

Language acquisition is not merely an accumulation of words; it is more, as it is embedded in culture accumulation and appreciation as well. It is alive and vibrant! Knowing of and engaging with other cultures helps us to reflect on our own and has proven to be essential in leading successful negotiations in all of life's aspects, whether they be business-related or in the private sector.

Successful intercultural engagement of students at local and global levels requires a paradigm shift in how we view education and learning in our K-20 classrooms. Students nowadays must be classified as global citizens who are ready to make the difference with strides for a better global community.

At the core of this engagement is world language study which emphasizes the development of collaboration, community, comparison, critical thinking, creativity, citizenship, and communication. Students engaging in foreign language learning are STEAMing ahead, not only developing the 7 C's competencies, but also the 5 E's - e.g. engaging in, exploring, explaining, elaborating, and evaluating.

As we the authors see it, world language study is an investment in our global citizens. The profile of a career-ready graduate has to include a holistic set of literacies, the most essential being communicative skills with multiple world languages.

The year 2017 was filled with wonderful opportunities for all of us to grow as educators. We were able to start bold conversations about the future of public education and 21st century learning. Let's continue this wonderful dialogue and build on our strengths.

As educational leaders we will continue to provide our students the opportunities to engage in experiences that facilitate international and intercultural relations, exchanges and conversations. Our learning communities will continue to encourage reflection upon and understanding of the learning outcomes from such experiences (Bennett, 1993; Sinicrope, Norris, & Watanabe, 2007), and our students will be the beneficiaries.

Bettina Staudt, Ed.D., is President-Elect of the Foreign Language Association of Virginia and District World Language Specialist K-12 for Chesterfield County Public Schools.

Dick Kuettner, DML, is the Immediate Past President of the Foreign Language Association of Virginia. He is the Director Global Discovery Laboratories and teaches as a Professor of Romance Languages and Teacher Education at Washington and Lee University. He also serves as the Coordinator of the Virginia Governor School Foreign Language Academies.