

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



Grant Boulanger
President, MCTLC

Letter from the President

Dear Language and Culture Educators and Stakeholders,

I am excited to share news and information with you from the local, state and regional goings on in our profession. Continuing Past-President Daryl Boecker's theme of reinvention, your board has identified priorities and approved a 2019 budget. MCTLC will be implementing several changes in 2019. Our Fall Conference will be a full two day conference. We will feature full-day workshops from nationally recognized presenters on Friday, with our keynote and breakout sessions on Saturday - all for one price. This format is successful around the country and I have no doubt it will be here as well.

We are excited to host Martina Bex as our keynote! She will also lead a full day workshop on Friday. Our theme, Peak Practice, Peak Proficiency For All will focus in on effective, joyful and equitable teacher practices that drive proficiency. We are excited for this shift in programming and our location, the Crowne Plaza in Plymouth, will be a great venue for us. Get a leg up by visiting Martina's incredible blog, [The Comprehensible Classroom](#).

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MCTLC is dedicated to providing high quality, relevant news, information and professional development to Minnesota language educators, while simultaneously being responsible fiscal agents of the organization we temporarily lead. Feedback from a recent survey indicates an astounding 70% of members prefer to receive our newsletter in a digital format. Our Treasurer, Maddy Wieneke (Hastings), advised that nearly 10% of our annual operating budget is spent on the newsletter, which includes printing and shipping a copy of Language Magazine.

Letter from the President, cont'd

Given the majority preference for a digital newsletter and the significant costs, your board has decided to distribute our newsletter digitally. This savings of over \$4,000 will be reinvested in advocacy efforts and investing in high quality national-level presenters for our Fall Conference. As a board we discussed avenues of preserving paper versions for some, opt-in options and other scenarios. We will revisit this at the end of the year via questions in our conference evaluation forms. Communications Director, Lucienne Nagel (DeLaSalle High School) and Newsletter Editor, Heather Cholat (Blake School), will collaborate to produce a digital newsletter dedicated to providing timely, relevant and meaningful news, information and teaching tips.

2019 Central States Conference

The 2019 Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages took place from Mar.14-16 in Columbus, Ohio. This year's theme of Breaking Barriers, Building Bridges, Promoting Performance gives you a taste of the variation and relevancy of topics addressed at this year's conference. MCTLC had several members present well-received sessions at the regional conference this year. We were proud to support Lisselin Diaz, from Blake Schools, as our Best of Minnesota session this year at the conference!



Our best of MCTLC, Lisselin Diaz from Blake Schools, presenting at Central States on March 15. (Photo: Megan Budke, President-Elect)

2020 Central States Conference

MCTLC members were all hands on deck to promote the 2020 Central States Conference in Minneapolis next year! The theme, Room for All at the Table, resonates strongly with our organization. Check out our promotional video featuring teachers from Minneapolis and St. Paul Public Schools! A big thanks to Kara Parker, consultant, blogger, and curriculum writer at creativelanguageclass.com, for partnering with MCTLC to create [this video](#) and lead our CSCTFL 2020 committee. We encourage MCTLC members to mark your calendars to join us March 12-14, 2020 at the Hyatt Regency Downtown, Minneapolis.



Submit CSCTFL proposals by May 1

An interview with Maureen Peltier, 2019 Central States Teacher of the Year

Heather Cholat - Editor, MCTLC

An exciting announcement to come out of this year's Central States Conference in Columbus, Ohio is that Minnesota's very own Maureen Elwell Peltier (MEP) was selected as Central States World Language Teacher of the Year! Maureen, a French teacher at Saint Paul Central High School, was kind enough to find time recently for a conversation with MCTLC Editor, Heather Cholat (HC),



Read on to learn more about Maureen and what is going on during this busy and rewarding time in her life.

HC : *In this day and age with Google translate and numerous voice input translation apps, why does the world language classroom still matter?*

MEP : World language and cultural learning is a transformative experience. Most students begin their study thinking that all they will do is gain a degree of linguistic competency. This is, of course, the end goal. Yet, the journey of language and cultural learning is what is important. Through the language, students learn to function in a multicultural world. They grow, hopefully, to respect and to empathize with those who see the world differently than they do. As language teachers, we hope that they will recognize those differences as enriching rather than threatening. In addition, they may develop new interests and sometimes passions because of the study of a language and the cultures attached to it. In short, students can be transformed. Therefore, the journey is language and cultural awareness and the end gift is bilingualism.

HC : *What do your students most value about your class?*

MEP : I am a big believer in the three R's of learning: relationships, relevance and rigor. A trusting relationship between the teacher and students is the key to success and the foundation of a strong learning community. Relevance keeps students engaged and makes learning an exploration of interests rather than a series of goals and outcomes. And finally, rigor. Students will work hard and challenge themselves if solid expectations are in place, goals are achievable, and the teacher encourages new exploration and growth through a well-structured curriculum. As one of my students put it: "Madame, I stayed in French because it's my hardest class and I wanted to be challenged".

HC : *You are now the Central States World Language Teacher of the Year and as such you are our representative (one of five national finalists) to be considered for the ACTFL National Language Teacher of the Year recognition. Félicitations, Maureen!! What are the next steps in this process?*

MEP : Thank you so much! It is truly an honor and privilege to represent the Central States at ACTFL. The process actually began last summer with my nomination by Liz Hathaway Castelan, Saint Paul Schools Language Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA). The first step was to build the foundation of my portfolio.

MEP : Next, after being chosen at the state level, I continued to add to the portfolio. Items such as student work, reflections on professional development, and advocacy experience completed this level. I also was interviewed in Columbus by a panel representing the governing board. Now, as the regional representative, I will continue the process with more entries such as recording myself teaching, analyzing my work in the classroom, and expanding my personal reflections. This, and an interview at the national level, are the last steps as finalist for ACTFL Teacher of the Year. It is a lot of work, but a wonderful journey through my years of teaching.

HC : *So, what's next?*

MEP : Besides continuing my passion of teaching French, I want to delve more into advocacy work for world languages. I was able to attend the National Language Advocacy Day in Washington, D.C. this past February. At this conference we worked on three bills:

-The World Language Advancement and Readiness Act (WLARA): ensuring financing to world language and immersion programs in American schools.

-The BEST Act (Biliteracy Education Seal and Teaching Act): the expansion of the seal from 36 states and Washington, D.C. to all fifty states.

-Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Programs Act: expanding study abroad opportunities at universities across the nation.

I want to contribute my experience and passion to helping others understand why language and cultural learning is important and worth supporting.

HC : *Hopefully you have some time over your upcoming spring break to put your feet up and catch your breath a little!*

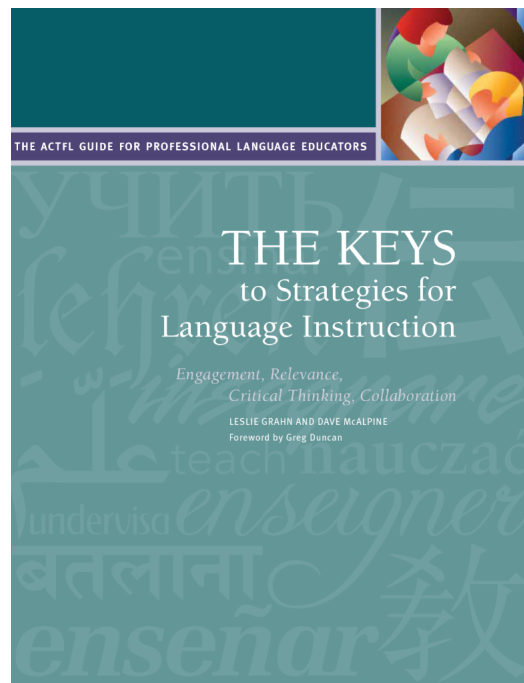
MEP : Well not exactly (she laughs), but I am looking forward to spring break because almost every year, I take a group of students to France. We have an exchange that started in 2010 with the Institution Sainte Marie in Caen (Normandy) France. In the fall, the French visit us and in the spring, we visit them. Each of my travelers host a French student in October and then that student reciprocates in the spring. It a great way to form lasting relationships and so rewarding to hear about the life long connections that are made. Just last summer at the FIFA World Cup in Russia, one of my former students ran into my son's French counterpart from the exchange in 2013. They immediately recognized each other and send a selfie to my son. How fun! And, of course, events such as these bring the language and cultural study out of the classroom and make it part of the student's life, a life that hopefully is more interesting and rewarding because of the years spent learning a language.

Maureen will represent our fourteen state Central States region as one of five national finalists for the ACTFL National Language Teacher of the Year. This will be awarded at the November, 2019 ACTFL conference in Washington, DC. Good luck, Maureen. We are all rooting for you!

Professional Reading

You outlined your unit, created assessments using backwards design, and...now what? How do you ensure that students will be successful on their assessments? This month we recommend ACTFL's book, *The Keys to Strategies to Language Instruction*, by Leslie Grahn and David McAlpine. The book features classroom performance-based strategies in the interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational modes that lead to student success on their assessments and move them to the next proficiency level.

Join MCTLC President-elect Megan Budke and MCTLC member Jessica Gillespie (Osseo Public Schools) for a study on *The Keys to Strategies to Language Instruction* on Twitter! We will be chatting about Chapter 4 on April 11 using the hashtag #langbookcafe.



MCTLC Welcomes New Newsletter Editor

Heather Cholat comes to us from the Blake School where she teaches French in the middle and upper schools. Heather earned her bachelor's degree in French and International Studies at the University of Tulsa and her master's degree in Educational Administration at the University of South Dakota. You can send any ideas you would like included in the newsletter to her at hcholat@blakeschool.org

**“One language sets you in a
corridor for life. Two languages
open every door along the way.”
-Franck Smith**