

President's Message for 2009 Annual Conference Publication

“Language Teachers: Seeing the Need, Making a Difference”

The theme for this year's NYSAFLT Annual Conference really sums up what we do everyday as teachers of Languages Other Than English. We are always observing, assessing and identifying the needs of our students. Then we adjust our instruction to meet those needs. Each teacher develops a repertoire of strategies and activities geared to meet the needs of a variety of learning styles, modalities and intelligences of his or her students. Language teachers tend to be very creative in reaching each student.

The immediate goals of the LOTE curriculum are to help students acquire fluency in a language and to learn about another culture. However, as teachers, we have much broader responsibilities to our students. We not only aspire to meet their academic needs, but to help them develop into responsible adults. No matter their individual life goals, we can assist them in preparing to be successful in college, their future work and life in general. As language teachers, we tend to have a unique perspective of the world that can guide our students to become citizens of that world, helping them be part of our global society. As we educate them about the culture of the target language countries, a major goal is to help them develop acceptance of differences. Each of them will come to this acceptance in slightly different ways, so a variety of approaches is vital.

The theme of this year's Conference, and the workshop offerings, can provide us as educators a wider range of ways to achieve these goals. We need to be prepared to meet the ever changing needs of our students. The greater the variety of strategies and activities that are part of our repertoire, the more likely we are to be successful. I am sure that each of you will find many opportunities during the weekend to broaden your knowledge and to add to your professional expertise. On behalf of the NYSAFLT leadership, I sincerely hope that you will not only expand your knowledge of effective language teaching, but will also enjoy the time connecting with colleagues from across the state. I know that I always look forward to meeting new people and seeing old friends.

Please enjoy and benefit from the 2009 NYSAFLT Annual Conference!