

Professional Growth, Active Involvement, Advocacy and Professional Leadership

I. Professional Growth

I attend ACTFL conferences, NECTFL conferences, AATF and AATSP national conferences, nearly every RIFLA Conference and RIFLA Spring Workshop for the past twenty years. I have attended, on two separate occasions, one-day workshops on AP French and I spent a week at St. Johnsbury for the Spanish AP workshop.

II. Active Involvement in Professional Organizations

I am currently the editor of the RIFLA Gazette, a position I have held for over ten years. I am also currently serving as Treasurer of AATF RI. I served on the Board of AATSP RI and RIFLA. I am Past President of RIFLA and served as recording secretary.

I will be giving the Keynote address at the RIFLA Fall Conference in October. I will also present a session at the MaFla Fall Conference as well. I have presented at RIFLA's fall conferences in the past and I won Best of Conference for one of the presentations and was then able to present at the NECTFL conference in New York City. To present a session on drama techniques in a hotel on Broadway in NYC gave me more pleasure than you can imagine!

III. Advocacy

Because of the NECTFL Teacher of the Year Award, I was featured in a front page article in our local newspaper along with an article in the Breaking News section of the Providence Journal. Additionally a very nice article was posted on a local internet news site. All the articles addressed the importance of second language learning.

I had a twenty minute private meeting with the Commissioner of Education, Deborah Gist on Wednesday, May 8th. We spoke about the future of foreign language study in Rhode Island and by the end of the meeting she decided to create a committee to do long-range strategic planning for foreign language study. That committee will begin in the late summer and she invited me to be part of it. We spoke about the initiatives that have begun in Rhode Island and how to best proceed with them. It was a very productive meeting and I look forward to serving on this newly formed strategic planning committee.

I serve on RIFLA's Advocacy Committee and was part of the launch of the Road Map for Rhode Island, an initiative to begin dual-language elementary school programs.

The most important thing I do to advocate for foreign language study is to attend School Committee meetings. I speak at every opportunity in support of language learning. I asked to present a short session on the connection between Common Core and world languages on the night I was honored for being named NETFL Teacher of the Year. I regularly have students give presentations on their travel experiences to Canada, France and Spain as well as my FLITES (*French Language in the Elementary Schools*) students who talk about teaching French to the fourth graders.

I have asked former students to come and speak to my current juniors and seniors about their study abroad experiences and this fall I invited the URI French department's liaison to the IEP (*International Engineering Program*) to talk about URI's five-year program which offers students the opportunity to work and study abroad and receive a dual degrees upon graduation – a Bachelors of Arts and a Bachelors of Science.

I taught a Spanish Drama Workshop at Rhode Island College for two years. At the end of the semester the students put on plays for high school students from around the state. My first year, I chose short stories and mini-dramas that are read by many high school students. The second year the students presented selections from *Don Quixote*. The college students enjoyed putting on the plays and the high school students were then able to see the literature they were reading in class come to life. It was a great experience for all of us!

Connecting with the community is a more subtle way of advocating, but it is still advocating. Every time we involve the community in our activities we succeed in promoting our department and foreign language study. We sponsor an International Night where students bring in food from around the world; we have booths representing different countries, entertainment and cultural demonstrations. This year over 250 people attended, including members of the School Committee and Town Council. In May the school sponsors an Evening of the Arts and our French V and Spanish V classes present plays that they wrote (typically they are adaptations of fairy tales). My advanced French students teach French, after school, to fourth graders at a near-by elementary school and we end the program with a presentation for the parents. We also have a formal induction ceremony for the Société Honoraire de Français and the Sociedad Honoraria Hispánica. We invite a guest speaker, give pins to the inductees along with their certificate, honor those who excelled in the National Spanish and French exams, announce the winners of two state-wide French Cultural awards and serve refreshments.

People in Smithfield know who I am and they know about all the activities we do in the language department. Since we are an elective, we must lobby for every student and the best way to do that is to make it attractive to study a language. Parents need to understand the importance of studying, and continuing to study, a second language and they need to be

aware of the opportunities available to their children when they become part of our program.

IV. *Professional Leadership*

Along with my active participation in our foreign language associations, I also serve on various committees on a school and district-wide basis. I am a member of the district's Strategic Planning Committee. I am the high school representative to the District Evaluation Committee. I have had to attend many training sessions sponsored by the State Department of Education over the past two years in order to serve on this committee which addresses district policies concerning the new Teacher Evaluation Program. I was recently asked by my superintendent to serve on the Citizens' Advocacy Group which is comprised of members of the School Committee, Town Council, parents, administrators and teachers representing each school in the district. This committee focuses on long-range planning for the entire district.