

CWL P NEWS

MARCH 2016

SPOTLIGHT ON CLTA AWARDEES

Brandon Zaslow, 2016 recipient of the Hal Wingard Lifetime Achievement Award

BRIEF RÉSUMÉ Brandon Zaslow holds degrees in Spanish Language, Linguistics and Literatures from the University of California, Los Angeles where he was a University Distinguished Scholar and in Heritage and Second Language Education from California State University, Los Angeles. From 1990 to 1995, he taught Methods of Foreign Language Instruction and Primary Language Development at UCLA's Graduate School of Education. His academic and professional interests include the applied linguistics of Spanish, Spanish American literature, language education, and life skills education and coaching. Since 1995, he serves as Director of the Los Angeles Area Site of the California World Language Project, funded by the legislature to serve the professional development needs of language teachers in Santa Barbara, Ventura, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. The site offers programs for teachers of commonly and less commonly taught languages, for teachers of heritage and native speakers and for teachers of English language learners. In addition, the site partners with districts and other educational institutions providing technical assistance, tailored professional development and on-site coaching and mentoring. At the local level, Mr. Zaslow leads programs for teachers of Spanish, Portuguese, French and Hebrew. At the state level, he was a key member of the writing team of California's *Classroom Oral*

Competency Interview, Classroom Writing Competency Assessment and Classroom Receptive Competency Matrix. In addition, he was contributor and consultant to the Golden State Examination in Spanish, the LAUSD Equivalency Examination in Spanish, California's most recent *Foreign Language Framework* and chaired the writing committee of the current *World Language Content Standards.* Brandon has been repeatedly honored by his colleagues receiving California's Outstanding Teacher Award in 1996, named National Textbook Company Language Teacher of the Year in 2000, receiving the National Textbook Company Award for Leadership in Education in 2000, a Distinguished Service Award for Contributions to World Language and Culture Education in 2009, and the Hal Wingard Lifetime Achievement Award for World Language and Culture Educators in 2016. At the national level, he is part of the author team of *Entre Mundos* (Prentice Hall), a program in Spanish for Spanish speakers, and *Invitaciones* (Vista Higher Learning) a parallel program for non-natives. For over three decades, he has presented the results of his work at state, regional and national conferences in the following areas: standards-based language instruction, proficiency-oriented programs for heritage and native speakers, competency-based assessment, diversity sensitive education, the teacher-teaching-teacher model of professional development, systems theory and school reform, models for

the development of teacher leaders and life skills education and coaching.

A SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR WRITES of Brandon, "During observations in his classroom, I was able to see how Brandon optimally implements and differentiates a common-core and standards-based program for Spanish speakers. Brandon builds upon the knowledge, skills, and experiences that students bring to the classroom and maximizes the use of current electronic media as sources of reference and input. He presents content in an interesting and lively manner using a thematic approach that highlights Hispanic cultures within and beyond the United States. His use of authentic materials exposes students to a variety of content areas and situations that prepare them to use Spanish in the world beyond the classroom. Topics are chosen in order to promote continued study of Spanish, foster a strong sense of identity and a high level of self-esteem, as students develop the broadest possible world-view and begin to see themselves in professional roles. Thought provoking selections, delivered in a safe and welcoming environment, engage students with issues of universal interest, stimulate intellectual discussions, promote reflection, and challenge personal beliefs. Treatment of contemporary topics raises awareness and challenges students to analyze their environment, explore possibilities and reflect on choices and consequences. Brandon's focus



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on universal access and 21st century skills is visible in activities that differentiate content, process and products and lead to student ability to innovate, think critically and creatively, demonstrate flexibility and adaptability, and solve problems. Brandon begins units with essential questions that guide instruction. Activities that follow respond to student differences in readiness, interest and learning profiles and develop knowledge and skills in order to respond to the essential questions. Units contain proverbs, sayings, quotes, songs, works of art, and short or full-length films or documentaries that reflect unit themes and stimulate further exploration in folklore, music, art and cinema. The first of many authentic texts presents an aspect of the topic and features grammatical elements necessary to respond to the essential questions. This text is followed by activities designed for student discovery of aspects of the Spanish language and provides practice to develop micro-skills necessary to address the essential questions. Additional literary and non-literary texts (personal reflections, poetry, short stories, drama, essays, newspaper articles, editorials), introduce the major dialects of Spanish, further develop chapter themes, lead to real-world and academic tasks related to the essential questions and require the use the knowledge and skills developed in the unit. At the close of each unit, students are provided with multiple means of representation, action, expression and engagement. Through

tiered assignments with a wide variety of choices, students investigate demographic data, current events, history, science, art, music and the literature and cultures of Spanish-speaking communities in the United States and in each of the twenty Spanish-speaking countries and hone their Internet research and presentational communication skills. Before beginning subsequent units, students reflect on learning, on how activities interface with their needs and interests, and on how knowledge and skills can be used in the world beyond the classroom”.

A STUDENT WRITES “I enrolled in a first course in Spanish for Spanish speakers with Mr. Zaslow to recover my language and my identity. In the course, Mr. Zaslow provided us with opportunities to understand ourselves as products of two worlds and to choose the best of both. We studied ourselves, our families, our communities, the world of education and jobs, Hispanic immigrant groups in the United States, and contemporary issues through art, music, literature and films. Through them, we learned to read and write and acquired the vocabulary and grammar of formal Spanish without losing or disrespecting the informal variety we use with family and friends. When I finished studying with Mr. Zaslow, I chose to continue to the second course for Spanish speakers since I was proud of my language and culture and wanted to immerse myself in the Spanish language and culture for each of

my four years of high school. I continued to visit Mr. Zaslow during our nutrition and lunch breaks and sought his support in teaching me Brazilian Portuguese. Mr. Zaslow gave me a Living Language course and I spent many hours with him during the last three years practicing the Portuguese I was learning. Last year, Mr. Zaslow gave me another course so I could begin learning French. I have made a great deal of progress studying this fourth language with him and am grateful that he was able to find my hidden passion to become multi-lingual and multicultural. Mr. Zaslow has helped me value myself, understand that cultures offer ways to think and behave that can enrich our lives, and see that learning additional languages can open doors to exciting experiences and opportunities. I appreciate Mr. Zaslow for what he has done for me these past four years. He is an international citizen, a unique individual who helps students rediscover the language and culture they have lost, appreciate the value of English and the cultures of the United States, and open themselves to other worlds by learning additional languages and cultures”.

HIS COLLEAGUES WRITE, “It is with great enthusiasm that we, the California World Language Project (CWLP) Directors nominate Mr. Brandon Zaslow for the 2016 Hal Wingard Lifetime Achievement Award. Mr. Zaslow has been engaged in the teaching of languages and cultures since



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1986 and has been a distinguished leader in our profession, not only in California, but throughout the nation. His comprehensive roster of publications includes scholarly articles, textbooks and instructional tools designed to support learners, teachers, and professional development experts, the first appearing in 1990, four years after he began teaching. Over the past three decades, Mr. Zaslow has charted the vision for World Language and Culture education in California through the documents he has authored, most importantly through California's first set of World Language Content Standards that are consulted by virtually every state and national organization as each sets out to develop or revise their documents. While he has played and continues to play a vast number of professional leadership roles, Brandon is first and foremost a distinguished classroom teacher where he is admired by his colleagues and by his students. Although he has taught Hebrew and Portuguese, most often he teaches Spanish, particularly courses for heritage speakers, where he is extremely adept at developing in his students high levels of content knowledge and linguistic and cultural literacy. Mr. Zaslow's professional presentations are always informed by cutting-edge research and always illustrate with a vast array of examples, how to apply research based instructional strategies in the world language and culture classroom. Nationally, Brandon has been a presenter at virtually every single

conference pertaining to the teaching of world languages and cultures and has led a number of federal infrastructure projects that are used throughout the nation and the world to advance and strengthen the teaching of critical languages and meet the nation's security and economic priorities. His contribution to teachers of other languages and cultures is most impressive. Through his leadership, the Occidental College World Language Project has become one of the most respected centers for the professional development of teachers of Arabic and Chinese, with discipline-based professional learning opportunities, but his mark can be seen in almost every other successful language program in the greater Los Angeles area most recently in Korean as well as full- and dual-immersion and English language development programs. As Directors of the California World Language Project, we feel extremely privileged to count Brandon Zaslow as a visionary of our immediate professional learning community. Brandon's professional demeanor, commitment and dedication to the profession set the standards for us all, and are always met with our deepest professional respect and admiration. He has at one time or another mentored each one of us as we strive to fulfill our primary mission of strengthening the teaching and learning of languages and cultures across California and the nation. Brandon is the ultimate advocate for the inclusion of world languages in our schools

and works to ensure that schools and districts set goals for providing world-class language and culture education to every learner. His continuous record of excellence in language teaching, his enduring tenure of leadership, dedication and commitment to the profession spanning over three decades of his fifty-four years, and his ever ready disposition to lend his expertise and support on behalf of kindergarten through graduate studies in languages and cultures, is a direct parallel to the individual for whom this prestigious award is named. Mr. Zaslow was actually mentored by Hal Wingard in the first years of his career. Mr. Wingard so admired Brandon's vision, his ability to synthesize vast bodies of research, to translate them into classroom practices that led to high levels of learner competence in language and culture, to marked growth of learner content knowledge and skill, and to the development of learners as individual human beings. Brandon wrote to Hal's wife after his passing and remarked, 'To act is at the core of Judaism, a religion of deeds rather than creed. As such, Hal Wingard, follows a long tradition of Jewish men and women who act to create the conditions that grow minds, hearts and the disposition for action to change the world'. So in other words, we believe that our treasured and beloved late-colleague, Hal Wingard, would fully endorse Mr. Zaslow's nomination to receive his namesake award just as strongly as we do".



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