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WEBINARS LAUNCH

CLEAR sustains 50% funding cut

CLEAR has just begun the second year of a new funding cycle, and we are excited about some of the projects and products begun during the past year. We had our most-attended set of summer professional development workshops ever in July, and look forward to continuing to offer these opportunities and our products to language educators nationwide.

We do, however, need to share some important news about CLEAR's funding. This summer we received word that our federal funding for 2011-12 had been reduced by 50%. This cut was due to a reduction in Title VI funding and affected not only CLEAR and its sister LRCs, but also National Resource Centers, the Fulbright Hayes program, and many other Title VI funded projects. The US Department of Education, which administers Title VI, was as caught off guard by the cuts as we were; there was no warning or opportunity for discussion.

This funding cut means that you may notice some changes in CLEAR's offerings this year. For example, you will notice that this newsletter has been reduced to a two-sided flyer instead of a full issue. In addition, we have had to reduce some staff hours, so people calling in may get our voice mail, but rest assured that we will get back to you as soon as possible. Email responses may also be delayed. CLEAR traditionally exhibits and presents at numerous conferences each year, and we enjoy meeting you all in person; this coming year we will have a reduced presence at conferences. For example, instead of a 14-booth LRC Pavilion at ACTFL this year, we will be sharing just two booths collectively with our sister LRCs.

We are doing everything we can to maintain most of our projects, though some promising initiatives in areas such as business language and research have had to be put on hold. Please continue to visit our website for updates and news, and also watch for some new product launches (including our webinars, described on page 2).

We do not know what will happen with our federal funding in 2012-13 and beyond; we certainly hope we will be able to continue serving the language education community in the way that we have for the last fifteen years.

CLEAR launches webinars!



Thousands of language educators from across the country (and the world!) have taken advantage of CLEAR's professional development opportunities over the years through their participation in summer workshops, onsite workshops, conference sessions, and other presentations. Until now, these opportunities have required face-to-face contact, and we have always enjoyed interacting with you on a personal level. However, there are always teachers who can't make it to the workshops for a variety of reasons, from the financial strain of travelling to Michigan or attending a major conference, to a date mismatch where the family reunion conflicts with the workshop you wanted to take. In recent years we have fielded innumerable calls and emails asking whether our professional development materials will ever be available online.

We are excited to announce that as of this fall, yes, you can take advantage of our professional development opportunities online with our newly launched webinars! CLEAR webinars are our online workshops for language teachers. Unlike many webinars, our modules are interactive and focus on specific topics of interest to language teachers. Webinars are largely self-directed and self-paced, but a facilitator will be available to answer questions as participants need additional help.

Unlike face-to-face workshops, the on-demand format of webinars accommodates your busy schedule. We designed the webinars to be modular, so you can complete a webinar in a single block of time (between two and six hours, with most of them being three hours). Conversely, you can also choose to complete a webinar in a few sittings, working at a pace that fits your learning style, and then returning to where you left off. If you leave a bit too much time between log-ins, and forget some of the previous material, never fear – you can always go back and review anything you did before, including re-watching the presentation and re-accessing reading materials. Once you have taken a webinar, the materials remain accessible to you forever.

Webinars are a low-cost option for high-quality, directed professional development that is targeted to the needs of language teachers, and we will be offering incentives for teachers who return for future webinars as more are developed. Educators who are required to maintain certification will also be eligible to obtain State Board Continuing Education Units (SB-CEUs) from the Michigan Department of Education. Many states maintain reciprocity agreements with Michigan, so SB-CEUs received for these webinars can often be honored for out-of-state participants.

Access the webinars from a link on CLEAR's home page, or directly from this URL: <http://clear.msu.edu/webinars/>. You can browse the catalog of offerings, which will expand as we develop new workshops, and take a free mini-webinar to explore the format of our online professional development.

We look forward to hearing from you as you take the webinars, and will be adding to the collection in the months and years to come!



Suite 101 UPLA Building
East Lansing, MI 48824

Phone: 517.432.2286

Fax: 517.432.0473

Email: clear@msu.edu

Website: <http://clear.msu.edu>

Susan M. Gass & Patricia R. Paulsell
Co-Directors

Joy M. Campbell
Executive Associate Director

Dennie Hoopingarner
Associate Director for Technology

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