

Using the Peer Review Process in the ESL Writing Class

Roberta Adams and Suzanne Koons

A useful classroom learning technique supported by the process writing approach is the peer review: students reading and commenting on each other's writing. We have used this process in ESL classrooms of various levels and recommend it as a way to help students gain a deeper awareness of the role of audience and to help them see revision as dealing with meaning. We teach adult learners, but the methods discussed here can be adapted to younger writers.

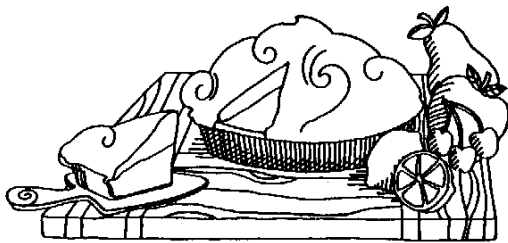
Writer as reader/Reader as writer

One premise underlying the peer review process is that students will come to see the writing/reading interaction and alter their initial view of writing as something done in solitude that is handed to the teacher who corrects it; in that scheme, audience equals teacher and revision equals error correction. Students who view writing as somehow separate from reading tend to see reading as a process used with published books and articles; they should learn to see their own writing and the writing of their peers as worthy of the same kind of reading. They can discover that revision is not correction of errors, but clarification and elaboration of meaning. The peer review process encourages students to analyze their own writing, to redefine their concept of audience, and thus to begin to define themselves as writers. Making meaning becomes the primary focus of writing, understanding meaning the primary focus of

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Homemade Publications

Susan Pickford



There are few who can resist the temptation of homemade pie sitting on the counter. To be sure, the crust may not be uniform around the edges and the juices may run a bit all over the plate, but even so the enjoyment derived is so much greater than from the perfectly formed store-bought variety.

To those involved in writing, printing, and illustrating a homemade book, booklet, or newsmagazine, the satisfaction of having one's very own thoughts transferred to words and then again transformed into a real printed publication is unmatched. True, the product may not look perfect in every aspect when compared to mass-produced professional materials, but that is its charm and its strength.

At a mini-session at the MATSOL '91 Fall Conference, I shared three homemade publications that I have produced in collaboration with my students. Adult workers in my ESL class at Wang Laboratories, men and women from various countries of origin, proudly showed families and co-workers their "Profiles in Determination": their most memorable first experiences in the U.S. It was

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

Ruth Spack

100 Salisbury Road

Brookline, MA 02146

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

Next Deadline:

June 30, 1992

Report to the Membership

Kathryn Riley

This report is an effort to summarize the activities and accomplishments of MATSOL. The report is an effort to be responsible to the membership by committing to writing what the Executive Board has done and why we have done it. We also hope it will stimulate more active participation in the activities and decision-making of MATSOL. Please read the document and feel free to respond, either by commenting in person or in writing to any member of the MATSOL Executive Board.

Employment Issues: The Employment Issues Committee (EIC) began to send a representative to all Board meetings. They soon presented a proposal to establish a legal support fund to be used exclusively by MATSOL members who are involved in legal disputes with their employers; the Board approved the proposal, a procedure was established for application, and a referral list of lawyers was developed. To this date, no funds have been expended for legal fees; however, members of the EIC have received numerous requests for information and names of lawyers.

The EIC is currently developing employment standards for full-time and part-time teachers in higher education and adult education. They will present a proposed set of standards to the Board during the coming months. Once standards have been accepted and approved by MATSOL, the next step will be to disseminate them and begin to determine which employers meet these standards and which do not.

Teacher Research Grants: Three teacher research grants in the amount of \$500 each were awarded to MATSOL members. The recipients were selected by a committee of five members after a review of proposals. Grant recipients will report on their work through presentations at MATSOL conferences and through articles in the *MATSOL Newsletter* during the next year.

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NYS TESOL

Dates: October 16-18

Place: New York City

Contact: Tess Ferree

(212) 854-3584

Modern Language Association

Dates: December 27-30

Place: New York City

Contact: MLA

(212) 614-6370

**BU Conference on Language
Development**

Dates: October 23-25

Place: Boston University

Contact: Conference Office

(617) 353-3085

MATSOL '92 Fall Conference

Date: October 31

Place: Bentley College, Waltham

Contact: Linda Schulman

(617) 237-1763

NCTE New England

Dates: October 29-31

Place: Farmington Marriott Hotel,

Connecticut

Contact: Barbara Laurain

(203) 561-2281

NNETESOL Conference

Date: November 14

Place: New Hampshire College

Contact: Diane Dugan

(603) 668-2211, x3386

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

MATSOL '92 Fall Conference Update

October 31, 1992
Bentley College, Waltham

Plenary Speaker: Leslie Beebe

"Leslie, do you mind if I eat your shrimp tails?"



Learning the social rules that govern our speech requires a lot more than just grammatical accuracy. Dr. Beebe's talk uses both amusing anecdotes and research findings to celebrate second language learners' successes and to address their challenges in acquiring culturally "comfortable" English.

Leslie M. Beebe is currently Professor of Linguistics and Education in the Applied Linguistics and TESOL programs of Columbia University Teachers College where she is Coordinator of the Doctoral Program in TESOL and was formerly Chair of the Department of Languages and Literature. She has taught ESL in Oregon, Illinois, and New York and EFL in Thailand. In 1990-91, she served as President of the American Association for Applied Linguistics. She is editor of *Issues in Second Language Acquisition: Multiple Perspectives* and co-author of *English in the Cross-Cultural Era: The Social Rules of Speaking and TESOL*. She has published widely in the areas of sociolinguistics and second language acquisition. Her research interests have travelled from phonetics and phonology through syntax to discourse analysis, always focusing on language as it is used in varied social settings

by learners of English. Her current focus is on cross-cultural differences in conversation and the problems these fascinating differences create for speakers of other languages.

Bentley College, Site of the MATSOL '92 Fall Conference

Bentley College, recognized for its outstanding professional undergraduate and graduate programs, is an independent, non-sectarian, coeducational college that integrates a diverse business curriculum with the liberal arts and sciences. Founded in 1917 as the Bentley School of Accounting and Finance, Bentley now offers eight bachelor of science degrees in all major business disciplines, and a bachelor of arts program with degrees in English, history, philosophy, and liberal arts. The Bentley College Graduate School has five master of science programs and eleven MBA concentrations.

Bentley's ESL programs include: 1) Credit-bearing second-language sections of the required freshman Communication courses; 2) A 20-hour-per-week ESL tutor in the Writing Center; 3) Classes and other services for graduate students who speak English as a second language; 4) The Bridge Program, which offers a curriculum for entering ESL/EFL undergraduates who have demonstrated excellent academic potential but whose SAT-Verbal and/or TOEFL scores are lower than those required for regular admission.

The English Department and the Office of International Programs are jointly sponsoring the MATSOL '92 Fall Conference on October 31, 1992. We look forward to welcoming participants to Bentley College.

For more information about the Fall Conference, call:

Linda Schulman (617) 237-1763

or

Diane Terry (617) 861-9612

Publishers: Please contact Eileen Prince (617) 437-2455

Peer Review *Continued from page 1*

reading, and the two processes interconnect.

A second premise is that writing is a collaborative process. In Peter Elbow's words, the students form a "community of writers," in which they work like many professional writers: getting feedback from various readers, then revising. In sharing their writing, students encounter various viewpoints and approaches which they may accept or reject, so that they are helped to find their own voices and gain ownership of their texts. As they ask each other, "What did you mean to say here?" they learn to re-see the writing and to transform unstated ideas into words.

The Peer review process

1. Before the process:

a) Help students identify strengths and weaknesses in a text through class activities analyzing professional and student writing.

b) Establish an environment of trust and cooperation to enable students to feel comfortable giving diplomatic but helpful criticism of their peers' writing.

2. The process itself:

a) Create a peer review form consisting of a set of questions the reader is to ask of the text and the writer. Include space at the top for the writer and reader(s) to list their names and the paper topic/title. The form should be adapted to the level of the writers and the particular assignments, and over the course of the semester, it should become more sophisticated, as students learn to use it and as their writing and commenting abilities develop.

For all students and assignments, basic questions may include:

- What do you like most about the paper?
- What hasn't the writer told you that you need to know?

For low and intermediate students, or for experiential writing, questions may include:

- What is the topic of the paper? Is it clear?
- For each idea introduced, what examples or details has the writer given? If more details could be added, ask the writer what they might be (list them here).
- Number the paragraphs. Do the ideas in each paragraph go together? Should any of the ideas or paragraphs be moved or reordered?
- Does the paper have an ending? If not, discuss with the writer how to conclude the paper and make some notes here to help him or her.

For advanced students, or for persuasive and analytical writing, some questions may include:

- Does the introduction grab your attention and make you want to read more? If not, how can the writer improve it?
- What is the main idea of the essay?
- Does the author address the audience's needs and questions (define unfamiliar vocabulary, use analogy,

provide background)? If not, where is clarification needed?

- Are the writer's arguments presented fairly and logically? If you are not persuaded, why not?

- What kind of evidence (statistics, facts, quotes, etc.) does the author use to support the conclusions? What evidence could be added to make it more convincing?

b) Train the students to use the form: to understand the purpose of the questions and to see how their responses will provide important feedback to the writer.

c) Create review groups or pairs for students to read and respond to each other's writing. Groups may remain the same throughout the semester or vary by language groups or proficiency levels.

d) Have students exchange papers, bring in photocopies of their drafts, or read their papers to each other/the group.

e) Allow plenty of class time (at least 30 minutes for pairs) for students to read each other's essays, complete the review form, and discuss their responses with the author.

3. Follow up:

Encourage students to think about the peer reviews when they revise their drafts. Emphasize that each writer has ultimate ownership of his or her own writing, so each should incorporate only those suggestions perceived as beneficial. You might want to schedule individual conferences during which students can ask about the validity of comments they received and the changes in progress.

Final comments

The peer review process has been used successfully at many levels and for a wide variety of tasks. Students have created introductions and conclusions where none previously existed, reorganized paragraphs, added illustrative details, and even completely refocused their topics. The role of the teacher in this process becomes that of another reader giving feedback. Teacher comments, whether made in conference with the student or as written responses to the revised draft, also address the student's expression of meaning. Error correction in this context is moved to the editing phase, so that students see that after their meaning is understandable to the audience they can focus on grammar and mechanics. A semester goal for using the peer review process in the writing classroom is for students to read their own texts as critical readers, as though the text were written by someone else, and ask questions of their text. Not all students reach this goal, but most gain something rarely achieved without this process: an awareness of self as serious writer.

This article is based on a presentation given at the MATSOL '91 Fall Conference. Roberta Adams teaches at Fitchburg State College and Harvard ESL. Suzanne Koons teaches at MIT and Harvard ESL.

Homemade *Continued from page 1*

the next-to-last culminating activity of the twelve-week course. They then shared their favorite recipes, which led to the end of class supper and more homemade goodies.

High school students anonymously answer a questionnaire. Their response to such items as "The hardest thing about learning English was....," "Although this wasn't funny when it happened, I can laugh about it now....," and "My advice to new kids coming to America..." were collated, illustrated, and published in a booklet entitled *Coming to America...Our Version*. The final edition provided delightful reading material for administrators, teachers, and fellow students.

Last year I was introduced to "Big Books" through a workshop given by Chaimidi Benager, Director of the Lawrence/Lowell area ITRC, Intercultural Training Resource Center in Roslindale. My senior class tackled the problem of reading and rewriting a children's play of mine titled *Barron & Lyla*. Using the xerox machine to enlarge drawings, the computer to print text, and traditional materials such as paste, tape, and large pieces of paper, this class produced a lively classroom book for grade three. A bilingual Spanish student sprinkled Espanol generously throughout the story. When the high school students read

the finished book to their young audience, everyone was excited; and the rich aroma of language and homemade success filled the classroom.

The discussion during the mini-session at MATSOL centered not on whether the language learning taking place during these projects "justified" the time required to complete them, but on whether the teacher is responsible for correcting all mistakes in spelling and grammar before the finished product is shared with schoolmates and parents. Certainly, we all agreed, editing must take place by the students themselves with some assistance from the teacher. Then a sharp-eyed participant found a misspelled word in the Big Book being demonstrated, which highlighted the issue. My facetious question, "Have you read *The Globe* today?" produced a knowing laugh and drove my point home. To become obsessed with a letter-perfect product is to destroy the very spontaneity, joy and—to return to my original analogy—taste and texture of language and homemade pie.

This article is based on a presentation given at the MATSOL '91 Fall Conference. Susan Pickford teaches at the Robinson School, Lowell and the Wang Laboratories and is a Master's candidate in ESL at UMass/Lowell.

TEACH ENGLISH IN THE PEACE CORPS Today you're needed more than ever.



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The New England Peace Corps Office encourages MATSOL members to find out how YOUR skills can be put to work overseas. Call 800-648-8052 or 617-565-5555.

Peace Corps . . . still the toughest job you'll ever love.

Report *Continued from page 2*

Travel Grants: Nine travel grants in the amount of \$300 each were awarded to MATSOL members. The recipients were selected by a committee of five members after a review of proposals. Grant recipients will report on their experiences through articles in the *MATSOL Newsletter* during the coming year.

Budget Process: On June 30, MATSOL will complete its first fiscal year under our new budgeting process. The 1991-92 annual statement will be distributed to the membership at the 1992 Fall Conference. The 1992-93 budget has been proposed, discussed, and recommended for adoption; the incoming Executive Board will vote on the 1992-93 budget before June 30, 1992. This budgeting process gives us an opportunity for an annual review of activities and provides a basis for considering new projects and activities.

Health Insurance: Surveys of insurance needs were distributed throughout the summer and at the Fall Conference. Catherine Sadow sent completed surveys to Washington for analysis. Several weeks ago she received a proposal for a health insurance plan which would be available for purchase by MATSOL members. We are currently analyzing this plan and comparing it to others.

Computerization: MATSOL purchased a MacClassic computer and software which enabled us to establish multiple data bases, maintain our membership files more quickly and accurately, and prepare for future needs.

Low-incidence Working Group: A group of teachers working with low-incidence populations in elementary and secondary schools has been meeting informally since the Fall Conference.

Job Bank: The Job Bank has grown tremendously. Approximately 100 members receive a copy of the job listings each month. Many types of jobs are listed and a variety of employers contact the Job Bank. At the present time, the Job Bank Coordinator, Amy Worth, is actively seeking listings for summer and fall positions.

Nominating Process: Since a change in the MATSOL Constitution in 1990, a single slate of candidates is presented to the Executive Board by a Nominating Committee; the Nominating Committee is chaired by the most recent past president. The 1992-93 slate was presented to the Board by Catherine Sadow and approved at the January Board meeting. A ballot was mailed to each member.

Newsletter: Three issues of the newsletter were published this year. Thanks to Judy DeFilippo, advertisements in our newsletter have increased substantially and underwrite an increasing percentage of the cost of the publication. The content and appearance of the *MATSOL Newsletter* reflect the high quality of the profession in Massachusetts. Ruth Spack and Marilyn Katz Levenson have served as co-editors.

Fall Conference: A very successful conference was held at the Showa Institute, Boston, in October 1991. Elsa Auerbach, UMass/Boston, was the plenary speaker. The conference was organized by the five representatives on the Executive Board: Bea Mikulecky, Connie O'Hare, Chris Parkhurst, Linda Schulman, and Diane Terry. The 1992 Fall Conference will be held October 31 at Bentley College.

Spring Conference: The 1992 Spring Conference was held this year at Mount Ida College, Newton, March 20-21. The plenary speakers were Karen Price, Harvard University, and James Paul Gee, University of Southern California. Robby Steinberg was Chairperson of the Spring Conference.

Rick Smith Lecture: The Rick Smith Lecture was held in May, 1991, at Brighton High School. Nancy Cloud of Hofstra University spoke on "Collaborating Across Departments to Serve Children: The ESL/Bilingual Special Education Relationship."

Interested in an Interest Group for Volunteers?

Does your program train and use volunteers? Are you interested in establishing a MATSOL interest group to discuss and share how programs recruit, train, support, and recognize volunteers?

If you are interested in organizing and/or participating in a rap session at the Fall MATSOL Conference, call Joan Frutkoff, JVS Volunteer Coordinator, at (617) 423-8660 between 1-4 pm, Monday through Friday.

MATSOL Grant Recipients

In May, 1991, the MATSOL Executive Board voted to provide grants for MATSOL members to attend conference and to conduct classroom-based research. Grant applications were published in the newsletter and were also distributed at the MATSOL '91 Fall Conference. The MATSOL Awards Committee, appointed by the MATSOL Executive Board, met in November to select grant recipients and to decide on monetary allotments. A total of \$4500 was available for distribution, \$500 for each of three research grants, the rest for travel grants.

The MATSOL Board is pleased to publish the names of those applicants who were awarded MATSOL grants.

MATSOL Travel Grant Recipients: 1991

Each of the Travel Grant recipients received \$300 to attend TESOL '92 in Vancouver.

1. Janet Kaplan, Showa Women's Institute
2. Veronica McCormack, Roxbury Community College
3. Stephanie Pasternak, Centro Presente, Boston Conservatory, M.A. Candidate/ UMass-Boston
4. Eileen Prince, English Language Center/Northeastern University
5. Raynel Mary Shepard, Boston Public Schools
6. Barbara D. Sinclair, Intergenerational Literacy Project, Boston University
7. Betty Stone, SCALE (Somerville Center for Adult Learning Experiences)
8. Judith Templer, Northern Essex Community College
9. Ruth Ann Weinstein, Boston Public Schools

Travel Grant recipients will write a brief report for the *MATSOL Newsletter*.

MATSOL Research Grant Recipients: 1991

1. Barbara Gerner de Garcia, Boston Public Schools

Research Questions:

1. What ESL methods and materials are the most appropriate for deaf education?
2. What further adaptations are needed to meet the needs of deaf students from language minority homes and immigrant deaf students with no prior formal education?

2. Ellen Rintell, Urban Teacher Resource Center, Lowell

Research Questions:

1. Will a cross-age read-aloud project benefit children learning English as a second language, i.e., in terms of English reading, writing, and conversational ability?
2. What aspects of this program are most beneficial?

Research grant recipients will report on their research findings at the MATSOL conference following completion of the project. Research must be completed within 12 months of acceptance of the grant.

The MATSOL Executive Board would like to thank the members of the MATSOL Awards Committee for their time and commitment to this project.

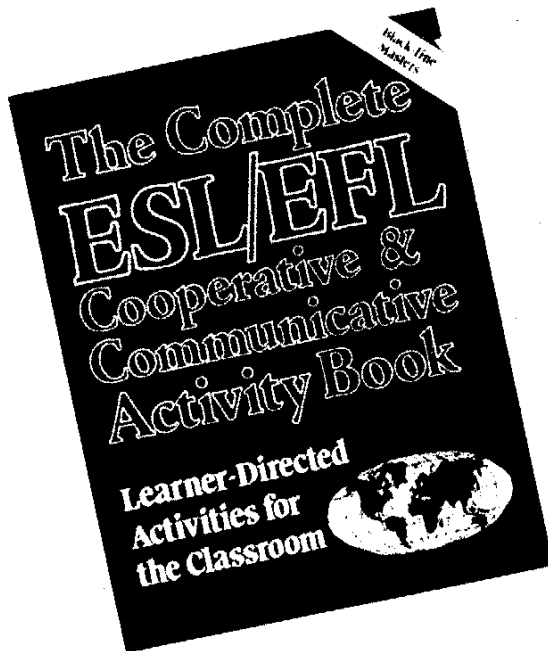
MEMBERS OF THE AWARDS COMMITTEE

Karen Price, *Harvard University, (Chair)*
Mary Doolin, *Newton North High School*
H. Shippen Goodhue, *JVS/ESL, Hebrew College*
Rachel Goodman, *Department of Employment and Training*

Lydia Grave-Resendes, *Umana Barnes School, Boston*
Sima Kirsztajn, *Edith Baker School, Brookline*
Paul Krueger, *Northeastern University*

The MATSOL 1992 Research Grant Application is enclosed in this newsletter (see insert). To balance the budget, the 1991-1992 MATSOL Executive Board voted at the February meeting not to offer Travel Grants at this time.

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AD 0329

Employment Issues Committee Update

Karl Smith

I have to tell you that I'm excited. No, I didn't win the lottery. I'm excited because I have been participating in a process that I think will help us all professionally. I'm excited because although the process has been difficult, the potential rewards are enormous.

Since the Fall MATSOL conference, members of the Employment Issues Committee (EIC) along with several volunteers, have been working to create professional standards for MATSOL: guidelines for institutions that have ESL programs. Separate standards have been created for higher education, community/adult education, and public school systems.

You may ask, what good are standards? Are they enforceable? Who will pay attention to them? These are valid questions. Our strategy is not complex nor is it secret. We hope that with clearly outlined standards, institutions and a-

gencies that hire ESL professionals will recognize that this is a profession and will cast aside the notion that anyone who speaks English can teach it. We also feel that newcomers to the profession and/or to MATSOL should know what to expect from employees. We hope that institutions that give astoundingly low pay and no benefits (we know that they are out there; horror stories abound) will see the error of their ways.

So far the rough draft of our standards deals with issues such as contract and job security, salary and benefits, hours and responsibilities, ratio of full-time to part-time in the workplace, and educational qualifications. The final document(s) will be published in the *MATSOL Newsletter*.

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

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 resume 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.

Ms. Amy Worth
MATSOL Job Bank
31 Fox Hill Road
Newton Centre, MA 02159

Dear Amy,

I just wanted to let you know how happy I am after landing a job through the MATSOL Job Bank.

I'll soon be teaching in the Transition Center at Parker Brothers in Salem, helping dislocated workers obtain new skills to get back into the job market.

It should be a wonderful opportunity. Thank you so much for being there for me.

Sincerely,

Richard Goldberg

Report on MATSOL '91 Fall Conference

Plenary Address by Elsa Auerbach: "Community and Classroom"

Carol Chandler

Professor Elsa Auerbach from the University of Massachusetts/Boston began her plenary address at the Fall MATSOL Conference by changing the original title of her talk from the generic "Community and the Classroom" to "Who's the Expert Anyway?" or "Why I'm the Wrong Person to be Giving this Plenary Address." In her talk, Professor Auerbach appealed to educators in the field to look more deeply into our frequently expressed concern about making real connections between what we do in the classroom and the lives of our students. According to Professor Auerbach, this must be done by examining this concern not simply in terms of pedagogical contexts but in terms of ideological issues of authority and power. She argued that issues connecting classroom and community cannot be divorced from questions of status and power.

Monolingual vs. bilingual approaches

Professor Auerbach focused the first part of her address on the re-examination of two dogmas about ways of teaching in terms of their ideological assumptions. The first dogma concerns the use of the native language in the ESL classroom. The rationale and research used to justify English only in the classroom is neither conclusive nor proven to be pedagogically sound. A closer examination of immersion research, which is most often used to support an English only approach, reveals that while immersion programs may be effective for language majority students, bilingual instruction is more effective for language minority students. Teachers and researchers locally, nationally, and internationally report positive results from classrooms at all levels where the learners' native language is regarded as a resource and not as an obstacle.

Professor Auerbach asked the audience to consider the contradiction of opposing the English only movement on a societal level yet advocating for exclusive use of English in the classroom. She argues that the classroom and society are "two sides of the same coin." A monolingual approach which "may result in slower acquisition of English" and "disempowering approaches to language instruction" perpetuates the unequal power relations which exist in and outside the classroom. A bilingual approach, on the other hand, begins to challenge these unequal relations.

Acknowledging the practical concerns that ESL teachers might have regarding language choice in the classroom, Professor Auerbach pointed out that the issue is not simply one of which language to use but a question of how decisions are made about what happens in the classroom and who makes them. Rather than the teacher making the deci-

sion for the students, as in the traditional classroom, she suggested that the issue itself be posed back to the students for reflection and dialogue. Not only would this approach provide content for language and literacy work, but more importantly, it would model a shift in the power relations from the teacher to the learners, rehearsing a process for learners to address problems outside the classroom.

Professor Auerbach presented the issue of English only versus bilingualism in the classroom as only the "tip of a larger ideological iceberg." This brought her to the second dogma of the field which she chose to address—that the most appropriate qualifications for teaching immigrants are higher education credentials and grounding in second language pedagogy and knowledge of English rather than shared knowledge of the learners' language, life experiences and culture. Auerbach raised the question that if second language and literacy theory emphasizes the importance of contextualized instruction around content and language relevant to the learners' lives, then "Who is better qualified to draw out, understand and utilize learners' experiences than those who themselves have had similar experiences?" She argued that, as a field, we have much to learn from popular education movements and third world countries where adult educators are drawn from the community of learners themselves. Changing the power relations within the classroom opens up possibilities for change outside the classroom.

In the second part of her address, Professor Auerbach described two local community-university collaborative projects as examples of ways in which this popular education model can be applied within a U.S. context, each of which challenges the taken-for-granted practices she critiqued in the first part of her presentation.

The UMass Student Literacy Corps Project

The first of these is the UMass Student Literacy Corps Project, which provides a content-based ESL course at UMass about literacy and second language acquisition and a weekly fieldwork seminar for ESL undergraduate students who tutor in Boston area community-based adult ESL classes. The model is one in which students reflect on their own learning, and read, write and talk about second language acquisition and pedagogy while developing their own proficiency and teaching others. The strength of the students' work in the project comes not only from shared language backgrounds but from their shared life experience, more specifically their experience as language learners. In addition, tutors are directly able to apply their own experience

Continued on page 11

“Community and Classroom” *Continued from page 10*

as learners in the UMass course to their teaching, by introducing and developing new ideas at their sites. For example, students apply second language reading strategies to their own reading and teaching of reading, and they learn about dialogue journals while writing their own and using journals with their students.

The Bilingual Community Literacy Project

The second collaboration Professor Auerbach described is the Bilingual Community Literacy Project, which trains language minority people to become literacy workers in their own communities. The training includes mentoring (pairing interns with experienced teachers), weekly site-based teacher-sharing meetings and monthly project-wide workshops. It involves three community sites: Haitian Multi-Service Center, East Boston Harborside Community School, and the Jackson Mann Community School.

Auerbach cited concrete examples of the successes of this project at the three participating sites. These included: at the Haitian Multi-Service Center, students learning to read and write in Kreyol through language experience stories, and dialogue journals, as well as interns developing a Kreyol proverb book; in the East Boston Spanish literacy program, students moving in six months from being able to do little more than sign their name to writing page-long stories; and at the Jackson Mann, interns, who themselves were beginning ESL students only two or three years ago,

teaching their own classes. The teacher/interns from the three sites share similar concerns about issues such as how to deal with large classes, mixed levels, the diversity of language backgrounds, and use of the native language in the classroom. By looking to each other and to the students as resources, they have become the problem-posers searching together for ways of addressing these and other issues.

Auerbach ended her talk by returning to her title: “Who’s the Expert Anyway?”, reiterating the importance of expanding our conceptions of expertise to include community people, not just as cultural resources but as experts in their own right. Promoting the development of this alternative community-based expertise, she argued, will strengthen the profession by “opening up the ranks,” for “our marginalization is closely linked to the marginalization of our students in the broader society.”

A lively discussion followed Professor Auerbach’s talk and focused mostly on the question of whether or not bilingualism and biculturalism are necessary qualifications for effective second language teaching. Julio Midy, a Master Teacher at the Haitian Multi-Service center through the Bilingual Teacher Training Project, and Ana Coelho, a tutor in the UMass Student Literacy Corps, joined Professor Auerbach at the podium to participate in the discussion.

Carol Chandler teaches at the University of Massachusetts, Boston.



DELTA SYSTEMS

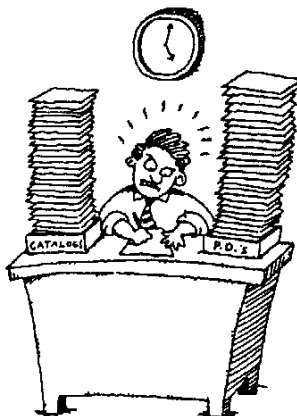
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Whole Language for the ESL Classroom: The Rain Forest

Barbara Gerner de Garcia

In the past two years, there has been an explosion of books, materials, exhibits and other media related to the plight of tropical rain forests around the world. The theme of rain forests is especially rich for ESL classes. We can take advantage of the popularity of the topic and relate it to our students' lives at the same time. Many of the students we teach are from parts of the world with these treasures. Rain forests are found throughout Latin America (Central and



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South America and Puerto Rico), Asia (India, Southeast Asia, Indonesia, Borneo, etc.), and Africa.

By focusing on rain forests in their native countries and regions, the children can personalize the issue. Concern for the rain forests does not belong to businesses such as McDonald's (once targeted for use of Amazonian beef, they now advertise their concern for the rain forest) or even environmental organizations. As conscientious educators, we can encourage our students to see the topic as relevant to them and work with them to reclaim ownership of their ecological heritage. Focus should be on indigenous peoples, as well as the biodiversity of the forests, with the goals to create in our students:

- pride in their continent/country of origin
- a sense of concern for their heritage
- a motivation to reclaim a topic too often exploited

- by those furthest removed from it
- caring about the rain forest not because it's exotic, but because it is connected with their lives.

Developing a unit

This topic crosses all disciplines—social studies, science, and language arts—and can be adapted for elementary and secondary levels. There is a growing body of children's literature—both fiction and non-fiction—that can be shared with the students through reading aloud. In the spring of 1990, when the 20th anniversary of Earth Day was being celebrated, my search for a way to explore the topic led to the creation of a Rain Forest unit. My class at that time was made up of Spanish-speaking deaf and hard of hearing students in grades 4-6. I began with the book *The Great Kapok Tree* by Lynne Cherry and took off from there.

My students created maps and reports. After I shared fiction and nonfiction accounts of Amazon adventures, the students created their own stories, in which they were the survivors. Appropriate activities for younger students, K-3, include making story books with rubber stamps (*Stamp a Story Rainforest Adventure*, All Night Media Inc. \$19.25) and murals. Older elementary students can conduct a rain forest survey (favorite animals) and play Rainforest Jeopardy (question asking skills) and write letters to save the rain forests.

Literature

- The Great Kapok Tree—A Tale of the Amazon Rain Forest.* Lynne Cherry. Gulliver/HBJ, 1990. \$14.95. K-5.
- Rain Forest.* Helen Cowcher. Farrar Strauss Giroux. \$4.95. K-3; also available as a Big Book from Scholastic (approximately \$21).
- El Yunque—Exploring the Rain Forest of Puerto Rico.* Lisa Johnson Vargas. Editorial Cordillera Inc. O'Neill 157, Apartado 170, Hato Rey, Puerto Rico, 00919. \$7.50. (This book is in both English and Spanish). Gr. 4-8.
- This Place Is Wet.* Vicki Cobb. Walker and Company, 1989. \$12.95. Gr. 3-6.
- Tropical Rain Forest Around the World.* Elaine Landau. Franklin Watts, 1990. \$4.95. Gr. 4-12.

Curriculum Guides and Teacher Resources

- Rain Forests: Tropical Treasures.* Ranger Rick's Nature Scope. Distributed by the Sewall Co., Lincoln, MA. \$7.95.

Continued on the next page

The Rainforest Book—How You Can Save the World's Rain Forests. Scott Lewis. Living Planet Press, 1990. \$5.95.

The Children's Rainforest, P.O. Box 625, Lewiston, ME 04240 (educational resource guide, \$3).

Rain Forest Teaching Kit. Conservation International, Dept. MV, 1015 18th Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20036. Kit is \$12 and includes a 25 min. video.

Rainforests: a Teacher's Resource Guide. Rainforest Action Network, 301 Broadway, Suite A, San Francisco, CA 94133. This 28-page guide is \$5.

Environmental Ed./Rainforest, Wildlife Management Center School of Natural Research, U. of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI 48109. Available for \$10 in English or Spanish.

For information on the Puerto Rican Rainforest, write or call:

El Yunque Ranger District, P.O. Box B, Palmer, P.R. 00721. (809) 887-2875.

Supervisor Forestal, Servicio Forestal Federal, Apartado 25000, Rio Piedras, P.R. 00928 (809) 766-5335.

For a resource list, send a SASE to the author at P.O. Box 2920, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130.

To order the "Rain Forest . . . Endangered" poster call Graphique de France, 1-800-444-1464.

This article is based on a presentation given at the MATSOL '91 Fall Conference. Barbara Gerner de Garcia teaches in the Boston Public Schools.

Dr. Renate Perkins

MATSOL mourns the passing of Dr. Renate Perkins, who died September 24, 1991. Coming from a truly multicultural background, Renate was born into a German family living in Venezuela. Later she was educated in Germany and the United States, and received her Ph.D. in linguistics. Her sensitivity to learning a second language led her to devote her time to helping foreign students adjust to a new country and

culture. Like so many ESL professionals, Renate often worked three part-time jobs at three different colleges; consequently, few people knew her varied skills, and her many contributions went unrecognized. However, she will not be forgotten by the students she befriended or by other ESL teachers who got to know her.

(Submitted by Jodi Templer)

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Christina Bratt Paulston,
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Rod Ellis,
Temple University, Tokyo, Japan

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1-85359-135-1 SC \$36.00

Language, Culture, and Cognition: A Collection of Studies in First and Second Language Acquisition

Edited by Lillian Malavé
and George Duquette,
Laurentian University, Sudbury, Canada

In contrast to the majority of the literature that uses pedagogical constructs to explain the behavior of bilinguals, this publication provides current research findings to critically analyze and interpret their academic and cognitive performance. This book aims to provide up-to-date research findings and conceptualizations to explore the relationship between native culture, first and second language acquisition, and cognitive development.

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English by Foot

Christine B. Root

"American history is short," a Japanese student once said to me, "but very interesting." I agreed and immediately began thinking about ways I could incorporate more history, particularly of this area of the United States, into my ESL classes. I had for years provided students with the information I thought necessary for them to understand Thanksgiving and Patriot's Day and the July 4th hoopla. But this is not enough, I think, given that we are living in the "Cradle of Liberty," the "Hub of the Universe," the "Athens of America." Surrounded as we are by rich history and its telegrapher, architecture, it's not difficult for us to capitalize on our assets as yet another vehicle for tapping into both language and culture.

Concord, Massachusetts

I decided to start by revamping my usual Concord lesson plan. I live in Concord and had always brought my students to Concord for a day so that they could get a taste of history and see that Harvard Square is not necessarily a representative American town. I always took the students by Walden Pond, having given them the minimal requisite background on Henry David Thoreau. I took them to see the Hawthorne, Emerson and Alcott houses (many students have read *Little Women*, which Louisa May wrote in the Alcott House (known as Orchard House), the First Parish Church (home of Harvard University from June of 1775 to March of 1776 when the soldiers were billeted in Harvard's Cambridge buildings), the Concord Art Association building (once a station on the Underground Railroad), Sleepy Hollow Cemetery (where the Concord Literati are buried), and the Old North Bridge (where the "shot heard 'round the world" was fired).

My new, enriched trip begins with Longfellow's "The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere." The cadence of this poem is wonderful, and while the poem in its entirety is too long and too difficult, the first three stanzas are perfect for our needs. They provide adequate stimulus for a discussion of the events leading up to the Revolutionary War, and they are fun to recite. I divide the class into three groups, each of which memorizes and practices one stanza to present at a choral reading at the old North Bridge. I point out that one of the lanterns from "one if by land and two if by sea" is on view at the Concord Museum if students want to see it and that in fact it was a man named Sam Prescott who made the famous ride; poetic license was taken, since "Listen my children and you shall hear" rhymes better with Revere than Prescott. Concord is accessible by train from North Station and Porter Square. It is a pleasant, picturesque one and one-half mile walk from the train station in Concord Center to the Old North Bridge.



Harvard University, Cambridge

Not long ago, a friend invited me to join her on a special tour of the Harvard campus which a mutual friend was developing. We would be her guinea pigs. Since I teach in Harvard's ESL program, I was thrilled at the prospect of learning some interesting tidbits about Harvard buildings that I could then pass along to my students. The tour was exceptional and the information fascinating, but I felt that I had absorbed only enough of it to be dangerous and that I needed to find a good resource book on the subject. Of the many choices available, I settled on *All About Harvard Square, A Guide: Historic Walking Tours, Museums, Restaurants, Shopping and Entertainment* (Basement Graphics, Cambridge) by Richard Curran and Allan Curran. As its frontispiece promises of Harvard Square itself, the book delivers an "exciting mix of history, culture and learning."

I was pleased with the success of the next step, testing my "expertise" on my students. Tailored to the vocabulary, interests and comprehension levels of my students, the tour lasts an hour or less but provides them with engaging background information on the buildings they walk by every day: such buildings as Massachusetts Hall, the oldest remaining Hall in Harvard Yard, a modestly-sized building that housed 640 Continental Army soldiers during the Revolutionary War; Widener Memorial Library, the funds for which were donated by the mother of a 1907 Harvard graduate who perished on the Titanic (Mrs. Widener, they are intrigued to learn, set as a condition that all Harvard students, before being allowed to graduate, must pass a swimming test since she felt that her son might have survived had he been able to swim); the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, the only building in the United States designed

Continued on the next page

by renowned Swiss architect, Le Corbusier; and the Science Center, which many believe looks like a Polaroid Land Camera. Students enjoy learning about their surroundings.

And they enjoy reading about them. Last winter I read with my class *The Memorial Hall Murder* by local author Jane Langton. In this mystery set in Cambridge, Harvard's Memorial Hall has been bombed. The question is, as the book-cover blurb enticingly asks, "Has the hall with its passages and catwalks, its cavernous basement and honeycomb of rooms been used to hatch a murder plot?" Quite by accident, I had the good fortune to meet Mrs. Langton in a Concord bookstore. She was pleased to hear that I was using her novel and invited my class to join another class on a tour that she had arranged of the Memorial Hall tower. Needless to say, the story came to life when we ascended that breathtakingly frightening tower. If nothing else, this was kinesthetic learning.

Massachusetts is favored with many local, accessible, frequently cited areas rife with fascinating intellectual, mythological and visual grist for any ESL teacher's mill. The Boston and Cambridge Centers for Adult Education as well as Boston by Foot offer lively courses and tours for those interested in learning more about early American history and architecture. History and architecture are symbiotic, but studying them is at the heart a cultural endeavor. If we as ESL teachers feel that we are after all teaching more than just language, architecture and its attendant history is extraordinary not only for the centuries or styles exhibited, but also for the lessons and legends, lore and facts they bring to mind.

Christine Root teaches in the Extension School at Harvard University.

Help Start an ESL School

I am interested in starting a private ESL school in a community where existing institutions cannot meet the demand for ESL teaching.

I'd like to discuss this project with any like-minded teachers who have a touch of—or are in touch with—the

entrepreneurial spirit, and could endure the awesome task of setting a school up!

Please write me, Donald MacMaster, at P.O. Box 883, Acton, MA 01720 or telephone (508) 263-5498.

To the Outgoing MATSOL Executive Board . . . from the New

The Spring 1992 Conference is a memory now, but it isn't really finished. Many ESL instructors from the elementary level through the adult level are teaching with some new techniques, with some new texts, with a refreshed enthusiasm for their profession. The MATSOL Conference is a place for professionals to learn, to gain inspiration—or just to trade war stories. It provides a forum for colleagues with similar interests and problems to meet and share and improve. Yes, there IS something new under the sun.

Conferences don't just happen. Some busy ESL professionals choose to use some of their precious free time to grow professionally and to give to their professional community so we all have the opportunity to grow. Because these super-busy professionals have given their time, their smarts, their very best efforts, we all have the opportunity to gain, to enhance our teaching, and ultimately help those whom we teach.

The MATSOL Conference is just one of many services our professional organization provides. You can get a more detailed overview by reading the report of our outgoing president, Kathy Riley, elsewhere in this newsletter.

At this time, we wish to give a special THANK YOU to those outgoing members of the MATSOL Board who have generously given of their energy, time, smarts, and more to enhance our professional lives.

Thank you for a superb job well done to Cathy Sadow, our past president, under whose leadership grants were instituted and our employment issues and grievance committee got started and flourished, and who is still looking into the possibility of providing medical insurance for our part-timers.

And thank you to Dianne Ruggiero, our outgoing treasurer, who spent countless hours meticulously keeping our very complicated fiduciary records—in a timely, unflustered fashion.

And thank you to our outgoing representatives: General Representative, Bea Mikulecky; Higher Education Representative, Christine Parkhurst; Western Area Representative, Connie O'Hare.

And thank you to our newsletter senior editor, Ruth Spack, who oversaw the development of a more professional, meatier newsletter.



Activities You Can Use in Class Tomorrow

Stephen Sadow

Making a toast

Mr. John Augustus, teacher here for forty years, is retiring. In two weeks there will be a banquet in his honor. Since all of you number among his favorite students, it would be an excellent gesture if you could each write a short speech in Augustus' honor. Be sure to give the toast at the banquet.

• • • • •

Write a toast celebrating the person sitting next to you. Point out his or her fine qualities. (You may have to ask some questions before you write.) Present the toast at a class get-together.

Role-played conversations

On a farm located a few miles from a town called Dismal, there is an old dilapidated house. It is rumored to be a "haunted house." In this ruined dwelling lived an old lady with her black cat, but it has been years since anyone has actually seen them. Travelers passing by claim to have heard a macabre laugh and to have seen strange lights which seem to come from the small cemetery behind the house.

Michael Medway, a university student, has decided to visit the house to resolve the mystery once and for all. There are many thunderstorms during this season and Michael's car doesn't work very well in the rain. But, in spite of this,

Michael is intending to drive out to the house this evening.

His friend Wilfred Lamston is a prudent and cautious person. He believes that life is dangerous enough as it is. He decides that he had better warn his friend of the risks he will be taking.

With a partner, act out the conversation between Michael Medway and Wilfred Lamston.

• • • • •

Jim Anderson is a salesman for Coat-of-Many-Colors, Inc., a company that produces paints, brushes, and other tools for the "do-it-yourselfers." Jim has been with the company for several years and truly believes in its products. Today he has an appointment with Samuel Lewis, the owner of a chain of hardware stores. Lewis always tries to offer his customers, at a good price, the most modern products available. He has seen Coat-of-Many-Colors' advertising and finds it interesting, but he is not yet convinced that he wants to sell their products in his stores.

With a partner, act out the discussion between Anderson and Lewis.

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

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Were They Prepared? College ESL Students in Content Classes

Wendy Schoener

After years of preparing college ESL students for their content courses, I decided it was time to find out what those courses actually involved. I spent one semester interviewing content course professors and three ESL students and observing their shared courses. The students were chosen from a group whose ESL writing classes I had observed the previous semester. They were a student from the Ivory Coast taking Women's Studies, a Czechoslovakian student taking Philosophy, and a Vietnamese student taking Western Civilization. The last student had the most difficulty with the content course I observed, and we focused on her work when the results of this study were presented at the MATSOL '91 Fall Conference.

I suspected from the outset of the study that ESL teachers should *not* try to teach the writing of specific disciplines; we do best teaching general principles of writing, and our expertise.¹ Even so, I feared that I might see ESL students floundering in mainstream courses and conclude that we needed to teach "writing across the curriculum" after all. But my fears were not realized.

This was, admittedly, a small study; still, ESL teachers may take heart at the results. All three students that I followed got a final grade of C+ or better, and each liked the content course teacher. Also, the three content teachers exhibited positive attitudes toward ESL students. There was no mention in our talks of ESL students being poor writers or otherwise problematic. Even more important, these teachers took an interest in other cultures and encouraged ESL students to speak. Finally, all three had been influenced by writing teachers at UMass. The Philosophy professor told me in detail about a talk by ESL Center Director Vivian Zamel on the counter-productivity of judging papers based on students' written fluency rather than on their ideas.

There were aspects of these courses that could tax ESL students, though. Excepting Women's Studies, they consisted mainly of lectures. The Vietnamese student told me that she was rarely able to follow the Western Civ lectures well enough to take notes: a tape recording of a classroom lecture suggested why this was so. The professor was an entertaining lecturer who digressed, however, a great deal, moving rapidly from topic to topic. Sometimes he used humor, probably also bewildering: "The battle of Actium, right? —at which . . . Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor were defeated by Augustus . . ."

¹ Ruth Spack makes this argument in: Spack, R. 1988. "Initiating ESL Students Into the Academic Community: How Far Should We Go?" *TESOL Quarterly* 22 (1): 29-51.

Another shared characteristic of these courses was the relatively short time given to writing itself. Even the professor who was familiar with process writing techniques—and had tried journals and peer editing in her classes—seemed discouraged with her ability in this area. Our discussions about writing underlined the need for ESL and content teacher dialogue. At the MATSOL session in which I presented this research, we studied a paper by the Vietnamese student. The readings for her assignment were three essays on Charlemagne: two by modern historians and one by a medieval historian, Einhard, who was raised in Charlemagne's court. The assignment read:

Consider whether Charlemagne deserves his title to greatness. Include areas where he had the most effect and made lasting accomplishments. Provide interesting or convincing evidence and examples from Einhard and modern scholars.

The student based her paper only on the Einhard article, a sample of which conveys his laudatory style: "Charles was large and strong, and of lofty stature, though not disproportionately tall . . . his eyes were large and animated . . . Thus his appearance was always stately and dignified . . ."

Teachers at the MATSOL session remarked that the student's paper did not answer the question posed by the assignment. Instead, it dwelt on personal attributes ("According to Einhard, the author describes Charlemagne was very big and strong man"), and aspects of the emperor's behavior which, while useful in answering the question, needed to be made more "interesting or convincing," perhaps through support from the other articles (" . . . he was very forward in succoring the poor. He was pity them and used to send money overseas to the poor people.") Someone suggested that the student had used the parts of the reading she had understood rather than the parts most relevant to the assignment.

However, our discussion went beyond the paper's flaws. Several participants argued that novice writers would need to learn how to "play the game" of writing a history paper by fully discussing the assignment and seeing samples of good papers. Someone surmised that Einhard's reverential tone fit the student's expectation of how one should talk about a cultural hero, thus discouraging the very objectivity the assignment demanded.

This student was disappointed in her paper grade (C+) and unsure what was wrong with her work. (The teacher's written comment: "A good effort at describing Charlemagne

and citing specific aspects of his personality.”) But she did not talk to the teacher about this, even with my encouragement, and seemed resigned.

This project confirmed that ESL teachers and content teachers need to share ideas. No content teacher argued that we should try to duplicate in our classes the complexity of disciplines besides our own. But content teachers *would* like us to prepare students for their classes: their suggestions are, in fact, about general principles of writing. An example: one professor suggested that student writers learn not only to

support their own arguments but to anticipate the objections of others and address these. Content teachers are also interested in how we support and react to student writing. Finally, the project revealed the necessity of preparing ESL students to consult content teachers whenever a lecture or assignment causes confusion.

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

Getting Published in the 90's Guidelines for Manuscript Submissions

At the MATSOL '91 Fall Conference, Jennifer Bixby and Judy DeFilippo chaired a panel on “Getting Published in the 90's.” During the discussion, it became evident that many MATSOL members have toyed with the possibility of seeing their ideas in print. The possibility can become a reality. Many publishers are interested in developing new materials. The following guidelines for manuscript submissions were provided by Joanne Dresner, an ESL editor with Longman Publishing Group.

The following is a list of items Longman would like to see at the time an idea is submitted for consideration for publication.

1. A complete table of contents. This can consist of either:
 - a. A formal outline, or
 - b. A list of part and chapter titles with a paragraph describing proposed contents of each chapter.
2. Description of the book. This is the most important part of the prospectus. In it you are, in effect, “selling” your idea to the audience or publisher, so it should have as much specific information as possible. Please include the reason for writing the book (in other words, why is the book necessary?) and a summary of the content (skill development, level, topics included, etc.).
3. Comparison of your book with the competition. Please select the bestselling books with which yours will compete and briefly compare each book with yours, naming strengths and weaknesses. (Why does your book need to be published in addition to the others?)
4. As complete a profile of the market (audience) as possible. Please include:
 - a. The kind of class (level and skill) in which your book will be used, and the kind of program.
 - b. The type of student who will benefit.
5. Two sample chapters that are representative of the book.
6. Approximate length of the book, expressed in printed pages.
7. Approximate number of illustrations.
8. Approximate number of charts, figures, and “realia.”
9. Approximate length of time needed for completion.
10. A copy of your current curriculum vitae.

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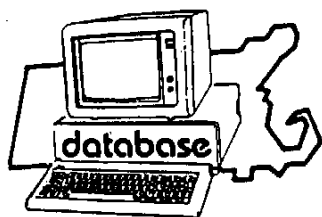
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Making Connections: Using Computers to Communicate with Others

Karen Price

Members of the "reach-out-and-touch someone" generation would be amused to learn that the Bell System originally conceived of the computer only as a business tool. Yet many of us conceive of the computer only as an information-processing tool—limiting its use to word processing, simulations, tutorials, or drill and repetition—and ignoring its potential as a communication tool.

Over one million home computer users in the United States are connected to each other and many on-line services. Users can write to a particular subscriber, or to anyone browsing through messages grouped by topic. In addition to electronic mail, users have on-line access to services such as advice columns, sports, weather, news, advertisements, Dow Jones stock reports, up-to-date summaries of soap opera plots, film and book reviews, Nielsen ratings, and horoscopes. They can query *Consumer Reports* to learn which brand of a product is best suited to their needs. Or they can consult the airline reservation system for flight times, cost, and availability of spaces on actual flights. They can play against other users in simulations where they must make daily decisions about expanding or down-scaling business, issuing stock, or borrowing money.

ESL teachers who find that these kinds of activities can motivate accurate, effective language use might chuckle at Thoreau's reaction to the invention of the telephone. When told that the invention would enable a gentleman in Maine to talk to a gentleman in Texas he replied, "That's nice—but what will they have to talk about?" My students wrote to a woman who was asking for advice about keeping an unwanted pregnancy secret from her husband. Suddenly, students were arguing over the clarity of proposed wording and punctuation on a letter they wrote together using a large-screen computer-projection system (see *MATSOL Newsletter*, Fall 1991). Computer connections offer teaching and learning opportunities we don't otherwise have—continually updated information about real-world concerns, and our choice of interlocutor on a moment's notice.

What do you need?

To update an old adage, computer talk is cheap. A 2400-baud, Hayes-compatible modem costs less than \$100. Connecting the classroom computer and modem to a phone line can be accomplished inexpensively by stringing any length of Radio Shack modular telephone wire from an office phone to the classroom. Start-up software for a service is sometimes free to new subscribers. Otherwise, it generally costs \$40-\$50. Monthly subscription fees (\$6 to \$10) may cover unlimited use of electronic mail, or include all electronic

mail and all on-line services as a *Prodigy* subscription does.

Examples of commercial electronic services

While many computer professionals scoff at *Prodigy's* omnipresent on-screen advertisements (which ESL teachers may actually find a plus), and the slow speed with which text and graphics appear, the service is a good value. It was designed for the home market and is, therefore, one a neophyte can get up and running on even the oldest IBMs and Macs. Unlimited use of the service is only the cost of the local phone calls, plus the \$9.95 per month subscription fee. Subscriptions to *America Online*, also available for both the Mac and IBM, include unlimited electronic mail, but do not include unlimited use of other services, for which there are charges per minute. For information, call *America Online*: 1-800-827-6364, or *Prodigy*: 1-800-776-3449.

Examples of electronic networks created for educators

Those affiliated with public schools and universities typically have free access to the many projects, resources and addresses on the Internet and Bitnet networks. Contact your computer center to learn how to access them. An excellent annotated bibliography of resources on the Internet is available from stanton@csuvax1.csu.murdoch.edu.au. Information about other networks specifically for teachers is available from Connie Louie, MA Dept. of Education, 135 Hancock Street, Quincy, MA 02169 (617) 770-7508.

One Internet project, sponsored by TERC and the National Geographic Society, has had participants from more than 4,000 classrooms around the world. Students collect valuable data (in several instances, the only data available) on issues such as acid rain, trash, and water quality and then write to each other and their supervising scientists by computer. Another project, *Cheche Kinnen* ("Search for Knowledge" in Haitian Creole), is sponsored by TERC & the Cambridge Public Schools. Designed for language minority students K-8, it encourages students to conduct scientific inquiries to answer their own questions about the natural world. For information, contact TERC Communications, 2067 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02140, or telephone (617) 547-0430.

Project IDEALS sponsors simulations in which students around the world negotiate international agreements concerning, for instance, the use of the ocean's resources. Students can send or retrieve messages at any time, or communicate in real-time conferences. For information,

Continued on the next page

contact crookall @ ualvm on bitnet, or ualvm.ua.edu on the internet, or telephone David Crookall at (205) 348-9494.

ESL-L is a discussion group of ESL/EFL teachers. By December 1991, 178 institutions in 17 countries were participating. Discussions have included cultural imperialism, appropriate class size, assessment of the Silent Way, and teaching ESL/EFL to the blind. Other projects are under way. For information, contact ESL-L @ ubvm. on bitnet, or attic @ cunyvm.cuny.edu on the Internet.

Uncomfortable at getting started with telecommunications? A few years ago we were uncomfortable leaving messages on answering machines. Now we're annoyed if there is no machine on which to leave a message. Soon we

will feel the same way about not having a computer and modem to communicate with others.

For telecommunications workshops, contact:

- The BCS, The Boston Computer Society, at (617) 262-0600, One Kendall Square, Cambridge, MA 02139, or
- MASSCUE, the Massachusetts Association of Computer Using Educators, a statewide organization of educators who use computer technology in their classrooms, at P.O. Box 812188, Wellesley, MA 02181.

Karen Price is Associate Director of the Programs of English as a Second Language at Harvard University.

1993-1994 Competition for Fulbright Scholar Awards for U.S. Faculty and Professionals

The Fulbright Scholar Program for 1993-94 includes some 1,000 grants for research, combined research and lecturing, or university lecturing in over 120 countries. Opportunities range from two months to a full academic year; many assignments are flexible to the needs of the grantee. Nearly one-third of Fulbright grants are targeted for research and many lecturing awards offer research opportunities;

multicountry research is also possible. Fulbright seeks good teachers as well as active researchers.

Application materials are available beginning March 1, 1992. For further information and applications, call or write the Council for International Exchange of Scholars, 3007 Tilden Street, N.W., Suite 5M, Box NEWS, Washington, DC 20008-3009. Telephone: (202) 686-7877.

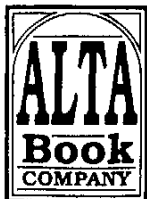
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The Not-So Perfect

Robert Saitz

The more audacious ESL texts eventually confront the challenge of the use of the present perfect for acts completed in the past with no continuation of the verb action into the present: "I've broken my elbow." In explanations of when the present perfect is used for such acts, texts will usually note reference to (1) recent events, (2) events with a present relevance or (3) events happening at an indefinite time in the past. Thus in *Tense Situations* by Hartmann et al., we find: "Both the simple past and present perfect are used with a very recently completed action but the present perfect is more common." They give: "I just finished" and "I've just finished" as examples. Both of course are possible and the text, prudently, doesn't suggest when we might use one or the other. When I ask my native (from birth on?) English students for the difference, they invariably say that the simple past focuses on the act and its completion while the present perfect, in line with its common use, calls attention to present validity and significance. Thus in response to "When in the world are you going to do that assignment?" "Hey, I just finished it" is more likely while in response to "What are you doing tonight?" we might get "I've just finished reading a 200-page novel and I don't want to do anything." Present relevance seems important, perhaps more important than recentness. We're probably more likely to say "I just swallowed a caterpillar" (where the focus on the act is paramount) although we must be open to the situation of the world traveller who might say "I've just swallowed a caterpillar so I don't think I'll try your spaghetti at the moment."

Many texts omit the "recent" category and focus on the present relevance. The interesting *A New Reference Grammar of Modern Spanish* by Butt and Benjamin notes that both Spanish and English use the present perfect "for any past event that is relevant to the present or whose effects still bear on the present." Michael Swan, in his excellent *Practical English Usage*, writes "The present perfect . . . to talk about finished actions and events . . . when the past events have some present importance; . . . we often use the present perfect to give news; it is especially common in reports, letters and conversations." He gives as examples "Fire has broken out on board an oil tanker in the North Sea," and "Mary's had her baby—it's a boy." We should note here the British tendency to use the present perfect more frequently than Americans and Swan, in his British text, cites "I can't go on holiday because I broke my leg" as a "mistake"; but to at least two American ears the following sounds fine: "Why can't you go with us?" "Because I lost my wallet."

Despite the difference in frequency between British and

American usage, we're probably safe in focusing on present relevance as one key trigger for the use of the present perfect and less safe in relying on the idea of recentness. The third context is indefiniteness, and this seems to work. We find it in both the question and answer here: "Has anyone ever had any serious injuries?" "I've broken an elbow and a leg."

If we consider what keys the use of the present perfect—ideas of present relevance and indefiniteness—we realize that it is impossible to present it pedagogically just by giving a semantic explanation and sentence examples. It demands full context, a discourse orientation. At the 1991 TESOL Convention, Susan Kesner Bland offered the following as a way to raise students' consciousness of the past/present perfect choice (here focusing on the definite/indefinite contrast, though she did not specify that):

Suppose that you are in the following situation. You are in the lounge at work reading a magazine article. You read about something that reminds you of a character in a Chekhov play that you once read. A co-worker walks in.

Which of the following questions would be more appropriate for you to ask your co-worker. Why?

- Did you read any of Chekhov's plays?
- Have you read any of Chekhov's plays?

Compare the two responses. Why are they different?

- Did you read any of Chekhov's plays?
- No, was I supposed to? Why do you ask?
- Have you read any of Chekhov's plays?
- No, never. Why do you ask?

Ignoring Kesner's legitimate but overrich use of the simple present in the scene (Imagine that you have just successfully taught the present progressive and the students get a passage with "Why do you ask?"), we can see the value and indeed the necessity of presenting the contrast in a context of discourse. And precisely because context is so important and so open-ended we will always run into situations where the "other" one could be used. Swan lists as another "mistake" the sentence "Who's given you that necklace?" Well? Can you think of a situation in which that sounds right? Send your answers in to this column and we'll print the most intriguing ones.

Send answers to Robert Saitz, Department of English, Boston University, 236 Bay State Road, Boston, MA 02215.

BIG NEWS

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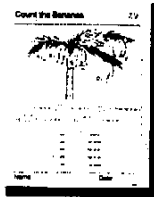
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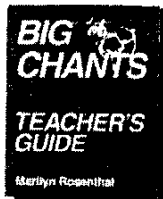
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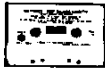
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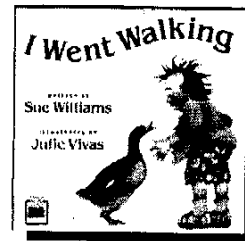
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MATSOL Legal Support Fund

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
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Need More Information About MATSOL?

Want to Volunteer?

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New Initiatives, General Information: Robby Steinberg, MATSOL President, 232-9022

Employment Issues: Karl Smith, 734-8587, Rebecca Pomerantz, 265-7439

Teacher Research: Kathy Riley, 524-4224

Low-Incidence: Linda Schulman, 237-1763

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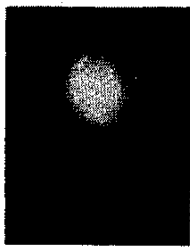
Fall Conference-1992: Linda Schulman, 237-1763, Diane Terry, 861-9612

Spring Conference-1993: Marilyn Katz Levenson, 277-2861

Newsletter: Ruth Spack, 738-6022

Nominating: Kathy Riley, 524-4224

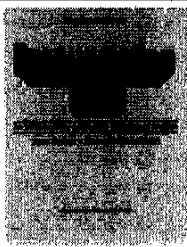
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- ▶ All students with some knowledge of English can use this course, working either in the classroom or alone.



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Davies, Whitney, Pike-Baky, Blass

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