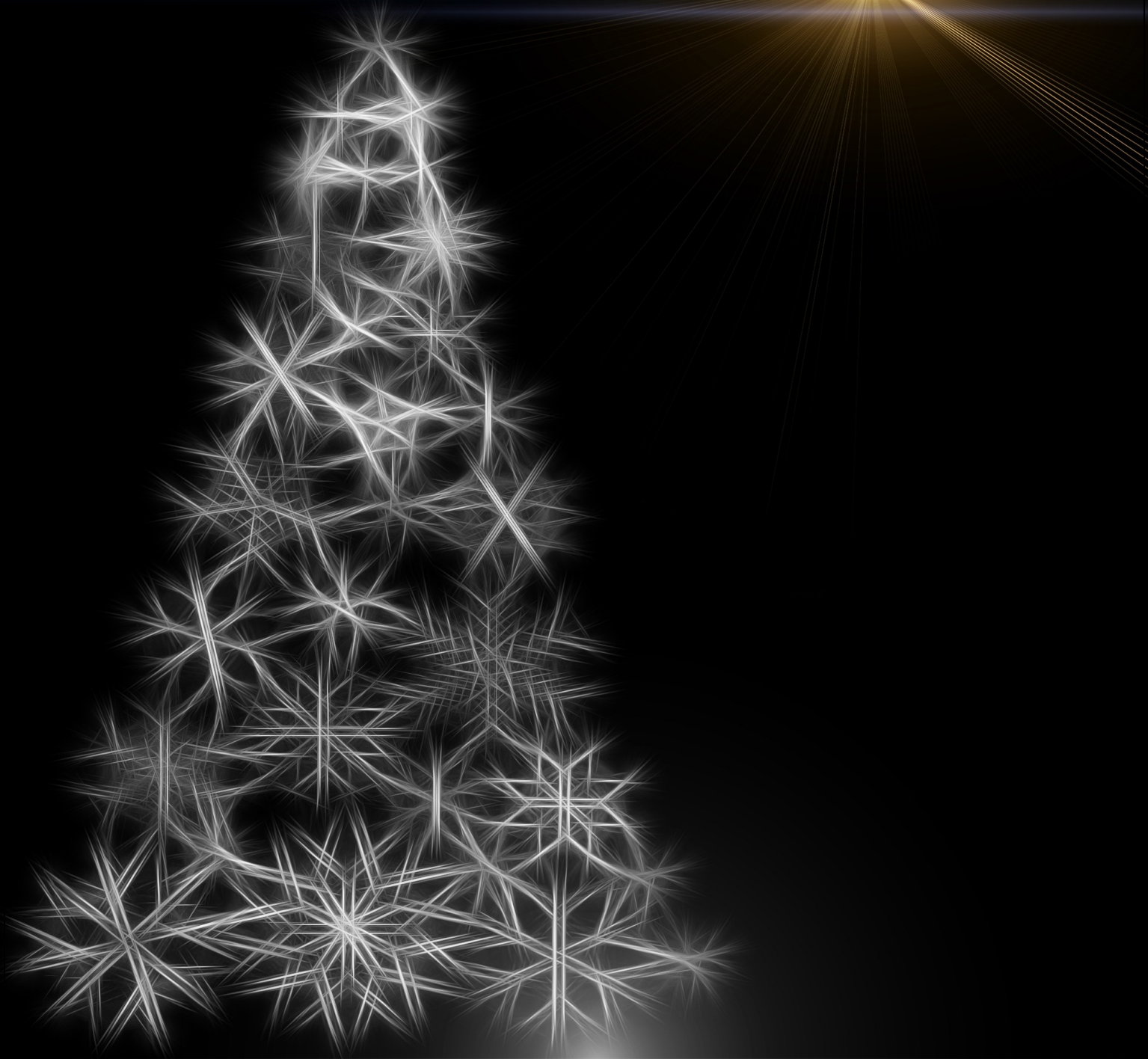


# BCATML



**British Columbia Association of Teachers of Modern Languages**  
*Supporting teachers and learners of second languages.*



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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - Rome Lavrencic



*Bonjour!* On behalf of the BCATML Executive, I bring you warm greetings. I hope that your start up to this school year ran smoothly as you prepare to embark on new language adventures with excitement and success in all of your classes!

With the fall colours having already changed, I am reminded of the changes that our Association is currently facing. After many dedicated years of service, our Past Co-presidents Kathy Chmelyk and Sandi Kostur have stepped down to pursue other professional adventures. As well, outgoing Other Languages Rep Pepi Kotsalis and Spanish Rep Sonya O'Neill have decided to pursue other educational paths this year. These four committee members have contributed enormously towards the operation of our Association, and especially in planning our annual "Celebrating Languages" conference. I have learned much from their dedication in making BCATML an Association of professionals. *Un grand merci à vous toutes!*

Another change in the BCATML is the new Executive. We have welcomed on board four new executive members: Nicole Jarvis (Punjabi Rep), Ping Li (Mandarin Rep), Kelly MacLean (Other Languages Rep) and Trevor O'Rourke (Spanish Rep). I look forward to adding their creativity to the mosaic of the BCATML. Due to changes in her professional life, Brigitte Atwood (Elementary & Middle Years Rep) decided to step down. Returning members Angela Kleine-Buning (German Rep), Cristina Gismondi (Secretary), Nancy Griffith-Zahner (French Rep), Stacey Sveistrup (Vice-President), Tina Tsai (Treasurer) and Wendy Yamazaki (Japanese Rep) have agreed to offer their expertise again to the Association, some of whom are taking on new roles in the Executive, including myself as your President. I invite you to read about your new Executive in this edition of the newsletter and to click on our profiles to view a short video.

BCATML's website is in the midst of an overhaul and facelift. One of our goals this year is to update our website and to make it more useful and user friendly. Social media will be one of the items we wish to include, so get ready to begin tweeting! We hope to make our website more interactive by allowing teachers to share and post ideas, concerns, and even resources. We are striving to make our website a beacon for information regarding not only the Association but the highly anticipated new curriculum as well.

By the time this newsletter is released, the holiday season will be almost upon us. I wish you all the best in your classrooms with your students; as well as a well-deserved restful winter break with your family, friends and loved ones.

*Je vous souhaite tous mes meilleurs vœux de bonne et heureuse année 2014! Feliz año nuevo! 祝你圣诞快乐 Fröhliche Weihnachten! メリークリスマス.*

Please enjoy this winter edition of the BCATML newsletter!

# CONFERENCE NEWS

## BCATML Annual Conference 2014 - Celebrating Languages!

- Nancy Griffith-Zahner

Our 2013 Annual Conference, held at Burnaby South Secondary School on October 25, was such a success that we can't wait to promote our next conference.

This year's conference had three-80 minute sessions followed by the BCATML Annual General Meeting. We also had our World Café, where teachers and other educational professionals broke into groups to discuss a variety of issues, including new curricula, assessment, and language developments in their specific areas.

By all measures the conference was a wonderful success. According to the survey we sent out after the conference (through Survey Monkey), our registration procedure was excellent to very good; the variety of workshops we offered was very good, and the catering provided by Burnaby South Secondary was excellent.

We listened as well to your views and advice as to our venue, the location of the next conference, and World Café. Forty percent of delegates at the 2013 conference rated their World Café experiences as "satisfactory", with helpful comments as to how the café can be run more smoothly next year. You also indicated that as far as city and venue are concerned, you would like to see the 2014 conference run at a school in the Lower Mainland. We will do our best to accommodate!

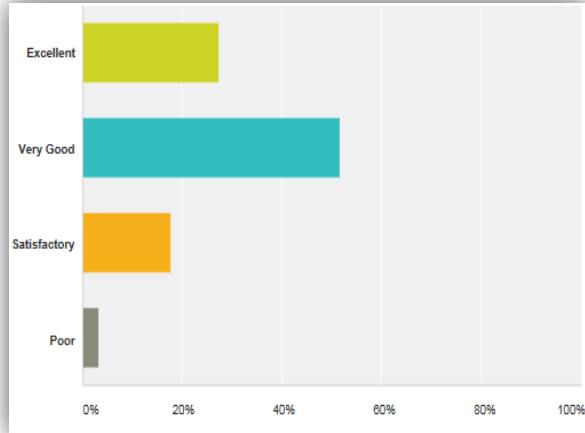
Details about the 2014 Conference - including venue, city, theme, and a formal Call for Presenters - will be available online in the spring. In the meantime, it is never too early to think about a workshop that you might like to present at our conference. Sharing your expertise not only enriches the educational experiences of your peers, but it's also a wonderful opportunity for networking with new colleagues, publishers, representatives from the Ministry of Education, and other educational professionals.

Perhaps your area of expertise is assessment, evaluation, social responsibility, or you simply wish to share an idea that has worked in your classroom, we are eager to receive your applications. Please watch for email blasts from the BCATML in the spring inviting you to present your workshop ideas to the Conference Committee. As well, keep your eye on our website for further information.



## Celebrating Languages Conference Review – Rome Lavrencic

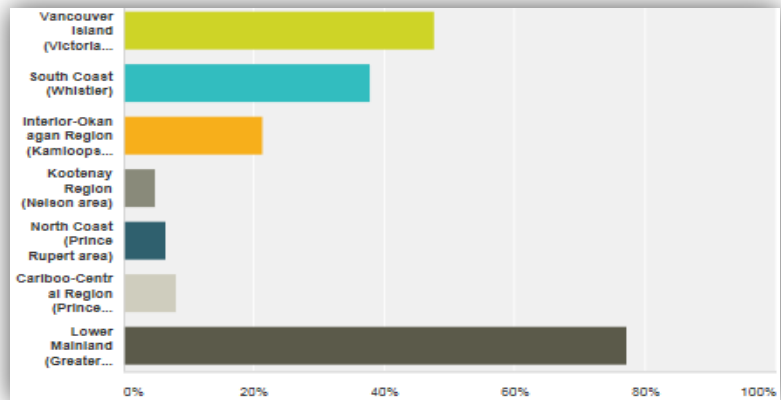
The Conference Committee had a very busy fall preparing our annual conference at Burnaby South Secondary School and Michael J. Fox Theatre – it has been a very long time since we hosted our conference at a school. It was wonderful to see the largest number of teachers come out in well over 8 years. We are close to 400 members strong!



The variety and rich offering of workshops, presentations, sessions and networking contributed to a successful day for all language teachers at all levels. Our Presenters showed patience and resilience working in smaller rooms despite not always having a reliable WIFI signal for their sessions. The table to the left shows the results of our Survey Monkey regarding your opinion of the quality of workshops offered this year.

This was BCATML's second year offering a World Café session discussing a variety of educational topics ranging from curriculum questions to methodologies. The Executive is in the process of compiling the numerous notes taken and we hope to post them on our website in the New Year, and perhaps publish them in our next newsletter. We may alter the World Café format next year and return to having language forums [*sic*] with your Language Representative.

Many of you expressed your desire to return to Burnaby South in future years, and the Conference Committee has negotiated our return for 2015. Unfortunately, another group has already booked this venue for 2014. With a much smaller Conference Committee to assume the arduous task of all the conference preparations, and the fact that we do not have a contact liaison at another school on the



Executive, BCATML will likely return to the previous venue: the Delta Burnaby Hotel next year. Lastly, we have already begun discussing moving the conference to Vancouver Island or possibly to Whistler in 2016 or 2017. In the interim, we invite you to visit our website for all the details, and to consider submitting a proposal for next year's workshop. *À très bientôt!*



# BCATML Conference 2013

## Celebrating Languages!



# Introducing the BCATML Executive!

## President – Rome Lavrencic



Rome is no stranger to the different roles of the BCATML Executive. He started out over 8 years ago as the Other Languages Rep and assumed the role of the Conference Registrar. He has also been the Treasurer, Vice-President and Conference Chair; however this is Rome's first year as President. While not native to BC (a "Pegger" transplant from Ontario), he considers Vancouver his home now after living here for 18 years. His first teaching contract was at New Westminster Secondary School teaching FSL, Français Langue, Social Studies, English and Science Humaines. After 18 years, he is still there with a lovely view of the mountains outside his classroom windows. While Polish was his first language, he has mastered French but secretly is in love with Italian. When not in the classroom, you can find him on the courts playing indoor volleyball (he is rather proud of his gold medal at championships earlier this year in Calgary) or out on the softball diamond playing second base. He is looking forward to the winter season and hopes Père Noël will give him a new set of skis to replace his broken ones from last season.

<http://youtu.be/S0TKCw5v7a8>

## Vice-President – Stacey Sviestrup



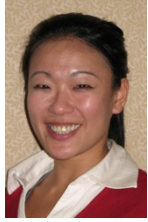
This is Stacey's third year as an executive member of the BCATML. Her first two years she was the treasurer and conference committee, and now she is our new vice president. She enjoyed being the treasurer and embraced the new learning curve of creating a budget. She teaches Intensive French Grade 6 in the Vancouver School District and loves her job. She lived in Hong Kong where she taught in local schools and was part of a pilot project to bring the communicative approach to English classes. Another experience she had in Hong Kong was teaching French and EAL at a British International Secondary School. She was part of the BCTF Cuba project for several years, and travelled twice with the team to Cuba. There she presented workshops on ESL strategies as well as language enhancement for Cuban teachers. Outside her career, she too is an avid volleyball player both in the winter and on the beach. Finally, she is about to embark on her last term of her Master's degree and is anticipating an exciting journey in the next few months.

## Secretary – Cristina Gismondi



This is Cristina's sixth year involved in the BCATML, and she is continuing in the role of Secretary on the Organizing Committee. Cristina's first language is Italian, but she teaches a multitude of subjects. Cristina is used to being the only language teacher in her school, juggling Italian, French and Spanish, which gets very lonely. She came to the BCATML after 11 years of teaching in order to find a community of language teachers with whom she could collaborate. She wanted to be 'in the know' after being so isolated for a long time. Six years later, it's obviously been a great match!

### **Treasurer – Tina Tsai**



Tina is Grad Transitions Advisor and Mandarin/Art Teacher at Burnaby South Secondary School. This is her 3rd year on the BCATML Executive; she is now transitioning from Mandarin Rep / Conference Publishers and Vendors Coordinator to the role of Executive Treasurer. Last year's 2013 BCATML Conference took place at her school (Burnaby South Secondary), and Tina coordinated student volunteers, managed the facilities rental, booked classrooms, and organized an amazing gourmet lunch prepared by the Burnaby South ACE-IT Chef program teaching chef and students, which not only provided desperately needed funds to the chef program but also saved our PSA a lot of money previously spent on catering costs: a win-win! In short, Tina did a TON of work, and we are very grateful to have her back on the BCATML Executive this year!

Aside from her passion collaborating with other Grad Transitions, Mandarin and Art Teachers, Tina is interested in technology initiatives to transform the way students learn second languages. Tina is currently piloting a new exchange program: a Spring Break tour of Taiwan, which will be completely planned and lead by the students themselves. We hope to read some stories after the exchange so that we can learn from her experience! (Keep your eyes peeled for Tina's submissions to future BCATML Newsletters!)

### **French Rep – Nancy Griffith-Zahner**



Nancy teaches core French 9-12 at Charles Hays Secondary School in Prince Rupert, B.C. Receiving an Honours BA in English Literature and a Masters Degree in Education, Nancy acquired most of her French skills not solely in the classroom but also through various immersion trips to France and Quebec. Nancy has been the provincial representative for French on the BCATML executive committee for the past seven years, as well as a co-author (with Rome Lavrencic) of CASLT's *Assessment in Action: A CEFR-based Toolkit* resource and French advisor for her district. Nancy is an avid gardener, runner, and travel-addict, as well as a musician who plays the viola, piano, and guitar. Her dream is to someday be able to combine her love of French and traveling, by doing some teaching overseas.

### **Spanish Rep – Trevor O'Rourke**

In his first year with the BCATML, Trevor is our new Spanish Rep. He is trained in French Immersion and Social Studies, as well as Spanish, but is thrilled to be working full-time in Spanish! He is professionally based in New Westminster, lives in East Vancouver, but grew up on Quadra Island. He plays the Autoharp, the trombone, and the piano, as well as singing flamenco and trova (Latin folk) in the Lower Mainland. He has lived on l'île de la Réunion, in Venezuela, Zambia and Spain, and tries to bring these varied perspectives to the classroom and to his work with the BCATML.

<http://youtu.be/M9Pbj7tduOg>





## **Mandarin Rep - Ping Li**



*I started teaching Mandarin at Crofton House School when Mandarin curriculum in B.C. was still in a budding state. Like a gardener, I have been toiling in the garden tirelessly and patiently, carefully tending the seedlings and proudly seeing them grow, develop and bloom. Almost 25 years has passed. Now, it is time for me to reflect and share my gardening experience with more gardeners.*

Trained as an English Teacher, but initially hired and retained for over 20 years at Crofton House as their Mandarin Teacher, Ping has been the only language teacher at her school for a long time, so she has felt isolated in her profession from other passionate language teachers. Joining the BCATML was her way to find a community of supportive, sharing colleagues, and we are so glad to welcome her on the EC this year as her passion for collaborative professional development is inspiring. Mandarin is a ‘late-starter’ modern language much like Punjabi, so there aren’t a lot of good-quality teaching resources available. Ping Li identified the need for quality Mandarin - language texts so she spent last summer working out a set of Textbooks with the Confucious Institute, using a backwards approach focused on Project-Based Learning (PBL). Ping’s perspective as a Mandarin teacher at Crofton House Girls’ private school is immensely valuable to the BCATML.

## **German Rep – Angela Kleine-Buning**



Angela has been with the BCAMTL for the past 3 ½ years. She teaches on Vancouver Island (Victoria) at SIDES Secondary and is our link across the Georgia Strait.

## **Japanese Rep & Newsletter Editor – Wendy Yamazaki**



Wendy has been with the BCATML for the past eight years (she thinks...), most of those years as the Newsletter Editor as well. Even though she works only part-time, she’s usually running around like a chicken with her head cut off as the only Japanese teacher in Seaquam Secondary as well as in Delta and as a mother of two children, hence the brevity of this introduction. When Wendy is not doing things like cooking meals, shopping for meals, thinking of the next meal, chauffeuring the kids around, cleaning the house (and not doing a very good job of that!), marking students’ papers, going to meetings, preparing lessons and reports and talking to parents, she finds a Zen tranquility in lifting heavy things and putting them down.

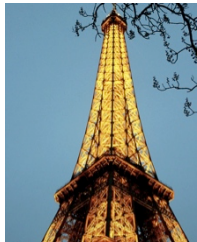


## **Punjabi Rep – Nicole Jarvis**

During her B.A. Nicole studied abroad with SFU, at Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic (2007); L'Université François Rabelais Tours, France, (2009), and Monash University, Prato, Italy (2010). Without the marking and prep loads of a classroom teacher, Nicole dedicates a significant amount of her personal time to local and provincial Teacher-Specialist Associations as well as to local union Committees such as the Surrey TTOC Committee. @nicole has worked in two districts around Metro Vancouver as a French, French Immersion and English Teacher and Teacher-on-call, and is passionate about Metacognitive Strategy, foreign language education, government policy, and professional learning. Her retired teacher mom helped to spearhead a literacy project called "Write to Read," which builds libraries in Aboriginal Communities in rural British Columbia, so the preservation of Aboriginal dialects are of special interest in Nicole's family. Nicole is a member of the Executive Committee with the Delta Teachers' Association (Local #37 of the BCTF), as Chair of the Public Education Advocacy Committee (PEAC), and she attended the BCTF AGM as a delegate for the first time this past year. When Nicole isn't surfing the internet in the search of amazing teaching ideas (or napping from all of her busy work-related activities...), she loves to hike, camp, do Bikram Yoga, and cook. As Webmaster and Punjabi Language Rep of the #bcatml, Nicole intends to connect Language Teachers in British Columbia to be part of the conversations, sharing, and discussions that are happening as education changes to improve student learning.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ea7GauvR5tg>

## **Other Languages Rep – Kelly MacLean**



Kelly is the current treasurer and French Language Rep of the Surrey Language Teachers' Association. This is her 1st year on the BCATML Executive ('Other Languages Rep') and she is interested in pursuing Intensive French training. Kelly completed PFP (Programme de Formation Professionnelle) at SFU in 2011 in conjunction with the Programme de Certification Duale where she was able to study in France at the Université of François-Rabelais in Tours to complete the Master 1 program. During PFP she also participated in the Explore program, which allowed her to spend 5 weeks studying at the Université Laval in Québec City! Kelly is now in her 3rd contract teaching Core French 9 & Socials 9 at Fraser Heights (Surrey). Kelly has Norwegian citizenship & is currently taking Norwegian language classes in Burnaby one night a week.



# LANGUAGE NEWS

## Spanish – Trevor O'Rourke

¡Saludos a l@s maestr@s de español en la Colombia Británica!

Estoy encantado de ser su nuevo representante en el BCATML, y mi meta para este año es no solamente ayudarles con sus preguntas, pero también colaborar con much@s de ustedes.

Primero quisiera recomendarles un sitio web sobre un viaje extraordinario que se está realizando ahora: “Out of Eden”, la meta de un hombre que va a volverse sobre los pasos de la migración humana desde sus principios, o sea que viaja desde Etiopía hasta Tierra del Fuego: <http://www.outofedenwalk.com>

Esta caminata podría servirles de principio en muchos aspectos: es un hombre, va a tomar 7 años, y son 21 000 millas aproximadamente. Puede servir como punto de salida para hablar de la importancia de Latinoamérica como el último continente poblado por los seres humanos. Niveles más avanzados podrían crear reportajes de viaje sobre los lugares variados que visita Paul Salopek o imaginar sus propios viajes inspirados por un tema más personal. ¡Hasta tienen una sección para maestr@s donde se pueden hallar recursos sobre varios temas, incluso sobre la perspectiva de la persona que cuenta su propia historia, fácilmente adaptada a la clase de español: <https://pulitzercenter.creatavist.com/story/5823>

¡Veamos qué se puede crear para enriquecer nuestras aulas!

Para algo un poco menos serio, les sugiero este App para sus alumnos tecnológicos que quieren avanzar a su propio ritmo y con el ayuda de fotos divertidas de gatos: <http://www.catacademy.com>  
¡Muy lindo y bastante útil! Parece que los gatos se han juntado para proveernos las herramientas para comunicarnos entre todos... ¡He hecho varias lecciones y son suficientemente entretenidas como para que las prueben estudiantes verdaderos!

Para terminar, muchas veces en esta temporada nos enfocamos mucho en lo que es el currículo; si tenemos que enseñar el gerundio, el imperativo negativo, el subjuntivo, etc. Se nos olvida que la utilidad de aprender un idioma siempre se debería de tomar en cuenta por nuestros alumnos. Una manera de lograr esto de manera sencilla es animar a los aprendientes con las habilidades intralingüísticas que están desarrollando. Por ejemplo, yo les muestro canciones en distintos idiomas (catalán, francés, náhuatl, portugués, quichua, etc.) y, usando su español como base, tienen que adivinar el significado de palabras específicas y de la canción en general. Así se puede aprender un poco sobre la historia del castellano (¡recordemos que así se debería de llamar en nuestras clases!) y también notar la transferencia de las habilidades que usamos a diario.

Espero que algo aquí les sirva para inspirarles en los meses que vienen, y no se olviden que siempre estoy a la orden si necesitan más información o si quieren hablar de proyectos o conceptos particulares. Mi correo electrónico es: [torourke@sd40.bc.ca](mailto:torourke@sd40.bc.ca)

Gracias y hasta pronto,

-el Trébol de cuatro hojas

## Culture in Language Teaching: A Reflection on a Field Trip to Winter Solstice Celebration

Whenever I ask my students why they choose to learn Mandarin, a lot of their responses are surprisingly culturally based: ‘I enjoy Chinese food’, ‘I am fascinated by Chinese gongfu (martial arts)’, ‘I want to climb the Great Wall’, and the list can go a long way. It is obvious that what the students hope to be able to do is not simply the language component of taking a language course, but clearly a cultural aspect along with their language acquisition.

On a pedagogical level, of all the changes that have undergone in the field of language teaching and learning, particularly in recent years since the millennium, the most striking one could be the emphasis on the importance of integrating culture in language teaching. Therefore, there is little argument in the concept that language and culture are inextricably intertwined, and students will benefit if they are exposed to the culture of the target language while learning the four skills of that language. However, I often question myself: ‘*What and how* should I implement culture effectively in a language classroom?’ From my own experience, asking students to do big and elaborated projects on a famous person, an elegant piece of music, or a well-known tourist spot bores them easily after a few attempts. Including a cultural component at the end of a unit simply cannot meet the needs of students’ ever-increasing desire for more cultural knowledge and practice. One solution to such a challenge is to provide students with more authentic and hands-on opportunities such as field trips to help them apply their language skills and understand the knowledge, values, beliefs and behaviours that a group of people share in their life.

Recently, I took my Mandarin 11 students on a very cold day to Vancouver’s Chinatown to participate in an activity called ‘Light the Night’, an occasion to celebrate Winter Solstice in the beautiful Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden. It is my attempt first to demonstrate how cultural literacy can be incorporated in language learning, second to reflect on its benefits, and finally to prove that immersing students in a community environment and in authentic cultural surroundings goes well in bridging language and culture in an engaging context.

My Mandarin 11 students finished the themes of weather and four seasons not too long ago, and they have started a new theme on winter vacation. What could have been a better opportunity for them to go for a field trip to celebrate Winter Solstice! So I made the arrangements with the education coordinator Ms Ma from the garden. The following outlines the various things my students experienced at the garden:

1. To provide my students with some background information, I created a short description of Winter Solstice in Mandarin using the characters that students can understand. Included in the description is a popular song in China—‘The Nine Cycles of Nine Days Song’ (for better English ‘Cold Dispelling Song’). Since my students can recognize most of the characters in its lyrics, I changed only a few words but retained the meaning of the lines. While waiting for the bus, I asked my students to read and interpret the song and gave them a brief introduction of the festival as well as the garden. The following are the description and the song (on the bus, I chatted with my students about the cold weather and the clothes they should wear, all in Mandarin, a good review of the previous themes they have learned):

## 冬至 (Dōng Zhì Winter Solstice)

冬至是北半球 (Northern Hemisphere) 全年中白天最短、黑夜最长的一天, 过了冬至, 白天就会一天天变 (biàn)长。

从冬至那天起, 以九天作一个单元 (dānyuán one unit), 一共有九个九天, 到九九一共八十一天, 冬天就过去了, 春天就来了。《九九歌》说的就是冬至到春天。

### 九九歌

一九二九不出手;  
三九四九冰上走;  
五九六九河边看柳 (liǔ willows);  
七九河开八九雁 (yàn geese)来;  
九九加一九, 春暖花遍开。

The first and second 'nine days' are so cold  
That we dare not hold out our hands;  
During the third and fourth 'nine days,'  
We could even walk on the ice (in the river);  
The fifth and sixth 'nine days' see a thin veil of green  
On the far bank of the river,  
The rivers thaw during the seventh 'nine days,'  
The eighth 'nine days' welcome the wild geese back,  
Winter finally draws to an end in the last 'nine days,'  
When bright blossoms and flowers smile in warm spring.

2. Once inside the garden, the students sat down, sipping a cup of hot Chinese tea in a very 'Chinese' room while listening to Ms Ma's vivid and engaging story about how Chinese people started the festival, why they have been celebrating the festival since ancient times, what kinds of activities and food the Chinese have for such an occasion. The interactive communication came after, done both in Mandarin (whenever they could) and in English. Ms Ma asked them a lot of questions about how other people from the world celebrate Winter Solstice and some specific questions regarding the Ming Dynasty and the classical Chinese garden. Students were all very eager to offer answers, opinions, and guesses, and to raise more questions out of curiosity.
3. Ms Ma then took the students out for a tour of the garden. She started by explaining the main concept of Yin and Yang in Taoist philosophy on how seemingly opposite or contrary forces are interconnected and interdependent in the natural world and how they give rise to each other as they interrelate to one another. She demonstrated this idea of keeping everything in

harmony and balance by asking students to look for things in the garden that exemplified this philosophy. Before long, they figured out quite a few features: paving stones and patterns, different shapes of windows and doors, tall and short plants or trees of evergreen and deciduous nature. With the guidance of Ms Ma, the students also discovered some hidden meanings behind some seemingly ordinary objects: bat-shaped door handles actually mean ‘good fortune’, and so do the bat-shaped roof tiles (the Chinese love to use homophonic words for symbolic meanings); the plum tree, the pine tree and the bamboo each behind a



window side by side mean ‘the friends of winter’ since they share characteristics of endurance, uprightness and loyalty. The students also came to understand how yin and yang could be interpreted in the changing of seasons. On the day of the Winter Solstice, the Yin is at its peak with the longest night. Afterwards, the days are getting longer, cold days and long nights giving way to the light and warmth of Yang. And the Chinese consider it a right time for optimism and joy.

4. After the tour, students went back into the warm room ready to challenge themselves in piecing together a 24 agricultural solar terms puzzle. The students had to work together to put together the character expression and its pinyin equivalent, and the English translation of each solar term, and then figure out which expression went with one particular date and the order of the dates. It was not easy, but since students could recognize most of the characters and got a few free tips from Ms Ma, they made it in the end. It was indeed a very interactive and social activity. The finished puzzle looks like the following on the next page.



5. The final but the most exciting part of the field trip for my students was making origami lotus flower candle holders. They not only made a lotus flower candle holder with their own colour choice, but also learned why the Chinese love lotus flowers: because they grow out from the mud, pure and unstained.

### The Twenty-four Solar Terms in 2013

Solar Terms	Month	Date	Meaning
Lesser Cold (Xiao Han) 小寒	Jan.	5th	It is rather cold.
Greater Cold (Da Han) 大寒	Jan.	20th	It is the coldest moment of a year.
The Beginning of Spring (Li Chun) 立春	Feb.	4th	Spring begins.
Rain Water (Yu Shui) 雨水	Feb.	18th	It begins to rain.
The Waking of Insects (Jing Zhe) 惊蛰	Mar.	5th	Hibernating animals come to sense.
The Spring Equinox (Chun Fen) 春分	Mar.	20th	Day and night are equally long.
Pure Brightness (Qing Ming) 清明	Apr.	4th	It is warm and bright.
Grain Rain (Gu Yu) 谷雨	Apr.	20th	Rainfall is helpful to grain.
The Beginning of Summer (Li Xia) 立夏	May	5th	Summer begins.
Lesser Fullness of Grain (Xiao Man) 小满	May	21st	Kernels plump.
Grain in Beard (Mang Zhong) 芒种	Jun.	5th	Wheat grows ripe.
The Summer Solstice (Xia Zhi) 夏至	Jun.	21st	It has the longest daytime and the shortest night of the year.
Lesser Heat (Xiao Shu) 小暑	Jul.	7th	Torridity comes.
Greater Heat (Da Shu) 大暑	Jul.	22nd	It is the hottest moment of a year.
The Beginning of Autumn (Li Qiu) 立秋	Aug.	7th	Autumn begins.
The End of Heat (Chu Shu) 处暑	Aug.	23rd	Heat hides.
White Dew (Bai Lu) 白露	Sep.	7th	Dew curdles.
The Autumn Equinox (Qiu Fen) 秋分	Sep.	22nd	It is the mid of autumn.
Cold Dew (Han Lu) 寒露	Oct.	8th	Dew is very cold.
Frost's Descent (Shuang Jiang) 霜降	Oct.	23rd	Frost descends.
The Beginning of Winter (Li Dong) 立冬	Nov.	7th	Winter begins.
Lesser Snow (Xiao Xue) 小雪	Nov.	22nd	It begins to snow.
Greater Snow (Da Xue) 大雪	Dec.	7th	It snows heavily.
The Winter Solstice (Dong Zhi) 冬至	Dec.	22nd	It has the shortest daytime and the longest night of a year.

Reflecting on this field trip, I feel that this activity best embodies the ‘The Five Cs’, standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century (1999) in the world languages classroom.

**Communication:** My students all tried to use their newly-acquired language skills to express themselves in an authentic situation and enjoyed doing so every minute. They also showed their eagerness to learn and their curiosity in interpreting cultural content by interacting with each other and with Ms Ma and myself. They even attempted to read calligraphy scrolls hanging on the wall! Some students said that they were surprised by how easy it was to match the pinyin and characters to the English once they all started working together.

**Cultures:** This trip has functioned effectively as a bridge between language and culture. Learning the characteristic features of a classical Chinese garden while celebrating the Winter Solstice helped my

students to develop a better understanding and appreciation of the cultural part in language learning. They also became better able to understand other people's points of view, ways of life, and contributions to the world. Joyce Yang wrote in her reflection, 'Learning that hundreds of years ago, the Chinese figured out there were twenty four seasons really surprised me, but after going through the activity and learning what each season was called it made sense that there were twenty four season at that time.'

**Connections:** This field trip has covered quite a range of other subject areas such as geography (climate, weather, seasons interpreted in different cultures), philosophy (Taoist yin and yang), social studies (the Ming Dynasty), and biology (plants and flowers). My students were quite amazed that such a trip could generate so many interesting topics to discuss and explore.

**Comparisons:** My students acknowledged the fact that they enjoyed learning about the different seasons developed in ancient China since it is more detailed for agricultural purposes than the more general four seasons we know in the city. It is clear that they have come to understand their native culture better through comparisons of different cultural aspects. Julia Lindsay wrote about her trip as 'both enjoyable and educational for me. I had imagined it as a Western-style garden that was entirely outdoors and took up lots of space. However, our tour guide, 马老师, explained that classical Chinese gardens are actually houses of scholars, with garden aspects throughout both the house and the outdoor areas. . . . . This was very different from any Western architecture I know. For example, most houses don't have their garden in the centre of the house; instead they have front and back gardens. A garden as a central courtyard means that it is used and appreciated more often, because people cross through it more often. It also offers more safety and privacy than having separate front and back gardens.'

**Communities:** What my students experienced in a beautiful classical Chinese garden in Vancouver is a good example to show how beneficial it is if learning experiences can be extended from a classroom to a larger community.

In short, this learning experience is exciting and rewarding for my students. They had lots of fun, gained some insight into Chinese culture and developed a new perspective of looking at their own culture. Just as Julia wrote at the end of her reflection, 'Overall, the trip helped me to connect the Chinese culture that we'd learned in class with the outside world. As we walked around, I found myself planning a return trip!'

Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden offers a wide range of educational school programs for K-12 students. If interested, please go to their web site for more information:

<http://vancouverchinesegarden.com/things-to-do/education-programs/>.

**By the way, if you have time, go and enjoy the 20th Annual Winter Solstice Lantern Festival at the Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden, Sat. December 21<sup>st</sup> from 16:00 – 10:00pm!**





## Mandarin Teachers in Action

Those of us who live in Vancouver have been blessed with exceptionally fine weather this autumn, bathed in warm sunshine and awed by beautiful colours of the leaves turned yellow, red, orange and even golden. While admiring the weather, I also feel that the effort of professional development shown from the Greater Vancouver Mandarin teachers is equally impressive and awesome!

Since the beginning of this new school year, I have had quite a few rewarding opportunities to work with other Mandarin teachers, sharing our teaching expertise, voicing our concerns related to Mandarin teaching and new curriculum implementation, and making proposals for better communication among Mandarin teachers and more effective teaching strategies.

The first of such a platform for Mandarin teachers to share ideas and expertise was offered on Oct. 5<sup>th</sup> by the Greater Vancouver K-12 Association of BC Mandarin Teachers and hosted by the Confucius Institute at BCIT, which kindly provided not only the space and facilities but also snacks and food. I was very happy to spend a Saturday working with about twenty Mandarin teachers from elementary and secondary schools. The day started with a very interesting and eye-opening presentation by Professor Chen from UBC, who demonstrated with examples how to incorporate cultural components in teaching Mandarin as a second language, the best part of which, to me, was when he used groups of characters to explain the origins of these characters in connection with ancient Chinese beliefs. Another exciting part of the day was an action plan elaborated by the head of the Confucius Institute, Mr. Gu, who exemplified how IT application, cultural exploration and community interaction could become an integral part of Mandarin learning by promoting the web site recently improved by the Confucius Institute. Mr. An from the institute introduced HSK (Chinese Proficiency Test, China's only standardized test of standard Chinese language proficiency for non-native speakers) and coached the teachers how to use different levels of the test as assessment tools as well as incentive for students to keep up with their Mandarin learning. Ms Li from the institute promoted a newly-published advance level Chinese textbook *Chinese Teaching Toolbox Level C* with an emphasis on project-based learning and implementation of the 21<sup>st</sup> century standards for foreign language learning. Then, it was our Mandarin teachers' turn to do presentations on student-centred classroom activities, audio and video resources, and student-centred project-based learning for autonomy and success.

What a productive day I had! I just wished that we could have more time to chat and share ideas and experiences since, as the only Mandarin teacher in school, I do not usually have such interaction in my daily teaching.



Luckily, another Pro-D opportunity came by shortly afterwards. Our annual provincial BCATML conference on Oct. 25<sup>th</sup> attracted quite an attendance of Mandarin teachers, where I had the honour to get to know some new faces in our field and noticed that the content of the Mandarin presentations was up-to-date in pedagogy and methodology of foreign language teaching and learning. I was very grateful to those who were willing to spend some extra time to prepare and share their teaching expertise with their fellow teachers. The highlights included integration of technology such as Moodle, online resources, audio and video tools, multimedia, etc. in Mandarin classroom. Although I was not able to attend the after-lunch World Café discussion with other Mandarin teachers, I read the notes afterwards. What struck me the most was the fact that the need for more interaction and collaboration among Mandarin teachers became an utmost priority. It was a very positive sign to show that teachers care about their teaching and feel the urge to learn more effective current strategies to better their practice. What could be a better incentive to take part than this initiative!

Members of the Greater Vancouver K-12 Association of BC Mandarin Teachers gathered again on Nov. 9<sup>th</sup> during the Thanksgiving weekend at a place provided by the Consulate General of PRC. We began with a social time, where Mandarin teachers discussed their concerns, exchanged ideas, or simply struck a conversation with a new face. As a matter of fact, I noticed that there were quite a number of new and young faces I had never seen before and needed to make acquaintance with! The atmosphere was amicable and relaxing while the topics were serious and earnest. Some of the topics covered were the upcoming new Mandarin curriculum based on CEFR, incentives to attract students to learn Mandarin, suitable teaching materials, assessment tools and methods, effective use of technology in the classroom, meeting diverse needs, collaboration to support our learners, etc. After a lovely buffet dinner, officials from the Consulate General of PRC gave speeches in which they thanked Mandarin teachers for their dedicated work and expressed their continued support by presenting to the chair of our association Mr Lei with a \$1,000 cheque. The association's committee election followed. The newly elected committee consists of a chair and vice chair, a public relations person, a treasurer, a secretary, an IT person and three representatives for art and culture, IB and AP, and elementary school affairs respectively. I want to use this opportunity to thank all the committee members for spending their precious spare time for our Mandarin community!

Before we ended the long day, Mr Lei modeled how to use online HSK to train his students' listening skills, a useful teaching tool he mastered from our Oct. teacher training and collaboration. A lot of teachers expressed interest in the method. Our IT guy Mr Lou's demonstration on how to use moodle in teaching drew everybody's attention. After much discussion, all the teachers present reached the agreement that



moodle is the way to function as a platform for teachers' interaction and collaboration. Much to our delight, Mr Lou volunteered his service of redesigning our website and setting up a moodle site for all Mandarin teachers. As usual, I came home loaded with new ideas after a fruitful day.

Christmas is around the corner, and spring will soon arrive. I sincerely hope that the nice weather in Vancouver will continue into the new year and spring, and more and more Mandarin teachers will join us to further our dynamic dialogue and spend collegial time together to enrich our professional learning and find better ways to teach our students to be 21<sup>st</sup> century global citizens.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you all!

## German – Angela Kleine-Buning



Schon wieder ist Mitte Dezember, wie die Zeit vergeht!

Viele von euch werden sich noch an unsere Diskussion über das Angebot eines Sprachcamps beim Word Café auf der BCATML Konferenz erinnern können. Das Engagement von John Warkentin-Scott in Abbotsford hat etwas gebracht: Die University of the Fraser Valley veranstaltet am 19. Dezember ein Deutsch Camp für zwei High Schools am Ort. Diese Aktion wird von der ZfA finanziell unterstützt!! Vielen Dank!

An vielen Schulen fand am dritten Dezember die schriftliche Prüfung zum Deutschen Sprachdiplom der Stufe II statt. Die beteiligten SchülerInnen können nun vielleicht über die Feiertage etwas verschnaufen, bevor Anfang Januar die mündlichen Prüfungen durchgeführt werden. Viel Glück! Wir drücken die Daumen!

Ich wünsche euch und euren Familien eine schöne Adventszeit, besinnliche Weihnachten und einen guten Rutsch ins Jahr 2014!

Bis im nächsten Jahr!!      Angela



Der eingesparte Weihnachtsmann  
(Lustiges Weihnachtsgedicht mit starkem Realitätsbezug)

Der Weihnachtsmann ist übel dran  
Er muss jetzt alles tragen  
Hat keinen Schlitten, kein Gespann  
Hat nicht mal einen Wagen

Sein Antrag wurde abgelehnt  
Die Gelder sind gestrichen  
Das ist nun mal der große Trend  
Man kennt das ja inzwischen

Mit Auto oder Bahn zu fahr'n  
Ist Luxus heutzutage  
Man will an allen Stellen spar'n  
Und streicht trotz mancher Klage

Der Weihnachtsmann fragt: Liebe Leut  
Ja, wollt ihr mich verkohlen?  
Soll'n sich die Kinder weit und breit  
Die Sachen selber holen?

Da tönt's: Wir sparen ganz gerecht  
Bis alle Schuld beglichen  
Und wenn du aufmuckst, alter Knecht  
Dann wirst du auch gestrichen!

*Autor: Horst Winkler*



# Japanese – Wendy Yamazaki

Sometime in early October, I received an email from a representative from the Consulate General of Japan, asking me if I would like to participate in the Kakehashi Project. The Kakehashi Project, as you may recall from the article written by Rome Lavrencic in the last newsletter, is an initiative by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (MOFA) and the National Federation of UNESCO Association in Japan (NFUAJ) to promote cross-cultural awareness between the youth of Japan and participating nations.

I had heard about the program and all the amazing experiences of the trip from Rome and my colleague Kathy Shannon at New Westminster Secondary and immediately accepted the offer. The race was on – find a colleague willing to help and 23 students wanting to experience Japan.

Since I had never taken students that far on a school trip, I asked Toby Mundy, a colleague who was very experienced in school exchanges and with Japan. We then put out the call for program applicants and received over 100 applications! After going through all of the applications, we still had over 23 quality students to choose from, so to be fair, we did a random draw of those final students.



We were paired with a school in Ibaraki Prefecture, in the city of Chikusei – Shimodate First High School. In a strange coincidence, it turned out that the principal of the school was an old school mate of the Consul General of Japan!

With only about four weeks before the scheduled departure date, Toby and I had one parent information meeting, and four after school meetings with the students to prepare them for the trip. Since none of them had ever been to Japan, we had to give them lessons on not only language, but also on culture so that they would not experience too much culture shock! We also had to practice our presentation that was to be done during a welcoming assembly at Shimodate. It was a busy month of practices, shopping for omiyage (gifts) and teaching (of course!).



Our 10 days in Japan were jam-packed with activity. We arrived on a Friday, so the first night was in a hotel near Narita airport. The next morning, we were off to the school to meet with the homestays. After the weekend with their homestays, the students returned to the school on Monday to spend the day with the Shimodate students and to see what high school life was like in Japan. They enjoyed home economics, Japanese Classics, Mathematics, Calligraphy, just to name a few. After school, they even participated in the many extra-curricular club activities with their homestays. Then of course, there was clean-up.

After a farewell party in the evening, it was off to the next hotel and the rest of the trip. We visited with the Chikusei mayor. We had a few laughs with him when he mentioned that he was proficient in French and German but not English, but had to ‘fess up when one of our students introduced herself in fluent French! Various activities followed: indigo tie-dyeing, weaving, visits to temples and shrines, soaking



in an *onsen* (hot springs), drinking matcha at a tea ceremony, learning Aikido, and even a celebrity-spotting (we were at a Edo-period village – think Fort Langley – and there was a film crew working on project)! We spent a day in Tokyo where we met with the Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs and visited the Hama-rikyu Gardens, where some of the Shimodate students met with us while they were on a school excursion to

Tokyo. And before we knew it, we were having our last wrap-up meeting about our trip and it was time to head to the airport. A few of the Shimodate students and their parents drove the 2+ hours from their homes to Narita to see us off. A few more tears were shed and hands were tired from all the waving goodbye.



The most gratifying part of the trip for me was seeing the connections that the students made with each other. It made me happy to hear that the part that our students enjoyed the most was the homestays. I see them constantly communicating with each other through Facebook. It goes to show that the apprehension that our students felt about going to a foreign country and staying with people with whom they do not share much language was for naught – they were still able to connect and communicate. The spoken and written language is not the be all and end all of communication. Kids are kids they will all find a way to get along and connect if given the chance. So the Kakehashi Project is proving successful in their mission so far! We look forward to reuniting with our friends when they visit us in March 2014!



# OTHER LANGUAGES/NEWS

## Ministry of Education Curricula Update – Rome Lavrencic

One of the biggest changes in BC this year is the release of the new draft curricula. The Ministry of Education recently released the draft curricula for K-9 Mathematics, Social Studies, Science and English Language Arts. Last month, I attended the fall PSA Council meeting at which BCTF 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President, Glen Hansman, announced to all PSA Presidents that it is very likely the Ministry will release the Core French and French first language draft curricula in January 2014. There was no word about the other languages curricula nor the status of the core French curriculum committee which was initially reported to be put together in January.

According to the Ministry, there is no definitive date for curriculum implementation yet, as it will depend on the feedback the Ministry receives. We as language educators will want to carefully review the new document in detail and provide our feedback. These curricular changes will have significant impacts province-wide. Keeping ourselves well informed and working together means we can support one another as we explore the new curricula drafts and related issues. As members review the draft, curriculum consideration needs to be given to questions to guide member feedback, especially with a critical eye to considering how the proposed changes could impact teachers' professional autonomy and working conditions. Be sure to keep an eye out on our website and the Ministry's for the release of these drafts. Both the Ministry and I encourage you to respond to the Ministry of Education's web-based questionnaire at:

[https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/sites/curriculum.gov.bc.ca/files/pdf/review\\_process.pdf](https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/sites/curriculum.gov.bc.ca/files/pdf/review_process.pdf)

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# CASLT CORNER

## CASLT Chez Vous

New to the BCATML Conference this year was the addition of an exciting event: a day-long seminar at the *BC Teachers Federation* building called a “Chez Vous” sponsored by the *Canadian Association of Second-Language Teachers* (CASLT). Led by Dr. Laura Hermans, the Chez Vous provided introductory information about the *Common European Framework of Reference for Language* (CEFR), upon which the 2011 draft Core French curriculum is based.

The seminar was very well attended, with a large, lively crowd curious about various elements of the CEFR, including how it might fit in with the new BC Ministry of Education Plan for Learning. Dr. Hermans explained the basic structure of the CEFR, as well as its history in Europe and global applicability. There was much opportunity for audience participation and break-out groups for discussion. All in all, it was a very informative and successful workshop.

An educational consultant at frameWorks Consulting, Dr. Laura Hermans is the author of several publications on the CEFR, including *Assessment in Action: A new toolkit for second language teachers*. She has also given many workshops and Chez Vous throughout Canada on the subject of bilingualism, use of the target language in the classroom, and how to develop resources and assessment based on the CEFR.



**Current BCATML President Rome Lavrencic with Dr. Laura Hermans**



**Lively discussion at the CASLT Chez Vous**





# TREASURER'S REPORT

Proposed budget for BC Association of Teachers of Modern Languages for 2013–14

<b>INCOME ACCOUNTS</b>	<b>2012–13 Current Budget</b>	<b>2012–13 Actual Budget</b>	<b>2013–14 Proposed Budget</b>
99921 Income surplus (deficit), June 30, 2013*	\$ -66,749.20	\$ -66,749.20	\$ -80,042.05
99922 Portion of income surplus held as reserve June 30, 2013*			
99923 Conference surplus outside account, June 30, 2013	-7,395.24	-7,635.76	-6,626.18
99930 Membership/subscriptions fees	-14,741.20	-15,337.36	-14,674
BCTF members <u>  235  </u> @     \$40			
Students/Retirees <u>   45  </u> @     \$15			
Subscribers <u>   73  </u> @     \$63			
99931 BCTF grant 235 @ \$20.00 (\$5,250 minimum)*	-5,577	-5,000	-5,250
99932 Advertising	-200	-150	-200
99933 Sale of back issues			
99934 Interest income	-500	-776.27	-800
99935 Project grants			
99939 Other [for internal BCTF use only]		-568.42	-500
99940 Conference fees	-46,000	-28,000	-18,000
99941 Conference grants			
99942 Conference advertising revenue	-1,000	-725	-750
99943 Conference exhibits/sponsorships	-7,2000	-7,525	-8,000
99944 Conference entertainment			
99948 Conference sale of souvenirs			
99949 Conference miscellaneous (specify)*			
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$-149,362.64</b>	<b>\$-132,467.01</b>	<b>\$-134,842.23</b>

## EXPENSES ACCOUNTS

99950 Meeting—executive	\$15,000	\$6,909.31	\$12,000
99951 Meeting—table officers	0	0	0

99952	Meeting—PSA Council*	1,000	0	1,000
99953	Meeting—subcommittee	5,000	0	2,000
99954	Meeting—annual general meeting	500	0	500
99958	TTOC expenses for meetings	5,000	910.39	5,000
99959	Meeting—other	5,000	0	5,000
99960	Publication—journal	0	0	0
99961	Publication—newsletter	0	0	0
		<b>2012–13 Current Budget</b>	<b>2012–13 Actual Budget</b>	<b>2013–14 Proposed Budget</b>
99962	Publication—other	0	0	0
99969	Publication—equipment	0	0	0
99970	Operating	10,000	39.67	5,000
99971	Equipment purchase	10,000	112.44	10,000
99972	Chapter support	7,000	1121.69	5,000
99973	Affiliation fees and meetings	10,000	2450.33	10,000
99974	Response to curriculum or development of resources	12,000	0	15,000
99975	Projects	5,000	0	5,000
99976	Complimentary memberships	400	0	400
99978	Scholarships	0	0	0
99979	Miscellaneous	15,262.64	90.00	6,642.23
99980	Conference—operating	1,500	354.52	1,500
99981	Conference—facilities	7,000	5,348	3,000
99982	Conference—catering	20,000	22,283.69	8,000
99983	Conference—printing	500	436.80	1,000
99984	Conference—promotions	0	0	2,000
99985	Conference—committee costs	5,000	6,087.71	8,000
99986	Conference—entertainment	500	500	500
99987	Conference—equipment rental	1,500	1,164.80	2,500
99988	Conference—speakers	1,200	1,098.81	1,500
99989	Conference—start up costs	1,000	0	1,000
99998	Conference—hold, future conference expenses*	6,000	0	18,700
99999	Conference—miscellaneous (specify)*	4,000	3,516.80	5,000
	<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$149,362.64</b>	<b>\$52,424.96</b>	<b>\$134,842.23</b>



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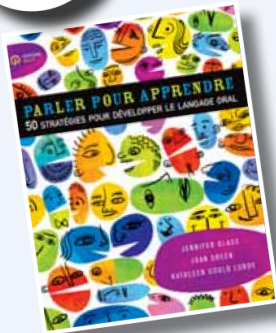
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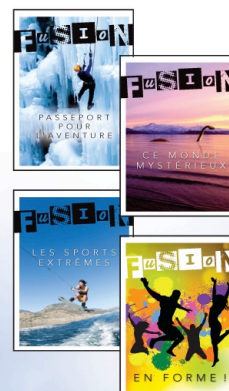
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## **BCATML Newsletter Guidelines**

*The BCATML Newsletter* is the official publication of the B.C. Association of Teachers of Modern Languages, a provincial specialist association of the B.C. Teachers' Federation. Three issues are published each calendar year.

### **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

The BCATML Newsletter is the professional journal of the BC Association of Teachers of Modern Languages. As such it:

- 1) acts as a communication vehicle for ideas, trends and new developments in the field;
- 2) supports a professional network of modern language teachers who are committed to innovative teaching strategies;
- 3) promotes the learning and teaching of additional languages through the BC curriculum.

Subscription to *The BCATML Newsletter* is included with membership in the BCATML. 2013-2014 fees: BCTF members \$40, Associate members \$63; students/TTOC/retired and community-based teachers \$15. Payment of fees includes *The BCATML Newsletter*, membership in CASLT (Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers) and information about conferences, workshops, projects, and other BCATML publications and activities. BCATML memberships/subscriptions run for 12 months from the time applications are processed by the BCTF staff.

### **NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS**

Articles submitted for publication should be sent with a covering letter that contains:

- the author's full address and telephone number
- a short description of the author and his/her current work
- a brief disclaimer allowing the editor editing and publishing rights

Please also include, where possible:

- a photograph of the author, if available
- a photograph or high resolution graphic to accompany the article. If you would like your photo(s) returned to you, please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope for that purpose. Otherwise, they will not be returned

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#### Submission Deadlines

Spring – March 1

Fall - July 31

Winter – December 1

#### suggested topics

Spring, Easter, Passover.

Back to School, Fall, Halloween, Dia de los muertos

Winter, Christmas, Hanukah, Solstice, New Year's, Valentine's

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