A Note From The President...

With the passage of Public Act 10-111 in last year’s legislative session the house and senate heard our call to be sure that the educational reform plan included the study of world language as a core subject. Students graduating from high school in 2018 would be required to have satisfactorily completed two credits in world languages. This success was due in large part to the leadership of CT COLT who united CT COLT members, world language teachers, colleagues, parents and friends who signed petitions, testified to the state legislative education subcommittee, wrote letters, and called their congressmen. Thus, the freshmen class entering in 2014 would begin to fill this language requirement. While seemingly a victory for those of us who believe that the study of and proficiency in another language is an essential, no better said, critical 21st century skill to prepare our students to compete in the world, I knew it was only going to be a matter of time before those opposing the contents of the reform bill would seek to delay its implementation, with perhaps the intent to repeal some of its contents.

Historically we have seen what happens to world language programs when budgets get tight. Then and now as we move into another economic crisis, it is one of the first programs put on the table for reduction and or elimination. Often that means reduction of programs at the elementary and middle schools, elimination of a language, or reduction of force that impacts class size. While studies have shown that large class instruction in a foreign language limits the time that a student has to gain oral proficiency because not all policy makers are aware of this fact, and while not all voters are aware of how crucial WL acquisition is for our children, we need to keep working to get our message across.

In the January session of 2011, bill 6498 was referred to the education committee with numerous amendments made to include the delay of implementation of the law until 2020. Proposed bill 421 wants the general statutes “be amended to permit local and regional boards of education to delay the implementation of the provisions of public act 10-111 until such mandates are fully funded by the state, and to amend section 10-221a of the general statutes to permit local and regional boards of education to delay the implementation of the changes to the high school graduation requirements until (1) such changes are fully funded by the state, or (2) for classes graduating in 2024, whichever is sooner.”

Seeing this, I ask: how is it possible to delay the study of a second language as a graduation requirement for all students when we are already 20 years behind the rest of the world? Students in Europe are now graduating with proficiency in two and three languages. The European educational reform plan of 2000 included second language learning to start at the elementary schools for all children with third language to begin in middle school. How much further are we going to be putting our students at a disadvantage – many who are already so much farther behind because of the very district in which they live?

Thirty five years ago, I sat in on the Horton versus Meskill court case in pursuit of equal educational opportunity and watched again with great interest as the Sheff v O’Neill court case resurfaced the issue. I asked how it is possible that one district can have the state of the art language labs, supported by state of the art technology, with language learning starting at the elementary schools and others are using 15 year old textbooks that are still teaching about the peseta and franc, and technology is a new tape recorder and CD player? How is it possible to delay the requirement of second language learning for all students when the regents board of the state colleges has passed an entrance requirement for all students entering our state schools to have a minimum of two years high school language study, with 3 preferred starting in 2015? While many districts will continue to have no problem meeting this requirement, there are far too many more districts that have more than half of their student population taking no language at all. Without a state-wide law guaranteeing all students a two-year sequence in high school WL, this inequality will endure, and CT will continue to be in the situation where there is a huge gap in access to education among those who live in some towns versus others. While it is true that the reform will cost the state money, there is no other way to ensure that all of our state’s children have access even to our state university system, not to mention the other spectrum of experiences that are only open to those with more than one language. If we are serious about equal access, we must do not delay any longer.

CT COLT members came together to speak as one voice when WL was taken out of the reform plan as a graduation requirement and the two year requirement was eventually added back in. What must we do as an organization to speak as one voice again? To begin, we have launched a membership campaign to expand and solidify our ranks. With over 3000 language educators in the state of CT, each CT
COLT member must convince colleagues PK-20 of the importance of belonging to our organization not just for the "professionalism" of it, and not just to perhaps attend a conference every few years, but also to work together to collaborate, support each other, and advocate effectively for the place that WL learning rightfully has at the table. As we saw in Egypt, there is strength in numbers. We can move our truth so that the study and proficiency of another language as well as knowledge of its culture becomes a focal point in the minds of educators, parents, policy makers and tax payers.

As we continue to build our organization, we will be updating our website, initiate Facebook, Twitter and YouTube pages and channels. We will continue the activities that we now sponsor, and begin new initiatives with the goal to expand professional growth opportunities for our teachers and our students. And we invite you to get involved in a big or small ways. There are a number of committees and task forces that need your help, your time, your passion for language learning, your talent and expertise. There are small commitments and large ones. We will be asking you to contact your congressmen, to advocate for language learning in your community, to promote every wonderful event that your students participate in by sending a press release to your newspapers, and by becoming a fully active participant in the changes we know are necessary for our state's children. We cannot afford to be passive and stand by to let decisions be made for us, or to expect just a few to try to turn around this tide of language cuts. I encourage each and every one of you to get involved at some level. A call for action will be sent to you through your department chairs, and directors. I ask you to accept that challenge to make a difference in our profession by getting involved and helping us to speak with one voice.

I'd like to close by thanking all of the unsung heroes that you don't know about who have given days, months and years to make CT COLT what it is today. There are too many to name at this point, but know that they do so year after year with dedication and passion to our discipline.

Linda

Advocacy

Why Join CT COLT? Then and Now

A Personal Perspective

By Stephanie Duchesneau

In 1982, when I started teaching in Eastern Connecticut I had never heard of CT COLT. It was not until I crossed the river to Farmington that I became a member of this professional organization. Why did I join then? All the teachers in my department were members and it was simply a given that we take part-it was the school culture. We regularly sent two or three teachers to the fall conference and at time went on there was participation in the Rhythm and Rhyme celebration, poster competition, and later medals given at a ceremony for excellence in language. As a young mother I never considered becoming more active as I was busy with family and teaching as well as graduate work. My view of the officers running the organization was that of a coterie of higher ups who knew more than I and had time that I didn't. If they were willing to do all this extra work so be it. I would keep going to the conferences and be active in my own school with the student based activities CT COLT offered. There was a time that I felt I knew everything that was being presented at the conferences and I did not attend for a number of years nor did I consider participating more actively.

When my department was asked to do a presentation/demonstration of our new language lab to the Board of Education and other important officials in town it was a scary prospect. However, standing in front of influential
and highly educated people of the community to show them what I did best was actually a turning point. I realized that I had something to offer other teachers. The idea of presenting in front of peers began to percolate and my department head gave me that opportunity a few years later when I began my studies for administrative certification. After my local debut, I was encouraged by the feedback of the other teachers but it was not until I moved to a department supervisor position in Simsbury and was contacted by a former colleague that I decided to try a presentation at the annual fall CT COLT conference. My proposal for paper cutting was accepted and along with two other teachers we did a hands on seminar in the fall. We were chosen Best of Connecticut and went to New York to take the show on the road and also presented at CCSU. This was a great experience for my teachers and me. This past fall another teacher came with me for a different presentation. I have since become the Recording Secretary for the board and my perspective that had held firm for the past ten years has totally changed.

Once again, I felt a nervous excitement and apprehension taking on this new challenge. I have attended Executive Board meetings, committee preparation for the conference and communicated via email to help make important decisions and discuss where CT COLT is going in the future. I have networked at every gathering whether it be an answer to a technology question to possible candidates for openings in my district, free websites or an all expense paid trip to another state to investigate student travel opportunities other than the traditional travel experiences. In six months I have met wonderful and dedicated professionals both new to the profession and veteran teachers each with unique skills. As a department supervisor in a fairly large district I do not have an inordinate amount of time outside of my demanding obligations to spend endless hours for CT COLT. I give the time that I can by choosing to contribute my strengths to the group effort.

Why do I join CT COLT now? This is a critical time for the future of World Language instruction. It shook me to the core to realize the lack of vision or knowledge of the importance of communication in multiple languages by those setting up high school graduation requirements. The reinstatement of the language credits was hard won by the dedicated people in CT COLT who lobbied and wrote letters and asked us to do the same. Budgets are being slashed and languages eliminated. It is first and foremost our job as language teachers to educate the students, community, and elected officials and help them to understand the need to communicate with other nations. As we look at the push for Math and Science we need to be right there also. The tired mantra of others speaking English simply does not cut it anymore. Those countries who educate their students in other languages have an edge in business, science and important industries because they can cross the borders and build relationships and understand the cultures in which they work and live. There is strength in numbers when voices come together with this message that we want a bright future for our children and students and the ability to compete on a national and global level. By joining CT COLT I have a voice. By spending a few extra hours here and there I have found new friends and possibilities for myself and my students. I would encourage each of you to join or ask a colleague to get on board so that we can continue to learn, network and educate. I would ask you to contact us and give a few hours a year to help whether it be sitting at a table at the conference or designing a brochure. Propose a presentation in the fall or serve as a judge for the poetry contest. Show us your strengths and you will get so much more than you give. I joined then and I join now and although the reasons have changed over time I know that I am ready to step up and do more for my colleagues and challenge myself in new ways.

Note: Feel free to contact any of the officers for more information on how you can help, join or make suggestions.

A Simple Equation for Teaching Success: History + World Language = Learning for a Lifetime

Susan Roberts, PhD

Officer Accessions

Officer Candidate School

United States Coast Guard Academy
Her name was Helen, echoing a classical tradition of beauty: the face that launched a thousand ships. However, this Helen was nothing like her classical counterpart in appearance. Lacking grace and walking on short spindly legs with a pronounced belly that made her look six months pregnant, she was in no way similar to that infamous Helen of Troy. What set Helen Brill apart, though, from her classical namesake was a zest for teaching, a curiosity about life, a burning desire to help those in need, and a philosophy of service to others—regardless of consequences.

I met Helen Brill in my sophomore year in high school. Always an avid reader of history, I looked forward to World History I. What I didn’t expect was that when I walked into that second floor classroom was a row of naked dolls sitting on the windowsill and walls ablaze with maps, world language posters, timelines and other fascinating historical documents that changed as we moved through the course. Since she was new to the school, we had no background—or gossip—to draw upon to fathom this teacher who insisted we actively participate in her classes and discover something about the culture and language of each country we were studying. Passivity was not a word in her lexicon.

No matter how we tried to uncover possible tantalizing secrets of her past, we encountered silence. Just when we were ready to admit defeat, the school’s annual Open House for parents provided an opportunity for my mother and father to spend an hour with Helen, revealing a past that her students could never imagine. Because no other parents bothered to attend teacher meetings for Period 5, my parents sat and learned about her amazing life.

A devout Quaker, Helen lived her beliefs during World War II. Giving up tenure at a high school in California, Helen volunteered to work at Manzanar, a Japanese internment camp. In order to teach many of her older students, she had to quickly immerse herself in the Japanese language. A linguist at heart, she approached the task with curiosity and intensity, challenging herself to learn at least twenty new words or expressions every day. On the bus that she rode to and from work, she watched as fellow Americans pelted the windows and doors with rotten vegetables and fruit. Protestors outside the camp gates found the transport buses easy targets. Screaming obscenities and making threats, crowds would gather mornings and afternoons waiting for the buses to pass. Undeterred by such hostility, Helen drew on inner strength to learn a new language and teach the Japanese-American children held hostage by a nation at war. She met her husband Bob, another peace activist, in 1944 at the camp, and they eventually married and moved to Connecticut where he found a job with one of the large Hartford-based insurance companies. Making their home in Bloomfield, a diverse community outside Hartford, they raised two daughters. Helen decided to resume her teaching career once her daughters graduated from high school. Never daunted by criticism of her beliefs, she looked to instill in her daughters and students a sense of social justice, a love of history, curiosity about travel, and an appreciation for world languages.

We didn’t learn about historical facts over that year; rather, we gained an appreciation of the different voices that made up the fabric of ideas, beliefs, languages and actions that shaped the world’s civilizations. Once a week Helen devoted a class to international events, and every student was responsible for bringing in a newspaper article and reporting on that article to the class. Not only did we expand our knowledge of life in other countries but we also honed our public speaking skills in ways we never imagined. Those naked dolls that sat on the windowsill represented Helen’s vision of overpopulation and the need for family planning. Always ahead of the times, Helen discussed environmental destruction hastened by overpopulation, poverty, and world governments’ unwillingness to preserve natural resources for the future. While her students discovered new information and a budding social consciousness, some parents were not pleased with Helen’s beliefs or choice of material for the classroom. Because they saw no value in world languages or cultural appreciation in a history classroom, their complaints made their way from the principal’s office to the school board; however, the administration and other teachers supported her teaching methodology and materials. Perhaps they realized that at times she was a visionary and attuned to world issues that would someday impact her students.

From Helen I gained a sense of place in history and a love of world languages and travel. I wanted to visit the places she had spoken about and learn the languages that created empires and transmitted key ideas across borders and centuries. Because of Helen’s enthusiasm for languages, I made sure that I took both French and Spanish in high school. When I graduated, I vowed to keep in touch with Helen, and I did for over thirty-five years. She encouraged me to continue my course work in French and Spanish, and I discovered a new passion in my life: Italian culture and language. I was so
determined to master this new language that I spent a year in Italy traveling from Sicily to the Italian Alps.

Over the years, Helen and I would meet for lunch and catch up on current events and my academic work. By the time I completed my student teaching Helen had already retired and was busy traveling the world with Bob. As the years unfolded, I received postcards with messages penned in French or Spanish chronicling their journeys to exotic locales. Even after her beloved Bob died, Helen and I maintained our ties. We visited four to five times a year, and she shared her latest projects with enthusiasm and commitment. Helen became a founding member and supporter in 1981 of PFLAG--Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays--when one of her daughters announced she was a lesbian. I was not surprised to see a photo of Helen marching in a Hartford parade celebrating gay pride, for her support of her daughter was yet another demonstration of Helen’s social activism for a multitude of concerns.

I heard from Helen a few days before she died. She and her daughter had planned a trip to Yale to see the Machu Picchu exhibit of artifacts assembled by Hiram Bingham. Helen was so excited that she phoned to tell me the details of the visit. Her closing words brimmed with anticipation: “We’ll have lunch next week and talk about my visit. I’m so thrilled to be seeing all this at Yale. I’ll phone you this weekend.” That was the last time I spoke with her. After their return from New Haven that evening, she and her daughter were having coffee in Helen’s apartment. As Helen walked across the room, she tripped, falling and hitting her head on the hardwood floor. She died instantly. That was in 2003.

Throughout the many years that marked our friendship, Helen Brill was an inspiration to me and other students who recognized her love of teaching and presence in the classroom. She lived her beliefs, and she never backed down in the face of adversity. Helen possessed a conscience that dictated the need to do what was right, and she never hesitated to share those beliefs with her students. She hoped they would grow to love history and languages as much as she did. She also knew the value of networking before the practice became fashionable, and she looked across departments to bring in colleagues who shared their love of fine art, culture, food, and languages with her students. Helen realized that it doesn’t take much to inspire students, and she always had a word of encouragement for her those around her. Teachers like Helen can and do have the power to influence their students’ lives in many tangible and intangible ways. Those results may take years to achieve fruition, but the effects are powerful and life altering. Although her physical features may not have launched a thousand ships, her personality and force of character left a legacy of commitment and compassion for those students whose lives she touched.

**Ideas to Action**

By Jaya Vijayasekar

Each day is an opportunity to help our students, parents and community members understand more about our profession as teachers of language and culture. Given the landscape of the current national debate regarding the teaching profession as a whole, we are counting on each and every one of you to make the difference!

Your regional directors periodically update you on the issues concerning world language education. Please contact your senators and representatives not only when you are urged to do so to fight for a bill and stop an impending budget cut, but also to share the good work that you do in your classroom and community. ([www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov) and [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov))

Every project should be displayed and woven into the life of the school. To create a constant world language presence is
not always an easy task, but a necessary one. In this edition of the CT COLT newsletter, I am sharing an update of our annual Taste of Languages celebration in Vernon and a project from Senorita Rinaldi’s classes that is displayed in the Vernon Center Middle School Library.

Please share your great ideas with us as we build our advocacy toolkit for our profession.

**Personal Perspectives**

**Hello to all CT COLT Readers from Valladolid, Spain**

By Teresa Blanca Andray, *English teacher in Spain and coordinator of CT – Spain program*

I’m an English teacher in *Ribera de Castilla in Valladolid, Spain*. Like many others you will figure out I’ve had good and hard times, routine and disappointments; more and less motivated students and, like many colleagues, a great deal of patience dealing with challenges in classes. We could say, paraphrasing the popular song: “Trouble is all around.”

But my professional view has dramatically changed since I started an exchange program with *Enfield High School in Enfield, CT*.

Visiting La Granja in Segovia (Spain 2010)

It’s not been just an experience that has lasted eight years now; it’s a *before and after* the program, a new leitmotiv in my teacher training, an activity that takes tons of work hours outside the classroom, an educational full time dedication, but, mainly, a passion. And when I think that it will have an end in a near future when I retire, or when the government can no longer fund the scholarship, I feel quite miserable.

How many generalizations about USA and American way of life I first would have to banish of my mind so long settled...and why were they there? Maybe they had been poorly learned and by no means contrasted. Anyway, I didn’t take long to appreciate the culture, the people and the country and literally be soaked into it.

For almost a month every fall my workmate and I take a bunch of 21 students and go to Enfield, CT. That’s possible thanks to a scholarship that our government provides and pays a large part of our program. We are selected among several schools in our region and we are asked to present a work project between both schools. We couldn’t do this without that help because we teach in a blue collar community. Parents couldn’t afford the whole trip and insurances, and unlike so many American students, our students do not have jobs after school.

At EHS we take classes, seminars, and visits to museums, sport events, playful competitions, short trips or full day excursions on weekends. All these activities are recorded in the students’ journals.

Pot Luck dinner in Enfield High (2010)

Likewise, we temporarily live with American families that generously open their arms and houses. We are invited to know them better, to share and cooperate, to ask for help and communicate, to be responsible and grow up with them to become part of their family. We gladly taste hamburgers, pizzas or dinners out. We don’t mind. Sometimes we cry, sometimes we miss home, but many more times we laugh and enjoy. We are involved in their findings and policies, in their discussions and enjoyments. **How is it not possible TO LEARN in that atmosphere?** How could we experience all this if we only stay in our Spanish ambiance?
Personally I am much more comfortable speaking since I’ve been visiting Enfield High. Every year I notice how the words come more naturally to me; school teachers are now my friends so I really communicate with them, not just practice. Furthermore, I’ve had feelings of relief in terms of language, experimenting with new words of Latin roots that I had never used in my rigid British pronunciation, keeping in touch daily through email with my American friends, feeling the language deep inside when I am teaching my classes by talking about things that I really saw and lived.

Our students have been so impacted that they don’t want to come back home. They make friends easily, some of them still keeping their friendship, even though they are at college or working. But, what it is more impressive in terms of teaching is their language improvement. We could say that, on average, the students who take part in the program are more likely to participate in oral activities in class, to take risks with their speaking ability and overall, they become conscious of how tiny the world is and how much easier it is to open minds and borders.

Finally, I don’t want to forget to mention New England. It is one of the most beautiful areas I’ve ever visited. Every single year I am so touched by its landscape, woods and autumn leaves that I see falling down, that I’m now missing the snow that cover your roofs and houses as if it was a Norman Rockwell Christmas painting. I’ve completely fallen in love with that area.

That’s why I would highly recommend any teacher to get involved in some kind of exchange program where they can experience language and culture in an authentic way and get the immeasurable rewards that the fact of living with an American family and staying at a foreign school brings both your students and yourself.

I’m still considering an opportunity to spend a year there teaching Spanish as an exchange teacher. There are still many obstacles that I would have to overcome to make this a dream come true!

Learning Languages in Egypt

By Pasquale Di Matteo, Modern English School Cairo

This article was submitted for publication on February 12, 2011. At this time President Hosni Mubarak announced on television the previous evening that he was resigning after two weeks of protests against his government. Many Egyptians then celebrated the end of his 30 year old rule and look forward to democratic reforms.

“Why do I have to study another language?” I would hear this question uttered from time to time by a student whom I had difficulty in motivating even with my greatest display of enthusiasm for the Spanish, French or Italian language. My overt passion for trying and eating any bizarre type of food from another country could not convince the adolescent, who often shows a curious appreciation for such odd behaviors, that learning another language opens up the world to us. I know the appeal of new sounds and words had convinced me to study language from an early age and I would discover various answers to that question later in the course of my studies. However, sometimes it is necessary to appreciate the validity and complexity of this question and we teachers may need to encourage students to search for their own answers.

For almost three years I have been teaching Spanish in an international school in Cairo that offers the American High School Diploma, the British National Curriculum and the International Baccalaureate Diploma to students mostly of Egyptian nationality. Strangely enough, no student has ever asked me why they need to study another language. Several reasons explain this lack of questioning and I believe they can give us another perspective on language teaching and learning in the United States.

English is the language of instruction in the school. From a very early age the students attend school and begin learning to speak English from their teachers hired from the UK with the assistance of Egyptians who speak the children’s Colloquial Egyptian Arabic.
As they progress through the years they are exposed to other teachers and become what I professionally classify as an “OLA”, the Odd Linguistic Animal. They are a beautiful species to behold in their habitat. They have learned written English to a degree better than their native Arabic which they continue to speak at home or with their friends during break -- especially when they do not want the teachers to know what they are saying.

These OLAs then acquire peculiar accents. Several sound quite American, perhaps traveling to the States during the summer or having lived there for a period of time, often holding dual citizenship, and more than likely following a steady diet of American television and music programs in Egypt. Others have taken on the intonation of their British teachers or family and friends to whom they may have had exposure in the UK.

Having learned to speak Egyptian Arabic and English from an early age, they can produce a wide range of sounds and some can imitate an American from the South or a Cockney better than Americans or British.

Starting French in American Grade 6 or in British Year 6 they easily pick up the cadences of a third language and may choose in Grade 9 or in the IB to pursue Spanish, another notch in their linguistic belt. They all are beautifully ignorant of how good they sound, but if it is mentioned to them, they will easily admit that they like to talk. Indeed, the students are quite talkative, in the hallways, on the playground, in the movie theaters, and probably even in their sleep. Almost everywhere represents a forum for social interaction.

In fact, during a Grade and Year 7 and 8 trip to Paris which I chaperoned two years ago students immersed themselves in the language, being friendly with whoever might reciprocate. Perhaps it was the thrill of shopping, but they especially entertained themselves and me speaking French while making purchases of almost anything that bore a price tag. In fact, one Parisian peddler met his match in a 12 year old boy who bargained with him deftly in French, at times not grammatically correct but spoken with such conviction that the seller delivered his entire lot of Eiffel Tower key chains for a pittance.

Not once did these students ask why they should study another language, certainly not when they knew they had to communicate in the native tongue while in France, but not even during their class time in Cairo. It was not a question that begged answering. In fact, they might look at others puzzled if the question were raised at all. Acquiring more than one language for these students became as natural as accepting that addition and subtraction are activities that happen daily in life.

However, these children do not live in a country as vast as the United States. In less than three hours, they can be in Sicily, in two Istanbul. The students of international schools have the financial means to travel and experience what they and the rest of Egyptians see through the media, be it American pop music, Italian fashion, Spanish paella, the French countryside or the opportunity to see the stadium of their favorite international soccer team (or football, as we say here in Egypt). They have grown up eating their Egyptian “fuul” (broad beans) for breakfast, learning Classical Arabic in school, reciting Muslim or Coptic Christian prayers, while at the same time integrating certain aspects of Western culture into their daily life. Many Egyptians have learned about these cultural differences through the vehicle of another modern language. For a time many Egyptians have been pursuing the idea of a more Western-style democracy and at the moment this reality is palpable for them.

As language teachers we all do our best to entice students into trying new things, into being open to what other cultures have to offer as a complement or as a contrast to ours. Even our elementary school colleagues who may not necessarily teach a modern foreign language also expose students to places and peoples of the world and appeal to their sense of innocence and wonder. As we continue to encourage this openness, I believe we language teachers can also remind our students not only of the contributions of other societies but also of how
other countries have adopted or adapted to a degree some aspects of American culture, be it music or democratic presidential elections, with all their benefits and complications.

Egyptians are quite proud to be Egyptians, but when they ask me where I am from, my experience has been that they respond “Amreeka kwaiyisa” (American is good). They seem to be able to be proud of their nation while still being open to American ideas. Perhaps American students do not realize how much our culture can influence others. Perhaps if they know, for example, how my Egyptian students live a paradoxical life of feeling great national pride and drawing strength from learning another language, these American students, unconvinced of the power of knowing another language, would gain one other point of view.

Who knows? Perhaps a few might be flattered, would even consider learning Arabic. My Egyptian students always take some pride in remembering that the Spanish word for rice “el arroz” is related to their Arabic “ar-rooz,” and that “saffron for a Spanish paella, “el azafrán” reminds them of “al zaferán” that they use in soup. The United States still has its admirers and I have never been more proud to be an American citizen as I have been in the past few years, being an Italian-American teaching Spanish to mostly Egyptian students in an English school. Our American students deserve to know that others can appreciate various aspects of America from cheeseburgers to limits on presidential terms of office and that with this position comes a responsibility to understand other cultures and therefore the language of one or two of those cultures. Otherwise, what would you say to an Egyptian who says “Enta aayiz tishrub ahwa fee starbaks?” Say yes if you want to drink a coffee with him at Starbucks.
Methods & Motivation

Fostering Intrinsic Motivation in Our Classrooms

Books reviewed: Drive: The surprising truth about what motivates us, by Daniel Pink, (2009, Riverhead books) and 150 ways to increase intrinsic motivation in the classroom, by James P. Raffini (1996, Allyn and Bacon)

Review written by Michaela Volovsek

Having read the previous bestseller by Daniel Pink, A Whole New Mind, I was eager to read Drive and his thoughts on motivation. The issue of motivation has struck me as the elephant in the room in so many discussions about education; books like Boys Adrift by Leonard Sax have touched the topic, but I rarely hear people outside the classroom talk about how pivotal student motivation really is.

Educators will probably find useful tips in Pink’s book, although it is primarily focused on business. His main thesis is that intrinsic motivation, while richer and more powerful than extrinsic motivation, is less deliberately fostered by our current systems. What’s worse, he maintains that focusing on extrinsic motivation weakens intrinsic motivation.

A quick check for understanding: Pink defines extrinsic motivation as being that which motivates through the use of rewards such as salary and good grades. Intrinsic motivation is the simple desire to do something for the pleasure of doing it. In his book he gives many examples of studies showing that the pure satisfaction derived from an activity can be undermined or even destroyed by external rewards. The basic theory is that rewards are offered exactly because the activity is boring, difficult, or otherwise not appealing.

I found the book fascinating and while I had hoped for more direct thoughts about how this might play out in education than he offers, I did find it a good read. However, I finished with many questions—for example, he doesn’t really address the issue of sports, and I wonder how his theories would succeed or fail here, as many athletes do have a strong internal desire to participate but the hunger for winning and trophies is also a huge factor for most. Perhaps he would argue that trophies aren’t really rewards—but if that is the case, why are grades considered rewards?

In my view, the more useful book to us as educators is the earlier one published by Raffini. He also talks about the differences between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and he mentions the research that has shown the deleterious effect that relying on rewards has on intrinsic motivation. Citing the oft repeated ‘You can lead a horse to water...’ he insists that while we can’t make it drink, we can “increase the likelihood of their drinking if we feed them a pail of salt before bringing them to the trough.” (preface, page ix) And to that end, he outlines what the research suggests are the basic human needs which when met can lead to intrinsic motivation. These five needs are: the need for autonomy, for competence, for belonging and relatedness, for self-esteem, and the need for involvement and enjoyment. His argument is that if we ignore these, we are left either having to dominate and create merely obedient children, or lose them altogether. What we want is true buy-in, self-willed and creative engagement in the subject. To achieve, he argues, that we need to meet these basic, universal human psycho-social needs.

The book is designed so that after the theoretical framework is established, there are then scores of practical suggestions and strategies. The recommendations cover the range from elementary to high school and a range of subject areas. While I found that a good many of the suggestions did not seem to fit my classes, others did, but the most useful piece to me was how it gave new shape to my thinking about motivation.

One strategy that he says would be particularly useful to a WL classroom is what he calls ‘Voting with your feet’ (pages 63-64). It is in his section on strategies to build students’ sense of autonomy. He suggests that teachers put signs saying yes, no and no comment on three different walls of the room and then
when the teacher asks a question, students walk over to the wall that reflects their response. They then explain their response. The teacher’s question might be straight opinion (liking country music), a position on a controversial topic (Wiki leaks) or an interpretation of a piece being read (Don Quijote is a hero).

To build student self esteem, he suggests having students research and present that day they were born (pages 203-204). Such a project would require resources, of course, but the internet or a local library would help. This could be adapted to many different levels of language acquisition.

So, in conclusion, while Daniel Pink has had far more air play of late and his book is interesting, if you are going to put your money down for one, in my view the Raffini book will address your professional needs far more satisfactorily.

Using Performance Tasks in Foreign-Language Classes

In this article in The Language Educator, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction official Paul Sandrock shares a step-by-step guide to designing foreign-language curriculum units (excerpted from his new book). Foreign-language teachers, he says, “express frustration with assessments that emphasize only low-level recall of vocabulary, manipulation of grammatical structures by filling in blanks, and other substitutions for real communication.” Sandrock believes that good performance assessments put the emphasis where it belongs – on the message that’s being communicated – while keeping perfect grammatical accuracy as an important long-term goal.

To develop effective assessments of student learning, teachers need to ask the reason for their assessments, what information they hope to gather, and what they will do with the information. In foreign-language classes, the most important assessment goal is measuring students’ use of language in real-life situations, which include:

- Presenting ideas to an audience;
- Exchanging opinions;
- Preparing a letter of application or introduction;
- Understanding other people and comparing their ideas to one’s own;
- Skimming a website to find information.

A well-designed performance task will simulate genuine acts of communication and provide teachers and students with helpful feedback. “Students will know much more than how well they did on a test,” says Sandrock. “They will know how well they can perform when actual communication is needed.” Here are Sandrock’s recommended steps:

- **Identify standards-based learning outcomes.** Then target the language level and focus the assessment within the context of the curriculum unit.
- **Create a rich and engaging thematic focus.** Identify what students need to do to demonstrate their learning, and evaluate assessment tasks against the targeted level of proficiency.
- **Decide on a series of on-the-spot assessments.** These might include tickets to leave (for example, asking students to write down two ways to say goodbye and give it to the teacher on the way out of class) and quick oral checks for understanding, moving from yes-no answers (Does a good friend help a friend with homework?), to having students finish a sentence (Tomorrow you are going to bring to class …), to forced-choice questions (When a friend is being bullied, should a good friend step in to fight back, go get help, or escort the friend to where there is an adult?) to open-ended questions (How can a friend be helpful without doing the work for a friend?).
- **Create summative assessments.** These should provide evidence of what students can do on their own as a result of a unit of instruction. These might be conversational (for example, students pair up and talk about how much they have in common on the topic), interpretive (for example, students identify a news story of national importance in their local paper and then search for stories on the same event in three different foreign newspapers in the target language and highlight similarities and differences), or presentational (for example, intermediate students write a letter to a potential host …)
family in the target language, explaining differences in responsibilities and house rules that could be anticipated).

- **Design rubrics.** First, identify what quality performance looks like at the proficient level. Second, describe exceeds-expectations performance and below-expectations performance; it’s ideal to involve students at this stage of rubric construction. Third, pilot the rubric with students and make revisions. Finally, decide how to communicate the assessment results.

- **Use performance assessment data to enhance programs.** Sandrock recommends using performance tasks to track student progress across grades and schools and to improve curriculum design.


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**Technology**

**Adina’s Technology Page**

By Adina Alexandru

On a daily basis we introduce in the classroom and practice fundamental language skills with our students. It often seems that when we target the development of language skills by using the technology, students show more interest and appear to be more invested in the learning process through the activity at hand. To keep the students interested and engaged in class work is very tough and can sometimes be a pain. For this reason, yearly, I usually attend several local and national conferences for the purpose of gathering various ideas to try out in my classes. Below is a short 2010 synopsis of technology use in the classroom as seen through the eyes of various presenters.

In the spring of 2010 I attended the National Chinese Conference in Washington D.C. and in the summer of 2010 I attended the AATF in Philadelphia and the NADSFL summer institute hosted by the Stanford University in CA. In the fall of 2010 I attended the COLT annual conference in Cromwell, CT and the MaFLA/ACTFL conference in Boston, MA. Throughout the year I was delighted with my selection of workshops. Many of them were outstanding presentations. One of them was a dynamic technology session presented by 2 teachers from St Luke’s school. They entertained the audience with some of the activities outlined below. Another dynamic workshop was presented by Lara Lakomka at the AATF conference that I attended this past July in Philly. Overall I was able to gather a good number of ideas throughout the year. I hope that you will be able to use some of them based on your interests. Good luck!

### Web-based activities:

- **digital family trees**
  - [http://www.microsoft.com/education/timelinesword.mspx](http://www.microsoft.com/education/timelinesword.mspx) - An on-line tutorial of how to create a timeline using Microsoft Word
  - [http://bubbl.us](http://bubbl.us) - An on-line mind mapping brainstorming tool, where students can create webs and export them as jpeg files (something less fancy than “Inspiration” but as effective!).

- **Texting**

  Although having cell phones in a classroom is widely frowned upon by many teachers, Gay Rawson from Concordia College loves it. She devised a project based on cell phone use in her classroom. The project involves texting in French and is called the “texto” day. Students in the class list their phone numbers on a sheet of paper and the teacher explains the three types of texting that exist in French. The students go through a “texto” worksheet given in class and try to decipher what they mean. After the students find out the real meaning of the “texto” abbreviations ([http://french.about.com/library/writing/bl-texting.htm](http://french.about.com/library/writing/bl-texting.htm)), they are asked to text each other in order to express themselves with the fewest number of characters possible. They can also text each other throughout the class making comments (in French obviously).

- **Class participation**

  For those of you still unsure how to reward students for participating in your class or what kind of participation to expect, I propose to you an excellent class participation rubric that translates points into grades. The page automatically calculates the total points for a score and comes up with a percent grade. I love it! I hope you enjoy it too!


- **Google**

  It is hard not to notice that Google offers a plethora of free services that are extremely beneficial in today’s education. I am not only talking about Google Map and Google Earth that have established themselves pretty much in every classroom by now as a point of reference in the daily instruction. In case
you do not have it, here is a link to download the application, Google Earth (http://earth.google.com). With Google Earth students can flag/mark locations, add pictures, and save them as .tmz files. Students can also measure distances from one point to another. However, what I am talking about is what every educator can take advantage of on a daily basis: the email service, “Gmail”, the instant messaging application “Google Talk”, the calendar, the document sharing and the website design tools. “Google Docs” for instance is a free, web-based word processor, spreadsheet, presentation, form, and data storage service offered by Google. It allows users to create and edit documents online while collaborating in real-time with other users. This is a service from Google that allows you to upload and save documents from your desktop, edit them online from any computer, and invite others to read or edit your documents. Files are stored conveniently in Google’s secure servers.

Developed by TechSmith Corporation, Jing is a computer software program used to share images or movies with others on the Internet. Jing has a number of possible uses; out of which enhancing online conversations or social networking sites are the most commonly known.

...Moodle...

Moodle is a management system that enables educators to create dynamic online sites for conducting online learning or supplementing F2F instruction. It allows you to create wikis, databases and forums to foster collaborative learning communities. Moodle is also available as a Microsoft Office Add-in. You can use it to open and save office documents housed in Moodle.

...Wiki...

Wiki is an interactive internet site where you can place files, videos and sound files. It allows the easy creation and editing of any number of interlinked web pages via a web browser using a simplified language. Wikis are typically powered by wiki software and are often used to create collaborative wiki websites, to power community websites, or for personal note taking. Wikis may accept content without firm rules as to how the content should be organized. You can create one free of...
charge at the following site for educators: 
http://www.wikispaces.com/content/for/teachers. Many creators of wiki’s are educators who use various projects to demonstrate how writing in a target language can trigger interest, foster collaboration and co-construction, promote revisions and peer review and finally contribute to a more engaged L2 writing.

· **Prezi**

Prezi is a web-based presentation tool using a map layout and zooming feature to show contextual relationships which address some of the shortcomings of Microsoft PowerPoint. You can get a free account at the following address: http://prezi.com/

· **Delicious**

Delicious is a social bookmarking service that allows users to tag, save, manage and share web pages from a centralized source. With emphasis on the power of the community, Delicious greatly improves how people discover, remember and share information on the Internet. Instead of having different bookmarks on every computer, Delicious makes it easy to have a single set of bookmarks kept in sync between all of your computers (school, home, iPhone, etc.). Even if you're not on a computer you own, you can still get to your bookmarks on the Delicious website. Here is where you can get a free account: https://secure.delicious.com.

· **Schooltube**

Have you ever used it? “Schooltube” is a free online video hosting and sharing resources for K-12 students, teachers and school communities. Videos are produced by students and approved by moderators to ensure the appropriateness before posting. You may want to try it if your school banned Utube.

· **Voki**

Voki is also a free service that allows you to create personalized speaking avatars and use them on your blog, profile, and in email messages. Here is the link to open an account: http://www.voki.com. With Voki you can look at how other teachers use the service to support students’ speaking fluency and accuracy. You can create your own Voki and you can also embed it in your “glog”.

· **Dogonews**

DOGOnews is a free online newspaper and web guide for elementary and middle school students, providing short articles about current events with photos, videos. It also has a dictionary for challenging words and maps for geographical context. Teachers can also create a custom online newspaper for their students and students can post news or discuss articles with other users.

· **OpenOffice**

If you do not have Microsoft Office this may just be a great alternative. OpenOffice.org 3 is the leading open-source office software suite for word processing, presentations, graphics, databases and more. It is available in many languages and works on all common computers. It stores data in an international open standard format and can read and write files from other common office software packages. It can be downloaded and used completely free of charge for any purpose.

· **Voicethread**

It seems unlikely, but just in case you are still not sure what Voicethread is, or you are still deciding if you should use it or not, here is in a nutshell what it is and what it does:

Web-based digital-storytelling application that allows users to share their stories through audio, images, videos or text.

It allows visitors to make comments on their stories in five different ways:

- voice with a microphone,
- voice with telephone,
- text,
- audio file, or
- video with a webcam.
The stories can be shared with anyone in the world or they can be kept private for selected individuals. In other words you can create group conversations.

Free educator account for all k-12 classroom educators. Simply go to the following website and register: http://voicethread4education.wikispaces.com/Resources

Glogster

The creators of Glogster tell us that regardless of how fancy Microsoft decides to dress up the new 2007 or ‘10 Power Point versions, it is, simply put, yesterday’s technology!! A more suitable method to teach the 21 century skills to our students is the use of Glogster as both educators and students can easily create GLOGS (online multimedia posters) - with text, photos, videos, graphics, sounds, drawings, data attachments and more. Glogster offers free basic accounts for educators and you can get one at: http://www.glogster.com/. Similarly, you can also get additional features to Glogster if you go to http://edu.glogster.com/.

Games

Eggspear

For elementary grades “eggspert” is a great interactive game. You can purchase it for a low price. It is extremely engaging and teachers can use it to test students, to spice up daily activities and to transform review sessions into exciting, energizing games. When in “Jeopardy®” mode, the game participants can connect to an answer button held by a player. In “Wheel of Fortune®” mode, the teacher squeezes the teacher control button to set the lights in motion. Although this game is set up for elementary grades, I’ve seen it work successfully, in a different version, when students participate in the various Quizbowl competitions across the state.

Symtalk

Whether or not you use the EMS series, you can use the Symtalk games to foster communicative proficiency and listening skills in contexts students care about. They are developed by EMC PUBLISHING and contain symbol cards, workbooks, and games that complement each other and lead to the goal of having students improve their speaking proficiency by using complex sentences.

Other original games

“Throw the Fly”

You probably know this game as the “fly swatter game”. This is a vocabulary building activity. When you have a new list of 15 or 20 words from a chapter, you can play the fly swatter game. I usually write the words (without the article for nouns) in large print in rows across the board. Then I divide the class into two teams. I’ve seen this game also played with verbs in various tenses and modes. For those not familiar with the fly swatter game, one student from each team comes to the front of the room facing the class, with their back to the board. Each has a fly swatter. When the teacher says one of the words written on the board, students have to turn around, look over the words on the board and touch the word with the fly swatter. The first one to touch the word gets a point for their team.

With all the above flood of technology, I hope you have enough to explore and try out until our next issue!

Bridge Over Virtual Waters: Teaching Students to Use the Technology for Language Learning While Simultaneously Fighting the Good Fight with Pen and Paper Teachers

By Amanda Robustelli-Price

At thirty-one, I am a bridge between “technology immigrants” and “technology natives.” Most of my fellow teachers did not grow up with computers and find them to be cumbersome, whereas most of my students have an innate and intuitive understanding of technology. I, the “bridge” between the two, did not have a cell phone until I was twenty-two, but was lucky to begin using the internet when I was ten. I find that I am often a “translator,” helping the two to communicate and to understand each other.
As a French teacher, I use technology regularly to improve my own French language skills:

- **Online dictionaries and writing.** When composing emails to colleagues in France or creating student activities, I use [www.wordreference.com](http://www.wordreference.com). This great website allows me to look up words in French or English, see verb conjugations, or even participate in language forums about the French language with other francophones.

- **French spell check.** Truly a life-changer. My computer will actually tell me when I have forgotten an accent or used the wrong tense.

- **Google.fr – living, breathing language!** When I think I know an expression, I will often put it in quotes and use [www.google.fr](http://www.google.fr) to see if it really exists. This is how I learned to say “jouer à la Wii.” I will also use this site to research up-to-date materials.

- **Translators!** I will often use online translators to figure out certain expressions or to double check my own grammar or vocabulary use. I have found that Google’s translator is one of the best for accuracy.

- **Pop culture galore.** I love to learn about popular music ([www.nrj.fr](http://www.nrj.fr) has a phenomenal all French web radio), television shows ([www.tv5.fr](http://www.tv5.fr)), or regions (I love sites like this one for a tiny Provencal station [www.provenctv.fr](http://www.provenctv.fr)) through the internet.

These are but a few examples of my personal use of technology to improve my French. I, the bridge between technology immigrants and technology natives, use technology every day to improve my ability to communicate and to understand the language of France.

If I use technology every day to improve my ability in French, why shouldn’t my students? Many teachers abhor technology, rationalizing that language learning takes rote memorization, in-class practice, discipline, reading, and a focus on details…and I agree. However – we must acknowledge that the world has changed. We must look at our own, personal use of technology and teach our students the skills they need to flourish in our global society, a society that has countless tools to help the process. I say with pride that I teach my students how to use internet resources and even – GASP – online translators. Using translators takes skill and practice, and it is in the classroom where students can get the guidance and practice they need to master the appropriate use of technology. This skill must be learned in order for students to successfully and to appropriately incorporate the use of technology into the difficult process of mastering a non-native language. Here are some tips for teaching students how to use web resources, including translators:

- **First draft – in class.** For many writing assignments, I find that I need to have students write the first draft of an essay in class. This prevents students from translating the entire essay from English to French. I also look at the various drafts and stress that I only expect them to use what they know when writing.

- **Analyze translators.** Students need to figure out, on their own, the value of and issues with online translators. I have created an assignment for students to test the waters with this powerful, yet possibly self-defeating, tool. For the activity, students convert a number of sentences from
French to English using two different online translators of choice. Sentences include words that are often difficult to translate, like “can.” At the end, students rate the accuracy of their translations and determine where translators are useful and where they can fail.

- **Dictionary skills.** Just like with the old-fashioned AMSCO dictionaries, students need to be taught the skills and steps that are needed to properly use an online resource.
- **Teach translators.** After students have evaluated online translators, I teach them how to use translators to their advantage. For example, students can first write an essay in the target language and then use a translator to check its accuracy in English. Students can use these sites to find out how to say a few small phrases or to double check a sentence that they have written.
- **Microsoft word and accents.** I believe it is important to teach students how to make accents both in Microsoft programs or online as well how to use spell check to their advantage.

These are but a few ideas that can increase student performance and engagement. As educators in today’s flattening world, we need to empower students to communicate globally. We must teach appropriate use of all resources. Technology, when used properly, is a critical tool that impels success.

**YouTube, a Supreme 21st Century Educational Tool: Blocked!**

By Richard de Meij
World Languages (Spanish & French) Teacher
The Nursing Academy – Hartford Public High School
Founder of www.celebratelanguages.com

In the age of technological marvels, seemingly unlimited media, and the inevitable 21st century need of our tech-savvy students to Connect, Communicate and Collaborate (the new 3 Cs), our schools have failed to embrace this immense potential for immediate media-rich, student-relevant educational tools. Instead, schools have resorted to old-fashioned, non-effective blocking of some of the web’s most popular and media-rich sites such as YouTube, Facebook and Livemocha, sites that surely stand to revolutionize our classrooms (if properly used and monitored). Educational workshops around the country are demonstrating just how practical and relevant these website tools are in today’s classrooms! Today’s schools must adopt and adapt to new technologies to meet the educational realities and nature of this “networked” millennial generation.

It is indeed quite laughable when one considers that while our school districts spend precious resources to ineffectively and unwisely “block” YouTube and the likes, there isn’t any middle or high school student I know (in the last 12 years) who did or does not know how to circumvent the districts’ “expert” blocks. We teachers are in fact the ones who are denied access and use of these tools, while our students all around us use proxies and portals, hosted on servers in other countries, to access sites at will in order to connect, communicate and collaborate with the world. Our students are even using their newly acquired multilingual skills to access blocked sites by using foreign language key words and

Magali Hannegan (Willington) downloads some new material for her classes in the YouTube workshop at Enfield High School.
phraseologies they know school districts did not even think to block. Brilliant!

School districts could better spend their energies, resources and expertise to embrace these surely revolutionizing web-based technologies, and to educate our teachers, parents and students on how to use them in the best and most responsible way in our educational settings to truly bring education into the 21st Century.

So, teachers, here is how you too can take advantage of the world's biggest video library, and use any YouTube video in your classroom, all for free, without having to circumvent any school district's blocking. First, create a folder in a desired location on your laptop into which you will want to store your downloaded YouTube videos you intend to use in support and for the enhancement of your 21st Century compatible lessons. While at home, you will have to download and save any and all YouTube videos you desire, to your hard drive, by using one of the following web-based YouTube video downloaders:

- www.keepvid.com
- www.savevid.com
- www.catchvid.net
- www.youconvertit.com
Once they’ve been downloaded to your hard drive, rename them and move them to your newly created folder. In that way you’ll have them all in one convenient place. For complete instructions on how to do all of this you can go to www.celebratelanguages.com/tech where you will be able to download a “How to” instructions sheet in plain & simple non-technical language (right column, at the bottom). Be sure to also read the four useful articles/commentaries (by Edutopia, TeacherLingo, Education World, Free Technology for Teachers) linked there. Teachers cannot afford to be left or fall behind when it comes to 21st century educational technologies. We need to and must tech-up!

For some additional web-based tools you might just want to consider using in your classroom, check out the following sites in particular:

- [http://dotsub.com](http://dotsub.com)
- [www.xtranormal.com](http://www.xtranormal.com)
- [http://worldlanguages.merlot.org](http://worldlanguages.merlot.org)
- [www.busuu.com](http://www.busuu.com)

To find 100s of other free language learning resources, gadgets, tech & tools, visit, bookmark and share www.celebratelanguages.com with your friends and colleagues.

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### CT COLT News

#### Fall Conference 2010

By Vincenza McNulty

Monday October 25, 2010 was an exciting day at the Crowne Plaza Hotel and Conference Center in Cromwell, the CT COLT Fall Conference with 287 World Language teachers in attendance. Many teachers came at their own personal expense and found this day to be a most cost effective conference, “a great bang for the buck”. The keynote speaker, Dr. David Carter, Chancellor of the State University System, energized us all with his lively and inspirational address and updated us on the new two year language requirement to be considered for admission into the state universities starting in 2014. He shared personal anecdotes and statistics of the importance of and necessity for polylingual people in the twenty-first century world. Dr. Carter is and will continue to be an advocate for World Language teachers and language learning in our state.

The attractive and well-organized day program featured a drawing of the conference theme World Languages: Essential 21st century Skill for Global Citizens by Liesl Dalpe. Teachers selected from a variety of workshops from culture, music, pedagogy, technology and more; they could earn a maximum of .5 CEUs. The technology CEUs also helped teachers meet that requirement to renew their certification. The program also featured many exhibitors with a wide variety of textbooks, other teaching materials, and realia. Completing the passport with stamps from the various vendors placed the attendee in a drawing for one of many practical and valuable prizes as well as adding an element of fun. All pre-registered participants received a free ticket to enter the drawings for one of a dozen creative and valuable baskets, now a popular new event at the conference at the ways and means table with proceeds furthering the work of CT COLT. Several vendors commented on the professionalism and friendliness of the teachers. Kudos to all!
Conference co-chairs, Vincenza Mazzone-McNulty and Janet Picerno thank all the committee members for all their many hours of work dedicated to making this conference a success. The 2011 conference committee is already hard at work preparing for the fall conference to be held again at the Crowne Plaza in Cromwell on Monday Oct. 31. We are most grateful to our colleagues who have volunteered to serve again on the committee and invite new members to complement our committee with new ideas and energy. The call for proposals for our conference “World Languages: Portal to the Future” will begin March 2011 on the CT COLT website.

This annual fall conference continues to be such a success thanks to all of you who share your knowledge, time, and talents. Let’s continue this great World Language tradition and learning experience by thinking about how you can contribute in a large or small way! Many hands make a strong team!

CT COLT President, Linda Dalpe, congratulates the 2010 Fall Conference co-chairpersons, Janet Picerno and Vincenza Mazzone-McNulty.

Lacey LaHaie, recipient of the Irene Stanislawczyk Scholarship and Linda Dalpe, CT COLT President
Organizational News

Alliance Française Summer 2011 Trip

By Silvia Bettega

The Alliances Françaises of Harford and New Haven are offering another trip to Québec with Prométour. This time, the trip will be longer- 8 days/7 nights and will include visits to Québec City, Tadoussac, Matane, Percé, Bonaventure Island, Rimouski and return to Québec City.

Featured are the beautiful rugged coastline of the St. Lawrence with its charming fishing villages, Forillon National Park at the farthest point of the Gaspé Peninsula with its cliffs, picturesque coves and pebbled beaches, visits to vineyards, and picnicking as travelers admire the view from Cap-Bon-Ami.

The dates are Wednesday, June 29 to Wednesday, July 6, 2011. If there are 25 participants, the cost will be $1650 which includes coach transportation from the Hartford area and transportation during the trip, 7 nights in 3 and 4 star hotels, all dinners in Québec, tours and visits with a two hour cruise/whale watching on the St. Lawrence, one lunch at Aux Anciens Canadiens in Québec City, and bi-lingual tour guide. The cost will be somewhat higher for fewer participants.

If interested contact tour coordinator Sharon Straka at skstraka@gmail.com or send your deposit ($500 per person) to:

Prométour
339 St. Paul East, Montreal QC J7V9Z1 CANADA
Attn: Jennifer
Re: AF Connecticut

Please note that passports are now required for travel to Canada.

Alliance Française: Tour and Lunch “Monet’s Water Lilies: An Artist’s Obsession” Saturday, April 2

In the morning, we will meet at the Wadsworth Atheneum for a 10:30 am tour of Monet & Impressionists. The tour includes the special exhibition and selections from the museum’s permanent collection. Tours in French or in English will be available. Each tour will accommodate 15 participants. Alliance member and president emeritus of the docents at the Atheneum, Gisèle Miller will be in charge of the French tour. After the Atheneum, we will meet at Cavey’s in Manchester at noon for a prix fixe three-course lunch. Notes: Parking on the street in downtown Hartford is free on weekends.

Reservation, Please send check to: Alliance Française of Hartford, 233 Pearl St # 12, Hartford, CT 06103-2100 by March 18 ($45.00 for tour and lunch, $12 for tour only/checks payable to Alliance Française of Hartford). In addition, contact Sharon Straka at skstraka@gmail.com to reserve, give menu selection (coq au vin or quenelles) and specify French or English tour for the Atheneum.

We need a group of at least 20 for Cavey’s to open especially for us for lunch so please reserve early.

MONET LUNCHEON
Celebrating the art of fine food

AMUSE BOUCHE

COQ AU VIN BONNE FEMME
or
QUENELLES AUX FRUITS DE MER LYONNAISES /SAUCE AUX ECREVISSES

OEUF A LA NEIGE

Non-alcoholic beverage included (with refills), tax and tip also included. You may purchase wine or beer separately.
E. O. Smith Sponsors Three Student Exchanges: French, German, and Spanish

French Exchange at E.O. Smith High School
By Lauren Chadwick

Following three days in the Big Apple, eighteen students and two teachers from Lycée Edouard-Herriot in Troyes, France arrived in Storrs after several months of ongoing correspondence with their American counterparts. Their first day of school was followed by a welcoming potluck where American and French students mixed and talked, meeting as a group for the first time. After that, the French students had quite a busy schedule. Many spent the first weekend traveling with their respective families or learning about American culture through concerts, plays and college visits.

Students from Troyes also enjoyed the many field trips around Connecticut and the surrounding area. They learned about American history and culture through trips to Sturbridge, Boston, and the Pequot Museum. They also experienced their first real Halloween here in America, and were no doubt surprised by the festivities inside and outside of school for a holiday seemingly nonexistent in France. But among these adventures were also several gatherings: parties, movies, games, and shows that are closer to home, where students learned that American lives can be both busy and fun. Surprised by the multitude of extracurricular activities in America, French students enjoyed sitting in on sports practices, dance competitions, play rehearsals and more.

We may think that France, with its beauty, restaurants and history, has more to offer than Storrs, CT, but students from Troyes have enjoyed sharing our lives here immensely. In speaking activities in French class, they remarked about the American advancements in home technology such as ipods, television and three-dimensional film. Such conversations provoked more discussion about world problems and the
difference between our educational systems. Personally, my French exchange student Charlotte was shocked that University tuition in America is so high. But the French system is so different, that it’s hard for Americans and French to understand each other’s schooling. However, it was certainly fun to learn about each system’s complexities.

In the mere two weeks of their visit, French students enjoyed themselves immensely with both fun and work. And as Charlotte Grenaut of Troyes, France said, “It’s great just to have had the opportunity. It’s so different from France. You don’t realize that before you were closed, [unaware of the culture]”. So despite the long hours and sacrifices that come with involvement in any foreign exchange, we all have learned more than expected about our differences, making the experience all the more worth it.

**German Exchange at E.O. Smith High School**

By Lisa Morton

Wow! Look how time flies. The German exchange students have already been here at E.O. Smith for two weeks! The German Exchange is a chance not only for students learning German, but for all E.O. Smith students to meet and get to know students of other nations. The exchange with the Goethe Gymnasium in Emmendingen, Germany has been a tradition at E.O. Smith for decades. Mrs. Smith, the German teacher, is just one of the many people that make this exchange possible. Mrs. Smith has been involved with the German exchange for ten years now, and the trip to Germany this summer will be her fourth with E.O. Smith students. She succeeds at making it the most thrilling experience for the Germans and for the E.O. students, as we take on new adventures with our German friends. But the trip also wouldn’t be possible without the German coordinators, Anne Schindelbeck and Peer Millauer, as well as every host family that has opened up their homes and their lives to our visiting students.

Our adventures included a wild ropes course, which had us zip-lining through the forests of Middletown and scrambling up the side of a tree in an assisted tree climb, as well as a UConn soccer game and Fright Fest. The German students had the awesome opportunity to meet Governor Jodi Rell while touring the state capitol. They also had the chance to cook a homemade stew over an open hearth at the Nathan Hale homestead, go on multiple shopping excursions, visit the Pequot Museum, and take a trip to the UConn Dairy Bar while on a tour around UConn’s campus. The host families and all the students also went to see a Wolfpack (now the Hartford Whales) hockey game. These experiences only scratch the surface of their time in Connecticut, as all the students participated in individual trips and events with their host families as well.

Here is just a sample of the funny experiences we will remember long after the Germans have returned to Emmendingen: Belay on! I will never forget Robin Fehr climbing the trees as if he were a monkey. Nor will we forget how Lena Forman, with the help of Jonas Böcherer, overcame her fear of heights. Frau Schindelbeck exclaiming in her British accent, “Permission to descend!” was unforgettably entertaining.

The UConn soccer game was full of screaming fans and soccer players. It was so cold that we nearly turned into icicles. But
by the end of the night all the German Exchange kids were cheering like they were UConn fans. Sometimes the fun was completely unplanned, like when a group of the girls, including Jana Elena Kabus, Ines Jendritski, Hannah Ernst, and Filiz Koneberg went to West Farms Mall and subsequently got lost! It did not seem to matter, as everyone was just enjoying the time together, as we worked together to find our way to a great shopping experience and a yummy dinner out at Friendly’s. Getting lost was a bit of theme, as Felix Hahne and Julian Knittel made their way through the Connecticut Arts Maze in Merrow with their partners, Evan Fulton and Danielle Dumais. Julian Knittel went on a haunted trail reported to be “a blast!”

We made so many memories in those two weeks. Now I only get to talk to my new best friend, Ines Jendritski, over Facebook. There are so many more things that I wish I could say, but I don’t know how to put into words. I miss her immensely. She has been there for me, like an older sister, and I miss sharing my daily life with her. I know the other group members would agree that this German Exchange has been a wonderful opportunity to meet new people, to form lasting friendships and to learn more about ourselves and our own country and culture. We can all barely wait to see our new ‘family’ in June and July of 2011.

Spanish Exchange at E.O. Smith High School
by Eric Tyler

Several E.O. Smith families hosted students from Spain in September. As one of those students I felt the need to share the experience with the rest of the school and let me be the first to tell you, I think it was one of the best experiences I will ever have. After spending 2 weeks in Spain living with these people and then having them live here for 3 additional weeks made the group grow as one big family.

While the students were here, we did various things both inside and outside of school. One of the best and most memorable days was the trip to New York City. While there, we visited the Statue of Liberty, the Empire State Building, and Times Square. It was priceless to share this experience of exploring the city and taking in the sites with the Spanish students.

Many other memories define their stay here. One that many of us share is telling the students that they had to attend our B period classes and instantly hearing the Spaniards moan because that was the one class that the students attended almost every day. The other experience that I think many remember is going bowling with the whole exchange. Since we did this in both countries (Spain and the USA), it was awesome to see that even though these two places are an ocean apart, we still share a common activity.

Whether it was attending UConn soccer games, sharing welcome and farewell experiences, having the whole exchange sleep over one host’s house, staying up all night chatting, visiting various cities including New York and Boston, or just watching the Spanish students dance to music that was only playing in their heads, it goes without saying that these students became family to us. Anyone who met the Spaniards, became friends with them, or was involved in the exchange in any way, I feel, could sense just how awesome these people are.

To anyone who may be considering becoming involved the next time that there is an exchange at E.O. Smith, I strongly advise you to do it because you will love every minute of the experience you have.
French Exchange at the Farmington High School
By Linda Zabor
Farmington High School students are eagerly awaiting the second part of an exchange with the Lycée Dumont D’Urville in Caen, France which began in October. At that time, 32 French students were welcomed into Farmington homes and experienced many American customs. In addition to visiting New York, Boston, Hartford and the Pequot Museum, students were taken by host families on hay rides, walked in fall mazes, viewed the changing leaves from the top of Talcott Mountain and took part in pumpkin carvings. In addition, one Farmington family hosted a typical Thanksgiving dinner at the Tunxis Plantation. Since the departure of their French guests, the American students have been in contact with their French peers on Facebook and have set up a Skype session with them for later this month.

Seventeen students will return to France for 10 days in April and will spend a week with their hosts in Caen, followed by a few days in Paris. They are looking forward to trekking across the bay of Mont St Michel, visiting the American Cemetery and Bayeux and experiencing a French high school with their hosts. Scavenger hunts with a Norwegian exchange, visits to the abbey and town hall of Caen and picnics on the beaches of Normandy are also planned. This is the tenth year of the exchange, organized by Linda Zabor and Kate Christolini.

Metropolitan Enlightens Latin Students
RJ Scofield
On October 22, 2010, AITE Latin students were treated to an astounding excursion to a place where they could immerse themselves in the culture and influences of Latin. The setting was that of the New York Metropolitan Museum, where many connections between life and Latin can be found, as well as enjoyed. Their reason for attending was the extraordinary opportunity to explore ancient Roman and Greek art and to attempt to discover its relation to modern art and culture. There were many interesting exhibits, though that is truly a gross understatement. However this is not an assumption, for evidence could be found in the numerous comments from those who attended. As one AITE student Zach Hertz worded it, “There was so much to do and take in. I barely had time to think!” Although, in regards to time, Latin teacher and unofficial guide of the museum, Ms. Koltypin, assured the Edge that they did not spend more than an hour touring the museum, for that is the maximum amount of time one’s brain can handle given all the interesting facts and exhibits on display. Yet some students found it hard to stay within this healthy constraint and snuck away with a chaperon during lunch, favoring just a taste more of what the Metropolitan offered rather than the food available.

As for the exhibits themselves, they ranged from exciting displays of the twelve labors of Hercules (he did not feel the need to belt out Broadway-style tunes as the 1997 Disney film might lead you to believe), to a display of vases that tell stories of heroism and legend. Also available for viewing pleasure was an Etruscan funeral chariot. The highlight was an entire room from Pompeii preserved by volcanic ash. Paintings also were in abundance, much like the “mystery paintings” AITE Latin students are asked to interpret each week in class. Herein lies the beauty of these paintings and story vases; as Ms.
Koltypin worded it, “there is no right or wrong answer”, it is strictly left up to interpretation.

Ms. Koltypin and her entourage departed after lunch, filled with gratitude and joy at what they had just witnessed. Ms. Koltypin was, in fact, more than eager to express her gratefulness toward the wonderful chaperones who accompanied her class on this excursion. She was also gracious in thanking the museum for the tours they offered as well as their existence in general. Above all, Ms. Koltypin was filled with gratitude toward the simple fact that her students were able to experience all they have studied in class in a real and tangible manner; an example of one of the many ways AITE is willingly able to keep Latin “alive” in the best of ways.

**Vernon's Taste Of Languages 2011**

By Jaya Vijayasekar, World Languages Coordinator

In addition to presenting thirteen languages on February 16, this year's annual community event included a ten minute segment, "A Taste of Chinese," in the auditorium. Mrs. Xian Shen Biek taught the four tones, salutations, and numbers in Chinese to the audience. Attendees were awarded with door prizes if they remembered the contents of their lesson as the winning numbers were called out in Chinese. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Mary Conway was our honored guest who addressed the gathering and shared some of the expressions she had just learned in her Arabic lesson. She stated that while we now offer French, German, and Spanish, it was time to think about adding to our offerings with some other languages that are critical for 21st century learners. Other dignitaries who attended were Representative Janowski, Assistant Superintendent of Schools Mrs. Murasso, Board of Education members Mrs. Fischer and Mrs. Rispoli, teachers Mrs. Goff, Mr. Smith, Mr. Rhoades, Officer Middleton, Mrs. Freemer and Mrs. Schubert, and administrators, Mr. Maltese, Mr. Baim, Mr. Harrison, and Mr. Griffin. Junior Jenny Mears sang two songs, "Alma del Core" and "Nina"; our Polish teacher, Mr. Kozlowski, entertained the guests on the accordion. All were treated to an international culinary feast, prepared by Mrs. Gilmore and the students from her Creative Foods classes. Congratulations to the World Languages and Family & Consumer Sciences teachers and students of Rockville High School.

**Regional School District #10- Burlington-Harwinton offers 3 chances to… Spring into Culture**

World Languages are alive and well in Regional School District 10! Come join us to celebrate the middle school Cultural Caravan on March 24th and the high school annual Culture Night on March 25th. Our culminating event this year will be on April 27th, when Region 10 Schools hosts the annual CT COLT Poetry Recitation Contest.

**GO GREEN and SAVE!**

If you prefer to read our newsletter on line, you would save lots of trees, and help save CT COLT resources.

Email Paul at pmsaint@verizon.net and he will take you off the mailing list.
Each new edition of our newsletter will now be posted on our website.