

# MATSOL NEWSLETTER

Massachusetts Association Of Teachers Of English To Speakers Of Other Languages

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WINTER 1990

## Ann Raimés, Plenary Speaker, to speak at MATSOL '90 Spring Conference "Writing and language learning: new concerns in a new decade"



At the MATSOL '90 SPRING CONFERENCE, Ann Raimés, Professor of English at Hunter College, City University of New York, will speak on "Writing and language learning: new concerns in a new decade." In her talk, Professor Raimés will look at the dominant features of language learning and writing as we enter a new decade and will discuss what she sees as future trends and future problems. "Solutions, however, are not guaranteed."

Ann Raimés has directed programs and taught courses in ESL, writing and rhetorical theory for nineteen years at Hunter College. She has written frequently about composition, language teaching, and methodology and is the author of several textbooks, the latest of

which is *How English Works: A Grammar Handbook with Readings* (St. Martin's Press, 1990). She is also the Chair of the TESOL Publications Committee.

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## Nancy Cloud to Present Two Workshops at MATSOL '90 Spring Conference



Nancy Cloud, Special Assistant Professor in the Department of Curriculum and Teaching at Hofstra University, will present two back-to-back workshops. The first titled "L2 or LD?: Distinguishing Second Language Needs from Learning Disabilities" will explore the major educational issues that must be addressed to effectively distinguish among and properly serve special populations of LEP speakers. "At risk" second language learner profiles (undereducated, highly mobile, comparably limited students) will be distinguished from those of second language learners with disabilities. The factors to analyze in making such distinctions will be detailed and recommendations for serving the "at risk" group will be outlined.

The second workshop titled "Planning ESL Programs for Special Education Students," will briefly introduce a theoretical framework for understanding the second language acquisition process in students with disabilities and a framework for selecting effective methods and materials.

Ms. Cloud, who specializes in the area of bilingual special education, recently co-developed a media-based training curriculum to be used by training centers and colleges charged with improving teachers' capability to deliver appropriate instructional programs to culturally and linguistically diverse exceptional children. Ms. Cloud is currently completing her doctoral work at Teachers College, Columbia University in the area of mental retardation and bilingualism.



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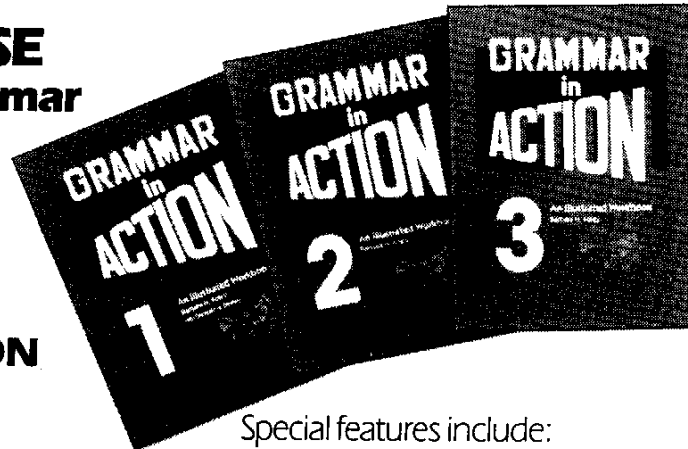
Barbara Foley, et al.

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# More on MATSOL '90 SPRING CONFERENCE

## Special Interest Groups: Issues and Updates

During lunchtime on Saturday, March 31 at the MATSOL '90 SPRING CONFERENCE, several Special Interest Groups will hold Rap Sessions. Representatives from Elementary, Secondary, College/University, and Adult/Vocational Education will lead separate discussions on the pedagogical and political issues important to each interest group. This is a marvelous opportunity for teachers and administrators to get together with colleagues to address issues and to offer solutions to pressing problems. As an outgrowth of these rap sessions, MATSOL hopes to publish related articles in the MATSOL Newsletter, or, if there is enough interest, produce a new publication devoted exclusively to the teaching practices of Special Interest Groups.

Bring your own lunch, or order a box lunch (\$6.00) when you pre-register for the conference.

## LIVE DEMONSTRATION OF A COMPUTER PROGRAM FOR PRONUNCIATION

In a special session at the MATSOL '90 SPRING CONFERENCE, Linda Ferrier, Professor of Speech, Language Pathology and Audiology at Northeastern University, Sherri Robinson, a graduate student in the same department, and Susan Donnio, a teacher at the ELC at Northeastern University, will demonstrate the DSPS real time speech lab, a visual acoustic feedback system used to train international T.A.s to improve their pronunciation of English. Participants will observe a T.A. as he works to improve his pronunciation using a split screen format that allows him to match his pronunciation to that of a model. Using wide band spectrographic displays, the student will get instant feedback on his pronunciation. At the end of the demonstration the audience will have the opportunity to look at the program and speak to the presenters.

## EAST MEETS WEST: The MATSOL Bus

At 7:30 A.M. on October 28, 1989, a yellow school bus left the parking lot of the Driscoll School in Brookline filled with ESL teachers and administrators (and even a plenary speaker!), bound for a day at Elms College in Chicopee for the ConnTESOL/MATSOL FALL '89 CONFERENCE. Having paid \$5.00 each, passengers were able to chat, sleep, discuss presentations, and look at the scenery instead of spending hours on the turnpike driving to and from the conference. Anlee Schaye, who organized the successful trip, true to her word, left on time and got us there for the first session. The cost of the ride was subsidized by MATSOL.

Since the MATSOL board is equally anxious to bring people from the Western part of the state to Northeastern University on March 31 for the MATSOL SPRING '90 CONFERENCE, it will subsidize a bus, now scheduled to leave from Amherst that morning and to return to Amherst that evening. Lyn Froning will organize the trip. If you are interested, please indicate this when you get your registration form and include \$5.00 for the bus when you pre-register. As soon as plans are complete, you will receive a letter with information concerning the exact location and scheduled departure of the bus. If you are not preregistering, but are interested in the bus, you can contact Lyn Froning at (413-256-8994) before the conference.



At TESOL - SAN FRANCISCO  
Watch for information in the  
TESOL Daily about Where &  
When the MATSOL "Get-  
together" will be.

## WANTED:

### MATSOL JOB BANK COORDINATOR

#### DUTIES:

- 1) Consult with job seekers about employment opportunities appropriate to their experience.
- 2) Provide information on MATSOL membership to job seekers new to Massachusetts.
- 3) Contact programs about job openings.
- 4) Refer seeker - applicants for immediate openings; refer programs to appropriate seekers.
- 5) Update and distribute list of current openings regularly (every 3-6 weeks).
- 6) Maintain a file of active job seekers' resumes; coordinate Resumé Exchange at conferences.
- 7) Contact MATSOL Board members and others to keep current of overall job market.
- 8) Coordinate the biannual revision of the Massachusetts ESL Directory.
- 9) Sit as a non-voting member of the MATSOL Executive Board.
- 10) Report to the Board volume and type of use of Job Bank as requested.

#### QUALIFICATIONS:

- 1) Must be an ESL professional and member of MATSOL.
- 2) Familiarity with or willingness to learn about various ESL programs statewide.
- 3) Word processing/data entry skills a plus.
- 4) Ability to work flexibly and independently.
- 5) Must be accessible through an institution and/or answering machine.

#### SALARY:

\$10.00 per hour for an average of five hours per week.

# Fall Conference Report

## FALL CONFERENCE

Ruth Spack and Sharon Tsutsui

MATSOL joined forces for the first time with ConnTESOL to sponsor the 1989 Fall Conference, "Voices of Literacy" at Elms College in Chicopee, MA. The conference drew an impressive number of attendants, representing Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Jersey, and New York. Conference participants could choose from among twenty-five presentations covering a wide range of ESL teaching practices and concerns. Sessions included workshops on cooperative learning, tutor training, and classroom video; papers and demonstrations on reading texts, reading research, writing programs, children's literature, computer laboratories, and job training; three publishers' sessions; and a Community College forum.

To share these learning experiences with members who may have been unable to attend the fall conference — and with those who may wish to remember its highlights — the editors of the MATSOL Newsletter asked two participants and several presenters (three of whom responded) to report on the content of some of the presentations. Each of these sessions was well-attended and fostered stimulating discussion of the material both during and long after the conference.

## Report on the Keynote Address

Jennifer Bixby

Keynote speakers of the Fall '89 Conference, Courtney Cazden and Ann Rosebery discussed "ESL Literacy in the Content Areas," focusing on studies that show how ESL teachers are integrating ESL literacy and content area instruction.

Professor Cazden of the Harvard Graduate School of Education began by discussing two basic components of language education: the focus on meaning and the focus on language form. She looked at how these are integrated in the classroom by discussing the use of peer dialogue journals at the Newcomer School in San Francisco, a high school for immigrants in their first year in the

United States. Students have six courses a day, three ESL courses in heterogeneous language groups by bilingual teachers, and one elective.

Most teachers are familiar with the dialogue journal; students write to other students, giving them an opportunity for informal written "dialogue." In writing to a peer, students can practice language and expressions important for socializing. The written work is not evaluated by the teacher, which saves the teacher time and gives students a chance to communicate in writing without being concerned about evaluation. At Newcomer School, students in ESL courses were paired with peers from civics classes. Students did not know their journal partners and did not know the partner's language or culture.

Professor Cazden shared excerpts from the journals of two students, an Indian girl and a Vietnamese boy. Over time they showed increasing fluency and greater depth of topics, which included both academic and personal subjects. The two students began to use their own backgrounds as resources for each other in their civics classes. For example, they exchanged questions and thoughts about Gandhi, fascism, their classes, and health. It was clear that meaningful communication was the sole purpose of their journals, and that the students put in quite a bit of thought and effort.

Professor Cazden addressed concerns about peer journals limiting learning by reinforcing errors. Since teachers don't read peer journals, would student errors be reinforced? She felt that as long as there is other language input and focus on language in the classroom, the benefits of such an activity far outweigh possible liability of error reinforcement.

Ms. Rosebery talked about her work with the Cheche Konnen project at the BBN lab (Bolt, Beranek and Newman, Inc.). Cheche Konnen is Haitian Creole for "search for knowledge," and the project focused on developing scientific literacy in high school ESL students. The goal was to foster an understanding of science through the development of vocabulary, writing genres, thinking skills, and problem solving.

Ms. Rosebery worked with a basic skills class within a high school bilingual program. The students were in a remedial program to build academic skills, had little English, and were considered to be at risk for drop out. In

many science classes, students are essentially rehearsing knowledge, learning is decontextualized, and students work individually. Ms. Rosebery proposed to involve students in construction of knowledge, to contextualize the learning, and to encourage collaborative work.

The topic for investigation came from students' own questions and observations about a dirty pond near a local water plant that they toured. Ms. Rosebery shared scripts and slides of the students at work, showing the dynamic nature of the investigation students were undertaking. Students were enthusiastic and excited about their investigations, and their language abilities were challenged in discussions where they compared data, formulated hypotheses and questions, expressed ideas, sought clarification, and summarized findings. Students prepared reports, and the final project was a field guide for elementary students who would take field trips to the pond. This was quite an achievement for students who started out with such low basic skills.

These two classroom examples, the peer journal and the student-initiated science project, show but a few of the "voices of literacy," the conference theme. When students are communicating for a personally important purpose, the focus on meaning inspires and encourages. Students themselves begin to focus on language form in order to better communicate what they want to say. The key is to contextualize content learning, tuning in to students' own experience and natural curiosity. ESL literacy and content area instruction can be natural partners.

## Looking Back, Looking Forward: Lessons Learned from the Family Literacy Project

Elsa Auerbach

Since the Fall MATSOL Conference coincided with the end of the UMass Family Literacy Project, project staff thought it would be a good time to share our reflections on what we learned during the three-year course of the project. The project was a community-

university collaboration funded by Title VII to provide English literacy instruction to the parents of children in Bilingual Education programs. UMass worked with three community-based adult literacy centers from the Boston area (the Jackson-Mann Community School, the Cardinal Cushing Center for the Spanish Speaking and the Community Learning Center in Cambridge) to provide instruction for about 150 students per year. Two of the four project teachers, Rosario Gomez-Sanford and Loren McGrail, the curriculum specialist, Andy Nash, and the coordinator, Elsa Auerbach, each presented their perspective at the MATSOL panel.

In planning for the panel, we set ourselves the task of identifying individually and collectively what we felt were the most important contributions of the project as well as its limitations. Elsa Auerbach began with an explanation of the rationale for our participatory approach to family literacy and curriculum development, an approach which involves learners in investigating their own strengths, interests and needs, developing literacy proficiency holistically and using literacy to make changes in their lives.

The second presenter, Andy Nash, talked about the implications of this participatory approach for other aspects of our work, describing a range of initiatives in teacher-training, evaluation and research. Andy concluded all of these initiatives were possible because the project built in the time and the freedom to experiment and explore issues as they arose. Rosario Gomez-Sanford went on to discuss a further area that we were able to explore in the project, the question of language choice in a participatory curriculum, concluding that if the goal is to make literacy a tool for change, the choice of language will depend on the situation. Finally, Loren McGrail described how we put this model into practice by presenting an example participatory cycle from beginning to end. She talked about the process of finding students' concerns, developing them into literacy materials and using them with students.

In terms of limitations, we felt that the fact that we were not a school or community-based project inhibited our ability to make school or community-level changes through the project; since participants came from a range of locations and had different interests, there was no real organizational base for action. Further, since our funding ended, we were unable to fully develop our alternative model for evaluation. A range of other issues came up in discussion.

The teachers of the Family Literacy Project have written up their experiences developing participatory curricula in a new book called "Talking Shop: A curriculum sourcebook for participatory adult ESL." The book includes teacher accounts, teaching materials, and a bibliography of non-traditional resources. The text is available now for \$3.00 from: Bilingual/ESL Department, UMass Harbor Campus, Boston, MA 02125.

Project coordinator Elsa Auerbach has written a comprehensive curriculum guide to participatory adult/family literacy. The guidebook outlines a process for developing context-specific curricula and documents how the UMass Family Literacy Project put that model into practice. The book will be available in March, 1990 from: Bilingual/ESL Department, UMass Harbor Campus, Boston, MA 02125.

## Educating Language Minorities: Issues and Solutions for the 1990's

Dr. Rosalie Pedalino Porter

Educators are divided over the use of native languages in the education of language minority children whose English language skills are not developed enough for regular classroom work. The dramatic increase in the number of language minority children — refugees, legal and illegal immigrants, and the native-born — together with the diversity of languages and ethnic groups represented dictate a need for a variety of educational solutions. Helping these children learn English quickly and thoroughly, achieve academic success, and become integrated with their majority language classmates is the challenge. Successful programs in California, Texas, Virginia and Massachusetts offer a variety of solutions.

Special language programs for limited-English children were initiated with federal funding in 1968, mainly for Spanish speakers. Since then the language minority population has become the fastest growing segment in our public schools, is distributed throughout urban, suburban and rural school districts, and includes 145 different language groups, with Spanish speakers making up sixty percent of the children. How are we currently meeting their needs for English language learning and academic success? How will we meet the

challenges of better educating language minority children in the next decade when language minority people will make up a larger proportion of the new workers and their skills are essential to the economic well-being of this nation?

The predominant type of education program provided over the past twenty years — transitional bilingual education — is not the answer and may be contributing to the problem. The documented record of bilingual education's failure is clear. Even scholars who earnestly support bilingual education are admitting that it has not measured up to the early expectations. Kenji Hakuta said in *Mirror of Language* "Evaluation studies of the effectiveness of bilingual education in improving either English or math scores have not been overwhelmingly in favor of bilingual education . . . Someone promised bacon, but it's not there." (1) Carlos Yorio of Lehman College in New York put it even more strongly when he said at a conference in Massachusetts, "Our detractors are not lying. Our children are not learning English well enough." (2) There seems to be little mandate for continuing with programs that segregate children by language and do not produce better second language learning or better school success.

Exemplary programs in various parts of the country offer valuable lessons for future directions in this field. Early immersion programs in El Paso and Uvalde, Texas, Elizabeth, New Jersey and Arlington, Virginia; content-based ESL programs in Dade County, Florida, Fairfax, Virginia, Berkeley, California, and Newton, Massachusetts are among the districts that have been carefully researched for language minority student achievement with successful results. In these cases, native language use is minimal or not employed at all but an intensive focus on second language learning and subject matter learning are the distinguishing features of each program.

There are real choices to be made by educators, parents and community leaders. If English language learning and the integration of language minority and majority students are the highest priority then some form of ESL/immersion is called for. If home language maintenance and cultural cohesiveness is most important, then maintenance bilingual education will serve best. If full bilingualism with literacy in two languages is desired, then the Canadian French Immersion model will achieve the best results. These choices are not simply about language but involve issues of cultural diversity, gender roles,

intergenerational differences, and social and economic aspirations. In this last decade of the century, we need to reflect earnestly on the inadequate language policies of the past twenty years and begin pursuing bold new program initiatives.

#### Notes

1  
Kenji Hakuta, *Mirror of Language: the Debate of Bilingualism* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 219.

2  
Author's notes, Massachusetts Association for Bilingual Education Conference, Boxborough, Mass., 14 November 1986.

Rosalie Porter, Director of Bilingual and ESL Programs, Newton Public Schools, is the author of *Forked Tongue: The Politics of Bilingual Education*, Basic Books, Inc., March 1990.

## Report on "Active Learning: 'Drama' in the ESL Classroom"

Catherine Sadow

Christine Root's demonstration on drama techniques fulfilled its promise to "introduce the techniques, goals and rationale for an ESL/drama approach" developed by Mark Rittenberg and Penelope Kreitzer. After discussing this drama-based approach to education, which involves the teacher and students physically and emotionally, as well as intellectually, in the learning process, participants divided into small groups and soon found themselves on their feet clapping to increase energy and establish rhythm while they learned each other's names. They quickly learned other "turn" games that could be adapted to learn grammar or vocabulary. Two of the many reasons for incorporating these activities are increased energy and increased concentration. Using some of these exercises would be helpful in any language learning classroom at any level.

MATSOL members interested in learning drama techniques adapted for ESL will have the opportunity at the MATSOL '90 SPRING CONFERENCE to spend time with Christine Root, a Teaching Fellow in ESL at Harvard University, who will be expanding, at the request of some of the participants, on what she did at the Fall Conference.

## Drawing Circles Around the Heart of Multicultural Learning

Teryl Lundquist

Multicultural learning is a global priority, affecting classrooms worldwide. At the heart of this learning must always be the student. And, at the heart of any student is a rich reservoir of human resources, often untapped, plus the natural longing for individual wholeness, identity, and meaningful connectedness with others. As teachers in a world that tends toward fragmentation, we can create wholeness by reinforcing contexts for learning that are heart-centered and holistic. Using the circle as both a symbol for wholeness and a framework for our teaching, we can more easily keep the heart in the center, teaching from our own hearts to the hearts of our learners.

As an acronym to form our framework, the word "circles" represents the key concepts that guide our teaching in the multicultural classroom.

**C - CULTURE.** At the heart of each person's identity is his or her culture and language. This calls for us to take an additive approach to culture and language, seeing diversity as a plus and using every opportunity to incorporate the cultural realities and backgrounds of the students into the curriculum. In order to develop literacy, language competence and self-esteem, students need to tell their stories, and share what they know of the world and of their life experience.

**I - INTEGRATION.** A multicultural classroom needs to use integrative instructional approaches that blend the students' interests, talents, prior and present experiences, with language and content development, heterogeneous groupings and peer teaching, and multidimensional resources inside and outside of the classroom. There also needs to be ongoing integration of the whole person of the student - mind, body, emotion, and spirit - into the learning.

**R - RELATIONSHIPS.** At the heart of communication and life skills are human relationships. Our minority students need more honest access to each other, to themselves, and to their teachers, than traditional classrooms often allow. By working closely and cooperatively with their peers, they discover they are not so alone. They also need relationships with adults (teachers, staff, and community members) who know how to communicate from the strength of their vulnerabilities, and who can trust, respect, challenge, encourage, mentor, and advocate for them.

**C - COMMUNITY.** Making the classroom environment a "community" of learners, whose families have a place in that community, is especially important to minorities whose community structure most likely has been fractured, disputed or left behind. Already experiencing considerable alienation, these students are at risk of greater alienation from school and society unless they can connect to a new base of belonging in which they have a valued role to play. Cooperative learning strategies support the building of such communities, but rarely succeed where community is not already a priority.

**L - LITERACY.** Literacy is at the heart of making sense of the world; it is more than just reading and writing. Language minority students need multiple opportunities and approaches to develop their literacy in the second language. What must be understood is that their first language is part of their overall literacy; it contributes to their sense-making skills and to their academic abilities. Therefore, we must not minimize the value of the student's first language in the development of the second. Using the language of their lives and environment and experience forms the foundation of literacy development.

**E - EMPOWERMENT.** We prepare students for life and global citizenship by preparing them to be lifelong, resourceful learners, ready to deal with change, differences, ambiguity, unknowns, conflict, responsibilities, and growth. Learning is most powerful when the learners can work on their own personal growing edges. A growth centered classroom can be aware of those individual edges, and foster the courage it takes to move out toward their dreams. Through co-created and personalized involvement in the learning process, students develop control over their own lives and destinies, both inside and outside of school. They become liberated from limiting beliefs, fears, and imposed expectations to become more self-actualized. This is empowerment!

**S - SUBSTANCE.** We are not talking about fluff here. The stuff of real learning has substance. What truly comes from the heart has substance. And this substance is the heart and strength of the curriculum. When the content of the curriculum is connected to reality, and when it challenges the growth of the student, and when it is integrated into thematic units that allow for a variety of modes of learning to be active at once, then it has the substance to promote real learning. This real learning, in turn, promotes the substance and strength of  
(continued on page 12)

# WRITE SOON! A beginning text for ESL writers

by Eileen Prince  
*Maxwell Macmillan International  
Publishing Group*  
Review by Pamela Graham

If you've been looking for an ESL composition text to use with real beginners, **WRITE SOON!** is it. This book prepares young adults and adults for writing in academic and business settings. The text integrates the use of sentence and composition models with a process approach to writing. While focusing on the rules of formal writing, the author combines grammar lessons with composition instruction in each chapter, thereby liberating the instructor from having to supplement writing units with outside grammar work. Students continuously monitor their own and others' work at all levels, from grammar and sentence writing to paragraph construction and organization.

Each of the ten chapters is divided into sections which cover pre-writing, sentence writing, grammar, editing, connectors and transitions, paragraph preparation, paragraph writing,

paragraph expansion, revising and editing, and finally, additional writing. Clearly-delineated grammar presentations precede exercises and writing assignments. The last section of each chapter, "more writing," allows students to review concepts as well as to do extra writing.

**WRITE SOON!** covers present, past, and future verb tenses, infinitives and gerunds. Students are guided through different types of writing such as description and comparison and contrast. Writing exercises reinforce teaching points. One exercise teaches students to write a letter of advice, while another provides sentence work with cause and effect. Students also learn various organizational modes, such as chronological and spatial organization. In addition, the writing topics are interesting. The chapter on "Describing Views," where my Northeastern students wrote about the trash they saw outside the window of their classroom in the Boston YMCA building, was especially fun to work with. The chapter on "Describing People and What They are Doing" and "Writing About a Past

Experience" also generated a great deal of enthusiasm.

**WRITE SOON!** is a superior text for real beginners. What makes the book distinctive is that, unlike many elementary-level texts, it starts with the alphabet and progresses through various levels of sentence, paragraph, and short essay writing. The author suggests that instructors use various categories and chapters as they see fit for their particular classes and the book is organized to allow this flexibility. I found this method especially successful in classes where the students were of slightly different skill-levels. The final "more writing" section in each chapter was useful in individualizing instruction for students who worked at a faster pace. Moreover, the pair exercises really encouraged students to get involved in the writing process.

This is a comprehensive and versatile text for an elementary-level composition class. Although I used it with university classes, it can easily be used with high school and adult education students as well.

## MAYBE WE SHOULD GIVE THEM WHAT THEY WANT . . .

Vance Stevens, Sultan Qaboos University

When the cinema camera was first invented, early directors, staged plays and filmed them straight on; it was only through gradual experience that the cinematographer's art produced effects that took advantage of the unique and powerful properties of the medium. In *Mindstorms*, Seymour Papert used this example to illustrate how courseware developers with minds deeply rooted in linear, textual modes of lesson delivery had transported book-like exercises to computers and so missed potentials inherent in that medium.

Software developers now have a much better understanding of how computers should be programmed to exploit those aspects of CALL environments that lend themselves to exploratory language learning, and we rarely encounter these days the bookish, wrong-try-again sort of software that many of us cut our teeth on but have since abandoned. That is to say, that CALL software developers have over time discovered much about what

computers can do to promote learning and are exploring novel ways to appropriately use them. But what of the users of our products? Has their sophistication with computers kept pace with ours, or do they fail to grasp the significance of what we are doing for them? Although answers will differ from one situation to another, courseware developers should at least be asking these questions.

Four years into running a self-access CALL lab at Sultan Qaboos University in Oman, I am struck by the indifference shown to our advanced CALL facilities by a large proportion of entering freshmen. For the most part, our students encounter computers hands-on for the first time in their lives at our university, having never had opportunities in earlier schooling for exposure to computer-based discovery learning. Although we have many inquisitive and clever students at our university, for those whose minds are rooted in bookish, wrong-try-again modes of study, our computer lab with its

impressive databases and tools for exploring these might as well contain windows on runes from another planet.

We have tried various means of informing our students about the scope and purpose of our lab setup; for example, we have given orientation sessions, conducted semester-long obligatory and guided "self-access" sessions, and provided mini-courses on exploratory software within other English courses. The computers are mobbed at orientation sessions, and the students look forward to using them if given the opportunity in class. They even come with some regularity to true self-access evening sessions. But they seem mainly interested in games, never mind the content. They try out the exploratory tools, but often without grasping the philosophy behind them. Despite our efforts to tell them, they often fail to see the (often direct) relationship between the databases and the courses they are studying, and rather than devote the



sustained and concentrated effort to these tools that might yield benefits, they prefer to jump purposelessly from one item of software to another, as one might idly change channels when watching TV with nothing better to do. Even though I might personally sit with students and patiently walk them through our most powerful programs, explaining in terms they can understand why we designed them the way we did and how they can use them to improve their English, the reaction is often a polite five or ten minutes with the software, and then the inevitable question, "Do you have anything that teaches grammar?"

It's a question that rankles, but one that is repeated often enough to require attention, and possibly even a carefully considered answer. At the most recent TESOL Conference, Claire Bradin raised a few eyebrows with her talk on a possible role for drill-and-practice in computer labs. I myself have suggested in print and more than once, that one should at least try our some drill-and-kill software that teaches a language one is trying to learn before tossing the concept our entirely. Furthermore, recent indications are that some students may be predisposed to deductively-based courseware just as others may acquire a bit of a target language through simulations or adventure games. So why don't we have any software that "teaches grammar?"

Of course, we do! What do you think these exploratory software packages are supposed to do — I mean, if you just sat down and gave it a chance . . . !!? At least that's what I would like to say in response to this question. But have you ever tried to distill for a group of computer-naive ESL students in the amount of time you have before they start looking furtively at their watches the philosophy behind the approach you have chosen and to impart to them some competence in the language they are supposed to be serious about learning? To do justice to the attempt risks inducing glazed faces and blank stares.

The most important consideration is why they ask the question in the first place. I think it is simply that they resist modes of study different from the one they were brought up on, and although one goal of university training is to promote inquiry learning, it will take time before the old ways are extinguished in favor of more productive ones. Therefore, the proper answer to the question is probably to try and inculcate the philosophy behind discovery learning until the eyes start darting toward the wristwatch, and then go and get them a grammar lesson. I think that most of us

have, when we were students, experienced wasting time in one course of study or another, blithely ignoring what someone was trying hard to teach us and even failing to seek ways of learning it on our own, only to at some other time in life gravitate toward the same subject because it has taken on a new relevance to us. Accordingly, it is unrealistic to expect every student who walks into a computer lab to suddenly absorb a predilection for methods of learning that we think works best there. The best we can expect is that such a predilection may evolve over time. A self-access CALL lab needs to have something for every student, and for some of these students, that something is a straightforward grammar lesson.

I'm not suggesting that we revert to modes of delivery that replicate lessons found in books. I am saying that some students want the computer to teach them something, and we software designers must on occasion remember to bring our heads in out of the clouds and meet learners on their own turf. We who have been growing the most comfortable working with computers over the years are perhaps in the greatest danger of racing ahead of our audience, who may

need a little time to catch up. Meanwhile, we should be giving them a little of what at least appears to be what they want, and designing it cleverly so that it teaches content in a tangible sense, yet in a way that will expose learners to the unique benefits of computer-based media, whet their appetites for more, and lead them gradually into the modes of inquiry learning that we enlightened developers think they should be pursuing. Easier said than done!

Meanwhile, I think I may try relabeling some of my discovery programs Grammar Lesson I, Grammar Lesson II, and so forth. Who knows, it may work!

CALL Digest, Vol. 5, No. 7  
Nov. 1, 1989

## Announcement of Search: Editor of *The TESOL Teacher*

The TESOL Executive Board invites applications and nominations for the editorship of a new TESOL publication—a refereed journal with a focus on classroom methods and techniques, teacher-student interaction, and classroom-oriented research, as well as reviews of textbooks and other publications of special interest to classroom teachers.

The new editor will be appointed by April 1, 1990 and will take up duties by October 1, 1990. The initial appointment will be for three years, with a maximum term of five years. The position carries an annual honorarium of \$4,000.

The Search Committee solicits applications from those who

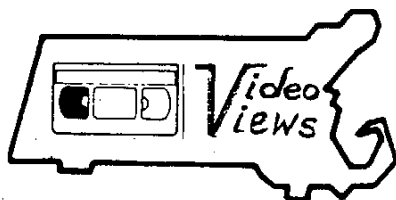
- (a) have solid and varied experience in the field of TESOL,
- (b) have an established record of editorial work,
- (c) are committed to supporting classroom teachers around the world in sharing their professional ideas and concerns, and
- (d) have some potential for institutional support.

The editor of *The TESOL Teacher* will direct and implement journal policy within the parameters set by the TESOL Executive Board.

Applications, consisting of a CV, a letter of application, and the names and telephone numbers of two people able to comment on the applicant's editorial work, should be sent to the Chair of the Search Committee:

Dr. Barbara J. Agor  
442 Lake Road  
Webster, New York 14580 USA  
Telephone 716-266-0007

Applications should be postmarked no later than February 1, 1990. For additional information, contact the Chair of the Search Committee.



# TESOL International Video Colloquium: A Report from the U.S.

by Carol Houser Pineiro

The use of video in the United States in the context of ELT is difficult to describe in general terms because, as Jack Loneragan so eloquently phrased it, "There are deserts and there are pockets". The "pockets" are mainly the institutions of higher education, while the "deserts" are most of the other ESL situations with some exceptions. The following is a brief description of the extent, context, level, materials, and impact of video use in the United States as culled from an informal survey of colleagues who are actively involved with the medium.

At the elementary school level, there are few ESL videos available, so teachers use materials developed for native speakers in content areas, such as language arts (books on tape), and the physical and social sciences. Video is often used as a "substitute teacher" or a reward/punishment mechanism in the primary grades. Some Title VII (federally funded) programs employ Curriculum and Video Specialists who produce in-house videos and materials for use in certain school districts.

At the secondary school level, there do exist some suitable, commercially-available videos for ESL students. Teachers also make use of content-area videos produced by State Departments of Education; adjusting the difficulty of the support materials to the ability of the students.

At the college/university level, video is widely used in the form of off-air tapes, educational films, full-length movies, and commercially-produced ESL programs. Some English language centers have a video library, and occasionally teachers are paid or given release time to develop support materials. In-house production of student programs also takes place. It is not uncommon to store tapes of university class lectures or guest speakers that ESL students may watch in preparation for academic courses. International Teaching Assistant programs often employ this method to familiarize ITAs with American styles of lecturing; videotaping their performance in mock or real teaching situations for critique and feedback purposes is also common. TESOL graduate programs make use of teacher-training tapes, as well, to illustrate methodologies and

techniques.

Adult education programs utilize videos that serve the needs of their particular populations. Survival skills, the job search, and English for the workplace are among the areas studied in these centers, and there are several good commercial and amateur productions around on these topics.

As far as the context of the medium goes, most schools own monitors and VCRs, and some may even have one in each classroom. Closed-circuit television is common in public schools, as is satellite reception of educational programs. On closed-circuit TV, content area videos are televised, as well as live programs involving teachers and students. Some ESL classes have a "video pal" exchange with students from other schools in their district. One of the largest instructional satellite networks (TI-IN), based in Texas, enables rural schools to offer a wide variety of subjects, including ESL, despite low student populations and limited budgets. Interactive video is still in the early stages of development because of the still-prohibitive cost of equipment and production of material. Cable television (transmission by underground of public utility cables), with part of its services devoted to community access programming, also allows for the broadcast of instructional programs, some of which may be ESL-related.

This community access part of cable television has come to the fore in the past few years as a possible solution to the lack of appropriate video materials for certain student populations. Commercial videos must, in a sense, be generic products that satisfy the needs of the masses, but not necessarily the needs of the students one is presently reaching. To solve this problem, ESL teachers are turning to community access facilities in order to produce their own video programs. The agreement a cable company strikes with a city/town governing body allows local residents to air programs of their choosing for a fixed number of hours per day in exchange for permission to market the company's services in the area. By joining the non-profit community access organization for a modest fee, members can learn how to use studio and on-site equipment. After

passing a test, they can become part of the technical crew, and, if so inclined, write a proposal for an original production, which, if accepted, can be produced at low cost with the community access facilities. Some educators have gone so far as to write grants and obtain funds for ESL productions. Thus, the problem of finding a video "just right" for a certain population is on its way to being solved by these teacher-turned-producer entrepreneurs.

After surveying the ELT video scene in the U.S., it is clear that in order to promote the wider use of such an effective pedagogical tool, it is necessary to encourage more teacher involvement in the use and production of materials. Administrators should be aware of the necessity of bringing in qualified instructors to train teachers in the criteria for choosing and the guidelines for using video in ESL. They should also provide incentives such as release time and payment for the creation of support materials for authentic videos. Companies who produce ELT videos should solicit teacher input instead of relying solely on "curriculum design specialists: whose reality is the drawing board rather than the classroom. Teachers who feel inclined towards the actual production side of the process should take up the challenge and try out the director's chair; it's one of a myriad of options available in educational media and technology today. To conclude, let us meet the challenge of the 90's: Let us go forward and make the video "deserts" bloom and the "pockets" overflow!

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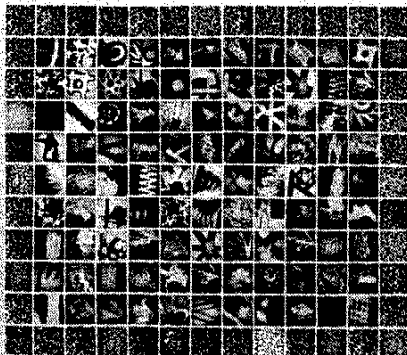
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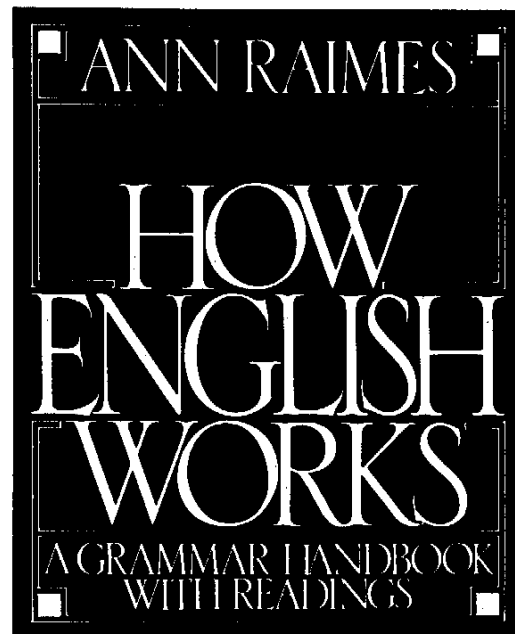
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# TEACHING ENGLISH IN THE SOVIET UNION

Bea Mikulecky

Many people who decide to become teachers of English as a second or foreign language do so partly because they hope to have an opportunity to teach abroad, and I was no exception. But never did I think I would find myself teaching in Moscow!

During the spring semester of 1989, I was one of six American English teachers in the USSR as part of a teacher exchange which grew out of the first Reagan-Gorbachev Geneva meeting. Under this agreement, administered by the American Council of Teachers of Russian, Soviet teachers of Russian teach in US schools and American teachers of English teach in the USSR.

Ours was the third contingent of Americans working there under the agreement. Teachers are assigned to institutions by the education authorities of the host country, and until I arrived, all of the American teachers had worked in teacher training institutes. I was the first teacher to be assigned to an institute which was not in that category: I worked in the foreign language department of the Moscow Steel and Alloys Institute (the equivalent of a college or technical institute in the USA).

Concurrently, I was engaged in conducting research on the reading comprehension strategies of Russian college students who are fluent in English. This involved working with some of the most highly qualified students in the USSR at two of their finest Institutes, the Maurice Thorez Institute of Foreign Languages and the Lenin State Pedagogical Institute.

My host institute provided living accommodations in the student dormitory, on a special floor reserved for visiting scholars. The dorm was a sixteen-story building in an area full of similar tall apartment complexes. As a resident of a typical Moscow "neighborhood," I was on my own, and this meant I shopped and rode the Metro with the people who lived nearby. In fact, in many respects I had the rare experience of leading the life of an ordinary working person.

At the Institute, I gave in-service classes three times a week for the teachers, focusing on American culture and TEFL methods. I introduced them to such ideas as interactive classes and the

concepts of minimizing error correction and the importance of reading in English for pleasure. Alas, as in many countries, the English teachers at the Steel and Alloys Institute suffer from low status, low pay, and heavy work loads, teaching as many as 26 hours per week. It is understandable that not many of them could spare the time to attend my classes regularly.

I taught five groups of students at advanced and intermediate levels — a total of nine hours a week — in supplementary English classes. There were no restrictions on what I did in the classroom.

As products of the Soviet schools, where English lessons begin in either the second or fifth grade, depending on the type of school, my students had already learned an amazing amount of English pronunciation and grammar. And since examinations in the USSR are almost exclusively oral in English and most other subjects, they had learned to be articulate and perfectly correct in using certain memorized expressions. They needed to develop fluency, and that became my primary goal.

I conducted communicative, interactive classes, using a variety of materials about the USA. These included any US magazines or newspapers I could find (usually several weeks out of date) at the Press and Culture section of the US Embassy, music tapes and paperback books that I had brought with me, a couple of excellent USIA publications, a handmade version of the "Wheel of Fortune" game, and a baseball and bat borrowed from the Anglo-American school in Moscow. These last items led to one of the big hits of my classes: Saturday afternoon baseball in Gorky Park Sports Stadium. One of my students, playing pitcher, was hit in the shin by a fast ground ball, and claims to be "the first Soviet man to have a baseball injury!"

Students were responsive and enthusiastic, often remarking on how different American teachers are from Soviet English teachers. They attended my classes during their free time, and eventually, stable groups of highly-motivated language learners formed. My Friday afternoon class, from five to seven p.m., soon became my favorite, taking on the tone of a weekly social event, with

visitors dropping in from outside the institute, lots of laughter, and music. I miss them very much.

Those four months in the Soviet Union afforded me unbelievable opportunities for learning, travel, and fun. I found it very easy to understand and adapt to the warmth and generosity of the many Soviet people who befriended me on numerous occasions.

At the MATSOL '90 SPRING CONFERENCE Bea Mikulecky, a reading specialist, writer and doctoral student will discuss her experience teaching EFL in a Soviet Institute and the opportunity it gave her to experience Soviet pedagogical practices, culture, and the new political openness first hand.

## Drawing Circles Around the Heart of Multicultural Learning

*(continued from page 7)*

the learner, as well. It is learning that takes the students from where they are, and moves them to where they want to go.

There are countless activities and strategies that support a "CIRCLES" approach to multicultural learning: small group projects, problem posing, ethnographic study, theater game activities, etc., etc. Just having students face each other in a circle seating arrangement helps them to feel less isolated and invisible, more related and connected.

Finally, we cannot teach to the heart of the matter unless we put our own hearts into the center of our teaching. Learning has never really been about methods, strategies, or prevailing educational philosophies. It has always been about the human experience between students and teacher.

Teryl Lundquist, who trains classroom teachers at the N.E. Multifunctional Resource Center in Providence, and Wendy Schwer, who teaches ESL at Showa Women's Institute in Jamaica Plain, will present a thematic unit based on *The Wizard of Oz* at the MATSOL '90 SPRING CONFERENCE.

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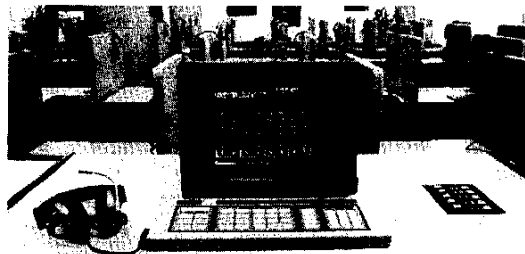


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## WORKING GROUP ON BILINGUAL/ESL TEACHER CERTIFICATION

Suzanne Irujo

The Massachusetts Department of Education is in the process of revising current teacher certification procedures in order to establish a two-stage certification system, whereby new teachers with bachelor's degrees would receive provisional certification, with full certification being awarded after receipt of a master's degree. As part of this process, the Massachusetts Advisory Commission on Educational Personnel has established a Working Group on Bilingual/ESL Teacher Certification. This group is charged with examining the role and function of ESL and bilingual teachers in the 1990's and beyond, the need for change in the existing standards to meet the demands of the new two-stage certification system, and the exploration of alternate routes to certification to allow qualified professionals to enter the field of bilingual/ESL teaching.

The Working Group was convened in October, and will meet monthly through May, when a report will be made to the Board of Education. Group members include representatives of various educational association, teachers, higher education representatives, and other interested parties, as well as Department of Education support staff. MATSOL's representative on the Working Group is Suzanne Irujo; she will be attending all meetings of the Group and will be working on recommendations for revising the certification standards for ESL and bilingual teachers. For more information, or to provide input into the process, please call Suzanne at 353-6294 (work) or 275-0489 (home).

## REPORT ON PRE-VOCATIONAL ORIENTATION

Eileen Price

On a morning in October 1989, early-rising Northeastern University faculty, staff and administrators were treated to a talk at the Chaplain's Breakfast by Marlyn Katz Levenson on "Integrating Pre-vocational Orientation into the ESL Program." Ms. Levenson, Director of the Jewish Vocational Services ESL program, which is housed at Hebrew College,

Brookline, has been with JVS since June 15, 1981, ever since her arrival in Boston. Her early background was in the teaching of reading, and while a student she was able to help fund her education by teaching Hebrew at the Gratz Hebrew Teachers College School of Observation and Practice. Her supervisor was a Mrs. /xamski/ (spelled Chomsky), known to most of us for her son Noam /t amski/ (also spelled Chomsky).

Ms. Levenson spoke in a way that was appropriate for the hour, sharing some jokes with us, showing that her sense of humor is in part responsible for her ability to manage her demanding job. She explained to our audience — most of whom were not ESL professionals — how her program is able to provide, in addition to English language instruction, a thorough program in such pre-vocational skills as filling out applications, role-playing interviews, telephone skills, reading want ads, and even the small-talk necessary for establishing rapport at a job interview.

Others wishing to set up or expand a program to prepare ESL students for finding and keeping jobs are encouraged to speak with Ms. Levenson and perhaps observe the excellent classes and other activities that her program is reputed to have. Her program participants have a high success rate in finding jobs and end up being employed in numerous professional and technical fields. (Although some might feel that this is not surprising given their backgrounds in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, in fact there are many hurdles to be overcome before they are able to put their expertise into practice in our country.)

Not wanting to miss any chance to enhance her mission, Marlyn also made an appeal for volunteers to our group. Should you have even a couple of "extra" hours a week, you can get in touch with her at 617-738-4577 and expand your professional skills in a different setting.

**Marlyn Katz Levenson**, the Director of the Jewish Vocational Service ESL Program will describe a pre-vocational curriculum integrated into an ESL intensive program at the MATSOL '90 SPRING CONFERENCE.

## NAFSA MEETS IN SPRINGFIELD

Paul C. Krueger

The National Association for Foreign

Student Affairs (NAFSA), Region XI, which is made up of the six New England states, held its annual conference in Springfield, Mass. on October 25 through 27th. Several matsol members were actively involved in the conference. Paul Abraham presented a study he did of the linguistic needs of advanced level ESL students at Harvard. Paul Krueger presented a paper on learner characteristics, such as major field and country of origin, as mediating variables in predicting the academic success of foreign students in American universities. Margot Valdivia and Kay Pachelis did a presentation which dealt with the changing needs of ESL students and the internal and external responses of intensive English programs to those changes.

The theme of the conference was "Making International Connections." One of the most timely presentations was one organized by the Admissions group on Soviet students in the U.S. The prediction is that we can expect a large increase of students from Eastern Europe in all areas of higher education. A personal international connection was the presence of Celia Chaves at the conference. Ms. Chaves is in charge of the ESL curriculum at the Bi-national Center in San Jose, Costa Rica. She attended the conference as part of a NAFSA grant which also took her to observe the programs at Northeastern, SIT in Brattleboro, and St. Michael's College in Winooski, VT.

The participants at the conference were excited by the prospect of 1991, when national NAFSA conference will be held in Boston. Many of the NAFSAs present will be active in the various local arrangements committees for 1991.

### CONGRATULATIONS TO . . .

. . . Sandra Fotinos, Michael Feldman, Jane Theifels and Allan Hislop for presenting at the first annual TESOL Conference in Trujillo, Peru, in January.

. . . Sheri Taub on the birth of a son, Fares, in Saudi Arabia.

. . . Ava Clough on her trip to Khartoum, Sudan, to do a health feasibility study.

. . . Melanie Schneider on her new column in the TESOL Newsletter entitled "Asking Questions."

. . . Craig Chaudron on his Fulbright to the University of Madrid.

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