Waiting in Line
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FROM THE EDITOR 2

COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

Circle Time 6
Building Self-Esteem through Cultural Pride
by Judie Haynes

Home Room 8
Home Visits
by Jim Hughes

The Road Taken 10
Waiting in Line
by Debbie Zacarian

Multilingual Momentum 12
Danger and Opportunity
by Gu Peiya

In-Service 14
Joining and Joining In
by Sheryl Slocum

From A to Z 16
Are End-of-Term Evaluations Already Too Late?
by Dorothy Zemach

PORTAL

Maximizing Face-to-Face and Online Interaction in the Computer Lab 38
by Paige Ware

Blended Learning Offers the Best of Both Worlds 42
by Dafne González

Building a Reading Scaffold with WebTexts 48
by Mary Lou McCloskey and Emily A. Thrush

HOME AND OTHER PAGES

Words in Print
Never Fade Away (William Hart) 54
Reviewed by Aixa Perez-Prado

Tangled Threads: A Hmong Girl’s Story (Pegi Deitz Shea) 54
Reviewed by Sheila Cockey

Cybersights 55
Google Scholar
Reviewed by Brock Brady

Soundbites 55
Crash (Lions Gate Entertainment)
Reviewed by George Bozzini

Software Thumbnails 56
Moodle (Martin Dougiamas)
Reviewed by Thomas Robb

OUT OF THE BOX

“You Can Train Me, and You Can Educate Me, But You Can’t Develop Me— I Develop” 20
by Sandra Piai

Learning English and Democracy in Mongolia 24
by Roger Cohen

Raising Mohammad Bilingually in Iran 28
by Hadi Farjami

Linking Essay Types and Cognitive Domains 32
by Kent Hill

BULLETIN BOARD

President’s Message 58
Association News 60

compleatlinks

is the online component of Essential Teacher. Look for the next to titles in the table of contents. Then go to the Essential Teacher section of http://www.tesol.org/, click on Compleat Links, and read these extensions of the themes and topics in this issue:

Time, Patience, and Support
Ayumi Hosoda, who arrived in the United States as a high school student, tells you how you can support international students in their social and linguistic adjustment.

Multiple Identities Emerge through Collaboration
Through their collaboration in person and over e-mail, Noriko Ishihara and Magara Maeda have learned to see themselves and others as more than simply native- or nonnative-speaking teachers.

In Blogging, the Benefits of Exposure Are Worth the Risk
Online encounters that may appear risky or dangerous can generate interest and be good for learning, says Aaron P. Campbell.

Grammatically Speaking
Richard Firsten explains why it’s tooth whitening, not teeth whitening; tells you whether hopefully is properly used as a disjunct adverb; untangles collective plurals; distinguishes clauses and phrases; and challenges you with a Brain Teaser.
In any teaching or learning situation, it’s good to know you’re not alone. The theme of reaching out—to students who need your expertise and attention or to other teachers with whom you can share valuable experiences—is a thread that runs through this issue of *Essential Teacher*. Whatever your location in the world, whatever your teaching experience, and whatever the background and level of your students, you are bound to find articles that will have an impact on your teaching and your students’ learning.

**Communities of Practice:** Judie Haynes (Circle Time) shares ideas on how to build students’ self-esteem by creating opportunities for them to share their cultural customs with others. Jim Hughes (Home Room) talks about the importance of home visits and describes his first experience in a student’s home. Debbie Zacarian (The Road Taken) underlines the importance of not assuming that students feel secure with school procedures after their first semester. Gu Peiya (Multilingual Momentum) discusses the dangers and opportunities of teaching and learning English with technology in China. Sheryl Slocum (In-Service) extols the benefits of being involved in professional teacher organizations. Dorothy Zemach (From A to Z) introduces an evaluation that you can administer early in the semester since end-of-term evaluations come too late to be useful.
Out of the Box: Sandra Piai looks at ways you can develop as a teacher even if you work in isolation or have little time to devote to professional development. In his English class in Mongolia, Roger Cohen balanced a focus on the election campaign in the young democracy with attention to the productive skills students needed for their graduation exams. Hadi Farjami explains how he and his wife are raising their son in Iran to be bilingual in Farsi and English. Kent Hill describes how to teach essay writing by linking essay types and cognitive domains.

Portal: Paige Ware explores ways to make the most of students’ interactions with each other in the computer lab. Dafne González describes how she maximized the advantages of face-to-face and online learning in the same course. Mary Lou McCloskey and Emily Thrush show how to use WebTexts to provide online scaffolding for students’ reading materials.

Home and Other Pages: Sheila Cockey reviews the story of a Hmong girl who leaves Laos for the United States and finds herself caught between two conflicting cultures. Aixa Perez-Prado describes a novel written in the form of personal diary entries exchanged between a frustrated English teacher and a struggling Vietnamese student. Brock Brady critiques Google’s new search engine, Google Scholar. George Bozzini writes about the feature film Crash, which focuses on clashes between ethnic groups in Los Angeles. And according to Thomas Robb, the free course management system Moodle can be used more effectively than other, fee-based systems.

Compleat Links: Ayumi Hosoda tells teachers how they can support international students in their social and linguistic adjustment. Noriko Ishihara and Magara Maeda highlight the benefits of collaboration between teachers of different backgrounds. Aaron Campbell shows how unexpected online encounters can benefit students’ learning. Richard Firsten (Grammatically Speaking) answers questions about adjunct nouns, collective plurals, and prepositional phrases, and presents a new Brain Teaser.

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When Yuki first entered my elementary school from Japan, she impressed me with her level of English. Yet she was obviously uncomfortable with my compliment. On reflection, I realized that many of the students I teach come from cultures in which accepting praise creates discomfort. They are not accustomed to receiving the accolades that are given regularly to children in the United States. What can teachers do to help these students build self-esteem without causing them to feel embarrassed?

School communities need to take advantage of the varied backgrounds of their student population to help all children learn to respect the cultures of other people. My school has done this in a variety of ways. One is an annual multicultural celebration that is mainly run by culturally and linguistically diverse parents. Through this celebration, the school community learns about the cultures of the English language learners and their parents and bridges the gap between the school and home cultures. Many of the parents of the students I teach do not speak English very well. During the multicultural celebration, bilingual students from each culture help parents with their demonstrations. As the “experts” on their culture, students prepare a short speech to explain the activity and help their classmates with it.

In the ten years that my school has held this event, students in my school have participated in hundreds of food, crafts, and cultural demonstrations from twenty different countries. One year, the Japanese mothers in my school held a fashion show featuring different types of kimonos and related garments. They asked some of the teachers to model the outfits. The students loved seeing their teachers clad in traditional Japanese clothing. Two of my colleagues were spectacularly clothed in...
wedding kimonos. Students were especially thrilled to see one of the male teachers wearing a groom’s traditional wedding kimono. The Japanese mothers also dressed some of the students in children’s kimonos made for special occasions. The students begged to wear the Japanese clothing, which reinforced the feelings of pride the Japanese students had in their culture.

Another year, Japanese mothers arranged for a performance of a Japanese tea ceremony, which takes many years to learn. Fortunately, the grandmother of one of the students had studied the tea ceremony in Japan and acted as the expert consultant to the mothers, who brought in a special woven flooring called tatami and moved all of the furniture out of a classroom to re-create a teahouse. During the ceremony, the mothers explained all of the implements used and gave each member of the audience a taste of the tea.

Japanese parents also arranged for a koto player to come to our school for another annual celebration. (A koto is a rectangular zither-like musical instrument with thirteen strings.) What amazed me at the time was how friends and relatives of the Japanese families who lived in other towns donated their time and resources to this celebration. The children and their parents also shared Japanese games, origami, and songs with the students. They brought in food, and students dared each other to eat a small piece of tuna roll. (They tried it, and many came back for more.)

Korean mothers also shared their culture. At one multicultural festival, they wore hanbok, the Korean traditional dress, and performed a Korean fan dance. Three years in a row, I danced the fan dance with them and felt proud to make this cultural connection with the Korean parents.

One year they sponsored a Korean drum and dance troupe. Another memorable demonstration was the reenactment of a Korean wedding ceremony. The bride, groom, and other members of the wedding party were all dressed in hanbok. The service featured the bride and groom performing a series of bows to the parents of the groom. The groom gave a wooden goose, symbolizing a lifelong union, to the bride’s family. The Korean families brought objects from their own homes to create the background for the Korean wedding ceremony.

Dancing and singing were willingly shared. Culturally and linguistically diverse children and their families taught students songs and dances from their native countries. They taught the steps to the fan dance, a traditional Armenian line dance, an Israeli hora, a Spanish cha-cha, and the merengue from the Dominican Republic. They beat a steel drum after a performance by drummers from Trinidad and Tobago. They learned how to write their names in calligraphy and fold origami animals from paper. They dug tiles from an archeological dig in Israel and formed mosaic pictures with them. They celebrated Chinese New Year and received red envelopes.

Aside from the obvious academic benefits of the festival, such as learning about various cultures, developing higher level thinking skills, and practicing speaking in front of an audience, students also gained social skills. They had an authentic reason to interact with their classmates and found a real audience for their work. But without a doubt, the most obvious benefit from this activity was the chance to display the pride they felt in their cultures.
I had expressed sorrow that a casualty of the nearly complete reduction of teaching to assessment and instruction was the devaluation of parents’ involvement in their child’s schooling.

“Home visits aren’t much of a loss,” she declared.

Only a few years before, our elementary school principal had considered such visits vital, lamenting their scarcity in educational practice and suggesting that one day a month we visit homes. Several teachers objected. They were afraid, they said. The neighborhood wasn’t safe. Hadn’t the father of a student been murdered two blocks away? The town had more ex-convicts per capita than any city in California. Drug dealers, crack and meth users, pedophiles, rapists, warring gangs, panhandlers, prostitutes, and the mentally deranged wandered the streets.

“Home visits aren’t much of a loss,” she declared.

“I’m not asking you to venture out at midnight,” said the principal. “The majority of those you’ve described sleep during the day. Also, I’m not saying to drop in unannounced. Introduce the idea at Back-to-School Night. Call ahead, or, when parents pick up their kids, ask if you may visit. If they don’t want you to come, they’ll make excuses. I can go with you, or you can visit in pairs.”

Most of us agreed to try. The principal suggested Wednesdays, the day that had been shortened to allow for staff development, because then the visits could take place during the teachers’ work hours.

When I made my first telephone call, Donte’s mother misunderstood. “I’m not asking for a date,” I had to explain. “Oh, you talking about a home visit!”

The next day, Ms. Hill welcomed me into her house and showed me around. “Donte’s not here,” she said. “He’s the oldest, isn’t he?”
“No, Miranda’s the oldest. Donte’s next. They both got the same father. Twyana’s one year younger than Donte, and Danielle’s the youngest. They each got a different father.”

“I have two kids,” I said. “Until they finished high school, they lived half the time with me.”

“How many mothers you had to deal with?”

“One. We’re divorced. My present wife and I don’t have children.”

“That’s smart. Three daddies be way too much. But I never married them. They aren’t bad, you understand; they’re just not responsible. Now and then they come round and take the kids to a movie or something. Ray—he’s the guy I’m with now—he keeps asking me to marry him, but I say, What do I need a husband for? I got myself a good job as a building inspector.”

Ms. Hill and I sat down at the kitchen table. “This is the family center,” she said. “It’s important to me that we all eat dinner together. Not that we always do, but I try.” She slapped at a fly.

“Flies are infesting the school,” I said.

“They’re everywhere. It’s these warm September days.”

We talked about screens. She offered me an orange. As we each peeled one, we became quiet. I had said I wasn’t coming to talk about her child’s academic progress or behavior. Why was I there, then? We sneaked looks at each other. Neither of us appeared to know how a home visit was supposed to run.

“Anything special you want to know?” she asked.

I shook my head. “When I was ten, my teacher visited my house. Maybe he believed the more he knew about me, the better he could teach me. I do know it was exciting. I never much liked school, and his visit gave me more positive feelings about it.”

“Donte was kind of scared of you coming,” said Ms. Hill. “He took off with Ray. Ray didn’t want to be here either. His school experience ... well, he dropped out. I wish Donte had stayed.”

“I’m here,” said Twyana, poking her head around the corner from the hall.

“But Mr. Hughes isn’t your teacher.”

“He will be next year.”

“Didn’t I tell you do your homework?”

“I need help.”

“You look at it first; then you come ask.”

“But Mama ...”

“I’m not playing.”

When her head disappeared, I said, “Tell Donte I didn’t say anything bad about him. I didn’t even complain about him shouting out.”

Ms. Hill laughed. “That’s his way. Mine, too. We don’t know how to be quiet. If we got something to say, we say it.”

“He’s a great kid, and really smart. But he needs all the parent and teacher support he can get on account of ...”

“It’s hard to say, isn’t it? Too many blacks—males especially—end up in jail or dead. Ray, he’s had his troubles. I’m afraid for Donte. He’s a good child, Mr. Hughes! I want a chance for him and the girls.”

“Is the neighborhood okay for raising kids?”

“It gets pretty lively around here on weekends. A lot of it’s fun. But sometimes things get out of hand.”

On my walk back to school, Donte and Ray jogged by in sweat clothes. “Hey, Mr. Hughes,” said Donte. Ray nodded. They began to race as they neared home.

Had my visit accomplished anything? Afterwards, Ms. Hill came by to see me more often. The whole family participated in a garden workday at school. Ray attended Open House. Twyana frequently showed up in my classroom after school. Donte didn’t stop shouting out, which I now understood was important for him. I felt more comfortable in the neighborhood and had gained firsthand knowledge of one family’s life.

“Home visits aren’t much of a loss,” the consultant had said, believing they didn’t increase test scores, the district’s main goal. By stepping away from school, however, and crossing into Ms. Hill’s territory, I had made my professional relationship with her more personal.

Representing the educational establishment, I increased (I believe) this head-of-the-family’s trust in school and in her children’s opportunity to succeed. She, in turn, influenced Ray. Isn’t it likely that the changes in her attitudes and actions had a positive impact on her children’s desire to learn? Why, they might even have improved the children’s test scores!
Edgar was worried about not being able to handle a new schedule, new classmates, and a new daily routine.

One of the students in line was Edgar. At the beginning of the school year, he had moved to the school district from El Salvador. Edgar did not speak any English and found the first few months of school to be very stressful. One day, for example, there was the frightening experience of a fire drill. When the fire alarm rang and his classmates walked quietly out of the school building to the school parking lot, Edgar continued to walk until he reached home. When he was asked the next day why he had not returned to school, he said, “Fire scare me.”

The first few months were filled with many incidents like the fire drill. For example, one day Edgar had forgotten to bring lunch to school and had not brought money to purchase a school lunch. Embarrassed that he had nothing to eat, he tried to remain invisible by standing in the hallway outside of the cafeteria. He leaned as unobtrusively as possible against the wall as he observed his classmates talking in clusters as they ate. He was terribly embarrassed by the incident and took extra steps to remember to bring his lunch or money for lunch so that the incident never recurred. It took Edgar a long while to feel comfortable with the daily routine of his new school and to stop worrying about what was going to happen next.

After the first few months, Edgar was familiar with his classes. He began to risk asking some of his classmates and teachers simple questions to which he believed he could predict the response. He was beginning to feel more comfortable, and teachers noticed the change in his behavior. For example, at the end of the first month of school, his ESL teachers had encouraged him to participate in various after-school activities. At the time, he did not feel comfortable enough, but near the end of the first trimester, he began thinking about joining the International Students Club, of which his ESL teacher was an adviser.
The end of the trimester also signaled the end of the daily schedule and activities to which Edgar had grown accustomed. While he prepared for the end of the first trimester and enrolled in courses that he had selected for the second trimester, he could not rid himself of the dread and fear that he had about the change in routine. As the trimester drew to a close, he became increasingly anxious and stressed. He was worried about not being able to handle a new schedule, new classmates, and a new daily routine. He could not share these feelings with his classmates. The all-too-familiar stress that he had experienced three short months earlier returned. He had thought that those uncomfortable feelings were behind him, and he did not welcome their return. To allay his fears on the first day of the new trimester, he walked quickly to his ESL teacher, Mrs. Snow, hoping that her familiar voice would calm his nerves and that she would provide him with the much-needed directions to his new classes.

The end of the trimester also signaled the end of the daily schedule and activities to which Edgar had grown accustomed. While he prepared for the end of the first trimester and enrolled in courses that he had selected for the second trimester, he could not rid himself of the dread and fear that he had about the change in routine. As the trimester drew to a close, he became increasingly anxious and stressed. He was worried about not being able to handle a new schedule, new classmates, and a new daily routine. He could not share these feelings with his classmates. The all-too-familiar stress that he had experienced three short months earlier returned. He had thought that those uncomfortable feelings were behind him, and he did not welcome their return. To allay his fears on the first day of the new trimester, he walked quickly to his ESL teacher, Mrs. Snow, hoping that her familiar voice would calm his nerves and that she would provide him with the much-needed directions to his new classes.

When he arrived at Mrs. Snow’s classroom, a setting with which he was entirely familiar, he felt a sense of calm wash over him. Surprisingly, he encountered a long line of classmates. One of them greeted him with “What up, Edgar?” He tried to respond in a casual tone. “Oh, I come ask Mrs. Snow tell me where my classes is located,” he said. “Me too!” his classmate replied.

In fact, the entire line of students, Edgar would soon learn, had come to seek Mrs. Snow’s comfort and direction. All had been in school during the previous trimester, and had, or so I thought, become accustomed to the school routine. The change in trimester, however, caused many of the anxieties that newcomers generally experience to resurface. I observed the many exchanges between Mrs. Snow and the students. They each handed her a computerized copy of their schedule for the new trimester. In a calm voice and with a sure smile, she reviewed their courses with them and gave them the directions to their classes. When she spoke with Edgar, she said, “You are taking some great courses this semester. You have math with Mr. Collins, a great teacher. You can find his classroom next to your math class from the last trimester.” These exchanges continued until the last student was sent off to class.

When I asked Mrs. Snow about the students that she had met and dispatched, she smiled and said, “Yes, this is what it is like before school on the first day of every new trimester. Some of the students that come to see me have been here for a few years while others are newcomers. At first, I was surprised that so many came to see me, especially the ones that have been here for a good while. Now, I anticipate and prepare for it by remembering to respond patiently and positively to all of the questions asked of me.”

Mrs. Snow’s thoughtfulness demonstrates what teachers can do to assist students in acclimating to an ever-changing and often frightening environment.

In a calm voice and with a sure smile, Mrs. Snow reviewed the students’ courses with them and gave them directions to their classes.
Multilingual Momentum

Danger and Opportunity
by Gu Peiya

In the Chinese phrase weiji, the characters for danger and opportunity stand side by side. The word symbolizes the situation of some Chinese teachers, who face the challenge of digital literacy but can overcome it (see my March 2005 column). From a Chinese perspective, learning and teaching English with technology brings opportunities as well as dangers.

Well before digital literacy was even possible, many Chinese had a longstanding love-hate relationship with English. English represented Western science and technology but also carried a sense of superiority and imperialism. This sensitivity toward English comes from the traditional Chinese perception of foreigners, one that associates English with British colonialism and subsequent U.S. cultural influences.

For centuries behind the Great Wall, the Chinese people lived at peace in the shadow of Confucianism. They considered any outside influence, linguistic or otherwise, a threat. The study of English in China started with the need for self-defense in the aftermath of the Opium Wars and continues with today’s need for technology and economic advancement. There has always been tension. English is to be rejected because it is humiliating, but it is to be welcomed because of its usefulness (Parry 1998).

The idea of usefulness has made English increasingly important in China today. The association between English and better-paid jobs and promotion opportunities has brought millions of Chinese to English programs of all kinds. However, many Chinese learn English for purely instrumental reasons, with a deep feeling of inferiority and even hostility, particularly when English is forced on them by national and local examinations.

This resentment, coupled with personal and social needs, contributes to the love-hate mentality toward English. Even now, when the government is actively promoting the teaching and learning of English, there are growing worries about losing Chinese identity and about the possible brainwashing effects of Western cultural influence. Therefore, for many Chinese people, being able to read English and pass exams is enough. They avoid engaging in English discourse and learning about foreign cultures because they think it can only bring trouble. People remember well the historical lessons
from the Cultural Revolution, when anyone who knew English was regarded as a traitor.

Cultural influence is inevitable in language learning, however. As an English learner and a teacher in China, I can see the changes in identity, values, and lifestyle caused by English learning and teaching. We open our minds to the new and different and become more critical of the close and familiar, especially the taken-for-granted beliefs and values we picked up in childhood. We constantly find ourselves happy, confused, angry, and in pain, all at the same time, because we live in a doorway between two rooms, with Chinese culture on one side and English culture on the other.

One student lamented his confusion and pain at the way his old friends misunderstood him. “I don’t know who I am or what to do now. At a get-together this past Spring Festival, some of my former schoolmates laughed at me and called me hypocritical when I opened the door for the ladies and said excuse me before asking questions.” In his peers’ eyes, he was showing off his English superiority or worship of foreign cultures, which alienated him from his own culture. As this student so painfully discovered, English has brought opportunities for personal and professional development as well as difficulties as we attempt to survive and succeed in our own culture.

Information and communications technology only complicates the situation. Although computers linked to the Internet provide unprecedented opportunities to learn and use English for real purposes, the decentered nature of networked teaching has challenged the habitual control and dominant role of school administrators, who try to minimize such reform efforts or use them only as a showcase. As the new technology has made English an international language, it has made unwanted Western cultural influences much easier and faster to accept. In addition, unequal access to the Internet and ineffective instruction have made proficiency in digital literacy an unrealistic goal for all but a wealthy, urban elite in China.

The work of EFL teachers has always been tied to their socioeconomic contexts and the students’ development. We as teachers must be aware of the dangers and opportunities brought by English and technology. We should recognize the complex social meaning of English in China and the double-edged sword of technology. Education will play a key role in determining who has the language, communication, and technological multiliteracies required to become active shapers of the multimedia future rather than mere recipients of prepackaged choices (Castells 1996). And language classrooms will be one important place where these new educational opportunities are found—or missed.

How can EFL teachers minimize the dangers and maximize the opportunities? Learner-centered collaborative projects involving social investigation, exploration of cultural themes, and critical analysis have provided powerful learning experiences for the students I teach and for me as an EFL teacher. Organizing such projects internationally creates an even better basis for developing cross-cultural negotiation and problem-solving skills.

Compared with learning from a textbook, project-based learning is more time-consuming, perhaps more sloppy, but ultimately more beneficial (see “Leaving the Bathtub to Make Waves,” Essential Teacher, Autumn 2004). First and quite obviously, it helps me better understand my students’ concerns and interests. Second, it makes all participants more aware of the campus and local cultures that they take for granted. Last, it makes them more aware of the ways in which language, culture, and technology work together to define and shape their daily existence and professional future.

Teachers in China experience the same internal culture shocks that students do, particularly when learning and teaching clash with more traditional norms in Chinese culture and education. Teachers have the responsibility to help students increase their repertoire of behaviors so that they can behave in an appropriate way in more than one culture (Bennett 1996). Here again, project-based learning with technology is a good way to produce successful members of a multicultural society.

References


I don’t believe in cluttering my life with too many obligations, but I am a strong believer in the benefits of association membership.

My first response was an indignant “Of course!” I thought of how my supervisors cite professional memberships as assets on every annual review, and I gratefully counted the number of times the school I teach for has paid for me to attend conferences given by those same organizations.

And then I remembered what it was like before I taught at this wonderful school. I have no memory of any previous employer commenting on the line in my vita listing the organizations I belong to. During my many years as a part-time ESL teacher, no school or supervisor ever paid my way to a conference. To be fair, I remember being encouraged to attend, but the overwhelming message I got as a part-timer was that belonging to professional associations was strictly my own business.

I then asked myself the following question: “Do I consider membership in associations important to professional development?” Without a moment’s hesitation, my answer was “Yes!”

How did that string of acronyms on my vita develop me professionally? In all honesty, as a new teacher, I had no idea. Perhaps I was sleeping when my professors enumerated the benefits of belonging to an organization, or maybe they never mentioned it. At any rate, I had been teaching a number of years before I attended my first conference, one held by Louisiana TESOL.

What a revelation! Under one roof I found a plethora of enlightening and inspiring sessions designed to make me a better teacher. Unfortunately, being human, I could attend only one at a time. It made my head spin. Why hadn’t these conferences been around during the first five years of my teaching career? (You see how ignorant I was.) I was so excited and impressed that I went home, saved my pennies, and soon became a proud member of LaTESOL. I couldn’t wait for the next conference.

A question on a survey I recently filled out for a group within TESOL made me pause: “Does your school, your educational organization/institution, or others you know about consider membership in associations part of their staff’s professional development?”
The most obvious benefit of belonging to a professional association is the professional development provided by workshops and conferences. From my first indiscriminate plunge into concurrent sessions (I attended everything and anything, even if it had no connection to my own teaching situation), I have become a choosier customer. I study conference programs and carefully plan my time. I now try to attend a mix of presentations that relate to my current teaching, my scholarly interests, my colleagues’ needs and interests (supporting a friend making her first presentation supersedes the utility of a more relevant session), and—a very important category—my own curiosity. My teaching and thoughts about teaching grow as a result of attending these workshops and conferences.

A second way association membership develops me professionally is that it helps me get to know other people in the field. I meet other teachers and administrators, materials writers, graduate students, and teachers of vastly different populations; these professionals broaden my knowledge of the field and increase my appreciation for all the kinds of work my colleagues do. Some of these people I meet turn into friendly acquaintances, and I look forward to seeing them every year. Sometimes we are able to help each other out. For example, a student at my school recently asked about TESL certification programs. Thanks to the contacts I’d made at my local TESOL affiliate conferences, I was able to give her names and phone numbers for several local programs.

The best way I’ve found to increase the benefits of association membership is to become more active in the association. I started out slowly as I didn’t want to get too involved right away. I first became involved with LaTESOL by helping with conference registration. This was actually enjoyable—and very informative. Later, I volunteered to introduce speakers—I think it was called facilitating. This gave me an opportunity to have a little one-on-one time with a presenter; much to my surprise, I discovered that presenters were normal people, just like the rest of us. Since those early, toe-in-the-water days, I have served in local associations as president and membership secretary. And, as you can see from this column, I’ve even been able to do a little for TESOL itself.

I could not quantify all I have gained from being involved in both my local and the international TESOL organizations. I’ve learned how to run a business meeting, how to build consensus, how the world of TESOL is connected by common dilemmas and concerns, how a seemingly small decision can affect even the most far-flung members. I’ve met inspiring, creative, dedicated people. These are just a few of the ways being involved in the association has broadened me. I’ve also been challenged to try things I never would have imagined doing—like writing this column.

The fact that you’re reading this probably means you are already a member of TESOL. Now, I don’t believe in cluttering my life with too many obligations, but I am a strong believer in the benefits of association membership. So, are you a member of at least one local teaching association? Have you thought about helping out? It’s true that very few people get paid for being active in their professional associations, but the fact that teachers continue to do it anyway shows that the payoffs are great.
Every intensive English and university program I’ve taught in has required teachers to give out and collect end-of-term evaluations, both bubble forms and sheets for additional comments. The bubble forms produce the statistics that your department may (or may not) use for evidence of the quality of your teaching. Every ESL class I’ve taught in the United States has had fewer students than would make up a statistically significant—or even somewhat accurate—sample size, but that never seems to have given a department pause.

The comment sheets, which may be signed or unsigned, are supposed to give you insights that standardized questions cannot. At one university where I taught, you could choose whether to include comment sheets in your teaching portfolio, but only if they were signed. Another university required comment sheets to be included if they were signed and forbade them if they weren’t.

Comments typically range from pointless (“I wish the bending machines to have sprit not just coke”) to obscure (“I thank my English”) to revealing (from my French 101 class: “You tried to teach us too much French—that’s not why we’re here”) all the way to useful (“I think we need more practice paraphrasing as whole class, not just groups or partners”).

One reason not all comments are useful is that many ESL students aren’t used to evaluating courses and teachers, and don’t know what they’re supposed to write. Is the comment sheet a suggestion box? A way to thank their teachers? The few lines of instructions at the top of the page are probably not enough to make this clear.

It’s worth spending five or ten minutes of class time explaining to students why they’re being asked for their opinions, how their comments will be used, and what sorts of comments are
useful. For example, while not a morning person, I’ve somehow always ended up with classes that start at 8:00 a.m., which are clearly not a favorite of students either. However, the class time is definitely not negotiable. Making this clear to a class of twenty-five students means that I’ll get only four or five comments about changing the class time instead of twenty-three.

But the real problem with comments is that they come at a point in the term when you can’t do anything about them. In the fall, the listening/speaking class wants more authentic listening activities. So you change your syllabus for the spring term, only to have the new class complain in May that there were too many listening activities and not enough opportunities for conversation.

The best solution I’ve experienced is the SGID, or small-group instructional diagnosis, a technique for midterm classroom evaluation that has been around in various forms since the 1970s.

In the version I’ve used, you arrange to swap classrooms for one class period with a fellow teacher around midterm. In advance, you prepare a sheet of questions for your students about how the class is going. A helpful Web site from the University of Washington (2005) even gives you sample question sheets, but you’ll probably want to write your own.

The cooperating teacher takes over your class for the period and leads the class through the process. The teacher distributes the sheets to the class, which they discuss in small groups without needing to reach any kind of consensus. Students are not only allowed but encouraged to speak in their native language. I’ve done this several times with classes that included several core groups speaking one language or another and a few isolated speakers of other languages; those students formed a group on their own and used English, and it was never a problem.

When the discussions are done, the cooperating teacher writes categories such as Going well, Not going well, Suggestions on an overhead projector sheet or a sheet of butcher paper, and solicits responses from everyone in the class. When several students agree, the teacher can just tally responses. Since the students watch the teacher write, they can make sure their ideas are reported accurately. All dissenting opinions are written down, even if there is a clear majority. No names are used.

When the class is over, you and the cooperating teacher meet and go over the feedback. You then discuss your response with the class at the next session.

Here are the advantages of SGID:

- Students hear from all others in the class and realize that others share—or don’t share—their feelings.
- Students are more likely to report minor concerns that they might not bother mentioning on an end-of-term form from the university.
- You have a chance to explain why you cannot make some changes they’ve requested and to explain the purpose of some unpopular activities.
- You have a chance to make reasonable changes.

This last advantage is the most important, I think—it shows students that you are listening, do care, and are flexible. And the evaluation happens while the students are still in class, so the changes you make affect the people who have asked for them. A student once requested that I write up the class calendar (in outline form on the syllabus) in calendar form. The change was easy to make, and I handed her a calendar-style schedule at the next class. She would never have scheduled an office visit to request this or mentioned it as a criticism on a final evaluation, but my change made her life easier, and she was touchingly grateful that I did it.

Although a class period and a half may seem like a lot of time to spend on a class evaluation, I’ve always found it worthwhile. The second half of your class will go more smoothly, and, as a bonus, your end-of-term evaluations will probably be higher, too.

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The title of this article comes from a comment I heard at an International Association of Teachers of EFL (IATEFL) Special Interest Group (SIG) symposium in Barcelona in 2002. It neatly sums up the idea that development can only come from within you.

But suppose you work for an institution where development is not encouraged, where there never seems to be time to do anything about it, or where you are the only language teacher and have no one to share ideas with. How can you develop in these circumstances? This article looks at some of the ways teacher development has been defined over the years, at what teachers understand by development, and most importantly, at how you can develop yourself.

**Education, Training, or Development?**

The terms teacher training, teacher education, and teacher development (TD) are often used interchangeably. What is the difference? Is there indeed a difference?

Development means change and growth. It means becoming the “best kind of teacher that I personally can be” (Underhill 1986, 1). According to Edge (cited in Wallace 1991), “teacher training or education is something that can be presented or managed by others; teacher development is something that can be done only by and for oneself” (p. 3).

Rossner (1992) identifies four key characteristics of teacher development:

- it is about dealing with the needs and wants of the individual teacher in ways that suit that individual ....
much of TD is seen as relating to new experiences, new challenges and the opportunity for teachers to broaden their repertoire and take on new responsibilities and challenges ....

TD is not just to do with language teaching or even teaching: it’s also about language development (particularly for teachers whose native language is not English), counselling skills, assertiveness training, confidence-building, computing, meditation, cultural broadening—almost anything in fact.

TD, in most teachers' opinions, has to be “bottom-up,” not dished out by managers according to their own view of what development teachers need .... (p. 4)

**Development Opportunities, Real and Wished-for**

Are the characteristics above relevant to your situation? In 2003, the IATEFL TD SIG undertook a small research project to explore the development opportunities teachers felt were available where they worked and whether they were content with those opportunities. They were also asked what type of development they would have in an ideal world.

**The Ideal World**

Here are some of the development opportunities teachers said they would like to have:

- time to discuss teaching methods and the like with colleagues
- monthly TD sessions where teachers of the same level, course, or programme coordinate and share what’s happening in class meetings for the exchange of good practice
- more liaison between teachers, sharing of ideas, and discussion of problems
- more cooperation with colleagues who are interested in development, structured with long-term aims and time for reflection
- in-service, on-site training
- more regular workshops at the workplace rather than off-site conferences and workshops
- courses with a practical element
- action research, because it allows teachers to focus on their own development and follow research in areas they want to work on in their teaching
- time off to take credit-bearing training courses with a specific focus

These requests seem to fit with Rossner’s key features and are similar in referring to cooperation, collaboration, and discussion with colleagues, and in-house courses or workshops. Basically, the teachers wanted time to get together with other teachers, which is not often possible because of busy schedules.

**The Real World**

Of the teachers who completed the questionnaire, 85 percent said there were opportunities for development where they worked, but only 60 percent felt encouraged to develop. Teachers in primary and secondary schools and adult education were more positive about the possibilities for development than teachers in higher education were, with just under 60 percent saying they were satisfied. Just over 40 percent said they did not feel they were given sufficient time or opportunity for development. Private sector teachers responded more positively than their state school counterparts.

This research was conducted only on a small scale, and follow-up interviews would have been interesting. Although only 10 percent of the questionnaires were returned, the fact that more than forty teachers took the time to return them shows the importance some teachers give to development. You never stop learning, and teachers, more than people in most other professions, may continue to do so throughout their careers.

**Developing Yourself**

How relevant is this to teachers who work in isolation? One colleague who set up his own school in Pakistan after the British Council closed down its schools there in 2001 wrote, “When you are isolated, you don’t have anyone to bounce ideas off and your creativity suffers. Working on your own can be great, but you begin to miss things like coffee breaks and friendly chats with colleagues.”

To avoid complete professional stagnation, he joined an online course that included tutor support and a chat room. He felt that taking an online class was better than subscribing to an electronic discussion list because the discussions would be more focused and relevant to his interests.

Below are some of the ways other teachers said they tried to keep up-to-date:

- reading journals, articles, and books
- talking to other teachers
- reflecting on their own teaching
- going to conferences
- relying on other people who are more up-to-date
- using the Web
- trying to use new materials or revise old ones
- writing and editing articles
- learning from their trainees or students

While none of these ideas is new, they are all activities that you and your colleagues can organise among yourselves, even if TD is not encouraged where you work and even if you work in isolation.

**Reflect Weekly**

Not everyone likes keeping a reflective diary. Some like the idea but find it too time-consuming. Even if you cannot manage a journal, try to find half an hour at the end of each week to sit down quietly, look back over the week, and write one good and one bad thing you remember about your lessons. Then reflect on why you remember them and why they were good or bad.

If you reflect in this way each week, you can then compare your reflections over the weeks, throughout the term, and even throughout the year. You might also note one thing you have learned each week and reflect on “What would have happened if … ?”

**Revise Your Materials**

Another technique for self-development is revising old materials. Do they always need revising? Why or why not? If they do, how would you revise them? Thinking about these questions triggers a reflective process that can lead you to explore areas you might not otherwise have explored.
Basically, the teachers wanted time to get together with other teachers, which is not often possible because of busy schedules.

Discussing the materials with other teachers can lead to discoveries about yourself as a person as well as a teacher. It may even lead to writing and editing articles, both of which involve reading about the topic of the article, checking certain data for accuracy, revisiting books and articles you read a long time ago or reading new ones, and making sure you are not misquoting or misinterpreting. Perhaps from this process you will move on to getting some of your materials published or even writing your own book (see Fleming Wood 2004).

Learn from the Students You Teach
Rinvulcri (2004) gives several examples from his teaching career of how he learned from the students he worked with. This way of learning was on the list of questionnaire responses.

You can learn from students, but how? You can learn how they like to learn, and you can adapt how you teach accordingly. You can learn about their language and their culture. From their attitudes and their response to your materials and lessons, you can learn whether they like what you are doing and, as Rinvulcri says, whether what you are doing is appropriate to their needs.

All of this aids your professional as well as your personal development. Rinvulcri also asks whether lawyers, doctors, and architects learn as much from their clients or patients as teachers can from students, which reinforces the point raised earlier about teachers continuing to learn throughout their careers.

Observe Yourself
There are more traditional ways of developing, even if you are in an isolated teaching situation. One way is to set up action research projects; these can be undertaken individually. Another way is to audiorecord lessons. Not only do you hear yourself teaching, but you often hear other things you may not have been aware of while engaged in teaching. For example, recording yourself can make you more aware of just how clear (or unclear) your instructions are.

Become a Student
Less traditional ways to develop are to attend courses that are not related to language or teaching, such as aromatherapy, yoga, drama, salsa, art, or information technology. Some of these courses will help you unwind and, as a result, may put you in a more reflective mood. Others will help you develop different creative skills, which you will be able to use later in the classroom.

In addition, putting yourself in the position of a student helps you understand what your students are going through in your classes and helps you empathise with their frustrations. Similarly, if you do not speak your students’ language, think of the problems you might have learning it. If you do speak the language, reflect on any problems you may have had learning it. This will help you understand how your students may be feeling about learning English.

Observe Someone Else
Another traditional form of TD is peer observation. Peer observation can work two ways: you can develop from observing colleagues, and you can develop from having colleagues observe you.

If you work in isolation or in an institution where development is not encouraged, how can you undertake peer observation? Is it absolutely necessary for peer observation to involve teachers teaching the same subjects? Surely, classroom management techniques—such as setting up pair and group work, giving clear instructions, and using visual aids—and factors such as motivation and discipline are relevant to all teachers? Try to arrange peer observations with other teachers in your school who are like-minded but teach different subjects, or even send transcripts of your lessons to other teachers for comments.

Make Time to Develop
Most teachers I know never have enough time. However, putting aside a half-hour on the weekend for reflection or taking a course in something new and completely different can be invigorating and stimulating and can only benefit you and the students you teach. Talking and collaborating more with colleagues can improve the working environment as well as encourage development.

I leave you with some sentences to complete, based on an idea by Head and Taylor (1997):

- Reading this article has made me think about ...
- I can create opportunities to work collaboratively with other teachers by ...
- My students can help me develop by ...
- Next week I’m going to ...

References


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Practical issues.

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Good ideas from teachers like you.

Vote for Gansukh! Support the Democratic Coalition! Free concert tonight at the square!” The crackling message blaring from the slowly cruising van on the street below continued throughout our class at the National University of Mongolia. Even after we closed the window, we were constantly reminded that the 2004 election campaign for Mongolia’s parliament had just begun. The national vote was only three months away, and every seat was up for grabs.

The Soviet-constructed concrete apartment blocks all over the city were draped with immense flapping cotton sheets and cardboard signs displaying ten-foot-tall candidates urging the residents of Ulaanbaatar, the capital, to cast their vote for them. Only days after we heard the van outside our classroom, Ulaanbaatar was transformed. Gers (traditional Mongolian round tents) set up in each district acted as campaign headquarters where candidates met with the public and their volunteers distributed information. Less than twenty years old, Mongolia’s democracy was in full swing, and everyone, including the students I was teaching, couldn’t help but take notice.

As the campaign commenced, a group of ten senior-year English majors and I began a spring semester class in advanced productive skills. Throughout our initial class discussions and free-writing sessions, the topic of the upcoming election kept emerging. The students were keen to discuss the situation and learn the vocabulary necessary to discuss Mongolian politics in English. I was also curious to know how they, as first-time voters, reacted to the messages of the various candidates and parties.

Learning to Choose
I therefore decided to integrate a political focus into the class, and, after receiving input from the students, I redesigned the course to serve two major purposes. The first was to help the students develop an understanding of the basic principles and history of Mongolian democracy as they evaluated Mongolia’s current variety of election candidates. My second objective was to prepare the students for their grueling graduation exams in speaking, grammar, and essay writing.

I named the course The Election: Learning to Choose in the hope that the students would be better able to make an informed choice when they cast their ballots at the end of the semester. I also hoped that, by practicing productive skills through content, the students would gain confidence in their language skills before the final exams.

Platform Debates and Position Papers
To begin the course, I first created a module based on a series of structured debates and writing activities in which the students assessed the platforms of each of the two major competing parties. I divided the students into two teams representing the major parties (the Revolutionary Party and the Democratic Coalition) and asked the groups to brainstorm the campaign policies that they had observed through various media since the campaign began. Each team then prepared a short position paper stating its party’s goals before presenting their ideas in structured debates with me acting as moderator.
The debates on different aspects of the campaign (e.g., education, foreign policy) progressed slowly as we spent large periods of time in each class reviewing the vocabulary collocations and sentence structure necessary for argumentative speaking. Many of the debates also sparked further discussion about the various, and somewhat unusual, political guarantees of each party. We compared the standard political promises in U.S. elections (e.g., no new taxes, crime reduction) with the promises that had been touted in the Mongolian media (land privatization, education reform, and even free cash if young Mongolians tied the knot or had children).

The main assignment of this module was a research project that began with each student reading four articles in English on the parliamentary elections of 1996 and 2000 and selected sections of *Modern Mongolia: Reclaiming Genghis Khan* (Sabloff 2000). I also asked the students to interview three older family members and elicit their opinions on the two previous elections. After their research was completed, the students wrote a descriptive essay summarizing what they had read and what their interviewees had stated. The students also composed an argumentative essay discussing how they felt these previous campaigns might influence the upcoming election in late July.

The students spent several weeks working on their essays through various writing tasks. Most students argued in their writing that each party in power at the time of an election (the Revolutionary Party in 1996 and the Democratic Coalition in 2000) had lost due to either gross inexperience or corruption. Now that the influential Revolutionary Party was in power and was expected to win despite its lackluster performance, the students and I were curious to see if history might repeat itself. Would power once again move to its polar opposite, as it had in the previous two elections, or would the Revolutionary Party retain control, as most in the country were predicting?

**Campaign Strategy Analysis**

As the vote drew nearer, the students and I turned our attention to these questions by analyzing the campaign strategies of both major parties. Now that Mongolian political candidates had become more efficient at fundraising and advertising, we also wanted to discover what specific effects these factors had on a population that had little experience with modern democratic campaigning.

For two weeks, we watched TV campaign advertisements, read billboards, and monitored the activities of the major candidates. I based several class discussions and essay assignments on how these campaign advertisements influenced the students’ opinions and how the advertisements affected voters in different parts of the country. The class also role-played political debates by assuming the positions of individual candidates and having their classmates evaluate and “vote” for the winner at the end of the class period.

**A Campaign Corpus for Vocabulary and Grammar**

Besides the structured debates, essays, and research that the course had emphasized in previous weeks, developing the students’ linguistic competence for the graduation test remained a top priority. I asked the...
students to translate advertisements and articles dealing with the election and used these as a tool for teaching the vocabulary of campaigning. The students and I then cooperated in producing a minicorpus of the most common lexical and phrasal choices in the speeches of different candidates. As the minicorpus allowed us to view authentic language rather than invented exercises for vocabulary that can often be artificial (Ma 1993), the students were able to analyze genuine political language and determine what collocational and grammatical patterns emerged in political advertisements and campaign speeches.

Our corpus also served as a basis for the students to concentrate on the grammatical structures that they had consistently found troublesome. For example, students improved their understanding of the use of passive voice by analyzing the reasons it was used in campaign speeches, official debates, and interviews (e.g., distraction or deemphasis from the subject, obfuscation). They were also able to observe how the concept of backshifting occurred in reported speech and practice how to make the proper adjustments in their own writing.

We later reviewed differences between some of the perfect and simple tenses, which are especially difficult for Mongolian learners to acquire, by creating timelines of major candidates’ accomplishments, and future goals and promises. Students then outlined the positions taken by each candidate, writing full sentences using the tenses or verb aspects that needed practice. Students then used these lists as supplemental material for their final research projects.

Calling the Outcome
In the final weeks, the students conducted research for group presentations analyzing the campaigns of both parties in the month before the election. Each group began its research by videotaping or noting every political advertisement or speech that they witnessed in the media over a three-day period. The students also conducted a brief survey among the university population and Ulaanbaatar citizenry on voter preference and opinion, and interviewed party representatives at their local political stations.

At the conclusion of the research, the class believed that the Revolutionary Party would retain control of Parliament and yield only a few seats to the Democratic Coalition. The students cited the fact that, of all the political advertisements they had observed, more than 75 percent were sponsored by the Revolutionary Party. They also stated that most of their interviewees remarked that the Democratic Coalition was too inexperienced and did not have enough funds to prevent the Revolutionary Party from winning. The students mentioned in their presentations that many of the interviewees believed that the Revolutionary Party had become too powerful to be defeated despite its less-than-stellar record over the previous four years.

Aftermath
I returned to the United States shortly before the election took place. The students’ presentations were still fresh in my mind as I watched the campaign results on CNN several days after the voting had taken place. I sat aghast as members of the Revolutionary Party stormed Parliament protesting the outcome of the election. Shockingly, the Democratic Coalition had won a majority of seats due to last-minute grassroots campaigning in the countryside. In utter disbelief, the Revolutionary Party refused to accept the results and staged protests in Ulaanbaatar. Their anger soon led to brawls with Democratic Coalition parliamentarians, as TV cameras broadcast the news around the world.

As I was viewing the politicians that the students had researched only weeks earlier being wrestled to the ground by security forces, my telephone rang. It was one of the students. After we discussed the situation, he paused and said, “Maybe the politicians should have taken our class.”

“If I had known this would happen,” I replied, “I would have given them all an F.”

References


Roger Cohen, who worked in Mongolia for five years as a Peace Corps volunteer, Soros Foundation teacher educator, and U.S. State Department senior English language fellow, currently teaches at the University of Guam.
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his story is about my son, Mohammad, whom my wife and I decided to raise as an English user in Iran, a completely foreign context. I, as his only direct input provider, did not have full mastery of the English language or of U.S. and British culture. This account describes the linguistic situation for the first five years of Mohammad’s life.

Many young Iranian English teachers and students are attempting to bring up their children as bilinguals. Since many people associate English with success in today’s international world and are, at the same time, unsure about language learning success later in life, I would imagine that similar trends exist in other non-English-speaking countries. My failures and successes may be relevant to parents who share my situation, and they may also provide insights to teaching colleagues around the world.

My English-Only Policy
Before Mohammad was born, his mother and I agreed on a one-person, one-language policy (the principle known as the Grammont Principle or Grammont Formula). His mother, a native speaker of Farsi, spoke Farsi to him, and I, also a native speaker of Farsi, spoke only English to him. I continued to use Farsi with others, including his mother.

Because I had learned and was learning English as an adult and taught English to adults, I had to familiarize myself with the English of children. To this end, I studied relevant entries in children’s encyclopedias, child-care books, and children’s stories and fairy tales. Unfortunately, such books are hard to obtain here in Iran.

From the day Mohammad was born, I took every opportunity to take him along to all the English-based activities I could. These ranged from shopping and hiking trips to sightseeing tours for English or foreign colleagues. These frequent and often long outings were aimed at reinforcing sociolinguistic norms and helping Mohammad’s bilingual progress. Interestingly, it was noticeable that when, once in a blue moon, I addressed him in Farsi, Mohammad felt distinctly uneasy, as if I had changed personality or was no longer friends with him.

I was very strict in sticking to the English-only policy. I did not directly use Farsi with him in any circumstance and had to ignore complaints from different relatives about social inappropriateness. The whole project seemed somewhat strange to people who observed the father-child interaction. However, I feared that if I used Farsi with the child occasionally, I would use it more and more and damage the special bond we were developing linguistically as well as potentially harm our long-term goals for Mohammad, since he had few other English stimuli.

I also ignored a heavy barrage of criticism from people who raised linguistic and cognitive concerns. Some said Mohammad would confuse the two languages. Some believed he was being overloaded. Some feared exposure to English at such an early
age would halt, or even damage, his cognitive development, leaving permanent losses. I rejected the criticism as simply misconceived.

**English Input, Farsi Output**

Because Farsi was the dominant language of the environment and in many areas the child was poorly and insufficiently exposed to English, Mohammad chose Farsi as his only language of oral production. The only exception to Mohammad’s choice of which language to use orally was when he created a few stories in English, which I jotted down. We accepted this situation readily as we thought pressuring the child to speak English might check the fluent expression of his feelings and ideas and harm his psychological and social development.

At the age of three, Mohammad had quite a large vocabulary in English, and my communication with him (I spoke in English, and Mohammad responded in Farsi) was no less successful than his mother’s. In some areas (e.g., nature, animals, and games) his passive vocabulary was considerably larger in English. Bedtime was often a propitious occasion for language work as Mohammad and I cuddled together and I told or created stories, which he could easily follow. The journey of a leaf or a conversation between a pebble and a tree fascinated him, and he would reenact those stories the following day.

**Motivating Reading in English**

In spite of the initial successes noted above, I soon realized that my deficient English was already having an effect. I had known that this would be a problem later, but I was surprised that it became one so early. I realized that English literacy could make up for the poverty of English stimuli.

I started with flash cards. Mohammad already knew the English alphabet by heart and sight. I posted words on the walls, and he gradually learned them. When he had mastered a word and got it right even when the card was relocated, I removed it and put it in a stack for later review.

Some elementary language teaching programs on CD-ROM also helped his passive vocabulary and word recognition. However, Mohammad, who was now almost four years old, had not yet started to read and was therefore unmotivated as he could not sense the purpose all learners need. He needed frequent goads and reminders to start an activity.

I decided to appeal to his interest in jungle animal stories. I started telling him exciting stories but kept him in suspense until he produced the sentences in writing with some help from me and posted them on the wall in the right order. The sentences were frequently visited and reviewed, and new ones were added to the current story. This program continued for four short stories, which took a few weeks. Nevertheless, I realised we were making little headway. Mohammad’s lack of interest was also easy to see.

**A Subtle Path to the ZPD**

Analyzing the situation and considering it in the light of recognised learning theories helped me deal with the problem based on a sounder psychological and educational foundation. I had always been fascinated by Vygotsky (e.g., 1978) and his zone of proximal development (ZPD) and by Krashen’s (1985) suggestions on language acquisition and natural learning, particularly his input hypothesis. I also noticed that children are sensitive to negative feedback and that I should be using much more discretion and subtlety.

So, when Mohammad was about four and half years old, I opted for a practical technique informed by the idea of scaffolding (Vygotsky 1978) and characterized by the absence of manifest evaluation.

Specifically, I chose *Four Clever People* (Howe 1995), grade four in the Start with English Readers series, which includes four very simple short stories that were totally new to Mohammad. All the material we needed was a pencil or a pen and slips of paper. I found rectangular slips cut out of A4 paper very handy and made four slips out of each sheet. I read one sentence from a story to him and made sure that it did not present...
I was very strict in sticking to the English-only policy. I did not directly use Farsi with Mohammad in any circumstance and had to ignore complaints from relatives about social inappropriateness.

“..."

comprehension problems. On one side of the slip I wrote the words of the sentence in scrambled order, and on the other I wrote letter-spaces for each word in the right order. I filled in letters for the more challenging words so that he was sure to fill in the missing words and letters successfully. In this way, Mohammad began to understand the idea of the sentence in action as well as improving his mechanics, such as handwriting and spelling.

I used a few standard rules, which Mohammad quickly became familiar with, as we worked through the four stories. On completion of each sentence task, I would praise Mohammad with a small expression of satisfaction or a pat on the back. I broke longer sentences into smaller ones. I never pushed him hard to start this sentence work, but as soon as he seemed ready, I would gently prompt him to get the materials. Once we had started, Mohammad would frequently insist that I prepare another sentence frame, but we seldom did more than four sentences in one session.

I never read or prepared a frame for the next sentence until he had successfully read the sentence under practice. At the start of each practice session, before trying a new sentence, I asked him to present the last sentence from his slip stacks and read it.

After about two months from the start of the sentence completion project, we had completed the first three stories, and Mohammad wanted to read full stories without stopping the sentence completion project. Since his preference for reading whole texts was quite perceptible, I terminated the sentence completion program when we moved into another grade four storybook from the same series. We started a new program that included copying, doing dictionary work, and writing down the jungle stories he told spontaneously in English.

And what about Mohammad’s progress in his other language, Farsi? His mother, who had also begun to use flash cards and similar techniques, could only envy this success because his Farsi literacy now lagged far behind his English.

References


Hadi Farjami, an assistant professor at Semnan University, in Iran, has been teaching EFL courses for twelve years.
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Quipping students with what they need to write effectively is no easy task. If you could let them know that many of the essays they write are closely related to how their thoughts are organized, they might look at the writing process differently and be a little more willing to pick up a pen or sit in front of a keyboard.

This article looks at a writing approach that encourages students to write by revealing that it is a complex process and not simply a matter of text organization. Prior to becoming language, thought begins within broader cognitive domains. Therefore, you may be able to help your students produce quality writing by building their awareness of thought construction.

**A Different Approach to Essay Writing**

Most writing textbooks introduce different rhetorical kinds of process writing (e.g. descriptive, narrative, cause and effect, and opinion), but they don’t really show how to combine the various kinds into a coherent essay. Nor do they show that the different types are related to cognition and that this relation can be useful when making thesis statements, which are crucial to successful academic writing.

In an effort to integrate cognition with process essay writing and encourage a new, constructive essay-writing approach, this article introduces domain blending and domain networking via sociocognitive metaphorm. This way of looking at essay writing is in line with sociocognitive learning (Hill 2004), an approach to teaching that combines sociocultural theory (Lantolf 2000) and cognitive grammar (Langacker 1987). Sociocognitive metaphorm maintains that second language and grammar acquisition is a bidirectional knowledge construction process (i.e., from sociocultural to cognitive and vice versa) and that, through this process and through interaction with underlying cognitive schemata, metaphor connects meaning making to form.

What domain blending does is reevaluate the comparison-and-contrast essay in a new cognitive context. This reevaluation involves the use of metaphor and metonymy as basic functions, which are often labeled the topic (the content of the discourse) and the vehicle (the metaphorical focus) (Cameron 2003). Many of the most basic concepts, like quantity, time, change, action, cause, and modality, use metaphor as a conduit for comprehension (Lakoff 1993). Domain networking builds upon the metaphoric cognitive basis of domain blending by organizing cognition into four structural levels—prototypes, spatiotemporal relations, causation, and social roles (MacWhinney 1999), each of which can be respectively applied to descriptive, narrative, cause-and-effect, and opinion essays.

**Guiding Students through the Domain-Networking Essay**

For students to become cognitively autonomous and produce descriptive and narrative discourse, teachers need to make them aware of each of the four cognitive organizers (i.e., prototypes, spatiotemporal relations, causation, and...
social roles) when introducing the four respective kinds of essays. Hence, before they produce any language, students should be encouraged to make mental images by using what I call the domain-networking matrix. It is based on the idea that mental models and cognitive simulations help students produce descriptive and narrative discourse, better understand academic concepts, and integrate the four cognitive organizers to link inner and outer speech. Rather than linear, this process is dialectical.

For the domain-networking essay, I often give topics such as “The Perfect …” or “The Future of …” The intention of the first topic is to get students thinking in exemplars, and the second gets them thinking state-of-the-art. After they complete the title, I ask them to fill in each of the four areas of the domain-networking matrix with as many examples as they can (see the diagram below). Five or six examples for each of the four sections are great. Then they choose their favorite from each one. This linking together of the domains is metaphorically similar to the connectionist concept of neural networks (Pulvermuller 2002).

By combining their favorite example from each area into one grammatically correct sentence, students should end up with a clear, explicit thesis statement. I found this method to be more effective than other organizers, such as mind maps, at least with academic topics. Additionally, their favorite from each domain can be used as the topic sentence for each body paragraph in the essay, and the other examples they have written can be used as supporting sentences for each respective paragraph.

Prototypes and the Descriptive Essay
The typical descriptive essay requires students to describe an object from either a subjective or an objective perspective—or, put another way, from either a first-person or a third-person viewpoint. This ability to view an object in a very basic way is similar to the cognitive construct of prototypes, or best examples.

Prototypes are grounded mostly in the visual area of the brain (Pulvermuller 2002), and this domain is for the most part noun based. It builds on the comparison-and-contrast, meaning-making metaphor domain and can be divided into superordinate (e.g., canine), basic (e.g., dog), and subordinate (e.g., collie) categories. This domain has a mainly word-level focus, and the grammar that begins to emerge in students’ writing is, for example, related to countable or mass nouns. This slightly edited example is from a student’s descriptive essay, called “The Future of Technology”:

In addition, most electric household appliances can be worked by mobile phone that has multiple functions. You can heat a bath, turn on an air conditioner, and confirm the house security and the like anytime and everywhere if you want. Therefore, it is not necessary to walk around in the house specially to pick up remote controllers and to turn on the switches.

The three levels of prototypes enhance students’ ability to describe using nouns and adjectives. They also illustrate that use of written grammar, as opposed to spoken grammar, emerges as a result of regrouping, reordering, and reorganizing thoughts.

Spatiotemporal Relations and the Narrative Essay
The most important part of a narrative essay is the plot. Typically, the plot develops in four chronological stages: background, conflict, resolution, and ending. These four stages are also related to the metaphors of time is space or time is motion and the concept of grounding (i.e., foregrounding and backgrounding) in cognition and narrative discourse. To develop the sequence of actions necessary for narration, this second cognitive domain incorporates a set of spatiotemporal reference frames located in the activity area of the brain. Since this domain is activity or verb based, it has an added triangular dimension between a speaker-centered, an object-centered, and an environment-centered frame.

Temporal relations also use these three analogous frames, whose specified perspectives match up with the tense or aspect in the sentence. To illustrate, the
Technology developments make our lives easier and convenient. However, we are now facing many other problems. It seems that we are losing our original human life. We need to think of what we are really in need.

In this way, social relationships (e.g., between leaders and others) and opportunities for social change develop through language. In terms of its linguistic reflexes, this system goes beyond the sentential level to involve the more salient features of discourse patterning. Additionally, after students have developed an opinion, they may be ready to start a research-writing project to determine to what extent society shares their opinion.

**The Outer Limits of Domains**
A sociocognitive approach to writing links different kinds of essays with different cognitive domains, and each of these domains establishes a partial reflection of cognition. The approach stresses a focus on developing thought processes in tandem with writing processes to restructure students’ schemata so that they learn to develop nonspontaneous concepts (e.g., thesis statements). Showing students the connection between thought construction and text organization may help them see how to write more effectively.

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**References**


Kent Hill, specially assigned lecturer at Seigakuin University, in Japan, is completing his doctorate in the teaching of language as sociocognitive metaphor at the University of Nottingham.

Out of the Box is edited by Phil Quirke (pquirke@hct.ac.ae).
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The popular New Ways series offers language teachers effective classroom techniques and activities. This 18-volume series includes topics such as authentic materials, communicative games, English for specific purposes, English at the secondary level, content-based instruction, reading, speaking, and many others.
What makes using technology better than not using it? This question about the benefits and drawbacks of using technology has come up often in my work with English language learners and technology. Although I am a technophile, I have moments of doubt—particularly when the inevitable technical glitches happen at the worst possible times.

Lately, however, I have come to think about technology from a slightly different angle. The question is not always whether technology is better than or as good as face-to-face teaching. After all, for many teachers and students, technology has become part of the fabric of everyday learning, teaching, and communicating both inside and outside the classroom (Hull and Schultz 2002). A more relevant question now seems to be, How can teachers use technology in ways that contribute purposefully and meaningfully to student learning?

Technology as a Fulcrum

Based on my work with elementary and middle school students and technology, I offer a partial answer to this question. In a university and community collaborative project designed to bring elementary and middle school youth from a low-income urban neighborhood into a technology-rich after-school literacy program, students work individually and in groups in a computer lab to create multimedia movies, or digital stories (Hull 2003), about their lives and their communities. Adults at the center help facilitate student learning and teaching as they work together on these literacy-intensive and technology-rich projects.

Technology in this program is a fulcrum for social interaction and peer teaching and learning on at least three levels. First, at the social level, technology provides the material resources that initially attract youth to the center. Social interactions around technology in the computer lab invite students to cross racial, ethnic, and linguistic lines in ways that are not always available in the classroom. At the pedagogical level, inside the computer lab, youth find multiple opportunities to become peer teachers. They become more aware of what it means to be a learner and how they themselves can become teachers. Finally, at the linguistic level, students use language in patterned ways around technology, which provides insight into the kinds of language learning opportunities available to English language learners.

The technological resources available to you and the students you teach may be basic, advanced, or in between. In any case, you can maximize your use of the computer lab with students by following some practical tips for teaching at each level.

Side-by-Side Social Interaction

Educators often talk about the viability of communicating via computers in labs as an alternative to face-to-face interaction (see “Why the Electronic Class Will Not Replace the Face-to-Face Class,” Essential Teacher, Spring 2004). Technology-based interactions can promote culturally sensitive dialogue among students in the same physical space by allowing them to contribute their ideas through writing, which is sometimes less threatening than oral interaction (Warschauer 1996).
In the computer lab, communication takes place both through and around computers. In other words, technology serves as a vehicle for promoting interaction among students located in the same physical space. I like to call this side-by-side interaction, in which students have more opportunities than they would in a traditional classroom environment to engage in verbal and written dialogue as they work on collaborative projects involving technology. As an educator, you can organize activities to promote this type of side-by-side interaction.

Structure Learning in Pairs and Groups
Many of the best conversations take place when people do not necessarily have the explicit goal of talking in mind. They talk while cooking, driving, or waiting in lines; in short, conversations often occur as part of social activities.

The same holds true for students. When they work on group projects, their engagement in a common activity promotes conversations among individuals who might otherwise not interact. Technology allows such group projects to have tangible outcomes: photography collages, interviews, multimedia stories, and newsletters, to name a few. Conversation naturally occurs as students negotiate their tasks, solve problems, take short breaks, and present their work.

Structure Use of Technology into Icebreaker Activities
Some of the most basic software programs can provide students with creative ways to learn about one another. I often teach students how to use Microsoft PowerPoint by having them make a simple, three-frame slide show about themselves.

I start by explaining the motto Each one, teach one and make explicit the expectation that knowledge is for sharing. I then show a team of four students how to use a digital camera and the voice-recording function of PowerPoint. While most students locate images on the Internet for their slide show, the team of four circulates and teaches everyone else how to use the technology. Through creative icebreaker activities like this one, students have the chance not only to share something about themselves, but also to become learners and teachers of basic technology skills.

The Pedagogical Value of a Shared Screen
The variety of tasks, resources, and interactions made available to students through technology has multiplied the definitions of learning (Lemke 1996). In technology-rich contexts, peer teaching often occurs naturally among students without explicit support from teachers. In many informal encounters, students can become tutors who readily hand down knowledge to others, the tutees.

In many cases, however, peer teaching becomes somewhat lopsided because the roles of tutor and tutee become fixed rather quickly. I have found several techniques useful for ensuring that students take turns being learners and teachers.

What will happen if I click here?
And now, what do you think I’m going to do?
What should I type now?

My style is to ask predictive questions that help lead students to think about the processes they are using and to gradually develop their own strategies for self-teaching and problem solving.
Foster an Awareness of Who Controls the Mouse

All too often, teachers are pressed for time in the classroom, and a natural reaction to a request for help with the computer is often simply to show the questioner how to do it.

To avoid positioning learners as passive, I show students how to become aware of who is in control of the interaction. The easiest way for them to understand this concept is through a visual check of who is controlling the mouse. We then can talk about what it means to be actively involved or passively involved as learners.

Model Interactive Teaching

When teaching their peers, students often rely on discourse patterns that their teachers use with them. As a result, you can learn a great deal by listening to your own instructional language.

My style is to ask predictive questions that help lead students to think about the processes they are using and to gradually develop their own strategies for self-teaching and problem solving. One afternoon, as I listened to Inma, a nine-year-old English language learner, I noticed how she used this strategy to teach Kathy, an adult volunteer, how to size images in Adobe Photoshop:

Inma: I want more of a grayish background. So I’m gonna go over here, go here, uh oh, something happened.

Kathy: I think you have to go to the bigger ones, 640.

Inma: I know what to do now. I step backward, and step backward. And now, what do you think I’m going to do?

Kathy’s suggestion to “go to the bigger ones” potentially positioned Inma as a passive learner, a position that she resisted. Inma skillfully repositioned herself as the active teacher by echoing the kind of predictive questions she had learned: “And now, what do you think I’m going to do?” Such pedagogical moves demonstrate the subtle ways that children learn to take on roles as active learners and teachers around technology.

Support for a Variety of Linguistic Forms and Functions

Besides the broader social and pedagogical interactions that occur around technology, I am also concerned about the forms and functions of English that are available to students working with computers. Here are some suggestions for supporting a variety of language forms and functions.

Notice the Types of Linguistic Interactions That Take Place around Computers

Much of the linguistic interaction that takes place around computers involves highly procedural language. Students point to the screen and use simple imperatives: put this here, scroll down there, move the cursor over here, click back, click forward, or type this. Certainly, such language has an important function around computers, but it has its limitations in diversifying English learners’ interactional repertoire.

Make an effort to become aware of what specific linguistic demands are placed on students when they are working with technology. Sometimes you may need to design tasks specifically to target forms and functions of language that move away from procedural language.

Expand the Language Patterns Used around Computers

Students can more easily move beyond the language of simple imperatives if you integrate structured opportunities for social and pedagogical interaction around computers.

For example, I often give English language learners handouts with prompts that focus on different aspects of their multimedia projects. Third-grade students in a summer program might receive a “watch-and-tell” form with three large boxes for...
comments on three particular features of another student’s digital story: use of verbal details, diversity of visual images, and choice of background music. Students choose a partner, watch their digital story, and record at least one comment and one question in each box. This form is then used during sharing time, when we gather as a large group to discuss revisions to the multimedia projects.

Alternatively, eighth-grade students in an after-school program, working at their own pace on projects, have handouts that take them step-by-step through different software functions, such as sizing images, enhancing photos, or importing pictures. They select information from these handouts to teach themselves and then write comments on the handout before filing it in their personal folder.

Giving feedback and monitoring their own learning provide important, even indispensable, opportunities for students to push beyond the mere mechanical “how-to” language that can quickly dominate a computer lab. Over time, students develop not only a more critical eye but also a larger vocabulary and more complex syntactical structures.

Make Good Use of What You Have

Not all educators have the luxury of turning to Internet-connected computer labs when teaching English language learners. However, as Warschauer (2003) has pointed out, access to computers in U.S. classrooms is not that uncommon, either. Notions of a digital divide have shifted, he notes, from a focus on material access to an eye on the different ways that people make use of technology for social practices.

With that in mind, consider carefully how well you utilize whatever technology you have available in ways that support the multiple levels of social, pedagogical, and linguistic interactions that enfold students.

References


Paige Ware, who works with second language learners and technology, is an assistant professor at Southern Methodist University, in the United States.
Imagine EFL students doing oral presentations for an authentic audience from different countries or listening to presentations by a group of invited guest tutors from all over the world. Through blended courses (courses that include an online component as well as face-to-face [F2F] classroom activities) at Universidad Simón Bolívar, in Caracas, Venezuela, students have increased their exposure to the target language, learned how to use Web tools, and gained flexibility in how and when they learn.

Nearly four years ago, after I joined the online community of practice called Webheads in Action (Stevens 2005; see the review in Essential Teacher, Spring 2004), my professional practice changed from teaching purely F2F to teaching blended courses because of these benefits. The English for Architecture and Urban Planning Program at the university has always been student centered, following a content-, task-, and collaborative learning–based approach (see González and St. Louis 2002). To enhance the program with an online component, I designed some blended courses.

**Authentic Materials, Field-Specific Practice**
The courses aim to provide practice in English in the context of the students’ fields, architecture and urban planning. Each course has objectives in three areas: content, language, and study skills. The content is related to the subject matter taught in the two career paths. The course materials are authentic, consisting of online journals and magazines, books, articles, videos, photos, and blogs intended for and created by architects and urban planners.

The language is taught through the content of the specialty. Teachers give grammatical explanations to students individually, according to their needs. The idea is for the students to manage the vocabulary and the different kinds of discourse used in their fields. Regarding study skills, students learn, for example, outlining, mind mapping, brainstorming, and taking notes from readings and lectures. Cognitive and metacognitive strategies are also introduced in each course.

**Face-to-Face Classes Complement Flexible Online Sessions**
Having F2F as well as online class sessions gives students the opportunity to experience different kinds of activities and modes of learning.

In the required F2F sessions, students discuss readings and present group projects to their classmates. The classes allow the students to practice and to receive feedback from their classmates before they present their work to their architecture and urban planning teachers. Students also do simulations in which they prepare classes as if they were teachers of architecture and urban planning. These activities are self-, peer, and teacher evaluated with rubrics generated by the students and the teacher. The students receive individual and group grades.
In the online classes, students access the wealth of resources found on the Web and learn to use many Web tools. For the online component, students have the freedom to attend class from home, from the computer lab, or from anywhere else. I do not take attendance; what counts is that students complete the weekly individual, pair, or group activities.

As soon as I get to the computer classroom for these sessions, I open the instant messaging software Yahoo! Messenger (see http://messenger.yahoo.com/) and invite all students—those in the lab and those at remote sites—to a conference. In this way, I can talk to everyone and give instructions; the students can also communicate among themselves. For group work, they open other conferences in Yahoo! Messenger and get to work as if they were in a traditional classroom.

Web Tools with a Purpose
The online component takes advantage of a variety of Web tools, the most important being the class Web site and the course management system Moodle (see http://moodle.org/ and the review in this issue).

Class Web Site
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Class Web Site
Each course has its own Web site, where students have access to course information and resources (for two examples, see González 2004, 2005a, 2005b). The Web site gives the course flexibility: I prepare the skeleton of the site before each course starts, but I revise and gradually complete it as the course develops. As necessary, I make changes and add rubrics generated by students, presentations by guest tutors, and student work.

Management with Moodle
Moodle is a course management system that provides the virtual learning environment for the asynchronous communication in the course. With Moodle, students carry out class activities using a set of modules, and I can keep track of which students visit the platform, how long they spend there, and where they go. I organize the material by week so that students can find the required modules for each activity.

Using Moodle’s Forums module, students discuss the various topics presented, hand in assignments, give opinions, and ask questions. The Wiki module enables groups of users to author documents collectively in a simple markup language using a Web browser. Students use Wiki for collaborative activities such as writing group compositions, sharing the addresses of their blogs, or selecting readings. With the Journal module, students can write to me about any topic, knowing that I will get back to them in no more than twelve hours.

The Glossary module, which allows participants to create and maintain a searchable list of definitions, is one of my favorites. As students read articles, view ▶
videos, or attend speakers’ presentations, they jot down unfamiliar vocabulary, look it up in online dictionaries such as OneLook (http://www.onelook.com/), and create a glossary entry by defining the word, translating it, writing a sentence with it, and adding an image if possible. I use the entries as the source of interactive online exercises and vocabulary quizzes created with, for example, the online quiz and exercise creator at Quia (http://www.quia.com/). The fact that the students create their own glossary means that I do not have to guess at the words students do not know.

Recording with Handybits
With the free application Handybits Voice Mail (http://www.handybits.com/voicemail.htm), students can record messages to send via e-mail or save on their hard disk. In the course, students use Voice Mail to record summaries of readings, narrations for presentations, and messages to me. One year, students recorded scenes from the play Albert’s Bridge (Stoppard 1969), which they worked on with a guest tutor in the Netherlands, Arnold Mühren. This play served as a literary intermezzo to introduce a unit on bridges.

Tailored WebQuests
WebQuests have been invaluable for my courses. Even though the architecture and urban planning students in my courses share some interests, they also need to learn different vocabulary items and kinds of discourse. Designing WebQuests for each group of students helps me address these differences. For example, one trimester I designed a WebQuest on house plans for the architecture students and a simulation WebQuest for the urban planning students.

Interacting Live Online
My students say that they enjoy most and learn the most from the live online interactive activities in the course. So far, students have participated in three different kinds of live online activities: group chats for collaborative group work, online oral presentations for a foreign audience, and interaction with guest tutors from different countries.

Focused Group Discussion
After watching videos or reading articles related to the topic under discussion, students chat with two or three other classmates to share their views, compare and contrast the readings, relate the content to their core subject matter, and come up with conclusions. The chat logs generated by each group are then posted to a forum in Moodle. Sometimes, students publish them on their individual blogs.

Rising to the Challenge of Presenting Online
Presenting online for an international audience has been a challenging and wonderful experience for the students. My purpose in including this activity was to have students present their projects to an authentic audience that would listen for content more than for correctness of the language. Although the students were nervous because they knew they were being evaluated, they agreed to participate because they had been interacting via chat with some of my international colleagues in the first weeks of the course.

Each pair of students prepared a project in which they evaluated a building in Caracas. Together, the students designed a rubric containing the criteria for evaluating each of the aspects they considered important, based on the architectural literature. Students created Microsoft PowerPoint presentations, which were converted to Web pages and presented to an online audience of invited teachers gathered in a virtual room at Alado (see http://www.alado.net/).

The results were amazing. The students carried out their presentations well, and the audience, most of whom had never been to Caracas, asked good questions and gave useful feedback. Students who were not presenting interacted via text chat with the audience, helping the presenters answer the guests’ questions (for a report on this activity, see González 2005a, under Assessment). Interestingly, after their presentations, all the students said they felt more at ease than when they had presented F2F to their classmates.
Learning from International Guest Tutors
As described above, one guest tutor helped the students record scenes from a play. One trimester, another guest gave a presentation on rhythm and acoustics, and a group of six guest tutors spoke about bridges in their countries, following my guidance on which aspects to cover. The guests were five teachers from Argentina, Denmark, Germany, Japan, and Portugal, and a civil engineer from Canada, who was part of the team that had designed the bridge he was to present.

The presentations were given at Alado and at the online community LearningTimes.org (http://www.learningtimes.org/) using the collaboration software Elluminate (see http://www.elluminate.com/). The presentations included Web pages, photo stories, photo blogs, and PowerPoint presentations. Using such a wide range of tools helped students come up with ideas for their own final projects. (For a report on these presentations, see González 2004, under Syllabus.)

Blogging Their Thoughts Away
For the course, students set up blogs at LiveJournal (http://www.livejournal.com/) and Blogger (http://www.blogger.com/), which offer simple-to-use blogging tools. They have discussed readings, videos, and presentations by guest speakers; shared Web resources; and published photos, including those of their own projects. The students' acceptance of this activity has exceeded my expectations. Through it, they are becoming experts at blogging their thoughts in English and getting feedback from all over the world.

The Potential of Podcasting
In fall 2005, I used podcasting in the course for the first time (see González 2005b). In podcasting, users listen to content on a Web site instead of reading it on their computer screen. If they wish, they can download the content to a CD or an MP3 player.

The students in my course go to the podcasting blog, Thoughts on Buildings and Cities (http://courses.worldbridges.com/dyg_usb/) and listen to podcasts on architecture and urban planning recorded by native and nonnative speakers of English from different parts of the world. These podcasts are used as prereading or previewing activities. After listening to the podcasts, the students may react, discuss, or take notes, and download the podcasts to listen to again at their leisure. Then I may give the students the text to read or have them watch a video related to the topic of the podcast. The students also record their own podcasts on related topics using the free recording and editing software Audacity (http://audacity.sourceforge.net/).

“A Space to Interact More Personally”
A blended online and F2F approach to teaching and learning can help maximize the advantages of both types of classroom. A student who took the course says it best:

I think it is awesome to have a space to interact more personally with the teachers, and to have a platform so we can work outside the college. I think that it is known that we usually don't have so much time left for works, and working this way is a nice advantage. The use of technology for learning is something that should be used, not only in this course, but also in other courses.

References


Dafne González is a full professor of EFL/ESP at Universidad Simón Bolívar, in Venezuela; a member of the TESOL Electronic Village Online Coordination Team; and a member of the advisory board of ESL MiniConference Online.
Teaching English outside your home country?

Please insert nativespeakerad.pdf, this is a place holder

More than a Native Speaker
An Introduction for Volunteers Teaching Abroad
Don Snow

This book offers a nontechnical introduction to English teaching that is geared toward the special needs of native English-speaking teachers working outside their home countries. You’ll refer to it again and again for tips on everything from planning your courses and lessons to evaluation and grading. Also covered are classroom survival skills, adaptation to life in a new country, and teaching listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar, vocabulary, and culture. It’s the ultimate refresher course for teaching abroad.
This is your starting point. Follow a small group of refugees, an elementary school student, and a professional adult. By reflecting on their situations, you’ll discover ways to respond to your own.

This new, easy-to-follow guide is designed for the inexperienced or volunteer tutor of ESL.
Have you ever been at sea in a dense fog, when it seemed as if a tangible white darkness shut you in, and the great ship, tense and anxious, groped her way toward the shore with plummet and sounding-line, and you waited with beating heart for something to happen? I was like that ship before my education began, only I was without compass or sounding-line, and had no way of knowing how near the harbor was. “Light! Give me light!” was the wordless cry of my soul, and the light of love shone on me in that very hour.

—Helen Keller, The Story of My Life

This passage (from Keller 1905) is often included in U.S. language arts textbooks for teens and preteens. Background knowledge and language knowledge help readers find meaning and understand what the author intended. For example,

- **vocabulary**: Readers may know that a plummet and sounding-line help determine the depth of the sea. They may know the meanings of dense, tangible, tense, anxious, shore, compass, and harbor.

- **cultural information**: Readers may know that Helen Keller was a famous American who became blind and deaf at an early age and was helped to learn to read and speak in sign language by a teacher who became famous.

- **background information**: Readers may have been to the sea and seen pictures and films of large ships on the sea.

- **literary knowledge**: Readers who are familiar with metaphors may know that “without compass” refers not just literally to a ship on a sea without a navigation tool but to a person who feels directionless.

When English language learners read the same passage, they may be able to find definitions of the unfamiliar terms in a dictionary, although looking them up would interrupt the flow of reading and perhaps impair comprehension. They may not find technical terms about ships in their bilingual dictionaries. And determining the correct meaning of a word like sounding in the context of this passage might be tricky.

English teachers often try to supply the rest of the information in class with prereading discussions or with reference to footnotes or visuals in the textbook. But what if students could access all this information independently, as they needed to? What if they could see a picture of Helen Keller and her teacher Anne Sullivan in Alabama or see a picture of a ship on the ocean and read about the use of a plummet or sounding-line? What if they could hear someone reading the poem with the appropriate rhythm and expression, and choose the speed at which the text was read?
A Hyperlinked Scaffold Makes Text Comprehensible

Providing information that is linked where readers need it in a text is the concept behind WebTexts, our term for a certain type of Web-supported reading text. These hypertext readings take advantage of the capabilities of HTML authoring and user-friendly HTML editors in Microsoft Word and other word processors or dedicated Web development tools, such as Macromedia’s Dreamweaver. With WebTexts, you can differentiate learning to meet students’ specific needs, avoid lengthy explanations, eliminate some of the frustration for readers who need more help understanding a text, and create independent learners with the skills they need to engage texts without your constant intervention.

WebTexts are more than just bells and whistles. They fit with the theories underlying current knowledge about language acquisition. In establishing the importance of scaffolding, or support, during learning, Vygotsky (1986) recounted an experiment in which a child with a mental age of eight was able to solve problems meant for twelve-year-olds if he had a little assistance. Vygotsky commented that “the discrepancy between a child’s mental age [indicated by the static test] and the level he reaches in solving problems with assistance is the zone of his proximal development [ZPD]” (pp. 186–87).

The ZPD lies outside the zone of independent performance (ZIP). When attempting tasks in their ZPD, learners need support and assistance. As tasks in the ZPD are practiced and mastered, they move into the ZIP. And as a particular language skill moves from the students’ ZPD to their ZIP, you can gradually decrease the support until the learner is operating independently with confidence.

Comprehensible input is input at the learner’s current level of independent performance (interlanguage, or i) but with a little extra difficulty (i + 1) that pushes learners into their ZPD (Krashen 1988). The role of the teacher and teaching materials is to scaffold learners in the ZPD until the skills and knowledge become part of the learners’ ZIP. Your goal in scaffolding is to provide support until it can be removed, just as the support system built around a construction site is removed when the building can stand by itself.

Tailored, Supportive WebTexts

Good teachers—and good textbooks—have always sought to scaffold learners. What is new is that technology allows learners to access the precise degree and type of support they need. WebTexts are reading passages supported by information tailored to the context of the passage. For example, in a WebText based on the passage at the beginning of this article, the only meaning of sounding that would be accessible is that used in the term sounding-line. Better yet, the user would see a picture of a sounding-line. HTML and Web browsers allow the use of many types of support in WebTexts, including

- links to texts with background information,
- bibliographic information on the author, or information on people mentioned in the text
- pictures, illustrations, graphs, charts, and other visual aids
- animations and 3-D graphics
- sound recordings
- video clips
- brief definitions or grammatical notes

Teacher-Created WebTexts

You can develop WebTexts in ways ranging from simple to complex. Here we present three examples: one with simple glosses on the same page as the text, one with links to existing Web sites, and one developed using the programming language JavaScript. (To see the actual WebTexts, go to http://www.mlmcc.com/. Click on Technology, then WebTexts.)

“Granddaughter’s Sled” (DeSpain 1993; see screenshot, p. 50) demonstrates the simplest level of development of a WebText. Words in the story are glossed on the same Web page as targets of the links. This placement speeds access to the definitions; the student does not have to wait for new Web pages to load. Some of the definitions are linked to pictures. With an Internet connection, the students can even...
watch a QuickTime movie of the Iditarod dog sled race in Alaska to help them understand what sled means. The text also contains sound links inserted with Microsoft Word’s Comment feature: clicking on a word in the glossary list allows the user to hear a voice pronounce the word.

“Surrender Speech of Chief Joseph” (WETA 2001; see screen shot, right) illustrates extensive use of supporting material from existing Web sites, such as maps of the territory, photos of tribal leaders, and testimonies from people who knew Chief Joseph. Notice also that the vocabulary words are glossed in the left margin, to be viewed without leaving the main text.

For the balcony scene from Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet (see screen shot, below right), we used a glossing technique available via JavaScript, a programming language for Web pages. Clicking on a linked word causes a text box to pop up on the screen with a definition and, sometimes, a related picture. Here the reader has clicked on the word jests.

The Reading Machine
We are now working on an application of WebTexts for an online e-language teaching program called Chengo (see http://www.elanguage.cn/). In collaboration, the U.S. Department of Education is developing a program that supplements Advanced Placement Chinese courses in the United States.

To introduce vocabulary as well as cultural, background, and language information in the context of short texts related to each program episode, the English Chengo program uses the Reading Machine, a software engine developed for Chengo. The Reading Machine produces texts like WebTexts, but all supporting materials are included in the software, not drawn from the Web. After the user views the opening scene of an episode and works with the written script of the scene, the Reading Machine provides learners with options to study the text and its elements, and to apply the language they are learning. The short texts in the Reading Machine are related to a problem or quest that is set up in the opening scene of the episode and often give the learner information needed to accomplish the quest.
In Episode 1, “The Missing Student” (see screenshot below), a group is arriving at language camp. Tianming, one member of the group, is missing, and the others try to locate him. The text in the reading machine helps learners develop language they will need to visit locations and ask questions that will help them find Tianming. Color-coded links in the text help learners identify vocabulary: nouns are in red, verbs in blue, phrases in green. There are links to pictures of the characters; maps of New Zealand and Canada; pictures of a kitchen, a gym, and a pool; and grammatical information. The Chinese text at the right explains North American conventions for names.

By clicking on the buttons in the software screen, users can listen to the text, read it in chunks or as a whole, follow links to understand its elements, record themselves reading or speaking the text, and replay and self-evaluate their recordings. The Fallout button leads to an activity in which students replace words that have “fallen out” of the text. When learners feel comfortable with the language in the Reading Machine, they move on to other activities and exercises.

**Powerful, Simple, and Enjoyable**

WebTexts offer teachers and students and material writers ways to take advantage of the power and simplicity of HTML editors. With the help of pictures, sounds, and videos, you can give students the chance to enjoy reading while they utilize a variety of tools to work out meaning and build language skills. As Web authoring becomes simpler and more flexible, WebTexts will become an increasingly important resource for language learners.

**References**


Mary Lou McCloskey is director of teacher development and curriculum design for Educo, in the United States. Emily A. Thrush is professor of English at the University of Memphis, in the United States.
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Directory of Teacher Education Programs in TESOL in the United States and Canada, 2005-2007

Virginia Christopher, Editor

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)
Written in the form of personal journal entries, *Never Fade Away* is an intriguing exploration of the private world of ESL instructors and their students. In it, a frustrated college ESL writing instructor and a Vietnamese student share their thoughts and feelings on a variety of contemporary issues inside and outside the classroom.

The teacher struggles as he works within a system that often seems structured to the disadvantage of actual learning opportunities and to the detriment of international students. The student, a refugee from Vietnam, writes in a voice that any ESL teacher will recognize as that of a developing language learner. Her relationship with the instructor and her struggle to make sense of her surroundings and the university system feature in many of her entries.

Using this novel in a master’s in TESOL course provides an opportunity for students to engage in the discovery of essential content in the field from a viewpoint that differs significantly from that of the traditional textbooks and research articles typically used in teacher education programs. TESOL students can benefit from thoughtful discussion of several key concepts in the novel: how to become reflective practitioners, how to interact with individuals of diverse cultural backgrounds, how to work with school administrative policies, and how to focus on particular linguistic features of learner language.

Aixa Perez-Prado is an assistant professor in the TESOL program at Florida International University, in the United States.


Tangled Threads is a beautifully written novel about the Hmong migration out of Laos, through the refugee camps in Thailand, and finally to the United States. The book chronicles the moving personal experience of Mai, a young girl who struggles to bridge the gap between the traditional culture she knows and understands and the new culture that she finds exciting and confusing. In the camp, the refugees' eternal hope that their names will be called for the next group to leave contrasts with the daily struggle for health and survival.

Cousins have preceded Mai and her grandmother to the United States and help them settle into their new life when they finally arrive. However, she soon discovers that there are good and bad things everywhere. Her struggle to become American and still be respectful of Hmong traditions is a compelling story for students in secondary, university, and adult education programs.

Sheila Cockey recently retired from teaching high school Spanish in King George County, Virginia, in the United States.
Google launched a new search engine, Google Scholar, in November 2004 designed to focus more exclusively on scholarly publications. Updated in April 2005, it is still labeled a beta version and should be regarded as a work in progress.

A unique feature of Google Scholar is that it visits and indexes, or spiders, the content of articles and books not on the open Web. Specifically, these invisible resources include hard-copy books and articles accessible only through subscription to publishers' Web sites. Google receives access to such items through arrangements with publishers. Happily, Google Scholar provides the means to access these additional documents. For books, the Library Search feature asks your location and provides a list of the nearest libraries holding them. For subscriber service articles, Google Scholar promises at least an abstract. Then, if your library has subscriptions to publisher sites, you can often access the complete articles through your home library user ID and password. Finally, if other, non-password-protected versions of the document exist on the Web (e.g., draft versions), Google Scholar's Web Search feature can locate them.

Additionally, Google Scholar provides a citation count for each search result, and the Cited-By link lists all entries that make up that citation count. This feature is useful in three ways: it reveals related publications you might otherwise miss, shows whether the article is relevant to your research area, and indicates how other researchers are using the article.

To test Google Scholar, I searched for several topics on which research is limited. I found articles that I would not have known about otherwise. On the other hand, Google's definition of scholarly leaves something to be desired. Many items turned out to be syllabi, course documents, or Microsoft PowerPoint presentations that contained my search terms but little else of value.

Comparing Google Scholar to Google itself proved revealing. Since Google Scholar ranks entries by citation totals and conventional Google ranks according to the number of Web hits, search results were never identical. Items frequently appeared in both search engines but were ranked differently. Significantly, I often found relevant items through conventional Google that did not appear in Google Scholar. Using both search engines may be wise. My impression is that if you are looking for teaching applications rather than research reports, Google may yield better results than Google Scholar, but again, why not use both applications? The scope of Google Scholar's database and its citation features make it another valuable tool in your resource kit.

Cybersights


sound bites


The movie Crash begins and ends with the scene of an automobile accident, a fender-bender that serves as a metaphor for the crash/clash of cultures in the populous and sprawling city of Los Angeles. Featured in the narrative are European, Mexican, and African Americans—representing upper-, middle-, and working-class native Angelenos. Then there are the recent immigrants—from Iran, from Korea, from China—all leading a hardscrabble existence, all distrustful of each other and of the native ethnic groups, who distrust and often disdain them in return.

The tie that binds these citizens is law enforcement, the Los Angeles Police Department, which in real life has been tainted with race-based police brutality. In this respect, the film is a parable showing the violence and ethnic and class tensions apparent in most U.S. cities, and in Los Angeles in particular. But in the end, none of the characters is entirely bad at heart, and fortunately most are redeemed.

Crash is a fairly realistic portrait of urban Americans divided by racism and classism. This film should engender stimulating discussion in an EFL or—in particular—an ESL class.

George R. Bozzini is an associate professor emeritus of English and EFL at The George Washington University, in the United States.
Software Thumbnails


Do you wish you could send a message to everyone in your class, painlessly make handouts available to those who were absent, or set up a Web page without learning HTML? If so, Moodle might be your answer. It is the teacher’s Swiss army knife.

Moodle is a relative newcomer to the field of course management systems. Although free, it has more features than its big, for-fee cousins, such as WebCT and Blackboard. You will need Web server space somewhere in order to use it, but there are many ways around that problem.

Some of the “blades” of this virtual knife are the following:

Discussion and news forums: If fluency in writing is an important part of your course, here is one way to have students write something other than the traditional composition.

Reference documents: Rather than using a word processor, you can neatly format a document within Moodle with headlines, colored text and boxes, itemized lists, and other embellishments with simple point-and-click operations. You can paste in plain text and then quickly make it look like a professional HTML document. Even images can be included.

Student blogs or learning diaries: You can create one or more Journal modules that give all students their own private space for writing, with room for you to give individual feedback. The forthcoming blog module will allow students to share their postings with the rest of the class.

Tailored quizzes for your material: Moodle has an excellent module for quizzes and quizlike activities for a wide range of item types, such as multiple-choice, cloze, and reordering. You can also design activities with Hot Potatoes software (http://www.halfbakedsoftware.com/) and have Moodle keep track of the students’ scores. An excellent item analysis module allows you to see where students are having trouble, and, for serious testing applications, which items aren’t discriminating well.

Links to outside material: Setting up a page of links is as simple as pasting the URLs into a Moodle document. It automatically recognizes URLs as clickable entities.

Other great features include an assignment submission module, a feedback and evaluation function, detailed tracking of student accesses, a lesson module for stepwise presentation and testing of material, chat and survey modules, and a great teacher support network.

For information in greater depth, including screen shots and suggestions on how to get started, see “Moodle: A Virtual Learning Environment for the Rest of Us” (Robb 2004) or visit Moodle’s home page.

Reference


Thomas Robb teaches at Kyoto Sangyo University, in Japan, and is a past chair of TESOL’s Computer-Assisted Language Learning Interest Section.

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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 from a broad perspective. Program indicators in eight distinct areas can be used to review an existing program or to provide guidance in setting up a new ESL program.

President’s Message

TESOL’s Strategic Plan, Part One

In October, the TESOL Board of Directors passed a new, three-year Strategic Plan. This plan is a guideline for TESOL’s priorities from November 1, 2005, through October 31, 2008. It lists the major goals of the association. Under each goal is a series of objectives, and under each objective are a number of activities designed to meet the objectives.

The goals, objectives, and activities are reviewed at each Board of Directors meeting to ensure that they are being implemented by various entities within TESOL. If situations change, other goals, objectives, and activities can be added, and some may dropped if they are no longer relevant. In short, the Strategic Plan is a road map for TESOL, which will guide us in creating a stronger professional association.

The Board has identified six goals for TESOL: (1) policy promotion for the profession, (2) professional development, (3) research, (4) standards, (5) worldwide professional participation, and (6) organization sustainability and growth. Here I describe the first three goals briefly and discuss some of the objectives and activities for each. I will describe the next three in my March 2006 President’s Message.

Goal One: Policy Promotion for the Association

TESOL’s first goal is policy promotion for the association. The first objective within it is to increase TESOL’s professional influence outside of the association. TESOL needs to inform decision makers of the association’s positions on key educational policy issues. Sometimes TESOL can do this alone, and sometimes the association will need to collaborate with other organizations, agencies, and shareholders.

TESOL also needs to train members of the association to become effective advocates for the profession and create ways to promote TESOL as the preeminent professional association for English language teaching throughout the world. In order to accomplish this, TESOL needs to succeed at a second objective: identify, develop, and approve policies on professional issues. TESOL already has a rich history of issuing policy statements on a variety of issues of professional concern. The association needs to continue to do so by consulting with all members and by making sure policy pronouncements are rooted in current research findings.

Thirdly, TESOL needs to develop the role of English around the world. The association can promote English as a language of wider communication while continuing to respect the use of other languages in multilingual/plurilinguistic societies.

A fourth objective is to strengthen the status of English language teaching as a profession. The association can do this by building a sense of professional identity among teachers and by educating employers about the importance of having qualified English language teachers.
Goal Two: Professional Development

The second goal articulated in the Strategic Plan is professional development. The first objective within this goal is to make sure TESOL’s professional development programs, publications, and resources are relevant to the members of the association and the profession at large.

To accomplish this goal, the association needs to identify critical issues that affect the profession and prepare a professional development plan. The effectiveness of the products and services that TESOL provides must be evaluated, and, when necessary, they should be improved. TESOL needs to support and expand the sharing of knowledge through face-to-face and online learning, investigate the possibility of creating new accreditation options, and continue TESOL’s broad-based research project to assess the need and feasibility of creating a nondegree teaching certificate program. Lastly, but equally crucial, is to assess TESOL’s annual convention to see if it meets the association’s professional development goal.

The second objective for professional development is to revise and strengthen TESOL’s leadership programs. A professional organization cannot maintain its vitality without training new people to assume leadership positions. Therefore, the association must continue to develop courses that stress leadership development, expand the number of courses offered in its leadership strand, and evaluate the effectiveness of the leadership program. Furthermore, TESOL must help affiliates develop leadership programs.

Goal Three: Research

Research is the third goal of the Strategic Plan. As a professional association of educators, TESOL needs to promote the value of and increase research for teachers worldwide. One way to do this is to identify and promote existing research sources and clearinghouses. The association needs to evaluate and update TESOL’s research agenda as well as disseminate new research findings to members of TESOL and to other educators, policy makers, and the public. TESOL also plans to create a new practitioner-oriented journal based on current theory and research in the profession.

TESOL must continue to mentor new researchers to continue the association’s research objectives and explore ways to expand researchers’ participation in TESOL’s activities. As noted above, these are only three of the six goals that have been advanced in TESOL’s new Strategic Plan. I encourage you, as a member of the association, to think about these goals and help TESOL meet these goals in the next three years. TESOL needs your involvement to make these goals and objectives a reality. They will help you be a better professional.

As always, I wish you much success in your professional career and thank you for being a member of a vibrant association.

Elliot L. Judd
President, 2005–2006
The 40th Annual TESOL Convention to Be Held in Tampa, Florida, USA, March 15–18, 2006
The advance program was mailed in mid-November. Convention registration and hotel reservations began December 1. Visit http://www.tesol.org/ for updates and links to Laser Registration to register for the convention and with the Tampa Housing Bureau—Passkey to make hotel reservations. Do you have questions on registration or want to confirm your TESOL convention registration? This year TESOL has provided toll-free numbers for callers in the United States and Canada. Please call 1-866-999-3032 for information. The fax number is 866-614-5463. For convention attendees from outside North America, please direct your registration questions to 514-228-3074. Fax your registration forms to 514-228-3151. Laser Registration is located in Montréal, Canada.

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 and 2006 Symposia
Two symposia were held in 2005. The TESOL Symposium on Dual Language Education: Teaching and Learning Two Languages in the EFL Setting took place September 23 at Boğaziçi University, Istanbul, Turkey. The featured speakers were Cem Alptekin, Istanbul, Turkey; Jim Cummins, Ontario, Canada; and Barbara Seidlhofer, Vienna, Austria. Hüsnü Enginarlar, Ankara, Turkey, provided closing remarks.

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

The TESOL Symposium on Words Matter: The Importance of Vocabulary in English Language Teaching and Learning will take place March 27, 2006, at Dubai Men’s College, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. For more information, e-mail edprograms@tesol.org.
2006 TESOL Academies
TESOL will hold two academies in 2006, one in the United States and the other in Korea. The first 2006 academy will be held at Roosevelt University, in Chicago, Illinois, in the United States, June 23–24, 2006. This academy will feature six hands-on, ten-hour workshops. The TESOL International Summer Academy will be at the Sookmyung Women’s University, in Seoul, Korea. This academy will feature four hands-on, ten-hour workshops.

For more information about TESOL Academies, e-mail edprograms@tesol.org.

2006 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@dwc1.net for assistance. The deadline for receipt of all resolutions is February 12, 2006.

Board of Directors Approves Position Statements on No Child Left Behind Act, U.S. Visa Policy
At its meeting in October, the Board of Directors approved two new position statements. The first addresses assessment of English language learners in the United States under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, and the second focuses on U.S. visa policy for international students and scholars. Both statements are available at http://www.tesol.org/.

New Standing Committee on Research
At its June meeting, the TESOL Board of Directors voted unanimously to create a Standing Committee on Research. The new standing committee’s stated objective is “to monitor, evaluate, and encourage research initiatives within the association.” This vote proclaims that English language teaching (ELT) practices are best guided by valid research findings. Second, the vote announces that research is important to ELT professionals whether or not they engage in research. Third, by creating a standing committee, TESOL sends a clear message that public policy affecting ELT should be congruent with current research findings. To help policy makers evaluate and enact sound measures, ELT professionals must educate them on current research perspectives. Fourth, TESOL’s Strategic Plan has designated research as one of its six major goals. The creation of the standing committee embodies this goal in TESOL’s organizational structure and demonstrates its commitment to research as a guiding principle.

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
Now is a good time to take advantage of global memberships. Join TESOL before TESOL 2006 convention registration opens, so that you may register to attend at the reduced member rate. 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/.
Student Membership
Do you have students who would benefit from TESOL membership? Each year TESOL prepares membership packages especially for students, including a TESOL poster, a PowerPoint presentation about TESOL membership, and sample TESOL bookmarks to share with your students. E-mail sjenkins@tesol.org to request a packet.

With TESOL's upcoming annual convention in March, now is a good time to remind your students to join TESOL. Not only does TESOL offer student members a deeply discounted membership fee of only $30, but the student registration fee for the annual convention is also greatly reduced. TESOL is committed to making membership in TESOL affordable to students, so urge your students to join now using the materials TESOL recently sent to participating teacher education programs in the United States and Canada. If your school is not participating and would like to, please contact Sha'Dana Jenkins at sjenkins@tesol.org and ask to have materials shipped to you.

TESOL Awards and Grants
The generous contributions of TESOL members made it possible for TESOL to provide sixty awards and grants last year. You can support the Awards and Grants program when you register for TESOL's 40th Annual Convention and Exhibition, when renewing your

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 began in October 2005 and will 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 Díaz 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
Affiliates
Gabriela Klickova
University of Memphis
Memphis, Tennessee, USA
Jackie Moase-Burke
Oakland Schools
Waterford, Michigan, USA
Caucuses
Khadar Bashir-Ali
Ohio State University
Columbus, Ohio, 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
Higher Education Programs
Ann Johns
San Diego State University
San Diego, California, USA
Margi Wald
University of California, Berkeley
Berkeley, California, USA
Intensive English Programs and Bicultural Centers
Suzanne McLaughlin
Roosevelt University
Chicago, Illinois, USA
Annick Todd
Lane Community College
Eugene, Oregon, USA
Interest Sections
Lisa Harshbarger
U.S. Department of State
Dulles, Virginia, USA
Armeda Reitzel
Humboldt State University
Arcata, California, USA
Researchers
Gerald Berent
Rochester Institute of Technology
Rochester, New York, USA
Ester de Jong
University of Florida
Gainesville, Florida, USA

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
Advocacy
advocacy@tesol.org
Convention Services
conventions@tesol.org
Exhibits
exhibit@tesol.org
Education Programs
edprograms@tesol.org
Member Services
members@tesol.org
Affiliates
affiliates@tesol.org
Awards
awards@tesol.org
Career Services
careers@tesol.org
Caucuses
caucus@tesol.org
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
membership, or by buying a ticket at the Annual Awards and Grants Raffle (held during the annual convention). Or, if you’d like to make your U.S., Canada, and Mexico tax-deductible contribution today, visit http://www.tesol.org/ : Association: Help Support TESOL : Awards and Grants.

Job MarketPlace
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 all 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.

New Affiliates
TESOL welcomes the Asociación Nacional Universitaria de Profesores de Inglés (ANUPI- TESOL/Mexico) and the Philippine Association of Language Teaching (PALT) to the worldwide community of TESOL affiliates.

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

For information on how to become a sponsor, contact Jane Kaddouri at 703-518-2539 or jkaddouri@tesol.org.

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., Canada, and Mexico 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.

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.

Contact TESOL When You Move
TESOL wants you to receive your issues of Essential Teacher and TESOL Quarterly in a timely manner. To ensure uninterrupted delivery, please notify TESOL when you move. As a member, you can change your address online. Just log in with your member number, view your current profile, and edit your address changes. Or you may send a message to either info@tesol.org or members@tesol.org. If you send a message, please be sure to include your member number.

For information on how to become a sponsor, contact Jane Kaddouri at 703-518-2539 or jkaddouri@tesol.org.
If you currently receive issues at your institution, consider changing your address to receive your issues at home. This small adjustment may significantly improve arrival time.

**Access TESOL Quarterly through IngentaConnect**

Current TESOL Quarterly (TQ) subscribers can download articles from 2001 forward free from IngentaConnect (http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/tesol/tq/). Members may either create a user name and password with IngentaConnect, or they may access TQ through TESOL's Web site by logging in, then visiting the Membership: Member Benefits section and clicking on Member Subscribers: Access TESOL Quarterly Online. Members who choose to access TQ through TESOL's Web site do not need to register with Ingenta. Nonsubscribers may read TQ abstracts and tables of contents through IngentaConnect for free, and they may purchase articles. Current prices are US$25 for articles and US$15 for reviews. Users in the European Union must also pay tax. The entire run of TQ is also available on CD-ROM from http://virtualcopy.com/.

**TESOL Quarterly Forum**

To share ideas, comments, and questions about the articles in TESOL Quarterly's September special topic issue on pronunciation, visit the TQ Forum Online (http://communities.tesol.org/~tq/). The editor has posted the following topics to generate discussion: (1) diverse accents in the language classroom, (2) accent and identity, and (3) teacher negotiation of tensions between the professional and the personal. Visitors are encouraged, however, to raise questions or share experiences that are not directly related to these topics.

If you are already registered with any TESOL-hosted bulletin board, you can use your existing username and password to access the TQ Forum Online, or you can register on the Forum bulletin board. When you visit the Forum, you can join the discussion by posting or answering a question or sharing your views, or you can just listen in as the TQ editor, authors, and readers respond to and develop ideas from TESOL's flagship scholarly journal.

**Graduate Student Forum**

The Graduate Student Forum is a student-run miniconference. The forum provides a venue at the TESOL convention that allows MA-level students to share the results of their research, their teaching ideas and experiences, and the materials they have developed. They can also meet and network with fellow graduate students (and faculty) at other universities. This forum allows graduate students to formally participate in the TESOL convention without having to meet the early deadlines for submitting proposals or compete with experienced professionals for time on the convention program. For more information, please visit http://www.tesol.org/.

**Doctoral Forum**

The Doctoral Forum (formerly the PhD Forum) will be held in Tampa as part of the 40th Annual TESOL Convention. TESOL invites doctoral students to participate in this informative event. The Forum is an informal meeting that brings together doctoral students and experienced ESOL professionals who are interested in similar research topics and research approaches. The forum enables doctoral students to get feedback about current issues pertaining to their dissertation research from their peers as well as from the seasoned ESOL professionals (mentors). It is also an opportunity for doctoral students to network with one another. While this may sound formal, the event is actually a relaxed, informal gathering where the students can talk casually about their research. For more information, please visit http://www.tesol.org/.

**TESOL Sponsorship Opportunities**

In addition to Silver, Gold, and Platinum sponsorship packages, TESOL is offering a Platinum Plus package. To learn more about how your sponsorship can earn fabulous rewards at the 40th Annual Convention in Tampa, Florida—and year round—visit http://www.tesol.org/ : Association : Help Support TESOL : Sponsorship or contact Jane Kaddouri at jkaddouri@tesol.org.
Plenary Speakers at TESOL 2006

March 16 - 18, 2006
The Tampa Convention Center
Tampa, Florida USA

Please Place file speakersadreduced.pdf here.

**Elliot L. Judd**
University of Illinois
Chicago, Illinois, USA
Turning 40: A Midlife Crisis for the Profession?
Friday, March 17, 11:30 am–12:30 pm

**Liz Murray**
From Homeless to Harvard
Wednesday, March 15, 11:30 am–12:30 pm

**Keith Folse**
University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida, USA
Almost Everything I Know About Teaching I Learned From My Own Teachers
Friday, March 17, 2–2:45 pm

**Jim Key**
Hitting the Mark: The Quest for Excellence
Thursday, March 16, 11:30 am–12:30 pm

**Barry O’Sullivan**
Roehampton University
London, England
Testing Times: Daring to Lead or Failing to Follow?
Thursday, March 16, 2–2:45 pm

**Michael McCarthy**
University of Nottingham
Nottingham, England
Spoken Fluency in Theory and in Practice
Saturday, March 18, 11:30 am–12:30 pm
When a student succeeds, everyone succeeds. For ESL students, the possibilities are endless when they learn to speak, read, write and understand English. Rosetta Stone® language-learning software helps make this possible every day in US schools.

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