President’s Message

We welcome this summer with open arms as we strive to recharge in the midst of this ongoing pandemic. Though it has been a trying time to be an educator, please remember how important the work is that we do with our students. We need every one of our language teachers to stay healthy and continue to guide our students to higher levels of proficiency, welcoming them into classrooms that truly celebrate diversity. As we consider the needs of our members returning to teaching in the fall, we decided to focus this newsletter on topics related to distance learning; offering resources for specific languages, perspectives from various educators and advocacy work to support our programs. We hope that you will share your stories and ideas in the upcoming newsletter as we are all in this together.

We closed out the school year with an amazing Summer Proficiency Institute with educators from around New England. With presentations by Greg Duncan, the expertise of our facilitators and planners, and the excitement of almost a hundred teachers working in breakout rooms and collaborating in small groups, the 4th year of the institute was both inspiring and engaging. Participants shared that both the process and the content were extremely valuable. With the focus on lesson planning for the synchronous and asynchronous classroom, the content was both timely and research-based. Participants shared that the process was powerful due to the fact that we used the Launch, Explore, Summarize model of instruction, which is effective for in-person or online learning. We started each day as a large group of 90, moving to individual work and group work with a facilitator group of 18, then to triads or pairs for small group collaboration. The variety of groupings allowed participants to deeply process the input and have opportunities for output and feedback. Coming back together to summarize as a full group at the end of each day was critical. We look forward to welcoming Greg Duncan back for our 5th year June 23-25, 2021 where we will delve into Assessment and Feedback through the Lens of Proficiency.

We have a number of celebrations going into this summer. Gina Gallo, an Italian and Spanish teacher of Bristol Central High School, was just selected as CT COLT’s Teacher of the Year. In this role, she will serve as an advocate for language programs around our state, sharing her talents with members of our organization through articles, webinars and her work in CITA as an Italian teacher. Her speech at the Proficiency Institute was both encouraging and filled with her infectious enthusiasm.

I would also like to celebrate the new CT COLT Board which came together over two days during our summer retreat. We have eight new members who have volunteered to serve and organize activities to support students and teachers. We also elected the new Executive Board. I have been honored to
serve as the President for the past two years and President-Elect for the two years prior. Now, it is a wonderful to hand it over to my colleague who is taking the role of President, Amanda Robustelli-Price. Amanda’s dedication and professionalism are unmatched and she works tirelessly with a positive attitude. I would also like to recognize Rebecca Aubrey, our CT COLT former ToY and ACTFL ToY, as President-Elect who will continue to transform our organization. In the role of Secretary, Jill Griswold, who has served on the Conference Committee. In his 28th year, we continue to lean on Paul St. Louis who is a gift to CT COLT. As I move into my final two-year term as Past-President, I would like to thank Jimmy Wildman who is just finishing his term as Past-President. Jimmy has poured his heart and talent into CT COLT for years and we are thrilled that he will remain the Conference Co-Chair. Without his humor and dedication, CT COLT would not be the vibrant organization that we know and love.

With gratitude and hope for a healthy summer and fall,

Lea Graner Kennedy

In Memoriam

Remembering Alan Beck

By Karen Stoj, Curriculum Specialist for English Learners and World Languages, South Windsor Public Schools

Magister Alan Beck passed away tragically and suddenly on the morning of July 2 while returning from his annual cross country motorcycle ride. Alan was a Latin teacher at South Windsor High School.

I wish each of you could have known Alan the way I did. I have never met someone with a smarter wit, wisdom, humor and deeper knowledge base than Alan. I would find myself hovering in his classroom door simply listening to the gems of history that he and his Latin students were exploring and learning about. From culling ancient coins, to examining chariot colors to reading firsthand accounts of the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius, I was constantly learning from Alan.

I wish each of you could have sat and had a cup of coffee with Alan, as I did so many times. Alan’s passion for his content and his teaching were contagious. I wish each of you could have gone into his room to ask for advice about any problem in the world as I did, so many times. Alan had a deep patience and calm demeanor that made him instantly approachable to both students and his colleagues. He would always listen and take notes in a tiny leather bound notebook with his fountain pen.
I wish each of you could have been present for Alan’s famous one liners that he would drop into any conversation or situation at exactly the perfect time, leaving you in awe of his humor.

I wish each of you could have been at our Language Honor Society Induction ceremony the year Alan’s students recreated a scene from a gladiator fight on stage. As our only Latin teacher, Alan forged relationships with students that sometimes lasted through all four years of their high school experience.

I wish each of you could have heard Alan’s deep reflections upon teaching and learning during one of our PLC’s, the ones that made you examine your own practice.

I wish you all could have seen his very extensive collection of bow ties. Alan’s love for the bow tie had become part of his persona with the students and faculty.

Our loss as a school community and department is profound, however I am confident that together we will continue to remember Alan, in our hearts, our language program and in our own classrooms. I only wish that you could have had the privilege of knowing him as we did.

A Go Fund me account has been started on behalf of his wife Melissa Beck and daughter Claire, as a college fund: https://gf.me/u/yduiiy

Image courtesy of Liz Ruiz, Spanish Teacher from their most recent trip to Italy and Spain.

Teacher Spotlight

Congratulations Gina Gallo Reinhard - 2021 CT COLT Language Teacher of the Year!
By Rebecca Aubrey (@MaestraAubreyCT)

CT COLT is pleased to announce Gina Gallo Reinhard as our 2021 CT COLT Language Teacher of the Year. Gina, among many other things, has taught Italian and Spanish at Bristol Central High School for the last thirteen years. The Connecticut Council of Language Teachers Teacher of the Year program was established to recognize excellence in language teaching and elevate the public profile of language learning in our state. Gina epitomizes high leverage teaching practices, advocacy, and service to the profession. We are honored to have her as our advocate and spokesperson in the coming year.

Gina is a committed, energetic, and passionate educator. Parents and students alike shared how Gina has enriched the community at Bristol High School, by bringing students to Italy, and bringing Italy to the students. Gina was described as creative and tireless at immersing students in Italian culture, whether in Italy or in her classroom in Bristol. According to Ryan Broderick, Assistant Principal of Bristol Central High School, she goes above and beyond to ensure that her students develop a passion for languages and cultures, setting up museum exhibits in the hallway and recreating Italian architecture with her students.

Gina further contributes to her school community in diverse ways. She is the recipient of multiple grants to support student learning totaling almost $300,000, that include e-Readers, renovating the school auditorium, and a puppet theatre for the World Language Department. She serves as a TEAM mentor for new teachers and serves on multiple school committees. In 2020, Gina was selected as the Bristol schools Teacher of the Year.

Gina’s service to the profession extends beyond her students and school community. She has presented multiple times at conferences in Connecticut and at the regional level. In 2018, along with Amanda Robustelli-Price, Gina was awarded the prestigious NECTFL Mead Fellowship for their project to build a professional network of World Language educators. This project seeks to support novice language teachers in their first years by connecting them with a more experienced mentor teacher, and build their professional learning community through workshops. Gina serves as the President of the Connecticut Italian Teachers Association (CITA), and was been nominated to assume the position of Business and Community Outreach Coordinator for CT COLT for 2020-2022.

Mr. Broderick described Gina as “the epitome of a lifelong learner, continuously looking for ways to improve her mastery of Italian and Latin and her growth as a teacher”. Gina recently added Latin to her language teaching endorsements, after taking additional coursework. In the fall, she will begin coursework towards a Ph.D. in Italian Culture and Literature at the University of Connecticut.

Please join CT COLT in congratulating Gina Gallo Reinhard as the CT COLT 2020-2021 World Language Teacher of the Year. You can follow her on Twitter at @CITALTEACHERS.
Advocacy

Promoting Language Learning and Teaching During Times of Crisis

By Michele Back
Advocacy Coordinator, CT COLT

I’m thrilled to be spending part of this year as CT COLT’s new Advocacy Coordinator. In upcoming newsletters, I hope to offer some concrete ideas for advocating for world languages in your schools, with the hope that advocacy can be seen as a logically integral part of language teaching. This month I discuss why this advocacy is especially important during these extraordinary times.

In an era of distance learning and social upheaval, it is only natural that being advocates for world languages would seem to take a back seat to more pressing issues. We are struggling to plan engaging, socially conscious lessons that support our students against a backdrop of ongoing uncertainty. Most of us don’t yet know how classes will resume in the fall. Yet I would argue that this is precisely the time to continue pushing forward as advocates for the profession.

World languages’ ability to open new worlds to our students fosters global citizenship and intercultural understanding at a time when communicating between cultures is absolutely essential. Today, scientists from all over the world are working together on COVID-19 vaccines and treatments, while policymakers are exchanging ideas between their countries on how best to address the pandemic. At the same time, an urgent global dialogue is beginning to take place on dismantling systemic racism. These discussions require a deep knowledge of other cultures that learning an additional language can provide. In our lessons, we must continue to incorporate current events into our curriculum. We might even consider opening up our lesson plans, encouraging students to share issues that they would like to discuss and providing resources and scaffolds to engage with these issues in the target language. Students rightfully want to know why they are learning what they learn, and tying our lessons to what’s happening around the world is a great way to demonstrate the relevance of learning a language.

At the same time, we must advocate to address the very real inequities within our own profession. Research has demonstrated that very few Black students pursue advanced language study (Anya, 2020), while our current population of teachers remains overwhelmingly white. Moreover, many of us struggle with supporting heritage speakers in mixed classrooms, and these speakers often feel stigmatized for speaking different varieties of their languages. Advocacy for world languages also means working to dismantle the inequities in our own backyard. By making our language classes spaces where students of color feel included, safe, and welcome, we can encourage them to pursue advanced study and perhaps become teachers themselves. By acknowledging and celebrating all varieties of the languages we teach, we can do the same for heritage speakers, empowering them to fully utilize their funds of knowledge in the language. The current context of distance learning offers a particularly rich opportunity for virtual conversations and connections with world language teachers of color, as well as members of diaspora and indigenous communities from our target cultures. One can also use a variety of authentic resources to demonstrate the myriad ways that people speak these languages around the world, including but not limited to the cultures of our heritage speakers.

Lastly, distance learning, particularly with respect to world languages, might mean physical distance, but we can still
maintain social closeness. In the words of Dr. Michael Osterholm, a lead epidemiologist from the University of Minnesota, “I’m trying to ban the concept of social distancing [...] I think it’s physical distancing. We should never social distance” (Espeland, 2020). Advocating for world languages means highlighting the social benefits of learning another language, introducing students to a wide variety of practices with which they can interact with others in meaningful ways. It means a relevant, engaging curriculum that allows students to see the importance of learning languages and cultures. It means creating welcoming spaces, virtual or otherwise, that celebrate all of our students’ humanity. In short, advocating for world languages is simply good language teaching, which is now more important than ever.

What do you do to advocate for language learning and teaching in your school? Please feel free to email me with your ideas! (backm@ctcolt.org)

References
Espeland, P. (2020). Michael Osterholm on COVID and the arts: ‘This is going to be a rough few years.’ MinnPost 06/09.

Personal Perspectives

Hammonasset: Where We Dig Holes in the Ground

por Juan José Vázquez-Caballero
(Lyme - Old Lyme High School) vazquezj@region18.org

Durante los últimos siete años he ido a Cincinnati como “AP Reader” y también, como “Table leader”. Se trabaja mucho corrigiendo exámenes, no os soy a mentir, pero también se hacen amigos y durante las tardes hay actividades culturales. Una de mis favoritas es la velada literaria y cultural organizada por Ana María y Elia. En estas veladas profesores de secundaria y de universidad de EE.UU. y de todos los países de habla hispana, comparten poemas e historias, presentan libros, cantan canciones populares, se visten con trajes tradicionales. Los primeros años asistía como espectador, después me involucré un poco más y empecé a ayudar hasta que finalmente leí mi primer poema, a este le siguió una historia y después otras. Dos compañeras me animaron a que escribiera, compartimos algunas tardes y me ayudaron a pulir algunas de mis ideas.

Personalmente me gusta orientar mi vida con objetivos. Consigo alguno y la gran mayoría no. Uno de mis sueños siempre ha sido escribir un libro, pero no ha sido fácil. He intentado mandar cuentos infantiles durante años a agencias y concursos, incluso compré libros sobre cómo publicar, pero después de dos años me di por vencido. Publicar algo en una editorial es como encontrar una aguja en un pajar, algo casi imposible. Con la ayuda y el apoyo de un escritor y amigo de España finalmente cumplí mi sueño y lo pude publicar en KDP. Él me ayudó mucho con la maquetación y la ortotipografía.

Durante muchos años el parque estatal de Hammonasset y sus playas, ha sido y sigue siendo refugio para nuestra familia. A unos cuarenta minutos de nuestra casa, el parque se ha convertido en escenario de peleas, de visitas, de picnics, de paseos en bicicletas y a pie, de escapadas y despedidas. En ocasiones, cuando el sol, el aire del mar y la digestión se unían, la imaginación se confundía con la realidad. Otras veces la meditación y los largos paseos por la playa inyectaban realidad fruto de la observación de todo aquello que me rodeaba. Fui escribiendo ideas en servilletas, trozos de papel, otros libros, revistas que llevaba. Las fui guardando y con el tiempo, en casa y con las sugerencias de amigos, les fui dando forma. La palabra Hammonasset es una palabra india que significa “donde hacemos agujeros en el suelo”, esto es algo que aprendí una vez que terminé el libro y la verdad es que no lo sabía a priori. Lo interesante es que en casi todas las historias del libro que he escrito hay un común denominador que son los agujeros. Durante mucho tiempo pensé que se debía a mi fascinación por ellos o a hacerlos quizás por pensar que nunca dejamos de ser niños, como los anillos en un árbol que aunque crece los primeros anillos siempre quedan en el centro y nunca desaparecen. Con el tiempo, sin embargo, me he dado cuenta de que las historias son trepanaciones en mi subconsciente para, así, poder salir emociones que llevaban escondidas y atrapadas en mi interior por mucho tiempo. Supongo que no podemos escapar del pasado, solo podemos correr lo más rápido para que no nos alcancen los pecados.

Ahora tengo historias y micro relatos para utilizar con mis estudiantes que a la vez son auténticas. También he cumplido un sueño, aunque en este tardara nueve años. Si no escribimos estamos condenados a olvidar lo que pensamos o
lo que una vez hicimos. Os invito a que también escribáis, publíquéis y compartáis.

Quizás el próximo otoño podríamos organizar, si hubiera voluntarios, una sesión o un foro literario para leer nuestras historias, cuentos, poemas, ensayos, trabajo de estudiantes, presentar libros... quién sabe. Podríamos incluso subir todo a la página de CTCOLT para compartir con todo aquel que quiera disfrutar o necesite material auténtico para sus clases.

**Methods and Resources**

**Form Vs. Meaning-Focused L2 Teaching: Does it Have to be One or the Other?**

Cody Rodrigues - CCSU MAT Graduate

When I joined my Master of Arts in Teaching program a little over a year ago, I had little to no knowledge about teaching. My understanding of what good language teaching looked like was limited to my own experiences in middle and high school. During that time, I learned Spanish and later French through a very form-focused approach. That is, we studied the language itself and only occasionally broke out into communicative tasks to practice its real world use. To me, this seemed the most logical and only way to learn a language. Given the fact that I had never researched language pedagogy and my experience was so limited, I was shocked upon joining the program to find out there were other approaches and that the form-focused approach was so frowned upon.

About two months into the program I still wasn’t entirely convinced of all that a more meaning-focused approach had to offer. It seemed unrealistic at the time that students would learn to speak a language correctly without any attention to form. Over time, though, through additional reading, conversations, and observations of quality world language teaching, I came to realize that meaning-focused instruction was in fact the much better approach in getting students to develop communicative competence. It wasn’t an overnight switch, but something that occurred gradually. The catalyst for the change in my perception was observations that I had made of world language teachers at King Philip Middle School (West Hartford) over our college’s winter break. Over time, in reflecting on those observations and on my own practice, I found myself an advocate of meaning-focused instruction.

Something still bothered me, though. Even though meaning-focused instruction helped to develop communicative competence, there were still many gaps in students' accuracy, something a focus on form would help to fill. Many language teaching books dismissed form-focused instruction all together without acknowledging any of its possible benefits. In one such book, Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching, Richards and Rodgers state that this approach has no advocates despite it still being widely practiced (2014, P.7). I even recall having a conversation with a Spanish teacher who vehemently told me 'there is no place for grammar in the classroom'. Something seemed off. I began to wonder why people think it has to be one approach or the other. Then it dawned on me, something so simple yet something that had never been said to me: why not teach both approaches?

Now for many of the veteran teachers out there, this probably doesn’t sound as revolutionary as it did to me in the moment. To put it into perspective, up until a few months ago I seriously struggled to wrap my head around why one approach was emphasized while the other was written off. Nonetheless, I needed validation. Through the help of a great mentor I reached back out to West Hartford to conduct an informal survey on form and meaning focused instruction. I asked the 25 participants if they taught one of the two approaches exclusively or if they taught them together. Of the 25 participants, 85% responded in saying that they taught both
approaches together. Another question asked what percentage of classroom time was spent on each approach. The responses varied but the most common was 75% of classroom time was focused on meaning while 25% was focused on form. Even though there were only 25 teachers participating, it was a significant enough sample size to tell me that I wasn’t alone. Who knows, maybe the vast majority of teachers think that way. What was important for me was that despite the taboo nature of discussing an older teaching method, I persisted and continued to question the benefits. Just because something is no longer promoted or popular doesn’t mean that it should be discarded out right.

Again, to most, none of this may seem novel, but my journey over the course of the last year has helped me to shape the philosophies that I carry with me into my first year of teaching and beyond. My classroom will feature mainly meaning-focused instruction, but in an effort to develop each student’s proficiency holistically, it will also feature some form-focused instruction. Just as all knowledge grows with time and experience, so too will my own knowledge and philosophies of second language teaching. I look forward to continuing to make sense of it all.

How is Methodology Different at a Distance?

Michelle Nicklas - William H. Hall High School
@MichelleNicklas

Teaching in an MAT (Masters of Arts in Teaching) program at a distance makes you review the core of what high schoolers (your target audience) need to succeed in world languages. We had covered Omaggio chapter 3: Grammar-Translation Method, The Direct Method, Audiolingual Method, etc., but after March 13th what my USJ (University of Saint Joseph) student needed most was an effective delivery mechanism. Many of the methods and approaches we had discussed were much more effective in person. I needed to rethink, both for my Masters level student refining her craft and her high schoolers, the new essential elements at a distance.

I found the new needs similar to those in the classroom, but the delivery needed to be more deliberate. These five details were essential: (1) laser clear objectives, (2) social and emotional support, (3) more and varied feedback, (4) more opportunities to speak; and (5) content rich with culture.

At a distance, students need a clearer understanding of why they were doing every activity, how that activity would benefit them and grow their skills. The most effective way to address this need is to write your Can Do statement on the activity or with the directions for the task. Additionally, I offered students a Google form and rating scale 1-5 for them to rate each activity and its alignment with its Can Do objective. They felt empowered and were able to reinforce the connection between the Can Do and the activity.

For social/emotional support, I used Pear Deck to ask students how they were feeling. I asked them about their weekend activities or their week and requested that they articulate their affect. They answered in a text box (written form in private). With their written work in Google Classroom, I found a Chrome extension called MOTE. It allowed me to leave recorded feedback. I could leave it more quickly than written feedback and they could hear my voice as I left an overall enthusiastic impression of some aspect I found as a strength as well as some tips towards growth.

Another vehicle I used to get students talking was Flip Grid. In designing the topic and topic focus, I looked for high interest content. In one case, I gave them a science fiction short and they had to explain the mysterious details that its content left unclear using if clauses. For feedback on Flip Grid, there are 3 options: you can write and click “email feedback”, you can video yourself offering feedback or you can select “comment” (just audio) and leave it embedded in their work. I like the first option because I do it while viewing their work.

For a speaking venue, I offered a sign up for six students at a time (document allowed students to EDIT in Google Classroom) allowing them to engage in student directed chats. To participate, students could not eat and they had to come with topics and questions for one another. I muted my microphone, but they were definitely performing for me. I got to smile and laugh on mute and see how they were doing as well as hear their concerns and let them lift my spirits.

Finally, the piece we can never forget, the reason language study is interesting in the first place, is its inextricable connection to culture. When cutting back on volume of work at a distance, it is tempting to see culture as less essential, but do not make this mistake! My colleague and Latin teacher extraordinaire, Jim Crabb, artfully embeds cultural images throughout his game review with Kahoot. Edpuzzle is another vehicle for listening and viewing comprehension where you can search for a cultural topic on Youtube, put it into your Edpuzzle account and when you go to edit mode, you can see if others have already created questions for that same video. You can copy it into your account, edit to make it perfect for you, and save some time in the process.

Prior to distant learning, Kae Volpintesta, ASL expert teacher, had always done a ‘Culture Connect’ during each class, typically, a short video, a news article, or a piece of an
interview where she reinforced the idea that culture and language are co-dependent. During distance learning, Kae continued her culture connection by providing students with articles, videos of many interpreted events around the state and country, and utilized opportunities where ASL surfaced in mainstream media (articles about clear masks, popular TV shows such as ‘Zoe’s Extraordinary Playlist’ and even The Daily Moth). She would assign parts for her students to view and then ask them questions about how the message was influenced by their understanding of Deaf culture.

Distance learning has different needs in that students cannot see how much you care and honor them personally. They cannot see that you value their skills and are helping them towards growth in proficiency. Speaking, with the reduced social cues and timing issues, is more awkward because of their fears of being judged or talking when someone else is talking. Making a few more overtures to show students that you are listening and you value their input on their experiences makes a world of difference.

Developing Language Proficiency for a Reason
Andrea Bohling, interviewed by Jill Griswold
Glastonbury Public Schools
bohlinga@glastonburyus.org

JG: Congratulations on being selected as one of the 2020 semi-finalists for CT COLT Teacher of the Year. What would you like readers to know about you?

AB: I am originally from Lima, Perú and moved to the United States when I was 13. I just completed my 5th year teaching in Glastonbury Public Schools and have taught Spanish at the elementary, middle and high school levels. During my undergraduate career, I majored in Latin American Literature with a minor in French. Manuela Wagner has been an instrumental influence and mentor throughout my teaching journey. She teaches at UCONN where I first met her during my MA and I have had the honor of collaborating with her during my first year at GPS to put theory (of ICC) into practice to develop a unit that was featured on the Center for Applied Second Language Studies (CASLS)’s InterCom. She truly helped me find my purpose as an educator; with her guidance as well as the contributions of some of my colleagues, I’ve been inspired to continue to learn and grow as a language teacher. Most recently, I had my first experience teaching an undergraduate class for the teacher preparation program at Central Connecticut State University where I am currently working on my doctorate in Educational Leadership.

JG: Your guiding philosophy for teaching languages is that students should be “proficient in the language for a reason.” What do you mean by that?

AB: Language is a vehicle through which we facilitate interactions with others; with language we can understand deeper, more personal aspects of people in a way that is often unexplainable. But these interactions cannot be limited to just communication. As we consider this, it is important to reexamine our curricula and ask ourselves, “Why do students really need to know this? What are they going to do with this knowledge or information outside of the classroom? How will “this” develop skills that they will need to utilize in order to understand other people and other cultures with an open mind, an open heart and an open will?” Think about a standard unit on food, transportation or clothing—Whether we’re teaching these units for novice, intermediate or advanced learners, it is essential to think about what we are really equipping students with and if what we’re teaching will serve to develop the skills, attitudes and critical cultural awareness necessary to establish and maintain meaningful relationships with other people and in different contexts. Grammar and vocabulary in isolation won’t facilitate this. Proficiency for proficiency’s sake won’t do this. Students need more. The same goes for various cultural facts and rote activities that are typically taught and implemented in the language classroom. Thinking in this way allows me to push my curriculum to encompass what my students really need to develop while always keeping my teaching relevant to the current social context. It can be challenging but necessary to think about ways we can connect students to what they are learning. For me, the development of good essential questions for each unit has been groundbreaking in doing this.

JG: Can you give us an example of a unit that you reframed through the development of new essential questions?

AB: One example I can give you is from a unit that I do with my sophomores where we study the Spanish Civil War within the context of Spain’s history. I asked myself how I could transform this unit from being completely fact-based to getting students to really connect with bigger ideas. One essential question I developed to redesign this unit was “What happens during (political) adversity?” The other two that naturally emerged from this were “How do issues of power, wealth and morality influence war?” and “What were the effects of the Spanish Civil War on its citizens?” In order to make a connection with an event so foreign (in terms of culture, experience and time period), we approached it from the angle of adversity as something that permeates all human experience. These questions guided us to think about how we could relate to the feelings and experiences of these people during the civil war and now, as they’re still dealing with the repercussions. We
learned from a variety of authentic resources in which this historical event was interpreted and viewed in different ways. Learning from people rather than about people reduces the risk of stereotyping and allows us to get a more complete understanding of a product, practice or perspective. I truly believe that language learning should be a self-discovery process so that students do not just gain an understanding of other cultures, but reflect on their own culture, lived realities and identities as well.

**JG: How do you facilitate student reflection in your classroom and why is it so important in language learning?**

**AB:** There is no one way to facilitate student reflection, but there is a lot of power in incorporating it into your practice. Each of my students has a reflection journal. Based on the climate and dynamics of each class, as well as the unit and its essential questions, I formulate open-ended prompts. Sometimes students might interpret a quote or watch a video clip first. Sometimes, a prompt might emerge from a classroom discussion. I have used students’ comments as a prompt if it seems like it will continue to engage in inquiry. It is important to dedicate time to writing reflection questions that are broad enough so that we do not lead our students in a particular direction. Also, it is okay if the reflection is in the students’ native language because it will allow them to engage cognitively in a way that will not be limited by their language proficiency. I also give students an outline or a suggested structure at the beginning of the year for how they can guide their thought process because I have come to find out that most students don’t know what it means to reflect and how to go about reflecting. I encourage them to think about what they think, why they think in this way, and to think about the other side of the argument or an opposing stance. Teachers can also assign these reflections as homework so that they maximize target language use in class, depending on students’ language proficiency. I do not grade my students’ reflections, but they certainly help guide my instruction. I also use an Intercultural Competence self-assessment that they complete at the beginning and end of the year based on Michael Byram’s ICC framework.

**JG: For readers who want to teach their curriculum through a social justice lens and focus more on intercultural competence, where do you suggest they begin?**

**AB:** It’s crucial to recognize that prior to setting out to do this, there is some important “prep work” that must be done before delving into modifying existing curriculum or creating anything new. For teachers, I would recommend beginning with engaging in self-reflection. If we recognize this as being an important step and even ask this of students then we should live out and put into practice what we preach and teach. This starting point is important because it allows us to identify where we are before planning where we want to go. Reflect on your own teaching, biases, perspectives and then engage with others to further expand your initial understanding. Then, collaboration is essential. Collaborate with other teachers in your school, perhaps even in a different department, so that you can gain multiple perspectives. These relationships will help you redesign curriculum to be more meaningful and interdisciplinary for students. Finally, seek out purposeful learning opportunities. Self-reflection also plays into this because it will help identify the gaps in knowledge or expertise that we might want to “fill.” With this in mind, we can seek out new learning experiences on topics we may know very little about and although this may bring about some discomfort, it will ultimately help you grow as an educator to be prepared to reach your students.

**JG: Many teachers already feel pressure to address a jam-packed curriculum. What advice do you have for teachers who might not be sure how these ideas will fit into their existing curriculum?**

**AB:** Start with identifying the themes, language functions, and vocabulary of your units; that which you “must” teach. Students do need these in order to be able to successfully talk about the unit themes, but these are simply the bare bones of your units. I am an advocate for backward design as a way to start to reframe curricula one unit at a time. Most likely you have something developed already that might just need further refinement in a way that will integrate social justice and intercultural competence in which language serves as a tool. The most difficult but most important piece is to develop good essential questions for each of your units. Moreover, corresponding performance objectives (and integrated performance assessments), per mode, should not only include a measurable language function, but they should be culturally contextualized and allow students to extend their knowledge beyond the classroom walls. From here, you can then start the search for current and relevant authentic resources that will help students accomplish those performance objectives—usually, in planning we do this the other way around and acquire resources first. Think about your intentions for each of your units first; think of why students need to learn what you’re about to teach them: for what purpose? Also, take a look at the ACTFL’s World Readiness Standards. Most of the time, we address the ‘Communication’ and ‘Culture’ standards, but I’d encourage teachers to reflect on how to also address the ‘Communities’ standard as well as “Connections,” which really encourages that students bring their learning experiences to life. Finally, listen to your students for feedback and use this as formative data to further inform your practice and planning.
**Distance Learning**

**Let's Be Honest: Teaching in the Time of Corona**

By Tara Smith (Canton High School, Canton, CT @meltarasmith) and Lisa Urso (@mllesrtaurso)

My name is Lisa Urso, and I want to start with something that my friend and colleague Meredith White of Georgia refers to as the highlight REAL. What you are about to read does not reflect the Pinterest-perfect, glossy experiences that you often see on social media. For me and for Tara, we had our struggles with distance learning.

For many teachers, March 13th, 2020 is a day that will live in infamy.

That was the day that many school districts shut down due to the spread of COVID-19. Days later, educators had to transfer all of their lessons online.

When this first happened, I thought it wouldn’t be much of an issue for me personally. I am a tech-savvy teacher. I am very proficient in Google Classroom. I thought of establishing office hours so that students could get in touch with me. I started making screencasts of all of my Google Slide presentations.

Getting all of your lessons organized virtually is one thing. Getting the students engaged with online learning--and actually executing the material from home--is another.

March 16th, I went on Twitter to get ideas for online lessons. I saw dozens of teachers share their lesson plans online. They were immaculately detailed, with tasks for each of the three modes, and aligned to the Core Practices.

I saw all of this wonderful material, and I froze. I had no idea where to start with my lesson planning. I got overwhelmed.

I then learned that some teachers in other districts and private schools made the switch to synchronous learning. My district did not start it until late April, and virtual classes were not mandatory. I started to get angry. I was angry that my students were falling behind in presentational and interpersonal speaking.

The anger permeated all aspects of my professional life. “I serve on the board of CT-COLT,” I thought. “I should be able to assist my fellow teachers. Lots of my colleagues have stepped up to the plate and have shared. But why am I freezing? Why is my stupid brain not producing serotonin?”

Like many teachers, I thrived on the daily interaction with my students. We shared inside jokes, we had discourse, and I was able to witness firsthand their tangible progress. Unfortunately, this camaraderie did not translate at all to distance learning. My students were very uncomfortable meeting behind their computers. They didn’t know when to speak. Some didn’t speak at all. There would be days when I spent 95% of the class talking, and there was little engagement. If there was any participation, students would write their thoughts in the chat box as opposed to saying anything out loud.

Anyone who knows me knows that I am my own worst critic. I am an experienced teacher, an almost 20-year veteran. And yet, the fourth quarter of the 2019-2020 school year made me feel like I didn’t know anything. There were times I felt that my cats could teach better than I could.

Educators know that mistakes were made during the sudden switch to online learning. They know that going back to this model looks inevitable next year. That is why I am taking this summer to engage in as many webinars and summer institutes as I possibly can, to refine my instruction for next year. I also volunteered to serve on my school’s reopening committee, so that I can help develop protocols for distance learning.

Now that I am actively reflecting on this, I feel that there are some positives. Knowing what we know now, we can improve distance learning. While most educators agree that nothing can--or should--replace a classroom teacher, it is important that we learn from our experiences and make improvements to this model. We are the pioneers, and I hope that history regards us as such another 20 years from now.

My name is Tara Smith, and my experience is similar to Lisa’s. I, too, am a very tech-savvy teacher. My colleagues were quick to tell me that my transition to online teaching and learning would be easy because I was so good with technology! In reality the opposite happened. While I am good at integrating technology in my classroom setting, this sudden change to working from home and teaching remotely was shocking and I too was frozen in my tracks.
My creativity and energy were gone. I took to Twitter to look for ideas. I attended Webinars put out by CT COLT and ACTFL. I was on the hunt for what to do now, but all I ended up finding was a feeling of being overwhelmed and underprepared. It seemed like everyone else had it figured out; they were developing engaging online lessons and had students who were 100% invested in continuing the learning process. Meanwhile, I ran back to my traditional teaching roots.... Vocabulary instruction, verb drills, and worksheets. (I’m cringing just writing it!) Now, it wasn’t all bad. In fact, with one of my classes I did a full Integrated Performance Assessment for the first time ever.

So, before you think that I’m being fake humble, and what d’you mean you did an IPA? I must confess that I purchased this resource already complete with authentic resources and the IPA template already done for me, but you have to start somewhere, right? I also feel fortunate that my district allowed me to slow the pace down, if necessary, and we would pick up the pieces of missed instruction next year.

So with all of that, I started this IPA, painfully slowly - only 1 or 2 activities per day. It took us over 2 weeks to complete, but it was something, and it felt fresh. It wasn’t perfect. Many of the activities were completed in English; something I felt made my students more able to dive into it with minimal guidance from me, but I also felt I was compromising. I had to have uncomfortable email exchanges with students regarding Google Translate and academic integrity when it came time for the interpersonal email task. In the end, I at least feel like I learned something from the experience, even if my students did not. I know that next time will be better.

So, if you felt as we did - anchorless, alone, and not sure how to approach online learning, take heart and read through the rest of the newsletter for great ideas and practical PD opportunities!

A Technology Guru Sees Student Benefits in Distance Learning

Michelle Nicklas - William H. Hall High
School@MichelleNicklas

Bruno Koffi is no stranger to COLT and presenting about technology; so how was distance learning for him? He had all of his tools in place: his students were accustomed to Mondays with Edpuzzle. Students knew that Dr. Koffi would be assessing their vocabulary and grammar comprehension through matching, multiple choice, open-ended questions, true/false and written paragraphs. He alternated Edpuzzle with Socrative.com. On his end when students work during class time, he can see green (right answer) and red (wrong answer). He stops periodically and shows students his screen so they can see the right and wrong answers with anonymity. He asks them to explain why certain answers are right and others are wrong, extending student thinking and challenging their language skills.

He uses Vocaroo.com, an online recording tool without subscription, to have students record speaking activities. Google Forms for reading, listening, and viewing comprehension. With EdPuzzle, students watched video snippets and answered vocabulary, grammar or culture questions or a combination of these. At a distance, students had written in Google Docs some of the best pieces he had seen from them. To check for any potential copying and pasting from other sources he used Draftback, a Chrome browser extension that tracks documents as they are created. Draftback allows you to see students’ work as if it were a movie playback; you can see how many keystrokes students used on the assignment; a copy and paste from Google Translate would take just one. You can see how much time students spent on the work. But students get wise to this extension; they copy and paste into another document and then retype into the assignment document.

Bruno is perceptive about students’ attempts to make their workload easier, but he believes that if expectations are expressed clearly and repeatedly in the beginning of the year and also regularly communicated to parents, students will honor their commitment to learning and growing their proficiency over shortcutting the task. Using Stephen Curry as a role model with his extra free throws a day during practice time, Bruno shares with students that he embraces mistakes and believes in retakes, the process of continuous improvement. Recognizing the value of persistence and resilience, Bruno creates various versions of the same assessment, sometimes using the help of ISLCollective to ensure they are on the same topic and at the same level of difficulty. He awards students their last assessment score instead of an average, because he believes that score measures their current achievement and knowledge, even if it goes down. But students do not request retakes organically, Bruno approaches any student with a score less than a C and asks them when they will retake.

During distance learning, Bruno used class time to juggle two Google Meets at once: in one, he had students working on a Socrative or Quizizz activity while in the other, he met with a student from that class. He would guide that student in completing a missing task.
After reading recent research publications (here and here), Bruno discovered that students can learn up to 60% more with distance learning for the way it allows for differentiation, student pacing and interest, repeating if they need it. He also felt that in Google Meets and with backdoor writing activities, students were able to perform better anonymously; they could speak their mind in writing and trust that their teacher would protect their identity.

They knew they could trust Bruno, he had invested in relationships and honesty, especially during COVID 19. Students knew that he was tired, bored, frightened, sore, and happy to share their company, just like them. Through knowing his students, he assesses them individually and holistically. By treating them individually, he was mostly able to detect what work was authentically theirs and what was not.

He is concerned about what next year holds. Will we have a chance to get to know our students in person before being distanced from them again? He suggests that a remedy to this concern might be conferencing with their last year’s teacher to better understand their learning styles, preferences, and less visible success stories. Early in the distance learning period, he was inspired by his principal’s message: “Don’t let technology drive the teaching; let the teaching determine the technology.”

Consider The Physical Environment as You Teach Online

Sarab Al Ani
sarab.alani@yale.edu

Did you feel like a fish out of water in March 2020 when we had to move all instruction online? I know some instructors who did. They confided in my that they felt like the rug underneath their feet has been completely pulled. Those who had some experience in online teaching did not feel like they were out of their element. Regardless of how confident or not instructors were about the second half of Spring 2020, all instructors had to change much (if not all) of the way they had planned to teach their classes.

When it came to remote instruction, I myself did not feel like a fish out of water since I have taught online before. I still wanted to prepare for this unusual situation. Like many, I attended training sessions and webinars. I designed and differentiated, scaffolded and assimilated, and I monitored and evaluated. However, when it came to the interaction dynamic during the synchronous sessions, I did feel that my teaching in the second half of Spring 2020 was lacking something. Something was amiss, and I could not put my finger on it. So, I started digging. And that’s when I found the study that Martin H published in 2012 in which he investigates “relationships between the class-room environment and the practice of teachers” (p. 139). The elements in the physical space is one of the areas this study investigated. Martin tried to discover what aspect of the class physical environment could help empower instructors.

In his conclusion, Martin states (p.154):

This study illuminates the relationship that exists between teachers’ practice and the environment in which they operate. I have argued that teachers should be self-aware of these relationships and that this awareness should not be left to chance but rather should
be deliberately developed in them. The training of teachers in understanding the effects that the classroom has on them is therefore clearly a matter of importance.

The study itself was not dedicated to online instruction, quite the contrary; it was centered around classroom dynamics. Nevertheless, I felt that the findings were quite reasonable. There were many aspects in the study that resonated with my personal experience as an instructor. Hence, I decided to follow the recommendation the study makes and examine the “the environment in which [I] operate”. And just as Martin did, I attempted to explore the question: am I “empowered or defeated by [my] environment?” (p. 152). And why?

As I consider this aspect, I realize the obvious: there is nothing I can do about the fact that I was teaching from a room in my house. Nonetheless, there are other elements that I still felt I can examine. Upon doing so I noticed that the one other huge change that took place in my physical environment was my posture. In all my classes, I am usually standing and, in many cases, moving around (the Mobility element in Martin’s study). And this is what I had been doing in the first part of Spring 2020. After the transition to remote teaching, I was pinned to the chair, staring at the screen. The only thing that moved was my hand on the mouse. This calls for more investigation. That’s exactly what I did. This time I decided to look at other resources and examine different opinions as well. That’s when I found that there are resources that talk about the benefits standing and teaching (whether in face-to-face classes or in online ones). Health benefits for the instructor who is standing and teaching was among the first and most mentioned advantages. I am sure you have heard of the expression “standing in the new smoking” for office jobs. The same is true for teaching it appears. No surprise there. Though a valid point, it does not benefit my students. The digging continues. Another advantage that the instructor gains while standing and teaching is increased focus. This actually can benefit my students though indirectly. But I need more than that. A pleasant surprise awaits. I kept searching and I found resources emphasizing that when instructors stand and teach, students feel that they are more welcomed into the session, the feeling of respect towards the instructors increase, and so does their attention to what s/he is doing and engagement with it. Say no more! I was sold!

The very next day I pulled the chair away, I put boxes under my laptop to raise it, and I taught standing that day (two synchronous sessions). Despite difficult circumstances we were all going through (this was in April 2020), I saw more smiles on students faces that day. Students were indeed more engaged and willing to participate that day. I personally felt more in my element and that missing thing that I couldn’t identify was not such a big deal anymore. Needless to say, from then on, I taught standing.

If, like me, you have done everything you can in terms of transforming your class and you are still not feeling it, next time you teach in front of a computer, just do it standing. It is such a small change with such a huge benefit.

Resources consulted while writing this article:


Teacher positioning in the classroom. British Council – Teaching English:
https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/teacher-positioning-classroom

Standing While Teaching Online. Feedback Panda:
https://www.feedbackpanda.com/standing-while-teaching-online/

Teachers, please stand up when teaching. Reddit – Teachers: https://www.reddit.com/r/Teachers/comments/6z3b6f/teachers_please_stand_up_when_teaching/

Feedback for Proficiency During Distance Learning

Vannessa Tran, Spanish Teacher, Timothy Edwards Middle School, @SenoraTran

With distance learning, student engagement became extremely challenging to capture and maintain. This is particularly true for those districts where attendance at live class sessions was not mandatory. Students faced personal and emotional circumstances that were out of our control, which brought down their confidence and motivation to continue to build their language proficiency from home. It therefore became important to build student confidence from the ground up, and plan for opportunities to provide students with the tools and guidance to engage them and reassure them that they can continue to make proficiency gains even while learning from home.

Distance learning presented teachers with the opportunity to truly reflect on what we are doing to encourage students to
independently learn and perform to their best potential. Providing students with activities that ignite their curiosity, and are geared to their interests, will help hook the students into the learning process. Once students participate in the learning activities, providing feedback is an opportunity to celebrate the student’s strengths, and guide them towards the steps they need to take to make growth in their language proficiency.

At the beginning of the distance learning process, it was difficult to figure out how to appropriately provide feedback. On the one hand, it was hard to avoid falling into old habits and hold back from correcting every grammatical error or taking the easy route and just commenting “good job” students’ assignments. After all, providing feedback is quite time consuming and students don’t often even read it. I would like to challenge that thought and say that perhaps students just need a little bit of encouragement and reason to read your feedback. Students need to see that they can attain a goal and see that they can advance in the target language. What better way to prove that than to simply show students how they can continue to grow.

As teachers and coaches of student learning, we need to focus on what it is we want our students to be able to achieve and how we will get them there, and what we can do to motivate, engage, and keep our students’ interest. Each is equally valuable, however, feedback that focuses on accomplishments helps to fuel students’ motivation and is the foundation to their continual growth and progress with language proficiency. So how can we provide effective feedback through distance learning?

First, shifting students’ focus from grades to language proficiency is a game-changer. Providing students with a proficiency-based rubric that is in student-friendly terms with clear can-do statements helps to make this move. Rubrics can be supplemented with examples of student work within the target range of your students, like novice mid to novice high, or novice high to intermediate low. This provides students with a clear view of what they need to do to work towards a higher level of language proficiency. This is essential, as students will be able to see the required next steps needed to advance in the target language. Review these rubrics with your students to help familiarize students with them, and then use this same language to provide feedback.

Secondly, give students opportunities to choose to show their learning in different ways. Just be purposeful with these activities to ensure that they promote continuous growth. Offering choice will help to meet different learning styles and keep students engaged. When students are engaged, not only do you have more opportunities to provide them with feedback, but they also become more willing to self-reflect on their own work and set their own goals.

When providing feedback, use the language from the rubric you have shared with students to highlight something the student did well, and something they can work on to improve. This feedback can be in the form of writing, like commenting on a Google Doc or Google Classroom assignment, or orally through programs like Flipgrid, Seesaw, or Screencastify. Remember though, not everything needs feedback! Providing students with a visual of their own proficiency level, and showing how much they have grown, will promote student engagement because they are able to see progress and the next steps for further language development. As a result, a student’s focus will be shifted, and they will no longer dwell on the errors and mistakes they’ve made, instead, they will refocus their energy on what they did well and what they need to do to advance in their language proficiency.

Once students are familiar with proficiency rubrics and how they are applied, they can rate their own work and also engage in peer feedback. Establishing a safe environment for students to make mistakes and feel comfortable with one another was also key to making this work. With careful planning, this transition can be very smooth and supportive of students. Giving students opportunities to collaborate with one another has created a bonding experience much needed during such circumstances.

As I implemented these strategies during the distance learning period in the Spring of 2020, I saw an increase in student engagement. Initially I did not have a high turnaround rate of work completion from my students. However once I implemented opportunities for students to assume responsibility for their learning, complete partnered work with peer feedback activities, and incorporating choice through a variety of learning platforms, I immediately saw a shift in work completion and better quality of work. More importantly, students grew in their understanding of proficiency levels, and how they can, while learning from home, continue to work towards improving their language proficiency.

How One Teacher Uses Pear Deck to Increase Critical Thinking at a Distance

Michelle Nicklas - William H. Hall High School @MichelleNicklas

Meghan Kebernick had used Pear Deck before COVID 19. As a matter of fact, she trained a lot of West Hartford teachers on
Peak Deck, but distance learning caused her to rethink the way she used Pear Deck. Although she knew that there were teacher and student-paced lessons, prior to distance learning her Latin lessons had little use for student-paced instruction. Like many teachers, she preferred to be in control of the pace and guide the instruction along with her expert content narration.

But at a distance and with student attendance lower than in person, Meghan needed to ensure that all students were getting the same experience by making the lessons student-paced and grading them for completion and effort. She equated effort with depth of thought and used the interactive feature of takeaways to offer students rich feedback, encouraging them to extend their thinking.

Students had started a new textbook: in short, all characters in the previous textbook died off, the storyline now takes place in Britain instead of Pompeii, focusing on the Celtic and Roman cultures and their government, and through its imaging and narration, portrays the slaves as lazy and lethargic.

Meghan allowed students via Pear Deck to see the images and descriptions one at a time and asked students to infer why a textbook on its fifth edition, but with some elements from its original publication 1970, would portray British and Egyptian slaves as indolent. What was the author’s message? Aware that several students would receive the task without her input, Meghan skillfully and objectively phrased her questioning strategies so as not to color the student lens.

She was inspired by the results! For students who were present, she allowed them a few minutes to craft their responses in writing and then revealed the variety of thoughts anonymously to students, allowing them a minute to turn on their microphones and share their thoughts aloud. Some students asked if they could change their answers when they saw the thoughts of their classmates. Not only did they enlighten one another as she guided them to support their position with evidence, but also they offered Meghan some ideas she had not considered, such as the British wanting to align themselves with the Romans instead of the barbaric Celts.

They even shared a very different perspective on a female character from the first book, Metella, who spent the book in the atrium and left the house only once. Whereas Meghan saw her as a disappointing female role model, a student told her he liked her and saw her as sassy. Meghan deliberately used Pear Deck to have students analyze and dissect implicit biases and instead draw awareness to subtle messaging. Applications for this approach might allow for heated and healthy discussions when viewing images of Latin America, Francophone Africa, or other messaging that might foster racism. Overall, the experience will reshape how Meghan teaches cultural content in the future in that she will mindfully help students uncover and question the subconscious suggestions in their surroundings.

Looking Back at Our Accomplishments and Forward With Hope

Gina Gallo Reinhard, Bristol Central High School, CITA President and 2020/2021 CT COLT TOY
@CTITALTEACHERS

You did it, you accomplished the seemingly impossible—Google chat at 9:30 from your dining room table, Zoom meeting at 11:00 while making lunch for your kids, Webex conference at 1:15, Webinar from 3-4 with a cat who won’t leave you alone and finally a Board of Ed virtual presentation at 6:00pm. You made all of this happen and you balanced your homelife, your sanity and the social and emotional well-being of your students. These accomplishments speak volumes to the resilient nature of world language teachers. Not only have you changed how you teach, but you have altered the vocabulary and content needed to teach during a global pandemic. A typical lesson now includes words such as asynchronous learning, blended lessons, isolation and social distancing. You have selflessly modified your plans to reflect units on self-care and personal motivation; maintaining strong ties to your students and their families. As we finish up one of the most trying school years on record please be sure to be kind to yourselves and recharge your ever-ready batteries.

The upcoming school year will present us with many obstacles but I am confident that TOGETHER we can continue to maintain and grow our language programs. As the 2020/21 CT COLT Language Teacher of the Year I am excited to collaborate with and learn from the many exemplary teachers we have in our state. I look forward to teaming up with the COLT semi-finalists Andrea Bohling, Trudy Anderson, Michelle Nichlas and Melissa Tubbs. These rock stars are experts in the fields of social justice, mentoring, curriculum development, and proficiency. I am honored to represent COLT and showcase all the incredible talent we have here in Connecticut. Please feel free to contact me at ginagallo@bristol12.org or on twitter @CTITALTEACHERS; collaboration across languages will make us stronger, more connected and ready to tackle the upcoming school year as a team.
CT COLT Fall Conference Update:  
*The Fall Conference for 2020 is going virtual!*

The Fall Conference Committee is excited to share that our Fall Conference in 2020 is virtual! The committee met via Zoom over the past few months to discuss, at length, considerations for our annual fall conference, held in October, during this unprecedented time. Here’s a picture of one of our online meetings:

During these meetings, we examined a variety of factors, including:

- The safety of our members during this pandemic, including meeting current social distancing guidelines for the state.
- The possibility that this coming fall, districts may restrict in-person conference attendance or that they may limit the number of days this year that teachers can attend conferences out of the building.
- The need for high-quality professional development as schools offer distance learning, blended learning, or in-school learning within state guidelines.
- The necessity of professional development at this time in these areas: teaching towards proficiency in digital spaces, social justice, social and emotional learning, and wellness.

After much discussion, we determined that switching to a virtual conference for this fall, 2020, will provide the CT COLT membership with needed professional development within a collaborative digital space. We are currently in the process of planning our upcoming virtual Fall Conference – look for information on our website [www.ctcolt.org](http://www.ctcolt.org) and via email. We have reserved the Omni New Haven Hotel at Yale for our Conference the following year, October 24-25, 2021.
Virtual Summer Proficiency Institute 2020 featuring Greg Duncan
LAUNCH - EXPLORE - SUMMARIZE

Kathleen Archibald - Director, Summer Proficiency Institute

2020 has been a year for the history books. The global pandemic has changed the way people around the world conduct their everyday lives and interact with their family, friends and community near and far. This statement could not be more true about the 2020 Summer Proficiency Institute hosted by CT COLT and RIFLA on June 24-26. This year, the conference was conducted entirely via Zoom with an innovative virtual format designed to allow teachers a chance to still collaborate with a variety of World Language teachers. The “Launch - Explore - Summarize” model was a great success and without too much Zoom fatigue!

Ninety educators from New England and the Tri-State area collaborated in a daily whole group “Launch” session and listened to the lively webinar hosted by Greg Duncan. The “Explore” session put participants into smaller breakout rooms with one of five dedicated facilitators. The facilitators, Tim Eagan, Lea Graner Kennedy, Sarah Steverman, Rita Oleksak and Charlotte Gifford led discussions and empowered teachers with an individual work component and answered any questions that teachers might have. This session also allowed teachers to meet in pairs or triads to reflect on their individual work, share ideas and hear feedback. Finally, attendees “zoomed” back as a whole group for the “Summarize” portion of the program.

This was the fourth Summer Proficiency Institute and the third in the series with Greg. CT COLT and RIFLA are proud they were able to convert the Summer Proficiency Institute into a virtual program while maintaining the same collaborative spirit that keeps participants returning for many years. We would like to thank all of those that attended and let you know that we appreciate your participation and patience with the new format. We know you are giving up part of your well-deserved summer vacation to attend. Please consider joining us next year for the 2021 Summer Proficiency Institute in June 2021. We look forward to seeing you next year!

Here are just a few comments from some of the 2020 attendees:

“Thank you all again for such wonderful Professional Development. Lea and her team work so well together and I have learned so much from Greg Duncan’s programs. I am looking forward to next summer and can’t wait to see who you select for next year.” Lea Garcia, Pennsylvania

“This was the best conference I have attended over my 15 years as a teacher. Bravo to everyone who helped make it happen. It was a success! I plan on participating next year too! Thank you for inspiring me to continue to work hard and to share my passion of language and culture by crafting lessons that are proficiency driven and are planned based on proven pedagogy and brain based research.” E Ruiz, CT COLT Member

“I love that we end our day with Q&A. Greg does an outstanding job revisiting questions he can’t address in the time, and changing topics, creating a "responsive" classroom for us, based on our inquiry. Excellent. This whole workshop is an exemplar of competence combined with pure desire to help colleagues. Thank you :)” L. Rosano, CT COLT Member

How the Seal was Earned: Many Options for WL Testing for the Seal of Biliteracy

Jimmy Wildman, Past President

They said two weeks. It was three months. We didn’t know. They didn’t know.

The transition was difficult. And... now what?

Although COVID-19 canceled in person classes, teachers and students across the state and country continued the process of teaching and learning. The look and feel of distance learning was different for students and teachers in different places. The differences were stark, some quickly adapted, some didn’t. Some thrived, for others, the struggle was never greater. But one thing is certain, no one envisioned finishing the 2019–2020 school year from home. While a global pandemic may have changed how teachers taught, and learners learned, it certainly did not change the intense passion that world language educators have for their students and the drive students have in their quest to become proficient in a language other than English.

Although the Seal of Biliteracy, now in its third year, and has taken strength from passionate teachers, parents, students, administrators, and other stakeholders, administering testing during a global pandemic proved to be challenging for many. While some students struggled, others thrived in the online
environment. Language proficiency is not limited by a global pandemic, nor is it limited by technology. People are still communicating. In many cases, people are more connected to others than they were before the global health crisis. Today’s communication needs to be done more effectively and efficiently than ever before. Students need to understand the importance of being able to communicate with others, more important now, than ever.

Testing for the Seal of Biliteracy has come a long way in just a few short years. Both major companies, LTI and Avant, have offered a variety of testing options. Both companies have created responses to distance education by offering remote proctoring and in some cases, parent proctoring, which has allowed students to test from their homes, to demonstrate their language proficiency.

Despite the conditions not being ideal, students who participated in spring testing had the opportunity to show their knowledge and skills in world languages. This spring CT high schools awarded the Seal of Biliteracy to over 2100 students, who earned the distinction of being biliterate. Of the 2100+ students, 1808 of them were seniors, while an additional 296 juniors, and 17 sophomores also met the state’s lofty requirements for the Seal of Biliteracy.

This fall, as students and teachers across the State of Connecticut plan to return to school buildings, testing will also be completed for many seniors looking to earn the Seal prior to applying to colleges and universities this fall. Teachers and administrators may consider wanting to test students as early in the school year as possible, so that any student who earns the distinction can include that information during the fall application period for institutions of higher education. Teachers should also encourage students to share their test results with their future colleges/universities as they may be able to earn college credits for their work, placement in more appropriate higher-level classes, or even for possible scholarships and awards.

Testing for the Seal of Biliteracy can either be completed during in-person classes in school language labs or computer labs, individual devices, such as iPads or Chromebooks, or during distance learning, should it be necessary, through remote or parent proctoring. There are so many options for testing and awarding the CT Seal of Biliteracy. Don’t let distance learning take away from your students’ opportunities to shine, begin to formulate your plan for testing this summer, it’s never too early to begin planning. If you have questions about the Seal of Biliteracy, email your questions to sealofbiliteracy@ctcolt.org.

New Students Inducted into the CT COLT Future World Language Teachers Honor Society

By Aileen Dever

With her usual “can do” attitude, Linda Dalpe, the CT COLT University Liaison, reached out to CT COLT President Amanda Robustelli-Price, Past President Lea Graner-Kennedy, Advocacy Leader Rebecca Aubrey, and Advisor Aileen Dever, to hold the biannual induction ceremony of the CT COLT Future World Language Teachers Honor Society. Despite the global pandemic, a beautiful virtual ceremony was celebrated on Tuesday, June 30\textsuperscript{th}, 2020 with five new inductees. In attendance were members of the CT COLT Board, our students to be honored from Central Connecticut State University and the University of Connecticut, and their advisors: Prof. Rocío Fuentes (Central Connecticut State University) was there to cheer her students on and also Prof. Michele Back (University of Connecticut), dressed in full academic regalia. Other university advisors who regularly select students for admission are Advisor Jesse Gleason from Southern Connecticut State University and Advisor Aileen Dever from Quinnipiac University. Our newest honor society chapter Advisor is Michelle Nicklas from the University of Saint Joseph.

President Amanda Robustelli-Price created a beautiful PowerPoint presentation that even included a virtual, fluttering candle that shone while students recited together the induction oath:

\textit{I pledge to uphold the highest standards of integrity, leadership, and service in the pursuit of excellence as a member of the CT COLT World Language Future Teachers Honor Society to promote understanding between peoples of the world and to open the minds and hearts of my students through the teaching of language and culture.}

To be inducted into the CT COLT Future World Language Teachers Honor Society, selected students must maintain a GPA of 3.0 or higher, participate in community programs nationally and internationally, hold leadership positions in World Language clubs and organizations, advocate for World Languages, and represent their chosen profession in open houses or at cultural events.
President Amanda Robustelli-Price proudly welcomed these newest members of the CT COLT Future World Language Teachers Honor Society:

Aaron Blais, a 2020 graduate of the University of Connecticut, will be teaching at Enfield High School. He hopes to become proficient in many languages throughout his life and is looking forward “to sharing the joy of authentic language acquisition with students.”

Stephen Brownlee, a 2020 Central Connecticut State University graduate, grew up speaking both English and Spanish fluently, spending alternating summers in Virginia Beach and Puerto Rico. He has a passion for the Spanish language and one of his goals is to teach his students “about the many different dialects and cultures of not only Spain, but all of Latin America.”

Cecilia Dávila is a 2019 graduate of the University of Delaware who recently completed the education program at the University of Connecticut. She will be teaching Spanish at Woodrow Wilson Middle School in Middletown, Connecticut. Cecilia studied two years at the Universidad de Granada and is eager to share this rich cultural experience with her students.

Emilia Vega graduated Magna Cum Laude, Spring, 2020, from Central Connecticut State University with a B.S. in Spanish, Secondary Education and will teach at JFK Middle School in Enfield, Connecticut. Emilia will bring her love of travel to the classroom and give her students “the opportunity to explore different cultures.”

Maria Vega graduated Magna Cum Laude in 2020 from Central Connecticut State University with a B. A. in Spanish, Secondary Education and will also be teaching at Woodrow Wilson Middle School in Middletown, Connecticut. Like her sister Emilia, she love to travel! She says that when she teaches, she feels “like I am doing something right and giving back to the community that gave me so much.”

HUGE congratulations to these newest inductees and teachers! As members of the CT COLT Future World Language Teachers Honor Society, they will receive CT COLT membership through their first year of teaching, a small gift, and a certificate.

The CT COLT Future World Language Teachers Honor Society was established in 2015 to recognize excellent candidates preparing to teach a World Language. Professors at Connecticut colleges and universities who are members of CT COLT may nominate their language students accepted into their education programs. For more information, please contact Prof. Linda Dalpe (Linda.Dalpe@qu.edu) or Prof. Aileen Dever (aileen.dever@qu.edu)
In response to comments and questions during a roundtable dedicated to teaching online, the American Council of Teachers of Russian (ACTR) held a weekly Virtual Teachers' Lounge as a virtual space for sharing solutions to common challenges, brainstorming answers to questions, talking through ideas, etc.

Each Friday from 5-6PM (EST) starting on March 20 and ending on May 29, members of the ACTR board of directors hosted a virtual room on Zoom for ACTR member-teachers who want to talk about issues related to the online teaching of Russian language. ACTR Board Member hosts anchored the room and facilitated the discussion in the hopes of offering ideas and solutions to the challenges that distance learning had presented to teachers. Russian teachers representing secondary and post-secondary education co-participated, offering support and best practices concerning a wide range of topics concerning synchronous and asynchronous language teaching, student engagement, formative and summative assessment, online educational applications and platforms, proficiency and more.

Teachers used a variety of online educational platforms ranging from Google Classroom to Seesaw. There were some common and definitive concerns shared by all teachers. Teachers faced challenges as to how to keep their students interested and engaged in the curriculum and instruction during E-learning. Many teachers missed the in-person connection with all of their students, especially considering that not all students were able to attend online instruction simultaneously, when it was offered. At times, teachers had to modify their curriculum or materials to make them online accessible to their students. When not providing live online instruction, teachers would record videos of their lessons and instruction so that their students could access these at a later time and when possible. In some school districts, students were not required to attend online classes regularly, having to just complete and turn in assignments that were posted by teachers. Teachers then had to check the assignments that were submitted and somehow provide meaningful feedback to each student. Teacher feedback is a very important part of instruction, which guides students in their learning process and gives them the direction they need to reach the target or goal of the lesson. Delivering proficiency-focused instruction worked in some areas and not in others. Students were able to successfully complete language practice activities, interpretive tasks (reading, listening, and viewing), as well as presentational speaking and writing. Interpersonal speaking activities presented particular challenges for teachers to create, as students were not paired in class, nor in the language lab.

Teachers learned that distance learning not only presented challenges for them, but also for their students. Sometimes students and their parents felt that there was less support during distance learning, whereas it would be immediately available in school, during class. Without seeing their peers regularly in person, some students experienced feelings of isolation, not being in school or in the classroom environment with their peers. Working and studying from home is challenging for any professional or student. Being in the classroom provides students and teachers with a regimented environment, where everyone must show up on time and with work completed. Self-discipline and structuring one’s home learning and teaching environment was difficult at times, with demands on internet access, juggling family obligations, home distractions, prolonged immobility sitting at a computer, screen fatigue just to name a few. When schools closed, not all students were able to access online education immediately, as some districts were not equipped to offer distance learning or resources. This presented an educational equity issue wherein educators and their students were not able to access the technology they needed to continue their instruction and education, not to mention learning to effectively navigate and use the tools at their disposal.

The 2019-2020 school year has ended and summer has begun. Since mid-March, both teachers and students were presented with challenges, obstacles and difficulties. Through this experience, teachers and students learned so much about how to successfully construct and navigate distance learning. At this moment, states, districts, universities and colleges are all trying to figure out the learning environment for the start of the 2020-2021 school year, factoring in many logistical and health concerns for students, staff and families. Whatever the learning environment is, be it in-person instruction, a hybrid educational model, or distance learning, it is clear that teachers and their students will be better informed and equipped to successfully manage many of the challenges presented to them.
A Sampling of Online Resources used by Russian Teachers during Distance Learning

By John R. Rook, Recording Secretary – CT COLT Executive Board; ACTR Board Member, Teacher of Russian and Spanish – Glastonbury Public Schools

As described in the related article about the Virtual Teachers’ Lounge for instructors of Russian, there were numerous curricular ideas and activities that were shared by teachers. Detailed below, are some tech resources and tools that teachers used to deliver online instruction during distance learning.

**Zoom ~ Teaching Languages via Zoom**

To provide synchronous instruction and/or just to meet with students, teachers used Google Chat, Hangouts and Meet. Many teachers used Zoom, which provides video-telephony and online chat services through a cloud-based peer-to-peer software platform, used for teleconferencing, telecommuting, and for educational purposes - distance education or E-learning. Personally, I found Zoom to be an excellent tool for online foreign language teaching and learning. Zoom has a consistently good connection compared to many other video call tools, where the connection can be weak or interrupted. Zoom also works really well for groups and for group instruction. All participants – teacher and students can see and hear each other – all connected virtually and online. Teachers can create a meeting, send out the access information, which students can complete by just clicking on a link. Zoom is also great for screen sharing. A teacher can share their computer screen to present some instructional element or resource, demonstrate an in-country website, review written work collectively, etc. One can also share their phone or iPad screen via Airplay or USB cable. Students can annotate shared readings when teachers employ the whiteboard feature, thus enabling the annotation tools. They can also receive files uploaded and posted in chat, watch videos, and listen to recordings and music. Teachers can also create breakout rooms during Zoom sessions. This feature allows the teacher to open multiple “rooms” and assign students to them for a set amount of time, to complete interpersonal speaking tasks and other collaborative language activities. In this sense, I was able to recreate the language lab experience for my students and even record and save their speaking tasks in the breakout rooms. One challenge that teachers faced was Zoom-bombing, wherein outsiders would crash a meeting and typically say or show something inappropriate. To rectify this, teachers would require that students enter a password before being admitted individually to the Zoom session.

**Flip Grid**

Flipgrid is social learning platform that allows teachers to post a prompt, such as written questions, videos or images. Students then simply click a record button and then begin recording a video response, wherein they reflect upon, discuss and showcase what they are learning, making, reading, solving, experiencing, playing, etc. It is a great tool for presentational speaking in the foreign language classroom. Teachers first create Flipgrid classrooms and then a grid, by uploading up a short video prompt to which students can respond in their own video that can last a short and specified period of time. Students can also be given written prompts, which they have to respond to in a short video or recording.

Some ways that Flipgrid can be beneficial in a foreign language classroom are below:

- Ask a specific reflection question about the day’s lesson and have students respond before leaving
- Ask students to record their reaction to the day’s lesson
- Have students respond to an open-ended question regarding the lesson
- Encourage conversation through asking about their personal lives
- Have students give a short, informative presentation in the target language on a given topic
- Use this for students or classes that struggle with speaking in front of groups or peers
- Have students discuss what they did or will do over a non-school period.
- Have students create mock-interview questions, act out pretend scenarios like making a doctor’s appointment, ordering food at a restaurant, etc.

**Pear Deck**

Pear Deck is an interactive presentation tool used by teachers to actively engage students in individual and social learning. Teachers create presentations using their Google Drive account as an add-on tool. Students log into the presentation with unique access codes and interact with questions while teachers monitor student and whole-class progress and responses in real-time. Interactive presentations on Pear Deck allow students to work independently to respond to various questions throughout the ‘deck’. Pear Deck presentations are created in Google Drive and as a result, save as Google Docs in
Google Drive, which can then be organized and shared with other Google users.

While building their interactive decks for the foreign language classroom, teachers can choose from four question types:

- Draggable questions take the form of agree/disagree or thumbs up/thumbs down
- Drawing questions allow students to free draw in a blank space or on a grid
- Free response questions have short text, long text, and number capabilities
- Multiple choice questions take the form of yes/no, true/false, or A, B, C, D

**EdPuzzle**

Edpuzzle is a web-based interactive video tool that allows teachers to customize existing online videos in ways that encourage active learning. The teacher can embed either open-ended or multiple-choice questions, audio notes, audio tracks, or comments on a video. Edpuzzle interactive videos can be made with videos from a number of websites, including YouTube, TED, Vimeo, National Geographic, etc. Edpuzzle integrates easily with Google Classroom and teachers can quickly import their class rosters of students.

Edpuzzle has many practical uses for language teaching. It is a great tool to use for the flipped classroom as it allows students to view and interact with the videos as homework at their own pace. Edpuzzle also allows teachers to create multiple versions of a video for differentiation purposes. On Edpuzzle, teachers can conduct formative assessments; introduce new topics, review concepts and increase students’ engagement and accountability. Other ways to use Edpuzzle in the foreign language classroom are listed below:

- Check for listening comprehension and understanding by students watching a video containing embedded questions - open-ended questions to work on writing skills or multiple-choice for vocabulary checks.
- Start a debate. Teachers share an interesting topic using a video from YouTube and embed an open-ended question asking for their point of view and use those responses to start a debate in class or online.
- Use videos to go on virtual field trips. Teachers can virtually take their students to a country where the language is spoken, thus allowing their students to explore the culture and listen to native speakers.
- Share new grammar concepts and vocabulary. There are many videos available that cover grammar topics or vocabulary themes. Teachers can use Edpuzzle to flip their classroom, let students learn these concepts at home in order to maximize time in the classroom for practice.

**AATF adjusts to le confinement**

Melissa Tubbs
Organizational Director, AATF

While the quarantine certainly presented challenges to the AATF, in CT the organization was able to successfully adjust with some creative thinking and patience! The Grand Concours extended testing dates and relaxed procedures to support the 50 schools and 2354 students who had enrolled to take the exam. While not everyone was able to test, over 75% successfully did so, and participating schools have recently received their results.

The chapter was able to continue to offer its annual prizes, for which students had to complete an extensive application and finalists spoke in French with a panel of judges via Zoom. Wesley M. of St. Luke’s School was the recipient of the Tom Betts Senior Prize, Emma C. of The Hopkins School was the recipient of the Alberta Conte Junior Prize, and Sienna M. of Valley Regional High School was the recipient of the Alliance Française of Northwestern CT Prize. Congratulations to all who were honored!

A bright spot in the AATF spring lineup was a new video singing competition, “Alors on chante!” Initially intended to be a live competition hosted by New Brunswick School and judged by a group of enthusiastic French senior students, “Alors on chante!” became a video-submission competition - with fantastic results! Students chose to compete individually or in groups, and videos ranged in format from a traditional performance-based approach to full-fledged music videos. Among the schools that participated were St. Luke’s School, Hartford Public School, the Brunswick School, Lewis S. Mills High School, and Trumbull High School. Prizes were awarded for the top entries in the categories of grand groupe, petit groupe, chant solo and vidéo, and there were other recognitions for“special strengths” such as performance la plus émotionnelle, performance la plus entraînante, vidéo avec la meilleure chorégraphie, performance la plus grunge, chanson la plus énergique and groupe le plus dynamique. Event organizers should be commended for their flexibility and quick thinking - thanks to them, “Alors on chante!” was a successful and fun event.
While the annual Réunion Printanière was cancelled, the CT chapter is currently brainstorming ideas on how to make some of their more popular fall events virtual, such as the Rentrée Gathering.

The national office of the AATF organization has been offering their members a series of professional development webinars via ZOOM and these will continue throughout June and July. Details can be found here on the AATF website. The webinars cover topics such as technology, best practices, La Francophonie, interculturality, historical perspectives, and more.

As we continue to navigate this uncertain era of teaching, AATF continues to be a strong support system for French teachers around the state and upholds its commitment to serve as a vraie communauté. New members are welcome at any time! Visit www.aatfct.org for info, resources, and lots of great photos of our members and their students in action.

**CLASS’s Response to Remote Learning during COVID 19**

By Carol Chen-Lin, Choate Rosemary Hall

In response to the school closing of the COVID-19 in mid-March, CLASS (Chinese Language Association for Secondary-Elementary Schools) has launched a series of webinars helping teachers on remote learning.

CLASS organized three webinars per week for ten weeks from March 15 to the Memorial weekend. Every Tuesday and Thursday we had “jijiubao” (First Aid Kits in Chinese) on tools that teachers can use in remote learning such as Padlet, Kahoot, Flipgrid, Google Tool Creator, Gimkit, Edpuzzle, Nearpod etc. Saturdays’ webinars is entitled “Frontline” discussing critical issues of our time such as Social Emotional Learning, and Social Justice. We invited Linda Egnatz to talk about Seal of Biliteracy and Meredith White to talk about the use of technologies in the world language classes. The webinars can be found on CLASS website: You can also subscribe Youtube channel: CLASS membership. It has more than 1000 subscribers.

https://www.classk12.org/en/webinar
https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=class+membership

CLASS, established in 1987, is an organization that was designed to provide leadership to our K-12 Chinese teachers, and at this time when everyone was wondering what to do and how to do it, the leadership will be in the form of providing the kind of help teachers needed. We collected thoughts from teachers in social media like WeChat and Line, and realized quickly that teachers would need help and guidance in choosing and using appropriate online instructional tools. that was what we did, providing short and clear webinars to teachers on various online tools.

We are so surprised by the sheer number of dedicated teachers who have followed us throughout the entire three months. Consistently, each sessions averages over 160 viewers. We then continue the discussion in our WeChat or LINE groups. We never thought there would such drastic need for webinar. These series are incorporated into many teachers’ weekly routine in our new normalcy. This spans across grade levels and program types; it has fostered the most natural platform for preK-16 articulation.

**Italiano... a Distanza**

By Carla DeStefanis, Gina Gallo, Angela DiVirgilio Scaccianemici

Here we are again at the end of another school year. This year marked a fresh start for our CITA (Connecticut Italian Teachers Association) organization; new goals, new beginnings and new adventures! With the launch of our new social media platforms and the incorporation of new board members, we set out to begin the process of promoting Italian culture throughout our state.

Since Gina Gallo began spearheading our organization, there has been a revitalization of the program as she works tirelessly to continuously promote Italian language learning. This year, she has been named the Teacher of the Year earning state recognition for her commitment to teaching and learning of World Languages. The team of Angela Scaccianemici, Carla DeStefanis, Lorena Bizzotto Snell, Louisa D’Amore and Katherine Tavera Collins are the heart and soul of the CITA squadra. These women worked unremittingly this year (and every year) to organize networking and professional development opportunities, seminars (live and virtual), field trip opportunities for students, and scholarship opportunities for both students and teachers of Italian. However, the current pandemic had other ideas. With many of our plans on hold, our board members continue to work together to gather resources to meet the needs of our students and teachers in these new “school” environments.
Distance learning pushed us to self-reflect on the value of high quality world language instruction and best practices. This new climate posed the question, how do we engage our students with authentic language instruction while ensuring we are meeting their social and emotional needs as well? CITA worked with various Italian teachers to gather authentic and relevant learning activities for the vast needs of our students. At the onset of the pandemic, our Italian teachers rallied around our Italian community in Italy creating signs for “Andra’ tutto bene!” (It will all be okay!). Our students quickly saw the importance of unity and camaraderie; sharing their love and support abroad.

In an effort to make resources accessible to all members, we created shared folders of lessons, templates and models shared through Pinterest, Instagram and Twitter. This granted the opportunity for members to enrich learning with authentic materials and collaborate virtually. Members were quick to share their accolades with CITA to showcase all of the work students and teachers were doing in the Italian “classroom”.

Around the state we saw teachers incorporate real life into their Google classrooms. The Sanremo Music Festival Blog Project, Italian Cinema through Netflix, and Quarantine Choice Boards brought learning outside the classroom walls and into the living rooms of our students. Although technology has become an important component to distance learning our Italian teachers maintained strong connections to our students. In Meriden, our teacher duo, Angela Scaccianemici and Gabrielle Ciotto delivered lawn signs to their Italian club members to spread positive messages to the community in Italian. In Southington the trio of Kate Tavera Collins, Josephine Cusano and Tina Riccio used music, art and poetry as a means to assess and support the emotional needs of their students. Our Italian teachers continue to use language as a vehicle for positivity and support.

As we use this summer to regroup and regain our strength, CITA is still at work trying to gather essential materials that will help our members prepare for learning in the fall. While we are still unsure of what school will look like, CITA and its members will be ready with innovative and authentic resources that highlight the beautiful Italian culture.

We look forward to growing our community and building collegiality in this challenging climate. New members are always welcome so join us both virtually and at one of our many events.

To become a member or join us, first become a member at AATI (American Association of Teachers of Italian) please visit their website at https://aati.uark.edu/ and join our team using any of the following social media platforms.

Twitter: @CTitalteachers
Instagram: @connecticutitalianteach
Pinterest: CITA CITA
Website: we are in need of a new webmaster- come join us!
Join as a member or become part of the Board of Directors

Are you tech savvy?
Use your skills and become our new Webmaster!
The Connecticut Council of Language Teachers presents a
virtual conference

October 18-22, 2020
For more information visit: www.ctcolt.org
CT COLT BOARD OF DIRECTORS
2020–2022

OFFICERS / EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Amanda Robustelli-Price, President
Enfield Public Schools
robustellipricea@ctcolt.org

Rebecca Aubrey, President-Elect
South Windsor Public Schools
aubreyr@ctcolt.org

Lea Graner Kennedy, Immediate Past President
Stonington Public Schools
granerkennedyl@ctcolt.org

Paul M. St. Louis, Treasurer
275 Cedar Swamp Road, Monson, MA 01057-9303
stlouisp@ctcolt.org

John Rook, Recording Secretary
Glastonbury Public Schools
rookj@ctcolt.org

Jill Griswold, Corresponding Secretary
Glastonbury Public Schools
griswoldj@ctcolt.org

EX-OFFICIO DIRECTOR / DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE

Linda L. Dalpe, University Liaison
Quinnipiac University
dalpel@ctcolt.org

Joseph Parodi-Brown, Social Media Coordinator
Marianapolis Preparatory School
parodibrownj@ctcolt.org

Tara Smith, Social Media Coordinator
Canton Public Schools
smitht@ctcolt.org

COORDINATORS

Michele Back, Advocacy
University of Connecticut
backm@ctcolt.org

James Wildman, Seal of Biliteracy Co-Coordinator
Glastonbury Public Schools
wildmanj@ctcolt.org

Jessica Haxhi, Seal of Biliteracy Co-Coordinator
New Haven Public Schools
haxhij@ctcolt.org

Robin Bertrand, Membership Co-Coordinator
South Windsor Public Schools
bertrandr@ctcolt.org

Michelle Nicklas, Membership Co-Coordinator
West Hartford Public Schools
nicklasm@ctcolt.org

Lea Graner Kennedy, CT LILL
Stonington Public Schools
granerkennedyl@ctcolt.org

Rebecca Aubrey, Teacher of the Year
South Windsor Public Schools
aubreyr@ctcolt.org

Kathleen Archibald, Summer Institute
Bristol Public Schools
archibaldk@ctcolt.org

Gina Gallo Reinhard, Community & Business Outreach
Bristol Public Schools
gallog@ctcolt.org

Magali Hannegan, Awards & Hospitality
Glastonbury Public Schools
hanneganm@ctcolt.org

Judith Ojeda, Students Events
South Windsor Public Schools
ojedaj@ctcolt.org

ORGANIZATIONAL DIRECTORS

Melissa Tubbs, AATF-CT
E. O. Smith High School
tubbsm@ctcolt.org

John Rook, ACTR
Glastonbury Public Schools
rookj@ctcolt.org

Carla DeStefanis, CITA
North Haven Public Schools
destefanisc@ctcolt.org

Karen Stoj, CAPELL
South Windsor Public Schools
stojk@ctcolt.org

Open, ConnTesol, CT-AATG, Alliance Française
The 2020 CT COLT Fall Conference will be a virtual conference.

Please check the CT COLT Website for more details!