Professional Development Is Our R&D
by Andy Curtis

M-Time Teachers Meet P-Time Students
by Roger Grainger

The Three-Ring Classroom
by Heather Linville

English Club
Reviewed by Paula Emmert

The Wonderful World of Wiki
by Carol Johnson
New resources for ELL instruction

Balanced Literacy for English Language Learners, K–2
Linda Chen and Eugenia Mora-Flores

Balanced Literacy for English Language Learners, K–2, is thoroughly practical, grounded in the latest research and theory, applicable in all English-based classrooms, and full of ideas for every teacher. With emphases on scaffolding learning across the day and the use of specific, familiar instructional strategies, it offers best-practice ideas for helping little children take big steps into a new language.
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How to Reach Goals and Meet Standards, K–8
Denise M. Rea and Sandra P. Mercuri

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Lore Carrera-Carrillo and Annette Rickert Smith

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0-325-00992-9 / 2006 / 120pp / $15.00
The Wonderful World of Wiki

Through wikis, students can edit, revise, and enjoy collaborative writing without even realizing it, says Carol Johnson.

Suddenly, the Spotlight's on Me

Wei-Liang Lin learned to overcome the jitters that accompanied an assignment as a nonnative-English-speaking teacher of a diverse class of adults in the United States.

Shifting Classroom Expectations

How can ESOL teachers navigate the different expectations they encounter in various classrooms and contexts? Sarah Lipinoga offers some strategies for adjusting and adapting.

Grammatically Speaking

Richard Firsten discusses pat phrases with how and what, unpacks the verb head, and challenges you with another Brain Teaser.
We continue to make improvements to *Essential Teacher*. I’d like to remind you about ET’s broadened Portal section, which now publishes articles based on general classroom practice and research. And even more changes are happening. The President’s Message has moved to a more visible position at the front of the magazine. In that regard, I invite you to read about the significance of TESOL electing its first nonnative-English-speaking president in its forty-year history (see Ke Xu’s column in this issue). From 2007, the reviews section of *ET*, Home & Other Pages, will become R&R—References & Resources—with four slightly longer reviews. In addition to these changes, three new editors will join the *ET* team in 2007: Vanessa Caceres (References & Resources), Eileen Ariza (Out of the Box), and Michael Fields (Compleat Links).

This year-end issue covers the theme of change in ESOL teaching quite well. Articles include the topics of teachers adjusting to technologies, overcoming obstacles, and listening to students to enhance classroom experiences.

- **Communities of Practice**: Judie Haynes (Circle Time) tells why teachers need to learn “digital as a second language.” Jim Hughes (Home Room) and his colleagues take matters (and paintbrushes) into their own hands and perform illegal maintenance work at his school. Debbie Zacarian (The Road Taken) observes students writing and acting in their own play about emergency situations. Ke Xu (Multilingual Momentum) interviews several nonnative-English-speaking teachers to find out the significance they see in TESOL having its first nonnative-English-speaking president. Andy Curtis (In-Service) explains why institutions should view teacher development as a good investment. Dorothy Zemach (From A to Z) continues her exploration into causes and solutions for teacher burnout in the field of TESOL.
Out of the Box: Maria R. Coady explains the repercussions of the lack of bilingualism in Florida schools. Ulla Connor has the courage to come forward and tell you about a common fear she suffers from: the fear of making conference presentations. When teachers raised in European-based Western cultures meet students from non-Western cultures, various misunderstandings related to time are bound to occur, according to Roger Grainger. Kate Mastruserio Reynolds and Deb Pattee have found that Discovery Boxes can be an engaging way to bring student cultures into the language classroom and highlight them in lessons.

Portal: Vera Lúcia Menezes de Oliveira e Paiva’s students have done projects combining images, written text, and sound in order to tell others something about who they are. Through an unusual Valentine’s Day project, Cristina Costa takes the plunge into podcasting with students in the Portuguese navy. Rita Zeinstejer connects students in Argentina with teenagers from various countries, who find that they have much in common. Heather Linville tackles the difficult teaching dilemma of heterogeneous (varied) proficiency levels in a language class.

Home and Other Pages: Mary Peacock reviews a reference book that makes a valuable contribution to the theoretical underpinnings of distance education. Judy Winn-Bell discovers a novel that ESOL students and their teachers will enjoy. Paula Emmert takes you on a tour of EnglishClub.com’s lesson plans, leveled jokes, interactive games, quizzes, and other features. Elena Zakharova invites you to watch the engaging story of how a young, football-crazed Indian girl living in England copes with her traditional Sikh parents whilst dreaming of bending it like Beckham. Finally, Elizabeth Hanson-Smith tells you about a free Web site with valuable tools to help learners improve their writing and more.

Compleat Links: Carol Johnson shows you the ease of using wikis to revitalize the writing process. Wei-Liang Lin takes you through her first nervous days in the ESL classroom as a new nonnative-English-speaking teacher. And Sarah Lipinoga demonstrates how differing learning environments can change classroom expectations. Richard Firsten guides you in the use of how and what, considers the use of head as a verb and an adjective, and presents another Brain Teaser.

Best wishes for the New Year to you all. Make 2007 the year you send a manuscript to ET.
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Dorothy Zemach
Materials Writer
Eugene, OR, USA

Staff Editor
Ellen Garshick
Alexandria, VA, USA

Advertising
Cindy Flynn
Alexandria, VA, USA
703-518-2524
cflynn@tesol.org

Printing
United Litho, Inc.
Ashburn, VA, USA
One of the goals I mentioned in the June 2006 issue of *Essential Teacher* was my commitment to expand TESOL's global presence. In July and August, as I traveled through Asia, I had many opportunities to hear about the rewards as well as the challenges that EFL practitioners are experiencing throughout the continent. I want to share my story with you.

**South Korea**

The primary highlight in South Korea was the TESOL Academy, organized with local support from the affiliate, KOTESOL, and Sookmyung Women’s University.

I was given the honor of welcoming the Academy attendees and introducing the speakers. Of course, I took this opportunity to promote TESOL and the TESOL symposium in China (November 10, 2006, at Shantou University). Four keynote speakers gave short presentations in the morning followed by four intensive breakout sessions (five hours each) with about forty participants in each session. The four breakout sessions continued for another five hours the next day. The TESOL Academy ended on a very positive note when all the leaders reconvened for a fifty-minute panel discussion.

TESOL’s executive director, Chuck Amorosino, and I hosted dinner for KOTESOL leaders and KATE representatives. In addition to good company, we felt the gratitude from our local colleagues that TESOL had selected South Korea as a site for an academy. They felt empowered, they praised TESOL for reaching out, and they expressed interest in hosting future TESOL events.

(Continued on p. 55)
The purchase of wireless Apple iBook laptop computers for the ESL classroom has transformed the way I teach. I have seen remarkable progress in students’ writing and motivation to learn. All of the K–6 students in my school have their own electronic document folders on the school server; they can access the folders with a password from any networked computer in the school. When students write in my class, I can open the documents in their folders and make comments in a different color to indicate a need for revisions. This is a good way for me to keep track of and edit student writing.

When I first started to use a computer about seventeen years ago, I would write a text out in longhand and later type it and save it on my computer. It took a while before I felt comfortable writing directly in a word-processing program. In contrast, I’ve found that most young people prefer writing directly on the computer. This has a huge impact on writing because students are much more disposed to edit and rewrite. They are also more willing to begin by putting their ideas in a graphic organizer and developing their compositions from there. As a result, the length and depth of their written work has greatly increased, and they are more willing to expand on their ideas. Most importantly, they have become much more enthusiastic about writing, and projects that once took weeks are now completed in a few days.

According to Prensky (2001), today’s students are digital natives. By this he means that they have grown up in an environment that has always included computers, the Internet, cellular phones, digital cameras, and MP3 players. We, the teachers of these digital natives, are what Prensky calls digital immigrants. We speak “digital” as a second language (DSL). We grew up in a drastically different text-based environment, and even if we have tried to keep up with current technology, we speak this language with an accent.
Prensky contends that the U.S. educational system was not designed to teach today’s students.

One of the realities of education that Prensky doesn’t take into account, however, is the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and the standardized tests students attending U.S. schools must take in order to show adequate yearly progress (AYP). English language learners, even those who have exited from ESL programs, are experiencing great difficulty with the writing section of these tests, in particular. How can you prepare them for standardized testing and, at the same time, keep them engaged in and excited about learning?

In “Whose Digital Literacy Is It, Anyway?” (Essential Teacher, June 2006), Suzanne Blum Malley described how technology influenced her teaching at the university level. Technology has had an enormous influence on my teaching as well. I feel that elementary-age students need to be encouraged to do research, take notes, and write on computers. This keeps them engaged and teaches them the skills they need to succeed on standardized tests. As an example, let me explain a project that my fourth-grade intermediate-level learners are currently working on.

In response to a fictional story we read, I asked the students to describe a place where they enjoyed spending time. They first arranged their ideas on a graphic organizer using Inspiration Software’s Kidspiration (see http://www.inspiration.com/). They completed this organizer directly on the computer. One of the best writers, Erin, wrote the first organizer shown above.

From this outline, I asked Erin to expand the information under “Have fun with my family.” Her resulting organizer is the second one shown above.

Next, I asked Erin to write about the badminton game. Here is what she wrote:

The last time I went to the park, I played badminton with my family. We divide into two teams and play against each other. I practice badminton with my dad for a whole week so I thought I could beat my cousins. Unfortunately, I was wrong. My cousins are much better than me!

You can see how Erin fleshed out one part of her organizer so that it became a paragraph of her completed essay. She repeated this technique with each part of her organizer.

With fifth-grade and sixth-grade groups, I use the software Inspiration. With the latest version (8.0), students can research information for a report or other writing assignment and organize it on a template directly on their laptops. They can spell-check their work, use a thesaurus or dictionary, change the organizer into an outline, and export that outline to their word-processing program. These outlines become their frame for writing.

Let’s face it: students do not learn in the same way they did ten years ago. We teachers can blame technology, or we can use it to our advantage. We can no longer, however, teach in the same way. Even though digital is our second language, we can use technology to motivate and engage digital-native students. As teachers, we become collaborators in the educational process by facilitating and encouraging students to take charge of their own learning.

References

Built in 1957, the main structure had thirteen classrooms. Twelve of them were off a long hall, six on each side. Over the years, portables and a pod (a circular building without interior walls but partitioned into classrooms) had been added, but maintenance—not to mention beautification—was never a district priority. Our low-income, culturally and linguistically diverse families hadn’t much clout.

Todd’s first effort at upgrading was to wire the classrooms to accommodate a not-so-recent invention—the telephone. He begged the help of an electrical technician, and several of us teachers lent our support, which did not consist of much, if any, knowledge. One surprise was that by stringing and tacking wire along the crawl space above the hall, we acquired a feeling for the school’s innards. It was a peculiar way to assume ownership, but from that time forward the school seemed more ours.

Next, we hoped to extend ownership to the students, their families, and the neighbors. With their labor and expertise, we planted a redwood grove and a vegetable garden. Over several Saturdays, we weeded the cracked blacktop, replaced bent basketball hoops and their torn or missing nets, picked up litter from the playground (cautioning against touching used needles and condoms), and shoveled dirt into the burrows of gophers and snakes to make a safer place for softball and soccer. One teacher inspired her class to paint on an outside wall a mural about living harmoniously with nature and with each other.

There were limits, even restrictions, on what we could do. Todd pestered maintenance workers until they repainted the faded lines for blacktop games such as foursquare and cut the field grass. They also repaired the roofs and painted the exterior. We were pleased that the painters spared the mural but were disappointed by the
institutional colors of the district palette—gray-blue, gray-yellow, gray-green, and file-folder beige.

The interior, however, went untouched, remaining dismal with its dim lighting and soiled, nondescript walls. Tired of waiting, some of us teachers approached Edith, who had succeeded Todd as principal.

“Just don’t tell me what you’re doing,” she said.

“But we already did,” said Lucinda, a teacher.

“You know what you asked to do isn’t permitted, so you must not have asked. Besides, I’ve forgotten why you came in. As far as I’m concerned, you aren’t here.”

The six of us silently slipped out her office door.

“Did she say we could?” asked Kathy.

“She won’t stop us,” Rhonda replied.

Glenn joined us. A teacher, he was also an expert on contracts and regulations.

“What’s the meeting about?” he asked.

“Can you keep a secret?” asked Ruth.

“It doesn’t have to be kept secret,” I said, “except from Edith, who already knows.”

“We’re going to paint the hall,” said Kathy.

Glenn shook his head. “The certified employees’ union won’t allow it.”

“Nobody's painted those walls in twenty years!” cried Kamilah.

“It’s probably more like forty-odd. But when maintenance gets wind of what you’ve done, their painters will whitewash it. It happened at Truman when teachers, parents, and kids painted the football stands.”

“You're kidding,” I said.

“At least the walls would be clean,” reasoned Kathy.

The following Saturday we fumbled over turning off the alarm while managing not to alert the police. We couldn’t involve the school community in this operation because it was sort of illegal. (We didn’t dwell on the ethics of violating our sister union’s rules.) That whole day and Sunday we cleaned the walls, pulled out nails and staples, and patched holes. Sunday afternoon we called a meeting.

“What colors?” asked Margaret, who had joined our crew. We now numbered about a third of the teachers. “Calm and subtle, or bright and bold?”

“Some teachers won’t like flamboyant,” said Ruth. “Pastels are safer.”

“But wouldn’t the kids and parents love dark, rich colors?” declared Lucinda.

“If we’re making trouble,” remarked Kamilah, “let’s make it loud.”

We raised money through the energies of Kathy’s eighty-year-old mother, Helen, who was good at shaking down local businesses. She took the lead in cajoling a paint company into giving us discounts. Also, she proved to have a steady brush hand. The next weekend, we painted the walls alternately Happy Holidays (glaring yellow), Orange Juice (sparkling orange), Eccentric (sunny chartreuse), and Awesome Blossom (lurid pink). We used deep colors for trim: kelly green, crimson red, navy blue, and royal purple. Some of us ventured into our own classrooms, Rhonda painting her walls purple.

“Outrageous!” exclaimed Edith on Monday morning, clapping her hands with glee.

Some teachers were grateful that they taught in portables or the pod. Most, though, liked the colors once they got over the shock.

A parent observed that we certainly had livened the place up. Students ran their fingers over the walls as if they had never seen them before. “Teachers did this,” they kept muttering, awestruck, either by the wild colors or by our having had the nerve to choose them. We teacher-painters had, indeed, increased our sense of power by having brightened the surroundings. We’d claimed the interior space.

The school’s environment—structures, grounds, and spirit—affect student motivation and learning, not to mention teacher morale. A new school building might have been better. But even one like ours, its ceilings falling and its foundations imperiled by termites, could be nearly as good if maintained by the beautifying touch of those who cared about it.

“How can you walk down this hall and not have a sense of well-being?” exclaimed Kathy.

It wasn’t long before the chief of maintenance stopped in.

“He appreciated our initiative,” Edith later told us, “because his department is way behind schedule. Oh, and about the colors,” she added, laughing. “He asked me for their names.”
A colleague and I had been asked to be in the audience for performances of Emergency 911. The performance project was part of a Beginning Speakers of English course. The students in this seventh-grade class had recently arrived from their respective countries and were at the early stages of learning English. Their teacher, Mrs. Ortiz, separated the students into three teams and asked each to create and perform a play about a medical emergency. To complete this task, she provided them with a range of activities about medical emergency situations and contexts. She also furnished the students with a large picture book entitled How Your Body Works (1997) and with bilingual picture dictionaries that included detailed illustrations of hospital settings and doctor’s offices. In addition, she encouraged her students to watch medical television shows. These activities supported her students in acquiring the knowledge and vocabulary that they needed to write and perform their plays.

For two weeks, each team wrote a fairly elaborate story line and practiced the scenes that they created for their Emergency 911 play. During this time, Mrs. Ortiz brought the students to the school nurse to discuss their ideas. While there, the students borrowed various items to use during their performances. In addition, some students brought items from home—including the telephone used by Lily’s team. By the time the students performed their plays, they had assembled a cache of props including a stethoscope, a white lab jacket, and a wheelchair to depict the setting of their play. These hands-on materials and activities provided authentic and descriptive tools for the students to display their knowledge.

When Lily’s team decided to write a play about a broken leg, Mrs. Ortiz furnished the students with the knee brace, the X-ray photograph, and the crutches that she had used when she injured her knee. It took the students little time to learn the words and context for these
items and the additional vocabulary that they needed to perform the scenes from their play. The three teams delighted in their practice sessions and the revision process that they engaged in to display their expanding understanding of the story lines.

Lily’s team’s play consisted of four scenes. In the first, Lily falls, hurts her leg, and screams out in pain. Her mother arrives home, observes Lily falling, grabs the telephone, and asks Lily to call for help. In the second scene, Lily dials 911 and speaks with an emergency dispatcher about her injury. In the third scene, an ambulance driver and an emergency medical technician come to Lily’s house to assess her broken leg. They arrive with a wheelchair and roll Lily to the hospital.

The final scene takes place in the hospital, where Lily and her mother meet with a doctor and an X-ray technician. During this scene, two desks are pushed together to form a makeshift stretcher, and, with Lily lying on the stretcher, the doctor asks her, “Where does your leg hurt?” Lily responds in a crying voice, “My knee hurts.” “We must take an X-ray,” responds the doctor. After the X-ray technician takes a film of Lily’s leg, the doctor examines the X-ray and announces, “You have broken your leg. We will put it in a brace, and you will get better.” At the end of the play, Lily is given a leg brace and crutches, and she hobbles off the stage.

While the students did not utter their lines perfectly, with many giggling while performing, and the wheelchair bashed into the wall because the students were overexcited when wheeling Lily out of her home, their display of spoken English was impressive. Most importantly, their acquisition of new and meaningful language was powerful.

After the plays, I spoke with the students and Mrs. Ortiz about the project. The students commented that they enjoyed writing and performing a play of their own design. They also stated that they loved creating the set design, using the props that they had procured, and acting in character. An Israeli student told me that, while her country has an emergency telephone number, it is not 911. She said that the project helped her learn about the U.S. emergency telephone system and how to use it.

When I spoke to Mrs. Ortiz about the purpose of the project, she stressed the importance of engaging students in something meaningful and responsive. She told me that she had created the project to help her students learn how to communicate an emergency situation on the telephone and how to be responsible citizens in the event that they witness (or have) a medical emergency. She has found that student-created and student-performed plays provide beginning-level speakers of English with multiple opportunities to practice and use a new language, collaboratively build community, and have fun in the learning process.

Reference

Multilingualual Momentum

What Does It Mean to Have a Nonnative-English-Speaking TESOL President?

by Ke Xu

Last year, TESOL elected its first nonnative-English-speaking president. What does this election mean to the English language teaching (ELT) profession?

To answer this question, I interviewed Jun Liu, TESOL president, 2006–07; George Braine, founding chair of TESOL’s Nonnative English Speakers in TESOL (NNEST) Caucus; Lía D. Kamhi-Stein, TESOL board member and cofounder of the caucus; and Karen Newman, current chair of the caucus.

Ke Xu (KX): As TESOL’s first nonnative-English-speaking president, how do you perceive the trend toward the development of teaching English as an international language? How can TESOL best facilitate this trend?

Jun Liu (JL): There is a growing consensus among researchers on the importance of ELT professionals’ awareness of language diversity and varieties. Since the majority of English language teachers are nonnative speakers, it is not a matter of how many varieties of English teachers should teach. It is a matter of being aware of the varieties that will be crucial in facilitating intercultural communication and understanding. TESOL would like to encourage research projects on world Englishes with regard to nonnative expert corpuses in different regions. TESOL is developing a resource center to give more benefits to members, especially those unable to attend conventions.

KX: Is globalization part of TESOL’s strategic plan? If so, how well has it been implemented?

JL: TESOL is making efforts toward globalization. One of its strategic goals is to increase worldwide professional participation. Three objectives have been created to meet this goal. The first is to increase collaboration between TESOL and other associations, such as the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language and the Asian Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language. We have been seeking international partnerships through regional conferences and symposia, too. We have created links between organizational Web sites and encouraged collaboration among affiliates.

TESOL needs the speakers of numerous varieties of English to come together as equals to work to diversify and strengthen the association and the field.
The second goal is to conduct research toward establishing profiles of English language instructors. We have created e-instruments to collect data on teachers through local affiliates and initiated research on responses to ELT in diverse contexts, including resource-challenged environments.

The third goal is to encourage professional participation in local organizations and TESOL affiliates. By working with teacher training programs outside the United States, TESOL has increased the number of affiliates in underrepresented areas, such as Chile and Mexico.

KX: What have you done, and what do you hope to do as president, to empower TESOL’s global membership?

JL: I fully support the global initiatives spelled out in TESOL’s strategic plan and expect that all the action items under each objective will be implemented. To ensure that, I have formed a Standing Committee on Global Professional Issues. Members of this committee are diverse geographically, ethnically, and linguistically. We will issue more position papers pertinent to TESOL members outside the United States.

We also hope to regularize the process of hosting two to three TESOL symposia outside the United States every year. I will continue my efforts to reach out to local communities, to listen to their voices, and to make them feel that TESOL welcomes their participation and leadership.

KX: As founders of the NNEST Caucus, what do you think is the significance of having a nonnative speaker of English as TESOL’s president?

GB: Speaking presidents, although it did have forty years, TESOL had only native- and many are nonnative speakers. For 14,000 members from 142 countries, George Braine (GB): TESOL has about 14,000 members from 142 countries, and many are nonnative speakers. For forty years, TESOL had only native-speaking presidents, although it did have nonnative-speaking directors. So a nonnative-speaking leader was a long-felt need. I am especially pleased because Jun Liu was a chair of the NNEST Caucus and has been an active member since its inception.

Lia D. Kamhi-Stein (LK): I think that having a nonnative-English-speaking professional as president reflects several things about TESOL. First, Jun represents a growing number of TESOL members who have learned English in foreign and second language settings. Second, his election speaks very highly of TESOL since it shows that the association embraces change. Jun’s election brings a different, fresh point of view to the association leadership.

KX: What do you perceive as the latest trend in the development of teaching English as an international language?

GB: About 80 percent of the English speakers in the world are nonnative speakers. They will have a great impact on the English language. The so-called center countries (e.g., the United Kingdom and the United States) will no longer be able to set the trends. Native speakers need to recognize this and accept nonnative speakers also as role models in ELT. The emergence of China as an ELT powerhouse is the most significant event in this respect. China has over 200 million learners of English and more than a million English teachers. They will create a huge impact on ELT.

Karen Newman (KN): EFL and ESL educators should view each other as part of a team and draw from each other’s strengths to make programs as well rounded as possible. More and more ELT professionals are aware that the struggle for equity and justice in the profession is everyone’s struggle, whether the teacher is a native or a nonnative speaker.

KX: When and why did you start the NNEST movement?

LK: The idea came out of a colloquium in 1996. George, Jun, and I collected signatures after the colloquium to propose that the TESOL Board establish the caucus. The proposal was supported by then-TESOL President Kathi Bailey and officially approved later.

GB: It was an attempt to have nonnative speakers’ voices heard in TESOL. In all TESOL research up to that time, nonnative speakers were only anonymous subjects. Also, there was a lot of discrimination in the job market.

KX: What are your expectations of TESOL’s new president and of future presidents?

GB: Jun’s election itself is a major turning point. To start, I hope TESOL will take the convention to other continents and lower its fees.

LK: Jun’s background as a former EFL teacher and teacher educator has great implications. I am confident that his global initiatives will make TESOL visible in places where it did not have much of a presence in the past.

TESOL is reaching out to nonnative-English-speaking teachers more than ever before. There is an awareness today of the shift in power relations that is occurring in the field. Jun Liu’s election is a recognition of this change. TESOL’s leadership and general membership realize that regional and local varieties of English are legitimate. English is an international language, and TESOL needs the speakers of numerous varieties to come together as equals to work to diversify and strengthen the association and the field as a whole.
In-Service

Professional Development Is Our R&D
by Andy Curtis

I’d like to conclude this volume year’s series on professional development with a question: “Why bother with professional development?” (Bailey, Curtis, and Nunan 2001, 1).

One of the replies I’ve received when I have asked this question has been “higher income.” An ET reader stopped me at the TESOL convention last March and asked if money was a good enough reason to engage in professional development. “It depends,” I replied. “How much?” In my experience, if students are learning English to be able to increase their earning potential, I am all for it as long as this fact is keeping them motivated and engaged. For me, the same goes for doing professional development activities to increase earning potential.

This may not be a popular sentiment, as nobody is in the field of TESOL for the money (see Dorothy Zemach’s From A to Z column in this issue), and few people are in education to get rich. But in June, when I presented fifteen professional development workshops to English language teaching professionals in three different cities in Brazil, one of the most striking recurring themes was money. Specifically, the issue was how staff at Brazilian binational centers could persuade their managers that it was worth spending money on teacher professional development, especially during times when enrolment may be falling. Consequently, during the four-day intensive series of eleven workshops, I realized this key fact: TPD is our R&D, that is, teacher professional development is to language teaching organizations what research and development (R&D) is to other product-based organizations. (See http://www.andycurtis.org/ for handouts and slides from the Brazilian workshops.)

During my three years as executive director of the School of English at Queen’s University in Ontario, Canada, I studied how successful international companies functioned and dysfunctioned. In most
companies, when business slowed down, the axe fell first on R&D, but one of the features of long-term successful companies was that they maintained their investment in R&D during the difficult times, and some even increased their R&D budget. Consequently, when the economic climate improved, those companies that sustained their commitment to R&D were among the few that were well positioned in an expanding market.

But what is R&D? According to Harvey (2006), it refers to the “development of new products and services by a company in order to obtain a competitive advantage.” Although we as TESOL professionals do not develop new products in the traditional sense, we often work with new materials to help students develop competence with a new language, and the TESOL association itself could not exist without the members who serve on its committees, task forces, editorial boards, and other entities. So, in relation to Harvey’s definition, products and services are an inherent part of what we do as TESOL professionals. Also, the competitive advantage referred to by Harvey does apply to some students, for whom knowing English gives them such an advantage in the global marketplace.

Some years ago, the then-executive vice president and chief operating officer of Microsoft explained, “We invest for the long haul. The research budget, the R&D budget, is a large one at this juncture” (Herbold, 1998, 8). Whatever one feels about Bill Gates and his techno-empire, the growth of his organization has been unprecedented, and one of the reasons for this is its long-term commitment to R&D.

However, awareness of the importance of R&D is not new. Although in The Heavens and the Earth: A Political History of the Space Age, McDougall (1997) is extremely critical of the U.S. government’s emphasis on R&D in the 1960s, even he cites “one study [that] concluded that two thirds of all economic growth from the Crash of 1929 to Sputnik was traceable to new technology; the average return on R and D spending was 100 per cent” (p. 437; italics added). These two examples (and there are many others) show that R&D can be essential to securing the long-term existence and growth of an organization. They also show that R&D applies to the work of TESOL professionals and that professional development is our R&D.

R&D is no longer only important in the commercial world but is also essential in any learning organization. The problem for some language school managers, however, is how to calculate the return on their investment. During the workshops in Brazil, the participants and I considered this problem and realized that one very effective and highly efficient way of distinguishing one language teaching organization from another is to look at whether it has a teacher professional development program.

When I am helping newly qualified English language teachers prepare for their first employment interviews, I always advise them to respond to the interviewers’ question “Do you have any questions for us?” with the reply, “Could you please tell me about your organization’s teacher professional development program?” If the organization does not have one or the interviewer does not understand the question, I usually advise the applicants to think very carefully about whether or not they really want to work for such an organization. Although many schools do not have a professional development program, it is worth trying to find one that does—if the applicants plan to make teaching English a profession or a career rather than just something to do until they find a “real” job.

It is probably generally true that language teaching organizations with professional development programs often hire more qualified and more experienced teachers and, one hopes, pay them more. In so doing, such organizations may then need to charge higher tuition fees. But there is likely to be an excellent return on this investment for the student, the teacher, the school, and the entire TESOL profession. So the next time your supervisor, coordinator, or manager asks you, “Why do you want us to support your professional development?” you can reply, “Because without it, this school may not continue to exist.”

References


If I had a dollar for every teacher I've heard make that remark, I could buy private health insurance for three of them. Emily caught me at the wrong (or right?) time, and I questioned her attitude. Did she believe that she would be of value to anyone once she started working? Did she think her job was important? How much did she think she ought to be paid when she graduated? How about in ten years? Should she be paid less if she enjoyed her career? More if she didn't enjoy it? Should she be earning as much as her fiancé, a computer engineer? Should he also have a low salary, given that he enjoyed his profession?

In my September column, I discussed how the nature of teaching can lead to burnout: its demands are rigorous, and many who choose the profession are prone to overwork and self-sacrifice. However, another leading cause of burnout is poor working conditions, such as low salaries, lack of health insurance and retirement benefits, no sick leave, and temporary contracts.

Emily asked me what a typical salary for an ESL teacher was. I would happily have told her if I'd known. Most positions in the United States advertise salaries that are “commensurate with experience” or “competitive.” Americans don't typically talk about salaries. It's rude to ask people what they make, and strange to tell. So we teachers take whatever's offered because we don't know if it's good or bad, and we've never thought about what we're worth. I can easily count more than ten experienced, competent ESL teachers in my circle of acquaintances, working in U.S. institutions of higher learning, who earn less than $30,000 a year.

At least my friend who makes $22,300 has health insurance, which is not the case for many ESOL teachers in the United States. Some institutions can deny coverage to employees whose contracts are less than a year long or specify less than forty hours of work a week. After I earned my MA, I taught for four years at a university, twenty contact hours per week, on consecutive ten-week contracts, with no benefits. I was young and felt lucky. But that's not...
good enough in a country with no national health insurance. My worst health problem was a broken nose that I had to let heal on its own. A colleague was not so lucky—she died, at age forty-seven, after fifteen years of full-time teaching, of complications from the diabetes she couldn't afford to treat.

ESL programs are the only ones I know that require sick teachers to find substitutes for their own classes. When a business professor is sick, the department secretary hangs a note on his classroom door canceling the class. Yet ESL faculty at the same U.S. institutions must telephone colleagues to teach for them. Some programs even require teachers to pay their own substitutes in cash. No wonder some ESL teachers prefer to teach even when ill.

While most U.S. university professors teach a full course load of anywhere from eight to fifteen weekly contact hours, ESL teachers are called part-time if they teach twenty-five hours a week. In order to earn enough money, they teach “part-time” at several institutions, no benefits included. And many university labor unions don’t represent part-time faculty, so it’s hard to legally address the issue.

While these problems are pervasive and serious, they’re also problems that can be solved. Here are some recommendations.

*Share and research information about salaries.* Talk to teachers of other subjects, and ask what they get paid (or look it up—salaries of state employees, including university faculty, are public record).

*Talk to administrators about salaries and benefits.* A colleague e-mailed this story: “I was once in a group of instructors who met with the relevant university vice-president on matters of pay and benefits. When the point was made that full-time people had to teach part-time at various other institutions to make ends meet, he said that he had assumed that was the way ESL people liked to do things. He said with apparent honesty that he thought ESL people were academic vagabonds (his term), so he had not been concerned with employment practices for us. (To his credit, he apologized and had the program restructured.)”

*Write to the organizations that accredit schools.* Write letters to organizations that accredit institutions, such as the American Association of Intensive English Programs (AAIEP) and the Commission on English Language Program Accreditation (CEA), and ask that they state a minimum salary of $30,000 (the National Education Association supports a minimum salary of $40,000 for K–12 teachers). Currently, the CEA posts no criteria related to faculty salaries or benefits—though it does require that students have health insurance; and the AAIEP says that faculty must “receive an appropriate salary and fringe benefits” and that “salaries and benefits for IEP [intensive English program] faculty [must be] on a par with those offered by other IEPs in the same geographic region.” The teachers I know working for under $25,000 a year work at an institution accredited by the AAIEP.

*Don’t take jobs with unacceptable working conditions.* Other professors are paid higher salaries because, otherwise, they wouldn't teach—they’d go out and work in private industry. We as a profession have to start refusing salaries that are ridiculous.

*If you have good working conditions, agitate for those who don’t.* It’s hard to get politically involved when you’re burned out from running to three jobs. TESOL’s active Caucus on Part-Time Employment Concerns is an excellent place to start, and joining it is free. The caucus deals with the problems and rights of adjunct and temporary employees as well as true part-timers.

There are steps you can take to either cure or prevent burnout and to help other teachers cope and change. Strong teachers make a strong profession, and when one of us burns out, it hurts us all. Our profession depends on each of us taking our professional status seriously and demanding the respect that all professional ESOL teachers deserve.

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There are steps you can take to either cure or prevent burnout and to help other teachers cope and change.
Early in the school year, Ivan Guillen, a migrant farm worker from Mexico, became frightened by the thought that his children, Morelia and Julio, were being transported by bus at 5:45 a.m. to an unknown location. He did what any concerned parent would do: he jumped into his car and followed the bus closely to ensure the safe arrival of his children at the ESOL center school. In the meantime, the monolingual English-speaking bus driver thought that she was being followed by a predator. She radioed to the bus center and was instructed to drive to the nearest police station with the children.

The Guillen family’s experiences help illustrate the relationship between education and bilingualism in rural north central Florida. Morelia, Ivan’s nine-year-old daughter, arrived in the area in September 2005 with her mother and brother. She had traveled two days on foot through the arid desert, crossing the frontera (border) between the United States and Mexico. It took Morelia several more days by bus and by car to arrive in north Florida, where she was joined by her father, who had been working there for seven years.

The migrant education program advocate enrolled Morelia in the district’s ESOL center school. The advocate had the knowledge to help the family mediate the complex array of paperwork necessary for the children to receive school services such as busing and free lunch. Morelia’s father did not understand the process of schooling in the United States because the information that came to his home, including emergency medical forms and school calendars, was entirely in English. Thus, parent surveys, weekly class
newsletters, and homework instructions remained unreadable to him. In essence, communication between the Guillen home and the ESOL center school was nonexistent, due in part to a language ideology reflecting English monolingualism.

Why Does Bilingualism Arouse Fear?
This situation leads me to reconsider what it is about bilingualism that makes many Americans fearful.

Myth: Students in Bilingual Programs Don’t Learn English
Decades of research, including several recent, large-scale analyses of research on bilingual education, have debunked the myth that students in bilingual programs do not acquire English (Genesee et al. 2005; Rolstad, Mahoney, and Glass 2005). In fact, students enrolled in high-quality bilingual programs generally acquire English just as well as or better than students enrolled in English-only instructional settings. Yet throughout the United States, in places such as California, Arizona, and Massachusetts, bilingual education programs have been eliminated by referenda. In Texas and Colorado, state legislators are currently scrutinizing bilingual programs.

Myth: Giving Educational Support in Spanish is Unfair to Other Students
When I asked the secretary at the school if the Guillen family (and several others) could receive school-related information in Spanish, she looked at me disapprovingly. She stated the language policy clearly: if the school were to provide information in Spanish, then it would have to provide information in the home language for students from other language backgrounds. In short, translating information to Spanish would be burdensome for staff members and unfair to non-Spanish-speaking parents and children.

This incident reveals the second fear: that educational support in Spanish will benefit Spanish speakers to the detriment of speakers of other languages. Yet this English-only policy contradicts the basic principles behind effective parent and community relations. It makes sense to communicate with parents and guardians whenever possible in a language that they understand. Even though parents are children’s first educators and are responsible for their well-being, Morelia’s parents were excluded from participation in her education based on the limited bilingual services available.

In fact, bilingualism (and bilingual education programs that foster the development of two languages) not only benefits Spanish-speaking students, who make up the largest percentage of English language learners in the United States (U.S. Department of Education 2006); it also benefits society economically (for example, through international commerce), socially (by fostering communication and equitable access to social services), and through the enhanced cognitive abilities of bilinguals. A recent study conducted by Canadian researchers on bilingualism found that people who are bilingual for most of their lives are more able than monolingual people to attend to a complex set of rapidly changing task demands (Bialystok et al. 2004).

Equality or Equity?
The school secretary’s comment may have come from the idea that equal education should be the goal of every educational program. In that position, equal means using the same language, English, in all communication with parents and students, irrespective of context and individual or group needs. In contrast to the ideology of equal education, in which curriculum and instruction are the same for all students, an ideology based on equitable education responds to the linguistic and cultural needs of students both as individuals and as members of society. Equity challenges the disadvantage that some students face as a result of being outside the so-called mainstream.

At every twist and turn, both implicitly and explicitly, Morelia’s bilingual abilities are devalued by the actions and inactions of society.
Then I ask the preservice teachers to reflect on what a classroom based on equity looks like. They create elaborate drawings and scenes that reflect (linguistic) diversity—books in various languages, reference items, curricular supports and materials, and even food and scents that reveal a range of possibilities that support students’ identity in a diverse classroom. These two views stand in stark contrast to one another, yet the activity allows preservice teachers to imagine a classroom that reflects the social realities of the children they will teach.

One evening recently, I went to Morelia’s home. I brought with me several bilingual books from a home literacy initiative called Libros de Familia (Family Books) that I direct at the university. At the request of Señor Guillen, the student volunteers read weekly with Morelia and her brother under a tree, away from the noise and disruptions inside the busy home. I asked Morelia if she could read in Spanish; she responded, sí. I asked Morelia if she could write in Spanish, and she responded, sí. I gave her a book titled Me Llamo María Isabel (Ada 1996) and asked her to read a bit to me.

Gazing at the cover, Morelia predicted what the story was about. She read the title, opened the book to the first page, and began to read. At first, she stood stiffly, back straight, her hands clenching the sides of the book. But after a paragraph or so, she slowed down and glanced at me, a smile forming at the corners of her mouth. When I nodded reassuringly, Morelia continued reading with ease, fluency, and great interest.

**Will Education Diminish or Foster Human Potential?**

In a community where education is based on an ideology of equality, students’ native language abilities are set aside. Morelia is one example. No one in school had ever asked Morelia if she could read or write in Spanish, and the school owns few bilingual books that reflect the social realities of her life. At every twist and turn, both implicitly and explicitly, Morelia’s bilingual abilities are devalued by the actions and inactions of society. In short, Morelia’s education will likely assimilate her linguistically and will not foster her bilingual abilities in a way that supports her overall cognitive, emotional, and mental growth.

De repente (suddenly), I am reminded of the words of Cummins (2002):

> When bilingual students are instructed, explicitly or implicitly, to leave their language and culture at the schoolhouse door, they are also being told that everything they have learned from parents and grandparents up to this point in their lives has no value; the language through which they have expressed themselves up to this point in their lives is deficient and must be replaced by a superior model. In such classrooms, human potential is being diminished. (n.p.)

I cannot imagine anyone more “superior” than Morelia Guillen. She has the bravery to cross a border and come to a new country; she has the courage to make new friends and attend a new school; she has the perseverance to work within an educational system that does not realize her linguistic and cultural riqueza (wealth).

As educators, we have the task of not only understanding the sociocultural and political contexts of children who are in the process of acquiring English, but of responding to their lives and social realities in ways that foster their identities and human potential. For Morelia, this would include ensuring that the school communicates with parents in the home language whenever possible, that teachers and staff work to demystify the educational process and environment of U.S. schools, and that they extend this information to those who participate in Morelia’s education, including professionals such as migrant education advocates and busing staff.

Teachers working with children like Morelia can begin by inquiring about students’ first language abilities, including their ability to read and write. Morelia can continue to develop these abilities—if not through direct first language instruction in

> Providing equal instruction is not the same thing as responding to children based on their linguistic and cultural knowledge.
school, then through curricula and materials that reflect the bilingual, bicultural, and social realities of her life. Teachers can recognize that providing equal instruction is not the same thing as responding to children based on their linguistic and cultural knowledge. They can act as advocates for children outside the classroom through interactions with school officials and community members. Finally, teachers can reach beyond the academic, linguistic, and human rights arguments of promoting bilingualism and bilingual education and work toward developing the identity and human potential of all students.

References


Maria Coady is an assistant professor of ESOL/bilingual education at the University of Florida, Gainesville, in the United States, and directs the home-literacy initiative Libros de Familia (Family Books).
My presentation at the panel “Nonnative Speakers in Their Own Voices” (Braine 1996) was not an altogether pleasant experience. In my talk, I made the point that after some twenty-five years in professional life in the United States, I had begun to resemble an American more than a Finn in my style of writing and expression. After my public confession, someone in the audience asked me the following connected questions: Why did I want to learn to write like an American? Why did I have American friends correct my writing before submitting it to an English-language journal? Why not try to teach the editors of English language journals to adjust to my ways of writing?

The questions floored me. I had hoped and expected that my story would be an inspiration for other second language writers in TESOL. Here I was, baring my soul for the first time in front of a professional audience, and someone in the audience had the nerve to question me about my decision to seek U.S. citizenship and struggle to write like a native speaker. I rushed away after the session and drove back home feeling totally humiliated. At that time, I failed to realize that the questions were not meant as personal attacks but rather arose from the questioner’s research about how native speaker editors react to journal articles submitted by second language writers.

That speech, in which I spoke about my personal experiences as an ESL writer and professional for the first time (Connor 1999), was an autoethnography, “an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural” (Ellis and Bochner 2002, 739). I find the autoethnography to be an ideal format for describing my experiences as a nonnative speaker learning to succeed in the English academic world.

Despite the public scrutiny, I am foolhardy enough to continue on the personal narrative path, this time dealing with oral presentations of papers at conferences. Perhaps I will even show that I am not as politically naive as my first autoethnography might suggest. My own interest in this was piqued when, after some eighty presentations at national and international conferences over a span of two decades, I decided to get professional help with my presentation skills.

I Don’t Mind Presenting; I Just Don’t Want to Be Around When It Happens
Ventola, Shalom, and Thompson’s (2002) edited volume describes the complexity of
the conference presentation as part of the academic genre system—oral presentation, written paper, and publication. Contributors analyze the semiotic event of the conference presentation for genre moves, use of narratives, and use of visuals, for example. Some chapters deal with cross-cultural issues in conference presentations: Vassileva (2002) compares the speaker-audience interactions between native English speakers and Bulgarians, Slepovitch (2002) considers the use of English as a conference language of business in Belarus, and Ventola (2002) reports on the language choice at a conference in Germany attended by multilinguals.

They Don’t Teach This in Graduate School
As Ventola (2002) points out, novice academics receive little instruction about how to give presentations. My own experience concurs. My graduate education included no lessons in oral presentation.

After presenting for the first time at the TESOL convention in 1980, I learned strategies from good presenters. One, for example, taught me how to speak from cards and move around the room while talking. He graciously shared some of the secrets of his success, one of which was the relentless practicing of one’s script. Another influence was a former colleague who has perfected a natural, comfortable style of presentation thanks to her popularity at numerous conferences and gatherings.

Stage Fright
Conference presentations have always been a challenge for me. Like most presenters, I have stage fright. It has been said that, after dying, public speaking is the most frightening experience to anticipate. “I don’t mind dying, I just don’t want to be around when it happens,” says Woody Allen. “I don’t mind presenting, I just don’t want to be around when it happens,” says Ulla Connor.

I was particularly nervous while presenting with a colleague on writing in 1987 to an audience of some 300. A friend commented years later on how much better I am now at presenting. Other friends, and my husband, have commented that my nervousness comes through in a fast, quivering voice alternating with breathlessness. My husband jokes about my presentation style and says that it keeps the audience alert; they are waiting to see whether I get through it before having a heart attack.

Put Me In, Coach
Despite experiencing stage fright and feeling uneasy before presentations, I keep on presenting. But after one particularly well-received conference presentation, I listened for the first time to an audio recording of myself presenting and decided that my pronunciation and diction needed work. I decided to get professional help. I called an instructor of public speaking in the Communication Studies Department at my university to help with my next presentation.

Speak, Don’t Read
My speech coach is a wonderful teacher of public speaking. A warm woman, she shared with me her own phobias, such as not wanting to drive a car on a highway, which she cured by forcing herself to drive first on the freeway circling the town and later on other big roads. Her basic instructions, consistent with those of Mears (1982, as cited in Ventola 2002), mainly dealt with such practical techniques as how to deal with numbered memory cards while speaking and what to remember during the delivery (for example, voice

She videotaped me and gave me helpful hints. After the first taping, she observed that I was not using body language to enhance my message.
quality, gestures, posture). She urged me to forgo the written text.

I told her I was unwilling to speak from cue cards. At academic conferences, I argued, one gives academic papers. I followed her advice to a degree, however, and prepared a shortened version of the written paper printed in a large font size for easy reading or referral. As it turned out, after practicing reading the paper aloud many times, I basically knew it by heart. Finally, she taught me how to make a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation with sound and pictures, and even rockets shooting around.

Watch the Body Language
She videotaped me and gave me helpful hints, mainly dealing with style. After the first taping, she observed that I was not using body language to enhance my message.

Despite my repeated attempts to tell her that I was a Finn and that Finns are not supposed to use their hands and arms in such outlandish ways, she made me practice a variety of hand gestures. She told me to stop imitating a stork: not to stand on one foot but to be balanced on both (to save my back) and not to put my hands in my pockets or on my hips (it looks too informal). She advised me to breathe through my abdomen, pause strategically, and smile.

Still, I am not comfortable giving up my Finnish style of presentation: standing behind the lectern with arms motionless and face nearly expressionless. Using broad sweeping hand gestures is especially hard for me. In other words, “accommodation” is not easy.

A Measure of Success
My coach’s instruction bore some fruit. At the 2005 American Association for Applied Linguistics colloquium in honor of Robert Kaplan, I was fairly relaxed and gave a decent presentation. Afterwards, a participant came to inspect my Sony Vaio computer, which had projected my slides and sound effects. Another attendee said that although all my presentations were good, this had been a great one. I wondered if others noticed a difference, but I felt more confident.

A month later at a conference in Seville, Spain, I also spoke about intercultural rhetoric to a different audience, which mainly consisted of Spanish and other southern European linguists. Encouraged by the outrageous (to me) gesturing of my fellow presenters, I hammed it up. The twenty-minute presentation was so well received that after our break, the organizers asked me to carry on talking about my take on intercultural rhetoric research during the entire break that followed. I felt that I was beginning to enjoy presenting: that made all the difference.

I’m Keeping at It
In this exploration of my experiences as a nonnative English speaker giving academic presentations, I have just touched the surface, but like any autoethnography, this story is told as the subject sees it and wishes to tell it. Are my impressions of my own presentations reliable? To check, I asked my public speaking coach to read my reflection on our training sessions. She confirmed my impressions and urged me to speak from note cards whenever I present at conferences. Old habits die hard; I still want to have a text from which to speak.

After all my years of presenting and my work with my coach, I’d offer the following advice to those of you who give conference presentations:

- Practice, practice, practice. Find opportunities to present before your conference appearance. Practice your presentation out loud, in front of a mirror, or to friends or colleagues. Time yourself.
- Videotape yourself. Watching this video will give you a new perspective about your performance as a speaker, revealing any bad habits you may have. Pay close attention to any distracting body language or speaking problems, especially the use of verbal fillers like um or uh. You may also want to share this video with others to get additional feedback.
- Don’t worry about feeling nervous. You need a certain amount of adrenaline to pump you up.
- Prepare a good, hefty handout. The audience always likes freebies; even if your presentation isn’t great, they can take something good home.

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Ulla Connor has taught ESL/EFL and teacher education courses in more than ten countries, and has authored many books and articles in the field of TESOL and applied linguistics.
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one of Rudyard Kipling’s ballads contains the hoary line, “East is
East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet.” With
apologies to Kipling, I would change that to say, “North is North,
and South is South, and perhaps the twain shall meet.”

Where different concepts of time are concerned, the changed line may contain
more truth than poetry. Since time is a human construct, how different cultures
view time has strong cross-cultural implications for ESL teachers raised within
one time system but working with students from an utterly different one. According to
Hall (2000), two different views of time exist; these views can have an effect on teacher-
student interaction.

Time as a Cultural Concept
Cultures with a single-track view of time are said to be monochronic (m-time); they are
generally Northern cultures and are most comfortable accomplishing tasks one at a
time according to a schedule. Cultures with a multitrack view of time are said to be polychronic (p-time); these are generally Southern cultures and view events as
happening in all dimensions concurrently. A scale of a sampling of world cultures from
primarily polychronic to primarily monochronic (with some exceptions) would be as shown below.

Anglo-Americans are practically an m-culture stereotype in the way they tend to
commodify time and emphasize efficiency. They are obsessed with controlling time.
Whereas Latin, Arab, and many Asian cultures are considered p-time, emphasizing
relationships and the ever-unfolding

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present, mainstream U.S. culture (especially as manifested in the worlds of business and academia) is very much m-time, placing the emphasis on schedules and discrete time units (Hall 2000).

According to this widely referenced perspective, p-time cultures are more oriented toward people, and any appointment or plan can be changed at the last minute to accommodate the unpredictable needs of social relationships. Similarly, these cultures may not recognize conversation queues, and long waits are expected. M-time cultures, on the other hand, tend to “make a fetish out of [time] management” (Hall 1989, cited in Crabtree and Sapp 2004, 105), similarly valuing order in turn taking and completion of one task before moving on to the next.

Although there are certainly variations in the adherence to m-time and p-time within cultures, the important point is that moving from one time orientation to the other can produce a great deal of frustration as well as cross-cultural misunderstanding.

Time Warp
Events on the first day of an intensive three-week ESL course in Brazil illustrate how the move from m-time to p-time can create frustration for an m-time teacher, in this case an Anglo-American (Crabtree and Sapp 2004).

The first morning of this course, a welcome by various school officials and student introductions consumed nearly a third of the class period. After the introductions ended, the teacher eagerly began the class with a minilecture about time from a cross-cultural perspective, noting that in the United States people tend to view time as money to be made, spent, gambled, wasted, or lost. Checking her watch, the teacher reminded the students that she had a very ambitious course schedule, so it was time to “get down to business.”

These first moments of class were an example of the asynchrony produced by the presence of an m-time teacher in a p-time classroom. The Brazilians interpreted the teacher’s obvious impatience on the first day variously as personal rudeness, professional arrogance, or basic ignorance of the auspiciousness accorded the occasion from the Brazilian perspective.

What is wrong with this picture? The first error was the U.S. teacher’s failure to remind herself she was in a p-time culture during the introductions. Self-correcting from an m-time to a p-time mind-set can often be accomplished simply by taking a deep breath and relaxing. This means, among other things, no obvious checking of the clock. During her introduction, the teacher could have made a gracious statement about welcoming the opportunity to spend the coming three weeks with the students. The minilecture might have been replaced with a tactfully worded suggestion that, since there was a great deal of work to be done in such a short period, the class would be conducted “on American time.” Lesson plans should have been reevaluated to see what elements could be omitted.

“You’re Late!” “No, You Are Too Prompt!”
Obviously, not everyone falls into one or the other group, but these different time orientations can be a major source of frustration when m-time people and p-time people interact. A Mexican student (p-time), for example, might make an appointment to meet a U.S. teacher (m-time) at 2:00 p.m., then appear at 2:30 p.m. fully expecting to meet the teacher. The time-bound p-time teacher complains, “You are always late.” But the p-time student complains, “You are always prompt!” Teachers in p-time cultures should have plenty of work to do during office hours and be prepared to remain available even beyond the stated time limits.

A classic, if slightly more exotic, illustration of p-time culture behavior is the dhiwan held by Saudi Arabian leaders, in which a large chamber is set aside on particular days of the week for people to present themselves to the leader and talk to him and various other officials. Multiple conversations proceed simultaneously. The leader greets person A warmly and talks with him intently for a few minutes. Then person B presents himself, and the leader greets him warmly and shifts his attention to him for a while, then shifts back to person A until person C presents himself and starts yet another conversation with the leader, who juggles conversations among all three guests. People raised in p-time cultures are quite comfortable with this arrangement.

“The teacher should be willing to change Kipling’s lines to read, “North is North, and South is South, and here in my classroom, the twain have met.”
Class schedules are rather less important to p-time Arab students than to an m-time English teacher from, say, Canada. It is not at all unusual for such teachers to face a classroom missing half of the registered students at the first class meeting, then witness students trickling in days and even weeks later. How does the m-time teacher avoid stress in this situation? Taking a deep breath may not always suffice. In classes with Arab students, the m-time teacher needs to be prepared to repeat course outlines, rounds of introductions, and even lessons over the first two or three weeks of class, or merely to pass out printed versions to late (only in the teacher’s eyes) arrivals.

As for meeting deadlines, p-time students typically believe that what needs to get done, will get done. Scheduling does not help much since plans can change depending on what might or might not happen in the future.

The Natural Order of Things
Understanding these time concepts can help alleviate a major cause of culture shock, let alone frustration, in teaching. A willingness to let events determine daily activities is characteristic of p-time cultures. In Muslim cultures, even though p-time is the norm, an m-time ESL teacher must adapt to the concept that events happen according to God’s will. Since the schedules of people can be preempted at any time by the desires of God, why put much importance on schedules, or even on organization, for that matter?

If you are an m-time teacher working in a p-time culture, give yourself this quiz about your assumptions before your first meeting with students:

- What is the culture in my school?
- What characteristics first come to mind when I think of this culture?
- How should I treat my students based on these assumptions?

Some experts believe that people must learn the m-time concept whereas the p-time concept is inherent (Crabtree and Sapp 2004). I know of no reason for this difference; both time concepts are culture specific, and culture is by definition learned.

ESL teachers from an m-time culture might reasonably object to the notion that p-time is somehow in the natural order of things. In m-time cultures, time is a ribbon, in that the rhythm of nature is sequential. The concept of history could not exist if time were not sequential. The sun does not rise and set simultaneously (except possibly for an astronaut orbiting the Earth at a certain height and angle), morning always precedes afternoon, a visitor must arrive before departing, the body must ingest before it can excrete, and so on.

For good or ill, classroom settings in Northern cultures reflect m-time values: a class period is planned; a quiz is timed, an activity is organized. For an ESL teacher from an m-time culture faced with students from a p-time culture, this orientation to classroom routine could present a dilemma. But if an m-time teacher meets p-time students in an acculturation class, the expectations and therefore the approach would be different. Emphasizing promptness and adherence to deadlines should in this case be instructional objectives. In this setting, where the student population may be nonnative speakers of English who are immigrating to North America, conducting an ESL class in an m-time environment can help the students adjust.

The Twain Have Met
Regardless of the instructional setting, to avoid mutual frustration when m-time teachers meet p-time students, teachers must avoid misinterpreting student characteristics. In particular, teachers should recognize that a p-time student arriving late for class, missing a deadline for turning in homework, or spending too little time on task is not necessarily showing disrespect, being lazy, or suffering from attention deficit disorder. The teacher should be willing to change Kipling’s lines to read, “North is North, and South is South, and here in my classroom, the twain have met.”

References


Roger Grainger has been a technical writer and ESL teacher for over twenty-five years, with experience in the United States, Micronesia, and Saudi Arabia.
The Language Teacher Research Series aims to connect research and practice by highlighting the insights that teachers themselves describe after examining their own practices. Language Teacher Research in Asia presents research conducted by language teachers at all levels, from high school English teachers to English language teacher educators, throughout Asia. Each author describes specific classroom experiences in an Asian context and extracts a more broadly applicable analysis of how to improve student learning. The contributors hope that other language teachers will compare and contrast these studies with their own classroom challenges and accomplishments.

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Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc.
Most traditional schooling for students of color in the United States consists of windows (Style 1988): these students regularly learn about others’ cultures as opposed to learning about their own. In contrast, gathering cultural artifacts that K–16 students can touch and learn about creates mirrors in which learners see themselves reflected in the curriculum, and creates windows into the cultures and experiences of others.

Teaching with Discovery Boxes—plastic bins containing purchased and collected artifacts that represent aspects of a culture (Arnheim 1993; Eder 1988; Menser 1966)—can create such mirrors. They engage students and enrich their understanding of their own and other cultures. As we taught a Discovery-Box-based lesson to a sixth-grade ESL class in the United States, the learners’ connections to this material and their own lives generated excitement in the classroom.

Twelve Cultural Similarities

The lesson arose from a trip we took to Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam as part of a Fulbright-Hays seminar on highlighting Southeast Asian heritage and culture in the curriculum. As the group of eighteen K–16 educators visited schools, met with educators, and attended seminars and workshops, colleagues gathered or purchased artifacts. Our goal was to assemble twelve boxes that teachers could use in their classes as windows and mirrors for themselves and their students.

Why twelve boxes? A concept that one of us taught in middle school social studies holds that every culture has twelve aspects in common (or cultural similarities; see Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction 2005). The content of the categories may differ from one culture to another (for example, all cultures have food, but in one people may eat sticky rice, and in another they may eat noodles).

A mnemonic device for ten of these categories is as follows: one rhymes with bun (food), two with shoe (clothing), three with tree (shelter: houses are sometimes built out of trees), four with door (education: it opens up doors of opportunity), five with hive (economy: honey from beehives is sold to make money), six with sticks (recreation: sticks are used to build a bonfire), seven with heaven (religion), eight with mate (family), nine with spine (the backbone allows communication from the brain to the body), and ten with hen (art: dyed eggs or Fabergé eggs). Categories eleven and twelve are transportation and government.

For comparative purposes, each box included artifacts representing all three countries we visited. Later, because of the limited number of artifacts for certain categories, we combined family and shelter, education and recreation, communication and government, and economics and transportation. We also created one general box containing some artifacts from all twelve categories for K–16 teachers who want to address Southeast Asian cultures broadly.
Planning a Lesson with Discovery Boxes

As guest teachers, we co-taught one lesson using the Discovery Boxes in a sixth-grade ESL class in Wisconsin composed of fourteen Lao, Vietnamese, and Thai Hmong learners who were stronger in oral skills than in academic literacy. The lesson had three goals. We wanted the learners to interact with the content of the twelve cultural similarities, experience artifacts from their home countries, connect them to the twelve cultural similarities, and have opportunities for grade-appropriate academic language development.

Interwoven Content and Language Objectives
In designing the lesson, we had to select a grade-level-appropriate content standard that we could realistically meet in a fifty-minute lesson. We chose an academic performance standard in social studies: "Explain how language, art, music, beliefs, and other components of culture can further global understanding or cause misunderstanding" (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction 2005, n.p.). Meeting this standard would allow students to engage with the language and the cultural artifacts while learning how to compare and contrast cultures.

We also wanted to interweave content and language objectives. We first analyzed the content for the types of academic language that would be present. Using Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction social studies standard E.8.10, we wrote this content objective: "Students will categorize artifacts into the twelve cultural similarities." We asked the students to write a reason for their categorization choice. Later, when the students shared their choices orally and in written form, the language skill connected to the cognitive and content activities.

Challenges Faced and Lessons Learned
Different Academic Domains, Different Perspectives
Since we are experienced teachers in different academic domains (social studies and ESL), our perspectives on the lesson differed. One of us approached the lesson from the point of view of teaching the twelve cultural similarities using the artifacts, and the other focused more on teaching aspects of language (i.e., writing reasons) and on the learners’ use of language. We had to share knowledge and lesson goals from both perspectives openly and without fear of judgment or criticism.

Our academic backgrounds, experiences, and educational philosophy, though, were similar. We both felt strongly that the lesson was in line with the principles of brain-based learning and resonated with learners exhibiting various kinds of intelligence.

Moving Up the Taxonomy
To start the lesson, we created mirrors and linked to the learners’ schema with photos from our trip, which we discussed briefly. Then each learner chose one artifact and categorized it into one of the twelve areas of cultural similarity. Using guiding questions (for example, What is the object? What is it used for? Which category do you think it belongs in and why?), the learners each wrote a reason for placing an object into that category. During a debriefing activity, they shared their artifacts and their reasons orally with the class, then turned in the written work.

Discovery Box Resources on the Internet

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<th>Resource Center</th>
<th>Description</th>
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The lesson was thus stronger in listening/speaking and writing, and weaker in reading, pronunciation, and vocabulary development, although these areas were addressed. Using Bloom’s (1956) taxonomy, we scaffolded higher-order thinking skills throughout the lesson, starting with activities requiring the use of knowledge and comprehension skills and moving to analysis and synthesis. For example, during the introduction and discussion, the learners spontaneously recalled, explained, defined, and described their shared experiences relevant to the photos. They asked us countless questions about our experiences, too. These cognitive activities—recalling, explaining, defining, and describing—are all in the knowledge and comprehension portion of the taxonomy. When we asked the learners to place an artifact into a specific category and justify their choice with reasons, however, this engaged their analysis and synthesis cognitive skills.

Not Enough Time, Too Much Information

Our major constraint in designing this lesson was the fifty-minute time limit. We could easily have prolonged the lesson over a series of class meetings. Lack of time prevented us from formally assessing the learners’ output in class; all we could do was assess their written production in the work they turned in.

During this lesson, there was just too much information to share. The learners felt so connected to the lesson-beginning photos that the discussion about them could have gone on for a long time. The objects in the photos served as powerful, engaging mirrors for the learners, and they wanted to explain what the visuals were or how they had experienced the items in their lives.

The same held true for the artifacts because choosing one and using it allowed for personalization and offered mirrors for the students’ home cultures and experiences. The students touched, played with, and talked about the artifacts at length as they considered which artifact to choose for the activity, which was motivating for kinaesthetic/bodily learners (Gardner 2000). To conserve time, we encouraged the learners to choose one artifact quickly.

Connections Made and Pending

The learners answered the guiding questions we gave them, but they did not perceive how to use the questions to formulate their reason for categorizing the artifact. That is, they answered the questions in writing but could not connect this information to the writing of a summative reason. That connection would need to be overtly explained and modeled in future lessons.

The use of these categories and the artifacts, however, was a big hit. The learners memorized and retained the twelve cultural similarities and could connect an artifact with one or more of the categories. Even though the academic concepts (for example, economy) were difficult for the learners to understand, once they had grasped these concepts, they could see how artifacts could fall into more than one category. Seeing the learners make these intellectual connections was exciting, because we could see that they were developing their thinking skills.

Linguistically, the learners could state a grammatically accurate reason for placement into a category orally, but the written reason was usually much weaker in grammar and argumentation. This confirmed our knowledge that the learners were stronger in oral skills than in academic literacy; future classes would need to focus on the development of academic language.

Windows and Mirrors in Balance

It might be worth asking this question: to what degree does your classroom consist of windows that learners must look through to see other people and cultures, and to what degree does it include mirrors in which the learners can see themselves? If you need to bring more mirrors into your classroom, the use of Discovery Boxes is one way to do so.

You can find Discovery Boxes for learners of all ages (preschool, elementary, middle school, and even high school) at local...
libraries, museums, school district offices, and cooperative education agencies (see the box for some sources). In addition, many states have Web sites listing organizations that lend boxes. Some organizations allow you to check out the boxes free.

Or, if you prefer, you can construct your own Discovery Boxes or involve students in creating them. The result will be a set of engaging mirrors for students that reflect their own cultures and open windows into the cultures of others.

**References**


Kate Mastruserio Reynolds serves as TESOL coordinator and trains teachers at the University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire, in the United States. Deb Pattee teaches Middle-Level Methods in the Curriculum and Instruction Department at the University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire.
Students usually know how to use computers to surf the Internet, chat, and send e-mail, but most of them have not taken advantage of the full potential of the digital world.

The CALL courses aim to offer authentic opportunities for students to practice the English language and develop computer literacy. Communication through e-mail or chat with English speakers and learners from other countries is also encouraged. I design most of the learning activities; others I adapt from various sources.

Collaborative CALL
Following Vygotsky (1978) and Freire (1970), the courses at my university are rooted in a sociocultural perspective. Collaboration among the students is at the core of the course dynamics. Courses aim to provide a learning experience that is both collective and individual. Students are assigned to read every task produced by their classmates and to give feedback to them. Teachers and students become partners, and language is used not only to provide information but also to complete tasks and promote a collaborative social network.

Feedback focuses on the content and not the form of the learners’ output. The course pays little
attention to grammar, since the theoretical basis of the course is anchored in the strong version of the communicative approach—that is, using the language to learn the language. The same principle underlies computer literacy—using digital tools to learn how to deal with them.

More experienced students help those with less developed computer skills, and even I increase my technological knowledge by watching students come up with solutions to problems. Students act as coaches for their classmates, giving feedback and arousing their partners’ curiosity. Any message or task sent to the group can trigger a new experience, leading students to venture out on their own virtual quest for learning opportunities.

The Groundwork
For this CALL course, I invited the students by e-mail to join an electronic discussion list (which I created at Yahoo! Groups, http://groups.yahoo.com/) and to visit the course page (see Menezes 2005a) for instructions.

During the course, the students learned the skills they would need to produce multimedia narratives: using online dictionaries and concordancers to check word meanings and collocations, and using search engines to find texts (for example, quotations, software tutorials, tips on netiquette, and information on various home pages), images (for example, copyright-free clip art, photographs, and animated images), and sounds (for example, human sounds, songs, and listening exercises). They learned how to create hyperlinks to texts and sounds and how to use Microsoft Word to enhance their texts by adding dropped capital letters and WordArt, inserting and editing images, and creating borders and shading.

The Narratives: English Learning as a Journey
In all, the students produced twenty narratives (see Menezes 2005b). Many of the narrators used the metaphors of journey or adventure to describe their learning experiences, calling their narratives, for example: “A Long Journey . . .” or “The Adventure of Learning English.” Other titles emphasized unexpected events that worked as the initial motivation for learning English: “How It All Started . . .”; “By an Accident”; “The First Contact.”

Weaving Text, Image, and Sound
The students wrote their English learning histories using Microsoft Word. After they had written the text, the students used images and sounds to represent the emotions expressed in them. The students then saved the texts as Web pages.

One student used an image of the painting The Crying Woman by Edvard Munch, accompanied by the text in the box, to describe how she felt when she traveled to Europe and could not communicate with people from different countries. Text, image, and sound worked together to represent her feelings. The student told me that she was already familiar with the painting and that it came to mind when she was trying to explain her despair during her experience abroad. She thought the painting was similar to what she had felt. If readers click on the AAAhooooo!!!!, they hear a cry of terror. According to her, finding that sound was the most difficult part of the task.

Something like that had happened with my lack of communication:

AAAhhhhhhhhh!!!!!

With this experience abroad I saw how important English as a second language is, principally when we want to communicate. At that time I was not aware of the globalization through the internet and all the communication it provides because I had no access to it.

Another narrator portrayed his sorrow with an animated image showing a man with teardrops continuously falling from his eyes, along with the text shown in the box.

One day, I asked a friend if she would like to study with me, in order that we both could refine our English. Then she answered: “No, thank you. I don’t want to study with someone that knows less than I do. It’s no use.” I got so embarrassed that I could hardly find an answer to this. Then I said: Ok, thank you anyway.
The continual mention of cartoons, rock bands, movies, radio, and cable TV programs in students’ narratives shows how important mass media are in the language acquisition process today. The narrators included several hyperlinks to the home pages of their favorite bands and singers and even to songs those students found meaningful. For one student, songs increased the motivation to learn English:

Another point that made me enthusiastic about learning another language was the possibility of, for the first time, being able to understand what my favorite English singers were saying in their song lyrics. In fact, since my early childhood I was very interested in music and this indirectly made my interest for English also increase.

Critiquing the System
Each narrative portrays a learning experience particular to a certain learner. Some students referred to family members who spoke English; others talked about traveling abroad and included photographs; others lamented their economic conditions and the consequent poor learning experiences in high schools.

After complaining about the poor English teaching in high school, one student added an image of a brick wall based on the cover of the album *The Wall* (see Waters 1979), a recording by the rock group Pink Floyd, and, referring to the lyrics from a song on the album, stated that he did not want to be just one more brick in the town wall:

As I did not want to be just one more brick in the town wall, I thought that by learning English I could be different from the other men in my town. But as it was not so easy for me to learn the language there, I got frustrated. I did not have enough money to pay for a course, so the only way that I had was to learn it by myself. Then, I learned lots of grammar rules but not how to speak the language.
Another student used the lyrics of the same song to support his criticism of the educational system:

We don’t need no education
We don’t need no thought control
No dark sarcasm in the classroom
Teachers leave them kids alone
Hey! Teachers! Leave them kids alone!
All in all it’s just another brick in the wall.
All in all you’re just another brick in the wall
(Waters 1979)

One interesting aspect of the multimedia narratives is the recurrent visual representation of schools and teachers. Three different narratives depicted traditional, teacher-fronted classrooms with students sitting in rows and raising their hands to get permission to speak. The teacher is presented as the one who has the power to talk and to select the learners who can interact, and as the one who teaches grammar and transfers knowledge to the students. The narrators usually represented teachers as authoritarian professionals who do not take the students’ needs into account.

More Than the Sum of Their Parts
The students believed that the language learning experiences they portrayed in their narratives could motivate other students. One of them wrote at the end of his narrative, “I hope my own learning experience can help someone to get inspired to carry on also.” Another opened her text with optimistic advice: “Makes no difference who you are!!! Anything your heart desire will come to you!!!” A third one offered a piece of advice enriched by links to sites containing English learning materials:

The learning process never ends and we must be aware to catch the best of the moment such a TV program or the net, where we can find sites with listening materials, reading materials, and complete English courses . . . . So it can make a difference in my learning process.

Words, images, and sounds together added up to much more than the sum of their parts. The multimedia texts enhanced the students’ creativity and imagination and had a profound impact on our learning community. Participants not only produced and shared a new kind of text, but reflected on their past and present learning processes while helping peers develop and improve language and computer skills. Through these narratives, the students practiced language and computer skills and, just as important, the students and I gained a new awareness of the power of internal and external influences on language learning.

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Vera Lúcia Menezes de Oliveira e Paiva is a professor at Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil, and a researcher supported by the National Council of Research.
Teacher podcasts are created by teachers to develop students' listening skills. An example would be a teacher posting an assignment in a podcast for students to listen to or to download and complete.

Educator podcasts are used as a reflective tool by teaching professionals. In this forum, they discuss teaching methodology and practices with colleagues. See, for example, Sprankle's (2006) Bit by Bit: By a Teacher, for Teachers or EdTechTalk (http://edtechtalk.com/), a community of educators interested in discussing and learning about the uses of educational technology.

Student podcasts, such as the ones described in this article, are created by students for each other. Podcasting allows students to be involved in their learning process in a more direct and dynamic way, granting them a different level of motivation.

For the adult learners in my class, who had already established themselves in careers, making mistakes in a language class was not an option: they did not want to look bad in front of their peers. Although they had grown more confident as time went by, speaking was still not their strong suit. Classes were becoming somewhat boring, and active participation was lacking. I definitely had a problem to solve.

When I came across podcasting technology, I decided to try it with this class. I hoped that creating podcasts would give the students some speaking practice and generate enthusiasm for the class. And, best of all, podcasting seemed easy, teacher-friendly, and appropriate for adults.

Four Types of Educational Podcasts

Podcasts (a combination of the words iPod and broadcast) are sound and video files produced in a compressed format and uploaded to a page on the Internet that resembles a Weblog (blog). They usually focus on a certain topic or area of interest and can serve purposes from leisure to informational. According to Stanley (2005), there are at least four different types of podcasts that can be used for educational purposes:

- **Authentic podcasts**, created by native speakers for native speakers, are not meant particularly for EFL student audiences, but many (for example, news broadcasts such as those produced by CNN, http://www.cnn.com/) are suitable for them. These podcasts serve as means for authentic learning, especially for higher-level students, and are a way of bringing them closer to the target language.

- **Teacher podcasts** are created by teachers to develop students’ listening skills. An example would be a teacher posting an assignment in a podcast for students to listen to or to download and complete.

- **Educator podcasts** are used as a reflective tool by teaching professionals. In this forum, they discuss teaching methodology and practices with colleagues. See, for example, Sprankle’s (2006) Bit by Bit: By a Teacher, for Teachers or EdTechTalk (http://edtechtalk.com/), a community of educators interested in discussing and learning about the uses of educational technology.

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The Adventure Begins

My first experience with podcasts involved the class of beginning-level, mature EFL students described at the beginning of this article. The students’ average age was thirty, and all of them belonged to the Portuguese navy. Their language proficiency was
observably very low, and although they were willing to learn and improve their passive knowledge, they did not show much enthusiasm about developing their writing and speaking skills. I soon came to realize that this was not because they had learning problems but because they were much more self-conscious than the classes of younger students I had taught before.

Around the time I was teaching the course, I attended “Becoming a Webhead” (see González 2006), an online workshop for EFL teachers, and podcasts were one of the topics presented. Here was something new that I saw as a great learning opportunity for the rather reluctant adult learners in my class.

An All-Skills Valentine Podcast
I was determined to bring my students along with me in learning this new technology, but they ended up pushing me along. I decided to begin with a very simple podcast activity for three reasons: (1) I had never done podcasting with students before, (2) simple activities stand a better chance of being accepted and carried out successfully by lower-level language students, and (3) the main purpose was to raise the students’ confidence level and thus motivate them to practice speaking in class in a more enthusiastic and relaxed way.

Valentine’s Day was approaching, and linking this celebration to the English class seemed like a ripe opportunity. I posed a challenge to the students: write Valentine messages to their loved ones, record them, and send them into cyberspace via podcasting.

To my delight, most of the students immediately accepted the challenge, and even the most reluctant ones were eventually caught up in it.

The Valentine’s Day lesson plan included tasks in grammar, vocabulary, reading, writing, listening, and speaking. In class, I gave the students handouts outlining the tasks, which the students could use to explore the topics and get ideas on how to write their messages. Students then wrote their Valentine’s messages as homework and brought them to the next class.

Meanwhile, I put together a podcast page on the Web. With the help of the free podcast host/server PodOmatic (http://www.podomatic.com/), I assembled a page in a matter of minutes (see http://dreamteam.podomatic.com/) with no technical assistance. I clicked Register and filled in a title for my podcast; a user name, which would be the same as the first part of the podcast’s URL; and my e-mail address, so that a temporary password for the page could be e-mailed to me. Clicking Continue took me to a new screen, where I chose a layout for the podcast page.
The students and I then revised the written messages in class. After some practice, it was time for the students to record their messages individually in class. Because the school Internet connection is not very fast, I decided to use the free recording software Audacity (http://audacity.sourceforge.net/) to record the messages offline on the computer in my classroom. After class, I took the audio files home and uploaded them to the podcast page.

After all the podcasts had been posted on the Web page, we decided to hold an online contest to find out which pledge of love was the most appealing. Members of Webheads in Action (an online community of practice for teachers; see http://webheads.info/) were invited to collaborate with our class. Hundreds of people listened to the podcasts, and many commented on the messages. The students were astonished with the Webheads’ dynamic participation and positive feedback. A diverse group of foreign EFL teachers was validating their work, and this gave a purpose to their efforts to learn more and better English. They realized that their messages had been understood and that they were able to produce “real” English.

In preparation for Valentine’s Day, the students drafted e-mail messages to inform their loved ones of the podcasts. Again, the texts were used as grammar lessons on the simple past and imperative, which the students had learned during the first weeks of the course, and revised. On Valentine’s Day, the students informed their loved ones of the podcast through written e-cards from 123 Greetings (see http://www.123greetings.com/), a free service. In each e-card was a link leading to the student’s podcast and simple instructions on how to access it. Some of the e-card receivers later commented online about the podcast.

There was an enormous sense of triumph at the end of this assignment, especially since students’ family members had participated. At long last, I had managed to stir the learners’ motivation and enthusiasm for pursuing English study.

Grammatical White Lies
Since then, I have used similar assignments with other EFL classes. One group of upper-intermediate students consisted of new naval recruits who were younger than the group described above (averaging twenty years old), but they, too, needed an extra stimulus to learn English. Most had come directly from school benches to the navy. They were surprised to find that, during their first nine months in the navy, they would not be aboard a ship but

April Fool’s Day Contest
April 01, 2006 02:34AM

We are celebrating April Fool’s Day today! Level 4 students came up with some very creative excuses about not having done their homework. Listen to the messages and vote on the one that you think is the most original one! Thank you for your collaboration.
inside a classroom learning about issues that would be useful for their future naval missions. English for communication is now one of the main subjects taught, as it is the operative language of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), of which Portugal is a member.

Even though the students were confident about speaking in front of their classmates and seemed at ease with their knowledge of English, I felt that the class could use a little help from cyberspace. When the students joined the Navy, the last thing they wanted was to return to the classroom. I hoped that the podcasts would motivate the students and give them a sense of purpose.

After two weeks of classes, with April 1 just around the corner, I decided on an April Fool’s Day task. When they came to class the next day, I had already assembled a podcast at PodOmatic and left a little white-lie message there, which I showed the class as an example of what they were supposed to do (see http://aprilfoolsday.podomatic.com/). As a homework assignment, the students were asked to come up with an excuse for not having done their homework. Once again using this assignment as a grammar lesson, we revised the excuses in class. The students then practiced reading and speaking their brief messages before recording them.

Ending a lesson in a contest had worked so well with the Valentine’s Day project that I decided to try it again. I asked the Webheads in Action to serve as the jury for a contest to decide which excuses were the most convincing. Once again, the students were surprised by the number of messages left on the podcast page from people from all over the globe. The students were more eager to learn when they realized that people they did not know were watching and commenting on their performance in cyberspace.

Dynamic, Authentic, and Free
I was able to experiment with podcasting, and the students were able to benefit from an authentic learning task, because of the existence of free educational technology that is easy to access and use. To start your own adventure in podland, visit a podcast-hosting site—for example, PodOmatic (http://www.podomatic.com/) or Odeo (http://www.odeo.com/)—prepare an assignment for your students, and go.

References


Cristina Costa, an active member of TESOL and Webheads in Action, works as a naval officer and EFL teacher for the Portuguese navy.
I devoted some time to discussing with the teenaged students in my class whether they would like to chat over the Internet with other teenagers. Cross-cultural topics seemed the most appealing, so I made a list of interesting issues. I coaxed the students into working in groups on one topic so that they could eventually find similarities and differences when online with the other group. Their task would be to explore socializing, rules set by parents for behavior, and the money students received as an allowance.

Three female students accepted the challenge to chat online with students in other countries, and my quest for partner teachers abroad began. First, I had to make sure to contact reliable colleagues and match prospective student partners that were of similar ages and at similar stages in their language studies. To find partners, I visited discussion forums for teachers, posted to professional message boards, and felt out contributors to electronic discussion lists for teachers with needs and students like mine.

A colleague from Taiwan, whose students’ age and level of language were similar to those of mine, seemed a good choice, since the cultural differences between her students and my South American ones were likely to make the encounter rich and engaging. We exchanged student names and agreed on a date and time to contact each other using Skype. I took my students to the Multimedia area of the Skype site to show them how to set up an account. We had a
short rehearsal right there to build the students’ confidence and to ensure a successful online meeting.

Dealing with the Unexpected
Skype can connect as many as five people in a conference. I decided to give the floor to my three students, who would chat with the teacher from Taiwan and her student. As soon as we began the session, however, I had to make a spur-of-the-moment decision. The participants from the other class failed to connect to the conference because of problems related to time differences—a topic that teachers on both sides should tackle in advance to avoid frustration—so I asked one of the students to run the risk of inviting a stranger to participate. The students had prepared, they were motivated, and they had put off other plans for that Saturday morning, so I could not let them down.

Using Skype, the girls could choose among 2.4 million users worldwide. They narrowed their search by selecting a country, language, sex, and age. Fortunately, the students had an enlightening, compelling experience chatting with two teenaged boys from England.

At first, I allowed the students to communicate using text messages so they would have time to frame their questions and answers. The students got together using the Invite function of Skype, and they text chatted for a while, breaking the ice through introductory questions. When mistakes impeded communication, the students had to rephrase their ideas in an authentic exchange of personal information, which my students enjoyed. To the students’ excitement, they found themselves writing to boys their own age in England about a music festival in London where the rock bands U2 and Pink Floyd had performed live.

The Plunge into Voice Chat
When I suggested trying the voice function, I felt some resistance and fear on the part of my students, as voice chatting is more demanding than text chatting. But they took the plunge, and soon they and their partners were acting like any five teenagers

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### Why Use Skype with English Language Learners?

- The sound quality is excellent.
- It works with computers running Microsoft Windows, Macintosh, or Linux operating systems, so there are no platform problems.
- The system is completely secure. Everything you send is encrypted before you send it and, on arrival, is decrypted on the spot and presented as crystal-clear speech, as text, or as a file transfer.
- Language students and teachers living in countries where the target language is not heard daily in the streets can find speakers of the target language to chat with over text or voice, all for free.
- Skype’s Global User Directory, a giant telephone book listing all the people who use Skype, offers both access to other users and a measure of security. By browsing the personal data posted by Skype users, students can decide whether to accept or deny users access.
- You can send text files with tasks or pictures to share and discuss as well as voice files containing authentic recordings by both native and nonnative speakers. You can share content, questions, and answers to common problems and projects involving your students.
- You and up to four other people who have the software can get together to coordinate tactics in a game, make an important classroom decision, or simply chat, even if you are all on different continents.
- With the text-chat feature, you and your students can invite up to forty-eight other users to a group chat.
speaking English. They managed to use Skype's File Transfer function to send photos of their cities to each other, which enriched the experience. They also managed to complete the task I had given them.

The three students later made a presentation in class on the enlightening experience they had had using Skype. They reported on what they had learnt from the encounter regarding lifestyles and what they had felt to be interesting idiosyncrasies. This presentation led to an enthusiastic discussion on different behaviors, attitudes, customs, and celebrations around the world and a desire for more encounters with teenagers from different countries.

The Freedom and Future Dreams Project

In August 2005, I carried out a project, Freedom and Future Dreams in Different Cultures, with a colleague from Kuwait (see Zeinstejer and Al-Othman 2005a). The aim was for the students from the two countries to use synchronous and asynchronous tools to share cultural and social aspects of their lives, using English in authentic situations online.

New prospects and expectations were born: how I could use this tool to engage learners of languages all over the world in authentic communication, for free?

Students were directed to compare their cultures’ views regarding social restrictions, discrimination, and social and traditional expectations that limit their freedom. Since I expected that the gap between Eastern and Western cultures regarding these matters might be wide, I thought the topic would interest both groups of teenagers.

Based on previous experience using Skype with students, I decided not to rely on their connecting at home. In previous projects, some students had promised to participate in conferences from home, but their motivation faded, and they failed to do so out of fear of either facing an unknown audience or manipulating new technological tools. Instead, I brought the students together in the school’s multimedia area during class so I would be able to motivate them and support them when necessary.

The project would have two main voice-chat sessions: a preliminary synchronous session to try out the necessary software and to set the students at ease, and a final session, which would entail completing the assigned task. Preparatory work included a class discussion on the topic to raise motivation, a practical demonstration of text- and voice-chat tools, and a discussion of “chatiquette.” Students made text contacts through the blog I had created in Blogger (http://www.blogger.com/), which built their confidence as well as a desire to know more about each other.

A Tryout Session

For the rehearsal session, I set up the hardware so that the students would hear the interaction over a loudspeaker instead of through headphones. Because I had more students than computers available, this setup allowed all the students to participate. The dry run was very successful: my students were glued to the loudspeaker (for a recording of the rehearsal session, see Zeinstejer and Al-Othman 2005c).
Students at my end raised questions on topics ranging from politics and religion to education, social differences, women’s rights, music, and ways of greeting in the two cultures. After this successful session, the students eagerly returned to the lab repeatedly to work together on the project, update blog postings, and improve their software skills. Even students who had never shown enthusiasm about working with computers joined the crowd. They prepared a list of topics, and wrote questions and personal opinions to read into the microphone during the closing session.

The Final Session
The final session, which we recorded and uploaded to the Web (see Zeinstejer and Al-Othman 2005b), was a sound success. As shown by their comments in the class blog (see Zeinstejer 2005), the students found it an amazing, enriching experience.

Make This New Technology Work for You
The two projects described here are just simple examples of how voice technologies can enhance interactive tasks among students. Of course, these technologies would also enhance encounters among teachers: voice chat gives the interaction more energy, excitement, emotion, and dynamism. As well as using Skype in student projects, teachers could use it to share information, ask questions, and tell about their achievements and projects in virtual meetings and conferences with any other teacher on the planet who has a computer, Skype, and an Internet connection.

References


Rita Zeinstejer is a Computer-Assisted Language Learning Special Interest Group coordinator, consultant, and laboratory and multimedia coordinator at Asociación Rosarina de Cultura Inglesa, in Argentina.
What do teachers do when faced with heterogeneous classes—students of all levels of English proficiency in one classroom—and when the mandated textbook for the course is meant for beginning-level students? While a mix of native languages among students may have advantages, such as forcing students to use the second language, a mix of levels is not considered positive, especially in a monolingual environment. It is a challenge for teachers, requiring extra work and raising concerns about how much individual students are actually learning.

In an ideal world, the solution to this problem would be simply to administer a placement test and put students into homogeneous groups. Unfortunately, many teachers do not live in an ideal world, and the realities of scheduling, economics, and school policies make it necessary to find creative solutions.

Solution One: Small-Group Work
One solution often suggested for heterogeneous classes is that teachers use cooperative learning, or small groups. There are two possible models for group work in heterogeneous classrooms: (1) group students of roughly the same level together so that they can help each other and work at their own pace, or (2) form groups with at least one low-, mid-, and high-level student so that the higher level students can help the lower level ones as natural tutors (Celce-Murcia 1991; Davies and Pearse 2000). Small-group work is a valid technique with many benefits (Nunan 1999). Unfortunately, in my teaching situation, the benefits were not being realized.

Large Classes, Many Levels
I teach at the Technological University of Panamá (UTP), a public university where students take one or two semesters of English during their first or second year of study depending on their major. In my institution, the challenges of large, multilevel classes are very real. Groups of generally thirty-five to forty-five students take all of their classes together, including English, regardless of their level of language proficiency. While the seventeen English professors employed by UTP have waged a strong campaign for homogeneous EFL classes, they have so far been unsuccessful in this endeavor.

Not-So-Perfect Results
Many difficulties arise because of the vast range of English proficiency levels. This challenging situation is made more so by the fact that Panamanian students are not used to doing group work because the main educational methodology used in the country continues to be rote memorization.

Grouping students of the same level together did not work well for advanced-level students because the tasks were too simple and students completed
them too quickly. Lower-level students, on the other hand, did not understand the tasks well enough to be able to engage in them without a lot of teacher supervision. In contrast, including students of different levels in the same group most often meant that the one or two advanced-level students actually did the work while the other two or three students did not understand and, therefore, made little or no progress in learning English.

Find Out What the Students Know
First, I needed to know what the students’ working knowledge of English was. A standardized English proficiency exam could tell me the students’ levels, but I decided to give a short, three-part placement test that would be much less costly and time-consuming to administer but would still provide a fairly accurate idea of students’ proficiency.

The test, which I devised, consists of a dictation to evaluate listening comprehension, a personal essay to evaluate writing, and a short interview to evaluate speaking. I administer the placement test, which takes a total of about two hours, on the first or second day of class. The placement test serves another purpose as well: the writing and speaking sections, in which the students write and speak about themselves, give me information about the students, and the dictation, which contains information about me, allows students the chance to get to know me.

Divide the Students Accordingly
Second, I use the results of the test to divide the students into three groups (beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels) based on their grammar performance. For example, a student who can use the simple present, present progressive, and past tenses mostly correctly and accurately will fall into the intermediate-level group. Students who have not mastered these basic tenses are placed into the beginning-level group, and students who have mastered those as well as other more advanced grammatical structures will go into the advanced-level group. This system is not foolproof, so as I work with students and observe their abilities more closely, I may switch students from group to group.

Design General and Group-Specific Syllabi
The third step is to review the course goals and design course syllabi that align with those goals: for students to acquire a basic working knowledge of spoken and written English in order to continue learning English on their own for their chosen career. UTP recognizes that English is becoming more and more important as a tool for research in the sciences and as a means for getting a better job in any industry. This may suggest that the university should offer English for specific...
purposes (ESP) courses, but, given that such courses work best with students who have at least an intermediate level of English (Gatehouse 2001), using an ESP approach with an entire class of learners at UTP is impossible at this time.

The textbook for the course is designed for beginning-level students and covers only basic grammatical structures and vocabulary. Unfortunately, it is not appropriate for the intermediate-level and advanced-level students. Therefore, I design a separate course syllabus for each group:

- The beginning-level students follow the textbook and the course objectives as written by the university.
- The intermediate-level students are expected to participate and to complete the same class work and homework as the beginning-level group, but their syllabus includes extra assignments, which can consist of readings and comprehension questions, short reports about topics of interest in their field of study, and presentations to their classmates.
- The advanced-level students do only ESP project work from their field of study. Because they have already mastered the grammar and vocabulary of the course, they are not required to attend class each day but instead may do reading, writing, and research in their field of study, presenting their findings and information to their classmates. These projects are most successfully carried out with the input of the students and content-area instructors.

Explain the Scheme to the Students
At the beginning of the class, I present the syllabi to the students and explain how the class will work. Once students start working in their leveled groups, they see the benefits of the approach, and their motivation and interest in the language seem to increase.

For example, one unit from the textbook, which I recently presented to students in the electrical engineering major, is on forming questions in the simple present tense. The beginning-level students, who are learning this topic for the first time, complete grammar exercises and work with understanding and producing the language using the four skills. In addition to the textbook exercises, the intermediate-level students, who are reviewing this topic, do an out-of-class assignment: they read a short article from their field of study and write comprehension questions about it.

This topic also lends itself to work for the advanced-level students. They create an “electronic quiz,” a simple electronic device in which the correct answer to a multiple-choice question turns on a light. They then write an explanatory essay on how the electronic quiz was created and how it works, and present their quizzes to their classmates. The presentations take one class period, but the time is well spent because it reinforces the correct formation of questions for all the students.

The beginning-level and intermediate-level students are evaluated on their understanding of the grammar in a unit test, but with different versions. The advanced-level students are evaluated on all aspects of the project, including language use and writing.

Caveats and Lessons Learned
Too Much Freedom
When I first tried this approach, I gave the advanced-level students too much freedom without teaching them responsibility, resulting in missed deadlines and some students not coming to class at all. Young adult students new to university life are struggling with managing their newfound freedom and responsibilities. I learned that I have to divide the advanced-level group’s assignments into several parts, each with a separate due date requiring class attendance, so that the students learn responsibility and time management, a lesson I hope will serve them well in all their university classes.

Resentment over Group Differences
Initially, the students in the beginning-level and intermediate-level groups perceived that the advanced-level students were not working. When I realized this, I explained to all the students that even though some students were not attending class each day, they were still working.
Conversely, the advanced-level group sometimes expressed resentment at having to do research and longer writing assignments when the other students were doing “easy” work. I responded that they had the time to do the work because they were not attending the regular class hours, that the work the other students were doing was not easy for them because of their proficiency level, and, most importantly, that the ESP projects they were doing would help them in their future careers. Most students understand these reasons and appreciate a teacher who works hard to tailor the class to their needs.

Grades for Achievement or Effort?
Course evaluation and grading raise another issue. The advanced-level students have already achieved the course goals and could therefore argue that they deserve to get an A in the course from the beginning. However, a course grade should also reflect the student’s effort, participation, and improvement over time. Using these criteria could result in a lower grade for an advanced-level student who does not meet the expectations of the advanced syllabus.

I do not want to penalize advanced-level students with a harsh grading policy, especially since I cannot dedicate much of my teaching time to them. Therefore, the grading on their projects is usually more lenient than it would be for a regular course at the advanced level, as long as the assignments are completed. Finally, all students take the same final exam.

Not-So-Advanced-Level Students
Another concern is that some seemingly advanced-level students may not really have advanced-level proficiency in English. As Cummins (1999) has stated, students acquire conversational fluency, or basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS), more quickly than they acquire academic language ability, or cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). Many students who can achieve a high score on an entrance exam or on my placement test could have mastered BICS very well but may be lacking in CALP. No matter how well this three-in-one grouping model works, it can never replace a teacher who is solely focused on one group of learners with similar, achievable objectives.

Imperfect Teaching Situations Demand Creative Solutions
The administration of my department has fully supported me as I have implemented this approach, even adopting it as the methodology for all EFL teachers to use. The deans of other departments have also been very receptive to the idea, offering support and guidance with the technical aspects of the advanced-level group projects.

Clearly, resolving the challenges of heterogeneous language classrooms with this model is not ideal. For one thing, it requires more work on the part of the teacher. Nevertheless, it results in more learning and increased motivation for all students. Imperfect teaching situations will always demand creative solutions. When the teaching is at the right level, students can learn, progress, and achieve their potential.

References

Heather Linville, who was an EFL professor and education consultant for the Technological University of Panama for three years, currently works as a senior English language fellow and regional coordinator at the University of Indonesia.
The fields of second language acquisition and distance education both boast a profusion of theory and literature, yet the specific challenges of teaching and learning languages outside of the traditional classroom remain inadequately addressed. In her contribution to this volume, White states that a central theoretical framework for distance language learning has yet to be developed, meaning courses have tended to be technology rather than theory driven.

Distance Education and Languages begins to bridge that gap. It offers a collection of papers that combine theory from second language acquisition and distance education with practice. Based on the research and experiences of instructors of modern languages in geographically and institutionally disparate settings, the book explores issues central to language learning through computer communication. Elements critical to student success form the core of the book’s six sections. The authors explore ways in which distance affects, and does not affect, teaching and learning: definitions of learner autonomy, effective means of providing learner support, considerations in course design, and teacher development. Internet use is covered specifically in part 5. The book’s information and insights will interest anyone involved in distance language learning.

Mary Peacock teaches ESOL at Richland College in the United States.

Here’s a book that the beginning-level readers in my class truly enjoy reading. This page-turner has characters and a setting that even the most tuned-out students can relate to, no matter what their educational or cultural background.

Students in high school, adult education, and college ESL programs will enjoy this book, as will their teachers. It has a wonderful plot: an English instructor is killed in her office, stabbed through the heart with . . . a pencil. And what’s going on in the duplication office at test time?

The plot focuses on the developing relationships among three student officers—Danny Soto, Jade Lee, and Crystal Jackson—in a police training program at a community college and touches on timely themes of immigration, acculturation, and intercultural relationships.

The book offers suspense, romance, bad apples who get their comeuppance, and action a-plenty, all at a sixth-grade reading level. Not many writers could succeed in a feat such as this, but Batchelor has. She brings her extensive experience as a teacher, materials writer, and novelist to this work to produce a ninety-one-page novelette that meets the needs of an underserved market: compelling reading for reluctant readers.

The students and I had great fun with this book. We’re all looking forward to Batchelor’s next one.

Judy Winn-Bell teaches in the college and adult education programs at City College of San Francisco, in the United States.
English Club is a free Web site that is designed for all levels of English language learners. Both students and teachers can begin exploration of this site by taking a virtual tour on a red, double-decker London bus. This tour offers an introduction to the four main sections, with numerous lessons and interactive areas embedded in each that provide a wide variety of both synchronous and asynchronous tools. Founded in 1997 by Josef Essberger, English Club is dedicated to the learning and teaching of English.

The first main section, ESL Learning Centre, focuses on lessons for all English skill areas as well as business English, English for young learners, practice for the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), vocabulary, and English for specific purposes activities. The listening section offers news from both BBC and the Voice of America, which broadcasts in Special English (English with simple vocabulary and sentence structures delivered at a slow pace). The writing section offers structured and diverse tools for beginning- to advanced-level students. A writing assessment to determine the level of autonomous learners is included.

The ESL Clubhouse contains very active chat and forum areas that focus on a wide variety of topics for English language learners. Students can ask for help 24/7 and share and compare expertise about English content, structure, and usage in numerous forums and chats. eFriends, daily jokes, interactive games and quizzes, all by language level, add fun and learner-centered access to the English language.

ESL Teachers Lounge, the third section of the site, is designed as a resource-rich section for teachers. Highlights include ESL lesson plans with worksheets, articles on teaching English, an ESL jobs section with job vacancies and résumé posting, and a TEFL training and qualifications section. The ESL Teachers Discussion and ESL Projects forums, the true gems of this section, provide active discussion on numerous diverse topics ranging from grammar to setting up collaborative pen-pal writing projects over distance.

The fourth main section, ESL World, offers summary information and resources for several countries and includes practical information, language notes, news in English, maps, ESL forums, links, information on English schools for students, and information on TEFL courses for teachers. Currently, many countries are not represented here; however, future completion of this section will prove a valuable resource in distance and face-to-face teaching environments.

On completion of your free registration for English Club, you will receive the ESL Progress newsletter, “ESL Webguide,” and “7 Secrets for ESL Learners.” This site offers a resource-rich environment and a friendly club where you can meet and share knowledge with other teachers, bus fare included.

Bend It like Beckham is an excellent choice for use in an ESL classroom. The film provides many themes for thoughtful discussion, such as sports, religion, the generation gap and, in particular, cultural diversity. It also offers the opportunity to explore Indian marriage customs, which students can compare with those of other nations.

Elena Zakharova is a senior teacher of EFL at Yakutsk State University, in Russia.
Software Thumbnails


Cobb’s fascinating and free Compleat Lexical Tutor has far more to offer than just a concordancer (an engine that rapidly searches through many lines of text in an electronic corpus, such as transcribed conversations or academic papers, and arranges the words in the center of a page with their surrounding context). The value lies in how students use the results, or concordance, after a corpus search.

For vocabulary study, learners might compare a word they have used in their own writing with its occurrence in academic papers written by native speakers. For grammar study, they might see how often the continuous (-ing) form of a word is used as opposed to its simple present form, or compare its past perfect and past tense forms. For stylistics and rhetoric, they could explore how often certain colloquial terms are used in transcripts of spoken versus written language.

Concordance study assumes that fairly advanced learners need sufficient time to pay attention to significant target features. As their reading improves, for example, the likelihood decreases that they will stop to study a word or a grammatical structure. That is, at more advanced levels, it is presumed that they are absorbing meaning in large chunks and do not spend time on details. Hence, errors become frozen into their output. They may say, “But I’ve always said/written it that way!” Concordancing, particularly in composition classes, can be a revelation.

To get started easily with concordancing, you type a word into the Quick Lookup box in the upper right corner of the Lex tutor home page. The engine will immediately produce a concordance based on a collection of online corpora. For more in-depth activities, you might start with the tools in the Teachers column and follow the Research Base link, which offers explanations of how and why to use concordancing.

Students will need your assistance, but once they become familiar with some of the functions and are guided through their uses, they will be able to quickly check their own writing errors and vocabulary. Cobb has also built in downloadable text-to-speech software, a way to paste in student texts and compare them in batches to corpora, tests and quizzes, as well as reading passages with dictionary and thesaurus assistance.

This is an extremely rich site, and I have introduced only a few of its attributes here. Best of all, it’s free and doesn’t even require registration.

Elizabeth Hanson-Smith, professor emeritus at California State University in the United States, is co-editor with Sarah Rilling of Learning Languages through Technology (TESOL 2006).
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New Book Titles Recently Introduced by TESOL Publications

TESOL has recently introduced some new titles:

**Language Teacher Research in Asia**

Edited by Thomas S. C. Farrell, this is the first volume of a five-volume series. It presents research conducted by language teachers at all levels, from high school English teachers to English language teacher educators, reflecting on their practices. The countries represented cover both North and South Asia.

Many classroom teachers often feel a “disconnect” between research and practice. This volume successfully bridges the gap by demonstrating how the lessons gleaned from reflective research can be transformed into practical instructional strategies.

The chapters include the following topics:

- Fostering learner autonomy by discouraging teacher dependence
- Seeking content that encourages students to engage in second language discussions
- Balancing the focus on test-taking skills and content learning
- Helping students monitor and manage their listening strategies
- Teaching writing strategies more explicitly
- Comparing students’ and teachers’ perceptions of the learning that occurs

The format is such that language teachers with varied experiences and qualifications can make comparisons across chapters about issues, background literature, procedures, results, and reflections. Chapter details help readers compare and evaluate the examples of teacher research and even replicate some research, if so desired.

TESOL members can purchase *Language Teacher Research in Asia* for the member rate of US$22.45. To make this purchase, go to http://www.tesol.org/, and scroll down to the Product Catalog link.

**Science for English Language Learners: K–12 Classroom Strategies**

Edited by Ann K. Fathman (TESOL member) and David T. Crowther, this book is published by the National Science Teachers Association and distributed through TESOL’s Online Products Catalog. The purpose of this book is to provide educators with a guide for teaching science to English language learners.

To do their best with linguistically and culturally diverse students, teachers need a strong foundation in how to best teach both science and language. *Science for English Language Learners* is a comprehensive guide that will help expand expertise in teaching science content and processes, in language development and literacy, and in inquiry-based teaching. Additionally, it helps K–12 educators integrate best practices from the very different but highly complementary fields of science education and English language learning.

TESOL’s PreK–12 English Language Proficiency Standards complements the strategic approaches presented in *Science for English Language Learners*. The PreK–12 English Language Proficiency Standards...
Standards includes detailed matrices for science performance indicators by grade level cluster.

TESOL members can purchase Science for English Language Learners for the member rate of US$22.50. To make this purchase, go to www.tesol.org and scroll down to the Product Catalog link.

Report on Recent Visit to Asia (continued from page 5)

Cambodia

Chuck Amorosino, TESOL’s executive director, and I traveled to Phnom Penh to engage in several field visits. Through the gracious support of Paul Mahony, director of the Australia Center of Education (ACE), we were introduced to Dr. Lau Chhiv Eav, the president of Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP) and a member of the Cambodia TESOL Steering Committee, 2007. We had a nice conversation with the RUPP president, who shared with us his vision and support of English language teaching on campus. We then visited the English Language Supporting Unit and met with officials to learn about their language teaching curriculum as well as teacher development opportunities. Finally, we visited RUPP’s Institute of Foreign Languages and had a panel discussion regarding their views about TESOL and their other concerns.

Our last visit of the first morning was to Paul Mahony’s ACE. It is perhaps the longest and most well-established English training center in Phnom Penh. It serves as the glue for all English language teaching and teacher development events in Cambodia. In fact, the previous two conferences of CamTESOL were hosted by ACE. Paul is an instrumental and visionary person. Because of his more than ten years of residence and leadership in language teaching in Cambodia, he is a well-respected leader.

Later that day, Chuck and I gave a joint presentation titled “What is TESOL?” to about sixty school teachers and university professors from Phnom Penh. During the question and answer session, we had endless questions on topics such as how to join TESOL and what TESOL can do for members. We also had questions regarding teaching methodology, testing and assessment, as well as credit-bearing systems, placement tests, and computer-assisted language teaching. The level of enthusiasm from the audience was somewhat unexpected. One of the teachers made a comment that has had a lasting impression on us: “We are so pleased that TESOL is coming to us, and we really want to see more TESOL events to be held in our region.”

On the second day, we visited the New World Institute and Pannasastra University of Cambodia. These schools are both well-equipped, and it is obvious that they want to provide students with a more supportive environment in which to learn English.

We gave our “What Is TESOL?” presentation to an audience from outside Phnom Penh, with most of the audience composed of elementary, junior, or high school teachers. They seemed to be more interested in teaching issues and trends of language teaching around the world. As a result, our question and answer session turned out to be more content-based, discussing topics ranging from nonnative English-speaking teachers to global English, from teacher development to teaching methodology, from multilingualism to contextualized language teaching. The center of attention then shifted to the hiring practices in many universities. There was a round of applause when I told them about the position paper TESOL issued urging employers not to discriminate against nonnative speakers in hiring.

At the end of the second day, we hosted a dinner for all the CamTESOL steering committee members at which we discussed in detail what it takes to become a TESOL affiliate. We left Cambodia early the next morning with a feeling that we had made a stronger connection with our colleagues in Cambodia.

Philippines

Our main event in the Philippines was to participate in the well-organized PALT-TESOL Public Forum on the changing role of ELT in Asia. We participated on a panel with Dr. Thomas J. Kral, chief officer of USAID-Manila Office of Education, also a main player in promoting ELT in the
Philippines, and Dr. Rosario I. Alonzo, PALT vice president. Chuck introduced TESOL and its global orientation and activities, and I focused on the trends of ELT in Asia, a topic that seemed to have attracted a lot of attention from the attendees. Thanks to a strong promotion by the affiliate, the hall was packed with more than 250 participants, many from outside Quezon City. The question and answer session was the highlight of the forum, as much encouraging news and many positive perspectives were shared. I felt that I spoke on behalf of the membership, covering issues many TESOL members face. There was a resonance in our interaction that reminded me of our similarities as colleagues and our commitment to do the right things and to do them well. I am convinced that TESOL’s efforts to reach out have started to have an impact on our global affiliates.

As TESOL president, I was especially honored to induct eleven PALT-TESOL Executive Board members for 2006–2007. It was a rare opportunity that I owe to TESOL’s efforts to reach out worldwide.

On the whole, I found our trip inspiring because it enabled me to give back to so many TESOL professionals working in such diverse environments.

Jun Liu
President, 2006–07

TESOL Board Approves Two New Position Statements
At its meeting in October, the TESOL Board of Directors approved two new position statements. The first statement focuses on the diversity among English language learners in the United States, and the second outlines recommendations for the upcoming reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act. The full statements are available online at http://www.tesol.org/.

2007 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.

2007 TESOL Academy
The 2007 TESOL Academy will be held at the University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida, in the United States, in June. The academy will feature six 10-hour workshops. For more information, contact edprograms@tesol.org.

2006–2007 Symposia
The TESOL Symposium on English Teacher Development in EFL Contexts took place November 10 at Shantou University, in Guangdong Province, China. The featured speakers were Donald Freeman, Vermont, United States; Jun Liu, Arizona, United States; and David Nunan, Hong Kong SAR. Qiufang Wen, Nanjing University, China, provided closing remarks.

TESOL is offering two symposia in 2007. The TESOL Symposium on Teaching English for Specific Purposes: Meeting Our Learners’ Needs will take place July 12 at Universidad Argentina de la Empresa, in Buenos Aires, Argentina; and the TESOL Symposium on English Language Assessment will take place October 26 at Kyiv National Taras Shevchenko University, in Kyiv, Ukraine.

For more information, contact edprograms@tesol.org.

TESOL to Launch Language Teacher Research in Africa: Call for Volume Editors
TESOL is now ready to celebrate achievements in teacher research that are happening in Africa and wants to communicate those achievements to the profession through a new volume titled Language Teacher Research in Africa.

This volume on Africa will complement the five volumes under way in the Language Teacher Research Series (Thomas S. C. Farrell, series editor): Asia, Europe, the Americas, the Middle East, and Australia/New Zealand. (See “New Book Titles Recently Introduced by TESOL Publications” above for a full description of the Asia volume, which is recently off press.)

Teacher as researcher is a relatively new stance toward educational research in that it highlights the role classroom teachers play as knowledge-generators rather than receivers of knowledge. This series celebrates what is being achieved and encourages more involvement of language teachers from all types of programs or institutions. The aim of this series is to encourage an inquiry stance toward language teaching, in which teachers play a crucial role in taking responsibility for their own professional development, while also contributing their particular perspectives to the research literature on TESOL.

Jun Liu
President, 2006–07
2007 Call for Member Resolutions
The procedure for submitting resolutions to be considered by the general membership at the Annual Business Meeting, March 2007, in Seattle, Washington, USA, can be found on the TESOL Web site. Go to http://www.tesol.org/ and click on the News tab. On the News page, scroll to the 2007 Call for Member Resolutions link. Please send, by February 19, 2007, any resolutions you may have to Dudley Reynolds
Associate Professor, Department of English
University of Houston
R. Cullen 205
Houston, TX 77204-3013
Fax: 713-743-3215
dreynolds@uh.edu

E-List Subscriptions Have New Features
The Interest Section (IS) and caucus e-lists have new features that enable members to manage their own subscriptions. You can now set and change the preferences for your e-list connections, such as changing the e-mail address and setting subscriptions to digest mode.

For these features to take effect, you will need to edit your member profile on the TESOL Web site. If you are currently subscribed to IS and caucus e-lists, you will need to check “Join Your IS or Caucus E-list” in your member profile to remain on your respective e-lists. Note: If you did not edit your member profile by May 1, you were automatically unsubscribed from your e-lists, and you will need to resubscribe.

To use these new features, go to http://www.tesol.org/ : Interest Sections : Connect with Colleagues. If you have any questions or problems, please e-mail interestsections@tesol.org.

Renew Early to Avoid Delays during Convention Preregistration Process
If you plan to attend the TESOL 2007 convention in Seattle, Washington, USA, in March 2007, and plan to wait to renew your membership as part of the preregistration process, you may want to renew when your invoice appears instead. The convention preregistration process will no longer include the opportunity to renew membership or join TESOL. Registrants will now be referred to the TESOL Web site.

Members can now renew online instantly and avoid the weeks of delay that result from renewing as part of the convention preregistration process. By renewing membership online, members should incur no delays regarding the status of their membership during convention preregistration.

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.

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Job MarketPlace at the TESOL 2007 Annual Convention
Job MarketPlace (JMP) has changed formats and now puts recruiters and job seekers in control of much of the job-seeking process. The enhanced version features an online system allowing recruiters and job seekers to easily match criteria and set up interviews to be held at the TESOL 2007 convention. Those that have been to JMP in the past will see an entirely new setup, and those that have never been should expect to be able to conduct job searches electronically. On-site interviews will be arranged in advance or set up electronically on site.

JMP enables recruiters and job seekers to fill a variety of English language teaching jobs: long- and short-term; teaching and administrative; public and private; primary, secondary, adult, and higher education. Job MarketPlace will be located in Hall 4B at the Washington State Convention & Trade Center.

Graduate Student Forum
The Graduate Student Forum is a student-run miniconference sponsored by Seattle Pacific University, Bilkent University, and Purdue University. This forum invites graduate students in TESOL teacher preparation programs to present papers, demonstrations, and posters. This forum also 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 at the 41st Annual TESOL Convention in Seattle, Washington. TESOL invites doctoral students to participate in this informative event that brings together doctoral students and established TESOL scholars to discuss issues pertinent to the students’ research. This forum enables doctoral students to get feedback about current issues pertaining to their dissertation research from their peers as well as from seasoned ESOL professionals (mentors). This event is an informal gathering where doctoral students can talk casually about their research. For more information, please visit http://www.tesol.org/.

Student Membership
Do you have students who would benefit from TESOL membership? This year TESOL will begin an incentive program in which the cost of one free convention registration will be shared between the five student TESOL members that you recruited by Thursday, March 1, 2007. TESOL is committed to making membership in TESOL affordable to students, so urge your students to join now at the student rate 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 become a part of this program, please contact Jeanne Glover at jglover@tesol.org and ask to have materials shipped to you.
In Memoriam
Jean Zukowski/Faust of Flagstaff, Arizona, USA, who enjoyed a 42-year career as a professor of English, died July 17, 2006. She was 65.

Dr. Zukowski/Faust gave much of her time and talents to the TESOL community. She served on the TESOL Board of Directors from 2000 to 2003, chaired three AZ-TESOL state conferences, and was three times awarded the AZ-TESOL's Distinguished Service Award.

An author of over 25 textbooks for English language learners, she was a frequent speaker and workshop presenter around the world. During her career she taught at three institutions in Turkey, maintained a long-term affiliation with Northern Arizona University, and was an associate director with the U.S. Peace Corps in Poland.

The 2007 Board of Directors and Nominating Committee Slate

The 2007 Board of Directors and Nominating Committee slate shown below has been posted. Visit http://www.tesol.org/, under Association. Voting will begin in October 2006 and end in early January 2007.

President-elect, 2007–2008
(to become President, 2008–2009)
Mark Algren
The University of Kansas
Lawrence, Kansas, USA

Shelley Wong
George Mason University
Fairfax, Virginia, USA

Board of Directors, 2007–2010
Deena Boraie
American University in Cairo
Cairo, Egypt

Andy Curtis
Independent Consultant
Ontario, Canada

Marcia Fisk Ong
Independent Writer
Phuket, Thailand

Elizabeth Franklin
University of Northern Colorado
Greeley, Colorado, USA

Božana Knežević
University of Rijeka
Rijeka, Croatia

Christopher Sauer
Divine Word College
Epworth, Iowa, USA

Nominating Committee (2007–2008)
Representing Eight Major Groups

Adult Education Programs
Trudy Lothian
Ottawa-Carleton Catholic School Board
Ontario, Canada

Kirsten Schaezefel
The Center for Applied Linguistics
Washington, District of Columbia, USA

Affiliates
Ulrich Bliesener
University of Hildesheim
Hanover, Germany

Natalie Kuhlman
San Diego State University
San Diego, California, USA

Caucuses
Rick Kappra
City College of San Francisco
San Francisco, California, USA

Silvia Pessoa
Carnegie Mellon University
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

Elementary and Secondary Education Programs
Judie Haynes
River Edge Board of Education
River Edge, New Jersey, USA

Glynis Terrell
Atlanta Public Schools
Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Higher Education Programs
Fabiola Ehlers-Zavala
Colorado State University
Fort Collins, Colorado, USA

Craig Machado
Norwalk Community College
Norwalk, Connecticut, USA

Intensive English Programs and Bicultural Centers
Fernando Fleurquin
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA

Philip Less
Arkansas Department of Workforce Education
Little Rock, Arkansas, USA

Interest Sections
Jane Hoelker
Qatar University
Doha, Qatar

Anne V. Martin
ESL Materials Writer and Copy Editor
Syracuse, New York, USA

Researchers
Gerald P. Berent
Rochester Institute of Technology
Rochester, New York, USA

Candace Harper
University of Florida
Gainesville, Florida, USA
Perspectives on Community College ESL, Volume 1: Pedagogy, Programs, Curricula, and Assessment
Marilyn Spaventa, Editor

English as a second language (ESL) programs in community colleges are as diverse in the models they follow as the students they serve. This volume provides a detailed look at how faculty and administrators are tailoring their ESL programs to best serve the needs of their students and the missions of their institutions.

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Perspectives on Community College ESL, Vol. 2: Students, Mission, and Advocacy
Amy Blumenthal, Editor

The Perspectives on Community College ESL series brings into practical focus a wide and diverse array of reflective work on ESL education in U.S. community college settings. It draws on the broad mission and constituencies that community colleges throughout the country must embrace in order to be effective.

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- Set (Volume 1 and 2): Members: $49.95, Nonmembers: $62.50

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At the TESOL conference, ESL and EFL teachers from around the world gather to exchange ideas and practices in interactive sessions featuring TESOL’s global perspective. Participants integrate knowledge of current trends in the field while developing a professional network and gathering knowledge resources that they can share with colleagues at their home institutions. TESOL’s convention attendees teach English to children and adults in a variety of contexts worldwide.

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Job MarketPlace is better than ever!

TESOL’s new online Career Center streamlines your search and optimizes your time.

This year, Job MarketPlace, held in conjunction with TESOL’s Annual Convention (March 21-24, 2007, in Seattle, Washington, USA) features the new TESOL Career Center, an online resource for making career connections in English language teaching. The new Career Center offers a job fair module designed to help you make the most of your time at the convention.

Starting December 1, 2006, recruiters can register online, post jobs and begin screening résumés and scheduling on-site interviews. Job seekers can view jobs as soon as they are posted and apply to the ones they want to interview for, rather than waiting until the event itself.

By convention time, both employers and job seekers will already have established their schedules for who they want to see and when. No more time conflicts, blind hiring, or double-bookings.

Visit www.careers.tesol.org after December 1 to learn more and to register with Job Marketplace.

TESOL

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Want to know what's happening in Washington, DC?
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This interactive feature of the TESOL Web site includes detailed information on the U.S. Congress, a congressional directory, legislation and bills, and communication tools. Through the U.S. Advocacy Action Center you can:

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- Learn more about your elected officials in Washington, DC
- Find information on key bills and legislation that TESOL is tracking
- Have access to advocacy tools and tips to better understand and influence the legislative process
- Motivate your colleagues to become more involved on important issues
- And much, much more!

In addition, by joining the Advocacy Action Network, you will receive action alerts and updates on legislation and policies that impact you, your classroom, and your students.

Help make a difference for English language learners and educators! Get involved by going to www.capwiz.com/TESOL today!


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