MaFLA is thrilled to welcome The American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) to Boston for its 2016 Annual Convention and World Languages Expo. The event will be held at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center from November 18-20 (with pre-convention workshops on November 17). This is an exciting opportunity for our members to attend an international event where more than 7,000 language educators will come together “for a comprehensive professional development experience that will have an impact on language educators at all levels of teaching and in turn impact their students to succeed in their language learning process.”

ACTFL has prepared a rich program that includes 20 pre-convention workshops to be held on Thursday, November 17 and more than 700 sessions that will be offered from November 18-20. Attendees will find high quality presenters sharing their expertise in innovative programming, emerging trends in the language profession, and research-informed practices. Additionally, more than 250 companies will be exhibiting their latest products and services.

MaFLA will also have an “impact” on the Convention. ACTFL has selected five of our members to present cultural immersion pre-convention workshops on Thursday, November 17:

- Na-Lu Hogan, Mandarin Chinese teacher at Ottoson Middle School in Arlington, will present Engaging Strategies to Advance Mandarin Chinese Proficiency.
- Charlotte Gifford, Professor of French and Spanish at Greenfield Community College, will present The Interpretive Mode and Beyond: Making Effective Use of Authentic French Resources.
- Thomas J. Howell and Corrado Russo, Latin teachers at Belchertown High School and Lynn Classical High School respectively, will present From Aesop to Alsop - Storytelling Strategies through Fabulous Fables.
- Michele Dávila Gonçalves, Associate Professor at Salem State University, will present Latin American Intercultural Competence in the Global Classroom.
- ACTFL has also selected Nicole Sherf, Professor and Secondary Education Coordinator in the Department of World Languages and Cultures at Salem State University, to host a 3-hour workshop for non-foreign language administrators on Friday, November 18. There will be a panel of national leaders in the field who will address current trends in foreign language teaching: proficiency, best practices, and the Seal of Biliteracy. This workshop is designed to advocate for increased foreign language programming across the state.

Since MaFLA will not be hosting its own annual conference in 2016, the Business and Awards Luncheon will be held on Friday, November 18, at the Convention site. Members may register for the luncheon as part of the ACTFL Convention registration form.

Registration for the 2016 ACTFL Convention will open in March. MaFLA members can register at the ACTFL member rate. Please visit the MaFLA website (www.mafla.org) to find up-to-date information about the Convention and a link to the ACTFL registration page.

Kathy Turner
MaFLA First Vice-president
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

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

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

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP AND SAVE $$$

As a partner organization for the 2016 ACTFL Convention in Boston, MaFLA is allowed to offer its members registration at the ACTFL discounted registration price! Please keep your dues current, as only those whose memberships are valid through November 30, 2016 will have access to this benefit. Renew your dues today and take advantage of all that MaFLA has to offer! Best for a wonderful 2016 ACTFL Convention in Boston!

For updates and questions, please contact
Madelyn Gonnerman Torchin, Membership Coordinator

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For updates and questions, please contact
Madelyn Gonnerman Torchin, Membership Coordinator
Happy Spring! I know that my energies increase and I always feel renewed as the warmer weather and sunny days arrive. It is also a time when I begin to plan for my own enrichment during the summer months.

I am already excited about our May Diversity Day and love the fact that there are some additional options. It will be difficult to decide. Shall I participate in *De la calle a la aula: transformando la clase de español con materiales auténticos*, a workshop that will support the professional goal that I have set this year, or shall I go for *Infusing Technology In and Out of the Classroom*, keeping me up to date with the latest technology. I guess I will just have to sit down and make those difficult choices and hope that participants will share what they have learned in the workshops that I cannot attend.

This will be followed by the July Proficiency Academy. I am really looking forward to getting together again this summer for the Intermediate Level. My department's participation in the Proficiency Academy last summer had such a positive impact on our department and our practice and I anticipate that we will continue to grow as a department and connect with wonderful colleagues again this summer.

Finally I am looking forward to the August Summer Institute which for years has been such a wonderful professional development opportunity. I will confess that I have been attending these from back in the day when they started at Elms College and then moved to Bay Path College in Longmeadow, MA. Each year they get better and better and continue to support my learning and growth.

Somewhere in between all of these activities, I do plan to get a little bit of rest and relaxation with my family but you can guess that I will still be talking about foreign language teaching and learning!

The focus theme of this issue of the MaFLA Newsletter is Engagement. We hope you enjoy the variety of articles that highlight this topic. We begin with a brief article by Kathy Turner in which she discusses how she keeps students engaged during the summer months. Next, we have an article *Motivation and Engagement: Who Cares?* by Tim Eagan in which he shares some ideas on the use of routines and instructional tips. Don't miss the article *Keeping Students Engaged In The Summer Months* by Jeanne O’Hearn in which she shares a variety of strategies used by the teachers in the Masconomet Regional School District. This article is filled with great ideas and resources.

Chris Krueger, a Spanish teacher at Doherty Middle School in Andover, has shared insights on the relationship between the instructional use of model technology and social media and student foreign language learning.

We have an article from Don Doehla, in which he discusses how he utilizes project-based learning to engage and motivate his students.

Our frequent contributor, Marcel LaVergne, has written a wonderful article entitled *Culture Shock: Preparing L2 Students To Go Abroad*. Certainly there is no higher level of engagement than to be immersed in the language and culture being studied. However, for our students to achieve the maximum benefit from their travel abroad, we need to prepare them for this experience.

As I close, I want to encourage you to submit an article to YOUR MaFLA Newsletter. Our Back-To-School Issue will focus on the theme of *Languages are the Keys to Global Understanding*.

- How do we prepare our students to be Global Citizens?
- How are we making global connections?
- What keys are we giving to our students to help them become global citizens?
- How are we using these keys to make an impact on our students?

I hope I will see you at our upcoming PD events and I will anticipate your articles and submissions for our Back To School issue. The deadline is August 5!

Ronie R. Webster
Tyngsborough Elementary Celebrates FL Week

¡ Hola from Tyngsborough Elementary School!

This is the first year for Tyngsborough’s elementary Spanish 1-5 program. We celebrated FL week March 7-11, with the following activities:

• Tiger Talk: Our daily morning news—we played the Buenos Dias song school-wide and everyone sang! Each day we announced a FL language ‘fun fact’.
• TES students made labels for familiar places/items around the school and posted them for everyone to see!
• A welcome sign was made for the TES entrance with many languages to say ‘WELCOME’.
• Lunch menus were translated to Spanish and displayed on the cafeteria lines.
• In class, all classes (25 for the week), made ‘mini’ rain sticks using TP tubes and rice. A culture lesson concerning the legend of the rain stick preceded the craft.
• Students in all grades were invited to participate in the MaFLA poster/essay contests. And, happy to report, we sent five posters for the contest.

Submitted by Jill Frechette

ACTFL Extends Thanks

The following quote is from the ACTFL Cinema SIG March 2016 Newsletter which thanks Madelyn Gonnerman Torchin for 10 years of service to the organization.

“We would like to extend our appreciation to Dr. Madelyn Gonnerman Torchin for over 10 years of dedicated service to the Film SIG. Dr. Gonnerman Torchin has served as Chair, Past Chair, and Vice Chair of this committee. We have been fortunate to have her leadership, vision, grace, and especially her wit!”

The globe was awarded at the 2015 ACTFL Convention.

Submitted by Joyce Beckwith

Summer Engagement

Although I am not a big fan of summer homework, I do not want my students to completely forget about French between June and September! I give my Honors French IV students several small assignments to keep them connected to the target language during their time away from school. Students have to send me two postcards or notes to tell me some of the highlights of their vacations. I then choose one fun and unique fact from each student and create a “quiz” for the first day of school. Students work in pairs to guess who did what, and the team with the most correct answers gets a prize. The “quiz” also serves as a springboard for conversation. Students elaborate on what they did, and their classmates ask follow up questions. This activity allows everyone to share their experiences while refreshing their skills. In addition to the postcards (which also make great decorations in class!), I ask students to watch a film of their choice in French (with or without subtitles) and to write a one page review of the movie. During the first week of school, students talk about what films they saw and whether or not they would recommend them to others. My students have given me positive feedback about both of these assignments.

Submitted by Kathy Turner

Nominations Sought For MaFLA/AATG 2016 Twenty-second Annual Massachusetts German Educator of the Year Award

MaFLA, in cooperation with the AATG Massachusetts Chapter, announces the twenty-second 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, 2016, to: Inge Buerger, AATG MA Chapter Awards Chair, 5 Pinewood Lane, Groveland, MA 01834, ingebuerger@comcast.net. 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 November 19, 2016, at the MaFLA Business and Awards Luncheon to be held during the ACTFL Annual Convention and World Languages Expo in Boston, MA.
Motivation and Engagement: Who Cares?

Tim Eagan

How do we design instruction to keep students’ attention and interest? It boils down to the thoughtful selection of meaningful curriculum content and effective instructional strategies. For this newsletter article, I’ll focus only on the instructional strategies, because most of them are prêt-à-porter tips that you can use right away. These tips for engagement keep the momentum high and don’t allow students down time to stop thinking.

Routines are some of the most useful strategies a teacher can have. Saphier, Haley-Speca, and Gower describe several routines in *The Skillful Teacher* (2008) along with a rationale for incorporating routines. Use routines for housekeeping, class business, work habits, and keeping instruction in the target language.

**Children want the same things we want. To laugh, to be challenged, to be entertained, and delighted.**  
*Dr. Seuss*

Housekeeping routines include things like how you take attendance or collect homework. An attendance routine that keeps you free to greet students and start out the lesson with good momentum can make a big difference. Start the class out on the right foot and you can keep the momentum going. Start out with low momentum, and you might have to fight to get the students engaged. For example, I use name tags. One student is in charge of attendance for a period of time, distributing the name tags, handing me the tags of absent students. At the end of class, I enter my attendance online. Handing back papers and collecting homework systematically both also allow you to increase instructional time. A homework tray or folders with student work are simple systems that take little effort to implement.

Managing class business with routines is an efficient way to handle these tasks. You might have a noise meter in the front of the room that you can adjust to show students that they’re getting too loud. Responding to students who ask to use the restroom can be distracting. A system of passes or a sign-out could work to keep you and other students focused on the learning. Turn taking can also be made into a routine. Popsicle sticks with student names on them can limit the need to think about who goes next.

Work habit routines like using classroom resources, completing tasks, or getting into groups can minimize the transition time, keeping the instructional flow in the zone. One or two students assigned weekly to distribute or collect materials allows the teacher to focus on other, more important tasks, like learning.

Saphier et al. argue that classroom routines have an academic purpose, increasing the effectiveness of cognitive learning, and a personal/social purpose, helping students to develop character and social skills. They suggest that routines have to be communicated to students clearly, need to be specific, modeled, and practiced until students master them. Finally, teachers must adhere to routines tenaciously and ensure that students do so as well.

Authentic texts for reading and listening comprehension should be the majority of texts that we use in class, if not the only texts. Deciphering native speakers and reading texts written for native speakers by native speakers can be challenging, especially for novice learners. Shrum & Glisan (2005) offer some support. They advise that we teach students how to skim texts for key words, dates, and main ideas before digging in to the text. For video, they recommend silent viewing (both previewing and repeated viewing). During silent viewing students can predict or retell dialogue or events. These strategies, they explain, reduce the load on working memory and provide contextual assistance, helping to raise students’ comprehension.

One of my favorite books for instructional tips is Doug Lemov’s *Teach Like a Champion* (2010). It’s a valuable resource that I keep handy on my shelf for when I need some new ideas. No Opt Out is one of Lemov’s techniques. The purpose of this technique is not to let students off the hook when called on. Lemov provides several suggestions on how a teacher can apply No Opt Out: When a student responds with “I don’t know” another student provides a cue and the first student provides the answer. Or, another student provides the answer and the first student repeats it. Lemov also advocates cold calling, and describes some important non-negotiables. Cold calling cannot be a Gotcha. You have to keep it positive, be predictable and keep it systematic. Students need to know how and why you are cold calling. You might announce a question and say, “I want to hear from several people on this one. Take a moment to think or talk, then I’ll call.” Everybody writes is another of my favorite tips from Lemov. I use the student white boards. When I ask a question, everybody writes down an answer. As an adaptation, I often use Everybody Talks, and have students answer a question to a partner first, before I hear from them. This technique takes you from one on one cognitive engagement with a question/answer sequence to 100% engagement.

Keeping students engaged can be hard work, and these tips are not magic bullets. However, if you implement just a couple of them, and own them, I can almost promise you that you’ll see a change for the better in student engagement.

**References:**


Keeping Students Engaged In The Summer Months

Jeanne O’Hearn

Spring is here! Teachers and students find themselves in the home stretch. Teachers are trying their very best to encourage our students as they continue to move along the path to proficiency right up until the last day of school. Foreign language teachers in the Masconomet Regional School District employ a variety of strategies to keep students engaged throughout the spring months. From daily motivators to summative year-end projects to ideas for engagement over the summer, here are some ideas to keep students interested.

High school French and Spanish teacher Ryan Quadros uses a variety of strategies with his students. For example, he has a reward system using stickers. Students get one sticker for answering questions or as prizes for winning competitions and games. When students accumulate 5 stickers they earn a free homework pass. According to Ryan, students don’t realize it but what they learned earning those 5 stickers is technically more valuable, time and effort rich, and more engaging than any one homework assignment. Ryan incorporates physical games involving kinesthetic activities such as competitions using balls and he also uses TPR symbols to help students learn vocabulary. He believes getting students up and moving helps tremendously. His high school students rarely refuse to participate in such activities. Spanish teacher Beatriz Sampietro Deplacido uses the website Kahoot to create fun games for her high school students. You can check it out at www.getkahoot.com. She also recommends www.todoele.net, a great website for Spanish teachers.

At the middle school level at Masconomet, teachers have incorporated a “Photo of the Day” activity. On a daily basis for the entire year students describe a different photo each day in their notebooks. New vocabulary is learned and vocabulary from earlier in the year is practiced. Students become able to write in complete sentences. Adjective agreement and other important grammar concepts are reinforced on a regular basis in context with the photo. Photos are a great way to incorpo-

rate culture and current events in any level class. To encourage student motivation in the spring months, middle school teachers change the Photo of the Day routine so that students are held more accountable for their work. Instead of students writing their descriptions in their notebook, students do a free write on a piece of paper with sections for Monday through Thursday. The paper is collected on Friday and based on what the student has written, points will be added or subtracted from the weekly vocabulary quiz on Fridays. New vocabulary that comes from discussion about a daily photo is still written in notebooks.

Also at the middle school, teachers have created several projects that require students to show the level of proficiency they have been able to achieve so far. Examples of 7th and 8th grade projects include:

• Postcard project (Spanish): Students in Jeanne O’Hearn’s 7th grade classes research authentic tourist attractions in a Spanish speaking country. An example of one very useful web site is www.guiadelocio.com. One side of a paper acts as the front of the post card where students would put a greeting and up to 4 visuals. The back side of the paper is the text of the postcard. Students are pretending that they just arrived at their destination and they are sharing information about the weather, the surroundings, the hotel, where they are going to go, which activities they are going to do, and how they feel when they are there. Students must incorporate a postage stamp from the country and they must write the recipient’s address in the proper format.

• Marketplace project (French): Mrs. Eaton’s 7th graders also research items that are sold in a French marketplace such as fruits & vegetables, cheese, meats and bakery items as well as the prices of these items in Euros. Students then create kiosks with trifold posters and must buy and sell items. Each student is given paper Euros and must keep track of what and how much they buy and sell. In a follow up activity, students write about the experience describing what they bought and sold.

• Children’s book project (Spanish): Ally VanLaethem and Amy Mihailidis have their 8th grade students read an authentic children’s book in Spanish.

If a child can’t learn the way we teach, maybe we should teach the way they learn.

Ignacio Estrada
Increased Student Engagement Through Teaching With Mobile Technology?

Chris Krueger, Ed.D.

Dr. Christopher Krueger has been a Spanish teacher at Doherty Middle School in Andover, Massachusetts since 2001, including three years when he taught at Andover High School. Chris is also a Head Age Group coach for a competitive USA Swimming team. In 2014, Chris earned his doctoral degree from UMass Lowell, with his thesis titled Exploring the relationship between the instructional use of mobile technology and social media and student foreign language learning. He shares a few of his findings in this article.

Over the last few decades, schools and classrooms have seen the introduction and evolution of impressive modern instructional technologies, and the foreign language (FL) classroom environment is prime for frequent and creative use of these technologies. Unique needs exist within the FL classroom, stemming from the communicative, cultural, social and interdisciplinary emphases of language learning (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 2006). Incorporating digital learning opportunities serves as one way to address those needs. In addition, the opportunities in a learner’s non-native language are generally more easily and fully accessible in the global community of the internet than they are in the nearby physical surroundings of most students. Online platforms for delivering lessons, practicing and communicating in the language, and evaluating learning are widely available and in use all over the world. Access to those online and digital environments is made increasingly possible through affordable mobile technologies such as laptops, tablets, and smartphones. By infusing these carried, personal devices with the capacity for learning applications, the “classroom” has been expanded to include anywhere the learner may be, and is certainly no longer limited to a school building. With regard to learning a foreign language, this anytime anywhere environment is already established and being developed, and is known as “mobile-assisted language learning” or MALL.

Foreign language teachers are known to adopt technologies early and enthusiastically, despite barriers that may exist, and students are increasingly dependent on and desiring of technology in learning (Project Tomorrow, 2012). This holds true also for the MALL environment, which is attractive and promising on multiple levels as a) it makes the process learner-centered, allowing language learners to capitalize on a need or motivation to learn something at the moment that they are motivated to do so (Petersen & Markiewicz, 2009), and b) it allows learning applications to be customized and placed in context (de Jong & Koper, 2010). But do these high-tech tools actually result in better learning and engagement?

It should. It is known from literature on second language acquisition that central tenets of language learning relate to the role of input (Krashen, 1982), output (Canale & Swain, 1980) and interaction (Ellis, 1997). In addition, it is clear both in research and to any classroom teacher, that a mediating force in the learning environment is student motivation, which can be described as a complex interplay of intrinsic factors, extrinsic factors, and elements related to the learning environment (Dörnyei, 2009; Gardner, 2006). Added to this conceptual mix of motivation and SLA theory are the more general perspectives on learning such as Bandura’s (2001) social learning theory and Bruner’s (1980) sociocultural theories of cognition and the general recognition of the need for curricular content that is relevant, accessible, and actively experienced. The conceptual framework loosely outlined right there provides a powerful lens through which to view the student foreign language experience, and supports the inclusion of mobile technology and social media in that experience. But how does all of this theory play out in practice?

An in-depth search for an answer to that question revealed that no definitive data exists, but there are some indications that suggest positive outcomes for students. Studies do indicate that students are more excited by the opportunity to learn with technology (Knutzen and Kennedy, 2012; Shao, 2009; Yamauchi, 2009). Also encouraging are the studies evaluating the integration of social media in language learning. These studies support the expectation for increased engagement with the material and increased communicative interactions (Blattner and

Keeping Students Engaged (cont.)

They have many different options for the students to choose from. Students are given a list of possible activities they can complete in Spanish for an amount of points. For example, students can draw and describe characters from the story for 15 points, they can make a list of 10 new words they learned in the story, draw them and write the definition in Spanish for 10 points, they can write a summary of the story using the preterit for 15 points, they can write and draw 4 quotes from the story for 10 points, they can write about their opinion of the story for 10 points, or they can write and draw a different ending for 5 points. Each student must earn at least 20 points in total.

Finally, Spanish AP teacher Su Bailey has a way to keep students who will be entering AP in the fall engaged with the language over the summer. Students keep a detailed log of Spanish practice they experience during the months of July and August. They log in 30 minutes to an hour of practice per week which can be accomplished by watching TV programs, movies, listening to podcasts, reading, etc.

If you’d like more information about any of these ideas, feel free to email Jeanne O’Hearn at johearn@masconom-et.org.

Submitted by Jeanne O’Hearn
Increased Student Engagement

Lomicka, 2012; Lloyd, 2012; Shih, 2011). While the existing literature is encouraging and does suggest an advantage to learning with mobile technology and social media, most research in this field has been conducted with adult learners, often in a university environment, and frequently with limited sample sizes. So as part of a doctoral study aimed at identifying the impact of MALL in environments on the K-12 foreign language learning environment, this author designed and administered a survey to K-12 teachers in the US to measure their use and perceived benefits of learning with mobile technology and social media in their classrooms.

Quantitative and qualitative analyses of survey responses make it abundantly clear that teachers value learning with mobile devices for the increased student motivation and engagement with the learning, the authentic learning scenarios afforded, and to a lesser extent, for the improved quality of student work as well as the interactions between students in Spanish. This is a strong finding that further supports the theory suggesting that increased student motivation and authentic learning scenarios should promote better engagement with the learning. The increased engagement translates to increased interactions both with other students and with the content, which leads to better overall learning of Spanish. The teachers’ perception that students are more motivated when using MALL is supported by students’ voices as well (Project Tomorrow, 2012). In a study concerning the specific motivators for learning with mobile technology, Martin, McGill, and Sudweeks (2013) identify the following motivators: mobility, ubiquity, access to information, access to learning resources, communication with friends, practical tasks, and interesting and relevant content. In Dörnyei (2009) these factors would be considered part of the experiential component to learning. The experience of learning, then, appears to be what excites students when considering learning with mobile technology, and their excitement is accurately reflected by teacher perceptions according to the survey.

Interestingly, even while data from most teachers in this study support a high level of perceived benefits of MALL, their instructional use of mobile devices and social media is not universally high. There are numerous reasons why this may be the case. First, considering that MALL is still a young phenomenon, teachers may simply still be in the early stages of exploring and implementing it. This initial stage of adoption would then be reflected by relatively infrequent use of the technology. The excitement for it may exceed the practice of using it because it is just too new to be an integral part of the instructional environment. Support for this early-phase explanation can be found in Drayton, Falk, Stroud, Hobbs, and Hammerman, (2010) who indicate that the initial phase of technology adoption, including the first one to three years, is unlikely to show any real impact, and from the Texas Center for Education Research (2008) who describes the initial focus of implementation as centered on proficiency with the tools rather than on integration of technology into lessons. Given these explanations, teachers can begin to adopt new technologies and be confident despite a potential lack of immediate results. As with any learning, perseverance and refinement are keys to creating an impact.

A second possible explanation of the difference between perceived benefits and practice can be attributed to the substantial changes required to fully implement a hi-tech environment. For example, fundamental foreign language teaching behaviors like monitoring and giving feedback on participation is very different in the social media environment than it is in a more traditional classroom setting. Nonetheless, it can be argued that the social media environment in fact offers advantages: Hyland and Hyland (2006) discuss the benefit of real-world negotiation of meaning as a form of feedback not accessible in the standard teacher-student dynamic; they go on to highlight the potential for computer-mediated feedback that incorporates authentic language examples beyond the teacher-student realm. This presents exciting opportunities in teaching and learning, but it also represents a very real departure from the comfortable, practiced, traditional teaching and learning environment. As teachers ask of their students, they must also ask of themselves: explore opportunities outside of one’s comfort zone - it’s the surest way to elicit growth.

A third possible explanation for the disparity between perception and practice among teachers with regard to MALL is the lack of awareness of how to use it. An overview of MALL literature, shows that its definition is nebulous, lacking any established structure to be followed as teachers explore or adopt the ideas. Teachers appear to be comfortable with the everyday technologies of word processing, emailing, creating presentations, and searching for information online (Varol, 2013; Gray et al, 2010), but their knowledge of specialized applications is weak (Varol, 2013). At this point in their development, MALL and the multitude of social media platforms available for foreign language instructional use, would fairly be characterized as specialized. It is evident in the open-response items from the survey in this author’s research that individual teachers and schools or districts are buying in to certain platforms that support MALL, and that those who are high-frequency users are developing a routine and practice that integrates MALL in the instructional environment. Since there is not yet a standard to be modeled after, teachers are encouraged to share their successful practices with mobile tools in student learning, which may inspire others to follow suit, and in time a more established methodology will evolve.
Increased Student Engagement

Finally, additional obstacles identified by teacher respondents in this study likely have an impact on teachers’ decisions around integrating MALL. For example, the time lost in a standard class period of 45-50 minutes due to equipment setup or malfunction, especially when experienced frequently as would be the case for enthusiastic adopters of MALL, can be quite discouraging. The concern for negative impacts like theft, cheating, and lack of student focus are also quite real. These obstacles to incorporating a MALL environment may discourage or even limit teacher adoption of the technology, even when it is perceived to be beneficial. In fact, Yaratan and Kural (2010) found that favorable attitudes toward implementation could be outweighed by the obstacles of implementing technology in the foreign language classrooms.

While the barriers and concerns may be real and numerous, preliminary investigations indicate that a technology-infused learning environment, especially one that capitalizes on the advantages of mobile tools and social media, is likely worth it. Teachers and school leaders are encouraged to identify, study, and reduce the barriers relevant to their environment, thus paving the way for the inclusion of what is known to be more appealing to students and believed to be more effective by teachers. The payoff of increased engagement with the target language and authentic interactions using it may well be worth it. The only way to see the true impact is to immerse ourselves in it.

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Using Project-Based Learning To Teach World Languages

by Don Doehla

Editor’s Note: Today’s guest blogger is Don Doehla, French teacher and instructional coach at Vintage High School in Napa, California. Don recently stepped up to become the new facilitator of our World Languages group. He’s got some great ideas for teaching world languages, including the use of project-based learning. He shares a few of these tips today. We hope you’ll join him in the World Languages group as well.

The world may be small and flat, but it is also multilingual, multicultural, and more and more, it is an interconnected world. Consequently, cross cultural communicative competencies are increasingly important for mutual understanding and cooperation - how is that for some alliteration?! Our students’ need to be able to communicate with their neighbors, here and abroad, is increasing with every moment which passes! The borders separating our countries are diminishing in importance as the global culture emerges. The definition of who my neighbor is has changed as well. No longer are we isolated from what is happening across the globe. Recent events demonstrate this quite well! Examples abound for everyone on the planet. We must be able to communicate well and proficiently across the kilometers which separate us.

The Challenges

Like other World Language teachers, I am constantly trying to focus on the essentials in order to create a standards-driven, communication-based curriculum for my students. I am also keen on addressing the necessary skills students must acquire for the 21st century as outlined in the wonderful document from the Carnegie Institution available at www.p21.org. How can I know whether I have achieved my desired objective? I need authentic assessments to evaluate target language proficiencies, while offering opportunities for greater engagement, for working in collaborative teams, for developing critical thinking skills, for managing precious time and resources, for emphasizing global themes, and for preparing students toward the new AP exam in French starting next year! On top of that, I want them to learn how to use proficiently the wonderful technology tools now available. Sound familiar? We work hard as teachers! Darn hard! Oui, monsieur, dur, dur!

The Rationale for PBL

And so I come to project-based learning (PBL) as a way of bringing it all together. Projects provide opportunities for students to engage in real life communication, in context, with real people, and across the globe. I try to align my projects according to the California WL Standards, and the fluency stages of the Language Learning Continuum found in chapter 2 of the California World Languages Framework. I also keep the 21st Century skills in mind, along with the more familiar five C’s from ACTFL, and the many things I have learned about literacy, and cross-cultural issues. I have found that the projects address all these things and more. I have tried to make sure that they also offer students the opportunity to be creative and to explore their potentials and aspirations. It is a lot of fun to see this in action. How about some examples?

Stage 1 Fluency Example: The Menu Project

In this project, students play the role of a restaurant owner who needs to develop and create a menu for his/her restaurant established in one of the target language countries of the world. Their menus must have at least five categories, and twenty-five items, all authentic dishes of the target culture of their choice within the Francophone world. They must decide on an appropriate name, create an address, phone number, website and twitter account name, consistent with examples they find online from authentic restaurants of the target culture. Their menu items must be priced in the local currency, converted in an appropriate manner for the target culture. The students then do a speech either in small groups or for the whole class in which they speak to the group as the restaurant owner, suggesting good dishes, specialty items, etc. They must say at least 15 sentences, and can either present live or on video. I have a rubric for the menu and one for the speech, and am looking for Stage 1 fluency, namely, formulaic language (memorized chunks of discourse combined with lists of works). I find that the kids learn a lot about a country of their choice, while having fun being creative!

Stage 2 Fluency Example: The Children’s Story Book

We refer to stage two fluency as created language. The premise here is that students take the formulae that they have learned so well in stage one, and combine them together into their own created sentences. These statements no longer sound like memorized sound bites given back in the same formula, but rather in individualized, self directed expressions of thoughts and ideas. The sentences are frequently complex, but do not contain subordinate clauses of the kind requiring specialized verb forms. They also do not necessarily have to be strung together in a particular

Learning is not the product of teaching. Learning is the product of the activity of learners.

John Holt
Using Project-Based Learning

order to make sense - if we were to reorder them, they would make just as much sense in the new order. In other words, these are lists of sentences, but the order of the lists are not significant.

I have developed a project to measure this stage of fluency which I call the Story Book project. Students create a set of characters who live in one of the target language countries. They write the story as if the main character were describing his life when he was five years old (which requires the imperfect tense in French). The students then describe a big event which occurred in the life of the character, such as his first day of school, and then the things which happened in that day (requiring the use of the passé composé in French). They need to research what a child's life is like in the target culture and create an authentic and visually rich situation for the story's setting. I usually ask students to write about 5 sentences per page, and about ten pages total. They do rough drafts and peer editing. I also look at the drafts and highlight what is correct, and make some suggestions for corrections. The editing process is a learning experience of its own.

As students write their stories, they cannot help but compare their own lives with those of the characters they have created. The compare and contrast paradigm creates a good context for created language. It also allows students to try out their knowledge of how to narrate in past time frames, and demonstrate that they know how to use the various past tenses typical of the second year language curriculum. We often find that students reach what we call "linguistic breakdown" as they use various verb forms, but they do not necessarily do so at the syntactic level. They are able to make the sentence structures fit together well, even when their verb forms are not always correct. Frankly, I think this is great! When my focus is on the fluency stage, and not on distinct verb forms, I find that my students are actually progressing very well in their journey toward language acquisition. In time, they will perfect their use of verb forms, but in the meantime, they are clearly able to communicate at a higher level of fluency even if their accuracy is not yet up to par. We do want accuracy, of course, but in terms of fluency, this is a lesser problem for communication than is the sentence structure.

Stage 3 Fluency Example: The ABC Book Project

In stage three fluency, the text type I am aiming for is planned language, ie, paragraphing, in which there is a topic sentence, supported by concrete details and commentary, and a concluding sentence to sum up the important ideas. In French, this requires that students know how to create complex sentences, using main and subordinate clauses, requiring the subjunctive, or "if/then" type sentences, requiring imperfect/conditional tenses, among others (other languages may require knowledge of other paradigms as well). I have done this project over the course of a whole semester, breaking it down in smaller parts over time, and with the focus being Québec. We study many different aspects of Québécois culture: short stories, poems, song lyrics, historical texts, current events... The students do smaller projects along the way, but as a result of their inquiry, they write a page on each topic of their choice. I have them write 20 pages, one for each of 20 letters of the alphabet, according to their choice. An example page might look like this in English:

Q is for Québec City (title sentence). Québec is the capital city of the province of Québec, and sits on a bluff overlooking the Saint Lawrence River (topic sentence). It seems to me that the people of Québec have much for which they may be proud (detail). It is necessary that they invest wisely in the maintenance of their historical monuments, because it preserves the diversity of their historical heritage (commentary). If I were to visit Québec, I would want to look out over the Saint Lawrence from the Terrasse Dufferin so I could enjoy the beautiful view of the river and of the Île d'Orléans (commentary). If I went to Québec in winter, I would go during the Carnaval so I could participate in the many activities (commentary). It is interesting that the local accent is different in Québec than in France. (commentary). If I go to Québec, I will practice speaking French with the local people and hope that I will be able to understand their accent without any problems (conclusion)."

This is a fair amount of work for one page, let alone twenty, so I provide a page template for students to use to be sure they keep on track. I have them do rough drafts of each page. When they turn in the drafts, I highlight what is correct and return the pages. The students may resubmit the pages with corrections until they have perfected their work. In this way, I am reinforcing their own editing process, and helping them to focus on the details they might otherwise overlook. This project has proven to be great fun, and I have found that by the end of the semester, they have mastered complex sentences and paragraphing quite well.

Future Plans

Next year, I plan to augment my project-based approach by connecting my classes with classes in 3 Francophone countries - France, Canada, and Sénégal. I want the students to collaborate with their peers across the world in writing digital stories which they will post on the web for their friends to read, and so they can offer comments and engage in conversations about the stories. I plan to have the students explore many story genres, including comic strips, manga, short stories and poems, and other kinds of writing as their interests are piqued. The many web 2.0 applications which are now available will be a big help in giving students the tools they need to write and create their stories. I expect the project to provide greater opportunities for engagement, creativity, problem solving, and collaboration, i.e., they will learn to communicate in French while learning 21st century skills!

Let's have some fun, too! Join the conversation. Post an idea on the Edutopia WL group. Need an idea? Got a question? Found a cool website, app or tool? Let's collaborate as well! Shall we get started? Thanks in advance for sharing your ideas. Together is better!

DON DOEHLA, MA, NBCT'S PROFILE
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Call</th>
<th>Team-up</th>
<th>Small</th>
<th>Heads-up</th>
<th>Express</th>
<th>Mix</th>
<th>Find</th>
<th>COMFORT</th>
<th>Zip-It</th>
<th>Silence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Call on specific students by name.</td>
<td>Do team work and let students answer together.</td>
<td>Let students learn in small groups.</td>
<td>Let the students know the question up front.</td>
<td>Let the students express themselves in their own way.</td>
<td>Mix up students you call on.</td>
<td>Find out what excites the student and focus there.</td>
<td>Take students aside and let them know you care and it's safe to share.</td>
<td>Teachers, be still and let the students speak.</td>
<td>Silence hackers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<tr>
<th>Give</th>
<th>Develop</th>
<th>Control</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Give students a reason to have a voice.</td>
<td>Develop students self-worth.</td>
<td>Place students in control of the discussion/activity.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Move</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Small</th>
<th>Get to know</th>
<th>Reward</th>
<th>Take Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rearrange students' seats.</td>
<td>Strategically place students in friendly zones.</td>
<td>Start small and work students into more in depth participation.</td>
<td>Get to know the students.</td>
<td>Reward student participation—intrinsically and extrinsically.</td>
<td>Take note who is participating when.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Assist</th>
<th>Music</th>
<th>Move</th>
<th>Create</th>
<th>Ask</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Help the student participate.</td>
<td>Play music in the background.</td>
<td>Get up and do work while moving.</td>
<td>Let students create something with their hands as you teach.</td>
<td>What motivates them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sometimes students don't have a voice to participate. Give students a voice.

By: Mia MacMeekin
Exchange trips are an integral part of many foreign language programs because they immerse the students in the foreign language cultural and linguistic reality. These programs are often a two-week trip during a school vacation or a month-long one during the summer. The better ones include a home stay component with a welcoming family. To guarantee that most students have a positive experience, it is essential that the students be aware of and prepared for the inevitable culture shock phenomenon. This article will define culture shock, list its stages and symptoms, and recommend strategies for coping.

Definition

According to the Merriam Webster Dictionary, culture shock is “a sense of confusion and uncertainty sometimes with feelings of anxiety that may affect people exposed to an alien culture or environment without adequate preparation.” Wikipedia states that it is “the personal disorientation a person may feel when experiencing an unfamiliar way of life due to immigration or a visit to a new country, a move between social environments, or simply travel to another type of life.” (1) The International Programs Center at the University of North Carolina Greensboro explains it as “the way you react and feel when the cultural cues you know so well from home are lacking.” (2)

Stages of Culture Shock

Diane Schmidt (3) lists the following as the five stages of culture shock as experienced by the fictional characters Michael and Norma.

The Honeymoon Stage: Michael and Norma are overwhelmed by awe and euphoria to have finally arrived in France after 3 years of studying French at their local high school. To them everything is wonderful: the food, the landscape, the historical sites and everything. The people they met are all nice, especially the family they are staying with. They especially delight in the cultural differences they observe and take great pride in hearing “but you speak French very well.”

The Distress Stage: The euphoria in being in a foreign country is gradually replaced by feelings of anxiety and hostility because Michael and Norma soon realize that foreign means different than one is comfortable with. Suddenly, gestures, facial expressions, customs and traditions, social intercourse, the correct and the incorrect way of doing and saying things, in short, the elementary routines of daily life are no longer naturally familiar. Life becomes a little uncomfortable especially since it has become painfully obvious that the French that they speak is woefully inadequate to express their thoughts and feelings. Some call this the culture shock stage.

The Re-integration Stage: The anxiety caused by the feeling of inadequacy in coping with the cultural differences and the language shock leads to an ethnocentric reaction wherein the attitude that “our way is definitely better than theirs” arises. What at first was looked upon very favorably is now regarded as inferior to what one finds “back home.” Michael and Norma need to feel the company of those from back home and look forward to seeing and spending time with the classmates that came with them on the trip. They find themselves criticizing the country, the people, the customs, and maybe even the family they are staying with. Everything seems weird and strange and they look forward to going home.

The Autonomy Stage: In this stage, Michael and Norma’s anxiety and inadequacy are gradually replaced by their acceptance of the differences of the foreign culture. As their language skills improve, they can better appreciate the cultural differences as valid and not as a repudiation of their own values. Because they can engage more...
Culture Shock:

Culture shock manifests itself differently according to the person affected by it. The most common symptoms are:

1. Tiredness: After a while Michael and Norma are tired of the constant activities that face them every day. There are educational activities planned by their teacher chaperones during the school day to be followed by the activities planned by the host family. They are also psychologically tired of hearing and speaking French all day and Norma has headaches because of it.

2. The need for privacy: Michael would like to retire to his room to write home or to read quietly, to take a nap or to listen to his I-pod not because he doesn't like his host family but because he yearns for some quiet time to think, to reflect, to rest. His host family, on the other hand, thinks that he wants to avoid them and they complain to his teacher chaperone.

3. Irritability: Norma is beginning to find that her French sister tries too hard to be nice and she finds that irritating. She sticks to her like glue, forever telling her what to do and where to go. Norma wants to practice her French but her French sister insists on speaking to her in English. At first she enjoyed being the center of attention to her French sister's friends, but now she wishes sometime that they would leave her alone.

4. Hostility: Both Michael and Norma are beginning to feel hostile toward their French families and toward their teacher chaperones because no one seems to pay attention to their needs. Everyone expects them to conform, to make a greater effort to fit in, to understand the other person's point of view, to be appreciative of the kindness and the generosity of the host family. At some point they both wish they were home.

5. Homesickness: Michael has never been away from home for more than a weekend to go to scout camp. Although this trip to France is like a dream come true, not everything is perfect. He craves his mother's cooking, he misses his friends, his free time to do what he wants, his bed, and all the familiar surroundings. In France, everything is so uncomfortably different that he feels totally inadequate all the time. He can't wait to be home.

6. Depression: One of their friends, Sheila, was put into a family that was a poor fit for her. She and her French sister did not get along and her French parents never involved her in family activities. Her dream turned into a nightmare and she cried to be placed out. Every day was a chore and she was feeling so depressed that it affected the whole program.

7. Feeling lost and confused: A stranger in a foreign land, the usually self-confident Michael sometimes finds himself doubting his ability to survive because so much is different and confusing to him. He no longer feels safe and secure and at times feels helpless. Did he behave appropriately when meeting his French brother's grand-parents, should he have accepted the extra portion of food offered to him, was he polite enough to the lady at the local bakery?

Coping Strategies

It is quite normal for everyone to undergo some degree of culture shock when traveling or staying abroad for a period of time. According to the University of North Carolina at Greensboro's International Programs Center, "Culture shock doesn't come from a specific event. It is caused by encountering different ways of doing things, being cut off from cultural cues, having your own cultural values brought into question, feeling that rules are not adequately explained, and being expected to function with maximum skill without adequate knowledge of the rules." (2) According to Oberg, who first coined the term, "Culture shock is precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing all familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse. These signs are the thousand and one ways in which we orient ourselves to the situations of daily life: when to shake hands and what to say when we meet people, when and how to give tips, how to make purchases, when to accept and when to refuse invitations, when to take statements seriously and when not." (4)

The following will help to alleviate culture shock:

1. Learn whatever you can about the foreign culture prior to going to the country.
2. Prepare yourself for different ways and values.
3. Be open-minded and do not judge all people by the actions of the few.
4. Do not expect to find what you have at home.
5. Remember that different does not mean inferior.
6. Consider your stay as a learning activity.
7. Concentrate on improving your L2 skills.
8. Accept corrections as being helpful, not critical.
9. Set some reasonable goals to be attained in the foreign country.
10. Try to maintain a positive attitude.

According to Oberg, “Once you realize that your trouble is due to your own lack of understanding of other people's cultural background and your own lack of the means of communication rather than the
hostility of an alien environment, you also realize that you can gain this understanding and these means of communication. And the sooner you do this, the sooner culture shock will disappear.” (4)

If you remember the adage “When in Rome, do as the Romans.” your stay can be personally exhilarating, culturally rewarding, and intellectually stimulating. However, if you set your own culture as the standard by which to behave, your stay will probably be quite unpleasant. According to the UCI Study Abroad Center, the most obvious responsibility the visitor has “is to adapt one’s behavior to the customs and expectations of the host country. This is not to deny one’s own culture but to respect that of others…. to remain open in order to become aware of similarities and differences, to learn rather than to judge.” (5)

Conclusion

In order to facilitate having a positive experience when planning a student exchange trip abroad, teachers need to prepare their students for culture shock which could turn the trip into a negative experience. Students need to be aware of the differences in culture, values, traditions, social interaction, and language that they will encounter when placed with a host family. Time should be spent discussing culture shock, its stages and symptoms, and most importantly strategies for coping 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 was recently associated with the National Capital Language Resource Center as the author of the Sound Bites for Better Teaching column.

MaFLA Summer PD

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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.

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If your dues are paid through November 30, 2016 you can register for the ACTFL Convention at the member price without having to join ACTFL. If your membership will expire before November 30, you can extend your membership at any time. Whatever term you choose will be added to your current membership. See you in Boston!

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Ronie R. Webster ronie@mafla.org
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