Happy New Year and here’s to a healthy, successful, and proficient 2016!

Looking back on 2015, there is so much to celebrate! First and foremost, I want to heartily congratulate MaFLA’s first-ever Teacher of the Year to also win the national competition! Congratulations to Dr. Ted Zarrow of Westwood High School, the 2016 ACTFL National Language Teacher of the Year! MaFLA is proud to call you our own. We know you will represent our state well and lead with vision and conviction.

Last year, MaFLA put proficiency at the heart of its professional development, and I am excited to announce that we will be expanding our initiatives this year to support more teachers as they move along the path to proficiency.

If you were among the over 100 teachers who attended last summer’s MaFLA Proficiency Academy, you are well along your way in shifting your teaching towards a focus on proficiency development. This new MaFLA professional development event was a huge success, with one attendee succinctly noting, “This was THE BEST professional development work that I have done in many, many years!” The MaFLA Proficiency Academy will be back this summer, from July 18-21 at Westfield State University with two strands. For those who are new to proficiency, plan on attending the “Novice” strand led by Greg Duncan, who facilitated the Academy last year and was the 2015 Conference Keynote speaker. For those who are returning or who have a solid foundation in teaching for proficiency, you should attend the “Intermediate” strand, which will focus on an important “principle of proficiency” - curriculum. This strand will be led by Thomas Sauer, who is recognized by many as a national leader in the proficiency movement and brings a wealth of experience in curriculum development. Collaborative, engaging, attendee-centered, and just a lot of fun, the MaFLA Proficiency Academy is not to be missed!

In 2016, MaFLA won’t be holding its annual conference. Instead, we’re partnering with ACTFL, the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages, to support them in hosting the Annual Convention and World Languages Expo here in Boston. While we hope our members will be able to attend this outstanding national event, we also want to provide high-quality professional development that is accessible to everyone. For that reason, the MaFLA Board is planning a new series of events, called the Core Practices Seminars. This will be a six-part series of Saturday seminars, beginning in September, with three in the fall and three in the spring. So what are the Core Practices? Announced by ACTFL...
The MaFLA Newsletter

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

Deadlines are:
- Winter - January 5
- Spring - March 5
- Back to School - August 5
- End of Year - November 5

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

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

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

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

Retired memberships: $25.00 per year

Student memberships: $15.00 per year

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

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

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP AND SAVE $$$

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

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

MaFLA 2016

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For updates and questions, please contact
Madelyn Gonnerman Torchin, Membership Coordinator
Continuing On Our Path To Proficiency

at the convention this past fall, the Core Practices are as follows:

1. Use the Target Language 90%+
2. Use Authentic Cultural Texts
3. Design Communicative Activities
4. Teach Grammar as a Concept
5. Plan with the Backward Design Model
6. Provide Appropriate Feedback

Each Core Practices Seminar will go in depth into one of these important practices, helping you build on and expand your teaching repertoire to better support student learning. Look for more details on this new event this spring!

We will continue to offer our popular MaFLA Diversity Day and MaFLA Summer Institute, though plans are underway to expand Diversity Day to include more languages and add a pedagogy strand. We want to highlight the diversity of languages MaFLA represents, as well as give our members the tools they need to diversify their teaching. We hope you will join us!

Of course, sometimes the best professional development is just being able to talk through something you’re working on with another like-minded teacher. That’s why this past fall, MaFLA set up the MaFLA PLC, an interactive Facebook Group where you can post questions, share successes and challenges, and learn from others. It’s free to join and open to all foreign language teachers.

It is an exciting time to be a part of the Massachusetts Foreign Language Association, and I look forward to collaborating with many of you as we all work towards higher quality teaching, learning, and professional development along the path to proficiency.

Here’s to a wonderful 2016!

Catherine Ritz
MaFLA President
Meet The New MaFLA Board Members

Britta Roper
Britta is originally from Germany and moved to the US just before high school. She received her undergraduate degree from Middlebury College with a major in Political Science and minors in German and Spanish. She is currently completing her Master in Education at Fitchburg State in Curriculum Design and Teaching. Britta lives in Groton with her husband of 23 years and her three children. She did not enter the teaching profession until about 10 years ago, at first only as a volunteer in her children's elementary school, when they wanted to introduce Spanish. This experience sparked her interest in the profession and the opportunity to open the world through language to young people. Most recently she has taught at Billerica Memorial High School, where she was the German teacher until last June. In her free time, she enjoys when her children come visit from college, long walks with her dog, and traveling.

Tim Eagan
Tim Eagan has been in public education for 25 years. He has taught French, Spanish, and Latin at both middle school and high school levels. He first entered a supervisory role in 2006 when he became the curriculum coordinator for world languages in Newton. In 2008 he joined Wellesley Public Schools as the middle school and high school department head, where he now has the added joy of working with the new K-5 Spanish program. His professional areas of interest include working with struggling learners, teaching for proficiency, and curriculum design. He is delighted to be joining the MaFLA Board of Directors.

Debra Heaton
Debra Heaton began her Latin teaching career at JEB Stuart High School in Fairfax County, VA, in 1985. She taught there for 11 years, while being very active in the Fairfax County Latin Teacher’s Association and the Classical Association of Virginia. She taught all levels of Latin, including AP and 8th grade at Glasgow Middle School. In 1996, after moving to Massachusetts, she continued her career both as a Latin teacher and an administrator in Marblehead and Westford, where she was the 6-12 World Language Coordinator. She currently teaches Latin and serves as the Head Teacher in World Languages at Salem High School. Debra is the past vice-president and president of the Classical Association of Massachusetts and is finishing her term as the treasurer of the American Classical League. She is very excited to be joining the MaFLA team and is happy to be making a contribution to its mission!

Join Us In November
As MaFLA Welcomes ACTFL To Boston

Seal of Biliteracy Update: Seal Pilots Underway Around MA!

The Seal of Biliteracy recognizes high school graduates for proficiency in English and at least one other foreign language with a seal on the high school diploma. MaFLA is working with MABE and MATSOL in the Seal Workgroup to outline the tiers of Seal awards for districts to use within the various levels and types of programming from Preschool through College level. The Seal Workgroup is delineating the list of acceptable tests in a variety of languages to maintain the integrity of proficiency focus of the Seal. The Seal Workgroup has also created a Toolkit for Seal to help districts implement the Seal as well as a promotional PowerPoint that you can adapt for your needs to promote and provide information on the Seal in your district. Go to http://mafla.org/advocacy-2/state-advocacy/ to see them!

If you have any questions, please contact Nicole Sherf, MaFLA’s Advocacy Coordinator, at advocacy@mafla.org
Editor’s Note

New! New! New! You are probably wondering why we are repeating New. Well it’s the new year and we hope that everyone is renewed and refreshed. Also, the featured theme of this newsletter is “What’s New?” So we have gathered here several articles featuring new faces, new initiatives and some new “hot topics.” We know that there is more “new” going on but we haven’t heard from you. If you have some “new” happenings or some “new” initiatives you would like to share, send your articles in. We love to hear “What’s new.”

First of all, we invite you to get to know our NEW board members. You can read all about them on page 4. In our What’s New section we offer a detailed new take on Designing Performance Tasks, written by Tim Eagan, with great tidbits of supporting ideas from some of the top experts in the field of foreign languages. Want to find out what’s new in Italian? Check out the article by Anna Tirone about a project which will allow students to celebrate their language and culture skills. Perhaps this model will serve other languages to take on a similar new project. Maryann Brady addresses in her article how a new generation with new voices will continue the tradition of strong foreign language instruction in the Tygnsborough Public Schools. An article authored by Gregory Cervenak of Westwood High presents an innovative cross-department collaboration activity. And we are fortunate to have two articles by Ted Zarrow, the 2016 ACTFL National Language Teacher of the Year, featuring a fresh new take on writing and interpretive reading. The foreign language department at Monson High has several new initiatives in place this year that they (Timothy Chávez and Ronie Webster) have shared. Finally we have some information about new technologies – Zaption and Periscope. In pursuing the Periscope article, written by Jennifer Williams and Fran Siracusa, I not only learned more about this new tool for the foreign language classroom but I also gained two new colleagues and friends who share my excitement and interest in using technology in my classroom. Who would have guessed that asking them to write an article about this new technology would result in new connections? I encourage you to reach out to others, try something new, take some risks, ask questions about things you don’t understand. You may be surprised at what you find and/or what you learn.

Our News section has some informative articles you might not want to miss and once again a special thanks to member Marcel LaVergne for his insightful article on Striving For Authenticity In A Foreign Language Classroom.

It seems that there is always something new going on in our profession. For me, I love change. I love to learn new things. As I try new things, I know that I am taking the risk of failing and I have failed but I believe I have learned from those failures. I know that I must continually embrace the new if I am going to grow as a foreign language professional.

I invite you to try something New – take that risk and write an article for the Spring issue of the MaFLA newsletter. Our featured topic will be Engaging Students. Need ideas – check below!

- How do you keep students engaged through the end of the year?
- What are some great student engagement techniques?
- What are the topics/texts that engage students?
- What are you doing to keep students engaged during the summer months? - also through May and June when student engagement usually starts to wane?
- What projects are you using that engage students and allow them to show what they know and can do?

You can learn new things at any time in your life if you’re willing to be a beginner. If you actually learn to like being a beginner, the whole world opens up to you.

Barbara Sher
Overview:

Article intended for K-12 world language classroom teachers. Introduces the Periscope app and its many uses for learning and sharing in the classroom and beyond. Specific examples of educational implications are offered.

World language classrooms of today are finding new and innovative ways to connect students to the world through the use of technology. Videoconferencing tools and apps are allowing students to share their voices with authentic audiences to inspire communication that is not only meaningful, but also transformational. Periscope is one such tool that is quickly taking classroom sharing to new heights! As a free smartphone application, Periscope allows users to broadcast and view live video from anywhere in the world. After creating an account, a user can simply follow the onscreen directions to start a broadcast. Settings allow for private or public viewing depending on the desired audience. Once the broadcast begins, the audience of viewers can interact and make comments using the chatbox feature, and they have the ability to indicate that they “like” content by pressing the iconic Periscope heart. Following broadcasts, the sessions can be viewed on the app for up to 24 hours. Users looking to save the broadcasts for later viewing or sharing can simply save to the camera roll or connect to the Katch.me website for instant storage. With this easy-to-use interface, the possibilities for learning and sharing in the world language classroom are limitless.

By encouraging connection to the world and exchange of ideas with diverse populations, Periscope can be an ideal platform for world language learning and teaching. As such, many teachers are starting to find creative and engaging ways to use Periscope in instruction by incorporating it into cultural lessons and target language practice. Here are some practical examples of Periscope for use in the classroom:

Guest Speakers: Through use of Periscope, teachers can invite guest speakers from the target language to share stories of culture, language, and history. Students can practice written communication by typing in questions in the target language into the chatbox.

Student-to-Student Sharing: Students can engage in authentic language practice by connecting with students in other language classrooms or in other countries. Students can alternate roles as broadcaster and viewer to get equal practice with speaking and listening and reading and writing of the target language.

Student Presentations: Periscope allows for the creation of an authentic audience for student presenters. Students can demonstrate a skill, share a talent, give a school tour, or present on a created project simply by creating a “scope” for the world to view. Recorded broadcasts can be saved and added to language portfolios also to demonstrate learning and document progress.

“Travel” the World: Periscope offers students a unique view into the lives of citizens of the world. Students can take “virtual field trips” to international destinations to experience cultural events, museum tours, festivals, restaurants experiences, and more! Teachers can request sharing by their own personal contacts or by exploring the network of world language teachers currently using Periscope as shared on social media with the hashtags #PeriscopeEDU and #PeriscopeTeachers.

With powerful opportunities for networked collaboration and sharing, Periscope can empower student voice and allow students to see the world through a new perspective as global participants. By using innovative digital technologies like Periscope, students can access new learning landscapes to become creators of content and facilitators of their own learning in our connected world.

As co-founders of Calliope Global, Jennifer and Fran seek to empower teachers and students to prepare for their futures in a world that will prioritize creativity, innovation, and collaboration. By connecting international classrooms, they hope to serve as a catalyst that will inspire transformational learning and teaching through global projects, travel, and professional development. Jennifer and Fran often speak and write on edtech tools for language learning and communication. To learn more about Jennifer and Fran, please visit www.calliopeglobal.com, and find them on Twitter at @JenWilliamsEdu & @ProfeEdTech.
What’s New?

Designing Performance Tasks: A Step-by-Step Guide

Writing a quality performance assessment can be a challenge if you aren’t sure where to begin. In The Keys to Assessing Language Performance, Paul Sandrock provides excellent guidance on creating assessments that focus on developing students’ proficiency. I attempt here to distill my interpretation of the essential elements of Sandrock’s guidance.

Before writing a performance task itself, I always remind myself of the proficiency target that’s been established for the course I’m teaching. Knowing the target grounds me in the appropriate level of challenge for students and helps prevent me from constructing a performance task that might be out of bounds. Setting proficiency targets is easy. Greg Duncan explains that setting proficiency targets is a matter of hours of quality instruction in the target language. Once students have accumulated between 135 and 150 hours of instruction, says Duncan, the proficiency target should be set to Novice High. After accumulating an additional 135 to 150 hours, the target should be set to Intermediate Low. The next two annual increments will be Intermediate Mid again (because it takes longer to move through this level). The NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements and The ACTFL Performance Descriptors for Language Learners are useful resources for understanding the parameters of student performance as well as how well students should be able to use language at each of the ranges of performance.

Once the proficiency target has been set, I move on to determining the mode of communication (interpersonal, interpretive, or presentational) and the language function. Functions describe what someone can do with language, and are very global: asking and answering questions, expressing feelings, retelling a series of events, etc. I find it very useful to determine language functions before digging into the Can-Do statements because the functions help me keep my focus narrow. The truth is that I generally have a task prompt in mind from the start, but I restrain myself and walk through each of these steps methodically.

Once I have done all of the setup work, I then write the prompt formally. For me, setting up the work in this way keeps me focused on elements that I might otherwise neglect if I move too quickly to get the job done. As I write a prompt, I ask myself the questions that Sandrock recommends: Is the context an interesting and challenging one? Is the communication purposeful? Is the task authentic, one that a language speaker might actually need to complete in the real world? Does the prompt answer, at least in part, the unit’s essential question? Does answering the prompt require students to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the target culture? If you don’t have one of these elements yet, keep working. You can always go back later and make adjustments. As Helena Curtain advises, “Don’t sacrifice the good for the perfect!”

Next, I write specific, measurable Can-Do statements based on the language function. For example, if the function is expressing similarities and differences, the Can-Do statements for the Novice-High range might be: Describe similarities and differences of two photographs of schools with short sentences and simple adjectives. Putting the “how well” in my Can-Do statements makes performance standard clear to both teacher and students.

My final step is developing a rubric for scoring the task. I first describe what represents a solid performance, i.e., “Meets Expectations,” referring back to my proficiency target and Can-Do statements. After designing lots of rubrics with lots of different descriptors over the years, I have settled on rubrics using the following ranges: Strong Performance, Meets Expectations, Approaching Expectations, Does Not Meet Expectations. I always choose from the following categories for my rubrics: Comprehensibility, Function, Text Type, Language Control, Vocabulary Use, Communication Strategies, Cultural Understanding. I used to write rubrics with all of the categories, but have learned to follow the advice of Donna Clementi and Laura Terrill, “You may choose as many different criteria as you like, but remember that simple is best.” Targeting a few categories for performance makes grading easier and faster. It makes providing descriptive feedback to students easier and faster, and it increases the likelihood that students will improve their performance based on the feedback.

The purpose of language learning is to be able to engage in purposeful communication. Good performance tasks provide teachers and students with a tool to help students attain this goal. My take on developing performance tasks works for me. You may discover that working in a different order works for you. Ultimately, what’s most important is the focus on creating interesting, meaningful contexts for students to demonstrate what they are learning and for teachers to help guide them through the continuum of language proficiency.

Submitted by Tim Eagan.

Anno Nuovo!
Progetto Nuovo

Over the past few months, members of MITA have been meeting to discuss a pilot project for our students. Steven LaPeruta introduced the group to a model that was used in New Jersey and which MITA will modify.

The project is called Il Giorno Dell’Italiano 2016. It will be held at Northeastern University on Friday, April 8, 2016 from 9:30 AM - 12:30 PM. This is a special day for our students to celebrate the Italian language and culture with peers. The theme of the day is Le festività e sagre in Italia. As with everything Italian, it will involve fun, food, friends and creativity.

Please join the activities on April 8 by taking a group of students and participating in the fun. Each group of students will perform a different original skit, song or poem. There will be prizes awarded.

The deadline to enter is March 4, 2016. MITA members should be receiving an email with more details about the event.

Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new.
Albert Einstein

Submitted by Anna Tirone
The Stranger is a first person account of an emotionally vacant Frenchman who commits a murder for, seemingly, no reason. The enigmatic work of Albert Camus, a paradigm of post-World War II existentialism, calls for a close reading. Does our anti-hero really act without any motivation? Why does our anti-hero refuse to accept absolution from a caring priest? And why does our anti-hero hope to be greeted with “cries of hatred” when he is executed? These questions, between two teachers, became the base of a collaborative effort between two departments.

“...the trigger gave” may have failed to capture the anti-hero’s motivation, to extent that there is such motivation. Was something important lost in translation? What was needed was a close reading of the critical passage where the anti-hero of the work describes the moments before a murder he commits. In the English translation, it is unclear if this anti-hero is claiming responsibility for the act, or if he is describing some strange force that caused him to kill in cold blood.

Each of the three translations was read to Dr. Noonan’s Philosophy Literature Class by the A.P. French students that produced them. These differences were discussed at length by Mr. Trotin. In the end, most of the Philosophy Literature students concluded that Camus purposely gives us an anti-hero that acts without any real motivation – even in the case of murder.

Mr. Trotin's description of post-World War II France was enlightening for both the students and Dr. Noonan. The level of detail he was able to bring to his short lecture went a long way towards explaining why the existentialism born of this period emphasizes cruelty and absurdity of the human condition. Also, the A.P. French students reported that they enjoyed translating a French classic and that the exercise of comparing those translations was helpful. The differences in those translations were, on one level, slight; however, as made clear in class, these differences in nuance and emphasis can greatly affect the philosophical interpretation of a work such as The Stranger.

Following are a few quotes from the students:

“I thought linking the French translation with the material gave a broader understanding of the topics.”

“The sessions touched upon questions and situations that a teenager doesn’t typically think about even though they are important topics.”

“...it allows for greater insight into the reason the book was written, and some of its main themes.”

“The overlap of literary analysis skills from English class and French skills from French gave us a whole new perspective.”

Written by Gregory Cervenak
Westborough High School

Zaption!

I learned about Zaption at last year’s MaFLA Summer Institute, and I have loved using it this year as I focus on incorporating more authentic video resources into my French classes. Zaption allows the teacher to download videos from YouTube, edit them, and embed comments (definitions, explanations) and/or questions (multiple choice, fill in, open-ended) for students. After creating a final product, the teacher gives students a link and they can watch the video and answer the questions independently on their own device. The teacher can also track which students have completed the assignment and how many questions were answered correctly and incorrectly. Although some of the functions on the site are for paid users, I have found that the free features are more than sufficient for my needs. This site is incredibly easy to use, it allows teachers to “adjust the task” and not the document for students at different levels, and it’s fun!

Submitted by Kathy Turner

The new year stands before us, like a chapter in a book, waiting to be written. We can help write that story by setting goals.

Melody Beattie
What’s New?

A New Generation - Passing The Torch

“And next year’s words await another voice.
And to make an end is to make a beginning.”

T S Eliot

Throughout the ages, while different peoples and cultures have bid adieu to the old year and ushered in the new one with various and time-honored customs and celebrations, one main premise has continued to serve as a connection across borders and creeds; a new year offers promise and possibility. It is a time of optimism and hope for what is yet to be. So too, will this ring true for foreign language students at Tyngsborough High School as classes resume this January 2016. The hallways and classrooms will remain the same as they were before the holiday break, but, for me personally, one main element will be missing. After 40 years of teaching French and Spanish in the Tyngsborough Public Schools, I will not be there to greet my students. It is with pride that I can say how rewarding it has been to work collaboratively throughout these many years with colleagues and administrators who strongly support foreign languages. From the development of a myriad of international travel and service learning opportunities to a newly expanded K-12 foreign language programming vision, the future holds great promise and possibility for Tyngsborough Public School students. The goal, shared by all, is to equip students with the conceptual tools, linguistic capabilities, and cultural knowledge, necessary to address the defining issues of the 21st century.

Absent my voice in the new year, the foreign language department at Tyngsborough will competently move this goal forward with the resounding voices of Sarah Silva and Corrine Turner. Sarah and Corrine, both MaFLA members and recent graduates of Salem State University, work diligently to help their students move along the path to greater communicative proficiency. Authentic documents are their mainstay. They prepare lessons that are contextualized, individualized, infused with technology as well as a variety of instructional strategies that promote maximum target language use among students.

So, because to make an end is to make a beginning, I turn the page knowing that students at Tyngsborough High School will hear these new voices spoken by talented foreign language professionals who will help them move forward in their foreign language studies.

Maryann Brady, Department Chair (retired), Tyngsborough High School

Activity Of The Week

Original Writing Revisited

Dr. Edward M. Zarrow
tzarrow@westwood.k12.ma.us

Format: Individual

Target Audience: This activity is designed to be used in a second / foreign language classroom with minimal facilitation by the second / foreign language teacher.

Purpose: In order for students to move through the ACTFL foreign language proficiency continuum more efficiently, they must be cognizant of their linguistic development and have ownership of their improvement and ability to use more advanced linguistic structures throughout the process. The following activity allows students to work on their creative writing skills – something that they are being asked to do less and less of outside of the foreign language classroom, especially at the high school level. Students will build a story over time, adding newer grammatical structures as they go to the same material. For me, this is an ideal activity to use before and after a vacation, a prolonged break, or an extended unit.

Time: Variable

Materials: Any image of the teacher’s choosing which will prompt students to tell an original story in the target language. The image may be projected and / or provided to students with space to source new vocabulary and write out a story. At a later time, the same image must be provided again with additional space to write.

Directions:
1. Present students with an image. Ask them to source all of the familiar vocabulary as a class and keep track of student input. Ask them what they see! Have the students write down as many nouns, adjectives, and verbs that describe the action taking place. At the teacher’s discretion, add / share with students new and unfamiliar vocabulary.

2. Give the students 5-10 minutes (although longer is possible for advanced or particularly motivated students) to write an original story using as many of the
vocabulary words they have just sourced as they can. Depending upon the level, they may write in the present or past. The teacher should circulate to assist with specific student questions about grammar and especially to see what kinds of common mistakes are being made by the group so that these can be addressed immediately and not become systemic. At the teacher’s discretion, student papers may be collected for review and returned to the students for correction. It is important that the student writing not be evaluated formally at this time. In any case, students should hold onto their writing.

3. After a new grammatical / linguistic concept has been introduced to the students, students should be instructed to rewrite their original paragraph; however, they must now use the new concept in their writing – whatever it may be. In my Latin classes, this is a particularly strong exercise when we learn the imperfect tense (students have to change all the verbs from present to imperfect) or relative clauses (students must use relative clauses rather than adjectives to describe nouns). Several positive things happen as a result. First, the writing is theirs, so the material is comprehensible to them, and they continue to catch and correct mistakes, often on their own. Second, students can immediately compare their two writings and take direct ownership of their improvement. And third, students are often buoyed by what they can express, and this moves from their writing into their interpretive reading, interpersonal speaking, etc.

4. (Optional) Teachers may again collect student writing for review. The teacher will often know quickly what needs to be retaught and what new linguistic structures have been mastered.

5. (Optional) Samples of student writing from the original and later writing exercises may be kept and filed by the teacher in order to provide subsequent evidence of student linguistic improvement.

What’s New?

Topic Of The Week:

Presentational Writing Improves Interpretive Reading

Dr. Edward M. Zarrow (tzarrow@westwood.k12.ma.us) teaches Latin at Westwood High School in Massachusetts. In addition to his language teaching and advocacy, he is the 2016 ACTFL Teacher of the Year.

For many years, I used to teach Latin in a traditional way. I prepared my students to read and interpret ancient texts, although I was never satisfied with their ability to read and comprehend a text that they had never seen, despite my best efforts. Over the past five years, as a result of using more active methods for teaching Latin and focusing on building student proficiency in writing, my students have shown marked improvement in their ability to comprehend unfamiliar, authentic reading passages. By making fluency with Latin writing, rather than exclusively reading, one of my principal goals for my students, they now demonstrate greater aptitude with Interpretive Reading long after they leave our program as well as greater retention of linguistic structures. The extended writing assignment described in this week’s Activity of the Week is one part of that.

This is an ideal activity for bridging a long unit or even a long vacation. I have had the most success with it in Latin II and beyond, when the students are making or have already made the transition in their Presentational Writing from novice high to intermediate low. For instance, shortly before the winter break, my students were shown a picture from a chapter we were going to read. As a class, we sourced familiar vocabulary and verbs that would help us to describe the content of the image, and we added some new words as well. Before we read anything from the chapter itself, I gave students some time to write their own story based on the picture – the goal of which was for them to use and internalize the new vocabulary. While they were writing, I was able to see what mistakes were systemic (naturally ones with the verb “to be” - argh!) and address them before they would become habitual. Some students volunteered to read their short stories to the class. We then set aside our original stories and read the actual chapter; it was remarkable how similar it was to what the students themselves had written. At any rate, we filed our stories for later.

In the chapter / unit, students were introduced to relative clauses. Once I was satisfied that they had learned all the forms they needed, students went back to their writing (which they hadn’t seen for about a week) and now added as many relative clauses to their original text as they could in order to describe the nouns in greater detail. Again, students were eager to read their passages aloud, and they were truly comprehensible! The two extended writing activities bridged the unit effectively, students had ownership of their new linguistic structures as well as their improvement, and even ones who can be somewhat challenging to motivate became active listeners. In the end, despite this being designed as a writing activity, there was actually a great deal of reading, speaking, and listening as well. I hope that you’ll give it a try! Let me know how it goes!

The joy of life comes from our encounters with new experiences, and hence there is no greater joy than to have an endlessly changing horizon, for each day to have a new and different sun.

Christopher McCandless
New Spirit Breeds New Initiatives

The MaFLA Proficiency Academy, Facebook groups, #langchat and #edchat on Twitter, and attendance at both state and national conferences have all had an impact on our department. Ideas and resources from all of these various professional development sources have brought about some changes in our curriculum. In this article, we would like to give you some insights about “what’s new at Monson High School.”

One of our new initiatives is the incorporation of authentic resources into our curriculum. In the past, authentic resources usually meant realia that department members brought back from travels to target language countries. With the availability of authentic resources now through the Internet and so much discussion on how to use them, we have really focused on utilizing a variety of these to support our curricular goals and our thematic units of study at all levels.

At level one, we have found that the students are still very capable of successfully completing an interpretive reading task targeted at their proficiency level. We used this activity to teach about Gloria Estefan. Most students had no prior knowledge of the singer/actress, so it was a great way of showing them how important context clues are. There’s not always a need to know every word in a text, as long as one can pick out the most important vocabulary.

We always begin our interpretive reading tasks with **Key Word Recognition**. This is important because it keeps the students from getting overwhelmed by larger texts with a lot of unfamiliar vocabulary. Most of the words in this section are cognates—but not all of them. What’s important in this section is to choose vocabulary that is essential for the students to grasp the main idea of the text. This gives students an idea as to what they should be looking for. We always ask the students to respond in English because we want to be sure that they understood the text, and we do not want their language boundaries to interfere with their ability to show us that.

We also used a news report on things to do in Miami. We created a list of words and phrases from the video, and then we added some words and phrases that did not appear in the video. The video is completely in Spanish, and the students--still with very limited vocabulary--were able to check off certain words and phrases that they heard while listening to the news cast. The students watched the video twice. Then, we went over all the words that were, indeed, in the video and listened again, pointing out some of the more difficult words that they may have missed.

Following the video, we then created category strips based on key vocabulary words in the video. For example, one category was “actividades acuáticas (aquatic activities),” so the students would place words like “el esquí acuático (water skiing)” underneath that category. This showed students that, despite their limited vocabulary, they can typically guess the meaning of many words that are similar to English words.

A second new initiative has been the incorporation of close reading activities. Frustrated with textbook readings which often didn’t engage the students and with readings
What’s New?

Based on what we learned as a department at the MaFLA Proficiency Academy this past summer, we have focused on creating realistic scenarios with all of our speaking as-

that didn’t necessarily connect well with our units of study we have focused on the creation of strong Interpretive activities for reading of authentic documents (of course). The format we are using for these readings has been taken from Implementing Integrated Performance Assessment by Bonnie Adair-Hauck, Eileen W. Glisan and Francis J. Troyan, an ACTFL publication. The below example is used in a unit we study about Mexico City and other large Latin American cities. The unit includes a discussion of some of the issues these cities face with overpopulation, traffic congestion and pollution.

One of the first authentic documents we look at is a video about Ecobici, a bike sharing system of transportation in Mexico City that has helped to alleviate some of the traffic and transportation problems and which allows citizens to get around the city easily and in a more timely fashion.

After discussing this we also learn that on Sunday in Mexico City the main street, Paseo de la Reforma, is closed off to vehicular traffic and people are encouraged to use it for cycling, walking, and roller blading. This leads to the topic of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. The close reading that is incorporated into this unit deals with El día mundial de la bicicleta (World Bicycle Day) and is based on an infographic which I found. It includes the following: main ideas, supplemental information, supporting details, guessing meaning from context, and inferences. It engages the students and is a great task to begin Interpersonal activities. Since the document is from 2011, we hope to update it this year and find another great interpretive task on this topic.

In our efforts, we are attempting to include readings that challenge the students but also want to incorporate some that allow the students to encounter success and gain confidence. To do this we look for authentic resources that incorporate some graphic help and/or some subtitles.

Another interpretive task/close reading which the above students were exposed to was much more challenging and focused on the árbol de la vida. The text was much more dense and the reading had no graphics to support it nor subtitles. The students also had very little or no prior knowledge of the topic. I was quite surprised when I saw how well the students responded to the more challenging text. They had developed through their earlier readings a persistence and confidence that they could work through the seemingly incomprehensible text and were pleasantly surprised at just how much they could understand. As we continue to gather and develop these interpretive tasks and incorporate them from the beginning levels up, we anticipate that we will find our students reaching higher levels of proficiency in reading.

The third initiative has been the re-assessment of the anchor speaking assessments for our units of study. Using ideas and information we learned at the MaFLA Proficiency Academy, we have re-worked the key speaking assessments at level 1. Here is an example of a speaking assessment that we created for the end of our preliminary unit:

Based on what we learned as a department at the MaFLA Proficiency Academy this past summer, we have focused on creating realistic scenarios with all of our speaking as-

You are traveling to Costa Rica with your Spanish class and you have just arrived at the Juan Santamaría International Airport in San José. Since you are with your class and none of you are family members, each student must stand in line and go through immigration individually. The female immigration worker does not know any English but needs information from you before you will be allowed to enter the country.

- Greet the immigration worker
- Tell her your name (be sure to spell it too because the worker is not very good with English names)
- Tell her where you are from
- State your nationality
- Tell her your passport number
- Tell her your date of birth
- Say goodbye
Ecuador Volunteer Trip

In August of 2015, I was fortunate enough to spend three weeks volunteering at the Yurak Allpa Zoológico (http://yurakallpazoologico.com), located in the Tarquí (Cuenca), Ecuador. This is an animal refuge originally started by Alberto Vele and his wife after witnessing mistreated animals in the area. Some of the animals at the zoo include ocelots, penguins, blue footed boobies, tapir, buffalo, deer, ostriches, yamalas (small deer), cuchuchos (coatis), a variety of birds, as well as monkeys, peacocks, and turtles. The shelter only receives donated animals; it never buys animals as the sale or purchase of wild animals is prohibited in Ecuador. The collection has grown from five deer and a capuchin monkey to its present size.

The project activities were coordinated by the staff of the zoo. Tasks included guiding educational tours, translating for guests, or supporting educational programs; animal feeding and management, supporting the animal enrichment programs, veterinary or prevention activities, and cleaning; grounds maintenance or planting and conservation of native species; and helping with maintenance and construction. Spanish language skills were required to participate in the program.

Along with volunteering, I was able to explore the cities of Cuenca and Quito and the Island Jambelí. I also visited the Mitad del Mundo, where the equator splits the northern and southern hemispheres; Pululahua, a town settled in a volcanic crevice; and Ingapirca, an Incan ruin in the Andes mountains.

Thanks to an AEIA grant and generous donations from our PAC and parents from the community, I was able to participate in this volunteer opportunity as part of the CADIP Organization. As a Spanish teacher, staying current with culture and language enables me to bring back a more authentic curriculum for my classes. Because

Last day at Yurak Allpa with Lenguitas the deer (venado)

Monson (cont.)

assessments. This helps the students to see the purpose for what they are learning/have learned. We also try to incorporate images that reflect the scenario to help set the tone and create a more positive mindset toward speaking assessments.

We still have a lot of work to complete and we need to re-assess at the end of the year the success of all of the above. Next year, we hope to continue to strengthen our curriculum by continuing with those new initiatives that have had the most positive impact on student learning. Want to hear more about our new initiatives? We will be discussing them at this year’s Proficiency Academy! See you there! Submitted by Ronie R. Webster and Timothy Chavez.

Mitad del Mundo

Pululahua

Ingapirca

News
of this opportunity, I am able to share specific vocabulary and grammatical constructs that are used in Ecuador and anecdotal information that enriches the vocabulary. For example, instead of just talking about houses, I can tell them what Ecuadorian food is like and show them pictures to compare and contrast it to our own culture. It is imperative that language teachers keep current because languages are fluid and always modernizing and changing.

In addition to my volunteer work, I was able to interview Ecuadorians about the topics from our Ecuador unit, which includes houses, throwing a party, and chores. This has helped me to strengthen my own knowledge base. I was also able to refresh and expand my knowledge of colloquialisms and idioms, particularly those that are specific to Ecuador. I learned about similarities and differences that Ecuadorians have to our own culture or to that of other Spanish speaking countries. I will be sharing ideas, video, photographs, and artifacts with my colleagues to help give more depth to our district's curriculum.

In the classroom, the students have been able to learn about Ecuador in a more authentic way. I was able to show them photos from my trip to Ecuador, teach them colloquial phrases, and pass around authentic materials (alpaca wool items, paintings, etc). I have found that this has made the students more excited about learning about Ecuador and about traveling the world in general.

Submitted by Lauren Hayes
Andover West Middle School

Attention All German Teachers

The 6th annual Deutschfest will be held on Saturday, March 19th at Veasey Park in Groveland. It is a fun filled full immersion day for German students of Middle and High School age from around the state sponsored by the Massachusetts chapter of AATG. All teachers of German are welcome to register a group of students, provided that you are actively contributing to the organization and running of the event as well. For more information about last year’s event check out the archived Spring 2015 newsletter or feel free to contact Britta Roper (roper.britta@gmail.com) or the Mass chapter of AATG. Become involved and bring your students to this event, last year we brought eighty-seven students from 9 schools together. How many will it be this year?

Submitted by Britta Roper

Annual Celebration of International Food, Languages and Community

For more than 30 years the Foreign Language Department of the Masconomet Regional School District has hosted the International Dinner. What started as a potluck dinner with 200 attendees has grown into a huge annual event with 550 students and family members enjoying foods from around the world.

This wonderful community celebration brings high school and middle school foreign language students, their families and faculty together to raise funds to support several of the department’s initiatives. Over the years funds have helped support exchange programs to Spain, France, China and Germany, field trips, and cultural events such as a performance by a Chinese artist. Proceeds from the International Dinner also fund an annual scholarship for a graduating senior planning to continue his/her study of a foreign language. Funds are collected through the sale of dinner tickets and raffle tickets. Each year many local families, businesses and faculty members donate great prizes for the raffle.

Student-musicians from the Masconomet Music Department entertain the guests throughout the evening and other student volunteers help serve the food. Examples of student projects are on display as well as videos from past exchange trips. Last year for the first time, students got their instant photos taken with international props at a photo booth. It was a big hit!

While dinner is being enjoyed, judges choose the winners of the International Cookie Contest. The cookies, which must come from a country other than the United States, are served after dinner as dessert. The evening ends with the announcement of the Cookie Contest winners and the raffle winners.

If you would like more information about how to plan an International Dinner celebration at your own school, feel free to contact Jeanne O’Hearn at johearn@masconomet.org.

Submitted by Jeanne O’Hearn

We keep moving forward, opening new doors, and doing new things, because we’re curious and curiosity keeps leading us down new paths.

Walt Disney
How linguistically and culturally prepared for the world outside of the classroom are your students after four or five years of the study of a foreign language? Are the activities that they have been exposed to preparing them for the tasks that they will encounter in the target environment? This article will explore the importance of authenticity in the foreign language curriculum: its definition, texts, materials, tasks, advantages, and disadvantages. The self-evaluation questionnaire at the end of each section asks the teachers to explore their own personal feelings, thoughts, and opinions about the topic. There are no right or wrong answers.

**Definition**

According to Webster’s New World Dictionary, “authentic implies reliability and trustworthiness, stressing that the thing considered is in agreement with fact or actuality, that it is genuine and real.” To determine the authenticity of a text or task, the L2 teacher needs to ask:

“Is this something that a German, a Spaniard, a Mexican, or a Frenchman would read or do?” If the answer is no, the teacher needs to decide how to incorporate authenticity in the curriculum. For the purposes of this article, authentic oral and written texts are those created by native speakers for native speakers and authentic tasks are those functions of language that are typically found in a native speaker’s daily communicative activities.

**Classroom Language Vs. Authentic Language**

If we are to prepare our students to converse in L2 outside of the classroom, it is important that they also engage in spontaneous language in real-life situations in the classroom rather than mostly engage in language activities designed to practice vocabulary and grammar. In many cases, the students speak to practice speaking because the teacher tells them to in order to get a good classroom participation grade. The teacher-initiated topic of conversation is very rarely of great interest to the students, does not fill an information gap, and has no intrinsic value. In the common question and answer format, it is usually tied into whatever activity the teacher has planned: homework correction, reading assignment, individual project, etc. Too often, the teacher concentrates on how correctly the students speak rather than pays attention to what they have said. Authentic language is spontaneous, arbitrary, and unrehearsed and what is said is potentially interesting to the participants. People speak to get something, to solve a problem, to reach a decision, to provide information, or to make a social contact.

**Self Evaluation**

Do you conduct classroom management in the target language?
Do you plan activities that encourage students to initiate the conversation or do most of the activities cause the students to react orally to something you have said?
Do you encourage the students to speak about topics that interest them on a regular basis?
Do your students speak in the target language because they want to or because you want them to?
If authentic communication happens when speakers tell their listeners something new that they don’t already know, how much communication actually takes place in your classroom on a weekly basis?
Can you categorize the type of speaking that happens in your classroom?
Is the motivation to speak intrinsic (personal interest) or extrinsic (a good grade)?
What is more important, accuracy or fluency? Which happens more in your classroom, interpersonal or presentational communication?
Do you expect your students to speak the target language with you both in and out of the classroom?

**Authentic Texts**

According to Lonergan, (1) there are three types of texts that L2 teachers use in the classroom: created, semi-authentic, and authentic. In beginning and intermediate classes, students are usually exposed to the language of created texts, i.e., those textbooks created for native speakers to achieve pre-determined curricular goals: they contain the targeted vocabulary, grammar, and culture to be learned as well as activities designed to learn the material. In some instances, students are also exposed to semi-authentic texts, i.e., those based on original language materials, rewritten with a simplified vocabulary and grammatical structure, adapted to fit curricular needs. Hopefully, in advanced classes, students are mostly exposed to authentic texts, i.e., texts created by native speakers for native speakers of the language. The latter provide “real life” linguistic input as well as valuable cultural information for our students.

**Self Evaluation**

Do you find it easy or difficult to incorporate authentic texts in your beginning classes?
Do you use authentic texts as a way to increase vocabulary, to illustrate grammar rules, and/or to teach culture?
How many authentic passages are there in your textbook? How would you categorize them?
Do you make it a point to include the authentic passages found in your textbook or do you tend to bypass them because of lack of time?
Are your intermediate classes based primarily on a commercially created textbook or on semi-authentic and authentic materials?
What percentage of time is spent on authentic materials in your advanced classes?
Do you have a library of authentic texts in your classroom, department, or school?
How often do you read authentic texts in the language that you teach?

**Authentic Materials**

According to Ji Lingzhu and Zhang Yuanyuan, (2) authentic language materials are listening, visual, and reading materials created by native speakers of a language for native speakers of the language. The listening skill can be developed by means of TV commercials, news clips, movies, songs, and documentaries. Authentic printed materials to develop reading skills include newspapers, magazines, comic books, menus, tourist information brochures, advice columns, TV guides, and movie advertisements. Visual materials to stimulate the speaking skill include photographs, paintings, pictures from magazines, postcards, posters, and stamps. Used efficiently, authentic materials will help to develop the four language skills that are culturally appropriate and accurate.
Striving For Authenticity

Self Evaluation

Do you think that using L2 newspaper articles or song lyrics to show examples of thematic vocabulary and grammar rules is a good use of those articles or lyrics?
Do you use the content of newspaper or magazine articles as a springboard for discussion?
Do you play L2 music in your classroom? What do you do with it other than just listen?
Do you have a collection of up-to-date videos depicting the L2 culture? Do you focus on the 3Ps when showing them?
Do you engage your students in compare and contrast activities based on those videos?
When showing a foreign language movie, do you prefer those with English subtitles or not? Explain.
Do the posters that you display around your classroom depict authentic or stereotypical scenes of the L2 country?

Authentic Tasks

According to Loyola, (3) “When dreaming up new activities, our main focus should always be authenticity. If we make activities genuine, our students will be much more inclined to participate, acquiring new knowledge through the process. Many language teachers think that being authentic means decorating their classrooms with flags and other souvenirs collected through their travels. But true authenticity comes from the activities we use during class time, leaving an impact on the communicative skills of our students.” The communicative tasks that we plan for the students should reflect as closely as possible those language tasks that are used in real life.

The following achievement-type activities are typical of those that are found in L2 classes:
true/false multiple choice spell follow the model
repeat recite fill in the blank memorize
state the fact conjugate make negative translate
make a list answer the question state the rule state the exceptions
complete the sentence give the correct form change one word for another

Those skill-getting activities are designed to learn vocabulary and grammar and do not prepare students to survive in an authentic environment because native speakers commonly engage in language tasks that include the following:
give personal answers prove a point seek information
accept/decline invitation explain reason write a resume
demonstrate knowledge write a poem tell a story
summarize paraphrase compare/contrast
give personal answers explain reason deny
agree/disagree state/explain opinion, thoughts, comments
state/explain opinion, thoughts, comments

Authentic tasks are those that impart information in a way that is spontaneous and unprepared and in which the content is more important than the form.

Self Evaluation

How does answering 10 questions about something you have just read prepare you to discuss the merits of the text with a friend?
When listening to a song, do you focus on the verb tenses used or do you focus on the ideas expressed?
When reading a newspaper article, do you conduct a true/false activity with a friend or do you summarize it for that friend or discuss its effects on you?
When someone asks you a question, do you always answer in complete sentences?
When was the last time that someone asked you to give the feminine form of an adjective or asked you to state a demonstrative pronoun?
How many of the activities in your textbook do you think will prepare your students to carry on a meaningful conversation with a native speaker of the language?

Advantages and Disadvantages

According to Daniela Tamo, (4) there are advantages and disadvantages in striving for authenticity in the classroom. Some of the advantages are as follows:

1. Students are exposed to the real world of communication.
2. Authentic materials are quick, easy, and plentiful to find.
3. Students derive a sense of achievement.
4. Materials are up-to-date, topical, and relevant.
5. Students are exposed to various language styles, including informal language.
6. Students can read for pleasure.

On the other hand, some of the disadvantages are as follows:

7. The text may have unfamiliar language and grammar.
8. There are no accompanying prepared lessons or tests.
9. Authentic materials contain idiosyncratic speech.
10. Authentic materials contain incorrect language.
11. Authentic materials may be culturally biased.
12. Current events become easily outdated.
13. The text may have irrelevant vocabulary.

On the plus side, authentic materials will prepare the students to cope with the language in its natural setting by exposing them to various accents, pronunciations, writing styles, and language functions as opposed to the controlled language found in carefully scripted textbooks. On the other hand, unless used effectively, authentic materials can immerse the students in language that is overly difficult and above their head. The teacher needs to choose carefully those materials that will supplement the curriculum and introduce interesting topics whose vocabulary and structure conform to Krashen's Input + 1 Hypothesis. (5) Used efficiently, authentic materials will help to develop the four language skills that are culturally appropriate and accurate.
Striving For Authenticity

Self Evaluation
Which of the following authentic L2 materials have you used in your classroom?  
Newspapers  
never  sometimes  often  always
Magazines  
never  sometimes  often  always
Videos  
never  sometimes  often  always
TV commercials  
never  sometimes  often  always
News clips  
never  sometimes  often  always
Movies  
never  sometimes  often  always
Songs  
never  sometimes  often  always
Documentaries  
never  sometimes  often  always
Comic books/strips  
never  sometimes  often  always
Menus  
never  sometimes  often  always
TV guides  
never  sometimes  often  always
Movie ads  
never  sometimes  often  always
Internet articles  
never  sometimes  often  always
Catalogs  
never  sometimes  often  always

Planning for Authentic Instruction
According to Newmann and Wehlage (6), teachers need to plan instruction that will guarantee success beyond the classroom by creating an environment wherein students use disciplined inquiry to construct meaning and produce knowledge, products, and performances that have value or meaning beyond success in school. They have identified the following five criteria necessary for authentic instruction: higher-order thinking, depth of knowledge, connectedness to the world beyond the classroom, substantive conversation, and social support for student achievement. To be considered as authentic, they distinguish between achievement that is meaningful and significant and that which is trivial and useless.

The following types of activities are considered trivial and useless:
- You need to know this for the test.
- Skip a line between each sentence.
- Restrict your essay to three pages.
- How do you form the future tense of regular verbs?
- Include three irregular feminine adjectives in your dialogue.

The following types of activities are considered meaningful and significant:
- What would you say in the following situation?
- Show three cultural differences between the French and the Americans.
- Create a clothing ad showing the prices in euros and in the equivalent American dollars.
- As a Spanish major, write your letter of application in Spanish for the available Spanish teacher position in your hometown.

Self Evaluation
Can you list examples showing the differences between lower-level and higher-level thinking? WHICH IS MORE PREVALENT IN YOUR CLASS?
Do you usually lead the students to the answers or do you encourage them to discover them themselves?
How deep is the student knowledge of the concepts that you teach? Can they apply those concepts to new situations?
Are your students taught certain concepts just to do well on their tests or are they encouraged to apply them to the L2 world whose language they are learning?
How substantive is the conversation that takes place in your classroom? IS IT MAINLY THE RECIPIATION OF FACTS OR ARE STUDENTS ENCOURAGED TO SHARE IDEAS, EXPRESS OPINIONS, AND QUESTION ONE ANOTHER?
Do you encourage your students to take risks and to respect one another’s points of view?
Do you have high expectations of everyone or are some of the students shut out of the class participation because of their behavior or lack of success?

Conclusion
Incorporating authenticity into the foreign language curriculum will enable students to engage in realistic conversations, to read native-level texts, and to listen to native broadcasts with more confidence and ease than when working only with created materials designed for those learning the language. Exposure to authentic materials and language tasks will prepare them for the native-type tasks that native speakers of a language engage in on a daily basis.

References
2. Ji Lingzhu and Zhang Yuanyuan . The Use of Authentic Materials in Teaching EFL Listening http://www.hltmag.co.uk/ aug10/mart03.htm

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

Author’s note
The ideas expressed in this article were first published in my “Sound Bites for Better Teaching” column, published in the National Capital Language Resource Center’s newsletter “The Language Resource.”
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 2017 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.

2016 MaFLA Elaine G. Batting Memorial Scholarship Application

Name: ___________________________________________  Email: _____________________________

Home Address: ___________________________________  Phone: _____________________________

School Name: _________________________________________  Phone: _____________________________

School Address: _______________________________________

Classes taught in 2015-2016 ______________________________________________________________

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, 2016.

Send completed application packet to:

Deb Heaton  Email:  Dheaton@comcast.net
80 School Street
Lexington, MA  02421

The successful applicant will be notified by April 30, 2016.
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)

2016 Helen G. Agbay New Teacher Graduate Study Scholarship Application Form

Name: ___________________________________________ Email: __________________________

Home Address: ______________________________________ Phone: __________________________

School Name: _________________________________________ Phone: __________________________

School Address:  ______________________________________________________________________

Classes taught in 2015-2016  ______________________________________________________________

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, 2016 to:

Nicole Sherf
43 Ralph Road
Marblehead, MA 01945

The successful applicant will be notified by June 15, 2016.
Cemanahuac/MaFLA Award

Are you looking to improve your proficiency in Spanish? Are you a French/German/Italian 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 nineteenth 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 $1105.00. The recipient can attend Cemanahuac any time during 2016, 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 2015-2016 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.

2016 Cemanahuac Scholarship Application Form

*Please print or type*

Name:________________________________________ Email: ______________________________

Home Address: __________________________________________ Phone:_________________

School Name:________________________________________ Phone:_________________

School Address:____________________________________________________________________

Classes taught in 2015-2016: __________________________________________________________________

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, 2016**, to:

**Ronie R. Webster**, 41 Glenn Drive, Wilbraham, MA 01095-1439

The winning candidate will be notified by April 30, 2016.
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, 2016.

New Teacher Commendation Application Form

Please print or type

Name:________________________________________________  Email: _______________________________

Home Address: _________________________________________  Phone: ________________

School Name: __________________________________________  Phone: ________________

School Address: _____________________________________________________________________________

Classes taught in 2015-2016: __________________________________________________________________

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

Submit the application form and supporting materials by March 31, 2016, to:

Nicole Sherf
43 Ralph Road
Marblehead, MA 01945

The successful applicant will be notified by April 30, 2016.
MaFLA Past Presidents’ Awards

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 2015-2016)
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: Britta Roper, 42 Northwoods Road, Groton, MA 01458 Email: roper.britta@gmail.com

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 2015-2016 certificates is May 15, 2016.

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>
<th>Language(s)</th>
<th>Course(s)</th>
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II. Award for Leadership (High School):

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<th>Course(s)</th>
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Nominator’s Name: ___________________________________ Membership Expires: __________________________
School: ___________________________________ Phone: __________________________
School Address: ________________________________________________________________
Email: ___________________________________ Signature: __________________________

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

DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF NOMINATIONS: May 15, 2016
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