My Journey from the World of EFL to the World of ESL
by Pat Colabucci

IPA Animals for Teaching Vowel Sounds
by Holly Krech Thomas

Grammar for the Real World
Reviewed by Leslie Huff

TESOL Convention Spans the Globe
Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages
42nd ANNUAL CONVENTION AND EXHIBIT
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

When?
April 2-5, 2008

Where?
Above Time Square
Hilton New York
1335 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10019-6078

Sessions will be divided between the Hilton New York and
the Sheraton Hotel and Towers.

What is the theme?
Worlds of TESOL: Building Communities of Practice, Inquiry
and Creativity

How do I register?
The Advance Program, which is mailed in late August, contains
all necessary registration forms and will be mailed to all mem-
ers. If you are not a member and would like to receive a
Program, please e-mail info@tesol.org.

Where do I stay?
Housing for the convention will open in early December
2007. For a list of convention hotels, please consult the
Advance Program.

What is the convention schedule?
Tuesday, April 1, 2008
Registration: 3-6 pm
Preconvention Institutes

Wednesday, April 2, 2008
Registration: 7 am-7 pm
Educational Visits
Preconvention Institutes
Committee Meetings
Interest Section and Affiliate Leaders’ Workshops
Opening Plenary 5 pm

Thursday, April 3, 2008
Registration: 7 am-5 pm
Job MarketPlace: 9 am-5 pm
Exhibits: 9 am-5 pm*
Sessions and Workshops

Friday, April 4, 2008
Registration: 7 am-5 pm
Job MarketPlace: 9 am-5 pm
Exhibits: 9 am-5 pm*
Sessions and Workshops

Saturday, April 5, 2008
Registration: 7 am-3 pm
Job MarketPlace: 9 am-5 pm
Exhibits: 9 am-5 pm*
Sessions and Workshops
Post Convention Institutes

*All times are subject to change.

Where do I get more information?
TESOL Conference Services Department
700 South Washington Street, Suite 200
Alexandria, Virginia 22314 USA
Telephone: +1 703/836-0774
Fax: +1 703/836-7864
Email: conventions@tesol.org
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

Circle Time: Teaching Comprehension through Conventions of Nonfiction Text
by Judie Haynes
Using Comprehension Strategies in Second Grade
By carefully demonstrating reading strategies in a workshop-oriented classroom, Laura Menzella gives students the tools they need to make magic with meaning.

Home Room: Rotating Principals, Persistent Teachers
by Jim Hughes

The Road Taken: The Breakup
by Debbie Zacarian

Multilingual Momentum:
ESL or EFL—Does It Matter?
by Ke Xu

In-Service: Developing Metaphorically
by Andy Curtis

From A to Z: Picture This
by Dorothy Zemach

OUT OF THE BOX

Learning English the Hard Way
by San Shwe Baw

What a Broken Jaw Taught Me about Language Acquisition
by Dennis Terdy

My Journey from the World of EFL to the World of ESL
by Pat Colabucci

The Right Place at the Right Time
Teaching abroad helped Gillian Grant develop in ways that would never have been possible in her home country, but she knew when it was time to go home.

My Painful First Year Teaching ESOL
by Chris Jenkins

PORTAL

Avoiding the Bleeding Edge of Wikis
by Joseph Tomes and Richard S. Lavin

IPA Animals for Teaching
by Holly Krech Thomas

Making ESL Textbooks More Relevant to EFL Students
by Alice S. Lee

Connecting the Course Book
by Brian Tomlinson argues that teachers can overcome the shortcomings of course books by humanizing, localizing, and personalizing the texts and tasks for the students.

Feather Day
by Kellie Molden

REFERENCES & RESOURCES

RULES: Rules for Using Linguistic Elements of Speech (Marjorie Feinstein-Whittaker and Lynda Katz Wilner)
Reviewed by Charles Duquette

Grammar for the Real World (CD-ROM)
Reviewed by Leslie Huff

Shambles in Southeast Asia: The ESL Page
Reviewed by Chris Smith

Twelve Chickens
The death of a student made Tracey Lin Edou wonder about the relevance of the middle school lessons she was teaching in Gabon.

SurveyMonkey
Reviewed by Susan Kelly

ASSOCIATION NEWS

TESOL Convention Span the Globe in Seattle

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Hedy M. McGarrell, Editor

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Language Teacher Research in Europe
Simon Borg, Editor

This volume describes specific classroom experiences in a European context and extracts a more broadly applicable analysis of how to improve student learning. Some topics include enhancing classroom dynamics, using technology, increasing motivation, and integrating a research focus in teaching.

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Helping English Language Learners Succeed in Pre-K-Elementary Schools
by Jan Lacina, Linda New Levine and Patience Sowa

This book shares the experiences of exemplary ESL and classroom teachers who regularly collaborate for the educational achievement of English language learners. The volume utilizes narrative vignettes, prereading questions, and end-of-chapter case studies to highlight pedagogical dilemmas, guide readers, and encourage dialogue. It is organized around knowledge that is required of many educators and all English language educators: curriculum, standards, assessment, community, language, culture, and advocacy.

Order No. 294, 189 pp
ISBN 978-193118539-4
Member price: $19.95
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Order online at www.tesol.org
In my March 2007 presidential message, I communicated my commitment to help TESOL increase its effectiveness as a global association while meeting the professional needs of its diverse membership.

What better way to start this process than to attend TESOL-SPAIN’s 30th Annual Convention? At 3:00 on Friday afternoon on March 9, 2007, I arrived at St. Patrick’s English School in Donostia-San Sebastián to register for the convention. I was greeted by John Phillips, the head of English in the school, and a group of students who showed the convention participants around. As a first-time visitor to a TESOL-SPAIN event, I relished the opportunity to watch this affiliate actively serving its members.

Before the convention I had been in touch with Kate Marriage and Catt Boardman, who are regional coordinators and were the speaker coordinators for the conference. Utilizing their knowledge and TESOL-SPAIN’s excellent Web site (http://www.tesol-spain.org/), which was designed and is maintained by Past President Enda Scott, I was able to learn a great deal about their history, their organization, and their interaction with their members. However, it was by speaking with the participants, the board members, and the other members who worked at the convention that I felt how exciting it was for everyone to meet in Donostia-San Sebastián in the Basque-speaking region. It was a risk to meet so far from the center of the country, but the board wanted to emphasize the importance of the association’s regional structure. Would the members come? They definitely came! There were over 700 attendees at this conference, many coming from the local area.

Because English teaching in Spain has traditionally emphasized the four skills, the board was taking a chance with this year’s theme: Content and Language Learning—Two Birds, One Stone. However, in this linguistically diverse country many schools teach content in more than one language. St. Patrick’s English School, the school at which the conference was held, teaches in English, Basque, and Spanish. Across Spain the public schools are beginning to teach some of their curricula in English. Therefore, this year’s theme was pertinent for Spain’s language educators. I met content teachers who are being asked to start teaching their content in English, program administrators who shared the ways in which their schools are teaching content in English and other languages, and many teachers eager to learn more about content and language teaching.

This experience in Donostia-San Sebastián showed me how one TESOL affiliate is meeting the diverse professional needs of its members. The theme of its next conference, in March 2008, is Global English: Local Perspectives, which, I believe, is both interesting and relevant.

Sandra J. Briggs

President, 2007–2008, sjbtbf@earthlink.net
“That’s amazing!” “Look at this!” “I didn’t know this!” These were the reactions of the eager second graders in my ESL class as they perused the dozens of nonfiction books on animals arranged at the center of the table. They squirmed with excitement as they pointed out items of interest to their classmates. Junya stopped and studied a picture of a raccoon in a book about forest animals.

“Mrs. Haynes, you won’t believe what I see on Japanese TV!” he exclaimed. “They have raccoons in Japan! They make big problem.”

“Hey,” interrupted Seigi. “That’s text-to-self connection.” He paused and thought for a moment. “Or maybe text-to-world.” After much discussion, the class decided that Junya had made a connection from the text he was reading to information in the world.

Since I had spent a lot of time in my class teaching students the strategies that good readers use, I was thrilled by Seigi’s observation.

Books such as Mosaic of Thought (Keene and Zimmerman 1997), Reading with Meaning (Miller 2002), and Strategies That Work (Harvey and Goudvis 2000) demonstrate the comprehension strategies good readers use when they interact with text. I have been teaching my students these strategies over the past four years to help them improve their reading comprehension. By using the same strategies and terminology as my mainstream colleagues, I can better support the instruction taking place in the general education classroom where my students spend most of their day.

My students are learning to make connections from the text they are reading to prior knowledge of their own lives, to other texts they have read, and to the world. They practice visualizing; asking questions before, during, and after reading; finding key concepts; predicting; inferring; and synthesizing.

Over the past few years, I have found that many of my students, even those ready to exit ESL, still have difficulties comprehending their science and social studies textbooks. They don’t really understand how the books are organized or how to find key concepts and supporting ideas. I developed a unit on the conventions (features) of nonfiction text for students in the fifth and sixth grades. Now I teach many of these conventions to my first and second graders. During this unit, I use multiple copies of nonfiction paperback books published by National Geographic. Along the way, I am always modeling responses for my students. Here is what this unit includes.

Titles: We discuss the title of the book and make predictions about the content. Students brainstorm and list questions that they have about the topic. This helps them determine a purpose for reading and keeps them focused. We also list what they already know about the topic. From a book entitled Forest Animals (Randolph 2004), students generate questions such as “What animals live in the forest?” “I wonder what forest animals eat?” and “What is a forest?” We also look at the titles of chapters in the table of contents. I point out to students that the word title can mean the name of the book or the name of a chapter. I show students how they can read the titles and find the page where the chapter begins. We practice looking up chapters from the table of contents.

Key concepts: Many texts have the key concept, or big idea, identified at the beginning of the book or chapter. A key
concept such as *Animals live in habitats that meet their needs* provokes questions such as “What is a habitat?” “What do animals need?” I tell the students that we will look for answers to these questions as we read. I also encourage students to study questions at the end of a nonfiction book or chapter.

**Headings:** Looking at the headings is a favorite activity because I bring out the Wikki Stix (twistable pieces of yarn covered with wax that students use to highlight text). Together, we highlight the headings with one color and the subheadings with another. We make questions from the headings. “What Every Animal Needs” becomes “What does every animal need?” This activity helps students understand what is important in the text.

**Visuals:** We then take a long picture walk through the book. Expressions such as “Look at this!” and “I didn’t know that!” from the pictures and other visuals announce when students learn something new. I want them to be aware when they are learning new information. We look at pictures, photographs, charts, and diagrams. I show students what labels and captions are. I point out that maps, charts, and diagrams also have titles.

**Vocabulary:** We then look at the text. I ask students how they know which vocabulary words are important. They identify the words that are in color, italics, or boldface. We check the glossary to see if the important words are included. Next, we look for these words in the index. Students learn that the important vocabulary usually appears in both the glossary and the index.

Throughout this unit, I assess the students continually. I list text features on a chart, and ask the students to find and mark examples in the text with brightly colored sticky notes. Now students are ready to read the book. When this unit is finished, they not only have learned about the conventions of nonfiction text, but also have learned the content of the book.

**What’s next?** They’ll write their own nonfiction book.

**References**


judieh@optonline.net

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My school was rumored to be a proving ground for new principals and a dumping ground for principals who were being eased out of the system. Todd, an independent, first-time principal, had proved himself so well he was reassigned to a larger, more troubled school. Edith was appointed to replace him.

She was a previously successful principal who had suffered a stroke from which she had been recovering for the past two years. “Public education is my life,” she insisted. “I won’t retire.” Not knowing what to do with her, the superintendent assigned her to us. Aware that, only five years before, our staff had been instrumental in the firing of Alice, an incompetent principal, she may have reasoned that Edith couldn’t survive us.

We loved her. She had no need for control, delegating what duties she could and not paying attention to how or whether they were done. Her meetings were short, and professional development was left to us. She didn’t do half of what district superiors told her to do, and what she did, she didn’t do on time.

Still, the job took a toll on her. “Those idiots downtown are wearing me out,” she complained. “Teachers need time to prepare lessons and activities. And haven’t the children been taking tests all year? Besides, those standardized ones are bunk.”

She couldn’t get over how much her job had changed since her stroke. “Downtown expects me to do what they tell me,” she said incredulously, “as if I don’t know what’s best. I wouldn’t treat teachers like that.”

Disgusted, she called it quits after one year.

Principals were rotating through our school at a rapid rate. Teacher
turnover, however, was low. Thanks to our union, we had considerable job security, whereas principals appeared to have none. By staying, the teachers had more opportunities than the principals to cultivate relationships of trust with students, parents, neighbors, and colleagues. We were the school’s caretakers. Todd had given us the energy of empowerment; Alice, the principal before him, had united us in ousting her; finally, Edith had let us run the school. Through it all, we had developed our voices and weren’t afraid to raise them.

Harold, the successor, had been a principal in one of the district’s affluent neighborhoods before parents forced him out. “I gave priority to the needs of English learners and the low achieving,” he explained. “It made me unpopular. The parents wanted me to attend solely to their ambitions for their children.”

We were encouraged. Even if what he said were only partly true, he might prove suitable for our low-income, multicultural neighborhood and its school. He had, however, a few disturbing characteristics. When talking with us teachers, he wouldn’t look us in the eye, which made communication disconcerting. Also, he was troubled by the bright, wild colors of the hallway, which teachers had painted at the end of Edith’s reign. He wanted to know if it was authorized, which, of course, it wasn’t.

The need to comply with district mandates became the chief characteristic of his leadership. He did not, however, discourage us from being candid with him.

“Why won’t you speak up for us?” complained Kamilah.

“In fourteen years at this site,” I added, “I’ve never had a principal who identified more with the district office than with our school community.” Our criticisms made no impression. He did not retaliate or hold a grudge. Often he would agree with our recommendations, such as expanding the bilingual program to include intermediate grades, but neglect to follow through.

One area of controversy was professional development. As a school with the lowest of ratings on the state Academic Performance Index, we were subjected to an overabundance of state- and district-mandated site trainings by outside consultants. Before one such training, a colleague remarked that she was “tired of being developed.”

“It’s for the children,” retorted Harold. In the past, this assertion had closed discussion. Now, however, having been used so often to justify administrative decisions that disempowered teachers, it evoked in most of us skepticism, even cynicism.

I raised my hand. “I believe Kathy is not opposed to developing; she’s sick of being developed.”

“Exactly!” said Kathy. “Teachers should plan professional development because we know our needs and interests and those of our students.”

“We should do the presenting!” called out Jan. “Haven’t we knowledge, passions, and gifts we can share with each other? Look at the talent around here!”

“I want to lead a discussion on cultural and linguistic diversity!” exclaimed Lucinda.

“Be assured,” interrupted Harold, “I’ll put the issue of staff development on the agenda for our next Site Leadership Team meeting. Oh, the one scheduled this week is postponed.”

Harold had begun avoiding Site Leadership Team meetings because its grade-level representatives would not stick to his agenda. “Those meetings make no difference anyhow,” declared Kamilah. I agreed, but it surprised me that Harold would risk district disapproval by not adhering to its site-management plan. An assistant of his later told me that Harold would invent the agendas and minutes for those meetings that didn’t take place.

Meanwhile, he sought to manage the school by training its teachers. The term training has traditionally applied to animals, such as racehorses, show dogs, and circus beasts, or to athletes in competition. It bothered me that training teachers had replaced educating them because it confused becoming adept at tricks and how to move fast and execute properly with learning how to make contextual assessments and decisions, nurture meaningful relationships, and think critically, imaginatively, and independently.

Harold’s commitment to district policies made him popular downtown. He claimed he had tamed the school’s teachers, or so we heard. In spring of his second year, he was promoted, becoming the district’s first director of literacy. His charge was to implement the recently adopted, scripted language arts program. Another principal had rotated out.

Next? jimlin@sbcglobal.net

By staying, the teachers had more opportunities than the principals to cultivate relationships of trust with students, parents, neighbors, and colleagues.
Regina Pool found it difficult to engage the students in her seventh-grade early intermediate ESL class. In deep frustration, she vented her concerns to a colleague who taught Spanish as a foreign language.

“Engage them in tasks that have to do with each other, and you will be surprised how much you will get out of them,” the colleague told her.

“I put my students into pairs and have them write love letters to each other. It’s not that I’m encouraging them to date; it’s that I know that they are at an age where they are thinking about relationships and that they can have fun with this assignment.” With her constant worry about the pressures caused by the U.S. No Child Left Behind Act, Regina couldn’t imagine how she could infuse this idea into her lessons.

When Regina was assigned the early intermediate class again, she did not challenge the assignment because she was a new teacher. Rather, she decided to try her colleague’s ideas. As fortune would have it, her class was composed of fourteen males and fourteen females. She decided to take advantage of the gender divide and designed a lesson, called “The Breakup,” that she hoped would extend her students’ willingness to use the new language.

When the students entered her classroom, they saw “The Breakup” written on the blackboard. One asked, “What is ‘the breakup’? Isn’t that when people stop their relationship?” When the students were seated, Regina noticed that they all appeared very attentive.

“Next week, we will read the true story of a teenager’s experience during a war. While the book, Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl (1947/1993), includes many important themes and plot lines, the love-hate relationship between Anne and Peter is one that I think we can all relate to. I am going to separate the class into pairs. Each pair will have a male and a female,“ she told them. She then proceeded to call out the names of pairs. She walked to the seats that she had assigned and told each pair where to sit. Then she launched into the lesson.

“Each pair represents a couple in this seventh-grade class. As a member of the pair, you have decided to break up with your partner in a letter. Typically, one member of the relationship writes the letter. In our class, work on the letter together so that you can develop the plot line of it.”

“What is ‘breakup’?” one of the students asked.

“It is when lover leaves,” one of the students responded.

“Yes,” Regina told the class. “It is when one member decides to leave the other and does this by writing the partner a letter about the reasons. During this class, work with the partner that you have been assigned. Be as creative as you wish, and develop a plot line for your breakup story that you will include in your letter written in English.”

At first, the students responded with blank stares. Then they looked at their partners and the rest of their classmates and began to work. Regina was struck by how quickly the students took to the task.

During the remaining class time, each of the pairs engaged in a conversation about their invented breakup story.

At the end of class, she assigned additional homework. “Tonight, using your English dictionaries and whatever resources you can find, begin writing ideas for the breakup letter. Telephone your partner and talk about these ideas. Tomorrow we will continue to work on this assignment. Remember, your letter must include the reasons that you are breaking up with your partner.”

The next day, each pair came to class with ideas for their letters. Regina was surprised at the amount that her students had written. She asked them to work in their pairs and continue to draft their letters. With dictionaries at hand, everyone appeared to be fully engaged in the task. She visited with each pair and took note of their plot lines. While they all had made multiple errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation, the overall plot lines were well articulated. For example, one letter began, “I break up with you because I saw you hug another girl. When we date, you should not hug girls.”

Regardless of the content and mechanics of the letters, one thing was evident: the lesson plan had clearly sparked her students’ interest. At the end of the second class, when the students had finished a rough draft of the first breakup letter, she assigned an additional homework assignment.

“Write a response to the breakup letter. Be imaginative. Be either serious or funny.” As in the first class, her students engaged in the task fully. By the end of class, each pair had assembled a draft of a response to the breakup letter. Their homework assignment, as before, was to use their dictionaries and any additional resources, including...
talking to each other on the phone, to improve their response.

During the third class, she asked the students to edit their letters to the best of their ability and to come to the next class prepared to read them aloud to their classmates. “Practice reading them with your partner,” she told them. “Use emotion when you read the letters.” During the rest of the class, the students edited their letters and practiced reading them aloud. At the end of the week, the students came to class prepared to read their letters. Several of the pairs asked if they could be the first to read theirs. This was not a response that she had ever experienced from this class.

While many educators who say that lessons should be compelling and involve a hook, it is difficult to develop plans that resonate with middle-school students. This one clearly struck a chord.

dzacarian@collaborative.org

Reference

(Orig. pub. 1947)

ESL or EFL—Does It Matter?

by Ke Xu

The distinction between EFL and ESL has been a much-discussed and controversial issue for many years. Recently, however, there has been renewed interest in the issue among practitioners in both EFL and in ESL settings.

The most recent example is perhaps a panel presentation given at the 2007 TESOL convention in Seattle titled “Geographically Challenged EFL-ESL” (Hoelker, Reutzel, and Harris 2007). The presentation examined the EFL-ESL distinction and questioned the assumption that geography mandates which abbreviation to use. The presenters maintained that geography alone can no longer determine what EFL and ESL mean. EFL may be appropriate sometimes in the United States (e.g., in immigrant communities or on Native American reservations), while ESL could describe some overseas teaching situations (e.g., on overseas campuses of U.S. universities).

Hoelker discussed some ESL programs that U.S. universities are establishing in the Gulf region. Both the textbooks and the professors are from the United States. But is it a good idea, she asked, to provide an ESL curriculum in a non-English-speaking environment while the students remain in their EFL culture, immersed in their first language and values? She examined the issue and discussed techniques and activities to help the students span the gap between their EFL world and ESL curriculum.

Reitzel shared her years of experience working with K–12 students from three major Native American Indian tribes in California and revealed how standard American English can be considered a foreign language for Native American youth. She believes that EFL rather than ESL curricula will suit the needs of Native Americans much better.

Harris pointed out that many teacher training programs at U.S. universities offer ESL/EFL certification programs. Student teachers intending to teach outside the United States are directed to the ESL program, while those intending to teach within the United States are told to choose ESL instead. However, English is rarely used in daily life in U.S. immigrant communities. As a result, student teachers often practice in a context within the United States that is dominated by a language other than English. She believes that this context should be more accurately defined as an EFL setting, thus requiring EFL techniques.

Another instance of the renewed interest in the issue is an online debate among mostly expatriate Americans (see Scott 2004). The debate was sparked by Neil Anderson, former TESOL president, who suggested during a presentation at a Japan Association for Language Teaching conference that English language teaching professionals should move away from the conceptual dichotomy of ESL versus EFL. In response to a question, he made three observations in support of his position (as cited by Scott):

1. The teaching methodology in both situations is becoming identical: teachers in both situations using the same books, same/overlapping methods, and so on.
2. ESL situations are becoming more like EFL situations with a vast number of immigrants from different countries living in near linguistic isolation.
3. EFL situations are increasingly becoming like ESL situations, as can be judged, for example in Japan, by the increased use of English in the mass media and elsewhere.

His bold suggestions prompted strong reaction from panelists and participants, with some defending his position and others questioning it. The proponents believed that the EFL/ESL distinction could be irrelevant with the emergence of the terms EIL (English as an international language) and WE (World Englishes), and the increasing blurring of the EFL/ESL distinction.

The opponents, however, believed that the distinction between the two is too important to be ignored. The distinction, they maintained, was introduced for valid reasons, related to pedagogical goals, student types, material development, and other factors, so how can it be unnecessary? They asked Anderson whether, by dismissing the
ESL/EFL distinction:

ences, Hu (2003) also mentioned the one of China’s national EFL confer-
ting. This teacher was met with strong resistance from the students.
Japan is not the only Asian country to witness the ESL-or-EFL debate. At
one of China’s national EFL conferences, Hu (2003) also mentioned
the ESL/EFL distinction:

Although many guiding theories and principles in the ESL field can be “bor-
rowed” for our reference in the ESL field, EFL and ESL, however, are not
the same. It is unrealistic to copy all

the ESL models and use them in the ESL field. We are teaching English in
China, where the target language is not a second language, but a foreign
language. . . . It is unfair to measure ESL students’ English competence
against an ESL standard.

Much like the case in Japan, in China English language teaching (ELT) pro-
essionals’ opinions are divided on the issue. ESL or EFL—does it matter? The
debate remains open. As the settings of English language teaching change world-
wide, so do the definitions and application of the terms. Yet the blurring of
the distinction between the two may not necessarily mean the total irrele-
vance of the distinction. What matters to ELT professionals, I believe, is to
understand the nature of their job; to stay alert to the changing setting of
their teaching and student needs; to be aware of the approach options
available; and, finally, to be able to adapt to change.

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Hu, Z. L. 2003. My view on the issue of the low efficiency of China’s TEFL undertak-
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kexu@aol.com

IN-SERVICE

Developing Metaphorically

by Andy Curtis

The importance of metaphors in lan-
guage and education has been long
been recognized. Nearly twenty years
ago, Provenzo and his colleagues
(1989) explored the use of metaphor
and meaning in the language of teach-
ers describing their work. In the field
of TESOL, some studies have looked at
how EFL and ESL students and teach-
ers use metaphors to describe what
they are doing.

For example, Littlemore (2001)
reported on the metaphoric compe-
tence of a group of eighteen- to twen-
ty-year-old native speakers of French
majoring in English at a Belgian uni-
versity. Littlemore looked at four
aspects of metaphoric competence:
originality of metaphor production,
ability to find meaning in metaphor,
speed in finding meaning in metaphor,
and fluency in metaphoric interpreta-
tion. Although the results of the study
did not support the hypothesis that
metaphoric competence is an impor-
tant part of communicative compe-
tence, it was still a good example of
the importance of metaphor in the
TESOL field.

In a more recent article, “The
Teacher Is an Octopus,” Farrell (2006)
reported on a case study of three pre-
service teachers of English in
Singapore, focusing on the relationship
between the metaphors they used and
their linguistic, cultural, and pedagogic
belief systems. The teacher in Farrell’s
study who provided the title for his
paper did not use the analogy but
instead went for the metaphor, thereby
creating a more vivid image of a
many-tentacled teacher doing eight
things all at the same time—without
dropping anything.

Perhaps the most well-known pro-
ponents of the power of metaphor are
Lakoff and Johnson, whose Metaphors
We Live By (1980) is still required read-
ing for many applied linguistics cours-
es nearly thirty years after it was first
published. In one of the most oft-quot-
ed lines from their book, they explain
that “metaphor is pervasive in every-
day life, not just in language, but in
thought and action. Our ordinary con-
ceptual system, in terms of which we
both think and act, is fundamentally
metaphorical in nature” (p. 3).

The importance of metaphors in
English language teaching was recently
highlighted by Darn and White (2006):

There is one single reason why
metaphor is important to the English
language and language teaching. It is
impossible to communicate naturally
and effectively without employing this
device. Metaphors are an essential
part of our everyday language…. To
the language teacher and learner, it is
this elementary level of significance
which is important. (p. 1)

Darn and White go on to say that
metaphor, then, “can be taught and
learned in the same way as grammar
and lexis, but also has a role as a tool
in teaching other facets of the lan-
language” (p. 1). However, it may also have a role as a tool in helping you think about your teaching.

For example, if you apply the life-as-a-journey metaphor to your professional life, you can ask a number of apparently simple but really powerful questions:

• Where did I start this journey?
• Where am I now?
• How did I get here?
• Where would I like to end?

When we as TESOL educators reflect on our careers, many of us start by thinking about time and reason, that is, by asking, “When did I decide to become an English language teacher, and why?” For international educators, the reference to place is often literal, for example, “In which country did I teach my first English language lesson?” or “From which country or countries did my first group of students come?”

But if you approach this question metaphorically, you can reflect on where you were in your professional life when you decided to become an English language teacher. The answer is important, because if you entered the field of TESOL in your early twenties, as your “first real job,” then your experiences are likely to be significantly different than they would have been if you had entered in your fifties, as your second or third career. The second two questions, on where you are now and how you got there, can lead to important related questions, such as these: Is this where I thought I’d be or hoped to be in my professional life at this time? If not, why not? These kinds of questions engage you and enable you to engage in the internal dialogue.

But why bother to engage in such a dialogue? Eric Hoffer (1902–1983), whose work often involved the importance of self-esteem in relation to psychological well-being, wrote, “The end comes when we no longer talk with ourselves. It is the end of genuine thinking and the beginning of the final loneliness.” Hoffer went on to say, “The remarkable thing is that the cessation of the inner dialogue marks also the end of our concern with the world around us” (see http://www.erichoffer.net/).

These lines from Hoffer show the importance of engaging in this kind of professional dialogue with yourself, though there are other benefits, too. Of all the approaches to professional development available, this kind of dialogue is the simplest in that it requires nothing external, not even pen and paper, unless you want to make a note of your realizations and reflections. This makes such a dialogue the least resource-requiring approach while at the same time demanding your focused attention and sustained awareness. You can carry out such a dialogue almost anywhere and anytime, for example, while traveling to or from home or school, before class, after class, and even during class.

It is possible that all languages and cultures use metaphors to help them understand and articulate complex and abstract thoughts and feelings. If so, the next time you find yourself engaged in that internal dialogue, listen especially carefully for any metaphors (or analogies) that may come up. As Hillman (1996) wrote, “Metaphoric images are the first unlearned language . . . making possible communication between all people and all things by means of metaphors” (p. 40).

References
it as a picture, diagram, or live-action scene in a movie or play. Verbal learners, like me, learn better from lectures or reading.

A speaker I heard once at a conference asserted that more people are visual learners than are verbal learners—but that verbal learners are more likely to become language teachers and textbook writers. Accurate figures are hard to come by, and if there is a definitive study giving percentages in any population of visual learners and verbal learners, I haven’t seen it (possibly it exists only as a visual or a chart, and I just didn’t understand it). I can imagine carrying out such a study: I would ask a group of students to approach two stoves, one labeled with words and one labeled with diagrams, and measure how long it took them to turn on the burner under the kettle and boil water for tea. But who has time to carry out a study like that? And what teacher can afford two stoves?

But I do know that my ESL classes are filled with students who are visual learners. They make word maps to brainstorm for their essays, whereas I’d write a list. They spend time looking at the photos and diagrams in their textbooks, but I’d skip straight to the exercises. They were relieved when Apple Computer began using more icons and fewer words to label folders and applications, which continues to be an irritation to me.

So what does a verbal teacher do to relate material to a class of visual learners? Here are some techniques that have worked for me.

**Exploit the illustrations in textbooks.** The photos and drawings in textbooks are not background decoration that crowd out exercises—they support the written material (if they don’t, then choose a different textbook). Use the art to activate background schema, review vocabulary, and introduce new vocabulary. Ask questions about the pictures: What do you see in the picture? What is he doing? How is she feeling? What do you think he’s going to do next? Have students ask and answer questions about the pictures. Have students close their eyes and tell a partner what they remember about the picture.

**Illustrate new vocabulary words with sketches.** I’m embarrassed to say that I actually asked my husband to give me lessons in drawing stick figures, but it turned out to be an easy skill to acquire, even for the artistically challenged. A quick, rudimentary sketch can be far more effective than a verbal explanation. When I can’t draw something, I ask for a student volunteer.

**Use gestures and facial expressions to explain new vocabulary and demonstrate situations.** Illustrations don’t have to be drawn on paper. If you’re shy about acting something out, use student volunteers.

**Bring in photos, drawings, charts, and graphs to accompany written materials or lectures.** True, these will take some time to prepare, but save your materials in a folder, and they’ll be ready when you teach the lesson again next term.

**Encourage students to use graphs and charts to supplement their writing.** Understanding and creating graphs and charts are useful skills for a variety of university classes, and students should learn how to create these with their word-processing and presentation software (and then they can teach you how if you don’t know).

**Have students illustrate new vocabulary they’re learning.** I have my students create vocabulary cards with the word, context sentence, definition, and original sentence using the word on one side of the card and a picture they’ve drawn to represent the word on the other side. In the twelve years I’ve been using this technique, I’ve never had a student of any age or nationality be unable to illustrate a word or idiom. Students can quiz each other by exchanging sets of cards. Student A shows Student B the picture side of the card and asks A to spell the word, give the definition, and give an example sentence; B can check the answer because he or she is looking at that information while A is looking at the picture.

**Have students illustrate reading journals.** Ask the students to draw quick sketches to illustrate an important scene in a book or some new vocabulary they’ve learned.

Most importantly, though, teach your classes explicitly about different learning styles. A variety of questionnaires already exist for this, and the good ones also test for kinesthetic learners, social learners, and a variety of other styles. For further reading, check the library for books on this topic by Joy Reid, Kate Kinsella, Mary Ann Christison, and H. Douglas Brown, among others. It’s important for learners not only to understand how they learn best but how to adapt their learning styles to material that is presented in another way.

**Note:** In my December 2006 column, I stated that the American Association of Intensive English Programs (http://www.aaiep.org/) accredits English language programs. In fact, it is a member organization promoting standards for intensive English programs. The accrediting organization is the Commission for English Language Accreditation (http://www.cela-accredit.org/). I regret the error.

zemach@comcast.net
As an EFL learner from an isolated part of Burma (Myanmar), I worked my way around various obstacles before becoming an English language instructor in my country. My journey has taken me from poverty to a university education and, eventually, to a university teaching position.

In Burma, English was not only the sole foreign language taught at schools; it was also an essential tool for securing well-paid jobs. Almost all the students at my school had the same primary study goal—to make themselves proficient in English. However, having no reliable and effective source to help me learn English systematically, I had to resort to nonconformist ways. I was like the young Buddhist monk in our neighborhood who was so frustrated with the lack of opportunity to study English that he vowed to learn every word in the English-Burmese dictionary by heart, thinking that lexical knowledge alone could help him become proficient in English. My own ways of learning English differed from those of the Buddhist monk, but I, too, have learnt English the hard way.

Early Obstacles

My background offered little support in my battle to learn a foreign language. No one in my family had even a rudimentary knowledge of English. My mother, widowed at the age of twenty-six, became the sole support of my family. These circumstances, as well as having to study in a school where learning English meant listening to the teacher’s translation of the English text into Arakanese (my native language), were some of the major stumbling blocks I faced as a young learner of English.

In Burma, English was taught only when students reached the fifth grade. Students whose parents had good educational backgrounds had the advantage of possessing an elementary knowledge of English, while poorer students like me struggled with pronouncing a set of foreign-sounding letters called the English alphabet. Consequently, I was weak in English in middle school. I became the butt of my friends’ jokes due to my faulty English pronunciation. I remember English class with a sense of humiliation, embarrassment, and disgrace. Depression and despair became my daily companions there.

A Failure Leads to Success

My success in English learning came with my failure in one of the English exams. I scraped through the test in fifth grade, but English classes never ceased to be a nightmare for me. I wondered how long it would be before I quit school for good.

An unexpected incident reinforced these thoughts. My name alone was conspicuously missing from the list of students who had passed the English exam. I had passed every other subject, but failure to pass even one subject meant having to repeat the entire academic year. I felt ashamed and despondent as I thought about my poor mother, an uneducated and unskilled young woman bearing the sole responsibility for the family. Thinking about her predicament prompted me to make a decision—not to study harder in the following year, but to leave school and help my mother in her teashop.

As it turned out, this one and only academic failure in my life was a blessing in disguise. I was flabbergasted to see my usually stoic mother completely lose her head when I quietly broke the news. As tears rolled down her cheeks, she gave me an ultimatum: I must complete my education.

Though it was painful for me to see her spend money she could ill afford, my mother sent me to a special English
The book was intriguing enough for a beginner like me because the language level of the essays was just slightly above my own, and more importantly, the topics of the essays seemed to be selected to suit the interests of young people. As I devoured the essays, my comprehension improved. I remembered every essay almost word for word. Yet, getting enough English books to read to quench my thirst for knowledge was almost impossible, since my town was so far away from the capital city of Rangoon. Children’s books were difficult to come by. A few bookstores had them, but at a steep price.

With no money for books and not even a corner for a school library, I began to read the textbooks of senior students with zest. Luckily, I could get the textbooks free at the end of each academic year because the seniors were eager to get rid of them as soon as their final examinations were over. The stories I read grabbed my attention. I was thrilled by the simplified versions of Shakespeare’s comedies and tragedies.

Finding a Way

For me, the scarcity of English literature was like a desert when I desired a deep well of resources. But a man cannot be defeated unless he gives up. Suddenly, I saw an opportunity that had been staring me in the face the whole time.

My eyes were drawn to anything written in English. A sugar packet in a local shop or, rather, a section of the local English newspaper used as the wrapping paper for the sugar, completely transfixed me. It carried a review of a Burmese movie about a poor, widowed mother who had raised her only son. I felt a flash of inspiration; I knew I would no longer be short of reading materials. I had a large collection of wrapping paper from previous purchases to sell to scrap dealers by weight for pocket money. Ruffling through the scraps of paper back home for interesting reading materials, I discovered, to my great joy, that almost half of them were from English newspapers and magazines bearing local and foreign news, articles, editorials, and even short stories. These scraps whetted my appetite because missing pages often prevented me from reading a story to the end.

Reading gave me confidence to write academic essays and short stories. My teachers, anxious to help me pass the high school English exam, corrected my papers and lent me their storybooks. My English proficiency improved due to my relentless effort, but I had difficulty understanding idiomatic expressions and vocabulary. A good dictionary would have been a perfect solution, but I could not afford one. In the spirit of a Burmese proverb that claims someone seeking knowledge should follow the example of a beggar, circumstances were forcing me to beg for words. A classmate had an advanced learners’ dictionary, so his house became my favorite haunt at the weekend. I copied definitions of useful words and expressions in good handwriting and posted them on the front door of my house so that I could see them whenever I left or entered. Although I was unsure what my visiting friends thought about the unsightly writing all over the door, I
knew I was enriching my English vocabulary faster than I ever had.

My reading and writing skills improved, but I had no way to improve my listening and speaking skills. Speaking to each other in English outside the classroom was taboo; using English among the people of my own culture was a direct insult to their national pride. So I began to speak English in soliloquy, much to the amusement of some friends who heard me practicing.

Losing hope about practicing speaking English, I became one of only two students from Arakan (Rakhine) State who passed the exam with distinction in English. Shortly after we received this great news, my mother sent me to buy mango pickle from an elderly Jewish woman who spoke fluent English. I told her the good news. Out of curiosity, she asked me to read her a story from the local English newspaper. After I finished, she told me that I deserved the distinction in the English test. She became my teacher and mentor and spent time speaking English with me. She asked me to read her books with various themes: inspirational fiction like *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (Stowe 1852/1982), edifying and morale-lifting books like *How to Stop Worrying and Start Living* (Carnegie 1944/1984), and motivational articles from *Reader’s Digest*.

**More Bumps in the Road**

This might appear to have been the end of my stumbling blocks in learning English, but I was about to encounter a more difficult situation. According to the educational policy of my country, anyone who passed the high school exam could attend the university, but the choice of the specialized field depended totally on the student’s exam scores. My desire was to specialize in English in the university, so I submitted an application to the Higher Education Department requesting permission to do so.

Competition was fierce. Each year, only fifty students from the whole country were selected to study in a BA (English) program. It was difficult to rejoice when I got the acceptance letter because the only place that offered this English program was the Institute of Education, in Rangoon. With my poor economic background, going to the capital city for a university education was a pipe dream. I broke the good news to my mother as if I were telling her the saddest story of my life, but the outcome was contrary to all my expectations. With no signs of indecision on her face, she told me I must go to Rangoon to further my studies. I might have appeared to be taking unreasonable advantage of my mother by accepting her offer, but the resolution on her face told me that she would never change her mind.

**Arrival**

Thus, I became a university student in Rangoon. The resources I had so yearned for in my middle and high school years now seemed inexhaustible. Good libraries, modern audiovisual materials, fellow students with learning experiences abroad, and native-speaking teachers meant that bringing my English proficiency to an internationally acceptable level was simply a matter of my own efforts. My English continually improved, and eventually I became an instructor in Rangoon University’s English Department.

Though naturally good at concealing emotions, my mother seemed to be at a loss for words when I gently placed the appointment letter in her hands. We had come a long way, my mother and I. Because I had learnt English from scraps and had to constantly scrap (fight) throughout those early years learning the language, my definition of *scrap value* will never be the same as that of most other people.

**References**


San Shwe Baw is an assistant professor at Assumption University, in Thailand, where he edits Abac Journal.
What a Broken Jaw Taught Me about Language Acquisition

by Dennis Terdy

In May 2005, I broke my jaw in a batting cage accident while coaching baseball. My mouth was wired shut; it was somewhat ironic for a linguist to be speechless for four weeks. This strange personal tragedy became an unexpected firsthand reminder of the experiences many English language learners go through on a daily basis in their schools and communities in the United States and, I would suspect, worldwide.

As this experience unfolded for me, unlike during the many diverse linguistic and cultural experiences of my past, I remained in my well-known surroundings, neighborhood, stores, and predictably familiar contexts. After a few days, I began to realize that I was linguistically paralyzed. My usual daily routines all took on a range of different forms.

Age and Empathy

I watched how my children and family adapted to my strange new language of “jawese.” Comfort and flexibility with my condition seemed to depend on the age of the person with whom I was interacting. My twelve-year-old son, DJ, and my seventeen-year-old daughter, Jill, seemed to be the most adaptable. They grasped my new language quite well. As I squeezed sounds between my teeth with minimal points of articulation, they seemed to quickly “get” the process and sought meaning in every mumble. In fact, quite naturally, they conveniently negotiated each word into meaningful bites.

Conversations were slow and strained, but fruitful.

Although spending much less time with the family and me, Andrea, my twenty-three-year-old daughter, adapted fairly well too. She also had the capacity to extract meaning from my varied grunts and extraneous noises. However, my eldest daughter, my wife, extended family members, and coworkers became increasingly frustrated with my feeble attempts to communicate. I wondered, “Did age correlate with flexibility and capacity for seeking meaning? Do people become less patient and perhaps even less capable of adapting to new linguistic environments as they age?”

Communication Anxiety

I continued to hang on to the need to punctuate each erratic sound with some essential nonverbal cue. Acting out and gesturing to accompany my feeble communication attempts became a necessity to get my point across. My children soon became my interpreters when I went shopping and did other errands in stores. They acted as intermediaries on the phone and, oddly enough, at times served as interpreters for my wife.

After initial expressions of sympathy, several colleagues just went on with work as before. However, it was clear that, out of either frustration or empathy, some of my coworkers did not want to communicate with me at all.
Familiar daily tasks became arduous. I avoided a ringing telephone as many of my second language learners had told me they regularly did. I reacted as they often did, with anxiety, as if I might catch some deadly disease if I opened up the phone line.

My wife and my coworkers continued to express frustration with the new language I was trying to invent and master at the same time. My wife needed me to write almost everything down. She often raised her voice when communicating with me. Being accustomed to very good communication in more than thirty-three years of marriage, we were reduced to meaning-seeking utterances for the next several weeks. Usual summaries of our days consisted of one strained sentence on my part and lengthy stories from my wife, to which I could only listen instead of responding with my usual barbs or sarcastic analysis. Maybe this experience will make me a better person, but, frankly, I don't think so. I rather enjoy adding my critiques.

Interaction and Reaction

The ranges of responses in stores were amazingly varied. Some store clerks acted as if nothing were different, seeming almost oblivious to anything I attempted to communicate. They simply assumed they knew what I was saying, probably because there was not much variation in anything their customers would likely say. Without my juvenile interpreters, I found myself wandering aimlessly throughout the store, helplessly looking for things. Upon seeing a store clerk, I would be ready to ask a question or seek information, but then I would realize that it was more bother to ask than to keep quiet, so I just kept wandering.

Other people in stores went into extensive “mediated” language as if I had lost my hearing. They began to act out responses, overemphasizing their comments, as if I really did not speak the language. I would look at them in a befuddled way, confused at what they were doing, and then politely approximate an utterance that sounded like thanks before walking away.

After two weeks, I had lost more than nine and a half pounds, and eating continued to be difficult. Everything I ate had to be pureed. Surprisingly, I found the loss of communication far worse than my greatly restricted diet and my hunger.

During the first week after my injury, I was talking in my high school’s Newcomer Center, where I served as director. I noticed something strange: when I spoke Spanish, most students understood me after only an initial adjustment on their part. I realized that the articulation points of Spanish are limited to five very basic vowel sounds. Furthermore, the points of articulation for consonants were also very easy to understand. It was as if I had a minor speech impediment that only slightly obscured communication. It was almost a relief, and I actually wished my family spoke Spanish at home.

Cognition Is the Key

A family function one Sunday proved to be very awkward, since no one knew what to say to me. My wife’s semideaf cousin didn’t even know anything was different about me. Her other cousin, who coincidentally has a deaf brother and niece, tried shouting at me with extra-enunciated speech as if I were deaf, too. I wandered about aimlessly, looking for someone to talk to. I had so much to say and no one to say it to.

I reflected for a moment that maybe the fast-paced linguistic society I live in has no patience for slowly articulated speech. People just want to get on with it and move on to the next person or topic, even in informal settings. I imagine that second language learners in schools feel just as I did. Not only are they exhausted and frustrated by their own limitations, but they cannot seem to carry on any meaningful conversations, often just responding to low-level proficiency demands. Cognition is not needed or even requested.

Something in my broken-jaw experience hit home. I made a mental connection between how people helped me communicate and how we as so-called experts on English learning don’t really assist colleagues in working with English language learners. Although sheltered instruction has been around for years, and although I was actively involved in developing
It seems to me that what many mainstream teachers crave are insights and strategies to challenge English learners in their courses.

materials for it almost two decades ago, I wondered how far the TESOL field had evolved in its impact on mainstream teachers’ practice. Sure, knowledge of language acquisition, cultural issues, and language methodology play a role. However, because of my broken jaw experience, I reflected more on how teachers assist mainstream colleagues in creating classroom environments that make cognitive demands on students with the lowest levels of English proficiency while being comprehensible to them.

Krashen (1981) challenged language teachers decades ago with the language learning paradox, that is, language is best learned through content. Cognitively demanding content lessons should continue to be the primary focus of English teaching. Even though teachers are primarily charged with assisting English learners with language development, as the English learner experts in schools, the focus of ESOL teachers should be to support mainstream colleagues in creating lessons that challenge their students’ cognitive abilities while developing their linguistic capacities in the subject-area classrooms.

One way to broach this important topic would be to acknowledge colleagues’ subject-matter expertise and begin engaging them in discussions about their lessons. In this way, you might find opportunities to introduce them to insights from the TESOL field as well as some techniques they might use to make their lessons more appealing to new learners. In general, the real challenge is to help educators create instructional environments that do not acquiesce to low English language proficiency and that demand academically and cognitively challenging responses from all students.

English learners in your class or school need support from all of their teachers. Find the time to work with your content-area colleagues on ways to stretch English learners’ academic and cognitive capacities while facilitating their language skill development. One thing I am sure of from my broken jaw experience: English learners will be grateful to have some patient individuals engage them in meaningful, cognitively challenging communication.

References
I enjoyed twenty wonderful, rewarding, fascinating, travel-filled years from 1983 to 2005. I taught in private corporations, colleges, and universities in Japan, Taiwan, China, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. I even earned my MA at an American university in Japan. My children were born and educated outside the United States. We had great holidays and traveled through many parts of the world.

But in 2004, with my daughter entering high school and never having attended an American school, we decided to return to the United States. I thought I was reasonably experienced as a teacher, had good classroom management skills, and was technically competent. I reckoned finding a job and teaching a new student population would be a challenge but well within my acquired abilities. After all, with twenty years of experience teaching EFL outside the United States, I felt confident that I could handle U.S. classrooms.

The job search was brutal for me and tumultuous for my family. I began my search months before returning to the United States on the plethora of Web sites posting jobs. You can search by state, country, field, zip code, specialty, and any combination of the above. You can also subscribe to electronic discussion lists focusing on jobs.

Résumés and Short Lists

The first thing I had to do was update and tailor my résumé to fit the job descriptions I found. I needed to obtain—and pay for—original transcripts from universities that I had not visited or contacted in decades. Once back in the United States, I intended to apply for around twenty-five jobs but quickly realized that the number was far too conservative. I had to more than triple it, and I was shocked when I did the math.

I was looking for a full-time position with benefits, which meant that I had to expand the geographical range of my job search. I interviewed within a radius of 150 miles of my house in southern California. That meant driving for nearly three hours one-way in the hope of being short-listed and then taking another long drive. My longest journey for an interview, though, originated while I was in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. I flew to San Diego, stayed one night, interviewed at a college, and got back on a plane immediately afterward. It was a risk, but the return on the investment is that I have been teaching part-time at that college for almost two years.

In the end, I applied for more than eighty positions, interviewed for almost twenty, and received nearly as many rejection letters. Many universities did not even send a rejection notice. Others sent a postcard, thanking me for my interest and wishing me luck. Dealing with the rejection letters began to leave doubt in my mind. Part-time work can fill a schedule prettily quickly, but it cannot fill a bank account and provide health benefits or retirement security.

A Fish out of Water

Eventually, almost inevitably, I lined up several interviews. There was an initial nervous excitement when I finally got my first few interviews, and with a mixture of confidence and trepidation, I prepared for them.

The interviews varied in format. Across the table from me might be one person, two people, or three people; twice there were nine people. Being new to southern California, I wore a suit jacket, slacks, leather shoes, and a tie to every interview. I felt so out of place. No one else even came close to dressing as I expected they would at an interview. They wore jeans, sleeve-
Id of EFL to the World of ESL

Working Without a Net

I soon realized that my lack of a network in the United States was a big disadvantage for me. While in Japan, I had been an active member of the Japan Association for Language Teaching for several years and had a network of colleagues, friends, and other professional contacts. I had the pleasure of working with many talented colleagues for several years in Dubai and participated in a wide range of TESOL Arabia activities. I felt I was part of a wonderful network of educators in the Emirates.

The situation was completely the opposite in the States. I knew no one. Of course, I had checked out TESOL and California TESOL (CATESOL) on the Web, but Web pages and e-mail contacts aren't the same as a face-to-face network of people. It took me more than a year in the United States to build up such a network. I volunteered to act as treasurer of CATESOL's Los Angeles regional conference, went to TESOL's 2006 convention, and participated in online courses and discussion groups, all in an attempt to build a network. This network construction is, at best, a work in progress.

If you are a TESOL professional returning to the United States after years overseas, I highly recommend that you try to build a network of contacts far in advance. Participate in online discussions and interest section threads. Also, have scores of reference letters at the ready—on school letterhead, if possible. Prepare a similar number of résumés. Subscribe to every job discussion list you possibly can. Be prepared to spend money and time making copies, filling out online application forms, and standing in line at the post office. And take as many part-time jobs as possible. For me, these steps proved invaluable in building a network, gathering information, and, most importantly, putting the difficult job search in perspective. The colleagues I met at my part-time jobs shared the same job-search experience.

Entering a Diverse Classroom

As I found out on my return, finding a job—or jobs—is no easy feat. But once I secured a position, I had to adjust as a teacher going from the EFL world to the ESL world. The biggest difference I found was in the student populations. In Japan, China, Saudi Arabia, Taiwan, and the United Arab Emirates, I had taught in classrooms that were homogeneous. Typically, students are of one nationality, have the same religion, and are at the same stage in life. They are even from the same city, town, or neighborhood. This is not a bad thing, of course. It is just the nature of many countries. In fact, the teaching faculties that I was part of abroad were all more diverse than the student populations.

This homogeneity is definitely not the case in the United States. Initially, I worked full-time at the University of Southern California and part-time at Palomar Community College; then I

less shirts, Hawaiian shirts, sandals, T-shirts, and the like—and these were the interviewers. I am not sure whether this style of dress is unique to southern California, common at educational institutions in the United States, or common now for any type of job interview there. Having been away for two decades, I felt like a fish out of water. Also, the longer I went without a full-time position, the more I doubted myself, my ability to interview, and my skill in reading a social situation.

This perspective does not seem to be peculiar to me. I discussed this transition process in detail with at least three other people who had returned from extended stints outside their home country, and they all reported similar experiences.
became director of the American Language Institute at San Diego State University. To date, my classrooms have been populated with Chinese, Guatemalans, Indians, Indonesians, Iranians, Japanese, Koreans, Mexicans, Palestinians, Poles, Russians, Saudis, Sri Lankans, Taiwanese, Thais, Turks, Ukrainians, and Vietnamese. I am sure this diversity is common for classes at any university or community college in the United States. And the students are diverse not just in their nationalities but, unlike in the EFL world, in their professions and backgrounds.

So, after negotiating my way through the labyrinth of the job search, I was rewarded with a rich, diverse classroom population. Teaching such a population opened a new career chapter for me, and I would have it no other way. The real challenge for teachers going from the EFL world to the ESL world is grasping this aspect of the ESL classroom. It is one of the unexpected pleasures resulting from my transition.

As I get to know my students better, I am constantly learning about the world and being challenged as an educator. After living in one country and teaching relatively homogeneous groups for a couple of years, I had a pretty good idea of the global schema and makeup of the student population. But it is not so straightforward with student populations in the United States. Within the first couple of weeks into a university course, I learned that the students bring a wealth of experience and knowledge that I would never have imagined. In my classes, there are doctors, engineers, musicians, and movie makers. There are government-sponsored students, corporate-sponsored students, and students working and paying tuition out of their own pockets. When students share their experiences and backgrounds with one another, I can sense the surprise and excitement of their classmates.

Another side of the ESL teaching world, and I think it is a significant one, at least in southern California, is the presence of an immigrant population. Teaching classes of farm workers, laborers, and their children is eye-opening for anyone who is new to this demographic. Their stories amaze me yet are common among the students. Their struggles, their tragedies, their longing for family and home, and their hopes for their children are moving, to say the least. Saying the classroom dynamic is stimulating is quite an understatement.

Like-Minded Colleagues
Another positive consequence of making it through the job search is meeting fellow educators. Some have had an experience similar to mine when returning to the United States. Others simply bring new energy and ideas.

I work with teachers who bring years more experience than I do to their classrooms. They are still brimming with energy and dedication. Many are involved with TESOL on the regional and state levels. They have a passion for the classroom. And they have been sympathetic, empathetic, and inspiring for me. I watch them move effortlessly from the migrant worker classes to the English for academic purposes courses with smiles and with dignity. Not enough Americans realize what magnificent work these professionals are doing.

Worthwhile on Balance
Returning to the States has, finally, become a positive experience. The beginning was tumultuous for me and my family, but the classroom interaction and richness of the experiences of the students in my classes have made my move from the EFL world to the ESL world worthwhile. If you are also a returning teacher and would like to share your experience, I invite you to get in touch (pcolabuc@mail.sdsu.edu).

Pat Colabucci is the senior director of the American Language Institute at San Diego State University, in the United States.

See also “The Right Place at the Right Time,” http://www.tesol.org/et/.
I began teaching ESOL part-time in spring 1997 at a large, suburban school in Oklahoma. The struggles that I endured are typical of those faced by teachers in U.S. school districts that are not prepared to address the needs of their ESOL programs. While I felt adequately supervised as a first-year teacher, the administration was not prepared to support me with TESOL-specific resources and mentoring.

I replaced a teacher who had left two weeks into the spring semester. I quickly discovered that, like me, this teacher had no ESOL background. She had not dealt well with the widely varying proficiency levels of the students, as all ten students were doing the same assignments in class. The two advanced-level students, Anna, from Germany, and Victor, from Brazil, were not stimulated by the low-level content and exercises. They often finished the assignments quickly and sat at their desks while other students struggled.

I concluded that I could organize lessons much more effectively by giving these students assignments that corresponded to their level of English proficiency. To teach this class properly, I needed to treat it like a special education class, where every student had an individual lesson plan. Putting this idea into practice, though, proved very time-consuming.

Out of Sight, Out of Mind

The school had one ESOL classroom, and the students attended five other classes per day. I was not consulted by any teacher or administrator about expectations. I was just assigned the task of teaching the students English and keeping them occupied.

I realized very early that the students with the lowest level of proficiency—Juan, Hector, and Luis, all from Mexico—just sat in their other classes doing absolutely nothing. They didn’t complete the work their teachers gave them, but none of their teachers ever came to me to discuss their progress.

The school had gone through five principals in the past eight years (see Jim Hughes’ “Rotating Principals, Persistent Teachers” in this issue); the high turnover rate meant that I had no direction from administration about the expectations for ESOL. The materials available for the students were not even ESOL oriented. I met with the principal and showed him the materials I had to work with. I begged him to give me some money to buy ESOL materials, and he reluctantly gave me a budget of $200, which I used to buy textbooks, workbooks, and activity packets.

My daily routine in the ESOL class was very frustrating. Every night I spent hours making new lesson plans for each of the leveled groups I had organized. As a new teacher, I was energetic and serious about my career, but as I drew my meager paycheck and dealt with the stresses, I wondered whether entering the TESOL field had been the right decision. I began to doubt myself as I realized that the school, and perhaps the district, did not see ESOL students’ issues as serious ones.

School of Hard Knocks

According to Black (2005), “English language learners are more likely to
In many districts, the belief persists that if you put a group of ten students with little or no English proficiency into one room, a good teacher should have them all functioning at the same level by the end of the year.

Unprepared Schools, Unprepared Teachers

Misconceptions about teaching English language learners are common in U.S. school districts. According to Harper and de Jong (2004), one misconception is that all ESOL students learn English the same way and at the same rate. In many districts, the belief persists that if you put a group of ten students with little or no English proficiency into one room, a good teacher should have them all functioning at the same level by the end of the year. This expectation does not take into consideration the cultural and linguistic differences among students in U.S. schools. I faced this battle every day, in addition to coping with different levels of intelligence and the students' lack of comfort with different styles of teaching.

Miller and Endo (2004) note that even though 3.5 million children in U.S. schools are identified as limited in English proficiency, they are placed in mainstream classes after having spent just one or two years in ESOL classes. The teachers of these children are often not trained in TESOL. Miller and Endo suggest that the culprit is governmental policy that seeks to bring immigrant students to "proficient" levels of English within three years. This policy contradicts research that indicates that students need five to seven years in language programs to reach academic proficiency.

Many schools suffer from a lack of funds and a lack of public concern. While the problems of English language learners stem primarily from linguistic and cultural differences, ill-trained teachers are expected to solve all social and cultural adjustment problems as well as teach English. Many times, I felt as if I were a counselor to my first class of ten students. I had to help them learn how to develop life skills and to deal with the daily struggles of being an immigrant. I did not resent this role; however, I felt alone in my struggle.
Many rural schools have to deal with small groups of immigrants who come to their area, and these schools do not have the resources to deal with them. According to Zehr (2001), “While urban school districts often have entire full-time staffs devoted to educating students with limited English skills, educators in the nation’s rural areas often have to rely largely on their own wits to build ESOL programs” (p. 6). Our suburban school was like a rural school in that respect. The district did not use its resources adequately, nor did it focus on the problem as I saw it. This demonstrated a lack of preparation for the influx of immigrants into the district.

**To Help the Student, First Help the Teacher**

As the United States experiences increases in immigration, schools must be prepared to provide support for English language learners and their teachers.

**More Time** Markham (1999) identified the stress felt by ESOL teachers who, in addition to carrying out their multi-level job functions, have to prepare students for a successful transition into regular education programs. While subject-area teachers tend to focus on how students are doing in their particular class, ESOL teachers constantly fret about whether their students are succeeding outside the ESOL classroom.

I knew that my students’ parents were probably confident that the American teacher (me) would take care of the daunting task of educating their child in English. This pressure alone was enough to make me feel responsible for more than just my one hour of ESOL class per day. School districts should provide more support for ESOL teachers by allowing them the time to monitor their students’ success in other classes. Perhaps administrators could give ESOL teachers an extra preparation hour in order to visit their students’ teachers, just as special education teachers do with inclusion students.

**Administrator Involvement and Mentoring** School districts dedicate many resources to helping the struggling first-year mainstream teacher; however, schools should also consider the situation of first-year ESOL teachers. I struggled in my solitary attempts to deal with the many issues that are distinctive to the beginning ESOL teacher. I wished that I had been assigned a mentor to help me deal with them.

School districts with large immigrant populations should provide support to ESOL teachers in the form of mentor assignments as well as a defined curriculum that accounts for the differences in the English ability of each student. Administrators should also arrange for better contact between ESOL teachers and other classroom teachers so that each student’s progress can be monitored appropriately.

**Appropriate Teaching Materials** Access to ESOL-oriented teaching materials and resources is imperative for any ESOL program. Black (2005) mentions picture dictionaries as an example of the type of materials that can help ESOL students understand a new language. District administrators should realize that their ESOL programs need to have program-specific resources.

**Administrators Can Ease the Pain**

Five years after my painful year of teaching ESOL, I became a principal. I used my first-year teaching experience to help me understand and empathize with first-year teachers. The many valuable lessons I learned from this experience helped me become a better administrator and deal with program-specific issues that are common to ESOL programs.

District administrators should not only provide material resources and moral support to first-year teachers, but they should also recognize that certain programs, such as ESOL or special education, require special elements of support for the first-year teacher. Administrators who provide a solid foundation for first-year ESOL teachers in the form of proper teaching materials, mentors, and active involvement in the program will enable their ESOL programs to succeed.

**References**


Chris Jenkins, a former ESOL teacher and principal, is a PhD candidate in curriculum and social foundations at Oklahoma State University, in the United States.
If you are using technology to improve teaching and learning, it is hard not to get excited about the possibilities of wiki software. Wikipedia as well as smaller, more focused wiki projects, such as Wikitravel, Wikibooks, or one of the many examples on the Meatball Wiki TourBus, may have you thinking that if you can just tap into some of the energy surrounding wikis, your classes will be swept up in a wave of excitement (see Wiki Resources on page 27 for the wikis and tools mentioned in this article).

Wiki enthusiasts think of wikis as an important tool to ensure that “students will not simply pass through a course like water through a sieve but instead leave their own imprint in the development of the course, their school or university, and ideally the discipline” (Holmes et al. 2001). We count ourselves as wiki enthusiasts but suggest a measure of caution. Though many successes have been reported (see, e.g., “The Wonderful World of Wiki,” Essential Teacher, December 2006), we have also observed and, indeed, experienced projects that have not gone as expected.

If you are new to wikis, we suggest that you not plunge straight into projects with students but first become a wiki user yourself. Wikis are both gloriously simple and strangely subtle; by taking your time to make them work for you, you can become attuned to the numerous possibilities they offer while avoiding disappointment through uses that ask too much of students.

Does Size Matter?

Fundamentally, a wiki is a Web site that can be edited from anywhere on the Internet, that keeps track of changes so you can revert to a previous version, and that allows for easy link making. The best-known wiki is Wikipedia. Anyone who has edited or authored an article will appreciate the power of an encyclopedia that, by harnessing the expertise of many thousands of people worldwide, has grown to nearly three times the size of the Encyclopedia Britannica (cf. Zandberg 2006). However, not all wikis are large, not all are open to contributions by the public, and some are not even viewable by anyone other than the author.

For many educational uses, smaller-scale wikis may be the way to go. Above all, realize that you do not have to use all the features of wikis. We offer a few projects here that can help you familiarize yourself with the different aspects of wikidom.

Play in a Sandbox

First, it is worthwhile to test-drive wiki software. Most public wikis offer a sandbox, where you can play without consequences. You can either try some of the major wiki software, such as PmWiki or Wikka Wiki, or some of the wikis listed at the beginning of this article. Practice making links, as this skill is at the heart of creating wikis with a flexible structure. And get accustomed to some of the markup conventions, such as creating headings or lists.
A Comparison Shopping Spree

After you’ve gotten your feet wet, visit the Wiki Matrix, where you can select several wikis and compare features. Both wiki engines (the software that drives wikis) and sites offering free wiki space are listed, and a Wiki Choice Wizard guides you through a series of questions to make an appropriate choice. We’ve been impressed by the free wikis offered by PBwiki, Wetpaint, and Wikia. One exciting possibility is offered by Wikispaces, which excels on the usability front and is free for K–12 use.

Wiki Projects

All of the following projects assume a single author (you) because we strongly feel that the first step to being a wiki teacher is being a wiki user. You may want to unleash wikis on your students before unleashing your students on wikis.

Project 1: Make a Wiki Notebook

After finding free wiki space on the Web or, more ambitiously, setting one up on a server, your next step would be to store some information in a wiki for personal use. Many wikis today are personal information repositories, or outboard brains (Doctorow 2002). Wikis are ideal for this, as they do not restrict you to a conventional hierarchical structure of section and subsection. You can add links between any pages that have some relation to each other, thus shortening the distance between useful chunks of information.

Don’t get too hung up on the format; concentrate on getting information into the wiki. Try to add information whenever you are connected to the Internet, even if you simply make a

Wiki Resources

Wikipedia (http://www.wikipedia.org/): A massive encyclopedia. This is what people usually think of when they hear the word wiki, but it is too big and complex for most class projects.

Wikitravel (http://wikitravel.org/): A wiki that uses the same software as Wikipedia but provides open-source tourist information on locations around the world.

Wikibooks (http://en.wikibooks.org/): Collaboratively produced textbooks for a wide range of educational courses.

Meatball Wiki TourBus (http://www.usemod.com/cgi-bin/mb.pl?TourBus): Tours of wiki sites. Originally set up to show the variety of wikis, the wikis on the tour have a long history and therefore a more developed structure.

PmWiki (http://www.pmwiki.org/): A system for creating and maintaining wikis that doesn’t require knowledge of a computer instruction language.

Wikka Wiki (http://wikkawiki.org/): A slightly more complex wiki engine that uses a MySQL database but emphasizes speed and has support for mind maps.

The Wiki Matrix (http://www.wikimatrix.org/): A list of more than 200 wiki engines and sites that allows you to compare features. The Wiki Choice Wizard helps you narrow down your choices.

PBwiki (http://pbwiki.com/): PB stands for peanut butter, to underline that making a wiki is as easy as making a peanut butter sandwich. Free to educators and for personal use if the site unabashedly advertises itself as a wiki.

Wetpaint (http://www.wetpaint.com/): A free wiki site that avoids mentioning wikis and provides lots of support.

Wikia and Wikia: Places (http://www.wikia.com/): Free wiki hosting. The site uses the software used by Wikipedia, Wikitravel, and Wikibooks, so this is a logical choice if your aim is to eventually use these wikis in your class. The Places area has lots of gaps ready for students to fill.

Wikispaces (http://www.wikispaces.com/) and Edublogs (http://edublogs.org/): Edublogs, which provides educators with free blogs, has arranged with Wikispaces to offer ad-free wikis if you sign up. Wikispaces emphasizes usability.
tiny correction. If you realize that your wiki structure is not appropriate, then change it little by little. It isn’t necessary to replace one structure with another; by adding links, you end up with multiple paths to your information. Remember that you can work on your wiki anywhere you have a connection to the Internet.

**Project 2: Create a Course Material Center**

Once you’ve created a notebook, you’ll probably begin to see the flexibility inherent in wikis. The next step is to make limited use of a wiki for a single course.

Put your handouts and class notes within the wiki. Students can either read these online or print them out, just as they could with a conventional Web site, but wikis offer huge advantages over static Web pages. As you teach the class and find something that needs to be added or changed, make a note of it and update it immediately after class. Using wikis in this way gives you a powerful tool for education. If your class is held in a computer lab, make the changes in front of the students; a particularly powerful example is to move back a homework deadline.

A variation on this theme is to make pages with large type and a small number of bullet points and to include a Next link at the bottom of each page, which functions as a kind of computer slide presentation. You can add questions or extra information that arises from class discussion to the slide live.

Going a step further, consider converting your whole teaching Web site to a wiki, giving you one central, instantly editable place to manage all files and materials. Any changes you make for this year’s class will automatically be available for next year’s.

**Project 3: Collaborative Wikis**

So far, we have focused on the instant editability of wikis and their organizational flexibility but not their collaborative aspects. You can also introduce individual students or whole classes to a collaborative course wiki. We have found that it is best to introduce students to wikis by giving them a personal page. Using a page like this to get to know students better can add an important dimension to your class and provide regular feedback.

Wikis usually have a Recent Changes list of all changes made within a specified time, so you can quickly and easily identify student pages with feedback or new information. If you teach in a room equipped with computers, you can easily gather feedback about lessons by asking students to write one thing they liked and one thing they didn’t like about the class. Easing students out of their own wiki spaces, you can create a course questions (FAQ) page, being sure to add new questions promptly as they are raised. You can also encourage students to create a Class Notes section that, alongside the FAQ page, serves as a resource for current and future classes.

**A Wider Wiki**

Expanding your horizons, you may be tempted to experiment with open sites like Wikipedia, but a more manageable option may be to create a wiki to encourage students to contribute information and advice. This becomes a resource for the community beyond the class. If you are at a loss what to do, consider using the Places area of Wikia, as it is focused on communities based on place, a great topic for almost any group.

**A Middle Way**

Many teachers have seized on wikis as the ultimate collaborative tool, and enthusiasts imagine environments where students with very little training or coaxing participate enthusiastically, editing each other’s work in a constant, lively back-and-forth flow of ideas. Pessimists worry that students will change important documents, that things that should remain private will not, and that it will be impossible to ascertain the correct attribution for work on the wiki, leading to concerns about assessment.

Returning to our title, we caution that if you are not careful, the cutting edge can all too easily become the bleeding edge, as the newest tools leave early adopters injured while the problems they wish to tackle remain unsolved. The possibilities of collaboration through wikis are multifaceted, but in order to collaborate, you must have enough confidence in your own grasp of seemingly mundane technical details. If your aim is to have students collaborate with you, you owe it to them to have a broad base of experience for your efforts. Previous work (Lavin and Tomei 2006) has suggested to us that even trivial user interface issues can stop users in their tracks. When these issues are coupled with the newness of a fully collaborative environment, the wiki may survive thanks to the efforts of a few brave souls, with less confident students over-whelmed by the shock of the new. Thus, we recommend using wikis for storing and presenting information before deploying them as full-blown collaborative tools.

Cole (1993) suggests that tools contain within them the history of their use. Unbundling the instant editability and general convenience of wikis from their collaborative aspects unlocks a new range of possibilities. While the traditional Web site update routine of edit, upload, and test was often just enough trouble to stop people from doing it more than a few times a year, with wikis, instant, even daily changes are perfectly feasible. Using a wiki does not necessarily entail total transformation. There are plenty of modest but useful ways to put them to use in your teaching life.
Consider converting your teaching Web site to a wiki, giving you an instantly editable place to manage files and materials. Any changes you make for this year’s class will automatically be available for next year’s.

References


Joseph Tomei is an associate professor at Kumamoto Gakuen University, in Japan, and has taught ESL in France, Spain, and Japan. Richard Lavin is an associate professor at the Prefectural University of Kumamoto, in Japan, and has taught EFL in the United Kingdom, France, and Japan.
Learning English vowel sounds presents a twofold challenge for ESL students. First, English has many more vowel sounds than there are vowel letters in the alphabet, and, second, these sounds often seem perplexingly similar to each other. Teaching the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) vowel symbols to ESL students can provide them with a useful tool for pronouncing English vowels accurately and for comparing the spelling and pronunciation of the vowels.

Vowel-Animal Pairs

To help students learn the IPA vowel symbols quickly, I use a set of animal drawings on large index cards to serve as visual cues for the vowel sounds. Each animal name contains a vowel sound that corresponds with an IPA symbol (see the table below for a list of these pairs arranged by where in the mouth the sounds are formed). A similar technique of linking vowels to colors may also help students learn the vowel sounds, as suggested by Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin (1996, 112), but I have found that the animal pictures provide memorable, concrete representations for students.

I begin introducing the IPA vowels on the first or second day of class, so that by the end of the first week, students are already familiar with the vowels. I give my students the IPA symbols commonly used by phoneticians, but if your textbook or dictionary uses alternate symbols, you could substitute as necessary. I list front and back vowels from high to low, but because the central vowels have a less tidy high-to-low order, I list them as a pair of stressed and unstressed vowels (/Λ/ and //) followed by an r-colored pair of stressed and unstressed vowels (/ / and / /).

In the table, alternative animals are given for two vowel sounds: / / and / / For the mid-front vowel / /, either bear or elephant is acceptable. The rhotic /r/ sound in bear affects the quality of the vowel and might make it difficult for students to hear the pure / / vowel. In using bear, however, I have found that ESL students do not generally have problems identifying and hearing the appropriate vowel sound. Nevertheless, to avoid potential confusion, bear may be replaced with elephant.

For the low back vowel / /, either dog or hog may be used. Regional dialect variation results in two acceptable pronunciations for dog, with / / or / / as the vowel sound. Because my dialect has an / / in dog, I naturally model that pronunciation. However, if your dialect has an / / in dog, it might be better to use hog for modeling the / / vowel, even though hog is a less common term that may be unfamiliar to some students. Finally, the table presents / / and / / as separate vowels even though many North American dialects, including mine, do not distinguish between these two vowels. Many texts include both symbols, so I teach both, warning students that although I can demonstrate the distinction between the two sounds, they will not hear the difference when I am speaking normally.

### Seeing and Saying the Vowel Symbols

To introduce the vowel symbols, I draw a large vowel quadrilateral on the board (see the diagram opposite).

### IPA Animals for Teaching Vowel Sounds

by Holly Krech Thomas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Front Vowels</th>
<th>Central Vowels</th>
<th>Back Vowels</th>
<th>Diphthongs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Symbol</td>
<td>Animal</td>
<td>Symbol</td>
<td>Animal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>bee</td>
<td>å</td>
<td>duck</td>
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<td>fish</td>
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<td>panda</td>
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<td>eI</td>
<td>snail</td>
<td>ø</td>
<td>bird</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>bear or elephant</td>
<td>ø</td>
<td>badger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>æ</td>
<td>cat</td>
<td>ø</td>
<td>dog or hog</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The quadrilateral is particularly helpful because the placement of the vowels on it roughly corresponds to the position of the mouth and tongue when forming the vowels. The visual image of the quadrilateral thus enables a discussion of how to make each vowel sound. Nevertheless, for low-level ESL students, you may want to simplify the presentation by listing the vowel-animal pairs on the board instead of using a quadrilateral.

I present the front and back vowels during one class period, but you could introduce them gradually over the course of several days or weeks. I begin with the front vowels. When I show an animal card, students name the animal and tell me what vowel sound they hear. After students isolate the vowel, I use sticky tack to fasten the animal card on the board, and I write the IPA symbol of the vowel in the vowel quadrilateral next to the card. Then we practice saying the animal name and vowel sound a few times before moving on to the next animal card. I go through the vowels in order, high to low, for both front and back vowels. If students do not know some of the animal names, I write them on the board next to the animal cards. The photo above shows how the board looks when all the animal cards have been added to the presentation.

Once all the front and back vowels are on the board, we focus on how the vowels are formed by the mouth. I say the front vowel sounds, and the students watch what happens to my mouth as I make the sounds. They notice that my mouth becomes more open as I go from high to low. I show them the same phenomenon for the back vowels, and we discuss what the increasing openness means in terms of their own pronunciation. For the back vowels, students also note the rounding that occurs.

During a subsequent class, we review the front and back vowels by going through the animal cards and tacking them next to a vowel quadrilateral on the board. I again write the IPA symbols for each vowel in the quadrilateral. Then I cover the central vowels and diphthongs, presenting them the same way the front and back vowels were introduced. If the course textbook makes a distinction between the stressed and unstressed central vowels /ʌ/ and /ə/ or /ɔ/ and /ɒ/, then I present all four of the central vowels and discuss the schwa (/ə/) as an unstressed, reduced vowel. When the textbook does not make this distinction, however, I simply present the central vowel symbols used by the textbook. I list the diphthongs next to the vowel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vowel Quadrilateral</th>
<th>Back</th>
<th>Diphthongs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Front</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>/æ/</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Games for Review and Practice
Once students have been introduced to all the IPA vowel symbols, I use several activities to help students learn and review the symbols.

Quizzes
Brief, ungraded quizzes are a simple way to review, and I use three types. The first two quizzes prepare students for the independent task of creating and correcting the third quiz.

1. I write five to ten IPA vowel symbols on the board, and students write the corresponding animals on their papers.
2. I write five to ten animal names on the board, and students write the corresponding IPA symbols on their papers.
3. Students use their notes to create a quiz with five symbols and five animals, then exchange quizzes with a partner. After the students have taken each other’s quizzes, they go over the correct answers together.

IPA Bingo
Another enjoyable way to review the vowel symbols is to play IPA vowel bingo. For this game, students draw a grid with sixteen squares on their papers. On the board, I demonstrate how to draw the grid and how to put IPA vowel symbols randomly in each of the squares. If all the IPA vowel symbols are covered in class, there will be one extra symbol.

Once students finish creating their bingo grids, the game begins. I show the class an animal card, and the students mark the symbol on their grids that corresponds with the animal. This exercise is more difficult if students are not allowed to name the animal or the vowel sound aloud. The first student to mark four squares in a row wins, and the student must read the winning row by saying each vowel sound and the animal name that corresponds with it.

You can also use the vowel cards to practice other language skills. For example, students can work in pairs to write sentences or stories using the animal names and then present their independent work to the class. Or students can use the pronunciation guide of a dictionary that has IPA symbols and categorize words according to the vowel sounds.

IPA Animals Work
Knowledge of IPA, especially the vowel symbols, is beneficial for ESL students in pronunciation or speaking classes. Linking the IPA vowel symbols to animals provides a solution to the challenge of learning to recognize and pronounce English vowels. Not only do animal cards make the learning process easier and more enjoyable, but they also enable students to remember the sound-symbol correspondences better and longer. In addition, the animals provide a handy reference for indicating which vowel is used in a given word. Both you and the students can speak about “the /æ/ as in cat” or “the /u/ as in woodpecker,” and there is no ambiguity about which vowel sound is being named.

References

Holly Krech Thomas is an assistant professor at Kingsborough Community College in the United States, where she teaches communication courses to mainstream and ESL college students.
If you teach English in an EFL context, chances are you've had an experience like this while preparing to give your students an essay assignment topic:

You scan your textbook for topic ideas. The international edition of your course book, however, is based on the experiences of native English speakers. This renders some of the materials in the textbook difficult for your students to relate to (Bell and Gower 1998). Even if your students can relate to the topics, they may not necessarily be able to relate to the readings on those topics.

This predicament makes it very difficult to expect your students to write essays on the topics in the readings, and it was just the predicament my students and I were mired in for a chapter from an integrated skills textbook we use. I teach Cantonese-speaking college students in Macau, which, like Hong Kong, is densely populated. The chapter, which was on the environment, included two readings and grammar exercises on past modals used to express blame and regret.

One of the readings discussed what people could do to make a smaller environmental impact, which my students understood. However, when we discussed the reading on urban sprawl and the concept of an ecocity, the look of confusion on my students' faces told me that perhaps I had not presented enough background on the reading before assigning it.

I was puzzled by my students' confusion at first. I had spent many years in the United States, so the concept was familiar to me. I assumed my students would at least have heard of urban sprawl. I forged ahead partly because I had already committed the class to the reading, but mostly because the reading gave my students the opportunity to learn about an interesting concept. Just because my students may have had trouble handling the reading didn't mean that it was without merit.

**How to Find a Relevant Writing Topic?**

Having discussed the readings and finished all the accompanying exercises, I was dissatisfied with the suggested writing prompts given at the end of the chapter. I didn’t see a need for my students to continue to elaborate on the urban sprawl option. And I feared that if I forced this writing topic on them, their unfamiliarity with the topic would tempt them to lift essays straight from the Internet. I also didn’t want them to discuss environmental issues in a vacuum.

Writing topics on the environment may ask students to discuss the causes of environmental problems, the effects of global warming on the environment, or both; persuade the audience to conserve natural resources; discuss environmental problems and provide possible solutions; or compare and contrast the advantages and disadvantages of alternative energy sources. If I chose one of these writing prompts, all my students would have to do was to regurgitate the actions needed to reduce, reuse, or recycle. They may not see the need to take the extra step to apply the information they’ve learned to a specific case.

At this point, I realized that I needed to reconsider the writing assignment. I had to come up with a topic that the students would be interested in writing on—one that not only was relevant to them but also drew from the readings in the textbook.

I decided to ask the students to picture themselves living in the same city fifty years in the future but with a different set of circumstances. I wanted them to imagine the future of their current living space and use that image to reflect on how they are living their lives today. I wrote a scenario in which I speculated what the students’ immediate surroundings would be like if they continued living without altering any of their behavior. Asking students to reflect on a situation would also allow me to integrate two of the grammar points, the unreal past conditional and past modals, discussed in the textbook.

To make the scenario both realistic and fun, I adapted recent local and international news events, incorporated real locations, and let my imagination loose to change the scenery from the unfamiliar to the familiar. Some of the news events included the contamination of the local fish supply, the designation of Macau as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Macau’s urban and business development plans, speculation on the consequences of the melting of the polar ice caps, and the disappearance of forests due to logging.

Using the following information as their new reality, I asked the students to write a paper that reflected back in time on the possible causes of the reality:
Fifty years into the future, Macau’s living conditions have changed quite a lot. Students can no longer walk around without wearing protective suits to safeguard against the deadly ultraviolet radiation. Many food items are no longer available due to contamination. A massive dam that encircles Macau has been constructed to combat the rise in sea level when the polar ice caps melted. A city that used to be inhabited by 500,000 people now has 5 million crammed into the same surface area. Instead of historic monuments earning a World Heritage Site designation, a park that still has trees in it has received that distinction. Blackouts have become routine.

**Adapting to the “Conceptual World of the Learners”**

The scenario still called for students to write a cause-and-effect essay, which was one of the objectives of the chapter, but it was tailored to the students’ lives and experiences. Since this task was based on the familiar, students could easily use their imagination to “see” it. As a natural extension, students discussed how their present behavior could have led to this future reality. Furthermore, students found the textbook readings more relevant as they referred to the readings for some of the possible causes of such harsh and drastic living conditions. My students were even receptive to additional readings that helped them connect the dots between cause and effect.

Whether or not you have to work within the confines of a text, you can modify assignments to suit “the conceptual world of the learners” (Jolly and Bolitho 1998, 111) but keep the learning objective of the assignment intact. Furthermore, by taking ownership of the teaching materials, through either creation or adaptation, you get the satisfaction of seeing the effectiveness of your creation. Students benefit because you have incorporated their needs into the assignment.

**Bridging the Form-Meaning Gap**

In addition to bringing the topic closer to my students, the scenario worked well for the grammar point discussed in the text. Because students were asked to reflect on their present situation as if it were in the past, they very naturally needed to use past modals, which, combined with unreal past conditionals, would allow the students to see the relationship between cause and effect.

To my surprise, not all the students were able to grasp the use of the unreal past conditional and past modals to express blame and regret. Before their arrival at university, many of my students had learned English by having grammar drilled into their heads. To them, the textbook grammar exercises were a cinch. However, the application of the form in the essay assignment presented them with a significant challenge. Those who didn’t make the connection between form and meaning wrote an advice essay for the next generation instead of one of reflection and regret.

Fortunately, students caught some of these mistakes in the peer response session. As students discussed their first drafts, some had doubts about the form they had used...
in their drafts. When I realized that there was a gap between the students’ understanding of the grammar form and the meaning, I created the chart on page 34 to help them understand when to use the unreal past conditional as applied to the essay assignment.

Even with the help of the chart, a few students still had difficulties using the grammar structures fluidly. After the students reviewed the chart and completed their final drafts, some of them demonstrated their understanding of the structure, but others were inconsistent with their usage.

One explanation for this result may be that students had to negotiate among too many tenses. According to Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999), “the problem with imaginative conditionals arises in the tense used. The past tense refers to the present time, and the past perfect tense refers to past time” (p. 551). To increase the difficulty for my students, Cantonese doesn’t have verb tenses (Yip and Matthews 2000). Because students had to negotiate so many different constructions, they invariably made mistakes in their choices.

**Lessons Learned**

Overall, students thought the assignment was challenging but enjoyable. One student who encountered difficulties said, “I thought the essay was a little bit difficult for me to write. In the beginning, I didn’t know the requirement that we should write the reasons based on the reality. I just imagined some events that might happen in the future and it might cause the living conditions to worsen.”

Another student remarked, “That essay is really different from my previous ones before. I had to do a lot of imaginations and it is enjoyable and funny. Think something I don’t think of in my life, and plan something we have ignored.”

Through this adaptation of a textbook assignment, I learned that letting my students discuss experiences they now regret would help bridge the gap between form and meaning. In other words, they would start with the familiar and work their way to the unfamiliar future. Also, perhaps my students could have handled the writing assignment better if I had introduced the scenario before launching into the chapter readings so that they had a clear goal from the outset.

**A Shift to the Familiar Is Worth the Effort**

Materials writing and adaptation can shift the focus from the standard ESL textbook readings to the familiar, reducing the temptation for students to rely on texts from the Internet. Once you remove the pressure to complete an assignment to which students may not be able to relate, they can pay more attention to the application of the information. They can do that best with materials created or adapted by you, their teacher.

After all, a textbook, no matter how well written, can rarely address all the issues of a particular group of students. Seeing students enthusiastically engaged in writing assignments is well worth the time and energy required to write your own materials or adapt those in a not-so-perfect textbook.

**References**


Alice S. Lee is an English language instructor in the English Language Centre at the University of Macau, in Macau SAR.
All through teacher’s college, I heard that the teacher sets the tone for the classroom. I could not agree more, but a feather activity introduced by Mrs. Secchio, the principal at Marine Creek Elementary in Lake Worth Independent School District, in the United States, taught me that the administrators also set the tone for the whole school. When the principal trusts the staff enough to allow staff members to express their own creativity, there is no limit to what they can accomplish.

For a week, Mrs. Secchio kept the staff waiting in suspense for an announcement to be made at a meeting that Friday. She built anticipation throughout the week by placing a written message beside the teachers’ mailboxes stating, “Special announcement at the mandatory Friday meeting.”

Every morning that week, she made an announcement telling us not to forget the special announcement. She also sent us an e-mail on Wednesday to remind us of the meeting and gave us a single clue: “Birds of a feather flock together.”

Throughout the year, Mrs. Secchio had used personality colors (Ribberger 2000) and learning styles (Dunn and Dunn 1999) to assist the faculty in becoming more aware of how they interact with each other, students, parents, and administrators. She continually worked to facilitate a cohesive school community. Many of our guesses centered on a community-building exercise. However, none of us could figure out how the feathers figured into the equation. When the faculty was assembled with their feathers, she finally ended the suspense.

“Congratulations! Monday will be Feather Day,” Mrs. Secchio announced. “On Feather Day,” she continued, “you can only teach using feathers. Three rules must be followed: (1) no textbooks, (2) no workbooks, and (3) no worksheets. On Monday, I will make an announcement to the students informing them of Feather Day and of the three rules. I expect you to have a good time with this.”

While leaving the meeting, I overheard a few grumbles about not teaching the curriculum. Many teachers questioned, “How are we supposed to do this, and exactly what are we supposed to do?” I left the meeting full of excitement and a little confused about what was expected of us on Monday.

Now What?

When I sat down to plan for my English classes on Monday, I realized that, other than those three rules, I had no structure to follow and no guidelines to meet. This prospect was both terrifying and exhilarating. I made a list of personal guidelines for the activities I would have the students do on Monday:

1. They had to be on grade level for the prekindergarten students in my class.
2. They should reinforce previous lessons or be literature based.
3. They must be lots of fun.

Having set these guidelines, I began brainstorming a list of activities. My list included identifying animals with feathers, making Mardi Gras masks, sorting feathers by color and length, creating number books with feathers, and decorating names with feathers. Then I went to the Internet and typed “feathers” and “lesson plans” into the Google search engine (http://www.google.com/), and more than 1,740,000 results came up. I then refined my search to include my students’ grade level, which brought the number of results down to 688. I began searching for creative ideas that were not yet on my list. Based on the search, I added two more items to my brainstorming list:

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feather-flying races and blowing-feather races.

Once I had a list of ideas, I needed to see if they fit into the guidelines I had set for myself. I came up with the plan shown in Lesson Plan for Feather Day.

All Play and No Work

When Mrs. Secchio announced Feather Day to the students on Monday, I could feel the excitement in the air among them as well as among the teachers. I am not sure whether the students were enthusiastic because a day with no workbooks, worksheets, or textbooks sounded like fun or because they could report on teachers who broke the rules. My students were so excited that, during the first twenty minutes of class, we just tossed the feathers into the air and played with them.

During the animal name activity, the students named an impressive thirty-four animals and decided, sometimes with other students’ assistance, whether the animal had feathers or not. While reading about the carnivals and Mardi Gras, a teachable moment about hurricanes and other natural disasters arose when one of the students said her parents used to go to Mardi Gras every year but could not any more because of someone named Katrina. I was able to explain that Katrina was not a person but a name given to a hurricane.

During learning centers, the students were able to demonstrate their mastery of independent sorting by different attributes and patterns. All the students were able to find their names written on cardstock, though sometimes a friend would help if the student was unsure. Some students even decided to use the feathers to make patterns on their names.

Making the number book seemed to be the most difficult task for my students. In reflection, I wonder if they had trouble because I sat there with them instead of letting them work independently or with a partner. The most enjoyable activities that day were the feather-flying and feather-blowing competitions. During the feather-flying competition, another teachable moment occurred when the feathers flew away from the finish line and I asked the students to explain why. After several suggestions, they concluded that the wind was blowing them away from the finish line.

A few of the other teachers carried out ideas I thought were terrific. In one class, students made boats out of plastic bowls with the feather as the sail and raced the boats across the water by blowing on the sail. Other students made Indian and Yankee Doodle hats, with some even singing the song “Yankee Doodle.” Whatever the activity, though, the most obvious thing I noticed was the big smile on everyone’s face.

Lesson Plan for Feather Day

- Have students make two charts of animals, one showing animals with feathers and one showing animals without. Then have students think of an animal and tell which chart it should be on.
- Read aloud books on Mardi Gras and other carnivals around the world where people wear masks with feathers. Then have students, with the help of their third-grade buddies, make their own masks.
- Hold a feather-blowing contest in which students line up in two rows and blow their feathers across the floor until they reach the finish line.
- Create four classroom activity centers:
  1. feather patterns: At a separate table, students sort feathers by color and length into colored baskets. The students make patterns using the different colors.
  2. number books: Students make number books with feathers at the teacher’s table so that students struggling with the numbers can get assistance. Books will have the numbers 1 through 10 on individual pages, and the students will glue the corresponding number of feathers on each page.
  3. feathered names: Students decorate their names with feathers. Student names will be printed on card stock in big letters. The students will locate their names and then glue feathers on the letters.
  4. carnival: Students use feather boas, feathers, and Mardi Gras masks to pretend they are at a carnival.

Reinforcing the Joy of Learning

The students, teachers, and administrators all had a wonderful time on
Feather Day. What surprised most of us were the amazing things the students learned that day from playing with feathers:

- Teachers were able to informally assess what their students learned by watching them play.
- My students showed the knowledge of animals they had gained in previous units by naming and categorizing them.
- Teachers in the higher grade levels reported that students had learned about air flow currents and velocity.

Administrators from around the district commented on the amount of learning that took place even as the students believed that they were having a day off to play. The laughter in the hall was contagious, and I did not hear of any major discipline problems from the teachers throughout the day. Both students and teachers were engaged in all of the activities. Many teachers claimed that every day should be Feather Day or should involve a similar activity so that students and teachers would love to come to school. One teacher also commented that if the students could learn this much information in an enjoyable way every day, they would not have any problem passing the state's standardized test.

References


Kellie Molden works in Preschool Programs for Children with Disabilities, Lake Worth Independent School District, in the United States, and is currently pursuing a master's degree in reading and ESL.
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RULES: Rules for Using Linguistic Elements of Speech

Marjorie Feinstein-Whittaker and Lynda Katz Wilner.

The authors of RULES have prepared what they call “a resource and interactive workbook” that is a valuable resource to the classroom teacher who is preparing lessons on English pronunciation.

In keeping with modern research on the most effective ways of learning pronunciation, the book takes a suprasegmental approach to teaching English speech patterns, emphasizing elements of speech that connect phonetic segments to give spoken English its “native” character. Accordingly, the book is organized into three sections, the first dealing with stress and intonation patterns of English, the second with assimilation and linking rules, and the third with rules for stressing (and using) English articles and pronouns.

The first section covers stress patterns in compound nouns, adjective-noun combinations, phrasal verbs, proper nouns, acronyms, abbreviations, and heteronyms (nouns and verbs that are spelled identically but distinguished by their stress patterns, as in an artist records a ‘record’). In this section, the authors also cover syllable stress patterns (e.g., stress shift with suffixes); sentence-level stress patterns, including contrastive word stress; and stress patterns used in speaking numbers.

In section 2, titled “Pronunciation Rules,” the authors treat assimilation rules, including the effect of voiced and unvoiced consonants on syllable length, the production of -s endings and past tense endings, and alternate /θ/ pronunciations. Elements of linked speech are also covered, including rules for linking words together, y-insertion, syllable reductions, and consonant blends and clusters.

In the section “Grammar Rules,” the authors first present the grammatical rules for English articles and demonstrative pronouns and then frame those rules within a pronunciation context that again emphasizes the stress patterns speakers use to convey meaning. For teachers preparing pronunciation curricula, a summary sheet at the end of the book can serve as an outline of the rules presented.

Besides rules, the book offers a treasure trove of useful exercises that you can either use as is or design into your classroom activities. Topics include setting a monthly schedule; making appointments; ordering from a menu; and, in a particularly authentic context, talking on the telephone. Exercises include both sentence- and dialogue-level examples.

To use this book, I recommend treating it as a resource to use in designing lessons. Students will need extensive contextualized practice and recycling to internalize the rules presented. Students may also need background in the mechanics of stress and rhythm in spoken English. Lessons that allow students to discover the dynamics of pitch and the rhythm of a stress-timed language will complement the material presented in this book.

Charles Duquette is an adjunct professor of TESOL at Northern Virginia Community College in the United States.

Grammar for the Real World


Grammar for the Real World is an interactive CD-ROM that uses workplace-situated tasks to develop grammar skills. The CD and teaching materials provide an interesting opportunity for students to relate grammar to real-world jobs in the media. The program was not created for English language learners, but it is appropriate for both native speakers and English language learners in elementary school who need to practice grammar.

Students enter the virtual workplace as interns for an organization called World Studios. They look at job ads on the employment board and choose those they want to try. Each job the student chooses practices a different aspect of grammar: the news assistant position asks students to pick out different parts of speech, the technical director listens to a news reporter and corrects usage errors, and the commercial writer arranges sentences by intended audi-
ence and then organizes them into paragraphs. Students can click a Help button to clarify instructions or to get assistance with grammar.

After completing several jobs, the student is called back to World Studios and given a game break: an assignment to get doughnuts for the directors in which the student must dodge traffic to get the right doughnuts to the right directors.

The offline teaching materials accompanying the CD are divided into four units, each set up for a small-group collaboration that culminates in the production of a final unit project (a newspaper, a welcome book, an ad campaign, and a letter). Each unit consists of milestones, or short assignments that help children develop particular skills and ideas to complete the final unit project. The milestones focus on the writing process and project preparation as well as grammar and editing skills; some examples are analyzing a newspaper, gathering news, and writing articles.

The CD and the teaching materials are interesting and motivating for students and lend themselves to cooperative and collaborative learning. A bonus in the CD is a movie-building activity, called Studio 19, that students can work on while waiting for classmates to finish their tasks. Students can build their own movies from a range of set characters, backgrounds, sound effects, and props, and they can create original dialogue.

However, the CD does not teach grammar. It would be better used as an enjoyable way to review grammar and terms that have been studied in class than as a tool for teaching new grammar terms and concepts.

Leslie Huff is a PhD candidate and teaching assistant at Washington State University in the United States.

Shambles in Southeast Asia: The ESL Page
http://www.shambles.net/esl/

I designed the Web site Shambles in 2002 to support the international school communities in Brunei, Burma/Myanmar, Cambodia, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Macau, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam. The site now attracts a worldwide audience of over 10,000 visitors a day. The international schools served by the site mostly use English as the medium of instruction in a curriculum based on one outside the resident country.

The ESL section of the site was established at the request of expatriate and local teachers who were looking for a single reference point to find relevant teaching and learning resources. Locally produced ESL materials designed by teachers working in Asia are mainly listed under ESL Education News & ESL Teaching Resources in Newspapers. Teachers do not normally submit materials directly to be hosted on Shambles but instead submit hyperlinks to the materials that are already available on the Internet.

Being a specialist in an international school is often difficult if there are no other specialists with whom to share problems and successes. One area on the site, called ESL Newsletters, Listservs, Chats, and Forums—Talk with Other ESL Teachers, contains links to opportunities to share and collaborate with teachers in other schools.

Also available on the site are lesson plans, policies, assessment suggestions, and support for ESL teachers, including continuing professional development and job openings. The ESL Games section contains links to over 40 Web sites offering free games.

Many links on the ESL page overlap with the resources on the page geared toward mainstream English teaching (http://www.shambles.net/english/). Shambles also contains a database of international schools and has resources to support teaching and learning in other curriculum areas.

The site offers a calendar of educational events around the region and the world. A newsletter is e-mailed to subscribers three times a year and can be read online. Also available on the site is a podcast series of interviews with educators mainly based in Southeast Asia. In addition, ESL students can listen to podcasts made by and for them.

Access to all the materials on Shambles is free.

Chris Smith is creator of the Shambles Web site and head of The Education Project Asia in Thailand.

See also “Twelve Chickens,” http://www.tesol.org/etc.
I like to query students to learn how I can improve a class. My school’s standardized end-of-semester evaluations occur too late and feature questions that don’t fit my needs. My colleagues and I also do needs assessments for new courses or curricula, but if I ask my students for suggestions, silence most often results. Thus, to survey my students, I use SurveyMonkey, a Web site that makes collecting and analyzing data a quick, paperless process.

After registering, you can custom-design surveys with multiple-choice, open-ended essay, and matrix questions. The matrix questions allow you to create charts with several criteria heading each row and can be used to create Likert scales.

Once finished designing the survey, you can e-mail students with the link to the survey, add the link to a Web page, or create an address book and send invitations to the survey from the site. Checking the response rate is simple, and you can remind students to participate if necessary. My response rates are high because taking these surveys is a novel experience for students, and they appreciate the opportunity to voice an opinion in a non-threatening forum.

The multiple-choice question results present the data in bar graphs that indicate the percentage and the total responses for each answer. The design is easy to read. To use the data in a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation or report, you need to enter the totals manually into another program, such as Microsoft Excel.

Because the site is well designed, high intermediate- and advanced-level students can create their own surveys and include the data in presentations or essays, providing them with an opportunity to practice forming questions. I review question structure and teach students how to design surveys that don’t lead respondents to a favored answer.

The free features of the site satisfy my needs, although it would be nice to be able to export my data to Microsoft Excel. To gain this capability, you must upgrade to the premium service, which costs US$19.95 a month. The premium service also allows conditional logic, result sharing, password protection for respondents, an unlimited number of questions, and up to 1,000 respondents per survey (there’s a nominal charge for exceeding the limit). Although I don’t require these features, the time saved in data entry alone justifies the expense for someone who is doing a larger research project.

I have seen other survey-building sites, such as Zoomerang (http://info.zoomerang.com/) and FormSite (http://www.formsite.com/), but I prefer SurveyMonkey’s well-designed graphics, its convenient interface, and the way it helps me adapt my teaching to students’ preferences.

Susan Kelly is a full-time instructor at Sogang University in Korea.
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TESOL Convention Spans the Globe in Seattle

More than 7,700 professionals from 106 countries attended TESOL’s 41st Annual Convention and Exhibit, Spanning the Globe, Tides of Change, in Seattle, Washington, USA, in March 2007. Attendees visited more than 160 exhibitors to view their latest products, professional texts, classroom resources, and multicultural instructional materials.

Educational, Career Development, and Networking Resources Offered

Throughout the convention, attendees were able to participate in a variety of combined educational and networking events. For example, the Evening Forum on March 21, focusing on change management in English language teaching (ELT), included a formal presentation on the framework of change followed by breakouts into small discussion groups of EFL, K–12, adult education, and higher education professionals.

Over 500 educators participated in 30 Pre- and Post-Convention institutes, 4- or 6-hour workshops covering a wide variety of issues, from collaboration with mainstream teachers and adult literacy to teaching pronunciation and vocabulary. In addition, off-site visits to local educational institutions were orchestrated to give attendees exposure to some of the ELT opportunities and challenges in the Seattle community.

Over 750 attendees utilized the Job MarketPlace to apply for close to 60 job openings. Another 104 TESOL members completed courses as part of TESOL’s Leadership Development Certificate Program.

Daily Plenary Sessions Conducted and Advocacy Honors Presented

Each day the convention spotlighted a plenary session on professional issues of ELT. The topics were varied, including “From ESL to Harvard: An Immigrant’s Perspective”; “Language, Creativity, and Classrooms”; and “Global Changes and Perspectives on Communicative Language Teaching.”

TESOL President Jun Liu delivered a compelling plenary speech, “From Shanghai to Seattle: Tides of Change,” and described with humorous anecdotes his development from being an English language learner in China to having dual careers as director of the English Language Learning Center at Shantou University in the People’s Republic of China and associate professor of linguistics at Arizona State University in the United States. Throughout his speech, Dr. Liu emphasized his appreciation and gratitude for the support of the board, the central office staff, and the TESOL membership during his tenure as president.

Mr. Léon-Charles Ciss, Director General of Sonatel Mobiles, received TESOL’s Global Advocacy Recognition for his work in recognizing the importance of English as a global language in his professional work.
and for his active support for the Association of Teachers of English in Senegal (ATES). Internationally, he represents Senegal in the Surveys Committee of the International Telecommunications Union, responsible for the development of data transmission networks in Africa. He is currently a member of the INTELSAT Working Group, in charge of restructuring the Satellites International Organization in Washington, DC, in the United States.

U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell, representing Washington State, received TESOL’s Local Advocacy Recognition. Elected to the Senate in 2000, Senator Cantwell has been a strong advocate of immigration reform and improved educational opportunities for children, especially language minority students.

Citizenship Symposium Featured

The 2007 convention also featured a special event: the Symposium on Adult Civics and Citizenship Education in the United States. Sponsored by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services’ Office of Citizenship and the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Vocational and Adult Education, the symposium featured a panel of distinguished speakers discussing a history and analysis of citizenship in the United States, and five workshops throughout the convention. Participants in the symposium learned about and discussed many aspects of the citizenship process, including a first look at the newly revised U.S. Naturalization Test and Study Guide.

TESOL 2007 Event Casts—Access to Key Sessions

TESOL videotaped almost 50 hours of sessions at the convention. These event cast sessions are currently available online for TESOL members, and access is free for members who attended the convention. TESOL members who did not attend the convention can purchase access to the entire package of Web casts for $50. Nonmembers may purchase access for $75. To find out more and see additional photos from Seattle, visit www.tesol.org/convention/eventcasts.

Start Spreading the News... New York, New York in 2008!

It’s not too early to start planning for TESOL’s 42nd Annual Convention and Exhibit, in New York. The scheduled dates are April 2–5, 2008. Papers, demonstrations, workshops, reports, and colloquia submissions were due on June 1, 2007. Submissions for poster sessions and video theaters are due on August 1, 2007. The theme for the 2008 Annual Convention and Exhibit is Worlds of TESOL: Building Communities of Practice, Inquiry, and Creativity. Presenters are encouraged to incorporate the theme into their proposals.

The 2008 convention ushers in the new 3-day convention format. The opening plenary will be on Wednesday evening, April 2, and the convention and exhibit will take place April 3–5.
TESOL Resource Center

The TESOL Resource Center (TRC) is a new benefit developed for TESOL members. The TRC is an online platform where members can find a variety of resources for educational and professional purposes. The resources include lesson plans, activities, quizzes, and teaching tips as well as professional papers, presentations, and multimedia resources. Members are invited to participate in the expansion of the TRC and benefit from the opportunities it provides. To submit resources or to become a reviewer for the TRC, please visit the TESOL Resource Center at www.tesol.org/resourcecenter. All contributors retain the copyright for their resources.

TESOL Board Approves Position Statements on Rights of Teachers, Special Education Needs

At its meeting in March, the TESOL Board of Directors approved two new position statements. The first addresses the status and rights of teachers worldwide, and the second focuses on English language learners with special educational needs. Both statements are available on the TESOL Web site.

Correction to TESOL E-List/E-News Management

The March issue of Essential Teacher provided some inaccurate information about how TESOL was managing its e-list and e-newsletter subscriptions. Automatic subscriptions are not available; members must sign up themselves to receive e-newsletters and e-mail for their interest sections and caucuses if they haven’t already.

New and renewing members need to check appropriate boxes within their online member profiles to receive e-mail and e-newsletters from their free and paid interest sections and caucuses.

To check appropriate boxes, members must be logged into the TESOL Web site at www.tesol.org, click My Profile, click the Edit button at the bottom of the page, then click the Communications Options and Professional Information tab. Navigate to Preferences and click appropriate boxes.

If members are unsure of their subscription, they should follow the same process to check their status.

Awards and Grants

The generous contributions of TESOL members make it possible for TESOL to provide more than sixty awards and grants each year. You can support the Awards and Grants program when you register for TESOL’s Annual Convention and Exhibition, when you renew your membership, or, if you’d like to make your U.S., Canada, and Mexico tax-deductible contribution today, visit http://www.tesol.org/.

Using the Forgot Password? Function

If you forget your password or member ID to log in to TESOL’s Web site, use the Forgot Password? option under the log-in area on the left side of the home page. If you have any questions or problems, e-mail info@tesol.org.

Free Open Access to E-Lists and E-News for All Members

The approved budget for FY07 has provided for the following, effective June 1:

TESOL will provide members with free “open access” to all TESOL e-lists and e-newsletters and no longer charge for additional subscriptions to interest sections (ISs) and caucuses. From a special Web page, members will be able to easily choose whichever primary IS and caucus they would like, add or change any other ISs or caucuses, determine how to receive their e-news (digested or not), easily turn mail on and off while on vacation, etc.

A minimal dues increase went into effect June 1, 2007, for the following categories: individual dues increased from $75 to $85; joint membership increased from $120 to $130; student fees increased from $30 to $33; and retired member fees increased from $51 to $55. Global and part-time membership categories were not affected.
China English as a Foreign Language Standards (CEFLS) Now Available

CEFLS was a 30-month standards development, materials writing, and teacher education project. Three organizations collaborated on this project: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. (TESOL), with headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia, in the United States; The McGraw-Hill Companies, with headquarters in New York City, New York, in the United States; the National Foreign Language Teaching and Research Association (NFLTRA), with headquarters in Beijing, China.

There are four CEFLS volumes:

- Integrating EFL Standards Into Chinese Classroom Settings, Primary Level (Grades 3–6),
- Integrating EFL Standards Into Chinese Classroom Settings, Junior Level (Grades 7–9),
- Integrating EFL Standards Into Chinese Classroom Settings, Senior Level (Grades 10–12),
- Portfolio-Based Teacher Development and Appraisal With Teacher Performance Standards: Companion to Integrating EFL Standards Into Chinese Classrooms Settings Series.

Each volume costs US$30 for TESOL members. To order these volumes, go to TESOL’s Web site: www.tesol.org and use the drop-down menu: publications/books/online catalog.

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 Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts, in the United States, June 22–23. The academy will feature six 10-hour workshops. For more information, contact edprograms@tesol.org.

2007 Symposia

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.
Just Off Press! Language Teacher Research in the Americas

Language Teacher Research in the Americas (editor, Hedy McGarrell) is just off press, adding to the scope of TESOL’s Language Teacher Research Series (series editor, Thomas S. C. Farrell). The series includes two previously published volumes, Language Teacher Research in Asia and Language Teacher Research in Europe, as well as three forthcoming volumes, Language Teacher Research in the Middle East, Language Teacher Research in Australia and New Zealand, and Language Teacher Research in Africa.

The teacher researchers who share their experiences in Language Teacher Research in the Americas show how language teachers can become empowered to examine their practices and reflect on ways to refine their approaches. As these professional educators strive to improve teaching and learning, their efforts take a variety of forms. The authors teach in many different contexts: higher education, K–12 schools, or teacher education settings. In relation to their specific contexts, they analyze their teaching practices, reflect on their students’ learning environments, and turn the lessons learned into practical instructional strategies that can foster growth—in teachers as well as students. Each author describes specific classroom experiences in the Americas and extracts a more broadly applicable analysis of how to improve student learning.

The studies presented in this volume show that when educators take an inquiry approach to language teaching, they can craft professional development that is personally meaningful and has lasting results for English language learners and teachers everywhere.

The format of the Language Teacher Research series 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.

Also off press in 2007:

- Teaching Creatively Within a Required Curriculum for Postsecondary Learners, Anne Burns and Helen de Silva Joyce (Eds.), Language Curriculum Development Series
- From Language Learner to Language Teacher, Don Snow
- Learning Languages through Technology, S. Rilling and E. Hanson-Smith (Eds.)
- Helping English Language Learners Succeed in Pre-K–Elementary Schools, Collaborative Partnerships Between ESL and Classroom Teachers Series

Please visit www.tesol.org to the link to the online product catalog, where you can browse and preview all TESOL books.

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