President’s Message

Dear CT COLT colleagues,

With the longer days and the first signs of spring, we can feel rejuvenated after a long winter. As a time of renewal, spring is a good time to reflect on and to refresh our practice. CT COLT is ready to support you in this endeavor. I have much news for you: CT COLT is active as ever and we have lots to offer in the coming months. I will fill you in on the events of the past few months as well.

Due to super storm Sandy, our fall conference had to be moved to December 3, 2012, but it was, as ever, a rewarding professional experience. You will find a link to an article by Stacie Berdan, the keynote speaker, on the CT COLT website. Turning around an event of that size in just 6 weeks was hard work, but thanks to the dedication of the conference committee, it was a fabulous event. We held the conference at the CoCoKey of Waterbury—I want to reiterate our gratitude to them as they were very accommodating when we had to make the last minute switch. The 2013 conference will be again held at the CoCoKey, this October 21. The conference committee, chaired by Vincenza McNulty and Linda Dalpe, is already busy making plans and arrangements. Linda is taking the position on that committee that our dear friend Jan Picerno used to hold. This fall’s conference will be held in Jan’s honor. Best of Conference went to John Hegarty, who then went to NECTFL with his excellent presentation on the importance of French in Connecticut; you can see his power point on our website. The winning entries are made public for all to enjoy and be inspired by.

Other spring time events were the Essay Contest, the Poster Contest and the Spring conference for World Language teachers at CCSU. The essay and poster contest ask students to creatively express their commitment to and enthusiasm for language learning. The winning entries are made public for all to enjoy and be inspired by.

The backdrop to all this energy and excitement for World Languages has been of deepening financial concerns at the national and local levels. We have seen districts planning to reduce their programs by either eliminating less frequently studied languages or by cutting classes for younger learners. We have seen larger class sizes and reductions in resources. We have seen challenges to the two year world language requirement in the high school reform bill. CT COLT has been monitoring the developments and sending calls to action (with guidance) to members when appropriate. We have sent letters to newspapers, made speeches to gatherings and spoken up for world languages in many different meetings. CT COLT continues to sponsor COFLIC, which unites language department supervisors (whatever their official title) from around the state. We continue to work on our membership campaign, knowing that there is strength in numbers. Without a consultant at the State Department of Education, we need to create together a clear strong voice so that every child in the state has access to world language learning at all stages of his/her education. If you have a friend or a colleague who has not yet joined us, please do encourage him/her. For all that we offer and for all that we need to do together, this is a critical time.

Wishing you a happy spring!

Michaela
America Lags in Language Study

by Ruth Boettner


That joke probably made a few people sour and defensive, but there’s some truth behind it.

In my French classes abroad last semester, I was one of two Americans. My class consisted of students from China, Thailand, South Korea, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Austria and Rwanda. The majority of them spoke at least three languages.

The United States is definitely behind in foreign language learning. Forbes found that only 18 percent of Americans can speak a language other than English. Comparably, 53 percent of Europeans are at least bilingual.

There are a lot of different factors that affect why this is the American reality right now. For one, the majority of other top industrialized nations begin teaching a foreign language to their students in elementary school.

The United Kingdom, for example, now requires children to begin learning French, Spanish, German, Mandarin, Latin or Greek by age seven. Australia has a National Policy on Languages, and its government has pumped more than $60 million into a national program for studying Asian languages. More than 60 percent of European countries require at least nine years of foreign language study.

Meanwhile, most Americans don’t start this study until they’re 14, and many only take the required one or two years to get into college.

The research on the existence of a “critical period” for second-language learning is conflicting. Some argue that older learners are better, because learning two languages together at a young age risks the possibility of never having a fully fluent grasp on either. However, most scientists agree on a rule of thumb that “younger is better.” A child’s brain is more “plastic,” meaning it’s better at absorbing a slew of new information.

American students have a much smaller list of languages to choose from. My high school, for example, only offered Spanish and French. Many small schools only teach Spanish, if anything at all. A lot of this is because of a lack of qualified teachers. Around 25 percent of elementary schools and 33 percent of middle schools report this kind of shortage.

Foreign language education also faces a lack of funding. Because of this, programs everywhere are being cut. The percentage of elementary schools teaching other languages fell from 24 to 15 percent. Middle schools fell from 75 to 58 percent. Only about half of universities required it in the 2009-2010 academic year. This was all before the early 2012 budget cut of $27 million worth of grants for foreign language education in the United States.

Besides the shortage in general, American education seems to favor German and Romance languages like French, Italian, Spanish and occasionally Portuguese. Mandarin has seen a recent surge, but there’s not much comparable encouragement for languages like Bengali and Indonesian. Although not spoken widely in the States, their speakers are growing in numbers in the context of the global economy.

On the other hand, English seems like the language to know. Statistically speaking, the estimates vary between 400 million and 900 million speakers of various levels worldwide. While in France, I scarcely found someone who didn’t speak it at least at a beginning level. I spoke to a couple people (in French) about how they were dismissed from educational or professional opportunities because they didn’t speak English. Why, then, as Americans, should we bother learning foreign languages when we seem to have drawn the lucky linguistic straw?

Being at least bilingual has many advantages. Perhaps the most obvious, it’s a resume builder. This qualification will increase your competitiveness as an applicant. Employment in the government, American and international business and health care often require it. Knowledge of a foreign language can also open the door to employment or internships abroad—or it may just soften the blow of culture shock on your European vacation. These stints abroad can also, in turn, be resume boosters.

From a purely monetary standpoint, being at least bilingual will also earn you a larger salary. On average, American workers with this extra language asset receive anywhere between 5 percent and 20 percent more per hour than unilingual employees. Government employees can also earn up to $1,000 of “proficiency pay” for their skills. In Canada, English-French bilinguals have lower unemployment rates than those who speak only one or the other.

Foreign language learning and speaking has also been shown to...
aid in cognitive development, improve memory and increase multi-tasking abilities.

There is also evidence that second-language learning aids in other areas of education. A study of elementary-age children in Louisiana found higher English state exam scores in those who had experience learning a foreign language. College Board surveys indicated that it also increased verbal and math SAT scores for many students.

Most foreign language learning is also coupled with cultural education—cultural education that one might potentially miss out on otherwise. My own K-12 education happened to favor Western (mostly American) civilization and history. My French courses in college exposed me to periods and regions I skipped previously—the French Revolution, African studies, the European colonial empire, etc. As I gear up to write a thesis on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, my knowledge of French allows me to read from sources in French and English. The research possibilities have practically doubled in consequence.

Study abroad programs are also easier pickings for the bilingual student, particularly those eyeing exchange. This form of education offers the best kind of language immersion, where a student must speak the language outside of class to get by. At the same time, we observe and learn new customs as they occur in real time. It gives us the equal opportunity to see new things and different versions of what we see every day at home.

I firmly believe foreign language links the world. To use a personal example, my classmate from Seoul and I would have never been able to communicate last semester without our mutual knowledge of French. Language gives us the opportunity to speak to people we would have never met otherwise — the chance to build bridges.

If we are all meant to stay in our respective countries and never interact with one another, maybe we could get by as unilingual beings. But we left this kind of society behind hundreds of years ago, and we must continue to move forward.

Ruth Boettner is a senior French and global studies major. Reach her at opinion@dailynebraskan.com.

World Language Month

Do not forget to send a note to district publications regarding any and all activities in your classes and in your departments during the month of March! Take the time to report the number of students who have participated in the Grand Concours, the National Spanish Exam and the Latin Exam. If you have participants in our Poetry Recitation Contest, request to bring them to the first BOE meeting in April- before the contest actually happens. While we hope that your student will take home the Gold, showcase your efforts and theirs by having them recite their poetry selection to the BOE and the community. These meetings are generally televised; this is just about the best free publicity that you can get! In addition, I hope you will take your own pictures of your students and send along an article to the local newspapers for publication. You will have a better chance of getting it published because you have already done all the work.

On March 11th, our high school students delivered a short presentation on their after school teaching experiences in two of the five elementary schools. A parent also shared with the Board her experience teaching French during recess at a third school. In addition, we were proud to report that we have started a Confucius classroom at our middle school with classes in Mandarin Chinese on Mondays and Wednesdays. As we concluded our presentation by asking if Board members had any questions, though none had questions for us, one BOE member asked if we had any questions. I checked
Teachers don’t need to be involved in creating the new curricula to go with the new learning standards. I’m sure that the businessmen and publishing companies in charge are motivated only by the needs of the children.

with our students who did not have anything more to add or ask; the parent, however, who is fluent in French and Arabic, stated that she did have a question. She asked, "Why do we not begin language classes earlier than the 7th grade in Vernon? We know that students learn best when they are younger and retain more if they start classes earlier." The Board Chair deferred to the Superintendent who said, "We would love to do that; it all comes down to money." While I could not have predicted what our parent would have said, I was happy to have this unsolicited support for language learning from a community member at the elementary schools.

Finally, I hope that you will continue to communicate with your legislators by sharing your successes with them and reiterating the benefits of second language acquisition. Elected officials seek every opportunity to hear from their constituents and attend events to learn more about us. I would urge us all to make that reality work in our favor by taking the opportunity to discuss and explain what you do to prepare students who will meet the 21st century demands.

Best wishes for a wonderful spring!

Jaya Vijayasekar

Personal Perspectives

Lessons Learned as a Long Term Substitute and Student Teacher
By Amy Schlett

My journey through education has been fast paced and challenging so far. As a long term substitute, I have had the opportunity to try out my future career before it really started. Throughout my journey, I have learned that no one can really “teach” you how to be a teacher.

I have been through many challenging situations, many through which I had to navigate on my own. The only real way to become a teacher is to do the job. While education courses are important, they could never have been a substitute for the real hands on experiences I have had at the different schools at which I had the opportunity to work.

The Beginning
My very first experience as a Spanish teacher was in 2011 when I received my first job as a long term substitute. This experience taught me what it feels like to go from the educational utopia of my coursework to the real classroom full of lively teenagers. It was very difficult to take on teaching full time without any prior experience or even the mentor that student teachers usually have with their cooperating teachers. This sink or swim opportunity taught me my first real lesson of teaching: perseverance is key to surviving this career. I struggled with planning lessons that my students would enjoy and from which they would learn. I also struggled with classroom management first hand without the mentor that student teachers usually have. I left some days wondering if this profession was really right for me, but I never gave up.

Having the freedom to plan my lessons myself and assess my students independently and not under the watchful eye of others helped me to learn by trial and error. My students succeeded at the objectives I set for them, but I got to learn firsthand in the classroom what worked and what absolutely didn’t work. I also used everyone around me to bounce ideas off of and learn from. My second lesson was that thoughtful reflection leads to improved teaching and better results for students.

Something that most potential teachers don’t get to benefit from is taking classes at the same time being able to teach. At my second long term substitute position, I was taking useful classes at the same time I was teaching. This was tremendously helpful and improved my teaching. I was able to learn about instructional strategies, such as Think Pair Share, and implement them the following day! This was the best way for me apply the knowledge I was learning at the same time that I was learning it. I know that my fellow classmates have probably forgotten much from our reading course early on in our education coursework, but I will never forget some of those useful activities because I had the opportunity to reinforce that knowledge immediately.

Teachers should have the opportunity to learn about instructional strategies throughout the school year to improve and liven their teaching.

Methodology and Real Life
Unfortunately, towards the end of teacher education is where teacher education candidates normally take their methodology courses. In my methodology courses, the first half of the semester was spent learning about first language acquisition, and only towards the end of the semester we learned about
actually teaching the language. In addition, many of the examples I was given were not applicable to the high school setting. I left this class confused and lacking much knowledge about how to teach the subject that I was preparing for.

So far, I have found more strategies that connect with students and really engage students from other real life teachers, than in my coursework.

**Student Teaching**

For me, the most difficult and testing part of student teaching is being under the watchful eyes of everyone around you. Not only are you being observed by the cooperating teacher, your university supervisor is watching as well as the other faculty and administration. It is a time of constant observation, criticism, and high emotions. Student teaching is a very formative (and exhausting) experience and you end up a changed person at the end. Thanks to this experience, I am learning how to change the way I deliver lessons to be more effective and clear for students. Before I student taught, I found that I would have the same problems at different schools and I didn’t know how to fix them. Through this experience, I learned that you can’t be an effective educator without support from other teachers around you.

The biggest lesson I have learned so far throughout my student teaching experience is that you are only limited by yourself. You have to be able to believe in yourself and trust yourself and apply your heart in teaching. This personalization of teaching is what really speaks to students. This is an amazing career that I and many others have chosen. Not only will I change the lives of others, but I have changed my own life in a really powerful way!

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**Methods, Materials, Motivation**

**Affichomanie – The Craze of Posters by Toulouse-Lautrec and his Contemporaries**

By Christi Moraga

Are you an affichomaniaque? Did you hang reprints of stylish French posters of the 19th Century on your college wall? I did, as well as many of my fellow French majors. There was a certain style that everyone liked still in the 1970’s - just about one hundred years after the craze began: think “Jane Avril” with a snake wrapping around her black dress, the “Moulin Rouge La Goulu” for the Concert Bal with the can can girls and “Aristide Bruant” in his imposing black cape and hat, wrapped in a red scarf. Those posters were all from the genius of Henri de Toulousse-Lautrec. However, other poster styles also graced our college walls or showed up on notecards: “Lait pur” with the little blond girl in a long red dress, drinking milk from a big bowl while three hungry cats look on, is a classic by Steinlen, a Swiss artist. And who doesn’t recognize his intense black cat with the big yellow eyes in “Tournée du Chat Noir”? I also remember having some postcards of lanky girls with luxurious hair from Alphonse Mucha.

Recently, I was reintroduced to these posters and other artwork by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, by watching the amazing multi-media production of his life at the Wadsworth Atheneum, produced by the “Bated Breath Theater Group” and by subsequently soaking up the extraordinary exhibit on Toulouse-Lautrec at the New Britain Museum of American Art. His life and times are well documented and throw you back to la Belle époque with vigor! You need to see this! While at the NBMAA, I couldn’t resist the gift shop and had a difficult choice of three large tomes on Lautrec and other poster artists. I chose “Posters of Paris – Toulouse-Lautrec
and His Contemporaries.” I came home eager to understand more about these affiches and how they were the rage in Paris at approximately the same time that the Impressionists were growing in popularity. Here are a couple of ideas that I picked up.

· The second half of the nineteenth century was propitious for the growth and development of the poster. Several forces came together. The boulevards were widened under Haussmann’s major urban planning and provided long walls upon which to decorate with posters. The recently invented technology of lithography was improved so that posters could be printed larger and faster. The Morris Company, that specialized in advertising theater, put up 150 “colonnes Morris” throughout the city with the express function of posting ads.

· Entertainment was growing and demanded more advertising. These diversions included: circuses, café-concerts, cabarets, dance halls, theaters, operas and others. Consumption was blossoming and the grands magasins wanted to seduce the buyers to come into their stores. Consumers not only looked at posters on walls but they started to collect them.

· The stars aligned and there was a proliferation of many talented artists in Paris, some of whom started to specialize in the making of affiches.

   Jules Cheret (1836-1932) was the poster maker that refined the craft and elevated it to an art. Not only was he the leader in the 1870’s and 1880’s, but amazingly he was credited with transforming the city of Paris by adorning the walls with his caricatures. The whimsical lettering played an important part in this new art, as well as his three color formula of black, red and yellow. He drew his inspiration from Fragonard by populating his posters with figures from la commedia dell’arte, such as Colombine, Harlquin, and Pierrot. Nevertheless, the smiling scantily dressed young lady in many of his posters was the public’s favorite. She quickly became known as “La chérette.”

   Pierre Bonnard (1867 – 1947) changed the style in 1891 with a brand new advertisement for champagne. His France-Champagne drew its strength from the in vogue japonisme. The thickness of his outlines on the flowing champagne invoked Japanese brush painting. The young lady and all the bubbles were exciting to the viewers.

   Art Nouveau – Eugène Grasset (1845-1917) and Alphonse Mucha (1860-1939) This style of reverie and exotic beauty in Paris is timeless. Imagine ornate vegetation and dark outlines that evoke stain glass with a beautiful girl in a striking pose.

   Théophile-Alexandre Steinlen (1859-1923) was born in Switzerland, yet he is attributed with helping to give Montmartre its Bohemian look. He immortalized his daughter, Colette, drinking sterilized milk with his three house cats, on a poster that was much beloved by the Parisians and collected by many for more than a century. Another poster of his was touted as the best example of “l’art démocratique” because in his poster-mural of the printer, Charles Vernaux, he depicts figures of Parisians from different walks of life, among others: a gentleman, a bourgeois, a laundress, and once again, his daughter, Colette.

   Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864-1901) was, without a doubt, the most celebrated affichiste, but in his short career during the 1890’s, he only made thirty posters. His were different. He did not invent creatures, such as la chérette. He advertised real entertainers from Moulin Rouge and other cabarets. He mixed with the night life and got to know his clientele. He sketched right beside the dance floor. The following quote speaks

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to his famous poster advertising the nightlife of “Moulin Rouge – La Goulu”:

“Lautrec’s poster makes plain the equation between sex, commerce, celebrity, and the Moulin Rouge. … Lautrec’s poster – huge, thrilling, daring, crude – made a startling impact. Unlike Chéret’s posters, which were generally greeted with encomiums for their beauty, lightness, and above all, gaieté, Lautrec’s poster provoked stronger emotions.” (p. 26 – Weaver-Chapin).

This art is so exciting that I hope you will venture into one of our Connecticut museums with posters on display. Paris de la belle époque will come closer to you. Would you turn that down?


Teaching Culture Abroad - Reversed Perspective

By Pasquale J. Di Matteo

Pasquale J. Di Matteo is in his second year of teaching in an American International School in Ho Chi Minh City. All instruction is completed through the medium of English and the school offers students the choice of the American High School diploma including the possibility to take AP classes or the International Baccalaureate Diploma. Most students are Vietnamese; there is also a small number of Korean, Chinese, Japanese and Australian students.

Our school recently just celebrated International Week. Have we taught and learned Culture? The idea for this week of activities was conceived in a Student Council meeting, orchestrated by students, and guided by adult advisors, two well-traveled and internationally minded teachers, one of English and the other of History and involved in Model UN. Many students expressed their input and were able to raise curiosity and excitement about the week through an artfully handled advertising campaign. As it was their idea, they had an invested interest in seeing the week be a successful event. They simply wanted to promote culture, celebrate diversity and perhaps learn something we did not know before. Although the Modern Language Department did not directly oversee the week, I have gained some new perspectives that will affect my inclusion of Culture in my French and Spanish classes.

One activity that excited many students was the hallway decorating competition among the four high school grades, each one assigned a continent to represent: Europe, Asia, Africa and America Yes, this last one was considered as one place, not divided into North and South, without even mentioning the problematic nomenclature we encounter while teaching geography in Spanish class. Scores of students committed hours of their time after school to decorate their hall and win what would be recognition and their claim on the School Cup, a temporary title, until the next grade competition, yet victorious nonetheless. Walking through their recreations of the continents, I caught a glimpse of what they considered as culture.

The freshmen had to design America in a space 200 ft by 8 ft. Their final product lacked the detail and sophistication of the seniors, who were assigned Europe. They did include some representation of Aztec and Incan art and displayed a model of the New York City skyline and one of the famous Hollywood sign complete with a red carpet down part of the path. As many other Vietnamese, they do watch the Discovery Channel, Cesar Milan and Animal Planet, Gordon Ramsey and Master Chef, When I Met Your Mother and American Idol in addition to other Vietnamese programming. I understand that many of their ideas are formed from popular culture and they clearly are influenced by the television they watch as well as YouTube and Facebook.

I found it a little odd, however, that there was no mention of other significant symbols of the US culture. Perhaps I was looking for a model of the Washington Monument or Mount Rushmore (Aren’t there always those monolithic symbols of culture that aliens destroy when they come to Earth in the movies that depict the not-so-distant future, along with the Eiffel Tower, the Pyramids at Giza and Big Ben?) I thought there might be some decorations representing products that changed Europe at the discovery of the Americas. Alas, no tomatoes, no maize, no bell pepper. However, I also accept that the students did have to choose from among a vast area and could only include just a few items; they decided on the Big Apple and the movie capitol.

I did judge their final product with a little disappointment because I thought they would have based it on what I feel has been the “culture” I teach them in class. I do not even refer to the culture I try to embed in my French and Spanish classes and what perhaps Spain and France bequeathed to the Americas. My expectations were based on the high culture and low culture that their teachers and I often try to include in all our lessons, be they in modern languages, math, history, P.E.

For example, on several occasions here in Saigon, I have had to explain what Thanksgiving is, why it is celebrated and the controversial aspects regarding it. One occasion involves my teaching the months in Spanish and French, and I have to
remind them in which month the holiday occurs. At other times students have inquired about the holiday when a seemingly unrelated question occurs. A question about sports in France leads to one about school sports in the US, which in turn leads to the idea of rivalry between schools, then to the big American Football game at Thanksgiving, and finally the inevitable “Why do you celebrate Thanksgiving again?” History class can delve more deeply into all facets surrounding Thanksgiving more than I want to in my language class but I find it fascinating how the opportunities for connections abound.

These moments, in fact, spring out of seemingly unrelated questions, so often that I do feel responsible in taking some time to answer their questions. After all, I would want my students to become integrated with as few embarrassing and cultural faux pas as possible when they go to the States just as I would want my Spanish and French students to show the proper sensitivity and diplomacy in the Spanish and French-speaking countries they may also visit.

How can these students then show evidence of such cultural understandings during a hallway decoration contest? I think I have realized that this contest was not intended as an assessment of their cultural knowledge and skill and I certainly cannot fault them for emphasizing so much what essentially is pumped to them through the medium of pop culture. At the same time, I found myself thinking that this idea of knowing how to calculate on which day Thanksgiving falls represented a Cultural understanding the students needed to know.

I tend to use the expression “need to know” frequently, it seems, when these teachable moments temporarily stop the language lesson and I judge that my students should probably refine their vague understanding of an idea which to me comes so naturally. I suppose it is this process of instant recall and understanding that I deem a useful criterion in determining what is culturally significant. Many times I find myself prefacing a statement of the greatest importance with “You need to know this if you’re going to college in the US…” It may be why there is some time off from school in November. Or why you normally wait to everyone else is served in a restaurant before eating as opposed to the convention in Viet Nam where a person begins eating as soon as his plate arrives.

Apparently, without ever planning to teach it, I also think they need to know why many Americans celebrate St. Patrick’s Day. An expression in French class like “Tu as de la chance” led to a discussion of what culturally may be considered good luck. And so, suddenly, my students needed to know about St. Patrick’s Day and the four-leaf clover. In the same way, they needed to know how to recognize the American National Anthem in case they hear it and are sitting down and do not want to insult others. They also need to know that waiters need 15% tip or more in exchange for good service in order to make a viable income. In Viet Nam it is rare to tip in many places.

In addition to holidays and ways of interacting in the culture, I also feel the need to instruct my students on the small misunderstandings they betray in their casual conversations, the small tidbits of culture with a small “c.” Would I be a teacher if I did not tell them to stop wearing white socks with their black shoes when they go to the US unless they are trying out for a role in Grease? Would I be dedicated to my profession if I did not tell them that the letter “L” they happily form on the background of their forehead with their thumb and index finger extended, other fingers closed inward, does not mean you are cool and sing really well as the fictional characters you see on “Glee”? It means “loser” and they are not going to make friends if they show such cultural insensitivity!

In all seriousness, I think, and hope, they understand my distinctions between High Culture and simple dos and don’ts. I learn from them also. When I take photos for my charity club, according to them, I “need to know” never to ask just three of them to pose (bad luck for the person in the middle). I also “need to know” that International Women’s Day is celebrated as an official holiday on March 8th in as countries as different as Viet Nam, Azerbaijan, Uganda and Cuba, just
Calling All...

Past Members of the Board of Directors
Past Contest or Committee Chairpersons
All Members of CT COLT

Please help us reconstruct the history of CT COLT from 1968 to the present.

Are you cleaning out your files and closets?

If you come across anything related to CT COLT past activities or contests, please contact Linda Dalpe at lindald001@aol.com. We have reconstructed a considerable amount of CT COLT history, but we still have more to do. We could use any documents, photos, newsletters, etc. in completing this very important task. Thank you for your help!

As they “need to know” that they should not expect many Americans to know about International Women’s Day.

As I mentioned, our cultural digressions usually occur while discussing another topic. Mentioning the Euro may generate questions about the Dollar, which then prompts me to remark tangentially on the debate on whether to continue to produce the penny. Students enjoy the inquiry, want to learn more about the country in which they will be studying in the future, and naturally ask then about the image on the penny. In that moment I have to remind them of President Lincoln and his major contributions, which they may or may not have studied yet. In either case, this cultural exchange exemplifies many steps in gaining cultural knowledge. I think it shows the relationship between history and the present. It also demonstrates that cultural knowledge is not just taught once. It must be revisited many times before it becomes that natural instinct, such as when many of us Americans know to stop talking before a movie begins (Culturally instinctive for the Vietnamese is to interact more vocally with the film).

How then does this help me in my language classroom? I am too obsessive about planning lessons that I do not want to leave much of the Culture in French and Spanish class to luck and to random questions that may or may not arise. However, while teaching French and Spanish to my Vietnamese students, and teaching them High and Low culture about the US on the side, I have become more aware of how some ostensibly unrelated questions actually may hide deeper, hidden cultural contexts. As a result, I want to be more cognizant of possible hidden cultural connections when I introduce new language material in my language classes and allow students to make more inquiries. Perhaps some of us have never shown our students a copy of a real calendar from Spain when we teach the days and the months? We could have students inquire as to which holidays and how many they get off from school and this offers many opportunities for cultural awareness. And perhaps, after having discussed the discovery of the Americas in history class and having talked about all the foods in Spain that contain that lovely paprika derived from that transplanted capsicum, then dried and ground, students would then perhaps also include some bell peppers in the hallway decorations of the America as well?

Book Review
written by Stephanie Duchesneau

Quiet-The Power of Introverts
By Susan Cain

There is great pleasure in watching our children go through the various stages of childhood and enter adulthood. When my two sons were preschoolers and early elementary students, we read stories together before bedtime. Later as they grew older, we shared typical “boy” stories such as Goosebumps or Harry Potter on lazy summer afternoons. Then we hit the void….high school English with required novels and essays, college textbooks and no time or desire to read for pleasure. I am happy to report that today, both my sons are reading (without any prodding from Mom) and giving me suggestions. My eldest recommended Quiet-The Power of Introverts. As a newly employed college graduate, he told me that he could identify with the people who are not naturally outgoing. The book “spoke” to him as an educator at the college level as he advises incoming Freshmen and resolves conflict between roommates or speaks to concerned parents.
This book is a must read for teachers. It explains why some strategies that we have been trained to embrace in the classroom do not work for all students. For example, our culture emphasizes the importance of collaboration and teamwork. We praise the students who work well in groups and do our best to encourage the more reticent learners to participate. How many of us can identify a student who never wanted to join a group always asking to “work alone”? We say that students need to be outgoing and share ideas. This method does not work for everyone and the book shares personal stories of great inventions or innovations that come from investigating and researching alone. It makes a compelling argument for allowing time to create sans group or committee. This made me think about the push for differentiated instruction. Why don’t we let students do a project on their own if that is the best way that they learn? This extends to teachers who must work in PLC (Professional Learning Communities-new buzzword). How many times have we collaborated as a team to create an End of Course Assessment (formally known as Final Exam) that takes weeks? Wouldn’t it be easier to divide it up the sections, work alone and then regroup and revise the sections written in creative solitude?

Another thought provoking observation is that of the effectiveness of “brainstorming”. Companies have executives sit in the boardroom and throw out ideas that are recorded in some format. This idea was revolutionary when if first began and we have extended this technique into the classroom. What better way to get students excited! The studies show however that it does not work. It is more effective to send the executives off to “brainstorm” in their preferred environment and return to share the ideas. The same is true for students who are also much more susceptible to peer pressure and fear of criticism. If we take this away by collecting the ideas rather than shouting them out in a group the author writes that better suggestions, ideas and more creative thought will come from the exercise.

This book also delves into various cultures and why introverts and extroverts are valued more or less in different societies. It explores famous thinkers, inventors and introverts such as Rosa Parks who made a great impact on society. Extroverts and introverts are defined and both add to our culture but in different ways. I enjoyed the chapter entitled “Cobblers and Generals” with the subtitle: “How to cultivate quiet kids in a world that can’t hear them”. There is some very useful information not only to help educate students in classrooms that have become more diverse but also in our everyday lives. The bottom line-let’s not force everyone to be the same whether in the classroom, on a team or in a family. As I finished reading the book, I had a new insight into my son and how he was pushed to be an extrovert when he is not. He is a successful introvert in a world that values the extrovert-it is time to open up our minds to both.

Other thought provoking reads:

- The Tipping Point by Malcolm Gladwell
- Blink by Malcolm Gladwell

**Creative Ways to Bring World Language to Young Children**

by Danielle Sandridge, active parent in Granby, CT

I can ramble on forever about the importance of exposing kids to a second language as early as possible but I suspect I will be preaching to the choir. This audience fully appreciates the value of this exposure in terms of cognitive development, higher test scores, better math and English skills and overall global awareness. I don't know if it is because young children are more open minded but clearly, learning a new language is much easier the younger you are.

However, as we all know, our school systems are severely constrained by state guidelines and requirements, driven by test performance and financial budgets. This leaves little room for most school districts to incorporate early secondary language opportunities. However, several Granby, CT parents recognized how important this is to our children and found some creative solutions to this dilemma. We created a model that can be replicated with minor changes in any community.

Clearly, although a long term objective of our school board, we knew that funding would not currently allow for secondary language classes to be incorporated into the school day for grades K-6th. So, we had to think outside of the box. Why not
offer something optional after school? With the full support and encouragement of the Superintendent and the Intermediate and Elementary Principals, we reached out to the Recreation department which offers all kinds of community programs to our town.

There are some small but surmountable hurdles to get over. First, we had to find the teachers. Although not ideal, the good news here is that since it was not technically school sponsored we didn't have to have a certified teacher. We just needed someone who was fluent with some teaching experience that was good with kids...certification is a bonus and our first inquiries went out to all the language teachers in our school system. Second, we had to find a curriculum. Sometimes the teacher can provide this or incorporate their own material into a predesigned purchased curriculum like we found at www.spanishforkids.com (Risas y Sonrisas).

Next steps were figuring out the schedule and price. Kids these days are so busy after school. We knew that once they leave school we have lost them. We settled on a twice a week class for 50 minutes, immediately following the school day. This allows the kids to just walk down the hall to class after the final bell and finish up about the same time they would be getting off the bus...so no time lost for all the extracurricular activities(a huge selling point!). The class would mirror the school calendar but split into two semesters, with 25 classes per semester. The cost per semester is approximately $150 but financial aid is available through the recreation department.

The key to our success is that this class has to be fun, with minimal homework requirements. Not burdensome to the kids or parents. We wanted the kids to be excited about learning a language and that is exactly what happened. Besides the in class activities, the kids sang Christmas carols at school assemblies, community events, and at town and school board meetings, even appearing on local TV. They have food festivals and have cultural art projects displayed throughout the school. They are very proud to be part of the program and there is a waiting list to get into the classes.

The initial Spanish programs were rolled out last year to grades K-6 with tremendous success. This year, a French class was also introduced and a shorter, more broad and cultural based Russian program was also offered at the elementary school. Our most limiting factor is finding enough teachers to meet the demand.

Fortunately, our town passed a budget for this year that incorporated Spanish into the school day for grades 5-6. We are hoping that the budget will pass again this year too which will bring in school Spanish to grades 3-4. Longer term there are plans to incorporate Spanish all the way down to kindergarten but even when that happens, based on the popularity, we will likely continue offering French and other cultural 6 to 8 week programs like Russian.

If you would like further information please don't hesitate to email me at danielle.sandridge@cox.net. Additional information on the classes can also be found at www.granbyrec.com.

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**Technology**

**Adina’s Technology Corner**

Great to talk to you all again in 2013!!

Happy Spring! I am happy to see that you are all wired in one way or another to technology! Simply reading this newsletter and this column is proof enough! ☺

Of course that with the new CCSS, the mastery of 21st century technology becomes more and more a required skill in any classroom not only for students but for teachers too! This should not be hard to achieve at all though because due to the nature of our discipline, creativity, innovation and inspiration are at work at all times in our profession. To me it is very clear that we, foreign language teachers, are indeed forward thinkers in many aspects of the planning, teaching and assessing the four literacy skills as outlined in the new CCSS: reading, speaking, listening and writing.

I just realized this recently when I had the pleasure to attend the Technology Academy sponsored by CT COLT. I was pleasantly surprised to discover that our colleagues across the state are using new and exciting approaches to teach these same four fundamental skills in foreign language via a multitude of technology platforms. I am anxiously planning to...
try a few in my own classroom very soon! Here are a few highlights courtesy of the presenters:

**Using Technology to Bring Native Voices to the Classroom** – This workshop focused on the use of podcasts (either amateur recordings or podcasts taken from the website of authentic newspapers around the world, French, Spanish etc.) and authentic music taken from Pandora, Spotify, etc. In general, it was refreshing to learn how web-based technology can be used to bring native speakers into your classrooms for free. The variety of information presented, the incredible array of accents, dialects and specific cultural practices that can be found on these websites was indeed incredible! Try these new resources that are beautifully presented in dynamic and authentic snapshots taken from around the virtual world. This is an excellent approach to choose authentic sources and differentiate lessons appropriately for students of different levels and needs.

**Schoology in world languages** – Some of you probably heard of or even currently use Schoology. To me it was fairly new and it was great to hear and see how I could use it in my foreign language class. Schoology is a great free online course management system. Aside from posting homework reminders and other class announcements, teachers can provide easy links to relevant web sites, upload files for student reference, create online quizzes & tests, embed YouTube videos, and more. While it is in many ways similar to Moodle and Edmodo, Schoology in fact is more at an intermediate level between Edmodo and Moodle. Edmodo is more of a social networking platform with some assignment/quiz options included. It is particularly suited to Primary/Elementary schools and for light duty in Secondary classes. At the other end of the spectrum, Moodle is a full-featured Learning Management System that is suited to Secondary or Tertiary institutions where there is sufficient technical support available. Of course, the best way to decide the most suitable option for you or your school is to give each platform a try. All are free, or offer a free component for educational use.

**Creating video “shots” for the language classroom** - This was a great workshop that taught participants how to use stills of film, video and/or YouTube. Although the concept is fairly simple and many of you probably have seen it, it is an extremely powerful teaching tool! These pictures can be used in various ways in the classroom to teach from beginning students to the most advanced AP classes. “Still” pictures can be used in power points or any other instructional format to deliver a short lecture or to give students a visual prompt for a narrative or interpersonal speaking performance activity. Here are some tips on how to do it:

**Instructions: How to print a still from a video**

Step 1: As you watch the video and find the scene you want to have a shot of: HIT PAUSE to stop the video

Step 2: press PRNT SCRN (sys rq) on the keyboard and control C

Step 3: Open a power point and new slide-hit control V to paste the picture onto the slide.

*The picture will be very large. Continue these steps:

**CROPPING**

Step 1: Put mouse on picture and drag so you can see the corner. Put mouse on white circle and move toward the center of picture. Do this a few times until the picture fits the screen.

Step 2: Be sure to click on picture so you have the circles. Then go to VIEW and TOOLBAR. Scroll down in TOOLBAR and select PICTURE. Another bar will appear. CLICK on the cropping symbols. They will go around the picture. Click on the black line in the middle of each side. Pull in until the picture is cropped. You can do this again if you need to fix the crop.

NOTE: The size of the pictures is large. In order to reduce the size of your power point, click on the picture and go to FORMAT PICTURE. At the bottom of the box there is a button COMPRESS. Click ALL PICTURES IN DOCUMENT and then APPLY. This will reduce the size so you can send and open easily.

**Screencast-O-Matic** – Perhaps one of the most intriguing presentations was Screencast-O-Matic. This is an ingenious, ad hoc movie maker that allows students or teachers to record a voice (through a computer microphone and web cam) and any computer screen activity that takes place during the recording for the purpose of demonstrating a process, making a presentation or simply creating screen shots. These movies can be then published/uploaded anywhere on Vimeo, Google Drive, YouTube, etc.

**Tech Tools for Differentiation in World Language** - If you like to play games in your classroom, then, there is no better way to engage students in various language learning competitions. They can be done via a multitude of online instructional formats. These formats can support differentiated
instruction in World Language classes by accommodating many learning styles and levels. And the key to this is http://www.superteachertools.com. Here you can find jeopardy games, board games, name generator, group makes, etc. It is a perfect teaching tool in any foreign language classroom that has a SmartBoard!!

This is all for this spring edition of the newsletter and as always I am open for suggestions, ideas and mostly new technology! Please send me your comments, suggestions, questions to aalexand@baypath.edu.

P.S. You may want to attend the May 2013 session of the Tech Academy held in Southington for more ideas on technology in the foreign language class. Sign up is easy: http://ctcolttechnologyacademy.weebly.com/

Schoology: Broaden the Reach of Your Classroom

By Neil Holt, World Language Content Leader & Spanish Teacher, Amity Middle School Orange

Neil.Holt@reg5.k12.ct.us

Language teachers have long supplemented their in-class instruction with online resources such as YouTube videos, practice activities and games on Quia, or visits to target-language web sites from other countries. An easy way to centralize these kinds of resources for your students, in an engaging and interactive environment, is to create an online presence for your courses in what is called a Learning Management System (LMS). Popular LMS include Blackboard, Edmodo, Moodle, and Schoology.

Schoology (www.schoology.com) is an excellent choice for language teachers; not only is it a free service, it has a number of features that have the potential to enhance language learning. Schoology is designed to appeal to students who are accustomed to using social media in their daily lives. For a 2-minute video introduction, search "Schoology" on www.vimeo.com, where you can also see an extensive collection of videos demonstrating how to use the features of Schoology.

To get started on Schoology, a teacher creates an "Instructor" account and one or more courses (e.g. "Spanish period 2" or "Mandarin Chinese III."). Students then create their own accounts (no email address required) and use the access code provided by their teacher to join the course on Schoology.

Next, you're ready to add content to your courses. The easiest way to do so is by posting an "update." When students log into Schoology, they see a list of "updates" from you (and other teachers if those teachers also use Schoology). This is similar to the news feed found on a typical social networking site.

The simplest update would be a reminder about a homework assignment (e.g. "Read the article about café culture in Spain and answer the questions."). Your updates may include other things too:

- Give reminders about what to study for upcoming quizzes/tests, with study guides attached (in .pdf or .docx format, for example)
- Link to a web page in the target language and ask students a specific question about content from that web page. (e.g. "Visit the web site of a major department store in France and describe one item you might buy as a gift for a friend."). Students can respond by posting a comment in the space directly below the update.
- Embed a video from YouTube. Music videos are especially fun -- Ask students to give their reactions in the comments section.
- Link to practice activities on other web sites, such as Quia or Quizlet.
- If you have a microphone on your computer, you can even add a recording of your voice to your updates.

Another way to add content on Schoology is in the "Materials" section of your course. Among other things, this is where you can post files for student reference and host student discussions. Most useful is the ability to create quizzes and tests for students to complete on Schoology. Creating quizzes and tests on Schoology can be time consuming, but the benefits are clear:

- you can include pictures and videos right in your quizzes/tests,
- some of the items can be scored automatically (multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, true/false),
- you can allow students multiple attempts (great for formative assessment of grammar topics -- if students don't do well the first time, give them some extra practice and then have them do the assessment again), and
- when students finish, you have automatic item analysis so that you can see the areas in which your class may need additional instruction.
Schoology has many other capabilities than there is space to describe here. A few examples: Allow parents access to your courses with special parent codes, communicate with students without needing email (which most students these days don't seem to use nearly as much as teachers), and create dropboxes for students to submit assignments electronically. There is also a Schoology mobile app for iOS and Android devices.

Use Schoology however it best suits you. Some teachers make it a core part of their instruction, with a lot of content and frequent updates. Others make it an ancillary part of their courses, as a way to provide "extra" information and practice for their students. Whatever your preference, the same advice applies here as with any new technology: start small. Try it out and you will be able to tell quickly whether Schoology is something that suits your teaching style or not. Students may make the decision for you -- many of them love this kind of technology and will be asking you to use more of it!

The 22nd Annual CT COLT Rhyme Celebration
By Kate Krotzer

The 22nd annual CT COLT Rhyme Celebration was held on Thursday, March 21st, 2013, at Danbury High School in Danbury, CT. The Rhyme Celebration is an annual event sponsored by the Connecticut Council for Language Teachers (CT COLT) for elementary foreign language students in grades K-6 from across the state. Students come from various school districts and recite poems and rhymes in many different languages. It is a great opportunity for students to celebrate their language learning skills and share their enthusiasm with their peers, teachers, and parents.

This year, over 230 students from 14 towns, 11 school districts, and 17 schools participated in the celebration. These students were joined by over 20 world language teachers and
administrators. The languages represented this year included: Bosnian, Catalan, Chinese, English, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Kannada, Khmer, Malayalam, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, Tamil, Urdu and Vietnamese. The rhymes and poems were all centered on this year’s theme “World Languages: Bridges of Peace” chosen by the Western Connecticut Academy for International Studies Elementary Magnet School hosts, Maria Sorrentino and Maria Finnerty.

The celebration began with the Danbury Superintendent of Schools, Sal Pascarella, and Kate Krotzer, CT COLT Rhyme Celebration chair, who welcomed the participants and congratulated the Clinton hosts for their enormous efforts in coordinating this year’s event. Kate noted the importance of supporting early world language programs and specifically thanked parents, students, and teachers for such support by attending this event.

The theme “Bridges of Peace” was integrated throughout the event, starting with the welcome mural where participating students decorated bricks with words of peace that formed part of a bridge structure. The stage decorations included a peace dove and a Japanese style peace pole. John Farrell from Bridges of Peace and Hope led the theme song “We Are Walking a Bridge of Peace” and set the tone for the many students that presented rhymes and poems about love and peace.

Students from Washington recited a poem in Spanish about “Paz y Libertad”, peace and liberty. West Hartford students sang in French about how they were “proud to be me.” Danbury students presented a finale with all the letters of the alphabet in Spanish, and the three that make up the word for peace, paz. Several heritage students shared their native languages and even wore some traditional clothing as they recited their poems. The audience was delighted by all of the performances and the children’s smiling faces as they brought to life the different languages with their props, rhymes, and costumes.

We had a special thanks to Desiree Galassi who brought students to recite in Italian from her private classes at “In Italiano Prego” in Newtown. Desiree developed the Languages of Love project and worked with Newtown students to create hearts with words of love and peace in different languages to give to each student participating in the Rhyme Celebration. What a great way to extend the message of peace and love to the community and spread it through languages.

On behalf of CT COLT, we would like to thank all of the teachers, students, parents, and volunteers for making the 22nd Rhyme Celebration a great success. We look forward to next year’s celebration and hope to see you there! Please contact Kate Krotzer for any questions or information at kate.krotzer@gmail.com.

Organizational News

Classical Association of Connecticut, Inc. Distinguished Service Award 2013-2014

At the Fall Annual Meeting of the Classical Association of Connecticut, Inc., Geraldine Drabik Kuenkler received the ClassicConn 2013-2014 Distinguished Service Award.

In presenting this award, Marilyn Archibald had this to say about the recipient:

Gerry Drabik Kuenkler began a serious pursuit of language excellence at St Bernard’s High School in Montville, CT, continued similar studies at Amhurst College in Woodstock, Ct, and took a master’s degree at Fordham University in NY. I emphasize language excellence because the focus was not only Latin, but French and English as well. She began teaching English at St. Bernard’s and also accepted an administrative position in addition to teaching duties. She then decided to teach Latin and French at Holy Cross Waterbury, at RHAM in Hebron, at Wethersfield HS, and finally Valley Regional in Deep River.

Gerry has been a much requested chaperone on student trips to France and Italy, and chose to study Polish in Poland and Spanish in Providence, both electrifying experiences. In 1987,
NNELL is Celebrating its 25th Anniversary!

NNELL Summer Institute

July 12-14, 2013
NNELL Summer Institute
In Partnership with ACTFL and Glastonbury Public Schools

Friday - July 12, 2013
OPTIONAL - site visit to Arabic Mandarin, and Russian STARTALK programs

9:00 a.m. to 12:00 Noon
Regional and State Representative Advocacy Workshop

1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. (open to all members)
Tammy Dann, presenter

Networking Dinner at 5:30 p.m.

Saturday - July 13, 2013
8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Terry Caccavale - Keynote- Our Global Identities
Paul Sandrock - In Common: Early Language Learning at the core.
Barbara Lindsey - Global Show and Tell: Finding and Participating in International Language Projects

5:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Networking Dinner and evening activity

Sunday - July 14, 2013
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Helena Curtain - What can we learn from Common Core Standards in the Early Language Learning Classroom?

12:00 to 1:00 p.m.
Working lunch

Time to network, collaborate, and communicate!

Registration will open March 1st.
Please check www.nnell.org for more information

A block of rooms will be reserved at the Hilton Garden Inn and Homewood Suites in Glastonbury.

Gerry published with the American Classical League a pamphlet entitled “The Latin and Greek in Your Car,” still available through their press.

Gerry champions public transportation so fervently that a Chevy Leaf was recently leased, and travel to points in North Carolina are always achieved by train and by bus. She finds solace mornings along the Niantic River in a favorite kayak and relishes the opportunity to attend lectures, symposia, and theatrical productions. She hopes to convert us all to the slow eaters club.

Gerry has readily served on various ClassConn committees and attended the CANE Summer Program at Dartmouth as well as CANE meetings the past several years (relying on as much public transportation as possible!). She decided to retire last year at the request of a spouse ready to share adventures together and to fulfill the responsibility of day care for an aging parent.

Gerry now wants to offer a vast collection of books acquired throughout the years and almost single-handedly organizes the silent auction tables at classics meetings.

To a true scholar, a loyal friend, a remarkable teacher, I am honored to present the Distinguished Service Award to Geraldine Drabik Kuenkler.

Horas non numero sed serenas
I do not count the hours but the peaceful ones

News from CT Schools

Anna Koltypin Nominated for Spotlight on Teachers Award

The Stamford Public Schools Spotlight on Teachers Award recognizes outstanding achievement for the 2012-2013 school years. Any Stamford Public Schools employee may nominate a teacher for this competitive award, which recognizes creativity and innovative educational projects, professional awards, extraordinary community contributions, etc.

Ms. Koltypin’s exposes her Latin and a world languages class to interdisciplinary lessons that incorporate a wide variety of multiple-intelligences and learning styles, within a small group and individual work/learning environments.

Ms. Koltypin has been teaching the “Hanging Branch/Charter Oak“ projects for many years. Though she regularly modifies her lessons, they are always anchored
with the foundation of standards that most states have adopted now called Common Core Standards.

In her lesson “Hanging Branch Project” students use prior and new learned knowledge of Latin to explain how plants are named, in addition to how botanical taxonomy nomenclature is based in Latin and other languages other than English. This lesson is started and augmented by a trip to the Bartlett Arboretum, to hear a lecture and take a tour of the Arboretum.

Not only is this a sophisticated Latin language lesson, but also involves an interdisciplinary blend of engineering, art-design, math, science, history, and language arts. This lesson’s grade scoring rubric is based on the ELA/Literary and Mathematics standards within the protocol of project based learning.

The adjunct lesson that the students engage in is the “Charter Oak” project. This project is done in a small group, and in some cases individually. Again, for reinforcement of the above lesson, students must use multiple disciplines, and are encouraged to use different intelligences to cover the project completely. Each group/student then presents their project to the class using learned proper public speaking techniques.

The “Hanging Branch /Charter Oak” projects are engaging sophisticated lessons that force students to draw on prior and new learning. The lessons are designed to be flexible enough to be modified and used with all types of students so that success can be realized even within heterogeneous classes.

Given the above, Ms. Koltypin deserves to be honored and the breadth of her work in and out of the classroom.

Sample Latin Projects assigned to Ms. Koltypin’s students:

In groups of 4 – make a “hanging branch project” of Arboretum trip

- Short biography of Carolus Linnaeus, the father of botanical taxonomy.
- How are plants named?

Charter Oak

- Give a short history
- Give the scientific name

Project

- Make an outline of what a tree of the 3 leaves/maple, birch and oak looks like.
- Paste the dried leaf inside the tree. Give the scientific name
- Give the uses of modern days and Roman times

Project

- Medicinal herb garden. Give 5 examples of herbs. Scientific names.
- Give the modern uses of today

Project

- Write out a recipe for one herb.

Project

- Draw or paste a picture of your favorite tree, bush or flower and tell a story about it.

Bethel High School to Host 24 students from Québec

CT Colt’s West Central Regional Director, Alisa Trachtenberg has been busy the last few years putting together new and exciting international exchanges for the Bethel students. The first exchange she organized was a 17 day exchange with a high school in Saint Affrique, France. That exchange was a resounding success for the school as well as for the students who forged lasting relationships as many of them still communicate on a regular basis.

This year, however, given the global situation, Ms. Trachtenberg decided it would be the perfect time to do an exchange with our French-speaking neighbors just over the border. Not only was it geographically desirable, but it would afford a greater number of students the opportunity to travel abroad. She was in the process of looking for a school when, as luck would have it, a former Bethel teacher, Chantal Gagné, who now lives and teaches in Québec, saw the write-up on the Bethel website about the French exchange which took place the previous two year and contacted the school. The two women have been working tirelessly ever since to make this exchange a reality. Twenty-one Bethel families with students at Bethel High School and Bethel Middle School will be
hosting twenty-four students from L’École Secondaire de Bromptonville, located in Sherbrooke, Canada in French-Speaking Quebec. The Canadian students will be arriving on Friday, April 5th and returning home the following Friday, April 12th. Bethel students will be traveling to Québec next year from April 4-11, 2014. While here the Canadian students will get a taste of American life and practice their English skills as they attend classes and spend time with their host families. In addition to shadowing their host, the Canadians and Americans will take two field trips, one to the Norwalk Aquarium and the other to New York City. In addition, the Bethel students will be treated to a presentation on Québec by the Canadian students which will take place on the last day of their visit. It is an exciting time for all. The Americans will have a similar program while they are in Québec, however they will be visiting Montréal and Québec City while abroad.

**Simsbury High School Students Celebrate Chinese New Year at Asian Meadow Cuisine**

On February 12, 2013, students enrolled in the Chinese courses at Simsbury High School, along with teachers Shiffon Theodorou and Wendy Ku, as well as Wendy Lee, a substitute Chinese teacher who is also a Simsbury parent, went to Asian Meadow Cuisine located on Hopmeadow Street in Simsbury for a Chinese New Year celebration. During this celebration, Asian Meadow Cuisine owners Sam Lin and his wife Mei Shu Gao welcomed the students and teachers with dumpling skins and prepared dumpling fillers. Mr. Lin provided students with a demonstration on filling and wrapping the dumplings.

“We learned how to properly wrap dumplings and wontons. It was cool to learn since this is something I never knew how to do before,” said senior Mark Gschwind. “Through the demonstration, they taught us how to make and wrap the dumplings, and the instruction was spoken in Chinese, which made us practice our listening skills.”

Chinese student Kevin Jordan discussed his experience celebrating Chinese New Year with the Chinese students at Asian Meadow Cuisine. “I enjoyed learning the different ways to wrap and make dumplings and wontons. After we wrapped them, they cooked the ones we made and we got to eat them. My classmates and I finished all the dumplings we made. They were really delicious!” Other traditional dishes were also given to the students as part of the celebration.

Freshman Chinese student Rosemary Wallace particularly enjoyed eating the noodles. “The noodles are important to Chinese New Year because they symbolize longevity. Since I am a vegetarian, the noodles were perfect!”

This year, Chinese New Year was on Sunday, February 10, 2013 and it is now the year of the Snake. As a Chinese tradition, many families spend New Year’s Eve together and prepare dumplings from scratch. The dumplings are then cooked and eaten at midnight. Each method of wrapping the dumplings conveys a different symbolic meaning. For example, round dumplings signify family reunions, whereas crescent-shaped dumplings symbolize wealth and prosperity, due to the resemblance of ancient Chinese money.

Through this celebration at Asian Meadow Cuisine, the students were able to participate in a Chinese tradition and experience the Chinese culture. “This was a great opportunity to come together with the other students at Simsbury High School taking Chinese as a language, especially for the Chinese New Year. I felt like part of a family celebrating Chinese New Year,” concluded Gschwind.

**Expanding Learning Beyond the Classroom at Lake Garda Elementary School in Regional School District 10**

by Dana Tracy, Spanish Teacher at Lake Garda Elementary School
The Common Core State Standards mission statement includes preparing our students to be fully prepared for the future so our communities will be best positioned to compete successfully in the global economy. This is something that World Language Teachers have embraced for many centuries and now applaud as being the newly adopted state standard, but it is also a challenge as teachers or ambassadors of culture to extend this kind of learning beyond the classroom. I have only been teaching in the United Stated for five years now after returning from many years of teaching English as a Second Language in Granollers, Spain, and this challenge to encourage learning beyond the classroom and hit all of our World Language Standards or The Five “C’s” is not always easy, but necessary for our students to compete in an ever shrinking global marketplace. Here are a few ways we are celebrating learning beyond the classroom.

One of the most exciting ways that my third and fourth grade students are extending this love of learning outside of the classroom is attending the CT COLT Rhyme Celebration each March. My first year with Regional School District 10 we were the host school district and this was very rewarding for all of the community involved. Where else can one celebrate so many languages or cultures being learned all across the state at the elementary level? I only wish I could bring all 240 of my students to attend! Each year I am thrilled to involve my students in broadening their horizon’s beyond the district boarders. Year after year I have students and their families inform their community and me how positively this has impacted their love of learning about a new culture and ignited the fire that burns for more knowledge beyond their classroom and country borders. This year Lake Garda Elementary will proudly participate in the Rhyme Celebration with six third grade students, one fourth grade student, and one first grade student. We will travel with students from HCS and Har-Bur to perform.

Spring is a busy time at Lake Garda Elementary as the second grade is celebrating Cultural Day with various activities to promote cultures across the globe. Many hours go into preparing for this one day and I feel honored to be asked to open the ceremony with short lessons in Spanish to my future third grade students. Parent volunteer alongside many dedicated professional bring to life the music, dance, art and even cuisine from various continents. My only lament is not having more time to visit between lessons!

We are very fortune this year to have our first ever Swiss Student Teacher interns from Bern, Switzerland. Although this program is not new, it is the first time our new Principal; Jack Gedney, the founder has brought this program along with him to our school. These students were handpicked by their university in Bern to complete a four -week internship here in Connecticut to become teachers who will have to teach all subjects similar to the one room school house teacher who taught Music, Wellness, Art, Languages as well as their core subjects to their future students. My third and fourth grade students will have an opportunity to see firsthand how learning another language will help these two interns further their education and ultimately help them to complete for a teaching career in a foreign country where there are four official languages. These busy interns were gracious enough to allow time to meet with my third and fourth grade students to answer their burning questions about their culture, discuss with my students how their visit has impacted their learning, career, and how their culture differs from ours.

It is my hope that involving my students in these events will ignite the light that fosters a love of learning beyond their high school years with Regional School District 10. For my students time will tell, but from my encounters with my former students it looks as though we have students who will be well prepared to meet the global challenges that face them as a result of fostering this love beyond the classroom walls at such an early age. I feel very fortunate that my community and district supports this early language learning and continues to send us to the Rhyme Celebration each year.

Long Distance Friendships
by Andrea Agüero, Lewis S. Mills High School, Spanish student

Some people may say that long distance friendship doesn’t work. Here at Lewis S. Mills, we beg to differ. Students in advanced Spanish classes have received pen pals from Spain. This pen pals program is interlocked with last year’s student exchange program. This wonderful activity is possible thanks to the coordination between Susana Ortega, a teacher from Colegio Los Pinos in Spain, and Mrs. Lapman.

The Spanish kids from Colegio Los Pinos wrote very thoughtful letters to us in English. Often times, they include pictures of themselves and their friends. Some also asked to be followed on twitter and facebook. They like to tell us about their friends and family, even their pets. My pen pal Jose Angel wrote:

“I haven’t got much to tell you because I don’t know you. This is a good opportunity to start a good relationship with you”

He went on to tell me about his friends, his family and the activities he enjoys, which include playing basketball and going to parties. Now, it’s my turn to respond in Spanish. I’m sure he will be just as excited to read my letter as I was to read his.

Mrs. Lapman says she was holding back tears of joy when she saw that her students were very excited to receive a letter. She is also very excited because this is an opportunity for students to experience the Spanish language and its culture.
The purpose for this activity is to connect and make friends with people far away. Over time, friendship will develop between students at LSM and those at Colegio Los Pinos. Lewis S. Mills is on its way to become an international institution. Having pen pals is moving us a step closer.

**A Showcase of Cultural Talent at Har-Bur Middle School RSD #10**

by Ginny Powell, Spanish Teacher at Har-Bur Middle School

The Cultural Caravan is a program which shows cases cultural talent of Har-Bur Middle School students during 3 performances; the Senior Citizen Breakfast, a school-wide performance and an evening celebration for the community. Students show the different ways in which we express ourselves through language, music, literature, cuisine and art. Each year our membership expands and introduces new cultures and interests. This year the focus is on the Caribbean with the Puerto Rican Vejigante characters running and chanting through the crowd. Our aim is cultural literacy and cultural competence: the ability to live and be a productive member of our diverse community.

**The Sister City Project at Har-Bur Middle School RSD #10**

by Jean Satmaria, Spanish Teacher at Har-Bur Middle School

The Sister City Project began in 1997 when Mrs. Satmaria began teaching at Har-Bur Middle School in Burlington, CT. It began as a pen-pal program between eighth grade students studying Spanish and elementary bilingual students from Lincoln Elementary School in New Britain who were studying English.

Throughout the year, Mrs. Satmaria's students correspond with their pen-pals in Spanish, with an emphasis on current curricular components. They also complete a book and school supply drive for their friends and hold simulated stores in the classroom to select gifts for their pals. The relationship culminates in a face-to-face meeting at Action Wildlife in Goshen in the spring.

This year, we have established a new partnership with Hanover School in Meriden. A new dimension to our communication is skyping. It is very exciting for our students to speak directly and see each other.

The program's objectives are to provide both sets of students with opportunities to practice emerging language skills and to have a cross-cultural experience, as well as to engage in direct community service. The program puts a very human face on the World Language Communication standard.

**Le Voyage au Quebec February 15-18 Har-Bur Middle School RSD #10**

By Holly Mathews, French Teacher at Har-Bur Middle School

The explorers of the frozen north (i.e., 32 8th graders who traveled to Quebec City!) returned home with many stories to tell of how winter is celebrated by our Canadian neighbors. We admired ice sculptures at the “Carnaval” and in the unique ice hotel. The culture of Quebec came alive at the festival, the museums, and the prison (which doubles as a library!). Many hours were spent outside in the chill (-14 C) dog sledding, dancing, and tobogganing. To refuel we dined on savory French inspired cooking, artisanal chocolate and maple treats, as well as a lumberjack dinner at a Sugar Shack.

Our thanks go out to all the participants for their wonderful spirit and enthusiasm.

**RSD #10 8th Graders Make Connections with Students Attending Collège Jacques Mauré in Castelginest, a Suburb of Toulouse**

by Holly Mathews, French Teacher at Har-Bur Middle School

Some motivated 8th grade students in French 1 have taken on the challenge of writing to students of English who live in France. The French students attend a college (middle school) called Collège Jacques Mauré in Castelginest, a suburb of Toulouse. The students write each other half in French and half in English so that each group has the opportunity to hone their language skills. The students are learning that their pen pals have similar interests and past times. They are also gaining confidence in their ability to express their ideas in French and to understand French as it is spoken by their peers!

**Lewis Mills High School ASL Classes Visit ASD (RSD #10)**

by Robin Mengual, ASL Teacher at Lewis S. Mills High School

Robin Mengual's ASL classes visited ASD February 6th. ASL 1 observed the Lower School classes (2nd grade-8th grade) while ASL 2 students shadowed their pen pals to their classes in the high school and had to interview a Deaf adult on their own. Nerves abound. We met all together for lunch. After lunch we played some games. We lined up alphabetically according to our first names. Then we played a game of telephone via sign language. A fun time was had by all. Consensus is "we can't wait till they visit Mills in May".
11th Annual World Languages Share Meeting

Scott Webster, Alisa Trachtenberg and Jo-Ann Cordes at the 11th Annual WL Share Meeting

For the past 11 years, several schools in Fairfield County and beyond have been organizing a World Language “SHARE” gathering at which teachers share instructional strategies. Each year, a different school in the area hosts the event. Last year’s meeting was hosted by Bethel High School and this year, Cider Mill Elementary School in Wilton hosted the meeting which took place on Thursday, March 21. These meetings are open to all Pre-k through university professors in both public and private schools.

One of the goals of this meeting is to provide teachers with some hands-on materials and ideas that they may be able to implement the very next day in their classes. This is also a fabulous forum for World Language teachers to meet others in their profession, share ideas and make connections. During the meeting, teachers take turns presenting an instructional strategy that has been especially successful for them. In addition, participants often come with handouts of favorite instructional strategy to share with other teachers.

For more information on how organize a World Language Share Meeting in your area, contact Alisa Trachtenberg.

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