

LOTE CED *Lowdown*

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Languages Other Than English Center for Educator Development

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LEARNING SCENARIOS DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

On April 19-21, ten outstanding teachers of LOTE took part in a LOTE CED Learning Scenarios Development Workshop in Austin. Representatives from seven different school districts came to the workshop; included among them were teachers of French, German, Latin, and Spanish. The work produced by the writers will be published in a LOTE CED volume of TEKS for LOTE-based learning scenarios to appear in late summer 2001.



Hard at work in the computer laboratory at SEDL.

The purpose of the workshop was to provide the participants some food for thought and time to write. The "nourishment" was provided by French teacher and nationally-known foreign language consultant Toni Theisen of Fort Collins, Colorado.

Ms. Theisen energized the participants with interactive presentations on Multiple Intelligences and Differentiated Learning. Motivated by her demonstration of various activities and innovative ideas, the ten writers worked in pairs to create original and imaginative learning scenarios (theme-, task-, and standards-based instructional units) in their respective languages.

The participants received both the training and the uninterrupted writing time with great enthusiasm and left Austin eager to continue working on the scenarios they had begun. Each team of two teachers will create three complete learning scenarios by early June.



Participants join in on a demonstration of a bodily-kinesthetic activity called "Human Geography."

Developing Language Proficiency

Proficiency and Achievement

Language proficiency is the ability to use language for purposeful communication. Proficiency describes what students are able to do with language using the skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing, and showing. Participating in class discussions, reading literature, playing educational games, giving oral presentations, or watching a video of a news report are examples of purposeful communication in an educational setting.

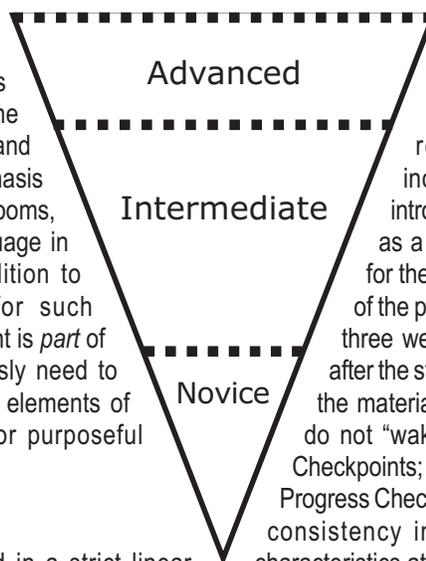
Language proficiency should not be confused with achievement. Achievement, which is also important for students, looks only for students to develop mastery of the content of instruction, such as grammar and vocabulary, in a particular course. An emphasis on developing proficiency in LOTE classrooms, however, prepares students to use language in practical and meaningful ways in addition to mastering the content necessary for such communication to take place. Achievement is *part* of gaining proficiency. Teachers continuously need to move students beyond just learning the elements of language to using them proficiently for purposeful communication.

Proficiency and Progress Checkpoints

Language proficiency is not developed in a strict linear progression, a progression of equal-sized blocks of material learned and tested. Rather, language proficiency develops when practice is guided repeatedly over time to help students gain confidence and fluency in different language functions. Teachers plan classroom activities to help students get closer and closer to authentic use of language structures and vocabulary, knowing that students' experimentation with language will falter as structured support (such as written sheets to guide pair work) is removed, but will then progress again as students stretch to creatively apply their language tools. Progress Checkpoints along the path of proficiency are specified in the TEKS for LOTE. These checkpoints cannot be precisely equated with year-long courses, since experience makes clear that students do not neatly reach a new checkpoint at the end of each school year. The pathway is constant, but the time it takes each student to reach each checkpoint is not. These Progress Checkpoints help guide the teacher and students to know first the goals for designing developmental activities and second the signs showing that students are reaching a given checkpoint. In this way, the Progress Checkpoints will guide curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

The Progress Checkpoints in the TEKS for LOTE represent different learning stages also known as proficiency levels (novice, intermediate, and advanced). An inverted triangle is often used to show that as students advance from Progress

Checkpoint to Progress Checkpoint, the amount of time and practice needed to reach the next stage increases. A student can move relatively quickly through the early stage of mimicking memorized words and phrases, a stage that is limited, controlled, and comfortable. To move into later stages, characterized by flexible, challenging, and creative use of language, requires longer periods of practice and an increasingly meaningful volume of experiences.



Gaining proficiency is a process that requires repeated exposure and opportunities to practice new language functions, vocabulary, and structures; to receive feedback; and to use skills in increasingly sophisticated contexts. A topic introduced at one level might reappear in the next as a challenge in a new context; learners reach for the next level as they begin to control the tasks of the present level. "Mastery" does not come two or three weeks after material is introduced, but rather after the student has had many opportunities to practice the material in meaningful ways. In addition, students do not "wake up" one day having changed Progress Checkpoints; instead, they move through stages within the Progress Checkpoint by showing increased control over and consistency in the use of the language proficiency characteristics at the next checkpoint.

Proficiency and Accuracy

Accuracy is the degree to which communication is structurally correct and culturally appropriate (The College Board, 1996). In real-life situations, communication occurs without complete structural precision; that is, grammar mistakes do not necessarily equate to lack of communication. However, a high degree of accuracy, including communicating in a socially and culturally appropriate manner, is very important to achieving high levels of proficiency.

At different levels of proficiency, students exhibit different degrees of accuracy. Novices, for example, may repeat memorized phrases with nearly perfect grammar and pronunciation. As they begin to combine these learned phrases in an effort to build more creative ones, accuracy initially declines. Temporary fluctuations in accuracy normally accompany increases in skill development. As students grow more secure in their understanding of another culture, their ability to behave in culturally appropriate ways increases. The overall goal is to gradually use and mesh cultural and linguistic skills with increasing accuracy in order to obtain a high level of language proficiency.

The College Board (1996). *Articulation and achievement: Connecting standards, performance, and assessment in foreign language*. New York, NY: College Entrance Examination Board.

Facilitator Spotlight



Close to one hundred Texas LOTE educators have been trained by the LOTE CED as TEKS for LOTE and/or Peer Coaching and Mentoring training facilitators. They serve as consultants to provide in-service through Independent School Districts and regional Education Service Centers.

Rosanna Pérez (standing)

Rosanna teaches Spanish IV AP Honors and Spanish V Honors at Communication Arts High School in San Antonio. She is also the sponsor of the Spanish student newspaper, "La Comunidad," as well as the Spanish National Honor Society and has been recognized as the Northside ISD Teacher of the Year. In May, she will receive her Masters of Education in School Administration from Trinity University. Rosanna is a frequent presenter at conferences and serves as both a TEKS for LOTE trainer and a trainer for Peer Coaching and Mentoring for the LOTE CED.

María J. Fierro-Treviño (seated)

Maria is the Instructional Specialist for International Languages for the Northside ISD in San Antonio. She was involved in the study of the Elementary Dual Language Program for Northside which will be implemented in 2001-2002 and was instrumental in the implementation of the multimedia language labs for the district. María served as co-chair for the TEKS for LOTE and Framework Writing Teams. She has served as President-Elect and President of TFLA and is currently serving as Immediate Past President. In March of this year, she was elected to the Executive Board of the Southwest Conference on Language Teaching. Maria is also a frequent conference presenter and was a member of the original LOTE CED training facilitator corps.



Upcoming Conferences

Regional CLEAR Workshop: On-site Technology Training for Foreign Language Teachers

May 14-15; Belton, Texas
<http://mthomas@umhb.edu>

National Total Physical Response Storytelling Conference

June 11-14; Oklahoma City, OK
OFLTA, P.O. Box 15356, Del City, OK 73155

American Classical League Annual Institute

June 28-30 • San Antonio, TX
<http://www.aclassics.org/Institute/index.shtml>

American Association of Teachers of French

July 5-8 • Denver, CO
<http://aatf.utsa.edu/convention/>

American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese

July 5-9 • San Francisco, CA
<http://www.aatsp.org/meeting.htm>

National Junior Classical League

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

Texas Foreign Language Association

October 25-27 • Houston, TX
<http://www.baylor.edu/~TFLA>

National Association of District Supervisors of Foreign Languages

Nov 14-15; Washington, D.C.
Email: swatts@ops.org

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages

November 15-18 • Washington, DC
<http://www.actfl.org>

American Association of Teachers of German

November 16-18; Washington, D.C.
Email: aatg@bellatlantic.net

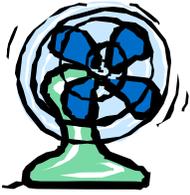
Modern Language Association

Dec 27-30; New Orleans, LA
Email: convention@mla.org

Check out ***What's Hot*** on the LOTE CED Web site for a regularly updated list of conferences and other activities.

<http://www.sedl.org/loteced/hot.html>

Resources



SUMMER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO PARTICIPATE!

Linguahostel is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing professional development programs that enable educators to prepare their students for the worldwide neighborhood of the 21st century. They are currently offering two professional development opportunities for LOTE educators:

World Language Teaching Methodology and Culture Online

This web-based professional development course is intended for both experienced and beginning K-12 teachers of Spanish, French, and German who would like to update their language teaching methodologies and expand their knowledge of target cultures. The course is held three times a year with the next course beginning on May 21, 2001 and running through Aug. 27, 2001.

French and Quebec Culture Program for Teachers

This program is held in Montréal and conducted in collaboration with the Université de Montréal. It is intended for teachers and future teachers of French who would like the opportunity to master a variety of teaching methods based on current pedagogical approaches integrated with Quebec cultural activities. The program runs from June 24 through July 1, 2001.

For more information on these programs, please visit <http://www.linguahostel.org> or contact Linguahostel's Director, Elizabeth White, at (518) 561-0093 or via e-mail at info@linguahostel.org.

SPANISH AND U.S. HISPANICS: ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

The first moderated national forum for the exploration of issues related to the total Hispanic experience in the United States has been launched by Dr. María Carreira of California State University at Long Beach. The discussion group is being sponsored by Houghton Mifflin Co. and can be found at <http://www.hmco.com/cgi-bin/WebX?college1-14@@.ee6bd3d>

On the web site, Dr. Carreira has chosen and provided links to three publications to elicit discussion:

Latino Talent Pinch Hobbling U.S. Firms' Expansion Plans, is an article from the L.A. Times that underscores the shortage of qualified bilingual personnel in the U.S.

U.S. Hispanics and Information Technology Fact Sheet is a summary of a recently released report assessing the use of technology by U.S. Hispanics.

The New Economy and the Preservation of Spanish in the U.S.: A cause for optimism is the keynote address that Dr. Carreira delivered last summer in Las Cruces, New Mexico, at the Sixth Annual Conference on Teaching Spanish to Native Speakers. This paper examines the future of U.S. Spanish in light of the favorable social conditions arising for U.S. Hispanics.

FREE COPIES OF ERIC REVIEW ON K-12 FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

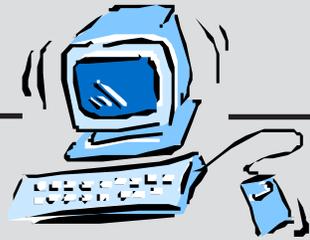
In the fall of 1998, the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) published a volume of the *ERIC Review* that focused on K-12 Foreign Language Education. This publication is a useful resource for teachers, administrators, school boards, and parents. It provides good, general information in a user-friendly format on various aspects of LOTE education in the United States, including:

- benefits of foreign language learning
- status, trends, and models
- standards, assessments, and professional development
- less commonly taught languages

FREE copies of this publication are available for the asking – call ACCESS ERIC at 1-800-538-3742 or send an e-mail request to accesseric@accesseric.org.



LOTE



LINKS

SPANISH

<http://globegate.utm.edu/spanish/span.html>

This site, developed by “Tennessee Bob Peckham” of the University of Tennessee at Martin, contains links to a variety of Spanish-language sites and is a good place to begin a search for materials related to Spanish-language matters: culture, history, literature, popular culture, current events. Sub-headings include: Spanish-language search engines, maps, link sites, grammars, on-line courses/lessons, newspapers, magazines, and radio/TV.

<http://cvc.cervantes.es/portada.htm>

The Centro Virtual Cervantes offers a wonderful web site with information and resources for Spanish teachers and engaging activities for learners. For example, a link called *Paso a Paso* offers reading excerpts for students at the novice, intermediate and advanced levels. Once an excerpt has been selected, pre- and post-reading activities, teaching suggestions, and a text summary are provided. Within the text itself, unfamiliar or difficult words are glossed using synonyms or explanations in Spanish.

GENERAL

<http://www.adeater.com>

An enormous amount of cultural information can be gleaned through target culture advertising. This site contains a wealth of video clips of commercials from countries around the world. The homepage has links for French, Spanish, and Portuguese; but the Cinema Library allows you to select from scores of countries--or to choose by key word, year, brand, business sector, or product.



TFLA TEACHERS OF THE YEAR

Four Texas LOTE educators were named Teachers of the Year at the Texas Foreign Language Association spring conference in Laredo on March 31, 2001. The award winner for German was **Heidi Hubbard** of Plano ISD. **Chizuko K. Bolinger** of Houston ISD won the Japanese Teacher of the Year award. **Cindy Ong** of Northside ISD in San Antonio was named Latin Teacher of the Year. The Spanish Teacher of the Year award went to **Johnnie Eng** of Alamo Heights ISD in San Antonio. In keeping with the tradition of previous Spanish Teachers of the Year, Mr. Eng also received a scholarship from Spain’s Ministry of Education and Culture to attend one of the many summer institutes in Spain this year.

TFLA recognizes Teachers of the Year annually at its spring conference. Awards are competitive, and teachers are nominated by their colleagues or administrators. Several factors are considered in the selection process, including excellence in teaching, professional contributions, publishing awards, involvement in TFLA, etc. If you wish to nominate an outstanding colleague for next year’s awards, contact TFLA (713/468-4959) or look for a nominations ballot in the fall issue of the TFLA Newsletter.

Friends of the Profession awards are also presented at the spring and fall TFLA conferences. This spring, **Senator Judith Zaffirini**, Vice-Chair of the Texas Senate Education Committee and sponsor of Texas Senate Bill 467 Dual Language Immersion Programs was honored in Laredo at the conference luncheon. TFLA presented Senator Zaffirini with its award for distinguished public service as a friend of languages. Why not nominate someone you know who is a strong advocate for language learning?

A CLASS ACT: COMPARISONS

A CLASS ACT features learning scenarios tied to the five Cs: Communication, Cultures, Comparisons, Connections, and Communities. The following scenario is reprinted from *Standards for Classical Language Learning*, a collaborative project of The American Classical League and The American Philological Association and Regional Classical Associations. This unit, in which students compare a piece of Latin literature with a Broadway play, illustrates some of the timeless and universal themes related to war, romance, and culture. Some of the issues which emerge in this particular example may give teachers pause. For classical cultures, properly "motivated" suicide was considered an honorable act. Obviously, given the problems of contemporary American culture—and particularly when dealing with impressionable youth—teachers should approach the subject with caution. It is, however, an opportunity to focus on the importance of understanding that cultural perspectives vary from country to country and age to age.

Is Vergil's Dido "Miss Saigon?"

by Ruth Adams Haukeland

Mrs. Haukeland's Advanced Placement Vergil students at Schreiber High School, a large suburban public school near New York City, are involved in a lively discussion about whether Dido could have acted differently and avoided the tragedy that ended her life. On the



previous day, Mrs. Haukeland took her class to see the musical "Miss Saigon," whose plot is very similar to Book IV of the *Aeneid*. In both, a foreign soldier on his way home from war falls in love with a proud but vulnerable woman; a pseudo-wedding is held; ghosts visit and warn in both stories; and both end in abandonment, curses, and suicide. Both heroes, Aeneas and the young American soldier, Chris, unwittingly bring death to the women they love.

One student suggests that it is the war that is to blame: war always disrupts; rules of civilization no longer apply. Another suggests that Dido, and her counterpart, the beautiful young Vietnamese Kim, had to be sacrificed for "the greater good." Mrs. Haukeland asks how the greater good which Vergil envisions differs from America's in the chaotic aftermath of the Vietnam war.

The discussion moves on to "culture clash." Is it possible that neither of these couples had even the smallest chance of a lasting relationship because of the wide divergence in the perspectives and values of their different cultures? The students, in general, reject this

suggestion, but one points out that Aeneas' Roman concept of honor (*pietas*) is very ethnocentric. The conflicts in both stories result from viewpoints that are inflexible and insulated. Another student suggests that these first encounters with "the other" often result in tragedy, but sometimes

pave the way for subsequent understanding. The discussion passes quickly on to questions of conscience, honor, a woman's role in a relationship, and Fate—was the outcome inevitable from the beginning?

Standards Addressed*

- 1.1 Students read, understand, and interpret Latin or Greek.
- 2.2 Students demonstrate an understanding of the perspectives of Greek or Roman culture as revealed in the products of the Greeks or Romans.
- 3.2 Students expand their knowledge through the reading of Latin or Greek and the study of ancient culture.
- 4.2 Students compare and contrast their own culture with that of the Greco-Roman world.
- 5.2 Students use their knowledge of Latin or Greek in a multilingual world.

**Standards for Classical Language Learning*

Before seeing the play, Mrs. Haukeland's class reviewed the plot, characters, and conflicts in Book IV of the *Aeneid*, which they had just finished reading and translating over the previous five weeks. Knowing the details from Vergil's story so well has enabled them to draw these numerous comparisons with the Broadway play and to produce such a spirited discussion. Mrs. Haukeland concludes their colloquium with a comment about timelessness and the reason that the classics are called classics.

Linking their reading of Vergil's *Aeneid* with attending a Broadway show caused many students to see the *Aeneid* in a completely new light. For instance, the experience capitalizes on the importance of music in the students' lives by considering Vergil's poetry in the light of its musical elements. The comparison of the two works enables students to view problems created by war and the ensuing collision of cultural values in a personal context. The students' emotional response to the living characters on stage affects their reactions to Dido and Aeneas' anguished parting.

The central questions of life—love vs. duty, self vs. society, destiny vs. action—are asked by both works. Each one provokes illuminations and responses in its own way. This kind of lesson goes far beyond the classroom and is very successful in creating a deeper personal involvement in the Latin literature that students

Reflection

- 1.1 Students read Book IV of Vergil's *Aeneid* in Latin.
- 2.2 Students demonstrate an understanding of the Roman perspectives through the reading of Book IV of the *Aeneid*.
- 3.2 Students recognize the influence of Latin literature on the artistic achievements of the modern world.
- 4.2 Students compare the themes and heroes of the *Aeneid* with those of their own culture.
- 5.2 Students recognize from their study of the *Aeneid* that cultural diversity has been an integral feature of society from antiquity.

read in class. The insights into Roman perspectives that provide the substance for this kind of discussion can only be gleaned from a careful reading of Vergil's texts.

This type of comparative activity can be implemented with reinterpretations of ancient themes in various media, such as film, opera, live theater, and videotapes, e.g., *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (Plautus); G.B. Shaw's *Pygmalion* and *My Fair Lady* (Pygmalion); *Romeo and Juliet* (Pyramus and Thisbe).



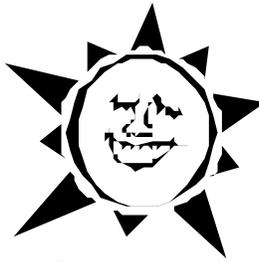
TALS Officers: Ray Maldonado (Vice-President Elect), Beth Harris (President Elect), David Kleinbeck (outgoing President), Doris Kays (Secretary-Treasurer)

LOTE coordinators and lead teachers from around Texas gathered in Austin, Texas April 29-May 1 for the annual meeting of the **Texas Association of Language Supervisors (TALS)** and the **Texas Conference on Coordinating Languages (TECCL)**. Attendees heard from a variety of speakers including **Mary Diehl**, Project Director of UTeach – Liberal Arts at the University of Texas at Austin and **Loretta Williams** (Plano ISD), **María Treviño** (Northside ISD, San Antonio), and **Jody Klopp** (Oklahoma State Department of Education) who spoke on the New Visions in Foreign Language Education Project. Participants spent Monday afternoon brainstorming and providing input on various components of the project which will be communicated to the national group working on redefining and redesigning a long-term vision for foreign language education. Tuesday morning's session was devoted to updates from the Texas Education Agency, the LOTE CED, and the College Board.

LOTE CED Bulletin Board



LOTE CED staff and LOTE educators from around Texas enjoy an evening in Nuevo Laredo during the spring TFLA conference.



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

Professional Growth Opportunities...

Over seventy LOTE CED trained facilitators continue to be available to provide workshops and training on a variety of topics such as standards-based curriculum development, performance-based assessment, learning scenarios (standards-based thematic units) development, and peer coaching and mentoring. Training is available to all local independent school districts and through any regional Education Service Center, but it may not be offered if it is not requested. If you're interested in learning more about the possibilities, contact us; we can provide a list of facilitators. If you're interested in obtaining the hands-on training for your district, talk with your LOTE coordinator, superintendent, principal, or regional ESC.

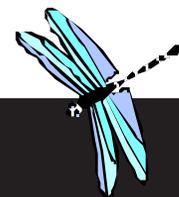
LOTE CED Provides CPE Documentation

SBEC, the State Board for Educator Certification, now requires that Texas educators certified as of September 1, 1999 (Standard Certificate)—or those adding a certification—must obtain 150 hours of Continuing Professional Education (CPE) activities every five years for certificate renewal purposes. The LOTE CED has registered with SBEC and is now a **certified CPE provider**, and offering CPE credit for workshops and training that "support the professional growth of educators in the knowledge and skills necessary to improve student achievement in Texas public schools." Although many Texas LOTE teachers hold lifetime certificates and are not under the new SBEC rules, they may be able to use LOTE CED documentation for local district requirement purposes.

TECCL

On April 30th and May 1st, LOTE CED Director, **Lillian King**, and Field Specialist, **Elaine Phillips**, attended the **Texas Conference on Coordinating Languages** held in Austin, Texas. They shared information on LOTE CED activities with foreign language supervisors and lead teachers from around the state, reporting on the recently concluded Learning Scenarios Development Workshop (see cover, this issue), possibilities for summer TEKS for LOTE training, and—in conjunction with **Inés García** and **Carl Johnson**, Director and Associate Director of LOTE for the Texas Education Agency—they introduced portions of the new video series, **Learning Languages Other Than English: A Texas Adventure**.





Professional Journals and You: Language Learning and Technology (LLT)

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 fields of language education and second language acquisition. This edition of the LOTE CED Lowdown highlights one of those journals.

Language Learning and Technology is, not surprisingly, an *on-line* journal devoted to issues related to the teaching and learning of languages and “how they are affected or enhanced by the use of technologies.” Like the other print-based journals featured in the *Lowdown*, **LLT** has an editorial board composed of specialists in the field—in this case second language acquisition and computer-assisted language learning—and its articles are refereed. **LLT** is published on the web in January, May, and September at <http://llt.msu.edu>; on-line archives allow an easy search of past issues.

Each issue includes feature articles, reviews, and regular columns. One such column, called **On the Net** (written by Jean LeLoup and Robert Ponterio of FLTeach fame), examines web sites designed for and/or useful to teachers of foreign languages. Sample titles include the following:

- *Sites for Soar(ing) Eyes* (Vol. 5,1) describes several “collection” sites.
- *Reading on the Net* (Vol. 4,2) presents sites that help learners improve target language reading skills.
- *A Starting Point for Classical Studies: The Perseus Project* (Vol. 4,1) describes a vast digital library of resources for the study of the classical world.
- *Cooperative Learning Activities for the Foreign Language Classroom* (Vol. 3,2) presents a site designed for high school-aged learners in which the author presents “a myriad of activities ... all of which have one common theoretical underpinning: Cooperative Learning.”

Featured articles from current and past issues include the following:

- *Giving a Virtual Voice to the Silent Language of Culture: The Cultura Project* (Vol. 5,1). According to the abstract, this article “presents a Web-based, cross-cultural, curricular initiative entitled Cultura, designed to develop foreign language students’ understanding of foreign cultural attitudes, concepts, beliefs, and ways of interacting and looking at the world.” The project promotes a kind of ethnographic exploration of perspectives as students use the World-Wide Web to explore how the language learners in the target culture view and respond to a variety of concepts—“those invisible aspects” of the culture that have been called the *silent language*.
- *To Gloss or Not to Gloss: An Investigation of Reading Comprehension Online* (Vol. 1,2). This article reports on a pilot study investigating “how multimedia annotations influence the level of [reading] comprehension.” Students read computerized texts under three conditions: full glossing, limited glossing, or no glossing. Think-aloud protocols allowed researchers to evaluate learners’ comprehension under each condition and to make pedagogical suggestions for language teaching.



Inés García, Director of LOTE within the Division of Curriculum and Professional Development at the Texas Education Agency, was awarded the **Friend of the Profession Award** at the annual Southwest Conference on Language Teaching (SWCOLT). The award was presented at a luncheon on March 16, 2001 at this year’s conference location in the San Francisco area. Each year SWCOLT presents this award to an outstanding supporter of foreign language education from its eight-state region.

!!! Congratulations Inés !!!

After Fifteen Years of Teaching...

by Ricci Hatten



I believe in "gut feelings."
I believe in teachable moments.
I believe in real-life situations as long as it's the students' life situations.
I believe in varied approaches and varied assessments.
I believe in fun, for the learner and the teacher.
I believe second language acquisition should closely resemble the first.
I believe in songs and games and repetition and praise.
I believe languages are acquired and not learned.
I believe in realistic expectations and limitless potential.
I believe no one wants to fail and that everyone can learn.
I believe in movement.
I believe in making connections: teacher to student, student to student, and student to community.
I believe in respect and discipline.

I believe in assuaging anxious feelings.

I believe communication is more important than accent marks.

I believe consistency is fairness.

I believe students should leave my classroom each day wanting to come back the next day, next year...

I believe in fiestas and food.

I believe that I'm underpaid and overworked.

And when I walk the halls and hear students singing a song in Spanish or playing with the words without inhibition or telling me how they communicated in Spanish with a new friend, I believe that I am a very lucky man.

I've taught Spanish for fifteen years in high school and middle school, in rural, urban, and suburban school districts. The one constancy is that every day I, the "teacher," continue to learn from my students. There is no paradox here. I witness this dynamic daily in the classroom. My students, usually in pairs, teach and learn from each other. Students are encouraged to experiment and make mistakes. If they don't, they are not learning. We laugh and cry, fight and negotiate, grow and learn. Within four walls, forty-two minutes a day, five days a week, it's very difficult, near impossible, to recreate the familiar atmosphere in which the first language was acquired. But we are, after all, in the business of the impossible. And we can draw upon new strengths each student has developed in her scholastic career.

I believe our students will be working in the future at jobs that don't exist today, trying to solve problems we can't imagine.

I believe the best opportunity we can give them is to see the world from new perspectives that one attains with the acquisition of a new language.



Ricci is a Spanish teacher at Hill Country Middle School in Austin, Texas. He is an active advocate for LOTE issues and appears in the LOTE video series "Learning Languages Other Than English: A Texas Adventure."



FOREIGN LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION IN THE UNITED STATES: A NATIONAL SURVEY OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS



The following was excerpted from the Executive Summary of the report *Foreign Language Instruction in the United States: A National Survey of Elementary and Secondary Schools*. The Executive Summary can be found in its entirety on the CAL web site at <http://www.cal.org/pubs/results.html>; The report itself can be purchased from Delta Systems (<http://www.delta-systems.com>).

The Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) conducted a survey of elementary and secondary schools in 1997 to gain greater understanding of current patterns and shifts in enrollment, languages and programs offered, curriculum, teaching methodologies, teacher qualifications and training, and reactions to national reform issues. The survey was designed to replicate CAL's 1987 survey in an effort to show trends during the decade of 1987–1997.

The profile of foreign language instruction in the United States revealed by the survey shows that the amount of foreign language instruction in the last decade has increased by nearly ten percent at the elementary school level and has stayed relatively stable at the secondary level. At both levels, more than half of the schools not currently teaching languages were interested in doing so in the future.

A number of positive trends are evident from the survey results:

- language classes for native speakers have increased dramatically at both elementary and secondary levels
- the teaching of less commonly taught languages has increased at the elementary level for Japanese and at the secondary level for Japanese and Russian
- computer-based instructional materials were used by a significantly greater percentage of schools in 1997 than in 1987 (although we have no data on the effectiveness of technology in the language classroom)
- staff development and in-service training has increased significantly in the past decade in both elementary and secondary schools
- teachers at the secondary level are using the target language more in the classroom
- about half the schools teaching foreign languages said that their teachers were aware of national and/or state language standards; of those, over half the schools changed their curricula due to this awareness

Despite these positive trends, there is still reason for concern about the limited number of K-12 long-sequence language programs that are designed to educate students linguistically and culturally to communicate successfully in the U.S. and abroad. Well-articulated elementary and secondary programs are still the exception rather than the rule, and intensive instruction that aims at a high level of proficiency, as outlined in the national standards document, is scarce.

EFFECTIVE TEACHERS AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

The last **Texas Foreign Language Association Bulletin** contained an article by **Nathan Bond** (Southwest Texas State University) and **Zena Moore** (the University of Texas at Austin) entitled *Professional Development Among Inservice Foreign Language Teachers: How Effective Teachers Improve Their Practice*. The article reports on a qualitative study in which several “effective” LOTE teachers were interviewed about their training and professional development practices. Although based on a small number of interviewees, the themes uncovered echo those of other researchers cited in this article. The following themes “provide significant insight into the approaches that effective foreign language teachers follow to grow professionally” (p. 13):

Effective foreign language teachers:

- take responsibility for their own growth,
- are willing to help pay for their own professional development,
- do not look to administrators for help,
- want to talk to colleagues,
- incorporate personal interests in their lives to keep themselves energized,
- value professional organizations, and
- establish significant professional relationships with other colleagues.

The authors conclude that “[e]ffective foreign language teachers select from a wide variety of growth experiences which address their individual needs.” For details on the study, see the **Texas Foreign Language Association Bulletin**, Vol. 12, 1 (2001).

LOTE INSTRUCTION AT THE ELEMENTARY LEVEL

The next Dallas/Fort Worth **Metroplex Foreign Language Supervisors (MFLS)** meeting will focus on *LOTE Instruction in the Elementary School*. Proposed agenda items include sessions on the “mini-lab,” commercial instructional programs, and panel discussion/presentations by local school districts. All districts are invited to the meeting on **September 6, 2001**; however, those who wish to attend are requested to contact M.K. McChristian, Director of LOTE, Richardson ISD at (469) 593-7452 or m.k.mcchristian@risd.org. The MFLS is a local affiliate of National Association of District Supervisors of Foreign Languages.

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