



MCTLC Newsletter

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



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Letter from the *new* MCTLC President: HAPPY NEW YEAR MCTLC MEMBERS!



I am humbled and honored to serve as your MCTLC president this year. MCTLC is an organization of fewer than 300 members representing over 3,000 language educators in Minnesota, yet a mere 30 volunteers carry out the task of sustaining our activity and influence. Those are daunting numbers but for over the past fifty years we have stayed the course of fulfilling the mission to “advance the teaching of languages and cultures in Minnesota.” Although the mission statement is newly crafted it reflects the work of MCTLC throughout its history. I was inspired by the following quote by John Maxwell at the ACTFL Assembly of Delegates in November and I hope it can continue to inspire us in the future: “The pessimist complains about the wind. The optimist expects it to change. The leader adjusts the sails.” We are the leaders in our field in our state. We welcome others to join us to adjust the sails. Nonetheless, we know that there has been a core of individuals committed to world language learning in our state for the past half century and can trust that there always will be. One of our newest regional representatives, Brittney Rehm, a Spanish teacher at Fargo North High School, from the West Central region has written the Practitioner’s Corner in this issue. One of the leaders of the organization who has greatly impressed me is our immediate past president, Betty Lotterman. She leaves big shoes to fill. She led us into the 21st Century with her vision to hold our first cyberspace board meeting in April on Wimba. Gay Rawson, French professor at Concordia College and one of the gurus in integrating technology into language teaching in Minnesota, facilitated that meeting and just led MCTLC’s first webinar in early December. Betty liked to address us board members as her “fellow warriors in the fight for advancing languages and cultures” in Minnesota. She certainly led the way. As a long time Spanish teacher at Mounds View High School she has been advocating language learning throughout her career. She led the marches on the capital to inform the public that we are “making a world of change” in our classes and to successfully advocate for a World Languages Specialist at the State Department of Education. In October she orchestrated a marvelous 50th Anniversary Celebration for us at our annual fall conference. She gave a nod to the past and propelled us into the future during her tenure as president. We have an exciting course to follow in her wake. I am ready to take the helm and work with the dedicated members of the board to set our sails for the year. Come aboard and join us! *Mary Thron* MCTLC President

Dear MCTLC members,

This will be my last letter to you as MCTLC president. It has been a pleasure to serve you. I wish I could have done much more, but in many ways I think we had a successful year. Our budget is balanced and our annual conference honored our 50 years tradition of offering Minnesota language teachers quality professional development. Gay Rawson led our first webinar. Our technology workshop in April received outstanding reviews. Membership has included the monthly newsletter and The Language Educator for the entire year. We have held at least one regional gathering in each of our regions. Our website is a source of the latest information on what’s happening in world language education in Minnesota and the forum on the website gives members an opportunity to network with their colleagues. However, the low number of members remains a huge concern. Right now we have 174 active members. It is very difficult to maintain a high quality organization with such a small number of members. I’m asking all of you to become ambassadors for MCTLC. Promote our organization wherever you can. Encourage colleagues to become members. With more members we could offer more services. Together we can make this organization grow. We have had some new members join the Board of Directors. Brittany Rehm is taking over the representation of the West Central Minnesota region as Mary Thron becomes our president. Joanne Chiang will be our new North Suburban Metro representative as Marjie Hay assumes the position of vice-president. Valerie Arrowsmith has joined the board in a newly created advocacy position. She will be working on the website and in the newsletter to give you the information that you need to promote world language education. We are still looking for volunteers to serve as regional representatives in the South Central Minnesota, East Suburban Metro, and Southwest Suburban Metro. If you or anyone you know would be interested in joining the Board of Directors in one of these positions, please let me know at bettylotterman@hotmail.com. As I take leave of my position as president I am very happy that Mary Thron is standing ready to take over the position. I know that her energy, passion for world language education, and her professional expertise will mean a good year for MCTLC. I will remain on the board as past president and will continue to work towards a bigger and better organization for you. Sincerely yours, *Betty Lotterman* Immediate Past President

ACTFL 2011 Empowering Language Educators through Collaboration

Over 7,000 language educators from across the country attended ACTFL's Annual National Conference held in November 2011 in Denver, Colorado. I kicked off the conference by representing Minnesota at the Assembly of Delegates and learned how ACTFL has aligned itself with the leading educational movements of our time and to learn of progress being made in our field in other states. Working with the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association (NGA) representatives from our field have drafted a document showing the parallel between the ACTFL National Standards for Foreign Languages and the Common Core Standards for Language Arts. The premise is to show how beyond its own intrinsic significance, the study of world languages supports the study of language arts and other subjects. A 21st Century Skills Map, which reflects the integration of World Languages, core subjects, and 21st Century Skills was presented. A copy can be accessed at www.P21.org. Diane Linn of the NGA was quoted as saying, "It is no longer enough to communicate in one language, access information from one source, or view an issue from a single perspective." The state of Utah is setting the bar high for language education as it has set the standard that all students will graduate from high school, proficient in a world language, other than English. New York State has aligned itself to ACTFL standards by adopting the official position statements as their own. The conference kicked off with a dynamic keynote address by Dr. Milton Chen of the George Lucas Educational Foundation (GLEF) and author of Education Nation: Six Leading Edges of Innovation in Our Schools. He reminded us that a nation is only as good as its educational system. He challenged us to envision our ideal schools, use technology as a weapon of mass instruction, connect to our communities, and collaborate in co-teaching and to recognize that our youth are our greatest asset. We need to connect to them with engaging, cooperative and contemporary educational practices, including incorporating technology.

FLARR Fetes One of Its Founders

The Foreign Language Association of the Red River (FLARR) held its Fall Annual meeting on the University of Minnesota Morris campus on November 5, 2011 and celebrated one of its founding member's illustrious career. Professor Tom Turner has been teaching Spanish at the University of Minnesota Morris for decades and was instrumental in founding and sustaining FLARR over the years. He has been our ambassador, inspiring the teaching of languages and cultures in the Red River Valley. The meeting also included the following presentations: "Best Practices While Traveling Abroad with Students," by UMM French professor, Sarah Buchanan and "Managing Student Dynamics Before and During Travel Programs," by Mary Thrond, Spanish professor at the Minnesota State University Moorhead. Vicente Cabrera, Spanish professor at UMM presented "Teaching Culture Through Film."

Nous sommes allés a la France / Nosaltres vam anar a Catalunya i a Barcelona



Pictured are the students who accompanied Profs. Diane Leslie, Chris French and David Paulson to Europe in May 2011. We are at the entrance to the museum at the Pont du Gard, north of Nîmes, France. We began our journey in Barcelona, staying several days in the magnificent Catalan capital. We journeyed on to Besalú, Cadaqués and Girona. Next we followed the coast via motorcoach to Nîmes and Nice. Next we rocketed via the *TGV* to Paris. In this unique trip, students of Spanish and French language studied the history and culture of Mediterranean Spain and France in a semester-long seminar before leaving. While en route, the professors gave lessons about the history and cultural importance of the sites visited and the students wrote reflection papers about each major city

we visited. Also, those students proficient in Spanish helped out the students of French while in Spain and vice versa while in France. Actually everyone had the opportunity to speak in Spanish and in French. About half the group returned with Prof. Paulson after two weeks. Unfortunately MSP International was closed on the afternoon of our return due to electrical problems, so we spent the night at a motel laid over in Kentucky. We ate pizza and drank sodas and talked about our amazing journey. The rest of the students traveled with Profs. Leslie and French for another week, returning to the south of France. In 2012, Prof. Paulson and his colleague in Culinology will be traveling with 20 students of Spanish, Hospitality and Culinology to Puerto Rico over Spring Break. Profs. Leslie and French plan to travel to Martinique with several students of French.

And some last-minute headlines...



On Saturday, December 10, a group of world language teachers from the metro area met at the offices of Intercultural Student Exchanges to share refreshments and stories from celebrations from many different cultures. We had treats from Minnesota, Germany, Egypt, Japan, and China. We learned about Christmas celebrations in Rumania, Sham Ennisim in Egypt, and the Chinese New Year. Everyone agreed we should meet for more sharing sessions in the future. MCTLCL would like to thank the staff of Intercultural Student Exchanges for making us feel so welcome. Participants at the combined metro regional gathering posed in front of the world's largest Jeffers world map in the offices of Intercultural Student Exchanges.

2012 Executive Board

Note: The following contact information is provided for MCTLC members to contact leadership. For product or service solicitations please contact the President.

President & Conference Chair

Mary Thron
University of Minnesota Morris
1335 6th St S
Fargo, ND 58103
701-293-5763
ticatrueños@yahoo.com

Vice-President

Marjie Hay
Brooklyn Center High School
6500 N Humbolt Ave
Brooklyn Ctr, MN 55430
mhay@brookcntr.k12.mn.us

Secretary

Donna Le Grand
Bethel University
3900 Bethel Drive
St. Paul, Mn 55112
(651) 638-6544
donna-legrand@bethel.edu

Webmaster

Jennifer Duronio
The Blake School, Northrop Campus
511 Kenwood Parkway
Minneapolis, MN 55403
webmaster@mctlc.org

Membership Chair

Kay Edberg
Mora High School
2166 Grove St.
Mora, MN 55051
membership@mctlc.org

Past-President

Betty Lotterman
Mounds View High School
2267 Priscilla Street
St. Paul, MN 55108
651-238-6859
bettylotterman@hotmail.com

Treasurer

Allison Spenader
St. John's University
37 S. College Ave.
St. Joseph, MN 56374
320-363-5028
aspenader@csbsju.edu

MCTLC Newsletter

Dr. David Paulson-Wolf
Southwest Minnesota State University
1501 State Street
Marshall, MN 56258
507-476-1243
editor@mctlc.org

Fall Conference Exhibits & Advertising

Diane Leslie
Southwest Minnesota State University
1501 State Street
Marshall, MN 56258
diane.leslie@smsu.edu
Barbara Judd
Riverland Community College
965 Alexander Drive
Owatonna, MN 55060
barbara.judd@riverland.edu



At the *Place de Vosges, Paris*

MCTLC Newsletter
Dr. David L. Paulson-Wolf, Editor
Southwest Minnesota State University
1501 State St, Marshall MN 56258

Practitioner's Corner: Voice Thread

If you are looking for new ways to engage your students with technology to encourage them to speak and listen creatively, you must check out www.voicethread.com! Just log onto www.voicethread.com with a working e-mail address, and the opportunities are endless! The site is free to staff and students, and codes and passwords are not needed.

I recently used Voice Thread with my level I Spanish students. First, I created a rubric for students to follow as they spoke in Spanish about the topic of family. They uploaded images and recorded their voices communicating about family. Students were able to upload images from flicker, Facebook, webcam, a flash drive, or scanned pictures from home. If students did not want to talk about their own family, there were opportunities to create a fantasy family by using other pictures, found on www.voicethread.com.

Additionally, students were required to comment in Spanish on two classmates' projects. Students invited me via e-mail to see and hear their completed projects and peer comments. I was able to assess the projects and give them feedback in Spanish. The projects gave my students more practice speaking and listening as well as an opportunity to express them creatively. I observed that students went above and beyond what was required of them, because they were in charge of their images and it was a fun project to create! Research cites that Voice Thread helps increase student engagement, motivation and active learning (Brunvand and Byr 2011 28). If you go directly to www.voicethread.com, you can search for examples to help you start brainstorming your future projects for students! Happy hunting! ☺

Brittney Rehm, Spanish Teacher, Fargo North High School
rehmb@fargo.k12.nd.us

Brunvand, Stein and Byr, Sara. [Using VoiceThread to Promote Learning Engagement and Success for All Students](#). *The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC): TEACHING Exceptional Children*. March/April 2011 issue. Retrieved 3/30/11 from: <http://voicethread.com/media/misc/support/JTECVoiceThread.pdf>

Do you have a teaching/learning idea to share? Send it to **Info@MCTLC.org**