



Nebraska Department of Education

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World Language Review

2024 Issue No. 2

Outstanding Nebraska Team at 2024 Central States Languages for All!



In March, a talented group of Nebraskan World Language teachers made their appearances at the 2024 Central States Language for All Conference (previously Central States Conference on Teaching Foreign Languages) in Minneapolis, Minnesota in March. Nebraskan teachers and professors presented 15 sessions and were recognized by many as one of the most outstanding teams! Let's

team in Kansas City, Missouri in 2025!

NDE World Language sincerely thanks Ms. Kelly Garcia from ESU5 and Yinuo Daniel Wang from Lincoln East High School for spending the time editing and reviewing this newsletter!

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The 2024 NE World Language Week Was A Great Success

Thanks to Dr. Nick Ziegler from ESU 5 and Dr. Christopher Jacobs from the University of Nebraska-Kearney for facilitating the celebration across the state.

During the dynamic events of World Language Week 2024, participants enjoyed a plethora of activities, allowing them to



THE POWER OF LANGUAGES

to make you college, career, and civic ready

**WORLD LANGUAGE WEEK
FEBRUARY 19 – 25, 2024**



<https://www.facebook.com/NDE.WL/> education.ne.gov/worldlanguage @NDE_WorldLang

experience many different cultures and languages. On February 19th, Spanish Day, Dr. Nicholas Ziegler, Danielle Fulcher, Kelly Garcia, and Dr. Cecilia Tocaimaza-Hatch engaged around six hundred eager students in live sessions. The following day, on French Day, Dr. Christopher Jacobs offered three engaging asynchronous games, complemented by an illuminating presentation from Dr. Cecilia Tocaimaza-Hatch on French programs at UNO.

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German Day saw Kelleen Browning and Yulia Evans providing versatile asynchronous activities primed for classroom integration. Meanwhile, Ms. Dan Song led an invigorating asynchronous session on Taichi during Chinese Day. Virtual campus visits from UNL and Xi'an Jiaotong University, as well as an assortment of asynchronous cultural sessions from the Asian Community & Culture Center, enriched the week's offerings.

The campuses of UNL and UNK buzzed with in-person activities throughout World Language Week. The Asian Community & Culture Center and the Lincoln Chinese Culture Association joined in the festivities, even celebrating Chinese New Year in tandem.

Adding scholarly depth to the occasion, five esteemed guest speakers—Cara Heminger, Dr. Theresa Catalano, Dr. Barbara Buttes, Dr. Aleidine Moeller, and Dr. Nicholas Ziegler—graced the event with their insights on various topics. Their presentations are now accessible through a dedicated [playlist](#) on YouTube.

Teachers seeking to enrich their classrooms with these multicultural resources are encouraged to explore the [2024 World Language Week website](#). There, a treasure trove of materials awaits, ready to inspire and educate. NDE World Education has created [a video](#) to capture all of the celebrations from the 2024 World Language week.

Please mark the calendar for the 2025 Nebraska World Language Week, which is scheduled from February 17th to 23rd. More details will be announced in the fall.

Events

- ◆
- [NDE WL Webinar 12 by Chunmei Guan on Growing Language Programs](#)
May 11th
- ◆
- [Nebraska Seal of Biliteracy Info Session](#)
May 22nd
- ◆
- [NDE World Language Advisory Panel Meeting](#)
May 31st
- ◆
- [STAMP Assessment at UNL](#)
June 1st
- ◆
- [Nebraska Career Education Conference](#)
June 3rd
- ◆
- [Future Ready Conference](#)
June 10th - 11th
- ◆
- [ESU 5 World Language PD](#)
June 13
- ◆
- [NDE World Language OER Hub Development Cohort III](#)
June 18th – 21st
- ◆
- [Winnebago Language Network](#)
June 25th
- ◆
- [CSCTFL Proposals Due](#)
June 30th
- ◆
- [NDE Day](#)
July 24th
- ◆
- [Teacher Educator Forum](#)
August 6th
- ◆

Please email your event information to chrysal.liu@nebraska.gov

NeSoBL: Updates & April Round



Thanks to World Language educators and administrators for advocating for the Nebraska Seal of Biliteracy. Thanks to the NDE Seal of Biliteracy Advisory Board members, Danielle Fulcher (NILA), Dr. Christopher Jacobs (UNK), and Dr. Janet Eckerson (UNK), for helping with the review of the 335 applications. In April 2024, 142 Nebraska Seals of Biliteracy were awarded to 141 high school students across the state. In addition, CLTA-NE (Chinese Language Teachers Association), NFCF (Nebraska Family and Community Foundation), and NILA (Nebraska International Language Association) have endorsed the Seal. The news

release can be accessed [here](#). Note that, the news release only includes names of students whose parents/ guardian had granted permission to include them by April 10th.

The application form was deactivated at midnight on April 1st (due date), and it will be reactivated for applications at midnight May 1st. The upcoming deadline for the Nebraska Seal of Biliteracy is August 1st. Please continue to encourage your students to apply.

UNL STAMP 4S Assessment Site



The Department of Modern Languages and Literatures at UNL will monitor the AVANT STAMP test, which can be used to earn the Seal of Biliteracy, on June 1st, between 9 a.m. and noon at Burnett 301, UNL City Campus. Please email Dr. Nora Peterson (npeterson10@unl.edu) to register your students.

COST: Free for all high school students; paid for by the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures at UNL.

WHAT TO BRING: a laptop (limited numbers of laptops will be available for checkout)

NEED TO KNOW: the test can take up to 3 hours. Test takers should plan accordingly.

LANGUAGE AVAILABILITY: Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Korean, Russian, Spanish, Somali Maxxa, Vietnamese

OTHER: When you're done with the test, come relax in the Language Lounge! Free coffee and snacks will be provided. There be a faculty member/advisor to chat with you about UNL Modern Language programs and hand out some swag.

[NDE Seal of Biliteracy Information Webinar](#)

Due to the increasing inquiries about the Nebraska Seal of Biliteracy, NDE World Language Education will offer three info sessions during the 2024 Spring Semester. The information about the last one is as follows:

- Wednesday, May 22nd, 4:00 -5:00 p.m.
Registration Link:
<http://tinyurl.com/NeSoBInfo03>

this webinar will feature:

- Overview of the Nebraska Seal of Biliteracy Program
- Application procedure and qualifications
- Approved assessment tools and resources.
- Questions & Answers

Nebraska Seal of Biliteracy Program Information Webinar

Same Information Different Time Options

2024 Spring Online

At this webinar, you will learn:

- Overview of the Nebraska Bilingual Seals Program.
- Application procedure and qualifications
- Approved assessment tools and resources.
- Questions & Answers

Option 1 • 4 - 5 pm (CT), Monday, Feb 26th, 2024
<http://tinyurl.com/NeSoBInfo01>

Option 2 • 4 - 5 pm (CT), Tuesday, March 12th, 2024
<http://tinyurl.com/NeSoBInfo02>

Option 3 • 4 - 5 pm (CT), Wednesday, May 22nd, 2024
<http://tinyurl.com/NeSoBInfo03>

More Information: ☎ 402-254-9147 📧 tinyurl.com/NeSoBInfo03

Target audience: School personnel and educators in Nebraska Schools, World Language teachers, parents, high school students. Please email crystal.liu@nebraska.gov if you have any questions.

Meet Our NILA Board - Dr. Moreno González (Treasurer)

Dr. Joseba Moreno Gonzalez, treasurer
Online Spanish Instructor, ESU5, Beatrice
jmoreno@esu5.org

As an enthusiast of human language, I love teaching and reading about language acquisition, etymology, and sociolinguistics. I believe that language is one of the most fascinating parts of being a human being. My PhD focuses on Literary Manifestos, but my interests are broader than that. I started learning English in Spain and graduated from the University of Deusto in 2010 with a B.A. in English Studies. That same year I moved to Nebraska, where I specialized in Spanish Literature and Digital Humanities. After finishing my education at UNL, I became a certified teacher and decided to work for ESU 5, where I serve small schools that need a Spanish instructor. Nowadays, it is my mission to use my knowledge to give back to the state that has been my home for the last 14 years. Serving as the treasurer of NILA is another way to be involved with a subject that I love and to devote some of my time to help my community.



Opportunities and Resources for Language Teachers

2024 Spring NDE, NILA, & CLTA SIG K12 Guest Speaker Webinars

NDE World Language Education continues to work with NILA, and CLTA SIG K12 to facilitate the 2024 Guest Speaker Series. There is one more webinar for the spring semester: Alicia Shoemaker, the 2024 ACTFL Teacher of the Year is going to present 'Designing "Aha moments" In ICC Experience" at 10:00 am, Saturday, May 11th. It will NOT be recorded. Please register at <https://tinyurl.com/2024SpringNDEGuest13> or <https://bit.ly/3T3AACg> and join us online.



The graphic is a promotional poster for a webinar. It features a blue and yellow color scheme. At the top, it says '2024 Spring NDE, NILA, & CLTA SIG K12 GUEST SPEAKER SERIES'. Below that, it says 'NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION WORLD LANGUAGE'. The main title is 'Designing "Aha moments" In ICC Experience'. The speaker is Alicia Shoemaker. The date is MAY 11 | 2024. There are two QR codes and a small photo of Alicia Shoemaker. At the bottom, there are two URLs: <https://tinyurl.com/2024SpringNDEGuest13> and <https://bit.ly/3V1RILb>. Logos for CLTA-SIG K12 and NILA are also present.

The 2024 webinar recordings have been uploaded to [this playlist](#) on YouTube. Currently, NDE World Language, NILA, and CLTA SIG K12 are working together to recruit speakers for the 2024 Fall Guest Speaker Series. The fall series will cover the following topics: Standards-based instruction, Integrated Performance Assessment, Strategies to Engage Heritage Learners, AI for World Language Classroom, American Sign Language, and Language Assessment. Please contact crystal.liu@nebraska.gov if you are interested in presenting or nominating speakers for the fall series.

2025 Central States Languages for All Conference is Calling for Proposals

As we know, Central State Conference on the Teaching Foreign Languages was renamed as "Central States Languages for All". Its 2025 annual conference will be held in Kansas, Missouri, March 13-15. The theme is "Global Goals, Global Languages". The proposal submission deadline is June 30th. Please check this [link](#) if you need help submitting a proposal. If you need feedback for your proposal, please email crystal.liu@nebraska.gov.

Teacher Story: Gwen Fisher

Name: Gwen Fisher
School: Creighton Preparatory
Language: Spanish



¡Hola a todos!

When I was asked to tell my teaching story, my first thought was, “why me?” Then as I gave the idea more consideration, I realized that I possess a unique story filled with experiences, professional development, and culture.

After high school, I decided to end my French studies to learn Spanish in a quest to talk to a family friend who only spoke a few words of English. This was incentive to spend my senior year in Spain. After nine months, I realized that I was not as proficient as I had hoped to be so I accepted a summer job with the program that I had enrolled in. That position became a full-time position which I gladly accepted. I contacted my university in the United States to have my diploma mailed to me. I had a new life plan!

Long story short, I lived in Spain for thirty-five years before relocating to Omaha, Nebraska with my family. This amazing journey is not only responsible for my love of the Spanish language and culture but literally led me to the love of my life. My husband and I married in Valencia where our two children were born and raised in a trilingual and tricultural home.

Since I spoke English, a neighbor asked me if I could give her daughter private English classes. I accepted the offer and then word got out. Before I knew it, I was giving a number of private English classes. That year I discovered teaching as my true vocation.

While living in Spain, my pathway to proficiency took me to the highest level earning the C2 DELE (Diploma de Español como Lengua Extranjera; Diploma of Spanish as a Foreign Language). For those of you who are not familiar with this exam, it is created by the University of Salamanca to show proficiency in all facets of language learning. The C2 is the mastery level. I also earned my certificate as a translator from the Universidad Complutense de Madrid as well as a certificate in Educación Preescolar (Preschool Education) from the Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia.

I used the latter to apply for a teaching position at a reputable preschool after having my children. It was an ideal position because I could enroll my own children at the school. I had no idea that this teaching experience would be fundamental to my professional development as a world language teacher. The curriculum was a task-based backward design created exclusively for the school. It engaged students and provided them with the opportunity to be successful. I brought the learning from this experience on to my next teaching job as a high school teacher.

In 2012, we sold our home in Valencia and moved to Omaha. The culture shock was challenging to say the least but finding a teaching position was easier than expected. In August of that year, I started teaching Spanish at a small Catholic school in Council Bluffs, Iowa. I had to gain the confidence of administrators, school board, and students to be able to hold true to myself and have them become



partners in my vision for students to learn the language for real-world situations. By the time I resigned seven years later, I had developed a program that offered courses at all levels including college credit and an opportunity to earn the DELE certificate and later the Seal of Biliteracy when the bill was passed. When I left in May of 2019, it was rewarding to look back and not only see the program I had developed but also how many students' lives I had impacted. I was named Teacher of the Year and recognized by the Rotary Club as one of five teachers in the area for our exceptional work as educators.

In August 2019, I started my teaching career at Creighton Preparatory School in Omaha where I continue to grow and learn with my students and colleagues. I am the mentor for our chapter of the Sociedad Honoraria Hispánica and strongly support the Seal of Biliteracy. I continue to attend professional development conferences and workshops as often as possible to stay current and to expand my professional learning community.

I advocate for self-identity and the importance of being proud of one's culture. I encourage students and families to share their story to enrich others. Our language and culture are the greatest gifts we possess. In Spain my classes celebrated American culture by participating in American holiday traditions. In my classes here in the United States, my students have celebrated Spanish culture by building a monument called una falla and reenact a typical procession with a Queen and President of that festival, as well as, build altars to honor loved ones that passed in recognition of the Day of the Dead among other hands-on activities like celebrating La Tomatina, preparing typical dishes, and participating in Omaha's parade to celebrate Hispanic culture for Hispanic Heritage Month.

I have been teaching for 35+ years and I am as passionate as ever. My unique journey in learning and teaching a world language has shown me the importance of teaching to proficiency. Also, providing students with the input and the learning process to complete real-world tasks. The excitement and sense of accomplishment that they feel when sharing their experiences in the wider community is so rewarding. The notes that I receive from students who are now in college telling me how I have inspired them to stay connected with the Spanish speaking world and continue to use their language skills are precious. It is gratifying to know that my students come to realize that Spanish is much more than a graduation requirement; it is instrumental in providing them with life changing opportunities and the means to communicate with other members of our global society.

Focused Topic: Introduction to the 2024 ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines

On April 2nd, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) released the ACTFL Proficiency Guideline 2024, marking a significant milestone in World Language Education. These guidelines provide a comprehensive framework for assessing language proficiency in speaking, writing, reading, and listening for many languages. The 2024 version defines "proficiency" as "the ability to use language to communicate objectives" and portrays language proficiency in four domains: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Notably, the 2024 ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines integrate the FACT framework, emphasizing **F**unction, **A**ccuracy, **C**ontext, and **T**ext, all crucial components in evaluating language proficiency.



The 2024 ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines offer a deeper exploration of the link between proficiency and performance. They illuminate how performance assessments can effectively contribute to proficiency growth, reflecting the Guidelines' commitment to refining both language skills measurement as well as proficiency enhancement strategies.

Furthermore, the 2024 Guidelines redefine each proficiency level and sublevel through the lens of **FACT**, introducing four sub-parameters to assess comprehension and comprehensibility towards accuracy: language control, vocabulary, communication strategies, and cultural awareness. These parameters provide a detailed framework for evaluating language performance and fostering proficiency growth, demonstrating the Guidelines' dedication to a structured approach to language skills assessment.

The 2024 version places increased emphasis on cultural competence and intercultural communication skills, aligning with the importance of Context within the FACT framework. This update offers nuanced descriptors to evaluate learners' ability to navigate cultural contexts, demonstrate cultural awareness, and adapt communication appropriately. Moreover, the acknowledgment of technology's role in language learning and communication reflects the Guidelines' forward-thinking approach, aligning with contemporary pedagogical practices and the demands of an increasingly globalized world.

Call for Contribution to Next Issues

World language teachers, your contribution is needed to build the Nebraskan world language community. If you are interested in sharing any information and contributing to any section of the newsletter, please contact crystal.liu@nebraska.gov. The purpose of the NDE monthly newsletter is to communicate NDE initiatives, advocate for programs, advertise cultural events, make connections, and build community.

Make sure you contact crystal.liu@nebraska.gov

- When you have questions about NDE initiatives.
- When you have an initiative that needs support from NDE.
- When you want to increase the presence of your program.
- When you have resources to share.
- When there are exciting events going on locally.
- When you need help to get connected with other teachers and programs.
- When you have professional learning needs.
- And more!

If you are not on the email list and wish to subscribe to the newsletter, please contact crystal.liu@nebraska.gov to have your name added to the listserv.

