

MATSOL NEWSLETTER

Massachusetts Association of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

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SPRING/SUMMER 1991

Beyond Language and Culture: Special Situations in ESL

Adriana Pellicari-Rodriguez

ESL teachers are entrusted with the mission of promoting the acquisition of English for students who speak another language, and they also fulfill a most important function in facilitating their students' cultural adaptation. However, it is not unusual for teachers to have among their students a child who has difficulty integrating within the group or one who not only shows a slower rate of English learning but simply has difficulty "learning" in general. In this special situation it is puzzling for teachers to tease out what factors may contribute to their students' condition, given the influence of culture on cognition (mental ability, cognitive styles, etc.), motivation (the perception of what one views as worthy of effort), and emotions (ways of being and therefore shaping of reality). The cases illustrated below address issues that go beyond cultural differences and absence of English facility as they show up in the ESL classroom.

Illustrative cases

Mario is a second grader who is crying during his first days of school and cannot find his lot with the other students in the ESL classroom. He is inconsolable, and the school social worker begins to think that he may be a school-phobic child. Yet his mother says that he was happy in school when he was in first grade in Italy. One reason for his resistance is that on his first visit to this country he was placed in kindergarten, which made him feel

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Pairwork: The Backbone of Classroom Speaking Activities

Rebecca Bradshaw



Our ESL students need to learn, above all, to communicate orally in English. One problem that confronts ESL teachers is how to facilitate this process by increasing the amount of time students speak English in class. Developing appropriate speaking activities is a challenge we all face. In this article, I will share a few of the strategies I use.

Pairwork

Pairwork is the backbone of the speaking activities in my class. Not only does this greatly increase the amount of student talk time, but it also provides the opportunity for students to get to know one another and for the class to bond and to become more supportive as a whole.

Continued on page 5

MASSACHUSETTS
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OF ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF
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Ruth Spack
100 Salisbury Road
Brookline, MA 02146

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

Next Deadline:

September 15, 1991

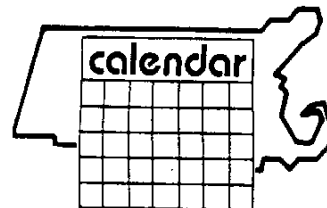
From the President

I am pleased to be writing this first letter to you as President of MATSOL for 1991-92. I want to use this space to suggest ways in which you can participate in MATSOL in the coming year.

1. The Fall Conference will be held October 26 at Showa Women's Institute, Boston. Four topics will receive special attention at this conference: needs of elementary school teachers, racism, publishing, and teacher research. If you would like to be involved in addressing one of these issues at the conference, please call me, (617) 524-4224. If you want to make a presentation on another topic, please respond to the call for proposals all members recently received in the mail.
2. Last month the board voted to form conference committees for both the 1991 Fall Conference and the 1992 Spring Conference. If you would like to work on the Fall Conference, call Chris Parkhurst, (508) 872-1194; for the Spring Conference (March 20-21 at Mt. Ida College, Newton), call Robby Steinberg, (617) 232-9022.
3. If you want to write an article for the *MATSOL Newsletter*, call co-editors Ruth Spack, (617) 738-6022 or Marlyn Katz Levenson, (617) 872-2861. They will be happy to discuss ideas with you.
4. Issues confronting part-time teachers are being addressed by a growing group (now 40) of MATSOL members. For more information, call Fred Turner, (617) 787-0183.

I look forward to the coming year and hope each of you will help make MATSOL responsive to your professional needs.

Kathryn Riley



FALL 1991

**Boston University Conference
on Language Development**

Dates: October 18-20
Place: Boston University
Contact: (617) 353-3085

**MATSOL '91 FALL
CONFERENCE**

Date: October 26
Place: Showa Women's Institute,
Boston
Contact: (508) 872-1194

**NAFSA Regional XI
Conference**

Dates: October 23-25
Place: Portland, Maine
Contact: (617) 353-4870

**NY TESOL Annual Fall
Conference**

Date: November 8-10
Place: Albany (NY) Hilton Hotel
Contact: (914) 358-3664

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MATSOL '91 Fall Conference Update

October 26, 1991 • Showa Women's Institute • Boston

Plenary Speaker: Elsa Auerbach

"Connecting Classroom and Community"



Elsa Auerbach is Assistant Professor in the Bilingual/ESL Graduate Studies Program at UMass/Boston and Coordinator of the Bilingual Community Literacy Training Project. She has taught ESL in community-based, union, community college, and university programs. Her work focuses primarily on adult ESL and literacy with particular emphasis on participatory approaches to curriculum development and workplace ESL. She has coordinated several university-community collaborative ESL literacy projects (including the UMass Family Literacy Project and the UMass Student Literacy Corps Project) and been involved in both university and community-based adult ESL teacher education in the past seven years.

Professor Auerbach has published numerous articles on the ideology of adult ESL texts and approaches to curriculum development, as well as co-authoring (with Nina Wallerstein) *ESL for Action: Problem Posing at Work* (Addison-Wesley 1987), a Freire-inspired ESL text for immigrant workers. Most recently, she has written *Making Meaning, Making Change: A Guide to Participatory Curriculum Development for Adult ESL and Family Literacy* (CAL, Prentice-Hall, forthcoming) which was the recipient of TESOL's Mary Finocchiaro Award for Excellence in the Development of Pedagogical Materials.

SHOWA: A Bridge Connecting Japan and The United States

The MATSOL Executive Board is delighted to announce that the Fall '91 Conference will take place on October 26, 1991 at Showa Women's Institute in Boston. Showa's beautiful campus is located at 420 Pond Street, just over the Brookline town line, down the street from Larz Anderson Park and up the hill from Jamaica Pond.

Showa's history traces back to Tokyo in 1920. The founder of Showa Women's University, poet Tomei Hitomi, felt that women had a strong role to play in building the future of Japan. Today, as the world becomes more internationalized, the University's president, Kusuo Hitomi, son of the founder, is also promoting a global perspective for the students.

Opened in 1988 as the American campus of Showa Women's University, Showa Boston's goal is to provide Japanese students with exposure to American culture. All English majors at the University are required to spend a four month semester at the Boston campus. Approximately 200 students are accepted each semester. The faculty is

comprised of American educators. Non-English majors may voluntarily study in Boston during their summer vacation.

At Showa, the education process occurs not only in the classroom but in the city of Boston and in other historic places. Students learn something of the American spirit and also share their culture with the larger community. For example, aspects of Japanese culture such as the tea ceremony, flower arranging, calligraphy and noh, kyogen, and kabuki dramas are presented in the assembly hall and in the tea house. Showa has created one of the finest tea ceremony facilities outside of Japan.



SPECIAL FEATURE OF MATSOL '91 FALL CONFERENCE

—MINI-SESSIONS—

"What Works for Me"

This year's conference committee will sponsor mini-sessions in which three teachers will each do a fifteen-minute presentation on a classroom idea or technique. If you are interested in participating in or organizing a mini-session, please contact Chris Parkhurst (508) 872-1194 or Bea Mikulecky (617) 731-1461.

Beyond Language and Culture *Continued from page 1*

babyish. His family wants to settle here because there are better professional opportunities for his father, who is a university professor. His ESL teacher finds a colleague in school who speaks the child's native language, which gives Mario a chance to unleash his anguish and talk about his fears in the language of his emotions. Slowly this child begins to adjust and make connections with other children.

Ramon is a ten-year-old boy who had attended a rural school in tropical Puerto Rico, in a building without doors. His typical way of transferring from his classroom to the ESL room is by lifting both his feet and pushing them forcefully against the corridor door. Is this a reaction to a building with doors, and perhaps to a sense of physical constraint, or is he impulsive and aggressive because of some emotional imbalance? He is also struggling with his reading despite getting one-to-one tutoring. Is the acquisition of English difficult for him, or are there learning disabilities? A

It is not unusual for ESL teachers to have among their students a child who has difficulty integrating within the group or one who not only shows a slower rate of English learning but simply has difficulty "learning" in general.

bilingual evaluation determines that his Spanish reading level is also low. The evaluation also reveals that he has some interference in his ability to attend to instruction and process information (memory). This interference is independent of language but does delay acquisition of the second language.

Vladimir is a twelve-year-old boy who has recently immigrated from the Soviet Union. His English is fairly impressive because his family has prepared for this move for years, and he is a bright youngster whose parents are highly educated. But his behavior is odd and almost bizarre: He questions everything and everybody; he does not trust anyone. Why? Is it because his family was politically at odds in their country of origin and constantly under surveillance? Consultation and possibly an evaluation with a bilin-

gual/bicultural mental health professional may help to answer these questions.

Hao is a young boy who has arrived this year from Taipei. His inability to communicate proves so traumatic to him that he experiences an affective regression to a much earlier stage in his life and runs into "pantswetting" problems. Should the ESL teacher be alarmed and immediately conclude that this child has emotional problems? It might be more useful to just monitor him for a while and, if at all possible, to pair him up with another student in order to open communicative channels for him. Sitting down in a conference with his parents may also help to gain some information about his developmental history.

Finally, a fairly common problem in an ESL classroom may be refusal on the part of the child to speak, perhaps for an entire year. Refusal to speak in school, with no problem communicating at home, has been referred to as Elective Mutism, a rare condition in the general population but not so rare in an ESL population, and certainly amenable to treatment. In young primary children (and mostly girls), it is usually a way of withholding. By the time the child is in third or fourth grade it may be more an indication of perfectionistic tendencies ("I will not speak until I can do it perfectly"). In either case, patience plus contact with the family, with the assistance of a mental health professional, is essential to help family members in their acculturation.

When they face these special situations, which have been reported to occur in up to one third of their students, teachers of English as a Second Language need ongoing support and validation of their impressions. They may benefit from consultation with other multicultural professionals. They can avail themselves of various resources in the school, in the community, or at local universities, both to get a better understanding of their students and to have access to additional services. Following their intuition, insight, and creativity, not to mention their resourcefulness, they can secure the right help. After all, when it comes to students whose native language is not English, they are the experts!

This article is based on a presentation given at the MATSOL Fall Conference, 1990. Adriana Pellicari-Rodriguez is a multilingual school psychologist in the Brookline schools.

Pairing *Continued from page 1*

At first some students may be resistant to working in pairs. But I've found that I only need to keep with it for a short time before the students see the advantages and begin to enjoy it. Having students work in pairs also frees me up to circulate among the students and assess their progress, giving individual attention where it's needed.

I use different strategies to pair students. Sometimes I put together students of a similar level, sometimes students of different levels. Sometimes I match students with different strengths. I often mix language backgrounds so that the students won't slip into the native language. I try to change pairs often so that students can work with a variety of other students. I watch for personality clashes and avoid matching two students whom I suspect may have difficulty working together.

I usually have students record information or report back in some form to assure that they're actually listening and communicating, not just doing a rote job. These activities can be expanded into reading and writing activities to get the most "juice" out of them.

Other speaking activities are designed to keep the class together more as a whole. Some involve students circulating among other students to get information, and some involve one student in a teacher or leadership role.

A sampling of activities

- **Warm up.** I use pairwork to warm up the students at the beginning of class. Students may be given a question to talk about, such as "What did you do this morning?" or "What happened in the news yesterday?" To start these discussions, I often use events that are connected to the students' lives (birthdays, weddings, holidays, driving tests). I also keep a list of topics to refer to in case I can't think of a topic one day!
- **"Find someone who...."** An activity I like is "Find someone who...." [from *Caring and Sharing* by Gertrude Moskowitz]. The students have a list to fill out with the name of a student that fits the category. Examples include "Find someone who... eats rice for breakfast ...lives in Amherst ...drinks coffee everyday" (to practice present tense), or "went shopping last weekend... stayed home... watched a movie..." (for past tense), or "can ski... can play piano (for practice with "can"). Students ask around until they get the matching answer, and then they fill in the blank with a name. I can usually develop an activity like this in a few minutes.
- **Grids.** I also do speaking activities with grids. On one side the students' names are listed and on top is a series of questions. Students fill in the responses of the people they question. Once they've finished, they can practice asking each other information about other students.
- **Grammar questions.** When we're studying a certain grammar point, I make lists of questions for the students to ask each other. I personalize the questions to make them more interesting. At the end of the exercise, students can be encouraged to make up more questions of the same type. I can create an activity like this in only a few minutes using questions similar to the ones mentioned in "Find someone who...."
- **Pictures.** Students work in pairs with pictures. They can make sentences about the pictures to practice verb tenses, make comparisons, talk about count and non-count nouns, or practice question formation. I structure the activity carefully and model it beforehand so the students don't get confused about what they are supposed to do. Since I have categorized picture files, it is easy to pull out relevant pictures when they are needed to practice certain structures.
- **Culture sharing.** My students come from various countries, and I like to give them a chance to talk about their country and answer questions from the other students. I warm them up for this activity by asking the class as a whole, "What kinds of things do we want to know about other countries?" After we have some categories on the board, they spend some time thinking of specific questions that interest them.
- **Vocabulary.** Vocabulary guessing games are great. I use "Twenty Questions" limited to a certain category of words. Or students describe something, and the other students guess what it is.
- **Photographs.** Photos from home are always good conversation starters.
- **"Pick a topic."** Another activity is "Pick a topic and talk." I give students a list of topics in a certain category, and they choose the one(s) they want to talk about in pairs. Some examples are "The last time I..." or "The first time I...."

This sampling of activities offers a hint of the variety of speaking activities teachers can plan for their classes. With a relatively small amount of time and effort, teachers can create personalized activities geared specifically to the levels of their students and to the topics they are studying. Then teachers can enjoy the benefits of a class in which students are speaking English most of the time.

This article is based on a presentation given at the MATSOL Fall Conference, 1990. Rebecca Bradshaw teaches at the Northampton Skills Training Center.

MATSOL '91 SPRING CONFERENCE



A time to look



A time to learn

The MATSOL '91 Spring Conference took place on May 3-4 at Bunker Hill Community College. Close to 400 people attended the conference and participated in 80 sessions covering a wide range of topics including racism, cultural sensitivity, music, poetry, fiction, travel writing, reading, and field research. Special features included a panel on higher education, a video theater, a computer room, and rap sessions on such varied themes as teacher research, publishing, part-time issues, and elementary education. The conference was chaired by MATSOL Vice-President Kathryn Riley. Eileen Prince was the publisher liaison.



A time to listen



A time to laugh



A time to linger

MATSOL '91 SPRING CONFERENCE

"On Theory and Practice: Focus on Literacy"

Report on Friday's Plenary Talk

Cindy Fong

Dr. Joanne Devine's plenary address, its title notwithstanding, focused not so much on literacy as on the connection between language learning theory and its classroom application. Noting that in childrearing, for example, theory appears to retreat in the pressures of the practical moment, Dr. Devine, Associate Professor of English at Skidmore College,



explored the range of views on the theory-practice link. There is the yin-yang view, which sees the two as interdependent. There is Krashen's view (the view of many theorists?)

that theory is the model, the rationale, for practice. And there are the opposing attitudes of teachers, some of whom reject theory as unconnected to reality or as patronizing towards the practitioner; others of whom embrace theorists as gurus; but most of whom appear to see theory as operating in a domain separate from practice.

As both mother and scholar, Dr. Devine has labored to understand the interweave, if any, of theory and practice. The heart of her presentation outlined her four conclusions: 1) that theory and practice cannot be separated, that class-

room teachers, for example, nearly always operate according to theories on language learning and teaching, whether articulated or not; 2) that we are all theorists, following certain principles and adapting as we go, just as Theorists pose questions, test them, draw conclusions, and revise them according to new data; 3) that, contrary to routine belief, "theory" comes to us not only from academic mountaintops but from a variety of sources: primary (our own observations, readings, discussions with colleagues), removed (a second-hand source), and deferred (an unknown but unquestioned expert); and no one source alone, therefore, should be treated as definitive; and 4) that theory exists whether we recognize it or not, and that the art of being "professional" lies in pushing theories from the tacit (unexamined, expert-dependent) end of the continuum to the overt (expressed, evaluated) end.

Dr. Devine illustrated her four points with the example of literacy, the unexamined definition and teaching of which gave way, with her classroom experience, to personal theories more in line with confronted reality.

In short, Dr. Devine encouraged us to trust our own abilities as theorists, and to draw on personal theory as well as more distant Theory to guide our teaching.

Cindy Fong teaches at Bunker Hill Community College.

Teacher Research and ESL Report on Saturday's Plenary Talk

Polly Ulichny

Dr. Joseph Check, Acting Associate Dean of the College of Education at UMass/Boston and Director of the Boston Writing Project, delivered Saturday's plenary talk at the Spring MATSOL Conference at Bunker Hill. Dr. Check is an initiator and facilitator in the area of teacher research. Most of his work has been with urban K-12 teachers of writing. He answered the title of his talk, "Does Teacher Research Have a Place in the ESL Community?" with a comprehensive and convincing yes.

Dr. Check cast his net wide to show the MATSOL audience where teacher research fits within the larger area of educational research in general. From the theoretical concerns surrounding the debate on teacher research he moved on to the important role ESL teachers can play in providing knowledge about language learning and teaching to the wider educational community. He ended with very practical, concrete suggestions for questions ESL teachers might explore and for research projects they might undertake in their own classrooms.

Among the many definitions of teacher research, Dr. Check signalled several characteristics as the most salient. Teacher research is systematic and intentional inquiry carried out by teachers themselves. In reporting their systematic inquiry, teachers make the knowledge, terms, and definitions of their practice accessible to the wider community of educators and also establish themselves as makers of knowledge, not merely implementors of knowledge produced by "professional" researchers.

Science provides the paradigm for mainstream research. Yet education cannot meet the conditions of basic scientific research because it is complex, context specific, and highly controversial. Nevertheless, mainstream educational research has persisted in trying to follow the canons of scientific research. As a result, researchers and practitioners rarely talk to each other because researchers don't often speak the language that teachers understand or find useful.

Continued on page 8

Teacher Research *Continued from page 7*

Teacher research, according to Dr. Check, provides an opportunity to begin to close that gap. As teachers take on the responsibility of defining problems and producing answers that make sense to them through systematic documentation and reporting of their practices, the wider educational community of fellow teachers, researchers, policy makers, and administrators will benefit from their work. Their voice in education will matter.

Dr. Check noted the particularly marginal position most ESL teachers find themselves in. He did not predict an easy entry into the mainstream educational community for ESL teacher researchers. Yet he emphasized the need for educators to learn from ESL teachers, particularly given the sweeping demographic changes in public school populations. He mentioned, for example, his discovery on a recent trip to Houston Public Schools that 63% of the incoming first grade class is hispanic.

In the more practical realm, Dr. Check offered some questions that ESL researchers might investigate through systematic inquiry:

- What do ESL tests measure?
- How do I know if students are really learning anything?
- What do students want, anyway?
- How do I use or ignore silence?
- What are places where I lose students?
- How can I get students to increase their range of strategies?
- What are characteristics of good language learners?
- What is the relationship between the visual and the verbal for the young learner?

In his final recommendations to ESL teachers on ways to begin raising their voices about teaching and learning, Dr. Check stressed the importance of professional networking in order to create a forum for their teacher research. For anyone interested in undertaking research in their classrooms, Dr. Check advised starting with a support group of colleagues. He advised not starting with a literature search, but rather with journal keeping of daily events. Teacher researchers can describe and log classroom practices in their journals and share them with colleagues. A systematic work-up of the data (journal entries) means pulling out the patterns that recur and analyzing them. Finally, teachers can write up their research to share it with a wider audience.

Dr. Check suggested that the most powerful sharing of this information occurs within a school or institution. Staff development that emerges out of teacher concerns and directed by teachers themselves has the power to transform teaching and learning.

Dr. Check's important message to ESL professionals was: Yes, teacher research does have a place in the ESL community. And ESL teachers need to raise their voices within the larger educational community. The best way to begin is with strong support and sharing among colleagues who are curious about their teaching and learning in ESL classrooms.

Polly Ulichny teaches at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

A Thank You Note to Catherine Sadow, Outgoing MATSOL President

Ruth Spack

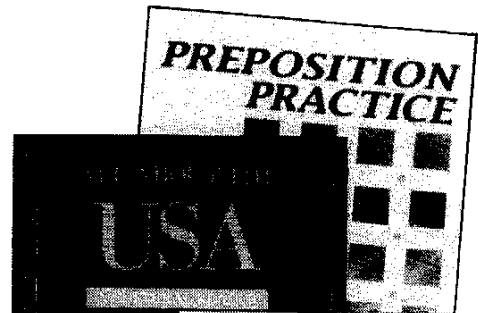
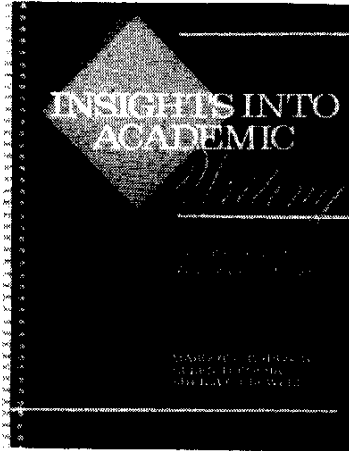
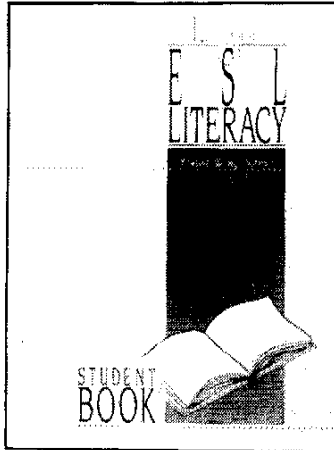
Eighteen years ago I was hired by the Brookline Adult Education Department to teach the most advanced level ESL group. I arrived on the first night of class with a bagful of high level materials only to discover that my job description had changed: I was to teach beginners who could neither read nor write. I had never taught adult beginners but I was expected to begin in five minutes. Sensing my panic, the secretary leaned forward and said, "Go down to Room 357. Cathy Sadow is also teaching beginners. She'll help you."

That was the best and truest advice I have ever received. With seconds to go before class was to begin, I poked my head in the doorway of Room 357, told a complete stranger my tale of woe, and was immediately handed a packet of materials and told, "This is one hour's worth of activities. Meet me at the break and we'll switch."

That was the beginning not only of the beginners' class but also of a lasting professional and personal relationship.

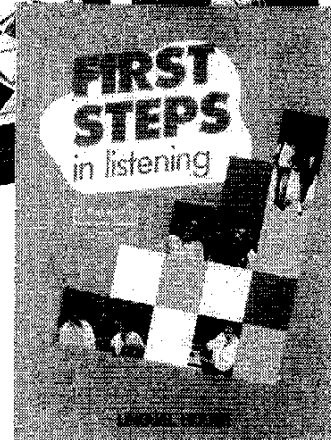
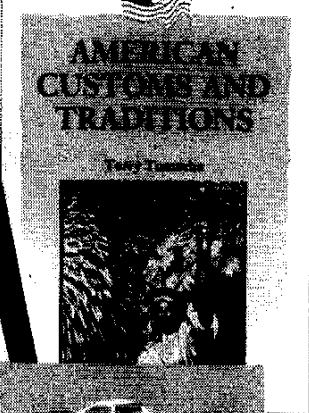
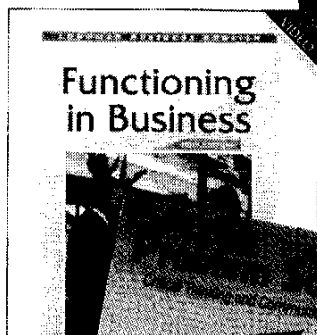
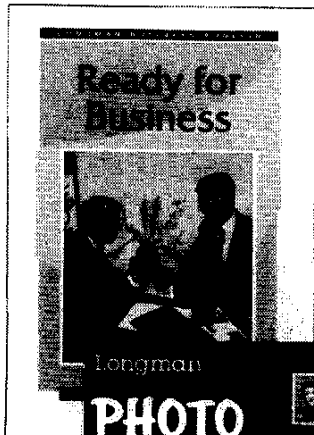
As I write this piece, Cathy has just stepped down as president of MATSOL. Her creativity and generosity have inspired numerous MATSOL members, within and beyond the Executive Board, to work hard for the organization. During her presidency, the Job Bank was revived and expanded, membership grew by 280, the newsletter became a longer and meatier publication, a brochure was designed and distributed, and grants were offered to the membership for conference travel and teacher research. Cathy was influential in getting MATSOL involved in state certification and educational legislation and in organizing a part-timers' committee. I know I speak for the entire Board when I say it has been a pleasure to work with Cathy and to watch MATSOL grow and mature under her leadership.

New from Longman ESL...

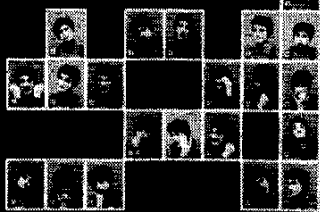


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MATSOL Grant Recipients' Reports on TESOL '91

T E S O L



AS AN INTERNATIONAL FAMILY

Three of the four recipients of the 1990 MATSOL Travel Grants, Lisa Santagate, Muriel Harris, and Vivian Zamel, used the funding to attend the 25th Annual TESOL Convention in New York City, March 24-28, 1991. All three, as part of the grant package, have written a brief report for the *MATSOL Newsletter*, highlighting the most valuable sessions they attended.

"Texts, Lines and Videotape" (and Bilingualism)

Maureen Harris

Sometimes the anticipation of a major conference in an exciting city is better than the event itself. However, this was not the case with the TESOL conference this year in New York City. In general, the conference was well organized and provided an enormous variety of excellent workshops. From 7 AM until 9 PM, I was stimulated by impressive speakers, dynamic presentations, and innumerable publishers' exhibits.

Fortunately, I had a focus, for without it, I would have been overwhelmed. My focus was video and the different ways it can be used in the ESL classroom. To my delight, there were more than 25 enlightening workshops on this topic. They ranged from "Video in Language Teaching: The Recipe Approach" to "Video as a Teacher-Training Tool" to "Texts, Lines and Videotape: Classroom Video Projects" to "Interactive Video for Language Instruction." All of these demonstrations provided informative and inspiring ideas that I could take back to my work with bilingual and ESL teachers in the Boston Public Schools.

As a culminating event, I took a bus with other TESOL conventioners to visit the Bilingual/Bicultural Mini School in East Harlem. We met with the director and were given the opportunity to observe many classrooms and talk to the teachers. They have developed a wonderful program that incorporates a multicultural focus, whole language learning, and bilingual/monolingual integration. The school, teachers, administrators and students were all truly impressive; and I left with a very positive feeling.

The MATSOL Travel Grant enabled me to stay at the New York Hilton, the site of the conference. Because of this, I was able to participate in the many exciting activities that were offered and to meet many people from around the world involved in teaching English as a Second/Foreign Language. I feel fortunate to have had this experience, for it provided me with a global perspective that will certainly benefit my present and future endeavors.

Maureen Harris is a bilingual resource specialist in the Boston Public Schools.

Multiculturalism, Integrated Learning, and Male/Female Talk

Lisa Santagate

With MATSOL Travel Grant funds in hand, I made my way to New York City to participate in TESOL '91. Celebrating "25 Years as an International Family," I found this silver anniversary conference not only full of practical sessions but also quite a lot of fun.

During my time at the conference, I managed to attend many sessions. One favorite was a workshop titled "Integrated Lessons with ESL Students as Multicultural Resources," led by Deborah J. Short and Nancy C. Rhodes from the Center for Applied Linguistics. The presenters gave tips for using ESL students as resources in the classroom and demonstrated strategies and techniques for integrating language and content instruction. Participants received several useful handouts, among them a sample multicultural lesson and a list of national multicultural resources. Both presenters were enthusiastic and transmitted information and ideas that I will use in my own teaching.

Another session I found interesting and well-organized was "Working Together: An Integrated Approach to Kindergarten ESL." Duane Diviney and Anne Furman from the Ithaca (New York) City School District shared their educational model and illustrated the positive changes that occurred at Belle Sherman School when the ESL program became an integrated one. Not only were the presenters polished, but their work was an exemplary model for school systems considering a shift in practice.

I also enjoyed the plenary session during which Deborah Tannen, Professor of Linguistics at Georgetown University, spoke humorously on the subject, "Women and Men: Talking as Cross-Cultural Communication."

I thank the MATSOL Grant Committee for providing me with the opportunity to attend such a well-organized professional convention. I brought back much to my own school system.

Lisa Santagate teaches in the Dedham Public Schools.

Whole Language and Higher Education

Vivian Zamel

In her TESOL '91 presentation, "The Fluency-First Approach to ESL Writing and Reading," Adele MacGowan-Gilhooly described the whole language approach that has been implemented in ESL courses at the City College of New York since 1987. This approach reverses the usual

Continued on page 11

Reports *Continued from page 10*

order of curricular concerns: rather than beginning with discrete items of language and grammar, it focuses first on the development of fluency and gradually addresses itself to issues of clarity and correctness. Even at the lowest level of coursework, students are provided massive exposure to English through extensive reading and writing, with students reading 4-6 novels, responding in journals, writing daily in class, and writing a lengthy (10,000 words) semester-long project that grows out of students' real interests. At the highest level, the emphasis shifts to academic writing and correctness in a course devoted to exploring and researching a particular content area or theme. In all three courses, students work collaboratively in workshops, learning from and teaching one another. Students share their reading and writing, publish their work, and experience the pleasure that comes with reading and writing when these are based on genuine interest and engagement. They learn to prioritize language concerns, and they gain the critical understanding that the purpose of reading and writing (and all language use) is the making of meaning.

Importantly, this approach, which, according to MacGowan-Gilhooly, "individualizes, accelerates and augments learning," has resulted in both qualitative and quantitative gains. Students experience higher levels of

confidence and have changed their attitudes about reading and writing (and using English), while teachers enjoy reading and writing along with their students, look forward to reading student writing, and note the "depth, richness and intellectual curiosity" revealed by this writing. Furthermore, this model of instruction has led to markedly better passing rates on the CUNY-wide writing and reading assessment tests: the passing rate on the writing test has almost doubled while the passing rate on the reading test has doubled.

This approach to ESL study clearly demonstrates the kind of language and literacy growth that is possible when language is a means for understanding and constructing knowledge, rather than an end in and of itself, and makes a compelling argument for shifting our focus from "learning to use English" to "using English to learn."

I am grateful that MATSOL has made a commitment to support conference travel for its membership, especially at a time when state funding is dwindling or is no longer available.

Vivian Zamel is the director of the ESL program at the University of Massachusetts, Boston Campus.

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TESOL Day at the United Nations

Ruth Spack and Catherine Sadow

In addition to commemorating 25 years as an international family, TESOL had an exciting new relationship to celebrate: Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) status with the United Nations, approved in March, 1990. As participants of the TESOL Convention, we decided to accept the invitation to register for an educational day at the U.N.

The U.N.

Our first speaker was Farouk Mawlawi of the Department of Public Information, who spoke about what the U.N. is and what it does. Using the recent conflict in the Gulf as an example, he explained that the U.N. has both a political role (establishing sanctions against Iraq) and a humanitarian role (repatriating refugees). Yet the political is always connected to the humanitarian (avoidance of war).

Where does TESOL fit in? Teachers are instrumental in spreading the message of the U.N., and the message must get out if the U.N. is to work. Teachers are also the key to solving the problem of illiteracy, which affects millions of people worldwide.

The Environment

The next speaker was Noel Brown, a director of U.N. Environmental Policy. Within seconds of hearing his first words, we were aware that we were in the presence of an extraordinary mind. Dr. Brown spoke eloquently at length about the environment. His message went beyond the bounds of the environment as we sometimes consider it, beyond air and water and land. He emphasized our responsibility in establishing human solidarity, not just human rights. To do that, we must convert the energy we expend in producing waste to aid the poor.

Focusing on the "brief but devastating" Gulf War, Dr. Brown pointed out that wars no longer have to be long to be destructive. As oil was deliberately spilled into the gulf, it became obvious that nature is now not only a victim but also a weapon of war. And, Dr. Brown asked, "Who speaks for nature? Where was 'Desert Flower'?" He called for a new international law that would protect natural systems, much as present international law protects religious and cultural structures during a war. The world acquiesced in this war with no environmental assessment required; we should never allow that to happen again. Air, water, and land need a higher priority on the human agenda. We need to re-establish connections with nature. Otherwise, "we will unravel in a few hundred years what was created in billions of years." It does not help to "win the battle and lose the earth."

How can TESOL teachers help to save the earth? Teach students to think critically, Dr. Brown advised. Tell them they must ask the right questions or they will not get the right answers. "Teaching," he said, "is a commitment to the truth."

After this scintillating talk, we were sure that it would be downhill for the rest of the day. But while it's true that none of the speakers who followed moved us to the extent that Dr. Brown had, in fact each of the presentations was important and dynamic in its own way.

Teaching materials

Reeta Roy, of the Special Programs Section, explained that the U.N. would like to establish a meaningful presence in classrooms around the world. The goal is to reach out to young people to inform them about the role of the United

Teachers are instrumental in spreading the message of the U.N., and the message must get out if the U.N. is to work.

Nations. Materials include beautifully-designed booklets on such subjects as peace, human rights, literacy, and the environment. Also available are videos with teaching guides, narrated by youngsters. For information about these materials, write to: Public Inquiries, The United Nations, New York, NY, 10017.

Language training

Laura Layton, of the Office of Human Resources Management, spoke about language training, which is an integral part of the organization. Training is provided for U.N. staff members and the diplomatic corps in 6 official languages: French, Spanish, English, Arabic, Russian, and Chinese. A coordinator, 3 full-time teachers, and 1-3 part-time teachers serve 200 students in 7 levels. Included in the program are writing courses for both native and nonnative speakers.

Human Rights

Elissavet Stamatopoulou-Robbins, of the Center for Human Rights, and Iqbal Haji, of the Office for Development and International Economic Cooperation, outlined the U.N.'s human rights agenda. Through the Human Rights Commission, the U.N. monitors the implementation of human

Continued on page 13

Tesol Day at the U.N. *Continued from page 12*

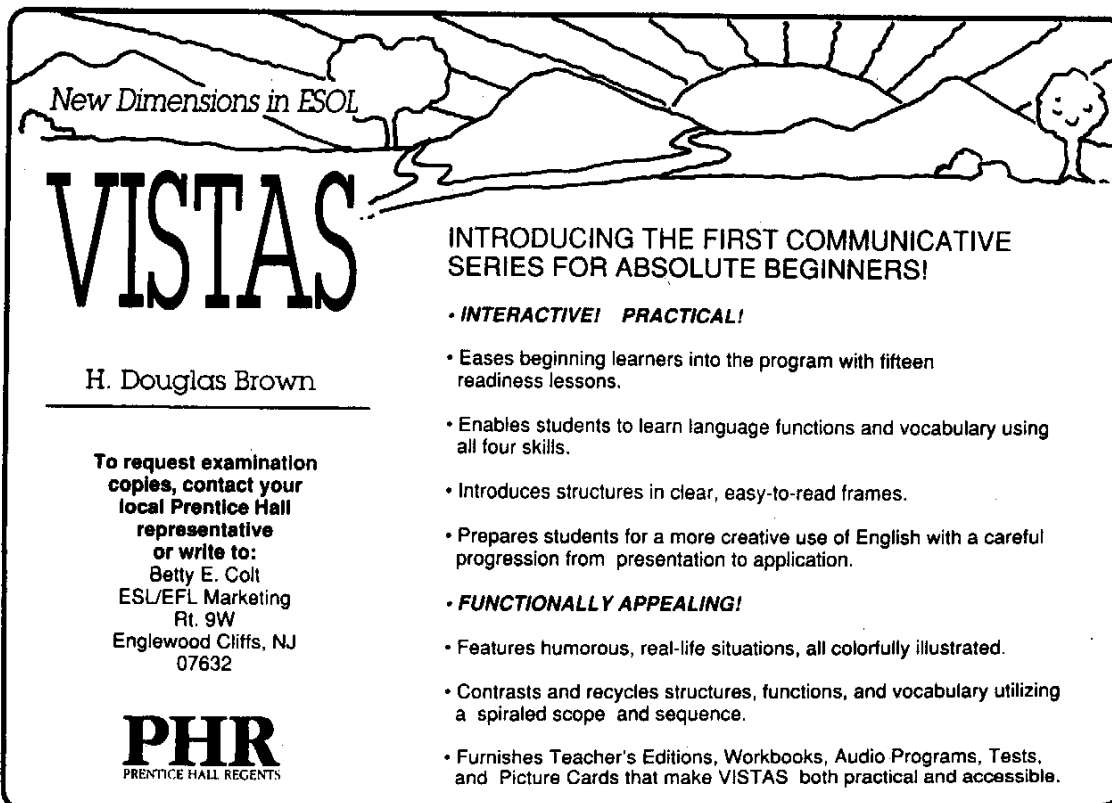
rights, and countries are obliged to submit periodic reports. Not a day goes by in the U.N. without a meeting related to violations such as illegal executions, mystifying disappearances, arbitrary detentions, and the sale of children. Constant pressure is exerted to promote human rights in global and local communities. But because world ideology is dominated by market forces and economic development, no country has a clean record.

English at the U.N.

The subtitle of the "English at the U.N." presentation was "Why, which, whose and for what purpose?" John Lee Truman, Janet Murray, and David Klein, of the Editorial Service, quickly made it clear that writing at the U.N. is as much a political issue as it is a linguistic and rhetorical one. The reports, technical writing, letters, and memos need to be clear, concise, and to the point, but they must at the same time satisfy the needs of a multilingual, multicultural readership highly sensitive to editorial changes. Numerous documents are simultaneously translated on a daily basis

into the 6 official languages of the U.N. To avoid "anarchy in the use of language," the editors use the *Guide to Writing for the U.N.* (available in the U.N. bookstore); English is used as the language measure against which the others are judged. Since editors are often thinking and creating in 2 or 3 languages at once, all of the editorial revisions must be done by hand: Word processing is inadequate because it makes the original text disappear; and the original text, with its marginal, "redlighted" notes, must always be in view. As there is no time for editors to sit with the authors, they sometimes have to interpret inexplicable passages and imagine what the writers wanted to say in their own language. Editors often work until midnight: All of the work has to be completed and published in all 6 languages by 6:00 AM!

Ruth Spack teaches at Tufts University. Catherine Sadow teaches at Northeastern University and Boston University.



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A Little Lie, A Kernel of Truth

Fred Turner

A while back, I met a teacher who'd moved to Boston from the midwest. When she and her husband first packed the kids in the car a year and a half ago, she said, she was nervous. With the Massachusetts miracle turned Dukakis debacle, she didn't know if she could find decent work. She thought that despite her nearly ten years of college teaching experience, she might end up giving lessons at Berlitz.

Luckily, her first application landed her a job. For the last nine months she's been happily teaching eight hours a week at a university in Boston. She has a semester-by-semester contract, a high hourly wage, and a boss she likes. As a matter of fact, she said, she has a much better deal than she ever had before.

When I asked her for the details of her last job, I got a little surprise. In the midwest, eight hours a week of teaching earned her a full-time, annually-reviewed position, with full benefits and students she liked. Her boss had been a little brusque, but her salary, including benefits, had added up to quite a bit more than her hourly wages here. It looked to me like she'd had a better deal on the far side of the Mississippi.

When I pointed this out, she became flustered. What was *really* good about her current job, she said, was that she had young children and needed flexible hours to take care of them. Was that all, I asked? She grimaced. That was all she could think of right now and if I would excuse her she had enjoyed talking to me but she was very busy and had to go.

At first I felt sorry for having offended her. Then, the more I thought about it, the more I found *her* attitude offensive. Day after day, she told herself that her current job was better than her last one. When presented with evidence to the contrary, she retreated to a fallback justification: her children. She simply couldn't face the fact that even with all her experience, she was still working for hourly wages, that she had no benefits, and that she had absolutely no job security.

If it weren't so common, her denial would be cause for pity rather than anger. But as I've gotten to know more ESL teachers, both part-time and full-time, in Massachusetts, I've discovered that with few exceptions, we each have little lies we tell ourselves. We each have ways to justify our putting up with often abominable working conditions. On the one hand, these private deceptions allow us to maintain our self-esteem. On the other hand, though, precisely because they allow us to tolerate the intolerable, they also keep us from improving our

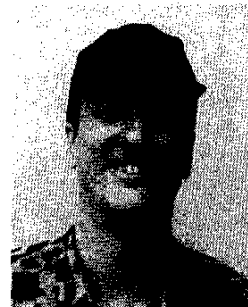
lots. If, instead of trying to feel happier about working conditions that make us miserable, we allowed ourselves to get good and angry at both the conditions and the people who profit from them, we might stand a chance of improving our lives.

My own favorite white lie runs as follows: I don't know what I want to do with my life and for a holding-pattern job, ESL pays pretty well. I've told myself that every September for six years. Every year, just when I begin to feel angry about the money (not to mention the lack of job security and benefits), I think to myself, "Well, it's just for a while," swallow hard, and sign up. Never mind that the holding pattern has become a life pattern: *This* year it's "just for a while."

I've heard other versions of my personal deception: "I'll just put up with this till the kids are out of the house"; "I'll just hang in there till I can save up enough for Africa/Asia/Europe." I've also heard other kinds of justifications, including "I'm so lucky to be working in a classroom when most people are stuck in some airless office that the rest of it (pay, benefits, seniority) doesn't matter," and "My husband makes enough for both of us. Why risk a job I like for more (pay benefits, seniority)?"

Each of these fibs is built around a kernel of truth. I really will not be teaching ESL in twenty years. My friend from the midwest really does need flexible hours to take care of her kids. But at the same time, each allows us to pretend that we aren't angry, that we aren't underpaid, that we aren't overworked. The fact that I don't know what I'll be doing a few years down the road shouldn't keep me from trying to improve the life I live now. Likewise, the fact that a mother needs flexible hours should not keep her from demanding compensation commensurate with her experience.

Even though the little fictions we weave may make us feel like we're looking out for our best interests, in the end, they best serve those who hire us. They keep us from being angry. And as any employer knows, if the workers aren't angry, they won't protest. And if they don't protest, you don't have to change their conditions.



CALL FOR PROPOSALS

If you would like to present at the MATSOL '91 Fall Conference on October 26, please request a proposal application from Christine Parkhurst, 15 Maple Lane, Framingham, MA 01701 (508) 872-1194.

1991 MATSOL GRANTS for Travel and Research



Since Fall, 1990, the MATSOL Executive Board has provided grants for MATSOL members to attend conferences and to conduct classroom-based research. A MATSOL Awards Committee is appointed annually to select grant recipients and distribute grant money. Members of the MATSOL Executive Board and members of the MATSOL Awards Committee are not eligible to receive grants. The Awards Committee encourages all eligible members to apply.

Travel Grants

Grants totalling \$3000 (up to \$350 for an individual applicant) will be awarded to enable MATSOL members to attend professional meetings such as the Annual TESOL Convention, a regional TESOL Affiliate conference, or any workshop or meeting that can demonstrably enhance a MATSOL member's ESL teaching experience and benefit the MATSOL community.

Research Grants

Three \$500 grants will be awarded to support classroom-based research conducted individually or collaboratively by MATSOL members. Classroom research enables teachers to become researchers by observing closely what is occurring in their classrooms and then theorizing from their own experience. Teacher-Researchers formulate their own questions, collect and describe their own data, and share their results with other teachers. The principle underlying such research is that teachers can and should play a central role in the creation of new knowledge about teaching and learning.

MEMBERS OF THE 1991 AWARDS COMMITTEE

Mary Doolin
Newton North High School

Lydia Grave-Resendes
Umana-Barnes School, Boston; Lesley College

H. Shippen Goodhue
JVS/ESL, Hebrew College

Sima Kirsztajn
Edith Baker School, Brookline

Rachel Goodman
Department of Employment
and Training

Paul Krueger
Northeastern University,
English Language Center

Karen Price, Harvard University

Teacher-Research Workshops

Workshops on conducting classroom-based research and writing a grant proposal will be presented at MATSOL CONFERENCES.

MATSOL Travel Grant Application

(1) Name _____

Address _____

Telephone (work) _____ (home) _____

Affiliation(s) [workplace/place of study] _____

Position(s) _____

(2) Which conference/workshop/meeting do you wish to attend? _____

location _____ date(s) _____

(3) Have you previously attended this conference/workshop/meeting? yes ___ no ___ If yes, when? _____

(4) Estimated expenses: Registration _____ Travel _____

Accommodations _____

(5) Have you applied for funding from another source? no ___ yes ___ If yes, amount requested _____ received _____

(6) Amount of request from MATSOL (maximum \$350) _____

(7) Personal statement (250 words maximum, typewritten, double-spaced. Attach separate sheet with your name at the top.):

Describe your reasons for wishing to attend the conference/workshop/meeting, noting especially the ways in which it will enhance your teaching or learning on return to the classroom. Please include a brief statement describing your background and professional goals.

MATSOL TRAVEL GRANT

Purpose: To support a MATSOL member who wishes to attend a conference, workshop, or meeting that will promote professional development.

Amount: Up to \$350

Eligibility: Any MATSOL member in good standing as of November 1, 1991. You may apply for this grant even if you are receiving partial support from other sources.

Criteria: Applications will be evaluated on the basis of (1) your reasons for wishing to attend and (2) the benefits that your participation will bring to you and to your institution.

Stipulation: Grant recipients will write a brief report for the *MATSOL Newsletter*. They will receive editorial support for this endeavor.

Applications must be postmarked on or before November 15, 1991. Recipients will be notified by December 15, 1991. Awards will be announced in the MATSOL Newsletter.

Send application to:
Lydia Grave-Resendes
Chair, MATSOL Awards Committee
30 Glenwood Road
Somerville, MA 02145

MATSOL Research Grant Application

(1) Name _____

Address _____

Telephone (work) _____ (home) _____

Affiliation(s) [workplace/place of study] _____

Position (s) _____

(Attach separate sheet with bio-data for each researcher.)

(2) Research Question(s):

(3) Research Proposal (500 words maximum, typewritten, double-spaced. Attach separate sheets with your name at the top of each sheet.):

How do you propose to answer the question(s) noted above? Please present a research plan, including relevant dates.

MATSOL RESEARCH GRANT

Purpose: To support classroom-based research

Amount: \$500

Eligibility: Any MATSOL member(s) in good standing as of November 1, 1991. Research may be conducted individually or collaboratively (several individuals or a program or an institution).

Criteria: Applications will be evaluated on the basis of (1) the clarity of the research question and (2) the feasibility of the research plan.

Stipulations: (1) Research must be completed within 12 months of acceptance of the grant.

(2) Award recipients will report on their research findings at the MATSOL conference following the completion of the project.

Applications must be postmarked on or before November 15, 1991. Recipients will be notified by December 15, 1991. Awards will be announced in the MATSOL Newsletter.

Send application to:
Lydia Grave-Resendes
Chair, MATSOL Awards Committee
30 Glenwood Road
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MATSOL JOB BANK

The MATSOL Job Bank serves as a clearinghouse for directors of ESL and Bilingual programs who are seeking professional staff and for MATSOL members who are looking for full-time or part-time employment.

Directors looking for staff may send or call in pertinent information to the Job Bank Coordinator.

MATSOL members who are looking for jobs can send six self-addressed stamped envelopes to the Job Bank Coordinator to receive monthly listings of current job openings.

MATSOL members who wish to be considered for job bank openings (including last minute and substitute openings) may send a resumé to the Coordinator indicating at what times they are available and what type of assignment interests them. Directors who need staff immediately will be given the names and phone numbers of individuals who are available.

For further information about the Job Bank, write or call the Job Bank Coordinator:

Amy Worth
31 Fox Hill Road
Newton Centre, MA 02159
(617) 969-2437

MATSOL members who did not pick up a copy of the membership list or the Massachusetts ESL Directory at the Spring Conference may request either or both from Amy Worth.

MATSOL MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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Mailing Address		Street	
City	State	ZIP	
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Dianne Ruggiero
MATSOL Treasurer
50 Harvard Avenue #5 Brookline, MA 02146

The Town of Brookline, TBE, ESL and All That Jazz

Ruth Spack

On the evening of February 28, 1991, residents of Brookline were treated to a presentation sponsored by the League of Women Voters on the bilingual and ESL programs in the Brookline Schools. Four of Brookline's teachers and the TBE/ESL Coordinator, Kathleen Polga, shared their expertise and experience.

The TBE/ESL program serves more than 500 children representing over 30 language groups. In addition to offering ESL instruction in every school, Brookline offers bilingual instruction in Chinese, Hebrew, Japanese, Russian, and Spanish.

After introductory remarks by Kay Polga, Nancy Colburn described the high school program, which offers three levels of ESL. These levels range from instruction to students with very limited English skills to students in command of English to a remarkable degree. Colburn impressed the audience with stories of students who enter the system in September with virtually no skills in English and who achieve remarkable proficiency by January. She emphasized the need for flexibility in assessing students' progress.

Bambi Good, describing the ESL pull-out program in the elementary schools (K-8), explained that the ESL class is a "safe" place. In the class, materials are geared toward students' levels and give them a comfortable start. She emphasized that the program uses a whole language approach, introducing story-telling and journal writing, for example, before grammar instruction. In response to audience surprise that grammar is not the primary focus of second language instruction, she said, "If that's the way we started, we'd be starting for a very long time." And then she gave a "grammar lesson" by singing one of Carolyn Graham's jazz chants. The

audience was delighted.

According to Maria Marrero, most of the students who are served by the bilingual program in the elementary schools are the children of immigrants. Their parents were attracted to Brookline because it is a safe place to live, has a good school system, is near Boston, and is on the T-line. They share a desire for their children to learn English and to become part of the community. Like other Brookline parents, they want their children to make friends, to go to high school, and to go to college. As these students enter the school system from another country, however, it is as though they are "falling into a black hole." In the bilingual program, with a teacher who speaks their native language, they can talk about their fears and maintain their self-esteem. With this support, they are more willing to take risks, an important element in their continuing educational development. Marrero assured a concerned audience that no students stay in one bi-



Kay Polga Joan Tieman Nancy Colburn

lingual class all day; all are integrated into other classes. Within a relatively short time, virtually all are mainstreamed.

Joan Tieman, a regular third grade teacher with twenty-five years of experience in the Brookline schools, expressed her appreciation of the TBE/ESL teachers in the system. She takes advantage of their expertise to fine tune her program. To audience members who expressed concern that second language students may be a burden, Tieman emphasized that these students bring a great deal to the children of Brookline, and vice versa. For Tieman — and there are no better words with which to end this article — "Every child is unique; every child has special needs."

Congratulations to . . .

Elsa Auerbach, University of Massachusetts/Boston, who received the Mary Finnochiaro Award for Excellence in the Development of Pedagogical Materials. The award-winning materials are entitled, "Making Meaning, Making Change. A Guide to Participatory Curriculum Development for Adult ESL and Family Literacy." The Mary Finnochiaro Fund was established and is maintained through the contributions of TESOL members.

Professor Auerbach will be the plenary speaker at the MATSOL '91 Fall Conference.

What Does the Trick for Second Language Learners?

Lydia Grave-Resendes

I feel proud that I can speak English. But it was not easy to learn. The fact of the matter is that second language acquisition doesn't come easily for everybody. What does do the trick for second language learners?

It was not too long ago that second language acquisition was seen by many scholars as a task different from first language acquisition. But by taking a close look at what helps children acquire their first language, we can find answers to some of the questions we have about how to help our students acquire a second language and be motivated to do so. There are two main factors that are critical to providing and fostering the development of language in the ESL classroom: a meaningful, functional context and social interaction. I call them the major ingredients.

A meaningful, functional context

The first attempt of children when learning a language is to comprehend and create meaning of utterances that are part of their day-to-day life. ESL students need to have a learning context with purposeful use of language. Language can only develop within a meaningful contextualized situation.

The simplest way to begin is to make sure that the language is connected with the students' real life experiences and to take these experiences as the starting point for the acquisition of the second language. Unfortunately, what is usually taught in the classroom is language isolated from context: rote exercises and drill after drill, which for many students are irrelevant and meaningless. Thus, acquiring a second language becomes a hardship for them; they may memorize but they soon forget.

Students learn language when they use it as a form to express themselves. The language must have the purpose of satisfying their needs. Children use language to communicate, and it is through speaking in a real communication context that they develop language. Nigel Hall (1987) states that:

the child looks through language and sees the social function of the interaction. It is for this reason that children become users, indeed proficient users of language, without achieving what has come to be called linguistic awareness, i.e., an understanding of what language is, rather than an understanding of how it is used.

Since children use language to communicate and since it is through speaking in a real communication context that children develop language, they need to be exposed to language in a situation where social interaction is provided. In other words, students must take an active role in the classroom rather than a traditional one in which they just listen to the teacher.

Teachers as facilitators

As teachers in the classroom, our role must be multi-dimen-

sional. Portuguese educator Sergio Niza advocates that we should become auditors, the ones who listen (to the students), because this way we facilitate and establish communication, which in turn makes available the above necessary ingredients. As auditors, we can capture the students' messages as we listen to them. This listening fosters interaction between the students and the teacher and among the students themselves. Niza also presents the teacher as the only person who can bring to the surface the students' intrinsic motivations, give suggestions, and generate initiative. Yet the teacher is neither the only transmitter of knowledge nor a bank of knowledge, but rather a facilitator and partner in the classroom. As facilitator, the teacher is the person with the most active role in the group because the teacher is always "at cause," asking how to

The classroom is a place where one lives, where one is heard, where one is respected and valued.

prevent the student from not learning. Niza says, "a teacher who puts himself/herself at permanent cause is interested in finding better ways of teaching so the child can learn."¹

The classroom as a micro-society

The classroom itself is a place where one lives, where one is heard, where one is respected and valued, and not where one is confined to a space to sit and listen to the teacher. The classroom ought to be seen as a micro-society, and it should contain all features of society as a whole. Many students resist learning the second language, not because they don't want to, but because they don't see it as stimulating, or the classroom as a fun place. It doesn't turn them on.

It is up to us to make sure that we look at the motivation for second language acquisition as not different from what made us learn our first language. We acquired our language naturally through a meaningful, functional use and with plenty of human interaction.

1 Grave-Resendes, L. (1989). "Niza's Pedagogical Model: A Real Life Experience-Based Approach to Literacy." Doctoral Dissertation, Boston University.

2 Hall, N. (1987). *The emergence of literacy*. Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann Educational Books, Inc.

Lydia Grave-Resendes teaches at the Umana-Barnes School, Boston, and at Lesley College.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS TO THE MATSOL EXECUTIVE BOARD

The positions of Vice-President, Treasurer, General Representative, Higher Education Representative, and Western Region Representative on the MATSOL Executive Board will become vacant in the Spring of 1992. The positions are briefly described below. If you wish to have someone considered for the nomination, please obtain that person's consent and forward the name and biographical data to:

Catherine Sadow
MATSOL Past President
109 Tappan Street
Brookline, MA 02146

Each of the members of the Executive Board is expected to attend monthly meetings and to help with ongoing projects of the Board.

In addition, some of the specific duties are as follows:

The Vice-President is responsible for the Spring Conference, assumes the presidency upon completion of this term, and remains on the Board during the year following the presidency. This is a three-year commitment.

The Treasurer is responsible for the membership dues, for maintaining proper financial records of income and expenditures of MATSOL funds, and for registration at the Spring and Fall Conferences. This is a two-year term.

The Representatives serve as co-chairs of the Fall Conference and help recruit workshop leaders for the Spring Conference. These are two-year terms.

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Certification Issues: A Word of Caution

Agnes Farkas and David Coltin

"Grandfather" Certificates

According to Gilman Hebert of the Massachusetts Department of Education, the DOE has attempted three times to have legislation passed rescinding the "grandfathering" of elementary teachers and secondary English teachers as ESL teachers that took place in the early 1980s. So far the legislature has not gone along, possibly because these teachers would then be caught in a classic Catch 22. They were denied the more desirable conventional certification, even after taking the required courses, because they already had "grandfather" certificates. Yet at the same time, their "grandfather" certificates would be taken away, and they would be left without any certificates. Teachers who fall into this classification may wish to contact their state legislators.

Bilingual teachers

The DOE is also contemplating changes in the certification of bilingual teachers. Many teachers failed the required culture and history exam and are teaching under waivers that will expire in September 1994. The present exam will be offered only through Fall, 1991. It will probably be replaced in January 1992 by the choice of either a 3 semester hour college course or 30 contact hours of staff development training to be completed by September 1994. There is the possibility that a portion of the 30 contact hours may be earned through a "portfolio," to be approved by an as-yet-unestablished-and-unfunded board. Due to a legal technicality, the one month period for public comment on the proposed amendments, which ended on April 2, may possibly be extended. Anyone

wishing to comment should contact Nan Stein of the Department of Education at (617) 770-7426 for copies of the proposed amendments and to ascertain if the comment period has actually been extended.

Staff Development

MATSOL could become a staff development provider for bilingual teachers by undergoing a lengthy approval process for relevant conference workshops. We would need to know the number of interested people before deciding to go through all the "red tape." Please call Agnes Farkas at (617) 964-0464 if you think you will need to earn these staff development hours.

ESL certification

Math teachers with certification in related subjects need only one or two courses to obtain ESL certification. A word of caution: only BU and UMass are on the Board of Education approved list for ESL training. And as many people have found out, it is impossible to register for courses leading to ESL certification at UMass unless one is enrolled in a full-time degree program. The rejection letter from the certification bureau lists the competencies that applicants lack but neglects to inform them that unless the courses are taken at UMass or BU, it is a long process to get them accepted by the bureau.

Agnes Farkas teaches at Pine Manor College and Brookline Adult Education. David Coltin teaches at Northeastern University.

English Language Teaching Materials Needed in Czechoslovakia

The Velvet Revolution of 1989 inspired the world and introduced a wellspring of hope for the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic. The people are now confronting the challenge of rebuilding the country; education as a foundation for change is their major priority. Andree Collier, a teacher in Czechoslovakia, wrote earlier this year to Catherine Sadow, then MATSOL president, asking for contributions of good textbooks and teaching materials. The MATSOL Executive Board allotted \$28.00 for postage, and a box of up-to-date, high quality texts, donated by MATSOL members, was sent.

If on your own or through your institution you want to make a donation, please send materials directly to: The Information Market of Bohemia, B. Smetany 13, 305 94 Pilsen, Czechoslovakia. Postage is \$. 72 per pound. The Information Market is a library created by Americans in Czechoslovakia. Materials include textbooks, journals, reference tools, software, audiotapes, and video cassettes. If

there are large quantities of any textbook, they can be checked out by a teacher to be used for a whole course.

The MATSOL Winter Social

On a brisk night in February, 125 MATSOL members and their friends gathered in the cozy Boylston Lounge at Harvard University to share wine, salsa, and song. In addition to the beautiful sounds of Esther Hanes and Susan Welby, we were treated to Central American folk music performed by students from the School for International Training in Brattleboro, who dropped in to the Social on their way back to Vermont from a day-long conference at Boston University.



A Report from Portugal

Nancy Mann

In a recent survey, a major Portuguese television station in the United States discovered that most Minnesotans don't know that Portugal is a small country on the western tip of the Iberian peninsula. The official language is Portuguese, the national dish is codfish, and the weather is wonderful from mid-March until late October (the rest of the year is pretty miserable, and there is no central heating). The people are friendly, the lifestyle is relaxed, and food and wine are good and plentiful. Travel is relatively cheap, but clothes and stereo components are expensive.

Portugal then and now

Portuguese history in a nutshell: In the Middle Ages, the Portuguese empire extended to Asia, Africa, and South America. It has gradually shed all of its former colonies, and today consists of continental Portugal and the Atlantic islands of Madeira and the Azores. In 1910, the monarchy was abandoned and replaced with a republican regime. During most of the twentieth century, Portugal was ruled by a fascist dictatorship. The 1974 revolution resulted in the overthrow of the dictatorship and the granting of independence to Portugal's former African colonies. Following the revolution, a parliamentary democracy was established in which power is shared by the government/assembly (elected every four years) and the President (elected every five years).

Portugal has been experiencing increasing stability and economic growth in recent years. It is now in the process of joining the European Economic Community (EEC) and will become a full member in 1992. EEC funding is being poured into agricultural mechanization and human resource development. EEC membership is also resulting in a dramatic increase in foreign investment.

Much of Portugal, even much of Lisbon, still retains a traditional flavor. In the last few years, however, modern touches have been appearing which include ATM machines, Diet Pepsi, and fast food chains. The newly opened Pizza Hut is one of Lisbon's latest hot spots, and Portugal's first McDonald's is due to open its doors any day now. Debate rages about whether McDonald's can succeed in a country where meals are taken so seriously. I vote yes.

Teaching English in Portugal

Opportunities for teaching English abound: private language institutions, universities, private businesses, and so on. Unfortunately, it is becoming more and more difficult for Americans to get work due to EEC regulations. At the same time, Portugal's imminent entrance into the EEC has increased the English-learning furor. More and more businesses

are providing English-language training for their employees. The Portuguese have great enthusiasm and aptitude for learning languages, and their knowledge of English is strong. It is a required course in public schools, and people are bombarded daily with English on television and at the movies (subtitles, no dubbing).

I am currently teaching English in multinational companies and in hotels. At Pepsico (Frito Lay), students need English to do everything from describing potato quality to negotiating business deals. Benefits for the teacher include such valuable knowledge as the fact that green potato chips are caused by high sugar content, as well as complimentary crates of potato chips and Fritos.

At one hotel, I teach a group of pure beginners, most of whom are housekeepers. The primary goal for these students is to learn basic social English and to be able to cope in English with guests' requests and complaints. For example, a student might need to know how to explain that the guest has pressed the housekeeper call button by mistake and must now turn off the switch above the bed in order to make the call light in the hall stop blinking. For a beginning student, such an explanation is a mouthful. Jazz chanting can be helpful here:

Bed, bed, over the bed,
Turn off the switch that's over the bed....

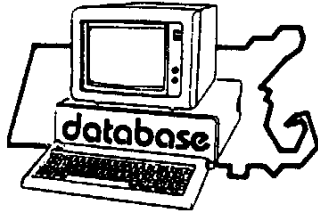
(Has anyone considered publishing a book of jazz chants for hotel employees?)

A technique I have found useful for dealing with these students' very specific communicative needs is to have students carry a small tape recorder around during a workday and tape all exchanges with guests. Students edit the tapes so that they contain only exchanges in English. I then make transcripts of dialogues for frequently-occurring situations. As a class, we transform the dialogues into standard English. Each student is responsible for learning the functional language that is most relevant.

If any of you MATSOLers is going to be passing through Portugal in the near future, I'd love to meet you. You can get my address by contacting Jenny Bixby (see box below).

Nancy Mann, a former MATSOL member, is teaching English in Lisbon.

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



Mountain Venture

Adrienne Saltz

Our own Daphne Mackey (Boston University, 1978 and CELOP, 1978-86) and her colleague at the University of Washington, Barbara Hansen, have created a business communication simulation called *Mountain Venture*. I prefer to call this piece of ingenuity computer *supported* rather than computer *assisted* language learning, which makes it attractive to those ESL educators who don't have computer labs for their students. Only one computer is needed to run this program, yet students benefit from its computerization because tasks are personalized.

Mountain Venture is basically a word processing document, created for use with Word Perfect or Microsoft Word (for the IBM PC). It forms the base of a multi-faceted business simulation, in which students evaluate and solve problems and practice effective oral and written business communication.

The context for the simulation is a ski resort and travel agency in Canada. In the first class period, students choose managerial positions in the company that they hold throughout the 10- to 15- hour simulation. They also change the name of the resort and design a logo. Once positions are chosen, the teacher, who becomes the office manager, goes through the document, using the "find and replace" function of the word processor to individualize the memos from the ever-absent president of the corporation, Arthur Metlinger. For the rest of the simulation, each "student manager" receives personalized memos from Metlinger, customers, employees, or the office manager. Each memo requires the managers to meet, negotiate, and solve problems in pairs or small groups. They then respond in written letters and memos or prepare oral presentations for the group. There is a wide variety of themes outlined in the correspondence, such as customer complaints,

new marketing concepts, and union problems. Problems can easily be discussed by students with a minimum of background in business. The oral and writing skills needed by students can be taught beforehand, or as "training sessions" offered by the office manager during the simulation.

The material itself is interesting in content and realistic in form. It offers ample opportunity for students to take the venture in new directions of their own choosing. For example, once they had bought into this long-term fantasy, my group of young Japanese businessmen who were preparing to take MBA courses with Boston University professors did just that. Not only did they refer to each other outside of class using their new management titles, some insisted on inventing financial statements for the company, complaining that they could only make sound decisions based on more "facts." I often found letters written during "overtime" in my mailbox! The kit accompanying the data disk contains a lot of useful supplemental materials: "stock certificates" in the Arthur Metlinger Corporation, name cards, brochures for a competing ski resort, a chart for tracking students as they move through the simulation, as well as instructions for using it in class and performing the "find and replace" operation in each of the word processors. In addition, there are hard copies of all the memos, which can be used when one's computer refuses to cooperate!

All in all, this is a fun, challenging and inventive activity for pre-academic ESL students. I'd be happy to show samples of its contents to anyone who is interested. Ordering information can be obtained by calling Daphne at (206) 946-3634.

Adrienne Saltz teaches at CELOP, Boston University.

NOTE TO ADVERTISERS

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PART-TIME CONCERNS

The committee concerned with part-time issues will meet in September in the Snell Library of Northeastern University. All MATSOL members are welcome.

For further information, call Cathy Sadow after Labor Day, (617) 437-2455 (w).



“Who Knows?”

Stephen Sadow

To the teacher:

This small group activity is appropriate for intermediate-to-advanced-level students. Allow about thirty minutes for the entire activity.

Present each problem as dramatically as you can. During the discussion period, you may want to act as a “walking dictionary.” If students in a group seem to be having difficulty, you may want to give a suggestion or two, but you should not join the discussion. When the groups have completed their deliberations, the secretaries report to the entire class. Correct only those errors that interfere with communication.

To the class:

Last night, at a time that has not yet been determined, there was a bloody murder at the mansion which is home to the Diamund family. Lance Diamund, the unmarried brother of Leland Diamund, the mansion’s owner, was found in the study, dead of a pistol shot in the forehead. The police have no idea at all about who could have been the murderer. They don’t believe it was a family member, since the rest of the family is away on a European vacation.

At this point in the investigation, the police would like to know the motive for the crime and what sort of person could have committed it. As far as it is known, Lance did not have enemies or a history of criminal activity. When the police arrived at the crime scene, they found some papers, articles of clothing, and a variety of other things. They are sure that some, if not all, of these things have to do with the crime; but they have not succeeded in interpreting them.

On the writing desk were found:

- a volume Ec-Fr of the Universal Encyclopedia
- a map of Ottawa, Canada

- a frog made of jade
- an envelope bearing a postmark from Zurich, Switzerland; there is no return address, and the letter itself is missing.

On the floor they found:

- a silk scarf with a blood stain on it
- a drinking glass with red lipstick stains on the rim
- a bow from a violin (the violin was not found).

In the pockets of the victim were found:

- an unused ticket to the opera, dated last December 12
- a broken key
- a small knife with an ebony handle.

The police ask that you, expert detectives, help them solve this case.

Divide into groups of four to six detectives. Each group should choose a secretary. Study the clues and come up with a theory about the personality of the murderer and the motive behind the crime. Remember that not all the clues will be useful to your investigation. Some are simply misleading. Later, you will have the opportunity to present your conclusions to your classmates. Don’t waste time! The criminal is at large and may kill again!

From: Stephen A. Sadow, *Fantastico!: Activities for Creative Communication*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle Publishers, Inc., 1989. Translated and adapted from the original Spanish for the *MATSOL Newsletter*. Used with permission of Heinle & Heinle Publishers, Inc.

Stephen Sadow teaches in the Department of Modern Languages at Northeastern University.

MATSOL FALL '91 CONFERENCE — OCTOBER 26, 1991

For more information about the conference, contact a MATSOL representative

Bea Mikulecky	General	(617) 731-1461
Connie O'Hare	Western region	(508) 533-1277
Chris Parkhurst	Higher ed	(508) 872-1194
Linda Schutman	Elem/sec ed	(617) 237-1763
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Poetry in the Language Class

Christine Root

It was just about two years ago when I first got a call from Claire Kramsch at M.I.T., who, together with Marlies Mueller at Harvard, was producing and directing a video entitled "Celebrating, Understanding and Creating Poetry in Language Classes." The video would be dedicated to Wilga Rivers upon her retirement as a Festschrift and was conceived as a means of celebrating the pleasures and pedagogic advantages of teaching poetry in foreign language classes. It would feature live recordings of poetry being taught in six different languages (ESL, French, German, Italian, Russian, Spanish) by 11 different instructors using a variety of approaches and styles with students at varying proficiency levels. Claire and Marlies wondered if I would do the ESL component and demonstrate the rhythm of poetry through Carolyn Graham's jazz chants. Of course I agreed. I am pleased to describe here the finished product, which runs 50 minutes, a distillation of 14 hours of classroom taping and 4 hours of taped interviews with the instructors.

The video is meant to be used both to train teachers and to sensitize students as well as teachers to the many reasons for including poetry in foreign language curricula, even at beginning levels. As the video's narrator (Marlies Mueller) explains, poetry, with its sounds, rhythms, grammar, vocabulary, images and hidden meanings, allows students accustomed to drills and structured conversational practice "to enjoy and rediscover the verbal pleasures of early childhood and to develop the adult pleasures of aesthetic reading." It is the intent of the video to show that poetry isn't too abstract or too difficult or too threatening for inclusion in language classes, as it is often presumed to be. Poetry imparts the power of language, and poetry brings everyday language to life. One of the main benefits of the tape is the way it reminds teachers of how wonderful poetry is and why they went into language teaching in the first place.

Celebrating

As the name implies, the video is divided into three broad categories: celebrating, understanding and creating poetry in language classes. In Section 1, the "Celebration" of poetry, emphasis is given to the oral/aural and kinaesthetic enjoyment of the poems presented. We see the teachers encouraging the students to let the poems appeal to their senses, to let the sounds, shapes, rhythm, beauty and tone of each poem take precedence over literary analysis.

We see teachers performing poetry so as to spark the students to want to practice playing with the sounds, reciting and performing the poems either individually or in chorus.

Understanding

In "Understanding" poetry, the second section, the viewer sees students learning to refine the pleasures of poetry by studying the vocabulary and grammar, the implied meanings and the fabric of words that are the tools of the poet's craft. In order to highlight the uses of other modes of artistic expression that can deepen the emotional and cultural appreciation of the poems, techniques are shown for linking poetry and mime, poetry and painting, and even poetry and its translation.

Poetry, with its sounds, rhythms, grammar, vocabulary, images and hidden meanings allows students accustomed to drills and structured conversational practice "to enjoy and rediscover the verbal pleasures of early childhood and to develop the adult pleasures of aesthetic reading."

Creating

If students learn to celebrate and then understand poetry, it follows that they will react positively to opportunities for "Creating" it as well. As Wilga Rivers points out in Section 3, "poetry does not conform to the strict rules of grammar; poets break rules. Students can feel relieved from the heavy responsibility of total accuracy. This liberates students to express their feelings, emotions and observations while using whatever they know of the language at whatever level." Accordingly, in this section of the video, we see charming examples of students' own poetry, some based on simple models, some on formulas, and some originating from a less structured wellspring. We also see the palpable pleasure derived from students' presenting their own work to the class.

I thought it would be fun and rather exciting, albeit challenging, to be involved in the production of a video. And it was. What I did not foresee was the extent to which the video would influence my thinking about the effective, evocative and inspirational teaching of poetry.

Christine Root teaches in the Extension School at Harvard University. For information about the video, please contact Harvard University's Office of Patents and Copyrights, (617) 495-3068.



“Here or to Go?”

Robert Saitz

Wayne Booth, cited in the *New York Times* of January 20, 1991, writes that the first use of the word “bore” as a transitive verb was recorded in 1768. He also notes that before that people suffered from melancholia and ennui, internal conditions, but that with the invention of the romantic individual, people began to blame everybody but themselves for their conditions. From then on, presumably, our language could refer to an individual or group whose activity created a state of boredom in others, and sure enough the noun “bore” is recorded in 1812. The Zeitgeist of the era is reflected in its language.

The awareness of how language reflects culture and thought often comes to us *post facto*; we ask ourselves when bores assumed a palpability and we run to the *Oxford English Dictionary*. However, language changes are occurring all the time; and for an example of one happening now we might look into the world of pizza.

A mere thirty-five years ago, pizzas were a layer of dough covered with cheese and a tomato sauce; the word pizza, existing alone, sufficed to refer to the item. You asked for a pizza (maybe a small or a large) and you got a pizza. Since then, our culinary culture has clearly changed.

Nothing is that simple anymore, as our incoming international students find out when they try to order food:

- “Coffee, please?”
- “Here or to go?” . . . “Regular or espresso?”
- . . . “Plain or decaf?” . . . “Sugar?” . . . “Cream?”
- . . . “Paper or plastic?” etc.

(Let me digress and suggest that one of the first phrases all international students should be trained to listen for is [hIr^t^gow]). This world of choices encompasses the simple pizza as well. The number of possible pizza combinations is probably now infinite, or if not, expressible as 6 to the 10th pizza power.

This development in our cuisine, perhaps a rococo reaction to the relative innocent art deco food of the first half of the century (some of you may recall the now classic diner menus of macaroni and cheese, franks and beans, and the ever-popular salmon croquettes with mashed potatoes and peas), has, of course, demanded a concomitant profusion of food terms. Often, instead of creating a new word for each new idea, we extend the meaning of words we already have.

Thus we took the word “topping,” which when applied to food usually meant something sweet such as chocolate sauce or marshmallow superimposed on cake or ice cream,* and we extended it to include other foods, often not sweet. The word “topping” now no longer has a food valence that restricts its application to sweet foods. It serves as a useful term to refer to the plethora of foods we seem determined to put on top of other foods. Future generations, who will of course sensibly have gone back to croquettes, will be delighted to find a pizza topping citation (c. 1955?) in their *OED* and will undoubtedly speculate on the post-modern hedonism that led to the twenty-page menu and probably at least one case of starvation frustration — “I can’t deciiiiide.”

* Howard Johnson’s, with its introduction of 28 flavors of ice cream, probably fired one of the opening salvos in the battle to liberate us from the world in which decisions on what to eat didn’t take up so many of our waking hours.

Comments on or contributions to the Recreational Grammar Column may be sent to Robert Saitz, Department of English, 236 Bay State Road, Boston, MA 02115.

SPECIAL FEATURE OF THE MATSOL '91 FALL CONFERENCE

October 26, 1991

Two-Hour Sessions on Thought-Provoking Issues

At the request of the membership, the Fall Conference committee will sponsor sessions on such topics as racism in the classroom, the plight of part-timers, and pull-out programs vs. mainstreaming.

If you are interested in participating in or organizing a session on any issue, please contact Chris Parkhurst (508) 872-1194.



The ESL Student and the Regular Classroom

Review by Sima Kirsztajn

When They Don't All Speak English: Integrating the ESL Student into the Regular Classroom. Edited by Pat Rigg and Virginia G. Allen. National Council of Teachers of English. Urbana, Illinois, 1989. xx., 156 pp. ISBN 0-8141-5693-2.

In the past, immigrant groups tended to settle in large cities, so it was urban teachers who were faced with the challenge of teaching English to newcomers and integrating them into their classrooms. In recent years, however, teachers in suburban areas have found themselves facing the same challenge. *When They Don't All Speak English* speaks to the needs of ESL/bilingual populations in all schools. This excellent resource combines research on language acquisition with practical advice for teachers from kindergarten through high school. It belongs on the professional library shelf of every school.

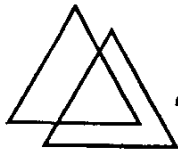
In their introduction, Pat Rigg and Virginia Allen offer fundamental principles that they feel all classroom teachers should know about language learners and language learning. Essentially, these principles stress the importance of: (1) acknowledging each student's individuality, (2) providing a

rich and meaningful language environment with opportunities for creative expression, and (3) recognizing that literacy and language develop simultaneously. That these are the same principles that underlie all good teaching is the message of the book.

Developing a program

Social and emotional readiness are prerequisites for academic success. Unfortunately, as Jean Handscombe points out, for many second language learners the assumption has been that their lack of "familiarity" with English, more than any other reason, has accounted for the difficulties with behavior and learning in school. She stresses that those who teach these "newcomers" should learn who they are, i.e., the reason they came, the culture they came from, and their academic background (or lack thereof). Handscombe then outlines a five-point program, the goal of which is an "integrated institutional setting." This program, which emphasizes cooperative

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DELTA SYSTEMS

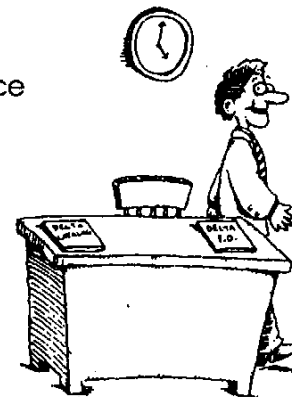
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learning, has the classroom teachers, the specialists, and, importantly, the parents working together to monitor the student's progress and to adjust the student's program of learning.

That teachers need to consider all their students as language learners and not separate them into first language and second language categories is reiterated by Carol Urzua. She cites the "multiple perceptions" of second language children, which, she maintains, result from their being placed in a number of other classes in addition to the regular classroom, e.g., ESL, Chapter 1, or Special Education. In these different settings teachers' approaches toward teaching may differ widely. Urzua believes that classroom teachers and specialists will benefit by becoming familiar with each other's research and practices, in order to "formulate a shared set of beliefs" and thus facilitate language learning for all students.

Providing a meaningful language environment

A common theme of several chapters is that language development occurs when the second language learner is placed in a learning situation where language is meaningful and authentic.

Judith Wells Lindfors contends that the teaching techniques of using basal readers, where language is highly controlled, or of asking the child to memorize short vowel sounds on flash cards, isolate language and are therefore inauthentic. An authentic language environment, she says, does not separate speaking, reading, listening and writing. Lindfors elaborates on the activities that would give the language learner the opportunity to elicit, create and interact with meaningful language.

Virginia Allen argues that literature, rather than text with a controlled vocabulary, contains the many cues that second language learners utilize to elicit and create language. She cites three classroom observations of a young Laotian student who is asked to respond to a story in his basal reader, to flashcards, and to the book, *The Gingerbread Man*. His enthusiastic and truly sophisticated answers to questions about *The Gingerbread Man* contrasted sharply with the one-word, often instructor-provided answers to the other contexts. He

used the cues available — the predictable text and the illustrations — to speak. Allen provides suggestions on how to use different types of literature such as concept books, predictable pattern books, and beautifully illustrated texts.

Both Elizabeth Franklin and Carol Edelsky encourage

Language development occurs when the second language learner is placed in a learning situation where language is meaningful and authentic.

teachers to learn from their students' original work. From her experience with second language students, Franklin observes that teachers can learn a great deal from a student's creative artistic and written work and consequently can plan activities suited for that student's learning style. Edelsky discusses in depth the variations in different speech communities. She presents a number of suggestions, including the dialogue journal, for teachers whose classrooms are diverse.

Preparing the secondary school classroom

How to integrate the language learner into secondary school classrooms is the subject of the last three chapters. Each of these elaborates on programs that utilize content material to teach English language and move students "gradually into the curriculum" of the regular classroom.

Although there is a range of ideas and research provided in this text, one recurrent theme, central to second language teaching, emerges. It is that language acquisition occurs when the language activities and the material provided are meaningful to the student. The value of the book is that there is something for everyone: classroom teachers, specialists, and even those parents whose children are part of a multi-language classroom.

Sima Kirsztajn teaches in the Edith Baker School, Brookline.

GRANTSMANSHIP SYMPOSIUM

A two-day grantsmanship symposium designed to teach public school educators about grants and how to apply for them will take place on October 24-25 at the Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel in Marlborough, MA.

For more information, write to the Massachusetts Field Center for Teaching and Learning, UMass/Boston, Wheatley Hall, 3rd floor, Boston, MA 02125-3393, (617) 287-7660.

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