Creating Cross Cultural Connections
by David Bong, co-founder and CEO, AVANT Assessment

The theme of this fall's MAFLA conference was set to be Creating Cross Cultural Connections.

Language or Culture? Can you separate them? Maybe, but I don't know how. In my personal experience in Japan, I found it difficult or impossible to understand what words and language meant without understanding the culture embedded in them. Without understanding the culture in the language it was all too easy to create cultural disconnections instead of connections.

My partner in business and life, Sheila, and I both had wonderful educational experiences and business careers in Japan. Both of us moved to Japan with virtually no Japanese language experience: Sheila as a high school exchange student in Aomori in the far north, and me as a language student in Tokyo after earning a college degree in Japanese history in the US. I clearly remember first hearing a friend say “われわれ日本人は….” “Ware Ware Nihonjin wa...” “We Japanese (think, say, do etc....)” In telling me that XYZ was how Japanese acted, or thought about something, etc. I thought, I would never say “We Americans...” From that moment I looked at Japan, and at myself differently. For the first time I had stepped outside of myself and my culture and looked not just at Japan, but at myself and my assumptions about society and culture.

Later in life, Sheila rose to a senior position in a major Japanese trading company and helped to negotiate deals with US technology companies. In negotiations, as in many aspects of life, Japanese are typically indirect with their language. At the end of a negotiating session the Japanese would sometimes say to the Americans on the other side of the table, “考えておきません” “Kangaete okimasu”, which literally means, “I (or we) will think about it”. After the session, just like clockwork, the American negotiators would come up to Sheila who was the one American on the Japanese side and say, “Great, what is the next step?”. Then Sheila had to gently let the Americans know that there was no next step, that the Japanese had just told them “no”.

In my work in Tokyo I headed up the only international investigative firm in Japan. In that work I witnessed many instances of clashing or mutually unintelligible cultural and linguistic situations and the problems that resulted from them.

In one case my firm was brought in to investigate an extortion at a western company. An unidentified employee had released sensitive internal documents that damaged the company and threatened to send out more if they didn't pay him a huge sum. We had to find who was doing this, and we eventually did, but what was most interesting was interviewing the extortionist to understand why he had committed this crime.

The CEO of the Japan subsidiary had come from the overseas headquarters on a typical five-year rotation. He didn't speak Japanese and apparently wasn't briefed on the importance of the concepts of “和” “Wa” = “harmony”, or “根回し”. “Nemawashi”, which literally means “binding the roots”, or less literally and more practically, “preparing everyone for a change”. When the CEO decided to make some changes, he made the mistake of not reaching out to talk to important managers in the company so that he could listen to them and get their input. Instead he relied on a small group of top executives who spoke English well who made him confident that they would just make the change happen. This was not the first time that these important managers had been ignored, and they were angry. One of them became so angry that he tried to destroy the company.

In these examples it was not possible to understand the meaning of the words without understanding the cultural meaning inside them. In our experience, the magical power of learning Japanese was the experience of seeing how the same words from English can have a very different meaning based on the culture embedded in them. These experiences have helped us understand the critical, inseparable nature of language and culture.
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**MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION**

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

**Individual memberships:**
- $45.00 for 1 year  
- $120.00 for 3 years

**Retired memberships:** $25.00 per year

**Student memberships:** $15.00 per year

For more info and/or a membership application packet, contact:  
Debra Heaton  
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Now you can join, renew or update your profile online! Just visit mafla.org.

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**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:  
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**MaFLA Membership Special!**

Due to the unprecedented events of the last few months, MaFLA is offering a special rate for new and renewing members who want to extend their membership. Now you can get 3 years for the price of 2! A regular 3-year membership (Member 3) is $120. From June 1, 2020 to May 31, 2021, it is only $90. This means you can have all the member benefits - registrations, newsletters, and 2021 Conference without having to renew your membership. It also covers the 2022 ACTFL Convention in Boston. MaFLA members can go without signing up for ACTFL membership!

So, when you renew your membership, choose Member 3 and you will get this special renew rate! Don’t worry if you have recently renewed since this rate goes for a year, you can simply take advantage of it the next time you renew!

Click here to renew.  
Click here to join.
In Memoriam

A tribute to MaFLA Treasurer Maryann Brady

December 17, 1954 – July 1, 2020

I first met Maryann at an EMFLA (Eastern MASS Foreign Language Administrators) meeting in September of 2000 when both of us arrived early. Maryann was never late and always looked as if she walked out of the most recent edition of a fashion magazine: impeccably coiffed with designer outfits and matching accessories. At EMFLA meetings, Maryann took copious notes and always participated in open discussions. For the next few years, I would often ask her if she would be willing to accept a nomination to join the MaFLA Board of Directors, but she was hesitant until 2004 when she finally agreed. In 2005, Maryann was voted in as a Director and served a 4 year term until our Treasurer at the time resigned and Maryann happily accepted that position and became an Officer of MaFLA. As our Treasurer, Maryann had an incredible work ethic. She was extremely efficient and kept impeccable records. Maryann attended all of MaFLA’s professional development events and enjoyed handing out the honorarium checks to presenters as well as carefully reviewing the room rental charges and the catering fees. If there was an error, she would find it and graciously negotiate a new bill! As MaFLA’s Events’ Coordinator, when I would announce to her that prices had gone up for food and beverages or audio-visual equipment, she would always smile and say “No Worries!”

Maryann graduated from UMASS Lowell where she majored in French and Spanish. She received her Master’s degree from Rivier College in Nashua, NH, where she also taught several Spanish classes toward the end of her tenure at Tyngsboro and continued after her retirement. Along with her Department Chair position at Tyngsboro, Maryann also served as the ESL and Mentorship Coordinators and the Senior Class Advisor. One of the highlights of her career in Tyngsboro was chaperoning her students on trips to Spain, Italy and her favorite destination, Costa Rica, where she wowed her students by ziplining! Besides serving as an Officer of MaFLA, Maryann chaired the Finance Committee, was a member of the Needs and Policies committee and also worked on the DESE panel for developing SMART goals and core course objectives.

A devoted wife to Tom, Maryann was also so proud of her two children, Steven and Kathryn and their spouses Abigail and Peter, and was thrilled to be a grandmother to Delaney, Mave, Matthew and Kristi.

At a July meeting, the MaFLA Board of Directors unanimously voted to honor Maryann by naming her the posthumous recipient of the 2020 MaFLA Distinguished Service Award for a “lifetime of exceptional and meritorious service to the foreign language profession in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.” MaFLA will also create a grant in her name which will provide funding for a new teacher and a new department head to attend future MaFLA Conferences.

May Maryann’s memory always be a blessing to our MaFLA family and to all whose lives she touched. She will remain a jewel in our MaFLA crown.

Joyce Beckwith

August 2020
In Memoriam
Phyllis Dragonas, PhD

With the death of Dr. Phyllis Dragonas on August 1, 2020, Massachusetts has lost one of its most indomitable foreign language advocates for the last 50 years, a champion of foreign languages for all students, insisting that they be included not only as part of the core curriculum but also be a graduation requirement in all districts.

An alumna of Boston University, Phyllis received her MA degree from the Middlebury College Abroad Program at the Sorbonne in Paris, and her PhD in 1971 from Ohio State University. A Fulbright Scholar, Phyllis also received a 2nd Masters degree in Educational Administration from BU. For many years, she chaired the Foreign Language Department for the Melrose Public Schools where, in 1975, she created a German American Partnership Program (GAPP) which was a huge success and written up in the New York Times. It became the basis for her book, entitled High School Goes Abroad: International Homestay Exchange Programs, published in 1983 by the Center for Applied Linguistics. When the German students came to Melrose, Phyllis set up a full cultural and educational schedule for them and accompanied them whenever possible. Chaperoning the Melrose students in Germany was one of the highlights of her career. She made life-long friends, whom she continued to visit after her retirement. Whenever she travelled abroad, she would only fly with Lufthansa, while at home, she enjoyed driving a white Mercedes!

However, Phyllis’ true love was French! Elected President of the AATF Eastern MA Chapter in the mid 1970’s, she remained an active member and served on the AATF National Executive Council as their New England Regional Representative from 1989-1992. In 1990, the French Ministry of Education awarded her the distinction of “Chevalier dans l’Ordre des Palmes Académiques” for her efforts in promoting the French language and Francophone culture across the country and she proudly wore her silver medal and purple ribbon every time she attended a professional event.

Phyllis was a Charter member of ACTFL along with her close friend Dr. Wilga Rivers, Chair of Romance Languages at Harvard for many years. When Dr. Rivers passed away, Phyllis set up, according to Wilga’s wishes, an award for Leadership in Post Secondary Education at ACTFL and was asked to chair the candidate selection committee and present the award at several of ACTFL’s Annual Conventions, which she faithfully attended each November.

A MaFLA member since 1970, Phyllis served a three-year term on the Board of Directors in the early 2000s, then chaired their Advocacy Committee. For the past 20 years, she represented Massachusetts at the JNCL/NCLIS Legislative Day and Delegate Assembly in Washington, DC, and looked forward to meeting our Senators and Representatives and telling them in no uncertain terms what needed to be done to improve foreign language education! She wrote advocacy articles published in the MaFLA Newsletter, and was invited every year to give presentations to Department Heads at their Fall, Winter and Spring EMFLA meetings. In 2008, Phyllis was honored by MaFLA with its Distinguished Service Award for her exceptional contributions to the foreign language profession in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Phyllis was one of a kind! She loved “center-stage,” and she deserved to be on it, because she was so passionate about our principles and values as language educators and the global future of our students. She spoke so eloquently, whether one-to-one, to a room full of colleagues or at an Assembly of Delegates. Her voice may be silent now, but it will always resonate within us. May her memory be a blessing to all whose lives she touched, and may her enduring fervor and generosity of spirit remain an inspiration for generations to come.

Joyce Beckwith
August 2020
In Memoriam
Dr. Richard Ladd

MaFLA is sad to announce the passing of Dr. Richard Ladd on August 29, 2020. Dr. Ladd, who served as President of MaFLA in 1997 and received the MaFLA Distinguished Service Award in 2006, graduated from Salem State University, received an MA from Middlebury College and a Doctorate from SUNY at Stony Brook. Foreign Language Department Chair for many years at the Ipswich Public Schools, Richard was devoted to his students, who kept up communication with him long after they had graduated. After his retirement, Richard was a lecturer at Gordon College. In 1997, Richard published the first edition of AP French: Preparing for the Language Examination, which was hugely successful and became a staple in all advanced French classes. In 2012, he published a 2nd edition which included Culture as well as Language, and Interpretive, Interpersonal and Presentational activities in sync with the Proficiency Guidelines. An AATF member since 1988, the French Ministry of Education honored him with the rank of Chevalier in the French Academic Palms for his efforts in promoting the French language and Francophone culture across the country. A frequent presenter not only at MaFLA but also at regional, national and international foreign language conferences, Richard loved to travel and visited five continents and almost all of the European countries.

Teaching was Richard’s life, not just his job. He had an incredible work ethic, and was truly a visionary, designing engaging oral and written communicative activities, and authentic performance assessments long before they ever became part of the mainstream foreign language teacher’s vocabulary.

To Richard, we say Un Grand Merci for all your contributions to our profession! Your legacy will live on. Adieu cher collègue! Que ton âme repose en paix!

Joyce Beckwith
September 1, 2020

And just like that, he’s gone. A Renaissance man of such brilliance that it was impossible to predict what would come out of his mouth, or in which of four or five languages it might appear. Conversations with him were never long enough and always full of unanticipated adventures.

He was one of the most masterful and creative teachers I have ever known—perhaps because he never forgot how to be a child. He understood that “it is only with the heart one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye.” (St. Exupery). Suffice to say he was very skilled at reading invisible books.

Speaking of books, Richard, we never did get around to finishing ours. It doesn’t matter, though, because you wrote your stories into the lives of all who knew you. I am sure I’m not the only one looking forward to sitting on the floor with my blanket, and eating milk and cookies while you read them to me again someday. I will miss you my cherished mentor and friend.

A message of gratitude

As we approach the final months of 2020, a year that has brought many challenges, several themes run through my mind. I think of loss, letting go, and looking forward. Each of us has had to deal with loss in one form or another this year. We had to end the school year without the closure of being with our students and colleagues. We haven’t been able to visit friends and loved ones as we usually do. Important events may have been canceled or postponed. Some of us have struggled with health concerns and may have even lost a loved one. The MaFLA community has recently suffered a tremendous loss. The board of directors was devastated when we learned of the sudden passing of our beloved Treasurer, Maryann Brady, in July. Long-time colleague, Joyce Beckwith, has written a beautiful tribute to Maryann on page 3. As we work through our grief of losing Maryann, we appreciate your patience in the coming months as we transition to a new Treasurer. We all feel an enormous amount of gratitude toward Maryann for her many years of dedicated service to MaFLA. I am pleased to announce that board member Callie Egan will be serving as Treasurer for the remainder of the term through 2021. We all greatly appreciate Callie’s willingness to take on this challenge and we look forward to working with her and supporting her in this new role.

Losses have been felt in the larger world language community as we acknowledge the recent passing of Phyllis Dragonas and Richard Ladd. Phyllis served on the MaFLA Board of Directors, chaired MaFLA’s Advocacy Committee, represented Massachusetts at JNCL/NCLIS events, and received the Distinguished Service Award. Richard was a Past President of MaFLA, a Distinguished Service Award recipient, and a frequent presenter at MaFLA events. Both giants in the profession, Phyllis and Richard will be greatly missed.

As teachers, we are the ultimate planners and this school year’s unknowns make that difficult. In order to be able to accept the unknowns that this year will bring, I need to let go of my idea of how my teaching should be. I will try to approach this new school year with fresh eyes, open to seeing the possibilities and potential of new ideas. I am grateful for our world language colleagues from all over the country who have generously shared their resources for approaching instruction in the different scenarios that we may face this year. While this may be one of the most challenging years we’ve had as teachers, it is my hope that this experience will bring us all closer together in collaboration and with a spirit of strong determination to adapt and persevere.

Webinars 2020-2021

World Language education is entering into a new era. As we leverage our new practices, MaFLA hopes to offer guidance through a monthly free webinar. Please join us to learn, reflect and collaborate on the following dates.

Wednesday, September 16th, 7pm
Into the Unknown: Remote and Hybrid Learning in Local Districts

We will hear from three panelists on their systems’ plans for re-opening and then there will be time for participant discussion. Be informed on the different models and learn the strategies for best practices in our new reality.

Rebecca Blouwolff, Middle School French Teacher, Wellesley Public Schools
Julie Caldarone, Director of World Languages, Boston Public Schools
Carlos-Luis Brown, Department Head, Wilmington Public Schools

Saturday, October 24, 10am
An Equal World Language Classroom Is Just Not Enough
Bárbara Barnett, K-5 Department Head for World Language, Wellesley Public Schools

Wednesday, November 4, 7 pm
Eurocentric/Ethnocentric Approaches in the WL Classroom
Abelardo Almazán-Vázquez, Spanish Teacher, The Putney School, Vermont

December date TBA
World Language Curriculum through an Antiracist Lens: Professional Development for Teachers and Administrators
Jorge Allen, World Language Program Head, Andover Public Schools

We strive for webinars that are practical in a way that will add to your teaching tool box. The topics are current and the presenters are dynamic. We urge you to participate and be inspired in your language teaching.
Culture, the focus of this issue of the MaFLA Newsletter, was chosen as the theme by the MaFLA Communications Committee back in February 2020. At that time we were planning to feature the upcoming workshops, sessions and events of our Annual Fall Conference and get our members excited about our conference theme Creating Cross-Cultural Connections. Little did we know that everything would change come March and the MaFLA Annual Conference would be postponed to another time.

Mid-summer, as we were still quarantined due to the pandemic, I seriously considered throwing out this theme and/or changing the focus of the issue entirely. However, I stepped back and reflected on what I personally had experienced since March. I realized that perhaps “culture” was an appropriate and relevant theme. The PD that I attended during the pandemic had experienced a cultural change as did my daily life.

In fact, as I thought about the hours I had spent walking around my neighborhood I determined that even the culture of the neighborhood had changed and evolved. As I walked I noticed over time that playscapes were being built, driveways were becoming play areas, volleyball nets were becoming visible and gardens were being planted and tended. As these products were now part of my neighborhood, I saw neighborhood practices changing.

Children were playing in their yards, some were riding their bicycles, scooters, skateboards. Others were sitting with their families at picnic tables and playing board games. All of these had never been practices or had been rarely seen practices prior to this.

Many of us now view ourselves more as a “neighborhood.” We are getting to know each other and feel more connected. We also are more likely to stop and have a brief conversation. I certainly have a different perspective of “neighborhood” and feel much more connected to mine.

My personal culture has changed. Who would have ever predicted that I would value toilet paper, hand soaps, Kleenex, sanitizers and cleaning products. Masks? If you had asked me a year ago what practice I associated with a mask, I probably would have said Halloween or a costume party. Now, I do not go anywhere without my mask… and always with a spare… just in case. My mask has become an everyday product. I stay at least 6 feet from others and respect their space, and I also follow the arrows in the supermarket, practices that have now become ingrained in my everyday life. Culture is not stagnant. It is continually evolving. So culture has remained the theme of this issue. I hope you enjoy it.

This summer has also brought some sadness to the world language community. In August we lost our gracious and kind MaFLA Treasurer Maryanne Brady. A few weeks later, we said goodbye to Dr. Phyllis Dragonas who has been a colleague, friend and advocate for world languages for her entire career. Just recently we lost Dr. Richard Ladd, a former MaFLA President and outstanding and creative world language educator. I know these individuals have had a positive impact on my career and on me personally and I, along with the world language community, feel blessed that I had the opportunity to know them, to work with them and to call them my friends.

I know that many MaFLA members have been apprehensive and concerned about returning to their schools, no matter what program, virtual, hybrid, or face-to-face. These are trying and challenging times but I have hope that we will get through this stronger than ever. Stay safe, collaborate and support each other but most of all step back and take care of yourself. YOU ARE IMPORTANT.

The theme of our End of Year Issue is CHALLENGES. 2020 has certainly proven to be a year of challenges and creative ways to meet those challenges. Please consider sharing your challenges, your solutions (if any), or just general ideas and feelings.

Send in your CHALLENGES

• What are some challenges you have had in 2020?
• How have you overcome or begun to overcome challenges you are facing?
• What are some of the ongoing challenges you or we as a profession are facing?
• What are some of the personal challenges you have had to work through in 2020?
• What are some of the challenges students are facing?
• How are students dealing with these challenges?
MaFLA’s Educator In The Spotlight

Our Educator in the Spotlight, Sara McDonald, is a Spanish teacher at Canton High School. She teaches grades 11 and 12 and was recommended by her colleague Mike Farkas. Mike says that “Sara is an outstanding educator who is a leader for many of us within the department here at the school.”

MAFLA: Tell us a little about yourself.
Sara: I am a lifelong learner who is constantly in awe of our world, especially the natural world. I continuously seek opportunities to learn from our world and the people in it.

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?
Sara: I have found that being one’s authentic self, incorporating humor, inviting active play, and modeling / encouraging risk taking are all essential components that help to build a positive class culture across all grade levels.

MAFLA: What do you like best about being a teacher and helping students every day?
Sara: I love questions, all kinds of questions! Well, ok, maybe most questions. I’m not a big fan of having the same question asked more than twice, because it makes me feel as though folks may not be listening. When this happens I ask my class: Am I talking to the great outdoors?

I am however, an aficionado of open ended questions. I like exploring a plethora of possibilities with my students, knowing that we often don’t hold all of the answers. I believe as teachers, if we communicate to our students, learning is reciprocal and that we too are also learners; we intentionally create a parallel partnership in which the teachers’ and students’ growth and understanding flourish.

MAFLA: Since the proficiency movement is so new, how do you think language teaching will evolve over the next few decades? or where do you see yourself in making the transition to teaching for proficiency.
Sara: I tend to be cautiously optimistic when it comes to educational movements. We need to ask questions about what has already been done. There are states such as Maine, who over the past two years, have learned valuable lessons pertaining to how they rolled out proficiency based learning in several districts including Portland and Sanford. It is important to investigate what a concept looks like in practice. Furthermore, it is imperative that no one organization, individual or entity profit off of any new educational movement; such as proficiency-based learning.

We also need to ask tough questions such as: What happens when students do not meet the proficiency targets? What type of models, structures, and supports can we put in place school wide? How could these models etc. go beyond the typical classroom supports to ensure our schools are providing an equitable experience for all learners? If we are truly going to make an educational shift to proficiency, we need not look past the present barriers to equity, rather, we have an imperative to address the inequities now.

My own proficiency journey started back in 2007 when I joined Meridian Academy, a small independent project-based school that doesn’t use grades. In my 7 years at Meridian, students were provided feedback on assignments and given multiple opportunities to revise their work, typically a culminating project.

Additionally, each term, we communicated formally to students and their families on their proficiency progress based on a carefully curated list of expectations. This list spanned both traditional academic skills along with habits of mind such as creativity and curiosity.

A pillar of Meridian Academy is the inclusion of community. Exhibitions were and are still held by students several times a year in which they display their work and interact with the community. Students educate those who attend by sharing their work demonstrating their understanding of the topics learned throughout the term. Students become educators by inviting members of the community to learn from them; they are now the experts showcasing their proficiency!


MaFLA: So then what would be your advice to another teacher making the transition to proficiency-based teaching?
I would encourage teachers in general to move away, for the most part, from traditional tests and quizzes. Instead, I recommend teachers design and co-design (in that order) with their students, meaningful projects, along with the criteria that will be used to evaluate their proficiency level on said task. In the process of moving towards or sustaining a dynamic way of teaching it can get messy. Embrace this creative chaos. This may make others nervous. Own the mess, make mistakes, learn from them, seek feedback from your students, and those on a similar path and then refine your work. Trust in yourself and in your own growth. Relish in the discoveries made alongside your students for they are far more powerful than fear.

I recommend PBLWorks, a Project Based Learning organization to help teachers design, implement, and refine meaningful projects both with and for their students. A pillar of a Gold Standard P.B.L project is that it has a public product and along with that all projects have measurable expectations. Project Based Learning goes hand in hand with proficiency-based learning and is a practice I gravitated towards as it is authentic and has real world applications.

https://studentsatthecenterhub.org/resource/buck-institute-for-education-bie/

MaFLA: What are some of the fun things you like to do in class? How have they affected your teaching and students’ learning?
Sara: An essential routine I have built in at the start of class sets the tone for intentionality and joy. I start each class with what I call Minute to Breathe or M.T.B. In
MaFLA’s Educator In The Spotlight
An Interview With Sara McDonald, High School Spanish Teacher

As we are very fortunate to have green space right outside of our classroom, I try to get us outdoors when it makes sense to do so. We have a long block (when our classes run a bit longer than usual) routine, where we explore an open ended question that a student poses. When the weather is nice, we go outside to do this as it doesn’t necessitate the use of technology or other materials. Students do bring a classroom folder with them containing tools to help them connect their ideas or elaborate on a response their peers make. A change of scenery, a change of work space is a small adjustment that I have found brings joy to many students.

As my classes presently are mostly film based, in the past I would do circle activities with classes such as Spanish II & III. During these activities, we are on our feet, in the hallway learning new vocabulary through movement and association in the target language. This approach encourages students to take risks, embrace mistakes as part of the learning process, and even gets them laughing!

MaFLA: What do you do to motivate students?
Sara: I believe in tough love. Tough love is setting high expectations and being supportive all the while not giving up on students even if this means they have to revisit a skill or task more than they would like. For example, early on, my students learn that saying “I don’t know” is not an acceptable answer in my classroom. They may initially push back; however, I stay with them by using wait time, circling back to them etc.; they discover this is not a response that will let them “off the hook.”

I have high expectations for all of my students especially when it comes to effort. This is a trait that my parents instilled in me when I was young and I try to foster this trait in my students as well. You don’t always have to be right; I reiterate this day in and day out. I do however, ask for you to bring your best self to class and this means putting in genuine effort!

MaFLA: Is there anything else you would like to share?
Sara: I would love to see MaFLA and other organizing bodies use their platform to help promote awareness around teacher Social Emotional Learning (S.E.L.). Furthermore, it would be advantageous for organizations such as yourself to advocate and create S.E.L. opportunities for teachers within our public school calendar at our respective schools. If you are looking to grow your base of teachers, I think starting with teacher self care is a wise place! I also think these supports are vital for any new teacher joining our field at this time.

MaFLA: You have been an active member of MaFLA. How has your membership inspired your teaching?
Sara: I have gained the most inspiration in my teaching by attending workshops by Organic World Language (O.W.L). I attended two trainings years ago at Francis Parker Charter School and it completely transformed my teaching practice. I had an opportunity last fall to attend an O.W.L. workshop at the MaFLA annual conference. I appreciate offerings such as O.W.L. that encourage both educators and students alike to explore what active language learning can look like!

MaFLA: Send along pictures that we can reprint. You or your classes.
Sara: Although not a traditional picture, I want to include this photo to remind folks that our classrooms extend beyond the four walls we teach in. I am constantly photographing things I see in the world and interweaving ideas and images etc. into my lessons.

I came across this particular photo on a shoreline. I hope it inspires my fellow educators and administrators to remember to be curious and ask open ended questions. By doing so, I believe we are affirming the same practices we are instilling in our students.
Digital Storytelling: The Answer To Boosting Culture When Teaching Language Remotely

by Sarab Al Ani

As a language educator, you are probably already well aware of the fact that Culture is one of the five goal areas in teaching language (also known as the 5 Cs). But did you notice that the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) gives Culture the second position right after Communication in the sequencing of these 5Cs? If nothing else does, this position should be enough proof that shows the importance attributed to teaching culture in the language classroom.

Teaching Culture is not easy!

Despite its significance, and despite the fact that most language educators are on board with it, Culture has always been one of the toughest of these goal areas to teach. There are many reasons why teaching Culture is challenging. One of these reasons is the fact that Culture is a “very broad concept embracing all aspects of human life” (Seelye, 1984, p. 15). Additionally, when teaching Culture, language educators are not dealing with a one-dimensional factor, rather they must teach cultural knowledge, awareness and functional skills (Lessor-Clouston, 1992). Therefore, language educators sometimes feel pressured when tackling Culture and cultural issues as they may feel that too much is expected of them (Byram & Kramsch, 2008), which only adds difficulty to the situation.

However hard teaching Culture may be, language educators do not give up. They make sure to do what it takes. They create cultural festivals, fashion shows, cooking contests, and karaoke contests to guarantee learners’ involvement. They invite native speakers, immigrants, and members of the local community to their classes to capture cultural authenticity. They organize trips to museums and cultural centers to use art as a gateway to teaching culture. They do all of this while ensuring that language is front and center and maintaining communicative language teaching standards.

Cultural Events after Covid-19

The widespread of the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020 put an end to many of these activities since many of them are designed specifically to be in the form of group events. Moreover, all classes moved to an online platform and for some instructors, remote instruction was a brand-new experience. Even this did not put an end to language educators’ perseverance. Home kitchens were soon reconfigured to host cooking contests, living rooms became runways and personal computers turned into music mixers. With these and other such admirable efforts, language educators managed to maintain the cultural events that they had previously designed, and they were able to complete the academic year successfully.

Planning for the Coming Academic Year

The situation is different now as many of us know in advance that we are going to be teaching online in 2020-2021. This means that we need to consider teaching Culture in a new perspective and plan accordingly. Instead of trying to maintain the same type of activities and change them to fit the world of remote teaching, perhaps it’s worth considering the introduction of some new activities. Here is where digital storytelling can be used to boost teaching culture.

What is storytelling? Why use it? And How?

Let’s start first by agreeing to a common definition of Storytelling. According to Esteban (2015, p. 47) “Storytelling is a receptive and productive educational resource in which social values, content and language are linked and integrated.” Cameron (2008) tells us that coupling a digital story with a good lesson plan leads to a successful learning experience and “holistic learning experiences are constructed through rigorous attention to detail in planning and teaching” (2008, p. 184). Smeda, Dakich, & Sharda (2014) elaborate further on some of the reasons that make the use of storytelling a successful teaching experience saying that it is considered a useful resource to develop thinking skills and content language. Storytelling, they add, allows for different topics to be covered. Moreover, they stress that “contemplation and use of content, culture and language procedures through tales was, consequently, considered an important factor that contributes to the appropriateness of teaching language lessons” (Smeda, Dakich, & Sharda ,2014, p 50). They add, “Teaching environmental or cultural contents through storytelling can become a valuable experience for children, as they are encouraged to use new language in a communicative and motivating way.” (Smeda, Dakich, & Sharda ,2014, p 50).

With careful selection and planning, we can now keep our culturally relevant theme of food, fashion, music, art, etc., by selecting an authentic digital story that is based on these topics to use in the class. Numerous news agencies and online media platforms create special short reports by building it round the story of an individual. They are usually created in video format. For example: The Story of This Street (Al Arabiya News, Modern Standard Arabic) which takes well-known streets in various key Arab cities and then creates a story to tell about that street including its historic and cultural significance. Or Story Post (YouTube Channel, Arabic/Egyptian Dialect) which takes authentic Facebook posts that have been liked by millions and turns them into an illustrated story. These digital stories are usually authentic, not longer than 3 minutes, available online with zero cost, and can be digitally manipulated by slowing video speed or by adding script or subtitles. Moreover, they tend to tackle relevant popular cultural topics. For a language educator these resources are invaluable. Authentic language, as ACTFL tells us, provides a rich source of language input, showcases real-life examples of language, helps increase learners’ interest, and expands language exposure to what is beyond the textbook. More importantly, authentic language “can provide information about the target culture and provide that culture’s perspective on an issue or event” (ACTFL Guiding Principles for language learning).
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The fact that these videos are short make them ideal to use in the language classroom (Mendelsohn, 1998). Furthermore, changing the speed of the video and adding script or subtitles may be a strategy language educators can use if they see the need to, especially since it is known to aid in language learning (Hayati, Mohmedi, 2011). Free access and online availability are ideal for a language class taught remotely.

Where to Find Authentic Arabic Digital Stories?

- Al Arabiya News has a YouTube channel which takes well-known streets various key Arab cities and then create a story to tell about that street including its historic and cultural significance.
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=efgJARQYfK6&list=PL0FBNcTyiW6oQK8j_l72h2qg81afue

- BBC News Arabic has a YouTube channel which takes current issues and events (art, culture, economy, culture, politics etc.) that take place in the Arab world and presents it in the form of a narrative special report. These stories are found in one playlist in that channel under the title “Cases”.
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CAHf4yO6JcF&list=P163uqJ7_8svB0DhNA52eN1NDv5h88J1

- BBC News Arabic has a YouTube channel which takes current issues and events (art, culture, economy, culture, politics etc.) that take place in the Arab world and presents it in the form of a narrative special report. These stories are found in one playlist in that channel under the title “Stories”.
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JyVH9g6I6N5&list=P163uqJ7_8svB0DhNA52eN1NDv5h88J1

- Al Arabic is a YouTube channel which takes stories of Arab people thriving and surviving presents it in the form of a narrative report. These stories are found in one playlist in that channel under the title “The Story of a Follow Human”.
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1YU1MsQ1k6s&list=PLX1bYsA5oDBWwnZyZaPgmvwaFT-FS6jD9y_j0

- Story Post is a YouTube channel which takes authentic Facebook posts that have been liked by millions and turns it into an illustrated story.
  https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCR81D3N335rYMSfHq52rL_92A

- Al Saha is a Facebook page that collects main events and popular form Egypt and turns it into video posts. The videos include visuals, script (Modern Standard Arabic) and music. It often has little spoken language.
  https://www.facebook.com/TlsahaEG-AlHurra/

- Playaling is a free website where Arabic subtitles as well as English translation are added to video content. Videos can be used with or without the added feature, with both, and only one of them. The site also includes a bank that includes words and the videos in which this word appears. Videos are categorized by Language Level, Dialect and Content.
  https://playaling.com/

Where to begin?

To use digital storytelling in your language classes with the intention of boosting teaching culture I recommend the following:

a. Create a list! Start creating a list of sites where you can find digital stories and add a short description. Trust me! This description will come in handy (see example of the resource list that I have created for Arabic, the language that I teach).

b. Don't disrupt your regular teaching and don't switch themes. Rather, using your resources from point a above, find a digital story that you can use to boost the instruction of your current theme.

c. Once you have located your thematically relevant digital story, create the activity/activities that would both highlight Culture and target the rest of the teaching objectives.

d. Create Learner-Centered Activities and bear in mind that students might want to learn more about a certain cultural aspect. Be prepared for further instruction!

e. Create activities with differentiated instruction in mind.

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Fall 2020 is approaching faster than we may like. Some teachers might teach face-to-face, but the option of distance learning will always be there. This is no reason to jeopardize the teaching of Culture in language classrooms. Digital storytelling, along with meticulously designed activities, is a great way to boost Culture. We will do what language educators do best; use methods backed by research, strengthened by resourcefulness, perfected with hard work and fortified with love.

Sarab Al Ani is a senior lector in Arabic at Yale University. Her current research interests focus on using technology for language teaching, overcoming challenges that face students of Arabic in the U.S., the means to achieve desired language skills with minimum of difficulty, in addition to optimum methods of testing.

References:
The American Council on Teaching Foreign Languages:
https://www.actfl.org/resources/guiding-principles-language-learning


Additional reading:


Making The Día de los Muertos Come Alive
Reading in the Cultural Mode: Applying the 3Ps to a Reading Text

by Marcel LaVergne, Ed

This article is a reworking of two out-of-print articles that I wrote for the National Capital Language Resource Center’s Culture Club e-magazine.

In accordance with the Foreign Language National Standards, it is important to consider all reading assignments through a cultural vision and to go beyond the normal vocabulary acquisition, grammar recognition, and factual question/answer routines that usually accompany those activities. In other words, what else besides words and verbs are the students learning through the reading assignments?

When seen through the lens of culture, reading passages can generate valuable information about the people whose language we are studying through the products, practices, and perspectives mentioned in the readings. Students can also gain valuable insights about their own culture as they read and discuss someone else’s traditions, customs, and way of life, especially if they engage in compare and contrast activities by applying the Cultures and Comparisons Strands.

To illustrate the technique being proposed, I chose the holiday known as the Day of the Dead (Día de los Muertos) that is a very popular observance in Mexico and also among the many Mexicans that have settled in the United States. The examples that I have chosen relate specifically to the article “Day of the Dead is time to remember” that appeared in the November 2, 2003 issue of the Boston Sunday Globe.

The traditional achievement-based approach to reading usually evaluates what facts students have learned as a result of the reading. That approach often results in knowing the what (vocabulary and facts) and the how (customs and traditions) of the holiday observance as it engages the students in skill-getting activities such as true/false, multiple choice, matching, question/answer, or translation activities, all of which address lower-level thinking skills.

The proficiency-based approach to reading takes the students one step further because it challenges the students to demonstrate what they can do with what they know as it engages the students in skill-using activities such as compare/contrast, personalize, hypothesize, analyze, summarize, etc., all of which address higher-level thinking skills. That approach usually results in understanding the why (the underlying belief system) behind the what and the how.

Unless the students understand the belief system (i.e., the perspectives) that governs the holiday, they will never get beyond the superficial, tangible, and outward manifestations of the custom and, in their eyes, the Day of the Dead becomes a quaint holiday when people eat candy skulls and skeletons.

The Cultures and the Comparisons Strands of the Foreign Language National Standards provide an effective way to get the most out of reading if one plans activities that focus on each of the three Ps: products, practices, and perspectives.

Step 1: Knowledge of the facts (Achievement based)

After the students have read the article Day of the Dead is a Time to Remember (Boston Globe, November 2, 2003) or a similar text on this subject, preferably as a homework assignment, the teacher would divide the class into three groups and would assign a different topic to each group:

Group 1 would list all the products mentioned in the article.
Group 2 would list all the practices mentioned in the article.
Group 3 would list all the perspectives mentioned or assumed in the article.

Each group would then present its findings to the rest of the class. In this step, the students would be learning the basic words and facts expressed in the article. The information presented would look like this:

The products:
- cempazuchil: a flower the color of the sun
- pan de muertos: bread of the dead: sweet bread sprinkled with sugar or decorated with icing and shaped like human figures or round loaves topped by small knobs symbolizing bones
- chocolate caliente: hot chocolate
- gifts of food and drink
- cemeteries
- ofrendas: altars dedicated to the memory of family members and friends
- paper streamers
- candles
- photographs of the dead
- candy in the shape of skulls and skeletons
- calaveras: skulls
- calacas: skeletons

The practices:
- bringing gifts of food and drink to the gravesites of family and friends
- decorating cemeteries and homes with elaborate altars, adorned with colorful paper streamers, candles, photographs of the dead, and candy in the shape of skulls and skeletons
- baking pan de muertos
- making and drinking chocolate caliente
- remembering loved ones and the country they left behind
- making candy in the shape of skulls and skeletons
- decorating with the cempazuchil whose scent guides the dead back for their yearly visit to this world

The perspectives:
- belief in the soul and the after-life
Step 2: Expansion of the facts (Research based)

The groups would research on the Internet to find photos of the products, descriptions of the practices, and explanations of the perspectives in preparation of group presentations to the whole class. In this step, the students would enrich and expand their knowledge of the Day of the Dead.

A Google search of the topic Day of the Dead reveals many references to that holiday. The following two give the history of the observance, describe the rituals, show colorful photographs of the artifacts of the holiday, and explain the meanings of the tradition:  [http://www.azcentral.com/ent/dead](http://www.azcentral.com/ent/dead) and [http://www.dayofthedead.com](http://www.dayofthedead.com).

Step 3: Analysis of the facts (Proficiency based)

The class would then engage in a series of Cultural Comparison activities such as:

- Compare and contrast the Day of the Dead with the following:
  - Memorial Day
  - All Souls’ Day (November 2)
  - Halloween
- Families erect an altar at home to remember the dead loved ones. How do we remember our dead in our homes?
- People remember the country they left behind. How does your family remember the country of your grand- or great-grandparents?
- Gifts and food are left at the cemeteries. How do we decorate the graves of our loved ones who have died?
- What role do candles play in our remembrance of the dead?
- The Day of the Dead celebration seems to be a joyous event. Do we feel the same when we remember our dead?

This step transfers the Day of the Dead from the article into their own life as they relate this custom to what is done in their own home or in their community.

Step 4: Demonstration (Proficiency based)

The students will recreate the Day of the Dead in their classroom as follows:

- Create an altar to a fictitious character or to an important figure from the past.
- Decorate the classroom with flowers, paper streamers, and candles.
- Bake pan de muertos and skull candy.
- Make chocolate caliente.
- Hang student-made posters of the various products and practices of the Day of the Dead around the room.
- Discuss the person remembered.
- This step attempts to make the Day of the Dead come alive as the students participate in the event.

Step 5: Evaluation (Proficiency based)

In this assessment phase, the students can demonstrate their understanding of the Day of the Dead through various means such as:

- Compare/contrast the Day of the Dead and Memorial Day by means of a Venn Diagram.
- Debate the topic: Is remembering the dead a joyful or a sad event?
- Produce a travel brochure designed for tourists promoting the Day of the Dead celebration in Mexico.
- Write a brief essay or a newspaper article about the belief system (perspectives) that underlies the Day of the Dead rituals (practices).

In this step, the students show what they can do with what they know.

Conclusion

When students engage in active rather than passive reading, i.e., proficiency vs. achievement, they have a deeper understanding of the material being read because they go beyond a simple knowledge of the words and facts.

Integrating the 3 P’s approach of the Cultures Strand guarantees that the students will have a more complete under-
Making The Día de los Muertos Come Alive

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standing of the topic because by identifying the products (the what?), the students will be learning their vocabulary in context, by recognizing the practices (the how?), students will know the raison d'être of the products, and by discussing perspectives (the why?), the students will understand the belief system that gave rise to the practices. Except for the very beginning classes, these activities would be done in the target language and the students would be improving all four language skills, would engage in higher level thinking skills, and would gain a better understanding of the world that they live in. More importantly, the students would be engaging in all the 5Cs:

- **Communication**: each group would be providing information that the other groups do not have and would be engaged in all three of the communicative modes:
  - interpersonal: when discussing among themselves in their group
  - interpretive: when reading the article at home and researching the Internet
  - presentational: when presenting their findings to the rest of the class
- **Cultures**: the activity is based on the 3Ps: products, practices, perspectives
- **Connections**:
  - History: Christian and Aztec beliefs
  - Geography: Where is the Day of the Dead celebrated? Where do your ancestors come from?
  - Sociology: family traditions
  - Art: the decorated altar
  - Cooking: pan de muertos, candy shaped like skulls and skeletons
- **Comparisons**: the students will compare/contrast the Day of the Dead tradition in Mexico with the way it is celebrated in the United States
- **Communities**: the article relates how the Day of the Dead is celebrated in towns near the Boston area.

According to the National Standards, there is more to reading than just answering a series of questions, of learning vocabulary lists, of writing a summary of the story, etc. By adopting a cultural vision and reading through the eyes of the 3 Ps of Culture, the students are afforded the opportunity of seeing more than one vision of reality and of realizing that they truly live in a multicultural world.

**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.

**A Big THANK YOU To Leslie Grahn**

Leslie has been working tirelessly since March curating and organizing materials in all languages for teachers to support them at this unprecedented time in education. She not only supports us with teaching materials but understands and encourages our social and emotional well being. Her Wellbeing Tasks (starting with the one above) will be appearing in our MaFLA Newsletter. We are so lucky to have Leslie supporting our profession!

Check out grahnforlang.com for all of her resources.
For the past three years, I’ve been teaching Latin American Studies for Social Justice to high school students, and as Glynn et al. stated, the content of social justice lessons is not as neutral as many language-focused ones. As a result, you might find it challenging to start discussions about social justice issues. Naturally, it is safer to engage students in discussions of superficial topics of culture, but doing so does not allow students to gain an authentic understanding of the lives of others, one of the most important components of world language instruction. To peer below the surface of the products of culture to explore practices and perspectives, the teacher must invite students to view the culture through different lenses and to employ critical thinking skills (p. 28).

The ultimate goal for the past three years of teaching this course has been the rewards I reaped from collaborating with students to understand, critique, and contest inequitable power relations in our culture. This curricular design allows for deeper understandings of the “Cultures Standard, which relates the products and practices of a culture to the perspectives of its individuals” and the standard of Connections, as it addresses critical thinking (p. 8).

The approach taken was to use history as an entry point to engage students in content-based learning, as it fosters more in-depth understanding and critical thinking for students. Next, the units lead to comparisons between the target cultures with the students’ home cultures, which allows our students to “learn how differences among people can present challenges and insights” (p. 8).

World language textbooks “tend not to include references to social justice or more critical aspects of culture” (p. 46), as they do not reflect the lived experiences. To infuse social justice, teachers need to present culture as an ever-changing thought-provoking pendulum and believe in students’ agency and empowerment “to work toward change” (p. 2).

To start planning lessons, I considered starting with the what; what do we want to know more about the target culture? Through that investigation, I look for authentic materials that our students have not yet learned or discussed in previous courses. When I identify the authentic material, I carefully organize it to prompt my students to reflect and explore their privilege, power (or lack thereof) to interpret the data. The what we know, the what we don’t know and the what we want to know more about are critical questions that can guide the students to arrive at their critical conclusions.

Learning activities such as brainstorming with visual imagery, new vocabulary, a relatable reading selection, EdPuzzle video, a guided Pear Deck interactive presentation, a ThingLink image, a movie, or a documentary can help assess the students using the three modes of communication (interpretive, presentational, and interpersonal). It will help them arrive at a critical and thoughtful reflection. Teachers can use the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to identify the themes, for example:

- SDG 1: No poverty
- SDG 5: Gender Equality
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities
- SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions

La Mochila y la Historia Del Perejil (Lo que llevamos en la mochila lesson):

In this lesson, I use Pear Deck to incorporate storytelling. While studying the Dominican Republic in LAS, I created this lesson to respond to George Floyd’s devastating death. I truly wanted to use it as an example to understand systemic racism in society. First, I created a connection using storytelling with visuals and a short script to keep the facts concise and unbiased.

Then, with the preamble of:

To understand what is happening, we need to go back in time and dig deep in that “mochila.” We had an open discussion using the Padlet Board to express our opinions, and we all unpacked our mochila (including myself!).

Vamos a desempacar la mochila...

Click: Padlet for an Open Discussion of the current events and the story read to you today.

Let’s unpack that knapsack and open up to a fair, non-judgemental discussion of race and racism here and in the world.
Later, I started defining what is white in our society, making a connection to historical facts before I connected them to the Story of the Perejil Massacre in the Dominican Republic in 1937 during Trujillo’s dictatorship.

La Masacre del Perejil - pg 5

Los militares de Trujillo mataran a los haitianos. El arma que usaban para matarlos era el machete. Para distinguir entre los negros dominicanos y los haitianos, los militares los forzaron a pronunciar la palabra “perejil”.

The Trujillo military killed the Haitians. The weapon they used to kill them was the machete. To distinguish between Dominican blacks and Haitians, the military forced them to pronounce the word “parsley.”

After reading and analyzing the story, I had students participate in a Pear Deck mini-assessment asking students to make personal connections and asking if they know any other political leaders who have executed similar atrocities.

Here I received tons of answers from students, from the Holocaust and Hitler to Russian abuses that forced their parents to come to the US. On the following slide, I asked them to find a common thread between the Perejil Story and the current events happening in the USA. Then I used an exciting Pear Deck slide to creatively dialog with different opinions.

And lastly, I asked them to conclude what we carry in our knapsack/mochila—-with the prompt: What conclusions do you draw from the information today? Here the students opened up about white privilege, their worries, concerns, and how to do the right thing. Most importantly, it made a connection to home, their lives, and culture.

Conclusion

As a Latina, Puerto Rican native, I went into the unknown when I started teaching it. Still, this very course opened up my eyes to so many inequities in the education system. Be courageous and challenge students with social justice. As language educators, we must teach culture to create equity amongst all. It is not the “sombrero” you use but what, who, and why the individual is wearing that sombrero. Truthful culture and social justice are connected: Without justice, there is no equity.

Work Cited


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The PD Culture Shift… Happening Now

by Ronie R. Webster and Timothy Chavez

Each summer teachers close up their classroom and many head out for their summer PD. Some travel to target language countries where they can practice the language, explore, and experience first hand the culture. Others sign up for college and university courses and others participate in workshops focusing either on language and/or pedagogy. Enter 2020 – PD looked exciting and many of us were already enrolled in programs or had our flights and travel arrangements made only to discover that PD as we knew it was not going to happen.

Some time in April, I, (Ronie) realized that PD everywhere was being cancelled including all of the MaFLA summer PD. I was concerned because I am a lifelong learner and a summer without PD was just not possible. You can imagine my excitement when I saw that the NFLC in conjunction with ACTFL, Startalk, and the five regionals CSTFL, NECTFL, PNCFL, SCOLT, and SWCOLT was going to offer a 3-day Virtual Summit. Hooray! There was some PD! I had just heard that my former colleague, Timothy Chavez, was also not going to participate in his summer program which was to bring him to Argentina, so I messaged him immediately to tell him about the Summit and within minutes we were both registered. Timothy is not only a former student of mine but he worked with me in Monson for 1.5 years. He now teaches in Andover but we have continued to work together and share ideas and materials. I guess prior to COVID-19 we were already social distancing in a sense. I knew this would be a fun experience even if it wasn't how we usually did PD. At least it was something. So we headed into the experience and wow, was I ever surprised. It exceeded my expectations.

My biggest desire as an educator is to learn constantly more and more until the day I (Timothy) am no longer an educator. Language acquisition research has become a huge passion of mine and has helped me a lot in the development of curricula, lesson plans, etc. However, there are some hurdles when trying to learn more. It's no secret that we teachers are not the richest people in the world; sometimes, when some of my favorite colleagues are hopping on planes to various conferences, I find myself discouraged if I am not able to attend because of financial restrictions. This virtual summit combatted the issue many of us have in not being able to afford the PD, the plane, the hotel, the food, and every other cost associated with traveling to attend in-person conferences. Social Justice education is becoming the biggest, most important aspect of World Language curricula, and I felt that the equal access to this summit was a form of social justice for teachers.

So let's look at the “culture of PD” from the viewpoint of the 3 Ps of ACTFL’s World Readiness Standards. How have the products, the practices and the perspectives changed—or better yet-shifted?

**Products**

The PD product was the same, high quality, but we got a giant package instead of just the regular size. It's kind of like when McDonald's used to ask you if you wanted to "super size" your meal. We got a “super sized” professional development experience, without any of those yucky foods, of course! We were fortunate to hear from experts from all over the country without the human limitations of only being able to be in one place at a time. We got it all with this summit because we were able to watch every single session--no more having to choose between multiple sessions that caught our attention! We also didn't have to leave great sessions five minutes early anymore to ensure that we wouldn't have to sit on the floor at our next session, or worse, be denied entry due to full capacity.

**Practices**

Along with our product becoming “super sized,” so did our conference practices. We didn't have to book flights or rent hotel rooms; we were able to stay at home and learn. We could sit, listen and take detailed notes, and back up and listen again if we missed something. We could even do other things while listening to sessions (I have a tweet of someone cooking while attending a session). I, Timothy, was even able to build a cool litter box for my kittens while projecting a session to my TV screen. We were not face-to-face but could interact and send questions to those doing the live stream sessions. The moderators also did an impressive job of making sure that those questions were brought to the presenters in ample time. Furthermore, we could also send questions via google docs to the presenters of the pre-recorded sessions. This way, even though the session wasn't live, we could still interact with the presenters and attendees.

We were able to maximize learning by watching multiple sessions that were released at the same time, but something
we often struggle with during in-person conferences is leaving. Sometimes, sessions are not what you expect. That's not to say that they are bad by any means, but the target audience is different or it doesn't meet our current professional goals. With a live summit, it was easy to just switch to a different session without worrying about making a scene or insulting the presenter.

The two of us very often team up when attending the same workshops, and this summit was no different. We were still able to send each other messages about what we were learning and the sessions we liked the most. It also added some accountability; online learning can often be difficult because we have to be self-motivated. Having a partner in crime helped me, Timothy, wake up early in the morning to get started and helped keep me inspired with all the new ideas flooding my brain. We continuously messaged each other with ideas and inspiration as we listened to each session.

When attending conferences in person, it's easy to feel a sense of community because there are other educators with similar struggles, successes, questions, etc. Online instruction/learning can easily be lacking in that sense of community. The combination of live sessions and recorded sessions, however, added to the comradery one often feels when attending in-person conferences. This virtual summit was unlike any other because even the pre-recorded sessions had their own release times; some sessions were released at 10:00 AM and some at 3:00 PM, for example. The live sessions allowed for live questions, and the release times limited the possibility of becoming overwhelmed. There were many sessions we wanted to attend, but having release times made it easier for us to manage our schedules. Even though we were watching alone, it felt like others were watching with us, and you could easily follow the hashtag #NFLCVirtualSummit and see what others were saying and thinking about the sessions!

**Perspectives**

As World Language educators, it is our obligation to show our students the benefit of getting to know the world, not just our own backyards. However, when it comes to our own education as teachers, we are often limited to our own backyards with what our districts can provide. In this case, we were not limited to hearing from just our school, regional, state and local presenters. We had the opportunity to hear from outstanding educators from around the country. The likelihood that we would have ever had the opportunity to attend a session from someone from Alaska was quite slim in the old paradigm of PD.

People often refer to Facebook as a “hive mind” when asking others for opinions/help. The access to educators around the country doing what they do best felt like a “hive mind” to us. Among the uncertainty in this world right now, this “hive mind” gave us the power to feel alive again as educators. We now have ideas for virtual, hybrid, and in-person classes. We now see that we are all in this together and need to stop trying to do it all on our own.
While waiting to hear whether they would be remote teachers during the upcoming school year, over 120 educators from MA and other Northeastern states were remote students in MaFLA’s first-ever Classroom Collaborative, which ran from July 6 through August 14.

In the spirit of collaboration, MaFLA Programming Coordinator Catherine Ritz and President Elect Beckie Rankin co-organized and co-hosted the six-week series through Google Classroom and Zoom. Differentiation, classroom community, 90% target language use, and the three modes of communication were the themes of the weekly modules.

While many presenters and participants acknowledged the irony of discussing pedagogical strategies for the year ahead when nobody knew what the year would look like, everyone was thoughtful, vulnerable, and open-minded. The chance to participate in a variety of learning experiences while navigating different platforms was an excellent way for teachers to put themselves in their students’ shoes prior to September.

“It was especially helpful to take on a student’s perspective as we participated in asynchronous tasks and synchronous virtual sessions, all while accessing materials and submitting work,” said Elizabeth Pruitt, a middle school French teacher in Belmont. “I’m able to approach an uncertain school year with additional teaching strategies that are applicable in a traditional classroom or a virtual one.”

Each week, participants watched videos prepared by two presenters, one with an elementary focus and one targeting a secondary audience. Teachers then chose a task to work on for the remainder of the week, such as creating a Bitmoji classroom, designing an interactive presentation with Nearpod, or crafting an interpersonal task for remote learning.

“I finally learned how to write better questions for interpretive tasks, something I’ve consistently struggled to do,” said Melrose High School French teacher Denise Wagstaff. “I found the Hess’s Cognitive Rigor Matrix that Greta Lundgaard presented to be an extremely helpful tool in understanding how to create questions that go beyond remembering details in the passage. I can’t wait to share this with my department!”

On Wednesdays, everyone gathered on Zoom for a Q&A session with the week’s presenters. Rebecca Blouwolff, Mike Travers, Meredith White, and Nathan Lutz were just a few of the educators featured in these engaging sessions, deftly responding to questions that were often tinged with uncertainty about the coming school year. The chat window was typically just as vibrant as the discussion itself as participants responded in real time to the presenters’ commentary, sharing their own experiences and resources or praising a particularly interesting idea. Week 5 participants, for example, loved Ying Jin’s suggestion for interpersonal speaking that each student receive a card with a question on one side and a rubric on the other side. As they pose their question to their partners and have discussions, they can give each peer feedback based on the rubric.

“It strikes me as genius in its transparency and simplicity,” one teacher wrote. “I love how much it simulates circulating at a party and engaging in brief conversations with a variety of people.”

It wasn’t just the presenters who sparked new ideas. Every Thursday, participants met in small groups to discuss the week’s theme. Each cohort’s conversation was moderated by a facilitator, such as myself, who served as a point of contact for participants throughout the week and gave feedback on their work products. Teachers were encouraged to raise lingering questions from the week, solicit advice from the group, and share the progress they were making on their tasks.

As cohorts had no more than ten or fifteen participants, everyone had an opportunity to receive individualized feedback and to have productive group conversations. I found that the members of my cohort each week consistently took risks, shared their personal experiences and their insecurities, and responded thoughtfully to each other’s ideas. During a time when we are forced to be more isolated than we might like, feeling much more hesitant about the year ahead than is normal, MaFLA’s decision to create a cooperative PD model resonated with participants.

“The topics for each week were so relevant and presented so thoroughly. I was impressed,” said Melissa Candon, who teaches Spanish at Longmeadow High School. “I liked being able to view the presenters’ videos and process them individually before our Zoom meetings. I feel that the first couple of weeks of school are, in a way, ready to go.”

Even if next summer sees a return to normalcy that permits large in-person gatherings, MaFLA members may clamor for another virtual, collaborative experience. Though we may have been separated physically, MaFLA’s Classroom Collaborative offered a meaningful, lasting sense of connection.
The first ever MaFLA Classroom Collaborative has afforded us the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues from across the state to share instructional practices, develop course materials, and develop meaningful relationships in a virtual setting using Google Classroom and Zoom. The presenters’ rich independent learning tasks, the weekly live question & answer forums with presenters, and our weekly cohort discussions provided us with several take-aways on how we can return to school, whether we do so remotely, face-to-face, or hybrid.

#1- Start with purposefully integrating Social Emotional Learning and creating an inclusive classroom community. During the first week of the MaFLA Classroom Collaborative, Haydee Taylor Arnold and Bárbara Barnett provided us with strategies on how to build a class culture, whether we teach virtually or in-person.

Haydee and Bárbara challenged us to think about how we can adapt the work we do with our learners face-to-face to ensure that all learners feel seen and accepted in a virtual or remote setting.

Haydee suggested creating a Bitmoji classroom to build community. Becky Stiles designed her own Bitmoji classroom during the course and plans to ask their students to create their own Bitmoji locker that they will share during a synchronous learning activity. Information about how to create a Bitmoji locker can be found here. Need a low tech solution for Bitmoji lockers? Students could just as easily draw their ideal locker or make a collage with pictures from a magazine or catalog. They could present that during a zoom meeting. Programs like Canva and Adobe Spark can also help students create these kinds of images.

Bárbara suggests another powerful SEL instructional practice that motivates learners to talk about who they are in the target language on day one of class. Students introduce themselves in the way that they would like and model how they want to be addressed, which would include the pronunciation of their name, their gender identity, and other aspects of their identity.

As part of the inclusive classroom, Laurie Moore believes that students need teachers to form social emotional support. They need to feel safe. To feel safe, students need to experience self-management, and what better way to self manage than to become more reflective and participate in “can-do” statements?

They can ask themselves, “What can I do?” so that they understand what they are learning and receive immediate satisfaction. In support of a relaxing environment, objectives also need to be repeated throughout a lesson. A teacher can often say, “Now, what are we learning today…? Why are we learning this?”

Although this may seem very basic and more appropriate for elementary learners, the presenters emphasized that strategies, like these, are beneficial for all levels of language learning, from novice to advanced. “All” students, especially now, need to feel safe, included, and engaged; only then will learning take place.

#2- We can meet the goal of 90% percent target language use if we support students with routines. Rebecca Blouwolff and Caleb Howard shared with us during week #2 how to teach remotely in the target language. Rebecca reminded us that routines will be EXTRA important this year. She shared practical strategies on training learners to use non-verbal cues. For example, many teachers use “4 corners” in the face-to-face classroom, but how can we do 4 corners remotely? Assign each corner a letter (ABCD) and have students hold up the ASL sign for that letter to indicate their preference. Or, have them hold up a card where they’ve written the letter. If routines are set up correctly they can also give students a safe (low risk) way to respond to input to demonstrate understanding (or a lack of).

Technology, such as Nearpod (www.nearpod.com), Textivate (www.textivate.com), Padlet, Google Slides, and the breakout room feature of Zoom, can strategically support learners when interpreting with an authentic text and interacting with peers. Caleb emphasized the importance of making target language input comprehensible for learners. To do so, he recommended the use of visual aids, such as images, gestures, and body language. Also, Caleb suggested being direct when speaking to learners by cutting out “the fluff” and using simpler, shorter, and more repetitive phrases. Both Rebecca and Caleb started with the interpretive mode and emphasized the role of repeating and working extensively with the text(s) as scaffolding for interpersonal and presentational tasks.

#3- Making learning accessible and rigorous through clear, purposeful instruction. Greta Lundgaard and Nathan Lutz showed us how we can use authentic texts in interpretive mode that are both accessible and rigorous for all students. Have you ever really thought about how students read and comprehend the target language? Laurie Moore recalled that Greta called this the messiest type of learning because it is difficult to observe since it takes place in one’s mind. As teachers, how can we see it and guide students to understand while maintaining “cognitive rigor”? Strategies, like “question ladders” (DOK Question Stems), in which students answer questions that correlate with low to higher order thinking skills on Bloom’s Taxonomy help students build skills before, during, and after reading, allowing students to do the “thinking” to gain deeper knowledge.

Nathan showed us how to capitalize on the content within an authentic text by designing multiple interpretive tasks with the same text. He showcased an array of tasks which guided learners from the recognition or identification level to the creation level. In addition, he affirmed the importance of asking personal questions to help students connect with the materials and understand the purpose of the learning. We recommend taking a look at his resource page on Nathan’s blog.

#4- Collegial collaboration is more important than ever during these uniquely challenging times. As a whole, the presenters shared a bounty of effective strategies, tools, tips, and practices that we can use to teach our respective languages in a face-to-face, remote, or hybrid setting. Mike Farkas and Heidi Olson concurred that one of the most powerful aspects of the
Pandemic Proof: Free Choice Reading
by Holly Markiewicz

Last year I implemented a free choice reading program in my level 3 Honors Spanish classes, but then the pandemic hit and I was unable to pivot free choice reading to a purely remote model under the teaching and learning guidelines in place last spring. Aside from the need to be able to make free choice reading pandemic proof, and continue this powerful proficiency based practice, I wanted to better understand the relationship between student choice and comprehension. I wanted to know if students understand what they choose to read and how well they understand it, and what impact this would have on their engagement in free choice reading. This summer I completed an action research project in order to investigate my questions, and because of COVID-19, I did it all through distance learning platforms.

The participants in the study were students from Weymouth High School, where I have taught for the last 10 years. It was open to any student in the high school who had passed Spanish 1. The study lasted 3 weeks and took place via remote learning practices. There were 3 participants and 2 finished the study completely. Because the study was limited in duration and number of participants the conclusions cannot be considered a trend. However, it was insightful, and has given me a new focus for the direction of this program. The participants were all three highly motivated students who self reported as loving to read in their L1, English, for pleasure. Two students had just completed Spanish 4 honors, and one had completed Spanish 1. The Spanish program at Weymouth goes through Spanish V honors or AP. The student in Spanish 1 did not complete the study.

The students completed pre- and post-surveys and a reading log with Google Forms, they chose books from a virtual library that I created with Google Slides, they met with me to discuss their books on Google Meet, and they accessed e-books on Fluency Matters that they had pre-viewed in the virtual library slideshow. The books on Fluency Matters are short, around 50 pages, and designed for language learners. Because of the unique and challenging circumstances of this project I was able to gain insight into my questions and troubleshoot some best practices for making free choice reading meaningful even during remote learning. Here is a brief summary of some of my takeaways. (Comprehension of a text does not necessarily equal reading fluency, students can be taught specific criteria to help them pick books that they can read fluently, students have their own motivation for reading such as learning new info, pleasure, or improving their Spanish).

In order for free choice reading to lead to gains in language proficiency, students need to understand what they are reading.

Classroom Collaborative Takeaways (conc.)

- collaboration was the weekly live Q&A sessions with the presenters and our weekly cohort Zoom discussions with fellow Massachusetts language teachers. As a language department, we felt supported and affirmed by our MaFLA colleagues and our facilitators as we had “real,” organic conversations around a multitude of topics that related to the challenges that we will inevitably face in September. The opportunities to work with other language teachers has reminded us of how crucial it is to connect with others to forge, rekindle, and maintain relationships, to share ideas, plan together, and even reflect on our challenges! We feel inspired to return to school renewed -- with new practices, new ideas, and new directions -- for building a class and departmental culture that honors each individual, each day.

- Regardless of what language we teach, together we can make synchronous and/ or asynchronous teaching a unifying, collaborative, and constructive experience for all students and colleagues.

- *The Team*
  - Mike Farkas, High School Spanish Teacher
  - Laurie Moore, Middle School Spanish Teacher
  - Heidi Olson, High School Spanish Teacher & PreK-12 Coordinator
  - Rebecca Stiles, High School French Teacher
  - Canton Public Schools

They also need to read books that they can read fairly fluently. Having choice in what they read gives them buy-in. The students in this study were self-identified readers in their L1. Buy-in wasn’t an issue, but even these students would have benefited from guidance in choosing books that were a balance of something interesting and something they could read fluently. This was due partly to students’ misconception that harder reading, where you look up a lot of words, is the only way for reading to help you improve Spanish. Additionally, students had varying motivations for why they wanted to read in Spanish for this study. By the end of the study, I gave students criteria to self-define their “just right” book. Something that balances the difficulty of the text with their interest in it. According to one participant, “A just right book needs to match your Spanish ability and will allow you to enjoy the book and not have to be confused every chapter and looking up multiple words in a paragraph. A just right book for myself has to keep me interested and wanting more each page, making me not want to put down the book.” This student read a total of 5 books during the study. While she enjoyed
everything she read, only 2 of the 5 met her criteria for a “just right” book.

This fall, Weymouth students will start school in remote learning. A by-product of my action research project is that I learned how to make the program pandemic proof. Many of the practices that I did in the classroom were easily replicated to virtual formats with Google Forms, and of all of these practices the most valuable was student-teacher conferences. The biggest challenge was finding virtual books. At the time of the study, virtual e-library subscriptions did not exist for World Language books. I had to purchase books per individual student request, buy them as e-courses, and ask students to ignore the comprehension activities. However, since the completion of this study there are already companies offering e-subscriptions. Fluency Matters has options in Spanish, French, and German. The main drawback to their e-library is that it is web based. Students need internet access to read.

Another option that launches in August 2020, is the E-Lit App. The app works with iphone or android, or any web browser, and students can download books to read offline. They have options in Spanish, French, German, and Japanese. As I look forward to this coming school year I am excited to engage students in a long term free choice reading program. Despite the challenges that this pandemic has created, I am confident that students will be able to meaningfully engage with texts to support their identity and growth as readers as well as their language acquisition and proficiency.
School districts find themselves in uncharted territory and facing a long list of challenges because of the Coronavirus pandemic. Student and staff safety, as well as engagement in learning, are paramount. Additionally, due to the loss of tax revenue for municipalities and states, cost-cutting measures are inevitable. Given that budget cutting is contentious in less challenging times, deciding what to cut at this pivotal juncture is a real conundrum for administrators. When budgets tighten, World Language has always been a vulnerable discipline; this is no different now. I think eliminating or reducing K-12 World Language programs now would be counterproductive. It would dilute students’ preparedness to contribute to and succeed in a world that is united by COVID-19 and divided by economic and culture wars.

In an ideal world, or even in one sans pandemic, language study would be a central part of the K-12 curriculum. Too often, however, it is considered expendable. Now is the time to acknowledge and capitalize on the impact that mastering a second language has on students’ academic achievement and developing their global mindset. Research-based data supports keeping languages off the chopping block. In addition to strengthening cognitive functions, academic achievement, and enhanced student learning across curricula, languages build bridges that connect people and create global understanding. This understanding could be the potent vaccine needed to unite countries to fight against COVID-19 and other future global. In a few months, COVID-19 obliterated geographic divides, spreading across nations as if it were one large Petri dish. It swiftly and stealthily achieved its kind of globalization.

UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) is among many sources that state that bilingualism supports intercultural and multicultural education. In its position paper UNESCO Guidelines on Intercultural Education, it states: “Language is one of the most universal and diverse forms of human cultural expression, and perhaps even the most essential one. It is at the heart of issues of identity, memory, and transmission of knowledge.” It adds: “Linguistic competencies are fundamental for the empowerment of the individuals in democratic and plural societies, ... and encourage openness to cultural exchange.”

Another affirmation comes from Dr. Wade Davis, a bestselling author, and anthropologist. In Importance of Language, he states: “Every language is a watershed of thought, an ecosystem of social, spiritual, psychological, and ecological possibility.” Knowing a language leads to embracing cultural diversity.

There is abundant research that maintains how languages positively impact higher academic achievement, enhance problem-solving skills, creativity, and flexible thinking. In the NYT article by Claudia Dreyfus, The Bilingual Advantage, cognitive neuroscientist Ellen Bialystok states: “Until about the 1960s, the conventional wisdom was that bilingualism was a disadvantage. Some of this was xenophobia. Thanks to science, we now know that the opposite is true.”

Victorian Marian, Ph.D., and Anthony Shook, in their work The Cognitive Benefits of Being Bilingual, offer the following findings: “The cognitive, neural, and social advantages observed in bilingual people highlight the need to consider how bilingualism shapes the activity and the architecture of the brain, ... especially since the majority of speakers in the world experience life through more than one language.”

At this time of anxiety and uncertainty, the need to equip students with a second language is more crucial than ever; it provides them with a powerful compass for navigating our interdependent and interconnected 21st-century world. Language classrooms have always been where students realize they can make connections across geographic and geoeconomic divides. Moreover, being immersed in linguistic and cultural exchanges empowers students to become empathetic leaders, effective communicators, and champions of diversity.

Besides benefiting individuals, bilingualism helps our economy and national security. In The Contributions of Language to the Economic Interests of the United States, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences determines: “In addition to the direct impact of language on the economy, as measured by the outputs and employment of the language enterprise, and the indirect leverage that the language enterprise has on the economy (and global security) the human capital of language and culture skills is increasingly important to the broader economy.”

Other endorments for world languages come from former Central Intelligence Agency Director Leon E. Panetta: CIA Director Calls for a National Commitment to Language Proficiency at Foreign Language Summit. “Language skills are vital to success in an interconnected world, and they are fundamental to US competitiveness and security.” And later, Americans are Losing Out Because so Few Speak a Second Language.

The Coronavirus highlighted that being interconnected globally is a reality, not an ideological choice. Now more than ever, it is imperative to raise awareness of need for language study. Attaining a more profound knowledge of languages and cultures fosters the worldwide collaboration necessary to minimize the spread of COVID-19 and find a vaccine. Language learning is the pivotal medium to accomplish global understanding and communication; the bridges it builds can traverse all borders.

Iolanda Volpe, an English language learner, recently retired after twenty-five years of teaching Spanish and being World Language Department Chair at the high school level.
Rachel Hess Wachman just graduated from Sharon High School in Sharon, MA. She has been learning French for eight years and has studied abroad in both France and Senegal. She is delighted to be attending Wesleyan University in the fall, where she will continue studying French, as well as English with a concentration in Creative Writing. Her dedication to social justice has inspired her to get involved with numerous organizations to promote equality and empowerment, and her passion for words has led her to never stray far from her pen. Rachel intends to travel the world, write novels, and use her voice to help make the world a better place.

Arianna Ruhoy is a resident of Boston and will be starting her senior year this September at the Woodward School in Quincy. She has been studying languages since the age of 10 and greatly values the opportunities and experiences that arise by knowing another language.

Arianna nurtured her love for language through cultural exchange and language immersion; she lived with a family in Ecuador for a month when she was twelve and when she was sixteen, she was an exchange student at the Tokyo Jogakkan School. She made close friendships, learned about other cultures, was able to share her culture with others and became a member of loving families from across the globe. Arianna feels that she was able to make stronger and lasting cultural connections because she was able to engage in the language of her hosts.

Arianna has studied Spanish and French at the Woodward School and Japanese at the Showa Boston Institute for Language and Culture. She also takes classes with the French Cultural Center of Boston and has taken ASL classes through local programs. Arianna's other interests include drawing, painting and writing. She plans to further her studies of Romance and Asian languages during college.
**Matt Tibbitts** is a senior at Ludlow High School and is currently enrolled in AP Spanish. He serves as the Vice-President of the senior class, President of the Student Council, President of the National Honor Society, and President of the Tri-M Music Honor Society.

Matt is the student member of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education where he represents 954,000 K-12 students and has spoken at many national education conferences and was recently published in a national educational policy journal.

Additionally, he has the pleasure to serve on the Hampden County District Attorney’s Office Youth Advisory Board and is chair of the Massachusetts State Student Advisory Council.

In his spare time, Matt enjoys playing in his high school’s drumline where he plays the snare drum. He has been playing various forms of percussion for over eight years and has been selected as an all district percussionist for the past four years.

In the fall, Matt will attend Harvard University to pursue a bachelors of arts with a concentration in government. He one day hopes to one day obtain a law degree and then work as a Foreign Service Officer for the United States Department of State learning many more languages.

My name is **Maria “Christie Louis.”** In the fall, I will be attending Boston College where I hope to major in Biology in the Morrisey School of Arts and Sciences, as well as pursue a minor in Political Science. It is my greatest hope not only to study French during my college career but also to use my knowledge of the language and culture to take part in international humanities research and relations in the future.
MaFLA New Teacher Commendations

Heather Sweeney
Needham High School
Spanish

Konstanze Schiller
North Andover High School
German and French

Chang Liu
Wayland High School
Mandarin
Cemanahuac/MaFLA Award Winner
Emily Kammerer
Andrews Middle School
Medford

Did you miss the MaFLA Spring Webinars?
Do you want to review what you heard in one of the Spring Webinars?

They are still available for you, along with the Presenters’ slides.

You will find them here on the MaFLA Website
MaFLA Student Awards

**Attleboro High School**, Peter Pereira, Teacher – Awards to Nat Rivet (ASL), Veronica Esteban (SP), Kristina Gonzalez (LEAD)

**Bishop Fenwick High School**, Diane Eromin, Teacher – Awards to Oceane Goriou (FR), Abigail Carr (SP), Ryan Stolarz (LEAD)

**Chelmsford High School**, Jessica Nollet, Teacher – Awards to Kevin Hamilton (SP), Banmai Huynh (FR)

**Cohasset High School**, Jeff Kotter, Teacher – Award to Carly Ford (FR & SP)

**Concord-Carlisle High School**, Caitlin Smith, Teacher – Awards to Cleo Baldoumas (FR), Aarohi Goel (LAT), Elsa Couvillon (CH), Alyssa Stainton (SP), Teresa Wood (LEAD)

**Duxbury High School**, Diane Mehegan, Teacher – Awards to Victoria Zolla (ASL), Ella McKenzie (SP), Margaret Strauss (LAT), Katherine Cully (FR) Rebecca DiVirgilio (MANDARIN), Fiona Shortt (LEAD)

**Falmouth High School**, Pat DiPillo, Teacher – Awards to Siobhan Carignan (LAT), Kaitlynn McCay (SP), Molly LeBrun (FR), Lilia Miranda (LEAD)

**Fontbonne Academy**, Anke Herbert, Teacher – Awards to Carolyn Tuite (SP), Christie Louis (FR), Grace Duncan (LAT), Clarissa Garzon (LEAD)

**Foxborough High School**, Debra Grant, Teacher – Awards to Yadhirys Beato (FR), Grace Groves (LEAD)

**Littleton High School**, Elizabeth Kelley, Teacher – Awards to Taryn Evans (FR), Hallie Cordingley (LAT), Madison Feudo (LEAD)

**Malden High School**, Mar Marjomaa, Teacher - Awards to Rasmee Ky (SP), Jinpeng Chen (LAT), Gerard Mauriello (IT), Jacky Luong (FR), Angelina Schorr (LEAD)

**Matignon High School**, Paula Gaffey, Teacher – Awards to Molly Hayes (FR), Alyssa Martello (SP), Lily O’Connell (LEAD)

**Melrose Public Schools**, Denise Wagstaff, Teacher – Awards to Elisabeth Schwarz (FR), Lillian Sullivan (IT), Alessia Pari-di-Monriva (GER), Amber Chow (SP), Lydia Mroz (LAT)

**Mount Greylock Regional High School**, Amy Kirby, Teacher - Awards to Ryan Narey (SP), Charlotte Rauscher (LAT), Julia Donati (LEAD)

**North Reading**, Amy St. Arnaud, Teacher – Awards to Elizabeth Barrett (SP), Hannah Lord (FR), Matt McCotty (LEAD)

**Revere High School**, Albert Mogavero, Teacher – Awards to Aymen Amine Chahlaouy (FR), Jackeline Kayla Armetta (IT), Lucas Barbosa (SP)

**The Bromfield School/Harvard Public Schools**, Lisa Terrio, Teacher – Awards to Emmalyn Mirarchi (FR), Elizabeth Toll -(SP)

**Triton High School**, Regina Symonds, Teacher – Awards to Jamison Bell (FR), Eric Buczala (SP), Adrianna Deeb (LEAD)

**Tyngsborough High School**, Sarah Silva, , Teacher – Award to Adhitii Ambati (SP)

**Wakefield High School**, Ruben Reinoso, Teacher – Awards to Cailyn Davies (SP), Alexander Ross ( IT), Colin Leary (LAT), Enaile Da Silva Baessa (LEAD)

**Whitinsville Christian School**, Karen Exoo, Teacher – Award to Nicole Spiller (SP)

**Winchester High School**, Anna Tirone, Teacher – Awards to Zijian Niu (LAT), Shreyya Nair (IT), Katherine Yu (SP), Darya Guryanova (FR), Cate Kneebone (LEAD)
MaFLA Poster Contest Winners

The results of the MaFLA’s Annual Poster Contest are as follows:

**Middle School Division Winner**
Brandon Nguyen
Wood Hill Middle School, grade 7 (French)
Teacher: Zoe Cabaret Salameh

**Poster of the Year**
Michelle Pathrose
Acton-Boxborough Regional High School, grade 11 French, IV Honors
Teacher: Cathy Foster

**Elementary Division Winner**
Sophie Sichani,
Field School, grade 4 (Spanish)
Teachers: Kimberlee Kasanov and Diana Tintle

Additionally, the following students earned Honorable Mentions:

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<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>School/Grade</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
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<tr>
<td>Aimi Lee</td>
<td>Field School, gr. 4</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Kimberlee Kasanov</td>
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<tr>
<td>Millie Clark</td>
<td>Country School, gr. 2</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Kimberlee Kasanov</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elise Sichani</td>
<td>Country School, gr. 1</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>K. Kasanov &amp; Mrs. Mariano</td>
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<td>Carolyn Mountz</td>
<td>Nashoba Brooks, gr. 4</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Amy Riddle</td>
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<td>Maura Shapiro</td>
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<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Amy Riddle</td>
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<td>Edward Tang</td>
<td>Wood Hill MS, gr. 7</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Maria Hernández</td>
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<td>Zoe Zeng</td>
<td>Wood Hill MS, gr. 7</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Norma Villareal</td>
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<td>Carson Boyer</td>
<td>Wayland MS, gr. 8</td>
<td>Mandarin</td>
<td>K. Fuentes &amp; Dr. Chang</td>
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<td>Samantha Lee</td>
<td>Wayland MS, gr. 7</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Jada Williams &amp; Dr. Chang</td>
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<td>Charlotte Wong</td>
<td>Wayland MS, gr. 8</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Leigh Netcoh</td>
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<td>Olivia Tun</td>
<td>Acton-Boxborough RHS, gr. 10</td>
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<td>Carrie DeBlois Mello</td>
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<td>Acton-Boxborough RHS, gr. 11</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
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<td>Madison Hill</td>
<td>Agawam HS, gr. 10</td>
<td>French 3</td>
<td>Antoinette Delore</td>
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<td>Virginia Futrell</td>
<td>Agawam HS, gr. 11</td>
<td>French 2</td>
<td>Antoinette Delore</td>
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**Celebrating Maryann Brady’s Legacy**

by Madelyn Gonnerman Torchin

Celebrating Maryann Brady’s legacy focuses on her many contributions to our organization, our profession, and the world.

As an outstanding teacher, adjunct, officer, and friend, she will live on in our hearts and memories. Beyond this, Maryann was like a sister and more to me. Remember that we had all those hours together at the registration desk and over the phone with the myriad details of group rates, discounts, and refunds!

Ever a fashionista, Maryann always grabbed a selfie of our outfits to send home. We often remarked on how our daughters shared the same name, even to spelling Kathryn with a K and an ryn. And sharing our love of books kept us reading and texting until late into the night!

Maryann was our rock and a gentle, loving soul. MaFLA and all of us will miss her kind, sanguine ways and her deep commitment to our profession and mission.

We appreciate her spontaneity and ability to live in the present.

Now we must remember to be in the moment and share our love. She did.

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**Send YOUR contribution to the next issue to:**

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