

INSIDE:  
A Lead with Languages  
poster for your classroom!

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AMERICAN COUNCIL ON THE  
TEACHING OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES

# The Language Educator

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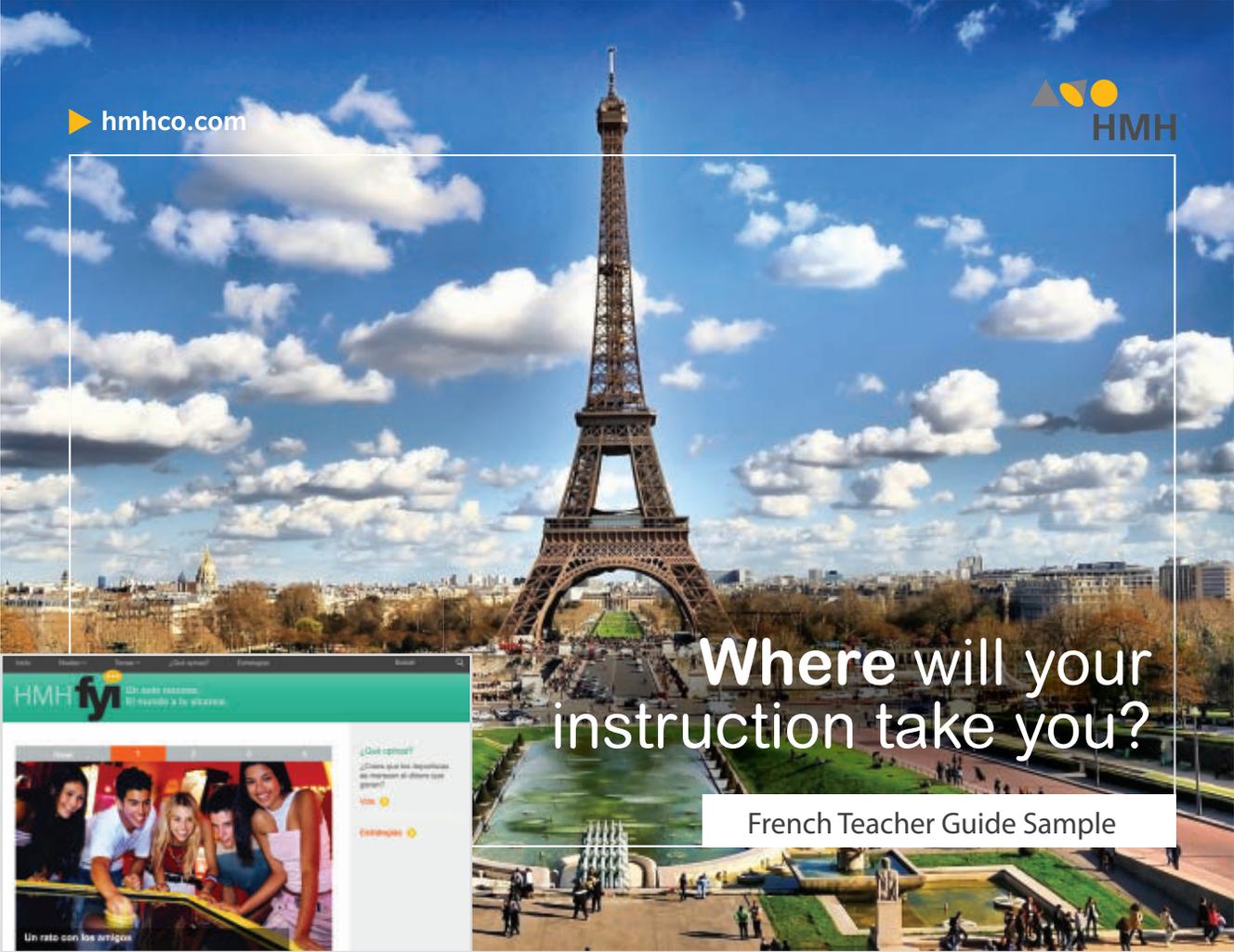
## FOCUS TOPIC

### Empowering Learners

- Reflection Empowers Learners
- Empowering Students with Self-Assessment
- Designing for Motivation
- Planning for Active Learning
- Make Your Classroom Like a Talk Show
- Digital Publications for Learner Autonomy

## UPCOMING FOCUS TOPIC

Leading with Culture  
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# SAVE THE DATE

Learn more  
on p.12  
of this issue!

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- How to **renew** online
- How to **access** the online publications (*The Language Educator* and *Foreign Language Annals*)
- How to **volunteer** with ACTFL

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# The Language Educator



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### ON THE COVER:

Students complete language performance tasks at the start of the Basic Outcomes Student Self-Assessment (BOSSA) session at the University of Minnesota. Learn more on p. 37.

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AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2017

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Look for this symbol in this printed edition of *The Language Educator*. It alerts you to enhanced content available in *TLE Online*, the interactive version of the magazine available at [www.thelanguageeducator.org](http://www.thelanguageeducator.org).



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The 2017 ACTFL Convention in Nashville: Experience It!

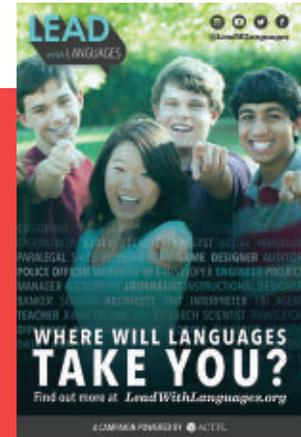
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*Jessica Haxhi and Jacque Bott Van Houten*



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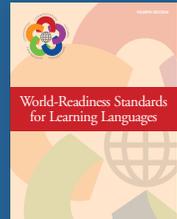
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- *The Keys to Assessing Language Performance: Teacher's Manual* (Sandrock)
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- **NEW** *The Keys to Strategies for Language Instruction: Engagement, Relevance, Critical Thinking, Collaboration* (Grahn & McAlpine)

*World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages* (Standards Collaborative Board)

*Implementing Integrated Performance Assessment* (Adair-Hauck, Glisan, & Troyan)

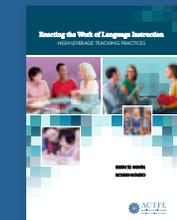
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## MEET THE *authors*

—Special Book Signing Event at the ACTFL Convention in Nashville—

Donna Clementi, Leslie Grahn, Dave McAlpine, Laura Terrill, and Bill VanPatten will be signing their books at ACTFL Central in the World Languages Expo on Saturday, Nov. 18. Don't miss this special opportunity to chat with the authors of these new and revised texts!



**Saturday, November 18, 2017**



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**NASHVILLE 2017**  
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# President's Message



Desa Dawson, ACTFL President

## Get Involved in These Exciting Initiatives

What better time than a new school year to look forward to a renewed commitment to our students and our craft! It has been a whirlwind summer for me as President of ACTFL as we gear up for our Annual Convention and World Languages Expo in Nashville and push forward with our critical agenda to build our nation's language capacity. I have a lot of exciting news but want to focus on three items in particular in this issue's message.

EXPLORE the campaign website at [www.LeadwithLanguages.org](http://www.LeadwithLanguages.org) with your students to take advantage of all the opportunities available including student scholarships, inspiring testimonials, career information, and much more.



First, I would like to call your attention to the very important focus topic for this issue: **Empowering Learners**. It's a perfect time of year to set proficiency/performance targets for your students and then to help them understand exactly what it means to reach those targets. What does success look like at each proficiency level? What are the strategies that students can focus on to ensure that they reach the targets? How can they self-assess where they are on the language continuum? By focusing on our learners' autonomy, we help ensure that they will become lifelong language learners, motivated to continue building their language competence after they leave class. There are so many ways that learners can extend their language acquisition beyond the classroom and we can provide them with the means to do that by guiding them in both their in-class and online learning.

ACTFL is proud to be part of a working group developing a strategic plan for implementing the recommendations of the national report, *America's Languages: Investing in Language Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. We are helping to organize a series of symposia nationwide to mobilize community resources that cross academe, government, and business to move our language agenda forward. That effort is aligned with the *Lead with Languages* campaign that is effectively building support for language education through engaging the general public—primarily students—in understanding the benefits of learning languages, particularly as it relates to college and career readiness.

Another major focus for ACTFL this year has been finding solutions for our teacher recruitment and retention crisis. Last year, 44 states plus the District of Columbia declared shortages in the number of language teachers available to fill our classrooms. We are in crisis and need to work together on solutions. I have been privileged to be involved in these initiatives first-hand as I attended the National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE) symposium entitled, "Empowered Educators: How High-Performing Systems Shape Teaching Quality Around the World." It was exciting to hear Linda Darling-Hammond, whose research has informed my own work, discuss the critical components of teacher preparation that result in highly effective classroom practice. We have taken this crisis very seriously and, as a result, are launching the *Educators Rising* program. This is a collaboration between ACTFL and the *Educators Rising* initiative to spark interest among students in pursuing language teaching as a career. We all know that an inspiring teacher makes a difference in the career choices of students. After piloting the *Educators Rising* program last year, ACTFL is making the resources available to all language educators who wish to start a program with their students, exploring language teaching as a career and providing them with that first teaching experience so that they can see how rewarding a career in education can be. No matter how old your students are, it's never too early or too late to spark that interest in a career as a language educator. Check out the site at [www.actfl.org/assessment-professional-development/educators-rising](http://www.actfl.org/assessment-professional-development/educators-rising).

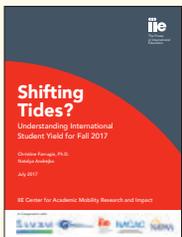
Now, more than ever, we need a united field working on a common purpose in line with ACTFL's mission to provide leadership, vision, and support for high quality language programs. Consider getting personally involved: We have a new volunteer portal where you can offer your time and talent to our initiatives. Finally, I look forward to seeing you in Nashville in November as we celebrate our 50th annual convention. Come "Experience It" with your colleagues!

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## Interest in U.S. Steady Among International Students for Fall 2017

The Institute of International Education (IIE) recently released a study which showed that international students overall remain interested in attending higher education institutions in the United States.

Despite some concerns that international student interest in the United States might be diminished, this survey of college admissions officers suggests that this is not the case. According to the study, modest drops in yield—the percentage of students that attend a college or university after having been offered admission—at some institutions may be offset by steady or increased yield at other schools. Among the 112 colleges that provided data there was a 2% decline in the expected yield rate this year compared to last year. Overall, international undergraduate yield has dipped slightly from 26% to 24% from fall 2016 to fall 2017. The two percentage point decline is comparable to shifts in the domestic (U.S.) student yield reported by institutional respondents, which fell from 30% to 28% over the same time period.



The study, *Shifting Tides: Understanding International Student Yield for Fall 2017*, was conducted by IIE in cooperation with the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers (AACRAO), the Council of Graduate Schools, the National Association of College Admissions Counselors (NACAC), and NAFSA: Association of International Educators.

With over a million international students pursuing higher education in the United States and contributing more than \$36 billion to the United States economy, U.S. colleges and universities have expressed concerns about the desire and ability of international students to travel to the United States for their education, and have taken active steps to encourage these students to enroll in their institutions in the fall. While some institutions are feeling variations more than others, responding campuses are expressing cautious optimism that enrollments by new students will not decline as much as they had feared, and some may even see increases due to steps they have taken this spring.

The findings of this survey suggest that variations in international undergraduate yield are being felt by some institutions more than others. Admissions and yield patterns in the top four host states—California, New York, Texas, and Massachusetts—compared favorably to the national average, except for Texas. Yield rates in New York and Massachusetts remained steady from the prior year at 22% and 31%, respectively. California institutions reported a slight increase in yield, which grew from 23% to 25% in fall 2016 to fall 2107. In contrast to the other three top host states, respondents from Texas reported a sizeable decrease in yield from 44% to 35%. While Texas institutions reported large declines in yield, their yield remains notably higher than the national average.

Following up on an earlier survey showing the number of applications colleges received, the new IIE-led survey asked colleges to report on how many of the international student applicants they accepted, and of these accepted students, how many have indicated they plan to enroll, comparing these figures to the same indicators from last year. The snapshot of expected yield as of May 2017 serves as a useful tool for colleges and universities to track the progress of their admissions recruitment and enrollment processes, and take active steps to address changing needs.

Earlier concerns among students and educators about the effect of the Executive Order (EO) temporarily limiting visitors from six nations from entry to the United States may be somewhat ameliorated by the guidance issued to consular officials worldwide (effective June 29) that an acceptance to study or lecture at U.S. universities would qualify as a “bona fide” relationship with a U.S. entity and therefore students from the affected countries who intend to enter the United States for higher education will not be barred from entry under the EO for the time being. Final enrollment figures for this fall will depend on students being able to get visas on a timely basis and to gain entry to the United States.

Learn more about this survey at [tinyurl.com/iieresearch](http://tinyurl.com/iieresearch).

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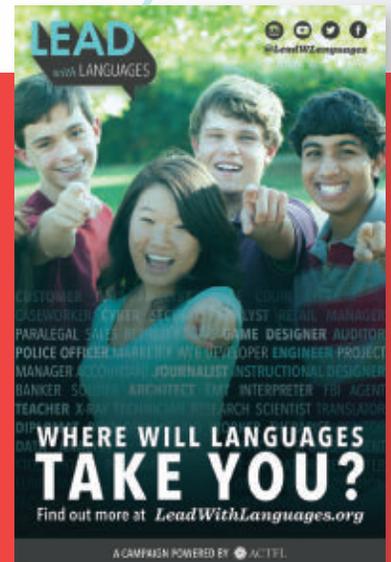
# LEAD

with LANGUAGES

A COMPLIMENTARY CLASSROOM POSTER INCLUDED  
IN THIS ISSUE OF *THE LANGUAGE EDUCATOR*

Help ACTFL spread the word about the *Lead with Languages* public awareness campaign by sharing the enclosed poster with your language learners, parents, administrators, and other stakeholders.

The poster celebrates this exciting new effort with a question: “WHERE WILL LANGUAGES TAKE YOU?” and a suggestion of the many different types of careers that may be made more readily available to students with knowledge of a second language, including Research Scientist, Cyber Security Analyst, Teacher, Police Officer, FBI Agent, Translator, and many more.



With language skills growing in importance in the job market, yet fewer than 1 in 10 Americans able to speak a second language, *Lead with Languages* is a national campaign aimed at making language proficiency a national priority.

The effort seeks to raise awareness across the United States and motivate people to take action around the rapidly rising importance of language skills to a wide array of careers and to our nation's economy, national security, and international standing. The ultimate goal is to create a new generation of Americans competent in other languages and cultures and fully equipped to compete and succeed in a global economy.

If you haven't already done so, we encourage you to explore the *Lead with Languages* website at [www.leadwithlanguages.org](http://www.leadwithlanguages.org). It includes a wide variety of useful information, including sections highlighting Success Stories, Language Programs, Language & Careers, Language Advocacy, and others. “Why Learn Languages” offers the Top Ten Reasons to Learn Languages. One section—“Choose Your Language”—features information about 18 different languages to study. Another section—“Busted! Myths and Misconceptions About Language Learning”—offers straight talk about language learning. The site features information related to Heritage Learners, Early Childhood & Elementary, Middle & High School, and College & University. News and events will be updated on the site regularly.

The campaign is also active on social media—so make it a point to follow the Twitter account: @LeadWLanguages, like the page “Lead with Languages” on Facebook, and watch the videos available on the YouTube channel: [tinyurl.com/leadwithlanguagesonyoutube](http://tinyurl.com/leadwithlanguagesonyoutube).



Check out the *Lead with Languages* website and the various media channels for yourself and share them with your students and at your school—and keep checking in with the campaign as more and more keeps happening the rest of this year and beyond!

## Get Involved: Volunteer with ACTFL

Volunteers are at the heart of ACTFL's work. Because of the contributions of volunteers' time, talent, and expertise, ACTFL is able to provide the essential information and tools, vibrant community, and exceptional experiences that we all value so highly.

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- Enhance your leadership skills by expanding on skills and roles you may not get to take on in your current position

We are seeking to build an energetic, inclusive, and innovative corps of volunteer leaders. Together we can accomplish so much more and move the world language profession forward. Learn more at [www.actfl.org/membership/get-involved-volunteer-actfl](http://www.actfl.org/membership/get-involved-volunteer-actfl).



### Language Differences Heard by Unborn Babies

Unborn babies are able to recognize the difference between two languages, scientists have found. Fetuses can distinguish between English and Japanese even a month before they are born and respond differently to hearing a language with which they are not familiar, according to a recent study published in the journal, *NeuroReport*.

Conducted by a team at the University of Kansas with a sample of 24 pregnant women, the study tested whether fetuses responded differently to the rhythm of a language that was new to them. English and Japanese have very different rhythms; English is spoken in bursts while Japanese has a more regular tempo.

Researchers played an audio clip in Japanese followed by one in English, both read by the same person, and used magnetic imaging

to measure the heart rate of the fetus. What they found is that the unborn babies' heart rates changed when they heard the Japanese language, with which they were unfamiliar, while there was no variation when they heard the clip in English. This, they said, shows that the unborn babies recognized a rhythmical difference between the two.

Previous studies have shown that newborn babies respond differently to different languages, but this is the first time a similar finding has been made in unborn children using the most accurate technology available. While one earlier study that used ultrasound reported a similar finding, the University of Kansas project used more advanced imaging technology in a more controlled environment.

Learn more at [tinyurl.com/unbornbabiesstudy.com](http://tinyurl.com/unbornbabiesstudy.com).

### Bilingual Infants Learn a Third Language More Easily

Young children who understand two languages are able to learn a third language more easily than their monolingual peers, a study by National University of Singapore (NUS) researchers has found. These bilingual babies are able to differentiate between words from an unknown foreign language, unlike their monolingual counterparts.

During the nine-month study, infants aged 18–20 months—one group who were solely exposed to English and others who knew English and Mandarin—were exposed to the southern African language, Ndebele. In one experiment, the 40 babies were shown an image and at the same time read a word

in Ndebele. Next, they were shown the same image but this time a different word was read out to them. The bilingual children detected the change in sound while the monolingual children did not. The conclusion was made using a method that tracks the time that they spent looking at an object on a computer screen while the word was read out to them. More fixation time when the tone changed reflects a surprised response, indicating that they were sensitive to the differences.

The finding, published in the scientific journal *Child Development*, further supports the theory that exposing children to two languages at the same time has cognitive benefits.

An earlier study by Professor Leher Singh and her team found that bilingual babies can master the rules of each language faster than monolingual babies. A child learns a language fastest from birth to the age of 3, and in the past people used to think teaching a child two languages at the same time would hamper the early learning process for both languages, said Singh.

She added: "This study suggests parents trying to raise bilingual children shouldn't worry about that, and in fact we should be aware of the fact that it is beneficial to children."

Learn more at [tinyurl.com/babiesthirdlanguage](http://tinyurl.com/babiesthirdlanguage).

## Bilingual Workers Needed in U.S.

A new research study released by New American Economy (NAE) highlights the growing demand for bilingual talent in major industries in the United States. The research looks at online job posting data acquired by Burning Glass Technologies, a leading labor market analytics firm that searches 40,000 job boards daily.

The NAE report shows that employers increasingly desire workers who speak multiple languages, particularly in industries that provide services involving a high degree of human interaction. Bank of America, H&R Block, and Humana were among the top firms seeking bilingual workers, based on the share of online job listings posted in 2015.

The report, “Not Lost in Translation: The Growing Importance of Foreign Language Skills in the U.S. Job Market” finds:

- Over the past five years, demand for bilingual workers in the United States more than doubled. In 2010, there were roughly 240,000 job postings aimed at bilingual workers; by 2015, that figure had ballooned to approximately 630,000.
- Employers seek bilingual workers for both low- and high-skilled positions. In 2015, 60% of the jobs with the highest demand for bilingual workers were open to individuals with less than a bachelor’s degree. Meanwhile, the fastest growth in bilingual listings from 2010 to 2015 was for so-called “high prestige” jobs, a category including financial managers, editors, and industrial engineers.

- Employers are increasingly looking for workers who can speak Chinese, Spanish, and Arabic. Employers posted more than three times more jobs for Chinese speakers in 2015 than they had just five years earlier. During the same time period, the number of U.S. job ads listing Spanish or Arabic as a desired skill increased by roughly 150%.
- Some states have particularly high demand for bilingual workers. Despite being home to 12.4% of the overall U.S. working-age population, California accounted for 19.4% of all job ads seeking bilingual workers. Arizona displayed similar trends—accounting for just 2% of working-age adults, but 4% of bilingual job listings. Seven states—including Colorado, Oregon, and Texas—had considerably higher demand for bilingual speakers than would be expected based on their share of the working-age population overall.
- Some employers have particularly strong demand for bilingual workers. More than a third of the positions advertised by Bank of America in 2015 were for bilingual workers. At the health insurer Humana, meanwhile, almost one in four online posts asked for such skills—including almost 40% of the company’s listings for registered nurses.

Learn more at [tinyurl.com/bilingualworkers](http://tinyurl.com/bilingualworkers).

## BriefBits

*Below are some language-related articles which appeared in newspapers and online, and were recently featured in ACTFL SmartBrief. To subscribe to this free e-newsletter and get the most up-to-date news sent directly to you via email, go to [www.actfl.org/smartbrief](http://www.actfl.org/smartbrief).*

### Reviving the Tlingit language in Alaska

A group of people in Juneau, Alaska, are learning Tlingit, a language believed to have only about 100 fluent speakers left. The participants meet weekly to learn—from a free, online workbook and from each other—as part of an attempt to revitalize the language.

From “Free Tlingit Workbook Part of Language Revitalization” in *KTOO Public Media*, 7/5/17

### Heritage Language Classes Connect Home, School

Some Minnesota schools offer heritage language classes to assist with meeting the needs of students whose first language is not English. Programs in two schools seek to help Spanish-speaking and Somali-speaking students maintain the languages of their families and bridge gaps between home and school.

From “Path to Mastering English? Schools Say Students’ Home Language is Key” in *MPR News*, 6/1/17

### Program Links Students with New Mexico’s History and Culture

More than 100 fourth- to eighth-grade students participated in the Hands on Heritage summer program, five weeks that focus on the history and culture of northern New Mexico. Participants learned about farming, traditional foods and cooking through hands-on lessons and field trips while also sharpening their reading and math skills.

From “Summer Program Helps Students Explore Heritage and History” in *The Santa Fe New Mexican*, 7/24/17



**ACTFL**  
ANNUAL CONVENTION  
& WORLD LANGUAGES EXPO

**NASHVILLE 2017**  
MUSIC CITY CENTER  
**NOVEMBER 17-19**



A CONVENTION UNLIKE ANY OTHER  
*Experience It*

Join in harmony with your colleagues and find innovative ways to strike the right chord with your learners at the most comprehensive professional development opportunity available to language educators today—the ACTFL Annual Convention and World Languages Expo.

The 2017 ACTFL Annual Convention and World Languages Expo in Nashville, TN, will gather together more than **8,000** language educators at all levels in teaching. Attendees will enjoy the focus on innovative programs, research-informed practices, emerging trends in the language profession, and roundtable discussions that can help make language instruction sing!

**HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:**

- An Opening General Session where attendees will be captivated by a keynote address from journalist **Bill Weir**
- More than **800** sessions focusing on innovative programs, research-informed practices, and emerging trends in the language profession
- The World Languages Expo, featuring **250+** exhibitors and including more than **60** exhibitor workshops

**PLUS:**

- the new **LangEd Hackathon**, offering practical, hands-on sessions focused on current trends and best practices
- **ACTFL UnCon**—the popular and innovative “unconference” format
- **23** full and half-day **pre-convention workshops**
- special **ACTFL plenary sessions** on Friday and Saturday
- the always in-demand **Career Café** for job seekers
- our interactive **Social Media Lounge** where you can recharge, connect, and learn
- the popular **“Collab Zone”** offering the latest about ACTFL assessment tools

**AND MUCH MORE!**

**HOW TO REGISTER**

It's easy to register for the ACTFL Convention in advance. Simply go online to [www.actfl.org/convention-expo/registration](http://www.actfl.org/convention-expo/registration) to access the registration form. Registrations may be submitted online, by phone, by fax, or by mail. All registration forms must be sent by **October 25**. Please note that badges will not be mailed; you will need to bring your email confirmation and print your badge onsite. If you do not register by the deadline, you will need to register onsite in Nashville.

Registration Rates	Advance by 10/25/17	Onsite after 10/25/17
<b>Full Convention Registration (Friday-Sunday)</b>		
Member	\$245	\$340
Non-member	\$355	\$450
<b>One-Day Registration for Friday, Saturday, or Sunday</b>		
One-day member	\$215	\$310
One-day non-member	\$310	\$405

**VISIT [WWW.ACTFL.ORG/CONVENTION-EXPO](http://WWW.ACTFL.ORG/CONVENTION-EXPO)**

**for all convention information and updates**

## WHERE TO STAY

ACTFL has arranged special rates with a number of excellent hotels in Nashville. Be sure to register by the **October 23** housing deadline to ensure your room! Find all the details you need online at [www.actfl.org/convention-expo/housing](http://www.actfl.org/convention-expo/housing).

### OFFICIAL HOTELS:

- Omni Nashville
- Westin Nashville
- Hilton Nashville Downtown
- Hampton Inn & Suites Downtown
- Hilton Garden Inn Downtown
- Hyatt Place Downtown
- Holiday Inn Express & Suites Downtown
- Renaissance Hotel

- Courtyard by Marriott Downtown
- Homewood Suites Downtown
- Hotel Indigo



There has never been a better time to come to Music City! Named “One of the Top Destinations for 2016” by Forbes Travel Guide, Nashville is booming and the Music City Center—a 2.1 million square foot facility built in 2013—is at the heart of it all. Known for its trendy restaurants and eclectic music scene, Nashville has become a popular destination. You will find the convention hotels put you within blocks of the Country Music Hall of Fame, Music City Walk of Fame Park, the Riverfront, the historic Ryman Auditorium, and other top attractions. For best availability and immediate confirmation, make your hotel reservation right away. Learn more about Nashville at [www.visitmusiccity.com](http://www.visitmusiccity.com).

Friday **Nov 17**



## Experience **THE OPENING GENERAL SESSION**

Renowned journalist and TV personality **Bill Weir** will kick off ACTFL 2017 with a keynote speech at the Opening General

Session on Friday, November 17 on “Stories from Cultures Around the World.” Weir, the host and executive producer of CNN’s *The Wonder List with Bill Weir*, will share with convention attendees his fascinating experiences while doing this series. Weir is a rare combination of brilliant reporter and passionate adventure enthusiast. Known for his front-line reporting and constant exploration

of the unknown, he travels around the world in search of unique people, places, cultures, and creatures on the brink of seismic change.

Weir joined CNN in November 2013 as anchor and reporter after a decade of distinctive broadcast journalism at ABC News. In early 2015, *The Wonder List with Bill Weir* debuted on CNN. Previously, after helping to launch the weekend edition of *Good Morning America* in 2004, Weir was co-anchor of *Nightline* in 2010 while his reporting was featured on *World News with Diane Sawyer*, *Good Morning America*, *20/20* and his own Yahoo! News digital series, *This Could Be Big*. In his network

career, Weir journeyed to more than 50 nations and all 50 states, covering breaking news and uncovering global trends.

Join Bill Weir during a meet-and-greet opportunity at ACTFL Central in the World Languages Expo after the Opening General Session. [You can also learn more about him in the Q&A interview on p. 18 of this issue.]

Another highlight of the Convention Opening General Session will be the announcement of the **2018 ACTFL National Language Teacher of the Year**, chosen from the five regional finalists. Who will represent the language education community in 2018? Find out at this exciting event!

Friday **Nov 17** | Saturday **Nov 18** | Sunday **Nov 19**

## Experience **SESSIONS AND PLENARIES**

At the 2017 convention, you can choose from more than **800** sessions in a variety of formats covering a wide spectrum of the language profession. Educational opportunities include the ACTFL plenary sessions, roundtables, electronic posters, and exhibitor workshops. You can find out all about these and more by accessing the ACTFL Online Program at [www.actfl.org/convention-expo](http://www.actfl.org/convention-expo).

### Four ACTFL plenaries will be presented:

#### **Addressing Our National Crisis of Language Teacher Recruitment and Retention**

With 44 states and the District of Columbia declaring world language or bilingual teacher shortages, it is imperative that we find solutions to this growing crisis of being able to build teacher capacity. This panel discussion will focus on strategies for recruiting as early as high school and as late as the “career switcher” programs to fill our ranks. In addition, programs that help retain teachers once they enter the classroom will also be featured.

#### **National Commission on Language Learning: Implementation Plan**

The national study on languages, *America’s Languages: Investing in Language Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, makes recommendations for moving the language agenda forward in the United States. Commissioned by the U.S. Congress, this study is an in-depth look at where we stand as

a nation in building our language capabilities. This plenary will outline an implementation plan that all members of the language field can embrace.

#### **Research Priorities: Advancing Research for Effective Classroom Practice**

What are we learning through the research priorities grants given each year by ACTFL and how can the findings advance our classroom practice? Come hear researchers share the results of their studies and how they can help language educators promote student learning.

#### **Lead with Languages: Advocacy for the Language Field and Beyond**

With the launch of the *Lead with Languages* public awareness campaign we have seen renewed public interest in building our country’s language capacity. This panel will address the various facets of the campaign and how you and your students can play an active role in helping to promote language learning!



Thursday **Nov 16**

## Experience **PRE-CONVENTION WORKSHOPS**

Expand your convention experience even more by arriving early and taking part in a full-day or half-day pre-convention workshop on **Thursday, November 16!** More information and presenters listed at [www.actfl.org/convention-expo](http://www.actfl.org/convention-expo).

### FULL-DAY

Developing Language Performance in the Classroom: Novice to Intermediate

Developing Language Performance in the Classroom: Intermediate to Advanced

Learning that Lasts: Keys to Effective Unit and Lesson Design

Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA) from Design to Feedback on Performance

Supporting Language Professionals to Implement Core Practices

Engaging Learners Through Authentic Resources, Authentic Audiences, and Authentic Purposes

Advanced Placement (AP) Chinese Language and Culture

Advanced Placement (AP) German Language and Culture

Advanced Placement (AP) Japanese Language and Culture

Advanced Placement (AP) Spanish Language and Culture

Advanced Placement (AP) Spanish Literature and Culture

### HALF-DAY

Proficiency as a Tool to Focus Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Motivating ALL Learners, ALL the Time: Facilitating Target Language Comprehensibility

Investing in Their Learning: Empowering Students to Take Ownership

Heritage Language Teaching in Action: Essential Tools and Strategies for Meeting the Needs of All Learners

Can-Do Learning for Intercultural Communicative Competence: Investigate, Interact, and Reflect

Transform Your Language Teaching with Digital Tools to Inspire, Create, and Collaborate

The Keys to Strategies for Language Instruction: Engagement, Relevance, Critical Thinking, and Collaboration

Moving Beyond the List: Helping Students ACQUIRE the Words They Need

Practical Approaches to Presentational and Interpersonal Communication in Today's Latin Classroom

Pathway to Cultural Perspectives: Question, Explore, Verify, Reflect, Question

Transformational Play: Language and Culture

Learning Through Games and Game Design

Creating Formative and Summative Assessments to Guide Language Learning

## Experience **THE WORLD LANGUAGES EXPO**

Friday **Nov 17** | Saturday **Nov 18** | Sunday **Nov 19**

While at the convention, you must visit the 2017 World Languages Expo with more than **250** exhibiting companies showcasing the latest products and services for you and your students. This is a one-of-a-kind experience with the most companies and organizations relating to language learning in one place that you can imagine.

### ACTFL Central

Get the latest publications from ACTFL, information about membership, or just about anything else you need at **ACTFL Central**, located in the heart of the World Languages Expo in the exhibit hall.

### LangEd Hackathon

New this year in the Expo is the **LangEd Hackathon**, offering practical, hands-on sessions that will focus on current trends and best practices which can help you explore solutions for effective language learning. An expert from the field will provide a brief overview of a topic and attendees will have ample time to apply, create, and design a solution that will help their learners.

### ACTFL UnCon

What do you need from this ACTFL Convention? Find it at the **ACTFL UnCon**: an innovative, unconference model driven by participants. Unlike traditional programming, the 90-minute UnCon sessions have no scheduled speakers or predetermined content. Can you talk about an emerging technology or teaching trend that was not on the radar when convention proposals were due? UnCon is the ideal environment in which you can lead a dialogue about it!

### Collab Zone

Join us in the **ACTFL Collab Zone** in the exhibit hall where you'll have an interactive, hands-on opportunity to learn more about ACTFL assessment products and services in a relaxed environment.

### Get Social

Stop by the **Social Media Lounge** to recharge your devices and your minds! Join us for mini-byte sessions exploring fun and current tech topics meant to energize your classrooms and liven up your lessons.

### Career Café

Take advantage of this opportunity to learn from and share with other colleagues involved in the career search process in a relaxed atmosphere.

### BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND: TOY Talks

TOY Talks are previous ACTFL National Language Teachers of the Year sharing topics in a quick-paced, entertaining "TED Talk" format.



We invite you to join us and *Experience* all that the 2017 **ACTFL** Annual Convention in Nashville has to offer!

# Discover the ACTFL Film (Cinema) SIG



SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

Did you know that ACTFL has a Special Interest Group committed to the promotion of film studies and pedagogical uses of film in the classroom? The Film (Cinema) SIG has started many exciting initiatives over the last year and we wanted to make sure that you are aware of everything this group has to offer. As most know, membership in one SIG is included in your ACTFL membership fees—and anyone who shares our passion for foreign language films should certainly consider joining us!

Beginning with the 2016 ACTFL Annual Convention in Boston, the Film (Cinema) SIG has been able to sponsor an annual attendance scholarship for \$300 to one SIG member. Applicants are asked to fill out a short application and to write about how they have used film in their classroom or any film-related research they have undertaken. This information is published in the quarterly newsletter for all members of the SIG. An email announcing the opening of the application process from the SIG went out in June.

Also at last year's ACTFL Convention, the SIG was proud to sponsor "Night at the Movies," which featured "La película del rey" by Argentinian director Carlos Sorin. We are thrilled to again be sponsoring "Night at the Movies" this year in Nashville, which will feature the 2015 documentary film "Hija de la laguna," followed by a Q&A with the director Ernesto Cabellos and Néida, the protagonist of the film. This event will be held on Saturday, November 18.

Hopefully many of you have had a chance to catch one of the excellent webinars sponsored by the SIG as well. If not, the recordings are available to Film SIG members through the Film (Cinema) SIG Community on the [ACTFL.org](http://ACTFL.org) website. In 2016, the SIG sponsored "Lights, Camera, Assessment: Using Cinema in Assessment" in English (with examples in Mandarin and Spanish) of how to use film in integrated performance assessments (IPAs). In 2017, the SIG sponsored "Hispanic Cinema: Thematic Units through Film," presented in Spanish. Be on the lookout for the announcement of future webinars from the SIG and look for past webinars recorded in the community.

We will also be sponsoring three presentations in Nashville, so make sure to check out the ACTFL Convention Program and look for the tag "sponsored by the Film (Cinema) SIG" to know that you are headed to a great presentation! We will be holding our annual business meeting just before "Night at the Movies" on Saturday, November 18 and all SIG members and other interested ACTFL members are encouraged to attend. Light refreshments will be served and you will have the opportunity to discuss SIG initiatives, meet and network with colleagues interested in film, and get more involved with the group.

Anyone interested in joining the Film (Cinema) SIG can email Genevieve Borello at [gborello@actfl.org](mailto:gborello@actfl.org).

*Submitted by Mary Reed, Film (Cinema) SIG Chair*



## Do You Have <sup>The</sup> Language Educator Mobile App?

Read *The Language Educator* on your mobile device! Search in the Apple, Amazon, and Google app stores to  Download the *TLE* app for free. Log in with your ACTFL username and password to access issues back to 2011.

If you are not sure of your login, contact [membership@actfl.org](mailto:membership@actfl.org).



# Inside ACTFL

AN UPDATE FROM THE AMERICAN COUNCIL ON THE TEACHING OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES



## CALL FOR PROGRAM REVIEWERS:

### ACTFL/CAEP Program Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers (Initial Level)

**ACTFL** invites individuals to apply to become reviewers for teacher preparation programs that are seeking national recognition from ACTFL and CAEP. Program reviewers are trained to examine the reports and data submitted by Educator Preparation Providers. This is a rewarding professional service that offers an opportunity to view and influence national and international teacher education programs. There is no remuneration to reviewers or to ACTFL.

Upon successful completion of a one-day training workshop, held Thursday, November 16, 2017, prior to the ACTFL

Convention, individuals will be assigned by CAEP to a three-person program review team. One member of the team is designated the lead reviewer and is responsible for compiling the program report for submission to ACTFL/CAEP. The entire review is conducted online. No travel is required. Reviewers agree to participate in at least one review per semester.

#### Who may apply:

- Educators from schools
- Professors, adjuncts, instructors, or lecturers at universities or colleges (departments of education or departments of languages, cultures, and literatures or related departments).

Program reviewers should reflect a range of language, ethnic, and experiential backgrounds.

#### Term of service:

- 3 years, renewable based on satisfactory performance and updated training.

#### How to apply:

- Apply online at the ACTFL website: [www.actfl.org/assessment-professional-development](http://www.actfl.org/assessment-professional-development).
- You will be asked to upload an abbreviated CV and two letters of recommendation.

For further information: Contact Teresa Bell at [caep@actfl.org](mailto:caep@actfl.org)

## ACTFL/CAEP Program Reviewer Workshop

Writing and Reviewing the ACTFL/CAEP Teacher Preparation Report

Presenters: ACTFL Coordinator with CAEP, members of the Audit Team, and a CAEP staff member

Date and Time: Thursday, November 16, 2017

Program Report Writers: 9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

Program Reviewers: 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

Location: Omni Hotel, Nashville

This workshop will examine the ACTFL/CAEP Report as it is written by faculty members in programs that prepare world language teachers and as it is reviewed by ACTFL reviewers. Participants who are faced with the task of writing their program's report will view the report components in detail, learning what constitutes a successful report leading to national recognition from ACTFL. Participants who are interested in becoming reviewers of reports will learn how to analyze and review a submitted report in order to determine the appropriate recognition decision and provide support to the program. In the morning period (9:00–12:00), the workshop will focus on how to write the report. From 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., the workshop will focus

on reviewer education with hands-on work with actual reports. Potential program reviewers will spend all day in the workshop. A box lunch will be provided for potential program reviewers.

The full-day Program Reviewer Workshop is open only to those who have applied or plan to apply to be ACTFL/CAEP Program Reviewers. The morning Program Writers' Workshop is open to anyone who wants to learn how to write the ACTFL/CAEP Program Report.

Potential reviewers should apply online at the ACTFL website. Following a screening process, applicants will be notified of their acceptance into the workshop. Following the workshop, participants will be expected to review at least one program in the fall and spring review cycles.

The workshop is free; there is no paid compensation for reviewers. There is no registration fee for this workshop. ACTFL is unable to provide funds for travel, lodging, or meals.

Learn more at [www.actfl.org/assessment-professional-development](http://www.actfl.org/assessment-professional-development).



## ACTFL Releases 2016 Annual Report



**ACTFL** has released its Annual Report for 2016, sharing how the organization served the language community last year. The report contains:

- A letter from the President and the Executive Director
- A recap of the 50th anniversary celebration and the ACTFL Annual Convention and World Languages Expo
- An overview of programs & services, with performance metrics
- An explanation of the new membership structure
- Metrics on ACTFL's community engagement
- ACTFL's 2016 financials
- Full list of staff and board members

Access the Annual Report at [tinyurl.com/actflreport2016](http://tinyurl.com/actflreport2016).

## Mark Your Calendar Now for Future ACTFL Conventions

- November 17–19, 2017** Music City Center, Nashville, TN
- November 16–18, 2018** Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, New Orleans, LA
- November 22–24, 2019** Walter E. Washington Convention Center and Washington Marriott Marquis Hotel, Washington, DC
- November 20–22, 2020** Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center and Grand Hyatt Hotel, San Antonio, TX

**Looking for a new position or want to add an exceptional language professional to your team?**

Don't forget to check the **ACTFL Job Central Career Center** for language education listings. Job seekers can browse, explore, save jobs, and get job alerts. Employers can upload information about open positions. ACTFL Job Central offers professional services to help job seekers build and manage their careers for maximum potential for success, including a career learning center, reference checking, résumé writing, and career coaching. Learn more at [jobcentral.actfl.org](http://jobcentral.actfl.org).



## Register Now for ACTFL 2017 in Nashville

Registration is open for the 2017 ACTFL Annual Convention in Nashville, TN.

Make note of these important dates:

Housing Deadline.....	October 23	Pre-Convention Workshops...	November 16
Registration Deadline.....	October 25	Convention .....	November 17–19

Find out everything you need to know about this exciting professional development opportunity on the ACTFL website: [www.actfl.org/convention-expo](http://www.actfl.org/convention-expo) and on p. 12 of this issue. Access the 2017 Online Convention Program here: [tinyurl.com/2017actflconventionprogram](http://tinyurl.com/2017actflconventionprogram).

 **ACTFL**  
**ANNUAL CONVENTION & WORLD LANGUAGES EXPO**  
**NASHVILLE NOV. 17–19 2017**



# Interview

with ACTFL Keynote Speaker  
**Bill Weir**



*On behalf of the more than 13,000 ACTFL members and the ACTFL Board of Directors, we thank you for speaking with us here in advance of your keynote address at our 2017 Annual Convention in November. We look forward to welcoming you in Nashville, Tennessee!*

**Thanks! I'm honored to be a part of the convention experience!**

## Q&A

**Q:** You have had a distinguished career as a journalist, covering stories that have taken you all over the globe. Naturally, in reporting on world events, the aim is to get the story as complete, accurate, and nuanced as possible. Do you have any thoughts about the difference between relying on an interpreter for communication as opposed to being able to communicate directly with the subject being interviewed?

**A:** I'm lucky enough to travel the globe with a small band of shooter/producers and on more than one occasion we have sat around an exotic watering hole debating the following question: "What superpower would be most advantageous to this job?" My friends always make good arguments for human flight or time travel but as the interviewer and storyteller of the group, I always opt for the ability to speak every language. Great interpreters have saved my skin and my story on multiple occasions, but my gratitude comes with a self-loathing frustration over all the details that are inevitably lost in translation. The way a person makes a joke or conjugates a verb tells us so much more than the words on a transcript or subtitle. But unlike human flight or time travel, this is one superpower that is actually attainable! (With a little hard work and the help of an ACTFL member, of course.)

**Q:** In 2015, you began your show, "The Wonder List with Bill Weir," which allows you to visit locations all over the world—not just to fly in and out quickly—but instead to spend considerable time getting to know people and immersing yourself in the local culture. We language educators probably know better than anyone the inextricable link between language and culture. What would you say about the importance of appreciating diverse cultural perspectives to truly understand a place and its people?

**A:** I have a daughter who will turn my age in the year 2050, so I often wonder: On her 50th birthday, how many elephants will be left in the wild? How many glaciers in the Alps? How many undeveloped islands in the South Pacific? These questions launched "The Wonder List," but in the quest to answer them I quickly learned that I couldn't tell stories of global change without a heart full of empathy and a head full of cultural understanding. From the fate of the tiger in India to the race to save a drowning Venice to the political divide in the United States, so much comes down to the way people work and play, live, and worship. And at the heart of it all is language.

Take Madagascar. It's impossible to understand this exotic and heartbreaking land without first understanding their system of supernatural taboos called "fady." Egypt doesn't make sense until you figure out the rivalry between Alexandria and Cairo and their distinctive brands of humor. Every destination has a similar puzzle to solve.

**Q:** How valuable do you think a knowledge of other languages is for a student pursuing a career in journalism today? Do you see other related careers where language learning is an advantage?

**A:** I once worked in a newsroom where someone pinned up a quote from Humphrey Bogart's character in *Deadline U.S.A.*: "If you can write, there is hope for you," it read. "If you can't, find the door." To modernize that sentiment, if you can write and report, you'll never go hungry and if you can write and report in multiple languages, you'll eat well. It's hard to overstate the premium placed on an American journalist proficient in another language in these globalized, complicated times and I'm sure the same applies to those in finance or fashion. But as a reporter, a multilingual mind can save your life in a hot spot or maybe even help uncover a story that changes the world.

**Q:** The stereotype of Americans around the world is that we are all monolingual in English and expect others to speak our language. What examples have you seen of America's inability to communicate with and understand people around the world? What steps do we need to take to overcome this challenge?

**A:** Much to my family's chagrin, I once pulled a very loud American woman aside in a gelato shop in Florence. She didn't understand that she had to pay the cashier before getting her ice cream and was rudely lecturing everyone in earshot her displeasure with the system. "They've been selling gelato around here since the U.S.A. was wilderness," I whispered to her. "How about we try to go with their flow?" It's easy to dismiss her behavior as Ugly Americanism but if I employ the same code of empathy I use in foreign lands, I can see why she acted this way. She comes from a culture where the customer is always right. She speaks a language and carries a currency long envied by most of humanity, so as an American, she is used to getting her way. But as the richest, most powerful society in human history, I believe Americans carry a responsibility to tread lightly as guests in foreign lands. Some of my favorite travel moments came when I took the time to ask the housekeeper or bartender, "What was life like before we showed up?" For the average tourist, that may be a step outside of the comfort zone. Learning local phrases is an even bigger ask. But the payoff in human connection is incalculable.

**Q:** ACTFL is the largest association serving all language educators in the United States and a leader in advocating the importance of language education. As part of our mission of advocacy, we recently launched a nationwide campaign, **Lead with Languages** ([www.leadwithlanguages.org](http://www.leadwithlanguages.org)), which seeks to raise awareness across the country and to motivate people to take action around the rapidly rising importance of language skills to a wide array of careers—and to our nation's economy, national security, and international standing.

Our ultimate goal is to inspire a new generation of Americans competent in other languages and cultures and fully equipped to compete and succeed in a global economy. With your background in television, you are no doubt very savvy in how to craft an effective message for the greater public. Do you have any advice on how we can best spread the word on a larger scale of how language learning opens a world of opportunities?

**A:** I'm a big believer in the power of a good story, well told. From cave walls to movie screens, humans have used hero quests and love stories to make sense of the human condition. We crave stories that roil our emotions and leave us inspired. I'd encourage your members to share their most poignant personal stories on the rewards that come with learning a new language. The best could be produced into viral-worthy digital shorts, perfect for social media. For many, the idea of learning a new language evokes dry vocabulary lists to memorize and stumbling moments of public embarrassment to suffer through. The right story can shift the association from pain to reward. After all, a new language is the one investment that benefits brain, heart and soul and can even make the world a slightly better place.

**Don't miss the keynote address on Friday, November 17 at the ACTFL Convention in Nashville!**

**Learn more about Bill Weir and his CNN program, "The Wonder List"**

[www.cnn.com/shows/wonder-list](http://www.cnn.com/shows/wonder-list)

**Check out Success Stories of language learning**

[www.leadwithlanguages.org/success-stories](http://www.leadwithlanguages.org/success-stories)

**LEAD**  
with LANGUAGES

# Using the Newly Revised Can-Do Statements to Make Learning Transparent

BY JESSICA HAXHI AND JACQUE BOTT VAN HOUTEN

Access the newest version of the Can-Do Statements at [actfl.org/global\\_statements](http://actfl.org/global_statements).

**T**he newly revised NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements offer language educators a user-friendly tool for a variety of planning, instruction, assessment, and professional development needs. The National Council of State Supervisors of Languages (NCSSFL) originally introduced Can-Do Statements in 2002 through the groundbreaking *LinguaFolio*, a U.S. version of the Common European Framework of Reference, meant to make language learning transparent and empower the learner to set goals and chart progress. Subsequently, the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements helped learners and educators gain a greater understanding of the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines, while also serving as a way to steer lesson and unit planning toward a more performance-based outcome.

As the Can-Dos were used, educators gained insights into how to improve the document to address new areas of need (e.g., clarification for educators/learners to focus on language functions and how they progress across the sub-levels of the scale).

This newest revision of the Can-Do Statements strives to be even more accessible to learners and educators. It is enhanced by the addition of the equally new NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements for Intercultural Communication. The document is organized by modes of communication, with three layers of increasing detail. Benchmarks define the general characteristics of each proficiency level. (Novice, Intermediate, Advanced, Superior, and Distinguished). Indicators at each sub-level (Novice Low/Mid/High, Intermediate Low/Mid/High, etc.) are listed for each Benchmark. The Indicators are introduced by questions related to functions derived from the three Communication standards of the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages. The Indicators show a clear progression of each function up the proficiency scale by addressing text type, topic familiarity, and discourse type. Examples under each indicator allow both educators and learners to place themselves in the document by suggesting what new functional tasks at each sub-level might look like to fit the context of the learning situation (e.g., early language learner, immersion student, adult learner).

The NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements have many applications for both language education and those learning independently. As a deconstruction of the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages, they show what the ACTFL Performance Descriptors look like in action and what the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines describe as sustained performance. To support effective use of the tool, the box on the following page describes what this document “is” and “is not.”

*Presentational Communication*

**INTERMEDIATE Benchmark**

I can communicate information, make presentations, and express my thoughts about familiar topics, using sentences and series of connected sentences through spoken, written, or signed language.

**INTERMEDIATE Presentational Indicators**

How can I present information to narrate about my life, experiences and events?

LOW	MID	HIGH
I can present personal information about my life, activities and events, using simple sentences.	I can tell a story about my life, activities, events and other social experiences, using sentences and series of connected sentences.	I can tell stories about school and community events and personal experiences, using a few short paragraphs, often across various time frames.

*Presentational Examples*

How can I present information to narrate about my life, experiences and events?

**Speaking or Signing**

I can retell a story that I've read or heard.  
I can narrate the steps of an experiment I conducted.

I can talk about an experience related to my hobbies or activities.  
I can describe plans for an upcoming work experience.

I can present a comparison between the roles of family members in my own and other cultures.  
I can present my hypothesis about what will happen in a science experiment and provide supporting information.

**Writing**

I can write my plans for an upcoming holiday, vacation, or a typical celebration.  
I can write about events that took place at school, in a workplace, or in a place I have visited.

I can write a simple story about a recent trip, project or childhood memory.  
I can write about personal, academic, or professional goals for a college or job application.

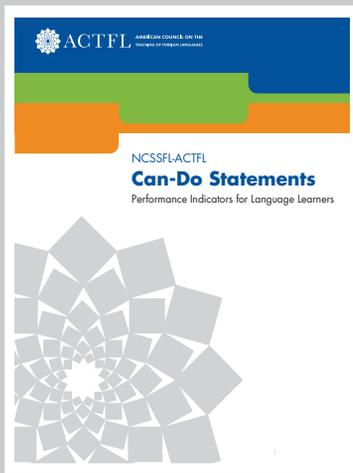
I can write a description of an event that I participated in or witnessed for a newsletter.  
I can write a series of simple predictions about consequences of a particular action or practice for a community or school blog.

What this tool IS	What this tool IS NOT
<p><b>Performance indicators for learners to demonstrate consistently over time</b></p> <p>Learners need to demonstrate their evidence of what they "can do" in each mode at each sub-level, with increasing consistency in numerous situations throughout the learning process.</p>	<p><b>NOT a checklist of tasks to be demonstrated once and checked off</b></p> <p>It is not sufficient for the learner to show evidence of the indicator in just one specific situation; the examples illustrate how the learner might demonstrate each mode of communication through a wide variety of evidence of each indicator at each sub-level.</p>
<p><b>A set of indicators (illustrated by examples) that can be adapted to school, district, or postsecondary curriculum as well as independent learning goals</b></p> <p>The Can-Do Statements are meant to be adapted to individual learning contexts. They include open-ended "I can . . ." statements for learners and educators to customize in order to fit the content and context of the learning and the targeted proficiency level.</p>	<p><b>NOT a prescribed curriculum</b></p> <p>The Can-Do Statements include examples of communicative performance to adapt or modify for local curricula; they are not intended to provide ready-made lessons. The examples provided do not claim to be exhaustive or specific to a level of schooling.</p>
<p><b>A starting point for self-assessment, goal-setting, and the creation of rubrics for performance-based grading</b></p> <p>Learners and educators use the statements for self-evaluation to become more aware of what they know and can do in the target language. By using statements aligned to the proficiency scale, educators can more easily create rubrics that enable learners to chart their progress.</p>	<p><b>NOT an instrument for determining a letter or number grade</b></p> <p>Growth in acquiring a language is measured over time when tasks are integrated into performance assessments and evaluated using rubrics based on the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines.</p>

**Setting Proficiency Targets**

From an educational perspective in the age of accountability, outcomes need to be measurable. From a learner perspective, end goals need to be clear, specific, and achievable in a timely manner, and in the case of language, functional in real life. Using the Can-Do Statements achieves all of these objectives. From the state, to the learning

institution, to the classroom or the learner, the Can-Do Benchmarks, Indicators, and even Examples can be used to set proficiency targets. Many states already use terminology from the ACTFL Proficiency Scale in their course code descriptions, identifying learning targets of a range across sublevels or a specific level or sublevel. Can-Do



Using the NCSSEFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements in a fully articulated system:

**States** would set proficiency target expectations within their course codes for different levels and sequences of language study, to guide districts in organizing their programs and in setting policy for performance-based granting of credit.

**Universities** would develop entrance and exit requirements based on proficiency levels and set proficiency targets for their language courses. They would encourage learners to set learning goals, particularly in online learning situations, and grant credit for consistent demonstration. Teacher preparation courses would show educators how to use the Can-Do Statements to set learning targets, design units, plan lessons, and create assessments and rubrics for evaluating learners' performance.

**Districts and schools** would set proficiency targets for graduation, design curriculum and units based on Can-Do Benchmarks and Indicators and provide professional learning for educators on how to move learners up the proficiency levels. Educators would collaborate to design end-of-unit or end-of-course assessments to provide evidence of learners independently and consistently demonstrating the targeted level of proficiency.

**Schools** would provide time for professional learning communities (PLCs) for language educators to review and analyze evidence of learning and collaborate on assessment design. Schools would set policies to determine criteria for performance-based credit.

**Educators** would set daily learning targets and incorporate the Statements in lesson assessment, and rubric design to make learning transparent to students every day. Educators would assist learners to realize what learners can do with language, how to set goals, and what to do to improve.

**Learners** would set learning goals and regularly chart their own progress toward those goals. Through reflection they would identify what it takes to advance their language and intercultural proficiency in order to function at a higher level.

wording from the Benchmarks and Indicators can clarify the code description even more, standardizing definitions of proficiency across program types and helping to inform those outside of language education how the focus of language learning has evolved. Using the Can-Do Indicators to set end-of-grade-level or end-of-course outcomes guides the organization of curricula and personal teaching and learning toward language usage rather than mastery of grammar. Unit and lesson design can employ indicators and use or adapt the Can-Do Examples to define their targets.

## Setting Student Learning Objectives

The Indicators in the NCSSEFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements may also be used to guide educators in setting student learning objectives (SLOs), as required by many teacher evaluation programs within school districts. The SLOs might be based on year-end proficiency targets as defined via the Can-Do Statements. Educators can choose specific indicators from which to create SMART (Specific, Measurable Achievable, Relevant, Time-Bound) goals as well. Educators may collect data from a variety of assessments throughout the year to gather evidence of student performance against the target Indicator(s). Some school districts may also allow for student self-assessment against the Can-Do Statements at various points throughout the year to be used as a measure of SLOs. The reader-friendly nature of the language of the statements allows both administrators and learners to fully-understand the SLOs as the educator presents them for evaluation purposes.

## Setting Individual Learner Goals

As learning becomes more learner-directed through school initiatives, online classes, or personal apps, a structured way to show growth and motivate continued effort is essential. The Can-Do Statements provide the steps on this incremental performance path. With help from educators showing early learners how to set goals and assess what they can do with language, learners can set their own short and long-term goals. In classes, learners can personalize their lesson goals by adapting the learning tasks to create new goals to fit their interests and needs. When they are at ease with continuous demonstration of a goal, they can look to the Indicators and Examples to see what is needed to reach the next level, thus developing a clearer understanding of how to move from one proficiency sublevel to the next.

## Creating Rubrics

When assessments have been created based on targets and unit objectives set using the Can-Do Statements, rubrics for those assessments flow naturally and tie the learning together, such as the one featured in the Elementary Learning Scenario on p. 25-26. Educators might choose to use their Target Indicator as the "competent" rating and then use the Indicator one proficiency sublevel higher as "exceeds" and the one lower as "near target." Educators might also use the Indicator as a guide for creating a more detailed rubric that includes common criteria such as comprehensibility, comprehension, vocabulary use, accuracy, or communication strategies, as well

as task-specific measures. During the rubric implementation process, however, educators and learners must keep in mind that one single performance at a given proficiency level does not put a learner solidly at that level. What is needed is a series of performances at that level throughout the year and across a range of tasks and topics as well as increasingly independent of the educator's support to provide evidence that the learner is demonstrating the given level.

### Informing Unit and Lesson Goals and Assessment

The indicators in the Can-Do Statements may be taken as-is or modified for specificity when creating unit and lesson goals, as educators have done in the learning scenarios (see p. 24-26). This practice aids in keeping educators focused on proficiency targets while allowing for a range of real-world contexts and themes via modification of the indicators. For each unit, educators can choose one or more indicators in each mode of communication (Interpersonal, Interpretive, Presentational) and use those indicators to guide creation of unit assessments, such as in ACTFL's Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA) model. The examples may also offer ideas for assessments appropriate to the proficiency level and can spark new ideas for lesson activities well beyond those provided.

### Used to Guide Professional Development

The grid of the Can-Do Statements (Benchmarks and Indicators) offers a big-picture view for defining each proficiency level and talking about how to assist learners in progressing up the levels. In state, district, school, and classroom meetings, educators can use the benchmarks of the Can-Dos, as well as the sample videos and written work on the Proficiency Guidelines page on the ACTFL website ([www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/actfl-proficiency-guidelines-2012](http://www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/actfl-proficiency-guidelines-2012)) to gain a deeper understanding of the characteristics of each proficiency level. Then, educators can use the sub-level Indicators to brainstorm ways to move students up the proficiency levels. They can also discuss how to build assessments that provide evidence that a student is reaching a particular level. For example, in order to move students from Novice to Intermediate, classroom activities and assessments must encourage and provide opportunities for students to speak at the sentence level when the situation authentically requires it and to ask questions. The specificity and comprehensiveness of the new Can-Do Statements demonstrate where these key transitions need to occur.

### Teacher Education

The number of postsecondary institutions that are using Can-Dos to set their own targets is growing. The more widespread the use of Can-Do Statements becomes, the more important it is for students in teacher preparation programs to see them modeled in their own university language classes and to be informed of the strategies for implementing the Statements in their methods classes. Keeping the wide variety of learners in mind, creators of the tool took care to craft examples of learning activities or assessments that were relevant to adults as well as K–12 learners, so adapting statements to the university context should not be difficult.

### Deeper Learning

As education slowly begins to move away from a total focus on accountability to an emphasis on the whole child through deeper learning, mastery-based learning, and learner autonomy through metacognitive awareness, language educators will find the revised NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements a helpful tool. Using it facilitates the first step in a shift toward a focus on functional language and performance. The second step involves incorporating the cultural context in which language learning always takes place. The new NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements for Intercultural Communication (IC) guides educators and learners through this next key transition and offers a fuller view of how to implement and integrate the Communication and Cultures standards. The Can-Do IC Statements show what learners can do to demonstrate how much they understand about their own and others' cultural products, practices and perspectives through their learned language(s).

The Language Can-Dos deconstruct the Communication's Interpersonal, Interpretive, and Presentational standards through Benchmarks and Indicators that use the same terminology (e.g., negotiate meaning; interpret and analyze; present information, concepts . . . to explain, persuade . . .). The Intercultural Can-Dos also use wording that mirrors the Cultures Standards: Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the relationship between cultural practices and perspectives and between cultural products and perspectives. Both sets of Can-Do Statements provide illustrative examples and both are organized under proficiency headings. There are differences between the tools. Every IC Can-Do example is set within a cultural context. For example, Intermediate Low: "In my own and other cultures I can compare school/learning environments and curricula to determine what is valued." Descriptions of demonstrations of proficiency are provided only for levels (Novice, Intermediate, Advanced), not sublevels (Low, Mid, or High).

The IC tool includes a reflective piece with sample activities to offer educators a glimpse of how they might use the Can-Dos, integrate language and culture, and foster interculturality within their classes. These complementary Can-Do tools provide a scaffolded approach to understanding and implementing a standards- and performance-to-proficiency-based approach to teaching and learning.

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The revised language Can-Do Statements were the year-long work of a writing team spearheaded by State Supervisors Kathy Shelton (OH) and Lisa Harris (VA) and ACTFL Director of Education Paul Sandrock. Members included: Ruta Couet (SC), Lynn Fulton-Archer (DE), Jessica Haxhi (CT), Ali Moeller (NE), Debbie Nicholson (WV), Christina Oh (VA), Fernando Rubio (UT), Thomas Sauer (KY), and Jacque Bott Van Houten (KY). Cindy Martin and Arnold Bleicher, ACTFL OPI raters and trainers, served as advisors. The writing team met face-to-face three times and collaborated online over a nine-month period. Once a draft was developed, feedback was provided by over 470 professionals through an online survey and focus groups.

The scenarios shown here illustrate how the Can-Do Statements might be applied in real-world classrooms.

## High School Scenario

Second-year language learners, like other students in their high school, are encouraged to volunteer or do service learning projects. Because many are unaware of the international population in their community or the global agencies that exist and offer opportunities for interaction or service, their teacher has suggested they explore the situation in a project-based learning (PBL) unit.

PBL starts with a problem, so through a brainstorming activity they decide to address: “How can I use the target language to interact with or serve others in my or the global community?” Each learner will share what he or she learns through a gallery-walk type of presentation, supported by visuals of the learner’s choosing (e.g., multimedia, poster, etc.), so that everyone can become aware of the variety of opportunities available.

The students are trying to transition from Novice High proficiency to Intermediate Low, the course target, so the focus will be on getting them to broaden their vocabulary topic areas and communicate and ask questions in unrehearsed sentence length speech and text. They will also be striving to identify main ideas and some other pieces of information from what they read and hear.

Because PBL is a student-directed effort, the teacher uses NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Indicator Statements for broad unit goals and rubrics, and, since learners are somewhat familiar with “I Can” goals from their teacher’s daily postings, the learners create their own Can-Do learning task statements. During a lesson early in the unit, the teacher models how to *adapt* the statements to fit the learners’ particular needs in acquiring new vocabulary for thinking about and researching volunteer opportunities. Later, the teacher models how to *create* new Can-Do learning tasks that align to the Benchmarks and Indicators (e.g., text type, audience), but whose contexts are specific to the individual.

### Teacher’s Goals

Interpersonal:

- I can request and provide information on familiar topics by creating questions and simple sentences.

Presentational:

- I can present on familiar and everyday topics, using simple sentences.

Interpretive:

- I can identify the topic and related information from simple sentences in short informational texts.

### Early Lesson Teacher Modeling

To prepare the learners for their topic exploration, the teacher writes a Can-Do Learning Task on the board and shares how she adapted it from the original:

Intermediate Low Interpersonal Example – Meet Needs – Writing/Reading:

I can interact online with a ~~hotel agent~~ **community agency** to inquire about ~~their pet policy~~ **volunteer opportunities**.

Because the learners will have to contact the various agencies to gain information, the teacher then has them form groups and brainstorm categorized questions about what they would need to ask about. She has the learners work in groups to write questions on sticky notes and post them on large posters under the headings of Logistics (hours of operation, location, contact information, names of directors), Purpose (audience, activities, events), and Your Involvement.

Then, the teacher has learners think about the process they will need to go through to find and present the information on volunteering at a community/global agency and asks them to look at the list of NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do statements, choosing ones they feel will be appropriate to their own work and adapting them as goals to guide the process.

Learners work individually or collaboratively to identify the resources and information they need to present information (a solution) about where and how to volunteer and analyze that solution to decide how they personally will volunteer. They share the information in the gallery walk and later reflect on the process, self-assessing their language performance on the self-created Can-Do Statements.

The focus will be on getting learners to broaden their vocabulary topic areas and communicate and ask questions in unrehearsed sentence length speech and text. They will also be striving to identify main ideas and some other pieces of information from what they read and hear.

Example of Learner’s Can-Do Adaptations

Intermediate Low	NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Examples	ADAPTED Can-Do Learning Task
<b>Interpretive</b> Main idea Pieces of information Familiar topics	I can understand some information on job postings.	I can understand some information <i>about a volunteer agency from a brochure or website.</i>
<b>Interpersonal</b> Unrehearsed Simple sentences Familiar topics	I can participate in a conversation to compare classes and sports with peers at a partner school.	I can ask and respond to questions to explore <i>what a community/global agency does, who it serves, and how I might volunteer there.</i>
<b>Presentational</b> Simple Sentences Familiar topics	I can present a brief summary of something from a book I’ve read.	I can present a brief summary of <i>information I’ve read about a community/global agency and what opportunities it offers to volunteer.</i>
	I can state multi-step instructions for completing a process, such as preparing a recipe.	I can state multi-step instructions for <i>offering/applying to volunteer.</i>
	I can give a series of reasons why an art or music style is appealing to me.	I can give a series of reasons why <i>a particular volunteer opportunity is appealing to me.</i>
	I can give a presentation recommending something I like, such as a movie, television show, famous athlete, celebrity, or historical figure.	I can give a presentation recommending <i>a particular community/global agency as a service learning opportunity.</i>

Elementary Level Scenario: Unit Example

Background

Students in a fifth-grade class have been learning Japanese three times a week for 30 minutes since third grade. The teacher is focused on developing their proficiency through engaging and real-world use of vocabulary, phrases, and simple sentences. While many of the class activities are at the Novice Mid level, her goal this year is to move students to Novice High tasks within each unit and she plans her lessons accordingly. She uses the new NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements to guide her planning. She has chosen these Can-Do Statements as objectives for a six-week long “Let’s Eat!” unit [specifics of the unit in *italics*].

Interpersonal:

- I can interact with others to meet my basic needs related to routine everyday activities, using simple sentences and questions most of the time: *ordering food, asking prices, asking “do you have \_\_\_\_\_?”*

- I can express, ask about, and react to preferences, opinions, or feelings on familiar topics, using simple sentences most of the time and asking questions to keep the conversation on topic: *likes/dislikes of foods.*

Interpretive:

- I can identify the topic and some isolated facts from simple sentences in informational texts: *fast food chain commercials, restaurant menus.*

Presentational:

- I can express my preferences on familiar and everyday topics of interest, using simple sentences most of the time: *my likes/dislikes of foods and restaurants.*
- I can present on familiar and everyday topics, using simple sentences most of the time: *my favorite restaurant and the foods they have there.*

### Unit Sequence

The unit begins with a variety of activities introducing Japanese foods with visuals and discussing likes and dislikes. Students learn to recognize Japanese written words for the foods through matching and copying activities and games. They watch a variety of restaurant commercials and name the foods they see. They simulate purchases with Japanese money and talk about what various foods cost while finding them on authentic menus.

As an Interpretive assessment, the teacher shows students a new authentic menu and restaurant commercial. Students answer questions in English about the type of restaurant each might be, prices, and foods are served there. The teacher uses their results to inform further review and extension activities.

For Interpersonal assessments, students work in pairs to complete an information gap about likes/dislikes of foods and restaurants while the teacher walks around and scores by rubric. Later in the unit, students take turns coming up to the teacher’s “restaurant” to order foods, respond to her follow-up questions about their “meal,” and pay appropriately, as she scores. The rubric for that task is presented in the box below.

Novice High is set as the target for learners’ language performance. The teacher has provided learners with numerous opportunities to practice the type of interaction needed to produce Novice High language in an Interpersonal interaction. The teacher designed the task to provide learners the opportunity to demonstrate Novice

High language. Weak or minimal evidence of Novice High language is labeled “Near Target” and “Emerging” and characteristics that exceed the target, with some evidence of Intermediate level language, are labeled “Above Target.” Note that weaker or stronger performance is not sufficient evidence to say that learners are at the Novice Low, Novice Mid, or Intermediate Low level; they are simply below or above the targeted level of Novice High. Consistent and independent demonstration of Novice High language is the target.

As a Presentational assessment, each student is asked to convince the class to come to a new Japanese restaurant. The students must name the foods at their restaurant (*It has \_\_\_\_\_*), talk about which ones they like the best (*I love the tempura!*), talk about some of the prices (*It costs \_\_\_\_\_*), and say at least one learned extra expression about the restaurant (*It’s the most delicious!*). Some students choose to do this with a poster, others create fake Japanese foods from clay, while others record videos at home to show to the class. Students peer score as they watch one another’s presentations and give feedback about both language performance and impact of the presentation.

As a unit wrap-up, the teacher passes out the ACTFL Can-Do Statements related to the unit and has students self-assess using the choices of *Yes I Can Do This*, *Can Do With Help*, or *Not Yet*. The teacher gathers this data with her own observations of student work to inform instruction in the next unit.

### Rubric—Interpersonal Assessment

	4 - Above Target	3 - Target (Novice High Performance)	2 - Near Target	1 - Emerging
What type of language do I use to accomplish this task?	I consistently use simple sentences, when appropriate, and a variety of vocabulary, to order and discuss my meal.	I use simple sentences when appropriate, with sufficient and appropriate vocabulary most of the time to order and discuss my meal.	I use a mixture of practiced or memorized words and phrases, to order my meal.	I can use a few practiced or memorized words and phrases, to identify some of my meal.
How well do I interact in the conversation?	I consistently interact with my conversation partner to accomplish the task.	I interact enough with my conversation partner to accomplish the task.	I express basic needs.	I express some basic needs.

The teacher is focused on developing learners’ proficiency through engaging and real-world use of vocabulary, phrases, and simple sentences.

**ACTFL Congratulates** the Regional Finalists for the

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# ACTFL at 50

## Outreach and Advocacy

### EDITOR'S NOTE:

As we celebrate 50 years of ACTFL this year, we focus here on an important part of our shared history with a look at some key milestones in outreach and advocacy. To learn more about our 50-year history, check out *A History of ACTFL* by Robert Terry, available from ACTFL now.

**“Leadership is paralyzed without a well-informed public that embraces all citizens.”**

—Chairman James A. Perkins in a letter to President Jimmy Carter, accompanying the report, “Strength Through Wisdom: A Critique of U.S. Capability” (1979)

### 1972

- The Joint National Committee for Languages (JNCL) is launched by ACTFL and other collaborating organizations with the main purpose of “implementation of a continuing movement in favor of learning foreign languages in the United States, as well as the sponsorship of special projects to improve and enhance the teaching of these languages.”

### 1975

- An early public awareness effort from the JNCL involved distributing a set of cassette recordings of famous personalities who spoke of the value of second language study. These tapes were used both in radio publicity spots as well as classroom materials.

### 1977

- The ACTFL Public Relations Committee produced a packet of materials that could be widely distributed to help celebrate Foreign Language Week.

### 1978

- A dynamic public awareness effort by all associated with foreign language education began, as a result of the President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies.

### 1979

- “An ACTFL Position Paper: Foreign Language and International Education in the Twenty-First Century” was issued at the request of Chairman James Perkins and submitted to the members of the President's Commission.
- “Strength Through Wisdom: A Critique of U.S. Capability” was presented to President Jimmy Carter by the President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies.
- ACTFL helped fund LENGUA (Language Education Now for Global Understanding and Awareness), a national public awareness project to help raise consciousness of American parents to demand more foreign language instruction in schools.

### 1982

- ACTFL received funding from the Exxon Education Foundation to support the creation of Public Awareness Network for Foreign Language and International Studies, designed to collect and disseminate pertinent information on these issues.

### 1993

- In response to advocacy from ACTFL and the language community, foreign languages were formally included as a core subject in the version of the federal education reform bill, *Goals 2000*.

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## 1999

- ACTFL entered into an important initiative, “New Visions for Foreign Language Education” (later New Visions in Action), an effort to identify and implement the actions necessary to improve foreign language programs throughout the United States.

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## 2002

- Language and national security briefing held in Washington, DC, addressing the widespread, urgent need for more foreign language proficiency nationwide among U.S. citizens, especially in light of the events of September 11, 2001.
- ACTFL launches *The Year of Languages*, planned for 2005, endorsed by delegates at the Assembly of Delegates at the ACTFL Convention.

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## 2005

- The nationwide public awareness campaign, *2005: The Year of Languages*, solidified ACTFL as the leader of language education advocacy. The U.S House of Representatives, U.S. Senate, governors, and other government officials passed resolutions and proclamations recognizing 2005 as the Year of Languages. Public service announcements and special events were used to promote languages in a variety of creative ways throughout the year.

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## 2006

- First ACTFL National Language Teacher of the Year, Ken Stewart, represented the profession after having been named at the 2005 ACTFL Annual Convention and World Languages Expo.
- *Discover Languages*, ACTFL’s sustained promotional campaign built on the momentum coming out of *The Year of Languages* effort, was launched. February was declared as “*Discover Languages* Month.”

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## 2007

- ACTFL President Rita Oleksak testified on Capitol Hill before a Senate subcommittee that American national security and economic vitality were now closely tied to our foreign language capability. She stressed the need for a comprehensive, coordinated plan to expand and strengthen school-based foreign language education in the United States.

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## 2014

- Request sent by Congress to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (AAAS) to conduct a study on “how language learning influences economic growth, cultural diplomacy, the productivity of future generations, and fulfillment of all Americans.”

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## 2015

- Assembly of Delegates at the ACTFL Convention created Top Ten Advocacy Goals Defined by States, including: “Arrange for a meeting with State Legislative or Congressional Representatives,” “Advocate for State Supervisor for languages,” and “Develop a Biliteracy Seal Program for the High School Diploma.”

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## 2017

- American Academy of Arts and Sciences (AAAS) Commission on Language Learning published groundbreaking report, “America’s Languages: Investing in Language for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.”
- *Lead with Languages*, a new national multi-year public awareness campaign is launched by ACTFL, in conjunction with the release of the AAAS Commission report.



### Order Your Copy of *A History of ACTFL*

To celebrate ACTFL’s 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, former ACTFL President Robert M. Terry dove deep into our archives to craft a detailed and compelling history. Filled with photos and original documents, *A History of ACTFL* tells the story of how ACTFL went from an idea to a reality of the national association representing all language educators.

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# Empowering

## EDITOR'S NOTE:

In this issue, we present articles on the focus topic, "Empowering Learners." The submissions for this issue were blind reviewed by two education experts, in addition to staff from *The Language Educator* and ACTFL. We thank Linda Egnatz of Lincoln-Way West High School in New Lenox, IL, and Carrie Toth of Salem Community High School in Salem, IL, for writing an introduction to this important topic.



Want to discuss this topic further? Head over to *The Language Educator* Magazine group in the ACTFL Online Community ([tinyurl.com/the-language-educator](http://tinyurl.com/the-language-educator)).

**D** evelop the Dream

**I** nspire Independence

**V** isualize Each Learner's Needs

**E** ngage the Learner

**D** ifferentiate Instruction

**E** quip for the Task

**E** mpower and Evaluate

**P** ractice Toward Proficiency

Envision your learners successfully using their language skills outside of your classroom walls. Perhaps they will help a patient in a health clinic complete forms or share a medical need; perhaps they will access resources to learn new information and cultural perspectives; or perhaps they will come back from a family vacation and excitedly share how much they understood and were able to communicate. Empowered learners are not afraid to use language independently. They take risks that allow them to navigate the unfamiliar waters they encounter, growing their proficiency with each plunge. The question is: How can we prepare our students for these adventures?

As President and Past President of the Illinois Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, we recently had the privilege to lead our annual ICTFL Teacher Tour to Ecuador and the Galápagos Islands. We both excitedly prepared to "dive deep" into Ecuadorian culture. Carrie, a risk taker, dreamt of diving in the Galápagos and planned an underwater adventure.

*"For years I had told myself that I would get Open Water SCUBA Certification, but I never made it a top priority. When I enrolled in the ICTFL tour that included the Galápagos, the number one dive site in the world, I knew that there were no more excuses . . . I had to be certified. What began with me holding my instructor's hand every time I entered the water ended with me rolling backwards into choppy seas ready to 'dive deep' and discover what was under the surface."*  
(Carrie Toth)

As we, Linda and Carrie, introduce and frame this issue of *The Language Educator* focused on "Empowering Learners," we believe that **DIVE DEEP** is a great metaphor for motivating language users to understand the journey toward proficiency. As teachers ourselves, we know the intrinsic motivation and long-term commitment that comes when students reach tangible personal goals. If the dream is big enough, learners are willing to break the surface and discover the real purpose of language: communication.

So let's DIVE DEEP . . .

### Develop the Dream

Empowerment begins with a dream, a proficiency goal, a purposeful situation or a learning target. Learner-centered instruction means that unit design is borne from the learner's areas of interest—what they want to explore. The educator's role is to challenge and expand the learner's vision of how they will use the language to meet personal performance goals. Do you know what dreams are big enough to excite and move learners to take action? How do you help students discover their personal purposes within a standard unit? Can you assist students in breaking down big goals into steps and expand small goals into a longer-term vision? From the beginning, a SCUBA dive master sets the expectation that learners will work toward advanced certifications. Likewise, the language educator should plan for incremental learning experiences leading to higher levels of motivating language proficiency.

# Learners

BY LINDA EGNATZ AND CARRIE TOTH

## Inspire Independence

Creating independent learners is the educator's second task. It begins by uncovering our students' intrinsic motivation and determining how to scaffold language tasks and opportunities that push proficiency. Models are important and should begin to paint the picture of an independent language user. For example, a beginning diver needs the dive master to literally hold his or her hand, to check the regulator and monitor the remaining air. A more independent diver no longer requires the hands-on assistance of the dive master and can let go and enjoy the view, asking for help only when needed. Educators have to avoid hand-holding too long so that autonomy and competence can be developed. Learners are far more excited about communicating with and being understood by a native speaker than they are by any exam a teacher could create. It is like taking the training wheels off their first two-wheeler.

## Visualize Each Learner's Needs

The varied needs of today's learners are challenging. In a single classroom, the level of proficiency of learners is not uniform, a department's curriculum and resources vary, administrative policies frequently change and each learner comes to the classroom with a different world perspective and learning style. Similarly, each diver requires an individualized set of weights to help them maintain buoyancy under the water. There is no formula that determines how much weight a diver carries, the variable must be discovered through trial and error. In a proficiency-based language learning environment, the teacher can use a variety of strategies such as formative assessments to determine a student's individual performance. For example, Linda used a composition book for writing assessments in order to provide students ongoing feedback on what they did well or how they had improved, providing a challenge to dive deeper such as improving organization and sharing a comment on a weak area that was uniquely theirs. Like the diver, individualized feedback keeps lower level students afloat while enriching the experience for all.

## Engage the Learner

The language user is most engaged when there is a perceived high value or motivation to complete the task. Designing an instructional

experience that combines your passion and resources with the interests of the learner and current cultural themes can increase engagement and the excitement needed to persevere. Proficiency is only accomplished through practice—and practice in an authentic context provides relevance. The swimming pool, commonly used to teach SCUBA, does not inspire a diver in the same way as a coral reef does. Completing a task in the learning environment does not offer the same satisfaction as having a conversation with a native speaker or accessing authentic materials to hear, read, or view. As educators we must foster and facilitate these more meaningful and purposeful interactions. With today's technology and social media, these potential connections with other users of the language are more accessible than ever.

## Differentiate Instruction

Differentiating instruction so that all learners' needs are met is perhaps our biggest challenge. In addition to a huge disparity of language proficiency levels in a single classroom, today's educator must also provide documented accommodations for a wide variety of students' needs, including adaptation of both instruction and assessment. These educational *currents* press on teachers who may be evaluated based upon meeting these criteria and who may have to articulate how they plan for and deliver individualized content. Couple these school-wide, and sometimes legal, expectations with the desire of a language department to provide rich authentic resources, varied performance-based assessments, flexible rubrics that infuse risk with proficiency-based learning targets and even experienced teachers may feel like they're drowning. New divers, just like our novice language learners, when pressed by strong currents get nervous and go into panic mode. Like the dive master who teaches safety stops, the language instructor needs to include formative checks to measure comprehension and be willing to adjust a lesson or scaffold the task so the learner doesn't give up. Learners are willing to keep practicing when they feel successful, even if progress is only incremental. Too often, language students are lost after only two years of study, never getting to that Intermediate or "survival" level. When educators help learners focus on what they can do and chart their own progress through Can-Do Statements, both language proficiency and retention grow.

### Equip for the Task

As stated earlier, we need to inspire independence, but to realize dreams, learners must be equipped for the task. SCUBA divers require protective clothing, fins to propel them through the water, masks to see clearly, and most importantly an oxygen tank, breathing apparatus, and regulator. Similarly, language learners need a safe environment where they are encouraged to take risks, vocabulary and functional language chunks to communicate original messages, Can-Do Statements to clearly identify the next learning target and finally, critical communication strategies such as making inferences and using circumlocution. The 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom offers a variety of ways to access the target culture through technology and social media connections. Once equipped, the language learner's internal monitor begins to function, leading to more control over grammar and structures. Comparably, when the SCUBA diver learns buoyancy control, they can self-evaluate and self-correct to maintain their desired depth.

### Empower and Evaluate

A learner-focused environment flips the traditional paradigm in which the classroom teacher held all the power. The teacher chose the content and vocabulary, narrowly scripted the lesson and gave assessments that more frequently measured what students couldn't do rather than what they could do. Simply stated, the teacher held all the power. The 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom is one that gradually turns that power over to the learners, empowering them by providing proficiency descriptors and rubrics so they know where they are and where they can go. Learning is enhanced when practice activities are collaborative. The goal of language learning is, after all, communicative. Neither is diving a solo event; one always has a dive partner to help monitor, encourage, and assist. Language learners benefit from extended partner and group practice, student-directed project-based learning and co-constructed assessment in which peers partner to evaluate their performance based on descriptive rubrics and reflect on specific ways to improve. Practice and real-world-like assessments help learners understand how they will apply their learning in meaningful, relevant settings. Self-evaluation builds ownership of the learner's performance but also provides opportunity to reflect on their performance to celebrate growth and progress toward learning targets. Educators become more of a facilitator, coach, or cheerleader; our support lies in being able to equip, encourage, and excite.

### Practice Toward Proficiency

The transition to a proficiency-focused learning environment has had its challenges. Many of us were schooled in a grammar-based pedagogy that may have worked for us but left many language learners doing the dead-man's float—dropping out of the language program before they had enough practice to succeed. Insisting on accuracy sets students up to fail when, by definition, learners moving out of Novice-level proficiency into the Intermediate level will make errors when they create with language. Illinois is one of 28 states that

now offers graduating high school seniors a State Seal of Bilingual Proficiency to document a “level of language proficiency in English and another language.” In Illinois, this has become a great motivator for learners. In order to assist educators in school districts that have chosen to adopt the Seal, ICTFL offers full ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) Workshops each summer. Participants learn how a speaker's language proficiency can be rated by evaluating the following criteria illustrated with a tree as a visual metaphor:

**Vocabulary and Context** are the tree's roots. Vocabulary is necessary to communicate any message. Motivated learners must continue to grow their vocabulary and topics about which they can speak and encourage users to grow a personalized lexicon.

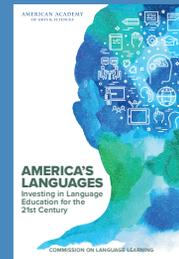
**Language Functions** are those tasks the user can do, such as asking questions, describing, or giving a past narration. These tasks form the trunk of the tree and will grow in complexity. Functions are our Can-Do Statements and form our learning targets.

**Text Type** describes the type of discourse (how much and how organized) the language user can produce or understand. Does the user just name items, use simple sentences, or construct complex paragraphs? Text type forms the branches: The user who makes lists or just uses memorized phrases has only a few scrawny branches, but the user of complex paragraphs has strong branches from which extend smaller branches and twigs. Educators can *foster* growth of a learner's text-type by asking novices to increase word count or number of sentences, challenging intermediates to expand the amount of description and detail provided or increasing the time requirements for language produced. Like the novice diver gradually increasing the depth of their dive certifications, Question Words (where, when, why, how, with whom) are seeds that invite elaboration and detail.

**Accuracy** is described as the leaves. Leaves can fall off, but the tree still lives. Likewise, a language user can make structural mistakes and still communicate the message. Learning a language, like learning how to SCUBA, requires meaningful practice to improve, but if learners wait for perfection to break the surface of the water, they'll miss the whole point of the activity. Instead, the educator has to continue to hold the dream aloft—articulating the vision so that the learner sees themselves using their skill in a variety of contexts—be it in a hospital with patients, in a business with clients, or while on vacation diving in the Galápagos Islands.

The goal of this issue is to provide you with examples of how to DIVE DEEP. Spend some time in *The Language Educator* pool to discover new insights and strategies that will help your students become more autonomous learners. As the new 2017–2018 academic year begins, envision your students taking more personal responsibility for their language learning. How might you design a cultural adventure that expands your students' horizons and encourages them to explore other cultures, even if only virtually? English poet, John Dryden, said, “He who would search for pearls must dive below.” So, take a deep breath and dive in!

# The Language Educator FOCUS TOPICS



Each of the four issues of *The Language Educator* in 2018 will include a “focus topic” section featuring article submissions coming from varied perspectives related to the topic—reflecting different levels, languages, methods, backgrounds, opinions, and experiences. The articles in this focus section will again be double-blind reviewed by two language education experts, in addition to *TLE* and ACTFL staff.

These focus topics will explore recommendations from the Commission on Language Learning of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences 2017 report, *America's Languages: Investing in Language Education for the 21st Century* ([www.amacad.org/language](http://www.amacad.org/language)). Contribute your stories and examples of how language educators are responding to this urgent national language crisis.

**If you are interested in submitting an article for an upcoming issue of *The Language Educator*, consider the following focus topics:**

## Jan | Feb 2018 Leading with Culture

Article submissions due:  
**OCT 1, 2017**

**AAAS Recommendation 5:** Promote opportunities for students to learn languages in other countries by experiencing other cultures and immersing themselves in multilingual environments.

Lead with culture and language will follow. Lead with learners’ motivation of engaging with the people, products, practices, and perspectives of another culture—and learners’ motivation is strengthened to develop language proficiency. “We learn to understand another culture and interact appropriately within it through the learning of its language for purposes of communication” (World-Readiness Standards). What works to develop learners as intermediaries between cultures and as cultural explorers—and to develop stronger intercultural communicative competence?

## We Invite Your Submissions!

### PLEASE NOTE:

- We urge you to submit original, previously unpublished articles for these issues directly on the ACTFL website at [www.actfl.org/publications/the-language-educator](http://www.actfl.org/publications/the-language-educator). You will find a link there allowing you to upload your article directly to the site for a specific issue, as well as more information about formatting and content.
- Only articles submitted for the focus topic sections will go through a peer-review process.
- If you would like to submit an article for consideration for *The Language Educator* that is **not** meant for a special focus topic section, please upload it here: [www.actfl.org/publications/all/the-language-educator/author-guidelines](http://www.actfl.org/publications/all/the-language-educator/author-guidelines).
- Focus topic articles, while peer-reviewed, should still follow *The Language Educator* Author Guidelines (available online) and should be written in the style of a magazine feature article, with direct quotes from multiple primary sources and intended to appeal to educators of all languages at all levels. They should not be narrowly focused research articles or dissertations with literature reviews, etc. Please do not submit a paper that is meant for an academic journal; we suggest you send these to *Foreign Language Annals* for consideration.

## Mar | Apr 2018 Supporting Heritage Learners

Article submissions due:  
**DEC 1, 2017**

**AAAS Recommendation 3:** Support heritage languages already spoken in the United States, and help those languages persist from one generation to the next.

**AAAS Recommendation 4:** Provide targeted support and programming for Native American languages as defined in the Native American Languages Act.

Language holds culture, provides identity, and links communities. How can we as language educators support native or heritage speakers? For many heritage learners, their language is not available for study or for credit within their school or university. What are the challenges and opportunities to develop heritage learners’ language skills to include communication within their family as well as a career asset? Share examples of supporting heritage language learners to achieve the Seal of Biliteracy in an increasing number of states.

## Aug | Sept 2018 Building Our Professional Capacity

Article submissions due:  
**MAY 1, 2018**

**AAAS Recommendation 1:** Increase the number of language teachers at all levels of education so that every child in every state has the opportunity to learn a language in addition to English.

Teacher recruitment and retention are critical issues facing our profession, with 44 states reporting shortages of language educators. How can we all reach out to bring in and support new language educators? At every level, communities and networks of educators are collaborating on unit and assessment design, exploring their practices, engaging in online discussions, and sharing resources. Advocacy is only as effective as the results demonstrated by learners, results focused on learners showing increasing language proficiency. What is effective to increase our professional capacity?

## Oct | Nov 2018 Leveraging Community Connections

Article submissions due:  
**JULY 1, 2018**

**AAAS Recommendation 2:** Supplement language instruction across the education system through public-private partnerships among schools, government, philanthropies, businesses, and local community members.

How are we making the case for languages in order to draw in a broader network of supporters? How are language programs made visible; how are programs proving their value to the local community? Partnerships are essential for long-term support. Tell others what is effective in creating, maintaining, and leveraging connections with communities beyond your institution.

# Reflection

BY BECKIE BRAY RANKIN

## EMPOWERS LEARNERS

In a world seemingly moving faster and faster, messages of mindfulness, awareness, and growth-mindset clash with time in the test-centered education environment in the United States. How can we make the most of every (educational) moment, linking experience and meaning to map onto future experience? By *reflecting*. As language educators, we are also asked to reflect on our practice, in order to grow from our mistakes and successes. Can we then be models for our students to do the same?

According to Costa and Kallick (2008): “Reflecting on work enhances its meaning.” When language educators and students invest time in reflection, students enhance not only the material reviewed, but also the process of learning. This engagement in the content and process can therefore be applied to future situations and transform future experiences. Dewey suggested that taking this awareness out of the classroom creates richer meaning, motivation, and empowerment—in and

through lifelong learning. Reflecting therefore not only encourages students to make meaning, but moves them from simple experience to “understanding of its relationships with and connections to other experiences and ideas.” (Rodgers, 2002). Instead of thinking of reflection as a one-step process that happens quickly at the end of a lesson or unit, let’s reframe to a different paradigm that not only affects teaching and learning, but also how one navigates circumstance:



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## ▶ Curiosity and Reflection

Let's take, for example, a unit in an Intermediate High French classroom on slam (spoken word) poetry. To motivate students, engage their curiosity in co-creating learner-created targets. After a brief overview of "*la poésie engagée*" [activist poetry], students create Can-Do Statements for their own communicative abilities, intercultural competencies, and content. Knowing they will be studying slam artists, how they work on their texts, and the cultural underpinnings of the genre, students can begin to imagine their acquired skills during the unit:

- I can differentiate the causes and effects of *la poésie engagée*.
- I can interpret the message and literary techniques used in a slam piece.
- I can justify which slam poem inspires me and why.
- I can compare and contrast issues evoked by a slam piece with current issues in my culture.

While these Can-Do Statements are live for my students, I co-construct them to ensure that their objectives range throughout Bloom's Taxonomy and that the goals fit into the instructional framework of the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages. It is crucial to pause for reflection, to process how these four targets can be reached through different tasks of an Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA). The first statement necessitates research regarding the history and legacy of slam. One interpretive task of this unit is to listen to an extract of a TV5 documentary called "*Slam: Ce qui nous brûle*" [Spoken Word: That which burns us] in order to answer questions about the inspirations of the genre (Interpretive viewing). The second Can-Do Statement suggests that students interact with different poems in order to practice analyzing the messages and techniques used; they learn in the documentary that a characteristic of slam is how each poem is "*travaillé*" [worked, polished]. Another task in the IPA is to scan three pieces of slam, pick one with a theme that interests the student, then analyze it for

the literary techniques used, pointing out how carefully it was written (Interpretive Reading).

The communicative Can-Do Statements are assessed through a partner and group conversation, based on which poems students selected from the Interpretive Reading task. The IPA Interpersonal Speaking task was to discuss how the poem they chose moves them, then to continue in a bigger group discussing the various cultural issues treated in the poem. This all lays groundwork for the final part of the IPA: a Presentational Speaking assessment during which students present their own slam. After having created and presented their work, students finished the Interpersonal Speaking task by comparing and contrasting the issues presented in the French slam poems and in theirs and their classmates' poems.

In order to incorporate the Communities goal area of the Standards, I contacted Marie, an English teacher at our sister school outside of Paris. She agreed to swap poetry with me: Her students created and recorded spoken word in English to exchange with our slam in French. After the simple exchange of poetry, students wrote to one another (Interpersonal Writing) to discuss again the cultural issues evoked by poetry. It is fascinating to see how some topics overlap in the two cultures. When students reflected on the IPA as a whole, they realized that achieving their goals was a stepping stone to communicate with others about deeper topics. Therefore, a final Can-Do Statement based on their IPA tasks was:

- I can create and present a slam poem to elicit conversation about cross-cultural issues.

## ▶ Experience and Reflection

After the students' curiosities are piqued, they are ready to be engaged in the experience. Because they have their own goals and motivation to improve their language and cultural proficiency, they then move forward with the interpretive and interpersonal experiences. To "backward design" the curriculum, I model these activities and assessments after the exchange they will be doing later, asking them to pull out the main message, time-

less themes, literary techniques, and cultural underpinnings.

As students engage in dialogue, I remind them of one of the key tenets of intercultural competencies: to suspend judgment while learning about a different culture and comparing it to one's own. When students listen to Julien Delmaire—who recounts how he has been inspired by Martin Luther King, Jr. to speak up for what he believes in—and Hocine Ben—who points out that pleasure comes from interacting with others—they begin to believe that, as Deardorff (2006) wrote: "Intercultural competence is about our relationships with each other and ultimately, our very survival as humankind, as we work together to address the global challenges that confront us in this century."

So, after the experiences of interacting with the texts and one another, students take another moment to reflect, to encourage depth of understanding, to create space for the learning—for the learning was only begun during the reading and speaking activities. Where the learning meets meaning and depth is in the space between the experiences. When students begin to reflect on current global issues to explore in their poetry, they begin to not only understand, but also to apply how and why the other artists created their pieces. Motivated by the chance to achieve their goals and share their thoughts *en français* with their French counterparts, students engage in the multilingual discussion surrounding the culture and language. Creativity, curiosity, and autonomy spur students on to rich discussions, then rich reflections as students process what they garnered from the experience, both procedurally and vis-à-vis their learning. For example, some students were able to point out that they found it helpful to write back-and-forth with native speakers so they could learn more slang. This encouraged further correspondence with native speakers, which organically grows intercultural competencies.

## ▶ Learning, Applying, and Reflection

Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey (2002) suggested that assessment for intercultural competence

is to encourage awareness and “to help them realize that these abilities are acquired in many different circumstances inside and outside the classroom.” Therefore, the assessment of this particular unit centers around the rubrics for each of the performance tasks. As a way for the students to reflect on their final piece of the IPA, I recorded each of the students performing their poem, gave them the original rubric for the Presentational Speaking Task, and then the same rubric, but without the indicators filled into the grid. Next I asked them to pull, from their own recording or text, specific examples that support the indicators to fill into the blank rubric. For example, to reach “Exceeds Expectations” on the rubric, students need to effectively use multiple literary techniques. If students could pull several techniques from their poem and label them in the blank rubric, they would circle that indicator on the original rubric. Similarly, they would score themselves as “Meets Expectations, Strong” on the rubric if they appropriately and effectively use varied time frames with consistency.

After the individual reflection time, I meet briefly with students to hear what they felt their strengths and growth edges were.

This way, students preset personal goals for the following unit and/or assessment based on areas (content or process) in which they would like to see improvement or change. We talk about their mindset, their learning process, whether or not they reached our unit goals, the types of activities that they found easier, their depth of understanding, their effort, and their ability. Students compare and contrast our last unit with this unit so we can track growth and connect past experiences and learning with what will happen next. It is during this reflection that students learn about themselves, their learning process, the competencies they have acquired, and where they can look to grow next.

### ► Empowered Students

Using this alternating of motivating, experiencing, learning, and applying with reflecting, learners not only self-propel toward linguistic and cultural proficiency, but they also begin to take reflecting into their lives and travels. My students who travel abroad map their classroom experience onto their travel by creating their own linguistic and cultural goals, and reflecting throughout their trip. This practice

empowers students to invest in the ideas of personal goals and reflections, which in turn inspires students to keep a growth mindset not just towards language learning, but also towards life. As Fantini and Tirmizi (2006) said: “Because the nature of intercultural encounters is always provocative, it promotes deep introspection and reflection . . . and learning about others provides new vantage points for learning more about oneself.” Motivation may come from co-created goals, from the excitement about learning about another culture, or from within. But as educators, let’s make reflection a major catalyst for future goals, future learning, and future intercultural competencies.

*Beckie Bray Rankin is a French teacher at Lexington High School in Lexington, Massachusetts.*

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# Taking the Next Step and Empowering Students with Self-Assessment

## *“I know what I need to do and now I am going to do it.”*

BY SARA MACK AND GABRIELA SWEET

*Students complete language performance tasks at the start of the BOSSA session.*

*Photos: Jonathan Prestrud, Proficiency Assessment for Curricular Enhancement (PACE) project, University of Minnesota*

Learning is fundamental. It's what we focus on and work for and struggle with in our classrooms. However, learning in and of itself isn't enough; it's really only the first step. Growth and empowerment happen when we take the next step by reflecting on what we have learned, and then doing something about it to go forward.

Philosopher and education reformer John Dewey championed the idea that learning works best when students have choice, purpose, and motivation throughout the learning process. He maintained that effective learning comes through reflective thought; that is, learning happens not through experience, but from reflecting on experience. Though Dewey's writings are now nearly a century old, the message still resonates. Educators today seek to promote self-awareness, mindful learning, motivation, autonomy, empowerment, and engage-

ment. At the same time, this wish list runs the risk of becoming a collection of 21<sup>st</sup>-century buzzwords, fashionable but empty of real meaning and without practical application. How can we pull together all of these concepts and create a meaningful, student-centered experience resulting in more motivated and empowered learners?

The path to a meaningful experience that motivated and empowered our learners at the University of Minnesota started as a cross-departmental project with a twist on self-assessment. The project addressed a need expressed across language programs: We were seeking a way to support both instructors and students to more easily understand what language learners can do in terms of proficiency levels and course objectives from the outset of instruction. Our creation, the Basic Outcomes Student Self-Assessment (BOSSA) protocol, combines performance tasks with reflection, directly linking

Basic Outcomes Student Self-Assessment (BOSSA) protocol, combines performance tasks with reflection, directly linking experience to reflective thought in a straightforward, meaningful way.

experience to reflective thought in a straightforward, meaningful way. This integrated set of activities begins with a 50-minute lab session and consists of language performance tasks followed by practice and training in self-assessment through individual and paired reflection. Training concepts are further unpacked during class discussion and culminate in an online self-assessment questionnaire. This BOSSA toolkit also includes activities done throughout the semester, so students have multiple opportunities to reflect and build awareness and understanding of their skills over time; it's not a one-and-done experience. BOSSA tools help students become engaged in the learning process, bringing their different and unique skills, goals, and feelings about language learning. Learners begin to take charge of their own learning through a step-by-step, reflective approach.

### 1 First things first: What's going on right now?

As with many things in life, the best action plan is based on a detailed and realistic understanding of the current situation. In BOSSA, students start by examining their current skills via a live experience in a computer lab class session. They complete communicative language tasks in speaking and writing, recording their responses to prompts targeting tasks and topics appropriate for their instructional and proficiency levels and linked to course outcomes (for example, many fourth-semester language classes at our university target the ACTFL Intermediate Mid level for speaking proficiency). This step is the beginning of the journey of becoming autonomous learners—students become aware of what they can (and can't) do, and start to look at their language skills as something they can examine in a systematic way on their own.

### 2 Get up to speed with self-assessment.

Once students have done the performance tasks, they are ready to dive into the work of self-assessment, supported by training. This training includes an introduction to criteria linked to course outcomes, followed by a chance to put those criteria into play. Students practice with the criteria by listening to their recordings or reviewing their writing, rating how well they completed the performance tasks. Next they discuss the process with a partner while identifying strengths and challenges.

Since they have just completed performance tasks—again, linked with course outcomes, depending on the level of instruction—students have a concrete idea of what they are able to do with language. In other words, it is easy to situate themselves and their skills within an immediate lived experience, rather than trying to remember what they have done in the past or imagining what they might do. As with the performance tasks, this step puts learners in charge—the instructor works as a facilitator rather than the exclusive holder of knowledge.

### 3 Talk it out, then try it out!

Evaluating and reflecting upon their skills first individually, and then in pairs, builds confidence for the next step, a whole class discussion. In the discussion, learners reflect together, creating an understanding collaboratively about what is realistic to be able to do at their level. In the words of one student, “In your head you think that everyone is better than you, and then in class discussion, you don't feel as bad . . . now I am not alone and I can work on that.” Students themselves lead the class discussion while the instructor takes notes and facilitates as needed. In this way, a sense of community builds as students realize that they can help themselves and one another, setting specific goals for language learning that are meaningful to them on a personal level. This also creates room to address Krashen's affective filter (as described in his 1981 publication, *Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning*). It helps learners to reflect together and manage emotions through self-motivation as they share techniques that help them help themselves take charge. In the words of one learner: “I didn't judge myself. I spoke without thinking; I went for the message.”

After the whole class discussion, students complete an online self-assessment questionnaire. The questionnaire includes statements about tasks from the performance step and asks students how well they can do them. The questionnaire is delivered via online survey software that automatically tabulates the student responses, categorizes their self-assessed skill level, and delivers results through a web browser on screen and via email. In other words, the self-assessment data is in the hands of the students. They immediately see a report that summarizes where their skills are right now, and they can use that knowledge to plan for the rest of the semester. Instead of the instructor in charge of planning, the learners have the data and are in charge of making decisions and charting a course that aligns with their goals and the goals of the course.

### 4 Keep the momentum going with periodic reflections, then reevaluate.

The online self-assessment questionnaire is the last step in the computer lab, but reflection continues throughout the semester. Online reflections

help students to track their progress, revisit their goals, and reflect on what they are learning—and how they are growing—inside and outside of class as the semester rolls on. Reevaluation comes towards the end of the semester, when the computer lab sequence is repeated just like described above, linking experience with reflection, with one key difference: This time, learners also reflect on what they have done during the semester and evaluate the steps they have taken to work toward their goals.

## Measuring Progress

As you might imagine, creating and maintaining BOSSA is a significant investment in terms of time and person hours. After the toolkit was created and the materials were piloted, we were fortunate to receive funding from the University of Minnesota’s Center for Educational Innovation to research the effects of BOSSA. A grant awarded to our College of Liberal Arts’ Language Center from the Language Flagship Program Initiative of the National Security Education Program, U.S. Department of Defense, funded BOSSA’s extension to more instructional levels. For our institution, the investment has really paid off. From the very first pilot sessions, we noticed a shift for both instructors and students.

From the instructor perspective, it was a practical way to introduce goals and objectives of the course in a way that is scalable across languages and levels, and works in the large-scale context (BOSSA reaches an average of 1,200 students each semester, in 11 languages). Moreover, instructors report an increase in learner engagement through awareness, and that they ask more and better questions. As one instructor noted, “I see that my students are much more self-aware of their own skills, struggles, and goals in relation to the target language. I think this self-awareness is empowering.”

BOSSA’s impact on empowerment, autonomy, and motivation from the student perspective is also evident. A fourth-semester learner of Spanish shared, “It was a huge wake-up call for where I was in my language learning. This has definitely helped with my proficiency and confidence.” A fourth-semester Portuguese student stated, “I know what I need to do and now I am going to do it.” Through BOSSA, learners have a chance to reflect, process their feelings about learning, and very often realize that the next step, growth in learning, is up to them—no matter how difficult it may be.

In the words of a learner of French, “I think it is very powerful to hear yourself speak in a different language. It’s uncomfortable, but I think it is necessary to continue to learn and improve.” Learners have also cited the automated feedback from the self-assessment questionnaire as a good motivator: “I’ve appreciated the immediate feedback. It is motivation to study harder and make more progress,” says a fourth-semester learner of Italian. In addition, students seek opportunities for self-regulatory learning such as that provided by BOSSA, and welcome additional opportunities, as one second-semester learner of Arabic suggested: “I wish there were organized groups or



LEFT: BOSSA’s integrated performance tasks make self assessment meaningful across languages and learning levels.

RIGHT: Automated feedback after the BOSSA lab session puts students in position to take the next step with their learning, moving it outside the classroom.

activities available for students to work on specific skills in response to how they feel they did on BOSSA.”

In the words of a fourth-semester learner of Spanish, “This type of thing should be implemented in all classes because that type of power and change in your consciousness will make you pursue your learning in a different way—a more intentional way. Because not only do you have the tools to track what you’re doing, but you want to do better, and you are also able to identify your personal goals.” Learners also appreciate the chance to reflect on their own goals: “[With BOSSA] it is your own goal you are working towards, rather than a teacher’s goal; in that way it was a lot more helpful [than having a teacher evaluate you],” says a fourth-semester learner of Italian participating in a focus group.

Although our example is from the context of a very large language program, anyone—in any language learning context—can use the principles of BOSSA to help students experience their skills, understand, and reflect on where they are right now. Empowered with that knowledge, learners can take the next step to grow, plan, and begin to take charge of their own learning.

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BOSSA materials will be available from the University of Minnesota’s Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA) at [carla.umn.edu](http://carla.umn.edu).

# Paradigm Shifts, Talk Shows, and Language Classes

BY MEREDITH WHITE

I often tell my students that motivation is like deodorant: “We need it every day, people! Every single day!” They laugh, yet it is true—we typically do not get motivated once or twice for it to sustain us the entire duration of a goal process. It must be continually renewed.

So, how do we get our 100–200+ students through our classrooms every day while keeping instruction relevant, engaging, and challenging for them? We must ensure there is a clear path to our destination and that the learners take ownership of the driver’s seat more often than not. It can be exhausting just considering that, because although we as educators already do a lot, we must continue.

However, as John DeMado says, “We don’t renovate what we don’t own.” I am not going out and washing my neighbor’s car on a regular basis nor am I repairing her front door; those things aren’t mine. If our students see learning a language as something that is





not part of their current identity—if it is just considered one more thing in their course load—they will be hard to motivate. Then, learning becomes memorized, not memorable. We are living in the Information Age where anything you want to know can be located at the push of a button. We must take a hard look at what is really going on in our classrooms. If our students' language class is not a valuable experience, it is replaceable. We must reflect, shift, and learn because changes are always coming—and that's never been truer than now in language teaching.

So, where do we start? Think about talk shows. Steve Allen, Jack Paar, Johnny Carson, Jay Leno, Jimmy Fallon, Ellen DeGeneres—these are all great hosts who, like great teachers, bring their own personality, style, and observations to their work. The format of talk shows, for example, has remained largely unchanged: There is a band, big opening, monologue, interviews, games, laughter, wrap-up. Sound familiar?

When studying best practices and brain primacy, a language classroom should run much the same: offering big bangs in those first 10 minutes, a rundown of objectives, transitions, interactions, some humor infused, wrap-up, and so on. The parallels are clear. Don't have your own personal classroom band? Have some music in the target language playing. Don't have a sidekick to give you that drum rimshot when you are funny? Good news: You definitely have a student who would love to have the job of sound effects master. But what if you cannot focus on your monologue because you are busy with attendance and setup? Have you

assigned class jobs like attendance taker, personal assistant to set out markers and water, prop person to get class ready with the items you need, hospitality helper offering tea to anyone having a bad day, cheerleader encouraging classmates, and so on?

Jimmy Fallon of *The Tonight Show* isn't running around like a madman every night adjusting the camera and finalizing details for the games and interviews; he has people for that. So do we! I have 36+ people in each class dying to participate—not just attend—and class jobs set them up for that. They own those jobs and procedures and they improve them with new ideas. Again, if students do not feel ownership in our classes, they will not improve it, they will simply put up with it.

Class jobs are the answer to acquiring your people. The jobs should not be randomly chosen on certain days (“Hey, Pam, can you pass these out?”), extremely varied in difficulty, or only given to certain students. Instead, they should be plentiful, consistent, varied, and open to a student's individual spin. Suddenly, you will realize: *We have people for that*. Let's say the beginning of class is usually chaotic, from hustling in students, greeting them, monitoring tardies, getting them to the first task of the day, and so on. Ask yourself if any of those duties can be passed on. Maybe you need a door greeter (greet students in the target language), warmup motivator (encourages other students in the warmup), attendance taker (on a paper list that you submit electronically afterward), director of papers for absent students (“Absent? Ask so-and-so!”) and he

or she shows the absentee what is needed), etc. Such jobs free us up at the beginning of class to take care of what is really important: acknowledging the learners in our classes as humans first, students second. I use this time at the beginning to connect with my students, tap into what kind of day they might be having, note any changes, check out who is getting started and who isn't, and so on. Students who know they will be held accountable and that they won't go by unseen are much more likely to engage in instruction because now it is student-centered by default. Relationships form quickly, trust is built, and everything else after that becomes easier.

Student jobs give consistent responsibility to the members of the class community and are made fun when the jobs are many and some are quirky. Moreover, they concretely matter. “Our class cannot run effectively without you” is what I tell my students, and I mean it. There is always a paper passer and collector—those are straightforward—but do you ever have your students' friends who aren't in your class trail in behind them? Perhaps the doorway needs a bouncer. I like to make the students sitting closest to the door take jobs like bouncer (“Hi there! Can we help you? OK, bye then!”) or greeter (complete with tea, hot chocolate, or coffee offerings).

What is the teacher doing at this point? When students are more directly involved in their own classroom experience, we teachers have the energy and inclination to curate learning experiences. We have time to connect with and therefore teach the students

## What we know about brain primacy is that the opening minutes of class are critical, as are the final moments, and within the class period, there are several cognitive shifts.

in front of us. Once our students own that block of class time each day, they are more inclined to want to show progress, and we can focus on making the instruction both student-centered and student-guided.

What we know about brain primacy is that the opening minutes of class are critical, as are the final moments, and within the class period, there are several cognitive shifts. Predictability is important here, especially if there's an anticipatory set, several activities, and an exit card/conclusion. The bell has rung, the jobs are getting done, and the teacher is circulating to connect with students and monitor class jobs. Attendance is being taken, the motivator is cheering others along, the paper distributor is explaining what the previous day absentee missed and what he or she needs, and the teacher is walking around actively engaging the learners.

The set is ready and the show is about to go on. But is the audience ready? TV shows have an "Applause!" sign, but what do we have? Call and response. As the anticipatory set wraps up a few minutes in and we need to go over it, I call out, "¡Clase clase!" My students are to respond, "¿Sí sí?" and they get three chances. This gives them a few seconds to finish their sentence, realize class is starting, and get mentally prepared. By the third call, I expect silence and every set of eyes. Then we begin. Instead of rushing around hurriedly, I relinquish some direct control and get the calm start that I want for my show—I mean, class.

The applause button is on, the host (teacher) comes out, and the monologue begins. The monologue is going over the anticipatory set, doing some current event/weather/etc. telling and asking, and setting out the rest of the class period (think, "We have some great guests for you tonight!" swapped with, "We have some really exciting and challenging work today!").

Students know that this is heavy input time, and there is a little light audience interaction. This is where the information/energy from circulating early on pays off as the teacher can use that information as a reference, again making the input inherently personalized and student-centered.



Now that the class is primed and knows what to expect, the routines can begin and activities can happen. Talk shows over time have not changed tremendously, as each host brings their own set of games or activities, and even then, they typically have 10–15 canned activities that can work for any guest at any time, just by changing the content. The same goes for teachers: If Monday is our "Special Person" interview day (See [brycehedstrom.com](http://brycehedstrom.com)), they know that we'll next transition into that, sort of like the first "guest" of the day. Special person interviews are naturally student-centered and student-guided, and I make sure to bestow some incentives on the special person for their duration (usually the comfortable easy chair becomes their class chair for a few days, plus their beverage of choice each day in class, etc.). After that, we transition, as any good host would, to the next activity, and so on. Focusing on that brain primacy, the exit card wraps up the end of class, we thank students for their attention and preview tomorrow's "show" before the bell rings.

Now, where does technology fit into all of this? We teachers learn about innovative maps, apps, and snaps, but are not always charged to reflect on where they fit into our overall educational philosophy.

Although I am perceived by my peers as a technology-using teacher, I actually use very little in-the-moment, in-the-classroom technology on a regular basis, except for in the preparation of lessons, and, because I am a strong believer in the classroom experience,

overall I don't use smartphones in my classroom. Sure, the occasional round of Quizlet Live can be rewarding, but only for about 10 minutes, because after about 2 or 3 rounds, they are done: They're clicking over to other apps, they're bored and not moving toward their new group, and the novelty has worn off. I have found that if you're telling a story, giving new input, front-loading vocabulary, asking personalized questions and answers (PQAs), circling, or any other input-heavy activity here, phones are often a distraction.

Again, talk shows have not largely changed in the last century, and we still tune in to watch two people talk. Are those two people on their phones? Are those people listening to music with one or both earbuds in? No, they aren't. There is still novelty in talk shows, because the guests bring the magic, and everyone is on-board and tuned-in. Our classrooms can be the same. Students are the guests, they bring the magic, everyone is tuned-in, and technology is capturing the moments, not creating them. We are the hosts of our own classrooms, the curators of learning: We design and coordinate the experience, and then invite our students to participate and bring the magic.

Technology, however, can capture those experiences, and it should. There's no reason to pretend as if we don't live in 2017 where we can take pictures easily, so let's use that technology to enhance learning. Another class job could be captionist: As teacher you choose a relevant caption with a current, isolated structure, or story piece, or whatever

*continued on p. 47*

# Designing for Motivation

“I just want to know what to do to activate motivation and ownership in my learners!”



BY GRETA LUNDGAARD

**W**hy is motivation so difficult to firmly grasp? Why isn't it straightforward and consistent? Motivation is a concept based on human judgment, perception, and emotion. Motivation in educational settings and its impact on learning is such a concept. Everyone can agree that motivation is an integral component of learning, but we also know from case studies, action research, surveys, and observation that what motivates some learners does not motivate others. Student perceptions, mindsets, social status, and prior experiences, among other factors, may affect what is motivational. Motivation seems fuzzy because completeness, certainty, and precision in predicting its impact on groups are unattainable.

If what is motivating is so unclear or so inconsistent, why are teachers striving to understand motivation and how to connect instruction to it? Motivation is a driving force in learner-centered

instruction and a crucial element in the mindset of learners who invest in their own learning. A central idea of learner-centered instruction is to develop an environment that provides the focus and structure to allow learners to themselves determine, to a large measure, what, how, and when to think, rather than rely on their teacher for cues for all these things (Maclellan, 2008).

Keller's **ARCS** Model of Motivational Design was introduced in 1988 and continues to be a framework for research and development. A primary focus of Keller's **ARCS** Model is on the motivation to learn and it refers specifically to strategies, principles, and processes for making instruction appealing. Merging motivational design and instructional design is essential as we work to influence and advance learners' abilities to take responsibility for their cognitive and metacognitive processes throughout their learning experiences.

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Designing instruction in response to the concept of motivation is clearly relevant and has a direct impact on learning.

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## What Is “Designing for Motivation”?

**“I never teach my pupils. I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn.”**

The above quote, attributed to the noted physicist Albert Einstein, defines a goal around motivation: discovering the conditions in which learner motivation has a positive impact on learning. Motivational design refers to “the process of arranging resources and procedures to bring about changes in motivation” (Keller, 2010). Instructors responding to motivational design aim to influence learner dispositions and attitudes as much as to incorporate strategies, principles, and processes which will create a motivational learning environment.

Creating a sense that “I believe I can do it; I believe it matters” in learners is vital. How learners feel about our courses and the ways in which we are affecting their overall cognitive ability is just as important as being skill- and proficiency-focused. However, if asked to choose between organizing a unit around a skill or grammar sequence or developing contextualized learning within a real-world and cultural context with thematic essential questions, most teachers would say that keeping students in an appropriate skill-and-grammar sequence is more efficient. It just “makes sense” to us: You have to learn *this* before you learn *that*.

Yo Azama, Japanese teacher at North Salinas High School, Salinas, CA, notes that teachers often think their jobs are to cluster information into manageable chunks to help students acquire knowledge

and skills. But students learn more and stay more engaged when they experience learning in authentic contexts. It is more effective for learners to spend time experiencing authentic tasks within real-world contexts and real-world communicative acts. For example, it would be more engaging for students to learn verb sequences in a unit based on schooling in other cultures than it would be to do a unit based on verb sequences in isolation. These kinds of learning experiences are particularly problematic for non-traditional language learners, who are often also unmotivated. Designing for motivation means that we must design instruction that emphasizes the dispositions we want learners to have: motivation, persistence, grit, and risk-taking.

Azama notes, “In our language classes, we have to remember that students are practicing the language. They are getting out of their comfort zone when they try to communicate in another language. When we try to master skills, we can only ‘fail forward.’ In other words, mastering skills always requires multiple trials; therefore, plenty of opportunities must be provided for learners to master those skills.”

To be effective, motivational tactics must support instructional goals. Motivational features can be fun or even entertaining in the short term, but unless they support the instructional goals and targets, these “fun” activities will not result in increased learning. For variety, the teacher can introduce fun activities as an extrinsic reward for achievement or effortful behavior. This can contribute to the students’ overall good feelings about the course and the teacher, but they will not in and of themselves have an impact on learning. If used improperly and too frequently, these entertainments can actually have detrimental effects on students’ motivation to learn if they begin to work only for the extrinsic rewards. Thus, motivational design is concerned with how to make instruction appealing without becoming purely entertaining (Keller, 2010).

In the following section, each component of Keller’s **ARCS** Model will be explained and discussed within the context of learner-centered instruction and empowering learners.

Designing for motivation asks teachers to design instruction to promote dispositions necessary for learning: engagement, persistence, grit, and risk-taking.



## Attention – Creating Interest

Attention is assumed to be both an element of motivation and a prerequisite for learning. Attention must be obtained, sustained, and directed for learning to occur. Almost any sudden or unexpected change in environment will activate the first step in the attention process. At the same time, be aware: Perceptual attention does not last long because learners tend to adapt quickly and what grabbed them once or twice might not get their attention again. Incorporating variety helps prevent learners from adapting and tuning out. Variety includes different groupings and modes of communication as well as changing up instructional strategies and methods.

Some teachers have found success getting sustained and directed student attention by building classroom community. A growing trend is to spend time at the beginning of the school year “setting the tone” and building a safe and trusting learning environment. Laura-Jane Barber, Spanish teacher at the IB World School at Plano East Senior High School, Plano, TX is a proponent, especially when teaching older students. “Students who lack confidence and feel threatened by a course will resist learning, be unsuccessful, and experience self-fulfilling prophecy. Community-building activities are essential to establish trust. I need my learners to trust me (and their classmates) in order to feel safe enough to take risks in the language. When they take risks, they learn, grow, and acquire language.” As part of this process, Barber spends the first week of school teaching classroom norms for various types of activities, including norms and routines for target language environments, small group and pair work, peer assessment, peer tutorial sessions, and large group discussions (fishbowl, Socratic seminar, inner/outer circle, for example). One full class day is dedicated to deconstructing assessment rubrics by rating models of Interpersonal task responses and Presentational Speaking and Writing responses using small group calibration training. Barber sees the positive impact this philosophy has on the language progress made by her students, and the positive impact it has on their motivation to learn.

Keller (2010) notes that “knowledge-seeking behavior,” along with an environment incorporating variety and variability will sustain attention and curiosity. Inquiry or discovery learning environments move learners’ attention to a deeper level. Teachers designing learning plans based on problem or project-based learning, experiential learning, or task-based language teaching have seen the power of posing challenging questions, problems to be solved, or patterns to be discovered as strategies that grab and hold learners’ attention.



Designing for motivation asks teachers to explore ways to hook and sustain student attention.

## Relevance – Ownership

Relevance is about how the learning goals connect cognitively to the learners themselves, but it goes deeper than merely making a real-world connection or connecting to student likes and dislikes. Relevance also emphasizes the importance of learners understanding why they should expend effort on a given task. Annie Rivera, World Language Administrator for the Lewisville Independent School District, TX, notes that the word “relevant” is almost overused these days. Rivera sees that teachers have a lot of impact and control in designing for relevance if they heed some guiding questions: “What is going to be relevant today, tomorrow, next year? What aligns with the students’ interests? What’s real—to them?”

Keller (2010) links relevance to goal setting and explains that generally learners are more motivated to learn if they perceive that the new knowledge or skill will help them achieve a goal in the present or future. Linking current goals to previous contexts, experiences, skills, and performances gives all learners a sense of continuity and makes their expanding knowledge base visible. Making progress visible pays motivational dividends that persist and encourages learners to persevere, especially important when the themes, topics, or tasks do not necessarily match up to learners’ personal interests or goals. Additionally, designing for motivation asks unit and lesson designers to consider the motives and needs of learners (Keller, 2010). Learners with a high need for achievement typically enjoy setting goals for themselves but might be uncomfortable in environments that ask them to depend on others to achieve those goals. Other learners have a high need for affiliation and enjoy working with others in primarily noncompetitive situations. Yet a third group of learners are motivated by a combination of achievement and affiliation. Effective instructors are aware of the diversity in their classrooms and find ways to incorporate individualized learning as much as possible. Instructional designers should take advantage and be mindful of the social aspects of learning: risk taking, group dynamics, the Zone of Proximal Development (ability + 1), and peer-to-peer collaboration as they shift responsibility for learning from teachers to their learners. Many instructors find the Graduated Release of Responsibility Model helpful as a framework to structure releasing control to their learners. (Fisher & Frey, 2013).

Designing for motivation asks teachers to consider ways to promote student ownership of their learning.





## Confidence – Expectation

Henry Ford, American industrialist and founder of the Ford Motor Company, stated it nicely: “Whether you think you can, or you think you can’t—you’re right.” Designing for motivation includes work around instilling a sense of confidence in learners, the belief that they can succeed. Instilling confidence requires designers to make learning requirements transparent; to develop frames that scaffold for success with small steps of growth; and to clearly communicate performance requirements, evaluation criteria, and quality things to look for. Intentional and purposeful feedback on how to improve next performances supports motivation through the development of a pathway for progress. Feedback should not only provide information around where learners stand in their progress journey but also acknowledge the learners’ internal attributions for success. Rivera agrees that meaningful feedback and encouragement positively affect student confidence: “This is an area that we continue to develop and build in the lesson design portion of our curriculum. I’m proud of the deep thinking of our teachers as they have really begun to internalize the idea of formative assessment.”

Developing a realization that success is a direct result of the amount of effort they have put forth is a powerful disposition for learners to gain. Learners who have the expectation of success tend to invest more cognitive effort in their own learning because they realize that effort will have positive results. In her blog, “Getting Students to Invest in Their Learning” (2013), Nicole Vagle points out that students who trust in their own cognitive efforts do not rely solely on the teacher for validation or direction, rather they become partners in the work and share the process of making meaning and applying that meaning to a task. Vagle intentionally uses the word “investment” instead of “involvement” to denote that there must be a “reciprocal relationship between student and teacher that leads to the student taking the reins and beginning to own his learning and value it.” Vagle continues by observing that learners should move beyond compliance and completion based on teacher instruction to making decisions about how to best move their learning forward. Peer coaching, feedback, and reflection all stem from peer assessment done well. Instilling confidence includes intentionally teaching learners how to use and when to use self- and peer-assessment strategies gives them the tools to make those decisions. As Barber noted previously, intentional work creating an effective peer assessment routine based on class or district rubrics or proficiency scales pays big benefits in feelings of learner ownership. Designing instruction that allows learners the time to wrestle with, make meaning of, and reflect on their new learning becomes a central responsibility for teachers and instructional designers.

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Designing for motivation asks teachers to instill confidence in their learners by connecting success to cognitive effort and by teaching them self- and peer-assessment strategies.

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## Success – Outcomes

Learning must be rewarding or satisfying in some way, whether it is from meeting a goal, improving based on feedback, immediate success in applying new learning, or other positive consequences. Feeling satisfied after a learning experience is the final step in the motivational process and its value to the health and sustainability of the motivation loop cannot be overestimated. Allowing learners to set their own personal learning goals, receive feedback and coaching from peers, and then improve their next performances creates that history of achievement and the “I can do this” kind of confidence that keeps learners learning. Natural positive consequences, including praise or encouragement from others that focuses on specific aspects of performance, are powerful and may lead to learners’ developing their own extrinsic rewards based on their appreciation of the results of their cognitive efforts. Even something as simple as renaming rubric progressions can have a positive effect on success. Most learners would prefer to earn a “WOW!” rather than a “4”, “exceeds expectations” or “above standard.”

Teacher-developed extrinsic rewards are useful when the students are not intrinsically motivated, when the task is inherently monotonous, or in highly competitive situations (Keller, 2010). It is not uncommon for instructors to use a reward system to encourage specific learner actions or behaviors, like “euros” for participation, target language production, or collaboration. There is always a danger, however, that extrinsic rewards will end up patronizing the learners by over-rewarding easy tasks, so care is needed. Intrinsic and extrinsic methods are best used in combination, maintaining the learners’ sense of ownership and responsibility for the learning, but also recognizing their efforts and accomplishments. Many teachers look at reward systems the same way they regard scaffolding in instruction: It is kept in place until it is no longer needed.

Director of Foreign Languages Rita Oleksak notes that in Glastonbury Public Schools’ world language classrooms, teachers are making progress moving away from extrinsic rewards as they support intrinsic motivation within the school’s 1:1 iPad integration model. Standards-based grading is part of the intrinsic motivation plan and Oleksak reports, “We are rethinking our lessons and our teaching strategies and, in some cases, entire units, giving more emphasis on informative feedback in order to help students reach a successful end goal.” Proficiency scales and analytical rubrics that breakdown characteristic elements of a proficiency level are great ways to document feedback that learners can use as intrinsic motivators.




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Designing for motivation asks teachers to understand that learning must be rewarding and satisfying for all students.

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So how can we answer the original question? What can we do to activate motivation and ownership in learners? Diane DeNoon, World Language District Coordinating Teacher for Blue Valley Schools, KS, sums it up this way:

*We have the professional tools—the 5 Cs, the standards, the modes, the Can-Do Statements, thematic design templates, clearly defined proficiency levels, access to authentic sources, and performance assessment formats—to help learners experience relevance, confidence and satisfaction in their second language learning experience. When world language educators see relevance through the eyes of the end user, the learner, and use the tools to provide meaningful classroom and beyond classroom experiences, then motivation will take care of the learning and learning will take care of motivation.*

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## Paradigm Shifts, Talk Shows, and Language Classes | *continued from p. 42*

you want to emphasize, and assign a student to find a picture for that caption, like a caption contest in reverse. They get a device and they work to find a moment in class to fit to that caption. Instant engagement. Furthermore, you can have a class photographer who sets up your phone/camera on the tripod if you want to record a certain activity, take pictures of a role play, and so on.

To that end, I also like to capitalize on what they're already using, with the example of our class Snapchat. The filters provide plenty of input opportunities for repetition or new vocabulary with an entertaining twist, and its ability to scan QR codes and send messages and pictures allows for scavenger hunts, for example, and interpersonal writing, respectively. My students go on QR code scavenger hunts once a unit or so (including one that is done Amazing-Race style). Each QR code may be part of their current story within each themed topic, therefore when they scan them, the text appears. They can take a

picture of their group personifying/acting out what the caption said, and send it back to me. I then have student-generated non-linguistic representations to use with writing prompts, speaking prompts, free writes, blog posts, social media posts, and more.

Want them reading others' responses? Save the pictures they send back, head to the local drugstore, plug into the kiosk, and print them out. It's relatively inexpensive and they can then be part of a gallery wall for students to read, analyze, critique, whatever you want. They're personalized and therefore compelling, and I as the teacher didn't have to make anything new. Again, the host is not inventing the guests, but rather is bringing them onto the show to share their gifts. The museum curator isn't creating the art and displaying it; that person is designing an exhibit to capitalize on the art's features. There is a big difference, and teaching in 2017 and beyond won't be sustainable if teachers keep working harder than the students.

The same can be said for creating electronic art or student blogging—these are great artifacts, and the technology is convenient and useful, but then what? How can we fuel more organic, experiential learning with these products? And who is the audience; how are we sharing?

For teaching and learning to be effective, information must be memorable and not memorized. Our students must not merely be going through the motions of school work, but rather they should be active participants, apprentices in their own learning under the experts, their teachers (or hosts). Technology can facilitate much of this, but it is not the touchstone of a master classroom: Student-centered learning, student-guided lessons, personal connections, effective practices, and organic, caring moments are and always will be.

*Meredith White is a Spanish teacher at Peachtree Ridge High School, Gwinnett County Public Schools, Suwanee, Georgia.*

# Planning for Active Learning and Communication

BY JUAN JOSÉ VÁZQUEZ-CABALLERO



If you were to walk into my high school Spanish classroom, you would see long-term and daily learning targets posted, red–yellow–green codes that students use to self-evaluate their understanding, and charts guiding students to self-assess before deciding to take a quiz to demonstrate their achievement of a learning target. You would hear students reflecting on their work and setting goals, making arrangements for “retakes,” and choosing if they’d like to work independently, collaborate with a friend, or get help from the teacher.

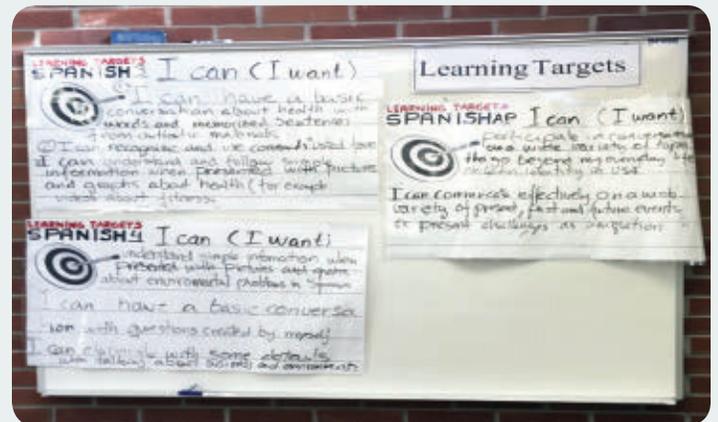
My journey on this path began two years ago when I was presented with the book, *Leaders of Their Own Learning* by Ron Berger, Leah Rugen, and Libby Woodfin (2014). I began flipping through the book, and a powerful statement caught my attention: “The real value of checking-for-understanding techniques lies in the way they enable you to help students who might otherwise fall through the cracks.” (p. 82). Although culture and collaboration were embedded in this research project, my focus was to see the impact of self-evaluation on progress in communication. I put students in charge of monitoring their progress and guided them to practice the communication tools they needed.

I thought about the students who tend to make themselves invisible and wondered: *How can I make sure that not a single student falls through the cracks?* The above-mentioned book helped me realize that the key to reaching all students was to teach them how to take responsibility for their own learning. I worked for two years to design and implement a plan that incorporated learning targets, checks for understanding, self-evaluation, and goal setting into my Spanish classes. I focused on grammar and vocabulary as merely tools supporting communication and I wanted to shift the responsibility to students for using their tools in meaningful ways.

## LEARNING TARGETS

The first step I took was to develop and implement “learning targets” for students. I used the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements and I also created my own “can-dos” with content from the curriculum

and Common Core State Standards (CCSS) (based on the level of proficiency of my students), for example, Spanish 2 (Novice Mid-High), Spanish 3 (Novice High-Intermediate Low), and finally, AP Spanish (Intermediate Mid-High).



Berger and his colleagues state: “As a result of using learning targets in every class every day, [learners] have a strong sense of responsibility and accountability for their learning.” In terms of languages, students have a sense of how they are using the language with the three modes of communication. Learning targets are goals for lessons, projects, units, and courses. They are derived from standards and used to assess growth and achievement (p. 22). They are framed from the perspective of the student (e.g., “I can . . .”).

Our learning targets were divided into knowledge, skills, and reasoning targets. Our focus was clearer and the students understood their goals for the day. Students were more involved in discussing the goals and the vocabulary related to the lesson everyday regardless of whether the content was about culture, communities, or a comparison. Since the students and I were spending time unpacking the learning targets, we were moving along at a slower pace; however, there were shorter transitions between the teaching and the student practice sessions of the class. In an effort to write specific, clear

I can recognize key details in an authentic document \_\_\_\_\_

I can sometimes identify the purpose of a brochure \_\_\_\_\_

I can identify healthy products \_\_\_\_\_



This is an example of an Interpretive Reading activity with learning targets of Novice Mid to High.

learning targets, I found myself constantly referring to the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages and the CCSS. I was becoming more aware of how they complimented each other, and I realized how complex the CCSS were.

The learning targets were displayed on a bulletin board every week in the class, on my website, and on most of the handouts. Students were asked to read the learning targets at the beginning of the lesson and then they were asked the following questions in English and Spanish: *How will you know if you understand this well? What might you be able to do to demonstrate understanding?*

At the beginning, it seemed as though students were not invested in using the learning targets. I returned to the book to read about how to set the stage and how to build a culture of trust. To this end, I facilitated a conversation about the purpose of this approach and I modeled an example. I asked students to evaluate my teaching by writing two techniques or strategies that I was doing well and one that needed to be changed. I collected the information and I created my own learning target displayed in the classroom: “I can give more time for quizzes. I can explain the long-term assessment clearly and effectively.” I referred to those goals as I demonstrated how they could help me improve as a teacher. I shared the communication and collaboration piece with my students. As students better understood the purpose and helpfulness of learning targets, they became more engaged in the process and the course. This led to many class discussions about the mindset that mistakes are a key part of how everyone learns and about how people have different learning needs while learning a language.

In terms of my learning as a teacher, I found that the process of developing long-term targets and then breaking them down into smaller learning targets was challenging. It forced me to think about long-term goals, break those goals into small pieces, and then assess the students’ understanding of each piece along the way. For example, in Spanish 4, students had to exchange information during the unit for interpersonal communication using the Intermediate Mid Can-Do Statement “I can use my language to handle tasks related to my personal needs.” Before students reached that point, I guided my students to practice formulating a variety of questions and how to build on each other’s statements with follow-up questions. Break-

ing the long-term learning targets into smaller steps not only helped me communicate my ideas but also helped to better communicate among students what they were learning at that moment. Here are examples for Spanish 4:

“I can formulate questions to maintain a conversation about environmental issues.”

- I can formulate yes/no questions.
- I can formulate questions that begin with who, what, where, why, when.
- I can formulate questions using using various time frames.
- I can formulate questions after viewing or reading an authentic document.

After a few complete units of study, I asked for feedback from the students about learning targets. The following are quotes from students:

“Learning targets are very helpful; they allow me to see what goal I am trying to reach.”

“It is more helpful the way Sr. Vázquez does it because it helps me and the entire class to see what we should be accomplishing.”

“This has helped me to see the bigger picture in what we are currently learning. I find it to be helpful.”

The application of learning targets had a big impact on the teaching and learning in my classroom. It shaped the units and lessons, and it gave students a clear understanding of what they needed to accomplish in terms of communication in all the modes as well as culture. Once it became a given part of our routines, I decided that it was time to learn how to use the learning targets to monitor understanding throughout the learning process.

## CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING

Checking for understanding includes a wide range of techniques (formal and informal, oral and written, verbal and nonverbal) during daily lessons to track what students understand and can do throughout a lesson using presentational and interpersonal activities. I incorporated these checks at the beginning, middle, and/or end of each lesson. These techniques were important because they helped me

identify gaps in understanding and figure out when students would be ready to move on to another learning task.

For example, in the classroom, there are five posters by class with all the students' names. At the beginning of the class, students were asked to write concepts from the previous day on a sticky note (e.g., "Write three types of alternative energy in Galicia, Spain") and place their notes on the poster. That was how we closed the previous day. While students were working on warm-up activities, I quickly reviewed the sticky notes. At that time, if there were a few students with gaps or misconceptions, I worked with them. If there were many students with mistakes, I planned to reteach the concepts in a different way. I used the same system with exit cards; the feedback helped me readjust my lessons. Checks for understanding were connected to learning targets. To evaluate their progress, we used a continuum for the long-term learning targets. The levels were the following: beginning, approaching, meeting standard (ready for assessment).

When I first began implementing checks for understanding, I took all the responsibility. When I felt like I had mastered those strategies, I began releasing some of the responsibility to the students. For example, all the students in my classroom have three circles (green, yellow, and red). Again quoting Berger, "Checking-for-understanding techniques help develop the self-awareness needed to be independent, confident learners who take ownership of their progress toward meeting standards."

Whenever I explain something, students identify their level of understanding by raising the appropriate color card: green (they understand), yellow (they understand so-so) and red (they don't understand). Part of that independence included giving students choices about how to check their own work. I used a second set of circles A, B, C. Students chose how to check answers A (with a friend), B (alone), and C (with teacher in a designated meeting space).

When I surveyed students about our checks for understanding, they generally gave positive feedback. Students said: "I really like these because I am able to tell you where I am at with my learning and understanding. They let me test myself to see where I am and I like how if I am struggling you notice and help me." "I think sticky notes, red-yellow-green, and the stickies are good because it gives the teacher a clear view of who understands the topic and who doesn't."

## SELF-EVALUATION

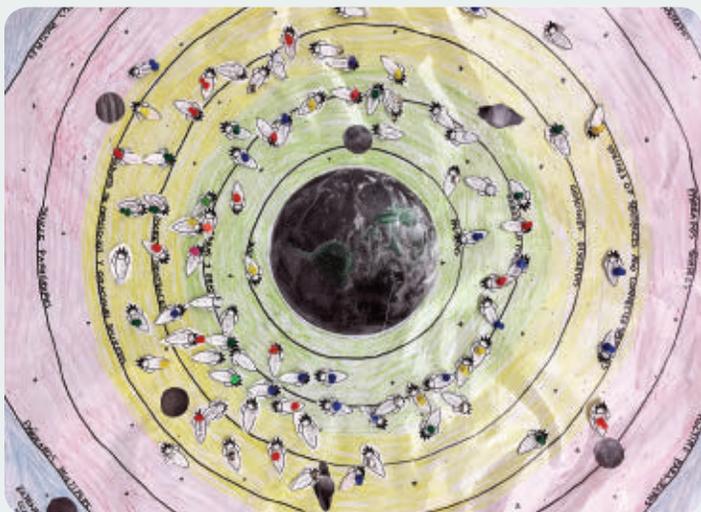
An important part of this process to help students take control of their learning was to teach them to self-evaluate. I began letting the students decide when to take assessments (within reason). I had a big poster on the bulletin board with the standards as well as columns for levels: beginning, approaching, meeting standards/ready for evaluation. During the week, I asked students to go to the poster and to write their names in the appropriate level for each standard. Once I saw most of my students' names in the meets column, I assessed them. At first, some of the students were not taking it seriously. They learned quickly that it was to their advantage to be thoughtful about this process. Throughout the year, I tried different ways to involve the students in self-evaluating and to give them a voice in terms of when they were prepared to take assessments.



Students lining up to self-evaluate.



Students are self-evaluating using rockets on a poster with Earth in the center and the universe expanding. Students are self-reflecting whether they are using words, phrases, simple sentences, or streams of sentences or paragraphs while communicating at novice, intermediate, or advanced.



I also wanted to create many opportunities for self-assessment so that students would take the responsibility to set goals and create action plans. As stated by Berger, "When students themselves identify, analyze, and use data from their learning, they become active agents in their own growth" (p. 97). It should be part of the classroom culture. "Students can use the data to set and achieve goals to improve learning. Students identify their own strengths and weaknesses to target goals and provide students with skills to track those goals" (p. 98).

When I asked students about the effectiveness of these techniques, they responded positively:

“It makes students more aware about their grades and it brings attention to areas of work.”

“I like the posters because it gives me a balance to follow and make sure I understand it before taking the quizzes. I feel more comfortable choosing my quiz day.”

“I think this is amazing and more teachers should do it. It gives us a chance to be in charge of our own education.”

## GOAL SETTING

In order to help students develop skills in goal setting, I used several methods. First, I taught them to set SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, timely) goals. This helped students who had previously set goals that were too vague or too long-term. I also taught them how to analyze their errors on exams. I created two new forms for self-analysis for vocabulary and grammar. After completing an assessment, students had the opportunity to self-evaluate and recognize the kind of mistakes that they were making. I used the data with students to help them set goals. When I transferred the responsibility of assessment and error analysis to students, I noticed a big change in how they set goals and followed through with achieving them.

The student response to this shift in goal settings was positive:

“Making plans and goals after an assessment is a great help. I can then budget my time and understand what I have to do to better my grade and increase my understanding of the topic.”

“The goal-setting sheet helps to show me where I need to focus on most on my next test and create an action plan for that test. It also helps to monitor my grades easily.”

## RESULTS

For two years in a row, I began implementing checks for understanding in late October for multiple classes. The results were similar. There were increases in the class average for each assessment and

fewer students were failing. Students felt more confident and as a consequence they communicated better at their level.

I averaged three sets of three different assessments from the beginning to the end of the year for Spanish 3. The last set of three assessments where students decided when to take the evaluation were the highest.

The chart below shows the transition. In early March, I set the date for the assessment based on their self-evaluations. In mid-March, students began deciding when to schedule their assessment. There was an overall increase in their scores.

## REFLECTIONS

Although still challenging at times, this understanding of teaching students to take charge of their learning has had a great impact on both my teaching and on student learning. Ninety-five percent of my students in the last two years that were engaged in this process met all my learning targets by the end of the year.

As I move forward and plan for next year, I'm considering the following questions:

- What types of data are most useful as students self-evaluate?
- How can I integrate these techniques and routines in the most time-efficient way?
- How can I engage the few students who were not invested in the process?
- How can I embed these techniques and routines in the study of culture more often?

In the end, I feel confident in saying that study of a language requires more than focus on the 5 Cs, the three modes of communication, and learning vocabulary and grammar. It truly requires that students take control of their own learning.

*Juan José Vázquez-Caballero is a Spanish teacher at Old Lyme High School in Lyme, Connecticut.*

Average 3 assessments without checking or self-evaluation	Average of assessments with checking for understanding (teacher decided when students were going to be evaluated)	Average of three assessments with self-evaluation (students decided when to be evaluated)
79%	86%	89%

AP results	5	4	3	2	1	0
2014: 14 students	2	10	2	0	0	0
2015: 14 students (Checking for understanding)	4	8	2	0	0	0
2016: 20 students (Setting goals for reading and/or listening)	15	5	0	0	0	0

# Digital Publications in Language Classes: Performance, Multiliteracies, and Learner Autonomy

By GABRIELA C. ZAPATA AND ALESSANDRA RIBOTA

One of the aspects that distinguishes those attending Texas A&M University is their loyalty to the institution. Students are always ready to talk about their “home away from home,” and many also pride themselves in coming from the lone-star state. Every semester, a large number of these learners enroll in the four basic language Spanish classes (Novice High to Intermediate Mid/High) that we offer at the Department of Hispanic Studies to fulfill their four-semester language requirement. Often, these students’ level of motivation is low, and thus, when revamping the curriculum in our program, our priority was to find ways to motivate them. We did so by developing two specific digital projects—a profile magazine and a cookbook—that allowed students to use Spanish to share their Texas pride with a broader audience.

Both projects were grounded in the tenets of the *Learning by Design* pedagogy (Kalantzis et al., 2005, 2016), and thus incorporated tasks that guided students through the framework’s four learning processes:

(1) experiencing the known and the new; (2) conceptualizing by naming and by theorizing; (3) analyzing functionally and critically; and (4) applying appropriately and creatively.

We implemented these projects to serve various purposes:

- to increase learners’ motivation by connecting Spanish to their personal lives;
- to provide learners with a real-life like opportunity to use Spanish in the presentational mode;
- to establish a clear connection between class content and assessment;
- to develop students’ multiliteracies through the understanding of how digital media work, and how multimodal resources can be combined to convey specific meanings; and
- to promote learner autonomy through their collaboration with peers.

We present the two projects separately in the following sections.

## Digital Profile Magazines in Novice High Classes

The digital profile magazines became part of the Novice High, first-semester Spanish course, the themes of which focused on aspects of students' personal and academic lives (e.g., their classes, weekly and weekend activities, family life, and places they live). The main objective of the magazine project for this level was to provide these students with the opportunity to talk about themselves and their institution in Spanish, demonstrating to Spanish speakers in the United States and around the world what it means to be from their state and university. Each section of this class developed a digital magazine that showcased the work of the enrolled students.

The project's point of departure was teaching learners not only about digital magazines (what they look like and how they are organized and formatted), but also about digital profiles (the personal information found in this kind of genre). In this first stage, instructors additionally guided learners in both how language and tone are used to present information and how photos/video can add to the meaning conveyed by text. Once students had a clear idea of what creating a digital profile magazine would entail, they developed their personal profiles in Spanish using a specific set of detailed instructions and a template. They divided their profiles into four sections: (1) My life, daily routine, and activities as a university student; (2) my academic life at Texas A&M University; (3) my family; and (4) my home away from home. Learners used the Spanish they learned in the course to develop hybrid products (text, pictures, and/or video) for each section of the profile.

Naturally, the teachers guided the students with very specific instructions, whole-class discussion on expectations and outcomes, and examples. However, one of the goals of the project was to promote learner autonomy. To this end, students collaborated with one another throughout the semester on the development of each section of their respective profiles. Once their classmates' work was completed, they provided feedback for revision and editing. Instructors monitored students' progress, but they did not interfere with the development process. Once the learners had completed all the sections of their profiles, a group of three to four student volunteers compiled all the profiles, designed a cover and table of contents for the magazine, and published it on the free online publishing platform *issuu* ([issuu.com](http://issuu.com)). We chose this platform because it was free, easy to use, and accessible by a world-wide audience, which we assumed would further motivate students to participate.



Digital magazines developed by Novice High students.



The resulting magazines exemplified learners' performance in the presentational mode, synthesizing the Spanish they had learned throughout a semester. We assessed the work process and resulting product through a holistic rubric that included categories devoted to the completion of the task (e.g., the presence of all the required elements and achievement of the expected outcomes), the language used, the effectiveness of the photos/video chosen to complement what was expressed in the text, and the creativity of the overall profile. Both instructors and students embraced the project. For example, instructor Kelsey Harper felt that it was not only valuable for the development of students' performance, but also for their digital literacy, as she discovered that through their work, learners who were not technologically savvy were able to broaden their knowledge of not only photo and video editing, but also digital formatting by the end of the semester.

Learners also praised the project for a variety of academic and personal reasons. For example, they felt it allowed them to increase their vocabulary, and it helped them with other class components, as one learner stated:

I liked applying what we learned in class with each unit. It helped me learn to gather my thoughts to master the skill, but also to study for the exams. I think it will help me with my future Spanish classes. I also liked how it forced me to find vocabulary from each chapter that I would probably use the most because it relates to my life.

Another aspect learners found interesting and motivating about the project was the connection to their personal lives:

I think it is good to have an exercise that relates directly to myself such as describing my family, life at school, etc., because learning a foreign language is easier when being able to relate to the information instead of going strictly by the book.

Overall, the project seemed to have served as a motivating tool for students as language learners, as several of them expressed feeling proud of their language use, such as the one seen in this comment:

I was proud of my Spanish skills when I was working on my profile and my boyfriend read it. He speaks fluent Spanish, and he was proud of me for how well my Spanish had developed.



## Digital Cookbooks in Intermediate Low Classes

One section of our second-semester, Intermediate Low class worked on the digital cookbook project. The project was directly related to the content of the curriculum in that course and to learners' personal experiences, as we asked them to develop recipes that showcased Texan food. As with the digital magazines described in the previous section, students departed from their existing knowledge on cookbooks and were guided by the instructor to develop new knowledge that included understanding the similarities and differences between printed and digital recipe books. Learners were then organized into groups of three and were provided with detailed instructions and expected outcomes, as well as templates they could use to complete their work. Students were told to choose a typical Texan dish in one of three categories—breakfast, main dish, or dessert—and to then create a hybrid recipe (text and photos and/or video) with information about the place where the dish originated, a list of ingredients, instructions for preparation of the dish, and a short biographical excerpt on each of the student "chefs."

Throughout the semester, each group distributed tasks among its members, but they all collaborated on the overall development of their recipes, assisting one another with feedback for formatting, writing, revision, and editing. In addition, the groups were told they needed to cook their recipes, and to include original photos and/or video of their cooking experiences. The resulting recipes were then compiled by four student volunteers who designed the book's cover, table of contents, and sections. The book was published in same digital platform used for the Spanish 101 magazines, *issuu*, and learners' work was assessed in a similar way, taking into account task completion, language used, effectiveness of visual media, and creativity.

As was the case for the digital magazines, the instructor and students in the cookbook project had very positive opinions about it. The course instructor, Alessandra Ribota, also one of the authors of this article, believes that the cookbook constituted an effective, motivating, and unique way to synthesize what students had learned throughout the semester. As with the magazines, learners felt involved with their work first and foremost because there was a personal connection, this time to their home state, which drew from their Texan pride, as can be seen in this quote, "I loved that we could show how rich and interesting our food is." Using Spanish in a more realistic and comprehensive way and the digital nature of the assignment were also important to students: "It's the future! Learning how to construct one [a digital cookbook] and make it exciting, it has educational value."

We deemed the projects very successful based on not only the quality of the student work on the digital magazines and cookbook, but also on the overwhelmingly positive opinions expressed by the participating instructors and learners. We feel that the projects were extremely valuable in other ways as well. For example, they allowed students to apply their ability in Spanish in a realistic and comprehensive way: Digital media are now part of our lives, and they constitute a new, innovative way to convey our views and work meaningfully. In addition, the projects provided learners with opportunities to develop their performance in

*Digital cookbook showcasing Texas traditional dishes developed by Intermediate Low students.*



the presentational mode, and they fostered collaboration and autonomy. But perhaps the most important pedagogical value was how the projects motivated our students through the connection both assignments had to those aspects of learners' lives that they hold dear: their everyday experiences as young, university students, their family, and their pride in school and state. Through these projects, Spanish ceased to be a distant language disconnected from students' personal reality, and instead it became a means of self-expression that was motivating and empowering.

The successful completion of the digital magazines and cookbook was the overall result of the collaborative effort of the program's director, the instructors in charge of the classes where they were implemented, and the students in those courses. We feel that this work synthesized the positive outcomes that can be achieved when a project incorporates active and meaningful language use, effectively guides students through every step of their work, leverages user-friendly tools like digital platforms such as *issuu*, and above all, connects language learning to learners' reality and personal lives.

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*Alessandra Ribota is a graduate student in the doctoral program in Hispanic Studies at Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas.*

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### Notes

The digital magazines and cookbook featured in this article can be found on the Texas A&M University Spanish Basic Language Program's website at [spanprog.wixsite.com/tamu-spanprog/spanish-101-102](http://spanprog.wixsite.com/tamu-spanprog/spanish-101-102).



## TIPS FROM Educators

This issue's tip comes from Patty Kallman, an experienced French teacher and doctoral student in Houston, Texas.



**What new technology tool do you recommend—and how can teachers use it in their classrooms?**

If you walk into my French class during virtual reality (VR) time, you may hear me saying [in the target language] to my students, "Okay, you should be able to see something pretty *fantastique*. If you don't see it immediately, keep turning and then look at the sky!" I'll watch excitedly as my students' heads start turning around, holding their phones in \$5 Google Cardboard viewers, their jaws slowly dropping.

"I see it! I found the Eiffel Tower!" one of them shouts in French. Another enthusiastic voice joins in: "I found it, too! There's tons of people!" "Bravo!" I exclaim. "Now, who wants to go to the top? Search around the area for the *la queue* and let me know when you've found it. Then, we will be able to see even more!" These days, thanks to virtual reality, I have a new role: I am a teacher tour guide in my own classroom.

It was my experience as a student traveling to Paris for the first time just before high school that solidified my desire to become a French speaker. By the time I

was selecting my major in college, I knew I wanted to help students have those same feelings for the French language and culture I'd had. However, as transformative as I know travel is, the cost can be prohibitive. I have taken students on trips to France but the financial constraints make it impossible for many. To be an effective educator, I had to find another way to bring French culture to my learners.

### Ticket to Travel

Google Cardboard, and other similar virtual reality (VR) viewers, can provide students with a unique way to explore the world through the hundreds of thousands of 360 degree photos. These inexpensive products, which look somewhat similar to the ViewMasters of my childhood, are found easily online. Some sites offer bulk pricing for school purchases. Any of these VR viewers require the use of a smartphone, which may appear to be restrictive. However, it is important to note that, according to a 2015 Pearson study, *Harris Poll, Student Mobile Device Survey National Report*, 82% of high school students in the United States have a smartphone. If smartphone use is still holding anyone back, these 3D photos and videos are available on laptops, tablets, and personal computers. In my own classroom, I pair up students just in case someone doesn't have a phone or their battery died. Also, I keep extra viewers in the drawer of my desk.

### Becoming a Language Learning Tourist

The use of VR viewers in the language classroom is quite wide-ranging. Regard-

less of the assignment, I have found my students' eyes light up when they see my stack of Google Cardboard viewers out on my desk when they walk into class. While certainly very engaging, the use of VR can also tie in perfectly with the goal areas of the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages: *Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities*.

Through reading signs on buildings, streets, and billboards, students are learning how others *communicate*, and they themselves are doing interpretive communication. *Culture* is present throughout, with students able to study architecture, clothing, hairstyles, modes of transportation, city and neighborhood layouts, restaurants, museums, monuments, and more. In exploring cities and towns, students can begin to make *connections*. My own students saw street names that connected to historical figures they learned. They would also look, with little luck, for the Bastille, and some would even look for a guillotine! In exploring the Parisian catacombs, my students found Latin inscriptions, and discussed similarities between the languages.

On a basic level, all of my students were able to study the cities, landscapes, and cultures with a new perspective that a textbook or two-dimensional photo could not provide. The level of engagement was quite apparent, which can also be difficult to gauge when all your students are staring at a book. All students were on their feet, moving their heads around, enthusi-

*continued on next page*

continued from p. 55

astically answering the questions I asked. They could easily make cultural *comparisons* through using VR, looking at the traffic circle around the Arc de Triomphe, the café chairs facing the sidewalk traffic, and the ornate exteriors and interiors of some of the schools and universities.

One of the greatest parts of this is the way *communities* were formed. My students could not wait to share what they found with their peers—both in and outside of French class. They became engaged and excited to learn about French and Francophone countries in a way I never experienced.

### Tour Guide Tips for Teachers

VR viewers can be easily integrated into any level language classroom. Here are some tips to help you get started.

- Go beyond a photo of a market in a textbook. Allow your students to visit one virtually in France or Tunisia [or in a country where your target language is spoken]. YouTube has a growing number of Virtual Reality “Field Trips”. To find these 360 degree videos, simply include either “VR”, “virtual reality”,

or “360” in your search on YouTube, along with the city or country in which you are interested. As virtual reality grows in popularity, there continues to be a growing number of videos available. These VR videos can be found in a wide variety of languages.

- The greatest wealth of material at present can be found on Google Streetview. This free app connects students with an ever-growing number of cities and rural areas around the globe. Virtually visiting countries allows students to experience culture in a way beyond watching something passively. They become active learners and in charge of exploring.
- Videos are great for crafting listening comprehension questions. You may choose to have students make comparisons with what they see or discuss the experience with classmates in the target language. Another quick assessment I use is the “Fast Five,” where I have my students quickly name five things in the target language that they see, find interesting, or understand. Virtual scavenger hunts are fun ways to allow students to explore cities as well. These

can be linked with a unit’s thematic focus or essential question such as “Are cars necessary to get anywhere in this city?” or “What aspects of this city encourage a balanced lifestyle?”

### Students as Tour Guides

As students become more comfortable with the viewers and applications, I plan on passing the baton of “tour guide” to them. This will allow them to help their peers see what life is like in other countries they may not be able to visit in real life, hopefully breaking stereotypes and misconceptions. While they will be guided by a key objective, they will have the opportunity to learn through the lens of Google Cardboard and then share their findings. These VR viewers provide a great opportunity for both teachers and students to become virtual tourists and tour guides.

Finding new ways to share the French language and culture with my students brings me great joy. My hope is that we as language educators can help bridge the world so that students can go from being tourists in the classroom to respectful, inquisitive, and empathetic world citizens.

## Use Research Map to Connect Findings to the Classroom

[researchmap.digitalpromise.org/about](http://researchmap.digitalpromise.org/about)

The Research Map from Digital Promise helps education leaders, policymakers, and technology developers quickly access research findings on education and learning that can inform their work.

The map was built using data from over 100,000 articles published between 2007 and 2016, found in 184 academic journals from the Web of Science database. The developers of the research map analyzed the bibliographic record (title, keywords, author, cited references, and abstract) for each article and created a bibliographic coupling network to link articles sharing at least two common references.

Next, they used an algorithm to detect groups of articles with densely shared links. In the Network View, articles belonging to

the same group are gathered into nodes, or circles, called “topics.” The circle size is proportional to the number of articles it contains. Similarly, the width of a border arc of color in the Chord View is proportional to the number of articles it contains. In both map views, the thickness of the lines (or chords) between topics indicates how strongly they are connected. Then, they applied the same algorithm to the articles in each topic to split them into subtopics.

Digital Promise supports the education community in using research to inform decision-making and to design high-quality learning programs and products. The research map empowers stakeholders with research information and tools to collect and analyze data, and commission and conduct research studies to drive change.



## WEBSITES to Watch

### Pear Deck

[www.peardeck.com](http://www.peardeck.com)

Pear Deck works like any slide presentation program with which you may be familiar. In fact, you can even import your old PowerPoints, Google Slides, and PDFs to turn them into powerful interactive Pear Decks right from your Google Drive. If you are looking for some inspiration, you can check out their example activities for many subjects and grade levels. Pear Deck brings the classroom “clicker” into the 21<sup>st</sup> century with not only multiple choice-style questions, but text responses, numbers, drawings, draggable pins on images, and more. Every learner grapples with the interactive activity on his or her own screen, and knows their response will be anonymous to the rest of the class. This makes it less intimidating to participate and makes it clear that the teacher expects every single person in the room to be thinking and engaged.

### Streema

[streema.com/tv](http://streema.com/tv)

For the video-loving language learners out there, Streema’s hard to beat. Although not necessarily designed as a language learning tool, it offers free TV streaming from over 100 countries around the world in nearly as many languages. This is an especially exciting resource for those learning a less commonly taught language with less widely available video material. Tuning into your favorite Albanian or Nepali TV station can help supplement other scarce learning materials in the language.

### The Polyglot Club

[polyglotclub.com](http://polyglotclub.com)

The Polyglot Club is an all-purpose language learning website with many free features for connecting individuals with native speakers of their target language. You can find language exchange partners, submit written texts for correction, hang out in chat rooms, browse through target language videos, and even attend their language events and meetups for connecting with even more learners.

### The LEAF Project

[www.leaflanguages.org](http://www.leaflanguages.org)

The LEAF (Language Education Access Foundation) Project is a focus of Didactic Tactics LLC, which is owned and operated by Professor Michael Van Etten. The LEAF Project provides Creative Commons licensed language learning materials online, for free. It also provides low-cost custom print materials for students in a variety of educational settings.

## WHAT'S THAT APP? Download



### Socrative

[www.socrative.com/apps.html](http://www.socrative.com/apps.html)

This app offers fun and effective classroom engagement.



Get instant insight into student learning with easy-to-create quizzes, polls, exit tickets, and more! Teachers can create timed

learning games. Then in class, students compete individually or as part of a team against classmates. Exit tickets can be a question the teacher asks students about what they learned in that day’s class. Students can write their answers on their mobile devices and then the teacher can show the answers on a shared video screen. A free Socrative account offers some features; even more features are available with an annual fee.

## Share Your Great Lesson with a TED-Ed Video

A great way for teachers to share a lesson is to create a TED-Ed lesson. These three- to five-minute animated videos focus on topics ranging from chemistry to Shakespeare to origami. Each animation is created by a classroom teacher in collaboration with a TED-Ed scriptwriter, professional animator, and voice-over actor. Teachers who wish to work with the folks at TED-Ed to create a video, can apply at [ed.ted.com/get\\_involved](http://ed.ted.com/get_involved).

These and other web resources can be accessed through the Publications area on the ACTFL website at [www.actfl.org/publications/all/the-language-educator/tech-watch](http://www.actfl.org/publications/all/the-language-educator/tech-watch)

# So You Say

READER RESPONSES TO ISSUES IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

Q:

How do educators empower learners to take responsibility for and build interest in their language learning? Tell us your stories of times when you empowered language learners to be more engaged, more autonomous, or more motivated.

Studying college-level Spanish in the South Bronx allows for authentic language use in students' daily lives. From Day One, I encourage students to participate in the community and see if they can grasp even one or two words. As the semester advances, students report to the class the times they have used or understood Spanish out in the real world, things like asking a price in a bodega or giving an address to a cab driver—genuine experiences that students are motivated to share, which often in turn galvanizes other classmates to try. I contrast the value of their language learning with other required subjects such as algebra, asking: “How often do you use the quadratic equation in your daily life?”—not to belittle other subjects, but to highlight that they are actually using their college education in everyday life. This is when many students begin to appreciate their overall college experience more.

*Kevin Martillo Viner, Spanish  
Bronx Community College, Bronx, NY*

This school year, I intend to start pulling up the *Lead with Languages* Twitter page at the beginning of class periods to show students examples of how their learning for that day directly applies to real-world situations.

*Chris Cashman, Spanish  
ChiArts, Chicago, IL*

## Offer Your Views in So You Say

OCT/NOV

**Q:** How have you supported the development of literacy through the use of a wide variety of texts from original sources, those not invented for learners? Share successful strategies you have used to make effective use of authentic resources. How can such material be used with learners at all levels?

To offer your views on the topic, go to [www.actfl.org/publications/all/the-language-educator/so-you-say](http://www.actfl.org/publications/all/the-language-educator/so-you-say).

Learners crave a real, relevant context with tangible goals. I start the year by introducing proficiency goals and discussing scenarios, on both global and local scales, to apply the target language and culture. Students also consider their own growth plan for the course. When beginning new units, I introduce objectives and ask students to write down or talk about their interests and goals for the topic. The responses help me plan choice activities and extensions for the individuals in my classes so that each learner can progress on their own goals in the most meaningful ways.

*Michelle Martino, Spanish  
Berlin Public Schools, Berlin, CT*

This past year, I rewrote my French 7 curriculum to kick off with a short unit on becoming a language learner. My unit objective was: I can explain why and how to learn French. Since language learning was new to most students, I wanted students to be able to explain why French is an important language today, perform basic classroom business in French, and describe how to increase their proficiency in French. While the unit was brief, it empowered learners in several ways. Students could justify their choice of language, function in a 90%+ target language environment, and envision their path to proficiency. During the unit, students wrote EPIC goals based on materials from the Shelby County Schools' World Language Program website ([leveluplanguage.weebly.com/be-epic.html](http://leveluplanguage.weebly.com/be-epic.html)). On our last day of school, students revisited their EPIC goals and reflected on their progress. Many were surprised to see that they had far exceeded their initial goal.

*Rebecca Blouwolf, French  
Wellesley Middle School, Wellesley, MS*

I ditched a traditional final exam and instead asked students this one question: How has your world view grown because of your Spanish studies? Students created multimedia presentations to address their personal journey, discussing the themes that had fostered their personal growth while demonstrating their best language proficiency. They were the most meaningful exams I had ever given.

*Amber Kasic, Spanish  
Holland Public Schools/globalspanishplans.com, Holland, MI*

Social justice themes enlighten and engage learners. Let's create a culture of empathy and action with meaningful topics that connect students' social conscience and desire to make an impact with our target languages and cultures. My students face many challenges, but they repeatedly set them aside to help others. Engaging topic: The right for all girls to attend school. We moved beyond typical classroom vocabulary and discussed the conditions girls face around the world: *What is a typical school day like? What supplies are needed? What prevents them from attending school?* We watched, "On the Way to School" and Malala Yousafzai's, "He Named Me Malala" to investigate worldwide realities. It's not to make them feel guilty, but to guide through reflection and action: *Why become engaged global citizens?* Results: Students followed Francophone social media and hashtags such as "Plan International," collected funds and supplies for the refugee school in Calais, France, and cited support for women's rights to education when applying for National Honor Society.

*Catherine Ousselin, French  
Mount Vernon High School, Mount Vernon, WA*

I have had the most success in sharing ideas and telling stories instead of teaching language as if it were subject matter to be learned. Nothing motivates most students more than a compelling story or topic to discuss.

*Lance Piantaggini, Latin  
Northampton, MA*

Students feel empowered when they can make their own choices. I give my students options so that they can personalize their learning experience. For example, it would be impossible to cover all the chapters in the textbook we use for my Business Spanish course, so in the middle of the semester we skim and scan the "leftover" chapters, and students vote for the one they want to include at the end of our syllabus. (Interestingly, every semester the majority votes for the same chapter.) In my community service learning (CSL) courses, students can choose among several community partners. Many report making that choice based on their career aspirations, allowing them to explore a profession before they commit to it. For their reflective essays, students can opt for the prompt that interests them the most among a long list. Finally, all students must complete the same number of online language exercises, but they decide which exercises will help bolster them where they are weak. For example, commands are surprisingly challenging yet are often used in their CSL work, whereas students quickly realize that they rarely need to use some of the most challenging grammatical structures. All students (and instructors) need a structure, but within that solid framework I have found that students feel more engaged, autonomous, and motivated when they make choices for themselves.

*Annie Abbott, Spanish  
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, Urbana, IL*

I empower my students by offering and promoting opportunities to apply their knowledge and communicative abilities in real-world contexts. Whether they are providing child care at monthly workshops for Spanish-speaking parents, dining at authentic Latin restaurants, holiday shopping with Hispanics in the community, answering telephones at a local agency for the foreign-born population, facilitating discussions at local ESOL programs, celebrating new citizens at a Naturalization Ceremony, participating in demonstrations on behalf of the Spanish-speaking population, or cheering on Spanish-speaking runners at an international 5K race, my students are engaging with the Spanish-speaking community in authentic and dynamic ways. They are recognizing that language is a force that connects people, and they are making those connections inside and outside of the classroom. In fact, through our outside community involvement, we have even been able to bring the community inside the classroom.

*Tyler Petrini, Spanish  
Howard High School (HCPSS), Ellicott City, MD*

I teach at a full-immersion French elementary school. We have a ticket system for rewarding students for speaking French and any staff member can award them. Each day at lunchtime, those selected are rewarded with a healthy snack. My kindergarteners, who are not necessarily Francophone when they arrive, become very motivated to use their French because of this system. The more they practice, the more confident and engaged they become in using their developing language skills. I hand out tickets when they use their French. They might tell me their name, their age, likes and dislikes; they also get tickets when they are polite with me and others. I give double tickets when they say particularly complex original sentences, which show how they've assimilated our read-alouds, mentor texts, and French language arts studies. The excitement and pride they display when they earn a ticket is precious and motivating to their peers.

*Amye Sukapdjo, French  
École Kenwood French Immersion School, Columbus, OH*

There is nothing more rewarding than learning to speak in another language. Most students are motivated to speak when it is not mechanical and based on an obscure prompt with clear ties to grammar. For each level and language, I provide real-life examples that pique everyone's interests. Whether they are speaking with a clerk about a set of lost luggage at Charles deGaulle Airport or "people watching" during a Semana Santa procession in Sevilla, students need to be able to imagine themselves needing the language in each situation. If each activity promotes conversation and promotes individuality and relates to the target culture, students take ownership of their spoken word. The best part is that the more creative and humorous I make each situation, the more language production that takes place in the classroom from all of my students.

*Michael Travers, Spanish and French  
Norton High School, Norton, MA*

# Legislative Look

NATIONAL, STATE, AND LOCAL NEWS ON POLICY AND LEGISLATION



## SAVE THE DATE:

### 2018 Language Advocacy Day & Delegate Assembly

Mark your calendars now for the 2018 Language Advocacy Day & Delegate Assembly, February 15–16, 2018 at the Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill, Washington, DC. Learn more at [languagepolicy.org](http://languagepolicy.org).

## Language Advocacy

If you are looking for advice on how to START a language program, how to EXPAND a language program, or how to SAVE a language program—look no further than the *Lead with Languages* website. The helpful “Language Advocacy” section of this resource includes advice on each of these topics, as well as how to Contact Your Legislators, The Seal of Biliteracy, and a section geared toward language use in various career sectors.

Find out more at [www.leadwithlanguages.org/language-advocacy](http://www.leadwithlanguages.org/language-advocacy).



## Two More States Adopt Seal of Biliteracy

The Seal of Biliteracy is an award given by a school, school district or county office of education in recognition of students who have studied and attained proficiency in two or more languages by high school graduation. The Seal of Biliteracy takes the form of a seal that appears on the transcript or diploma of the graduating senior and is a statement of accomplishment for future employers and for college admissions. In addition to the Seal of Biliteracy that marks attainment of high level of competence in two or more languages, schools and districts are also instituting Bilingual Pathway Awards, recognizing significant steps towards developing biliteracy along a student’s trajectory from preschool into high school.

Recently, two more states adopted the Seal of Biliteracy, bringing the total number recognizing the seal to 28:

- Connecticut Governor Dannel Malloy signed HB NO 7159 on June 6, 2017. The Constitution State became the 27<sup>th</sup> state with Seal of Biliteracy.
- On July 21, 2017, Governor John Carney signed House Joint Resolution 4 establishing Delaware’s Certificate of Multiliteracy, the state’s version of the Seal of Biliteracy. HJR 4 directs the Delaware Department of Education to establish the criteria for the Certificates by August 30, 2017 so that they may be awarded beginning with the 2017–18 school year.

If you want to learn more about establishing a Seal of Biliteracy in your state, check out these links:

- The Seal of Biliteracy: [tinyurl.com/thebiliteracyseal](http://tinyurl.com/thebiliteracyseal).
- Steps to Implement the Seal of Biliteracy: [sealofbiliteracy.org/steps](http://sealofbiliteracy.org/steps)
- Celebrating Students of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (video): [tinyurl.com/celebratingstudents](http://tinyurl.com/celebratingstudents).

## New Jersey Establishes Immersion Grant Program

Legislation sponsored by State Senator Patrick J. Diegnan, Jr., to establish a grant program for school districts and charter schools to develop dual language immersion programs was approved by the New Jersey State Senate during a recent legislative session.

“The best way for a student to excel in a foreign language is an immersion program,” said Senator Diegnan. “The ability to be bilingual or multilingual is increasingly necessary for study, work and coexistence and provides cultural awareness to children at a young age. It also gives young people a more pluralistic vision of the world which helps them be prepared for the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century labor market. Most important, it contributes to the economic diversity and growth of our state.”

“Dual language immersion is the perfect marriage of language learning and content that allows for students of all backgrounds to simultaneously develop literacy and proficiency in two languages,” said Amanda Seewald, President of the Foreign Language Educators of New Jersey (FLENJ). “New Jersey has the potential to stand out as a leader in this field and we thank Senator Diegnan for taking this opportunity to recognize and capitalize on the strength of rich diversity in our great state.

Learn more at [tinyurl.com/newjerseyimmersion](http://tinyurl.com/newjerseyimmersion).

### Send in Your Legislative Updates to *The Language Educator*

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

## Language Education Advocates Stand Against Fulbright-Hays Elimination

In July, the House Appropriations Committee Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies (Labor-H), released its draft funding bill for FY2018. The bill passed out of full committee with a partisan vote of 28-22. The subcommittee’s draft recommended elimination of Fulbright-Hays, the overseas component of the Department of Education’s International and Foreign Language Education (IFLE) programs.

Rep. David Price (D-NC) introduced an amendment in full committee mark up to restore funding of \$7 million to Fulbright-Hays; Subcommittee Ranking Member Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) endorsed the amendment. It was, however, defeated on a partisan line vote, along with nearly every other amendment, save one offered by Labor-H subcommittee Chair Tom Cole (R-OK), and two others that dealt with bill language, not program funding. Though the amendment was defeated, Rep. Cole

expressed personal sympathy with the issue, having been a Fulbright recipient himself, and he committed to working with Rep. Price on a path forward to restoring funding.

JNCL-NCLIS worked with its partners in Washington (including ACTFL), the National Humanities Alliance, the Association of American Universities, the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities, the Coalition for International Education, and others to support Rep. Price’s amendment and we continue to push for restored funding. Numerous JNCL-NCLIS members and associates elsewhere in the United States sent messages, called, and otherwise personally contacted their members of Congress on very short notice to request support for the program. These messages will continue to matter as the FY2018 appropriations process continues.

While the bill would eliminate Fulbright-Hays, it does fund our other prior-

ities in the Department of Education, such as the domestic programs of IFLE commonly known as Title VI, the Student Support and Academic Enrichment program in Title IV-A of ESSA, programs for English Language Learners in Title III of ESSA, and programs to support language immersions for Native American and Alaska Native youth.

The next step for the House Labor-H bill is a floor vote, which is likely to take place after the August recess. Before then, JNCL-NCLIS will be working on the House side with Reps. Price and Cole, along with other supporters, on restoring funding to Fulbright-Hays. In addition, language education advocates will be pressing the Senate to include full funding for Fulbright-Hays and all of our other Labor-H programs before the Senate Labor-H bill is due for release and mark up.

*Adapted from recent update from  
JNCL-NCLIS*

# Upcoming Events 2017-2018



## OCTOBER

**October 1** Deadline for submissions to the January/February 2018 issue of *The Language Educator* focus topic: Leading with Culture. [www.actfl.org/publications/all/the-language-educator](http://www.actfl.org/publications/all/the-language-educator)

**October 23** Deadline for Housing Reservations for the 2017 ACTFL Annual Convention and World Languages Expo, Music City Center, Nashville, TN. [www.actfl.org/convention-expo](http://www.actfl.org/convention-expo)

**October 25** Deadline for Advance Registration for the 2017 ACTFL Annual Convention and World Languages Expo, Music City Center, Nashville, TN. [www.actfl.org/convention-expo](http://www.actfl.org/convention-expo)

## NOVEMBER

**November 1-7** National French Week. [www.frenchteachers.org](http://www.frenchteachers.org)

**November 13-17** International Education Week. <https://eca.state.gov/programs-initiatives/international-education-week>

**November 16** ACTFL/CAEP Program Reviewer Workshop, Omni Hotel, Nashville, TN. [www.actfl.org/assessment-professional-development](http://www.actfl.org/assessment-professional-development)

**November 16** Pre-Convention Workshops, Music City Center, Nashville, TN. [www.actfl.org/convention-expo](http://www.actfl.org/convention-expo)



**ACTFL**  
ANNUAL CONVENTION  
& WORLD LANGUAGES EXPO

**NASHVILLE 2017**  
MUSIC CITY CENTER  
**NOVEMBER 17-19**

**PRE-CONVENTION WORKSHOPS** November 16

# SAVE THE DATE

**November 17-19** 2017 ACTFL Annual Convention and World Languages Expo, Music City Center, Nashville, TN. [www.actfl.org/convention-expo](http://www.actfl.org/convention-expo)

2017 Convention partner organizations include:

- American Association of Teachers of German [www.aatg.org](http://www.aatg.org)
- American Association of Teachers of Italian [www.aati-online.org](http://www.aati-online.org)
- American Association of Teachers of Japanese [www.aatj.org](http://www.aatj.org)
- Chinese Language Association of Secondary-Elementary Schools [www.classk12.org](http://www.classk12.org)
- Chinese Language Teachers Association [www.clta-us.org](http://www.clta-us.org)
- National Association of District Supervisors of Foreign Languages [www.nadsfl.org](http://www.nadsfl.org)
- National Council of State Supervisors for Languages [www.ncssfl.org](http://www.ncssfl.org)
- National Network for Early Language Learning [www.nnell.org](http://www.nnell.org)
- Tennessee Foreign Language Teaching Association [www.tflta.org](http://www.tflta.org)



## DECEMBER

**December 1** Deadline for submissions to the March/April 2018 issue of *The Language Educator* focus topic: Supporting Heritage Learners. [www.actfl.org/publications/all/the-language-educator](http://www.actfl.org/publications/all/the-language-educator)

## JANUARY

**January 4-7** Modern Language Association Convention, New York, NY. <https://www.mla.org/Convention/MLA-2018>



## MARCH

**March 27-30** TESOL International Convention, Chicago, IL. [www.tesol.org](http://www.tesol.org)

**We Invite Your Submissions!**

YOU CAN WRITE AN ARTICLE FOR  
The Language Educator

CHECK OUT THE 2018 FOCUS TOPICS

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## The Language Educator

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— Lea Graner-Kennedy, Spanish & French teacher and Humanities Coordinator at Stonington High School

[www.ACTFL.org/VirtualLearning](http://www.ACTFL.org/VirtualLearning)



# Translating Research into Classroom Practice



The **Fall 2017** issue of *Foreign Language Annals* will change the way you think about teaching and learning.

Learn more at [www.actfl.org/publications/all/foreign-language-annals](http://www.actfl.org/publications/all/foreign-language-annals).



## What's happening with the Seal of Bilingualism in your state and school district?

The Seal of Bilingualism is “an award made by a state department of education or local district to recognize a student who has attained proficiency in English and one or more other world languages by high school graduation” (ACTFL, 2015, p. 2). **Kristin Davin and Amy Heineke** were inspired by the potential of the Seal to raise the visibility of world language education and influence public opinion. However, they were surprised to learn that the policy was implemented in significantly different ways across the 25 participating states and the District of Columbia. Learn more about how this important initiative is being put into practice and how some colleges, universities, and employers are making use of this special designation.

<http://tinyurl.com/fla-davin>



## Wondering how to help your learners improve both their pronunciation and their comprehensibility? Let them talk!

**Annie Bergeron and Pavel Trofimovich** found that more complex, free response tasks (e.g., answering interview questions vs. doing structured oral activities) encouraged learners to draw on their full range of linguistic resources; to practice pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and discourse strategies; and to simultaneously working on improving their pronunciation and increasing their comprehensibility.



## How about . . . game-based learning?

**Karim Ibrahim** investigated the impact of learners' proficiency, identity, and gaming experience on their interactions with a simulation-management video game. Learn more about the potential of player-game and online player-player gaming to engage learners in authentic and meaningful communication.



## To delay . . . or not to delay . . .

The timing of character instruction for beginning Chinese foreign language students has been a controversial issue for decades. **Ellen Knell and Hai-I (Nancy) West** found that, when a very slow and highly scaffolded approach to teaching characters was used, there were no significant differences in oral interview and oral fluency assessments between middle school learners who began learning to read and write characters immediately and those who began one semester later. However, they found that the early instruction group learned more characters and performed significantly better than the delayed group on reading comprehension and character writing tests.

<http://tinyurl.com/fla-knell>



## Celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of *Foreign Language Annals*

**Looking back . . .** Watch for messages from ACTFL featuring a link to a series of electronic collections that trace the evolution of our thinking and instructional practice over the last 50 years. These e-collections provide easy access to articles that were published in *Foreign Language Annals* since its inception in 1967. The collections document our changing perspectives on issues that still merit thoughtful consideration and continued research.

**Moving forward . . .** The celebration continues! To launch the next 50 years, the Spring 2018 issue of *Foreign Language Annals* will feature a series of invited papers on critical themes. These articles are designed to challenge our thinking and to help researchers and practitioners go beyond the here and now and imagine what the future holds.



### Vocabulary knowledge and proficiency levels—how are they related?

Just how many words does a learner need to know in order to function at the Novice or Intermediate level?

**Jane Hacking and Erwin Tschirner** pose that question and share data on the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and reading proficiency. Their findings emphasize the importance of helping K–12 and postsecondary students directly and indirectly develop vocabulary breadth and depth. The findings have critical implications for curriculum design and instruction.



### Putting the spotlight on foreign languages in community college settings

Community colleges play an important role in preparing learners for a post-industrial workplace; however, few studies have examined the teaching and learning of foreign languages in these settings. **Tomonori Nagano, Alex Funk, and Eric Ketcham** offer insights into students' motivation for learning a language other than English and into instructors' professional qualifications and instructional experiences.



### How do your beliefs about teaching influence your teaching practice?

Teachers who complete their schooling and teacher preparation programs in another country often find American education to be baffling and find teaching American learners to be frustrating. **Ying Yue** found that many of the challenges that K–12 Chinese teachers reported encountering stemmed from the teachers' cultural views of, and beliefs about, what constitutes a “good” education, effective pedagogical approaches, and appropriate teacher–student or teacher–parent relationships. Learn more about how to help your colleagues navigate our American educational system and best support the learners with whom they work every day.

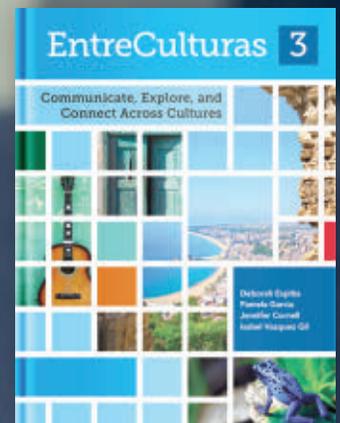
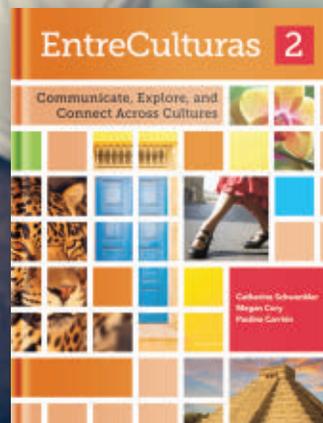
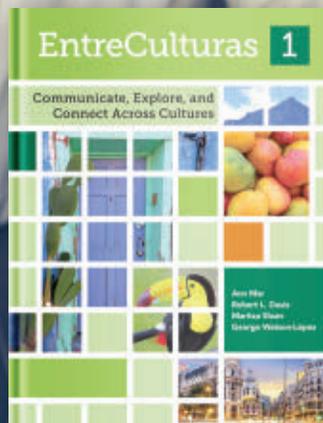


### Going it alone?

Faculty mentors can't always travel abroad with their students. **Shu-Ling Wu** describes how one student intern abroad and her on-campus mentor very successfully used structured goal-setting, weekly oral and written reflections, and Skype conferences to support language development, increase intercultural competence, and enhance professional knowledge.

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