

## TÊTE-À-TÊTE UPDATE

At the *Tête-à-Tête* session "French Bérêts to the Rescue! A Plan of Attack for Mentors, Mentees, and Colleagues Working Together throughout the Francophone World" in Milwaukee, participants shared information concerning French programs in their areas and discussed actions to strengthen them and give support to teachers. The *Tête-à-Tête* teacher-to-teacher mentoring initiative, sponsored by the Commission on Articulation, is an effort to improve communication among teachers and enable collegial sharing in order to support and learn from each other. There has been much interest in the project to date, and many individuals, as well as chapters, are actively involved in mentoring and collegial sharing. Thirty-two chapters have designated Mentoring Coordinators, and in many chapters these mentors have presented workshops at state language conferences on the subject of mentoring, as well as provide support for the teachers in the chapter who are serving as mentors, have mentors, or participate in colleague to colleague sharing.

In order to clarify the roles each of these individuals play, guidelines for Chapter Mentor Coordinators and Mentors have been established. The chapter coordinator's role is primarily to (1) inform the chapter about the initiative through presentations at local meetings, the chapter website and/or newsletter, etc.; (2) be a mentor and/or help identify individuals within the chapter who want to serve as mentors, have a mentor, or participate in collegial sharing; (3) publicize the initiative by distributing photocopies of the *Tête-à-tête* flyer (we can send you an electronic copy) at state, local, and regional conferences, chapter meetings, schools, etc.; (4) serve as a liaison between the chapter and the national coordinators. The role of a mentor is to (1) create a *Tête-à-Tête* partnership to discuss ideas and enable the partners to support and learn from each other; (2) offer assistance and collaboration; (3) share areas of expertise and correspond via email, telephone or face to face. Mentor/Mentee relationships can be intensive or more casual and sporadic, depending upon needs which may arise during teaching experiences.

Jo Ellen Sandburg and I are the National Coordinators of this initiative. We are in the process of creating a database to pair participants according to geographical location, areas of expertise, and special interest, and we would like to update the information we have. If you have volunteered and are currently working with someone, we would like to hear from you about your experiences. If you have contacted some-

one about participating in the program, but have not been paired with anyone yet, we would like to know that as well, so that we can have accurate information. If you want to become involved in the initiative, please contact your chapter coordinator and Jo Ellen [J\_Sandburg@msn.com] or me [sue.hendrickson@asu.edu]. We would especially like to invite all retired, experienced teachers who feel they have time to share their experience and expertise with a teacher who needs support, to join the program. If your chapter has not already designated a Mentoring Coordinator, please do so and send the name and contact information to your Regional Representative, who will forward it to us. Through working together and supporting each other, we can strengthen our programs and advance our mission of teaching French and Francophone culture.

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