Walking around the exhibit hall and passing through various workshops and sessions I heard the same comment repeated again and again: “Every session is so interesting I don’t know which to attend.” I was personally lucky enough to facilitate a few sessions this year as well as to have the time to observe many other sessions. All of the offerings at this year’s conference were so strong. They also aligned perfectly with the theme’s emphasis on multilingualism and global leadership. It’s always exciting to have the opportunity to work with colleagues across the state, and this year’s conference was no exception.

The first workshop I facilitated was a three-hour workshop presented by Charlotte Gifford on maintaining 90% plus use of the target language in the classroom. I thoroughly enjoyed this workshop because I have never seen a presenter detail such effective methods to motivate students to stay in the target language. It was clear that the activities that were described were things that she actually uses in her classes daily. I left that session with at least a dozen new strategies that I can use to promote speaking in the target language in my class. All of the participants present were equally as enthused about the new tools they had for their classroom and I overheard many of them talking during the break about how they were planning on implementing what they had learned the next week.

I also received a lot of positive feedback from other colleagues that attended a variety of sessions. Amale Bourhim ran a six hour workshop entitled Allons au Cinéma. It contained lots of information on French films, actors, actresses, and directors. All attendees were able to download the presentation to better be able to use the information in their classes. Amale has consistently been a presenter that has offered fabulous comprehensive French presentations over the years. Judith Chapman also presented on Le Puy and Medieval France. This session had information on art, architecture, religious symbols, and other historical aspects of the region of Le Puy. These were only a couple of highlights of the French sessions that were offered.

Another interesting presenter that contributed to the strong conference lineup was Catherine Ousselin. Catherine travelled from the West Coast to present at the MaFLA conference. She presented several informative sessions on both language and technology. She made a point to not only provide participants with detailed information regarding the use of technological tools in the classroom, but she also allowed time to practice using these tools. It was said that she was a magnificent presenter. Having someone who can show participants how to use the latest technology tools in a variety of languages was a huge asset to the conference.

Overall the conference was a huge success. These were only a few highlights. From sessions on specific languages, history, art, film, and technology, the learning opportunities were endless. All the attendees I spoke with left their sessions invigorated and prepared to incorporate lots of new methods into their teaching. I cannot wait to attend the MaFLA conference in 2015 and work with my colleagues to make the language teaching profession even stronger than it is.

Submitted by Jessica Clifford.
The MaFLA Newsletter

The MaFLA Newsletter is the official publication of the Massachusetts Foreign Language Association. It is published four times per year - Winter, Spring, Back To School, and End of Year. Subscription is available through membership in the Massachusetts Foreign Language Association. MaFLA welcomes short articles, anecdotes, brief reviews of books and other teaching materials, and other items of interest to members of the profession. The opinions expressed by the authors of articles published in this newsletter are their own and are not necessarily shared or endorsed by MaFLA or its Board of Directors.

Deadlines are:

Winter - January 5  Back To School - August 5
Spring - March 5  End of Year - November 5

All submissions should be sent to:
Ronie R. Webster  Email: ronie@mafla.org
41 Glenn Drive
Wilbraham, MA 01095-1439
Tel: 413-596-9284  Fax: 413-596-9513

Notification to Members of Membership Category Changes:
In order to streamline its operation, the Board voted at its September 25, 2013 meeting to eliminate the category of two-year membership. Two-year memberships will be honored through their expiration dates but are no longer an option.

The member categories 1 and 3 will remain in effect (see below).

Please note that membership dues remain the same without an increase; MaFLA has worked diligently and prudently on your behalf to preserve its price structures for your benefit.

Please help us maintain the dues at this rate by honoring your dues renewal notice! Thanks so much!

Madelyn Gonnerman Torchin, Membership Coordinator
Questions: Email Madelyn at membership@mafla.org.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION
Membership in MaFLA is open to anyone interested in the learning and teaching of languages. The basic membership runs one year from date of inception. There are four categories of membership - Individual, Student, Retired, and First-Year Teachers.

Individual memberships:
$45.00 for 1 year
$120.00 for 3 years
$25.00 for 1 year (new to profession teacher in first year)

Retired memberships: $25.00 per year

Student memberships: $15.00 per year

For more info and/or a membership application packet, contact:
Madelyn Gonnerman Torchin
membership@mafla.org
PO BOX 590193
Newton Centre, MA 02459

HAVE YOU . . .
MOVED?
CHANGED SCHOOLS?
CHANGED YOUR NAME?
Please notify Madelyn Gonnerman Torchin, PO BOX 590193, Newton Centre, MA 02459, Ph. 617.964.6141, (membership@mafla.org), to update your membership information.

OR
You can do it yourself. Just go to mafla.org and click Membership/Update Profile and login to update your profile.

Please help us keep our files updated so you can receive ALL information regarding MaFLA.

Now you can join, renew or update your profile online!
Just visit mafla.org
President’s Message

Wrapping Up 2014: How MaFLA Has Moved Forward With Technology!

At the beginning of 2014, I set out our theme for the year: Moving Forward With Technology and likened our MaFLA Board of Directors to the Chinese Zodiac Year of the Horse Sign – energetic, bright, warm-hearted, intelligent and able. This year’s efforts by MaFLA to provide the most current professional development in the foreign language profession has even surpassed the strides made in years past! We have moved forward with technology in a variety of ways, have continued to provide top-notch professional development, and have kept communication open with our membership. The MaFLA Team worked hard to develop and adhere to Board meeting norms so that we could use our time as wisely and efficiently as possible. I think you will agree that this all-volunteer board of twenty-three was highly productive this year!

The 2014 Annual Fall Conference was a huge success. Members were able to keep abreast of happenings and events throughout the year at mafla.org and the Conference Blog. As October approached, the Conference Chair worked hard to prepare a Conference App and online evaluations. Overall, these additions were wildly successful and will continue to be improved upon each year. An online evaluation of each session provided important information to inform the 2015 Conference Chair about needs for the following year.

Communications with our membership have been better than ever. We offer a new look to our quarterly newsletter, shorter in format, but loaded with information. Monthly e-mail blasts keep members informed about our professional development events as well as any pertinent foreign language issues in the state. The MaFLA Website offers a wealth of information. H.O.W. offers the most up-to-date online resources for teachers.

Outreach to members has resulted in 144 new members this year! Our goal is to continue to grow this membership and to provide the most pertinent services to foreign language teachers. Please remember to tap the shoulder of teachers new to the profession and encourage them to join their state professional organization.

The Advocacy pages of the MaFLA website have been updated. This committee and the Board of Directors continue to push forward with the Seal of Biliteracy, working in concert with MATSOL, MABE, Pangea, and other state language organizations. Watch for updates throughout 2015 and please follow MaFLA’s lead and participate by contacting your area representatives about this important initiative.

Vibrant professional development opportunities were offered in abundance in 2014! Our ever-popular Diversity Day in the spring, Tech Days East and West this year in June, Summer Institute in August and the Annual Fall Conference. Watch for information on the Proficiency Academy (all about DDMs) coming in the summer of 2015. MaFLA has also collaborated with Westfield State University to offer graduate credits at a very reasonable rate for certain PD Events.

MaFLA has added exciting new awards this year, including a formal online process to choose the Massachusetts Foreign Language Teacher of the Year. New scholarship awards for Italian and French teachers are now available. Watch for the announcements about these awards in the MaFLA Newsletter and on the website. Applications for these awards are found online at mafla.org, making the process streamlined and efficient.

MaFLA always looks for enthusiastic, energetic and talented members who are interested in joining the Board of Directors. This process has been put online through the website, resulting in more nominees and greater diversity on the board!

Finally, MaFLA has decided to try out a new venue at the Springfield Monarch Hotel in 2017. This beautiful, newly renovated Hotel and Conference Center will provide MaFLA with a plethora of possibilities for sessions and workshops. We look forward to working with the team there as we plan future conferences.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank departing Board member, Adina Alexandru for her years of service, her guidance in establishing Tech Days East and West, and her technological vision. MaFLA welcomes two new board members, Dominique Trotin and Jorge Allen and we look forward to working with them in 2015.

On a personal note, this year has been exciting, hectic, humbling and rewarding. Of course, no one person on the MaFLA Board can achieve everything by him or herself, but rather by working as a team, we have made a difference in the professional practices of educators and in the advancement of the profession. I am very proud of the work that MaFLA has done. I wish incoming president, Catherine Ritz, a successful and rewarding year and I know the board will support all of her efforts.

Best regards for a happy, healthy, productive 2015!

Sincerely,

Jane Rizzitano

2014 MaFLA President
MaFLA’s 47th Annual Conference was fortunate to have Rita Oleksak as the Keynote Speaker. Rita is Director of World Languages and ELL for the Glastonbury Public Schools in Glastonbury, Connecticut. Aside from that, she has been Past President of MaFLA, ACTFL, NADSFL, and, currently, NNELL. Her Keynote Address reflected the Conference theme of Multilingualism: The foundation of global leadership. Her address highlighted why global competency—the knowledge students must be able to use in order to function successfully in today’s globalized world—equates with the ability to think, speak, understand, and work in a foreign language, as well as the acquisition of knowledge about global systems, world history, geography, and other global issues such as health, economics, and world cultures.

In order to understand global competencies, students must desire to become global citizens and must recognize the interconnectedness of their actions with those who live in other countries. Additionally, students must be open to and actively involved with other cultural practices by effecting positive global exchange through a commitment to action, such as exchange programs, internships, research projects, and community service.

In her words, “...numerous college professors across the country have stated that the vast majority of freshmen arriving on their campus do not have a global mindset and are not prepared to study abroad. They do not think globally, have little or no second language skills, and do not understand the serious activity that study abroad is. They haven’t thought about it, and haven’t prepared for it academically, logistically, emotionally or financially. Most of all, they do not appreciate the increasingly important role study abroad plays in their ability to land a job upon graduation.”

On a larger scale, global training in education must emphasize lifelong learning and include a curriculum designed to build on global competency using leadership tools. The challenge for leadership is in providing these global competency skills—defined as the ability to think, speak, understand, and work in a foreign language and the acquisition of political, social, and economic knowledge—that will enable students to navigate cross-cultural settings, to succeed in domestic and study abroad programs and global internships, and to flourish in cross-cultural communication inside and outside their classrooms.

Among the essential global competencies that leaders must include in their toolkits are foreign language proficiencies and a deep understanding of other cultures, along with a global perspective and sense of global citizenship. Students also need to be aware that societal issues are often global in scope and they should heed the words of Hillary Clinton. In a message aired during the Open Doors 2012 briefing on international educational exchange in Washington D.C, then Secretary of State Clinton stated:

“The ties of friendship and understanding you’re building are the most effective forms of diplomacy.” “They truly will help shape our common future.”

All global citizens need to understand the nature of global economic integration, to appreciate the interconnectedness and interdependence of people, to respect and protect cultural diversity, and to fight for social justice for all. A further consideration is the increasingly real challenge of bridging cultural chasms. Academic programs that develop and teach global competency skills challenge students to view themselves as members of a global marketplace and a world community.

In November 2012, the U.S. Department of Education set out its international strategy for 2012-16...

“prepare today’s youth, and our country more broadly, for a globalized world, and to engage with the international community to improve education.”

In terms of national security and diplomacy that means...

...Our future leaders must possess the knowledge, skills and cultural under-
Conference Wrap-up

standing that can transcend the borders of our interconnected world.

...Global problems require the global exchange of knowledge to forge solutions through international dialogue and collaboration.

In conclusion, as Rita so aptly states:

“To be on track today for college and careers, students need the 21st century skills that are so vital to success in the global economy. They need to show that they can analyze and solve complex problems, communicate clearly, synthesize information, apply knowledge, and generalize learning to other settings.” We thank her for her brilliant and insightful words, her generous actions on behalf of the foreign language profession, and for sharing her philosophy about the importance of what global studies are and should be.

Submitted by Pat DiPillo.

Speak Up! - What have you learned at the Conference this year?

I learned that building classroom culture throughout the year - not just at the beginning - is incredibly important. To that end, my juniors will be playing a couple of rounds of Invisible Volleyball on Monday morning!

Alison vonRohr, Narragansett Regional High School

Latin Strand

What an exciting time for the 72 attendees present in the Latin Strand at the MaFLA Fall Conference! Vigor and vitality filled each session and workshop bringing the ancient world to life through its spoken language and culture. Indeed, spoken Latin could be heard often both by the presenters and in the presentations, culminating with an entire session (Harrius Potter in the Classroom) presented totally in Latin by TJ Howell and Jamie Lawrence in a way that was easily accessible for the attendees.

Dr. Ted Zarrow began the day with a thorough and fascinating overview of the Roman influence through art and architecture in both Spain and France. From there, MA students from UMASS Boston and Amherst, as well as other presenters, enthusiastically demonstrated creative ways to teach vocabulary, approach Latin literature, employ new games (Race to the Top!) and develop projects that bring Roman culture to life.

Professor Carlon, reminding everyone that Latin needs to be taught as a language and not as an artifact, walked the attendees through active reading strategies that allow students to focus on comprehension of passages read rather than translation for the sake of translation. Her focus and passion were evident and convincing to many. Greg Stringer who followed the annual CAM meeting, continued this theme by becoming immersive in the classroom. Throughout the weekend it was evident that the Latin classroom is changing, coming to life with its spoken language, reading comprehension and cultural activities. What an exciting time for Latin teachers! Thank you to all who participated and made this weekend not only memorable but also one that has energized, challenged and stretched minds in so many wonderful ways.

Submitted by Brenda Cook.

German @ MaFLA 2014

German language offerings at this year’s MaFLA Conference touched on a wide range of areas – from an introduction to Switzerland through the novel Heidi to a demonstration of the use of “clickers” for assessment in the language classroom.

In her delightful interactive workshop, Däi obe uffem Bergli: Teaching Switzerland Through Heidi, Karin Baumgartner of the University of Utah offered participants a variety of ways to introduce students to this multifaceted country through Johanna Spyrry’s novel and various film versions. She demonstrated that the novel, despite being perceived as somewhat sentimental, subtly addresses important social issues of the day, i.e. the role of women and the lack of social responsibility for orphans, as well as a contrast between the cultures of the village of Dörflis and city life in Frankfurt. Beyond

Karin Baumgartner’s engaging German Workshop

the images of mountains, banks, cheese and chocolate as well as four distinct languages - the typical stereotypes which Switzerland presents to the outside world - workshop attendees were led to a deeper understanding of the people and culture. Participants had the chance to practice with a wealth of materials for teaching the novel (available in an “Easy Reader” version) and the film including a tip on how to insert speech balloons in frames from the film. Karin led the group in singing Gang rüef de Bruune, a Swiss German song calling the cows from the Alm back to the barn. The workshop concluded with a look at life auf der Alp today in a clip from the film Alp Summer (2013) and postings for summer jobs there including Senner (cheese and butter maker) and Hirte (shepherd).

In a hands-on session: Intercultural Competence in High School, University, and Online Language Courses, Manuela Wagner and Niko Tracksdorf of the University of Connecticut and Joan Campbell of Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School provided participants with examples of collaborations between colleagues at the university and high school levels with the common goal of developing and assessing intercultural competence in their language students. One setting consists of high school and university students, both enrolled in capstone courses, who collaborated in a project developed to foster intercultural competence (ICC). The second context is an online university beginning German course developed to integrate ICC in a systematic way.

Beate Alhadeff and Susanne Werk of Boston University presented a session: Classical Music for Affective and Effective For-
eign Language Learning. Be it a scene from a popular opera or the fascinating works and lives of great composers, students have a great opportunity to absorb magnificent music, physically and verbally express its impact, produce discussions, essays and skits about it, as well as gain a vivid insight into history. Attendees received a wealth of instantly usable hands-on activities, applicable to intermediate and advanced courses in German and other European languages.

With their session Joyeux Noël: A Film Inspires French and German Classroom Collaboration, Holly Rickerl and Louise Faria of Briscoe Middle School, Beverly, truly inspired participants to focus on a topic infrequently addressed in language class: war. The 2005 film Joyeux Noël memorializes the Christmas Truce of 1914, when French, British and German soldiers laid down their arms, came out of the trenches and called off the Great War for one night. Using the European film as a catalyst, they crafted nine lessons and a combined end project. The multiple objectives included communication and student understanding of cultural commonalities among European nations. Students learned about how WW I started as a result of ancient prejudices, misunderstandings and modern political alliances and acted out the beginning of the war wearing flags representing each of the 12 countries involved. They became soldiers and learned to write letters home from the trenches (under their desks) as the sounds of war surrounded them. They learned to sing Nuit de Paix and Stille Nacht, and phrases in the other class’s language in order to greet and exchange gifts. The film (in French, German and English) is shown at the end and discussion follows as to whether they were good soldiers or not. The joint project concludes each year with the “Truce” on December 23 with gifts, games and other tokens of friendship.

In Examination Writing: A Major Challenge for Multilingual Students, Heidi Rex and Pia Groth of the German Saturday School, Boston addressed the specific challenges faced when preparing students for success in writing high stakes exams such as the A2, DSD 1 and the AP. Many of their students speak German and possibly another language in addition to English at home. The code switching with which the students are dealing demands a great deal of flexibility from them and their teachers. Successful completion of these examinations is critical to their ability to progress academically and professionally within the German system. The brainstorming techniques and “free writing” ideas presented would be particularly helpful for teaching writing to any language class. The presenters gave high marks to the materials from Hueber Verlag, particularly the series Menschen as well as Was ist Guter Unterricht? by Hilbert Meyer from Cornelsen Verlag.

Speak Up! - What have you learned at the Conference this year?

It is a wonderful time to learn from other teachers and to share resources and information!

Mu Qing Gu, Belmont High School.

AATG Massachusetts Annual Chapter Meeting

Lisa Parkes, Harvard University and AATG MA Chapter President, and Folke Christine Moeller-Sahling of the Goethe-Institut, Boston met with AATG members present to explain the many benefits of AATG membership and the wealth of programs and materials available from the Goethe-Institut.

The ACTFL Conference (November 21 – 24 in San Antonio) offered 70 sessions for teachers of German.

Mohamed Esa will present on “Musik, Märchen, und Medien” on February 7 at the Goethe Institut, Boston. The Goethe Institute is motivating young learners of German with exciting programs such as Step Into German, Todo Alemán, Mindcraft Geschichte, Eurovision –US, and competitions such as the Deutsch-Olympiade and the Award of Excellence. The annual Musiktournee is huge. This year’s presentation of the group: Tonbandgerät was a tremendous hit and the band: Einshochsechs is booked for 2015.

Certain schools offering German are also designated as PASCH-Schulen and their students receive special scholarships for Germany. The TRAINERNETZWERK group trains German teachers in methodology and the Goethe-Institut offers scholarships for teachers of German to attend professional development in Germany or...
Conference Wrap-up

online. Teaching Materials - videos (example: Kurz und Gut Macht Schule 2), E-books, audio and lessons - are available from the Goethe-Institut, mostly free of charge. Support is also available from local mentors.

To promote German, there is an Advocacy Toolkit and the program: Germans for Hire in which Germans studying in the US visit American high schools for a day. The AATG-Massachusetts is also organizing a German Immersion Day, probably in mid-March including a cookout, bonfire, tubing, story-telling, etc.

Discussion is on going in regard to making changes to the AATG National Test Preisverleihung und Festessen traditionally held in May. Participants were reminded to add their email to the AATG MA list serve.

German@MaFLA 2014 offered attendees a wealth of information and tools for teaching effectively in the tech age.

Submitted by Kathleen Gallogly.

#MaFLA14

A Smorgasbord For Techie

Calling all Techie! This year’s MaFLA Fall Conference offered a tremendous variety of technology workshops and I managed to attend many of them.

My MaFLA Fall Conference began on Thursday with the Pre-Conference Workshop, Thinking About Syncing? Digital Storytelling Tools for World Languages with Catherine Ousselin from Mt. Vernon, Washington. Catherine, who is well versed on Web and mobile tools, led us through the use and application of numerous exciting applications.

Our first application was on a Padlet wall where we posted our name, a picture, a question about technology in the classroom or an idea about how to use Padlet in the classroom. We all could see numerous applications for this “conversation” wall and shared our ideas on the wall. Padlet already has become a favorite in my classes.

Next we learned about Chirbit.com and Sound Cloud, both excellent tools for recording audio.

QR codes were the next topic. We learned how to easily create QR codes and Catherine provided numerous ideas on how to integrate these into our classroom.

Infuse Learning was next explored with many examples of its usage.

Speak Up! - What have you learned at the Conference this year?

One of the highlights of this conference was the class taught by Catherine Ousselin, "Thinking about Syncing? Digital Storytelling Tools for World Language," which allowed participants to experience first-hand the use of innovative technology in the classroom. It embodied the Common Core Standards in the most engaging way, while actively permitting users to speak in the target language. This was one of the most useful and up-to-date uses of technology in the classroom that truly focused on language production. Way to go MaFLA for promoting this Workshop!

RMichele, West Roxbury Academy
Conference Wrap-up

Advocacy At The Conference

The Advocacy Booth at the 2014 MaFLA Fall Conference had another productive year promoting foreign language teaching and programming in the state. Nicole Sherf, MaFLA Advocacy Coordinator, organized the materials for the booth with activities including: a Speak up, where attendees shared a highlight from the Fall Conference, a Capwiz sponsored by ACTFL, where people emailed legislators in support of federal foreign language funding and a photo in the news, where participants snapped a photo to promote conference attendance in their local news outlets.

In addition to these activities, conference attendees browsed an array of new pamphlets and received free gifts from the

Speak Up! - What have you learned at the Conference this year?

I had a great time at my first foreign language conference. Nice to meet colleagues across the state, share ideas, and attend presentations. I am particularly interested in TPRS, and also using songs, games and art in my teaching.

Chuck Edgerly, Deerfield Elementary School, Frontier Regional Middle School

Lessons/activities that can incorporate listening, speaking, reading and writing. It allows for video and image integration to provide very rich assignments and teachers can provide feedback easily. This session added ideas to my repertoire and introduced me to a variety of useful new tools.

Integrating Videos Into the World Language Classroom with Ken Hughes from New York State was next up. Ken, who is a very animated presenter, discussed why we should use videos and how we can easily utilize them in our classrooms. He reminded us that we do not need to know everything - we can get help from our students. All we need to be are guides and empower them.

He explained how a green screen works and helped us see how it could enhance our use of video in our classes. He provided us with lots of technical details (software to use, places to get a green screen, what video editors available and what level of computer would be needed – memory and processing power) in addition to showing us various videos he had created with his students.

There was a great deal of Ken graciously answering the variety of questions he was asked and he offered us continued support as we delve into the world of video making.

Lunch provided a delightful break in my technology overload but as soon as I had finished, I was off to Teaching with Technology! Fostering Language and Culture Learning Through Web 2.0 Tools. You would think by this time I would just be hearing the same things over and over. But in this session Theresa Schenker of Yale University introduced me to the CLEAR (Center for Language Education and Research) Rich Internet Tools. I had been aware of them but never had the time to really investigate them. Using the Rich Internet Tools, Theresa showed us how to create an Audio/Video dropbox and embed it into a website. She also demonstrated how to use the site for listening comprehension and how to find authentic videos.

We also learned how to use QuizBreak, a Jeopardy like game that allows teachers to author so that they can develop customized materials for their learning targets. We finished by learning how to develop Mashups, which are websites that combine audio, video and text. We also discussed Zunal.com for creating webquests, Chatzy, for creating chat rooms, and LiveMocha, for conversing with native speakers.

I was certain I would return from the MaFLA conference with lots of new ideas for technology tools, but little did I suspect that I would return with so many. I still have to take the time to play on my own with several of them but many of them have already impacted my classroom and my daily practice. The #MaFLA14 conference along with the MaFLA Tech Day have really kept me at the cutting edge with technology. Gracias to all you techies out there for sharing! Submitted by Ronie Webster.
Exhibits And Sponsorships

The Exhibit Hall at the 47th Annual MaFLA Conference at the Host Hotel in Sturbridge had a brand new look this year and was draped in blue and white. It really looked super with the white table tops, and had several new vendors, exhibitors and language organizations such as Costa Rican Resources and Thisislanguage.com. Complimentary coffee was again served from 7:00 AM-10:00 AM, thanks to the generosity of Vista Higher Learning. The Hall opened earlier at 7:00 AM to allow conference attendees time to visit with exhibitors before heading to their first sessions and workshops.

The Exhibit Hall was filled with 56 companies and organizations that provide foreign language teachers with excellent resources for classroom instruction, cultural enrichment, fundraising, and educational travel. Though the trend may be to advertise and sell goods online the MaFLA Exhibit Hall has remained full. It continues to be clear that many of our loyal exhibitors make MaFLA a priority in their conference schedules. We thank them for their patronage and continued support of excellent teaching and learning in the field of foreign language. We are fortunate that MaFLA has not followed the trend of lower conference attendance, as our number of attendees has remained strong. Exhibitors regularly comment on how much they look forward to the MaFLA conference because of the dedicated, thoughtful and creative language educators that they meet in the Exhibit Hall.

There were several new exhibitors with us this year including Colegio Delibes Study Abroad Programs, Costa Rican Resource, Swift Education Systems, ThisIsLanguage.com and MWS Student Camps. We also had a second visit from a few companies as well as a return to the Exhibit Hall after a year or two away by Cambridge University Press. Better Chinese and Chinese in Focus kept up their momentum with third-time visits. Also present in the Exhibit Hall were representatives and materials from AATF, AATSP, AATG, NECTFL, ACTFL, CAM, the French Cultural Services, the Spanish Embassy and the Goethe Institut-Boston and NNELL. We are also very appreciative of the companies (20+) who have been consistently present in the MaFLA Exhibit Hall for many years.

A cornerstone of the MaFLA mission is advocacy for foreign language teaching. This year’s Advocacy Booth doubled in size and had lots of resources, including opportunities to learn about making language teaching more visible in our communities and a very impressive display of posters from the MaFLA poster contest along with quotes from the MaFLA essay contest. The Advocacy Booth was the headquarters for raffles again this year and posted the individual raffle winner names. Various MaFLA Advocacy Committee members were at the booth throughout the conference, headed by Nicole Sherf.

MaFLA is also very grateful to those companies who sponsored various events and initiatives at the 47th Annual Conference. Our Corporate Sponsors included Chester Technical Services, Costa Rican Resources, and Tandberg. The Benefactor was ACTFL and our Patrons were AATF, Eastern Massachusetts, French on Location, Cambridge University Press and Vista Higher Learning.

Attendees enjoyed the opportunity to sit down, socialize, and charge their devices in the Exhibit Hall Lounge.

Pat DiPillo greeted Exhibitors and Exhibit Hall attendees with a smile.

We hope that you will continue to visit our exhibitors and sponsors virtually throughout the year. Links to all of the exhibitors are on the MaFLA Website (www.mafla.org) under the Events tab. Thank you for continuing to support the companies
MITA Annual Meeting

The Massachusetts Italian Teachers Association held its annual meeting on Saturday morning, October 25. We discussed the various professional development opportunities that MITA offers its members as well as the collaboration that it maintains with MaFLA and the office of the Italian Consulate.

In 2015, MITA will be turning twenty-five. Many of us know what life as an Italian teacher was like before MITA. We remember going to the MaFLA Conference and attending the workshops that were conducted for other languages. Fortunately, many of us knew two languages and were able to benefit from these workshops. The workshops and the passion that Italian teachers had were catalysts in starting the MITA organization.

At the meeting, Stella Cocchiara talked about sending the first mailing from her kitchen table. It was truly a grass-roots organization that grew out of the love and dedication the founding members had for their profession. Many of the founding members are still active.

It is time to elect new officers for MITA and it is the hope of the organization that there are dedicated leaders who will continue to move MITA forward. Celebrating its 25th year is a great time to take on a leadership position. If you are interested in nominating someone or nominating yourself, please send an email to Massachusetts Italian Teachers or contact Anna Tirone at atirone@winchestersps.org.

Forza!! "INSIEME PER L’ITALIANO"
Submitted by Anna Tirone.

Massachusetts Italian Teacher Of The Year

At the MaFLA Business and Awards Luncheon on October 25, 2014, Domenico Teker, the Director of Education of the Office of the Italian Consulate General, presented the first Massachusetts Excellence in the Teaching of Italian Awards. There were two categories: the first was for Middle School/High School and the second was for Elementary.

Tanya Ferretto and Rosemarye Grasso, our first Excellence in Teaching of Italian Award winners with Domenico Teker

Tanya Ferretto, Italian teacher at Winchester High School, received the award for the high school level. Tanya has taught all levels of Italian as well as mentored foreign language teachers.

Rosemarye Grasso, teacher at the Elliot School in Boston, received the award for the elementary level. Rosemarye teaches Italian to students in various grades at the Elliot School.

It is heartening to know that there are so many dedicated teachers and that the Consulate has chosen to recognize the hard work that they do. Congratulations to our first-ever winners! Grazie mille!
Submitted by Anna Tirone.

Demystifying AP World Languages And Cultures

This year’s MaFLA conference included an array of workshops that provided beneficial information regarding the AP World Languages and Cultures exams.

Friday afternoon featured Marcia Arndt, Director of AP World Languages and Cultures from the College Board. She took participants through an overview of the entire AP program. She shared recent results and trends, the history of the courses and exams, how the exams are prepared and also how they are scored. Participants were given a tour of the College Board website and were encouraged to join the teacher community to access the countless free resources available.

Marcia Arndt

Saturday morning continued with two engaging sessions that further deepened workshop goers’ understanding of the Spanish AP exam. Adrienne Talamas from Belmont High School presented “Preparing for the AP Cultural Comparison Task Throughout the Language Curriculum.” With several colleagues presenting with her, she shared activities to help begin to prepare Spanish students for the AP from as early as level two. Alignment from the beginning stages was a theme throughout each of these sessions. Participants received a list of eighteen questions stemming from the six AP themes that could be implemented throughout the curriculum and help align courses from the beginning levels. The questions presented helped participants become familiar with how to integrate the themes to help prepare students for the AP cultural comparison task.
Finally, the Saturday morning sessions concluded with a third presentation by Helena Alfonzo and Viviana Planine from Newton South High School, *Recycle! Using Materials You Love in the AP Spanish Class*. These two presenters enthusiastically showed participants how to take previously prepared materials and adapt them for use to prepare students for the new AP Spanish exam.

Participants teaching at all levels of languages left these sessions with a myriad of ideas to integrate into their teaching to better help align their curricula and prepare students for the AP World Languages and Cultures exams.

*Submitted by Sinikka Gary.*

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**CAM Award Winner**

Remarks made by the President of CAM, Dr. Edward “Ted” Zarrow, upon presentation of the Classical Association of Massachusetts Excellence in Teaching Award to Marjorie Keeley of Mt. Greylock High School:

> It is our honor to present the Excellence in Teaching Award to Marj Keeley of Mt. Greylock Regional High School. Marj has become a legend in the years that she has been teaching Latin at her school, thanks both to her willingness to consider the needs of students and to her insistence on high standards.

Unfortunately, she cannot be here today to receive the award in person. Among her many commitments, she has master-minded the annual Mass. Junior Classical League catapult contest, which takes place today at Mt. Greylock. [for more on the Junior Classical League see the article from the Berkshire Eagle, reprinted on the next page.] Her absence at least tells us something about her priorities: her students come first, so we must honor her *in absentia*. Please join me in congratulating this year’s winner of the CAM Excellence in Teaching Award for 2014, Marj Keeley.

*Submitted by Madelyn Gonnerman Torchin.*

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**THANK YOU!**

MaFLA wishes to thank Catherine Ritz for all her hard work in producing an amazing Conference.

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**Speak Up! - What have you learned at the Conference this year?**

I loved the wide range of workshops in terms of bringing different tools for teaching in the classroom. My only issue is that many of workshops are targeted to middle and high school teachers. I would love to see more workshops and sessions for elementary teachers. Overall I loved the conference! Gracias!

*Carolina Gomez, BB&N*
Junior Classical LeagueKicks Off At Mount Greylock
By Jenn Smith

WILLIAMSTOWN >> Busloads of students arrived at Mount Greylock Regional High School on Saturday, October 25, 2014, ready to compete, *ad honorem*.

The school was host to the Massachusetts Junior Classical League kickoff, where approximately 250 middle and high school students and nearly 50 Latin teachers, from Boston to the Berkshires, gathered to showcase their knowledge and skills in the language, literature and culture of ancient Greece and Rome.

“We’re sort of the theater geeks of the Latin world,” said Mount Greylock eighth-grader Rachel Bisson, treasurer of the school’s JCL chapter.

Mount Greylock high school level Latin teacher and former Mass JCL executive board member Marjorie Keeley works with middle school Latin teacher Amy Turner, parent and other faculty volunteers to recruit and engage students in JCL activities, which range from the fall kickoff to the summer’s National JCL convention, held this past year at Emory University in Atlanta, Ga.

This year, the Classical Association of Massachusetts honored Keeley as an “intrepid” classics leader with an “Excellence in Teaching” award, which was presented through the Massachusetts Foreign Language Association.

“JCL are my varsity letters. If you don’t play sports, this is a way for kids to show what they can do at a local, state and national level that can help them get into a good college,” Keeley said.

From The Berkshire Eagle, October 28, 2014
Reprinted with permission.
Conference Wrap-up

MaFLA Member Reception

Connecting

Celebrating

Laughing

Relaxing

Enjoying

Sharing
2014 Distinguished Service Award

The MaFLA Distinguished Service Award is given for exceptional and meritorious service to the foreign language profession in Massachusetts. Below is the speech given by co-presenters Tiesa Graf and Nicole Sherf at the MaFLA Annual Business Luncheon on Saturday, October 25.

Tiesa Graf:

We are truly honored to celebrate Charlotte Gifford this year.

Charlotte Gifford epitomizes complete, selfless and dedicated devotion to the foreign language profession. Her excellent record of strong Board leadership, high quality workshop and session presentations, and department leadership, coordination and teaching, make her the ideal candidate for the 2014 MaFLA Distinguished Service Award.

Those of us who were fortunate to serve with Charlotte in MaFLA appreciate her no-nonsense, can-do, and collaborative approach to leadership. On the MaFLA Executive Board and on the NECTFL Board, her high standards and determination shine through in all aspects of planning and delivery. Her flair was evident in her chairing of the 2011 NECTFL conference with so many great innovations – surveys, webcasts, pre-conference sessions, and change of conference timing. We watched the same efficiency, presence and hard work as NECTFL Conference Chair, as we had admired as newbies on the MaFLA Board when she chaired the 2004 MaFLA Conference and then served out her Executive term as President and Past President.

Nicole Sherf:

Every year Charlotte goes above and beyond to make the MaFLA Conference special and successful. When any need presents itself, she is ready and eager to step up and step in. For example, when I called on her in 2008 for help when I chaired the MaFLA Conference, she was, ever Charlotte, open and willing to serve in any capacity that I suggested. And she did: as workshop presenter, technology expert and runner, and session facilitator, among many other vital roles. Last year when a presenter cancelled at the last minute during a high need time slot, she once again stepped in and presented a session that of course received phenomenal feedback. She is perpetually available and interested in serving the profession to the maximum. She participates wholly at MaFLA even with her own demanding roles and responsibilities at NECTFL, presenting at ACTFL, her teaching and chairing at Greenfield Community College – not to mention her many hobbies such as singing in a choir, martial arts, hiking, and enjoying family activities.

We have been to a number of Charlotte's workshops and sessions, and we are continually impressed by how she develops a topic related to high standards in foreign language teaching, technology or programming, and supports it well with evidence and experience from her own classroom and department. We always leave these sessions with strong ideas and tools to incorporate into our own classes and programs. Also evident from her presentations is a clear sense of her teaching and leadership style at Greenfield Community College. This, with many discussions with her over the years about program and student assessment, coordination with feeder high schools, and recent technology and teaching innovations, leave us impressed by her leadership, professionalism and hard work.

Tiesa Graf:

Two years ago I had the pleasure of working with Charlotte on the curriculum review committee for the Williston Northampton School in Easthampton, Massachusetts. Charlotte and I worked as a team with two other educators for more than six months with Williston, observing classes and analyzing curriculum documents, developing reports and presenting – her input and expertise were invaluable and made for a thought provoking and seamless reflection process.

In 2011 and in 2013 I worked with Charlotte as she led webinar series for NECTFL – which she still continues to do as NECTFL webinar consultant. Charlotte organized, coordinated and continues to serve as an excellent facilitator for these high quality professional development opportunities.

Finally, more than twenty years ago I met Charlotte for the first time as a new teacher at Amherst Regional School. Charlotte was a presenter as a part of the Franklin County consortium for professional development. Her presentation about story telling in the foreign language classroom knocked my socks off! I was immediately a Gifford groupie and have been ever since. She is a role model, mentor and inspiration. I wouldn't be the teacher or leader that I am today without her guidance, motivation and leadership.

While we know that Charlotte never seeks thanks or appreciation for all her expertise, service and dedication, this is an honor that she has earned and deserves. She serves as a model to all who strive to use their experience to strengthen our profession.

We are thrilled to honor Charlotte Gifford this year and present her with the 2014 Distinguished Service Award.

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**Conference Wrap-up**

**2014 Distinguished Service Award**

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MaFLA would like to express its sincere thanks to the following companies and organizations whose loyal support makes our Conference possible.

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- AATG Massachusetts Chapter
- AATSP Massachusetts Chapter
- CAM – Classical Association of Massachusetts
- EMFLA – Eastern MA Foreign Language Administrators
- MITA – Massachusetts Italian Teachers Association
- Host Hotel and Conference Center
- ISE – Intercultural Student Experiences
- New England Association of Chinese Schools
- Passports Educational Group Travel
Conference Wrap-up

Awards

Retirees
Jeanette Szretter
The Rivers School, Weston
Mary Brown
Wayland High School

25 Years of Service
Anna Mendes-O’Leary
Bay Path Regional High School
John Pedini
William H. Lincoln School, Brookline

Helen G. Agbay Scholarship
Hanna Brenner
Algonquin Regional High School

ISE Language Matters Award
Stephanie Cuddeback-Salim
Mantignon High School, Burlington

New Teacher Commendation
Na Lu-Hogan
Chinese teacher, Arlington High School
Katia Haberman
Spanish teacher, Arlington High School
Shelagh Frossard
French teacher, Tucker Elementary School, Milton

MaFLA Conference Registration Award
Kimberly Bray, Henri A. Yelle Elementary School, Norton
Kaitlin Robinson, Edith C. Baker School, Brookline
Chuck Edgerly, Deerfield Elementary School

Student Awards

Elaine G. Batting Memorial Scholarship
Gregory P. Stringer
Burlington High School

MA German Educator of the Year Award
Lee Prudden Wells
St. Mark's School, Southborough

Past Presidents’ Scholarships
Lindsay Chow, Bishop Feehan HS
Teacher: Joan Drobnis
Helen Au, Brockton HS
Teacher: Noah Roseman
Kenneth Graczyk, Malden Catholic HS
Teacher: Maria Crotty
Sarah Malala, Bishop Fenwick HS
Teacher: Diane Eromin

Essay Contest Winners

Essay of the Year
Sruti Pandey, Burlington High School
Teacher: Susan Price

Middle School Essay Winner
Sonali Sikder, Wood Middle School, Andover
Teacher: Maria Hernandez

Poster Contest Winners

Poster of the Year
Anastassia Korin, Sharon High School
Teacher: Kathleen Turner

Middle School Poster Winner
Megan Schirl, Triton Regional Middle School
Teacher: Carol Regazzini

Speak Up! - What have you learned at the Conference this year?

This year’s conference was very special to me because I had the opportunity to present during a session for the first time and to be a part of the advocacy team. I spoke to many attendees and I was able to exchange outstanding ideas and suggestions. Seeing people attending the conference with enthusiasm and an open mind is both rewarding and fulfilling.

Vilma Bibeau, North Andover High School
Reflections On The 2014 MaFLA Conference
by Conference Chair Catherine Ritz

Looking back over the past year, I am so amazed by what we accomplished! It has been a true honor to serve as the 2014 MaFLA Fall Conference Chair. I will forever remember this experience as a highlight of my career!

Perhaps the most exciting piece of conference planning for me was being able to invite workshop presenters and guide the content of workshops, balancing important pedagogical topics to provide a range of important and engaging workshops for all attendees. What a joy to walk around the Host Hotel, stopping by each workshop to see packed rooms with motivating presenters and motivated participants. The vision I had for the pedagogical focus of the conference had been realized, and our record attendance numbers and stellar evaluations are a testament to the high-quality workshops we were able to provide to our members.

Anyone who knows me at all professionally, knows that I love technology. Since I joined the MaFLA Board four years ago, I’ve been hunting for a platform for an app that would make our conference program more “interactive.” What felt like a pipe dream even two years ago became a reality with the launch of our first-ever MaFLA Conference app! Over 200 attendees downloaded the app to their iPhones or Android devices, with even more accessing the online web version. We also set up “digital signage” around the conference that showed current sessions. Never one to hold back (if I’m going to go for something, I go for it!), we also added digital evaluations to the conference this year. While we encountered some glitches with wifi due to the heavy demand, the overall results were hugely successful!

One of the reasons I love MaFLA and the MaFLA Fall Conference so much is because I get more than just high-quality professional development. I also get a chance to connect on a personal level with like-minded professionals and friends – MaFLA has become family to me! At the MaFLA Member Reception on Friday evening, attendees get a chance to unwind and relax with their MaFLA family and friends. This new tradition was started during the 2013 Fall Conference, and has quickly become an anticipated event and highlight of the conference. This year, we were able to get a very exciting raffle for the reception… a one-week trip to Costa Rica, sponsored by Costa Rican Resource. I’m so glad that I wasn’t the one to pull the raffle ticket because a teacher in my district and good friend, Katia Haberman, won! Her overjoyed reaction to winning was enough to prove how deserving a winner she is! I think this has to be the best photo in the history of MaFLA conference photos!

Katia Haberman winning a trip to Costa Rica at the MaFLA Member Reception
Conference Wrap-up

Consider How You Will Participate Next Year

With another MaFLA Conference behind us and all the recap articles in this newsletter, you are reading this issue either to overview what you were able to experience at the conference or checking out what you missed. In either case, we hope that you will take the opportunity as you read to consider how you can be more actively involved in next year’s conference. Believe it or not, the planning for next year’s conference began over a year ago when the 2016 Conference Chair, Jessica Clifford, was elected to MaFLA’s Executive Board at last year’s Business and Awards Luncheon. At this year’s Luncheon, at the conclusion of the three days of events and programming, Jessica read her Notes to the Profession in which she elaborated on and officially announced her conference theme Climbing the Ladder of Proficiency: Many Languages, One Goal. You can find her Notes reprinted in this issue on page 19.

Active attendance should be a first goal of conference participation, of course. I consider myself a “conference junkie” and have rarely returned from a conference without a great variety of ideas, activities or materials to inform my daily practice, department and professional involvement. I try to see a session or attend an event in every available time slot. To me, participating actively represents attending the sessions and/or workshops, and the Keynote Address, perusing the Exhibit Hall and networking with other attendees, presenters and exhibitors. The Member Reception on Friday after the session programming ended was a wonderful opportunity to relax with colleagues and overview highlights.

With active attendance in mind, we hope that next year, you will consider a variety of other ways to enhance your conference attendance:

- **Stop by the Advocacy Booth** in the Exhibit Hall and ask us what advocacy action you can do to promote foreign languages! Have your students participate in this year’s poster, essay and video contests and maybe your student’s work will be posted next year at the Booth! Check out the Advocacy pages on the MaFLA Website for the new materials posted from this year’s Booth. If you have suggestions for more materials, please let us know!

- **Consider volunteering.** When you finish registering for the conference, there is a survey in which you can check whether you’d like to volunteer or not. Among other roles, our volunteers facilitate sessions. MaFLA assigns a facilitator to every session and workshop to ensure that presenters are supported and that the evaluation process is completed effectively. It is an important role without which we cannot plan future conferences effectively.

- **Consider submitting a session proposal** on your own or with a colleague. The proposal form will be online shortly to accept proposals for next year’s conference. Presenters receive a significant discount on their registration and serve a vital role in the conference. It is an incredibly powerful experience to present at a conference and even more gratifying to work with a colleague on a specific issue on which to present. If you are not ready to present, consider pushing a colleague whom you admire to share their great ideas!

Please remember that the conference is organized and run by an all-volunteer Board of Directors who serve the K-16 foreign language teaching profession in an effort to strengthen teaching and programming in the state. Our Conference, though, is only as strong as its active attendees. We look forward to seeing you participating actively at the MaFLA Conference next year! Please do not hesitate to contact me at advocacy@mafla.org with comments or suggestions. **Submitted by Nicole Sherf.**
Every year I ask my students a series of questions on the first day of school. Most of these questions revolve around their goals for the course. There is one question in particular that almost always elicits the same response. This question is, “What would you like to improve upon most in this class for the upcoming school year?” Ninety-five percent of the time the response is, “I want to SPEAK better Spanish.” The other five percent of responses generally discuss improving writing or listening or even learning more about the cultures of Spanish-speaking countries.

I have yet to have a student answer that they want to score higher on their exams or get a better homework grade. Although as teachers I’m sure we would also want those things to be a small part of their goals, as language teachers we understand that there is a bigger picture.

As it so happens, the students also see this bigger picture. In the end we all wish for the students to be able to improve their speaking in whichever language they are studying.

Of course there are other areas that we focus on like reading, writing, listening and culture, but the desire to increase speaking proficiency remains at the top of the wish list. Ironically this also seems to be the area that is most difficult to improve.

I also meet each week with the teachers in my department during our common planning time. We use this time to share information about activities we may have created and new resources we are using in our classes.

We talk about the importance of exposing our students to authentic materials and providing them with opportunities to practice language that are useful and interesting. However, this always proves to be a challenge. Having good intentions as an educator is simply not enough.

As world language teachers we must work together not only to define the high expectations in our discipline, but we must also diligently create the exciting learning opportunities that we talk about.

We have to work especially hard to ensure that students are exposed to the target language as much as possible in class and that they have the chance to actually use their language as well.

This quotation resonated with me. I felt that what Krashen said captures the essence of what we try to do as language teachers every day. We don’t simply lecture our students or make them complete memorization exercises; we provide actual opportunities for them to interact in the target language. This is one of things that makes our discipline unique, we do not simply teach about language, we actually require students to use their language each day.

Although I do not believe that I have offered you all any information during this speech that is particularly new, I do believe that I have gotten the message across that as teachers we are all fighting for the same thing. Even our students share our common goal.

We also face the same challenges, but each year we are lucky enough to have the opportunity to come together and attend conferences and professional development seminars that allow us to share best practices and explore new resources and trends to help us face these difficulties together.

This year’s conference has been an incredible opportunity to do just that. I anticipate that next year’s conference will be just as exciting and I am elated that I have had the opportunity to choose this theme and to chair the upcoming conference.

That being said, I would like to unveil the theme for the 2015 MaFLA Annual Fall Conference, Climbing the Proficiency Ladder: Many Languages, One Goal.
MaFLA Proficiency Academy
Connecting Proficiency to DDMs, DEPAs, and MCUs

Save the Dates! July 13-16, 2015

The MaFLA Proficiency Academy will support teachers in making the connection between state initiatives and National Standards for high-quality World Language education. Teachers and Department Chairs are encouraged to come in groups to learn how to set course and departmental proficiency targets, develop quality assessments to serve as District Determined Measures (DDMs), revise curriculum while developing and integrating performance assessments – in the model of DESE’s Model Curriculum Units (MCUs) and Curriculum Embedded Performance Assessments (CEPAs) – and develop instructional strategies that make proficiency and communication a central focus.

An internationally recognized expert in World Language education, Greg Duncan, will lead the Academy. Serving first as a high school teacher of Spanish for 12 years, and concurrently for seven of those years as department head of the Georgia public schools’ largest foreign language program, he later held the position of Coordinator for Foreign Languages and International Education in the Georgia Department of Education. Greg is also the founder of InterPrep, Inc., a company that provides assistance to schools, school systems, and other educational entities in matters related to foreign languages and international education.

So plan to join us at Westfield State University in July. PDPs and Graduate Credits will be offered. Go to MaFLA.org/proficiency-academy/ for more information. See you there!

Advocacy Update

We hope that you stopped by the Advocacy Booth in the Exhibit Hall of the Annual Conference to check out our new materials and information. Check it out in the Advocacy pages of the MaFLA Website under “Promote your Program.” In particular, there is a great brochure to inform non-foreign language administrators about the special needs of foreign language programming that you can download which is chock full of great resources. Find more information about the activities and information at the Booth at the Conference on page 8 of this Newsletter. A big thank you to our Advocacy Interns Amy Mihailidis and Vilma Bibeau for their dedicated service.

We hope that you are visiting our Advocacy pages on the MaFLA website which have been reorganized and updated. Under “Advocacy News” in the Advocacy pages, you will find an update of our work to obtain legislation for a Seal of Biliteracy in Massachusetts. We will begin our work again in January. Please let us know if you have contacts in the state legislature that you think would be supportive of this legislation! We need as many strong voices as possible to make the legislation pass during the upcoming legislative cycle.

Thank you for responding in great numbers to the recent requests to contact your national legislators by email to support foreign language funding in the FY ’15 budget. ACTFL has informed us that, again, our state is number one in the number of emails sent out to legislators! Your messages are important and make a difference. We’ll be calling on you to contact your state legislators again once the Seal process begins and we thank you in advance for your responsiveness.

Please let me know if you have any questions or comments! I can be contacted at ad vocacy@mafla.org. Submitted by Nicole Sherf.
The Functions Of Language: Teaching L2 For A Purpose

by Marcel La Vergne Ed. D.

It is generally agreed upon that most of an L2 teacher’s time in the classroom is spent in explaining, practicing, and evaluating the forms of the language, i.e., the grammatical structures needed to attain accuracy in L2. Commercial materials such as textbooks, workbooks, e-texts, etc. are based on what I refer to as the “words and verbs” approach to teaching L2. Unfortunately, once outside of the classroom, there is very little need of those skill-getting activities designed to learn and to practice L2: conjugating verbs, replacing nouns by pronouns, answering all questions with a complete sentence, filling in the blank with correct form of the adjective, true/false statements, vocabulary list memorization, etc.

Students need to be able to use the language to achieve a communicative purpose, to be proficient in the use of language in everyday situations, i.e., to seek or give information, to ask for clarification, to greet and welcome people, to persuade, agree, disagree, compliment, insin, predict, express anger, sympathize, and empathize.

This article will define, categorize, and list functions of language and give examples of activities based on a functional approach.

Definition

Savignon describes a language function as “the use to which language is put, the purpose of an utterance rather than the particular grammatical form an utterance takes” (1); in other words, the meaning of an utterance is as important, if not more important, than the form of the utterance.

Krashen and Terrell (2) suggest that basic communication goals can be expressed in terms of situations, functions, and topics. According to Bilash, “The teacher’s role is to plan the situations within which students attempt to use L2 for a specific purpose in the classroom context. For instance, if the topic being learned is family and relatives, the situation may be introductions of visiting relatives.” (3) The teacher then identifies the relevant language functions inherent in the situation, provides a variety of expressions that express those functions, and creates activities that practice them. She adds that “In addition to knowing the appropriate vocabulary and grammar required by the situations, the students also need to understand the meaning and the communicative function of a language in order to use the language.”

Functional Categories

Mary Finocchiaro (3) lists five categories of language functions:

Personal: the ability to clarify or arrange one’s ideas, to express one’s thoughts or feelings, and to convey everyday feelings of hunger, thirst, fatigue, sleepiness, cold, or warmth

Interpersonal: the ability to establish and maintain social and working relationships

Directive: the ability to influence the actions of others, to accept or refuse direction

Referential: the ability to talk or report about things, actions, events, or people in the environment in the past or in the future; the ability to talk about language

Imaginative: the ability to discuss elements of creativity and artistic expressions.

Language functions refer to what we do with language in every day conversation. Every function comes with its own specialized vocabulary, stock words and expressions, and in some instances grammatical structures, e.g., compare and contrast requires knowledge of words such as like, similar, different, etc., and the grammatical rule of comparative and superlative of adjectives and adverbs. Extending an invitation requires the knowledge of expressions such as the formal “Would you like to go to dinner with me?” or the informal “How about we grab a bite to eat?” It also requires that students know how to accept or to decline the invitation beyond just saying “yes” or “no.”

Lists of Functions

The following illustrates how a teacher can enlarge the students’ vocabulary by encouraging them to express themselves in as many ways as possible when facing a communicative task. When asked to speak spontaneously, students should be given the tools to expand their fluency by varying what they say: when seeking clarification, in addition to the usual “I don’t understand”, they would be encouraged to use expressions such as “Sorry, would you repeat what you said?” or “Sorry, I’m not sure if I understood correctly.” or “Can you give me another example, please?” On an informal level, “What?” or “What did you say?” would also be appropriate. The language thus becomes more natural and authentic.

The following includes some of the many language uses that fall under each category followed by one example of the variety of ways to express oneself.

Personal category: The following uses of language include: the ability to express love, joy, surprise, hate, satisfaction, disappointment, pain, anger, fear, sorrow, frustration, likes, dislikes, anxiety.

Example: to express surprise, one could say:

I was so surprised to learn that...
I was really shocked that...
It took me completely by surprise to learn that...
I could not believe that...
What? No way! You’re kidding me, right!

For each of those functions, students need to learn the corresponding expressions and grammatical structures in order to use them authentically in a real-life situation. When said in French, most of those expressions in the example require that the verb in the subordinate clause be in the subjunctive mood.

Interpersonal category: The following uses of language include: the ability to greet and take leave, to introduce oneself or another, to extend, accept, or refuse an invitation politely, to make or break an appointment, to apologize, to agree or disagree, to interrupt, to offer ones services, to accept or decline food or drinks, to share wishes, hopes, desires, and problems, to promise, to compliment or insult someone, to express ones gratitude, to express sorrow, anger, or frustration.
The Functions Of Language

Example: to offer to help someone, one could say:

- May I help you?
- Can I help you?
- Are you looking for something?
- Would you like some help?
- Do you need any help?
- What can I do for you today?
- Do you need a helping hand?

For each of those functions, students need to be able to express themselves in more than just one way. Those expressions in the example require knowing how to form interrogative sentences.

**Directive category:** The following uses of language include: the ability to make requests and suggestions, to persuade, to grant permission, to forbid, to warn, to discourage, to establish deadlines, to ask for directions or instructions. Example: to grant permission, one could say:

- Yes, you may.
- Go ahead. That's fine.
- It's ok with me.
- You have my permission.
- Sure. I don't mind.

When taught the many different formal and informal ways to express themselves, students will be encouraged to include idiomatic expressions in their speech.

**Referential category:** The following uses of language include: the ability to identify, to define, to paraphrase, summarize, or translate, to explain how things work, to compare and contrast, to evaluate, to discuss possibilities, to ask for an explanation, to report facts. Example: to ask for an explanation, one could say:

- Can you tell me why...?
- I don't understand why...
- Can you explain why...?
- Why is it that...?
- How come...?
- Does this mean...?
- Do you really expect me to believe...?

This category expects that the students be able to use language to express their own thoughts in a creative way. It requires that the students engage in higher-level thinking.

**Imaginative category:** The following uses of language include: the ability to discuss works of art, to suggest original beginnings or endings to stories, to solve problems or mysteries, to create rhymes, poetry, stories or plays, to expand ideas. Example: to solve problems, one could say:

- What else could you do?
- How else could this be done?
- Could this be done differently?
- Can you think of another solution?
- Do you think this might work?

This category focuses on the creative ability of the students and encourages them to go beyond the situation at hand.

Concentrating on language functions is an effective language enhancing tool that increases the students’ range of vocabulary and improves their level of proficiency.

**Application**

The following activities are offered as examples of the language function approach to developing classroom activities.

**Increasing vocabulary:** Following the example below, students working in groups are asked how many ways they can fulfill the language functions listed below:

Example: Soliciting a Response: What do you think? Do you agree? How do you feel about that? What answer did you get? We haven't heard from you yet.

Expressing an opinion  Paraphrasing
Predicting  Asking for clarification
Affirming  Acknowledging ideas
Reporting a group's idea  Offering a suggestion
Disagreeing  Greeting someone
Declining an invitation  Persuading

**Conversation cards:** Role play activities are an effective way to create real-life situations. Working in pairs or in small groups, students are given conversation starter cards as follows:

**Conversation Card Situation: Going to the movies**

| Student 1: invite two friends to go with you |
| Student 2: agree to go |
| Student 3: decline the invitation politely |
| Students 1 & 2: persuade student 3 to go |
| Student 3: give an excuse for not going |
| Student 1: indicate that you are upset with student 3 |
| Student 2: agree with student 1 |
| Student 3: re-explain why you can't go |
| Students 1&2: take leave of student 3 |

**Identify the language functions:** Students are asked to identify the language functions to be used in the following situations and to provide the appropriate language expressions: Example:

**Situation:** Going to a dinner party

**Functions:** Arriving at the dinner party we may introduce ourselves, thank the host and ask where to put our coats. During the dinner we may congratulate someone on a recent accomplishment, ask advice, express affection and compliment the host on the meal.

**Appropriate language expressions:**

**Introduction:** Hello! I’m Helen's friend Joe.

**Thanking host:** Thank you so much for including me. I truly appreciate it.

**Asking... coat:** Where should I put my coat?
The Functions Of Language

Congratulate: I understand that you got a promotion. Congratulations! Fantastic!
Ask advice: I’m thinking of changing jobs. Do you have any advice for me?
Express affection: I’ve known Helen since my teens. She’s a great person.
Compliment the host: This has been a wonderful meal. Thank you so much. I was wondering if I could I have the recipe for the potato salad?

Discussing a movie
Declining an invitation
Preparing for a trip
Looking at old photos
Eating at a fine restaurant

Vocabulary expansion: Students are asked to provide three appropriate expressions for each language function listed. Example: Asking for directions to town hall
Excuse me. Could you tell me how to get to town hall?
Do you know where the town hall is?
Is the town hall close to here?

Expressing joy at winning the game
Disagreeing about your grade
Changing an embarrassing subject
Refusing an invitation politely
Apologizing for being late
Suggesting a different ending to a story

Complete the sentence: Students are asked to complete each of the sentences below according to the situation and the function listed. Example: Situation: quitting job; Function: guessing
I'd say he's about ready to quit his job.
He might be quitting his job.
He could be quitting his job.
It looks like he's quitting his job.
Perhaps he's quitting his job.
Maybe he wants to quit his job.
I guess he's quitting his job.
Do you suppose he's quitting his job?

At a party: offering hors d'oeuvres
Would you...?
Can I...?
Have you...?
Please, try...
Another...?

Snow storm: Expressing anxiety at son’s lateness
He should have...
I hope he...
I'm afraid that...
Do you think...?
Should I...?

Conclusion

The end-goal of L2 instruction is to develop the students’ ability to use the language naturally and authentically in a real-world situation. Creating real-world situations to practice real functions of language is the L2 teacher's task if students are ever to be proficient enough to survive outside of the classroom. It's not what one knows about the language that is important; it's what one can do with it.

References

About the author
Marcel LaVergne, Ed.D., retired, was a high school teacher of French, a Director of Foreign Languages, an adjunct professor of Foreign Language Methods, a textbook author, and a consultant on Foreign Language Teaching and Learning. He is currently associated with the National Capital Language Resource Center as the author of the Sound Bites for Better Teaching column.

SAVE THE DATES!
Saturday, May 2, 2015
DIVERSITY DAY
Lasell College, Newton
French/Spanish & Italian Strands 10 PDPs

Friday, August 14 - Sunday, August 16, 2015
MaFLA SUMMER INSTITUTE
Lasell College, Newton
French/Spanish & Latin Strands
Focus on Technology, Culture & Best Practices
30 PDPs - 2 Graduate Credits (Optional)
French Coordinator: Dominique Trotin
Spanish Coordinators: Beatriz desLoges & Olyan Rosal
Latin Coordinator: Madelyn Gonnerman Torchin
MaFLA Poster/Essay Contest Rules

THEME: Climbing the Proficiency Ladder: Many Languages, One Goal
DEADLINE: Postmarked by March 15, 2015. NOTE: MaFLA will begin accepting entries March 1, 2015.

GENERAL RULES CHECKLIST

_____ Each entry must be an original work of a current foreign language student (including students enrolled in an ESL class) whose teacher is currently a MaFLA member. No group entries will be accepted.
_____ LIMIT: 5 (five) entries per contest per school.
_____ Teachers must submit the official entry form on the following page with their entries.
_____ Teachers are required to put the requested information on the back of the poster/essay. (See next page)
_____ All entries become the property of MaFLA.

**Poster Checklist**

_____ All posters must incorporate the exact wording of the theme.
_____ Posters must measure the standard poster size of 22” x 28” & have a flat surface with no moving parts. No three-dimensional posters will be accepted.
_____ Use lightweight poster material. Posters should be mailed in a 3” or larger tube.
_____ Paints, markers, pencils, crayons, inks, gel pens may be used. Glitter, glue, charcoals, or tape on the front of the poster will not be accepted nor will computer generated posters.
_____ Illustrations must be used in addition to words and must be relevant to the theme.
_____ There must be a two-inch margin on all sides free of design and/or lettering.
_____ No copyrighted figures such as Snoopy, Disney characters, Family Guy, Simpsons etc. may be used.

**Essay Checklist**

_____ Essays must be written in English.
_____ Essays must state theme and content must be relevant to the theme.
_____ Each entry must have a title, be typed/word processed using Times New Roman font at 12 point size and double spaced.
_____ Each entry must have identification on the back only. No identifying marks are allowed on the face of the essay.
_____ The identification sheet on the next page must be replicated on the back of the essay.
_____ If outside sources are used they must be cited appropriately.

**ESSAY LENGTH - By Division**

- Grades K-5: Maximum 150 words
- Grades 6-8: Maximum 250 words
- Grades 9-12: Maximum 350 words

**Judging Criteria Checklist**

**Posters**
- Visual impact, overall appealing effect
- Theme relevance
- Neatness
- Originality
- Accuracy

**Essays**
- Theme relevance
- Clarity of thought
- Organization of ideas
- Creativity
- Overall impact of message

**Prize Information:**

- One poster will be selected as Poster of the Year; artist will receive a check for $50.00; poster will be displayed at the MaFLA Conference.
- One essay will be selected as Essay of the Year; author will receive a check for $50.00; essay will be featured at the MaFLA Conference.
- There will be only one winner per division. (grades K-5, grades 6-8, and grades 9-12) For the division producing the Poster of the Year and the Essay of the Year no division award will be given.
- Division winners for the essay and poster contest will receive a check for $25.00. These awards may be presented by a MaFLA Board Member at the student’s school awards ceremony in the spring.
- Several honorable mention posters and essays will be selected and featured at the MaFLA Fall Conference.
- All entrants will receive a certificate of participation.
- A letter of appreciation will be sent to all MaFLA members whose students participate in the contests. In addition, letters of appreciation will be sent to the principal and superintendent of participating schools.
- Winners will be posted on mafla.org. Certificates and acknowledgements will be sent out at a later date.

Poster information contact:
ChinHuei Yeh
33 Camelot Drive
Shrewsbury, MA 01545
chyeh33@gmail.com

Essay information contact:
Stuart Gamble
646 Granville Road
Westfield, MA 01085
gamble_stuart@hotmail.com

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MaFLA Poster/Essay Contest Entry Form

Please submit this form (make a separate copy for each contest) along with your 5(maximum) posters and/or essays and mail each to the appropriate person at the address indicated below. Mail posters and forms together in a 3” (or larger) diameter tube.

#1. General Information: (please type or print legibly)
School:___________________________________________________         School Phone #: (____)_____________

School Address: (street)_______________________________________________________________________________

(city/town)_______________________________________(zip) __________________

Superintendent’s Name: ____________________________   Principal’s Name: ________________________________

Superintendent’s Address: __________________________________________________________________________________

#2. Entrants’ and Teachers’ Information: (please type or print legibly)
Student’s Name                 Grade  Teacher’s Name/dues paid through
1. _____________________________________________  _________  ________________________________________________
2. _____________________________________________  _________  ________________________________________________
3. _____________________________________________  _________  ________________________________________________
4. _____________________________________________  _________  ________________________________________________
5. _____________________________________________  _________  ________________________________________________

#3. Item Identification: (Photocopy the form below, fill it out and attach it to the back of each essay and poster)
Student’s Name:_______________________________________________________ Grade:____________________
Language:__________________________ Level:________ School:________________________________________
School Address:_________________________________________________________________________________
School Phone #: (____)______________________  Teacher’s Name:______________________________________
Teacher’s Email: __________________________________________

Deadline for both contests is March 15, 2015
NOTE: Only five entries per school (in each contest)

Send Posters to:
ChinHuei Yeh
33 Camelot Drive
Shrewsbury, MA 01545

Send Essays to:
Stuart Gamble
646 Granville Road
Westfield, MA 01085
Coming in January . . .

A special focus edition of the MaFLA Newsletter

**DDMs: Tracking Student Progress**

We are soliciting articles coming from varied perspectives related to the topic. Send your submission by Dec. 15.

For more information contact **Jeanne O’Hearn**.

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**Coming Attractions:**

We are busy at work on a **special edition** of the Winter MaFLA Newsletter. The topic is District-Determined Measures in the World Language classroom. According to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), District-Determined Measures (DDMs):

- are measures of student learning, growth, or achievement
- provide feedback to educators about their impact on student learning
- will lead to opportunities for robust conversations about student learning, and ultimately improved educator practice and student growth.

Tracking the growth of student proficiency is a particular interest and concern of World Language teachers. Since all educators in Massachusetts must now use DDMs with their students we should make this an opportunity to step back and think about how we assess our students and how we check for growth in proficiency of language skills.

The DDM section of the Winter Newsletter will provide a variety of perspectives from teachers and administrators on both a local and national level. Examples of World Language DDMs will be included. We would love to include as many different examples as possible and invite you to send in your DDM or one from a colleague. Please email Jeanne O’Hearn at jlo817@hotmail.com to submit a DDM before December 15, 2014.

*Submitted by Jeanne O’Hearn.*