

FLANC NEWSLETTER

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Fall 2010

FLANC Fall Workshops and Conference! Friday and Saturday, November 5-6, 2010

Berkeley City College and University of California, Berkeley

The Executive Council of FLANC invites you to join us at our annual Fall Workshops and Conference. As always, it will present you with material which will infuse your classroom with something exciting by offering a wide array of Interest Sessions. There will be many Exhibitors. The

presentations will have practical how-tos for use Monday morning, ideas for the classroom, and the ever present technology and its adaptation to our classes.

Mark the date on your calendar, send in the registration form today, **take Public Transportation**, and see you in Berkeley! **Teach on!**



Friends of FLANC and World Language Study!

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President's Message

My summer vacation was rather busy, spending the end of May and early June in Japan. As a matter of fact, my stay in Japan was not a vacation. I gave lectures at Kobe University, Kobe Japan, and at the National Institute for Japanese Language and Linguistics in Tokyo. In addition to those lectures, of course, I enjoy staying in Japan, visiting many places. For instance, every time I return to Japan, new items or gadgets stimulate me. This time I bought a new digital camera!

My term as FLANC President abruptly started with the June Council meeting, which took place right after my return from Japan. The June meeting usually marks the transition of our organization's administration. Ed Sterling is now Past President but continues to be my mentor, and I hope that he will

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The President's Message

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continue to give me a ride to attend the Council meeting. In any case, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Ed and other Council members for their strong leadership and guidance during the past year. Several of the Council members have been president in the past, and I look forward to working with them in leading this vibrant organization so that we will be able to effectively respond to the needs of the membership and further advance FLANC's mission.

At San Francisco State University, I teach classes in all areas of the extensive Japanese program. For the past five years, I have been President of the Northern California Japanese Teachers' Association. I am also Coordinator of the Japanese Language Proficiency Test for Northern California. My special field of research is in bilingual education and cross-cultural studies. I have written extensively on psycho/sociolinguistics with particular emphasis on cross-cultural comparisons of language development and narrative/discourse structure. I have published works covering cultural constructions of meaning, childcare quality in Japan, and the experiences of East Asian students in US classrooms. I have always felt that producing research in the public interest is more important than anything else. As a language researcher interested in analyzing, evaluating, and exploring the relationship between education theory and practice, I have particularly interested in providing a lens through which practice can be seen and brought into focus for the improvement of bilingual or foreign language education at various academic levels.

Bilingualism/bilingual education and foreign language teaching are inseparable. At the university

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where I teach, I often encounter students of Japanese heritage in my Japanese language classes. Some were born in the United States, but their mothers are Japanese. Others were born in Japan and brought to the United States when they were very young. Sadly, many of these students do not speak fluent Japanese or have simply forgotten their mother tongue. In many bilingual and multilingual societies, a language shift in immigrant families takes place rapidly, with a prevalent pattern of a total shift to the dominant or prestige language within two to four generations. Unfortunately, parents' desperate endeavor to maintain their native language and cultural heritage is often unsuccessful. To make matters worse, in U.S. society, in which English is the dominant and prestigious language, children of immigrant families tend to be critical of their parents' efforts to maintain their native language.

There are not only cultural problems but also societal problems as well. For the past couple of years, many educational organizations throughout the U.S. have been hit by budget cuts. Our schools on the West Coast are not immune from this crisis. The budget cuts that are currently occurring at all levels throughout the country particularly threaten the future of foreign language education. Advocating for the importance of foreign language education at all levels – from K through 16 – is more critical now than ever before.

My terms as FLANC President (“abruptly” at least in my mind) started as I wrote above. Nonetheless, I am ready to devote my efforts towards fostering collaborative efforts between the Council and the general membership in order to create opportunities for FLANC to engage actively in intellectual exchange and discussion, and to promote studies aimed at increasing the scope of knowledge among persons interested in foreign languages and cultures. One way to gauge the quality of a professional organization is by the papers presented at its annual meeting, and I am also ready to collaborate with the Council members in order to make our annual Fall Workshops and Conference successful.

*Your new FLANC president,
Masahiko Minami, SFSU*