

NEWSLETTER

Massachusetts Association Of Teachers Of English To Speakers Of Other Languages
SPRING/SUMMER 1984

VOL. 12, NO. 4

Beyond Survival:

ESL as a Tool for Change

by Elsa Auerbach

"My son calls me stupid because I don't speak English, but in Portuguese I am more intelligent than he is."

These words, spoken by a 45-year-old Azorean immigrant, capture the essence of the problematic reality facing adult ESL learners, a reality of contradictions and upheaval. The primary aspect of this reality is that non-English speakers are reduced to the powerlessness of silence — a powerlessness which is reinforced and exploited within the broader social context. Since the times of slavery (when Africans who spoke the same language were separated from each other to prevent resistance), language has been a tool for subordination and social stratification in the U.S. Non-English speakers have occupied the lowest echelons of the labor force and been utilized to fulfill very specific structural needs of the economy (from the Chinese who built the railroads to the southern Europeans who manned the assembly lines and the Mexicans who harvest the crops). Still today, foreign-born workers are hired in the mills and sweatshops across the country precisely because they do not speak English.

Thus, when ESL students come into our classes, they come not just as individuals with complex personal histories but as participants in a deep-rooted, ongoing historical process. As the sociologists of curriculum (e.g. Giroux, 1983, Apple, 1982, Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977) have pointed out, what happens in the classroom either reproduces the hierarchical relationships of the dominant social order or challenges them.

The work of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire is based on the notion that adult literacy is only successful to the degree that it is an integral part of the process of empowerment. Freire argues (1973) that very often adult educators follow a *problem-solving* model in which students are seen as lacking the necessary skills for survival in a changing world. The job of the teacher is to intervene with educational welfare — a pre-determined package of skills which the students require to act according to societally defined norms of appropriate behavior. In many ways, the new wave of survival ESL materials reflect this approach: their goal is to teach specific modes of

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Natural Wonders



Rob Gogan goes to the source — Niagara Falls — for inspiration. You'll find a review of his reader, *Natural Wonders*, on page 5.

A Profile of Rob Gogan

by Mark Stepler

Rob Gogan is currently the Acting Dean of Academic Affairs at Chamberlayne Junior College. Having gotten an M.Ed in TESOL from Boston University, he has taught ESL at Chamberlayne Junior College, in Harvard's Summer School program, in Iran, and at the American Language Academy. Rob was the editor of the *MATSOL Newsletter*, from June, 1980, to June, 1983.

He has authored three ESL reading texts in recent years. When asked about how he became interested in writing ESL texts, Rob noted that those books had evolved from his work on the *MATSOL Newsletter*.

M: Have your texts thus far been geared mostly towards lower-level ESL students?

R: *Natural Wonders* was a Level 1, *Engineering Triumphs* was for Level 3, which is intermediate — 3 out of 5 — by Regents' method of breaking it down, which is basically the same as Longman's. It's based on the Longman structured readers. I think it's important in working with adult readers — adults who don't know much English — to touch on things that they already know, and introduce a topic that they have quite a degree of familiarity with, to warm

them up to the topic and the challenging situation of learning a new language, but then tell them some things that they perhaps didn't know about it, in an adult way.

M: What is your latest book, and how does it differ from the others?

R: Well, the newest one is called *Great Inventors of the U.S.* It really looks at the creative process, and instead of just being a biographical background of what these great inventors were, I try to get at the aspects in their development that made them creative. One of them, of course, is curiosity, a trait that I think is among the most important in humans, and it's promoting curiosity in students that I think is one of the best things a teacher can do. You know, as soon as you give them an answer, if they ask you a question, it's a great thing. All of these people that I wrote about — Thomas Edison, Alexander Graham Bell, the Wright brothers, Edwin Land, and Henry Ford — were all very curious and wanted to know "why" and "what if." They were also very playful, so it was fun to tell some of the funny stories, the practical jokes they played. Actually, Edwin Land and Wilbur Wright were very serious. Thomas Edison, Henry Ford, and Alexander Graham Bell had a real comic side.

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**MASSACHUSETTS
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**THE MATSOL
Newsletter**

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This is a quarterly publication for the members of MATSOL. Subscription costs are included in annual dues. Letters, articles, black and white photos and other contributions are welcome. They may be sent to:

Mary Christie
MATSOL Newsletter
25-1/2 Grant Street
Cambridge, MA 02138
Articles should be typed, double-spaced, set to 40 characters.
Next deadline: August 31, 1984.

Notes From the Board

**REPORT ON SPRING CONFERENCE
BUSINESS MEETING**

The first order of business was to announce the winners of the Executive Board elections. They are: Vice President — Paul Abraham; Treasurer — Mary Christie; Higher Ed Rep — Susan Vik; General Rep — (for which there was a tie) Judy Friedland and Kenny Vorspan.

Other business:

- MATSOL FUNDING OF PROJECTS that would benefit either the general membership or a particular interest group is still available. So far there have been few takers. It was suggested that we might sponsor a speaker series, establish a scholarship fund for ESL high school students, and purchase tapes of TESOL conference presentations. We could also help establish a library for materials, tapes, discs, etc. Members interested in funds for any such project should send requests to Jacklyn Clayton, 26 Sargent St., Needham, MA.
- TAX-EXEMPT STATUS has been granted to MATSOL, and a bulk mailing permit has been obtained.
- THE MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY and ESL Program Directory are on a word processor at SCALE and will be published regularly.
- THE JOB BANK Coordinator's position is open.
- CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE PROPOSALS (to be voted on next year) included: that dues be paid on a calendar year basis; that nominees to the Board not be required to be TESOL members unless elected; that nominees be allowed to run unopposed if the membership does not respond to the call for nominees.
- A LETTER URGING SUPPORT OF LEGISLATION affecting immigrants and refugees was presented. It was moved and passed that Jacklyn Clayton send the letter to Tip O'Neill and members of the Mass. delegation. The legislation includes *The Cuban-Haitian Adjustment Act* (the Rodino Bill), which would allow Cuban and Haitian refugees who have been in the U.S. since January 1982 to become permanent residents; *The DeConcini-Monkley Bill*, which would grant temporary suspension of deportation to Salvadoran refugees; *The Roybal Bill*, which has been presented by the Hispanic Caucus as an alternative to the Simpson/Mazzoli bill.

Membership Directory

The MATSOL *Membership Directory* was distributed at the Spring Conference. It lists the name, address and affiliation of our approximately five hundred members. Many thanks to Angie Nardella and Betty Stone of SCALE who did the compilation!

Those who did not attend the Conference and would like to obtain a copy can do so by writing to: Mary Christie, 25 1/2 Grant Street, Cambridge, MA 02138.

Catching Up With.

"Whatever happened to. . ." This question is often asked at Conference Social Hours about members who have moved out of state. The *Newsletter* will periodically try to get you the answers. We begin with Lucy Caldwell-Stair.

"I've been living in Washington for six years now, and the last time I taught ESL was the summer I came up to teach at Harvard Summer School — 1978 — with my 5 month old daughter.

When I was still living in Boston, I studied for an MBA in Marketing. I did market research and planning as an independent consultant while my children were real little. Now Rebecca is 6 years old and Peter is 3 1/2, and I work as a market researcher and analyst at the headquarters of the American Red Cross. It's a great job — good people, lots of work to do, and a chance to influence change in this huge organization.

Each year when my subscription to the MATSOL *Newsletter* comes up for renewal, I can't turn it down. I love reading about all of you."

Lucy Caldwell-Stair

In Memoriam

Bert Neustadt

1921-1984

Bert Neustadt, one of the first instructors in English as a Second Language at Boston University, died on May 5 after a long illness. Bert began teaching at BU in 1965, when the program was part of Metropolitan College, and continued teaching at the Center until multiple sclerosis forced her to resign last fall. Never one to evade a challenge, Bert continued teaching in spite of her illness. In an interview with the *Boston Globe* on February 20, 1983, she said: "When you become disabled, work is more important than ever before. Your self-image suffers terribly because you feel so dependent, helpless. Teaching — talking with students and colleagues, preparing for class — restores your sense of self-worth." Indeed, Bert continued working. She completed the second edition of her discussion text *Speaking of the USA* and began work on a new book. She also became a member of the Massachusetts Commission on Employment of the Handicapped.

Those of us who were fortunate enough to have known her saw how truly remarkable a woman Bert Neustadt was. Rarely has there been a teacher who inspired as much devotion in students and colleagues alike. She was an outstanding teacher for whom students had the greatest respect. She was a dedicated colleague to whom others turned for advice, and she was, above all, a dear friend. Our lives have been enriched immeasurably by having known her. Her warmth, courage, and concern for others will remain an inspiration to us while we mourn her passing.

Francine Stieglitz directs the CELOP program at Boston University.



Lorna Porras and Paul Krueger, relaxing at the TESOL Barbecue and Rodeo, ask that age-old question, "How are you going to keep us down in Boston after we've seen the farm?"

Letter From The President

TESOL IS ELEMENTARY. That was the message on large buttons worn by a lot of people at the TESOL Convention in Houston last March. I was one of those at the Convention (also wearing that button) and for that opportunity, I thank you, the members of MATSOL. I was there as your representative; your money helped send me.

The Convention was exhilarating. In 1966 TESOL started with 337 members. This year, TESOL has 10,822 members. There are 61 affiliates of TESOL, 18 of them non-US, among them, Italy, Spain, Scotland, Venezuela, Japan, Thailand . . . Obviously, there was an international flavor and perspective at the whole convention.

It was educational. At the Leadership Workshop for Affiliate Representatives, we had a chance to meet the TESOL Executive Board, to attach faces and personalities to names we all have heard or read. We heard about TESOL activities of the past year and learned about the suggestions and services TESOL can offer its affiliates. We had an opportunity to meet with other affiliates to share some concerns (e.g. How to make a viable affiliate out of 40 interested but widely-scattered members) and some successes (e.g. our "Employment Directory," which no other affiliate seems to have).

It was exhausting. So much information to absorb in such a short time! The four days of the convention after the Leadership Workshop groaned with the feast of 800 workshops and presentations. I haven't yet unpacked all the materials or experiences. However, that will surely get done by next April 9-14 when the TESOL Convention will be held in New York City. Mark your calendars now!

TESOL is a large organization brimming with talented and dedicated people who represent many different interests (ELEMENTARY, included!) and who really are not as intimidating as they seem from afar. Indeed, MATSOL is a microcosm of that expertise, variety, talent and dedication. As your new president and affiliate representative, I hope to continue to strengthen our ties with TESOL, I rejoice in the vitality of MATSOL and urge you to help MATSOL address some of your concerns in the field. Together, drawing upon each other, let us celebrate our strength and diversity.

Jacklyn Clayton

MATSOL ♥ s NY

September 10, 1984! Write that date down on your calendar now. It's the deadline for submitting proposal to TESOL '85. The 19th annual convention will take place in the Big Apple on April 9-14, 1985.

The Program Chair, Jean McConochie, and her staff will be busy coordinating the many presenters. Why not be one of them?

You can obtain a copy of the proposal form from Jean McConochie, TESOL '85, Pace University, Pace Plaza, New York, NY 10038 or from the TESOL Central Office, 202 D.C. Transit Building, Georgetown University, Washington D.C. 20057.

Monica Maxwell is an experienced TESOL presenter. Read her tips on getting your proposal accepted.

Thoughts on Giving a Professional Presentation — Hows, Whys and Wherefores

by Monica Maxwell

Giving a presentation at a professional conference can be a stimulating and rewarding experience. Many of us have attended papers and demonstrations in a rather passive state of mind and never considered that we too could add to or even lead a similar discussion. There does come a point when one should evaluate one's own potential and consider becoming an active participant and a leader.

Deciding to give a presentation is the first giant step. A topic should be chosen with care. Two main factors must be considered — your own experiences, interests, and strengths and the audience you will be addressing. If an academic lecture format is what you are most comfortable with, gear your research and preparation towards a topic in your area of expertise, but keep in mind that you will be speaking to a group of people whose attention must be kept throughout. The demonstration format is less formal.

Again, a topic which is near and dear to you is always a good choice, but perspective must be kept and the audience, not as familiar with the topic as you are, must be led through a well-organized, step-by-step demonstration. Take care not to assume too much. The audience will of course be interested in your topic, but may never have considered your particular ideas or approach.

After you have made your decision to submit a proposal for a presentation and decided on a topic, the chore of writing a proposal looms on the horizon. A proposal takes a good deal of time to write, primarily because the process usually precedes the writing or organizing of the presentation itself. In writing a proposal, one must figure out exactly what the purpose of the presentation is, as well as how the desired result will be achieved. Many proposals are written as basic outlines of presentations yet to come. Do not feel discouraged if you cannot complete the entire presentation before submitting the proposal. While that would be nice, it is rarely



done, and actually not as necessary as you might think. The proposal is just that — you are proposing to present a paper or demonstration.

Your proposal should be a concise yet informative description which includes the following:

1. *Summary of ideas.* What do you plan to talk about? Give an outline of your own work, plus, if possible, references to other work which has been published/presented in the same area.
2. *Rationale for presentation.* Why do you plan to talk on this particular topic? Perhaps your research is unique; perhaps your approach to a familiar topic or problem is fresh. Whether your topic fits neatly into a category or is one-of-a-kind! it is important in your eyes, so explain why it will be important to your potential audience as well.
3. *Method of presentation.* How do you plan to present your material? Tell what format you plan to use — an academic lecture, a demonstration with complete audience participation, or something in-between. Give a preview of what the participants will experience. Will there be hand-outs, book lists, bibliographies, viewing of/listening to tapes, hands-on use of equipment, group interaction?

The process of developing a proposal which includes the above should have you well on your way to putting the presentation together.

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"Sing a Little, Learn a Little Sing Some More, Learn A Lot"

by Jenny Nicholson

Folk songs can provide a focal point for a lively language lesson. Simple nursery rhymes set to music are helpful for teaching stress and intonation, as well as practicing grammatical structures.

For example, the song, "Oh a Hunting We Will Go," is about planning a hunting trip, and lends itself to practicing the future tense.

Oh a hunting we will go, a hunting we will go;
We'll catch a fox and put him in a box,

And then we'll let him go! (fish, dish) (goat, boat)¹
etc.

Each verse plays with rhyme in a nonsensical manner. With two-word substitutions children can make up their own verses. This makes a fun pronunciation exercise.

Other songs can be used as a springboard for conversation. "Pick a Bale of Cotton" is an Afro-American folk song which describes picking cotton.

Jump down, turn around, pick a bale of cotton,
Jump down, turn around, pick a bale a day.
Oh, Lordy, pick a bale of cotton,
Oh, Lordy, pick a bale a day.²

To draw children into the subject of the song, the teacher can teach it, and then have them act it out. Pictures are useful for bringing to life songs with regional or historical themes.

It is often helpful when teaching the song to teach the words and music separately. After the students have heard the song, read through the song for comprehension, and cleared up any vocabulary questions, teach the lyrics by breaking them down into phrases. Next teach the melody in phrases on a single syllable (la, da, da . . .). Finally, put the words and music together and sing!

If you are not comfortable with singing, there are many records in the public libraries with songs that can be taped. Here the focus of the lesson can be listening comprehension instead of oral practice. It's advisable to choose songs that have simple melodies that you could easily sing yourself and lyrics with contemporary sounding language. Although many of the older folk songs have interesting themes, much of the language is archaic and

not accessible to ESL students. However, even these songs can be used with a few revisions.

Planning a lesson around a song can be an effective way to engage students' interest.

1. *Oh a Hunting We Will Go*, Langstaff, 1974.
2. *150 American Folk Songs to Sing, Read and Play*, Erdei, 1974.

Jenny Nicholson is a graduate student in TESOL at Boston University and has taught ESL to children in the Brookline Public Schools.

Teaching Vocabulary: A Few Games

by John Kopec

The following are two vocabulary games through which students can demonstrate their ever-expanding lexicon and can learn new vocabulary items while having fun.

(1) CATEGORIES: The students use a grid containing a certain number of boxes. The standard grid is usually five boxes across and four or five boxes down. The number may vary, however, depending upon the discretion of the teacher. Categories are written on the left of the grid and a key word is written at the top. The object of the game is to fill the entire grid with lexical items for each category by using each of the letters of the key word (Figure 1)

	O	P	E	N
Famous People	Lawrence Olivier	Peter Sellers	Einstein	Nasser
Languages	Old English	Persian	English	Norwegian
Feet Verbs	open	push	enter	near
Bedroom Words	orgy	pillow	evening	night table

Figure 1

When choosing a key word, try to select one with high frequency letters (letters such as h, j, x, etc. usually draw blanks). Category possibilities are infinite: nouns, adjectives, verbs (head verbs = possible things to do with your head, hand verbs, eye verbs, etc.), classroom words or classroom verbs, university words, capitals, sports, library words, countries, cities, etc. This particular game encourages all students because everyone has an opportunity to contribute. It can be played as a class, in teams or individually. Imaginations are stretched to their limits. Generalizations and associations can be made. Everyone has a good time and learns a thing or two. Categories can also lead to improvement of other language-oriented skills: pronunciation and spelling, parts of speech and conversation (and many times, arguments!). Categories may also be played in reverse. The teacher

can give students the answers and have the students formulate the categories and guess the key word.

(2) "PROBE": This Parker Brothers game is a version of the word game "hangman." Each player selects a secret word of a predetermined number of letters. A player prints each letter of his/her word on pieces of paper or index cards in the proper spelling sequence. S/he then turns these face down. A player then begins his/her search for the letters that make up the word of his/her opponent. S/he asks the opponent if s/he has hidden a particular letter of the alphabet. If the opponent answers, "Yes," the opponent reveals the letter called for. Should s/he have more than one of that letter in the word, s/he selects which letter to reveal. For example, if the word of the player questioned is "received" and an "e" is asked for, it is the player's privilege to expose whichever "e" s/he wishes. If the player whose turn is in progress has guessed correctly, s/he is entitled to guess again. A player's turn ends when s/he fails to guess correctly. Players are not permitted to keep a list of letters that have been called for during the game. A player wins if s/he is able to guess the word from any of the exposed letters.

Class level may dictate the manner in which the game is played. In less advanced classes, the game can be controlled by having students select topical lexical items, i.e., specific vocabulary from a reading selection or a class discussion. Another controlled variation would be to have the students use irregular past tense verbs or past participles; students could also use verbs and related prepositions (e.g., talk to, listen to, arrive at, etc.). For more advanced levels, the game could be less controlled, but still focus on a specific subject area.

John Kopec has been a lecturer at the Center for English Language and Orientation Programs, Boston University since 1977. He has previously taught ESL in Poland, Iran, Morocco and at Ohio University.

Please send teaching ideas for the Fall issue to Carla Meskill, Harvard U. Summer Program for Foreign Students, Sever Hall, Cambridge, MA 02138 before August 31, 1984.

Moving?

MATSOL was happy to receive a special bulk rate mailing permit from the U.S. Post Office; this will significantly reduce the cost of our bulk mailings (conference announcements, MATSOL Newsletter). However, this mail cannot be forwarded, so be sure to keep us informed of your current address, including zipcode. Send updates to Rick Smith, 117 Park Drive, Boston, MA.

Five Folk Tales (from the Regents Readers series)

by Robert Gogan
Jean McConochie, editor
Regents Publishing Company
1982

Reviewed by Shirley Brod

What is both high, low, rare and available? The answer is really workable reading texts for beginning adult ESL students. The books must be of high interest to mature students but of low reading skill level, a rare combination which exists in the *Regents Readers* series.

Natural Wonders, Level 1, contains stories of five places of special beauty and importance in the United States: Niagara Falls, the Grand Canyon, the Mississippi River, and Yellowstone and Yosemite National Parks. The book is illustrated with photographs which aid in comprehension as well as attest to the factual scientific nature of the material.

Gogan uses a 300-word base vocabulary with an additional 60-word list of new terms presented in context and repetitively. Only the present tenses and the "will" future are employed. Each story is divided into three to five sections. Exercises following the stories are varied and useful, dealing with comprehension and vocabulary skills including factual recall, cause and effect, pronoun reference, sequence, word recognition, and spelling.

The subject matter of the *Natural Wonders* stories makes them intrinsically interesting to almost every reader: foreign students like to learn about the country they are visiting. (Their first question for each story is, "How long does it take to get there?") I have found that the stories are also excellent springboards for extending reading proficiency to the limits of the students' abilities. With *National Geographic* pictures as supplements, we have worked in these additional, sometimes overlapping, areas:

- 1) Expanding concepts: ecology, geology, geography, erosion, water rights, economics, map reading.
- 2) Expanding vocabulary: climate and weather; deltas, swamps and islands; tourism; agriculture and irrigation; source, course and mouth of rivers.
- 3) Developing analytical skills: categorizing, outlining by comparison and contrast.
- 4) Relating cross-cultural topics: honey-moon customs (Niagara Falls); jazz music (New Orleans and the Mississippi); oral or written reports on natural wonders in their own countries; American literature (Mark Twain, John Muir).

I have been amazed at the richness of knowledge and communication which beginning readers have contributed to the study of these stories.

Reprinted from Curriculum Clearing House Newsletter, March 1983.

Shirley Brod teaches at the Spring Institute for International Studies, Denver Center, Colorado.

ROOKS' BOOKS

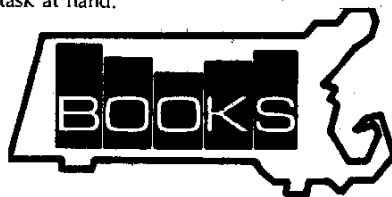
Can't Stop Talking 1983 and
The Non-Stop Discussion Workbook 1981

by George Rooks, Newbury House
Publishers, Inc., Rowley MA 01969

Reviewed by Judy DeFillippo

Teachers of advanced beginner and low intermediate students will welcome George Rooks' latest book, *Can't Stop Talking*, as a useful addition to the speaking/listening portion of their program. Teachers familiar with Rooks' earlier book, *The Non-Stop Discussion Workbook*, designed for higher level students, will find that both texts have the same goal: To create discussion through problem-solving situations in which students do most of the talking. The value of both texts is that teachers are free to pick and choose those topics which they think would interest or excite their students the most.

Can't Stop Talking consists of 24 units, each containing a problem-solving situation. Units are divided into five sections: (1) VOCABULARY, to help developing students assimilate more words, (2) READ, to describe the problem in two or three short easy-to-read paragraphs, (3) CONSIDER, to set out the factors to be weighed in the problem-solving process, (4) DECIDE, to discuss and resolve problems in small groups, and (5) FOLLOW-UP, to expand students' thinking beyond the task at hand.



Teachers may assign each unit for homework the day before the problem is to be discussed. All lessons are based on a 50-60 minute class and teachers should allow at least that much time; enthusiasm can be lost if lessons are dragged on. One possible exception to this is if teachers wish to videotape the "discussion and comparing solutions" portion of the class. A follow-up session is valuable for students to see and hear themselves as they really are.

For the DECIDE portion of the class, which can last up to thirty minutes, students, preferably from different language backgrounds, are divided into groups of 3 to 5. Groups with only two students may also be successful if the class is small or if students seem particularly shy or reluctant to talk.

Both books contain a wide variety of problems, most of which pose serious and challenging dilemmas, ranging from budget decisions to a life or death situation. Unit 7 in *Can't Stop Talking* is called "Which Programs Will Get the Money?" The situation is that the state of California has a \$500,000 budget surplus which is to be used to help the citizens of that state. Students have to decide what portion of the money would be given to the following needy organizations and explain why: (1) Construction of a Senior Citizen's

Center in one town, (2) a new swimming pool for a City Council, (3) a pay raise for 120 state legislators, (4) money to give jobs to ghetto teenagers through the department of public works, (5) money to clean up a beach devastated by an oil spill and (6) money to hire 3 more policemen and buy 3 more police cars. After the groups have made their decisions they are always anxious to hear the decisions of other groups and some of the liveliest discussion takes place after all the decisions have been shared.

The Non-Stop Discussion Workbook, contains 30 units and is organized in similar fashion. One unit is called "Into the Future!" Students are asked to predict what the world will be like in the year 2025. More specifically, they have to decide what they think will be the 15 biggest changes, positive or negative, that will take place in their lifetime. Other problems to solve are: Unit 8, "Who Gets the Heart?". As members of a surgical team, students must decide which one of 6 needy patients will receive the heart transplant. Unit 11, "Which School Programs Do We Eliminate?" asks students to be members of the local board of education. Students have to decide which school programs to cut due to a law which has just reduced all property taxes. This lesson can be preceded by a mini lecture on taxes in the U.S.

Most teachers agree that even low level students benefit by listening to each other in open discussion even when the English they hear may contain some grammatical errors or lexical deficiencies. Small group discussions allow students to develop confidence in a non-threatening atmosphere. The role of the teacher during group discussions is to circulate among the groups or sit in where help/ideas are needed. At this time the teacher can note any grammatical errors and correct students when needed.

Free conversation should be a part of every ESL program and both of Rooks' texts are a step in the right direction. These texts are most successfully used once a week, if the class meets every day. Other recent texts recommended to supplement listening/speaking classes are:

1. *Look Who's Talking*, by Christison, Bassano, Alemany Press.
2. *Idea Bank*, by Steve Sadow, Newbury House Publishers.
3. *React/Interact*, by Byrd, Clemente-Cabetas, Regents Publishing.
4. *Bridge the Gap*, by Ferrer, DePoleo, Alemany Press.
5. *Before the Bell Rings*, Alemany Press
6. *Fitting In*, by Coffey, Prentice-Hall Publishers
7. *Communication Skills* by Weinstein, Prentice-Hall.

Judy DeFillippo teaches at the English Language Center, Northeastern University.

Please send book reviews for the Fall issue to C. Sadow, ELC, Northeastern U., Boston, MA before August 31, 1984.

The MATSOL Spring



Conference



Beyond Survival

(Continued from page 1)

behavior and communication norms for minimal functioning in specific contexts (CAL, 1983, *From the classroom to the workplace: teaching ESL to adults*). For example, pre-vocational and vocational materials teach to the standards of employers (how to dress, how to fill out forms, how to ask for clarification, etc.). While these skills are certainly necessary, they are not sufficient for dealing with the complexities of the workplace. By focusing on the narrow situational contexts, rather than the broader social reality, these materials may not prepare students for real issues of survival like unequal treatment on the job, long lines, and less than respectful treatment at the unemployment office or dangerous conditions. Materials which emphasize language behavior (following the competency-based model which breaks language teaching into "task-oriented skills with behavioral objectives" [CAL, 1983]) may reproduce the role of immigrant as *doer* rather than *thinker*.

At worst, some survival materials explicitly attempt to socialize students into subordinate roles by teaching passive obedience and submission (e.g. Hopewell Work Series). While most vocational materials, for example, teach duties and responsibilities of workers, few mention their rights. They avoid the single greatest cause of job loss: conflict on the job. In short, the problem-solving approach is based on teaching students what they should say and how they should act to fit into the *status quo*.

In contrast, the *problem-posing* approach aims to prepare students to think critically about the conditions and conflicts of their world so that they can become subjects (rather than objects) of the process of change. Instead of imposing solutions on them or solving problems for them, the teacher's role is to involve students in searching for and creating their own solutions. The starting point of this approach is the complex and contradiction-ridden reality of students' lives; the goal is to enable students to act on these problems outside the classroom.

Freire's problem-posing model for first language literacy work has been adapted to ESL instruction in programs around the U.S. and Canada (including by the *Mujeres Unidas* program in Dorchester, MA) and is discussed in *Language and Culture in Conflict: Problem-Posing in the ESL Classroom* (Wallerstein, 1983). In the early phases of the program, the teacher researches the themes or loaded issues of students' lives in order to gain first-hand knowledge of student problems. Issues might include the need to live with many others because of high rents vs. the problems of overcrowding, the need to work quickly to please the boss vs. the desire to be accepted by co-workers, the fear of leaving children in childcare vs. the need to work outside the home. The teacher selects themes which represent common contradictions for a particular group of students and presents them back to students in the form of a codification (a picture, dialogue or chart). The codification becomes the basis for dialogue in the classroom. It is important in class discussion that teachers not impose personal biases about

handling problems. Rather, the classroom should be a place where students can analyze the various aspects of problems and develop their own strategies for dealing with them.

This process is facilitated through a series of inductive questions asked by the teacher which starts with concrete questions about the codification, and proceeds with questions that aim to help students define the problem more generally and relate it to their own experience. Subsequent questions examine the causes of the problem and finally encourage discussion about alternative ways of addressing the situation outside of class. The dialogue is followed by exercises which may be similar in form to conventional ESL exercises (substitution drills, TPR, jazz chants, etc.). The difference is that these exercises are incorporated in response to students' identification of their own communicative needs vis-a-vis specific contradictions. They are embedded in a context of highly meaningful interaction rather than utilized as a pre-determined starting point of the curriculum.

Thus, the socio-political context of students' lives is very much a part of the curriculum in the problem-posing approach. What happens within the classroom becomes a model of the process of changing *status quo* relationships. Both the form and the content of ESL instruction challenge the traditional role of subordination and silence of adult learners.

Dr. Elsa Auerbach is an instructor in ESL at UMass-Boston. She has worked as an assembler in the electronics and auto industries and taught ESL to adults through union-sponsored programs.

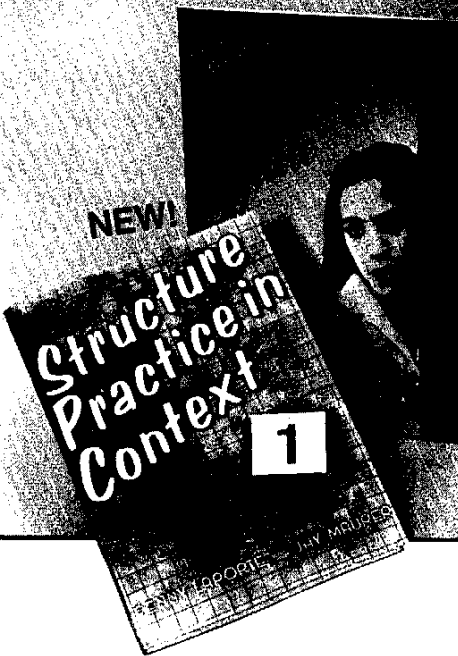
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ESL and the Business World, or, You Know More Than You Think

by Joyce Neu

Last fall, after 12 years of teaching ESL/EFL, I applied for and got a job as consultant to the University of Southern California School of Business' Department of Business Communication. What, I wondered, did they want with an old ESL teacher? As long as they were willing to hire me, I was willing to find out.

My position was a new one — to work with American (*American!*) MBA students on improving their writing and speaking skills. I had never taught American students and though I had heard of so-called "transferable" skills, I wasn't certain just how transferable ESL was to ENL (English as a Native Language).

Now, after almost 2 semesters with the Business Communication Department, I would like to encourage other ESL people interested in business to get out and offer their skills to the business community — be it in a school or company setting.

Our skills as ESL teachers are transferable,

and those of us who have had the opportunity of teaching ESP courses are just that much ahead. Companies such as Sperry are in the forefront in offering in-house workshops on active listening strategies. If you look at what these "active listening" workshops consist of, you'll see such things as "paraphrasing, summarizing, giving verbal and nonverbal feedback, taking notes," etc. None of these things should be new to the ESL teacher who's taught listening skills.

In the School of Business, one of the main problems is that students get out of the program with the content knowledge, but are unable to express it. Part of my work there is helping American students write business reports and case studies. We look at such things as "statement of the problem" (otherwise known as the thesis statement), "mechanics" (grammar), "executive summaries" (abstracts), etc. Not only do we ESL teachers have the skills necessary to deal with such issues involving native speakers, but we offer an additional bonus to the business world: we have experience dealing with many different cultural groups. As I have found in my work, my experience with international students appears to be unique in this environment. With more and more international students and workers coming into this country, and more and more schools and companies becoming aware of not only their language problems, but their cultural ones as well, ESL teachers should be able to find a whole new market for their skills.

Joyce Neu has also taught in Mass. at Harvard's English for Foreigners Program.

More Books!

At Last, A Truly Useful Dictionary! — Longman's User-Friendly Dictionary

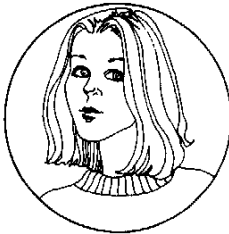
by Charlo Maurer

In the endless battle to keep native languages out of the ESL classroom, we are now presented with a dictionary which can help squeeze out the bilingual counterparts while being helpful, clear, and comprehensible.

With the publishing of *Longman Dictionary of American English*, the dictionary problem has diminished substantially. (In fact, the dictionary was published in 1978; however, not until last year did it come out in paperback.) By defining its 38,000 words with a vocabulary of only 2,000 words, students at all but the lowest of levels should be able to look up an unfamiliar word and understand the definition in English.

When this dictionary is compared with other English-English dictionaries, many advantages become apparent to the ESL student. As mentioned earlier, the definitions are much simpler in vocabulary and sentence structure. There are many example sentences, although not for every word, which show the student how they are used. Without such examples, a student may know the definition,

(Continued on page 12)



Susan, daughter of powerful businessman Preston Wade, is caught in the struggle between her father and the tenants of Tudor Village. Does she help him or her boyfriend Jeff Ryan in the fight?

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The Educational Research Quarterly (ERQ), published by the USC School of Education, will devote its 1984 special issue to the topic of culture and language education outside the continental US. The issue, scheduled for publication in April, will consist of ten articles on how educators and governments outside the continental US deal with the schooling of their minority children. Minority takes on a different meaning—in Alaska, Hawaii and Guam, minority language children are the indigenous peoples. In Puerto Rico, they are English speaking migrants from the US. In Canada, they are French or Ukrainian speakers. In Australia they are the Aborigines and in New Zealand, they are the Maoris.

Pre-publication costs are \$7.25/single copy, \$6.50/2-10 copies, \$5.50/10-20 copies. Post-publication costs are \$9.00/single copy,

\$8.00/2-10 copies, \$7.00/10-20 copies. Class sets of 20 or more are available at a sizable discount. If you subscribe to ERQ now, you will receive the special issue as well as 3 regular issues. Subscription rates are \$17.50/domestic and \$27.50/foreign. For more information or to order please write: ERQ, USC School of Education, Waite Phillips Hall 703D/T, Los Angeles, CA 90089-0031.

The Center for Training of International Cultural and Technical Assistants (CFECTI) has recently produced a filmed case study *Of Teachers and Grades*. CFECTI is mandated by the French Ministry of Foreign Relations to prepare and aid French technical personnel on assignment abroad, particularly in North Africa. The 20 minute film was conceived to help the trainees become more aware of the "intercultural" side of new experiences. The starting point of the case is a situation teachers are well familiar with—the need to evaluate students' work. Grading can become bewildering when transposed to an unfamiliar cultural context, in which the system of selection and the pressure from the various social groups concerned differ from uses back home.

The film is not a catalogue of courses for action: it ends before a solution is found to the teacher's predicament. This case study has been tested for over a year on teachers assigned to North Africa, but can be used with various other kinds of personnel who are emigrating to different cultures.

The film can be ordered in English, French or Bilingual, for a 3/4", VHS, Betamax, or

V2000 and with a NT, SC, PAL or SECAM. The videocassette is 1500FF each; accompanying booklet, 30FF and shipping charge, 100FF. (Check your bank for the daily exchange rate.) International money orders are accepted. Please make check payable to Foundation Nationale des Sciences Politiques. Reprinted from SIETAR Communiqué.

Congratulations to . . .

Vivian Zamel on being chosen Book Review Editor for the *TESOL Quarterly*.

Donaldo Macedo, Amy Sayles and Lynn Stevens on the recent births of their daughters.

Paul Krueger on being named ATESL Representative for NAFSA (National Association for Foreign Student Affairs). Paul is now working on NAFSA's Fall Conference, October 23-4 at the Park Plaza Hotel in New Haven. Call him at 437-2455 if you're interested in making a presentation.

Barbara Swartz and Rick Smith on signing a contract with Prentice Hall for their book. *This Is A Recording*.

Linda Darman on the reprinting of her *MAT-SOL Newsletter* article in the *TESOL Newsletter*.

Ellie Holstein on her State Dept. assignment to Caracas, Venezuela.

Richard Newman on his retirement from directing the U. Mass Graduate Program in ESL and Bilingual Education.

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Rob Gogan

(Continued from page 1)

M: How much universal appeal do you think your books have?

R: I think they are interesting to fairly broad cross-sections of people. *Natural Wonders* is good for people interested in the outdoors. *Engineering Triumphs*... good for engineering types, and also business types. You know, technology is the marriage of science and business, and the application of science to achieve practical ends, and so there is a lot of money talk in it, too. *Great Inventions* tells a very human story. In the exercises I try to encourage original thinking on the part of students — learning language through games.

M: Do you have any pointers that you might like to suggest to teachers who are using or plan to use any of your books?

R: In using *Natural Wonders*, teachers should bring in a lot of pictures, ask the students about their native countries. And you can do a lot of sharing of information.

I have taught certain chapters of each of my books repeatedly, so I have a lot of tricks up my sleeve, but all teachers evolve their own ways of getting materials across. I particularly like the exercises that get the kids working together in groups, in competitions, and role plays based on readings. One exercise is in the chapter in *Engineering Triumphs* called "The Interstate Highway System: The Long Road." I set up a model city on the floor using cuisinaire rods and other props, and I have different roles. I say, "OK, we've got to build a highway from this end of town to that end of town." It helps the students relate to the difficult

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job of making a democratic decision on how to do a very large-scale civic improvement project.

I've found that students get very excited when their field of expertise is touched on in English, and they can apply the knowledge that they have in their native language, and really stretch their English to the maximum, and help it grow. They're experts, and they really want to share what they know.

M: What kinds of feedback have you gotten from field testing of your books?

R: One thing I've heard pretty consistently from people is that there's one chapter in *Natural Wonders* where maybe I was trying to stretch the language a little too far. I was trying to explain the process of mineral accumulation in Yellowstone Park, Mammoth Hot Springs. It's kind of a tricky thing to understand, but to explain that all in the present tense is very tough.

M: I know you're quite busy now in your present administrative position, but do you anticipate any new book projects for the not-too-distant future?

R: Well, one thing that I would love to do ever since I did research for *Great Inventors* on the Wright brothers is a book about brothers who collaborated to achieve something great, like the Wright brothers, the brothers Grimm, George and Ira Gershwin. Vincent Van Gogh and his brother Theo worked together. Neither one could have achieved what they did without the support of the other... That's something I think would have universal appeal because it has the family story and the family relationship which everyone can relate to, no matter what culture.

M: Do you have any advice to give to aspiring writers of ESL texts?

R: Well, I think you have to write about something that interests you in everyday life outside of the classroom and then pick some subset of that. You have to select the level of difficulty. There's no market for advanced, or not much of one, or intermediate. It has to be low level. If someone can write a good beginning text, a reading text, it'll be used very widely. The closer you get to advanced skill areas, the less need there is for specialized ESL materials. You can just look at native-speaker materials and adapt them. The next step is to write a sample chapter and propose an outline that you could realistically expect to see in the book and you could see yourself completing. One of the most important things you've got to do in putting together a reading text is make it usable. Write it so that the instructor could walk into a classroom with this book and tell the students to start reading, and get an hour's worth of activities, games, conversation and reading out of it.

M: How would you say writing ESL texts has changed your perspective on teaching?

R: It's made me a lot more critical of the reading materials to be used in my ESL class. It's made me think about a lot more ways that reading material can be used in the language classroom. If you can reward the knowledge that students have, build on that with reading materials, then you can really do them a great service.

Mark Stepler teaches at ALA-Babson College.

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Professional Presentation

(Continued from page 3)

Before, during, and after this process of putting together a proposal, you may ask yourself, "Why bother?" The answers to that question will undoubtedly vary from individual to individual. Some may be fulfilling professional obligations; others may wish to provide a forum for others to join together to discuss a topic of common interest. No matter what the initial motivation might be, a presenter will find the experience satisfying. Sharing one's ideas with colleagues is stimulating and rewarding no matter which side of the podium one happens to be on.

Monica Maxwell is an Instructor at Georgetown University and has taught in the Harvard Summer Program for the last four years.

Additional reading:

TESOL second Vice-President, Jean McConochie, and Newsletter Editor, Alice Osman, were kind enough to send along some suggestions from past issues of *TESOL Newsletter*:

F. Dubin, "The Conference Paper as an Oral Script: Writing-To-Be-Heard," *TN*, Feb. 1980.

M. Kaplan, "Conference Paper Presentation: Step-By-Step Procedures," *TN*, Dec. 1981.

M. Kimball and A. Palmer, "Making Your Abstract Concrete: How to get the Message Across in 250 Words," *TN*, June 1979.

R. Yorkey, "How to Prepare and Present a Professional Paper," *TN*, Feb. 1978.

R. Yorkey, "A Workshop Is Work," *TN*, Feb. 1979.

Dictionary

(Continued from page 9)

and the word form (noun, verb, . . .), yet may not be able to produce a logical sentence.

Longman has included a useful set of grammatical abbreviations which accompany the entries. "U" and "C" represent uncountable and countable nouns. "T" and "I" tell the student whether a verb is transitive or intransitive. In addition, entries mention gerund vs. infinitive use, or placement of adverbs and adjectives in a sentence.

Helpful hints at the bottom of appropriate pages suggest that particular sounds may be represented by different spellings, in case the student is way off course. For example, it might be noted that /f/ may also be spelled "ph." Other pages contain "study notes" on adjective position, conjunctions, irregular verbs, modals, and other grammatical points.

Included at the end of many entries are notes which make cross references. These inform the student about antonyms as well as related words which may be useful, such as synonyms or others that could cause confusion through subtle distinctions. "More" sends the reader to compare this with "less." Another example is that "hurt" says to see the word "wound." Many traditional dictionaries use a particular word to define an unknown word, which, in turn, is defined with the original unknown word — e.g., A morsel is a tasty tidbit; a tidbit is a choice morsel.) There is none of that in Longman's.

The greatest aid that the *Longman Dictionary* offers is a dictionary skills workbook. Placed before the word entries, these thirty pages teach one how to alphabetize, to understand the pronunciation table, to choose between spelling differences, and to comprehend all

the abbreviations used. A good week of classwork could be spent on this.

The dictionary's weaknesses are insignificant by comparison. Fewer words are defined than in other English-English dictionaries — 38,000 in comparison to 50,000. The study notes and illustrations, though listed in the table of contents, could easily be missed if the student is not shown where they are. Finally, speaking practically, the dictionary costs \$5.95, a good three dollars over the rest. Its large size could also be a hindrance. Will your students bother to bring it to class?

Although bilingual and other English-English dictionaries are cheaper, smaller, and perhaps friendlier, after a good introduction to the *Longman Dictionary*, I am sure students and teachers alike will see its value. With its simplified definitions and its helpful notes, it is an asset to any classroom. Now, teachers can truly stick to their guns of nothing-but-English in the classroom, and students can still have a faithful dictionary.

Charlo Maurer teaches at the American Language Academy-Babson College.

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