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

LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT:



Dear MCTLC Colleagues and Friends,

It was a privilege to host the Central States Conference in Minnesota last month. It was wonderful to see over 1,200 world language teachers there. Among them, Minnesota was well represented.

The season of spring has traditionally been associated with new beginnings. As language teachers, it is easy to lose touch with being a language learner and forget what it is like to be in our students' shoes. Spring is a great time to try learning something new for both personal enjoyment and professional growth.

Several years ago, I developed an interest in the Korean language and culture and began taking classes in *haidong gumdo*, a Korean martial art which uses swords. It has been fun becoming a student all over again and the experience has given me a new perspective on language learning and teaching. I have enjoyed making connections between teaching a skill and teaching another language. Although there are many differences in the content, there are many similarities in how the two are learned.

In *haidong gumdo*, everything starts with the basic cuts. These are practiced at the beginning of each class. They are the building blocks for learning forms which are a combination of moves, stances, and cuts. Much like language which starts with vocabulary and basic structures in order to build sentences and express simple ideas, *haidong gumdo* builds on the basics and expands them to create longer and more complex forms.

Another powerful lesson I have learned in *haidong gumdo*

is the power of connecting words and movement. Because it is such an effective way to build connections in the brain, I try to use movement as much as possible in my classroom as well. I find it interesting that despite having watched far too many hours of Korean dramas, I know the words I have learned in class better. My language acquisition is hindered by the fact that it is easier just to read the subtitles than process the language I hear.

These experiences have impacted my teaching practices. When I feel tempted to simply translate something in class into English, I consider whether it will help or hinder my student's ability to truly learn the word or structure. If students know they can always use me as a crutch, teaching them to speak independently will be a much harder task.

I encourage everyone to take advantage of spring and try something new both inside and outside of the classroom. Becoming a learner again is a lot of fun. You might be pleasantly surprised to find that you can bring your experiences back to the classroom, making you a more effective teacher.

I look forward to seeing you again soon. In the meantime, enjoy spring!

~ Kay Edberg

Save the date!!!

❖ **iFLT Conference: July 14th – 17th, 2015, 8 am – 5 pm** at Tartan High School in St. Paul, Minnesota. All participants will have the opportunity to observe master teachers implementing the best practices of TCI (Teaching with Comprehensible Input) as they teach elementary through high school students, followed by a debriefing session led by master teachers. Find more information and register at: <http://tprstorytelling.com/events/iflt-conference-2/>

❖ Check out the CARLA update on page three along with other amazing opportunities for language educator professional development!



Cuba covered by Cuban flag

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The Connections Between Cuba and Minnesota

President Obama has eased restrictions on travel to Cuba, yet that does not mean traveling to Cuba is like traveling to other countries. You still need permission to travel and you need to fulfill the requirements of one of the 12 categories permitted by the Department of Commerce and the Department of the Treasury. But there are some important changes. You will be able to use a U.S. issued credit card in Cuba. You will be able to spend more money. But you cannot simply go on the Internet and buy a ticket to Havana as you can to any other country.

The most common category under which people who do not have family in Cuba travel to Cuba is called "people to people" exchanges. These are groups that are arranged for specific purposes to further the exchange of cultural awareness between the two countries. We here in Minnesota are very lucky because we have local connections to groups that organize these exchanges. One of the most common is Witness for Peace. Their local representative is Elise Roberts and her email is wfpumw@witnessforpeace.org. A visit to their website will show you what trips are being planned for the next year.

Minnesota had had connections with Cuba for many years through the Pastors for Peace mission and the Minnesota Cuba Committee. They both have websites and mailing lists. They also have up to date information on what trips are being planned. And just in case you cannot travel to Cuba and you live in the metro area, the Minnesota Cuba Committee annually sponsors the Cuban Film Festival during February and March.

~ Betty Lotterman

Question of the month: How do you engage your students in learning another language? Share your ideas in a virtual conversation at the MCTLC Teacher's Café on Facebook.

Dr. William Rivers, the executive director of JNCL-NCLIS, was at the 2015 Central States Conference for the Teaching of Foreign Languages in Minneapolis in March. When introduced he always clarifies, "It's Bill," and refers to himself as America's Language Lobbyist. He has recently led the effort to have Congress send a letter to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (AAAS) to request a study be done on the impact of language learning on our nation. AAAS is a highly regarded institution established by John Adams in 1780. In 2013 it published a similar study on the impact of the humanities and social sciences, entitled "The Heart of the Matter." In November 2014, Senators Mark Kirk (R-IL), Brian Schatz (D-HI), Orrin Hatch (R-UT), and Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) sent a letter to AAAS requesting that a study be conducted on "how language learning influences economic growth, cultural diplomacy, the productivity of future generations, and fulfillment of all Americans." A similar letter was sent by Representatives Leonard Lance (R-NJ), Rush Holt (D-NJ), Don Young (R-AK), and David E. Price (D-NC). We are hopeful that AAAS will move forward on this.

~ Mary Thron, MCTLC Advocacy Chair



Save the date! The MN – AATSP awards ceremony for the National Spanish Exam will be held at the Wellstone Center in St. Paul on Saturday, May 16th. Watch your email for more information. Winners of the poster contest will also be recognized at this ceremony.

On Saturday, February 21st, the Minnesota chapter of AATSP held a workshop at the offices of Global Citizens Network/Intercultural Student Experiences. Attendees participated in two sessions – Agnes Matheson from the Blake School gave a presentation entitled "The Super Advanced Spanish Language Learners: How to Meet Their Needs" and Mary Lynn Montgomery from the University of Minnesota gave a session called "No Passport Required – Developing Intercultural Competence in the Classroom." It was a great morning of collaborating with colleagues!

MN – AATSP is still seeking nominations for the position of President-Elect, which is a 3-year term. This person would serve as President-Elect for the remainder of 2015, President in 2016, and Past President in 2017. Contact president@mn-aatsp.org for more information.

~ Mary Lynn Montgomery

MCTLC Pulse Interview Featuring: Treasurer, Kim Miller



If you could change one thing about the world, what would it be?

As a language teacher who is interested in other cultures, I would change the world by getting rid of our tendency as humans to be intolerant of other cultures!

How many languages would you like to speak?

I would like to learn all of the languages. I truly wish I spoke more than two fluently! I've had exposure to Vietnamese, Hmong, Hebrew, Norwegian, Czech, Japanese, Thai, Spanish and speak French fluently.

What inspired your passion for languages?

When I was eight years old, I took French after school with a group of neighborhood kids and became enamored with the language from that point on! What fascinated me was that you could communicate in a different way!

If you could visit any country around the world where would you go?

I would go to Laos since it was prohibited when I was over in that region of Asia and most of my ESL students were from Laos.

How many years have you been involved in second language acquisition?

My entire career, all forty years has been involved with other cultures and languages. From working in refugee camps in Thailand to teaching French, ESL, Cross-Cultural Communications, and most recently immersion education for the past twenty years!

So far, how many countries have you visited?

My goal is to travel the world and I have been to 19 countries. I especially want to get back to Southeast Asia, specifically Laos.



Buddha Park in Laos

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Conferences

- **May 14th – 16th, 2015 – Changes and Challenges in Language Teacher Education: Ninth International Conference on Language Teacher Education** at The Commons Hotel, Minneapolis, Minnesota. To register go to: www.carla.umn.edu/conferences/LTE2015/registration.html
- **October 20th – 22nd, 2016 – Sixth International Conference on Language Immersion Education**

Workshops

- **May 2nd, 2015 – Developing more complex speech through critical thinking** with Elaine Tarone and Maggie Broner. Find information and register at: <http://www.carla.umn.edu/presentations/index.html>

Summer Institutes for teachers

- **June 22nd – 26th, 2015 – Immersion 101: An Introduction to Immersion Teaching for Chinese and Japanese**
- **July 6th – August 9th, 2015 – Using the Web for Communicative Language Learning and Professional Development (Online courses)**
- **July 13th – 17th, 2015 – Using Technology in Second Language Teaching July 13th – 17th, 2015 – Creativity in the Classroom: Fostering Student Learning by Engaging the Senses (NEW)**
- **July 13th – 17th, 2015 – Going “Green”: Bringing Sustainability and Environmental Themes into the Language Classroom (NEW)**
- **July 20th – 24th, 2015 – Immersion 101: An Introduction to Immersion Teaching**
- **July 20th – 24th, 2015 – Improving Language Learning: Styles-Based and Strategies-Based Instruction**
- **July 20th – 24th, 2015 – Culture as the Core in the Second Language Classroom**
- **July 20th – 24th, 2015 – Content-Based Language Instruction and Curriculum Development**
- **July 27th – 31st, 2015 – Developing Assessments for the Second Language Classroom**
- **July 27th – 31st, 2015 – Developing Materials for Language Teaching**
- **July 27th – 31st, 2015 – Focusing on Learner Language: Second Language Acquisition Basics for Teachers**

Upcoming events in Language Associations:

- ❖ **MN-AATF : May 19th, 2014 – Awards Breakfast – Le Grand Concours** at Coffman Union, University of Minnesota – Twin Cities
Watch for information at: <http://mnaatf.org/GCMN.html>
- ❖ **Confucius Institute : June 15th – 26th, 2015 – STARTALK: Teaching and Assessing Chinese Culture and Language Authentically (Free)** at University International Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Email registration form at <http://confucius.umn.edu/> site to: confucius@umn.edu
- ❖ **AATG : June 22nd – 27th, 2015 – Saint John’s Prep German Camp, Co-ed, ages 8 – 16.:** <http://www.aatg.org/events/>
- ❖ **AATF : July 8th – 11th, 2015 – Annual Convention** in Saguenay, Québec, Canada. To register go to: <http://www.frenchteachers.org/convention/updatefiles/highlight.htm>
- ❖ **AATSP : July 17th – 20th, 2015 – 97th Annual Conference** in Denver, Colorado. Deadline for online registration: **June 1st, 2015**. Register online and get more information at: <http://www.aatsp.org/>

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