Information

We have already shared with you the new conference schedule (most importantly highlighting the shorter sessions and earlier end time Friday) and many of our conference presenters such as Cassandra Glynn & Beth Wassell (writers of the ACTFL book on Social Justice), Leslie Grahn (NECTFL & ACTFL board member), Meredith White (Social Media Queen of Georgia), and Nathan Lutz (NNEFL past president). We have more presenters to introduce to you this spring along with our call for proposals due April 27.

Justin Slocum Bailey of Indwelling Language will head our six-hour Latin workshop on Thursday as well as a three-hour pedagogy session Friday on Mindfulness in the Language Classroom. The 6-hour French workshop on Thursday is titled Designing Thematic Units for the French Classroom using ACTFL Core Practices, presented by the famous blogger of Madame’s Musings, Lisa Shepard. MaFLA is incredibly lucky to have these and so many other national presenters at our conference.

We are also talented locally, too. A Thursday six-hour workshop by board members Tim Eagan and Nicole Sherf entitled The Departmental Mindset Shift: Teaching and Programming for Proficiency will be a wonderful opportunity for several department members to work together on curriculum and program design. Charlotte Gifford will lead a new teacher’s workshop on Thursday evening, offering a Cohort 1 experience continuing throughout the school year. Ashley Uyagvari of the popular podcast Inspired Proficiency will involve participants in games towards language proficiency. MaFLA and NECTFL TOY Rebecca Blouwolff will offer strategies to keep it real in the presentational mode. To better serve all students, Kim Talbot and Cari Berman will offer an inclusion-based workshop entitled Level Up Success for All Students In Your WL Classes.

Our three-hour language workshops are worth your while. Back by popular demand, Abelardo Almazan-Vazquez will sweep you off your feet in Spanish Immersion with Latin Dances. Marialuisa Di Stefano will draw connections between Italian and a STEM-centered teaching approach. Manuela Wagner will hone in on integrating intercultural competencies in the German classroom. Three university professors, Duséwoir, Shabani, and Chummun, will discuss identity, gender, and physical appearance in French class. To learn more about using technology in the Mandarin classroom, Amber Navarre will walk you through some ideas. Most exciting, we have a Portuguese workshop led by Glaúcia Silva on teaching heritage and foreign language learners in a mixed classroom.

As amazing as these paid workshops sound, the MaFLA conference is only successful with our members’ sessions and attendance. We encourage you to think about a session you could share and submit via the Session Proposal Portal! Deadline for proposals is April 27 so don’t delay!

Conference Registration will be open early summer.

How to LEVEL UP!

Each newsletter leading up to the conference, will highlight a way to Level Up Your Language Education. This time, we recommend that you level up in your department by sharing a teaching practice or performance-based assessment that has moved students along their path to proficiency. Don’t have one yet? Check out one of MaFLA’s many PD offerings such as Core Practices, MOPI, Diversity Day, or Proficiency Academy where you can learn incredible strategies. Then, offer to present it to the wider MaFLA community by offering a one-hour session in October!

NEW in NINETEEN

Small Group Coaching! Do you love the PD experience but find it isn’t tailored to you? Are you working on thematic units and IPAs but need some one-on-one help to take it to the next level? Sign up for a one-hour IPA coaching session with Lisa Shepard! Space is limited – only ten teachers per session – so that Lisa will have time to provide some applicable model IPAs, individualized support, and direct feedback. Coaching A will be targeted at teachers of Novice High Students, Coaching B for Intermediate Low, and Coaching C for Intermediate Mid. These hour-long coaching sessions are paid events (similar to our 3-, 4-, and 6-hour workshops); participants will be contacted by Lisa ahead of time to ensure a profitable experience for all.

Are you a Department Chair who would love to reserve a block of time with Lisa for your department? Contact the Conference Chair, Beckie Bray Rankin, for more information.
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**Presidential Appointees**

NICOLE SHERF, Salem State University  
TIM EAGAN, Wellesley Public Schools

**Memberships**

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

New Teacher Memberships (first year in the profession) $25.00

**Retired** memberships: $25.00 per year

**Student** memberships: $15.00 per year

For more info and/or a membership application packet, contact: Debra Heaton  
membership@mafla.org

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
- 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, the Summer Institute, and the 2018 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!
Spring Greetings to all my MaFLA friends and colleagues. This warmer weather is so invigorating and I am looking forward to getting outdoors and enjoying the better weather. Warmer weather and sunshine always help so much at this time of the year when we teachers are exhausted and feeling not as creative as we were in the fall. I know I am looking forward to that energy and excitement I hope will grow as the days get warmer and the sunshine brighter.

This issue of our Newsletter starts with a great article from our 2019 Conference Chair, Beckie Rankin. She has so many amazing presenters already lined up and it promises to be another great PD event. We also have another Educator in the Spotlight. This issue features one of our Western Massachusetts professionals.

Our theme for this issue is all about Biliteracy and Advocacy. We have some very insightful articles about the data from those districts that were involved in the pilot of the Seal under the Language Opportunity Coalition. If you read these articles, you can see that the data that came from the testing and the student comments on the testing had a great impact on the individual students, the department and the language program. My school participated last year in the pilot and I can attest that it validated my program and provided me with helpful data to evaluate and to strengthen my program. You will also find articles on the history of the Seal of Biliteracy and a very valuable FAQ article about the Seal. Continuing on that theme of biliteracy and advocacy, we have two articles that were submitted by former students of Ted Zarrow. In these articles you will see how being biliterate has opened doors and opportunities for these individuals. These are great articles to share with your students. We also have information about JNCL-NCLIS Advocacy Day to keep our MaFLA members up to date on what is happening nationally.

Thanks again to our frequent contributor Marcel LaVergne and his informative article for this issue on Accuracy vs. Fluency. We even have an update from the field of K-12 Chinese language and culture education in the U.S.

As we close out this academic year, I want to wish you all a restful and relaxing summer. I also hope to see you at our upcoming PD events. There are so many wonderful opportunities for us to learn, to grow and to collaborate with each other.

Our next issue will be our Back To School issue for the fall. Out theme is Level Up Your Core – Strengthening with Core Practices. This will be a perfect opportunity for you to share with your colleagues how you are strengthening your teaching by using the Core Practices in your classroom.

The deadline for the Back to School issue is August 5, 2019. Looking forward to receiving all of your articles. Send them to ronie@mafla.org

**Mentoring and Sharing**

It’s A Two-Way Street

This February I had my second opportunity to serve as a mentor at the NECTFL Conference in NYC. Just like my last mentoring experience, I really enjoyed working with my mentee and it was great to see the conference through the eyes of a young teacher new to the profession.

The choice of mentee was once again a perfect match. About two weeks before the conference, I received an email from Mary and learned that she was a first year teacher in Cromwell, CT. Coincidentally, she was hired about a week before school began and I also found myself in this same position about 46 years ago. We exchanged emails and I learned that we not only shared that hiring issue but also we both loved to learn about teaching, we both had very influential professors at the undergraduate level and we both loved music, dancing and Zumba (she teaches Zumba classes in various towns in CT.)

When we finally met at NECTFL, I felt we were going to be best friends and colleagues for life. We shared so many things in common. Since this is my last year of teaching, I had brought a goody bag of various resources and materials I was cleaning out of my classroom. There were Spanish bookmarks, stickers, pens, and activity books. I was so excited to be able to pass these things on to a young and enthusiastic teacher who so reminded me of myself many, many years ago.

We shared ideas throughout the conference and discussed what we learned in the various workshops we attended. We have become friends on FB and as I continue to clean out for my retirement, I am gathering more materials that I can pass on to Mary. This is such an ideal situation. I know we will continue to share ideas and our friendship. I hope to be able to attend one of her Zumba classes next year when I finally have some time for things that I love. Who knows? Maybe I will become a regular in her classes and she can support me in my retirement. Thanks Mary for everything and I am looking forward to watching you become a leader in the field of foreign languages.
Message From The President

Dear Colleagues,

I wanted to reach out to the Massachusetts language education community following the tragic and hateful events in Christchurch, New Zealand. On behalf of the 2019 MaFLA Board, I want to offer sincere condolences to the victims and their families. This year MaFLA is deeply committed to being explicit and public about the importance of creating diverse and inclusive representation and attendance at our PD events, foremost we denounce and condemn hate and intolerance. We take great pride in the diversity of our students, their families, nationalities, faith, race, gender identification, and sexual orientation. We offer our thoughts and support to all within the Massachusetts language education community and beyond.

As part of our commitment to being explicit and public about the importance of creating diverse and inclusive representation in our language classrooms, we would like to thank the many language educators who paused in February and included learning experiences regarding Black History Month. In the same way, I am sure many others are reminding students of the significance of International Women’s Day (March 8). These instructional gestures are opportunities for our students to feel that we see and value their identities. Let’s all make language classrooms identity-safe spaces!

Jorge Allen, MaFLA President

MaFLA’s Educator In The Spotlight

An Interview With Mary Purdy, High School Spanish Teacher

Mary Purdy is a Spanish teacher at Agawam High School in Agawam, Massachusetts. She holds degrees from Marist College (BA Spanish), Middlebury College (MA Spanish) and Springfield College (M.Ed.). She has been teaching for 15 years.

MaFLA: Tell us a little bit about yourself:

MP: Teaching was an unexpected career path for me. I initially trained to be a translator but discovered during my senior year of college internship in Mexico that I craved more interaction. After graduating, I gave teaching a shot, unsure what to expect, and, happily, it was a good fit. Arriving at teaching through a nontraditional route meant a steep learning curve and a lot of hard work but it also empowered me to approach teaching in a very personal way. I have my objectives and frameworks for my courses, but I revise the path we take and the experiences we have along the way to best respond to the students in front of me. It keeps things fresh, particularly in the upper levels of language instruction, where so much of our discussion is rooted in the present, in examining the world in which we are living, the challenges it is facing, and our hopes for improving it.

MaFLA: What do you like best about being a teacher and helping students every day?

MP: I’d say the appeal is primarily two-fold for me. First, as any language educator or even parent could tell you, it is magical to be a witness to a person developing a new language, to go from chunks to paragraphs, from halting utterances to smooth, detailed, and impassioned speech. The other very appealing part of teaching for me is the opportunity to interact with and provide support to students on a daily basis. Our subject area is by nature very collaborative, very interactive, and so we do get that opportunity to really connect with our students individually, and I’m grateful for that contact. Teachers have a daily opportunity to teach students that while success takes effort, and accountability is critical to one’s success, success and perfection are not synonyms. At a time when students seem to have less and less of a window to just be kids, are already looking ahead to college as freshmen in high school, and are too often receiving the message from society that a course’s worth is determined by whether or not it has the letters AP in its title, teachers are in a position to step in and support the whole student in front of them. We can discuss Maslow’s hierarchy of needs as something that must have real-world implications for their self-care, their dreams and goals, their self-acceptance, and their self-advocacy

MaFLA: You’ve taught a wide range of students and levels. What teaching skills do you find work with all the grades that you teach?

MP: I think one must first and foremost be responsive to the students in front of him or her, and this affects everything from goal setting to scaffolding. I am wary of absolutes and extremes because most students fall somewhere between the two extremes of any learning spectrum. I believe in customizing the practices you incorporate in your classroom and differentiating how you utilize them based on the students you are teaching that year, that level, and even that period. Frankly, something that doesn’t work for the students in front of you, isn’t right for them even if it’s right for someone else. Parents adjust their parenting techniques among their children, even though they strive to impart to each the same values and preparation for life. I don’t see teaching as any different in the realities of...
An Interview With Mary Purdy, High School Spanish Teacher

**MaFLA:** Since the proficiency movement is so new, how do you think language teaching will evolve over the next few decades?

**MP:** Teaching has long been compared to a pendulum; teaching trends tend to swing from one pedagogical extreme to the other. I myself learned a foreign language at a time when grammar was king and the Socratic Method was used in all my classes (and, at least in my own case, quite effectively). Proficiency has moved us in a very different direction, one in which learning is more student-centered and cooperative, and communication is more grounded in authentic application. I believe that the proficiency model essentially empowers teachers and students to find more success in effective communication rather than flawless precision, which in turn supports students in becoming communicators who will have the confidence to use their language skills outside of the classroom. I do find that particular aspect of the proficiency model much more consistent with the realities around communication in any language. I have yet to meet many native speakers of English (myself included) who do not commit grammar mistakes with varying frequency, or come across unfamiliar words from time to time, or even occasionally misuse words entirely. This doesn’t mean that they aren’t fluent in English, their native and perhaps only language. With proficiency, I would assert that we are making progress toward applying the same indicators of ability in a second language that we use in measuring ability within a first language. I hope that this will encourage our students to use their second language in their lives outside of any classroom, indeed to see it as a second, rather than a foreign language. In summary, I am hopeful that the proficiency model will move us as a national (and global) society closer to viewing languages as resources, and enable us to embrace our second languages as another skill set that helps prepare us to be effective and sensitive communicators in a multicultural and multilingual society.

**MaFLA:** So then what would be your advice to another teacher making the transition to proficiency-based teaching?

**MP:** Don’t be afraid of the attempt, allow yourself to walk before you run, and don’t feel that you need to prioritize the pedagogy – any pedagogy – over what your own observations are telling you about what works and doesn’t work for your students. Theories specify do’s and don’ts in black and white, but application must allow for the gray. You must strike the right balance for your students, particularly as you transition from one model to another. Pedagogy guides us, both in our goals and our methods, but change takes time and you must teach in a way consistent with the needs and circumstances of the students in front of you. In level 5, quite unconsciously, my own approach has always had much in common with the proficiency model, so adapting to the proficiency model was almost more a question of changing how I dialogue about what we do, rather than changing what we do. On the other hand, the proficiency model is pretty different from how I have historically taught my other levels, other than the classic essentials like clear objectives, backwards planning, and increasingly authentic assessment measures. This is my first year attempting it on a broad level below Spanish 5/AP, and I’ve had to adjust my goals for this first phase based on how my students were responding to it. I’ve made more room for explicit grammar support than I had originally planned but in retrospect I feel I should have anticipated this. Given that their first couple of years of language instruction involved a heavy emphasis on explicit grammar instruction, it is hardly surprising that students would crave some continuity and extract comfort and confidence from such scaffolding or support. So, I’ve accepted that I’m using essentially a hybrid model at the moment and I’m content with this more gradual transition because it’s what is going to work for my students. For better or for worse, my personal teaching philosophy has never been as much rooted in strict adherence to trending pedagogical approaches, as it has been designed around the goal of empowering students to live in a multilingual and multicultural world.

**MaFLA:** What are some of the fun things you like to do in class? How have they affected your teaching and students’ learning?

**MP:** Debate is among my favorite tools. It coaxes students to communicate persuasive-ly and passionately, and about meaningful contemporary issues, but it also creates the perfect atmosphere for students to lose focus on the language and instead immerse themselves in communication. For me, the best moments in my classroom are the moments when communication becomes unconscious, and students find and use their voices out of an intense desire to communicate their thoughts and opinions. I love listening to my students debate complicated topics or ethical dilemmas like genetic engineering or contextualize something like CRISPR-Cas9 within the circumstances and needs of Spanish-speaking countries as well as their own national and local communities. It is so gratifying to see them advance their treatment of an issue from the point of analysis to advocacy, e.g., going from round table discussions or debates to creating PSAs or writing open letters to society or letters to an editor.

**MaFLA:** What else do you do to motivate students?

**MP:** A couple years back, my students in level 5 began completing Capstone projects, the goal being for them to use their Spanish skills to create a product to inform their community and advocate action relevant to a global issue about which they feel passionate. We started small, with each student participating in creating a series of PSAs and a film short. We’ve now moved into a second phase in which students create more varied products and then we decide together how and what they will showcase to their peers. For me, it’s very much about the journey rather than the destination. It’s a way of showing students how their abilities are indeed evolving and what they’re capable of doing with them.

**MaFLA:** Is there anything else you would like to share?

**MP:** I believe that learning a second language and developing multicultural competency greatly benefit our students along the path to becoming responsible global citizens. This prepares students to live and work in a diverse world, and to consider the far-reaching effects of one’s words and actions. Beyond simply enriching students’ lives by exposure to the world outside of their native country, second language (and cultural) study empowers students to knowledgeably and effectively dialogue around global solutions to global problems in a global economy and society. You can’t put a price on that.
Every Data Point Tells A Story, Don’t It?

By Pat DiPillo, Ed.D

“I feel the STAMP testing was a very effective way to evaluate the French knowledge that I have.”

“I personally enjoyed taking the test. I did not find it too difficult.”

“I thought that the STAMP test was a good experience. All in all, it was somewhat challenging but not impossible.”

“Overall, I had a good experience taking the STAMP test. I found some parts challenging. I think it was a valuable experience to test my French knowledge by taking STAMP”

It seems students at this level feel successful at language study!

What this means

Not only are students enjoying seeing the fruits of their labor, but increasing enrollments serve as a validation of it as do improvements in the three modes of communication. In the past few years, we have had a letter writing exchange between Grade 4 students here in Falmouth and a Grade 4 class in Guatemala (sponsored by the Rotary Club). We involved the Honor Society students at FFHS who translated letters back and forth. Two of them also won MaFLA Scholarships for their efforts.

This year, Falmouth Reads selected Le Petit Prince as its book choice. Plays, art projects and readings are planned all year long. As a member of the Committee, I organized an adapted version to be read at an elementary school in North Falmouth. Our Grade 8 French teacher created an abridged version accompanied by a coloring book and book marks for the entire K-4 school. The reading was done by the Chairman of the School Committee.

We have a French Honor Society that runs a very well subscribed after school program at our grade 5 and 6 elementary school. Students teach French to grades 5 and 6 there throughout the year. I plan to add students in the Spanish Honor Society next year also. Our Exploratory Program for remedial modules at the junior high may add French to the rotation in Grade 8 next year along with Spanish Language Awareness Days and Language Clubs. My video blog Ciao, Falmouth also serves to get the message out about the value of learning another language.

As a result of all of this, we are seeing an increase in language enrollments for next year and more and more students taking our proficiency assessments due in part to the students comments included here. Students are experiencing a great deal of success and are excited to see their progress from year to year as a result of authentic resources, living language, and our exchange programs.

Why is this so important?

As the number of states in the US turn to ‘blue’ and indicate a state approved Seal of Biliteracy and the ‘blank spaces’ on the map slowly disappear, it means that state legislators value the study of another language for students more and more. In Massachusetts, we worked long and hard to get our legislation passed as I’m sure others are doing and have done. A national movement to improve the status of language study is growing. The value and enjoyment of language study is clearly evidence in the comments of the students above.

Pat DiPillo, Ed.D., is the World Language Department Chair for Falmouth Public Schools

Who are we?

This article is based in part on a data report I have worked on that catalogues three years of STAMP testing and that constitutes the next phase of the proficiency journey for the World Language Department here in Falmouth. We are a grade 7-12 Department with French, Spanish, and Latin, and twelve teachers committed to student success. I have worked with the staff in the district for twelve years and started them on the road to proficiency testing three years ago. We have encountered the usual challenges and bumps in that road but are gratified when we read the comments from students indicating enjoyment and fulfillment in the study of another language. One teacher was indicating enjoyment and fulfillment in the next phase of the proficiency journey three years of STAMP testing and that constitutes a validation of it as do improvements in the three modes of communication. In the past few years, we have had a letter writing exchange between Grade 4 students here in Falmouth and a Grade 4 class in Guatemala (sponsored by the Rotary Club). We involved the Honor Society students at FFHS who translated letters back and forth. Two of them also won MaFLA Scholarships for their efforts.

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Pat DiPillo, Ed.D., is the World Language Department Chair for Falmouth Public Schools

Educator In The Spotlight (conc.)

MaFLA: Outside of the classroom, what activities do you pursue that inform your teaching? Hobbies?

MP: I am a member and the current Chair of the Foreign Language Teachers of Western Massachusetts collaborative (or FLT-WM). The Collaborative was established in 1984 to encourage collaboration and professional development among teachers of World Languages in area public and private schools, K-16. We meet six times a year, and participants earn 12 PDPs for their participation. It’s a fantastic way to keep current with pedagogy, develop connections among teachers from different districts, and pool our skills for shared growth. It’s also a very accessible opportunity to mentor and be mentored in turn as our focus shifts year to year, but most importantly to grow in skill and confidence as an educator.

MaFLA: You are a newer member of MaFLA. How do you think your membership will inspire your teaching?

MP: As anyone who has studied abroad would likely tell you, sustained exposure to that which is different and thus new to you is critical to promoting continuous growth, curiosity, and passion. The more contact you have with other educators, the more opportunity you have to discover new ways of working toward your goals. The fastest way to grow is to be open to improving not only from your own experience but also from that of others.

Submitted by Teresa Benedetti.
In August 2017, while all of my friends were packing up their cars and getting settled into college, I found myself halfway around the world. There I had to obtain an apartment, phone number, bank account, utilities, WiFi, groceries, etc. – all in French. My name is Owen Doherty and I am currently a sophomore in the Dual BA Program Between Columbia University and Sciences Po Paris. The Dual BA Program is housed within Columbia University’s School of General Studies and provides students with an opportunity to study social sciences at one of the premiere social sciences institutions in Europe. The program requires that I study for two years at Sciences Po, followed by two years at Columbia University, with the ability to receive two bachelors degrees after four years. At Sciences Po, I am majoring in Politics and Government and next year, at Columbia, I plan to pursue a major in Classics.

My language studies are directly linked to both my academic and personal success in the classroom and out. I use French every day: shopping, traveling, and speaking with friends and teachers, administrators and boulangeries. Language opens up so many avenues for exploration that I feel enabled me to be a part of the culture. Learning French also has great practical implications. I have access to hundreds of thousands of additional academic sources that make papers and presentations more convincing, I can absorb news sources with different perspectives, and I have even begun to learn German taught from French. On a recent trip to Austria, I was late booking a tour and with the English group already full, I opted for the French one, a testament to the practicality of being bilingual.

I wasn’t always this way, however. In seventh grade, I started French and I’ll admit, I wasn’t a fan. I struggled with conjugations and gender assignments, all the while thinking: “Why does this matter?” It took a while, but as my interest in travel grew, so did my appreciation for the cultures and traditions that I learned about in the process. It led me to realize that in fact, language is culture and is critical for developing a deeper understanding of and appreciation for societies and cultures beyond our borders. This was further reinforced once I started taking Latin in high school where the goal was not necessarily to become a fluent speaker, but to understand how history, philosophy, and culture manifest themselves through speech, writing, and art.

I cannot overstate what studying languages has done for me. Language has allowed me to make connections among history, social sciences, and other languages including English, it has opened doors to many new and exciting professional and personal opportunities, and it has made me a better writer and a more critical thinker.

My parents once framed for me a quote from Herman Melville that “I am tormented with an everlasting itch for things remote.” More than any other factor, language has helped to make that perspective my reality.
Adults have always mentioned that I was blessed to be the daughter of Polish immigrants, and that being a multilingual individual in a multicultural world was unique. Mom and Dad told me that I have a greater scope of intellectuality, understanding more linguistic aspects and having a plethora of cultural knowledge. I disregarded it and I wasn’t thinking about multilingualism when, at three years old, in Poland, I discovered my love for horses. I wasn’t thinking about it when I presented projects about horses in high school Latin and Spanish classes. Yet, now, being a University of Massachusetts Amherst student on the pre-vet track, I see that my knowledge of languages has allowed me to push through the crowd of dreaming students and use my differences to put myself out there.

As a member of the UMass Dressage team, I have experienced riding a multitude of different horses, each with its own personality, temperament, and training level. I’ve become more knowledgeable about creating strong relationships between horse and rider, working with horses with various tendencies. Initially, I completed most of my training on Polish-Arabian horses, notorious for being difficult to work with. Without knowing Polish, I would have never been able to learn to ride, and my life could have entirely been altered. I could have been a freshman engineer student, like my parents wanted me to be. Instead, I am enjoying every moment of my college experience, working with my passion and watching dreams unfold.

I travel to Kraków every summer and spend two months helping my aunt and training, at her barn, where she breeds Arabians and Polish warmbloods. Every day I experience a pungent smell of manure, the sweet smelling hay and the crisp air hitting my cheeks. At this barn, since childhood, I’ve trained in dressage: a discipline in equestrian sports. The summer before college, I trained for dressage tryouts, that were rapidly approaching in the fall. My trainer knew no English, and was persistent in teaching me various dressage movements: pół wolta, lotna zmiana nogi w galopie, wydłużony kus, użyj wszystkie konty czworoboku i roboczy stop. I drilled the motions into my body, in response to the brisk sounding commands.

“Go show me a half turn reverse, flying lead change, extended trot, while using all corners of the dressage ring, and finish with a working walk”.

A sigh of relief came out of my mouth. This was not the first time I’ve heard these words. They were spoken to me differently, yet my limbs knew how to give the proper aids to the horse for clean execution, regardless of the language that I was asked in.

Now, I am a competitive member of the UMass dressage team, even after training ujeżdżenie in Poland.

“One language sets you in a corridor for life. Two languages open every door along the way.

Frank Smith

www.bilingualkidspot.com
Melissa Bryant is the Head of the World Languages and Classical Studies Department at Wayland High School.

Wayland High School is grateful to the Language Opportunity Coalition for its leadership and incredible collaboration these past several years to help ensure that Massachusetts pass legislation to establish a State Seal of Biliteracy. With support from the LOC and several eastern Massachusetts Foreign Language administrators (EMFLA), Wayland High School has been part of a three-year pilot, evaluating nationally recognized testing tools that assess students’ proficiency levels. We are pleased to announce that at this date fifty-one of our Spanish and French Level V students have sat for the AAPPL Exam. Twenty-two seniors achieved an Intermediate-High score for all four language skills and will receive the official Seal on their diploma in June, three of those will be a Seal of Biliteracy with Distinction for the Advanced score in all four language skills. Beyond that challenging target level, thirty of the seniors tested achieved an Intermediate-Mid score for all four language skills and will thereby receive the LOC seal of recognition on their transcript. This is just the beginning of a long awaited recognition program in our state and we look forward to the expansion of testing and awarding within our growing elementary Spanish Immersion Program, our well-established Middle School Language Program and our district ELL Program.

Here are some quotes from graduating Seal recipients who provided the following feedback to the prompt, I am excited about the Seal of Biliteracy because...

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**it is proof of how far my Spanish abilities have progressed over the last six years of learning the language. I am proud of my efforts in and out of the classroom to become more proficient in Spanish, and the Seal of Biliteracy is a huge achievement as a result of that dedicated time.**

**I’m excited about the Seal of Biliteracy because it represents the years of work I’ve put in to learning the spanish language. I was excited to win the Seal because to me it means that I can now officially communicate in another language, which opens doors for me to meet new people and experiences new cultures.**

**I will have the opportunity to use Spanish in the workplace and I will have the confidence to connect with Spanish-speaking cultures.**

**I know that it’s a qualification I can put on my CV, etc. as a hallmark of my learning.**

**It validates all of my hard work that I’ve put into language throughout the years and has given me so much more confidence in my language skills!**

**I can show people and my future college and work that I am bilingual in Spanish after all my hard work.**

**I’m excited about the Seal of Biliteracy because it helps me to expand my choices and visions for the future, doesn’t matter if it’s college, internship, gap year, volunteer overseas, etc. Having the Seal of Biliteracy also proves to me that my hard work, in the long run, has paid off eventually. I’m excited to use this opportunity in my life to make many things possible!**

**It shows my proficiency in Spanish and is a reward for all my hard work.**

**It acts as a symbol of all of my hard work over the years in learning a new language. It gives me a concrete award to point in order to validate all of my learning, and provides me with the confidence that I can hold my own in a foreign land.**

**it means that I’m proficient in Spanish after years of studying the language. I am honored to be a part of a community of bilingual people.**

**it is a symbol of the hard work and dedication I have put in over the past 6 years to learning French.**

**It validates my ability to communicate with people from around the world**
MA Seal Update: A Short History By The Numbers

by Nicole Sherf

MA Seal Update: A Short History By The Numbers
By Nicole Sherf, LOC and MaFLA

1. One fabulous bill signing date: November 22, 2017
2. Two DESE levels of award: Seal and Seal with Distinction
3. Three LOC levels of awards to compliment the multi-tiered structure: LOC Bilingual Participation Award, LOC Biliteracy Attainment Award, LOC Seal
4. Four organizations collaborating to make it happen: MaFLA, MABE, MATSOL and MIRA
5. Five years of legislative advocacy including a three-year pilot before legislation passed
6. Six districts that gave awards in the first year of the pilot, 13 in the second and 26 in the third
7. Seven O’clock: the time of the monthly GoToMeeting during the Pilot and now the quarterly meeting of the LOC Google Group

During the three academic years of the Pilot (2015-2018) in Massachusetts, more than 2,000 Seal of Biliteracy awards were given to students of all levels, language program types and language program types across the multi-tiered award structure developed collaboratively by the Language Opportunity Workgroup in anticipation of the legislation. When the legislation was signed by the Governor on November 22, 2017, Massachusetts became the 30th state to adopt the Seal of Biliteracy as a way to reward graduates of all types of language programs for their functional biliteracy. There are now 36 states and the District of Columbia that have a Seal of Biliteracy.

The DESE Seal of Biliteracy Guidance Document, released at the beginning of January, describes the parameters and administration of the Seal of Biliteracy (requiring Intermediate High in the partner language) and the Seal of Biliteracy with Distinction (requiring Advanced Low in the partner language). The vision of the Language Opportunity Coalition (LOC) LOC Guidance Document extended from the beginning of language learning through college and beyond, essentially creating a lifelong learning experience. To supplement the DESE guidance, the LOC created a new website and an additional LOC Seal of Biliteracy Guidance Document that builds on the years of experience of implementing the Seal and adds levels to the DESE Seal to recreate the multi-level award structure implemented in the Pilot. The Google Group is an ongoing collaboration of more than 200 members representing districts across the state in the variety of levels, languages and program types exemplified in the Pilot. Please join the group to receive updates, participate in our quarterly meetings and be able to ask questions.

DESE is in the final stages of hiring a World Language Coordinator, a position that has not been filled in MA since the late 1990’s. As of the writing of this article, the Department has narrowed down to three finalists for the position and we eagerly await the announcement. DESE reports that there were more applicants for the position than for any other Coordinator position in recent history, partially due to the wide ranging national spreading of the position by MaFLA. Additionally, the DESE Office of Language Acquisition, in which the Seal of Biliteracy and the new WL Coordinator will be housed, reports that almost half of the 406 school districts in MA have registered to give Seal awards this year. This is more than triple the 26 districts that awarded Seals in the last year of the Pilot. The word is spreading on the benefits of collaborating between district language programs to strengthen and document the biliteracy of all types of language learners. If you are not involved yet, read the DESE and LOC Guidance Documents, join the LOC Google Group, and begin the process!

The Seal of Biliteracy Impacts North Reading

Teacher: Amy St. Arnaud

“The Seal of Biliteracy is transforming our department because now we are able to teach for mastery. Students enrolled in language classes know they could leave NRHS with the skill of biliteracy, not just acquired knowledge. This skill can be applied towards any career path or ambition a student may have, which makes the learning personal, relevant and meaningful in an interdependent global economy.”

Gabriel Miranda (Junior) who will test in Portuguese and is a very motivated and high achieving student in our Spanish classes:

“I want to obtain the Seal because it exemplifies the necessity of language and rewards those who make the varying effort, but effort nonetheless, of fluency. I hold language in such high regard because to me, language is the igniting spark that starts conversations, relationships, and the learning of any knowledge otherwise unknowable. It is difficult to exist in a place completely isolated in its own echo chamber of language, meaning there are a number of unique experiences waiting to be had, jokes to be made, joys to be shared only as long as two people share a language in common.”
What is the Seal of Biliteracy?

The Seal of Biliteracy is a national movement that began in California in 2011 as a way to recognize and reward students who had attained a functional level of biliteracy as a result of their schooling. Since that time, and as of the spring of 2019, 36 states including the District of Columbia have enacted Seal of Biliteracy legislation. You can follow the national progress at www.sealofbiliteracy.org. Governor Baker signed the MA Seal legislation into law on November 22, 2017.

What does the MA Seal of Biliteracy legislation say?

The MA Seal of Biliteracy passed as part of a comprehensive legislation to provide more options to heritage learners of other languages and celebrate biliteracy. A complete description of the state awards and procedures can be found in 603 CMR 31.07(2) of the state regulations. The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education established these criteria to identify and recognize students who have attained a high level of proficiency in English and not less than one foreign language. To qualify for the State Seal of Biliteracy, students must meet all graduation requirements and the English language and foreign language criteria. See criteria in the DESE Guidance for Implementing the Massachusetts Seal of Biliteracy with Distinction, see the list, updated yearly, in the DESE FAQs, a webinar and other information.

Why was it necessary to pass state Seal of Biliteracy legislation?

The Seal of Biliteracy movement is a national effort to value and reward biliteracy and the legislation represents a formal commitment by the state to the importance of language learning in this global environment. This is especially important in states like ours whose Departments of Education have not been active in world language leadership and who leave most programming decisions of untested subjects up to district choice. More importantly, legislation and state oversight creates a directive to language programs that the historic grammar-based language instruction is not effective and does not produce proficiency.

What is the Language Opportunity Coalition (LOC)?

The Language Opportunity Coalition (LOC) is a collaboration between world language (MaFLA), dual language (MABENE) and English learner (MATSOL) professional organizations to increase high quality language learning opportunities for students in all types of language programs, languages and levels and to value biliteracy as a critical skill. Join the LOC Google Group with hundreds of other teachers who are implementing the Seal in their districts across the state. See the new LOC website packed with resources including our newly updated guidance document that supports the broader vision of Seal implementation.

Why is the Language Opportunity Coalition (LOC) still involved in supporting the Seal in MA?

The Language Opportunity Coalition (LOC) created and oversaw the Seal Pilot over three years prior to the passage of the legislation, involving teachers from all types and levels of language programs. They created the criteria and parameters for a multi-tiered award structure. The LOC had a broad vision of what the Seal of Biliteracy could represent Pre-K through graduate school with awards along the way to promote ongoing biliteracy and lifelong learning. Join the LOC Google Group to interact with and ask questions of hundreds of other teachers who are implementing the Seal in their districts across the state.

How do I get my district involved in the Seal of Biliteracy?

Read the overview and criteria for the MA state Seal in the DESE Guidance for Implementing the Massachusetts Seal of Biliteracy. The DESE Guidance document describes the criteria for the MA State Seal of Biliteracy (Intermediate High) and the MA State Seal of Biliteracy with Distinction (Advanced Low). The LOC elaborates over the course of the pilot.

What if a district or a student does not want to participate in the Seal of Biliteracy?

The Seal of Biliteracy is voluntary for districts and voluntary for students within those districts that elect to participate.

What are the criteria for the various levels of the Seal of Biliteracy?

For the MA DESE Seal of Biliteracy and Seal of Biliteracy with Distinction, see the criteria in the DESE Guidance for Implementing the Massachusetts Seal of Biliteracy. For the LOC Seal of Biliteracy, see the criteria in the LOC Guidance Document. Also see the steps for district implementation that were elaborated over the course of the pilot. Also, join the LOC Seal Google Group to participate in the statewide discussion.

What tests are approved for documenting the partner language to award the Seal of Biliteracy?

For the approved lists of tests that can be used to document the MA DESE Seal of Biliteracy and Seal of Biliteracy with Distinction, see the list, updated yearly, in the DESE Guidance for Implementing the Massachusetts Seal of Biliteracy. The LOC Seal of Biliteracy approves the same list of tests to document the level of proficiency of the partner language, see the criteria in the LOC Guidance Document. Also see the steps for district implementation that were elaborated over the course of the pilot.

How does my district choose between the tests to document the partner language to award the Seal of Biliteracy?
Seal Of Biliteracy FAQ

Seal of Biliteracy?

The two most selected tests in the Pilot to document the partner language to award the Seal of Biliteracy were proficiency tests called the AAPPL and the STAMP. The LOC has prepared this PowerPoint overviewing the administration and differences between the two tests. The AP World Language tests are also on the list of approved tests but it should be understood that the results of these AP tests are not returned until July, which is too late to celebrate the award with graduating seniors.

How does my district pay for the tests to document the partner language to award the Seal of Biliteracy?

Ultimately, the district needs to find a way to budget the payment of the tests. Some districts begin implementation of the Seal of Biliteracy through grant funding to pay for tests. Some districts ask the students to pay for the tests. It must be understood that districts must pay for the tests for students who receive free or reduced lunch.

What tests are approved for documenting English proficiency to award the Seal of Biliteracy?

For the MA DESE Seal of Biliteracy and Seal of Biliteracy with Distinction, see the criteria in the DESE Guidance for Implementing the Massachusetts Seal of Biliteracy. For the LOC Seal of Biliteracy, see the criteria in the LOC Guidance Document. Also see the steps for district implementation that were elaborated over the course of the pilot.

How does the Seal benefit the different student populations?

The Seal of Biliteracy rewards English language learners, dual language program students and world language program students for biliteracy they demonstrate in speaking, writing, reading and listening. The Massachusetts Language Opportunity Coalition developed tiers of the Seal award to demonstrate that the language learning process can take time but that the more extensive the timeframe, the more proficiency can be developed. English language learners who maintain their native language are honored for the linguistic resource that they bring to their schooling. Dual language programs reward their students through this tiered process that starts in the elementary school with Pathway Awards and encourages them to continue language programming through high school and beyond. World language programs that set proficiency targets can demonstrate to students that the longer sequences of language study lead to higher proficiency.

How does receiving a Seal impact students’ college and career readiness?

As the Seal is being implemented across the nation, employers can understand and use reference to the Seal award on a job candidate’s application to place the candidate where his or her language skills will be most necessary. The alignment of the Seal with the Proficiency Guidelines provides for a nationally recognized standard of ability to perform in the language. The university level was included in the sequence to push students to continue their language studies and become lifelong learners. It is also expected that a system of college credit awarded to the high school Seal award will be developed. Biliteracy is a skill that enhances most career opportunities.

What is the potential impact of the Seal of Biliteracy?

There is no other school-based test that we can think of that so perfectly describes what a student can do as a result of programming and that has such a clear connection with a necessary career skill. In this age of seeking evidence of student learning, we have a perfect measure to describe what it is that our students can do as a result of their language learning programming. Even more exciting, it is a scale that is understood at the national level and can be used to document college and career readiness. We envision a near future where college credit is allocated through proficiency attained in K-12 and where jobs require a specific level of proficiency for the positions they post.

What is proficiency?

The proficiency movement began in the 1970s when the government needed to describe what communicative functions were necessary for diplomats and the armed forces who were working abroad with the understanding that there would be a need for those personnel to interact with the native population. Certainly, the linguistic needs of a clerk are different than those of a soldier and those of a hostage negotiator. The levels extend from Novice, to Intermediate, to Advanced, to Superior to Distinguished and each have sub-levels of low, mid and high. Each sub-level outlines the range of tasks or communicative functions that the person can complete, in which communicative contexts and how well the person can understand and be understood. The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) adapted the scale for use in language development in K-12 and beyond. Though it has taken some time to become the national movement that it now is, best practices in foreign language teaching now focus on what the learner can do with the language. The purpose of language learning is to develop proficiency to be able to interact with the language in real-world communicative contexts for authentic purposes.

The Seal award has pushed districts’ focus on proficiency development and teachers create a learning environment that focuses on the communicative needs of the target proficiency level of the awards. This encourages programs and teachers to move away from the historic grammatical focus of language learning that did not develop proficiency or lead to much enjoyment in language learning. Language teachers are united in frustration over consistently hearing some version of the statement; “I took X number of years of X language in high school and I can’t say a word now.” Historically, language learning has not focused on what students can communicate as a result of programming.

How is proficiency measured?

Along with the proficiency scale,
Seal Of Biliteracy FAQ

Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) was created as a formal assessment process through interview to assign the specific level of proficiency that the person can sustain in the language. In 2015, ACTFL in cooperation with the National Association of Bilingual Education (NABE), the National Association of Teachers of Other Languages (TESOL), and the National Council of State Supervisors for Languages (NCSSFL) designated Intermediate Mid as the minimum standard of functional proficiency for the Seal of Biliteracy. See the Guidelines for Implementing the Seal of Biliteracy at https://www.actfl.org/news/press-releases/seal-biliteracy-guidelines-released.

Over the last ten years, as language programming has shifted to proficiency development and teachers have wanted to assess how well their students are attaining the departmental targets, two companies have created tests over the computer for use in schools to simulate the OPI interview process, but in the four skills or three modes of the language. The tests take about an hour or so and cost about $20 per student. See the Toolkit for more information.

Created by the Language Opportunity Steering Committee:

- Phyllis Hardy, Massachusetts Association of Bilingual Education (MABE, www.massmabe.org)
- Nicole Sherf, Massachusetts Foreign Language Association (MaFLA, www.mafla.org)
- Kim Talbot, Massachusetts Foreign Language Association (MaFLA, www.mafla.org)
- Helen Solorzano, Massachusetts Association of Teachers of English Language Learners (MATSOL, www.matsol.org)
- Resources for State Seal Implementation:
  - MA DESE Seal of Biliteracy Guidance: http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/guidance/default.html
  - LOC Guidance Document:

MaFLA Needs Your Talents!

Are you an advocate for language studies?

Have you considered giving back to our teaching profession?

Would you like to work with a group of dedicated language professionals?

Nominate yourself or a colleague for the MaFLA Board.

Please fill out and submit the online application form by June 1, 2019. Persons elected to the Board of Directors of MaFLA serve as volunteers without compensation for a period of four years, and must be willing to participate actively in the business of the Association. The Board formally meets six times per year and conducts much of its business through committees which meet outside of the formal meetings via electronic means (e.g. email, Go To Meeting, etc.). MaFLA values the diversity of our students across the state. Therefore we are committed to the recruitment of exemplary language educators representing a broad range of backgrounds, including people of color and various ethnic groups. If you have any questions please contact Jeanne O’Hearn at jeannemafla@gmail.com. Thank you!
Accuracy vs Fluency in L2 Teaching

by Marcel LaVergne Ed.D.

“I was an A student in my AP French class in high school and then I went to Paris and I suddenly realized that I was not fluent in that language.”

The biggest challenge for L2 teachers is to find an equal balance between accuracy and fluency. Is one more important than the other? Is one more neglected than the other? Or are they interdependent on each other? This article will define each term, suggest challenges that L2 teachers face, and provide the L2 teacher with the opportunity for self-evaluation.

Definitions

Accuracy is the quality or state of being accurate or exact. It is the ability to produce sentences using correct grammar and vocabulary. (1) Hadley quoting Swender adds that “it refers to the acceptability, quality and precision of the message conveyed.” (2) The focus is on the mechanics of language and students are expected to:

1. produce clear and accurate speaking or writing;
2. produce language free from grammar mistakes;
3. spell and/or pronounce words correctly; and
4. produce language appropriate to the situation and/or context. (3)

Consequently, grammar becomes the backbone of most classroom activities and the focus is on skill-getting activities such as small-group dialogues, cooperative activities, interviews, open-ended activities, etc. The main role of the teacher is to encourage interpersonal communication among the students, to provide opportunities for students to express their opinions, their life-experiences, and their likes and dislikes so that they can communicate freely with the world outside of the classroom. Content and context are more important than form. The student becomes a speaker of the language.

Fluency is the quality or state of being fluent, especially in speech or writing. It is the ability to produce language easily, smoothly and expressively. (1) According to Ray “it is the ability to use language as the principal manner of communication in whatever communicative scenario.” (4) The focus is on helping students to:

1. converse freely with native speakers on a variety of topics;
2. express themselves meaningfully;
3. make themselves understood with a minimum of errors;
4. achieve a certain level of automaticity; and
5. create language rather than react to it.

Consequently, language as communication becomes the backbone of most classroom activities and the focus is on skill-using activities such as small-group dialogues, cooperative activities, interviews, open-ended activities, etc. The main role of the teacher is to encourage interpersonal communication among the students, to provide opportunities for students to express their opinions, their life-experiences, and their likes and dislikes so that they can communicate freely with the world outside of the classroom. Content and context are more important than form. The student becomes a speaker of the language.

Challenges

The following questions illustrate the challenges that face the L2 teacher in attaining the goal of accurate and fluent command of the target language:

1. How accurate/fluently can one become after 4 years of high school?

It is important to set realistic expectations. According to the United States Foreign Service Institute’s Interagency Language Roundtable Scale, it takes between 600-750 class hours for one to achieve professional working proficiency (S3/R3) in French, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish (Category I); 900 class hours for German (Category 2); 1100 class hours for Russian (Category 3), and 2200 class hours for Chinese, Arabic, and Japanese (Category 4). If the typical high school class lasts 50 minutes and if the class meets every day for 180 days (which never happens!) students are exposed to no more than 600 hours after 4 years. Because the majority of students only study L2 for two years, their exposure is no more than 300 hours of class time. Consequently, the majority of students only attain elementary/limited working proficiency.

2. Are there degrees of accuracy/fluency?

The Foreign Service Institute divides proficiency into 5 levels: elementary (S1), limited working proficiency (S2), professional working proficiency (S3), full professional proficiency (S4), and native or bilingual proficiency (S5). Based on the descriptors of each level, most high school students of L2 attain the S1/S2 level after 2 years, and the most exceptional the S3 level in Category I languages after 4 years. In terms of the ACTFL proficiency guidelines, most students in high school can only be classified as novice/intermediate.

3. Is perfect accuracy/fluency possible?

Many believe that few have a perfect command of their own native language. Because most native speakers do make grammatical, spelling, and pronunciation errors, striving for perfection could stifle the student’s desire to learn L2 by negatively impacting Krashen’s “affective filter” hypothesis. (5) It is a fact that all learners of L2 will make mistakes in their oral and written production of L2.

4. How does one promote accuracy/fluency?

According to Swain’s comprehensible output hypothesis (6), giving students the opportunity to produce language will enhance accuracy/fluency as follows:

• by helping students notice a gap between what they want to say and what they can say, leading them to recognize what they do not know, or know only partially;
• byaffording students an opportunity to test their hypotheses about how the language works and possibly receive feedback that can lead to modification of these hypotheses;
• byencouraging conscious reflection on their own use of the forms of the target language, allowing them to control and internalize it.

5. How does one correct errors?

The two most common ways to correct errors are teacher corrections and stu-
Accuracy vs Fluency in L2 Teaching

by Marcel LaVergne Ed.D.

Do you distinguish between global and local errors?
Do you distinguish between form-focused (grammar) and meaning-focused (communicative content) errors?
Do you believe that overcorrection is more harmful than beneficial to the student?
Do you encourage peer-correction opportunities between your students?
When correcting written work, do you use a holistic method or do you correct only the grammatical errors?
Do you expect your students to have a more accurate command of L2 than they have of their own language?
Do you understand Krashen’s Affective Filter Theory? Do you agree with it? Explain.
Do you encourage students to go beyond what they know in both oral and written work? If so, do you hold them responsible for any errors they might make?
Do you consider errors as something to be avoided at all costs or as a natural part of the L2 acquisition process?

Conclusion

The successful L2 teacher understands the limits that confront the students trying to master and produce both accurate and fluent language. Because oral and written errors are a natural part of the L2 acquisition process, L2 teachers need to consider errors as a positive rather than a negative and encourage students to acquire the target language through trial and error. Immediate and constant teacher correction for accuracy often has a negative effect on students while opportunities for student self-correction result in positive learning. Too much attention to accuracy can affect the student’s ability to use the language effortlessly. The more the students use the language the more accurate and fluent they become.

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.

“You can’t make your child speak a language. However, you can set the stage so they will want to speak it.”

The Bilingual Edge

Spring
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: John Carlino
Executive Director
Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages
info@nectfl.org

Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (NECTFL) announces its 2019 Teacher of the Year

February 8, 2019

Buffalo, NY – The Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (NECTFL) announces that it has awarded the NECTFL Teacher of the Year award to Rebecca Blouwolff of Brookline, MA representing the Massachusetts Foreign Language Association (MaFLA). Ms. Blouwolff, a teacher of French at Wellesley Middle School, received her award February 8, 2019 at the annual NECTFL Awards Ceremony at the NY Hilton Midtown in New York City.

When Rebecca Blouwolff’s students enter her classroom, they are welcomed into a place where curiosity, investigation, interaction and empathy will lead them to global competence. One student shared that, “part of what made Madame Blouwolff’s class so unique was that she not only taught us to love and care about French, but to love and care about people.” These human connections are carefully forged when students engage in thematic units with social justice and perspective taking at their core. In this way, students learn to approach their cultural and linguistic learning, as Rebecca says, with “humility rather than hubris” and “curiosity rather than judgment.” As a world language professional, Rebecca models continuous learning by achieving National Board Certification in 2017, and consistently presenting highly-valued workshops on topics such as social justice, transitioning to proficiency, performance-based assessments, incorporating authentic resources, meeting the needs of diverse learners, and backward design lessons.

Each year, the Northeast Conference chooses its Teacher of the Year from among the candidates selected by the states in the Northeast region. This individual then represents our organization at the National Language Teacher of the Year competition at the ACTFL Convention in November. The award for the National Language Teacher of the Year is intended to elevate the status and the public profile of the language teaching profession at the state, regional and national levels by recognizing the individuals chosen for this award.

The Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages serves educators in all languages (including classical, less commonly taught, and ESL), at all levels from kindergarten through university, in both public and private settings. In existence since the late 1940s, NECTFL is the largest of five regional associations of its kind in the United States, representing educators from Maine to Virginia but exercising leadership nationwide. For more information about NECTFL, please visit our website: www.nectfl.org.
Congratulations To Rebecca Blouwolff, NECTFL 2019 Teacher Of The Year

“There are a lot of different kinds of kids who can do well in my class now, whereas before I was really privileging one kind of learner” is a quote from my interview with Rebecca on episode 47 of We Teach Languages. She was describing her journey on the path to teaching for proficiency, moving away from a grammar syllabus to thematic unit and performance assessment. It is not surprising that Rebecca earned the title of MaFLA Teacher of the Year in 2018 and NECTFL Teacher of the Year this past February. Her work inspires me every day. From her grade 8 unit where students learn about the communities and factors that impact people’s living conditions and lifestyles to her organizing informal lunch PLC with the middle school department to share ideas and inspire each other, I am continually in awe of the work she does, her passion for being her best self, and her dedication to exemplary teaching and learning. I can say without reservation that Rebecca is a treasure and I am honored to call her a colleague and a friend.

Submitted by Timothy Eagan, Department Head, Classical and Modern Languages, Wellesley.

The Two Rebeccas
ACTFL 2019 National Language Teacher of the Year Rebecca Aubrey with Rebecca Blouwolff, NECTFL 2019 Teacher of the Year

High Fives from the other finalists as Rebecca trots across the stage to accept her award

MaFLA Colleagues celebrate with Rebecca
(l-r) Ronie Webster, christina Toro, Jorge Allen, Deb Heaton, Tim Eagan, Rebecca Blouwolff, Nicole Sherf, Charlotte Gifford and Catherine Ritz.
Update from the Field of K-12 Chinese Language and Culture Education in the US

A presentation made at Chinese Language Teachers Association of California, CLTAC 2019 Conference at Stanford University
By Baocai Paul Jia, Chinese Teacher, Cupertino High School, Cupertino, California
Executive Director, Chinese Language Association of Secondary-Elementary Schools, CLASS

This presentation covers updates in the following areas:
- World Language Education: Six Core Practices promoted by ACTFL
- AP Chinese Language and Culture: New resources for AP teachers in 2019-2020 provided by the College Board
- ACTFL Teacher of the Year program
- National professional organizations in K-12 Chinese language education: foreign language education versus heritage language education
- In California: new state standards, framework and CWLP sites

I. World Language Education: ACTFL's Six Core Practices for World Language Learning

II. AP Chinese Language and Culture:
Resources and Supports for AP

**Designed to motivate students and improve the AP classroom experience**

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**Resources and Supports for AP**

**Unit Guides**
Planning guides that outline content and skills for commonly-taught units within a course.

**Personal Progress Checks**
Formative AP questions that provide students with feedback on the areas where they need to focus.

**AP Question Bank**
Library of formative, released, and secure AP practice questions teachers can use to assign online and paper tests to students.

**Progress Dashboard**
Interactive reports that help teachers understand student progress on learning critical concepts and skills.

**Scores of 3+ increased across student groups**
In the 2017-18 school year, we piloted fall exam registration with 40,000 students. We saw an increase in scores of 3 or higher across multiple groups. Moving the time of registration made a difference across the board, but it had the strongest effect for students who are traditionally underrepresented in AP.

III. World Language Teacher of the Year programs

Chinese teachers are recognized in the world language education field in the US:
- Ying Jin (CA) as ACTFL 2018 Teacher of the Year (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages)
- Yan Wang (WA) as a finalist for ACTFL 2019 Teacher of the Year (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages)
- Esther Chau as CLTA Outstanding Teacher of the Year 2019 (California Language Teachers Association)
- Peggy Kao as SWLP Teacher Leader of Year 2019 (Stanford World Language Project)
- Baocai Jia as CLTA Hal Wingard Lifetime Achievement Award 2019 (California Language Teachers Association)

IV National Professional Organizations in K12 Chinese Language Education:
  - CLASS provided workshops in 2019: NECTFL, NCLC, NanHai...
- Heritage language schools:
  - 全美中文学校协会CSAUS (http://csaus.org)
  - 全美中文学校联合总会NCACLS (http://ncacls.net/)
- National Chinese Language and Culture Coalition, NCLCC 全美中华语言文化联盟 (http://nclcc.org/)

V World Languages Education in California
- Newly revised state standards: California State World Languages Standards for K-12 Schools: approved in January 2019
- Framework: Revision is in progress
- California World Language Project Sites:
  - Berkeley World Language Project (BWLP)
  - California World Language Project; Statewide Office
  - Capital World Language Project (CapWLP)
  - Central California World Languages Project
  - Monterey Bay World Language Project (MBWLP)
  - Occidental College World Language Project (OCWLP)
  - Southern Area International Language Network (SAILN)
  - Stanford World Language Project (SWLP)
Report of the JNCL NCLIS Advocacy Day And Legislative Assembly

February 14-16, 2019
Presented by Phyllis Dragonas

The Joint National Council on Languages and the National Committee on Languages and International Studies (JNCL NCLIS) is the profession’s strongest advocate. It includes stakeholders of the language enterprise at the federal, state and local levels across the nation. JNCL advocates with Congress in an effort to provide program funding and introduce or reintroduce legislation such as the World Language Advancement and Readiness Act of 2019 whose purpose is to establish high quality world language programs in our nation’s elementary and secondary schools. Many additional sponsors joined in support of this bill after our visit.

In 2017, the Commission on Language Learning of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences released a report which was requested of them by Congress as a direct result of JNCL-NCLIS advocacy. This report stated that by several measures, the United States has neglected languages in its educational curricula, its international strategies and its domestic policies. This year, however, according to the JNCL Executive Director Dr. William Rivers, language priorities have stronger momentum entering the 116th Congress. A record attendance of 160 language activists came to Washington to participate in this year’s Language Advocacy Day. This attendance meant more than 200 meetings in legislative offices on Capitol Hill. Our energy and passion in interacting with members of Congress or their assistants is making a difference!

The future national security and economic well-being of the United States will depend on the ability of its citizens to communicate and compete by knowing the languages and cultures of other countries. Unfortunately, our country is behind in the percentage of its citizens’ biliteracy in another language as compared to other nations. Our language deficit can be a threat to our missions around the globe which require language skills to access global markets and create policy.

Another important Bill whose content has been well received and implemented in over 30 states is the Seal of Biliteracy. This bill directs the Department of Education in Washington to award renewable two-year grants to states in order to establish or improve Seal of Biliteracy programs.

Here in Massachusetts, we have excellent, dedicated and enthusiastic language teachers who are passionate about their practice. It is time for us to advocate at the local and state level that world languages be a dedicated part of the core curriculum. A two year language requirement for high school graduation does not push schools to develop high levels of proficiency in our program completers. World language education should begin in the elementary level consistently across the state. The retention of language teachers is vital. Needless to say, we could be facing a major teacher shortage at a time when they are most in demand.

MA Delegation
Karen Sasky Hughes, FLES Spanish Teacher, Lincoln Elementary School, Lincoln MA, and Hanscom Primary School, Hanscom AFB
Marcela Summerville, Advocacy Chair NNELL (National Network of Early Language Learning)
Dr. Phyllis Dragonas
Erin Cahill, Marketing & Sales Manager, Community Interpreter Services, Boston, MA
Corey Hixson
MIT Student and Global Seal Recipient

MaFLA President Jorge Allen and Dr. Santiago V. Wood, Executive Director, National Association for Bilingual Education
Helen G. Agbay New Teacher Graduate Study Scholarship

PURPOSE:

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

CRITERIA FOR APPLICATION:

For consideration the applicant is required to be:

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

The application form (below) must be accompanied by:

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

2019 Helen G. Agbay New Teacher Graduate Study Scholarship Application Form

Name: _______________________________________________ Email: __________________________

Home Address: ________________________________________ Phone: __________________________

School Name: _________________________________________ Phone: __________________________

School Address:  ________________________________________________________________________

Classes taught in 2018-2019  ______________________________________________________________

Years and languages taught: Full-time _________________ Part-time _______________________

I am a full time teacher.       Signature ________________________________________________

This form and complete supporting materials must be submitted by June 1, 2019 to:

Julie Caldarone Email: caladaj1523@gmail.com
499 Lebanon Street
Melrose, MA 02176

The successful applicant will be notified by June 15, 2019.
The MaFLA Board of Directors has established an awards program for students of foreign languages in public and private schools in Massachusetts. Awards categories are:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

f. The deadline for request for 2018-2019 certificates is May 15, 2019.

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

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

I. Awards for Excellence:

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

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<th>Student Nominated</th>
<th>Language(s)</th>
<th>Course(s)</th>
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Nominator’s Name: __________________ Membership Expires: __________________

School: ___________________________ Phone: ___________________________

School Address: __________________________

Email: ___________________________ Signature: __________________________

Mail to:  
Nilma Dominique  
Email:  nilmadominique@gmail.com  
50 Phillips Street #2  
Andover, MA 01810

DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF NOMINATIONS: May 15, 2019
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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 Spring Issue is Mar. 5

2019 SAVE THE DATES

52ND Annual MaFLA Fall Conference
Level UP Your Language Education
Oct. 24-26, 2019 - Sheraton Monarch Place Hotel, Springfield

MaFLA Diversity Day & Modified Oral Proficiency Interview (MOPI) Training*
June 7 & 8, 2019, Melrose High School

MaFLA Proficiency Academy*
July 22 - July 25, 2019 - Westfield State University

MaFLA Summer Institute
August 16 - August 18, 2019 - Lasell College

*Registration is open now!