The Language Educator

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Announcements

Rifkin Receives ACTR Service Award

Benjamin Rifkin, member of the ACTFL Board of Directors, is this year’s recipient of the American Council of Teachers of Russian (ACTR) Service Award. Rifkin is currently Dean of The School of Humanities and Social Sciences at The College of New Jersey. His previous career was in teaching Russian at Temple University, at Middlebury College Russian summer school where he also served as Director of the program, at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and at the Taft School in Connecticut. At Temple he also served as Vice Dean for Undergraduate Affairs in the College of Liberal Arts. Rifkin has also previously served on the ACTR Board of Directors, New Jersey Council for the Humanities, and the Board of Directors of the Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (NECTFL). His academic awards include two American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages (AATSEEL) Awards for Best Work in Pedagogy, an award for academic advising from the University of Wisconsin, and three separate awards for distinguished teaching at the University of Wisconsin.

TLE Spotlight on . . . Anne Lair

Anne Lair is currently an Assistant Professor (lecturer) at the University of Utah, where she also serves as Director of the French language program lower division. Prior to this position, she was an Associate Professor and head of the French section in the Department of Modern Languages at the University of Northern Iowa. In addition to directing more than 26 MA research papers, she is author of the book, Les Arts de la Table, and co-author of Invitation Au Monde Francophone. With Wynn Wong, Stacey Weber-Fève, and Bill VanPatten, she is co-authoring Encore, a second-year French textbook. Lair was named the 2008 Outstanding Educator of the Year at the Secondary Level by the Iowa World Language Association, and she was honored in 2012 with the ACTFL Nelson Brooks Award for Excellence in the Teaching of Culture.

Among her students and colleagues, Lair is known for her high standards, passion, energy, organization, and creativity. “Mine are immersion classes, since I teach only in the target language,” she explains. “It’s tough but rewarding.” Lair, who served as Co-President of the American Association of Teachers of French in 2010 and 2012, says that because of the termination of her program in Iowa, she never misses a chance to promote the language and culture, be it through her university position or through the Alliance Française in Salt Lake City. “French is spoken by more than 230 million people over five continents. By 2050, there will be over 400 million French speakers,” she explains. “Through the profession, we reinforce our commitment to the French language and show it is not dying.”

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