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Features

16  STAYING HEALTHY AWAY FROM HOME
Susan Reese

30  CELEBRATING DISCOVER LANGUAGES MONTH 2008: A Successful Video Podcast Contest
In Kentucky, It’s Official: How One State Has Embraced Discover Languages

33  NEW SURVEY REVEALS ATTITUDES ABOUT LANGUAGE LEARNING

34  TAKING LANGUAGE SKILLS TO WORK: Exploring the Field of Language Conversion Through Translation and Interpretation
Maura Kate Hallam

38  FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN GLASTONBURY—50 Years and Going Strong
Patti Koning

43  INTERVIEW WITH BUSINESSMAN AND AUTHOR EDWARD TRIMNELL

48  SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE ENJOY EXCELLENT RESOURCES: Embassy of Spain, Instituto Cervantes, Camões Institute, FLAD
Patti Koning

53  STUDYING ABROAD: One Educator’s Dream Come True
Victoria Russell

54  In the Classroom: USING SUSTAINED SILENT READING IN THE LANGUAGE CLASSROOM
Elba Rivas de White and Maggie Payne

60  USING GRANTS TO SUPPORT LANGUAGE PROGRAMS: A Look At CSCTFL
Anne Nerenz and Stephanie Dhonau

63  MINNESOTA EDUCATORS FIND WAYS TO ADVOCATE FOR LANGUAGES
Anita Ratwik

64  BUILDING STURDIER VESSELS: Can We Offer Beginning Language Students What They Really Need?
Joseph Magedanz
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I just want to thank ACTFL for listening and responding to its membership. This last Foreign Language Annals and the most recent issue of The Language Educator were both right on target! The research presented in FL Annals about vocabulary acquisition was so timely, as we have been discussing in our department research-based approaches to vocabulary acquisition and long-term memory retention.

Equally, The Language Educator has some great articles about using Internet translators, web resources, legislative updates, the surveys of the public, and attitudes towards language learning—all great stuff that has created a lot of buzz and energy among us. I keep finding myself saying, “Yes!” as I read more and more sections that are relevant to our practice.

These great professional journal and magazine articles help language educators approach administrators to give authority and power to some hints we have dropped them years ago.

My regards to Sheri Spaine Long and Sandy Cutshall! Two consummate professionals!

Adam J. Stryker
President, Greater Washington Association of Teacher of Foreign Languages
Spanish Instructor, McLean High School, McLean, VA

Note
In the February issue of The Language Educator, the ACTFL members certified in 2007 by the National Board for Professional Standards (NBPTS) were listed on page 6. Also included on that list should have been Lori McCool, Landrum High School, Landrum, South Carolina. We regret the omission.

The Language Educator features a humorous look at language learning. This cartoon and those appearing in future issues will also be on the ACTFL website at www.actfl.org.
In 1998, an article in The Wall Street Journal predicted that within 10 years computer technology would translate languages so quickly and accurately that no one would study foreign languages any more. Sadly, there were many who believed that prediction.

Now, a decade later, we can see that prediction was inaccurate, and we know why. It wasn’t that the expert prognosticators did not accurately predict the advances that would be made in computing power, rather they underestimated the complexity of human language.

Perhaps because language is such a constant component of our lives, it is easy to take it for granted. However, language teachers, translators, interpreters, and even language learners are constantly reminded of the reality that language is the most complex of all human activities.

Developing the capability to accurately move ideas from one language to another requires more than a dictionary. One constant reminder of that fact is the usually comical and sometimes potentially dangerous translations that emerge from the combination of a beginning language learner and a dictionary. Early machine translation efforts produced the same caliber of results. However, computer programmers working with language professionals have made significant progress over the last 10 years, and corpora-based, domain-specific machine translation programs now produce products that are far superior to the efforts of beginning language learners. However, despite these advances, today’s capabilities still fall far short of what technology experts predicted in 1998.

It is much easier to do inter-language matches of a word’s surface meaning than it is to recognize the context in which that word is being used. Yet accurate translation requires not just translating “words” but the ideas behind those words—and this requires capturing the context in which the words are being used. Humans are much more intuitive than computer programs, which are still not very proficient at determining context. Without the ability to recognize context, they have difficulty going beyond what the word “denotes” to determine what that word “connotes” in that setting. And it is that conceptual rather than the literal meaning that guides the selection of the equivalent expression in another language. As a trivial example, consider the newspaper headline, “National Head Seeks Arms.” The purposeful ambiguity of this intended pun might cause humans to smile, but it presents a formidable challenge for a computer translation program.

As the result of efforts by language teachers, awareness campaigns such as ACTFL’s Discover Languages, and “globalization” in general, the public is becoming increasingly aware of both the value and complexity of second language skills. But have those efforts had an impact on technology experts? Do those who work with machine languages better understand the complexities of human language in 2008 than they did in 1998? A follow-up to the 1998 article was published this year about how technology will change our lives between now and 2018. This year’s article includes no predictions about computers providing instantaneous, flawless language translations—which could indicate an improved awareness of the complexity of language.

As language educators, it often falls to us to not only communicate how best to learn a language, but also to educate the public about languages in general. In order to help promote the importance of language learning we should, wherever possible, take the opportunity to speak up as experts about the fascinating and complex nature of human language.
Study Shows U.S. Must Support Community Colleges to Keep Pace with Globalization

Without a concerted national effort to bolster the role of two-year institutions and expand access to them, the United States is in jeopardy of losing its status as an economic and global leader. That is the urgent message of a new study released in February by the College Board’s Center for Innovative Thought, in which the function of community colleges is analyzed in the context of the nation’s labor force and economic growth.

The study, conducted by the National Commission on Community Colleges, concludes that the United States must significantly increase the number of students who earn associate and bachelor’s degrees and calls for the president and Congress to take action in the form of a Community College Competitiveness Act, which would provide matching grants to states to support facilities’ construction and modernization. The Competitiveness Act is one component of the combined agreement the study recommends to national leaders, state officials, and community colleges to make these institutions a priority and a national focus.

Winning the Skills Race and Strengthening America’s Middle Class: An Agenda for Community Colleges also calls for a national commitment to universal access to two years of education beyond high school.

In the century since they were founded, community colleges have become the single largest sector of U.S. higher education, reports the study, which catalogs the names of some notable public officials, congressional and military leaders, CEOs, and Nobel and Pulitzer Prize winners who began their education in community colleges. With nearly 1,200 regionally accredited two-year colleges enrolling 6.5 million students each year for credit and another 5 million for noncredit courses, community colleges are responsible for educating almost half of all U.S. undergraduates. As such, these schools are an indispensable asset in the increasing challenge to provide a growing workforce with educated, capable employees.

Citing Bureau of Labor statistics, the study projects that nearly half of all jobs in the next 10 years will require some postsecondary education. However, several obstacles, including the rising costs of higher education, threaten the ability of community colleges to keep pace. Among the areas that need more national attention and in which community colleges must be involved are biotechnology, nanotechnology, genetics, environmental engineering, energy, health care, and new manufacturing technologies, the study cited.

While applauding the efforts of four-year institutions to respond to the growing needs in education, engineering, mathematics, science and technology, the commission reported that the role of two-year institutions must be expanded with transfer agreements that permit properly qualified students with associate degrees to advance to bachelor’s degrees. Otherwise, the current degree completion gap for low-income, African-American, Native American, and Hispanic students cannot be overcome.

States are more involved with financing for community colleges than is the federal government, and it is imperative that governors and legislators become more involved in desired outcomes, the report stated. Furthermore, with encouragement and financial support from states, community colleges should work with secondary schools and four-year institutions to improve curriculum alignment and strengthen the bridge between high school and college success.

Delaware Students and Teachers Partner with Peace Corps

Peace Corps has announced a new partnership between the Peace Corps Coverdell World Wise Schools program and the Delaware Department of Education, the first educational partnership of its kind between the Peace Corps and a U.S. state. The partnership will capitalize upon the Peace Corps experience and the resources of the World Wise Schools program to bring a variety of free cross-cultural educational materials and resources into Delaware classrooms.

The Peace Corps Coverdell World Wise Schools program provides free cross-cultural educational materials to U.S. teachers, and the Delaware Department of Education incorporates the study of language and international studies into its curriculum throughout the state.

According to Gregory Fulkerson, Education Associate in World Languages and International Education for the Delaware Department of Education, “Collaborating with the Peace Corps Coverdell World Wise Schools helps to internationalize learning in Delaware. Their resources and programs provide Delaware educators and students with meaningful, real-world contexts for learning in all content areas.”

Fulkerson and his staff are working to incorporate World Wise Schools materials and services into the Delaware curriculum. To date, the current curricula for social studies, world languages, and visual arts all incorporate aspects of the World Wise Schools program. Collaborative efforts are now in place not only for Delaware’s K–12 classrooms, but also for curriculum coordinators at Delaware State University and the University of Delaware.

In addition to the written and recorded stories and lessons offered by the Peace Corps World Wise Schools program and made available to educators for classroom use, the agency’s Correspondence Match program is being promoted to education leaders in Delaware. That program matches U.S. educators with Peace Corps volunteers in the field on a one-to-one basis, facilitating the exchange of photographs, reports, stories, artifacts, and videos that help expand the geographic and cultural horizons of students in U.S. classrooms. Collaborative agreements between the Peace Corps World Wise Schools program and a number of other states are under consideration.
Virginia Tech Students Teach in Honor of Professor Killed in Shooting

Over a half dozen former students of Jocelyne Couture-Nowak, the Canadian-born French instructor killed in the April 16, 2007 shooting tragedy at Virginia Tech University, opened the doors to their own French class at Blacksburg’s Harding Avenue Elementary School on January 23, 2008 in honor of their late professor.

“Teach for Madame,” the official name of the program, welcomed 46 students, ranging from kindergarteners to fifth graders, to the first of 13 weekly beginner’s French language classes planned for the spring. Gathered closely around in a theater-style classroom, young students learned basic greetings and introduced themselves in French for their first lesson.

The program was established by John Welch, now a junior at Virginia Tech and former student of Couture-Nowak, in response to the VT-ENGAGE initiative. The Virginia Tech university community challenged itself on October 16, 2007, the six-month anniversary of the tragedy, to uphold its motto, “That I May Serve,” by completing 300,000 service hours by the end of this spring semester in honor of the 32 students and teachers killed.

On the morning of April 16, 2007, Jocelyne Couture-Nowak, affectionately known as “Madame” by her students, was teaching an Intermediate French class in room 211 of Norris Hall when gunman Seung-Hui Cho began his 10-minute shooting rampage before killing himself as well. Of the four classrooms Cho entered, Madame’s was the hardest hit: Twelve were killed, including Madame, and six were injured. Only one student walked away from the class physically unharmed.

Joie de vivre, which in French literally means “joy of life,” best characterized Couture-Nowak. Students recalled her ecstatic “Bonjour!” at the beginning of every class and her excited antics, dancing, and enthusiasm that often left her breathless. It was that very joie de vivre that Welch remembers which inspired him to continue Couture-Nowak’s work in her honor.

Support for Welch’s program grew rapidly and came from many directions. Sharon Johnson and Françoise Mizutani, friends and colleagues of Couture-Nowak, worked to help prepare the members of the organization for their new roles as teachers. Lynn Jefferey, director of school and library programs at Early Advantage, Inc., publisher of the British Broadcasting Corporation’s foreign language education system for children, MUZZY, graciously offered a classroom curriculum package. Couture-Nowak’s husband, Jerzy, has also been a major source of inspiration for his late wife’s students and regularly hosts gatherings for the group at his Blacksburg residence.

The 1-2-3 Speak Spanish Verb Guide simplifies teaching and clarifies the use of tenses by providing a color-coded 1-2-3 system for sentence building. Illustrations and conjugations of 15 model verbs promote faster acquisition through visualization. Use for games, exercises, and journaling. Laminated for easy wipe-off in activities with dry-erase markers. Students gain confidence in writing and speaking with this innovative fun-to-use guide! Ideal for beginning and intermediate students grade 8 to adult levels.

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Student Wins Prudential Award for Language Tutoring Program

One of the 102 State Honorees for 2008 announced in February by the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards was selected for the honor because she developed an after-school foreign language tutoring program for students at a local elementary school in Washington, DC.

Elizabeth Bowles, 18, a senior at Washington International School, began learning French when she was just three years old. Bowles was surprised to discover that many elementary schools in the District of Columbia do not offer foreign language instruction.

“I wanted to share the unique experience I had,” she says. “I thought exposing children to another language would give them a chance to see a broader view of the world, just as it had for me.”

Bowles had little trouble persuading a school in her neighborhood to let her introduce an after-school tutoring program. She then recruited other students at her high school to join her in tutoring and developed a curriculum that emphasized fun activities such as interactive games and art projects.

“I wanted the children to have fun playing with language,” she says. When a fellow student expressed interest in being a Spanish tutor, Elizabeth expanded the program to include Spanish. Now, 15 tutors work with about 20 children for an hour and a half every Friday afternoon. Two elementary schools in northern Virginia have asked Elizabeth to start tutoring programs for their students, so she is also training a group of high school sophomores to accommodate those requests.

The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards is a nationwide program honoring young people for outstanding acts of volunteerism. The awards program, now in its 13th year, is conducted in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP).

Bowles was selected as one of two top youth volunteers in the District of Columbia. For information on all of this year’s Prudential Spirit of Community State Honorees and Distinguished Finalists, visit www.prudential.com/spirit or www.principals.org/prudential.

Middlebury-Monterey Language Academy Receives Grant for First Summer

The Middlebury-Monterey Language Academy (MMLA) will open this summer with the help of a $100,000 grant from the Leon Lowenstein Foundation. The grant will provide financial aid based on need for qualified middle school and high school students to attend a four-week foreign-language immersion program this summer at MMLA’s locations in Atherton, CA, and Colchester, VT. The Lowenstein grant also will establish a “lending library” of technology tools—laptop computers, iPods, software, etc.—to complement language learning for MMLA students.

Middlebury College and its affiliate, the Monterey Institute of International Studies, will launch the language academy on June 28 for students entering grades 7 through 12. Described as “a micro-environment that blends language immersion and cultural experiences with the fun of summer camp,” MMLA will offer Arabic, Chinese, French, and Spanish during its inaugural summer. In addition to the Vermont and California sites, the academy also will be offered in Amherst, MA, in partnership with Johns Hopkins University’s Center for Talented Youth.

The Leon Lowenstein Foundation, based in New York, supports educational and health care initiatives for organizations such as the American Heart Association, California Charter Schools, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, Thompson Island Outward Bound Education, and the United Negro College Fund. The funding from the Lowenstein Foundation was the first grant received by the Middlebury-Monterey Language Academy. A portion of the grant is contingent upon the receipt of matching funds by June 30.

On January 31, Concordia Language Villages, National Italian American Foundation (NIAF), and the Consulate General of Italy celebrated the establishment of the Italian Language Village, Lago del Bosco, outside Blairstown, New Jersey. Former governor of New York Mario Cuomo and Matilda Raffa Cuomo were in attendance at this event.

“We are pleased to bring Concordia Language Villages and our mission of preparing responsible global citizens to the east coast—and what better way to enact that mission than through the depth, breadth, and beauty of Italian language and culture,” said Patricia Thornton, Director of Summer Programs at the Language Villages.

Concordia Language Villages launched the first Lago del Bosco in Minnesota in summer 2003. The Minnesota site now offers programs for high school students (to earn credit), families, and adults. Since 2003, members of the Italian Language Village Advisory Committee and of national Italian-American organizations have been urging the establishment of a second Italian Language Village on the east coast. This coming summer, that dream becomes a reality. Lago del Bosco, New Jersey, opens in August 2008 and will offer two residential summer camp sessions for youth ages 7 to 14. The Village is situated near Blairstown, about 90 minutes from New York City.

Concordia Language Villages “prepares young people for responsible global citizenship.” Lago del Bosco, translated as “lake of the woods,” provides an outdoor camp and learning environment in which villagers increase their cultural understanding as they learn about countries where Italian is spoken and about the global issues affecting these areas.

Concordia Language Villages is a program of Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota. For more information, registration materials, employment opportunities, or to contribute to Lago del Bosco, please go to www.ConcordiaLanguageVillages.org or call 1-800-222-4750.
Butler-Cooley Excellence in Teaching Awards

The Butler-Cooley Excellence in Teaching Awards Program honors teachers who have changed the outcome of students’ lives and the communities in which they live. Entries are now being accepted and the deadline is May 1, 2008.

The program, made possible through the John William Butler Foundation and offered by the Turnaround Management Association (TMA), provides $5,000 cash stipends to three to five public or private school teachers, as well as travel and lodging expenses to the 2008 TMA Annual Convention in New Orleans, October 27–29, 2008.

The Awards are open to currently licensed and active primary and secondary school educators employed by accredited schools for at least five years. Teachers or other qualified individuals may submit a nomination. Entries must include a completed application, a statement describing the basis for nomination, and a statement of teaching philosophy. Nomination guidelines and applications are available online at www.turnaround.org/about/awards.asp.

Majoice Thomas, a 10th grade Spanish teacher at North Little Rock High School, has received a number of awards during her teaching career, including being named twice as the North Little Rock School District Teacher of the Year. In 2007, she was recognized with a Butler-Cooley Excellence in Teaching Award. Thomas’s dedication extends beyond just classroom teaching, as she tutors her own students and those in the International Baccalaureate Program, and mentors former students in upper-level Spanish. She also established a Sociedad Honoraria Hispánica chapter at her school, which has helped open up the world to her students.

“My philosophy is that I have the right to teach, and my students have the right to learn, and nothing will interfere with that,” says Thomas. “I came from a life where no excuses were accepted, and I don’t accept excuses from my students.” She has earned a reputation as a tough but caring teacher, as she helps her students exceed their own expectations. “With my encouragement, they learn they need not be afraid to move out of their comfort zone,” she says. “There are no boundaries to what one can do, if one wants to do it badly enough.” Thomas doesn’t set boundaries for herself either. She says that, as a language teacher, she wants to be a guiding force in bringing about social change and cultural awareness that is necessary for people to live in harmony.
The Endangered Language Fund provides grants for language maintenance and linguistic field work. The work most likely to be funded is that which serves both the native community and the field of linguistics. Work which has immediate applicability to one group and more distant application to the other will also be considered. Publishing subventions are a low priority, although they will be considered. Proposals can originate in any country. The language involved must be in danger of disappearing within a generation or two. Endangerment is a continuum, and the location on the continuum is one factor in funding decisions. Eligible expenses include consultant fees, tapes, films, travel, etc. Grants are normally for a one-year period, though extensions may be applied for. Grants in this round are expected to be less than $4,000 in size, and to average about $2,000.

Applications must be received by **April 21, 2008** and decisions will be delivered by the end of May 2008. For more information and application information, go to [www.endangeredlanguagefund.org/request.html](http://www.endangeredlanguagefund.org/request.html).

### 2008 Award for State Supervisor of the Year

Since 2003, the publishing company Pearson Prentice Hall has sponsored an annual award for National State Supervisor of the Year. The 2008 Award for State Supervisor of the Year will be presented in November at the ACTFL Pre-Convention Meetings of the National Council of State Supervisors for Languages (NCSSFL) and the National Association of District Supervisors of Foreign Languages (NADSFL).

The purpose of this award is to acknowledge outstanding foreign language supervisory leadership at the state level among professionals whose leadership in facilitating the implementation of standards-based reform and advocacy for foreign languages has had a profound impact in their state and others throughout the country.

Nominations for this award will be accepted from state foreign language organizations, the five regional foreign language organizations, and national language-specific organizations. The nomination process and the award criteria are described online at [www.ncssfl.org](http://www.ncssfl.org). Contact Ann Tollefson, NCSSFL Awards Committee Chair, at tollefson.ann@gmail.com with any questions.

If your organization is interested in sponsoring a state supervisor as a nominee for the 2008 award, please note that the deadline for submission of the required materials to the chair of the NCSSFL Award Committee is **July 15, 2008**. Please mail these materials to Ann Tollefson, 231 E. 10th Street, Casper, WY 82601, phone (307) 234-9684; fax (307) 234-9689.

### Endangered Language Fund Providing Grants

The adventures were not without risk. In India, extreme poverty in the region had sparked a violent Maoist insurgency. With its travel under strict government regulation, the group was urged by its Indian guides not to travel at night or stay in local villages, and to keep interactions with the populace to a minimum. Because the linguists’ work demanded otherwise, the group was forced to take certain risks in the interest of recording endangered languages.

“The resurgence of interest among linguists in smaller languages has happily coincided with an upsurge in activism on the part of the speaker communities,” says Douglas H. Whalen, program director for NSF’s Documenting Endangered Languages program. “This film provides a thought-provoking sample of cooperation between these groups in the urgent task of documenting endangered languages.”

In India, Siberia, and the United States, the group found confirmation of a recurring pattern: Schools set up to “civilize” indigenous children had taught them the pointlessness of their native tongues and pushed them toward abandoning that language and the culture associated with it. “The Linguists” lets the communities involved speak for themselves in demonstrating the power of these forces.

For more information, and to see a trailer of the film, go to [www.thelinguists.com](http://www.thelinguists.com).

### Social Networking Site for Learning Languages is Launched

A new social networking site, VoxSwap ([www.voxswap.com](http://www.voxswap.com)), has been introduced to match up people wishing to learn or practice different languages. According to the site, “It doesn’t matter if you are a student needing help to get better language grades, a former student who doesn’t want to let their language skills go rusty, or a business person needing to speak another language for work, VoxSwap is here to ensure you can talk to real people and offer one another pointers on how to excel in a language.”

Registration for VoxSwap is free. Find out more at [www.voxswap.com](http://www.voxswap.com).

**“The Linguists” Premieres at the Sundance Film Festival**

**“The Linguists”—**a documentary film which highlights endangered languages in Siberia, India, and Bolivia—premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in Utah in January.

Producer-directors Seth Kramer, Daniel A. Miller, and Jeremy Newberger of Ironbound Films accompanied scientists David Harrison of Swarthmore College and Gregory Anderson of the Living Tongues Institute on a journey to record these languages and understand the cultural and political pressures threatening their extinction. The film was funded in part by the National Science Foundation (NSF) and is the first documentary supported by the NSF ever to make it to Sundance.

It is estimated that of 7,000 languages in the world, half will be gone by the end of this century. In Siberia, India, and Bolivia, the linguists’ resolve is tested by the very forces silencing languages: institutionalized racism and violent economic unrest.

“The most surprising discovery was just how interesting and dramatic it was to follow two seemingly no-nonsense linguists—David Harrison and Gregory Anderson—into the field,” says Miller. “The linguists first had to penetrate bureaucracies, then gain trust within communities, and finally inspire speech from people often driven into not using their native tongue by decades of persecution and shame. These challenges required skills finely honed by the linguists and made the expeditions more like adventures.”

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**Breaking News**

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“The Linguists”—a documentary film which highlights endangered languages in Siberia, India, and Bolivia—premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in Utah in January.

Producer-directors Seth Kramer, Daniel A. Miller, and Jeremy Newberger of Ironbound Films accompanied scientists David Harrison of Swarthmore College and Gregory Anderson of the Living Tongues Institute on a journey to record these languages and understand the cultural and political pressures threatening their extinction. The film was funded in part by the National Science Foundation (NSF) and is the first documentary supported by the NSF ever to make it to Sundance.

It is estimated that of 7,000 languages in the world, half will be gone by the end of this century. In Siberia, India, and Bolivia, the linguists’ resolve is tested by the very forces silencing languages: institutionalized racism and violent economic unrest.

“The most surprising discovery was just how interesting and dramatic it was to follow two seemingly no-nonsense linguists—David Harrison and Gregory Anderson—into the field,” says Miller. “The linguists first had to penetrate bureaucracies, then gain trust within communities, and finally inspire speech from people often driven into not using their native tongue by decades of persecution and shame. These challenges required skills finely honed by the linguists and made the expeditions more like adventures.”

The adventures were not without risk. In India, extreme poverty in the region had sparked a violent Maoist insurgency. With its travel under strict government regulation, the group was urged by its Indian guides not to travel at night or stay in local villages, and to keep interactions with the populace to a minimum. Because the linguists’ work demanded otherwise, the group was forced to take certain risks in the interest of recording endangered languages.

“The resurgence of interest among linguists in smaller languages has happily coincided with an upsurge in activism on the part of the speaker communities,” says Douglas H. Whalen, program director for NSF’s Documenting Endangered Languages program. “This film provides a thought-provoking sample of cooperation between these groups in the urgent task of documenting endangered languages.”

In India, Siberia, and the United States, the group found confirmation of a recurring pattern: Schools set up to “civilize” indigenous children had taught them the pointlessness of their native tongues and pushed them toward abandoning that language and the culture associated with it. “The Linguists” lets the communities involved speak for themselves in demonstrating the power of these forces.

For more information, and to see a trailer of the film, go to [www.thelinguists.com](http://www.thelinguists.com).
Survey on Value of Homework Released

In February, the Committee for Economic Development (CED) partnered with MetLife to focus attention on the value of homework for American students. The value of homework has long been a topic of debate among educators and families, particularly in recent years, when critics have raised pointed questions regarding whether homework delivers a benefit or is simply busywork.

Surprisingly, the MetLife Survey of the American Teacher: The Homework Experience, released at the National Press Club in Washington, DC, revealed that a substantial majority of teachers, parents, and even students feel strongly that homework is important, helping students learn more in school and paving the way for future success. More students value homework now than in the past, with 30% of secondary school students describing homework as busywork, compared with 74% in 2002 (19% of today’s elementary school students in grades 3–6 considered homework busywork). The survey also revealed a strong connection between the importance a student places on homework and academic success. Despite the positive marks, however, significant numbers of parents and students identified problems with homework.

“Homework is a frequent topic of conversation among parents, teachers and students, and that conversation often leads to larger discussions about teaching and learning, parenting, and preparation for work, college, and life. This survey shares the voices and perspectives of those closest to homework,” says MetLife Chairman and CEO Rob Henrikson. “We believe these views can stimulate discussions in homes, schools, and communities across the nation, help with teacher preparation, and contribute to an improvement in education.”

Additional information on the survey, including remarks by a number of educational experts, is available at www.ced.org/projects/educ_metlife.shtml.

Virginia Gramer

Although she retired from full-time teaching in 2000, Virginia Gramer still substitutes for her former school district in Hinsdale, Illinois, where she also works to help the district meet revised state standards and benchmarks. As a young teacher in 1960, Gramer started the foreign language program in the district, which consists of nine elementary schools. She taught French, coordinated the program and was known as its “Mother Superior.” She has received a number of awards, including the Elementary Teacher of the Year from the American Association of Teachers of French and the Ordre des Palmes Académiques from the French government. In 2006, she was recognized with the ACTFL Florence Steiner Award for Leadership in Foreign Language, K–12. Gramer was a charter member of ACTFL and says of the organization, “We have grown up together.”

In addition to her French studies, Gramer also majored in English and spent time in studying in Germany. She believes that every age group has its own abilities when it comes to learning a foreign language, but it is important for teachers to have a connection to the age group they teach. For her that connection is with the younger children. Gramer says the secret to her success is that, “I have always liked little children, and they like me—and they're more fun.” It is not only the young students who have benefited from her many years of teaching, because her colleagues speak about her commitment to excellence and her leadership.
Goldman Sachs Foundation Prize Winners Announced

In June 2003, Asia Society and The Goldman Sachs Foundation created the first ever Prizes for Excellence in International Education to promote international knowledge and skills in schools and communities. This year’s winners, who each received $25,000 at a luncheon ceremony held at Asia Society’s New York City headquarters in March, were:

ELEMENTARY/MIDDLE SCHOOL: Sunset Elementary School, Miami, FL—an urban magnet and neighborhood school that, for the past 20 years, has offered a unique International Studies magnet program to its diverse student population. The program offers an inquiry-based, global curriculum focused on the topics of civic responsibility, cultural and environmental awareness, and knowledge of the global economy. Coursework includes foreign language programs in Spanish, French, and German and instruction in math, science, and social studies in these languages. The International Studies program is delivered in alignment with the curricula of the Ministries of Education of Spain, France, and Germany, and students are assessed through both state and international tests of academic achievement and language proficiency. In addition to these languages, Sunset began to offer courses in Mandarin in 2007.

HIGH SCHOOL: Eugene International High School, Eugene, OR—a teacher-developed school-within-a-school across three high school campuses in that serves approximately 1,300 students in grades 9 to 12. Established 20 years ago, the required core curriculum centers around culture, history, economics, and political and belief systems. Each grade level focuses on a particular region of the world through coursework and students develop a culminating research project and engage in internationally oriented community service during their senior year. Students are required to take at least three years of French, Spanish, Japanese, or German, and Eugene also offers the option of immersion study in Spanish or French through which students take four content classes in their target language in conjunction with four years of language classes. The school will soon add a Chinese language immersion option through a new collaboration with the Center for Applied Second Language Acquisition at the University of Oregon. Graduates earn either an International Baccalaureate degree or an International Studies Certificate of Advanced Mastery, the latter of which was developed by Eugene and has since been adopted by the state of Oregon.

MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY: Reischauer Scholars Program, Stanford Program on International and Cross-Cultural Education (SPICE)—a college-level distance learning course for high school students that provides a broad overview of Japanese history, literature, religion, art, politics, economics, education and U.S.–Japan relations. The course, which has been offered since 2003 to students from 29 states, is 10 sessions held over six months and is taught by senior scholars, diplomats, and other experts from the United States and Japan. Students are engaged through lectures, readings, and online discussions, as well as through video and PowerPoint presentations that creatively display maps, statistics, images, and digitized primary resources to support their learning. Those who successfully complete the course receive college credit.

STATE: Ohio—where the State Board of Education is the first in the country to engage in a systematic international benchmarking study. The state’s Creating a World Class Education System in Ohio compares its educational system to others globally and makes recommendations for policy changes. The Board has also revised its state curriculum standards to increase the amount of international content in which students are expected to demonstrate proficiency. A strong partnership between the Ohio State Department of Education and The Ohio State University is creating new opportunities for students to study world languages. The June 2007 Language Summit led to the publication of Ohio Languages Roadmap for the 21st Century, a report that presents a vision for the development of a multilingual workforce through opportunities for language learning combined with job-related technical and academic skills. The state legislature also created a Foreign Language Advisory Council, which, in December 2007, released a foreign language plan for students enrolled in pre-school through university. Much credit goes to State Language Consultants Debbie Robinson and Ryan Wertz, both long-time ACTFL members.

STARTALK Grants Awarded for 2008

The National Security Language Initiative (NSLI) has awarded its second year of funding through the STARTALK grant. These funds are allocated by the President and supported by the Departments of Education, State, and Defense, and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. This initiative is designed to increase the number of Americans learning critical languages and to increase America’s competence and proficiency in cultural information and understanding. Programs for students and teachers will be held this year in Arabic, Chinese, Hindi, Persian, and Urdu. A full list of program descriptions is available online at startalk.umd.edu/program-info/2008.

Among the numerous workshops offered this summer will be programs in Chinese sponsored by ACTFL and the Chinese Language Association of Secondary-Elementary Schools (CLASS). ACTFL will also sponsor a new program in Hindi, in collaboration with the Hindi-Urdu Flagship program at the University of Texas at Austin.

Based on the very successful programs in 2007, this year there will be two Discover Chinese student programs, June 30–July 25: one at Choate Rosemary Hall in Wallingford, CT, and the other at Gastonbury Public Schools in Glastonbury, CT. Discover Chinese programs will also be held for teachers at Gastonbury Public Schools, June 30–July 11 and July 14–July 25.

ACTFL will also be offering a new Discover Asia teacher program in Hindi at Hurst-Euless-Bedford Independent School District, Dallas/Fort Worth, TX, June 9–June 20 (including June 14 and 15). This will be an intensive two-week professional development program that will allow participants the opportunity to focus on quality instruction, curriculum, and assessments for Hindi programs.
Tenure-Track Positions in Languages Available

The Department of Arts and Languages at Alvernia College in Reading, PA invites applicants for a tenure-track position in Languages. Ph.D. or ABD near completion. Area of specialization is Spanish language and Hispanic continental (Americas) culture.

Successful candidates will demonstrate teaching excellence, scholarly productivity, ability to develop programs, and superb communication skills. A diverse and dynamic Catholic Franciscan institution dedicated to academic excellence, Alvernia is located on a picturesque suburban 85-acre campus in Reading, PA, within driving distance to New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore.

Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. To apply, submit a letter of application including experience and teaching interests, a c.v., and two letters of reference to Dr. Kevin Godfrey, Dean, Arts & Sciences, Alvernia College, 400 Saint Bernardine St., Reading, PA 19607. Visit www.alvernia.edu to learn more. Alvernia College is committed to equal opportunity. Applicants who will enrich the diversity of our campus are encouraged to apply.

Toyota International Teacher Program Application Available

The Institute of International Education has announced that the application is now available for the 2008 Toyota International Teacher Program to the Galápagos Islands, a unique professional development program for secondary school teachers and librarians.

This year, all full–time teachers of all subjects in the 50 states and the District of Columbia in grades 6–12 and Library Media Specialists are eligible to apply. Selected participants will travel from November 22 to December 6, 2008 on a fully funded study program that is geared toward international and environmental study. Participants will work to create an interdisciplinary lesson that can be implemented in their home schools. This is a special chance for educators to visit these remote islands, the inspiration for Darwin and home to unique ecosystems found nowhere else on Earth.

The application is now online at www.iie.org/Toyota and the deadline for application is May 9, 2008.

Toyota Motor Sales, USA, began taking U.S. teachers to Japan on study tours in 1998. After 10 successful years and almost 500 participants, these educational and cultural exchanges have exceeded expectations and set a new precedent for Toyota’s philanthropic future. New programs are coming soon so check the website for more information. You can also e-mail toyotateach@iie.org or call 1–877–832–2457.

EuroBABEL Will Include U.S. Partners

The European Science Foundation (ESF) is proposing a new initiative called Better Analyses based on Endangered Languages (BABEL). The intent is to bring endangered language data to bear on theoretical issues. The grant mechanism will be collaborative research involving at least three countries in the ESF network. The U.S. National Science Foundation has made a firm commitment to BABEL, so projects can have a U.S. institution as one of the partners. New field work is envisioned as part of this initiative, but the direct relation to theoretical debates is also expected. Outline proposals are due by May 12, 2008. It is expected that full proposals will be invited by June 30, 2008, and the submission deadline will be in September. For a preview of the program, please visit www.esf.org/activities/eurocores/programmes/eurobabel.html.

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nothing can spoil a travel experience like becoming sick or injured, so whether it's a short tour with elementary, middle, or high school students, or a study abroad semester of college, maintaining good health is vital for traveling students. Few things are worse than becoming very sick and being far away from home and the tender loving care of one's own family. To make matters even worse, the familiar family doctor is not just a quick car trip away.

When traveling abroad, there will always be unexpected events—things that cannot be planned for—and that is part of the fun and excitement of the experience. However, sometimes they are the types of events that can negatively affect your health or the health of your students.

Like every other aspect of a travel abroad experience, staying healthy begins with good planning. The U.S. State Department and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) both offer a list of steps that teachers and students should take before traveling abroad. First, be sure everyone is up-to-date on all routine vaccinations. The CDC warns that diseases such as measles and mumps remain common in many parts of the world, including some developed countries, so those are on the CDC's list of vaccinations, along with rubella, tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis, hepatitis A and B, meningitis, influenza, and polio.

Ideally, notes the CDC, your health care provider should be consulted four to six weeks before your trip to get any additional vaccinations or medications needed. As the tour company ACIS advises, immunization requirements change constantly, so you should definitely consult your health care provider to make sure you have the most up-to-date information and get the vaccinations you need.

Ensuring the Health of Students

When students from Key Elementary School in Arlington, Virginia, travel to El Salvador, the teachers take a great deal of care to ensure that the young students have a healthy and happy experience. Felix Herrera, who teaches at Arlington's Wakefield High School, went on the trip in 2005 when he was a teacher in the Spanish immersion program at Key. He was actually born in El Salvador and came to this country when he was 16, so he was ideally suited to be a guide and chaperone.

The students stay with host families in San Salvador, and Herrera says that the families treat the young American students like their own children. “It’s good to see how they interact with one another,” he adds. The families are at a similar socioeconomic level as the families of the American students, which means that they already have a lot of safeguards in place for their own families, according to Herrera.

Natalie Canadas, who also was on the trip and still teaches part-time at Key, adds “I was also very impressed with the matching of the students. The two principals take their time in making sure that comparable children are placed together.” She says the students became so close to their host families that many “best friend” relationships were formed.

Dietary concerns are addressed before the students leave the United States, and care is taken in pairing the students. For example, there was one boy who was a vegetarian on the trip Herrera and Canadas chaperoned, and that student was paired with a family who also had a vegetarian child.

“We had a meeting prior to leaving on our trip where we warned students of the dangers of the drinking water, among other things to be aware of,” says Canadas.

“When we were out doing activities or when we traveled outside of the capital, the chaperones would actively monitor what the students ate,” Herrera explains. “Everyone knows about not drinking the water when they travel, but there are things people don’t always think about, like eating a hamburger with lettuce and tomato. You don’t know what kind of water they might use to wash produce.”

“The teachers made sure we always drank bottled water,” recalls Lilly, one of the students on that trip, “and when we went to a restaurant, they were really careful about what we ate. They wouldn’t let us get anything with lettuce.”

Canadas credits the young students with remembering what they had learned before the trip as well. “I found that the students themselves really did a great job making sure they didn’t eat salads or lettuce on burgers or anything like that,” she notes. “I felt as though I was just an extra pair of eyes in case they forgot—but I can’t remember anyone who did.”

The caution of the teachers and the preparation of the students paid off, because the worst thing that happened was that one student got motion sickness and vomited on the bumpy bus ride back from the visit to a volcano. Veteran teachers who have traveled frequently with students often warn that even children who aren’t normally prone to motion sickness might get it when traveling, so they advise always having motion sickness medication on hand.

(continued on p.18)
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The students in the Key Elementary program are young and therefore closely supervised at all times, but because they are so young, they are more susceptible to one particular kind of sickness—homesickness. There were a couple of short bouts, but the care and concern of the teachers helped with the cure.

“I got really homesick one night,” Lilly says. “But Ms. Canadas let me stay with her, and that really helped me get over it.”

Lilly’s parents still speak of their gratitude for the actions of the foreign language teacher whose kind and caring actions helped their young child turn the travel experience back into a happy one.

Common Sense Advice

Staying healthy when traveling often means simply applying the same common sense rules you use when you are at home—such as using sun-block for protection when outdoors for long periods of time.

Linnea Bradshaw, who teaches Japanese at Apple Valley High School in Apple Valley, Minnesota, says that while there are really no big issues with food and water when traveling in Japan, there are still some common sense practices to use. “First, drink plenty of water,” she advises. “Most students travel to Japan in the summer when it is very hot, and in addition, they will walk a great deal.”

Lots of water and plenty of rest breaks are important, but Bradshaw also advises bringing a couple of pairs of really comfortable walking shoes. “It rains a lot, and you will have to walk a lot,” she notes. “You do not want blisters, and your shoes will probably not dry overnight.”

Bringing hand sanitizer along is a good idea as well, Bradshaw says, since many public restrooms do not have soap. Jet lag is another problem she mentions. “Day is turned into night in Japan,” says Bradshaw, so you must listen to what your body tells you. “Go to bed at a decent time and get plenty of sleep.”

Dali Tan teaches Chinese at Landon School in Bethesda, Maryland, and she has been taking students to China since 1996. They usually arrive in the early afternoon, which is the middle of the night by U.S. time. Tan encourages the students to rest on the plane so that they can stay up until what would a normal bedtime in their new location. That way she can get them on schedule with Chinese time as quickly as possible.

Like Bradshaw, Tan always brings hand sanitizer along, and like the teachers from Key, she insists that the students only drink bottled or purified water. They have to be careful, even with water used for brushing their teeth. Tan advises using bottled water or water that has been boiled then cooled. She also doesn’t allow the students to eat from street food stands. They still want to get a taste of local flavors, so Tan takes them to places where she knows the standards are higher and, therefore, safer. There are McDonald’s restaurants in China, and while they don’t provide the local flavor experience, they do have more stringent safety requirements for salads, according to Tan.

The six-week Landon program includes a home stay and two weeks of traveling. When the students stay with a Chinese family, Tan gives them instructions about raw food. “My mantra,” she says, “is, ‘If you can’t peel or cook it, then forget it.’”

Joan Elias Gore, director of adult travel programs at the School of Continuing and Professional Studies, University of Virginia, and a con-
consultant to International Student Exchange Programs (ISEP), prepared a brochure on good health abroad for NAFSA: Association of International Educators. Her advice for defending yourself against jet lag includes starting off your travels well-rested, not drinking any alcohol en route, drinking a lot of water along the way, and immediately shifting your eating and sleeping schedule to that in your new location.

Gore says that, aside from the impact of jet lag and culture shock, “For the most part, your health needs abroad are the same as they were at home. You will have to tackle the everyday ups and downs of your body and its health, including those health issues unique to you.”

That means eating a healthy diet, monitoring your intake of alcohol (if you drink), and getting enough exercise. Gore notes that, “Exercise is an excellent counterbalance to jet lag, dietary change, and the emotional ups and downs of culture shock—and it may be easier to do in your foreign setting than it was at home. You’ll probably walk more overseas than in America.”

**Touchy Health Facts for Older Students**

While high school students traveling are still carefully supervised by their teachers and chaperones, they may have slightly more freedom than students as young as the Key Elementary children. However, for older and more independent postsecondary students who are in study abroad programs, there are additional health issues of concern.

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**A Good Dose of Knowledge**

To learn more about ways to ensure good health when traveling abroad, here are some websites to explore.

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
  Travel Health Tips for Students Studying Abroad
  www.cdc.gov/travel/contentStudyAbroad.aspx

- Council on International Educational Exchange
  www.ciee.org

- NAFSA: Association of International Educators
  www.nafsa.org

- U.S. State Department
  Tips for Traveling Abroad
  travel.state.gov/travel/tips/tips_1232.html#health

- World Health Organization
  International Travel and Health
  www.who.int/ith/ithpreface/en/index.html
Older students, who may be sexually active, should avoid sexually transmitted diseases through safe sex practices or abstinence. Sometimes students who are far away from home are tempted to experiment with more risky behaviors or lifestyles. The CDC warns students against getting tattoos or body piercings because of the risk of HIV and hepatitis B infections. Among its other advice is to swim in only well-maintained chlorinated pools, and avoid swimming in lakes, streams, or other fresh bodies of water if you are in an area that has a risk of water-borne infections.

It is also important to maintain good mental and emotional health. While younger students might experience homesickness such as the Key Elementary students did, their stays abroad are shorter. College students may be away from home for a semester or longer and could be at risk for depression, even if it is not something they are normally prone to. Students and advisors should be familiar with the symptoms of depression so the problem will not go unrecognized and untreated. Living in a different culture, far from home and family can lead to feelings of isolation and loneliness.

Gore notes, “There are steps you can take to minimize the physical tolls of flight, jet lag, and culture shock, and ways you can more easily adapt to new living styles, values, and standards. Expect to be exhilarated, grumpy, annoyed, even depressed or anxious on occasion. The simple fact that you are surrounded by people who don’t speak your own language can throw you off entirely at first.

“But don’t turn around and go home,” she advises. “Steps you can take include learning how to get information and assistance you might require and how to get around in your new community. You should learn quickly where and to whom to turn in the event of an emergency as well as how to make phone calls and how to fulfill basic needs you might have, like buying certain kinds of foods or health products. A little early effort on your part makes a big difference in your long-term feelings in your new home.”

**What to Pack**

First and foremost, an adequate supply of necessary prescription medications should be taken along. According to the State Department, any medications being carried overseas should be left in their original containers and be clearly labeled. Travelers should also check with the foreign embassy of the country they are visiting to make sure these medications are not considered to be illegal narcotics. Tour groups such as ACIS also ask that students make sure their group leaders have a list of their medications. It is also important to know the correct dosage administration of the medication.

Parents must make those who will be responsible for their children while traveling aware of any allergies or physical conditions—such as diabetes—that might require emergency care. The State Department says that any traveler going abroad with a preexisting medical problem should carry a letter from the attending physician describing the medical condition and any prescription medications, including the generic names of prescribed drugs. Anyone with allergies or reactions to certain medications, food, or insect bites should consider wearing a medical alert bracelet, the department advises, and again might wish to carry a letter from their physician explaining the required treatment.

Those who wear glasses or contact lenses should take an extra pair along—as well as extra contact lens solution. The State Department also recommends packing medicines and extra eyeglasses in carry-on luggage and packing a backup supply of medication and another pair of glasses in checked luggage, although rules about what can be packed in a carry-on bag seem to keep changing due to security concerns.

The CDC suggests preparing a travel health kit that includes, as recommended by the State Department, an ample supply of prescribed medications and a note from the prescribing physician. Other items recommended by the CDC for the travel health kit include an anti-diarrheal medication, at least 60% alcohol-based hand gel, an antibiotic for treatment of most causes of acute bacterial illness, a thermometer, the name and telephone number of your primary health-care provider, and a copy of your vaccination record. If traveling to a tropical or subtropical area, insect repellent containing at least 30% DEET is also recommended.

The Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE) notes that two things that really affect the health of those who travel abroad are a new lifestyle and a new environment, but the two things that can make a positive difference are planning and awareness. For foreign language educators and their students who pack common sense practices and a good plan along with their language skills, the trip will be a healthy learning experience.

Susan Reese is a contributing writer to The Language Educator. She has written for numerous education publications and is based in Arlington, Virginia.
HAVE A GREAT SUMMER

The Language Educator is published six times a year and our next issue comes out in August 2008! Look for us in your mailbox as you head back to school in the fall.

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**Tareq: A Basic Multimedia Arabic Course**

Didaco, SA, a Barcelona-based Spanish publisher, offers a multimedia, self-teaching Arabic course for English speakers, called Tareq. The course was developed after three years of work by a team of Spanish and Moroccan Arabic linguistic experts. The course includes geographical, cultural, and social aspects of the main Arabic-speaking countries, providing students with a virtual immersion environment.

Tareq course materials include a calligraphy book, a basic grammar book, a full script (in Arabic) of the video and audio components of the course, a script of the video components in English, exercise notebooks, a student guide, and instructional DVDs, videos, and audiocassettes.

For more information, visit [www.arabic-course.com](http://www.arabic-course.com).

**SpeakText Uses AT&T Natural Voice to Convert Text to Speech**

SpeakText is a text-to-speech shareware application that can use any speech engine compatible with Microsoft's Speech Application Programming Interface. Using SpeakText, students can have documents and website content read aloud, then convert the text to an MP3 that can be downloaded to any MP3 player.

SpeakText can convert entire Web pages or documents, read portions of text that have been highlighted, or read single words.

The AT&T Natural Voice demo on the site speaks in perfect English and the voice quality is very realistic compared to many other text-to-speech voice simulators. AT&T Natural Voice is available in English, German, French, and Spanish.

For more information, visit [www.speaktext.com](http://www.speaktext.com).

**Guide to Creating a “World Languages Day” Event Online**

This free downloadable publication provides a step-by-step guide to planning “World Languages Day”—a university event for high school students designed to stimulate interest in learning languages and to highlight the importance of cultural awareness.

Co-authored by personnel from CLEAR, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and the University of Minnesota, the guide gives perspectives and advice from three different universities. The guide is organized chronologically, outlining the steps needed to organize an event like World Languages Day at your institution. Every step of the way is covered, including rationale, laying the groundwork, funding, presenters and sessions, participating schools, registration, logistics, exhibit area, volunteers, and evaluations. The appendices include sample budgets, programs, session descriptions, ads, timelines, letter templates, and other useful information.


**Grant Opportunity for Language Learning Technology Offered by SANS Inc.**

SANS Inc., the developer and exclusive licensor of Sony language learning software solutions, is pleased to announce the SANS 2008, SANSSpace(tm) Technology Grant Program. This comprehensive grant is available for eligible high schools, colleges, and universities in the United States and Canada.

The SANSSpace Virtual Learning Environment is an innovative, Web-based software application, designed to manage and share multimedia course material, track student activity, and provide synchronous and asynchronous communication. It has been designed specifically for language learning applications, and features a built-in digital comparative recorder with which students can engage in communicative audio-based activities.

The SANSSpace functionality encourages an open learning environment, unencumbered by time and/or space, where individual student work as well as interactive communication is optimized. Each student’s activity and progress in the core language learning skills are tracked, and can be reviewed and measured to enhance development. In keeping with the particular needs of language learning, SANSSpace tracks not only who is online, when and for how long, but also what file is being accessed, while it monitors the interaction with the material.

The school or institution that is awarded the grant will receive enough SANSSpace software licenses to accommodate the needs of their language program(s). The installation of this software will also be arranged and paid for by SANS Inc. and handled by a SANS representative. In addition, SANS will also provide up to 100 SANS headsets to use with the SANSSpace software.

Applications must be received by SANS Inc. on or before April 30, 2008. The grant recipient will be chosen by May 30, 2008. For more information on submitting an application, interested parties are invited to go to [www.sansinc.com/grant](http://www.sansinc.com/grant).

(continued on p.24)
One of the key benefits that the Sony digital language lab provides is immediate application to the real world using the paired activity features and the partnered lab work. It teaches students to negotiate meaning and is perhaps the most communicative of all activities.

Georges Detiveaux
Language Lab Coordinator
and Lead French Faculty,
Lone Star College-CyFair

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Easy Proficiency Testing Online from OWL Testing Software

OWL Testing Software, the web-based language testing software used to create the highly successful PPS Orals proficiency examinations, is now available in a hosted version.

OWL Testing Software was developed specifically for foreign language proficiency testing and makes oral proficiency assessments simple. Using a web browser, teachers and administrators can create high-stakes tests, placement exams, or quizzes, and can administer them to large groups or even one student—in the classroom or around the world. Likewise, teachers can rate speech or writing samples and the software will automatically grade all single-answer questions types. Special needs students can be easily accommodated.

Now with the hosted version, OWL privately and securely hosts your tests on its own servers. For a guided tour, contact Greg Russak at grussak@owlts.com, or visit www.owlts.com.

Apple’s New Operating System Includes Multiple Foreign Language Features

Apple’s new operating system, Mac OS X Leopard, is now available. The system includes a number of international features designed to support its use with foreign languages.

International features include:

• Full Russian localization
• Full Polish localization
• Full Portuguese (Portugal) localization
• Enhanced international font support, which adds improved Russian and Polish support; a Korean system font that supports the full set of modern Hangul; two new fonts in Tibetan; built-in Arabic fonts that support Persian, as well as three additional Arabic-based scripts in Geeza Pro, Uyghur, Kurdish, and Jawi.
• An expanded font set in Japanese
• Expanded keyboard support, with more than 15 new international keyboard layouts, including Tibetan, Kazakh, and Persian-QWERTY.
• A Russian and Danish spell checker

For more information, visit www.apple.com/macosx.

Descriptions, information, and reviews of the above software/hardware were taken directly from the respective websites. Inclusion of products in “Tech Talk” does not imply endorsement by ACTFL or The Language Educator.

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.


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Toyota Selects Jorge Pulleiro for Costa Rica Study Tour

Jorge Pulleiro, who teaches Spanish and student leadership at Grant Union High School in John Day, OR, was selected to participate in the Toyota International Teacher Program and given the chance to embark on a cultural and environmental learning expedition in Costa Rica from February 24–March 7, 2008.

Teachers selected for the Toyota program have the opportunity to collaborate with other U.S. teachers and resident educators to exchange innovative approaches to teaching environmental stewardship that they can share with students when they return to their classrooms. Pulleiro, a member of ACTFL, was the only educator from Oregon among the 35 chosen for this program.

In Costa Rica, area experts educate participating teachers on local development, agronomy and conservation practices. Activities include researching methods in sustainable agriculture at EARTH University and interacting with ecological leaders at La Selva Biological Station.

The Toyota program is open to educators in all 50 states and the District of Columbia and, according to Toyota, it strives to expose educators of all disciplines to the diversity of peoples and ecosystems worldwide in an effort to inspire the creative teaching of international, cultural, and environmental themes in U.S. schools and communities. It is administered by the Institute of International Education. For more information, visit www.iie.org/toyota.

Donna Clementi Receives Les Palmes Académiques

On February 29, 2008, at the French Consul General’s office in Chicago, ACTFL Board of Directors Member Donna Clementi received the prestigious Les Palmes Académiques (Order of Academic Palms). The honor dates back to 1808, when it was inaugurated by Napoleon Bonaparte by decree. In 1955, the decree was raised to the level of a Ministerial order.

One of the oldest civil orders, Les Palmes Académiques honors individuals with outstanding devotion and accomplishment in the areas of teaching, scholarship, and research. Recipients of the honor receive an Award Diploma from the French Minister of Education and are entitled to wear the medal that is an insignia of this order.

Ann Tollefson Named 2007 NCSSFL Supervisor of the Year

Ann Tollefson, who recently retired from the Wyoming Department of Education where she worked as a foreign language content specialist, has been named the 2007 Supervisor of the Year by the National Council of State Supervisors for Languages (NCSSFL). The award, which is co-sponsored by education publisher Pearson, is presented at NCSSFL’s annual meeting.

Tollefson began her 43 years in education as a classroom teacher in the Goshen County School District in Wyoming and later served as a French teacher, district supervisor for foreign languages, and as executive director of school–community relations and resource development in the Natrona County School District in Casper. She currently works as a consultant on K–12 foreign language education.

Tollefson was recognized by NCSSFL for her work that included finding funding for and developing foreign language programs to be offered statewide on the Wyoming Equality Network (WEN), which links every secondary and postsecondary school in the state and provides free live videoconferencing classes in Spanish, French, German, and Russian, with an initiative underway to add Mandarin Chinese. Through grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and from the Fulbright-Hayes Group Study Abroad Program, she made it possible for Wyoming teachers to study and visit other areas of the world.

In presenting the award, Don Reutershan, world language specialist with the Maine Department of Education and chair of the NCSSFL Awards Committee, cited Tollefson’s outstanding leadership, service, and innovative contributions at both the state and national level, and said, “She has risen to the challenge of encouraging schools and districts to develop or expand world language programs as part of their core curriculum.”

Pearson Curriculum Humanities Marketing Director Cathy Wilson noted that Tollefson has played a vital part in placing her state at the forefront of the movement for improved education on foreign languages and cultures.

Tollefson has served as president of the Pacific Northwest Council on Foreign Languages and the Wyoming Foreign Language Teachers’ Association. She also served as the 1997 president of ACTFL.
Martin Smith Named 2007 NADSFL Supervisor of the Year

Martin J. Smith, supervisor of the World Languages, ESL, and Bilingual program at Edison Public Schools in Edison, NJ, has been named the 2007 Supervisor of the Year by the National Association of District Supervisors of Foreign Languages (NADSFL). The award was presented at NADSFL’s 2007 conference in San Antonio, Texas.

Co-sponsored by educational publisher Pearson, the award recognizes Smith’s contributions to the profession of foreign language education. Among his accomplishments cited by NADSFL was his drive to establish a standards-based world languages program for students throughout the state of New Jersey. As an executive board member of the Foreign Language Educators of New Jersey, Smith worked to develop a language program from elementary through high school to help students improve their ability to communicate in the language they are studying.

By working toward giving students a language learning and cultural experience throughout their K–16 careers, Smith hopes to give students a very special skill that connects them to the world through language and culture, and notes, “We have a chance to change a generation of students.”

“Mr. Smith is responsible for extremely innovative work with students and teachers, including the introduction of technological tools to access authentic information and materials on foreign languages and culture,” says Pearson Curriculum Humanities Marketing Director Cathy Wilson.

Supervisor of World Languages and ESL for the Princeton Regional Schools Priscilla Russel, who is the chair of the NADSFL Nominating Committee, adds, “Martin Smith has successfully shared his vision for a world language program with other district administrators as well as parents in his community, garnering crucial support for his initiatives.”

In addition to being an ACTFL member, Smith is a member of the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese. He serves on the board of directors for the Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages as well as the World Languages Academic Advisory Committee for the College Board.

Six Hands-On Foreign Language Workshops for July 2008:

- Making the Most of Video in the FL Classroom
- Tech Up Your Classroom: Enhancing Your FL Classroom with Technology
- Next-Generation Tools for Language Teaching: Rich Internet Applications for the Classroom
- Designing Online Language Teaching Materials with an Online Assessment Portfolio
- Incorporating Communicative Speaking Activities into the Teaching of Reading, Writing, Grammar, and Vocabulary
- Language Program Development

Early bird registration deadline: May 9, 2008

CLEAR also offers a wide variety of free and low-cost materials for language teaching, as frequently featured in the “Tech Talk” column of *The Language Educator*!
Facing the Great Wall

Just about this time last year I made my first trip to China. When in Beijing, our group took an early morning trip out to the Great Wall of China and we had a rather vigorous “walk” (more like a climb!) up to the top of one of the peaks. As we were ascending a rather narrow and steep section, it occurred to me that the struggle of the language profession to gain a foothold of priority and prominence in education policy and funding is much like climbing the Great Wall of China. You begin the process in some cases as a pleasant walk and you are filled with the excitement of the adventure and the promise of a short and successful journey to a “destination” that provides funding for the language programs you need in your school or university. After a time, you realize that your walk has become a climb up a mountain and you struggle to keep your breath. As you take each short vertical step, you look ahead and see that the wall keeps going up and there is no destination in sight. You begin to feel as though you carry a heavy weight on your shoulders and that those who built this wall do not want you to reach your destination.

At the time, my thoughts about the analogy stopped there because my lungs were aching and, in fact, it seemed that there was no ultimate peak that we would reach; the Wall just kept going up and up. Now that I think back on that experience, though, I see what I hope is a richer comparison to our struggle to get people to recognize the value of language learning and the pursuit of support and funding for language education.

This past year has seen a huge increase in interest in the Chinese language. More parents want it taught in their school; more students want to learn Mandarin; more policy makers want it and they are putting money behind it. The Chinese government is making a big investment in expanding Chinese language education in the United States. It would seem that the effort to increase support for Mandarin language education is an easy path. At the same time, many teachers are struggling to keep other language programs in their schools. French and German programs seem to be most often targeted for elimination, but Japanese, Italian, and even Spanish programs have not been immune.

Unfortunately, this reality is erecting a Great Wall between Chinese language programs and other language offerings. In too many school districts, language education is a zero-sum game and a new program cannot be funded unless an existing one is cut. Therefore, the language teacher whose program is being cut sees the introduction of Chinese as a threat, not as a welcomed addition to the curriculum. This leads to an unstable and potentially dangerous balkanization of separate languages within the language teaching profession.

Our challenge as a profession is to not allow this Great Wall to become a barrier for keeping out an enemy, but rather to use it as a path we can all travel to reach our destination: public policy support and funding for all language education in every school at every grade for as many languages as there are who want to learn them. Those who advocate for the implementation of a Mandarin program in a school should also help fight to keep the French and German programs, lest they become victims of cuts in the future to make way for the next popular language. Teachers of all languages should welcome Mandarin into their schools and embrace those teachers, but they must also fight to keep their existing programs. Key to this is making all language learning something that students want to take and making sure that policy makers and parents understand the economic, political, and social need for all the languages being taught.

ACTFL is in a unique position as a community of all language teachers—all levels and all languages—to try to bring unity to this struggle for recognition, support, and funding. Activities such as the ACTFL Convention & World Languages Expo and publications such as The Language Educator and Foreign Language Annals take on new significance as ways to bring the various languages together. Our advocacy efforts have always supported the introduction of new languages as well as the preservation of languages currently being taught. But in order for our voice to have the kind of impact we need to have on policy makers, the public, and the media, we need the involvement and help of all language teachers and administrators. While ACTFL has grown to more than 10,000 members, there are some 140,000 of your colleagues who are not participating in any professional association. ACTFL needs more individuals to become part of our group of professional educators who understand the importance of having a national voice.

Whether they are new Chinese teachers or long-time Latin teachers, I urge you to lend your issue of The Language Educator or Foreign Language Annals to your colleagues and encourage them to join our community of language professionals. Together we can help each other climb this Great Wall and reach our destination.
Help Turn the Spotlight on the Stars of Our Profession!

Do you know a language teacher whose work is so exemplary that you think he or she would well represent our profession? Contact your state association to nominate that person for the ACTFL National Language Teacher of the Year Award, sponsored by McDougal Littell. The Teacher of the Year Award also includes a $2,000 stipend.

To bestow its annual awards, ACTFL relies on members to nominate qualified candidates. Many of these awards include cash prizes of $500.

Have you read a great doctoral dissertation lately? Then maybe you should nominate the writer for the ACTFL-MLJ Marie Birkmaier Award for Doctoral Dissertation Research in Foreign Language Education.

Know someone who is dynamite at teaching culture? Maybe that person should be a candidate for the ACTFL Nelson Brooks Award for Excellence in the Teaching of Culture.

Think that someone has excelled at integrating technology into instruction? How about recommending that person for the ACTFL/FDP-Houghton Mifflin Awards for Excellence in Foreign Language Instruction Using Technology with IALLT.

Were you inspired by an excellent teacher educator? Then that person would make a great candidate for the ACTFL-NYSAFLT Anthony Papalia Award for Excellence in Teacher Education.

Have you read a great research article lately? Then let the editor of that journal know that the author should be submitted as a nominee for the ACTFL-MLJ Paul Pimsleur Award for Research in Foreign Language Education.

We all know great leaders in our profession! Whether K–12 or postsecondary, that person can be recognized with the ACTFL Florence Steiner Awards for Leadership in Foreign Language Education.

Have you heard about an exemplary elementary foreign language program? Consider nominating that program for the ACTFL Nelson Brooks Award for Excellence in the Teaching of Culture.

Award Deadlines

ACTFL National Language Teacher of the Year Award:
• Submissions are made by state organizations
• Contact your respective state organization for more information

Emma Marie Birkmaier Award:
• Abstract of Dissertation must be postmarked on or before May 30, 2008
• Finalists notified to send copies of dissertations to the award committee chairperson by July 7, 2008
• Winners and finalists notified by September 12, 2008

Nelson Brooks, Houghton Mifflin, Anthony Papalia, Paul Pimsleur, Melba Woodruff, and Florence Steiner Awards:
• Nominations postmarked on or before May 30, 2008
• Winners and finalists notified by September 12, 2008


ACTFL Officers Nomination Deadline

Nominations for 2009 President-Elect (2010 President) and two At-Large Board of Directors positions must be postmarked by April 25, 2008.

Visit the ACTFL website for details.

Mark Your Calendar Now for ACTFL 2008 – 2010

November 20–23, 2008
Orlando, Florida
November 20–22, 2009
San Diego, California
November 19–21, 2010
Boston, Massachusetts

Contact convention@actfl.org with any questions.

Results from Discover Languages Podcast Contest Announced

ACTFL held its first ever Discover Languages student video podcast contest in February 2008 as part of the celebration of Discover Languages month. Go to p. 30 in this issue to read more about the results of the contest. You can also see the winning entry online at www.actflvideocontest.org.

Plan to Attend ACTFL 2008 in Orlando!

The early bird registration date for the ACTFL Annual Convention and World Languages Expo is July 16, 2008. More about the convention, including information for making hotel reservations and registration, can be found online at www.actfl.org.

Friends of Foreign Languages

ACTFL’s “Friends of Foreign Languages” program is a way for individuals outside of the language education profession to support learning languages and understanding cultures beyond our own. We invite those who want to speak up for language education to join in the effort.

Benefits of the program include the brochure Facts About Foreign Languages, periodic e-mails containing news and information about language education, a member discount on all Discover Languages logo products, and access to resource information and other friends of foreign languages. The cost is only $15 per year and membership is valid for one year after the date ACTFL receives the application.

Find out more at www.actfl.org.

2007 Convention Webcasts Available

Due to overwhelming demand, some sessions videotaped during the 2007 ACTFL Convention and World Languages Expo in San Antonio, Texas are being offered for your viewing at no cost. Check out the webcasts online at www.actfl.org. This information is being provided as a way to boost your instructional skills and enhance your professional development from the comfort and convenience of your computer. Please let us know what you think by filling out the evaluation form after viewing.
once again this February, people around the country celebrated the importance of language learning as they marked Discover Languages Month. From language pop quizzes to poster contests to drama and music competitions, foreign language teachers and their students strived to bring attention to language education by displaying their love of languages at their schools and in their communities.

A Successful Video Podcast Contest

This year, for the first time, ACTFL held a National Student Video Podcast Contest during Discover Languages Month, inviting language students of all ages to send in entries on the theme “Not Just a Language Class!”

In addition to the generous sponsorship of ASC Direct, who provided cash prizes for the winners’ schools, significant thanks also goes to the Center for Language Education and Research (CLEAR), who completely set up and hosted the website to show the videos and handle the voting process. The Multimedia Education Resource for Learning and Online Teaching (MERLOT) also helped to publicize the undertaking. The advisory committee for the contest included Lynn Fulton-Archer, Richmond Drive Elementary School, Rock Hill, SC; Mikle Ledgerwood, State University of New York, Stony Brook, NY; Laura Franklin, Northern Virginia Community College, Alexandria, VA (MERLOT); Adam Stryker, McLean High School, McLean, VA; Dennie Hoopingarner, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI (CLEAR); Vineet Bansal, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI (CLEAR); Elizabeth Hoffman, ACTFL past president; and Joy Campbell, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI (CLEAR). Special thanks is also due to Melissa Ferro, ACTFL intern from George Mason University, for all her hard work. ACTFL Director of Education Marty Abbott coordinated the committee and the contest process.

Students submitting videos were asked to respond to the questions: Is learning a language more than just “another class?” How do you use the language and cultural information you are learning in your language class? Do you use the language outside the classroom? Contest entrants who shared their experiences on a short two-minute video were eligible to win cash prizes of $300 each.

Almost 200 videos were submitted in January and February, and the list was narrowed down to a group of finalists in each of the four contest categories: Elementary School (PK–5); Middle School (6–8); High School (9–12); and Postsecondary/Undergraduate.

Those submitting podcasts were encouraged to develop their videos based on the following criteria:

- **Content:** Is the “message” engaging and appropriate to the theme of the contest?
- **Creativity:** Is the idea shared innovative and creative?
- **Execution:** Is the use of technology effective and used appropriately to get the “message” across to the audience?
- **Effect:** Was the overall effect achieved in communicating to the audience?
In early March, a popular vote was held to choose the favorites in each category. Individuals went online to view the videos and cast their votes, and many teachers used this as an opportunity to have their students become involved with Discover Languages Month, by discussing the videos in class and encouraging students to vote. Over 3,000 votes were received.

According to Abbott, the video entries were numerous and strong in all categories. “We are thrilled by the enthusiastic response we had,” she says. “We consider it a big success and we also learned a lot in this first year. Our plan is to have an even bigger contest for February 2009!” More information about next year’s competition will be made available on the Discover Languages website at www.DiscoverLanguages.org in August.

ACTFL are pleased to announce the winners of the 2008 competition:

Elementary School: Nikki D’Ambrosio and Marissa Ortiz. Two fourth grade students tell why Spanish is so important to them. (School—Hawthorne Elementary School, Louisville, KY; Teacher—Jimmy Wathen.)

Middle School: Spanish: A Step out of the Classroom. Four 14-year-old students explain why Spanish is more than just a class to them. Students featured in the video are eighth graders Neil Nijhawan, Ankush Gupta, Vinay Raj, and Kush Nijhawan. (School—Meyzeek Middle School, Louisville, KY; Teacher—Ana Castro.)

High School: When Teachers Aren’t Around: Confessions of a Language Student. Produced the UCLS Filmmaking Club, a group of high school students who enjoy making movies. They set up a video camera in a hallway cabinet to record continuously, and put a chair in front of it with a list of questions. The video shows a small fraction of the amazing answers they received. (School—University of Chicago Laboratory Schools, Chicago, IL.)

Postsecondary: Make Someone Smile—Study a Language. A disappointing night is redeemed by speaking Arabic. Stanford University Student Ben Kessler-Reynolds finds that he can understand and converse with an Arabic-speaking taxi driver, putting a smile on both their faces, and making a cross-cultural connection. (School—Stanford University, Stanford, CA.)

“We are so excited for our students and our school community of learners,” says Jimmy Wathen, school technology/STLP coordinator at Hawthorne Elementary School. “We thank you and the ACTFL organization for giving us this opportunity to showcase our language immersion school and to highlight the importance of foreign languages in education.”

“I am very happy that my students won the contest in the Middle School category,” says Ana Castro, teacher at Meyzeek Middle School. “We enjoy sending out the message of how important it is to learn other languages and cultures.”

“I’m glad to help ACTFL in teaching students the importance of learning languages,” says Ben Kessler-Reynolds, Stanford University, Class of 2009. “Foreign language teachers have been some of the most influential people in my life, and I’d like to thank them all. In particular, Ramzi Salti, who told me about the contest and turned my purely academic interest in the Arabic language into a broad enthusiasm for the Middle East; Janice Rocha, my AP Spanish teacher, who wrote my letter of recommendation to Stanford and put me on the path to fluency; and Cleo Villamarin, who brought me on an exchange trip to Spain, one of the most positive experiences of my life and one which led me to pursue other overseas programs, including 10 weeks in Madrid this spring. Shukran and gracias to you all, and to ACTFL for the honor.”

More interviews with the winners and the runners-up in the podcast contest can be found at www.DiscoverLanguages.org. We encourage everyone to read what the students have to say about the making of their videos and to also enjoy the videos online.
In addition, the resolution recognizes the efforts of ACTFL and the Kentucky World Language Association (KWLA) toward public support of increased language education for students at all levels of instruction.

KWLA President Thomas Sauer, who is a district world language specialist with Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS), explains that the resolution was achieved by first talking to a legislator known to be supportive of foreign language learning—Reginald Meeks, who, along with Sauer and others, had gone on a trip to China that was organized by former Governor Martha Layne Collins.

“We also gave him some names of other legislators who we knew were language friendly,” notes Sauer.

Resolutions were also obtained from the mayor of Lexington and the mayor of Louisville. Sauer credits one-on-one contacts made with members of the mayors’ staffs for achieving those resolutions.

In addition to working toward the official state recognition of Discover Languages Month, Kentucky’s Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) held events to promote world language education, and all schools were encouraged to highlight the benefits of language learning, such as making a school announcement in a language other than English, and participating in the ACTFL Student Video Podcast Contest. Another suggestion was to ask students if they speak a language other than English at home, and then find out if someone at the school can communicate with those students in their native language.

Schools were also encouraged to participate in the World Languages in the Elementary Schools Showcase & Exposition that was held on February 28 at Gheens Academy and Durrett Auditorium in Louisville. Sauer says the event was designed to celebrate the students’ success, to educate the parents about what it means to learn a foreign language in elementary school, and to advocate for world language programs. Languages taught in JCPS include Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Latin, and Spanish, and each school set up a booth at the exposition where the work of students studying these languages was shared.

The showcase part of the event featured student performances of dialogs, dances, and songs that highlighted the students’ world language and cultural knowledge. This was the first year the showcase and exposition was held, but Sauer is very pleased by the response and by all of the support the event received. “It was a tremendous success,” he says. “We had over 200 kids and over 500 parents.”

On February 5 in Frankfort, KWLA staged its first ever “Languages and Legislators” event, which garnered some good media attention as it was covered by WTVQ 36 and by the Frankfort State Journal. About 100 middle and high school foreign language students from Franklin, Fayette, and Jessamine County schools participated in the event. The students staged a pop quiz, talked to the media, performed dialogs and songs in the capitol rotunda, and met with legislators. The pop quiz involved asking legislators, staff, and visitors to the capitol what time it was—in French, Spanish, Japanese, or Chinese.

The Frankfort State Journal reported that of the 301 people polled by the students, 129 did not respond, 126 responded in English, and 46 responded accurately in the correct language. As a result, KWLA gave the city a C-minus. According to Sauer, although this is the first time the pop quiz was done in Frankfort, similar events have been held in Lexington and Louisville. At those events, Lexington received a C-minus, and Louisville received a D. In Sauer’s view, the quizzes serve as a test for measuring where Kentucky is as it prepares to host about 500,000 visitors for the 2010 World Equestrian Games.

Sauer also sees the visit to the capitol as a great public relations event in multiple ways because it targeted more than one group. “The students got a tour of the capitol and got to talk to the legislators, which was an extraordinarily educational event for them,” he explains. “The parents were very appreciative, and we got responses thanking us and asking how they could further support world languages.”

Sauer says that the legislators were very impressed by the students, and adds that, “Any time you can bring in the smiling faces of elementary school children, it is bound to create a positive experience and highlight the importance of starting language programs in elementary schools in order to achieve high levels of proficiency.”

Sauer and his colleagues in Kentucky, along with their students, are doing their part to make their state more aware of the value of language learning—from the events they have held, to the Discover Languages bulletin board in the district’s professional development center, to the Discover Languages banners that are proudly displayed in all 21 high schools in the district, to the House Resolution.

If there is one thing that Sauer feels it is important to share with his fellow language educators, it is this: “These events are really not that much work and are easier to organize than you think—and the payoff is big. It’s an investment worth making.”

While we may all take February as a special month to focus on Discover Languages, we can continue to promote language learning throughout the year with Discover Languages logo products, available through the online product store at www.DiscoverLanguages.org.

And don’t forget to check the website regularly for the latest on the Discover Languages campaign and advocacy efforts throughout the United States!
Italian and French are the languages that students report most wanting to study, according to two recently released surveys from ACTFL that detail the attitudes of high school students and their teachers towards language learning.

Students in large numbers reported seeing the study of a foreign language as beneficial for travel, recreation, and enjoyment—as well as for working in the business world. Of the students who were interested in majoring in international business, a higher proportion of students chose Arabic, Chinese, and Japanese over more traditional languages.

Foreign language teachers say their greatest areas of challenge in teaching languages are low motivation of their students, having inadequate instructional materials, and needing more professional development opportunities and information on “best practices.” Teachers also called for more opportunities to network with other educators.

Throughout last year, ACTFL worked together with the National Research Center for College & University Admissions (NRCUA) to compile the data concerning student and teacher attitudes about learning a foreign language.

In the spring of 2007, the first questionnaire was mailed to high school foreign language teachers across the nation. These educators were asked to distribute the survey to their students, as well as to complete an educator survey themselves. There were 70,170 foreign language student surveys and 833 foreign language teacher surveys collected between January 1, 2007 and May 18, 2007.

In the fall of 2007, a similar questionnaire was again mailed to high school foreign language teachers across the nation. These educators were asked to distribute the survey to their students and to complete an educator survey themselves. There were 152,800 students and 2,236 teachers who completed the foreign language surveys between August 1, 2007 and January 15, 2008.

ACTFL Executive Director Bret Lovejoy says that conducting such research is an important step in gathering data concerning prevailing attitudes about foreign language learning.

“We need to know what students are thinking and why they choose certain languages,” says Lovejoy. “This helps to assist in program planning and also in our local and nationwide advocacy efforts.” He also notes that it is vital for ACTFL as an organization to listen closely to what language educators say they need.

“It’s no surprise to hear that teachers are clamoring for more opportunities for professional development and networking,” says Lovejoy. “That is why ACTFL makes it such a priority to offer a vibrant and relevant annual convention and a variety of workshops and training opportunities every year. Teachers often report that the ACTFL Convention and World Languages Expo is their most useful professional development experience throughout the year. The 2008 Convention in Orlando promises once again to provide language educators with what they most need to support them in their chosen profession.”

The fact that the survey showed students are very interested in learning traditionally taught European languages, such as Italian, French, and Spanish, was welcomed by many who feel these programs have been threatened in some institutions and districts.

“It’s music to our ears to hear that Italian was chosen by students as the language they are most interested in studying,” says Rev. Lydio F. Tomasi, editor of Voce Italiana and president of Casa Italiana Language School. “While this popular interest rewards the multiple efforts to spread the teaching of Italian, it’s also a strong invitation to public and private schools to include Italian in their curriculum.”

“The fact that students continue to show a strong interest in studying French demonstrates the appeal of the French language,” says Jayne Abrate, executive director of the American Association of Teachers of French (AATF). “Students are more and more aware of the economic importance of learning French to be able to compete in the global economy in addition to the undeniable historic and cultural appeal of French. Students know that French opens the doors to more than 50 countries around the world where French is used on a daily basis and to countless professions where French is a definite plus.”

More information on the surveys, including charts which highlight the data, is available online at www.actfl.org.
Taking Language Skills to Work

Exploring the Field of Language Conversion Through Translation and Interpretation

Language conversion: the act of taking writing or speech in one language and converting it to another effectively and accurately; more commonly referred to as translation and interpretation.

From courtroom and medical interpretation to government and business translation to corporate website localization, language conversion is a broad field that has applications in virtually every facet of life.

“It’s just fascinating to know that all of these little things you do in your daily life you can access in another language,” says Nataly Kelly, an author and professional courtroom interpreter. “There are interpreters for professional athletes, interpreters who work at major film festivals to help negotiate deals, interpreters who work for the Olympics, and even one interpreter who interprets for the International Space Station.”

Reliable statistics on the number of professionals working in language conversion are difficult to come by, given that many of them work as freelancers or part-timers. But it is definitely a growing field.

“Last year,” says Dr. Jiri Stejskal, president of the American Translators Association (ATA), “following 10 years of steady growth, ATA welcomed its 10,000th member.”

Employment of interpreters and translators is projected to increase faster than the average for all occupations over the 2004–2014 period, according to a U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics report, reflecting “strong growth in the industries employing interpreters and translators.”

But for many outside these fields, there is a fundamental lack of understanding of what they are and just what is required to do them well.

Breaking It Down

To begin a discussion of language conversion one must first understand what each of its incarnations really involves.

“Different qualities and skills are required of interpreters and translators,” says Izabel S. Arocha, cultural and linguistic educator at Cambridge Health Alliance in Massachusetts, and president of the International Medical Interpreters Association (IMIA). “While these are sister professions that focus on the linguistic conversion from source to target language, they differ strikingly in practice.”

The most obvious differences between translation and interpretation are the materials they work with and how they convert them: Translation handles written documents and interpretation deals with spoken language.

“Both translators and interpreters must have excellent knowledge of at least two languages,” says Stejskal. “However, translators typically work into a single language—their native tongue—while interpreters work in both directions. Translators must be good writers and be able to spend long hours reading and writing; interpreters must be good verbal communicators and have great hearing and memory. Translators can

Where Does Localization Fit In?

Localization may be the fastest growing language conversion specialty. It deals specifically with re-purposing media, Web, and audio materials for consumption in other countries. More than simply translating text, localization also deals with testing software to ensure it will function correctly in the target country; making sure color schemes and layouts are culturally appropriate, and even completely re-working taglines and other marketing and sales messages so that they have the same impact on an audience in another country as they do here.

take their time and do research on the text they translate, whereas interpreters must be able to grasp and convey the message immediately."

“To be a good translator you need the skill of understanding a text completely—not just the language but also its culture, idioms, references,” says Dr. Geoffrey Koby, associate professor of German Translation at Kent State University—one of only two universities, besides California State University, Long Beach, that offers a bachelor’s degree in translation. “No one reads a text more closely than a translator.”

Interpretation is, in many ways, a much more complex undertaking than translation. For one thing, different kinds of interpreting require different skills.

“There are two types of interpreting: consecutive and simultaneous,” says Dr. Edward Dawley, faculty translation advisor for American University’s Graduate Certificate in French Translation program. “Consecutive interpreting is used in situations where the orator speaks for a while, anywhere from a few sentences to a speech of a few minutes, after which the interpreter gives the message in the target language. Simultaneous interpretation, which is much more in the public eye, requires the ability to listen, analyze, and speak at the same time.”

“There’s also sight translation, something that only interpreters do,” says Kelly, “where you take a document that has to be rendered in the target language verbally.”

Because the skills required for each profession are so specialized, it is rare to find someone who works in both fields.

“I have lots of friends who are renowned translators who would never interpret,” she says.

More than Language Training

Clearly, no matter which field of language conversion one undertakes, it requires skills beyond mastering a foreign language.

“There is a misconception that a person who speaks a language and can repeat/write a few simple phrases in the other language can interpret or translate,” says Arocha.

“One of the main challenges is the low barrier to entering the profession,” says Stejskal. “This is particularly true for translation—if you know another language and have at least rudimentary computer skills, you can market yourself as a translator. Since the client cannot readily assess the skills of the service provider, poor translation service can go undetected for a long period of time.”

The misconception that all it takes to be a good translator or interpreter is to be bilingual is, perhaps, one of the greatest chal-
The effective and accurate translation of foreign language materials is crucial to national security. A large portion of the demand for translators is driven by the U.S. government, and the languages that are needed most are often driven by national security concerns.

“The languages that seem most promising in terms of employment at this time are Chinese and Arabic, although demand can change, says Dr. Edward Dawley, faculty translation advisor for American University’s Graduate Certificate in French Translation program. “When I was in college in the 70s, there was a huge demand for Russian because of the Cold War, but demand seems to have slackened somewhat since then.”

“There is certainly no shortage when it comes to FIGS [French, Italian, German, and Spanish], but when looking for languages of limited diffusion, qualified translators and interpreters are few and far between,” says ATA President Jiri Stejskal. “This is especially true for languages currently needed by the U.S. government, such as Dari or Pashto. . . . The shortage of qualified linguists has made headlines on numerous occasions,” he notes.

“There are national security issues,” says Dr. Geoffrey Koby, associate professor of German Translation at Kent State University. “The volume of Arabic communications is so large, there’s too much for analysts to read. We’re at a disadvantage. There is such a huge volume of translation to be done that some things will never be translated and some will be translated poorly.”

Making a Professional

While the need to use translators and interpreters who are well trained in all facets of their field is certain, it can be a challenge for organizations to find these qualified language conversion professionals—as with many foreign language-related professions in this country. And individuals interested in pursuing translation or interpretation as a career may find it difficult to obtain suitable education and training.

“There is a desperate need for people who are qualified,” says Dr. Alexander Rainof, a professor at California State University, Long Beach, who sits on the board of directors of the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators (NAJIT). “But the infrastructure isn’t there.”

“We are the only organization in the United States that is a member of the International Permanent Conference of University Institutes of Translators and Interpreters,” says Wood. “There are maybe 20 to 30 schools in North America that offer translation or interpretation programs; 15 in the United States offer degrees in the field.”

“If you look at the last 50 years, we didn’t have a whole lot of translation training in this country,” says Koby, “In most universities, translation is kind of a stepchild.”
Still, a number of excellent programs do exist, such as the graduate programs at Kent State, the only university in the United States to have a BS, MS, and PhD program; MIIS, which offers programs in eight languages; California State University, Long Beach, and American University in Washington, DC, which both have graduate certificate programs; as well as the two bachelor’s programs at Kent and California State University, Long Beach.

Of course, translation and interpretation programs are not the same as foreign language programs, for students must already come to them with a native or near-native grasp of the languages in which they plan to work.

“We’re an applied program,” says Wood. “You have to come into the program already being able to apply the language. It’s not for language improvement.”

Clearly, in addition to formal training, spending significant time in a country that uses the target language is essential for those who are interested in entering one of these professions.

“Study abroad is a great way to master the language,” says Stejskal, “and to get to know the people, customs, and culture of a country.”

“Study abroad is crucial,” agrees Koby. “Think early and think as long as you can—at least a semester; better a year.”

A Market Waiting to Be Tapped
As globalization continues to shrink the international and domestic landscapes, and attitudes about learning foreign languages in the United States continue to evolve, the translation and interpretation fields should benefit from increased exposure in this country and a greater understanding of the need for trained, skilled professionals.

“I think that in the past students were not interested in studying foreign languages because of a limited choice of careers,” says Stejskal. “In today’s globalized world, there are many attractive careers involving foreign languages, including translation and interpretation.”

“As the world grows smaller,” says Wood, “there will be a better understanding that language conversion is important.”

And in a country where foreign language-related professions are sometimes underappreciated—and often underpaid—it is heartening to know that demand for translators and interpreters represents significant earning opportunities for those entering these fields.

“The worldwide translation market is now estimated at about $10 billion annually and growing,” says Stejskal. “The largest and possibly fastest growing segment is represented by the U.S. government. The same applies to the European Union. In the corporate world, demand is also booming. Thanks to the Internet, companies now can easily reach buyers who either do not speak English or who prefer to conduct business transactions in their own language. Without translators and interpreters, communication is impossible.”

Maura Kate Hallam is a contributing writer to The Language Educator. She is the owner of Hallam Creative Services (www.hallamcreative.com), a writing and editing firm based in Washington state.

Additional Resources
Looking to learn more about the translation and interpretation professions? Visit these websites to get started.

Membership Organizations
American Translators Association
www.atanet.org
International Medical Interpreters Association
www.mmia.org
National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators
www.najit.org

Undergraduate/Graduate Programs
American University
www.american.edu
California State University, Long Beach
www.csulb.edu
Kent State University
www.kent.edu

The Graduate School of Translation & Interpretation at Monterey Institute of International Studies
translate.miis.edu
For a town of 32,000 people, Glastonbury, Connecticut, certainly carries a lot of weight—at least in education circles. The name Glastonbury is almost synonymous with K–12 foreign language education.

Last year, the Glastonbury Public Schools' foreign language program celebrated its 50th anniversary. In 2009, the Russian language program hits the half-decade mark.

“We have the oldest, continuing public K–12 foreign language program that I’m aware of,” says Rita Oleksak, Director of Foreign Languages and English Language Learning (ELL) for Glastonbury Public Schools and ACTFL Past President.

The program began in 1957 with funding from the National Defense Education Act, which came about in reaction to the country being caught by surprise when the Soviets launched Sputnik. The idea was that by training a generation to speak the language of the nation’s chief rival, we might be able to keep closer tabs on them.

Glastonbury’s longevity is impressive; it’s also a strong reason for the language program’s continuing success. In a 1995 paper, “The Case for Foreign Languages: The Glastonbury Language Program,” Christine Brown, Glastonbury’s Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction (and another ACTFL Past President), noted that although there have been many national revolutions within language pedagogy since the 1950s, the course offerings are nearly the same ones that were in place in 1957, when the program began.

Lynne Campbell, a Glastonbury alumnus, recalls that when she went off to college at Indiana University in the early 1970s, her language professors all knew she was from Glastonbury when she mentioned Connecticut as her home state. “I was just amazed. It was this dinky little farm town back then, with a population of probably 8,000,” she says.

Glastonbury students begin studying Spanish in first grade, twice a week for 15 minutes. That increases to five times a week in second grade. In sixth grade students have the option of continuing in Spanish or switching to French. Language class time increases to 45 minutes daily in seventh grade and students have the option of adding Russian to their course load.

Upon entering high school, Glastonbury students have mastery of Spanish that far exceeds their peers in more typical language programs that generally start in middle school. Last year, Glastonbury students who voluntarily took the ACTFL Spanish language pilot computerized assessment test received Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) scores ranging from intermediate low to high, with two students scoring at advanced low.

The language offerings and study abroad opportunities at Glastonbury High School rival those of some small universities. French, Greek, Japanese, Latin, Russian, and Spanish all are offered with Advanced Placement and University of Connecticut Cooperative credit at the sixth-year level in French, Russian, and Spanish, and at the fifth year in Latin.

The Glastonbury Foreign Language staff includes 36 Spanish teachers, nine French teachers, four Latin teachers, two Russian teachers, one Chinese teacher, as well as two ELL teachers and nine ELL tutors. The program has even more depth than the numbers indicate, as several teachers work in multiple languages. Campbell, for example, returned to Glastonbury and currently teaches French, Russian, and Spanish.

Many graduates of Glastonbury Public Schools report testing into upper division language courses in college and spending their freshman year alongside juniors and seniors. According to Brown, some students place out of the undergraduate language sequences altogether.

As a college freshman, Campbell started with third-year French and Spanish classes and second-year, second-semester Russian. She wanted to triple major, but had to settle...
for a dual major in Spanish and Russian with a minor in French. According to Brown, the high achievement is a result of the long sequence of study in Glastonbury—the opportunity for students to cultivate and nurture their language skills in a sequential fashion beginning in elementary school.

This sequential instruction is made possible by the Director of Foreign Languages, a role that Brown held for 22 years before becoming an assistant superintendent. The Director of Foreign Languages is completely responsible for curriculum, recruiting supervising, and evaluating teachers, and working collaboratively with each school site supervisor. Continuity within this office has also helped with achieving success; Oleksak is only the fourth Director of Foreign Languages in the program’s 50-year history.

“Foreign languages are a discipline, like music or art, that really requires expertise,” Brown explains. “Without that expertise the system tends to break down over time.”

In times of tightening education budgets and ever-increasing pressure of schools to meet performance targets dictated by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, so-called enrichment programs are often the first to go. Language programs, unfortunately, fall under the umbrella of enrichment in many areas, but not in Glastonbury.

“It’s part of the mindset,” says Oleksak. “All students are expected to study foreign language—it’s part of our core instruction.” Foreign language is one of the five academic core areas taught at every grade level, which also include math, language arts, social studies, and science. Foreign language teachers meet regularly with teachers in other subject areas to so that concepts flow beyond subject-matter boundaries.

This attitude fosters success in the students. Campbell says that and her classmates were comfortable learning multiple foreign languages. “We didn’t view it something impossible or difficult,” she recalls. “Mastering the Russian alphabet was fun, sort of like a puzzle.”

In the early 1970s, the language program was eliminated for one year due to budget cuts. Parents rallied to bring back the foreign language program the following year, but Brown says Glastonbury was still feeling the effects six years later when she joined the program.

A Magnet for Foreign Language Educators
Glastonbury’s reputation means recruiting foreign language teachers is not a problem. The school system is a professional development site for the University of Connecticut’s teaching program. Fifth year Master’s degree students spend a year interning at Glastonbury after completing their student teaching.

“We have an enormous pool of excellent teachers,” says Brown. The opportunities for teachers at Glastonbury are fairly unique to public K–12 education. Campbell says that when she decided to pursue a teaching credential, she focused her efforts on French and Spanish, thinking there was no way she’d ever find a job teaching Russian.

“It’s a dream come true,” she says. “When I started learning Russian I didn’t know what I was doing or why, I just enjoyed languages.”

In 1986, Campbell was one of 15 teachers nationwide chosen to attend a Russian summer institute in St. Petersburg (which was known as Leningrad at the time), when Russia was part of the Soviet Union. In 2000, she spent the summer on a Fulbright scholarship studying at Moscow University. And, she’s been on a “zillion” exchange programs with students.

Every year Glastonbury hosts students from Spain and France and sends its own students abroad for a one-month exchange. A Russian exchange occurs on alternating years. An exchange program to China is in the works.

Another Glastonbury teacher, Linda Sisti, was able to pursue her passion for classical languages when she became a Latin teacher at Glastonbury High School. She joined Glastonbury as an elementary Spanish teacher after completing her student teaching there.

“One day about 10 years ago my director [Brown] mentioned that there was a need for a part-time Latin teacher at the high school and asked if anyone had studied Latin,” she says. “Since Latin was my all-time favorite class I volunteered.”

For several years Sisti taught both elementary Spanish and high school Latin, a schedule she describes as challenging but very rewarding. “While it was difficult to leave the little ones after so many years, I am very happy with my decision to focus on one language and one age group,” she says.

Campbell teaches at both the high school and middle school level. Her assignments change from year to year, variety she finds exciting and satisfying.

Glastonbury also attracts other educators interested in emulating the foreign language program. Oleksak sets aside one day each month (although one day can sometimes become one week) to host visiting teachers, school administrators, and researchers interested in learning more about the program.

What will the next 50 years hold for Glastonbury? Oleksak envisions extending class time in middle school, sending students to more destinations worldwide, and adding new languages that are gaining prominence, such as Farsi and Arabic.
Proposed Funding Cuts Could Hurt Many Education Programs

The FY 2009 Appropriations process began in February and at that time President Bush released his request for the next fiscal year. The Administration request zero-funded a number of programs dealing with languages and international education, including Byrd Honors Scholarships, Teacher Quality Enhancement, Civic Education programs, and the newly created STEM grant programs under America COMPETES.

To justify these cuts, Education Secretary Spellings stated that the unfunded programs were mostly duplicative and that, consequently, more money was being requested for the larger programs, such as federal Pell Grants, to consolidate spending. Also, Spellings asserted that the President’s request aims to put money in the hands of students and to increase Title I funding. Although FY 2008 earmarks will be funded, the request does not include any earmarks, thus accounting for the significant drop in Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) funding.

President Bush's FY 2009 proposal will essentially level fund education. This does not include an inflationary increase, which will result in a funding cut for many programs. Further, the funding increases proposed for a few programs come at the expense of other education programs. The budget proposal continues the President’s attempt to eliminate 47 programs to save about $3.3 billion. Slight increases in Title I and IDEA (roughly equal to inflation) are provided as a result of the cuts to other programs.

While essentially freezing or eliminating many public school programs, the President has proposed about $300 million to enable children in lower performing public schools to go to unregulated private schools with no requirements for teacher quality and curriculum. To cover the tuition and other expenses of a few students, the initiative would use taxpayer dollars that could be used to improve public school education for many more students.

The next step is for Congress to consider the budget and propose changes. Many in Congress have already indicated little support for this budget, and it is likely that significant changes will be made by the House and Senate before the fiscal year begins in October. For specific information about the President’s budget, visit www.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/budget09/index.html.

Simon Act to Go Before Senate

In February, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee passed the Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Foundation Act, which would expand nearly fivefold the number of college students who participate in overseas education. The House of Representatives approved the bill last June. It was introduced by the late Rep. Tom Lantos, Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. The legislation creates a foundation whose goal is to send one million American students abroad each year within the next 10 years. The bill would authorize an appropriation of $80 million annually for the foundation. The legislation now must go before the full Senate.

New Coordinator of World Languages Appointed in New Jersey

Cheri Quinlan, current president of the Foreign Language Educators of New Jersey (FLENJ) and former supervisor of world languages at the Toms River School District, has been hired at the New Jersey Department of Education as World Languages Coordinator. Quinlan replaces Janis Jensen, who has been promoted to the position of Director of the Office of Academic Standards at the New Jersey Department of Education.

According to Quinlan, she first got the “language bug” when she spent the summer of her junior year in high school studying in Guanajuato, Mexico. After graduating from Georgian Court College in Lakewood, NJ, she began her career in Toms River, teaching Spanish to 7th–12th graders. She received her MA in Spanish and Latin American Studies from the University of Arizona through the Guadalajara Summer School. In the late 1980s, Quinlan completed OPI training in Spanish and at that time was certified as an OPI interviewer.

Quinlan says she looks forward to the challenge of serving the profession in her new role as the Coordinator of World Languages and International Education.

Beyond performing functions affecting international and foreign language education within the department, the legislation directs that the Assistant Secretary would:

“(1) have responsibility for encouraging and promoting the study of foreign languages and the study of cultures of other countries at the elementary, secondary, and postsecondary levels in the United States;
(2) carry out the administration of all Department programs on international and foreign language education and research;
(3) coordinate with related international and foreign language education programs of other Federal departments and agencies; and
(4) administer and coordinate the Department of Education’s activities in international affairs.”

Below is an excerpt of a letter from Representative Holt about this bill:

The national needs for Americans with expertise and knowledge in foreign languages and world regions have expanded with globalization and national security demands, but the nation is dangerously behind. International and foreign language education historically have not been high priorities in the nation’s schools, or in most institutions of higher education. That is why I am introducing legislation creating an Assistant Secretary of International and Foreign Language Programs.

International and foreign language programs are scattered throughout the Department of Education. The largest programs in the federal government, Title VI and Fulbright-Hays, are not currently administered at the executive level, but at the bottom of the bureaucratic chain within the Office of Postsecondary Education. An Office/Assistant Secretary would consolidate administration of all international education and foreign language programs under an executive-level person appointed by the President reporting to the Secretary. This would enable better coordination and strategic vision within the Department, as well as an integrated and articulated approach among multiple systems—including K–12, higher education, and business—to help address the nation’s critical shortcomings.

In early March, the Utah state legislature passed $750,000 per year for six years in new funding for world language programs. The bill passed the Utah House 67–0 and the Utah Senate 27–2.

This funding is in addition to the $330,000 of ongoing funding that was passed last year to expand the position of world languages specialist at the Utah State Office of Education from half-time to full-time, and to create the Critical Needs Pilot program for 20 secondary schools (18 Chinese, 2 Arabic). The new funding will expand the Critical Needs Pilot to 60 schools teaching either Chinese or Arabic. It will also create 15 new elementary one-way or two-way immersions programs in Chinese, French, Spanish, and Navajo.

The funding will be used in the form of incentives to schools to start these new programs; the incentive will be given over a six-year period. The Utah State Office of Education will partner with Brigham Young University and the University of Utah on program design, teacher recruitment, and curriculum.

Gov. Jon Huntsman, who speaks fluent Mandarin Chinese, and Sen. Howard Stephenson were instrumental in supporting the funding increase. Utah World Languages Specialist Gregg Roberts also testified before the Joint Public Education Appropriation Committee.

“Utah wants to create students who are biliterate and cultural competent,” Roberts told the committee. “No longer are students from Utah only competing with students from California and Colorado . . . we are now competing with students from China, India, and Europe.” He ended by asserting that “this just makes good business sense.”
Legislative Look

Indiana Passes Academic Standards for East Asian Languages; Holds International Education Summit

The Indiana Department of Education has paved the way for other states with their passage of academic standards for East Asian languages in 2007. Action taken by the Indiana State Board of Education last June made Indiana the first state to adopt grade-level standards specific to Chinese, Japanese, and Korean languages for all grades K–12.

“Because the time commitment required for a student to gain proficiency in an East Asian language is different, it did not seem appropriate to treat the redesign of our world language standards as a sort of ‘one-size-fits-all’ that would apply to all language groups,” says World Language Specialist Adriana Melnyk. “We feel that these standards will more accurately shape East Asian language program development across the state, and hope that other states will utilize our new standards as well.”

The revision of the state’s standards for world languages is part of a larger state effort designed to equip Indiana students with the 21st century skills needed for success in a global economy. Leaders recognized nationally and internationally for their advocacy and impact on expanding international educational opportunities are supporting Indiana’s work on a state strategic plan for international education that aligns with the state’s economic development goals.

To kick off these efforts, Superintendent of Public Instruction Dr. Suellen Reed assembled more than 250 education, business, government and community leaders from across the globe for the State’s first-ever International Education Summit on February 1, 2008. Co-hosted by Eli Lilly and Company and funded by a grant from the Longview Foundation, the Summit was designed to position Indiana as a leader in educating a globally aware and economically competitive workforce.

“Indiana’s economic future depends upon our ability to produce an educated workforce that understands and can effectively interact with diverse peoples from around the world,” says Reed. “Our schools are key partners in Indiana’s quest for excellence and engagement with the world.”

A broad coalition of stakeholders will work with the Indiana Department of Education international education and world language initiatives to provide programs and resources addressing identified goal areas, such as increasing educator knowledge through international exchange. Caterina Gregor Blitzer, Director of International Education, convened the Indiana Committee on International Exchange to promote participation in and access to exchange opportunities.

“International student and teacher exchange, outbound and inbound, benefits Indiana schools and their communities through cultural enrichment and global interaction,” said Blitzer. “Indiana ranks among the top 10 states in receiving students from abroad, more than 1,000 in 2007. The number of outbound students remains small, and Indiana ranked 40th in numbers sent.”

In collaboration with the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel, Indiana hosted the first annual National School Conference on International Youth Exchange in February 2008. Additional efforts include the Taiwan Principal Leadership Training Project, a program available through a Memorandum of Understanding with the Taiwan Ministry of Education. This project allows Indiana principals to establish partnerships with Taiwanese schools, and encourages two-way administrator exchange. Indiana principals hosted 30 Taiwanese principals in October 2007, and a delegation of Indiana principals travels to Taiwan in April 2008.

Those wishing to read about Indiana’s efforts in international education and world language instruction can access more information online. Preliminary findings from “State of International Education in Indiana,” a survey of K–12 schools conducted for the Indiana Department of Education by Indiana University, are available online at www.doe.in.gov/internationaleducation. Additionally, the importance of world language instruction to Indiana was underscored by the recent “What Do We and Our Students Need in Indiana?” report produced by the Department and the Indiana Humanities Council with support from the Ball Brothers Foundation, available online at www.indianahumanities.org/ForeignLanguageReport.pdf.

Report provided by Adriana Melnyk, Indiana World Language Specialist

Georgia Considers Language-Related Legislation

Georgia legislators proposed two bills during the 2008 Georgia General Assembly concerning foreign language education. The first bill, proposed in the House, called for recognizing two years of computer programming language as equivalent to two years of high school foreign language instruction. This bill died in committee and did not come up for a vote or discussion. The other bill, proposed by the Senate Majority Leader, Tommie Williams, proposed moving all high school teachers to elementary schools beginning in the 2010–2011 school year and offering high school language courses through Georgia’s Virtual School. The bill did not include any provisions for middle school foreign language instruction.

Due in part to a quick and overwhelming response from language teachers and other education professional organizations from around the state, Senator Williams pulled the bill from consideration for this session. He strongly believes that students must receive language education beginning in elementary school and wants to continue to explore ways to offer foreign languages across the state. No one who argued against the bill believes that elementary language instruction is not beneficial, but educators were quick to point out the need for long, uninterrupted sequences of language instruction. Once again, these bills show how important it is for language educators to stay informed during legislative sessions and to be ready to voice their opinions.
We will lose our competitive edge if we do not realize that English is no longer the only “lingua franca” in the world. There are now large sectors of the global economy where languages other than English are routinely used for communications between people of different nationalities.

It is easier to find a Brazilian who speaks fluent Spanish than one who speaks fluent English, because Brazil’s economy is so tightly integrated with its Spanish-speaking neighbors. In Thailand, there is a real debate about whether business students should study English as a second language—or Chinese. If present trends continue, Chinese will become the lingua franca of Asia in another 10 or 20 years. In this new environment, monolingual Americans will be at a distinct disadvantage.

There have been many lingua francas in various times and places: Greek, Latin, Aramaic, and French, just to name a few. In the post-World War II era, English emerged as a lingua franca because the United States was so disproportionately powerful, both politically and economically. But the relative positions of languages are subject to change, just like the relative positions of the nations that speak them.

We now seem to be moving back into a multi-polar world. This doesn’t necessarily mean a decline of the English-speaking world, but we do now have more competition. In general, language studies go where the money is. In several Latin American countries, Mandarin now vies with English as the most popular second language, because China has become the major trading partner.

There is more at stake than day-to-day communications. China, South Korea, Russia, and other countries are graduating engineers and technical graduates at unprecedented rates. Only a small percentage of the technical literature that is compiled in these countries is translated into English. To keep up on the latest developments from overseas, more of our own engineers and researchers will need to be able to read original technical materials in the languages of these countries.
Q: What you are saying directly challenges the idea that Americans do not need to learn other languages because international English has become the lingua franca of business. You have argued that for complex discussions and business or technical situations, English may not be an adequate communication tool for non-native speakers. What specific experiences have you had that have formed your opinions about business and language use?

A: In each country outside the English-speaking world, there is indeed a small core of highly educated, elite professionals who speak English well. These are the people who occupy positions in global consulting firms and the boardrooms of international companies.

I have made numerous trips to Japanese automotive plants in Mexico. Most of the Japanese managers at these companies speak Spanish—but not necessarily English. When I traveled to one of these facilities with a group of American colleagues, we began our meeting with the premise that discussions would be held in English. Only one of the non-American attendees—a Mexican who had lived in Houston until the age of 13—had a sufficient grasp of English. As a result, the meeting soon split into separate side discussions in Spanish, Japanese, and English. Since Spanish was the language used for everyday communications at the plant, Spanish would have made the most sense for our meeting.

In my experience, English is a very poor choice for communications between two groups of people when neither side speaks it as a native language. I have been copied on many e-mails in English between engineers from Thailand and Japan. Because both sides had only a minimal grasp of English, these communications were quite confusing for everyone involved. English is only slightly more useful for communications between non-native speakers in Europe. There is a common misperception that everyone in Continental Europe speaks English well. The reality is somewhat different. I once witnessed a complete communications breakdown when an Italian engineer tried to discuss a complex issue with his German boss in English during a meeting. Neither one spoke English at a level that was sufficient for the topic. This ended up being very embarrassing for both of them. It would have been better for the Italian engineer to learn German and speak that with his boss, since he worked for a German company.

The problem is simply the unrealistic expectation that English can serve as an all-embracing lingua franca, in all circumstances. I often refer to this as the “English-at-all-costs” mindset. Suppose that tomorrow we arbitrarily designated Greek as the new global lingua franca. Just imagine an American and a Mexican trying to hold a meaningful discussion in Greek. Wouldn’t it make more sense for them to use one of their native languages—either English or Spanish?

Q: You are fluent in Japanese and have written several books on studying Japanese vocabulary. What other languages do you speak and under what circumstances did you learn them? How have your language skills helped you in your professional life? What kind of advice do you have for students today—particularly those who may be interested in a career in business?

A: I have a good grasp of Spanish and a fair grasp of Mandarin Chinese. I began my Spanish studies about 25 years ago as a high school student and I have studied it more as my work has taken me to Mexico. I have studied Chinese mostly on my own, with various books, audio courses, and software programs. My language skills have always given my résumé an edge. Since my graduation from the University of Cincinnati in 1991, I have always encountered a high level of demand from employers. So I can connect the time I have spent mastering languages to jobs I have held and salaries I have earned.

Foreign language study is not some artsy pursuit that has no relevance to the “real world.” Foreign language skills will give you additional job security, and probably additional income. This is true no matter what your major is. In fact, I would say that language skills are most valuable to business and engineering majors, because so few of their colleagues have mastered foreign languages up to this point. An engineer or an accountant who speaks a foreign language has real scarcity value.
Q: You are the author of a book entitled *Why You Need a Foreign Language & How To Learn One*. Why did you feel this book needed to be written and what special perspective do you believe that you bring to the topic? In the book’s introduction, you write, “For the most part, native English-speakers do not learn the languages of others. Therefore, we are overly dependent on the language skills of others—and their willingness (or lack thereof) to use them to our benefit.” Can you give some specific examples where you saw this deficit exemplified in the business world? How can schools better engage students in studying languages?

A: I wrote the book primarily for business and technical professionals. These are the people who have the most to gain from foreign language skills, but too many of them are still trapped in the mindset that foreign languages are “for liberal arts majors.” Many years ago, I met a senior manager at a large company who told me “a foreign language isn’t a business skill.” I believe that his extreme attitude is becoming rarer everyday in the corporate world, but his remark was very characteristic of recent decades.

It is true that foreign language studies are distinct from subjects like finance and accounting. But this argument misses the point: A foreign language is a basic skill—more akin to literacy in your own language than to complex financial analysis. Even the most accomplished technical expert can be limited by the language barrier. I have seen many, many cases in which a monolingual American is unable to reach the real decision-makers in a foreign company because he or she cannot speak the other side's language.

Most companies outside the United States employ at least a few local college graduates who have learned English. When these companies do business with American firms, these bilingual individuals on their own staff are frequently assigned as “window people” to the American side. In theory, this would solve the language problem. In reality, however, these people often have their own agendas, and may even limit the information between the Americans and their own management. In other cases, the liaison person may not have an adequate grasp of the technical subject matter. Either way, the American engineer, purchasing agent, or salesperson has a frustrating time channeling all their communications through the English-speaking window person. This is where the ability to pick up the phone and talk to anyone on the other side becomes invaluable. But most American businesspeople (for the time being, at least) don’t bother.

I am much more optimistic about the generation that is currently in school. Most people who are in corporate management positions today came of age in the 1970s or 1980s, when “international business” was an exotic topic restricted to a few industries. Today the economic clout of countries like China is obvious and makes the news every day.

If school districts provide well-funded, adequately staffed language programs, students and parents will respond positively. They see what is happening in the news. I hope that the current emphasis on standardized tests doesn’t push language studies aside. Math and reading are extremely important, but so are foreign languages.

The Internet gives students regular exposure to written and multimedia content in various languages. If teachers can integrate such materials into classroom studies, this will emphasize the real world relevance of foreign language studies. In other words, French is a really great tool for reading one of Molière’s plays in the original text. But French is an even better tool for doing market research about business opportunities in France, or for reading the latest editorial about U.S.-French relations in *Le Monde*. 
ACTFL Invites Educators to Air Their Views on Topics in So You Say

AUGUST
Q: What advice or mentoring do you offer to new language educators?

OCTOBER
Q: What one thing could your district, school, or institution do to offer more support for you as a language educator?

So You Say is the section where you can speak up on the issues most important to you.

Each issue of The Language Educator will include this feature where our readers can offer their opinions on topics relevant to language education. Representative statements will be published in the magazine.

To offer your views on a topic, please go to www.actfl.org. You will be taken to a form where you may enter a message of no more than 150 words. When finished, click submit and your message will reach the Editor.

Thanks in advance for contributing to more representative content for The Language Educator!

One way to motivate students who are struggling is encouraging them to use the public library. They always encounter books on themes they like; it's a beginning so that they can become independent learners of new words they encounter while reading. The learning of new vocabulary throughout life is unquestionable; besides, the act of choosing what they can read is appreciated by those students who have stayed behind. I leave time in class for sharing any book or worthy experience they have had in the library. The public library has “saved” many of my reluctant learners. Since day one, the address of the closest public library is written on the board and rewards are given to those students who obtain a library ID and keep reading regularly. Stimulating reading outside the school has impacted the lives of many of my second-language learners. Most recently, suggesting the parents plan family nights at the public library has impacted my low achievers dramatically.

Luz Legra, Spanish
Davidsen Middle School, Tampa, FL

I talk with struggling students first, to make sure that their struggle is not one of just failing to do the work or preferring to give more attention to sports or other extracurriculars rather than French. If the student is truly struggling, I ask the class if anyone would agree to be the struggler's partner (usually there is more than one). They place their desks side by side. The more proficient student, by helping the poorer student, is really an assistant to me. It is, however, important to make sure that both students are compatible and that the child being helped is okay with the situation.

Bunny Rubenstein, French
Christian Brothers High School, Memphis, TN
Our department gives formative common assessments based on established essential learning outcomes. Students must pass the formative assessment with an 80% or higher to be considered proficient with that learning outcome. If a student does not pass, intervention occurs, pinpointing the area of weakness. Teachers work one-on-one or in small groups with the student before or after school with reassessment of the skill immediately following intervention. This year, centers have been established allowing teachers time to intervene as well as provide enrichment activities for students who are already proficient with the particular learning outcome.

Julie Kossack, Spanish
Mead Junior High School
Elk Grove Village, IL

I use acronyms and steps to teach everything! I offer study skills and organizational strategies to my students as they need them. I target all different learning styles (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, etc.) to ensure that all needs are targeted at some point. Eventually, students find that comfort zone. Lastly, I have found a vast amount of websites that have PowerPoint tutorials, verb drills, vocabulary games, and cultural tidbits that interest students outside of class. This encourages that extra participation that completes the cycle.

Alice Shradar, Spanish
Marvin Ridge High School, Waxhaw, NC

I talk to them about the importance of opening their minds to accept that there are people in other parts of the world who speak differently, express differently, and we must accept that first, to start to learn the language. If they don’t work on this, the learning process will be harder. The question my pupils ask me most frequently is: Why do they say this in this way? And I often answer them that they can say the same about us. It’s just about wanting to communicate.

María Fernanda Tognola
Spanish and English
Thelanguagemaker.com.ar
Santa Fe, Argentina

I try and use as much visual reinforcement as I can with speaking and auditory activities. I also provide online activities, such as Conjuguemos and Quia, so that they may practice vocabulary and grammatical structures in an interactive manner. I tend to follow a more direct instruction approach, in an effort to provide some degree of order and structure in the lessons, especially the presentations re: grammatical structures. Lastly, I engage the students in lots of pair activities. This allows students who may find it difficult to engage in whole-class activities an opportunity to practice their speaking, writing, and auditory skills.

Marcy Webb, Spanish
Watkinson School, Hartford, CT

The most effective strategies against the sense of being overwhelmed or frustrated while learning a different language are: (1) Find student interest to build the content examples. (2) Review the instructions for homework and provide “one-on-one” homework clarification with the students. This will help to build trust and sense of security. (3) Challenge enough to build student confidence but not too much to continue overwhelming the student. (4) Demonstrate winning personality traits: Be accountable, friendly, fair, and flexible. (5) Classroom and teachers’ expectations must be very clear from the beginning.

Sarita Smith, Spanish
Advocate Lutheran General Hospital
Park Ridge, IL

There are always students who struggle with [a second language]. I am also an online teacher so I e-mail back and forth with my online students a lot. I think e-mailing your students is a great way to have personal contact with them. You can make up assignments that are only due through e-mail or you can just reach out to students to ask them how things are going. Many of these types of students who are shy in class respond well to e-mails. Just be sure to keep a log of communication and to abide by school policies for teacher–student rapport.

Sara R. Woodward, Spanish
Insight School of Oregon, Portland, OR

Various! I believe that most world language teachers use a variety of strategies to reach all learners, not just those struggling. Traditional dictées and verb charts assist some learners, whereas others prefer pictures and songs. Whatever it takes to open the world for our students is what we need to provide.

Jo Anne Anita Bratkovich, French
Joliet West High School, Joliet, IL

I try to first help the struggling student find their motivation to work harder. I help them identify what language skills they can find a practical use for. Then I try to include authentic activities they can master. A little bit of confidence goes a long way. I speak more slowly and use cognates, mnemonic devices, and lots of praise to increase their enthusiasm for a class that is difficult for them.

Linda Egnatz, Spanish
Lincoln Way High School, Frankfort, IL

It took me many years, but I finally realized that focusing on my students’ potential and strengths does more to improve their proficiency in the language. Moreover, I have learned to share current second language acquisition and brain-based research with them. We discuss implicit versus explicit learning; we discuss that listening to and reading a lot of authentic “texts” is crucial to acquiring a language. We discuss and research information they are interested in from auditory and printed sources in the target language. Happily, they understand that they must listen to the language as much as they study our notes during our grammatical observations. Therefore, they visit my Blackboard site and view or listen to authentic sources we used in class many times over to improve their skills as “cultural observers” as well as “junior linguists.” I see myself as a “language coach” praising their progress one little step at a time.

Adam Stryker, Spanish
Fairfax County Public Schools
McLean, VA
Embassies represent a piece of the home country transplanted onto the soil of the host country. In this sense, the Embassy of Spain in the United States is a direct link back to Spain, rich in pedagogical and cultural resources. Spanish teachers of all levels know—or should know—that the Spanish Embassy is an essential tool for keeping their instruction dynamic, relevant, and up-to-date. The Embassy is located in Washington, DC, with consulates in Boston, Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, New Orleans, New York, San Francisco, and Puerto Rico.

“The Spanish Embassy provides amazing resources and support to teachers of Spanish in the United States. They definitely make my job easier,” says Emily Spinelli, Executive Director of the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP) and Professor Emerita of Spanish at the University of Michigan-Dearborn.

Education and Science Commissioner Miguel Martínez, three attachés, 24 education advisors, and 14 administrators staff the Education Office of the Embassy of Spain in the United States. Miguel Martínez is a full professor of English studies at the University of Valencia and a former Education Attaché at the Consulate General of Spain in Miami.

“The U.S. and Spain have a long and fruitful history of bilateral relations, which are particularly strong in international education (among other fields). Literally thousands of educators from both countries serve in over 20 programs of cooperation through MOUs [memoranda of understanding] signed by the Ministry of Education and Science of Spain and U.S. universities, school districts, etc.,” he says.

“In addition, the U.S.-Spain Fulbright program for graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and visiting professors has become the largest in the world. To witness how year after year, all these programs thrive and make a difference for so many children (over 250,000), educators (over 4,000), and researchers (over 1,000) is extremely rewarding for all of us at the Education Office. To be part of it is a privilege for us who believe that the education of the 21st century must be international, multicultural, and plurilingual.”

Carmen Velasco is an education advisor on her sixth and final year with the program. She was a high school Spanish teacher in Barcelona before joining the Embassy staff; her past experience also includes teaching Spanish in California. The education advisors are all educators who typically spend five years in their position.

“I love this job,” she says. “It’s given me the opportunity to deepen my knowledge of my own language and culture.”

Pedagogical resources are provided through the Spanish Ministry of Education. Programs range from courses for American teachers, student and teacher exchange programs, scholarships to study in Spain, and travel opportunities.

The Ministry of Education provides speakers at AATSP conferences as well as other events in the Spanish teaching community. “The conference sessions are always top notch,” says Spinelli. “They are conducted in Spanish and focus on fascinating topics, such as current events, popular culture, and government.”
Supporting Education

Each year the Ministry of Education creates an education plan of language and cultural courses aimed at teachers of Spanish in the United States. The courses incorporate the latest pedagogical trends and technology advances. The most recent education plan has 98 classes that are offered at Spanish centers/offices across the country.

An example is the three-day immersion institute on Spanish language and culture offered this summer by the National Capital Language Resource Center (NCLRC) and the Embassy of Spain. In addition to an Embassy reception, programs include hands-on interactive presentations, discussions, and cultural experiences. Evenings focus on sharing teaching strategies and learning how to play guitar and sing songs in Spanish. Participants can even borrow a guitar to take home and play in their classes.

The Spanish Embassy places native speakers in American schools through two programs: Spanish Language and Culture Assistants and Visiting Teachers. The Ministry of Education and Science of Spain and the Education and Science Office of the Embassy of Spain in Washington, DC, sponsor the Spanish Language and Culture Assistants program. The benefits go two ways—students have the opportunity to learn from native speakers and the Spanish assistants learn about the English language and American culture, resulting in increased cultural understanding between both countries.

The Visiting Teachers Program is a collaboration supported by the Ministry of Education through the Embassy of Spain and several departments of education and school districts across the United States and Canada. This program offers U.S. and Canadian school districts the opportunity to recruit foreign language and bilingual teachers from Spain to teach at elementary, middle, and high school levels. At the same time it provides students, parents, and educators with the opportunity to work with professionals who are native speakers of the target language, bringing a valuable international perspective to American or Canadian classrooms.

These programs have many benefits. Mary Fasarci, a Spanish teacher with the Portland (ME) public school system, spent a year as an Auxiliar de Conversación at a high school in Madrid. The Auxiliar de Conversación program is a joint effort between the Spanish Embassy and Ministry of Education in Madrid and the different regional governments.

Fasarci’s year in Madrid came just after she finished a master’s degree at Bowling Green State University, during which she’d also spent a year studying in Spain.

“Of my various experiences working or studying abroad, this was the time that I felt most immersed, since I was able to actually be in a Spanish high school and see how the Spanish school system works,” she says. “The year in Madrid built my language skills and cultural experiences tremendously and provided me with a wealth of stories and photos that I often use to engage my students here and to make the language and culture come alive for them.”

Providing Scholarships

In addition to bringing education to Spanish teachers in the United States, the Spanish Embassy also sends teachers to Spain to further their education. The Embassy funds many scholarships each year, which are administered through professional associations such as AATSP.

Each year AATSP awards two Embassy-funded scholarships to its members. Recipients spend three weeks in the summer studying at a Spanish university of their choosing (from among the Embassy program universities). The scholarship covers tuition, lodging, weekday meals, medical insurance, and some excursions.

Roselinda Vélez Prikazsky, a high school Spanish teacher at Tenafly High School in New Jersey, won one of the AATSP/Spanish Embassy scholarships last year. She spent three weeks in Granada, which she describes as a wonderful experience.

“I thank the Embassy of Spain for providing me with this opportunity that I will always cherish,” she says. “The courses I took have served me in a variety of ways as I have implemented many ideas in my high school Spanish classes. The professors were refreshing and I established lasting friendships with colleagues.”

Among the tools that she brought home are video clips to teach her students gestures and new phrases and songs to teach pronunciation, intonation, and syntax.

Vélez Prikazsky enjoyed visits to historical sights around Granada in conjunction with her literature and popular culture class. These field trips included the Gothic Cathedral of Santa María de la Encarnación, containing the Capilla Real (Royal Chapel) with the tomb of Ferdinand and Isabella, La Casa Real in Alhambra, and the gypsy district of Sacromonte. In fact, Vélez Prikazsky enjoyed her time in Granada so much that she has already sent in her application to return on the master’s program this summer through the Spanish Embassy.

(continued on p. 52)
Speakers of Portuguese need not feel left out when it comes to support for their language programs. The Camões Institute—or Instituto Camões—which is headquartered in Lisbon and promotes Portuguese language and culture worldwide, recently opened a site in Newark, New Jersey, in conjunction with the Portuguese and Lusophone World Studies program at Rutgers University. Named for Portuguese author Luís de Camões, the Camões Institute is affiliated with the Portuguese Foreign Office and sponsors language centers and schools in 23 countries.

Associate professor Kimberly DaCosta Holton directs the Rutgers Portuguese and Lusophone World Studies program. Monica Pereira, a visiting assistant professor from Portugal, serves as the Instituto Camões Leitora, meaning she directs the Portuguese Language Center/Instituto Camões and serves as an official representative of the Portuguese government, as well as teaching classes at Rutgers.

The library has over 2,000 volumes of printed material from Portugal in addition to a vast film and audio archive. In addition, there is audiovisual equipment for viewing and listening to the archive materials. The library has three “Portuguese-native” computers, meaning they are programmed in Portuguese to facilitate writing and researching in the language.

“The Camões Institute is an amazing resource for the academic community,” says Holton. “This is the first center of its kind on United States soil and it is definitely being taken advantage of—not just by teachers and students of Portuguese but also by the large Portuguese community here in New Jersey.”

The Portuguese and Lusophone World Studies program at Rutgers is also quite new. Rutgers began offering a Portuguese minor at the Newark campus in 2000, and a Portuguese major at the start of the 2003 academic school year. The Camões Institute was opened in 2004.

Holton points out that Portuguese is the sixth most spoken language in the world today and many U.S. residents (particularly along both coasts) possess Portuguese heritage. Newark has a large population of Portuguese immigrants; the 2000 census found that the Portuguese represented the largest foreign-born population in the area.

The Camões Institute hosts three events each semester, usually two lectures and one music performance or film screening. Last year’s visitors included Portuguese writer Francisco José Viegas; University of Lisbon professor Manuel Frias Martins, speaking on the poetry of António Gedeão; and Aberta University professor Mário Avelar, speaking on Jorge de Sena’s poetry.

As the Camões Institute grows, Holton hopes it can serve more teachers of Portuguese across the country. Holton and Pereira hosted the Institute’s first conference in March with a focus on using technology in second language classrooms. They plan to make the conference an annual event.

Another excellent source for teachers of Portuguese is the Luso-American Development Foundation (FLAD), a private, financially autonomous institution created by the Portuguese government in 1985. Based in Lisbon, FLAD’s main goal is to provide financial and strategic support for innovative projects that foster cooperation between Portuguese and American civil society.

Carmen Tesser, professor of Romance Languages (Emerita) at the University of Georgia and Founding Director of the Middlebury Portuguese Language School, says she has benefited both directly and indirectly from FLAD. During her tenure at Middlebury, she received a grant to fund Lusophone programs. At the same time, FLAD made a generous grant to Cobb County, Georgia, which enabled 10 Georgia teachers to attend a seven-week summer program in Portuguese.

“What I found particularly impressive about FLAD was the personal attention that FLAD administrators gave to grantees,” she says.
In 2006, FLAD donated $250,000 to Rhode Island College to start a Portuguese Studies Endowment Fund and create an Institute for Portuguese and Lusophone World Studies.

That same year, Isabel Ferreira-Gould, a faculty fellow of the Kellogg Institute for International Studies at the University of Notre Dame, received a three-year grant from FLAD to support activities of the University’s Program in Portuguese and Brazilian Studies and the Kellogg Institute. The funding is being used to enrich undergraduate experience in Portuguese language classes, support student research, increase awareness in the broader community of Portuguese studies, and nurture scholarly research on Portugal and the Lusophone world. Included in the activities of the project are library acquisitions; speakers from Portugal, the United States, and Lusophone countries; an artist-in-residence; faculty and graduate research grants; and prizes for undergraduate excellence in advanced courses.

Thanks to FLAD, this summer Concordia Language Villages will officially open Mar e Floresta, the Portuguese Language Village, making Portuguese the 15th language offered through the Language Villages’ immersion programs. FLAD awarded Concordia Language Villages a generous $300,000 grant toward the start-up costs.

A formal announcement of Mar e Floresta took place on Capitol Hill last October. Rui Machete, executive council chairman of FLAD, joined the festivities, flying in from Lisbon. Other attendees included U.S. Senators Norm Coleman and Amy Klobuchar, House of Representatives Portuguese-American Caucus Co-Chair Patrick Kennedy, Ambassador of Portugal João de Vallera, and Concordia College President Pamela Jolicoeur.

“We are grateful to Dr. Machete for his vision and leadership in supporting more opportunities for young Americans to learn Portuguese and be immersed in the cultures of the Lusophone world,” says Christine Schulze, executive director of Concordia Language Villages. “We anticipate that we will draw youth from across the United States to Mar e Floresta in its inaugural summer session.”

Another resource for teachers of Portuguese is the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and Museum, a private institution of art in Lisbon. The Serviço Internacional (International Department) of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation provides support, typically through scholarships and grants, for foreign individuals and institutions that are interested in studying, disseminating, or preserving Portuguese culture.
Teachers of Spanish also have another pipeline back to Spain through the Instituto Cervantes, a worldwide non-profit organization created by the Spanish government in 1991. It is the largest organization in the world dedicated to teaching Spanish, with 54 centers in 20 countries worldwide. The mission of the Instituto Cervantes is to promote the teaching, study, and use of Spanish as a second language and to contribute to the advancement of the Spanish and Hispanic American cultures throughout non-Spanish speaking countries.

In the United States, there are established Instituto Cervantes offices in Albuquerque, Chicago, and New York City. The newest American location is in Seattle, through the University of Washington, and was dedicated in March 2007.

Each Instituto Cervantes site has a library rich in Spanish language resources, and offers cultural events and Spanish classes. Sabrina Abreu, a library assistant at the New York Instituto Cervantes, says that her library is especially popular with middle and elementary school Spanish teachers.

For $50 a year, teachers can become members of the New York Instituto Cervantes and check out up to 12 items at a time. The library's collection includes educational workbooks, course books, and teacher's editions; leveled readers; videos; and CD-ROMs and other multimedia.

The New York Instituto Cervantes works in collaboration with other institutions in organizing cultural activities such as lectures, book presentations, concerts, art exhibitions, the Spain Film Festival, and the Festival of Flamenco.

Recent events at the Chicago Instituto Cervantes included a performance by flamenco guitarist Javier Conde and a roundtable discussion on Federico García Lorca, led by Christopher Maurer, the Department of Modern Languages chairman at Boston University.

Earlier this year, the Instituto Cervantes in Albuquerque hosted “Palabra de Rock: Discussion and Concert.” The evening consisted of a discussion lead by Spanish journalist Silvia Grijalva followed with a rock concert by musician Javier Colis performing his own songs and musical adaptations of poets such as Cernuda and Antonio Gamoneda.

In May, the Instituto Cervantes in Albuquerque will screen several Spanish films: Platillos volantes, La casa de mi abuela, and El tren de la memoria. All of the screenings are free.

For those not living near an Instituto Cervantes office, the Central Virtual Cervantes (ave.cervantes.es) is just a few mouse clicks away. The Aula Virtual de Español (AVE) provides Spanish classes that mirror those offered at bricks-and-mortar Instituto Cervantes locations. The lessons take advantage of the Internet medium, with an episode of an ongoing interactive graphic story at the end of each lesson. This helps students develop their communication skills in play form.

(continued from p. 49)

Lauri Hutt Kahn, an associate professor of Spanish at Suffolk County Community College in New York, was the other AATSP/Spanish Embassy scholarship recipient last year. She describes the academic climate of the program as ideal for beginning teachers and instructors enrolled in master’s degree programs.

Janine Erickson, current ACTFL President-Elect and a Spanish teacher at Horizon High School in Thornton, CO, got three scholarships from the Embassy of Spain as part of her AATSP Teacher of the Year award in 2000. She received one scholarship for herself and the other two went to students that she selected. Erickson chose to go to Barcelona, where she says she had the time of her life. Her two students went to Seville.

“It was phenomenal. I was in a class with students from about eight different European countries and our common language was Spanish,” she recalls. “Even after having lived in Spain for seven years myself, I learned so much more when focusing on language learning at the most advanced level available.”

Patti Koning is a freelance writer based in Livermore, California. She covers education for the Livermore Independent and has written for numerous local publications on the wine industry, small business, and lifestyle topics.
Two summers ago I finally lived a dream that I’ve had for over 25 years, to study abroad in Spain. As a high school student, undergraduate, and graduate student, I longed to study abroad, but there always seemed to be obstacles, such as a lack of financial resources and family obligations, that prevented me from realizing my study abroad dream. After I began to work as a teaching professional, somehow the years began to pass by at a seemingly ever-increasing pace.

After 15 years as a high school and community college teacher, I decided to go back to school full-time for a PhD. In my program of studies, Second Language Acquisition and Instructional Technology, all of the courses are taught in English. Although I have enjoyed being a student again very much, after two years away from teaching Spanish, I began to worry that my Spanish language skills were beginning to deteriorate somewhat. As a nonnative speaker of Spanish, it took me years to develop native-like fluency, and I didn’t want to lose what I had fought so hard to gain. Once again the idea occurred to me to study abroad. I wondered if this could finally be the right time to do it? Who studies abroad at my age? Where would a seasoned teacher go to take a meaningful and relevant course in Spanish at an advanced level?

I found exactly what I was looking for in the summer courses for teachers that are organized by the Embassy of Spain and Spain’s Ministry of Education and Science. During the summer I took part in their program (2006), over 20 courses were offered throughout Spain at 13 different universities. I applied to take a course in southern Spain at the University of Cádiz.

The course that I took comprised 60 contact hours spread over three weeks, and it was divided into three learning modules: (1) new methodologies, (2) didactic resources, and (3) an elective (either Spanish history or literature). The cost was $1,500, which included the course fee, materials, room and board, two excursions, and Sevillana dance lessons. After paying such a low fee, I wasn’t sure exactly what to expect when I arrived in Spain. To my amazement, all of the students from the course were housed in a student residence located in the heart of Cádiz, across the plaza from the famous golden-domed cathedral, and my room even had an ocean view!

There were 19 participants in my course of every age and background, ranging from first-year teachers to those with over 20 years of experience. There were elementary, middle, and high school teachers in our group as well as college professors. Although there was an equal mix of native and nonnative speakers of Spanish, every teacher in our group was committed to speaking in Spanish all day, every day. After my fourth day in the course I once again began to dream in Spanish, and after two weeks, English seemed like a distant memory.

Classes ran from Mondays through Thursdays, which gave us two long weekends to travel around Spain during the course. We formed smaller groups to travel to locations such as Gibraltar, Córdoba, Granada, Morocco, and Sevillia. Of course, there was much to see and do in beautiful Cádiz as well, which is located on Spain’s Costa de la Luz.

In addition to the excellent location and great travel opportunities, the classes were meticulously planned and the professors were extremely knowledgeable and passionate about teaching Spanish as a foreign language. After being in the field of foreign language education for 17 years and attending numerous workshops and conferences, I thought that I had pretty much seen it all when it came to teaching methods, games, and activities designed to motivate students to learn Spanish. However, I was happily surprised to learn even more imaginative ways to inspire students in the classroom.

The professors primarily advocated the communicative language teaching method, authentic communication, and inductive grammar instruction. These topics have been around in the field of foreign language education for quite some time, but the manner in which the material was presented was very fresh, energetic, and creative. I came back home with a suitcase full of the latest language textbooks currently used in Spain and throughout Europe, CDs of popular music with activities to accompany each song, a large package of pedagogical materials designed to motivate students to learn Spanish (including games, inductive grammar lessons, role-play activities, and task-based activities), and a detailed list of texts and resources for teaching every level of Spanish. The course was definitely more practical than theoretical, and the best part was learning it all in Spanish.

Now that I have experienced studying abroad as a teacher, I highly advocate this type of continuing education and professional development for all foreign language educators. It is an excellent way to keep up language skills, stay on top of the latest trends in the profession, and re-energize a teacher’s own enthusiasm for the subject matter. That summer I learned that studying abroad is not an experience that is exclusively reserved for high school students or undergraduates, but rather that students and teachers of any age have a lot to gain from this extraordinary life experience.

Victoria Russell is a long-time language educator and currently a PhD student at the University of South Florida.
Although the students were supposed to be reading silently, there were a few excited whispers: “Where did you get that book?” and “I want to read that, too.” Esteban was smiling to himself while concentrating on his book, and Vato was clearly enjoying his, too. Reina and Laura were struggling with vocabulary but were caught up in their stories. The teacher just smiled; it was working!

Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) is a program designed to develop students’ reading skills and enjoyment in which a block of time is set aside each day for quiet reading. Could it be used to develop literacy skills in a foreign language classroom? Elba Rivas de White, a Spanish teacher at a Northern California high school, decided to find out and launched an investigation into SSR with her third-year Spanish students.

Getting Started
White began with high ideals and her own experience. As a native Spanish speaker, she had struggled to learn English in grade school. Pushed by her seventh grade teacher to abandon her little brother’s books in favor of books that were both more challenging and age appropriate, she soon discovered that reading such books in English was not only possible, it was fun. The unanticipated result of all her reading was that her test scores in vocabulary and comprehension improved by three grade levels in just one year. Reading books had allowed her to make major strides in her language acquisition and literacy skills. White decided that the same approach could work for her students. The plan was just to give the students time to read and enjoy books and to see what benefits might result from their reading.

But what books? While studying in Spain, White had purchased a suitcase full of novels, comic books, and magazines aimed at the teen Spanish reader. But she was convinced that these materials were much too difficult for her students to read independently. She needed books that were high interest but also comprehensible. Again she looked to her own experience, this time with her son, who for many years seemed determined to grow up illiterate. But then he discovered Goosebumps. Overnight he became a reader, reading that whole series and any other books about horror or ghosts that he could find. So White looked for Goosebumps in Spanish. Escalofríos had new vocabulary and grammar structures, but because many of the students had previously read the books in English, the stories were familiar. The books were challenging, but not impossible, and their short length made them less intimidating. Moreover, even though they were translated into Spanish, the scenes, action, characters, and culture were taken from daily life in the United States, allowing the students to focus on the language.

Using a small Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) Program grant, White bought five copies each of six different titles.

Initially, the SSR program was voluntary and a letter was sent home to parents and guardians inviting their students to participate. As explained in the letter, each student would choose a novel in Spanish to read for the first 10 minutes of each class period and then write a brief response to the reading in his/her writing journal. This would replace the daily warm-up activity, but the parents were assured that their children would increase their exposure to grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure while enjoying a short novel.

The students who responded were small in number and not the most advanced. In fact, the GATE students in the class were leery of the project, and only one A-student chose to participate. The majority of participants had a B in Spanish, and one had a D. Asked why they had chosen to participate, they wrote in their journals, “My mother said I had to participate,” “I don’t like the warm-ups,” and “I thought this would be more fun than class stuff.” Their responses were not an assurance of great things to come.

But they seemed proud of their independence and thrilled to be out of the daily routine. They read for the first 10 minutes of class every day while the rest of the students were doing warm-ups or reviewing homework. Each day they were to write a brief summary and comments on what they read. Before beginning the project, however, they had to fill out a survey designed to remind them of all that they already knew about reading skills and strategies in English and to give them confidence beginning something new.

“Over time,” says White, “other students went to the cabinet to get books to read, too. I was thrilled when that happened and I barely contained the urge to jump up and down. But I had con-
cems. There were only six titles available in the Escalofrios series, and some students did not enjoy the limited variety. Also, I was uncomfortable doing active teaching while the students were reading. Vocabulary practice and homework review were important for all the students, as well as distracting to the readers. I was not surprised when two students informed me that they were opting out of the investigation. Their lack of success made me question the program. Was it worth it? What good could reading 10 minutes a day really do?

By the time May was slipping into June, White felt that the project had not been a success. But a few of the students’ journals told a different story. By reading 10 minutes a day, some students attained the immense satisfaction of reading “a whole book” in Spanish.

“The book has paragraphs that are hard and many times boring,” wrote one student in February. But upon completing the novel she wrote, “Now I understand los, las and le’s.” She had read, mostly enjoyed the reading, and gained a greater understanding of direct and indirect object pronouns. Nevertheless, White knew that to really tell if such a reading program could enhance language learning, all of the students needed to be reading and all of them needed to experience some success.

Meeting All Students’ Needs

The next year, she was able to double her grant funding. Determined to have plenty of reading material at every level, she purchased a variety of books from Clifford, El Perro Grande to El Hobbit and Lord of the Rings. She even brought in her own children’s “ABCs in Spanish” books as well as Cuentos de Grimm. The greater variety of books allowed greater choice for the students, and they were allowed to pick any book at any level that they liked and could read. Hoping to ensure each student’s success, White told them that if they struggled with the book or needed a dictionary, they were to pick another book.

A kickoff activity was planned to create excitement for the reading program. When the students entered the classroom on the first reading day, they found a book or two on every desk, each with a sticky note inside. They were instructed to peruse the books briefly and then write a recommendation in each. The students had less than a minute for each book. When the timer rang, each student would move to the next desk until everyone had snaked through the classroom. This way each student picked up every book and reviewed it. The activity took about 30 minutes and was well worth the time.

This time, instead of limiting the reading to the first 10 minutes of class each day, every Friday was designated a reading day. The students were to read silently the whole period and answer the required questions completely. The questions asked them to identify the book and why they had picked it, to summarize what they had read and describe the part they liked best, and to predict what would happen to the main character when they returned to the book the following Friday.

“In the beginning,” says White, “many students lacked confidence, and even my excellent students chose various primer level books. One student explained that she didn’t enjoy reading without knowing all the words, and she could figure out the new vocabulary in her low level book. She was happy. Her compositions were good and getting better with each week, so I left her with her choices. Conversely, other weaker students were choosing books that were way too difficult for them. One went from ABC de las Aves to Harry Potter y la Piedra Filosofal. When I suggested that she should pick an easier book, she assured me that she had read the book in English and that she understood what she was reading. Frankly, I didn’t believe her, although she did appear to be enjoying the book.”

But with each Friday came the moaning and groaning and complaints: “Reading again?” Despite some behavior problems, the reading program continued doggedly onward. Eventually, with some trepidation, White asked the students to evaluate the program. Not surprisingly, some stated flatly that they did not enjoy reading—in English or Spanish. To her delight, however, student after student stated that their books were now easier to read. Their compositions also showed a marked improvement, a change White had initially attributed to undetected collaboration instead of individual improvement. But the improvement was authentic. The students were incorporating more vocabulary and advanced grammar structures into their writing. Additionally, a whopping 90% answered that the texts and the exams were now easier for them. The greatest success story turned out to be the student White had tried to steer away from Harry Potter, whose D grade rose to almost a B over the course of the semester.

Beyond Just Reading

These results spurred White to continue the project for another year, even though there was no more GATE funding available and no way to buy more books. That was a dilemma because the students needed more books, more variety, and a more mature interest level. Fortunately, White remembered all the magazines on computers, fashion, sports, gossip, health and fitness, as well as comic books and poetry that she had bought in Spain. Stored away as too difficult, they now added much needed variety to the classroom library. White also checked out books in Spanish from the local library.

To reduce the weekly power struggle and to increase the time spent enjoying the reading, White attached a grade to the students’ reading and developed a procedure for recording points. Each week, she would sit in front of the class facing the students. At intervals, she would look up from her own reading and deduct points for anyone not reading. This process was particularly helpful in establishing
the reading time as an important component of the class rather than
as unstructured time.

As before, most students that year began by reading the easier
books, but then turned to higher interest magazines or books. Some of the girls even requested more recent issues of the fashion and gossip magazines. Still, White was surprised to find one of
her weaker students attempting to read El Joker. Felipe spent a lot of
time with a dictionary reading and rereading passages from the
book. He wrote down vocabulary and looked up definitions.

“I tried to dissuade him from reading the book,” says White, “because, contrary to my often-repeated encouragement to just read
and enjoy, he was having to work at it. Despite my concerns, he
continued his laborious reading. This was particularly surprising be-
cause Felipe was a very social boy who had not shown any interest
in learning all year. But when he found this book, he changed from
class clown to scholar. There are many avenues to success and for
Felipe it was finding something he really wanted to read. He read
his book on his own with the help of good study skills. This was a
revelation. I didn’t let my students use dictionaries and note taking
until Felipe demonstrated the benefits so clearly.”

There were other revelations as well. For example, White had
always maintained a quiet environment in class to promote good
reading habits. After some observation and research, however,
she became aware that group conversations about reading, check-
ning for meaning with other students and sharing opinions about
reading materials were very valuable support strategies. The use
of student presentations of novels and literature circles, in which
students reading the same novel each have a specific role to play in
promoting a lively and insightful discussion, also seemed promising
additions. These strategies provide opportunities to incorporate oral
language production and reception in support of reading and writ-
ing, and they address all three of the Communication standards of
the Standards for Foreign Language Learning.

Other standards, too, can be addressed through this type of SSR
program. Reading an already familiar book in the target language
provides opportunities for language comparisons, while popular
magazines and comic books from a target language country provide
insights into cultural practices, products and perspectives, as well
as rich cultural comparisons. But the most powerful connection
may be with the Communities standard. Like the euphoria many
language learners experience the first time they use their new
language outside the classroom to communicate to a real person for
a real-world purpose, there is a headiness that occurs the first time
learners realize that they have been reading, even for the briefest
times, without translating. That they have been seeing pictures
in their minds instead of words on the page. Such experiences are
strong motivators for students to continue to learn and use the
target language.

Although White implemented the SSR program with her third-
year students, ideally the development of skills for independent
reading would start as early as the first year of language study with
teacher-led oral readings of children’s books in the target language,
with pictures to aid understanding, humor to engage older students,
and lots of repetition of expressions to build in practice. Silent,
independent reading can begin with snippets and gradually increase
to longer periods of sustained reading. As students are able to read
with more independence, the teacher should:

• Provide a variety of reading materials and allow students to
  choose according to their own interests, abilities, and confi-
dence levels. The Internet is a good source of new and used
  books and other materials for children and adolescents both
  written in and translated into foreign languages.

• Set students up for success by reminding them of strategies
good readers use with difficult text in their native language,
such as rereading, predicting, inferring, and using context
cues.

• Explain that, unlike other work they do in the language
class, reading does not require students to understand every
word if they are able to understand the story. Active practice
in pulling out meaning from passages they do not under-
stand word for word may help in the early stages.

• Hold the students accountable for the reading. Monitoring
  of their reading through observation and/or brief entries
  into reading logs or journals can help students stay on track
  (Don’t spoil the reading, though, by having too much writ-
ing attached to it.)

• Provide opportunities for students to discuss their reading
  with others in their first or target language, depending on
  their level. Encourage students to recommend books they
  enjoy to others.

• Model the reading behavior expected from the students, in-
  cluding the reflective writing and the discussion with others.

White’s SSR program began with the belief that just reading in the
target language could help students learn Spanish, and the results she
observed confirmed her belief, often in surprising ways. Over time,
the program has grown to include more students, more reading time,
more structure, and more related activities. Today, the SSR program
continues in her Spanish classroom and has been emulated by col-
leagues at her own and other schools around the state.

“One small step at a time is the way that each journey begins,”
says White, “and for my students and me, the journey continues.”

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From the World to the Classroom

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Contact us at scola@scola.org or visit us at http://www.scola.org
Interactive Italian Language Course
academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/modlang/carasi/site/pageone.html
This site includes 20 lessons that have interactive exercises and grammar lessons.

Useful Arabic
www.cafe-syria.com/Useful_Arabic.htm
The Café-Syria site includes a list of links to Arabic words, phrases, places, and other important things to know about the Arabic language.

Online French Course
www.lsfrench.com/frenchonline.htm
The “London Speaks French” site includes online lessons in general French and business French as well as a French tutor online.

Lessons About Alternative Fuels in Spanish
www.gm.com/explore/education/teachers/spanish/index.jsp
For teachers who might want to incorporate information about energy and the environment into their Spanish lessons, General Motors has free lessons in Spanish about topics such as E85 ethanol and fuel cells.

Portuguese Language Site
www.easyportuguese.com
This site (with audio) includes beginner and intermediate Portuguese lessons, Portuguese vocabulary, useful phrases in Portuguese, and a Brazilian Portuguese dictionary and quiz.

Latin Crosswords
games.bestlatin.net/cwblog
This site has puzzles for Latin students and anyone else who might be interested in the ancient Greco-Roman world.
Japanese Podcast Lessons
www.japancast.net

Using examples from anime and everyday conversations, this site has free Japanese lessons in podcast format and includes recommended study materials.

Say Hello to the World
www.ipl.org/div/kidspace/hello

The Internet Public Library’s “Say Hello Project” provides greetings in languages that range from A (Arabic) to W (Welsh), as well as non-verbal languages (Braille and American Sign Language). It also gives the pronunciation, and for languages such as Japanese and Chinese, it gives the script as well.

Interactive Language and Filipino Culture Resource
www.seasite.niu.edu/tagalog/Tagalog_mainpage.htm

Part of the SEASite Project at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb and the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, this site includes pages for language teachers with sample lesson plans, modules in Tagalog, culture essays, and a module about the Philippines for teachers and K–12 students. There is also a Tagalog discussion forum and a Tagalog chatroom.

Russian Tongue Twisters
www.uebersetzung.at/twister/ru.htm

This site has a collection of Russian tongue twisters, along with their English translations, some of which are pretty amusing.

Resource for Spanish Teachers and Students
zonorus.marlboro.edu/~jmconn/capstoneproject/capstone1.html

Jennifer McConnell says that her site, “Mrs. McConnell’s Super Spanish Web Site,” is intended to provide a resource that will help teachers and students take advantage of the technology that is available today, which can give them instant access to cultural information and help them to connect to the Spanish-speaking world.

Introduction to Swedish
www2.hhs.se/isa/swedish/chap1.htm

This site by Urban Sikeborg is from the Stockholm School of Economics and includes exercises and an introduction to the basic elements of Swedish grammar, as well as some insights into the Swedish people.

Virtual Museum about the Doig River First Nation
www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Danewajich/english/project/index.php

Created by Doig River First Nation elders, youth, and leaders, along with ethnographers, linguists, and web designers, the project includes history, stories, and songs.

These and other Web resources can be accessed through the Publications area on the ACTFL website at www.actfl.org/webwatch. Why not visit today?
Using Grants to Support Language Programs: A Look at CSCTFL

By Anne Nerenz and Stephanie Dhonau

The Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (CSCTFL) was created in 1967 to promote the teaching and learning of foreign languages at all levels of instruction in 17 midwestern states, including Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, and Wisconsin. During the last 40 years, CSCTFL has supported language teachers and state organizations in a number of ways, including the Extension Workshop Program, the Leadership Development Program, and the Scholarship Program, by allocating money in their annual budget. In the last 15 years, CSCTFL has also offered more than $60,000 in grants to individual state leaders and to state language associations to support four kinds of activities: (1) advocacy efforts; (2) recruitment and retention of teachers; (3) professional development opportunities; and (4) special initiatives designed to strengthen local or state world language organizations.

Advocating for World Languages

In an era of decreasing budgets, high stakes testing, and increased competition for resources, developing a culture of advocacy has never been more important. Advocating for language teaching and learning is recognized in the ACTFL/NCAE Program Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers as one of the critical skills new teachers must demonstrate. These standards require teacher candidates to learn to access data which support world language learning, to communicate this information to a variety of constituencies, and to demonstrate that they can serve effectively as “advocates with students, colleagues, and members of the community to promote this field.”

In recent years, there has been increasing support for, and interest in, language learning thanks to the work of national organizations like ACTFL and the Joint National Committee for Languages (JNCL) as well as within the federal government, in particular within the Departments of Defense, State, Education, and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. However, the need to educate both the general population and state policymakers about the value of world languages remains. It is not enough to recognize the need for advocacy and to possess the knowledge and tools needed to advocate effectively. Advocacy often requires the work of a coordinated team that has both the knowledge and the funds to design and carry out a focused campaign.

CSCTFL considers world language advocacy to be a critical goal and responsibility and has awarded several grants to support advocacy efforts. To reach the general public, the Minnesota Council on the Teaching of Languages and Cultures (MCTLC) used grant monies to secure booth space to publicize the importance of world languages at the Minnesota State Fair, at Education Minnesota, and at the annual conference of the Minnesota Association of School Administrators. In addition, members of MCTLC used grant money to fund a publicity campaign called Minnesota New Visions: Languages for Life. To advocate for languages with state policymakers, the MCTLC also used CSCTFL grant money to lobby members of the Minnesota state legislature in support of bipartisan bills recognizing the personal and economic value of language learning.

Similarly, the Colorado Congress of Foreign Language Teachers used CSCTFL grant money to create a world language coalition that included representatives from the Colorado World Language Advisory Committee, the Center for Teaching International Relations, the Colorado Council for the Social Studies, the Colorado Department of Education-Sister Cities, and the Colorado World Affairs Council. This coalition prepared and presented to state policymakers in the Colorado House of Representatives and Senate three major world language initiatives, including a resolution recognizing 2005 as “The Year of Languages,” legislation supporting international education with a foreign language component, and a request for state funding to support a revision of the Colorado Foreign Language Standards. Working together, the coalition also retained a professional lobbyist and carried out a 2005: The Year of Languages postcard campaign directed at state legislators. Such advocacy programs go a long way in educating the general public, parents, school administrators, business and community leaders, and state policy makers on the importance of world languages.
Facilitating Teacher Recruitment and Retention

In recent years, recruiting and preparing a new generation of teachers has become a critical issue in all academic disciplines and the need to energize world language students to pursue teacher licensure has never been more critical. The Department of Education list of teacher shortage areas (www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/pol/tsa.pdf) shows that the need for highly qualified foreign language professionals is growing in almost every state: Many states report shortages in the number of qualified foreign language teachers, and in some areas of the country, schools are unable to hire certified foreign language teachers. Encouraging teacher candidates and supporting and retaining new graduates who secure foreign language teaching positions are critical issues in the field.

CSCTFL has made it a priority to offer grants to support the recruitment and retention of new foreign language teachers. Members of the Ohio Foreign Language Association used their grant to host a breakfast session for high school juniors and seniors who had expressed interest in careers in world language teaching, accompanied by their parents and their teachers. Following the breakfast, a panel of practicing teachers discussed the benefits of a career in world language teaching and representatives from different universities presented information about teacher certification programs, scholarships, and study abroad opportunities.

The Indiana Foreign Language Teacher Association (IFLTA) used grant money to cover the cost of lodging and conference registration at the annual state conference for university students seeking teacher certification in world languages, for teachers with fewer than five years of experience, and for first-time conference attendees. Recipients were required to participate in the following year’s conference as a presider or conference helper and then serve as a member of IFLTA’s new teacher support team. Similarly, the Kansas Foreign Language Association requested a CSCTFL grant to support new teachers. Working with a list of newly certified world language teachers obtained from the Kansas Department of Education, project organizers offered new teachers the opportunity to join the state association and attend the annual conference at no charge. Grant-supported scholarships included a travel stipend, an invitation to attend a first-timers welcome session, a special session on surviving the first year of teaching, and an evening gathering for beginning and pre-service teachers that included dinner and informal opportunities to talk with the keynote speakers and university methods teachers. Each of the initiatives described above can be incorporated relatively easily into an existing teacher development program. More importantly, the long-term benefits of such recruitment efforts, as well as efforts to build and maintain effective support systems for beginning teachers, far outweigh the relatively modest costs.

Offering Professional Development Opportunities

In addition to supporting advocacy and teacher recruitment and retention efforts, attending to the professional development needs of new and veteran teachers is also an important charge of CSCTFL. Besides the Extension Workshop and the Leadership Development Program offered in conjunction with the CSCTFL annual conference, CSCTFL grants also support professional development activities at the state and local levels. The Kansas Foreign Language Association requested funding to send a state leader for training in performance assessment through the CARLA Summer Institute on Assessment. Upon returning from that workshop, the state leader presented a pre-conference assessment workshop for teacher trainers at the annual state conference and presented several additional conference sessions on integrated performance assessment.

Similarly, the Ohio Foreign Language Association received CSCTFL grant support for two teacher development programs focusing on the Ohio K–12 Foreign Language Academic Content Standards. An initial workshop was offered at no charge to participants in conjunction with the annual state conference; participants attending the workshop received handout masters and text materials and were requested to replicate the presentation in their own school districts and geographic areas. The second workshop brought together for similar training three-person teacher teams including a teacher educator, a pre-service teacher, and a practicing classroom teacher.

The Iowa World Language Association also offered a one-day workshop for teachers focusing on the state standards. This workshop encouraged teachers to reflect on current classroom practices and allowed participants to design and share standards-based thematic units and performance assessments for the interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational modes of communication. A second similar workshop was offered at the annual state conference using funding from the CSCTFL grant.

Additional professional development projects funded through CSCTFL grants have focused on training teachers to use LinguaFolio, creating online professional development modules (Wisconsin Association for Language Teachers), supporting articulated curriculum from the elementary to the middle school level (Michigan World Language Association) and from middle school to high school and beyond (Nebraska International Language Association). By extending professional development opportunities first offered at national and regional conferences in the form of state and local training sessions and in-service activities, CSCTFL professional development grants provide the financial support needed to improve the teaching of world languages for all students.
Supporting State Conferences and Organizations

Strong state organizations provide critical professional development opportunities and serve as a key link in disseminating new policies, research, and best practices. State and local foreign language associations play a particularly important role in areas of the country where there may not be a dedicated foreign language supervisor at the state or district level. In many instances, the state or local organization serves as the default provider of foreign language professional development opportunities. Understanding this reality, CSCTFL funds proposals that allow state and local foreign language associations to maintain daily operations as well as launch new projects.

State leaders in a variety of foreign language associations have requested CSCTFL grants for a number of innovative initiatives. The South Dakota World Language Association requested a grant to defray the cost of renting a 47-passenger bus to bring teachers from the eastern part of the state to the annual conference on the western side of the state while the Nebraska International Language Association and the Kansas Foreign Language Association received grant money to support keynote and workshop speakers. Other state associations used grant funding to create or update a database of world language teachers (Michigan World Language Association; Nebraska International Language Association), to create a brochure or website to promote their state association and its services and activities, and to survey teachers to determine how the state organization can best serve teachers and learners (Colorado Congress of Foreign Language Teachers). These successful programs highlight ways in which seed money from an exterior funding source like CSCTFL can help a local or state organization to recruit new members and offer more varied and specialized services.

Fulfilling Their Mission

One of the oldest regional foreign language organizations in the country, CSCTFL seeks to assume a proactive, leadership role within the foreign language profession, and to provide service to foreign language educators throughout the 17-state region. The CSCTFL Grants Program helps to support efforts to educate policy makers and the general public about the value of foreign languages, by funding activities designed to recruit and retain new teachers, by supporting professional development opportunities, and by encouraging state and local leaders to plan and carry out innovative projects of interest to teachers and learners throughout our region.

Learn More About Grants

For more information on the CSCTFL Grants Program, please visit www.csctfl.org. Note that grant funds are often matched by dollars from other sources and are paid out in several segments as projects progress.

Anne Nerenz is the Chair of CSCTFL and Professor in the Department of Foreign Languages at Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, MI.

Stephanie Dhonau is a member of the CSCTFL Board of Directors and Professor in the Department of Second Languages at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

2008 OPI Workshops

ACTFL is pleased to announce the 2008 schedule for the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) Assessment workshops. This year’s schedule includes training in Rutgers, New Jersey; Middlebury, Vermont; and Orlando, Florida:

- Rutgers, NJ
  April 14–17, 2008
- Middlebury, VT
  July 10–13, 2008
- Orlando, FL
  November 17–20, 2008

For specific dates, locations, languages, and fees please see the workshop schedule in the Professional Programs area of www.actfl.org. You can also register online.

The ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) Assessment Workshop is a four-day professional development workshop designed to introduce language educators to the Oral Proficiency Interview, the ACTFL rating scale, and the techniques for conducting and rating oral proficiency interviews. In daily plenary presentations, participants address general concepts and strategies for oral proficiency testing. This information is then reinforced and practiced in language-specific break-out sessions by observing model interviews, participating in hands-on rating activities, and conducting and rating live practice interviews. These practice interviews and ratings are discussed and critiqued in the language-specific groups. Following the workshop, eligible participants may pursue ACTFL OPI Rater and OPI Tester Certification.
Minnesota Educators Find Ways to Advocate for Languages

By Anita Ratwik

Minnesota New Visions in Action (MnNVIA), in partnership with the Minnesota Council on the Teaching of Languages and Cultures (MCTLC), has taken an active role in advocacy and in educating decision makers about the need for and benefits of world languages. We have also made it a priority to seek funding for our organizations to continue doing that.

This year, Minnesota is celebrating its sesquicentennial [150th anniversary] and the state legislature made money available for grants to celebrate this event. We developed a project called Many Languages, Many Voices, One State, Their Legacy Past and Present and recruited two more partners to join the effort—the Twin Cities German Immersion School and the American Swedish Institute. We applied for and received a grant for $3,000. This project not only enables us to explore the languages and cultures in Minnesota over the past 150+ years, but also to apply knowledge from that experience to benefit us as we continue to interact with people and issues from many cultures, using many languages, now and in the future. This effort includes projects for students and classes, as well as for individuals with an interest in this area. We will use the information from the projects to develop curricula on the topic and to create a DVD and make it available to those wishing to use it including schools, historical societies, heritage groups, and others. The project information and a promotional brochure are available at www.mctlc.org.

In addition to funding the brochure and a retractable banner for the project, the grant also provided money for three conference exhibit booths, strategically chosen for their attendees and influence. The first conference, held in January, was the Minnesota School Boards Association, attracting over 2,000 Minnesota school superintendents and school board members. We spoke one-on-one with over 200 attendees, passing out over 600 brochures on the Minnesota Sesquicentennial project and almost 200 resource folders with information about world languages that we most wanted to get into the hands of these influential people. Part of this exhibit included a “Show and Tell” section at which Marcy Zachmeier-Ruh, from the Twin Cities German Immersion School, and Sue Nordquist, from International Falls, showed off what their students could do with what they had learned. People truly love to hear the students talk about what language learning has done for them. We expect the grant to continue to bring attention to world languages and cultures in Minnesota for years to come, as well as to MCTLC.

We are also involved in Minnesota’s Promise (www.minnesotaspromise.org), which is a coalition of educational organizations, including MCTLC, that came together to develop a common vision and process for change in public education in Minnesota. Most of the organizations in this coalition have full-time lobbyists in our legislature and frequent contact with one another and legislators. They realized that working together from a common plan and strategy, we could bring about needed change that would not be possible working individually on separate agendas. MCTLC and MnNVIA have worked very hard to educate others in the coalition about the importance of including world languages and cultures in this plan. The terms, “world-class education,” “skills for the 21st century,” and “global education,” are often disconnected from world languages education in many of the discussions we hear today and we needed to be part of the discussion to ensure this was not the case here. Other elements of Minnesota’s Promise will also benefit world languages such as stable consistent funding for schools and research-based changes—to name just two of many.

Through these types of efforts, we have learned that we are indeed interconnected far beyond just our profession, and that the more we reach out and work with others, the more we also benefit. We encourage educators in other states to also find out what successes can be achieved through advocacy and organization.

Anita Ratwik is the coordinator of Minnesota New Visions in Action.
**Building Sturdier Vessels:**

**Can We Offer Beginning Language Students What They Really Need?**

*Editor’s Note: Language educators are always searching for appropriate materials and methods to use in their courses. Here Joseph Magedanz takes a critical look at the selection of textbooks devoted to the teaching of German and discusses the need for real content in beginning language courses. We invite educators of other languages to also share their thoughts on the way that they see their language being taught—and their thoughts about how those methods could be improved—so that we can share those ideas on the ACTFL website. Send in your comments to scutshall@actfl.org.*

*By Joseph Magedanz*

At the 2007 ACTFL conference in San Antonio, there were several sessions devoted to the “problem” of first-year German language instruction. Some speakers were frustrated with the current selection of commercial textbooks available, and some were casting about for new methods of presenting the first year; some were concerned with both.

Several sessions and attendees alike expressed concern with overwhelming demands on students and lack of real content in current beginning language courses. Overemphasis of grammar, superficial culture, and hollow experiences were starting points for the discussion about today’s state of affairs.

Many conference participants commented on how much grammar is taught in the first year. It was noted that the vast majority of first-year textbooks present the full gamut of German grammar, far more than most experienced professors feel their students are able to deal with, let alone command. People suggested that more manageable amounts of grammar be presented and previous items be better recycled. One comment was to limit grammar in the first year to those items that support activities listed at the appropriate level of the current proficiency guidelines.

Presentation of the target culture was another area of concern. As is commonly acknowledged nowadays, cultural studies are not things such as the superficial mentioning of the Döner [Turkish meat kebab] now being Germany’s number one fast-food item or pictures of the Euro bills and coins or descriptions of the 2006 FIFA World Cup held in Germany. Instead, students need cultural information about why the Döner is in Germany at all and how Germans feel about those who brought the Döner to Germany and who are now neighbors, coworkers, and established community members. Pictures of the new currency do little to explain the feeling of loss and unease at the dismissal of the trusted and valued D-Mark and German society’s unease with new money, possibly still stemming from the communal memory of hyperinflation and post-WWII black-marketeering. Descriptions of the FIFA Fan-Meile in Berlin are not enough; why were the Germans and their guests surprised at the openness, friendliness, and enthusiastic if benign flag-waving shown by the host country? If in their study of “Deutschland,” first-year German students come away understanding this level of German culture, then we as educators will have accomplished something.

A third concern was not using the target language in a meaningful way. “Why do we have to role play again?” is a question heard from students (and no doubt from many a teacher, too). How many times can students say where they are from, what their hobbies are, or what they think about the environment? Why do current textbooks still present invented characters with predictable daily routines instead of presenting real Germans and their real daily lives? The all-too-often make-believe world of first-year texts in their presentation of Germany rings hollow.

Perhaps we are doing our students a disservice with today’s standard approach. By force-feeding grammar, we may end up with students who can engage in some degree of communication, but by plying them with superficial culture and presenting invented Germans lacking substance, we are building fragile vessels.

If some students do retain enough grammar forms to provide at least some of the planks of the superstructure of communication, the superficial culture which is typically provided does not form seaworthy joints to keep these fledgling vessels afloat for long, not to mention that the students are without any meaningful cargo of experiences in their use of the language. These students of ours end up drifting about unladen before they finally do sink. Wouldn’t it be better to build somewhat smaller vessels (reduced grammar) that are more seaworthy (caulked with real cultural insights) and bearing valuable cargo (investigation of authentic Germans and their lives)?

Among the alternatives presented at ACTFL 2007 were two that stood out for their interesting approaches. One was Auf geht’s! (www.aufgehts.com) which provides a reduced-grammar approach to the first year while offering (among other components) an intensely interactive CD that truly utilizes the best advantages of student computer work and presents authentic Germans with authentic speech and their lives in authentic situations and cultural settings.

Vassar College’s first-year German program (german.vassar.edu) was another. It uses a commercial first-year German textbook as a background reference to provide basic language for students to use but mainly focuses on a wide variety of children’s literature as an investigation of the “other.” Here students can discover who the Germans are by examining what the Germans themselves emphasize to their own children via children’s books: How is the family defined? How do Germans see the world functioning? How has the role of children in society changed?

How much better would our students learn and remember their first year of language if it were presented in some sort of combination of the two programs mentioned? Why not make the experience and examples real? Why not use the newly learned language skills to actually explore something about Germany and discover who the Germans are?

We all know that students crave something real and challenging, whether or not they admit it to us. Why not build sturdy vessels outfitted for a lifetime of plying the waters of all things German [or whatever language and culture they may be studying]?

Joseph Magedanz is Assistant Professor of German at the University of Redlands, Redlands, California.
Upcoming Events

Send in Your Events for the Calendar

If you have information about any upcoming events related to language education, please send it to Sandy Cutshall at scutshall@actfl.org.

April

April 2–5, 2008

April 3, 2008

April 3–5, 2008
Ohio Foreign Language Association (OFLA) 2008 Conference, Hyatt Regency, Cincinnati, OH. Information: www.ofla-online.org.

April 3–5, 2008
Southern Conference on Language Teaching (SCOLT) and South Carolina Foreign Language Teachers’ Association (SCFLTA) Joint Conference, Myrtle Beach, SC. Information: www.scolt.org.

April 4–6, 2008
38th Linguistic Symposium on Romance Languages (LSRL 38), University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Information: www.lsrl.uiuc.edu; contact: lsrl-38@uiuc.edu.

April 4–6, 2008
Central Association of Russian Teachers of America (CARTA) Annual Conference, Colcord Hotel, Oklahoma City, OK. E-mail: msukholu@mailclerk.ecok.edu; information: carta.us.

April 9–11, 2008
Center for International Business Education and Research (CIBER) Business Language Conference: Preparing Global Business Leaders, St. Petersburg, FL. Contact: Isabelle Winzeler at isabelle.winzeler@cba.ufl.edu. Information: conferences.dce.ufl.edu/CIBER.

April 14–17, 2008
ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview Assessment workshop, Rutgers, NJ. Information and registration: www.actfl.org.

April 17–19, 2008

April 17–19, 2008
The 61st Annual Kentucky Foreign Language Conference (KFLC), University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY. Information: www.as.uky.edu/kflc.

April 17–20, 2008
Center for the Advancement and Study of International Education (CASIE) Global Language Convention, Atlanta, Georgia. Information: www.casioneonline.org/glnc.

April 18–19, 2008

April 24–25, 2008

April 25–27, 2008
The Fourth University of California Language Consortium Conference on SLA Theoretical and Pedagogical Perspectives, University of California, Santa Barbara, CA. Information: ucll.ucdavis.edu/Events/index.cfm.

April 24–27, 2008

May

May 1–3, 2008

May 2–3, 2008

May 5–7, 2008

May 19–30, 2008

May 22–25, 2008
American Association of Italian Studies (AAIS)/American Association of Teachers of Italian (AAIT) Joint Convention, Taormina, Italy. Information: www.utm.utoronto.ca/~aait.

June

June 5–7, 2008

June 5–8, 2008
Association of Departments of Foreign Languages (ADFL) Summer Seminar West, Palo Alto, California, hosted by Elizabeth Bernhardt, Stanford University. Information: www.adfl.org.

June 9–14, 2008
The 19th Annual Faculty Development Workshop in International Business (FDIB) for college and university professors of Spanish, Moor School of Business, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC. Information: moorecms.graysail.com/moores/dmc/focused/fdib-series.htm.
Upcoming Events


June 15–20, 2008

June 20–28, 2008

June 22–25, 2008
Association of Departments of Foreign Languages (ADFL) Summer Seminar East, Charlottesville, Virginia, hosted by Randolph D. Pope, University of Virginia. Information: www.adfl.org.

June 22–July 2, 2008

June 22–August 1, 2008
The 28th Annual German Summer School of the Atlantic, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, RI. Information: www.uri.edu/artsci/ml/german/summerschool/index.html.

June 23–27, 2008

June 25–28, 2008

June 26–29, 2008
Association for Language Awareness (ALA) 9th International Conference, The University of Hong Kong. Information: www.hku.hk/cla/ala/papers.html.

June 26–July 6, 2008
Creative Bridges for Language Learning Institute, a total Spanish immersion program, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Information: connectionstd.tripod.com/totalimmersion.

June 27–29, 2008
American Classical League (ACL) Summer Institute, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH. Information: www.aclclassics.org.

June 28–July 13, 2008
A graduate French program (six credits) in Switzerland and Belgium (Geneva and Liege) organized by the American Association of Teachers of French (AATF) and the University of North Texas. Scholarships available. Contact: Marie-Christine Koop, Program Director, at koop@unt.edu. Information: courses.unt.edu/koop/institute.htm.

July 1–30, 2008
TravelLessons for Teachers, Angers, France. Study at the Université Catholique de l’Ouest and earn three graduate credits. Opportunity to add additional coursework; local tours are also included. Contact Diane Phelps at Grand Valley State University, phelpsd@gvsu.edu or visit www.gvsu.edu/training.

July 7, 2008

July 7–12, 2008

July 7–18, 2008
Northwest Indian Language Institute (NILI) Summer Institute, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR. Information: www.uoregon.edu/~nwili/institute.html.

July 7–25, 2008
University of Mary Washington and Universidad de Deusto-Bilbao Summer 2008 Spanish Institute, Bilbao, Spain. Information: www.umw.edu/cas/modernlanguages/spanish/graduate_courses/bilbao/default.php.

July 7–25, 2008
TravelLessons for Teachers, Bilbao, Spain. Study at the University of Deusto and earn three graduate credits. Excellent instruction geared to enhancing classroom methods; local tours included. Contact Diane Phelps at Grand Valley State University, phelpsd@gvsu.edu or visit www.gvsu.edu/training.

July 8–11, 2008

July 10–13, 2008
ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview Assessment workshop, Middlebury, VT. Information and registration: www.actfl.org.

July 10–28, 2008
Center for Language Education and Research (CLEAR) Summer Workshops, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI. “Making the Most of Video in the Foreign Language Classroom,” July 10–12; “Tech Up Your Classroom: Enhancing Your Foreign Language Classroom with Technology,” July 14–16; “Next-Generation Tools for Language Teaching: Rich Internet Applications for the Classroom,” July 17–19; “Designing Online Language Teach-
The Language Educator
Advertiser Index

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FUNIBER USA</th>
<th>Inside front cover</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Auralog</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Start Languages</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern Language Association</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgetown University Press</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2-3 Speak Spanish</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concordia Language Villages</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renault USA</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avant Assessment</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alvernia College</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHA Educational Tours</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACIS</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob Rogers Travel</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yabla</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SANS</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAFA: Association of International Educators</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTFL Career Center</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosetta Stone</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLEAR</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCOLA</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTFL OPI Workshops</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTFL 2008 Convention &amp; World Languages Expo</td>
<td>Inside back cover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASC</td>
<td>Back cover</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Calendar

**July 11–13, 2008**

**July 13–19, 2008**

**July 14–August 2, 2008**

**July 16–19, 2008**

**July 21–25, 2008**

**July 26–28, 2008**
“Meeting the Challenge: Bringing Classical Texts to Life in the Classroom,” Venice International University, Isola di San Servolo, Venice, Italy. Information: www.iperaltino.it/venice/index.htm.

**July 28–August 2, 2008**

**July 28–August 8, 2008**
TraveLessons for Teachers, Guadalajara, Mexico. Study at the University of Guadalajara and earn three graduate credits. Excellent instruction from university faculty; local tours included. Contact Diane Phelps at Grand Valley State University, phelpsd@gvsu.edu or visit www.gvsu.edu/training.

**August**

**August 24–29, 2008**

**September**

**September 11–13, 2008**
British Association for Applied Linguistics (BAAL) 41st Annual Conference, Swansea University, Swansea, Wales, UK. Information: www.baal.org.uk.

**October**

**October 17–19, 2008**
Linguistic Association of the Southwest (LASSO) 37th Annual Conference, “Building Communities and Making Connections,” Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR. Information: www.tamu-commerce.edu/swjl/public_html/lasso.html. Deadline for submission of papers is June 1, 2008. Contact: Susan Rivera-Mills via e-mail at LASSO2008@gmail.com.
We want your contribution to The Language Educator

Have you been involved with an innovative project in language education? Or have you taken part in an unusual professional experience that you would like to share with your colleagues? Do you possess special expertise in an area that others might benefit from learning more about? Have you ever wondered why you haven’t seen coverage on a particular topic—when it is an article that you yourself could write?

If you have something valuable to share, we welcome your submission to The Language Educator magazine!

Submissions should be sent via e-mail to scutshall@actfl.org.

In 2008, we plan to focus on a wide variety of topics.
Well-written submissions are particularly welcome on:

- Assessment literacy
- How language learning is perceived around the world
- Language education travel and culture-related topics
- Promoting languages through advocacy programs (i.e., Discover Languages)
- Innovative ways to use music and the arts in the language classroom
- Service learning projects
- Languages across the curriculum

We are always looking for:

- Exciting new programs and practices being used around the country
- Technology advances in language education
- Hot news in language learning at all levels
- Your suggestions and contacts for Q&A interviews

From the Editor—Some Advice for Submitting to The Language Educator

- Get familiar with the magazine. Read previous issues. Pay particular attention to the style of writing in TLE. How is it different from some educational newsletters or academic journals you may be used to reading? Look over the guidelines (available on the ACTFL website). Always be sure your article represents accurate, up-to-date information.
- Think beyond yourself to a greater audience. Try to see your topic beyond your own classroom or perspective. Will this be interesting to an educator who teaches a different language or at a different level? Might this be important to someone who cares about language learning but is not an educator? Would the information be accessible for administrators, government officials, parents, students, or others?
- Have you talked to anyone else to get another perspective and can you include quotes from other experts that broaden the topic?
- DOs and DON'Ts for writing about research. DON'T just repackage a research study or dissertation. DO approach the information you have from a new angle. DON'T include every small detail of your research procedures. DO get to the heart of the findings and why they are important. DO add in quotes with reactions from participants or experts concerning the topic. DON'T include extensive citations to previous studies, literature reviews, bibliographies/reference lists, etc. DO properly cite sources naturally within the body of your text.
- Add some extras. Can you provide photos that go with your article? Are there other items such as bulleted lists, pull-out quotes, or short vignettes that might be featured alongside your article in a box or sidebar item? Can you provide some “web extras”—such as rubrics, documents, interviews, or further information that could be made available on the ACTFL website as a tie-in to your article?
- Be patient and responsive. The magazine is printed six times a year and there is limited space for publication. Not all submissions can be accepted and some are in consideration for some time before a decision is made. Often accepted submissions are scheduled for an issue months later because they will fit well with the articles in a future issue. Try not to write something that will be dated in a few months. Alternatively, you may hit the timing just right and submit something that fits perfectly for an upcoming issue. Please respond right away when contacted by the editor in order to get your article ready for publication. If you have not been contacted recently or have questions, feel free to follow up via e-mail to scutshall@actfl.org for an update about your submission.
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Chinese Language Teachers Association (CLTA)
Florida Foreign Language Association (FFLA)
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National Council of Japanese Language Teachers (NCJLT)
National Council of State Supervisors for Languages (NCSSFL)
National Network for Early Language Learning (NNELL)

For complete information visit the Convention and Expo area on our website at www.actfl.org

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