



Draft Policy Statement April 2003

The following draft policy statement attempts to operationalize the goals and values developed within MATSOL over the past thirty years. The Board welcomes comments and discussion as this statement is being finalized. Please contact with any suggestions or recommendations.)

Advancing Equal Opportunities for All English Language Learners

MATSOL is dedicated to advocating on behalf of all English language learners (ELLs) and the professionals who work with them in different contexts including at the elementary and secondary levels, in adult education and workplace programs, and in the realm of higher education and in the education of ESOL teachers. Today, MATSOL has slightly over 1,200 members who, on an annual basis, teach between 20,000 and 25,000 immigrant and refugee learners of English of all ages in classrooms across the Commonwealth of

Massachusetts.

We believe all English language learners have the right to access quality services that are based upon adequate funding, use methods that are grounded in sound theory supported by findings from empirical studies, and are based upon an understanding of ELLs' specific cultural heritage,



Massachusetts
Association of Teachers
of Speakers of Other
Languages, Inc.

linguistic background, and academic needs.

Several recent reports have indicated that immigrants have made significant contributions to the Massachusetts economy. For instance, foreign-born immigrants accounted

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International Partnership Teacher Exchange 2002

Next Year It Could be You

For the past five years, MATSOL has been engaged in a teacher exchange program — an outstanding aspect of our international TESOL affiliate partnership with SAUA/SATE, Slovak Republic. This year exchanges took place bilaterally. In August, two MATSOLers, Michael Murphy (Watertown school district) and Carmen Acquino (Lutheran Community Services of Southern New England), were guests in the homes of Slovak teachers. In October, at the time of our conference, Michael Murphy, Past President Rob Vitello, and Roberta Jaquith hosted Viera Chovancova, a Slovak teacher.

As is the intent of the exchange program, home stays are arranged in varied locations, offering a view of American culture and state from different perspectives. Guest teachers observe ESL and foreign language classes in K-12 and adult education, attend the conference, sightsee, and have fun. An added attraction this year was a trip to New York with Carmen. Since the Slovak conference took place during the summer, our teachers' programs there

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MATSOL Currents

Vol. 29, No. 1

Editor

Phyllis Thesier
Accent Management Group

Reviews Editor

Sterling Giles
Roxbury Community College

Teacher Research Editor

Jean Chandler
New England Conservatory of
Music and Clark University

MATSOL Executive Director

Paula Merchant

MATSOL Currents is published two times a year and is available through membership in MATSOL. Send submissions to the Editor, Phyllis Thesier: phyllis@phyllis.thesier.com. Submissions should be sent on a disc as a Microsoft Word file or by e-mail to the editor: smarttalk@attbi.com They should include a two-sentence BIO and passport-style photo. For submission guidelines or questions, call the editor at (508) 460-3803.

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Advertising

Contact Bob Schechter
(508) 820-7789

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Bartleby Scriveners

From The Editor

Thank you so very much for your infinite patience! We have had an intriguing year with upheavals in the MATSOL Currents leadership. John Hicks, unfortunately, needed to step down as Currents Editor, while we were pulling the fall/winter issue together. This spring I landed in the midst. Without the help of so many folks, I would have floundered immensely. On behalf of the Board and our membership, I would like to thank Julia Stakhnevich for her dedicated and innovative work as the editor of the Currents for the past two years. Rob Vitello is the true "center of influence", relating wisdom and contacts so that we could finish this issue. His calm demeanor consistently soothes harried souls. The detailed mind of Paula Merchant is invaluable to a novice editor. Her explicit and detailed emails allowed me to reference invaluable data. Sterling Giles workhorse ethics parallels his intellectual knowledge of the teaching needs of the ESOL teacher. His commitment to finding new materials for review and gathering reviewers has enlightened many of us.

As we developed this edition, we envisioned the possibilities of an electronic format as well and smaller and more frequent communications with the membership in the future. Hopefully these possibilities will allow us to be timelier in presenting the MATSOL Currents materials to our membership.

We love having each of our members interact with the MATSOL leadership and each other. The vitality of all of our current members helps us to attract new members, reinvigorating our ranks. Be sure to copy the membership application and ask all of your associates and ESOL friends to join MATSOL and get to know of our lively and informative organization.

GRAB more Professional Development Points! It's easy. MATSOL is eligible to grant professional development points to those folk who contribute to MATSOL Currents. Share your expertise and wisdom with your colleagues and help yourself as well! We look forward to hearing from you!

With warm regards,

Phyllis Thesier

New Board and New Leadership

As the times and climate change, there are a few important changes within MATSOL of which we would like to make our membership aware. First and most important, we would like to inform our membership that Carlos Matos has resigned as President of MATSOL. The Vice-President, Zoë Morosini, has taken on the responsibilities of President, as written within MATSOL's by-laws. MATSOL has not missed a beat, and under Zoë's brief tenure has been able to continue the work that began under Carlos' term. Part of this endeavor included filling some MATSOL board positions, and thus we also have some new board members to announce. Kellie Jones is now in the position of Professional Development Coordinator, Margaret Adams is serving as clerk, and Leah Nattell is helping us all, as she serves as the Socio-Political Advocacy Co-Chair. All candidates were required to submit a resume and were voted on for approval by the MATSOL Board the first week of April.

The new Board under new leadership has resolved to do all that it can to make MATSOL an organization of which you, the membership can be proud. The Board has a renewed vigor and will continue toward achieving its mission of advocating for the students and teachers that have made, make, and will continue making MATSOL a thriving organization. We thank you for all of the hard work that you do every day and we also will continue with our endeavors, for only together can true change happen.

Impressions from the 2002 SAUA/SATE-MATSOL Teacher Exchange

by Michael Murphy

My Slovak hosts, Bozka and Ladislav, met me at *Hlavní Nadrazi* (Main Station) after my short ride on the Budapest-Bratislava Express. I was greatly impressed by the variety of activities that they had arranged for me. From sightseeing in the Old Town of Bratislava to attending a medieval fair at the legendary *Cervený Kameň* (Red Rock) castle to spending a relaxing evening drinking *burczak*, or new wine, my hosts ensured that I was immersed in Slovak culture.

After four short days in Bratislava I boarded the new inter-city train to Banská Bystrica complete with recorded station stops in English! Eva and her husband, Andrej, met me at the station, and both ensured that I was able to participate in an array of activities in the central region of Slovakia.

From mountain biking through the wooded hills to buying hand-made lace in the village of Spania Dolina to taking a restful afternoon bath at a local public spa, the Banská Bystrica region offers a great deal of possibilities for tourists. I was delighted by the number of different activities we did in such a short period of time. I felt that I was able to appreciate all that the city and region have to offer. In addition, Eva and Andrej accompanied me on some noctambulations through Banská Bystrica's pedestrian main street which is filled with restaurants, outdoor cafes, and beer gardens.

The final part of the exchange took place in the eastern town of Presov, just north of the provincial capital of Kosice. Presov is a wonderful small town with a beautiful main street dotted with open-air cafes and restaurants.

The SAUA/SATE Conference was held at the University of Presov and included a very practical plenary session by Paul Seligson. Attending the conference in Presov was a fascinating experience. Seeing our professional colleagues

discussing many of our own issues and concerns regarding classroom practices, new testing requirements, and new student achievement levels demonstrated the importance of cross-cultural collaboration. Making personal connections with English Language Teaching professionals in

Slovakia contributes to our understanding of the challenges and rewards involved in our profession. Given the

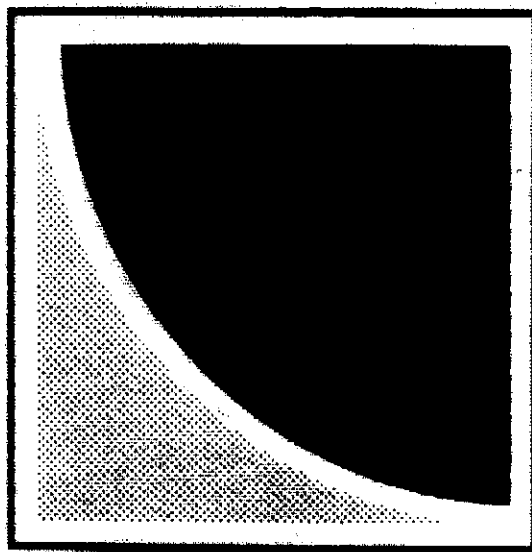
wealth of places to visit, activities to engage in, and friendships to be made, the SAUA/SATE-MATSOL Teacher Exchange is a unique and enriching experience.

I was able to host a Slovak teacher in October 2002. My young son and I met Ms. Viera Chovancova at Logan Airport. We had a wonderful time showing her some of the attractions of this area, including a trip to Lexington and Concord and dinner in the North End. The highlight for me was accompanying Viera to all five of the schools in the Watertown School District. We received a warm and sincere welcome from administrators, staff, and students. As Viera's host, I was in a unique position to witness her reactions to observing a French 5 Honors course, an intermediate level high school ESL course, and an Armenian as a Foreign Language course. The variety of nationalities and language groups that comprised these classes was truly astounding to Viera and me. It was a rare but wonderful opportunity for me to see how all of the different

ESL programs throughout the town of Watertown function. I would like to thank the Watertown School District for giving me the flexibility to host Viera Chovancova. Seeing the exchange from both sides reaffirms my commitment to education as a professional and as a human being. For it is through our professional organizations that we have the opportunity to meet, but then it is up to us as human beings to take this opportunity to create friendships. I am grateful for both.

SLOVENSKÁ ASOCIÁCIA
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S A U A



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OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

A Closer Look at Bilingual Students' Writing Development in Spanish and English

by Linda Caswell

Few among us would argue that the ability to write effectively is an essential skill for academic success (NAEP, 1999). Particularly as students move from the lower to the middle elementary grades and beyond, writing becomes increasingly important in overall school success. Yet, as the results from the latest NAEP (1999) writing assessment demonstrate, learning to write poses a serious challenge to most students in U.S. schools. For language minority students in the United States, almost three-quarters of whom are native Spanish-speakers, writing poses a particular challenge. These students are not only learning how to write, but are also learning how to write *in a second language*.

This research study was motivated by the urgent need to understand more about native Spanish-speaking students' writing development, given the low performance of these students on assessments of English writing. Several recent national reports (August & Hakuta, 1997; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998) have also emphasized the necessity for further research that would explore the nature of first language (L1) literacy development and determine how that development interacts with and impacts second language (L2) literacy (August & Hakuta, 1997; Snow et al., 1998).

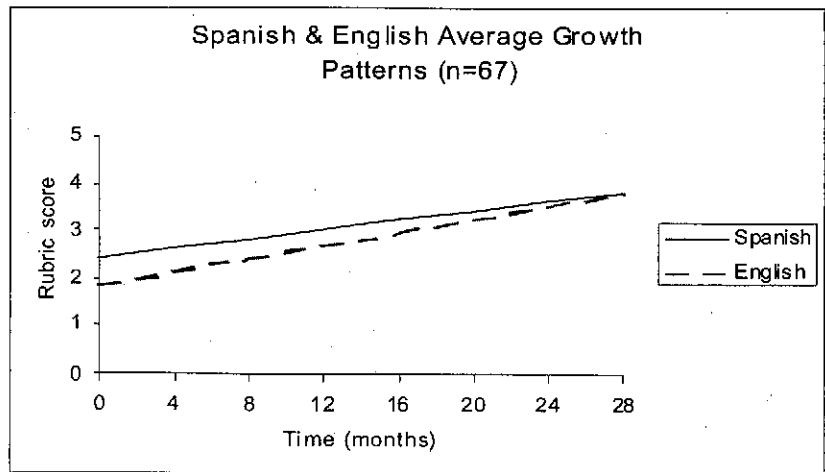
The study included 67 fourth- and fifth-grade native Spanish-speaking students in a late-exit transitional bilingual program in the northeastern United States. In this program, students received a significant amount of their instruction in Spanish in the early grades, with the amount of instruction in English increasing over the elementary years. I analyzed the students' Spanish and English narrative writing samples from third- to fifth-grade using an analytic rubric with three components: composition, mechanics, and grammar (Howard, 1998). I estimated average patterns of growth from third- to fifth-grade in each language based on the total rubric scores. I also explored the possible effects of students' background characteristics and early home language and literacy experiences to see if they accounted for different growth patterns. Finally, I examined the relationship between students' Spanish and English writing.

Study Findings

This study provides insights about possible predictors of native Spanish-speaking students' Spanish and English

writing development. It also provides strong support for the lasting effects of early home literacy experiences on students' later literacy outcomes and for the transfer of literacy skills across languages. Specifically:

- As seen in the graph below, students' scores in both Spanish and English writing improved from third- to fifth-grade. On average, students' initial writing scores were higher in Spanish than in English, but English scores were equivalent to Spanish scores by the end of fifth grade.



- For Spanish writing, only non-special education status and being female were associated with higher average writing levels at the beginning of third-grade.
- For English writing, non-special education status, being born in the United States, and *home support for Spanish literacy before kindergarten* were associated with higher average writing levels at the beginning of third-grade. Home support for Spanish literacy included the types and amount of Spanish literacy materials in the home, how often the parent read and wrote in Spanish with their child, and how often the parent borrowed books in Spanish from the library.
- Spanish and English writing were correlated over time, so that students who had higher writing scores in one language tended to have higher scores in the other language. In addition, after controlling for English oral proficiency, Spanish writing level at the beginning of

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An Update on the Rhode Island Special Interest Group

The Rhode Island Special Interest Group of MATSOL, also known as the RI SIG is off and running! Our group continues to put emphasis on outreach, organizing and professional development to support ESOL and Bi-lingual educators in the Ocean State. The plan is for the RI SIG to operate under the organizational structure of MATSOL for a period of time and then in October 2003 re-evaluate the options, which include:

- 1) forming an independent TESOL affiliate,
- 2) approaching MATSOL with a recommendations on the viability of a bi-state affiliate arrangement, which would be considered by the MATSOL Board
- 3) remaining a RI Special Interest Group under MATSOL for another year.

Planning is currently underway for a second annual summer professional development event. This event will hopefully build off the success of the first mini-conference held in June 2002 at Rhode Island College. That event offered two concurrent strands: one for ESL teachers of K-12, and the other for ESL teachers of Higher Education, Adult

Education and Workplace Education. Linda Filomeno, Fran Mossberg, Sally Gabb, Janet Isserlis, Nancy Carnevale and Cathy Fox generously undertook to do the presentations and Longman/Pearson Publishers were sponsors displaying their materials. The attendance was encouraging with more than 50 teachers from all parts of the State joining the RI SIG and who ending their day with happy faces and supportive comments.

Following this inaugural event, the Rhode Island planning group met and discussed the challenge of pulling together practitioners from the different fields of K-12, Adult/Workplace and Higher Ed. The group agreed to hold organizational meetings combined with speakers or specific topics for discussion. We broke down the tasks for each representative as follows: 1) Coordinator of the sub-group; 2) Liason to MATSOL; 3) RI SIG Program representative; and 4) Membership/ Mailing representative.

An expanded group of the RI SIG met at Rhode Island College in the Fall to begin planning meetings for 2003. Sub-groups chose representatives and discussed potential topics. The next step is for the SIG as a whole to proceed with plans

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A Closer Look at Bilingual Students' Writing *Continued from page 4*

third-grade predicted English writing level at the beginning of third-grade.

Study Implications

This study has educational implications for improving the English writing performance of native Spanish-speaking students in both bilingual and ESL instructional contexts. For example:

- Whenever possible, students would benefit from initial literacy instruction in their first language, as many of the skills and knowledge developed in a first language will transfer to a second language.
- Schools, in general, and bilingual and ESL programs, in particular, should make it a priority to create connections with students' home experiences and knowledge, including, but not limited to students' native language expertise.
- Schools and local educational organizations should: 1) make concerted efforts to develop and implement programs that educate parents about the crucial role that early literacy experience plays in children's later literacy outcomes; and 2) encourage non-English-speaking and

bilingual parents to engage in native-language literacy activities with their children.

Linda Caswell is a Senior Research Associate at Education Development Center, Inc. in Newton. Her primary interest is in conducting classroom-based research that provides insights to teachers and administrators about ELL children's language and literacy development. Contact her via LCaswell@edc.org

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The Lie behind "Part-Time"

Linda Werbner

There was a moment at the MATSOL 2002 conference during keynote speaker Gary Orfield's provocative speech that inspired unintentional mirth. There is nothing funny about the dangers of high stakes testing, of course, but a slide illustrating the range of average salaries for high school dropouts all the way to those with doctoral degrees made my colleague and me shake our heads and laugh—with despair. According to Orfield's data, Eva and I, both longtime adjunct ESL instructors with master's degrees, earn the same salary as high school dropouts.

Earlier that morning we had presented on a content-based curriculum we had designed and implemented at the university where we've taught for the past five years. Last spring, we presented at TESOL Salt Lake City, and we are currently involved in a grant-funded teacher research project. We are active, conscientious educators who care deeply about the craft of teaching and our students. We are adjuncts with multiple jobs, but we don't simply teach and leave for the next gig. Yet, these professional virtues and achievements dissolved in that one sad-funny moment when we learned that we earn as little as high school dropouts.

Preaching to the choir?

Perhaps this sort of article in MATSOL Currents is a futile exercise, akin to preaching to the choir, but as the momentum grows to give adjuncts equal pay for equal work, as adjuncts Jack Longmate and Frank Cosco wrote in the Chronicle of Higher Education (May 3, 2002), I feel like adding my voice to this roiling and long overdue discussion.

There certainly are enough of us out there to warrant a serious look. Figures from the Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA) estimate that in Massachusetts alone there are between four and five thousand adjuncts (compared to only two thousand full-time faculty) teaching at the state's 15 community colleges. Clearly, we are a force, a majority, yet a vulnerable and often exploited majority.

Such a deal

How has this situation developed and evolved to the crisis point it has (yes, it is a crisis for many, especially aging, long-term adjuncts who have no retirement to look forward to and no insurance safety net should they fall ill or become injured)? There are numerous factors that have allowed for the dependence on adjunct or contingent labor, including:

- A burgeoning labor force (continually replenished by Boston's many universities, which churn out fresh crops of master's in TESOL every spring); and

- Experienced, highly professional teachers willing to work for a third of what a full-time faculty instructor earns.

And there's no need to foot the bill for health insurance, retirement plans, or any other trifles for these poor saps. They don't even take up that much space, either. Up to six adjuncts can share a cubbyhole of an office and one desk. Such a deal! From the school's perspective, it's understandable why the movement for adjunct fair benefits has been put off so long and why the resistance from college administration has been so firm. They are getting the deal of the century.

To better understand the frustrations and complexities of this problem, essential reading is Michael Dubson's heartbreaking collection of essays by college adjunct faculty *Ghosts in the Classroom* (Camel's Back Books, 2001). In one story an adjunct college composition teacher recalls teaching six three-hour classes in the spring, four in the summer, and seven in the fall—six different courses on four campuses. "In addition to hours spent in the classroom," she writes, "this required tremendous amounts of planning, grading, conferencing, and driving time (with no travel allowance)." Before taxes, she made \$15,000 or \$2.12 an hour.

Glimmers of hope

ESL, in particular, is a field that has an unusually large contingent of part-time teachers—and for the past eight years, I have counted myself as part of this benevolent, overworked, and wildly underpaid army. So it was heartening to learn that the adjunct instructors in California's gargantuan community and state college system have organized and started striking for much-deserved benefits. Hopefully, this momentum will spread to the Northeast where, up until now, adjuncts have been a quiet but restive presence in education.

There are glimmers of hope on the front for adjuncts. A friend of mine, who teaches at four different community colleges around Boston and is active in the union for contingent labor, tells me that a bill for adjunct health benefits has been put forward to the teachers' union. Rumors abound at one university where I teach that the dean is considering offering minimal health benefits for adjuncts who have worked there for at least five years. Some state schools even offer their adjuncts some benefits. But at this point, such schools are the exception rather than the rule. I know adjuncts in their tenth or eleventh years of teaching who are hardened and skeptical about the prospect of benefits or any promise of job security. These people do not own homes or condos;

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some do not own cars or, if they do, own a beat-up, tired, paper-strewn "office on wheels."

Kindred spirits

The janitors of Boston are currently on strike for the same things that adjuncts are denied. When I pass by a knot of them picketing on Boylston Street with signs like \$39 is not enough I feel like we are kindred spirits. Of course, part-time ESL teachers make slightly more than the pittance Boston janitors receive, but we also have no benefits, no health insurance, no 401K plan, no vacation time, no tuition reimbursement, and no promise that there will be a job next semester. In short, we are as expendable as Kleenex. Many of the picketing men and women are immigrants from Latin America or Haiti. They could be my students at the immigrant and refugee program where I teach evenings. Perhaps they have sat in ESL classes taught by part-time teachers who, like me, teach at three different institutions to make ends meet.

The American Dream deferred

In one of my ESL composition courses at one of the universities where I teach, we were reading an essay in the Bedford Reader, an argument for a shorter work-week in America. We went over terms like "work ethic," "yuppies," and "workaholicism." One student wanted to know what epitomized the American Dream, and I explained the classic and somewhat cliché notion of American success: a good job, a house, a car, a dog, and 2.5 children. "That's it?" the student's bemused expression seemed to say. No problem. As I was erasing the board after class, it dawned on me that I have none of these ingredients of the American Dream.

Someday I want to own a house, maybe have a child, and pay off my student loans that have hung around my life

like an unwanted guest. I don't want to have to do what my mother had to do at the height of devastating Proposition 2 — in the late 1970's — leave teaching.

The dilemma

What makes this question so complex and frustratingly circular is that I love teaching. It sustains me, fulfills me, and challenges me, and I wouldn't want to do anything else. Teaching is infinitely rewarding, and no day is ever the same.

Yet, sometimes I find myself staring at my gleaming diplomas, with their gold foil insignia and some Latin gibberish at the bottom. Is this why I borrowed \$20,000 and my parents put a second mortgage on the house? How long until the "inevitable burnout," the searing epiphany that all poor teachers like me are supposed to have, where one morning they see with brutal clarity the absurdity of their pursuit and cast it aside for more profitable ventures? Or apply to business school or law school? Which is just what some of the graduates from my teaching program have already done.

I have great faith in the art of negotiation and believe that the janitors will eventually get at least part of what they are striking for. It will be a compromise that will not leave everyone elated, but then, as my friend Andy always says: "Nobody fantasizes about compromise." I have less faith in the fate of Boston's adjunct instructors. We will continue cobbling together a living from several jobs, flying down the highway, and rushing through the subways with our offices on our backs.

I remember reading once that Martin Luther King, Jr. was in Memphis that fateful day in 1968 to show solidarity with black janitors who were not getting a fair deal. It seems sadly poignant that more than 30 years later the janitors—and educators—are still being shut out of the American dream.



Johan Uvin, out-going Past President, is recognized at the MATSOL 30th Anniversary Conference for his dedication and visionary work in moving MATSOL forward. Flanked by Rob Vitello and Carlos Matos.

My Experiences In Slovakia

by Carmen T. Aquino

My trip to Slovakia was very positive and rewarding. Meeting people with different cultural backgrounds has been a very encouraging experience for me. It has widened my cultural sensibility and given me the opportunity to become a better person and a more conscious professional. I thank Marjorie Soriano, MATSOL liaison, for her great contribution to the preparation for my trip, and MATSOL for permitting me to become one of its representatives to the Slovak 6th Annual Conference of English Teachers.

Slovakia is a small country, situated in the center of Europe. Its people are trying to survive after living for more than three decades in a communist regime. Today, Slovakia is a capitalist and democratic country. For over three decades, Slovakia was part of Czechoslovakia. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Czechs and the Slovaks separated, and, while the Czechs accepted having foreign investment in their country, the Slovaks wanted to keep their country closed to foreign investment. Slovakia believed that closing their doors would be the best way to go forward with its economy. It has been proven wrong.

Today, Slovaks are complaining about the poor way that the Slovak government is trying to make their economy grow. Crime has risen, and dishonesty among politicians is an everyday issue. Unemployment is something hard to confront, especially when it has created a rising crime rate and homelessness in the Slovak society. While I was there, I had the opportunity to talk with several professionals about their fears. They told me that never before had they been confronted with such a dire economic situation, that even when Slovakia was communist they did not have to worry about losing their jobs and finding new ones because there were always job openings. They told me that under communism they had not seen people on the streets without a home or without jobs, asking for money or food. They told me that they had not had to worry about crime, because it was under control. No one had to worry about food, medicine, and housing because those things were always there. They told me that the worst mistake the Slovaks made was accepting their politicians' decisions not to permit foreign investment in Slovakia. Now the country is trying to become part of the European Union, but it will be very difficult to be accepted.

Today, the Slovaks have a government that gives them freedom of speech and freedom to travel abroad, but they do not have the money for traveling, have to worry about keeping their jobs, and fear becoming homeless or unemployed. They are experimenting with the everyday issues of a capitalistic country without being prepared for it. They do not want to become a county from which people are forced to emigrate because of the lack of professional opportuni-

ties in their own land. They love their country, which is why they worry a lot about its economic future.

Slovaks are warm and friendly people. The time that I spent in their homes was very gratifying. They asked me many questions about my customs; my way of living in my native country, the Dominican Republic; and why I immigrated to the United States.

One month after I came back from Slovakia, I had the chance to reciprocate: Viera, one of my hosts, came to Boston as an exchange teacher. Now she was able to see things that we talked about in Slovakia. I took her to New York City. There we traveled to the former World Trade Center site. She told me that she could not believe what happened in the United States on September 11, 2001. We also went to the Empire State Building, and she was able to view the entire city of New York. In visiting New York, she realized her long-time dream. She was so thankful, and I felt happy that I was able to take her there.

Slovaks are in the midst of changing their educational system, their economic system, their way of approaching future. While some talk very clearly about their situations, others try to avoid talking about what is going on in Slovakia. And still others simply say: "Before we were taught Russian in school. Today, our children are taught English. What do you think about it?"

Carmen T. Aquino is Chair of MATSOL's Standing Diversity Committee.

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The New England School of English (NESE) ESOL Program: Winner of the "Good Working Conditions" Award

This year's ESOL program winner of the award for good working conditions from the MATSOL-MCAE joint ABE Working Conditions Committee is The New England School of English (NESE). NESE is a language school, located in Harvard Square, that provides ESOL/EFL instruction mainly to international students and their spouses in the US for study or work. Steve Hazam, an instructor, represented NESE.

In a world where many independent language schools hire primarily part-time employees with no benefits or permanent positions, NESE received this recognition for its dedication to staff. NESE has mostly full-time instructors who receive health care, vacation, and prep time benefits. The few part-timers without benefits are paid a higher hourly rate. Instructors are very involved in the school's organization, including hiring,

evaluations, and staff meetings. The school also maintains an active list of substitutes, provides written job descriptions, and has a grievance procedure in place. NESE provides paid membership to professional organizations, including MATSOL, and also sends an instructor every year to the TESOL conference. That instructor then reports back on her/his learning and experience at staff meetings and staff development trainings.

We offer our congratulations to NESE and its management for setting an example for other private international language schools and providing a model workplace for its staff! To learn more about the MATSOL-MCAE Joint Committee on ABE/ESOL Working Conditions and the Guidelines for Quality Standards for Working Conditions, please contact Maryana Huston at maryana34@yahoo.com.



Lantana employees receive recognition and MATSOL T-shirts for attending workplace ESOL classes. Lantana's CEO, Paul Hart (far right), receives the MATSOL Quality Employer Award for sponsoring the classes which are provided by On-Site Resources. The classes are funded in part by the MA Workforce Training Fund. Lantana, in Randolph, was the site of the MATSOL 30th Anniversary Conference in October 2002.

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for the future meetings and professional development events.

Our RI SIG is a work in progress, but those of us who have been wrestling with its development feel encouraged that we are at least finally getting to know each other and that we share many of the same professional interests and concerns. Professor Nancy Cloud and Professor Willis Poole, both of Rhode Island College, have been our mentors and we are all enormously grateful for their help and encouragement. Rob Vitello, immediate past president of MATSOL, and Paula Merchant, Executive Director of MATSOL, have also been staunch supporters of our efforts by attending our meetings and offering help and advice as needed. As we succeed in grounding ourselves more firmly

as an entity in our home region and pulling together more as a team rather than a collection of individuals, we look toward forging stronger and closer ties with MATSOL and to participating more actively as a partner in this bi-state affiliate. If you live or work in Rhode Island and are interested in participating actively in the RI SIG, please contact Barbara_Gourlay@brown.edu.

This update was written by Barbara Gourlay who administers and teaches in Brown University's English for International Teaching Assistants Program since 1992. Previous to that she taught in academic and intensive-level ESOL programs at the University of Iowa and the University of Nebraska.

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for most of the population growth between 1990 and 2000, as well as for most of the net labor force growth in the 1990s in Massachusetts and this trend is expected to continue. Foreign-born residents accounted for 60% of the 332,672 individuals that represented the 1990 to 2000 population growth and, if we include residents born in Puerto Rico, this share is even greater. In the City of Boston alone, more than one in four residents are immigrants speaking over 140 languages. More specifically, foreign-born residents in the city of Boston accounted for 151,836 individuals or 25.8% of the total population, according to the 2000 Census. In addition, there were 91,062 individuals in the population ages five and older who spoke English less than very well at the time of the 2000 Census survey.

According to the 2000 Census, approximately, 19% of households in Massachusetts spoke another language other than in English in the home. The population of English language learners for the school year 2000-2001 was 44,747 or 4.6% of the school age population. Approximately 69% of these students were Spanish speakers, 10% Portuguese speaking, 5% Khmer, 5% Vietnamese, and 3% Haitian Creole. In addition, 13.2% of Massachusetts's students' first language was not English. Clearly, English language learners at all ages represent a key and growing portion of the state's population.

Adequate Funding for English Language Learner Programs in K-12

Communities with growing numbers of English language learners often are those with the least amount of resources to provide for the variety of needs of these immigrant elementary and secondary student populations. Both federal and state funding must be adequate to support high quality

and research-based programs for English language learners in grades K-12. MATSOL advocates that requirements for funding should be tied to the development of sustainable programs that are based on strong research and promote students' native language and cultural background. School funding formulas should account for the specialized programs needed to service English language learners.

The services offered to English language learners should include access to adequate space, resources, and staff at least equal to those offered to English only speaking students. ELLs must be given the same opportunity to participate in extra-curricular activities, after and before school programs, and other special programs offered to English only speaking students. English language learners should have access to adequate materials to develop and support literacy skills both in their primary language and in English. Availability of materials should be comparable to the amount and quality of materials available to English-only speaking peers.

Adequate Funding for English Language Learner Programs for Adults

Not surprisingly, ESL and adult basic education courses often emerge as key priorities for many (new and old) immigrants in Massachusetts. Immigrant adults want to learn English in pursuit of jobs, career advancement and living wages, citizenship, higher education and other personal achievements. In other words, most, if not all, immigrants want to improve their literacy skills so they can be fully involved in their children's education, become well-informed citizens and skilled/competent workers.

However, there are inadequate opportunities and

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Andrea O'Brien, Staff Developer for the Lawrence Adult Learning Center and a MATSOL Board member, receives recognition at the MATSOL 30th Anniversary Conference, for being one of the first teachers to be certified under the new voluntary ABE Licensure. (from L-R: Rob Vitello, MATSOL Past President, Andrea O'Brien MATSOL Adult Ed SIG Rep., Mary Jane Fay, MDOE ABE Licensure Coordinator, Bob Bickerton, Director of ACLS at MDOE)

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resources available for them to attend classes. The unfortunate reality is that there simply not enough classrooms for them to go to. ESL providers across the state have waiting lists often in the thousands. In September 2002, for instance, there were 19,894 adults waiting for adult basic education and ESL classes at programs funded by the Massachusetts Department of Education. In the City of Boston alone, 4,256 individuals were "wait-listed". Clearly, the program and government officials alike need to become more aware of the real value of these services and acknowledge the need for increased ESOL and ABE programming.

Therefore, MATSOL advocates in the short-term for the following:

- (1) preservation of federal, state and municipal funding to support sustainable and high-quality adult education services,
- (2) greater emphasis (within current funding allocations) on creating access to ESL services at workplaces and union halls across the state (e.g., by providing incentive funding and program design

assistance to employers, industry associations, and labor organizations),

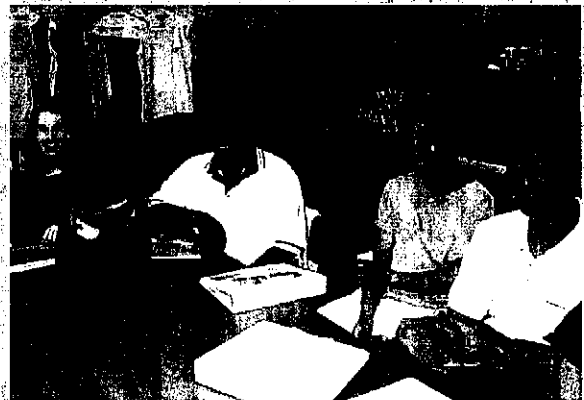
- (3) increasing the number of programs that integrate ESL classes with occupational skills training and math and computer literacy instruction,
- (4) increasing the number of programs that are part of career ladder programs within specific sectors of the industry (e.g., health care), and testing the use of technology to deliver instruction within cities and regions.

In the mid- to long-term (i.e., when fiscal realities are more favorable to investments), MATSOL advocates for additional federal, state, municipal, and corporate funding to eliminate long-term waiting lists (i.e., waiting lists where individuals need to wait longer than a semester before they can enroll in classes). In the long-term, MATSOL also wishes to explore with its partners and ESL funders in the government, corporate, and foundation communities the feasibility of a developing a Massachusetts Examination of

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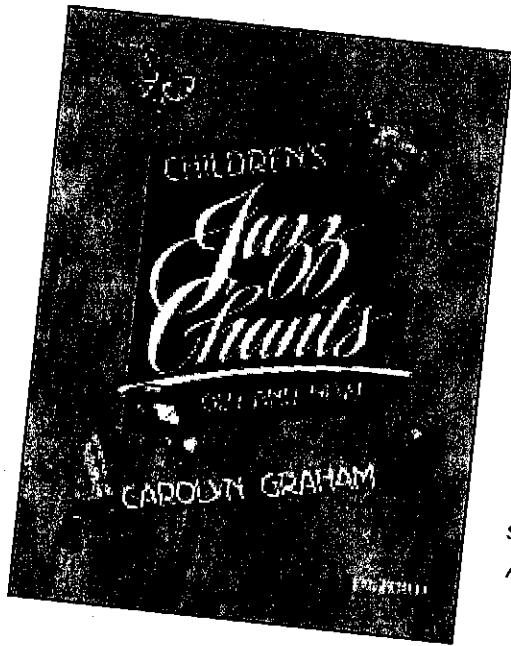
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English for Speakers of Other Languages. This assessment would allow immigrant adults -irrespective of whether they participated in ESL programs to gauge their proficiency and to signal their English language ability to employers.

As for quality of services, MATSOL advocates for program designs and curricula that are less of a one-size fits all and are more geared toward meeting the needs of immigrant populations with different backgrounds. For example, programs for those learners literate in their native language should be different than for learners with much less formal schooling in their native language.

Appropriate Personnel and Working Conditions for the Servicing of English Language Learners

Personnel serving English language learners should have the appropriate credential and professional knowledge on first and second language acquisition, linguistics, the role of culture, and ESOL methodology and materials. The professional development available for districts and programs servicing ELLs should include the needs of current ESOL teachers but also strive to develop among all teachers skills to adequately support ELLs. State and federal policies should support the continued development of high quality professional development models for ESOL teachers that

allow for sustained support in the implementation of programs and instructional approaches that are theory based supported by findings of empirical research.

Often part-time staff are used in the servicing of ELLs in spite of continued need for full time personnel. This happens in all settings K-12, adult and higher education. In K-12, they take on positions such as tutors that relegate them to a less than professional status in spite of the fact that they may be licensed teachers. These part-time employees often face the challenge of decreased job security, lack of health insurance, and less than comparable compensation. Federal and state policies should support part-time employees through legislation and aid for the creation of work benefits. In addition, school districts and adult education programs should strive when possible to employ full time staff in order to insure the creation of high quality services for ELLs.

The use of part-time staff increases in programs servicing adult ELLs, despite continued demand for ESL classes. The teacher in the classroom defines the quality of a program. As such, instructional quality cannot be maintained when districts continually hire new part-time instructors rather than give full-time positions to long-term employees. Part-time instructors are also unable to give sufficient

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attention to planning, assessment, curriculum development, professional development, and individual students. The high employment turnover due to little or no job security, less than adequate wages, benefits and working conditions all contribute to a fragmented faculty and a curriculum taught with less consistency.

Therefore, MATSOL advocates that highly qualified, fairly compensated, full time staff be employed in the servicing of ELLs of all ages in order to maintain high quality instruction. Teachers of ELLs also require sustained long term professional development that assist them in meeting the specific and continually changing needs of the students they serve. MATSOL calls for Quality Standards in Working Conditions for teachers, aides, counselors and other program staff with specific recommendations in the areas of:

- ◆ Functional work environment
- ◆ Compensation and benefits
- ◆ Program supports
- ◆ Job descriptions and hour of work
- ◆ Professional development

Native Language Instruction and Programs

Effective programming for English language learners includes both opportunities for the maintenance of students' native language in addition to English as a second language instruction. In fact, research is clear that the development of the second language is facilitated by proficiency in one's native language and further strengthened by strong literacy skills in the native language. ELLs who develop both English and their native language have higher academic achievement and better employment opportunities than students replacing their native language with English. Thus, programs designed for English language learners and ESL instruction should maximize students' knowledge of literacy in the native language.

In fact, when the native language is not maintained, ELLs' intellectual development is interrupted leaving them behind their age level peers. ELLs also lose contact with their cultural identity, family, and other community members. The connections to family members and community are essential ingredients in supporting the success of learning among at-risk students.

Research shows that programs, which emphasize the use of native language and the development of native language literacy, have higher academic achievement and higher rates of student graduation. Programs that provide sustained native language development in addition to ESL instruction include maintenance bilingual programs and dual immersion programs. State and district policies should promote such programs with the intent of providing English

language learners program models based upon findings from empirical studies.

Effective ELL programs provide students with sufficient time to attain both social and academic English and take into account the wide variety of rates of English acquisition among the students. ELLs can achieve social language in 2-3 years. At this point, students may appear to be fluent English speakers. However, students lack sufficient academic English proficiency and literacy skills needed to function in the development of abstract concepts, which requires 5-7 years to be fully developed. Academic language proficiency is best achieved through content-based instruction. Issues of motivation, learning style, the individual student's educational background, native language literacy skills, and cognitive style also affect the rate of English acquisition. Policies that set arbitrary time limits on support for ELLs ignore these various factors and the distinction between social and academic language.

Students are more likely to graduate from high school if they are fluent and effective readers by grade three. Young ELLs have the double challenge of learning to read and learning to speak a new language. Early literacy for ELLs is facilitated by development of literacy in the native language. These skills in the native language are then easily transferred to the second language. Literacy programs for young ELLs incorporate elements of a balanced literacy program and are developmentally appropriate.

Native language also plays a vital role in ABE programs, which service immigrants. It is possible to build people's skills in many areas that are highly relevant (math, computers, knowledge of labor market, career development, study skill) in their native language. These areas do not require someone to know English first and seriously increase the marketability and reduce the learning time immigrant workers need to enter, re-enter, or advance in the workplace.

Thus, MATSOL disapproves of any imposition that limits the use of native language use in instruction or program design. Any imposition of English-only programming ignores the research base indicating that strong native language skills facilitate the development of English. In addition, MATSOL disapproves of any arbitrary time limits on the length of time ELLs receive specialized instruction for learning English, which again ignores empirical research on how multiple factors interact and affect the acquisition of a second language.

English Language Learners in the Public Schools and their Families

Schools play a vitally important role in reaching out to immigrant families. Procedures for the intake of new students include a system of comprehensive assessments for

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the incoming ELL in English and the native language to facilitate student placement. Families should have access to information about programs and services in the native language. Districts must offer home school communications to families in the native language and English and access to translation services that allow them to participate in school activities and communicate with staff. District staff must make ongoing efforts to reach out and understand the values and cultural backgrounds of the families.

Families play an important role in the development of literacy for young English language learners. Families should be encouraged to read and talk to their children in the native language. These interactions in the native language between parent and child provide a rich language foundation, which promotes the learning of their native language and English.


MATSOL advocates for programs through school districts and community organizations that bridge the gap between home and school and facilitate language learning and literacy development of both child and adult in English when appropriate in addition to the family's native language.

Assessment

Multiple measures to assess English language learners' achievement are the only means to provide a diverse group of learners opportunities to show what they are able to do. Assessment when possible should be authentic and performance based, reflecting both standards but also the developmental stages of second language learners.

The inclusion of LEP students in state assessments systems is to insure school districts are accountable for the progress of their ELLs. Assessment serves different purposes. However, the use of one single measure for the high stakes decisions such as high school graduation is inappropriate. While there is a role for high stakes testing in providing for system-wide accountability, the primary purpose of assessment should be to inform instruction and not to deny students' access to education or high school graduation.

Tools used in the assessment of ELLs should be culturally and linguistically appropriate and take into account their development of both social and academic language proficiency. Often English proficiency measures fail to link the development of English language proficiency with the parallel need to show students' progress towards content area standards. However, use of instruments designed for regular education students are inappropriate measures for ELLs because they fail to take into account the ongoing developmental process of learning a second language. These assessments of content area knowledge in English becomes foremost a measure of students English proficiency and not of their content area knowledge. Thus, a clear distinction must be maintained between tests of English proficiency and those of content area knowledge.

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The implementation of the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System in Massachusetts is failing ELLs. Almost all ELLs will be included in MCAS assessments beginning with the 2002-2003 school year. MCAS as a single measure is not specifically designed to assess ELLs. Instead of measuring progress towards standards or academic content knowledge, the state is assessing English language proficiency. Thus, MCAS is inappropriate for use with ELLs.

MATSOL urges the development of a systematic and research based approach that includes multiple measures, performance, and curriculum based assessments for the measuring of the progress of ELLs. Assessments should clearly distinguish between measurement of English proficiency and progress towards content area standards. Also, MATSOL disapproves of the use of a single measure for all students including ELLs for high stakes decisions such as high school graduation.

Opportunities for Undocumented Immigrant Children

Undocumented immigrant children, who were brought to this country by their parents often at a very young age, had no part of making the decision to stay in this country without proper documentation. They have grown up in the United States, often only speaking English, excel in school, and graduate from high school. Often these children no longer

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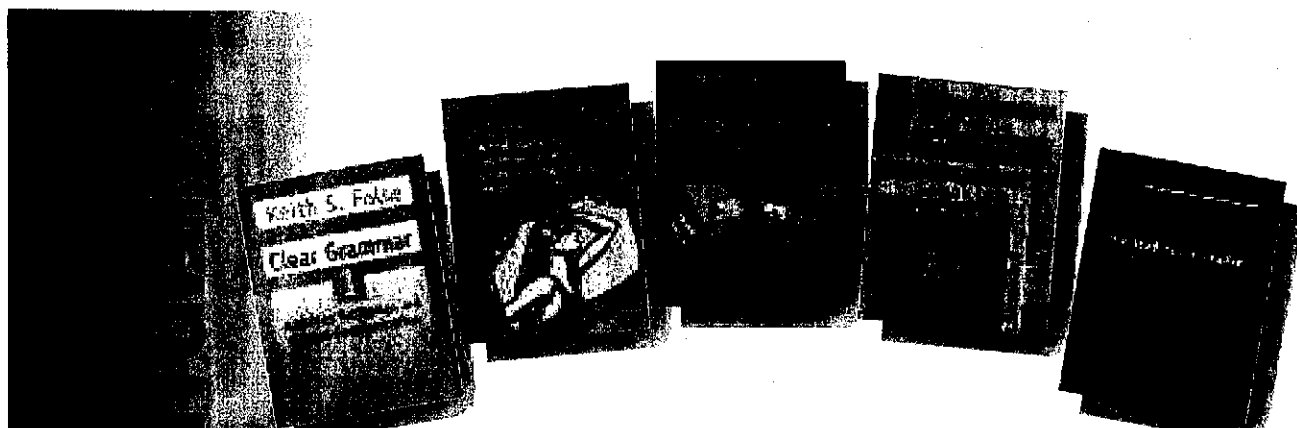
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...speak their first language and cannot remember the countries of their birth, having grown up in the United States considering themselves American. These immigrant students dream of going on to college but are effectively shut out due to their immigration status. MATSOL supports legislation



such as the Dream Act. Such legislation would allow undocumented students who were brought here as children, grew up in the United States, have good moral character and have graduated from high school to go to college, become legal residents and work here legally.



Conclusion

The educators servicing English language learners in the state of Massachusetts believe these families and their children have a tremendous amount to offer each of us personally and the state economically, socially and culturally. It is in the best interest of the elected representatives at the local, state, and federal levels to recognize the specific contributions of immigrants to our communities and support increased educational opportunities for these children and adults. Failing to address the needs of these communities in the short and long run has implications for the economic and social well being of our state and country. Democracy will only thrive on a well-informed and educated populace of which English language learners constitute a growing majority in many cities and towns throughout the state of Massachusetts. MATSOL will continue as a fundamental component of its work to advocate for equal educational opportunities for ELLs of all ages, because we believe the future of our local communities, state, and country depends on it.



John Pery
52 Sheffield Road
Boxford, MA 01921
Phone: toll-free 1-877-571-9649
Fax: 978-887-8045
Cell: 978-857-5173
E-mail: JohnP41184@aol.com

 esladmin@umich.edu
 866.804.0002

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International Partnership Continued from page 1

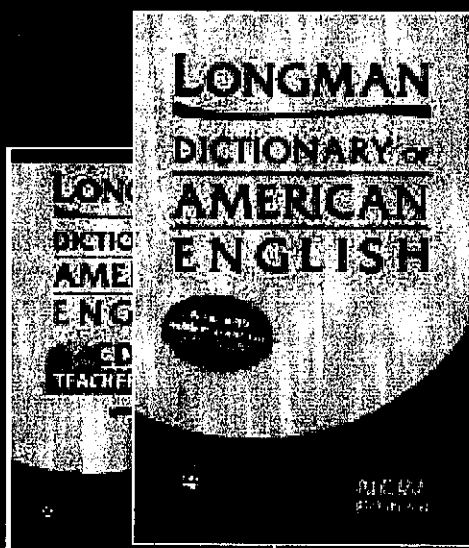
emphasized Slovak culture, history, sightseeing, and good times (see related articles from the participants).

At MATSOL's recent 30th anniversary conference, an exhibit and the presence of our Slovak guest and MATSOL's exchange teachers represented the partnership. Set up in a prominent location in a well-trafficked area of the Lantana Conference Center, our exhibit of Slovak artifacts, pictures, and student projects attracted many attendees. As a result, we have acquired numerous offers from teachers interested in participating in the program, both to host a guest and to journey to Slovakia as an exchange teacher.

The five-year old MATSOL_SAU/SATE partnership is one of a dozen similar programs between American TESOL affiliates and countries on other continents. The primary goal is cultural and professional awareness, benefiting both guests and hosts.

We are always anxious to have new people share this ten-day experience of professional development and personal contacts between MATSOL and SAUA/SATE members. This opportunity is open to all MATSOL members.

For additional information, please contact Marjorie Soriano, MATSOL liaison, 978 / 927-2077, marjorie.s@juno.com



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Effectiveness of Two Pre-Writing Strategies — Freewriting and Oral Brainstorming — on the Written Work of Haitian Creole ESL Students

by Jennifer L. Carlson

Last year, I was fortunate to work with Haitian Creole students in the seventh and eighth grades. What greatly intrigued me about the Haitians was their predominantly oral native language culture. Haitian Creole, recognized as an official language in Haiti in 1987, has only recently developed into a written language, with limited authentic texts and materials. The illiteracy rate in Haiti remains high (80%), and many Haitians continue to rely on oral rather than written means of communication. To bridge the gap between the Haitians' oral and written skills, I proposed a study that would capitalize on the Haitians' strong oral tradition in order to improve the quality of their written work.

The objective of my study was to compare the effectiveness of two pre-writing strategies, namely freewriting and oral brainstorming, on Haitian students' written work. These strategies were chosen because they both call on oral skills.

Freewriting is a technique in which one writes continuously for a predetermined amount of time without concern for grammar, spelling, or paragraph structure. Just as one typically speaks without pausing to correct mechanical errors, one freewrites without editing. In both speaking and freewriting, the emphasis is on content rather than form.

The pre-writing strategy of oral brainstorming more directly calls upon oral skills. Oral brainstorming involves openly speaking ideas on a given topic, with no concern for being "right" or "wrong." Students typically brainstorm in small groups, freely contributing their ideas. For non-native speakers of English, oral brainstorming may be completed in either their native language or in English.

It was predicted that both prewriting strategies would improve the subjects' written responses to specific questions. Given the Haitians' strong oral background, my initial hypothesis was that oral brainstorming would be even more effective than freewriting.

Six native Haitian-Creole students from the seventh and eighth grades participated in this study. The participants were four females and two males, aged 13-14, who had been in the United States for one to three years. All participants were also enrolled in the same Advanced ESL Humanities class.

Participants responded to one journal question per week for four weeks. For each question, students had five minutes to brainstorm their answers using one of the two pre-

writing techniques and twenty-five minutes to write their final responses. During weeks one and three, students used the pre-writing strategy of freewriting. During weeks two and four, students used oral brainstorming. All student responses were evaluated by the researcher according to a rubric and given a holistic score. Higher scores were indicative of thorough, organized responses with supporting details. The scores were reported and categorized according to the prewriting strategy used. The responses were also typed in Microsoft Word and given a total word count.

As hypothesized, both strategies seemed to be effective in generating students' ideas. Although the students' earlier work, in which no designated pre-writing strategy was used, was not subjected to holistic ratings, it is my observation that both strategies improved final writing. Student written work completed before the study was often loosely organized, lengthy, and lacking supporting details. Final written responses in this study, on the other hand, were concise yet detailed.

However, oral brainstorming was not superior to freewriting, thus refuting the second hypothesis; subjects performed consistently (within 0.5 points) regardless of the prewriting strategy used. Comparing the two strategies, freewriting yielded slightly longer responses than oral brainstorming. Though longer responses are not always better than shorter responses in overall quality, the longer responses in this study revealed more details. This suggests that freewriting is more effective in helping students generate ideas that they can transfer to their final responses.

In addition to the aforementioned results, this study revealed several practical tips

on teaching second language learners. First, freewriting is a great technique to get students to perform actual writing tasks. From earlier classroom observations, I noticed that the Haitians tended to stare at a question for several minutes before attempting to answer it. When I instructed them to freewrite, on the other hand, they put their pencil to paper instantly and enthusiastically wrote until their hands were about to cramp up. While there must be caution against rushing and making careless mistakes on final written work, freewriting enables one to get initial thoughts on paper without worrying about being "right" or "wrong."

Second, freewriting enables the instructor to see a

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Learning How English Language Learners Must Feel

by Judy Kahalas

Here is how it happened that I, a native speaker of English and an ESL teacher for over two decades, became an ESL student. I had some nasty surgery to remove nodules from my vocal cords and open blocked sinuses, and I couldn't speak for over 10 days. It wasn't as though the doctor had failed to warn me that I would be uncomfortable. He probably told me too much. For three weeks before the operation, I awoke in the middle of the night and frantically began flailing about the house, turning on lights and gasping for breaths of air.

The surgery went fine as surgeries go (I won't bore you with the details of my operation so long as you don't stop me at the next conference to share details of yours). When I opened my eyes in Recovery I, I was thrashing wildly in the narrow gurney. I heard the nurses say that I was agitated from the anesthesia, but what did they know? I knew why I was thrashing. No one could understand me!

In Recovery II things weren't much better. Now I was aware: aware that not only could I not talk, but I also could not breathe through my nose or swallow through my mouth! I was truly locked inside myself and began a series of yoga-inspired conversations. (Hi, are you taking deep breaths?

Hmm. Namaste isn't working yet.) That night I went home and checked myself frequently in the mirror to make sure that I was still Me. I really wasn't. My eyes had this horror-filled look, and I couldn't figure out why.

Then I got The Marches. The first two days Post-Op were punctuated with The Marches. I marched into the living room and sat at the piano (Oh! Sound!). I marched upstairs to make sure the Blue Hills were still standing. I marched into the kitchen and spotted overripe bananas and baked, from scratch, my mother-in-law's recipe for banana cake. I defrosted a turkey; I cooked the turkey. I made extra Jello. I made Ratatouille. I marched into my office and went online. I communicated with the world at 3 a.m. Was anyone listening? I marched in and out of bed 17 times; I finally marched out into the hallway of my building, where the lights were bright at 4 a.m. Sousa would have been inspired to create his most brilliant piece to accompany my rhythm.

My sister-in-law and my friend Marcia decided that the doctor had to prescribe something for The Marches. So I was finally calmed into a stupor of passivity. Now I sat and stared at people as they communicated and wondered about my value to society in general. My eyes grew wider and wider,

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Effectiveness of Two Pre-Writing Strategies *Continued from page 17*

student's thoughts on paper. In turn, the teacher may pose specific questions of the student to elicit more detailed responses. For example, one student, in her freewriting response to the prompt "Describe something that makes you feel grown-up. Explain why it makes you feel that way," wrote about her mother blow-drying her hair. In the final composition, the student only mentioned perming her hair and chose instead to emphasize a special dress given to her by her mom. The teacher could use the freewriting piece to ask specific questions of the student, such as, "Was having your mom blow-dry your hair very special for you? Or does the dress mean more to you?" The teacher could also explicitly tell the students to be sure to use the good ideas from the freewriting exercise in their final responses.

It was also beneficial to allow students to orally brainstorm in their native language. The Haitian students seemed relaxed and enthusiastic about the task when I told them they could brainstorm in Creole. Though there are certainly times when target language brainstorming is optimal, providing non-native speakers with the opportunity to use their native language for an academic task is a welcome change of pace for English language learners.

Finally, pre-writing brainstorming activities focused students' attention and resulted in simple yet effective lessons. After the students wrote their final responses, I allowed volunteers to share what they wrote. Open sharing provided closure to the activity and improved the sense of camaraderie among the students.

In summary, each of the two pre-writing strategies encouraged students from a predominantly oral culture to produce solid samples of written work. The difference in results produced by the two approaches was not statistically significant. However, several practical teaching tips emerged as a result of the study, and, in my opinion, both freewriting and oral brainstorming led to better final writing than that produced by the same students in the absence of any assigned prewriting strategy. Further research, with more subjects, questions, and a control group that uses no pre-writing technique, may yield more significant and conclusive results on the effectiveness of freewriting and oral brainstorming.

Ms. Carlson recently earned her Master's degree in Teaching ESL from Simmons College in Boston and is currently employed as an Elementary ESOL teacher with Anne Arundel County Public Schools, Maryland.

MFA Offers Tours to Adult Students of ESOL

by Christine Root

The MFA Associates* at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, are excited about our new program of ESOL Tours at the Museum. Our guides have been trained to work with adult ESOL students and are eager to share the treasures of the MFA in these specially designed tours. The tours last approximately one hour and can either provide an overview of the entire collection or focus specifically on our Asian, Egyptian, Greek and Roman, European Paintings and Decorative Arts, or American Paintings and Decorative Arts collections.

We hope you will find the time to bring your adult class to the Museum. The tours are free of charge as we have a grant to cover the admission fee if your institution does not already have a membership pass to the Museum. We invite you to stay in the Museum after the tour to explore on your own.

As we ESOL professionals know, one of the great things about learning and teaching language in an immersion setting is that language is everywhere. It is in everything we do. Art is just one of many vehicles available to us as language teachers, but it is one that evokes an emotional response and adds another dimension to the learning experience. Art represents all that is enduring and best in the human spirit. It puts us in touch with history, teaching us about the past and helping us understand the present. It gives us a sense of who we are. Its message is universal; art is for everyone.

Several years ago Professor David Nunen surveyed EFL teachers in many parts of the world to identify their primary classroom concerns. Many of the concerns he found in the foreign language classroom are still familiar to those of us working in ESOL settings. In descending order of significance, some of the major concerns were keeping students motivated, finding appropriate materials and resources, getting students to take responsibility for their own learning, working with mixed-ability groups, getting students to practice out of class, fostering awareness of the learning process, getting students to take risks, maximizing oral production, and getting students to speak accurately. What better way is there to meet these challenges than by visiting a world-famous museum?

The following student testimonials from our pilot program last winter attest to ways that museum tours can excite and motivate students and bring them to a rich language learning experience:

"I was really worried about English, if my guide speaks fast and uses difficult words, but it's not happened. My guide was so friendly, kind and she talked to me carefully. So I could understand and know about paintings. If she uses a difficult word which I didn't know it, she explained about it to me. It's really good for me." Akiko

"I really enjoyed the museum tour the other day. Since the Museum is so huge, looking around with a guide helps a visitor to make it easy to take a look. My guide explained about some works. Her explain was very courteous and clear. Also by watching at the works carefully with explanation, visitors can find a slight points they usually don't realize." Naho

"When I arrive at the museum on that day, it was a very nice welcome to all of us. My guide showed me *Dance at Bougival* by Renoir. She said in 1887 artists have paint in tubes and easels so they can paint outside and enjoy nice events like in the painting. She said, 'cover the lower part of this paint and you see movement.' I saw that beautiful dress with a nice design was floating and waving to show joy and happiness." Mario

"My guide took me to furniture rooms because I said that I'm going to study interior design. I went 'shopping' with her at the museum. She asked me, 'Which do you pick up if you can bring something to home?' At each room, whenever I chose something which I was interested in, she told me the details clearly." Masako

"It was interesting that there are separated to many kinds of part, such as, Asian part, American part, etc. Actually, I am interested in art. When I entered the room of pictures, I could smell them. They have peculiar smell, and I love it. I like paintings because I can imagine how that period was through them." Nao

Instructors who participated in our pilot program were also enthusiastic:

"I was impressed with how well-trained the guides were. They really understood that for ESOL students, this is a language experience and that anything they learn about the art is frosting on the cake."

We invite you to open the doors of the MFA to your students. Tours are available September through March by advance reservation, between 10 am and 3 pm, Monday through Friday. For a reservation, call Terry Aufranc at 781-237-0451. At that time, you can talk about ways to ensure that your students have a great Museum experience.

* Formerly the Ladies Committee

Nunen, David. "Challenges in the EFL Classroom." *TESOL Matters* Aug/Sept (1993): 7.

Christine Root is a member of the MFA Associates at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and Head of the Guides. She taught ESOL at the University of Pennsylvania and Harvard, has coauthored several ESOL textbooks, and is currently working on Ready to Read Now, a companion series to Ready to Write.

Learning How English Language Learners Must Feel Continued from page 18

and my arms became increasingly more weary with the realization that these were my best means of communication.

On the third day Post-Op, my husband decided to take me to our home on the Cape to finish my recovery. During the comMUTE, I realized that I couldn't even carp about his tailgating. Our daughter had purchased a whiteboard, and I frantically scribbled, "Slow down," "Watch it, dummy," or "You'll kill me, and I won't even have a say in it." Just as quickly as I wrote these critically important missives, I erased them when I realized that if he diverted his eyes to read them, we would surely die even more quickly. So I motioned to let me drive, and he did.

Friends continued to drop by to visit. In the first few days, they were kind and compassionate and offered words of sympathy; then, slowly, they began talking to each other as though I weren't in the room. One of my friends (an ESL teacher!) spoke 10 decibels higher than her usual voice and made sure I saw her lips move. The fair majority assumed that since I had lost my voice, I also had lost my cognitive abilities. Eventually, most of the others began talking around me, pretending that I wasn't even there as they grew tired of

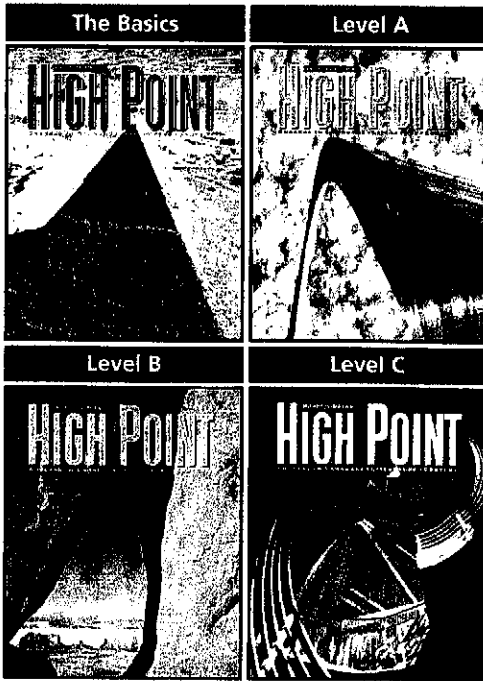
my failure to participate in Group Activity. Even my husband skipped out to an office party and told me he'd love to take me but he knew I'd be uncomfortable.

As the days turned into a week, then longer, I began to doubt that I would ever master Muteness. I swallowed frequently, just to hear myself. I checked my image a dozen times an hour to make sure I was still here. People were solicitous, but no one really wanted to embark on a one-sided conversation. It was more like, "Hi, Juuuudy, how are you feeeeeeling?"

I know that Paulo, my hero, my mentor, told me to live within the community where I would teach. Having had this post-surgical experience of muteness literally opened my eyes to some of the issues our ESL students have to deal with on a daily basis. And by the way, if you should happen to bump into me, just don't ask me what my first words were.

Ms. Kahalas began teaching ESL in the Randolph Public Schools in 1978. Presently, she coordinates the Writing Center at Roxbury Community College, where she has found the best students and most creative opportunities of her long career.

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REVIEWS



Grammar Links 1-3: A Theme-Based Course for Reference and Practice

M. Kathleen Mahnke (Series Editor). Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000. 409-450 pages. Instructor's manual, workbook, audiocassette, CD-ROM, and links to the World Wide Web. 1: by Linda Butler, Janet Podnecky, ISBN 0-395-828848. 2: by M. Kathleen Mahnke and Elizabeth O'Dowd, ISBN 0-395-82888-0. 3: by Janis van Zante, Debra Daise, Charl Norloff, Randee Falk, ISBN 0-395-82892-9.

Reviewed by Eliza Nutting and Heather Tillberg

Grammar Links, a series of 3 books, professes to be a theme-based grammar curriculum with a communicative framework. However, teachers using these books will have to come up with some of their own communicative tasks. The books, geared to high school and college students, are divided into dense units, each focusing on several grammatical forms in sequence. There is actually little organization around functions or themes. The book says that its goal is like that of *Focus on Grammar*, but in reality it is more similar to Azar's *Basic English Grammar*, in which everything revolves around grammar.

Each unit in the series follows the same outline. Unit objectives, which are a variety of related grammatical points, are clearly bulleted at the outset. The unit introduction reading or listening follows, and then there are two short exercises with some emphasis on comprehension. Several chapters each have the same structure. An initial reading is followed by a task based on the unit's target grammatical structures. Each chapter contains two or three "Grammar Briefings," which define and explain the rules of the featured grammatical form. The not-so-brief "Briefings" are generally followed by exercises, interspersed with "Grammar Hotspots," which examines particularly tricky points of grammar, and "Talking the Talk," which elaborates on formal and informal usage. In the subsequent Grammar Practice, exercises reinforce learned forms, beginning with fill-in-the-blank exercises, and moving on to more open-ended tasks, but sometimes falling short of genuine, spontaneous use. Base forms are usually provided; students need only produce the correct form. After several chapters, the Unit Wrap-Up ties the various parts together in written and oral exercises that provide opportunities for whole use and test the students' knowledge. Most of the suggested pair and group work is in the wrap-up. Only here is the book truly communicative. Appendices and Grammar Glossaries pro-

vide additional reference for students seeking more concise grammatical explanations.

Although the series claims to be theme-based, the themes exist only as vehicles for the grammar. Beyond the first page of each unit, the book's organization (and focus) rarely mentions the unit's topic. The grammatical forms are reiterated as chapter headings, so it is difficult to relocate exercises with the theme in mind. All of the exercises and readings do revolve around the theme; however, most of them feature mechanical drills, in which understanding meaning is not necessary to perform the task. As a result of the "focus on forms" approach, the readings in the series are fabricated expressly to demonstrate specific grammar, which leads to detachment of content from natural uses of language. There are few real needs to communicate about the content.

The series is sadly limited primarily to a representation of only white, middle-class, American culture. Students from less privileged backgrounds would probably not feel comfortable with much in this book. Multiculturalism is reduced to discussions of cultural foods and festivals. Sexual stereotypes are rampant; women are generally in traditional or uncreative roles. For example, in a Halloween reading in Book 1, the girls are uncreative, reusing their witch and princess costume from the year before—discussing, but not doing. There are references to historically important women, but the portrayal of contemporary women is weak. Language instruction is inextricably linked to cultural representation, and we think ESOL books should represent a broad array of cultures. This series misses an opportunity to help students explore possibilities as well as language.

The grammar explanations are accurate and traditional. Attempts are made at creating opportunities for negotiation of meaning between students, but, more often than not, activities labeled as group and pair work are purely

Continued on page 22

Grammar Links 1-3 Continued from page 21

mechanical exercises that do not result in authentic communication. In order to engage students communicatively one would have to modify the activities to make them more relevant to students' lives. Although it doesn't really meet the authors' stated goals, it is a solid traditional grammar text.

Heather Tillberg works at Embassy CES at Lasell College and

at Breaking Barriers in Waltham. She has just completed an M.A. in Applied Linguistics from the University of Massachusetts-Boston and hopes to get a Ph.D. in Instructional Design. htillber@yahoo.com

Eliza Nutting is a graduate student in the Applied Linguistics Program at the University of Massachusetts-Boston and teaches ESL at the middle school level. e-nutting@stoughton.k12.ma.us



Maria Lindia (left) from the RI DOE was a first time presenter at the MATSOL 30th Anniversary Conference. Her workshop focused on how the federal Leave No Child Behind legislation effects programming for English language learners in RI. Ms. Lindia's participation underscores the growing RI membership in MATSOL under the new RI Special Interest Group.

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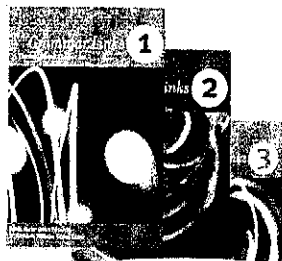
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Over the Transom

Review A Book for Currents!

by Sterling Giles

Currents has recently received the following books for review: Lou and Marilyn Spaventa at McGraw Hill have produced *Writing to Learn*, a series of four slender volumes that take students from high beginning to advanced levels while moving from sentences through paragraphs and on to essays. Relevant grammar is integrated throughout.

The University of Michigan Press has come out with local author Margaret Gelin's *Taking Turns: A Pair-based Text for Beginning ESL*, with materials for lots of practice and pictures to make instruction accessible. Reader's Choice is in a 4th edition with new readings, web work, and help with visual literacy in modern situations where text and graphics are interwoven.

A rich, complex, fascinating review assignment would be to look at the *MacII*, the Maculaitis Assessment of Competencies / Test of English Language Proficiency. This is a program-wide instrument, not something for one teacher to use in a class. It can assist with placement, measuring progress, informing instruction, and making program exit decisions.

Pro Lingua has a content-based reader *Heroes from American History* and a related book of plays for student performance, *Celebrating American Heroes*. This K-12 offering focuses on women and minorities in a meaningful way. *Living in the United States* is a simple introduction for adults – all content, no skills development. *Lexicarry* has a new edition; this is a picture book of for language learning. *Write For You* is a collection of writing activities for teachers; student pages can be copied for classroom use. *Rhymes 'n Rhythms* and *The Great*

Another engaging approach to reading skills development can be found in *Active Skills for Reading*, a four-level series with a wide range of reading types, intellectual and practical topics, but a younger look and more everyday vocabulary focus.

Big Bingo Book are other copyable activity books which speaks for themselves, as does *The Modal Book* (high intermediate). All very imaginative, fun, and time saving. English Interplay offers bare-bones survival skills.

Heinle & Heinle has produced a third edition of Marianne Celce-Murcia's definitive *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language*. For bi-lingual teachers interested in professional development as well as administrators and policy makers, there's *Dual Language Instruction: A Handbook for Enriched Education*. Third

editions of two popular series have also appeared: *Composition Practice* (books 1-4) now has expanded pre-reading activities and optional on-line components; *Grammar in Context* (books 1-3) continues to engage students with American cultural readings and has added listening and web activities.

At Heinle the series *Steps to Academic Reading* has also been updated and expanded. The basic level, *Steps and Plateaus*, is now in a second edition with new exercises that focus on skimming, inferencing, main ideas, and increasing speed. Thematic units and extensive recycling remain a part of the series. The intermediate *In Context* is in a third edition with all new readings, as is the highest level, *Between the Lines*. Levels two and three (between *Steps* and *In Context*) offer a finely

A rich, complex, fascinating review assignment would be to look at the *MacII*, the *Maculaitis Assessment of Competencies / Test of English Language Proficiency*.

graded continuum, so teachers can look carefully and make a nuanced decision when choosing an appropriate level. Another engaging approach to reading skills development can be found in *Active Skills for Reading*, a four-level series with a wide range of reading types, intellectual and practical topics, but a younger look and more everyday vocabulary focus.

Houghton Mifflin offers *Great Sentences*, *Great Paragraphs*, and *Great Essays*, three books that stretch from mechanics to logical thinking in a comprehensive, context-driven approach to writing. Also new is *Blueprints: Composition Skills for Academic Writing*, books 1 and 2. The first goes from paragraph to essay; the second delves deeper into essay writing with a wide variety of models and focus on relationships between grammar and writing.

The *Longman Dictionary of American English* is now available in stand-alone CD-ROM format. *Reviewing Basic Grammar: A Guide to Writing Sentences and Paragraphs* is in a 5th edition, with new checklists, computer activities, and a related website for expansion. The *NorthStar* reading/writing series now has *Writing Activity Books* at all levels, including Basic; there's also an Introductory level now. *Write Ahead* is an academic prep writing and grammar book for high beginning students who have learned English informally, but have gaps in formal knowledge. *Academic* and *Active Vocabulary* are two books with a rich variety of approaches for various learner types, and links to web sites. *Eye on Editing 2* serves high-intermediate students.

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Russian-English Dictionary of Proverbs and Sayings

Alexander Margulis and Asya Kholodnaya. McFarland and Company, 2000. 487 pages. ISBN 0-7864-0703-4.

Reviewed by Eileen Feldman

Example is better than precept." Margulis and Kholodnaya have demonstrated to 21st century readers and writers the power of collective wisdom merely by listing 2,375 Russian proverbs and translations. This year 2000 edition updates and consolidates several previously published proverb dictionaries. (Thirty such volumes are cited in their bibliography.) The humor, pathos, irony, and truth of these sentence-long entries embody the moral lessons of longer fables, short stories, novels, and poems. The metaphoric language of proverbs could be a path to more successful and sophisticated second language learning for students; journalists and translators are also included as the authors' intended audience.

There are three sections: the Dictionary (232 pages) is comprised of Russian proverbs listed alphabetically by first word and followed by literal translations. Second come the more familiar British and American versions. Last, the Russian Proverbs and Sayings Key Word Index are counterparts.

Several features make the book useful for classroom and writing purposes. Students' enjoyment of familiar proverbs in L1 enables them to understand grammar and vocabulary

in L2. ("What we learn early we remember late.") Idioms such as these are perfectly suited to introductions and conclusions in writing and presentations. Integration between ideas and language in L2 and L1 aids thinking in the new language. Even if the class has students from many language backgrounds, an appreciation of traditional, generational, and cross-cultural value similarities and differences can lead to great discussions and spurs non-Russian students to share (and express in English) their own idioms as well.

The book fails to address the current popularity, context (literary vs. oral), and geographical limits of idioms, so students might embrace obscure or inappropriate expressions. Russian students might wince at some of the bland translations of their earthier idioms.

Margulis's and Kholodnaya's experiences as ESL-students-turned-authors can serve as a model for the needs of our learners and encourage us to find creative ways to work with books such as these. "Everyone knows best where his shoe pinches."

Eileen Feldman teaches at Bunker Hill Community College and Suffolk University.



Nancy Cloud, TESOL Board member and advisor to the new RI Special Interest Group, presents Rob Vitello, MATSOL Past President and Carlos Matos, incoming President, with a plaque commemorating MATSOL's 30 years of affiliate membership in TESOL.

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A Novel Approach: Fried Green Tomatoes (A Guide to Using Literature and Film in the Classroom)

*E. Gareis, M.S. Allard, S. Gill, and J. Saindon. University of Michigan Press, 1998.
83/85 pages. ISBN Student Workbook 0-472-08495-X; Teacher's Manual 0-472-08499-2.*

Reviewed by Gosia Janik

The goal of *A Novel Approach* is to increase students' US cultural knowledge as well as their English proficiency. The authors recommend the book for groups ranging from intermediate ESL classrooms to college-level literature courses. The textbook is visually unappealing, consisting mainly of print. I expected it to be full of images from the movie, which would provide motivation to read the novel.

Each of the novel's 10 sections has its own chapter in this book. Each chapter is organized similarly: a comprehension quiz, vocabulary exercises, topics for discussion, whole language activities, and writing topics. Two chapters focus specifically on a video project and the movie "Fried Green Tomatoes."

This textbook integrates language skills: reading the novel, speaking during activities and class discussions, writing essays, and listening during the showing of the movie. However, listening comprehension could be incorporated more into other activities.

The instructions in the textbook are very clear. However, most of these instructions really belong in the teacher's manual; in most cases the students cannot follow them without the teacher's guidance. For example, "Select one or more of the following vocabulary development activities to do in small groups or with the whole class." Having this in the student textbook is useless.

Using this book with the novel will require a good deal of preparation from the teacher. Although there are many interesting ideas for activities, there are few examples or ready-to-use activities. Having an idea for an activity makes it easier to prepare, but the teacher still has to plan the actual procedures and prepare materials. I was disappointed to see that approximately three-quarters of the teacher's manual is a reprint from the student book, with only a few additional comments.

One strength of this book is the communicative approach in the activities. Vocabulary exercises and games and whole language activities and discussions give countless opportunities for students to talk, ask questions, argue, and fantasize. There are also opportunities to work alone on journal entries, essays, and reading. The repeated pattern of ac-

tivity types could be boring, but the book introduces interesting new activities in each chapter. Vocabulary is a strong area; students keep a vocabulary journal. Working in groups, they make keyword lists and come up with definitions. Games and group activities are varied and fun.

The first chapter provides a set of reading strategies. Once again, it is a list of instructions without many examples or a clear context. This set of rules could be easily turned into a helpful activity if each strategy were illustrated in a paragraph. It would be helpful if the book contained specific examples from the novel illustrating how to approach the text.

Reading activities are far from perfect. The only pre-reading activity is in the first chapter. Why isn't there more

The book suggests one very creative project – the video project. Students prepare a passage from the novel, assign roles, select the director and actors, and try to make a movie based on the novel that they just read. I imagine students having a lot of fun doing this.

of this easy-to-design, crucial strategy? At the end of each chapter students should make predictions about the next chapter. Snap shots from the movie would help a lot. The only during-reading activity is keeping two journals: a book journal and a vocabulary journal. Both are used in the classroom. As post-reading activities students take a quiz checking their comprehension (true/false) and have a discussion, which includes questions clarifying content. Much of this would work better as a pre-reading task, giving focus to the actual reading process. It's a pity the book doesn't use the countless strategies that could make the reading process more interesting and effective.

Writing assignments present a better variety. Essay topics ask the students to imagine a person or an event, force them to make a judgment, relate experiences of the characters to students' personal experiences, and let them express

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A Novel Approach Continued from page 25

personal opinions and interpretations of the novel. Students share their journal entries with others. Almost every essay question asks students to think of their own experiences and opinions and respond to a topic in light of their knowledge and feelings. What is not stressed enough is the cultural and historical aspect of the novel. The authors aim to integrate culture into the approach, but this goal is not present in the activities. Assignments such as researching the historical background of the novel or learning about a particular place would achieve this goal.

Only after the novel has been read do students get to watch the movie. The authors give a few suggestions for pre-viewing, viewing, and post-viewing activities, which are interesting and engaging, but very general. I expected specific examples of how to handle one or two scenes. There are several creative activities for students, but they require more detailed instruction or an example in order to get on task.

The book suggests one very creative project – the video project. Students prepare a passage from the novel, assign roles, select the director and actors, and try to make a movie based on the novel that they just read. I imagine students

having a lot of fun doing this. The teacher could talk about the project even before students start reading the novel, so they would start imagining every scene visually.

One advantage of the general, non-specific character of this book is the possibility to adapt ideas to other novels and movies. However, since the book is intended as an approach to this particular novel, it should be more specific and detailed in doing so. If I were a student, I would want pictures and scenes from the movie; I would like the book to guide me through each chapter by asking me particular questions, motivating me to find out more about an historical event or person, and explaining idiomatic expressions and jokes. As a teacher, I would like to have more specific activities and examples. As it is, it's a helpful starting point for the teacher, but less useful for students.

Gosia Janik has a master's degree in teaching German from Silesia University in Poland, her native country. By the time you read this she will have finished a graduate program in Applied Linguistics at the University of Massachusetts in Boston and done her student teaching in the ESL program at Somerville High School. gosiajanik@hotmail.com

Review A Book for Currents! Continued from page 23

Writing for Results brings together academic and professional goals. *Text & Thought* is in a 2nd edition, with some new readings, web searches, a section on learning styles, and a new unit on summarizing that addresses plagiarism and research skills. Another addition is an *Intro* level of *For Your Information*, the popular Reading Skills development series. *Contemporary Topics* (1, 2 and 3) is out in a second edition with a focus on corpus-based academic vocabulary and word lists, realistic lectures, and new, engaging topics.

"Easy English News" is a newspaper for students that more people should know about. Lastly, *In our Classrooms* helps K-12 instructors to respond to ESOL students and adapt curriculum; it includes specific lesson ideas and copiable blackline masters, something to share with your colleagues outside ESL.

If you are interested in writing a review of any of these texts, 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.

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