

UFLA

The Utah Foreign Language Association Newsletter

Volume 110, Issue 1



Teresa Bell
UFLA President

Happy New Year! 2025 is shaping up to be an amazing year for language teachers in Utah! We're kicking things off with our annual conference in sunny St. George at Utah Tech University on Friday, February 21st. For the first time ever, we're bringing

this event to Southern Utah, and we couldn't be more excited to connect with the incredible language educators in this beautiful corner of the state.

Our keynote speaker will be Dannielle Larkin from the St. George City Council, and we're thrilled to hear her inspiring message. Did you know St. George has a rich history of language teaching and learning, dating back to the late 1800s? It's the perfect setting for us to come together and celebrate what we do as language teachers.

Sticking around St. George Friday evening? Keep an eye out for details from your language association leader about a fun dinner meetup with fellow teachers of your language. It's the perfect way to connect, share ideas, and enjoy some good food together!

Don't miss out on the post-conference workshop on Saturday, February 22nd! Professor Troy Cox will guide us on an exciting journey from the WHAT to the HOW, helping us effortlessly integrate proficiency into our classrooms. It's a fantastic opportunity to learn and grow, and it's only \$40! Join us from 9 AM to noon for an inspiring and practical session you won't want to miss!

On a personal note, this area holds a special place in my heart—my mother was born in St. George, and my father grew up in Mesquite, Nevada. I can't wait to share a piece of my heritage with all of you next month. See you in St. George for what's sure to be a fantastic and rewarding conference!

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UFLA Conference



UFLA Conference - February 21, 2025

Our upcoming [UFLA Conference](#) in St. George, Utah. Hosted at Utah Tech University promises to be a dynamic gathering of language educators, and scholars eager to share their knowledge and experiences with languages and cultures.

Plan to take advantage of the weather and outdoor experiences that southern Utah has to offer. From hiking scenic trails to discovering ancient archaeological sites, there's something for everyone to enjoy amidst the natural splendor of the region.

[Join us in St. George](#) for a celebration of linguistic diversity, cultural exchange, and professional development. Stay tuned for updates on registration, accommodations, and program highlights. We look forward to welcoming you to the UFLA Conference.

[Register by February 14th](#) for the best price.

SWCOLT



Hi UFLA Friends!

I am writing this in between sessions at the SWCOLT conference in Arizona. We have a strong contingent of Utah WL teachers here and many are presenting sessions. We have the second largest number of attendees behind Arizona. We have more than California and Texas! When I think back on the SWCOLT conferences of the last several years, Utah has been an exemplary state in every way. We have contributed outstanding leadership (Jill Landes-Lee has served as president). We have had incredible TOYs representing us (this year Jeff Peterson). We hosted a fantastic, well-attended conference in SLC. We have had many outstanding presenters. We have had scholarship winners (Bethany

Billets is this year's recipient of the Vista Future Language Teacher scholarship). We have had many Utahns receive SWCOLT awards (this year Elina Dos Santos Figueriedo is the recipient of the Elementary Excellence in Teaching award and Anna Murta Hodgson is the recipient of the Excellence in Teaching Award for post-secondary). Whenever I tell people that I am from Utah, they respond with a compliment about how well we do language teaching in Utah. We have a great reputation. Let's keep it up. The next SWCOLT conference is in Denver. Plan now to attend and possibly even present.

Stephen Van Orden
SWCOLT Representative

Congratulations to Dr. [Anna Murta Hodgson](#), SWCOLT Excellence in Teaching: Post-Secondary Award Recipient!

Dr. Anna Murta Hodgson University of Utah Dr. Anna Hodgson is a passionate and innovative educator who has made significant contributions to the field of language education. Her dedication to her students and her commitment to creating engaging and authentic learning experiences are evident in her teaching. Dr. Hodgson seamlessly blends theoretical knowledge with practical application, enabling her students to connect classroom learning with real-world contexts. Beyond her teaching, Dr. Hodgson is a respected leader in the Portuguese language community. She has actively collaborated with K-12 teachers and local organizations to provide students with rich and immersive language learning opportunities. In addition, Dr. Hogson coordinates Quechua and Nahuatl programs. Her work as a program director and mentor has had a profound impact on the development of future language educators. Dr. Hodgson's warm and inspiring personality creates a positive and supportive learning environment for her students. Her commitment to excellence and her passion for language learning make her a true asset to the field of education.



SWCOLT

Congratulations to [Elínez Dos Santos Figueiredo](#), SWCOLT Excellent in Teaching: Elementary Award Recipient!



Lina is a passionate and innovative educator. Her dedication to her students is evident in her creative approach to teaching. Lina has developed tools that empower students to take ownership of their learning journey, fostering a sense of responsibility and motivation. One such innovation is a tool that allows students to visualize their progress and set goals for future learning. This personalized approach not only engages students but also instills a sense of agency and purpose. Lina's commitment to creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment ensures that every student feels valued and motivated to participate actively. Her passion for teaching, her dedication to her students, and her ability to inspire her students make her an invaluable asset to the educational community.

Congratulations to Julie Damron, Recipient of the ACTFL/IALLT Postsecondary Award for Excellence in World Language Instruction Using Technology!

Julie Damron is a professor of Korean at Brigham Young University. The ACTFL/IALLT Postsecondary Award for Excellence in World Language Instruction Using Technology is presented annually to recognize excellence in the integration and use of technology in world language instruction at the post-secondary level. These awards began as the outgrowth of collaboration between ACTFL, the Faculty Development Programs of Cengage Learning, and the International Association for Language Learning Technology (IALLT). Julie is a leader in the field for her innovative use of technology in teaching beginning Korean.



Congratulations to SWCOLT Teacher of the Year Finalist Jeff Peterson!



A member of BYU faculty since 2019, Peterson teaches a variety of Japanese courses. He constantly looks for ways to improve his curriculum, and he especially focuses on promoting tasks that will help students demonstrate both language proficiency and real-world usage skills. Student Emily Seals says, “Professor Peterson is outstanding in his ability to help his students learn the feelings behind customs and traditions in Japanese culture . . . His teaching helps his students to be able to envision what it would be like to have actual conversations and interactions as native Japanese people would have.”

Peterson looks forward to continuing his work in the Japanese program to gather student interest and provide opportunities for engagement both in and outside of classroom. He says, “I’m humbled to be among those who have earned this award previously. It’s an honor to be recognized for the work that’s been put in to help improve [both] the classes that I teach here at BYU and student learning in general.”

UFLA Awards

UFLA GRANTS

Each year there are two Grants available to world language teachers who are members of UFLA.

1. [THE TEACHER VITALITY GRANTS](#)

Three annual grants may be awarded for the purpose of research, study, workshops, or projects for improving the quality of teaching. Award amounts will typically range from \$500 to \$1000.

2. [THE PAT BUCKNER COLLABORATION GRANT](#)

One award of up to \$1000 is given annually to facilitate collaboration between two or more language teachers in the same department, school, or in different schools, districts or across the state.

Teacher Vitality Grant recipient December 2024 –

Congratulations, Fabiana Hansen!

Fabiana is a Portuguese DLI Teacher at Hidden Valley Middle School in Jordan School District. SWCOLT selected her presentation proposal for the upcoming conference, January 2025. At the conference, she will highlight her students' inspiring collaborative projects and her school's partnership with the U of U Portuguese Department.

She will use the grant funds to offset the costs of attending the annual SWCOLT conference.

UFLA Awards / Language News

2024 Award Winners

Teacher of the Year - Secondary

Gwen Cannell – Junior High Spanish teacher, Davis School District

Teacher of the Year – Post-secondary

Jeff Peterson – Assistant Professor of Japanese, BYU

Friend of the Profession

Allyson Chard – Founder of the Christkindlmarkt

Candice Pierucci – Utah legislator

Lifetime Achievement

Carolyn Sandstrom- German teacher, Weber School District

Dr. Bryan Eldredge – Chair of the Department of Languages and Cultures, Professor of Deaf Studies, UVU

Dr. Fernando Rubio – current director of the Yale Center for Language Study and former director of the Second Language Teaching and Research Center at the University of Utah

UVU Language Department

The UVU department of Languages and Cultures currently teaches 8 different languages, including Russian, French, Spanish, Portuguese, German, Japanese, Chinese, and American Sign Language. We welcomed two new faculty members this year: Tim Stout for Japanese, and Thierno Diallo in French. This summer we sponsored Study Abroad programs to Germany, China, Brazil, France, Japan, and Spain. We also celebrated the Grand Opening of our new Language Hub, a new approach to language and cultural enrichment that takes the place of our traditional language lab.

Language News

Utah Constituents Care about Languages!

Please support the World LEAP and BEST Acts, as well as other legislation to grow vital language education opportunities.

What Foreign Languages Mean for U.S. Employers

-ACTFL, 2019

9 out of 10
rely on employees with
language skills other than English

56%
say their foreign language demand
will increase in the next five years

Top 5
Departments
with greatest foreign language skills need

1. Customer service
2. Sales
3. Marketing
4. Management
5. IT

Most In-Demand Foreign Languages Reported by U.S. Employers



The Foreign Language Skills Gap*
1 in 3
foreign language-dependent U.S.
employers reports a language skills gap
1 in 4
U.S. employers lost business due to
a lack of foreign language skills

*A foreign language skills gap occurs when an employer has foreign language needs that are not currently met by its employees.



The Utah State Seal of Biliteracy is a recognition on the rise! Utah awarded 3855 seals in 33 different languages to high school seniors throughout the state, 2016-2022!

Utah's DLI, Bridge, ESL/ELD, & World Language Programs:

- develop literacy skills
- improve academic success measures
- build a global-ready workforce

- We need to teach languages to build up our national defense, economy & diplomacy!
- Tradeshows feature Utah DLI programs, a draw for Utah's businesses (*Le Monde*).

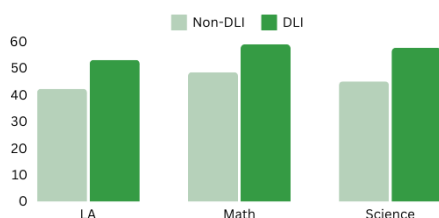
Utah Dual Language Immersion Programs

Utah DLI Program	Elementary	Middle	High
Spanish	65	56	40
Chinese	31	37	30
French	14	20	11
Portuguese	9	13	7
German	2	2	2
Russian	1	1	0
TOTAL Utah Programs 2023-2024			341

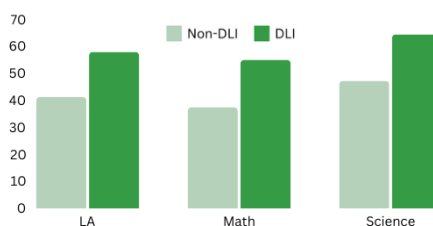
Utah Bridge Program Counts (High School - University)

	# High Schools	Fall Enrollment	# University Upper Division Sections
Spanish	41	2044	88
Chinese	29	1035	50
French	11	518	23
Portuguese	7	335	15
German	2	20	2
Total	90	3952	178

Grade 4 RISE Proficiency



Grade 8 RISE Proficiency



In light of decreasing university language enrollment nationally, Utah is unique in this number of additional sections to be funded, paid for, and full of students.

State JNCL-NCLIS Leader: Danielle Asay
danielleasay@alpinedistrict.org

2025 Utah ASL Competition



The ASL High School Competition is taking place Saturday, March 22nd from 8:30 to 1:00 at Payson High School.

High school ASL students from levels 1,2, 3 or 4 can participate, and the cost is \$25 per student.

The [registration form](#) and payment are due by February 15th. Learn more about the events, rules, and deadlines at the [ASL Competition website](#).

BYU Language Department

BYU now teaches a total of 84 languages, more than any other university in the country. That number includes 62 less commonly taught languages (LCTLs). The most recent language to be offered is Twi, which is a tonal language spoken by millions of people in Ghana. Our first class of 11 students began this semester, taught by native speaker Victoria Blay. Last year, Amharic, S'gaw Karen, and Azerbaijani were also added. We are thrilled to be offering these new language and culture classes to BYU students, but non-BYU students are also encouraged to enroll. Contact Ellen Knell (ellen_knell@byu.edu) for more details.

Language News

Dual Language Immersion programs across the state have been buzzing with activity lately, culminating in the recent statewide student assessments. These assessments are a crucial component of ensuring the program's strength and monitoring student progress. 3-9 DLI graders take the AAPPL (ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages) test, a standardized measure that evaluates language proficiency.

For some teachers, the focus now shifts towards preparing students for the AP (Advanced Placement) exams, or equivalent tests, in 9th grade, a challenging but rewarding milestone that allows our DLI students transition into the Bridge program, which provides continued language support and academic enrichment to ensure a smooth and successful high school experience.

Recent festivities have celebrated the achievements of DLI students, fostering a sense of community and recognizing their hard work. These celebrations serve as a reminder of the program's positive impact on students' academic, social, and personal development.

The DLI program continues to be a valuable asset to the state's education system, providing students with a unique and enriching learning experience.

Advance Your Career in Language Education!

Earn a master's degree from one of the nation's top-ranked universities for language learning! Whether you want to refine your teaching skills, open doors to leadership roles, or strengthen your job security in a changing educational landscape, this program will help you stand out.

Enhance Your Expertise – Deepen your knowledge in pedagogical and linguistic theory, curriculum design, assessment, and research methodology.

Expand Your Opportunities – Qualify for higher pay scales, administrative roles, or post-secondary teaching positions.

Gain Stability in Uncertain Times – With evolving school district structures, position yourself as a leader and an expert in your field.

Flexible Scheduling – Designed for working professionals with options for evening and online coursework. Scholarships Available!

Join a collaborative community of educators and strengthen your impact in Utah's multilingual classrooms!

For Spanish instructors, please reach out to the Spanish Pedagogy MA program.

For Portuguese instructors, please reach out to the Portuguese Pedagogy MA program.

For all others, please reach out to the Second Language Teaching MA program.

Priority application deadline—February 28th!

For any questions, please reach out to Troy Cox (troy_cox@byu.edu) or Greg Thompson (Gregory_thompson@byu.edu).

Language News

Celebrate the Lunar New Year with Utah Tech University and Washington County School District

Join us on February 8, 2025, from 10 AM to 1 PM for a vibrant celebration of the Lunar New Year at Utah Tech University's Gardner Center Ballroom. In collaboration with the Washington County School District, we're bringing the community together to honor the traditions and cultural richness of the Year of the Snake.

The event will feature performances by local school groups, showcasing talent from our young students throughout the celebration. Visitors will also have the chance to explore various interactive booths offering activities and experiences that celebrate the customs and symbolism of the Lunar New Year.

Whether you're learning about Chinese traditions, enjoying cultural performances, or simply looking for a fun day with family and friends, this event is open to everyone in the community. Come be a part of this exciting occasion!

Experience Utahtlán: Utah Tech University's 2025 Language Fair

Utah Tech University is excited to host Utahtlán, the 2025 language fair, on April 2, 2025.

This immersive event will welcome dual language immersion students from the Washington County School District for a day filled with cultural and linguistic exploration.

The fair will feature language/culture competitions in Spanish, Chinese, and Portuguese, providing students an opportunity to showcase their language skills in a fun and engaging way. Additionally, students can explore interactive booths offering activities that celebrate diverse cultures and languages.

The event will conclude with an awards ceremony, where we'll recognize the winners of each competition as well as honor the talented winners of the Span 3118 Short Film Festival, the bridge course.

We're thrilled to host this celebration of language, culture, and creativity. Stay tuned for more details, and we can't wait to see you at Utahtlán!



L2TReC
SECOND LANGUAGE
TEACHING & RESEARCH CENTER
THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH



DEPARTMENT OF
WORLD LANGUAGES & CULTURES
THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

SAVE THE DATE

*French Language Teacher
Workshop*

Run by Dr. Anne Lair and Michele Harward

June 9 - 12, 2025

UFLA INFO

UFLA needs YOU

To find out more about how to become more involved in our UFLA organization, complete this survey. (click here)



Would you like to nominate a Teacher of the Year? As a reminder, applications are accepted on our website at ufla.net.

In addition to [Teacher of the Year](#), UFLA also awards the following grants:

[Teacher Vitality Grant](#)

[Pat Buckner Collaboration Grant](#)

Thank you for the many nominations for the UFLA Teacher of the Year Award. Our state is blessed with an abundance of exceptional world language educators. We will announce this year's Teacher of the Year winners and other award recipients during the upcoming SWCOLT conference.

UFLA Mission

The Utah Foreign Language Association exists to promote the learning of world languages and cultures in the state of Utah and beyond. Specifically, the mission of UFLA is to:

- Support world language teaching and acquisition at all academic levels, including traditional instruction and dual language immersion programs
- Disseminate information and provide opportunities for the exchange of ideas and resources to support language teaching and learning
- Offer professional development opportunities for language teachers
- Recognize excellence in language teaching and learning
- Collaborate with regional and national language teaching organizations
- Advocate for public policy that promotes language learning and supports the needs of language teachers and students

UFLA WEBSITE

The UFLA Website has now moved to <http://ufla.net>

It's a new name, but with all the content we have always had on the site. If you only visit once a year to register for the conference, come see what else we have on ufla.net (including copies of the newsletters going back over twenty years.) We will also post handouts from presentations at our upcoming conference on the new UFLA website.

We also hope you will join [UFLA on Facebook](#) and on our new Instagram account ([@ufla_utah](#)). Come participate in the conversation!



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Advertising Information

The UFLA Newsletter is published three times each year in September, January and May. All issues are distributed via e-mail to UFLA members as well as posted on the UFLA website.

Advertising rates are available at:

[UFLA Sponsorship Opportunities](#)

Contact Branden Lansing at blansing@dsdmail.net with any questions or to place an ad.