

## OBE-WL collaborates with FLACS and Queens College to put World Language assessments on the map



Dr. Elaine Margarita, Angelica Infante-Green, Joan Anderson



Peter Swerdzewski, Lissette Colón-Collins, Jennifer Sattern, Juliette Lyons-Thomas, Joan Anderson, Angelica Infante-Green, Dr. Elaine Margarita, Dr. Jennifer Eddy

For the past five years the leadership of FLACS (Foreign Language Association of Chairpersons and Supervisors) has met with officials and representatives from the New York State Education Department to address the concerns and issues that have arisen since NYSED eliminated the Checkpoint A and B exams in World Languages.

Our conversations have been fruitful, and our collaboration has resulted in positive outcomes for both organizations and for World Language programs across the state. This past August, representatives from OBE-WL, FLACS and Queens College met to continue these efforts. Present at the meeting were: Associate Commissioner Angelica Infante-Green, Regents Fellows Lissette Colón-Collins, Peter Swerdzewski, Jennifer Sattern, Juliette Lyons-Thomas, FLACS President Dr. Elaine Margarita, Chief Operating Officer Joan Anderson and Dr. Jennifer Eddy from Queens College. The goals for the meeting were to discuss:

1. The Seal of Bi-literacy and eligibility requirements for World Language students
2. The status of FLACS Exams becoming state approved assessments
3. The importance of developing a consistent nomenclature and procedure for posting World Language Assessment scores on transcripts
4. The posting of World Language Assessment dates on the NYSED calendar of June assessments
5. The Pathways and World Languages

At the meeting we discussed ways to advance the Seal of Biliteracy. For example, NYSED will provide criteria and a point system to award students with a Seal of Bi-literacy on their transcripts. There may be options for schools to develop their own criteria, providing that they meet the general criteria outlined in the NYSED document. We shared ideas regarding acceptable assessments and the importance of awarding the seal at graduation (as opposed to delaying them for AP scores).

We also discussed the FLACS exams and the efforts to have the exams placed on the NYSED list of approved assessments. Dr. Eddy will implement and oversee the process required to submit the exams for approval, and we hope to see this come to fruition by next year. Once the exams are approved, they can be used in several ways: for validation of student performance against state and national standards in World Languages, for credit by examination, and for data collection on student performance for SLOs.

With over 200 districts throughout New York administering FLACS Exams, the exams must be administered at the same time across the state. For that reason, the date for the exams will be clearly posted as **World Language Assessments** on the SED June calendar of assessments. For the 2015-16 academic year, it is recommended that FLACS exam grades be posted as **FL-A** or **FL-B** on student transcripts (abbreviations for languages can also be added).

FLACS and Queens College have partnered to develop a new syllabus and curriculum guide to enhance world language programs and to define student performance using language from the ACTFL National Standards and Performance Descriptors. For several years now, they have also partnered to provide professional development for World Language teachers through an annual conference. This year's conference will be held on April 1<sup>st</sup> at Queens College.

In addition to administering FLACS Exams, the Foreign Language Association of Chairpersons and Supervisors remains committed to providing professional development opportunities for both supervisors of World Language programs and for their teachers. FLACS conducts three informational workshops for their membership (supervisors of World Language programs) each year. Topics include changes and updates regarding NYSED regulations, current trends in World Language education, application of technology in World Language classes, Student Learning Objectives and changes in the FLACS Exams. Since many teachers do not come to the profession with adequate training in quality test development, the organization also provides training for teachers in writing items for the FLACS Exams, an area that the association feels is extremely important, not only for the development of the FLACS Exams but also for thematic or unit tests.

This October's Item Writing Workshops will be offered in five locations throughout New York State. Teachers of French, German, Italian, Mandarin and Spanish will come together to learn/review the techniques of creating quality listening and reading multiple choice questions and answers. Over the past few years, FLACS has been rolling out more Common Core based questions and writing tasks on their exams. Section 2c of the FLACS Checkpoint A exams will no longer include four picture choices based on a listening stimulus. Instead, Common Core-type questions based on a picture and a listening stimulus have been included on the exams for June 2016. The goal of the organization is to share this information early in the school year in order to support teachers in using this type of Common Core task with their students all year.

When NYSED discontinued the World Language Proficiency and Regents exams several years ago, FLACS assumed the responsibility of developing and administering regional exams to ensure that language programs are aligned across the state. That new role has spurred the organization to work collaboratively with NYSED and Queens College to continue to move language and language instruction in a positive direction.

NYSED has also collaborated with other world language organizations, including the New York State Association of Foreign Languages (NYS AFLT), to ensure the needs of teachers are being heard and met. One of the most important recent events was the hiring of a new Associate for the World Languages, Ricardo Constantino, who will now be a liaison for our World Language programs throughout New York State.

*~Dr. Elaine Margarita,*  
President of FLACS  
Curriculum Associate, World Languages, K-12  
Jericho Schools, Jericho New York

~Joan Anderson,  
Chief Operating Officer of FLACS  
Chairperson, World Language Department  
East Williston UFSD  
Old Westbury, New York

Below are some important dates on the FLACS calendar. More information regarding dates, meetings, PowerPoints, guidelines, etc. can be found on our website: [www.flacs.org](http://www.flacs.org)

### **FLACS Calendar of Meetings (2015-2016)**

#### **September 25**

FLACS General Meeting- members only

#### **October 8/October 23**

FLACS Item Writing Workshop-open to teachers and supervisors

#### **January 8**

FLACS General Meeting- members only

#### **April 1**

FLACS/Queens College Conference –open to all

#### **June 3**

FLACS End of Year Meeting/Awards Presentation- members only

### **Some important links/resources for World Language teachers and supervisors:**

General information, registration for meetings and events, and resources:

[www.flacs.org](http://www.flacs.org)

Official Seal of Biliteracy Guidelines are now available at:

[http://www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/SealofBiliteracyGuidelines\\_0.pdf](http://www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/SealofBiliteracyGuidelines_0.pdf)

Powerpoints on Resources, Common Core, etc. for World Language programs:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/search?q=lote%20resources>

Youtube video prepared by Lillian Carey on how to access quality resources:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fBIId--21I9I&feature=youtu.be>

From Dr. Jennifer Eddy at Queens College:

- Do you have a Chinese, Korean, Arabic or Portuguese program or are interested in starting one? Apply this fall for a summer 2016 STARTALK grant, a fully funded immersion camp that can help start or expand your year round program. K-12 students attend the camp for free. Learn best practices at two professional development conferences. For more information and the 2016 RFP, visit <https://startalk.umd.edu>
- Join Dr Jennifer Eddy for a free webinar, *Introduction to Performance Assessment in the three modes of Communication*. Monday, October 5 at 3:00. Contact [WorldLanguageEd@aol.com](mailto:WorldLanguageEd@aol.com) for more information.

- Queens College World Language Education program invites you to mentor a student teacher candidate for spring 2016. Your candidate will have at least advanced low on both the OPI and WPT and can design tasks in the three modes. You will receive a free voucher to attend an online hybrid course on thematic curriculum development or action research. If you have already mentored our candidates, thank you! Please register for your free PD course in December. For more info contact [Jennifer.Eddy@qc.cuny.edu](mailto:Jennifer.Eddy@qc.cuny.edu).