Expanding Minds, Hearts And Worlds At MaFLA Fall Conference
by Kathy Turner

Learn a New Language

Expand Your Mind
Expand Your Heart
Expand Your World

The Sheraton Springfield Monarch Place Hotel welcomed more than 700 foreign language educators from Massachusetts, New England, and beyond for three days of inspirational professional development from October 25 through 27. MaFLA’s 51st Fall Conference had a full program of four 6-hour workshops, three 4-hour workshops, eleven 3-hour workshops and more than one hundred and twenty 75-minute sessions. Nationally renowned presenters and talented local favorites shared their expertise on everything from proficiency-based instruction, comprehensible input, and effective feedback to brain breaks, the Seal of Biliteracy, and children’s literature.

Jeanne O’Hearn, 2018 Conference Chair, chose the theme of Learn A New Language: Expand Your Mind, Expand Your Heart, Expand Your World. Jeanne believes that art – in its many forms – has a unique way of opening our eyes to the world. This notion permeated all aspects of the Conference. Attendees examined the role that the arts can play in their curricula during workshops and sessions on the integration of arts into the classroom, Spanish immersion through Latin dance, comprehensible input through film, and Guadeloupean identity through the eyes of a filmmaker. One of the Conference highlights was the keynote address given by Richard Blanco, President Obama’s Inaugural Poet. He eloquently and passionately shared anecdotes and poems that reflected his linguistic and cultural journey as a Cuban American.

The MaFLA Fall Conference was not only about attending workshops and sessions. There were many opportunities to connect with old friends and make new ones at meals, in the Exhibit Hall, at the Members’ Reception, in Zumba class, and at the Business and Awards Luncheon. This year the Members’ Reception doubled as a celebration of the successful vote by the Massachusetts legislature to adopt the Seal of Biliteracy.

The annual Business and Awards Luncheon is the culminating event of the Conference. During the business portion of the program, members voted on a slate of directors to serve on next year’s Board. This was also the time to honor colleagues and their students for the outstanding contributions that they make to our profession, to award scholarships, and to announce the recipients of MaFLA’s three highest accolades: the Foreign Language Teacher of the Year, the Distinguished Service Award, and the Friend of Foreign Languages Award. This year’s Teacher of the Year is Rebecca Blouwolff, a middle school French teacher in Wellesley. Phyllis Dragonas presented the Distinguished Service Award to Marty Abbott, ACTFL’s Executive Director, to recognize her lifelong commitment to the promotion of foreign language education.

At the conclusion of the Business and Awards Luncheon, 2019 Conference Chair Beckie Rankin unveiled next year’s Fall Conference theme: Level Up Your Language Education. Please visit www.mafla.org to learn more about the exciting details of next year’s event and/or to submit a proposal to present a session.
MaFLA Board of Directors 2018

Officers

President
KATHLEEN M. TURNER
Sharon High School

President Elect
JORGE ALLEN
Andover Public Schools

First Vice President
JEANNE L. O’HEARN
Masconomet Regional Middle School

Second Vice President
REBEKAH RANKIN
Lexington High School

Clerk
DEBRA HEATON
Salem High School

Treasurer
MARYANN E. BRADY
Rivier University

Adjunct
ANNA TIRONE, Winchester High School

Directors

TERESA BENEDETTI (2018)
Minnechaug High School

LOUISSA ADBELGHANY (2018)
Salem State University

BRITTA ROPER (2019)
Melrose Public Schools

KIM TALBOT (2019)
Newton South High School

HELENA ALFONZO (2020)
Boston Public Schools

JULIE CALDARONE (2020)
Wilmington Public Schools

SARAH MOGHTADER (2020)
Falmouth High School

CARLOS-LUIS BROWN (2020)
Dover Sherborn Middle School

KATHLEEN EGAN (2021)
Pingree School

SHENG-CHU LU (2021)

Coordinators

Membership
MADELYN GONNERMÁN TORCHIN
Tufts University

Events
JOYCE BECKWITH
Communications
RONIE R. WEBSTER
Monson High School

Advocacy
TED ZARROW
Programming
CATHERINE RITZ
Boston University

Exhibits
DOMINIQUE TROTIN
Website
LARRY WEBSTER

MaFLA Board of Directors 2018

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

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. MaFLA welcomes short articles, anecdotes, brief reviews of books and other teaching materials, and other items of interest to members of the profession. The opinions expressed by the authors of articles published in this newsletter are their own and are not necessarily shared or endorsed by MaFLA or its Board of Directors.

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

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

Taking advantage of your MaFLA membership this year, you have enjoyed outstanding professional development events: the Core Practices Seminars, Diversity Day, Proficiency Academy, the Summer Institute, and the Jubilee Conference! Listen to our members who tell us “This 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!
Winter Greetings!

As we approach the winter holidays and the beginning of the new year, many of us reflect on the past year. It certainly has been a banner year for MaFLA PD. We started the year with a very successful Core Practices Program in March. In May, many of our members enriched their skills and knowledge at our annual Diversity Day.

Summer saw record attendance at our 4th consecutive Proficiency Academy, followed by our two and a half day Summer Institute which is always a popular PD event for so many of our members.

As the school year began so did what I call “conference season”. In October, I re-connected with my MaFLA colleagues at another outstanding MaFLA Fall Conference and in November I traveled to New Orleans for the ACTFL Conference. Each of these events was memorable and each one has helped me to improve my skills and to impact positively my teaching.

It seems that foreign language colleagues are special. They continually share their knowledge and expertise and inspire each other as foreign language professionals to stay in the forefront of the educational field.

As I think back on this year of exceptional PD, I have come up with 2 important questions.

First of all, why can I attend workshops over and over again presented by the same individuals and each time learn so much to improve myself? I believe it is because they, like myself, are life-long learners and each time they present they offer new and innovative tidbits to whet our curiosity.

My second question is why do I look forward to “conference season” so much when it really is a stressful time trying to gather lesson plans for three classes for 84 minute blocks over the two days that I will be out of the classroom? Oh, and of course, these classes will be taught by substitutes who do not know Spanish at all? So what is my Why? It is the enthusiasm, the learning, the sharing of ideas and materials that come from my outstanding FL colleagues.

So as we wind down this year, I send out a big THANK YOU to all of my wonderful colleagues!

The theme for this issue of the Newsletter is Always Expanding Our Repertoires!

We asked our members how they have expanded their repertoires through PD this year. We wanted to know what they took away from their PD, whether that PD was simply reading a professional article or book or participating in a workshop, conference or program. This issue has numerous articles about professional growth and what it has offered to our members.

If you missed our conference or if you were there and want to continue your learning, we have some great articles about workshops and conference strands with resources and ideas. Check out those articles (even those from languages you do not teach). In these articles you will find information on what was offered, topics and resources shared and find out the names of the various presenters. If you want to learn more about some of these topics or if you have questions, you can contact them to expand or continue your learning.

I believe that the passion and desire to be life-long learners and to continually expand our toolkits is perfectly summed up in the article by Mike Travers, a first time presenter at MaFLA. He states that he always leaves the conference with a feeling of hope for new methods to teach, and excitement as we continue our own paths to proficiency. As Mike states in his article, we need to have that growth-mindset and MaFLA members and colleagues consistently demonstrate this.

Don’t miss the MaFLA Educator in the Spotlight, the articles about all of the various MaFLA Awards, the in-depth article about Teaching for Proficiency in the L2 classroom, the Seal of Biliteracy update and most of all, be sure to read the Notes to the Profession by 2019 MaFLA Conference Chair Beckie Rankin. You can already submit your proposal for the 2019 MaFLA Conference whose theme will be Level Up Your Language Education. Proposals can be submitted on the MaFLA.org website. Click here. It is that easy.

The deadline for our January issues is January 5, 2019. Our theme is Advocating and Teacher Leaders.

Here are some possible topics.

• How can we all be teacher leaders? How are you a teacher leader?
• How can we keep our programs vibrant and attractive to students?
• How has online learning impacted our programs? What have we learned from these programs?
• Where will the next generation of world language teachers come from? How can we work to be certain that there are enough teachers to meet the needs? What can we do or what are we doing to encourage our students and others to become world language teachers?

Let your ideas be heard!
MaFLA’s Educator In The Spotlight

An interview with Ashley Uyaguari, Middle School Spanish Teacher

Ashley Uyaguari may be best known to MaFLA members for her podcast Inspired Proficiency, so we wanted to get to know the details of the rest of her career. Since 2010 she has been a middle school Spanish teacher at the Innovation Academy Charter School in Tyngsboro and prior taught for three years at the Alvirne High School in Hudson, New Hampshire. She has also taught at the middle school and high school level in Ecuador.

1. Tell us a little about yourself.

I live in NH with my two sons and husband. I love my job, and sharing what I do with other teachers through professional development, social media and my podcast. I teach 6th-8th grade Spanish and work with incredible teachers and administration. I enjoy reading, listening to books and podcasts, watching my kids play sports and playing cards and board games!

2. What does your ideal classroom look like?

It’s a class that is free of distractions like desks, English and backpacks and full of face to face human interaction, comprehensible input and play. The classes are communities where we interact in the target language; where Spanish is being practically applied every day within our class community.

3. Can you comment on the role of play and movement in your classroom?

The desk-free space allows me to engage the students in play and movement every day. And it is really the core of what we do. We move around as we transition from activity to activity, and also move from different pairs and groups to interact with each other and the language. Games and play allow us to have a shared context to interact with one another authentically in the language, and to talk and write about after playing.

4. How has proficiency-based instruction changed assessment?

Our digital portfolio system is something I’ve shared with many teachers through workshops and webinars. It’s something I’m really excited about! We’ve advocated for changes to assessment practices over the last six years, so that we now report out on each students’ proficiency growth based on evidence in their digital portfolios.

With proficiency, we want to see what students CAN do, not what they can’t do. Traditional tests and quizzes, tend to focus on what students miss. So, when we switched to proficiency, we knew we needed to change up assessment, too. We now collect language samples from the students over time. The samples come from open-ended prompts and cover a variety of topics that aren’t taught within traditional units.

Their portfolios consist of six impromptu videos of them speaking on a variety of topics, four writing prompts, and two mini-OPI inspired interviews with their teachers per year. Over three years, you can imagine it’s exciting to be able to see their growth!

5. From conversations with you, I can tell that you value getting to know your students. Can you talk about an opportunity you have had to get to know students outside of your classroom? And, let us know why you value close relationships with students?

I think that building relationships with students and being a trusting adult in their lives who believes in them is the most important thing we do as teachers. I think one reason I value this so much is because it was important to me as I was growing up.

Also, when I have relationships with students, it’s much simpler to ask them to do things like avoid English in class, take risks and trust me with the plans I’ve created. I don’t think we could accomplish much at all without the community building and relationship building that I make a priority at the start of each year, and through the year.

I get to work with students outside of the Spanish classroom through our advisory program, which is a passion of mine I can tell you about another time. Another time I get to see students outside of class is during trips to Monteverde, Costa Rica.

6. What do you tell your students before they do their family stays in Costa Rica?

Using the digital portfolios as evidence, we guide students in self-assessment, self-reflection and goal setting throughout their three years in our program. Through this process they take ownership of their language acquisition journey and gain a strong understanding of the ACTFL proficiency levels as well as how they are growing through them.
My colleague, Stel Schmalz, is the heart and soul behind our Costa Rica trips! I’m so thankful she’s made this a part of our program. When we send students off to be with their host families, we remind them that they have the skills to express themselves even when they don’t have the specific vocab they need. We remind them that their commitment to the target language for these nine days will make a huge difference in their language proficiency. And of course, we remind them that we are here for them and will spend time with them every day. It’s really been amazing to support so many students through this experience.

8. **Give us one of the best realizations you had when interviewing a guest for your podcast.**

Just one? There have been so many! I think a big one was when I was talking with Ruth Whalen Crockett for episode 7 of season 1. She was talking about how teachers need to find a support system to surround themselves with. Through that conversation, we realized teachers could take the step to support others first and that would likely lead to finding their own support systems. When you take that step to support others, you build a network of support for yourself. It wasn’t a point either of us had thought of before and it came from our conversation which was really exciting.

Another one I’ll mention is when talking to Kristopher Morehead about how to avoid teacher burnout, I realized that so many teachers are experiencing burnout. Since then it’s been a mission of mine to inspire teachers to find balance between work and life, and to be a better model of that myself.

Joshua Cabral also reminded me that when I respond to the form of what a student says instead of the message, I am ignoring what the student wants to say. And that message is more important. There is a time and place for practice and form, but that it can be extremely valuable to respond to the message and not the form when interacting with students.

I knew that this podcast would be a good resource for teachers, but it’s been exciting to experience how much I am learning from the process of interviewing so many teachers. I grow with each episode I create.
Distinguished Guests, MaFLA Members, Colleagues and Friends:

On behalf of the Massachusetts Foreign Language Association, it is an honor for me to be asked to present the 2018 MaFLA Distinguished Service Award to Ms. Martha G. Abbott, our nationally renowned, accomplished and dedicated leader of the Foreign Language profession, who is most qualified and worthy of this recognition. Marty is the Executive Director of ACTFL, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, which is the largest national organization for language education professionals representing all languages from every level of instruction.

Marty Abbott has been committed to serving the ACTFL membership as the advocate for language education which should be central to the curriculum in our schools, colleges and universities, especially where our country holds a prominent position in the global community. Under Marty’s leadership, ACTFL’s strategic plan has been emphasizing its ever expanding mission and vision. In sharing her passion for language proficiency she believes that advocacy for language programs will continue until mastery becomes the norm and not the exception.

In her present capacity, as Executive Director of ACTFL, Marty was the keynote speaker at the opening of the MaFLA conference in 2007. Over the years, she has attended many of MaFLA’s conferences where she has also conducted workshops and sessions. It is under Marty’s leadership that ACTFL has established many initiatives adopted by the state language associations including MaFLA. To mention a few they are the proficiency guidelines, performance indicators and proficiency assessments.

As Director of Lead with Languages and Co-Chair of The Year of Languages, Marty has given much support to advocacy through public awareness. It is also under Marty’s direction that ACTFL took the lead in establishing the guidelines for the Seal of Biliteracy, presently active in at least 30 states across the nation.

In July, 2018, National Public Radio, through Boston’s WBUR National Broadcasting, conducted a week-long series focused on foreign languages where Marty Abbott was invited to comment on language learning in this country. It was live news which was distributed nationally.

Marty has held a number of leadership positions within professional organizations on the state and national levels. She has been President of the Foreign Language Association of Virginia; Chair of the Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages; President of ACTFL, and most recently President of the Joint National Council on Languages, JNCL.

As a distinguished alumna of the University of Mary Washington, Marty was inducted as an honorary member of Phi Beta Kappa. She was also appointed to a four-year term to the University’s Board of Trustees.

Prior to her current position as Executive Director of ACTFL since 2011, Marty served as ACTFL’s Director of Education for seven years. Before joining the ACTFL team in an official capacity, she was the Director of Secondary Education and Coordinator of Foreign Languages in the Fairfax County Virginia Public Schools.

In recognition of Marty’s accomplishments and professional visibility, President Barack Obama appointed Marty in 2016 to the National Security Education Board, which is composed of eight cabinet level appointees, and six presidenially appointed members who advise the National Security Education Program. Marty’s appointment to this Board sends a strong message regarding the importance of global and linguistic competence in the 21st century.

In view of Marty’s numerous achievements and positions of leadership in the profession, Marty is a kind, friendly and unassuming person who is well-liked and respected, and who reluctantly accepts credit for her professional endeavors and accomplishments.

Nevertheless, it is appropriate at this time that MAFLA recognize the untiring and relentless efforts and achievements of this true leader and national advocate of foreign languages by presenting to Marty Abbott the coveted MaFLA 2018 Distinguished Service Award with our sincere thanks and congratulations.

Last but not least, please accept our best wishes as you complete your period of service as Executive Director of ACTFL, and take with you the power of all of the relationships that you have been part of in this professionally dedicated and friendly community of foreign language education.
I nominated Arthur Chou of Velazquez Press and the director of www.sealofbiliteracy.org for the 2018 MaFLA Friend of Foreign Languages Award. Arthur Chou exemplifies the spirit of this award as a national leader of the Seal of Biliteracy movement, and a diligent and tireless supporter of Massachusetts’ legislative bid for the Seal through the Language Opportunity for Our Kids or LOOK Act which was signed into law by Governor Baker on November 22, 2017. He is actually a friend of all language learning groups; world language, English language and dual language.

I and many other MaFLA Board members were at ACTFL last year when the MA legislature finally voted to pass this historic legislation. He was as happy as we were with the news, as he had been following our progress, supporting our efforts and providing resources to us throughout the process. At that same ACTFL, Arthur Chou facilitated a Seal session attended by 30-40 states that were all in various stages of implementation of the Seal of Biliteracy. He conducted an overview of the national status and then coordinated a giant share of information after dividing the room between advocates of those states that had passed and those that hadn’t yet passed legislation. I know that he is doing the same thing at TESOL and MABE and beyond. He is expert at making connections, providing resources and giving support.

The www.sealofbiliteracy.org website is a perfect example of the resources overseen by Arthur Chou. Over the five years of the legislative process in Massachusetts, I was addicted to the Seal of Biliteracy interactive map on which states turn dark blue once the legislation is passed in the state, are light green if legislation is being considered and pale yellow if they are at the early stages. The Website offers state updates, general Seal of Biliteracy information and FAQs, and has incredibly active Facebook and Twitter pages for all sorts of resources and information about biliteracy and the Seal movement and district and state Seal related announcements. To mimic Dr. Seuss of this fair city of Springfield, “Oh, what a glorious day it was when Arthur Chou turned Massachusetts blue!”

Over the five years or three legislative sessions that it took to get our legislation in Massachusetts passed, Arthur Chou supported the Language Opportunity Coalition in its work to celebrate biliteracy and overturn the 2002 legislation restricting dual language learning. He was there for us with answers to questions, connections to resources and his understanding of the national progress of the Seal of Biliteracy. Through Velazquez Press, he offered stickers, bumper stickers and medals to those states who were still advocating for the legislation.

I can think of no stronger 2018 Friend of Foreign Languages than Arthur Chou, Friend of Languages, Friend of Biliteracy and Friend of Celebrating What Students Can Accomplish When Programs Set Targets and Create Programming to Increase Biliteracy.
A Keynote With A Cuban Flair

This year’s keynote speaker, Richard Blanco, captivated attendees in the packed ballroom and a nearby overflow room with stories of growing up in a Cuban-American home in Miami and how he eventually became President Obama’s inaugural poet. He recited several of his poems which appealed to many in the audience in different ways, prompting both laughter and tears. Originally an engineer, Richard told us he became a poet “to investigate language and how language creates itself.” In explaining his craft of writing poems in both English and Spanish, Richard discussed the concept of interlingualism which he defined as writing about things that can’t be translated into another language. He stated, “When we know two or more languages, we are two or more people.” He added, “I think in English but I love in Spanish.”

Earlier that morning, Richard participated in a Question and Answer session and autographed his books for attendees both during that session and after the Keynote Address in the Exhibit Hall. During the Question and Answer session, Richard offered his thoughts on teaching poetry in the world language classroom, mentioning that the first rule of poetry is “show don’t tell.” Referring to John Dewey’s work with aesthetics education, Richard encourages teaching “art as experience.” Richard believes that poems offer an experience from the author and can be used in any content area with any age. According to Richard, most of the meaning in a poem is delivered through the use of imagery and sensory details. He suggests that teachers ask students to think about what they see, hear, smell, taste, and feel while reading a poem.

Want more Richard? Visit www.poets.org and click on Materials for Teachers. If you scroll down you’ll find the video “A teacher’s guide to poets.org” with Richard speaking as the Education Ambassador. Richard encourages all teachers to take advantage of the many wonderful resources that are available on this site, such as Poem-a-Day, Teach this Poem, lesson plans, and audio and video recordings of poets reciting their work.

Jeanne O’Hearn, 2018 Conference Chair

MaFLA 2019 Language Teacher of the Year

Springfield, MA—The Massachusetts Foreign Language Association (MaFLA) is pleased to announce its 2019 Language Teacher of the Year, Rebecca Blouwolff, a French teacher at Wellesley Middle School. The presentation was held during the Business and Awards Luncheon of the 51st Annual MaFLA Conference on October 27, 2018.

The award for the MaFLA Language Teacher of the Year is intended to elevate the status of the language teaching profession at the state level and beyond. “As language advocates, we are seeking to create opportunities to recognize the most accomplished members of the profession,” said Dr. Edward Zarrow, chair of the MaFLA Teacher of the Year Committee. “The MaFLA Language Teacher of the Year is chosen not only because of their success in the classroom, but also because of their sustained vision for bilingualism and biliteracy. The winner becomes a spokesperson for the language profession. We are privileged to extend this award to Mme. Blouwolff for all that she does both in the classroom and beyond as an inspirational teacher-leader. She is indeed a superstar!”

The two other finalists for the MaFLA Language Teacher of the Year were:
- Vilma Bibeau, a Spanish and Italian teacher from Medford High School
- Ashley Uyaguari, a Spanish teacher from Innovation Academy Charter School, Tyngsboro, MA

In a video interview shortly following the announcement, Mme. Blouwolff thanked the committee, congratulated the other finalists, and discussed making the conscious decision to raise her children in a bilingual household. “This year I will be an advocate for multilingualism in the United States, and most certainly in our Commonwealth,” said Mme. Blouwolff. “I believe that monolingualism is the illiteracy of the 21st century, and it is our duty as educators and our privilege to educate other people about how we can learn more about other cultures through learning a language.”

Mme. Blouwolff will now represent the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and offer her vision for language teaching and advocacy as she competes with other state winners to see who will become the Language Teacher of the Year for the Northeast Region (NECTFL) in February, 2019. This teacher goes on to a final competition at the national level.

Jeanne O’Hearn, 2018 Conference Chair

2018 Conference Wrap-Up
Greg Duncan Makes Proficiency Real

On Thursday, October 25, we attended Greg Duncan’s pre-conference workshop: *Leaving with Performance-Based Assessments In-Hand*. Our department has been working towards proficiency for more than a couple of years. Initially, it all seems quite theoretical, overwhelming and difficult to apply. In order for proficiency to be successful both students and teachers must have a total mindset shift. This workshop not only reiterated and confirmed our knowledge of proficiency in the world language classroom, but also gave us true direction. The road to proficiency is a journey, one that takes time and creativity, but the results are well worth the work and our students will be more equipped to use the target language in real world application.

We focused on the importance of creating strong scenarios (prompts) to get the students to talk or write. Duncan gave us several examples and we had the opportunity to create an IPA and also saw other people’s work. This gave us the opportunity to compare and learn from each other’s work. We have learned that the better the prompt, the better the results. A good prompt should be real world, relatable, and culturally appropriate. The prompt should include who, what, when, where and why. All of these elements should reflect the target language and culture. Perhaps the most important part of the prompt is a good hook- something that draws your students in. The more invested your students are, the more excited they will be about it and will in turn show more creativity when completing the task.

However, once the tasks are completed and need to be graded, it becomes complicated if we continue grading in the traditional way. The assessment should be graded as a whole, rather than subtracting a set point value for each grammar or spelling mistake. When grading, the main thing you focus on, is “was the student understood and did he or she get the point across. Towards the end of the workshop, Duncan spoke about rubrics and gave us very useful links to research them on our own. He encouraged us to pick out what we liked about various ones and to go from there. It was a great relief to hear Duncan say that he has not yet come across the perfect rubric (those he wrote himself included). In our department, we have created and recreated rubric upon rubric. It was nice to know that we are not alone.

We returned to school feeling energized. The following week, during our professional development day, we chose to work with a colleague on creating a rubric that would address both interpersonal and presentational use of the language and we are planning on creating several prompts for our students. We feel that the process of creating prompts is more enjoyable and successful when you have a colleague to bounce ideas off of and revise what you have. It is great to have a friendly critic when going through the process. The colleague does not have to teach the same language as you.

We truly enjoyed the workshop and were grateful for the time Duncan gave us to work on IPAs. It is very rare to be given the gift of time. We feel that we are headed in the right direction and are excited about what is to come for our students.

Submitted by Krystin Beauchesne and Tanya Ferretto, Winchester Public Schools.

Methods Bootcamp

by Tim Eagan

Are you new to the profession or did you take your methods course too long ago to remember? In recent years, our profession has made a seismic shift to proficiency that is transforming how we prepare, teach and program world languages as a critical college and career readiness skill. In our six-hour workshop, Nicole Sherf and I reviewed several important concepts, from the six Core Practices, to the national Seal of Biliteracy movement, to the strategies needed to motivate and engage your students in their language learning. For this newsletter article, I’d like to share just a few highlights focused on planning, communication, and assessment. I want to acknowledge that Nicole did most of the heavy lifting for this workshop, as a methods professor at Salem State. I was glad to contribute to the work from my experience at the K to 12 level.

One of the first principles in teaching for proficiency is creating a classroom community where the target language is the primary means of communication for teacher and students. While we know the 90%+ guideline, we also know that often teachers report falling short of that goal. If you are struggling with attaining 90%+, here are some simple tips. Create a structure to your lessons so that they are infused with daily routines and go-to activities. In this way, students know what to expect from segment to segment. Routines and go-to activities provide teachers with many opportunities to use purposeful communication in a meaningful context, employing functional chunks of language as comprehensible input. Here are some ideas that you might begin to establish today: handing in homework, completing a warm-up...
task, getting into groups, what to do during free time, attention signals, regrouping signals, classroom jobs. These all provide opportunities to use patterned language to minimize or even eliminate the need for English. These functional chunks of language, such as “Please find your red/blue/green group and make a list of X” are all simple ways to keep the focus on target language. Elementary school teachers survive on routines. Try doing an online search for elementary classroom routines and adapt some for your teaching context and you’ll find lots of ideas that will work K to 12.

Student target language use often breaks down when they don’t know what to do or they don’t have the language they need to complete a task. The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines describe what students can do with language in real-world situations along the continuum of proficiency development. It’s important for teachers to read and unpack the proficiency levels as part of planning for instruction. A supporting document, and one that I keep at my fingertips for unit, lesson and performance assessment planning is ‘The NCSS-FL- ACTFL Can-Do Statements’. Written to serve as a planning tool for teachers and for student goal-setting, the Can-Do Statements will be a game changer for you.

Assessment was another big category in our Bootcamp workshop. Let’s keep in mind a few things that the Center for Applied Linguistics has to say about assessment validity in a language classroom. Instruction and assessment have to mirror each other and assessment has to reflect real-world, authentic communication. In practical terms, this means that performance assessment at its best does not measure student performance in terms of numbers of errors or numbers of stem-changing verbs the student used. When we measure accuracy, students are best served when we ask how much it helps or interferes with communication. Requiring “at least five stem-changing verbs” or “all of the verb tenses we have learned in this unit” is not authentic.

If I need directions to El Yunque, I can meet my needs even if I don’t know that ¿Me puede ayudar? contains an o to ue stem changing verb. And if I need someone to repeat something for me because I’m only a novice Spanish speaker, I can say “Repite, por favor” without knowing that the infinitive is repetir and the e changes to i. If I need to tell a tour guide that I lost my phone in a volcano, I might forget the double object pronouns in “Se me perdió” but I can still get my point across. If we really want to be sure students know these structures, we can teach them as functional chunks. Am I saying that students should never know what a stem changing verb is or never be exposed to double object pronouns in Spanish? No! And a common misconception about teaching for proficiency is that we don’t teach grammar. What I am saying is this: There is a time and a place for explicit knowledge of grammatical structures and verb forms, and novice-level Spanish is not the time and place (I have lots more to say on this topic, but that’s another piece for another day).

When teachers learn to embed grammar instruction into meaningful communicative contexts, students are much more successful moving along the path to proficiency. When teachers focus too much on explicit knowledge of rules and paradigms, some students might develop great knowledge of these rules, but that does not mean that they can communicate in the language. Not to mention the many students who are left in the dust and drop language after their two-year requirement. A student might know all of the irregular preterit forms, but that does not mean that she can tell her host mother about the giant spider that chased her out of the kitchen when she went in for a snack. There is so much more to consider in effective instructional design for world languages. I hope that the above examples give you some food for thought as you continue to explore the teaching of languages and cultures.
Chinese Strand

On Friday morning, MaFLA welcomed Ying Jin, the 2018 ACTFL Teacher of the Year, to present a 3-hour workshop on Innovative Ideas to Foster the 21st Century Minds. The attendees were impressed by all the information she shared, including a variety of hands-on class activities and strategies that make learning interesting and enhance students’ proficiency in the language. She also made the handouts available online and ready to be downloaded for immediate classroom use. On Friday morning, Ann Ferriter and Mei-Ju Hwang showcased their Springfield Startalk Chinese Immersion Program, followed by the presentations of Star Lew, Yezhe Wang, and Ming Lu who are from Newton Public Schools on “How to Keep Program Sustainability.”

On Friday afternoon, ChinHuei Yeh focused on Small Steps Move Mountains: Using Authentic Materials in Chinese Classrooms. She shared the authentic materials that she has been working with, where to collect them, and most importantly, how to use them at different levels of teaching. Other sessions included How to Teach Complicated Chinese Grammar in an Uncomplicated Way from Jade Qian, and Make it Real: Authentic Resources Amplifying Chinese Proficiency from Lijie Qin.

On Saturday morning, Wayland Middle School teacher Chiun-Fan Chang presented on How to Incorporate Chinese into a World Language Week Celebration. She shared her experience on how to lead different activities to organize a school-wide event as well as the rubrics, examples of student work, and example videos for teaching culture. During the last Chinese session before the Business Luncheon, Shan-Lee Liu presented Languages and Technology to Expand Our World and Extend Our Mind, in which the website Flipgrid was presented. She demonstrated how to use this platform to allow students to record and reply to each other's videos.

At the luncheon, ChinHuei Yeh, a high school teacher in Shrewsbury, received the Chinese Teacher of the Year award. The General Director of Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Boston attended the luncheon to congratulate Ms. Yeh.

Submitted by Sheng-Chu Lu.

Italian Strand

The Italian Strand had all the elements of a strong conference. Dr. Paula Servino, Professor of Italian at Brandeis University kicked off the conference for us with her amazing and engaging workshop, Multi Cultural Coexistence in the Italian Curriculum Today through IPA and Proficiency Based Instruction. Paula is well known in the field for her many talents and knowledge of Italian, particularly as the creator of the five levels of the Pimsleur Audio Program and her specialty in Italian-Jewish culture.

If this was your first workshop with Paula Servino, you quickly understood that she is a gifted educator and why she received the 1998 Excellence in Teaching Award at her University. She is dynamic, current in the field and models the qualities of excellent teaching at any level.

Dr. Servino had enough energy, enthusiasm, materials and activities for a workshop that could have lasted one or two whole days, maybe more. She provided the participants with various types of authentic resources such as films, videos, songs, statistics, and thought-provoking readings on the subject of immigration. She did this while modeling how to teach for proficiency. That is probably one of the reasons that this workshop was so informative and engaging. That is, Dr. Servino did not just present information and materials to us, she had us working together, sharing ideas and using the language.

My favorite activity was role-playing the members of a town. (Role-playing always brings me back to childhood, when we didn't have structured play dates and we had to come up with scenarios to role-play on our own.) In this activity each group received
the name of its town with a description of it. Each member of the group had a person he or she had to play. The individuals had different titles and personalities. The purpose of the role-play was to show how different types of people would treat immigrants and, in many cases, reveal stereotypes that people might not even be aware of.

Another role-playing activity was playing the role of a mediator or migrant to Italy, in an interview. The mediator had to ask questions to the migrant in order to obtain specific information. These activities, as others, contained key components of performance tasks (Context and Mechanics) and were linked to the ACTFL standards that guide us.

If you have been teaching for proficiency, you know how much work it is and how much time it takes to find authentic materials and create activities and assessments. You have probably experienced the satisfying feeling of seeing your students use the target language in a meaningful way after all the hard work you did for them. Paula Servino did this for us and we appreciate her dedication and her sharing of knowledge with us so that we can return to our classes and use what we have learned. Grazie mille, Paula.

Submitted by Anna Tirone.

Spanish Strand

Teachers attending the workshops and conference sessions offered in the Spanish strand this year certainly had the opportunity to acquire a wealth of information related to authentic materials, thematic unit planning, and student engagement. Teachers were busy learning and participating in activities that encouraged the full use of the target language using engaging materials.

The Spanish teachers who attended the six hour pre-conference workshop Get Ready, Get Set, Get Proficient in Spanish! with presenters Katia Marticorena and Christina Toro from Arlington HS were offered a workshop delivered entirely in Spanish focused on the planning, implementation and assessment of complete thematic units. The lessons shared ranged from Spanish 2 to AP Spanish and the units were organized by the AP themes. Teachers walked away from this workshop praising how completely these lessons were planned and how generous the presenters were with their information and advice for each level. Katia and Christina shared the tools for the organization of thematic and culturally-based units encouraging teachers to do the same in their own classes. Truly this workshop was a mini foreign language methods class, blending both content and pedagogy delivered using teaching and grouping strategies that they use in their own classes. Over the course of these six hours, teachers took on the role of students with a variety of partners as they engaged in the lessons created by Katia and Christina.

Both veteran and novice teachers came away from this experience with high praise and gratitude to Katia and Christina for their generous sharing of information that included their own collaborative process, a bank of authentic materials, the teaching materials spanning pre-listening/reading through assessment with IPAs. Another highlight of the workshop was the virtual reality piece! Participants were treated to a 360-degree video experience at either La Tomatina or Carnaval using virtual reality goggles. Katia and Christina taught the participants how to turn their smartphones into virtual reality devices using the mobile apps necessary. Christina explained how they acquired their virtual reality goggles through a local grant funding program and they use them within their thematic units. As many teachers say good-bye to the use of textbooks, this presentation by Katia Marticorena and Christina Toro truly gave teachers the steps they need to take to present culturally authentic lessons in the most engaging ways possible! Kudos and mil gracias to Katia and Christina!

If you have been teaching for proficiency, you know how much work it is and how much time it takes to find authentic materials and create activities and assessments. You have probably experienced the satisfying feeling of seeing your students use the target language in a meaningful way after all the hard work you did for them. Paula Servino did this for us and we appreciate her dedication and her sharing of knowledge with us so that we can return to our classes and use what we have learned. Grazie mille, Paula.

Submitted by Anna Tirone.

If Spanish teachers were unable to attend the Thursday workshops, there were plenty of other opportunities in the Spanish strand to increase the number of strategies in our pedagogical toolboxes. On Friday, Alejandro Yegros presented Authentic Listening Resources for Beginning and Intermediate Classes. As the creator of Conjuguemos, Alejandro guided the participants through a lively session focused on viewing techniques, types of questions and activities to create from the authentic listening resources he shared and how these fit into the routines of his classes. Participants completed his sample activities for beginning and intermediate levels using videos from Univision’s En Un Minuto segments and CNN en Español. Additionally, Alejandro shared how he creates a divided classroom in which he can work with smaller groups of students while another part of the class is practicing their language skills individually. Alejandro graciously shared all of his collected work which can be found online at https://goo.gl/BrY5wX.

For those of you who need new ideas and approaches for native speaking Spanish students, Maria Payano and Tina de la Cruz from Abbot Lawrence Academy presented a session entitled Strategies for Teaching Spanish Language and Cult-
2018 Conference Wrap-Up

French Strand Attendees Excited About Workshops & Sessions

This year, instead of offering both a 6 hour and a 3 hour workshop in French, The Eastern MA Chapter of AATF decided to bring in a well-known cineaste, Mariette Monpierre, originally from Guadeloupe, whose film La Bonheur d’Elza has won several awards and received very positive reviews.

Mme. Monpierre gave a 3-hour workshop in which she discussed her personal journey from student to cineaste, the identity crisis she faced for many years and the role of women in today’s francophone films. Down to earth, honest and full of interesting anecdotes, Mme. Monpierre’s workshop touched on many interesting points. She was also able to show some clips from La Bonheur d’Elza and give details about why she chose them, who the actors were and the parts of the films which were truly autobiographical. Attendees felt privileged to be included in her inner circle, and many were excited about showing her film to their students. Presenters on Friday included Edit Dibra, in charge of education at the French Cultural Services in Boston, who introduced attendees to the programs, scholarships and resources which the FCS offers to French teachers, Janel Lafond-Paquin who presented on Infographics and Beckie Rankin who spoke on Slam Poetry. MaFLA Board Member Sarah Moghtader gave two sessions, one on sitcoms, reality shows and cartoons and the other on picture books. Andrea Javel and Carol LaPointe presented on francophone films, including Mme. Monpierre’s film Le Bonheur d’Elza. Jeanne Douillard, a French-speaking author, gave a session on her book: The Silent Presence of the French in New England. At the AATF Session, Kathleen Stein-Smith, Chair of the AATF Advocacy Commission, reminded members of the work her commission is doing and web sites and other resources which are available to them. Once again the guest speaker was Mariette Monpierre who entertained all of our members with a Q & A discussion about her latest projects, and recent experiences which happened to her on her last trip to Paris.

Submitted by Joyce Beckwith.

There’s A First Time For Anything

By: Mike Travers

There is nothing more joyous and rejuvenating than the first day back to work after MaFLA’s extraordinary annual conference in Springfield. I know I speak for many when I say that each year I leave with a feeling of hope for new methods to teaching and excitement as we continue our own paths to proficiency.

This year I took my own leap of faith and decided to be more than a participant in the audience of extraordinary teachers. I took a leap of faith and decided that this is the year that I want to present on a topic that has grown near and dear to me and that experience made my #MaFLA18 extra special.

I left last year’s MaFLA Conference feeling inspired by the amazing group of teacher presenters and I remember wondering if I had what it took to be a presenter. Following the conference I found myself asking teachers in person and online what they got out of the presentations and what they would want to hear more about. While the answers varied greatly there was one common theme in most of the answers. Most people wanted to hear more about “the g word”...grammar. For so many people they felt like they could implement thematic units with authentic resources and communicative activities but there was still that elephant in the room of grammar.

One of ACTFL’s core practices says to teach grammar as a concept where the focus is on meaning before form. This sounds lovely but for so many teachers this is the point where the path to proficiency-based teaching becomes more of a curvy highway with a potential sinkhole. Teachers were saying they want to hear from the heavy hitting experts in the field but also from everyday teachers who are working to implement this in their classroom. From there my topic was born and I began working on my presentation Keeping Up the PACE- teaching grammar in context through the PACE model.

Now for those of you who despise acronyms, PACE stands for Present, Attention, Co-Construction, Extension and is a relatively new approach that aims to have students discover specific grammar points and

End of Year
2018 Conference Wrap-Up

inductively construct their own meaning of the words before ever focusing on the rules. I vividly recall learning about it first with Nicole Sherf at a professional development workshop in Foxborough and realizing how practical this method could be. From there I took the risk and began implementing it in my Spanish and French classes to see what it was all about. The results were truly remarkable! My students went from memorizing grammar rules and worrying about conjugations to interpreting the meaning of texts and asking thought-provoking questions about the meaning while constructing their own understanding of what the grammar means. I could go on for days (or at least for a 75 minute MaFLA presentation) about this game changing method but I knew that this was something more teachers should hear about and try in their teaching.

In my presentation, while discussing the steps to creating a PACE model and showing examples of PACE lessons, I wanted teachers to know that this approach requires a growth mindset for us. In other words, we have to know that mistakes and failures are what will help us grow to becoming more proficiency based teachers and the PACE model gives us that space to take those risks and grow. During the session I showed examples of lessons that worked but also showed examples of moments where I learned what not to do for the next time. A presentation is not just a moment to show off what you did well but it’s also a time for you to show that you are just like the other teachers in the room. You are just like the language learners in your classroom. You have moments of glowing work and you have areas in which you plan to grow.

As a first time presenter I can sum up the experience with one word – support. From the minute the red presenter tag was attached to my name tag I felt supported by the MaFLA community. Whether it was board members asking for information on my session, colleagues from my own district telling me they were attending or strangers in the elevator who wanted to meet new people, I felt supported.

If you are doing something unique or intriguing in your classroom, chances are the MaFLA community wants to see it and they’ll support your risk taking. Yes, there’s a lot of prep work that goes into your presenta-

There is no end to education. It is not that you read a book, pass an examination, and finish with education. The whole of life, from the moment you are born to the moment you die, is a process of learning.

–Jiddu Krishnamurti

Andover Teachers Share Conference Take-Aways

Timothy Chavez
Spanish, West Middle School

My biggest takeaway was the importance of developing thematic units and how to go about doing so. Since the conference, I have been working very very hard to come up with topics/themes for each of our units and tying in cultural connections with those themes. It’s so much easier to teach this way!

Lin Wu
Chinese, High School

I learned some classroom activities to engage and improve students’ listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Peter Hall
French & Spanish, High School

I attended a session on giving meaningful feedback. Research shows that meaningful feedback is one of the most effective ways to move students towards greater proficiency. I learned a couple of strategies about how to “level-up” by giving specific feedback, a limited number of specific suggestions and ways to phrase it. I tried it out with some French 3 writing assignments. I was also reminded to make the students more aware of the goals and can-do statements so students

are just more cognizant of what they are learning and where they are at in terms of their goals. We had just completed a unit in French 3 so I had students go back and write out what they “can do” after the unit in the different modes. They were able to state the goals of the unit.

I also discussed specific ways to “level-up” with my French Conversation class and my Lengua y Cultura class following oral presentations and a graded debate.

A second session was about promoting student discourse in the target language with a focus on giving students more control over the learning objectives. I tried a strategy with my French conversation class as we are embarking on a new unit by having them formulate questions about what they want to know about the topic before we start investigating.

Overall, two worthy sessions for reflection.

Jen Deschenes
Spanish, High School

A great take away from my symposium Acquisition Focus lens of Film was to learn that there are more formats than ever to provide comprehensible input, prior to viewing a film, for our students.

Mike Travers is a Spanish teacher at Wellesley High School. He also writes for a blog www.madlanguageteacher.weebly.com
2018 Conference Wrap-Up

AWARDS

25 Years of Service

Peter J. Hale, Andover Public Schools

Stuart Gamble, East Windsor High School

New Teacher Commendations

Michael Sweet, Mansfield High School
Kayla O’Meara, Westwood High School
Zoe Cabaret-Salameh, Wood Hill Middle School, Andover
Ryan Casey, Lexington High School

Massachusetts Chinese Educator of the Year

ChinHuei Yeh, Shrewsbury Public Schools

Embassy of Spain Scholarship
Maureen Stake, Grafton Middle School

Cemenahuac Scholarship
Shannon Vigeant, Mount Greylock Regional School, Williamstown

Classical Association of Massachusetts for Excellence in Teaching
Kenneth Rothwell, Jr., PhD

MaFLA Friend Of Foreign Languages Award
Arthur Chou, Publisher, Velázquez Press and SealofBiliteracy.org

MaFLA Distinguished Service Award
Martha G. Abbott
Executive Director, ACTFL

MaFLA Teacher of the Year Finalists

Ashley Uyaguari
Innovation Academy Charter School
Rebecca Blouwolff
Wellesley Public Schools
Vilma Bibeau
Medford Public Schools

Learning is not attained by chance, it must be sought for with ardor and diligence.
Abigail Adams
Thank you, Jeanne and Jorge, for the opportunity to transition from this incredible conference and a year of well-attended PD events such as Core Practices, Diversity Day, Proficiency Academy, and Summer Institute to look ahead. I’d like to take this moment of gratitude to applaud everyone who worked incredibly hard to pull off this conference. Eighteen months ago, the report entitled "America’s Languages: Investing in Language Education for the 21st Century" outlined recommendations for the future of language teaching and learning. The first recommendation is a call to increase our population of highly qualified language teachers. We all know of the critical need for good language teachers, and, naturally, increasing our population involves both training new teachers and retaining those of us invested in the profession already. I am passionate about the pipeline from our language classes through excellent preparatory programs to recruit new teachers, but today I will be focused on you: high quality language educators and our desperate need to retain you and your incredible colleagues in Massachusetts classrooms.

Educators who stay in the classroom consistently exhibit several qualities, according to Darling-Hammond and Ingersoll’s research. One of the top and overlapping characteristics of long term educators is teachers as leaders. “Teacher leader” can be defined as an educator who pursues parallel paths inside and outside of the classroom. Becoming a teacher leader opens up two levels of interwoven investment: leading in your classroom and leading outside your classroom. Your classroom gives you insight and motivation to seek change and your leadership roles beyond your students affect change within your classroom.

One piece of my teacher leader pathway has been as your representative to LILL, the Leadership Initiative for Language Learning. As part of our activities, participants identified their spheres of influence. Your sphere of influence is where you can lead change most effectively.

For me and my three colleagues here, our spheres include Lexington High School. With my fellow MaFLA Board members, I work to affect positive change in our state via quality professional developments such as this conference.

Looking around, I see those of us who facilitate conversations on Twitter, who present nationally, who write articles, who mentor, who chair school committees, and who train the next generation of language teachers. A leadership path may be local, regional, or national and it must come back to impact the students you see in your classroom every day. When you bring the outside knowledge and experience you gain in the community back into the classroom, you positively impact your students. In today’s world, our students need us to be impactful educators as we prepare them for the 21st century with multiple languages, intercultural competencies, critical thinking, digital capacity, creativity, and collaboration. Just as you empower and support your students for the world of tomorrow, MaFLA wants to empower and support you in your teacher leader journey. This is our key to teacher retention. You’ll read more about teacher leaders in a winter issue of ACTFL’s magazine: The Language Educator. During next year’s conference, we aim to offer you the language, pedagogical, and leadership tools to increase and impact your spheres of influence. I am delighted to share with you our theme:

**Level Up Your Language Education.**

I hope that in preparation, we language educators will take ownership of our individual teacher-leader paths. Make a plan today! Start hyper locally by sharing with your PLC what you learned here. Continue state-wide by writing an article for our newsletter about a take-away that worked for you. Maybe your leadership path will find its way towards the Seal of Biliteracy or to presenting a session at our conference.
MaFLA would like to express its sincere thanks to the following companies and organizations whose loyal support made our 2018 conference possible:

**CORPORATE SPONSOR**
*Avant Assessment*

**BENEFACTORS**
*Idioma Consulting*
*Wayside Publishing*
*Passports*
*EF*
*Swift Education Systems*

**PATRONS**
*ACTFL*
*Jumpstreet*
*Sanako*
*EMC School*
*AATF*

**SUPPORTERS**
*NECTFL - Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages*
*CANE - Classical Association of New England*
*CAM - Classical Association of Massachusetts*
*NECTA - New England Chinese Teachers Association*
*NECSA - New England Chinese School Association*
*AATI - American Association of Teachers of Italian*
*MITA - Massachusetts Italian Teachers Association*
*Sheraton Springfield Monarch Place Hotel*

Thank you ~ Gracias ~ Merci ~ Danke ~ 谢谢 ~ Grazie ~ Gratias
Throughout the years there have been many attempts to identify the one true methodology in the teaching of a foreign language: the grammar-translation method, the direct method, the communicative approach, the natural approach, the community language learning approach, suggestopedia, total physical response, the silent way, etc. Regardless of the “How to teach L2” concern, there seems to be a universal agreement that the end result of all approaches is the development of L2 proficiency in our students.

This article will suggest some organizational strategies that L2 teachers can consider adopting for the purpose of planning proficiency-oriented language instruction regardless of their preferred methodology or methodologies. Each of these strategies will be illustrated by some actual activities.

Goal of Proficiency-Oriented Language Instruction

According to The Center for Advanced Language Acquisition (1) L2 learners practice the four modalities of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in order to communicate meaningfully, effectively, and creatively in the target language for real-life purposes and to communicate appropriately and accurately in authentic contexts.

- Meaningfully: is fully comprehensible, has meaning
- Effectively: achieves the desired result
- Creatively: has the quality of something original, not imitated or memorized
- Real-life: exists in reality, draws on actual events or situations
- Appropriately: is suitable or proper in the circumstances, is relevant to the situation
- Accurately: is correct in all details
- Authentic: is what a native L2 speaker would encounter

Characteristics of Proficiency-Oriented Language Instruction

Omaggio-Hadley (2) lists the following organizational strategies as helpful in planning proficiency-oriented language instruction:

1. **Students must have the opportunity to practice using language in a range of contexts to be encountered in the target language.**

If students spend most of their time in achievement-type activities such as those found in textbooks and workbooks, if they spend a great deal of time correcting homework assignments or engaging in question and answer sessions, most will never be able to acquire the ability to function in the real-life situations they would encounter in the L2 world. They will become proficient in those activities that they practiced in the classroom. The classroom should be used as a laboratory wherein students engage in role play activities such as doctor/patient, salesperson/customer, lawyer/client, teacher/student, etc.

Activities such as the following can provide the necessary practice: Working in pairs or in small groups, students are given conversation starter cards as follows:

Imagine the conversation between the waiter, your friend, and yourself.

### Conversation Card  Situation: At the restaurant

- **Waiter greets you and is ready to take your order.**
- **Your friend gives her/his order.**
- **You give your order.**
- **While waiting, you discuss your favorite class.**
- **Waiter arrives with your order.**
- **You and your friend comment on the food.**
- **Waiter inquires about the food.**
- **You respond.**
- **Waiter asks if you want anything else.**
- **You both order dessert.**
- **Waiter presents the check.**
- **You discuss leaving a tip.**
- **You thank the waiter and leave.**

2. **Students must have the opportunity to practice carrying out a range of functions likely to be necessary in dealing with others in the target culture.**

Savignon (3) describes a language function as “the use to which language is put, the purpose of an utterance rather than the particular grammatical form an utterance takes.” Language functions refer to what we do with language in every day conversation: we seek or give information, we ask for clarification, we greet and welcome people, we persuade, agree, disagree, compliment, insult, predict, express anger, sympathize, and empathize. Activities such as the following can provide the necessary practice:

Following the example below, how many ways can you fulfill the language functions listed?
Teaching For Proficiency In The L2 Classroom
by Marcel LaVergne Ed.D.

Example: Soliciting a Response: What do you think? Do you agree? How do you feel about that? What answer did you get? We haven't heard from you yet.

Expressing an opinion  Paraphrasing  Predicting
Asking for clarification  Acknowledging ideas  Affirming
Reporting a group's idea  Offering a suggestion  Disagreeing
Greeting someone  Declining an invitation  Persuading

3. **Students should be encouraged to express their own meaning as early as possible after productive skills have been introduced in the course of instruction.**

The productive skills refer in this context to speaking and writing. Activities such as the following can provide the necessary practice:

List 5 adjectives that describe life in the country and 5 that describe life in the city. Using those adjectives in full sentences describe to your partner life in the country and life in the city. Then tell your partner which you prefer and why. *As a take-home assignment, write a one-page essay describing both and tell which you prefer and why or which your partner prefers and why.*

4. **Opportunities must be provided for active communicative interaction among students.**

This is the perfect opportunity to include cooperative learning activities into your lesson plans. Activities such as Give One, Get One can provide the necessary practice:

**Step1.** Every student writes down one thing that they did yesterday after school on line 1 and another thing that they did on line 2.

**Step2.** Give one of your activities to another student and get one from him/her. Continue this until you have shared your activities with ten students. Write the name of the student and his/her responses on the paper provided.

**Step3.** Share your answers with the class to discover who did what. Put the results on the white board.

Example of completed sheet: Give one, get one activity

*Line 1: I went to the library after school.*
*Line 2: I ate dinner at 6:30 p.m.*

*Student 1: Marc went to work at McDonalds.*
*Student 2: Mary went to the gym.*
*Student 3: John played basketball with his friends.*
*Student 4: Sharon did her homework.*
*Student 5: etc.*

5. **Creative language practice must be encouraged.**

To become proficient, students must be taught to break away from memorized expressions, structured paradigms, and familiar patterns. They must be given the opportunity to create original, imaginative, and personal language. Activities such as the following two can provide the necessary practice:

a. **Finish the sentences as you see fit:**

1. *The class was very happy when the teacher announced that*

2. *My friend was very sad because*

3. *Yesterday, I was late for school because*

4. *My parents were very disappointed when*

5. *I did not go out yesterday even though*

b. **In groups of two or four, finish the story as you see fit.**

The children ran outside to play. They had so much fun playing games and running after each other. Suddenly

c. **After each activity, the students share their many different answers with the class.**

6. **Authentic language should be used wherever possible.**

According to Lonergan, 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 non-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
Teaching For Proficiency In The L2 Classroom
by Marcel LaVergne Ed.D.

The development of accuracy should be encouraged as students produce language.

It is a fact that all learners of L2 will make mistakes in their oral and written production of L2. It is also true that most native speakers of a language make mistakes, i.e., no one has a perfect command of their own language. When approaching error correction, teachers need to consider what mistakes to correct and how to correct them. Focusing on every error will frustrate and discourage even the most dedicated of students. Error correction strategies differ according to the goal of the particular lesson: achievement-type drill work leading to the learning of vocabulary and grammar demands accuracy and should be corrected at the time, but proficiency-type activities leading toward fluency demand only selective error correction. In the latter, errors that cause incorrect facts, misunderstanding, and miscommunication, i.e., global errors, must be corrected immediately, but local errors, i.e., minor errors of gender agreement, mispronunciation, etc., can be worked on at a later time. Activities such as the following can provide the necessary practice:

Expect students to correct their own mistakes according to editing guidelines such as the following that I used in my French classes.

| v | vocabulaire; ce n'est pas le bon mot (vocabulary; wrong word) |
| tv | temps du verbe (verb tense) |
| a | il faut mettre, enlever, ou changer l'accent (add, remove, or change the accent mark) |
| ort | le mot est mal épelé (spelling) |
| f | forme: bon verbe, bon temps, mauvaise forme (verb form) |
| ( ) | il faut ajouter un mot (missing word) |
| / | pas nécessaire (word not necessary) |
| ang | anglicisme; c'est un mot ou une syntaxe anglaise (English word/construction) |
| ?? | je ne comprends pas (I don't understand) |
| acc | L'accord n'est pas juste: masculin, féminin, singulier, pluriel (agreement error) |

Example:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{J'aime me lever tard samedi. Je prends des œufs pour mon déjeuner.} \\
\text{( )} \\
\text{Mon frère jeune joue avec ses video games.}
\end{align*}
\]

Instruction should be responsive to the affective as well as the cognitive needs of students and to the different personalities, preferences, and learning styles of the students.

Ommaggio-Hadley states that it is important to “vary classroom activities in a way that will address the needs and preferences of as many students as possible, thus contributing to a more comfortable and flexible learning environment.” (5) This is in accord with Krashen's affective filter hypothesis. (6) It makes sense that anxiety and stress impair the learning process. Consequently, teachers should be aware of the students' learning styles and plan lessons accordingly. For activities based on different learning styles, I refer you to my article, "Understanding Learning Styles and Teaching Styles to Improve L2 Teaching" that appeared in the 2016 MaFLA Newsletter End of Year Issue.

9. Cultural understanding must be integrated into the instruction so that students are sensitive to other cultures and are prepared to live more harmoniously in the target-language community.

Language is the written and oral expression of a people's culture. Consequently, culture should not be considered as a separate entity with its own curriculum and activities because it exists in every aspect of the language. When studying vocabulary, students need to be taught both the linguistic and the cultural meanings of the words, i.e., the linguistic equivalent to the word “bread” is pain or pan but if our students visualize pain or pan as Wonder Bread, they do not fully understand the cultural meaning of the French pain or the Spanish pan. To achieve that, they should have the same mental picture of the word that the French or the Spanish have. Many of the rules of French grammar can be explained by the 'logical reasoning” so characteristic of the French mind: the noun + adjective sequence, the hour + the minutes, the future after quand, lorsque etc. to express a future action, the present tense after depuis to express that the action is still happening, etc. If culture is defined as the perspectives, practices, and products of the people, i.e. the 3Ps, then every reading can be broken down into its cultural components. Activities such as the following can provide the necessary practice:

When showing a video, shut off the sound and ask the students to describe the cultural elements they see: products, such as cars, buildings, signs, houses, clothing; practices, such as use of space, greetings, meals, school schedules, leisure activities, etc. That could be followed by a brainstorming session to determine the perspectives, i.e., why what they see is different from what we do here in America.
Conclusion

The L2 teacher needs to plan lessons according to two separate and distinct goals: 1) the immediate or short term goal of successfully performing the task at hand, i.e. learning the vocabulary of the lesson, forming the imperfect tense, differentiating between an American family and a Spanish one and 2) the long range goal of achieving proficiency in the target language so that the students can function at an acceptable level with a native speaker of the target language. To accomplish the latter, the L2 teachers need to plan lessons that consider contexts in which the language is used, practice the functions of language, engage the students in creative and personal expression, stress accuracy and authenticity, and encourage student interaction, all the while providing a safe and non-threatening atmosphere in the classroom.

Author notes: Some of my comments and activities came from my “Sound Bites for Better Teaching” column published in the National Capital Language Resource Center’s newsletter.

References


About the author

Marcel LaVergne, Ed.D., retired, was a high school teacher of French, a Director of Foreign Languages, an adjunct professor of Foreign Language Methods, a textbook author, and a consultant on Foreign Language Teaching and Learning. He was associated with the National Capital Language Resource Center as the author of the Sound Bites for Better Teaching column and is a frequent contributor to the MaFLA Newsletter.
Seal Update: Bring Transformational Power Of The State Seal Of Biliteracy To Your District!

by Nicole Sherf

After five years of collaborating to advocate for the LOOK Act’s passage (November 22, 2017) and three years of coordinating and overseeing a comprehensive Seal of Biliteracy Pilot, MaFLA, MABE and MATSOL under the umbrella of the Language Opportunity Coalition (LOC) have handed over the reins of supervision for the Seal of Biliteracy to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). This transformational and now official state program rewards students of world language, dual language and English language learning programs for functional biliteracy attained by graduation. See the official MA state Seal above.

The LOC has been reaching out to MaFLA, MABE and MATSOL members along the way for support in reaching out to legislators and then to comment on the proposed regulations. As I told you in the Back-to-School Seal Newsletter Update, at the last minute before the LOOK Act’s passage, the “functional level of biliteracy” wording in the Seal of Biliteracy component of the LOOK bill was changed to “high level of biliteracy.” This pushed DESE to only consider the two higher documented levels of the partner language than had been determined by the Seal Workgroup.

The LOC advocated to retain the three-tiered award structure starting with our Silver Seal which is linked with Intermediate-Mid in the partner language according to the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines. This is the level that has been selected nationally as the minimum standard for the Seal. We felt strongly that it represented a high level of achievement for world language students, some of whom have a maximum of six years of possible programming in their district, and many of whom do not even have that. The fact of the matter is that only 26% of students K-12 are involved in world language programming. Intermediate-Mid is a rigorous level of proficiency and makes the Seal attainable by more students, thus encouraging further study of language by more students. The other two levels of the Workgroup’s tiered structure are the Gold Seal (tied to the Intermediate High level of proficiency) and the Platinum Seal (tied to the Advanced Low level of proficiency).

DESE has renamed our Gold Seal the State Seal of Biliteracy and the Platinum Seal the State Seal of Biliteracy with Distinction. The LOC is committed to continue to support the work begun in the Pilot. We are creating a new website with exemplars and resources, and the LOC will offer the lowest level of the Seal of Biliteracy that DESE eliminated.

More districts are joining the LOC Google Group every week to find out how to become involved in Seal of Biliteracy and implement the program in their district. We are still advising districts to join our Google Group and take a look at the work developed collaboratively over the last three years in the Seal Toolkit: https://languageopportunity.files.wordpress.com/2018/02/2017_toolkit_sealofbiliteracy-revjan2018.pdf. We currently have almost 200 members of the group representing districts across the state of all types, sizes, levels and languages. See our latest blog post documenting the 2017-18 Seal of Biliteracy Pilot Data here: https://languageopportunity.org/tag/seal-of-biliteracy/. In year three of the Pilot, 26 districts (13 continuing, and 13 new) made 1,339 Seal awards of all types. This is a particularly exciting number because the...

TO FIND OUT MORE OR TO BECOME INVOLVED IN THE SEAL IN YOUR DISTRICT:

- Look at the resources at www.languageopportunity.org
- Download the Seal Toolkit as a resource until the DESE Guidance Document is published on their Website in the fall.
- Join the Seal Workgroup Google Group on the Pilot Page link

Nicole Sherf and Kim Talbot (MaFLA), Phyllis Hardy (MABENE) and Helen Solorzano (MATSOL) present to superintendents and school committee members at the Annual ASS/MASC Conference on November 8, 2018
Seal Update

2018 Seal of Biliteracy & Pathway Awards - All Grade Levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pathway</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Platinum Seal (207)</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold Seal (359)</td>
<td>26.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silver Seal (426)</td>
<td>32.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilingual Participation (51)</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilingual Attainment (294)</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Languages

Seal of Biliteracy awards are made for proficiency in English and an additional world language. The world language can be language that is taught in the school district, or a language that the student has learned outside of school or in another country.

- Spanish was the most common world language in awards made in all districts.
- Other languages: French, Portuguese, Hebrew, Mandarin, Marathi, Urdu, Haitian Creole, Polish, Latin, German, Italian, Tagalog, Cantonese, Korean, Bengali, Arabic, Hausa, Thai, Russian, ASL, Hungarian, Dutch, and Luganda.

Districts with most language variety were:

- Newton: 20 languages - French, Portuguese, Mandarin, Cantonese, Latin, Korean, Italian, Hebrew, Bengali, Arabic, Hausa, Thai, Russian, ASL, Hungarian, Dutch, Luganda, Swedish, Turkish, Greek
- Framingham: 9 languages - Portuguese, Hebrew, Mandarin, French, Arabic, Marathi, Urdu, Haitian Creole

Districts Awarding the Seal of Biliteracy

- Year 1: 6 districts - Boston, Falmouth, Framingham, Melrose, Wilmington, Winchester
- Year 2: 13 districts (6 continuing, 7 new) - New: Brockton, Chelsea, Newton, Norwood, Pittsfield, Wayland, Westwood

End of Year
The Massachusetts Foreign Language Association

IN THIS ISSUE
Conference - The Tradition Continues 1
From The Editor’s Desk 3
MaFLA Member Spotlight 4
Distinguished Service Award 6
Friend of Foreign Language Award 7
Conference Wrap Up 8
MaFLA Awards 15
Notes to the Profession 16
Thanks to Our Sponsors 17
Teaching Proficiency in the L2 Classroom 18
Seal of Biliteracy Update 22

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