

CCHS WORLD LANGUAGES



2020 NEWSLETTER



Wie geht's? / ¿Como estás? / Quoi de neuf?

World Languages Faculty

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Chair, **Spanish, ESL,**
Bilingual Ed

Overview:

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Bonjour!

What a fantastic year so far! In the Fall, students visited a French goat cheese facility in Bloomsdale Missouri where they learned about the cheese making process and got to taste different cheeses. In class, we elaborated on the French cheese culture with different related activities. French students got to also visit the French colonial homes in St. Geneviève. This worked great as a continuation of the Home unit for the French 2 and an elaboration on the study of French settlements in North America, for the French 4. Honors French 4 read a novel of their choice and we got to discuss it every Monday as part of "lundi lecture". At the end of the semester, each student made a presentation about their novels. The students enjoyed this project which, contributed to considerable growth in their conversation skills. French Club participated in the FBLA Fall Festival where they made savory and sweet crêpes.



In November, French Club organized their 3rd annual French Trivia night where they made and served authentic French Onion soup. The students' efforts were rewarded by a successful and fun event.

This year we also started a pen pal program with a high school in Tulle, France, where one of our own CCHS alumni is teaching. The students are loving this program and have been looking forward to corresponding with their new friends. During National French Week, students had fun participating in the annual daily Trivia Question contests open to the whole school as well as, participating in the



National French Kahoot and National French Video competition, both put together by the American Association of French Teachers (AATF). This Spring, French 1 and French 2 are enjoying "lundi lecture"; every Monday we have been reading a chapter of "Pauvre Anne". All classes are also enjoying "mardi musique" (our own

March Madness) where they have been listening and discussing 2 contemporary French songs, every Tuesday; each student votes on their favorite song every week, and writes the winning song in a bracket chart. Honors French 4 students already picked a song they want to perform at SIUC's World Language Day in April.



We are also very excited this year to attend a French Immersion weekend at Concordia Language Villages in MN. Students organized several fundraisers to help with their travel costs and Honors French 4 entered the travel award essay contest put by SHF - Société Honoraire de Français (National French Honors Society). We are delighted to announce Maysa Crooks as a national winner - All her travel costs will be paid for by SHF. Among other activities we are looking forward this Spring, is our participation in the CCHS annual multicultural Festival - French Club has been busy building an Eiffel Tower to display at their booth. We are also planning on participating in the CCHS Poetry slam, celebrating Mardi-Gras with francophone cultural activities, participating in National World Language Week, competing in the National French contest, taking a trip the Alliance Française in Saint Louis, as well as

teaching French to grade school students as part of our 3rd annual community service. To wrap up the year, students will be submitting scholarship applications for summer language camps at Concordia Language Villages, in an attempt to keep up with those valuable language skills, we work hard developing, during the school year.

~ Madame Lahlou, CCHS French Teacher

Guten Tag!

German Adventures

In early November, Students in German 2 through German 4H traveled by bus to St. Louis to see a theatrical dance production titled "Wall Stories" at the University of St. Louis Missouri (UMSL). This show celebrated 30 years since the Berlin Wall coming down in 1989. While this production was very abstract, the students seemed to connect to the Pink Floyd Soundtrack and the acrobatic dance moves. Following the performance, the dancers sat on the stage and engaged with the students and discussed main themes, emotions, and history reflected in the show.



Then, this December was the Chicago German Club Trip! Twenty-three students and seven chaperones came along for the ride. We rode the 3AM Amtrak to Chicago, grabbed breakfast at Starbucks, and we were off on the 'L' Train to the Dank Haus Christkindlmarkt. Students tried German Pretzels, Käse Spätzle, and Gulaschsuppe!



Later in the day, students traveled to Daley Plaza for the *Christkindlmarkt*. Students dispersed into the crowds of people to visit the numerous booths and tents filled with gifts, ornaments, handmade goods, chocolate, cuckoo clocks, nutcrackers, hot chocolate, and bratwursts! There were so many wonderful things to see!

As the trip was coming to a close, the weather grew colder and we made our way to Union Station. On the train ride home, students didn't sleep, despite being exhausted. Instead they played numerous rounds of UNO and other games on the train. All in all it was a long day of travel and German Culture, and it was definitely worth it!



Summer 2021 Germanic Cultures Trip Abroad

There is a fantastic opportunity for your student to travel through Germany and Austria during the summer of 2021! This trip is a chance for students who are curious to see the world for themselves. It is a trip that will be lead and organized by *WorldStrides*, and I will be one of the several chaperones on this adventure.

If your student interested in this trip, please feel free to email me or our *WorldStrides* Team Lead, [Paul Arcangeli](mailto:parcangeli@worldstrides.org).

World Strides Team Lead:
parcangeli@worldstrides.org

Germanic Cultures Trip Website

Trip ID: Bassett-2021

June 7, 2021 - June 16, 2021

<https://www.educationaltravel.com/register>



~ Frau Bassett, CCHS German Teacher

On the Path to Proficiency

How Mrs. López and Mrs. Rendón are
Addressing New State Standards

In our lower level courses, we have changed our way of thinking about how students use language and have changed our mindset in our daily teaching. "Acquiring" a language is very different than "learning" a language. Acquiring is something that happens to you instead of something that you make happen.

Acquisition vs. Learning

- Acquiring is something that happens to you.
- We don't "study" Spanish.
- Focus on finding content to listen to and read in class (interpretive communication)
- Less focus on grammar and memorized vocabulary
- High frequency words used in context and with high repetitions

Comprehension and Proficiency based

- Focus is on input: We read and listen at the appropriate proficiency level.
- TPRS (Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling)
- Modified Movie Talk (talking about what we see in a short film)
- Comprehension checks using English

Culture

- Embedded throughout unit of study
- Use of music, authentic readings and current events
- Easily accessible language to novice-level students
- Analysis of target culture and comparisons with home culture
- Prepares students to be culturally literate in community and beyond

Assessments

- Grade portrays level of proficiency
- Focus on input (reading and listening)
- Few writing assessments
- Speaking is practice in class but not graded. Students need more input!
- Assessments are unannounced.
- Provides snapshot of where students are at that moment.

Buenos Dias!

World Language Article

Spanish teachers within our CCHS World Language Department have welcomed a new approach with curricular changes which began last Fall with the transition from traditional textbook Foreign Language teaching to an innovative, thematic based curriculum which stresses language acquisition vs. language learning. Student response, including verbal feedback in the classroom, paper/pencil survey, and overall student growth indicates that our new approach will ultimately be more effective and will lead students down a veritable path to proficiency.

Traditionally, textbook teaching has cumbersome lists of vocabulary words and isolated, scaffolded grammar structures followed with bouts of rote exercises which often times can be meaningless and lack purposefulness for everyday life and communication. Upon completion of a series of exercises and activities, students are tested in various formats to assign a grade of just how well he/she can regurgitate the chapter content. Beyond that point, students freely admit that much is lost if it is not “drilled and killed” for the purpose of more testing. All of this leads up to the unfortunate conversation years down the road when World Language teachers meet these young adults and their response when greeted with, “I’m a Spanish teacher” is, “I took all four years of Spanish in high school and I can’t speak a word!”



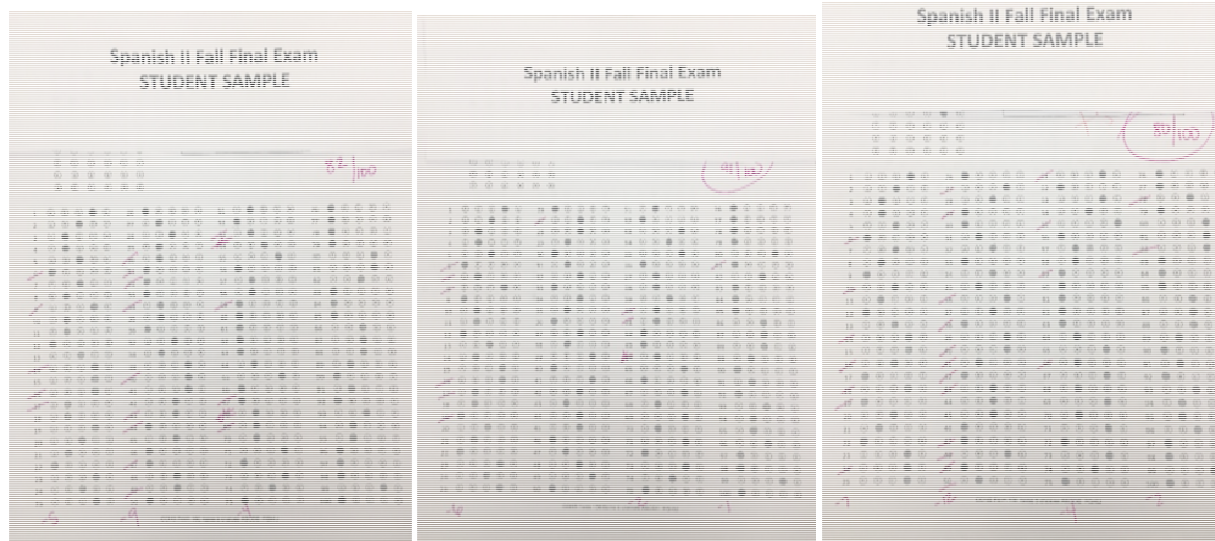
Our new curriculum, **Somos** (We Are), presents a small amount of core vocabulary and readily useable grammar structures, many of which are already conjugated in a variety of tenses, which mimic what everyday use would sound like. Several series of short sentences, repetition, and paraphrasing are key in helping students to comprehend material and to be able to think in and eventually respond in target language. Students are focused more on what they DO know, not on what they lack. In this manner, language acquisition is seen as the result of having meaningfully communicated about content matter, not memorizing

speech components. Traditional fill in the blank testing is replaced with task-oriented assessments, in which students set goals for themselves individually and are graded by rubrics, not on number of correct responses. Units are centered around a particular theme, and activities are provided for students to practice all modalities: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Over time, the goal of this approach is for students to produce a natural flow of language vs. their production of a series of mechanically produced structures that are not consistent with natural language flow. Correction of errors is not the focus, but rather comprehensibility—in other words, students’ goal is to be understood, not native-like, which is unattainable for an older second language learner.

For me personally, due to having several new courses to teach, the Fall 2019 semester was begun in our traditional Spanish textbook, which enabled me to begin the year with materials already in place. I then adapted the Somos curriculum after first quarter, in October. This means that for the final exam, I had to test students in a traditional format *one more time* (100 questions multiple choice) to ensure fairness and validity in testing over BOTH curriculums. (Future testing/assessments will be rubric based.) A computer error, however, necessitated that the scan sheets for the final be hand graded at the last minute in order to turn in final exam grades for first semester. Fortunately our whole department was present at the time and we worked together to mark errors on these finals. The exciting part was when it became obvious to all of us that the number of errors in the first two columns, questions from the textbook units, far outnumbered the errors in the right two columns (2nd 50 questions) which were taken from the SOMOS curriculum, using the comprehensible input technique.

Granted, the questions from the 2nd quarter which appear in the right column were more recently studied, but ALL components of the curriculum were thoroughly reviewed for two days before testing. Students were actually drilled more on concepts from the first quarter, since it had been several weeks since those units were covered.

Below are just a few samples of students' Fall final exams, which were seen as typical results for the whole group of 56 students. The exams pictured are not necessarily from the stronger students, but are random, as was the outcome of the grade.



Overall, basic statistics from this batch of final exams are as follows, for the ***averages of ALL 56 students*** tested.

Total questions missed 1-50
(textbook quest): 10.2
Total questions missed 51-100
(Somos): 5.6

The beginning conclusion that we all have come to, which is without an extremely in-depth data analysis, is that the “language acquisition” process which is now replacing “language learning” is effective. Students who seldom or reluctantly participated previously are now more engaged, feel a sense of success on a daily basis, and are able to perform well on rubric based tasks that they find interesting and relatable to life. They are excited to be in class, willing to engage in activities, and asking many more questions about content in order to increase their own working proficiency. Students who were already strong language learners are able to readily acquire speaking skills. Our goal is for all CCHS world language students to feel successful and to be prepared to continue their study of language beyond our doors, whether in an academic setting or through travel experiences.

~ Linaya Germann, CCHS Spanish Teacher

UNA NOTA DEL SEÑOR TAYLOR...

I am very pleased to report advancements and updates at CCHS in the **World Languages Department** for this school year (2019-2020).

Beginning at the start of this school year, we have two new faculty members on board. Ms. Alexandria Bassett is the new German teacher and Ms. Melisa Lopez is the new Spanish Teacher. Their impressive background brings a new perspective to our program. Ms. Rendon also moved from part time to a full time Spanish Teacher position. After some classroom shuffling, the World Languages hallway now has French, German and all but one Spanish classroom together. This helps facilitate collaboration.

After sharing research articles and experiences throughout last year, we all agreed that using the target language in the classroom to communicate (whenever possible) was the most effective way to teach. This pragmatic approach includes using the best aspects of all methods. Late last summer the updated “World Readiness Standards for Learning Languages” were adopted in Illinois. This confirmed that we were already on the right path. We are always striving to continuously innovate, collaborate, and improve to reach all students.

Three of our Spanish language students earned the Seal of Biliteracy upon graduation. We had a total of 13 students apply and take the challenge. This year, we will offer the Commendation seal as well for those who “almost” reach the bar. The test that is used is the AAPPL (ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages) test and it is a very rigorous test---the bar is set high. The ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) plays an important role in the creation of World Language standards.

Our ESL classroom consists of several students from countries including Guatemala, Honduras, Brazil, and the Philippines. Students begin at different levels and start at different times throughout the year. Teachers continue to collaborate and reach out to provide the necessary support to accommodate their challenges. We are continuing to make further improvements using both ESL and Bilingual Educational strategies in order for them to succeed not only in English, but in all of their classes.

Lastly a special thanks to Ms. Bassett who graciously volunteered to produce this newsletter for our department. We appreciate her expertise in this area. Please let me know if you have any questions or comments about the World Languages Department at CCHS. ¡Viva Los Terriers!

~ Arnold Taylor

World Languages Department Chair

Spanish, ESL, and Bilingual Ed Teacher