

ITBE Adult Education SIG Newsletter

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Welcome to the first
ITBE Adult Education
SIG Newsletter!

**I am excited to be
sending out our first newsletter!**

Thank you so much to all those who took the time to write and contribute. Your ideas, suggestions, questions and articles give adult education professionals in Illinois many wonderful ideas to keep our classes interesting and relevant.

Thank you.

I hope this newsletter continues to grow and become a place for us to share even more ideas, ask questions, discuss issues in adult education, and give each other support. Please enjoy our first issue. I look forward to more to come!

Catherine Swanson
ITBE Adult Education SIG Chair
Newsletter Editor

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What is Singuistics?

By Barbara Kanter

Using songs to focus on connected speech

Connected speech is the natural way we speak, linking together and emphasising certain words in a sentence. Singuistics is a technique for teaching connected speech. ELL adults know that spoken language is misrepresented by written language and feel frustrated by this, but it is difficult to convince them that connected speech is proper language, not sloppy pronunciation. Ability to use weak and contracted forms are necessary for anyone with the goal of approaching fluent native-speaker English. We use the songs to persuade our clients that connected speech is authentic English.

The frequent practice of sentence stress helps to improve communicative competency. Since attention to pronunciation needs to be constant for it to have a lasting effect, it is integrated it into all aspects of the ESL curriculum. From the start our staff emphasizes that spoken and written English comfortably coexist. ELLs especially at lower levels, tend to pronounce each word separately. Compounding the problem is that most teachers generalize from they teach reading and writing to how they teach pronunciation. For example, both native and non-native speakers believe that contractions are inferior forms and feel guilty about using them, because they are rarely written. This myopic perspective is difficult to reverse in both mature native and non-native speakers.

Singuistics

Singuistics is "the global science of using music lyrics and chants" to each a foreign language. Singuistics is a holistic and multifaceted discipline, closely related to **musicology, speech, and drama and music therapy**. Singuistics was invented for applied practice. Attentive listening to music recruits neural circuits underlying multiple forms of working memory. (continued on page 3)

Have an idea you'd like to contribute?



Please consider submitting to the next newsletter, due to be sent out in April.

As always, remember articles don't have to be lengthy. For instance, consider submitting an interesting paragraph-long teaching idea, a half page book review, a two paragraph opinion piece...whatever you would like to contribute, as long as it is relevant to the Adult Ed SIG interest group, will be published.

Please include a title for your article and your name on any submissions you send.

Submission deadline is **Friday, March 14, 2008.**
Submissions can be emailed to adultedcathy@gmail.com.

Organizing Beginners

By Michelle Skrypek



Many beginning ESL students have limited organizational skills and often come to class unprepared. Start your students off on the right foot by giving them an inexpensive pocket folder

filled with 10-20 sheets of lined paper. The folders and lined paper can be purchased at back-to-school sales in July for less than 5¢ per student. More paper can be added if necessary.

On the inside of the folder, put a business card or sticker with your name and telephone number so the student will have it handy.

A pen and a pencil tucked inside the folder and given out the first day of class is a great and inexpensive gift students will appreciate.

Pocket Folders can also be used for writing journals. Writing journals are a wonderful way to improve writing skills and demonstrate student progress. Pocket folders take up less space and weigh considerably less than spiral notebooks, and by using pocket folders, you'll never have to deal with the spiral wires snagging your clothes or getting hooked together!

Mr. Bean to the Rescue

By Betsy Green

Many ESL teachers struggle with the problem of what to do in the first 15 minutes of class when only half the class is present. I use this time to play one or two segments of the episodes from the Mr. Bean TV show DVD (it's also available on VHS). Yes, he's as corny as Kansas in August, but his physical humor is easily understood. Humor helps to alleviate the stress of communicating in another language.

I preview the segments (each is about five or 10 minutes long) to make sure that there is nothing offensive, and create a vocab. list of words in the order in which they appear in the segment. I print the list and leave it by the classroom door for the students to pick up as they wander in. I encourage the students to say the words as they see them on the screen. I also say the words.

Watching the episode enables students to connect the vocab. words with the action on the screen. When the segment is finished, I review the words and ask for questions.

I teach the beginning levels, so I usually use words or simple sentences. A higher level class could handle longer sentences, and use the past tense in a post-viewing discussion: What did Mr. Bean do first? What did he do next?

Here's an example of the vocab. list for the well-known segment in which Mr. Bean changes his clothes while driving:

Mr. Bean: Vol. 2: Episode 6: Dressing in Car

night	shaving	jacket
clock	scissors	sock
sleeping	jacket	tie
water	He is in a hurry.	circle
clock	running	shoe
pajamas	yellow car	teeth
slippers	white shirt	toothbrush
window	pants	He brushes his teeth.
exercising	foot	

If anyone is interested, the author can e-mail Mr. Bean vocabulary lists for about 25 episodes.

bigreen07@gmail.com

What is Singuistics? By Barbara Kanter (continued from page 1)

Singing is a time proven mnemonic device. Traditional curricula are reinforced by real life examples in music. It encourages teachers and students to discard institutional formality and a preoccupation with grades. Relative progress is measured rather than absolute levels or performance.

Our theory of Singuistics was derived by extrapolating from the Side by Side series (Third Edition) written by Steven J. Molinsky and Bill Bliss. Most connected speech texts focus on stressing content words in a sentence. Singuistics emphasizes the use of weak and contracted forms as opposed to, strong forms. Although few in number, they are of very high frequency. The songs are an extension of the Side by Side approach, which presents oral/grammatical sentence patterns and chants requiring reduction and deletions of high frequency structure words (such as and, to, for, can, and contractions 've, 'll, n't and 'd) to teach reduction, linking and assimilation. For example, most ELLs can use a schwa in the word can, pronounced 'kin'. During spontaneous conversations people don't have the time to plan which nouns, verb and adjectives to stress. The more the ELLs practice the motor plan necessary for production, the more automatic it becomes. The increased practice can result in improved production of a sound, syllable or word and increased confidence when attempting to communicate.

Steven J. Molinsky and Bill Bliss utilize a cloze procedure which allows a speaker to fill -in words and phrases. Like the exercises in Side by Side, songs also use functional carrier phrases. The predictable patterns of choruses allows ELLs to grasp the content of the lyrics with greater ease, decreasing the "cognitive load" that may come when reading a narrative sentence.

These phrases allow ELLs to produce a longer utterance while only having to change one core word. As a result, an unlimited number of multiword utterances may be created. By practicing carrier phrase such as Night and Day, Day and night, our clients naturally acquire a motor plan for the portion of the phrase that repeats itself, in turn decreasing the "motor load" required for a lengthier utterance. As with predictability, these phrases allow them to experience increased participation as well as the success of producing multi- word utterances. The ability to fill- in words and phrases can lead to increased participation, turn taking, and decreased frustration for the ELL.

Please click on the link below to hear how we illustrate linkage and deletion. The word [and] is linked before words beginning with a [d] or vowel and deleted when and precedes words beginning in a consonant.

[Night and Day](#)

2 min - Dec 22, 2006

"**Night and Day**" is a **song** written by Cole Porter for the 1932 musical play Gay Divorce

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rn2MCntoUeY>

Learning to analyze the pronunciation of English lyrics is at least as effective as studying pronunciation using formal "educational materials". Listening and singing first improves comprehension and later, leads to greater fluency. We encourage the use of IPA to foster the development of phonemic awareness and sound symbol association. (continued on page 4)

Teacher Voices



"I would like to spread information for ESL Adult Educators about the wonderful experience I

had at the conference in December which was held in Bloomingdale, Illinois. I was lucky enough to participate in seminars offered by Jayme Adelson - Goldstein who came from California. I would recommend her to all ESL teachers who are interested in some practical ideas for their classroom, especially group work and multi-level instruction strategies. This lady is awesome!"

-Eva Gubalova



"I would love to see the newsletter solicit ideas from folks for how they make optimal use of that time at the very beginning of a class, when only a few people have made it to class on time, and it's a given that the others will come -- they're simply late each time. I've made use of word searches and puzzles, but they're a bit lame, and I'd love to find more interactive things to do while waiting for the others to come."

-Lynn Kendall

Do you have a question or comment for "Teacher Voices"? Please send it to aduldedcathy@gmail.com by Friday, March 18, 2008!

Resources for Students and Teachers

New Website about Adult Education

"Excellence in Adult Education" is a new resource for Adult Educators Instructors provided by the Illinois Community College Board. It has articles by professional development specialists as well as discussion boards. Right now, there are posted articles on Emotional Intelligence, Instructor Creativity, Citizenship Education in Illinois, and becoming a "Wikiteer." Address: <http://www.excellenceinadulted.com/>

Government Resources for Immigrants

The United States Citizenship and Immigrant Services (USCIS) has a publication for immigrants called Welcome to the United States: A Guide for New Immigrants. It has information on living in the U.S. as well as information about the U.S. Government. It's available for download in 12 different languages at <http://www.uscis.gov/newimmigrants>. The English version is written at a fairly advanced level, but teachers might consider reading it just so that they'll be able to better help students with questions. Also, there is a new website for immigrants called Welcome to the USA at <http://www.welcometousa.gov/> It has some information and resources for immigrants, too. There is a section where students can look up classes near them although our students can also call the Illinois Adult Learning Hotline at 1-800-321-9511.

Contributed by:
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Teachers who wish to review or discover more about the teaching and learning of grammar may find the following book titles useful resources. These books can answer questions about instructional practices, using non-textbook activities in their instruction, and about the different theories in conventional grammar teaching today.

The ELT Grammar Book by Richard Firsten
Alta Book Center Publishers

Systems in English Grammar by Peter Master
Prentice Hall Regents

Second Language Grammar: Learning and Teaching by William E. Rutherford Longman



Oxford Basics: Teaching Grammar by Jim Scrivener
Oxford University Press

How to Teach Grammar by Scott Thornbury
Longman

Grammar Practice Activities by Penny Ur
Cambridge University Press

Explaining English Grammar by George Yule

Learning Disabilities and ESL in Newest Focus on Basics

The National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL) publishes a quarterly collection of articles on current research and best practices in adult education. Focus on Basics can be viewed and downloaded from the NCSALL website, www.ncsall.net (click on Focus on Basics near the top of the right-hand column on the homepage). The articles in each issue center on a particular topic.

The topic of the newest issue is learning disabilities, and there are two very informative articles on learning disabilities and ESL learners. "Addressing Potential Impediments to Learning with ESOL Students" by Robin Lovrien Schwarz examines possible reasons why English language learners might have difficulty and provides suggestions for classroom and program use. "Leave No Stone Unturned" by Alice-Ann Menjivar describes an adult ESOL program in Washington, DC, and the process used to meet the learners' needs. In addition to these articles, there are pieces on universal design, the neurobiology of dyslexia, legal issues, and more.

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What is Singuistics? By Barbara Kanter (continued from page 3)

While singing we spontaneously apply melodic tone to lyrics thereby reproducing native like sentence stress. Prosody, the melody of speech, is the stress, duration, pitch, rate, and timing changes that make our speech meaningful, intelligible, and interesting. Familiar inflection, another characteristic of songs, can assist in addressing some of the difficulties with prosody. Applying prosodic characteristics of a first language to another often results in decreased intelligibility, difficulty expressing emotion through speech inflection, effortful speech, and robotic sounding speech and equalized stress patterns. Singuistics enables students to e confidently mimic the target language patterns with less embarrassment.

The presence of carrier phrases, repeated content and recurring words in a songs provides with numerous opportunities to practice the motor plan a particular sounds and phrases. Singuistics promotes increased participation, decreased frustration, and additional motor planning practice for speech sound production. Successful experiences communicating can improve self- esteem and provide a sense of empowerment.

Since 1983, Barbara Kanter has taught all levels of ESL ranging from introductory to advanced American English pronunciation, reading, writing and grammar. She earned a B.A from Barnard College in 1974 and an MA from Harvard University in 1977. [SpeakIQ](#) clients have included people studying for the U.S. Citizenship test, Japanese consulate employees and their families, corporate staff in the US and China and students transitioning to American schools.