

# NCOLCTL 2013 Conference Report

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The 16th Annual Conference of the National Council of the Less Commonly Taught Languages (NCOLCTL) was held on April 25th through 28th 2013 under the theme "Expanding Opportunities for AFL Learning at all Levels of Instruction." This conference was organized in conjunction with the 17th Annual Conference of the African Language Teachers Association (ALTA) in Eaglewood Resort & Spa, Itasca, IL. The conference featured individual and group presentations, along with meetings and miniconferences featuring several NCOLCTL affiliate organizations. Global participation for this year's NCOLCTL conference included language teachers and professionals who conducted presentations about topics relating to Less Commonly Taught Languages (LCTLs). US governmental institutions were also featured in parallel discussions relating to the importance of LCTLs. These panel discussions encouraged expanding the education of less commonly taught languages critical to national security of the United States.

There were two pre-conference workshops. One was an Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) Familiarization Workshop led by Dr. Virginia Maurer, Harvard University. She spoke about the introduction to the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines, the ACTFL Rating Scale, and the ACTFL OPI. The second was "Standards -based Curricular Design and Lesson-Planning for LCTL" workshop which was led by Drs. Hong Gang Jin and Antonia Schleicher. It was designed to teach LCTL teachers theoretical and practical ways of effectively designing standards-based, LCTL-specific curricula and lesson plans. The keynote speaker for the 2013 NCOLCTL/ALTA Annual Conference was Dr. Richard Brecht, University of Maryland and he spoke on "Languages for Everyone: The 'Elitist Challenge.'"

The first plenary session titled "The 7000 Languages Project: Unique Technology for Under-Supported Languages" was delivered by Michael Quinlan of Transparent Language, Inc. The second plenary session titled "Brain Training: Impact on Working Memory and Language Learning" was led by Dr. Gregory Colflesh of the Center for Advanced Studies of Languages (CASL) of University of Maryland- College Park.

Following the second plenary was an ALTA Presidential Panel titled "The Evolution of ALTA: Retrospectives and Prospective" chaired by Dr. Eyamba G. Bokamba, University of Illinois. The panel consisted of Drs. David Dwyer, Michigan State University, Antonia Schleicher, Indiana University – Bloomington, Audrey Mbeje, University of Pennsylvania and Lioba Moshi, University of Georgia -Athens.

The third plenary session titled "Connecting Research to Instructional Delivery: Making Wise Decisions" was led by Dr. Audrey Heining Boynton, University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill. This presentation linked major educational research findings to instructional delivery and encouraged collaborative opportunities that create motivating experiences for learners.

In 2013, ALTA celebrated its 25th anniversary in collaboration with NCOLCTL's annual Walton Award ceremony on April 27th. The Walton award is presented to distinguished individuals whose performances and services to NCOLCTL helped expand LCTL initiatives. This year, Dr. Hong Gang Jin, a William R. Kenan Professor of East Asian Language and

Literatures at Hamilton College received this honorary distinction. The festivities concluded with conference participants congratulating Dr. Hong Gang Jin in their respective languages.

The last plenary session featured two speakers. Dr. Bill Rivers of the Joint National Committee on Languages, who spoke on “Language Advocacy at the National Level” while Ms. Toni Theisen, President of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) spoke on “Engaging Your Students: Activating Chaos to Invigorate.”

Major sponsors for the NCOLCTLS 2013 were the Qatar Foundation, National African Language Resource Center (NALRC) and National Language Service Corps (NLSC). In all there were about 146 parallel sessions conducted at The 2013 NCOLCTL/ALTA annual conference.