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Date April 20, 1977.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES

by

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A professional paper submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

Master of Education

with concentration in

Adult and Higher Education

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April, 1977

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The writer would like to thank, particularly, her Advisor, Dr. Earl N. Ringo, for his encouragement and patient understanding. Also Mrs. Joan G. Stovall, whose enthusiasm has sparked many of the ideas in this paper.

Special thanks to my husband, whose constructive criticism and experience made the writing of this paper much easier.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
VITA	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENT	iii
LIST OF TABLES	vii
ABSTRACT	viii
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
STATEMENT OF PROBLEM	2
NEED FOR THE STUDY	2
GENERAL QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED	4
GENERAL PROCEDURE	5
The Instrument	5
Sample and Delimitations	5
DEFINITION OF TERMS	6
SUMMARY	7
Chapter	
2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	8
Introduction	8
Traditional Assumptions in Foreign Language Teaching.	8
Individualization of Instruction in Foreign Languages.	10
What is Interdisciplinary?	10
Why Interdisciplinary?	11

Chapter	Page
Some Problems Encountered in the Establishment of Interdisciplinary Programs	13
Interdisciplinary Programs at Five American Institutions	14
Summary	16
3. PROCEDURES	17
Introduction	17
Population Description	17
Type of Study	18
Method of Collecting Data	18
Method of Organizing Data	19
Analysis of Data	19
Summary	20
4. FINDINGS	21
Introduction	21
Data Collected	21
Additional Findings	26
Summary	27
5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	28
Introduction	28
Discussion	28
Curriculum Design	28
Curriculum Content	30
Evaluation	33
Summary	36

	Page
APPENDIXES	38
Appendix 1	39
Appendix 2	42
Appendix 3	49
BIBLIOGRAPHY	51

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Languages reported as Most Useful	23
2. Desirable Levels of Proficiency for Foreign Language Occupations	24
3. Most Often Mentioned Specialties to Benefit from Foreign Languages	25

ABSTRACT

The problem of this study was to determine whether or not graduates with a background in foreign languages will be hired by multilingual corporations over graduates without the foreign language ability; and if so, what skills and professional levels of competency are most desirable. A questionnaire was designed and sent to a sample of multinational corporations in the United States. The results were tallied and presented in the form of percentages and tables. The results showed that: 1) Multinational corporations will hire persons with a background in foreign languages to back up their specialties, over persons without the language, all other things being equal. 2) Spanish, French, and German, followed by Chinese, Russian, and Japanese, in that order, are the languages in most demand. 3) Oral skills are preferred over written skills. 4) A Foreign Service Institute rating of 3 and 3+ (Minimum Professional Proficiency) is desirable if the language is to be used on the job. 5) A listing of specialties which would benefit from a foreign language was presented. It was concluded, on the basis of this study that: 1) The audiolingual and interdisciplinary approaches could give students the ability to apply foreign language skills to other disciplines; 2) Curriculum content would be of more benefit if it were more diversified; 3) The Foreign Service Institute method of evaluating language proficiency could be beneficial if it were adapted to the academic setting.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

A paradoxical situation exists in the field of foreign languages in the United States today. On the one hand most of us are aware of the need to be able to communicate in a language other than English. At the international level the United States carries a great share of the responsibility for maintaining world peace. Economically we are dependent on other countries and conversely, they are dependent on us. States like Montana can no longer afford to remain in isolation; this becomes manifest in recent efforts to sell local products in new and distant markets. Also, as our natural resources dwindle, we become more dependent on the natural resources of other countries.

This all requires the ability to communicate effectively with people of other countries, and the burden of communication should not be placed only on them.

The other side of the paradox is this: even though we realize that foreign languages are essential to better relations and understanding among people, we continue to cling to our old habits: 1) By restricting the use of foreign languages to the confines of the classrooms; 2) By failing to see the relevance of foreign languages to disciplines closely related to our daily lives, such as commerce, transportation, banking, recreation, etc.

The questions we can raise at this point are: 1) How can we in education help to make foreign languages more relevant to students? 2) Should we extend the use of foreign languages to other disciplines? and if so, 3) How can we do it?

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem of this study was to determine whether or not graduates with a background in foreign languages would be hired by multinational corporations over graduates without the foreign language ability; and if so, what skills and professional levels of competency would be most desirable.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

This study was of importance because traditionally the content in the study of foreign languages has been limited to the study of literature. However, a language is a skill that can be applied to other fields, such as technical knowledge, business, travel, etc. To this point the foreign language skills have been channelled mainly to the teaching profession.

For most students who enter the field of languages the prospects for employment after graduation are slim. Candidates applying for positions at an institution of higher education have stated that the academic crisis is severe because of a continuous decrease in

language enrollment and overstaffing. Also, because many universities have dropped the foreign language from their requirements for advanced degrees. The background of these candidates with many years of experience was in philology and medieval literature.

In an open letter to his colleagues, dated October 16, 1976, William D. Schaefer, Executive Director of the Modern Language Association of America, expressed his view of the situation as follows: "No chairman can be ignorant of the disastrous employment future facing Ph.D's in English and foreign languages."

The downward trend in foreign languages began in 1970; in 1974 the drop in registrations was 6.2% at institutions of higher education (Brod, 1976). The continuous drop in enrollments in foreign languages has caused concern among both teachers and administrators, who face the problem of maintaining costly departments for a small number of students. These concerns were discussed in October 1976 at a meeting of school officials and language teachers at the High School in Bozeman. Some of the points brought up are of special interest here:

- A. Severe decline in foreign language enrollments.
- B. Difficulties in maintaining upper division courses.
- C. More pressure on administration to increase class sizes and drop classes with small enrollments.
- D. Teachers feel pressured to keep all students in order to maintain or project enrollments within allowable limits for minimum class size.
- E. Many students do not feel the need to enroll in a foreign language course as a pre-requisite to higher education.

- F. Students feel the foreign language curriculum is meant only for above average students; they are therefore concerned that their grade point average will suffer in foreign languages.
- G. There is a sharp increase in elective course offerings for students to choose from.*

The following items were considered as possible solutions to the problem: 1) A philosophy should be developed for the District in regard to foreign languages. 2) the number of languages taught should be reduced. 3) A minimum number of students that would constitute a class should be established, as well as a maximum class size for effective foreign language instruction. 4) There is a need for more direct counseling in student curriculum decisions.

In order to find adequate solutions to these problems, it is necessary to explore ways of making languages more relevant to the needs of the people. This study was an attempt to explore opportunities for graduates with a background in foreign languages.

GENERAL QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED

The problem of this study opened up many questions; however, the scope of this investigation was limited to the following general questions:

1. Is there a need for students to enter a particular field, and to back up their specialties with a foreign language?
2. All other qualifications being equal, will graduates who

*Used with permission of the Bozeman Senior High School.

possess a specialty which is backed up by a foreign language be hired over those who do not?

3. What languages are most useful for career purposes?

4. What skills in the foreign language are most useful on the job? (oral versus written)

5. According to Foreign Service Institute levels of proficiency in a foreign language, what level would be most desirable for job purposes? (Foreign Service Institute proficiency levels are described in Appendix 1)

6. What fields could benefit most from foreign languages?

GENERAL PROCEDURE

The Instrument

In order to answer the questions posed in the previous section, the investigator constructed an instrument based on the general questions (Please see Appendix 2, The Instrument and Cover Letter).

Sample and Delimitations

The questionnaire was sent to a systematic random sample drawn from a listing of multinational companies contained in the American Encyclopedia of International Information, Vol. 2, Directory of American Firms Operating in Foreign Countries, compiled by Juvenal L. Angel, Simon and Schuster, Inc., New York, 1969.

This work contains the names and addresses of 3200 multi-

national companies. The sample was delimited to four percent of those names.

For accuracy and in order to update the information, the names were checked against Standard and Poor's Register of Corporations, Directors and Executives, 1976, Corporations, Vol. 1, New York, N.Y. 1976.

A descriptive analysis was made from the data collected. This analysis was presented in the form of percentages and tables were constructed to illustrate the results.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. Traditional approach to language teaching: The study of foreign language seen as a sequence that begins with the teaching of linguistic skills and ends with literary analysis (Burrelli, 1975).

2. Audio lingual method: Listening, speaking, reading, writing sequence in learning a language.

3. Individualization of Instruction: A variety of techniques and instructional resources utilized to meet the needs of students individually (Horn, 1975).

4. Interdisciplinary: A crossing of intellectual or curricular boundaries (Warriner, 1971). Synonymous with multidisciplinary.

SUMMARY

The field of foreign languages is facing a crisis with the sharp drop in enrollments and a lack of job opportunities for high school and university language teachers.

The problem of this investigation was to determine whether or not graduates with a background in foreign languages will be hired by multinational corporations over graduates without the foreign language ability; and if so, what skills and professional levels of competency are most desirable. To solve the problem, a questionnaire was constructed and sent to a sample of multinational companies.

A descriptive analysis was made from the data collected.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

Three major topics in the literature reviewed relate directly to the problem of this investigation: 1) The traditional assumptions and methods of teaching foreign languages; 2) Individualization of instruction in foreign languages, a new trend which has emerged within the last decade; 3) The interdisciplinary nature of programs which have been organized in several schools throughout the United States.

Traditional Assumptions in Foreign Language Teaching

Throughout the years several assumptions evolved in the approach to foreign language instruction. A brief look at these assumptions will allow us to form in our minds an idea of what is meant by the term "traditional."

Traditionally, foreign language study was regarded as a sequence that began with the teaching of linguistic skills and ended with the analysis of literature (Burrelli, 1975). Emphasis was placed mainly on the development of reading and translating skills (Brooks, 1963).

The use of English in the classroom was central to the learning of the foreign language. English was used in translation exercises, grammatical explanations, examples, etc. (Brooks, 1963).

One of the main goals of the traditional approach was to become proficient in the grammatical rules of the language without concern for their application to real life situations. Teaching was oriented to the use of books and the blackboard (Brooks, 1963).

At the high school level it was assumed that foreign language instruction should be geared to the elite students who were college bound (Strasheim, 1972). Since most advanced courses at the college level were literature courses, lower level courses were restricted to meet the standards of a college literature course and the Advanced Placement Examinations (Warriner, 1970, Corrin et al., 1966).

The above notions not only prevented teachers from being innovative in their teaching (Warriner, 1970), but also implied that students learn the same way and that the methods used applied to all students (Logan, 1972).

This situation remained unchanged until the introduction of the audiolingual approach in the early sixties, which shifted the emphasis from the reading and translating to the listening and speaking skills (Brooks, 1963).

In spite of the fact that many students today do not find the study of literature to be relevant to their needs, the upper level high school and college courses continue to be literature oriented with a few exceptions (Gilbert, 1976).

Individualization of Instruction in Foreign Languages

Upon reviewing the literature of the late sixties and early seventies, the trend that emerges from most articles is a push towards more individualized forms of instruction in foreign languages.

Individualization is a term which can be generally defined as a variety of techniques used to adapt instructional resources to meet the needs of individual students (Horn, 1975).

There are many approaches to individualization. Logan, 1972, describes seven categories of individualization:

1. Self-pacing
2. Independent study
3. Ability grouping within a traditional class
4. Remedial and enrichment courses
5. Use of materials and content of student's choice
6. Interdisciplinary courses
7. A combination of various techniques

Within the scope of this study the investigator will focus on the interdisciplinary approach.

What is Interdisciplinary?

The study of foreign languages has never been a pure discipline. The content of language instruction has been, by necessity, interdisciplinary to some extent. By interdisciplinary it is meant the crossing of intellectual or curricular barriers (Warriner, 1971).

Most programs in foreign languages, especially at the beginning levels, have dealt with the study of culture, history, literature of the countries where the language being learned is spoken (Warriner, 1971). At the more advanced levels the emphasis has been placed more on the literature. What the advocates of interdisciplinary language programs are trying to do is to bring about, not a drastic change, but a focusing on a variety of disciplines in order to make foreign language study, not only more appealing, but more relevant to more students (Horn, 1975; Honig, 1974; Warriner, 1971; Corrin et al., 1966).

Why Interdisciplinary?

From the standpoint of language learning, a foreign language cannot be learned in a void. A language is a skill, which by itself might not be very important as a profession; however, when the contents of the language are diversified, this skill has a broader range of application (Fuller, 1975).

Even for highly specific careers where a language is the basic skill, such as Translator/Precis and Interpreters at the United Nations and other international organizations, applicants must be qualified not only in the languages, but they must be highly qualified in a variety of other fields: political, economics, legal, literary and so on. As expressed in a job information brochure put out by the United Nations, the interpreter and translator must be a generalist (United Nations, RECR-I. 21c(12-75)E).

Jobs where the language is the main skill are fairly limited and the turnover is very slow. The United Nations has a staff of about ninety-eight interpreters; the State Department has only about fifty linguists of whom about twenty are interpreters. The Organization of American States, The World Bank, and other such organizations also employ a small number of interpreters, but in total there are no more than about one hundred seventy-five full time positions as interpreters in the entire United States (U.S. Department of State, 1976). To qualify for these positions, applicants must be at least true bilinguals and have a broad education (U.S. Department of State, 1976).

In the competitive job market of today, a specialty paired with a foreign language can give graduates an "edge" over those who do not have the language (Altman, 1976). More and more jobs are developing where a language can definitely be an asset. There are about 3200 companies in the United States with connections abroad (Honig, 1974). The United States yearly total of investments abroad is \$48 billion and American exports continue to grow at an average nine percent a year (Bureau of International Commerce leaflet n.d.). The United States Department of Commerce encourages businesses, small and large, to find markets abroad. Along with the growth in exports the need develops for qualified people in international marketing, international corporate law, economics, research, etc. All these are careers in which foreign language skills are useful (Honig, 1974).

The United States government is another source of employment for people with a background in foreign languages (Fuller, 1975). The Foreign Service, particularly, recruits candidates for appointments as Foreign Service Officers. Their academic and practical experience should be preferably relevant to economic and administrative work, communications, etc. Even though knowledge of a foreign language is not required, those applicants who pass a test in one or more languages are eligible to receive a higher salary (United States Department of State, 1976). Other government agencies in which languages are useful are the Central Intelligence Agency, the U.S. Information Agency, the Army, the Federal Bureau of Investigations, and numerous others (Honig, 1974).

Other fields in which languages are useful are journalism and communications, religious and service organizations, social work, travel and tourism, hotel management, transportation, etc. However, in most cases experience in a particular specialty is given higher priority (Fuller, 1975; Honig, 1974).

Some Problems Encountered in the Establishment of Interdisciplinary Programs

The traditional assumptions described earlier: 1) That the study of foreign languages is to fulfill college requirements (Corrin et al., 1966), and 2) That language study is a sequence that begins with linguistic skills and ends with literary analysis (Burrelli, 1975), have been particular barriers to change in the professional attitude

of foreign language instruction.

In addition to the reluctance to change is the lack of teachers who are qualified to teach something other than literature in a foreign language (Corrin et al., 1966).

Corrin et al.(1966) describe other problems such as lack of texts, instructional materials and journals available in areas other than literature.

In a study conducted by Warriner (1971), teachers and administrators reported that teacher apathy and jealousy, and lack of inter-departmental cooperation were often encountered in their attempt to establish interdisciplinary programs.

Interdisciplinary Programs at Five American Institutions

The interdisciplinary trend has been initiated at the high school level and in many cases it has proved to be successful (Warriner, 1971). Here the investigator wishes to briefly describe what in her opinion are good examples of interdisciplinary programs at the higher education level. The following information was gathered from current catalogs and pamphlets.

The American Graduate School of International Management

(Thunderbird), Glendale, Arizona, founded in 1946, is a private school which offers a Master of International Management degree. The curriculum is taught by three departments: World Business, International Studies, and Modern Languages. In addition to nine different

languages, courses are taught on the Multinational Corporation, international banking, commercial correspondence and business language, advanced commercial Spanish, etc.

The American University, Washington, D.C. has a School of International Service. Of interest here is a quote from an American University brochure (American University, n.d.):

"There are subjects which are the province of no single discipline (International Service and Public Affairs). Their complexity grows as the world shrinks. Interdisciplinary approaches to understanding and problem solving in intercultural relations are no longer only desirable; they are essential, and hence schools which are interdisciplinary in concept and design are essential. The School of International Service is such a school."

Their degrees require research competence in one modern foreign language. The language program includes a practicum or internship.

The University of Denver has a Graduate School of International Studies which offers a multidisciplinary graduate program in technology, modernization and international studies. To facilitate interdisciplinary work, the school offers programs in cooperation with the Divisions of Law, Arts and Sciences, and Business Administration of the University (University of Denver Bulletin, 1976).

Georgetown University, Washington, D.C. has a School of Language and Linguistics which provides specific training in translation and interpretation. However, a core of courses in English, History, Philosophy, Economics, and Political Science is required (Georgetown University Pamphlet).

The Monterey Institute of Foreign Studies, Monterey, California offers the Master of Arts in Intercultural Communication, which integrates courses in Economics, Management, Political Science, International Studies, and Languages. Other graduate and undergraduate programs are also of an interdisciplinary nature which include foreign languages (General Catalog, 1975-1977).

Summary

The purpose of this review of literature was to examine, first, what traditionally has been the content of foreign language instruction. The present trend of Individualization was examined, focusing on the interdisciplinary approach and employment opportunities open to graduates with a diversified background plus foreign languages.

Even though the job market for language specialists is somewhat limited, most authors concurred on the fact that a person with a "marketable" skill in addition to a foreign language, or vice versa, has better chances of finding interesting jobs over those who do not have the language. This concurrence made a strong case for the establishment of interdisciplinary programs in foreign languages.

Chapter 3

PROCEDURES

Introduction

The problem of this study was to determine whether graduates with a background in foreign languages will be hired by multinational corporations over graduates without the foreign language ability; and if so, what skills and professional levels of competency are most desirable.

In this chapter the procedures for the accomplishment of this goal were discussed. Briefly described were the population included in the study, the type of study this was, the method for collecting and organizing the data, and the analysis of the data.

Population Description

Inasmuch as multinational corporations were considered to be one important source of employment for persons with foreign language skills, they were selected as the population for the study.

A systematic random sample of multinational companies was taken from about 3200 names contained in the American Encyclopedia of International Information, Vol. 2, Directory of American Firms Operating in Foreign Countries, compiled by Juvenal L. Angel, 1969.

Starting with the third name on the list, every twentieth name was selected to be included in the sample. The Sample consisted of four percent of the 3200 companies. For accuracy the names and

addresses of the companies and the names of the officers to whom the questionnaire was sent were checked against Standard and Poor's Register of Corporations, Directors and Executives, 1976 Corporations, Vol. 1, 1976. As a result of this check the addresses of several companies and the names of various executives had to be updated.

The sample included corporations located in twenty-nine states in the continental United States; it included one hundred and eleven different fields of products.

Type of Study

This was an investigative type of study. The categories included were companies and organizations at the multinational level, dealing in a wide range of business enterprises.

Method of Collecting Data

An instrument was constructed by the investigator in consultation with university faculty, in order to collect the desired data. Due to its simplicity, no pre-test of the questionnaire was required. This instrument contained six questions designed to generate the following information:

1. Whether a person with a foreign language to back up his/her specialty would be hired as opposed to a person with the same training but without the foreign language.
2. What languages are most useful to the organization.

3. What skills in the foreign language are most useful to an organization: oral versus written.

4. What level of proficiency would be most desirable according to Foreign Service Institute levels of proficiency criteria. (Please see Appendix 1.)

5. What specialties or training would be desirable in addition to the foreign language.

Comments were encouraged throughout the Instrument. (Please refer to Appendix 2, the Instrument.)

Method of Organizing Data

The results from the questionnaire were tallied and presented in the form of descriptive tables and percentages, as appropriate to the questions.

Analysis of Data

Due to the nature of this investigation, the analysis of data was made in a purely descriptive manner. Responses were tallied and the results were presented in the form of percentages and tables. Relevant comments from respondents were also included.

Summary

This was an investigative type of study. A questionnaire was constructed and sent to a systematic random sample of multinational corporations. The sample consisted of four percent of 3200 companies. The data collected was organized and presented in the form of percentages and tables.

Chapter 4

FINDINGS

Introduction

In this section the investigator wishes to present the findings from data collected from a sample of multinational corporations. A questionnaire was sent officers of these companies in order to find out what their opinion is in regard to employment opportunities for people with a background in foreign languages.

The findings in this chapter were reported following the order of the questions included in the questionnaire. (Please see Appendixes 2 & 3)

Data Collected

The questionnaire designed was sent to 128 multinational corporations, four per cent from the 3200 listed in the source (Angel, 1969). A total of eighty replies were received. The responses were as follows:

Question 1: Would your organization hire a person with a background in foreign languages to back up his/her specialty?

Of the respondents, eighty-one percent answered Yes; thirteen of the answers were No; and the remaining five percent of the respondents gave no answer to this question, as it was not applicable to their organization or hiring practices.

Comments to this question from some of the respondents were:

Yes - "If relevant to the position." (Lift trucks)

"Prefer the language capability." (Clothing manufacturing)

"Particularly in product areas where we do international marketing." (Business machines)

"Language would be a requirement in our international division."
(Steel strapping)

Of the respondents who answered No to this question, the comment was:

"Our foreign business associates in all countries (about 8) speak enough English for all business purposes ... but a knowledge of German or French is a social advantage." (Engineering services)

Question 2: Would your organization hire someone with a background in foreign languages to back up his/her specialty as opposed to hiring someone with the same specialty but without the language?

Of the respondents, sixty-one per cent answered Yes to this question; twenty per cent answered No; and nineteen per cent gave no answer.

Comments to this question were:

"The language would be useful in international sections of the company." (Business machines)

"If the candidates were otherwise evenly matched." (Dairy products)

Some of the respondents who answered No commented that the answer was based upon the fact that a language is not required for the position; that the languages would be considered, though it would not be the only determining factor, because it would not be a bona-fide occupational requirement. (Wood products)

Question 3: What language(s) would be more useful in your organization?

Chinese	German	Spanish
French	Russian	Others

When tallied, the responses were as follows: (More than one answer was given to this question. (See Table 1.)

Table 1
Languages Reported as Most Useful

Language	No. of Responses
Spanish	50
French	38
German	31
Chinese	11
Russian	10
Japanese	7
Italian	5
Arabic	4
Portuguese	3
Dutch	2
Swedish, Polish, Korean	1

Question 4: What skills in the foreign language would be more useful in your organization? Speak/Interpret Write/Translate

This question was designed to determine whether or not there is preference for oral versus written skills or vice versa. Of all respondents, forty-seven per cent preferred the oral skills, twenty-eight per cent preferred the written skills, and twenty-six per cent

said both were equally important.

Question 5: According to Foreign Service Institute proficiency ratings (Appendix 1), what would be the minimum degree of proficiency you would expect from your employee?

The ratings range from one to five, five being native speaker proficiency. The responses are described in Table 2.

Table 2
Desirable Levels of Proficiency
for Foreign Language Occupations

Proficiency Level	No. of Responses	Percentage of Responses
5	4	7%
4 and 4+	10	17%
3 and 3+	35	58%
2 and 2+	11	18%
1 and 1+	0	---

Question 6: What other specialty or technical training in addition to a foreign language would be most useful to your organization?

A few alternative choices accompanied this question. However, respondents added other specialties to their answers. The list of most useful specialties is given in Table 3. (More than one answer was given to this question.)

In spite of the large cross section of fields represented in the sample, engineering was named in twenty-three percent of the responses, as benefiting from a foreign language.

Table 3
Most Often Mentioned Specialties to
Benefit from Foreign Languages

Specialty	No. of Responses
Engineering	31
Accounting	20
Budget/Finance	15
General Administration	14
Economics	13
Administrative Secretary	11
Travel/Transport	10
Sales/Marketing	10
Public/International Relations	8
Foreign Affairs	4
Agriculture	2
Attorney	1
Education	1
Management	1
Food Technology	1
Other	2

Of the respondents, an engineering firm expressed the nature of the problem in the following words: "We are an international engineering and construction company; we build plants world wide. Experience and skill in specialty would be first and main consideration. It would be of great advantage if our people spoke the native language, but I don't see any solution; over the years our people must work in many countries."

Additional Findings

Letters from some of the respondents contained additional information regarding opportunities for applicants with a background in foreign languages. From a banking firm in New York:

"Your project is of particular interest to me since my background is in French and Spanish literature, and I taught French for three years. It would have been useful to me when I began looking for work outside of the teaching field, to know where my language skills would have been applicable.

Our bank has its own Language Training Center, which is part of the International Department. Virtually any language is taught if there is a need for it. The most commonly learned languages are English, Spanish, French, German, Italian, and Portuguese. In addition, we have, or have had, students learning Japanese, Korean, Arabic, Dutch, Russian, Greek, Swedish, etc. We train employees of the International Department who will either be transferred overseas, travel overseas, and/or speak on the phone and meet with foreign-speaking customers. The spouses and family of people being transferred overseas are also eligible for language training.

The International Department does prefer to hire people who speak at least one foreign language to back up their specialty in the banking field. Wherever possible, they would assign someone with a background in Spanish to work with Spanish-speaking countries. A student's desired level of proficiency is determined by his/her department, according to the amount of time to be spent overseas, previous knowledge of the language, the nature of his/her work, and the country to which he/she is assigned. The majority of the students, however, are trained to reach level S3-R3 or S4-R4. Spouses of employees are usually approved for level S2-R2.

A number of other banks in the New York area have recently begun to organize language programs also. It is possible, then for someone with a language background to use their skills in the business world."

A broadcasting company wrote, providing information on their hiring practices in general:

"The employment practices at our company, as with many other organizations, involve a myriad number of factors in determination of a viable applicant. Each applicant for employment is screened by several individuals and consideration is given to the applicant's work experience, education, presentation, career goals and other factors, as well as the tangible and intangible requirements of the open position for which the individual has applied."

From an oil company:

"We do not recruit directly into our International Division. As you may know, many overseas opportunities within international companies, such as ours, are filled by foreign nationals from the various countries in which they operate."

Summary

A questionnaire was designed and sent to four per cent of 3200 multinational corporations. A total of eighty replies were received. Of the respondents, eighty-one per cent indicated that they would hire a person with a background in foreign languages. Spanish, French, and German, in that order, were found to be the languages most in demand. Speaking ability was found to be preferred over writing ability, and a Foreign Service Institute rating of three to three plus was found to be most desirable. A listing of specialties said to benefit from a foreign language was drawn. From the results of this study it became very evident that a technical skill paired with a foreign language is a valuable combination.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

A very distinct pattern of organization became evident from the results of this study. It was established that multinational corporations will hire a person with a foreign language in addition to his/her specialty over the person without the language, all other things being equal. On the basis of that premise, the results addressed themselves to three areas in foreign language education: 1) Curriculum Design, or the "how" of language teaching; 2) Curriculum Content, or "what" to teach; and 3) Evaluation.

Discussion

Curriculum Design

The information gathered through this study makes it possible to explore some alternatives on how to make foreign languages a more relevant and marketable skill than it is at present.

The results of the study showed that multinational corporations will hire a person with a foreign language to back up his/her specialty over a person without the language, all other things being equal. The following comments from respondents support this finding:

From one shipping company the comment was:

"As info, we are steamship agents, representing FESCO Line, as well as several other Soviet services.

Our principal requirements relate to specific areas of expertise in shipping; i.e., traffic, sales, documentation and vessel operations. Certainly, all other things being equal, we would hire the candidate with Russian language experience, over the candidate without."

A comment from a waterproofing company was: "The language specialty is helpful for all export jobs, sales, traffic, marketing, or in international sections of the company." Other companies made similar comments.

Fuller (1975) and Honig (1974) described numerous careers, such as technical and engineering, banking, government, law, journalism, communications (radio, television, films), airport, transportation, where a foreign language as an auxiliary skill would become an asset. Both authors point out that careers where the language is the main skill are limited; however, when the language is paired with another skill, the applicant has a definite advantage. Alter (1976) referred to this advantage as "the edge" in the competitive job market of today.

It is the opinion of the investigator that programs of an interdisciplinary nature would greatly help in giving students that "edge."

Corrin, et al. (1966) suggested several ways: 1) By integrating foreign languages into other disciplines (history, geography, for example) through team teaching and joint (departmental) offerings, thus reducing fragmentation; 2) By broadening teacher training; 3) By encouraging language majors to diversify in their minors; and 4) By requiring candidates for degrees at all levels to demonstrate foreign language proficiency in their disciplines.

Fuller (1975) and Honig (1974) suggest that more universities should introduce language courses which are related to other careers.

It is the belief of the investigator that there is a great need to bring to the awareness of both students and school administrators the advantages of pairing a foreign language with another specialty. This awareness could be brought about through the news media and through professional organizations which deal with curriculum development and languages.

Curriculum Content

The results of questions one and two in the questionnaire addressed themselves to the "how" of an alternative approach to language instruction. The results of questions three, four, and six, are related to the "what" in foreign languages. (Please see Appendix 2, The Instrument.)

The results showed that Spanish, French, and German, followed by Chinese, Russian, and Japanese, in that order, are some of the languages in greatest demand. (Please see Table 1.) These results are supported by Brod (1976), whose survey of language registrations in colleges and universities in the United States showed that Spanish is the most widely taught language in the United States; it accounted for 43.4 per cent of the registrations in 1974, followed by French, 30.4 per cent; German, 18.3 per cent; and Russian, 3.9 per cent. In Brod's survey Russian showed an increase in registrations between 1970

and 1972. There was also a rapid growth in the enrollments of Chinese, sixty-one per cent during the same period. These figures are an indication that developing markets and international events might have an effect on the need to learn a foreign language.

Closely related to the question, "What languages to teach?" is the question, "What skills in the language should be emphasized?" Question four in the survey addressed itself to that problem. The results showed that oral skills, or the ability to speak and interpret, are slightly more valued than the written skills: forty-seven per cent for oral versus twenty-eight per cent for written. Some respondents added to this question that the ability to conduct business in a foreign language was important; others commented that the ability to use the language at least at the social level was desirable: "We see language skills as a useful indicator of cultural sensitivity and adaptability."

Thus, in the opinion of the investigator, the findings support the continued use of the audiolingual approach, which stresses the listening and speaking skills over writing and translating, at least during the initial stages of learning. The contents, however, could be career oriented at any level, with the use of the audiolingual approach. The investigator finds no discrepancy in combining audiolingual with interdisciplinary, since the former deals with method and the latter with content. The only stumbling blocks might be, as mentioned in the review of literature, the lack of appropriate

materials, lack of teachers qualified to teach innovative courses, and the lack of administrative cooperation (Corrin, et al.).

Corrin, et al. (1966) emphasized that a language should be viewed as a "tool" that could be applied to one's own discipline or skill; therefore, it is of importance that students should be given the opportunity to apply the language they are learning to practical situations. Learning to apply a foreign language to another discipline would be of great value career-wise.

The idea of applying foreign languages to careers other than teaching immediately brings up the question: What specialties are most likely to benefit from a foreign language? The results of this study provided some initial answers to this question. Even though the sample in this study included corporations involved in a wide range of fields (one hundred eleven different products or services), engineering was mentioned in thirty-one of the eighty responses. Business-related occupations showed the next largest number of responses. Several other occupations were mentioned as benefiting from a foreign language. (Please see Table 3, page 25.)

Several conclusions may be drawn from these results:

1. There is a need for other disciplines, such as Engineering, Business, Economics, Medicine, Social Sciences, etc., to take a closer look at the job market situation their graduates will face. Are they including in their programs courses that will give their graduates "the edge"?

2. There is a need to find out what the employment requirements of multinational corporations and international organizations are, in order to train our language students accordingly. This information would also make it possible for university placement officers to assist in the placement and guidance of their graduates at the international level.

3. The difficult employment situation mentioned previously makes imminent the need to continue to conduct research in the field of foreign languages in careers. Questions which were beyond the scope of this paper, such as a statistical correlation of languages which can be best matched with particular specialties, and how to better integrate the language into the educational system, need to be explored further.

Evaluation

As a result of this study an important element of the educational process emerged in a different light.

To this point most grading in foreign language is done through the letter system. All universities reviewed showed this. Also, most tests in foreign languages test only one or two levels of language proficiency. For example, the Modern Language Association Cooperative Foreign Language Tests test only two levels of competency: 1-2 years high school or 2 semesters of college, and 3-4 years high school or 4 semesters of college. The Pimsleur Modern Foreign Language Proficiency Tests test first and second level courses in grades seven through twelve, or first and second semesters in college; the Advanced

Placement Examinations are designed to test high school students desiring college credit (Buros, 1972). No uniform method of conveying language proficiency in a more precise manner than "two years of French" or "fluent" and "good" is available (Defense Language Institute, 1977).

The Foreign Service Institute's testing procedures were first instituted in 1956. By 1958 the United States Information Agency, the Agency for International Development and many other government agencies began to use the ratings. Today the Foreign Service Institute's Language Testing Unit administers about 3000 tests a year in forty languages (Foreign Service Institute, 1977).

The tests are oral interviews, judged on the basis of absolute criteria. (Please see Appendix 1, Absolute Language Proficiency Ratings.) Whereas these are printed guidelines, there is no printed test sheet. The test depends for its reliability on a small number of well trained examiners who are in contact with each other. Whenever possible the testing team consists of a native speaker and an experienced linguist, both well informed in current events, warm, friendly, and tactful. It is felt that the testing techniques are so refined as to make it possible for any language teacher or native speaker to learn them easily (Foreign Service Institute, 1977).

In an effort to determine what the most desirable level of proficiency on the job would be, the only method appropriate to gather that information was the Foreign Service Institute's Absolute Language Proficiency Ratings. (Please see Appendix 1.) An abbreviated form of

those guidelines was included in the questionnaire sent to the corporations. It was thus possible to obtain a uniform and meaningful idea of what level of proficiency is most desirable for career purposes.

Fifty-eight per cent of the respondents said that an S-3, S-3+, or Minimum Professional Proficiency would be most desirable; eighteen per cent marked the S-2, S-2+, or Limited Working Proficiency level; seventeen per cent marked the S-4, S-4+, or Full Professional Proficiency level; only seven per cent of the respondents indicated preference for the S-5, Native or Bilingual Proficiency; and the S-1, S-1+, or Elementary Proficiency was not indicated by any of the respondents. (Please see Table 2, Page 24.)

It is the belief of the investigator that these findings are of great importance, not only in the formulation of educational objectives in foreign languages, but also in the evaluation of those objectives. For example, it would be realistic to say that students in Business Marketing would profit from the Minimum Professional Proficiency (S-3, S-3+) in Spanish. On that basis, the language department could formulate a program through which those students would attain that particular level of proficiency in the language. Ideally, the program would include courses pertinent to that field. It would then be possible to evaluate both the students and the program according to some absolute criteria similar to, or adapted from the criteria developed by the Foreign Service Institute. A system of this nature would have some obvious advantages: 1) It would make it

necessary for an institution to formulate integrated programs based on performance objectives; 2) It would make it possible to measure the effectiveness of programs according to definite, stable criteria; 3) It would provide a uniform method to determine the proficiency attained by students at any stage of their program. It would also provide a precise manner to convey that proficiency to their prospective employers.

The investigator strongly feels that there is a need to explore and research the possible adaptation of Foreign Service Institute Absolute Language Proficiency Ratings to the academic system of foreign language evaluation.

It has been the endeavor of the investigator to provide in this paper information and ideas which will help place the study of foreign languages in a new light. There is no question in her mind as to the value of learning a foreign language, both for personal enjoyment and for career purposes. If more people in the academic world would become aware of this, foreign languages would be like vitamins flowing through and enriching the educational system.

Summary

Three main topics of foreign language education were discussed in this chapter, based on the findings of the study: 1) Curriculum design. It was suggested that the interdisciplinary approach to teaching languages, along with the audiolingual method would be

complementary and effective in providing students the language skills and ability to apply it to another discipline. 2) Curriculum content.

It was suggested that Spanish, French, and German should be continued to be taught, and that oral skills should be emphasized. The results of the study indicated that some specialties are in demand when paired with a foreign language. It was suggested that more research is needed in the area of careers which could benefit from languages.

3) Evaluation. It was suggested that the Absolute Language Proficiency Ratings used by some government agencies might be very useful if applied to the academic setting.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX 1

FOREIGN SERVICE INSTITUTE

ABSOLUTE LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY RATINGS

The rating scales described below have been developed by the Foreign Service Institute to provide a meaningful method of characterizing the language skills of foreign service personnel of the Department of State and of other Government agencies. Unlike academic grades, which measure achievement in mastering the content of a prescribed course, the S-rating of speaking proficiency and the R-rating for reading proficiency are based on the absolute criterion of the command of an educated native speaker of the language.

The definition of each proficiency level has been worded so as to be applicable to every language; obviously the amount of time and training required to reach a certain level will vary widely from language to language, as will the specific linguistic features. Nevertheless, a person with S-3's in both French and Chinese, for example, should have approximately equal linguistic competence in the two languages.

The scales are intended to apply principally to government personnel engaged in international affairs, especially of a diplomatic, political, economic and cultural nature. For this reason heavy stress is laid at the upper levels on accuracy of structure and precision of vocabulary sufficient to be both acceptable and effective in dealings with the educated citizen of the foreign country.

As currently used, all the ratings except the S-5 and R-5 may be modified by a plus (+), indicating that proficiency substantially exceeds the minimum requirements for the level involved but falls short of those for the next higher level.

DEFINITIONS OF ABSOLUTE RATINGS

ELEMENTARY PROFICIENCY

- S-1 Able to satisfy routine travel needs and minimum courtesy requirements. Can ask and answer questions on topics very familiar to him; within the scope of his very limited language experience can understand simple questions and statements, allowing for slowed speech, repetition or paraphrase; speaking vocabulary inadequate to express anything but the most elementary needs; errors in pronunciation and grammar are frequent, but can be understood by a native speaker used to dealing with

foreigners attempting to speak his language; while topics which are "very familiar" and elementary needs vary considerably from individual to individual, any person at the S-1 level should be able to order a simple meal, ask for shelter or lodging, ask and give simple directions, make purchases, and tell time.

- R-1 Able to read some personal and place names, street signs, office and shop designations, numbers, and isolated words and phrases. Can recognize all the letters in the printed version of an alphabetic system and high-frequency elements of a syllabary or a character system.

LIMITED WORKING PROFICIENCY

- S-2 Able to satisfy routine social demands and limited work requirements. Can handle with confidence but not with facility most social situations including introductions and casual conversations about current events, as well as work, family, and autobiographical information; can handle limited work requirements, needing help in handling any complications or difficulties; can get the gist of most conversations on non-technical subjects (i.e. topics which require no specialized knowledge) and has a speaking vocabulary sufficient to express himself simply with some circum-locutions; accent, though often quite faulty, is intelligible; can usually handle elementary constructions quite accurately but does not have thorough or confident control of the grammar.
- R-2 Able to read simple prose, in a form equivalent to typescript or printing, on subjects within a familiar context. With extensive use of a dictionary can get the general sense of routine business letters, international news items, or articles in technical fields within his competence.

MINIMUM PROFESSIONAL PROFICIENCY

- S-3 Able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and professional topics. Can discuss particular interests and special fields of competence with reasonable ease; comprehension is quite complete for a normal rate of speech; vocabulary is broad enough that he rarely has to grope for a word; accent may be obviously foreign; control of grammar good; errors never interfere with understanding and rarely disturb the native speaker.

- R-3 Able to read standard newspaper items addressed to the general reader, routine correspondence, reports and technical material in his special field. Can grasp the essentials of articles of the above types without using a dictionary; for accurate understanding moderately frequent use of a dictionary is required. Has occasional difficulty with unusually complex structures and low-frequency idioms.

FULL PROFESSIONAL PROFICIENCY

- S-4 Able to use the language fluently and accurately on all levels normally pertinent to professional needs. Can understand and participate in any conversation within the range of his experience with a high degree of fluency and precision of vocabulary; would rarely be taken for a native speaker, but can respond appropriately even in unfamiliar situations; errors of pronunciation and grammar quite rare; can handle informal interpreting from and into the language.
- R-4 Able to read all styles and forms of the language pertinent to professional needs. With occasional use of a dictionary can read moderately difficult prose readily in any area directed to the general reader, and all material in his special field including official and professional documents and correspondence; can read reasonably legible handwriting without difficulty.

NATIVE OR BILINGUAL PROFICIENCY

- S-5 Speaking proficiency equivalent to that of an educated native speaker. Has complete fluency in the language such that his speech on all levels is fully accepted by educated native speakers in all of its features, including breadth of vocabulary and idiom, colloquialisms, and pertinent cultural references.
- R-5 Reading proficiency equivalent to that of an educated native. Can read extremely difficult and abstract prose, as well as highly colloquial writings and the classic literary forms of the language. With varying degrees of difficulty can read all normal kinds of handwritten documents.

Appendix 2

A CHECK LIST FOR SELF-APPRAISAL
OF SPEAKING PROFICIENCY

(All answers must be YES to achieve at least the level of proficiency listed on the left, except for four items at the S-3 level.)

		<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
S-0+	Can you use a minimum of thirty words in appropriate contexts? (i.e., not just count or recite the days of the week).	___	___
S-1	Can you tell someone how to get from here to the nearest hotel, restaurant, or post office?	___	___
	Can you ask and tell the time of day, day of the week, date?	___	___
	Can you order a simple meal?	___	___
	Can you negotiate for a hotel room or a taxi ride at a just price?	___	___
	Can you buy a needed item of clothing or a bus or train ticket?	___	___
	Can you understand and respond correctly to form questions about your nationality, marital status, occupation, date and place of birth, etc.?	___	___
	Can you make a social introduction and use appropriate leave-taking expressions?	___	___
	Can you use the language well enough to assist someone who does not know the language in coping with the situations or problems covered by the S-1 range?	___	___
S-1+	Can you meet all S-1 requirements and at least three of the S-2 requirements listed below?	___	___
S-2	Can you describe your present or most recent job or activity in some detail?	___	___
	Can you give detailed information about your family, your house, the weather today?	___	___

		<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
S-2	Can you take and give simple messages over the telephone?	___	___
	Can you hire an employee, or arrange for special services (taking care of details such as salary, qualifications, hours, specific duties)?	___	___
	Can you give a brief autobiography and tell of immediate plans and hopes?	___	___
	Can you describe the geography of the United States or a familiar location?	___	___
	Can you describe the basic structure of the U.S. Government or of the U.S. educational system?	___	___
	Can you describe the purpose or function of the organization you represent?	___	___
	Do you feel confident that you understand what native speakers want to tell you on topics like those mentioned above and that they understand you (linguistically) at least 80% of the time?	___	___
	Can you use the language well enough to assist someone else who does not know the language in coping with the situations or problems covered by the S-2 range?	___	___
S-2+	Can you meet all S-2 requirements and at least three of these S-3 requirements?	___	___
S-3	(Answers should be <u>NO</u>)		
	Are there grammatical features of the language which you try to avoid?	___	___
	Do you sometimes find yourself in the middle of a sentence you cannot finish because of linguistic limitations (grammar or vocabulary)?	___	___
	Do you find it difficult to follow and contribute to a conversation among native speakers who try to include you in their talk?	___	___
	Are you afraid that you will misunderstand information given to you over the telephone?	___	___

		<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
S-3 (cont'd)	(Answers should be <u>YES</u>)		
	Can you speak to a group of educated native speakers on a professional subject and be sure you are communicating what you want to, without obviously amusing or irritating them linguistically?	—	—
	Can you listen, take notes, and summarize accurately a speech or an informal discussion on your area of special interests, heard on the radio or over a public address system?	—	—
	Can you (on a social occasion) defend U.S. attitudes toward culture, race relations, or foreign aid from attack by an anti-American student or politician?	—	—
	Can you cope with such trying linguistic situations as broken-down plumbing, an undeserved traffic ticket, a serious social or diplomatic blunder made by you or a colleague?	—	—
	Can you follow connected discourse on a non-technical subject; e.g., a panel discussion on the status of women?	—	—
	Can you serve as an informal interpreter on subjects in the S-3 range?	—	—
	Do you feel that you have a professional command (rather than just a practical one) of the language?	—	—
S-3+	Can you meet all S-3 requirements and at least three of these S-4 requirements?	—	—
S-4	In professional discussions, is your vocabulary always extensive and precise enough to enable you to convey your exact meaning?	—	—
	Are you able to alter your speech deliberately, depending upon whether you are talking to university professors, close friends, employees, etc.?	—	—
	Can you serve as an informal interpreter for a U.S. senator or cabinet official on all diplomatic and social functions?	—	—

S-4 (cont'd)

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
Do you practically never make a grammatical mistake?	___	___
Do you think you can carry out any job assignment as effectively in the language as in English?	___	___
S-4+ In discussion on all subjects, is your vocabulary always extensive and precise enough to enable you to convey your exact meaning?	___	___
S-5 Do native speakers react to you as they do to each other?	___	___
Do you sometimes feel more at home in the language than in English?	___	___
Can you do mental arithmetic in the language without slowing down?	___	___
Is your vocabulary at least as extensive and precise as in English?	___	___
Do you consider yourself a native speaker of the language?	___	___

APPENDIX 2

October 7, 1976

Dear

May I take a few minutes from your busy schedule? My name is Gabriela Mahn. I am conducting research for a graduate degree project on the use of foreign languages in fields other than teaching. The purpose of the study is to find out what opportunities are available to university graduates who have a background in languages, along with their major field of study.

The information you provide will help me to design a program of study in foreign languages that would better meet the needs of the students and the companies that hire them upon graduation.

Would you kindly fill out the enclosed questionnaire and return it in the self-addressed envelope by October 27, 1976? Your name and that of your Company will be kept in strict confidence.

I appreciate your cooperation and remain,

Sincerely yours,

Gabriela Mahn

Enc.

APPENDIX 2-(cont'd)

FOREIGN LANGUAGE TRAINING QUESTIONNAIRE

Gabriela Mahn - P.O. Box 124
Gallatin Gateway, MT 59730

Would you please fill out and return this questionnaire by October 27, 1976. If your answer to question No. 1 is negative, please indicate so and return the questionnaire anyway. Thank you.

1. Would your organization hire a person with a background in foreign languages to back up his/her specialty?

Yes _____

No _____

Comments:

2. Would your organization hire someone with a background in foreign languages to back up his/her specialty as opposed to hiring someone with the same specialty but without the language?

Yes _____

No _____

Comments:

3. What language(s) would be more useful in your organization?

Chinese _____

German _____

Spanish _____

French _____

Russian _____

Others _____

4. What skills in the foreign language would be more useful in your organization?

Speak/Interpret _____

Write/Translate _____

5. According to FSI proficiency ratings, what would be the minimum degree of proficiency you would expect from your employee?

S-5 Speaks the language natively. Has the ability to use the language accurately and precisely as a graduate from a university. _____

S-4 & 4+ Speaks the language with almost complete fluency. Approximates that of an educated native speaker, but with occasional random mistakes. _____

S-3 & 3+ Speaks the language fluently and accurately enough to be comfortable to listen to and understand. This is a high level of competence, the basis for incentive payments in several government agencies _____

S-2 & 2+ Can communicate uncomplicated ideas and experiences without difficulty and can meet routine job demands. Limited in vocabulary, structural control, comprehension. _____

S-1 & 1+ Can survive among natives but is difficult to understand. Uses gestures and actions to communicate. _____

6. What other specialty or technical training in addition to a foreign language would be most useful to your organization?

Administrative secretary _____ Agriculture _____

Accounting _____ Budget/Finance _____ Economics _____

Engineering _____ Education _____ Foreign Affairs _____

General Administration _____ Public/International Relations _____

Travel/Transportation _____ Other _____

Comments:

APPENDIX 3

All America Cables & Radio, Inc.
Aluminum Co. of America
American Bureau of Shipping
American Foreign Insurance Assn.
Anti-Hydro Waterproofing Co.
Associated Spring Corp.
Auto Specialties Mfg. Co.

Ted Bates & Company, Inc.
Beatrice Foods Company
Besser Co.
Borden Co.
C. F. Braun & Co.

Carboline Co.
Cascade Corporation
Caterpillar Tractor Co.
Chase International Investment Corp.
Clark-Engine Compressor Div.
Columbus McKinnon Corp.
Consolidated Electrodynamics Corp.
Continental Oil Co.
Cory Corp.

Dow Corning Corp.

Economics Laboratory, Inc.
Engineers International Corp.
Evans Products Co.

Farrel Corporation
Fink & Pavia
Flying Tiger Line, Inc.
Fram Corp.

General Binding Corp.
Gibbs & Hill, Inc.
Gorton Corp.

Hallmark Cards, Inc.
Hobart Mfg. Co.
Howard-Cooper Corp.
Hyster Company

International B.F. Goodrich Co.

Jantzen, Inc.
Joy Manufacturing Co.

Kellog Co.
Keyes Fibre Co.

Lane-Wells Division
Leeds and Northrup Co.
Eli Lilly International Corp.
Lockheed Aircraft Corp.

MacDermid, Inc.
Massey-Ferguson, Inc.
Mechanical Handling Systems, Inc.
Mobil Oil Corp.
F.E. Meyers & Bro. Co.

NBC Enterprises, Inc.
National Distillers & Chemical
National Tank Co. Corp.
North American Aviation, Inc.
Nuodex Division (Tenneco Chemicals,
Inc.)

Omark Industries, Inc.
Oscar D. O'Neill, Inc.

Parker-Hannifin Corp.
Chas. Pfizer & Co., Inc.
Pitney-Bowes, Inc.
Polychrome Corp.
Portco Corp.
Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Rain Bird Sprinkler Mfg. Corp.
Readers Digest Assn., Inc.
Resistoflex Corp.
A.H. Robins Co., Inc.
Ross Operating Valve Co., Inc.

Appendix 3 - cont'd

SCM Corporation
Sarco Co., Inc.
Sawyers, Inc.
Sealy Mattress Co.
W.A. Shaeffer Pen Co.
Signode Corp.

Tektronix, Inc.
Transversal International Corp.

Van Nuys Travel

White Stag Mfg. Co.

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