

MATSOL *Currents*

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Massachusetts Association of Teachers of Speakers of Other Languages

MATSOL Participates in TESOL Advocacy Day 2008

by Robyn Dowling-Grant

On June 18, 2008, Robyn Dowling-Grant joined a thirteen other TESOL members representing 12 U.S. based affiliates in Washington, DC for TESOL Advocacy Day 2008. This event featured a day of issue briefings and workshops, capped by visits to Congressional offices on Capitol Hill. The goals of Advocacy Day were not only to lobby on key issues for TESOL, but also to provide an interactive learning experience for affiliate representatives on elements of advocacy. By the end of the day, TESOL members had visited the offices of more than 36 representatives and senators.

As with last year's event, TESOL Advocacy Day 2008 was focused on the efforts to reauthorize the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).

To maximize the impact of TESOL Advocacy Day, key members of Congress serving on the education committees in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives were identified for meetings. In turn, affiliates representing the constituencies of those members of Congress were selected and invited to send a representative to Advocacy Day. Since Rep. Barney Frank, Sen. Edward Kennedy and Sen. John Kerry serve on the education committees in Congress, MATSOL was one of the affiliates selected to send a representative to TESOL Advocacy Day.

To participate, each affiliate representative was required to do several preparatory activities. For example, participants had to set up their own individual meetings with their Congressional representatives. To assist with this, TESOL provided directions and guidance, as well as the list of specific representatives and senators to contact. Setting up these appointments took

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The Enhanced First Year Program at Pine Manor College

by Pamela Palmer, M.Ed.

A supportive proactive program for all qualifying ESL female students who possess the desire to achieve a four year college degree Pine Manor College (PMC) was once known as an elite private women's college in Chestnut Hill. In the past 10 years, PMC has taken on a whole new image by providing quality education to a multi-cultural/diverse population. US News and World Report cited Pine Manor College as the most diverse, private women's college in the country. The mission statement of the college "Pine Manor is dedicated to preparing women for lives of inclusive leadership and social responsibilities..." reflects the huge commitment that the college has in offering an affordable education to women.

A few years ago, the Enhanced First Year Program (EFY) was started as a building block for international students who lacked profi-

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Providing professional development and support to educators who work with English language learners

MATSOL

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MULTIPLE LITERACIES



*Launching English Language
Learners into a New Era*

MATSOL Spring Conference
Pre-Conference Institutes: May 6, 2009
Conference: May 7-8, 2009
at the Sheraton Four Points Leominster

*The conference will have a K-12 Strand on
both days and an Adult/Workplace/Higher
Education Strand on Friday, May 8.*



May 7, 2009 Keynote Speaker
Stephen Krashen



May 8, 2009 Keynote Speaker
Jim Cummins

TESOL Advocacy Day...

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time and perseverance. Congressional offices require all requests in writing, and it was necessary to follow up with these faxes with emails and phone calls.

Participants were also sent talking points and background information on NCLB so that they could begin to familiarize themselves with the issues in advance. To help make their Congressional meetings more effective, participants were encouraged to find examples from their own programs to illustrate the talking points. For example, enrollment data from Massachusetts districts illustrated the phenomenal growth of English learners in many of the Commonwealth's school systems. Additionally, MCAS data was used to illustrate that many former limited English proficient students require academic support after they have been exited. Representatives were informed that assisting

content teachers in supporting these students was key to their success.

TESOL Advocacy Day commenced with a welcome from TESOL President Shelley Wong. The participants were also joined by President-Elect Mark Algren and Past President Sandy Briggs. The morning workshop was led by John Segota, Advocacy and Professional Relations Manager, and was comprised of three briefings. The first featured congressional staff from both the House and the Senate discussing the "view from the Hill" on NCLB reauthorization, and the key issues under debate. The second briefing featured the education staffer from Sen. Barack Obama's office discussing a bill on middle school reform he has proposed, the Success in the Middle Act. The final briefing featured the acting director of the Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA) providing an update

from that office.

Following these briefings, an interactive workshop was held on how to have an effective meeting with one's congressional representative. This workshop was led by Ellen Fern and Krista Heckler of Washington Partners, LLC, TESOL's legislative consultants. Participants were provided key information to prepare for their meetings and given the opportunity to role play. The purpose of the briefings and the workshop was to help the participants practice and prepare for their meeting on Capitol Hill that afternoon. This information was useful, since many of the affiliate representatives were participating for the first time.

Robyn met with the congressional staff members who work with the representatives on educational issues. She explained the challenges faced by teachers under NCLB, and suggested that teacher training become a priority, in order to improve reading skills for these students. They talked about refining the definition of limited English proficiency, in order that students may be provided more time to reach academic proficiency level. They also discussed the specific issues faced by older students who were learning English while trying to master content. In most cases, it was gratifying to see the level of understanding these staff members had of English learners and the programs that served them, and their openness to consider the views of the field. Typically, the meetings lasted about fifteen minutes, although the meeting with Sen. Kennedy's office lasted nearly an hour, since the senator's legislative assistants, Roberto Rodriguez and David Johns, are very involved in the efforts around the reauthorization of NCLB.

At the end of the day, all the participants shared their experiences and what they learned over dinner. It was interesting to hear what other people experienced on their visit. Overall, all of the participants agreed this event was a very positive experience for them and for TESOL.

Additional information about TESOL Advocacy Day, including photographs and video of the interactive workshop, is available on the TESOL web site at <http://www.tesol.org>. If you are interested in learning more about your Congressional representatives, and the legislative issues TESOL is tracking, go the TESOL U.S. Advocacy Action Center at <http://capwiz.com/tesol>.

Pine Manor College...

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ciency in English, but had strong academic potential, to mainstream into a full academic college program. What makes this program unique is that college credit is given for the two intensive English classes that are required during the freshman year. This allows nonnative speakers to have the opportunity to complete a full college program in four years. Our program has been very successful with 75% of our students completing their freshman year with averages above a 3.0 GPA. Last year, it was decided to expand the EFY program to include domestic ESL students from many urban schools in the Boston area. This expansion opened the door for many female students to attend a private four year institution as an alternative to large community colleges or no college at all. We recognized that many supports had to be put in place for this program to succeed. A mentor/ big sister program was instituted to all incoming EFY students so that they would have immediate support from an upper classmate for all social issues. ESL awareness training was offered to professors who would later serve as academic advisors. It quickly became clear that dealing with students who were not proficient in English, even though they had strong academic capabilities, presented many issues that required greater patience and guidance. Tutoring EFY students in many subject areas became part of a standard procedure and slowly students began to thrive.

While has been difficult to meet with all ESL guidance counselors in the greater Boston area, we have stepped up our networking efforts with various high schools including schools throughout New England. We are targeting those who address ESL issues within their own student population to informing them of our alternative, academically strong college program. This year we had applicants from East Boston and Brighton High Schools among others. Please contact Pam Palmer, EFY Coordinator or Janna Spinazola, Director of International admissions at spinazoj@pmc.edu to learn more about this unique program.

Pamela Palmer, ME.d is the EFY Coordinator- Pine Manor College. She has over 25 years experience in education, the last 15 working in ESL in schools, colleges, workplace and grant funded programs

Rhode Island Special Interest Group of MATSOL to become Rhode Island Teachers of English Language Learners (RI-TELL)

Inaugural Event October 18th

by Lisa Davis

The Coordinating Council is proud to announce an exciting change to the status of Rhode Island's Professional ESL/bilingual educators' organization, formerly known as the Rhode Island Special Interest Group (RISIG) of MATSOL. The change has occurred to meet the unique needs of our state's diverse professionals while continuing to attract new members. The Council has worked closely with MATSOL leadership over the past several months to create a more "distinctively Rhode Island" presence within the ESL community. The Council recently decided to distinguish Rhode Island under the banner RI-TELL, or Rhode Island Teachers of English Language Learners. Effective this year, Rhode Island's status as a Special Interest Group of MATSOL will be changed to that of a regional allied professional association, although RI-TELL will remain under the umbrella of MATSOL. The Council is confident that this change will ensure members' continued access to the many benefits afforded by MATSOL while enhancing the visibility of the people, events, and opportunities that are specific to our local Rhode Island communities. In addition, another important goal of the Council is to build our membership so that Rhode Island will be eligible to become an independent affiliate of TESOL in the future.

To celebrate and commemorate this milestone in our organizational history, the RITELL Council cordially invites you to attend our inaugural event* this coming October. If you haven't done so already, you'll greatly support your professional organization by becoming a member and registering for the event at a special discount price. The topic of this year's program is a timely one that will undoubtedly be of interest to many of you: "Supporting Immigrant Students and Families in an Anti-Immigrant Climate." You'll enjoy hearing from our panel of immigration experts, participating in curriculum-related breakout sessions featuring guest speakers from your respective

ESL teaching community (elementary, secondary, adult), and perusing a broad selection of teaching materials made available by this year's sponsoring publisher, Santillana. New and existing members each receive a full year of member benefits, to include: a copy of the biannual newsletter, *Currents* (containing book reviews, new resources and classroom activities, reviews of recent conferences and workshops, and much more); an e-bulletin and job postings;



member rates at two conferences per year, and; important information regarding other professional development opportunities. As an added incentive, new members will also receive a handy canvas tote bag, replete with our newly-designed RI-TELL logo, great for carrying both your favorite old books and your soon-to-be-favorite new ones!

Of course, RI-TELL needs your help! If our organization is to become what we envision, we need YOU to jump on board and help to spread the word to your ESL and bilingual education colleagues. By working together, we'll ensure that RI-TELL is able to effectively meet the advocacy and professional development needs of our special (and growing) teaching community and the unique populations we serve. In the coming weeks, we'll be directing our members to the new RI-TELL webpage where more important announcements will be posted. RI-TELL Coordinating Council members will also soon be available to assist you. Members of the Coordinating Council of RI-TELL are Lauren Bentley, Nancy Cloud, Lisa Davis, Jane George, Sonia Forte, and Julie Nora. In the meantime, please be sure to take advantage of every opportunity to get the word out about our professional association and our October event!

To our new members, we'd like to say welcome to your professional organization. To our existing members, a hearty thank you for your loyalty and ongoing support of our programs and events. We hope that all of you are as enthusiastic as we are about the promising future of RI-TELL and the many wonderful opportunities that are on the horizon.

See you in October!

The RITELL inaugural fall event, "Supporting Immigrant Students and Families in an Anti-Immigrant Climate," is Saturday, October 18th from 8:45 – 12:30 at the Student Union Ballroom at Rhode Island College. Register online in advance at www.matsol.org or in person the day of the event. *Don't forget to join RITELL while you're there!*

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Around the World Club

by Ann Duguay

The world has been growing smaller at Benjamin Banneker Charter Public School in Cambridge, Massachusetts! Students, who in some cases have no memory of crossing the river into Boston, have collected passport stamps from countries across seven continents by participating in the Around the World Club. Benjamin Banneker Charter Public School is an urban K-6 science, math, and technology school. It was founded in 1995 by a concerned group of community leaders, parents, and educators. Its mission is to challenge all local youth, regardless of race, culture, language, or socioeconomic status with a high quality education. The Around the World Club was established in 2004. Its enrollment has grown to its present level of 60 students. Its objective is to enrich the variety of opportunities for our students so that they will become valued citizens of the world through exposure to the arts and a diversity of cultures.

We believe that the “Around the World Club” is aligned with all of our school objectives about meeting the academic and social needs of our students and their families. As the world is shrinking in size, we want our students to be prepared for the competitive 21st century through exposure to second languages, travel opportunities, and cross-culture. The material was deleted as it does not seem related to the article.

“Around the World Club” celebrates a different culture every two weeks. Students are involved in choosing the country of study and learn about various aspects of the culture and language. For example, when we “visited” India, students watched a short film with images of the Taj Majal and the varied landscape, practiced yoga with incense, learned to count in Hindi, played musical chairs to Indian music, ate samosas, and drank mango juice. They left the club with a rupee and added a stamp to their “passports” to indicate the additional country visit. When we ‘traveled’ to Peru, a Peruana came in traditional dress, taught an indigenous dance, and shared photographs of Peru. Our group also delighted in the features of a llama and played

Bingo in Spanish! Each student also received a sola and a playing card from Macchu Picchu.

We made stained glass windows with a visitor who has lived in Italy. Fiddlers taught us to sing in Gaelic and to do Scottish country dancing. We learned to dance with ribbons in a swirl of colors with the help of a visitor on Chinese New Year. With the help of Club Passim’s Culture for Kids initiative, we welcomed a 15-year-old Native American flautist who performed and allowed children to perform on a range of native percussion instruments. A club member’s father shared his experiences and pictures from



his time in Iraq. This prompted our students to make peace signs.

Staff members have also presented about their cultures, from Brazil, Cuba, Canada, and Louisiana, helping students to appreciate the cultural diversity of the adults in their community.

In addition, students from the Club have been to the Alliance Française. They have also traveled to the Harvard campus where they met the author of the classic French Babar books, saw a Haitian storyteller, listened to West African musicians, and cheered at a Harvard-McGill hockey game. They have also attended the international competition at the Head of the Charles and a guided tour at the FOGG Museum.

Studies show that students who maintain connections to their home culture, and who are able to speak the home language of their grandparents perform better academically and show more pro-social behaviors in school (Tannenbaum & Berkovich, 2005). For this reason, parents are encouraged to participate in “Around the World Club.” While some remain throughout the session, others are greeted at pick-up time with their child eagerly insisting that they sample a meringue, some guacamole, or dumplings. To strengthen the bond with our community of families, we have celebrated each of the countries of our Banneker students. Every year on Haitian Flag Day, we wear red and blue, dance to coumpa beats, sample traditional foods brought in by parents, and create a Haitian craft.

We have also enjoyed concert performances by a local band featuring Caribbean music, with students participating on percussion instruments while parents sang the familiar songs. This year, a student from Cape Verde presented pictures and anecdotes from a recent trip to her home country. She was beaming with cultural pride teaching students a game and the students returned for seconds and thirds of her mother's traditional fish recipe.

As a result of our multi country 'visits', we have observed marked growth in our school culture and students' world knowledge. Just 3

“...our kindergartners want to wear shorts to school on Cinco de Mayo insisting “isn't it hot in Mexico?” The world has become more accessible for our students through these experiences.”

years ago, students would tease new immigrant students about their accents. Today, native speakers are eager to ask English Language Learners how to say certain words and phrases in their home language. Whereas students used to consider Tennessee and New York City to be countries, they now demonstrate familiarity with places as far away as China and Morocco.

Similarly, this heightened awareness of the world has trickled into academic areas. During a third grade class discussion about the role of the Boston Tea Party in American history, a club member said, “Oh, that makes sense that it was tea, because England used to own the United States, and when we went to England at Around the World Club, we had a tea party!” Additionally, cultural details help students to understand the context of a story; as one fifth grade student said, “I read the word cous cous and I knew the setting was Africa because I remember we had that when we did Morocco.” Students have raised many sophisticated and complex global issues. They have noticed patterns during Around the World Club sessions, including economic disparities between regions, the Gulf War, colonialism, slavery, and environmental problems.

During 2007-2008, the Around the World Club took on a 'Green' theme to raise awareness about the global warming. On a “trip” to Antarctica, students watched the movie, March of the Penguins, and made posters about the effects of Global Warming while eating fish

sticks. For Earth Day, students learned about the continent of Oceania, the rising tides affecting the island of Tuvalu, and the endangerment of the coral reefs around Australia. Students enthusiastically cleaned up a local park, separated trash from recycling, and composted their snacks. Later in the year, students learned about the glaciers melting in Switzerland. To celebrate the IOC's headquarters in Lausanne, they competed in the “Green Olympics” with recycling relays and water conservation activities. Club members have also presented at assemblies by sharing words for “thank you” or “Good luck

on the MCAS” in a multitude of languages. Their peace and green-themed posters have also raised awareness for non-club members. Of course everyone has benefited from sharing the international snacks we have made, including shortbread, dumplings, and fried plantains!

There are no words to describe the enthusiasm of the students for “Around the World Club.” They are in constant anticipation of learning the country in which will visit next. Students experience the world through our club. The presence of guests, traditional music and food, and tangible souvenirs from the countries we study brings the country and culture to life in our school. For example, our kindergartners want to wear shorts to school on Cinco de Mayo insisting “isn't it hot in Mexico?” The world has become more accessible for our students through these experiences. We would like to continue to provide these activities and develop our students' thirst to one day discover the world on their own.

This year, our club enrollment has doubled. We believe that this growth is due to the club's popularity and visibility within our school. Around the World Club is a simple way to involve families and staff members. It raises cultural awareness, cultivates a sense of belonging, and builds on academic objectives while having fun.

To learn more about starting a club in your school, please visit our website:

<http://www.banneker.org/duguay>
or contact Annie Duguay by email:
aduguay@banneker.org

One experience co-teaching at the High School

by Jackie Coelho and Justin Richards

Co-teaching? Isn't that for elementary teachers? No, Thank you! What exactly is co-teaching? It's too much work. At the high school? It's too nebulous. How do we begin? Is co-teaching an efficient use of resources? These were the thoughts and reactions that I heard from colleagues when I raised the topic of co-teaching. They were not affirming thoughts and were not the warm and fuzzy responses that I had hoped to receive. Yet, I had been asked to try it [was this a school initiative? What was the impetus that led to it? Also, if this is being written by two authors, it needs to be opened with a statement from Jackie followed with a statement by Justin or some method by in which the author's voices are evident. Although I knew as little as those asking the questions, and had indeed had the same questions when the idea was first presented to me, I decided to give in to my adventurous side and experiment with it.

Before anything else, I needed to find a 'co' to be my co-teacher. In referring to your willingness to "step up to the task" you might state what made you seek a co-teacher and why. The high school has a relatively small ESL population. I approached my search by looking for the largest group of students that had been clustered into one of the content classes. Algebra I, part II, is traditionally a one-year course that is offered to sophomores. It covers the second half of Algebra I with a focus on passing MCAS.

Justin, the content teacher assigned to teach this course had 9 students enrolled in it. Four of the nine were ELL. Justin shared my inexperience with using a co-teaching model approach. He was eager to try the method with me to help his students be more successful math students. We became a team.

We researched the co-teaching method and found a good deal of research available on the subject. One theory that resonated with us was co-teaching for the purpose of inclusion [you might cite the research that you used here]. We also decided to teach the course with a particular focus on math vocabulary for the purpose of increasing our students ability to express their

mathematical thinking more clearly. We hoped that the inclusion model and vocabulary focus would assist our students in being more successful in taking and passing the MCAS.

When we met, over the summer, we realized that co-teaching is intended for two teachers with equal credentials, [Jackie, are you a paraprofessional? If no, delete the phrase... not a regular education teacher with a paraprofessional as it is irrelevant to your fine article. We knew our strengths, math and linguistics respectively, and worked at incorporating these into a smoothly run high school math class.

Often, it seemed easier when Justin taught new math topics and I asked questions and reviewed material for the next day. [your use of pronouns and first names should be more consistent. Either use I or Jackie, not both. Because we knew that we both had to be involved, a normal class day would begin with Jackie

“ 100% of our juniors that had to re-take the state exam - passed it. ”

doing some sort of warm-up and homework review while I circulated the room to check for understanding. We would then switch roles. The warm-up often included an introduction to new

vocabulary or an activity that allowed students to practice previously studied vocabulary. Justin planned to warm-up homework review activities and I planned the vocabulary and review tasks.

We collaborated on the homework assignments. Assessments from previous years were reviewed, for linguistic ambiguity, and sometimes questions were added to specifically measure the students' ability to explain.

Co-teaching definitely allowed us to reach out to all of the needs of our students. At the most basic level, having two teachers in the room lowered the student/teacher ratio. It also allowed us to divide the groups- review with one while reinforcing a concept with another. However, most of the time, we instructed the class as a whole group to avoid isolating our ELLs.

One of the most surprising outcomes was the difficulty that the native speakers had with the linguistic tasks, particularly in the beginning of the year. When asked to explain or support thinking using the mathematical language learned for the task, even the native speakers slowed down and grappled with the assignment. Another surprise was the absence of management issues. The students stayed on task, behaved well, and performed well..

If anyone wonders if our first year was a

“success,” feel free to ask, but first define “success.” Is success the percentage of students that passed the state required test in May? Is success the grades our students got on the final? Is suc-

“ A meshing of personalities, with one teacher trying to power the entire class simply will not work. If you are not willing to experiment and willing to try new things, co-teaching will not work. ”

cess what our students thought of the class? Is success what we thought of the process?

100% of our juniors that had to re-take the state exam - passed it. The sophomores who took the state exam in May will not receive their results until the fall. 73 was the average on the finals. Our student feedback form was as positive as any feedback form from teenagers can be. That leaves us with our thoughts on the process.

From the ESL desk

I think that the process of being a co-teacher in a math class had many benefits. It increased my math knowledge. It increased our awareness about the language of math and how to be more explicit in teaching it. A more subtle outgrowth of my learning in the content area was an increased richness in the learning environment. I asked questions and made connections that helped others. I asked to help myself understand, or to clear up an ambiguity that I could see from a different part of the room, or that I could anticipate from my knowledge of other languages. I started the school year more concerned that a certain word be used, or that an explanation be precise, and complete. As the year progressed, I relaxed. Justin became more vigilant in use of words and more often checking for comprehension of words. Once I heard him say, “I feel like an ESL teacher.” And I know what he meant as I heard myself use one of his favorite expressions in another class.

We didn’t have a common prep time. We didn’t have a lot of background knowledge in co-teaching. We didn’t even know each other very well. However, I count the year a success. The students did well, they learned. We did well, we learned.

From the math desk

I feel without any help and without a common prep period, we did as well as can be expected for the first year. In reflecting back upon my experiences, I’ve come up with some key points which I feel would enable teachers, students, and school systems to get the most out of their co-teaching experience.

We most certainly would get better if we were given the same class to co-teach in the future.

Successful co-teaching needs to be a common idea in the school system, and cannot be a one year deal.

Both teachers need to be willing to try and experiment with new ideas, and need to be willing to allow their fellow co-teacher to try their own things. Jackie and I did this extremely successfully. A meshing of personalities, with one teacher trying to power the entire class simply will not work. If you are not willing to experiment and willing to try new things, co-teaching will not work.

Slowly throughout the year, I got more confident in the linguistic portion of teaching and Jackie got more confident in speaking mathematically. I learned several methods of teaching from Jackie which I can now incorporate into my other classes. So, as co-teaching is meant to help students, teachers should use the strengths of their partners to help them and should use all their experiences to help themselves become better teachers.

Finally, as almost everyone would want to know was this past year successful? Our students did benefit from having two teachers with different expertise in the room. Overall, in the long run, they were better off. The students learned and the teachers learned. So doesn’t that mean it was successful?

The experience was positive and can only get better with repetition. Try it.

Jackie Coelho is an ELL Teacher at Westborough High School. She has taught ESL for more than 16 years. She has a Masters Degree in Bilingual Education. She has also taught an adult GED preparation course and received training from TIAN for teaching Math.

Justin Richards is a fourth year Math teacher at Westborough High School. He what does he teach in the mathematics department?

Pronunciation – Accent Reduction or Communication Enhancement?

by Erica Walsh

In 2006, after teaching community-based and college ESOL for about ten years and teaching Italian at college for two years, I opened my own business as an accent modification trainer. I work with non-native, but proficient, English speakers who want to be better understood when they communicate orally.

I earned a M.Ed in ESOL instruction (concentration in teaching adults) in 1998, and there was never any discussion of accent or pronunciation in my coursework. As I began teaching, my adult students would say to me, “How can I change my accent?” and my response would be a helpless shrug of “Just listen to how it sounds.” I have always had a good ear for accents and was a great mimic, so I

didn’t understand why some people had such a hard time imitating target sounds and intonation patterns.

As time went on and I began teaching Italian, I would hear students who I knew had only

ever spoken Italian in my classroom – some were able to accurately pronounce and intone in Italian and some were not. I began to wonder more and more about accent. I started doing research on phonetics, linguistics, and everything else related to accent. I ultimately took a training course designed for Speech Language Pathologists on accent modification. I became certified in the Compton P-ESL method of accent modification and hung out my shingle.

In the past two years, I have worked with over seventy-five people who wanted to be better understood when speaking English. While I believe that have enjoyed varying degrees of success, each report that they have become easier to understand, and the training was beneficial to them.

Some people find the concept of accent modification troubling. They say that it robs people of their identity and forces people to sound the same as everyone else. I – and my clients -- strongly disagree. People who have successfully changed the way they communicate in spoken English report feeling more self-confident, an improvement in their self-esteem, and

an overall better sense of well-being. One client told me, “I feel like people understand the real me now. They don’t just see me as some Japanese guy, they see me as me.”

Who is a typical learner? Most of my clients are professional people who have lived in the United States for more than seven years, have at least a bachelor’s degree from their home country, came here for a specific job (rather than as refugees), work in a monolingual English environment, may have a spouse who shares their native language, and do not consider themselves members of a community of co-nationals (even where such a community exists).

Most people come to me as a result of a request by their employer. Colleagues have a hard time understanding them, and management wants to promote them but cannot do so until they can be sure they will be able to communicate effectively at their new position.

No one has yet walked away from accent modification training sounding like they were born and raised in Western Mass (where my accent originates). All

of my clients continue to have recognizable foreign accents. However, at the conclusion of their training, they are more easily understood by others. They can conduct business over the telephone, order a meal without having to point at the menu, communicate more freely with patients about medical issues, and ask to see a dress in a different size from behind the fitting room door! In short, they can make their way through life without having to constantly repeat themselves or resort to non-verbal communication in a spoken situation.

I find this work extremely rewarding in a way that is different from language teaching. The gains students make in learning a new language are gradual and nuanced, but the progress that my clients make is dramatic and swift. Because all of our work is recorded (audio and video recordings are made of every session), the before and after recordings provide tangible evidence of the changes these learners make. Working in the field of ESOL is a diverse one, with multiple needs, multiple student clienteles, and multiple approaches, all of which are very rewarding.

“ As I began teaching, my adult students would say to me, “How can I change my accent?” and my response would be a helpless shrug of “Just listen to how it sounds.” ”

Paul Abraham Receives 2008 Dow Award

by Judy DeFilippo

Paul Abraham, Chairman of the Education Department at Simmons College, is the 2008 recipient of MATSOL's Anne Dow Award, given annually to a professional who has made outstanding efforts that reflect enthusiasm and creative, energetic, and independent thinking. MATSOL, the Massachusetts Association of Teachers to Speakers of Other Languages, selects a professional, like Anne, who displays the ability to take risks, solve problems, support colleagues, and model ethical behavior. The focus in 2008 was on teacher education, and the award was presented at the MATSOL One-day Spring Conference held in Leominster on May 16.

Paul has directed and taught in the MATESL program at Simmons College for 15 years and is now Chairman of the Education Department that includes both undergraduate and graduate teacher education. Prior to that he taught ESL at BU's CELOP program and directed an ESL program at Bradford College. When he was at Bradford, he realized he wanted to do more with teacher preparation so he went to the Ed School at Harvard, where he completed his doctorate in Reading and Language.

Over the years he has co-authored several successful readers for ESL students, served as MATSOL's President, and continues to do volunteer work with Newton's Jewish Community Relations Council, where he went to Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine to help assess the quality of English instruction at a Day School. He also serves on the Board of Examiners for NCATE—the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education.

In 2003, Paul accepted a Fulbright to teach courses in second language reading to graduate students, and applied linguistics to undergraduate students at the University of Santiago in Chile. A subsequent Fulbright Alumni Award allowed two years of exchanges between Simmons and the University of Chile.

Students in Paul's TESL program at Simmons develop a variety of interdisciplinary curricula to use with students ranging from first grade through university. He consistently produces top notch teachers and is truly deserving of this award.

Secondary SIG news

By Boni-esther Enquist,
Secondary SIG Representative

Greetings to all of our Secondary School teachers and program leaders! This year MATSOL had speakers address issues of Vocabulary and Literacy at each of our Fall and Spring conference days which addressed the needs of the older English learner. It is still quite a struggle, however, to help our ELLs learn content and pass State tests while they are acquiring English, especially for those who come with limited former schooling.

Next year we hope to host a special meeting for guidance counselors and ELL leaders to tackle the issue of course offerings, grading, scheduling and assigning credit for ESL and Sheltered Content courses – something that many High Schools struggle with. As the Secondary SIG representative I will also work with teachers and leaders to compile resources specific to the needs of our older learners. I will keep in touch by email with those MATSOL members who have indicated that they would like the Secondary SIG as their primary or secondary Special Interest Group as well as post things to the MATSOL website from time to time. Also, please contact me if you have ideas of future activities or resources that would be helpful to you and your secondary colleagues. Please also be thinking about what YOU might like to share in a presentation at next May's annual MATSOL conference – your ideas are most welcome.

October is MATSOL Renewal Month!

*Renew today to ensure the
continuation of MATSOL's
programs, advocacy
efforts, and publications!*

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MATSOL *Reviews*

Dear MATSOL Members,

We are very happy to offer you this special issue of MATSOL Currents in an easily accessible e-format. MATSOL relies on volunteer effort for most of its undertakings, including publication of Currents. Unfortunately, in recent years no one has stepped forward to produce this much loved magazine on a consistent basis, so publication has been irregular. Over the years I've been privileged to work with many dedicated professionals who have written the reviews which appear in Currents. We all know how valuable it is to get good advice when choosing materials, and reviews from colleagues can make all the difference. This special issue is now appearing in this format to ensure that, although the entire publication isn't moving forward, the reviews continue to reach you. I know that the MATSOL Board continues to appeal to members for a general editor so that all of Currents can re-emerge on a more regular basis; I hope someone will step forward in that capacity – I'd love to work with you. In the meantime, we are heartened to know that so many have remained committed to sharing their thoughts on texts and the ever-evolving related world of digital materials. We hope you enjoy it. Please feel free to contact the authors or myself with any responses you may have to these reviews, or if you'd like to write one yourself.

Sterling Giles
Reviews Editor
sterlg@aol.com

In Our Classrooms: An Educator's Guide to Helping English Language Learners with Curriculum

Mary Meyers. MainStreams Publications (Toronto), 2001. 131 pages. ISBN 0-9687377-5-7.
reviewed by Susan L. Schwartz

When I started teaching in a public school five years ago, I had no idea that I would end up teaching teachers almost as much as I had to teach children. But as the only ESL teacher in the school, I soon realized that few of the mainstream teachers with my students in their classrooms had any training in ESOL methodology and that most teachers, although well meaning, had little idea of how to make their instruction comprehensible to the children in their classes who spoke English as a second or third language. So in conversations with colleagues I began to offer ideas on how they could

better address the needs of our students, and I also began to seek out whatever resources I could find that would help mainstream teachers teach children who are English language learners (ELLs).

One such resource is *In Our Classrooms*. This spiral-bound paperback is organized into the following chapters: Language Learning Back Grounder [sic], Helping Language Learners in Our Classrooms, Primary Programs and Curriculum Presentation, Core Subject Programs, Working with Newcomers, and Assessment and Reporting. There are also two other sections, one called Integration, at the beginning of the book, and a Conclusion, at the end, as well as a bibliography. Interspersed throughout the book are Reflection pages, which pose questions to the reader and make teachers think about the ways they provide instruction. The text is written in a large font that makes the book quick

and easy to read. Numerous graphics—charts, diagrams, lists—are included and there are many samples of blackline masters for teachers to photocopy. As a result, though, the layout of the book is busy and sometimes confusing; when the author includes as many sample activities as she does, it is sometimes to the detriment of providing explanatory background information that would make it easier for teachers to understand how and why to use them. To further complicate matters, some of the blackline masters are for teachers to use themselves and others are for teachers to use with students, and it is not always immediately clear which is which.

This book will be most useful to teachers who have little experience teaching ELLs and need basic information about how to meet their instructional needs, especially if they work in a school where they have limited, if any, access to ESL educators and materials. Experienced ESOL teachers would find this book too general for their own needs, but they could use it as a resource when working with mainstream colleagues who need to learn some techniques to teach non-native English-speaking students. The first and second chapters, and pages 58 – 63 of the third chapter, are especially helpful because they describe the process of second language acquisition in a general, easily understandable manner. Issues such as the length of time it takes a student to learn English, factors that help or hinder language acquisition, and the difference between social and academic language learning are discussed. On pages 87 – 88 there is a very nice, simple framework for teaching academic content material to middle and high school students, and page 100 is a checklist of “Curriculum Modifications for Language Learners” in grades four through twelve. This is essential information which all teachers should be aware of.

Ultimately, this book serves the purpose of educating mainstream teachers who need an introduction to the challenges of teaching ELLs. But after they finish this book, public school teachers should find other resources for more detailed and in-depth information on the topic. *In Our Classrooms* is a good first step to learning how to meet the academic needs of English language learners in public schools.

Susan L. Schwartz teaches Grades 5 - 8 ESL at Marsh Grammar School in Methuen, MA. In addition, she serves on the MA Board of Education's ELL/Bilingual Advisory Council. marshesl@yahoo.com

Making the Most of College

Richard Light. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 2004 230 pages. paperback ISBN 067 401 359x.

reviewed by Eileen Feldman

When kids drop out of school, dreams are deferred and intellectual, civic, and economic resources are squandered. Yet today many ELL and non-ELL high school and college students choose to, are forced to, are allowed to abandon their educations. To avert this, Richard Light suggests to teachers, policymakers, and students ways to increase school retention. His ten years of reflective interviews with hundreds of college seniors from various universities provide data for teachers, students and administrators who are interested in assessing their success.

First, Light's research methodology is described so that it can be easily replicated. Following that are nine chapters consisting of students' stories of frustrations and joys at the beginning of their college careers. From these stories Light extracts students' advice to other students: Make conscious decisions on time management, course selection, extracurricular activities, work, living arrangements; initially keep a weekly log of time spent; each semester select one small seminar/mentor style courses besides the huge introductory classes; plan for learning outside the classroom too, and participate in the arts; take advantage of the diversity inherent in dorm life and don't become isolated; each semester develop a one-to-one relationship with one faculty member.

Advice to teachers includes: have several quizzes and short writing assignments with quick feedback, encourage homework and peer reviews done in groups, use and demand precise word choices, connect course content to other disciplines, relate that content to students' professional aspirations, end class with the one-minute paper for students to report what they learned and what is confusing, encourage discussion from various perspectives, require more foreign language expertise, volunteer to be a mentor for students.

For all these goals to be realized, the administration must offer support: deans' setting the tone of inclusion in their introductory remarks at freshman orientation, running a freshman orientation program, reading and discussing essays designed to aid in transition to college, adding and adapting courses to include non-American

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authors and more language learning, student groups' co-sponsoring programs, funding faculty to be mentors and to serve on committees which continually assess and disseminate information on student success and retention.

Although many of these learning suggestions apply for ELL students as well as non-ELL, Light's emphasis on frequent communication with faculty and other students might prove uncomfortably challenging, even frustrating to some ELL's. Yet perhaps institutions and faculty should intervene and not allow ELL's to feel isolated. The book's emphasis on advancing inclusion and taking advantage of diversity will resonate with ELL students and teachers alike. Perhaps a follow-up study interviewing only ELL students is needed to bring to light further implications. Professor Light generously makes his research model available to readers for replication and adaptation, inviting others to explore contemporary retention issues facing ELL students.

Eileen Feldman teaches ESL at Bunker Hill Community College and English Composition at Suffolk University as well as maintains membership in TESOL, MLA, and MTA. efeldman@suffolk.edu

Blueprints 1 & 2

Keith S. Folse, M. Kathleen Mahnke, Elena Vetri Solomon, and Lorraine Williams. Houghton Mifflin, 2003. 204 & 249 pages. ISBN 0-618-14409-9, 0-618-14410-2.
reviewed by Linda Werbner

The road to a dusty, forgotten space on a teacher's bookcase is paved with well-intentioned textbooks. The shelves where I teach are full of cleverly named books with colorful covers and impressive-sounding subtitles and promises. Like any conscientious teacher, I am eternally hunting for a textbook that will present the craft of writing and editing in an engaging and challenging way. The book should be fresh, topical, and easy to follow, and should address the needs of a multi-level writing class. This magic book will not only teach active critical reading, but will provide lots of models of different rhetorical patterns, from argument through compare and contrast, process, and cause and effect. Simple, right?

Once in a great while the planets align and I discover a textbook that incorporates these qualities. Unfortunately I use these few books

so much that I tire of them, or I find students coming from other programs have already used them, or the format becomes stale—however excellent the book—for those students who use the same series from level to level.

Luckily I have found a textbook that is varied and challenging and seems burn-out proof (for the moment). Blueprints 1 & 2 are linked textbooks that teach reading and writing and all the other skills associated with academic writing in a fresh, clear and systematic way. These books balance very well the separate skills of writing and editing that usually send teachers running elsewhere for supplementation. It's all here, folks, from brainstorming and topic sentences to that first tentative paragraph and the drafts that follow.

Another attractive feature with these books

“For second language writers, knowing how to paraphrase and summarize in a research paper can be a passport to better grades and a way to avoid inadvertently plagiarizing.”

is how they build gradually: this block-by-block foundation laying is a wise way to teach writing. Second language writers need structure, guidance, much practice and strong models to follow. And regardless of level, these writers need lots of practice in everything, from the mundane mechanics of writing—capitalization, punctuation, spelling—to the more sophisticated aspects such as audience, structure, organization, and using metaphors and similes, examples and supporting details.

Blueprints 1 is for “intermediate students” (a murky term, as any teacher knows!), but I could see this book used with a variety of levels. Its prime focus is developing solid paragraphs and refining grammar skills. Blueprints 1 takes students through the rigors of prewriting, editing and the final draft. Blueprints 2 (high intermediate to advanced level) transitions learners into essay writing; it seamlessly leads writers from paragraph to essay level, while continuing to focus on grammar and the different rhetorical modes. Both books include helpful appendices on research and citation skills, how to avoid run-on sentences and comma splices, and peer feedback forms for each of the rhetorical modes.

What I found most appealing about this series are the sections on summarizing, paraphras-

ing and synthesizing—important skills that are frequently given short shrift in writing courses. For second language writers, knowing how to paraphrase and summarize in a research paper can be a passport to better grades and a way to avoid inadvertently plagiarizing.

There's little to criticize about the books, but here are a few quibbles. Some readings are briefer than I'd like and the illustrations in Blueprints 1 are a bit silly. Finally, the weakest link in this otherwise stellar series is that there is no companion listening/speaking/pronunciation book. The authors have thought of this, however, and on the inside back cover have included a useful "curriculum at a glance" chart which suggests possible pairings in the grammar and listening and speaking realms.

These books should serve me well for some time. They can form the core of a reading/writing course, and they will remain meaningful on the shelf as references for teachers and students alike.

Linda Werbner has left teaching, returned to school, and now works as a social worker for Elder Service Plan of the North Shore.

Taking Turns: A Pair-Based Text for Beginning ESL

Margaret T. Gelin. The University of Michigan Press, 2000. 168 pages. ISBN 0-472-08705-3. *reviewed by Victoria Richter, Ph.D.*

Many of my colleagues would agree that looking for the "perfect" textbook can be a painstaking and never ending quest. It's a trial and error process often ending in the latter. Perhaps it is all due to the fact that every one of us has our own perception of the learning process and our own methods and approaches to it.

The latest chapter in my quest for "perfect" is Taking Turns. Recommended as a core text for beginners, the book combines communicative, structural and grammatical approaches with an emphasis on oral communication, and is based on pair-work. Taking Turns comprises ten basic topics including personal information, classroom, small talk, family, body, house, and life in the U.S. Though not a perfect book, it has many valuable components.

“Taking Turns presents phonetic drills that are rarely included in other textbooks and will be useful to students of any level.”

Each chapter starts with a first person narrative centered around personal information. Students are expected to fill in the blanks using a great deal of new vocabulary to which they are introduced later in the chapter. To complete the first chapter narrative, students would have to first learn the alphabet and the vocabulary, practice grammar points, as well as learn question structure by skipping forward in the book and/or using other resources. Having completed the narrative, students will use questions provided to interview their partners only to find out that at the end of the chapter there is a form on which the interview answers could have been recorded. This kind of nonlinear sequencing might appear confusing for teachers and students equally. Students must constantly browse back and forth to go from easier to more difficult tasks.

In the first chapter, along with traditional personal pronouns, possessives and cardinal numbers Gelin introduces numerous greetings such as "How have you been?" as well as ten informal ways of saying "goodbye," including forms in Spanish and Italian. I question the necessity of such capacious vocabulary at the onset of study. In the same chapter the author uses the terms "take turns" and "alternate" interchangeably in the instructions, making it needlessly confusing for students to follow. Many expressions are too long and heavy for a beginner who has just stepped into a new classroom.

Sections on common courtesies are also included in the textbook. They contain a great deal of useful everyday language, pair interviews, and drills. However, students will only be able to do them effectively after they have understood the book's sometimes confusing prompts. Students have to deal with complicated instructions and learn to use various graphic organizers; this is most likely to work well with considerable modeling on the part of the teacher. Some grammatical points, such as comparatives, are used throughout the book, but are introduced only in later chapters or not at all. Likewise, the author emphasizes the importance and the challenge of asking questions in English, but does not provide comprehensive explanations or practice opportunities to elucidate and reinforce this

grammar point. (Only past tense questions are explained.) Taking Turns contains somewhat ambiguous questions like “What are you?” and often uses advanced vocabulary and grammar, as well as complicated sentence and question structures (Who do you work for? – in the 1st chapter). Unit six contains over one hundred new vocabulary words and expressions clustered on three pages, most of which are found in any ESOL picture dictionary. The book progresses rapidly, so the teacher would have to fill in the gaps with her own materials in order to make transitions smoother.

Taking Turns is designed in black and white. The author employs a stock of public domain clip art for illustrations, a strategy that may keep production costs down and make for convenient publication, but this also opens another can of worms. While we realize that economics of textbook publishing might make it difficult to hire a professional illustrator, the book suffers greatly from an eclectic overall design that utilizes a mixture of stick people, corporate style illustrations, crudely drawn images, and pixelated low-res images all on the same page.

In spite of its drawbacks, the book contains a wealth of useful activities that can supplement a high beginner and intermediate core curriculum. I would particularly recommend the “My Family” unit which contains a hard to find “step-” and “half-” family vocabulary and the “My Country” unit which draws on students’ national pride and knowledge of their country’s history, geography, political system, and culture. Taking Turns presents phonetic drills that are rarely included in other textbooks and will be useful to students of any level. Personal narratives and pair interviews on these subjects could be great beginnings for pair conversation.

Though intended as a core text, I think the book is not suitable for that purpose. However, as a supplement the book can play a very positive role in course design – a useful resource if used the right way. Well, it seems my quest for perfection must “Take” another “Turn” and delve yet again into the depths of the jungles of publishing. Meanwhile, I hope that you find your own “perfect” textbook and if you do - let me know! Good luck and happy teaching!

Victoria Richter has been teaching ESOL in Rhode Island for 8 years. She is currently working for the International ESOL program at Brown. She has a Ph.D. from the University of Toronto and has authored a number of original materials in ESOL. victoria_richter@cox.net

A Sense of Wonder: Reading and Writing through Literature

Bill Preston. Longman, 2003. 218 pp. ISBN 0-13-040560-4.

reviewed by Sally Bunch

One challenge for the high school ESL teacher these days is to find collections of authentic literature that are not only accessible and meaningful to intermediate-level students, but which also familiarize them with different genres and literary conventions that they will encounter in their mainstream English classes and on the mandated MCAS exam. Fortunately, materials such as the Visions series by Heinle have recently been introduced to help meet those expectations. In *A Sense of Wonder*, Bill Preston also manages to stress reading comprehension strategies and literature concepts in an anthology of works that are occasionally challenging, yet presented in a non-threatening, comprehensible manner. Preston’s primary goal is to instill an appreciation of literature in the secondary and adult education learners he hopes his book will reach.

The book’s six units are organized around themes: Food, Love, Clothes, Growing Up, Work, and Life and Death. Each unit’s four works are prefaced by pre-reading activities ranging from discussion questions about students’ own experiences or cultural norms to the use of prediction and other strategies that encourage interaction with the text. Definitions to challenging vocabulary are provided in footnotes on each page of the work, and in some cases, an exercise that calls upon the student to use contextual cues to determine meanings of words or phrases is featured as an additional pre-reading activity. A rich variety of post-reading activities begin with the expected comprehension check but also include a clear and simple introduction to a reading strategy and a literary device. For example, the poem “Girl with the Green Skirt” by Dana Naone is followed by explanations on making inferences and figures of speech. These explanations are set apart in boxes and reinforced with practice in analyzing the poem for these concepts.

For each literary work covered, Preston provides three follow-up writing assignments which allow students to tie in the themes of the work to their personal experiences. The assignments often include poetry writing, personal narratives and other essays, and a set of peer response questions that can be used with any of the three

assignments in the set. Although these tasks are engaging, a *A Sense of Wonder* is not a writing text, so it is up to the teacher to find or develop her own writing lessons, rubrics, graphic organizers, and other supporting materials that meet the needs of her class.

The multicultural roster of authors featured in *A Sense of Wonder* includes Sandra Cisneros, Pablo Neruda, Gary Soto, Maya Angelou, Lensey Namioka, and the Native American writer N. Scott Momaday. A few essays are sprinkled in among the poetry and stories, including “Why Boys Don’t Know What Girls Mean and Girls Think Boys are Mean” by Deborah Tannen, which is bound to provoke some discussion among students. Each unit contains one or two short stories, mostly first-person narratives such as Longhang Nguyen’s “Rain Music,” in which the narrator’s friend is involved in a cross-cultural romance. A teacher looking for examples of traditional short stories that students could possibly recall and use to respond to an MCAS long composition prompt will only find a few here, including “Just Lather, That’s All” by Hernando Téllez, used as an example of conflict. Two short plays are also featured, but the prevailing genre in this anthology is poetry, which is meaningful and addresses a variety of literary conventions as well.

Preston provides introductory sections to support the teacher’s use of *A Sense of Wonder*, whether as a main text or a supplement to other materials. A Scope and Sequence chart lists each work by genre, reading strategy and literature focus. Although his explanations of the activities and teaching suggestions are second-nature to most ESL teachers, his notes on teaching poetry may reduce some of the intimidation that some educators with limited background in this genre may experience. An answer key and glossary of literary terms is also provided. With these supports, as well as the clear and consistent format of explanations and activities and the choice of works appropriate for English language learners, *A Sense of Wonder* can be effective in helping students across that challenging bridge to mainstream achievement.

Sally Bunch has taught ESL at the Washington Irving Middle School in Boston and at Malden High School. Her email address is sbunch@tiac.net.

Computer Applications in Second Language Acquisition: Foundations for teaching, testing, and research

C.A. Chapelle. Cambridge University Press, 2001. 215 pages. ISBN# 0-521-62646-3.
reviewed by Gina Hurley, Ed.D.

Carol Chapelle is considered one of the leading authorities on computer-assisted language instruction and language acquisition. In this book she provides a thorough review of the work in the field of computer application in second language acquisition. The book is a comprehensive analysis of the work that has been completed in this field. It is intended for language teachers, language testers, and second language acquisition researchers.

At the start of the book, and prior to the first chapter, Chapelle provides a list of the many abbreviations used in the field of computer assisted second language acquisition, which is very helpful. If readers are not familiar with these abbreviations, they will find themselves flipping back to the start of the book for review. Chapelle’s first chapter reviews the historical foundations of Computer Applications in Second Language Acquisition (CASLA). This chapter covers the history of microcomputers, and local area networks as they relate to computer-assisted language learning, testing and research. Chapter two deals with the context and challenges of CASLA, including disciplines related to CASLA, such as educational technology, computer-supported collaborative learning, artificial intelligence, computational linguistics, corpus linguistics, and computer-assisted assessment. Chapelle provides a review of each to help define CASLA from a historical perspective. Her review is helpful to the reader in understanding the related disciplines. In chapter three Chapelle introduces the principles for evaluating Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL). This includes subjective evaluations and empirical evaluations, and reviews the aspects of learner fit, meaning focus, and authenticity. Chapelle provides the reader with several helpful tables that focus on summaries and questions necessary for evaluation. Computer-assisted language testing (CALT) is also included in Chapelle’s book. In chapter four the test method in CALT is reviewed. Chapelle discusses the principles for validation in CALT, as well as test usefulness and empirical validation of CALT. Several tables are included in this chapter to aid the reader in understanding and

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summarizing the text. Chapelle then moves into computer-assisted second language acquisition (SLA) research. Chapter five reviews the investigative conditions for SLA, as well as examples of computer-assisted second language research (CASLR) and evaluation of CASLR for assessment. Within this chapter Chapelle provides the reader with a table that includes examples of research assessing learner's knowledge and strategies with CASLR tasks. In the last chapter the author discusses emerging directions of CASLA. Chapelle discusses the overlapping themes as they relate to reliability and learner fit, authenticity and generalizability, construct validity, language learning potential, interactiveness and meaning focus, positive impact, and practicality. Chapelle also discusses CASLA software development, specifically the functions needed in CASLA software tools.

Overall Chapelle does a thorough job at reviewing and discussing the past and current issues in CASLA. However, the thoroughness may be lost on the reader who does not have the background necessary to grasp the computer concepts. On the other hand, those looking to learn more and get a comprehensive and somewhat technical understanding of CASLA will find this book a wonderful resource.

Gina Hurley, Ed.D., is the director of Student Services or the Barnstable Public Schools. She oversees English Language Development, School Counseling and Psychological services, Health services, 504 services, and McKinney Vento Homeless services. hurley_gina@barnstable.k12.ma.us

Never Fade Away

William Hart. Fithian Press, 2002. 202 pages.
ISBN# 156474386-1.

reviewed by Sterling Giles

This mini-review is being added to this issue of *Currents* because I want people to know about a special book that teachers might enjoy. It's out of print, but nevertheless available through Amazon or other purveyors of that sort. I have a copy that I'd be happy to pass on if you promise to do so, too, after reading it.

Never Fade Away is a novel written in two voices. One is that of John Goddard, a Vietnam War veteran now teaching remedial English courses at a state college. The other is Tina Le, a Vietnamese college student struggling to adapt

linguistically and culturally. She enrolls in his course and unexpected things happen.

John, the narrator, is a writer struggling to finish a series of short stories and get a book out. He's also a teacher who cares a great deal, sees what people need, and wants to give it to them, but he sees that they need more than his course can provide. He is wrestling with his own demons from the war, his own personal and sexual urges in life, and with the way his department and college respond to the needs of the non-native speakers they accept, but don't necessarily serve. The descriptions of the faculty interactions and meetings are fascinating to anyone who has been there. John is a messy, evolving, very tangible, and possibly appealing human being. You may not like everything he does, but you come to understand its sources. He is also an unusually muscular and non-PC hero for a novel that revolves around ESOL issues.

Tina is dealing with roommate situations that are painful to observe, a need to feel connected and respected, memories of a harrowing war and immigration experience, and slowly emerging comprehension of the fact that she is in a place where, sometimes, she can, and should, open up and share what's really on her mind. Her journals, begun for the writing class but eventually taking on greater significance, form her part of the narrative. Her straightforward description of things that happen among people, and her attempts to construct a system of rules and expectations from all these confusing inputs, form a simple, powerful analysis of the human reality.

The relationship between these two people tests each of them in profound ways and points out the challenges, and miraculous possibilities, of connection among people across genders, cultures, languages, and expectations. It's a thought provoking and touching work that speaks particularly to us as teachers and will make you question some of your assumptions along the way. I recommend it.

Sterling Giles has been a professor of ESOL at Roxbury Community College for 14 years, where he is currently the Coordinator of the Achieving the Dream initiative. He is also the Reviews Editor for *MATSOL Currents*. sterlg@aol.com

Over the Transom

by Sterling Giles

Currents has recently received the following materials for review: Walch Publishing offers two volumes of *Key Decisions in US History: A Participatory Approach*. This book aims at the 4th to 8th grade reading level and is ideally adapted to bilingual students who are able to decode, but who confront problems of understanding in other history texts due to a lack of previous knowledge. *Key Decisions* takes a step back to meet these students where they are both culturally and linguistically, and it frames each historical “story” in the form of a question, to develop critical thinking skills while developing language skills through rich, necessary content in an approachable way. It’s also appropriate for native speakers, so might serve a mixed class well.

Pearson/Longman’s local authors Lynn Bonesteel and Samuela Eckstut-Didier have produced a four-skills course, *Center Stage*, with successful communication strategies at the high beginning adult level connected to plenty of grammar, all clearly laid out with none of the usual alienating teacher talk about grammar. Innovations include error correction in the context of realistic conversations and fill-in-the-blanks that appear to the student to be about content, but are really guiding them to a healthy mixture of natural and analytical grammar acquisition. Community and adult programs might find this refreshing.

Also from Pearson is *Writing to Communicate: 1 – Paragraphs*, writing development with some vocabulary, meaningful pair and group work, sections on structure and mechanics, and simple checklists to sum up the skills of each unit. *For Your Information* is in a second edition, with updated readings, expanded exercises, and a companion DVD of ABC News excerpts. *Fundamentals of Academic Writing* helps beginning-level students come to terms with developing sophisticated writing with simple, clear instructions, lots of modeling, and checklists. *Advanced Reading Power* is a higher level of the well known *Reading Power* series, with the same skills development approach of vocabulary and comprehension work, plus extensive reading and speed practice. *Real Talk 2* manages to deal with everyday language yet incorporate graduated note-taking activities and preparation for TOEFL and academic situations. *Making Content Comprehensible for English Learners: The*

SIOP® Model provides a model of sheltered instruction in its third edition, with updates based on recent research, discussion questions that relate well to graduate programs and in-service professional development, and a CD-ROM with video clips, interviews, and reproducible teacher materials. *What I Believe 1: Listening and Speaking about What Really Matters* is based on the similarly named radio series and offers a logical progression of activities that brings students to precise speaking and beyond into optional writing components. *What a World 1: Amazing Stories from Around the Globe* appears to be an engaging beginning reader with a rich variety of exercises which ensure that students not only get reading practice and acquire vocabulary, but that they develop reading skills as well.

The *Cambridge Dictionary of American English* is out in a 2nd edition with CD-ROM, a rich thesaurus, and links to any document so students can quickly look things up while on the computer. The *Collins Cobuild Advanced Dictionary of American English* also now includes a CD-ROM, collocations, grammar information, and a rich trove of information on natural English - tips on odd little ways we use words (e.g., the use of one in “That was one good party.”). It’s not quite as simple to use as some other dictionaries, but it’s very complete. A comparative review of several dictionaries would be an interesting writing assignment – anyone interested?

Active Skills for Reading is out from Heinle in at least three levels of a second edition. New or expanded sections on critical thinking, review units, and related website are among the improved features, and a new Intro level.

Penguin *Active Reading* brings us *Little Women*, an interactive CD ROM with a simplified version of the novel, connected to the recent movie, which has a short printed reader and exercises offering lots of choices and reinforcement.

If you are interested in writing a review of any of these texts or materials, or receiving a more complete list of available titles, contact Sterling Giles at (617) 421-9134, sterlg@aol.com. You can earn PDP’s for writing published reviews. A list of titles available for review follows.

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Books Available To Be Reviewed For Matsol Currents - Fall 2008

If interested, contact the reviews editor, Sterling Giles / (617) 421-9134 / sterling@aol.com

- * = book for teachers (not a student text)
- * Affect in Language Learning Camb. UP '99
- * Beyond Training (Cambridge Language Teaching Library) Camb. UP '98
- * Civic Participation and Community Action Sourcebook (A. Nash) 2003
- * Discourse and Context in Language Teaching:
A Guide for Language Teachers CAMB '01
- * Dual Language Instruction: A Handbook for Enriched Education H&H 2000
- * English Phonetics and Phonology: A practical course (3rd edition) Camb. '01
- * Essentials of Teaching (see English for Academic Success series below.) HMCO 2004/2005
- Academic Oral Communication
- Academic Reading
- Academic Writing
- Academic Vocabulary
- * Exploring the Second Language Mental Lexicon Camb. UP '99
- * Extensive Reading in the Second Language Classroom Camb / 1998
- * Extensive Reading in the Second Language Classroom
(Cambridge Language Education Series) Camb. UP '98
- * Focus on Form in Classroom Second Language Acquisition Camb. UP '98
- * Focus on Form in Classroom Second Language Acquisition
(Cambridge Applied Linguistics Series) Camb. UP '98
- * Grammar Contexts...A Resource Guide for Interactive Practice UMichPR 99
- * Language Teaching Awareness:
A Guide to Exploring Beliefs and Practices Camb / 1999
- * Learner Autonomy: A guide to developing learner responsibility Camb. '00
- * Learner English: A teacher's guide to interference and other problems Camb '01
- * Learning About Language Assessment: Dilemmas, Decisions, and Directions
(Newbury House Teacher Development) Newbury/Heinle - '98
- * Materials Development in Language Teaching
(Cambridge Language Teaching Library) Cambridge UP '98
- * Mentor Courses: A Resource Book for trainer-trainers
(Cambridge Teacher Training and Development) Cambridge UP '99
- * Mentor Courses: A resource book for trainer-trainers Camb / 1999
- * Network-based Language Teaching: Concepts and Practice Camb / 2000
- * New Ways in English for Specific Purposes TESOL '98
- * Rhymes 'n Rhythms for the ESL Classroom Pro Lingua 2001 Camb '00
- * Teaching Adult Second Language Learners Camb / 2000 H&H 2001
- * Teaching English Spelling Camb / 2000
- * The Grammar Book (maybe Ccarney doing this) Heinle '99
- * Write for You: Creative Activities for Building Writing Skills Pro Lingua 2001
- * Writing Simple Poems Camb. '01
- Active Skills for Reading / Intro, Book 1, Book 2 (second edition) Heinle 2008
- American Ways – 3e Lman 2005
- Basic Grammar and Usage – 7th edition Thomson 2006
- Cambridge. Dictionary Of American English w/CD ROM, 2nd ed. CUP 2008
- Center Stage: express yourself in English Pearson 2007
- Clear Speech: Pronunciation and Listening Comprehension
in North American English 3rd edition CUP 2005
- Collins Cobuild Advanced Dictionary of American English
(w/CD ROM) Thompson 2007
- English for Academic Success (series) HMCO 2004/2005

- College Oral Communication (4 levels)
 - College Reading (4 levels)
 - College Writing (4 levels)
 - College Vocabulary (4 levels)
 - Essentials of Teaching (4 skills)
- English for Health Sciences(VM has it) Thomson 2006
- English Interactive (1, 2, 3) – CD ROM programs Lman 2004
- English Pronunciation Made Simple Lman 2005
- Essential Academic Vocabulary:
- Mastering the Complete Academic Word List HMCO 2006
 - Exploring Content 1 & 2: Reading for Academic Success Longman 2004
 - Focus on Vocabulary Lman 2005
 - For Your Information: Reading and Vocabulary Skills – 2nd ed. Longman 2007
 - Fundamentals of English Grammar – Interactive Lman
 - Fundamentals of Academic Writing Lman 2007
 - Gateways to Academic Writing Lman 2005
 - Get Ready to Read Longman 2005
 - Grammar Express Basic – CD Rom Longman 2005
 - Grammar Form and Function 3 McGH 2005
 - Grammar In Context – 3D – 4th edition Heinle 2005
 - Grammar Sense Interactive – CD ROM (1, 2, 3) Oxford 2005
 - Insights for Today– 3rd edition (See also Themes for Today) Heinle 2004
 - Inspired to Write: Readings and tasks to develop writing skills Camb. 2004
- Key Concepts (1 & 2):
- Listening, Note Taking, and Speaking across the Disciplines HMCO 2006
- Key Decisions in US History: A Participatory Approach Walch 1997
- Little Women - Penguin Active Reading with CD ROM
- Longman Dictionary of American English, 3rd edition with
now with thesaurus and w/ or w/out interactive CD ROM Longman (2004)
- NorthStar - 3rd edition - sampling = Listening and Speaking 2,
Reading and Writing 3, but can get others Pearson/Longman 2009
- Password: A Reading and Vocabulary Text (1, 2, 3)
- Quest – all skills 2nd edition McG H 2007
- Reading Advantage – 2nd edition Heinle 2004
- Reading Power (3e) Longman 2005
- Reading Power: Advanced Longman 2007
- Real Talk 2: Authentic English in Context Pearson 2007
- Side by Side Interactive - CD ROM (2 levels) Lman 2004
- The Heinle Picture Dictionary Heinle 2005
- Themes for Today – 2nd edition (See also Insights for Today) Heinle 2004
- Topics from A to Z (1 & 2) Lman 2005
- Tuning In: Listening and Speaking in the Real World Pearson 2006
- Understanding and Using English Grammar – Interactive CD Longman 2004?
- Weaving it Together – 2nd edition (I have 1,2....could get 3, 4) Heinle 2004
- What a World 1: Amazing Stories from Aroudn the Globe Pearson 2004
- What I Believe: Listening and Speaking about What Really Matters Pearson 2008
- World View 1 Pearson 2005
- Writing to Communicate: 1 – Paragraphs Pearson 2008

Shaping a Book Review

The following are only suggestions and are not intended to be a rigid format.

Introduction

Title, by Author. Publisher, date of publication. Number of pages. Ancillary materials (instructor's manual, tapes, etc.). ISBN #.

reviewed by _____

First Part

- Provide background information that helps place the book in context. (e.g., the general area the book addresses, other books that address the topic, earlier books by the same author)
- Describe the book by genre (e.g., textbook, instructor's guide, research study, anthology)
- Define the intended audience.
- Restate the book's goal (usually stated in preface) and/or explain the author's ideology or vision.
- Provide an overall evaluation. (your general reaction)

Second Part

- Summarize the contents of the book, providing specific examples if space permits.
- Discuss the book's strengths and weaknesses.

Third Part (select among the following)

- Discuss how well the book has achieved its goal.
- Examine the possibilities suggested by the book.
- Argue with specific points.
- Discuss ideas or issues the book has ignored.
- Explore a personal teaching or learning experience related to the subject matter of the book.
- If you have used the book in your class, share student feedback and provide advice on how best to utilize it, pitfalls to avoid.

Final Part

- Tie together the issues raised in the review.
- Make a final statement of evaluation.

Also

Please provide a one- or two-sentence biography of yourself and, if you have one, your e-mail address.

Reviews should be 400-750 words! If your review is too long, we will shorten it. It's best if YOU do the editing and difficult selecting to keep it short, since you know what's most important about the book.

If possible, please send soft copy, or send the review via e-mail.

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