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Introductory Remarks

Loyola University

Language Education and Resource Network (LEARN) Workshop

Columbia, Maryland

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Good morning and welcome to the Romance Languages LEARN Workshop!

The program today and tomorrow, sponsored by the Foreign Language Program Office of the Director of National Intelligence and the National Cryptologic School, is a wonderful opportunity for all of us, and I thank the Planning Committee and Ellen Kalb for inviting me to join you.

As we move through our professional careers as foreign language teachers, teaching adult professionals in U.S. Government affiliated schools and institutions, we have to build on everything we know and continuously adapt and learn new things to stay at the top of our game and to stay the very best at what we do.

One of the best ways to efficiently do that is through the attendance at professional conferences.

Over the years, it has become increasingly difficult for federal government teachers to attend conferences.

The LEARN workshops provide just such an opportunity and your sponsors have lined up four such opportunities for you to grow this year.

I want to congratulate you for making the decision to attend today and tomorrow. It shows that you:

- are open-minded
- are willing to share what you know
- are willing to collaborate
- are interested in avoiding duplication and seeking efficiency
- are willing to Network (the N in LEARN)

A long time ago, I remember receiving some advice for when one is asked to speak in front of a group like this: Simply tell your story and make it human and relatable. That advice was reinforced by Beth Mackey who encouraged me to "share some of his personal story, and how he's used venues like this for his professional development".

Like everyone in this room, my core professional skill was as a foreign language, professional educator.

Let me tell you how that evolved and what I did with that core skill over a 48 year career.

I grew up in Baltimore City and I became the first member of my family to finish High School. I had a good foundation in a Catholic elementary school, where a distant cousin was the Pastor and covered my tuition (I think it was \$35 a year in the 1950's). That foundation made me competitive enough to earn scholarships to a Catholic High School (then \$125 a year) and then to Loyola College (then \$1150 a year). In High School, like all good Catholic boys of that period, I kept open the possibility of becoming a priest. That meant that I studied Latin all four years. I also studied Spanish. In that competitive environment, I was motivated to get excellent grades in both.

Relevant here is my solid foundation in Latin language, literature, grammar and etymology, and the excellent teaching I received in Spanish from someone who had just served in the Peace Corps in Costa Rica. For a beginner student, the Costa Rican, or Tico, accent is very clear and easy to hear and to imitate.

When I got to Loyola College, I was focused on becoming a High School English Teacher. I learned that I did not like the way the English program forced students to analyze literature, placing everything into existing archetypal patterns. So, I switched to a Spanish major so that I could analyze literature my own way, with the freedom to interpret. Thus, I became a Spanish High School teacher.

My first job was in a rural community; I built a four year program with over 200 students as the only teacher. In four years, I took 2 groups of students on Spring trips to Spain. Overall, I was deemed relatively successful by all accounts.

My reward - I became a High School Administrator !

I kept my Spanish alive by teaching Adult Education classes and maintaining my professional affiliation and attending state and national foreign language conferences.

Seven years later I received an invitation to apply to the National Security Agency to teach Spanish.

A friend, who was a Mathematician at NSA, saw my wife's car at a shopping center parking lot and left a note for me to call. That's how I got to work at NSA.

The language piece of moving to NSA is interesting. Although I had a Spanish Bachelor's from Loyola, and a Master's and Doctorate from The Catholic University, I always considered myself a "gringo wannabe" when it came to comfortable, professional conversation. My academic focus at Catholic University was Medieval Spanish Literature. However, my Doctorate was unique. I was the first person to ever graduate with a Doctor of Arts degree from The Catholic University. The degree included basically all of the requirements of a Ph.D. PLUS the addition of requirements that make for a good university teacher of Spanish: morphology, etymology, teaching techniques in foreign language, etc. I was prepared by that program to be the Department Head of a University Foreign Language Department in 1975.

By 1982, when I went to NSA, I was rusty, at best.

Before being hired, I was told that I needed to pass a written test with at least a level 3 to be able to be hired.

On Easter Sunday, the day before the test, I reached out to a nun at the Spanish Apostolate in the Archdiocese of Baltimore who arranged for me to spend Easter Sunday conversing with a Cuban woman who was one of the Marielitos of that time. I paid her for her time and the practice of talking with a poor, uneducated woman with a Cuban accent was exactly what I needed - and it broke my heart as I listened to her story. Life was so bad in Cuba at that time, that a mother would leave her children and head off into the unknown under very dangerous conditions to an uncertain future.

It was good that I prepared. The written test, due to miscommunication between agencies, became a four skills test, including an Oral Proficiency Interview.

Fortunately, I passed - Level 4 in all areas - thanks to my Marielita teacher.

So, I began work, alone, at the National Cryptologic School to create a Spanish program where literally nothing was in place. My first class began 6 days after I was hired. In four years, I was able to put together a full program of American Council on Education (ACE) accredited Spanish courses at the beginning, intermediate and advanced levels and added classified, specialized, and tradecraft classes. Before arrival, I didn't even know what NSA was. How was that success possible? How was it possible that, in the same four years, the program grew to almost 30 teachers and the curriculum pattern in Spanish was duplicated in Portuguese, French, Italian, German and other languages? The Department had grown to become the Romance and Germanic Languages Department.

Here's how: The "rusty gringo" had an incredible amount of resources at his finger tips:

- NSA foreign language teacher legends like Renee Meyer, Emery Tetrault, and Jim Child who taught me how to teach ADULTS using their contextual methodology.

- Professional translators and teachers of other foreign languages at the National Security Agency and The National Cryptologic School taught me the methodology for analyzing, correcting and grading translations and transcriptions with a precision that

was remarkable, and incredibly useful for teaching how to fill any learning gaps uncovered.

-Professional national conferences, where I, and my staff, joined other National Cryptologic School professionals in presenting and learning from colleagues

- Professional U.S. Government conferences, much like today's, where there was an incredibly high end of intellectual stimulation of the composite body of attendees as we pursued, shared, collaborated, and parallel- processed foreign language research and learning initiatives

-Partnerships with other government (like Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC), the State Department, the CIA, the FBI and others) and academic entities (like Georgetown University and Brigham Young University) which were so close that we felt like one intellectual entity tackling the next level of challenge of foreign language proficiency and performance together.

WOW! What a wonderful time in my career!

In addition to what I just described, I personally selected and hired every one of my teaching colleagues in the Romance and Germanic languages and they were superstars every one. My boss at the time dubbed it "Camelot".

I was deemed relatively successful by all accounts.

My reward - I became a manager!

A manager in the main line "Operations" of the National Security Agency.

For the next 20 years.

Not always in language, but I always maintained my interest and influence in foreign language learning and professional development.

By 2006, my hero, Renee Meyer, had become the Commandant of the National Cryptologic School and asked me to come join her leadership team. Since she had foreign language teaching well in hand, she asked me to lead "all mission related training which was not foreign language".

I said "Yes."

Relevant to today's conference is my experience in analytic training in that job - not my forte.

I was able to make great progress because of the resources available to me:

- My Deputy was a career professional with a focus on the hiring, development and training of intelligence analysts. Maureen Lynch was supported by an incredible network of professional analysts across our Agency.

- I was introduced to a new, grass roots organization at the Intelligence Community level (then Directorate of Central Intelligence; later, The Office of The Director of National Intelligence) which was called, The Intelligence Community Analysis Training and Education Council (ICATEC).

Renee asked me to be the Co- Chair.

I agreed, and began, even before I reported to the National Cryptologic School.

Two months later, the Chairman moved on and I became the Chairman!

The collaboration, the creativity, the efficiency, the sharing across agencies of classroom seats, materials, teachers, classroom space, and intellectual property - all without talking about money or the lack thereof, was incredible! Among other things, we created the ICATEC ICAAP (Intelligence Community Advanced Analysis Program) with that model, and it has served hundreds of analysts to date. ICATEC became a model and a trusted entity for the entire Intelligence Community.

My next few jobs led me to Renee's old job, Commandant of the National Cryptologic School, in 2014.

I kept my interest for foreign language learning and development and it was in good hands with Jil Aspatore and, now, Beth Mackey.

I looked to the broader job of how to run the complex school well. The resources I had were tremendous:

-Mission partners

-National academic partners

-CTS (The Cryptologic Training System)

-ICTC (The Intelligence Community Training Council)

-DITEB (The Defense Intelligence Training and Education Board)

-DLIFLC (The Defense Language Institute/Foreign Language Center)

-CLO (Chief Learning Officer) Summits

The same type of resources that had helped me through all of my other challenges were there. Partners willing to selflessly:

- collaborate
- share resources
- share ideas
- share research
- share best practices
- and, above all, to network

By all accounts, my tenure as Commandant was relatively successful.

My reward - I get to spend more time with my beloved bride of 46 years in retirement.

24 hours a day; 7 days a week...

She is so excited!

But for some reason, she was happy that you invited me here for 2 days...

So, back to the relevancy for you, I challenge you over the next 2 days to approach the activities, and what comes after, with a similar collective spirit.

I challenge you to leverage the N (for Network) in the title of the event LEARN.

Networking not just to meet new people, but to meet them to understand and share resources.

I challenge each and every one of you to do 3 things as a result of this workshop:

- come away with at least one new colleague that you have met;
- take away at least one best practice to try out;
- identify at least one new resource to look into.

If we can all keep pressing ourselves and learning from each other, we will continue to move our collective knowledge, success and impact forward, always able to serve our country as the very best in our business.

Thank you for your attention. May you have a great conference!