Making The Shift: Proficiency, Technology, & Active Engagement

A Message From Our Incoming President

World Language teachers across the state and nationwide are increasingly moving towards a classroom where proficiency development and communication are central. Leaving behind traditional grammar-translation and other outdated methods, teachers must now teach 90% or more of classroom time in the target language, look to National Standards that put the three modes of communication (interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational) as their focus, and track student achievement by proficiency level (novice, intermediate, and advanced). While the research supporting this shift in instructional methodologies has existed for a few decades, it has taken our profession some time to begin adjusting the realities of our classrooms. With a new teacher evaluation system that requires us to present evidence and data demonstrating student growth, and new guidelines from our national organization in the form of Standards and Can-Do Statements, it’s finally time for all of us to take the plunge! Not only must teachers shift their methods, but as a state organization, MaFLA must also make some changes. So, get ready, because we’re all in this together!

The first, and in many ways, most exciting shift you will see MaFLA make in 2015 is our new summer professional development initiative, the MaFLA Proficiency Academy. We are bringing in a national expert in foreign language teaching and learning, Greg Duncan, to lead the Academy. Teachers and administrators of all levels and languages will benefit from this 4-day training, and will leave with the following outcomes:

• Understand how to design performance assessments that demonstrate achievement of proficiency targets, as well as how to develop Integrated Performance Assessments (IPAs) and rubrics.
• Learn how to develop curriculum with embedded performance assessments, proficiency targets, and can-do statements, and begin drafting curriculum for one of your classes.
• Design lessons drawing on instructional strategies that place proficiency and communication development at their core, following guidelines from the Teacher Effectiveness for Language Learning (TELL) Project.
• Understand connections between best practices in foreign language education and Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education initiatives, in particular:
  - DDMs - District Determined Measures
  - CEPAs - Curriculum Embedded Performance Assessments
  - MCUs - Model Curriculum Units
  - Teacher Evaluation Rubrics and their alignments with TELL Project guidelines

Representatives from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will be in attendance at the MaFLA Proficiency Academy to provide the DESE perspective on these initiatives and their connection to foreign languages. To learn more about the MaFLA Proficiency Academy and to register, please click here. I’m also so excited that the 2015 Fall Conference takes up the proficiency movement with the theme: Climbing the Proficiency Ladder: Many Languages, One Goal! Mark your calendars to join us in Sturbridge from October 29-31, 2015.

While MaFLA has already made some important changes to better utilize technology to reach our members and present professional development, some additional technology shifts are on the horizon. These shifts also help give our members a chance to participate more actively with MaFLA, our presenters, and each other.

• First, all of our professional development events will use a new, interactive platform, including presenter information, session descriptions, links to handouts, and digital evaluations. We launched this new platform at the 2014 Fall Conference with huge success, and are excited to roll it out at Diversity Day, the MaFLA Proficiency Academy, and Summer Institute.
• Next, we're looking at ways to make our newsletter more accessible to our members, as well as more immediate and...
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       Tel: 413-596-9284
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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

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Please notify Madelyn Gonnerman Torchin, PO BOX 590193, Newton Centre, MA 02459, Ph. 617.964.6141, (membership@mafla.org), to update your membership information.

OR
You can do it yourself. Just go to mafla.org and click Membership/Update Profile and log in to update your profile. Please help us keep our files updated so you can receive ALL information regarding MaFLA.

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.

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interactive. While we haven't settled yet on a specific platform, we hope to launch a new online newsletter in 2015 that will give our members up-to-date, interactive information about foreign language teaching and learning.

• Beginning in January, I'm assigning a new Social Media Committee to our Board that will look at better ways to connect with members, share exciting teaching tips, and facilitate member interaction, such as Pinterest, Facebook Groups, and Instagram.

• Finally, plans are underway to provide webinars or GoogleHangouts to support members with questions about the conference, follow-up on important professional development topics, and provide meaningful professional development to those members who can't attend our events in person.

It is an exciting time to be a part of the Massachusetts Foreign Language Association, and I look forward to connecting with each of you this year as we all shift and shimmy towards higher quality teaching, learning, and professional development.

Here's to a wonderful 2015!

Catherine Ritz, MaFLA President

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## Meet The New MaFLA Board Members

### Jorge Allen

Jorge was born in Panama City, Panama. Jorge is the Andover Public Schools 6-12 World Language Program Coordinator. He completed his undergraduate studies in Monterrey, Mexico where he earned a B.A. in Pedagogy. He later came to the United States as part of a teacher exchange program. Jorge holds an MA and PhD from Purdue University. He is an ACT-FL/NCATE program reviewer, and also a member of the Board of Directors for One-World Classroom, an Andover nonprofit that facilitates global art exchanges.

### Dominique Trotin

Dominique is a French native who grew up near the Loire Valley, famous for its Renaissance castles and wines. He has lived here in New England for 25 years and has grown quite fond of the region's rich history. He graduated from Boston University as a French Literature major and earned his Masters of Education at Boston College as part of their Donovan Teaching Scholar program. He spent most of his professional life interacting with teenagers as a teacher, a coach, a mentor, and a director for a specialized foster care home. Before entering the realm of public education as a French teacher, his first passion was ice hockey- both on the ice as a player, and off the ice as a coach. Over the years, he has also coached varsity soccer and led several student travel experiences abroad. Second language acquisition and the effective integration of technology into instructional practices has become his area of expertise. He currently serves as the World Language Department Chair at Westborough High School and is delighted to join the board of the Massachusetts Foreign Language Association. He has three sons with his wife of 25 years and enjoys spending as much time as possible at their home in the mountains of central Vermont.

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### Screen shot of the MaFLA Event App

interactive. While we haven't settled yet on a specific platform, we hope to launch a new online newsletter in 2015 that will give our members up-to-date, interactive information about foreign language teaching and learning.

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>9:00am</td>
<td>Curriculum Design for World Languages ($)</td>
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<td>Keys to Speeding Up Proficiency Development from Novice to Advanced ($)</td>
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<td>Allons au Cinéma: films, metteurs en scène et vedettes ($)</td>
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<td>Thinking About Syncing? Digital Storytelling Tools for World Language ($)</td>
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<td>3:00pm</td>
<td>Exhibit Hall Preview: Wine &amp; Cheese Reception</td>
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<td>Engage and Communicate ($)</td>
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Support the Goal of Increasing World Language Proficiency.
Submit a Proposal in 2015!

Happy New Year! 2015 is already shaping up to be an excellent year for MaFLA and for the World Language teaching profession as a whole. Planning for the 2015 Conference has been underway for the past few months and there are many exciting workshop presenters already lined up for October. Please consider taking the time to submit a session proposal for the 2015 conference in Sturbridge. MaFLA needs active member participation to offer the highest quality professional development possible. There are many ways to get involved and assist in making this conference the best one yet.

Here are some ways that you can contribute:

- Submit a proposal to present at the conference in October on the conference page of the MaFLA Website. Share all of your great ideas with colleagues across the state. You can present as an individual or as a group. The deadline to submit a proposal is April 15. We are especially looking for sessions to be presented in the target language. Be sure to try to incorporate the conference theme into your session topic.

- Encourage your colleagues or foreign language teaching friends to present. Many of you work with or know other teachers who have phenomenal ideas. Spread the word and ask them to present at this year’s conference.

- Be sure to check the MaFLA website often for conference updates and share this information with your department. Print the information and post it in any common areas. Alternatively, you can forward the link to the website to your colleagues.

- Get your students involved by having them participate in the various contests offered by MaFLA. We offer poster, essay and video contests – check out the MaFLA Website for more information about them. In addition to the prizes offered by the organization, this is a great way to get students involved and excited about language learning, as well as to advocate for your program in your district.

I am excited to say that the first proposals for this year’s conference began trickling in as early as December 2014!!! It’s great to see so much excitement this early on in the process. I have also been in contact with many professionals across the country in order to recruit the best presenters in the field for the conference workshop offerings.

I am so happy to announce that this year’s Keynote Speaker will be Greg Duncan, founder of InterPrep and a leader in World Language professional development. He is an engaging and inspiring presenter who has something for everyone in his transformative addresses. MaFLA has been working with him on the Proficiency Academy that is being organized for the summer. In addition to giving this year’s Keynote Presentation, he will also present a workshop on Proficiency in World Language.

Here are a few of the other presenters that you will see in the fall:

- Jennifer Eddy, an expert on World Language professional development and curriculum design will present on Using IPAs for Curriculum Planning. She received rave reviews when she presented at the MaFLA 2008 and 2009 Annual Conference. Her workshops will dramatically affect your planning and programming.

- Kara Jacobs, Spanish teacher and board member on the New Hampshire Association of World Language Teachers will conduct a presentation on using Thematic Units in Spanish and in all languages. Her engaging presentations include the use of technology and authentic resources will inspire you and motivate your students.

- Amanda Robustelli-Price, winner of the 2013 Best of MaFLA session, former French teacher and independent education consultant, Amanda is passionate about the use of technology in the classroom and will conduct a presentation on the use of technology in the language classroom for all languages.
- **Charlotte Gifford**, Chair of World Languages at Greenfield Community College, Charlotte is a seasoned presenter at MaFLA and MaFLA’s 2013 Distinguished Service Awardee, and will be presenting a workshop on literacy in the world language classroom. Charlotte is an engaging and thorough presenter with a history of strong presentations.

- **Catherine Ousselin**, French Teacher and Technology Consultant, Catherine will be presenting multiple workshops in the target language revolving around technology in French. Catherine presented last year to rave reviews.

This is just a small sample of the interesting workshop selections that you will have to choose from at the conference. I look forward to the upcoming months of planning and working with YOU to create a spectacular fall conference. I would also love to hear any suggestions or questions that you may have. You can send me an email at conference@mafla.org. Please check the website for further information. See you in the fall!

Sincerely,

Jessica Clifford, 2015 Conference Chair

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**MaFLA Continues Work On A Seal Of Biliteracy For MA**

We are working to re-introduce legislation for a Seal of Biliteracy that would document foreign language proficiency of high school graduates in the state and certify attainment of a functional level of proficiency of both the foreign language and English on the high school diploma. We want MA to become the next state to raise the importance of multilingualism for college and career readiness. A Seal of Biliteracy will strengthen foreign language programming in the state by putting the emphasis on what our graduates are able to do with the language, and rewarding them for high performance.

Please answer our call when we reach out to you to contact your legislators! It is quick and easy: provide a link to a pre-written email to legislators; you provide your zip code and click ‘send,’ and your message goes to your representatives.

Please let me know if you have any questions!

Nicole Sherf, Advocacy Coordinator, advocacy@mafla.org

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**District-Determined Measures (DDMs)**

**Editor’s Note,**

Kudos to our guest editor, Jeanne O’Hearn, who has put together the following special focus section on DDMs. She began working on this project this past summer and, with her special edition team, has assembled a great collection of key articles on the topic. I hope you will enjoy this focus section. Thanks so much Jeanne for your dedication and vision.

Ronie
Special Section: District-Determined Measures

Assessing Student Growth

In 2010 MaFLA published a special issue devoted to the topic of assessment. That comprehensive issue offered extensive discussion of important topics such as backwards design, integrated performance assessment, data analysis, achievement vs. proficiency, essential outcomes and effective rubrics. Those articles are just as useful today as they were in 2010 and the issue can still be accessed by simply going to the website and selecting Member Services, Newsletters, Archived Newsletters and Assessment in 2010.

Now we find ourselves in 2014 required to develop and use District-Determined Measures (DDMs) with our students. According to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, DDMs:

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

Tracking the growth of student proficiency is of particular interest and concern to world language teachers. Therefore, we are pleased to offer this special section of the Newsletter with a focus on DDMs for use with foreign language learning. It is easy to become discouraged by the many responsibilities that educators must handle. DDMs can be particularly worrisome given that teachers’ ratings as educators are influenced by student growth data from DDMs. Rather than look at the requirement to use DDMs as a hassle or just one more administrative task, we can choose to look at this as an opportunity to create positive changes in our practice. Teachers never seem to have enough time to collaborate with colleagues. DDM creation, the analysis of the data they provide, and reflection on outcomes all create perfect opportunities for cooperation. Indeed, common assessments can’t happen in a vacuum. Effective DDMs require that teachers work together. They provide a way to start the conversation about student growth by focusing on how we assess student learning.

It remains to be seen if DDM use actually improves educator practice and student growth. As with any major initiative, time will tell whether or not DDMs are beneficial or just one more top-down mandate. In my district, students start their foreign language study in the 7th grade. I am excited about the possibility to eventually have benchmark data on each student from the 7th grade until they graduate. I envision the use of digital portfolios that contain examples of student work and common assessment outcomes that follow students throughout their middle school and high school years. Each year teachers, parents and most importantly, the students themselves will be able to see their growth. This big picture view offers some motivation but we all must still get through the daily challenges that the classroom presents.

In this special section we are thrilled to offer eight thought-provoking articles that should get our conversations started. These articles offer a wide range of ideas to consider, from local, regional and nationally-recognized leaders in the field. First Tim Eagan, Department Chair in Wellesley, writes about the importance of collaboration and cooperation among colleagues. He discusses aligning instruction through DDMs and arriving at common vocabulary and definitions to be used when discussing student work.

Next Maryann Brady, Foreign Language Curriculum Content Specialist for the Tyngsboro Public Schools and MaFLA Board Member, also writes about the opportunities for collaboration that DDMs create. She discusses the importance of working with a supportive administration.

Tiesa Graf, Department Chair in South Hadley and MaFLA Past President, writes about the importance of reliability when developing common assessments. She offers helpful advice on how to develop effective DDMs and includes a template her district uses that was adapted from one created by Tim Eagan in Wellesley. Also included is a protocol for examining student work, instructions on how to calibrate rubrics, and links to several helpful resources.

In her first article Nicole Sherf, Professor at Salem State University, MaFLA Past President and Advocacy Chair, writes about using the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines for departmental goal setting and DDM development. She connects this with MaFLAs work toward passing legislation for the Seal of Biliteracy. She includes links to ACTFL resources and shares information on this summer’s Proficiency Academy. Nicole’s second article includes comments regarding assessment from graduate and undergraduate students in a Methods course at Salem State University.

For a regional perspective, Rita Oleksak, Director of Foreign Languages and ELL in Glastonbury, Connecticut gives us an account of her department’s long history with departmental benchmark assessments used in grades 1-12. She highlights external assessments used by her department with students of Chinese, French, Russian, Spanish and Latin. Rita includes testimonies from her department colleagues detailing their feedback about the use of these tools.

On the national level, Chantal Thompson, Professor at Brigham Young University, shares her expertise on assessment. In her article she discusses the shift in focus from what students know about a language to what they can do with the language by highlighting effective formative assessments.

Lastly, we have a discussion between Madelyn Gonnerman Torchin, Program Supervisor at Tufts University and MaFLA Past President and Membership Coordinator, and national leader, Cheri Quinlan. During the interview Cheri, the New Jersey Coordinator of World Languages, International Education, and Gifted & Talented, Emerita, shares her views and strategies for making DDMs work in Massachusetts. We hope you enjoy this special section of the MaFLA Newsletter! You can keep the conversation going by sharing your thoughts and ideas about DDMs with us. We hope to produce a follow-up section once we’ve all had a chance to experience and reflect on the use of DDMs in our classes.

Submitted by Jeanne O’Hearn, Spanish and ELL teacher at Masconomet Regional Middle School and MaFLA Board Member. Please send comments or questions to johearn@masconomet.org.
DDMs and the Power of Common Assessment
by Tim Eagan
Wellesley Public Schools

Reviving the common assessment project we had begun in 2010 was my first thought when the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) announced the requirement that teachers develop and administer district-determined measures of student learning (DDMs). I knew that in order to sell this new requirement to the teachers in my department that I would need to make the work meaningful. I would need to incorporate it into the work we currently do, rather than create another add-on for teachers who are already working as hard as they can. Knowing my department, what they value most about working in the Department of Classical & Modern Languages in Wellesley is the spirit of collaboration and cooperation; that spirit makes our department a special place to work. When I began to look at the resources provided by DESE (Technical Guides A and B and the Quick Reference Guide), I was reminded of the importance of framing the work on established best practices in foreign language assessment. The value of common assessments, the opportunity for collaboration and dialogue about aligning instruction, and improving learning have since been at the center of my thinking on DDMs.

To begin the work of using common assessments to look at curriculum, instruction, and learning, we first engaged in some assessment literacy in order to share a common vocabulary and common definitions of that vocabulary. The first step was to agree on what we mean when we use the term assessment. The Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) defines assessment as “an ongoing process of setting clear goals for student learning and measuring progress toward those goals.” Rather than define assessment as a series of paper and pencil tests that we give to students on a certain cycle, we began to think of assessment as embedded in our instructional practices, blurring the lines between the typical distinctions between instruction and testing.

Three indispensable publications from the American Council on the teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) have served to inform our thinking: The ACTFL Performance Descriptors for Language Learners, The NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements: Progress Indicators for Language Learners, and the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines. The Performance Descriptors explain that assessment of language performance “describes what the language learner can demonstrate based on instruction” on “content based on what was learned, practiced, or rehearsed.” With a basic understanding of performance, proficiency, and the implications for instruction, the next step was to look at some basic concepts of assessment. On its website, CAL identifies four principles of assessment: practicality, reliability, validity, and impact. Practicality refers to the resources: How much time does the department have to administer common assessments? What funding is available? What expertise do teachers have in developing standards-based rubrics? What time is available to engage in dialogue about the data? What is the department’s experience with looking at data? CAL advises that practicality should be the first consideration when developing any assessment plan.

The second principle, impact, can be described as positive and negative effects of assessment, or washback. Positive washback includes the desired outcomes of an assessment. An assessment’s focus on certain skills might result in students’ improvement with those skills. Negative washback includes any unintended results that have a detrimental impact, such as undue stress on teachers or students. It is useful and sensible to reflect on the impact of all assessments given, whether common assessments, DDMs, or regular, in-class assessments.

Validity, advises CAL, is perhaps the most important consideration when planning for assessment. By breaking down the concept of validity into a series of questions, teachers can look at the assessments and at samples of student work to build a validity argument. First, Does the assessment measure what it is supposed to measure? This question provides for an opportunity for dialogue around what is in fact worth measuring in a language classroom.

“People still think of assessment as what happens after teaching and learning are over as opposed to thinking of assessment as the giving of feedback to help you to achieve your goal.”

Grant Wiggins, Education Reformer
and for teachers to align their practice. It allows teachers to explore the assessment items, the scoring rubric and ask important questions. The second question: Does the assessment reflect real-life language? (Is it authentic?) Best practices as described by the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for Foreign Languages tell us that purposeful communication is at the heart of effective language instruction. To that point, assessments in language classrooms that do not measure authentic, real-life language which we have begun to measure our assessment practices.

In our pilot year (SY 2012-2013), we settled on a pre-test/post-test model of assessing presentational writing performance. To make this decision, we relied on resources available on the DESE website: Technical Guide A: Considerations Regarding District-Determined Measures, Technical Guide B: Measuring Student Growth & Piloting District-Determined Measures, Quick Reference Guide: District-Determined Measures. These documents along with the resources from ACTFL and CAL helped us in planning for DDMs that would be meaningful for the work we do with students in the classroom. Teams of teachers used department meeting time to develop writing prompts that could be used across languages. Then they worked on designing rubrics. During the pilot year we looked at data in very low stakes ways, applied the validity argument to the writing prompts and student work samples, and came away with some valuable learning that informed our work for the current school year.

Our tasks this year include refining our practice of looking at data and digging more deeply into the data. The Harvard Data Wise Institute advises teachers to stay small and focused when looking at student work, advice that we are following. By narrowing the focus, we can build our capacity to engage in dialog about the data in front of us. The danger in going large and wide is that there are so many ways to look at student performance, it is easy to get lost in the details or overwhelmed by everything we would like to address. Focusing our attention on a small slice of student performance is therefore both practical and necessary. For this second year with DDMs our scoring focus is on language control, defined by ACTFL as “the level of control the learner has over certain language features or strategies to produce or understand language.” We know that we need to continue to build our assessment literacy and our capacity to talk about student work in a structured way. We know from our many years using a standards-based rubric in the department that we need work on aligning our scoring practices, which requires us to learn to stay low on the Ladder of Inference. In Schools that Learn (101-105) Senge et al shed light on our tendency as human beings to draw inferences quickly, jumping up to the top of the Ladder of Inference. The ladder metaphor provides teachers with a framework for observing data. It helps us to be specific about what we see and descriptive in what we know about the data, separating out our assumptions about what we see. The metaphor helps us to look at student work with a different lens. This year, we are using our DDMS to compare our expectations for language control and how we score that domain for observing data. It helps us to be specific in what we know about the data, separating out our assumptions about what we see.
can consider [the student work] objectively and dispassionately” (Senge et al 104).

Keeping our eyes on the prize of what we value most, quality teaching and learning, has been fundamental as we take on this work. State and federal government initiatives may come and go, but as long as we use the work to maintain high expectations and help all of our students reach those expectations, then we can sustain the work because we know that we are making a difference.

References

ACTFL Performance Descriptors for Language Learners
ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines
Center for Applied Linguistics
NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements: Progress Indicators for Language Learners
Quick Reference Guide: District-Determined Measures, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Determining District Measures of Student Growth

A Collaborative Process at Tyngsborough High School

by Maryann Brady
Tyngsboro Public Schools

Without a doubt, for many educators, measuring student growth is a new practice that may require support. As Massachusetts school districts continue to implement district determined measures (DDMs), teachers from various academic disciplines and administrators continue to collaborate to view these assessments as more than just a solution for measuring student performance in the context of teacher evaluation. While DDMs do show potential as an evaluation method to incorporate student growth measures in the evaluation process, they are also an important method for aligning curriculum, instruction, and assessment to enhance student learning and higher levels of achievement.

As they participated in professional development this past summer, foreign language teachers at Tyngsborough High School soon realized the positive impact of engaging in these collaborative DDM conversations. Initial discussions with the high school administrative team resulted in the creation of a coherent theory of action on how DDMs will support instructional practice, student learning, as well as the high school and district missions. Any apprehension regarding the task ahead was soon replaced with the realization that the THS administration embraced the content and instructional practices found in the foreign language curriculum as viable means to develop DDMs.

Further collaborative discussions with the THS administrative team led to common assessment protocols for school wide administration of DDMs. The administrative viewpoint allows for ideas to be brought in from what other departments are using, taking pieces that fit and applying them to the foreign language DDM. In this way, students are able to gain a familiarity with assessments while addressing those requirements set exclusively in the foreign language DDM. Through discussions with administration, current assessment practices were recognized and supported for transformation into effective DDMs.

Specific to the foreign language department, discussions progressed from establishing clear targeted learning objectives to expanding these objectives in relation to the DDM design. This led to collective reflection on curriculum alignment, assessment design, and student performance. An agreed upon balance was found between breadth of coverage and depth of knowledge; the same expectations for student achievement are shared by all department members.

This balance resulted in a unified learning plan for all levels of language study allowing students to reach desired benchmarks. The development of the assessments resulted from these targeted learning goals and the instructional practices aimed at achieving them. The following essential

“I think that the challenge to getting any teacher to change the way they teach is to change the way that students are assessed.”

Marty Abbott

Using Protocols To Analyze Student Work: 
Looking For Growth

by Tiesa M. Graf
South Hadley Public Schools

Considering Reliability in terms of Common Assessments/DDMs

When developing common assessments, the principle of Reliability is important. When considering reliability of assessments, there are three areas to keep in mind: items, administration, and rating. When thinking about reliability of items, educators need to be sure that the questions/prompts are assessing the same skill/knowledge. Often, prompts are identical, but it’s not always necessary. If prompts are not identical, the skill being assessed should be clear to both the educators and the students. For example, if one seeks to see improvement in use of cohesive devices and transitional phrases, a number of different prompts may be used, but the end goal will focus on use of these devices to enhance communication. Next, when considering common assessments, a protocol for administration is essential. Educators need to determine if prompts will be in English or the target language, how long students have to complete each section of the assessment, how many times students are able to listen to an authentic resource for comprehension, etc. Finally, for rating to be consistent, team/departmental calibration practice needs to be in place to ensure that scorers get the same (or very close) results in ratings and scores.

Developing Common Assessments/DDMs

The first important piece of advice when developing DDMs is to keep it simple! Select one core course objective, determine the mode (Presentational, Interpersonal, or Interpretive) that you want to focus on, develop the prompt and then select the domain from the rubric for your focused area of growth. In the Foreign Language Department at South Hadley High School, we used the template below to help us to narrow our focus on an area of growth that worked across levels (adapted from Tim Eagan’s template from Wellesley Public Schools).

Protocol for examining student work

After developing your prompts and administering the assessments, it’s time to determine quality of student samples. The calibration process takes time and practice but is well worth the investment. This process might help you in the calibration planning process:

- Use a common rubric (South Hadley uses the Fairfax County rubrics – they offer holistic and analytical rubrics, by mode and level http://www.fcps.edu/is/world-languages/pals/ - see resource list below for more options)
• Each teacher should bring copies of three student samples to the table: low, medium and high
• Each teacher examines student work and determines rating based on the selected shared rubric. Teachers share ratings and justifications and discussion follows. Repeat, repeat, repeat. After a number of practice rounds and discussions, ratings should be more closely aligned.

Here is the protocol used at South Hadley High School that you might find useful:

### Protocol for Examining Student Work/Calibrating with the Rubric
South Hadley Foreign Language Department

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before looking at student work:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review the objectives of the prompt – note the communicative goal of the activity</td>
<td>Review the prompt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examing student work:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read/Listen to the sample silently, looking/listening for evidence based on the domains of the rubric</td>
<td>Consider the evidence in the sample and select a score for each domain. Write the score onto the scoring sheet. Jot down evidence that justifies your scores.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>After examining student work - Feedback to consider that will help students to improve:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Select two or three main points for comment</td>
<td>Give feedback specific to central learning targets</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>After assessing a number of samples, reflect on the following:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are there patterns of errors? How might these samples inform instruction/curricular choices for next year?</td>
<td>What might you do the same/change or stop doing?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Points to consider for successful calibration

By its very nature, teaching, as a profession is isolating. In general, we plan alone, deliver instruction in isolation and assess on our own. Under the current paradigm, it can take courage to open our classroom doors to others and share student assessments. It is important to build trust and to encourage teamwork in foreign language departments in order to move forward together.

To build trust and encourage teamwork to facilitate successful calibration, consider the following:

- Department meeting time should be used effectively. Time to collaborate by department is limited and should be thoughtfully planned. Meetings should have clear objectives and norms should be established for working together. Agendas should be planned and provided in advance to give department members time to plan and reflect.
- When working together and examining student work and practices, focus on evidence and observations; not judgments.
- Value time to work together – plan the agenda thoughtfully and carefully. When reflecting on your agenda, be sure that all items included are action items – if an item on the agenda can be dealt with via email/in writing – it’s not valuable enough to take up meeting time!

Wherever you and your department are in the process – remember to start small to go big! Take the process one step at a time and be thoughtful in your planning. Developing common assessments and analyzing student work can lead to growth and development in your department and in student proficiency. Make the process work for you – incorporate planning into Smart Goals and processes already in place (midterms/finals). With the number of expectations on our platters, don’t reinvent the wheel; rather, fold best practices into current practices whenever possible.

### Helpful resources

Protocols for examining student work:
- Essential Schools: [Resources](#)
- ASCD: [Protocols for examining student work](#)

School Reform Initiative: [Protocols](#)

Setting norms/effective meeting resources:
- Center for Collaborative Education: [Tools](#)

ACE Habits of mind:
- Harvard: [Habits of Mind](#)

Essential ACTFL resources:
- Proficiency guidelines: [ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012](#)
- Can do statements: [ACTFL Can Do Statements](#)
- Performance descriptors: [ACTFL Performance Descriptors](#)

Rubrics to explore:
- Fairfax County – by level, analytical and holistic: [Rubrics](#)
- FLENJ by mode and proficiency level: [Rubrics](#)
- Glastonbury (includes elementary): [Foreign Language Rubrics](#)
- Ohio by language and level includes prompt samples (model assessments): [Model Assessments](#)

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**Got News?**

**Want to share?**

Send in your article of general interest to MaFLA members:

ronie@mafla.org
Use Of The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines For Departmental Goal Setting And DDM Development

by Nicole Sherf, Advocacy Coordinator

The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines have been available to the profession since they were first published in 1986, but it is only in the recent past that their use has expanded to routine use at the district and the class level. The national discussion has grown from “what can the students do with the language?” to include “what is their target proficiency level and what class activities will help them to get there?” I recently asked internationally renowned presenter and expert on proficiency-oriented teaching, Greg Duncan, why it has taken the profession so long to bring the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines to the forefront of the foreign language pedagogical discussion. It seems the essential question to ask in any department: “What level of proficiency do we want our program completers to attain?” Greg Duncan responded that the profession wasn’t ready for them until now.

A survey of our MaFLA members last summer shows that districts around the state are working with the Proficiency Guidelines to align expectations about what students should be able to do over the course of their programming. However the survey shows that almost three decades after the introduction of the Proficiency Guidelines, only 42% of MaFLA members reported being able to describe the various levels well or very well. Certainly, describing the levels is a necessary starting point for using the Guidelines to inform programming. Interestingly, 68% of the survey takers state that they are using the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines with their department to discuss teaching and programming. These two numbers represent a disconnect between theory and practice which is further compounded in the open-ended responses to the questions. While there are certainly departments who have embraced the Guidelines and use them in curriculum planning, the use in other departments seems to vary by level, language and teacher, if there is reference to them at all. In some cases, it seems a challenge to bring the departmental group together to unite on this goal.

If the ultimate reason for proficiency programming is to impact student learning, a third question found that 42% of those surveyed answered that they discuss the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines with their students to help them make progress in their developing proficiency. In the open ended responses related to this question, various teachers remarked that it would be a good idea to include the students in the conversation, as if inspired by the survey question to do so. Others remarked the difficulty of involving younger students and yet others did not know enough about the Guidelines themselves to involve their students.

It is a national trend to organize departmental goals around proficiency goals as opposed to seat time. This is the basis of the Seal of Biliteracy legislation that MaFLA is working, with legislators at the state level, to pass. Students who attain a specific level of proficiency in two languages would receive a seal on their diploma at graduation which documents this accomplishment. As a profession, we need to get away from district determined leveling of students and describe what students can do with the language in practical, communicative terms. MaFLA will be requesting your support in the coming months as we move forward in the new legislative session with a new Seal of Biliteracy bill.

ACTFL has republished the Proficiency Guidelines three times since the first publication, most recently in 2012. They are now downloadable from the ACTFL Website with elaborations for the four skills (speaking, writing, listening and reading), and with speech and writing samples of the various levels (Proficiency Guidelines). Two invaluable companion documents to the Proficiency Guidelines can be found through ACTFL. The Performance Descriptors for Language Learners, also newly updated in 2012, provide an invaluable resource to describe language performance that is targeted to instructional settings specific to K-12 (Performance Descriptors). The brand new 2013 NCSSFL/ACTFL Can-Do Statements, which can be purchased through ACTFL, is designed to be used to help the department to develop statements about what the student can do with the language at the various levels of study to provide programmatic consistency and alignment (Can-Do Statements). These statements can be used to describe the objectives of a lesson or a unit, help students to self-assess their progress over
the course and even advocate for the program to the administration and at Open House with parents.

Member confidence to discuss Proficiency surpasses their comfort level with District Determined Measures or DDMs. According to the survey, only 37% of respondents were comfortable or very comfortable with the DDM process and 26% of respondents selected the “What is a DDM?” option, the rest were in between. Granted, some of our membership teaches in higher education and in private schools, but that number is compounded with the next question. More than half of those surveyed (52%) answered that their departments were somewhat or not at all collaborative in the departmental DDM development process.

In recent MaFLA Annual Conferences, we have made sure to include workshop programming on the topic of teaching for proficiency in addition to other related important topics such as curriculum planning and collaboration, and target language use. We are currently planning an exciting “Proficiency Academy” for the summer which will support teachers’ efforts to focus on bringing their students up the levels of the proficiency scale, how to create departmental proficiency targets and the necessary curricular revisions while developing quality assessments to serve as District-Determined Measures (DDMs). We certainly hope that those survey respondents who were inspired by our survey will take advantage of this invaluable professional development opportunity. We have invited Greg Duncan to lead the Academy. For more information, check out the preliminary information on our website: mafla.org/proficiency-academy/.

Check out the great information and resources on the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines at http://www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/actfl-proficiency-guidelines-2012

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Special Section: District-Determined Measures

Back To Basics: Assessment Take-Aways From Methods Class

by Nicole Sherf, Salem State University

For this Special Edition Newsletter on Assessment, I thought that it would be interesting to compile a list of lessons learned regarding assessment practices for effective foreign language teaching from the newest teachers in our field. These comments come from graduate and undergraduate students in a Methods course together. The course overviews the theory and the important documents of the foreign language teaching profession and applies it to classroom practice through a variety of projects. In the course, we use the text Teacher’s Handbook: Contextualized Language Instruction (Heinle, 2010) by Shrum and Glisan, which addresses an important topic a chapter. Chapter 11 is called “Assessing Standards-Based Language Performance in Context.” Some of the comments refer to direct quotes from the chapter, and their page is indicated.

In their preparation for the class discussion of the topic, students were instructed to write their answer to the following question on a poster sized sheet of paper: “What did I learn about foreign language assessment through the chapter reading that I never knew?” In class, the posters with the answers were posted around the room and the students completed a “gallery walk” in which they silently read their classmates’ answers and wrote comments or responses to them. The following is a transcribed selection of the responses of the eight students who participated in the activity.

It was a very interesting exercise for the class and for me. The variety of assessments represented in the comments reflects the change in foreign language programming in the recent past. It is interesting to me that three of the comments relate to portfolio use in the classroom. Most comments center on the fact that a wide variety of evidence needs to be provided to evaluate student progress to course and program goals, and that students need to participate in the assessment process. Certainly, the paper-
Special Section: District-Determined Measures

based tests are the least important of the evaluative focus in this age of performance and proficiency.

I learned about the use of portfolios in the FL classroom that I had only seen used in English classes before. – Lynne

➢ I never realized that the only class that used portfolios was English – I had one in high school and never put two and two together. Why not use them in Spanish, too? – Corinne

➢ I have always wanted to (and still plan on) using the portfolio approach! Thankfully this chapter further educated me on a more in-depth usage of them! – Mike

➢ I love this idea because students are able to see their own progress in the language. – Terrell

➢ Portfolios are a great way to organize information taught. – Ryan

➢ Yes! We can assess our students casually and informally to see if they are “getting it.” Assessment doesn’t have to be a big test! – Lynne

➢ I like the idea of using assessments to guide or improve instructions and not just a means to an end, like grades for example. – Ana

I realized the importance of self-assessment by the students. – Diana

➢ Self-assessment is a great ability to have in any setting. – Ryan

➢ Self-assessment motivates the kids to set personal goals and to achieve them instead of the teacher telling them what to do. – Ana

➢ This is an excellent way for students to guide themselves in a positive direction. They become more self-aware. – Terrell

➢ With the Can-Do statements from we’re evaluating and don’t even realize it. – Diana

➢ Yes – it is so important to mix it up; a project, along with a test, a long with a presentation, all sorts of ways. – Lynne

Assessment doesn’t necessarily need to be an exam in a formal setting; it can be a paper or a group discussion that can be used to guide instruction. – Corinne

➢ Less formal assessment puts less stress on the students allowing them to learn without thinking only of strict grading. – Ryan

➢ I had the same “take-away” and I plan on using a portfolio approach to welcome a spectrum of performance evaluation. – Mike

➢ I agree and it is amazing to see how well they do when they are not nervous or anxious because of a test. – Ana

➢ “Teaching, Assessing and Grading: Am I sending the same message?”

Greg Duncan, Education Reformer


➢ Yes – that was something I learned in my first year and keep working at it now. We are assessing (or should be) students daily. – Lynne

➢ “Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs) are informal, formative assessment strategies that are aimed at improving instruction, rather than assigning grades or points. The[ir] goal […] is to improve the quality of student learning, not to provide evidence for evaluating or grading students.” (p. 433) Terrell

➢ Ability is achieved in various ways! – Mike

➢ This idea seems quite obvious and yet I don’t know how often it is used in the classroom. Good alternative for those who get stressed when a grade is involved. – Corrine

➢ “The reality of the classroom setting and instructional goals is that teachers make use of a wide variety of assessments” (p. 399) – Ryan

➢ Wide variety is the key point. – Victor

➢ This is perfect because it can reach out to many students with different learning styles and abilities. – Terrell

➢ Yes! As “they” say “variety is the spice of life!” It’s funny how sometimes

➢ ACTFL, it puts the responsibility somewhat on the students’ own shoulders. – Lynne

➢ Portfolios document the growth and development of students in or through time. It’s a rich description of what they have learned and what they can do. They offer a perspective that tests cannot offer. – Ana

➢ It is a good idea that helps the students to be more organized. – Victor

➢ Portfolios allow students to work at a gradual pace, instead of cramming for a test the night before. – Ryan
Yes! Sometimes we become focused on the content and forget how much students have progressed. Definitely, this is an important point to keep in mind: a portfolio with tangible evidence. – Corinne

Absolutely! What a great way to see how students have improved and also a great way for students to reflect on their growth and achievement. – Diana

“If the activity is hands-on, interactive and relevant, the students will perform the task to the best of their ability regardless of grading.” (p. 292) – Victor

This summarizes the textbook’s philosophy in one sentence. – Ryan

And if it is engaging, they’ll do it happily without complaint. This will create interest. What a wonderful side effect! – Diana

This is one of the most important aspects to keep in mind. Of course students will be more likely to try harder if they’re actually interested! – Corinne

This can give students a sense of independence and interest. – Terrell

Portfolios help to view assessment as a step by step process.

It seems like a good idea and a good way of doing something more than just tests. – Ana

Great! It puts the focus on everything produced to get an overview. – Terrell

I like this because it shows how other teaching tools play a role as well. – Ryan

It is a great way to measure student growth over time. – Lynne

“Assessment 101 says we need lots of assessment evidence of different types. Each method we use is flawed, so it needs to be supplemented by different methods.”

Grant Wiggins, Education Reformer


Celebrate Foreign Language Week
March 9-15

We hope you will make use of all the information, ideas and tips for celebrating Foreign Language Week in your school/district on our webpage for Foreign Language Week (http://mafla.org/advocacy-2/national-foreign-language-week/) under Advocacy. Celebrating Foreign Language Week with style is a fun and creative way to create a buzz from your department and advocate for language study! If you tried something new or have an idea to share, please contact Advocacy Coordinator, Nicole Sherf, at advocacv@mafla.org.
District-Determined Measures In The Glastonbury Public Schools

by Rita A. Oleksak, Director of Foreign Languages/ELL, Glastonbury, CT

The Glastonbury Public Schools has had a long history of administering Departmental assessments from grades 1-12. These assessments are benchmarks for student progress and are used to continuously monitor curriculum, instruction and assessment. Horizontal and vertical articulation are key components to delivering a successful program along with ongoing professional development opportunities. Common Core State Standards and 21st Century Skills have given our program additional opportunities to explore ways in which we continue to connect with literacy on a daily basis. The ACTFL Common Core Crosswalk is a tool that we use in the Department to highlight ways in which we are making logical connections across the modes of communication. The new teacher evaluation plan has been a vehicle for our Department to create student learning objectives which tie directly to the benchmark assessments we administer and gives teachers opportunities to follow student progress throughout the year, gathering appropriate evidence and making adjustments along the way. Below are some highlights about the external assessments we have been administering, in a more formal way, over the past four years.

AAPPL

The ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages (AAPPL) is a performance-based assessment of standards-based language learning across the three modes of communication (Interpersonal, Interpretive, and Presentational) as defined by the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages. AAPPL Measure assesses Interpersonal Listening/Speaking (ILS), Interpretive Reading (IR), Interpretive Listening (IL), and Presentational Writing (PW) in an online format. AAPPL Measure assesses language proficiency within a familiar classroom context. Each task, such as writing an e-mail message, video-chatting in the target language, or making selections based on the understanding of something heard, read, or viewed, takes place in the context of the language classroom. AAPPL tasks explore a variety of topics that are familiar to learners through classroom instruction or other language learning experiences, such as school, family, and community. AAPPL Measure resembles a seamless, virtual day in a standards-based classroom.

In the Glastonbury Public Schools, the AAPPL, test of interpersonal listening and speaking, is currently administered to all 8th grade students in Chinese, French, Russian, and Spanish. The results are used as a benchmark for curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Some adjustments have been made to the timing of the test due to the Common Core State Standards Smarter Balanced (SBAC) assessment in Connecticut. Teachers have used the results in lieu of the speaking component for final exams and will use the results this year for midterm speaking data. Teachers have designed their student learning objectives around interpersonal speaking and student engagement and are using the AAPPL data as one example of evidence of student growth.

In 2014-2015, Glastonbury plans to pilot this test with all 5th graders.

ALIRA

The ACTFL Latin Interpretive Reading Assessment (ALIRA) is a computer-adaptive assessment of Latin students’ ability to read for comprehension a variety of Latin-language texts that typify those used in an instructional setting. One or two multiple-choice questions accompany each text and gather evidence of understanding of main ideas, supporting details, point-of-view, inferences, or text purpose. ALIRA is designed for students in middle school and beyond. ALIRA presents a wide variety of texts including shorter and longer texts from ancient Rome, texts from today’s Latin-users’ community and may include Wikipedia, social networks, and online newspapers and publications.

“The common thread in performance assessment in all the levels is that you’re giving students a meaningful task that has a purpose and that is reflective of real life kinds of activities that they would do.”

Marty Abbott

Special Section: District-Determined Measures

ALIRA provides an ACTFL Performance Score. There are four gradations of the Novice level and five gradations at the Intermediate level. ALIRA Scores are N1, N2, N3, N4, I1, I2, I3, I4, and I5. Test takers receive an individual ALIRA report that shows the score and provides a brief narrative.

In 2013-2014, the Glastonbury Public Schools participated in its first administration of the ALIRA which was given to all students studying Latin. Scores covered a broad range but became more closely aligned the higher the level of language studied. After data analysis and review of students tested, a strong correlation was identified between students studying more than one foreign language and higher scores. Language layering allows students to build upon skills previously learned and make connections to a new language studied.

**DiscoTest**

The Test of Reflective Judgment (RFJ) is a set of DiscoTest Teasers that focus on students’ theories of knowledge. The teasers present what is known as an ill-structured dilemma—a dilemma with no correct answer. Through their responses to a series of prompts, students reveal how they think about inquiry, evidence, learning & the mind, truth & certainty, conflict resolution, persuasion, and deliberation.

Currently, there are 2 forms of the RFJ, one with an emphasis on scientific knowledge and the other with an emphasis on social knowledge. Both are now being used as summative assessments. Each form can be delivered with a number of alternative dilemmas.

The RFJ is suitable for grades 4-13. One FLES teacher’s story…

In 2013-2014, the 5th grade students at Hebron Avenue School piloted the Discotest, a test of Reflective Judgment. These 5th graders have been taking Spanish since 1st grade where they had lessons twice a week. They had daily lessons in grades 2-4 for 15 minutes and in grade 5 transitioned to 3 days a week classes of 25 minutes each due to a change in scheduling. Throughout their years of study, these students have been developing their reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills in Spanish while learning about communities and cultures. This sequence of language study has been shown to have positive benefits in their thinking and the Discotest assessment was an opportunity to examine such an impact.

Each fifth grade class took the Discotest during an hour long enrichment class in the computer lab. The students used computers for the Discotest and were asked to type sentence/paragraph answers to scenarios presented. Possible scenarios were topics, such as bullying, that students were asked to think about and write their opinion on while backing it up with reasoning. The students were very engaged in the test, reading through the scenarios and composing their responses. They had some experience in writing using computers and their typing skills were varied but this was not an issue for them to complete the assessment. The students completed the assessment with ease and thoughtfulness.

**OPIc**

The Oral Proficiency Interview-computer (OPIc) was developed as a computerized tool to deliver and score valid and reliable oral proficiency testing on a large scale. The computer delivered assessment emulates the qualities of the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) but handles the delivery of the questions by a carefully designed computer program. The goal of the instrument is the same as the OPI: to obtain a ratable sample of speech which a rater can evaluate and compare to the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 – Speaking in order to assign a rating. The current version of the OPIc measures oral proficiency up to the Advanced level on the ACTFL scale. An ACTFL OPIc is assigned one of the following rates: Advanced, Intermediate High, Intermediate Mid, Intermediate Low, Novice High, Novice Mid or Novice Low. The ACTFL OPIc is appropriate for both small-group and large-scale testing. Hundreds of speakers can take the test online at the same time. The recording of their responses is made available via the Internet to Certified OPIc Raters and is evaluated by them within a short period of time. Because of the availability of access to the test, speakers can take an OPIc easily, anywhere in the world.

In Glastonbury, the OPIc is administered to all seniors studying Chinese, French, Russian, and Spanish at the highest level that is offered. Students receive a certificate with their scores which can be shared with institutions of higher educa-

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*“Assessment is central to learning because you need feedback about how you are doing to learn.”*

Grant Wiggins, Education Reformer

tion. An individual student report is prepared and a sticker is affixed to the student data sheet which is shared when the student's final transcript is sent out to institutions of higher education. Students who score into the advanced range participate in an actual phone OPI. Qualitative data has come back indicating that students are regularly placing into second semester sophomore level language courses at higher education institutions.

Teachers use these scores in lieu of final speaking exams and have created student learning objectives which incorporate a greater emphasis on target language use, interpersonal communication, and student engagement. The Department conducts regular professional development on strategies to cross major borders from novice to intermediate to advanced.

### WPT

What are the Writing Proficiency Tests and the Business Writing Tests? The Business Writing Test (BWT) and the general Writing Proficiency Test (WPT) are standardized tests for the global assessment of functional writing ability in a language. The ACTFL writing proficiency test measures how well a person spontaneously writes in a language (without access to revisions and/or editing tools) by comparing his/her performance of specific writing tasks with the criteria stated in the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines – Writing.

ACTFL writing tests are carefully constructed assessments with four to five requests for written responses dealing with practical, social, and/or professional topics that are encountered in informal and formal contexts. The writer is presented with tasks and contexts that represent the range of proficiency levels on the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines Writing – 2012. The tasks and prompts are written in English with the expectation that the responses be written in the target language.

ACTFL writing tests assess writing proficiency in terms of the ability to write effectively and appropriately for real-life writing purposes. They do not address when, where, why, or the way in which an individual learned to write. ACTFL writing tests are not an achievement test assessing a writer's acquisition of specific aspects of course and curriculum content, nor are they tied to any specific method of instruction. ACTFL writing tests do not compare one individual's writing to another individual's writing, but rather compares each individual's writing to the descriptors for writing.

In Glastonbury, the WPT is administered to all seniors studying Chinese, French, Russian, and Spanish at the highest level that is offered. Students receive a certificate with their scores which can be shared with institutions of higher education. An individual student report is prepared and a sticker is affixed to the student data sheet which is shared when the student's final transcript is sent out to institutions of higher education. Qualitative data has come back indicating that students are regularly placing into second semester sophomore level language courses at higher education institutions.

Teachers use these scores in lieu of final writing prompts and have created student learning objectives which incorporate a greater emphasis on presentational communication. The Department conducts regular professional development on strategies to cross major borders from novice to intermediate to advanced.

Comments from high school…

My experience with testing our students began as a classroom teacher. I have had students take the OPI, the WPT and the Disco-test. The OPI and the WPT were the most interesting to me, from a teacher perspective and I think the most relevant to the students. As a teacher, it was interesting for me to see the tasks that our students were going to be asked to do, on both the OPI and WPT. The tasks, both oral and written, are real-life situations, presented in a manner that reflects everyday life. This made me reflect on the tasks that I was asking of my students in the classroom. As teachers, we talk all the time about making sure that what we are asking of the students is real-life and relevant, and these two tests made me take a look at what I was asking of my students on a daily basis. I think these tests also made clearer to the students what their proficiency levels were, so as they enter higher education and want to continue with their language study, they have an appropriate reference point.

As head teacher for the Department, I have taken on the task of assessment coordinator for our Department. I work closely with the Director and her assistant to schedule and administer the eternal testing from 5th grade to 12th grade. This is a large task, with a lot of coordination involved, but very interesting to see from a different perspective. The sheer number of students that we assess on a yearly basis is impressive. The ability to have benchmark data on students in 8th grade and then in 12th grade on performance assessments has influenced the way we run professional development within our Department as well as our curricular goals, our instruction and assessments. As we continue to advocate for foreign language programs, our own as well as nationally, the assessment results are instrumental in showing the long-term benefits of studying languages.

My students were very engaged when taking both the OPIc and WPT tests. They enjoyed being assessed on their speaking and writing skills and receiving feedback from ACTFL that allowed them to grasp their proficiency levels in Spanish outside of the classroom. Students gain experience in this kind of testing while practicing their Spanish. I have seen this give students a renewed sense of purpose in their pursuit of Spanish proficiency and many times a sense of pride in all they have learned during their years of study. I am so thrilled we continue to offer our students the opportunity to take these tests as it encourages them, teaches them, and prepares them for a future of continued Spanish study.

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Assessment
by Chantal Thompson, Brigham Young University

What can our students DO with the language they are learning? The beauty of proficiency assessment is that it shifts the focus from what students know about the language to what they can do with it in real-life situations. “Real” then becomes relevant, meaningful to students, and learning targets take on a different definition, for both teachers and students.

A recent personal experience comes to mind. Last summer, I was asked to design and teach an “Advanced” course for “French camp” at my university. This was a three-week intensive course for high school students from throughout the US. (As a matter of fact, we had a few students from Massachusetts!) Twenty-four students placed into the advanced group, and as I listened to them converse with one another before class on the first day, I noticed that they were measuring their own level of French by how many tenses they knew. When I announced that we were not going to “do the conditional or the subjunctive” in the three weeks ahead, some of them looked absolutely devastated. How could this be an “Advanced” French course without those prestigious tenses?? I had to explain to them the meaning of functional ability. And since most of them were rated Intermediate Low or Intermediate Mid in their placement interview, our priority was clear: we were going to work on narration and description in present, past and future time frames, not hypothesis or supported opinion. It only took a couple of hours for them to understand that their knowledge of the present tense did not equate with the ability to narrate or describe in the present in the context of connected discourse, and even the most reluctant ones were on board. What had to happen? They had to see and hear for themselves the difference between Intermediate and Advanced-level language, and they had to get formative feedback on their functional ability, their text type and their accuracy.

Assessment comes in two forms: assessment OF learning, or summative assessment, at the end of a chapter, a unit or a course; and assessment FOR learning, or formative assessment, which takes place every single day. Are we giving our students ongoing feedback on their functional ability, their text type and their accuracy? How do we do this?

• Formative assessment of functional ability requires an understanding on the part of the teacher of what function means, and the ability to relate everything we do in the FL classroom to function. For example, if I am teaching the chapter on food in French 1, and students are learning a lot of food vocabulary, as well as partitive articles vs. indefinite/definite articles, and some irregular verbs such as “vouloir” and “pouvoir”, my end goal is not to have them list food vocabulary or fill in the blank with articles or verb forms. My end goal is to have them create with the language in the context of food, ask and answer questions related to food, and negotiate simple situations such as ordering a meal in a restaurant. So, while each class period will include some guided practice on language forms, the bulk of my activities will focus on providing communicative practice at the Intermediate level. Yes, my students are still at the Novice level, but we don’t teach FOR Novice, we teach FOR Intermediate, that is how we get Novice-level students closer and closer to Intermediate. As I provide and monitor those open-ended communicative activities, I assess and give them individualized feedback on their degree of control of those functions.

• Text type is generally the number one indicator of that degree of control. Are they creating with the language at the Intermediate level if their answers are still primarily at the word level, or if verbs are either missing or in the infinitive form? No. They need models, they need pre-speaking, they need feedback on their text type. As we move up the proficiency scale toward Advanced, that feedback on text type (from discrete sentences to strings of sentences to connected discourse) becomes even more crucial. Textbooks do not address text type. Listen to your students’ text type and address it explicitly in every single class. That is an essential part of formative feedback.

• Accuracy is often the focus of achievement assessment. While it is certainly impossible to move up the proficiency scale without increasing attention to grammar, pronunciation and other elements of accuracy, too much attention to form will keep students at the bottom of the scale. In our formative assessment, let us allow for the “partial control” phase of development. For example, going back to my chapter on food in French 1, articles (indefinite vs. definite vs. partitive) are a big hurdle for students. In fact, even Advanced-level speakers still make mistakes on the choice of articles. So, in level 1, while we may expect higher accuracy on discrete-point test items, in proficiency-based practice and testing, let us settle for partial control of articles and encourage students to take risks by rewarding the ones who truly create with the language at the sentence level. If the task is to compare eating habits among teenagers in the US and in France (at a simple level), who gets the better grade? The one who says or writes 2-3 baby sentences with correct articles, or the one who elaborates through 5-6 relevant sentences with a few mistakes? Formative assessment rewards risk-taking and gives feedback on patterns of errors before communicative practice (through pre-speaking or pre-writing) and after communicative practice (through delayed correction.)

As we provide ample opportunities to express personal meaning in ever-expanding contexts, our students are able to grow in functional ability, text type, and accuracy. And as we provide formative feedback in all three areas, we prepare them for higher levels of proficiency in summative assessment. We also prepare them for real-life language use.

Chantal_Thompson@byu.edu
Special Section: District-Determined Measures

Interview Between Madelyn Gonnerman Torchin And Cheri Quinlan

MGT: At the 47th Annual Fall MaFLA Conference, in your workshop on assessment, you introduced the mantra, “Assessment must mirror instruction.” Would you elaborate, please, keeping in mind Massachusetts’ educators’ need to create District-Determined Measures (DDMs) for determining student growth over time.

CQ: If we use the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages to inform our instruction, we are providing opportunities for our students to practice the three modes of communication (interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational), to examine the relationship between cultural products and perspectives as well as practices and perspectives, to make connections to other content areas, and to compare language and culture. If we address the three modes of communication in an authentic way, we are also providing our students with opportunities to “communicate and interact with cultural competence” both at home and in the global community. When I say that assessment should mirror instruction that means that our assessments should focus on finding out what students can do with language in an authentic way. How well do they communicate in the interpersonal and presentational mode? How well can they interpret authentic text, both written and oral? What proficiency benchmark have we set for our students? And, how do we know that they are reaching that benchmark? In a school setting we use assessment for many reasons. For me, one of the most important uses of assessment is to let students know how well they are doing: are they meeting the targeted proficiency level and what are the ‘next steps’ to either meet that level or move to the next one?

MGT: Two distinct types of assessments, formative and summative, are at the forefront of standards-based teaching, nationally. You modified formative to the mnemonic in-formative. How might teachers remember the difference between summative and formative, and what are some of the strategies educators might use for in-formative purposes?

CQ: Summative assessment is typically a high stakes assessment used to evaluate how well a student has done as a result of instruction at the end of a unit, semester, or year. Of course, those results can also be used in a formative way to determine next steps in instruction. Formative assessment lets the instructor know where their students are in the process and thus plan for interventions and future instruction based on that information. From a student perspective, formative assessment should let them know what their strengths and weaknesses are. Some strategies that educators might use for formative purposes include those mentioned during my presentation at MaFLA this fall: Signaling, white boards, K-W-L-U charts, exit slips, Poll Everywhere, TPR, T-W-P-S, Venn diagrams, T-charts, story maps, questions and answers to name a few. (To access the presentation please go to http://www.symbaloo.com/mix/assessment41.)

MGT: Nationally, the trend is to use the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines to align expectations about what students should be able to do over the course of their programming rather than awarding credits based on seat time (or in addition to). This trend is driving the movement toward implementing a Seal of Biliteracy. New Jersey has been an early adopter of the Seal. What level of proficiency is required for the New Jersey Seal and what was the rationale for choosing this level?

CQ: During the pilot year for the Seal of Biliteracy, the targeted proficiency level was set at Intermediate-Mid in at least two of the modes of communication. There may be changes in that level based on discussions taking place with other states throughout the country that are also considering awarding the Seal or already doing so. New Jersey initially selected that level based on the results of a four-year proficiency study of students who had begun the study of a language in elementary school. While the committee wanted to set a high standard, they also wanted it to be an attainable one.

MGT: In a survey of MaFLA members taken last summer, only 37% of respondents were comfortable or very comfortable with the District-Determined Measures process. Additionally, 26% of respondents selected the “What is a DDM?” option, with the rest somewhere in-between. What steps do you recommend for MA educators setting out to create DDMs?

CQ: I would suggest that first step be for educators to find out what their students can do in the interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational modes and then set benchmarks based on that information. It is important to remember that proficiency growth can occur both vertically as well as horizontally. Especially in the case of intermediate students, the growth may be observed across a range of contexts as opposed to moving up a sub-level. Educators may be interested in reviewing the guidance put out by the New Jersey Department of Education or measuring student growth in world languages. Click here for more information.

MGT: New Jersey’s Model for High School Reform in World Languages, Building a Linguistically and Culturally Competent Workforce, a Foreign Language Assistance Program (FLAP) grant, focused on using proficiency data to inform instruction and assessment. The Massachusetts Department of Secondary
and Elementary Education (DESE) and MaFLA are offering a Summer Proficiency Academy in July, 2015 to guide educators in creating and implementing performance assessments. What advice do you have for the program, to be led by Greg Duncan, and facilitated by trained MaFLA coordinators?

CQ: You are in excellent hands with Greg Duncan leading the institute. And from what I observed during my time at MaFLA 2014, your trained coordinators from MaFLA are very well informed in standards-based instruction and assessment. Most likely they are already aware of the resources I would suggest they consider.

Some examples of performance assessments can be found at the link previously cited: http://www.symboloo.com/mix/assessment41. Additionally, the most recent publication by ACTFL on integrated performance assessments is a great resource for educators embarking on this work. (Click here for additional information.)

There are free resources available from ACTFL that can help inform the work of this institute. Click on the following links to download the following documents free of charge:

The ACTFL Performance Descriptors for Language Learners
NCSSFL/ACTFL Can-Do Statements
21st Century Skills Map

Furthermore, there are examples of units and lesson plans from The Keys to Planning for Learning that can be downloaded by clicking here.

MGT: Thank you for your time and for sharing your expertise. We look forward to seeing you back in Massachusetts for another Conference!

Call for Proposals

Believe it or not, planning is well underway for the 2015 Fall Conference. Proposals are now being accepted for 78-minute Sessions. What is your “take” on the 2015 theme: “Climbing the Proficiency Ladder: Many Languages, One Goal”? Prepare to share with your colleagues. Send your proposal today. Click HERE for more information and/or to submit a proposal. See you in the fall.
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
Elaine G. Batting Memorial Scholarship

MaFLA has established a $500.00 scholarship to honor the memory of an outstanding teacher of Latin in Massachusetts. A long-time member of MaFLA, Elaine G. Batting served on MaFLA's Board of Directors from 1990 until her untimely death in 1994. During her tenure as a teacher of Latin, she received numerous fellowships for both intensive study and travel during the summer and encouraged others to apply for such scholarships by presenting workshops on how to apply for fellowships and grants. Her studies and experiences contributed significantly to the curriculum base in classical languages. It is expected that the recipient of the Memorial Scholarship will make similar contributions to the study of classical languages in the Commonwealth, including a 75-minute presentation at the 2015 MaFLA Conference and a 350 word article for the MaFLA Newsletter.

ELIGIBILITY

The applicant must be a member in good standing of MaFLA, be a full-time teacher in a public or private school K-12, and must carry a teaching load of at least 60% in classical languages/studies.

This form, completed, must be accompanied by:

1. an outline of a study project or study proposal
2. a summary of curricular outcome of the project or travel
3. a short essay on how the proposed study or travel will impact the applicant's future teaching
4. a recommendation from a fellow classics teacher/department chair concerning the candidate's previous work and potential benefit from the proposed project or travel

N.B. Those who have previously received a Batting Scholarship will be considered after first time submissions are considered.

2015 MaFLA Elaine G. Batting Memorial Scholarship Application

Name:_____________________________________________  Email:  _____________________________

Home Address:__________________________________________ Phone: _____________________

School Name:_____________________________________________ Phone: _____________________

School Address:___________________________________________

Classes taught in 2014-2015 ______________________________________________________________

Years teaching - full time _____________ part time _____________ Latin/Greek/Classical Humanities

If awarded the scholarship, I agree to make a presentation at the annual MaFLA Conference and write a 350 word article for the MaFLA newsletter on my project.

Signature ______________________________________________

This form and complete supporting materials must be submitted by March 31, 2015.

Send completed application packet to:

Brenda Cook  Email: bbc777@verizon.net
60 Miller Street
Middleborough, MA  02346

The successful applicant will be notified by April 30, 2015.
Helen G. Agbay New Teacher Graduate Study Scholarship

PURPOSE:

The Massachusetts Foreign Language Association has established a $500.00 scholarship to honor the memory of Helen G. Agbay who was a founding member of MaFLA and served on the board for many years in numerous capacities. During her career as a foreign language educator and interpreter, Helen taught French and Spanish at the K-12 levels as well as at the post-secondary level. She was not only a foreign language educator, but also an advanced degree language student of Italian and Portuguese. To honor Helen and her passion and dedication for the teaching and learning of languages, this scholarship has been created to financially assist a current foreign language teacher who is in the process of earning a master’s degree in foreign language education.

CRITERIA FOR APPLICATION:

For consideration the applicant is required to be:

- a member in good standing of MaFLA
- a full-time foreign language teacher (K-12) in a public or private school from 1-10 years
- matriculated in a graduate studies program in foreign language education

The application form (below) must be accompanied by:

☐ a copy of academic transcripts
☐ proof of matriculation in a graduate program
☐ two letters of recommendation from:
  (1) current school principal or department chair
  (2) additional administrator or fellow foreign language teacher
☐ personal statement of intent for use of scholarship (maximum one page)

2015 Helen G. Agbay New Teacher Graduate Study Scholarship Application Form

Name: ___________________________________________ Email: __________________________

Home Address: ___________________________________________ Phone: __________________________

School Name: ___________________________________________ Phone: __________________________

School Address: ______________________________________________________________________

Classes taught in 2013-2014 ______________________________________________________________

Years and languages taught: Full-time ___________________ Part-time ____________________

I am a full time teacher. Signature ________________________________________________

This form and complete supporting materials must be submitted by June 1, 2015 to:

Nicole Sherf
43 Ralph Road
Marblehead, MA 01945

The successful applicant will be notified by June 15, 2015.
Cemanahuac/MaFLA Scholarship

Are you looking to improve your proficiency in Spanish? Are you a French teacher who has recently discovered that you are teaching a few classes in Spanish? Are you interested in expanding your knowledge of Mexico and its culture? Then perhaps you are the perfect candidate for this cooperative effort between the Cemanahuac Educational Community and MaFLA. For the eighteenth year the Cemanahuac Educational Community in Cuernavaca, Mexico, is offering a full two-week scholarship for a MaFLA member. The scholarship is for two weeks of intensive Spanish language study in Cuernavaca. Family housing (double room), Cemanahuac's Latin American studies classes, one field trip, a certificate of achievement, and registration are included. The value of this scholarship is $1100.00. The recipient can attend Cemanahuac any time during 2015, and if he/she wishes to stay beyond the two weeks, Cemanahuac will offer the recipient a reduced tuition fee. Winner is responsible for air transportation, transfer to Cuernavaca, textbook and personal expenses.

Eligibility: The applicant must be a member in good standing of MaFLA; be a full-time teacher in a public or private school, elementary through high school level during the 2014-2015 school year; and must carry a teaching load of at least 40% Spanish classes. Applicant must also be willing to share his/her experience by presenting a session at the MaFLA Conference.

The selection committee will be composed of members of the MaFLA Board of Directors and will consider:

- merit as evidenced by professional commitment to and involvement in the teaching of Spanish;
- need for an immersion experience in Mexico;
- how the applicant perceives that the experience will enhance his/her teaching as expressed in a personal statement written in Spanish;
- evidence of institutional support, in the form of a letter of recommendation from the applicant's department chairperson or principal;
- willingness of the selected teacher to provide a session at the annual MaFLA Conference.

2015 Cemanahuac Scholarship Application Form

Please print or type

Name:_________________________________________________ Email: _______________________________
Home Address: ________________________________________________________Phone:_________________
School Name:__________________________________________________________Phone:_________________
School Address:____________________________________________________________________________
Classes taught in 2014-2015: __________________________________________________________________
Years teaching:  full time ______  part time ______         Years teaching Spanish at least 40% of load________
If awarded the scholarship, I agree to make a presentation at the annual MaFLA Conference and/or write an article for the MaFLA newsletter on my immersion experience.

Signature__________________________________________

Please submit the following with your application

Cover Letter: Please submit a cover letter, in English, with a Curriculum Vitae listing your educational degrees, professional activities, membership in professional organizations, and any other information you think would help the committee in evaluating your application.

Immersion Experience: List experience in a Spanish-speaking country or in the US. Include dates of undergraduate and graduate study, personal and school-affiliated travel, and work.

Statement: Write a 200-word statement in Spanish describing what you would expect to gain from studying in Cuernavaca and how the experience would enhance your teaching.

Recommendation: Include with your application a letter of support, in a sealed envelope, from your department chairperson or principal.

Submit the application form and supporting materials by March 31, 2015, to:
Ronie R. Webster, 41 Glenn Drive, Wilbraham, MA  01095-1439

The winning candidate will be notified by April 30, 2015.
NEW TEACHER COMMENDATION

FOR EXCELLENCE IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

Four Complimentary Three-Year Memberships to MaFLA Will Be Awarded

PURPOSE: MaFLA’s mission encompasses the mentoring, support and professional growth of new teachers in the profession. This commendation and accompanying award recognize new teachers for demonstrated excellence. MaFLA wishes to welcome new teachers to the state organization and to offer multiple opportunities for professional development, support, networking, and collegiality through membership. Awardees will receive a complimentary three-year membership to the Massachusetts Foreign Language Association (MaFLA) and all accompanying benefits.

CRITERIA FOR RECOMMENDATION/APPLICATION:

New Teacher refers to a person who, at the time of being recommended or of applying for the award is:

1. New to the foreign language teaching profession within the past 5 years.
2. A full-time foreign language teacher in Massachusetts.

The nominating letter for the new teacher must show that (s)he demonstrates:

- Proficiency in the language(s) taught.
- Knowledge and application of current methodologies of foreign language teaching.
- Knowledge of the diverse learning styles of students.
- Successful communication skills with students and colleagues.
- A class atmosphere conducive to learning.
- Involvement in extra-curricular foreign language activities.
- Involvement in professional activities.
- Enthusiasm in his/her teaching and learning of foreign languages.

RECOMMENDATION/APPLICATION PROCESS:

Recommendations/applications for the commendation can be made by a school administrator, a colleague or the teacher him/herself. All applications must be sent to the MaFLA Board New Teacher Awards Committee Chairperson listed below by March 31, 2015.

New Teacher Commendation Application Form

Please print or type

Name:________________________________________________  Email:____________________________

Home Address:_______________________________________  Phone:_________________________

School Name:_________________________________________  Phone:_________________________

School Address:_______________________________________

Classes taught in 2014-2015:__________________________________________________________

Years teaching: full time _____ part time _____  Years teaching Foreign Language(s) ________

Submit the application form and supporting materials by March 31, 2015, to:

Nicole Sherf
43 Ralph Road
Marblehead, MA 01945

The successful applicant will be notified by April 30, 2015.
**MaFLA Past Presidents’ Award**

Awards of $500 each will be given to up to four deserving high school students who have demonstrated excellence in foreign language study and service/leadership within their school.

N. B. Native speakers are encouraged to apply.

**************************************************************************Criteria for Scholarships**************************************************************************

1. Student must be a senior in high school who has completed the last sequence of that language.
2. Student must have studied a foreign language for a minimum of three sequential levels (Spanish I, II, III, for example). The only exception will be for students who study a critical language which has a program of only two years in scope (Chinese I, Chinese II, for example).
3. Student must be planning to continue foreign language study at the college level.
4. Student must have achieved a 90% average in the foreign language over the 3+ years of study.
5. Student must have demonstrated service to or leadership within the department, school and/or community. Some examples are language club officer, tutor, etc.
6. Student must be able to articulate in an essay of not more than 250 words the importance of foreign language study. This topic may be treated either globally or personally. Some examples are:
   - The Importance of Foreign Language Study in Today's Changing World
   - The Importance of Foreign Language Study in My Life
   - N. B. This essay should be written in English.
7. Nominating teacher must be a member of MaFLA.

**APPLICATION FORM**
(to be filled out by nominating teacher)

Name of Student: __________________________________________________________ Email: ______________________

School: _____________________________________________________________________________________________

Language Studied: ___________________ Years of Study (9-12): ______________ Highest level completed: ______________

Overall Average in the language for which he/she is nominated (9-12): ________________________________________

Nominating Teacher: __________________________________________ Email: ______________________

School Address: _____________________________________________________________________________________

Home Phone: ____________________ School Phone: ______________________ Membership expires: ______________

PLEASE SUBMIT THIS APPLICATION WITH THE FOLLOWING:
1. Official high school student transcript (including first semester grades for 2014-2015)
2. Student essay of not more than 250 words on the importance of foreign language study (in English, please)
3. A single page letter of support from the nominating teacher which should include evidence of student's leadership/service to department, school and/or community.
4. A signed statement from the student indicating his/her intention to continue foreign language studies in college.

N. B. Applications which do not contain all required materials will not be considered.

Send to: Maryann Brady, PO BOX 548, Black Oak Lane, Dracut MA 01826
Questions: brdy1@comcast.net

**2015 MaFLA Student Video Contest**

**Theme**

*Climbing the Proficiency Ladder: Many Languages, One Goal!*

**Premise**

In the state of Massachusetts, students need to demonstrate the ability to use technology for the purpose of communication, collaboration, creativity, and innovation. Consequently, through the use of a variety of media formats students develop technology skills that enable them to communicate effectively, to multiple audiences, a variety of information and ideas to satisfy both foreign language and technology standards.

**Summary**

Video production is a method of communication that is more and more used and it allows anyone to create video files and post them to the Internet for others to download and view at any time. MaFLA is pleased to offer an exciting opportunity for all students in the public and private schools in Massachusetts to participate in a video contest.

**Contest Specifics, Categories, and Prizes**

All foreign language teachers of Massachusetts are invited to get their students involved in celebrating the 2015 theme.

In a two-minute video, students will have the opportunity to demonstrate in English or a foreign language, how they understand and interpret the current theme in order to raise awareness of the role that foreign languages play nationally and internationally.

Students may be entered in one of three specific categories corresponding to their grade level.

- Category 1: Elementary School – Students enrolled in K through grade 5
- Category 2: Middle School – Students enrolled in grades 6-8
- Category 3: High School – Students enrolled in grades 9-12

In order to enter the contest teachers who are members in good standing with MaFLA can mail only one entry per category to Jeanne O’Hearn, Contest Chair. Only the first 15 entries will be considered in each category.

**Please note:** Students should only submit their own original work (no copyrighted material should be included).

**List of suggested activities for all categories:**

- a speech/soliloquy/address
- a poem,
- a song (raps included),
- an advertisement,
- a public service announcement,
- a skit,
- other

The contest will take place during Foreign Language Week in March 2015. It will begin on March 1, 2015. The submission deadline is March 15, 2015.

A MaFLA committee will select one winner in each of the three categories. The prize for the winner in each category will be $50.00 awarded to the student creator of the video (to be split if there are 2 students). The videos of the winners, and up to two runners-up from each category, may be showcased in an area of the MaFLA website.

**Submission Guidelines - Submissions that do not meet these guidelines will not be considered**

1. Participation is limited to students attending public or private schools who are enrolled in a Pre-K–12 foreign language class at the time of submission.
2. The total video length is not to exceed two minutes in English/foreign language.
3. A maximum of 2 students can perform on one video entry.
4. Participating teachers need to fill out and mail or email the Contest Entry Form to the contest chair Jeanne O’Hearn. Mailing instructions can be found on the entry form.

**Judging Criteria - videos in all 3 categories will be judged on the following criteria:**

1. **Content:** Is the audio/video clip engaging and appropriate to the theme of the contest?
2. **Creativity:** Is the message innovative and creative?
3. **Execution:** Is the use of technology effective and appropriate?
4. **Effect:** Was the overall effect achieved in communicating to the audience?
MaFLA Video Contest Entry Form

Please submit this form along with your video and mail to the address indicated below. Mail videos and forms together in a single package. Please use a separate entry form for each video submitted.

#1. General Information: *(please type or print legibly)*

School:_________________________________________________ School Phone #: (____)_____________

School Address:  (street)________________________________________________________________________
                (city/town)______________________________________ (zip) __________________

Superintendent’s Name: ________________________________ Principal’s Name:______________________________

Superintendent’s Address: __________________________________________________________________________________

#2. Entrants’ and Teachers’ Information: *(please type or print legibly)*

Student’s Name                 Grade                Language and level(s) enrolled for 2013-2014
1. _____________________________________________  _________  ________________________________________________
2. _____________________________________________  _________  ________________________________________________

Teacher’s Name:_______________________________________________________ Dues Paid through ____________________

Teacher’s Email:_______________________________________________________

Release

I, the undersigned, hereby grant permission for my/my child’s video entry to be used and posted on the MaFLA web site. I understand that the videos of finalists and winners are to be archived in a public area on this web site to promote the teaching and learning of world languages. The video shall be used for educational purposes only.

I hereby release MaFLA, their agents, personnel, directors, and officers from any claims or liability regarding any use that may be made of the video in accordance with this consent and release.

Student Name: (please print)   _____________________________________________________

Student Signature (18 or Older): _________________________________________ Date: ___________________

NOTE: by signing above, student attests that he/she is 18 years of age or older.

Parent/Guardian Name (please print):  _____________________________________

Signature of Parent/Guardian:  __________________________________________ Date: ___________________

(required if student is under 18)

Mail your completed application to:

Jeanne O’Hearn
19 Broadway
Beverly, MA 01915

Entries must be postmarked by March 15, 2015
MaFLA Student Award Certificates

The MaFLA Board of Directors has established an awards program for students of foreign languages in public and private schools in Massachusetts. Awards categories are:

1. One award for excellence for each language per school. This certificate is conferred upon the student who has demonstrated excellence (highest achievement) in the most advanced course of each language taught in each school.
2. One award per high school to a student who has distinguished him/herself for leadership in foreign language activities.

Any public or private school in Massachusetts wishing to recognize academic excellence and leadership in foreign language activities by awarding the MaFLA award certificates should complete the form provided and return it to the address on the form. Individual certificates, signed by a member of the Board of Directors of MaFLA, will be sent for presentation to students. Each school is eligible to make one award for excellence in each language taught (no ties, please). Each high school is eligible to make one award per school for leadership (no ties, please) in foreign language activities.

The Board of Directors has established the following criteria which each award recipient’s school must meet:

a. Nominees must be public or private school students in Massachusetts.

b. Recipients of the Award for Excellence must be enrolled in the most advanced course offered in their school of the language for which they have been selected to receive the award.

c. Recipients of the Award for Leadership for foreign language activities may be enrolled in any high school foreign language course but must demonstrate leadership in foreign language activities. No more than one award per high school per year will be granted for leadership.

d. Recipients are to be selected by the foreign language faculty of their respective schools. Criteria for determining highest achievement shall be determined by the local school’s foreign language department.

e. Schools participating in the awards program must have at least one current MaFLA member on their foreign language staffs. Application for awards must be made through this member.

f. The deadline for request for 2014-2015 certificates is May 15, 2015.

***************************************** MaFLA STUDENT AWARD FORM *****************************************

As a current member of MaFLA and the person representing my school’s foreign language department, I nominate the students named below for MaFLA awards. I certify that the criteria outlined by the MaFLA Board of Directors have been met by the nominees and by their school.

MUST BE TYPED! (or submit online via mafla.org)

I. Awards for Excellence:

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<th>Student(s) Nominated</th>
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II. Award for Leadership (High School):

<table>
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<th>Student Nominated</th>
<th>Language(s)</th>
<th>Course(s)</th>
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<td>Nominator’s Name:</td>
<td>Membership Expires:</td>
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<td>School:</td>
<td>Phone:</td>
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<td>School Address:</td>
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<td>Email:</td>
<td>Signature:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Mail to: Anna Tirone
120 Winchester Road
Arlington, MA 02474-2139

Email: abtirone@comcast.net

DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF NOMINATIONS: May 15, 2015

30 2015 MaFLA Newsletter
Congratulations to Dr. Edward (Ted) Zarrow
2015 MaFLA Teacher of the Year!!!

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 Spring Issue is Mar. 5

Ted teaches Latin at Westwood High School and
will now move forward as a regional finalist!