



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

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## FROM OUR PRESIDENT:



### *New Spaces, New Realities for an ACTFL First-Timer*

The 2013 ACTFL convention was a whirlwind three days that left this rookie attendee feeling energized and inspired. Paging through the conference program “book”, I was struck with how truly titanic this experience was. To navigate the enormous convention center I tried to replicate the cool and relaxed styles of seasoned ACTFL attendees and my mentors, Past-President Mary Thron and Secretary Frances Matos-Schultz. My goals were to attend key sessions with acclaimed presenters, meet and collaborate with other state delegates, and seek out resources in the exhibit hall to bring back to Minnesota language teachers. My highlight had to be attending the Thursday delegate assembly. At the assembly it became evident that here at the state and local levels we have tremendous power to advocate for policy changes in language education. ACTFL and our national lobbying body, JNCL-NCLS, are working tirelessly to push world languages into the national spotlight, yet what states are doing at a grassroots level is what is pushing progress forward. I left Thursday’s assembly realizing that we must strengthen our alliances and work together to see real advances occur here in Minnesota. We need to work together with our partners at MDE, CARLA, MAIN, the AATs, Concordia Language Villages, and school districts to meet the professional development needs of our teachers. As I flew home from sunny Orlando, I realized that our new reality is that it is imperative to work together in this shared space. ACTFL left this first-time attendee inspired to work even harder in 2014 to build up our world language community in Minnesota.

## Task-Based Language Learning and Technology

Featuring Elizabeth Harsma , Minnesota State University – Mankato

*YOU ARE INVITED! To a Hands-on Workshop for World  
Language Teachers*

**WHERE:** The College of St. Scholastica, Duluth, MN

**WHEN:** Thursday, February 6, 4:15 – 7:15

Learn about task-based language learning and some simple ways to integrate technology tools into tasks. Participants will leave the workshop with five ideas for task-based language learning activities that integrate technology tools from beginning to advanced language and culture courses. For more information contact [mpflug@css.edu](mailto:mpflug@css.edu) or to register [www.mctlc.org](http://www.mctlc.org).



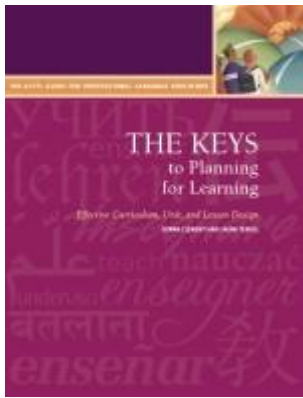
Elizabeth Harsma, Minnesota State University Mankato

## **Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages**

*Unlock the Gateway to Communication*

March 20 - 22, 2014  
St. Louis, MO

For more information: [www.csctfl.org](http://www.csctfl.org).



*The Keys to Planning for Learning: Effective Curriculum, Unit and Lesson Design* written by language educators and experts, Donna Clementi and Laura Terrill, has just been published by ACTFL with a Foreword by Heidi Hayes Jacobs. It is the latest in the popular Keys series from ACTFL which includes *The Keys to the Classroom* by Paula Patrick and *The Keys to Assessing Language Performance* by Paul Sandrock. Clementi and Terrill have created a useful guide to assist teachers, curriculum designers, administrators and professional developers in designing standards- and performance-based curricula. Starting with an understanding of the 21<sup>st</sup> century learner, the authors establish a mindset for creating curriculum based on developing learners' proficiency in language and culture. Easy-to-follow templates to develop units of instruction and daily lessons that incorporate the Standards for Learning Languages, Common Core State Standards, 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and technology integration are provided. Ultimately, a well-designed unit is the foundation for planning and delivering instruction. Check it out at the ACTFL Online Store at [www.actfl.org/store](http://www.actfl.org/store).

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The National Council for Languages and International Studies (NCLIS) recently surveyed members of Congress to see how many of them speak a language other than English. Each of the 540 Senators', Representatives', and Delegates' offices was contacted. With an overall 65.6% response rate, 35% had at least some second language ability while 20% claimed to speak the language fluently (Senators 49%, Representatives 32%). Spanish is the most common language; Chinese, French and German are also spoken.

### **ACTFL Collaborates with Europe**

The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) is proud to announce the launch of a collaborative project with the European Centre for Modern Languages of the Council of Europe (ECML). The aim of the project is to determine what student and initial teachers consider to be good practices in foreign language teaching. The project involves student teachers and initial teachers of languages in the USA and throughout Europe observing foreign language classes and documenting 'indicators' of good practices in specific areas. The findings of this survey ideally will feed into teacher education programs and be of value to all teachers of foreign languages.

At the core of the project is an online survey, consisting of a structured observation sheet to be used to evaluate foreign language classes in 24 competences in Lesson planning, Teaching, Evidence of Culture, and Assessing. ACTFL is encouraging your support through participation. See more at: <http://www.actfl.org/news/press-releases/actfl-announces-actfl-ecml-project>



## MCTLC Offers Regional Workshops

A group of language educators gathered in Rochester on Saturday, November 16 for the workshop, “Content-based Instruction with Barb Cartford.” See photo above, Cartford is pictured on the far left. The full-day workshop was sponsored by an Education Minnesota Affinity grant and graciously hosted by the Language Department at the University of Minnesota Rochester. Lisa Perez, MCTLC Regional Representative of Southeast Minnesota, organized the event. In February another quality workshop, “Task-based Language Learning and Technology” will be held in Duluth. See page 1 for details. Let us provide your next staff development event. Contact us with your needs at [president@mctlc.org](mailto:president@mctlc.org).

### Creating Innovators with Passion, Play and Purpose

Tony Wagner, founder and co-director of Harvard Graduate School of Education’s Change Leadership Group was the keynote speaker of the 2013 ACTFL Conference held in Orlando in November. He brought a powerful message from his most recent book, *Creating Innovators: The Making of Young People Who Will Change the World*, published by Simon and Schuster.

Creativity and Innovation have been identified as key skills for 21<sup>st</sup> Century students to prepare for increasingly complex work environments. Wagner acknowledged three challenges facing us as educators in teaching these skills: 1) Knowledge is a commodity everywhere; 2) Students need to be prepared to create new questions with what they know; and 3) Engaging millennial students is even more daunting when the Internet allows them to be the architects of their own learning. We need to be engendering skills beyond content like critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creative problem-solving.

Ironically, he pointed out that there are contradictions in the messages we give students in our culture of learning. First, we reward individual achievement as opposed to teamwork which leads to innovation. Then, we compartmentalize knowledge

rather than nurturing the innovation that occurs at the margins of interdisciplinary inquiry. We too often still practice passive learning, the “sit and get” approach which leads to consuming not creating. Failure is frowned upon which discourages risk-taking. Wagner advocates “fail early and fail often.” Students need to feel free to practice trial and error. We should consider grading a body of student work, not just developmental quizzes students take as they are still learning the material. Intrinsic motivation needs to be developed so that students drive their own learning. He concluded that truly innovative educators are outliers.

Malcolm Gladwell’s acclaimed book, *Outliers: The Story of Success*, outlines several key factors that lead to success including meaningful hard work. If one feels that there is purpose in the work, one is more likely to work hard. It is this purpose that provides powerful motivation to learn; giving a reason to want to learn. Purpose, coupled with play and passion, leads to creativity and innovation. When students are given the freedom to play, to be exposed to a range of opportunities, they discover their passions. Following a passion leads them to focus and become tenacious in their learning. Is this not what we as world language educators are ideally striving to achieve? We give them a purpose to use the language and stimulate them with play so they can discover their own passion for learning the language. Submitted by Mary Thron

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Minnesota was well represented at ACTFL in Orlando in November as this chance encounter indicates. Current and former MCTLC board members in attendance are from left to right Janice Holter Kittok, Marjie Hay, Mary Thron, Frances Matos-Schultz and Kathy Olson-Studler.

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