MaFLA’s 50th ‘Jubilee’ Conference

Languages Transform Individuals into Communities brought together almost 900 educators in our new venue (Springfield) to improve our craft. The level of enthusiasm for collaboration was high, especially since last year ACT-FL’s annual convention was held in Boston in lieu of our conference. With dozens of sessions and workshops to choose from in language-based and pedagogy strands, attendees created their own individual schedules that fit their professional development needs. Here are some highlights from the conference.

The New App

Trying to find where the member’s reception in “Mahogany” is? Check out the map section on the app. Looking to connect with someone you met at a session? Message people within the app. Hoping to download resources from a presentation you couldn’t attend? Documents are loaded on app session pages. Itching to suggest a session for Best of MaFLA? Feedback questions in the app make data collection easy. Group discussions, linked social media, and polls opened up connections among all attendees. Beyond basic scheduling, the app also introduced gamification to our Conference. By meeting board members, checking out the expo hall, attending sessions, swinging by the advocacy booth, and completing announced challenges, attendees racked up points towards one of five spots on the leaderboard. Congratulations to Elizabeth L, Patricia S, and Adrianne B, our top three winners! Thinking about coming next year but don’t have a smartphone? The app is also available through your computer’s web browser.

The New Location

Thirty miles west of our traditional Sturbridge conference center you’ll find a recently upgraded hotel with good food, comfortable beds, and enough spaces for all MaFLA’s incredible receptions, meals, workshops, and sessions. While breaking from the norm can be challenging, the Sheraton Monarch Place Springfield staff were attentive to our wants and needs. From Friday’s scrumptious tiramisu to the yummy covers of our beds, diving into the Sheraton experience proved worth the transition. The new location is only 20 minutes beyond the old -- still commutable for many east-coasters, but maybe next year will be the year that you stay at the hotel for the full conference experience. Even with our new location, eighty percent of attendees came from all over New England, states as far as Utah, and countries as far as Italy.

National & Local Presenters

Rita Oleksak, Thomas Sauer, Ted Zarrow, Señor Wooly, Julien Suaudeau and Alvino Fantini (to name a few big names in the world of language and culture education) offered their expertise on pedagogy topics from Promoting a Student-Driven Classroom to Planning Like an Assessor and from Student Evidence to Exploring Intercultural Communicative Competencies. Local sought-after presenters including Joshua Cabral, Kara Jacobs, Arianne Down, and Nicole Sherf rounded out our workshops with topics like new teacher training, grading, and target language use. Twenty three-, four-, and six-hour workshops on a wide variety of topics provided the opportunity for teachers to learn the material, work with it, and put it to use - modeling what we do with our students daily in the classroom. The 40+ pedagogy, 10 exhibitor, and 60+ language-specific sessions brought in specialists from all over, allowing teachers to be immersed in language while learning how to positively change our classes.

Jubilee Year

After fifty years of experience, MaFLA knows how to pull it off - and well. Delighted to offer quality professional development, the MaFLA Board of Directors was joined by half of our Past Presidents to celebrate this special year. Well attended traditional (member’s reception) and new (Zumba!) events pave the path to conference proficiency; success is knowing that each attendee learned how to better impact student learning. Membership is up, award nomination will be open again in the spring, more events planned for the new year; there is no post-conference lull. Don’t forget to fill out the PDP forms for the sessions you attended, hold onto your badge, share your learning, and check out the newly designed site, mafla.org, for news on next year’s conference:

Learn a new language:
Expand your mind.

Expand your heart.
Expand your world!”
MaFLA Board of Directors 2017

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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

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

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

Taking advantage of your MaFLA membership this year, you have enjoyed outstanding professional development events: the Core Practices Seminars, Diversity Day, Proficiency Academy, and the Summer Institute! Listen to our members who tell us “This is the PD! I love the presenters and meeting other teachers with the same interests. We have formed a group to continue our learning!” (Summer Institute participant). Come experience the learning, the camaraderie, and the sheer fun of being a MaFLA member!

I have said it before, and I will say it again – never has a Latin teacher received as much love as I have in the history of the Latin language. I say this legitimately, as during my experience as the ACTFL teacher of the year, not only was I able to visit the White House at an event honoring teachers, but of far greater significance to my Bostonian wife and her family, I was recognized at Fenway Park as the MVE, wearing a hat that my father-in-law designed and sold outside the park in 1978.

It was a distinct honor to serve ACTFL, and in this address, I would like to share with you a few highlights from the year, some thoughts about what the experience confirmed, as well as an important message that if we are to see languages on the rise, and if we are to lead with languages, we must all be advocates.

In 2016, our regionals began with NECTFL in New York City whose organizers boldly conceived to begin the conference itself with a panel of students, five girls from area schools who all spoke about the value of being inter-culturally competent in a connected global society. It was a poignant reminder of the impact that truly passionate language teachers can have upon their students as well as how receptive our students can be to messages of humility, tolerance, and acceptance, even when not made explicitly.

My experience in Washington, D.C. is one that I am still trying to process. I met with both Senator Warren and Senator Markey in person, as well as three of our Representatives, to discuss appropriations for world language programming as well as the language of the ESSA, and I was part of an ACTFL leadership group that met with then Secretary of Education John King Jr. – suffice it to say that ACTFL had unprecedented access to the executive branch that year, and we found a ready and outspoken ally for our cause – something which he remains today though not in the same capacity. The organizers of the Southwest conference had the foresight to schedule their event in Honolulu – even more remarkable than the weather was the fact that everywhere I went, even in the tourist Mecca of Honolulu, the Hawaiian language was being spoken everywhere – a resounding and powerful reminder of what can happen when native populations take deliberate action to preserve their language and with it, their heritage. At every event, I was humbled by the fact that so many districts were driven by a vision of multilingualism, and how world languages and dual immersion programs like the ones here in Massachusetts are being used to close the achievement gap – or perhaps the more aptly named “opportunity gap” faced by so many students living in poverty. If we want to address the opportunity gap, we need more language in schools, not less.

In the remaining free time that I did not have, while I was pretending to teach my five classes with five preps, I wrote letters and (on at least one occasion) picked a fight on social media in defense of Latin. I wrote articles in which I argued that coding and computer programming should never fulfill a world language requirement and completely misses the point of why the study of world languages is a critical part of a 21st century education. I staged an intervention at the Harvard school of Ed, where I politely took to task professors who wrote a book about 21st century education without mentioning world languages at all, testified before a MA House committee in support of the Seal of Biliteracy, tried to manage the PD of Latin teachers throughout New England as the president of the Classical Association of Massachusetts and Coordinator of Educational programs for CANE, and returned to Washington D.C. one final time to attend a symposium on multi-literacy hosted by the Department of Education & Office of English as a Second Language where I argued that the goals of English language learners and world language students are inextricably linked and we have to do more to support one another.

As I traveled and witnessed the exceptional things that so many of my colleagues were doing, especially ones lacking the resources that my district has, I was truly humbled, and it confirmed for me that when I shifted my Latin program years ago from a traditional one to one that espoused the proficiency model, I had made the right choice. I don’t care what language you teach – it’s about proficiency: what our students can do with the language, what they cannot do yet, and the interventions we introduce to get them there – the ability to communicate and comprehend increasingly complex ideas with increasing accuracy is tied to our core practices – the use of the target language, engagement with authentic materials, etc., and in the process we cultivate in our students a more critical understanding of and readiness to participate in a modern global society. However, there are some other things that might not receive their due consideration before we jump right in.

What if a student just isn’t ready? How can we recognize the apprehensions that our students have, especially when it comes to writing and speaking, and find ways to manage them? Are we really promoting a “Growth Mindset” for language learning? While posters advocating for a shift from the fixed to a growth mindset highlight the differences in working through challenges (i.e. instead of “This is too hard” say “This is going to take time and effort”), to date this material never includes languages and language learning. I suggest that we model for our students a new way of thinking – in-
stead of allowing them to say, "I can't learn languages," model for them, "I am on the pathway to proficiency." We need to impart to students that proficiency and perfection are not the same, that mistakes are not only common but essential, and that they should focus more on what they can do rather than what they cannot.

It's not about letting students off the hook – it's about helping them understand that working towards proficiency is a gradual process.

In addition to students working towards proficiency, they must have ownership of the proficiency itself. What they can do with a language needs to matter to them. This approach is not the same as the student-centered model. We can put our students at the center of virtually any activity. But that does not mean that they are motivated, and it does not mean that they are always learning and growing. What students can do with a language has to matter to them, not us. They must have ownership of what they can do with language. The strongest positive relationships of trust that we can build with our students are based upon reasonable freedom and choice. The best teachers that I ever had, or have ever met for that matter, didn't simply put students at the center; rather, they made their students part of the process. These teachers were risk-takers. They understood that flexibility was among their greatest strengths. If an opportunity arises to do something with our students that will allow them to take ownership of their proficiency, why do we often hesitate to take advantage of it? How can we, as language teachers, model effective risk-taking with our students when we are reluctant to take risks ourselves? In order to discuss these very issues at the regional language conferences I attended, I shared the following personal story with my language colleagues.

“So you teach Latin . . . who are you gonna talk to, the Pope?”

I expect that virtually all teachers of Latin and the classics have fielded this or other similar questions about spoken Latin – questions that are directed at the usefulness of learning or speaking Latin at all. I also admit that I must have joked more than once about the same issue with colleagues, saying, "I'm not teaching Latin so that my students can speak with anyone at the Vatican . . . I'm teaching them how to think." That is, of course, until one of my students, named Sam, approached me several years ago and told me that he was likely going to have an audience with Pope Francis. "O.K." I said, "You're going to talk with him in Latin."

In my classes, even at the lower levels, I now routinely explain unfamiliar passages in Latin to my students before we discuss the nuances of vocabulary or work towards rendering an English equivalent, but it was not until that moment that I realized just how little conversational Latin I was using in class. I had always been excited about interpersonal speaking in Latin, but until that time I had lacked the impetus I needed to begin the collaborative process of working towards meaningful communication, especially in a language many consider "dead." After school, for about two weeks, Sam and I practiced how to carry on a polite conversation in which he could introduce himself formally as well as describe himself, including his likes and dislikes. We kept it a secret from the others in his class until a few days before he was to leave for Italy. I played Gregorian chants over the AV system in class, donned a makeshift mitre and lumbered over for a somewhat irreverent dress rehearsal, "Salve, mi fili . . . (Greetings, my child …"

When Sam and his family were in Vatican City, and the Pope walked by and greeted people with his retinue, Sam made the most of his opportunity. Here is the beginning of the dialogue as it was reported to me:

Sam: "Salve, Sanctitas! Te convenire honor est mihi. " (Greetings, your Holiness, it is an honor to meet you.)

Pope: "Ah . . . Salve, mi fili . . . non Anglice loqueris. (Hello, my son, you're not speaking English.)"

Sam: "Minime, Sanctitas, sed possum Latine loqui. (No, your Holiness, but I can speak Latin.)

Pope: "Optime, quid tibi est? (Excellent, what do you have there?)

Sam: "Camisiam tibi habeo. " (I have a T-shirt for you.)

Pope: "Mihi?" (For me?)

Sam: "Sic, tibi. " (Yes, for you.)

Pope: "For blessing?"

Sam: "Minime, tibi. " (No, for you.)

Pope: "Ah . . . plurimas gratias ago, mi fili . . . . (Many thanks, my son … )

Sam carried on a conversation with Pope Francis in Latin for almost forty-five seconds. At first, as the dialogue would suggest, the Pope was clearly surprised, surely as much by Sam speaking Latin as by his
Languages on the Rise: We are All Advocates

Dr. Edward M. Zarrow

not speaking English. Sam gave our Latin club shirt to the Pope as a gift. The front reads COLLEGIVM, the title of our Latin Club. The motto of the club on the back has always been a student favorite because of its mild irreverence – NONNVMQVAM FIDELIS SEMPER SVAVIS (Sometimes faithful, always smooth). The seal of the city of Boston, which is entirely in Latin, and our addition of BOSTONIA FORTIS appear beneath the motto. There was no guarantee that Sam was going to be able to meet with the Pope. We had studied and taken a risk on the off chance that he would. He was able, through his experience, to know firsthand part of the living legacy of the language, and how even today, it can still come alive in unexpected and exhilarating ways.

I still firmly believe that the classroom teacher is the lynchpin to successful language advocacy in this country – real language advocacy begins with what we teach and show our students every day. But that is the reality for those of us who are here – MaFLA may push record attendance year after year, but for every teacher who frames lessons based on proficiency and what students can do with language, espousing core practices and new research in second language acquisition, there are still more teachers who do not. Outreach within our own community is a major part of advocacy that we, as individual teachers, often overlook. If we truly want to make languages an indelible part of our schools and build global competency across multiple disciplines, what are we as individuals doing to reach the language teachers who don’t know what proficiency means, who don’t know what MaFLA has to offer? Moreover, are you tapping your best students to be teachers? Better yet, are you tapping your best language students to become principals and school leaders? For that’s where we need them most if we are to have truly robust programming. We are all advocates.

In addition, I have come to witness firsthand the divisions among us, sometimes within our own departments, that ought not to exist – it is time that we concentrate on our commonalities – we may not always be on the same page, but we are all on the same team – language is not merely part of culture, language is culture – that is what we teach, that is our commonality, that is what we all share – we are all advocates.

I have said it before and I will say it again, language advocacy has never been more important than it is right now – languages in general are under siege – it’s not just Latin, it’s all of us, especially given how the study of languages and the humanities is being savaged by individuals who challenge its benefits or see none at all, and equate those who do not speak English as their first language as people to be feared and mistrusted, and tie these irrational fears to anti-immigrant policy. The Dreamers are bilingual, and to suggest that their linguistic diversity is a hindrance and a deficit rather than a gift is irresponsible and a fundamental misunderstanding of what makes this country great – we cannot be afraid – for we are all advocates.

And until we speak with one voice and establish new pathways for outreach and teacher recruitment, we will never successfully chip away at the firewalls that people have established, firewalls fitted together with a mortar of misconceptions of what we do and why what we do matters for our students and the communities in which they live – we are all advocates.

We strive to develop a curriculum from the elementary to the post-secondary level in every language that focuses on the promotion of respect, equity, and inclusion. Schools now across the country are scrambling to address these issues and to provide a safe space for students to have real dialogues about race, ethnicity, and gender – precisely the things that we discuss on a daily basis in the language classroom. For the work that we do is not reactive – it is grounded in a belief that an education promoting the value of diversity and one where we foster important conversations about who we are critical for the success of every child, every day. During these times that challenge us in unexpected ways, in the language classroom we aspire to do precisely what our country is finding difficult if not impossible to do right now: to demonstrate empathy, love, and respect for one another – we are all advocates.

Having met hundreds if not thousands of language teachers over the past two years, I know that we are up to the task – we will not back down in the face of those who peddle hatred and fear – for we know the truth – that language is a vehicle for seeing beyond what we do not yet understand – not a window into culture but THE window into culture. I want to create an environment in which we no longer have to advocate – in which languages are an undeniable part of our educational core – so that when my children are raising their own, they will understand that a world language education beginning at the elementary level is a civil right, and to deny a child access to world languages is to deny them access to a world class education and a world where global collaboration is the key for combating hunger, disease, climate change, terrorism, and economic instability. We are all advocates …

For every day, in the classroom, our calling is to show our students how to be open-minded, how to listen to people, even people with whom we might disagree so that we can find common ground; everyday, we show our students humility, that there is often more than one way to approach a situation or solve a problem; we show our students how to be inclusive and how not to see ourselves in isolation from the rest of the world; we show our students how to be critical thinkers and risk-takers, developing skills which they will be able to apply to the rest of their lives; we show our students that by immersing themselves in languages and cultures they will be compelled to reexamine their own values and beliefs for the better. And what is the result? Our students come to be scholars and life-long learners, to lead informed lives, to respect knowledge for its own sake, to go beyond a shallow understanding of the world, and to seek the truth – for only then can we come to recognize what is good and beautiful when we see it, and even fight for it when we have to.

Let’s try to leave this conference as better teachers than we were before, and through our passion let’s try to leave the world a better place than it is now, for our students’ sake – I love you all, thank you.
Italian Teachers Learn, Share and Celebrate

The MaFLA 50th Anniversary Conference was an opportunity for teachers from all of Massachusetts to meet and work together. During the day, they gathered in the King Edward Suite to attend a three-hour workshop with Antonietta DiPietro when she delivered her very informative presentation “One, Two Three AP! Spiraling Instruction in the Italian Classroom.” In addition, there were a number of sessions in which teachers learned and exchanged information about programs and pedagogy. The sessions included teaching Italian at the elementary level, gamification in the classroom, discourse analysis and improving reading comprehension, using an online program to support AP students and teachers. Teachers also learned about other online resources.

We hope that the next generation of teachers will continue the wonderful work that has been done throughout the years. Please consider sharing your craft, ideas and collegiality at our next conference.

Reception For Italian Teachers

The Consul General of Italy, Nicola DeSantis and Mr. Paul Picknelly, proprietor of the Sheraton Monarch Hotel in Springfield, hosted a reception for Italian teachers Friday evening. This was an opportunity to honor teachers and give credit for their hard work.

Gino Colantuono was introduced as the Italian Teacher of the Year. He formally received his award at the MaFLA Luncheon on Saturday.

Christine Kelley of Boston Latin attended the reception and accepted the award for the highest number of students in AP Italian in Massachusetts. The teacher, Silvana Myette received the Edlingua Award.

Gina Maiellaro, our AATI representative, announced that at the ACTFL Convention in Tennessee, Stella Cocchiara will receive the prestigious AATI Distinguished Service Award for her tireless work in championing the study of the Italian language and culture in the classroom and beyond.

Rita Di Carlo, Coordinator of World Languages in Medford, received an award from the Consulate for her many years of dedication and leadership in the field of Italian.

We are proud of all the recipients of the awards and thankful for their hard work.
On Thursday, MaFLA welcomed best-selling author Julien Suaudeau from Bryn Mawr College who presented a six hour workshop on “The Fluidity of the French Identity: Past-Present-Future.” Attendees were mesmerized by his wealth of information and resources, his dynamic delivery and his ability to intersperse the themes of immigration, identity, multiculturalism with the recent terrorist attacks not only in France but also throughout Europe and in the US. The afternoon pedagogical approach and Q & A could have continued for another few hours! On Friday morning, Nathalie Degroult from Siena College presented on Francophone films which focused on children and adolescents and distributed a helpful dossier for classroom use.

Other French sessions included Janel Lafond Paquin on Martinique and Guadeloupe, very appropriate as a preview to the 2018 AATF National Convention which will be held from July 18-21 in Martinique, Zoe Cabaret-Salameh on Using Visual and Performing Arts to Teach French, Miriam Przybyla-Baum on Teaching French Vocabulary and Pronunciation with Songs, Games and Rhymes, Liz Blood, Regina Symonds and Jennifer Keeler on French Connections: Promoting French In and Out of the Classroom, and Louissa Abdelghany on Why Should Literature be Integrated in Every French Classroom? On Saturday, Christine Goulet presented a session on the Togolese singer Brice Kapel entitled Cherche Tes Roots!, followed by Beckie Rankin who spoke on Film to Interpret and Practice Intercultural Competency and Susan Schmidt on Building Community. The AATF Annual Meeting took place during the last block before the Awards Luncheon. Guest speaker Nathalie DeGroult presented on Rediscovering the French Review with emphasis on the new pedagogical film dossiers which can be downloaded for immediate classroom use. At the Luncheon, Kristen Russett, a middle school teacher in Marblehead, received the AATF French Teacher of the Year award. On Friday evening, AATF and the French Consulate sponsored a reception to honor Magali Boutiot, Education Director at the French Cultural Services for the past 5 years, who will be returning to France in December.

Many farewell tributes were given. Adieu Magali! We will all miss you! Thank you for your incredible service to all French teachers!

Submitted by Joyce Beckwith
Member Reception
Member Reception
The MaFLA Advocacy Booth
by Nicole Sherf

There was a hub of energy at the Advocacy Booth at the MaFLA Annual Conference this year! The booth offered a variety of new resources, activities and fun giveaways. This year’s Advocacy Intern, Laurie Smith, Spanish teacher at Reading High School and student in the MAT in Spanish at Salem State University, was a powerhouse of enthusiasm, pulling in attendees to talk to them about the variety of advocacy endeavors.

Advocacy Coordinator, this year’s MaFLA Keynote Speaker and 2016 ACTFL Teacher of the Year, Ted Zarrow created a variety of new handouts for the Booth that will be posted on the Advocacy pages of the website shortly. He created an informational sheet on the Lead with Languages campaign and how to get involved. He also created an advice sheet about how to better inform and discuss foreign languages with your district guidance personnel.

He also created a handout on the exciting new recommendations of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (AAAS) Commission on Language Learning Issues Report and Recommendations. There was also a variety of information about the MA Seal of Biliteracy Pilot Project, now in its third year. See the Seal of Biliteracy legislative update in this Newsletter. [spoiler alert - It Passed!]

2017 MA Teacher of the Year Kristen Gillette was on hand at the MaFLA Advocacy Booth to take pictures with attendees so that they could publish their conference attendance in their district newspapers. Ted Zarrow created a handy sheet explaining the process and providing a blurb to adapt and submit with your photo.

Teachers were given a variety of fun MaFLA trinkets from pens, to phone card holders, to notebooks and the treasured notecards featuring the MaFLA 2017 Poster of the Year (see poster below left). We hope that you’ll be part of the Advocacy Booth energy next year! See you there!

MaFLA 2017 Poster of the Year
Christina Pathrose
Acton-Boxborough High School
Teacher: Suzanne Hogarty

(l-r) Kristin Gillett, Westford Academy; Laurie Smith, Reading Memorial High School; Ted Zarrow, Westwood High School; Kristen Duhamel, Burlington High School; Martha Abeille, Foxborough High School; Nicole Sherf, Salem State University
What a great celebration! For 50 years MaFLA has been supporting foreign language teachers in the state and the region. What a phenomenal accomplishment. This Jubilee conference was very special to me. I still remember my first MaFLA conference and how in awe I was of the invited speaker and all of the presenters, officers, board members and organizers. It was a great learning experience and I felt humbled to be in the presence of such knowledgeable, talented and skillful individuals. I knew then that if I was going to become the educator I wanted to be I needed to stay connected with this amazing organization. MaFLA conferences have been a "must do" for me since. I cherish all of the wonderful individuals I have had the opportunity to know and work with through my involvement with MaFLA. As I reflect back, I still remember MaFLA’s 25th Anniversary conference and all of the special activities offered. It was no surprise then that the MaFLA Jubilee conference was an equally special and classy affair. I loved the Member Reception and it was very moving to see and re-connect with so many former MaFLA Presidents and board members. I also found myself repeatedly watching and reminiscing with colleagues in front of the slideshow monitor. It was so much fun to remember past conferences, past activities and many of our special invited presenters and speakers over the years.

As I was helping with pictures from the MaFLA archives, I happened to come across one that was particularly meaningful to me. It was a picture of myself with Bess Harrington who served as MaFLA Treasurer for many years and who was one of the early participants in MaFLA’s organization (operations). This particular picture was taken when Mrs. Harrington was awarded the Distinguished Service Award. I remember very well that night when I had the honor of speaking about this very special lady. Bess, however, had a much more important role in my life, other than being a colleague on the board of MaFLA. She was my colleague and mentor at Monson Jr.-Sr. High school when I started there in 1973. She was a premier foreign language educator and I credit her not only with guiding me as a foreign language teacher but also with getting me involved in MaFLA. Bess had a confidence in my abilities that I certainly didn’t have and she told me that I had to become involved with MaFLA. Since she was like my second mom, I didn’t dare to question her and before I knew it I was elected to the MaFLA board as Clerk. I was truly blessed to have such a wonderful professional to support me and to mold me over my early career. Bess has not been the only MaFLA colleague who has impacted me personally as well as professionally. I have worked with so many board members and officers who have shared their expertise and wisdom. They too have left an indelible mark in me as a person and as a life-long learner. Likewise, MaFLA colleagues with whom I have attended PD events have continually shaped and impacted my career. I cannot imagine teaching and professional growth without MaFLA and I am sure that this organization will always be a part of my life.

As much as I enjoyed re-connecting with former colleagues, I also loved seeing so many young and vibrant professionals celebrating MaFLA’s 50th. The ironic part of that is that so many of them were not even born when the first MaFLA Conference was held, nor were many of them around when MaFLA celebrated 25 years. These young professionals were already taking charge of their own growth and learning and were obviously eager to join the MaFLA tribe. I couldn’t help but think about how different the MaFLA demographic has become in the past few years. These young professionals were comfortable with their technology and many of them had cell phones, tablets and laptops going at the same time. They were natives with the new app and several of them mentioned to me how they much preferred the app to the large conference program which they continually had to sift through to find out what was happening. In fact, one said, I love the notices that are sent to me about the next session I will be going to. The ease with which they navigated the digital world was amazing. Their questions were challenging, their enthusiasm contagious and their love of the profession visible in all they did. It became obvious to me that as those from my generation who are close to retirement will be leaving the profession in good hands. These individuals were already on the path to being at the cutting edge of teaching and learning and will become the leaders of tomorrow.

As MaFLA enters into its next decade, I have no doubt that the organization will continue to prosper and I look forward to continuing my own growth and development with this very special organization.

As we close out the year, I wish a very happy holiday season to everyone and peace and happiness in 2018! Looking forward to see you at a MaFLA PD event in 2018 or reading your submission to your professional newsletter!

The theme for the Winter edition of the MaFLA Newsletter is What’s in Your Toolbox? We want to highlight some of the favorite tools and ideas you use for teaching. Share your own favorite activities, technology, resources, etc. and/or ask your colleagues to share theirs. We would love to spotlight YOUR district/department. Remember we want to keep it local!!!
This year seven teachers from Winchester Public Schools attended the MaFLA Jubilee. I honestly cannot remember the last time this many teachers from our district went to the MaFLA Conference. Although none of us attended the first MaFLA Conference in 1967, each one of us had different experiences along the way to this year’s conference. Some of us were at the conference for the first time or had not attended in a while. For others, it was something we have attended and look forward to every year since we became teachers. I was very fortunate to attend as a student teacher, when Domenic Camarra, my cooperating teacher introduced me to MaFLA and the conference. For all of us, it was amazing and rewarding.

We know that it can be difficult when we need to get coverage for so many and on the teacher’s part it is also a lot of work to be absent. However, our district was extremely supportive and had no issue with granting the professional time and funds for our teachers. As middle school and high school teachers, we represented all languages taught in Winchester (Latin, French, Italian and Spanish.) Although we are responsible to different languages and levels, we took on the conference as a team mission. The mission was to attend different workshops and sessions that focused on Proficiency and bring the information back to our other colleagues. Thus, the individual teachers became the glue to strengthening our community.

While still at the conference, some of the teachers already started sharing with those at home through a googledoc and email messages. We have been talking about moving towards Proficiency and everyone was getting on the “Proficiency Train” at his or her own pace. The significant number of teachers from our district who attended the conference was a game changer in getting everyone on board and staying on track.

Upon our return, we participated in a full Professional Day in which the World Language Department focused on rewriting our curriculum using Can-Do Statements and the UBD Format with Proficiency as the goal. On this day, we received training from Karen Nerpouni, a former World Language teacher, Director and Assistant Superintendent who continues to be a leader in curriculum and instruction. As the teachers worked on the UBD template, it was a matter of addressing the ACTFL Standards and Proficiency levels for all languages together in order to ensure a fully articulated and coordinated curriculum. Collaboration and collegiality were obvious as we worked together in our community.

### And the Adventure Continues . . .

**Save these dates for another year of great professional development.**

- **Diversity Day**  
  Saturday, May 5 - Lasell College
- **Proficiency Academy**  
  Monday - Thursday, July 23-26 - Westfield State University
- **Summer Institute**  
  Friday - Sunday, August 17-19 - Lasell College
- **Fall Conference**  
  Thursday - Saturday, October 25-27  
  Sheraton Springfield Monarch Place Hotel
New Teacher Commendations

This year, MaFLA is awarding our New Teacher Commendation to Meagan Hyman of Ottoson Middle School (Arlington), Mike Travers of Norton High School, and Benatty Assunção of Brockton High School. Each of these teachers is new to the profession, less than 5 years, and is already making a difference in their school and world language department.

Meagan Hyman
Ottoson Middle School, Arlington

Meagan Hyman has just begun her second year of teaching middle school Spanish. Having originally studied Music Education, Meagan fell in love with the Spanish language during the two years she spent teaching English as a second language in Madrid, Spain. It was also during this time that Meagan learned the value of learning a language through immersion and teaching for proficiency! Working at Arlington High School (MA), Meagan is interested in investing in the world language community through participating in professional development as an attendee and presenter.

Benatty Assunção
Joseph F. Plouffe Academy, Brockton

Benatty Assunção is a Spanish teacher at Brockton High School. Having always wanted to be a teacher, she finds it a privilege that she can teach something she is passionate about. In teaching a language, we teach more than grammar and language structure; we also teach about culture, traditions, history, and the importance of knowing and embracing the differences of others. Benatty loves to teach about respecting those differences and making connections. Her love for language and culture has allowed her to meet and connect with others because I speak “their language”. Learning a new language goes beyond the spoken words, it allows you to connect with others in ways that that one would never think possible.

Mike Travers
Norton High School

Mike Travers is currently starting his third year teaching at Norton High School. He teaches both Spanish and French from novice to advanced levels and is thrilled about focusing on proficiency. Mike graduated from Stonehill College in 2015 with a degree in foreign languages and received his Master’s in Education this past May from UMass Boston. Apart from teaching he loves traveling and exploring new countries - yet his magnet country is Spain.

Arlington, Norton, and Brockton are lucky to have you new teachers. Welcome to MaFLA! Join us at our Awards and Business Luncheon during the Conference to celebrate these award winners and other.

Do you know a new teacher who deserves a MaFLA Commendation? Look out for nomination requests next spring.
Massachusetts Foreign Language Teacher of the Year

Kristin Gillett
Westford Academy

Cemanahuac Scholarship

Elizabeth Donovan
Qualters Middle School, Mansfield

Massachusetts Chinese Educator of the Year

Sheng-Chu Lu
Pingree School, Hamilton

Embassy of Spain Scholarships

Sandra Noack
Wilmington High School

Daniela Desousa
Burlington High School

Javier Marquez
Kipp Academy, Lynn

AATF-Eastern Mass French Teacher of the Year

Kristen Russett
Marblehead Veterans Middle School

Classical Association of Massachusetts Award for Excellence in Teaching

Sara Cain
Monomoy Middle School, Harwich

Italian Consulate & AATI Massachusetts Teacher of the Year

Gino Colantuono
Somerville High School

Student Awards And Scholarships

Past Presidents’ Scholarships

Emma Forbes
Bishop Feehan High School
Teacher: Joan Drobnis

Lindsey Forg
Lexington High School
Teacher: Ryan Casey

Zoe Pelliter
Boston Latin High School
Teacher: Christine Kelley
End of Year

Professional Awards And Scholarships

Essay Contest Winners

Essay of the Year
Hannah Gearan
Acton Boxborough Reg. High School
Teacher: Suzanne Hogarty

Middle School Winner
Mia Bernadino
Triton Regional Middle School
Teacher: Shirley Faulkner

Poster Contest Winners

Poster of the Year
Christina Pathrose
Acton Boxborough Reg. High School
Teacher: Suzanne Hogarty

Middle School Winner
Eunchai Kang
Wood Hill Middle School, Andover
Teacher: Norma Villareal

Elementary School Winner
Grant Hasner
Woodland School, Weston
Teacher: Kristen Sheridan

Video Contest Winners

Middle School Winners
Isabel Tu and Simran Bajaj
Wood Hill Middle School, Andover
Teacher: Norma Villareal

High School Winner
Lindsey Barrett
Canton High School
Teacher: Heidi Olson

Mel & Cindy Yoken Scholarship

Christian Herlihy
Lexington High School
Teacher: Beckie Rankin

Friend of Foreign Languages Award

I am so pleased to present the MaFLA 2017 Friend of Foreign Languages Award to Marsha Olsen, PhD, Director of Continuing Education and Research at Westfield State University. Marsha began her career in education as an elementary school teacher in Connecticut, finished as Principal of Torrington High School and after retiring, joined the Administration Team at Westfield. Three years ago, when she was looking to start an online Spanish course, she contacted me via email and wondered if MaFLA could advertise the course. I called her back immediately, spoke to her at length about MaFLA’s professional development opportunities and she offered Westfield as a possible site. At that time, we were planning our first Summer Proficiency Academy and we had just received news from Lasell College that they could no longer offer graduate credits to our members. I asked Marsha if Westfield could not only provide the graduate credits we needed but also host our Proficiency Academy. With the help of Dr. Cheryl Stanley, Dean of Education at Westfield, who is here with us today, a new and exciting collaboration between MaFLA and Westfield began, and the rest is history!

Thanks to Marsha, over 200 MaFLA members have received graduate credits for our professional development events. Not only has she coordinated the lodging, catering and meeting space for our Summer Proficiency Academy, and also worked on-site around the clock, but she has also personally taken care of all the graduate credit paperwork.

Since partnering with Westfield, MaFLA’s enrollment in professional development events has broken all records! Last year we had 110 attendees at the Proficiency Academy, over 50 at each of our six Saturday morning Core Practices workshops, and over 80 at the Summer Institute. Our members are thrilled that their graduate credits allow them to advance on the salary scale and they love the Westfield campus!

Marsha, it is with our sincere appreciation for all that you have done for the members of MaFLA, that we now honor you as our 2017 Friend of Foreign Languages.

“For Selfless Devotion, Support and Advocacy of Foreign Language Education in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts”
by Joyce Beckwith
Distinguished Service Award

Good afternoon! I hope you have had a wonderful conference. For me, to borrow a phrase from Shakespeare, this is a “singular joy” on behalf of MaFLA, to honor our colleague Nicole Sherf with the MaFLA Distinguished Service Award.

From the moment that she joined the Board in 2005, her contributions in leadership, advocacy, and mentoring have been profound. Her calling has been steadfast and clear: to advance language learning for all, to bring about greater harmony, peace, and understanding at home, first, and then globally, to our universal home.

Nicole has touched the lives of many, through her workshops and sessions, at her university, Salem State, and here, for MaFLA members, as well as nationally at the Northeast Conference (NECTFL), the American Council for Teachers of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), and JNCL, and through her articles, including in ACTFL’s Language Educator. Locally, she has been not only a guest editor for the MaFLA Newsletter, but has authored several columns and at least 65 articles! (Yes, I counted!) In addition, she was the Conference Chair in 2008, co-chair in 2013, and mentor for at least three more!

As President, she was responsible for MaFLA’s mission statement and first Five-year strategic plan.

As Advocacy Coordinator, she has lobbied for us at the State House and in Washington, D.C.

Nicole’s vision of language teaching and learning has been far reaching. Since her early days in a classroom, she has advocated for proficiency standards, so that students may exhibit what they can do with a language, rather than how many hours they have occupied a seat in that very classroom!

And when the Massachusetts legislature finally passes the bill for a Seal of Biliteracy (and I believe this is our year), it will be in large part thanks to Nicole Sherf and her indomitable and indefatigable efforts on our behalf!

Chapeau bas, madame!

But, for all the accolades that we could add, one of Nicole’s former grad students said it best. Friday, when she was checking in and we spoke of this luncheon, she said (thank you, Vanessa French), “Nicole Sherf truly transformed my teaching. I would not have become the teacher I am without her. She is truly amazing.”

Thus, for her tireless, impassioned, heartfelt devotion to the promotion of language learning and teaching, please join me to present the MaFLA Distinguished Service Award to Nicole L. Sherf.

By Madelyn Gomnerman Torchin

A Few Words About Service

by Nicole Sherf

I often say that the discipline of foreign languages is the most underfunded, the least aligned with state and national standards and, generally, the least understood by non-foreign language district administrators of K-20 programming. For this reason, language teachers need to learn to be strong advocates for well-aligned, long sequences of language study in their school, district and state since it is generally not high on the list of school priorities to strengthen or lengthen foreign language programming. Language teachers need to be at the table at all committee meetings to ensure that the needs of foreign language programming are made clear. If we are not at the table, we run the risk of being put off the table.

As our profession is making an exciting shift to proficiency-oriented programming, fueled by the national Seal of Biliteracy movement, an amazing variety of resources and supports are being created at the national level to support strong programming. Professional development at the district level is rarely foreign language specific unless it is contracted directly by and for the department. For this reason, in my view, departmental participation in foreign language conferences and seminars, such as those offered by MaFLA, is essential for teachers to be able to plug into the newest resources, materials and strategies for effective language teaching.

The foreign language teachers of MA are fortunate that even though there is no representation of, or advocacy for foreign languages within our Department of Education, MaFLA is a strong state organization that has stepped up to the challenges of leading the state’s K-20 teachers in professional development and advocacy efforts. MaFLA is an all-volunteer non-profit organization that depends on the service of its Board as well as the active participation of its members. I have had the privilege of serving on the Board in a variety of capacities since 2004 and it has taught me much of what I now understand about what it means to be a professional. I am fortunate
Writing the Notes to the Profession gave me a chance to reflect on the many ways in which MaFLA has worked to provide numerous high quality professional development opportunities throughout 2017. This year MaFLA added to its already extensive list of PD offerings, making them more accessible to our colleagues by holding them in various locations throughout the state. Coming together at these events, for a few days or even for a few hours, has created a strong network of language professionals. This year MaFLA has also begun an outreach program to 1st-time conference attendees and 1st-time presenters so that they feel welcomed and supported. Each and every event this year contributed to bringing this year’s theme to reality, Languages Transform Individuals into Communities.

- In May we had Diversity Day which annually promotes cultural proficiency and focuses on content in French, Spanish, Pedagogy and Technology.
- For the 3rd year in a row, we spent 4 days during the summer at Westfield State University at the Proficiency Academy. Teachers came together to learn about the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines and to begin or continue the process of setting proficiency targets, reworking curriculum, and planning integrated performance assessments.
- We spent a weekend in August at the Summer Immersion Institute at Lasell College with offerings in Spanish, French, and Latin. This immersion experience allows participants to enhance their language and cultural skills as well as learn about new pedagogies and connect with colleagues.

This year, to support our members’ need to meet the new recertification requirements, our Summer Institute also offered a 15 PDP program featuring Special Education in the World Language.

Along with Professional Development offerings, MaFLA’s Advocacy Team has continued to work tirelessly with representatives from MATSOL (Massachusetts Educators of English Language Learners), MABE (Massachusetts Association for Bilingual Education), and the Language Opportunity Coalition to help pass legislation to bring the Seal of Biliteracy to Massachusetts. The Seal of Biliteracy is a national movement to document and reward students for attaining literacy in two or more languages. Earlier this month we offered a complimentary Webinar with information on how to join our growing list of schools involved in the pilot program, which is now in its third year.

A Few Words About Service (conc.)

that, as the program coordinator of the language teacher preparation programs at Salem State, I have been able to actively involve my students in attending, presenting, writing for and serving on the Board of MaFLA either as Board member or as Advocacy Intern.

I was honored and thrilled to accept the Distinguished Service Award at this year’s Business and Awards Luncheon at the end of the 2017 Conference. I accepted it in the name of all the amazing Board members with whom I have had the pleasure to serve over the years. In our Board meetings and conference preparations and the like, as a Board, we continually discuss the fact that all the amazing advocacy and professional development opportunities, all the writing and presenting possibilities, and all the legislative endeavors, represent a well-coordinated team effort. I have been so blessed to be a part of this hard-working and dedicated team that has grown together, faced challenges together and created amazing opportunities together in service of the teachers and the programs of our state. This was never more apparent to me than at this 50th Jubilee Conference with the celebration of the past perspective and beautiful historic overview. Our future success as a Board depends on new teachers of all languages and levels participating actively in MaFLA programming and more experienced teachers making the decision to serve on our Board. We’ll see you there!
In response to the growing tensions existing in the country this year, MaFLA has made its voice heard. In August MaFLA issued a statement reaffirming its commitment to linguistic, cultural, religious, gender and ethnic diversity. As the statement said, the teaching of language and culture to all, from kindergarten through adulthood, is essential in creating a society where we all respect our fellow citizens of the world.

I cannot move on from my review of 2017 without recognizing the MaFLA newsletter and the many excellent, thought-provoking articles it offers. Along with these amazing articles, the Newsletter publishes teaching tips, advocacy links, and awards and scholarship opportunities. Speaking of amazing, we’ve also completely revamped our web site this year. Go to mafla.org and look in the About section for the Newsletters and explore all that our new site has to offer. While you’re at it, don’t forget to visit MaFLA’s home page on Facebook.

As chairperson of the 2018 Annual Conference, I have the task of choosing the theme for next year and a corresponding logo. As I developed the new theme, I couldn’t help but think of my students. I have taught 7th and 8th grade Spanish for many years now and I love the middle school age group. Their energy and enthusiasm is contagious. When I think of my students I often think of myself and what it was like as a language learner and the different phases that I went through. As a language student in high school and in college I remember acknowledging that I was developing a skill that not everyone else had and it made me feel special and proud. I also remember feeling that I was using my brain in a different way, which was exciting. I was expanding my mind.

As I continued my studies I learned about the history and cultures of different countries. Through travel experiences I saw architecture and art, I tasted different foods, I heard different accents and was exposed to amazing music, and by staying in people’s homes in Spain, Mexico, Costa Rica, and Japan, I got to know the daily lives of real people. All of this expanded my heart.

Because I have learned another language my life has been enriched in so many ways. I am not the same person I used to be. I appreciate everything I have learned and come to understand so far, but I know there is so much more. By learning another language, I continue to expand my world.

As world language teachers we guide our students as they make their way along the path to proficiency. By teaching them a new language we also provide the opportunity for our students to expand their minds, expand their hearts and ultimately to expand their world. This brings me to the theme for 2018. The logo was designed by Cecily Paglierani, one of my 8th grade Spanish students.

Learn a new language!
Expand your mind…
Expand your heart…
Expand your world!

I want to thank all of this year’s wonderful presenters and I encourage everyone to consider presenting a session next year. It can truly be one of the best experiences you can have in personal and professional growth. In closing, stay tuned for some exciting announcements regarding plans for next year! I look forward to seeing all of you at events throughout 2018 and back here for the 2018 conference!

Submitted by Jeanne O’Hearn

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Notes To The Profession
by Jeanne O’Hearn

I always wondered why somebody doesn't do something about that. Then I realized I was somebody.

Lily Tomlin

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Image: Learn a New Language

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Image: Expand Your Mind, Expand Your Heart, Expand Your World
Communities: Lifelong Learning
by Marcel LaVergne Ed.D.

“Knowledge of languages is the doorway to wisdom.”
Roger Bacon

“Learning another language is not only learning different words for the same things, but learning another way to think about things.”
Flora Lewis, American journalist

ACTFL’s World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages defines the Communities Standard as the ability to communicate and interact with cultural competence in order to participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world according to the following:

- School and Global Communities: Learners use the language both within and beyond the classroom to interact and collaborate in their community and the globalized world.
- Lifelong Learning: Learners set goals and reflect on their progress in using languages for enjoyment, enrichment, and advancement.

This article will concentrate on the Lifelong Learning aspect of the Communities Standard.

Definition
The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines the following terms as follows:

Enjoyment: a feeling of pleasure caused by doing or experiencing something you like.

Enrichment: the ability to make rich or richer especially by the addition or increase of some desirable quality, attribute, or ingredient.

Advancement: the promotion or elevation to a higher rank or position; the progression to a higher stage of development.

The Lifelong Learning Standard will enable the L2 teacher to plan activities that will aid students go beyond the academic goals that they set for themselves and to aspire to learning beneficial to their personal lives and to their future.

Activities
The following activities for French and German classes might prove helpful as examples of successful strategies to get students to set goals and reflect on their progress as L2 learners. These activities can easily be adapted for other languages.

1. Music
When introducing the music of the target culture, in this case French, the L2 teacher might show that there are American songs that were originally written/or sung by French singers such as:

- Edith Piaf’s La vie en rose and Tony Bennett/K.d.lang’s La vie en rose
- Bobby Darren’s Beyond the Sea and Charles Trenet’s La mer
- Frank Sinatra’s Autumn Leaves and Yves Montand’s Les feuilles mortes
- Neil Diamond’s If you go away and Jacques Brel’s Ne me quitte pas
- Elvis Presley’s What now my love and Gilbert Bécaud’s Et maintenant
- Dean Martin’s The River Seine and Jacqueline François’s La Seine
- Andy Williams’s Under Paris Skies and Edith Piaf’s Sous Le Ciel De Paris

After playing both versions of the song, students will compare and contrast the lyrics of both versions and explain the differences and similarities. Students will pick which version they prefer and explain why. Are there cultural reasons for the different interpretations? Hopefully, the teachers will not use music simply to illustrate vocabulary and grammar. (1)

Also compare La Seine to Old Man River. How are the images of the Seine and of the Mississippi River different? How is Paris pictured in song compared to New York City or Chicago?

2. Art trip to Museum: The French Impressionists
This activity was described in my article “Motivating Students in the L2 Classroom.” The MaFLA Newsletter. End of Year Edition. 2015. Pp. 25-27.

The following activities involving proverbs can generate enjoyment and enrichment to students:

3. Play production Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme
After reading and discussing Molière’s Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme, my French 5AP class as part of the final exam rewrote a condensed version of the play in modern French and performed it in our high school auditorium for other French students and guests. Everyone had a role to play in its production: choosing which scenes to include, which modern music to play on the piano, guitar, and drums, which costumes to wear, etc. The project took about 10 class days and two days of rehearsal in the auditorium.

4. Play production of Le Petit Prince in planetarium
This activity was described in my article “Motivating Students in the L2 Classroom.” The MaFLA Newsletter. End of Year Edition. 2015. Pp. 25-27.

5. Producing a TV news program
My French 4 and 5 classes every year created a TV news program for viewing in the high school TV studio. The students chose current news stories, wrote the scripts, and provided the visuals for the program. The script included international news, local stories, sports, entertainment, weather, and editorials.

6. TPR activity
The Middle School French and German teacher asked students to bring to class clothing that their family no longer used. She borrowed a skeleton from the Science Department and planned a TPR activity in which students directed other students to dress the skeleton. The commands not only included the names of the clothing, but also described the material, color, and patterns of the clothes. When the activity was over, I sneaked behind the skeleton and began to talk to the students. This completely unplanned activity surprised the students who quickly began to hold a conversation with the skeleton for about 15 minutes.

7. Proverbs
The following activities involving proverbs can generate enjoyment and enrichment to students:
a. Students research popular American proverbs and their French equivalents.

b. They explain the differences between them.

c. They write short stories in which the proverbs serve as a moral to the story.

d. They illustrate the differences visually as follows:

   Every cloud has a silver lining
   - Après la pluie le beau temps.

   Rome wasn’t built in a day
   - Paris ne s’est pas fait en un jour.

   Can’t see the forest for the trees
   - L’arbre cache souvent la forêt.

   Tall oaks from little acorn grow
   - Les petits ruisseaux font les grandes rivières

8. Fictitious person

   My French 5 AP students wrote a biography of a fictitious person including the following information:

   Chapter 1: Name, age (25+), parents, siblings, marital status, spouse, children
   Chapter 2: Education, occupation/profession
   Chapter 3: Likes and dislikes
   Chapter 4: Religious affiliation, philosophy of life
   Chapter 5: Political affiliation
   Chapter 6: Leisure time activities, volunteer work
   Chapter 7: Talents: musical, leadership, dramatic, artistic, etc.
   Chapter 8: Things to be proud of, regrets
   Chapter 9: Other items of interest

   This project took place during March and April. Chapters (no more than 2 pages long) were due on each Friday. The final project was due the first Friday in May. It had to be done in a 3-ring binder and include illustrations and/or pictures of individuals and of activities concerned. The projects were then shared with the whole class.

9. Group composition

   Students in groups of 5 or 6 write their name on a piece of composition paper. On line 1 they write a complete sentence of their choosing which they then pass to the student on their right. On line 2 they write a complete sentence that logically follows the sentence on line 1 which they then pass to the student on their right and on line 3 they write a sentence that logically follows the first two sentences. This process continues until the students get back the paper with their name on it. The student then writes an interrogative sentence that logically follows all the sentences on the paper. The group compositions are then shared with the whole class. Although each composition started with the same sentence, students will analyze how different the final products are from each other.

10. Open conversation sessions

   A middle school French/German teacher every Friday planned a 15 minute free conversation for the students. Using all their knowledge of the language, they were encouraged to talk about anything they wanted for those fifteen minutes. Using the TPR activity Inside/outside circle, they rotated every five minutes and continued the conversation with a new student.

11. Cooking demonstrations

   A high school German teacher as part of the final exam had the students over a week put on a Julia Child demonstration of German cuisine. The students then happily tasted the fruits of their classmates’ labor.

Conclusion

   Student involvement in the subject matter is one of the best ways to increase intrinsic motivation. The more involved in the activities, the better the chances are that the students will develop a liking for the subject matter. And the more the students like the subject matter, the more likely their grades will increase. The activities presented in this article are but a small sampling of the type that students enjoy because they give the students a sense of accomplishment. They fulfill the Communities Standard that encourages L2 teachers to plan activities that foster lifelong learning experiences: activities that promote enjoyment of the subject matter, enrichment in their personal lives, and advancement in their knowledge of the foreign language.
Effective Assessment And Feedback

by Tim Eagan

Effective assessment and feedback are essential to moving students forward on the path to proficiency. Many teaching practices still common today fall into an outdated model with assessment practices that don’t provide useful feedback, and grading practices that don’t fully reflect what students know and can do. Improving assessment and feedback practices can serve to create much needed change. In order to create this change, teachers need two things: deeper knowledge of assessment and some tools and strategies.

Susan Brookhart, in How to Give Effective Feedback to Your Students, explains that student improvement depends on feedback, but the feedback is only beneficial when teachers know what kind of feedback to give and students know what to do with that feedback. To that end, teachers need to be able to distinguish between effective and ineffective feedback.

The Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) describes assessment as an ongoing process of setting clear goals for student learning and measuring progress toward those goals. In other words, teaching and assessment are one and the same; assessment is not something we do to students at the end of a learning episode. CAL suggests four questions that teachers can ask to evaluate the validity of their classroom assessment practices. (1) Does the assessment measure what it is supposed to measure (i.e., language performance tasks)? (2) Does it reflect real-life language uses? (Is it authentic?) (3) Do students and teachers take the assessment seriously? (4) Is the assessment consistent with instruction — what was taught and how it was taught? Understanding instruction and assessment within this framework provides teachers with a starting point to begin to consider what feedback practices to use and what feedback should look like.

In Data Wise, Boudett, City and Mundane encourage teachers to provide specific, descriptive feedback. Yet, they point out that in practice teachers often offer students feedback that fits in one of three other categories: specific and judgmental, general and judgmental, or general and descriptive. These three kinds of feedback are not effective because they do not provide unbiased, clear information about how to move forward. Marzano explains in detail, emphasizing that in order to be effective, feedback must be goal-related, actionable, specific, user-friendly, timely, and just the right amount.

Brookhart asserts that students can handle two to three pieces of feedback at a time, and that teachers should limit feedback to just that amount. Dr. Nicole Sherf at Salem State University suggests one piece of feedback on content and one piece of feedback on language function/structure. With an understanding of what effective feedback can look like, teachers are prepared to consider the feedback in context of their curriculum.

In order to provide specific, descriptive feedback on student performance, teachers and students need clearly-defined goals of success. In Teacher’s Handbook, Contextualized Language Instruction, Shrum and Glisan provide a simple framework for understanding goal setting and backward design. First: Identify desired results. What will students know and be able to do at the end of a lesson or unit? (e.g., a language function embedded in a cultural understanding). Second: Determine acceptable evidence. How will the teacher know that students can do that? Finally: Plan learning experiences. What learning activities and communicative tasks will the teacher need to include to get students to the goal? With this in mind, teachers are equipped to provide feedback that describes student performance in relationship to the goal and any gap between the performance and that goal, taking the guess work out of the recipe for everyone.

There are many resources available to support teachers as they being to integrate feedback into daily instruction. The Ohio Department of Education and Shelby County World Languages have some good model rubrics, feedback forms, as well as a collection of other useful resources available to teachers. The New Jersey Department of Education has model curriculum resources available. The recently-updated NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements are a practical tool for understanding and writing goals. When teachers share performance rubrics on the first day of a unit and teach students how to use the rubric as a learning tool, teachers have begun an instructional dialogue with students around feedback. In Visible Learning, John Hattie reviewed over 900 studies, and concluded that one of the highest indicators positively impacting student learning was reflection or self-reported grades. Feedback, therefore, is not only the responsibility of the teacher. Students have a role in providing themselves with feedback as well.

Even for the teacher who is at the beginning of the journey to communicative language teaching, small changes in instruction and feedback strategies can make a big difference. When teachers make the shift from measuring one student’s performance against another’s to measuring performance against clearly-described standards, integrating effective feedback along the way, all students benefit, but most importantly, the students with the lowest performance tend to benefit the most.

References

1. Obviously the songs chosen expose the musical tastes of the author and I encourage teachers to find music more to their and their students’ liking. All the songs can be found on YouTube.

Communities: Lifelong Learning (conc.)

Pp. 25-27

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 associated with the National Capital Language Resource Center as the author of the Sound Bites for Better Teaching column.
Proficiency Academy Top Ten Takeaways
by Jennifer Hayman, Lawrence Junior High School

Now that I have been able to put some of the things I learned last summer into practice by presenting a session at MaFLA’s Jubilee Conference, I wanted to capture what I thought were the most important elements of the Novice Strand at Proficiency Academy 2017. It was truthfully the best professional development I have ever received. MaFLA has done a really great job in providing a super charged workshop with Greg Duncan as the presenter. His humor and talent made it a tremendous success for me not to mention being there with my friends and colleagues and meeting so many proficiency capable teachers. Here are my thoughts on what I think are the "Top Ten Take Aways” from my summer in Westfield.

1. Language Input 90 percent: Teachers need to use the Target Language 90 percent of the time with students and can accomplish that through using: 1) word walls that decorate the classroom and support students as they use the Target Language; 2) circumlocution serves to add more Target Language by eliminating “Como se dice” expressions. It encourages creative use of language which is the goal; 3) language ladders help students to go from easy expressions to more complex and more intense use of language also.

2. Daily Can-Do statements: These plus the ‘hook’ help students see the learning task as something that has value and has meaning and they will be more engaged and interested in the class when it comes to learning. Accompanied by the Understanding by Design model of design, this creates a more enriching environment for learning.

3. Prime Time for learning: This involves changing the way a class is taught and uses bell ringer activities followed by Prime Time learning with a teacher presentation, explanation and student to student interaction followed by Prime time 2 with formative assessment and a wrap up.

4. Homework Choice Boards: This allows students to pick and choose what is to be completed outside of class in a given learning target. Activities for all four skills are varied and relate to the task. An occasional worksheet is also acceptable.

5. Cultural content: Students also need to be culturally proficient and culture should be naturally embedded within the daily lesson and not added on as a separate entity. Language is culture.

6. Technology: There are many learning tools that help students produce language, interact with culture and content and that help meet the performance objective. Some examples are Epals, Flipgrid, Avenue, Quizlet, ipads for voice memos and Google phone that allows students to submit an oral response assignment to the teacher.

7. Chat stations allow opportunities for spontaneous conversations and can be found at pedagogy.com. Simply set them up at various locations around your classroom, create prompts and have students do a a gallery walk as they move from place to place.

8. Engagement should account for 70 percent of the class by students in interactive communication with classmates, partner and group work. Application should account for 30 percent of the time on tasks such as homework, summative assessment, projects, quizzes, tests and presentations.

9. Collaboration: This is not a solo endeavor. It requires constant sharing in order to be creative and productive. I work closely with my junior high colleagues and cannot imagine doing this type of work alone.

10. Start with one or two things so as not to get overwhelmed and remember to keep at it and be persistent. When you think about it, I’m sure we all do a lot of the things I mentioned already. Keep remembering that as you continue your journey on the path to true proficiency!
The MA House and Senate voted to pass the bill with only one no vote on Wednesday, November 15, 2017! Currently awaiting the Governor’s signature, it is a comprehensive bill called Language Opportunity for our Kids (LOOK) which opens up the restrictive one-size-fits-all SEI mandate for districts and includes a Seal provision to reward students for functional biliteracy through the Seal and we also have a stand-alone legislation for the Seal. This is a monumental piece of legislation for the foreign language, dual language and English language learner (ELL) teacher groups who sponsored it.

As I have described in countless Seal Updates over the past five years, the Seal of Biliteracy is a national movement to recognize students’ functional biliteracy in English and another language. Legislation has been enacted in 28 states and the District of Columbia since 2011, a fact that I find amazing for the swiftness of the movement. In just eight years, we have watched the map which indicates the states that have enacted Seal legislation on www.sealofbiliteracy.org, get bluer and bluer as more states join the movement, denoting that they have “Approved the State Seal” or passed the legislation. Massachusetts has remained a frustrating light green for the past five years meaning that we have legislation in the state that is “Under Consideration,” but that is soon about to change!

The legislative advocacy was a cooperative effort that will benefit all who value multilingualism as a vital college and career readiness skill. In particular, foreign language teachers and programs will benefit from the transformative effect that Seal implementation in a district represents. We are already seeing, in this third year of the pilot the inter-district collaboration resulting from the process. When well adopted, participating in the Seal means that districts set proficiency targets, assess their students to see if targets are being met and make any changes to teaching or programming to do better next year. It is an exciting process that focuses on what the student can do as a result of programming and related to

The Seal Pilot in MA has already created resources, pathways and templates for Seal implementation across the state, even as the legislation was being considered for passage. The Seal Workgroup GoogleGroup currently has almost 90 members and at least 70 districts participating. The two years of the pilot has been running, more than 1,000 Seals were awarded last spring. We invite any district to become part of our Pilot by going to www.languageopportunity.org, watching our October 6 Webinar overview on the home page, joining our Seal Workgroup GoogleGroup on the Pilot Page and coming to our electronic GoToMeetings the fourth Monday of the month at 7PM. You’ll receive updates through the GoogleGroup and can ask questions the same way. The more the merrier! Come join the movement!
MaFLA Student Video Contest

Theme

Learn a new language! Expand your mind... Expand your heart... Expand your world!

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 2016 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 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,
- other
- a skit,
- an advertisement,
- a skit,
- other

The contest will take place during Foreign Language Week in March 2018. It will begin on March 1, 2018. 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 or the 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 Carlos-Luis Brown.
5. 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 2017-2018

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: Carlos-Luis Brown

Click on link above to email Carlos and request mailing address.

Entries must be postmarked by March 15, 2018
MaFLA Poster/Essay Contest Rules

THEME:  Learn a new language! Expand your mind… Expand your heart… Expand your world!

GENERAL RULES CHECKLIST

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

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

PLEASE NOTE: Any posters that do not meet all of the criteria will be disqualified.

Essay Checklist
____ Essays must be written in English.
____ Essays must state theme and content must be relevant to the theme.
____ Teacher must scan and submit a completed copy of the official entry form, including the required item identification information, with each entry.
____ Essays must have a title, be typed/word processed (12 point Times New Roman font), double spaced.
____ No identifying marks are allowed on the face of the essay.
____ If outside sources are used they must be cited appropriately.
____ All entries must be scanned to pdf files and emailed to Stuart Gamble at the address below.

ESSAY LENGTH - By Division
• Grades K-5: Maximum 150 words
• Grades 6-8: Maximum 250 words
• Grades 9-12: Maximum 350 words

Judging Criteria Checklist

Poster Criteria
• Visual impact, overall appealing effect
• Theme relevance
• Neatness
• Originality
• Accuracy

Essay Criteria
• Theme relevance
• Clarity of thought
• Organization of ideas
• Creativity
• Overall impact of message

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

Poster information contact:
Teresa Benedetti

Essay information contact:
Sarah Moghtader
MaFLA Poster/Essay Contest Entry Form

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

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

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

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

Superintendent’s Address: __________________________________________________________________________________

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student’s Name</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Teacher’s Name/dues paid through</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. ___________________</td>
<td>______</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. ___________________</td>
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<td>5. ___________________</td>
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<td>________________________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#3. Item Identification: (Photocopy the form below, fill it out and attach it to the back of each essay and poster)

Student’s Name:_______________________________________________________ Grade:____________________
Language:__________________________ Level:____ School:________________________________________
School Address:_________________________________________________________________________________
School Phone #: (_____)______________________  Teacher’s Name:______________________________________
Teacher’s Email: __________________________________________

Deadline for both contests is March 15, 2018
NOTE: Only five entries per school (in each contest)

Send Posters to:

Teresa Benedetti
Click on the link above to email Teresa and request mailing address

Send Essays to:

Sarah Moghtader
Click on the link above to email Sarah and request mailing address
The Massachusetts Foreign Language Association

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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 Winter Issue is Jan. 5

Why Advocate?
“Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, Nothing is going to get better. It’s not.”
- Dr. Seuss, The Lorax

2018
Happy New Year