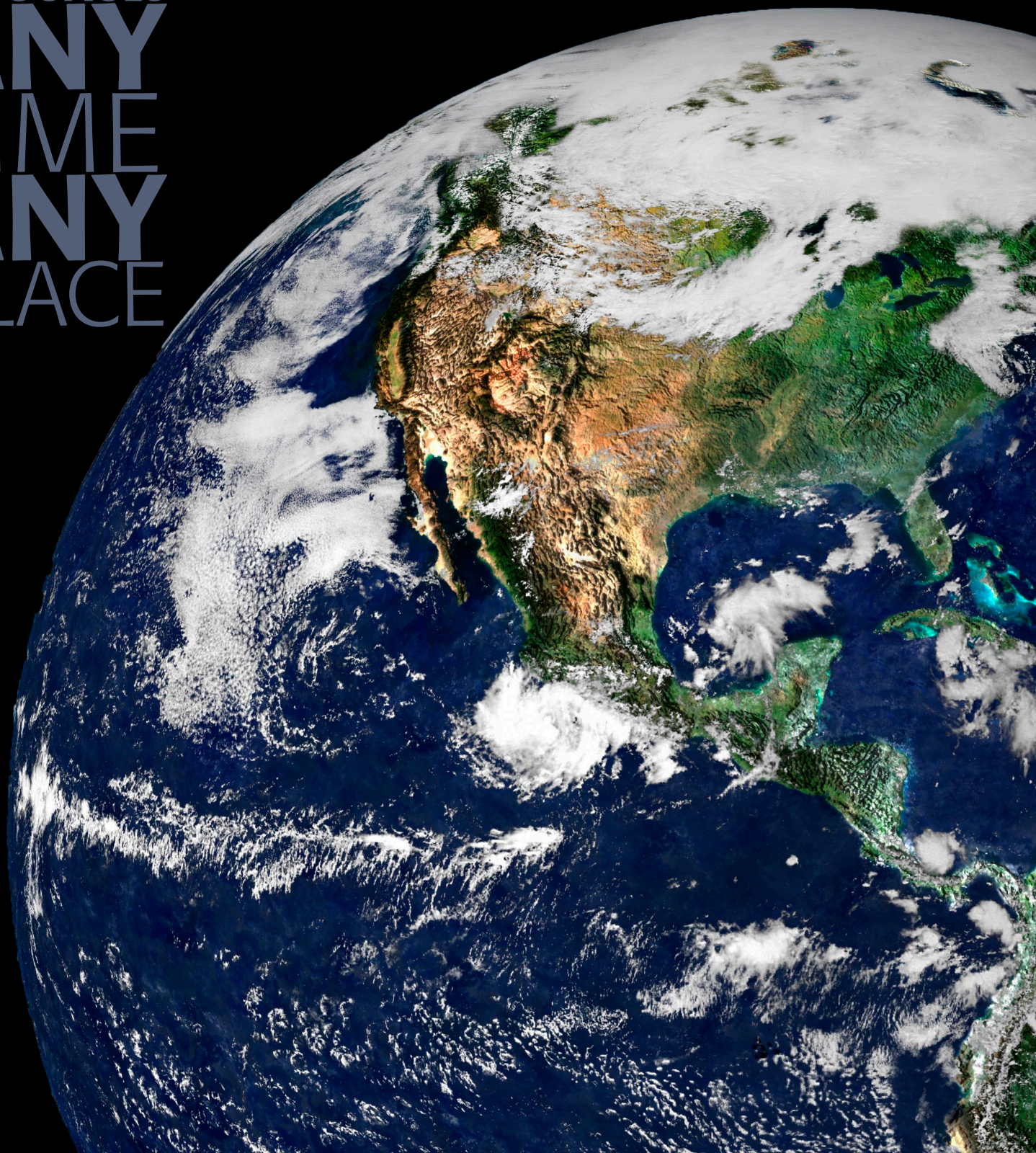


The Professional Journal of the National Network for Early Language Learning

LEARNING LANGUAGES

winter 2014 volume 19 issue 1

LEARNING
LANGUAGES
ANY
TIME
ANY
PLACE



NNELL REPRESENTATIVES

by region

Central East – Nicole Saari

Eastwood Middle School
nsaari@msdwt.k12.in.us

Central West – Kathy Olson Studler

St. Paul Academy and Summit School
1150 Goodrich Avenue
St. Paul, Minnesota 55105

Northeast – Kate Krotzer

Hebron Avenue School
katekrotzer@gmail.com

Pacific Northwest – Sally Hood

University of Portland
hood@up.edu

Southeast – Open

Southwest – Kathy Duran

Douglas County School District
kathy.duran1@gmail.com

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Spanish Workshop for Children
msummerville@nnell.org

Tammy Dann, Early Language Learning Advocate

Crestview Elementary, Iowa
tdann@nnell.org

Dorie Perugini - Executive Secretary

dperugini@nnell.org

LEARNING LANGUAGES EDITORS

Rita A Oleksak, Chair

Glastonbury Public Schools, Connecticut
roleksak@nnell.org

Rose Scotto, Copy Editor

Glastonbury Public Schools, Connecticut
roleksak@nnell.org

Bretton Zinger, Layout Editor

Holliston Public Schools, Massachusetts
Bretton.Zinger@gmail.com

by state

1. Alaska: Janice Gullickson, gullickson_janice@asdk12.org

2. Alabama: open

3. Arkansas: open

4. Arizona: open

5. California: Akiyo Tokoi, ahirose47@sbcglobal.net

6. Colorado: Kathy Duran, kathy.duran@dcsdk12.org

7. Connecticut: Lisa Urso, lurso@reg4.k12.ct.us

8. DC: open

9. Delaware: Iris Busch, bueren@udel.edu

10. Florida: open

11. Georgia: Vicki Welch-Alvis, alvis@fulton.k12.ga.us

12. Hawaii: open

13. Iowa: Sharon Shreffler, shrefflers@wdmcs.org

14. Idaho: Molly Michalec, mmichalec@blaineschools.org

15. Illinois: Kathleen Priceman, kapriceman@gmail.com

16. Indiana: Pamela Valdez, pagemmer@gmail.com

17. Kansas: Mary Smith, marysmith.ksreppnell@gmail.com

18. Kentucky: Audrea Suarez, andrea.soyceleste@gmail.com

19. Louisiana: open

20. Massachusetts: open

21. Maryland: Sherri Harkins, sharkins@wcboe.org

22. Maine: Liz-Ann Platt, lplatt@berwickacademy.org

23. Michigan: Norma Richardson, rich1nh@cmich.edu

24. Minnesota: Veronica Guevara, veronica.guevara@breckschool.org

25. Mississippi: Yohanna Jimenez, vjimenez@wmcarey.edu

26. Missouri: Astrid Ruia, aruizregion2@gmail.com

27. Montana: open

28. North Carolina: Ashley Velazquez, velasqa@gcsnc.com

29. North Dakota: open

30. Nebraska: Marlene Knobbe, marlene@knobbe.org

31. New Hampshire: open

32. New Jersey: Amanda Seewald, espanolparaninos@aol.com

33. New Mexico: open

34. Nevada: open

35. New York: Marissa Coulehan, srtacoulehan@gmail.com

36. Ohio: Judith Brown-McCombs, sra.mccombs@yahoo.com

37. Oklahoma: open

38. Oregon: Sally Hood, hood@up.edu

39. Pennsylvania: Heather Hendry, heh15@pitt.edu

40. Rhode Island: Suzanne Pezzulli, spezzulli@gordonschool.org

41. South Carolina: Liz Lawrence-Baez, ElawrenceBaez@lexington1.net

42. South Dakota: open

43. Tennessee: Patricia Davis-Wiley, pdwiley@utk.edu

44. Texas: Teresa Kennedy, tkennedy@uttyler.edu

45. Utah: open

46. Vermont: Lizzy Lindenberg, llindenberg@maplestreetsschool.com

47. Virginia: Ingrid Badia, ICBadia@fcps.edu

48. Washington: open

49. Wisconsin: Jessica Bradley, Jessica.bradley1@gmail.com

Cover photo: This true-color image shows North and South America as they would appear from space 35,000 km (22,000 miles) above the Earth. The image is a combination of data from two satellites. The Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer (MODIS) instrument aboard NASA's terra.nasa.gov/ Terra satellite collected the land surface data over 16 days, while NOAA's Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellite (GOES) produced a snapshot of the Earth's clouds.

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Learning Languages ~ 3

Dear NNELL readers,

The theme of this latest issue, "Learning Languages Anytime, Anyplace," originated from the 2013 ACTFL theme of New Spaces New Realities: Learning Any Time, Any Place. I am delighted that ACTFL President, Toni Theisen, took a few moments out of her busy schedule to write a perspective piece for this issue on "Engaging Young Learners Authentically with 21st Century Skills and Technology". For

those of you who weren't able to join us at the NNELL breakfast, our keynote speaker Jessica Haxhi has written a follow up article to her highly engaging "early morning" presentation. I think you will find this feature article "The

Common Core State Standards in Early

Language Learning: Let's Do This!" both timely and interesting as we move forward with Common Core Standards, new assessments and a new teacher evaluation plan. Barbara Lindsey, whom many of you met last summer at our national Summer Institute, has embraced our theme with her article on "Anyplace Apps". NNELL is delighted that she has accepted our offer to return for Summer Institute 2014 where she will present on Using Digital Bookmaking (please see more information on the 2014 Summer Institute

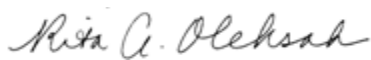
"Homeschool Assistance Program Offers Spanish Classes to All Levels" -Allyson Day's article navigates teaching foreign language to homeschooled students. She details how the program has grown as well as the challenges and successes of this important student population that we don't want to forget.

This issue also includes two reviews: *Raising Global Children* book the and the "MARACAS Las Cuatro Estaciones" curriculum review. If you are interested in submitting a book or curriculum review for the spring/summer 2014 issue, please contact me at roleksak@nnell.org.

You will also find the current edition of Parent's Connection, "Reading with Your Child," is a great handout to give to parents or send home with students this winter. This is the perfect opportunity to reinforce with parents the wonderful opportunities that exist for quality time together.

Please consider submitting an article for the spring/summer issue. The topic will be *Advancing Student Proficiency*. Share your strategies and suggestions for moving our youngest learners up the proficiency scale!

Rita



President's Message

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Staying Put in Mexico for Language Learning

By **Stacie Nevadomski Berdan**

This past summer, our family went to Mexico for two weeks. We usually like to travel around a country – planning a loose itinerary, strapping on backpacks and using the available buses, ferries and trains – but we decided that this year would be different. Mike and I had been working all summer long on our latest book, *Raising Global Children* and although we love to travel, sometimes the intensity of “winging it” can be very tiring, especially with children. We needed to relax, but we also realized that we’re the kind of family that is energized by international travel. So we rented a house in the historic artist community of San Miguel de Allende (SMdA) for 10 days, followed up by five days in Mexico City (known as DF to locals). One of the many highlights of San Miguel de Allende is its small-town charm and safety (we found DF to be safe as well and had no problems).

We wanted our now 13-year-old daughters to experience living in a place outside the U.S. Anyone who spends a few weeks or months at a summer (or winter) place, feels the comfort that comes with waking up in the same bed every day, buying groceries at local markets, getting to know neighbors, reading books in a favorite spot, and returning to the same pastry shop for your favorite delicacies. We did all this, only in SMdA.

But our real objective was to have Connie and Betty attend Spanish language school for one week. The girls have been studying Spanish for the past eight years; they excel in class and did very well on the national Spanish examination in 7th grade. But as anyone who speaks another language knows, using those language skills in a practical situation is very different from the classroom. Although they use their skills when we travel in Spanish-speaking countries, they are often frustrated by not being able to use the correct tense of a verb form because they haven’t learned it yet. We wanted them to understand the value of their language lessons firsthand – and assure them that what they had learned thus far was important – so we chose an immersion language school, Centro Mexicano de Lengua y Cultura, that was only a 10-minute

walk from our casita. The school was run by Josefina, a charming older woman who exuded calm yet with a touch of stern; the kids seemed to know she meant business and so always followed the rules. Josefina and her school came recommended by friends of ours.

Connie and Betty walked by themselves to and from school every day. They attended classes from 9-1 pm, Monday through Friday, with four other teenagers – two from the Bahamas, one from Texas, the other California – in one of the rooms off the open-air courtyard of a traditional Spanish-style casa. Their teacher, Sara, was a native speaker who spoke English, but only spoke to them in class in Spanish. She taught them practical vocabulary they’d use in town, many irregular verbs and all 20 different tenses. The first two hours of every day were spent in class, followed by an excursion so they could practice. They went to a tienda and ordered a drink and cookies. They went to the Tuesday “everything” market – the biggest market in SMdA that sold everything from fruits and vegetables to car tires – and talked with the vendors, asking questions about the goods. They went to the university to practice speaking with other teenagers and learned that, in Mexico, “university” corresponds to the last year of high school and first two years of college. They learned a good deal but, above all, they had a great time.

Probably the most important lesson they learned from the experience is the value of trying to communicate even if they didn’t have all the right words. People liked it when they spoke in Spanish, helped them along the way, and didn’t criticize them when they made mistakes, but instead repeated the word or phrase and encouraged the girls to do the same. They felt humbled but also proud of their abilities. They loved ordering churros from the man who made them in his portable cart behind the square (or el jardin) and tacos from either Tio Carlos or Don Rafael, where all the locals ate. They wandered the square on Friday eve-

ning, like all the other teenagers, talking, laughing and just “hanging out” in the open air.

When we described our trip to people, many asked us if we were afraid (or crazy) because Mexico has a reputation for drug

Parent's Corner

lords and crime. It seems most peoples’ experiences with Mexico can be boiled down to three: all-inclusive beach resorts, poverty and illegal immigrants, and drug lords. There is so much more to Mexico – a beautiful country filled with rich history, stunning landscape and fascinating culture. Never did we feel unsafe or experience any crime at all. In fact, people were so helpful and happy to see us (there weren’t many visitors in DF at all), they thanked us for visiting and not believing all the bad things that aren’t true about Mexico.

Mexico offers so much to families: It’s close, inexpensive, historic and, yes, safe (for information on safety in Mexico, see the U.S. Department travel site). If you’re looking for ways to improve your child’s Spanish language skills – and open their and your eyes to another culture – I’d recommend Mexico.

Stacie Nevadomski Berdan is a seasoned global executive and an expert on international careers. She is the author, most recently, of “Go Global! Launching an International Career Here or Abroad” and the upcoming book “Raising Global Children from Tots to Teens.”



BEEN THERE, DUNE THAT

By Marshall S. Berdan

HUACACHINA, Peru – It's a scene right out of "Lawrence of Arabia": enormous mountains of sand – some as tall as 300 feet – their surface sculpted into soft, geometric designs by the wind, and extending as far as the eye can see. My wife and I stand captivated, feeling the heat of the day rising up out of the soft sand and watching the interplay of golden light and pale shadow as the sun dips behind a distant ridge of solid beige.

Of course, there were also a few differences. For starters, this is not the great Sahara Desert, but the northernmost stretches of the even longer – but not as wide – Atacama Desert in southern Peru. And when it is time to return to our oasis, we climb not back onto camels, but into equally curiously-shaped, 10-passenger dune buggies. Nor will it be a leisurely plod back, but a wild ride up – and especially down – a Bedouin's dozen more dunes, our hands

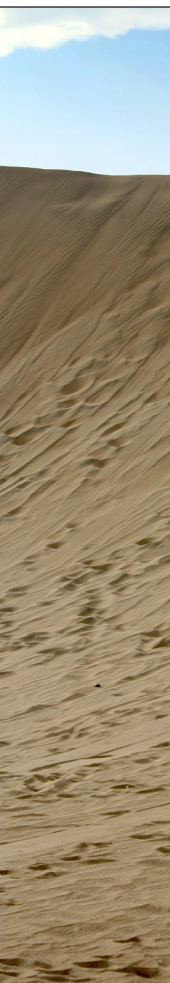
clenched tightly to the cushioned bars in front of us and screams of delight issuing involuntarily from the mouths of our internationally-diverse fellow passengers. Peter O'Tooles we definitely weren't.

For nearly two weeks, Huacachina had been dangled as a reward to our 12-year-old twin daughters for all the "ordeals" we had subjected them to: eight hours wandering the ruins of Machu Picchu, a day-long boat trip across Lake Titicaca, and a 15-hour minivan tour of the amazingly deep (11,000-feet) Colca Canyon. After a second overnight bus ride, they had certainly earned it. And we all needed to end our trip on a piercing high note.

Naturally I was worried that Huacachina wouldn't be anywhere near as compelling as it looked in the guide books. Fortunately, I was wrong. Towering dunes of beach-quality sand encircle the palm, jacaranda, and bougainvillea-laden oasis on three sides. The fourth,









through which the road to Ica, three miles distant, passes is small by comparison, but still sufficient to block the view and create the impression of complete isolation. What little there is of the town wraps itself around three sides of a murky green lagoon of mythical origins (the name means “crying woman” in Quechua) whose allegedly curative waters once attracted ailing Peruvian elites.

These days, however, it’s Huacachina’s sand that’s attracting thrill-seeking foreigners. While the girls cool off in the pool, I set off to arrange our afternoon dune buggy/sandboarding excursion. In fact, there wasn’t much arranging to do. Just about every accommodation in town will do it for you, and it’s all the same tour anyway. All you have to do is negotiate your price downwards from the asking price, which in December was only 30 soles (\$12).

At 4 p.m., our driver, Francisco, swings by our hotel in his neon orange buggy, a racked, open-air contraption that rumbles with power. Two hotels later, we are full. Francisco loops around to the other side of town where we pay our nominal municipal tax, and wait, engines throbbing, until the full caravan of dune buggies – about 20 of them – has assembled. Then, in an explosion of noise, color, and palpable excitement, we roar off into the desert.

For the next 30 minutes, Francisco delivers big time on the “adrenaline-stirring” promise of the tour, tearing up, down and over a succession of serious sand as we in the back brace ourselves as best we can while being jostled every which way. Finally, after one particularly rollicking and well-received descent, he stops at the top of a small dune so that we can try our luck at sandboarding.

Like snowboarding, sandboarding requires strapping your shoes into set grips atop a three-foot, wooden board. Then all you have to do is maintain your balance while gravity does the work. Needless-to-say, this is easier said than done, so first-timers like us appreciated the option of taking the first two runs on our stomachs with our legs splayed out behind to use as brakes. By now we are ready to try standing up, and with fairly satisfactory results – surfing straight down for about 20 or 30 yards until friction arrested our momentum and we toppled over.

From there, we are driven to a series of increasingly steeper dunes, with increasingly less innocuous results, including some rather unpleasant face-plants. By the time we arrive at our last run of the day – a black diamond to be sure – not even the two ac-

complished Korean snowboarders in our group are willing to take it any way but lying down. Our legs tired from trudging, our egos bruised from the falls, and our clothes infused with thousands of grainy souvenirs, we gladly relax to watch the sunset.

And no one is more glad than I that Huacachina is such a big hit – a sand blast, in fact – with another round of thrills still to come. By the time we are dropped off at our hotel, we have two very happy campers – and two contented parents looking forward to a cold beer and an exceedingly atmospheric night at a real oasis.

GOING TO HUACACHINA

GETTING THERE: Huacachina is located three miles southwest of Ica, which is roughly 175 miles south of Lima via the Pan-American Highway. Bus fares from Lima to Ica range from \$10-\$30 with the trip taking 4-6 hours. From Ica, the set taxi fare is 7 soles (\$3).

Information: www.huacachina.com

NB: Transportation prices are mostly fixed, but hotel and menu prices are pretty much whatever the proprietor thinks that he can get, with significant seasonal variation. We were there in December, the low season, and every price in this article is either what we were quoted or actually paid, often after some bargaining. In the high season (May-August), however, prices can easily be 50% higher or more.

WHERE TO STAY: There are two upscale choices, both overlooking the lagoon: Hotel Mossone, a hacienda style property with an enormous pool that dates from the 1920s (rooms from \$100), and Hosteria Suiza, on the quieter northern end (rooms from \$125). Backpackers and other budget travelers should head for the area behind the lagoon where choices include Casa de Arena, El Huacachinero, and Hotel Salvatierra (rooms from \$30.) Be advised, however, that bars and discotecas in Huacachina often throb late into the desert night.

WHERE TO EAT: While the best food is served inside the better hotels, the more atmospheric choice is to dine outdoors, overlooking the lagoon. Café Moroni sits in the small park near the mermaid statue, while those lining the eastern malecon (promenade) include Tratoria Farolito, La Sirena, and Bolepo. Two-course tourist menus begin around 15 soles. (\$6)

WHAT ELSE TO DO: In addition to climbing the dunes, self-starters can rent a sandboard in town for about 10 soles an hour. And like all tourist destinations in Peru, Huacachina serves as a base for a number of other tours. Among the more popular are those to the Ballestas Islands, the Nasca Lines, and local bodegas (wineries).

Marshall S. Berdan is a freelance travel writer who has been to more than 60 countries. He is a former high school English teacher and business journalist who has lived and worked in Stockholm and Hong Kong. Mike recently co-authored his first book *Raising Global Children*.





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Review: The MARACAS Las Cuatro Estaciones Curriculum

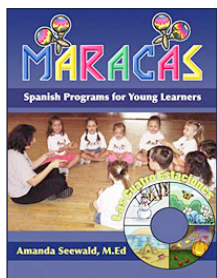
By Nathan Lutz

The MARACAS *Las Cuatro Estaciones* Curriculum takes you and your elementary school aged Spanish students through a year of engaging and interactive lessons that develop students' proficiency in the Spanish language.

As the curriculum's 25

lessons are grounded in Gardener's Theory of Multiple Intelligences, you'll be sure to tap into all your students' strengths and develop the areas wherein they may have challenges. Author Amanda Seewald wrote the MARACAS *Las Cuatro Estaciones* Curriculum aligned to ACTFL's standards for foreign language learning.

Teachers will find this curriculum easy to implement. Each of the lessons comes with all the resources you'll need to implement the lesson: clearly articulated objectives, a list of materials, step-by-step directions for activities and games, suggestions for literature connections, songs and chants, and re-



producibles. The book's artwork uses delightful and colorful children's artwork throughout the lessons and in the materials you copy for your students. There are also assessments and home-connection reproducibles, so you can be sure to tap into parental support for your elementary Spanish program.

The curriculum also has an accompanying CD with 22 original songs that relate to the four seasons. The catchy lyrics and upbeat rhythms reinforce the Spanish language being presented in the lessons. Whether the CD is used alone or in conjunction with the curriculum, you and your students will enjoy listening and singing along.

Author Amanda Seewald states, "Each module, lesson, and activity is crafted to give the teacher simple guidance and instructional strategies that will engage learners. As the Theory of Multiple Intelligences and Brain Compatible teaching are the central foci of the curriculum structure, each

lesson is divided by what I am calling 'active learning sections.' These themes will call on the notions and concepts at the heart of the MARACAS' philosophy: make the learning fun and memorable!"

Nathan Lutz is an elementary school French teacher at Kent Place School in Summit, N.J. Nathan has served the world language community as president of Language Educators of Central New York, and as the National Networking Coordinator for the National Network for Early Language Learning. In 2012, he was a participant in the UPenn STARTALK Excellence in Leadership Institute and he was a participant in the New York State Association of Foreign Language Teachers' Leaders of Tomorrow Program in 2007. Nathan is also the World Languages Community Leader for Teach for America. In addition to frequently presenting workshops, he has written several publications concerning world language education with Early Advantage, Little Pim, and Research Education Association.



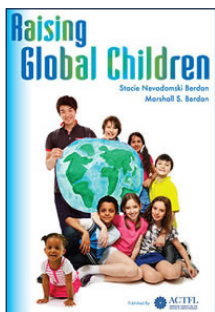
Review: "Raising Global Children"

By Lori Langer de Ramirez

Raising Global Children is "written for parents and their children, and teachers and their students from all walks of life" (p231). The chapters provide ideas and inspiration for developing international mindedness and global perspectives in children, teens, and college-aged students. By combining short quotes and longer personal anecdotes with research, historical background and concrete suggestions, the authors have created a highly readable and useful guidebook.

Chapter 1 sets the stage for the need for globalization. In chapter 2, the authors define "What Raising Global Children Means," and in chapter 3 they provide insights into "How to Prepare Children to become Global."

Of particular interest is chapter 4: "Teaching Language: 'Switching On' the Global Mindset." After a brief introduction to the need for and benefits of foreign language education, the authors detail the ways to encourage learning languages, how to choose a language, and different learning mode options that can supplement traditional school-based study (e.g., language



clubs, technology, immersion programs, etc.). This chapter includes up-to-date information about the state of language teaching and learning in the United States, coupled with specific suggestions for advocacy and support of language learning programs on the local and national level.

The subsequent chapters include information about "Exploring Culture," "Learning Through Travel" and "Helping Teens Further Their Global Mindset." The final chapter provides readers with a list of suggestions for advocacy and support of global education in our schools.

In her introduction to *Raising Global Children*, Marty Abbott, Executive Director of ACTFL, recalls her first international experience as a "turning point in her personal development." At several points throughout the book, contributors and the authors reminisce about that one life-changing event that puts the world into a different perspective and somehow alters their career or life course. In detailing these events, this book both honors these moments and strives to provide a blueprint for facilitating similar experiences for our children.

Raising Global Children prompted me to

think about my own growth as a global citizen. From early childhood memories of my mother's collection of dolls from around the world to more recent experiences with international travel and teaching and learning languages, the stories in the book resonated with my own perspectives, both as a mother and an educator.

Nevadomski Berdan, S. & Berdan, Marshall S. (2013). *Raising Global Children*. Alexandria, VA: The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.

Dr. Lori Langer de Ramirez holds a master's degree in applied linguistics and a doctorate in curriculum and teaching from Teachers College, Columbia University. Lori is the author of several books, including *Empower English Language Learners with Tools from the Web* and *Take Action: Lesson Plans for the Multicultural Classroom*, as well as several Spanish-language books and texts. Her website (miscositas.com) offers free materials for teaching Chinese, English, French, and Spanish. Lori has presented workshops at local, regional and national conferences and in schools throughout the United States and around the world. Her areas of research and curriculum development are diversity education, folktales and authentic materials, and technology in language teaching, with an emphasis on Web 2.0 tools.





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More information to follow in January 2014.

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Friday, July 11

9 a.m. - noon

- Optional site visit to Arabic, Mandarin, and Russian STARTALK programs

1 p.m. - 5 p.m.

- Regional and State Representatives Advocacy Workshop (open to all members)

Saturday, July 12

9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Sunday, July 13

9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

- Building Literacy – Helena Curtain
- Creating Pattern Books Using Storybird – Tori Gilbert and
- Barbara Lindsey
- Exploring the Modes of Communication – Paul Sandrock Creativity and Innovation in Language Learning (TBD)

The Common Core State Standards and Early Language Learning: *Let's do this!*

By Jessica Haxhi

A group of elementary students sit in front of you, waiting for the opening “good morning” song in the target language. As they stare up at you with those sweet faces, let’s hit the pause button:

These kids are all beautiful and unique. They come from different experiences and with very different skills. Some live in comfort, others in poverty. Some have problems reading, or seeing, or holding a pencil. Some love to participate while others sit shyly on the side. Some have parents who are very involved in school; others have parents who are not. But all of the parents love their children and want them to succeed. And so do you.

Now, all of these children are going to be held to the same standards—very high standards—called the “Common Core State Standards” (CCSS). Most of the United States have agreed to implement these first-ever nationwide standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics. (see <http://www.ascd.org/common-core-state-standards/common-core-state-standards-adoption-map.aspx> for a map of adoption). These standards are designed backwards from the skills and knowledge that students need to be “College and Career Ready” at high school graduation.

Of course, students will be tested on their ability to meet these standards. Depending on the state, your students will take standardized assessments created by either the “SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium” (SBAC) or the “Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers” (PARCC). The tests they are creating are challenging—very challenging. They require the ability to comprehend deeply, to write spontaneously and well, and to make sense of different types of “texts.” Kids

need technology skills just to take the tests, such as dragging and dropping and TYPING quickly.

You can try some of these tests yourself at <http://sbac.portal.airast.org/practice-test/>. You can see what the kids, and their homeroom teachers, are up against. And when you do, I think you may decide that these homeroom teachers can’t do it alone. In order for these beautiful kids to succeed, in order for them to be College and Career Ready, it’s going to take all of us, working together, giving them practice, giving them support. In this article, I’d like to talk about how we can start to do that and how we might be uniquely equipped to do so.

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS AND WORLD LANGUAGES

The CCSS delineate standards for English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics in grades K-12. An additional document defines standards for literacy development in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects in grades 6-12. While world languages is not mentioned specifically in any of these documents, I think you’ll find that connecting the ELA document to the way we teach (or could teach) is going to be an exciting and do-able task.

ACTFL has already created documents and resources to assist us in understanding how these documents relate to our national *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* (1999, originally 1996). A document referred to as the ACTFL “Crosswalk” shows the alignment of the national Standards for Language Learning with the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts (see Resources below). The Common Core ELA document is divided into four skill areas: Reading, Writing, Speaking & Listening, and Language. The ACTFL document shows how these align almost perfectly with

our instruction in the three modes of communication: interpretive (reading and listening skills), interpersonal (speaking and listening skills), and presentational (speaking and writing skills). The notion of “language” as defined in the Common Core is represented in our definitions of the proficiency levels (novice, intermediate, advanced). ACTFL has also offered a series of webinars that introduces the Crosswalk document and helps us to understand implementation of CCSS (see Resources below).

HEY, WE KNOW ABOUT NATIONWIDE STANDARDS!

We world language teachers already understand the concept of shared, nationwide standards. You may have noticed that CCSS workshops in your school focus on the Common Core “anchor standards”. This is the first time that ELA and math have had nationwide end-of-program standards with backwards-designed K-12 benchmarks that lead up to those final goals. Sound familiar? We’ve had our national Standards for Foreign Language Learning “anchor standards” since 1996! This organizing principle makes perfect sense to us.

You have also probably attended meetings at your school about the “shifts in instruction” that the Common Core will require. Again, we world language teachers have already experienced how standards require us to *shift* our instruction. As we have worked with our Standards over the past 17 years, we have redefined what language learning looks like and how we teach and assess it. Before we talk about the shifts that will accompany the implementation of Common Core, it helps to think about the instructional shifts each of us has made since the rollout of the 5 C’s. Perhaps you share some of these shifts with me:

Shift 1: 5 C’s Unit Planning

I loved my “fruits” unit in which students would learn 10 fruit names. I used bingo

and flashcards to make sure they knew every word. I gave them a quiz and felt very satisfied that they had learned so much! Then, Carol Ann Dahlberg and Helena Curtin taught us all how to go from these decontextualized vocabulary units to thematic units that pulled together many topics and included functions, such as *expressing dislikes*, *making requests*, etc. Suddenly, *students* were talking! The standards showed us how to incorporate all 5 C's in each unit and now we are teaching far richer units that support regular classroom instruction and develop real-world language skills.

Shift 2: A New Definition of Communication:

Let's face it; we all thought we were teaching kids to communicate until we understood the new definition of the *three modes of communication* in the standards. I'll never forget the first time I heard Paul Sandrock explain that interpersonal communication should be *spontaneous*. We guffawed, "Impossible in the elementary grades!" Now, building students' spontaneous conversational skills is my greatest focus and my biggest challenge – and so effective when it is done right. After all, true conversations in the target culture are spontaneous!

Shift 3: High Expectations for Student Engagement

Before the standards, we were satisfied when students were "passively engaged" in class, listening quietly and not acting up. But the 5 C's don't allow for mere quiet listening; students must be conversing, presenting, contemplating cultures, considering subject area content, making comparisons and interacting with native speakers. If the 5 C's are being done right, our rooms are full of "active engagement" and it's noisy and fun, yet purposeful.

Shift 4: High Quality Assessment

We struggled with notions of assessment around the 5 C's at first. If we have done a connection to math in our unit, should we be giving a math quiz? We went back to the ACTFL Performance Guidelines to figure out what we should assess (communication and the cultural awareness necessary to communicate well). Then, we began to use the contexts offered by culture, connections, comparisons and communities as organizing principles for our units. Our understanding of assessment was further expanded by the ACTFL Integrated Performance Assessments, which showed us how using real-world tasks in all three modes of communication both motivated students and gave us a comprehensive snapshot of

their language development. More recently, as we revisit how to move students up the ACTFL Proficiency Scale within the context of the 5 C's, we see real language learning is messy, full of mistakes, and not always linear. We cannot measure such learning by multiple choice tests, but by performance tasks and rubric feedback.

Shift 5: Authentic Materials

The first materials that I bought years ago were generic, devoid of culture, and meant for the regular classroom (especially those pre-made fruit bingo cards!). As the standards shifted our focus to "realia," we began to search out high quality materials, toys, and texts from the target culture. Now, we have Google images, YouTube, and projectors – not a result of the standards, but still a terrific "shift" in the last 20 years!

As you can see, the shifts that we have made since the Standards for Foreign Language Learning document came out were neither easy nor quick. The field had to take the time to revise established practices and documents and create new definitions and strategies. For all of us, there was a lot of trial and error and plenty of collegial discussions. All of this could not have happened, however, without this common document that outlines the goals of our instruction, for all states and all languages. That commonality is what the ELA and Math people are just beginning to experience now.

COMMON CORE ELA STANDARDS – THE SHIFTS

Imagine if, in 1996, we had anticipated the changes in instruction that would be required in order to implement the national Standards. Certainly, many of the best thinkers in our field did just that and they were the ones who helped us make sense of everything over the years. But, what if the main focus of the roll-out of the standards in 1996 had been to tell us the "shifts" up front? That is how the Common Core State Standards are being presented to teachers today.

The shifts in ELA instruction have been divided into six components (or three, depending on which authors you read). Let's consider the six shifts and how we can support them in WL instruction. (shifts taken from the "EngageNY" website - see Resources below).

Shift 1: Balancing Informational and Literary Texts

Students read a true balance of informational and literary texts.

Up until now, ELA instruction has focused more on literary texts, such as novels,

stories, and plays. In order to prepare students for real-world literacy needs, they will now be asked to read much more informational text. This shift aligns perfectly with *our* shift toward the use of more authentic materials for our instruction. We support this shift as we have students' work with menus, posters, advertisements, brochures, charts, graphs, songs, webpage "screen-shots," movie tickets, etc. from the target culture.

Shift 2: Knowledge in the Disciplines

Students build knowledge about the world (domains/content areas) through TEXT rather than the teacher or activities.

Rather than gaining knowledge merely from textbooks or teacher lecture, students need to learn by their interpretation of texts. "Texts" include realia (yes, objects) and the authentic texts mentioned above. Students can learn about a topic via a short video in the target language, by interacting with toys for a particular celebration, by perusing a website about recycling in a country. The point is that they are not just being told something by a teacher; they are accessing that learning directly.

Shift 3: Staircase of Complexity

Students read the central, grade appropriate text around which instruction is centered. Teachers are patient and create more time and space and support in the curriculum for close reading.

In ELA and other subject areas, students have not always been asked to read the complex texts that would prepare them for real-world college and work tasks. This shift requires teachers in all subject areas to consider complexity when choosing texts for students to work with. We can support this shift by giving students experiences with complex texts in the target language (for their level) as early as possible. First graders can look at a movie poster for a popular children's film and find words they recognize, such as dates and times the film is showing. Fourth graders can look at various menus from the target culture, determine what types of restaurant each one comes from, and discuss prices. Sixth graders might read a short non-fiction article about "Coqui" in Puerto Rico and answer comprehension questions about main idea and supporting details. If we consistently expose students to authentic texts from an early age, we can teach them to remain calm when faced with a lot of text, find what they can understand, and use contextual clues. This practice goes to the heart of literacy instruction in any language.

FIGURE 1



Shift 4: Text-based Answers:

Students engage in rich and rigorous evidence-based conversations about text.

Conversations? We know how to do this. We have always asked students if they like a particular story or how much the hamburgers cost on the Japanese McDonald's menu. In order to get students to a point where they are having "evidence-based" conversations, however, we will have to add some phrases to their repertoire. We will have to teach students how to indicate where they are getting their answers, such as saying "it says it here" or "in the second sentence." That seems like fairly useful language to know, though, doesn't it? After learning such phrases, a fourth grade FLES class might talk about which sentences of a short article talk about the animals found in Costa Rica; a second grade class might point out which words in a poem give clues as to the season the author is describing.

Shift 5: Writing from Sources Writing

This emphasizes use of evidence from sources to inform or make an argument.

For literacy instruction, this represents a move away from opinion-based persuasive writing to evidence-based argument writing. We can support this shift by working with students on making references to "texts" (as described above), and helping students to develop debate skills both orally and in writing.

Shift 6: Academic Vocabulary

Students constantly build the transferable vocabulary they need to access grade level complex texts. This can be done effectively by spiraling like content in increasingly complex texts. The same holds true when reading world language texts. We can also borrow instructional strategies from ELA such as "close reading." We can teach strategies to guess word meanings from context and apply pre-

viously learned vocabulary to new situations. As we deliver strategy instruction, students will develop both vocabulary in the target language and the "academic vocabulary" of our discipline.

SUPPORTING THE COMMON CORE AND SHOWING IT

As you strive to support the Common Core "shifts" listed above, don't forget to remind your colleagues and administrators that you

are a team player. Go to homeroom teachers or literacy coaches and ask their advice on various literacy-based instruction that you are doing. Use the same graphic organizers that they use in the ELA classrooms. Post non-fiction articles and texts that you are working on in your classes on the wall outside your room. Create a bulletin board, such as the one in Figure 1, with pictures of students that shows how they are learning to find meaning from context.

IN CONCLUSION

The Common Core States Standards are here to stay – for awhile at least. From our own experiences, we are uniquely prepared to understand the concept of instructional shifts; perhaps we can even reassure our ELA colleagues that the benefits of national standards far outweigh the challenges. Luckily, we can support the ELA shifts by making changes that align well with quality world language instruction. Now, we just have to show our stakeholders that once again, world language instruction is a "core" subject. Let's do this!

RESOURCES

Start at the main website at <http://www.corestandards.org/>

Download the Common Core App to your device! More information at <http://www.masteryconnect.com/learn-more/goodies.html>

Download the ACTFL "Crosswalk" showing alignment between the national Standards for Foreign Language Learning and the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts document. <http://www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/CrosswalkFinalAligningCCSS-LanguageStandards.pdf>

Go to Paul Sandrock's ACTFL presentation on "Common Core Standards through World Languages: Developing Literacy through Language Learning" for more information about the ACTFL Crosswalk with CCSS and specific examples of how CCSS might look in

the world languages classroom (from Laura Terrill). (<http://tinyurl.com/mk55u4e>) Find the archived ACTFL Webinars (Fall 2012) on CCSS at https://live.blueskybroadcast.com/bsb/client/CL_DEFAULT.asp?Client=562094&PCAT=4798&CAT=4798.

A table of the SIX shifts for ELA and Math can be found at <http://www.engageny.org/sites/default/files/resource/attachments/common-core-shifts.pdf>

Your school may talk about THREE shifts. These can be found at <http://www.achievethecore.org/page/277/the-common-core-shifts-at-a-glance>

To learn more about academic vocabulary, see Appendix A of the Common Core State Standards, specifically pages 32-33. Available at http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_A.pdf

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Jessica Haxhi is currently the Supervisor of World Languages for New Haven Public Schools in Connecticut. Previously, she taught Japanese language in grades PreK-12 for 22 years, the majority spent teaching at a PreK-5 magnet school.

She is the current co-president of the American Association of Teachers of Japanese and has served on the Board of Directors of the Northeast Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. Jessica has taught world language methodology courses at two Connecticut state universities and consults with districts on curriculum and instruction both locally and nationally. She received the Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award in 2002 and the U.S. Japan Foundation's Elgin Heinz Outstanding Japanese Teacher Award in 2008.



Learning Languages: Any Place, Any Time

By Allyson Day

When I walk into a school building with my large brown and pink polka-dot suitcase rolling behind, many think I am going on a trip. Not the case. My suitcase is my rolling office, my rolling bag of tricks, my rolling lesson plan in a bag. Like many elementary Spanish teachers, I travel from building to building with all my wares that help teach students the love of a second language!

One of my teaching assignments is different than those taught by my public and private school colleagues. Each Tuesday morning, I roll my suitcase into a former elementary school building and set up for the day's exciting K-12 Spanish classes for children who are homeschooled.

The West Des Moines Community School District serves those children through the Home School Assistance Program (HSAP). HSAP has existed for many years, although not at the level it functions now. In the beginning, a coordinator visited homes to collaborate with families on the educational progress of their children. In 2007, the Chief Financial Officer of the West Des Moines Community School District, a parent of homeschooled children, suggested expanding the program to include enrichment classes. Parents were polled and initially requested subjects that proved difficult to teach and/or assess at home. Art, lab-based science, physical education and writing were offered in the first year with approximately 80 students participating at varying levels.

After the success of the first classes, Spanish and drama were added the next year. said Dan Miller, a homeschooling father who has two children in the program says, "We confidently instruct the children through most of their subjects, but some, such as foreign languages and music, present a great difficulty. The children use a computer-based program to assist them in languages, but it is no

substitute for a real teacher."

Now, six years later, there are 130 students involved in the program.

STAFFING

The job description for a homeschool Spanish teacher has many of the requirements one would expect. The candidate must be fluent in Spanish, love working with children, be willing to work with all kinds of learners, communicate well with parents and students, and have great enthusiasm for teaching. The HSAP classes in the West Des Moines Community School District are very elementary heavy, so hiring a Foreign Language in Elementary School (FLES) teacher met the developmental needs of the majority of the students. There are, however, junior high and high school students that want to learn Spanish too. Since the program is classified as "enrichment," there is flexibility in the level taught according to certification requirements and subsequent hiring of teachers. (Check your individual state Department of Education for specific requirements.)

A homeschool teacher must possess very specific qualities to ensure a successful program. First and foremost, the teacher must be open-minded to different educational approaches, such as homeschooling. The educational culture of homeschool families can be very different than that of the traditional school community. Teachers must also be open-minded to and respectful of differing belief systems. Many families that homeschool have strong beliefs in some aspect of life, which can be apparent through the words and actions of their children. The homeschool teacher must be able to accept all students as they come and must also be able to work with all grade levels, some of them being grouped together.

CLASS SCHEDULE

The fall and spring sessions are 13 weeks long. The fall semes-

ter goes from Labor Day to the first week in December, the spring from the end of January to the beginning of May. This schedule was created to meet the needs of homeschooling families who often take extended trips around the holidays.

The elementary students attend enrichment classes one morning a week. They learn Spanish for 50 minutes and then rotate to another subject area for two other class periods. The groups are multi-age and consist of classes of K-1, 2-3

and 4-5, with approximately 15-20 students in each class. The reason the elementary Spanish classes are so well attended is because homeschool parents pay close attention to educational research, and they are aware of the window of opportunity that exists for learning language at an early age. This results in the K-1 grade class being the largest group.

ELEMENTARY CLASSES

In the elementary classes, students experience immersion in the language. They participate in a wide variety of games, songs, and stories. Special attention is given to the developmental level of the students, with emphasis on high energy, highly motivating activities lasting only five-10 minutes each. My repertoire of strategies includes informational gap activities, Total Physical Response, Total Physical Response Storytelling, the natural approach, units with Integrated Performance Assessments, along with other strategies based on the National Standards for Foreign Language.

Holidays and cultural topics are also discussed. In the spring, each subject area in the HSAP program has a culminating activity. The writing class has a poetry reading, the drama class has a production, and the elementary Spanish classes have a piñata party. Prior to that date, students learn about the cultural traditions surrounding piñatas and then create their own class piñata. Students learn that the American birthday party tradition has Hispanic, Aztec, and Mayan roots.

The K-1 curriculum consists of conversation questions, colors, numbers, days of the week, clothing, and shapes. It should be noted that there is a significant high turn-over of students in our HSAP program. Because homeschool families are not bound to a school-year schedule and have many curriculum options available to them, their year-to-year routines vary greatly. It is not uncommon for a family to enroll in the HSAP classes during the fall semester, but

HOMESCHOOL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM OFFERS SPANISH CLASSES TO ALL LEVELS

not the spring semester. Or they may take classes for one year, and then decide to “take a year off” because they have a new baby. Additionally, many families “try” homeschooling for a year or two and then re-enroll in public or private school. Based on this unique dynamic, I teach the same curriculum in the K-1 class for both years even though there are first graders who attended as kindergarteners too. This meets the needs of the students very well, and their retention rate is

good, even though they are only with me for 26 class periods of 50 minutes each in one year. The fast-paced environment in my classroom keeps students interested, even though some of the same activities may be repeated.

In the 2-3 and 4-5 classes, the “enrichment” nature of the classes gives me complete freedom to choose curriculum. I alternate between the content-related curriculum that I teach in the public schools and student-driven curriculum. One year students asked to do a unit on animals. Last year, they wanted to study sports. Luckily, I have written FLES curriculum for our public school district for 19 years, so I can efficiently develop curriculum for these classes using my knowledge of best practices.

My homeschool classes are generally smaller in size than my public school classes and serve as a great place to try out new strategies. Last year, when I took a class on using iPads in the FLES classroom, I piloted the lessons with the homeschool classes first. While writing integrated performance assessments for my public school curriculum, I tried out various components of the assessments on my homeschool classes to see how they worked and decide what to tweak.

SECONDARY CLASSES

Developing class offerings for the older students was challenging at first. When I was hired, the program offered two classes: a junior high class (grades 6-8) and a high school class (grades 9-12). This was successful the first year I taught, but it would not have worked the next year because of the high turnover rate in HSAP students. New students are allowed to enroll at any time. This provides great flexibility for the families, but made it difficult to progress with the students who remained in the program for any length of time. Changes in the courses were necessary.

Now parents can enroll their children in Spanish A, Spanish

B or Spanish C. Any student, sixth grade or older, is eligible to take Spanish A. The classes are now year-long courses. Students must complete a full year of Spanish A to be eligible for Spanish B, and they must complete Spanish B to take Spanish C. It was important that the classes *not* be called Spanish 1 or Spanish 2. I did not want to mislead parents to believe that if their child took Spanish 1 in HSAP, they could take Spanish 2 in a traditional high school the next year. Regular high school classes have 180 days of instruction per year versus the 26 days in the HSAP program.

For curriculum, I use the same textbook that my district's high school uses. This allows for a smooth transition for students who choose to enroll in the public high school after homeschooling. Because the classes are enrichment in nature, letter grades are not assigned. At the end of each class, I hand the students a review sheet, covering the important points of the lesson. Most homeschooled students are skilled at studying independently or with a parent, so this is a successful way to re-enforce the topics of my direct instruction. The next lesson begins with a mini-quiz over the previous lesson. Mini-quizzes are not meant to be difficult or stressful; they are to remind the students that they should periodically study their Spanish to ensure retention. Students can also access a wiki website I developed for them. Each class in elementary and secondary has its own page with the current lesson topics available for study. There are also links to on-line games and songs for additional practice.

Secondary classes also have a culminating activity at the end of the school year in the spring. This endorses their hard work and gives them a cultural experience they might not otherwise have. Students brainstorm ideas, and have chosen such activities as an Hispanic food fair where students prepare and bring a food from a Spanish-speaking country, a field trip to a local Ecuadorian restaurant, and a piñata party.

FUNDING

In Iowa, public school districts receive 30 percent student funding for each homeschooled child that is enrolled in their district. Any money received for homeschooling students must be spent on homeschooled students, so that money goes directly to the HSAP program. As word spread about the vast offering of enrichment classes taught by experienced certified teachers, families in surrounding communities open enrolled their students into the

district. The same 30 percent funding is then provided for those students. Teachers are paid hourly rather than on contract, since the schedule does not follow the district calendar.

CHALLENGES

When I started with the program four years ago, I knew little about the homeschooling culture and how it might relate to Spanish instruction. I have learned a lot during my experience.

As mentioned earlier, homeschool families are used to keeping their own schedule. Because these are enrichment classes, there are no attendance requirements. This frustrated me in the beginning because I was accustomed to teaching in a public school, and I wanted my students present and ready to go. Most of them are, but each year there are a few that are much more laid back.

During my second year, I learned to look at the HSAP the same way I viewed ballet lessons or an extra-curricular art class for my own child. I became more relaxed and understanding of the culture of homeschooling, and it stopped bothering me. I realized that many families choose homeschooling because they want more flexibility. I knew that the students that were attending regularly were learning and growing in their language acquisition, but also appreciated the students who came infrequently because I knew they were at least walking away with a positive attitude about Spanish.

Another issue is the short amount of teacher-student contact time. One 50 minute class period once a week for 26 weeks is hardly enough time to get through what I could cover in the public schools. After getting a few years of experience, I became more accustomed to the amount of time I have with the students and what I could realistically cover. I struck a balance between maintaining the highest of teaching standards and remaining realistic about the amount of time I have with students.

WHY IT WORKS

This program is successful and has almost doubled in size over a few short years for many reasons. First and foremost, these free classes are provided by certified veteran teachers, who specialize in unique subject areas. Although the district offers an elementary school Spanish program in the public schools, the idea of elementary Spanish classes is still relatively new and interesting to many homeschool families. Therefore, they want their students to participate. Secondly, the children are excited to be there. Meeting only once-a-week keeps the ex-

perience new and interesting. Dan Miller's daughter, Mattea, a seventh grader who has been in the program for six years, says, "It is the most fun class. I like singing the songs. I like doing the quizzes."

A certain level of teacher gratification is achieved by teaching students for several consecutive years. As a FLES teacher, I have the opportunity to instruct students in consecutive years and build relationships. Being able to teach children in the HSAP program from elementary into junior high and then into high school gives me the experience of a familial, one-room schoolhouse.

The shorter school year—26 weeks instead of the traditional 36 weeks—cuts back on teacher and student fatigue. The long break in the winter months makes everyone eager to return in late January. Small class sizes enable greater participation for students, more accountability, and the opportunity for more in-depth learning.

CONCLUSION

Teaching Spanish to homeschooled students is different than being a FLES teacher in a public school. I have less time with the students, and the commitment level for some families is different due to the enrichment nature of the course. However, the enthusiasm, overall behavior, and willingness to learn are big perks to teaching in the home school program. Having autonomy over my very own articulated K-12 program keeps things stimulating and novel for me as well.

Working with parents who take great investment in their children's educational experience is an energizing benefit for this veteran teacher. In fact this year, so many parents enrolled their children in my K-1 class, we had to divide them into their own grade levels and hire another Spanish teacher. In a time when budget cuts are looming, it is invigorating to know that early language learning is greatly appreciated and valued.

Allyson Day resides in West Des Moines, Iowa, and has been teaching in the West Des Moines Community School District for 21 years, with 16 of those being in an elementary Spanish program, along with four years in the Homeschool Enrichment Program highlighted in this article. She teaches part-time and spends the rest of her time caring for her family of seven.



By Tony Theisen

On a recent trip, waiting at the gate for my flight, a 4-year-old boy sitting next to me was helping his grandmother navigate through the levels of an iPad game. Dazzled by his skills, I wanted to know more so I decided to ask his parents if I could talk to their son about his love for technology.

Not shy at all, this young learner began to tell me

Engaging young learners authentically with 21st century skills and technology

about all the things he could do with technology. He explained how he liked to play video games because it helped him think more. He then let me know he reads lots of books online, loves making family movies with the iPad, and likes to Skype with his grandmother and cousins. He finished by giving me a demonstration of several new apps on the family iPad.

So when this young learner and many like him enter school next year, how can we engage them in purposeful, meaningful and relevant learning? How can we help our learners be critical thinkers, risk takers ready to create as well as flexible learners open to a new language and new cultural perspectives? How do we guide them to be good consumers of informational and media technology? And finally, how do our young students find opportunities to experience authentic leadership roles?

We are definitely experiencing a monumental shift in the ways students learn, teachers deliver instruction and how systems are organized. This monumental shift, where “anytime, anywhere” learning is the norm and where students design their own learning, is invigorating.

New space and new realities highlight

the changes in the learning landscapes of not only schools and classrooms, but also the many virtual spaces that connect learners worldwide. From the new realities of technology, such as internet resources, mobile learning, app-based learning online and video gaming, to the many opportunities of authentic face-to-face encounters, it is evident that language learning at all levels is flourishing.

So what can we all do as teachers of young learners to help our students be strong language learners in the 21st century? Here are some possibilities.

1. **Take a multimedia approach to learning content as much as possible.** Engaging students with multiple modalities provides many ways for students to not only access the content, but learn how to be critical thinkers when engaging with knowledge.
2. **Promote innovation skills.** Students prefer to create with content more than just consume it. Using technology tools that allow students to create with video, audio, text, images and videos provide more opportunities to use more complex critical thinking skills as they design their projects and responses.
3. **Encourage students to be inquiry learners.** Provide opportunities for students to discover new ideas, ask good questions and synthesize new information.

During elementary school, it is so important to provide a sound introduction to 21st century skills. When young learners are engaged in both meaningful and challenging experience, as well as have opportunities to integrate technology into their learning both as solo learners and as active members of collaborative teams, they will begin to acquire the skills needed to be productive global citizens.

Toni Theisen, ACTFL 2013 President and the 2009 ACTFL Teacher of the Year, teaches French at Loveland High School in Loveland, Colorado where she is also the district WL Curriculum Representative. Theisen is a National Board Certified Teacher with a M.A. in Foreign Language Teaching and a M. A. in Education of Diverse Learners. She is also a Google Certified teacher. Very active in the foreign language profession, Theisen has presented many workshops, keynotes and webinars for national, regional, and state conferences and has authored articles on Multiple Intelligences, Differentiated Instruction and Technology for the 21st century learner. Theisen presented “Activating Communication” as part of the first ACTFL Webinar series. Theisen has participated on many committees including the revision of the World Languages teacher standards for licensure. She chaired the 2009 revision of the Colorado World Languages Academic Standards. Most recently she chaired the ACTFL 21st Century Skills Map committee in collaboration with the Partnership for 21st Century Learning.



CREATIVE PRACTICE WITH ANYTIME, ANY PLACE APPS

By **Barbara Lindsey**

I recently participated, with graduate students at the University of Connecticut, in a Google Hangout regarding digital pedagogies.

At the end of our session, one of the students was eager to share with me something she observed with her twin boys who are in separate classes and learning to read. One of her sons is in a “traditional” classroom in which he has access to paper-based books only. The other is in a classroom where the children can use iPads and apps to read stories.

She told me that the son who used the iPad had a significantly larger vocabulary, read more fluently and enjoyed reading more. When I asked her why, she attributed it to the fact that the reading apps he had access to allowed him to see and hear the printed word as often as he wished and to participate in the story by moving words and objects around in response to spoken cues.

The multimedia capabilities and touch interface of mobile devices such as iPads are particularly suited to young learners, but the sheer volume of apps available can be daunting to sort through. Regardless of whether you have just one, or an entire classroom of iPads, how can you provide your young language learners the opportunity to rehearse and create with these “anytime, any place” devices? Here are three ideas:

Shadow Puppet: <http://bit.ly/ShadowPuppet> (free)

Whether it's you or your students doing it, storytelling is an engaging way to reinforce and apply learning, and this app is so simple, even a 5-year-old can use it! (http://get-puppet.com/s/_Qt-bT74BhvE) Organize your pictures, record your voice as you tell your story, zoom in and out, highlight and share.

Fotobabble: <http://bit.ly/FOTOBABBLE> (free)

Want your students to focus on just one image at a time, maybe to learn or share one new word or concept a day? This app lets you

or your students import images and then record your brief descriptions. You can easily share out your creations via multiple platforms. Some examples: <http://www.fotobabble.net/?p=55>

Whiteboard Lite: Collaborative Drawing: http://bit.ly/Whiteboard_Lite (free but w/ads)

Collaboration is a 21st century skill and this app lets two users connected via wi-fi work together in real time on a shared whiteboard. Collaborate with students on a game, start a picture and have them complete it. The possibilities are numerous.

How do you use apps to help your students creatively practice with language?

Barbara Lindsey teaches for the ACTFL/UMUC Online Graduate Certificate in Instructional Technology Integration Program. From 1996 to 2012 she directed the Multimedia Language Center at the University of Connecticut. She also provided professional development for K12 language educators and designed and taught a graduate level course on the use of social networking environments for language, culture and civilization courses. She participated in the University of Connecticut's Neag School of Education's Universal Design for Instruction in Postsecondary Education grant and co-authored two book chapters (one published) with Professor Manuela Wagner on the role of mediated technologies in foreign language education. She has twelve years' experience teaching German language and literature at the university level, for the private business sector as well as for after school enrichment programs. She has served as project director on three federally funded grants, is a past president of the Connecticut Council of Language Teachers (2004-2006) and is currently a member of the NECTFL board (class of '16).



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