

# MATSOL NEWSLETTER

Massachusetts Association Of Teachers Of English To Speakers Of Other Languages

VOL. 17, NO. 1

SPRING/SUMMER 1990

## Gender and Tender: Women and Compensation in ESL

*Fred Turner*

Imagine, just for a moment, that women were not allowed to teach ESL. They could be secretaries or nurses or anything else they wanted, but when it came to the classroom, only men would be admitted. If most of those men (like most of the women actually teaching ESL in Massachusetts these days) had earned at least a Master's Degree, had taught for at least 7 years, and were nearing their 40th birthdays, they would think of themselves as professionals and believe me, they would expect to be treated as such.

If you attended MATSOL's Spring Conference, of course, you know all of this is fantasy. One look around the ballroom would have told you that the great majority of ESL teachers are women. Having been one of the few male teachers at that meeting, I've developed the sneaking suspicion that many of those who employ ESL teachers often pay us less than we're worth, offer us less job security than we deserve, and withhold benefits that we need simply because they know

*Continued on page 4*

## Victory Garden: An Active Learning Project for Adult Cambodian Refugees

*Michele Perigard McEachern*

The ESL instructor who works with adults seeking basic literacy and survival skills encounters these students both in their present context and with a window into their past.

Many refugees struggle to acquire a new language while they attempt to heal the scars resulting from the loss of family, work, and land.

A Cambodian class of beginning English speakers repeatedly spoke of the longing for their simpler agrarian past. In drawings, oral histories, and life experience activities springing from photos of their native country, it became clear to me and to co-teacher Ro euth San that the reality of living in a city was an additional hardship for them to endure.

Compounding our concern was the additional knowledge acquired from the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health indicating that Cambodians suffer the highest number of trauma experiences of any refugee group, with consequent frequent depression and anxiety. We realized that we needed to be strong promoters of mental health in the classroom. This we could

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ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS  
OF ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF  
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The *MATSOL Newsletter* is published three times a year. It is available through membership in MATSOL. Articles, reviews, letters, and other contributions are welcome. A writer's request for final approval is honored whenever possible. Send material to:

Ruth Spack  
100 Salisbury Road  
Brookline, MA 02146

Articles should be typed and double-spaced. Please include bio-data and phone number.

*Next deadline: August 1, 1990*

*From the President*

**Massachusetts Needs Mary**

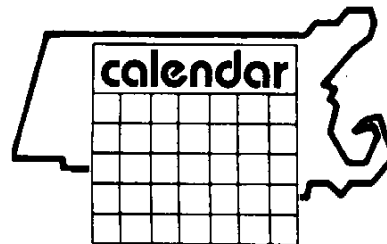
In the two years that Mary Doolin served as MATSOL treasurer, she streamlined the membership process, aggressively getting dues paid on time, and built up the MATSOL treasury. What spare time she had was spent accounting for every MATSOL penny, sending out timely notices, and keeping records that an exacting bank examiner would praise. How many hours she spent on MATSOL regular business and MATSOL conferences is not known, but many of us believe that they often equalled or exceeded her working hours as a teacher in Newton.

Some of the benefits MATSOL will now be able to offer its members, such as this expanded newsletter, a soon-to-be-published MATSOL brochure, and some as-yet-to-be-determined MATSOL grants, can be directly attributed to Mary's devotion, thrift, and expertise.

And so, if Mary Doolin ever decides to run for Treasurer of the Commonwealth, those of us who have had the opportunity to work with her will be out on the street corners collecting signatures.

On behalf of the MATSOL Board and the membership, I would like to publicly thank Mary for putting us very much in the black.

*Catherine Sadow*



1990

**MATSOL '90 Fall Conference**

Date: October 27  
Place: Middlesex Community  
College (Lowell)

**NAFSA Bi-Regional Conference**

Date: Oct. 28-31  
Place: Atlantic City (NJ)  
Sands Hotel

**NNETSOL Fall Conference**

Date: November 3  
Place: New Hampshire College

**Boston University Conference on  
Language Development**

Date: October 19-21  
Place: Boston University

**MaFLA Fall Conference**

Date: Nov. 2-3  
Place: Boston Marriott,  
Burlington

**Modern Language Association  
"Responsibilities for Literacy"**

Date: September 13-16  
Place: Pittsburgh (PA) Hilton and  
Towers

MATSOL welcomes the new Job Bank Coordinator, Margo Downey, 1220 Adams St. #207, Dorchester, MA 02124. For information about the Job Bank, call Margo at (617) 296-8348.

*Typesetting:* Bartleby Scriveners. *Printing:* Sir Speedy, Brookline.

# The MATSOL '90 Spring Conference



On Friday, March 30 and Saturday, March 31, 1990, Northeastern University hosted the largest MATSOL conference ever held, chaired by Catherine Sadow. Over 500 people came to hear speakers and presenters from several states, including Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, and Texas, and



were treated to comments from the new Czechoslovakian Ambassador to the United States.

Many participants came early and took advantage of a breakfast of donuts, danish, bagels and cream cheese; explored 20 tables of publishers' exhibits; spoke with recruiters from the Peace Corps and the American Field Service; signed up for the Job Bank; and read through a beautifully-designed conference booklet to choose among 49 sessions to attend. The 49 sessions included 4 rap sessions, 5 publishers' demonstrations, and presentations on films, books, materials development, course design, summer programs, language learning games, special education, research studies and techniques, writing, reading, grammar, TOEFL preparation, teacher education, immigration, group activities, Soviet students, multicultural awareness, and union organizing.

Some of the highlights of the conference are reported on in more detail in this issue of the *MATSOL Newsletter*.

## "Who's in Charge?" Report on Plenary Address

*Ruth Spack*

Ann Raimes, Professor of English at Hunter College and author of several textbooks, including the recently published *How English Works: A Grammar Handbook with Readings*, spoke to an overflowing audience on Saturday at the MATSOL '90 Spring Conference about "Writing and Language Learning: New Concerns in a New Decade."

### Changes in writing instruction

Professor Raimes began her talk by discussing the enormous changes that have taken place in the teaching of writing since the 1960s. In reaction to a rules-governed approach, the 1970s embraced a process-centered approach that offered students the opportunity to grapple with ideas for themselves. Often misunderstood as an approach that ignored the product -- the essay that had to be evaluated -- it nevertheless did include concern for accuracy of language, but at later stages in the writing process than had previously been the case.

The process approach came under fire in the 1980s when it was associated primarily with personal writing. Critics, suggesting that freedom for personal expression does not constitute academic writing, focused instead on teaching students the conventions and formats of particular academic assignments, including essay examinations. Raimes claims that such an approach, which resorts to the safety of models and rules, is a narrow characterization of what it means to be a writer in the academic community. She maintains that rather than taking extremist positions, teachers and researchers should seek compromise and consolidation. Personal writing should be seen not as an end in itself but as part of a process of exploration of the subject matter of any course.

### Ideology of writing instruction

The polarization and controversy that Professor Raimes has observed in two decades of writing about and teaching second language composition has led her to agree with Alistair Pennycook's recent observation in the *TESOL Quarterly* (December, 1989) that all language teaching is inherently political. Drawing on James Berlin's September 1988 *College English* article (September, 1988) and borrowing his terminology, Raimes focused on the concept of power in the ideology of three rhetorics that have emerged in classroom practices. Those who adopt an *expressionistic ideology*, viewing writing as a creative act whose product is the expression of one's true self, see power as invested in the individual. Those who adopt a *cognitivist ideology*, viewing writing as a problem solving phenomenon that allows writers to realize pre-determined goals (but not deliberate about their value), see power as invested in the system of the institution. Those who adopt a *socio-epistemic ideology*, viewing writing as an act of critical examination, see power as invested in the individual and the academic community, allowing students and teachers and their shared experience to interact within a social framework as they work together to shape the classroom and become agents of change.

### Taking charge of our teaching

Raimes then got to the heart of her talk as she asked us to explore our own ideology and ask ourselves, "What are we teaching and why? Whose interests do we serve?"

*Continued on page 5*

## **Gender and Tender** *Continued from page 1*

that most of us are women. I am not accusing specific universities, school systems, businesses and government agencies of discriminating against specific women -- the process is much too subtle for that. I'm simply suggesting that like special education or social work, ESL has come to be seen as women's work and that like those professions, it systematically undercompensates its practitioners.

In 1986, data from a survey of some 120 MATSOL members conducted by Paul Krueger and Eileen Prince of Northeastern University suggested how the preponderance of women in the field could affect overall compensation levels. 20% of the survey's respondents were men. Fully 74% of those men earned more than \$19,000 per year as teachers or administrators. In contrast, only 43% of the women made as much. And when it came to benefits, a similar picture emerged. 70% of the men had some form of health insurance, while only 51% of the women did. 40% of the men belonged to some sort of union; for women, the figure was 31%. In fact, to quote Krueger and Prince, "For every benefit with the exception of tenure, males fared better than females."

So why are men in ESL getting more than their female colleagues? Some have suggested it's because they need more. After all, 52% of the men answering the Krueger/Prince survey were the sole heads of households, whereas most women (63%) lived in two income households. According to this line of thought, most women in ESL have partners who bring home substantial incomes and substantial benefits. As "dependent" spouses, they simply don't need the same compensation "independent" men do.

Likewise, it is commonly assumed that women do not need to work full time. I've heard it said that many women will want to stay home part of the day with their children, or, if their children are at school, will want to be there when they get home. If they don't have children, they want "free" time, time their husbands' presumably large incomes can pay for.

In fact, these arguments are insulting. Just because a woman may have a husband who earns a good salary doesn't mean that she should be paid less for her work. Nor does the fact that a person may not need to work full time to pay the bills mean that those who want to work full time should be denied the chance to do so. As the Krueger/Prince survey showed, there are plenty of women who must support themselves (43% of respondents) and plenty more who must at least help to support dependents (34%).

In male-dominated fields, the question of compensation has nothing to do with the question of need. Would Chrysler even think of paying Lee Iococca \$15,000 a year just because that was all he needed to live on? And if they did, would Lee Iococca take the job?

Of course not. But semester after semester, year after year, universities offer women with advanced degrees and years of experience short term contracts with few, if any, benefits. Language schools, businesses, and government agencies offer

those same women \$10 per hour and no contract at all. And lo and behold, the women take the jobs, often gratefully! (True, some men take them too. But after a few years, it's the rare man who hasn't become an administrator or left the field altogether.)

I suspect that what's really happening here has less to do with how employers perceive their female employees' needs than with how those employees perceive themselves. Over the

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last few years, I've met a number of extremely competent and highly qualified female ESL teachers who are working for very little money. Although they like their jobs, they frequently complain about their low salaries and lack of benefits. But do they do anything about it? Do they even take the first tiny step of asking for a raise?

Rarely. Somewhere in the back of their minds a little voice destroys their confidence. It tells them that they are lucky to have work at all, let alone work they like; that they don't really need the money; and that they just might not deserve a raise anyway.

Most men don't have that voice. That's one reason why I believe that if only men taught ESL, ESL teachers would be offered much more full-time work for much better pay and far better benefits. Until women in the field see themselves as highly qualified and undervalued professionals, until they stop taking what other people think they need and begin to demand what they deserve, ESL teachers everywhere, men and women, will continue to be grossly undercompensated.

*Fred Turner teaches ESL in the Extension School at Harvard University.*

The MATSOL Newsletter invites commentary on current trends or practices in the ESL profession. It also welcomes responses or rebuttals to any articles or remarks published in the Newsletter. Permission to reprint must be obtained from the editors or individual authors.

## MATSOL '90 Spring Conference— *continued*

### **Victory Garden** *Continued from page 1*

achieve in part by fostering a stress-free atmosphere, facilitating a climate conducive to sharing and the rehearsal of coping skills, and recognizing that prior experiences of the students could serve as a bridge to new learning.<sup>1</sup>

Recognizing that all of the students were farmers in Cambodia, we decided as a class to plant a garden. We were able to obtain the last of the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture seeds for urban gardeners. My backyard, in an adjacent town, was an ideal location. In early May, the students took the seeds home to soak, and the next day, they lovingly tilled the dark earth, created raised beds, lined out perfectly parallel rows, and PLANTED! The rest (with the proper mix of sunshine, rationed watering after sundown, and TLC) is history. Weekly visits to weed and eventually harvest the abundant Chinese watercress, oriental and local vegetables were reinforced in class with lessons on supermarket shopping, dialogues about food, and a host of related activities. Photos and slides were taken regularly to document the project and to inspire writings.

What were the outcomes of this learning through experiencing?<sup>2</sup> Primarily, on a personal basis, there were evident gains in self-confidence and positive affective change. It was a truly happy time, and undoubtedly the best thing we

ever did together as a class. Literacy-related actions included affirming students' identity through the use of first language. The activity became inter-generational, as various family members shared in the work and the fun. There was also a renewed sense of pride in the Khmer language and culture.

With spring warming our classroom windows we are again preparing to plant a garden, a small symbol of victory--of overcoming obstacles, of sinking roots into this new land.

<sup>1</sup> See *Preventive Mental Health in the ESL Classroom: A Handbook for Teachers*, ed. by Michael Paul (E. Providence: Connors, 1986).

<sup>2</sup> Elsa Auerbach's book, *Making Meaning, Making Change: A Guide to Participatory Curriculum Development for Adult ESL and Family Literacy* (U Mass, Boston: 1990) is particularly helpful for providing tools and evaluation models.

*This article is based on a presentation given at the MATSOL Spring Conference, 1990. Michele Perigard McEachern teaches ESL and Adult Basic Education at the Harborside Community School in East Boston.*

### **Who's In Charge?** *Continued from page 3*

These questions moved the discussion from writing in particular to the larger issue of language learning, and embraced the whole audience, from elementary school teachers to adult education instructors, from administrators to the publishers' representatives who lined the walls. As the crowd strained to hear, Raimes demanded to know "Who's in charge?" The question reverberated throughout the ballroom.

"Who's in charge?" ESL teachers or content teachers? Why should we give up our content to become tutors for other academic courses? Don't we know more about teaching second language students than anyone else?

"Who's in charge?" Teachers or researchers? Why should there be a one-way flow of prescriptivist knowledge from researcher to teacher? Why can't teachers inform the research?

"Who's in charge?" Teachers or textbook authors? Why should we follow texts that present language learning as static when we know that it is a highly dynamic process? Why

shouldn't we be told the ideology of the author rather than the less political, safer "special features" of the book?

"Who's in charge?" ESL teachers or administrators and testers? Why should we spend time teaching to tests that we know do not truly measure what our students know or need to know? Why should we support the \$14 million Educational Testing Service (ETS) when it doesn't fully inform us of research procedures?

Professor Raimes emphasized that our job is diminished unless we answer that we, classroom teachers, are in charge. We need to follow our intuition and to challenge the research, textbooks, and tests that have become our mandated reality. We have knowledge and the wisdom of practice behind us, and we should use them to determine why we teach what we do.

*Ruth Spack teaches at Tufts University.*

Save the date  
MATSOL '90 FALL CONFERENCE  
Middlesex Community College, Lowell Campus  
Saturday, October 27

# Report on Nancy Cloud's Featured Presentations on Bilingual Special Education at MATSOL '90

Susan Ashkouri

Nancy Cloud, Special Assistant Professor in the Department of Curriculum and Teaching at Hofstra University, presented two sessions in her area of expertise, bilingual special education: "Distinguishing Second Language Needs From Learning Disabilities" and "Planning ESL Programs for Special Education Students." Those who attended the sessions agreed that she offered a very realistic picture.

## Definition

Professor Cloud defined special education as instruction designed for students who require some degree of modification in their educational programs because of intellectual, emotional, sensory, or physical impairments. Bilingual special education is instruction that accounts for both a particular student's disability needs and the student's second language status.

Second language students have special instructional needs because of their cultural and linguistic background and, unfortunately, these needs are often confused with disability. Improved teacher education is needed to prevent inappropriate referral to special education. Currently, however, few ESL graduate programs provide cross-over training in special education, and few special education programs address the needs of LEP students.

Cloud also emphasized the importance of distinguishing between "at risk" (undereducated, highly mobile, comparably limited) LEP children and children with learning disabilities. She described different kinds of "at risk" students and said that a child can be thought of as learning disabled if there is a pattern or problem which cuts across codes.

## Assessment

Cloud noted that it is difficult to achieve validity for second language students using formal testing. Typically, bilingual children may be assessed using measures of nonverbal skills. Since most school tasks are highly verbal, nonverbal measures provide schools with inadequate information for program planning. Professor Cloud placed emphasis instead on the usefulness of the observation and input of teachers working on a daily basis with the LEP child being evaluated. If a non ESL/Bilingual teacher refers a second language student to the special education program, the student should undergo psychological testing conducted by qualified bilingual/bicultural evaluators familiar with the influence of second language status on the assessment process.

## Unique problems

The special education process for LEP students presents unique problems. For example, in most school systems, the special education process requires that the parents advocate for their children. But language minority children usually have language minority parents, and these parents may not understand

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**Special education instruction for an LEP student is not the same as special education instruction for a native English-speaking child with a similar impairment. Equally, second language instruction for a child with an impairment cannot be the same as second language instruction for an LEP child with no impairment.**

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the school system or the process of parental advocacy and intervention in American schools. Therefore, they may not be able to help plan an adequate program for their child.

## Need for collaboration

Professor Cloud believes that essential to a constructive process of evaluation, program planning, and program execution for LEP children is collaboration among professionals from different disciplines. The service providers (the special education teacher and the ESL/bilingual teacher) need to have access to each other's expertise. Special education instruction for an LEP student is not the same as special education instruction for a native English-speaking child with a similar impairment. Equally, second language instruction for a child with an impairment cannot be the same as second language instruction for an LEP child with no impairment. The special education teacher and the ESL/bilingual teacher also need access to the body of knowledge and experience offered by other specialists (e.g., the reading specialist, the math specialist, the speech therapist, the social worker, the school psychologist). It is the responsibility of the school to make collaboration among professionals possible, to provide time for them to consult with one another and to share their knowledge so that they can intelligently modify the service offered to the child.

*Susan Ashkouri teaches in the Newton Public Schools.*

## Words of Welcome: The Czechoslovakian Ambassador at MATSOL '90

Ruth Spack

*She was a girl scout in New York. Later, she was a persecuted dissident in Czechoslovakia. Now, Rita Klimova is Ambassador to the U.S.*

Two days after Ambassador Rita Klimova spoke in the ballroom during the social hour, the above words summarizing her life appeared in the *New York Times Magazine*. Many MATSOL attendees who had listened to her brief comments about Czechoslovakia and the country's need for a new educational system (and for energetic language teachers) were unaware of the eventful background of this self-described "exotic creature."

Escaping Hitler's wrath, Klimova and her family fled their homeland and arrived in New York in 1939. From third through ninth grades, she was "completely American," reciting the Pledge of Allegiance and eating hot dogs and hamburgers. After the Allied victory, she reluctantly returned to Prague in 1946, where her parents worked to build Socialism. At 17, she joined the Communist Party for what she claimed were social, not socialist, reasons (she wanted to meet boys).

Eventually, she became a true believer ("I swallowed the ideology hook, line and sinker") and was rewarded with a fine education and an invitation to teach at Prague's prestigious Charles University, where she lectured on the history of economic thought and the economics of Anglo-Saxon countries. However, in the early 1960s, when Czechoslovakia's economy stopped growing, she found that Western, not Marxist, analyses were most credible; and by the time the Soviets in-

vaded Czechoslovakia in 1968, she had become completely disillusioned with Communism.

In 1970, she lost her party card and her job. She managed

to find work as a freelance English interpreter; many of her colleagues were forced to work at manual labor. Klimova and her family, now human rights activists, were often harassed. As the government stepped up its repression of dissident activity, she faded from the political scene.

Much later, through her son's involvement in clandestine activities, Klimova again became active, helping to bring forbidden equipment and materials into the country and reviving an old, politically independent Czechoslovakian newspaper. When, much to her surprise, the prospects for change in the country looked promising, it took her "30 seconds to accept" the ambassadorship to the United States.

Having spoken with an eclectic group of celebrities since becoming ambassador, including Frank Zappa, Joan Didion, and Barbara Walters, Klimova was only too happy to speak to the participants of the MATSOL '90 Spring Conference. Her mission is to convince Americans that Czechoslovakia is undergoing fundamental change; her goal is to recruit investors, establish political and cultural ties, and promote tourism. The resounding applause she received indicated that what she calls her "perfect New York Jewish English" was perfectly understood by the MATSOL audience.



Rita Klimova

### *Congratulations to . . .*

*Francis Bailey, Ph.D.* candidate at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, who received an Albert H. Marckwardt Travel Grant from TESOL. The grant assists graduate students traveling to a TESOL convention.

*Andrea Nash, Ann Cason, Madeline Rhum, Loren McGrail, and Rosario Gomez-Sanford,* teachers in the UMass Family Literacy Project, who received the first annual Mary Finocchiaro Award for Excellence in the Development of Pedagogical Materials. Their award-

winning book, *Talking Shop: A Sourcebook for Participatory Adult ESL*, and other publications of the UMass Family Literacy Project, may be ordered from Barbara Graceffa, Bilingual ESL Graduate Studies, UMass Harbor Campus, Boston, MA 02125. Telephone: 617/287-5760.

The *Albert H. Marckwardt* Memorial Fund and the *Mary Finocchiaro* Fund were established and are maintained through the contributions of TESOL members.

## From High School to College ESL

Alicia Russell

During her senior year in high school, Trinh applied to and was accepted by Northeastern University. Since she'd studied English for three years in a high school ESL program, she thought she'd be taking academic classes full time. But, based on the scores of English proficiency tests she had to take when she was accepted at NU, she was placed in two ESL classes.

Many permanent residents find themselves in Trinh's position when they begin college. Although they can speak well and understand everything they hear, they can't read and write well enough to do college work. Since they've done well in their high school ESL classes and can communicate orally, they're surprised and frustrated when they are forced to continue with special English classes. They feel they could better prepare themselves in English if they knew the college matriculation requirements they'd face.

To help high school ESL teachers prepare their students, a panel of Boston area community college and university administrators and teachers described their programs and testing procedures at the MATSOL '90 Spring Conference.

Panel members included Alicia Russell, Northeastern University (moderator); Wendy Schoener and Vivian Zamel, Uni-

versity of Massachusetts/Boston; Ralph Radell, Bunker Hill Community College; and Manju Hertzog, Roxbury Community College.

Entrance requirements for non-native speakers vary with the college or university. Some require a TOEFL score, others use a writing sample, and still others give a battery of proficiency tests. When high school ESL students decide which school they want to apply to, they should find out what its English requirements are. Students who plan to attend a university or college that gives assessment tests can prepare by taking timed tests, such as TOEFL practice tests. All prospective freshmen need strong reading, writing, and grammar skills and should broaden their knowledge of western culture since test items are often based on cultural information.

High school and higher education ESL teachers who are interested in exchanging information about their students and programs may contact Alicia Russell at 617/437-2457.

*This article is based on a panel presentation given at the MATSOL Spring Conference, March, 1990. Alicia Russell teaches at the English Language Center at Northeastern University.*

## The Newspaper, the ESL Student, and the Itinerant Teacher

Lisa Santagate

Many systems that operate an ESL "pull-out" program have only one teacher who works with all the ESL students in many different schools. For this reason, many students have ESL lessons only once or twice a week. With school holidays and special events taking place, oftentimes continuity is lacking.

Charged by my own teaching situation in an ESL "pull-out" program, I designed materials for a situation in which issues of time, space and money pose serious impediments to successful teaching. "The Newspaper and the ESL Student" is a set of materials which, as the title suggests, links the newspaper as a learning tool with students of English as a Second Language. The set consists of 27 unit envelopes (3 units for each grade level, kindergarten through grade 8), each of which contains a lesson plan for a thirty to forty-five minute lesson, student objectives, and the appropriate section of the newspaper.

While easily used by a classroom

teacher, the set is more ideally suited for an itinerant teacher. Each lesson is designed to be as inclusive as possible. All lesson plans are straightforward and self-explanatory; exercises are to the point. The lessons can accommodate one student or a small group of students. The envelopes address the issue of a shifting workspace, a problem for many travelling teachers.

"The Newspaper and the ESL Student" also addresses the problems of money and materials. The newspaper is an inexpensive, available vehicle full of current events and relevant local information. One newspaper is enough for a large number of lesson plans, not to mention a stimulating "idea bank" for future lesson plans. The newspaper provides an excellent framework for the ESL teacher, allowing the instructor to set up a more student-centered approach to learning.

The majority of the lessons revolve around writing, and the writing sug-

gested is more process-oriented than product-oriented. Some of the unit highlights include using the comics, creating advertisements for silly products, writing headlines, writing captions for newspaper photos, and applying for jobs listed in the "Help Wanted" section of the paper.

Some of the creative/critical thinking responses elicited from the students may prove to be surprising and quite sophisticated. Using the newspaper as an idea bank almost guarantees fantastic feedback. The students develop good skills using a familiar resource, and they also have fun!

*This article is based on a presentation given at the MATSOL Spring Conference, March 1990. Lisa Santagate teaches in the Dedham Public Schools. (Those interested in the materials should contact Lisa at P.O. Box 426, Cambridge, MA 02140.)*



# Exchange Teachers Visit MATSOL '90

*Michele Perlgard McEachern and Bambi Good*

First-time visitors to the MATSOL '90 Spring Conference included several teachers presently participating in an Intercultural Exchange program in the U.S. through the American Field Service (AFS). This program provides opportunities for teachers of English in non-English-speaking countries to observe American teachers in action in a variety of subjects including English, ESL, and foreign languages. According to Marcia Franson, the director of AFS New England, the program truly lives up to its name. While learning from their American counterparts, visiting teachers share their talents and cultures generously with their hosts.

## **From Argentina...**

Silvina Montrul has taught English to children, adolescents, and adults in her native Argentina. The "varied and exciting" experiences of working with such a range of students prepared her well for her assignment at a mid-western high school, where she is sharing her knowledge of geography and Latin American civilization. Silvina has discovered that teaching methods are very similar here

and in her country. She observes that the level of motivation differs, however, in that learning a second language does not seem to be viewed as a necessity by secondary school students in the U.S. Advantages in her present school include the abundance of materials available and the added reinforcement of daily classes.

## **From Brazil...**

Two instructors from Brazil with similar teaching backgrounds face different challenges in their work in this region. Besides his native Portuguese, Gustavo Gama speaks English and French, and finds himself comfortable in attempting a variety of approaches with ESL students in a northern New England boarding school. The sharing of ideas with other teachers, in particular, has provided a "good starting point" for his own professional development.

Joao Gomes feels enriched by observing classes at a metropolitan adult education center with a multicultural population. In Brazil he teaches middle and high school students English as a foreign language. Here, the adults are

preparing for the GED or better jobs and seem more eager to gain mastery of English.

## **From China...**

Feng Lan Gao has applied techniques and life experience activities acquired while teaching in China to classrooms at a suburban high school and a middle school in the U.S. She enjoys using songs and games, including ping pong, along with demonstrations of Chinese cooking and paper cutting, all to nudge her students to explore the language, history, and customs of her native land.

Franson invites other schools to sponsor a foreign teacher of English for six months or a year. Teaching ideas, cross-cultural understanding, friendship, and potential "homes abroad" are but a few of the many benefits of this exchange. For more information, contact the AFS New England office at 1-800-USA-4AFS.

*Michele McEachern teaches at the Harborside Community School in East Boston. Bambi Good teaches at the Driscoll School, Brookline.*

## PRESENTING AT MATSOL CONFERENCES

The planners of the MATSOL '90 Spring Conference worked hard to provide sessions that appealed to a variety of special interest groups and that covered a wide range of subject areas. In addition to accepting proposals, we made numerous phone calls to encourage teachers to present workshops for certain interest groups where response had been light. Our efforts paid off in 49 challenging presentations.

Given the growth of MATSOL and the record-breaking attendance at the conference, however, we need to increase the number of presentations and to reach out even further to inspire our membership — and others involved in the teaching of ESL — to submit proposals for future conferences. It is in YOUR hands to create a

conference that fulfills your needs.

We invite presentations dealing with classroom practices, teacher training, and local and state issues. We welcome proposals from teachers, graduate students, program administrators, materials and curriculum developers, and classroom facilitators. In the hope that it may energize you, we are including a short list of some potential presentation topics that conference participants requested:

- ESL and health education (especially AIDS)
- Promoting multicultural awareness among students
- The effects of poverty and illness on adult learners
- Problems associated with immigration
- Whole language and elementary education

- Cooperative learning and elementary education
- Secondary level teaching strategies
- Teacher conferencing
- Teacher collaboration and teacher research
- Jobs and funding
- Video

Many more possibilities exist, of course. We know that you are doing something that others can benefit from. Come forward. Share your ideas, problems, programs. Start thinking about the Fall Conference.

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**October 27**

# SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS: ISSUES AND UPDATES

## SIGs Rap at Matsol '90

### ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

Reported by *Anlee Schaye*

At the Elementary Interest Session on Saturday, March 31, we discussed the types of workshops that would be of interest to elementary teachers in the future. More presentations by Nancy Cloud in Special Needs ESL were requested. Some other suggestions for workshops were

- How to give a workshop
- Cultural issues in child abuse
- Cooperative learning
- Whole Language learning

Some interesting ideas were shared. One teacher had her ESL students make New Year's bells out of paper, representing many countries. Another teacher had an International Dinner and each student brought a friend. They made maps and flags of their own countries. Someone else did a project with puppets, and the students worked on their own stories with the puppets.

Elementary teachers were strongly encouraged to get actively involved in MATSOL.

### SECONDARY EDUCATION

Reported by *Stephanie Cohen*

The Secondary Interest Group met for the first time at the MATSOL '90 Spring Conference. Sufficient interest was expressed to warrant a continuation of group meetings and to publish a newsletter.

Discussion at the meeting centered on such problems as how to teach within a classroom setting that includes literate students and those students who are illiterate in their first language. Other problems mentioned were how to motivate students and how to keep students from mainstreaming themselves too soon. Another concern was that because the interests and learning styles of junior high school students are different from those of high school students, their needs should be discussed separately.

Some of the people who attended the session complained that there were insufficient presentations at the conference for elementary and secondary teachers. That was countered with a plea for more participation from those teachers both as presenters and in MATSOL activities.

### HIGHER EDUCATION

Reported by *Susan Vik*

About 30 MATSOL conference participants attended the Higher Ed Rap Session, and lively discussion of several topics of interest took place. Various pedagogical and socio-political concerns, as well as issues related to working conditions and program administration/organization, were addressed.

One participant asked for sources of material for teaching American culture; several texts and other resources were offered. Teachers from several institutions that have ESL students who are U.S. residents shared ideas on how these students' special needs can best be met. This led into a discussion of the issue of whether academic credit can/should be given for ESL courses, and how this affects financial aid for students, teacher salary and tenure eligibility, and the status of ESL teaching as a profession.

Several teachers were interested in exploring ways that older, professional students could be motivated, and in the related issue of dealing with diversity in the classroom in the areas of language, culture, education and experience. This discussion prompted another participant to comment that ESL should be a two-way street, where our students are educated about American culture and also help to enlighten the American business and educational communities about the rest of the world. There were several suggestions about how to achieve this.

Finally, people shared their ideas on attendance policies and how best to implement them.

### ADULT/VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Reported by *Ellen Yaniv*

At the MATSOL '90 Spring Conference, the Adult/Vocational Education Special Interest Group held a very successful rap session with over 30 people in attendance. After brief introductions and discussions of the current concerns of Adult Ed teachers and the unique problems of the adult ed learner, we decided to break up into groups based on work environment: ESL in the workplace, agencies/centers dealing with low income education minorities, and adult education centers that have a mix of groups. Each group was free to ask each other questions, network, or simply get to know one another's programs.

Concern was also expressed about the lack of Adult Education presentations at MATSOL. The answer to this is simple: In order to have more adult ed presentations, we, the Adult Ed teachers, need to give them. A presenter doesn't have to have a lot of degrees or experience to give a good presentation -- just the interest to share something worthwhile with colleagues and a little time to organize and prepare.

Some interest was expressed concerning future meetings of this group, but nothing was set up. Anyone interested in meeting in the future or in regularly submitting something to the *MATSOL Newsletter* related to adult education should contact Ellen Yaniv at (h) 739-3329.

Workplace Education Teacher Sharing Network has monthly meetings at the ALRI in Boston. For more information, contact Joan LaMachia at 725-3360.



90  
MATSOL

Two People at Work



Refreshing interlude



Music as a second language



Learning to play/Playing to learn



Browsing the bookstalls

## Massachusetts Enriches TESOL '90

Thirty-eight Massachusetts teachers, most of whom are members of MATSOL, gave presentations at the Twenty-Fourth Annual TESOL Convention held on March 6-10, 1990 in San Francisco, California. Their names are listed here. Reports on some of the highlights of the Convention are included in this issue of the *Newsletter*.

### FEATURED PRESENTATION:

- Wilga Rivers

### COLLOQUIA:

- Rosalie P. Porter • Maggie Sokolik • Ruth Spack
- Vivian Zamel

### PAPERS:

- Paul Abraham and Nancy Clark-Chiarelli
- Elsa Auerbach • Barbara Gerner de Garcia
- Mary Hammond • Ann Hilferty
- Suzanne Irujo • Alexis Johnson and Caroline Gear
- Kathleen Kopec • Paul C. Krueger • Alice Lyons-Quinn
- Margo Miller
- Eileen Prince and Jean Mullen-Smith

- Ellen Rintell and Mary Eileen Skovholt
- Gregg L. Singer
- Jerri Willett, Francis Bailey, Terry Fuentes, Margaret Hawkins, Mary Jeannot, Melissa Johnson, Diane Sweet, and David Zuccalo

### DEMONSTRATION:

- Barbara V. Smith and Hana Prashker

### VIDEO THEATER:

- C. A. Edington and Carol Houser Pineiro

### INFORMAL DISCUSSION GROUPS SESSIONS:

- Caroline Linse
- Carol Houser Pineiro and C. A. Edington

### PUBLISHERS' SESSIONS:

- Steven Molinsky
- Catherine Sadow and Edgar Sather



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## Report on Literacy Panel at TESOL '90



*Karl Smith*

The late afternoon TESOL session moderated by Shirley Brice Heath had a lot to offer to the unsuspecting TESOL novice. Besides the basic educational experience available at any TESOL session, this presentation, entitled "The Senses(s) of Being Literate," provided the audience with exciting drama, artistic prose, and miraculously enough, insights into the teenage mind. In other words, this session highlighted the ability of young ESL students to accurately express themselves through writing and drama.

The session began with Ms. Heath giving a brief overview of the accomplishments of the Herald Program, a program that attempts to get students and teachers to reassess their strategies for and assumptions about learning. The Herald Program assumes that objective tests and in-class questions are not the only ways literacy should be promoted. Language competency can be improved, according to Heath, by having students communicate through meaningful activities, i.e., content-based exercises, as part of their school work. Experiencing a language this way gets the students profoundly involved in the language. In addition, both the students and the teachers learn about each other and learn how to accept diversity. Heath brought with her several people to attest to the success of the program.

### **Peer journals in an ESL social studies class**

First to speak was Myron Berkman, a social studies teacher at Newcomer High School, a special school set up for young, recent immigrants to San Francisco. Mr. Berkman's aim is to integrate social studies and language acquisition using peer journals in the class. He pairs students from different countries and instructs them to use the journal to discuss topics brought up in their social studies class. The students do not know their journal partner or what country the partner is from beforehand.

In the TESOL presentation, Berkman brought with him two students, one from India and one from Vietnam, who had participated in the peer journal workshop. They read excerpts from journals they had written to each other during the semester. Through the journals the students learned about each other as well as the topics that were a part of the social studies class. For example, when the movie "Gandhi" was shown in class, the Indian girl was able to answer some questions her Vietnamese partner had about the things he saw in the movie. He in turn was able to answer questions she had about Vietnam and the Vietnamese people. Their weekly correspondence also touched on issues important to any student, such as after-school activities, friends, and ways to get over a cold. Berkman concluded that writing to a partner was more revealing than writing to the teacher. By focusing on content instead of grammar, the students became more adept at expressing themselves.

Perhaps the highest praise for this method of learning came from the students themselves. When asked during a question and answer period what they had gained from peer journals,

they said they had learned about paragraph form, used new vocabulary and, perhaps most importantly, made new friends.

### **Writing workshop**

A second teacher from Newcomer High School, Lydia Stack, spoke about Beginning Writer's Workshop, where the students learn about writing by "jumping in and swimming." This method, according to Ms. Stack, allows students to improve their writing and learn about people at the same time. She began the presentation by showing a composition written by a student at the beginning of the fall semester. The composition had a fair number of spelling and syntax errors. In contrast, Stack showed a composition written by the same student at the end of the term. Clearly the writing had improved. The process involved having the students write every day, focusing on content and meaningful expression. Exercises in class helped students to correct grammar mistakes. In the end the students had a better grasp of ways to express themselves clearly and a keener understanding of how to write accurately.

### **Drama class**

Gil Sanchez, who teaches an elective drama class at Newcomer High, was the third featured speaker of the afternoon. Mr. Sanchez works with international students to develop their acting skills and guides them in their own drama productions. In class the students work with partners, writing stories and plays, developing scenes and action. Sanchez works with students to simplify vocabulary and helps them with intonation and speech patterns, i.e., when to make pauses, when (and how) to groan and sigh. He also shows them what exclamations are appropriate in English. Students from Sanchez's class did a scene from a play they had written for the TESOL audience based on the irresponsible drug use of a famous rock star. This was just one of the many dramatizations students had developed in the drama class.

Throughout the presentation the point seemed to be that interactive, content-based experiences help students become more fluent in English. Indeed, what was obvious to the casual observer at TESOL was that the students there were not just comfortable using English. What they were saying was as important and interesting as how it was said, especially since what was said was created by the students and therefore addressed their own ideas, concerns and feelings. Students taking an active interest in what they are trying to say will turn to language form in order to make themselves understood. If the competency levels displayed by the Newcomer High students who participated in Shirley Brice Heath's presentation are the norm, then certainly this approach to learning is of considerable value.

*Karl Smith teaches in the English Language Center at Northeastern University.*

# Constructing a Whole Language Teaching Perspective

*Jerri Willett*

The "Whole Language" perspective is becoming increasingly influential in the field of second-language learning and teaching (Enright & McCloskey, 1988). Whole Language is a system of beliefs about language and literacy that guides practitioners in creating facilitative learning environments. Some of the key beliefs are:

- learners actively engage in creating what they know and understand;
- language and literacy develop wholistically through using language for social purposes rather than through formal study of discrete component skills and features;
- learning and language use are collaborative actions;
- language and literacy development are facilitated by language-rich, comfortable, interactive environments in which learners are encouraged and praised for experimenting with language to accomplish what is important to them.

Unlike a method that can be taught, a whole language perspective emerges from one's experiences in social communities, and reflection on those experiences (Altweger, Edelsky & Flores, 1987).

## TESOL Methods and Materials course

With the broad goal of creating a whole language learning community, a TESOL Methods and Materials course was developed at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst with three aims: 1) to provide preservice and inservice ESL teachers with varied teaching goals and from varied backgrounds with an interactive, collaborative, heterogeneous, and supportive environment in which to explore and reflect upon whole language learning and teaching; 2) to integrate learning, teaching, mentoring and research; 3) to provide a common meeting ground for local language educators and researchers to develop personal ties, as well as a common language framework.

## Creation of a collaborative community

The course was structured to encourage the creation of a learning community in which members, by pooling resources and working collaboratively, would engage in the tasks of whole language teaching, while reflecting on the whole language principles that governed how their tasks were carried out and how the course was organized.

Briefly, the class was divided into small groups to plan and present a workshop to the class, attempting to follow the whole language principles they were learning and discussing. Each group selected one of the following broad topics around which to present a workshop: natural approach, interactive language learning, problem posing, writing process, reading with meaning, content-based instruction.

Members took full responsibility for helping their classmates understand the important ideas associated with these

topics, become aware of the variety of materials and techniques that could be used to assist learning, and understand how whole language principles would guide the uses of these approaches and techniques.

## Facilitators

Each small group had a facilitator (cooperating teachers from local schools and agencies, some of whom were also doctoral students) who provided guidance to the small group as they carried out their tasks, engaged in interactive dialogue with individuals in their group (through dialogue journals), provided feedback on how well they were functioning as a cooperative group, and provided scaffolding to help members relate their activities to the whole language principles that framed the course.

Facilitators also met as a group to provide each other with opportunities for dialogue and reflection about how to support their group members and contribute to the ongoing research. In addition, class members provided feedback to the facilitators on how well they accomplished their jobs as well as feedback to the professor who designed the overall structure of the course.

## Evaluation of the course

An outside evaluator interviewed students, examined written feedback, and interviewed facilitators to investigate how students reacted to both the course content and course process. The evaluator concluded that the vast majority of students found the course to be an excellent way to both study and experience a learner-centered, collaborative whole language methods and materials course. However, the following findings and questions emerged, which might help plan the next course: 1) International students initially reacted to the experience with shock, although ultimately it became a positive source of learning. Question: Are there better ways to support international students in their initial adjustment to the course? Question: What can be done to facilitate the international students' struggle to apply what they are learning to their own teaching situations? 2) Experienced teachers who were not facilitators found that the course, though interesting, did not fulfill their goal of being stretched further. This reaction was in sharp contrast to that of experienced teachers who were facilitators: Although these teachers were also already familiar with the basic course content, they found that they were able to think more deeply about the constructs presented in the course. Question: How can we help experienced teachers go beyond the basic course content to stretch their current understanding?

In a short space it is difficult to describe the rich environment that members of the class created together. We anticipate that the research underway will help to clarify the features of the course that contributed to the creation of this community

and the process through which members came to better understand whole language principles.

A full description of the course will be available in August by writing to Dr. Jerri Willett, School of Education, Furcolo Hall, UMass Amherst, Amherst, MA 01003. Presenters who reported on this project at TESOL '90 included: Jerri Willett, Francis Bailey, Terry Fuentes, Margaret Hawkins, Mary Jean-not, Melissa Johnson, Diane Sweet, and David Zuccalo.

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*This article is based on a paper presented at the Twenty-Fourth Annual TESOL Convention, March, 1990. Jerri Willett teaches at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.*

### Report on Thomas Scovel's TESOL '90 Featured Presentation:

## "Back to the Future: A Time for PLACE"

*Caroline Banks*

In his speech on March 7, 1990 at the San Francisco TESOL Conference, Thomas Scovel presented an overview of Second Language Learning and Teaching, with special emphasis on a set of guiding principles, a model for approaching the future.

The first part of his presentation, "Back to the Future," contained illustrations and examples of past practices in language acquisition from as far back as 1000 B.C. He noted that "if you were a learner of Gileadite as a Second Language and couldn't pronounce 'shibboleth' correctly you were dead—as in D-E-A-D." Other harsh and "direct" methods have been used over the years to ensure efficient second language learning.

The core of his talk, however, was the exposition of a set of principles, culled from past practices and confirmed in recent research. Bernard Spolsky's 1989 work, *Conditions for Second Language Learning*, was cited frequently in Scovel's enumeration of five basic principles acronymed PLACE.

Summarized, they are as follows:

1. P = People, populations.  
Language learning requires social interaction. In the future we must think about how to maximize social interaction in an institutional setting.
2. L = Language, listening to language.  
Language learning is based on listening comprehension. A biological auditory foundation makes second language learning possible.
3. A = Attention to structure  
Language acquisition requires attention to structure.

Discrete structural items must be taught; older children and adults especially need explicit examples of how one language is the same or different from another.

4. C = Cognition, contextualization

Language acquisition requires contextualization.

Learners need the opportunity to understand how the elements of language are embedded in linguistic and nonlinguistic contexts. This type of cognition can affect the rate of acquisition.

5. E = Emotion

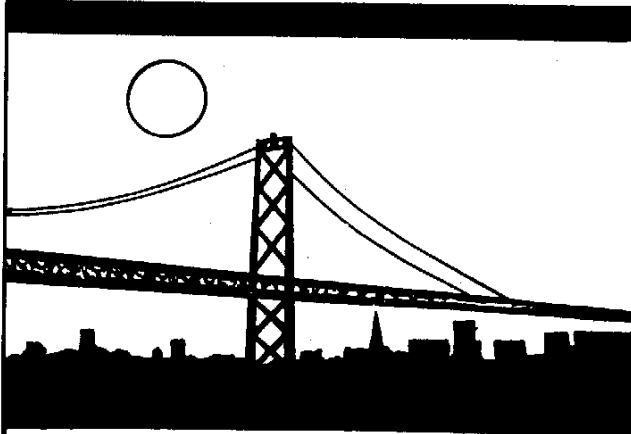
Confidence in the second language classroom breeds competence.

Scovel's talk was accompanied by a handout containing many references to research confirming the above principles, including two articles of his own, most pertinently his paper "A New Model of Acquisition: A PLACE for Attention." (23rd TESOL Convention, San Antonio, 1989).

In closing, Scovel left his listeners with several suggestions for the future. First, classrooms need to provide plenty of opportunity for social interaction, since there is no communication without people. Second, there is no meaning without form, so teachers need to provide explicit examples of how the language works. Third, there is no reason to communicate without something to say, or a person with whom to talk. Finally, being motivated to communicate grows out of belief in oneself.

*Caroline Banks teaches at Arlington (MA) High School.*

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## Library Skills for ESL High School Students

*Barbara Smith and Hana Prashker*

This program addresses both skills development and self-image issues as it teaches ESL students how to use reference materials in the school library.

"Library Skills for ESL Students" began as a component of ESL Writing II, a writing course for second year ESL students at Brockton High School. In an effort to generate content for writing assignments, we decided to try to open up the world of reference materials to our students. We found that the *World Book Encyclopedia* entries on countries all follow the same general pattern, so we began by designing a worksheet to go along with that pattern. Students at a wide range of skill levels could find and record information for use later in the classroom. Also, maps and flags, copied from the encyclopedia or an atlas, not only enriched the final written products, but allowed students with artistic skills a moment to shine.

The most exciting outcome of this program, beyond the quality of the writing students have produced, has been the change in how students view themselves and the library. The library had been a place where advanced classes went for instruction and where "real" students went to study. Now there are numbers of ESL students asking for library passes and going into the library to study and to browse. The librarians have gotten to know a few ESL students and they have begun

to identify materials that are appropriate for second language learners. Mainstream teachers who see ESL classes at work in the library have begun to realize the scope and seriousness of our teaching.

Since "Library Skills" was first developed, it has evolved to include units of study for all levels. For beginning students in ESL I and ESL History there are encyclopedia and atlas lessons that introduce the concept of citing sources. Higher levels of ESL work with the card catalogue and the *Reader's Guide* to develop bibliographies. Advanced ESL Science classes do research papers that include subject reference materials in addition to the encyclopedia, books and magazines.

Students who have participated in these "Library Skills for ESL Students" classes have gained research skills, but even more importantly, they have developed the self-confidence to walk into a public or a college library and to ask for help. As college students, that is one less hurdle, and as parents of the future, that is a good start for the next generation.

*This article is based on a demonstration presented at the Twenty-Fourth Annual TESOL Convention, March, 1990. Hana Prashker and Barbara Smith teach at Brockton High School, Brockton, MA 02401. They welcome your comments.*



# Multilingual Education for Hispanic Deaf Children

Barbara Gerner de Garcia

Amongst the deaf, Hispanic children's achievement has been documented as being the lowest of all (Jensema, 1975). Although recently considerable attention has been focused on the still unsatisfactory performance of the majority of deaf children (Commission on Education of the Deaf, 1988), the recommendations put forward may not in fact be sufficient to assure the success of minority deaf children, especially those from non-English speaking (NES) homes.

The deaf child from a NES home not only has to contend with the failure of deaf education to enable deaf children to reach their potential, but the failure of this society to adequately educate and address the needs of minority and NES children. Within schools for the deaf, we cannot treat all deaf children as belonging to the same cultural and linguistic group. Cummins (1989) believes that minority students are empowered or disabled as a direct result of their interactions with educators in their schools, interactions that respect their language, culture and minority community participation. In the case of Hispanic deaf children and other minority deaf children, their inclusion in both the deaf community and the community of their families must be recognized and actively promoted in the school. There must be recognition as well that minority deaf form communities of their own that are distinct.

Hispanic deaf children need an approach that empowers them as both Hispanic and deaf. They are not one more than the other. Robert Davila, the Assistant Secretary of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation, and now the highest ranking deaf person in the federal government, tells audiences he is both Deaf and Hispanic, emphasizing that the two identities are inextricably bound. The dual identity of Hispanic deaf children must be programatically addressed in order to assure them of success.

## Hispanic Deaf Program, Horace Mann School

The dilemma for language minority children who have special needs has for too long been a choice between special education or bilingual education (Cummins, 1984). In the past, children with less severe hearing losses whose dominant language is Spanish were assigned to bilingual regular or special education classes, where they were often the only children with hearing losses and were unlikely to be using hearing aids. In some cases, teachers were unaware that the students had hearing losses. The Horace Mann School for the Deaf, a Boston Public School, now over forty percent Hispanic (this appears to be due to a high rate of heredity deafness in Puerto Rico), established the Hispanic Deaf Program in 1988. The program was designed to serve both an in-school population and offer support services to teachers and students in bilingual programs in the BPS.

## Bilingual Deaf Education in the 1990s

Now, in the 1990s, deaf education is looking towards a true bilingual approach using American Sign Language (ASL) and English. Deaf children from NES homes may be learning three

languages--their home language, English, and American Sign Language--as well as using codes such as Signed English and/or Signed Spanish (the educational practice of combining a spoken language while simultaneously signing the words). Hispanic deaf children must be dealt with on a case-by-case basis (Delgado, 1984). They must have the option of content instruction in Spanish, use of Spanish interpreters, ESL instruction, and native language and culture enrichment; and their metalinguistic awareness of the languages they encounter at home and school should be promoted. Limitations to providing broader services include lack of bilingual and bicultural professionals in deaf education, as well as some resistance on the part of teachers and parents to using Spanish with deaf students.

The acceptance of all of their languages is tremendously empowering for Hispanic deaf children. The literature indicates that deaf children from NES homes many not know that they are hearing different languages at school and at home (Dean, 1984). Words that they use in the home language may not only be ignored in school, but reacted to negatively. Deaf children from NES homes must learn they are multilingual not through traumatization, but through celebration of their multilingualism.

It is the task of all of us who advocate for deaf children to include deaf children from NES homes. It is vital that the efforts of those who are struggling to equalize deaf education constantly work towards a vision that is inclusionary. The "Toward Equality" advocated by the Commission on Education of the Deaf is meant for all deaf children. It is our task to see that this goal is constantly kept in the consciousness of all working in the field.

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*This article is based on a paper presented at the Twenty-Fourth Annual TESOL Convention, March, 1990. Barbara Gerner de Garcia teaches at the Horace Mann School for the Deaf, Boston Public Schools.*

Report on Ann Raimés's TESOL '90 paper:

## "The Case Against TOEFL and TWE"

*Vivian Zamel*

To a standing-room-only crowd at TESOL in San Francisco, Ann Raimés delivered a paper that represented for me the highlight of that week's conference events. In a presentation that had many of us sitting at the edges of our seats, Raimés, as she has done many times before, took on well-established authorities and practices, this time the powerful Educational Testing Service and its testing of ESL/EFL students. Her disclosure of much-needed information about the TOEFL and the TWE (and other standardized texts administered by ETS) had all the earmarks of a great news story, and we were swept along as she poked, probed and posed questions.

Raimés began her talk by drawing our attention to the rapid growth and influence of these tests world-wide and to the "big bucks" this expansion has generated. Few of us in the audience, I would venture to guess, were aware that approximately 3,000 American colleges use TOEFL scores and that ETS made over fourteen million dollars for TOEFL last year. Furthermore, in addition to influencing the "business" of testing, ETS is responsible for the implementation and administration of these tests and has full control over the research undertaken and the data collected.

After pointing to the problems of ETS's standardized tests for native speakers, Raimés noted similar kinds of problems with regard to the TOEFL and the TWE (Test of Written English). She raised questions about the correlation between these tests. She revealed how the TWE was generated, not on the basis of collecting academic writing from 190 departments, as is implied by ETS reports, but on the basis of interviewing 30 faculty members, after which a questionnaire including topic types was distributed. Raimés further reported that faculty responses to the survey indicated disagreements on the appropriateness of these writing tasks.

Despite these and other problems, however, the TWE was developed. It consists of two questions types, one asking students to compare and contrast two opposing points of view and taking a stand on one of these, the other asking students to describe and analyze the information on a chart or graph. Students are given only one of these question types and have 30 minutes to respond. The scores students receive represent a holistic rating based on a 1-6 scale.

These developments in the testing of ESL/EFL students served as a backdrop against which Raimés shared seven "important areas of concern" about the TWE. These had to do with: the demanding nature of TWE's writing tasks and the extent to which each topic type measures the same constellation of skills; the problematic nature of asking students to write only on one topic and not giving them any choice of topic; the conflation of undergraduate and graduate student populations; the appropriateness of the topic types; the confusion and anxiety caused by the combination of the scaled scores of the TOEFL and the holistic score of the TWE; the lack of clarity about what the TWE actually tests, and the extent to which both the TOEFL and the TWE are necessary; and the proliferation of preparation courses and published materials that the establishment of these exams inevitably generate.

Having shared these concerns, Raimés turned to a number of recommendations, recommendations that challenged us to think long and hard about the implications of all this for us, for our students, for our teaching practices, for the institutions within which we work. She urged us to: raise serious questions about the TOEFL and TWE and what they actually measure; use our expertise and influence as ESL professionals so that appropriate decisions and policies are enacted in our schools; ask for more information about what scores represent; help others understand that differences within ESL student populations must be taken into account; be wary of teaching to the test; examine TOEFL and TWE in relation to other tests and to the writing students actually do; and take on the responsibility of reviewing tests, conducting research, and even creating our own writing tests.

In her recent plenary address at our Spring MATSOL Conference, Raimés challenged us to ask questions about the control and authority we exert as ESL professionals. As she invited us to reflect about our status and the kinds of decisions we can and can't make, she repeatedly punctuated her talk by asking us, "Who's in Charge?" Ultimately, it is this very question that was the basis for making her case against TOEFL and TWE. And what a case she made!

*Vivian Zamel teaches at the University of Massachusetts, Boston.*

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# CHOOSING FILMS FOR THE ESL/EFL CLASSROOM: WHAT AND WHY?

C. A. Edington

Many teachers like to use feature films in the classroom because films offer an authentic range of native speech and nonverbal communication as well as cultural insights, but some teachers are not sure how to choose those that would be appropriate for their students. The purpose of this article is to give guidelines in selecting films for the ESL/EFL classroom--what to look for and what to avoid.

## How to use films in the classroom

It is most effective to show segments of a film in class before having students watch the entire film. From six to ten segments of three to four minutes can help students gain fuller comprehension of the plot and understand the main characters, if accompanied by exercises. Vocabulary that is essential to comprehension can be introduced and worked on. A follow-up to the film can include a class discussion or composition on a topic such as values clarification or cultural contrasts.

## What to look for

1. Choose a film that fits the time frame of the class and the attention span of the students. Most films run less than two hours, so they can be shown within a class period or two.

2. Choose a film with a limited number of characters that can be easily distinguished from one another. *Breaking Away* is a good example of a film in which the main characters have obvious physical differences.

3. Try to choose a film that has a mixture of action and dialogue. A "wordy" film with little action, like *My Dinner with Andre*, may get too tiring for students. On the other hand, if the film is all action with little dialogue, like *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, students get too little language exposure.

4. Students love suspense, and since most movies have some, this is a fairly easy factor to include when choosing a film. Any film in which there is some question as to the outcome will be captivating.

## What to avoid

1. A complicated plot. Films can be confusing if they contain some of the following:

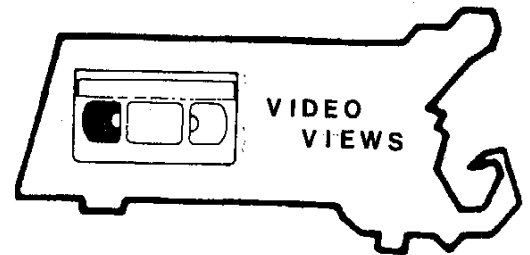
- Flashbacks. Make sure the context of the present and past are very clear.

- A culture within a culture. Avoid films like *Out of Africa* or *Passage to India* unless your students are studying both of the cultures involved.

- A plot within a plot. Even to native speakers this can be confusing, as in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*.

A teacher who wants to work on a plot that is more sophisticated can use diagrams or other devices to make sure students understand the story line before watching the film.

2. Lack of clarity. When previewing a film, listen for the following:



- Unclear pronunciation. That might rule out a film such as *Rocky*, in which characters have fairly strong regional accents and do not enunciate.

- Background interference. Be careful of noise such as traffic, music, gunfire, and bombs.

- Complex Dialogue. Listen for dialogue that is too fast or conversation that overlaps too much, unless working with an advanced group where the purpose is to stretch their listening.

- Idiomatic English. Watch for ungrammatical, colloquial, or outdated expressions that may need explanation.

3. Culture-bound scenes. If a film is so culturally bound that an excess of background explanation is necessary, students may become frustrated and lose confidence in their ability to learn the language. Woody Allen films such as *Annie Hall* are delightful, but a teacher might have to spend too much time explaining the setting, subculture, colloquialisms, and relationships.

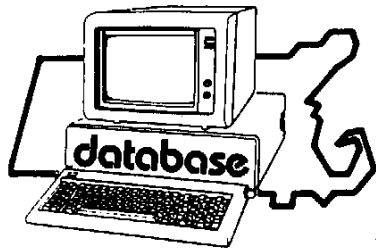
4. Potentially offensive subject matter. Be conscious of the students' situations when selecting films covering sensitive issues. Students may not be ready to deal with the political situation in their country, so showing *Missing* to Latin Americans or *The Killing Fields* to Southeast Asians may be a negative rather than a positive language learning experience.

Don't overdo censorship, but keep in mind that films containing profanity, nudity, sex, abortion, drinking, gambling, and/or violence may offend certain student populations. "Censoring" films will depend not only on the country the teacher is in and the openness and maturity of the students, but also on what the teacher feels comfortable viewing or discussing in class. Unless teachers are willing and able to explain terms students won't find in their dictionaries, and unless they are ready for the inevitable bedroom scenes, they shouldn't use films that contain them.

Previewing films with a particular group of students in mind is essential to choosing what will be appropriate to enrich students' language learning experiences.

*This paper is based on presentations given at TESOL '90 and at the MATSOL Spring Conference, March 1990, with Carol Houser Pineiro. C. A. Edington teaches at CELOP, Boston University.*

Articles on video or film may be sent to Carol Pineiro, Video Views Editor, CELOP, Boston University, 730 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, MA 02215.



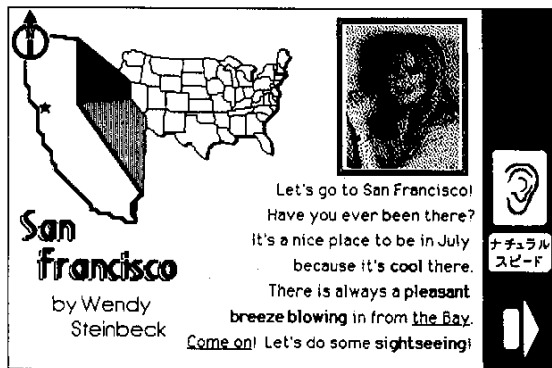
## REVIEW OF PROFICIENCY'S *MacENGLISH*

Alicia Russell

Hiroshi, an intermediate level ESL student, sits down at a Macintosh computer to do a lesson. He has never used a computer before. But he doesn't have to know a system of commands or even how to deal with a keyboard. Instead, he has only to move and click a "turbo mouse" to navigate through the lessons. They are in the form of a magazine, called *INFORM*, issued monthly with new exercises and lessons. Each issue offers six topics.

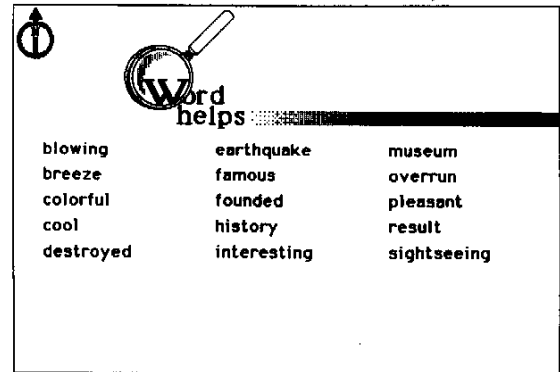


Steering the mouse, Hiroshi positions the cursor on his screen over his desired topic--Travel--then with a click conjures it up. Each topic contains four activities: an article to read, a conversation between native speakers, word assistance, and review questions. Hiroshi chooses the article. When he wants to hear it, he moves the cursor to the ear icon, clicks--and the passage is read to him at slowed speed by a native speaker. He wants to hear it read at natural speed, so he clicks over the natural speed icon (shown here in Japanese). To record himself reading it, he clicks over the micro-



phone icon. Later he can listen to what he has recorded by clicking over the earphone icon. He can record and compare his speech with the model as many times as he likes.

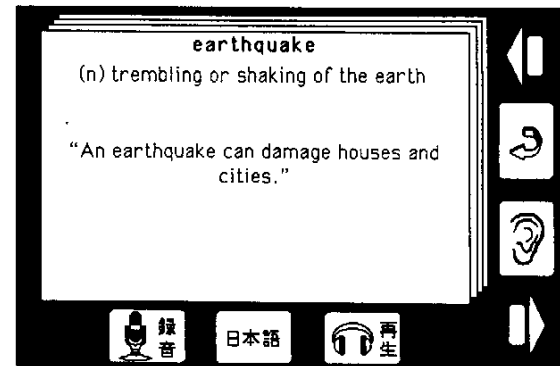
Some words in the text are highlighted. If Hiroshi clicks over one of them, the screen changes to show Word Helps. He clicks over a word and it appears with its definition. He can click over the ear icon to hear the word pronounced, then practice by clicking over

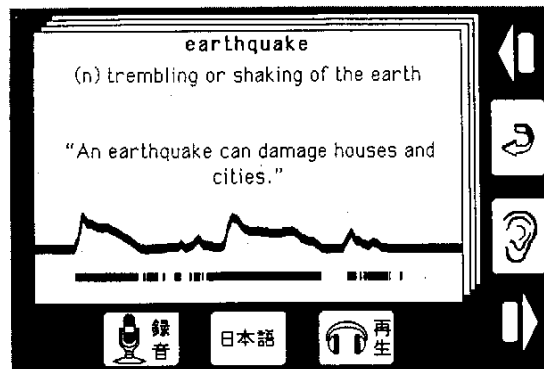


the microphone icon to record his speech, and the earphone icon to hear it. Again, he can practice matching his pronunciation with the native speaker's many times.

When devising this language package, designers of *MacEnglish* studied Nintendo video games to find out what held users' interest. Among other things, they found the game's appeal stemmed from the power it gave players to tailor its pace and difficulty to just the right level.

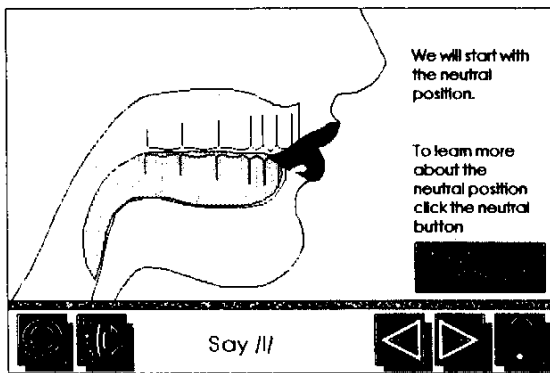
Like Nintendo, *MacEnglish* is self-paced. Students can speed





up or slow down the action, repeat a section as often as they like, go backward, or skip back and forth among sections.

In studies with Japanese EFL users, students first worked through the lessons in the order presented. Later they tended to skip



around, zeroing in on sections they most needed to work on. They practiced new vocabulary--both pronunciation and meaning--and were able to use it with confidence during class discussions.

*MacEnglish's* INFORM offers a full year's lessons in the form of a monthly magazine. Its usefulness spans a wide spectrum of proficiencies--from the advanced beginner to the moderately advanced student. It is presently available for Japanese EFL speakers only, but an ESL version will be available by June first

and Chinese and Spanish versions are expected to be issued by year's end.

Another *MacEnglish* package called PRONUNCIATION PLUS is also available. Students hear a word and see front and side view animations of a tongue forming the word. They see comparative voice graphs, and hear the word produced in isolated sound-pair words, sound pairs in combinations of words, and sound pairs in sentences.

There is also a *MacEnglish Executive* for business executives.

The three *MacEnglish* software packages work with enhanced Macintosh computers. The system--a Macintosh plus computer, hardware enhancements including the MacEnglish Sound Center, and the software packages INFORM, PRONUNCIATION PLUS and EXECUTIVE ENGLISH--costs about \$4000 or about \$3000 without the computer. INFORM, PRONUNCIATION PLUS and EXECUTIVE ENGLISH are developed by Proficiency, a certified Apple Developer based in Salt Lake City, Utah. MacEnglish is a registered trademark of Proficiency. Macintosh is a registered trademark of Apple Computer, Inc.

*Database articles may be sent to Alicia Russell, Database Editor, English Language Center, Room 206 BY, Northeastern University, 360 Huntington Avenue, Boston, MA 02115.*

## NOTE TO PUBLISHERS

from the MATSOL Board

We were delighted that the MATSOL '90 Spring Conference was able to provide 20 tables of Publishers' Exhibits so that our members could view the latest texts on the market, request examination copies, and order specific books. More publishers came to the conference than had ever been before.

But, believe it or not, our members want even more! Many conference participants, in evaluating the conference, said they wanted to see a greater number of publishers, especially those who have never exhibited at MATSOL before (such as Heinemann and Intercultural Press), as well as more software companies.

Before the conference, we sent letters to approximately 50 publishers, inviting you to show your wares. The 30 of you who chose not to come missed a golden opportunity to strut your stuff before a record crowd of 540. Don't let that happen again!

We have added 30 publishers to the permanent MATSOL mailing list so that you can have the opportunity to see what a vital organization we are, and we hope that this will bring more companies to future conferences.



## \*In the Japanese's Consciousness

Robert Saitz

Some of the first things our students can and want to talk and write about are the countries and peoples of the world. They enjoy discussing the similarities and differences between the Japanese and the Americans, the pleasures of Brazilian music and French movies, and the places to get Chinese food and Spanish tapas. But to do that they have to learn (1) that someone from China is a Chinese, the people are the Chinese and the won ton are Chinese won ton; (2) yet someone from Denmark is a Dane, the name of the people is the Danes, but the name of the pastry is Danish; (3) and someone from Ireland is an Irishman or Irishwoman (Irishperson?), the name of the people is the Irish, and the smiling eyes are Irish eyes. There are thus three categories: (1) the largest category in which, fortunately, the name of the person, the people, and the adjective are all the same: an Italian, the Italians, Italian; (2) a category in which the names of the person and the people are the same but the adjective is different (often ending in -ish): a Turk, the Turks, Turkish; (3) a third category in which there is a different word for the person but the words for the people and the adjective are the same; an Englishman/woman, the English, English. The need to shift to words with man/woman suffixes (for England, France, Ireland, for example) seems especially capricious to our students but our use of the adjectival forms without a following noun, as in "The Spanish and the French are in the Common Market," leads the students to refer to \*a Spanish or \*a French.

However, learning which of the three categories each country belongs to is only Stage One. What happens when students want to use the genitive with the name of the people? There seem to be no problems when the word for the people is a plural that adds an -s to the singular: the Italians' decision, the Thais' borders, the Swedes' massages, etc. But what about the student who writes of "the Japanese' consciousness of the attitudes of others" or another who notes "the Spanish's worries about the importation of Italian wine"? It looks as though when the word for the people ends in the sounds s (as in sees), sh (as in she's), or ch (as in cheese) and the sound is not a plural suffix (as in Turks), we tend not to add anything, not an s in the pronunciation nor an 's in the writing; we waffle and use the adjective or an *of* phrase: the Welsh love of singing, the Portuguese ports on the Atlantic, the French concern for the proper wine, the success of the Japanese. Similarly, we avoid adding things to the genitive singular of the person words ending in those sounds; so instead of a Japanese's consciousness, we'll write in the consciousness of a Japanese or, more likely, in the Japanese consciousness. In general, we use the adjectival solution to avoid problems,

phonological or punctuational; after all, what else can we do but support Massachusetts businesses?

### Review

In their third edition of *The Structure of English Words*, Clarence Sloat and Sharon Taylor present forty pages of rules designed to delight the morphologist's heart. Aimed at those who wish to enrich their vocabulary and using basic linguistic terminology such as *deletion* and *assimilation*, the book describes the ways affixes are joined to bases, focusing of course on the Latin-Greek component of the English word stock. Although it is a text that might interest and be useful to native speakers who already control healthy vocabulary, it would require a sophisticated ESL student to benefit from it. Yet ESOL instructors can enjoy it and could well adapt parts for use in those classes that have mastered the core grammar and vocabulary and feel desperate to make the leap to near-native proficiency. For example, our students have learned the a/an article alternation before C and V-beginning words; the same principle underlies the way the negative prefix *an* attaches to bases: thus an+emia, an+archy, but a+political, a+symmetry. Of course the huge number of bound bases in English whose meaning is not available without a dictionary search (-ecdote, -omalous, etc.) makes the application of such a rule rather frustrating, but as happens so often in language learning when we learn things that may not be the focus of a lesson but which are interesting, students learn something. The focus on word roots and affixes is usually fun and stimulating to enough of the students so that memorable associations are generated and words are remembered; for me, the -archy words have always seemed cold and jargony but knowing that underlying them is -archos, "leader," I feel that they have a renewed vitality. When I learned Spanish and became aware that the root of the word *atravesado*, 'mischievous,' was the word *traves*, 'cross,' it not only helped me remember the meaning of the word but called up a wealth of associations like double-crossed and cross-eyed that created a vital and memorable learning moment.

Of course, many of the rules are a bit more complex than the negative prefixes. Thus "X-Deletion deletes the x of the prefix *ex* 'out, away' when the following morpheme begins with a voiced consonant" (p. 33). The x remains before vowels and voiceless consonants so we have: *ex+pel*, *ex+tend*, *ex+quisite*, *ex+cise*, and *ex+empt*, *ex+it*, *ex+hale*, but *e+ducate* and *e+volve*.

The text also notes one of my all-time favorite phonological phenomena, the tendency of /p/ to materialize after /m/ and before

a following voiceless consonant. On page 65 reference is made to the pattern of assume/assumption, redeem/redemption where the /p/ is pronounced and written in the classical borrowings and the words like dreamt, something and warmth, native stock words in which the /p/ is often pronounced but not written. We also have the sons of Tom, some of whom end up as Thomsons and others as Thompsons, and we may even find that this intrusive but satisfying

/p/ may occur after /m/ even without a following voiceless consonant as in the earlier English form mushroomp.

Finally, with an index that lists metathesis and rhotacism, amelioration and synecdoche, *The Structure of English Words* will please those ESOL instructors who have been waiting for the chance to apply their knowledge, hard-earned in the required Introduction to Linguistics course.

## Thinking Ahead Department, French Style

Sign at the entrance to a French zoo: No dogs allowed, even if on a leash. Sign at the entrance to a French church: No food allowed in the church, even if it's only ice cream.

Those signs, observed last year in France, suggest the possibility of an *even if* language game, a challenge for the imaginative

students: give them a place (e.g., a swimming pool, a cat show, a Coca-Cola factory) and they have to make up an *even if* sign, or give them a sign (e.g., No typewriters allowed, *even if* your term paper is due tomorrow) and they guess the place.

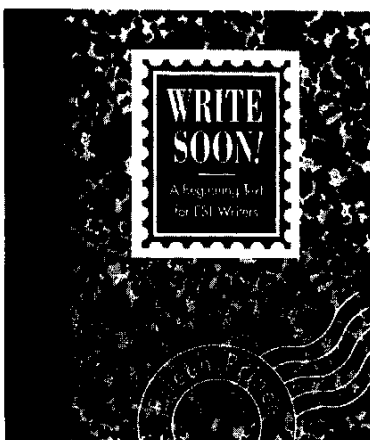
*Comments on or contributions to the Recreational Grammar column may be sent to Robert Saitz, Department of English, Boston University, 236 Bay State Road, Boston, MA 02215.*

# WRITE FROM THE BEGINNING WITH **WRITE SOON!**

By Eileen Prince

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## TEACHING IN MOZAMBIQUE

John R. Dreyer

### *Teach English and see the world!*

Late last summer, the State Department phoned from Washington to tell me I had been awarded a Fulbright grant; and during the final trimester of 1989, I taught in my seventh overseas location, at Mozambique's one-and-only university, Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, in the capital city of Maputo (formerly Lourenco Marques). A previous teaching post at Rio de Janeiro's Pontifical Catholic University and dissertation research work among the large Portuguese immigrant population in Massachusetts had given me ample language preparation. Yet I had only a vague idea of what awaited me.

### **Socioeconomic and political conditions**

Mozambique is the world's poorest country. Malaria, civil war, and the vestiges of Marxism and "African socialism" have left the people unable to work their fertile land and, consequently, to feed themselves. It is not unusual for a thousand people to die of starvation in a week's time. Ninety percent of the country is outside government control, subject to raids by rebels who murder, torture and maim citizens, then steal what they can and destroy whatever is left.

Sub-tropical Maputo was once a lovely getaway vacation destination for South African and European tourists, but the war has swollen its shantytowns with refugees. Almost all privately-owned buildings not destroyed in 1975 by departing, revengeful Portuguese colonials were taken over by or for "the people" and have fallen into disrepair. Few Mozambicans possess the skills necessary to manage the country or maintain its infrastructure. (I remember walking up to the 18th floor of the Ministry of Education for an appointment; its elevators had not worked for years due to lack of parts and repair personnel.) The city's original bus fleet of two hundred sixty has dwindled to thirteen.

Maputo suffers from a severe housing and hotel-room shortage. However, to attract the diplomats and foreign aid personnel essential to the country, the government maintains some posh neighborhoods built by the Portuguese colonialists. These areas now bustle with workers from the U.N. and from many rich countries, including Italy, Holland, Portugal, Sweden, Canada, Great Britain, France, and the U.S.A. Cubans (who provide virtually all the country's medical and dental services), Nicaraguans, most Russians, Czechs, and other workers from socialist countries are housed more modestly in other neighborhoods.

### **Teaching experience**

I knew that to stay happy, I would have to stay busy professionally, which was no problem, since there was much to be done. I was asked to "take out" the bottom ten percent of the freshman class and help them catch up to their classmates in English for Science and Technology. (Forget any basic introductory English courses!) Many of these students were from rural and war-ravaged areas and had been able to complete only ten years of rudimentary schooling, often with ill-trained teachers and few or no textbooks; some were destined to fail their first year and drop out. Poorly fed and clothed, and housed far from the university, these students came to class too tired or sick to concentrate. Remarkably, they persevered and maintained a good spirit despite their miserable conditions.

The workshops on linguistics and second language teaching I gave to future Mozambican teachers of Portuguese as a Second Language at the Instituto Superior Pedagogico inspired more hope, perhaps because these subjects relate more directly to the immediate challenge of national development than does English: Most pupils speak one of twelve indigenous Bantu languages but need to learn Portuguese before they can plug into the national education system. I recall a lively debate about abandoning Portuguese in favor of an African language, but the truth is that most Mozambicans have to learn a second language since no single language is spoken by a majority of the citizens.

Everyone in Maputo, including foreign workers, seems interested in learning English. The country is surrounded by the English-speaking countries of Swaziland, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, and Tanzania. Once the war ends, commerce and contact with these countries will certainly pick up, and English will be the means of communication.



*continued on the next page*



Before I knew it, my three months in Mozambique had come to an end. Warm thoughts about the experience -- the new friends I had made, the rewarding work I did, the aerobics classes I taught, the street children I befriended -- mingled with the sad, sobering awareness that I was leaving a country paralyzed by poverty, dependence on "donor countries," and a guerrilla war with no end in sight.

*John Dreyer is a peripatetic scholar.*

Articles about your own experiences teaching or learning overseas may be sent to Jennifer Bixby, Foreign Correspondence Editor, 90 Hammond Street, Acton, MA 01120 (500-900 words).



## Poetry, Pictures, Reading, and Writing

Reviewed by *Stephanie Cohen*, Brown Junior High School, Newton

**The Inward Ear: Poetry in the Language Classroom**  
by Alan Maley and Alan Duff. 1989. Cambridge University Press (186 pp.)

**Pictures for Language Learning**  
by Andrew Wright. 1989. Cambridge University Press (218 pp.)

**Task Reading**  
by Evelyn Davies, Norman Whitney, Meredith Pike-Bakey, and Laurie Blass. 1990. Cambridge University Press (124 pp.)

**Writing Workout**  
by Jann Hizenga and Maria Thomas-Ruzic. 1990. Scott Foresman/Little, Brown (186 pp.)

Three books recently published by Cambridge University Press for the ESL market are especially useful for the elementary and secondary classroom teacher.

Poetry has been used for a long time in the language classroom to teach the rhythm and pronunciation of the target language and to make grammatical structure more memorable (and because it is just plain fun). *The Inward Ear: Poetry in the Language Classroom*, published as part of the Cambridge Handbooks for Language Teachers series, emphasizes the value of teaching second language students to write poetry. The authors point out that "Poetry offers a rich resource for input to language learning. As such it is at least as relevant as the more commonly accepted types of input" (p. 7).

*The Inward Ear* presents many concrete suggestions, such as using pictures to prepare for writing, along with "how to's" and comments for each suggestion. Although much of the poetry quoted in the book is more appropriate for older students, the suggestions for "how to" can be used for younger students. This is a wonderful reference book for every writing teacher's library.

*Pictures for Language Learning* is another Handbook for Lan-

guage Teachers. This practical book offers concrete suggestions for using pictures in language teaching.

In addition to the most common use, that of teaching meaning, pictures can be used as prompts for grammar exercises or to tell stories. Pictures can also be used to elicit dialogue or to initiate role play.

*Pictures for Language Learning* is a resource that can be used with students from kindergarten to adult education.

*Task Reading*, an adaptation of *Reasons for Reading* (Heinemann, 1979) is meant for older students, secondary to adult, who are literate in their native language and are advanced beginners or intermediate students in ESL.

*Task Reading* has a story line: It follows the activities of two foreign students in the San Francisco area, focusing on their need for reading throughout the day. In addition to reading tasks, there are many different types of reinforcement activities such as crossword puzzles, and cloze, sequencing, and comprehension exercises. Types of reading include maps, weather reports, notices and advertisements, forms and messages.

Older students can relate to the two main characters in this text; the reading tasks are useful culturally for newcomers to the United States and the activities are varied. It is an appropriate text to use for supplementary reading.

. . . .

*Writing Workout* is a very basic writing book, appropriate for secondary school students and older learners who are not comfortable with either creative writing or research papers. The activities are simple but interesting. They include writing a recipe, filling out a patient information form, writing a brief essay about an important holiday, and writing a classified ad. The grammar used in each lesson is presented at the beginning of the lesson. Reading exercises are also included. This would be a useful supplementary text.



## *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans*

by Ronald Takaki. 1989. Little, Brown (491 pp.; bibliography)

Reviewed by *Judy DeFilippo*, Northeastern University

When the author Ronald Takaki was studying at the College of Wooster in Ohio in the 1960s, he was often invited to "dinners for foreign students." He politely tried to explain to his hosts that he was not a foreign student but a third-generation Japanese-American, born and raised on the multicultural, multilingual island of Oahu, Hawaii. Takaki realized long ago that very little is known or understood about Asian Americans and their history, and having to continually explain to fellow college students, even professors, that English was, in fact, his first language was the type of experience that led him on a search for his roots. The result is a comprehensive narrative history of not only the Japanese, but also the Chinese, Koreans, Filipinos, Asian Indians, Vietnamese, Cambodians, and Laotians who have come to the United States in the past 150 years. Takaki, now Professor of Ethnic Studies at the University of California at Berkeley, has interviewed countless numbers of immigrants and their descendants and allows them to speak through their poems, letters, and journals, and, without minimizing each group's distinctiveness, blends their voices into the broad context of American history.

Through their voices we learn of their hopes, frustrations, sufferings and dreams from the first enterprising Chinese miners of the 1850s in search of gold to the most recent refugees fleeing oppressive regimes in Vietnam and Cambodia. We feel through their poetry, especially, the cruelty of racial discrimination, for while Asians can sometimes hide their despair, they cannot hide their personal appearance. Better economic and educational opportunities notwithstanding, thousands of Asians who had spent most of their lives working here were repeatedly denied citizenship until World War II. A surprising number returned home. And today, amid the triumph of the American dream, college graduates often encounter the "glass ceiling" which keeps them from advancing into management positions.

We see how geography affected different members of the same ethnic group. The Japanese in Hawaii, unlike those on the mainland, were never sent to internment camps during World War II. They were too much an integral part of Hawaii's economy. And Filipino plantation workers there were not the targets of violent white working-class backlash as were mainlanders. We discover that, as a group, Koreans were the smallest in number and the most literate and that the Hmong, originally recruited by the CIA in Laos, are now being taught to read and write in their native language which, only recently, was given written form. We learn how writers such as Filipino poet Carlos Bulosan emerged to become an eloquent spokesman for all immigrants.

Throughout their history in this country, Asians have struggled in different ways to help America accept and appreciate its diversity. When Takaki was interviewed on CNN last summer, he was asked what he hoped his book would achieve. His reply was "to understand each other better." *Strangers from a Different Shore* is compelling testimony to the fact that until we have a better understanding of Asians and their cultures we cannot truly understand American history and society.

Please send book reviews (350 to 1000 words) to:

*Janet Zinner, MATSOL Newsletter Book Review Editor,  
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