



Question Two's One-Year Promise Debunked

by Stephen Krashen and Margaret Adams

In November of 2002, the voters of Massachusetts approved "Question 2" through referendum vote. Spearheaded by millionaire Ron Unz after similar successful initiatives in California and Arizona, the new law drastically changed the education of English language learners (ELLs) in the state. Structured English immersion (SEI) replaced the past requirement of transitional bilingual education in districts with twenty or more ELLs, and the new law stated that after a short time in structured immersion, "normally not lasting more than one year," students should be ready for regular class-work in the mainstream.

But this has not happened. In fact, English learners have not even come close to acquiring English proficiency this rapidly under the new law.

The 2004-2005 school year marked the first administrations of the Massachusetts

English Proficiency Assessment (MEPA). The assessment was administered in the fall and spring to ELLs in grades 3-12. MEPA has both oral (speaking/listening) and written (reading/writing) components.

Student scores on MEPA result in a designation at one the following four levels: beginning, early intermediate, intermediate, and transitioning. Beginning and early intermediate students are clearly not candidates for reclassification as English proficient. A score at the intermediate level means the student "may or may not" be ready for reclassification; the decision depends on other data, such as classroom performance (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2005a, p. 3). Students who score solidly in the "transitioning" category are considered "probable candidates" for reclassification, assuming classroom performance is consistent with the MEPA score (p. 3).

In table one we present the progress made by students in their second year of schooling in the US, students who have had

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Meeting the Literacy Needs of Older Elementary Limited Formal and Interrupted Schooling English Language Learners

by Margaret Adams and Kellie Jones

The needs of English language learners that must be met by schools are already quite diverse. The demands of learning a new language and the overwhelming experience of immigrating to a new country can be quite traumatic on students and their families. Imagine adding the demands of never having any formal education or limited formal schooling. The demands increase two-fold as one now has to learn the routines and structures of school. In addition, academic language in your first language is non-existent. The challenge for the limited and/or interrupted formal schooling ELL include the social/cultural adjustment to a new country and cultures, the gaining of literacy skills often in a language they do not

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**MATSOL
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Kelly Jones
Brockton Public
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Executive Director
Paula Merchant

Reviews Editor

Sterling Giles
Roxbury Community
College

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Questions?
Need more info?

Contact:
Paula Merchant
paulamerchant@yahoo.com

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The Schrafft Center
Suite 1M10
529 Main Street
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Tel: 617-242-1756
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Letter from the MATSOL President

Fall has passed, and the winter flakes represent promise of a busy and exciting year to come. It's beneficial to take a moment to reflect on MATSOL's work and successes, after a busy MATSOL year of representing the diverse community of teachers of speakers of other languages.

MATSOL/MABE's annual K-12 Conference, this year entitled, "The Reform Agenda: Leave NO ELL Behind", was held on March 11-12, 2005 at the Four Points Sheraton in Leominster, Massachusetts. With over 500 registrants, this year's conference was the largest in years, despite the snowy weather. Highlights of the conference included keynote addresses by Dr. Alfredo Schifini, James Crawford, and Dr. Jack Damico. One participant (who traveled from Connecticut to attend the conference), and new MATSOL member, sent a personal email reflecting on his experiences:

I thoroughly enjoyed every aspect of the conference including the keynote addresses, workshop presentations, the informal conversations and the planned social activities as well. The lunches and refreshments were also very well done. I attend many local, national and international conferences and I must say that this MABE/MATSOL conference is among the best organized and most informative and useful that I have attended in a long time...Most impressive to me was the warmth of your staff and the fellowship that I felt with your staff and other attendees. This is rare in my experience in attending conferences. You created a climate that mirrored effectively what we all would like to see in schools and classrooms where parents and staff can work together in a spirit of collaboration and mutual respect to support students' total development.

Our other Special Interest Groups representatives organized programs throughout the year, targeting specific needs of our members. Building on the success of last year, our Higher Education, Workplace, and Adult Education special interest groups collaborated on the second annual conference, held on May 5, 2005 at Suffolk University. The conference, entitled, "Bridges to Success: Best Practices in Adult and Higher Education ESL", attracted over 80 registrations, and was highlighted by the plenary address of Dr. Ruth Spack of Bentley College. Our Western Massachusetts SIG held a social event last autumn in Northampton, with representatives from the publishing community to share resources with our members. Our Rhode Island SIG has held a series of events, with the latest one focusing on the Rhode Island state ESL standards. Our Bilingual Special Education Network hosted a special strand at the K-12 conference in Leominster, Massachusetts and sponsored an afternoon keynote speaker, renowned educator, Dr. Jack Damico.

Equally important to the events planned by MATSOL is celebration of the work of its members. MATSOL awarded its second annual Ann Dow award, in remembrance of a much beloved state leader in adult/higher education, to Andy Nash of World Education. The K-12 Conference awarded its Elementary ELL Teacher of the Year award to Maria Fontes of the Brockton Public Schools and its Secondary ELL Teacher of the Year award to Kevin Frost of the Leominster Public Schools. These deserving recipients represent the dedication and clinical expertise that is shared by so many of our members.

The MATSOL community, while enjoying the successes of 2004-2005, held its annual end of year meeting in early October, and is now well into the work on future events for our new membership year beginning this month. We welcome all MATSOL members, who wish to contribute to the on-going efforts on behalf of the professionals and students across the state, to get involved. Feel free to contact me at tvrdosin@hotmail.com !

With gratitude,
Kellie Jones,
MATSOL President

*On behalf of the
MATSOL Board of Directors we wish
you Happy Holidays and a great 2006*

2005 Anne Dow Award Given To Andy Nash

by Tom Griffith

Tom Griffith is ESL Director at Showa Boston, and a former editor of MATSOL Currents. He was privileged to work under Anne Dow in 1990-91.

The MATSOL board is pleased to announce that the second Anne Dow Award for Excellence and Creativity has been given to Andy (Andrea) Nash. This award recognizes all her career accomplishments, but especially her role as Project Coordinator of the New England Literacy Resource Center at World English.

Andy was nominated by her supervisor at World English, Silja Kallenbach, who saluted her "outstanding and tireless work in participatory, social justice-oriented adult ESOL, as teacher, professional development provider, author, and curriculum developer for the past 20+ years."

Prior to working at World English, she served as adjunct professor in the graduate Bilingual/ESOL Studies Department at UMass/Boston from 1990 to 1997. Though she didn't work directly with last year's award recipient, Elaine Ward, both share a passionate concern for new immigrants. In her teaching and writing, Andy has focused on connecting adult ESOL to civics education, by way of empowering English learners. Her publications include Participatory Workplace Education: Resisting Fear-Driven; Talking Shop - a Curriculum Sourcebook for Civics and Adult ESL; and most recently, Thinking Beyond Increased Participation - Integrating Civics and Adult ESOL.

Her growing expertise has taken her well beyond Boston. She has done professional development for new ESL instructors in northern Vermont and worked on standards-based instruction and assessment with the Mayor's Literacy Initiative in the District of Columbia. And she developed an ABE/ESL teaching guide for the recent PBS documentary The New Americans.

For the last seven years, her chief interest has been the New England Literacy Resource Center at World Education. This represents a direct line from the original work of World Education, as revealed in the website profile of its colorful founder Welthy Honsinger Fisher. Ms. Fisher was born in 1879, graduated from Syracuse University, and went to China as a Methodist missionary. Beginning as principal of a girls' school in Nanchang Province, she developed a vision for spreading literacy as the key to raising the status of Chinese women. "She was committed to the idea of women's independence, and knew that if she could give them the tools they needed through education, then there would be no stopping them from changing the face of China."

Ms. Fisher pursued this cause in many other countries for decades, along the way becoming close friends with Mahatma Gandhi, marrying a Methodist bishop, working as a journalist, investigating educational systems

in South American and the Middle East, and in her seventies (!), organizing the work that became World Education. In her outsized energies, talents, compassion, charisma, and appetite for life, Welthy Honsinger Fisher reminds one of none other than - Anne Dow. Hence, the award to a member of that organization is even more fitting.

In addition, the MATSOL board is happy to announce that a foundation created from Anne's estate will provide the recipients of the 2005 and 2006 awards with an honorarium of \$500. Andy Nash will be presented with the award at a private gathering this month. Readers are encouraged to think of nominees for next year's prize.

- Tom Griffith

*Anne Dow Award
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Excellence
and
Creativity*

*Advocating for the
educational
opportunities and
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Annual Meeting of the MATSOL Membership

by Laurie Zucker-Conde

Laurie is the Director of ELL in the Waltham Public Schools.

The MATSOL Board hosted a well-attended annual meeting at the Schrafft Center on October 17, 2005. Kellie Jones, President of MATSOL, presented a slate of candidates nominated to the MATSOL Board of Directors, and members of the Board of Directors presented the 2004-2005 Annual Report.

Following the business meeting, MATSOL welcomed Roger Rice, a well-known lawyer and the Co-Director of Multi-Cultural Education, Training, and Advocacy (META). Roger Rice led the group in a spirited exploration of ways that MATSOL members can best advocate for immigrant students in their classrooms, schools, and communities. Roger Rice, who has fought many battles on behalf of ELLs, both shared his legal expertise with the group and sought out the opinions and experiences of members.

Rice encouraged all MATSOL members and ELL advocates to write to the opinion pages of local newspapers about issues of importance to ELLs, and members in attendance mentioned such issues as the unfairness of MCAS as a high-stakes assessment for students who have not had enough time to learn English, the discriminatory nature of educational policy decisions that frame immigrant students as low performing on AYP when they have had less time to learn tested material, the lack of accountability for high drop-out rates among immigrant youth as well as the tacit encouragement for school-leaving among older students believed least likely to either pass or achieve proficiency on the MCAS test.

In addition to writing to newspapers, Rice and MATSOL members discussed a need to reinvigorate parent committees, formerly known as Parent Advisory Committees (PACs) that had been eviscerated by changes in state law and policy. By empowering parents to both understand state and school policies, and to advocate for needed

services, parents could help teachers and administrators to gain the staff and resources for academically effective programs.

Finally, Rice and the members present discussed asking the Massachusetts State Board of Education to require that licensure for district administrators include sufficient training in ELL. Since Licensed Massachusetts Teachers will have to complete the ELL categories by 2009, Rice and the group felt that those who evaluate teachers might also need to fulfill this requirement.

The MATSOL members in attendance were hopeful that such a policy might sensitize building principals to ELL issues, and create greater understanding about recent policy changes affecting ELLs. Teachers spoke movingly about how principal and administrator lack of knowledge about language acquisition and culture had led to

collapsing of ELL issues with Special Education inclusion needs, often to the detriment of English language learning, or the confusing of the need to learn English with that of having a disability. Teachers also felt that they should be fairly evaluated in their classroom teaching, and that to understand their instructional choices, strategies used, approaches to cultural mediation, a principal should also have basic ELL competencies. More importantly, to provide instructional leadership and guide school based plans, policies and practices to support the achievement of ELLs, it is critical for principals and other administrators in a district to engage in professional development related to ELLs, if they have no formal background already.

Another key area of discussion focused on the implementation of Chapter 71A/Question 2. Many of the members of the group who provide professional development to their teacher peers in the four areas of competency for SEI teachers reported a continued lack of clarity in and across districts, about what Structured English Immersion is, and the variety of interpreta-



MATSOL President Kellie Jones and MABE President Debbie Sercombe welcome conference participants

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Annual Meeting

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tions and communications about this law in schools. For example, there is still a widespread misconception about SEI being allowed only for a year, when the Department of Education and US Department of Education Office for Civil Rights clarified that a program must be offered for as many years as a student needs. Another example pointed out the misconception that regardless of the language of the law that allows a student's first language to be used in the classroom for clarification, and despite local policies, such as that published in Boston, and intended to clarify the legality and usefulness of using native language in the classroom, there is some sense among teachers that they must speak only in English in the classroom. The group discussed the importance of disseminating these clarifications more widely.

Finally the group discussed the issues of implementation of Ch. 71A /Question 2 in low-incidence districts, where little support has been provided by the Department of Education in regard to professional development, and where thousands of our English language learners in the state reside. While numbers of students from district to district may be small, the requirements for offering a full program are the same, and every student deserves a competent, highly qualified ELL teacher, and program that meets their needs. It was reported that students are still being submerged rather than provided an SEI program in many districts, that teachers and districts are barely "in progress", if at all underway, in working towards developing competencies required to teach English language learners in mainstream education classrooms. Another concern is a great

shortage of available professional development providers to address the newly required professional competencies. In addition, it was shared that districts who are providing professional development in this context, in many cases do not see this professional development as a part of a district wide plan for achievement of English language learners and while the professional development may be happening, basic planning and building of program infrastructure has not happened. This is clearly linked to the above mentioned problem of a lack of knowledge of ELLs among district leadership. In some districts, administrators, teachers and tutors have been given titles such as "ELL Coordinator", when they have little or no knowledge of what needs to be done, or formal background that would make them qualified to provide this leadership.

Those attending the annual were ELL teachers, directors of K-12, workplace and adult ELL programs, and immigrant advocates. Directors and teachers from Brockton, Bridgewater, Framingham, Arlington, Everett, Waltham, Lawrence and Providence, Rhode Island all expressed a desire to improve both educational outcomes and culture in districts, but on a sadder note, many shared the sense of confusion and fearfulness about the use of other languages in their schools. Many directors expressed the fear that they would find it increasingly more difficult to find highly qualified ELL teachers as fewer teachers were enrolling or graduating from schools in a political climate that often seemed to embrace an "English Only" sensibility. *All expressed the hope that more members would join MATSOL to advocate for ELLS.* ■

Meeting the Literacy Needs

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speak, the development of academic language for success in the content areas, and overall English language proficiency.

Just as ELLs are diverse so are those who might be characterized as having limited and/or interrupted formal schooling. However, they share the common characteristic of recently immigrating to the United States, limited native language literacy, and below grade level skills in math and other subject areas (Freeman & Freeman 2002).

Beginning at approximately grade three, the needs of students with limited and/

or interrupted formal schooling students begin to become more difficult to meet within the traditional classroom setting. The higher the grade the larger the gap that must be narrowed for these students. In addition, the time constraints of a high school student who must meet graduation and state testing requirements add to the pressure the student experiences.

Best Practices

Several components to instruction are identified as essential for the instruction of these students. While these students may have had little to no formal schooling, they have a

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host of experiences which should provide the beginning point for all instruction (Moran et. al. 1993). Building upon those experiences from their native country, the process of immigration, and their families are important bridges to new learning and support their cultural adjustment. Literacy learning must be connected to the realities of the students, for example, their need to translate for their families or teach younger siblings (Jimenez 2001; Rubinstein-Avila 2003).

Student's self-determination to succeed should be built upon and nourished with opportunities to see themselves as successful learners (Walsh 1999). However, students will quickly become aware of their deficiencies and need opportunities within the classroom to build their own confidence as capable of reading, writing, and learning (Freeman, Freeman & Mercuri 2003). Teachers must create a warm accepting learning environment where these students will feel comfortable taking risks. These students gather safety from the structures and routines teachers set up for everyday learning activities (Freeman & Freeman 2002; Freeman, Freeman, & Kerman 2001). In addition, teachers must believe their students can succeed in spite of the obstacle of limited schooling experiences (Chamot 1995).

Students must be seen as active participants in their own learning (Chamot 1995). Students must also be given the opportunity to interact collaboratively and use the language being taught (Gerseten & Jiménez 1994). Strategy based instruction allows students to develop strategies not only for literacy but also for learning and problem solving that cross the content areas (Chamot 1995; Gerseten & Jiménez 1994).

Theme based instruction provides the opportunity for students to engage in repeated use of vocabulary across the content areas (Freeman & Freeman 2002; Freeman, Freeman, & Kerman 2001; Walsh 1999). Vocabulary development is then integrated throughout the theme giving students both functional but also content related vocabulary.

The classroom environment must provide a rich print learning environment where students are able to engage in meaningful literacy activities (Freeman & Freeman 2002; Freeman, Freeman & Kerman 2001). A balanced literacy approach can best meet the needs of these students (Chamot 2000). Students are engaged in opportunities to interact with real text as they develop word study skills, compre-

hension, and fluency (Chamot 2000). Students use the writing process in response to text focusing on the grammar and mechanics needed to complete the specific piece (Chamot 2000).

Development of literacy skills in the native language is a more effective approach to literacy development for these students. The research base available for young children supports the development of native language literacy with the transfer of the skills to English. The process of learning to read is

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paula_merchant@yahoo.com

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easier when students have the oral language to sustain their reading. However, little research has been done to confirm this at the secondary level (Chamot 2000). However, any approach to literacy whether in English or via native language must account for the bilingualism of the students (Jimenez 2001).

The Community

Brockton Public Schools is a diverse urban K-12 school district approximately 20 miles south of Boston, Massachusetts. Approximately 8% of the student population is made up of ELLs with 40% speaking another language at home. The largest of these groups are Cape Verdean students who speak a Portuguese based Creole but learn to read and write in Portuguese in their native country. Cape Verde is a series of islands of the coast of Africa on the Atlantic Ocean.

The district offers a structured English immersion program for Cape Verdean students in grades K-6 within grade level self contained classrooms. Teachers who speak the native language provide English instruction with some support in the native language. All materials used are in English.

Beginning at the third grade level, the district found a need among its Cape Verdean students who were experiencing great difficulty in school. These students lacked literacy and academic skills in their own language. Upon further investigation, it was found that these students often had limited and/or interrupted formal schooling. A few of these students sometimes had limited schooling experiences

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because of specific disabilities for which the education systems of their native countries were unprepared.

Native language literacy development in this case was decided to not be the best option, since most students speak Cape Verdean Creole for which little literacy materials exist. There is also little agreement in Cape Verde on a system of writing this language with a mostly oral tradition. In response to this need, a specific intervention was designed to support these students in developing the pre-literacy skills to be successful in their own classroom.

The Intervention

Facing these challenges, the structured English immersion staff at the Belmont Street Elementary School began a program of targeted instruction for its upper elementary (grades 4-6) limited formal schooling students. A multi grade literacy class was established based on the research of best practices. The small class of six students met daily for an hour of instruction, led by the school ESL teacher.

The class was systematically organized with a structured schedule based on thematic cross-curricular units. The first five minutes of every class was individual reading time whereby students re-read patterned books and reviewed sight words that students had previously mastered. This enabled students to feel success as readers and promoted a safe, secure, risk-taking environment.

Once students were settled and completed the individual reading, the class came together to listen to a read aloud related to the thematic unit. For instance, when the thematic unit was centered on habitats, the teacher read the book, *Here is the African Savannah*. The read alouds were read multiple times with different foci over multiple days, thus promoting the development of strategic

skills, such as prediction, visualizing, synthesizing, and selectively attending. The read alouds provided access to language beyond their current reading levels and assisted the development of oral/aural language skills.

Once the thematic read aloud was completed, the class moved on to shared reading experiences with a patterned text related to the theme, purposefully chosen to align with the students' instructional reading level. For the habitat theme, the class read the book entitled, *In the Rainforest* (DRA level 10-12, Fountas-Pinnell Level F). The texts were read multiple times each day until they were mastered by the students and could be read independently. On the first day of encountering the text, the students used the title and illustrations to predict the content of vocabulary of the text, which was recorded on chart

paper. The teacher then read the book aloud and the students listened to confirm or analyze their predictions about content. After a discussion about the prediction, the teacher next read the text aloud again

and the students listened for the predicted vocabulary. The class periodically stopped to tally the predicted vocabulary that was located in the text. The class analyzed the success of their predictions and translated the fraction into a percentage.

On subsequent days, the teacher provided opportunities to interact with the same piece text, while simultaneously increasing student independence until the students could read the text independently. Some of the activities that fostered student independence were choral reading, searching for meaningful words in text and putting small post-it arrows on them, the teacher reading a part and students completing sentences, students being responsible for a particular word or phrase and reading it when encountered in text, and



"Conference participants let loose at the social hour hosted by our friends at Santillana"

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paired reading. Ultimately, after interacting with the text over a series of classes, the text would become part of the students' "master bag", which was read every morning at the beginning of class.

The next segment of the class was word study. Students had individual bags with magnetic letters corresponding to word families they had mastered.

Teacher and students would create words they had mastered and manipulate the sounds of letters to create new words. For example, after having

the students create the word "bat", the teacher might say, "If I changed the /a/ to the /i/ sound, what word would I get? What letter makes the /i/ sound? So change the letter to make the word bit." These activities promoted both phonemic awareness and understanding of phonetic elements. Once a certain familiarity with the sound-letter relation, the teacher then began to make connections of the word study component to the patterned texts that the students were reading.

A cross curricular component was included in the program. During the habitat unit, for example, students identified teacher provided examples of animals and placed them in the appropriate habitat. Students then graphed and analyzed the results, which were reported on a shared writing experience.

The final component of the literacy program was patterned writing, usually incorporated some of the language structures and content of the patterned book of the unit. For the habitat unit, students took the language structure of third person plural regular tense verb with one adjective with the new habitat of the sea. After a whole class brainstorm and teacher modeling, students chose words and phrases to complete

the sentences creating their own book, which was illustrated, read aloud for their classmates, and placed into their "master bag".

Conclusion

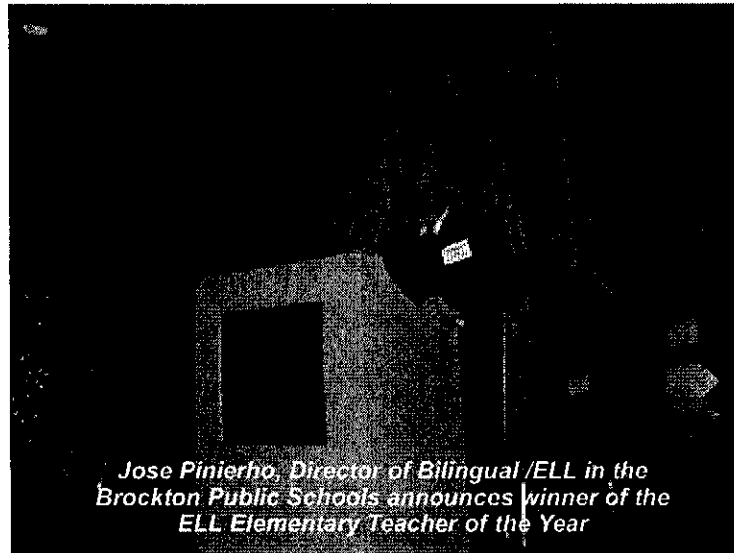
The students who participated in the literacy program reported growth in their independent reading levels. Students began at a DRA level

A and after five months had moved up to DRA level F. The literacy program developed for these students incorporated the elements of balanced literacy instruction through theme based instruction. Reading and writing were seen as means to communicate information and knowledge. The

phonics instruction was completed within the context of the theme and the texts being read. Students also received strategy instruction within the context of the theme and literacy instruction. Oral language development was an essential component of developing the language students needed to be successful with the theme and its literacy activities.

Students also identified individual goals every month in reading, writing, listening, and speaking and analyzed the attainment of these goals. Most importantly, students indicated that they enjoyed reading, saw themselves as readers and writers, and felt successful in school. For most of these students, these were their first experiences at being successful literacy learners even though students were doing so within the context of learning a new language.

Limited or interrupted English language learners will continue to present a specific challenge to school districts. A magic tool or strategy does not exist to meet the needs of these students. Instead, a variety of different instructional strategies will meet their emotional, social, and learning needs. Key to their learning is the creation of successful learning experiences that are at their level but also challenging. While most districts will find their



Jose Pinierho, Director of Bilingual/ELL in the Brockton Public Schools announces winner of the ELL Elementary Teacher of the Year

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limited and/or interrupted formal schooling student population to be quite small, teachers and schools should create interventions that will accelerate language and literacy learning.

Margaret Adams, Department Head for Bilingual/ESL Services K-8, Brockton Public Schools

Kellie Jones, English Language Acquisition Coach, Brockton Public Schools

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MATSOL Seeking Member to serve as the MATSOL Representative on the MCAE Public Policy Committee

MATSOL is seeking an adult ESOL educator to meet monthly, one Friday per month, from 10-12PM in Cambridge with the MCAE Public Policy Committee, as MATSOL's representative to the committee.

Serving as the MATSOL representative ensures immediate communication and coordination between organizations in outreach related to various funding and advocacy issues that affect adult learners and their teachers. It also ensures immediate activation of and communication with MATSOL's 5,000 person outreach list on issues of importance to adult education. Interested individuals should contact Paula Merchant, paulamerchant@yahoo.com, or Carol Kolenik, Workplace Education Representative, Carol_Kolenik@harvard.edu

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The Reform Agenda: Leave No ELL Behind-Policies-Practices-Programs Report

MATSOL and MABE held the second annual joint conference at the Sheraton Four Points Hotel in Leominster. This year's conference was dedicated to bringing teachers, practitioners, administrators and district personnel together to participate in the most up-to-date research, policies and practices in the education of ELLs. The conference was held on March 11-12, 2005. There were approximately 365 people attending on Friday, March 11, and 215 people on Saturday, March 12. Over 500 people registered despite the snow-storm warning.

With the agenda, 'Leave No ELL Behind,' the conference offered key-note speakers; Kr. Alfredo Schifini, professor, author and lecturer on literacy and language development for second language learners; J.S. Damico, professor, speech pathologist, and author on diversity, whole language and literacy, and authentic assessments; James Crawford, Executive Director of NABE, lecturer and author of numerous books on language policy.

Dr. Schifini commenced with a historical overview of ESL/ELD and changes in ESL/ELD methods. He also acknowledged the growing expectations caused by recently-introduced federal/state legislation, in an effort to meet the needs of ELLs; moreover, he addressed setting measurable goals such as providing quality instruction with increased staff development. He also emphasized the importance in making connections between prior knowledge and new content, teaching and assessing both language and reading to achieve successful biliteracy.

Dr. J.S. Damico focused on four lessons in educating exceptional ELL students. First, he put an emphasis on the importance in acknowledging different learning styles and differentiated testing. He also emphasized on contextualization of learning, focusing on meaningfulness and authenticity. As a third lesson, he introduced five principles for effective acquisition/learning, such as meaningful, contextualized, contrastive, recurrent, and active acquisition/learning. He concluded his speech by encouraging the development of

individual responsibility as educators. The main idea is that educators should engage in a process of personal redefinition and become an agent of change.

On Saturday, NABE Executive Director and well-known author and language rights advocate, James Crawford, gave the keynote address entitled, "Accountability vs. No Child Left Behind: High Stakes for English Language Learners". Mr. Crawford highlighted the diversity of the "LEP" subgroup, and related it to the requirements of adequate yearly progress as outlined in NCLB.

Different sessions were centered on the issue of accountability. In the area of bilingual/special education, the following sessions, including many other insightful presentations, were offered.

The Bilingual Special Education Network Meeting discussed the future possibilities for networking and professional development in the area of bilingual special education.

"ELL? SPED Understanding the NCLB and IDEA Requirements" discussed various issues. The presenters emphasized in differentiating between special education and second language acquisition. The session also offered information on learning domains and variables for possible accommodations and modifications for different learning and performance styles/needs, definitions and educational service coordination, special education eligibility/initial and reevaluation determination, in addition to disability definitions-Massachusetts 603 CMR 28.00.

Round Table Discussion on Dual Language Immersion addressed research and implementation of dual language instruction across the state. The discussion also included achievements and common goals, successful academic, linguistic, and parenting practices. As a prerequisite for the successful academic and linguistic practices, following agendas were discussed: short and long term staffing and professional development needs, strategies to share resources, and finally collaboration and connection at state-wide conferences in order to meet the needs of teachers, families and leaders in the dual language state wide community.

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Question Two's One-Year Promise Debunked

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more than one year, and up to two years, in classes. According to the promises of the new law, this should be more than enough time to acquire enough English to reach the "transitioning" stage.

Note that many of the second year students began the school year as beginners in English (44% of those in grades 3-4). Note that many also ended the year as beginners (19% in grades 3-4)! In general, 40 to 60% of those who were beginners at the start of the year had not even moved up one level. In other words, one year was nowhere near enough time to acquire enough English to do work in regular classes.

See table one below: Progress made from fall to spring by ELLs in their second year in the US

Table one below shows a clear increase in the percentage of children in the transitional and intermediate categories from fall to spring. But there is little evidence that children made large jumps during the year, and it is highly unlikely that a significant number of students went from the beginning to the transitioning level in one year. For example, among second year students in grades three and four, 30% reached the transitioning category in the spring. But 11% were already there in the fall, and another 22% were just below this in the intermediate category. The same pattern is present at other grade levels.

Teachers of ELLs are not surprised by these results. The results reflect the reality of

language acquisition and the fact that it takes time, whether it is in all-English or as part of bilingual education. The promise of a one-year program leading to full English proficiency is clearly a fallacy. Results from California and Arizona support the same conclusion (Grissom, 2004; Mahoney, MacSwan and Thompson, 2005). It is our obligation to inform the public and to begin to question the other promises made by Question #2 advocates to the voters and immigrant families of Massachusetts.

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Progress made from fall to spring by ELLs in their second year in the US

Table One	beginning	early int	intermediate	transitioning
grades 3-4				
fall	44	23	22	11
spring	19	21	30	30
grades 5-6				
fall	49	21	21	9
spring	25	23	32	31
grades 7-8				
fall	48	18	22	12
spring	31	21	28	20
grades 9-12				
fall	40	18	24	18
spring	25	16	31	28

From: Massachusetts Department of Education (2005b)

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High Point: Success in Language, Literature and Content

level B, by Alfredo Schifini, Deborah Short and Josefina Villamil Tinajero. Hampton Brown, 1994. 496 pages. ISBN 0-7362-0933-6. (Student Handbook) also Teacher's Edition, Practice Book, Teacher's Resource Book, Assessment Book, CD

Reviewed by Lisa Evans

High Point is a four-level series (Basic, A, B, C). This review concerns the level B student text (intermediate), called Student Handbook, which addresses grammar, reading comprehension, the writing process, cooperative learning, and listening comprehension for middle school students. The authors define it as a "Standards-based text with specialized strategies for English Learners." Its goals are to provide assessment tools, to meet the needs of different types and levels of learners, and to utilize relevant and motivating reading material.

Each chapter has three or four short reading selections, many authentic or adapted texts. The beginning of each chapter introduces vocabulary for the upcoming reading with short definitions; these words are highlighted in yellow within the reading. Other words are bolded within the text; definitions for these are supplied at the bottom of the page. At the beginning of the chapter, students are given reading strategies to use. In addition, a new language structure is briefly introduced. Unfortunately, the readings do not generally reinforce the language structure.

At the end of each selection, there are reading comprehension questions. The questions push the student to truly think about the passage. At the end of the chapter, students are then asked analytical questions relevant to the story. Students usually answer with a partner. For example, "What would you do if you heard about an invasion from space?"

At the end of each chapter, the new structure is directly explained, having been only briefly presented previously. Grammar concepts are not input-enhanced in the selections that students have read. There is no connection between the readings and the grammar; often the structure is not even present in the reading selections. The exercises that follow in the textbook and practice book are often mechanical. Students do not need to focus on the meaning of the material. Lastly, the detailed explanations at the end often have a different focus from the

general introduction at the beginning, and from the exercises. For example, when the present tense is explained, students are given third person singular and plural examples. In the exercise that follows, students are asked to do work in the first and second person singular.

At the end of each chapter is a series of activities that students can do to connect content to what they have been reading about. Students might be asked to do research on the internet related to the reading, or to incorporate multimedia into a presentation. This seems like a very interesting project, but the textbook gives only rudimentary guidance to the student on how to get started on such a project. In the teacher's edition, the only guidance that is given is on how to show students that the front and back pages of book can help them find information about the book.

The assessment book is helpful because many of the tests are in the same format as the MCAS, so students can start to develop test-taking skills. Alas, the answer keys are often wrong!

Students have responded really well to the reading selections, wanting to read ahead. The characters in the stories are often their age and from diverse backgrounds, which helps students appreciate other cultures. Students tell me that these are topics they already know something about. This is helpful because it reinforces the material for them. In addition, many of the authors are familiar to them, and they proudly let me know this. The selections are culturally relevant and address topics that challenge the students.

Students are indirectly taught about history and geography. For example, when my students had to read about a Native American, many of them thought that she was from a foreign country. When I started to explain Native American history, they immediately referred to lessons from history class about the Native American Indians. Somehow, the students had not been able to make the connection between their history class and our character in a story. The book complements other subjects in the curriculum.

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High Point

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After using this book with 6th-8th grade students for the last year, I have an overall positive response to it. Students are interested in the readings and engaged in the activities. The activities vary in type and have proven helpful for my students. Because there are so many materials accompanying the book, I always have something to fall back on. Age appropriate and culturally sensitive readings also build self-esteem and awareness, something crucial for middle schoolers. Unfortunately, in the area of grammar the textbook falls short.

However, the book makes up for grammatical shortcomings in the richness of its reading selections, breadth of activities and overall attention to issues of culture and

diversity. It addresses many of the language arts standards and provides content-area connections. It also provides a wealth of valuable opportunities for students to learn about themselves, their peers and their community. Overall, I am pleased with the textbook and the depth that it has brought to my classes.

Lisa Evans has a B.A. from Tufts University in International Relations and an M.A.T. in Spanish from Simmons College. She is pursuing a second master's degree at the University of Massachusetts in Applied Linguistics and teaching Spanish and ESL to 4th-8th graders at the Patrick Lyndon School in Boston.

levans@lyndon.boston.k12.ma.us ■

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Using Newspapers in the Classroom

by Paul Sanderson. Cambridge University Press, 1999. 275pp. ISBN 0-521-64526-3.

reviewed by Amanda Mathiesen

Ah, my hometown newspaper. A single issue contains both Pulitzer-worthy investigative reporting and the ravings of that columnist who was pleased to tell the world that she does her children's homework. Like the *Globe*, Paul Sanderson's *Using Newspapers in the Classroom* contains something for everyone, but you're not guaranteed to like everything you see.

This book is a collection of over one hundred newspaper-based activities for use with adults and teenagers in the ESOL classroom, and as far as I can tell, it's the only book of its kind on the market. (Knowlton and Barefoot's *Using National Newspapers in the College Classroom*, 1999, also contains newspaper-based activities, but it's not designed specifically for teachers of ESOL.) One of Sanderson's goals is to "foster positive attitudes" towards reading in and out of the classroom.

Each chapter focuses on a different portion of the paper, including headlines,

articles, and comics. To his credit, the author classifies each activity by level of proficiency, thus saving the reader time and effort. He provides lead-in and follow-up activities. He also provides an appendix of web sites for major newspapers in the UK and the US.

One of my favorite exercises in the book is "Conducting Job Interviews." This is exactly what it sounds like: students select job advertisements, brainstorm the kinds of questions that might be asked in interviews for those positions, role-play the interviews, and then provide feedback on each other's performance. Afterwards, students write letters of application for the jobs they have selected. Although this was not the most creative suggestion in the book, I felt that it was one with great potential to make a positive difference in students' lives.

I also liked the "Spot the Differences" activity, in which the students look for disagreement in the way two different newspapers cover the same event, then theorize as to

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The Conference Planning Committees give a proper welcome to keynote speakers James Crawford and Jack Damico, at the Leominster Four Points Sheraton

Using Newspapers in the Classroom

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the reasons for the differences. Sanderson recommends comparing one tabloid and one broadsheet, but you could just as easily compare periodicals from different ends of the political spectrum (say, the Wall Street Journal and the Nation). I felt that this was one of the few activities in the book that had the potential to promote critical literacy.

Other activities baffled me. In "Ranking Articles," the teacher gives the students a set of newspaper articles, and the students work in pairs to develop a set of criteria by which to rank them (e.g., most/fewest words; most/least recent). The only rationale I could come up with for doing such a thing would be as a focus-on-form activity highlighting the correct use of superlatives, and even then, I had trouble imagining students getting excited about it. It would have been helpful to state the purpose behind each activity.

As someone primarily interested in working with adult immigrants, I would have liked to see more exercises that speak to the realities that immigrants face. Note, for example, that Sanderson devotes three entire chapters to activities on horoscopes, TV guides, and advice columns, but that the four activities on want ads are hidden in amongst those on personal ads in a chapter on advertisements. I understand that Sanderson is

trying to reach a variety of students, but surely most people find want ads more useful to decode than Jeanne Dixon.

I also would have liked to see the book display more cultural sensitivity. While there are photographs of whites playing soccer, getting their hair done, etc., the only depiction of a person of color is in a charity appeal ("With no family to look after her, and no money, Naiku can't afford ... a proper meal"). In a field where the need for cross-cultural understanding and respect is paramount, this is unacceptable.

Teachers who are looking for exercises with real-life applications will find many of those in the book disappointing, as will teachers who seek to promote critical literacy. Nonetheless, some teachers will be inspired by Sanderson's techniques. While I didn't agree with everything the author said, the book definitely got me thinking about the value of newspapers as a teaching tool. Depending on your values and your target population, you may or may not find the book useful.

Amanda Mathiesen, Libra, is the Technical Services Librarian for Lexington Public Schools. She is certified to teach ESL (5-12).

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Pearls of Wisdom: African and Caribbean Folktales

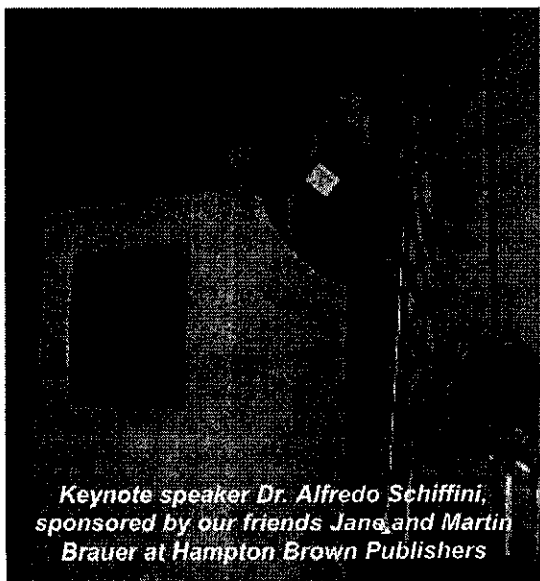
The Reading and Listening Book, Raouf Mama & Mary Romney. Pro Lingua Associates, 2001. 77 pages. ISBN 0-86647-134-0. cassette and workbook

reviewed by Eileen Feldman

This string of pearls contains twelve wise, accessible stories which support students' need for language skills, political and social inquiry, values education, and affirmation. What good fortune for grades 4-adult intermediate-level students to have this reader-cassette-workbook set for both instruction and pleasure! Each story is in print in the reader, in Dr. Mama's voice on the cassette, and in exercise format in the workbook.

The reader has many useful features:

- 1) A title page lists the source of each story.
- 2) A seven-page Introduction describes the four categories of folktales (trickster, explanatory, cautionary, and sacred) and traces and maps the African Diaspora.
- 3) A Users' Guide suggests ways of incorporating the vocabulary and workbook lessons.
- 4) The stories contain helpful illustrations, identification of countries of origin, simple texts with numbered paragraphs, several discussion questions, and vocabulary glosses with the paragraph number in which each word appears.
- 5) The last few pages reference other similar cultural readers (North American Indian, Aesop, and Nasreddin Hodja) with sample stories from each, as well as cultural drama books by Pro Lingua.



Keynote speaker Dr. Alfredo Schiffrini, sponsored by our friends Jane and Martin Brauer at Hampton Brown Publishers

The Workbook likewise is user friendly. In the beginning is a Glossary of literary terms used in the lessons, which facilitates the approach to these stories as serious literature. The individual chapters follow; each prescribes tasks in pre-listening, listening, and summarizing, and introduces approximately twenty vocabulary words. There are also exercises which involve retelling the story from different points of view, writing and speaking about the story, connecting it to personal experiences, and understanding symbolism in the story. An Answer Key allows self-study and evaluation. I do have one criticism: the stories could be reordered according to folk tale classification, country of origin, or common theme; they are currently organized by number of constituent paragraphs.

The most charming feature of the set is the Audio Cassette. With his lilting West African tones, Mama focuses clearly on pronunciation, intonation, rhythm, and passion. The moods of his voice begin with outrage at injustice, move to humorous characterizations, revel in victory for the forces of good, and conclude as a benediction. These stories can offer a peaceful ending to each class.

My own experience with this book has been positive. As a complement to prescribed texts, this set painlessly injects lessons in geography, anthropology, economics, government, and ethics. For example, in a literature circle my students discussed child labor and good parenting in reference to "How the Glutton Was Tricked" and in the contexts of their own countries. Mama and Romney suggest as a final project that the students create a vision of the future - a utopia without the problems confronted in the stories. If students feel increasingly empowered linguistically and intellectually, what a wise investment Pearls of Wisdom could be.

*Eileen Feldman teaches at Suffolk University and Bunker Hill Community College.
efeldman@acad.suffolk.edu*

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NorthStar: Focus on Reading and Writing

Basic Level. Natasha Haugnes & Beth Maher. Addison Wesley Longman, 1998. 208 pages. ISBN# 0-201-69423-9. Writing Activity Book 0-13-030643-6.

*Reviewed by
Leonela Gonzalez and Noel M. Tieszen*

NorthStar is a five-level ESL/EFL series. This is a review of the basic level Focus on Reading and Writing text, the second of five levels, since the lowest is introductory. The reading/writing books are complemented by Focus on Listening and Speaking and are designed to be accompanied by the Focus on Grammar series; activities are keyed to related units in those books. The authors' philosophy emerges from current research on second language acquisition; they believe in teaching language through content in thematic units. NorthStar's strength lies in its success at helping students make meaning through these thematic units, which are relevant to adult students' academic reasons for learning English. However, the activities should be enriched with additional communicative activities to enable students to fully master the target skills.

Each book has ten units, divided into seven activities each. The units are well organized and include effective warm-up activities to introduce the topic and activate previous knowledge, a variety of genres in readings, and clear and concise grammar rules with good examples. The activities that follow are sequenced so that students build on previous language skills for more complex reading and writing purposes. Each unit gradually increases the level of complexity in ways that facilitate comprehension and challenge skills development.

The topics are relevant to students in an academic environment such as a community college or other adult education program, where English is a tool to be used in their future or immediate environment. Some of the themes -money, sports, food and travel- reflect issues that are part of students' daily lives. Others like "Finding the Ideal Job," "Making Money," and "A Cheap Way to Travel" are likely to come up in discussion with friends or colleagues, to be pertinent to daily life situations, or to appear in news articles, magazines or assigned classwork. This relevance helps ensure that students will apply what they learn outside the

classroom.

The authors appropriately attempt to integrate grammar into the unit themes, and grammar activities use the content and vocabulary of the themes as context for practice exercises. This helps students to activate background knowledge in order to expand their vocabulary and use it effectively in different language situations. Based on recent research of "focus on form" language pedagogy (e.g. Swain, 1998; Doughty & Williams, 1998), we believe it is important to present sufficient flooding of target forms in reading or writing. Because the texts used in this book do not provide enough models of the targeted grammatical structure to reinforce correct usage in context, it is necessary to provide additional flooding of targeted grammatical forms to familiarize students with the structures before using the book's grammar sections to introduce them formally. For example, in Unit Three's section on comparative forms, the teacher could provide visual cues of two objects to be compared and could use oral or written sample texts to model the use of the targeted structure. Complementing the book in this way will reinforce understanding of the grammar structures and how to apply them to reading and writing.

Based on our teaching experience and recent research about effective language and teaching pedagogy (e.g. Roberts, Auerbach, 1992), we believe it will be important to incorporate more communicative activities to supplement this book. The NorthStar series includes a Writing Activity Book at each level. At the basic level we can't imagine using the reading/writing text without the activity book and wonder why the valuable activity material isn't simply incorporated into the main text, to be available at lower cost. One way or another, teachers should find ways to allow students to use the language to solve problems and exchange new information in realistic situations. For instance, students could be encouraged to use the information learned from thematic texts to take action on the issues addressed, maybe by writing a letter or article expressing their opinions on the topic or informing someone who may be unfamiliar with the issue at hand. In this way, students

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NorthStar

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would be able to apply what they learn to real-life situations, using language for its ultimate purpose - communication.

Finally, the authors do not specify a particular audience for the series, but based on the themes they use and the structure of the activities, these books seem most appropriate for adult learners who have native literacy skills and who are now in an academic environment. As elementary and middle school educators, we feel that the topics of the book relate more to adult concerns and life experiences than to the interests of the children we teach.

The book will work well in conjunction with the listening/speaking and grammar supports it is designed with, but on its own it will need teacher-designed supports to serve its purpose well. The authors' principles of

making meaning and activating background knowledge in order to enhance language learning are overall quite successful.

Leonela Gonzalez received her master's degree at UMass/Boston, then worked in the Framingham public schools for four years in a two-way elementary bilingual program. She has returned to her native Venezuela and is currently working as a first-grade English teacher in a bilingual school in Margarita Island.
leonelagc@yahoo.com

Noel M. Tieszen is a 2002 graduate of the University of Massachusetts - Boston Masters in Education program. She began teaching humanities at the John W. McCormack Middle School in Fall 2002.
ntieszen@mccormack.boston.k12.ma.us

Immersion Education: International Perspectives

edited by Robert Keith Johnson & Merrill Swain. Series editors: Michael H. Long and Jack C. Richards. Cambridge University Press, 1997. 315 pages. ISBN 0521 58385 3 (hardback), 0521 58655 0 (paperback).

Reviewed by Ellen Kisslinger

Recently within bilingual education, we've seen an increase in programs utilizing immersion education, in which a second language is used for content instruction. Immersion Education: International Perspectives, through thirteen case studies of programs in North America, Europe, Asia, the Pacific, and Africa, explores immersion globally. This excellent resource, part of the Cambridge Applied Linguistics Series, will interest teachers, teacher educators, and applied linguists involved in second language and bilingual education. It is a serious work, but worth the effort for practitioners who might want to focus on only a chapter or two, while others will appreciate the thorough overview of the whole book. Even reading just the first chapter will deepen one's understanding of the issues.

The text aims to demonstrate how immersion programs can facilitate language learning for a wide variety of learner needs such as teaching a minority language to majority language speakers, supporting languages at risk, and teaching language needed for career advancement or success in school. The text is organized into six sections

and fourteen chapters. Chapter 1 provides an overview of immersion education and the features that differentiate it from bilingual education. Eight defining features of immersion programs are presented:

- 1- The second language (L2) is the medium of instruction rather than a subject in the curriculum.
- 2- The immersion curriculum parallels the local first language (L1) curriculum-that is, the L2 curriculum consists of the same content subjects, such as math or science.
- 3- The classroom culture is that of the local L1 community, not that of the community where the L2 is used.
- 4- There is overt support in the curriculum for the L1 language. (The students' L1 is taught as a subject in the curriculum, and is sometimes used as an ancillary medium of instruction.)
- 5- The program aims for "additive bilingualism"- this means that by the end of the program the students have achieved a high level of proficiency in L2, but not at the expense of L1 proficiency. (The editors note that it is unlikely to have such an idealized bilingual program in which L2 proficiency DOESN'T develop at some expense of L1.)
- 6- The teachers are bilingual.
- 7- Exposure to L2 is confined to the classroom.

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Immersion Education

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8- Students enter with similar levels of L2 proficiency (unlike a program in which L2 students are a disadvantaged minority within the classroom).

Chapter 1 also summarizes a number of ways in which immersion programs are different, such as the educational level at which L2 is introduced and the extent to which L2 is used. The point is also made that some programs labeled "immersion" have overextended the use of the term to the point where the discussion of common issues and features is difficult. One example given is the labeling of English-only programs for Spanish-speaking minorities in the U.S as immersion. In many of these programs the primary goal is to replace Spanish (L1) with English (L2) both in and outside of school. This is the antithesis of the classroom-based learning of the immersion programs described in this text. This is an important distinction to bear in mind.

Sections 1-5 contain the thirteen case studies. The case studies are grouped by section based on the type of program. This

grouping facilitates an in-depth understanding of the various program types, their similarities and dissimilarities. Section 1 presents immersion programs in a foreign language, such as English in Hungary. Section 2 presents programs for teaching a minority language to members of a language majority, such as Swedish in Finland. Section 3 presents programs to revivify endangered languages, such as the case study of Kula Kaiapuni Hawaii. Section 4 presents programs to maintain the status of a language, such as Catalan in Spain. Section 5 presents programs for professional or career reasons under stress, such as late-life English immersion in Hong Kong. Finally, Section 6 reviews lessons from experiences with immersion in North America and explores some of the new directions this approach is taking.

Immersion Education: International Perspectives gives us a better understanding of the role of immersion programs within bilingual education. It succeeds at presenting an international perspective through detailed case studies that present some of the diverse contexts, levels, methods, and purposes of immersion. More important, it broadens our understanding of the issues and challenges us to reconsider what is and what is NOT immersion. The term "immersion program" is familiar to many of us, yet it is all too easy for us to use a familiar program as the defining model of immersion programs. As content-based L2 instruction is explored more, particularly in K-12 public schools, this text could prove beneficial to those trying to promote English competency while maintaining L1 competency. It also helps us reflect on our sensitivity to diversity and to supporting L1 cultures within L2 settings.

Ellen Kisslinger has worked at CELOP, in Asia, and in a bilingual K-3 program in Denver. She is the author of Listening Focus, Impact Listening 1, and Contemporary Topics 2, and has worked for some time as a materials writer and developer on a consulting basis. ejkiss@aol.com
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Springboard 2

Jack C Richards. Oxford University Press, 1999. 74 pages. ISBN 0-19-435353-2.

Reviewed by Tom Griffith

This is a review of Springboard 2. Though I have also seen Springboard 1, I haven't used it, so I can't speak about the first book from teaching experience. Springboard 2 is true to its title. It aims to supplement more formal instruction with a melange of exercises that give students a "springboard" for discussion. Its greatest strength is the choice of topics, which drives everything else. Its peril is the extent and difficulty of the vocabulary with which the topics are explored. That's not a problem if the class level is high enough, but it proved an obstacle when we used it at Showa Boston.

What drew me initially was the list of topics, chosen by surveying young adult English-language learners. That seems an obvious strategy, but the topics of many ESL textbooks reflect instead the interests of teachers. We may think that students should be concerned with the environment, or with social justice, or with gender roles, or other abstract ideals. But often they aren't. Instead, their interests run to the personal and concrete, and derive from the new globalized youth culture that makes us feel old and tired.

The first chapter of Springboard 2 is bluntly titled "Money." That's followed by sections such as "Stress," "Friendship," "Challenges" (extreme sports), "Globetrotters" (international travel), "Animals," and my favorite, "Theme Parks."

The latter, for example, breaks "theme parks" down into categories that are instantly recognizable - water parks, movie parks, futuristic parks, and recreations of other countries a la Epcot Center. It introduces vocabulary - water slide, gift shops, scariest - that should help students describe their experiences in them. It encourages opinion-forming and comparison by means of a survey.

Those words and phrases are reinforced by two other excellent features of the text - the recorded dialogues, and the graphics. The dialogues are unusual in using a variety of accents, especially Asian. Linguist David Crystal claims that with the spread of English as a global lingua franca, it's more accurate now to speak of "Englishes."

This is the first text I've seen to reflect that new reality. When my students complain about hearing accented English, I tell them their future use of it will most likely NOT be with native speakers, but with others who learned it as a second or third language.

This diversity is reflected too in the splendid, and humorous, artwork (a relief from the amateurish drawing that blights so many ESL texts). Caucasian faces and British-derived names are in the minority. Instead, the discussions may be between Rajiv and Keiko. The drawings are supplemented by first-rate photographs, all combining to make the text visually appealing.

However, the accessibility of the pictures is not matched by that of the language. The model dialogues presume a mastery of grammar that was beyond our students. The one on "Money," for example: A. I think "Money talks" means when you have money, people listen. What do you think?

B. It could be. Or maybe it means when you have money, you can get anything you want.

With this model, students were supposed to discuss proverbs about money from their own cultures. It's the old dilemma. This language is perfectly natural, but quite grammatically complex - noun clauses, missing relative pronouns, modals with secondary meanings. The problem is partly one of labeling. Springboard 1 and 2 are billed as a series for "pre-intermediate and intermediate learners," respectively. Yet the students we categorize as "low-intermediate" were way over their heads, despite using the first volume for a semester in Japan prior to coming to Boston. The word lists and glossary in the back were helpful, but the students never felt comfortable.

If Springboard is used at the appropriate level, I think it could be very successful. At minimum, the well-chosen and well-developed topics could be used selectively to supplement a high-intermediate to advanced class.

Tom Griffith is ESL Director at Showa Boston, and a former editor of MATSOL Currents.
tgriffith@showaboston.org

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Vol. 30, No. 1

Over the Transom

by Sterling Giles

*S*ifting through a pile of new titles to compose this list was an opportunity for reflection, and two things jump out at me. One is the lack of complete, honest, respectful biographical/bibliographical data about textbook authors in the texts themselves. Some books say nothing at all about the author, others have a brief statement that amounts to little more than a business card, and some, happily, tell us more about the author's current work, earlier publications, and other professional experiences that informed the production of the text. Doesn't every author deserve a full paragraph? Why are some of us toiling in the dark? What most concerns me is the omission of previous publications; I can't help sensing that they are omitted especially when the previous books were put out by other houses. That's a pity; the author's experience and achievements ought to promote the current text in a substantive way that speaks louder than competitive business concerns. Are these symptoms of an undervalued profession?

My second observation is less about publishing and more about books: Words! There seems an overall increased willingness to devote pages, when working on any skill area, to the acquisition of vocabulary, and to explore the various dimensions of vocabulary growth (active, passive, usage, etc.) in a variety of exercise types. Happily, the delivery of these digestible bits that students love is often embedded in larger contexts for learning grammar, pronunciation, reading strategies, and critical thinking, to name but a few. Let's hope this is an indication that we, as a profession, are moving towards a balance between analytical learning of discrete items, which is measurable, and larger modes of natural language learning, which is more mysterious but quite efficient.

Currents has recently received the following materials for review: Longman has come out with English Pronunciation Made Simple, a fairly complete but manageable course with CD's for every student. Topics from A to Z (1, 2) is a listening/speaking set for beginners to low-intermediate. American Ways is in a third edition, much updated for an increasingly diverse country and with more opportunities for oral presentations.

Password (1, 2, 3) is a series of reading/vocabulary books with corpus-informed goals and truly engaging readings; the gentle integration of phrasal verbs with vocabulary and back and forth between reading skills development and vocabulary work are admirable. Focus on Vocabulary relies on rich, authentic contexts, more so than most vocabulary books. Get Ready to Read is a beginning level addition to the popular Ready series. The efficacy of content based instruction is exploited in Exploring Content (1, 2), readers for academic preparation at the upper level. Many teachers want to move towards sustained content but aren't ready to choose one subject for the whole semester; this series of inter-related themes is a more comfortable first step. Reading Power is in an updated third edition. Contact USA (1, 2) are lower-level additions to the reading/vocabulary series, with challenging readings, simple exercises, and a good range of exercise types.

Gateways to Academic Writing is an adaptation of the earlier Writing with Confidence; the new book has more material on larger issues of essay composition. Engaging Writing has substantial readings and lots of modeling to help students know what to aim for in their writing.

Grammar Express Basic is available in interactive CD-ROM in addition to the book. Oxford's Grammar Sense (1, 2, 3) is also out in CD-ROM.

Houghton Mifflin has produced a comprehensive English for Academic Success series, with books at four levels in College Vocabulary, College Oral Communication, College Writing, and College Reading. The series relies on state-based competencies and is enhanced by many student self-tests and a wealth of tests and handouts available securely to faculty online. The material is "adjunct tested," which means the books are designed for ease of use and can be well employed by faculty who are called in on short notice or who have minimal prep time. Each text was field tested and received input from at least three different adjunct teachers, so this perspective truly informs the series. There are also four Essentials of Teaching books for faculty growth in the four skill areas.

One particularly interesting book for the ABE and higher-ed areas is Civic Participation and Community Action Sourcebook: A Resource for Adult Educators. It has a wealth of ideas

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Congratulates Award Recipients

Maria Fontes, Brockton Public Schools
2005 MATSOL/MABE
ELL Teacher of the Year (Elementary)

Kevin Frost, Leominster Public Schools
2005 MATSOL/MABE
ELL Teacher of the Year (Secondary)

Andy Nash
2005 Ann Dow Award

Ruth-Ann Weinstein
2005 TESOL
TESOL Leadership Mentoring Program

Kathy Mellor
2005 National Teacher of the Year

Roger Rice
MTA Louise Gaskins Award
for Civil Rights

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Over the Transom

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and thought-provoking perspectives on ways to connect language and life skills learning with critical thinking and citizenship in the largest sense of the word. The editor, Andy Nash, was the recipient of MATSOL's 2005 Anne Dow Award for Excellence and Creativity in Addressing Social Problems in an ESL Environment. It's a valuable resource for any

practitioner with a large sense of their mission as a teacher.

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

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Vol. 30, No. 1

Higher Ed Highlights

Report from the TESOL Convention and
Some Reflections on Teaching
By Carol Baum, ESL adjunct

Carol Baum teaches at North Shore Community College as an adjunct faculty member. The following report connects Carol's reflection on her own teaching practice to new or different practices and knowledge she gained at the TESOL convention this year.

On Saturday April 2, 2005 I returned from a stimulating five day TESOL (Teachers of English to Students of Other Languages) Convention held in San Antonio, Texas. There were approximately 5,000 participants from all over the world. After attending lectures, panel discussions, and workshops, I came away from this event with many new ideas that will inform my teaching in the coming semesters.

The presentation which had the greatest impact on my thinking was *A Cross Discipline Approach for Teaching Reading*. The presenters were ESL (English as a Second Language) teachers from community colleges in Florida, Washington, Georgia, and California. Several years ago they began to look at why more ESL students didn't complete AA degree programs. In addition to personal reasons – family and job obligations, they discovered that these students were overwhelmed by the amount of reading that was expected of them once they left the ESL program and entered regular college. These teachers compared the books used by the ESL faculty to the books used by regular college teachers and discovered a fundamental difference. While the ESL books were user friendly with large margins and photos, the regular textbooks were dense and complicated. The teachers determined that it would be more useful for ESL students to be exposed early on to the type of texts they would encounter in the college classroom, and they set about compiling appropriate texts from the various disciplines – psychology, social sciences, hard science, history, accounting, computer information systems, and education among many others.

Reflection: I've been teaching ESL Reading at North Shore Community College for eleven years. I've taught Advanced 2, Advanced 1, and Intermediate 2. When I taught Advanced 2, I used an academic textbook which included readings from college textbooks as well as "The Assistant" by Bernard Malamud. At present I'm teaching Intermediate 2. I use two books, an academic textbook with readings about US history, and a novel, "How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents". The students also choose a book to read for pleasure and meet privately with me to discuss their choice. This presentation challenged some of my assumptions about what is best for my students. Perhaps I've been devoting too much time to studying character, theme, and plot. Next semester I will try a textbook that offers a variety of readings and instead of a novel I will choose a few short stories.

Another session that was thought provoking was Current Research Perspectives and Grammar Teaching. Linguists have looked at large collections of texts to discover which grammar patterns occur most often. They believe that frequency of use should be the basis of teaching. In other words, when students study verb tenses, not all verb tenses should be given equal weight as they are in current textbooks. Many teachers emphasize the present progressive (He is working.) as much as the simple present (He works.), but it turns out that the simple present is twenty times more common in conversation. The present perfect progressive (I have been living in the US for three years.), appears only 5% of the time. When the linguists looked at dependent clauses (Adverb-After he left the theater, he went to a restaurant; Noun-He thinks that he should buy a new car; Adjective-The man who is sitting in the corner...), they found that adjective clauses were a feature of writing, not of conversation, and noun clauses were the most common. In noun clause usage, think, say, know, and guess accounted for 75% of the verbs. Another surprising finding was the frequency of noun modifiers (adjectives – white, big; nouns used as adjectives – plastic box, pencil

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Higher Ed Highlights

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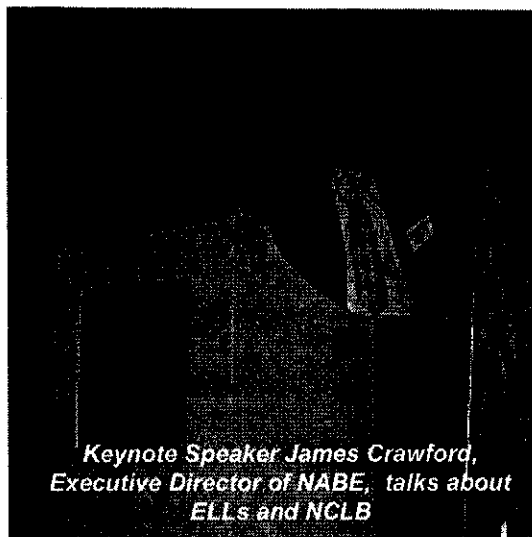
case; participles used as adjectives – flashing lights). The research shows that nouns are used as modifiers as much as adjectives.

Reflection: I asked the presenters if there were a grammar book that uses the frequency approach to teaching, but they said not yet. However, with this new information, I can approach the teaching of grammar in a way that will be more beneficial to my students.

A third session I attended was entitled *Toward a Realistic Approach to Plagiarism*. The presenters looked at some of the reasons why ESL students plagiarize when they are given writing assignments. They discussed how we as teachers encourage imitation as an essential strategy, particularly when we're teaching oral skills. But once a student starts writing at the advanced levels, they are supposed to produce their own writing. There are two tasks in writing: a. to expand skills and b. to avoid plagiarism. The presenters compared "avoiding plagiarism" to teaching a child how to ride a bicycle where there are a lot of pot holes. Even teaching the students how to paraphrase is a difficult task because students don't always have "their own words" in English to put the information into. Nevertheless, they encouraged teachers to begin the process of teaching paraphrasing at the intermediate writing level. This is the 22nd semester I've taught Advanced 1 or 2 ESL writing, and each semester I get several plagiarized essays.

Reflection: I usually spend one class period discussing why plagiarism is wrong, but I haven't devoted enough time to teaching how not to plagiarize. While I was in San Antonio at the TESOL conference I assigned a plagiarism exercise to my Advanced 1 Writing students. The tasks included going on the internet to define "plagiarism" and to discuss three methods for avoiding plagiarism. Next time I will also include a number of paraphrasing exercises.

I also attended a lecture on *vocabulary teaching* and how important vocabulary



Keynote Speaker James Crawford, Executive Director of NABE, talks about ELLs and NCLB

learning is to ESL students. The presenter, Keith Folse, expressed dismay at the notion that students just pick up vocabulary. He stressed the importance of including vocabulary practice whether you're teaching grammar, listening, writing, but especially in reading. He feels that at least 15 minutes of a 50 minute reading class should be devoted to studying vocabulary and that students should be allowed to use a bi-lingual dictionary. The vocabulary words should come from a list of high frequency vocabulary words which can be found at www.lex tutor.ca/Research. (The words were compiled from academic texts which were scanned for frequency of usage with the understanding that these are the words that ESL students and other students can expect to encounter when they matriculate.)

Reflection: I've been using the list of the 700 academic words in my Intermediate Reading 2 class this semester. What I do is look at the reading for the week and then find 5 words from the list that also appear in the reading. When I introduce the words, I also show the students where they can find them in the text. In addition the students make vocabulary cards and do various vocabulary exercises.

As a teacher it's important to reflect on your teaching—what's working, what's not working and how you can better serve your students. The TESOL Convention has given me much to think about and the impetus to make some changes.

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Vol. 30, No. 1

Low Incidence Districts in RI

When most Rhode Islanders think of ESL, they think of our core cities. Providence. Central Falls. Pawtucket. Woonsocket. "Urban" and "ESL" are seen as terms that go hand-in-hand while our rural and suburban communities are perceived as being inhabited by native speakers alone. However, it would be incorrect to assert that the core cities are the only RI areas with English Language Learners. In the following piece, Jane George addresses issues affecting our low-incidence districts and reminds us not to forget the "other ELLs" in our state. - Tabettha Bernstein

LOW INCIDENCE DISTRICTS' STRENGTH IN UNITY

By Jane George

North Kingstown, Rhode Island

In Rhode Island most of the ESL population and resources are concentrated in the four large urban districts of Providence, Pawtucket, Woonsocket and Central Falls. Even though the majority of districts in the state are low incidence, with fewer than 100 ESL students each, their needs have not been listened to as readily as the needs of the big districts. This changed recently for teachers and their students in seven districts in Southern Rhode Island, when in 2003, district assistant superintendents in the Southern Rhode Island Collaborative (SORICO) were required to either join forces to get TITLE III funding for their ESL programs, or get nothing. A grant was written, and Westerly School District volunteered to be the fiscal agent. In addition, Westerly assigned its district professional development coordinator to manage the professional development portion of the grant.

In the first year, the grant only provided money for purchasing new materials. There are restrictions on the types of things that can be purchased, but for teachers who generally get undesirable workspaces, and who have to beg for or borrow everything, this has been an extremely refreshing change.

In the second year, the professional development portion of the grant became available for use. It not only funds a monthly dinner meeting where problems are shared, ideas are proposed and books are discussed, but it also includes money for three full-day workshops each year. A small contingent even went to the MATSOL conference in Leominster in March. The professional Development coordinator, Maureen Logan, although not an ESL person herself, has done an excellent job making the meetings happen. She believes that networking is important to any consortium's success.

This isn't the first time a group of teachers from different low incidence districts in the state has gotten together to share ideas. From 1998 to about 2003, teachers from more than nine districts tried to meet after school on a quarterly basis to discuss their different needs. All the participants were committed to professional sharing and networking. However, this group was very informally organized which made it hard to maintain.

The new group, called the South County ESL Consortium, is a small but welcome start of increased collaboration among all ESL teachers in the state. ■

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One of Our Own: RI ESL Teacher Speaks at TESOL Convention

By Tabettha Bernstein

Words cannot fully express the excitement that spread like wildfire throughout the RI community of Bilingual and ESL educators last year when we heard the good news. One of our very own, North Kingston, RI ESL Teacher Kathy Mellor, was to be the recipient of an honor some might call the Academy Award of the education world. She was chosen as the 2004 National Teacher of the Year. As a plenary speaker at this year's TESOL Convention in San Antonio, TX, Kathy had the opportunity to share her rich experiences in K-12 and adult ESL education with an international audience of her peers. In the following article, fellow low-incidence ESL educator Jane George gives us a synopsis of Kathy's speech, one that inspires all of us to brim with pride in being a member of the Bilingual and ESL education community.

Tabetha Bernstein is on the Coordinating Committee of the Rhode Island Special Interest Group of Bilingual and ESOL Professionals, and a Bilingual/ESL Literacy Resource Teacher in the Department of Language and Culture in the Providence Public School Department

National Teacher of The Year from Rhode Island is a Plenary Speaker at TESOL Convention

By Jane George

Kathy Mellor, an ESL teacher from Rhode Island and the National Teacher of the year for 2004, was the plenary speaker on Thursday, March 30th. Kathy gave an uplifting talk to all present, recounting her experiences of the last year traveling around the country, meeting new people, and sharing her enthusiasm for teaching English to new learners. Everyone could relate to the story she told of her first encounter with a nonnative speaker of English and how frustrated she felt when she taught the foreign exchange student staying at her house how to say, forget about it, when neither of them could communicate with each other. She talked about teaching adult immigrants at the start of her career. She talked about her middle school students, her true love. She misses them dearly and can't wait to get back into the classroom. She always makes sure, she said, to get personally involved with her students and their families and she thinks this has made all the difference for her. Kathy admitted that her teaching situation, in a low-incidence district, was far from typical, but

thought that everyone would benefit when the focus was on the children. She reminded us that even when we are confronted with overwhelming challenges and difficult situations in our careers, we should remain focused on our students and their needs. Kathy urged us to be advocates for our students and their families. She encouraged everyone present.

She has been an ESL teacher at Davisville Middle School in North Kingstown, Rhode Island for 19 years. Before that she worked with adult immigrants in Providence.

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Recording Secretary/Clerk
Ada123@comcast.net or
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Helen Solorzano

Membership Secretary
hsolorzano@suffolk.edu

Matt Pearson

*Revenue Generation
Committee Chairperson*
matpearson@hotmail.com or
Matpearson@yahoo.com

Linda Vinay

Higher Ed. SIG Rep
lvinay@suffolk.edu

Monika Floyd

Adult Ed SIG Rep
Monika_floyd@yahoo.com

Carol Kolenik

Workplace Ed SIG Rep
Carol_kolenik@harvard.edu

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Advocacy Committee Chair

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Pam Greene

Western Mass. Rep
Greene@stcc.mass.edu or
pbgreene@javanet.com

Elizabeth Johnson

*Professional Development
Coordinator*
elizabethmatsolpd@hotmail.com

Matt Howell

K-12 Low Incidence Rep
howellmattina@netzero.com

Eileen Feldman

Associate Currents Editor
Efeldman@acad.suffolk.edu

Marjorie Soriano

*SAUE-SATE
Teacher Exchange Liaison*
Marjorie.s@juno.com

Sterling Giles

*Currents Reviews
Column Editor*
Sterlg@aol.com

Janet Isserlis

*Listserve and e
MATSOLworks Manager*
matsolworks@yahoo.com

The New England Bilingual Special Education Network Special Interest Group Steering Committee

Maria-Luisa Wilson-Portuondo
NEBSEN SIG Steering Committee
Maria_Wilson-Portuondo@brown.edu

Maria Serpa
NEBSEN SIG Steering Committee
mserpa@mail.lesley.edu

Ellen Rintell
NEBSEN SIG Steering Committee
ellen.rintell@salemstate.edu

Pat Landurand
NEBSEN SIG Steering Committee
patlandur@aol.com

Tom Hidalgo
NEBSEN SIG Steering Committee
thidalg@WestEd.org

Mary Ellen Garrity
NEBSEN SIG Steering Committee
megarrity@comcast.net

Rhode Island Special Interest Group of ESL and Bilingual Professionals Coordinating Council

Jane George
RI SIG-Rhode Island Web Page
jane_george@nksd.net

Lauren Bentley
RI CEI/PD Coordinator
bentleyhj@aol.com

Tabetha Bernstein
RI SIG -Currents Editor of Rhode Island News/Articles
wordartist1@aol.com

Gail Matthews
RI SIG E-Bulletin/Electronic News
GRM134@aol.com

Nancy Cloud
RI SIG Coordinating Council and Event Coordination
ncloud@ric.edu

Willis Poole
RI SIG Coordinating Council and Event Coordination
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