



Conference And Union Issues Make Distressing News

Tanya Zaccone, Advocacy Chair

If you work in a school or district that has a union that has either held a strike or a “work slow-down,” you know all too well how distressing, divisive and devastating that process can be. We all believe that crossing picket lines is not the “American way” of supporting our labor force that after all is the engine of our economy, and in our case the backbone of our educational system. Yet, of late we have seen many attacks on labor, unions and—yes—on educators all in the name of “accountability” that most often is based on factors beyond teachers’ sphere of influence.

So, while many teachers in our state and across the nation may be adversely affected by the backlash on unions, we are dealing with an unexpected snag for our spring Conference, which is hosted by MCLASC. Several of our members, most especially leadership and those working directly with the hotel, have reported serious issues with this particular union trying to organize the hotel workers, some of whom have reported to us that they do not wish to be represented

by the union in question—UNITE HERE! Several members of our Board/Officers/Leadership Team have reported badgering and other inappropriate acts by union organizers and pickets (who are not hotel employees).

CLTA, of course, does not want to be a party to the union/hotel issues, but we do remind you that due to the fact that most of our conference hotel contracts have to be executed at least five years prior to the date of the conference, there are legal and huge financial liabilities at stake for CLTA and the hosting affiliate. If a conference fails to provide enough revenue to support programs that directly benefit our members, CLTA must make up the difference from the agreed-upon hotel revenues and the lower revenues earned due to lower conference attendance and sales. You may have already read about this unexpected boycott snag in the conference issue of the CLTA Newsletter. In the event that you did not, Local Conference Chair Bernie Rang’s explanation of this very same issue follows.

A Union Snag

By Bernie Rang, Local Conference Chair

As you may imagine, planning a statewide conference for over 500 folks is quite a task. The CLTA Board works with the Conference Coordinator to pick cities across the state, which will be supported by the local affiliates in providing a professional atmosphere as well as workshops, interest sessions, exhibitors, and significant ambiance for meaningful networking. Conference contracts must be signed at least three years in advance of a conference in order for local affiliate to begin planning for the event.

It should be no surprise then, that on occasion, there is an unexpected snag. Sometimes, circumstances occur over which we have no control and that we cannot mitigate. This year, in Los Angeles at the LAX Hilton, we are faced with such a situation that was unknown at the time of the signing of the contract with the Hilton Hotel LAX. A hotel workers’ union, UNITE HERE, is trying at this time to organize the workers at the hotel.

We may be faced with informational pickets upon arrival; the picketers are not the current employees. We have explained to the union that there was no way we could economically void our contract nor would we be able to relocate. However, we may still be confronted with aggressive union organizers. CLTA wanted you to be aware of the situation before you come on the Hilton property. Both the hotel and CLTA will try to find a way into the hotel so that you will not have to cross the pickets by workers hired by UNITE HERE.

This issue of *Language Magazine* has been brought to you by the California Language Teachers’ Association, www.clta.net

Telling World Language Teachers What They Already Know: The Value of Language Skills in the Job Market

By Kevin Duffy, CLTA President Elect

Although world language teachers already know that multilingualism is a vital job skill, there are articles that appear from time to time about the “surprising” news that *fluency in more than one language gives job seekers a competitive edge*. Surprise!

The MSN article at careerbuilder.com, “Surprising fields in which a second language will pay off” by Alina Dizik, makes the case for language study as a smart career skill.

In the classic movie “Casablanca,” Inspector Renault was “Shocked! Shocked!” to find gambling going on in the cavernous back room of Rick’s Café Americain. In a similarly *shocked* tone, Dizik reported that career fields as diverse as information technology, marketing, law enforcement, hospitality, airlines, gaming, government, library science and health care required more and more workers to come prepared with world language skills. This trend, Dizik predicted, would continue to increase in the coming years.

It’s gratifying to read something that validates our work as language teachers. This article reinforces the idea that world languages are a vital component of career and technical education. Please feel free to follow the link to the article and share it with career/tech ed. teachers and administrators. Learning other languages is very important! (Are you **shocked**?)

http://msn.careerbuilder.com/Article/MSN-2785-Job-Info-and-Trends-Surprising-industries-where-a-second-language-will-pay-off/?SiteId=cbsmnhp42785&sc_extcmp=JS_2785_home1

Bring The World To Your School!

By Zara Hovhannisyan, American Councils for International Education

Explore these fully funded programs that are supported by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State and implemented by American Councils for International Education!

Host A Guest Teacher From China Or Egypt

The Teachers of Critical Languages Program (TCLP) places EFL teachers from China and Egypt in U.S. K-12 host schools for an academic year where they teach Mandarin or Arabic language and culture. TCLP provides teachers’ salaries, healthcare, roundtrip airfare, training, professional development funds, and ongoing program support.

To increase the number of Americans teaching and learning these critical languages, selected host schools also receive access to grant opportunities to support language learning projects. For more information, please visit www.tclp.org or email tclp@americancouncils.org.

Program Application Deadline: January 9, 2012

Connect Internationally

The Educational Seminars Program provides short-term professional development opportunities to teachers and administrators from around the world, for 2-3 week reciprocal exchange programs and one-way professional development programs.

Participating countries include Argentina, Brazil, Thailand, and Uruguay for reciprocal exchanges and Greece, India, and Italy for one-way programs. All Educational Seminars provide airfare, training, travel health care, and living costs. For more in-

formation, please visit www.americancouncils.org/es or email edseminars@americancouncils.org.

Program Application Deadlines: January 6 and March 30, 2012

Study Language In Egypt And China

Intensive Summer Language Institutes (ISLI) provides fellowships for U.S. classroom teachers to spend six weeks overseas studying intermediate and advanced-level Arabic in Alexandria, Egypt, and Chinese in Changchun, China. Current K-12 teachers, community college instructors of Arabic and Mandarin Chinese, and students enrolled in education programs who intend to teach these languages can apply.

Participants earn ten hours of graduate credit through Bryn Mawr College, and are provided with peer tutors and roundtrip airfare. All travel and study-related costs are fully covered. For more information, please visit www.americancouncils.org/isli or email isli@americancouncils.org.

Program Application Deadline: March 2, 2012

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California Embraces Open Source Digital Textbooks

The most populous state is the first to take on this complicated initiative.

From an article by Kara Platoni—Edutopia

California schools have cracked the spine on open source, free digital textbooks in an attempt to save money and to make educational resources easier to access and update.

The cash-strapped state launched the nation's first open source digital textbook initiative last May, asking content providers to submit high school-level math and science texts for free. The state reviewed 16 digital textbooks, available as PDF files (downloadable at the [California Learning Resource Network](#)), scored by how well they align with state standards. Teachers began accessing the texts online last fall.

Some of these texts look just like scans of traditional hardbacks, while others are clearly formatted or written for the digital age, featuring dozens of links to supplemental reading sources. Teachers can print out the materials for students or display them overhead via projectors or interactive whiteboards. "It's not about the hardware," says former State Secretary of Education Glen Thomas. "It's about the content." Open source digital textbooks, in the works for several years, contain free, typically changeable material that can be shared between teachers and are just one part of a larger movement to transform learning through the use of technology. Some critics question whether a digital textbook initiative will work, citing lack of quality control over factual information and no comprehensive plan for the future.

Most educators believe it's an important step toward fixing the challenged textbook system, according to Douglas Levin, the Deputy Executive Director of the National Association of State Boards of Education. "There's been a sense for a long time that the system

we have for textbooks hasn't been working," Levin says. "We're seeing now there may be a way to fix it. It's less a question of whether we go there but how we go there." Going digital could help solve some of the state's financial woes. "By going open source, we knock down price barriers," says Thomas. He says the savings could be significant...

Unlike their hard-copy cousins, digital textbooks can be quickly updated with recent discoveries and current events. California adopts new books every six years. In contrast, the state-reviewed PDFs will be updated after two years... In addition to timely updating, some digital textbooks have functions their paper counterparts don't, such as searchable text and embedded videos, audio files, quizzes, or simulations. Hyperlinked keywords can guide students to more detailed information.

How much money can open source digital textbooks save? In California, it could depend on how many school districts warm to the digital initiative. In 2008, the state allocated \$350 million for open source instructional materials—but that's not counting what the districts contributed. By comparison, \$600 million is what the state paid for new books in 2007, according to the Association of American Publishers.

(From your Executive Director) It remains to be seen when and if world language materials are included in the digital initiative. Do you think our discipline is suited to being digital? CLTA would love your comments and concerns. Please send them to our Twitter site.

Teaching in China

By Lewie Johnson, CLTA Webmaster



tion, and tours. July of 2011 took me to summer camp in Nanjing. These are some highlights of that experience.

First were several days in bustling Shanghai and beautiful

Many world language teachers are eager to respond to China's call for English teachers. I answered one such call, and, while I cannot vouch for other programs, I can highly recommend this one. The Summer China Travel and Teaching Program is a non-profit experience for teachers who teach for twelve days while receiving airfare, hotels, meals, transportation,

Hangzhou. From there, we toured Nanjing, the old capital. After a day of orientation and opening ceremonies, we met our students. How exciting to work with motivated students who had been studying English since first grade! While their traditional English studies focus on grammar, our program would provide active engagement and oral language. We filled each day with interaction where we could use our many communicative strategies.

The culmination of our twelve days was the closing ceremony. My fifth-grade students performed "I'd Like to Teach the World to Sing." As the time came for our departure, I have to admit there were few dry eyes. In just twelve days, we had formed bonds with our students and Chinese teacher colleagues that would last a lifetime.

Our last days we toured more wonders: The terra cotta warriors of Xian, the Great Wall, and Beijing with its Forbidden City.

Additional information and applications for this summer are available until February 25, 2012, at <http://www.sctntp.org>.

CLTA News

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The Good News: We are Career Tech

by Tanya Zaccone, Advocacy Chair

Doesn't it seem like every time you open the paper or turn on an electronic news device, someone, somewhere, decries the use of funds to educate our young people in the humanities? It's all about Career Technical Education (C/TE), and how this must supplant the wasteful spending for useless information that students get from music, arts and world languages. Have you had the experience that I have had (many times), when someone mentions to me that languages aren't as important as preparing students for real jobs?

The feeling seems to be that somehow Career Tech and languages are at odds with each other. Here's the message for the new focus on careers, something we in fact have been saying in CLTA for many years: *We ARE Career Tech!* Check out technical jobs, and you will be surprised at

the number of positions that require language skills, from food services to carpentry to agriculture to computers to manufacturing to ... the list goes on. Language skills are an advantage, and not only for academia and medicine and law enforcement.

Our message is the same as it has always been: let's always do the best we can to prepare our students for their lives on many levels, including smart career choices. Let's give them the advantages they need to succeed and compete in the global economy, including working knowledge of at least one language other than English, and to support them even more, maybe two or three languages, or more. Let's do for our students what other countries do—and truly prepare them for the work world, whether in an academic arena, or C/TE.