

# MATSOL NEWSLETTER

Massachusetts Association of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

VOL. 18, NO. 2

FALL 1991

## From AFL to ESL: The Lesson of Samuel Gompers

Fred Turner

At last May's MATSOL CONFERENCE, I found myself facilitating a brown-bag lunch on working conditions. Actually, "facilitating" might be the wrong word, since after a few introductory remarks, my anger began to rise and so did my voice. "We're professionals, not janitors or garbage-men!" I almost shouted, ready to rouse the rabble. "But at more than a few schools, we get treated worse than the people who clean our rooms."

Fortunately, Jim Kaplan was there to save me from myself. A teacher at Somerville's SCALE program and a member of U.A.W. District 65, Jim raised his hand and very gently pointed out the obvious—that ESL teachers are no better human beings than janitors or garbage collectors. And by thinking of ourselves as belonging to a caste above that of those who clean, he explained, by thinking of ourselves as belonging to the "professional" as opposed to the "laboring" class, we ESL teachers often fail to see what we have in common with other workers. Consequently, we ace ourselves out of the collective bargaining arrangements that have made it possible for janitors, garbage collectors, and so many other organized workers to improve their employment conditions.

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MATSOL member held hostage during Gulf War!  
Read all about it on page 20.

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## Music: Language for the Heart and Mind

Veronica McCormack



Learning anything should be a joy, and through music we can bring joy into our students' lives. Studies in the therapeutic value of music show that music benefits our mental-emotional nature, lowers the barrier to ideas, and contributes to memory.

Through the ages, magical curative powers were attributed to songs, chants, and mantras. Music served as a medium for the transmission of sacred truths because it relaxed the mind and heart away from the pressing concerns of the outer world. In the early 18th century, before the discovery of anesthesia, French dentists performed their work accompanied by an orchestra be-

cause the sound of music lessened the shock of crude dentistry. Slaves and sailors used spirituals and chanties to coordinate their strength as they pulled in unison on ropes and bars.

In using music in the classroom, we do not always have to have a specific learning goal. Songs can be presented purely for listening pleasure. Many of our students suffer from psychic fatigue—from inner city immigrant experiences and/or the often severe

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**MASSACHUSETTS  
ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS  
OF ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF  
OTHER LANGUAGES**

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

Ruth Spack  
100 Salisbury Road  
Brookline, MA 02146

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

**Next Deadline:**

January 15, 1992

***From the President***

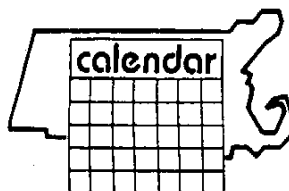
This is a difficult time for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and many of us and our students find ourselves with fewer resources, fewer colleagues, and an uncertain future. Our profession has come a long way in a short time, and I am confident that each MATSOL member is doing his or her best to maintain the professionalism which is our trademark.

In October the MATSOL Executive Board, in response to a proposal from the Employment Issues Committee, approved the establishment and funding of a Legal Support Fund. This Fund makes financial assistance available to members who have a legal issue related to employment for which they need assistance. To my knowledge, this is the first such fund in the United States, and it signals our determination to fight for fair and legal employment conditions for our members. I encourage you to read the articles which appear in this issue of the *Newsletter*; procedures for application for funds are explained and names and telephone contact people are given. The Employment Issues Committee deserves tremendous credit for their initiative and perseverance in establishing this fund; a member of this committee will attend future Executive Board meetings and the group will work quickly toward proposing employment standards to be adopted by the entire organization. I hope these are ready for your consideration in March at the Spring Conference.

The MATSOL Job Bank, superbly staffed by Amy Worth, continues to collect and disseminate job listings monthly. Under Amy's supervision, our listings have expanded dramatically during the last year. I urge you to contact her at (617) 969-2437 if you are looking for a job or have one to offer.

As always, please call me if you have any questions or issues which you think MATSOL should be addressing. My number is (617) 524-4224, and I welcome your calls.

**Kathryn Riley**



**SPRING 1992**

**TESOL CONVENTION**

Dates: March 3-7

Place: Vancouver, B. C.

Contact: TESOL (703) 836-0774

**Teaching Foreign Languages**

Dates: April 2-5

Place: New York City

Contact: (802) 863-9939

**MATSOL CONFERENCE**

Dates: March 20-21

Place: Mount Ida College, Newton

Contact: Robby Steinberg  
(617) 232-9022

**American Association for  
Applied Linguistics**

Dates: February 28-March 2

Place: Seattle

Contact: FAX (217) 224-2223

**MABE Conference**

Dates: March 5-6

Place: Leominster, MA

Contact: Olga Amaral  
(413) 534-2082

**Ethnography Forum**

Dates: February 21-23

Place: U. of Pennsylvania

Contact: Frederick Erickson  
(215) 898-3273

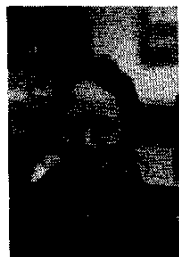
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# MATSOL '92 Spring Conference Update

March 20-21, Mount Ida College, Newton

## Friday's Plenary Speaker: Karen Price



Karen Price is Associate Director of the Programs of English as a Second Language at Harvard University. She spent the 1970s teaching ESL in France and has for the past twelve years been involved with teaching, administration, teacher-training, and software design for administrative purposes at Harvard. She loves the nitty-gritty of administrative work when nice things happen for teachers and students but is perplexed and concerned by many issues regarding the evaluation of teachers and programs. Dr. Price has researched how various cultural groups use different points on a rating scale and is interested in mismatches between instructor and student perception of progress and participation.

A founding steering committee member of the TESOL CALL SIG, she has designed and produced an award-winning laserdisk, developed on a Macintosh-based system, which aids classroom discourse analysis by keeping track of who's talking when, and is completing a prototype which will let teachers and students automatically cue up video by simply typing a word or phrase from the sound track. Such a search is made possible by the existence of closed captions---a technology which her 1981 research showed helps the comprehension of ESL viewers.

## Saturday's Plenary Speaker: James Paul Gee

James Paul Gee is Professor of Linguistics in the department of linguistics at the University of Southern California. He taught formerly at Hampshire College in Amherst, Massachusetts and in the School of Education at Boston University, and is currently on sabbatical from USC in residence at the Literacies Institute in Newton, Massachusetts and at Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts. His work over the last few years has been devoted to integrating research on discourse, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, critical theory and socioculturally-situated theories of education and literacy within a "post-disciplinary" applied linguistics. The initial part of this project has recently appeared in his book *Social Linguistics and Literacies: Ideology in Discourses* (Falmer Press, 1991). The second stage of the work is soon to appear in *The Social Mind* (to appear in 1991, Bergin & Gravey/Praeger Press). The third part of the project is in progress and the focus of his current sabbatical. His earlier papers on literacy, including work originally published in the *TESOL Quarterly* and a former keynote address to MATSOL, appeared as a special issue of the *Journal of Education* entitled *Literacy, Discourse, and Linguistics: Essays by James Paul Gee* (1989).



## Mount Ida College: Site of MATSOL '92 Spring Conference

Mount Ida College, site of the spring MATSOL conference to be held on March 20 and 21, 1992, was founded in 1899.

"Two colleges in one," Mount Ida offers diversity of programs and degree options. All first-year students enroll in an Associate Degree program in the Junior College Division, and upon completion of their degree have the opportunity to earn a Bachelor's Degree at Mount Ida in selected areas.

With 1526 full-time and 354 part-time students, the college has become more geographically diversified within the

last ten years, attracting over one hundred and twenty-five foreign students from more than fifty countries. Mount Ida provides a semi-intensive English as a Second Language Program.

The college offers an array of 41 academic programs in fields as diverse as mortuary science, communications, interior design, computer programming, and early childhood education.

Mount Ida College is proud to be hosting MATSOLers this spring.

For more information about the Spring Conference, call:

Robby Steinberg (617) 232-9022 (Chair)

Eileen Prince (617) 437-2455 (Publisher Liaison)

Mount Ida College is located at 777 Dedham Street, Newton Centre.

There will be ample free parking and a free shuttle bus from the Newton Centre T stop.

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## Music *Continued from page 1*

effects of culture shock—and they can benefit from music as a positive form of therapy. Music allows us to be humanistic in our teaching approach.

When music is used for specific tasks in the classroom, a common approach is to design cloze exercises. Yet, though this task can be useful, it can also be frustrating for students, especially if the blank spaces make a sentence unintelligible. Following are some activities that can be used to teach language skills; all are alternatives to cloze exercises. Of course, the skills overlap; they are divided here for ease of explanation.

### *Speaking*

Popular songs provide a wealth of material for discussion: love, peace, sex education, sports, environmental issues, literacy, holidays, homelessness.

When introducing a song, I first find out who in the class knows something about the artist. That alone often elicits discussion. For pronunciation and listening, I identify any reductions: "gonna," "wanna," "hafta," etc. We discuss new vocabulary or idioms, and I suggest that students keep a dictionary of idioms in a blank address book. For quick vocal warm-ups, activities such as "jazz chants" (Carolyn Graham) are valuable because they are fun to share and can be uninhibiting.

### *Listening*

Besides the obvious activity of listening to the songs, students can listen to reviews. This easy-to-prepare activity involves finding brief newspaper reviews of concerts. I make a copy for each student, with the review on the top half and questions on the bottom half: Who? Where? When? etc. I ask the students to fold the paper in half so that they can take notes while I read the review. Then, before they read the article themselves, I have them recall what they understood. With a little more work, I develop similar activities using radio interviews that I tape off the air. Programs are often listed in the paper, but I keep blank tapes by the recorder and usually tape spontaneously. National Public Radio often has artists' profiles/interviews in the morning; transcripts may be available.

### *Reading*

Songs can be presented as text. Rap songs, for instance, are usually too difficult to use for listening comprehension but can be useful in that they often paint pictures of life that we see or hear about (and maybe live!) and are also interesting for their poetic value.

Most of the music material I present for reading, however, comes not from songs but from music publications. Magazines such as *Rolling Stone*, *Downbeat*, *Hit Parade*, and *Teen Set* often have articles and interviews

that captivate the students' interest. In addition, books such as *Rolling Stone Encyclopedia of Rock and Roll* are useful resources for biographical data on artists. Most of the reading is done cooperatively: I number the paragraphs and assign each student a paragraph to read silently and then summarize aloud.

### *Writing*

Many of the songs used for discussion can also be used for writing activities. For example, if we are discussing homelessness, I might use "Another Day in Paradise" (Phil Collins) and ask the students to imagine they are homeless and to describe a day in their life.

I also ask them to rewrite songs in another tense (one that works well is "Tom's Diner" by Suzane Vega). Sometimes I present a song in paragraph format without punctuation and ask the students to fill in punctuation marks. Or I delete parts of songs and ask students to fill in their own versions. The students' nonnative use of

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**I ask [students to] teach a song to the class by explaining the vocabulary and message, playing the song, and then having the class sing along. They are always proud and I am always impressed.**

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language often can make them great songwriters, since usage that might be considered ungrammatical or incorrect in composition is sometimes very poetic in song!

### *Other*

Other activities can be developed using movies on video. Many films contain songs that could be presented visually/aurally in a lab. Near the end of *Ghost*, for example, "Unchained Melody" is played to a very dramatic scene. And there are some fascinating interviews with Heavy Metal artists in *The Decline of Western Civilization II*.

*The Phoenix* and other similar publications have ads that are rich in slang and descriptive vocabulary. Several times a year they publish a "best of" survey that works well for teaching superlatives. These can be "quickie" presentations on the overhead projector.

I like to give students a chance to present a song. I ask them to prepare a lesson in which they teach a song to the class by explaining the vocabulary and message, playing the song, and then having the class sing along. They are always proud, and I am always impressed.

Music is powerful and can pull on heart strings, evoking strong emotions, hitting very close to home; and so we

*Continued on page 5*

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## Music *Continued from page 4*

need to be prepared for what might transpire in the classroom. But it is worthwhile to experiment and to have fun in the process. And, as Manly P. Hall has suggested in *The Therapeutic Value of Music*, wouldn't we be living in a safer world if our distinguished nuclear physicists still revered and practiced the arts and "went forth to meet the dawn with lyre and flute and cymbal"?

### Resources

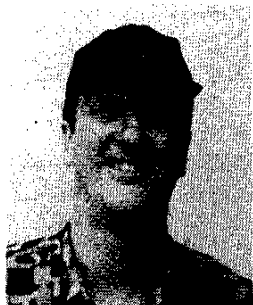
*Even If You Can't Carry a Tune* (Newbury House)  
*If You Feel Like Singing* (Longman)  
*Rise up Singing* (Sing Out Publications)  
*Jazz Chants* (Oxford)  
*Rolling Stone History of Rock and Roll* (Rolling Stone Press)  
*Turn of the Century Songbook* (Regents)

Local radio stations (look under "W" in the white pages)  
Public libraries (songbooks, tapes, videos)  
Looney Tunes (discount, used, and hard-to-find tapes)  
Tower Records (always very helpful)

*This article is based on a presentation given at the MATSOL '91 Spring Conference. Veronica McCormack teaches at Roxbury Community College and the Berklee College of Music.*

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## AFL to ESL *Continued from page 1*



As Jim spoke, I could feel the sting of truth. Even though I'd been actively lobbying to improve the worklives of ESL teachers for several years and even though I'd seen how roughly some teachers were handled by their employers, I didn't think teachers had much in common with Teamsters. In my imagination, union men wore oil-stained overalls and

wielded cast-iron wrenches at the end of hugely muscled arms. Teachers, I knew, wore coats and ties or cotton dresses and wielded mere bits of broken chalk. What could someone whose biggest on-the-job health risk was "chalk-

dust lung" have in common with a coal miner or the master of an 18-wheeled all-weather transcontinental freight hauler?

For an answer, I turned to a friend's history text and looked up "labor unions." I read about 19th century factory workers who had no health insurance, no pensions, and no pay if they became sick and couldn't work. I read about Samuel Gompers and how he founded the American Federation of Labor in 1886 in order to bring workers higher wages, shorter hours, and better working conditions. I also saw that Gompers and the AFL helped establish professional standards within individual trades and that employers often came to appreciate the stability and skill AFL workers brought to the job.

Granted, it's 1991. Labor unions have changed and not always for the better. But in reading about the origins of American unions, I saw that many of the issues that faced factory workers 50 and 100 years ago still face ESL teachers today. Large numbers of ESL teachers work without health or disability insurance, let alone retirement plans. Many work for salaries well below those their qualifications might bring them in other fields. And unless, like Jim Kaplan, they work on a unionized site, few ESL teachers have the leverage to negotiate (rather than politely beg for) changes in their working conditions.

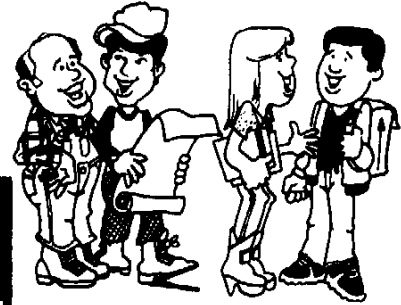
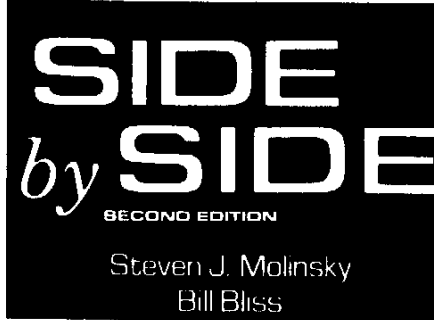
Looking at that history book, I also realized something else: We already have our AFL. It's MATSOL. And like the original AFL, MATSOL can, if its members want it to, take a stand on improving individual ESL teachers' working conditions. I'm not suggesting that MATSOL become a formal union. I'm simply asking that we, its members, begin thinking of it not only as a place to network and share teaching strategies, but as a place to reshape our professional lives. Through MATSOL we can articulate our vision of what fair employment conditions should be and we can set standards for professionalism throughout the field. As automobile workers, janitors, and coal miners already have, we can begin to say not only what's good for us, but what's good for the people we serve.

That, after all, is the lesson of Samuel Gompers. He knew that what was good for workers usually turned out to be good for managers and customers as well. By using the AFL to improve the lives of tradesmen, he brought stability and higher skill levels to factories all over the United States. Through MATSOL, we can do the same for ESL classrooms across Massachusetts.

*Fred Turner teaches in the Extension school at Harvard University.*



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## MATSOL '91 Fall Conference Reports

### Panel on Employment Issues Karl Smith

Many of us are overworked and underpaid by institutions that fail to appreciate our abilities and experience. At the MATSOL '91 Fall Conference hosted by Showa Institute, a presentation titled "Strategies for Improving the ESL Teacher's Workplace" addressed just such issues.

In the presentation, members of the newly designated Employment Issues Committee (EIC) reported that the MATSOL Executive Board had allotted money for a MATSOL Legal Support Fund. This fund is designed to help MATSOL members who are involved in disputes with their employers to determine if their dispute is actionable. The MATSOL Board has approved an application procedure and allocated funds for an initial legal consultation for eligible MATSOL members. The EIC has compiled a list of lawyers in the greater Boston area who have expertise in labor law. Some of these lawyers offer a free initial consulta-

tion; all are prepared to answer questions on labor law.

The MATSOL Board has also voted to allow the EIC non-voting representation on the MATSOL Board and, most importantly, has given the EIC the go-ahead to establish professional standards for adoption by MATSOL.

The initial report from the EIC was followed by a brief question-answer and comment session. The response from the participants was generally favorable. Everyone at the presentation had a horror story to share about low wages, inadequate classrooms, large unwieldy classes, or an impossible number of teaching hours. Many participants noted that they are part-timers and have to chase after low-paying jobs that offer no benefits.

Participants expressed the hope that MATSOL could begin to effect change in this area. Just to be able to identify employers that have a track record of poor treatment of ESL teachers would be a positive step. Many felt that it is within the power of MATSOL to publish more detailed data about salary ranges, work conditions, workloads, etc. of in-

*Continued on page 7*

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## Conference Reports *Continued from page 6*

stitutions listed in the MATSOL Job Bank. All agreed that the establishment of standards is a good place to start. Many of the participants at the presentation mentioned that other TESOL affiliates, and indeed TESOL itself, already have standards for the profession which MATSOL could adopt.

It was evident from the discussion that we have a long way to go in establishing standards. Definitions alone are obfuscated and need clarification. What exactly is part time? How many contact hours are expected of teachers in most workplaces? Is pay based on contact hours or should it include prep time?

We of the EIC encourage MATSOL members in need to make use of the MATSOL Legal Support Fund. Any and all MATSOL members interested in improving our workplace conditions are urged to come to our meetings. Contact Karl Smith (617) 232-8664 or Fred Turner (617) 787-0183 for information.

The application procedure for the MATSOL Legal Support Fund is described on page 22.

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### Panel on Certification Requirements

*Kathryn Riley and Agnes Farkas*

On January 1, 1992, new regulations concerning the certification of candidates in bilingual teaching and teaching of English as a Second Language will take effect. In summary: 1. The culture and history portion of the language proficiency examination for teachers of TBE and ESL will be eliminated. 2. This cultural and history requirement will be replaced with the requirement for completion of three semester hours or its equivalent (30 contact hours) of professional development activities or completion of a portfolio review. 3. Other components of the exam are still required. 4. The language proficiency requirement for candidates who have completed approved ESL programs in Massachusetts or who qualify for this certificate under the Interstate Agreement on the Certification of Educational Personnel is eliminated.

These continuing modifications have produced some confusion and lots of questions by those affected by these changes. A panel discussion, chaired by Connie O'Hare, was held at the Fall Conference to address some issues arising from the new regulations: Lea Vetter of the Department of Education and Agnes Farkas, a MATSOL member, were members of the panel. Portfolio contents should be directly related to an understanding of (a) cultural backgrounds of students to be taught and (b) the additive multicultural development and second language acquisition processes. Portfolio contents may include and must be distributed among: evidence of professional

development activities, research, professional reading, writing professional articles, curriculum/program development, observation, and educational travel.

According to Lea Vetter, the DOE is presently recruiting a pool of volunteer portfolio reviewers; there are special needs for reviewers who are native speakers of the target languages and reviewers with bilingual certification. Others are also encouraged to apply. Reviewers will attend a training session in January. Anyone interested in becoming a reviewer should contact Dr. Nan Stein at DOE, (617) 770-7426.

The 3 semester hours of 30 contact hours of professional development activities must also be related to the cultural, multicultural and SLA factors noted in the preceding paragraph. Professional development activities may include workshops, conferences, seminars, symposia, in-service training, and college courses. These may be designed and administered by institutions of higher education, school districts, non-profit organizations, professional organizations, and any combination thereof. All professional development activities must be approved by the Bureau of Teacher Certification. Those wishing to obtain more information on the portfolio review process should contact Dr. Elizabeth Thomas at (617) 770-7252.

Dr. Vetter also stated that the certification department has recently installed computers for faster service. It is now possible to make an appointment and meet personally with a transcript evaluator. Those wishing to do so or having questions about certification should call Dennis de Carlo, Deborah Smith Presley, or Denise Gullackson at (617) 777-7517.

**Background:** Certification for ESL began on September 1, 1982. Prior to that time, all teachers certified either as elementary teachers or as secondary English teachers were "covered" to teach at their respective levels. After September 1982, these teachers were "grandfathered" as ESL-certified teachers. Some of these "grandfathered" teachers later took the courses required for ESL certification but were never actually certified because provisions were not in place to add additional certification to teachers already eligible to teach ESL under the above-mentioned grandfather clause.

The situation is further complicated at the present time because with recent layoffs in some school districts, secondary English and elementary teachers who have never taught ESL are bumping ESL teachers. (For additional comment, see page 8.) This is one of the issues under discussion by the Employment Issues Committee; call Agnes Farkas at (617) 964-0464 if you wish to join this discussion.

Certification requirements will be further modified in September, 1994. Updated information of these changes will appear in the *MATSOL Newsletter*.

# Certification Issues

In the Spring/Summer '91 issue of the *MATSOL Newsletter*, Agnes Farkas and David Coltin, members of the ad hoc committee concerned with part-time issues, published an article that issued a "word of caution" about ESL certification in Massachusetts. It seems that the word couldn't get out soon enough. ESL teachers in the public schools are feeling the budgetary crunch in the state, and many are being laid off in spite of having the appropriate certification.

Sally Stocking, former ESL teacher at Holyoke High School, has sent the MATSOL Executive Board a copy of the letter she wrote to the Department of Education along with a copy of the state's ESL certification regulations. Both are reprinted below, along with the response she received from the Department.

Sally has asked that "if anyone agrees with me, back me up with my suggestions (or others) to the State Department of Education. I think a body of people is more forceful than just a single person."

The MATSOL Executive Board has taken an active interest in the issue of certification. (For additional information, see p. 7.) The *MATSOL Newsletter* will regularly provide a forum for this issue and for other issues that affect the MATSOL membership.

Certification Regulations  
Division of Curriculum and Instruction  
Bureau of Teacher Preparation, Certification and Placement  
September 15, 1982

On September 1, 1982 new certification regulations became effective including a certificate for teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) in Massachusetts. However, teachers certified under pre-September 1, 1982 regulations as elementary teachers (grades K-8) or English teachers (grades 7-12) may teach ESL. (In the absence of a specific ESL certificate the Bureau had consistently advised that an elementary or English certificate was the most appropriate certificate for ESL. The new regulations specify that all certificates will continue to be valid as issued.)

Those applying under current (new) requirements should apply for a certificate as a teacher of ESL at the appropriate grade level (K-3, 1-6, 5-9, 9-12) if they wish to teach ESL. English or elementary certificates issued under the new regulations will not be valid for ESL since the new more appropriate ESL certificate will be available.

July 9, 1991

Cindy O'Callaghan  
Division of Educational Personnel  
Massachusetts Department of Education  
1385 Hancock Street  
Quincy, MA 02169

Dear Cindy O'Callaghan,

The current Massachusetts ESL Certification regulations [written in 1982] apply to teachers who wish to teach ESL and are coming into a public school system in Massachusetts. The regulations do not indicate what takes precedence when there is a reduction in force, except that all English and Elementary and ESL teachers are equally legal in regard to being certified and teaching ESL. The regulations state that an ESL certificate is more appropriate, and for the past nine years an ESL certificate has been required of new ESL teachers.

It is my conviction that it is time to update the ESL certification requirements for the sake of both ESL teachers and their ESL students.

Teachers with Elementary and English certification who have not "wished to teach ESL" since 1982 should no longer be grandfathered into ESL. If they change their minds they can obtain an ESL certification. Those teachers who have wished to teach ESL and have actually done so can be grandfathered into ESL, or could later receive the certification with credit for their ESL teaching experience going towards certification.

In Holyoke, Massachusetts, where next year's student population is expected to be 80% Hispanic, many of whom are in the TBE Program's ESL classes, only one certified ESL teacher will remain in the whole school system. ONE! Two hundred and thirty-eight teachers have been laid off. Several ESL-certified teachers were laid off through seniority and certification. English and Elementary certified teachers bumped out all but one of the ESL certified teachers. I don't think that's fair.

If ESL certification is considered "more appropriate" than English or Elementary certification, then why were ESL certified teachers let go first, not last? ESL certification did not stand on its own two feet, and I think it should.

In my own case, I went through TESOL training with the Peace Corps in 1969, and I taught ESL in Korea for five years. I received my Master of Arts in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages from the School for International Training; I obtained Vermont and Massachusetts ESL certification for grades 9-12; and I had a tenured ESL position at Holyoke High School. I definitely "wish to teach ESL"!

*Continued on page 9*



## Certification issues *Continued from page 8*

There were three ESL teaching positions at Holyoke High School. One position was eliminated because of budget cuts. One position will be filled by the ONE certified ESL teacher. The other position will now be filled by a mainstream middle school guidance counselor who also happens to have English certification. This is typical of the re-assignments throughout the school.

Unfortunately, even though teachers ought to be above bigotry and prejudice, some aren't. Some teachers who would never "wish to teach ESL" will! These teachers would benefit from the cross-cultural component of the ESL certification, as would their students!

It seems unfair that ESL students will have generic teachers instead of specially-trained teachers in ESL.

As for my job as an ESL teacher, my ESL certification meant nothing when it came to reduction in force.

I hope you will give this matter your consideration.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Sally E. Stocking

.....

August 5, 1991

Dear Ms. Stocking:

Thank you for your letter of July 9 and supporting documentation regarding grandfathering of English as a Second Language Teachers. The issues you raise about the continuation of current Department grandfathering procedures are quite valid. In fact, legislation has been filed to eliminate this grandfathering and require E.S.L. certification for all teachers interested in teaching this population.

However, this legislation has been unsuccessful to date. Until such time as the filed legislation becomes law, the current grandfathering provision must continue. I have shared your letter and concerns with Dr. Susan Zelman, Associate Commissioner, Division of Educational Personnel. Dr. Zelman is responsible for all policy decisions related to educational personnel. I would recommend that you pursue this issue with Dr. Zelman.

Sincerely,

Cindy O'Callaghan  
Education Specialist

**Correction:** The article on certification in the *MATSOL Newsletter*, Spring/Summer, 1991 contained two errors. "Math" teachers should have read "Many" teachers. Also, the article indicated that "waivers" will expire in September 1994; there are no plans to eliminate waivers.

## MATSOL Grant Recipient's Report

Carol Houser Pineiro, recipient of one of four MATSOL 1990 Travel Grants, used the funding to attend the IATEFL Conference in Exeter, England. As part of her grant package, Carol has written a brief report for the *MATSOL Newsletter*.

IATEFL '91 University of Exeter

*Carol Houser Pineiro*

The air was chilly, but the sun shone brightly as I stepped out of Gatwick Airport. I had come to the United Kingdom to attend the IATEFL (International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language) Conference, April 3-6, and to present a paper at the University of Exeter. I was able to make the trip thanks to several small grants, among them a \$350 Travel Grant from MATSOL.

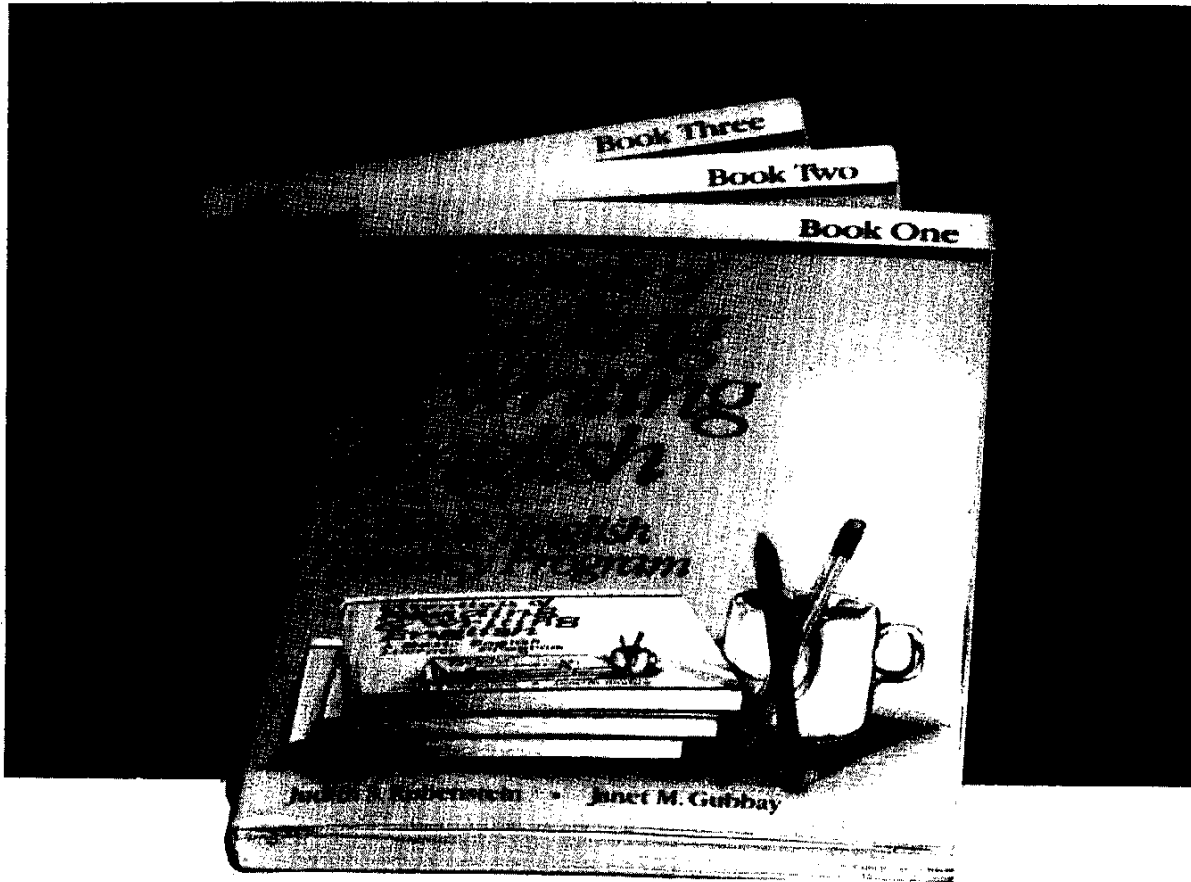
The welcome address of the conference was given by novelist David Lodge, who suggested using the titles of his books for ESL course titles [e.g., *How Far Can You Go?*], much to the amusement of the audience. Christopher Brumfit gave an astute talk on how the teaching of ESL/EFL is ultimately influenced by the linguistic power structure of the world today. Robert Kaplan added his thoughts on the subject by noting the differences in ELT teacher training and language norms in Britain and the U.S. and remarking that collaboration, especially in Europe, is needed to ensure uniformity of purpose. Alan Maley brought up the ever-growing concern for professionalism in ELT by questioning whether it could accurately be labelled a profession.

There was a myriad of interesting sessions to attend. I chose the theme of "teacher training" and tried to attend as many sessions as possible on the topic. The same areas are being examined in the U.K. as in the U.S.: teacher development as opposed to training, reflection on and processing of teaching by novices, and classroom-centered research.

After TESOL in New York City, IATEFL in England was quite a contrast. The peaceful beauty of the British countryside and the historicity and grandeur of the monuments will sparkle in my memory like so many jewels in the crown.

*Carol Houser Pineiro teaches at CELOP, Boston University.*

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# What Do Good Writing Teachers Do?

Wendy Schoener

As ESL college teachers, we often assume that we know what our colleagues do in their writing classes. But few of us have the chance to observe other ESL classrooms. This year I was able to observe two courses at the University of Massachusetts/Boston. At the MATSOL '91 Spring Conference, I introduced the two ESL composition teachers whose classes I visited — Esther Iwanaga and Wayne Rhodes — in a session titled “What Do Good Writing Teachers Do?” (Esther humorously suggested that I should have called the session, “What Good Do Writing Teachers Do?”)

## Link philosophy and practice

Esther and Wayne come from different educational backgrounds (UMass/Boston's ESL Master's program and University of Pittsburgh's MFA program in Fiction, respectively) and have had different prior teaching experience (French to Americans and composition for native speakers). But they have similar philosophies. Both want to learn about their students' experience through writing, which for Esther means “getting students to realize that what they pass over as trivial is of extreme interest to others.” And both want to communicate the fact that all writers struggle with writing. Wayne uses a metaphor from Norse mythology to help explain his reasoning for using sequenced assignments. Writers, like Valkyries, are “gatherers from chaos.” Just as the Valkyries consistently return to the chaos of earthly and heavenly battles to assemble Odin's army, so must writers “continually” circle back, “reviewing and rewriting.”

## Create a cooperative classroom atmosphere

Both teachers create a workshop atmosphere in their classes. Esther provides small group or pair work during almost every class meeting. In groups, students provide peer response, go over homework answers, or examine samples of student writing. Wayne's classwork on student papers is similar: a set of sequenced assignments requires students to describe a teaching and learning situation and then comment on it. Students' in-class work then consists of reading and commenting on each others' drafts in small groups. Wayne asks questions such as: “What did you notice about this paper?” “What parts are most effective?” “What did you

learn about teaching and learning?” “What questions do you have for the writer?”

Both teachers employ other in-class group activities, for example, freewriting, paraphrasing, and using quotations. Students share discoveries they've made in reading (such as particularly interesting introductions). They sometimes decide which of two different revisions of a paper was better (one revision grammatically correct but undeveloped, written by the teacher; the other developed by the student but grammatically flawed).

## Respond meaningfully to student writing

Behind both teachers' response to student papers lies the belief that rewriting — rather than teacher correction — helps students edit their work. Esther asks for details and clarification where she thinks a paper needs them. Then she picks a grammar point or two and addresses it separately from content issues. Similarly, Wayne argues that, since revision is essential to sequenced assignments, “it doesn't make much sense to treat each essay as a finished product.... I try to follow Nancy Sommers's advice and interpret my students' texts for meaning rather than correct their writing. According to Sommers, undue attention to surface level problems in early stages will 'fix' the paper more or less the way it is, giving the students the impression that the paper can be improved with a few corrections.”

Any focus on grammar stems from the needs of a particular class. Wayne helps students develop a “class error list” (derived from student papers) and gives them time to practice locating and correcting errors on subsequent papers. Esther says that her grammar teaching is based on errors she notes on papers; consequently, she has no established grammar syllabus.

Perhaps both teachers' views of what makes a good writing class can be summarized by Esther's remark: “The secret is to let the students do the work.”

*This article is based on a presentation given at the MATSOL '91 Spring Conference. Wendy Schoener teaches at the University of Massachusetts, Boston.*

## SAVE THE DATE

### MATSOL Winter Social

Friday February 7, 1992 • 4-7 p.m.

Ticknor Lounge, Boylston Hall, Harvard University

## "Free Voices"

Lila Goldman

*We all examine the face of our teacher of the writing workshop. It is our first class. Why is she teaching us refugees, I ask myself... Class after class, we students in Lila's care are more open and, using our shabby English, we try to shape our released ideas... And Lila is correcting our "calamity" English grammar patiently with sympathy and understanding.*

*... And during the last class I finally understand why she, sitting in a circle among us, does this job. It is a circle of life and love. A circle which is the symbol of the infiniteness of helping each other, the need of all humans.*

Milan Kohout  
(Czechoslovakia)

The idea of collecting my adult students' writing as primary historical resources was born when my first class sat before me. I could see only their eyes, full of hope and courage to live in America and haunted by ghosts of their lives in oppressive countries. I decided that their written ideas and experiences, and those of others who followed, would not be lost. They were the real teachers, I told them. That insight became my guiding philosophy.

My task was to provide a supportive environment in which they could practice the skills learned in their formal ESL classes. The class form was based on American writing workshops: the first zap of culture shock. There was nothing legal like it in the USSR or Eastern Europe.

We began by introducing ourselves. It was difficult for them, this new concept of being an individual as well as an important group member. But it was a step in acculturation and, as I told them, good practice for job interviews.

Then I stated my next cultural shocker: "You have complete freedom of expression in writing and speaking. This is an informal class where ideas are more important than spelling and grammar. If you feel that you have to say or write everything perfectly, then you may not be able to tell fully what is in your mind and heart. The world did not begin with good sentence structure; it began with ideas!"

Of course, to survive in a second language one must learn the rules of structure. I therefore needed to connect the lack of inhibition in utilizing this freedom to learning about English. "I

love mistakes!" I told my classes. "Don't be afraid to make them. I'll correct your essays, you'll examine your papers, and each mistake will be an opportunity to learn."

When essays were returned filled with feedback and red ink corrections, the students studied their papers eagerly. Succeeding papers had less and less red ink. The visual language corrections, because they were accompanied by my validating comments about their ideas, were effective in motivating further expression in writing and conversation. Confidence grew; the essays became longer and more complex.

During classes each person read his or her corrected paper aloud to the class. Then we discussed the ideas in the essay. Because of the common backgrounds and current hardships, these discussions were lively and often controversial. (There was a rule: ideas could be criticized, but never the person.) One idea led to another. It was not unusual for a man to say, "My favorite food is potato-and-onion pie," and to hear the response,

"That is because communism destroyed our country and that is all you know to eat!" Potatoes to politics was one of many tangents.

I encouraged digressions by asking many probing questions because the activity promoted a flow of listening to English and translating reactive thoughts into spoken English. When people argued about ideas, that was a cause for celebration. I told my class, "It isn't easy to argue in a first language, yet you are doing it in English.

To argue you must listen, think, and answer quickly in English. Terrific!" (This comment had the positive effects of returning the focus to developing skills and of creating a polite classroom.)

Together my classes produced over three hundred and fifty pages of manuscript in seven volumes of "Free Voices," volumes which I lovingly prepared. At each last class, I gave out the volume of "Free Voices" that the students had written. On one occasion a woman began to cry because the manuscript form reminded her of the worn, shared *samizdat* (forbidden publication) she had read in secret in her native country. We were silent; there was no language to express the long journey to freedom.

The encouragement of informal free expression in a sup-

*Continued on the next page*



portive, non-judgmental atmosphere enabled many of the students to develop confident communication skills and self-appreciation. By encouraging this special population to teach each other, I helped them to take the first step toward undoing what their native governments had done to them. They were no longer pieces of a machine; they were cherished individuals, each with a special voice. And they knew it. One man said, "The

Romanian government would never let you teach!" Bravo!

*Lila Goldman is a volunteer instructor in the JVS-ESL program at Hebrew College. The "Free Voices" writing project is now in the archives of the American Jewish Historical Society.*

## 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.

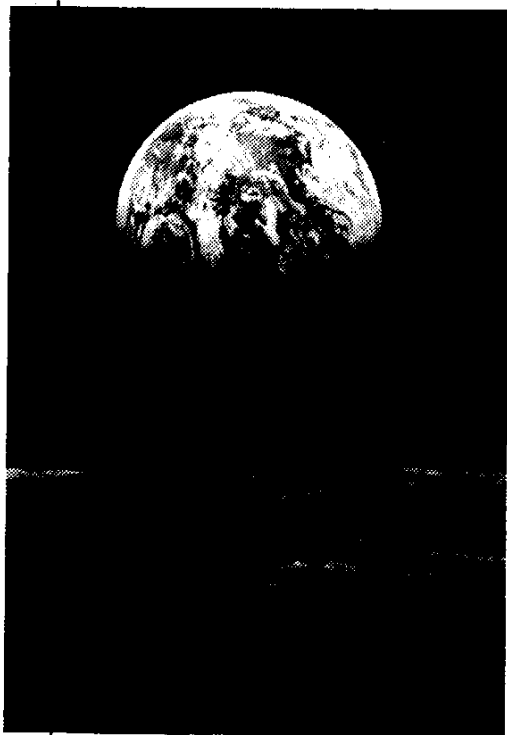


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## A Design for Oral Presentations

Robby Steinberg

This past summer while I was teaching at Harvard Summer School, my students asked if they could do oral presentations. Previous unsuccessful experiences flashed before my eyes: students sleeping rather than listening as the presenter incomprehensibly detailed the measurements of the Grand Canyon or neverendingly described feasts and holidays. And I recollected my feeling that no one was benefitting from the experience — neither presenter nor classmates.

Then I remembered that John Dreyer had run a session on oral presentations at a MATSOL conference, so I called him to find out if he had an alternative successful design. He assured me he had one. After having tried John's system and read my students' evaluations, I can attest to the validity of John's claim.

### Preparation

I first spent class time discussing guidelines and strategies with the class. Each presentation was to be a minimum of five minutes. Handouts, props, pictures, and video were encouraged. I stressed the importance of outlining and not reading notes, making eye-contact, and practicing repeatedly in front of a mirror. The students were free to choose any subject that personally or professionally interested them. Their topics ranged from "A Dramaturgy on Breaking Away" (a film we had viewed in class) to "The Korean System of Analyzing Men by Their Facial Characteristics" to "Handicapped Facilities at UMass Boston" to "Numerology in Naming Japanese Offspring" to a comic monologue on misinformation a Japanese had received before coming to America.

### Monitoring

The basic premise of John's approach is that students can do much of the evaluative work usually done by the teacher; and in so doing, they become more aware of the problems. The nonpresenting students become active participants. The nonpresenters rotate assignments: *vocabulary monitors* write down difficult words and central concepts; *pronunciation monitors* listen and notate mispronounced words; and *grammar monitors* find grammatical mistakes.

After each presentation, time is allotted first for positive feedback.

### Positive reinforcement

A criticism I have heard of student monitoring of oral presentations is that students can be enthusiastically and unnecessarily critical of one another. I endeavored to create a supportive environment before and during the presentations.

On the first day of class students memorized each other's names and exchanged biographies. Daily group work, rotating seat assignments, and a class trip fostered a sense of comraderie.

After the first presentation my initial response was praise for all the positive aspects including eye-contact, the choice of topic, research completed on the topic, and the detailed handout. The students thereby understood that positive reinforcement is the first and most important component of monitoring.

Positive feedback is followed by questions and comments.

### Identification of problem areas

After a question-and-answer period, each monitoring group identifies problem areas. For example, after a Japanese banker's presentation on Sumo wrestlers, the pronunciation group found examples of repeated "th" problems and slurring of final consonants; the grammar group reported consistent article and subject/verb agreement mistakes; and the vocabulary group asked for definitions of several vocabulary words they were certain the class did not understand, which the speaker then explained.

The students' presentations were audiotaped, and in listening at home they could hear the errors their fellow classmates noticed. As a follow-up the next day, I handed each student a list of mistaken pronunciation and grammatical items with their corrections.

### Students' evaluations of the project

After every student had presented, I had the students evaluate the experience. Here are some of their comments:

Tomiko: "Before this class I had already had the experience of oral presentations. But at that time we didn't check the grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation errors and main points. It is necessary. I could find that I skipped articles and prepositions many times."

Kinga: "Thanks to oral presentations I improved my pronunciation and I got to learn a lot."

Ajuko: "Now I know my weaknesses which I often mistake unconsciously."

Hiro: "The oral presentation was very beneficial for me. It was my first experience of a long speech in English. I could know my weak points in pronunciation and grammar through it. It was a significant experience for me. This was effective in improving my speaking ability."

Sophon: "Listening to the other students was very useful and helpful."

All agreed that the sense of comraderie that had developed in the class was the key to the success of this project.

*Robby Steinberg teaches at Mount Ida College and Harvard Summer School.*



## “The Cards are on the Table”

Stephen Sadow

### To the teacher:

Prepare ahead of time a pack of about 20 invented Tarot cards (don't use real ones). The cards should be 4" x 2", and each should have a small symbol, open to various interpretations, drawn upon it. Such symbols could be: a river, a candle, a barking dog, a volcano, two horses, a lock and key, a pair of shoes, an open book, a mask, the sun, a bouquet of flowers, and the like. At the appropriate moment, lay out the cards in groups of four.

### To the class:

For more than a year now, you have all been students at Madame Sophia's Academy. Under the personal direction of Madame Sophia, “The Wise,” you have learned a great deal about palm reading, astrology, parapsychology, and other esoteric systems. But card reading has fascinated you most. Night and day you have practiced Madame Sophia's system (distantly related to the Egyptian Tarot). You now believe yourselves ready to interpret the cards. You are certain that you can understand the past, present, and future of any person.

Madame Sophia is pleased with your progress, but she

never permits her students to use their techniques with the public until their control of the art is complete. Therefore, Madame Sophia is going to give you an exam.

Here are the problems: (Teacher: Lay out the groupings of cards).

Divide into groups of four to six. Each group should choose a secretary. Each grouping of cards relates to an individual. Using the figures that appear on the cards and the relationships that exist among them to help you, comment on each individual's nature, current problems, and future prospects. Later, you will have the opportunity to present your interpretations to your classmates.

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.*

## A Thank You Note to MATSOL

*Earlier this year, the MATSOL Executive Board allotted \$28.00 for postage and sent a box of up-to-date, high quality texts, donated by MATSOL members, to the Information Market of Bohemia. The Information Market is a library that was created by Americans in Czechoslovakia. Immediate Past President Catherine Sadow received the following letter in September:*

**Dear Ms. Sadow,**

I recently saw the write-up of The Information Market in Plzen in the *MATSOL Newsletter* [Spring/Summer '91], and it reminded me that I must thank you for your generous donation of books. They arrived shortly before I left Plzen in July and several of my Czech friends were already enthusiastically making copies. The books

are now in The Information Market, which opened to the public in May.

Again, many thanks to you and your organization from myself and Mike Kunz, the head of the project. With help from all over, we are beginning to bring some order to our teaching.

Sincerely,

Andree Collier

*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.*



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# From "Monkey Mind" to "Wild Mind": A Creative Writing Club

Christine Root

About a year ago I enrolled in a three-hour writing workshop. The success of that venture led me to enroll in another, longer workshop and then in an eight-week creative writing course. Naturally, the result was that I did a lot of writing. But I also found myself doing a lot of reading about writing. And some of the books (listed in the bibliography) made fascinating as well as inspirational reading.

By the time I finished the creative writing course, it was April, and I had to indicate the sort of club I wanted to organize and administer for Harvard's ESL summer club and activities program. On the basis of my experience, I decided that I would organize a creative writing club. I called the club "The Wild Minds: A Group for People Who Like to Write," borrowing from Natalie Goldberg's *Wild Mind: Living the Writer's Life*.

"Wild Minds" attracted a quorum of students, and we met once a week for about an hour and a half for seven weeks. The group was dedicated to the writing craft; one of the students was a published novelist from Italy, another a poet from Mexico.

## Wild mind

I had decided to make this truly a creative writing workshop—a departure from the academic training the students would be getting in their classes. I wanted to focus on ways to get into wild mind, where the power and magic of frequent, personal, expressive writing would lead not only to self-expression but also to self-revelation. My hope was that they would be able to enter wild mind on their own time and produce satisfying results. I also harbored the secret hope that practice in this type of writing would ultimately help students with their academic writing.

## Monkey mind

I devoted the first meeting to a discussion of what wild mind is and how to get to it. I presented Natalie Goldberg's words on Zen and the art of writing:

That big sky is wild mind. I'm going to climb up to that sky straight over our heads and put one dot on it with a Magic Marker. See that dot? That dot is what Zen calls monkey mind or what western psychology calls part of conscious mind. We give all our attention to that one dot. So when it says we can't write, that we're no good, are failures, fools for even picking up a pen, we listen to it (p. 32).

I told my students that monkey mind can limit and restrict what they think they can do. Instead, they should lose control and let wild mind take over.

## A creator/editor balance

I also told them Henriette Klaussen's view that there are two different hemispheres in the brain, and that one part works best for ideas, and one part helps with editing structure. She calls this phenomenon Ariel and Caliban, recalling the characters in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. She likens our unfettered side, the side where inspiration resides, to Ariel, who is foil to Caliban, our dark side. Both Ariel and Caliban are needed, but these creating/editing elements should be in balance:

When you learn how to make Ariel respond to your bidding, your written words will fly; when you learn to tame Caliban to help you on your terms, your final product will persuade with power (p. 5).

## Rapidwriting and other activities

Having primed students about what to expect, I asked them to put all this talk into action with a ten-minute rapidwrite. This would be a warm-up, following Natalie Goldberg's rules (pp. 2-4):

1. Keep your hand moving. Don't stop. The purpose of this is to keep the editor and the creator from becoming mixed up. "If you keep your creator hand moving, the editorial hand can't catch up with it and lock it."
2. Lose control. "Say what you want to say. Don't worry if it's correct, polite, appropriate. Just let it rip."
3. Be specific. "Not car, but cadillac. Not fruit, but apple. Not bird, but wren."
4. Don't think. [Go into wild mind. Find Ariel.]
5. Don't worry about punctuation, spelling, grammar.
6. Feel free to write "the worst junk."
7. Go for the jugular. "If something scary comes up, go for it. That's where the energy is."

We did a rapidwrite each week, which the students found to be an immensely interesting exercise, always on a topic I assigned, generally from the "Try This" section of Goldberg's book. Sample topics were, "I remember...", "I know...", "I'm thinking of...", "I wonder..." The homework assignment was always to mine the gems in the rapidwrite, to find something pithy that they could work with and develop.

In different club meetings we talked about journals and we practiced branching, brainstorming, clustering, and writing from memories as well as from quotations and pictures. We did visualization activities to stimulate the flow of ideas, and we did some writing from art.

*Continued on the next page*



### Student writing

It was my hope that I could take a group of interested students and help them see that they can and should make time for the things that are important to them — and try them in English. The following piece, created by Sebastian Odriozola, is an example of the extraordinary work I was privileged to receive.

One night, when my eyes were learning to fly...

I could see the fading red skies, the fire of my hidden heart;

the rising blue moon, the spirit of the night;  
the rainy sun, the tears of my pain.

I could hear the wind blowing, the secrets that I whisper;  
the empty silence, thunder and lightening;  
the screaming shadows, the lies of the night.

I could feel the magic of creation, a rainbow in the dark;  
the stare of a stranger, a voice beyond my sight;  
a breeze of sunlight, THE PROMISE OF A NEW DAY.  
... but it was just a dream,  
just a crazy dream.

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*This article is based on a presentation given at the MATSOL '91 Fall Conference. Christine Root teaches in the Extension School at Harvard University.*



## Congratulations to . . .

**MAUREEN HARRIS**, who has been awarded a Lucretia Crocker Fellowship by the Massachusetts Department of Education. The Lucretia Crocker fellowships are awarded to public school teachers who have been instrumental in the development of exemplary education programs. Fellows spend the academic year sharing their programs with teachers in other classrooms, schools, and school districts throughout the state.

Maureen's program, titled "In Celebration of Young Writers," is a schoolwide project that immerses the entire school. Students write about themes that are meaningful to them. Students' writings are showcased through publications, special events, and awards.

Maureen, one of the first recipients of a MATSOL Travel Grant, is a bilingual resource specialist in the Boston Public Schools.

**ROSALIE PEDALINO PORTER**, who was recently appointed as Executive Director of the Institute for Research in English Acquisition and Development (READ) in Amherst, Massachusetts. READ is a national research organization which specializes in the support and publication of independent studies on the acquisition of English-language literacy and on effective schooling for language minority children.

### MATSOL MEMBERS:

We would like to congratulate you on your professional accomplishments, but we can do so only if we know what you've been doing. Please write to tell us about your appointments, publications, presentations, awards, and so on. Send the information to: Marilyn Katz Levenson, 60 Brook Street, Brookline, MA 02146.

## Why can't Juan read?

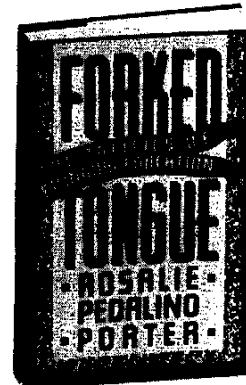
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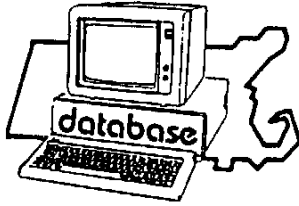
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## Planning Computer Resources for ESL Classes: Computer Labs or One-Computer Classrooms?

Karen Price

I frequently receive phone calls from colleagues who are suddenly asked to purchase software for ESL, or computers for their schools. Under pressure, they search madly for brand names, software titles, and suppliers of software and machines. No one ever calls to say, "We're looking for new ways to encourage peer feedback. Any suggestions for activities which happen to use software?" Or, "We're trying to decide between installing a computer lab, or setting up computers with projection systems on carts to be used in classrooms. Let's discuss the relative merits."

As teachers, we are interested in how technology can serve educational goals, not direct them. We want technology to support and complement the various ways teachers teach and students learn. Questions to consider are:

**What is the context for the language learning?** Are we focusing on individual work or group work? ...a computer lab or a classroom?

**Why do we want to use software?** Which pedagogical objectives can be supported by software activities? What can we do with software that we can't do otherwise?

For many, teaching with software is synonymous with teaching in an "electronic classroom" comprised of many workstations. What is the pedagogical rationale for wanting many machines in one classroom? If we are striving for communicative group interaction, it will be difficult to maintain in a lab where students and instructor are peering around machines and struggling for sight lines. Although instructors can make excellent use of several machines in a single room, (and well-equipped computer *laboratories* are a wonderful complement to in-class work), how many ESL instructors actually have pedagogical objectives which take advantage of a computer per student during a class session, in contrast to a lab session?

Colleagues who teach in institutions without computer labs often assume that they cannot use computer software until their institution outfits a computer lab with multiple workstations. However, rolling a computer with a projection system\* into a regular classroom makes it possible for instructors to incorporate software activities in meaningful ways into their traditional setting. In an ESL classroom, the computer need not control the pedagogical objectives any more than the chalkboard. The software can support the instructor's teaching style and enrich the class-centered environment.

For the past several years, Harvard ESL has been encouraging instructors to incorporate software in ways that complement the instructors' pre-existing objectives. For

example, ESL composition instructors may use the computer as an electronic chalkboard to demonstrate sentence-combining and other composition exercises in class. Student compositions are loaded into the computer and the class works together proposing revisions. The computer provides a way to quickly project and revise student text as a class — the dream of any composition instructor.



Large screen project provides shared focus for classroom interaction.

Computer software can generate discussion. It can play the role of arbiter as it tests student hypotheses in simulation activities ranging from running a Latin American government to city planning to managing a business. It can find examples of how we use a particular word, phrase, or grammatical form in a large corpus of written or spoken language. It can connect us to databases used by travel agents and government health officials to motivate the use of particular grammatical tenses. It can motivate students to argue over the clarity of proposed wording on a letter they write together to tens of thousands of potential readers across the United States.

One could argue that the implementation of several one-computer classrooms is not only pedagogically superior to trying to conduct ESL classes in a computer laboratory with multiple workstations, but cheaper, more flexible, and easier to schedule. Does every piece of software an instructor would like to use justify purchase of a site license or multiple copies? Will the software purchased for the language laboratory need to be a somewhat different collection than that purchased for classroom use since the lab setting will encourage a different type of learning from that of the classroom? What about the budget and resources necessary to cope with the logistics of software distribution, revision, and maintenance involving many disks and/or a computer network?

*Continued on the next page*

Moreover, if one's primary commitment is to the quality of classroom work, institutions experiencing economically difficult times could argue that the first priority should be to support one-computer classrooms before earmarking funds for a computer laboratory. The one-computer classroom also permits teachers and students to become familiar with software (which most likely will not be used the same way in a computer laboratory) before students go to work alone or in pairs in the lab.

Locating one-computer setups in each of several classrooms may impact greater numbers of students and instructors than one room with many machines. The one-computer classroom also accommodates instructors' wishes for different computers and environments, and allows for a gradual upgrading and replacement of machines as the technology evolves.

#### What do you need for a one-computer classroom?

An overhead projector and your computer, connected to a compatible liquid crystal display (LCD) panel, need to be set up on a computer projector table which also serves as a workstation. The instructor simply transports the cart and plugs it into an electrical outlet. (A smaller projector table not specifically designed as a computer projection table may suit your needs for approximately half the cost and weight.)

List prices of LCD panels range from \$695 to \$5,995. For a rugged, high quality display, you can expect to pay from \$1200 to \$1800 if you can settle for shades of grey rather than color. While many LCD displays are compatible with nearly the whole family of IBM (and IBM compatibles), Apple/Macintosh, and Atari, others require special cables and special cards inserted for each computer. A good panel should be capable of operating 3 hours without overheating and losing contrast.

One popular LCD display compatible with many computer brands is the ViewFrameII +2 display panel, which lists for under \$2000. It is available from N-View, 11835 Canon Blvd., Newport News, VA 23606 (804) 873-1354.

The January 1991 issue of *Presentation Products Magazine* has an excellent overview of important issues to consider and a comprehensive comparative chart of features and price ranges of more than two dozen different LCD panels.

\* Placed on an OHP, it acts as an electronic transparency and projects a large image of the computer monitor screen.

*Karen Price is Associate Director of the Programs of English as a Second Language at Harvard University. She will be Friday's plenary speaker at the MATSOL '92 Spring Conference, March 20.*

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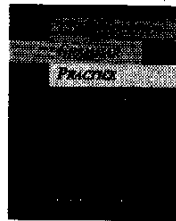


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### *Communicative Grammar Practice* Activities for Intermediate Students of English by Leo Jones

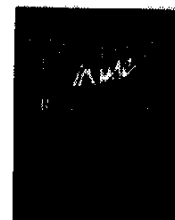
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## Teaching English in Iraq: Fall Semester 1990

Will Van Dorp

I spent the fall semester of 1990 in Basrah, Iraq, though I was not there by choice, had no job description, and needed no visa to enter the country. I was a captive of the Iraqi army, abducted on August 18 with 22 others from a hotel in Kuwait City\* while a representative of the US Embassy stood by helpless. We were taken to an army camp that night and moved from camp to camp for a week before the army turned us over to the Iraqi secret police, who bused us northward over the border to Baghdad. A day later, nine foreigners and I were bused 350 miles back to the border area with Kuwait. There, south of Basrah, from late August until early December, I was held at a refinery, a place that transformed natural gas into fertilizer.

With the other foreigners (British, German, and Japanese), I lived in a control room, nestled under hot steam pipes and screaming turbines that ran twenty-four hours a day. Here, we were told, we would burn if the coalition forces bombed the refinery. Each of the hostages (the Iraqis always insisted that we were *guests* and they, our protectors) coped differently with this awareness of our mortality. Besides listening to shortwave broadcasts on the radios the Iraqis gave us, some slept day and night, some played cards, some were sullen with fellow hostages and worse to the half dozen guards. I found I coped by talking with the guards, starting from Day 1 when they interrogated us all in detail about our jobs in Kuwait. I asked them some questions, wanting to know as much as possible about those who might receive the order to kill me.

Over the days that followed, I asked about — or the guards themselves chose to discuss — other places and times. They were generally pleasant, in spite of their orders. Many had studied at Baghdad University, and most hoped someday to visit the United States. They wondered whether I would welcome them to my home. When I asked if they wanted to be *guests*, the sarcasm eluded them. While my assignment in Iraq was to “shield” the plant, I ended up teaching, for the guards requested that I help them learn English. In exchange, I received instruction in survival Arabic, words and phrases I would need if I found it necessary to attempt escape. Armed with Kalashnikovs and 9mm pistols in addition to pens and notebooks, the guards were serious students, painstakingly writing out answers to more exercises than I would assign.

One of the students was Husam. Husam was a blond ethnic Turkish draftee in the Iraqi army, based near the refinery, and sometimes he — the brother-in-law of one of our guards — would eat with us. One night after supper, this

guard asked if I would help Husam with English. I answered his questions about the grammar lessons he completed in the book he had in his pack. He asked my opinion of his book, which — published in Beirut — had a lot of Arabic in it. I said I liked it and asked to borrow it. He reacted to my request with a troubled look, as if I had asked to borrow his weapon. However, he did lend the book to me, returning the next evening to reclaim it, happy either that I returned it or that I had been able to use it to study Arabic.

Another one of the students was Abu Alaa, one of the guards. During the last weeks of my detention, I spent some time every evening with him, teaching seven or eight words of English in exchange for seven or eight words of Arabic. One night I asked him about hobbies. As an illustration, I offered that my hobby was camping. This touched something in him: he began to tell of his life before the war with Iran. He said that his family often camped outside Baghdad and had *kebob*. He said that a barbecue would be a welcome change to the monotony of our diet — fat soup or a scoop of rice that barely nourished us — and arranged weekly cookouts. Abu Alaa seemed to think of these as demonstrations of their traditional Arab hospitality.

The war from August until March was a tragedy, a breakdown within and among nations. One reflection on my unscheduled semester in Iraq is that I was fortunate to have as baggage the experience of interacting with people from different cultures. I did not appreciate this baggage until reading *444 Days*, by Tim Welles, a book of interviews with some of the diplomats detained in Teheran some 10 years ago. One of those hostages, John Limbert, had also coped by talking with his guards; then I learned he had taught EFL in Iran before he joined the Foreign Service.

“When you are held captive, people somehow expect you to spit in your captor’s face and get killed,” said Patty Hearst at her trial. I could never have guessed how I would react to being a hostage — I doubt anyone can. What surprised me about the way I did react was that I coped by doing what I would have done if in Iraq or anywhere else of my free will: interacting with the guards as students, as people.

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\* At the time of the invasion, I was teaching EFL to trainee pilots of the Kuwait Air Force.

Will Van Dorp teaches at Bradford College and Northern Essex Community College.



## “Yertle The Turtle” and Other Names of Note

Robert Saitz

The search for enrichment reading materials at the elementary school level often leads us back to the best sellers, among which we'll certainly encounter the Dr. Seuss books and the Pooh stories. For many of us *Yertle the Turtle* and then Winnie the Pooh were ancillary parts of Mr. Rogers' neighborhood. As those titles illustrate, we were introduced, early on, to the use of the English restrictive appositives as a naming device, with the name followed by a designation. The pattern is an ancient one in our history.

In the ninth-century Anglo-Saxon Chronicles we find: Alfred King hateth gretan Waferth biscep (literally, King Alfred commands to greet Waferth Bishop). The use of the definite article with the designation occurs only slightly later. In the Chronicle entry for 869-870 we find both Aethelwulf aldorman and Sidroc eorlse giongca (Earl Sidroc the Young); the son Alfred is referred to as Edward the Elder (c. 900) and in 989 we see Iohannes se godspellere (John, the Evangelist). Thus the naming mode that distinguishes by adding a definite article and a distinguisher is already well-established in our earliest written documents.

It was a useful pattern of course in medieval times when in England, and the Germanic world in general, family names were not common (in Old English times alliteration was often used to indicate relationships; the English Dictionary of Christian names notes that the daughters of Marewald were named Mildthryth, Mildburh and Mildgyth). People could be designated by occupation—Piers the Plowman, John the Baker, etc. Surnames begin to develop in the thirteenth century, yet even after that the appositive device continued to be used, and one suspects that from the beginning the appositive slot was appreciated as a place not just to distinguish but also to add a characterization. Labelling him Richard I would have done to keep him apart from his heirs, but as Richard the Lion-Hearted he became unforgettable. (Think of the fun the French had with Charles the Hammer and Charles the Bald—was there the possibility of a Charles the Bushy-Haired?) There must have been an added pleasure and value in the creation of such epithets. We find them frequently in medieval times: William the Conqueror, Havelok the Dane, Reynard the Fox. And their use continues beyond the Middle Ages at times when surnames had become common, especially for the labelling of heroes and anti-heroes, beloveds and despiseds. Shakespeare gives us Othello the Moor; in the eighteenth century we read of *Asem*

*the Man Hater*, and in the nineteenth century the interest in the medieval, the exotic and the quaint produced a number of literary works featuring naming epithets such as Southey's *Thalaba the Destroyer*, Shelley's *Swellfoot the Tyrant*, and Rosetti's *Sir Hugh the Heron*. The practice continues through the late nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries. Damon Runyon created a world of characters like Dave the Dude, Louie the Lug, Harry the Horse, and Joe the Joker. And fresh

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**The naming mode that distinguishes by adding a definite article and a distinguisher is already well-established in our earliest written documents.**

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in our memories are Jack the Ripper, Mack the Knife, Smokey the Bear, Bozo the Clown, Ferdinand the Bull, Frodo the Hobbit, Dennis the Menace and, in a recent movie, Hannibal the Cannibal. Leslie Dunkling writes from Surrey that the pattern is particularly strong in Wales; epithets such as Jones the Bread have been common, probably because so many people were named Jones. He notes the story that when Jones the Bread became prosperous, his name changed to Jones the Rolls (Royce). Of course, when he was knighted he became Jones the Upper Crust.

For those still wondering about Winnie the Pooh, I'm not sure A.A. Milne would be of much help. After all, when the writer says that Winnie the Pooh lived in a forest all by himself under the name of Sanders, and Christopher Robin asks, "What does 'under the name' mean?" the response is, "It means he had the name over the door in gold letters and lived under it." In any case, regarding Pooh, Christopher Robin says, "He's Winnie-ther-Pooh. Don't you know what ther means?" The narrator responds, "Ah, yes I do...and I hope you do, too, because, it is all the explanation you're going to get."

Does "My son the doctor" belong here?

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



# MATSOL Legal Support Fund



## Application Procedure

### Description

The MATSOL Executive Board has approved an Employment Issues Committee (EIC) proposal to provide a legal support fund to be used exclusively by MATSOL members who are involved in legal disputes with their employers.

The purpose of the Fund is to enable MATSOL members to consult a lawyer in order to determine if their problem with their employer is actionable.

### Procedure

The applicant contacts a member of the EIC committee (see list below). The EIC member forwards a one-page application form to be completed by the applicant and arranges a committee meeting with the applicant. A quorum of three members constitutes the committee for the purposes of this process.

Using the completed application form, the committee interviews the applicant to determine the following:

- a brief description of the situation requiring legal assistance;
- a brief history of the applicant's relationship with the institution.

The committee then asks:

- if the applicant has discussed the issue with the employer;
- if the applicant belongs to any other professional organizations that might provide assistance;
- what the desired outcome is.

After the interview with the applicant, the EIC committee

discusses the issue and decides whether or not the applicant should receive the legal funds; a total of \$1,000 has been allocated, and it is estimated that this might assist four to five applicants.

### Confidentiality

The identity of the applicant will be known only by the EIC Committee and the MATSOL President and Treasurer.

### Referral List

The EIC has contacted several law firms that have labor lawyers who are committed to employees' issues. Their rates range from free (for unemployed or low paid teachers) to anywhere from \$90 to \$165 an hour. The EIC urges anyone with a grievance to use free consultation to see if the case is actionable, but it may take up to three "billable" hours to make such a determination.

The MATSOL Legal Support Fund is intended to be used for at least a part of this initial consultation. The applicant may have to pay legal fees after the initial consultation. If you are interested in contacting one of the labor lawyers directly, you can obtain names and numbers from any EIC member.

### Employment Issues Committee (EIC) Members

David Coltin (617) 720-2603 • Susan Donio (617) 731-6935  
Margo Downey (617) 296-8348 • Agnes Farkas (617) 964-0464  
Rebecca Pomerantz (617) 265-7479 • Karl Smith (617) 232-8664  
Fred Turner (617) 787-0183.

## MATSOL Executive Board Appoints Nominating Committee

The following MATSOL members have accepted the invitation to serve as the nominating committee to determine a slate of officers for the MATSOL election that will take place in the spring of 1992. The nominating committee will prepare a single slate ballot for the positions of vice-president, treasurer, higher education representative, general representative, and western region representative.

*Joan Frutkoff*  
JVS/Hebrew college  
Representing Adult Education

*Anlee Schaye*  
Devotion School, Brookline  
Representing Elementary Education

*Robert Saitz*  
Boston University  
Representing Higher Education

*Brenda Sloane*  
Lowell High School  
Representing Secondary Education

The committee will be headed by the immediate past president of MATSOL, Catherine Sadow. Their decision will be made by the end of January. The approved ballot, which will include biographical information for each nominee, will be mailed in February. The ballot will have spaces for write-in votes.

Ballots returned by mail or in person will be counted by members of the nominating committee at the Annual Business Meeting in the spring. A simple majority of all votes cast will elect.

# New Packets from TESOL

## *The English Plus/English Only Controversy*

A packet of information about the English Plus/English Only controversy is available from TESOL. It contains 8 readings, 8 flyers, and 3 bibliographies to help

you understand the basic issues. The readings include articles by Tom Ricento, Elliot Judd, Steve Nichols, and Jamie Draper.

## *Help for Job Seekers*

Are you looking for a job in ESL/EFL or bilingual education? Are you about to be interviewed for a position? Would you like information about qualifications and opportunities for teaching around the world?

The ESL/EFL Job Search was prepared for participants who signed up for employment counseling at the

Employment Clearing house at TESOL '91 in New York City. It includes tips for surviving the job interview, along with general information about developing qualifications as an English language professional.

The booklet is now available for US \$10.

Yes! I want to receive information from TESOL Field Services. My order is prepaid in US funds made payable to TESOL or with appropriate credit card information.

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Dianne Ruggiero, MATSOL TREASURER, 50 Harvard Avenue #5, Brookline, MA 02146



### **Beyond the Hidden Door**

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### **In the Magic Corridor**

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### **Bridge Across the Americas**

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