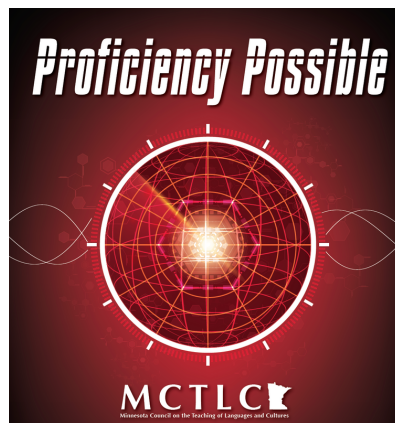


*Our Mission is to Advance the Teaching of Languages and Cultures in Minnesota*

## MCTLC Proficiency Possible: **Virtual** Conference



It's official - our fall conference will be a fully virtual event! It will be a new conference experience, for sure, but one that you do not want to miss: interactive, more inclusive than ever, and full of community building opportunities all while ensuring new perspectives and strategies to strengthen your teaching practice. New features include:

- NEW dates - **November 7-8, 2020**
- NEW prices
  - **\$65 Early Bird registration until October 6**
  - \$55 MCTLC Conference Presenters
  - **\$45 Immigrant, Black, Indigenous, People of Color, Teachers with Tier 2 licenses, First year teachers**
  - \$20 Future Educators
- NEW conference strand - Immigrant & BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) Voices and Narratives
- 2 NEW invited presenters - Abelardo Almazán-Vázquez & Kia London

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***REGISTER TODAY!***

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# A message from the President



Dear colleagues:

This has been an unprecedented year. I have watched you rise above a pandemic to innovatively teach your students from a distance. I have watched you come together as a community to stand as allies in support of those who are marginalized in our communities. And right now, I'm watching you prepare to return to work amidst growing anxiety over safety concerns. Teachers - I see you, I hear you, YOU MATTER. And that is why, together with the MCTLC Board, I want to share how we are intentionally fulfilling our 2020 mission & vision:

- **Access and Affordability:** Our MCTLC Fall Conference will be a fully virtual experience with synchronous and asynchronous learning. We are proud to offer our conference at a significantly reduced price. Plan to join us on our NEW dates - **November 7 & 8** - and get access to all sessions & workshops for a full year.
- **Creating space for marginalized voices:** We are so proud to partner with Abelardo Almazán-Vázquez, an immigrant Spanish teacher in Vermont, to host the first ever series of sessions dedicated to the voices & narratives of immigrants and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). Join Abelardo & his colleagues **Kia London, Nelly Ossia, Marta Silva Serrano**, and **Francoise Thenoux** as they share their powerful stories, struggles, & triumphs of how they have been actively disrupting the space to ensure that immigrants and BIPOC get a seat at the table.
- **Supporting social emotional needs:** We have watched so many of you struggle with grief, trauma, & anxiety in this pandemic. To support your needs, we are partnering with the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation to offer **(MC)TLC for the Heart & Mind**, a virtual support group for MCTLC members. Virtually join us **August 27 at 7pm** for a night to connect, comfort, and heal as a world language community as we mentally and physically prepare to return to work this fall.

I want to thank each MCTLC Board member for their creativity & unending compassion for our Minnesota world language educators. It takes a village, & I am so proud to be a part of this one. We look forward to supporting your heart, creating space for all narratives, & connecting with each & every one of you.

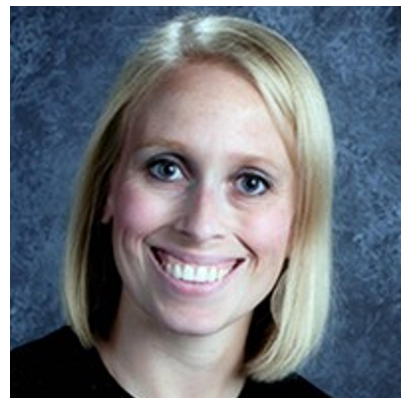
In solidarity,

Megan Budke, 2020 MCTLC President

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## In Memory of Mandy Marek

Our World Language and Heritage Spanish teaching community has lost a bright light and powerful educator. Mandy Marek, teacher at West Junior High in Shakopee, lost her courageous battle with metastatic breast cancer on August 9, 2020. Mandy grew up in Apple Valley, MN graduating from Eastview High School in 2001, receiving a B.A. from the College of Saint Benedict in 2005 and an M.A. from the University of St. Thomas in 2014. In 2006, she began teaching English and Spanish for Native Speakers in Shakopee Schools and she was a semifinalist for Minnesota Teacher of the Year in 2013. MCTL members might remember her from her participation in our 2010 Fall Conference's "Heritage Teaching Panel of Experts". Mandy was a pioneer in Heritage Spanish education in Minnesota. Part of a grass roots effort in her school, she created and taught their first 9th grade course, which would later grow into a strong high school program as well. Using her background in teaching language arts and her passion for the Spanish language and the cultures in which it is spoken, Mandy developed meaningful curriculum from quality resources and thorough research. She helped her students find their voice and explore their identities. She was a staunch advocate for them and empowered them to reach for their dreams. I know how much that she loved them and they loved her! I am honored to call her "amiga" and "colega".



*---Liz Perona, Eastview High School, Spanish teacher*

Read more about Mandy:

["Doubling up on language skills in Shakopee"](#) - Star Tribune article featuring Mandy's work

["Beloved Shakopee West Middle School teacher dies of cancer"](#) - SWNewsMedia article

[Obituary in Star Tribune](#)

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## (MC)TLC for the Heart & Mind

Join our virtual support group to actively process anxieties and fears about this upcoming school year. Connect and discuss with other Minnesota world language educators. Learn strategies to support your mental health this upcoming school year.



*MCTLC is proud to partner with the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation to provide this **free** event for MCTLC members.*



*Register here*



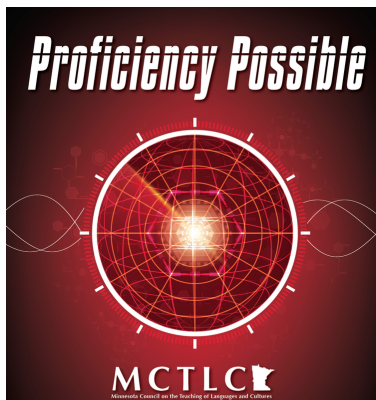
### Session description:

Teaching adolescents is difficult. We currently find ourselves in uncharted territory with many questions and even more emotions. However, can we remember that we have it within ourselves to find our passion that brings us to whatever we see as worthwhile work, which allows us to make a difference for others. Teachers find themselves desperate for guidance and support to help themselves and their students. **This dynamic presentation will help you begin to identify when you or your student is not fine and ways to intervene.**

### Presenter: Cindy Doth

Cynthia Doth has been with Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation since 2006 providing direct care to adolescents struggling with addiction in the Plymouth location. Her current role is the Youth and School Outreach Manager where she builds relationships with students, staff, and families in local schools to provide chemical health screenings and supportive services to individuals in need. Cynthia helps educate others on chemical health difficulties, treatment services, co-occurring mental health concerns, and related difficulties. Cynthia holds a Bachelor's degree in Community Psychology and has completed two Master's degrees from the Hazelden Graduate School of Addiction Studies.

# MCTLC **Virtual** Conference 2020



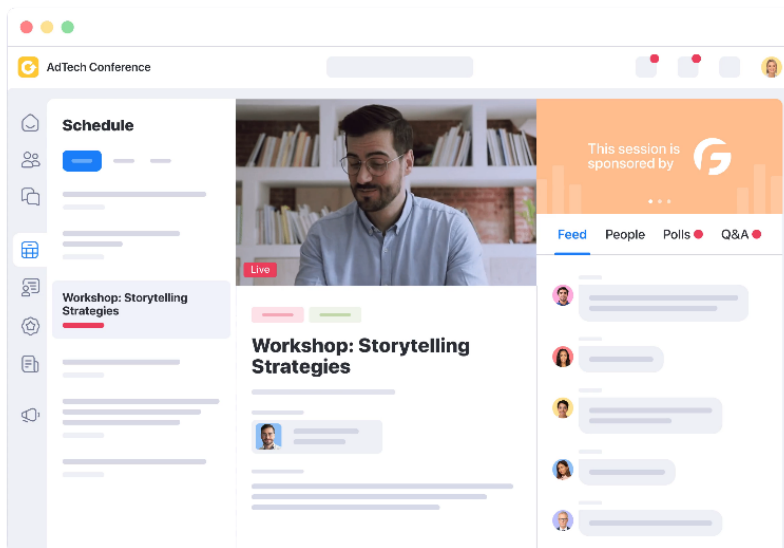
What can you expect at our virtual world language conference? Amazingly, it will include many elements of an in-person conference, including

- a robust schedule of workshops and sessions
- keynote address from Leslie Grahn
- a chance to connect with vendors
- & much more!

We'll be using **Attendify** as our virtual conference platform. The main landing page virtually replicates walking into a conference.

You will be able to see and interact with attendees who are present, eyeball the presenters and read their bios, reach out and chat with vendors, and visit virtual sponsor booths!

Once you are ready to attend a session, there will be live streaming sessions (*as well as pre-recorded sessions*) to check out. With live content the feel of an interactive in-person conference is virtually replicated thanks to session discussions, sharing, polling, chats, a question and answer tab, ability to upload documents, interactive Google docs allowing everyone to take notes together and collaborate, and the list goes on.



Under the current pandemic, we feel confident that you will find the virtual MCTLC conference we have carefully put together to be the next best thing to an in-person conference. We know that your time and PD dollars are precious so check out [this demo video](#) (*start at 9:39 min*) to give you an idea of the format and feel to expect at our Nov. 7-8 conference.

Plus an exciting bonus of this year's conference happening virtually is that we are able to bring in speakers from a larger geographic area than usual which makes the content and available strands even more compelling. With our robust schedule of workshops and sessions, it's impossible to attend everything within the given 2 day conference. Which is why another significant bonus is that all content will be available to you for a full year after the conference.

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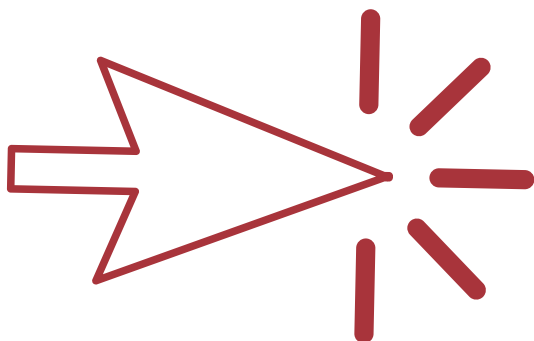
# MCTLC **Virtual** Conference 2020

We look forward to connecting with you virtually this year! Sign-up today to take advantage of our early bird rate of \$65 for two full days of community building, connecting and growing interactively with world language colleagues.

## Virtual Conference Features

- NEW dates - **November 7-8, 2020**
- **ONE** price for 2 days of workshops & sessions
  - **\$65** Early Bird registration until October 6, 2020
  - \$55 Presenters
  - \$45 Immigrant, Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), Teachers with Tier 2 licenses
  - \$20 Future Educators
- Access to all content for one year
- NEW conference strand - **Immigrant & BIPOC voices and narratives**
- 15 two-hour workshops available
- Live and on-demand workshops & sessions

**Get ready, get set for MCTLC's Proficiency Possible 2020!**



Register for the  
conference today!



# Welcome Our **New** Invited Workshop Presenters



Abelardo Almazán-Vázquez, Spanish teacher of 15 years, currently teaches Spanish and coaches soccer at the Putney School in Vermont while also finding time to instruct evening Latin dance classes and create immersion language programs in his home country of Mexico. We are proud to have him host MCTLTC's first ever series of sessions dedicated to the voices & narratives of immigrants and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). [Read our interview with Abelardo Almazán-Vázquez on page 8.](#)



Kia London, Spanish teacher at the Latin School of Chicago, is a passionate and committed educator, presenter, writer, and advocate for equity through diverse representation by way of intercultural competence. Kia blogs at [Trailblaze into Language Learning](#) and she will share her unique insights with us at our virtual November conference as both our CI presenter and a BIPOC presenter. Look for an interview with her in our October newsletter!

## MCTLTC 2020 Conference Strands



Immigrant,  
Black,  
Indigenous,  
People of  
Color Voices &  
Narratives



Heritage  
Language  
Teaching  
and  
Learning



Elementary  
Language  
Teaching  
and  
learning



Teaching  
for  
Proficiency



Performance  
Assessments



TPRS & CI

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# An interview with Abelardo Almazán-Vázquez

We recently had the honor of chatting with Abelardo Almazán-Vázquez, an immigrant Spanish teacher in Vermont, who is leading our first ever conference strand dedicated to the voices and narratives of immigrants and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). Read below to learn more about Abelardo, his experience as an immigrant in the United States, and how he uses his voice to disrupt the space and call attention to alternative narratives.



Heather Cholat - Editor, MCTLC

**MCTLC:** You currently teach at the Putney School which is grades 9-12. Have you always taught high school Spanish or do you also have experience teaching other ages?

**AA-V:** Although I currently work with grades 9-12, before immigrating to the United States, I started teaching at a small Montessori school, in my hometown, where my mom was one of the founding educators. I'm privileged and fortunate to have learned from mi mamá the fundamentals of Montessori, and with that, starting at a very early age to question my own practices as an educator not only in México, but in my experience here in the U.S.

**MCTLC:** You are originally from Cuernavaca Morelos Mexico and resided there until attending graduate school at Cleveland State University. How has your experience as an immigrant affected how you teach?

**AA-V:** It has affected me profoundly ever since getting a "full ride" offer from Cleveland. It was an incredible opportunity back then to imagine, from Cuernavaca, the idea of finishing my undergrad in the U.S. But the complications started almost immediately with the amount of paperwork for the student visa requirements from USCIS. I then had to take the bus from Cuernavaca to the U.S. Embassy in México City, wait in a long line full of applicants for various visas (work, tourist, business, diplomats, etc) and witness the intimidating and harsh atmosphere of the U.S. Embassy where staff members had the power to simply say "denied" before an applicant even arrived at the counter. There was a lot of racial profiling back then. One had to wear the best possible outfit and rehearse the best "accentless" English in order to make a great first impression. I was lucky. Having the sponsorship from Cleveland State University was incredibly powerful, and ever since, I feel a deep respect for millions of individuals who try to immigrate to this country "the right way".

*Continued on page 9*



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## An interview with Abelardo Almazán-Vázquez, cont'd

**MCTLC:** In your experience, have you found that BIPOC students thrive with certain teaching styles or conversely are hindered by other teaching styles that may impede equity efforts? Does this affect certain grade levels differently than others?

**AA-V:** Absolutely, it has been my experience that young BIPOC students seem to gravitate towards me because I might be representing something that they have not seen or considered outside of the mainstream educational narrative. I do also hold an advantage of teaching intermediate and advanced levels of Spanish, and a typical class often has a mix of 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grades, so my experience may differ from what a traditional, single "grade level" looks like these days.

I do not use a textbook, nor do I use any CI/TPRS. My materials have been personally curated in forms of Project-Based learning assessments and portfolios where students learn by inquiry. I stick to the curricular throughlines defined by my institution where they expect our students to understand ethical, cultural, and social justice perspectives, as well as develop their capacity for inquiry, research, argumentation, literacy, communication, collaboration, self-knowledge and self-regulation. That being said, my BIPOC students have found that my materials have constantly evolved and adapted to the current times, as well as constantly explore with different lenses how Spanish language and culture fits in today's society, both in the classroom and outside.

**MCTLC:** You have used the term "disrupting the space" before. Can you share what that means to you?

**AA-V:** It means questioning without fear of pushback or retaliation. To hold oneself accountable in the middle of a faculty meeting or during a WL conference before inviting those who are in my circle to do the same. It means to enter spaces that were, perhaps, not designed for someone who looks like me with a sense of pride and with the confidence that I have something to share and offer, while maintaining a curious mindset on how I can also keep learning, unlearning, and relearning from my colleagues and students.

**MCTLC:** Tell us how "checking your privilege" impacts your interaction with students.

**AA-V:** One good example of this is acknowledging that even though I'm an immigrant, I'm a cis male hetero with two passports, able bodied, tall, and I can continue to list many more privileges that my students may not always see in the first place. Being extremely honest and vulnerable the first 15 minutes of the very first class -in my experience- has set the tone for how the rest of the year will go.

“

*It means to enter spaces that were, perhaps, not designed for someone who looks like me with a sense of pride and with the confidence that I have something to share and offer, while maintaining a curious mindset on how I can also keep learning, unlearning, and relearning from my colleagues and students.*

Continued on page 10

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# An interview with Abelardo Almazán-Vázquez, cont'd

**MCTLC:** As we go into this fall, teaching amidst a pandemic, what should teachers be mindful of?

**AA-V:** That our students are taking note of our (in)actions as educators. Many former students have expressed frustration of not being able to talk about ABAR work (anti-bias anti-racism) in other classes these days because they feel teachers are not paying attention to what is happening out there. The pandemic should not be used as an excuse to drop this crucial work – we must maintain these conversations as an integral part of our curriculums. Being intentional in adding (not subtracting) themes and vocabulary related to ABAR work is imperative.

**MCTLC:** Any final thoughts for MCTLC members before they get to virtually interact with you in November?

**AA-V:** Stay open and curious. Allow yourselves to be vulnerable and to simply say: “Whoops”, learn from that, and move on every time there is an “Ouch” moment from one of your BIPOC colleagues or students. Let us normalize these behaviors, for every educator, to be ready to embark on this journey of learning, unlearning, and relearning.

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## Supporting Teacher's Wellbeing

Check out the resources that [Leslie Grahn](#), ACTFL Author and MCTLC 2020 Keynote speaker, has generously shared to help teachers care for themselves during this challenging year.

- [SEL & Self-Care Resources for Educators](#)
- [Teacher Wellbeing during COVID-19](#)
- [Strategies for Supporting Educator Resilience \(webinar\)](#)
- [7 Ways to Cope with Uncertainty](#)
- [5 Ways to Wellbeing at Work Toolkit](#)

More resources can be found at Leslie's [website](#).





MCTLC is proud to partner with the Minnesota Rural Education Association (MREA) to provide CoTeacher as a resource to our MCTLC members this fall! CoTeacher is a platform that enables teachers to leverage the aggregate knowledge, skills, and resources of their teaching community. On Coteacher, teachers can build standards-aligned repositories, plan instruction collaboratively, request advice or coaching from peers.

To help personalize CoTeacher for our MCTLC members, please complete this brief survey on a computer/laptop by September 4.

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## Minnesota Bilingual & Multilingual Seals



### Guidance for 2020 Graduated Seniors

[Executive Order 20-57](#) allows Minnesota schools and districts to administer bilingual seals testing to 2020 graduates over summer and into fall: "Upon approval by the Executive Council, during the Summer Learning Period and until August 15, 2020, school districts and charters must allow 2019-2020 graduating seniors to complete any testing required to attain a state bilingual or multilingual seal under Minnesota Statutes 2019, section 120B.022, subdivision 1b."

In addition, according to the Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.02, subdivisions 2-4, the board may permit a person who is over the age of 21 or who has graduated from high school to enroll in a class or program at a secondary. A district may not count a person enrolled pursuant to subdivision 2 as a pupil unit or a pupil in average daily membership for the purpose of receiving any state aid.

Therefore, schools and districts may allow 2020 graduated seniors to complete any testing required to attain a state bilingual or multilingual seals awards over the summer and into fall 2020. Please refer to MDH 2020-21 school year guidelines or MDH summer programming guidelines, depending on whether you are administering in the summer or after your school year has begun. Schools and districts do not generate any state aid for this purpose.

Please contact [mde.worldLang@state.mn.us](mailto:mde.worldLang@state.mn.us) if you have questions.

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# Professional Development Round-Up

Take a look at the resources that **Leslie Grahn**, ACTFL Author and MCTLC 2020 Keynote speaker, has generously shared:



Click on the title to be taken to the resource.

- [Back to School with Our Language Learners at a Distance](#)
  - Setting up your online classroom
  - Creating a language-rich, supportive learning environment
  - Communicating your expectations
  - Ideas for the first week of school
  - Building relationships with students from a distance
- [Tips for Engaging All Language Learners in Online Instruction](#)
- [Continuum of Support for Language Learners](#)
- [A Checklist for Transitioning to Online Learning in Languages](#)
- [Suggested Lesson Plan Framework](#)
- [Office hours "how-to" for students](#)
- [Distance Language Learning Norms](#)
- Ready-made Distance Learning Choice Boards for [Elementary](#)- [Secondary](#)
- [Six unit plans ready to go](#)
- ...and MORE!

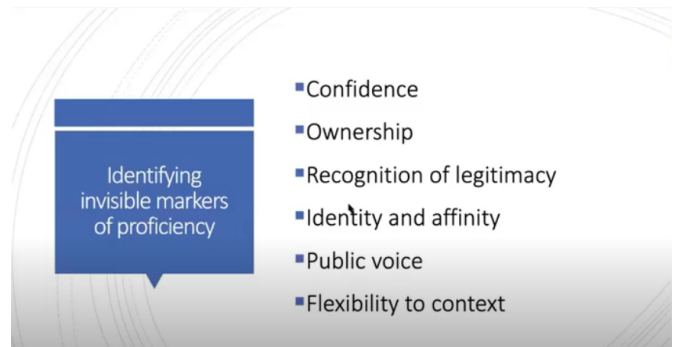


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## [Designing & Assessing for Teaching a Mix of Heritage Learners](#)

By Jenna Cushing-Leubner,  
assistant professor at UW-Whitewater

This calls on language teachers to consider what we teach, how we teach, how we recognize what “counts” as language, and how we can better assess learner language in terms of how it can be used for real purposes in the real world.

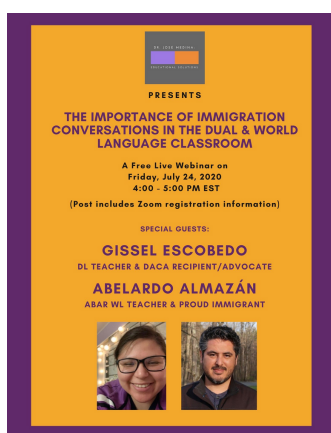


# Professional Development Round-Up

## NFLC Virtual Summit

(Recorded sessions available until Aug 31)

- First ever virtual summit by the National Foreign Language Center.
- It features numerous recorded sessions by experts in the field of language education and featured presenters from each region. Each session also includes an interactive Google doc used to connect, collaborate, and reflect with other summit participants.



## The Importance of Immigration Conversations in Dual Language and World Language Classroom

- Hosted by Dr. José Medina with invited guests Abelardo Almazán-Vásquez (*one of our invited presenters this year*) and Gissel Escobedo
- Explores the importance of immigration conversations in dual language and world language classrooms.

## Unbleach Your Curriculum

- By Jenniffer Whyte, Lower School Spanish teacher at The Donoho School in Alabama
- Celebrating African culture should not be isolated to one month in the year. As world language educators, it is our responsibility to unbleach history and present opportunities for our students to see and appreciate color and culture. In this training, you'll discover 6 steps to help you address your personal biases, start meaningful dialogues with your students, and ultimately recreate a unit to be more inclusive of Afro-Latino culture.
- [Sign-up for Unbleach Your Curriculum Part 2](#)



**[Access more Distance Learning Resources at the MCTLC Website](#)**

