In light of the current staff shortages and the difficulty teachers may face in securing substitutes, the **Maine ESOL Meeting is being rescheduled to Saturday 3.12.22**, in conjunction with the FLAME Conference. I hope this will make it possible for more of you to participate. Registration for the Maine ESOL Meeting will open next week, so stay tuned!

The schedule for this year’s event will also look different from past years. Quite understandably, given how thinly stretched everyone is at the moment, teachers were not able to invest their precious time and energy in preparing to present at this event. (That’s ok!!) I have also not received any interest from students in participating in the student panel. Therefore, the event will feature our keynote speaker, plenary speaker, and other opportunities to come together and focus on language education. The final schedule will be available soon. Thank you for your flexibility and understanding as we navigate this unique school year.

*April Perkins*
Educator Highlight
This week, intern Isabel Honigman interview Jessica Umełę, a Spanish teacher in Falmouth.

Jessica Umeł

What drew you to Spanish? How is teaching a world language different from teaching other subjects?
Most of my family is Franco-American, and my paternal Grandfather came from the Philippines. I have always been very interested in learning about languages and world cultures from a very young age. My grandmother and my great-grandparents spoke French, and my Filipino grandfather spoke Tagalog. In middle school, I fell in love with Spanish dancing and listened to a lot of Flamenco and Latin music. I was an honors student and did well in A.P. Spanish as a senior. My love of Spanish continued into college, and during my college years I traveled to Ecuador with my friends from the indigenous community of Otavalo. I traveled to Mexico with some college classmates to La Universidad de las Americas Puebla. Throughout the years, I have traveled to Spain twice, visited other parts of Mexico, and spent a summer in Costa Rica taking a course on teaching English as a foreign language. These experiences helped me gain greater insight about the people and cultures of Spain and Latin America. I have become ever more fluent in Spanish, often being mistaken for a native speaker. In 2007, I graduated from UMaine with my B.A. in Spanish and Minor in Anthropology. I was then accepted into the MAT Program at UMaine. I graduated with my Master’s in Secondary Education, specializing in teaching Spanish. For my first two years of teaching Spanish, I taught part-time at Orono High School. In 2010, I worked a summer job for the State of Maine as a Field Recruiter for Maine Migrant Education. As a recruiter, I needed to speak with migrant families from Mexico and Central America to provide translation services, enroll students in the summer language school, as well as enroll qualifying-aged workers English language classes. In the fall, I was hired to teach Spanish at Caribou High School. I maintained my ties with the Mexican migrant-worker community up there, helping workers with translation and interpretation services on various occasions. By 2013, I got a job teaching elementary and middle school level Spanish in Kittery and by 2019, I wanted to try out teaching at the elementary level and landed a job at Falmouth Elementary School. I currently teach Grades 3-5, and I love it! I feel very blessed to have been able to have experience teaching elementary, middle, and high school Spanish. It’s given me great perspective on how children learn at each age level and has allowed for me to experiment with different language-teaching strategies. Teaching a World Language is definitely unique from other subject areas. It helps students develop a more global perspective and actively engages students to exercise other parts of the brain. Students learn to see patterns and make comparisons with their own language. World Language studies enable students to broaden their horizons and help make other cultures seem less “foreign.” Being a World Language teacher enables me to lead a lot of interesting discussions with my students and help them develop a sense of pride with they learn how to say new things in Spanish.

How do you think your teaching style differs from other Spanish teachers, and what is most important to you in the classroom?
My teaching has evolved over the years. I used to teach a lot more about grammar and structures of the Spanish language earlier on in my career. During my time teaching in Kittery, I was introduced to CI (Comprehensible Input), and have modeled some of its strategies in my Spanish classes. CI is when the teacher has target vocabulary words and phrases, and via storytelling and acting, the students learn to absorb the language and practice speaking it themselves. I would say my teaching style using a combination of CI, cultural discussions, music videos, and the use of Spanish music and dance in the classroom. What is most important to me classroom while engaging my students in learning, is establishing trust and understanding with my students. Building good relationships with my students is the most important thing before teaching my students Spanish. Making my students feel safe, respected, and listened too is essential.

How do you navigate different levels of learners in your classroom?
I usually spend the first few weeks of the school year getting to know my students’ names and personalities and try to create a seating arrangement that best suits my students’ needs. There is a lot of trial and error in the classroom, and when teaching a language, it is important that students can see and hear me when speaking Spanish. For my students with IEPs and 504s, I take into special consideration when structuring my lessons, assigning their seating, and when executing my lessons. I have some learners that do not do well speaking publicly, and I offer them the ability to speak Spanish at their leisure or in private with me to show me their comprehension of the class material. I have a student who is blind, and she sits at the front corner of my classroom. She is mostly independent, uses her cane, and has a traveling Ed Tech to assist her most of the day. Her peers help to explain any visuals that are shown on our projector. It’s been amazing to see how much Spanish she is able retain and speak with her classmates! I have several students with Generalized Anxiety Disorder, and for these students I find it best to have supportive conversations and offer them alternative activities or use fidget toys to help them focus. I give these students choice seating and allow them to take breaks when needed.

What has been the biggest or most impactful challenge you have faced as an educator?
The pandemic has honestly been the most impactful challenge in all my 13+ years as an educator. Teaching Spanish has become quite a bit more difficult, especially since students cannot see my mouth when I am forming words, they cannot see me smiling at them, and it can be challenging for me to hear students say our target Spanish words (often muffled by their masks). We have had numerous staff get COVID during this past school year, and we are often short staffed. Other building staff are becoming stretched thin as well, and it can be quite overwhelming. Last school year when we were teaching in the hybrid model, it took quite a bit of time for students to adjust to a new schedule, sit behind plexiglass, and to stay 3 feet apart from their peers (still an impossible task). Changes in staffing, the need for substitute teachers, and so many other things during this time of the pandemic have really added challenges to our school community. Through this experience I have become close with my teacher colleagues, and we have supported each other on many occasions. I find it helpful to focus on making it through the day and taking time to focus on the positives that happen with my students. I love my job, and I love to see my students happy! I am thankful that I have supportive staff at my school, and I know I can speak for other educators when I say, “hopefully next year will be better!”.
Professional Learning

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

ExcEL Leadership Academy: Free Micro-Credentials (and option for graduate credit) in ESOL Topics

WIDA Self-Paced eWorkshops are available 9.1.21-8.31.22

2.16.22 4-5:15pm: NNETESOL Webinar Infusing Critical Language Awareness Into Our Writing Lessons

2.18.22 at 2pm: EdWeek Intersection Collective: Disability + BIPOC Youth

2.24.22 at 2pm: National Association for the Education of Homeless Children & Youth Celebrating Cultural Awareness: Practices and Policies for Homeless Liaisons

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

3.7.22: SLIFE Conference Presented by MinneSLIFE and Inlier Learning (Option to attend virtually or in-person in Philadelphia.)

3.12.22: Maine ESOL Meeting (Virtual) - Registration will open soon!

3.12.22: FLAME Conference (Virtual) - Registration will open soon!

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

3.22.22-3.25.22: TESOL Convention

Summer 2022: CARLA Summer Institutes schedule now available

7.25.22-7.29.22 CARLA Teaching Language through the Lens of Social Justice

Articles of Interest

Maine Public: In Portland, immigrant groups and city staff struggle to support record number of asylum seekers

Language Magazine: African Languages Week

Maine DOE Newsroom: South Portland Adult Education Offers ‘Survival English’ to New Mainers on Site

Maine DOE Newsroom: Apply for the Maine Seal of Biliteracy

BBC: Las palabras y expresiones en español que provienen del árabe (y que usas a diario quizá sin saberlo)

Maine Public: How Maine schools teach Black history and efforts to expand the curriculum

Maine DOE Newsroom: Foreign Language Association of Maine Accepting Nominations For ESOL Teacher of the Year and World Languages Teacher of the Year

Maine DOE Newsroom: Application Process Open for Student Position on Maine State Board of Education

74 Million: Increasing Segregation of Latino Students Hinders Academic Performance and Could Amplify COVID Learning Loss, Study Finds

Amjambo Africa: CANMP – Hope in Augusta

Amjambo Africa: Afghan Resettlement in Maine
ACCESS Administration Window Open 1/10/22 – 3/18/22

The Assessment Team requests District Test Coordinators to conduct at least one local assessment observation during the Winter 2022 ACCESS for ELLs administration, using the updated Observational Checklist Tool. Data from these local observations yields contextual and situational data to be used in conjunction with quantitative sources, to provide a better picture of the quality and equity of administration of assessments across Maine SAUs and schools. The Maine DOE Assessment Team utilizes this information to design planning and professional development for the upcoming school year, as well as to gather critical data about the student assessment experience. It is the hope of the Team to receive Observation Tools from across the State.

Observational Checklist Tool

Reminder: Please send completed Grades 1-3 writing booklets back to WIDA DRC as soon as possible. You do not need to wait until the district has completed all testing, or the assessment window closes.

All completed test booklets and secure test materials must be shipped back to DRC no later than March 21st, 2022. This will ensure that while we have extended the window for this year, Maine SAUs will still receive student data prior to the close of the school year.

Important Reminders! Please reach out to Jodi:

- If you have a student who has moved or transferred out of the district
- If you have a new student who has enrolled from another Maine SAU, and you need to confirm whether the student has already begun/completed ACCESS testing for the 21-22 SY
- If you would like a DOE Assessment Team member to provide onsite technical assistance during this year’s ACCESS for ELLs administration window! Technical assistance can include many elements based on the needs of the SAU, such as modeling an assessment administration, observation of an assessment administration, and answering questions regarding EL assessment and services.

Questions? Concerns? Please don’t hesitate to reach out:
Jodi Bossio-Smith, State Coordinator for Alternate and WIDA Assessments
Jodi.bossio-smith@maine.gov
207.530.1462

Maine Seal of Biliteracy

Do you have students graduating this year who are bilingual or multilingual? Encourage them to apply for the Maine Seal of Biliteracy! See the website for details about eligibility criteria, assessment options, the online application, and FAQ. Applications are due 5/15/22*. Contact April Perkins at april.perkins@maine.gov with any questions.

Maine Seal of Biliteracy Overview Webinar

*Students whose AP or IB exam scores are not available by May 15th can apply through 7/15/22.
Job Opportunities

Augusta ESOL Ed Tech II Part-Time

Freeport ELL Teacher

Biddeford ELL Middle School Classroom Teacher

Sebago Part-Time ESL Teacher (2022-23)

RSU 5 Long-Term Sub Spanish Teacher 7th/8th Grade

Maine Central Institute Spanish Teacher (Anticipated)

WIDA Researcher

South Portland ELL TEACHER (GRADES K-12) - REMAINDER OF 21-22 SY

MSAD 54 Part-Time ELL Tutors (Elementary/Middle School)

Center for Applied Linguistics Director of PreK-12 Language and Literacy

St. John’s Catholic School Long Term Substitute - Music & Latin Teacher (PK-8)

RSU 44 Spanish Teacher

Cape Elizabeth ELL Ed Tech III

RSU 64 High School Spanish Teacher

Winthrop Remote High School Spanish Teacher

RSU 57 High School French Teacher

Auburn Cultural Broker/Interpreter Park Ave Elementary

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Announcements

Summer Courses in Spain
The Education Office of the Embassy of Spain invites Maine Spanish teachers to apply to travel to Spain and attend a three-week course this summer. Applications are due April 1st. Details, including costs and the application, can be found here.

Study Abroad Scholarship Opportunity
The Center for International Education Exchange has extended the deadline for scholarship applications for the Global Navigator High School Study Abroad Program. Applications will be accepted through 2.16.22. For more information, contact hsabroad@ciee.org or 1.866.583.0332.

Maine Virtual Career Fair
On March 22-23, Maine C3, in partnership with ACTEM and Maine DOE, present this virtual event for all Maine middle school and high schoolers to learn about their career options. See flyer here.

Taiwan Foreign English Teacher Program
As part of its formal partnership with the Chinese Ministry of Education (Taiwan), the Maine DOE would like to announce that the Taiwan Foreign English Teacher Program is now accepting applications. If you’re interested in an opportunity to grow your teaching and intercultural skills abroad, this is a great opportunity.

Undergraduate/Graduate Scholarships to Study in Taiwan
The 2022 Taiwan Scholarship Program and the 2022 Huayu Enrichment Scholarship (HES) funded by the Ministry of Education, Republic of China (Taiwan) have been published. The guidelines and application forms are available here. Application deadline is 3.31.22.

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

Next: 3.16.22 at 3:00pm
Focus Topic: Family Engagement & Approaching the End of the ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS Administration Window

Register by 3.13.22