The Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers
L'Association canadienne des professeurs de langues secondes

Réflexions

Spring | Printemps 2013
Vol. 32, No. 2

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Past-Presidents of CASLT - Anciens président(e)s de l'ACPLS.
From left to right - De gauche à droite: Bev Anderson, Helen Coltrinari, Caterina Sotiriadis, Carolyn King.
Standing - Debout: Jim Howden, Miles Turnbull, John Erskine, Michael Salvatori.

2013

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8-9 Languages Without Borders 2013: Pictures
Congrès Langues sans frontières 2013 : Photos

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The Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT)

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2490, Don Reid Drive,
Ottawa, Ontario K1H 1E1
1-877-727-0994 • www.caslt.org

Publishing supervisor • Responsable de la publication
Marc Delisle – marcdelisle@caslt.org

Board of Directors • Conseil d'administration
Michael Salvatori, Caroline Turnbull, Janice Aubry, Sharon Lapkin, Wendy Carr, Ronald Boudreau, Jim Murphy

National Council • Conseil national
BC: Sandi Kostur – kostur_s@sd36.bc.ca
AB: Valerie Leclair – valerie.leclair@epsb.ca
SK: Roxanna Smycniuk – rsmycniuk@scs.sk.ca
MB: Krystyna Baranowski – kbaranow@shaw.ca
ON: Maureen Smith – smith@uwo.ca
QC: Stéphane Lacroix – stephane.lacroix@uqat.ca
NB: Léo-James Lévesque – leo-james.levesque@gnb.ca
NS: Élaine Melanson – melansea@gov.ns.ca
PE: Monica Rafuse – merafuse@edu.pe.ca
NL: Glenn Cake – g.cake@nl.rogers.com
YT: Elizabeth Lemay – elizabeth.lemay@gov.yk.ca
NT: Raymonde Laberge – raymonde_laberge@gov.nt.ca
NU: Martine St-Louis – mstlouis@gov.nu.ca

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Use of the masculine in this publication is generic and applies to both men and women. • L'utilisation du masculin dans cette publication pour désigner des personnes renvoie aussi bien à des femmes qu'à des hommes.

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Editor's Note • Note de la rédaction

What better way of entering in the summer season than an issue of Réflexions that covers the last Languages Without Borders 2013 Conference that was held last April. The event was certainly worthy of superlatives, but these would fall short of communicating the levels of energy and enthusiasm that we all felt throughout the conference.

Nous avons donc inclus un article qui résume la table ronde pré-congrès tenue le 18 avril, ainsi que deux articles sur les conférences offertes lors des sessions plénières par Mme Marlene Atleo, le 19 avril, et par Mme Tara Fortune, le 20 avril. Bonne lecture!

President's Message • Message du président

Michael Salvatori
CASLT's President
Président de l'ACPLS

From Konichee wa to *Gemütlichkeit* and from *joie de vivre* to *la dolce far niente,* learning a new word or phrase in a language we are learning is like opening a door a little wider into a new culture and a new discovery.

During CASLT's recent and very successful Languages Without Borders conference 2013 many of us wetted our own thirst for language learning by attending one of the numerous mini language lessons offered during the conference.

I had the privilege of attending an Arabic language lesson along with several of my colleagues. I was fascinated by the language, delighted by our enthusiastic teacher and humbly reminded of how our young language learners feel when learning sounds, words and phrases that are unfamiliar to them.

During our lesson, our teacher selected several words and phrases to introduce us to the language and the characters and symbols used to write them. She then proceeded to pronounce the words slowly and engaged us in choral repetition to practice. When our teacher proceeded to ask us to pronounce the words individually, I was immediately reminded of what it feels like to take a risk as a language learner when one lacks confidence, feels inhibited and worries about what others will think. Even among my trusted colleagues, some of these early language learning insecurities came flooding back to me.

The language learners whom we teach and support are very courageous. It takes courage to expose what one might perceive as a weakness, to speak with confidence when one feels uncertain, to take a risk.

As language teachers, we play a crucial role in creating an environment in which our vulnerable language learners feel comfortable taking risks. My recent experience in our mini language lesson reminded me of how important it is that the language classroom be a space in which discovery is encouraged, mistakes are a normal and accepted part of the process and in which risk is embraced for the great potential it can bring.

My experience also helped me to renew my commitment as a teacher to sharing with my students my own insecurities as a language learner, how I overcame many of them and how some of them still give me pause from time to time. The hat we wear as role models in language learning is a very broad and important one for students.

I can't wait for my next language learning adventure and the opportunity to rekindle my passion for language learning. §§§