

## MATSOL 2011 Conference

by Helen Solorzano

The MATSOL 2011 Conference *One Size Doesn't Fit All: Meeting the Needs of Diverse Learners* took place on May 5-7 in Leominster. Almost 700 members from around the state attended over the two and a half days of the conference, which featured keynote and invited speakers, more the 80 workshop sessions, and exhibits by twenty publishers.

Kate Kinsella, from Center for Teacher Efficacy at San Francisco State University, gave the keynote on Thursday addressing the problem of passivity and low verbal engagement in many classrooms serving English Learners. Through video clips, she demonstrated how commonly used techniques often fall short in eliciting student response and participation, and as a result only 4% of English Learners' school day is spent engaging in student talk. She emphasized the need to explicitly teach and practice oral

academic language in order to build students' academic vocabulary and thinking by constructing model responses and carefully structuring opportunities for student participation.

On Friday, we were honored to have TESOL President Christine Coombe join us from Dubai, where she serves as English faculty at Dubai Men's College. In her keynote, she invited participants to reflect on the "10 Characteristics of highly Effective Teachers." Drawing from research on what makes a "good" teacher, she outlined the qualities most often identified in effective teachers from the perspective of administrators, educational researchers, teachers and students, and discussed aspects of her "top ten."

On Saturday, keynote Larry Zwier, Associate Director for Curriculum at Michigan State Uni-

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2011 MATSOL Conference  
Jill Gold, 2011 MATSOL  
Teacher of the Year





## CONFERENCE HANDOUTS ONLINE

Download handouts from the conference workshops and keynote addresses at the MATSOL website. Go to [www.matsol.org](http://www.matsol.org) and login to the website. Click on the “Bulletin Board” link and look for the “2011 Conference Follow-up” forum.

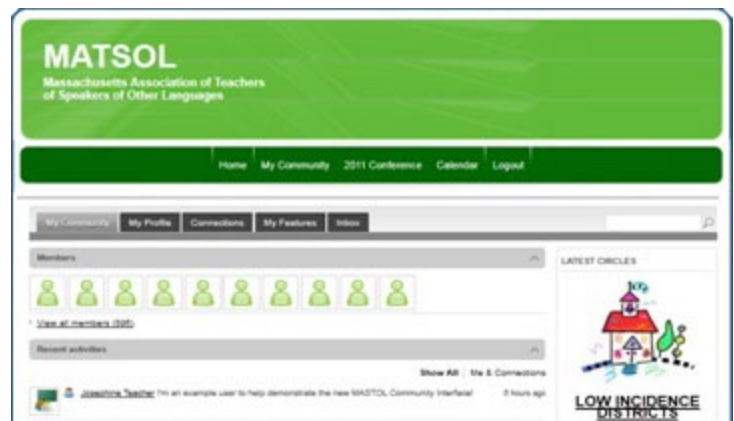
Conference presenters are invited to post their handouts on the website. If you have trouble posting them yourself, you can also email them to [matsol@matsol.org](mailto:matsol@matsol.org) for posting.

## COMMUNITY FEATURES ON THE MATSOL WEBSITE

When members log on to the MATSOL website, you now have access to new community features that allow you to connect with other members online, join Elists and Special Interest Groups Circles, and easily update your membership information. We hope that this new feature will enhance the member experience and allow you to build relationships with other members online. The MATSOL Board of Directors will be working expanding use of these features over the summer.

To access the community features, log on to the MATSOL website by clicking the “Login” link. Then click on the tabs on the My Community page to access the different community features:

- **My Community:** Get an overview of MATSOL Community activity.
- **My Profile:** Update your member record and change your privacy settings. (Your name and affiliation is the only information visible to other members.)
- **Connections:** See your connections and send a request to connect with other members (similar to “friending” on Facebook).
- **My Features:** Join a Circle (an online group) or subscribe to an Elist. You can also update the email address you use for an Elist, or read Elist messages online.
- **Inbox:** Send and receive messages to other members.



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## MATSOL 2011 Conference...

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versity in East Lansing, spoke about the complex relationship between teaching reading and teaching vocabulary. Using vocabulary examples ranging from Shakespeare to the “Yoooper” dialect of Michigan’s Upper Peninsula, Zwier discussed the complexity of identifying which and how many words learners need to acquire, and what it means to “know” a word. He then outlined research on the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and reading ability, and provided resources and ideas for vocabulary-for-reading instruction.

MATSOL was also pleased to feature presentations by staff from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Esta Montano, Director of the Office of Language Acquisition and Academic Achievement, delivered a “State of the State” address highlighting data on ELL demographics, achievement and trends in the state, and Title III

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Coordinator Michele Griffin gave an overview of Title III requirements for administrators and grant writers.



**2011 MATSOL Conference**  
**Cori Weiner, 2011 Linda Schulman**  
**Innovation Award Recipient**

Almost 200 people attended the MATSOL Social and Awards Ceremony on Thursday night. Members had a chance to network and socialize, and we also honored the 2011 MATSOL Award winners: Jill Gold, teacher at Whittemore Elementary School in Waltham, recipient of the MATSOL Teacher of the Year Award; Pat Mytkowicz, Professor and Coordinator of PAL for Multilingual Students at Curry College, recipient of the Anne Dow Award for Excellence and Creativity; and Cori Weiner, instructor at CELOP at Boston University, recipient of the Linda Schulman Innovation Award. Thank you to National Geographic/Hampton Brown for their generous sponsorship of the reception.

The MATSOL Conference Committee thanks all of the presenters and participants for contributing to the success of the conference. 

## I Love What You Wrote

Using a Class Blog to Promote Reading & Writing Development

By *Melissa DaPonte Katz*

It's been said that children around the world now share a common native language: that of technology. Adults tend to lag a few steps behind, painstakingly translating our "old-school" knowledge, such as how to phone a friend on the land line, into the know-how needed to communicate effectively today -- which might include dialing someone up on Skype or even answering a FaceTime call via iPhone.

Fortunately, the fearlessness with which kids approach technology can be a boon in the classroom, as it certainly was for me this year. Whether they come from homes steeped in the latest technology or only use computers at school, most of my ELLs respond well to all kinds of media and are very motivated to create it themselves. Like other kids, they seem to grasp that this New World, the digital realm, belongs to them.

To tap into their enthusiasm, I launched a class blog (<http://katzmelissa.edublogs.org>) for my grade three and four ELLs. Each student has an individual page featuring his or her own writing, which is called "All Write Now!" On an introductory post, I described the purpose this way:

Blogging is certainly fun, but what's the point of having a class blog? For one, it provides a great way to publish student work, and knowing that a broader audience will see their writing can be very motivating to kids. Parents will proudly send links of their children's work to friends and family around the world, from Brazil to Morocco to Ethiopia.

It also gives students a chance to read comments from peers, teachers, family and friends. Understanding what stands out to their readers can be encouraging and help students figure out how to improve their work.

By the time the blog was ready to launch, my students had just spent about six weeks working harder than I had ever seen them work before. No matter how many times I asked them to add details, revise, or take part in peer editing, they did it! Presenting their very finest work was extremely important to them. Once they had

finished their narrative writing about the immigration experience, I posted it online and asked them to comment on each other's work.

## Learning How to Comment

Before students could type their comments in the computer lab, however, they needed to know what a good comment would look like. I taught several lessons explicitly outlining how to respond to a blog post. I also posted a list of comment starters that I found on a Web site called Pandas on the Move by Derrall Garrison:

### Comment Starters

*This made me think about....*

*I wonder why....*

*I can relate to this....*

*I don't understand....*

*I was reminded that....*

*I found myself wondering....*

After that, we developed a detailed set of guidelines to post on chart paper in class. We reviewed this list every day for several weeks.

### How to Comment on a Blog Post

Start with a greeting.

Be positive and specific. Share what you like about the post and say why.

3. Describe how you reacted to the writing. Did it make you laugh? Was it surprising to learn about something the author shared? What was it?

4. Make a connection. What does the writing remind you of? Have you had a similar experience?

Feel free to ask a question or state what the post makes you wonder about. The author may be able to answer your question.

Check your work for punctuation, spelling, and grammar.

### Student Feedback

The resulting comments offered great feedback for the writers and gave readers a chance to thoughtfully connect with the text.

*Dear Birukti,*

*I like the part when you said you missed your dad. It reminded me of when I was little, and I missed my dad too. I also liked when you saw your first snow and when*

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*you started to laugh. It made me laugh, too.*

*Dear Diana,*

*I like the part when you said you didn't know how to read, because when I came to the United States I didn't know how to read either. Now I do.*

*Dear Victor,*

*I like the part when you said your mom started to blabber out those English words. It made me laugh. Do you guys speak lots of English at home now?*

*Gabriel,*

*Yes, we do speak English at home. Thank you for commenting on my story.*

## Logistics


To give students adequate time to compose their comments and become familiar with the blog, I began reserving a weekly slot in the library computer lab. Since most of my students do not have a personal email account, I disabled the blog feature requiring commenters to leave an email address.

For the sake of privacy, students use only their first names for posts and comments. While the public can view our site and we invite anyone to leave a comment, nothing actually gets published to the site without my approval. I also ask any outside commenters to leave an email address in case I have questions. So far all communication has been respectful and positive.

Getting the blog up and running was actually the easiest part of the process -- even for a Technology as a Second Language (TSL) learner like me! While there are many educational blogging sites, I chose Edublogs (<http://edublogs.org>). It allows users to create and manage school blogs and customize designs and features. While it's possible to get a blog up and running for free on this site, I opted for the "Pro" version as it has no advertisements, allows for the creation of 50 student blogs, and offers a greater selection of background themes. (The theme

I chose is called "Notebook Chaos," which seemed appropriate.) The annual cost is just under \$40.

If this is still confusing to you, don't worry. Most blogging sites require no technical background. They generally walk you through all of the steps, prompting and explaining where to add text, pictures, and titles. Also, you can continue to change or edit things as you go along. The National Writing Project also has a post-called Digital Toolbox: Blogs (<http://www.nwp.org/cs/public/print/resource/2756>), which includes a brief YouTube video explaining how blogs can be used in different settings.

In the end, though, the best bet is probably to just follow the example set by the students -- which is to say, dive right in and enjoy the process! 

Melissa DaPonte Katz teaches ESL in the Malden Public Schools. She received her M.Ed. from the Harvard Graduate School of Education and has taught in both private and urban public schools. She is a former journalist and editor.



## Making a Community Safer

By Sarah Schmidt

As adult educators, we are always looking for new ways to engage our students in community issues. In Massachusetts, fires are a serious safety concern in many communities. In fact, there were over 28,000 fires in 2009, and nearly all of them could have been prevented through education.

Holyoke Works is a community based non-profit workforce development organization located in Western Mass. We recently had the opportunity to participate in Keys to Safety, a national campaign to promote fire prevention and safety education in adult learner ESOL populations. Information about the campaign can be found at <http://www.proliteracy.org/keystosafety>.

The campaign provided a plethora of colorful printed materials, including posters, newspapers, and booklets. The website also houses an array of creative printable lessons and pictograms in three different reading levels. As we began using the lessons in the classroom, we found that fire safety and disaster preparation were topics which many learners had little to no familiarity.

The following are some of the lessons that we covered. Although the campaign officially ends on May 1, 2011, the materials will continue to be available on the *Keys to Safety* website and are well worth perusing.

### Calling 9-1-1

One of the first lessons that we tackled focused on 9-1-1 emergency calls. After completing the worksheets and practicing how to answer common questions, we listened to recordings of real 9-1-1 calls that are provided on the website. I then asked students to create their own emergency scenario, and did a role-play activity in which the students “called 9-1-1” and answered “the operator’s” questions. This activity was filled with laughter as students attempted to make up details about their “emergency”. It provided students with solid skills and new vocabulary to comfortably communicate information.

### Fire Safety

Fire Safety is a huge component of the campaign. In addition to the related lessons, we worked with our local fire department to schedule a presentation. While I expected a short lecture followed by questions and answers, the presentation turned out to be comprehensive and wholly informative. The presenter arrived with a huge box on wheels, which housed a giant “doll house” equipped with a remote control. Throughout the presentation she lit up various rooms, created smoke, and simulated “electric shocks”. The students loved it!

The presenter was charismatic and captivated us with stories of local emergencies. Students and teachers alike learned many new safety tips. For example, talking on your cell phone while it is plugged into a charger can cause an electric spark, which if conducted by a necklace for example, can instantly burn your neck. Yikes!

We followed the presentation with a short video, showing a fire burning in real time. In less than three minutes, the room was engulfed in a fiery inferno of flames. This visual reinforced why it is critical, during a fire, to exit a house safely in less than two minutes. This was a far better learning experience than any printed materials could have done



2011 MATSOL Conference  
Christine Coombe, Keynote Speaker

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### Preparing for a Disaster

Disaster preparation was another component of the safety campaign. We completed a class lesson about creating an emergency exit plan. Students individually drew maps of each level of their house, indicated two ways to exit each room, and designated a meeting space. The students brought these maps home and discussed the plans with their families. One of the best results of this campaign has been the ability of our students to have real discussions with family and friends about safety, and to formulate disaster and emergency plans.

One of the many wonderful booklets provided by the campaign is a short chapter book. Each focuses on a different topic. My Level 3 ESL class read about a woman, her son, and their neighbors as they experienced a dangerous storm. This prompted the characters to think about hurricane preparation and to create a plan that addressed their own needs and the needs of their neighbors.

After reading the book, each student was given a large piece of paper and markers. They drew items in their “ready to go bag” to show what they should pack in preparation to evacuate. This was a great way to reinforce what we read, as well as to allow students to creatively express

their individuality. In addition to water bottles and first aid kits, students packed cards and poker chips, cherries, checkerboards, raviolis, dominoes, photographs, and a grill! One student even declared her “ready to go bag” was a *Coach* bag!

As we moved through the curriculum provided by the campaign, it became clear that these lessons provided students with critical information and planning tools that they did not have access to before. By discussing and learning about safety and disaster preparation, we ensure a safer future for our learners, their families and neighbors, and our community as a whole. 

### Resource (for fire statistics in MA)

[http://www.mass.gov/Eeops/docs/dfs/osfm/fire-data/mfirs/facts\\_2009.pdf](http://www.mass.gov/Eeops/docs/dfs/osfm/fire-data/mfirs/facts_2009.pdf)

Sarah Schmidt is an Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teacher at Holyoke Works, in Holyoke, MA.

## The Reality of Family Involvement for Immigrant Families

By Margaret Adams

One of the greatest accomplishments in my life is a personal one. It is becoming a mother of two wonderful children. My oldest child is now a first grader in the local public elementary school. As a parent, I have learned more about education, specifically parental involvement, than any course or degree I completed or book I read.

This fall, I attended my first parent teacher organization meeting. There were half a dozen parents present. I was relieved tremendously to find someone I knew in attendance, my neighbor. Though free babysitting was advertised, there was none during this evening meeting. I was caught off guard to learn that none were offered and I noted that I was the only parent to bring along their children. No one introduced himself or herself at the beginning of the meeting. After fund raising business was discussed, the principal shared MCAS results with us. As a parent, I felt extremely uncomfortable and an outsider in this new world. This was surprising to me as I have been an administrator charged with running all sorts of parent engagement activities. I was horrified to think that the parents that I outreach might also feel the same way about my efforts to engage them in their children's education. Once I began reflecting on my own experience, I then put myself in the shoes of an immigrant parent and was humbled further. Our view of family involvement must be more inclusive than my first PTO meeting.

Our parental involvement programs for our English language learners and their families must look different. (Clearly, it could be argued that all family engagement must look different.) My own immigrant parents never attended a parent teacher meeting. They never read a book to me nor was there unending access to books in my home. They never took me to the

library or saw it as their personal responsibility to enrich my life with trips to museums and vacations. By current and past standards, my parents would have been one of those families who would have been named as not involved.

In reality, my parents were deeply involved in their two daughters' education. They sternly and repeatedly drilled a belief that education was of the utmost of importance to our personal and economic success. My home was highly literate -most of the "reading" centered on the telling of stories from my parents native Cuba. My mother would share so much of her past as she showed her daughters how to cook the many recipes her own mother shared with her.

My parents had the largest impact on me when they took steps to further their own education. They took small steps, at first, by enrolling in ESL classes and, later, in job training. Both of my parents successfully completed their bachelor's degrees in engineering while I was in high school. I remember sitting in the audience of many informal and formal graduations or celebrations of each of the courses and degrees they completed. Often, these events centered on food. Participants brought dishes from their native lands. The impact of those ceremonies greatly helped me in valuing education. I believe it can transform us personally as we accomplish what often seems to be insurmountable- especially the learning of a new language in a new country or a whole new trade.

2011 MATSOL Conference  
Browsing the Publishers



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Last year, I was privileged to be the master of ceremonies at one of those same informal graduation ceremonies that I had attended more than 30 years ago for my parents. In my current position as the director of Title I and ELL programs, we offered over 100 parents of our students access to daytime ESL classes. The program was funded partially through grant funds. As I watched the parents and their families, I was truly humbled. I shared with them how much their participation supported their children. I told that group of children that they would remember this day and likely many more informal and formal ceremonies for their parents. I was humbled as the daughter of immigrant parents who sat in that very audience more than thirty years ago.

For the 2010-2011 school year, we have extended our adult ESL classes for parents offering additional sections. We have added a family literacy component where parents are enlisted in celebrating their native language and culture to build a literate home that can include books but also includes their own personal stories. For the second year in a row, the parents are also integrated into the monthly parent workshops offered by the Title I office on a variety of topics. The adult ESL classes are a means for learning and parental support in their children's education. One parent recently commented, "I can now begin to be the parent."

All parents have much to contribute to the education of their children. Our greatest challenge is to see the world from the eyes of an immigrant parent or those who does not speak English. My understanding of family engagement has been furthered by my own challenges as a parent to negotiate my children's educational experiences. I have gained the gift of empathy for the many families I work with every day who, like me, are trying to raise their children successfully. Why not begin to celebrate each other's efforts in collaboration? 

Margaret Adams is the Director of Title I, Language, and Literacy for the Malden Public Schools.

## Making It Real

By Mary-Margaret Almonte, MAT ESL

There is a buzz of excitement when my English Language Learners, ELLs, and I discover a new writing contest. The contest announcement and details are met with a mixture of enthusiasm, and *over* and *under* confidence. This response is dramatically different from the time when I introduced the idea of competing in a writing contest. In the beginning, my students responded with, "Ah, Ms. Almonte, we'll never win because we are ELL students." I disagreed and encouraged my students to participate with the matra; "You will never know unless you try."

My students are emerging writers in free verse, narrative, expository and persuasive genres. They who work diligently to show evidence of the six traits of writing; including ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions).

*Making It Real* in an ELL writing workshop setting means providing opportunities for young writers to write for an authentic audience. This gives the writers purpose. They submit final pieces to various contests within the district, state, and at the national level. This gives students an audience and a very real reason to write. It has proven to be quite motivating.

Beebe School ELL Writing Workshop has participated on all three levels of competition during this current academic year. The outcome is encouraging. Writers generate seed ideas for various topics and final drafts emerge by the deadline! Students produce publication-ready documents by the designated date. Their writing becomes ready for judgment in the sea of work assembled and submitted by other writers in the district, state and nation. I try to look for contests that involve mainstream writers and encourage each one of my writers to have the confidence that their writing is competitive with native writers of English.

The powerful words of completed pieces of their writing speak for themselves. An eighth grade student, Ngor Luong, won a national place as runner up this past fall when submitting her work to a poetry contest entitled "Where I'm From". She was selected among 1,200 other writers from the United States. This is an

excerpt from her powerful poem. It can be read in its entirety on our wiki space. [www.ellwriting.wikispaces.com](http://www.ellwriting.wikispaces.com)


“I’m from the world of illiterate world,  
Where has less people who can read and write,  
But luckily, I can study a lot more than other  
kids,

Ngor is a fairly recent immigrant from Cambodia. She has been in the states just over two years. She came with strong literacy in her first language, and works diligently to find academic success in America. I am grateful that I found the contest online from a website called “What Kids Can Do” <http://whatkidscando.org>. This contest allowed us to submit written work into other contest as the school year progressed.

A recent contest was tied with a city wide literacy project-Malden Reads. <http://www.maldenreads.org/> Student writers from fourth through eighth grade chose a person from the Malden community to interview. This person, or interviewee, could be a family member, teacher, or person in their neighborhood. All students participated, and drafted ten questions, conducted an interview during class time or outside it, and used notes to draft a narrative-like article for newspaper publication. The results were amazing. The first place winner was Betty Tang, one of our students!

She interviewed a teacher at the Beebe that she was curious about. She began her piece with, *When the clock hits 7:45 a.m in the morning, the door of the Beebe Malden Public School will open. The woman who opens the door is a nice teacher who has short blonde hair and a soft voice telling the students to get in the building. She is nice and patient. Her name is a sweet name that suits her very well. Marilyn. Marilyn Burke is the name. Marilyn Burke is a teacher at the Beebe Malden Public School. All the students call her “Ms. Burke”.* This writer continued to weave her questions into her article with smooth transitions. Her piece caught the scrutinizing eyes and ears of the judges who were a panel of journalists from Malden’s local papers. She was a well deserved recipient of first place, and will soon have her photo and article published in the local newspaper. An accomplishment indeed! She closes her 600 word article with

clever power. *As the interview ended, a student came up and asked her for help. I looked at the student and then at Ms. Burke. She smiled to the student and said, “Sure!”*

In ELL Writing Workshop it has proven to be quite extraordinary. Students work hard towards a goal, and have winning outcomes. 

Listed below are some additional contests.

[http://www.readingrockets.org/books/fun/citizen\\_writers](http://www.readingrockets.org/books/fun/citizen_writers)

<http://worldunityinc.org/>

[http://www.scholastic.com/bookfairs/contest/kaa\\_about.asp](http://www.scholastic.com/bookfairs/contest/kaa_about.asp)

Mary-Margaret Almonte is committed to motivating ELL learners academically and giving them opportunities to have a stronger voice in their school setting. She views all her students as writer, and is determined to inspire them to embrace the same view.

She is currently facilitating ELL writing workshop at the Beebe School in the Malden Public Schools under the directorship of Dr. Margaret Adams.

Mary-Margaret Almonte can be reached at: [malmonte@malden.mec.edu](mailto:malmonte@malden.mec.edu)



2011 MATSOL Conference  
Maria Estela Brisk, Boston College

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## TESOL 2011: Report

New Orleans, Louisiana

By Carol Baum

The 45<sup>th</sup> annual TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) Convention was held in New Orleans, LA this year. According to the staff, there were 6,000 people in attendance. I came away with several interesting ideas to incorporate into my lessons and lots to think about.

Plenary Speaker: Alastair Pennycook was the second plenary speaker and gave a fascinating talk on what he described as the impossibility of English. He called English a lingua franca (dictionary definition: a common language consisting of Italian mixed with French, Spanish, Greek, and Arabic that was formerly spoken in Mediterranean ports; a common commercial tongue among people of different languages) and said we need to let people speak their version of English, the way it emerges from local practice and the way it is constantly being reconstructed. He decried the distinction in hiring practices between native and non-native speakers. He discussed, as an example, India, where people from the US and Canada are paid more than are bicultural bilingual speakers from India.

### Interesting Ideas

**1. Paraphrasing:** I teach an expository writing course using a “green” curriculum. This means that the paragraph and essays the students write have a “green” theme, such as global warming. Before writing these essays, students use Internet web sources to do research and take notes on what they learn. I talk to them about plagiarizing and give a lesson on paraphrasing. My teaching includes revising a sentence by using synonyms and, changing the voice, word order, and verb tense. I find that my students often do not make enough changes. I learned that students could study the sentence to understand the main idea, list the important key words. Once they do this, they could restate the main idea in different words without worrying about usage mistakes. Finally, they could check the restatement for clarity and the original idea and edit as needed.

### 2. Climate Change for the ESL Classroom:

I learned a way to introduce students to how long it takes for objects thrown in the trash

rather than recycled to degrade.

The way that this was done was to assign 12 students an item and to ask them to name from least to most, the most biodegradable item. These are the items and their “life span”- paper: 5 months; orange peels: 6 months; wool socks: 1-5 years; cigarette butts: 1-12 years; plastic milk cartons: 5 years; leather shoes: 25-40 years; nylon: 30-40 years; tin cans: 50-100 years; aluminum cans: 80-100 years; glass bottles: 1 million years; plastic bottles: forever.

**3. Poster Sessions:** These sessions provide a quick way to view interesting lessons. The one I particularly liked was appropriate for a listening and speaking class. This involved conducting a food drive for a food pantry in the community. The students were responsible for all aspects of the drive including contacting a food pantry, figuring out the needs, making posters, and arranging donations.

**4. A Short Course in Teaching Reading:** Our former chairperson at North Shore Community College, Bea Mikulecky, has written a new book for reading teachers. It is chock full of research-based ideas. For example, strategy 6 involves learning collocations (collocations are groups of words that frequently occur together) as part of vocabulary building. She lists collocations, such as commit a crime, develop further, do harm, have an idea. She then suggests different activities, such as having students look for examples of collocations in a concordance, a computerized collection of sentences that contain the same word or phrase.

**5. (Re)conceptualizing Grammar in the Writing Classroom:** As a writing teacher I’m always interested in what the latest research shows about writing and grammar. I attended a panel of college writing teachers- including Meg Gebhard from UMass Amherst. The following points were made:

*1. Grammar is a resource for meaning, not rules. (The two perspective we are most familiar with: parts of speech and prescriptive rules as well as grammar being innate as promulgated by Noam Chomsky are limited.)*


*2. As an assessment tool, teachers are moving away from rubrics. They feel that each writing assignment demands a different rubric.*

3. I asked a question about writing errors and recounted an earlier experience in which my students were not allowed to matriculate if they had more than 10 in their final composition. The panelists felt that counting errors was a form of “unrealistic linguistic imperialism”. They commented that writing teachers should understand errors.

#### **6. New Theories and Effective Practices in Teaching Vocabulary and Grammar:**

The presenters were interested in looking at an approach to grammar called cognitive linguistics. They spoke about different word patterns. For example, when we say *My house needs painting*, no verb works in this pattern except need. The traditional approach for teaching grammar assumes that language is static. This view encourages students to memorize patterns instead of rules.

#### **7. Going Digital: Introducing English 360**

Cleve Miller applied his years of research and teaching to create a course book for the future. He attempted to answer the questions: How will we learn? How will we teach? He quoted William Gibson who said, “The future is already here; it’s just unevenly distributed.” He traced a history of the Internet and described our behavior in the original web as passive consumers. He added that we have evolved to being more active by participating, creating, and sharing as well as mixing and adapting. He discussed his product, English 360, a Cambridge University Press product ([www.english360.com](http://www.english360.com)). 



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