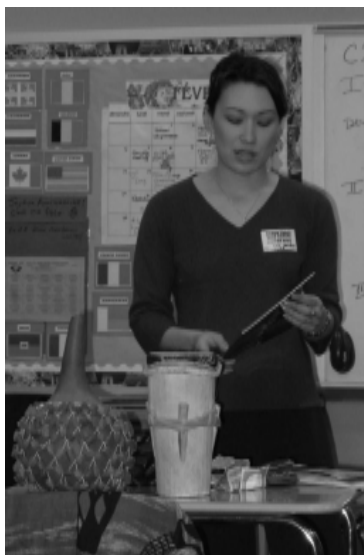


## PEACE CORPS RETURNEES BROADEN FRENCH STUDENTS' HORIZONS

During the first week of March, Peace Corps returnees shared a dialogue with Barbie Brown's French classes at Knightdale High School about French culture and diversity throughout Western Africa.

Lisa Bender taught the students about the country of Cameroon. Students learned about the role of the Peace Corps in the U.S. government and how this organization spreads the message of worldwide peace by aiding and assisting other countries. Ms. Bender emphasized the importance of being able to converse in French during her work abroad. She also enlightened students about the diversity of the French-speaking world by sharing cultural traits and life-styles in Cameroon. During her presentation, she shared pictures and samples of traditional clothing, musical instruments, common children's stories, food and other current products, practices and perspectives of the country.

Marc Jeuland shared his experiences from his three-year assignment to Mali. Dressed in traditional ceremonial attire, he



gave a presentation in French, in which he described the similarities and differences between the various towns throughout the country. He played samples of traditional music while showing pictures of the local handmade instruments used to create the sounds. Students discovered that many countries contain a large variety of ethnic groups just like in the U.S. and that they each have their own culture, life-styles and traditions.

Barbie Brown

stated that she invited these speakers into her classroom to "illustrate the fact that French is spoken beyond the borders of France and to instill a respect for diversity." She wanted students to hear and see for themselves the importance of French in other countries and cultures. She stated that, "Our textbooks tend to neglect French-speaking Africa and these speakers deepened their appreciation for the richness of the cultures found within this

continent."

Finally, these speakers were invited as a part of 2005 Year of Languages. The theme for February was "International Engagement." Mrs. Brown's students are members of a World Wise Classroom,\* in which they correspond regularly with a current Peace Corps volunteer through e-mail about his experiences and the culture of Mali. These speakers brought new life and meaning to this exchange and have increased student interest in the cultural traits and life-styles of Western Africa.

Barbie Brown  
Knightdale High School (NC)



**\*For more information on the World Wise Schools Program, visit the Peace Corps Web site at [www.peacecorps.gov](http://www.peacecorps.gov).**