Nominations for Maine Teacher of the Year are now open! This is a wonderful chance for us to highlight the amazing and critical work of language educators across the state. Do you know someone who stands out and inspires? Take a few minutes to nominate that person!

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**Educator Highlight**

This week, intern Isabel Honigman interviewed Dr. Clara Jean Howard, a professor of Secondary Education at the University of Maine at Farmington.

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

I started as a historian, specializing in French colonial history. I soon discovered when I first came to the U.S. that my interests were not in demand! I started a master’s in American Studies, but I shifted to USM’s TESOL program. I was one of the first graduating classes. Probably my interest in education would stem from my own experience. I entered a French school as an Anglo and I was the only Anglo in the school. I was learning to read and write in a language I did not know. There was not much help or support and it was really isolating. I’m sure that influenced my decision to enter the field. And I loved spending time in other people’s cultures. I’ve lived in five countries and traveled in dozens and it is certainly an opportunity while living in Maine to learn from many other cultures.

When I began teaching in the 1990s in southern Maine, it meant advocating every day. After teaching for only a year or two, it was up to me to introduce the Lau Plan to the district - I even had to write it. I spent the next decade in the district trying to see it realized. It was a struggle because I was pretty much on my own. When I began teaching, I had no more than 15-25 students across several schools. I had spent too much time doing short pull-out sessions that were not that effective. Whenever I could, I would try to work with other teachers and collaborate to create more inclusive curriculum. I did not know how to implement science, math, social studies, and ELA across all grades, K-12, so I had to learn through other teachers. One successful collaboration that stands out in memory was when I worked in a classroom of 3rd and 4th graders with seasoned co-teachers. I was able to facilitate infusing the curriculum to gain global competencies for everyone. We had students from Korea, Greece, Iran, and Russia, and every family came in to share their culture and language. Looking back now, it was so affirming for the students. My students wanted to be in the classroom with their peers. Pull out instruction would have robbed them and their classmates of the important learning they could do together. We have a long way to go in Maine and probably in the country. The social justice awakening of the last few years should help to affect change for our multilinguals. Educators are instrumental in the shift away from the oppression of others who are not identified with the dominant culture.

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

Having spent over two decades in the classroom, I acquired a lot of insights into the way the systems work. I wanted to understand particularly why it is so hard for general education classroom teachers to effectively instruct English learners to high degrees of academic accomplishment. I realized that most of our ELs in Maine were leaving school underserved, their potential routinely unrealized. There are lots of extraordinarily motivated teachers that made a difference for ELs, but the overall preparedness of teachers to help multilinguals has been wanting. There is a lot to it. I wanted to understand what specifically would make the biggest differences because general education teachers already have so many responsibilities. I undertook a study to ask my students who had been quite successful in accelerating their learning in HS what was effective for them and what they would want to see from their teachers. That became my dissertation and it led to college teaching. The students, of course, gave great insight about what would be priorities which lined up with much of what we think of as best practices. However, they emphasized aspects that are not as heavily focused on in the literature: Being included not just in the classroom but in the curriculum. Being able to use their language and background knowledge and being listened to. The other piece that was really striking in their responses was the importance of peer learning. Being able to really work with their peers, both Anglos as well as peers of the same language. It was compelling to see how the students’ comments would often arc towards the social context, to belonging.

**How does your previous work as an EL teacher inform how and what you teach at UMF?**

It totally informs everything I do and think about. I am still learning new things and coming to new understandings, that never ends. My work with ELs made me want to work more with teachers, which is what I do at UMF. When I think back to what was really important to my former students and what would have made a difference, the overarching message is really about a teacher’s attitude and desire to reach students. When teachers are striving and they feel it is in their wheelhouse to include every learner, they are open to learning from observing the impact of their instruction and facilitation in their classrooms. When teachers strive, it is not always about having the answer but listening to learn. Teachers should be hungry to learn from their students.
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

1.12.22 at 3:15pm: Maine DOE Panel Discussion on DEI Considerations for Health and Physical Education - Part 2

1.15.22 CARLA Workshop 1: Assessment and Feedback in the Virtual Classroom

1.18.22 at 6pm: Wabanaki Public Health & Wellness Stories from the Dawnland

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.)

1.29.22 10am-1pm: CARLA All Are Welcome in Language Class: UDL from Principles to Practice

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

3.1.22-3.8.22 Center for Applied Linguistics Institute on Newcomers in Your School: Cultural Connections and Instructional Strategies

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

3.11.22-3.12.22: Save the Date for the FLAME Conference

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

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!

Articles of Interest

Radio-Canada: Le dynamisme de la communauté francophone louisianaise

Stanford Social Innovation Review : Overcoming Racial Equity Fatigue

Maine DOE Newsroom: School Civil Rights Teams Across Maine Celebrate Inclusion and Belonging on Annual ‘Day of Welcome’

The New Yorker: Lost in Translation: What the First Line of “The Stranger” Should Be

Learning for Justice: How Culturally Responsive Lessons Teach Critical Thinking

Washington Post: Perspective – The Power of Reclaiming my Asian Name

WBUR: Multilingual liaisons are ‘cultural brokers’ for refugee students in this Vermont school district
ACCESS Administration Window opens 1/10/22!

NEW: Check out the Maine DOE ACCESS Assessments page for Coordinator, Educator and Family Resources!

NEW! Maine DOE Assessment Team presents the Assessment Security Webisode Series. Perfect for staff trainings and new assessment administrators!

Reminder: ACCESS for ELLs and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs test coordinators and administrators are no longer required to complete a state testing security agreement. In lieu of that form, the Assessment Team will be accepting the WIDA Non-Disclosure & User Agreement which all users complete annually during initial login to the Secure Portal.

◊ Please do not add students in the WIDA AMS platform. If there is a new / transfer student, they will be added to the platform automatically via the daily change file submitted by Maine DOE. The file is generated based on current state enrollment data and will capture updates changes to enrollment. If a student has unenrolled from the SAU, or if there are any questions about the roster in WIDA AMS, please reach out to Jodi for next steps. Jodi.bossio-smith@maine.gov

Helpful Links & Resources
Accessibility and Accommodations Guide
WIDA AMS User Guide

Questions? Concerns? Please reach out!
Jodi Bossio-Smith, State Coordinator for Alternate and WIDA Assessments
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Job Opportunities

RSU 19 is seeking a consultant teacher who can assist with ACCESS for ELLs test administration. If you’re interested, contact Stella Duhaime, Assistant Director of Special Services, at sduhaime@rsu19.net.

The New School (Private School in Kennebunk) Spanish Teacher and American Sign Language Teacher

RSU 64 High School Spanish Teacher

RSU 4 High School French Teacher

Winthrop Remote High School Spanish Teacher

South Portland Multilingual/Multicultural Specialist (Part-Time)

South Portland Community Partnerships Coordinator (Part-Time)

RSU 57 High School French Teacher

Brewer Long-Term Substitute French Teacher

Westbrook Communications Specialist

Auburn Cultural Broker/Interpreter Park Ave Elementary

Announcements

WIDA Framework for Equitable Instruction
Wisconsin Center for Education Research has published a working paper on this framework. Share with content area teachers!

Bridging Refugee Youth & Children’s Services Resources
BRYCS has translated some of its family resources into Dari and Pashto. Check out Raising Children in a New Country and Keeping Safe! A Children’s Bilingual Guide.

Lunar New Year Celebration
The non-profit Chinese & American Friendship Association of Maine is hosting a celebration to mark the start of the Year of the Tiger. On February 5th from 1-4pm, all are invited to participate in cultural experiences, activities for children, and a performance at 2pm by Boston’s Chinese Folk Art Workshop. Tickets can be purchased here.

English Language Fellow Program
Applications are open for the US Department of State’s English Language Fellow Program. Fellows participate in 10-month assignments abroad to teach English and/or train teachers.

Learning for Justice Educator Fund
Applications are now open for this fund, which “offers the opportunity to work with LFJ to address systemic inequities within education.” Apply by April 1st. Details here.

Monthly ESOL Office Hours
An informal opportunity to connect with DOE staff and teaching colleagues

Focus Topic: Family Engagement & Start of ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS Administration Window

Next: 1.19.22 at 3:00pm
Register by 1.16.22