Building Self-Esteem with Memories of Home

by Judie Haynes

Harvesting English Language Success

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- **Communities of Practice**: Creating artwork for publication gives the students in Judie Haynes's classes an important vehicle for sharing cultural information. Jim Hughes continues his struggle to develop an effective English language development program at his school, and Debbie Zacarian explains how she learned to make fewer assumptions about students’ prior learning experiences. Gu Peiya gives tips for networked projects that fire up students’ minds, and Sheryl Slocum takes the sting out of the word *evaluation*. For Dorothy Zemach, giving students a solid foundation in English and helping them prepare to take the Test of English as a Foreign Language are not mutually exclusive.

- **Out of the Box**: While working with a challenging student from Afghanistan, Dina Strasser hears a voice that tells her to stop teaching and listen. Heidi Evans Nachi and Stacey Vye describe a publication that espoused a nontraditional approach to academic research and writing. Having learners choose vocabulary and teach it to each other, finds Susan Finn Miller, results in a range of benefits. A gardening project run by Rebecca Hafley Gaydos and Tammy Jo Gaydos allowed students learn language meaningfully through biology, mathematics, and botany.

- **Portal**: Chikako Nishigaki and Kiyomi Chujo use a spaced learning sequence in software designed to help students learn vocabulary independently. Luciana Diniz and Kate Moran explain how free, corpus-based tools can help you identify students’ problems with form in writing and give effective feedback. Elise Catera and Robert Emigh had students create blogs as a soapbox for reflecting on passages in novels, and Laurette Poulos Simmons keeps organized by carrying a CD for each class containing electronic visual aids.
Home and Other Pages: Diane Watt reviews a book that teaches high-frequency idioms in the context of quirky stories, and Tracy Cramer has found a volume containing one hundred extensive reading activities. With an online concordancer described by Bill Walker, students can get answers to questions about language usage. Ellie Cavalcanti uses a film to examine U.S. customs, discuss characters, practice past tense narration, and practice prediction. Deborah Healey has discovered software that familiarizes students with using a mouse.

Compleat Links: A U.S. elementary school teacher tells Cristina Alfaro and Natalie A. Kuhlman how she has learned to meet the needs of the English learners in her mainstream classroom. Nancy Cloud and Tabetha Bernstein explain how to identify learning disabilities in English language learners, and Henrik Gyllstad offers print and electronic remedies to stalled vocabulary acquisition. Federica Barbieri tells you what the relatively new field of corpus linguistics has to offer language teachers. Richard Firsten examines anticipatory it, differentiates I feel good and I feel well, explains why ham and eggs is singular, and challenges you with a new Brain Teaser.

Kathy Weed, editor of Essential Teacher, died on May 22, 2005. Kathy spent fifteen years as an EFL/ESL teacher and another fifteen as a teacher educator concentrating on reading and ESL methodology and on supervision of student teachers. She was a Fulbright Scholar in Dakar, Senegal; a professor in the BA in English language teaching program at the University of Sonora, Hermosillo, Mexico; and a lecturer at the University of Natal, Edgewood Campus, Durban, South Africa. She was active in TESOL in various capacities and published numerous articles related to teaching second language learners. In addition, she was coauthor of a highly successful handbook for teachers who have second language students in their classrooms.

Kathy brought dignity and grace to her work, and a strength of character that she maintained even during the last stages of her illness. TESOL sends heartfelt condolences to her family, friends, and colleagues.
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Anyone who has ever attended school in a country where he or she is not fluent in the language knows how difficult it is to take part in conversations with groups of native speakers. I remember well the terrible feeling of being inarticulate and tongue-tied when I was a university student in Paris. I could understand the verbal exchanges of my classmates and formulate an opinion or idea in my head, but before I could give voice to my response, the conversation had already moved on to a new topic. Both my pride and my self-esteem suffered.

Imagine how young English language learners feel when they try to become a part of the social and academic life of their classrooms. Most of us who teach elementary ESL find that students have self-esteem issues. English language learners may feel confident at home and in the social milieu of their native language, such as at church or family functions, but their self-esteem may suffer when they are in their U.S. school environment. Students often feel painfully isolated by their inability to express themselves in English.

As ESL professionals, we want students to take pride in their accomplishments and to feel good about themselves. What can we do to help them become more self-confident? How do we give them a voice to express their feelings and opinions?

I decided to have the students I teach enter their work in a project sponsored by TESOL’s Elementary Education Interest Section (EEIS). For the project, entitled Memories of Home, students were asked to submit artwork and writing on this topic.

It was late November, when I often teach a unit on holidays in different countries. When I asked the students to tell me about a holiday in their country, there was complete silence in the room. “What about Seul-Lunar [Korean New Year], Oshu-gatsu [Japanese New Year], or the Harvest Moon Festival [the Chinese harvest festival]?” I queried my Korean, Japanese, and Chinese students.

“Oh yes!” the students exclaimed. “We celebrate those holidays.”

“What do you eat?” I asked.

“Regular food,” one student answered.

“What do you play special games or listen to special music?” I probed.

Through art, my students were able to express an important part of their culture in great detail.

**Circle Time**

**Building Self-Esteem with Memories of Home**

*by Judie Haynes*

Imagine how young English language learners feel when they try to become a part of the social and academic life of their classrooms. Most of us who teach elementary ESL find that students have self-esteem issues. English language learners may feel confident at home and in the social milieu of their native language, such as at church or family functions, but their self-esteem may suffer when they are in their U.S. school environment. Students often feel painfully isolated by their inability to express themselves in English.

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“Oh yes!” the students exclaimed. “We celebrate those holidays.”

“What do you eat?” I asked.

“Regular food,” one student answered.

“What do you play special games or listen to special music?” I probed.
“We do, but we don’t know the name of it in English,” replied the students.

It became apparent to me that my students did not view their holidays as interesting or as a worthy subject of study.

Parent conferences serendipitously fell at the end of November. In order to get more information, I asked parents for help. First, the students compiled a list of holidays celebrated in their native countries. They were told to choose one holiday and brainstorm general questions they might pose about it. Students thought of questions such as “What food do you eat on this holiday? Do you wear any special clothes?” Based on that list, we wrote a letter to parents. At the conferences, I asked parents to discuss holidays and help their children write responses to the questions.

When students finished the questions at home, I asked them to pick one aspect of a holiday and to draw a picture and write about it. There were some drawbacks to using this frame. For many parents, “helping” their children meant doing the work for them. Also, the writing was somewhat repetitive. All the children choosing food, for example, gave the same basic information. The artwork, however, was spectacular. Through art, my students were able to express an important part of their culture in great detail.

Would children have their feelings hurt if the work of some classmates was published and theirs was not? I decided that even those students who were not published in Memories of Home would gain from the experience. We displayed color photocopies of everyone’s artwork outside the classroom. All of the work was also hung (and photographed) in the EEIS booth at the 2005 TESOL convention in San Antonio, Texas, in the United States. I recorded a video entitled Multicultural Holidays through Children’s Artwork (which fulfilled a requirement of a technology class I was taking). I featured the book and video at the school’s Open House in May. The Board of Education was also shown the published work.

It was apparent that I also needed to teach the students how to be supportive of and happy about the success of a classmate or friend. They needed to learn the language of giving compliments and expressing what they liked about the work of others. The compliments needed to be precise, not simply “You’re a good artist.” This skill was practiced in class, and the students learned to make specific remarks, such as “I like the way you used bright colors. It was interesting to learn about Oshu-gatsu.” This lesson came into play when one of my students had her work chosen for the cover of the project book (see De Cou-Landberg 2005). Her classmates and friends knew exactly how to express their delight and support.

ESL students whose work was published received their own copy of Memories of Home and a certificate from TESOL. Students were very excited when I returned from San Antonio and gave them their copies of the book. The next day, after they shared the publication with their teachers, classmates, and parents, I asked them to reflect on how they felt. My goal was to make them realize that they were authentic authors and illustrators. One student said, “I feel famous. My classmates clapped and my parents were amazed.” Another student stated that he felt proud to tell everyone about his culture. Still another remarked, “I felt important and shy at the same time. I don’t like everyone looking at me.” Students agreed that they learned by discussing the holiday with their parents. When asked if she would want to do a project like this again, a student replied, “Yes, because I know I could do it even better, and it would help me learn something new.”

As a result of this project, students in the ESL classes I teach were given an important vehicle for sharing cultural information. They found their voice, and they were heard. (For a garden project that served as a similar vehicle, see “Harvesting English Language Success,” in this issue.—Ed.)

Reference
No one came. I would have to seek them out.

The teachers' room at lunchtime is not ordinarily a place where insightful conversation about curriculum or practice occurs. Grievances are aired, small talk is exchanged, and weariness is shared. Other opportunities to talk with teachers from different grade levels, however, are rare.

“Weren't we already a real school?” asked Clark.

“R-E-E-L,” I answered. “REEL means Restructuring Education for English Learners. Project REEL is a new office in English Learner (EL) Services. It’s adopted us.”

“No, Alice, you use scaffolding strategies, such as realia, pictures, videos, modeling, graphic organizers, and shared reading and writing, to make content more understandable to English learners.”

“Pardon my suspicions,” said Sandy, “but is the support they offer a euphemism for surveillance?”

“That's just good teaching,” said Alice. “All my students need it.”

“Maybe so, but ELD is different. It's small-group instruction for children who don't speak English at home but are learning it as a second language. It's an opportunity to engage students, who ordinarily may not fully understand you, in conversations and activities that are at their levels of English proficiency. Children who are shy or self-conscious about talking are more apt to participate in a group of learners like themselves. They acquire English faster.”

“English learners aren't the only students whose home language is
different from school language,” remarked Sandy.

“Some of my best students are English learners,” said Alice.

“All our students need English instruction,” I responded, “but they have different needs. I teach ELD to English learners, then standard English to African Americans and others. Both groups are learning to work independently.”

“Have you seen the kids in my class?” asked Sandy. “I have to watch them constantly or else they play or fight.”

“Anybody see Survivor last night?” asked Clark.

Such conversations gave me early indications that I would fail. Although another classroom teacher, Marta, shared the burden with me, she had no more time or eloquence than I to persuade teachers to do what they did not want to do. The principal, Edith, who retired at the end of Project REEL’s first year, was no help because she didn’t believe in ELD. The next principal gave it lip service but ranked test-taking skills for standardized tests and implementation of a new language arts adoption as priorities over ELD.

Nevertheless, Marta and I proposed two grouping models. The first involved blocking. For example, we combined second and third graders, and each of their teachers taught one group of the following: children who were at one of the English proficiency levels, students whose first language was not English but who were designated fluent English proficient (FEP), or English-only (EO) children.

Ideal in theory, the arrangement did not run smoothly. The mere movement of children from one classroom to one of several others could reduce instructional time to as little as fifteen minutes.

“Where’s Luis?” I asked.

“Him and Vicente went to the bathroom.”

“Vicente’s missing, too? Where’s Yocelyn?”

“She’s sick.”

“No, I see her at lunch,” said Nai.

“That’s what make her sick. I think she go home.”

Blocking had other problems. When teachers were absent, substitutes were not always available, which meant that students would be scattered among teachers throughout the school. Even if we had substitutes, they often had no ELD lesson plans or were confused by the arrangement. Also, many teachers felt they could instruct their own students better because of the strong bonds they had established with them. The schoolwide blocking experiment collapsed.

Marta and I recommended self-contained ELD: teachers would instruct their own students using differentiated teaching strategies that met the needs of students at various levels of English proficiency; meanwhile, FEP and EO children would engage in quiet work. But, as Sandy had lamented, responsible independent and cooperative behavior was difficult to maintain.

“Mr. Hughes, can I drink water?”

“Jason be talking ‘bout me.”

“We’re done. What we do now?”

“Cassandra’s having another panic attack.”

A major cause of our failure to develop effective, schoolwide ELD was the district’s adoption of a scripted language arts program. Teachers’ adherence to its plans was enforced by consultants and administrators. No longer could I teach standard English daily to a group of FEP and EO children. Indeed, the Adoption’s lessons and activities were so overwhelming that there was scarcely time to teach ELD. Marta and I continued to promote it. “ELD,” we argued, “is one of the few times during the day you don’t have to follow a script. You’re encouraged to supplement the ELD adoption with your own ideas and materials. You can be creative.”

Recently, however, the district’s Literacy Department noticed the obvious link between English acquisition and success on standards-based assessments. The superintendent has ordered EL Services to send out observers to see if ELD is being consistently implemented. This has resurrected the image of the “ELD police” that Project REEL tried so hard to change. Also, the superintendent is combining EL Services and the Literacy Department. Soon I expect a scripted ELD adoption, and the argument for ELD’s creative opportunities will be irrelevant.

At the end of the five-year project, a survey of teachers’ ELD attitudes and practices at my school showed considerable improvement. I have doubts. One of my contributions may have been to alert teachers to not say, “I do ELD all day,” but to say, “I do ELD.” Many, recognizing the significance of language, may have used it to mislead Project REEL about what they were doing for English learners. Having experienced ELD’s benefits, I wish, instead, that their realization of language’s importance had led to a schoolwide commitment to ELD.
In Massachusetts, as in many U.S. states, public school students must pass a standardized state exam, the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS), to graduate high school. This requirement puts a good deal of pressure on English learners to become competent in English and pass state competency tests in a range of subject matter, including English language arts and math.

All public school students in grades three through twelve take the MCAS in the spring of each school year and learn the results a few months later. Waiting for results is a very stressful time for many students, particularly English learners and their families.

I once worked in a high school that required students to pass final math exams to matriculate to the next level of math and to pass final exams in algebra and geometry to receive a high school diploma. The pressure to pass the math exams was as strong as the pressure to pass the MCAS. (See Dorothy Zemach’s From A to Z column in this issue for ways to deal with the pressures the Test of English as a Foreign Language [TOEFL] puts on university-bound students.—Ed.)

A student, whom I will call Alfredo, had moved to the United States from Honduras with no school records. We had placed him in the seventh grade based on his age and the educational history that we learned from his parents and him. Alfredo rarely missed school and frequently met with his teachers for additional support. He was known as a student with a strong work ethic and a happy spirit. Two years after he moved to the school district, however, his spirit was shattered when he learned he had failed the algebra exam. Believing that he would never graduate from high school and was doomed to failure, he came to see me.

“I tried so hard,” he lamented. “I don’t think that I can ever pass the test. I am just not a good student, and this test is too hard for me.”

I expected Alfredo to say next that he had decided to quit school. A few English learners had already quit, and I was concerned that Alfredo would choose the same path. As he spoke, I remember formulating some responses to counter the dropout proposal I expected. Instead, he spoke despairingly about how bad he felt that he had not passed the exams.

Were the difficulties Alfredo experienced due to language or learning, or language and learning?
This prompted me to ask him if we could review his test responses. We might find a pattern to the errors he had made, and then we could figure out some strategies that would help him perform better on math exams. Alfredo agreed, and we scheduled a time to meet.

Before the meeting, I reviewed his test results and found that he had skipped many questions requiring the use of arithmetic procedures, such as addition and subtraction. Each missed response, according to the scoring matrix, was subtracted from his total score. In other words, Alfredo had been penalized every time he chose not to respond to a question.

Before Alfredo took the exam, his math teacher had encouraged the students, including Alfredo, to make an “educated guess” and respond to each question. The volume of questions that Alfredo had left blank puzzled me.

“What made you skip these problems?” I asked Alfredo. He responded, “Why should I guess when I am unsure of the answer? It doesn’t make sense to me. I have never been good at math. Even in grade school in Honduras, my teachers told me I was not a strong student.” He looked at the missed questions and said, “I don’t have an educated guess about any of the problems here. Mine would be guesses, and it would not be smart of me to guess haphazardly.”

Alfredo’s math teacher was not surprised to hear that he had skipped many problems. Alfredo, I learned, did not have the fundamental arithmetic concepts that were needed to learn algebra or geometry. While he attended many after-school support sessions with his math teacher, Alfredo did not make the kind of progress that the teacher had hoped he would. “Alfredo doesn’t seem to be able to hold onto the concepts. He tries, but he doesn’t seem to internalize them,” she told me.

Thinking that Alfredo had made poor progress in math because of his limited competency in English, his math teacher had not considered the possibility that his learning challenges might be unrelated or in addition to his learning English. I thought about the extensive amount of time that Alfredo had devoted to meeting with his teachers. Each meeting, I had assumed, had been a reflection of Alfredo’s tenacity and commitment to learning. Reflecting on his statement—“Oh, I have never been good at math”—and his math teacher’s statement—“he doesn’t seem to be able to hold onto the concepts”—prompted me to reconsider my assumptions about Alfredo.

Were the difficulties that he experienced due to language or learning, or language and learning? What steps might I have taken to assess Alfredo’s language and learning needs? Since that time, I ask more and more questions about students’ and parents’ prior learning experiences to gain information that will help me discern the best academic program. The additional information about students’ prior schooling and approaches to learning is invaluable—each question leads to more questions and, I hope, fewer assumptions.
Multilingual Momentum

Sparking the Cultural Connection
by Gu Peiya

But culture learning was once considered difficult to do in an EFL context such as China. Many Chinese teachers still think they can't learn or teach culture because they themselves have never been to any English-speaking countries. Thanks to technology, though, culture learning has become not only possible but enjoyable. I have been experimenting for years with these possibilities, especially project-based learning (Stoller 1997) with technology. My experience has taught me that students learn best when they are engaged in meaningful projects in a networked environment.

Student motivation is key. In spring 1998, I signed up a group of junior-year English majors for the Cities Project (Meloni 1995), in which students exchanged cultural information about different cities while practicing writing skills. Students showed great enthusiasm for the authentic and purposeful communication. Over e-mail, they “talked” with teachers and ESL/EFL students from Washington, DC; New York City; Honolulu; Paris; and Khmelnitskiy.

While the students eagerly absorbed information about their key pals’ cities, they proudly introduced their home city of Suzhou. Despite their ignorance of Web page design, they successfully created a Web page called Suzhou Glories to introduce Suzhou from various perspectives. They wrote articles and interviewed their schoolmates, foreign teachers, business people, and even tourists in the streets. Finally, they edited the material and organized it into four online columns: Indoor Boast, Kaleidoscope, Tea-house, and First Impressions (Gu and Xu 1999). They even created a page celebrating their learning experience. One student remarked, “I always long for opportunities to communicate with foreigners; however, the chances are rare in my daily life. In this project, my dream came true.”

High motivation drove the students to devote even more time and energy to learning and doing culture. For example, in a project called China-U.S.
Business (Gu 2002), students worked in groups to help virtual partners develop viable business plans for marketing products such as mobile telephones, pajamas, and restaurants. To help their U.S. partners with their research on promoting new-model mobile phones in China, the Restaurant group conducted and reported on a comprehensive market survey, including such information as the price range for various foreign products, customer needs, and even Chinese cultural preferences for the lucky numbers 8 and 6.

Cultural awareness and sense of audience are only two benefits of project-based learning. Frequent interactions with international partners heighten the students’ awareness of cultural differences and their understanding of writing as a social and collaborative act. For example, in a draft of a message on family structure, one student wrote, “I think the old people should live with one of their sons or daughters, or they will feel lonely.” First shared with her facilitator and group members, this view immediately attracted attention. After an in-class discussion, the students realized that this kind of assertion might cause cultural conflicts and that they should respect other ways of life and social practices.

From then on, students became more sensitive to culture in their online communications. However, their final report revealed the great difficulties they went through. For example, the U.S. partners complained that the Chinese students didn’t reply to e-mail immediately. The reasons were the Chinese students’ limited Internet access, different class schedules, and opposite time zones. In addition, their lower level of language proficiency and inadequate cultural knowledge often became obstacles to effective communication. What pulled them through was their common interest in finding answers to the research questions they had chosen.

All language learning is cultural in nature (Swiderski 1993). As teachers, we need to integrate such learning into course teaching. It is never easy, though. Many students who are used to relying on the teacher’s lectures find it difficult and are reluctant to try. But as the above examples show, once students see the value, the potential payoff is encouraging. As one group put in the final report, “During the research, we met a lot of difficulties. We have been refused and laughed at for many times. But we believe what we have done in this semester will benefit our major study and finally will be helpful to our future career.”

Project work can be exciting, but it can be labor intensive, too. How can you scaffold the tasks so that students are successful and you are not burned out?

The answer lies in project design and management. Before each project, I discuss organizational details with the teachers. I then make sure the topics are relevant to the students’ interests. I divide each project into three stages: preparation, collaboration, and final presentation and evaluation. I design task outlines and checklists to scaffold each step. I provide opportunities for students to negotiate meaning and demonstrate their “group wisdom” and then with their partners.

For example, having students give fifteen-minute weekly progress reports proved effective. Groups reported difficulties, shared tips and strategies, and listened to advice from other groups and the teacher. After discussions that were sometimes heated, the roadblocks gave way to confidence and solutions.

Another way to prevent burnout is to involve more experienced students in the projects. Every year, I have some graduate students in my computer-assisted language learning (CALL) course help me answer e-mails and manage group projects for undergraduates. In turn, the undergraduates participate in the graduate students’ CALL research.

A popular Chinese saying supports this type of cooperation: When everybody adds fuel, the flame rises high (众人拾柴火焰高).

It also goes against the traditional Chinese metaphor of candles for teachers, who burn out their lives for others’ brightness. Instead, I see teachers as sparks, firing up students’ minds while stoking the embers of their own growth.

References


Imagine that you are going to ask students to evaluate a unit you have taught. Where do you begin?

You may object, “I teach elementary school. My students don’t know how to evaluate a unit!” Or “Having students evaluate instruction is inappropriate in my culture.” I hope that, even if you teach elementary students or work in a teacher-centered culture, you will keep reading.

As to the objection that seeking students’ opinions is a peculiarly student-centered notion, I doubt it. Aren’t teachers the world over sensitive to the curled lip, the rolled eye, the quick-bright look of agreement? Formally seeking students’ opinions may be particular to student-centered education, but informally seeking or noting their responses is probably nearly universal.

So imagine that you are going to ask students to evaluate a unit you have taught. Where do you begin? It makes sense to go back to the inception of the unit: what was the point of teaching it? What did you want the students to learn? Written objectives or goals are helpful here.

For example, one of the objectives for the course my students will soon evaluate is “The student will build her vocabulary.”

Now, it is not particularly helpful for me to ask the students, “Have you built your vocabulary?” They will answer either yes or no, and I won’t be any wiser. Besides, aside from a gut feeling, how are students supposed to know if they’ve built their vocabulary?

I must break the objective down into particular tasks or observable changes in behavior. In my case, I can ask, “Has any of the vocabulary we’ve studied been useful to you in other situations?” I will follow this question with “If you answered yes, write several words that have been useful. Or write Can’t remember.”

The information I gain from the responses will be extremely useful. First, if nearly half of the students answer that the vocabulary has not been useful, I have several not
I must break the objective down into particular tasks or observable changes in behavior.

mutually exclusive possibilities: (1) choose different vocabulary to teach, (2) link the vocabulary more explicitly to situations outside of class, and (3) set aside the teaching of vocabulary while I research (by reading and by speaking with colleagues) and reevaluate my approach.

If the students answer that the vocabulary was useful outside of class, but few are able to remember a useful word, I have several possible courses of action: (1) make the evaluation as low-stress as possible because students are more likely to remember information when relaxed; (2) reinforce the vocabulary more often throughout the unit, maybe even teaching fewer words in order to do more reinforcement; or (3) assume the students who say yes are politely lying and return to the options in the previous paragraph.

If quite a few students answer that, yes, the vocabulary was useful, and they are able to recall some useful words, I can keep a tally. Words receiving the most “votes” will definitely appear in the same unit next year.

Two simple questions thus help me become a better teacher. No matter how the students answer, their feedback enables me to further my professional abilities. And these sorts of questions can be written for every major course objective.

I must point out that the follow-up question makes the evaluation seem less like “let’s tell this teacher what we think of this class” and more like “the teacher wants to know what have I learned.” In other words, even in situations where students would not normally evaluate instruction, you can construct the questions so that the students think you are evaluating their learning when you are really evaluating the unit.

For elementary school teachers: I have never taught at that level, but I can imagine ways you might be able to accomplish unit evaluation. After all, evaluations do not have to be written, nor do all unit components have to be evaluated at the same time. To continue with the vocabulary example, you might print a list of the unit vocabulary in large letters on stiff paper. Then, for a few days, you can ask students to come to your desk one at a time while the others are working in their seats. Ask, “Which of these words are useful for you?” The students can say or point to the words they find useful. You note the words, then you choose several and ask, “Can you tell me about this word? When is it useful?” You take notes and, no matter what the students say, you praise them for using the vocabulary.

Then you take all the responses home, organize, and reflect. Do you need to build in more opportunities for vocabulary practice? Do you want to choose different words? Have you learned more about your students’ lives outside of class? Again, taking a unit objective and breaking it down into simple behaviors that students can identify helps you refine your teaching.

Finally, I want to affirm that tests are, of course, an evaluation of instruction. If the goal of education is learning, then when the majority of a class does poorly on a test, either the test or the instruction is flawed. Test results, however, seldom are strategy-specific. They indicate that something didn’t work, but exactly what was it? Was I asking students to remember too much? Was the unit irrelevant to the students’ needs? Did I allow too little time for meaningful practice? Is the text inadequate? Or was the students’ poor performance due to external causes, like a disturbing occurrence in the community? I will gain more specific information about how to enhance instruction if I create occasional opportunities for students to evaluate the methods and tasks in the unit I am interested in improving.
I recently had to renew my U.S. driver's license, which I knew would involve taking the thirty-item multiple-choice “knowledge” test. Now, I've been driving for most of my adult life. I believe I drive well: I’m calm, patient, and polite; I drive defensively; I’m aware of my surroundings; I know the rules of the road; I’ve never gotten a traffic ticket. In short, I have communicative competence in driving.

And yet I knew better than to walk in and try to pass that knowledge test without having studied the official state driving booklet full of information on, for example, how far away from railroad tracks you must stop if there is no marking on the pavement (fifteen feet) and what the speed limit is in an unmarked commercial district (twenty-five miles per hour). Nor did I choose to study gradually over several weeks, reviewing a few rules each day. No, I read the whole thing a few days before the test and then skimmed though it the morning of the test.

As I was taking the test, it struck me that I had prepared for it in much the same way many students wish to prepare for the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). That is, even though speaking, listening to, reading, and writing English at a college or university—the “driving”—are what they intend to do, they know that they can’t do it until they pass that knowledge test. We ESL teachers get frustrated with students who tell us that they want to study for the TOEFL rather than learn English (especially when they state it so baldly). Yet we can’t deny the power that the test has over their academic lives. If they handled English wonderfully but didn’t pass the test, most institutions of higher education would deny them admission.

The frustration arises because teachers know that passing the test alone is not enough. If you passed the knowledge test for a driver’s license but not the practical driving test, you wouldn’t get a license. But in the academic world, students can often pass the knowledge test and then be set adrift in classes for which they haven’t been truly prepared. Of what use is it, then, to achieve a passing TOEFL score if they are going to struggle miserably in or even fail at their academic classes?
The concept is clear to teachers. But have you ever tried to get it across to a class of students? I must have spent years lecturing students about how useful solid academic English classes would be for their future academic lives and explaining how passing the TOEFL was just the beginning of their language challenges and not the end. “Don’t study for the TOEFL!” I would cry. “Study English! And the TOEFL will take care of itself.”

Naturally, and rightly, these lectures have never changed anyone’s mind. In truth, sometimes I felt so frustrated with students’ focus on the TOEFL.

classes (and I think it should), then they should be offered only to students who have already taken classes or demonstrated proficiency in other key skills, such as academic writing, speaking, understanding the U.S. university culture, or whatever skills your institution has found to be necessary. Before they have their TOEFL scores, the students are your captive audience.

Of course, some institutions will matriculate students with too low a TOEFL score. This makes financial sense, because students with the lower scores will apply to institutions that that’s what students want, and then use that course to teach vocabulary, grammar, reading, listening, writing, and, yes, test-taking strategies. Techniques that worked for my driver’s license knowledge test also work for many students: I studied the information (and reviewed the more obscure rules just before the test), I learned how it would be tested, I took practice tests online, I talked to others who had taken the test before, and I got a good night’s rest and ate a decent breakfast before the test (and I passed, with a 97). Just being familiar with computerized multiple-choice tests helped me breeze through the test more quickly than the people around me, several of whom looked distinctly nervous. Certainly children in K–12 schools are given practice tests to become familiar with the content and format before taking their increasingly high-stakes standardized tests. (For views on the pressure these tests can have on K–12 students, see Debbie Zacarian’s The Road Taken column in this issue.—Ed.)

Even if you can’t offer a course with such an enticing title, simply pointing out that “being able to write a strong, clear topic sentence will help you get a higher score on the TOEFL” will perk your students right up.

Teaching for the test is not the same as teaching to the test. The TOEFL is neither evil nor irrelevant; it covers the same English language you teach in class, even if it tests in a multiple-choice format. Giving students a solid foundation in English and then helping them feel familiar and comfortable with a standardized test should prepare them for both the TOEFL and the academic world beyond.
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Qaiser, a fourth-grade ESL student from Afghanistan who has recently entered my classroom, is making a birthday card with me. I am pleased at how well Qaiser, who is a challenging and aggressive boy, is responding to the assignment. Instead of rolling his eyes and questioning my authority in his rapidly improving English, he has sat down to the construction paper and markers with focused attention. The room grows quiet.

I am a bully, he spits out suddenly.

I do a double take.

Why do you say that? I ask. This kind of self-condemnation is rare in Qaiser, struggling to define his place in the school through swagger.

He tells me a story about a peer on the bus who has teased him. It was probably instigated by Qaiser, but possibly not. He tells me how the ethnic-based tease hurt him and how angry he was in return.

I could break his jaw, he finishes.

I am preparing my response, something appropriately stern. But something else has happened. I have noticed that he speaks these words very simply, without malice. The whole time, there is no tension in his voice or body. He continues to work on his card intently as he speaks.

I experience an instinctive, powerful compulsion, as real as if someone is speaking to me. It says: Let go. Let go. Do not tell him that children do not hit one another, that he needs to take responsibility, and that he needs to start paying attention to cultural norms. Do not turn to the grammar. Do not be a teacher. Just close your mouth.

I feel a thrill of intense nervousness and discomfort. But I cannot help but obey. The silence stretches out.
Qaiser reaches for another marker and then says, in the same relaxed, matter-of-fact tone: “We were rich in Afghanistan. We had a lot of nice things. Then my father was shot, you know. It was in a park. We were all there, my family. I saw it. That is why we came here."

**Real Teaching?**

Don’t teach? It seems to be antithetical to every idea about ESL that I have received. Those ideas say how important it is to prepare children appropriately for the real world, particularly nonnative ones. The whole thing reeks of subversion.

Yet there it is. This voice has advised me, effectively, to shut up and stop teaching. Following the voice has resulted in possibly the most spontaneous, effortless, honest communication I have ever had with an ESL student. This demands examination.

I do know the voice is not new. Every teacher textbook says somewhere, “Know the children.” In a field such as ESL, where students’ situations can be so widely nonnormative, knowing the children is even more important than usual. Yet this concept often seems to be only a footnote to “real teaching,” particularly in the current atmosphere of high-stakes testing and quantitative educational measurement.

The questions echoing in my own head now include, “What is real conversation?”, “What part does it play in learning?”, “What really propels my students to communicate?”, and “What are they thinking?”

**A Chilling Authenticity**

Was it the Taliban? I ask, as gently as possible.

Yes, he says. Yes.

Qaiser flips the draft of his birthday card over and begins to draw a diagram for me showing where his family was standing at the time of the shooting. I was here, he explains, pointing with his pencil. His illustrations are as precise and cogent as a college professor’s; his tone, animated, urgent. The story pours out: the motorcyclist with the gun, the subsequent years of threats, the lottery at the airport for the visas that would save his family’s lives. This is something he needs to say, and his complete engagement in telling the story makes me wonder if I am the first teacher who has really asked.

The authenticity of this experience stopped me cold. The perfection with which this student communicated with me seemed to be the apex of what I strive for in ESL. Yet trying to incorporate this experience into the schemata of my ESL training simply was not working.

It had little to do with Qaiser’s grammar, his ability to synthesize his thoughts, speak fluidly, or use a wide range of adjectives. Qaiser was nowhere near native proficiency in any of those things. In fact, his proficiency in the language hardly seemed to matter at all. The experience moved beyond all that.

Nor does the experience fit neatly into Canale and Swain’s (1980) foundational four-square model of communicative competence (grammatical, discourse, sociolinguistic, and strategic). As I mentioned, while Qaiser’s interaction with me displayed some aspects of these competences, it did not demonstrate others. Furthermore, and more importantly, in this instance nothing I had done explicitly elicited, asked for, or modeled these competences. Qaiser had been with me for too short a time to put it down to something I had taught him. No, in my role as teacher I had done, quite literally, nothing. In fact, the very genesis of the experience seems to be that I abandoned my role as a language instructor altogether.

The questions echoing in my own head now include, “What is real conversation?”, “What part does it play in learning?”, “What really propels my students to communicate?”, and “What are they thinking?”

**Standard X: The Student Shall Touch the Heart of the Listener …**

Shut up, the voice said.

It appears that I have stumbled on the essence of what I do, and I have done it by ceasing to be an ESL teacher. Where was this in my MS-TESOL program?

I do not think in these kinds of ways normally. If I can be accused of a professional sin, it would be overoptimism: the conviction that all educators are doing the best they can by the children they teach. For example, New York State remains one of the first in the nation to write learning standards for ESL (Office of Bilingual Education 2003). There are five of them, ranging in topic from using English for literary enjoyment to critical analysis. The Standards serve as a benchmark, a scaffold, a check and a balance. I am profoundly grateful for them.

But I am looking at them again now in a final attempt to find some clue to the mystery of the experience I have had with Qaiser. Is it process or product? Is it defined, outlined?

I find some ideas. Standard 4 in particular specifies that ESL students should “use skills and strategies ... to communicate effectively with regard to audience, purpose, and setting” (Office of Bilingual Education 2003, 46). It suggests such time-honored techniques as dialogue journals, social letters, and guided classroom discussions. Standard 5 opens the door to more personal
communication by asking ESL students to “demonstrate cross-cultural knowledge and understanding” (p. 50).

Yet this language leaves me cold. The intense engagement, the profoundly personal and meaningful dimension of my experience with Qaiser, is missing. It is vaguely implied here and there in the Standards, but only as a very precise means toward a very precise academic end. There is nothing that reads, “The student shall touch the heart of the listener, and be touched in return.”

Furthermore, crucial to the authentic communicative experience is exempting a student from becoming a cultural icon. Being a mere prop for “teaching a lesson on multiculturalism” pigeonholes the student and can cause a backlash of embarrassment that washes out the benefit of the student’s alternative perspective. In a different setting I can imagine this happening very easily to Qaiser and me.

Mulling this over, I have to consider a revolutionary possibility: that the very act of codifying my experience with Qaiser as a pedagogical goal pushes it forever out of reach. This occurs not only for the student, but for the teacher: nullifying the goal at the very source of its emanation.

I cannot forget the feeling of deep discomfort during my conversation with Qaiser; the feeling that so easily could have stopped the experience in its tracks. I know very clearly what the problem was. It was guilt. Guilt and plain old fear. Thomas and Collier’s (2001) research on the double and triple effort it requires for ESL students to reach their native peers’ achievement. Washington, DC: Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence.

I have had a glimpse into the person that is Qaiser, and the experience has rippled with healing and hope throughout his learning. While we still struggle together, our relationship as student and teacher was nevertheless changed fundamentally for the better.

A Glimpse of the Person in the Student

We’re finishing the cards. Qaiser flips his paper back over.

Do I need more blue? he says. Again, the voice: It is OK. Let it flow.

Qaiser’s suddenly back to the subject of bullying, or so it seems.

You know, if I were rich like in Afghanistan, I could break that boy’s jaw, and then give him the money to fix it, he says, hopefully. He seems to be trying to strike an acceptable balance between altruism and avenged pride. There is a nagging sense that he is searching for the answer to a much deeper question than one of U.S. social mores.

Here, at last, is my opportunity to regain my role as teacher. But although I start with serious intent, I cannot help smiling in the middle of it.

Maybe you should learn to be a doctor, I suggest. Then you can fix his jaw right away yourself.

Qaiser looks at me, questioning, eyes widening. Then, to my surprise, he laughs, delightedly. He continues to laugh as he leaves to go back to his classroom.

In the following days there is a marked change in Qaiser. He is more open, responsive to direction, self-aware. One day he even asks to be moved away from his buddies in class so he can concentrate on his work. For the first time, he seems to understand that such strategies are not punishments but methods of assisting himself. I hear no more stories about bullying.

I have not been able to fully explain or justify what happened in pedagogical terms, but I know that it is key. It is more than key; it is essential. Qaiser’s laughter follows me. It stays with me still.

“Everything is held together with stories. That is all that is holding us together, stories and compassion,” the U.S. essayist Lopez (1994) once said. I know this because I have had this quotation taped to my desk for years.

Could it really be that simple?

References


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Out of the box

Breaking out of Traditional Research and Writing

by Heidi Evans Nachi and Stacey Vye

autonomy You Ask! (AYA!), an anthology of papers on learner and teacher autonomy in Japan, is hardly a conventional academic publication. While AYA’s nineteen chapters present rich accounts of classroom practice and research into the development of autonomy, they also explore, self-reflexively, issues of how and why we, as language teachers, research, write about, and theorize autonomy.

Many of the authors use dialogues or reported and imagined narratives to play with genres of academic writing about language learning. One chapter even appears as a science fiction story. And thirty-six readers from around the world give critical responses from their own contexts and perspectives to the chapters. AYA! also breaks with academic tradition in that it emerged from collaborative research and writing. This process sought to provide a supportive framework for teachers to find their voices and develop their research through dialogue with other teacher-researchers.

The Process Is Part of the Product

Researching and writing for publication are important components of professional development, but in their conventional modes, fitting them into busy schedules can prove a formidable challenge for teachers. Moreover, refereed and nonrefereed publications usually stipulate specific and lengthy requirements for style and format yet offer teachers little or no support for the process of research and writing other than suggestions for improving a submitted draft. Teachers are given little guidance about how to follow these often unfamiliar traditions, let alone encouraged to explore new ways of writing.

To address this challenge, members of the Learner Development Special Interest Group of the Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT) discussed publishing an anthology that would break with applied linguistics tradition by making the process of research, collaboration, and writing part of the final product. In the fall of 2002, JALT’s monthly publication, The Language Teacher, announced a call for working papers that diverged from the standard protocol: Japan-based teachers would have the opportunity to develop their research insights on learner and teacher autonomy through a collaborative process. The co-coordinators, not coeditors, would strive to create a framework that would support the research and writing processes from the first steps to the publication of the anthology. No one knew exactly how this journey into the unknown would unfold.

Unconventional Collaboration

Twenty-four Japan-based English teachers, Japanese and non-Japanese, responded to the initial call for research proposals. The co-coordinators matched each contributor with another writer to form peer-response groups, and created an electronic mailing list to put members of all the groups in touch and to negotiate the project timeline and guidelines.
This communication served to support writers throughout the process, from formalizing research questions and data collection and analysis to writing a discussion of the results within a tight time frame of nine months. In the first four months, authors exchanged research proposals, data, and data analyses for feedback and new perspectives. In June 2003, after half the authors attended a writers’ weekend retreat, AYA! writers commented favorably on the process:

I enjoyed talking about various projects and I could understand the projects more deeply through the poster sessions and discussions.—Akiko Takagi, as cited in Vye (2003, 11)

Now I wish the whole collaborative Anthology process had started with the retreat, because then I would have known how supportive and safe my fellow contributors were!—Denise Boyd, as cited in Barfield et al. (2003, xxi)

As well as motivating me, the Retreat was important because we reaffirmed our intention at the start of the project to explore non-conventional ways of writing up our work. Tim Murphey suggested we use narratives, instead of a literature review, to frame the issues in our papers. That helped me a lot with finding a voice in which I could articulate my thinking about learner autonomy.—Mike Nix

Near-final drafts due in late July and final drafts in late August were submitted to all contributors for additional feedback using the electronic mailing list. In addition, the co-coordinators gave detailed and supportive feedback to all writers on both drafts, focusing on encouraging writers to find their voices, bring more of themselves into their writing, and deepen reflections in each research project (Barfield and Nix 2003b).

In hindsight, we believe that this extra stage for personalized response was critical in helping writers try new genres and break out of the traditional mold of conventionalized academic writing. Finding new modes of academic writing that could adequately express, or perhaps translate, research insights that had been generated through collaborative dialogue was, then, one of the biggest challenges in breaking with academic tradition.

Never Enough Time
Although the collaborative framework provided space and support for writers to be creative, the project did not evolve without drawbacks. Keeping up with demanding teaching schedules, faculty work, and personal commitments left some contributors little time to work on their own papers and even less time to give feedback to others. Some of the writers who could not make the writers’ retreat regretted that they did not have the chance to meet the other contributors face-to-face. On top of that, a few people had to drop out because of various time constraints. Some writers commented on the time constraint:

Some of the processes we set up didn’t work for me—I didn’t really put enough effort into working with my various partners, in the rush of fitting things around a busy schedule, though perhaps I would another time.

—Michael Carroll

My feedback to Mike N. could have been more thoughtful; I was just so pressed for time. And though we had opportunities to read other contributors’ papers, I usually just skimmed them without giving comments.

—Heidi Evans Nachi

From coping with the time constraints, the AYA! writers learned that while the collaborative framework was motivating and supportive, and helped us develop our understanding of our research, it required as much discipline, focus, and stamina as any conventional academic research and writing, as well as the use of some very traditional deadlines for the submission of work.

The Research Narrative Reinvented
AYA! offers something other research collections do not. A quick flip through the book reveals more than just research reports. The chapters are content rich but easy to navigate. Each opens with abstracts in English and Japanese, features headings to guide the reader, and contains relevant charts and other visual aids. Personal anecdotes, student and teacher quotations, and clear project explanations make AYA! a practical teaching resource as well as a research resource; activities and ideas abound in each chapter. And visiting a password-protected Web site grants any AYA! owner access to loads of additional materials and appendixes.

The chapters in AYA! also may not read like typical research articles. Written in the first person, the papers use dialogues, reported and imagined narratives, introspection, and personalized anecdotes to engender alternative modes of reporting research. Examples, peer feedback, and anecdotes embody the writers’ strong sense of personal development and engagement within the challenge of doing research and writing about it.

Nix’s (2003) chapter weaves reflections on his project and the writing process to reinvent the typical research narrative.

He writes,

I’m struck now that the rational, contemplative tone of that previous draft misrepresents the rushed, incomplete understanding that I actually brought to my teaching in those classes last year. It is that dissonance that I have tried to express by interspersing the uncertain introspection of the fictional opening and early sections of this current draft with segments from the previous draft. The objective, authoritative voice of the teacher-researcher at the start of that earlier draft—elaborating the issues, describing the research project, laying out the theoretical framework for the research—now seems more of a fiction than a hot, flustered figure scrambling through the papers littering the table that I imagined at the start of this chapter. (p. 201)

Davies (2003), rather than simply describing a research project about learner portfolios, combines two unlikely genres: academic writing and science fiction:

Fenton looked as though he had something to say.

“Artemis, I’ll come to the point. You must be wondering why I asked you to come here today. It’s not everyday you visit my office, eh?”

“No, sir.”

In fact, Artemis had a good idea why he’d been asked. The old cyborg at the library had passed on the news. There must be wondering why I asked you to come here today. It’s not everyday you visit my office, eh?”

“Artemis, I’ll come to the point. You must be wondering why I asked you to come here today. It’s not everyday you visit my office, eh?”

“No, sir.”

In fact, Artemis had a good idea why he’d been asked. The old cyborg at the library had passed on the news. There was more trouble in deep space with the Naal. The word was that things needed
to be fixed out there. They were going to send some more teachers to sort things out. Artemis guessed he might have some extra work at the Academy to cover for them. (p. 237)

**Breaking New Ground**

Published in November 2003, the result of the project is the sixteen-chapter, 320-page anthology *Autonomy You Ask!* (Barfield and Nix 2003a). The title tries to catch the flair and innovative tone of the research and writing within. The anthology also includes overview chapters by language professionals working in the learner autonomy field: an introduction by Tim Murphey, an interlude chapter by Naoko Aoki, and a closing discussion chapter by Phil Benson. And at the end of every chapter are two 500-word critical reader responses from TESOL teacher-researchers from around the world.

To find out more about this tradition-breaking anthology, visit the AYA! Web site (Learner Development Special Interest Group 2003, http://coyote.miyazaki-mu.ac.jp/learnerdev/aya/).

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Anne Burns, Editor
When Learners Become Vocabulary Teachers

by Susan Finn Miller

What happens when learners become vocabulary teachers? I recently explored this question in a teacher research project with intermediate-level adult English language learners in which they chose the vocabulary they wanted or needed to learn. In assigning vocabulary logs, an effective routine utilized by many language learners, to adult students in the United States, I wanted to structure the experience to effectively exploit their language-rich environment. My goal was to take the vocabulary logs to another level by having the learners teach their newly learned vocabulary to one another.

I developed this teaching and learning strategy for a variety of reasons. First, the students I was teaching told me that their most important goal was to improve their speaking and listening skills in English. Although some of the students had been studying English for a while, they could not speak English with confidence, nor could they easily understand spoken English. Moreover, I noticed that many of the learners were reserved in the classroom, especially during whole-class and small-group discussions.

Since I knew that interaction was required for language skills to improve (Porter 1986), I wanted to organize class activities that would help the usually reserved students improve their listening and speaking skills in English. Furthermore, I wanted to do this by integrating the four language skills as often as possible. Finally, I wanted to experiment with allowing the students to choose materials to read, listen to, and watch, and then give them the opportunity to talk about what they had learned.

Balance, Choice, and Authentic Encounters

A number of researchers (e.g., Cuban 2001; Earl 1997; Krashen 1993; Swaffar, Arens, and Byrnes 1991) advocate encouraging learners to read frequently outside of class to supplement their in-class reading. For adults with established literacy skills in their first language, Swaffar et al. argue that learners need to capitalize on the top-down processing necessary for language acquisition, including vocabulary development:

We must overcome academic prejudices about the canon of literature or subject matter and encourage students to read magazines dealing with sports, movies, and notoriety. They must read trivial works of their own choosing such as thrillers or romances; in short, texts that are fun and have few intellectually redeeming features. The point is that, to develop automaticity in word recognition, students need L2 texts that are of interest to them, texts which they can read quickly and easily. Acquisition of vocabulary in context seems to occur when students read texts that have familiar contexts, familiar rhetorical organizations, and familiar subject matter. (p. 53)

In addition, suggest Swaffar et al., allowing English language learners choices may encourage the kind of metacognitive
strategies used by efficient reading in their first language. Moreover, light reading at the appropriate reading level can provide academically oriented students with a needed bridge to more challenging texts (Krashen 1993).

Regarding the teaching of vocabulary, Nation (2005) explains that there are “several strands through which knowledge of words needs to develop” (n.p.): (1) meaning-focused input through listening and reading; (2) meaning-focused output through speaking and writing; (3) explicit teaching and studying; and (4) fluency development (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Nation suggests that teachers devote one-quarter of class time to each strand. The classroom routine I designed balanced these strands and created a structure for students to learn from authentic encounters with vocabulary outside class. The strategy also helped learners develop fluency in using new vocabulary through numerous meaningful interactions during class.

Wide-Ranging Vocabulary Logs
Motivated by the adult learners’ desire to use English in realistic ways, the classroom routine involved learners in authentic conversations with one another about the vocabulary they had encountered outside class. Students learned words from conversations with friends, through interactions in the community or at work, from watching TV and movies, and from listening to the radio. They also learned from reading different types of texts, such as newspapers, manuals, prescriptions, memos at work, brochures, ads, song lyrics, material on the Internet, and even product labels, such as those on cereal boxes.

I asked the students to keep a log of these words and expressions. Each day the learners chose one or two new words or expressions to add to their vocabulary logs and studied them in context. The students could consult a dictionary, if needed, to check the meaning of the word, and then they wrote a definition and a sentence using the word in the log.

It was interesting to observe the different kinds of vocabulary students recorded in their logs. The words selected from listening contexts were often two- and three-word verbs, idiomatic expressions, and common slang, such as to put your finger on it, to go out on a limb, to get taken, and to wear the pants in the family, while the words chosen from reading contexts were usually more straightforward, such as mentor, affordable, struggle, and task.

I checked the students’ vocabulary logs for accuracy, noting which words or expressions from the students’ lists might be especially interesting and appropriate for the students to teach to the class. Each day in class, students in pairs talked about the context of their new vocabulary and taught their new word or expression to one another.

Teaching Vocabulary to the Class
To take the vocabulary log activity one step further, I had the students choose vocabulary from their personal logs and take turns teaching it to the whole class. I set up a teaching schedule so that students knew when they would be teaching ahead of time, and two students taught vocabulary in each class.

A planning worksheet helped the students with their preparation. On the worksheet, the learners filled in the vocabulary word or expression they planned to teach and explained where they had encountered the word. They noted the pronunciation of the word, a definition, and a sentence using the word, and listed any other words they might need to explain during their vocabulary teaching. Finally, they indicated on the planning form how they planned to engage their classmates in their presentations.

The students turned in the planning worksheet ahead of time so I could give feedback to them before they taught the class. To make the presentations more engaging and interactive, I encouraged students to involve their classmates in creative ways and to use visual aids. For instance, with assistance from classmates, some students performed short skits to illustrate their vocabulary word or expression; others created listening and reading cloze exercises from song lyrics or from a short section of video, gave miniquizzes, and played guessing games.

Students paid close attention to the vocabulary lessons and took notes since they were to be quizzed on the words taught by their classmates. During the presentations, I encouraged everyone to address clarifying questions to the student who was teaching the vocabulary and not to me. Being able to respond effectively to questions from the class was an important skill for these learners to develop. In addition, I gave written feedback to students on their presentations, using agreed-on criteria.

The students recognized words their classmates had taught to the class better than words I had assigned.

The students recognized words their classmates had taught to the class better than words I had assigned.
Teaching vocabulary to the class afforded learners an opportunity to carefully plan what they wanted to say. Making a presentation to the whole class demands different speaking skills than pair work does. During their daily conversations with a partner, the students could explore different topics of interest; experiment with different ways of expressing ideas; and discover new, interesting, and effective strategies for explaining things in English. This deliberate discovery process served as good preparation for teaching the whole class.

**Choose It, Teach It, Learn It**

The research project focused on twelve intermediate-level adults and the differences in rates of retention for vocabulary generated from different sources: words they had taught the class, words their classmates had taught to the class, words assigned by me, and words they chose randomly from each student’s log. The students had been previously quizzed on all the words except those chosen randomly from their logs.

At the end of the fifteen-week semester, the results of a personally designed quiz for each student demonstrated that the learners remembered words from their own vocabulary logs better than they remembered words in other categories. Notably, the students recognized words their classmates had taught to the class better than words I had assigned. The most surprising finding was that the results were identical for words students had taught to the class and those chosen randomly from their logs, even though students had never been quizzed on the randomly chosen words.

One possible conclusion from these results is that the words students choose themselves, especially from self-chosen materials and contexts, have more saliency than words chosen by others. Furthermore, students may learn vocabulary better from their peers than from teacher-assigned materials, a finding similar to that of Slimani (1992). The argument could be made that the learner’s personal interest and the need to know are what aids the acquisition of vocabulary. In addition, since these learners also remembered words they shared with their partners, having conversations about self-chosen vocabulary may have helped solidify the acquisition of vocabulary.

Moreover, teaching vocabulary seems to strike an appropriate balance between challenge and risk. While the activity is not completely risk free, students gradually begin to feel safe taking the risks required to improve their oral language output and push the “frontiers of their interlanguage forward” (van Lier 1991, 41).

**Balancing Challenge and Risk**

The main success of the student-led vocabulary-teaching routine has been the way it sustained the interest of the learners. While sometimes hesitant at first, most learners became motivated to participate because of their personal interests. As one student wrote in response to a survey, “This is my first time to study English in this way. It’s new for me, but I think it’s a very good way because everybody’s English level is different. Everyone’s studying ability is different. Everyone’s interest is different. We can choose our articles of interest to read and movies of interest to watch. Students who have higher levels of English can choose difficult articles to read. Otherwise, we can choose easy articles to read. I was surprised at how eager the students were to share what they had read, listened to, and watched with their partners during class. Students commonly brought the newspapers, magazines, and books they were reading—and even CDs and videotapes—to class to share with their partners. I was particularly impressed by the fact that students stayed on task, speaking and actively listening in English, for fifteen to thirty minutes during the partner conversation and vocabulary-teaching activities, especially when I consider the typical reticence of some learners.

What happens when learners teach vocabulary? By placing learners at the center of the learning experience, encouraging learners to choose high-interest, authentic reading and listening materials to discuss, and allowing learners the opportunity to negotiate in meaningful, feedback-rich interactions, the vocabulary-teaching activity gives students a disciplined structure for exploiting their language-rich environment. By teaching each other vocabulary, students interact with one another in authentic ways, practicing essential communication strategies such as checking comprehension and asking for clarification.

**References**


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What are the components of a quality education ESL program? TESOL’s *Standards for Adult Education ESL Programs* answers this question by defining quality components. Program indicators in eight distinct areas help you review an existing program or provide guidance in setting up a new ESL program.

In our search for innovative ways to teach using universal experiences that will enable students to make connections between their native culture and their newly adopted U.S. culture, our most successful project has been an annual children’s garden. The garden has produced a bountiful harvest as well as rapid English language development.

The students, who range in age from six to seventeen, come to us with few or no English language skills, and many plan to return to their native countries within two to five years. With these new speakers of English, we have found authentic language activities to be the most engaging and educational.

Ideas Begin to Sprout
The idea of using gardening as an avenue for teaching language first took root when we discovered a seeds-in-space project, The Growing Connection, being conducted by the American Horticultural Society and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (see http://www.thegrowingconnection.com/). The program provided a variety of seeds, some of which had been sent into space; soil and containers for planting; and activities and lessons to use with the students (American Horticultural Society and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations 2004). Some of these lessons included experiments that focused on the germination and growth of the space seeds as compared with seeds that had remained on Earth.

The project sparked our imagination, and we immediately placed an order for our own Growing Connection kit and began to plan how to incorporate the seeds-in-space project into a vegetable-gardening project.

Our goals for the students included using the garden to promote speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills; build an understanding of the scientific process; foster a community of cooperation; and create a garden of edible success. The project would run from February through early November and would require a serious commitment on the part of the students, especially as they would need to spend time outside of scheduled language learning sessions to help out.

To begin, we surveyed the students about their interest in planning, planting, and maintaining a vegetable garden. The students’ responses were overwhelmingly positive. As the snow fell in February, we began to prepare for the spring.

Planting the Seeds for Growth
Since the students met with us individually at various times during the week, we arranged a group meeting to discuss the garden with all the students and with their parents, whose support would be crucial to the success of the garden. During the meeting, we talked about the way plants grow, photosynthesis, the seeds-in-space project, and container gardening. Students brainstormed different vegetables that they would like to grow, and the group came up with a list of varieties to plant in our garden.
During the meeting, we gave some students assignments, such as finding out when the frost-free date would occur in our area, when seeds should be planted, which seeds needed to be started indoors and which could be planted directly into the garden, and when seedlings could be safely transplanted. Other students were asked to investigate how much area the garden would require, how much produce could be expected, which plants would grow best side by side, and which plants needed to be separated.

Before the first meeting ended, we showed the students where the vegetable garden would be located behind our home. Each child received a diagram of the box layout and the list of vegetables that the group had generated during their brainstorming session. We discussed the path of the sun and then asked the children to diagram which plants they would include in the garden and where they thought the plants should be placed for optimal growth. In the following weeks, the children submitted their plans, which we discussed as a group before agreeing on a final planting plan.

**Growing in the Garden**

As the plants grew, the students became more and more engaged in the garden. In a garden journal, each child entered research findings, recorded observations of the seeds in space, and recounted the gardening tasks they had completed. During their tutoring sessions, the students read each other’s journal entries and were encouraged to write a response.

In April, third grader Hiroki wrote, “We planted the rest of a peas in with the other peas and watered the peas.” Miharu, a first grader, and her sister Mizuki, a third grader, wrote, “We put toothpicks in the sweet potatoes. We put them in cops [cups] with water.” High school student Cynthia and her seventh-grade brother Richard recorded discoveries in the gardening journal: “Three out of ten pumpkin seeds were very successful. They sprouted quickly.” Another seventh grader, Yohei, questioned, “What makes worms different colors?” Seventh grader Yuya responded, “We found information on the internet about blue worms. The scientific name for the woodland blue worm is collision cyaneum.”

March and April were the time to begin indoor seed sprouting. Clear plastic food containers lined with paper toweling served as little greenhouses for the seeds. Vegetable seeds were sprinkled onto the toweling, and then the seeds were covered with another paper towel. The children then sprayed the toweling with water. In about one week, peas, tomatoes, cucumbers, zucchini, and watermelon seeds began to sprout.

The students consulted with their classmates who had researched when the different seedlings should be planted in the garden. When the weather was just right, we transplanted the young plants into the garden boxes. Miharu and Mizuki were the first to begin planting the seedlings: “We planted peas in the flower boxes. We can eat peas around June 23rd. We planted 1½ inches down and 2 inches apart.”

Some pumpkin, squash, sunflower seeds, and sweet potatoes remained; we put these aside for our harvest dinner. The students designed invitations for their families. Each student selected a vegetable to prepare. We collected written recipes for the dishes, which we later compiled into a cookbook.

When the day of the harvest dinner arrived, students and their families gathered to celebrate and share the successful harvest. After they had filled themselves with delectable goodies, the dishes were cleared away, and we brought out photos of the children taken throughout the growing season, along with scissors, glue, pens, gardening stickers, rubber stamps, and ink pads. Each child was encouraged to write and illustrate a memory scrapbook page about their experience.

Ai wrote about a picture taken of her and her sisters, “Everyone working and weeding the plant everyone eat vegetables.” Runa wrote about the gardening that she did with her twin sister Rina, “When I give water to tomato tomato grow up. My sister, who name Rina help me.” When completed, the pages were gathered and put into a gardening scrapbook to be enjoyed throughout the coming winter months. The scrapbook and journal also served as references for the students as they prepared for the next season’s garden.

> The garden project has driven home how important it is for learners to have a genuine purpose, goal, or objective for learning and for the teacher to teach to that purpose or goal.
Creating a Self-Sustaining Environment for Growth

As the plants grew, the children became more and more involved with the garden. As a result, several projects spun off. Some of the children became interested in the worms and insects they found in the garden. Mizuki and Miharu shared their surprise at finding worms in the garden, “Shh! There are worm in the garden!” They did research on the worms’ eating habits, their reproductive process, their habitat, and ways they benefited the garden and the environment. “Worms can be double their populations every ninety day. DON’T PUT IN TOO MUCH FOOD!” Kazuki, a seventh grader, warned. Before we knew it, we found ourselves raising 1,500 worms for their castings.

Other students were more interested in the differences in plant growth, seed sprouting, pollination, the Krebs cycle, and the effect of the atmosphere on the seeds sent into space. When the pumpkin leaves began to turn an unusual shade of silver, the students investigated and found that the plants had contracted powdery mildew as a result of the cool, wet summer weather. Richard shared his findings: “Our pumpkin leaf had white powder with gray patches on the upper side of the leaf which tells us that it has powdery mildew, but the pumpkins are ok.” In late summer, a local band of squirrels began to steal the sunflowers. The children researched, brainstormed, and shared ways to foil the squirrels’ attempts to eat the seeds.

When visiting relatives and friends arrived at the students’ homes, they were brought to the learning garden to see what was growing. The students were excited to share their expertise with their visitors while acting as ambassadors and translators for us. Their confidence in their second language matured along with the plants that they tended.

Growth for the Garden, Growth for the Gardener

The gardening classroom allowed the students to engage in meaningful language learning through biology, mathematics, and botany. The students planned, experimented, considered problems, assessed the effectiveness of their gardening decisions, and adjusted their plans and actions, all within a community of English language learners. This soothing and relaxing garden classroom supported the students’ language learning as well as their environmental awareness. The students were so excited about the vegetables they produced in the garden that they forgot they were learning English.

For us as teachers, the garden project has driven home how important it is for learners to have a genuine purpose, goal, or objective for learning and for the teacher to teach to that purpose or goal. We learned that when interest is high, lasting learning occurs. We learned to trust the students to make discoveries. We learned to be attentive and receptive to allowing students to step up to a wide range of opportunities.

Our garden classroom fostered more than English language skills. In us and in the students, it aroused a passion for learning, provided an opportunity for personal growth, and left behind a feeling of success. Runa summarizes the entire project for us: “I am weeding the little plant. I was happy!”

References


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A valuable resource for workplace language trainers and corporations. These guidelines promote quality and accountability and are illustrated with useful case studies. Develop realistic expectations and outcomes for your workplace language training programs.
Corpus-Based Tools for Efficient Writing Instruction

by Luciana Diniz and Kate Moran

In analyzing form and content in students’ writing, you may find it easier to score content objectively. Does the student address the prompt? Does the student provide details and support for claims? Is the content rich enough?

Form, however, can be more deceiving. When students omit words or a sentence is awkward, you are likely to notice. Recognizing a limited vocabulary can be a bit more difficult. For example, over the course of an essay, you may have a hard time seeing which words the students have repeated. Even more difficult to determine is what types of words students have used and how they have used them in the repeated instances. And when teaching vocabulary from the content, how can you choose words that have the most transferability to other areas of the students’ academic careers?

Features of corpus linguistics can add objectivity and clarity to the way you determine problems second language students are having with form in their writing. Corpus-based tools and programs that are available free of charge can help you identify these problems and give students clear, effective feedback.

Most corpora, large or small, are collected in computer-searchable databases. There are many commercially available programs designed to search and analyze different corpora.

Many corpus programs feature a concordancer, which allows the user to type in a word and locate its occurrences in the text (e.g., the Virtual Language Centre’s Web Concordancer, http://www.edict.com.hk/concordance/; see the review in Software Thumbnails, this issue, and see "Corpus What?" in Compleat Links for this issue, http://www.tesol.org/). The program displays concordance lines in which the search word, also known as the node or key word, is shown in context. The node word appears in the center, with a limited amount of the preceding and following text on either side, as we explain below.

Corpus, Corpora, Concordance

A corpus is simply a collection of texts. Some corpora, such as collections of student writing, are constructed of specifically chosen texts that have been put together for a purpose. They tend to be comparatively small. Very large corpora often include many different types of texts in order to be reflective of the language in general.

Tools for Analyzing Students’ Writing

What Vocabulary and Phrases Are Students Using?

A useful and straightforward way of analyzing students’ texts is to examine the nature of the vocabulary and phrases in their writing. Web Vocabulary Profiler (http://132.208.224.131/vp/), designed by Tom Cobb, is an excellent resource for seeing how students’
vocabulary choices compare with the most frequently used words in English in academic texts.

The program holds three fixed lists of words: two containing the 2,000 most frequent words in English (i.e., the 1,000 most frequent [K1] and the 1,000 next most frequent [K2] word families) and one with the Academic Word List (Coxhead 2000), a compilation of the words used most frequently in academic texts in several disciplines. When you type or paste student texts into Web Vocabulary Profiler, the program compares the words from the text with the words from the three lists. The software then generates a table displaying the words from the target text that match the ones from the lists.

By analyzing the tables, you can identify what categories of words students are using (or not using) in their writing. A glance at the list of academic words in a table, for example, will tell you whether a student is underusing this type of vocabulary. As we have mentioned, you may not recognize this simply by looking at the essay as a whole. The Web-based software makes it easier to analyze the vocabulary and structure of the students’ texts so that you can focus on a student’s or the class’s specific problems.

You might even show more advanced-level students how to use Web Vocabulary Profiler to analyze their own writing. After some guidance, students can enter their own texts and analyze them before submitting them to you. If the purpose of the class is academic, for example, you might require students to submit their papers with a minimum number or proportion of words from the Academic Word List. This way, learners have a focus in mind when examining their texts. This routine gives learners the opportunity for autonomy and is likely to force them to use a more varied list of words in their writing.

How Have Students Used Words and Phrases?
Another way to use corpus linguistics in teaching writing is to examine how learners use individual words or phrases in several contexts. For this, computer programs that provide concordance lines from the students’ texts are useful.

Two user-friendly programs you can download free of charge are Matthias Hüning’s TextSTAT (http://www.niederlandistik.fu-berlin.de/textstat/software-en.html) and Lawrence Anthony’s AntConc (http://www.antlab.sci.waseda.ac.jp/software.html). To use these programs, you enter students’ work and search for specific words or groups of words in each text or in the whole class’s texts. For example, if students are learning the difference between the words affect and effect, you can type the words into the program and produce a list of all sentences in which the students have used the words. The target words are highlighted in the middle of the sentences, as shown in the example below.

You can also look for word clusters, such as on the other hand and as a result of, to see whether students are using transition words correctly and in the right context. Using the software, you can easily keep track of students’ performance with regard to structure, freeing time for the analysis of content.

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1 lower. The constant 50 or 100 may affect a greater range of error if there i
2 extrinsic physical conditions that affect and influence the growth and develo
3 extrinsic physical conditions that affect and influence the growth and develo

1 s, expressing the ideas to maximum effect. A good summary is precisely co
2 Evidence of thermal pollution’s effect A series of evidences and obvio
3 anation of operation and Cause and Effect A watch is a device used to tell
Corpus-Based Feedback
Corpus-based features can be useful in responding to students’ writing. You can use concordance lines, for example, to give feedback to individual students on their specific problems. If a student omits or has difficulty using the correct preposition after a word (e.g., interested), you could print out a selection of concordance lines from a corpus that provides several examples of interested in and attach it to the student’s paper (see the box).

Web Concordancer, mentioned above, is an excellent, easy-to-use resource for obtaining concordance lines. To give a student individual feedback, you could, for example, opt for a simple search in English. You would then select a target corpus from the drop-down list offered according to the purpose of the assignment. (The Brown Corpus, for example, is a large collection of written North American English.) You would then simply enter the search term, in this case interested. A long list of concordance lines will be displayed, from which you can copy and paste the most appropriate examples for the student.

Corpus as Student Reference
As students become more familiar with seeing concordance lines and using corpora, they can carry out simple searches on programs like Web Concordancer to find examples for themselves. In this way, the corpus becomes an additional reference for students, like a thesaurus or a dictionary. Finding examples of actual language use can illustrate typical uses of words that are not always included in the dictionary definition.

Whole-Class Vocabulary Lessons
Vocabulary and redundancy problems revealed by using the programs we have discussed can form the basis of a whole-class lesson. After seeing which forms the students are overusing, you can provide appropriate alternatives. If you wish, you can also create a vocabulary list based on the Academic Word List and help students begin incorporating more academic word choices into their writing.

20 ring 1960, many of whom are still interested in a Rhode Island location. They
21 t to any great extent. Readers interested in additional information on
22 d this new technique is primarily interested in advancing and perfecting it.
23 ying out more and more. He may be interested in another woman, or just like
24 and fine arts building. Anyone interested in attending the meeting may ha
25 would become tagged as men not interested in being purely real estate
Simple, Practical, and Efficient
Using computer programs to analyze student writing can help you reflect on your teaching and have a clearer idea of the problems students face. Through the programs and techniques we have described, you can take advantage of the benefits of corpus-based tools without having to spend a lot of time or money. Simple, practical applications of the research done in corpus linguistics are beneficial for teachers and students, and with practice on your part, should make the job of teaching second language writing simpler and more efficient.

Reference

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Using CALL to Bridge the Vocabulary Gap

by Chikako Nishigaki and Kiyomi Chujo

Language educators know that vocabulary building is at the heart of language acquisition. If teachers can find a way to help learners improve vocabulary outside the classroom, then classroom time can be used for teacher-student and student-student interaction.

The good news is that technology brings solutions to the problem of learning vocabulary outside class. We have developed university-level computer-assisted language learning (CALL) programs for the vocabulary covered by the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC). Also under development is e-learning material for everyday vocabulary to be used at the elementary and junior high school levels in Japan. Although we created the programs for a specific audience, the steps we followed to define the core vocabulary and develop easy-to-use, enjoyable programs may help you create similar software for the students you teach.

The Epiphany

In Japan, students are expected to score well on the TOEFL or TOEIC after graduating from college. The TOEFL generally measures a learner’s grasp of general academic English while the TOEIC includes business English. The question is, do the schools teach students the vocabulary they need?

The current thinking in the field of vocabulary teaching and learning is that a reader should be able to understand 95 percent of the vocabulary in a text in order to comprehend it. Using this concept (called coverage), we compared vocabulary found in the most popular series of Japanese junior and senior high school textbooks with the vocabulary in the TOEFL and TOEIC. Not surprisingly, there was a huge gap (see Chujo and Nishigaki 2003). In spite of expectations, schools do not teach students the vocabulary they need to take these tests (for one view, see Dorothy Zemach’s From A to Z column in this issue.—Ed).

Building a CALL Program

The gap in vocabulary coverage gave us an idea: create an out-of-class CALL program to teach the missing vocabulary; do it in a way that integrates theories of learning, information processing, second language acquisition, and TESL to ensure long-term retention; and—most importantly—make the program enjoyable for students to use.

Defining the Core

To create the CALL material, we first listed all the word forms (145,391) from twenty practice TOEFLs and reduced the word forms to 6,839 different base
words. For example, communicate, communicates, communicating, and communicated are forms of the same word, so we listed them under a base word, communicate, with a frequency of four occurrences. We used our own computer program to list and reduce the word forms; programs such as WordSmith Tools (see http://www.lexically.net/) and TreeTagger (see http://www.ims.uni-stuttgart.de/projekte/corplex/TreeTagger/) could also be used.

Next, we subtracted all the words we knew would be taught in junior and senior high school by comparing the list with the vocabulary list we had compiled from the textbook series. The result was 4,848 words that would be new to high school graduates taking the TOEFL.

Following Nation’s (2001) view that an effective word list should provide a reasonable frequency of occurrence of words and encompass a wide range of texts, we listed the words in order of frequency and excluded any word that appeared fewer than four times. From the remaining 1,412 high-frequency words, we deleted words with a small range—that is, words appearing in only one or two of the TOEFLs. From the remaining 1,023 words, we eliminated 322 that would be taught in college EFL material, leaving 701 words as the missing, or core, vocabulary for the CALL program. We arrived at the TOEIC core vocabulary in a similar way. Later, in grouping the TOEFL words into 10-word units by topic, we set aside 100 words, which we may include in future programs.

Spaced Learning
Once we had the core vocabulary, we had to create a delivery method that would be effective for learners and support classroom teaching. We decided on a method called spaced learning (see the chart on the next page). The first ten vocabulary words are learned in isolation, then in phrases, and then in sentences. As the learner progresses through stages, new units of ten words are added, and the words from previous units of words are reviewed in different lessons on different days.

The complete program consists of three subprograms for TOEFL and for TOEIC. Each of the six subprograms covers 200 words (20 units of 10 words). In each unit, an introduction step gets the student thinking about what words might mean, and the student listens to the words in a series to prepare for learning. Next is a learning step: the student clicks on a button to hear the pronunciation and to hear the words in a different order. A confirmation step quizzes the student on comprehension, for example, by prompting the student to match a target word with a definition from a monolingual dictionary. A review step prompts students to double-check their understanding of the target words. Finally, the unit presents the base words with prefixes and suffixes to expand students’ knowledge of the words.

You can use the advantages of technology to move learning out of the classroom and into students’ everyday lives.
Designed for Ease of Use

We created the program as a series of Web pages using IBM's WebSphere Studio Homepage Builder (Version 7; see http://www-306.ibm.com/software/awdtools/hpbuilder/). The software is not difficult to use, allowing you to produce your own programs using core vocabulary specific to your learners’ needs (Nishigaki et al. 2004a). The resulting software can be adapted for CD-ROM or Web-based learning.

The vocabulary program is visual, it has an audio component, and it is kinetic: students interact with the software and physically control the pace of their learning. A feedback/hint feature allows students to try to correct themselves if they have made mistakes.

The real beauty of technology lies in how it can bring learning out of the classroom or language lab and into real-life situations. Because MiniDisc (MD) recorders and cellular phones are now in nearly all of our students’ pockets, we wanted to allow students to access target words with these devices while on the go (Nishigaki et al. 2004b). We created two types of supplementary material: a book-plus-MD format and a cellular phone format.

Impressive Results

We evaluated the program by asking university students to use it and then giving them retention tests and questionnaires. On average, the students remembered an impressive 95 percent of the words learned with the program four months after the original instruction, including a two-month vacation. In addition, students responded positively on a questionnaire with a five-point scale, saying, for example, that “the material was useful” (4.4), that they “want to learn more vocabulary with this material” (4.7), and that “the software was easy to use” (4.9).
Different Core, Same Method

Based on the success of the TOEFL and TOEIC programs, we have turned our attention to creating similar material for elementary and junior high school students. Textbooks used in Japanese junior and senior high schools lack sufficient daily-life vocabulary (Chujo, Hasegawa, and Takefuta 1994), and teaching everyday words to elementary-school-aged children can be highly beneficial. We saw the Japanese government’s 2002 initiative to teach English at the elementary level as a wonderful opportunity to teach a core of daily-life vocabulary that is currently missing in junior and senior texts.

To create the core vocabulary, we collected words from twenty picture dictionaries published abroad and ten picture dictionaries published in Japan. We felt it was important to consider Japanese dictionaries in order to include daily words common in Japan but not necessarily common elsewhere, such as chopsticks, squid, teacup, persimmon, and leapfrog. From these thirty texts, we gleaned a total of 5,259 words relevant to students’ everyday lives.

To make sense of such a large number of words, we rated them in various ways. Going back to Nation’s (2001) comments about frequency and range, we gave each word a range rating based on the number picture dictionaries that contained it. For example, a word that appeared in twenty picture dictionaries would be a range 20 word. Next, we checked for frequency by comparing how often the words appeared in both a children’s corpus of spoken data (Child Language Data Exchange System [CHILDES]; see http://childes.psy.cmu.edu/) and a corpus of adult spoken English (the British National Corpus; see http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/). This gave us a statistical score (log likelihood) for outstandingness—how often the word appeared in the children’s spoken corpus.

Then we assigned a grade level to each word (using Dale and O’Rourke’s 1981 and Harris and Jacobson’s 1972 criteria for determining the grade at which a U.S. student would learn each word) and separated out the elementary-level vocabulary. We now have a core of 500 words (Chujo, Nishigaki, and Iwadate 2005) and are currently creating e-learning material that presents words in categories (e.g., at home, at school, at the zoo, at the park).

Technology for Incidental and Intentional Learning

Students who learn incidentally by watching television or listening to English song lyrics can now tune in just about anywhere and anytime. In the same way, students who learn intentionally now have a huge variety of tools at their disposal. As educators, you can use the advantages of technology to move learning out of the classroom and into students’ everyday lives.

References


Chikako Nishigaki is an associate professor of TESL at Chiba University, and Kiyomi Chujo is an associate professor of corpus linguistics at Nihon University, in Japan.
Managing ESL Programs in Rural and Small Urban Schools

Barney Bérubé

This resource offers aid and comfort to the ESL manager in U.S. rural and small urban communities. It describes how a small program of services can fit into the standards movement and how to staff such a program.

This volume will guide you through the challenges and offer the tools necessary to support an ESL program. It contains a wealth of suggestions for instruction, student assessment, program evaluation, parent and community involvement, and multimedia resources.

A practical and timely guide for the ESL manager, this is a volume to use, to share, and to revisit often.

Collaborative Conversations Among Language Teacher Educators

Margaret Hawkins and Suzanne Irujo, Editors

This distinctive volume captures collaborative work among language teacher educators. Rich hours of conversation enable teacher educators to critically engage with issues concerning language teaching and language learning.

This volume will be of interest to teachers and teacher educators who already understand the power of nonjudgmental collaborative inquiry—and to those who are ready to discover it.

Topics include collaborative groups, in-service professional development, using a negotiated syllabus, linguistics, research in language teacher education, and language teachers' teaching knowledge.

Order online at http://www.tesol.org/
TESOL's 40th Annual Convention will be held at the Tampa Convention Center, Tampa, Florida. Daring to Lead will be the theme for 2006. TESOL will be celebrating its 40th Anniversary (1966-2006) with many special activities, programs and events. We look forward to your being a part of TESOL's 40th celebration and hope you plan to join us in Tampa.

The 40th Annual TESOL Convention and Exhibit

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Blogs—or Web logs—have been changing the face of political reporting in the United States. One political blog, Wonkette (http://www.wonkette.com/), had over 430,000 views per week during the 2004 U.S. presidential campaign. Presidential hopeful John Kerry and incumbent George W. Bush each had his own blog during the campaign. In fact, blogs have become the virtual soapbox. In a survey by the Pew Internet and American Life Project, 27 percent of online adults in the United States said they read blogs in November 2004, up from 17 percent in February of the same year.

As blogs of all kinds proliferate, more and more ESL instructors are finding that students can be bloggers, too. Introducing ESL students to blogging can generate in them a new fascination with the dynamism of writing and language. As instructors of intermediate and upper-intermediate ESL students at community colleges in Brooklyn, New York, and Norwalk, Connecticut, in the United States, we decided to integrate blogs into our curriculum. We postulated that students’ understanding of a novel would be enhanced if they could use blogs to reflect on and negotiate the meanings of passages they had just read.

How Do Blogs Figure in ESL?
The blog is yet another forum for education provided by technological development. We often seek out new ways for students to connect to the target language. We surmise that the more links we can build between the study of the language and its use in natural settings, the more likely it is that students will achieve solid communication skills. For many years, computers and the Internet have been an integral part of language instruction. Students are exposed to many kinds of discourse online and can participate in it as well.

The key elements of the blog are regular, chronologically posted journal entries that may contain links to other sites and often allow readers to post responses. Using blogs may increase students’ language competence and electronic literacy as well as create an egalitarian learning environment by providing students with equal space, time, and opportunity to express their thoughts and opinions. (For blogging basics and resources, see Stach 2004 and “Blogs for Language Learning,” Essential Teacher, Autumn 2004.)
writing, portfolios, class discussions, and grammar practice, we asked each student to set up an individual blog.

In the real world, a large number of blogs are never read by anyone besides the author; however, we felt that, to be useful, the students’ blogs would have to be not only read but responded to. To make sure all the students would receive feedback, we paired each student with another from his or her class before the semester began; in turn, we matched each pair with a pair from the other college. Each student thus had three partners: one from his or her own class and two from the other community college. The students were responsible for reading and responding to all three of their partners’ posts. In pairing students and matching pairs, we tried to create groups in which each student had a fellow member from a similar background and two fellow members from different backgrounds.

In general, the students formed two quite disparate groups, and we hoped their distinctly different backgrounds would add intellectual spark and cultural depth to the online discussion. One group was enrolled in the City University of New York (CUNY) Language Immersion Program (CLIP) at Kingsborough Community College. These students were living in Brooklyn and had immigrated from mostly Eastern European and Central Asian countries, particularly countries of the former Soviet Union (e.g., Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia, Ukraine). The other consisted of students in ESL credit-bearing courses at Norwalk Community College (NCC). Most of the NCC students were from Latin America, particularly Colombia and Peru, and lived in Fairfield County, a largely affluent, residential area in southwest Connecticut. The CLIP group as a whole was slightly older than the NCC group.

**Posting Four Ways**

Students were required to post on their blogs at least three times a week. The types of posts varied, but there were, in general, four types.

**Personal**

The first type of entry was *personal*. One example was a letter of introduction: the students each wrote a brief autobiography that included a bit of their background and current interests. Another example was the diary post, which simply chronicled the daily life of the students, much as a paper journal or diary would.

**Question and Answer**

For the second type of entry, *question and answer*, we posted comprehension, interpretation, or opinion questions based on a chapter from the novel the class was reading, and the students posted answers. In a useful variation of this type of post, the students themselves posed the questions (see the box below).

---

**Student A:** What do you think the hawk symbolized in the story?

**Student B:** I didn’t understand what hawk means in this chapter. The meaning for this words means a large bird that hunts animals and birds.

**Student A:** You don’t have to read novels taking every word literally meaning. Sometimes writers create symbols trying to say deep meanings. For example, I think the Hawk is not just an animal. The Hawk symbolized how uneducated people get distracted easy with something that keeps their attention. a TV Shows? Clothes? New shoes?...

**Student C:** I didn’t think about the symbol of the howk before ...

**Student D:** I think you brought a good point here ... Always howk or eagle symbolized to me freedom and distignity.
home schooling

In the future everything is going to change. Every day something else is discovered. It’s normal to evolve. We can talk about technology and everything around us. The education, also tends to find some better ways to be more effective. There are many ways that were tried in the past years. Lately, more and more people adopt home schooling as a better way to educate their children. In my opinion, home schooling has more disadvantages, than advantages. To become a whole person you need to have this experience, you need to interact with other people. There are so many things you learn in school, more than the courses that you take.

posted by amalia | 4:24 PM

4 Comments:

Ronron11 said ...
Hi Angela
I am completely agree with you, I think home schooling has limits because they are some things in life that you need to experience with other people. So I think students need to have a large idea about life.
1:47 PM

marivale25 said ...
I agree with you. Home schooling could be comfortable and easy in many ways but children need to learn how to live in society, and this among another things is what traditional schools teach the children
5:50 PM

Ronron11 said ...
Hi Amalia
I really really like the way you start you introduction. You use diferent ideas to capt the readers attention, but I don’t like the fact that you give your opinion. If it was me, I would do that later, maybe in the conclusion.
3:04 PM

oksana21 said...
I egree with you about home schools. Because I thing children have to be together and study together in normal school. I really like your introduction it’s great. Keep writting and i will read later.
By.
3:05 PM
Double-Entry Journal
For the *double-entry journal*, students would select a passage from the reading that appealed to them, provoked them, or confused them. They would then type this passage into the blog and respond to it in some fashion.

First Paragraph
In the final type of post, the students were to write the first paragraph of an essay they had begun to work on (see the box on p. 48). Other students responded to the paragraph by commenting on its content as well as its form. They might, for example, answer the question “Did it capture my interest?” or “Was there a thesis statement?”

Varying Quality, Varying Quantity
The results of the groups’ efforts with blogs had encouraging and disappointing aspects. Some students reported that discussion on their blogs improved their comprehension of the text, although this enhanced understanding was not apparent in all students. In terms of participation and motivation, some students were quite prolific in their posts while others made very few. A small number of the students seemed genuinely interested in reading and responding to posts by students at the other college, but most students responded more frequently and at greater length to the partner at their own campus.

The quality of the posts varied as well. Some students routinely wrote short, unreflective posts while others wrote lengthy, creative, and original ones. Some of the most creative and thoughtful posts came from a middle-aged woman who was not particularly computer literate and rarely expressed opinions in class discussions; however, she showed an intense interest in writing and expressing her thoughts through her blog.

Spontaneous, Dynamic Writing
We learned many lessons from this initial foray into cyberspace, and we have modified our approach in subsequent semesters. Probably the most important lesson was the critical role that feedback plays in this process. In many cases, students’ motivation to post on their blogs was directly proportional to the amount and quality of the responses they received to their original posts. While our feedback was useful, just as important and equally motivating was the feedback of fellow students.

Providing students with a virtual forum or soapbox in which they can express their opinions proved to be stimulating and dynamic. Blogging is not exactly free writing, but it is freer, more spontaneous, and more dynamic than writing multiple-draft essays (which we find useful as well). That spontaneity and freshness proved to be a central attraction for the students.

The last U.S. presidential campaign demonstrated that Internet technology will influence the political landscape for the foreseeable future. Likewise, by introducing ESL students to blogging, we hope to generate in them a fascination with the dynamism of writing and language that will help them acquire language naturally for years to come.

References


Elise Catera teaches in the CUNY Language Immersion Program at Kingsborough Community College, and Robert Emigh teaches at Norwalk Community College, both in the United States.
After a twenty-year career as a professor of information systems, finding TESOL was a tremendous boon for me. I loved helping people learn to communicate with each other, and my experience with technology proved to be quite useful. Almost immediately, I was giving seminars and presentations on how to effectively use technology to reduce preparation time, stress, and photocopying.

I continuously seek ways to streamline my work, since I teach as many as six university-level and adult education courses in four different venues. Carrying a CD for each class, packed with activities, visual aids, and course information, helps keep me organized, and because I have electronic visual aids with me at all times, I can pull out an activity, a quiz, or course information at the spur of the moment.

The Electronic Advantage
I create most of the activities and materials on the CDs with Microsoft PowerPoint; sometimes I use Word and Excel. If my classroom is equipped with a computer wired to a digital projector, a remote-control clicker, and a pull-down screen, I just bring in the CD containing the content. For classrooms without any computer or projection technology, I bring in my laptop computer and have the audiovisual department bring in a projection system.

An important advantage of using electronic visual aids with a projector is that students look up at the screen rather than down at a book, so I can maintain eye contact with them. The use of a remote-control clicker means that I can move about the class rather than being tethered to a board. The eye contact and relaxed movement help create a good atmosphere in the class. And, without the electronic visual aids, I would be carrying around boxes of materials from class to class.

Multipurpose Slides
For my beginning-level classes, the CD includes a set of Microsoft PowerPoint slides that go with each textbook chapter. I create these slides every time I use a new textbook and improve them with each subsequent use.

One constant in each lesson is a set of electronic pictures and animations that I use to introduce vocabulary. These pictures are obtained from several sources. Some are scanned from the text; others are related, royalty-free clip art; others are photos I have taken myself or that I find royalty-free on the...
Internet. Animations are available from multiple sources, such as clip-art packages (I love the Task Force Image Gallery collection and the related image browser Task Force Image Commander—see http://www.nvtech.com/) or the Internet (e.g., Classroom Clipart, http://www.classroomclipart.com/). Occasionally I record my own animations with a video camera and capture the clip to a PowerPoint slide.

The pictures provide a quick quiz at the spur of the moment (without the need for photocopying). For example, I show selected pictures and have the class write down a word or sentence to describe them. For verbs, I show animations (e.g., I ask “What is Ralph doing?” and show an animation of a boy running or picking apples or climbing a ladder). Many of these are humorous. For example, one slide shows a boy cutting his own hair (very short) with a scissors. I ask the question “What is Billy doing?” and then ask “What is Billy’s mother going to do?” For a more advanced-level class, I change the tense: “What did Ralph do yesterday?” or “What will Ralph do tomorrow?”

The pictures and animations can also be used for games such as bingo. I print out bingo cards that I have made with PowerPoint (the search-and-replace function allows me to make different sets of cards quite easily once I have made the first set). I show a picture on the screen, and students put a plastic chip on the word that describes the picture. That a bingo game can be pulled out at any minute motivates the students to keep up with their vocabulary—everyone wants to win.

I use pictures of students to personalize the materials. The PowerPoint slide shown here, used for preposition practice, was quickly created from some of those pictures. Students delight in seeing their pictures, and photos of family and colleagues add authenticity. I might ask questions verbally about where each person is or have students write sentences describing the relative positions.

Really Random Groups
Many other activities can be easily created and saved on the class CD and modified at will. For example, I create a class list in Microsoft Excel and use the program’s random number generator function to form activity groups spontaneously. It is a quick and objective method of group assignment.

Instant Writing Prompts
For writing classes, I often put up a photograph from my own travels and have students write a description and make up a travel story to go with it. There is no photocopying needed, and transferring pictures to the class CD takes very little time.

I might also have students describe the photos to each other. The students sit in pairs, one student with his or her back to the screen. The other student describes the picture, and the first one draws it with colored pencils. The class then judges which picture is most like the photograph.
Discovery-Based Grammar
I create more formal presentations on grammar topics, using the discovery approach to involve the students in the learning process. The computer makes the discovery approach possible in ways that a textbook cannot. I can bring up steps exactly when they are appropriate, and tools such as hypertext allow me to jump to additional material when the students are exhibiting difficulty with a concept or to skip over unneeded material. When I prepare to teach a grammar concept, I modify the presentation for the level I am teaching, then save the modified version on the appropriate class CD and use it in the class. When students miss class or need more work with the concept, I can e-mail the slides to them.

These grammar lessons take a great deal of time to create, but once finished, they are real time-savers. I plan to complete an entire set of grammar lessons, which will save preparation and make classes more interactive and enjoyable. Colleagues with a more limited computer backgrounds have used the lessons successfully, and students seem to love them. After demonstrating a lesson on count and noncount nouns to national and international TESOL conferences (e.g., Simmons 2004a, 2004b) and giving out CDs with the lesson, I have had many colleagues from many countries tell me that the lesson went over well with the students they teach.

Save Paper, Save Time
With computers everywhere and projectors getting cheaper, electronic teaching aids make more sense every day. That photocopying is expensive and wasteful provides further incentive. I spend much less time planning and waiting for the photocopy machine when I use electronic visual aids. If you run from building to building and campus to campus, work out of a car trunk, and have trouble remembering copier codes, electronic visual aids may make sense for you, too.

References


Laurette Poulos Simmons, professor emerita at Loyola College, teaches ESOL at Howard Community College, in the United States; gives presentation seminars to business professionals; develops ESOL teaching materials; and teaches basic Spanish in workplace settings.

A Plea to Textbook Publishers
ESL/EFL publishers could provide teachers with a CD of creative presentations and visual aids to go with each chapter in a given book. These presentations would serve as instant class materials, like the grammar lessons and the class CDs I have described. I don’t mean CDs for labs or student use; all the lessons on the textbook CD (or DVD) would be tailored to the material and the level served by the book. Offering sets of visual aids would help decrease a teacher’s work and stress level, and would support teachers who do not have good enough Internet connections to take advantage of publisher support sites.
THIRTY PEOPLE ALREADY HAVE WON PRIZES IN TESOL’S 40 FOR THE 40TH GIVEAWAY!

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- When did you first join TESOL?
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WHAT’S NEW FOR THE 40TH?

Visit http://www.tesol.org/ and check out TESOL’s 40th Anniversary Web page to learn about the latest anniversary events and celebrations.
This unusual book will appeal to teachers who are looking for effective ways to enhance the vocabulary component of their programs. It is soundly based on recent research on the nature of vocabulary and how it is acquired; it is also teacher- and learner-friendly.

Designed for adolescent and adult learners at the high-beginning level, the book teaches high-frequency idioms, fixed expressions, and phrasal verbs in the context of true stories. The stories have an international flavor and are engaging, memorable, and quirky. For example, one describes how Spanish villagers pelt tomatoes at one another as part of a tomato festival. Students find this outrageous and, after completing this unit, easily remember the expressions go bananas and let loose.

Another strength of this book is that it employs an integrated, four-skills approach, with input preceding output. Each chapter begins with a recording of the text accompanied by an illustrated version of the story. Ten new lexical items are highlighted in the text, with definitions given in a separate chart. Excellent listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities follow. Each new item is recycled in different contexts. The students I have worked with have used the newly acquired expressions long after the lessons are over.

Diane Watt teaches in the University of Ottawa’s English Intensive Program, in Canada.

In 1998, Bamford and Day helped introduce a generation of language teachers to extensive reading through their first book, Extensive Reading in the Second Language Classroom. Now comes their long awaited and immensely useful second book.

After defining extensive reading by means of ten guiding principles, the authors turn the book over to the forty-three teachers who have contributed over one hundred classroom-tested activities. The activities are divided into five sections: Organizing Extensive Reading, Oral Fluency, Writing, Reading, and Vocabulary. The activities are then grouped under subheadings that make their objectives clear. For example, under Organizing Extensive Reading, activities fall under the headings Getting Started, Introducing Reading Material, Motivating and Supporting Reading, Monitoring Reading, and Evaluating Reading.

For each activity, the authors state the level, aims, preparation, and procedure, and give tips and comments. Handouts (which teachers may copy for classroom use) round out the book’s user-friendliness. With this book, teachers will be able to “exploit the language learning potential of extensive reading” (back cover) efficiently and enjoyably.

Reference

Tracy Cramer is an EFL instructor at Kansai Gaidai University, in Japan.
Dictionaries and grammar books don’t always satisfy students when they need answers to questions about language usage. They could get the answers they need from extensive reading, but that takes an enormous amount of time, and students must know how to figure out what to look for. A quicker way is to use a concordance program to search through millions of words of text. Students are usually amazed at the kind of information that pops out when they get their search results.

The Virtual Language Centre’s excellent online Web Concordancer is simple to use and is a good way to introduce students to using this kind of software to answer their usage questions. At the site, the student can type in a key word or phrase, select a corpus, and within seconds come up with results. For example, by comparing the concordance results of the words while and during, the student quickly sees that while has two main meanings: although and at the same time as.

A word of advice: you will most certainly make some discoveries about the English language that run counter to your intuitions or long-held beliefs. Therefore, rather than authoritatively telling students “this is how it is used,” you may want to hedge a little by saying, “Let’s take a look and see what we can discover.” (For more information on corpora in language learning, see Aston 2001; Hunston and Francis 2000; and “Corpus-Based Tools for Efficient Writing Instruction,” in this issue.)

References

Some caveats need to be noted here. While most of the features of this site work on Macintosh computers, some work only on computers running Microsoft Windows. Also, the corpora are rather small by today’s standards, and none of them contains transcripts of spoken English.

Jules sets out for the wedding celebrations determined to win back her man. Is the relentlessly cute and perky Kimmie any match for the plotting and devious Jules? No opportunity to undermine Kimmie’s confidence and make her feel excluded is missed. Miraculously, most of these attempts backfire and provide hilarious comedy. The music is great throughout. The ending is happy, and Jules realizes who her real best friend is.

The film offers opportunities to examine dating and marriage customs in the United States, discuss characters and motives, practice narration in the past tense, and provide future tense prediction exercises. Above all, it gives you the chance to laugh with your class, whatever their level.

Ellie Cavalcanti has been a teacher and teacher trainer in Europe and Brazil, and now works for The Higher Colleges of Technology, in the United Arab Emirates.
Software Thumbnails


In the 1980s, I used a program called Break Bricks to familiarize students with using a mouse. The arcade game format was fun, and most students quickly learned to move the mouse and hit the ball. Even then, though, some people needed to begin at a much slower pace. I have finally found a couple of programs for the Microsoft Windows operating system that do not require speedy responses, are suitable for adults as well as for children, and are quite affordable.

Basic Mouse Skills begins with a large red box in one corner of the screen. As learners successfully move the mouse over and click on the boxes, the boxes shrink and show up in different parts of the screen. The user, not the computer, sets the pace while working through the five levels of practice. As a result, this is an excellent choice for students with no experience with and a certain amount of anxiety about computer use.

Basic Mouse Skills comes in two versions. The audio version gives directions and encouragement in a strong British accent. The other version has directions and feedback only in text form on the screen. Both versions are extremely easy to use. I have found adult learners willing to work through the program repeatedly until they feel fully comfortable using the mouse.

Tidy Up takes learners with some mouse skills further. This program, inspired by Kathryn Steinart’s Messy House for the Macintosh computer (see http://www.bry-backmanor.org/messyhouse.html), shows several rooms in a house with items out of place. Learners start by choosing a room: hall, living room, dining room, kitchen, bathroom, or bedroom. When the learner clicks on an item, it flies off to where it belongs. Items in the later rooms are more numerous and smaller in size. Because the program involves household articles in rooms, English language teachers can do language-related follow-up activities. Examples include describing the room before and after tidying up, listing the objects, and discussing how the room layout is similar to their own houses.

Both programs can be downloaded from Grey Olltwit’s Software (http://www.greyolltwit.com/indexedu.html). Basic Mouse Skills is free. A $20 membership fee gives access to a wide range of downloads, including Tidy Up. For £15 (including shipping and handling fees to anywhere in the world), you can get a CD-ROM with all of the programs on it. Other Grey Olltwit programs useful for English language learning are Crossword Maker, Hangman, and Wordsearch Maker (member-only downloads), and the freely downloadable Word Quiz Maker, Match Up, Practise Typing, Sentence Builder, and Loose Change.

Deborah Healey is director of Oregon State University’s English Language Institute, in the United States.
This comprehensive guide lists more than 420 programs at 232 institutions in North America and offers essential details for selecting a program such as:

- admission requirements
- program length and requirements
- tuition
- staff
- courses

Also included are listings of public school credentials requirements and institutions listed by type of program offered and geographical location.

U.S. $39.95 (member U.S. $19.95)
Advocacy: A Must for TESOL Members

If you consider yourself a professional in TESOL, then you must become an advocate for TESOL. I realize that this a pretty strong statement, so let me explain.

Political Advocacy
For many, advocacy means lobbying politicians on a particular point of view. Certainly, this aspect of advocacy is an important one for ESOL. Because politicians make laws or policy that affect the TESOL profession, you as a TESOL member need to talk to these politicians about what you do and what sound policy is.

It is often shocking to realize how little policy makers know about English language learning. They may hold beliefs that are often unsupported by research, and propose outdated or ineffective curricula or teaching methods. Yet these same policy makers, however ignorant they are, possess the power to enact measures that affect the daily lives of teachers and students.

For example, in the United States, many educators are now subject to the provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act, with its high-stakes testing, uniform standards, and numerous bureaucratic regulations. Under the legislation, teachers must be certified in their specialty areas; however, ESL is not listed as one of the accepted areas of certification. Here is a case for advocacy, a place for TESOL members, individually and collectively, to advance the argument that ESL is a separate, valid area of expertise and must be recognized as such in the legislation.

In your own countries and teaching situations, I am sure you can think of other policies that merit similar attention and demand advocacy. The point is simple: we in TESOL must speak to policymakers

- before they create policy, so that sound policy is created
- while they are implementing policy, to ensure that quality is being maintained
- after a policy has been promulgated, if changes in the existing policies are warranted.

Silence can be harmful to your professional well-being.
Public Advocacy

Another key aspect of advocacy is communicating to people outside the profession what TESOL is and what ESOL practitioners do. Besides policy makers, who else should you be talking to? Everyone—the public, teachers in other professions, administrators at your institution, parents, the media, and even friends and neighbors.

To be successful, we as TESOL professionals need to explain to others what we do in our classes and why we do it so that they have accurate notions of what the profession is and what professional standards TESOL professionals believe in. By doing so, we disseminate accurate information and build allies to help us champion our causes; there is strength in numbers.

When I speak to outside the TESOL field, I am constantly amazed at how little they know about what ESL/EFL teaching entails and how many inaccurate or misguided perceptions they hold regarding the TESOL profession. Remember that all these people often shape our professional lives. We need to educate them, and the public, so that they can become our advocates.

One way to educate non-TESOL professionals about the field is to invite non-ESL teachers into your classroom to observe and meet students. The same holds true for administrators, supervisors, and parents.

Another way to disseminate information on TESOL is to gain media coverage for the profession. You might call a local newspaper or media outlet and invite a representative to see your classroom and observe the students you teach. If they cannot to come to you, you might speak at their gatherings and engage them in dialogue. We TESOL professionals have been quite successful at talking to each other (at our conferences and meetings, and through our publications), but we have neglected communications with people outside the field, and the profession has suffered as a result.

Collegial Advocacy

Finally, you can become an advocate for the professional associations you belong to. The TESOL profession will be successful only when everyone who teaches ESOL belongs to a professional association. The more members, the stronger your voice is. We are stronger collectively than individually, and it is incumbent on those of us who already belong to professional associations, like TESOL, to get others to join. It helps us, and it helps them.

Many Ways, Many Arenas

Advocacy is a task for everyone. Each one of us must become an advocate for TESOL. There are many ways to become an advocate and many arenas to become involved with advocacy. Advocacy activities are not always successful, but, if we as TESOL professionals fail to advocate, then we have no one to blame but ourselves when things go wrong.

Elliot Judd
President, 2005–2006
**The 40th Annual TESOL Convention to Be Held in Tampa, Florida, USA, March 15–18, 2006**

The 2006 convention will be held at the Tampa Convention Center. The theme is Daring to Lead. TESOL will be celebrating its 40th anniversary (1966–2006). The association is preparing many special activities, programs, and events and looks forward to your being a part of the celebration. The advance program will be mailed in mid-November. Convention registration and hotel reservations begin December 1. Visit http://www.tesol.org/tesol2006/ for updates.

**TESOL 2005 on Audiotape and Audio CDs**


**Download Presentations from TESOL 2005**

TESOL has developed an online repository of convention presentations and materials. Participants were asked to submit their materials and papers by early June 2005. Watch for information on when and how you can access these resources in *TESOL Connections* and at http://www.tesol.org/ : Professional Development.

**2005: The Year of Languages**

Help celebrate 2005: The Year of Languages with TESOL. TESOL is participating in this year-long event with the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages and other language organizations across the United States. For more information, see http://www.tesol.org/.

**2005 Symposia**

Two symposia are scheduled for the remainder of 2005. The TESOL Symposium on Dual Language Education: Teaching and Learning Two Languages in the EFL Setting will take place September 23 at Boğaziçi University, Istanbul, Turkey. The featured speakers will be Cem Alptekin, Istanbul, Turkey; Jim Cummins, Ontario, Canada; and Barbara Seidhofer, Vienna, Austria. Hüsnü Enginarlar, Ankara, Turkey, will provide closing remarks.

The TESOL Symposium on English Language Teaching in Resource-Challenged Contexts will take place December 16–17 at the Sofitel Teranga Dakar Hotel, in Dakar, Senegal. The featured speakers will be JoAnn Crandall, Baltimore County, Maryland, USA; Pai Obanya, Ibadan, Nigeria; and Brian Tomlinson, Leeds, England. Moussa Diouf, Dakar, Senegal, will provide closing remarks.

For more information, e-mail edprograms@tesol.org.
2005 Online Courses and Seminars
Learn about online professional development opportunities through TESOL, including the Principles and Practices of Online Teaching Certificate Program and TESOL virtual seminars. TESOL virtual seminars focus on key issues in ESL and EFL. Bring together colleagues at your school or organization for a live Webcast (or, when it fits your schedule, use the virtual seminar’s playback feature). Virtual seminar participants can also take part in an online discussion. For more information, e-mail edprograms@tesol.org.

2006 Call for Resolutions
In accordance with TESOL’s Standing Rule on Resolutions, Chris Sauer, chair of the Rules and Resolutions Committee, has issued a call for resolutions. Procedures and guidelines for presenting resolutions for the 2006 Annual Business Meeting in Tampa, Florida, can be found at http://www.tesol.org /Association, or you may contact Chris Sauer at sauer@dwcii.net for assistance. The deadline for receipt of all resolutions is February 12, 2006.

Board of Directors Approves Position Statements, Member Resolution
At its meeting in June, the Board of Directors approved one position statement, as well as a member resolution passed at the Annual Business Meeting. According to TESOL’s standing rules, member resolutions passed at the Annual Business Meeting must be approved by the Board of Directors in order to become positions of the association. The position statement, addressing English-only provisions in the United States, as well as the member resolution on student visas in the United States, is available at http://www.tesol.org/.

Research Agenda
In October 2004, the TESOL Board of Directors approved a revised Research Agenda developed by the Second Research Agenda Task Force, which comprised Simon Borg, Andrew Curtis, Chris Davidson, Zhao Hong Han, Dudley Reynolds, and Tom Scovel (chair). The Research Agenda was created to help TESOL professionals and others organize and coordinate inquiry in the field and to promote broader awareness of what constitutes research in TESOL. Built on the broad, methodologically and topically pluralistic foundation of the first Research Agenda in 2000, this document presents TESOL professionals with priority areas for research and should help funding applicants and agencies decide what research to pursue and support. The 2004 Research Agenda includes a special hot-linked section titled “References, Resources, and Web Sites.”

To download the current agenda, go to http://www.tesol.org /Professional Issues : Research Agenda. A version in portable document format (PDF) is available. TESOL welcomes your comments and suggestions as well as your additions to the resources section. Please send them to research@tesol.org.

TESOL Offers Global Memberships
Interest in TESOL’s new global memberships continues as members and potential members learn the details. Global electronic memberships and global individual memberships are now available to anyone who is either a native-born current resident of or a current legal resident of any country where the gross national income per capita is US$15,000 or less as identified by the United Nations. Both categories carry full membership rights and privileges but varying member benefits. For details, including a list of eligible countries, see http://www.tesol.org/globalmembers/.

Reduced Rates for Student Members
Do you have students who would benefit from TESOL membership? TESOL recently reduced membership dues and convention registration fees for student members, so there is no better time for your students to join! Each year TESOL prepares membership packages especially for teachers to share with their students. Each package includes a student membership poster, a PowerPoint presentation about student membership, sample TESOL publications, student membership applications, and TESOL bookmarks to share with your students. E-mail studentmembers@tesol.org to request a packet.

TESOL Awards and Grants
TESOL-sponsored grants and awards are made possible by the generous support of members. The deadline for submitting an application or nominating a colleague for the 2005–2006 awards is November 1. You can make contributions when paying annual membership dues, when registering for a TESOL convention, online, or at any other time. In addition, all proceeds from the Awards Raffle at the TESOL convention are deposited into the award accounts. For more information, see Awards and Grants at http://www.tesol.org /Membership.

Career Services
Does your institution need teachers or other ESL/EFL professionals? Recruit at the Job MarketPlace, held during the TESOL convention. Post jobs, collect resumes, and hold interviews at
one convenient event. Don’t miss this chance to bring your job opportunities before the thousands of ESL/EFL professionals who attend the TESOL convention each year! E-mail recruit@tesol.org to request an Invitation to Recruit.

Retired Member Benefits Change
The TESOL Board of Directors approved a change in benefits for retired members. Retired members may now vote and run for elected office. To learn more about the retired member category, go to http://www.tesol.org/ : Membership.

40th Anniversary Web Page
Visit http://www.tesol.org/ : Association : TESOL’s 40th Anniversary to learn more about the celebrations and events that will mark the occasion. Among the resources now available or coming soon:

- a TESOL Timeline, marking significant events in the association’s history
- testimonials from members and supporters
- a calendar of events taking place during 2005–2006
- information about the 40 for the 40th Giveaway. Check back often to see if you are one of the lucky winners of hundreds of dollars in prizes being given away each month—no entry required!

Conduct TESOL Business Online
You can join or renew your membership, subscribe to TESOL serial publications, and purchase TESOL publications online. TESOL members get an average discount of 25% on publications.

Main info@tesol.org
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Interest Sections interestsections@tesol.org
President (Board of Directors) president@tesol.org
Publications publications@tesol.org
Advertising advertise@tesol.org
Essential Teacher et@tesol.org
Ordering tesolpubs@tasco1.com
TESOL Quarterly tq@tesol.org

The 2006 Board of Directors and Nominating Committee Slate
The 2006 Board of Directors and Nominating Committee slate shown below has been posted. Visit http://www.tesol.org/, under Association. Voting will begin in October 2005 and end in early January 2006.

Sandra J. (Sandy) Briggs
Educational Consultant
San Francisco, California, USA

Aysegül Daloglu
Middle East Technical University
Ankara, Turkey

Board of Directors (2006–2009)
Deena Boraie
American University in Cairo
Cairo, Egypt
Gabriel Diaz Maggioli
The British Schools, Montevideo
Montevideo, Uruguay
Joyce Kling
Copenhagen Business School
Frederiksberg, Denmark
Bozana Knezevic
University of Rijeka
Rijeka, Croatia
John Schmidt
Texas International Education Consortium
Austin, Texas, USA
Jim Stack
San Francisco Unified School District
San Francisco, California, USA

Nominating Committee (2006–2007) Representing Eight Major Groups
Adult Education Programs
Constantine Ioannou
Ottawa-Carleton District School Board
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
Margaret van Naerssen
Immaculata University
Immaculata, Pennsylvania, USA

Higher Education Programs
Ann Johns
San Diego State University
San Diego, California, USA
Margi Wald
University of California, Berkeley
Berkeley, California, USA

Elementary and Secondary Education Programs
Betty Ansin Smallwood
Center for Applied Linguistics
Washington, District of Columbia, USA
Beth Witt
Chinle Elementary School
Chinle, Arizona, USA

Intensive English Programs and Bicultural Centers
Suzanne McLaughlin
Roosevelt University
Chicago, Illinois, USA

Annick Todd
Lane Community College
Eugene, Oregon, USA

Researchers
Gerald Berent
Rochester Institute of Technology
Rochester, New York, USA
Ester de Jong
University of Florida
Gainesville, Florida, USA

Affiliates
Gabriela Kleckova
University of Memphis
Memphis, Tennessee, USA
Jackie Moase-Burke
Oakland Schools
Waterford, Michigan, USA

Caucuses
Khadar Bashir-Ali
Ohio State University
Columbus, Ohio, USA

Interest Sections
Lisa Harshbarger
U.S. Department of State
Dulles, Virginia, USA
Armeda Reitzel
Humboldt State University
Arcata, California, USA

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**Annual Fund**
Supporting TESOL's work has never been easier. Now you can make your contributions online. Visit the Support TESOL section of the Association page to make your U.S. tax-deductible gift to the association. And to see how your contribution is put to work, be sure to take a look at TESOL's 2004 Annual Report, also available online. For more information, or to receive a hard copy of the report, contact Development Manager Jane Kaddouri at 703-518-2539 or jkaddouri@tesol.org.

**Annual Report**
Want to learn more about TESOL's newest programs, its award-winning projects, and new resources for members? Check out the 2004 Annual Report at http://www.tesol.org/; Association: Annual Report, or request a written copy from info@tesol.org or by e-mailing TESOL’s development manager (jkaddouri@tesol.org).

**TESOL Connections**
TESOL Connections is a free semimonthly e-newsletter for members. It includes briefings about TESOL and TESOL members in the mainstream news and hot links to field-related resources. Articles and items and stories by and about members that are posted on the TESOL Web site are highlighted and linked through TESOL Connections. Sign up at http://www.tesol.org/; Membership : Membership Benefits.

**Partnering**
TESOL and the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) have partnered in the development of an ESL module hosted at http://www.ncte.org/prodev. Paula Leone-Bacchus, an ESL/bilingual/Spanish teacher and adjunct professor for language, literacy, and culture at Lesley University in Boston, Massachusetts, in the United States, is the content leader for TESOL on this project.

The module has been developed to aid mainstream teachers in meeting the needs of today's multilingual classrooms. Components of the module include articles from TESOL publications as well as from NCTE's, reading invitations, writing engagements, and bulletin board forums.

Go to http://www.ncte.org/prodev to learn more about the CoLEARN program and how to enroll. To view the TESOL module, click through to CoLEARN TESOL.

**TESOL Sponsorship Opportunities**
In addition to Silver, Gold, and Platinum sponsorship packages, TESOL is offering a Platinum Plus package for 2005–2006. To learn more about how your sponsorship can earn fabulous rewards at the 40th Annual Convention—and year round—visit http://www.tesol.org/; Association : Help Support TESOL : Sponsorship. Sponsors must have been confirmed by July 1, 2005, to be acknowledged in the Advance Program for the 2006 convention in Tampa, Florida, USA.
Gender and English Language Learners

Eleven case studies representing language learning and teaching communities in Asia, Africa, and North America examine gender and identity from sociocultural and cross-cultural perspectives.

Bonny Norton and Aneta Pavlenko, Editors

Teaching for Change
Innovations
Student Voices
Insights

Order online at http://www.tesol.org/
TESOL’s new series *Bridge to the Classroom* offers pre- and in-service teachers reality-based, open-ended cases to help them teach English language students at all proficiency levels.

**Creativity**

**Critical Thinking**

**Resourcefulness**

Based on actual classroom experiences, the *Bridge to the Classroom* cases address a variety of learning and teaching situations. They can be used in any order and adapted to a range of teaching practices and course goals, including professional development.

Each case volume in the series includes an up-to-date list of resources to help teacher educators and learners situate the cases within the field's larger theoretical framework.

Each case volume also has a teacher's guide. The guide helps teacher educators foster teacher learners' creativity, critical thinking, resourcefulness, and independence as they prepare to enter the field. It also enables them to help experienced teachers reflect on their classroom practices and develop new ones based on current teaching and learning theory.

Look for this exciting new series coming from TESOL Fall 2005!
One giant step for ELLs and struggling readers.

Introducing Rigby InStep Readers...a unique leveled reading program for ELLs and struggling readers, grades 3-8

How do you help ELLs and struggling readers make big strides in reading?

One important step at a time.

That's why Rigby's new InStep Readers use the only leveling system focused on progressive challenges in reading characteristics, developmental phonics, and language-building. Help your English language learners and struggling readers make systematic, gradual improvements in proficiency. It's a giant step forward in reading success!

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