Happy Back to Classes and the New Academic Year! I’m sure we are all anxious to see how the year unfolds and what new challenges it will bring. One thing we know is that we have new World Language Standards and DESE has offered districts grant monies to provide training. We all will need to be aware of Social Justice, Social-Emotional Learning and Cultural Proficiency as newer standards and practices. I am here to tell you that MaFLA is preparing to meet your needs in that regard with a top-notch Fall Conference: Creating Cross-Cultural Connections with a lineup of outstanding presenters!

To review . . .

Among the essential competencies that students must have are foreign language proficiencies and a deep understanding of other cultures, along with a global perspective and sense of global citizenship. Students also need to be aware that societal issues are often global in scope. Global citizens understand and appreciate the interconnectedness and interdependence of people, and that they need to respect and protect cultural diversity.

That said, this conference promises to promote these competencies. There are 2- and 3-hour workshops, Simu-live sessions, pre-recorded Deep Dive sessions as well as 15-minute Bite Size recorded sessions. So, let’s take a look at the workshop sessions and see what they are all about. But first, a bit about our opening and closing keynotes.

David Bong, CEO of Avant Assessment, will present the opening keynote. In his words, ‘Learning a new language and embarrassing yourself in the process can be scary. And we all know that experiencing an unknown and different culture can be terrifying. We all fear making a mistake, or revealing ourselves, or interacting with others who are different from ourselves.”

Manuela Wagner, Professor at the University of Connecticut, closes the conference addressing, “Our interconnected world with its complex problems requires students to engage in successful intercultural dialogue. The global health crisis related to COVID-19 has underlined the need for collaboration at the global level. Her keynote will discuss how we can teach WL for Intercultural Citizenship.”

The conference opens with two workshops on Thursday, followed by the Opening Keynote, two more workshops on Friday, four on Saturday and two on Sunday, followed by the closing keynote.

Workshop sessions include . . .

In the category of Social Justice and Equity, we have MaFLA Board member Bárbara Barnett and her topic: Where Are You Really From? How Teacher’s Identity and Biases Paint the Learning Experiences of Students. Oftentimes this leads to alienation and microaggressions although asked innocently.

Then there’s Intercultural Citizenship in Practice from Manuela Wagner, UConn, showing teachers how to modify a unit on intercultural citizenship in order to help students to solve real world problems.

Creating Equitable Classrooms While Teaching Intercultural Competence by Dorie Conlon Perugini of the Glastonbury Public Schools combines both Intercultural Competence and Social Justice to create equitable classrooms. She will help us enhance our units and evaluate our resources.

Teaching Languages Younger: Intercultural Projects for Elementary School Foreign Language Teachers, presented by Karen Sasky of NNELL is all about incorporating intercultural projects into the elementary classroom.

Playing MatchMaker: Grammar and Your Units by MaFLA’s own Mike Travers and Let’s Give Them Something to Talk About by Katrina Griffin, 2017 ACTFL Teacher of the Year, speak for themselves.

We will also have some social time on Friday evening, Oct 22, with a cooking demonstration via Zoom on making crêpes, and you might enjoy the yoga class on Saturday morning.

And so much more! Those are just some highlights to whet your interest, get you motivated and start you thinking about how to incorporate the new standards into your curricula. A while back I invited everyone to come join us by submitting a presentation. So many did! Now I am inviting you to sign up and be a part of the fun and learning that MaFLA’s 2021 Fall Conference is all about! See you in October!

Pat DiPillo,
MaFLA 2021 Conference Chair
## Officers

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## Coordinators

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<td>DEBRA HEATON</td>
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<td>RONIE R. WEBSTER</td>
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<td>KIM TALBOT</td>
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<td>NICOLE SHERF</td>
<td>Salem State University</td>
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<td>TIM EAGAN</td>
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<td>CARLOS-LUIS BROWN</td>
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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

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

### Retired memberships:
- $25.00 per year

### Student memberships:
- $15.00 per year

For more info and/or a membership application packet, contact:

Debra Heaton  
membership@mafla.org

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

## The MaFLA Newsletter

The MaFLA Newsletter is the official publication of the Massachusetts Foreign Language Association. It is published three times per year - Winter, Spring, and Back To School. 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:**
- Back to School - August 5
- Spring - March 5
- Winter - Jan. 5

### MaFLA Membership!

Click [here](#) to renew.  
Click [here](#) to join.
ChinHuei is a teacher of Mandarin Chinese at Shrewsbury High School. I have had the pleasure of working with her on the MaFLA Board and on various committees. She is very dedicated to her teaching and always working to inspire and lead others. She was recommended as Educator in the Spotlight by Sheng-Chu Lu. The students she teaches range from Chinese II to AP Chinese and her students’ proficiency rates span from Novice Mid to Intermediate High/Advanced Low. Ronie R. Webster

MAFLA: Tell us a little about yourself.

ChinHuei: I came to the US in 1991 with my husband as a graduate student. I had originally planned to continue the study of history for a doctoral degree. I had not thought of becoming a public school teacher in the US at that time. What led me to teaching was a teaching opportunity at a weekend Chinese school in Westborough, MA in 2002 as a way of helping my daughter learn Chinese language and culture and helping the community. Four years later, I attended an AP Chinese workshop and formally started the journey of my teaching career. I started teaching Chinese at Sherwood Middle School in Shrewsbury in 2009 and have continued teaching since then. When I’m not teaching, I enjoy cooking, painting, photography, Chinese calligraphy and traveling.

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?

ChinHuei: I used to travel between two school buildings for many years. The commuting time afforded me to reflect on how to teach effectively within the time constraint. Organizational skill comes to my mind first when I think about teaching all grades and levels in one day. With multiple lesson plans and school related responsibilities, I have to keep on top of everything in order to complete my tasks in a timely and effective manner. Secondly, I need to be patient and empathetic. Every student is unique. My students come from different families, cultural backgrounds and environments. Being able to listen to each one of them and assist them in the ways they need is something I try to do in my work. Thirdly, I try to be as reflective as I can. Practicing reflection daily helps me do a better job in my role at school as well as in everyday life. I know there is always room for improvement if I consciously pay attention to things as small as a homework assignment or as big as redesigning a new unit. Lastly, having a mindset of flexibility and adaptability is a key component of my teaching. Change is the new normal now. Becoming a lifelong learner is not only for all students but also for all teachers to incorporate into their career.

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

ChinHuei: The part that I enjoy the most everyday about being a teacher is to see my students grow as young adults and advance in their language ability. Being the only Chinese teacher at my school, I have the opportunity to teach the same students several years in a row, from the most basic pronunciation/tones to the AP course. I have witnessed amazing changes and growth over the years. When students sent me notecards and told me that they were able to use the skills they learned in real-life situations, it always touched my heart and reassured me that my time and efforts were spent most meaningfully.

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.

ChinHuei: The proficiency movement has changed the focus of instruction and assessment in the classroom since the beginning of the 21st century. Under the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines, students are not merely learning about the language, but rather, demonstrating what they can do with the language learned. I have been following the proficiency movement for a few years now and have experienced ups and downs through the process. Even though there are bumps, I truly believe that this is the right direction to guide students forward so that they are able to use the language in real life contexts - the ultimate goal of learning a second language.

MaFLA: So then what would be your advice to another teacher making the transition to proficiency-based teaching?
ChinHuei: Based on my students' feedback, almost all of them prefer the proficiency-based instruction to the former textbook-based method. However, not totally relying on the textbook and building an entire curriculum anew is a herculean task, it does not happen overnight. My advice is to start designing a unit at a time, and collaborate with colleagues in or outside your district, take baby steps while gathering support even from a social network. These steps will help the transition. We need to tell ourselves that there are many teachers who are at the same stage as we are in transiting to proficiency-based teaching. Remember, even a small unit plan is an opportunity that would make your efforts visible at the continuous improvement toward proficiency.

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

ChinHuei: My students enjoy celebrating their birthdays. The ritual is that the birthday star is interviewed by the rest of the students, which incidentally serves as a spontaneous oral assessment. Students also enjoy watching Chinese TV programs and being introduced to the life of typical Chinese students in China or Taiwan. They enjoy Chinese art and writing Chinese calligraphy as well. Right before the pandemic, I was planning to have a cooking class in the school kitchen, but obviously, it did not take place. The trip to Beijing has always been something my students look forward to, unfortunately, it did not take place either.

MaFLA: What do you do to motivate students?

ChinHuei: I believe that if we want to truly motivate our students, we have to build a safe community for them. One of my students once said, “Many teachers are able to give a fun lesson, but not all teachers can foster a safe learning environment.”

I often encourage my students to take risks. Being courageous to make mistakes helps students progress in learning a new language. If a student doesn’t want to make mistakes, he/she then forsakes the opportunity to use the language. I also promote the growth mindset in my classroom so that students can face new challenges and struggles and be empowered and ready to advance towards academic success.

MaFLA: You have been an active member of MaFLA. How has your membership inspired your teaching?

ChinHuei: My MaFLA membership has made me a member of a local professional family, in which I have friends to share daily struggles, joys, tears and accomplishments, outside my school and district. It has also offered me opportunities to learn from a diverse field beyond the Chinese teaching community and has inspired me to try new ideas and practices as well as to actively share my experiences with others.

MaFLA: Last March, teachers found themselves all of a sudden teaching virtually. What techniques or strategies worked well for you in the virtual classroom?

ChinHuei: Teaching virtually is not easy as we all know by now. One thing I remind myself is to keep the learning goals clear and visible to students. They serve as a compass with which to guide students through the learning process. One other thing is to make communication open to students and their families.
Building Community and Relationships - a perfect theme as we start a new school year. This fall I begin my 26th year as a teacher and going back to school this September feels like no other. On top of the normal feelings of excitement and anticipation mixed with a bit of anxiety, so many thoughts swirl around in my mind. When I think of the 21/22 school year I find myself feeling full of hope one moment and the next reminding myself that we still face an unknown future.

Every school year offers the chance for us to set new goals. We develop professional goals and student learning goals that incorporate new strategies and ideas we gained over the summer and we guide our students in setting their proficiency goals. This year, I will be adding the goal of building community and relationships among my colleagues and students. For me this means making a conscious effort to set aside time regularly to have conversations, to ask questions, and to listen carefully. After making it through more than a year of teaching in remote and then hybrid environments, we are all hungry to be together again collaborating, discussing, laughing and learning in person. Relationships with family, friends, colleagues, and students are not going to be quite the same as they used to be. We’ve all made it through an exceptional time. Much of the recent professional learning has focused on the importance of considering the social-emotional needs in our students and in ourselves. The advice to be gentle with our students and with ourselves and to focus on the essential is still appropriate as we make our way through this year.

What are you excited about for the new school year? My district will finally start offering the Seal of Biliteracy this year! Members of our department worked this summer on a curriculum review and redesign project. This multi-year initiative involves creating language neutral thematic units with a proficiency-based approach. We at MaFLA would love to hear what you’re excited about. Please feel free to email me at jeannemafla@gmail.com to share how your 21/22 school year is going.

I look forward to seeing you virtually at the annual conference and in person in 2022!

Jeanne O’Hearn

Want to learn more about Community? Check out this recent ASCD publication.

Back to School
The Star Student Interview is a powerful comprehensible input-driven activity that engages and builds connections with your students. It also sparks authentic and organic conversation in the target language. We can do this activity any day of the year, and at any time. This activity should be in the toolbox of any teacher.

I’m not sure who came out with the original idea of the Star Student Interview but I learned it from Bryce Hedstrom. These are the three main reasons I love this activity:

A. It’s a student center activity and aligns with the asset-based approach. I learned about the asset-based approach from Tan Huynh in his blog Empowering ELLs. This approach highlights the importance of understanding that our students come to our class with incredible assets. They have talents, interests, and experiences that can enrich our classes but we need to discover them. The Star Student Interview helps us discover those assets that our students bring to our classes.

B. It provides compelling and comprehensible input. When we ask comprehensible questions to our students related to their lives, we are just creating tons of input that is relevant to them because it is all about them. It also brings a lot of organic and authentic conversations that we can keep in the target language.

C. It builds community. The Star Student interview is not only about the star student. When you involve the class, you start finding similarities among your students and with us as teachers. We realize that we have a lot in common and we develop true relationships.

Get ready!

However, the Star Student interview requires some prep. These are my steps to get ready for this activity.

1. Prepare a set of questions to ask your star student. Depending on the level of your classes, think about questions that can be answered using one or two words. For novice levels, think about questions that can be answered with a proper noun!

2. Add translations and visuals to make each question comprehensible to any student in your class. Staying comprehensible is essential.

3. Provide sentence starters and helpful vocabulary so students can answer the questions in the target language.

I have created some basic questions for the beginning of the year. I also have created some sets of questions for specific months or seasons. The December one includes not only tons of questions but input-based assessments and structure output activities for novice and intermediate learners.

Making it happen in your class!

Once you have the set of questions,
you need to do the activity in class. These are my steps to complete the interview:

➡ Ask for a volunteer in class. You'll always have a student or a couple of students who want to participate. Once this activity is popular in your class, most of them will love to participate.

➡ Bring the student to the front of the class. If you're virtual, ask your start student to use the mic and greet the class.

➡ Ask each question to the student making sure that she or he understands the question. Depending on the student, you may want to prompt the answer. For example, you can say in the target language:

How old are you? Fourteen? Yes or no?

Prompting answers will help you stay in the target language and make your student feel safe and comfortable.

➡ Make the class part of the conversation. For some questions, stop and ask the class. You can say: Who is fifteen in this class? What do you prefer, turkey or ham?

➡ Keep it short and make it even shorter if you see your star student is uncomfortable or the class is not fully invested. Sometimes our students are not ready for this activity and we need to recognize and honor that. Let it go. Keep it short and move on. Maybe you can do it next week.

What’s next?

Write it down! I learned about Write and Discuss a few years ago from Mike Peto and since then I have used this strategy after any oral input activity in my class, and the star student interview is not different. Once we finish our interview, we, as a class, write a paragraph about our star student. I asked questions to my class and they shared what they remembered. Those texts become gold in my class and I can create tons of reading activities with them.

I hope you are sold, and you're ready to start doing these interviews with your classes too. Let me know.

You can contact the author Claudia Elliott at Growing with Proficiency.

https://growingwithproficiency.com/how-can-we-build-strong-relationships-with-our-students-while-providing-compelling-and-comprehensible-input/

Reprinted with permission from Claudia Elliott, Growing with Proficiency.

Building Relationships
by Claudia Elliott

Classroom Collaborative

One of John Dewey's most widely quoted commentaries is "If we teach today's students as we taught yesterday's, we rob them of tomorrow." With a year-long consistent change of instruction modes and interrupted learning, one of my professional goals for this summer was to learn the best-practice approaches to meet the needs of all learners when I welcome them back to school this fall. In addition, it was very difficult to find time to collaborate with colleagues when we were teaching in different modes. So I hoped to find a professional learning community where teachers could support each other, exchange ideas, and improve their practice to address diverse student needs.

The 2021 MaFLA Classroom Collaborative has met and exceeded all my expectations. For each week of this two-week long program, I watched two videos prepared by the national presenters about the high-leverage differentiation strategies, and then another two zoom videos, including one Q and A session, and one group discussion. I was also assigned one follow-up task to work on and received feedback from the course facilitator by the end of each week. The program structure was similar to 'flipping the classroom': course materials were introduced first in an asynchronous video and classroom time was reserved for class discussion over the zoom. I could watch all the videos at my own pace and view the lectures anytime and anywhere, even during my travelling. Upon the completion of this program, I felt inspired, recharged and empowered with effective classroom practices and strategies for my students with different points of entry: flexible grouping, respectful tasks, ongoing assessment, etc. I can't wait to use what I learned to engage and prepare my students for a successful year. And I can't wait to come back to MaFLA Classroom Collaborative next year. Submitted by Wan Wang
Welcome BACK! I hope that the school year has started on a positive note after a restful and relaxing summer. For me this was probably one of the strangest summers I have ever had. Early on we discovered that getting parts and other necessities was almost impossible. We did no boating as we spent the entire summer awaiting new gears for our motor. Oh and we are on a list to possibly get a new refrigerator to replace the one that started to fail in July. We may have it by January. We were lucky to find someone to temporarily repair ours. Once again, summer storms took down trees in our backyard. We still have a few of the ten that came down last summer during a very strong wind storm and this summer we added another seven to count of downed trees. We cannot complain however, because nothing was damaged while a neighbor ended up with a tree in her bedroom. Scary. Although we found it frustrating, we kept a positive attitude and completed numerous small projects around the house. That feels good.

Putting this issue of the MaFLA Newsletter together was exciting. We received numerous articles on the Theme: Community. Reading through these articles reminded me of so many pertinent and important things we need to keep in mind as professionals. Helping students lower that affective filter, creating fun so that students feel part of a group, integrating cooperative learning groupings so that students have the opportunity to practice in smaller groups rather than the entire class, getting to know the students and finally welcoming and supporting new as well as veteran colleagues. Thanks to all who contributed.

In addition to our theme-focused articles, we have some great updates such as Advocacy and an update on World Language Programming in Massachusetts. Other exciting articles submitted came from three graduate students in programs at Salem State University. It is so refreshing to see these young professionals already sharing ideas and research with the profession.

Our article on Tech Tips is extremely detailed and will help all master these tech tools. Our Educator in the Spotlight features ChinHuei Yeh who teaches Mandarin at Shrewsbury High School ChinHuei is not only a colleague but also a friend and a constant inspiration to me. It was a delight to read her responses to our questions.

We end this edition with the winners of the various MaFLA contests from 2021. MaFLA congratulates all winners.

Enjoy this issue of your MaFLA Newsletter. Wishing all a successful and wonderful academic year. Take care of yourselves and stay safe!

I WOULD LIKE TO EXTEND A BIG Thank You! to the proofreaders of the MaFLA Newsletter

Cherie Baggs Madelyn Gonnerman Torchin Nicole Sherf

Without your help and support, this high-quality Newsletter would not be possible.

Ronie R. Webster
What I have learned most of all is that this new focus requires collaboration with your department. There is no way to develop proficiency over time in programming if all are not working together to make this happen.

And, just as departments need to work together, the discipline as a whole is working together to share resources and grow together on Twitter, Pinterest, blogs, conferences, podcasts, journals... It is thrilling to experience the generosity of those who are leading the way in this journey to proficiency-oriented programming.

– Nicole Sherf

Even though most districts provide induction and mentoring programs, and mentors for new teachers, it is crucial that veteran educators seek them out, connect with them and make them feel welcome in their community. All new educators benefit from compassionate professionals who can point out the positive and enjoyable aspects of their work and not dwell on the negative ones. Having such allies helps the new teachers thrive and grow faster into effective practitioners.

– Iolanda Volpe

Lowering the affective filter by creating a safe environment for students has a positive effect for students learning L2. Students with integrative motivation, positive self-confidence, and low test anxiety are more receptive to the input, are more willing to participate, and experience greater success than students with a higher affective filter.

– Marcel LaVergne

It became evident to me that I needed – among other things – to incorporate a variety of games that focused on a specific language knowledge and/or skill in my classes, and that I needed to do so in a repetitive manner. It struck me that there was this element of predictability - despite the variation - that needed to be nurtured and continued in order for the class community feeling to thrive.

– Sarab Al Ani
What an amazing time to be a World Language Teacher in Massachusetts! We have a Curriculum Specialist at DESE overseeing implementation of our new Seal of Biliteracy and our even newer Framework. Our Framework was written to emphasize the need to focus on proficiency development over programming. Nationally, we have a variety of new resources and publications to support proficiency focus in teaching, assessment and programming, not the least of which are affordable and external proficiency tests for use in K through 12 to monitor progress of students to proficiency targets and to celebrate those students when they reach high levels and earn the Seal of Biliteracy.

As the program coordinator of the Masters of Arts in Teaching Spanish at Salem State University and the Methods instructor and student teaching supervisor, every year I experience the joy of discovery by my students of the supports and resources to implement a proficiency-oriented focus to teaching and programming. What I have learned most of all is that this new focus requires collaboration with your department. There is no way to develop proficiency over time in programming if all are not working together to make this happen. The community that we create in our Methods class extends to connections and supports for this departmental work. And, just as departments need to work together, the discipline as a whole is working together to share resources and grow together on Twitter, Pinterest, blogs, conferences, podcasts, journals... It is thrilling to experience the generosity of those who are leading the way in this journey to proficiency-oriented programming.

Just as world language teachers are enjoying the transformative nature of our discipline, our new Framework still includes the Communities Strand, now in Domain 3 of Lifelong Learning. We need to find ways to immerse our students in language and culture in and out of class and foster a love of this language and culture so that it will continue outside of class and beyond K-12 for personal enjoyment, career enhancement and the betterment of worldwide communication. Expose your students to music, pop culture, literature, fun people to follow on social media, interesting ideas and social justice dilemmas in the target culture... This exposure needs to be supported by discussion about what it takes and what it means to develop proficiency and supports to facilitate the process. Language learning takes time and needs supports, specifically those that facilitate comprehension and support meaning making. These supports are in the form of discussion placemats, word walls, sentence starters, bounce cards... Faculty should collaborate on developing these supports so that they grow and develop with students over programming to create strong numbers of students that earn the Seal of Biliteracy.

We are not teaching in the way most of us learned a world language. The messages we need to give to students and our other stakeholders are an important part of the language learning process. Many people already know that language proficiency enhances every career and personal life. Less understood is that errors are a natural and important part of the language learning process and if you are not making them, you are not trying hard enough. Many people do not understand that developing high functional levels of proficiency takes time; you have to stick with it. We can help by advocating for language learning to start earlier and by pushing the message that to attain high functional levels of proficiency, students have to find a way to use it and enjoy it in their daily lives. Our love of language and teaching can push the most important message of all that language learning transforms you and connects you to the wider world in ways you cannot anticipate.
Featuring *Educaplay*; a free educational game generator

When all instruction shifted to the remote format in March of 2020, many language instructors started receiving training on best ways to handle that transformation in a way that maintains instruction level and pedagogical standards, and fulfills students’ needs as closely as possible to the face-to-face format. In many regards it was a crisis management mode type of training. Initially the element of class community was not completely neglected nor was it a primary focus in these trainings. Under the heading “Resources for Transitioning”, Harvard Graduate School of Education put together a common course on Canvas (Link here). In that resource, you can find a section titled “Build Community in Your Online Course.” (Link here) And in that section, you can find headings such as “What moving online means for your instruction” and “Create space for students to check in with you and each other,” as well as “Support your students through an adjustment period.” (Link here)

When the remote instruction format continued beyond Spring 2020, it became obvious that the tips and suggestions for building class community in an online class that were given during the transition stage, though quite valuable, were no longer sufficient. Something else was needed. Consider this; the students who were completing the course remotely in Spring 2020 had already known one another and the instructor during the face-to-face portion on the class (prior to March 2020) and they had already established a communal relationship with the instructor and with one another. Establishing this kind of relationship in Fall 2021 is a different story and needs more work.

In their article on teaching online courses, Henry and Meadows (2008) devote one section to discussing the topic of creating a community in online courses. They touch upon many important points, the most important of which may be that creating a community sense “. . . will not happen on its own. Teachers need to work to develop community in their online courses. Without effort and social presence, any sense of community tends to wither.” (page 3) Another point that Henry and Meadows (2008) stress is the need for small group collaborative learning activities to enhance that feeling of community (page 3). Additionally, Henry

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**Enhancing Class Community With Virtual Activities; The Predictability Element**

by Sarab Al Ani

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[Image: https://campuspress.yale.edu/sarabalani/](https://campuspress.yale.edu/sarabalani/)
and Meadows (2008) make it clear that once this community feeling is established, teachers need to continue to work on maintaining, fostering, and supporting it over the duration of the course (pages 3&4).

In their discussion of using games in the language classroom, Cam and Tran (2017) touch upon the significance of collaboration and cooperation that such games provide. These games do not only increase students’ confidence, motivation, and enjoyment according to Cam and Tran (2017), but they also enhance students’ positive attitude towards language learning in general. In their recommendation for using games in the language classroom, Cam and Tran (2017) – like Henry and Meadows (2008) - stress the need for the continuity element. Under “useful tips to successfully apply games in class”, they recommend to “establish a routine and set up a schedule for certain types of activities in class” (Cam & Tran, 2017, p 68). At the same time, they suggest using a variety of games and avoid using the same game type repeatedly (Cam & Tran, 2017).

Cam and Tran also point out that these games must be designed consciously and deliberately in a way that focuses on and targets specific knowledge and skill level (Cam & Tran, 2017).

As I read the articles mentioned above, and pondered the need to create, boost and maintain class community in my online language classes, it became evident to me that I needed – among other things – to incorporate a variety of games that focus on a specific language knowledge and/or skill in my classes, and that I needed to do so in a repetitive manner. It struck me that there was this element of predictability - despite the variation - that needed to be nurtured and continued in order for the class community feeling to thrive. Hence, I obviously needed a reliable tech-tool that would help me create these games. For that purpose, I selected Educaplay.

**About Educaplay**

*Educaplay* (link here) is a free online educational game generator. To join *Educaplay* and start creating games for your students you need an email address and a password to create a free account. You can also use your already existing Facebook account information, your Google account information, or your Microsoft account information to create your *Educaplay* account.

*Educaplay* features sixteen types of games. Some of these games seem to be designed specifically for language classes while others could be used in a variety of classes such as math or science (Salazar, 2019). *Dictation* is perhaps one of the games that one associates immediately with a language class. In that game, students hear a saved audio prompt (that can either be recorded on the site or uploaded from your device) and then write what they heard (by typing it in a text box).

Another game that seems to be more fit for a language learning is the *Dialogue Game*. In this game you can create two or more characters who are engaged in a dialogue. You have the option of selecting the characters’ names and profile images. Once the selection is complete, the characters will appear as though they are having a dialogue in a phone messaging app where the viewer can see the person’s name in profile picture and the sequence of utterances along with the person who made them.

You also have the option of making the exchange in a written format only, an audio format only, or a combination of both. *Dialogue* games can be created in a way that enables the learner to complete the dialogue (by recording parts of the dialogue). They can also be designed as a listening activity only.
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Other more traditional games in Educaplay include a memory game, crossword games, word search games, matching, and filling in blanks. Evidently, some of these games are collaborative in nature (thus will help to build the class community as mentioned above), while others are solitary in nature. Therefore, the memory game was one of the games that I used in different classes as I was aiming for the students to work collaboratively towards a shared goal. Also for that purpose I would divide the students into teams of two when they were playing the memory game. The team who completed the set faster was declared the winner. Game duration is one variable that can be adjusted in this game, in that you can have the game end when all pairs were matched or have it end after a certain number of minutes and then count how many matches were made. The game can also be made to end after a certain number of pairs were flipped regardless of whether they were a match. Changing these elements can make the game more challenging. To create the pairs you can enter a text, an image or audio in any combination.

In Educaplay, once a game is created it can be shared with students in a variety of ways. The easiest (and the free) way is perhaps by sharing a URL. When the player clicks the URL, they are taken to the live game with no need for log-in or registration. Other ways to share the games include incorporating the game to the Learning Management System. This includes Canvas, Moodle, and Blackboard. Incorporating the game in the Learning Management System is available for paid accounts only. All games that are created in the Educaplay free account are public. This means that anyone with the link can play the game. It also means that all these public games can be browsed and played. Additionally, each account can create a collection of favorite games. Other features that are available in Educaplay include creating challenges and collections. Paid accounts include additional features such as having the games be private, saving students’ scores and results, viewing each student’s responses in activities, as well as downloading the activity to play offline (see the site for additional details). An extremely helpful feature that Educaplay has is a short video tutorial on creating each game (less than 3 minutes each). When you start creating a new game, you will see the tutorial video for that game placed conveniently next to the name of that game. Watching these videos is very helpful because it showcases the full features that a game may have.

Over the past two academic years, I found that using educational games was a great way to introduce an activity that would help lift students’ spirits, get them engaged, and bring them closer to one another while at the same time demonstrating the knowledge they have learned, and the skills they are trying to master. Having a tech-tool such as Educaplay to create these games facilitates my task as an instructor and gives me confidence in creating games that I know will be helpful, useful, and entertaining. Regularly integrating these games in the class helps foster and sustain strong and healthy class community.

References:
Miller, J. M. (2012). Finding what works online: Online course features that encourage engagement, completion, and success (Doctoral dissertation, California State University, Northridge).

Resources for transitioning your HGSE classes online; a Common Canvas Course (link here)

Featured Tech-tool:

Educaplay (link here)
According to Stephen Krashen’s(1) Natural Approach to L2 acquisition and learning, the affective filter hypothesis states that learners must be relaxed and open to learning in order for language to be acquired. This “filter” acts as a barrier to effective learning. The higher the filter the less learning takes place because of the student’s lack of motivation, poor self-confidence, and high levels of stress and anxiety. Learners who are nervous or distressed have more difficulty learning L2 than more relaxed learners who tend to learn L2 more easily. When the filter is low, students tend to feel safe and are more inclined to explore, to take risks, to make mistakes, to interact with their peers, and to participate more willingly in the activities.

I like to think of the affective filter as a wall that stands between the target language and the learner: the lower the wall the easier it is to scale to get to the other side and the higher the wall the more difficult it is to go over. Metaphorically the wall represents the emotional attitudinal factors that could inhibit the learning of L2 such as anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence.

See figure 1.

This article will examine the affective filter hypothesis and suggest ways for teachers to create a positive learning environment in their classroom that will help lower the affective filter of the students. The teacher needs to impart the information in a low anxiety, less stressful classroom that encourages integrative motivation and positive self-confidence.

High affective filter contributors

The communicative approach to L2 teaching and learning focuses a great deal of attention on the development of the four language skills of listening, reading, speaking, and writing. In addition to knowing vocabulary and grammar, students spend most of their time practicing and developing accurate and fluent communicative skills. Focusing on what students can do with what they know, those activities can often cause a rise in the affective filter as follows:

1. **The productive skill of speaking:**

Some students are reluctant to participate in activities designed to increase the speaking skill because they are afraid of making mistakes in public, of being judged and criticized, of being put on the spot, of appearing ignorant and foolish. They sometimes feel that when the teacher calls on them to answer they are being picked upon. Feeling unsafe, they rarely volunteer to raise their hands, preferring to sit back and be ignored because of accuracy issues such as pronunciation errors, inadequate vocabulary, and faulty grammatical constructions. Because of their unwillingness to participate in speaking activities, they lack sufficient fluency in making themselves understood. The focus on speaking can cause the students to exhibit low motivation, poor self-esteem, and high levels of anxiety and stress.

2. **The productive skill of writing:**

Contrary to speaking which is done in public, writing activities are done in private to be seen and judged usually only by the teacher. When done at home as an assignment, students have access to reference materials but when done in the classroom as a test the writing must be unassisted and spontaneous. If writing samples are judged mainly on spelling and grammatical accuracy, the red-ink corrections can be overwhelming and discouraging. The focus on writing accuracy can cause the students to exhibit low motivation, poor self-esteem, and high levels of anxiety and stress.

3. **The receptive skills of listening and reading:**

The listening and reading comprehension ability of students is often determined by how well they can respond in speaking or in writing to a listening or reading passage. Judging students by how well they can speak or write about something they heard or read gives a false indication of their listening or read-
ing comprehension abilities. In many cases, the students understand what is being said or written but not have the ability to express themselves in speaking or writing with any degree of accuracy or fluency. Judging listening and reading by means of speaking or writing can cause the students to exhibit low motivation, poor self-esteem, and high levels of anxiety and stress.

Low affective filter contributors

If students are to participate actively in activities designed to develop the four language skills, they need to feel safe in the L2 classroom. In order to lower the affective filter, the L2 teacher must find ways to change the student's motivation from instrumental to integrative and to encourage positive self-esteem thereby lowering their anxiety and stress levels as follows:

1. Motivation:

   Gardner (2) defines motivation to learn L2 as “the extent to which the individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity.” Students with integrative motivation want to learn L2 because they love the language for itself and want to know the people who speak it whereas those with instrumental motivation simply need the language to fulfill a requirement, to get a promotion, or a salary boost. Students who understand the personal benefits of learning L2, the extent of L2 in the world, and the advantages of bilingualism are more prone to have a positive attitude towards L2 and to participate more willingly and actively in the classroom activities.

2. Self-confidence:

   Students who feel safe in the classroom tend to take risks by participating more willingly in classroom activities. The more they participate, the better they acquire accuracy and fluency, and the more they succeed. Students who succeed tend to enjoy the subject and develop a positive attitude which leads to a positive sense of self-confidence.

3. Anxiety:

   Du (3) identifies three types of classroom anxiety:
   - Communication apprehension. This describes the students who may have the ability to perform orally but because of shyness are afraid to participate.
   - Test anxiety. Lack of confidence, fear of failure, lack of preparation, poor study habits, and pressure to succeed can lead to test anxiety.
   - Fear of negative evaluation. This describes the students who are more concerned with others' opinion of them that they avoid situations that could give rise to such evaluations.

   Unless addressed, classroom anxiety can be a source of language anxiety which Gardner and MacIntyre (4) define as “the apprehension experienced when a situation requires the use of a second language with which the individual is not truly proficient.”

   Students engaged in cooperative learning activities are less prone to language anxiety because they become collaborative partners with their classmates rather than competitors. Research has shown that cooperative learning can lower the affective filter because students show:

   • higher levels of achievement
   • increased retention of learned material
   • improved self-esteem
   • more positive attitudes towards school and in the subject being learned
   • improved relationship among students
   • improved social and collaborative skills

   Teachers who practice cooperative learning:

   • explain the task clearly
   • structure positive interdependence with mutual goals, joint rewards, assigned roles
   • structure individual accountability with random oral quizzing, individual tests, random check of written work
   • explain criteria for success
   • decide size and make-up of the groups
   • arrange the room

   In addition teachers can help lower the anxiety level of students by encouraging students to consider errors as part of the natural process of learning L2. There are two types of errors to be considered: local and global. The latter cause misunderstanding, miscommunication, and misinformation which should be corrected immediately, whereas the former contains errors such as gender/number agreement or adjective/noun placement that do not interfere with the message. Those errors can be examined after the speaking activity is over. If writing tasks are considered as the first draft, errors should be highlighted so that they can be corrected by the students themselves and resubmitted to the teacher for a second reading. These simple acts of error correction can reduce the anxiety level of the student and give them the impression that they can do it.
Creating a low-anxiety safe classroom environment

The following suggestions are intended to help teachers create a safe place for students to relax and feel good about learning a world language.

1. Teacher-centered vs. student-centered classroom.

Students who have some control over what they do in the classroom tend to get more actively involved in the learning process because in the latter the teacher’s primary function is that of a facilitator of learning rather than the imparter of information. The teacher acts as a guide on the side who helps learners discover knowledge and steers them in ways that would help them, a coach who encourages them to practice what they are learning, who provides them with advice, assistance, and correction while allowing them to explore a subject area independently or by interacting among one another.

2. Assessment.

When students are aware of the assessment criteria for success and of how they will be evaluated, they tend not to fear tests so much. Adopting a holistic approach to grading rather than the normal vocabulary and grammar right or wrong approach will set their minds at ease. Assessing students on what they know and can do rather than on what they don’t know and can’t do, setting realistic expectations rather than seeking perfection, and, above all, no pop or surprise quizzes are excellent ways to reduce test anxiety.

3. Backward design for lesson planning.

According to LaVergne, (5) “Applying the Backward Design Model to lesson planning is equivalent to starting at the end and working backward to the beginning. Once the end outcome has been established and the old and new content have been identified, the main job of the teacher is to create activities and practice exercises that will help the students do what it is that the teacher wants them to do. Relevant assessment activities will help both the teacher and the students determine how well they are advancing toward the final goal. If all goes well, the students will successfully do what the teacher expects them to do.”

4. The classroom as a laboratory.

A safe classroom is one wherein students working together as a team can set individual and group goals based on the varied learning styles of the students, explore and practice what they need to do to succeed by means of group projects, group discussions, and cooperative learning activities. In this setting, the trial and error process becomes part of the learning process rather than a negative outcome.


L2 teachers routinely include music from the target culture as a part of the curriculum. However, according to the National Association for Music Education, (6) playing music in the background while students are taking tests or engaged in quiet reading has additional benefits other than cultural because it:

- reduces feelings of anxiety and stress,
- helps children regulate their emotions,
- improves concentration and on-task behavior,
- enhances the way students can process language and speech,
- improves creative thinking,
- enhances auditory skills
- develops reasoning and language
- increases engagement in school.

Conclusion

Lowering the affective filter by creating a safe environment for students has a positive effect for students learning L2. Students with integrative motivation, positive self-confidence, and low test anxiety are more receptive to the input, are more willing to participate, and experience greater success than students with a higher affective filter.
The bittersweet feeling of returning to school and the allure of cool, crisp, early mornings are near. It can be comforting to think about the schedules and bells left behind in June: they cradle and shelter teachers through routines for "returning to normal." Everyone hopes that 2021-22 will not be remarkable for the reasons that made last year unforgettable. However, even without a pandemic, navigating this academic year will require considerable attention to the well-being of educators and students.

As they step out of the remnants of COVID-19, some groups may be more vulnerable. One of them is the cohort of teachers new to teaching or new to a district since they do not have the comfort of familiar routines to fall back on. Everything is new for them: students, colleagues, curriculum, school culture, technology systems, and, yes, the politics and unwritten norms embedded in any institution.

It is not an exaggeration to say that educators and students are still dealing with the PTSD caused by school closings, remote, and hybrid teaching and learning.

Teachers who were new last year had to find their way around Zoom breakout rooms and establish relationships with their students and colleagues without the benefits of consistent classroom comradery, meeting students face-to-face, and chatting during a break. The learning curve they expected became beyond challenging. It is well documented that teaching is inherently labor-intensive, and the weight of the pandemic created empathy fatigue, technology overload, and anxiety about so many unknowns. Whether they have some teaching experience or not, new colleagues always need acknowledgment, understanding, and empathy. This year, facing the hurdles of starting their career or being in a new school is colored by their COVID-19 experiences. Even though most districts provide induction and mentoring programs and mentors for new teachers, it is crucial that veteran educators seek them out, connect with them and make them feel welcome in their community. All new educators benefit from compassionate professionals who can point out the positive and enjoyable aspects of their work and not dwell on the negative ones. Having such allies helps the new teachers thrive and grow faster into effective practitioners.

Creating A Positive Learning Environment (conc.)

**References**


**About the author**

Marcel LaVergne, Ed.D., retired, was a high school teacher of French, a Director of Foreign Languages, an adjunct professor of Foreign Language Methods, a textbook author, and a consultant on Foreign Language Teaching and Learning. He was associated with the National Capital Language Resource Center as the author of the Sound Bites for Better Teaching column and is a frequent contributor to the MaFLA Newsletter.
Helping New Teachers Feel Included 
In World Language Departments 
And In The School-Wide Community

by Iolanda Volpe

the United States in WL departments. They are often bicultural, bilingual, or proficient in multiple languages and world cultures and have so much to contribute to the WL community. More than ever, this school year, it is essential to look deeper in the “visible baggage” they carry. What is visible is always the tip of the iceberg. Besides dealing with the impact of the pandemic and all the other challenges of being new teachers, they may be still learning about how school districts operate, and may be exploring new cultural norms and practices in and out of their place of work. Making them feel included in departments and the school wide community is paramount to their personal and professional well-being.

Over the years, I had the good fortune of working with and mentoring many colleagues from various cultural backgrounds, and I benefitted from their collegiality and friendship. They encounter and overcome countless challenges, and I would like to share an example. A new colleague, who grew up and attended college in another country, said she did not feel comfortable joining the department members at lunch because she did not understand the funny jokes (the “why did the chicken cross the road” kind). Jokes are particularly complicated when learning a new culture because they make nuanced references to that culture or play with the meaning of words. I realized at that moment that, to better support my colleague, I needed to think like someone for whom everything is new. I suggested we meet every morning to tell each other a joke; she translated some from her native language and explained references I did not understand. When she felt ready to share a joke at lunch, it met with laughter and some applause! Although World Language teachers are experts in cross-cultural interactions, the opportunities for community building are rare on a typical teaching day. I found that it takes some effort, but it can be done by deliberately looking for possibilities.

In conclusion, everyone has some marigold seeds and a few walnuts in them, and everyone has good days that are inspiring and bad days that are disheartening. Being sensitive to the needs of new colleagues, regardless of which discipline they teach, makes them feel included. Additionally, checking assumptions and being positive are very helpful in this process. Jennifer Gonzalez concludes her article with this piece of wisdom: “Teaching is a ridiculously hard job, . . . like climbing Mount Everest (if you’ll allow for one last metaphor). Before you climb that peak, you’ll need to choose a sherpa to escort you through the trek. (pick) Mary Gold, (she) congratulates you on your courage, sits down with you to map out some important strategies, and finishes off by saying, “It’s a crazy-hard, mammoth task, but you know what? We’re going to kick that mountain’s ass.” Although the idea of marigolds surrounding new teachers sounds like nothing more than a pretty image, the metaphorical marigolds are instrumental in making a big difference. The actions of supportive colleagues positively impact and benefit new teachers and all teaching and learning communities. Try it, be a marigold!

Iolanda Volpe is a former high school teacher and World World Language Department Chair. She taught the Spanish language and the cultures of the Spanish-speaking world. She collaborated with and evaluated teachers who taught French, Latin, Mandarin, and Spanish. In her current role as Induction and Mentoring Program Coordinator, she supports mentors and developing teachers. Iolanda strongly believes in the power of mentoring to inspire experienced teachers to reflect on their practices as they guide new educators to meet with professional success and thus improve student learning.
Teaching a language is a complex matter; we have a clearly defined task, to teach our students how to communicate in the target language. On the other hand, we have to open a door that can take them on a journey of discovery about the culture, traditions and idiosyncrasy of a people, and help them find a window into its soul. For that reason, we want our students to read in their target language, we want them to have contact with all those unique voices that talk to them from books, magazines, poems, lyrics and more. We also want them to really enjoy what they are reading so they continue being engaged in the activity, even when they leave the classroom. It is evident that teaching to read in a foreign language is a difficult task that requires a lot of commitment, passion and creativity.

When I started the last part of my MAT in Spanish in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, which was to develop and carry out an action research project, I had to decide the focus of my research when all the schools had been closed for months, and we were just beginning to create our unique remote classroom environments online. I realized I had to find an alternate way than observation to learn about how world languages teachers and their students managed their reading assignments before the pandemic, and what they were trying to do after everything changed because of it. I decided that I was going to conduct my research in the same environment classes were being held, and I prepared to do my research online through a survey. My goal was to reach the teachers in the public high schools in Massachusetts and ask about their experiences with teaching reading.

I was able to contact the principals of all the public high schools in the state to invite their World Languages teachers to answer an online survey for my research. I sent my invitation by email but I felt like I was sending a message in a bottle; I knew teachers were even busier than before the pandemic, and I did not know if somebody was going to find the message and answer my request. Fortunately, I received answers from about ten percent of those teachers in the state and, through their answers, I was allowed to enter their classrooms virtually, to learn about the texts they use, how they choose and suggest their reading material, and how they manage to convince their students to start reading in the target language. I was also able to understand what they do to keep their students engaged in their reading, and how the teachers themselves enjoy the activities along with their students.

Soon, I was reading every new response to the survey and collecting and comparing the statistical information I asked from the teachers.

There were 149 responses from the 400 schools contacted, 38.9% of those answers were submitted by teachers in the northeastern MA, 26.2% from the southeastern, 18.1% from the central MA and 16.8 from the west. I learned that eighty two of the teachers had reading programs in their classes, 20 of the other 67 had them before but they had to cancel their reading programs because of the pandemic, while 24 teachers were very interested in starting a reading program as soon as the conditions were better. Their class sizes ranged from less than 10 students to more than 25, and it was very interesting to find out that 61.7% of the teachers had from ten to more than twenty years of teaching experience. The languages they teach are mainly Spanish (75.5%), and French (24%), with a 6% teaching Italian and 8.1% teaching Latin. The percentages for other languages are: Portuguese (5.4%), Chinese (1.3%) Arabic and American Sign Language (0.7% each). These percentages related only to this research, they may not represent the full number of world languages teachers in Massachusetts.

After reading and learning from all kinds of interesting experiences and stories foreign language teachers shared with me, I was sincerely impressed by the variety of strategies and techniques that are used in their classrooms. Every variable was used to create enjoyable reading experiences; these included theater, music and jokes; students were drawing, imitating, predicting, and reading their own stories in books written by their teacher, others were planting a tree based on a story read in a book. Other activities reported included students writing their own story in the form of a legend, or immersing themselves in Roman mythology they were reading in their Latin class. There was even a group of students who turned into investigators in order to follow a famous French thief, from class to class from book to book, and students doing “book tastings” or playing a “game of quotes”.

My research was based on a simple question; I wanted to know if students were reading because they had to or because they wanted to learn. I was able to find the answer to my question: according to my survey, these teachers and their students are reading to learn, and they are certainly enjoying the process. Thanks to all the teachers who took some time out of their very busy day to answer my questions!

Leonila Tellez-Valle is currently pursuing her MAT in Spanish at Salem State University
Teaching Heritage Learners In The World Language Classroom

by Scott Ryan Sumrall

Like many world language teachers, I am a native English speaker teaching a language I learned as my L2. When I began teaching in the district of Lynn, where about 70% of the student population has been identified as Hispanic, it did not strike me as odd that many of my students already spoke Spanish with some degree of proficiency, since I myself had studied alongside heritage learners in high school. However, while studying SLA and refining my ideas about how languages should be taught in the classroom, I began to reflect on how these ideas can be applied to heritage learners. I also wondered and worried about what role I, as a non-native speaker trained as a world language teacher, should play in their learning process.

Given the benefits of maintaining and strengthening one’s level of bilingualism, school systems would ideally be aware of the existence of heritage learners and provide opportunities catered to them, including a separate heritage course of language study, which would allow for more tailored instruction at each level of the proficiency scale. Since this option may be unrealized in many districts, however, some instructors will find themselves teaching traditional L2 learners and heritage learners in the very same classroom. It is in this situation that I found myself seeking not only a deeper understanding of heritage learners themselves but also some practical solutions for my mixed L2-heritage classes.

I discovered that there are two separate but interrelated ways we can think about heritage speakers. The first is cognitive and focuses on how the language functions in the mind of the student. For the purposes of contextualizing heritage learners and considering of how they may best be served, this approach emphasizes the cognitive processes at work in acquisition. That is, bilingual students may have incompletely acquired or lost certain structures, may have absorbed input in different modes than their L2 learner peers, and may transfer structures from their dominant language into the language of study.

The other approach is sociolinguistic and focuses on the social context in which bilingual students acquire and use their languages. This approach considers the richness and complexity of language use and acquisition as it occurs in real life. Crucially, it offers a way of conceptualizing language variation among students. Heritage learners of Spanish, for example, may be users of one of the many contact varieties of English and Spanish spoken in areas where the two languages interact intensively, and may also be adept at code switching in certain situations.

These two perspectives allowed me to identify several key characteristics of heritage learners which are crucial to understand in order to avoid pitfalls and ensure that students derive the greatest possible benefit from their formal study. An important such characteristic is diversity of needs; while heritage learners generally enter the classroom with some familiarity with the language and may even speak it fluently, they can also vary greatly in proficiency across the different domains and modes of communication. Furthermore, heritage learners, like their advanced L2 counterparts, can make use of strategies such as circumlocution to communicate effectively but somewhat imprecisely. Formal study offers an opportunity for all students to enhance their precision.

This effectiveness of communication reflects another important characteristic of heritage learners: as competent users of language in a complex sociological milieu, these students represent genuine language variation. To apply the logic of language acquisition to these students, teachers will seek to provide opportunities to increase command of other variations without reinforcing a cultural hierarchy in which a normalized standard is thought to be superior to variations that reflect regionality or interlanguage contact.

This broad framework allowed me to outline a set of principles to inform my practice in working with heritage learners. Most fundamentally, language study should involve personal exploration. Discussion and reflection will enable students to explore the potential of heritage learning in their own lives and set their individual goals across the domains and modes of communication. Moreover, the explicit goal should be to add to students’ language repertoires, rather than suppress or remove natural language variations. Related to this is the need to build a deeper awareness of language processes beyond surface-level procedures and rules. For examples, the ability to name the letters of the Spanish alphabet—something both L2 and heritage learners may be unable to do at the beginning of high school—should be surpassed by an exploration of the phonological differences between English and Spanish and how these differences play out in the orthographic code.

Although a combination of heritage and traditional learners presents increased complexity for instructors, the same fundamental principles apply to all students. Our purpose is to provide meaningful, context-driven experiences
National Advocacy

In their latest national advocacy efforts, our language policy voice in Washington, JNCL-NCLIS, has initiated a “conversation series” to invite experts in the field to highlight areas of interest and focal points on creating strong advocacy representatives across the nation. The first conversation series was held in June and focused on “Innovative Initiatives for Sustaining and Growing Language Programs in Higher Education Confirmation.” The panelists led the discussion and centered on the possible causes of the general decline in enrollment and how the profession can help reverse this downward trend focusing on “advocacy, innovative curriculum, and better articulation.” Some of the high points of the conversation were on how to create innovative programs and ways to articulate between K-12 and higher education. With regard to innovative programs, the proposal was to create dual degrees as a significant way to incentivize studying a second language. This type of innovation opens new pathways for possible career readiness funding connections from advocacy and legislative standpoints. Concerning merging K-12 and higher education programs, the goal is to retain students from dual-language programs and recruit new students. “Access, relevance, and community” should be considered as the three characteristics of thriving programs in higher education. In addition, the panelists suggested that some higher education institutions have begun tracking the Seal of Biliteracy stats through their admissions offices. It would be advantageous if more institutions took this approach systematically to attract students to study languages. This incentive would also help to create a pathway for training future language instructors. JNCL-NCLIS has underlined that “the equitable availability of the Seal of Biliteracy is a specific area of policy for which JNCL-NCLIS has been advocating, most recently by providing a language for appropriations bills that support this,” and will continue to assert their support and advocacy for innovative higher education programs.

In July, the second conversation series focused on “Partnering for Progress: Parents and Educators Advancing Equitable Global Learning for All.” Among the panelists was Bárbara Barnett, member of MaFLA’s board of directors and Elementary World Language Coordinator in Wellsley. Bárbara spoke about the importance of creating well-articulated, proficiency-based world language programs in elementary schools as well as adopting an “open-door policy” to all stakeholders to portray how the world language program works in an elementary classroom. Bárbara reports that “It was a true honor to represent NNELL and MaFLA as a Panelist. It is now more critical than ever that all world language educators from all grade levels rally together to advocate for early language education. Early language learning opens the door to equity and inclusion to higher language proficiency levels as students move to middle school and high school. Thus, middle and high school world language educators must also be active participants in these conversations. Since there are various types of programs available at the elementary level, I want to emphasize the importance of standards and proficiency, regardless of the program available at your school. Too often, educators and administrators are discouraged because they may not have high-frequency contact programs, such as immersion or dual-language programs at their elementary school. I would encourage them to be even more strategic when designing their curriculum and planning the learning experiences for their students. A well-articulated world language for the elementary school’s curriculum that is anchored in standards and proficiency has the opportunity to harmoniously merge language standards with SEL and ABAR since young learners have a keen awareness of and passion for fairness.”

The next conversation series will take place on August 26 and focus on

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Teaching Heritage Learners . . . (conc.)

in all of the domains and modes of communication, to foster intercultural skills, and to prepare all students for a world in which multilingualism is the norm, rather than the exception. These are worthy goals for teachers of both aspiring and existing bilinguals.

Recommendations for mixed classrooms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommended</th>
<th>Not recommended</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Interpersonal activities that stimulate mutual accommodation between levels and language variation</td>
<td>• Permanent groupings or classifications based on heritage status or proficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increased exposure to different variations</td>
<td>• Stigmatization of one variation in favor of another</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Building metalinguistic awareness, including but by no means limited to grammar</td>
<td>• Grammar as the center of the curriculum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Back to School
K-12 Pathways to Equitable Biliteracy
Also, you may want to consider signing up for JNCL-NCLIS NewsBrief published every Friday with the latest news on advocacy language nationwide and share it with your WL department.

State Advocacy
DESE: The World Languages support site at DESE made a notable breakthrough by publishing the new Massachusetts World Languages Curriculum Framework in April 2021 WL Curriculum Framework. Districts across the state will be engaging in significant work to address the new format during the next academic year. The new framework represents the necessary guidance for setting our WL curriculum and serve as a powerful advocacy tool to all stakeholders involved in the education of our students.

This past spring, DESE also launched a grant opportunity to foster proficiency in languages other than English. Districts were asked to submit proposals that fell under one or both of the following goals:
• Collecting data on proficiency in languages other than English through the use of high-quality assessments and/or
• Providing professional development to teachers and programs of languages other than English.
A total of 24 districts were awarded the Proficiency in Languages other than English Grant.

In addition, over the last year, DESE has created a World Languages Leadership Network. “In 2020-21, nearly 150 districts sent one or more representatives to at least one World Languages Leaders Network (WLLN) meeting” (DESE). The group meets quarterly to discuss leadership for World Languages. These discussions help with essential tasks such as facilitating the implementation of the Seal of Biliteracy, the new framework and creating connections and relationships across districts throughout the state.

Learn more if you are interested in becoming part of this network at WL Leadership Network.

LOC: The Language Opportunity Coalition LOC continues to offer support to districts starting or already implementing the DESE Seal of Biliteracy and offers other levels of awards across K-12. The Seal of Biliteracy Workgroup will continue to meet quarterly to support districts in various stages of implementation of the Seal of Biliteracy. Be proactive and join the Google Group by emailing one of these outstanding representatives: Nicole Sherf, sherf.nicole@gmail.com, Phyllis Hardy, PhyllisHardy@mabene.org, or Kim Talbot ktalbot@salem.k12.org. Being part of this group benefits in navigating ways to implement the Seal of Biliteracy in your district and creates a network of WL educators and leaders who communicate and collaborate to address procedural or resource questions on the Seal and beyond.

In Memoriam - Marian St. Onge
MaFLA is saddened to announce that Marian St. Onge died very unexpectedly of pancreatic cancer on August 18. At the time, she was finalizing the manuscript of her biography of French priest and Resistance leader Louis Favre, a project for which she had received BC research grants. Marian St. Onge came to Boston College in the 1970s as a graduate student, earning her M.A. and Ph.D. in French literature. She continued her career at BC, first as lecturer and assistant professor of Romance Languages, and then in 1991 was named founding director of the Center for International Partnerships and programs, a position she held until her retirement in 2006.

Marian served as president of MaFLA in 1990.

BC colleagues have been invited to contribute written tributes to the online Memorial to Marian St. Onge which is being prepared by Romance Languages chair Franco Mormando (mormando@bc.edu)

MaFLA colleagues are also welcome to send personal tributes for the memorial page

Per Marian’s request, there will not be a memorial service.

Respectfully submitted by Rebecca Valette
As a nonnative speaker, I have worked tirelessly and constantly to improve my second language speaking skills and abilities. During my pre-pandemic summers, I have had the amazing experiences of living with host families in various Spanish-speaking nations while attending language institutes in order to immerse myself in the language. It was during one of these summers a few years ago that I was able to witness the incredible language growth that a fellow student named Mark experienced during his time living with the same host family and taking classes for four hours a day throughout the month that he spent with us in Ecuador.

After hearing the disbelief in Mark’s voice after I had complimented his newly acquired language skills on the last day of his classes, I remember wishing at that moment that I had had a recording of his first day in order to prove to him that he really had improved so much. The progress that Mark made in just about a month stunned me, and has stuck with me since then, as well as how much I had wished that he could have seen and heard the progression in his language speaking abilities for himself.

While I couldn’t believe that Mark did not hear and recognize his own language development, I realized that this is something that many of my students suffer from, as well. This experience drove me to learn more about how portfolios are used in world language classrooms in order to document improved speaking ability over time as well as to focus student attention on specific areas of proficiency development.

About six months after this experience in Ecuador, I attended a workshop led by Ashley Uyaguari. During this three day workshop, she showed us electronic portfolios that some of her students had created. Again, I was stunned by their language development and growth! Because of these experiences, I decided to develop my action research project for my MAT in Spanish program at Salem State University around the use of portfolios in World Language classrooms. Students in my Spanish 2 Honors class created an electronic portfolio using Google Sites and completed a survey regarding their previous experiences creating recordings in the target language, as well as what they believed their current target language proficiency level was. Each week, over the course of 10 weeks, students were given a prompt in English, related to our unit of study and then had two and a half minutes to think about how they would respond in Spanish without taking notes or writing it ahead of time. They then recorded themselves responding to the prompt. After every three recordings, students completed a self-reflection form in which they relistened to their previous recordings and wrote down their observations in regards to their fluency, type of language used, as well as content and details included in their responses.

At the end of the research project’s timeframe, the students completed a post-portfolio survey very similar to the one that they completed at the beginning of the project. Although some students expressed nervousness about the idea of creating recordings in Spanish, at the end of the project one student said that she “got used to them over time and the more we did it, everyone got more and more comfortable.” All students that participated in the study reported that they either maintained or improved their proficiency level. One student stated that she was a novice-mid at the start of the study, and felt that by the end of the study she was at a novice high proficiency level. In her final survey she stated that “I chose novice high because I can hold a conversation better and know somewhat what the other person is saying and definitely know what I need to say back.” While we did not conduct proficiency testing to confirm proficiency levels, and ten weeks is too short a time to document proficiency improvement, it was an interesting way to include the proficiency discussion with my students and to demonstrate how important confidence is in language performance, just like what had occurred in Mark’s case. As one student said: “[E]very time we recorded it I was of course nervous that I was going to mess up or say something wrong. So, although the recordings made me nervous I think the overall idea and assignment was good.”

In that same vein, by the end of this study, I noticed a huge increase in voluntary participation throughout class time. Students were quick to raise their hands and contribute to class discussions in the target language, and also
seemed not to be as concerned about making mistakes in front of their classmates or myself. Over the course of the project, to document and qualify in class participation, I used the TALK rubric. This rubric uses a checklist format to focus on target language use, accuracy, listening and kindness. For example, prior to this research project, one of my students volunteered in class discussion and answering questions on average four times per week. By the end of the research project, this same student was averaging nine times per week. They also started to use strategies that had been included in the portfolio task rubric like circumlocution and self-correction, as well as appear to be genuinely excited to practice the target language. Interestingly, many of the student comments related to improved facility with unit-related vocabulary over the time of the use of portfolios. One student stated: “In Spanish I think these recordings are a great way to work on vocab and the things we worked on that week.” Putting unit vocabulary to practical and task-based use reinforces it and makes students more confident about using it. Adding the assessment component of the portfolio underlines the importance of the class practice.

I am very excited to continue to use portfolios in my future classes, as I received very positive feedback from my students, and also witnessed how these tools supported their language development in just a few weeks. One student said in her final survey that “I didn’t expect to learn this much, I thought I would have a lot harder of a time. I am doing a lot better than I thought. My vocab has increased a lot!” while another student stated that “I liked seeing my overall progress at the end.” While I was happy to see that my students felt more comfortable practicing the target language throughout the study, I was excited that their attitudes towards creating recordings had also changed.

Although this research project was a great starting point, I plan to make some changes as to how I use portfolios in the future in order to maximize their impact on student language growth. In future classes, we will use the portfolios for the entire duration of the trimester and will create recordings every three weeks. Students will have four recordings in their portfolios per trimester, and will be able to take better note of their language development. A secondary effect of this research project was that students thought more about their own proficiency level, and began asking questions about language acquisition. I am excited to have more and more conversations with my students surrounding proficiency levels and the strategies involved in growing in proficiency.

I would like to thank my professor Dr. Nicole Sherf for all of her support, guidance, and encouragement throughout the development and implementation of this research project. Thank you so much for sharing your wisdom, passion, and knowledge with all of your students, and for making me excited to be a part of this amazing profession and discipline!

For Further Research:

• “Researching Electronic Portfolios and Learner Engagement: The Reflect Initiative” by Helen C. Barrett
• “Using Electronic Portfolios for Second Language Assessment” by Patricia W. Cummins & Céline Davesne
• “One School’s Adventure into Portfolio Assessment” by Lina Leonard Lamme & Cecilia Hysmith
• “Portfolios: Conceptual Foundations and Functional Implications” by Andreas Luescher & John W. Sinn

Electronic Portfolio “Must Haves:”

• Personalization - give students some time to personalize their page! They can add pictures, describe their foreign language learning strengths & weaknesses, as well as their goals!
• Open-ended prompts with examples - having more open prompts gives students a lot of room for creativity in their responses, while providing examples helps guide the creativity
• Audio and/or video - give students the option to upload a video or just a voice recording, it eases their anxiety
• Reflection Form - give students the opportunity to appreciate their growth and to identify the areas in which they can improve

For Further Research:
Four Technology Tools That You Shouldn’t Miss

Technology is a part of people’s daily lives now. No matter where you go and what you do every day, chances are, you need technology to some degree. With that said, every teacher needs to have a few tech tools in their pocket to call on to help them meet their lesson goals. However, before we get to a list of tools that I am recommending, let’s talk about why and how to use them.

Why do we use technology tools in our classrooms? While they are not meant to replace a real teacher’s teaching, tech tools enhance the effectiveness of students’ learning. If you can tell that it has extended and reinforced the quality of your input or lesson delivery, then you have most likely chosen the right tool.

How do we use technology tools in the classroom? Time in class is so precious that we teachers need to take advantage of every minute to maximize students’ learning. While technology tools can be powerful, they can also isolate students from each other if they are using the same platform individually for long stretches of time during class. Therefore, the key is to know how and when to use them. For instance, if students use an online flashcard website to practice vocabulary on their own in class for a long time, this doesn't allow them to collaborate with peers. Online flashcard practice would be better used at home on their own time. If students use an online discussion board to express their opinions and interact with classmates instantly, that's an efficient and meaningful use of class time because this type of technology allows students to interact with each other. It also helps students who are quiet and more reserved to have the chance to “speak up” online.

Above is my humble opinion on where I stand in terms of using technology tools in classroom. Knowing that, you can decide which technology tools work best for your class time and which work best as assignments for students outside of class time. I would like to recommend the following tools that I use regularly and get great feedback from students. They are either totally free or have a free version that already comes with useful features. If you really like any of the free versions, upgrading to a paid version might be something to consider.

1. Create a video-based and social media-like platform with Flipgrid. Flipgrid is a great interactive tool where students can record videos and share them for everyone to see. To begin with, teachers have the option to just type in texts for discussion, record a video or insert an outside source as information for students to watch. Below are some of the resources that Flipgrid supports and you can include for your communicative purposes:

(screenshot from flipgrid.com)

Students can then record what they want to say in their video in the target language. After they share videos, they can watch each other’s videos and comment on them. The options for commenting could be type written and/or recorded by video in response to their classmates. The teachers can also provide feedback on their students’ language samples by recording their voices or by recording a video to send their feedback. The platform has the option to show how many people have viewed each video. Additionally, you can click on the “like” symbol just like people do on Facebook. Below is the list of options teachers can choose to best fit their class dynamic.
2. Create all kinds of interactive activities with Nearpod. Nearpod has a variety of built-in activities, as showed below:

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You can host an online discussion board by using the “Open-Ended Question.” You can also combine listening and drawing together via the “Draw It” feature. For instance, teachers can record a paragraph such as the one below (or say it in real time) in the target language.

“My dad is tall with short hair. My mom is not tall and she has wavy long hair. We live in a house with 4 windows. I also have two puppies and one cat.”

Then, students draw a picture by listening to your descriptions. Once they are done drawing and have submitted, everyone can see each other’s pictures via the teacher’s projection on the whiteboard. Students often love to see what other people have drawn. Students can then use their own words in the target language to retell the story to their partners in this listening-drawing-speaking activity.

In addition, Nearpod can also be a slideshow that allows you to create live participation as well as student-paced participation. For the live participation, students join your presentation and follow your pace to do all the activities, and you control the length of time and what students see. For student-paced participation, you can prepare a task that you assign students to do on their own. Below are the resources that this platform supports and that you can upload to your slides.
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3. Tired of Kahoot?! Try Blooket! Blooket is a new interactive website that was released in 2020. It features several built-in games that help students practice their vocabulary and other comprehension check questions. It has only been on the market for a short time, but it certainly became one of the most popular technology tools in class. It also has a typical Kahoot game mode, but there are different ones that are well-liked by students. The fascinating part is that students can be held accountable by answering their own questions while they are still interacting with peers in the game. There is also a good variety of game modes that suit different age-groups of students. For example, Racing and Cafe might fit well with younger students while Gold Quest, Tower Defense might be good for middle and high students. For cooperative learning, Battle Royale is well-liked as it groups students into teams and they can work cooperatively in a team-based game mode. One last essential feature is that you can export Quizlet files to Blooket in a few simple steps. This is such a valuable time-saving feature if you already use Quizlet.

(screenshot from blooket.com)

4. Who says you cannot have formative assessments and fun at the same time? Check out the website called Wordwall. It features a lot of built-in templates that fit well into your formative assessment routines in class. The screenshot below are the templates that come with the free version. The best part is that once you make a set of questions with one of the templates, you will be given options to play with all the other templates as well. You don’t need to re-type all the questions just to play on different templates! That’s another valuable time-saving feature for busy teachers. It also has a community where other teachers can publicly share their question sets and you can simply use them, configure or build on their existing sets.

Below is the list of templates in the free version of Wordwall.

(screenshot from wordwall.net)
Tech Tips
by Sheng-Chu Lu

There are many more templates available in the pro/paid version.

(screenshot from wordwall.net)

Another way to use Wordwall.net is to assign activities as homework to do outside of class with a due date. Once the students complete these, the results will be sent to you. Below is a screenshot of a homework assignment using Wordwall.net. You can also get an HTML code to embed to your Learning Management System such as Google Classroom, Canvas or Schoology.

(screenshot from wordwall.net)

In summary, there are many technology tools for busy teachers to use in the classroom. Existing tools will evolve and new tools will continue to be developed each year. Some are suitable for class time and others are suitable for assigning to students to do on their own. You, the teacher, will know what is a good fit and what is not for your class. There is no need to use a lot of fancy tools for the sake of using them unless they are enhancing the effectiveness of students’ language learning experiences.
World Language Programming In MA
by Nicole Sherf and Catherine Ritz, MaFLA Board Members

What does world language programming look like in MA? This was a driving research question that guided the first part of a comprehensive survey that we administered in April of 2020. In 2019, with great anticipation, these authors created, piloted, and refined a survey for K-12 teachers during the spring of 2020. The work was supported by an ACTFL Research Priorities Grant which focused on Research Priority Area #3: Assessing Learning Outcomes in K-16 Settings. It is exciting to create a snapshot of the status of world language programming, especially when the Language Opportunity for Our Kids, or LOOK Act, had just been passed in November of 2017, and DESE was in the process of creating regulations for the administration and oversight of the Seal of Biliteracy, a component of that legislation, as well as hiring a World Language Content Specialist. Little did we know that the publication of the new WL Framework was also right around the corner in April of 2021, a document so collaboratively created and so firmly based on proficiency development over time in programming.

To begin developing the survey, we outlined five categories to describe programming for elementary (K-5), middle (6-8) and high school (9-12) world language programs. Elementary and middle school categories included: Exploratory, Language Achievement, Language Mix of Achievement and Proficiency, Language Proficiency and Immersion, and the high school categories were Language Achievement, Language Mix of Achievement and Proficiency, Immersion, and Distance Learning. Please see Box 1 for the full descriptions of the elementary and middle school categories and Box 2 for those of the high school ones. Our thinking in the designations of the categories was that we are in a time of transition of programming. We are moving away from a more traditional language teaching model which is based on a textbook-driven, active teaching of grammar and vocabulary, to a proficiency-based model which focuses on developing proficiency over time and prepares students to interact spontaneously in a variety of authentic contexts. Our hope would be to see more and more departments self-identify as proficiency-based over time. The LOOK Act creates more opportunities for immersion and dual language programming, mostly in elementary and middle schools, so the immersion category option was to gauge the use of this program type just as the legislation was being implemented.

As we can see in our new WL Framework which is organized by proficiency level based on the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines, our goal is to collaborate as a department to create resources and curriculum that support students in this path to proficiency over time. Ultimately, our Framework is intricately tied to the Seal of Biliteracy.

Elementary and Middle School Program Types as Described in the Survey

A. Exploratory: Program whose goal is exploring language and culture.
B. Language Achievement: Program whose goal is based on learning of vocabulary and grammar.
C. Language Mix of Achievement & Proficiency: Program transitioning from a traditional vocabulary and grammar focus to that of proficiency development.
D. Language Proficiency: Program whose goal is based on proficiency development.
E. Immersion: Program whose goal is communication and content acquisition with at least 50% of the day in the world language.

Box 1

High School Program Types as Described in the Survey

A. Language Achievement: Program whose goal is based on learning of vocabulary and grammar.
B. Language Mix of Achievement & Proficiency: Program transitioning from a traditional vocabulary and grammar focus to that of proficiency development.
C. Language Proficiency: Program whose goal is based on proficiency development.
D. Immersion: Program whose goal is communication and content acquisition with at least 50% of the day in the world language.
E. Distance Learning: Program whose content is primarily delivered on a computer.

Box 2
Mel And Cindy Yoken French Scholarship For Graduating HS Seniors Winner

The Triton High School World Language Department is pleased to announce that Alexander Wing has received the 2021 MaFLA Mel & Cindy Yoken French Scholarship for Graduating HS Seniors. This is a new scholarship opportunity offered to a graduating senior who has demonstrated excellence in the study of French as well as exceptional commitment to pursuing francophone studies at the University level.

Alexander Wing is a Massachusetts Seal of Biliteracy Award winner. He served as Secretary of the Triton High School World Language Honor Society, he scored as a National Laureat for four consecutive years on the AATF Grand Concours, and his environmental preservation speech in French won him accolades in the 2020 Club Richelieu Oratorical Contest.

MaFLA was founded in 1967 by a group of Massachusetts foreign language educators originally associated with the New England Foreign Language Teachers Association. The purpose of the new organization was to advocate for foreign language programming within our state as well as to establish the presence of the discipline before the State Board of Education. MaFLA educators are proud to recognize the achievements of outstanding students and their teachers. Find out more about Mel and Cindy Yoken, who hope that this award will motivate students to continue their study of French either through a career in teaching or as a complement to any other profession here. Alexander Wing will pursue the study of French in combination with environmental studies at the University of Massachusetts Honors College in the Fall of 2021. Félicitations, Alex!

World Language Programming In MA (conc.)

with a focus on proficiency. 40.5% of elementary programs reported using a Proficiency model and 21.69% reported using Immersion programming. In the middle schools, the percent using the Proficiency model was 29% and only 2.4% reported the Immersion model. In the high school level, 4.4% of schools reported an Immersion model and 40.5% reported a Proficiency model. The rest of the programs were either in the Exploratory, Language Achievement or the Language Mix of Achievement and Proficiency, the latter being a move toward teaching for proficiency.

In that same vein, 32.5% of elementary and 17.1% of middle schools reported using an exploratory program. As the profession moves towards proficiency-based instruction and away from achievement as a guiding force for programming, we expect that the use of exploratory programs will also decrease and hopefully be eliminated. Programming time is so precious and it is the overall length of time in the program that develops language proficiency, so we should not be using that time only to explore language and culture. The time for talking about language is over; we are now talking in the language.
Congratulations to this year’s winners of the Essay Contest!! The student, Sophia Latham, from Triton High School wrote the Essay of the Year. Sophia’s teacher is Regina Symonds. In her essay, Sophia described how language learning helps her. “Language has opened my eyes to the beauty of the world, and helped me to understand why different cultures do the things they do.” Brandon Nguyen, a student at Wood Hill Middle School was chosen as the Middle School Division winner. Brandon’s teacher is Zoe Cabaret-Salameh. In his essay, Brandon told us what languages mean to him, “Words convey so much, even through just conversation, and language is like glue, holding us together. It helps persevere through difficult times, personal or worldwide.”

There are so many great entries for Essay Contest this year. It's our pleasure to announce all the winners below.

**Winner for Essay of the Year** (the winner is from high school division)
Student’s name: Sophia Latham  
School: Triton High School  
Teacher’s name: Regina Symonds

**Honorable mentions in high school division**
The first out of the 3 Honorable Mentions in high school division
Student’s name: Sara Hanson  
School: Triton High School  
Teacher’s name: Regina Symonds

The second out of the 3 Honorable Mentions in high school division
Student’s name: Lisa Hood  
School: Littleton High School  
Teacher’s name: Jenene J. Allison

The third out of the 3 Honorable Mentions in high school division
Student’s name: Akash Chatterji  
School: Wilmington High School  
Teacher’s name: Joanne Veliz

**Winner of the middle school division**
Student’s name: Brandon Nguyen  
School: Wood Hill Middle School  
Teacher’s name: Zoe Cabaret-Salameh

**Honorable Mentions in middle school division**
The fist out of the 2 Honorable Mentions in middle school division
Student’s name: Alexander Wu  
School: Wood Hill Middle School  
Teacher’s name: Zoe Cabaret-Salameh

The second out of the 2 Honorable Mentions in middle school division
Student’s name: Edward Tang  
School: Wood Hill Middle School  
Teacher’s name: Maria Hernandez
MaFLA Poster Contest Winners

MaFLA Poster of the Year

Jesse Ding, gr. 12 (Spanish)
Wilmington High School
Wilmington, MA
Teacher: Carlos Luis Brown

Samantha Lee, gr. 8 (Mandarin)
Wayland Middle School
Wayland, MA
Teacher: Dr. Chiun-Fan Chang

Elementary Honorable Mentions

Zoey Ying gr. 5 (Spanish)
Field School (Weston, MA)
Teacher: Kimberlee Kasanov

Aimee Lee gr. 5 (Spanish)
Field School (Weston, MA)
Teacher: Kimberlee Kasanov

Lillian Yun, gr. 3 (Spanish)
Woodland School (Weston, MA)
Teacher: Kimberlee Kasanov

Abigail Sieber, gr. 2 (Spanish)
Woodland School (Weston, MA)
Teacher: Kristen Sheridan

Middle School Winner

Riley Palmer, gr. 3 (Spanish)
Country School
Weston, MA
Teacher: Dr. Chiun-Fan Chang

Middle School Honorable Mentions

Rhea Sethi, gr. 6
Wayland Middle School
Teachers: Danuta Bujak-Czubarrow & Maria Alcocer

Zuri Yee, gr. 6
Wayland Middle School
Teacher: Dr. Chiun Fan Chang

Vignesha Jayakumar, gr. 7
Wood Hill Middle School
(Andover, MA)
Teacher: Zoe Cabaret-Salameh

Elementary Winner

Elementary Honorable Mentions

Zoey Ying gr. 5 (Spanish)
Field School (Weston, MA)
Teacher: Kimberlee Kasanov

Aimee Lee gr. 5 (Spanish)
Field School (Weston, MA)
Teacher: Kimberlee Kasanov

Lillian Yun, gr. 3 (Spanish)
Woodland School (Weston, MA)
Teacher: Kimberlee Kasanov

Abigail Sieber, gr. 2 (Spanish)
Woodland School (Weston, MA)
Teacher: Kristen Sheridan

High School Honorable Mentions

Nicole Bell, gr. 11
Acton Boxborough Regional HS
Teacher: Hye Kyung Dragone

Rachael Friedman, gr. 10
Littleton High School
Teacher: Margaret Gillen

Kyra McCracken, gr. 11
Acton Boxborough Regional HS
Teacher: Hye Kyung Dragone

Katherine McDonagh, gr. 10
Littleton High School
Teacher: Elizabeth Kelley

Alexandra Pavlov, gr. 12 (Latin)
Littleton High School
Teacher: Elizabeth Kelley

Emme Richards, gr. 11 (Spanish)
Littleton High School
Teacher: Jacquelyn Duffy
MaFLA Digital Image Contest Winner

2021 THEME: We Got This!

In the state of Massachusetts, students need to demonstrate the ability to use technology for the purpose of communication, collaboration, creativity, and innovation. Consequently, through the use of a variety of media formats students develop technology skills that enable them to communicate effectively, to multiple audiences, a variety of information and ideas to satisfy both world language and technology standards. The Digital Art contest is intended to allow students to demonstrate the effect that being multilingual and multicultural has in our global society through a digital art form.

Sophia Kuchar
1st Place Winner: Sophia Kuchar
Grade 10, Spanish 3 Student
North Reading High School

Digital Art IMAGE LINK

Honorable Mentions:
Christine Yuan, Grade 11, Spanish 4 Honors Student
Acton Boxborough Regional High School

Jasmine John
Grade 9, Spanish Student
Burlington High School
MaFLA Past Presidents’ Award Winners

The Past Presidents’ Award is given to deserving high school students who have demonstrated excellence in world language study and service/leadership within the school. The high expectations of the awards ask that the students have studied a single language completing the last of the academic sequence (a minimum of 3 years) while maintaining a 90+ average; that the student demonstrates leadership or service activity during their high school years; that the student will continue to study language in college; that the student writes an essay reflecting his/her insights on the impact of studying a world language. In addition, the nominating teacher, who must be an active MaFLA member, writes an essay expounding on the excellence of the candidate.

The MaFLA Board of Directors is delighted to receive the many applications reflecting the positive impact that studying a world language brings to the students of Massachusetts.

Elizabeth Laughlin

Elizabeth Laughlin has studied Spanish since the 6th grade in East Longmeadow, concluding her senior year by taking the AP Spanish Language and Culture course as well as completing an externship, in which she helped teach middle school Spanish classes under the mentorship of one of her former teachers. Elizabeth initiated and developed the Women Empowerment Club at East Longmeadow High School with the goal of creating a safe space for young women to gather and discuss meaningful issues as well as fostering a sense of sisterhood amongst its members. She was also an active member in the Animal Rights Club, Environmental Club, and Spanish Club. Elizabeth was recognized at Senior Awards Night for her academic achievement in Spanish and for her leadership in the school community. In the fall, Elizabeth will attend UMASS Amherst as a Commonwealth Honors College student and plans to double-major in Spanish and Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies.

Adelaide DelMonico

Adelaide DelMonico studied Spanish from 7th through 12th grade at Triton Regional School District, finishing with Advanced Placement Spanish Language and Culture. She will attend Wheaton College (MA) in the Fall, where she will continue her studies of the Spanish Language and Hispanic Cultures. She served as Historian to the Triton High School World Language Honor Society. Adelaide received several awards for her achievement in Spanish throughout High School, including the 2021 Triton High School World Language Honor Society Scholarship. In addition, Adelaide has served as a member of the National Honor Society and participated in community service opportunities throughout her high school career. When not studying Spanish, Adelaide enjoys playing the flute in several youth music organizations and reading her favorite works of literature.

Lizzie Laughlin
East Longmeadow High School
Teacher: Erica Nissenbaum

Addie Delmonico
Triton High School
Teacher: Regina Symonds
MaFLA Past Presidents’ Award Winners

Jesse Ding

Jesse Ding is a senior from Wilmington High School. While being bilingual in Mandarin and English, she has also studied Spanish for all four years in high school. Jesse is the president of National Honors Society and Math Club. She also participates and leads FIRST Tech Challenge Robotics, DECA, and Academic Decathlon. Outside of school, she volunteers her time at Beyond TOPS and tutors math. She is planning to attend Carnegie Mellon University in the fall to study computer science while continuing to take Spanish classes at a higher level.

Jesse Ding
Wilmington High School
Teacher: Carlos Luis Brown

Ryan Stolarz

Ryan Stolarz is a 2021 graduate of Bishop Fenwick High School in Peabody. He has been studying French since the fourth grade, most recently with Madame Diane Eromin for four years at Bishop Fenwick. Madame Eromin was instrumental in cultivating his love of francophone language and culture. Interestingly, Ryan is a second-generation student for Madame Eromin, as she taught his mother, Laurie Faria Stolarz, who graduated from Fenwick in 1990. At Fenwick, Ryan became the Vice President and then President of the French Club, where he could share his passion for French with peers while practicing the language and enjoying the cuisine. In his junior year, Ryan won first place at the annual French Language Oratorical Contest sponsored by the Club Richelieu North of Boston. Outside of French, Ryan is a member of the National Honor Society and a captain of the Boys Varsity Tennis Team. He will be attending Tufts University and plans on pursuing his interest in physics as well as continuing his study of French and taking a semester abroad in a Francophone country. He also plans on living in the French dorms for sophomore year where he will speak only French and strengthen his fluency.

Ryan Stolarz
Bishop Fenwick High School
Teacher: Diane Eromin
MaFLA New Teacher Award Winners

MaFLA’s mission encompasses the mentoring, support and professional growth of new teachers in the profession. This commendation and accompanying award recognizes new teachers for demonstrated excellence. Awardees receive a complimentary three-year membership to the Massachusetts Foreign Language Association (MaFLA) and all accompanying benefits. Congratulations to this year’s awardees!

This year MaFLA recognizes:

Ruth M. Ortiz Collazo

Ruth M. Ortiz Collazo, born and raised in Puerto Rico, knew that she wanted to be a teacher from an early age; thus, it is no surprise that she currently finds herself surrounded by eager early language learners as a K-5 Spanish teacher at Schofield Elementary School in Wellesley, MA. She is a high-energy and caring educator devoted to ensuring that all the voices in her classroom are heard and that all of her students find a successful journey in their language proficiency path. Ruth enjoys collaborating and creating with her WLES team to develop enriching language-learning experiences for young learners. Moreover, Ruth M. Ortiz Collazo is passionate about sharing her native language and culture with everyone she meets. It was clear to her colleagues who nominated her that she absolutely loves to be a teacher!

Lily Zhu

Lily Zhu is a teacher at Lexington High School, where she began teaching in 2018. Lily was nominated for her dedication to students, her demonstrated passion for and excellence in teaching. For the past three years, she has been teaching Latin and Mythology and will begin teaching Mandarin as well this coming fall. Lily finds great joy in forming connections with students and guiding them on their journeys as learners of language and culture.

Laura Noonan

Laura Noonan, nominated by colleagues for her passion, dedication and excellence, is a Spanish teacher at Weston High School. Laura enjoys teaching various levels, from novice Spanish to Honors Intermediate, including 6th grade Spanish at Weston Middle School. She earned her B.A. from Boston College and her M.A. at Boston University. She worked and lived in Madrid as a Language and Culture Assistant in a bilingual elementary school. Laura’s professional interests and talents include differentiating instruction and assessment so that all learners can improve their proficiency in Spanish and designing authentic learning tasks that offer choice and appeal to a wide range of learners. Congratulations to Laura!
MaFLA Video Contest Winner

2021 THEME: We Got This!

The MaFLA Video Contest is an exciting combination of technology and creativity where students interpret the year’s theme in a two-minute video to raise awareness of the role that world languages play in their lives and beyond.

This year’s winner was Ryan Forcina. Ryan was a graduating senior of the Class of 2021 at Wilmington High School. He was in Spanish 5H and also earned the Language Opportunity Coalition’s Biliteracy Achievement Award. Ryan’s video submission was an excellent reminder of the importance of the connections languages make especially during this difficult pandemic.

Click here to watch the video!

Ryan Forcina
12th Grade Spanish 5 Honors Student
Wilmington Public High School

Language Award Winners

AATG-MA Teacher Of The Year

Heidemarie Floerke, the AATG-MA Teacher of the Year award winner.

We are pleased to announce the recipient of the AATG Massachusetts Teacher of the Year, an award which recognizes dedication and outstanding contributions to the German teaching profession.

Heidemarie Floerke joined the Modern Foreign Languages Department at Boston Latin School in September 2020, after leading the German program at Lexington High School for almost twenty years, where she launched important innovations to enhance language acquisition. Noteworthy initiatives that were introduced by Ms. Floerke at LHS include an ongoing exchange program with a high school in Germany, as well as regular collaborations with the Goethe Institute, the German International School and the German Consulate General in Boston. Heidemarie is committed to sharing her excitement in “all things German” as much as she can.

AATI/MITA Teacher Of The Year

Patricia Di Silvio
Senior Lecturer in Italian

Patricia Di Silvio is a Senior Lecturer at Tufts University. She served as Coordinator of the Italian Program for 18 years and currently teaches Italian part-time at Tufts. She is an active participant in the AP Italian Language and Culture Program for the College Board.

She served as College Board Advisor and Member of the Italian Development Committee and is currently a Senior Reviewer and Curriculum Advisor for the AP Course Audit. She has been a frequent contributor to the annual meetings of APAC, AATI, MITA, and MaFLA with papers on foreign language methodology and the Italian Curriculum.
**MaFLA Student Award Winners**

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<th>Teacher(s)</th>
<th>Awards to:</th>
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<td>Attleboro High School</td>
<td>Peter Pereira, Teacher</td>
<td>Gabrielle Bosh (SP), Cassondra Stuger (LEAD)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Auburn Senior High School</td>
<td>Daniel Creamer, Teacher</td>
<td>Sara Down (FR), Sabrina Tang (SP), Isabella Vangos (LEAD)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bishop Fenwick High School</td>
<td>Diane Eromin, Teacher</td>
<td>Ryan Stolarz (FR), Tyler DeClercz (SP), Lily Brown (LEAD)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Canton High School</td>
<td>Heidi Olson, Teacher</td>
<td>Michael Bornstein (FR), Kathryn Benson (GER), Amanda Signorini (SP), Adrianna Puccio (ASL), Natalie Mai Khoi Dakklak Nguyen (LEAD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chelmsford High School</td>
<td>Jessica Nollet, Teacher</td>
<td>Cassandra Larkin (SP), Niyati Shroff (FR), Aidan Hennessey (ASL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concord-Carlisle High School</td>
<td>Caitlin Smith, Teacher</td>
<td>Mia Caruso (FR), Stephanie Donovan (LAT), Samantha Wilder (CH), Sophia Hubscher (SP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durfee High School</td>
<td>Dr. Mel Yoken, Teacher</td>
<td>Isabella Desmarais (FR &amp; LEAD)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Duxbury High School</td>
<td>Diane Mehegan, Teacher</td>
<td>Sean Cadorette (ASL), Hannah Nolton (SP), Lily Horgan (LAT), Emerson Hunt (FR) Wes Moran (LEAD)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Falmouth High School</td>
<td>Pat DiPillo, Teacher</td>
<td>Sam Warner (SP), Nathan Chbarbi (FR), Nora Deyo (LEAD)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fontbonne Academy</td>
<td>Anke Herbert, Teacher</td>
<td>Olivia Chiavegato (SP), Ava Lundbohm (FR), Fiona McDonald (LAT), Sitong Li (LEAD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galvin Middle School</td>
<td>Heidi Olson, Teacher</td>
<td>Leah Condon (FR), Kirsten Batitay (SP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hingham High School</td>
<td>Erica Pollard, Teacher</td>
<td>Jillian Rathke (CH), Catherine Manning (SP), Haley McConnell (FR), Emma Nagle (LAT), Carter Anderson (LEAD)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Matignon High School</td>
<td>Paula Gaffey, Teacher</td>
<td>Katerina Krstanovic (FR), Isabela Ferreira-Nakatani (SP), Dylan Griffith (LEAD)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Melrose Public Schools</td>
<td>Denise Wagstaff, Teacher</td>
<td>Ella Fleming (FR), Emma Miller (IT), Will Burke (GER), Julia Foley (SP), Oliver Deeds (LAT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mount Greylock Regional High School</td>
<td>Shannon Vigeant, Teacher</td>
<td>Fiona Williams (SP), Charles McWeeny (LAT), William McDonough (LEAD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Reading</td>
<td>Ana Llamas &amp; Flores Quero, Teachers</td>
<td>Caroline Casey (SP), Nessren Ourdyl (FR), Sommer Reid (LEAD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norton High School</td>
<td>Martha Godfrey, Teacher</td>
<td>Lillian Corner (SP), Caitlyn Bailey (FR), Kevin Mahoney (LEAD)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Notre Dame Academy</td>
<td>Djida Kebir, Teacher</td>
<td>Scarlett Pigeaud (FR), Marlena Eichelroth (SP), Isabella Shackelford (LEAD)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Revere High School</td>
<td>Albert Mogavero, Teacher</td>
<td>Janier Alexander Menjivat (FR), Ivan Garcia Zapata (IT), Daniela Lopez Yepes (SP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bromfield School/Harvard Public Schools</td>
<td>Lisa Terrio, Teacher</td>
<td>Claire Stoddard (FR), Tara Modica (SP)</td>
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<td>Triton High School</td>
<td>Regina Symonds, Teacher</td>
<td>Alden Lentz (FR), Lillian Schroeder (SP), Alexander Sharpe (LEAD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tyngsborough High School</td>
<td>Sarah Silva, Teacher</td>
<td>Award to Stephanie Souza (SP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wakefield High School</td>
<td>Ruben Reinoso, Teacher</td>
<td>Chloe Joyce (SP), Anthony Amatucci (IT), Nora Hagopian (LAT), Georgia Lamarre (FR) Guy-Alexander Jacob (LEAD)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ursuline Academy</td>
<td>Houda Robert, Teacher</td>
<td>Ella Regen (FR), Bermina Cherry (LEAD)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Whitinsville Christian School</td>
<td>Karen Exoo, Teacher</td>
<td>Award to Olivia Fleming (SP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilmington High School</td>
<td>Carlos Brown, Teacher</td>
<td>Alyson Broussard (SP), Landrick Diaz (FR), Aaliyah Abel (LEAD)</td>
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Deadline for the next Issue is Jan. 5