Language Educators News
A weekly newsletter for teachers of multilingual learners

Message

I hope you’ve had a good week back at school after the break!

Here are just a couple brief announcements I’d like to share with you:

- Agnès Ndiaye Tounkara, Program Officer for the French Heritage Language Program, will be joining us on January 27th for a webinar that will provide an overview of the program and details about how to participate. If you didn’t catch her interview on French Morning, you can listen to it here (in French).
- Is your school having a hard time finding a World Languages teacher? If so, the Visiting Teachers from Spain Program may be able to help! See the Maine DOE World Languages webpage for details, and let me know if you have any questions.

April Perkins
Can you tell me a little bit about your background? What motivated you to teach?

I was born and raised in Annapolis, Maryland. There you are about a one-hour drive from Baltimore or DC, but Annapolis has its own vibe and culture. I have always been interested in history because of where I grew up. My mom was a home economics teacher, so education was very important in my family and I am very fortunate to be the fourth generation to have some level of post-secondary education. My mom was my biggest influence. But I have always been the type of person that wants to learn something new. My first language experience was when I was in 8th grade and my first language was actually German. I did that all the way through junior high school, high school, and college. I had a trip to Montreal when I was 14. I did not speak French at all at that time. I was floored by the culture and started teaching myself French. I was able to get many of my other credits out of the way so I could take three languages. I tested into French three as a junior and I was also taking AP German. The Spanish piece comes in when basically, my junior year I began teaching myself Spanish because it is the second most spoken language in the US. I went to St. Lawrence for undergrad and majored in Canadian History Studies and multi languages, but French was my language of concentration. At St. Lawrence, I also started Russian. I did not do a Fulbright until after college, but I did an international year in Quebec City at Université Laval. That was a great experience, and I became fully proficient in French. I went back to St. Lawrence and I wrote an independent study project in French on conversational aspects of that language in Quebec. After graduating, I did not take a teaching job immediately. I am actually glad that I was not teaching at that time because I would not have had the focus to do it. I got my first full-time teaching job down in Maryland and taught French and Spanish two years after I graduated from college. Four years after I began teaching, I got a Fulbright in Senegal as a Classroom Exchange Teacher. I taught English there and my exchange partner from Senegal taught my French classes in Maryland. While I was in Dakar, I taught the equivalent of 7th, 8th, and 11th grade English. That was a wonderful experience. I am of African American descent, so it was great to be where some of my ancestors came from and be connected to that culture.

What was your transition like from teaching K-12 to teaching college?

I taught for 8 years at the secondary level. What is fascinating for me is when teaching college, I use a little less structure. I teach mostly general education classes by choice. I find it important to intersperse local French into international French when I teach the language. There is a bit more flexibility with regard to academic freedom at the college level. I have mostly taught at private schools, but I have taught at one public school at the secondary level. As far as secondary, I enjoyed doing it when I was there. I take it as being the experience I was supposed to have at that time and now, I am doing what I am supposed to be doing at Fort Kent. Originally, I was hired to teach U.S. history, second-language teaching methodology, multicultural curriculum design, and Spanish. Today I still teach U.S. history and Spanish but have been asked to help with French teaching as well. I am fortunate to be in a small place where I can teach multiple things. French is where my passion is, but I thoroughly enjoy Spanish, too.

How is teaching language different from teaching history or education and how does your work and teaching style in one subject inform another?

When I first started learning language, there was a certain amount of memorizing I had to do. I combine that more traditional way of learning language with the communicative method. As far as grammar is concerned, I do explicitly teach it. Just teaching communication is not enough. Do we want to prioritize communication? Absolutely, but I start with teaching grammar. When I teach language, there is a certain amount of performing I do. For history, I don’t use notes and I present in a “talking textbook” style. I am a language educator first. History came after and I love that because I have a passion for both US and Canadian history. I would not say it’s drier, but I am leading the class much more with history than with language. To highlight the performative aspect of teaching language, I would point out how I teach the passé composé in French with the verb “être” (to be). When I would get to the verb “tomber,” I would do a pratfall and say, “je suis tombé” (I have fallen). You can bet that my students remembered, “je suis tombé”! Teaching language also needs to be practical. I am fortunate to be in a place where there is a significant French speaking population. When I teach French here, I do as much to include local French as possible. Local French is very much real French. It has a very strong history here. It has much more overlap with international French than is often believed and it’s just as valid. I am trying to make that bridge between international and local French. If anything, it’s to make my French teaching practical. Both forms of the language have value.
Professional Learning

All virtual Maine DOE offerings will be recorded and posted to the Maine DOE YouTube channel unless noted with an asterisk.

Maine DOE Professional Development Calendar

WIDA Self-Paced eWorkshops are available 9.1.21-8.31.22

12.7.21 at 3pm: Maine DOE Hosts Dr. Thomas Sauer of PEARLL Teacher Effectiveness for Language Learning Framework and Catalyst

12.7.21 at 6:30pm: New Mainers Series with Camden Public Library Connecting Across Cultures: The Afghan Community of Maine

12.9.21 4-5pm: FLAVA Co-Constructing Practices To Help Students With Disabilities Move Toward Proficiency

12.9.21 at 4pm: JNCL-NCLIS Panel Discussion Empowering Today’s Global Leaders: Our Nation’s Renewed Commitment to International Education

12.13.21 at 3pm: Maine DOE Hosts ExcEL Leadership Academy

1.27.22 at 3pm: Maine DOE Hosts French Heritage Language Program (This webinar will be an overview of the program. See their website for details.)

2.2.22-2.4.22: JNCL-NCLIS Virtual Language Advocacy Days

2.7.21 8am-4pm: National Association of English Learner Program Administrators Hybrid Conference: Advancing Linguistic Equity through Program Leadership

2.10.22-2.12.22 Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages Annual Conference in NY

3.11.22: Save the Date for the Maine ESOL Meeting (Details to come!)

3.18.22-3.19.22: Multi-State Association for Bilingual Education Dual Language Conference and Pre-Conference School Visits

Summer 2022: CARLA Summer Institutes schedule now available

Articles of Interest

Maine DOE Newsroom: Professional Learning Opportunity: Deepen Your Knowledge and Skills to Better Support Students who are Multilingual Learners

Maine DOE Newsroom: American Translators Association Announces the 2021 Winner of the School Outreach Program Award

ACTFL: 2022 ACTFL National Language Teacher of the Year Announced

Dallas ISD News: Dallas Spanish Teacher Elected to Foreign Language Organization’s Highest Office

Associated Press: Language barrier: Immigrant parents tell tales of exclusion

News Center Maine: Seeking shelter & safety in Maine, asylum seekers coming in increasing numbers

Chalkbeat: NYC expands translation of special education plans, but onus still on parents with limited English to request it

Learning for Justice: Favorite Holiday Poster Projects Aren’t Inclusive

Learning for Justice: Avoiding the Holiday Balance Traps

CAL: How can we offset “COVID slide” for multilingual learners through classroom assessment?

AATF-Maine and UMA: Virtual French Immersion Weekend

Are you looking to practice your French and learn more about French-speaking cultures? Join us for a comfortable language learning environment with French teachers who are there to support you!

The weekend runs Friday, January 14th 6-8:30pm and Saturday, January 15th 8am-4:45pm, and it is packed with great activities! We start out on Friday night watching the film LE CARREFOUR/THE INTERSECTION, featuring a beautiful friendship between a Franco-American woman and an African immigrant in Lewiston. We then discuss the film with the filmmakers! On Saturday, we will have workshops offered throughout the day at the intermediate and advanced levels. We will help you take your French to the next level by supporting you throughout the day! There will be a lunch break from Zoom if you need to recharge, and a midday concert with the renowned Togolese singer/performer Brice Kapel.

See the website for details and registration. Limited community scholarships are available. To inquire, write: goreyn@link75.org or chelsea.d.ray@maine.edu On a hâte de vous voir tous ! A bientôt!
ACCESS for ELLs and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs

Preparing for Assessment: SAU and School Coordinators, please read carefully!

- Check in with ACCESS Test Administrators to ensure times have been scheduled for students to participate in practice sessions. If students have accommodations, these should also be activated in the practice session. More information about practice sessions for students can be found here.
- Secure materials are stored securely; inventory of materials received completed in WIDA AMS.
- Confirm with SAU/school technology staff that DRC/Insight has been installed and tested for any devices used for the assessment. More information about technology requirements can be found here.
- Confirm all English learners are present in WIDA AMS. Establish additional test sessions as needed and ensure each student has been assigned to a session for all domains.
- Meet with case managers / Special Education Directors to review assessment accommodations for any ELs with an IEP or 504 Plan. Confirm that these accommodations have been selected in the WIDA AMS platform for the student. More information about assigning accommodations can be found here (pg. 57).
- Create an assessment schedule and share with all building stakeholders to minimize interruptions and confusion during the assessment window. Build in time for makeup sessions.

Student rosters and test sessions are now available in WIDA AMS!

- **December 15th**: Initial Materials orders received by schools and SAUs. The materials will be shipped directly to schools, and will include overage of materials for grade clusters with more than 10 students rostered. Overage materials as well as District Test Coordinator Manuals will be included in the boxes shipped to SAUs.
- **December 15th**: Additional Materials Ordering becomes available to SAUs in WIDA AMS. For more information about this process, please see the Additional Materials Ordering webinar in the WIDA Secure Portal (login required).

Helpful Links & Resources

Accessibility and Accommodations

Preparing for Assessment: Practice and Sample Items

WIDA AMS User Guide

Questions? Concerns? Please reach out!

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**Job Opportunities**

French Heritage Language Program Teacher (See announcements to right for details.)

- **Rhode Island DOE Multilingual Learners (World Languages) Specialist**
- **Brewer Long-Term Substitute French Teacher**
- **Brunswick Spanish Teacher**
- **Westbrook Communications Specialist**
- **Westbrook Long-Term Sub ELL HS Teacher**
- **Westbrook Long-Term Sub ELL Elementary Teacher**
- **Auburn Cultural Broker/Interpreter Park Ave Elementary**
- **Maine DOE Educational Technology Infrastructure Specialist (Limited Period)**
- **RSU 51 French Teacher**
- **RSU 3 Long-Term Substitute Spanish Teacher**
- **RSU 2 Hall-Dale MS Spanish Teacher (French also desired)**
- **Biddeford ELL Ed Tech III**
- **Westbrook ELL Elementary Ed Tech III (One Year)**
- **RSU 44 ELL Tutor**
- **Falmouth HS Latin Teacher (One Year)**
- **MSAD 54 Part-Time ELL Tutor**
- **Biddeford ELL Ed Tech II**

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**Announcements**

**Seeking French Heritage Language Program Teacher**

Alliance Française du Maine (afdume.org) would like to start a Heritage Language Class for francophone children ages 8 to 12, either in presence at the Immigrant Welcome Center, 24 Preble St, in Portland, or via Zoom. We are looking for a competent, experienced French Teacher interested in this project. Classes will happen once a week, at the day and time chosen by the Teacher, who will choose Zoom or in presence. Classes will start the week of January 10, 2022. The salary for each class is $50 an hour, paid monthly by AFduME, regardless of numbers of participants. Classes will have no more than 10 or 12 children at the most. If interested, please contact Regine Whittlesey, Presidente of AFduME, with a letter of motivation and a CV. Send documents to regine.whittlesey@gmail.com.

**Teacher Effectiveness for Language Learning (TELL) Virtual Roundtables**

- **January 26:** Learning Targets & Checks for Learning
- **February 23:** The Lesson Plan Cycle
- **March 23:** Moving from Input to Output
- **April 27:** Performance Assessments

All roundtable discussion will take place via Zoom at 4 PM (ET), 3 PM (CT), 2 PM (MT), 1 PM (PT). There is no cost to participate, however registration will be limited to ensure meaningful conversations among all participants. Click the roundtable titles to register today.

**Wabanaki Public Health & Wellness Winter Solstice Event**

On December 21 from 6-7pm, Dwayne Tomah (Passamaquoddy at Sipayik) and John Dennis (Mi’kmaq, Eskasoni First Nation) will present Stories from the Dawnland, a free streaming event. TV5 Maine Heritage Film Grant

TV5 is offering a grant of $15,000 to filmmakers to produce a short documentary film on Francophone cultures in Maine. Applications are due January 10, 2022. See here for details, et bonne chance!

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**Monthly Office Hours**

An informal opportunity to connect with DOE staff and teaching colleagues

At least five registrants are required in order for office hours to be held.

**ESOL**

3rd Wednesday of Each Month

Next: 12.15.21 at 3:30pm

Focus Topic: Culturally-responsive practices around the holidays; Receipt of ACCESS materials: inventory and assessment security. Best practices for assigning accommodations for the ACCESS.

Register by 12.12.21

**World Languages**

2nd Wednesday of Each Month

Next: 12.8.21 at 3:00pm

Focus Topic: Avoiding Burnout

Register by 12.5.21