

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

Réflexions

Winter | Hiver 2013
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Human Rights
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droits de la personne*

2013



16-17 Languages Without Borders 2013:
Preliminary program
Congrès Langues sans frontières 2013 :
Programme préliminaire

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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

Our Languages Without Borders 2013 Conference's is just around the corner and this issue of *Réflexions* presents the conference detailed schedule and preliminary program . . . I just can't wait to be in Winnipeg in April.

There are a number of very interesting articles on various aspects of language competencies, here in Canada and in Europe. You may want to read more on this topic on page 8 (in French) and 9 (in English). I am always interested to read about other countries and how they support second language teaching and learning.

If you want to know more about the findings of research undertaken on second language learning in Canada, I suggest that you read Dr. Callie Mady's article on the benefits of learning French as a Second Official Language for English learners.

Good reading!



Michael Salvatori
CASLT's President
Président de l'ACPLS

A pause in The Wrong Place, an Intonation Misunderstood, and a Whole Conversation Went Awry.

I came across this sentence recently while re-reading E.M. Forrester's *A Passage to India* and it reminded me that learning a second or additional language is much more than mastering vocabulary and grammar. It's also about the nuances of communication that are found among the words we use, about understanding cultural differences and learning to respect them.

As second and additional language teachers, we know well the value of learning languages. We encourage students to continue learning additional languages, whether the language be Japanese, Spanish, French or any of the numerous languages that are part of elementary and secondary programs across the country, by citing the proven value of language learning.

For example, learning an additional language opens up new vistas and opportunities through international travel, enhanced postsecondary learning and career opportunities. The learning of additional languages develops problem solving skills and improves the learner's understanding of his/her first language.

Learning an additional language like French, for example, provides access to culture by allowing the learner to read Hugo in its original form, to listen to the love and longing expressed by Edith Piaf in her songs or Gilles Vigneault's patriotism in poetry and song. Learning another language provides access to another valuable resource that we seldom cite: inspiring, creative and dedicated teachers.

Humility and good manners prevent us from waving our own flags but I think we need to add to the list of benefits of second and additional language learning the value of knowing and learning from inspiring language teachers. Others will wave our flags for us as I discovered recently in a presentation I was making to teacher candidates enrolled in an Ontario faculty of education.

During the presentation I congratulated the teacher candidates for choosing the teaching profession and in an effort to unpack

the standards of the profession with them, I asked them why they chose teaching as a career. I broke the ice by asking a colleague, Liz, also a teacher who was presenting with me, to share her reason for choosing teaching. She answered by describing her very first French teacher, Mme Tames whose passion for teaching, for French and for her students, her panache and her enthusiasm cemented Liz' choice. Because of her example, Liz wanted to become a French teacher and to strive to be as creative and motivating as her teacher.

Stories like this one are many. How many of you have met former students who are now teachers? How many of you have had the thrill of hearing them tell you that you are one of the reasons they chose to become a teacher? How many of you then blushed, looked down or away and changed the topic?

While I was studying French at St. Michael's College at the University of Toronto, I had the great pleasure of studying with Professor Collet, a passionate teacher whose elegance and charm overwhelmed every Wednesday afternoon from 1 to 3. I graduated many years ago and Professor Collet retired many years ago. However, I have seen her in Toronto on several occasions but haven't taken the time to stop and talk to her. I have decided that the next time I see her, I will tell her that she is one of the reasons that I became a language teacher. I hope that she blushes, tries to look away and changes the subject...but I won't let her. \$\$\$

