Dear colleagues,

Reflecting upon 2017, it has been a great year for the Connecticut Council of Language Teachers! In June, the governor signed legislation officially enacting the Connecticut Seal of Biliteracy. This fall many school districts have begun to think about how to assess student proficiency. With the help of Lea Graner Kennedy and Jessica Haxhi, CT COLT has sponsored a few webinars about the implementation process. If you are interested in how to test students in your school for the Seal of Biliteracy, you can refer to the webinars, which are located on our website. The ultimate goal is to continue to provide students with high quality language instruction, which will help to build their own capacity. The easiest way to do this is by using the target language as the exclusive method of language instruction in the classroom. Although there may be early pushback from students and/or parents, it is well documented and studied that this helps to build student proficiency.

This year marked the 49th CT COLT Fall Conference. The conference offered a wide variety of sessions from some familiar presenters, and from some first-time presenters. I encourage everyone to attend a professional conference, whether it is our CT COLT conference, MaFLA, RIFLA, NECTFL, or ACTFL, each organization provides high-quality professional development to help strengthen our knowledge and abilities to teach in the target language. I was fortunate to also travel to ACTFL and represent Connecticut at the Assembly of Delegates, where we tried to help tackle the issue of teacher retention and recruitment. This national epidemic sees on average one-third of our world language teaching profession turn over each year. What can we do as a profession to help support those who enter the profession? What types of supports do we have for those who are struggling with classroom management, content, connecting with students or dealing with parents? It is the answers to these types of questions that will help to keep highly qualified teachers in our classrooms, preparing our students to live in our ever-changing global world.

This summer CT COLT will welcome Greg Duncan to Connecticut as a part of our Summer Institute series. This two-day workshop will focus on proficiency, and helping to move students up the proficiency scale. Consider joining us for this exciting workshop! The dates for the 2018 Summer Institute are June 20th and 21st in Stonington. Check our website for registration materials and updates.

Wishing you happy holiday season and all the best in the New Year!

Jimmy
Antillana del Valle

By Stacey Clark  
Grade 6 Spanish Teacher  
CREC Academy of Aerospace and Engineering

Hi! What is your name and what do you teach and/or what position do you have? School and grade level?

Me llamo Antillana del Valle. I teach Spanish at the CREC Academy of Aerospace and Engineering. This year I’m teaching Spanish 2 & 4 to grade levels 9 through 12th.

In what town do you teach? In what town do you live?

I live in Newington, but CREC AAE is a magnet school located in Windsor, CT. Our population is at least 52% from Hartford and the rest from the surrounding suburban areas.

What influenced you to become a World Language educator?

I always wanted to be a teacher, due to the fact that I come from a family of teachers. I did my student-teaching in Puerto Rico on drama education, but when I came to the states I became aware of the high need for World Language teachers. That’s when I decided to become a Spanish teacher and I have no regrets. Well, maybe one. I wish I could be proficient in Italian or Portuguese so I could teach those languages as well.

Your favorite travel destination?

I grew up in Puerto Rico, so I love to visit my family and go to the beach and the countryside. I have been to certain areas of Europe and in Latin America I have only been to the Yucatán Peninsula in México, Caracas in Venezuela, and Río de Janeiro. My favorite travel destination has been San Juan, Puerto Rico and Barcelona in Spain.

What do you think has helped you the most to keep your students successful?

The main resource is documentation such as IEP’s, 504’s, and a classroom pre-assessment at the beginning of the year. Second, I try to find fun and engaging activities. I rely a lot on my colleagues when it comes to the preparation of activities. I belong to a great team of Spanish teachers and I also had a great mentor in the previous school where I used to work.

What is your favorite ethnic food?

That is a hard question. Of course I like Latin-American food and I have a list: arroz chaufa with meat from Perú; Brazilian cuisine in general; Argentinian churrasco and their parrillada; from Cuba I love ropa vieja and rice with black beans; and from Puerto Rico shrimp stuffed mofongo with mojo (garlic sauce).

What are some of your hobbies and things you do in your free time?

During the school year I like to read articles from ACTFL and watch some series from Spain and UK television. I love El Ministerio del Tiempo from RTVe.com (Spain) and any British television detective or mystery series. Name one of them and I probably have watched it: Sherlock, Midsomer Murders, Vera, Inspector Lewis. Yep, I’m a huge fan.
Living in a very small town has allowed me to stay in my comfort zone. Before this year I had never been out of the country, let alone travel by myself. I have always stayed close to home and have been too scared to venture out on my own. That is why my time in Spain this past June was such a life changing experience.

I spent one month in Salamanca, Spain hoping to better my Spanish speaking skills and learn more about the Spanish culture. In Salamanca I studied Spanish at Colegio Delibes and lived with a host family. This experience exceeded all of my expectations and taught me many lifelong lessons. One of the most important lessons I learned was to love what is not normal. I learned this by forcing myself to let go of my own customs and embrace new ways of living. By doing this I felt as though I wasn’t only visiting Spain, but I was truly living there. To me this is the best way to learn because it is completely immersive, hands-on, exciting, and scary all at the same time. After being exposed to new ways of living and different ways of thinking, I believe that now I am able to view life in two different lenses.

My one month journey to Spain was full of many firsts. First time out of the country, first time having culture shock, first time being immersed in a language I am not fluent in, first time meeting people from different corners of the world, first time trying many new foods, and first time being truly independent. All of these firsts allowed me to grow and shape as a person and see the world differently. One of the most shocking aspects of life in Salamanca was the sun did not set until 10o’clock at night! This meant that I had plenty more time to explore the beautiful city before nightfall. I will truly miss each moment spent in Salamanca. From my host mother always being there to make me feel as comfortable as possible in her home, to walking around each and every street to see the beautiful architecture, to making so many new friends from China, Japan, France, England, Ireland, Brazil, and the United
States, to eating tapas almost every day after classes at Colegio Delibes ended. Not a moment was wasted - each moment spent overseas in Spain, had a positive impact on my life and who I am as a person.

My goal in life is to become a Spanish teacher. Now that I have studied abroad in a Spanish speaking country my inspiration to teach has grown. I want my future students to have the same change in environment as I’ve had, because I know it will allow them to blossom into better individuals.

This was the most rewarding experience I have had and I would like to thank CT COLT for allowing me to go on this amazing journey.

French Immersion in Provence
by Linda Zabor

For the third time in 5 years, I decided to take a leap of faith and sign on for a “stage intensif” in France with fellow francophones. As on previous trips to Lille, Bruxelles, and later Rennes, I was excited to immerse myself in the French culture with teachers, retired and working, and other francophones for two weeks and to explore the many aspects of AP curriculum, 'patrimoine, esthétique, défis mondiaux, famille and communauté, arts – this time with a slant towards the region of Provence. Each seminar was packed with incredible cultural information and our afternoon excursions as well as our dining were closely aligned to the themes.

A session on l’esthétique where we explored not only the birthplace of Cézanne was followed by a visit to a Sisley exhibit at l’Hôtel de Caumont Centre d’Art in Aix-en-Provence. Some of us also explored Cézanne’s atelier, the Musée Granet and the Fondation Vasarely and its world of optical illusions, the choreography of ballets like Blanche Neige by Angelin Preljocaj and his dancers in the Pavillon Noir of Aix, and the Festival d’Art in Aix.

A day of discussion about recent changes in education was followed by a visit to our intervenante, Virginie’s school - where we explored her classrooms and discussed the challenges and great rewards of being a directrice at an école municipale.

Another day found us having a political discussion at the Town Hall of Aix en Provence with the mayor. In addition to the many young couples we observed being married that day, we had a lively discussion with Madame la Maire about her politics and her thoughts on Emmanuel Macron and the importance of the métropole and the commune in local politics.

And the real pièce de résistance was a cooking class with Gilles – starting from our trip to the market where we visited Gilles’ favorite fromagerie, boucherie, boulangerie, and tasted the amazing fruits and vegetables for sale at an open air market – then a dégustation at a winery at the foot of Mont St Victoire – followed by several hours of intense preparation for our menu of Soupe au Pistou, beignets de fleurs de courgettes, tartes aux nectarines et une grande assiette de fromage.

The educational experience, the cultural rewards and the many friendships made were beyond any expectation that I could have had – visits to villages perchés, Gordes, Roussillon, the villages of the “Bouries”, Les Baux-de-Provence – walking in the ochre mines, having extraordinary guides in places like Arles and Aix who allowed us to feel the long history of this beautiful region back to Roman times. Trips to Cassis and Marseille, where we experienced the strength of the “mistral” first-hand while visiting Notre Dame de la Garde, walking in the fields of lavender at the Abbaye de Sélanque, tasting the famous “Cassis” of Provence and viewing state of art photography built into the wall of a cave at Carrière des Images.

The sounds of the “cigale” and the pure blue rainless sky have given me a new appreciation of Pagnol’s Provence and the many Aixois we met along the way with their “beng” will always remind me of Ugolin and César. The amazing Cavaillon melons, the “bastides” and “mas” along the way, the quarries of Bibémus and the “Jas de Bouffon”, the family home of Cézanne just a short walk from the hotel.
After 2 weeks in Provence, those of us who returned to Paris enjoyed a ride on the barge of Eric Vincent, moored next to the Eiffel Tower. As his wife prepared and served us dinner and we cruised the Seine, Eric serenaded us with song and guitar as the Eiffel Tower sparkled in the background. A perfect ending to an enriching cultural experience. Join us next year in Lyon for the next “stage” of the French Traveler. Visit the website French Travel or email MmeZabor@aol.com for more information.

Reflections on Presenting a Workshop at the 2017 Fall Conference
By Anna Koltypin, AITE

It is an honor and a pleasure to be presenting a third time at the COLT conference and to be celebrating an event that has been taking place at the Academy of Information Technology and Engineering (AITE), Stamford, Connecticut for the past 13 years. Teaching is a noble calling and a moral duty that helps provide an ‘art of living’ to our students. Connecticut Council of Language Teachers (COLT) helps support and inspire teachers as an organization.

As a world language teacher for the past 40 years, International education has provided a platform of knowledge about many country’s history, language, cultures, cuisine, environment and traditions. This knowledge can be a used as a tool and skill to better work effectively in our global and cross-cultural environment by helping us understand and respect each other and diversity. In an effort to celebrate this mission and vision, AITE hosts an International Evening annually. International Evening celebrates creativity, ethnicity and culture! The whole evening resonates our nation’s motto located on The Great Seal of the United States, E pluribus unum Latin for “Out of many, one” (alternatively translated as “One out of many” or “One from many”). In other words, AITE student body, composed of many different cultures, ethnicities and heritages all come together as one to celebrate and support each other!

The sense of unification and solidarity is robust, as International Evening assembles over 350 guests in attendance, of which 150 -200 are students representing countries all over the world.

The planning and organizing of the evening begins 3-4 months in advance and this is what keeps the entertainment program running smoothly and most enjoyably! A floor plan displayed in many areas helps guests easily maneuver and locate tables of countries they are most interested in and keep the flow of traffic moving in a conducive manner.

The entertainment program presented and organized by the student body which varies from choir singing, a piano recital, Mexican singing, Chinese singing, Russian dancing, Irish dancing, Bollywood dancing, Latin dancing, Israeli dancing, Zumba dancing is welcomed and celebrated.

Please see the below outline on an international evening of music, dance and food.

What to include
- A performance of music/dance.
- Floor plan.
- Decorations made by students - with an international theme.
- Costumes/dress - encourage guests to wear their national dress or something colourful.
• Ask parents to donate a dish as this will keep food costs down. Alternatively (or as well as), ask local restaurants for food donations in return for some low-key advertising.

**Costs/revenue**
• Sell tickets in advance and adopt a ticket-only policy on the door to help manage numbers and for security.
• Consider holding a raffle to help boost revenue.

**Involving parents and local performers**
• In addition to involving students, seek out talented parents.
• Guests contributing food need to ensure that they label and name each dish and list the ingredients used. This is particularly important for foods that commonly cause allergies or dishes containing meat.
• Your event could include performances from local musicians and dance schools.
• Your local paper is a good place to source dance troupes and musicians that may be willing to support your event.

**Publicity**
• Publicize the event well in advance on posters, notice boards, newsletters and via school and PTA websites.
• Prepare and submit a media release and issue this to the local paper and radio station.

For those who would like a copy of the “You Can Do IT” International Evening presentation please contact me at Anna Koltypin akoltypin@aitestamford.org.

**Methods, Materials, & Resources**

**Feedback**

By Lea Graner Kennedy
lgraner@stoningtonschools.org

As educators, we know how crucial feedback is for students to make proficiency gains because feedback is both motivating and an important tool to promote learning. For this reason, one of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Core Practices is “Provide feedback in speech and in writing on various learning tasks.”

Questions often arise regarding the types and the frequency of feedback that students need to gain proficiency. This article focuses on providing insights and strategies that answer both questions, because feedback is an area where we can all work smarter – not harder – to deliver improved learner performance.

• The first and most important aspect of feedback is to focus on the student’s zone of proximal development (ZPD).

Channeling the work of the famous developmental psychologist Lev Vygotsky has been one of the most important lessons that I have learned with regards to feedback. In a nutshell, Vygotsky’s ZPD tells teachers only to give learner feedback that will bring students up to the next level. Challenge the learner to promote growth, but not be too difficult for the learner to absorb.

As language teachers, we often forget the small steps we took on our own proficiency journeys and feel the need to give more feedback in speech and in writing than the learners can possibly utilize. This tendency gives us more work, with little or no student gains. In fact, overloading the learner with feedback that is too far beyond their actual level, not within their zone of potential growth or ZPD, is demotivating for students. Limiting our feedback to that which is in their zone is a double win; less work for the teacher and more comprehensible input for the student.

When teachers hear errors in speech, it is important resist the temptation to give students more feedback than they can process. Errors are a critical part of creating with language and moving through the intermediate level of proficiency.

For language teachers, perhaps it is better to think of an area where we ourselves are trying to learn a new skill, such as athletics or music. It is only when we think about an area where we view ourselves as a novice or intermediate that we become clear on the strategies we need as learners to progress.

There are several documents and rubrics that make providing feedback easier to deliver to students because they provide a common language to use in discussions about how to move up the proficiency scale, such as the Can-Do Statements, AAPPL rubrics or Feedback Rubrics from Level Up Language. These tools help students and teachers to become mindful of their actual proficiency level and set goals based on their potential growth level.

Once we begin to internalize the lessons of Vygotsky, we give only the feedback that will help students improve their output. The ACTFL’s Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages (AAPPL) and Level Up Language rubrics are particularly helpful in giving efficient ways to provide feedback to students because the strategies are clear and specific to promote growth. Students can use the rubrics for self-
assessment and for peer-assessment as well, because they provide an easy way to highlight measurable strategies needed for growth.

- When considering feedback, we must consider both the variety of feedback we give to our students and the role the teacher plays in giving feedback within the classroom setting.

When the teacher is a facilitator, students have more opportunities to use the language for authentic purposes in all three modes – presentational, interpretive and the interpersonal. In “Enacting the Work of Language Instruction: High Leverage Teaching Practices” by Eileen Glisan and Rick Donato, the research behind each of the current Core Practices is explained clearly for teachers. They share the importance of teachers creating a “discourse community,” which is an interactional space where students have opportunities to negotiate meaning in authentic ways.

In this interactional space, teachers will need to consider how to vary their oral feedback to improve performance. There are six types of corrective feedback that we need to have in our toolbox: explicit correction, recasts, clarification requests, metalinguistic feedback, elicitation and Repetition.

Knowing that we have a choice of options to provide our students is extremely powerful. This is a brief description of the types:

**6 Types of Corrective FEEDBACK: A Rainbow of Opportunities**

- ** Explicit correction**: teacher says the student was incorrect and then provides correction.
- **Recast**: teacher does not say that the student was incorrect, but rather restates the student’s statement without error.
- **Clarification request**: teacher says “I don’t understand,” to let learner that he was not understood.
- **Metalinguistic Clues**: teacher asks a question about how the learner should construct a statement without giving correct answer.
- **Elicitation**: teacher directly elicits correct answer from the student by restating just up to the point of the error.
- **Repetition**: teacher repeats the student’s error to draw their attention to it.

(Adapted from Tedick and Gortari)

All corrective feedback is used to prompt the learner to notice the error and try to fix it. The research about how to vary the use of these types of feedback is important if we are looking at uptake, the ability for the student to process the learning and self-correct.

In the book by Glisan and Donato, research shows that teachers use recast 55 percent of the time – more than the other types of feedback – however, it is the least effective. By contrast, the most effective corrective feedback leading to student uptake is elicitation. This research prompts teachers to become cognizant of the types of feedback they are providing to students.

Their book illustrates the importance of teachers tapping the wide range of opportunities to promote uptake and being mindful about varying our types of feedback. For students to internalize the feedback we provide for them, they need to receive varied feedback that is within their potential learning area.

Our goal as language teachers is to motivate students to make gains in proficiency. To that end, we should remember errors are critical to their growth and that our focus on perfectionism can stunt their progress. We want the students to commit to risk-taking and be open to elaborating in the target language, while also encouraging reflection on feedback received.

As Elon Musk said in an interview with Mashable, “It’s very important to have a feedback loop, where you’re constantly thinking about what you’ve done and how you could be doing it better. I think that’s the single best piece of advice: constantly think about how you could be doing things better and questioning yourself.”

Building a discourse community, with ample opportunities for input and timely feedback on output, is crucial to creating the feedback loop.

We are the experts in the language arena. But when we step into a different arena, such as learning a new instrument or a sport, we then become much more empathetic to the needs of giving feedback within the zone of proximal development and of providing plenty of opportunities for students to receive comprehensible input before asking them to provide output. It would be like us taking voice lessons with Beyoncé and getting feedback on how to win a Grammy when we are mere novice high students.

As we step back in the language arena this year, we can move our novice students forward by providing appropriate feedback and establishing a discourse community. By guiding our learners to reach the desired learning targets with timely and varied feedback, based on their current proficiency level, we can help them to advance on their path to proficiency.
Why is teaching in the target language so important?

By Marisa Keen & Pat Mendoza, (Middlesex Middle School, Darien, CT)

Editor’s note: Marisa Keen and Pat Mendoza were participants in the Teaching for Proficiency Institute in Stonington, Connecticut, with Thomas Sauer in June. They wrote this piece as part of their work during the two days.

Is it easier to explain something in English? Is it faster?

Yes. But this is the easy way out and we’re doing it at the expense of our students’ learning. More and more studies are showing the importance of staying in the target language 90+ percent of the time. Our job as World Language teachers is not to teach about the target language. It is to teach in the target language.

During the Teaching for Proficiency conference we were able to gather some helpful tips and ideas for fellow teachers to help them stay in the target language.

• First, we have to plan carefully when to speak English, if necessary. We also have to be willing to struggle and persevere in the target language even if it takes longer to teach the material. Your efforts will pay off in the end. Instruction may be challenging at times but it’s important to push through it.

• As a department set a goal to increase target language use.

• It’s also important to extend the language learning beyond the classroom. Try to stay in the target language when you meet your students in the hallways or cafeteria, etc.

• Using visuals, gestures, cognates, repeating, redirecting in the target language, breaking-down new words, writing them on the board, and simplifying are all strategies that help to keep students listening and thinking in the target language. Use the vocabulary that the students already know.

• Front-load the year by providing students with frequently used questions and comments in the target language and by posting them in the classroom if possible.

• During input, give students opportunities to express understanding without requiring them to produce newly acquired vocabulary in the target language. Students need processing time. You can check for comprehension using activities such as thumbs up/thumbs down, matching, drawing, etc. Keep activities short - no more than five minutes per activity for younger students.

MORE INFO ...

For more research on providing oral feedback, read: “Enacting the Work of Language Instruction: High-Leverage Teaching Practices” by Eileen Glisan and Richard Donato (Appendix A, page 157)

For a webinar with more specific strategies to improve learner performance, watch this Connecticut Leadership Initiative for Language Learning video with Frank Troyan.

For more webinars about core practices from the Connecticut Leadership Initiative for Language Learning, visit the initiative’s website.
Finally, circumlocution is key - not only for you as the teacher, but also for the students. They need to learn how to deliver a message even when they don’t know all the words they want to say. The teacher needs to specifically instruct students how to circumlocute. The teacher also needs to wait patiently while each student tries to deliver a message. It’s important to encourage them every step of the way.

**Build Foreign Language Proficiency with Language Ladders**

By Joshua Cabral

This post originally appeared on [https://wlclassroom.com/2012/02/06/using-language-ladders-in-the-foreign-language-classroom/](https://wlclassroom.com/2012/02/06/using-language-ladders-in-the-foreign-language-classroom/) and was shared with the permission of the author.

Language Ladders are words or phrases that are linked together because of a common function or meaning. For example, different words or phrases to express degrees of liking or not liking something. These lists work in a similar way to Functional Chunks of Language, but in this case there is the element of degree, variety and choice.

- J’adore (I love)
- J’aime beaucoup (I like a lot)
- J’aime (I like)
- J’aime assez (I kind of like)
- J’aime un peu (I like a little)
- Je n’aime pas (I don’t like)
- Je n’aime pas du tout (I don’t like at all)

Whereas with early learners the functional chunks would have only one way of saying something, language ladders offer various possibilities and students can choose from among the options depending on how they feel about a topic or how formal or informal they should be with the language that they are using.

Language Ladders offer students an opportunity to personalize their language and is a very effective language tool when students are chunking together language to create phrases as they progress through the novice levels of proficiency.

Here is another example of a Language Ladder that students can access to add the detail of frequency to their sentences and phrases:

- siempre (always)
- casi siempre (almost always)
- a menudo (often)
- de vez en cuando (every once in a while, from time to time)
- raramente (rarely)
- casi nunca (almost never)
- nunca, jamás (never)

You can also have groups of students create these language ladders and look up the expressions on their own. You’ll be surprised at what topics they come up with. This is a language ladder that my students created to express “I’m sorry”:

- pardon (sorry, no big deal)
- excuse-moi (excuse me, informal)
- excusez-moi (excuse me, formal)
- désolé (sorry)
- je suis désolé (I’m sorry)
- je suis vraiment désolé (I’m really sorry)
- je suis sincèrement désolé (I’m sincerely sorry)
- je suis navré (my condolences)

Post these types of language ladders around your classroom for students to access when speaking and writing. You will soon see that students are personalizing their language more often and speaking and writing with more detailed output.

**Staying in the Target Language Part 4- Presentational Speaking and Writing Activities**

Jessica Haxhi, Supervisor of World Languages, New Haven Public Schools

ACTFL recommends using the target language 90% or more of the time during classroom instruction ([https://www.actfl.org/news/position-statements/use-the-target-language-in-the-classroom](https://www.actfl.org/news/position-statements/use-the-target-language-in-the-classroom)). In Part 1 of this series, we discussed the use of a “Target Language Sign” as a way to prompt ourselves to stay in the target language. In Part 2, we looked at the Interpretive Mode of Communication. In Part 3, we discussed Interpersonal Speaking. This issue, we will focus on the Presentational Mode.

- Part 2: [www.ctcolt.org/pdfs/NLSpring2017.pdf#TargetLanguage](http://www.ctcolt.org/pdfs/NLSpring2017.pdf#TargetLanguage)
- Part 3: [www.ctcolt.org/pdfs/NLSummer2017.pdf#TargetLanguage](http://www.ctcolt.org/pdfs/NLSummer2017.pdf#TargetLanguage)
The Presentational Mode refers to spoken or written communication that is meant for an audience or another person to read/view/hear, and might be practiced, drafted, and/or memorized. Examples include speeches, presentations, scripted dialogues, performed songs, written poems, essays, letters, postcards, and projects.

The Presentational Mode offers both opportunities and pitfalls. Before the “Three Modes of Communication” were presented in the national Standards for Language Learning (1996) and later the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages (2015), many of us had fallen into the trap of using Presentational Writing and Speaking as our forms of assessment almost exclusively. As teachers, it was easy to believe that a memorized dialogue demonstrated conversational skills and a drafted essay demonstrated writing skills; however, we didn’t really know how students would do in spontaneous communication situations – interpersonal situations – which, ironically, were the skills that most students wanted to develop in language classes.

As the Standards and experience have now shown us, high-quality assessment, instruction, and curriculum design for world languages should include all three Modes of Communication, as does proficiency in the real-world. Before work, we might watch a newscast, read an article, or listen to a podcast (interpretive), then arrive at work and discuss the topic with a friend (interpersonal), and then draft an email recommending that newscast, podcast or article to a another colleague (presentational).

As teachers, it is helpful to plan for and consider the Three Modes individually in order to make sure we are providing students with experiences and practice in each. Eventually, however, in the real-world, students will move seamlessly between the modes, in both their native language and the target language, as in the example above.

If we are cognizant of the potential pitfalls of Presentational Mode, we can focus on its many benefits. Students often excel in the Presentational Mode because their affective filter is lowered when they have time to draft, revise, prepare, and/or memorize. The Presentational Mode offers opportunities for student choice and creativity, thereby increasing motivation and engagement. Especially in the Novice Level, but also throughout the language learning process, memorization of songs, dialogues, speeches, and poems (Poetry Contest!) in the Presentational Mode help students to internalize structures, cultural expressions, and pronunciation – often before they understand every word they are saying (and that’s okay!).

PLANNING for PRESENTATIONAL

In both Interpersonal and Presentational Modes, it is essential to visualize and “act out” what you want students to do in order to determine the vocabulary and structures they will need to be successful at the task. For example, you might think “I want students to give a presentation about their dream home in the target language.” If you sit with a piece of paper or voice recording and actually script or act out yourself trying to talk about your dream home, you will find that students will want to talk about types of homes, rooms, numbers of rooms, sizes of rooms, fancy furniture, outdoor amenities, colors, and possibly design styles. They will need functions such as describing using “it will have” or “I want it to have” and “it will be” or “I want it to be.” This visualization helps you to brainstorm all of the input you will need to provide throughout the unit in order for students to give you high-quality output without having to constantly say “Miss, how do you say ______ in the target language?”

INPUT before OUTPUT

In order to avoid those constant requests for translation as students work on Presentational tasks, we must plan for plenty of INPUT in the types of phrases, sentences, or paragraphs that we want them to be able to produce. Here are some examples:

Family Description: If your goal is for students to write simple sentences about their family, then give them interpretive tasks where they are listening to, watching videos, or reading sentences and/or paragraphs about families. Students should have opportunities to interact with and interpret what they are reading/hearing/viewing by filling out graphic organizers, answering comprehension questions, identifying matching pictures, drawing what they hear, listening for particular details, etc. Then, when you ask them to write about families, they will have a bank of listening/reading memory from which to create sentences.

Written and Performed Dialogue: If your goal is for students to write and perform a skit, then they need to see, hear, and read similar skits or dialogues throughout the unit. Visualize what students might want to say in their skit first. Then,
incorporate questions during your interpersonal tasks that mirror questions you would want them to include in their skits. Show videos of people having similar conversations (they don’t have to be exact) and ask comprehension questions about the skits. Expose students to readings that include similar concepts or interesting expressions that might occur in the skit. Give sentence starters that scaffold writing of sentences that might occur in the skit, little-by-little. Then, when you give directions for the skit, students will be ready to write.

Memorized Poem: If your goal is for students to memorize a poem for the CT COLT Poetry Contest or the CT COLT Rhyme Celebration, practice the poem every day during your daily routine, using choral response at first (you say a line—they repeat the line), then whole-group recitation while reading the words, then whole-group memorized recitation (no words!), then student volunteers to recite.

Scaffolds to OUTPUT

When students have had plenty of INPUT, we can also provide scaffolds to assist them in presentational mode. The lower the proficiency level, the more students will need these scaffolds. Here are some examples:

Picture dictionary: All students benefit from the use of visuals to support target language learning. Vocabulary lists force students to switch back to English when preparing their presentational task. A picture dictionary (target language words with corresponding pictures) allows students to process what they are doing all in the target language. Students can help to create their own picture dictionaries or the teacher can provide them. The teacher should collect or have students save their picture dictionaries for use EVERY class after they make them. For words that are difficult to represent by pictures, make a picture that is close, add a “sneaky English” label to it when you introduce the pictures and eventually remove the English label. Students will continue to attach that meaning to the picture.

Sentence starters: Students can combine their picture dictionaries with sentence starters in order to create a variety of sentences. For example, if they have the sentence starters “I like___. I don’t like___. I love____” and a picture dictionary with foods or sports (or anything!), they can create many sentences. In higher level classes, they might have a sentence starter such as “I would like to try _____ because ____” with two sets of picture dictionaries for words appropriate to the two blanks (ex. I would like to try learning Japanese because I like Japanese food.”)

Recorded versions to memorize: If your presentational task is for students to memorize something and they are struggling, provide them with a recorded version to listen to at home. If this is a song or poem, it’s easy to do so. If it is a dialogue they are supposed to perform, let them record in class as they read the dialogue with a partner and then encourage them to listen to it at home without looking at the words.

Whole-Class Project as Example: If you would like students to produce a project, one way to scaffold it is to create a class version of the project whole-group as a model. For example, if you want students to create an advertisement for a restaurant, have the class brainstorm each of the parts of the advertisement and film it whole-group, with linguistic and logistical assistance by you. When they are in groups or pairs ready to make their own, they can refer to the whole-group model as they think about content and structure.

Guided Steps to Final Draft: If you would like students to produce a large project, divide the task into logical sections. Teach the relevant content for each section and then have students produce only that section. Then move to the next section. For example, if students are creating a Prezi about their favorite vacation, break the segments up into “places, foods, activities, people.” Teach about each section by showing your own personal examples, reviewing vocabulary, and giving lots of input. Then, have students make their slide about that section. The first slide might have a picture of all of the places they will go on a dream vacation. Students will narrate, “I want to go to Florida, and Disney, and Universal Studios. I love amusement parks.” Then, move on to teaching about the foods they might have eaten on vacation, etc. When you have finished all segments, give students ample
time to practice giving their entire presentations, thereby reviewing your whole unit!

**RUBRICS and Scoring Presentational Tasks**

Presentational Tasks lend themselves very well to rubric scoring. This is also the time when we can include accuracy as a measure. Students understand that written projects such as brochures, letters, essays and PowerPoint slides must have good spelling, grammar, and often complete sentences. Spoken tasks must have good enough pronunciation to be understood, and grammar is important if you are creating something that will be given to an audience. It makes sense!

Other rubric criteria for presentational tasks might include the following: Vocabulary Use (the extent of details), Comprehensibility, and even Impact (use of design, color, neatness, etc.). The introduction of rubrics is a time when some English may be necessary, but you can quickly move back into the target language by showing examples of past student work and asking students to vote on rubric scores. For oral tasks, you can act out presentations yourself (multiple times, at varying levels), and ask students to score you based on the rubric and discuss those scores whole-group.

**ENGAGEMENT with Presentational Tasks**

What will you do with presentational tasks when they are finished, created, or performed? Here are some ideas:

**Good**: Have students participate in scoring each other using one criteria of the rubric. Simply pass out small slips of paper for each item or student. Have an envelope labeled with that students’ name. After the student performs or after students read that student’s work, collect the little slips of paper into the envelope, seal it, and staple it to the rubric you have filled out for the student. The student gets an envelope full of peer scores to open and you don’t even have to tally them!

**Better**: Have students make their presentation available to you through recording or sharing somehow on the internet. You can score at your leisure and the rest of the students don’t have to sit through 20 presentations. This works best when your presentations are all very similar. You could ask for volunteers who want their presentations shared with the class, or allow students to share or view the presentations they choose via Google drive or another sharing site.

**Best**: Find native speakers to receive the presentational tasks and respond in some way (or score)! You can use the fact that native speakers will receive the product as a motivator during the entire creation process.

Note: If you are going to have students listen to each other’s presentations and fill out some kind of tally chart, be sure you follow up on it by going over it at the end of the presentations and rewarding those who have it all filled out. Otherwise, students will quickly learn that it isn’t worth doing all that listening work.

With plenty of input, scaffolding, and planning, Presentational Mode tasks are a time when students can stay entirely in the target language without frustration or nervousness. Let’s maximize this opportunity!

**Fall Conference Wrap-Up: Teachers Continue to Adopt a CAN-DO Mindset**

By Lisa Urso, Student Events Coordinator

Over the past few years, world language teachers across the country have been hearing the expression “can-do.” Can-Do Mindset. Can-Do Statements. But what exactly does CAN-DO mean? Connecticut world language teachers unpacked this question at the CT-COLT Annual Fall Conference October 23rd.

According to keynote speaker Alyssa Villareal, a Can-Do mindset is more than just a document issued by ACTFL. Mindset affects learning, and a growth mindset is critical to language learning.

“I hope to validate some of your thinking, I hope to challenge some of your thinking, and I will probably make you uncomfortable at some point,” stated Villareal in her opening remarks. “There are lots of things going on in our world today, but we have to think about how [our views] affect what is going on in our classroom.

“We can’t affect how kids come to us. We receive them as they are. If we approach [where kids are] with a growth mindset, then it’s not a deficit; it’s really an opportunity to grow. It does take some courageous conversations, and it takes teachers to be courageous first and foremost, because we have to identify who we are and what we believe in the classroom before we start working with kids.”
Villareal asked the audience if Michael Jordan was born with the talent of being a basketball player, or if he had to work at it. Some believed that Jordan had natural talent. However, if this was true, why was he rejected six times from his school basketball team?

Teachers were challenged about their thinking throughout the keynote. As educators, we often talk about fixed versus growth mindset with our students, but how often do we turn the lens on ourselves? How do we change our mindset with some of our students with respect to learning languages?

The difference, according to Villareal, is the willingness to fail. It is important to cultivate an environment where it is okay to make a mistake. This is where true learning and growing occurs. “It’s not about being born with capacity, it’s about working towards it,” she argues.

In addition to thinking about concrete, tangible learning targets that we set for our students, Villareal stated that there were three things that an educator needs to be conscious of when helping kids reach their goals:

- **Personal biases:** These are often unconscious, and we were raised with them. Our experiences affect our teaching.
- **Deficit thinking, and how it affects our classroom:** This is the opposite of the Can-Do Mindset. How do kids’ experiences affect their classroom performance? How do we, as educators, help them overcome some of their difficulties?
- **Binary thinking:** Right or wrong. Good or bad. Either or. Proficiency or grammar. This structure of two-way thinking is “not how the world works.”

So how do we interrupt the cycle? Villareal offered these suggestions:

- **The Proficiency Scale:** ACTFL’s proficiency scale is subjective, and specifies exactly what a learner needs to do in order to advance.
- **Principles of Proficiency:** How do we encourage students to develop proficiency? How do these principles drive what we do?

Villareal’s keynote definitely left some strong impressions on those attending, particularly with respect to her thoughts about the Path to Proficiency. Students are not the only ones who are on this path; the teachers are, too! With this in mind, here are some things to consider:

- How do we, as teachers, use our own personal journey to encourage kids to move up the path?
- What does this look like in the classroom?
- How do we build a classroom culture that is not only safe to take chances and make mistakes, but to help them feel SAFE and free from judgment?

I was fortunate to attend several workshops that helped extend this theme of the Can-Do Mindset in many different ways. Rachael Cassella and Elizabeth Sawyer, Spanish teachers at Valley Regional High School in Deep River, presented a workshop that helped teachers find authentic resources to use in their classroom. Juan Vasquez-Caballero, Spanish teacher at Lyme Old Lyme High School, delivered a presentation about how he incorporated growth mindset in his classes.

One of the aspects that teachers enjoy about the Fall Conference is the fact that they can use some of what they learned in the classroom the next day. Several teachers I talked to complimented the Fall Conference committee’s work on putting together the workshops, recruiting presenters, and structuring the day overall.

Special thanks needs to be extended to our Fall Conference Co-Chairs, Linda Dalpe and Vincenza Mazzone McNulty, as well as Workshop Coordinator, Jimmy Wildman, for their leadership in assembling this year’s event.

**Join us at the CT COLT Rhyme Celebration!**

By Kate Krotzer and Kristen Tagg

The twenty-seventh annual CT COLT Rhyme Celebration will be held on Thursday, April 5th, 2018. This year’s hosts are Farmington Public Schools, led by elementary Spanish teacher Kristen Tagg. The event will take place at Farmington High School at 5:00 P.M.

The Rhyme Celebration is an opportunity for children from kindergarten to sixth grade to promote an early love for world
languages. Participants represent approximately 20 towns, over 10 school districts, and about 35 schools (both public and private) from around the state. Last year, there were 220 student participants with over 30 world language teachers and world language administrators supporting the children in their recitations. This early language learning event is unique to our state and we are fortunate to be able to showcase the many languages our Connecticut children learn and speak with enthusiasm at a young age.

This year’s theme is “A Rainbow of Rhymes.” The rhymes, songs, poems and tongue twisters are chosen by the world language teachers and are presented by students with costumes and props. The students and teachers practice for months in order to memorize and prepare their recitations. Some groups perform in world languages learned in school, while other performances represent languages learned at home. Last year, we had rhymes and poems in Albanian, Chinese, Farsi, French, German, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Tamil, and Telegu. Each elementary student receives a certificate of participation printed in the language of the recitation, an illustrated souvenir program booklet (with all of the rhymes), a Rhyme Celebration button designed by a student, and a “goody bag.”

The CT COLT Rhyme Celebration Chair, Kate Krotzer, believes that children who attend the Rhyme Celebration develop their 21st Century Skills by building their language skills and their appreciation of world cultures. We are excited to have children come to the celebration and perform on stage in languages other than their own because they not only develop communicative skills, but also gain understanding of language diversity.

Registration is now open for this event. We would love to have your teachers and students attend and participate in this event. Registration forms and information are available at www.ctcolt.org. Please contact the Rhyme Celebration chair, Kate Krotzer with any questions at kate.krotzer@gmail.com.

Organizational News

News from the AATF-CT Chapter

- The AATF CT webinar series offered by Edouard Smith continues again this year and is available to all AATF members across the country. Four webinars have already been broadcast and links to the recorded webinars are at www.aatfct.org.
- Google Classroom: Refresher and New Features
- Lingro.com: The Best Online Dictionary You’re Not Using Enough
- Tech Tips for a More Efficient Classroom
- earpod: Engage and Assess Students in Real Time

Please watch the site for upcoming topics.

- French teacher colleagues joined together for the fourth annual “Rentrée Gathering” at The Library Wine Bar and Bistro in Wallingford on Sept. 26th. Cocktails, wine, and good times flowed as teachers enjoyed delicious homemade pizzas, apps, and conversation. Jacqueline Munk was the first recipient of the “Vedette d’Honneur de l’AATF CT” as she has been incredibly active in chapter activities. On t’aime trop, Jacqueline.
- AATF CT board members staffed a busy, heavily visited booth and greeted attendees of the Connecticut Organization of Language Teachers’ annual Conference in October. Our president, Jon Shee, also gave a workshop titled “How to ‘Blend’ Your WL Class: Move Some Content Online”.
- Professor J. Vincent Morrissette hosted a fabulous fall meeting and atelier at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield on Oct. 25th, 2017. M. Morrissette, also co-author of the recently published book "Je me souviens," talked about his upbringing in Québec that was saturated with "le parler québécois" and he presented numerous fun examples of typical québécois words and expressions and their origins.
- For National French Week, students at St. Luke’s School in New Canaan created and publicly showcased 2 dozen posters featuring francophone African countries. They also created large, professionally-printed word clouds of cognates illustrating that an English speaker can easily recognize up to 15,000 French words.
- Tip Swap for teachers at the end of January.
- A French Night at the Sound Tigers on February 2, 2018 for students, parents and teachers.
- AATF-Connecticut is on Twitter! Follow us at https://twitter.com/aatfct
- By Honore Radshaw Secretary AATF-CT chapter, November 12, 2017.
Officers/Executive Committee

President
JAMES WILDMAN (2018)
wildmanj@glastonburyus.org
Glastonbury High School

Vice-President/President-Elect
LEA GRANER KENNEDY (2018)
lkennedy@stoningtonschools.org
Stonington Public Schools

Treasurer
PAUL M. ST. LOUIS (2018)
275 Cedar Swamp Road, Monson, MA 01057-9303
pmsaint1946@comcast.net

Recording Secretary
JOHN ROOK (2018)
rookj@glastonburyus.org

Corresponding Secretary
AMANDA ROBUSTELLI-PRICE (2018)
amandarobustelli@gmail.com

Immediate Past President
ELIZABETH LAPMAN (2018)
lapmane@ctcolt.org

Ex-Officio Director/Director-At-Large
University Liaison
LINDA L. DALPE
Quinnipiac University
lindald001@aol.com

Social Media Specialist
STACEY CLARK
clarks@ctcolt.org

Ex-Officio Director/Director-At-Large
Advocacy (2018)
MAUREEN LAMB
Westminster School
latintechtools@gmail.com

Seal of Biliteracy (2018)
JESSICA HAXHI
New Haven Public Schools
haxhii@ctcolt.org

Membership (2018)
CHRISTINA VAZQUEZ MAURICIO
Darien Public Schools
cmauricio@darienps.org

ALLYSON POWER
Darien Public Schools
apower@darienps.org

CT LILL (2018)
LEA GRANER KENNEDY
lkennedy@stoningtonschools.org

Teacher of the Year (2018)
MATT MANGINO
mmangino@wethersfield.me

Summer Institute (2018)
AMANDA ROBUSTELLI-PRICE
amandarobustelli@gmail.com

Community and Business Outreach (2018)
OPEN

Student Events (2018)
LISA URSO
ursol@ctcolt.org

Hospitality (2018)
OPEN

Organizational Directors

ACTR
JOHN ROOK
rookj@glastonburyus.org

Alliance Française
BETTY PERLOT

CAPELL
KAREN STOJ
kstoj@swindsor.k12.ct.us

CITA
GIANCARLO DESEFANIS
gdsef@quinnipiac.edu

CLASS
CAROL CHEN-LIN
cchenlin@choate.edu

CLASSCONN
MAUREEN LAMB
latintechtools@gmail.com

CONNTESOL
OPEN

AATF-CT
BRIGITTE LANGE (brigitte@snet.net)

CT-AATG
OPEN

CT-AATSP
AILEEN DEVER, Ph.D.
Aileen.Dever@quinnipiac.edu
Quinnipiac University, College of Liberal Arts

NADSFL
LEA GRANER KENNEDY
lkennedy@stoningtonschools.org
Stonington Public Schools

NNELL
KATE KROTZER
krotzerk@glastonburyus.org
Glastonbury Public Schools
Rhyme Celebration
April 5, 2018 - Farmington High School
Theme: A Rainbow of Rhymes

Poetry Recitation Contest
April 26, 2018 - Southington High School
Deadline for Registration: February 19, 2018

50th CT COLT Fall Conference
October 22, 2018
Radisson Hotel Cromwell

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Newsletter Submissions
Deadline for next newsletter: March 1, 2018
Help us keep our membership records updated!
If you have moved or had a name change, please fill out the Information update form at www.ctcolt.org/pages/information_update_form.asp.