



**Linda L. Egnatz** is a Spanish teacher at Lincoln-Way North High School in Frankfort, Illinois and served as the 2013-2014 President of the Illinois Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ICTFL) and presently serves ICTFL as Webmaster. She currently teaches Spanish 2 and both AP Spanish Language & Culture and AP Spanish Literature & Culture as well as a language education methods course at DePaul University.

Egnatz has been a trailblazer in many respects. In her 2<sup>nd</sup> year of high school teaching she began annual Springbreak student tours to Europe and Latin America, often including service projects. In 2011, she became one of the first two teachers in her school district to become Nationally Board Certified, encouraging others to participate in the process with her. As a new member of the ICTFL Board, she began the process of redesigning the [www.ictfl.org](http://www.ictfl.org) website and has since served as Webmaster. Other ICTFL initiatives she has led or co-led include: leading tours abroad to places such as Peru, China and Cuba for Illinois language teachers, bringing ACTFL Oral Proficiency Training to Illinois, and the TALL-IL (Training for Assessment of Language Learning in Illinois) extension training. Egnatz is a popular keynote speaker and trainer at language conferences and focuses her presentations on connecting language study to 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning, preparing for the global workforce, making intentional cross-curricular connections and the importance of teaching for language proficiency. A recent project she has found especially meaningful has been as a trainer and consultant to the Sak & Fox Nation as part of the Sauk Language Revitalization project.

As ICTFL President, she testified on behalf of the Seal of Biliteracy in Illinois to recognize high school seniors who are biliterate in both English and a second language at graduation. In 2013, Illinois became the third state to have a “Seal of Biliteracy.” In support of that effort, her school district, Lincoln-Way Community District #210, was a pilot school for other school districts considering its adoption. Her work on the Seal of Biliteracy has been featured in a live interview with Univision television and on the front page of the Chicago Tribune. Her support of the Seal of Biliteracy is now national in scope; serving on a joint task force to establish national guidelines.

Egnatz has received several accolades for her teaching and her service in Illinois to world language educators:

- 2014 ACTFL National Language Teacher of the Year
- 2013 Golden Apple Fellow (Chicago, WTTW-11)
- 2013 Central States Conference Foreign Language Teacher of the Year
- 2012 Illinois Foreign Language Teacher of the Year
- 2011 College Board Scholarship for Advanced Placement Summer Institute
- 2011 The President's Award for Building ICTFL – ICTFL Fall Conference
- 2011 Teacher of the Year, Lincoln-Way North High School, Frankfort, IL
- 2010 CSCTFL Scholarship to CentroMundoLengua, AP Seminar, Sevilla, Spain
- 2006 Grantee - Adventure of the American Mind project, Library of Congress

Egnatz believes that she teaches a valuable life skill rather than a school subject. She says, “If I hope to inspire students to put in the practice and effort necessary to achieve proficiency in another language, they need to know that speaking that language has relevance outside of the classroom walls. The reward must be bigger than a transitory A on a report card. Studies consistently show that the ability to speak more than one language is one of the most highly valued skills in the present workplace, no matter what the career choice. My job is to help my students visualize themselves using the Spanish language, not just in the classroom, but in their community, in their career and perhaps outside of their country. A life skill is something you will always have -- for me the joy in knowing other languages has come from the incredible people with whom I have shared stories or a meal. Learning a language is not about learning a set of grammar rules, it is about communicating one's thoughts, one's ideas and one's passions. It is about expanding our cultural horizons while opening our arms to embrace the diversity of our own community. As a teacher, I have the privilege of serving as a model for lifelong learning.”

*Linda Egnatz earned her B.A. from Olivet Nazarene University in 1981 and her M.A. from Purdue University in 1996. She currently resides in Frankfort, Illinois, a southwest suburb of Chicago with her husband, John.*