

# LOTE CED *Lowdown*

November/December 2000

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## Languages Other Than English Center for Educator Development

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## National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Pilot Test

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) is a nonpartisan, independent, and nonprofit organization of teachers and other education stakeholders who work to advance the teaching profession and improve student learning. The mission of NBPTS is to establish high and rigorous standards for what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do, to develop and operate a national voluntary system to assess and certify teachers who meet these standards, and to advance related education reforms for the purpose of improving student learning in American schools. (National Board certificates are a means to professional growth and improvement; they do not replace state licensing.)

The NBPTS has just completed work on their *World Languages Other Than English Standards*. **The organization is seeking practicing Texas LOTE teachers to pilot test assessments aligned with these new standards.** Participants will be asked to videotape a lesson and/or collect student work, and to write an analysis about their teaching. The entries are based on the NBPTS *World Languages Other Than English Standards* and are designed to reflect activities that teachers engage in naturally during a workday. The NBPTS assessments encourage teachers to select samples of teaching practices and to reflect on them through written commentaries.

The timeframe of the pilot test is from January 2001 to March 2001. Pilot participants have reported that it takes approximately 10-15 hours to complete one entry.

### **BENEFITS AND INCENTIVES INCLUDE AN HONORARIUM OF \$150 AND EXCELLENT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE.**

For more information on the pilot test and/or an application form, call 1-800-779-3339, extension 5312 or e-mail Melissa Nolan at [mnolan@ets.org](mailto:mnolan@ets.org).

The NBPTS *World Languages Other Than English Standards* will be available February 1, 2001. For ordering information, call 1-800-22-TEACH or visit the NBPTS web site at [www.nbpts.org](http://www.nbpts.org).

### Featured in This Issue...

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Pilot Test ...	1
Focus on Guiding Principle 7: Interdisciplinary Nature of Languages .....	2
Understanding French Culture .....	3
A Class Act: Communities .....	4
LOTE CED Bulletin Board .....	9
Professional Journals and You: Foreign Language Annals .....	10
A Word from the LOTE CED Staff .....	11
TEKS in Action! .....	11
LOTE CED Training Modules and Publications .....	12

### **FOREIGN LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE GRANTS AVAILABLE !!! APPLY NOW !!!**

The application process for the 2001 federal foreign language assistance grants is open. It is estimated that \$5,000,000 in new grants are available to local education agencies nationwide to provide for the establishment, improvement, or expansion of foreign language study for elementary and secondary school students. Grant applications are due January 26, 2001. For more information, visit <http://ocfo.ed.gov/fedreg/announce.htm>.

**DATED  
MATERIAL**

## Focus On Guiding Principle 7: Interdisciplinary Nature of Languages

Learning languages other than English enlarges the base of knowledge available to a student. All students can add to their educational experience by using another language for interdisciplinary connections within the school curriculum. Students who have skills and knowledge in LOTE have expanded access to information that is not always available to those who only speak English, such as materials from Germany about acid rain that a student might use for a science report. In the LOTE classroom, students are able to access sources in the language being studied that add insight to the rest of the curriculum, such as a French perspective on World War II or a Japanese perspective on cooperative management in a company. Students of LOTE have the advantage over their monolingual peers of expanded resources and knowledge.

Content from other disciplines is incorporated into the LOTE curriculum as a vehicle for communicating in the language. In addition, students gain insights into other subject areas by studying original works in LOTE, such as a newspaper for social studies or poetry for English language arts. Using the language, students might:

- study world history, historical figures, cultural variation, and geography, which reinforce social studies skills
- study mathematical terms and concepts and compare weights and measures, which reinforce mathematical skills
- learn computer and software terminology by producing a variety of documents and use other technological equipment for worldwide communication, which reinforce a variety of technological skills
- use reading, writing, and speaking processes, which reinforce English language arts and reading skills
- study business terminology and sociolinguistics, which support social and business communication skills
- learn about climate, weather, and environmental factors, which reinforce scientific skills
- expand their vocabulary in content areas

Students will use language in these activities at a level appropriate to their age, grade, and language ability.

### Upcoming Conferences

#### **Modern Language Association**

December 27-30; Washington, D.C.  
Email: [convention@mla.org](mailto:convention@mla.org)

#### **American Association of Teachers of Slavic and E. European Languages and American Council of Teachers of Russian**

Dec 27-30; Washington, D.C.  
<http://clover.slavic.pitt.edu/~aatseel/>

#### **American Association of Applied Linguistics**

February 24-27, 2001; St. Louis, MO  
<http://www.aaal.org>

#### **Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages**

February 27-March 3, 2001; St. Louis, MO  
<http://www.tesol.edu>

#### **French in Texas Symposium**

Mar 8-10, 2001; Austin, TX  
[http://www.utexas.edu/world/frenchintexas/annonce\\_anglais.htm](http://www.utexas.edu/world/frenchintexas/annonce_anglais.htm)

#### **Southwest Conference on Language Teaching**

March 15-17, 2001; San Francisco, CA  
<http://www.learnalanguage.org/swcolt/>

#### **Texas Foreign Language Association**

March 30-31, 2001; Laredo, TX  
<http://www.baylor.edu/~TFLA/>

#### **Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages**

March 29-April 1, 2001; New York, NY  
<http://www.dickinson.edu/nectfl>

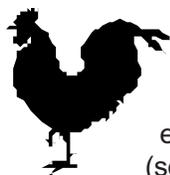
#### **Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages**

April 26-28, 2001, Indianapolis, IN  
<http://www.ualr.edu/~centralstate/>

#### **National Junior Classical League**

July 17-22, 2001, New Orleans, LA  
<http://www.njcl.org>

# UNDERSTANDING FRENCH CULTURE



Teachers of French, both native and non-native speakers, are fortunate to have available several important, and often humorous, resources to use as guides in the teaching and understanding of metropolitan French culture. In assessing the value of a given resource, especially one dealing with culture, readers must take into consideration the particular cultural (social, educational, gender-based, etc.) filter of the author as well as the publication date (since culture is not static). A book on “culture” is bound to generalize—which doesn’t mean the information is inaccurate or useless! The following three books provide insight and provocative, entertaining commentary on the French and French-American relations.



### ***Fragile Glory: A Portrait of France and the French***

Richard Bernstein (1991). Plume.

Bernstein is the former Paris bureau chief for the New York Times. This lengthy volume provides valuable background information on contemporary France and is based on personal experiences and observation as well as the reporter’s research. It includes chapters such as the following: The Miracle of the Whole, The Persistence of the Parts, Blood Names and Identity, Gallic Shrugs and Other Supposed Imperfections, and A Country Cut in One.

### ***French or Foe***

Polly Platt (1994). Culture Crossings, Ltd.

Platt is a journalist and, for eight years, has been a consultant with Culture Crossings (a consultancy and training organization for corporate transfers and their spouses). This engaging book is intended primarily for those who will be living or working in France, but it also provides “how to” advice on manners and getting along in the culture as well as insight into French attitudes that will be valuable to the casual traveler. Anyone who has traveled in France will recognize at least a few of the cultural “texts” Platt describes with a great deal of humor and empathy. Sample chapters include: Six Codes: Rudeness is in the Eye of the Beholder; You and the Bureaucracy: The Système D; History Matters: What Was, Is; The Logic of French Management; and Sixteen Marvels for Sixteen Headaches (including Line Jumpers, Dog Dirt, Taboos, and Making Friends).

### ***Cultural Misunderstanding: The French-American Experience***

Raymonde Carroll (1988). University of Chicago Press (*Evidences Invisibles*, Editions du Seuil, 1987).

Professor Carroll is a French cultural anthropologist married to an American who uses her experiences in both cultures (as well as those of friends and other informants) as a basis for cultural analysis. Each chapter focuses on a topic (Home, Conversation, Parents and Children, Friendship, etc.), providing examples (from both French and American perspectives) of real cross-cultural encounters in which misunderstandings occurred. Carroll then analyzes the situations, attempting to understand the meaning of the incident for each of the involved parties. The Introduction alone, in which Carroll discusses the nature of culture and cultural analysis, is worth the price of the book and is an excellent teaching tool for secondary students of LOTE to help them understand that their own worldviews are culturally (as well as individually) bound.



# **A CLASS ACT: COMMUNITIES**

A CLASS ACT features classroom activities tied to the 5 Cs: Communication, Cultures, Comparisons, Connections, and Communities. The following article is reprinted from the November 1998 issue of the American Council on Immersion Education Newsletter, Volume 2(1). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, The Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition. PLEASE NOTE: Although this scenario discusses the work of immersion students using rather advanced language skills, we feel that the activities described lend themselves to being adapted to any proficiency level. As you read the article, we invite you to take your own students' proficiency levels into consideration and reflect upon how you might "tweak" the various activities for their use.

## **Doing Oral History in a Spanish Immersion Social Studies Classroom** **by Martha Johnson**

In an immersion program, students need meaningful reasons to communicate in the target language for many different purposes—both inside and outside the classroom. To become fully proficient in the immersion language students need to develop a deep understanding of both the language and the culture they are studying. This is sometimes difficult to do in an immersion classroom where the focus is on integrating language into subject matter content instruction. Immersion teachers can overcome the shortcomings of classroom-based language learning by "designing tasks and using authentic texts that have a real communicative purpose for a real audience. Teachers can discover ways for immersion students to use their Spanish skills in the community and beyond" (Fortune 1998, p.72).

As a Spanish immersion social studies teacher of 7th and 8th grade students, I have found that one way to increase the authenticity of learning is to use oral history—the gathering and presenting of historical information in spoken form (Sitton 1983; Stokes Brown 1988). Doing oral history has the potential to bring history, culture and language to a new level in an immersion classroom. Oral history invites inquiry, stimulates discussion, and transforms abstract concepts into real terms,

*Doing oral history has the potential to bring history, culture and language to a new level in an immersion classroom.*

all necessary components of critical thinking skills. It supports an interactive communicative learning process that is based on building intergenerational relationships between immersion students and native speakers of the target language. Students are capable of doing incredible things when we succeed in constructing ways to actively engage them in the learning process instead of allowing them to be passive recipients. This approach to teaching and learning embodies what I consider to be an ideal learning experience for immersion students.

### **Introducing the Unit**

Before beginning a unit on oral history, students will need a basic understanding about what oral history is. If possible, the teacher should share a sample taped interview. It may be necessary to make one for this very purpose. Also, s/he should share a finished project with the class. Students can read about doing oral history (see references) and find actual projects on the Internet (<http://library.berkeley.edu/BANC/ROHO/online/>), although I have not found any sites that have information available in Spanish. This web site gives students a good place to start and they can continue exploring from there. If there is a local historical society or museum in the community, teachers can consider taking students to "see" the oral history archives or to hear someone present their own oral testimony—a refugee from El Salvador, a holocaust survivor, etc.

## Before the Interview

### ❖ Planning for meaningful projects

The oral interview process should be set up in such a way so that it culminates in a final project for class. It is important for students to decide ahead of time what the final project will be so that they can plan for the interview with that final project in mind. Students could create a life story booklet, display, short story or children's book. They could create a play or a skit. They could write an article for a local newspaper; maybe the newspaper could publish different sections of an oral history project over a period of several editions of the newspaper. The students could create their own newspaper or magazine to exhibit their work. The tapes and final projects could be shelved in the school library for future immersion students to use. The teacher may want to have pairs of students decide on a joint project and conduct the interviews together.

### ❖ Addressing ethical issues

The teacher needs to discuss and develop plans to address ethical issues such as privacy, obtaining informed consent, and other legal forms that interviewees may need to sign. (My students and I found samples of these types of forms, which students modified and translated, at <http://www.indiana.edu/~ohrc/pamph1.htm>.) Students must understand that pseudonyms need to be created for interviewees who prefer that their real names not be used.

### ❖ Developing skills as interviewers

Students need to learn basic interview techniques, how to ask open-ended questions, and how to work with senior citizens. This can happen in a variety of ways. The teacher can model the process in class. Students should make contacts with potential interviewees and conduct practice interviews in class (where they can analyze their techniques and develop their own interviewing style). Role play activities can be very help-

ful for getting students to practice their interview techniques. A prepared guest could come to the class to be interviewed by the entire class. The interview could be stopped and started to give students a chance to analyze what kinds of questions elicited the most in-depth responses.

*Oral history invites inquiry, stimulates discussion, and transforms abstract concepts into real terms, all necessary components of critical thinking skills.*

### ❖ Identifying people to interview

Some sources for finding potential interviewees include organizations and centers where native speakers get together in their community. If there aren't large numbers of Spanish-speaking people who could do interviews, the whole class might collaborate to conduct an interview collectively. Spending a few days before the interview doing research and organizing questions makes students much more involved with (and knowledgeable about) the guest speaker. If possible the interviewer and interviewee should get together to talk informally before the actual interviewing begins. They could talk about the process, sign the informed consent forms, etc. My students had a bag lunch get-to-know-you event before the first interview.

### ❖ Preparing for the first interview

Students also need to decide how many and what kind of interviews will be conducted. My students did two 90-minute interviews. Students may choose to organize their questions around specific themes (a particular historical event, holiday celebrations, etc.) which will lead to the final project they have in mind. Students may need to do research in the library to find out more information

**(continued on page 9)**

# LOTE CED Bulletin Board

## LOTE Video Series

The five-volume video series, *TEKS for LOTE: Learning Languages in Today's Language Classrooms*, produced by TEA's T-STAR studio, will begin airing in early 2001. Filming is underway in numerous LOTE classrooms around the state, and the first episode, an overview of the TEKS for LOTE, will debut January 30, 2001 from 4:15-4:45 pm. Remaining episodes focus on the Communication program goal along with an additional "C"; i.e., Communication and Cultures, Communication and Comparisons, Communication and Connections, and Communication and Communities. The second episode debuts February 27 (4:15-4:45pm); the third, March 26 (4:15-4:45pm); the fourth, April 26 (4:15-4:45pm); and the final, May 8 (4:15-4:45pm). The LOTE CED hopes to eventually develop supplemental materials for the videos to support districts who wish to use them in professional development activities such as study groups.

## TEKS FOR LOTE ON-LINE

You can find the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Languages Other Than English (TEKS for LOTE) at:  
<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/teks/114toc.htm>

## Learning Scenario Workshop

Learning scenarios are standards-based, thematic units of study that exemplify how standards can be implemented in the foreign language classroom. Because Texas' state standards, the TEKS for LOTE, describe broad goals for learners at various proficiency levels, teachers are eager to see examples of what others have done to incorporate the TEKS into the curriculum. The national standards document published by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) was the first to offer LOTE teachers numerous examples of learning scenarios at many levels and in many languages. (Those scenarios actually described pilot projects conducted during the development of the national standards after which the TEKS are modeled.) *A Texas Framework for Languages Other Than English* presents shorter examples of standards-based activities called snapshots. Now the LOTE CED plans to engage a group of Texas teachers in developing TEKS-based learning scenarios that will be distributed to LOTE educators around the state and will also be available on-line. The Center will host a learning scenario-writing workshop in the spring of 2001. Teachers chosen for the workshop will travel to Austin to work together in determining appropriate themes, texts, and learning experiences that interweave the five Program Goals (Communication, Cultures, Comparisons, Connections, Communities) into cohesive units of study that can serve as excellent illustrations of standards-based, student-centered learning. An application and detailed information on the workshop will be sent to Texas LOTE coordinators in January of 2001 to distribute in their districts. However, any Texas LOTE teacher may apply to be considered for the workshop. Call or email Lillian King Meidlinger at the LOTE CED, (800) 476-6861, x288 or [leking@sedl.org](mailto:leking@sedl.org) to get your name on the mailing list.

## Errata

- The LOTE CED Lowdown's Bulletin Board (Vol. 3.3) should have indicated that Julia Lozano is a peer coaching/mentoring facilitator in the Houston area.
- The author of *A Class Act* (Vol. 3.3) was inadvertently omitted. Lee Kovalek (Manahawkin, NJ) authored *Interdisciplinaire à la Carte: Making*

## COMING SOON! OCCASIONAL PAPERS FROM THE LOTE CED

The LOTE CED will soon be publishing "occasional papers" on topics of interest to LOTE teachers in Texas. The first of these papers will be sent out in early December and will address the issue of fostering connections between K-12 teachers of LOTE and those involved in LOTE education at the postsecondary level. The papers will be mailed to all Texas K-12 campuses with LOTE programs and made available on-line at the LOTE CED web site.



## Professional Journals and You: Foreign Language Annals

Teachers of LOTE do not lack for a variety of professional journals from which to choose as resources for ideas and information on classroom instruction and strategies and for reports on research findings in the field of language education and second language acquisition. This edition of the LOTE CED Lowdown highlights one of those journals.

*Foreign Language Annals (FLA)* is published bimonthly by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. Annual subscriptions are available to libraries and are included in the price of ACTFL membership. FLA is “dedicated to advancing all phases of the profession of foreign language teaching.” It contains articles on a variety of general language teaching and learning topics as well as those related to specific languages. In both cases, the information is useful in providing a “big picture” that allows LOTE educators to reflect on how the information *might* be applied/adapted to their own classrooms—or to a different language or a different level of instruction or proficiency. Recent volumes have contained articles related to instruction/learning in French, Spanish, Russian, and German as well as articles of general interest on topics such as using E-mail and content-based instruction (CBI). FLA contains an occasional feature called *In a Class by Itself: Focus on Instruction* which centers on classroom applications. Examples of articles of interest in recent issues include the following:



Volume 33 (5) Sept/Oct 2000: Anxiety and Reading Comprehension in Spanish as a Foreign Language.

Volume 33 (4) July/Aug 2000: Converging Evidence: Attitudes, Achievements, and Instruction in the Later Years of FLES [Japanese as a Foreign Language].

Volume 33(3) May/June 2000: Culture as Information and Culture as Affective Process: A Comparative Study; The Changing Face of the Intermediate Language Curriculum.

Volume 33(2) Mar/Apr 2000: Content-Based Instruction: Can It Help Ease the Transition From Beginning to Advanced Level Classes?

Volume 33 (1) Jan/Feb 2000: The Effects of Block Scheduling on Foreign Language Learning; Video in the Proficiency-Based Advanced Conversation Class: An Example from the Russian-Language Curriculum.

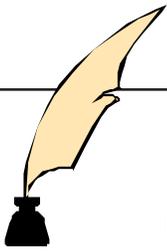
### COOL SITES TO CHECK OUT

**<http://carla.acad.umn.edu/cobaltt/>**

The University of Minnesota's Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA)'s **Content Based Language Teaching through Technology (CoBaLTT)** initiative provides language teachers with instruction and practical tools on incorporating content-based language instruction into the classroom using technology through a professional development program and a web-based resource center. Though it is still in the beginning stages of development, the CoBaLTT web site has much to offer, including a searchable lesson plan database that contains standards-based lesson plans developed by CoBaLTT participants and the Content-based Instruction (CBI) Databases, which provides annotation on key content-based language instruction resources.

**<http://frontiers.loc.gov/intldl/mtfhtml/mfsplash.html>**

**Meeting of Frontiers: America & Russia** is a bilingual, multimedia digital library that tells the story of the American exploration & settlement of the West, the parallel exploration & settlement of Siberia & the Russian Far East, & the meeting of the Russian-American frontier in Alaska & the Pacific Northwest. Much of the primary material has never been published or is rare. The site is intended to demonstrate the educational & cultural potential of international cooperation in the development of digital libraries.



## *A word from the LOTE CED...*

It's hard to believe that the LOTE CED is well into its fourth project year. When Elaine and I and our colleagues at TEA, Inés García and Carl Johnson, began the project in 1998, we had no idea what the LOTE CED's eventual life span would be. The center's very existence represents support for LOTE education that is unprecedented in our state. We feel that this support conveys a significant and positive message about the importance of language learning in Texas. We are quite fortunate to have been around this long and are proud of what the LOTE CED has been able to accomplish and produce thus far. We sincerely hope that you feel the same.

The LOTE CED exists to help you, the LOTE educators of Texas. Our primary mission is to support you as you implement the TEKS for LOTE in your classrooms. Classroom implementation of the TEKS has been challenging in every discipline and LOTE is certainly no exception. The TEKS for LOTE ask you to look at language teaching and learning from a very different perspective than did its predecessor, the Essential Elements. Among other things, the TEKS ask teachers of LOTE to integrate the five Cs into instruction, to think in terms of proficiency levels/progress checkpoints (novice, intermediate, advanced), to employ authentic materials and technology, and to incorporate student-centered activities that encourage the development of real-world communicative skills. These shifts in perspective necessitate change in curriculum development and assessment as well. All of this but no more hours in the day...

We invite you to look to us as you grapple with the challenge set before you. We have developed numerous resources to support you, including hands-on training workshops that address many aspects of TEKS for LOTE implementation, a quarterly newsletter that keeps you apprised of what's happening in LOTE education in Texas and around the nation, and a web site full of resources. Soon, we will be adding a video series, occasional papers, and a database of TEKS-based learning scenarios to this list. Please feel free to call us or visit the web site for more information about what we have to offer.

"Thank you" to many of you for your words of encouragement and advice—we need both in order to thrive. Elaine and I hope you have a marvelous holiday season and a very happy new year!

— *Lillian King Meidlinger*

### TFLA CONFERENCES

The annual fall conference of the Texas Foreign Language Association (TFLA) took place in Austin in early November 2000. As usual, the conference had much to offer LOTE teachers from across the state—engaging workshops, informative sessions, and entertaining exhibits. If you missed it this fall, don't fret! TFLA also holds a spring conference each year, so mark your calendars now and make plans to attend!

**TFLA Spring Conference**  
**March 30-31, 2001**  
**Laredo, Texas – La Posada Hotel**

*For information on how to register for the conference, please contact Eugenia Simons at: TFLAes@aol.com or (713) 468-4959*



### **TEKS in Action!**

The Texas Education Agency's T-Star Studios recently produced an episode featuring LOTE for its *TEKS in Action* series. The program debuted in late September. The classrooms of **Ricci Hatten** and **Lori Sánchez**, teachers of Spanish from Austin's Hill Country Middle School, were featured. In addition, the episode showed footage from a recent LOTE CED training of trainers session conducted via TETN by **Bobette Dunn** of Fort Bend ISD. A roundtable discussion of LOTE CED activities among LOTE CED and TEA staff was also filmed and included in the program. The program is scheduled to air again in the 2001-2002 school year. If you are interested in seeing it before then, you can obtain a copy by calling (512) 463-9218 – be sure and mention the TEKS in Action series, LOTE episode, and the original air date which was September 28, 2000. Though there is no cost to receive a copy, you may be asked to supply a blank videotape.

**(continued from page 5)**

about a particular historical event so they can ask informed questions. Life story interviews are also valuable. Once the seniors have been identified, students can ask them to complete a short questionnaire that will help the students organize their pre-interview research. This also helps the students to get to know the interviewee before the interview. The teacher will want to review the students' lists for possible interview topics and questions prior to the interview and make any necessary changes or recommendations.

Students will need to become familiar with the equipment they will be using. Before the actual interview begins students should label all the tapes and record an introduction with the date, place, time, names of participants and the topic of the interview. Chairs should be arranged in order to maintain good eye contact and in a quiet place. The equipment should be tested to check for sound quality.

### **During the Interview**

Conducting successful and respectful interviews is no easy task. Many issues need to be considered and should be discussed at length with students in the context of developing interview skills (prior to scheduling the interviews).

The students should start out the interview with a few pleasantries, explain what they are doing and why. The interviewer should explain the consent form again at this time and what they will be doing with the tapes. After the interview has begun, the tape recorder should be checked once to make sure it is working and then left alone so it doesn't distract the interviewee. Another strategy to get the interviews started is to ask the interviewees to bring a picture to loan to the students or simply to talk about at the interview. Some students may even find something appropriate that they could bring to the interview that could serve as a "memory trigger."

The interviewer should ask questions to guide the interview along. It is best to start with easy-to-answer, non-controversial questions. Students should always leave the most difficult questions for the end when there is more rapport. It is important to ask only one question at a time. The interviewer should not worry about silence on the tape. The interviewee may need time to think. Interviewers must remember never to interrupt a good story to ask for details. The interviewer can always ask follow-up questions afterwards to clarify something. The interviewer should take

*"The oral history project we did was a lot of fun. I liked learning from a person much better than having to read from the textbook. We had to work hard, but it was fun too. I learned how to talk with older people, how to do an oral interview and how to organize the information afterwards. I also learned a lot about World War II in Europe. We should do more projects like this one in the future."*

notes—one never knows when a tape recorder might malfunction. Keeping the important points on paper may also help to create new questions that the students hadn't considered prior to the interview. The interviewer should watch for opportunities to expand on topics.

The students must also watch body language for signs of fatigue or discomfort. Are the questions being asked too personal or too painful for the interviewee to answer? Is the interviewee too exhausted to continue? Sometimes it is wise to stop for a break or make arrangements to continue on another day. If the interviewee uses gestures, the student should verify them verbally. The interviewer should take care not to sound judgmental, impatient or disrespectful at any time during the interview.

Students may want to take pictures of the interviewee at the end of the interview. This could be used in the final project and as a gift for the

interviewee. The interviewer should always keep an eye on the time. I have found ninety minutes to be the ideal length for an interview (see also Lanman & Mehaffy 1989, p. 27). The interviewer should stop the formal interview a few minutes early to allow for some informal closure and if needed to schedule the next interview.

### **After the Interview**

Students need time to review the information and decide what is important. It is most helpful if the teacher can give them clear, specific guidelines about what needs to be done and when. The teacher becomes the facilitator of the learning process instead of the giver of information. Students need time to reflect on the process and their own learning. The teacher should design some reflection/debriefing activities.

Students need to consider the final project they have chosen and begin to work with the content of the interview with that project in mind. They need to consider the audience they are creating the project for; for example, if they are going to create a book for young children, they should have a limited text and use lots of pictures and illustrations.

Students should begin transcribing and editing the tapes. Summarizing the tapes in 5- or 10-minute intervals is another possibility. If needed, they may want to organize follow-up questions for a second interview or to clarify any questions they may have. There may be a need for some follow-up research to clarify a particular historical event. A discussion and/or an activity about written versus spoken language would be very helpful for students who are working to transcribe and edit the tapes. A discussion about first and third person narratives might also be valuable.

Students should write a thank you note to the interviewee and also invite them to a celebration event. A heritage fair or special event where parents, community members, and the interviewees could celebrate together and see all the projects on display is a fantastic idea!

### **Logistical Concerns**

There are many logistical problems to be considered when deciding to take on this kind of project

in the immersion classroom. Doing oral history requires a lot of teacher preparation and class time. The projects take on a life of their own, and the teacher has to be prepared for anything. Getting equipment that works can be a challenge. Finding interviewees (senior citizens or others who speak the target language) can be a challenge depending on where the immersion program is located. There are many questions that will need to be addressed during the course of the unit. For example, do the students have to find their own interviewees or do you help set this up for them? Where do they hold the interviews? What about liability concerns? Arranging for transportation for students to get to and from the interviews is another difficulty.

How can a teacher justify taking time away from the traditional curriculum to teach a unit on oral history? There are many, seemingly overwhelming obstacles to doing an oral history project. However, with proper planning and organization, I have found they can all be worked out. In the end students may have the most valuable learning experience ever. It is something they will never forget! Here's what one of my students had to say about the oral history project we did in my 7th & 8th grade Spanish Immersion U.S. History class last year:

"El proyecto que hicimos de la historia oral fue muy divertido. Me gustó aprender de una persona mucho mejor que tener que leer del libro de texto. Tuvimos que trabajar mucho, pero era divertido también. Aprendí como hablar con personas mayores, como hacer una entrevista oral y como organizar la información después. También aprendí mucho de la Segunda Guerra Mundial en Europa. Debemos seguir haciendo más proyectos como el de la historia oral en el futuro. Fue una experiencia que nunca olvidaré." (from final reflection piece, May 1998)

[The oral history project we did was a lot of fun. I liked learning from a person much better than having to read from the textbook. We had to work hard, but it was fun too. I learned how to talk with older people, how to do an oral interview and how to organize the information afterwards. I also learned a lot about World War II in Europe. We should do more projects like this one in the future. It was an experience I will never forget.]

Doing an oral history project is a great learning tool. Students realize history is made every day by real people. All people are actors in history. Oral history gives a voice to people who are not often heard in the history textbooks. Oral history projects give meaning and substance to history class and break down stereotypes between generations. They teach kids to look for inconsistencies and bias. Oral history is learning by doing. Doing oral history in an immersion setting uses a valuable resource—the community—as its classroom.

You can contact the author, Martha Johnson, at Highland Park Junior High School, 975 South Snelling Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55116, (651) 293-8950 or ramer001@tc.umn.edu.



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## National Language Resource Center Web Sites

**National Capital Language Resource Center (NCLRC)**

<http://www.cal.org/nclrc>

**Slavic & E. European Languages Resource Center (SEELRC)**

<http://www.unc.edu/depts/slavic/>

**National K-12 Foreign Language Resource Center at Iowa State University**

<http://www.educ.iastate.edu/nflrc>

**Center for Language Education and Research (CLEAR)**

<http://clear.msu.edu>

**National East Asian Languages Resource Center**

<http://www.flc.ohio-state.edu/nflrc>

**Language Acquisition Resource Center (LARC)**

<http://ssrl.sdsu.edu/larcnet/home.html>

**National Foreign Language Resource Center**

<http://www.LLL.hawaii.edu/nflrc/>

**Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA)**

<http://carla.acad.umn.edu>

**National African Language Resource Center (NALRC)**

<http://african.lss.wisc.edu/nalrc/>

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Call your TEKS liaison to request TEKS for LOTE training! See page 12 for more information.

# LOTE CED Training Modules and Publications

## **LOTE CED Training Modules**

Contact the TEKS liaison at your ESC or the language coordinator in your ISD to find out about workshops in your area. For more information on the content of the training, contact the LOTE CED.

- **Module I - TEKS for LOTE: Overview**
- **Module II - TEKS for LOTE: Classroom Implementation**
- **Module III-A - TEKS for LOTE: Addressing Assessment**
- **Module III-B - TEKS for LOTE: Developing Curriculum**
- **Peer Coaching and Mentoring for Teachers of LOTE**

## **Project ExCELL Publications**

Publications produced by Project ExCELL (Excellence and Challenge: Expectations for Language Learners) include:

- **A Texas Framework for Languages Other Than English**
- **Professional Development for Language Teachers: Implementing the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Languages Other Than English**
- **Preparing Language Teachers to Implement the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Languages Other Than English**

All three Project ExCELL documents include a copy of the *Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Languages Other Than English* and may be downloaded from the LOTE CED web site. Photocopied versions are available from the Texas Foreign Language Association (TFLA) for the cost of duplicating and mailing. The cost to TFLA members is \$2.50/each or \$6.00 for all three; the cost to non-members is \$3.50/each or \$9.00 for all three. Send checks payable to TFLA to: Phyllis B. Thompson, Houston Baptist Univ., 7502 Fondren, Houston, TX 77074

An original version of *A Texas Framework for Languages Other Than English* can be obtained from TEA. The cost to tax-exempt organizations is \$8.00/each; the cost for all others is \$10.00/each. To order, contact: Publications Distribution and Sales, Skip Baylor, Texas Education Agency, 1701 North Congress Avenue, Austin, TX 78701, (512) 463-9744

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