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ON THE COVER:
Karina Eversley has used her Russian language ability in her work at NASA. She is shown here (middle) doing underwater training similar to the zero-G experience of space with two astronauts (one from NASA and one from Japan’s space agency). Learn more about professionals using their language and culture skills in the new section “Language Impact: Where Language Learning Can Lead” on p. 36.

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The Summer 2013 issue of Foreign Language Annals contains a rich body of information to help language educators explore the latest research and apply it in their own classrooms. When the next issue of ACTFL’s journal arrives in your mailbox in June, be sure to check out the following articles:

The Role of Methods Textbooks in Providing Early Training for Teaching with Technology in the Language Classroom Nike Arnold This study focuses on one component of training in computer-assisted language learning (CALL), the textbooks used in methods courses, and employs content analysis to investigate how popular methods textbooks discuss CALL.

Foreign Language Student Teaching: Do Supervisor Qualifications Really Matter? Scott P. Kissau & Bob Algozzine This study compares the beliefs of language teacher candidates and supervisors with and without second language teaching qualifications to explore the extent to which these three groups share similar beliefs about effective language teaching.

Impact of Instruction on Shaping or Reshaping Stereotypical Cultural Representations in an Introductory French Course Isabelle Drewellow Using a combination of interviews and questionnaires, this study explores the ways in which learners’ pre-conceived images and representations of the French language and culture change and develop in an introductory French course.

A Discussion-Based Online Approach to Fostering Deep Cultural Inquiry in an Introductory Language Course Paula Garrett-Rucks This study explores the development of beginning French language learners’ intercultural understanding in a computer-mediated environment where students discussed online cultural instruction among peers, in English, outside of formal instructional time.

Oral Proficiency Standards and Foreign Language Teacher Candidates: Current Findings and Future Research Directions Eileen W. Glisan, Elvira Swender & Eric A. Surface For teacher candidates, the ACTFL/NCATE Program Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers establish minimum oral proficiency levels based on the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines—Speaking. Utilizing ACTFL OPI data, this study examines to what extent candidates are attaining the ACTFL/NCATE Oral Proficiency Standard of Advanced Low in most languages or Intermediate High in Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean.

Spanish Teachers’ Sense of Humor and Student Performance on the National Spanish Exams Peter Swanson This research investigates the relationship between the perceived sense of humor of in-service Spanish teachers and their students’ scores on the National Spanish Exams. The study indicates that teacher sense of humor is related to student achievement on the exams and to the teachers’ future occupational plans to either remain in the classroom or leave the profession.

Conceptualizing Pronunciation as Part of Translingual/Transcultural Competence: New Impulses for SLA Research and the L2 Classroom Mareike Müller The critical discussion of current teaching and research practices shows that the realm of pronunciation has benefited little from debates on intercultural language learning. In order to link the teaching of pronunciation with learner needs in intercultural encounters, this article develops the concept of pronunciation-as-language.

Bilingual Vocabulary Knowledge and Arrival Age Among Japanese Heritage Language Students at Hoshuukoo Yoshiko Mori & Toshiko M. Calder This study examines bilingual vocabulary knowledge in relation to arrival age among Japanese children attending hoshuukoo (i.e., supplementary academic schools for Japanese-speaking students) in the U.S. It examines the relationship between Japanese as a first language and English as a second language, as motivated by the notion of linguistic interdependence.

Does Beginning Foreign Language Instruction in Kindergarten Make a Difference? Results of One District’s Study Beverly A. Boyson, Martha Semmer, Lynn E. Thompson & Marcia H. Rosenbusch This article describes two Spanish programs in the Westport (CT) Public Schools: their new, long-sequence K–8 program and the short-sequence Grade 5–8 program it replaced. A five-year study examined students’ oral and listening comprehension proficiency levels in each program at the end of Grades 5 and 8.

The Value of Short-Term Study Abroad: Learners’ Acquisition of Region-Specific Forms Anne Reynolds-Case This study reveals the effects of a short-term study abroad program in Spain on students’ comprehension and production of the second person plural form, vosotros. The researcher follows a group of students during their four-week program in an effort to assess their exposure to and use of the vosotros form while in Madrid and administers pre- and post-program surveys.
Preparing Students for 21st Century Careers in a Global Community

One of the joys of my job as a high school language teacher is the excitement of Eighth Grade Night. Students from all over the city descend on schools with their parents to learn about high school life. The atmosphere is very much like a carnival with music, T-shirts, cheers, and information about different class choices. We have world language tables filled with brochures, photos, and videos of class activities, as well as current students helping spread the word of the value of language learning.

This year, a determined young woman came up to me and said she wanted to take French next year. I asked her why and without hesitation she replied that she has been researching a video gaming design company and one of the requirements is to know French. She wants to know if I can help her get that job.

Wow, I thought. This student has a plan. Whoa, I then thought. What do I know about video game design? How can I guide this student to follow her passion and do so in French, when I have hardly ever played video games? What do I know about the culture of video gaming—let alone what this looks like as a career option?

Using my best technology literacy skills, I went to the Internet to do some research—only to discover that video gaming is very much like what 21st century learning should be and what 21st century careers are becoming more and more. Jane McGonigal has explored the power of gaming and reveals many important aspects in her recent book and online TED Talk.

First of all, even though there may be competition, players want other gamers to succeed. So in a true sense of collaboration there is help and encouragement as each player moves to “level up.” Secondly, an “epic fail” is not a disaster, but rather an authentic learning experience and another chance to succeed. Through so-called failure, students reflect on their goals and monitor their progress. Next, all viewpoints are seen as valid and add to the richness and creative aspects of the game. Since gamers come from all over the globe, the notion of an interconnected, multilingual, and multicultural world is completely validated within gaming culture. Finally, engaging in a game does not mean a group of similar people in the same confined space playing at the same time from the same type of equipment, rather it is a diverse group of players interested in the same game, playing from locations all over the world, at different times of the day, using all kind of tools to succeed.

How can I take this information and guide this young learner and others to follow their passions? I can start by finding level-appropriate complex texts that will help them frame, analyze, and synthesize information. Texts like these also align with many principles of the Common Core State Standards. Effective collaboration where learners can negotiate meaning across language and culture in order to explore problems and issues from their own and different perspectives is essential. Knowing this, I can incorporate opportunities for students to work together on purposeful and meaningful tasks, such as by finding partner schools in other countries. Maybe there is even a way to find a video gamer mentor in a Frenchophone country for this motivated student. Knowing how important it is to explore one’s own passion, I must find time for students to be self-directed.

Of course, this young woman may or may not ultimately become a video game designer, or it could be one of several careers she will have in her lifetime. What is essential is that as an educator I have helped her develop skills she can transfer to any language and to any 21st century career.

What’s important for us all to remember is that our students are learning the importance of and accepting the challenge to be active members of a global community both competitively as well as in the spirit of collaboration. Our job is to help them along in this journey.

Learn More

Jane McGonigal’s TED Talk: “Gaming Can Make a Better World”
www.ted.com/talks/jane_mcgonigal_gaming_can_make_a_better_world.html

Reality Is Broken: Why Games Make Us Better and How They Can Change the World
www.realityisbroken.org
UK Releases Report on Demand and Supply of Language Skills

In February, the British Academy published a report entitled *Languages: The State of the Nation—Demand and Supply of Language Skills in the UK*, which outlines baseline data on foreign language use and deficits in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales.

Two new pieces of research were specially commissioned to inform the report. These include a survey of UK employers conducted in conjunction with Rosetta Stone and up-to-date language-focused intelligence on the labor market. These are combined with a wide-ranging appraisal of the language policies across the four countries of the United Kingdom and a synthesis of existing evidence on language skills.

*Languages: The State of the Nation* presents both a longitudinal perspective on the UK’s supply of graduates with high language competencies into the labor market and future-scoping of emerging strategic needs. It highlights a “vicious circle of monolingualism,” which in turn is causing market failure in the demand and supply of skilled linguists across all sectors of the UK economy.

Key findings from the report include:

- There is strong evidence that the UK is suffering from a growing deficit in foreign language skills at a time when globally demand for these skills is expanding.
- The range and nature of languages being taught is insufficient to meet current and future demand.
- Language skills are needed at all levels in the workforce, and not simply by an internationally mobile elite.
- A weak supply of language skills is pushing down demand and creating a vicious circle of monolingualism.
- Languages spoken by British school-children, in addition to English, represent a valuable future source of supply—if these skills can be developed appropriately.

These findings offer cause for both cautious optimism and rising concern, say the study’s authors. The diverse demographics and world-class higher education system in the UK provide the tools to respond to the challenges and opportunities of the future. But, too often, education policies are operating in isolation of demand. The report concludes that without action from government, employment, and education sectors, the UK will be unable to meet their aspirations for growth and global influence.

The summary and full reports are available online at www.britac.ac.uk/policy/State_of_the_Nation_2013.cfm.

Similar Effort Pursued in U.S.

A new report called “Languages for All: Perspectives and Evidence,” sponsored by ACTFL, American Councils for International Education, JNCL-NCLIS, the DLI Foundation, as well as the British Academy and the Australian National Academy for the Humanities, will be produced in 2013. This upcoming publication, part of the ENLIGHTEN initiative from the Center for Advanced Study of Language (CASL) at the University of Maryland, will be similar to the recent report released by the British Academy. This effort is designed to showcase evidence of how the language learning process in the United States has improved. The project will be led by Dr. Richard Brecht and will combine research done by CASL with proof of what can be produced with K–12 and postsecondary students. Find out more about this effort in the Q&A interview with Dr. Brecht on p. 39 of this issue.

New Initiative Opens Access to Arabic Science Education

Just before she left her position as Secretary of State in February, Hillary Clinton launched a project that will lower obstacles to scientific education for Arabic-speaking people across the world. In one of her final acts as America’s top diplomat, Clinton launched the Open Book Project (OBP), which will make high-quality educational resources freely available online in the Arabic language.

The OBP is a joint initiative between the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALESCO) and the State Department, focusing mainly on science and technology. According to Clinton, the architects of the project intended that by broadening access to information, people precluded from information by poverty or distance would be more likely to benefit. “Our hope is to lower geographic, economic, and even gender-based barriers to learning,” she said at the project’s launch in Washington.

Open educational resources can be accessed by anyone connected to the Internet. The content can be text, multimedia, or audiovisual. Materials in the program will be released under an open license, meaning creators or copyright holders are allowing it to be adapted and reused. Under this arrangement, materials can be freely downloaded, printed, and distributed. The OBP material will only be available online initially but there are plans for distribution in other media.

Learn more online at www.state.gov/p/nea/openbook.
Bilingual Babies Learn Grammar Early

Infants as young as seven months can distinguish between, and begin to learn, two languages with vastly different grammatical structures, according to new research from the University of British Columbia (UBC) and Université Paris Descartes.

Published February 14 in Nature Communications and presented at the 2013 Annual Meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) in Boston, the study shows that babies in bilingual environments use pitch and duration cues to discriminate between languages with opposite word orders, such as English and Japanese.

In English, a function word comes before a content word (e.g., the dog, his hat, with friends) and the duration of the content word is longer, while in Japanese or Hindi, the order is reversed, and the pitch of the content word higher.

“By as early as seven months, babies are sensitive to these differences and use these as cues to tell the languages apart,” says UBC psychologist Janet Werker, co-author of the study.

Previous research by Werker and Judit Gervain, a linguist at the Université Paris Descartes and also a co-author of the new study, showed that babies use frequency of words in speech to discern their significance.

“For example, in English the words ‘the’ and ‘with’ come up a lot more frequently than other words—they’re essentially learning by counting,” says Gervain. “But babies growing up bilingual need more than that, so they develop new strategies that monolingual babies don’t necessarily need to use.”

“If you speak two languages at home, don’t be afraid, it’s not a zero-sum game,” says Werker. “Your baby is very equipped to keep these languages separate and they do so in remarkable ways.”

Learn more about the study at tinyurl.com/bilingual-babies-grammar.
Bilingual Children Have Better Working Memories

Research recently conducted at the University of Granada in Spain and the University of York in Toronto, Canada, has revealed that bilingual children develop a better working memory, holding, processing, and updating more information over short periods of time compared to monolingual children. The working memory plays a major role in the execution of a wide range of activities, including mental calculation and reading comprehension.

The study—published in the February 2013 issue of the Journal of Experimental Child Psychology—examined how multilingualism influences the development of the “working memory” and investigated the association between the working memory and the cognitive superiority of bilingual people found in previous studies.

The working memory includes the structures and processes associated with the storage and processing of information over short periods of time. It is one of the components of the so-called “executive functions,” which are a set of mechanisms involved in the planning and self-regulation of human behavior. Although the working memory is developed in the first years of life, it can be trained and improved with experience.

According to lead researcher Julia Morales Castillo of the Department of Experimental Psychology at the University of Granada, this study contributes to better understanding of cognitive development in bilingual and monolingual children.

“Other studies have demonstrated that bilingual children are better at planning and cognitive control (i.e., tasks involving ignoring irrelevant information or requiring a dominant response),” she says. “But, to date, there was no evidence on the influence of bilingualism on the working memory.”

The study sample included bilingual children between ages 5 and 7, a critical period in the development of the working memory. The researchers found that bilingual children performed better than monolingual children in working memory tasks. In fact, the more complex the tasks, the better their performance.

“The results of this study suggest that bilingualism does not only improve the working memory in an isolated way, but [the languages] affect the global development of executive functions, especially when they have to interact with each other,” Morales Castillo states.

Find out more about the study online at tinyurl.com/bilingual-children-memories.

John Kerry Demonstrates Linguistic Skills

Former U.S. Senator John Kerry is now the Secretary of State and, in his first trip to Europe in that role, he made use of his multilingual speaking skills with his European hosts. During his February visit, America’s chief diplomat spoke with leaders in French, German, and Italian—even reciting a Thomas Jefferson epigram in French.

While U.S. diplomats are “proud Americans, we are also citizens of the world,” explained Kerry while in London. The son of an American foreign service officer, Kerry attended a Swiss boarding school and lived in Paris, Oslo, and Berlin as a youth.

Saskatchewan Embraces Language Study

Business students in the Canadian province of Saskatchewan will soon be encouraged to study more foreign languages. The government is developing an International Education Strategy—a large part of which aims to better connect Saskatchewan students with international trade and business markets.

According to Assistant Deputy Minister of the Advanced Education Ministry David Boehm, that means focusing on learning languages. “It’s a priority, because Saskatchewan . . . is very connected to the world—we’re a very export-dependent province—so enhanced relationships will be very important and will serve the province very well in the future,” he says.

“One of the ways to enhance those relationships is to encourage business programs . . . to put an emphasis on the development of international languages so they can interact with those markets and those opportunities in a more effective manner.”

Another part of the new International Education Strategy will establish 20 annual scholarships for Saskatchewan students to study at business schools abroad, with the requirement that they return to Saskatchewan for at least five years after they graduate. Currently it is not clear how much money the government will funnel into its strategy. Boehm said the ministry has yet to really work out plans with postsecondary institutions, but that it will be happening in the future.

Aside from creating scholarships and focusing on foreign languages in postsecondary education, the strategy has also set the goal of increasing by 50% the number of international students studying in the province by 2020.

While Boehm thinks they will see the advantage in “setting themselves apart” by knowing foreign languages, the Ministry of Education confirmed there are no plans to encourage more language studies at the elementary or high school level. He did, however, note the Ministry of Education would be “present at the table” as the language plan is developed further.
A computer program could help reconstruct the roots of ancient languages (called protolanguages), according to a recent study by a group of researchers from California and Canada. Linguists have been carefully examining different languages in an effort to determine the protolanguages from which modern day languages have evolved, but it is an arduous task that would take an inordinate amount of time.

“It would take hundreds of lifetimes to pore over all those languages, cross-referencing all the different changes that happened across such an expanse of space—and of time,” says UC Berkeley Associate Professor Dan Klein. “This is where computers shine.”

Researchers tested the program by feeding it 142,000 words from 637 languages currently spoken around Asia and the Pacific. The program generated a protolanguage that scientists believe was spoken in the region roughly 7,000 years ago. Since this was something the researchers knew previously, they were able to assess the program’s accuracy. According to the researchers, over 85% of the words reconstructed by the computer program were only one character off from the words reconstructed by an expert in Austronesian languages (a language family spread throughout the islands of Southeast Asia and the Pacific).

The reconstruction of protolanguages involves identifying patterns in similar words that have variations in the way they are pronounced. According to Klein, “the trick is to identify these patterns of change and then to ‘reverse’ them, basically evolving words backwards in time.” As the program has yet to reach 100% accuracy, it serves only as a tool to speed up the process by helping linguists but it will not replace them. By digging into the language of our ancestors, researchers can also know more about the era in which they lived and understand the world’s history more clearly.

More about the study, published in December 2012 in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, can be found at tinyurl.com/computer-program-languages.

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**TLE Spotlight on...**

**Jill Woerner**

After teaching Spanish at Lawrence Central High School and Pendleton Heights Middle School in Indiana, Jill Woerner became Dean of Students at Zionsville High School. She has served as Department Chair and in many other capacities, and has been active in professional associations. She is a member of the Indiana Foreign Language Teachers Association and the Indiana chapter of the National Network for Early Language Learning (NNELL), and has served as a board member of the Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (CSCFL) and the Indiana chapter of the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese.

Among her awards are Teacher of the Year from the Indiana chapter of NNELL and CSCFL 2012 Teacher of the Year, which made her an ACTFL National Language Teacher of the Year finalist. She also was honored by Indianapolis Mayor Greg Ballard as Latino Teacher of the Year at the city’s first Indiana Latino Expo. Woerner works toward providing her students with unique and realistic experiences that will keep them engaged for many years of language learning. “Reaching our students in meaningful ways requires that we seek every opportunity to learn for, from, and with them,” she says. “Authentic and remarkable materials and experiences exist in their natural state everywhere, and we need to be resourceful enough to discover those gems to maintain our own language skills and to enhance the knowledge and skills of our students.”

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Colorado Immersion School Experiences Rapid Growth

Parents interested in enrolling their children in Dual Immersion Academy in Grand Junction, CO, now must use the district’s lottery system. “[L]ast year we saw a big jump in the interest level and this year we actually have more parents than last year showing interest in enrolling their child in dual immersion,” said principal Monica Heptner. She attributes growth, in part, to an expanded interest in preparing students for life in an increasingly global society.

“Dual Immersion Academy Enrollment Growing,” KKCO-TV NBC Channel 11, 2/7/13

Language School Helps Children Maintain Polish Identity

Every Saturday, children who are Polish immigrants or the descendants of Polish immigrants gather at The Polish Language School of New Bedford in Massachusetts for instruction in the language. The 20 students and their teachers speak only Polish during the three-hour class. The program was developed for the local Polish community to hold onto its ethnic roots, school officials say.

“Polish School Helps New Bedford Immigrants” in The Standard-Times, 1/20/13

New School Targets French Immersion in Southern California

In Signal Hill, CA, Paris native and educator Chantal Harzig opened what might be Southern California’s first French immersion school. In 2008, nearly one million students in the state were learning a foreign language and about three-quarters studied Spanish. Harzig believes her students will benefit in other areas by immersing themselves in French. “It’s a Latin language, so once you learn French, it’s much easier to learn other Latin languages like Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese,” she said.

“Signal Hill Teacher Opens French Immersion School” in The Long Beach Press-Telegram, 1/25/13

Oregon School District Expands Arabic Program

Students in Portland, OR, who enrolled in Lincoln High School’s Arabic course three years ago were the first in the state to study the language. With continued grant funding from the Qatar Foundation International’s Anchor School program, district officials are expanding the Arabic program to a middle school. Grant funding also will give students an opportunity to visit Doha, Qatar, as part of their studies.

“Lincoln High Arabic Program Grows with Student Interest” in The Oregonian, 1/10/13

School in Massachusetts Sees Benefits in Switching to Dual Immersion

Milford Catholic Elementary School in Massachusetts will start a new bilingual education initiative for kindergartners this fall. The school is launching the curriculum through a program affiliated with the National Catholic Educational Association and Boston College. Students will start speaking Spanish 90% of the day, and the school will introduce more English into the school day each subsequent year. “At this age, children are like sponges,” school board member Annette Smith said. “When they learn a language at a younger age they are more likely to become fluent.”

“Milford Catholic to Offer Bilingual Classes Next Year” in The Milford Daily News, 2/1/13

Minnesota District Opens up Language Options

Two elementary schools in White Bear Lake, MN, have started offering Mandarin Chinese to students after considering feedback from parents. Other schools offer Spanish, and district officials say plans for next year include introducing language programs in all elementary schools. In middle school, students’ options include French, German, and ASL.

“White Bear Lake Schools’ Chinese Lessons Expanded” in Pioneer Press, 1/14/13

Find out more online:

Dual Immersion Academy, Grand Junction, CO – dia.mesa.k12.co.us/
Polish Language School, New Bedford, MA – www.polish-school.org/
First French Tutoring, Signal Hill, CA – www.firstfrenchtutoring.com/immersion
Arabic at Lincoln High School, Portland, OR – lincolnarabic.wordpress.com/
Milford Catholic Elementary School, Milford, MA – www.milfordcatholic.org/
The Maryland State Board of Education, recognizing that the state’s diverse student population has opportunities to develop language skills outside the classroom, has approved a model policy to award world language credit for proficiency. Local school systems may use the policy to develop policies and procedures to award credit toward high school graduation based on demonstrated proficiency.

“One of the most valuable skills immigrants bring to our country is their knowledge of foreign languages,” said State Senator James Rosapepe in January. “Maryland is taking the lead in helping immigrants and the children of immigrants keep their heritage language skills as they perfect their English. By awarding high school credit for language skills learned at home, in churches, temples, and mosques, as well as in private community schools, Maryland has created incentives for even more students from immigrant families to become multilingual—a huge economic benefit for our economy and our country.”

Senator Rosapepe, along with State Delegate Joseline Pena-Melnyk, spearheaded legislation that led to the Task Force for the Preservation of Heritage Language Skills in Maryland, established by the Maryland General Assembly in 2008. The Task Force investigated current language preservation efforts and developed new strategies in preserving world language skills in the state. The legislation creating the Task Force recognized that “while it is important for new Americans to learn and master English, there is also a critical shortage of Americans proficient in languages other than English.” The bill recognized that Maryland’s heritage language speakers “comprise a valuable and vastly underutilized linguistic resource.”

One of the recommendations of the Task Force’s January 2009 Report to the Governor and General Assembly was to “support and promote the awarding of high school credit by exam for students who attend non-public heritage language schools in Maryland.”

The State Department of Education convened a statewide validation and standard setting study with key stakeholders and world language experts to select the assessments and set the recommended proficiency levels equated to high school credit that are included in the model policy.

More States Adopting Proficiency-Based Approach

A number of other states are also pursuing the idea of either recognizing or awarding credit for student language proficiency.

According to the website for the National Council of State Supervisors for Languages (NCSSFL), 23 states report a provision to award world language credit based on proficiency. These include California, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

Some states, such as Georgia and Tennessee, note that this provision is in place for native speakers only. Others, such as South Carolina, say that this issue is currently under discussion. Some—including Kansas, Pennsylvania, and Louisiana—note that this is a decision made by individual school districts and not at the state level.

To learn more about an individual state’s response, go to www.ncssfl.org/reports2/index.php?reports_index and choose Question #7: “Does your state have a provision to award world language credit to a student based on proficiency?” Scroll down the page and click on “View Question Report” to see the state-by-state responses.

Two states have also embraced an emphasis on proficiency in a different way, through a “Seal of Biliteracy.” Starting out in California in 2008, the organization Californians Together championed the Seal—an award affixed to the diploma of a high school graduate who has studied and attained proficiency in two or more languages. Californians Together worked throughout the state to help school sites, districts, and others adopt and implement the Seal.

Legislation creating a California State Seal of Biliteracy was passed in 2011 and, in 2012, the state of New York also adopted the Seal. Other states are now pursuing similar policies.

While the Seal of Biliteracy does not award the recipients credit, it does recognize their achievement of language proficiency and is a statement of accomplishment for future employers and for college admissions. More information on the Seal of Biliteracy, including implementation steps and assessment criteria, is available at sealofbiliteracy.org.
Netop Vision Classroom Management Software Helps Integrate Technology Into Classrooms

Netop Vision Classroom Management Software allows teachers to view students' computer screens from their own display, guide how students are using their computers, and interact screen-to-screen.

Vision Classroom Management Software gives teachers the ability to:

- View a screenshot of each computer in the classroom from the teacher’s display, so teachers can follow students’ work in real time
- Communicate with the class screen-to-screen including by using chat, operating a student’s computer for them, or demonstrating tasks directly on student screens—all from the teacher’s computer
- Turn Internet access on or off entirely, or just choose specific websites to block or allow
- Select the applications the teacher wants the class to work in while blocking others
- Distribute files, collect assignments, and launch websites for the whole class in a click, saving lost transition time


For more information, including a feature comparison of each version, visit www.netop.com/classroom-management-software.htm.

Game Guroo Helps Teachers Create Online Educational Games

Game Guroo, an offshoot of Michigan-based educational tool developer, Teacher’s Discovery, allows teachers to create educational games and assignments in French, German, and Spanish.

The subscription-based service offers nine customizable game templates to tailor activities to the lesson and features a user-friendly “game creator” that walks teachers through each step.

Other features include:

- Homework games and preloaded games
- Ability to project games in the classroom
- Projectable flash card sets
- The ability to share activities with other teachers

Guroo automatically tracks student progress, including how much time they spend on an activity, their highest score, and how many attempts they make.

Subscriptions are available for six-month or one-year timeframes, and a free, 30-day trial is available.

For more information visit www.gameguroo.com.

Best of Punto Com Gathers Online Spanish Resources in One Place

Best of Punto com was created as a way to help find and use meaningful and fun world language learning materials from the Internet and is a fairly comprehensive resource site compiled by three Spanish teachers. The site includes links to videos, podcasts, news sites, project creator sites, digital texts, and other resources.

In addition to the useful listing of sites, the authors created standards-based materials to accompany the sites and offer suggestions for standards-based activities that can be used with each site. Some websites are accompanied by free, fully developed activities while others are available for a small fee. These materials developed by the authors are based on Wisconsin’s Model Academic Standards for Foreign Languages and on the three modes of the Communication goal area: interpersonal, interpretive and presentational.

For more information, visit bestofpuntocom.net.

LangMedia Offers Materials for Less Commonly Taught Languages

LangMedia provides materials developed by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages to support the learning of languages less commonly offered by colleges and universities in the United States. It also provides authentic materials depicting differences in regional dialects and language usage among speakers of the more commonly taught languages worldwide.

Resources are available in nearly three dozen languages, including Arabic, Bangla, Croatian, Czech, Farsi, Hindi, Persian, Swahili, Thai, and Urdu.

A major component of LangMedia is its CultureTalk section, which features video clips of interviews and discussions with people from many different countries and of many different ages and walks of life. Some interviews and discussions are in English; more are in the language(s) of the countries involved. Translations and/or transcripts are given for all non-English video clips. Topics include family, food, education, religious and cultural customs, work, art, sports, travel, and more. It also offers a selection of other multimedia offerings, as well as course guides to assist students studying a less commonly taught language.

For more information, and to view a full listing of available materials, please visit langmedia.fivecolleges.edu.

Share Your Ware!

The Language Educator would like to hear from you.

If you know of any new foreign language technology, software, or hardware, that you have used or reviewed, please send the information via e-mail to scutshall@actfl.org.
The U.S. is under cyber attack, every minute of every day. That’s why cyberspace has become today’s new front line. What you know can make a difference at the National Security Agency. Whether it’s collecting foreign intelligence or preventing foreign adversaries from accessing U.S. secrets, you can protect the nation by putting your intelligence to work. Explore technology that’s years ahead of the private sector. Plus exciting career fields, paid internships, co-op and scholarship opportunities. See how you can be a part of our tradition of excellence and help the nation stay a step ahead of the cyber threat.

NSA has a critical need for individuals with the following language capabilities:

- Arabic
- Chinese (Mandarin)
- Pashto
- Persian-Dari
- Persian-Farsi
- Russian
- South and Central Asian languages
- Somali
- And other less commonly taught languages

U.S. citizenship is required. NSA is an Equal Opportunity Employer. All applicants for employment are considered without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, or status as a parent.
A Guide to Help You Go Wisely

In THE SAVVY TRAVELER—Advice for Smart Travel and Study Abroad, we present ideas and advice for how to make overseas travel and study a great success for you and your students! We not only offer tips and strategies, but we also focus on successful programs and stories of student and educator experiences abroad. Submit your travel-related ideas and articles for THE SAVVY TRAVELER to us via e-mail at scutshall@actfl.org.

PASSPORT-PLUS: WHAT YOU MAY NEED FOR OVERSEAS TRAVEL

Many of us can remember a time when it was much easier to travel to other countries and even that a passport was not always necessary. While it may have been different years ago, today you must have a passport for most anywhere you want to travel outside the United States—and to get back into the United States from other countries. The only exceptions are a few nearby island countries, Canada, and Mexico—where you can cross borders with other identification, but only by ground or sea. In the end, you are safer to always carry your passport with you any time you leave the country.

Unfortunately, though required, simply having a valid passport may not be enough. You might also need to ensure that your passport is not set to expire any time soon, or that you have enough blank pages, or that you have obtained a visa in advance.

Among the countries who demand a passport with remaining validity ranging from one to six months are: Bolivia, China, Ecuador, Estonia, French Polynesia (Tahiti), Jordan, and most countries in Southeast Asia. This is often measured from the end of your visit, not the beginning.

Some countries require one or two blank pages in your passport, including South Africa, Turkey, and possibly others. Frequent travelers who have many of their pages stamped can find this to be an unexpected problem, despite having a valid passport.

Many popular destination countries require visitors to obtain visas issued in advance of travel, including Brazil, China, India, Russia, and Vietnam. Several others require visas but issue them on arrival at your entry airport. Some countries, including Australia and Sri Lanka, require you to arrange an “electronic travel authority” in advance, which you can do online.

A few South American countries—notably Argentina and Chile—assess a $160 fee on U.S. visitors in retaliation for a fee the U.S. imposes on their citizens, but Chile lets you pay on arrival.

These entry requirements apply to travelers who are tourists and plan to stay only a limited time, and maximum stay periods for tourists typically vary from 30 to 90 days. If travel plans include work or study in a foreign country, requirements typically vary and are usually more involved.

In general, foreign governments will not assist if you somehow arrive without proper documentation. Instead, they’ll refuse to admit you and send you on a plane heading back where you came from—at your expense. Airlines are supposed to check for compliance before you leave the United States, but issues sometimes still arise.

One way to be sure you are completely prepared is to visit the U.S. State Department website giving country-by-country rundowns at travel.state.gov/travel. Click on the country where you are going and you can easily find the “Entry/Exit Requirements for U.S. Citizens” link, as well as other helpful sections. You can also visit the website of the country’s embassy to access the most recent visa information. Find a comprehensive list of foreign embassies here: tinyurl.com/foreign-embassies-websites.

ADVICE FOR THOSE RETURNING FROM STUDY ABROAD

When students come home from study abroad, they usually have many wonderful stories to tell of their unforgettable experiences. However there can also be some challenges in the return process, or the students may not know how best to capitalize on what they learned. You may wish to share some of these helpful links with your students:

Showcasing Study Abroad on Your Résumé

www.studyabroad.com/articles/showcasing-study-abroad-on-your-resume.aspx

In this article, Rachael Kroot demonstrates how students can highlight what they gained in their time abroad. She suggests that they may want to add all the countries where they have traveled in the “Skills” section on the résumé, but notes that students should be careful when making such a list.

“It was never my intention to come across as bragging; the point for me was simply to capture the employer’s interest (while still leaving room for all of my relevant work experience elsewhere on the page). For instance, when applying to a job at a travel agency, I thought it would be beneficial for them to see I had extensive travel experience outside of work.”
Kroot says that in many scenarios, it is more practical to explain the skills gained abroad, such as:

- Adaptability and flexibility in new situations
- Strong listening and communication skills
- Comfortable working with people from different cultures

She says that students may consider adding a section on “International Experience” that details all the experiences and skills gained overseas.

“If you intern abroad, that would also be a great thing to add,” writes Kroot. “An internship can go either in the ‘International Experience’ section, or in a ‘Work Experience’ section. Just make sure to highlight any major projects you worked on or any cultural experiences you would not have gained elsewhere.”

**Top Ten Challenges for Study Abroad Returnees**


This list is presented on the University of Denver’s website and was adapted from a list originally created by Dr. Bruce La Brack, School of International Studies, University of the Pacific. The list, in brief, includes:

1. Boredom  
2. No one wants to hear  
3. You can’t explain  
4. Reverse “homesickness”  
5. Relationships have changed  
6. People see the “wrong” changes  
7. People misunderstand  
8. Feeling of alienation/seeing with “critical eyes”  
9. Inability to apply new knowledge and skills  
10. Loss/compartmentalization of experience (“shoeboxing”)

The site details each challenge and offers some suggestions for what to do about them.

**Five Things NOT to Do After Returning from Abroad**

matadornetwork.com/abroad/5-things-not-to-do-after-returning-from-abroad/

Colin May offers some tips geared towards young people for successful reentry to the United States after studying, living, or traveling abroad. These include: (1) Don’t go on and on and on and on; (2) Don’t pretend to be from your host country; (3) Don’t act “holier-than-thou”; (4) Don’t flaunt it; and (5) Don’t “hate on” the United States.

May offers advice such as: keep your stories specific and brief, connect with people from your host country on campus or in your community when feeling nostalgic, find positive ways to channel your newfound interests, remember how lucky you are to have had this experience and be sensitive when sharing stories with someone who hasn’t been abroad yet, and bring the same eagerness to learn and explore that you had abroad home with you.
Q: How do you demonstrate to your students the usefulness of linguistic and cultural knowledge for their future careers? Which methods and support systems assist you in preparing students for the global workplace of the 21st century and ensuring their mastery of 21st century skills?

Many high school students don’t have any idea what their future career will be so I try to demonstrate the importance of global awareness and to think beyond the here and now. Technology plays a crucial role in my classroom. The resources are abundant: online realia from foreign countries, social networking, and even the use of film, to name a few. Knowing about other cultures and environments will help them to make informed decisions, regardless of where they find themselves 10 years from now.

Linda Rence, French
Put-in-Bay School, Put-in-Bay, OH

We have an organization in our Canadian province (New Brunswick) called “Dialogue NB,” where Francophone students participate in varied programs with Anglophone students. For example, students will e-mail one another or make videos to send to each other. The end result is a meeting/encounter in June. Students see the usefulness of learning another language and the culture!

Paul-Emile Chiasson, English/French
University of New Brunswick, Saint John, NB, Canada

My advanced students actually do a phone interview with my professional Hispanic friends and relatives. Each group prepares questions for their interviewee in Spanish about their origin and profession. Each group then calls via speaker phone their individual (one NASA engineer, several lawyers, doctors, accountants, and other professions.) The students are extremely nervous but really enjoy the experience. Logistically, it takes a lot of planning, but again it’s worth it.

Kimberly Ponce de Leon, Spanish
Shaker Heights High School, Shaker Heights, OH

I am applying for a State Department position that requires language abilities. The students are going to watch me go through the process and will view my letters of recommendation/CV. I am hoping to show them that there are several career options through the government that require language and cultural knowledge.

Catherine Ousselin, French
Mount Vernon High School, Mount Vernon, WA
Many aspects of the Chinese culture differ greatly from those of the United States. The one aspect that I emphasize the most is hierarchy. Understanding of this idea and being able to incorporate it into language use will help their workplace performance in a Chinese society. I believe that role-play helps students understand the importance of learning how to use language in a way that is both linguistically accurate and culturally acceptable.

Hsiao-Chen Pan, Chinese
Wesleyan College, Macon, GA

Most of my students have lived in Japan for years and can speak Japanese fluently. They know the Japanese cultural background well. However, knowledge cannot make people have global views. So I have my students think about: “What kind of products in your country can be sold in Japan as a business?” To answer this assignment, they need a global perspective as well as the knowledge of their own country and Japan. We need to give assignments which require learners to consider circumstances from a global viewpoint. First, everyone in class thinks about what they want to put on sale and why. They work in groups of four to five, then they introduce the idea as a group to the class.

Masayo Iijima, Japanese
Japan Online School
Yokohama, Kanagawa, Japan

We have a relatively small population of Hispanics in our community (St. Louis ranks 34 out of 35 for Hispanic population among major U.S. cities), so we do a unit about Latinos in America that looks beyond our own backyard. We place a strong emphasis on not just knowing the language, but also understanding the culture. This clearly links to so many different professions.

Kimberly Lackey, Spanish
Eureka High School, Eureka, MO

Through the Internet and realia, we can help even the most naïve students to discover language as a tool for global communication. I try to take time to impress upon my students how widely spoken the French language is, and bring in natives or testimonials via the Internet to provide concrete examples of success based on cultural and linguistic knowledge. Teaching culture at all levels of language acquisition, and emphasizing skills can help language students apply what they learn with us to their other areas of study. Cultural and linguistic knowledge enhance most career paths directly (in the case of international business, overseas posts, and so forth); but also indirectly by helping students become more well-rounded and conversant on diverse topics. Language learning provides personal growth from analyses of different mores and mentalities that come out effervescently in language classrooms. The American Association of Teachers of French (AATF) and other agencies that disseminate this message are also key.

Randi Polk, French
Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, KY

In Spanish IV, I do a survey to see what kids want to be when they grow up. Then, I have them do some research about the company they would like to work for. I have them fill out applications in Spanish. Finally, I have them do a webquest in which they research bilingualism in the workplace. I sometimes find bilingual people in that field and have them come in and speak to the class.

Stephanie Bailey Weltz, Spanish
Battery Creek High School, Beaufort, SC

To help make relevant connections to students’ future professions, I started a world language community advisory board. This board is made up of professionals from many career paths, parents, senior student leaders, and administrators. It has been an amazing resource for our students. We have opportunities for speakers, interaction with professionals, and university connections to help students pursue their language and careers. The board has established a “21st Century Global Opportunities Night” to bring various businesses and organizations to Jackson High School for an evening with our students. We have had this for two years now, with attendance at around 500. Parents enjoy attending with their students, visiting the various tables and learning of opportunities for using world languages in 21st century careers, opening special doors to their children because of their language skills. After the evening, we debrief in class (in the target language of course) and students note that they are motivated to study language longer. One speaker emphatically told our students, “Don’t just study a language, learn to communicate it.” Those words resonated through the crowd!

Parthena Draggett, Spanish
Jackson High School, Massillon, OH

Check out Language Impact!
In this issue on p. 36, we introduce a new section that will regularly feature professionals in careers where they use their language skills. Feel free to share these stories with your students!

Share the So You Say Questions
We appreciate your help in getting more voices to include in this section. Please feel free to share the upcoming questions with your colleagues in the language education profession and urge them to send in their own responses. Mention them in person, via e-mail, on a listserv, or through a social network like Facebook or Twitter. Keep the great ideas coming!
In the pursuit of 21st century-style learning, behind-the-scenes work will determine success or failure.

EDITOR’S NOTE: In this issue of *The Language Educator*, we complete our series examining 21st century skills as defined by the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21)—with a look at the critical support systems necessary to ensure student mastery of 21st century skills and produce 21st century outcomes for today’s students.

In the national pursuit of 21st century-style learning, students occupy center stage. But as with any performance, it is the behind-the-scenes work that will determine success or failure.

State, district, and school leaders charged with putting next-generation education initiatives into practice have a convenient playbook: a set of implementation guides published by P21, a broad coalition of businesses and education non-profits. Each guide reflects one of five 21st century support systems: standards, curriculum and instruction, assessment, professional development, and learning environments.

These guides collectively outline the groundwork required to ready students for the demands of life, college, and career in the coming decades. The vital role of language learning in this endeavor is spelled out in the 21st Century Skills Map for World Languages, a document created by ACTFL and P21 with input from hundreds of individual teachers. Like the Skills Map, the support system implementation guides provide action steps as well as examples of pioneering projects states have already undertaken.

A growing incubator of 21st century skills, Lexington School District One in South Carolina has in recent years been the scene of ground-shaking change. This year the district hired 46 world language teachers; made languages a core subject in middle school on par with math, science, social studies and English; and completed a roll-out of 16,000 iPads for students and staff.
Those initiatives support the district’s goal that, by 2020, 75% of students will graduate with an Intermediate proficiency rating in a second language, says Alisha Dawn Samples, Coordinator for World Languages and Partial Immersion. But that has required support systems and strong direction from the top. “You have to have leadership that believes in the importance of language learning for all students for something like this to happen,” Samples says. “When they’re on board to make it happen, the rest will fall in place.”

She recalls a meeting several years ago with District Superintendent Karen Woodward, who asked what Samples would like to see happen with the world languages curriculum. “I said, ‘That depends: Are we about experiences or communication? Just dabbling with languages or achieving proficiency?’” Samples recalls: “Dr. Woodward went and learned all sorts of things. Then she came back and said, ‘We are about proficiency. We want young people who can communicate because that is what being a 21st century citizen is all about.’”

Embracing Standards

A primary P21 aim is integrating next-generation skills—and themes such as global awareness and civic literacy—into core subject area standards while emphasizing essential understanding over memorization of isolated facts. Language teachers, of course, have the National Standards for Learning Languages, with goal areas known as the “5 Cs” (Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities), to guide high-quality instruction in languages. The Common Core State Standards, being embraced nationally, also offer a guide to what should be taught in schools at the K–12 level. ACTFL has created a crosswalk document showing how the National Standards align with the Common Core Standards, offering a complete picture of standards-based instruction for languages.

The emphasis on developing modern skills is evident in Lexington One’s vision statement, which drives district educators to produce “self-directed, creative, collaborative, caring, and multilingual” graduates who “flourish in a global, competitive 21st century.”

But for some teachers, making standards and performance-based assessment the motor of instruction represents a revolution in practice. “This is a fundamental shift to really helping learners use 21st century skills—not just talk about them but use them in a way that is authentic,” Samples says. Her district’s strides are being noticed. “We have people calling saying, ‘We hear you’re hiring.’ But you can’t walk in and continue doing what you are doing. We have teachers who are sort of at the introductory level who are getting their feet wet with what we’re doing, but even that level involves getting away from being textbook-driven and away from lists.”

One teacher shared an e-mail with Samples that he had written to a student’s guidance counselor. He was “stunned,” he told her, to realize the degree of professional language he was able to use in describing the student’s proficiency, something he couldn’t have imagined just a year or two before. Administrators, too, are better equipped to discuss the fine points of language proficiency following district-wide education efforts, Samples says.

With students in the district’s 27 schools coming from a spectrum of socioeconomic backgrounds, community collaboration has been another important effort. A task force formed five years ago meets quarterly to discuss district initiatives and includes business owners, college representatives, parents, teachers, and students. Members of the world languages department have given their own presentations for community groups.

Another focus has been on rating student proficiency. Middle school students receive proficiency scores rather than grades, reflecting routine professional development that includes training on the use of rubrics. Among the tools that have been critical in helping teachers identify areas for growth are the guidelines from the Teacher Effectiveness for Language Learning (TELL) Project. Teachers this year set TELL-related goals and, together with colleagues, decided on strategies for meeting them.

TELL has established characteristics and behaviors that model teachers exhibit, with seven domains organized around the three competency standards of the National Board

Continued on p. 23
Changing the Focus to 21st Century Skills: One Educator’s Experience

By Sherrie Ray-Treviño

When first approached to be a presenter in a series of workshops on the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21) at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, I was initially hesitant. The purpose of the workshops was to facilitate teachers’ understanding of P21 concepts and to better enable them to create activities that foster the expectations described in the P21 Framework. I was unsure of participating because I was not a knowledgeable P21 teacher.

My initial reluctance soon turned into a personal challenge as I decided to approach the process differently by first implementing the P21 Framework into my university classes before planning what I would share with participants. I teach mostly lower-level required language courses, and my concern arose from a belief that I needed to experience P21 in the classroom before attempting to lead others to a belief that I needed to experience P21 in the classroom. While any change can be daunting, I recognized that it was especially important to take into account and plan for student reactions since student performance on the new requirements would be a significant component of the course grade. I decided to provide students with the information that I was using in order to redesign the course. To begin with, I provided students with copies of the 21st Century Skills Map for World Languages and I explained how the skills and the themes interacted. I dedicated some time to discussing the P21 Framework and the ideas behind it. I also encouraged students to speak openly about what this meant to them in their educational journey, their future careers, and how an approach like this could be beneficial.

The opposition was strong at first because students expected to be graded on the usual quizzes and exams. I let the students know that the P21 initiative was also new to me and that we would work together to accomplish the agreed upon goals. As a class, we discussed what the students thought a 21st century learning environment should look like as we examined the interdisciplinary themes and the 11 skill areas. We used the Skills Map as a guide and discussed what students thought they needed to know by the end of the semester—thus employing a backward design approach to the class. I encouraged students to do the same in order to accomplish their particular goals while working on the various projects. Though initially skeptical, several groups of students became incredibly engaged in the process and the products they created. Additionally, I constantly encouraged students to work directly with area businesses or volunteer groups, to incorporate material from their major or minor classes, and to think about how they would like to be able to use the Spanish language after graduation.

Many students were hesitant and did not like the self-directed nature of the projects and blogs. I had numerous students e-mail me asking, “What is it that you want me to write about?” or “What exactly am I supposed to do?” throughout the entire semester. When this occurred, I had to spend time advising students in order to figure out what the true roadblock was in each situation. Interestingly enough, it tended to be the highest-achieving students who had the toughest time with the changes. Apparently, the ambiguous nature of the assignments seemed to make some students very nervous even though I provided very detailed rubrics for each formal assessment. Furthermore and as required by the common syllabus, I also gave my students the traditional, common final exams that all of the other Spanish students took that semester. Not surprisingly, I did not find any differences in the grades when compared to the more traditionally taught courses. Overall, I felt the students did a great job, and I think many of them (more so than in previous semesters) truly realized how learning a language can and will help them accomplish different expectations for student performance.
their long-term goals in the private or public sectors.

I think one of the main challenges associated with shifting to the P21 Framework for me was the fact that most students are still accustomed to very traditional assessments. Students had to adjust to a new teacher and a different approach very quickly. Some were initially very worried about their grades, but the more we worked together, those fears subsided. At the end of the semester, many students even expressed their preference for the self-directed nature of the course.

Personally, I believe that any teacher who does this could be met with some resistance since students are taught from a very young age to do what the teacher says and that school subjects are extremely disconnected. This reinforced for me the fact that students need to be exposed to a more holistic approach to education from the very beginning.

Students must understand how interconnected our world is and that the isolated subjects they are learning in school are not exactly isolated in the real world. I believe my students realized through the adoption of the expectations outlined by the Partnership for 21st Century Skills that they need to be able to use their language skills in many different areas of their lives in order to become fully developed global citizens. My hope is that many of my students will continue to learn the language now that they have experienced the benefits firsthand.

Sherrie Ray-Treviño is a Senior Instructor of Spanish at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

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for Professional Teaching Standards: (1) preparing for student learning, (2) advancing student learning, and (3) supporting student learning. The domains (echoing many of the ideas in the P21 Framework) are learning environment, planning, teaching the lesson, assessment, resources, collaboration and professionalism—answering questions including:

How do I establish a safe and supportive learning environment with my students?
How do I maximize student learning through my instructional planning?
What high-yield strategies help my students achieve the daily performance objectives?
How do my students and I use assessments to show what they can do with what they know?
How do my students and I capitalize on a variety of resources to maximize student learning?
How does my collaboration with stakeholders support student learning?
How does my continued growth as a professional support student learning?

Crafting Curriculum and Instruction

Curricula, according to the P21 implementation guide addressing the topic, must be designed with activities that "produce deep understanding and authentic application of 21st century skills." That prescription positions teachers as "guides on the side," who pose critical questions to students and then help them discover resources that lead to answers.

“It takes a lot of reflection and creativity on the part of the teacher,” says Laura Terrill, a veteran educator who now works with district world language departments as an independent consultant. “Students may have been brought up as passive learners, so those who have always been given answers will need training, too. Part of that is tapping into the desire students have to learn about certain topics on their own.”

For traditionalists, that may mean letting go of vocabulary lists and textbook exercises. An alternative, Terrill says, is having students brainstorm methods of communicating and sustaining conversation in different situations and then giving them guidance to find the vocabulary they will need to carry out those tasks.

Another consideration is articulation. For example, in districts offering Advanced Placement (AP) exams, how do teachers’ lessons and units at lower levels align with AP’s six global themes? In such districts, “the threads of that curriculum should be evident all the way through,” Terrill says. “We need to give our topics bigger thematic brush strokes. After that, we’ll have more P21 automatically.” [Learn more about the revised AP Program and its global themes on p. 52 of this issue.]

Terrill and ACTFL President Toni Theisen together created a Novice-level unit on hunger that poses issues beginner students
can talk about in simple terms but wrestle with at a deeper level. “You can go beyond the questions of ‘Do you like hamburgers?’ to ‘What is the percentage of hunger in this or that country?’ or ‘What are the staple foods in different places and the nutritional levels of each?’” Terrill says. “You can still say you are hungry but the context of that statement becomes the world.”

**Assessment of 21st Century Skills**

Consensus has grown that modern assessments need to be performance-based, measuring skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, and media literacy. Formative assessments should be designed to help students develop those skills, and lead to summative measures that allow comparisons of student results with those of other countries.

Teachers accustomed to traditional models of instruction need time to absorb that new set of challenges and support in carrying them out, Terrill says. “It’s not just a matter of adding this or that, but rethinking the curriculum and units, focusing in particular on the performance assessments that will anchor each unit,” she says. “It’s in the performance assessment that you need to see evidence of 21st century skills. Teachers have to make sure their students are creating new products or being asked to solve a problem that reflects real world tasks.”

Sara-Elizabeth Cottrell, Spanish teacher at Whitefield Academy in Louisville, KY, says that unless working on a specific AP-prep exercise, she avoids testing methods such as multiple-choice questions and instead asks the questions: “How?” and “Why?”

“Multiple-choice questions train students to look at problems in one of two ways: (1) What is the ‘right’ answer? and (2) What is the answer the test writer wants from me? Neither develops critical skills and neither prepares students to be helpful, productive, thinking adults in the 21st century. People who continue this thinking into adulthood cannot approach a problem and really solve it. They can only repeat sound bites and avoid compromise.”

She continues, “Something I often say is: If the answer to a question is ‘Who cares?’ then the question was not worth asking. But if the answer to a question is ‘I don’t know, but I care,’ then we’ll actually learn something. Too often, the answer to a multiple-choice question is ‘Who cares?’”

ACTFL, regional, and state language associations all offer a variety of assessment tools, as do state departments of education. Of particular value, many teachers say, are the Integrated Performance Assessments (IPAs), thematic units, and other resources that peers post on wikis and other online sites. That willingness to share the fruits of one’s labor represents a sea change and helps move the entire profession forward, Terrill says.

“More and more, we teachers are posting our work and letting others take it,” she says. “The idea of putting your name on something and owning it—you don’t find that mindset as prevalent in the new generation of teachers.”

**Professional Development for Today**

In responding to the need for high-quality professional development for language educators, Terrill says she is encouraged by the growth in webinars, professional learning networks (PLNs), and other forms of online peer support.

Webinars such as those offered regularly by ACTFL “can be a way to feature teachers who have created performance tasks and can highlight evidence of critical thinking and problem solving,” she says. “A lot of outside speakers may talk P21 but may not have examples that speak to world language instructors.”

Priscilla Russel, Supervisor of K–12 World Languages and ESL/Bilingual Programs in Princeton, NJ, uses a professional development model that combines equal parts reflection and action. After arranging to view and take part in webinars, teacher teams reflect on what they have learned, then test out a lesson that incorporates their new insights. Follow-up discussions focus on what worked and did not, and how to make corrections.

Russel also looks for opportunities for in-house sessions. In one series of talks, French teacher Karen Parker walked colleagues through the uses of Edmodo (www.edmodo.com), a site that allows instructors to post assignments, quizzes, surveys, and resources for students, who can create profiles and engage in written exchanges. Parker explained basic functions such as registering students, creating small groups, and adding resources to the virtual library, then she set the teachers loose to test and explore. The group got together twice more over the next four weeks to share challenges and successes.

Terrill sees promise in replicating that reflection–action model elsewhere. “It’s not enough to just hear the information,” she says. “What we know about learning is you have to process it and practice it.”

How to motivate instructors to seek growth opportunities on their own? To reflect how professional development is changing, teachers should be able to earn credit for participating in online forums such as the ACTFL Online Community (community.actfl.org) or the FL Teach listserv (web.cortland.edu/fleteach), argues French teacher Lisa Lilley, 2010 ACTFL National Language Teacher of the Year.

“We’re still seeing a lot of face-to-face delivery [of professional development] in our
21st Century Learning Environments

Learning environment design begins with the classroom space in which most daily interaction takes place. In an American Architectural Foundation report, Elizabeth Lo- dal, former principal of Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology in Fairfax County, VA, argues that students today “need to be inspired to become creative problem solvers and intellectual risk takers so that they are prepared for the world of the 21st century. School design will either inhibit or support and enhance such a robust education program.”

Design experts say students’ physical spaces should be flexible and adaptable, promote collaboration and sharing, and connect students with the world outside the classroom—both their immediate communities and those found online.

Terrill urges schools to embrace a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) culture. “We can’t keep up with the technology demands of school today. Allowing that culture to prevail is something within the control of school. Otherwise we’re limiting what students can access,” she says.

In Lexington One, all students get access to the same programs. The district’s iPads, for example, have created many opportunities, Samples says, especially in the world languages department. “But trying to keep teachers ahead of the curve is a tough challenge,” she says. “We have to help them prepare to keep students on task and focused so they don’t have time to go in the wrong direction. [The iPad] really is just a tool that we ask teachers to use when appropriate, to do things that are creative and collaborative.”

Don Doehla makes technology-supported collaboration a centerpiece of the project-based learning he has championed as a French teacher at Vintage High School in Napa, CA, and as moderator of the world languages forum on Edutopia.org.

Sites he taps to spark exchanges among students include todaysmeet.com, which displays users’ posts in a thread, and evernote.com, an application in which users can organize online resources into categorized notebooks. That lets students e-mail assignments to their instructor’s Evernote address; if they include a teacher-provided code in the subject line, the document automatically drops into a shared notebook.

A look at a project Doehla’s French 3 students are now undertaking shows the potential for students to hone their 21st century skills when the right ingredients are in place. The heart of the students’ work involves writing a script, composing a storyboard, and creating a short film based on the French children’s story series, Le Petit Nicolas. Teams write collaboratively using Google Docs, together decide and keep track of member duties, and determine culturally appropriate ways for their characters to act and speak—ideas they can bounce off French teens as part of a class pairing. Community members ultimately will be invited to the school to view the films, which will be shared with the rest of the world via YouTube.

“In project-based learning, students are invited to work in teams—like in many workplaces—to produce a product which shows what they know as a result of inquiry,” Doehla says. “I have found that my students are more excited about what they are learning because they are inspired to dig in deeper to synthesize the various details of the project before them into an organized whole.” In that way, he says, “we ensure students have choices about what they need to learn and how they will demonstrate their learning.”

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**TLE Spotlight on... Lucy Lee**

In 1990, Lucy Lee started the Chinese program at Livingston High School in Livingston, NJ, where she has taught all levels of Chinese classes and is the advisor to the Chinese Culture Club, the Joy Luck Club, and the Chinese Honor Society. She served two terms as President of the Chinese Language Association of Secondary-Elementary Schools (CLASS), and has served on the boards of the Chinese Language Teachers Association, the Foreign Language Educators of New Jersey (FLENJ), and the National Council of Less Commonly Taught Languages. She has been honored with the FLENJ Professional Award, CLASS Professional Service Award, and A+ For Kids Teacher Award, and most recently she was named Teacher of the Year for her district. As the 2012 Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (NECTFL) Teacher of the Year, Lee was an ACTFL National Language Teacher of the Year finalist. Her many contributions to the profession have included co-chairing the Chinese National Standards Project and co-authoring the CLASS Professional Standards for K–12 Chinese Language Teachers.

Lee’s main goal is for her students to be able to engage in meaningful communication in real-life situations. “Through learning the language, students gain a better understanding of the perspectives of other cultures and compare the language and cultures learned with their own,” she explains. “Knowledge of a second language serves students well in our interconnected world. It opens the door to job opportunities in the global economy and makes more media accessible, enriching public discussion of current issues.”
Far too often when adults recall their early language learning experiences, they lament that they studied in school for years and yet cannot remember much in the target language beyond how to ask, “Can I go to the bathroom?” Some feel it is their own inadequacy for not having learned the language despite hours of instructional time; they decide that they must lack intelligence or language ability, or they believe that learning a second language is simply unattainable to anyone beyond age eight.

It is unacceptable that such reactions to language learning experiences are so common. As educators, we must all agree today that this “business as usual” approach simply does not work.

The ACTFL Position Statement on the Use of the Target Language in the Classroom advocates a goal of 90%+ by teachers and students in and beyond the classroom (see www.actfl.org/news/position-statements/use-the-target-language-the-classroom). Much of the latest research and many authorities in second language acquisition call for teachers to not use the textbook as the sole source for input, to avoid teaching grammar devoid of a context, and to use more authentic sources.

In a recent Education Week article, J.B. Buxton and David Young noted, “For too many years, we have maintained a language-learning strategy that simply does not work . . . [We] seek to teach language to 100 percent of the students with a success rate of 1 percent. Why the dismal results? Many experts agree that it’s because there is too much emphasis on grammar and translation and not nearly enough on learning to speak the language.”

Making this shift can be a daunting task, especially when we face the question of motivating the students to maintain target language use themselves. We may see the abstract ideal, but the practical question of “How?” remains. There are, however, a growing number of practitioners who feel they have found a way.

Three main principles, based on the work of such seminal researchers as Lev Vygotsky, Merrill Swain, Stephen Krashen and others, activate the kind of learning that is taking place in more and more language classrooms.

Students from Annie Tyner’s class at Ashland Middle School in Ashland, OR join Darcy Roger’s class at Crater Renaissance Academy in Central Point, OR for some collaborative language activities.

Editor’s Note: Following in the spirit of the previous article on 21st century support systems, Caleb Zilmer presents a standards-based approach that offers a fresh look at curriculum, instruction, and assessment, while redesigning the language learning environment.
Focus on Meaning Rather than Grammar

A focus on meaning leads to greater accuracy in the target language. An immersion environment in which language collaboratively and spontaneously manifests as a result of making meaning—a focus on communicative ability rather than accuracy and explicit grammar instruction—promotes natural language acquisition.

The paradigm shift here is from focusing on units or grammar to focusing on the skills students need to function in the second language—placing primary emphasis on their language level and production, and being part of a community. The approach (being called “Organic Language Acquisition” by Darcy Rogers of Crater Renaissance Academy in Central Point, OR) has been spreading as it has caught the attention of other language educators and received positive feedback from students.

With a greater focus on communication, students and teachers alike are freed to explore whatever topics they want. Kai Wangle, a former student of Rogers, says of the experience: “[She] instituted a complete ban on English; we even got docked points if we were caught. And it worked: Everything was done in Spanish, from attendance, to giving out homework, to subtle heckled insults and . . . jokes. We even spoke Spanish amongst ourselves, often when we were supposed to listen instead. And when the bell rang and the door opened, the English resonating from the hallway always seemed to take everyone by surprise.”

With a 100% target language environment comes a balance: more of a focus on getting across one’s message and less of a focus on accuracy, especially at the beginning levels. Particularly in the earliest stages of acquisition, according to the ACTFL level descriptors for Novice and even through a good portion of the Intermediate level, it is understood that there will be errors and that a “sympathetic listener” is needed. Even some elements of the Advanced-Low level (control of aspect in the past time frame) are understood to be inaccurate at times.

For this reason, a few teachers have shifted their focus from accuracy to communicative efficacy. It is not that the teacher pays no attention to errors, rather it is about how the teacher handles and reacts to them. Language learners need expressions to ask for clarification and to negotiate meaning in order to understand and be understood. Quickly learners realize that accuracy makes communication more efficient and effective and self-correction goes hand-in-hand with working through communication. It is important to note that every situation is unique, as is every conversation and communicative instance, so the teacher can determine in the moment if clarification needs to be made.

For example if a student says, “Yo hablar con yo mamá ayer noche” [I talk I mom yesterday night], we understand that the student spoke with his or her mother last night and we deal with the grammar issues as a lack of clarity in communication—bringing students’ attention to it later. If, however, the student says, “Hablas con mi mamá anoche” [You speak with my mom last night] when in fact you did not, clarifying questions would be employed to reach a more complete understanding—that, in fact, it was the student who spoke with his or her mother last night.

Correction of errors is replaced by encouragement and praise for effective communication. Ruth Whalen Crockett of Francis W. Parker Charter Essential School in Devens, MA, says, “Quiet encouraging smiles, pats on the shoulder, and clarifying questions are small and simple steps toward building a healthy classroom culture where students feel motivated to speak Spanish and actively engage with their peers.”

With a focus on communicative effectiveness and letting go of errors that do not obstruct meaning, the culture of the classroom becomes much warmer and more welcoming. The use of positive reinforcement is by no means a new concept to educators. We have all seen the powerful effects of celebrating success. The students’ sense of ownership in the community is what makes them the curriculum, which motivates them to experiment with new versions of themselves. Rogers says, “The new environment fosters spontaneity, errors, and fearlessness in communicating. Students are not a part of their learning process, they guide it.” As proficiency increases so does the need for accuracy, and learners become more capable of attending to accuracy with greater proficiency.

Creating a Safe Environment for Experimentation

Social interaction that relies on communication and movement creates a culture that facilitates a safe environment where learners can experiment with different versions of themselves. Instructors and learners construct meaning together and have fluid roles in the classroom. It is an environment where learners are intrinsically motivated to use the target language.

With this approach to teaching the second language, the students’ lives become the curriculum. Because life cannot be anticipated, whatever arises in the moment in the classroom or in the students’ lives drives the acquisition of language forward.

For example, in a Spanish 2 class taught by Rogers the topic of “bath salts,” the designer drugs being sold as “potpourri,” came up. Students jumped in and told stories of what they had heard, with all of their grisly details. Eventually, the discussion evolved into an existential analysis of the inherent issues with drugs in general. Whether these stories were true or not was beside the point—these students were able to express themselves on a topic of interest to them using the second language exclusively, and to arrive at an understanding together of how they felt about drug use.

“Since adopting this approach in my classroom, I have been most struck by the need for me to get out of the way,” says Whalen Crockett of her practice. “Though I have to initiate a conversation with a provocative question, it is essential that I allow students to engage together in the work of understanding each other’s responses to the questions . . . Students’ stories are essential to our work together and can be huge in motivating us to stay in Spanish.”

She is not only saying she has to get out of the way of the conversation, but that she has to also get out of the way of the movement—or, rather, become a part of it.

Wangle notes, “When I first entered the classroom, I was shocked to find no desks, and what few chairs were there were pushed up neatly against the walls, completely neglected. I reluctantly stood in the circle my classmates formed and listened; to my surprise I knew what they were talking about, even though the details often escaped me.”
Whalen Crockett describes the physical structure of a classroom that removes the barriers of desks and chairs. Instead, students are often running, walking, skipping, hopping, clapping their hands, giving each other high fives and playing games like rock, paper, scissors. Not only is it fun, but it also builds community, and such high energy brings up numerous opportunities for language instruction. Kinesthetic learning, including TPR-like gestures and circumlocution for new language, is a powerful tool.

When students are not moving around, they are interacting in a wide variety of groupings that fit the task at hand: whether in concentric circles; in rows facing each other; in groups of three, four, five, or six; or as a whole class, the physical structure is malleable to the need of the communicative activity. While at times the format sounds chaotic, it is all done for a purpose—driving the students’ language ability forward. These teachers are highly aware at all times of exactly where their students are linguistically and what is needed to push them forward. Rogers states, “When teachers become guides along the journey that is language learning, instead of just imparters of all knowledge, then something incredible and wonderful happens in the classroom, it becomes more than just a classroom—it becomes life.”

Instruction and Assessment Informing One Another

A focus on accessible aspects of language allows learners to engage in tasks that facilitate communicative language growth at their appropriate level. Instruction and assessment are simultaneous activities—one constantly informs the other. Assessment facilitates scaffolding to give students greater ability.

The concept of assessment and instruction informing one another is taken from Poechner’s concept of Dynamic Assessment, built on Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development. Rather than divest assessment from the instructional environment, assessment is an integral part of the instruction. With every interaction with students every day, teachers are attending to how the students’ productions look and sound. Depending on what is most appropriate (based on communicative efficacy), teachers either instruct in the moment or save thoughts to share later. Thus, assessment happens in the moment, as does instruction.

Each drives the other, and they are both constantly informed by an understanding of the learners’ proficiency level. For example, with Spanish 1 level students, possessive pronouns can be an issue. Thus, in the moment of utterance, a teacher may remind them of the more accurate construction or talk about how one accurately uses the possessive in other conversations, because the teacher has noticed it is something that needs to be addressed.

Whalen Crockett recounts an experience in her classroom where a student told a story about an encounter with the police: “Recently, one of my students began telling a story about being accused by the police of stealing a bicycle. Initially, the student stopped the story because he didn’t believe he could tell it entirely in Spanish. His peers were so motivated to hear the interesting tale that they coached him through the telling of the event by asking him clarifying questions and providing him important vocabulary. It was the motivation of the class to understand the story that fueled their interactions and engagement.”

This student got stuck a number of times in the telling of his story by specific vocabulary items and some advanced grammar. At one point, he and a couple of other students had to work around the verb decir [to say/to tell] in the appropriate past tense in order to discover who said what to whom when. They worked it out together, entirely in the target language, and then the student was able to continue with his story.

The introduction of new vocabulary and contextually appropriate grammar is a hallmark of what these teachers are doing. Depending on the language level of the learners and the context, different approaches are used, but TPR-like gestures and circumlocution are the mainstays. As students hit linguistic walls, the teacher often steps in to provide the needed elements—unless the other students can do it themselves!

In this “lesson,” the students and teacher alike engaged in natural conversation that all were simultaneously able to access at their own ability level and to push forward. By employing this research-based practice of making instruction and assessment one and the same activity, right at the students’ level, many teachers are saying that they are seeing greater proficiency in their students than in the past.

Administrators, too, notice changes.

“All students were speaking in Spanish and embracing the difficulty of communicating with a small vocabulary. All students appeared to have moved beyond embarrassment. This is quite an accomplishment! Some students don’t stop talking [in Spanish] or making noises even when directed,” said Tiffany O’Donnell, Assistant Principal at Eagle Point High School in Eagle Point, OR, after observing the author of this article’s Spanish 1 class.

What O’Donnell noticed as a classroom management challenge is in fact an intended outcome. “Students have replaced English side-chatter with Spanish side-chatter,” she noted. While a few teachers and administrators might see this as a problem, side conversations in the target language in the first three months of Spanish 1 can only be seen as a strength.

Furthermore, what O’Donnell remarks on here are actually explicit goals of the approach in the classroom:

• To speak the second language only
• To not be afraid of a second language environment
• To take risks (break down the filter and make mistakes)
• To be able to infer and circumlocute
• To participate and be part of the community

These goals are explicit to the students and are a result of the class environment. By holding to these five goals in the classroom, the teacher and students create their community in the second language.

O’Donnell goes on to say, “The teacher, with a small vocabulary, addressed [the students’ poor behavior with a substitute teacher]. Students brainstormed problems and solutions. Mr.

To read more about the approach described in this article, which is being called “Organic Language Acquisition,” go online to the Facebook group at tinyurl.com/organic-language-facebook.
Zilmer talked about the definition of respect.” Seemingly unremarkable on the surface, when one stops to notice that these Spanish 1 students engaged in this conversation entirely in the target language, it is apparent that there is something exceptional happening here.

Teachers new to the profession are also drawn to what these practices can offer. Rogers recently led a workshop in Guatemala, during which Alycia Harrah, a new English teacher said, “It is 100% unconventional and 100% effective. It makes sense, and because it makes sense, it will work. Not to mention it’s a blast.” Abbie Case, another teacher at the workshop, noted, “I think this approach will be extremely effective for teaching English to our students. Not only does it make sense to immerse kids in the second language, but it’s so fun! I loved every minute of training, and I feel closer to my fellow teachers because of it.”

Many educators find that the connections they make with other teachers using these concepts are the most useful aspect to being involved in this international professional learning community. The ideas, techniques, and support energize everyone. While some practitioners in the language profession have been confounded by calls for 90%+ target language in the classroom, a move away from textbooks, and a focus more on communication than on explicit grammar instruction, there are educators who are finding success teaching a second language for proficiency, and they and their students are finding deep fulfillment and intrinsic enjoyment at the same time.

“This new teaching method has given me the space to be who I am as a teacher. I could never fit into the textbook, and I needed something that could meet students where they are,” says Nanosh Lucas, a Spanish teacher at Phoenix High School in Phoenix, OR. “While my teaching isn’t perfect, I am developing relationships based on trust and honoring students where they are. We work directly toward standards, research-based practices, and making the learning exciting and meaningful.”

Caleb Zilmer is a Spanish teacher at Eagle Point High School in Eagle Point, OR.

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OPI Assessment Workshops

ACTFL is pleased to announce two upcoming OPI Assessment Workshops. One will be held at The Graduate Center, CUNY, New York, NY, June 4–7, 2013 for Arabic, Chinese, and Japanese. The second workshop will be for French, German, Hebrew, Portuguese, and Spanish held July 18–21, 2013 at Middlebury College, Middlebury, VT. Fees are $685 for ACTFL members and $850 for non-members.

The four-day workshop is an intensive introduction to the techniques of administering and rating the Oral Proficiency Interview. The rating scale and techniques for eliciting ratable samples are highlighted in daily plenary sessions and reinforced in language-specific break-out sessions. Participants can observe demonstration interviews and, under a trainer’s supervision, conduct their own practice interviews with volunteer candidates. The group critiques and discusses both the practice interview and their rating. Following the workshop, participants may apply to become ACTFL OPI testers.

ACTFL OPI Assessment Training provides a valuable foundation for teachers in second language assessment, curriculum design, and instruction. Participation in the workshop helps teachers to understand the key principles of teaching and testing for proficiency. By learning about the assessment method most widely used today in the United States for measuring speaking proficiency in a language, teachers are better prepared to determine the speaking abilities of their students, to design their own assessment tools, and to determine if students have reached specific benchmark levels as determined by individual districts or states.

Register now for either workshop at tinyurl.com/ opi-workshops.

ACTFL Webinars for Language Professionals—Spring Series

The latest series of ACTFL webinars for professional language educators on the important topic of “Curriculum and Instruction: Purposeful Planning to Increase Student Learning,” is being offered this spring. These webinars are designed especially for language educators at all levels and will energize and inspire you to grow as a language professional. Led by educational experts, each series delivers new insights and proven techniques that you will use right away.

Spring Webinar Series 2013

Curriculum Design – April 3
Content-Rich Units of Instruction – April 17
Purposeful Lesson Planning – May 8

Presenters: Donna Clementi (Lawrence University, Appleton, WI) and Laura Terrill (Indianapolis, IN)

This webinar series explores the basic elements of effective curriculum design. Participants consider how the National Standards, 21st Century Skills, and Common Core guide the development of a vertically aligned curriculum that builds students’ communication skills and cultural understanding. The webinars will also address thematic unit design and daily lesson planning focused on key strategies that maximize student learning in support of curricular goals.

Also—available ON-DEMAND:

Winter Webinar Series 2013

Improving Language Learners’ Performance Through Integrated Assessments
Creating Effective Assessment of Performance
Providing Effective Feedback
Designing Backward from Assessment to Impact Instruction

Presenters: Bonnie Adair-Hauck (University of Pittsburgh) and Francis J. Troyan (Portland Public Schools, ME)

This webinar series focused on designing effective Integrated Performance Assessments (IPAs), providing effective feedback, and focusing instruction to prepare language learners for successful performance on the assessments. The series built on the forthcoming ACTFL publication, Implementing Integrated Performance Assessment, by Adair-Hauck, Troyan, and Eileen Glisan.

ACTFL Offers Scholarships for Convention Attendees

ACTFL is again offering three New Teacher Scholarships for teachers with fewer than three years in the classroom to attend the 2013 ACTFL Annual Convention and World Languages Expo in Orlando, FL. These are made possible by a bequest from the Robert J. Ludwig estate. Ludwig was a member of the ACTFL Board of Directors (then Executive Council) from 1985–1988 and he served as ACTFL President in 1989.

ACTFL also offers a varying number of first-time attendee scholarships each year. The deadline to apply for either type of scholarship is July 10, 2013 and information will be posted on the ACTFL website on the 2013 ACTFL Annual Convention page under “Scholarships.”
The ACTFL Performance Descriptors for Language Learners can be downloaded free from the ACTFL website. The Performance Descriptors are designed to describe language performance that is the result of explicit instruction in an instructional setting. They reflect how language learners perform whether learning in classrooms, online, through independent project-based learning, or in blended environments. Find it online at tinyurl.com/performance-descriptors or order a printed copy from the ACTFL Online Store at www.actfl.org/store.

ACTFL Officers Nomination Deadline

Nominations for 2014 President-Elect (2015 President) and two Board of Directors positions must be postmarked by April 30, 2013. Visit tinyurl.com/actfl-nominations.

Mark Your Calendar Now for Future ACTFL Conventions

November 22–24, 2013 Orlando County Convention Center and Rosen Centre Hotel, Orlando, FL
November 21–23, 2014 Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center and Grand Hyatt San Antonio Hotel, San Antonio, TX
November 20–22, 2015 San Diego Convention Center, San Diego, CA

Update Your ACTFL Profile Information

ACTFL is always seeking native/native-equivalent speakers of languages other English who are interested in working on consulting assignments requiring target language expertise. Assignments are usually related to target language proficiency testing/assessment, test development, or testing program support. We encourage members of ACTFL who would be interested in being contacted for potential consulting assignments to update their membership profile information on ACTFL.org to include accurate contact information, teaching language(s), as well as any languages in which you have professional/native level proficiency in all four skills (listening, reading, writing, and speaking).

Participate in the ACTFL Mentoring Program

ACTFL announces the 2013–2014 Mentoring Program, designed to help early career language teachers succeed in their current assignments and learn the skills to be successful long-term in their careers. The mentoring will be conducted over e-mail and/or phone. Mentors and mentees will be matched by needs, skills, and experiences. To be considered as a mentor, you must have completed at least three years of teaching. The program will run from September 2013 through May 2014. If you are considering participating, please read the Program Guidelines online at www.actfl.org/professional-development/career-resources/mentoring-program. Applications must be submitted by August 19, 2013. For more information, contact Jaime Bernstein at jbernstein@actfl.org.
It was a problem any language educator would envy: After studying Spanish for the equivalent of five years, many of Cristin Bleess’s high school juniors hungered for more. But after Advanced Placement (AP), the menu of challenges ran out.

Bleess considered creating a business course in Spanish. Her school, Castle View High School in Castle Rock, CO, puts a priority on developing students’ 21st century skills set, so it seemed a natural fit. But once she spoke with educators and advocates in the Languages for Specific Purposes (LSP) field, Bleess conceived a broader vision: Why not offer a Spanish language class on leadership?

With her administrators’ blessing, Bleess began crafting a proposal in April 2011 and sent out Google Docs surveys to gauge the interest of students—as well as their parents—who might enroll in the class. The idea was warmly received and in January, after a year of detailed planning, the course kicked off.

“In the 21st century, the world has shrunk. These students may well be working with and for people who speak other languages and who come from other cultures,” says Bleess, who is also President-Elect of the Colorado Congress of Foreign Language Teachers (CCFLT). “Students are more willing to work hard at something when they see those connections outside the four walls of the classroom. They want to be able to take what they learn in school and apply it to real life.”

The ultimate expression of the Connections goal area of the National Standards for Learning Languages (i.e., “Connect with Other Disciplines and Acquire Information”), LSP courses have long been learner-centered, with a focus on helping students discover and practice the types of language they need to meet their specific professional goals. Traditionally, most LSP learners have been college students and adults. But Bleess and a small number of other teachers around the country are finding ways to also connect younger students with the work worlds they might one day inhabit.

Among those who have encouraged K–12 teachers to pursue such projects is Mary Risner, an LSP pioneer who serves as Associate Director of Outreach and Business Programs at the University of Florida’s Center for Latin American Studies.
“I loved Cristin’s idea of calling the course ‘Spanish for Leadership’ because that can bring in students interested in developing these skills for any profession,” Risner says. “Teachers who are doing similarly innovative things need to have a voice so these ideas get out there.”

Creatively designed LSP courses offer students real-world opportunities to practice language and navigate culture in the context of a specific field. While many to date have focused on the use of Spanish in fields such as business, health, and social work, Risner and other proponents are working to help expand both the number of languages and professions. In the critically important field of STEM [science, technology, engineering, mathematics], for example, more and more people are discovering ways to connect related professions with language learning. LSP courses in Arabic, Chinese, German, and other languages are continually being added at all levels.

“I’m always looking to post more things about what people are doing,” says Risner, who keeps in touch with the LSP community through Twitter and other social media. “Some of the journals on business languages have articles with examples of what’s being done in class. The model is there; you just adapt it to your language. Sometimes teachers are already doing career-related things and just need to frame it differently.”

In the eyes of business and government, the need for such initiatives is great, says Jim Vanides, Global Education Program Manager for Sustainability and Social Innovation at Hewlett Packard Company. He is also the author of a post on the Digital Learning Environments blog that is widely cited in LSP circles: “4 Reasons Why ‘Global Fluency’ Matters: An Open Letter to 6th Graders Everywhere.”

“Global fluency is the new résumé differentiator,” says Vanides. “Yes,” he writes to the 12-year-olds who make up his intended audience, “the ‘standard language of business’ within the company I work for is English. However, many of my colleagues are fluent in at least three languages, and they can be ‘friendly’ in one or two more. But it’s more than just ‘learning a foreign language.’ Global fluency, by my definition, is the ability to understand and collaborate across the complexities of language, culture, and multiple time zones.”

He urges students to view all subjects “in a global context” and cautions them that using Internet-rendered translations isn’t enough. “If you rely on Google Translate, you may be surprised, confused, or embarrassed,” he says. “So go ahead and explore your ‘talking dictionary’ and online translation tools—but know that what you will need is ‘meaning,’ and this requires vocabulary and experience combined.”

President Obama has consistently spoken of the need for prioritizing STEM education—a concern shared by many other national, state, and local government and business leaders. “Our nation’s success depends on strengthening America’s role as the world’s engine of discovery and innovation,” he told a gathering of CEOs, scientists, teachers, and others in 2010.

“And that leadership tomorrow depends on how we educate our students today—especially, in science, technology, engineering, and math.”

You can never start too young in helping students make connections between language and those highly valued STEM subjects. At Amana Academy in Georgia, students in grades K–8 combine Arabic with a special emphasis on scientific discovery. Topics are linked from year to year—especially, in science, technology, and math.

“Global fluency is the new résumé differentiator,” says Vanides. “Yes,” he writes to the 12-year-olds who make up his intended audience, “the ‘standard language of business’ within the company I work for is English. However, many of my colleagues are fluent in at least three languages, and they can be ‘friendly’ in one or two more.

Language teachers combine the school’s Expeditionary Learning model—a collaborative approach that puts an emphasis on hands-on activities and educational outings—with the National Standards and Georgia state performance standards.

Eman Maamoun, an Arabic teacher who translated the state language standards into that language, says students get added exposure in Arabic to concepts first presented in their other classes.

“Our work in Amana is teamwork,” she says. “Since we all share the grades, we need to communicate, agree, and collaborate before anything is introduced to the students. So we plan everything together and everyone adds to the big picture.” The ultimate goal, says Maamoun, who chairs the newly formed Georgia Association for Teachers of Arabic, is to give students an early start developing and honing the skills they will need as adults.

“Amana is trying to create a global student,” she says. “This is why we focus on the environment, the Expeditionary Learning, and the Arabic—to push for a student who will have all this in-depth knowledge and go places. I want my students to be fluent in Arabic, but also more confident to work in any job in the future.”

Similar language and professional goals are in place at Bleess school, which is composed of four academies. There, some sophomores reach Spanish 5 by starting their study in middle school and taking two course levels each year as freshmen and sophomores. “But in their junior year,” Bleess recalls, “many of them would ask, ‘Where do we go from here?’”

In searching for a supplement to AP courses, she attended a Centers for International Business Education & Research (CIBER) conference at Florida International University specially designed for K–12 teachers. There, she met Ann Abbott, a professor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign whose Spanish language courses on entrepreneurship and community-based learning give students opportunities for local and international outreach.

Global fluency is the new résumé differentiator
Abbott has an average of two educators contact her each week seeking information about service learning and languages for specific purposes—evidence, she says, “that there’s interest out there . . . but also a need for more outreach and education.”

One deterrent to starting new programs is the natural tendency to question whether one’s level of content knowledge is up to the task, Abbott says.

“When people think of Languages for Specific Purposes, they think they really have to know a lot about the particular field. They’ll say: ‘But I’ve never worked in the business world!’” she says. “Our best approach is to say, ‘Yes, it’s about the specific content area and the vocabulary that goes with it. But in every professional context there are certain activities you’ll always have to do. It could be an intake form for a doctor’s office or a business form asking about marketing material.’”

That’s what makes the title of Bleess’s course so appropriate. “If we’re preparing our students for professions in the 21st century, they need to have some basic leadership skills, to be able to work with people who have different skills, and to learn and be able to teach themselves technological skills—even if students don’t know what they want to be when they get older,” Abbott says. “We know in this world that people often change jobs and career paths.”

Margaret Gonglewski, Associate Professor of German and International Affairs at George Washington University, began teaching her “German Business” more than 12 years ago at the suggestion of a colleague. Given Germany’s status as the largest economy in the Euro zone, it makes particular sense, she says.

Since then, interest has grown steadily in the course, which has an enrollment cap of 15 and requires that students enter with a minimum proficiency rating of Intermediate.

“Students have gotten more pragmatic and ask, ‘What will get me a job when I get out?’’” Gonglewski says. “I didn’t want to make this a correspondence, how-to course. You have to get to know Germany as a strategic location and know where the industries are. There’s still a lot of emphasis on literature in some upper-level language courses, so there’s often a neglected aspect of the culture that students don’t know they’re missing.”

Students kick off their year with a unit on applying for a job, with discussion topics including how to identify and capitalize on one’s strengths. Gonglewski touches often upon cultural contrasts—job candidates in Germany including photographs with their résumés, for example. This year, students ended the unit by visiting a German cultural center and interviewing live with native speakers.

Teresa Kennedy, Professor of Bilingual, ELL, and STEM Education at the University of Texas at Tyler, has incorporated science materials into her language classroom since 1985. In addition, she served for more than 11 years as Director of the International Division of the Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment (GLOBE) program, which gives students and teachers opportunities to participate in international hands-on, earth science-related investigations.

Kennedy believes strongly in the marriage of language learning and content area study and offers simple advice to language teachers interested in adopting content-based instruction: “Walk down the hall, introduce yourself to the science teacher, find out what they’re teaching and weave some components of what they’re covering into your own classroom curriculum.” She suggests similar steps to incorporate other subject areas.

“To me, it makes sense that whatever is happening in the language classroom is piggy-backing off what’s being taught in students’ other classes,” she says.

Integrating elements of earth science—such as weather and climate—are a good place to start, Kennedy says. But whatever the topic, she cautions instructors to go through a careful fact-checking process to ensure they are presenting sound information and concepts.

“The most important thing is to connect to the science that is already being taught,” she says. “Teachers shouldn’t go beyond their own knowledge and capabilities. There’s a lot of potential—if they are not working together with the science teacher in their school—that they could encourage misconceptions about science that could interfere with future learning of concepts.”

Science teachers also may have contacts in professional fields who speak other languages and would be willing to come talk with students about how they use languages in their work. Linking up with ESL teachers—who teach diverse subject areas as routine practice—offers an additional advantage.

“Foreign language teachers tend to focus on social language skills while ESL and

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**Learn More About Languages for Specific Purposes**

- **4 Reasons Why “Global Fluency” Matters—An Open Letter to 6th Graders Everywhere** [tinyurl.com/vanides-blog]
- **Centers for International Business Education and Research (CIBER)** [ciberweb.msu.edu/]
- **Mary Risner on Twitter** [https://twitter.com/LangForCareers]
- **National Science Teachers Association (NSTA)** [nsta.org]
- **National Security Education Program (NSEP)** [nsep.gov]
- **Network of Business Language Educators (NOBLE)** [nbble.org]
- **Network of Business Language Educators (on Facebook)** [tinyurl.com/facebook-noble]
- **Scholarship and Teaching on Languages for Specific Purposes** [tinyurl.com/ayldznh]
- **A report on the state of LSP education published in March 2013**
- **Video: Are We Prepared for the Jobs of the Future?** [tinyurl.com/byae2r6]
- **Video: Don Quixote’s Lessons for Leadership** [tinyurl.com/stanford-video-leadership]
bilingual teachers are covering academic content,” Kennedy says. “I think that’s why you see a lot of teachers who bridge both—to get the best of both worlds.”

**Connect to Make it Work**

For teachers eager to experiment or even start their own courses, connecting with experienced peers is key. Social networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn offer LSP-minded teachers ideal ways to exchange ideas.

Bleess, who had little background in business, found the process of educating herself exhilarating. With support from Abbott, Risner, and others in the LSP field, she tailored her course to rely primarily on Internet resources, resulting in no additional costs for her district.

With each new resource on a given topic—how to write a résumé, proper business etiquette, how to look for a job—she created digital files for later use. One prized discovery was a video that a professor at Stanford Graduate School of Business uses to teach leadership qualities through an analysis of Don Quixote.

Recently Bleess started a new unit in which students analyzed episodes of the TV show, “The Apprentice,” as a basis for articulating the makeup of an effective project leader. “Each week we’ll have a different project with a different project leader who can put the skills we talk about into practice,” Bleess says. “For example, ‘Are we following through on each step of our project? Are we listening to team members’ feedback?’”

Bleess plans to use Skype to allow students to talk with professionals from other countries, many of them people she met during overseas experiences. They include a lawyer from Argentina and an employee at the U.S. Embassy in Uruguay. Also on the list of invitees is a member of her host family from her time as an exchange student in Mexico: the former mayor of Guadalajara who recently became governor of the Mexican state of Jalisco.

While specialized language courses were part of the vision at her high school when it started seven years ago, it doesn’t necessarily have to be built in for teachers to discover how to do this. Bleess sees ways for educators anywhere to apply LSP thinking to their classes. Instead of students brainstorming the traits of an ideal boyfriend or girlfriend, they could discuss the qualities of a team leader or salesperson, for example. A unit on business could also include identifying differences between phone numbers and street addresses in the United States and Spanish-speaking countries, or how to correctly arrange Hispanic last names in office files.

“I’ve learned so much as a teacher this semester,” Bleess says. “Students will ask advice or what a particular résumé should look like. . . . I say, ‘Let’s go online and see what’s there.’”

She is already seeing students imagine their place in the professional world. One student interested in medical science has begun researching Doctors Without Borders. Another, an aspiring engineer, told Bleess he wants to be able to work with people who might think differently than he does. A classmate has already contacted a theatre school in Spain in the hope of securing an internship, using the resume she developed in class as part of her intended application packet.

In June, Bleess and her students will head to Costa Rica, but they will go beyond more typical travel abroad activities in order to put their skills into practice. Their schedule will include a service project in which the Colorado teens will partner with Costa Rican peers to bring enrichment classes to younger children, opportunities for each Castle View student to interview with someone in their field of interest, and a visit to an organic chocolate farm to see up-close how the business works.

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**Douglass Crouse** is a contributing writer to The Language Educator. He also teaches French at Sparta Middle School in Sparta, New Jersey.
My first exposure to foreign language came when I was in fourth grade and lived in The Netherlands with my family for a year due to my father's work. My parents wanted my brother and me to be exposed to another culture and learn the language, so they enrolled us in a regular Dutch elementary school. Neither of us spoke any Dutch, but our teachers spoke English, as did a student in each of our classes.

After a few months of being almost fully immersed in the language, I became quite proficient. Having enjoyed the experience of learning a language, I studied Spanish in middle and high school. In my senior year, a friend wrote to me that he was studying Russian in college. I grew up in the later part of the Cold War but it was thawing out by that point. Although Russian seemed exotic and slightly sinister I was also pretty sure that the average Russian was not really so different from the average American—a viewpoint influenced by the year my family spent living abroad.

There was another reason that learning Russian appealed to me: Since about seventh grade, I knew I wanted to work for NASA one day. We had once collaborated with the Russians in space during the Apollo-Soyuz Test Project, and I hoped that we would some day work together again and I would be able to make a difference using my language skills.

In addition to my Engineering major, I studied Russian throughout college and also spent seven weeks at a summer program in St. Petersburg before I graduated. At the same time, as part of the Engineering Co-operative Education program, I worked alternating semesters at NASA. During one of my work tours, I was excited to watch on NASA TV as the heads of the United States and Russian space programs made an agreement to conduct the Shuttle-Mir program during which the Space Shuttle docked to the Russian Mir space station several times, and U.S. astronauts spent months-long tours on the crew of Mir.

When I graduated from college, the Shuttle-Mir program was finishing up, and NASA was about to embark on a giant undertaking—the construction of the International Space Station (ISS). Originally Space Station Freedom, the ISS had become an international project just a couple years before my graduation. The United States and Russia are the primary partners, joined by the European Space Agency (ESA), the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA), and the Canadian Space Agency (CSA).

I got a job in the Extravehicular Activity (EVA) group, which is responsible for planning, training the crew, and guiding all NASA spacewalks from Mission Control. I was lucky enough to be assigned to the team preparing for the first ISS assembly flight, which included three spacewalks. That mission joined the first U.S. and Russian pieces of the space station together.

Shortly afterward, in January 1999, I started an assignment that would officially make use of my Russian language skills. I became a part of the Houston Support Group, made up of people from different flight control and training groups within the Johnson Space Center who spent tours...
in Moscow helping to coordinate many aspects of our joint ISS assembly project. I worked mostly with the people who did a job similar to mine within the Russian space program: designing spacewalks, training the crew, and working at TsUP (the Russian version of Mission Control) during the spacewalks.

My role was to be a liaison between the two sides in any way necessary, and to gather knowledge and information to augment the training American crewmembers received in Russia, which they had to do in Russian. I attended crew training in the Russian facilities, inspected and learned about the Russian portions of the ISS, learned about Russian spacewalk tools and techniques, and supported spacewalks from the Russian Mission Control Center. I also helped to negotiate agreements on how much training U.S. and Russian crewmembers would get in the other side’s suit, and developed joint procedures and philosophies to ensure the safety of the crew. It was fascinating to work with many people who had been a part of the Russian space program almost since its beginning, some of whom still had a Cold War mentality; while many of the young engineers were more willing to share information and excited to put computers and new technology to use.

We had a full-time interpreter, but since I had spent so much time studying Russian, I found I was able to work without his help much of the time, making my interactions with the Russians both quicker and more personal. In addition, much of the communication was technical and very specialized, so there were times where my Russian skills allowed me to recognize that the interpreters didn’t fully understand the discussion and were therefore interpreting it incorrectly or incompletely. I could then explain further and get the discussions back on track.

If I had not had that ability, we could have spent a great deal of time talking past each other, or even walked away from the table having completely different ideas about what we had agreed upon. I also believe that my Russian colleagues appreciated the fact that I had taken the effort to learn their language, which allowed me to get to know them better, gain their trust, and develop friendships with them rather than just a business relationship. In all, I spent nearly a year in Russia between 1999 and 2002. One special highlight was during a shuttle flight when a U.S. and a Russian crewmember were doing a spacewalk in American space suits on the Russian part of ISS, as I supported them from Mission Control in Houston, talking to my American colleagues in English and my Russian counterparts across the globe in Russian.

Unfortunately, as the assembly phase of ISS wound down and budgets were tightened, NASA was forced to scale back our physical presence in Russia, so I have not been back in quite a few years. We now maintain the relationship mostly via teleconferences and yearly face-to-face meetings. Just a month ago though, one of my Russian colleagues walked into my office in Houston—he is now a Cosmonaut, scheduled to spend six months aboard ISS in 2014. I was amazed as we started talking how quickly much of my Russian came back! The visit brought back so many wonderful memories of the challenges and fun as we worked together on this exciting project.

The ISS program is probably the largest multinational peace-time project ever undertaken, and has been a challenge not only from an engineering and technical standpoint, but also from a cultural standpoint. I am proud of the relationships that we have developed with all of our international partners, and how we have learned to work together through cultural, philosophical, and language differences. I believe strongly that exposure to other cultures and languages is vital to our future as humans on this Earth, in much the same way that astronauts looking down on the planet see no national borders.

Karina Eversley works at NASA for the Extravehicular Activities Task Group. She majored in Engineering at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, with significant coursework in Russian.

**Seeing the Opportunities Unfold**

Matthew Lagod

The foreign language classes I started in middle school set me on my way to an adventure I could never have imagined. I now use different languages every day and have worked in a variety of organizations in Europe and the United States.

In 2005, after having graduated from college with a degree in civil engineering and working for a few years, I found myself in graduate school and looking for a way to spend a summer that would allow me to pursue my passion for languages. The year before, I had taken two semesters of basic Italian in night school. This enabled me to interview successfully for an internship in the political section of the U.S. Embassy to the Holy See in Rome. Although I had no background in political science or diplomacy, I was able to demonstrate an ability to communicate effectively—in more than one language—and that was enough for them to give me a chance. I spent the summer of 2005 putting these communication skills to work, meeting with members of the Vatican’s diplomatic corps to explain the position of the United States on a num-
ber of scientific and human rights issues, translating articles from the Italian press on topics of interest to the embassy, and writing official cables to Washington on the situation in the Darfur region of Africa.

That fall, I was thrilled when my high school French in the context of my work at the Chicago Department of Environment. The Mayor’s Office needed a rapid translation of a French document on residential recycling practices in Paris. Did our department know of someone who could help? My supervisor selected me for the task, knowing I had experience with waste management and had just enrolled in a Business French class at the Alliance Française. A few months later when a Canadian radio station contacted the City of Chicago looking to conduct an interview on the city’s environmental initiatives in French, I was suddenly the natural choice for the job.

It was around this same time that I also reconnected with my middle-school French teacher, who had spent a career passing on her enthusiasm and passion for French language and culture to her students . . . and above all, making it fun! When I told her about my recent work accomplishments involving French, she told me about Chicago’s Sister City International Program and the committee that worked on the partnership with the City of Paris.

“A friend of mine is on the committee,” she said, “you should talk to him.” Thanks to a call to that friend, I began attending the meetings of the Paris committee and learning about the exchange of best practices that were taking place between the two cities. A year later, an incredible opportunity presented itself to me: I was asked to undertake an 18-month assignment in Paris Department of Environment. I did not know if I could actually work entirely in French, but I took a leap of faith and departed for Paris on July 14—French Independence Day.

Thankfully, my previous French coursework enabled me to start functioning almost immediately in my new position at the City of Paris. However, I realized very quickly that I had a tremendous amount to learn. My assignment in Paris was to lead a team in the assessment of the negative environmental impacts associated with the city’s management of the Bois de Vincennes and the implementation of a concrete action plan to eliminate or reduce those impacts. I had experience in environmental assessments, and now I had to find a way to share that knowledge with my French-speaking colleagues. In fact, my job was really to listen to their ideas about what potential actions we could take to achieve positive environmental results, provide them with tools to help them decide what actions to take, and finally to document these decisions.

My 18-month assignment in Paris was extended to 36 months, and I expected to return to Chicago in the summer of 2011. In the fall of 2010, however, the City of Chicago undertook a number of cost-saving measures, including the reorganization of the Department of Environment and the elimination of several positions there, including the one I formerly held. But my Chicago connection would prove to be instrumental in what happened next. In the spring of 2011, I was invited to an international panel discussion to deliver a presentation on stormwater management in Chicago. One of my fellow presenters was a water expert from the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). After the event, we connected and I learned they were looking for a bilingual civil engineer to join their team. Interviews followed, and that fall I was offered a position at UNESCO’s International Hydrological Programme (IHP).

UNESCO’s mandate is to use education, science, and culture to promote peace, and much of the work undertaken by the IHP involves giving countries the tools they need to manage their shared water resources in a peaceful, equitable manner. Foreign language skills are indispensable for working in this kind of setting, where neighboring countries may not have the same mother tongue. It is precisely these skills that enable resource managers, politicians, and civil society groups to collaborate to achieve solutions that are fair and acceptable to everyone. My work since 2011 has involved the coordination of projects that preserve coastal aquifers along the Mediterranean Sea, in view of protecting the health of the sea, and the human livelihoods that depend on it.

None of this would have been possible without language learning. There is a Slavic expression that says, “You are as many times human, as many languages you know.” I would propose a similar one: “You live as many lives as the number of languages you speak.”

Matthew Lagod works at UNESCO in Paris, France. He earned a B.S. in Civil and Environmental Engineering at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and has studied French and Italian.
Q: You recently retired after serving as the Executive Director of the Center for Advanced Study of Language (CASL) since its founding in 2003. CASL fulfills a very important purpose as the first and only national resource center addressing the particular needs of the defense and intelligence community with regards to language. What do you see as the major accomplishments of CASL in improving America’s foreign language capacities over the past 10 years? What specific challenges remain ahead in this area and what role do language educators play in addressing them?

A: CASL was founded to serve the research needs for language and culture in the Department of Defense (DoD) and across government agencies and offices involved with national security. Our first task was to demonstrate the relevance of academic research to government needs, bringing together two cultures not fully at ease with each other. At our ribbon cutting in 2005, I declared, somewhat brazenly, that “CASL research would be instrumental in cutting the time it takes to learn a language in half.”

While CASL would hardly lay singular claim to major advances in language acquisition over the past decade, there is no question that its groundbreaking research in cognitive neuroscience, assessment, learning environments, and technologies can contribute significantly to the realizable goal of making language learning more effective and efficient. CASL’s new Executive Director, Amy Weinberg, faces the continuing challenge of transferring this research into all learning environments in government, industry, and education. For their part, language educators must play a key role in making this research more useful to managers, teachers, and learners throughout the K–16 and adult education systems.

Perhaps CASL’s most visible accomplishment has been its pursuit of an ongoing national collaborative effort across academia, government, industry, and the heritage communities. One manifestation of this effort was the National Language Conference in 2004, convened by the DoD and CASL, which ultimately resulted in President Bush’s National Security Language Initiative—major portions of which still continue today. We co-hosted former CIA Director Leon Panetta’s Foreign Language Summit in 2010, which was attended by more than 300 foreign language experts and educators from the public and private sectors. Finally, our ongoing ENLIGHTEN events are further evidence of this focus.
Q: You are spearheading the ENLIGHTEN [Exchange on Language for Industry, Government, Training, and Education in the Interest of National Security] project “Languages for All: Perspectives & Evidence,” working with ACTFL and other organizations to synthesize and disseminate evidence on how the language learning process in the United States has improved. The ultimate report that will be produced from this work will include extensive research done at CASL along with proof of what can be done with K–12 and post-secondary students. What will it take to move public opinion to support language learning and how will this report affect that shift?

A: One of CASL’s current policy foci is the premise that as a profession we have unprecedented language science, resources, and programs that are insufficiently recognized, used, and coordinated. This is the driving force behind “Languages for All: Perspectives and Evidence,” which is being sponsored—so far—by ACTFL, American Councils for International Education, JNCL-NCLIS, the DLI Foundation, as well as the British Academy, and the Australian National Academy for the Humanities.

The international perspective that we hope to bring to this issue is the result of the British Academy’s Lost for Words Forum last fall, which convened government and academe to discuss the declining situation of language in the UK. During that forum, it became clear that the usual rhetoric in English-speaking countries concerning the advantages of learning languages could be strengthened significantly if we focused equally on the “investment” part of the argument as well as the “return.” While as a profession we are in a position to deliver the vitally needed language ability, we can do it in a way that is much more cost-efficient. The current quality of language learning opportunities is higher than ever, and the cost in access to these opportunities and in the time required to advance in language skills is much lower.

Our assumption is that asserting the improved availability of language learning is a persuasive addition to the national campaign for language in this country and across the English-speaking world. Critically, the consequence of this availability is that learning a second language no longer has to be limited to more privileged schools, colleges, and universities. In effect, advances in science, technology, practice, and assessment make possible the goal of making the best education available to all Americans, and that education can now include second language learning.

Q: Throughout your career, you have focused on national strategic planning in the less commonly taught languages (LCTLs). What will it take to make the LCTLs (which can be among the world’s most commonly spoken languages) on an equal footing with other languages? What will it take to build both the supply of programs and instructors and greater demand from language learners?

A: In my view, one of the keys to broadening the appeal of LCTLs in the U.S. education system is our heritage language population. With almost 60 million speakers of languages other than English at home, we have a rich national resource in a very broad swath of world languages. If efforts are made in the education system to maintain these languages and even to reward those who possess them, then we will see a major breakthrough in their popularity and ultimate acceptance in the education system. One indication of movement in this direction, for instance, is the fact that the state of Washington has implemented a competency-based credits program for world languages that offers high school credits for demonstrated language ability, however acquired, including in heritage language schools. Other efforts directed at coordinating language instruction in our elementary and secondary schools with local heritage language programs could also provide significant benefits for both sides: credits for heritage learners and local immersion opportunities for learners in traditional language classrooms. The most promising development, however, is the spread of dual language immersion programs, where the standard argument that there is no room in the curriculum or time in the day for language instruction becomes moot. Finally, one cannot deny the more pragmatic view of the advantages of languages like Chinese, Hindi, Korean, Russian, etc. in the job market around the world.

All this being said, our cultural traditions and demographic reality strongly and properly support the teaching of Spanish, French, and German. However, the European concept of “ plurilingualism” assumes that limiting expectations to a native and a second language does not reflect the world in which we live. The new “linguistic dispensation” is one of multilingual societies and plurilingual residents able to deal with multiple languages and cultures. Adding additional LCTLs in high school, college, or later in one’s career is as much a part of the future of languages in the United States as is the inevitable dominance of English and Spanish in today’s educational system.
While we have a long way to go, CASL researchers have provided rigorous evidence of the correlation between “executive function” and “working memory” and language learning outcomes. We have been developing working memory training that enhances a learner’s readiness to learn and use language. The next step, which is a current effort at CASL, is to adapt learning and instruction to particular cognitive and perceptual profiles of individual learners. The potential for this kind of research for learners is immense, as evidence accumulates on the benefits of these cognitive abilities for better and faster language learning, just as we are learning about the cognitive advantages of bilingualism.

Added to this is the ability of technologies to dramatically increase access to locally unavailable languages, teachers, and programs, to authentic materials, to opportunities for practice with peers and native speakers, to opportunities in school and outside. Moving further into future developments, we expect “big data” analysis to be able to monitor and mentor the career of a language learner from beginning to the highest proficiency levels.

Of course, the dangers we face in both science and technology are Janus-like: over promising and under reaching. We have to be careful what we assert is within grasp, but we cannot afford to be timid in our reach.
Presentational communication is a natural part of education that applies to all academic disciplines. Students can present what they have learned by writing essays and reports, giving oral presentations, creating art, and in numerous other ways. Even a proof in an advanced math class is a form of presentational communication.

However, presentational communication is not limited to “formal” reporting nor is it only found in a school context. Instead, it includes any instance of creating a message without the back-and-forth of interpersonal communication; awareness and maintaining the attention of the audience; adding more information, opinions, or perspectives to something already presented (e.g., a blog, posting a comment); or making an impact (as with a poster, visual, PowerPoint presentation, or sharing of personal examples).

In the language classroom, presentational communication can be the most difficult mode to master, especially for beginning students. “Because presentational is non-negotiated communication, the student is in charge of producing all of the language,” says Robert Davis, a Professor of Spanish at the University of Oregon. “Unfortunately, a lot of teachers don’t address presentational communication sufficiently in lower-level courses.”

He points to the numerous examples of real-world presentational communication—leaving messages on a voice mail, writing e-mail messages and letters, and leaving comments on a blog. Technology is an important component of teaching presentational communication, says Davis, because knowing they have a public audience motivates students to do better work.
Technology can also make feedback more efficient, enable students to track their progress, and help beginning students navigate presentational communication with limited language skills.

Tatiana Sildus, an Associate Professor in Pittsburg State University's College of Education in Pittsburg, KS, has studied how video projects enable vocabulary retention, increase student engagement, and enhance student motivation. Video projects, she says, are a natural match for presentational communication and add a “real-life” element.

“In real-life presentational communication, more information is now ‘presented’ through media,” she explains. “For example, if the communicative task is to tell a partner school overseas about the local community, what would the students enjoy and appreciate the most: writing or receiving a letter, speaking and listening, or seeing the actual video with real things and people or being in the video, with the added benefit of being more in charge of their own learning?”

A video project, rather than a standard presentation in front of the class, enhances communication and engages multiple senses. The presenters and the audience are more involved in the process.

“If a project is well thought-out and explained and the expectations are clear, students are encouraged to create with the language and become engaged at a higher level,” says Sildus. Video projects can easily combine different types of language tasks (such as a dialogue vs. simple narration) or a vivid description to achieve a variety of purposes, like describing, convincing, or informing.

One example is a televised community news broadcast project. The students decide on the number of ‘anchors’ as well as the area of coverage—the local area, state, region, or country. There may be a combination of different areas involved. The participants can present from inside the “news studio” and “in the field.” Such projects can allow students to make multiple connections to other disciplines. For instance, creating the weather segment of a news broadcast requires a fundamental knowledge of geography, physical features, and prevailing seasonal weather patterns. Students can also use props, such as maps, diagrams, and posters.

“Video projects are a natural fit for the new generation of language learners,” says Sildus. “The technology-savvy Millennials are creative problem-solvers who want to be actively involved, enjoy working together, and do not like routine. The audience is also more motivated to stay on task because of the novelty and the unpredictability.”

Video projects require careful planning and coordinating with other school events and programs to be sure students can devote sufficient time to the project. Sildus cautions that video projects should not be implemented for the sole purpose of using technology or trying something different.

“Take time to think about how a video project would serve your instructional goals,” she says. “Determine how you are going to assess the project ahead of time and convey the expectations to students in advance. Keep in mind that the students’ knowledge of separate elements of the language is usually greater than their ability to put it all together in a fluent, comprehensible, and accurate way.”

Presentational communication does not equal memorization, as it is important to consider the reaction of the audience and adjust accordingly. If they look like they don’t understand, the presenter must provide more explanation, rephrase, or even provide an example of what something is or is not. Thus, educators must instruct students that presentational communication is not merely formal memorized speech—whether presented in front of the class or on video.

The ACTFL Video Contest, held annually every February in honor of Discover Languages Month, offers a great opportunity for students to practice their video production skills and communicate (in English) why they value language learning. Educators can also use this annual project as a springboard to having students apply those same technology skills using the target language. Learn more about the winners of the 2013 contest on p. 46.

HELPING BEGINNERS

Dan Carolin, a Japanese teacher at Kennedy High School in Cedar Rapids, IA, uses web-based storyboarding tools that enable students to easily combine photos and graphics with text. This pro-
vides an opportunity for students to work with authentic materials and allows students, especially beginners with limited vocabulary and language ability, to incorporate more creativity and personalization into their projects.

Carolin’s first-year students use Photo Peach to create slideshows with photos, images, and music to illustrate their daily and weekly activities. “This adds an element of fun and creativity to what could be a pretty mundane task, since first-year students are working with limited vocabulary,” he says. Using a tool like Photo Peach also helps students engage with the vocabulary in a different way and aids visual learners.

Carolin also uses Storyboard That, another simple, web-based drag-and-drop storyboard creator, for presentational projects. He prefers to use Photo Peach for single person narrative presentations and Storyboard That for presenting dialogs. He assigns varied dialog projects, such as one about shopping for first-year students or a conversation about future job plans for second-year students.

“I give the students certain guidelines for the conversation, and from there they can get creative with adding additional dialog and the visuals,” explains Carolin. “I have students who are drawn to my class before of their interest in Japanese manga and anime. Both of these tools allow students the creative output they really enjoy.”

ACCELERATING THE FEEDBACK LOOP

Davis uses the Blackboard course management system that has a voice board for the language lab. Davis has his students record a presentation they are working on for class onto the voice board; he listens to a few minutes of each presentation and gives general feedback.

“I was surprised by how much the students improved their presentations with this one extra step,” he says. “When students give presentations they often don’t prepare themselves thoroughly. Often the first time they run through the entire presentation is in front of the class. Just being able to record themselves and review how they sound really helps them improve, even if I don’t give explicit feedback.”

This kind of review and feedback for presentations, Davis says, would not be possible without new technology. “I can’t see having every one of my students come to office hours and run through their presentations,” he explains. “This is a case where technology makes teaching easier, better, and more efficient.”

Carolin has his students develop a WikiSpace portfolio of their presentational projects beginning with his first-year students. One of the first projects is a self-introduction, both written and oral. “By keeping a wiki, the students can see concrete examples of their progress as they advance,” he explains. “When they go to college, the portfolio can be used to demonstrate their proficiency for placement. It is filled with real examples of their work in Japanese class.”

Using WikiSpace also provides Carolin with an efficient means of providing feedback on student essays, and allows the students to easily keep versions of their work. “I’m a member and editor of each student’s wiki. I might assign a compare-and-contrast essay to my fourth-year students in preparation for the Japanese AP exam. I can go into each student’s essay and highlight errors without telling them exactly how to change something,” he explains. “This lets them figure out the problems with their essays for themselves.”

His third-year students are tasked with finding an apartment in Yokohama, Japan. “The premise is that they are college exchange students living in Japan for one year. I give them certain parameters, like neighborhoods to look in and a budget. Then they use Yahoo! Japan to find an apartment and create a written and oral presentation on what they chose and why,” he says. “They go through the exact same process that someone in Japan would use to find an apartment.”

EXPLORE THESE RESOURCES

- Audacity
  audacity.sourceforge.net
- Blackboard
  www.blackboard.com
- Photo Peach
  photopeach.com
- Storyboard That
  www.storyboardthat.com
- Vocaroo
  vocaroo.com
- Wikispaces
  www.wikispaces.com
This is another example of how technology enables students to use authentic materials and tools for presentational projects. Both versions of the project, oral and written, are saved into the student’s Wikispace portfolio.

For oral projects, Carolin uses web-based voice recording tools like Vocaroo and Audacity. His fourth-year students create cultural perspective presentations throughout the year to prepare for the AP Japanese exam. “It’s very important for students to hear themselves speaking Japanese,” he says. “Just as with the written projects, it is very valuable to have a record of their progress in the Wikispace.”

**TAKE IT SLOW**

Computers are smarter than ever, but they still cannot overcome operator error. The old adage of “garbage in, garbage out” always holds true. Although technology can make teaching more effective and accelerate learning, at the end of the day, it’s as much a tool as a calculator.

Davis cautions against allowing students to rely too much on technology. “Students make the mistake of thinking that presentational communication is linear,” he says. “But not all ideas are created equal. There are strategies to communicate the hierarchy of ideas effectively. Despite the many tools at our disposal to make presentational communication easier and more compelling, good speaking and writing is still good speaking and writing.”

Carolin advises educators to be flexible. “You should anticipate that problems are going to arise,” he says. This often discourages teachers from exploring as much as they should, he notes. It’s also important for educators to evaluate not only the message presented by the students, but also how well the message is supported and strengthened by the use of technology. Rather than awarding 10 points for a student having merely completed a PowerPoint, the evaluation should measure how well the PowerPoint presentation supports the message.

“Technology-based assignments appeal to students and teach them valuable skills,” says Carolin. “Whatever job a student holds in the future, it’s highly likely that technology will be a part of it. It is important to bolster those 21st century skills.”

Patricia Koning is a freelance writer and regular contributor to The Language Educator. She is based in Livermore, California.
Discover Languages Month in February 2013 was once again a cause for celebration, as language educators and their students found new and creative ways to spread the word about the importance of language learning. ACTFL developed the Discover Languages . . . Discover the World® initiative in 2006 to raise awareness about the cognitive, academic, social, cultural and economic benefits that language learning provides our students, which is a serious mission; however, Discover Languages Month is a time when educators and their students also have a lot of fun and share the joy of learning languages.

Teachers get creative in this effort in new and exciting ways every year—and this February was no exception as they used art, technology, and other forms of outreach to spread the word and advocate on behalf of language education.

ACTFL Video Contest—2013

The ACTFL Video Contest again this year played a strong role in the Discover Languages Month celebrations. Students across the country, from elementary school through college, submitted videos on how language learning has been important in their lives. The videos were judged for originality and creativity, with cash prizes awarded to the schools (elementary, middle, and high) and to the students (postsecondary) who produced the winning videos.

This year’s winning videos are:

**Elementary School**

1st Place (Judges) and 2nd Place (Popular Vote): “Discover Languages, Discover the World” – American Renaissance School, Statesville, NC; Teacher: Robin Munguia

2nd Place (Judges) and 1st Place (Popular Vote): “Learning a Foreign Language is Like a Superpower” – Fort Dix Elementary, Fort Dix, NJ; Teacher: Blake Winokur

3rd Place (Judges/Popular Vote): “Languages Are Everywhere!” – Moravian Academy, Bethlehem, PA; Teacher: Melika Matlack

**Middle School**

1st Place (Judges) and 2nd Place (Popular Vote): “Learn a Second Language” – Tenafly Middle School, Tenafly, NJ; Teacher: Mary Lane

2nd Place (Judges) and 1st Place (Popular Vote): “Language Breaks Barriers” – Coleytown Middle School, Westport, CT; Teacher: Margaret Manoff

3rd Place (Judges/Popular Vote): “Ser Bilingue Final” – Johnston Middle School, Houston, TX; Teacher: Meliza Hull Fredrick

**High School**

1st Place (Judges): “Much More Than Just Learning Chinese” – Choate Rosemary Hall, Wallingford, CT; Teacher: Dan Zhao

1st Place (Popular Vote): “Languages and Jobs” – Dunwoody High School, Dunwoody, GA; Teacher: Clarissa Adams Fletcher

2nd Place (Judges): “Santa Clara Discovers Languages” – Santa Clara High School, Oxnard, CA; Teacher: Mónica Schoenfeld

2nd Place (Popular Vote): “Be Careful What You Say” – Elizabeth Upper High School, Elizabeth, NJ; Teachers: Guido Morsella and Marilyn D’Antoni

3rd Place (Judges): “Learn a New Language Today!” – Tempe Preparatory Academy, Tempe, AZ; Teacher: Jaime Cardoso

3rd Place (Popular Vote): “Lost in Languages” – Mount Abraham Union High School, Bristol, VT; Teacher: Simone Skerritt

**Postsecondary**

1st Place (Judges) and 3rd Place (Popular Vote): “TCNJ Amazing Chase” – The College of New Jersey, Ewing, NJ

2nd Place (Judges) and 1st Place (Popular Vote): “Untranslatables” – Miami University of Ohio, Oxford, OH

3rd Place (Judges) and 2nd Place (Popular Vote): “Discovering Languages by the Sea” – Eckerd College, St. Petersburg, FL

To see the winning videos in each category, visit actflvideocontest.org.
Munguia says that while her students “did this project for fun,” they were “surprised and delighted” to learn that they had been chosen as a finalist. “Reflecting together afterwards, my students commented that they were challenged trying to pronounce each other’s different languages. It also opened their eyes as to the ‘coolness’ of being able to communicate in another tongue. This was a wonderful learning experience for my students, and they even received a letter from the mayor of our town!”

Spanish teacher Blake Winokur, who teaches Stephanie White—the student behind the video, “Learning a Foreign Language is Like a Superpower,” which won the popular vote in the elementary category—says he decided to enter the contest for the first time because he knew how enthusiastic his students were about learning Spanish and he wanted them to be able to express how important it is to them.

“When Stephanie found out about the contest, she said, ‘I was really excited and ran home to tell my mom about it.’” recalls Winokur. Stephanie wanted to enter the contest because, she says, “I really like Spanish class and I think it is interesting to learn another language.” She wanted to let others know about the importance of learning another language and finding out about other cultures, notes Winokur. “Our school is extremely proud of her.”

Melika Matlack, whose students created the video, “Languages Are Everywhere,” says they were delighted to have won third place in the elementary category. “We had a wonderful experience in the video podcast contest for 2013!”

Middle school teacher Mary Lane says her class first entered the contest two years ago because it sounded like a fun project. “Students were very receptive to the idea and wanted to use some of the Chinese they had learned in our classroom (always a good thing) in their videos. I find the kids like videos and enjoy shooting their own,” notes Lane. “This year we even had students cross language lines as friends, who study different languages, worked together on a video project. I think this enhanced the language message!”

Lane’s students won first place from the judges for their video, “Learn a Second Language.” She asked some of them to put into their own words what they thought about the contest. Here are some of their comments: “I think it was a great opportunity to learn how important languages are.” “I enjoyed it because it gets kids interactive with the language and plus the kids who want to do it can and who don’t, don’t.” “It was a good experience and it was fun to make and it’s educational and you learn from it.”

Meliza Hull Fredrick, the teacher whose students created “Ser Bilingüe Final” which won third place in the Middle School category, according to both the judges and popular vote, is in her second year of teaching Spanish at her school.

“It is a dual language school where students enter sixth or seventh grade in preparation for the AP language course and exam in eighth grade,” she says. “Students who earn a 3, 4 or 5 on the exam will receive high school and university credit at the end of the eighth grade year.”

Last year, she started a class for native speakers of Spanish and this year she has three classes. “These students have an advantage because they already know Spanish and English,” says Fredrick. “The classes have been very successful and I anticipate more next year. I believe this success is the result of educating students and parents about the possibilities and opportunities language learning offers and empowering them to make a plan for their lives. Many of my students are also learning French and Chinese while taking the dual language Spanish courses. It’s great to see their love for languages and especially their advocacy to other students—particularly elementary students.”

Fredrick began the school year by asking students about the importance of learning other languages and being bilingual or multilingual. They brainstormed and researched the requirements and benefits of being bilingual/multilingual. They brainstormed and made plans for careers and opportunities language learning offers and empowering them to make a plan for their lives. Many of my students are also learning French and Chinese while taking the dual language Spanish courses. It’s great to see their love for languages and especially their advocacy to other students—particularly elementary students.”

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As part of the lesson, the students had to give a presentation on the importance of learning other languages. “Many students...
decided to create the video and enter the contest,” Fredrick notes. “They were so excited and creative. It was the second time that we have entered videos and we are learning more and more each time. We already have ideas for next year. I am grateful that ACTFL provides opportunities for students to get involved and take responsibility in advocating for their education.”

In the High School category, Dan Zhao had her Level 4 students enter the contest. “There are two reasons behind this,” she says. “One, I wanted to have them reflect on both their original motive and their current one for learning Chinese, and how this has changed or not changed.” Secondly, she wanted them to consider “anything big that has been driving them in learning this difficult language besides enjoying the culture.”

She says her students worked on the project in groups and that two videos particularly surprised her and the other students. “One is a cartoon—which was the only cartoon among the finalists—and it was amazing in using technology to present enjoying two cultures by comparing them in pictures,” she says. “The other is the prize winner—More Than Just Learning Chinese’ from Yumi Masuda’s group, which tells a real story of how learning Chinese had made a special connection between her and her long-passed-away grandfather. It was very personalized, unique, and touching.”

Zhao plans to have students from other levels participate next year and she looks forward to the exciting videos that they create.

Mónica Schoenfeld reflects on her students’ experience creating the video “Santa Clara Discovers Languages,” which was recognized with second place by the judges, saying: “We are a small school and the thought of participating in a national contest seemed somehow intimidating to my students, but after some encouragement, they began working. The next day, my classroom resembled a beehive: Leo Albea, the director of the video, shared his ideas with the class and all of a sudden, all the students were involved in one way or another. When we watched the finalized video for the first time, we realized that it exceeded our expectations, but what raised more comments was seeing peers talking fluidly in another language and at that moment, speaking a second language had a new meaning for many. This was a great experience and we are already thinking about next year’s contest!”

The Italian and French students of Elizabeth High School Upper Academy were eager to take the challenge and create a video for the contest—and their entry, “Be Careful What You Say,” won second place in the popular vote.

According to Italian teacher Guido Morsella and French teacher Marilyn D’Antoni, “The students wrote the script themselves and choreographed the video without adult help. It was filmed in a salon of a friend of one of the participants. The experience was rewarding. The students enjoyed themselves immensely. They learned to work as a team. It was our first time entering the contest. We are thrilled to have achieved second place and we look forward to entering again next year.”

Spanish teacher Jaime Cardoso, whose students created the video, “Learn a New Language Today!” says, “We were very pleased to participate and that we got third place (judges).”

Simone Skerritt from Mt. Abraham Union High School, shares an article that was written by one of the student participants for their school’s newsletter (see box to right).

Eckerd College student Hailey Escobar was part of the team which made “Discovering Languages by the Sea,” winning third place (judges) and second place (popular vote) in the Postsecondary category.

“I originally became part of the team that made the film when I was recommended by Professor [Nancy] DiBella,” says Escobar. “She taught me Spanish 2 1 last semester. She knew of my interest in film and suggested that I become part of the project. I remember the first meeting, we were brainstorming and I immediately started drawing things on the whiteboard and pitching different ideas. Different members of the video team added to these ideas and we worked out schedules. Each of the different people that are featured in the video were very involved in the creation of the final project from what they were going to say to which angle they liked. I also had a wonderful friend, Cesar De La Rosa, who doesn’t go to my college, but gave me permission to use some of his music in the video.”

She continues: “Everyone at Eckerd has been wonderful throughout the process of the competition. I’ve had quite a few congrats from professors and students alike. I was very grateful for the opportunity and recognition for this video and I think it has just fueled my desire to keep learning and filming.”
Spreading the Word

Although we all recognize that advocacy should be a year-round priority, language educators also use the month of February as a special opportunity to publicize the value of language learning—capitalizing on their students’ creativity and the latest technologies.

ACTFL President Toni Theisen embraced the fact that February is both Discover Languages Month and a celebration of Valentine’s Day in her town of Loveland, CO.

“We have several special traditions for Valentine’s Day in Loveland,” she says. “One fun one is the ‘Wooden Hearts on the Light Poles’ project. One can propose a wooden heart with a special message from the Rotary Club, which is placed on a light pole around town.” Theisen created a heart with the message: “ACTFL Languages” which was placed in downtown Loveland.

She also worked on a special project—“Sending out Hearts into the World”—with her French students during February. They made by hand and then sent out over 400 valentines to France and Africa—and have been receiving messages in response. “I even connected them to our Global Valentine wikispace,” says Theisen. “The special messages are coming from Africa. We might even do a community project with Africa later.”

Theisen spoke at a Rotary Club meeting in her community about the project.

“Knowing how important community and internationalism are to Rotary, I shared how learning languages means also learning other cultures. It also means that students understand more about their culture,” she says. “I shared how many Rotary students from Loveland (who I have shepherded through the process for many years) also get our valentines to share.”

Shari Froedge, French teacher at Monroe County High School in Tompkinsville, KY, had to travel to Paris during the month and while she was away, she left her French classes with some group work to make a brochure explaining “Why study a foreign language?”

“They were left with instructions for how to perform their research, as well as a rubric,” she says. Their secondary task was to write about: “Why French is a good choice”—and she notes, this could have been done for any language.

“The brochures will be used to recruit students from the middle school as they enter high school in the spring, as well as to inform family and community members of the importance of language studies,” Froedge says. “The brochures look great, and since they get feedback, then edit, we can also use them for Program Support for Writing.”

Nicole Naditz, who teaches French at Bella Vista High School in Fair Oaks, CA, used technology to reach out to her students, former students, and others to pose the question: “Where has language taken you?” People were invited to post their “travels, cool encounters, job experiences (where language helped), etc.” on an online wall where anyone could add their thoughts. She did this by creating a ‘padlet’ (formerly known as a WallWisher) at padlet.com/wall/ry8fxw7k9v.

While the number of responses has not been quite as many as Naditz hoped, she says some of them are pretty interesting and exciting. “I tweeted out an invite to post on the wall every couple of days, hoping more will add their personal stories to it. Hopefully when the new Discover Languages campaign rolls out and we get celebrities on the wall, there will be more interest and participation.”

Naditz also had her Twitter account set to send out a different advocacy message each day in February. Many other language educators also used Twitter and other social media to spread the word about the Discover Languages campaign and the importance of language learning. ACTFL also tweeted out language facts during the month using the hashtag: #dlmonth.

Of course, these are just a few of the ways that language teachers across the country have embraced Discover Languages Month and involved their students and communities in spreading the word about the importance of language learning. It is always exciting to see what creative educators and students will come up with next!

Note: A new Discover Languages campaign will be unveiled in Fall 2013. Stay tuned to ACTFL.org and in The Language Educator for more details about what this means for our future advocacy efforts.
Assessing the Effectiveness of New Teachers with edTPA™

By Susan Hildebrandt and Anne Cummings Hlas

edTPA is a subject-specific tool to evaluate the effectiveness of new teachers, developed by Stanford University in collaboration with the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. Consistent with the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards system of advanced certification, edTPA intends to measure professional teaching knowledge development for preservice candidates. Through a written portfolio and video clips, edTPA assesses teacher candidates on three tasks: Planning for Instruction and Assessment, Instructing and Engaging Students in Learning, and Assessing Student Learning. There are 13 different rubrics used to evaluate world language teacher performance in those three areas. Pearson, as an operational partner with Stanford, will deliver the assessment materials and provide official edTPA scores. The evidence is scored using a five-point scale by qualified, subject-specific scorers who are professional educators with experience mentoring or supervising teacher candidates. While a national passing standard will soon be determined, most states will likely set their own policies for passing.

Currently, edTPA is used or will be used in up to 27 states across the United States as a performance-based assessment for preservice teachers in the last few months of their teacher education program. Some states, such as Washington and Tennessee, are “early adopters” with scores being used to make licensure decisions now; while other states, such as New York, Illinois and Wisconsin, are on the fast track for implementation in 2014 or 2015. Some states, like Illinois, anticipate using edTPA for both licensure as well as teacher education program completion decisions. Needless to say, these are high-stakes consequences. Not only do licensure tests affect K–12 teacher certification decisions, but they will most likely affect postsecondary teacher education programs.

edTPA has much potential. Real teachers and teacher educators developed edTPA, which focuses on the act of teaching. It could align teacher education programs within and across states, suggesting common outcomes and incorporating a common professional language. With that common language, teacher educators could begin making more connections across subject areas. Unlike other measures (e.g. Praxis II), edTPA captures a teacher candidate’s planning, implementation, assessment of instruction, and student learning. It provides candidates an opportunity to show their best work on a performance assessment in a real classroom scenario instead of in an artificial or contrived context. Additionally, the preservice teachers are required to reflect on each stage of the process, to justify decisions made, and to relate what they would do differently were they to teach the lesson again. Demonstrating whether or not one can teach has also drawn support as a replacement of other written teacher tests, according to a July 2012 New York Times piece. (See tinyurl.com/bewdwba.)

In addition, edTPA has been vetted by experts in world languages, similar to other content areas, with the content handbook developed and reviewed by content-area specialists, such as teachers and teacher educators. This subject-specificity has allowed edTPA to focus on critical behaviors and practices that are particular to that subject. For example, the world language handbook focuses on building “student
communicative proficiency in the target language in meaningful cultural context(s)" (edTPA World Language Assessment Handbook, 2013, p. 1). In addition, the world languages edTPA focuses on the five goal areas of the National Standards for Learning Languages (i.e., the “5 Cs”) and elements of second language acquisition theory.

While there are some benefits, controversies also surround edTPA. First, the adoption of edTPA by states that already require numerous teacher candidate and program evaluation measures seems to assume our current system is not working. It also assumes that more rigorous assessments are the solution, which can be problematic. In addition to these assumptions, the cost to each teacher candidate is $300. With accountability at center stage, edTPA adds another fee for teacher candidates in addition to other evaluation measures such as Praxis I, Praxis II, ACT + writing, Oral Proficiency Interview test(s), and/or state level content and pedagogy tests to “prove that they know each subject they teach”—the third requirement of the highly qualified teacher mandate of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Further, teacher candidates will often need to pay for a subscription to an online portfolio service (e.g., LiveText) for teacher education programs and colleges of education to keep track of data. The rising costs tied to licensure will most likely decrease the number of students interested in a teaching career and influence teacher supply and teacher education programs. Additionally, the move to “outsource” the teacher licensing process has drawn protest, according to The New York Times in May 2012, after a University of Massachusetts Senior Lecturer and her students refused to participate in piloting the new edTPA in their state. (See tinyurl.com/outsource-teacher-licensing.)

Aside from the cost and ubiquity of external teacher education mandates, other challenges exist as well. The assessments require teacher candidates to plan and teach an engaging learning segment during student teaching that emphasizes communicative proficiency, meaningful cultural contexts, and connections to prior knowledge, among other things. For teacher candidates to successfully pass edTPA, teacher education programs will need to plan for its implementation, to embed it into existing curriculum, and to reach out to student teaching placements for support. Programs and teacher candidates will need to maneuver the mechanics of videotaping a lesson, along with gaining parental consent. In general, stakeholders in the local area will want to collaborate as edTPA is not only assessing teacher candidates, but also a program’s success at preparing teachers according to the principles of edTPA.

National assessments, similar to edTPA, lead to many questions that will need to be addressed in the years to come, such as: Would we prefer to see more flexibility or more standardization in assessing teacher candidates? How does one more measurement of teacher accountability support the highly qualified teacher mandate (if at all)?

What types of research support the implementation and continuation of edTPA?
How does increasing assessment demands raise teacher quality (if at all)?

In a sense, the questions raised by edTPA are creating new opportunities for our field to discuss teacher development. Now more than ever, we need students who are engaged in communicating within meaningful cultural contexts through language. How can we support this worthy goal? While the intended and unintended consequences of edTPA remain to be seen, with implementation in its beginning stages, what we do know is that implementation has the potential to transform our profession and encourage conversations about what we want new teachers to know and be able to do. These conversations need to begin now to help shape the future of world language teaching and our next generation of world language teachers.

Susan Hildebrandt is an Assistant Professor at Illinois State University, Normal, Illinois.

Anne Cummings Hlas is an Associate Professor at the University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

In June 2012, ACTFL members involved with the ACTFL/NCATE program (Nathan Bond, Rebecca Fox, Shawn Morrison, and Judith Shrum) participated in a content validation process led by the edTPA development team from Stanford University and Pearson in order to document the alignment of edTPA with the ACTFL/NCATE Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers (2002). Their feedback was incorporated into a new version of edTPA World Languages Handbook that is currently being piloted.

While teacher preparation programs that seek national recognition through ACTFL/NCATE review may submit edTPA as they would any assessment, they must show how the performances of their teacher candidates on those assessments address the ACTFL/NCATE Standards.

Once the revised ACTFL/NCATE Standards (2013) have been approved this fall, an ACTFL-appointed Alignment Validation Team will work with the Stanford team to provide additional feedback and to identify crosswalk points consistent with our revised standards. World language educators who are members of the Alignment Validation Team are Susan Hildebrandt, Anne Cummings Hlas, Charles James, Shawn Morrison, and Judith Shrum. Input will also be sought from the ACTFL/NCATE Audit Team and from the members of the profession at large.
Once again this May, in an annual ritual of spring, anxious and excited students across the United States will be tested on their skills and abilities by taking Advanced Placement (AP) Exams in major academic subjects—including seven world languages.

Since 1955, the AP Program from The College Board has enabled millions of secondary students to take college-level courses and exams, and to earn college credit or placement while still in high school. The AP currently offers 34 courses in a wide variety of subject areas, including Chinese (Language and Culture); French (Language and Culture), German (Language and Culture); Italian (Language and Culture), Japanese (Language and Culture); Latin; and Spanish (Language and Culture; Literature and Culture).

Over the last couple of years and continuing through next year, The College Board has undertaken major revisions of much of the world languages program, with revisions to AP French and AP German courses implemented in the 2011–2012 academic year; revisions to AP Latin and AP Spanish Literature and Culture courses taking place in the current school year (2012–2013); and revisions to AP Spanish Language and Culture to take effect for the next academic year in 2013–2014. The AP Italian course and exam, which had been suspended in 2009, was also reinstated and revised for the 2011–2012 academic year.

The primary changes to the revised language and culture courses have been to align them with the goal areas of the National Standards for Learning Languages (i.e., the “5 Cs”—Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, Communities). The three modes of communication (interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational) are emphasized in these courses, along with a greater stress on cultural awareness (i.e., the “3 Ps”—products, practices, and perspectives).

Students study a variety of topics within meaningful contexts by incorporating six global—or “big idea”—themes: Global Challenges, Science and Technology; Contemporary Life; Personal and Public Identities; Families and Communities; and Beauty and Aesthetics. Each theme includes a number of recommended contexts for exploration. One way to design instruction with the themes is to identify overarching “essential questions” to motivate learners and to guide classroom investigations, learning activities, and performance assessments.

The revised AP Latin course integrates the two previous courses—one of which focused exclusively on prose, the other on poetry—into a single course that now focuses on the works of Vergil and Caesar. The new course requires students to read and translate poetry and prose, analyze literary texts in written argument, and practice sight reading. Revised course objectives are organized into broad categories that include reading and comprehension, translation, contextualization, and analysis of texts.

With AP Spanish Literature and Culture, in addition to aligning with the National Standards and incorporating a thematic approach, other goals of the course revision were to reduce the number of required readings, to emphasize contextual analysis, to engage students in cultural contexts through the use of media, and to develop proficiency in interpretive listening.

According to The College Board, AP Chinese and AP Japanese will be revised sometime in the future, however those dates have not yet been announced.

What’s Working Marcia Arndt, Director of World Languages and Cultures for The College Board, says that the new AP curriculum has been a great success.

“Both teachers and students report that they like the thematic approach to the course and that the use of ‘essential questions’ allows for creative and meaningful exploration of the themes,” says Arndt. “Teachers report that students are acquiring and then using a richer and more sophisticated vocabulary through the use of authentic documents. As the new courses focus on cultural competencies as well as linguistic competencies, students are learning culture at a more sophisticated level. Teachers seem to be enjoying the relative freedom they have in developing instructional materials instead of having to be bound exclusively to one textbook.”
Arndt sees the new AP world language program as an improvement for many reasons, beginning with the focus on real-life communication. She also sees the inclusion of tasks that require higher-level thinking skills such as synthesizing information in written and spoken work as key.

“The insistence on the use of a variety of authentic materials permits students to acquire and then use rich vocabulary in context while gaining cultural insights on products, practices, and perspectives,” she says. “The new courses have an inherently interdisciplinary nature, as students are exposed to a variety of information that connects to many disciplines not usually explored in a language class. The presentational writing and speaking skills acquired in our language courses transfer to other courses beyond the language courses. The courses are designed to be purposefully flexible by encouraging teachers and students to explore the course themes through a variety of lenses.”

So far, the reaction to the course revisions from teachers and students has been strongly positive.

“It’s a great improvement, because it connects language study to other disciplines and engages students in critical thinking,” says Johanna Watzinger-Tharp, Associate Dean for International and Interdisciplinary Programs, the Director of International Studies Program, and Associate Professor of German and Applied Linguistics at the University of Utah.

“I find my students able to articulate and defend their opinion as well as being more creative and able to sustain the language longer in various, less predictable scenarios,” agrees Linda Zins-Adams, German teacher at Highlands High School in Fort Thomas, KY. “Since the introduction of the new exam format based on the existing Standards, I feel like I can better connect to real-world scenarios in which the students could be asked to apply the language.” Zins-Adams is a certified AP consultant, reader, and reviewer for The College Board.

Raúl Rodríguez, Professor of Spanish Language and Culture at Manhattan College, also sees the revisions as a definite improvement.

“The new AP Curriculum Framework provides a road map to a course that is more skill-based than content-based. It includes learning objectives, expected student performance, thematic approach, organizing concepts, and essential questions. It better connects language proficiency with the 5 Cs, products, practices and perspectives of the target-language regions and the world at large. Plus cross-cultural comparisons make ample use of multimedia and Internet resources, an area in which logistically many students surpass some teachers’ knowledge,” he says. Rodríguez has served as instructor of AP Summer Institutes at Goucher College, Manhattan College, Stanford University, and LaSalle University, as well as being a former AP Spanish exam leader.

“From what we’ve seen in workshops, the opinions and experiences have been very favorable,” says Davara Potel, who started the AP French program at Solon High School, Solon, OH. She taught French there for 25 years and served as chair of the Foreign Language Department. She is currently co-chair of the AP French Language and Culture Development Committee.

“Teachers found that the new curriculum was initially daunting, but refreshing in scope because they have to stay abreast of current events, and there was a lot of satisfaction that we heard expressed regarding the exam results from the first year. The exam results had been better than what they were in the past. With the redesign, there was a resetting of test scores,” notes Potel.

“Based on my conversations with AP Italian teachers, they have been quite receptive to the new format,” says Frank Nuessel, Professor at the University of Louisville. “This positive response has been reflected in the results of the first exam in which students have performed at high level for an academically rigorous assessment of student performance.”

Nuessel, who served on the 2003 College Board National Task Force to create an outline for an AP Italian Language and Culture Course and to draft the exam specifications, also served as Chief Reader of the AP Italian Language and Culture Exam from 2005 to 2009 and was reappointed for 2010–2012. According to The College Board, 1,343 out of 1,806 students (or 74%) scored a 3 or higher on the AP Italian exam last year.

Although the new standards are not officially implemented in the AP Japanese curriculum, Professor Motoko Tabuse, Co-Chair of the AP Japanese Language and Culture Development Committee at Eastern Michigan University, and Dan Carolin, Co-Chair of the AP Japanese Language and Culture Development Committee at Kennedy High School in Cedar Rapids, IA, are both optimistic about the transition.

“Things are going very well for the Japanese group. In 2012, 76.8% of the students and 61.9% of the standard group (those who do not come from a home where Japanese is spoken or have not spent more than a month in Japan) received an AP score of 3 or higher. Classroom instruction is no longer solely centered on the textbook . . . students use the language as a tool to communicate in realistic situations,” they note.

Using Authentic Materials

Key elements of the new AP Exams include contextualized tasks (i.e., exam tasks and source materials include advance organizers and time for previewing the questions), authentic audio materials; and a wide variety of authentic print and audio materials to reflect the linguistic and cultural diversity of the target-language-speaking world.

By seeking out music, films, video clips, newspapers, podcasts, blogs, magazines, advertisements, short stories, and poetry from the target culture, teachers can acquire and use necessary authentic materials with their students.

“One of the key words is: authentic. Teachers should be using them at all levels, for their assessments and not just class activities,” says Potel.

Audio, visual, and audiovisual authentic sources should be included and teachers can focus on developing students’ visual literacy by including graphs, tables, and maps in instructional materials.

“You still can teach grammar, but it has to be connected to context and authentic materials to increase students’ literacy,” suggests Zins-Adams. “We have to find authentic materials to expose them well to the six AP themes and culture from the German-speaking region, so that they can compare to American products, practices, and perspectives.”

Brian Kennelly, Professor of French at Cal-Poly University, advises teachers to enlist students in seeking out these materials. “Don’t do all this work yourself; your students are often much better versed in the technology that we hope teachers are utilizing in the classroom,” he says.
Vertical Teams and College Readiness

AP vertical teaming is an essential component of a successful college readiness program, ensuring that teachers are instituting rigorous and relevant coursework throughout all grade levels. The goal is to equip students with the necessary foundational skills at every level. AP teachers strive to provide a supportive academic transition; the key is cooperation, communication, and teamwork. Vertical teams work in each subject area to articulate the curriculum and ensure a seamless learning pathway.

As Arndt notes, “The importance of establishing a strong, well-aligned vertical team approach to language acquisition is essential to be able to appropriately prepare students for our AP Language and Culture courses.”

Rodriguez adds, “Intra-school vertical teams can establish exchanges between AP students, teachers, and those in lower grades, where they all share any available people and materials.”

Nuessel highlights the first year of coursework as key in vertical teaming. “Preparation for all AP world language exams begins in the first year of instruction. Thus, language programs, teachers, and school districts must initiate preparation at the beginning stage of instruction. This is the essence of the notion of ‘vertical’ integration of AP instruction. The AP curriculum is not a course offered in the fourth year of instruction. Rather, it is the culmination of a longitudinal curricular program of instruction.”

“In the case of Japanese, articulation between secondary and post-secondary educators has become more active and productive,” note Tabuse and Carolin. “It has assisted teachers to set both short- and long-term goals that have focused and raised the level of learning at the secondary level. These changes in turn, have had an influence on college-level instruction. It has encouraged college faculty to build upon the skills that students learned in high school. Now college-level educators are beginning to think more in terms of where their students should be at the end of eight, rather than four, years of instruction.”

They warn about the dangers of isolation, saying, “When there is a horizontal articulation of the curriculum where teachers from different disciplines (e.g., art, music, world languages, social studies, history) form a team and plan lessons together, this may present less of a challenge, but when a language teacher is isolated, this could present a great challenge for interdisciplinary connections.”

They describe how this can be addressed. “Some teachers suggested creating a video introducing their school in Japanese. These videos introducing the teachers of other disciplines and explaining what American students do in that particular class to their Japanese high school partners have been a great success. Some teachers from other disciplines even learned a few phrases in Japanese during the creation of this project.”

To ensure seamless transitions from one level to the next, every teacher should remember where students came from and where they are headed. Jill Crooker, instructor at the University of Rochester, who serves as College Board Advisor to the AP Latin Test Development Committee, reminds Latin teachers of this concept.

“Any teacher considering the AP program or reflecting upon his/her present program should embed the objectives/skills of AP in the beginning and throughout instruction,” says Crooker.

How to Implement the 5 Cs in an AP Language Program

Mary Eileen Kirchner, Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction working with World Languages and ESL in Abington (PA) School District, offers some real-life applications that would work in AP language programs.

“Merging the National Standards, Common Core State Standards, and AP themes can be done effectively if the curriculum is developed using a backwards design. Begin with an essential question that supports one of the AP themes,” advises Kirchner. “Second, design a summative assessment in each communication mode that is both culture-based and has a higher-level thinking task as the language function. Third, develop the instruction, formative assessment and supports for the language function, vocabulary and structure necessary to be successful on each summative assessment. Finally, develop resources that are appropriate and engaging.”

The following examples from Kirchner show how each standard is applicable to the theme:

Families and Communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic: School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Essential question: “How is school in target language countries different from and the same as a U.S. school?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Sample summative assessment for interpretive reading: Students will compare and contrast a student schedule from a school in a target language country and a student schedule from the United States for an eighth grade student. Students will need to express their opinion about what they like and dislike about each schedule.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Communication: Interpretive mode

- Cultures: Practices and perspectives—school systems in target language countries
- Comparisons: School systems in target language countries and the United States
- Connections: Use 21st century skills of accessing information online from a target language country

Communities: Use Internet to explore a school schedule from a target language country, interpret authentic materials from target language community

Common Core Standard and AP skill: Compare and contrast, use key details from text to support opinion

Science and Technology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic: Weather</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Essential question: “How does weather affect a culture?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Sample summative assessment for presentational speaking: Students will present a five-day weather report for a city in a target language country with advice on what typical activities to do/not do and what typical clothes to wear/not wear depending on the weather.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Communication: Presentational mode

- Cultures: Products, practices, and perspectives—weather, typical activities, clothing typical of cities in target language countries
- Comparisons: Students will make comparisons between U.S. cities and cities in target language countries regarding weather, activities, and clothing
- Connections: Science and geography

Communities: Use Internet to explore cities in target language countries

Common Core Standard and AP skill: Analyze features of a target language community, integration of knowledge and ideas, research to build and present knowledge
Watzinger-Tharp suggests teachers “incorporate the curriculum framework at early levels (pre-AP) to build students language abilities across the three modes of communication, and use a wide range of authentic spoken and written sources.”

“One of the big messages out there is that the AP language courses are not one-year courses,” Potel says. “Whether you are part of a [large or small] program, there needs to be a concerted effort to align vertically and horizontally with other language teachers.”

Collaboration and Networking

For teachers who are adapting or have adapted to the new curriculum frameworks, there are many resources available and much to learn from experienced AP administrators and teachers through networking, collaboration, workshops, online communities, and AP summer institutes.

“The key thing to do is share,” says Kennelly, who has co-chaired the AP French Language and Culture Development Committee and represented AP French Language and Culture on a cross-disciplinary writing team for the AP Vertical Teams Guide for World Languages and Cultures. “Share your resources, communicate as much as possible with your colleagues, and have your students share with you. We are all in this together. We’re here to promote the study of languages and cultures. By doing this sharing and getting our students jazzed about what they are doing in the classroom, we’re increasing the visibility of language instruction and its importance in the 21st century.”

Potel describes the need to align with other language departments. “Having gone through the already established French program, I was able to sit down with the AP Spanish teacher and bring her up to speed on what to expect as far as curriculum, audit, and getting ready for the exam. There should be sharing among languages.”

“You can share your techniques and resources with other AP language teachers because, theoretically, we are all doing the same thing,” Kennelly affirmed. He also suggests teachers “attend workshops whenever possible, because it is there that strategies often get shared. If it isn’t possible to attend a workshop, make sure you sign up in the AP Online Teachers’ Community on The College Board website.”

Rodriguez suggests seeking out mentorship. “It would be ideal to have a colleague, who has trained and/or taught the course, as a mentor during the first year. An AP classroom can be an adventure to embrace with its college-level instruction in a different language and culture. Be a travel guide in the adventure, sharing your enthusiasm along the way.”

Zins-Adams says teachers of AP languages should focus on their similarities, and should not remain isolated in their own departments. “Today, all the Western languages use the same scoring guidelines, and the format and themes are the same,” she says. “Collaborate within your department and district, attend a day-workshop, share, join the AP Community. Expand your personal learning network!”

For some languages, like Latin, there can be an additional challenge. “I think that although Latin teachers often work in a vacuum as the only Latin teacher in their school district, they need to network with other Latin teachers at conferences and online using the AP Teacher Community which they can access via the AP Latin homepage,” says Crooker.

Making the Transition

While the idea of a revised exam can bring some anxiety, the changes to the AP course do not have to mean a complete overhaul. “Teachers don’t have to start at ground zero,” says Potel. “They can repurpose a lot of course activities and texts that they’ve already been using.”

Kennelly adds, “Teachers shouldn’t panic when they learn they have to submit a course audit. They can already use a bulk of what they have used before; they’ll just have to supplement it with authentic materials.”

Watzinger-Tharp offers that the standards have actually facilitated aligning with the evolution of teaching strategies. “Teachers have been teaching in a way that reflects the AP curriculum framework. So, in some sense, the AP course and exam have caught up with contemporary world language classrooms that integrate language and content. Students use the language interactively; they compare the target cultures to their own; and they take positions on compelling issues.”

AP by the Numbers

954,070 U.S. public high school graduates took at least one AP exam in 2012

127,358 U.S. high school teachers taught an AP course last year

5,400 College faculty participated in reviewing the syllabi of AP teachers, developing curricula, or scoring AP exams

20,943 AP coordinators, counselors, and principals used AP data to shape their schools’ programs

From the 9th Annual AP Report to the Nation, released by The College Board in February 2013

The Language Educator • April 2013
Exploring the New AP Program

Crooker sees a smooth transition as well. “The revised AP Latin program is a normal transition. Historically the AP syllabus readings have changed about every decade. The addition of a prose author, Caesar, to the poetry of Vergil is an appropriate change. It allows for instruction to include within the context of translations the historical themes like Roman values, leadership, and war and empire and compare the elements of prose vs. poetry.”

Arndt suggests, “Have students focus on cultural products, practices, and perspectives and give them many opportunities to compare their own culture to the target culture. Grade holistically—learn and use the scoring guidelines used to assess AP free response tasks. Focus on strengthening student communication over the acquisition of grammatical and syntactical mastery, and provide many opportunities for collaboration so students focus on speaking to one another.”

Watzinger-Tharp adds, “Engage students in a variety of authentic and meaningful activities across the three modes of communication (interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational), rather than focusing too much on the specific exam tasks.”

“Latin teachers know that their instruction helps students see that their learning of Latin gives them the benefit of recognizing the ancient world in their modern world,” says Crooker. “In terms of culture, the lessons from the ancient world enhance an understanding of cultural diversity.”

Those involved with the AP see the program growing stronger in the coming years. “We couldn’t predict the future, but we are very happy with what the revisions have brought,” says Kennelly. “Though the teachers scrambled a bit the first year to address the new course and new exam, they were pleasantly surprised with the test scores. And as the years go by, there will be more and more resources available and the preparation will become smoother.”

Kate Brenner is a contributing writer to The Language Educator, based in Middleburg, Virginia.
Because the Congress was unable to agree on a plan in February to avoid the dire spending cuts designed to cut the federal deficit (also known as “sequestration” or the “sequester”), on March 1, President Obama signed the order putting these cuts into effect.

Sequestration will shave funding off programs immediately until the end of this federal fiscal year (September 30), however it is unclear precisely how much money will be cut and from where. Just before the sequester was official, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) released a memo saying that since the cuts will need to be absorbed with only half of the fiscal year left, the effective cuts to defense programs will be 13% and for non-defense discretionary programs cuts will be approximately 9%.

Regarding specific programs, it is unclear how much flexibility Cabinet Secretaries will have in distributing these cuts in their programs. The White House released state-by-state summaries of the effects of sequestration, which the Washington Post has compiled at www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/special/politics/sequestration-state-impact.

During the week of March 25, President Obama signed into law funding for the federal government for the remainder of this fiscal year. The Democratic-controlled Senate and Republican-controlled House agreed to a continuing resolution with five additional appropriations bills which wrote the above-mentioned sequestration cuts into effect for the remainder of fiscal year 2013.

The President is scheduled to send his proposed budget for next year (funding programs starting on October 1 for FY14) to Congress during the week of April 8 (two months after he is required to submit it). In an unusual sequence of events, both bodies of Congress have already moved on their own budget blueprints prior to receiving the President’s proposal. The House passed a budget during the week of March 18, while the Senate adopted its first budget resolution since 2009 on March 23. The two blueprints differed greatly, as the House plan repeals the Affordable Care Act and offers a framework for a balanced budget in 10 years. The Senate budget embraces nearly $1 trillion in tax increases over the coming decade and protects domestic programs targeted for cuts by House Republicans.

Since things are happening so quickly on issues related to budgets, cuts, and appropriations, we urge all ACTFL members to keep themselves informed, through traditional media, as well as through communications from ACTFL and the JNCL-NCLIS. Since many language educators will be planning to visit Washington for the JNCL-NCLIS Annual Delegate Assembly and Legislative Day in May, we urge you to find opportunities to speak with your legislators concerning the importance of funding language education in these challenging times.

Proposal Could End Michigan Language Requirement

Michigan State Representative Phil Potvin introduced a bill in February (HB 4102) that would end regulations mandating all high-school students take language courses, contending that the requirement interferes with students’ ability to receive vocational training. Potvin argued that Michigan’s current curriculum standards, which has included two credits of world languages in graduation requirements since 2010, “forces kids into frustration” and can push students to drop out of high school.

Potvin claims his bill will protect Michigan’s students, however many around the state believe it will do exactly the opposite: Lowering the standards will not help students be competitive in college admissions or in the global job market.

Language educators throughout the state are speaking out against the bill and the Michigan World Language Association (MWLA) lists information to be used for advocacy on this issue on its website, including talking points, community benefits, student benefits, and a sample letter at mwla.org.
Military Leader Speaks Out on Language and Cultural Skills Gap

Despite “the widest imaginable set of skills” among the Defense Department’s 3.2 million military and civilian members, the DoD has an “obvious capability gap” in its lack of foreign language skills that affects its global missions, the supreme allied commander for Europe and commander of U.S. European Command said online in early February.

In his blog at www.aco.nato.int/saceur/to-know-the-world.aspx, Navy Admiral James G. Stavridis quoted Charlemagne, who observed that “to know another language is to have a second soul.”

“In this rapidly globalizing 21st century world, that simple statement summarizes the gift of regional expertise, cultural understanding, and the ability to communicate directly in the language of an ally, partner or colleague,” Stavridis wrote. Yet, he noted, fewer than 10% of DoD members speak a second language, which leaves a gap beyond mere linguists.

“In order to operate in a world that relies more and more on coalition action to succeed,” the admiral said, “we must develop the attendant skills of regional expertise and cultural understanding.”

Stavridis said he had seen “a mixed bag” of forces arriving at their combatant command assignments: some highly skilled in language, culture, and history of their region, some with just a “dusting” of exposure, and others totally inexperienced.

“We can do better,” he insisted. “I’ve learned that the shipmates who truly have the language, culture, and regional skills are often ‘silver bullets’ that can transform a difficult challenge into a success.”

To promote language and cultural skills more widely across the DoD, he offered three recommendations:

• Strengthen language programs, while considering mandatory second language skills at least among officers, and more incentives and training military-wide;
• Boost the foreign affairs officer field by providing better promotion opportunities, recruiting top-quality candidates into the field and ensuring continued growth through appropriate grade education; and
• Build on the “Afghan-Pakistan Hands” model to establish similar programs in other parts of the world, including the Asia-Pacific, Latin America and Caribbean, Africa, and other regions.

“These individuals would be the equivalent of ‘special forces’ in the world of global engagement, with truly deep, repetitive tours in the region, utter fluency in the language, and graduate-level knowledge of history, literature, geography, economics and the like,” Stavridis wrote.

“All of this requires investment—not huge amounts, but smart money spent on smart programs.” But more importantly, he said, it requires “a belief that part of providing security in this turbulent 21st century will mean we must ‘know the world’ so much better than we do today.”

Don’t Miss JNCL-NCLIS 2013 Legislative Day

The Annual Joint National Committee on Languages & The National Council for Languages and International Studies (JNCL-NCLIS) Legislative Day and Delegate Assembly will be held May 9–11, 2013 at the American Councils for International Education, 1828 L Street, NW, Washington, DC. More information is available at www.languagepolicy.org.

Request a District Office Meeting with Your Member of Congress’s Staff

Visiting your Member of Congress is a great way to build a relationship and position yourself as a leading resource on language learning in your community. You can also educate them on the importance of language learning. Find out exactly what you need to do to make it happen on the ACTFL website at www.actfl.org/advocacy/resources.

Send in Your Legislative Updates to The Language Educator

Please e-mail scutshall@actfl.org with any information about new legislation in your area that either helps or threatens languages, as well as your own state and local efforts such as letter-writing campaigns. Photos welcome!

Language Policy Article Coming in August

In the next issue of The Language Educator, we will take a look at what programs exist in the United States in lieu of a national language policy and their impact on language education in the 21st century.
Advocacy Tip: Take Advantage of “Fridays at Home”

TIP: Many members of Congress spend time in Washington, DC from Monday through Thursday and head back to their home districts in time to be back interacting with constituents over an extended weekend. Votes and committee meetings are often scheduled with this in mind. So take note: A good time to be able to meet your representatives in their home offices is on a Friday, says California Language Teachers Association Executive Director Lorraine D’Ambruoso.

She advises all language educators and leaders to consider making such Friday visits to their lawmakers’ offices, as they have done in her state. She also suggests: “You want to visit them before you have something specific to fight for, so you are laying the groundwork of the relationship. Then, when you really need those legislators to support you, they know who you are.”

For more tips on advocacy, go to www.actfl.org/advocacy.

Advocacy Evident in Alaska and Colorado

Many individuals in the language education profession have found opportunities to advocate with their state and national leaders. We urge anyone who may have made such contacts to send in their own photos to scutshall@actfl.org so we can showcase your efforts on behalf of language learning.

Colorado Congress of Foreign Language Teachers (CCFLT) members had the opportunity to testify at the Colorado Capitol to the Joint House and Senate Committee on Education on February 27. CCFLT members advocated for the importance of language learning and culture as essential 21st century skills that promote collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity. Members also elaborated on how being multilingual and multicultural is crucial in supporting the STEM programs in the country.

Shown here (l-r): ACTFL National Language Teacher of the Year Noah Geisel, CCFLT Co-President Anna Crocker, ACTFL President Toni Theisen, Colorado State Senator Evie Hudak, ACTFL Past President (2009) Janine Erickson, and CCFLT Co-President Debbie Cody.

While at the ACTFL Annual Convention in Philadelphia in November 2012, World Languages Curriculum Coordinator for the Anchorage (AK) School District Janice Gullickson took a side trip to Washington, DC. JNCL-NCLIS Executive Director Bill Rivers helped coordinate meetings for her with Alaska Senators Mark Begich and Lisa Murkowski.

Says Gullickson: “Crystal Goldie (with JNCL) accompanied me and we discussed the importance of funding for world languages and upcoming legislation. We asked the senators about funding for K–12 education and gave specific examples of how FLAP funding was instrumental in the development of sustainable and successful K–12 Japanese, Russian, and Spanish immersion programs in the Anchorage School District. [Nearly 2,000 students are enrolled in these articulated programs that are in their 20th (two Spanish programs) and 23rd (Japanese) years. Russian is K–9 as of 2013.] Senators Begich and Murkowski were pleased to note that they couldn’t agree more that ‘an early start’ produces results! Both senators currently have Anchorage School District language immersion program graduates working in their offices as staffers!”

Shown here: Senator Mark Begich with Janice Gullickson.
Donation Source of Classroom Technology
www.digitalwish.com
Digital Wish develops new online tools and promotions to help teachers and their supporters acquire new technology for their classrooms. Teachers and schools can receive donations of any of the technology products offered by Digital Wish, or cash donations can be made directly into school and teacher accounts, allowing teachers to purchase the tech items they need. Teachers can make a “wish list” of technology items they need for their classrooms, and then reach out to potential supporters who can buy wish list items or make cash contributions toward the new technology. The site also features lesson plans that demonstrate how teachers are using the technology, and includes a section on foreign language lesson plans.

Guide to the Internet from a “Cybrarian”
mediaspecialistsguide.blogspot.com
A Media Specialist’s Guide to the Internet offers a huge amount of information, and it covers everything from Web 2.0 tools, free e-books, websites, videos, interactive games, and lesson plans, to apps for iPads/iPhones and Android devices.

Onomatopoeia in Many Languages
www.bzzzpeek.com
Would you like to know how a cow sounds in Japanese, a duck sounds in German, a pig sounds in Chinese, or a fire truck sounds in Spanish? Bzzzpeek is an online catalog of onomatopoeia with audio clips of native speakers vocalizing animal and vehicle sounds in 22 different countries. Click on a flag to hear the sound spoken in that country’s language. Many of the clips are in children’s voices.

Online French Phonetics Course
tinyurl.com/french-phonetics
This site from the Department of Linguistics at the University of Lausanne in Switzerland presents the basics of acoustic phonetics, with descriptions of how consonants and vowels are produced. Illustrations are included. There are also links to other phonetics courses and exercises.

Intermediate Urdu
urdu.wustl.edu
Hosted by Washington University in St. Louis, the Intermediate Urdu site was developed with a grant from the South Asia Language Resource Center at the University of Chicago and fully utilizes Nastaliq as a web-based font. It has 16 interactive reading passages with corresponding audio and video components, as well as video interviews of Urdu scholars. There are also quizzes that accompany the reading passages.
Inspiring Spanish Teachers

sparkenthusiasm.com

Spanish teachers Amy Dunaway-Haney and Kathleen Oliver created the Spark Enthusiasm website, which offers ideas for teachers to use as time-savers or as inspiration in their classrooms. There are also videos to help teachers use technology, as well as cultural and music videos featuring popular artists such as Selena Gomez, Christina Aguilera, Jennifer Lopez, and Enrique Iglesias. The student resources section of the site has links to help students prepare for placement tests.

German Resources from the Max Kade Institute

mki.wisc.edu

The Max Kade Institute at the University of Wisconsin-Madison provides authentic materials and lesson plans for K–12 educators. Lesson plans are identified by levels such as I–IV, beginning/developing, developing/transitioning, or beginning to refining level. The lesson plans include subjects such as bridging cultures, health, and citizenship. On its website, the institute also offers scanned images of authentic documents, and many are related to German-American immigration.

Portuguese Lessons for Spanish Speakers

tinyurl.com/brazilpod-ta-falado

Produced and supported by the University of Texas at Austin, Tá Falado is designed to help speakers of Spanish who are learning Portuguese. The site includes 24 pronunciation podcasts, 20 grammar podcasts, and two supplemental lessons on vowel and consonant sounds.

Collection of Chinese Texts

tinyurl.com/digitized-chinese-texts

This site is a collection of digitized Chinese texts for Chinese language students. It includes texts from both modern and classical Chinese literature, as well as film scripts, song lyrics, fables, parables, and children’s stories. There are also texts relating to Chinese history, politics, and daily life.

French Culture and Language

www.azurlingua-culture.com

The Azurlingua-Culture website has information about French history, literature, food, travel, and politics. The topics of recent articles have ranged from Baudelaire and Simone de Beauvoir, to French cinema and television, to the French resistance during World War II. There is also a French language online test, and in addition to French and English, the site is accessible in 11 other languages.

Aesop’s Fables in Latin

millefabulae.blogspot.com

This is a companion blog for the book, Mille Fabulae et Una: 1001 Aesop’s Fables in Latin by Laura Gibbs and the fables that make up the book are available for download on the site. There are also links to her other resources, as well as an archive of the blog.

Resources for Language Learning from Busuu

www.busuu.com

Busuu.com is an online community for learning languages, and it has resources for 12 languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, and Turkish. There are interactive courses and lessons, as well as mobile apps in each of the languages, available for downloading on the site. Joining the Busuu online worldwide community allows users to practice their language skills with other community members.
### Upcoming Events 2013

#### MAY

- **May 1** Deadline for submissions to the August 2013 theme issue of *The Language Educator* focused on “The Learner: How do we personalize the language learning experience?” Information: www.actfl.org


- **May 9–11** Annual JNCL-NCLIS Legislative Day and Delegate Assembly, American Councils for International Education, Washington, DC. Information: www.languagepolicy.org

- **May 28** ACTFL Awards Nomination Deadline. Information: www.actfl.org/about-the-american-council-the-teaching-foreign-languages/awards

#### JUNE


- **June 27–29** American Classical League Annual Institute, Memphis, TN. Information: www.aclclassics.org

#### JULY

- **July 1** Deadline for submissions to the October 2013 theme issue of *The Language Educator* focused on “Technology: How do today’s learners shape a new learning environment?” Information: www.actfl.org

- **July 8–11** American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese Conference, San Antonio, TX. Information: www.aatsp.org

- **July 10** Deadline for 2013 ACTFL Convention scholarships for new teachers and first-time attendees. Information: www.actfl.org/convention-expo

- **July 11–14** American Association of Teachers of French Convention, Providence, RI. Information: www.frenchteachers.org

- **July 18–21** OPI Assessment Workshop, Middlebury College, Middlebury, VT. Languages: French, German, Hebrew, Portuguese, Spanish. Information: tinyurl.com/opi-workshops

#### AUGUST

- **August 1** Deadline for submissions to the November 2013 theme issue of *The Language Educator* focused on “Instruction: How are our practices helping students learn?” Information: www.actfl.org

- **August 19** Deadline for applications for 2013–2014 ACTFL Mentoring Program. Information: www.actfl.org/professional-development/career-resources/mentoring-program

#### OCTOBER

- **October 1** Deadline for submissions to the January 2014 theme issue of *The Language Educator* focused on “Cultural Proficiency: How do encounters with cultures change our learners’ views of the world?” Information: www.actfl.org

- **October 24** Deadline for Housing Registration for the 2013 ACTFL Annual Convention and World Languages Expo in Orlando, FL. Information: www.actfl.org/convention-expo

- **October 30** Advance Registration Deadline for the 2013 ACTFL Annual Convention and World Languages Expo in Orlando, FL. Information: www.actfl.org/convention-expo

Looking for additional conferences, professional workshops, and special events of interest to language educators and administrators? Visit the ACTFL Online Community Events Calendar at community.actfl.org/ACTFL/ACTFL/Calendar.
FREELANCE OPPORTUNITY

LOOKING FOR PROFESSIONAL WRITERS

The Language Educator is looking for writers to take on feature article assignments. Interested individuals should have a background in journalism and/or magazine feature writing, as well as strong knowledge of standards-based language education. Language teachers with experience in professional journalism are encouraged to apply; résumé and writing samples will be reviewed. There is compensation for assigned articles. Contact Sandy Cutshall at scutshall@actfl.org if you are interested.

ADVERTISE IN THE LANGUAGE EDUCATOR MARKETPLACE

We offer this section to provide a venue for classified advertising, including employment, schools, travel, and more! Find out more about this opportunity to reach language educators by contacting Alison Bayley at abayley@actfl.org or 703-894-2900, ext. 109.

Have a Great Summer!

The Language Educator is published six times a year and our next issue comes out in August 2013. Look for us in your mailbox as you head back to classes in the fall.
The themes for these issues are:

**August 2013—How do we personalize the language learning experience?**

**Focus on: THE LEARNER**
Possible article topics include (but are not limited to):

- Student backgrounds: Who are our learners? What is their prior knowledge and what are their skills?
- Meeting the needs of heritage language learners
- Enhancing learner motivation
- Students’ careers and other interests
- Differentiation for special populations, including students with learning disabilities
- Languages for Special/Specific Purposes
- STEM and languages

**November 2013—How are our practices helping students learn?**

**Focus on: INSTRUCTION**
Possible article topics include (but are not limited to):

- High-leverage practices
- Comprehensible input
- "Flipping" the classroom
- Do effective language teachers still teach grammar and if so, how?
- Research-informed instruction
- Thematic units
- Project-based learning
- 21st century skills

**October 2013—How do today’s learners shape a new learning environment?**

**Focus on: TECHNOLOGY**
Possible article topics include (but are not limited to):

- Connecting with learners’ means of learning
- Learning environments, learning centers
- Using new technologies in language learning
- Effective use of technology
- Online language instruction
- Web 2.0 tools
- Accessing and utilizing authentic materials
- Hybrid/blended classes
- Social networking

Article submissions due: **July 1, 2013**
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