



A Summary of the JNCL Delegate Assembly

By Lorraine D'Ambruoso, CLTA Executive Director

The JNCL Delegate Assembly is usually two days of intensive, in-depth discussions of everything happening regarding Foreign Language Education at the national and federal level. It is what many of us call "information overload."

David Plack of the State Department and Ed McDermott of the National Language Flagship Program spoke about the National Security Languages Initiative (NSLI). NSLI is the working group, which coordinates and collaborates in the work of all of the agencies involved in expanding the foreign language pipeline. As a result of the White Paper published several years ago, there is now a coordinated effort in Washington with regard to funding for and administration of the various foreign language programs whose goal is to strengthen the language and culture capabilities of the US. The Department of Education is responsible for FLAP grants (K-12). The Department of Defense, the largest employer of speakers of languages other than English, administers the National Flagship Program and the National Language Service Corps. The Department of State is responsible for the Study Abroad programs such as Fullbright-Hayes, and the Office of National Intelligence (CIA) is responsible for the various Startalk programs.

David Plack, of the State Department, said that there is \$30 million allocated for critical language programs. Also, there are opportunities for over 2,000 students to study abroad each year.

Ed McDermott outlined the available programs:

- summer language institutes at universities;
- NSLI programs for over 600 high school students;

- programs for teachers, both here and abroad;
- the Gilman Scholarship Program: 1700 Pell Grant students can receive funding for a semester or a summer of study abroad;
- Fullbright Grants - with or without intensive language study prior to travel; and
- Foreign Language Teaching Assistance Program to bring foreign teachers of English to the US.

Despite all of this, McDermott admitted that "Foreign Language is not at the top of the DOE's agenda." So there is still much work needed in K-12.

Michael Nugent, Director of the National Flagship Program, then updated us on his program, whose goal is to change the way Americans learn languages. The biggest challenge he sees is how we can create a critical demand for language learning in the US. There are expectations, which must be clear: our students must reach level 2 proficiency before departure for overseas study programs. There are also opportunities: We must create opportunities for language learning by changing the way we teach, by infusing language and culture into the entire curriculum and undergraduate experience.

The truth is that most students are not interested in majoring in languages. Rather, they tend to accidentally fall into language study within a double major. So we must look at how we might put them into programs that incorporate language and culture into content.

The Flagship Program has recently produced a wonderful video, "Creating Global Professionals," about study abroad. JNCL delegates were the first to view it, and it is wonderful. Its intent is to act as a conduit to

Continued on page 2

Flagship programs, because the DOD does not recruit students—schools do. The video advises students to be top-notch in their discipline and fluent in a language other than English and to integrate language skills into a major. It will be on the NSLI and Flagship websites with a matter of weeks. Please check it out—you may find it useful.

Our third speaker was Andrea Prejean of NEA's Global Competitiveness initiative. She began by stating that the need for our students to be "globally literate" is a "21st Century Imperative, due to fundamental changes in the economy, in jobs and in business, to different and new skill demands, and to the achievement gap." The 20th Century Framework of Core Subjects and Assessment has proven to be ineffective. The 21st Century Framework is very different. It focuses on life and career skills, learning and innovation (learning from failure), information media and technology, and core subjects. What is new is the concept of life and career skills and critical thinking and problem-solving skills for everyone. Also, world languages and geography are now core subjects.

NEA's Framework requires partnership by the states, since most policy happens at the state level. For example, in California, the CDE, the Superintendent of Public Instruction and a legislator would be required for the partnership. They must commit to examination of standards and assessment, curriculum and instruction, professional development and learning environments. California is not yet a partner. Does that surprise anyone?

NEA also has made clear its concerns with the Administration's Blueprint for Reform (ESEA's reauthorization). They oppose the continued emphasis on standardized testing, teacher evaluation tied to student test scores, mandated non-research based models for struggling schools, the shift toward untested competitive programs the absence of parent or family engagement.

André Lewis, Deputy Assistant Secretary for International and Foreign Language Education, addressed us regarding the US Department of Education and Languages. He began by stating that an international focus is essential in our educational system. He also stated that the DOE considers FL an essential component of education (contrary to Ed McDermott) and that he pledged "to use (his) office as a bully pulpit to advocate for Foreign Language learning at all levels, K through post-secondary." However, he admitted that in California, there has been an overall decrease in language programs at the elementary levels as well as a decrease in French, German and Japanese.

When he spoke about the consolidation of funding, he admitted that FLAP would go into the pot with a large group of other disciplines. We expressed our concern at the potential loss of this dedicated stream of funding, asking who would insure a place for foreign languages at the funding table. His response was that the states would decide. Obviously, we all realized the implications of this, and they are not good!

Our last speaker was Sharon Saez of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). She spoke of the national movement to create the Common Core of Standards, which would be "fewer, clearer and higher." The impetus for this effort is the belief that employment and expectations will be the primary driving factors in education in the years to come. These common core standards must be officially adopted by states that will commit to 100% of the standards and develop a process to align curriculum and assessment to these standards.

Obviously, the Delegates left the Assembly with "information overload." I hope this résumé is evidence that we are working hard to see that our discipline gets the respect, support and funding that it needs. We can do no more than that.

Some Quotations Heard at the JNCL Delegate Assembly

By Lorraine D'Ambruoso, CLTA Executive Director

The following quotes offer food for thought, and some offer hope for the future:

"America is the land of second and third chances."
André Lewis, Asst. Secretary for International and Foreign Language Education, US Dept of Education

"If you can't measure it, you can't improve it."
Ray Clifford, Director of Center for Language Studies,
Board Member, JNCL - NCLIS

"We can't fix Foreign Language Education if Education is broken."
J. David Edwards - Executive Director, JNCL - NCLIS

"We need to change dramatically how our children learn languages."
Representative Russ Holt (D - New Jersey)

"Language teachers used to train tourists; now they train explorers!"
Michael Nugent, Director, National Flagship Program

My 2009 France Study Grant

By Toni Drewry

It is funny for me to see how like our students we actually are and how we often we make them do some of the very things that we ourselves do not like to do. Due to the fact that I won the 2009 France Study Grant, I was given the task of writing an article about my three-week long stay and all of my adventures in Grenoble. And what did I do? Nothing less than procrastinate. I don't really like to write and I can certainly see by this very example that I as a teacher need to make sure I make writing a much more fun and interesting activity for my students. Since writing does not come easy to me, I will stick to the basics. Alas, my article.

When I first applied for the France Study Grant, I had to choose between Paris, Strasbourg, and Grenoble. This was a very hard decision because I love Strasbourg, and who doesn't love Paris. However, since I had already been to Paris many times, twice with students and several times with friends when I studied in the south of France, and since I had visited Strasbourg twice, my logical choice was Grenoble. I had never been there. I had not even been to any of the towns that surround Grenoble. So Grenoble it was. I was very excited about my new adventure. While in Grenoble, I was hoping to practice the lovely language of French that I teach to my students. It is important to me to remain in the target language while I teach, so having an authentic environment in which to practice would improve my speaking ability, thus providing a good classroom example of French. I was also hoping to learn about how the French teach French, thus adding to the richness and variety of activities in my classroom. Even further, I was looking forward to learning about this area of France, the towns, the history, and the culture. Adding extra elements about France to my lessons helps students to feel as though they are closer to the country whose language they are learning. One last but very important opportunity that I was hoping to find was to talk to and collaborate with teachers from other areas of the United States and other countries. So, off to Grenoble.

It was fun to see Charles de Gaulle airport again. Even though it is a very busy airport with hoards of people scurrying about, it meant I was in France. I arrived a few days ahead of time to spend time with my friends who live on the outskirts of Strasbourg. After a very nice visit, I took the train down to Grenoble. The train took me through unseen countryside filled with beautiful rolling hills, farmland, and small towns. When I arrived in Grenoble, I picked up my maps and a tram ticket from the welcome table set up in the lobby of the train station and headed for the university. After settling into my dorm room at Grenoble University Stendhal 3, I headed into town to find dinner. I had forgotten that it was Sunday and nothing is open except restaurants. I was tired and just

wanted a little something to eat so I stopped at a pizza place just off the campus. It was amazing how quickly I fell back into the slow pace.

Monday morning was busy with orientation, getting to know my surroundings, meeting students from all over the world, and signing up for classes. There were 2 two-week sessions with many classes from which to choose. I quickly signed up for classes that I thought would best fit the needs of my students; however, I was able to fit in a class that interested me as well. During the first session, I took classes in Phonetics, Idiomatic Expressions, and a class on Grenoble itself. The overall goal of the courses was lesson planning and the use of techniques that allow students to improve their foreign language knowledge and proficiency. The teachers had a wealth of knowledge and I could tell right away that the two-week sessions were just a tease that made me wish I was signed up for a year. My phonetics class, although taught differently than in the US, reinforced the importance of pronunciation and modeling of the target language in the classroom. It was expertly taught by a very enthusiastic French woman who liked telling stories. The class on idiomatic expressions was extremely interesting. It showed how using idiomatic expressions in the classroom can help reinforce the meaning of words in our lessons, how words can be used differently and how learning French can be fun as some of these expressions bring laughter to the classroom. The class on Grenoble helped me become familiar with the organizations, museums, and activities that Grenoble offers and allowed me to learn about some of the history and culture of Grenoble as well.

The first two weeks flew by entirely too fast. My second session included classes called Pedagogy of images, Pedagogy of writing, and Popular Stories for the French classroom. My class on the Pedagogy of images allowed me to see what a powerful tool pictures can be in the classroom, no matter the level. Pictures can be used for many activities including writing, whether modeled or created, discussions, and more. These pictures come from sources such as magazines, newspapers, books, photos, comics, publicities, paintings, posters, and really any type of picture that communicates with or without words. At higher levels, activities include creating publications, analyzing objects, writing stories, developing vocabulary, speaking, creating comics, and many other activities. The possibilities are endless. It is a shame that I couldn't stay for the fourth week to see what else they had planned. This was by far my favorite class. Pedagogy of writing was an interesting class, which emphasized grammar and writing through direct instruction. Although I prefer modeling and the use of TPRS to tell stories and then model writing, the

Continued on back page

CLTA News

P.O. Box 123, Ferndale, CA 95536
Return Service Requested

Continued from page 3

professor had some good ideas geared toward the more advanced students. My very last class covered the use of popular stories in the foreign language classroom to not only teach the target language, but also to teach writing. The teacher showed us how to draw from our traditional childhood stories and fairy tales as sources for classroom reading and writing. We shared our stories with each other and learned ways to combine these stories to create new ones. This was a fun class.

The university also offered a series of conferences that were given one to two times per week. They covered topics such as school systems, their organization, and how they influence education, teaching through literature, and other subjects that concern foreign language teachers. The ones I attended were informative.

The program offered a wide variety of excursions to help us become acquainted with Grenoble and the surrounding cities of France. There were also several social activities designed to help us get to know the other teachers,

collaborate with them, and just make new friends. Personally, I took excursions to Lyon, Chambéry, Annecy, Chamonix, and Vercors. I also had the chance to visit a museum, a church, and the market in Grenoble, and to take the *téléphérique* to the top of a mountain at the edge of town to see an old monastery that is now a beautiful vista with a restaurant. As well, I participated in many barbecues and lakeside parties offered by the entertaining staff, or *animateurs*, at the university.

This was a wonderful trip. I find that I pull out my class notes from time to time to see if there is anything else I can use in my classroom to keep it fresh and interesting. I recommend taking the opportunity to participate in the Study Abroad programs no matter how many years you have been teaching. It is a fun way to bring new things to the classroom and to become energized to teach.

Again, a grateful thankyou to the French Government for allowing me to participate in this program. It is an experience I will not forget.