Although it may seem like October is a long way away, the MaFLA team is eagerly putting together an interesting and strong lineup of presenters and activities for the Fall 2015 Conference. In the last newsletter we outlined some of the exciting workshop presenters that will be joining us in Sturbridge to provide the high quality professional development that makes the MaFLA Conference so strong.

Our Conference schedule will be the same as it has been in past years with 6- and 4-hour workshops on Thursday, October 29, 3-hour AM and PM workshops on Friday and 3-hour AM workshops on Saturday, as well as concurrent 75-minute sessions to choose from Friday and Saturday. In addition, we have a variety of events and meals that you will not want to miss including the Thursday afternoon Exhibit Hall Grand Opening, the Keynote Address at noon on Friday and our very popular Member Reception on Friday evening. The Conference will conclude on Saturday with the MaFLA Business and Awards Luncheon. We hope that you will plan to come to the whole event with your department to fully enjoy the entire time and the most out of the professional development opportunity and get the most benefits for your program and students.

We’re happy to be able to add to that list in this issue of our newsletter. Here are some of the additional presenters that have come on board over the past few months:

Nicole Sherf and Tiesa Graf: Nicole is a professor at Salem State University where she is the Director of Secondary Education for the World Language Department. Tiesa is a Spanish teacher at South Hadley High School. They will provide a 6-hour workshop for new teachers. Their knowledge of World Language pedagogy and experience working with new teachers always provides us with a comprehensive and up-to-date perspective of what is happening in the world of teacher training.

Na Lu Hogan: Na Lu teaches Mandarin at Arlington High School. She will be returning to join us in Sturbridge this fall in order to share her dynamic teaching strategies and techniques on how to get students engaged in the Chinese classroom.

Pedro Carrasquillo: Pedro is a Spanish teacher at Wellesley High School. He has presented for MaFLA several times in the past on a variety of topics related to Spanish language and culture. His expertise in the subject matter makes it always a pleasure to attend his workshops.

You will all want to be present for this year’s Keynote speech! As we announced in the last Newsletter, nationally renowned and dynamic presenter Greg Duncan will be our Keynote Speaker and will elaborate on the Conference Theme: Climbing the Proficiency Ladder: One Goal, Many Languages. He is also presenting on the theme of proficiency in a 6-hour Thursday Workshop and a special 3-hour workshop for foreign language administrators on Friday morning.

In addition to the presenters listed above, many MaFLA members have submitted proposals to present 75 minute sessions throughout the conference. Although we have many sessions to choose from, we still have room for some more. In order to provide the highest quality content it is imperative that our members get involved and showcase their talents. Please consider submitting a 75 minute session proposal. If you know of friends or colleagues who might be interested in presenting, encourage them to submit proposals. Sessions may be presented by individuals or groups.

Please let me know if you have any questions or comments about the conference! I look forward to hearing from you at conference@mafla.org. Also, if you are a new member or conference attendee, we will be offering webinars to help to orient you to the registration and conference experience.
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
- Spring - March 5
- Back To School - August 5
- End of Year - November 5

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

For up-to-the-minute news related to teaching and learning languages, follow MaFLA on Facebook and Twitter. Thanks to our website, mafla.org, it's easy.

Scroll to the bottom of the page where you will find a reflection of our Facebook and Twitter feeds. Click on the MaFLA logo under Find us on Facebook and/or the title TWITTER in the center column to be taken directly to the respective pages.

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. 617.431.3891, (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

MaFLA 2015

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From The Editor’s Desk

This winter has been the longest winter I can remember. Between the snow and that horrible cold it seemed to go on and on and on. Let’s hope we see a beautiful spring. We deserve it. But being New Englanders we made the best of it.

This winter has been very eventful personally for me. Usually the month of March drags on and seems to last forever but this year March has flown by. Why? There are many reasons. First of all, I have a Worcester State student doing his teaching practicum with me. This is the first time in my 43 year career that I have had a student teacher. My school district is somewhat out of the way of many of the major universities so we have not had many takers. This particular student is very special. First of all, he is a graduate of our school system and one of my former students. He also is a very enthusiastic learner and has demonstrated already that he is a highly reflective practitioner. He has been an inspiration to our students and has brought new ideas and perspectives to our department. He is a great collaborator and team player, and works tirelessly. I am really thankful that I have had this opportunity. I have no doubt that he will be a great asset to the profession and a leader in foreign language education. Best of all, he has been a student member of MaFLA since he was a sophomore in college. I am so glad that I purchased a gift membership for him many years ago and he has continued his professional involvement with MaFLA. I am sure we will see him at our Fall Conference. You will recognize him as he will be the one enthusiastic soaking up every bit of information he can get.

Another activity which has really been significant throughout the year and specifically during the month of March has been my work with our Professional Learning Network for Supporting Evaluator Capacity. The goals of this PLN have been to improve the efficiency of the teacher evaluation system by decreasing the burden on evaluators, supporting the consistency of implementation, and developing initiatives and practices to improve the educator evaluation process for our districts. Throughout the month of March we (our PLN) have run professional development activities for our staff centered around teacher evaluation. These sessions have allowed staff to focus on the teacher evaluation rubric and to consider artifacts and evidence for the indicators with the goal of making the evaluation system more a part of our practice than something additional that has to be accomplished. Our March Madness professional development allowed us to work with teachers from throughout the system, and brought about some very rich dialog. All of the districts involved in this PLN will be sharing their initiatives and these will be available for others to view to help their districts in the evaluation process. I will keep you updated.

The final engaging activity for March was an excellent professional development day. Our district focus this year has been RIGOR and our motto has been Digging Into Rigor. We have been working with Barbara Blackburn as our consultant and have had some wonderful sessions on bringing rigor to our classrooms. On March 13, we had a half day session with one of the trainers from Barbara Blackburn’s team. The day was filled with great ideas to create an environment in which each student is expected to learn at high levels, to establish classrooms in which each student is supported so he or she can learn at high levels and to ensure that students demonstrate learning at higher levels. If you are not familiar with Barbara Blackburn’s work, I suggest you check out her website with special attention to her archived newsletters.

Now on to some commentary about this issue of the MaFLA Newsletter. Our lead article by 2015 Conference Chair Jessica Clifford will give you a first taste of some of the exciting workshops planned for our 2015 Fall Conference. It is not too early to start planning for this great professional development opportunity. Amanda Robustelli Price, the winner of the Best of MaFLA session from our 2014 Fall Conference, has an intriguing article you will not want to miss entitled Solutions for Online Translators. It is an expansion of her session from the Conference. Our regular contributor, Dr. Marcel LaVergne has written an article entitled Language Is . . . which really delves into the topic. I know that I will share this with my department for discussion at an upcoming meeting. We also have some updates on French, German and Latin news. Hey all you teachers of other languages! What have your language groups or your schools been up to? We want to hear your news also. You may also note that we have an article featuring one of our members. We are hoping to feature more about our members next year so please send us the good news. Have you or a colleague recently received an award? Has your department done something special? Did you have a successful foreign language week? Let us know about it. Send us an article. We want to celebrate the many successes in the state.

As I close, I want to invite you to be a part of the upcoming MaFLA professional development opportunities. I am intrigued by the various topics which will be offered at MaFLA Diversity Day on May 3 and I am very excited about the MaFLA Proficiency Academy July 13-16. I will be participating along with my entire department. I have no doubt that we will leave the academy enriched and we will be ready to improve the teaching and learning for our students. I plan to end my summer by participating in the annual MaFLA Summer Institute, August 14-16. I will be looking for YOU - my MaFLA colleagues - at these various venues throughout the summer! See you there!

Ronie R. Webster

When was the last time you visited mafla.org?

Did you know that the Advocacy pages have been updated with new information?
Have you visited some of the new links on H.O.W. [Hot on the Web]?
Have you checked out our Student and Member Awards and Scholarships?
Have you submitted a proposal for the 2015 Conference?
Have you seen the new Tech Tips page?

Don’t miss out . . . Visit Often!
News

Janel Lafond Paquin
New ASFAP Director

The American Society of French Academic Palms is pleased to announce that 2007 MaFLA President, Janel Lafond Paquin has been elected to their Board of Directors for a three-year term. Ms. Paquin joins another former MaFLA President, Joyce Beckwith, on the ASFAP Board. Ms. Beckwith also serves as ASFAP National Secretary. Félicitations, Madame Paquin! Other MaFLA members who have received their French Academic Palms are Jean-Pierre Berwald, Terry Caccavale, Helen Cummings, Phyllis Dragonas, Richard Ladd, Carole LaPointe, Joe Scott, Brian Thompson, Rebecca and Jean-Paul Valette, and Mel Yoken. Madame Cummings, Messieurs Berwald and Ladd are also former MaFLA Presidents. Mesdames Beckwith, Cummings, Gadbois, Dragonas and Valette and Messieurs Ladd, Thompson, Valette and Yoken are former winners of MaFLA’s Distinguished Service Award.

Boivin Center Celebrates Thirtieth Anniversary

2015 is a unique year for The Boivin Center of French Language and Culture at The University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. It’s our 30th anniversary, and this will prove to be a very special—and important—year for the Center.

Thanks to a generous gift of $100,000 from Dr. and Mrs. Omer Boivin from Fall River, whom I knew very well, the Omer T. and Laurette M. Boivin Center was established at the then Southeastern Massachusetts University on April 11, 1985. Dr. Boivin, who had been educated in French in Canada, but had spent most of his life in Fall River, was Chief of Urology at St. Anne’s Hospital until the age of 70.

Boivin was 95 years young in 1985, and wanted to bring French language and culture to the fore in his native region of southeastern Massachusetts. He also wanted to show that the French language, which he and his wife cherished, was the lingua franca in the world alongside English in the arts, humanities, technology, hospitality, medicine and diplomacy, and he focused on the then SMU to do just that. I remember vividly that glorious, historic April day, as there was a very large gathering of very distinguished and prominent colleagues, officials and dignitaries representing France, Quebec and other Francophone areas. It was a day like no other day in the Francophone annals. That was the moment that the Boivins’ dream came true!

As I begin my 16th year as director, I feel a sense of great pride, satisfaction and accomplishment in what The Boivin Center has accomplished over the past three decades. The Center has helped students financially, for example, for study in Middlebury College’s prestigious Ecole française, or in Paris or Montreal or other major Francoophone cities and locales, by giving scholarships. The Center has been generous in bringing a multitude of notable Francoophone speakers, and bringing important French film series to campus. The Center has supported faculty research, dealing with French subjects, when the University has not had the necessary funds to do so. We have interviewed French and Franco-American in our region to document their history and to preserve for posterity their anecdotes, songs and stories. We have offered a certificate program in international marketing and French studies. Lastly, we have, like the Académie française, promoted and supported the French language to the best of our ability, and tried to act as an advisory, consulting board to schools and to those individuals who needed our advice and counsel. Succinctly and objectively, the Boivin Center continues to grow and prosper in trying to meet even new greater goals and challenges in the second decade of the 21st century.

We are targeting April, the month the Boivin Center was founded, as our “celebratory anniversary month” with the arrival of world-famous French chef, television personality and author, Jacques Pepin on Wednesday, April 1, 2015. Pepin will give a food demonstration/lecture from 4-5 in Woodland Commons followed by a book signing from 5-6. Thereafter, the UMass Dartmouth catering service, headed by Patrick Cotter, will be preparing a truly elegant, memorable dinner with Pepin, also in Woodland Commons, to which the public is invited. A special ceremony, honoring Pepin for all he has done and accomplished in the realm of French cooking, will take place at the time of the dinner. Reservations may be made at $100 a person, and the check, made out to The Boivin Center, may be sent to our most capable administrative assistant, Maria Sanguinetti, 6 Cindy Lane, New Bedford, Ma. 02740.

On April 15, at noon, The Boivin Center, in collaboration with the Center for Jewish Culture, will present a lecture with Sarah Lew Miller and Professor Joyce Lazarus. These two women collaborated in writing Ms. Miller’s fascinating memoir, HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT, which details her family’s eluding the Nazis in occupied France. A book signing and light reception will follow this free lecture which will take place in the Claire T. Carney Grand Reading Room.

To finish the April festivities, Mo Willems, an Emmy award-winning writer for Sesame Street and who is considered to be one of the most popular contemporary writers and illustrators, will speak on April 29 about the year he and his family have just spent in France. His books have been translated into many languages, and his illustrations and ceramics have been exhibited in galleries and museums throughout the United States. A book signing and reception will follow Willems’ free talk which will be held in the Main Auditorium of the University at 4pm.

The list of luminaries, who have graced the Boivin Center stage at the University, is indeed long and impressive, to put it objectively; therefore, let me note those who have highlighted our cultural programs over the past 30 years, and have been distinguished with the title of Honorary Life Member: Quebec writers, Marie-Claire Blais, Gaeten Brulotte, Helene Dorion and Naim Kattan; Francophone/Francophile writers, Nelson Brooks, Art Buchwald, Adam Gopnik, David Plante, Polly Platt and Richard Wilbur; Chef, Julia Child; French authors, Ambassador Pierre de Boisdeffre, Jacques Borel, Frederique Hebrard, Henri Peyre, Louis Velle; French Academician, Florence Delay; French mime, Marcel Marceau, French chanteurs et chanteuse, Maxime LeForestier; Annie Royer, Eric Vincent; Language Advocate, Senator Paul Simon; Humanitarian, Dr. Jeremiah Lowney, and Francophone scholars, Prof. William Carter and Prof. John Rassias. Two local lu-
News

AATF Eastern MASS New Contest Administrator

Amy Coombs, a recent transplant from Colorado where she served as AATF Contest Administrator, has been appointed the new Contest Administrator for the E. MASS Chapter. Madame Coombs has moved to Norfolk, MA and is now teaching French part-time at Sharon Middle School. Close to 5,000 students have registered for "Le Grand Concours" which is held during the month of March. AATF welcomes Mme Coombs and is very grateful that she has accepted this position. We also thank our former Contest Administrator, Janet Wohlers, for her many years of service to our chapter.

Alliance Français Award

The Alliance Française of Boston established for the first time this year an award for Middle School Teachers of French who seek financial assistance to enable the implementation of a project which would enhance their French language program.

We have recently chosen four recipients, and were very pleased to receive many applications. We wish we could have helped each and every teacher, and we encourage all to reapply for a grant next year.

The grant awards French programs at the middle school level because we believe students at this age are especially receptive to cultural exposure while learning a foreign language. Art projects, musical events, contact with students in another Francophone country, and cuisine are all received with enthusiasm at the target age level. Our hope is that they will be motivated to continue exploring the richness of the French language and various francophone cultures as they move into upper grade levels.

We awarded four grants of four hundred dollars each. The following paragraphs will identify the recipients and briefly summarize their projects:

Katharine Presswood of Kennedy Middle School in Natick will be purchasing YABLA subscriptions for her eighth grade students. This will enable the students to simultaneously hear and read text in French, watch videos and play games that, in a meaningful context, will increase their vocabulary.

Laura Sylvan of Vassal Lane School in Cambridge plans to have her eighth grade students publish books in French and in Haitian Creole. They will write original stories and illustrate them, sharing them with the younger grades before then sending them to a school in Haiti. A community service and a connection to a Francophone country will be enabled.

Dominique Le Paul of Mexican Middle School in Northborough will be able to have an iPad dedicated to her four French classes. In particular the iPad app, Quizlet, will enable her to create new activities, provide extra help and/or allow students to earn extra credit during class time using Book Creator and later share it with the rest of the class.

Wendy Perkins of Worcester Academy in Worcester will be able to establish a link to a school in Québec. Her seventh and eighth grade students will be able to produce imovies such as "Au sujet de moi" and share them via Google+ as well as to participate in discussion forums with their Francophone pen pals.

All recipients are required to send a progress report to the Alliance Française in mid-May. Examples of the work produced by the students, and photos, if applicable, will be used to assess the effectiveness of the projects. We look forward to receiving the progress reports.

The Alliance Française of Boston thanks all applicants for their participation in our first offering of a Grant for Middle School Teachers of French. We hope to have a large pool of applicants next year -- new applicants as well as re-applications from those we had wished to support this year.

Bonne continuation!

Lucy Sprayregen, Alliance Française de Boston et Cambridge

Member Spotlight

Yasmine Allen, Instructor in Spanish, Pursues Passion For Language and Culture

By SUSAN YUN — Friday, January 30

A self-described “language-nerd,” Yasmine Allen, Instructor in Spanish, has a love for learning new languages and cultures that extends far beyond Spanish. From Japanese to Portuguese, Allen boasts a bountiful repertory of new languages, as she seeks every opportunity to expose herself to a new language. "I just love the idea of meeting new people and accessing new languages and cultures, or accessing the people through the language and culture, and being able to talk and converse with millions of people through that medium," said Allen. Aside from teaching two sections of Spanish 400, Allen serves as the Chair of the Spanish Department, House Counselor at Nathan
Hale and a spinning instructor. She was also recently appointed as the new Assistant Dean of Faculty. Attending a Spanish-American bilingual school in Maryland, Allen was surrounded by a diverse group of students from a young age. “[The school] was probably more than half minority. I grew up with people from El Salvador and different Asian countries, including Korea, Laos, Cambodia. It was very diverse, and I like to get to know different people, so I guess that’s how I started my love of culture and language,” said Allen. In addition to receiving a Master’s Degree in Spanish at DePauw University, Allen decided to pursue Portuguese in college after befriending one Brazilian and two Portuguese friends in high school. “I learned about [Portuguese] culture through them, and, considering the similarities between Spanish and Portuguese, I was immediately interested in learning the language,” she said. Fascinated by Japan’s culture after taking a class on traditional Japanese literature in English at DePauw, Allen also decided to take a Japanese language class her senior year in college. Allen’s passion for new languages continued through graduate school, where she not only continued taking Portuguese classes as part of her Master’s Program at Purdue University but also took a summer course in Italian. Beyond the classroom lectures in college and graduate school, Allen has had the opportunity to visit Portugal and Brazil, where she was able to flaunt her new language skills and immerse herself in their culture. “Travelling to the places where I could speak their native tongue was an amazing experience. I would love to go to Japan one day. I haven’t been beyond the Iberian Peninsula in Europe... so I would also love to visit France and Italy as well,” said Allen. At Andover, Allen is currently auditing a French 200 course, taught by Debra Pickering, Instructor in French. Last year, she audited French 110/120. Furthermore, Allen had the chance to visit Quebec City over the summer, where she was able to practice speaking French. “It’s wonderful [auditing French]. I’m a ‘language nerd,’ so just to be back in the classroom again is wonderful. I absorb everything, and I just want to speak French everywhere,” said Allen. Allen hopes to relay her passion for new languages to her students. “I tell my students: ‘When you come into the classroom, adopt the culture. Become a different person. You’re not necessarily your English-speaking self, you’re your Spanish-speaking self.’” When I go to Panama in the summers, I’m a different Mrs. Allen when I’m in Panama than when I am here. Immersing yourself in a new language and culture makes you think of yourself differently... it makes you view yourself through a different lens. You’re changed by the people you meet, the food, the culture you experience,” she added. Apart from her love for learning new languages, Allen also enjoys spinning, an aerobic exercise performed on stationary bikes in the gym. Although she was intimidated at first by the cold gym rooms and shouting instructors, Allen was hooked after she tried her first class. “Riding on the bike is like meditation. I’m in the zone, especially when I am climbing up a hill. Once I tried spinning and experienced the cardiovascular benefits of exercising on the spinner bike, I wanted to continue incorporating these workouts into my weekly routine,” she said. Allen teaches 45-minute classes per week during the winter and spring terms and usually tries to get on the bike before the term to start training for the upcoming season. She has been instructing spinning classes since she got certified in 2010.

From The Phillipian, Saturday, January 30, 2015. Reprinted with permission.

German Teachers’ Workshop

In collaboration with the Goethe Institut-Boston, the MA Chapter of AATG was able to invite Mohamed Esa, National President of AATG and Professor of German at McDaniel College, to lead our sixth annual Deutschlehrkräfte-Tag on Saturday, February 7. The all-day immersion workshop focused on two themes, the first on Musik im DaF Unterricht: Der gezielte Ein-
were held March 14 at MIT in Cambridge, MA. After long and difficult deliberations, the committee determined the nominees, whose applications were then forwarded to the AATG Headquarters in New Jersey for consideration:

**Study Trip Award I (non-seniors):**
Carolyn Hitelman (Westford Academy)  
Joanna Wu (Wellesley High School)

**Study Trip Award II (seniors):**
Sylvia van der Weide (Lexington High School)

After reviewing the nominations, the national selection committee of the AATG will make the final decisions in mid-April. Recipients of the Travel Awards will receive round-trip airfare to Germany, live with a German family, attend classes at a Gymnasium, and participate in excursions to places of cultural and historical significance.

Congratulations to all Study Trip Award nominees and their outstanding teachers! Submitted by Peter Weise, MIT, Testing Chair

### Opportunity For College Students And Working Professionals

For college students and working professionals in Massachusetts between the ages of 18 and 24, the Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange for Young Professionals (CBYX) presents a remarkable opportunity to live, study and intern for a full year in Germany, the most dynamic economy and influential power in the European Union.

CBYX is open to young adults who have clear career goals, a demonstrated interest in contemporary Germany and the willingness to serve as a person-to-person ambassador for the United States. Applicants do not have to speak any German whatsoever, although language skills are preferred. The CBYX fellowship is awarded each year to 75 American and 75 German young professionals, and is funded by the German Bundestag and the U.S. Congress through the Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA). This fellowship provides an essentially free year of study and internship work experience in Germany, including free round-trip airfare, 8 weeks of intensive language instruction, a semester of university-level professional study in one’s field, followed by a paid second semester internship. Free housing is provided in a home-stay, shared apartment or dormitory setting.

Applicants from any and all disciplines are encouraged to apply, from business, IT, teaching and international relations majors to cooks and agricultural students. The program is not so much academically competitive as it is an attempt to send a diverse group of enthusiastic, accomplished, motivated young Americans to live, learn and work in Germany for a full year, expand their personal and professional skill sets and return fluent in German. Participants are not allowed to return to the U.S. before the year is up -- they have to be ready to invest a full year’s effort to the experience, but the experience sets the stage for a life-long international career. Students can find information and online application materials for the Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange for Young Professionals at [www.cbyx.info](http://www.cbyx.info).

### Deutschfest!

On Saturday, March 7, the Massachusetts Chapter of AATG hosted its 5th Annual Deutschfest. Eighty-seven students and their German teachers came together from nine area middle and high schools on this immersion day at Veasey Park in Grove...
News

The 38th Annual German Theatre Festival and Competition will take place on Thursday, April 16, 2015 at Mt. Holyoke College in South Hadley.

Dramatic presentations in German of no more than 15 minutes in length will be judged by a jury of secondary school German teachers, members of Mount Holyoke's German studies and theatre arts faculty as well as representatives of the German Consulate and the Goethe Institute in Boston. Prizes will be awarded on the elementary, secondary and college/university levels. The entry form and additional information are found at: https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/german/theaterfest The deadline to complete and turn in your entry form is March 20.

The Department of German Studies very much looks forward to welcoming German instructors and their students to this exciting event at Mount Holyoke College!

Nominations Sought For MaFLA/AATG German Educator of the Year Award

MaFLA, in cooperation with the AATG Massachusetts Chapter, announces the twenty-first annual Massachusetts German Educator of the Year Award. If you are interested in nominating someone for this award, please send a one-page resume and a cover letter explaining why the person you are nominating should be considered for the Massachusetts German Educator of the Year Award by May 1, 2015, to: Inge Buerger, AATG MA Chapter Awards Chair, 5 Pinewood Lane, Groveland, MA 01834. The Massachusetts Chapter of the AATG will determine the recipient. (S)he should be a member of MaFLA and AATG. This year’s award will be presented on October 31, 2015, at the MaFLA Luncheon to be held during the Annual MaFLA Fall Conference in Sturbridge, MA.

Deutsche Woche German Immersion Program

Save the dates for Deutsche Woche 2015 in beautiful Bar Harbor, Maine, August 2-8, 2015, at College of the Atlantic, a 31-year tradition of a week-long German immersion program for German teachers at all levels of instruction and experience hosted by the Maine Chapter of AATG.

Mathe, Ingenieurwesen, Naturwissenschaft, und Technologie (MINT) in Deutschunterricht! Can’t make it to Leipzig?

Get on board with the most recent initiative--incorporating science, technology, engineering and math (STEM)–into your German classes! Be exposed to materials and ideas for your instruction, exchange techniques with other German teachers, and get ready for the fall term with renewed enthusiasm! Three graduate credits in Education and/or continuing education credits are available from Elms College at reasonable cost!

The Maine Chapter of AATG has also applied for scholarship grants for attendees, but results will not be available until March 15! So there may be additional savings as well!

Don’t wait! This year, registrations close March 20 and a minimum of 15 attendees needed to run the event! Registration available on the AATG website here: http://www.aatg.org/resource/resmgr/Professional_Development/DW2015_Info_Reg.pdf Contact Sue Joy (207) 948-5678 or email: looney@uninets.net for more information

German Gala

To raise funds for the Friends of AATG Endowment Fund to help finance professional development opportunities for teachers of German, the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Association of Teachers of German (AATG) held a gala reception on February 6, 2015 in the beautiful parlor of the Goethe-Institut Boston. Special guests were Professor Mohamed Esa, National President of AATG, who was giving a workshop the next day, and Christoph Mürcher, the newly arrived Director of Goethe-Institut Boston, who assumed his duties on February 1. In addition to a broad array of German, Swiss and Austrian delicacies and wines, the evening featured a concert of songs from the German Romantik for male voices, beautifully performed by a chorus of Harvard students.

Submitted by Lisa Parkes AATG MA Chapter President.
Salvete omnes!

If you’re anything like me, it is becoming more and more difficult to bear the ‘snow-pocalypse’ with dignity. I have forgotten what grass looks like, and when I need to cut it in May, or now likely June, I’ll probably be mowing around drifts of snow like everyone else. It’s hard to imagine that the earth can even absorb this much precipitation. My students have been asking about representations or stories of snow in Greece and Rome. We read a few lines of Horace 4.7: Diffugere nives, reductum iam gramina campis / arboribus comae, although I don’t think what we have is the nives he had in mind! Other than Hercules chas- ing the Erymanthian boar into the deep snow, I was hard pressed to come up with anything except for the story of Thrasybulus, the Athenian exile who occupied the stronghold of Phyle in 403 BC. As an army of about 1000 hoplites under the command of the Thirty Tyrants approached to attack the seventy or so men with Thrasybulus, a great snowstorm blocked the passes through the mountains, and the much larger army was turned away. At least snow is democratic! If you know of other good ancient snow stories, please share them with us here.

Three excellent projects, at least, have come out of my classes this winter. This year’s seniors participated in our VIIIth annual Latin Holiday Caroling, in which we crash unsuspecting classrooms on the final day before the Winter Break with an impromptu song and dance performance. Rather than performing the traditional set list of ‘Jingle Bells’ / ‘Tinniunt’, and ‘Rudolph’ / ‘Reno erat Rudolphus’, this year we concocted a “Frozen” medley in which we created original Latin for “Frozen Heart” / “Gelidum (cordem) Rumpes”, “Do You Want to Build a Snowman” / “Faciamus simulacrum (nivale)”, “Fixer Upper” / “Meliorandus”, and, of course, “Let it Go” / “Libero (me)”. Our ultimate goal was to match the number of syllables in the Latin song with the original English lyrics and to have the Latin rhyme. A sample of the original lyrics, our Latin, and a literal translation of our Latin effectively demonstrate the challenges associated with this type of composition. We did conclude the performance with “Auld Lang Syne,” although I’ve been singing in Latin for so many years that I’ve forgotten the English. Did I ever know it? For a link to our performance, click here.

As the conclusion of our unit on Roman food and dining, I give students the opportunity to research and cook an ancient recipe for the class. One group baked Roman army hardtack, or ‘bucellatum’, the original ‘meal-ready-to-eat’. We ought to have rehydrated it first before attempting to eat it, and we were lucky that no one (in-
Students wrote a script which introduced the factiones, they created vows for good favor from the gods (this was modeled on the fabulous gladiator project that Abbi Holt presented at MaFLA – thank you, Abbi!), and then they actually attempted to pull each other on sleds through nearly four feet of packed powder. It was much more of a physical challenge than the students expected. For a link to the video, click here. We want to know about your winter projects. Send us a note, and let us know what’s going on in your classes!

_Curate ut valeatis_,
Edward “Ted” Zarrow, President, CAM

**Does Latin Help Students Learn English?**

_by Ken Rothwell, UMass Boston, Past-President, CAM_

Recent data say “Yes!” In early January, I was speaking to the School Board in Burlington, Vermont, hoping to convince them not to cut Latin from the high school I attended more than forty years ago. One of the time-honored tactics I used was to repeat a claim I have often heard, which is that Latin gives students a measurable boost on their SAT reading scores. I had remembered that the statistical advantage was around 170 points. Out of curiosity, I emailed the College Board to see if those numbers are true. A person in their Research Department responded very quickly, directing me to the 2014 reports for SAT College-Bound Seniors, which are available online.

In the “Total Group Report 2014” Table 20 shows how students who took this or that Subject Test fared on the SAT, and Latin students come out looking terrific (incidentally, the other tables are also fascinating and I recommend taking time to browse through them.) The mean Critical Reading score for students who took the Latin Subject Test is now up to 685, while the national mean has slipped down to 498. Latin therefore gives students, statistically, an advantage of 187 points. Of the languages, French is the second closest, at 639; Spanish is at 591. Interestingly, the closest to Latin is World History, at 646.

The SAT Writing score for Latin students is exactly the same: 685, trouncing all competitors, but the nationwide mean is 487, so the value added is even greater: 198 points. The talking point that many of us will now want to broadcast is that Latin will give students a nearly 200 point advantage on the SAT Writing Test! Of concern to me is the fact that the students taking the Latin Subject Test got a mean score of 626, which is somewhat middling. This is an issue I’ve heard about with respect to Latin AP too: the test scores are calibrated in such a way that the average Latin students are assigned average scores—internally consistent, perhaps, but almost certainly putting our obviously superior Latin students at a disadvantage.

These are raw data and a trained social scientist would pick nits. What is being measured? Does Latin make students smart, or do smart students take Latin? Both, of course, but how much of which? These questions have been asked before, and several pilot programs over the decades have shown Latin instruction to be highly effective at improving English reading scores for everyone – in particular disadvantaged student populations. Here’s a survey with summaries of earlier studies: Alice K. DeVane, “Efficacy of Latin Studies in the Information Age.” The familiar Philadelphia trial in particular showed that Latin instruction helped inner-city school children read above their grade levels. It would be nice to have more work done on this. For me a challenge is to see if there could be a way to adjust English Department curricula to take on some of what Latin teachers are offering.

What about Massachusetts? For this you need to click on the link to “Massachusetts” and scroll down to Table 21. I’m glad to say that the general pattern holds up. The 507 students who took the Latin Subject Test got 681 on the Critical Reading SAT. But if Massachusetts Latin students are slightly below the national average, who is pulling it up? I haven’t combed through all fifty states, but I did see that New York Latin students who took the Subject Test got 693 on their Reading SAT and Texas Latin students got 699.

No resting on laurels! _Qui praemis contentus non progrediatur!_
MaFLA Summer PD

Where will you be this summer? How will you be improving your practice? Be a part of our summer PD events.

The MaFLA Proficiency Academy
Westfield State University
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 (CE-PAs) – and develop instructional strategies that make proficiency and communication a central focus.

Click on the graphic below for more information or go to mafla.org/events-2/proficiency-academy/

MaFLA Summer Institute
Lasell College
August 14-16, 2015

During the summer months, MaFLA members can participate in our annual Summer Institute/Immersion Workshops. These workshops provide participants an opportunity to spend up to three days in an immersion setting to enhance their language and cultural skills as well as learn of new pedagogies and connect with colleagues.

Watch for the schedule and more information HERE or go to mafla.org/events-2/summer-immersion/

Return to school . . . enriched, excited and enthusiastic!
As a language teacher, do you know what "language" is, what its components, characteristics, and uses are? How can what you know about language help you to improve your teaching of a foreign language? This article will offer a definition of language, state its components, characteristics, distinctions, and its uses. It will conclude by offering implications for foreign language teaching.

Definition

According to Webster’s New World College Dictionary Fourth Edition, "language is a system of vocal sounds and combinations of such sounds to which meaning is attributed, used for the expression or communication of thoughts and feelings." The National Institute of Health defines it as "the expression of human communication through which knowledge, belief, and behavior can be experienced, explained, and shared. This sharing is based on systematic, conventionally used signs, sounds, gestures, or marks that convey understood meanings within a group or community." (1) Nordquist defines it as a "human system of communication that uses arbitrary signals, such as voice sounds, gestures, or written symbols." (2) Athabasca University defines it as "a dual system of arbitrary vocal symbols used for human communication." (3)

Language is the oral and written expression of culture. Baldini states that "Humans learn their culture through language and culture is transmitted through language... What we say influences what we think, what we feel and what we believe." (12)

Among the words to note in those definitions i.e., system, vocal and written symbols, gestures, meaning, knowledge, belief, behavior, expression, thoughts and feelings, culture, experienced, explained, and shared, group or community, perhaps the most important is the notion that language is for communication.

Components

Language is a system of sounds and meaning, arranged in units called words, phrases, clauses, and sentences according to a set grammatical structure which humans use to communicate with one another orally or in writing.

According to Newmonic, (4) the components of language include:
1. phonology: the study of the speech sounds used in a language
2. morphology: the study and description of how words are formed in language
3. semantics: the study of the meanings of words and phrases in language
4. syntax: the way in which words are put together to form phrases, clauses, or sentences
5. pragmatics: the study of what words mean in particular situations and contexts

In academic situations, such as in a classroom, the components are usually labeled pronunciation, enunciation, vocabulary, and grammar.

Characteristics

Language is specific to humans and distinguishes them from all other forms of animal life. According to Krashen, (5) it is acquired as a native or second and learned as a foreign language. The characteristics of language are:

1. Developmental: Language learners all undergo a "silent period" in the language development process. In simpler terms, early language learners, whether native, second language, or foreign language, can understand much more than they can produce, i.e. comprehension precedes production.
2. Acquired: L1 learners acquire subconsciously the rules of L1 without any formal explanation of those rules. Formal grammar learning, which comes later, helps develop accuracy and correctness in spoken and written language.
3. Socially Learned: Conversational skills are learned through interaction with other speakers of the language.
4. Functional: All language whether spoken or written has a purpose, a goal, a reason.
5. Comprehensible: Language is so structured that speakers and listeners need only to understand the essence of the utterance to understand what is being said.
6. Spontaneous: In a conversation, one cannot predict what will be said or how it will be said. Language use is ad lib, on-the-spot, and unrehearsed.
7. Symbolic: In all languages, words are arbitrarily associated with and stand for other things such as concrete objects, abstract thoughts and ideas, and actions. These can be communicated in spoken, written, and signed forms. (6)
8. Creative: Speakers of a language all possess the capability of understanding and of producing utterances that they have never heard or spoken before. They have the ability to create new and unique meanings of utterances from previously existing utterances and sounds. (7) This limitless ability to produce and understand an infinite number of totally new utterances is also called productivity or open-endedness. (8)
9. Recursive: Speakers have the ability to produce an unlimited number of utterances and sentences from the finite set of symbols and structures in the language.
10. Dynamic: Language is constantly changing, evolving, and adapting to the times.
11. Arbitrary: There is no necessary or natural connection between the words and the objects, concepts, or abstractions they represent.

Teachers need to consider the characteristics of language when planning lessons and developing activities if they want to expose their students to authentic language.

Distinctions

The following are helpful in understanding the two types of grammar and the difference between knowing and using a language.

1. Description: Descriptive grammar enables linguists and anthropologists to determine inductively the rules of the language based on what speakers...
Language is…

of a language say or don’t say and to determine the rules or patterns that underlie the use of words, phrases, clauses, and sentences. It shows what the language is.

2. **Prescription:** Prescriptive grammar enables teachers and editors to teach and improve the language of speakers by showing them what speakers should or should not say according to an agreed upon set of rules and examples dealing with the syntax and word structures of a language, usually intended as an aid to the learning of that language. It shows what language should be by laying out rules about the “correct” or “incorrect” use of language.

3. **Competence:** It is the unconscious knowledge of grammar that allows a speaker to use and understand a language correctly and accurately. It includes information one has internalized to use for communication without formally studying that particular language. According to Noam Chomsky (11), it is a system that makes it possible to create and comprehend an unlimited number of statements or questions in a given language, match sounds and meanings, and allow one to tell when something doesn’t make grammatical sense. Competence can be further broken down into the following:

   a. **Communicative competence:** It is knowing what speech is appropriate in a given social situation and it deals with using the right grammar, vocabulary, and general tone that are used in a particular discourse community.

   b. **Pragmatic competence:** It is the ability to use language in a contextually appropriate fashion and is a part of communicative competence that involves being able to use language in interpersonal relationships, taking into account such complexities as social distance and indirectness.

4. **Performance:** It is the ability to produce and comprehend utterances and sentences in a language. It is the way one actually applies that system when one writes, speaks, or acts. Performance is never equal to competence, because there are always interferences with language processing, such as fatigue, short-term memory issues, and other distractions.

Prescriptive grammar will help students improve their performance in the language; it is not designed to improve their competence which exists solely on a subconscious level.

**Uses/Functions**

Language is the most important aspect in the life of all beings. Campbell and Mailman state that “we use language to express inner thoughts and emotions, make sense of complex and abstract thought, to learn to communicate with others, to fulfill our wants and needs, as well as to establish rules and maintain our culture.” (10)

According to Lin (11) the three primary uses of language are:

1. **Informative:** It is used to give, receive, or share information, such as opinions, advice, news, or facts. It usually involves the sharing of information between two or more persons when one person shares information with others that they do not already know. It is used to affirm or deny propositions. The statements are either true or false: It’s very hot today.

2. **Expressive:** It is used to express and evoke ideas, thoughts, feelings, and attitudes. It may or may not include any real information because the purpose of expressive use of language is to convey emotion. The statements are neither true nor false: This heat is killing me!

3. **Directive:** It is used to establish and maintain social order by causing or preventing overt action. Directive use of language establishes norms of expected behavior in certain situations and is most often found in commands and requests: It’s too hot! Please turn on the air conditioner.

In many cases, use of language serves multiple purposes. For example, the statement “It’s too hot! Please turn on the air conditioner” can be both informative, (It’s a hot day.), expressive (too hot shows feeling), directive (both a request and a command). The use of “Please” can also be expressive because it demonstrates feeling.

Budani, (12) adds the following six functions of language:

1. **Instrumental:** using language to get what we want, to satisfy needs or desires
2. **Regulatory:** using language to control the behavior of others, to get them to do what we want them to do
3. **Interactional:** using language to establish and define social relationships, language used in group situations
4. **Personal:** language used to express individuality and personality, strong feelings and opinions
5. **Imaginative:** language used to create a world of one’s own, to express fantasy
6. **Heuristic:** language used to explore, to investigate, to acquire knowledge, to do research, to acquire understanding

If students are to perform efficiently and use authentic language outside of the classroom, it becomes crucial that they be asked to perform the many uses and functions of language inside the classroom.

**Implications**

The following implications based on knowing what language is can be of importance to all L2 teachers because they can provide a theoretical basis to L2 methodology and hopefully improve the teaching of foreign languages in our schools.

**Communication**

1. **Language for communication.** Language is the means by which all humans communicate their thoughts, feelings, wants, beliefs, and ideas to one another. Consequently, the focus of L2 study should be to aid students to communicate in L2 in an outside-of-the-classroom setting. Vocabulary and grammar become a means to an end and not the ends in themselves. Grammatical accuracy should not
Language is...

2. Conversational skills learned through interaction with others. The traditional question and answer format between one teacher and one student at a time will not produce students able to converse in a natural setting with any amount of fluency. Students must be given the opportunity to interact with one another as often as possible within the limited amount of time available in the classroom.

3. Interpersonal versus presentational communication. Students must be given the opportunity to engage in more interpersonal communication activities because contrary to presentational communication activities they engage the students to produce authentic, spontaneous, arbitrary, and unprepared language which more closely resembles the out-in-the-world language.

4. Language as information. Students must be given the opportunity to impart information to one another about topics other than the ones dictated to by the lesson at hand. The class becomes more interesting when teacher and students share personal stories, different opinions, and their views of the world.

5. Language and culture are ever-changing. Great care must be taken that the language and the culture that teachers present to students are current and up-to-date.

Acquisition vs. Learning

1. Acquisition versus learning. There should be more activities that promote acquisition than learning. Acquisition implies getting the language in an incremental and natural way, through play, work, action, interaction, and use. Learning implies getting the language in a forced, artificial way by means of drills, exercises, repetition, and the study of grammar rules.

2. Language with a meaningful purpose versus language for academic reasons. Students must engage in activities that approximate authentic language use, i.e., that practice actual functions of language, i.e., giving advice, agreeing, apologizing, refusing, etc. as opposed to drilling grammar items through conjugation activities and doing out-of-context vocabulary exercises.

3. Open-ended creative language. Most traditional language development activities involve the regurgitation of the language of the question, the exercise, or the reading. In addition to knowing the facts in question, students must be challenged to expand their answers by giving their opinion, explaining their reasoning, debating contrary ideas, etc. The language they produce must go beyond the text they are using.

4. Speech appropriate for the situation. Students need to be exposed to all varieties of speech if they are to survive in the L2 speaking world. A decision needs to be made about the sociolinguistic aspects of L2 and the ever-changing aspect of language such as the inclusion of informal speech patterns, the use of slang, regional dialects, etc. Language based solely on formal grammar patterns becomes academically rigid and unnatural.

Competence vs. Performance

1. Prescriptive grammar to develop accuracy. The role of grammar should be to develop accuracy and not be a prerequisite to learning L2. Because one does not know the future of every regular and irregular verb does not mean that one cannot use the future tense to indicate what they are going to do tomorrow.

2. Performance is never equal to competence. Because one may understand the difference between I and me does not imply that they will always be used correctly. Evaluating what one knows about the language only by means of a student's production is not assessing what they really know.

3. Comprehension precedes production. Because language is developmental, people can understand more than they can say (I can understand much more Spanish than I can speak) and they use fewer words than they know (my passive vocabulary is greater than my active vocabulary). It becomes important that the listening comprehension skill be treated as importantly as the other skills when judging a person's overall knowledge of L2. Listening activities should precede speaking activities, especially at the beginning levels.

Conclusion

Knowing what language is is as important to a language teacher as knowing what the body is to a medical doctor. If, as Vygotsky (13) maintains, “the primary function of language is, in both children and adults, communication, social contact” and if communication is the act of transmitting information to another person, then teachers need to base their teaching and learning strategies on what language is, its components, its characteristics, its uses, functions, and distinctions. They need to plan activities that challenge the students to go beyond answering questions and repeating the facts of the lesson. The few implications listed above will hopefully prove helpful to the improvement of L2 teaching in our schools.

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.

References

Solutions For Online Translators

Amanda Robustelli-Price

Introduction
Hi everyone! Here is an article that expands upon my workshop, “Solutions for Online Translators,” which won Best of MaFLA. I am thrilled to be part of this fabulous organization and look forward to seeing many of you at the Fall Conference in October where I will be presenting a follow-up Workshop and will hopefully present a couple of other sessions. As I believe that it’s easier to edit than to create, I hope you glean some ideas for your own classroom use. (I would love to hear how you use or modify any of these recommendations or to have professional conversations with you. Let’s connect - @RobuPrice or amandarobustelli@hotmail.com).

There are four basic solutions for online translators:
1. Scaffold the writing process
2. Give clear expectations for vocabulary use on assessments
3. Ask students to evaluate translators
4. Teach students how to use dictionaries (both hard copies and online resources)

Language Is . . . (cont.)


Amanda Robustelli-Price has been a French teacher for over ten years, also serving as a department chair. Extremely active in state and national conferences, Amanda was awarded the Best of MaFLA distinction for her presentation, “Solutions for Online Translators!” In the words of one very enthusiastic attendee, “How do I BECOME Amanda???? Can she come be a French teacher in my district and guide me?!?!?! So incredible!” Amanda has been asked to present a 3-hour workshop on this topic at the 2015 MaFLA Conference, so anyone who missed her session should sign up early to reserve a space... not to be missed!

Scaffold The Writing Process
Scaffolding the writing process improves student writing and significantly decreases the use of internet translators. Below are some ways that I have scaffolded the writing process in my French class. Note that I did not use the steps at the same time and often provided support to students in small groups based on their readiness.

1. Pre-writing. All of these tasks are designed to give students a “head start” for their essay writing, whether it be from a rough draft or useful expressions for the written or presentational task.
   a. Gallery walk: Students write down vocabulary and expressions in various poster categories while walking around with a marker.
   b. List-group-label: Ask students to list as many expressions as they can think of across a broad topic such as “cars.” Then they group and label those expressions. This is a great way to get a vocabulary list that crosses units of study.
   c. Venn diagram: Use this graphic organizer to help students use verbs with three different subject pronouns - I, We, and They.
   d. Quick writes: The class before, ask students to “write” about the topic without books or notes for about ten minutes. This gives them a great jumping off point and helps you, the teacher, to gain some data about their current level of performance. This quick write can be a rough draft.

2. During writing. Writing process:
   - When students are working on drafts of presentational tasks, follow this simple writing process:
     1. 7 minutes without books or notes
     2. 4 minutes with books, notes or partners
   - I find that dictionaries and partners can sometimes impede the writing process. This blend of alone time and collaboration time helps students be more productive and meets the needs of a variety of learning styles (quiet versus noisy environment, works better alone or works better with collaboration).

3. After writing
   a. Peer feedback: Create a quantitative worksheet that mirrors the rubric for peers to provide feedback against the rubric. When students fill in a worksheet (as opposed to just the rubric), it leads to more specific feedback.
   b. Goal setting: After reading peer feedback, ask students to write a quantitative goal for their rewrite. (Example: I will add 50 more words; I will add three more sentences to express my opinions about biodiversity.) Adding a student goal for rewrite makes the second draft significantly better.
   c. Quick teacher highlight: Instead of poring over first drafts for hours, as a teacher, I like to review the peer feedback and then add a quick highlight of areas I think need improvement. (My highlights may connect to project focus, such as expressing opinions.)
   d. After final draft. Reflection:
Solutions For Online Translators

**Students** reflect on whether they have met their goals or not and what actions they will change for future projects. It is powerful for students to keep and review these reflections in the same place, such as a Linguafolio.

**Give Clear Expectations For Vocabulary Use On Assessments**

Students often use translators because they are trying to express exactly what they want to say in their native language. Setting clear expectations for vocabulary use puts students at ease. Here are some ways to move students away from word-for-word translation.

- **Stress that students should use what they know.** Be clear with students that you are not expecting them to communicate at the same level in the target language as they can in their native language, and that they are only expected to use the functions and language they have learned.

- **Be methodical with rubrics.** Within rubrics, build in bonus points for students who seek out a specific number of new phrases (such as five) to include in the interpersonal or presentational task. This challenges students to seek new learning and also makes it clear that you are looking for mastery of the functions taught in class.

- **Focus on the audience.** Explain to students that vocabulary use should reflect the knowledge of the audience. For example, if students are creating a brochure for the local chamber of commerce to entice target language speakers to the area, this brochure can contain additional vocabulary that could be understood by native speakers. However, if students are writing or speaking with classmates, too many new words may impede meaningful communication.

- **Model and encourage creativity.** As language teachers, we must encourage our students to play with the target language. It is helpful to include non-graded speaking and writing activities and to model how to have “fun” and “create” with the target language.

- **Teach circumlocution.** Finally, students often get frustrated when they are unable to express something in the target language. It is helpful to teach students how to use circumlocution to share an idea without using the exact vocabulary needed. There are games that students can play to practice this key skill.

**Ask Students To Evaluate Translators**

Students marvel at my detective skills, but it is truly easy to know they have used an internet translator when finding the subjunctive in level 1. I am not sure that students really understand what is bad about internet translators, and have found it effective to ask students to evaluate the usefulness of these online tools. This type of activity can be done in class or for a homework assignment. This type of assignment leads to meaningful discussions about the target language as it compares to their native language, helps to move students away from translators, and deepens their knowledge of the complexities of creating with another language.

**Teach Dictionary Skills**

The last of my four solutions for online translators is a recommendation to teach dictionary skills. Students often do not know how to seek new words, and teaching them how to use the dictionary increases their accuracy and thus communication in the target language. I recommend doing a small assignment in class about once a month that focuses on a different part of speech. This can be done with both paper dictionaries and an online dictionary such as WordReference.

**Summary**

Students use online translators for a variety of reasons. Scaffolding the writing process, setting clear expectations about vocabulary use, evaluating translators, and teaching dictionary skills are all ways help students avoid internet translators and, more importantly, to empower them to create meaningful communication in the target language.

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**Great Advocacy Idea!**

Did your school celebrate Foreign Language Week? Did your students participate in the essay, poster or video contest? Revive the excitement! Download, print and post Governor Baker’s Proclamation of Foreign Language Week. Put it up in the foreign language hallway! Click on the image to the right or you can find it here: mafla.org/wp-content/uploads/FLWProclamation.pdf
MaFLA has been hard at work advocating on multiple fronts with many other language organizations to strengthen world language programming across the state. Personally, it has been the most exciting advocacy-oriented time period in my 26 year career as a world language educator. I am so excited to share the developments that positively affect K-16 programming in a variety of ways through the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), through state legislative efforts to make law of a Seal of Biliteracy, through cooperation with a variety of other language advocacy groups and through our strong ties with our national umbrella organization, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). It is through the collaboration of efforts with other language organizations that MaFLA’s voice becomes stronger and the message reaches more ears.

Here is a summary of some of the amazing results of this collaboration:

- **DESE:** A series of meetings between DESE personnel and MaFLA leadership have led to exciting decisions: funding for updating the MA Foreign Language Framework and a Foreign Language Coordination position are being allocated in the budget in the near future. We all know that the lack of direction from the DESE with regard to high standards in foreign language programming has been detrimental to programming at the district level. In addition, DESE is providing personnel to present on DDMs and MCUs during various components of our Proficiency Academy this July. MaFLA is emphasizing the critical tie between our teacher evaluation system and proficiency-oriented teaching by making the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines the focus of our Proficiency Academy as well as at our Annual Conference.

- **Seal Legislation:** MaFLA wants a Seal of Biliteracy passed by legislation which awards a Seal and rewards those graduating high school students who attain a functional level of proficiency in English and another language. There was a huge response from members in the contacting of legislators requesting their co-sponsorship of the new Seal legislation. More than 900 member emails were sent to 177 state elected officials. Some legislators received more than 20 emails from you, our members! This led to a total of 56 legislators signing on to the House version of the bill and 16 signing onto the Senate version. The Seal will be sent to the Education Committee, assigned a Bill number and placed on the agenda for discussion. We will surely be calling on you again to contact legislators when the time comes to vote and hope that you will respond with the same degree of enthusiasm! Follow our progress on the Advocacy News tab under Advocacy on the MaFLA Website.

- **Language Coalition:** MaFLA has become a member of the Language Coalition, a group of mostly English Language Learner organizations whose function is the promotion of dual language and immersion programs as well as the Seal of Biliteracy. So MaFLA, working with leaders from MABE, MATSOL and Pangea, among others, strengthens its voice in the promotion of language learning in the state with the goal of creating a system to reward students for their biliteracy. The Language Coalition under the logo ‘Language Opportunity’ has create a bill for this legislative

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### What is Our Discipline Name: World Languages or Foreign Languages?

For a brief period back in the 90s when our MA Foreign Language Framework was called World Languages, I went along and pushed my department to call itself “the World Languages Department.” However, when the Department of Education changed the name back to “Foreign Language Framework” in alignment with ACTFL’s “Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century,” I encouraged the Department to revert back to “the Foreign Language Department.” I have steadfastly stuck to the “Foreign Languages” title since then to be in alignment with the state and national name. Until now, that is.

At their Annual Convention in November of 2014, ACTFL announced their newly updated “World Readiness Standards for Learning Languages.” The National Standards have been updated again after their initial publication in 1996 with revisions in 1999, 2006. The new 2015 edition will be available for purchase soon but you can access the summary on the [ACTFL Website](https://www.actfl.org) under Publications. I am now fully on board to call our profession World Languages. Even though it is a little disappointing to see our name alphabetically last on the list of school disciplines, I am now convinced that it will become the nationally accepted and recognized name.
Advocacy Update!

Seal Update!

A Seal of Biliteracy rewards high school graduates who attain a functional level of foreign language proficiency and English with a Seal on their diploma. MaFLA wants a Seal of Biliteracy for Massachusetts because using levels of proficiency as a standard to reward performance can be transformative for programming. Additionally, proficiency is a more meaningful way to document student performance than grades or seat time as measured in years of study.

Thank you to all who sent messages to your state legislators during the short period in this new legislative session when co-sponsors could sign up for new bills. Your more than 900 messages sent to legislators resulted in 56 Co-Sponsors signing up on the House side and 16 on the Senate side. We have a strongly supported bill moving forward in the legislative process! See the list of legislators below:

**HD 1698, to establish state seal of Biliteracy:**

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<th>Lead Sponsor, Rep. Kay Khan</th>
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<td>Tricia Farley Bouvier</td>
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<td>Angelo Puppolo</td>
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<td>Michael Moore</td>
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<td>Sonia Chang-Diaz</td>
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Please follow up with your legislator if you see his or her name on the list and tell them how appreciative you are of their support of this important legislation! If you have any questions, please contact Nicole Sherf, MaFLA’s Advocacy Coordinator, at advocacy@mafla.org.

session called LOOK which includes a variety of dual language and ELL needs. It also contains a Seal of Biliteracy. MaFLA and the Language Coalition collaborated to ensure that the wording of the Seal would be identical in the LOOK bill and the stand-alone Seal bill that MaFLA is promoting.

- **European Language Advocacy Group:** MaFLA has recently begun collaborating with the European Language Group (ELAG) which consists of Education Advisors to five European Consulates as well as cultural centers related to those languages in Boston: France, Germany, Italy, Portugal and Spain. ELAG works with DESE as well to promote language teaching resources in the state from their countries and will be present at the Proficiency Academy as well as our Annual Conference to provide these resources to you, our members.

- **ACTFL:** MaFLA has enjoyed a strong and productive relationship with the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) for many years and is looking forward to co-sponsoring the upcoming ACFTL Convention and World Languages Expo in Boston from November 18 to 20, 2016. MA also has a strong ACTFL State Advocacy Team and participates in the quarterly calls with other state teams across the country. ACTFL provides support to states in attaining mutually necessary advocacy goals. Find the list of goals and resources on the ACTFL site under Advocacy and contact Nicole Sherf at advocacy@mafla.org if you would like to be included as a member of the MA State Advocacy Team.

It is rare to have such amazing and positive news on so many fronts to share on the foreign language advocacy front and on so many different levels. I am so excited by what the future holds for foreign language teaching and programming in the state but know that it is only by cooperating and collaborating with many different organizations that these efforts can be fulfilled. We also count on the strong participation and engagement of you, our members! Thank you so much for your support and action!
ISE Language Matters Award

MaFLA is pleased to announce that Intercultural Student Experiences (ISE) will fund a Language Matters Award of $250 for a high school world language teacher selected by MaFLA. The ISE Award will be made to a high school teacher of a world language who has achieved outstanding success in getting his / her students to speak the target language through exemplary motivation and creative methods; in addition, the winner shall be a teacher who has provided authentic immersion experiences outside the classroom for students to apply their speaking skills. Any current MaFLA member may submit an application. The application should consist of:

- A statement on his/her philosophy on the importance of taking students to the target country.

- Evidence of previous student trips to target countries and examples of the pre-departure programs to prepare students for the immersion experiences (i.e. trip itineraries and sample of abridged units/lesson plans.)

- A one-page “testimonial letter” from a (former) student addressing the teacher’s impact in the classroom and the value of the immersion experience.

- A one-page letter of recommendation from a colleague or supervisor that addresses the teacher’s commitment to excellence in the classroom, immersion experiences, and to a global education.

Complete applications will be received no later than May 30, 2015

The application materials should be mailed to: MaFLA Awards Committee, c/o Tiesa Graf, 500 River Road, South Hadley, MA 01075. Inquiries should be addressed to: tiesagraf9@gmail.com. The award, which consists of a check for $250 and a framed certificate, will be presented at the MaFLA Saturday Luncheon at the annual MaFLA conference on Saturday, October 31, 2015. For further information on the ISE, consult their web site at www.isemn.org

Nomination Deadline: May 30, 2015
TO BE AWARDED AT THE SATURDAY LUNCHEON, OCTOBER 31, 2015
Send YOUR contribution to the next issue to:
Ronie R. Webster  ronie@mafla.org
41 Glenn Drive
Wilbraham, MA  01095
Phone 413.596.9284
Deadline for the Back to School Issue is Aug. 5