



## FEATURED THEME: ADVOCACY

## Language Advocacy: It's Everybody's Business!

by Marty Abbott

When preparing for a language teaching career, very few of us thought that advocacy for language programs would be a critical part of our job. However, as we moved into our first year of teaching, our role as language teachers has invariably required us to quickly become articulate spokespeople for our field and to learn to speak up for language education. So critical is this for all language teachers that the accreditation process used by well over half of the teacher education programs in the United States, published by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), includes a standard on professionalism, as outlined by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). This standard requires new teachers to demonstrate knowledge and active involvement in the language teaching profession, including the ability to advocate for language programs. Likewise, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) requires that candidates for certification as accomplished teachers demonstrate that they possess the knowledge and skills to be effective advocates for language programs.

The reality is that on a daily basis, each of us is involved in advocacy for our craft, for our students, and for our programs, in both very visible ways—such as organizing school-wide programs that show off the talents of our students—to very small and seemingly ordinary acts, such as convincing a student to continue his or her language study the following year or enthusiastically telling someone what you do for a living and why it is so rewarding as a career. Because we have not yet reached a moment in U.S. history in which language programs are central to the curriculum in our schools and in our institutions of higher education, we all have a responsibility to become the best advocates we can for our language programs—it's everybody's business!

### Start with the Research

We are working in an age of accountability. In all sectors of our society, including the education arena, we are being asked to provide scientifically-based research to support our practice and our programs. While our field still has significant gaps in the body of research studies available to us, compelling data suggest that students derive specific cognitive, academic, and social benefits from having participated in a language program in school. ACTFL has compiled this research and listed it in an annotated version on

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## EDITOR'S MESSAGE

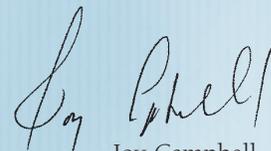
Dear Readers,

Spring is the season when Mother Nature gets energized and we see new growth; it's a perfect time of year to introduce a topic which I hope will energize you and help you "grow" your language program. Marty Abbott, Director of Education for the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), contributed this issue's main article on language advocacy. Her commentary is full of concrete resources and tips on becoming an advocate for your program, and offers encouragement that your role as a language educator is a vital one in your community.

Speaking of resources, if you are not already familiar with the work that ACTFL is doing on behalf of language education, take the time to visit their informative website, [www.actfl.org](http://www.actfl.org). Some of their initiatives are mentioned in this issue, but there are many more resources available online, including public service announcements, position statements, white papers, annotated bibliographies, and more. ACTFL is a national leader in program development and advocacy, and is well worth checking out.

One of CLEAR's summer workshops this coming July will also focus on language program development. For a description of that workshop and information about the other offerings this summer, including several that are technology-related, turn to pages 4-5. We are pleased to be offering some "encore" workshops, as well as new ones.

We always enjoy meeting language educator colleagues, whether you are already familiar with CLEAR or have yet to learn about our resources. We hope to meet some of you at the various spring conferences we attend, including CALICO and the Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. Look for us in Tempe, Arizona and Chicago to learn more about our products and services in person. And of course we would love to welcome you to campus for a summer workshop or two this July!



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### SUGGESTIONS WANTED!

We strive to publish *CLEAR News* articles that represent current topics in foreign language teaching, and we want to hear from you! If you have an idea for an article or would like to see a particular subject addressed, please let us know at [clear@msu.edu](mailto:clear@msu.edu). We will consider your idea for future issues of the newsletter.

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The U.S. Department of Education awards grants through Title VI funding to a small number of institutions for the purpose of establishing, strengthening, and operating language resource and training centers to improve the teaching and learning of foreign languages. There are currently fifteen Language Resource Centers nationwide: the Center for Advanced Language Proficiency Education and Research (CALPER) at The Pennsylvania State University; the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA) at the University of Minnesota; the Center for Applied Second Language Studies (CASLS) at the University of Oregon; the Center for Languages of the Central Asian Region (CeLCAR) at Indiana University; the Center for Educational Resources in Culture, Language and Literacy (CERCLL) at the University of Arizona; the Center for Language Education and Research (CLEAR) at Michigan State University; the Language Acquisition Resource

Center (LARC) at San Diego State University; the National African Language Resource Center (NALRC) at the University of Wisconsin—Madison; the National Capital Language Resource Center (NCLRC), a consortium of Georgetown University, the Center for Applied Linguistics, and George Washington University; the National East Asian Languages National Resource Center (NEALRC) at The Ohio State University; the National Foreign Language Resource Center (NFLRC) at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa; the National K-12 Foreign Language Resource Center (NK-12LRC) at Iowa State University; the National Heritage Language Resource Center (NHLRC), a consortium of UCLA and the UC Consortium for Language Learning and Teaching; the National Middle East Language Resource Center (NMELRC) at Brigham Young University; and the South Asia Language Resource Center (SALRC) at The University of Chicago.

(Continued from cover)

its website at [www.actfl.org](http://www.actfl.org) and invites its members and the public to consult this collection when searching for the very important research base that supports our field. This research becomes critical in convincing parents, school administrators, policymakers, and the media about the viability of our programs.

### Become Informed

More than just knowing the research, language teachers need to know what is happening, particularly at the local and state levels, in regard to language policy and practice. With education issues being primarily the purview of local communities and individual states, it is at the local level where critical decisions affecting language programs are made. Many state organizations have successfully led the effort to effect change. Recently, for example, Michigan language educators, under the leadership of the Michigan World Language Association (MiWLA), were able to have their legislature enact new graduation requirements for languages and develop a new state framework based on the national standards. States like Minnesota have successfully lobbied to have someone designated at the state level to be responsible for language programs and issues related to languages in their state. At the local level, school boards have responsibility for what happens in local school districts or individual schools. Take time to get to know the members of your board, those who make the decisions. Make it a point to get on their agenda and highlight some facet of your language program each year. Let them know what you do and how important it is for your students. Just last year, parents, students, and ACTFL helped lobby successfully for Fairfax County Public Schools in Virginia to maintain the expansion of their Foreign Language in Elementary School (FLES) program during a tight budget crunch.

### Get Involved in the National Effort

There are also important ways to get involved at the national level. Most language organizations are members of the Joint National Committee for Languages (JNCL) and its sister organization, the National Council for Languages and International Studies (NCLIS). This joint organization provides visibility for the language profession on Capitol Hill and ensures that our voice is heard at the federal level. JNCL/NCLIS sponsors a delegate assembly each year where members of our profession make visits to legislators on the Hill and urge them to support additional funding for language programs and legislation that supports issues related to our field.

Consult the language organizations of which you are a member to see how you can get involved in this lobbying effort. Go to [www.languagepolicy.org](http://www.languagepolicy.org) for more information.

Additionally, our field has a national public awareness campaign, *Discover Languages... Discover the World!* This campaign, sponsored by ACTFL, evolved from the highly



successful **2005: *The Year of Languages*** effort in which the foreign language field became actively involved in celebrating language programs and in educating the general public about the important benefits of language learning for students. The month of February has been designated ***Discover Languages*** month, a time to bring attention to language programs and raise awareness about how important these programs are for our students. February is a perfect time to highlight the successes of your programs and on the ***Discover Languages*** website there are many ideas and resources for you to use.

Go to [www.DiscoverLanguages.org](http://www.DiscoverLanguages.org) in order to find:

- Electronic resources to use in your language promotion efforts. Hundreds of language teachers have downloaded the ***Discover Languages*** logo to use on everything from their email signature to their course syllabi to letters to parents and displays in school showcases. In addition, there are public service announcements, both video and print, that can be downloaded to promote language programs.
- Forums to share information, such as a Bulletin Board where you can share the activities you have planned or read about what others have done. There is also a Picture Gallery featuring ***Discover Languages*** events and a Celebrity Corner with quotes from notable people who are speaking up for language education.
- ***Discover Languages*** products, from pens and pencils to balloons and wristbands, are available for purchase to make your event even more exciting. In addition, there are brochures highlighting the benefits of language learning and posters that you can display in your classroom and in your school.
- Resources to highlight the rewards of a career teaching languages, including brochures and a downloadable bookmark highlighting compelling reasons to enter the field. There is also a public service announcement that you can show your students urging them to consider a career in language teaching.

### ACTFL National Language Teacher of the Year Program

An additional very visible way that our profession has been showcased is through the ACTFL National Language Teacher of the Year program. Begun as a part of the New Visions effort, and piloted in the Southwest Conference on Language

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## 2009 Summer Workshop Preview

CLEAR has offered summer professional development workshops for over ten years. Teachers of all levels have come to Michigan State University's campus for these informative, hands-on courses. Take advantage of this great professional development opportunity and meet foreign language educators from all over the country. Visit our website for more information about the workshops, discounts, and registration. We hope to see you this July for one (or more) of our six workshops!

### 1 An Online Language Portfolio Approach to the Development of Speaking and Listening Proficiency

July 9-11, 2009

*Workshop Leader: Daniel Reed, Visiting Assessment Professor, CLEAR*

Advances in technology and developments in the field of language assessment come together in this CLEAR workshop, which is designed for teachers of all languages. The premise is that formative assessment facilitates learning when it provides regular feedback that is relevant, timely, and meaningful to the student. This workshop focuses on speaking and listening performances that can be recorded, evaluated, and revised by means of a new online language portfolio program. In this approach, students create their own portfolios by uploading multimedia files as well as text files that are representative of their classroom activities. Subsequently, teachers and peers provide feedback which is incorporated by the students in future revisions of their work. Furthermore, through this process students learn to self evaluate and improve their skills on their own, thereby becoming lifelong learners. Software we will use includes CLEAR's Rich Internet Applications technology, Audio Portfolios, and a new online language portfolio system named "Demonstrate." In addition, participants will learn how to align teacher-created assessments with national standards and the particular curricular objectives of their language programs. There are no technical prerequisites, other than basic familiarity with computers. The workshop is hands-on and very dynamic!

### 2 Rich Internet Applications for Language Learning: Introductory Techniques

July 13-15, 2009

*Workshop Leaders: Dennie Hoopingarner, Associate Director for Technology, CLEAR; Vineet Bansal, Information Technologist, CLEAR*

This workshop is for language teachers who want to learn how to use CLEAR's free tools for creating interactive web-based multimedia language materials. The only computer skills that these tools require are point and click, copy and paste, and drag and drop. Participants get to concentrate on teaching, and don't have to worry about programming, uploading, downloading, or installing. The tools can be used with any language, any textbook, and any level. Learn how to make web pages where students can record audio files that are automatically uploaded to a virtual dropbox. Make a "mashup" that combines text, pictures, video, and interactive language exercises into one web page. Create virtual conversations for students in which they listen to questions and the program captures their responses automatically. All of these functions are available from within a web browser, with no special hardware or software needed. Come and experience the next generation of web-based language teaching!

### 3 Rich Internet Applications for Language Learning: Advanced Techniques

July 16-18, 2009

*Workshop Leaders: Dennie Hoopingarner, Associate Director for Technology, CLEAR; Vineet Bansal, Information Technologist, CLEAR*

This workshop is intended for teachers who are already familiar with and are actively using CLEAR's Rich Internet Applications tools, and are interested in taking the tools to the next level. Participants from this summer's "Introductory Techniques" workshop will also benefit from this workshop. The workshop will focus on integrating RIA materials with CMS tools and other online environments that schools are using, application of the tools for assessment, ideas for creating more complex materials, and constructivist learning projects for students. Participants are encouraged to share their experiences using the tools, as well as their ideas for enhancing language teaching with them. Part of the time will be devoted to consultation with instructors on their individual project ideas or applications of the tools for specific purposes.

## 4 The Second “C”: Culture Teaching in the Language Classroom

July 20-22, 2009

*Workshop Leader: Senta Goertler, Assistant Professor, Department of Linguistics & Languages, Michigan State University*

This workshop is intended to assist language teachers at all levels in integrating culture into the language classroom. We will discuss pedagogical principles for teaching culture. First, we will lay a theoretical foundation for teaching culture by discussing the constructs of culture, intercultural competence, and transcultural competence. In this discussion we will consider historical, linguistic, political, societal, and geographical perspectives, as well as cultural artifacts. Next we will take a closer look at the cultural expectations as defined by the ACTFL standards and the Common European Framework of Reference. Most of the workshop time will be devoted to practical considerations. Pedagogical techniques for culture teaching will be presented and will include those enhanced by technology (e.g., telecollaboration, discussion boards) as well as more traditional techniques (e.g., mini research projects). Participants will experience sample activities from the perspective of the learner, develop their own activities, and exchange and discuss activities with the other participants. A particular focus will be put on how to teach culture in the target language and emphasize the connections between culture and language.

## 5 Teaching Writing in the Foreign Language Classroom

July 23-25, 2009

*Workshop Leader: Charlene Polio, Associate Professor, Department of Linguistics & Languages, Michigan State University*

This workshop will begin with a discussion of how writing fits into a general skills foreign language class and the role writing plays in meeting the National Standards for Foreign Language Teaching. We will then try activities that use writing as a tool to promote overall proficiency and that target specific grammatical structures and vocabulary. Next, we will focus on essay writing, including how to construct assignments, create prewriting activities, and give feedback on and assess assignments. The activities throughout the workshop will be appropriate for both beginning and advanced students. Participants will try activities and create their own specific to their current teaching situations.

## 6 Revisiting, Reinventing, and Restarting a Language Program: A Step-by-Step Approach

July 27-29, 2009

*Workshop Leaders: Senta Goertler, Assistant Professor, Department of Linguistics & Languages, Michigan State University; Angelika Kraemer, Co-Curricular and Outreach Coordinator, Center for the Support of Language Teaching, Michigan State University*

Federal policies and enrollment trends suggest an increased demand for foreign language instruction. However, in times of specialized language requirements and budget cuts, this requires creativity and collaboration. This workshop is intended for teachers, teacher trainers, administrators, parents, community members, faculty members, and staff involved or interested in building or revising a language program. The workshop has five components: (1) presentation of theoretical information, (2) demonstration of practical experiences of workshop leaders, (3) exchange of ideas amongst workshop participants, (4) individual consultations with the workshop leaders, and (5) observations of a language program in progress. Topics covered in the workshop include: state of foreign language instruction (e.g., statistics, attitudes, teaching methods, and second language acquisition theories), program types (e.g., outreach, K-12, FLEX, college level basic language program) and learner types (e.g., heritage vs. foreign language students), professional standards and guidelines (e.g., ACTFL Standards, ACTFL Guidelines, ADFL Guidelines, Common European Framework of Reference), program development and administration steps (e.g., needs analysis, planning, curriculum development, articulation, implementation, evaluation, testing, teacher training, mentoring, action research, budget, recruitment, marketing, funding). The goal of the workshop is to assist participants in starting or revising a language program.

### Learn more...

Learn more about all of these workshops and find information about lodging and fees by visiting our website. You can apply online!

Visit <http://clear.msu.edu/clear/professionaldev/summerworkshops.php>, or simply go to <http://clear.msu.edu> and click on “Professional Development.”

The \$15 application fee is waived for all applications received on or before the early application deadline of May 8, 2009.

#### **Regular application deadline: June 1, 2009**

Apply online at <http://clear.msu.edu/clear/professionaldev/apply.php>. You can also print a PDF application from the website, or contact CLEAR to receive an application in the mail.

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Teaching (SWCOLT) region of the country, this program is now a collaborative effort among our state associations, the regional conferences, and ACTFL. Since 2005, there has been a language educator designated each year to represent the profession and help spread the word about the importance of language programs. Each year the Teacher of the Year travels to Washington, DC, to attend the JNCL/NCLIS Delegate Assembly and to lobby in support of language legislation on Capitol Hill. Each year, the Teacher of the Year has been able to meet personally with at least one of his or her legislators to deliver the message. The 2008 Teacher of the Year, Janet Glass, a Spanish and ESL teacher in Englewood, New Jersey, met with both of her senators as well as her representative. The designation of someone who has demonstrated excellence in teaching to represent us has contributed vitally to the visibility of our profession.

### We Are All in This Together

No matter what language you are teaching or at what level, there is support for you in the profession. You can contact your language-specific national association, JNCL/NCLIS, your regional language conference, or ACTFL if you need letters of support for your language program. Just last year, ACTFL wrote letters in support of language requirements to state legislatures, made visits to federal agencies to lobby for more funding, and delivered testimony before a local school board. These organizations are here to serve you and are willing to help you in your advocacy efforts.

### Now It's Your Business

Here are some ways that you can get involved immediately in the business of advocacy. What those who have been doing this for a long time know well is that developing an effective ongoing advocacy program is a good investment of your time as it will help avoid threats to your program. When a school board has just helped you celebrate **Discover Languages** month, has had a chance to see the students using their language beyond the classroom, and has seen the parent support for the program, they are much less likely to put it on the list for budget cuts. It may sound simple, but it's true!

#### At the national level:

- Go to the **Discover Languages** website at [www.DiscoverLanguages.org](http://www.DiscoverLanguages.org) and access the resources to plan a February **Discover Languages** event in your school, community, or university.
- Visit [www.languagepolicy.org](http://www.languagepolicy.org) to learn more about JNCL/NCLIS and to find out if your organization is a member.

- Access the website of your national language-specific organization for additional ideas about advocating for specific languages.

#### At the state level:

- Visit the website of the National Council of State Supervisors for Languages (NCSSFL) at [www.ncssfl.org](http://www.ncssfl.org) to find out who your state supervisor for languages is. If you don't have one, start lobbying your state legislature to designate someone with this responsibility.
- If you don't have a state language organization, contact Juliet Mason at ACTFL at [jmason@actfl.org](mailto:jmason@actfl.org) to find out how ACTFL can help you get started in creating one.
- If your state does not have a language requirement for graduation or does not have a state framework for language learning, contact your state language organization about how to start developing an advocacy plan to lobby your state legislature or the policymakers in your state to put one into effect.

#### At the local level:

- Make sure that your students and their parents understand the benefits of language learning and why this is an important endeavor. Get your students involved in ACTFL's national student video podcast contest that encourages them to make a video in which they speak up for language education. Find out more at [www.actflvideocontest.org](http://www.actflvideocontest.org).
- Highlight your language programs in your community beyond the classroom by organizing events that showcase your students and get the community involved. For some great ideas, go to [www.DiscoverLanguages.org](http://www.DiscoverLanguages.org).
- Send an e-card to someone in celebration of **Discover Languages** month. You will find a variety of card options on the **Discover Languages** website: one for a policymaker who has been very supportive of your program, one for a policymaker who you feel should be more aware of the benefits of language programs, and one for a fellow advocate who is not in our field but may want to be part of ACTFL's national grassroots effort to promote language learning, *Friends of Foreign Languages*.

This is an important time to get involved in our national, state, and local efforts to highlight the importance of language programs and the benefits for our students. Together, we can realize the vision of making language programs available to all students across the United States. It takes all of us to be actively involved in these efforts because language advocacy is everybody's business.

*Marty Abbott is currently Director of Education at the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). She previously served as language teacher, foreign language coordinator and director of high school instruction for Fairfax County Public Schools in Virginia and was President of ACTFL in 2003.*

## Upcoming Conferences

CLEAR will be represented at exhibit booths at the following conferences this spring. Stop by to introduce yourself and let us show you what we can offer for your language classroom.

We will be presenting sessions and/or workshops at all of these conferences as well!

- [Computer Assisted Language Instruction Consortium \(CALICO\)](#), March 11-14, 2009, Tempe, AZ
- [Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages \(CSCTFL\)](#), March 19-21, 2009, Chicago, IL
- [World Languages Day](#), April 18, 2009, East Lansing, MI



## Get Help, Give Help

Are you using CLEAR's Rich Internet Applications? They are powerful and useful tools for enhancing your language classes. We have just added a discussion forum dedicated to sharing tips and information for getting the most out of the tools. Feel free to ask questions, answer others' questions, and share your experiences with using the tools. You've joined our community, now add your voice to the conversation! Go to <http://ria.clear.msu.edu> and click on the "forums" link.

## Global Educators Cohort Program

In keeping with this issue's theme of language program development and advocacy, we would like to inform you of a new program in Michigan State University's Department of

Teacher Education. The Global Educators Cohort Program is a specialized teacher preparation program focused on global and international perspectives. Teacher candidates participate in this unique program from freshman year through fifth-year internship by enrolling in coursework designed to support their development of a global perspective, participating in extracurricular programming developed to enhance the learning experience, engaging in practice teaching in multi-cultural and/or international contexts, and being mentored by faculty with expertise in international and global education. Graduates of this program will be specially qualified to bring the world to their students, to teach abroad, or to teach domestically in multilingual/multicultural classrooms or in schools/programs that emphasize international, global, or multicultural perspectives.

While we understand that the majority of our readers are already language educators, we wanted to bring this program to your attention in case you have students who are planning to pursue an undergraduate degree in teaching. More information can be found at: <http://www.educ.msu.edu/globalcohort/>.

## Language Resource Centers

CLEAR is one of fifteen Language Resource Centers (LRCs) funded by grants from the U.S. Department of Education. The LRCs recently published a comprehensive booklet that gives information about the projects in which they are engaged, as well as an overview of each individual LRC and some of its key initiatives. The full booklet can be downloaded at [http://clear.msu.edu/clear/otherlracs/lrc\\_broc\\_full.pdf](http://clear.msu.edu/clear/otherlracs/lrc_broc_full.pdf), or simply visit CLEAR's website and click on the "Other LRCs" tab. You will learn about numerous free and low-cost resources, as well as exciting programs happening at LRCs around the country.



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# CLEAR News

*CLEAR News is a publication of the Center for Language Education and Research and is intended to inform foreign language educators of the Center's ongoing research projects and professional development workshops, to report on current foreign language research and publications and their applicability to the classroom, and to provide a forum for educators to discuss foreign language teaching and learning topics.*



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