backward design” when planning their lessons and classroom assessment practices. As previously mentioned in Chapter 2, this approach emphasizes identifying what students are expected to do as a result of teaching and learning before instruction begins, and then planning the lesson and assessment based on those desired student outcomes. For instance, Chelsey’s remark encompasses the concept of teaching and assessing with the “end in mind” when she commented:

> with every lesson or activity that I do, previous to presenting it, I think: what I’m going to get out of this in terms of what the students will know? So I kind of plan in my head…okay, when we do this activity, I’ll be able to assess the parts of speech that they are aware of…so I plan it before each lesson in terms of what I’m looking for in that lesson. So previous to the lesson, I have an idea of what I’m hoping to get back from them.

Another illustrative quote reflecting how the teachers assessed with the “end in mind” includes Magda’s comment:

> You’ve got to have the end in mind and then go backwards…if I don’t know what the objective is…how am I going to assess? I need to know what is it that I expect the students to do…I have to know that before I plan or teach a lesson.
Other teachers mentioned that assessment was always present in their planning and teaching, indicating that they took into consideration the desired students’ outcomes before beginning instruction. Both Neil and Janice emphasized the significance of having the students’ “end goals in mind” and doing “backwards planning” while instructing FLES in order to better prepare their students. Morgan added that knowing “the end” helped her plan the beginning: “Knowing that ‘end result’ is very important in planning and assessing…knowing that ‘end’ is what guides everything I do.” These comments suggest that the teachers were aware of the important role “backward design” plays in the planning, assessing and instructing processes and implemented its practice in their FLES classrooms in order to maximize both their students’ as well as their own performance.

*Use of informal/formal classroom assessments.* During the interviews, 5 of the 14 teachers made reference to the use of informal and formal assessments when they were expressing their opinions about classroom assessments. The teachers’ viewpoint on informal and formal assessments indicates that due to the ongoing/continuous fashion in which they are used in the FLES classroom, they are crucial for gauging student progress and performance. This statement is best represented in the following comment made by Morgan:

> on a daily basis, informal assessment is happening all the time, because it’s natural. The more formal assessment only happens at the beginning of the year. I do one in the mid of the year just to make sure…that’s more for me…that I’m doing the right thing, and then at the end of the year to just get a final idea…this is where we got to.
Elma added that the administration of informal assessments occurs several times during the school year in an “ongoing fashion” but more formal assessments are limited and happen “once a month.” Krista elaborated that the formal assessments are mandated in order “to document my students’ work and progress” and the informal assessments “drive my instruction and help me get to know the individual learning styles of my students.” She noted,

> I do my informal assessments and see who understood and got something from this piece and it tells me about the individual learner. I’m going to have these kids for 6 years…so it’s very critical to understand the individual learner along the way, so that’s why I do a lot of informal assessments.

As Cadusch (2014) noted, teachers are constantly assessing on a daily basis, either informally or formally in order to further develop their students’ performance. These interview extracts suggest that the teachers emphasized both informal and formal assessments in their teaching and valued the purposes of each in their daily instruction.

*Time limitedness.* The concept of time was mentioned throughout the interviews by 11 of the 14 teachers as a factor influencing their perceptions about assessment and assessment practices in their FLES classrooms. In the majority of FLES programs, instruction is delivered two to five times a week for class periods of 20 minutes to an hour (Curtain & Dahlberg, 2016). According to the teachers, the insufficiency of allotted time for FLES instruction impacted their planning, preparation of materials, and assessment practices they used through the course of their teaching. Both Janice and Beatrice commented on the time limitedness factor: “the time we have is very short, it’s
only half an hour.” Other teachers noted that the transition time between FLES classes was always challenging. For instance, Morgan’s remarks embody this sentiment:

We have a seven-day cycle, I see them one hour a week, two 30 minutes sessions…. So, knowing that’s also very important…understanding how the time and the time between classes affect my teaching and determining the assessment that I do.

Zora’s comment echoed how the limitation of time affected the assessment practices she used as well. She elaborated: “It’s hard because we are there for only half an hour. So an assessment has to be quick, and it needs to be easy to administer. I usually use rubrics and checklists.”

Further, three of the teachers shared that preparing for teaching different language levels in a “revolving door fashion” presented some challenges, regardless if they had their own designated classroom for FLES instruction or used “push-ins” to carry their materials from classroom to classroom. Lisa gave a vivid description of her situation:

There’s not a lot of time to set up, at least I’m in my own classroom. So everything that I have is there. I don’t have to worry now traveling from one room to another room. A lot of people are in a cart. I used to be part of the time in a cart. So that would limit what materials I have available and the assessments I use.

Even though most of the teachers reported having issues with time allotted for FLES instruction, not all of them addressed the time factor in the same way. For example, Neil,
a French and Spanish teacher at a small private school, expressed his satisfaction with the
time he had available for planning and teaching. He shared:

I only have three to five classes a day, which gives me plenty of preparation time.
I feel very fortunate because the school where I’m in values that preparation
time…in the school where I was previously, I had nine 30-minute classes in one
day. So that was quite intense. And really I didn’t have a lot of time to prepare. So
I feel I can do a lot more creative things, have all the materials that I need
prepared, and use assessments that more multifaceted where I’m now.

The interview data indicated clearly, that some of the FLES teachers faced
numerous challenges in teaching and assessing their students related to the time
limitedness factor: only one participant was pleased with the current teaching and
planning allotted time for his FLES teaching. Next, the theme related to teachers’
changing views on assessment will be examined.

*Changing views of assessment.* Examining interview data also uncovered the
evolutionary process present in the teachers’ views on assessment. The interview protocol
contained a question asking the teachers to share their opinions on whether their views of
WL assessment had stayed the same or changed over time. A total of 12 of the 14
participants expressed that their views on assessment had evolved over time. Although
their responses were diverse and indicated various points of view and different reasons
for their changes of stance, they gravitated predominantly around factors such as
influence of experience, adoption of a “new paradigm” in WL planning and instruction,
and impact of new student/teacher standards and state regulations.
As a FLES teacher with 15 years of experience, Lisa’s remark on her changing views on assessment exemplifies the modification of stance due to experience. She stated:

as a beginning teacher I was afraid to tell my students that they were being assessed because I did not want to make them nervous…now I have come to realize that assessment when performed in a continuous nonthreatening way, enhances student self-motivation and alerts me of any remediation that needs to take place before instruction moves on. It’s a more frequent way to check in and it’s more transparent.

The statements voiced by Nelson and Krista, both second-year FLES teachers, indicated that their views on assessment had changed due to “the growth they had experienced as beginning teachers.” They emphasized that as they become “more comfortable” within the FLES program, due to their desire to innovate and learn new things, “they will be looking for new ways to implement informal assessments in their classrooms.” In addition, when describing how his views on assessment had changed over time, Neil commented on how he has “come to seeing it as a tool that helps me plan my instruction.”

The interview data also indicated that the teachers’ changing views on assessment were influenced by their adoption of the “new paradigm” in WL planning and instruction. Their views on assessment evolved from the traditional paper-and-pencil tasks to the emphasis of performance-based, authentic/real-life assessment situations and the planning of instruction taking in consideration “backward design.” In Tatiana’s words,
I’ve been lucky enough to participate in a group…where we’ve been working with Paul Sandrock from ACTFL. So we’ve been learning in depth about assessment…I thought I was doing it right and I can use some more work. But when you work together as a group on creating assessments…you realize it is very important for them [students] to have a task at the end where they have to perform and think. In knowing, like with “backward design,” the assessments really can lead the rest of the unit in a positive way and help shape how everything goes and what you focus on.

Elma, an Arabic FLES teacher with 17 years of experience, further indicated that before she came to the US “everything had to be documented in paper” and “now you ask them [students] to perform a task.”

Two other teachers described how their views had evolved by placing more emphasis on performance-based and real-life situations when assessing their students. For instance, Magda shared how her views on assessment “had evolved by being very much convinced that you teach what you expect the children to do” and it is critical to “know what that final assessment is going to be and then you structure all of your lessons, all your activities, all of performance tasks, formative and summative, on that final assessment.” She also mentioned that “you’ve got the end goal in mind and then you plan backwards.” Janice documented how her views had evolved by stating that “now our approach is more towards the real-life situations, more connected to reality…that is the only true way to learn a language because that’s the only way they [students] can remember things…it has to be meaningful.” Last, Cheryl’s words reflect a change of
stance in her views of assessment “only because it’s been brought more into the forefront in terms of expectations, regulations, and standards.”

The findings on the opinions the teachers had about assessment indicated that FLES teachers value classroom assessments as essential components of the teaching and learning endeavor and recognize that they offer the teacher valuable information on both the students’ and teacher’s performance. The data showed that even though the teachers’ opinions were diverse in relation to the degree of importance they attributed to classroom assessments, they shared some common underlying principles which were revealed in the survey data as: acknowledging the relevance of incorporating varied classroom assessment methods continuously, using authentic materials and situations in the target language, and the importance for teacher and student to establish a common understanding of assessment goals. In addition, the teachers concurred that comprehension checks are useful to confirm student understanding and believed that teacher feedback is effective in promoting learning. The interview data revealed that the teachers’ opinions about assessment and assessment practices revolved around the following four main areas: assessment with the “end in mind,” use of informal and formal assessments, time limitedness, and changing views of assessment.

**Summary.** To answer Research Question 1, both survey and interview data were analyzed separately and then examined holistically. The investigation of the teachers’ assessment beliefs resulted in the delineation of three major themes: the purpose and importance of assessment, the role of assessment in the FLES classroom, and the opinions about classroom assessments. The findings suggested the participants’
perceptions of assessment were varied and demonstrated different levels of understanding. Some of the teachers in this study viewed assessment as an essential component in their teaching of a WL language, with more than half (64.8%) rating the purpose of assessment to obtain information on students’ progress as very important, followed by as a way to diagnose strengths and weaknesses in their own teaching and instruction. However, the interview data disclosed one participant, an early career FLES teacher, expressed that currently assessment was at the “background” in his instruction, but desired to bring it more into the forefront as he becomes more comfortable in his FLES teaching.

Similarly, high mean scores for strength of agreement with statements related to their opinions about assessment indicate that FLES teachers strongly agreed that varied assessment methods should be used continually in the course of their teaching. Also, they strongly agreed that both teacher and student should share a common understanding of assessments goals.

The interview data revealed that the teachers’ perceptions about assessment and assessment practices were expressed mainly in terms of their views of the purpose and the role of assessment and the opinions they had about assessment in their FLES classrooms. The next section of this chapter will report on the findings that answer the second research question regarding the types of classroom assessment practices that FLES teachers use in their elementary WL classrooms.
Research Question 2

What types of classroom assessment practices do FLES teachers report they use in the elementary world language classroom? To answer this research question, the teachers’ self-reported survey and interview responses on classroom assessment practices were examined. Two sub-questions were asked: What practices/activities do FLES teachers report they use to assess students? Are there any identifiable patterns in these reported classroom assessment practices?

Classroom assessment practices and activities. Classroom assessment practices and activities in the FLES classrooms were explored primarily through self-reported responses from the survey and interview data. The interviews offered an in-depth perspective of the teachers’ responses and provided detailed information on the types of classroom assessments practices the teachers indicated using in their classrooms. They also offered expansions to their self-reported survey assessment practices. The findings from the survey and interviews will be reported next.

Survey findings. The survey findings are composed of three sections of the question in Section C of the survey (Appendix B): methods of classroom assessment practices. Section C asked teachers to indicate how often they employed different assessment practices/activities in their classrooms. The assessment practices were divided and will be reported according to the following categories: formative, summative, and performance-based.

Formative assessments. In this study, survey participants were asked to rate the frequency with which they used a number of possible formative classroom assessment
practices with their students. Teacher response values were denoted on a 4-point scale with 1 for *Not at All Used* and 4 for *Used Often*. The mean scores and frequency of their responses are provided in Table 6.

**Table 6**

*FLES Teachers’ Formative Classroom Assessment Practices*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Activity</th>
<th>Not at all used</th>
<th>Seldom used</th>
<th>Used occasionally</th>
<th>Used often</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read aloud/dictation</td>
<td>24 (18.8)</td>
<td>26 (20.3)</td>
<td>47 (36.7)</td>
<td>31 (24.2)</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student journals</td>
<td>43 (33.6)</td>
<td>31 (24.2)</td>
<td>33 (25.8)</td>
<td>21 (16.4)</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student portfolios</td>
<td>25 (19.5)</td>
<td>30 (23.4)</td>
<td>37 (28.9)</td>
<td>36 (28.1)</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer assessment</td>
<td>27 (21.1)</td>
<td>38 (29.7)</td>
<td>45 (35.2)</td>
<td>18 (14.8)</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>0.98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. N = 128. Mean scores range from 1 to 4, calculated based on the following conditions: 1 = not at all used, 2 seldom used, 3 = used occasionally, and 4 = used often.*

Among the 128 participants, 28.1% reported often using student portfolios to assess their students’ language development (*M* = 2.66, *SD* = 1.09), and 24.2% stated often employing read aloud/dictation (*M* = 2.66, *SD* = 1.04) as a classroom assessment activity. The use of student journals as a formative assessment practice was reported by 16.4% of the teachers (*M* = 2.25, *SD* = 1.09). Conversely, less than half of the participants (35.2%) reported occasionally utilizing peer assessment activities as a way of assessing their students (*M* = 2.42, *SD* = 0.98). These findings suggest that the FLES teachers’ most preferred formative assessment practice is the use of student portfolios. As stated previously in Chapter 2, under the Assessment Practices in FL/WL Education.
section, portfolios are valuable as classroom assessment tools since they provide the learners with the responsibility of assessing their own progress, making selections of work samples that best represent their performance, and providing feedback about instruction to the teacher.

Summative assessments. Descriptive analyses (Table 7) revealed that matching items, short answer items, and fill-in-the-blank answers were among the most frequently used type of summative assessment practices employed by the FLES teachers in this study. For example, nearly half of the participants (49.2%) indicated often using teacher or commercially made tests employing matching items ($M = 3.17$, $SD = 1.01$), while 48.4% of the teachers reported utilizing short answer items in their tests ($M = 3.10$, $SD = 1.07$), and 43% often used fill-in-the-blank answer items ($M = 3.05$, $SD = 1.04$).

Open-ended questions, multiple choice items, and cloze exercises were the summative assessment practices teachers reported to use occasionally. For instance, 37.5% indicated occasionally using open-ended questions ($M = 2.70$, $SD = 1.10$), 35.9% occasionally using multiple choice items ($M = 2.85$, $SD = 1.04$), and 33.6% occasionally utilizing cloze exercises ($M = 2.33$, $SD = 1.04$). More than half of the respondents (62.5%) indicated not at all using standardized tests as summative assessments in their classrooms ($M = 1.62$, $SD = 0.92$).
Table 7

**FLES Teachers’ Summative Classroom Assessment Practices**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Activity</th>
<th>Not at all used</th>
<th>Seldom used</th>
<th>Used occasionally</th>
<th>Used often</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>True–false items</td>
<td>40 (31.3)</td>
<td>28 (21.9)</td>
<td>42 (32.8)</td>
<td>18 (14.1)</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matching items</td>
<td>15 (11.7)</td>
<td>11 (8.6)</td>
<td>39 (30.5)</td>
<td>63 (49.2)</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple choice items</td>
<td>19 (14.8)</td>
<td>22 (17.2)</td>
<td>46 (35.9)</td>
<td>41 (32.0)</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short answer items</td>
<td>18 (14.1)</td>
<td>13 (10.2)</td>
<td>35 (27.3)</td>
<td>62 (48.4)</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fill-in-the-blank answers</td>
<td>18 (14.1)</td>
<td>12 (9.4)</td>
<td>43 (33.6)</td>
<td>55 (43.0)</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short paragraph writing</td>
<td>30 (23.4)</td>
<td>18 (14.1)</td>
<td>39 (30.5)</td>
<td>41 (32.0)</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloze exercises</td>
<td>37 (28.9)</td>
<td>30 (23.4)</td>
<td>43 (33.6)</td>
<td>18 (14.1)</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open-ended questions</td>
<td>28 (21.9)</td>
<td>17 (13.3)</td>
<td>48 (37.5)</td>
<td>35 (27.3)</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standardized tests</td>
<td>80 (62.5)</td>
<td>25 (19.5)</td>
<td>15 (11.7)</td>
<td>8 (6.3)</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. N = 128. Mean scores range from 1 to 4, calculated based on the following conditions: 1 = not at all used, 2 = seldom used, 3 = used occasionally, and 4 = used often.*

Performance-based assessments. Table 8 indicates the performance-based activities the participants most frequently used in their FLES classrooms. Sandrock (2010) states that performance-based assessments require students to use language for real purposes through using the three modes of communication (interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational). Specifically, these performance activities focused on requiring students to: follow directions given orally, engage in pair-share, and role play. Of the 128 respondents, 68% of the teachers indicated often using performance assessments that called on students to show understanding by following directions given orally ($M = 3.62, SD = 0.64$), 58.6% used engaging students in pair-share activities ($M =$
3.38, $SD = 0.88$), and 50.8% using role play activities with their students ($M = 3.28$, $SD = 0.86$).

Also, the participants reported occasionally using performance-based activities, such as information gap activities, students providing an oral or written description of an event or object, and student presentations on a topic in their classrooms. For example, 35.9% use information gap activities ($M = 2.69$, $SD = 1.06$), 34.4% have students provide an oral or written description about an event or object ($M = 3.14$, $SD = 0.96$), and 31.3% have students do oral presentations on a topic ($M = 3.02$, $SD = 1.03$). The aforementioned results suggest that most teachers prefer to use the interpersonal and presentational communication modes when utilizing performance-based assessments in their classrooms. On the other hand, 21.1% indicated not using at all the retelling of a story after listening to it ($M = 2.61$, $SD = 1.10$) and 18.8% did not at all used video or audiotaping of a skit ($M = 2.78$, $SD = 1.11$).
Table 8

*FLES Teachers’ Performance-Based Assessment Practices*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Activity</th>
<th>Not at all used</th>
<th>Seldom used</th>
<th>Used occasionally</th>
<th>Used often</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give oral directions</td>
<td>20 (15.6)</td>
<td>28 (21.9)</td>
<td>37 (28.9)</td>
<td>43 (33.6)</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow directions given orally</td>
<td>3 (2.3)</td>
<td>2 (1.6)</td>
<td>36 (28.1)</td>
<td>87 (68.0)</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide an oral/written description of an event or object</td>
<td>12 (9.4)</td>
<td>15 (11.7)</td>
<td>44 (34.4)</td>
<td>57 (44.5)</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information gap activities</td>
<td>24 (18.8)</td>
<td>25 (19.5)</td>
<td>46 (35.9)</td>
<td>33 (25.8)</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentations on a topic</td>
<td>16 (12.5)</td>
<td>19 (14.8)</td>
<td>40 (31.3)</td>
<td>53 (41.4)</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage in pair-share</td>
<td>7 (5.5)</td>
<td>13 (10.2)</td>
<td>33 (25.8)</td>
<td>75 (58.6)</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retell a story after listening</td>
<td>27 (21.1)</td>
<td>31 (24.2)</td>
<td>35 (27.3)</td>
<td>35 (27.3)</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role play</td>
<td>5 (3.9)</td>
<td>19 (14.8)</td>
<td>39 (30.5)</td>
<td>65 (50.8)</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video/audiotape a skit</td>
<td>24 (18.8)</td>
<td>24 (18.8)</td>
<td>36 (28.1)</td>
<td>44 (34.4)</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* N = 128. Mean scores range from 1 to 4, calculated based on the following conditions: 1 = not at all used, 2 = seldom used, 3 = used occasionally, and 4 = used often.

Furthermore, survey open-response items in Section C substantiated the findings gathered through the quantitative data. The teachers’ expanded responses indicate that they favored and reported frequently using formative assessments in their classrooms in the form of tests and practice quizzes, cooperative learning activities, along with student presentational projects and student self-assessments. The participants also stated frequently using games, exit tickets, Total Physical Response (TPR)/Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling (TPRS), and choral response as comprehension check activities. Data obtained from survey open-responses also revealed that the FLES teachers display a strong level of care for formative assessments which
involved the use of technology and which promoted ongoing interaction between the
teacher and students, as well as among students themselves. Several examples include
blogs with written and student voice recordings, online interactive lessons, use of the
Senteo® SMART® interactive response computer platform, and interactive whiteboards.
In addition, the teachers also reported employing informal assessments such as teacher
observation/anecdotal reports and assessment progress checklists/charts.

Likewise, data from survey open-response items (14 total responses) related to
formative and summative assessments show that the teachers who participated in this
study value the three modes of communication and incorporate them in their assessment
approaches. They indicated using summative assessments in the form of
interview/conversation assessments that were recorded, and then self- and teacher
assessed. Culture-related interactive listening exercises where students followed a text as
they heard it read were also reported to be used. Lastly, the use of summative oral
assessments in lieu of written ones, especially with younger language learners (1st through
2nd Grades) was also mentioned.

Other examples of both formative and summative assessments in the teachers’
qualitative commentary include the use of timed recorded conversations on
predetermined topics, short conversations in context to elicit the use of a particular
vocabulary or grammar structure, reading out-loud/audiotapes, reader’s theater,
plays/skits, and interactive games. The use of technology to enhance performance-based
classroom assessments included the use of iPads to create videos/stories, slide
presentations, and other web-based tools or applications, such as iMovie.
**Interview findings and discussion.** While the survey data provided a general overview of the types of assessments practices the teachers used in their FLES classroom, the data from the 14 semistructured interviews provided more detailed information and expanded upon “how” these assessments were used. Questions 7 and 8 in the interview protocol (Appendix E) asked participants to address the kinds of assessment methods they used in their FLES classrooms and share distinct successful and unsuccessful types of classroom assessments they had used as part of the evaluation of their students’ language performance and growth.

The teachers’ responses during the interviews related to types of assessment practices implemented in their FLES classroom predominantly focused on the following broad assessment categories: traditional, performance-based, and technology enhanced. The researcher noticed an overlap between each category, as instruction and assessment practices became more intertwined and connected in order to promote successful language development/proficiency. Each of these three assessment categories will be discussed in the following sections.

*Traditional classroom assessments.* Among the 14 interviewees, 4 stated occasionally employing traditional assessment practices in their FLES classrooms. For instance, Nelson, a classical Latin and ancient Greek teacher, commented on sometimes using worksheets, individually and collectively filled learning charts, and activities requiring memorization and translation skills. He shared that he uses interactive worksheets with the younger language learners which require them to color, solve simple situations, and practice vocabulary words. In his words:
I use worksheets for vocabulary…if we are doing body parts, I might have a picture of a Roman soldier to color…six or seven lines where they can write the Latin word and draw a line from the Latin word to the body part…. I like to walk around the classroom, to see who gets it and who doesn’t.

He also shared that due to the nature of Latin as a grammatical accuracy-oriented WL, with the older language learners, “a lot of in-class-work is devoted to memorization and translation activities which later turn into skills necessary for filling learning charts.”

Similarly, Beatrice and Magda stated occasionally using cloze/fill-in-the-blanks activities to supplement student learning. In Beatrice’s words: “We play traditional games or I use serial sentences or like cloze words and things using what we have done in class so to gives the kids opportunities to participate.”

**Performance-based classroom assessments.** The interviews also provided information on the teachers’ self-reported performance-based classroom assessment practices. The majority of the FLES teachers (13 out of 14 participants) expressed using performance-based assessments and being aware of the importance of integrating classroom assessment practices which reflect communicative competence and standards-based WL instruction. Among the performance-based assessments, three subcategories of performance-based tasks were identified: literacy-based, visual and graphic art related, and portfolios. These will be discussed in detail further along in this chapter.

The teachers’ responses related to performance-based assessments weighed on the significance of designing performance tasks presented in context which capitalized on the “meaning-making” ability of their students. Some of the performance-based assessments
the teachers reported using included student performances such as role playing/drama (skits and puppetry), music/dance-related activities, student projects with evaluating rubrics, interactive student centers, and games. They also mentioned involving students in presentational activities, such as interviews, story retelling, dialogues/conversations, and oral exchanges about specific topics studied in class. Written presentations were also reported, particularly expressive ones, such as journals, writing logs, and student notebooks. Transactional written presentations were also mentioned including letters to pen pals, surveys, and student reports. The use of visual and graphic arts was also present with student creations like storyboards, drawings, cartoons, posters, and displays. Some of the aforementioned examples were captured in Lisa’s comments.

Especially with the younger kids, although I do it with all ages, we do a lot of games. So we might do bingo with a lot of the vocabulary…then we play store and so I gave them a little script on how to ask the price and how to calculate the totals. I would circulate around the room and listen to them with their partners in their little groups. They didn’t have to do any writing, but they were reading, they were speaking, they were listening, you know…they were responding.

Elma’s comments expanded on the use of performance-based assessments. She noted the following:

A lot of it is games because I think in a lot of ways that is the more close way to represent what they would do in real life. We’ll do little interviews when they are older, give them a situation and they can talk to their neighbor about what sports
do they enjoy or do they play an instrument and things like that. So lots of conversations, lots of games.

Zora placed emphasis on the use of student self-assessments in the form of rubrics. She shared an example related to student participation that she implements with the older language learners (fourth grade and up):

I’ll give them an assessment to see how they think they did on participation...did they always bring the notebooks to class? Did they contributed and got involved in the lesson? Did they make an attempt to answer or participate in a positive way?

Mandy’s response during the interview captures the essence of how the majority of the FLES teachers approached classroom assessment activities.

I do assessments that are helpful for students to learn and show that they are learning. A variety of different ways, so I address the multimodal way students learn. So we do skits, quizzes...for the younger ones, we do drawing and labeling, games showing what they are learning, listening to music and following along with the activities that are described in the songs. Huge variety, those are just some of them...activities that address the three modes of communication. I also do a lot of interpersonal activities, assessment activities where the children have to navigate the social world with their peers and learn the social subtleties of getting along, of being understood or not understood.

*Literacy-based performance tasks.* Of the 14 participants, 11 emphasized the use of literacy-based performance tasks which connect students to the target language.
through the study of literature. Chelsey gave a vivid description of an assessment suitable for younger language learners:

One new thing that I did this year is a little book called in English *Frog and Toad* or *Sapo y Sepo Todo el Año* in Spanish. They learned the four seasons and each chapter…we did a different activity for each chapter…. I do a lot of “hands-on” activities…creating things and labeling things. I like to use “authentic” literature but in the younger grades sometimes they feel more comfortable when they know what to expect.

Tatiana expanded on the use of literacy-based performance tasks, “We read *Today is Monday* by Eric Carle and talked about…on Monday I eat green beans. So I have them make their own book and then read it to a peer.”

Three other teachers expressed using various performance-based tasks related to literacy enhancement. An example of this is summarized in Janice’s comment,

when we were doing the unit on Mesopotamia, the students [fifth graders] were studying four philosophers. They had a paper puppet with each part of the puppet containing a question about a certain philosopher. After answering each question in the puppet, they needed to write a paragraph. Then they read what they had written to each other…that was the assessment. They [the students] really enjoyed it!

Magda, on the other hand, shared how the use of graphic organizers or Venn diagrams help her students arrange their ideas in preparation for writing in the target language. She remarked during the interview:
with the upper grades [fifth and sixth grades], say you’re doing, for example, something concrete, like a cycle. I would have them make some kind of a map, either a Venn diagram, or some kind of graphic organizer to put down their basic vocabulary and then describe what each part of that is and give the connection. What is that cycle? Where does it begin? What does it go through? How does it end? Then I have them write a paragraph about the cycle accompanied by a drawing and they share with a peer or present it to the class.

*Visual and graphic art performance-based assessments.* The use of visual and graphic art from the target language culture was mentioned by 5 of the 14 participants. Chelsey’s comment is representative of this approach. She elaborated on how with the older language learners (fifth and sixth grades) she used “authentic” art pieces to introduce culture and literacy-based performance tasks. She offered an example from her class.

With Picasso’s Guernica, I had enlarged an outline of it and they had to pick a color scheme and color all the different shapes of one particular color. Then they had to make a list of all the things that they saw in the picture. With that, I was able to teach them, I see___, or there are___, I don’t like___, or I like____, so they were able to create sentences from the picture. We had watched a video on the film and then we had a discussion on the event itself. As their final product, they did peer-sharing.

*Portfolios.* Student portfolios were another performance-based classroom assessment which the teachers reported implementing in their classrooms. Compared to
the 28.1% (36 out of 128) of respondents who reported often using portfolios as a formative assessment in the survey open-response items, 3 of the 14 interviewed teachers (21.4%) mentioned using student portfolios (either traditional or electronic) to illustrate growth in language learning. These portfolios sometimes were not exclusively WL portfolios, but were comprised of work samples from “regular teacher” grade levels as well. For instance, Sandra noted that this form of assessment offers the advantage of student–teacher collaboration in the selection of student work samples and the opportunity to reflect on the information on the portfolio. She mentioned that her students added WL samples of work to the “regular teacher” grade portfolio. She shared, the older students (fourth, fifth, and sixth graders) may do a portfolio…so they always have a couple of samples of their work in the portfolio. They feel very proud of their progress…and specially sharing them [the portfolios] with their parents.

Neil also elaborated that he archives take-home activities in his students’ electronic portfolios, which require the students to call Google Voice and leave a message of a task at hand. He expands: we can go back and look at how they were performing in September, how they were performing in December, etc.…and really see a progression…and it is my hope that we could use these portfolios and pass them along from the elementary school to the middle school to follow them [students] along.

Last, Chelsey added,
I do “can do” statements and several years ago I got a fellowship from NECTFL and I created a “class link-o-folio”… it’s a paper folio that follows the child from K to sixth grade. So that when they go into seventh grade, they take the “can do” statement page to their next teacher and then the part that we have filled out over the 5 years, they get to keep it. It travels with them in each grade…. I’ve been doing that since 2007.

*Technology-enhanced classroom assessments.* Interview data revealed similar results to those appearing in the survey open-response items related to the teachers’ integration of technology and digital media as supporting tools in their classrooms. All 14 interviewed teachers reported using technology to enhance instruction and aid them in assessing their students’ language performance in the FLES classroom. The technology-enhanced classroom assessments mentioned by participants included media presentations such as videotapes, voice recordings, computer programs or iPad applications, photo essays, electronic slides, interactive boards, websites, and classroom response systems. Neil offered a description of one way he employs technology in his classroom: “we do a lot of voice supporting…the students produce those on iPads…everybody has headphones and microphones to be able to do the recordings. So that’s really a huge portion of my assessment.” Morgan emphasized using a classroom response system (clickers) to assess student understanding. She also shared employing applications such as Book Creator®, Pic Collage®, and Popplet® to assist students in their performance-based tasks. In her words:
The Book Creator® activity that I did with them was amazing. They really enjoyed doing it, and three months later we did a parent presentation and I had a group of second graders share their book and they remembered every single sentence. And I said, “if you forget, hit the audio button because it’s recorded….” I gave them the iPad and they read it in front of their parents. They had a great time with that one! In all honesty, anything having to do with technology they love.

Of the 14 interviewed teachers, 5 expressed using interactive boards (SMART Boards) extensively during their FLES instruction because of their easy access to authentic sources of language and opportunity for active student interaction. For example, Magda commented that she liked using the SMART board “because it’s interactive” and “allows for whole body expressions/movement through visuals.” However, Krista shared that while she would like to make more use of the interactive board, it is difficult because “traveling in a cart and at the end of the day it’s very hard to carry materials, so I use it sometimes just as a stable image.”

*Ineffective classroom assessments.* Three teachers reported some assessment practices which they considered as “ineffective” in their FLES classrooms. Neil observed that the traditional FL/WL teaching approach is very big on dictation and I don’t think that’s really the right type of assessment for students in a FLES program. Maybe if they were in an immersion program…having a more intensive study and paying attention to spelling and grammar…. I think then that would be a more appropriate assessment tool.
Equally, both Mandy and Morgan expressed how cloze exercises did not work as expected as an assessment tool in determined situations. In Mandy’s words:

In high school, I used to do a lot of cloze activities. When I first went to elementary school, I tried that and obviously, it did not work. Very soon I found out it was inappropriate and was not going to be a successful type of assessment for that age. So, I would say things that are, you know, where they are interacting…like the pair-share are better choices.

Morgan mentioned that she tried a cloze exercise during a winter season and because of the lack of continuity of instructional time due to inclement weather, the assessment was ineffective. She described,

because of the snow…I don’t think that the kids got it at all!… Most of the writings were cloze exercises. They could go out there and read and they’d have no clue of what they were saying…. I just felt that the whole unit was so choppy. It didn’t flow. I had to cut out so much stuff that I almost gave up finishing the whole project.

During the course of their interviews, 4 of the 14 teachers expressed feeling responsible for what they considered ineffective assessment outcomes which required, in some cases, the need to reteach. Some of the reasons they mentioned involved what they considered to be the probable inappropriateness of material presentation, lesson timing, lesson fluidity, and supplemental material organization. Magda’s remark captures this when she stated:
Sometimes maybe the way I conducted the beginning of the lesson was not optimal...and then, of course, the way I carried them [lessons] out varies according to the groups. So I look and ask why? Was it because I didn’t explain enough? Was a lack of time to do the presentation? Was the class big and weren’t able to get around to everybody? And then I make the adjustments.

**Summary.** The survey and interview responses focusing on types of classroom assessment practices used during FLES instruction were explored to answer Research Question 2. Findings indicate that the FLES teachers used an extensive variety of assessments, all falling in the formative, summative, and performance-based domains. These included traditional, literacy-based, visual- and graphic art-based, and technology-enhanced classroom assessments. The findings also indicate the participants’ strong level of care for interactive classroom assessment practices which require the use of the TL in real-life meaningful situations. Equally, the integration of technology appeared to dominate and become an important factor in the participating teachers’ classroom assessment practices selection. Next, Research Question 3, which addresses how the teachers understand their assessment practices informing the pedagogical choices they make in the FLES classroom, will be discussed.

**Research Question 3**

**How do FLES teachers understand their assessment practices informing the pedagogical choices they make in the elementary world language classroom?**

Research Question 3 addresses the relationship between and among the teachers’ attitudes, perceptions, and pedagogical choices they make regarding assessment and
assessment practices in the FLES classroom. It aimed to understand (a) factors influencing the formation of teachers’ beliefs about assessment and assessment practices, (b) possible areas of synergy and tension (barriers) between the FLES teachers’ beliefs and assessment practices they report using, and (c) how the teachers connect assessment and instructional practices.

How teachers perceive assessment and assessment practices, as well as the self-reported assessments they use in their FLES classrooms, have been discussed under Research Questions 1 and 2. Some of the teachers’ perceptions about assessment and the types of assessments used in the classroom found through the survey and interview data were reflected in the teachers’ self-reported practices, while others appeared to conflict with their stated pedagogical choices. This is a limitation inherent in self-reported data that are not substantiated by classroom observations or artifacts.

Survey questions focusing on pedagogical choices after assessment and time spent on assessment offered insight into the possible cause of such conflicts. Conversely, the interviews provided in-depth information on the formation of assessment beliefs and practices. These were found to be influenced by the participants’ knowledge and main goals related to WL teaching and learning, and their personal/educational backgrounds. This section explores how teachers’ perceptions about assessment might impact their pedagogical choices; it also investigates what appear to be constraints for the teachers in implementing their assessment beliefs.

**Formation of assessment beliefs and practices.** Teachers’ beliefs regarding assessment and assessment practices reported in both the survey and interviews were
determined to impact their teaching and assessing of their WL students. Factors influencing teacher cognition, such as knowledge, personal experiences, perceptions, and environmental components have been researched extensively (Altan, 2012; Barcelos & Kalaja, 2011; Basturkmen, 2012; Borg, 2003; Kissau et al., 2012). Thus, insights on the formation of teachers’ beliefs were vital for the researcher to understand how the teachers perceive their assessment practices informing the pedagogical choices they make in the FLES classroom, and the reasons underlying their choice of instructional practices. Three factors emerged from the data as salient components in the formation of the FLES teachers’ assessment beliefs and practices: knowledge about WL teaching and learning, goals and objectives in WL teaching, and personal/educational background.

**Knowledge related to WL teaching and learning.** The knowledge about WL teaching and learning played an important role in shaping the teachers beliefs and practices regarding assessment in the FLES classroom. This emerged during the interviews when the teachers shared their views on the benefits of learning a WL at an early age, the significance of learner-centered WL instruction, and the importance of seamlessly connecting assessment to WL instruction. Janice’s comment captured this point clearly as she addressed the benefits of starting WL learning early.

First, you see how a student can develop a new language. How it is so easy for them to speak a foreign language at an early age…. That, I think that is my, my…the best! They’re all capable to learn the language. They’re all capable, so there is no exception. I’m talking about cognitive skills, I’m talking about race,
I’m talking about ethnicity…it is for everybody, and everybody can do it. That’s the beauty of it!

Zora added that it is imperative to start language learning early due to “the need to prepare global citizens that are able to communicate with individuals from other cultures.” Tatiana expanded that “the students absorb so much when they are young” and she just does not understand how “we are going to communicate with the rest of the world if WL teaching is not started at an early age.” She added, “I feel that if the kids don’t understand the culture, the language they are learning…you have to connect to it. You have to make them understand in order to make them global citizens.” Magda asked the rhetorical question: “Is it worth it to learn another language?... Of course…the ability to speak another language will benefit you so much in your life.” Nelson described his interest in accepting a Latin teaching position at the elementary school level by stating, This year is the first year Latin was extended down to the elementary school and that’s the reason I took the job, because I was very interested in the idea of teaching Latin at an early age…the earlier the better.

Teachers also reported that learner-centered WL instruction was critical in order to empower the students and assess them appropriately. Elma, an Arabic FLES teacher, shared her views: “the teacher needs to ‘watch’ the students and make sure they are doing the activities properly…she needs to be always looking for the children and whatever catches their attention and do what she can to optimize their learning.” Morgan elaborated that she does not believe there is only one way of teaching FLES but that the teacher needs to employ a variety of teaching and assessment strategies accordingly
based on the learners’ interests. She stated, “You have to know your classes and your kids…some classes do not like singing, but they love to cut and paste and color. So I adapt things, it all depends on the types of students that you have.” Chelsey gave a vivid example of one way she practices learner-centered instruction in her FLES classroom.

Basically, I think that when I start a topic, I kind of “observe” how it is being absorbed and if some students…if the class seems to be getting it, then I’ll go into it a bit deeper. Sometimes it goes off track…and if it goes off track, I usually go off track with it because it’s where the students want to go.

The importance of seamlessly connecting assessment to WL instruction was mentioned during the interviews by 50% of the teachers (seven) as a factor influencing their formation of assessment beliefs and practices. Magda, a Spanish FLES teacher, made a comment that summarized their views.

When you are assessing…what are you assessing for? I assess according to what I’m teaching…the objectives, the goals I want the students to obtain. You take into mind…you have to know how this student learns a language, and you assess accordingly. You cannot expect a novice to do things on the expert level. So the assessment has to be in accordance to the grade level, the ability of the student, and taking in consideration how an individual learns a second language.

**Goals and objectives in WL teaching.** The second factor which appeared to influence the teachers’ formation of assessment beliefs and practices was their goals/objectives for WL teaching and learning. Question number three of the interview protocol (Appendix E) asked participants what were their main goals/objectives in WL
teaching. Their responses varied and mentioned components such as getting students excited and confident about learning a WL and about other cultures, promoting the communication and usage of the TL in real-life meaningful situations, and providing background knowledge in reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills in the FL.

For example, half of the interviewed teachers (seven) mentioned as their primary goal/objective for WL teaching and learning to instill in their students the confidence and an excitement of learning another language. Neil captured this sentiment when he shared:

My number one goal is to have students feel comfortable and confident about learning another language and about another culture…. To me, that is the strongest and most important thing…because once you’ve got that down, I think everything falls in its place.

Sandra elaborated,

My two main goals are that students feel confident and want to learn more and continue to be language learners throughout their lives and also that they feel they can communicate with people and use the language in meaningful ways.

Lisa stressed the importance of “establishing a relationship with the students” and “have them be happy and excited about learning another language, learning about other people.” Elma’s priority lay in “making language learning fun…we want them to love the language…it’s not an easy language,” referring to the Arabic language. Last, Mandy shared that her main goal is “giving the students the background knowledge in the four language arts skills [speaking, writing, reading, and listening].”
Personal experiences. The third factor which seemed to influence the teachers’ beliefs regarding assessment practices in the FLES classroom was their background, both personal and educational. Questions 1 and 2 of the interview protocol (Appendix E) asked teachers to share how their experiences prepared them to assess language development and performance in the FLES classroom and how these experiences have affected their teaching of a FL/WL, respectively. Among the 14 teachers interviewed, 9 (64%) talked about how their personal experiences to become FLES teachers, and the kind of teacher preparation they received, helped directly or indirectly shape the pedagogical choices they made in their classrooms. These choices were related to the types of assessments they reported using (previously discussed in Research Question 2), the allotted time they have for teaching and assessing their students, and the resources available to them in their particular teaching contexts.

In addition, 71.4% of the FLES teachers interviewed (10 out of 14) mentioned that the teacher preparation they received was geared towards the middle or high school level and did not include a robust emphasis on the elementary school level. This may have impacted the pedagogical choices they made in regard to assessment. Some said they relied on informal mentorships provided by other FLES teachers or a “regular” elementary school teacher to seek advice on how to design appropriate assessments for younger language learners. Others, like Magda, shared that “the teacher preparation that I personally received was 25 years ‘on the job’ training.” Krista summarized her situation:
Most of the teacher preparation I received was geared towards the high school level and in order to get my license in elementary, I student taught [8 weeks] with an elementary focus and that was the only elementary-focused preparation I had. She also commented on how her experiences as a new FLES teacher have shaped the way she assesses her students. In her words:

We need more instructional information on how other teachers carry on their assessment practices. A lot of times what we find is that our teacher preparation was at the high school or straight elementary level and you have to change them to make them work…. However, assessment is one of those things that’s really hard to find a way when you have a short time for lessons and a lot of material to cover. I’ve been looking at other specialists [Art and P.E.] and how they assess on an ongoing basis to find alternate ways to go about it.

Cheryl commented that while working on her alternative teaching certificate, the experience was probably “not that great” and a lot of it was “trial and error” with regard to assessment because she was new and had not done an internship. She added, in terms of actual preparation for what to expect in the classroom, it wasn’t there…. [But] my background of 10 years as a dance teacher and my exposure to languages at an early age helped me be creative and figure out how to help the students learn a FL.

The survey’s open-ended responses further disclosed how some FLES teachers struggle with feelings of inadequacy in respect to teaching and assessing at the
elementary school level due to their educational experiences. One teacher’s comment summarized their challenge:

I am still learning about the elementary grade level. I did my initial training in high school, so the past three years of teaching FLES have been a learning and growing experience for me. It is difficult…to know what is appropriate at each level, what students are capable of, and how much support to provide. Wish my training program had included more information about teaching at all levels, rather than just the upper grades.

Areas of synergy and tension. Although the FLES teachers’ reported classroom practices were generally found consistent with their stated beliefs regarding assessment and assessment practices, areas of synergy and tension were found in the data. These emerged as themes after the survey open-ended responses were connected with interview data, and two categories emerged: external factors beyond the teachers’ control and everyday classroom realities. Both categories will be discussed next.

External factors. Examining interviews and open-ended survey responses disclosed constraints voiced by the teachers as they taught a WL and implemented assessment practices in their FLES classrooms. The following three external factors were identified as subthemes to further delineate the external factors: student–teacher ratio, amount of teaching time, and the unpredictability of teaching assignments.

Student–teacher ratio. Both the open-ended survey questions and the interviews revealed teachers’ restraints regarding teaching and assessing their students. More than half (79%) of the interviewed participants taught 200 plus FLES students, 14% taught
between 100 and 150 students, and only one participant taught 40 FLES students. A comment voiced in the survey summarized the constraint presented by the number of students assigned to a FLES teacher.

It is very hard to keep track of all the students that we have in the FLES program (over 500) taking into account that we see them only once a week. I wish we could have the right amount of students so we can deliver how we should do, what is beneficial for our students.

While conducting the interviews, 12 out of 14 teachers (86%) also mentioned challenges related to the high number of students they taught. Lisa’s interview captured this example clearly as she expressed:

If I want to do any kind of assessment where I collect data and can put it in some written form to be able to use it, it has to be in an organized way…but to get through 120 kids that are in the classroom watching a movie, while I am out in the hallway trying to assess them…it is a nightmare!

She also stated that being able “to go into lengthy comments [while assessing] with that many students” is really difficult.

This sentiment was also echoed in Tatiana’s description of how she tries to address keeping track of student assessment records due to the high student–teacher ratio. She commented,

Sometimes I think I should make copies of all of their “Can do” statements and keep track of where I think they are at that time…but it is so much work…I have
200 students! So I haven’t found a good system for keeping track of student
growth yet.

In addition, Sandra noted that being the only current French teacher for K-eighth grades
has been hard in terms of assessment and she hopes “we are hiring a second French
teacher next year” to help ease the work load. Magda added,

This year I have first, second, and third grades…and I have a total of 395
students…the school is over a 1,000 students…we are stretched…I have eight
classes with just third graders. We have three teachers, but filling two full-time
positions.

*Amount of teaching time.* Another area of tension revealed through the interviews
that impacted teaching and assessing students was the allotted teaching time for FLES.
The “time factor” was also previously addressed in Research Question 2 of this study
regarding how FLES teachers perceive assessment in the classroom (see Time
Limitedness).

A total of 12 interviewed participants (86%) expressed discontent with the
amount of time they had for teaching and assessing their students. They voiced their
desire to spend more time in the classroom with their students and have more time for
completing more detailed assessments that provide a more in-depth perspective of their
students’ progress. For instance, Beatrice’s comment reflected the tension that many
FLES teachers experience with time restraints. She shared, “the time we have is very
short…there is not much opportunity to expand, go in-depth in a lot of the teaching and
assessment activities.” Besides, the interviews provided insight on how FLES teachers
often have to advocate for more teaching time in order to maintain the program’s quality and effectiveness. Morgan’s situation exemplified this when she described that when her current school changed to a “seven-day cycle” schedule, she only met her students once a week. She shared,

when we changed to the seven-day cycle, it was the most horrendous thing they did! I went in and said that if they wanted me to maintain my program the way it is, I needed at least three times every seven days…that’s even stretching it, but I got it!

Other teachers mentioned how being in a “push-in” (cart) often compromised their teaching time. Mandy described her situation: “I see some of my classes three times a week for 40 minutes. I see other classes twice a week for 40 minutes…but I lose a lot of time in transitions…going from one classroom to the other.” Zora noted that we only see students for half an hour twice a week…but with holidays, snow days, field trips, and pull-outs for testing [general education] for example, it’s hard to maintain the continuity of the lessons…so an assessment has to be something that is quick…it needs to be easy…I usually use a rubric and give them [students] a writing prompt.

Equally, the survey open-ended responses offered additional evidence on possible disconnects between the teachers’ beliefs and their assessment practices regarding the allotted teaching time for FLES. The following comment provided a vivid description:
I think for me there is a disconnect between what I would ideally like to accomplish with assessments and what I am able to do due to time constraints, as well as a lack of understanding of designing sound assessments/rubrics.”

Another teacher shared how “due to the limited amount of instruction [one hour a week] assessment and lessons are not what I wish they be.” Still another teacher commented, “I only see my K-5 students one time a week—hence the small amount of time for assessing.” Last, a teacher elaborated, “With the daily 15 minute allotted time for each lesson in grades Kindergarten through third grade, I find it challenging to assess students in other ways besides anecdotally and through observation.” These responses indicate that the teachers found assessing their students very challenging because they felt it is often impacted by scheduling issues and a high student–teacher ratio.

The teachers also expressed difficulty designing assessments that truly measured their students’ abilities due to the scarce time they “see” them. They expressed that teaching and assessing different educational levels on a daily basis was very challenging and required a great deal of organization and planning on their behalf. For example, an open-ended response in the survey indicated that every FLES classroom assessment was either created by the teacher herself or her colleagues, which “is very time consuming…and correcting them is also very time consuming since we have so many students each year.” Another open-ended survey response mentioned how teacher-made assessments were laborious. The teacher shared:

The assessments I use are ones I have prepared myself for my students and my program. Creating these assessments takes a long time! Since I am the sole
teacher in my department, I do not have the opportunity to collaborate with others and share ideas. I am always unsure if what I am doing is enough. The assessments are based on my own curriculum and my interpretation of state standards.

**Unpredictability of teaching assignments.** An additional external factor emerging from the interview data was the year-to-year unpredictability and variability of teaching assignments and schedules. This unpredictability appeared to contribute to the incongruence found between the teachers’ beliefs and practices in regard to assessment. Half of the participants voiced concern about how each year their teaching assignments varied tremendously, thus making it difficult to prepare in advance for the upcoming school year. Some teachers expressed how teaching at more than one school building made it hard to organize their teaching/assessing materials and keep accurate student records. For instance, Elma shared her concern, “every year we have different schedules, we have different planning time, with different number of students.” She added, this year because of the budget, we have four classes in every grade, so in Arabic, we’ll combine them…with three teachers that means that in K-third grade classes we have 30 students in each class…that is a lot of students.

The variability of the aforementioned factors affected the teachers’ sense of efficacy related to their preparation to manage their yearly teaching assignments effectively as well as their assessment practices. Beatrice’s remark demonstrated some of the teachers’ anxiety in regard to assessment related to next year’s teaching assignment, “When things change next year, I’ll have to start documenting that [assessments]. I haven’t been told
how it’s going to work, yet.” These remarks suggest that even though the uncertainty of the teaching assignments at the beginning of the school year created distress in some teachers, most of them managed to remain flexible and learned to deal with the situation.

**Classroom realities.** The findings indicate that besides external factors which impacted the assessment practices taking place in FLES classrooms, the everyday classroom realities the teachers face also created areas of tension between the teachers’ stated beliefs about assessment and their reported assessment practices. These classroom realities include a sense of isolation and a challenging physical teaching environment. Both influential factors will be discussed next.

**Sense of isolation.** Both the survey and interview data revealed that some teachers often experienced “feeling alone” within their school settings. Feelings of isolation appeared to be related to the singularity of the FLES teachers’ job: For the most part, they are the only FL/WL teachers in their elementary schools. For example, Neil shared that at his previous school he was “the only language teacher for the elementary school” and that he “did not have a team to work with.” This situation made the exchange of teaching and assessment ideas difficult. Likewise, Lisa’s comment also reflected this sense of isolation experienced by many FLES teachers: “I’m the only one in my school, no one else in my district does what I do.” She also emphasized that she is always looking for “colleagues from other states” and is active in world language LISTSERVS and attends seminars and conferences “in order to exchange teaching and assessment ideas.” The following statement sums up how “alone” FLES teachers feel and how it impacts their assessment practices.
Being the lone Spanish in a school of nearly 700 students, I see each class once every six days for 50 minutes. Most of my assessments are formative in nature. I do the occasional writing or fill-in-the-blank or multiple choice quizzes, but most of our time is spent acting out stories or mini situations using the language in context. The grade that I give them is derived from my observation of how well they participated and paid attention…. I realize this may not be the preferred way to do things, but I only see the kids about 29 times a year. I have to be very particular and intentional about how we spend our time, and so far, this is how it has worked out.

*Physical teaching environment.* The physical teaching environment was an additional factor which contributed to some of the incongruence found between the teachers’ beliefs about assessment and their assessment practices. Teachers were challenged physically when required to “move around” classrooms and teach at more than one elementary school. The logistics of the teachers using “push-ins” (carts) to transport their teaching and assessment materials from classroom to classroom also created organization and storage hurdles and impacted the timeliness of their teaching schedules. In addition, some teachers shared rooms with other specialists intermittently (on occasional days only).

More than half (57.1%) of the interviewed teachers reported using “push-ins” (carts) or “traveling” from classroom to classroom for delivering their FL/WL teaching. They shared their experiences related to teaching and assessing their students. For instance, Elma described how using the push-in, rather than having their own classrooms,
“gets very confusing trying to keep up with the curriculum or the planning” because of the “hands-on approach to teaching and the use of centers and manipulatives.” She expanded,

because we teach multiple levels, it gets very difficult making sure you have all the resources you need in your cart…then maybe you forgot to bring something or the assessment activity you planned for your students is too hard for them…you have to improvise all the time.

Magda mentioned that working from a cart presents challenges related to the way she assesses her students. She stated

building a community in the classroom is important…for the assessment…sometimes the interpersonal mode works well, sometimes not…so I make those adjustments according to what’s in the classroom [resources] and what works well. If I had my own classroom with more time, it’ll probably would function, but you have to work with what you have.

Mandy elaborated, “You lose a lot of time in transitions when you are in a cart.” Krista, who teaches at three different elementary schools, added that she “stores the teaching materials in the basement” of one of the schools she teaches at and “has to carry my materials from school to school because I only have one set of materials.”

Conversely, 42.8% of the teachers (6 out of 14) had their own classrooms designated exclusively for FLES instruction. They expressed satisfaction in being able to plan both teaching and assessing their students with more ease. Neil expressed,
I love having my own classroom because all my resources are there. Even the walls serve a purpose more than just for decorations. Every request they need to make whether it’s going to the bathroom, etc….is posted for the students to use them.

Likewise, Morgan pointed out the benefits of her own classroom:

I have my own classroom, which is very nice. The kids come to me. I think the classroom environment should be helpful to the students, so everything in this room is a tool to help them remember the words and use the words.

She also mentioned the challenges she once faced while trying to secure her own classroom. “I worked very hard to have this classroom…I was under the stairs one year…in a closet…I used the closet for storage of my teaching materials and made it work…for a while.”

Assessment and instructional practices. Research Question 3 also addressed how FLES teachers connect assessment and instructional practices. McTighe (2010) stated that assessment is much more than something performed at the end of an instructional segment to obtain a grade. He posits that assessment should guide curriculum planning, establish well-defined performance targets for teaching and learning, and provide helpful feedback for adjustment and improvement. Based on the aforementioned components, three themes emerged from the analysis of survey and interview data regarding how FLES teachers “connect” instructional practices and assessment: the pedagogical choices the teachers made after assessment, how they provided student feedback, and the time they reported spending on assessment.
Survey findings. The survey findings are composed of two sections of questions in the survey: Section D and Section F. The question on pedagogical choices after assessment (Section D, Question 1) asked teachers to indicate what they did with the information they obtained from assessment. The question related to student feedback (Section D, Question 2) provided information about how feedback was provided to students. The findings will be reported by theme as reported in the responses to the questions.

Pedagogical choices after assessment. The survey participants were asked to check all the belief statements that applied in their respective contexts related to actions taken after student assessment. An open-ended response at the end allowed participants to add “other” that might apply. From the participants’ responses, the researcher hoped to determine what actions the teachers took after assessing their students and understand how/if they “connected” assessment with instructional practices. Table 9 shows the frequency of possible actions participants can take in their classrooms with the information gathered from the assessment of their students.

Among the participating teachers, 91.4% indicated revising their lesson plans to make necessary changes to adjust or improve their teaching; 90.6% diagnosed the strengths and weaknesses in their own teaching; 71.1% provided information to parents, students, and other stakeholders; and 64.1% formally documented growth in the learning of their students. More than half (63.3%) of the participants indicated that they provided other assessment methods to accommodate differentiated instruction. The open-ended responses included remarks such as having differentiation elements built into the
assessment before it is given to students, writing narrative reports on each student three times a year, and determining any need for reinforcement before moving on with instruction.

Table 9

*What FLES Teachers Do with Information Gathered from Student Assessment*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Revise my lesson plans after assessment to make changes if necessary</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>91.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagnose strengths and weaknesses in my own teaching and instruction</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>90.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide information to parents, students, and school officials about student performance</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>71.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formally document growth in the learning of my students</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>64.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide other assessment methods to accommodate differentiated instruction</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>63.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Multiple responses were permitted.

*Student feedback.* Feedback has been identified as a crucial component of assessment. It provides students with tangible ways of knowing which qualities are strong, which ones need improvement, and which ones they need to develop (Sandrock, 2010). Katz (2012) also emphasizes the importance of useful feedback that provides “specific and descriptive information to students” (p. 72).

Table 10 shows the frequency of different types of feedback interventions the participants provided to their students during FLES instruction. From the seven possible types of feedback they used in their instruction, the teachers checked all that applied. An open-ended response option at the end offered the opportunity of adding “other” ways they provided feedback according to their teaching contexts. Among the participants, 92.2% reported offering verbal feedback, 76.6% gave feedback in the form of written...
comments on work, 57.8% provided a letter/number grade, and 39.1% gave feedback as a total test score. Less than half (32.8%) indicated having conferences with students and 28.9% used checklists to give feedback to their students. Only 7% reported maintaining a teaching/diary log to keep track of events in order to facilitate giving student feedback.

Open-ended responses, indicated the use of rubrics and nonverbal feedback, such as hand motions: high fives, thumbs up; facial expressions: smile, and a nod of the head.

Table 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How FLES Teachers Provide Student Feedback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N = 128*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written comments on work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A letter/number grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total test score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference with students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checklist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching diary/log</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Multiple responses were permitted.

Time spent on assessment. The participants were also asked to indicate how much time a week they spent on assessment during a grading period (both at school and at home). It included time spent on preparing assessment, collecting information, scoring the responses, and reporting assessment results. As shown in Table 11, 34.4% of the teachers spent between one and two hours a week on assessment, 22.7% spent between three and four hours a week, and 23.4% spent between five and six hours a week. The mean was halfway between three to four hours and five and six hours (\( M = 2.57, SD = \))
1.77). Less than half of the teachers (19.5%) reported spending between 7 and more than 14 hours a week on assessment.

Table 11

*Time Spent on Assessment during a Grading Period*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>N = 128</th>
<th>Frequency Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-2 hours a week</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>34.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4 hours a week</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6 hours a week</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>23.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-8 hours a week</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-10 hours a week</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-12 hours a week</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-14 hours a week</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 14 hours a week</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. M = 2.57 (halfway between 3-4 hours and 5-6 hours), SD = 1.77.*

**Interview findings and discussion.** Question 6 of the FLES teacher interview protocol (Appendix E) asked participants what information they expect to learn through the assessment of their students and what they usually plan to do with such information. It aimed at gaining a better understanding of how/if participants connect assessment and instructional practices and probed for pedagogical choices the teachers made after assessing their language learners.

The interview findings show both similarities and differences to several findings in the survey responses. First, the survey indicated that the majority of the FLES teachers (91.4%) revised their lesson plans after assessment to make changes if necessary and used the information gathered from assessment to diagnose strengths and weaknesses in their own teaching (90.6%). A detailed look at the interview content revealed that 92.8%
of the teachers (13 out of 14) often talked about assessment as an ongoing process of review and refinement of their WL teaching and learning. This included the revision of lesson plans and curriculum content, as well as identifying the students’ and their own strengths and weaknesses. Janice captured this when she shared that she “goes back and modifies her lessons after assessment.” Both Sandra and Magda emphasized “the use of assessment feedback as the focus of instructional design and reteaching.” Chelsey added that after assessment she “looks for improvement for them [students] and improvement for me.” These quotations capture examples of the specific way that some teachers were connecting assessment and instructional practices and viewed the connection as a guiding tool in the planning of instructional practices.

Second, survey results also showed that the two types of feedback most frequently used by the teachers were verbal feedback and written comments on student work. However, some teachers’ responses as found in the interview data shed more light on other types of student feedback they reported using. For instance, Zora commented that “using rubrics as student feedback” to gauge if they had met the WL learning standards was very useful to her. Krista shared that she favored often “giving nonverbal feedback during instruction” because of the ease of delivery. Last, Sandra elaborated that when time permits, she has short “one-on-one conferences” with her students to inform them about their progress.

Third, survey results revealed that the average time spent by the teachers on assessment during a grading period was between three and six hours a week. This result was echoed in Morgan’s words during the interview: “it’s also very important
understanding how time and the time spent teaching determine the assessments I do.” She elaborated by saying that that is the reason why her assessments “are more recall, more things that we’ve done in the class, every single time…things that they [students] can recall readily because they have done them so often.” This comment reflects FLES teachers’ challenges with time in many aspects of their work, including assessing their students and recording the results.

**Summary.** Research Question 3 examined how FLES teachers understand their assessment practices informing the pedagogical choices they make, possible areas of synergy and tension between teachers’ beliefs and assessment practices, and how teachers connect assessment and instructional practices in the elementary WL classroom. Survey and interview data indicated that three areas were aligned with FLES teachers’ beliefs and practices regarding assessment in elementary WL education: knowledge about WL learning and teaching, goals and objectives in WL teaching, and personal background. The areas of synergy and tension between teachers’ beliefs and assessment practices appeared as external factors and everyday classroom realities. The external factors were identified as student-teacher ratio, amount of teaching time, and unpredictability of teaching assignments. The classroom realities emerged as a sense of isolation and challenges with the physical teaching environment. How FLES teachers connect assessment and pedagogical choices they make in the classroom was shown through the findings from both the qualitative and quantitative data.
Chapter Summary

Chapter 4 presents and discusses the research findings in the order of the three research questions. The findings of this study indicate that the FLES teachers’ perceptions about assessment are varied and demonstrate different levels of understanding in the following areas: purpose and importance of assessment, role of assessment in the classroom, and opinions about classroom assessments.

Survey and interview data results indicate that the teachers use a broad variety of assessments, falling mainly in the formative, summative, and performance-based domains. These include traditional, literacy-based, visual and graphic art-based, and technology-enhanced classroom assessments. The results also reveal the participants’ strong level of attention to interactive classroom assessment practices which call for the use of the target language in real-life situations. The integration of technology appeared as a dominant factor in the selection of assessment practices.

The findings further reveal areas of tension which interfere with the teachers’ implementation of their assessment beliefs. These were reported as external factors and classroom realities, such as student–teacher ratio, amount of teaching time, unpredictability of teaching assignments, sense of isolation, and physical teaching environment.

Chapter Five provides further analysis and discussion, conclusions, and addresses implications of the study. In addition, several recommendations for future research are presented with the goal of connecting these findings to applications for teacher education and professional development, as well as school decision making.
Chapter Five

In the last 25 years, assessment in FL/WL education has received increased attention in the US as well as worldwide, as the world language community emphasizes student performance based on standards, proficiency, and communicative language learning. With more schools worldwide initiating FL/WL instruction beginning at the elementary school level, it is critical to seek viable ways to adequately assess the young language learners’ performance (Curtain & Dahlberg, 2016; McKay, 2006). Moreover, the teachers’ collection of information in the classroom using multiple assessment practices plays a critical role in how FL/WL learners process their L2 acquisition and expand their own language competencies. As Sariçoban and Hasdemir (2012) posit, assessment in FL/WL should include the kind of criteria that allows educators, teachers, and other stakeholders to observe and evaluate the teaching and learning process, to see student progress in learning the new language as clearly as possible, in order to provide sensible feedback on the needs, skills, and abilities to students, parents, and administrators. Ultimately, FL/WL assessment not only provides teachers and students important information about what students are learning, but it also serves as an instrument to keep the public informed on student performance and achievement in the target language, and provides information relating to language achievement for legislation and policy recommendation purposes.
An extant body of research on assessment in WL education suggests the intricate nature of the process which is categorized with the use of diverse assessment practices that have a variety of purposes and student outcomes in mind. At the heart of the matter is research on teacher beliefs that implies the strong influence these might have on the educational choices teachers make in their classrooms, including their assessment practices (Barcelos & Kalaja, 2011; Borg, 2003; Busch, 2010; Hüttnner et al., 2013; Inozu, 2011; Kissau et al., 2012; Kocaman & Cansiz, 2012; Ngueruela-Azarola, 2011; Nishino, 2012; Özmen, 2012). Altan (2012) stated that beliefs and attitudes shape teachers’ perceptions about possible courses of action in a given situation, in many cases, without the teacher being consciously aware of such hidden source of influence. Equally, it is important to study teacher beliefs in language teaching and learning because research has suggested the significance of teachers’ educational beliefs and assumptions for their classroom conduct (Kalaja & Barcelos, 2003).

This study sought to explore aspects of the complexity of teacher beliefs in the context of FLES teachers’ perceptions regarding assessment and assessment practices in the elementary WL classroom. It aimed to investigate how FLES teachers’ perceptions about assessment inform their decision-making process and might influence their judgments about lesson content, materials, learning tasks, learner outcomes, and overall language performance. The study was framed by the following questions:

1. How do FLES teachers perceive assessment and assessment practices in the elementary world language classroom? What do they perceive as the purpose of assessment?
2. What types of classroom assessment practices do FLES teachers report they use in the elementary world language classroom?

3. How do FLES teachers understand their assessment practices informing the pedagogical choices they make in the elementary world language classroom (i.e., planning, instruction, instructional material selection, classroom activities)?

The study provides a broad representation of teachers in the US. Its national scope captured FLES teachers’ views on assessment and assessment practices, in the continental US, Alaska, and Hawaii, thus providing a wide set of perspectives. It offers an alternative and expands upon studies in recent years which have addressed the topic of language teachers’ beliefs through case studies in specific contexts (Basturkmen, 2012). This study employed a mixed methods approach to allow for a deep, broad, and comprehensive understanding of the complex phenomenon of beliefs and practices pertaining to assessment in the elementary WL classroom and as they exist around the US. The examination of both quantitative and qualitative data provided a backdrop for addressing the research questions. The survey instrument was adapted from three sources (see section on Instruments in Chapter 3) and specifically designed to explore perceptions about assessment and assessment practices in the FLES teachers’ context. The analysis and interpretation of the data related the findings to the FLES classroom perspective.

The study was developed to address the relatively slow emergence of research addressing teacher beliefs regarding assessment practices in the elementary WL classroom (Hasselgreen, 2012). It brings to the spotlight a frequently underrepresented
group of FL/WL professionals: the FLES teachers and their specific points of view and needs in terms of assessment and assessment practices in their elementary classroom contexts. It makes a contribution to the FL/WL field by underscoring the accomplishments the FLES teachers make in their teaching and learning, but also highlights the many challenges/barriers the teachers face in their daily educational endeavors.

This chapter presents final discussion of the findings and provides connections to prominent research in the field, as well as conclusions based on the research findings presented in Chapter 4. It concludes with implications of the study and recommendations for teacher professional development and future research.

Conclusions

In Chapter 4, three research questions which guided the study provided the lenses through which the data were examined to explore how FLES teachers (a) perceive assessment and (b) understand their assessment practices informing the pedagogical choices they make in the elementary WL classroom. Three principal conclusions were derived from this study and will be summarized in the following sections. These conclusions cluster around three main areas: teachers’ perceptions about assessment, teachers’ classroom assessment practices, and assessment and pedagogical choices.

Teachers’ perceptions of assessment. The first conclusion of the study is associated with the diverse ways the FLES teachers addressed the concept of assessment, mainly through statements related to its purpose, its importance, and its role. The teachers also made assertions with regard to their opinions about assessment in the FLES
classroom. The data revealed that even though the teachers displayed diverse opinions about assessment, an underlying principle persevered: the teachers’ attitudes toward assessment were very favorable and they considered assessment to be of utmost importance in their classrooms.

**Purpose.** With regard to the *purpose* of assessment, the survey results indicated that the most commonly shared purpose of assessment in these teachers’ elementary FL/WL teaching was to obtain information on students’ progress to improve teaching and learning (64.8%). This finding supports what Brown (2003) and Brown and Hattie (2009) regarded as one of the essential components of teachers’ conceptions of assessment: improving teaching and learning. Other studies have outlined the fundamentals associated with the perception of assessment for improvement of learning and teaching as well (Black & William, 1998; Delandshere & Jones, 1999; Popham, 2009, 2011). While 64.1% of the teachers also perceived the purpose of assessment being to diagnose strengths and weaknesses in their own teaching and learning, 56.3% of the teachers recognized assessment as an important instrument to later provide their students with feedback to support their progress in learning the foreign language.

**Importance.** With regard to the *importance* of assessment, the majority of the teachers (90%) viewed assessment as being a very important component of the teaching and learning process. However, they indicated having varying amounts of teacher preparation and pedagogical content knowledge for implementing such assessment practices. Survey results indicated that the FLES teachers attached less importance to using assessment for providing information to an outside funding agency or central
administration (school district/state agency). For example, this might be explained by Brown’s (2003) assumption of the existence of tensions between the different purposes of assessment, such as the tensions that often exist between externally imposed accountability requirements and the improvement conception of assessment. These responses suggest that these teachers viewed assessment as a tool that enables them to make informed decisions about their students’ progress, but do not necessarily consider its main importance as providing accountability at the school or district level. This means that the FLES teachers in this study valued assessment as a tool that helps them identify their own, as well as their students’, strengths and weaknesses; however they did not emphasize its main importance as an instrument to provide information to an outside source.

**Role.** Interview results suggest that teachers also held varying perspectives with regard to the role of assessment in their teaching practice. For instance, 21.4% of the interviewed teachers mentioned they viewed the role of assessment as a student motivator. This finding reflects the emphasis that literature has placed on assessment as enhancing student motivation through their active involvement in the assessment process (Petre, 2014; Sandrock, 2010; Woylek, 2005). Also, as noted by a study performed by Bernard (2010), academic motivation needs to be examined not as a separate component of instruction, but in the context of classroom activities because of its importance as a predictor of students’ learning outcomes. The interview results likewise mirrored this view. By providing a deepening understanding of the teachers’ views with regard to the role of assessment, the interview data further revealed that the teachers perceived the role
of assessment in their classrooms as fundamental, very beneficial, and of notable importance.

The FLES teachers also described the role of assessment as a “guide or map” which offered direction to their teaching and acted as an integral component in their planning. This resonates with Sandrock’s (2010) work, which postulates that teaching without clear targets in mind is like driving without a road map, thus placing emphasis on teachers having clear-end-of-unit assessments in mind with every activity in the classroom leading to that target. Equally, Wiggins and McTighe’s (2005) “backward design” was evident in the interview results when teachers commented on how they planned their FLES instruction with the ‘end in mind’, meaning that they have goals/objectives for what the students are expected to do with the TL as a result of the instruction, before instruction begins, and then plan the lessons and assessments in a “backwards design” based on those desired student outcomes.

Another important role of assessment that emerged from the data was that of assessment serving as a cohesive agent embedded in teaching. Thus, the teachers perceived assessment as an element that helped unify their teaching and learning in a seamless way, and often occurs in the classroom without students taking notice it is happening. Teachers expressed that because assessment is so embedded in their instruction, it is happening every day without formal planning, that is, in a “natural” way. They referenced how assessment is not in the forefront of their instruction due to the fact that it is regarded as “cohesive and unified” with instruction. Several authors have addressed the importance of bringing a seamless connection between instruction and
assessment in order to maximize student performance and better inform instruction (Katz, 2012; Lambert & Lund, 2007; McNamara, 2001; Sandrock, 2010; Shrum & Glisan, 2016); and this study’s findings support such argument.

The FLES teachers also viewed the role of assessment as an indicator of their students’ learning. Teachers voiced how, for them, it was critical to always check if/how much the students are learning and what they can do with the language. The teachers also commented on the benefits of the students knowing where they stand, as far as learning goals, and which goals they still need to work on. This finding supports Öz’s (2014) argument which states that it is vital to view assessment and student learning as inseparable, and to place emphasis on assessment as a valuable tool for supporting student progress in the planning/instruction process.

Additional information about the role of assessment provides insight into how the teachers conceive assessment and conceptualize assessment practices in their FLES classrooms. For example, the majority of teachers strongly agreed that varied assessment methods should be used continually in the elementary FL classroom and that both the teacher and student should share an understanding of assessment goals. The findings also suggested that the teachers considered it important to use authentic materials and situations in the target language to promote progress in L2 development. All of aforementioned findings echo the basic tenets of the work of Shrum and Glisan (2016) which postulates that various types of assessment, when used in common agreement with expected outcomes between the teacher and student, strengthens their relationship and enhances the students’ ownership in being able to communicate in the TL. The findings
are also consistent with other research that has shown that assessment tasks should mirror situations and challenges that individuals would encounter in the real world, that is, be authentic (Adair-Hauck et al., 2006; Ferro et al., 2004). Conversely, findings on the teachers’ opinions about assessment indicated that even though they were diverse, they shared some common underlying principles. These included acknowledging the relevance of incorporating varied classroom assessment methods continuously, the authentic use of materials and situations in the TL, and the importance of teacher and student establishing a common understanding of assessment goals.

To sum up, FLES teachers’ perceptions about assessment and assessment practices were varied; personally related to their beliefs about the purpose, the importance, and the role of assessment; and articulated the diverse views they held about classroom assessment practices and procedures. Therefore, the study serves to highlight the intricate nature of assessment and points to the importance that FLES teachers across the US attribute to it as being an integral component of the teaching and learning process. Further, the teachers would benefit from being more aware of how their beliefs about assessment might influence the decisions they make in their elementary FL/WL classrooms. The next section will focus on a second major takeaway from the study: the teachers’ classroom assessment practices and their distinct features.

Teachers’ classroom assessment practices. The second conclusion of this research falls in the area of teachers’ classroom assessment practices. As indicated in the findings, the teachers reported using a variety of classroom assessment practices in their FLES classrooms, mainly falling in the formative, summative, and performance-based
domains. It was evident that a certain overlap existed within these domains; for example, performance-based assessments were also of a formative nature.

**Formative assessments.** Less than half (28.1%) of the FLES teachers expressed frequently using student portfolios as a form of formative assessment in their classrooms, and only 21.4% of the interviews mentioned using them at all, either in physical or electronic format, to illustrate student growth in language learning. These findings suggest that even though some of the teachers valued approaching assessment from a collaborative perspective, in which the teacher and student work together, few implemented this approach in assembling and reflecting on the information to be included in a portfolio (Curtain & Dahlberg, 2016; McLeod & Vasinda, 2009; NCLRC, 2004). These findings suggest that portfolios were not the preferred mode of assessment used by most of these teachers, perhaps attributable to the time limitation they encounter while teaching FLES (Curtain & Dahlberg, 2016). This study’s findings also echo previous research on teacher difficulties associated with the use of portfolio assessment (Delett et al., 2001). Other forms of formative assessment that the FLES teachers reported using often included read aloud/dictation (24.2%), student journals (16.4%), and peer assessment (14.8%). The teachers in this study valued the use of formative assessment in their classrooms because of its characteristic of enhancing learning by providing students with feedback on their progress in meeting the stated learning outcomes (Leung, 2004, 2005; Vandergrift, 2000).

**Summative assessments.** The findings further revealed that teachers frequently employed summative assessment practices in the following categories: matching items
(49.2%), short answer items (48.4%), and fill-in-the-blanks (43%). Other reported summative assessment practices were open-ended questions, multiple-choice items, and cloze exercises. The results point to the notion that the teachers employed a combination of both formative and summative assessment practices. Shrum and Glisan (2016) posit that both types of assessments play a key role in the elementary FL/WL classroom and aid in verifying achievement in an ongoing manner, provide feedback to students and parents, and inform teachers in ways instruction might be improved.

Likewise, it was evident that the teachers valued the three modes of communication and incorporated them in their assessment practices. For instance, they indicated using summative assessments such as recorded interviews/conversations on predetermined topics, short conversations in context to elicit the use of a particular vocabulary or grammar structure, readers’ theater, plays/skits, and interactive games.

**Performance-based assessments and beyond.** Other classroom assessment practices reported by the teachers in this study included performance-based tasks. Researchers who have examined performance-based assessments have noted that unlike more traditional assessment formats, performance-based assessments connect teaching, learning, and assessment seamlessly (Adair-Hauck et al., 2006; Davin et al., 2011; Glisan et al., 2007). The survey and interview data findings revealed that the most frequently used performance-based assessments were following directions orally (68%), engaging in pair/share activities (58.6%), role-play exercises (50.8%), and providing an oral/written description of an event or object (44.5%).
Furthermore, the teachers’ expanded interview responses corroborated with the open response findings in the surveys that the use of performance-based assessments prevailed and often incorporated the use of technology. The use of literacy-based and visual/graphic art-related performance-based assessments was also mentioned. For instance, the teachers expressed using performance-based assessments which capitalized on the ACTFL “Can Do” statements and required students to use the TL in meaningful real-life situations. Therefore, the findings indicate that broadly across the US, FLES teachers value and use a variety of classroom assessment practices that promote student outcomes in different modalities. This underscores their resourcefulness in terms of implementing varied grade-level appropriate assessment practices to show evidence of student performance and growth, and their knowledge of their students’ needs.

**Assessment and pedagogical choices.** The third conclusion drawn from this study is linked to the major findings on how the participants understand their assessment practices informing the pedagogical choices they make in their classrooms. These findings pointed to three influential factors in the formation of assessment beliefs and practices: pedagogical content knowledge, goals and objectives in WL teaching, and personal/educational background. These findings are consistent with widespread research on teacher cognition highlighting factors influencing teacher beliefs (Altan, 2012; Barcelos & Kalaja, 2011; Basturkmen, 2012; Borg, 2003; Kissau et al., 2012; Negueruela-Azarola, 2011) and specifically the connection between beliefs and practices in the field of L2 teaching and learning (Kissau, Rodgers, & Haudeck, 2015).
Pedagogical content knowledge. First, the knowledge about WL teaching and learning, often referred to as pedagogical content knowledge, appeared to play an important role in shaping the teachers’ beliefs and practices regarding assessment in the FLES classroom. Ample evidence was provided during the interviews when the teachers shared their views on the benefits of early language learning; importance of learner-centered WL instruction; and seamless connection between instructional planning, teaching, and assessment. Their comments alluded to the ease with which young language learners seem to absorb learning a WL, how critical it is for the teacher to always “observe” the students and cater to their individual needs in order to optimize their learning, and how assessment needs to be integrated with instruction, in a seamless, continuous way. One participant’s (Magda) comment serves as an illustration of the aforementioned beliefs expressed by the teachers in this study,

When you are assessing…what are you assessing for? I assess according to what I’m teaching…the objectives, the goals I want the students to obtain. You take into mind…you have to know how this student learns a language, and you assess accordingly.

This sample of teachers self-selected to participate in the study. It is plausible to wonder in what ways other teachers’ beliefs might be similar to or different from the beliefs of the current participant group regarding assessment practices in their classrooms. All FLES teachers need adequate pedagogical content knowledge and assessment strategies that will enable them to meet the needs of their students. FLES teachers across the US would benefit from further and ongoing professional development opportunities to
support their continuing development of their knowledge about FL/WL teaching and learning.

*Goals and objectives.* Second, the FLES teachers’ assessment beliefs and how they perceived these informing their pedagogical choices appeared to align with their goals and objectives in WL teaching. They cited “getting students excited and confident about learning a WL and about other cultures” as a very important goal in their teaching. An illustrative example came from Neil’s quotation, “My number one goal is to have students feel comfortable and confident about learning another language and another culture…to me, that is the strongest and most important thing…once you have that down, I think everything falls in place.” The data demonstrated the teachers’ ability to select a variety of assessment practices that would not only promote student interest and excitement about learning a WL language, but also provided evidence of their progress and development.

*Personal and educational background.* Third, interview data revealed that the majority of the participants (64%) shared how personal experiences influenced their decision to become FLES teachers. In addition, interviews suggested that the kind of teacher preparation they received appeared to have a role, directly or indirectly, in the pedagogical choices they made in their classrooms. Pedagogical choices were related to their reported usage of a variety of assessments, the daily time allocated for teaching and assessing of their students, and the accessibility of resources available to them in their particular teaching contexts. It is worthy to reiterate the finding that 71% of the participants indicated that the teacher preparation they received was geared towards the
middle or high school level: it had not included a robust emphasis on the elementary school level. The data suggest that this circumstance in many teacher preparation programs may have a direct impact on the pedagogical choices FLES teachers make in their classrooms every day. This finding was accentuated by reports shared by some teachers who struggled with feelings of inadequacy regarding teaching and assessing the young language learners. The teachers expressed resorting to “informal” mentorships from regular elementary teachers, receiving “on the job” training, and most critically, learning by “trial and error” as ways to navigate their students’ teaching and learning at the onset of their FLES teaching assignments. For instance, Krista’s comment summarized their struggles:

We need more instructional information on how other teachers carry on their assessment practices. A lot of times what we find is that our teacher preparation was at the high or straight elementary school level…assessment is one of those things that’s really hard to find a way to do it when you have a short time for lessons and a lot of material to cover.

Therefore, the study findings point to the need for FL/WL teacher preparation programs in the US to expressly integrate assessment components at all levels of instruction within their coursework, but particularly vigorously at the elementary school level for those preparing to teach elementary aged learners.

**Areas of synergy and tension.** The study’s findings also add support to prior L2 research which identified contextual factors influencing teacher beliefs and how these are put into practice, sometimes creating areas of synergy and tension (Kissau et al., 2012;
Kissau et al., 2015; McMillan, 2003; Nishino, 2012; Stergiopoulou, 2012). In this study, these areas of synergy and tension emerged as themes from the interview data and were divided into two categories: external factors and classroom realities. Interview and open-ended survey data further disclosed constraints voiced by the participants as they engaged in teaching FLES.

**External factors.** The external factors included circumstances related to high student–teacher ratio, not enough amount of teaching time, and unpredictability of teaching assignments. Even though not of all the interviewed participants had high student–teacher ratios (only one participant taught 40 students in grades K-sixth), the majority, (79%), taught 200 or more students.

In addition, the factor of adequate time to teach and assess surfaced often as an area of tension in the interview data. A total of 86% of the teachers expressed discontent with the amount of time they had for teaching and assessing their students. For that matter, they alluded to having to implement assessment practices that were “quick and easy” both to administer and evaluate, therefore often employing anecdotal and observational assessment types. One particular teacher quotation stands out in regard to the factor of limited time: “I think for me there is a disconnect between what I would ideally like to accomplish with assessments and what I am able to do due to time restraints as well as understanding of designing sound assessments/rubrics.” Moreover, the FLES teachers expressed how challenging it was to teach and assess different educational levels on a daily basis, which required a great deal of organization and planning on their behalf. The norm for elementary school teachers is to have one teacher
for an entire elementary school up, and sometimes one teacher may serve three elementary schools at once, as in the case of the comments made by Krista in this study.

Lastly, the unpredictability of their teaching assignments was another external factor which resulted in an area of tension between the teachers’ assessment beliefs and their reported classroom assessment practices. The interview data disclosed many of the teachers encountered difficulties in preparing and planning for the next school year due to the tremendous variability of their teaching assignments. Their comments were not taken as a lack of flexibility and adaptability, but mere concern in trying to “feel prepared” to adequately teach and assess their students. The unpredictability of their teaching assignments often affected the teachers’ sense of efficacy in regard to their preparation to manage their yearly teaching responsibilities effectively, as well as their classroom assessment practices.

**Classroom realities.** The findings further indicated that in addition to external factors which impacted the classroom assessment practices implemented by the FLES teachers, everyday classroom realities also created areas of tension between their stated beliefs about assessment and their reported assessment practices. Both the survey and interview data identified these classroom realities as teacher sense of isolation and challenges related to the physical arrangement of the teaching environment. The feelings of isolation were related to the singularity of the FLES teachers’ job: In most cases, they were the only WL teachers in their elementary school settings. This made the exchange of teaching and assessment experiences and ideas somewhat problematic. Some teachers voiced actively turning to the Internet in order to “connect” with other FLES teachers or
becoming members of LISTSERVS geared to elementary WL teaching, such as Ñanduti. Others attended conferences and seminars in L2 topics to stay abreast of information relating to methods of assessing their students.

The physical arrangement of the teaching environment also created obstacles for some of the FLES teachers. Oftentimes, the teachers found their organizational skills being tested by the need to have all their teaching materials prepared and “ready to go” in one location (classroom) or a push-in cart. The teachers expressed a desire to assess their students in the best possible conditions, but often the arrangement of the physical teaching environment created obstacles and made it difficult for the teachers to accomplish their goals. Even though 43% of the teachers had their own classrooms designated exclusively for FLES instruction, more than half (57%) reported still using “push-ins” for traveling from classroom to classroom to deliver their instruction. This circumstance imposed time restraints and organizational challenges upon the participants. Other teachers worked at up to three different elementary schools within the same school district, making the storage and availability of teaching and assessing materials very challenging, not to mention the travel time and ability to follow up with instruction or assessment practices at all of the teaching sites.

Therefore, the findings indicate that across the US, FLES teachers faced similar unique challenges that influenced the pedagogical choices they made in their classroom, including the assessments they implemented. This points to the crucial need for the FL/WL profession to devise ways to offer support to FLES teachers more specifically, such as through the incorporation of professional organizations such as NNELL, ACTFL,
and its regionals, in collaboration with school divisions, in devising a network that will cater to their “unique” needs.

**Assessment and instructional practices.** Three general themes emerged from the survey and interview data regarding how the FLES teachers “connected” assessment and instructional practices: choices made after assessment, provision of student feedback, and time spent on assessment. The survey provided a section in which the participants had to check all the beliefs statements related to ways assessment information was used to support student learning, which applied to their particular contexts. Ninety-one percent of the teachers indicated revising their lesson plans to make necessary changes to adjust and improve their teaching, 90.6% diagnosed the strengths and weaknesses in their own teaching, and 71% provided information to parents, students, and other stakeholders. More than half (64%) formally documented student growth and 63% provided differentiated instruction. These findings substantiate other research conducted on classroom assessment (Rea-Dickins, 2004; Stiggins, 2001; Stiggins & Chappius, 2012) indicating the important role that classroom assessment practices play in the teaching—learning process, including using assessment results in decision making (Zhang & Burry-Stock, 2003).

What Sandrock (2010) and Katz (2012) argued as important features of student feedback, including providing tangible ways of knowing which qualities are strong, and which ones need improvement and development, were acknowledged by the FLES teachers in this study. The study findings indicated that the FLES teachers used varied types of feedback interventions with their students. Data from the survey disclosed that
92% of the participants provided verbal feedback, 77% wrote comments on students’ work, and 58% gave feedback as a letter/number grade. Thirty-three percent reported having conferences with their students to inform them about their progress, and 29% used checklists as a form of feedback. In addition, open-ended survey data also suggested that the teachers often used other forms of feedback, including rubrics and nonverbal gestures.

This study’s findings underline the importance of uncovering and analyzing teachers’ beliefs about assessment and assessment practices to better understand the influences and obstacles preventing teachers from putting their beliefs into practice. According to Leahy, Lyon, Thompson, and William (2005), knowledge about classroom assessment practices is not enough; teachers also need a deep and practical understanding of how to make these assessment practices work within their own personal educational contexts. This study’s findings also suggest that the teachers viewed assessment as being very important, often expressing its significance as a fundamental element in the teaching and learning process. For this reason, it is critical to make explicit and visible how FL/WL teachers, and especially FLES teachers, perceive assessment and assessment practices in order to initiate change in the field with regard to refining assessment practices. While both this study and prominent literature in the field have revealed that a majority of teachers in general (not only FL/WL teachers) endorse and value assessment as an integral element of the educational process, teachers often feel ill-prepared to assess student learning appropriately. These teachers feel they have “inadequate” assessment literacy due mainly to the sometimes inadequate preservice education they received in educational measurement, specifically, classroom assessment practices. Findings from
this study underscore the importance of continuing teacher education. Teachers have often expressed a desire to augment their knowledgebase on the topic (Alkharusi, 2012; Guerin, 2010; Koh, 2011; Mertler & Campbell, 2005; Popham, 2009, 2011; Volante & Fazio, 2007).

To summarize, as a result of this national study, three principal conclusions can be drawn from the data:

1. Across the US, FLES teachers would benefit from teacher preparation programs and professional development opportunities that place marked emphasis on assessment practices geared toward the young language learner.

2. It is imperative that, as a profession, the FL/WL community acknowledges the “unique” circumstances that surround the FLES teachers’ needs and unifies their voiced needs in order to offer them their adequate pre and in service professional learning and ongoing support.

3. Professional organizations, school administrators, and school division personnel must acknowledge the FLES teachers for the expertise and knowledge about early L₂ teaching and learning that they bring to the field, and the work they perform preparing our elementary school students to face the challenges of the globalized world they live in.

Next, the limitations and implications of the study will be addressed, as well as suggestions for further research.
Limitations of the Study

Creswell (2013) refers to limitations as potential weaknesses or problems with a study identified by the researcher. This section will elaborate on several limitations to this study in terms of its findings: the use of self-reported data, the absence of classroom observations, researcher bias, and participant self-selection.

The use of self-reported data can be problematic since it relies on respondents giving honest answers, requires heightened participant motivation to complete the task at hand (survey or questionnaire), and the ability to recall, in many instances, information which could have been impacted by the respondents’ varying levels of memory retrieval strategies (Fielding, 2006; Smyth & Terry, 2007). The participants in this study responded to questions on an online survey relating to their feelings, attitudes, and perceptions about assessment and assessment practices in the elementary WL classroom. In an effort to supplement this information with data from another source, a total of 14 FLES teachers offered additional insight and depth to their survey responses by volunteering to participate in follow-up semistructured virtual interviews. There is the possibility that the participants’ responses might have been formulated by taking into consideration their personal conceptions of which answers were the “most appropriate” or “most desirable” (social desirability) in order to present themselves in a good light, as highly qualified language teachers. However, this should not undermine the copious research possibilities that self-report surveys bring to the educational research agenda.

Another limitation of this study lies in the lack of observational data to underscore the findings. According to Kawulich (2005), observation methods provide the researcher
with ways to determine who interacts with whom, and check for how much time is spent on various activities. They also help the researcher develop a holistic understanding of the phenomena under study. The collection and analysis of data in this study relied exclusively on information the participants offered in both the survey and follow-up interviews. There was no verification that the teachers’ answers represented what they actually did in their classrooms in relation to assessment practices. Such verification would entail expanding this study to include future research on the topic that includes participant observational data.

Throughout the data collection and analysis, the researcher was aware of the fact that being a former FLES teacher herself could influence the way she analyzed or reported the participants’ responses. According to Maxwell (2013), it is important not to try to minimize the effect of “bias,” but rather to understand how it affects the validity of the inferences drawn and report the “bias” in a transparent way. Every effort was made in maintaining objectivity when analyzing the data, as well as when reporting the study’s findings. On the other hand, the researchers’ insider perspective added to the credibility of the data interpretation because of her place in the “lived position” of FLES teachers’ daily teaching lives and adjoining assessment practices.

Last, the online survey and follow-up semistructured interviews were completed by self-selected FLES teachers. This self-selection could have possibly reduced the representativeness of the sample, thus producing a biased sample (Khazaal et al., 2014). It is reasonable to wonder if other FLES teachers’ attitudes and perceptions regarding
assessment and assessment practices in the elementary WL classroom are similar to the current self-selected group.

Implications

Several implications can be derived from the conclusions of this study. They pertain to stakeholders in the foreign/world language education field, such as teacher educators, policy makers, school districts and school administrators, and the FLES teacher community.

For foreign/world language teacher educators. This study points to the necessity of continual update and revision of FL/WL teacher preparation programs and professional development to ensure that they emphasize including and integrating assessment components within their coursework that will adequately address all levels of instruction, particularly the elementary school level. As argued by Stiggins, Faires-Conklin, and Bridgeport (1986), it is important to address teacher education programs’ lack of focus on classroom assessment needs in an effort to enhance teacher assessment knowledge and practice in their day-to-day measurement of student growth and development. Teachers in this study also underscored this need. Teachers should be provided with relevant, focused preservice and in-service education that includes classroom assessment strategies.

The FLES teachers frequently voiced their frustration with regard to their assessment literacy, specifically concerning their sense of inefficacy in assessing young language learners, suggested in part as being due to the lack of exposure of the topic in their teacher preparation programs. This is important for FL/WL teacher education
programs because it suggests that their coursework should extend beyond the current curriculum to include course impact on preservice teacher learning to robustly develop their assessment literacy. This should include following graduates into the field to see if/and how these courses components impact actual assessment practices and their role in FLES students’ learning.

In addition, it is vital for teacher preparation programs to place more emphasis in promoting preservice and in-service FL/WL teachers’ awareness of the impact their beliefs and perceptions have on the pedagogical choices they make in their classrooms, including their assessment practices. The study also offers insight into the importance of tailoring teacher professional development initiatives to meet the needs of specific teacher populations, in this particular case, FLES teachers. Lastly, it is critical to create “mentorship programs,” such as ACTFs, that target specially the distinctive necessities of the FLES teachers in order to offer them the support they need to perform their educational responsibilities.

For policy makers. Even though policy was not the focus of this study, its findings nonetheless provide implications for educational policy makers and their decision making regarding assessment and assessment practices in elementary WL education. This study may serve to establish conversations and inquiry among policy makers and the public realm about the needs and challenges of FLES teachers and programs and would add a much-needed knowledgebase for elementary WL education. For example, decisions about program funding or resource allocation at a county or school level clearly have impact at the classroom level and on teachers’ time and support
as they work with their FLES students. Teachers’ perspectives and needs should be an important dimension of these crucial decisions.

Also, providing a “spotlight” for the discussion on how to better prepare language teachers to assess their student populations would undoubtedly help initiate these conversations. As Jin (2010) argued in a study of the place of language assessment in the professional preparation of foreign language teachers, educational measurement, including classroom practice, receives significantly less attention compared to theory and practice of language testing.

**For state departments of education, school districts, and school administrators.** The findings also have implications for state departments of education, school districts, and school administrators. A call for collaboration among these stakeholders is in order to address the unique needs and challenges that FLES teachers face on a daily basis. These include finding ways to minimize the impact logistic hurdles, such as the use of push-ins, and teaching at more than one school, have on FLES teachers’ performance and emotional well-being. Steele, Peterson, Silva, and Padilla (2009) indicated that it is critical that school districts offer year-round professional development programs for WL teachers designed to strengthen FL/WL instruction and student learning of FL which are aligned to the national standards for foreign language education (NSFLEP, 2014). They showcase an example of a successful professional development program model implemented by the Bay Area Foreign Language Program (BAFLP), one of nine sites for the California Foreign Language Project. This model could be used as an example of an effective professional development initiative for
school districts nationwide. It is worth mentioning that strand C of the BAFLP model, “Academic Literacy and Assessment,” focuses on developing academic literacy skills and using assessment data to guide instruction. Also, the creation of partnerships between school districts and institutions of higher learning is important so that they can establish initiatives in the form of professional development opportunities for FLES teachers, geared to language assessment methods and practices suitable for the elementary school-level students.

School districts could establish such initiatives as FLES teachers’ summer assessment development initiatives (SADI) which could be in charge of developing classroom assessments by grade level, integrating the standards and curriculum content that eventually would be disseminated to all FLES teachers for their use in the classrooms. This or similar programs, would greatly help alleviate the novice FLES teachers’ workload in regard to developing assessments, and provide a forum for more experienced teachers to share their expertise and experiences. Teachers could share the use of assessment practices in their respective classrooms and learn what other FLES teachers are doing in relation to classroom assessment. The organization of beginning-of-the-school-year meetings/workshops would facilitate the discussion of the purpose of the SADI and help distribute copies/samples of teacher-made classroom assessment products among the FLES teachers. Such an endeavor might also serve to alleviate some of the isolation that teachers who are the only FLES teacher in their school, or school district, feel. This sense of “I’m alone” was voiced so clearly in this study’s interview data.

Lastly, school districts should initiate meetings with school administrators
(principals) of schools that incorporate FLES programs in their curriculum offerings to educate them on the FLES teachers’ unique needs and challenges. This would help promote a sense of joint involvement and commitment in supporting elementary FL/WL instruction. Moss (2013) pointed out that more research should be conducted on the impact that principals and central office administrators might have on the assessment practices of teachers in their buildings. Since teachers do not assess in a vacuum, it would be advantageous to learn more about how building and district-level administrators might lead a culture of high/low quality assessment to promote accurate decisions about what students know and can do. These findings might also be part of a team and grade-level discussion about students’ holistic growth and development across content areas and with regard to a student’s overall literacy trajectory.

For FLES teacher community. This final implication is related to creating public reflective spaces in which FLES teachers can share language teaching knowledge, practice, and ideas. This could be in the form of communities of practice (CoP) within their school districts or across language teaching professional associations, and through the use of technology such as Wikis and social media forums. Improved teaching and learning, along with assessment practices, requires sustained commitment over an extended period of time and practicing a reflective approach. Interventions could include teachers auditing their existing practices, then moving to engaging communities of teachers (CoP) in reflection on their individual and collective needs as educators of young language learners. Over time, the CoPs have the potential to develop a shared language that enables FLES teachers to talk to one another about what they are doing
relating to classroom assessment. In this way, they can build individual and collective skills, and confidence in assessing their young language learners. They can focus on where learners are now, where they want to go, and how they can help them get there. It is equally urgent to encourage FLES teachers to become involved in face-to-face workshops and online professional development opportunities so they can increase their assessment literacy.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

This study has provided insight into how FLES teachers teaching across the US perceive assessment and assessment practices. It also revealed the different types of classroom assessment practices they report using, and shared their understanding of how their assessment practices inform the pedagogical choices they make in their classrooms. Future research should include the expansion of this study to address a larger sample of teachers and perhaps extend it to those elementary teachers in immersion settings. Future research could build upon these findings by incorporating the use of classroom observations to study the actualization of teachers’ reported beliefs and practices. Knowing more about how teachers’ beliefs and perceptions translate into practice in the actual classroom will also deepen our understanding of the needs of teachers, and the ways in which preservice teacher education and ongoing professional development can best meet the needs of our teachers of young language learners.

Future research should also explore the use of a comparative approach to investigate the differences in FLES teachers’ assessment perceptions based on demographic variables such as years of teaching experience, language they teach, gender,
and professional course work. Such an approach would greatly enhance the understanding of how these factors might affect the way elementary foreign language teachers perceive assessment and apply assessment practices in their teaching practices. Ongoing research in this area can inform the field on how to improve the design of teacher preparation programs so they address the unique needs of elementary FL/WL teachers in multiple ways, and most particularly in the essential area of using assessment to inform practice and support the language development of elementary-aged students.

This study was cross-sectional in nature, thus representing data collected once. A longitudinal study could offer a broader understanding of how FLES teachers’ perceptions about assessment might change over time and uncover what factors might influence such changes. An additional area worthy of longitudinal investigation includes a study of WL FLES teacher preparation beginning at the onset of a teacher’s career, the development of and teacher assessment literacy and pedagogical content knowledge across an educator’s professional continuum.

In addition, investigation into FLES students’ perceptions about assessment would offer another lens, another side of the coin, to add a new perspective to our understanding of teachers’ assessment practices. It might be revealing to study the students’ standpoint to uncover what they consider important in relation to classroom assessments, thus offering ways to improve student learning outcomes. A possible research question to be explored might include: What are FLES students’ perceptions about the role and purpose of assessment in the elementary WL classroom?
Final Thoughts

This research provided a mixed methods study of US FLES teachers’ attitudes and perceptions about assessment and assessment practices. Its purpose was to gain a deeper understanding of FLES teachers’ beliefs of assessment and their reported classroom assessment practices, in order to inform the field of the complexity of issues which surround young language learners’ assessment in FLES classrooms. The researcher feels privileged to have had the opportunity to serve as a “voice” for an often underrepresented group of educators: the FLES teachers. The findings suggest that FLES teachers have knowledge of and the ability to successfully implement standards-based classroom assessment practices, but often faced unique challenges which influenced by their classroom pedagogical choices.

The findings also suggest the significance of tailoring teacher professional preparation and development initiatives to meet the needs of specific teacher populations. By doing so, we can emphasize the fact that in order for teachers to explore their teaching and professional identities as educators, they need to develop an awareness of the educational beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions which guide the decisions they make in the course of their teaching and learning. This study demonstrates the necessity of gaining a deeper understanding of the unequivocal influence of teacher beliefs on practice. In short, we must understand the needs and beliefs of teachers, in order to improve and disseminate appropriate and effective classroom assessment practices, as well as enhance language teacher preparation programs, for the benefit of both the young and more experienced language teachers and, most importantly, the learners in their classrooms.
Appendix A

Institutional Review Board Materials
Electronic Mail Survey Solicitation
Exploring FLES Teachers' Attitudes and Perceptions About Assessment and Assessment Practices in the Elementary World Language Classroom

Dear FLES Teacher,

As part of the requirements of George Mason University’s Ph. D. in Education program, I am conducting research for the purpose of exploring FLES teachers’ attitudes and perceptions about assessment and assessment practices in the elementary foreign/world language classroom. It is anticipated that approximately a hundred FLES teachers will participate in the nationwide study.

I would welcome your participation in this 15-25 minute online survey. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time. Please note, that should you determine the need to withdraw from the study at a later date, all data associated with the information you provided will be properly discarded. The research study is approved by the Office of Research Integrity and Assurance (ORIA) at George Mason University.

The promise of strict confidentiality is assured in both the collection and reporting of the data. Any findings obtained in connection with this study will be presented in such a way that no individual will be identifiable. By completing this online survey, you are giving me permission to publish aggregated results in my dissertation, in peer reviewed journals, and at professional conferences.

To participate in the survey:
Step 1 - Click on the link to the survey: https://www.surveymonkey.com
Step 2 - Follow instructions, clicking “next” at the bottom of every screen.
Step 3 - Remember to click “done” at the end of the survey when you are finished.

The second phase of the study includes a follow-up interview of approximately one hour duration. This is totally voluntary but would greatly enhance the richness of information gathered for the study. If you wish to participate in the second phase of the research, please complete the Follow-Up Interview consent form provided at the end of the survey. I will promptly contact you to arrange a convenient time for the virtual interview (could be Skype).

I am hopeful that the results from this study may benefit FLES teachers and language teachers in general, as well as educational administrators and policy makers by proposing ways of improving current assessment practices taking place in L2 elementary classrooms.

Thank you in advance for your time and willingness to share your assessment beliefs and practices. This study could not be completed without your help. Should you have any questions about this study, contact me at ocorrlet@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Olga I. Corretjer, PhD candidate
George Mason University

IRB: For Official Use Only
Project Number: 554748-1
Follow-Up Email to Participants

Study Title: Exploring FLES Teachers’ Attitudes and Perceptions About Assessment and Assessment Practices in the Elementary World Language Classroom

Dear FLES Teacher,

I recently sent you an email asking you to respond to an online survey about your attitudes and perceptions about assessment practices in the elementary world language classroom. I am conducting the research study as part of the requirements of George Mason University’s Ph. D. in Education program. Your responses to this survey are critical and very helpful. The collection of this important information will benefit FLES and language teachers in general, as well as educational administrators, and policy makers by proposing ways of improving current assessment practices taking place insecond language elementary classrooms.

The survey will take approximately fifteen to twenty-five minutes to complete. If you have already completed the survey, I appreciate your participation. If you have not yet responded to the survey, I encourage you to take a few minutes and complete it before March 31, 2004. I wanted to email everyone who has not responded to make sure you had the opportunity to participate.

Please click on the link below to go to the survey website (or copy and paste survey link into your Internet browser) and then enter the personal access code to begin the survey.

Survey Link: [http://www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)

Personal Access Code: 458766

Thank you in advance for completing the survey. Your responses are very important. Getting feedback from FLES teachers’ attitudes and perceptions about assessment in the elementary world language classroom is crucial in improving assessment practices used in world language education.

Sincerely,

Olga I. Corretjer, Ph. D. candidate
George Mason University
FLES Teachers' Attitudes and Perceptions About Assessment Online Survey
(Adapted from Assessment Practices Inventory (API), by Zhang & Barry-Stock, 2003; Classroom Assessment Practices Questionnaire (CAPHQ) designed by Cheng, Rogers, & Hsu, 2004; and a teacher questionnaire developed by Colby-Kelly & Turner, 2007)

Introduction:

Dear FLES Teacher,

You have been invited to participate in a research study concerning FLES teachers’ attitudes and perceptions about assessment and assessment practices in elementary WL education. By completing this survey and sharing your views, you will provide useful information that will benefit FLES teachers and language teachers in general, as well as educational administrators, and policy makers in understanding assessment practices in L2 elementary classrooms and professional development opportunities.

The research study is approved by the Office of Research Integrity and Assurance (ORIA) at George Mason University. Please be advised that all shared points of view, opinions, and information will remain strictly confidential. The second phase of the study includes a follow-up interview of approximately one hour duration. This is totally voluntary but would greatly enhance the richness of information gathered for the study. If you wish to participate in the second phase of the research, please complete the Follow-Up Interview consent form provided at the end of the survey. I will promptly contact you to arrange a convenient time for the interview (could be Skype®).

Thank you in advance for your support of my study. In an effort to gather all available data, I am asking participants to complete the survey by March 31, 2014. If you have any questions or concerns about this research endeavor, do not hesitate to contact me.

Kindest regards,

Olga I. Corretjer, Ph. D candidate
George Mason University

Contact Information:
Phone: 703-867-3074
Email: ocorretj@gmail.com

IRB: For Official Use Only

Project Number: 554748-1
FLES Teachers’ Attitudes and Perceptions About Assessment Online Survey

Consent to Participate

The purpose of this research project is to explore and gain knowledge on FLES teachers’ attitudes and perceptions about assessment and assessment practices in the elementary FL/WL classroom. This is a research project being conducted by Dr. Rebecca K. Fox, Ph. D (Principal Investigator) and Olga I. Correjtej MS Ed. (Co-investigator) of George Mason University. You are invited to participate in this research because you are a Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES) teacher. The survey will take approximately 15-25 minutes to complete.

Survey Monkey® is a secure site, and all responses are sent over an encrypted connection. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you may withdraw from this study at any time. You may also choose to omit specific questions if you prefer not to answer them. Should you decide to exit the study at a later date, you may also withdraw any provided information.

Be assured that any information obtained in connection with this study will remain completely confidential. All data is stored in a password protected electronic format. Also, the contact information (identifiers/email addresses, etc.) that you might provide at the end of the online survey will not be connected to your survey responses. It will be collected on a webpage separate from the survey such that any identifiable information cannot be connected to identifiers/email addresses. By completing the online survey, you will be giving Olga I. Correjt, permission to publish aggregated findings in her dissertation and present findings in professional journals and at professional conferences.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research study, please contact Olga I. Correjt at 703-867-3074 or via email at: ocorrejt@gmu.edu. This research has been reviewed according to George Mason University Institutional Review Board (IRB) procedures for research involving human subjects.

ELECTRONIC CONSENT: Please select your choice below.
Clicking on the “agree” button below indicates that:

- You have read the information provided above
- You voluntarily agree to participate in the research study
- You are at least 18 years of age

If you do not wish to participate in the research study, please decline participation by clicking on the “disagree” button.

- agree
- disagree
Drawing Consent Form
You can be a winner!

Dear FLES Teacher,

I appreciate your taking the time to participate in this online survey. If you accept to provide your email address, you will be entered in a random drawing of a $100.00 VISA card gift certificate. I will notify the winner via email before April 30, 2014. In the email, I will request a name and address, for mailing the gift certificate. If the winner does not respond to the email notification within 10 days, he/she will forfeit their gift certificate and an alternate winner will be randomly selected.

There are no foreseeable risks for participating in this drawing. To protect your privacy and confidentiality, your contact information (email/mailing addresses) will not be connected to your survey responses. Instead, they will be collected on a webpage separate from the survey such that any identifiable information cannot be connected to identifiers/email addresses. The email/mailing addresses will then be deleted as soon as a winner is secured.

If you have any questions or concerns about this drawing, please contact Olgia I. Corretjer at 703-867-3047 or by email at orcorretj@gmu.edu.

ELECTRONIC CONSENT: Please indicate your choice below.
Clicking on the “Yes” button below indicates:

- You have read the above information
- You voluntarily agree to participate in the $100.00 VISA card drawing
- You voluntarily accept to provide an email address as a point of contact
- You are at least 18 years of age

○ Yes, please enter my email address into the drawing to win a $100 VISA gift card. My email address is:

○ No, thanks. I am not interested in entering the drawing to win a $100 VISA gift card.

IRB: For Official Use Only
Office of Research Integrity & Assurance
Project Number: 554748-1
INFORMED CONSENT FORM – VIRTUAL INTERVIEW

Study Title: Exploring FLES Teachers’ Attitudes and Perceptions About Assessment and Assessment Practices in the Elementary World Language Classroom

RESEARCH PROCEDURES
This research is being conducted to explore and gain knowledge on Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES) teachers’ educational assessment practices. The study will focus on FLES teachers’ perceptions of classroom assessment practices in elementaryWL education as revealed in their beliefs about assessment and how these beliefs inform their decisions about planning and instruction. The research will be used as a vehicle that will help the researcher understand more about how FLES teachers interpret assessment in their WL classrooms, what their perceptions about assessment are, and what classroom assessment practices FLES teachers use in the WL classroom. The findings from the study may provide empirical evidence substantiating the knowledge base of foreign/world language assessment procedures.

You will be asked to participate in a virtual follow-up interview regarding your attitudes and perceptions about assessment in the FLES classroom. The interview will take approximately one hour.

RISKS
There are no foreseeable risks for participating in this research.

BENEFITS
There are no benefits to you as a participant other than to further research in the field of foreign/world language teacher education.

CONFIDENTIALITY
All the data gathered in this study, will be strictly confidential. Olga I. Correijer is the only researcher who will know your identity as a participant in this study. All information collected will be identified only in terms of a coded identification number or pseudonym, as well as, reported as combined data and therefore not identifiable to any individual. The pseudonym will be used when transcribing the audio-recorded interview. At the end of the study, all data that was collected solely for the purposes of this study will be destroyed. Your name or other identifiers will not be featured on surveys or other research data. Skype®’s privacy/confidentiality policy stipulates that appropriate organizational and technical measures will be taken in order to protect the personal and traffic data provided to it or collected by it with due observance of the applicable obligations and exceptions.
under the relevant legislation. Skype® may use automated scanning within Instant Messages to (a) identify suspected spam and/or (b) identify URL’s that have been previously flagged as spam, fraud, or phising links. Chat logs are generally stored by Skype® for a maximum of between 30 and 90 days unless otherwise permitted by law. Skype® will not sell, rent, trade or otherwise transfer any personal and/or traffic data or communications content outside of Microsoft and its controlled subsidiaries and affiliates without your explicit permission, unless it is obliged to do so under applicable laws or by the order of the competent authorities.

PARTICIPATION
Your participation in this research study is voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason. If you decide not to participate or if you withdraw from the study, there is no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. There are no costs to you or another party.

CONTACT
This research is being conducted by Olga I. Corretjer, a Ph.D candidate at George Mason University. You can reach her by email at ocorretj@gmu.edu or by phone 703-993-3074 for questions, concerns or to report a research-related problem. Her faculty advisor is Dr. Rebecca Kanak Fox. You may contact Dr. Fox at rfox@gmu.edu or 703-993-4123. You may contact the George Mason University Office of Research Integrity and Assurance (ORIA) at 703-993-5381 if you have questions or comments regarding your rights as a participant in the research.

This research study has been reviewed according to George Mason University procedures governing your participation. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) has waived the requirement for a signature on the consent form.

CONSENT
I have read this form and agree to participate in the study.

☐ I agree to be audiotaped/recorded for the virtual interview.

☐ I do not agree to be audiotaped/recorded for the virtual interview.

Name

Date of Signature

Version date: 1/23/14

IRB: For Official Use Only
Project Number: 554748-1

Page 2 of 2
Dear FLES teachers,

Thank you for participating in this survey. As a follow up activity to this survey, I would like to conduct various interviews regarding the attitudes and perceptions you have about assessment and assessment practices in your foreign/world language teaching. The interviews will be conducted via Skype®, take approximately 60 minutes to complete, and will be audio taped. Your participation is completely voluntary.

Your privacy and confidentiality will be protected by using pseudonyms or an identity key instead of your real name. Once the interviews are transcribed, they will be deleted. In addition, your contact information (email/mailing addresses) will not be connected to your survey responses. Instead, it will be collected on a webpage separate from the survey such that any identifiable information cannot be connected to identifiers/email addresses.

Skype®’s privacy/confidentiality policy stipulates that appropriate organizational and technical measures will be taken in order to protect the personal and traffic data provided to it or collected by it with due observance of the applicable obligations and exceptions under the relevant legislation. Skype® may use automated scanning within Instant Messages to (a) identify suspected spam and/or (b) identify URL’s that have been previously flagged as spam, fraud, or phishing links. Chat logs are generally stored by Skype® for a maximum of between 30 and 90 days unless otherwise permitted by law. Skype® will not sell, rent, trade or otherwise transfer any personal and/or traffic data or communications content outside of Microsoft and its controlled subsidiaries and affiliates without your explicit permission, unless it is obliged to do so under applicable laws or by the order of the competent authorities.

There are no foreseeable risks for participating in this research. Also, there are no benefits to you as a participant other than to further research in the field of foreign/world language education.

If you are willing to share your opinions and ideas with me, please complete the contact information provided below and send it to ccorrigd@amu.edu. I will contact you to arrange a convenient time for the interview. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at 703-867-8074 or at the email provided above.

Name: ____________________________

Email address: ______________________

As a thank you, all interviewed teachers will be provided with a chance to win a $50 VISA gift card. You only need to agree to be included in the drawing by clicking the “Yes” button below. The winner will be notified via email before April 30, 2014.

ELECTRONIC CONSENT: Please indicate your choice below.
Clicking on the “Yes” button below indicates that:

- You have read the above information
- You voluntarily agree to participate in a follow-up interview conducted via Skype®
- You voluntarily agree for the follow-up interview to be audio taped
- You are at least 18 years of age
If you do not wish to participate in the follow-up interview, please decline participation by clicking the "No" button.

- Yes, I agree to participate in a follow-up interview. Please enter my email into the drawing to win a VISA $100 gift card. My email address __________________________.

- No, thank you. I do not agree to participate in a follow-up interview.
Appendix B

Online Survey

SURVEY ON TEACHERS’ ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS ABOUT ASSESSMENT AND ASSESSMENT PRACTICES
(Adapted from Assessment Practice Inventory (API) by Zhang & Kenny-Mack, 2006; Classroom Assessment Practice Questionnaire (CAPQ) designed by Chang, Ferguson, & Han, 2004, and a teacher questionnaire developed by Colby-Kelly & Turner, 2007)

Introduction:

Dear FLES Teacher,

You have been invited to participate in a research study concerning FLES teachers’ attitudes and perceptions about assessment and assessment practices in elementary WL education. By completing this survey and sharing your views, you will provide useful information that will benefit FLES teachers and language teachers in general, as well as educational administrators, and policy makers in understanding assessment practices in L2 elementary classrooms and professional development opportunities.

The research study is approved by the Office of Research Integrity and Assurance (ORIA) at George Mason University. Please be advised that all shared points of view, opinions, and information will remain strictly confidential. The second phase of the study includes a follow-up interview of approximately one hour duration. This is totally voluntary but would greatly enhance the richness of information gathered for the study. If you wish to participate in the second phase of the research, please complete the Follow-Up Interview consent form provided at the end of the survey. I will promptly contact you to arrange a convenient time for the interview (could be Skype®).

Thank you in advance for your support of my study. In an effort to gather all available data, I am asking participants to complete the survey by March 31, 2014. If you have any questions or concerns about this research endeavor, do not hesitate to contact me.

Kindest regards,

Olga I. Corretje, PhD Candidate
George Mason University

Contact Information:
Phone: 703-587-3074
Email: ocorretj@gmu.edu
FLES Teachers’ Attitudes and Perceptions about Assessment Online Survey
Consent to Participate

RESEARCH PROCEDURES
The purpose of this research project is to explore and gain knowledge on FLES teachers’ attitudes and perceptions about assessment and assessment practices in the elementary FL/ WL classroom. You are invited to participate in this research because you are a Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES) teacher. The survey will take approximately 15-25 minutes to complete. You will also be asked if you wish to participate in an individual interview via Skype that will take approximately one hour. If you decide to participate in the interview, you will be contacted by email according to the information you provide at the end of the survey to set up a day and time at your convenience.

RISKS
There are no foreseeable risks for participating in this research.

BENEFITS
There are no benefits to you as a participant other than to further research in foreign language education, and beliefs about assessment and assessment practices in FLES programs in the U.S.

CONFIDENTIALITY
Survey Monkey® is a secure site, and all responses are sent over an encrypted connection. Be assured that any information obtained in connection with this study will remain completely confidential. All data is stored in a password protected electronic format. Also, the contact information (identifiers/email addresses, etc.) that you might provide at the end of the online survey will not be connected to your survey responses. It will be collected on a webpage separate from the survey such that any identifiable information cannot be connected to identifiers/email addresses. By completing the online survey, you will be giving Olga I. Corretjer, permission to publish aggregated findings in her dissertation and present findings in professional journals and at professional conferences.

PARTICIPATION
Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you may withdraw from this study at any time and for any reason. If you decide not to participate or if you withdraw from the study, there is no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. There are no costs to you or any other party. Upon your survey completion, you will be given the opportunity to participate in a drawing of a $100 VISA gift card.

CONTACT
This is a research project being conducted by Dr. Rebecca K. Fox, Ph. D (Principal Investigator) and Olga I. Corretjer MS Ed. (Co-investigator) of George Mason University. If you have any questions or concerns about the research study, please contact Olga I. Corretjer at 703-867-3074 or via email at ocorretj@gmu.edu.
This research has been reviewed according to George Mason University Institutional Review Board (IRB) procedures for research involving human subjects.

**ELECTRONIC CONSENT:** Please select your choice below. Clicking on the “agree” button below indicates that:

- You have read the information provided above
- You voluntarily agree to participate in the research study
- You are at least 18 years of age

If you do not wish to participate in the research study, please decline participation by clicking on the “disagree” button.

○ agree

○ disagree

Next >>
A. Background Information (Please check (✓) all that apply)

1. Your gender:  Female  Male
2. Your age group:  20-25  26-30
     31-35  36-40
     41-45  46 and over
3. In what city and state of the U.S. do you teach FLES? City  State
4. Languages you teach (Please write)

5. What is your first language ($L_1$)?

6. What other languages do you speak?

7. Years of experience teaching FLES (Please write) yrs.

8. The Teacher Preparation Program (Licensure) you received:
   a. Regular (4 yrs.)
   b. Accelerated
   c. Alternative
   d. Career Switch
   e. Other (Please write)

9. Your highest educational degree. Please check (✓) one option.
   a. Bachelor
   b. Master
   c. Doctoral

10. Grade level (s) you teach. Please check (✓) all that apply.
    a. 1st – 6th grade
    b. 1st – 5th grade
    c. K – 5th grade
    d. K – 6th grade

<< Previous  Next >>
### B. Purpose of Assessment

The following fourteen items refer to the purpose of classroom assessment practices most mentioned in education literature. For each item, please circle the rating scales to indicate your opinion on its degree of importance relating to the purpose of student assessment that applies to your teaching.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose &amp; Importance of Assessment</th>
<th>Least important</th>
<th>Somewhat important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. To plan my instruction</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>2. To group my students for</td>
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<td>instructional purposes in my</td>
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<td>class</td>
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<td>3. To motivate my students to</td>
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<td>learn</td>
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<td>4. To obtain information on my</td>
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<td>students’ progress</td>
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<td>5. To diagnose strengths and</td>
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<tr>
<td>weaknesses in my own teaching and</td>
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<tr>
<td>instruction</td>
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<td>6. To provide feedback to my</td>
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<td>students as they progress in the</td>
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<td>learning of a foreign language</td>
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<td>7. To diagnose strengths and</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>weaknesses in my students</td>
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<td>8. To prepare my students for</td>
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<td>standardized tests they will need</td>
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<td>to take in the future</td>
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<td>9. To make my students work</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>harder</td>
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<td>10. To formally document growth in</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>learning</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Cont. next page
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cont. Purpose of Assessment</th>
<th>Least important</th>
<th>Somewhat important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11. To determine the final grades for my students</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. To assess student progress in the attainment of standards</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>13. To provide information to the central administration (school district, state agency)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>14. To provide information to an outside funding agency</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Other (please specify):</td>
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</table>

C. Methods of Classroom Assessment Practices

Circle the response that best indicates how often you use the following methods to assess your students’ performance in the foreign/world language classroom.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Methods</th>
<th>Not at all used</th>
<th>Seldom used</th>
<th>Used occasionally</th>
<th>Used often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1. Formative assessment consisting of:</td>
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<tr>
<td>a) Read aloud dictation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>b) Student journals</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>c) Student portfolios</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>e) Peer assessment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>f) Other (please specify):</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Methods</th>
<th>Not at all used</th>
<th>Seldom used</th>
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<th>Used often</th>
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<tr>
<td>C2. Summative assessment consisting of teacher or commercially made test items containing:</td>
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<tr>
<td>a) True-false items</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>b) Matching items</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment Methods</td>
<td>Not at all used</td>
<td>Seldom used</td>
<td>Used occasionally</td>
<td>Used often</td>
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<td>c) Multiple choice items</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>d) Short answer questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>e) Fill-in the blank answer</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>f) Short paragraph writing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>g) Cloze exercises</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>h) Open-ended questions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>i) Standardized tests: (please specify which one(s))</td>
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<td>j) Other (please specify):</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Methods</th>
<th>Not at all used</th>
<th>Seldom used</th>
<th>Used occasionally</th>
<th>Used often</th>
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<tr>
<td>C3. Performance assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>requiring students to:</td>
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<td>a) Give oral directions</td>
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<td>b) Follow directions give orally</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>c) Provide an oral/written description of an event/object</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>d) Information gap activities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>e) Presentation on a topic</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>f) Engage in pair-share</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>g) Retell a story after listening</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>h) Role play</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>i) Video/audiotape a skit</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>j) Additional performance-based assessments you use to assess student learning: (Please write)</td>
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</table>

D. Pedagogical Choices after Assessment
Please check (*) all that apply

1. What do you do in the FLES classroom with the information you gather from the assessment of your students?
   a. Diagnose strengths and weaknesses in my own teaching and instruction
   b. Formally document growth in the learning on my students
   c. Revise my lesson plans after assessment to make changes if necessary
d. Provide other assessment methods to accommodate differentiated instruction
   
e. Provide information to parents, students, and school officials about student performance
   
f. Other (please specify):

   2. When you give feedback to your students during FLES instruction, how do you provide that feedback? Please check (✓) all that apply:

   a. Verbal feedback
   b. Checklist
   c. Written comments on work
   d. Teaching diary/log
   e. Conference with students
   f. Total test score
   g. A letter grade
   h. Other (please specify):

   E. Opinions About Classroom Assessments
   Circle a response that best represents your opinion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Classroom assessments focusing directly on student development are best.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Teacher and students should share an understanding of assessment goals.</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Varied assessment methods should be used continually.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Teachers should assess oral proficiency often.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Teachers need to use authentic materials &amp; situations in the target language.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Teacher and students should share an understanding of assessment goals.</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Asking students “What do you think I want you to learn from this lesson?” is useful.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Comprehension check questions are useful to confirm student understanding.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Student self-evaluation fosters</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
F. Time Spent on Assessment

1. In your estimation, how much time each week do you spend on assessment during a grading period? (i.e., preparing for an assessment, collecting information, scoring the responses, and reporting assessment results). Please include time spent both at school and at home.

I spend approximately, please check (✓) one of the following options:

a. 1 – 2 hours a week
b. 2 – 3 hours a week
c. 4 – 5 hours a week
d. 6 – 7 hours a week
e. 8 – 9 hours a week
f. 10 – 11 hours a week
g. 12 – 13 hours a week
h. More than 14 hours a week

2. Additional information
   Please add any personal comments or additional information you would like to share about your classroom assessment practices in the FLES classroom:

______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

This concludes the online FLES teachers’ survey.
Thank you so much for your participation! 😊
You can be a winner!

TURN TO NEXT PAGE ON HOW YOU CAN BE A WINNER!
Drawing Consent Form
You can be a winner!

Dear FLES Teacher,

I appreciate your taking the time to participate in this online survey. If you accept to provide your email address, you will be entered in a random drawing of a $100.00 VISA card gift certificate. I will notify the winner via email before May 30, 2014. In the email, I will request a name and address, for mailing the gift certificate. If the winner does not respond to the email notification within 10 days, he/she will forfeit their gift certificate and an alternate winner will be randomly selected.

There are no foreseeable risks for participating in this drawing. To protect your privacy and confidentiality, your contact information (email/mailing addresses) will not be connected to your survey responses. Instead, they will be collected on a webpage separate from the survey such that any identifiable information cannot be connected to identifiers/email addresses. The email/mailing addresses will then be deleted as soon as a winner is secured.

If you have any questions or concerns about this drawing, please contact Olga I. Correjier at 703-867-3047 or by email at ocorrejir@gmu.edu.

ELECTRONIC CONSENT: Please indicate your choice below.

Clicking on the “Yes” button below indicates:

- You have read the above information
- You voluntarily agree to participate in the $100.00 VISA card drawing
- You voluntarily accept to provide an email address as a point of contact
- You are at least 18 years of age

○ Yes, please enter my email address into the drawing to win a $100 VISA gift card. My email address is: ________________________________

○ No, thanks. I am not interested in entering the drawing to win a $100 VISA gift card.
Dear FLES teachers,

Thank you for participating in this survey. As a follow up activity to this survey, I would like to conduct various interviews regarding the attitudes and perceptions you have about assessment and assessment practices in your foreign/world language teaching. The interviews will be conducted via Skype®; take approximately 60 minutes to complete, and will be audiotaped. Your participation is completely voluntary.

Your privacy and confidentiality will be protected by using pseudonyms or an identity key instead of your real name. Once the interviews are transcribed, they will be deleted. In addition, your contact information (email mailing addresses) will not be connected to your survey responses. Instead, it will be collected on a webpage separate from the survey such that any identifiable information cannot be connected to identifiers/email addresses.

Skype®’s privacy/confidentiality policy stipulates that appropriate organizational and technical measures will be taken in order to protect the personal and traffic data provided to it or collected by it with due observance of the applicable obligations and exceptions under the relevant legislation. Skype® may use automated scanning within Instant Messages to (a) identify suspected spam and or (b) identify URL’s that have been previously flagged as spam, fraud, or phishing links. Chat logs are generally stored by Skype® for a maximum of between 30 and 90 days unless otherwise permitted by law. Skype® will not sell, rent, trade or otherwise transfer any personal and or traffic data or communications content outside of Microsoft and its controlled subsidiaries and affiliates without your explicit permission, unless it is obliged to do so under applicable laws or by the order of the competent authorities.

There are no foreseeable risks for participating in this research. Also, there are no benefits to you as a participant other than to further research in the field of foreign/world language education.

If you are willing to share your opinions and ideas with me, please complete the contact information provided below and send it to ocorret@gmu.edu. I will contact you to arrange a convenient time for the interview. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at 703-687-3074 or at the email provided above.

Name: ________________________________

Email address: __________________________

As a thank you, all interviewed teachers will be provided with a chance to win a $50 VISA gift card. You only need to agree to be included in the drawing by clicking the “Yes” button below. The winner will be notified via email before April 30, 2014.

ELECTRONIC CONSENT: Please indicate your choice below.
Clicking on the “Yes” button below indicates that:

- You have read the above information
- You voluntarily agree to participate in a follow-up interview conducted via Skype®
• You voluntarily agree for the follow-up interview to be audio taped
• You are at least 18 years of age

If you do not wish to participate in the follow-up interview, please decline participation by clicking the “No” button.

○ Yes, I agree to participate in a follow-up interview. Please enter my email into the drawing to win a VISA $50 gift card. My email address _________________________.

○ No, thank you. I do not agree to participate in a follow-up interview.
Appendix C

Interview Participants’ Profile

Table C1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Region of US</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Years of Experience Teaching FLES</th>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Teacher Training Program</th>
<th>World Language(s) Taught</th>
<th>School Setting</th>
<th>Approx. # of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Magda</td>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>46+</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>Regular*</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zora</td>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>46+</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janice</td>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>46+</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>Career Switch**</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krista</td>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>Career Switch Regular</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandy</td>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>46+</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Doctoral</td>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa</td>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>46+</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neil</td>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>41-45</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morgan</td>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>46+</td>
<td>20+</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chelsey</td>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>46+</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>Alternative***</td>
<td>Spanish/French</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandra</td>
<td>West</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>46+</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tatiana</td>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nelson</td>
<td>West</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>Alternative</td>
<td>Classical Latin/Ancient Greek</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elma</td>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>46+</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>Public/Charter</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beatrice</td>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>46+</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Pseudonyms were used to protect the identity and confidentiality of the participants.

*Denotes a regular 4-year teacher preparation program.

**Denotes a career switch pathway to becoming a FLES teacher.

***Denotes an alternative pathway to becoming a FLES teacher.
## Appendix D

### Research Design Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why?</td>
<td>1.1 To identify what FLES teachers consider to be the purpose of assessment; 1.2 To understand the importance FLES teachers attribute to the assessment process in the WL classroom (role)</td>
<td>2.1 To identify different kinds of assessments FLES teachers report they use in the WL classroom; 2.2 To understand how these types of classroom assessments are used in the WL classroom (choices)</td>
<td>3.1 To understand possible areas of synergy and tension between FLES teachers' beliefs and assessment practices they report using 3.2 To understand how FLES teachers connect assessment and instructional practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who/Where?</td>
<td>128 FLES teachers in the National Network for Early Language Learning (NNELL), Nanduti, and FL Teach LISTSERVES national membership databases, 14 of these teachers for follow-up interviews, varying in gender, age, educational background, teaching experience, language they teach, and geographical location</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kind of data</td>
<td>Survey, follow-up semi-structured interviews, and researcher analytical memos</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Quant: Descriptive Statistics: Frequencies and percentage of reported assessment purposes</td>
<td>Quant: Frequencies and percentage of different types of reported assessment</td>
<td>Quant: Descriptive Statistics: Frequencies Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Qual: Inferences about their perceptions about assessment &amp; assessment practices</td>
<td>Qual: Open Coding Categories/Themes</td>
<td>Qual: Integration of quantitative and qualitative data (dialogic approach) Categorizing &amp; connecting strategies (Maxwell &amp; Miller, 2008) NVivo coding and categorizing interview transcripts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>Qual: Clarification and expansion of information (richness/depth) in follow-up interview questions identification of purpose, use, importance, types, activities in classroom assessment practices reported by FLES teachers</td>
<td>Qual: Interconnecting codes/categories Constant-Comparative Method (Glaser &amp; Strauss, 1967) Data analysis from 14 teacher interviews</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Validity Threats</td>
<td>Researcher bias, participant retroactivity (social desirability), and self-report bias</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E

FLES Teacher Interview Protocol

1) Please share with me what kind of teacher preparation you received in order to become a FLES teacher? How do you think your experience prepared you to assess language development and performance in the FLES classroom?

2) Tell me about your experiences as a FLES teacher? How do you think these experiences have affected your teaching of a foreign/world (FL/WL) language?

3) What are your main goals/objectives in foreign/world language teaching?

4) What do you understand as the purpose of assessment in FL/WL learning and teaching? What do you want your students to know or be able to do in terms of assessment?

5) How do you view assessment and assessment practices in the FLES classroom? What role does assessment play in your FLES classroom?

6) What information do you expect to learn through the assessment of your FL/WL students? What do you usually plan to do with the information gained through the assessment of your FL/WL students?

7) What kinds of assessment methods do you use in your FLES classroom?

8) Please share two distinct kinds of assessment methods you regularly use in your FLES instruction, which have been successful as part of your evaluation of student
language performance and growth. Expand on how you use them in your FLES classroom.

9) In your opinion, have your views of WL assessment changed over time (for example, in the last three years)? Why?

10) Is there anything else you might want to add to this interview that was not covered or included in our conversation?

11) Thank you for your participation in this interview.
## Appendix F

### Online Survey Components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section A</th>
<th>Section B</th>
<th>Section C</th>
<th>Section D</th>
<th>Section E</th>
<th>Section F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demographic Information</td>
<td>Purpose/Importance of Assessment</td>
<td>Methods of Classroom Assessment Practices</td>
<td>Pedagogical Choices after Assessment &amp; Feedback</td>
<td>Opinions about Classroom Assessments</td>
<td>Time Spent on Assessment/Additional Comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Gender</td>
<td>- 15 Likert-type items</td>
<td>- 25 Likert-type items</td>
<td>- Two select the answer/ or specify other response questions</td>
<td>- 11 Likert-type items</td>
<td>- One question on time spent on assessment per marking period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Age</td>
<td>- Rating scale 1-4* *1 = least important 4 = very important</td>
<td>- Rating Scale 1-4* *1 = Not at all used; 4 = Used often</td>
<td>- Example: What do you do with the information you gather from the assessment of your students?</td>
<td>- Rating scale 1-4* *1 = strongly disagree 4 = strongly agree</td>
<td>- One question on personal comments/ additional information on assessment practices in the FL/WL elementary classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- State/city of residence</td>
<td>- Examples: Indicate your opinion on its degree of importance relating to the purpose of student assessment: - To plan my instruction - To group students for instruction purposes in my class - To diagnose strengths and weaknesses in my own teaching and instruction - To prepare my students for standardized tests they need to take in the future</td>
<td>- Examples: Indicate how often you use the following methods to assess your students: - Student journals - Read aloud/dictation - Student portfolios - Peer assessment - Performance assessments</td>
<td>- Example: Indicate your opinion about classroom assessments: - Classroom assessments focusing on student development are best - Teacher and students should share understanding of assessment goals - Student self-evaluation fosters learning - Student peer-review feedback is useful for learning</td>
<td>- Examples:</td>
<td>- Example: In your estimation, how much time a week do you spend on assessment during a marking period? 1-2 hours a week 2-3 hours a week 4-5 hours a week 10-11 hours a week More than 14 hours a week</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix G

Time Period

Table G1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Frame</th>
<th>Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| December 2013 – January 2014 | • Conducting communications, either face-to-face or by email with personnel from three LISTSERVS, and Northern Virginia school district WL coordinator to explain study in detail  
                          | • HSRB approval secured                                                                                                                  
                          | • Pilot study conducted with three FLES teachers currently working in a Northern Virginia school district                                      |
| February 2014 – June 2014 | • Activation and posting of online survey (SurveyMonkey®)  
                          |   o The survey was maintained “live” throughout this period to maximize respondents’ participation                                      |
| March 2014 – June 2014   | • One-on-one virtual follow-up interviews (SKYPE® or FaceTime®) conducted with 14 volunteer participants                               |
| June 2014 – May 2015     | • Data analysis and report writing process  
                          |   o It was an iterative process since the data collection and data analysis were performed simultaneously                                |
| May 2015 – March 2016    | • Final report written and submitted                                                                                                    |
Appendix H

Distribution of Survey Participants by US Region

Table H1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regions of US Where Survey Participants Teach FLES</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Frequency Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Northeast Region Teachers (N = 128)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delaware</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermont</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td>37</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Southern Region Teachers (N = 128)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
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<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
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<td>Louisiana</td>
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<td>1.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
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<td>3.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
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<td>Texas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td>West Virginia</td>
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<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td>49</td>
<td>38%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Midwest Region Teachers (N = 128)</strong></td>
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<td>Illinois</td>
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<td>5.4</td>
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<td>Indiana</td>
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<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa</td>
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<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan</td>
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<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
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<td>Missouri</td>
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<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nebraska</td>
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<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
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<td>1.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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**West Region Teachers (N = 128)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alaska</td>
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<td>0.8</td>
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<td>Arizona</td>
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<td>0.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hawaii</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nevada</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Mexico</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oregon</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utah</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix I

Survey Participants’ Demographics

### Table I

**Teacher Demography: Survey Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demography</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Frequency Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Teachers $(N = 128)$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>93.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Teachers $(N = 128)$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-25 years</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30 years</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-35 years</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-40 years</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-45 years</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46+ years</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>41.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Preparation Program</td>
<td>Teachers $(N = 128)$ (Multiple Responses Permitted)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular (4 yrs.)</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>54.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>19.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Career Switch</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accelerated</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7.8</td>
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<td>Frequency</td>
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Participants’ First Language Teachers (N = 128)

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<tr>
<td>Greek</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chinese and English</td>
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<tr>
<td>Portuguese</td>
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References


Schuster, B. G. (2005). Did a foreign language in the elementary schools (FLES) program in a Kansas school district affect students’ academic achievement in


Biography

Olga I. Correjter graduated *magna cum laude* from the University of Puerto Rico with a Bachelor of Arts in 1975. She went on to receive her Master of Arts in Education, with a concentration in Early Childhood, at Southern Illinois University in 1991. She has been a Spanish educator at the preschool, elementary, high school, and college educational levels. She was employed as a partial-immersion and FLES teacher at Fairfax County Public Schools, Virginia for 15 years. She has presented her research at state, regional, and national levels.