



**Vol. VI, No. 8**

**August 2015**

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

## LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT:



**Dear fellow world language educators,**

While human rights advocates in the United States celebrate the recent Supreme Court decision legalizing marriage for all, native speakers of the languages we teach in our classroom lack many of the rights

we take for granted. As we return to school this fall, news of the Supreme Court's decision provides us an unique opportunity to both incorporate current events and human rights into our daily lessons.

Why should we add human rights and current events to the already long list of curriculum we teach in the world language classroom? One of our goals is to create educated and compassionate global citizens. According to Culture of American Families' 2012 executive report (Bowman et al), 96% of parents say that their children's moral character is "very important if not essential". Yet 81% of children believe their own happiness and achievement are their parents' top priorities. What are our priorities as teachers? To educate global citizens who care deeply about the people around them and are genuinely interested in their cultures? Or to focus on the language spoken by these cultures and ensure that our students speak it well? Of course, we try to do both to the best of our ability.

Harvard's Graduate School of Education recently launched the Making Caring Common Project which provides tips for educators and teachers on how to raise caring and considerate children. Many of these suggestions could be modified for use in the world language classroom. Modeling compassion, demonstrating that you care on a daily basis, and providing opportunities for students to practice acts of

kindness in the classroom are a few great places to start. After all, if students cannot show compassion for the people they see every day, it will be difficult for them to care about the challenges faced by others half a world away.

As we focus on beginning the school year and the content we will be covering in the months that follow, we should not lose sight of the common goal we share with our students' parents: raising caring children. This is the pillar of educating global citizens. Since this is the theme of our fall conference, you can expect to get some ideas on how we can accomplish both goals in our classroom. I hope you will also consider sharing your thoughts on the MCTLC Teachers Café Facebook page.

We hold a pivotal role in the development of the next generation of leaders and citizens. It is crucial that we ensure they are both compassionate and knowledgeable about the world and its people. I look forward to seeing you in October and hearing about your students' journey toward global citizenship.

~ Kay Edberg

### **Save the date for these language educator events!**

**\*Find more events on page three.**

**MCTLC Teachers Café, Saturday, September 12, 2015**, at various locations around Minnesota. Check out your region at: <http://www.mctlc.org/event-1987293/Registration>

**MCTLC Fall Conference, October 23 – 24, 2015**, at Earle Brown Heritage Center, Brooklyn Center, Minnesota. For details and to register go to: [www.mctlc.org/Conference 2015/](http://www.mctlc.org/Conference%202015/)

**ACTFL Annual Convention and World Languages Expo, November 20 – 22, 2015**, San Diego, California (Pre-convention workshops, November 19). For more information and to register go to: [www.actfl.org/convention-expo](http://www.actfl.org/convention-expo)

## Interculturality in Cuba

*"You see that shed? It's like my culture. You can sit back here and describe it. But it's not until you go inside, listen, feel it, see it from the inside looking out, that you really know what it's all about. You've got to go inside!"*

- Alan Old Horn

This is a quote that I found in diversity training years ago. I include it on all of my syllabi as a preface to the cultural experience to personally interact with native speakers of Spanish, a requirement for my students at all levels. ACTFL President, Jacque Van Houten, writes about intercultural engagement in the Summer Issue of *Foreign Language Annals*. This year ACTFL is going to focus on interculturality, stressing the importance of language learners to engage in authentic cultural experiences. According to Van Houten, "intercultural competence goes beyond sensitivity to suggest a dynamic process of active participation or engagement in communication guided by the awareness and understanding of culture" (2015). She notes that the refreshed ACTFL (2015) *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages* reflect a shift to interculturality. The Cultures standard asks learners "to interact with cultural competence and understanding." The Communication standard asks learners "to interact and collaborate in their community and the globalized world." This implies that students go from passive knowledge of culture to active participation in it. It is essential to recognize the interdependent nature of language skills and cultural knowledge for learners to demonstrate interculturality. As language teachers we are uniquely poised to prepare our students to become informed world citizens with intercultural knowledge and competence.

I had the opportunity of a lifetime to enhance intercultural competency this spring when I joined a people to people exchange to Cuba in May with Witness for Peace. <http://www.witnessforpeace.org> Witness for Peace (WFP) is a politically independent, nationwide grassroots organization of people committed to nonviolence and led by faith and conscience. Established in 1983, its mission is to support peace, justice and sustainable economies in the Americas by changing U.S. policies and corporate practices that contribute to poverty and oppression in Latin America and the Caribbean. Since the 1990s the organization has been taking U.S. citizens to Cuba to improve relations between the two countries. The experience I participated in was to study sustainability in Cuba. After President Obama's announcement in December, I was intrigued to go to Cuba before it all changed. I wanted to see this country lost in time and meet its people.

Earlier in the spring I had started to give cultural presentations about Cuba in area high schools and in the Southwest Minnesota State University College Now Spanish classes I supervise. From my years living in Spain I was confident I had an open-minded perspective on Cuba. I had met Cubans in Madrid and listened to their stories. I had heard the revolutionary music, forbidden in the States, and followed the Cuban troubadours, Silvio Rodríguez and Pablo Milanés, also forbidden in the States. I had studied Che Guevara's life and read his diaries. In one school I even cooked with the students, featuring Cuban sandwiches. I knew of the very advanced Cuban medical system and their quality free education system. Yet, I felt the need to go to Cuba to experience these things first hand.

After ten days in Havana with a short trip to the Bay of Pigs area, I experienced the Cuban reality. I may have known more than the average U.S. citizen about Cuba but I had so much more to learn. I had taught that the two main products of Cuba were sugar cane and tobacco, making it world renown for rum and cigars. We met with an economist, Gladys Hernández, who informed us that the Cuban economy is based on five areas: sugar cane, mining, biotechnology and genetic research, agricultural machinery, and fishing.

Economic priorities in Cuba are to sustain the Cuban people. After decades of the trade embargo imposed by the U.S., in 1991 the support from the Soviet Union also ended. That meant that 98% of the oil, 75% of the food and 85% of spare parts disappeared. Cuba may have one of the most comprehensive, preventative medical systems in the world, but there are neither Band Aids nor gauze. We suggested that if Cuba would invest in tourism, multitudes of U.S. residents would surely be coming soon to improve the economy. Gladys laughed saying that Cubans know that their tropical island is forbidden fruit for Americans but they are going to invest in their own infrastructure before they invest in tourism. The Cuban people are in dire straits financially. There were lines outside of supermarkets. We had arrived just after an egg shortage. We would see makeshift bakeries advertising bread availability on a given day. And, finally there are no Cuban sandwiches in Cuba. All of the ingredients are not readily available.

The spirit and determination of the Cuban people, however, are strong. They love their cultural heritage, their history, their music, their dance. They believe in their revolution and their way of life just as we revere our own revolution and way of life. They are also very fond of the American people and our culture. They reached out to us on the street to say in perfect English, "You are my sister, my friend." At the historic soccer match between the Cuban national team and the New York Cosmos, fans waved the Cuban and American flags together and cheered on each of our goals. We have so much to gain by improving our relations with Cuba. We are neighbors and we should be given the opportunity to become friends and allies.

We were lucky to be in Cuba on Friday, May 29, the day that the U.S. removed Cuba from the list of "State Sponsors of Terrorism," a distinction they had suffered since 1982. Our group leader shared the news with us as we traveled to Playa Larga, a beach in the Bay of Pigs area. Later on the beach, a woodworker, selling his beautifully crafted work told me what a great day it was because Cuba was finally off the list, opening the way for improved relations and lifting the crippling trade embargo. I could not have shared that moment with him if I didn't speak Spanish. He and I could rejoice over the promise of peace between our countries, a profound promise of hope, because we could communicate.

In retrospect, I will revise my cultural presentations on Cuba and I will transcribe some songs to teach about Cuban culture and to practice vocabulary and verb forms. I will return to Cuba and hopefully, I will take students with me, "to go inside, listen, feel it, see it from the inside looking out."

~ Mary Thron

### References

ACTFL (2015). World-readiness standards for learning languages. Retrieved July 12, 2015.

<http://www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/World-ReadinessStandardsforLearningLanguages.pdf>

Van Houten, J. (2015). Intercultural engagement. *Foreign Language Annals*, Vol. 48 (2), 163-164.

GREAT IDEA for the FIRST DAY OF CLASS!  
Show this 5 minute STARTALK video to inspire your students to excel in language learning.  
"Keep Talking: Building Careers in International Affairs"  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aOm9uDaoSRc>

## Question of the Month

How do you teach your students to be caring, global citizens in your language classroom? Share your ideas today in a virtual conversation at the MCTLC Teacher's Café on Facebook!

## Local Culture, Careers, Experiential Learning, and Art were Focus of ESL Field Trip

Chisago County, MN--Learning about the local culture and exploring career opportunities was the focus for the 2015 field trip for English as a Second Language (ESL) department from four school districts in East Central Minnesota. This spring students, grades 1-9 had the opportunity to learn about bison, sculptures, jobs in a coffee shop, cheese making, and screen-printing. Students visited Eichten's Cheese and Bison Farm in Center City, ate lunch at the Eichten's Bistro, where bison burgers were offered as a menu choice, toured the Franconia Sculpture Park in Shafer, made a stop at Goldstar Printworks in Lindstrom, and had a chance to try homemade fudge at North Country Coffee in North Branch.

At each location the group could ask authentic questions of the business owner, to learn more about the possibilities of choosing a career in the same field. At the park in Franconia, they interacted with nearly all of the sculptures, using every preposition they knew, such as stand beside, on, in, above, below, and within as they tried out the artwork and took pictures of each other as part of the sculptural piece.

Students came from East Central, Hinckley/Finlayson, Pine City, and Rush City school districts and had these language backgrounds: Ojibwa, Hmong, Romanian, Khmer, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Spanish from Mexico, El Salvador, Ecuador, and the Dominican Republic. ESL services are coordinated through the St. Croix River Education District in Rush City. ~ Valorie Arrowsmith



English Learners pause for a group photo at Franconia Sculpture Park in Shafer. Photo by V. S. Arrowsmith

## Future Events for Language Educators



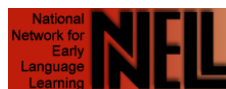
**MN - AATF - Cercle de lecture, Suite française,** Irène Némirovsky, September 26, 2015, Rice Hall 170, Macalester College at 10 am. See **building #16** on the Macalester College Map, see link below on next AATF event. For information email Laurent Déchery at [dechery@gustavus.edu](mailto:dechery@gustavus.edu) ou email Françoise Denis at [denis@macalester.edu](mailto:denis@macalester.edu)

**MN - AATF - Annual Dinner and meeting,** October 2, 2015, Alumni Center, Macalester College at 10am - Summit at Macalester Street. For information email Chapter President, Joëlle at [vitiello@macalester.edu](mailto:vitiello@macalester.edu) ou email Chapter First Vice President, Cristina at [chezsturm@frontiernet.net](mailto:chezsturm@frontiernet.net). See building #39 on the Macalester College Map found at: <http://www.macalester.edu/about/maps/campusmap-large.html>



**Classical Association of Minnesota - CAM 2015,** October 3, 2015. Guest speaker is Tolly Boatwright (Duke University)

Register at: <http://www.classicsmn.org/home/register-for-cam>



**NNELL - Look for future events at:** <http://www.nnell.org/events/calendar.shtml>



**MN - AATG - Keep up to date on events at:** <http://mnaatg.blogspot.com/search/label/Events>



**MN - AATSP - Check out events at:** [http://mn-aatsp.org/AATSP-MN/News\\_%26\\_Events.html](http://mn-aatsp.org/AATSP-MN/News_%26_Events.html)



**MAIN - MAIN event,** October 15, 2015, Robbinsdale Spanish Immersion School. Cost \$60 unless your school is a member of MAIN. Register online at: <http://www.mnimmersion.org/events>



**Confucius Institute, University of Minnesota - Check for events at:** <http://confucius.umn.edu/>



**Carla Institute, University of Minnesota - For professional development opportunities go to:** <http://www.carla.umn.edu/development.html>





## MCTLC Fall Conference : Educating Global Citizens, Brooklyn Center, Minnesota, October 23-24

Register online at: <http://www.mctlc.org/>

### Post Conference Workshops Highlight : Saturday, October 24, 2015

#### **Preparing students for study abroad -**

*Stacie Berdan*

This workshop will prepare you as the teacher of students planning to travel abroad with all the tips and information you will need to take your global children abroad.

#### **Talking about Things that Matter: Preparing for Success in the Interpersonal Mode -**

*Karen Fowdy and Lisa Hendrickson*

We want our students to leave our programs with the confidence to interact with native speakers and the curiosity to explore other cultures. How can we prepare our students for the challenge and satisfaction of having a spontaneous conversation about a meaningful topic? Presenters will demonstrate steps for designing instruction that moves from teacher-supported practice to independent student language use in the interpersonal mode within a thematic unit.

#### **Reading Activities Sure to Inspire a 'LIKE' -**

*Carol Gaab*

Reading is the perfect platform for facilitating language acquisition, and novel CI-based reading activities are an ideal way to turn an ordinary reading into CCCI (Compelling, Contextualized, Comprehensible Input). Learn how to deepen comprehension, engage even your most reluctant readers and accelerate acquisition through powerful activities that are easy to implement and sure to leave students looking for the 'LIKE' button!

#### **Keeping Students in the Target Language -**

*Talia Block and Lisa Perez*

Keeping novice level students in the target language can be a struggle. Come gain some key knowledge around creating a classroom community that encourages risk-taking and target language use. You will walk away from this session with activities and ideas for upping student target language usage in a fun and engaging way. This session will focus on our early language learners.

#### **Feeling Like a Citizen: Engaging Students and Building Community in the Classroom -**

*Grant Boulanger and Bryce Hedstrom*

Learn how to get students to buy into the classroom with engaging activities and student interviews. When students know one another they feel accepted, relaxed and ready to acquire the language. Learn how to interview students at any level in the TL and keep the *mojo* going all year long, increasing the complexity as students grow and helping them to learn real facts about one another with real language.



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