



Did You Know?

The United Nations has designated 2008 as the International Year of Languages and May is California World Languages and Cultures Month. Two great reasons to:

- recognize students for their achievements
- put announcements about the value of language study in your school bulletin
- invite your students to take their language out of the classroom to a library, daycare program, community festival, or an event of their own design
- highlight a special event or activity in your neighborhood newspaper
- invite a guest to speak to your class or to your school
- play world music for the school during lunch
- host a special club event

Check out “10 Cool Ways for Recognizing Your Students” in this issue for ways to promote your students to the community.

A Reminder from the Executive Director

By Lorraine D'Ambruoso

Our Legislative Advocate, Kathryn Lynch, is currently working on a Concurrent Resolution (from both houses of the California Legislature) to declare May as California World Languages and Cultures Month. Begin planning now for activities to spotlight your programs, both in the school and in the community.

As soon as CLTA receives a copy of the Resolution, we will mail your affiliate representatives a copy, which they can distribute to their members for use in these activities.

May would be a wonderful month to recognize student achievements:

☛ ask your Board of Trustees to give your students the time at a public meeting to highlight their expertise;

☛ give a Read Around the World presentation at your local library and invite the community's government officials;

☛ go into your local elementary school to share the language and culture with the younger children—perhaps tell a story or teach them a song—and

don't forget to invite the Superintendent;

☛ put the spotlight on the linguistic and cultural diversity in your school by activities that include all students, whether in language classes or not.

I am sure you can be more creative than I. Please do not let this month-long opportunity pass by without taking advantage of it to help our communities—students, parents, administrators—to “Discover Languages and Discover the World.”

Ten Cool Ways To Recognize Your Students

By Kristina Jenkins

We all know that recognizing student achievement is important. After all, our job is all about students. We say “good job” when they say something correctly in the target language or “way to go” when they try something new in the language. Even our grades recognize their achievement. But how can we really showcase all of the amazing things our students do and even bring some attention to our programs at the same time? Here are some ideas.

1. Your affiliate (or even your school if you have a large program) could sponsor a breakfast, a picnic or a cake reception for student award winners. Invite parents. Even on a low budget, this can be done. Allow each teacher to give one award. For an affiliate, award nominations could be limited to a small number such as fifteen. The affiliate can provide breakfast, a certificate, and a gift card for each student. Allow teachers to sit with the student and family while they eat to get that personal interaction and praise the student. Then have a short awards ceremony in which each teacher talks about his or her student to the group.

2. Start a chapter of an honor society at your school. Many professional organizations sponsor honor societies. For example, the American Association of Teachers of French (AATF), the American Association of Teachers of German (AATG), the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP), and the National Council of Japanese Language Teachers (NCJLT) all sponsor national honor societies. Teachers must be members of the above organizations to sponsor a chapter

of the honor society. There are also college honor societies such as Delta Phi Alpha for German, Pi Delta Phi for French, Gamma Kappa Alpha for Italian, and Sigma Delta Phi for Spanish. While many schools have language clubs open to everyone, an honor society is a perfect way to recognize the students who really excel in language. The society can work independently or along with the traditional club. As achieving students, this is a great opportunity for them to use their skills to tutor or provide cultural enhancement to your program outside of school time. Their activities outside of the classroom will also bring attention to your program and the great things that you are doing. Students in many of these groups get special recognition at graduation such as a cord to wear or a seal on their diploma.

3. Nominate your students for school and district awards. Let your students be recognized as “Student of the Month” at your school, for example. Recognizing students at such a local level allows them to feel honored in front of others who know them personally. This could boost their confidence by knowing how highly you think of them.

4. Have your students participate in your school’s Open House. Having student projects displayed is a great start. Bringing the students into the classroom allows them to really show what they can do on the spot (and what you’ve taught them!). Students in Japanese could offer to write visitors’ names in Japanese on nice paper. Other students could teach a few words using white boards to demonstrate. Have your students

make crepes or waffles on the spot to hand out. Attract attention. They can show how much they know as well as how much interest they have in the class and hopefully recruit some new students.

5. Get your students out into the community events using the target language. In doing so, students showcase their achievement in the language they are learning. Students could read children’s books at a local library, volunteer in an elementary school classroom, or prepare an after-school program. They could also take part in a local parade, carry a sign, carry flags, or maybe even throw out candy wrapped with sayings in their target language.

6. Follow up on a community event by presenting its success, and the success of your students, at a school board meeting. Being recognized outside of the school feels important to students. At the same time, the school board can get a glimpse of your language program and its success stories.

7. Engage your students in national language weeks inside and outside of the classroom. Organizations such as AATF provide ideas for activities during such weeks. Students can view films, cook traditional foods, hold cultural contests, make t-shirts, put notices about the language in the school bulletin, or play games, just to name a few ideas.

8. Contact local newspapers when your students participate in an exceptional or interesting activity. Ask the newspaper to write an article about your activities for a national language week or about a group of

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students reading to young children. And don't forget the wonderful magazines that deal with language learning. Language Magazine, for example, might be interested in highlighting student achievement if you are willing to submit a brief article. If you are a member of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), our national professional organization, their members' magazine is the Language Educator, and its editors are always soliciting articles that feature student achievement.

9. Encourage your students to enter national language contests. Check with the teacher organization for your language to see what is available. There are writing contests, language exams, and travel grants. Students achieving in your classroom can then apply their skills to a much wider area. Again, let others in your community know that your students are taking part in such a contest.

10. Take students abroad. Many of us sponsor student trips to other countries. While students may think it's all just fun (a great way to hide

the fact that they're actually learning something), the travel opportunity allows students to use their language in a real context. In this way, they can show what they have learned. They are being recognized internationally. Upon their return, they will have gained more skills in the language and can be recognized once again for their improvement. It's a two-way street. Student travel is enhanced by their language abilities, and students' language abilities are improved by travel abroad.

Resources for Recognizing Student Achievement

Here are some of the organizations that offer opportunities and ideas for recognizing student achievement.

All Languages:

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages*: www.actfl.org (home page),
Southwestern Council on Language Teaching (SWCOLT):
California Language Teachers Association (CLTA): <http://www.clta.net>
Language Magazine: <http://www.languagemagazine.com/>
The Language Educator: <http://www.actfl.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=4114>
National Association for Bilingual Education* (NABE): <http://www.nabe.org/>
California Association for Bilingual Education (CABE): <http://www.bilingualeducation.org/>
National Network for Early Language Learning (NNELL): <http://www.nnell.org/>

Language-Specific Resources:

National Foreign Language Resource Center* (NFLRC), especially their "useful links" page: <http://nflrc.hawaii.edu/>
African Languages Teachers Association (ALTA): <http://lang.nalrc.wisc.edu/alta/mission.htm>
American Association of Teachers of Arabic (AATA): <http://www.wm.edu/aata/>
American Association of Teachers of French (AATF): <http://www.frenchteachers.org/>
American Association of Teachers of German (AATG): <http://www.aatg.org/>
American Association of Teachers of Korean (AATK): <http://www.aatk.org/>
American Association of Teachers of Italian (AATI): <http://www.aati-online.org/>
American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages (AATSEEL): <http://aatseel.org/>
American Association of Teachers of Spanish & Portuguese: <http://www.aatsp.org/scriptcontent/index.cfm>
American Classical League (ACL): <http://www.aclclassics.org/>
Chinese Language Teachers Association (CLTA): <http://clta-us.org/>
National Council of Japanese Language Teachers: <http://www.ncjlt.org/>
The Japan Foundation: <http://www.jpff.go.jp>
National Council of Organizations of Less Commonly Taught Languages (NCOLCTL): <http://www.councilnet.org/>

*These sources have excellent "Useful Links" or "Helpful Links" pages that provide a great way to do a quick search.

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Please let us know what you think of *Language Magazine*, CLTA's latest service to its members.

Hot Topics: Updates on Issues Affecting the Profession

☛ The CLTA Advocacy Committee continues to monitor legislation and also the projected impact of any state budget decisions.

☛ **Field review of the draft world language state standards** will occur in late spring or in the fall. Once they are made available for public viewing and comment online, **it is imperative that all language teachers—especially those who are members of CLTA—go online to review and comment on the new standards.** Should there be little or no comment from members of the profession, the California Department of Education and the California Board of Education may decide to reject the standards altogether, thereby jeopardizing textbook adoptions and program funding statewide.

CLTA News

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