



ITBE

Newsletter

Summer 2011 Vol.39 No.2

www.itbe.org

TESOL Advocacy Day

Report by: Debbie Sternecky

June 6 and 7, 2011, Washington, D.C.

On June 6 and 7, 2011, an Illinois delegation attended TESOL Advocacy Day in Washington, D.C. The delegation consisted of Tim Collins, Professor of ESL and Bilingual Education at National Louis University and board member of International Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL); Gevik Anbarchian, ELL teacher at Niles West High School and Vice-President of Illinois TESOL-Bilingual Education (ITBE); and Debbie Sternecky, ELL teacher at Jefferson Jr. High School in Naperville, Adjunct Professor at National Louis University, and Executive Secretary of ITBE.

On June 6, delegates from across the nation were provided with training on the fundamentals of advocacy as well as TESOL's recommendations for ESEA reauthorization as it relates to ELLs. Presenters at this training were: Lindsay Hunsicker, Senior Education Policy Advisor for Senator Mike Enzi; Michele McLaughlin, Senior Education Policy Advisor for Senator Tom Harkin; Rosalinda Barrera, Assistant Deputy Secretary and Director, Office of English Language Acquisition; Amanda Karhuse, Director of Government Relations for the National Association of Secondary School Principals; and Luís-Gustavo Martinez, Senior Policy Analyst of NEA.

On June 7, the Illinois delegation had meetings with four Senate and House education staffers on Capitol Hill: Jonathan Rucks, Senior Policy Advisor for Representative Jan Schakowsky (9th District); Andrew Adai, Legislative Correspondent for Senator Mark Kirk; Lexi Barrett, Legislative Assistant for Senator Dick Durbin; and Brian Looser, Legislative Assistant for Representative Judy Biggert (13th District).

The Congressional staffers were very receptive to the interests of English language learners in Illinois and most took copious notes at the meetings. The meetings lasted between 30 and 45 minutes each. Jan Schakowsky's staffer asked to meet again with the delegation at the district office.

On behalf of English language learners and educators in Illinois, the Illinois delegation made the following recommendations for the reauthorization of ESEA:

Assesment

Reliable and Valid Assessments for ELLs. Currently, content-area assessments required of students across the nation are neither reliable nor valid for English language learners who have lower levels of English language proficiency. The Illinois delegation recommended the development and use of reliable and valid assessments for English language learners.

Use of Growth Models. The current "snapshot accountability" requirements of NCLB are particularly unreasonable in assessing ELLs who arrive in the U.S. from countries with a wide range of educational opportunities. Yet, NCLB holds U.S. schools accountable for these students' previous content-area knowledge. The Illinois delegation recommended using growth-model assessments to show the growth of ELLs over time.

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About the Newsletter

The newsletter is a publication of Illinois Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages•Bilingual Education, a non-profit professional organization, founded in 1970, which disseminates information, provides a forum, and serves as an advocate for students, educators and administrators in the field. Illinois TESOL•BE is an affiliate of TESOL, an international organization.

Membership in Illinois TESOL•BE is open to all interested individuals. To join, please use the form in this issue of the *Newsletter*; for further information about membership, call (312) 409-4770 or visit our web site at www.itbe.org.



Submission Information

Illinois TESOL•BE welcomes letters and contributions to the *Newsletter*. The *Newsletter* is published four times per year with the following copy deadlines:

- March 15
- June 15
- September 15
- December 15

Articles and other items for consideration should be submitted as Microsoft Word attachments to email and sent to: news@itbe.org

Citations and references should conform to APA guidelines. The editors reserve the right to modify any material selected for publication to fit the available space, or to improve on clarity and style. Authors will be consulted prior to publication if changes are deemed by the editors to be substantial.

Advertisement Information

The *Illinois TESOL•BE Newsletter* limits the space devoted to advertising. To inquire about placing an ad in the *Newsletter*, contact Marsha Santelli at (773) 525-3960 or e-mail marsantell@aol.com.

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Use of More than One Data Point. Currently in Illinois, schools must use results of a single English language proficiency examination (the ACCESS test) to determine eligibility and exit for ELL or bilingual services. The Illinois delegation recommended that schools be permitted to use more than one data point to determine eligibility for ELL or bilingual services.

Weighting of Language Proficiency and Content-Area Assessments. The Illinois delegation recommended that for accountability purposes of ELLs with low levels of language proficiency, more weight should be placed on language proficiency assessments than content-area assessments. As students' language proficiency increases, increasingly more weight should be placed on content-area assessments for accountability purposes. The weighting should not be tied to a specific number of years in an ELL or bilingual program, since language development rates vary greatly.

Program Design:

Content-Area Testing in Multiple Languages. Current research shows that bilingual and dual immersion programs are proven effective models for learning language. Despite this, NCLB favors Transitional Program of Instruction models by requiring content-area testing of students in English after three years. Students in bilingual and dual immersion programs will often not perform as well as their native English speaking peers on English assessments in such a short amount of time. The result is that districts are penalized for pioneering research-based language-learning programs such as Dual Immersion. The Illinois delegation recommended allowing districts to provide content-area assessments of student progress in more than one language.

Late-Entry ELLs. Under NCLB, districts are penalized when late-entry ELLs do not graduate after four years of high school. However, many ELLs need five or six years to accumulate the credits required for graduation. Additionally, because of the many cuts in non-academic programs (such as technical fields and arts), there are few opportunities for students who are not college bound to continue their education. The Illinois delegation recommended that districts be permitted to continue educating ELLs beyond four years without penalty and that the new legislation offer incentives to districts to offer course alternatives for students who are not college-bound to provide these students with tools to become productive members of society.

Teacher Certification:

Qualifications of ESL Teachers. The Illinois delegation recommended that teaching English as a Second Language be defined as a core academic subject, and that ESL teachers meet the same requirements as other teachers of core academic content areas.



Tim Collins, Debbie Sternecky, Jonathan Rucks (Senior Policy Advisor for Representative Jan Schakowsky), and Gevik Anbarchian



Tim Collins, Debbie Sternecky, Lexi Barrett (Legislative Assistant for Senator Dick Durbin), and Gevik Anbarchian



Debbie Sternecky, Brian Looser (Legislative Assistant for Representative Judy Biggert), Tim Collins, and Gevik Anbarchian

Message from the President



Heather Torrie

On behalf of the ITBE executive board, I extend a warm greeting to all of our members! My name is Heather Torrie, and I am the incoming president of the board for the year 2011-2012, following in the footsteps of my outstanding mentor, Elisa Marquez.

Aside from teaching academic English in higher education, I have enjoyed serving on the ITBE board for the past two years as Membership Chair, Convention Chair, and Vice President. It is a thrill to rub shoulders with all of you from around the state as we work together to support the profession.

This year, I hope you will make it a personal goal to be involved as much as possible in contributing to the profession through ITBE. First, consider submitting an article to the newsletter. This is a great way to earn publishing credit for yourself, as well as share your perspectives on teaching and the challenging issues we all face. We are also in the process of planning professional development

events for the coming year and would love to have your suggestions and help. Serving as a liaison between you and the board, your Special Interest Group (SIG) Leaders need your help in identifying key topics and issues to be addressed at workshops and the convention, as well as speakers and presenters you would like to hear from. Visit our website for information on your SIG: <http://www.itbe.org/sigs.php>.

Furthermore, if you would like to be involved in the planning of one of our workshops, we would gladly welcome you on the Professional Development Committee, or any of our committees. All ITBE members are welcome to serve on committees, even if they are not board members. Contact me at president@itbe.org for more information about how to get involved. I feel strongly that there is so much potential for professional development and advocacy as we work together within ITBE. Get ready for an exciting year ahead with ITBE!

Heather Torrie
President, Illinois TESOL-BE

Call for Submissions

Write for our upcoming technology issue! Have a great way to teach computer literacy, a web resource for teachers, a mobile ap that's perfect for the ESL classroom, a research based method for increasing success rates in online classes, a list of 'must follows' in ESL on twitter? Please share! Submit an article for our Fall Newsletter focusing on technology!

Guidelines are the same as all other articles, short snippets to 4 page articles are welcome. Just send them to news@itbe.org as a .doc or .docx attachment before September 15, 2011. See <http://www.itbe.org/newsletter.php> for details.



Meet the Illinois TESOL•BE Board



Lisa Barrett - Higher Ed Special Interest Group Leader

Hi! My name is Lisa Barrett and I will be serving as the new SIG leader for higher education. I have been employed in higher education environments for over six years. I currently teach ESL at Computer Systems Institute in Lombard and tutor English at Triton Community College in River Grove, Illinois. I am committed to serving my students in any possible way I can. That same commitment extends to all the members of ITBE, especially those working within higher education. I firmly believe that professional development strengthens my skills as a teacher and I hope to use those skills to help my students reach their academic goals. The motto in my classroom is that learning should be fun, so I try to incorporate interesting and fun activities to help my students stay involved in the learning process and retain the material I am presenting. Just this past semester my students worked on a project called "Behind the Mask." My students created their own masks accompanied by original poems written to symbolize the culture they were studying. My students had no idea how creative they could be!

My hope this year as the SIG leader for higher education is to get more people involved. I was amazed at the massive amount of information I took home from the last conference. However, I noticed that many presenters didn't have enough time to fully explain or present the material they wanted to share. My hope is that by using the newsletter, SIG website and periodic meetings, we can collaborate and share more information throughout the year, instead of one mass of presentations at the annual conference. I would like to hear your thoughts, ideas, and would love to get my hands on some of your wonderful lesson plans! I am hoping I don't have to wait until the conference to share ideas.

Another issue brought up at the last SIG meeting is that all of the workshops and meetings are almost always in the Chicago area, but Illinois is a big state after all. Another goal I have is to set up SIG meetings in areas away from Chicago and closer to those who express an interest in collaboration through workshops. I am hoping that some of the members on the SIG emailing list can help me set up a time and place to hold some meetings outside of Chicago. Let's meet in the middle!

Again, I introduce myself to you as a passionate English educator and your new SIG chair. I cherish my job and my students and now I cherish the time I will spend developing professionally and sharing my thoughts and ideas with my colleagues. Please, do not hesitate to contact me via email at any time highsig@itbe.org.



Margaret McGregor - Secondary Education Special Interest Group Co-Chair

Margaret works in Area 6 of the Chicago Public Schools as a PK-12 area literacy/reading coach. She also serves as an adjunct at National-Louis University teaching reading and language arts classes to pre-service teachers and graduate students.

An avid life-long learner, she has attended many Chicago area universities and recently enrolled in Northeastern Illinois University's Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language program. She has worked for many years with Chicago's English Language Learners and drew on those experiences in writing two chapters on vocabulary development for Donna Ogle's book, *Partnering for Content Area Literacy: PRC2 in Action*.

Margaret has presented much of the collaborative work of Area 6 schools at conferences, including the *Illinois TESOL/Bilingual Education Convention*, *Teachers of Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Students Statewide Bilingual Conference*, *International Reading Association*, *Illinois Computing Educators Conference*, *Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development*, *Society for Information Technology and Teacher Education International Conference*, and the *Illinois Reading Conference*.

Margaret's presentations, which are focused on classroom instruction and developing professional learning communities include 'Promoting Vocabulary Development in Grades 4 Through 12'; 'Partner Reading, Content Too (PRC2): A Framework for English-Language Learners and Struggling Readers'; 'Focusing on Student Learning: Teachers Using Educational Protocols in Grade Level Team Meetings'; 'Exploring the Connection of the Vocabulary of the Arts to Other Content Areas'; 'Organizing Middle School Vocabulary and Word Study Instruction Across the Content Areas'; 'Introducing, Building, Developing and Nurturing Word Consciousness'; 'Libros para todos! Books for All and Improving Struggling Readers Content Literacy in Mathematics and Science: Strategies from the Chicago and Memphis Striving Readers Project'.

In June she will be presenting 'Making and Playing Electronic Content Area Games Using the Excel Program' at the *World Conference on Educational Multimedia, Hypermedia and Telecommunications* in Lisbon, Portugal.

Margaret is thrilled to be a part of Illinois TESOL/BE and hopes that she not only contributes to, but also learns and grows with this vibrant community.

Meet the Illinois TESOL•BE Board



Jose Resto- Elementary Education Special Interest Group Co-Chair

Greetings from Carpentersville, IL! I am originally from San Juan, Puerto Rico, but was brought to Chicago, IL when I was only six months old. I am José A. Resto, your new Elementary SIG Co-Chair. At 50 years old I feel I am living a very fortunate life. I am married to the love of my life Tina Marie and we have two wonderful children (Heather 23 and Justin 16), three dogs: Ruby a nine month old micro-mini, long-haired Dachshund, Amber a two year old Cocker Spaniel, Stardust an eight year old Blue Heeler, and 8 Japanese Koi fish together.

Teaching has always been a passion of mine, but I have only been a licensed educator for the last three years. I currently hold a Type 29 (K-12) endorsed in Spanish, and a Type 03 (K-9) endorsed in: language arts, social studies, business and technology. I just completed my Masters in Educational Leadership, obtained the Type 75 license and am currently interviewing for assistant principal positions. This is my second career after 29 years as a realtor. I am here now because this was a life desire delayed. Selling real estate paid the bills, but my passion was always working with children. My volunteer work as director of Tropical Star Dancers, and as a tutor in Hogar del Niño and Elgin Boys and Girls club; simply re-affirmed this fact for me. I am truly a life-long learner, and in keeping true to that part of my nature, I am already in the doctorate program at Argosy University seeking to improve the Type 75 with a superintendent's endorsement. "There are dreams yet to be realized for me: but through the years I have learned that if I could see great things, and believe great things; I will achieve great things." My favorite song is by Jon Paul Puno's, "The Climb." This song has become the soundtrack of my life; check it out on YouTube.

Margaret Gigous - Elementary Education Special Interest Group Co-Leader

My name is Margaret Gigous. I have been a member of ITBE for about seven years. I became a co-chair of the Elementary SIG at the first meeting I attended. During my first year in office, the Elementary Poetry Contest was started. It's encouraging to see the contest grow each year! I enjoy being a part of our SIG because I am able to learn from my peers and keep up-to-date with the current research in our field. My favorite part of attending the convention is

when the awards are presented to the poetry winners. The children's faces are beaming with joy and their parents are so proud of them!

I currently work full-time at North School in Villa Park School District 45. I worked for six years as an ELL specialist and I currently teach 4th grade Sheltered English. In addition to working with District 45, I am also part of the adjunct faculty at National Louis University. My first goal this year is to get more people involved with supporting our poetry contest.

At the last convention meeting, several individuals signed up to help judge, print certificates, or write letters for the contest. I need to send some letters out in the fall to those interested in any aspect of the contest and get the contest started for the year. My second goal is to have Elementary SIG sponsor at least one event for our elementary educators. Finally, I would like to support my new co-chair, Jose, any way I can. I am impressed with his energy and all of the ideas that he has to expand how ITBE serves its members. Welcome Jose!



Cathy McCabe - Adult Education Special Interest Group Leader

Hi Everyone from the new Adult Ed SIG Chair! I would like to introduce myself. My name is Cathy McCabe and I have been working in Adult Education for about ten years. I started my career as a volunteer with the Literacy Volunteers of America. Working with that first student was so rewarding that I began to look around for a way to use my time and talents to help more students. I soon discovered that you could volunteer as a classroom aid at the College of DuPage. I stepped into that first classroom at COD and I have never looked back. I returned to school and completed a B.A. in English in 2004, and then completed a Master's Degree in Linguistics/TESOL in 2010. Adult ESL has certainly changed my life, and my goal in the classroom is to help my adult students to change their lives, also. I teach language, of course, but I also try to help feed and sustain the plans and dreams that brought those students to the classroom.

Why am I so excited about being our Adult Ed SIG Chair? Since I began teaching, I have felt a strong need to broaden my "sphere of influence." One teacher alone in a classroom can affect the lives of only the students in that class.

However, if I use my time and talents to mentor other instructors, there is, then, a larger, ripple effect. Many more students can be helped to achieve their dreams. This has been my guiding principle and I have been very lucky to have great mentors that have encouraged me on my path. And this is why I am excited about the next year in Adult ED/ITBE.

At the Adult ED SIG meeting in February, I listened carefully to the conversations around me and will work to promote these ideas for the next year:

- hold an ITBE Workshop outside of the Chicago area
- focus idea sharing on the topics of motivation and persistence
- encourage instructors to share their great ideas and classroom successes (and failures) in the newsletter by establishing publishing awards and class scholarships
- help instructors become advocates for our profession by providing information about issues that affect all of us such as concerns with state funding, part-time problems, SURS, and CASAS Testing.

This is what I see us doing this year and I am very interested in what you think. If you have suggestions or would like to help, please send me an email at adultsig@itbe.org. I hope that in the next year, ITBE becomes an essential part of your career as an Adult ESL Instructor. I can't wait to meet you!

Miguel Fernandez - New Board Member

Hello, my name is Miguel Fernandez, and I am the Coordinator of the Bilingual Education Program at Chicago State University, where I teach undergraduate and graduate ESL and Bilingual classes. I am a native of Spain, but I have been living and working in the United States since 2003. I began teaching Spanish as a Foreign Language in Atlanta, GA, and two years later I moved to Illinois, where I started teaching in a bilingual program for Cicero Public Schools District 99. During the last four years I have also been teaching as an adjunct professor at National Louis University and the Illinois Resource Center. It has been very recently that I joined Chicago State University as a full time professor.

Since I started in the field of education, I have participated in several national and international conferences on second language acquisition and applied linguistics, and I have always been actively involved in different committees in my school district. Now I want to expand my involvement in bilingual education, and that is why I decided to be part of the ITBE Board. I got my PhD in education, and in 2007 I finished a second masters degree in language testing. Since assessment is one of my areas of interest, I think I can help ITBE in this field.

As a second language learner myself, I really enjoy learning languages and using them in context. That is why I love travelling and exploring the world. I have visited many countries in South and North America. Now I need to start exploring Asia and Africa!!

Rebecca Anderson - New Board Member

Along with their dedication to instructional goals, Illinois TESOL-BE members demonstrate an equally strong commitment to making cross-cultural connections among Illinois' excitingly diverse population." This dual focus attracted me to TESOL-BE when I first joined the organization several years ago and it's a focus that I'll work to promote during my tenure as Member at Large on IL-TESOL/BE's Board. My particular interest is in advocating for critical TESOL and Bilingual Education issues.

A variety of educational and professional experiences will shape my contributions as a IL-TESOL/BE Board member. I'm a doctoral candidate at Illinois State University. I have undergraduate and graduate degrees in elementary education, English literature, and curriculum and instruction, as well as a TESOL graduate certificate. Currently, I'm working on my dissertation, which identifies and analyzes cultural and linguistic patterns in 17th through 21st century publications of English language translations of Turkish folklore. How do these English translations reflect the evolution of America's relationship with Turkey? –is a key question that my study answers. My findings contribute ideas and perspective not only to ongoing TESOL-BE initiatives in English language education that support cross-cultural understanding, but also, more broadly, to international programs promoting global citizenship.

Like many of the students of the organization's members, I've navigated unfamiliar cultures without the benefit of language fluency. As a result, I've developed a more nuanced understanding of TESOL and Bilingual Education issues. One of the most recent such immersion opportunities include my 2009-2010 Fulbright English Teaching Assistant assignment at Pamukkale University in Denizli, Turkey where I taught English and applied linguistics, and made a series of educational presentations about American culture to many undergraduate classes. Currently, I'm in Ankara, Turkey, studying Turkish through the U.S. State Department's Critical Language Scholarship program. I'm excited that IL-TESOL/BE members have given me the opportunity to advance their goals during the year ahead. And I'm looking forward to meeting and getting to know many IL-TESOL/BE members and learning about their concerns and interests.

A Different Taxonomy for Language Learning

By: Dennis Bricault

If you've been in the field of education for any length of time, you have no doubt encountered Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives (Bloom, 1956). Benjamin Bloom, working with a group of educational psychologists at the University of Chicago in 1956, developed a system of classifying learning events into three domains – cognitive, affective, and psychomotor – which allow educators to understand and measure the learning process (Churches, 2009). The cognitive (knowledge) domain, perhaps the best known and most applicable to language learning, “consists of six kinds of learning arranged in a hierarchical sequence... from highest to lowest: evaluation, synthesis, analysis, application, comprehension, [and] knowledge” (Fink, 2003a, p. 29). I, for one, have always found these categories difficult to work with because they don't fit particularly well with what I hope to accomplish in my ESL and Spanish classes.

I recently ran across a different way of looking at learning objectives, one that offers a much closer fit with language education. A former graduate professor recommended *Creating Significant Learning Experiences* by L. Dee Fink, an instructional consultant at the University of Oklahoma. The entire text – just under 300 pages – is worth a read if you are thinking of retooling your courses, but the second chapter, “A Taxonomy of Significant Learning,” really caught my attention. According to Fink, “for learning to occur, there has to be some kind of change in the learner. No change, no learning” (Fink, 2003a, p. 30). He proposes six categories of “significant learning”: “foundational knowledge, application, integration, human dimension, caring, and learning how to learn” (Fink, 2003a, p. 30). I'd like to describe how I've reworked my course syllabi based on this new taxonomy.

A good starting point is a glance at the “objectives” portion of the syllabus for my Advanced ESL Structure course:

Learning Objectives: This course is a comprehensive review of complex grammatical structures used in advanced writing (subordination, relativization), conditionals, verb agreement, and other selected topics. Proofreading and projects form a major part of the course. This is really nothing more than the course description from the university catalog, and it doesn't give the students much more than a list of topics we hope to cover over the next 15 weeks. I've always felt this part of the syllabus was lacking, but I couldn't figure out an effective way to align these objectives with Bloom's hierarchical taxonomy. After reading chapter two of Fink's

book, I found a more logical approach to stating objectives in my language classes.

The first category I'll look at is “foundational knowledge... the students' ability to understand and remember specific information... the basic understanding that is necessary for other kinds of learning” (Fink, 2003a, p. 31) and can encompass information, ideas, and perspectives. This category immediately struck a chord with me because our students need to know so many aspects of a language – vocabulary, pronunciation, syntax, morphology – just to get started. As I began to delve into this category, it reminded me of the theory of “grammatical competence” – knowledge of the building blocks of a language (Canale & Swain, 1980), so I felt I was on the right track. I decided to ditch the inadequate objectives paragraph of my syllabus in favor of a more detailed description of objectives. Here is the revised wording for the first category:

Foundational knowledge: This course is a comprehensive review of complex structures used in advanced writing. You will:

- review a variety of structures (e.g., determiners, adjective and noun clauses, connecting words);
- practice proofreading and peer-review techniques;
- watch, discuss, and write about several full-length movies;
- become familiar with the MLA style sheet.

This opening section sets the tone for the course: students will review and build on previous knowledge using all their language skills. It also highlights the range of material that we will cover, from intermediate language structures to academic themes.

The second category in Fink's taxonomy is “application,” a category it has in common with Bloom's. This category examines what the students will learn how to do with the foundational knowledge they acquire throughout the course: “students... learn how to engage in some kind of new action, which may be intellectual, physical, or social... [and] also includes developing certain skills (such as communication)” (Fink, 2003a, p. 31). This category rang another TESOL bell for me: communicative competence, “the ability not only to apply the grammatical rules of a language in order to form grammatically correct sentences, but also to know when and where to use these sentences and to whom” (Richards, Platt, & Weber, 1989, p. 49). This type of competence includes “both written and spoken language [and] is context specific. Communication takes place in an infinite variety of situa-

tions” (Savignon, 1983, p. 8). Here is how I built this category into my syllabus:

Application: In this course, you will learn how to:

- select appropriate grammatical forms when expanding on or combining simple sentence structures;
- proofread writing – your classmates’ and your own – for common and unusual grammatical mistakes;
- watch a movie and respond in various ways (e.g., a synopsis, a review, a reaction, a discussion);
- cite outside sources using the MLA style sheet in order to avoid plagiarism.

The students should get a better sense of what they will be doing in the course. It’s not only more accurate, it’s also more active and descriptive.

Fink’s third category is “integration,” broadly defined as the students’ ability to make connections with what they learn – language items, structures, ideas, perspectives, and the like. Because the Advanced Structure course is much more than a grammar class, I want students to begin to see the connection with what we do in the classroom setting and what awaits them in their mainstream studies. This is the third section of my syllabus:

Integration: Throughout this course, you will use all your language skills – speaking, listening, reading, writing, grammar, and vocabulary – as you encounter topics and issues. You will draw from in-class activities, movie projects, and personal experiences as you speak, write, proofread, and refine your usage of English grammar and vocabulary.

The fourth category is “learning how to learn: students can also learn something about the process of learning itself... how to be a better student, how to engage in a particular type of inquiry... or how to become a self-directed learner” (Fink, 2003a, p. 32). I’ve always tried to make students as self-sufficient as possible by showing them how and where to look for answers to their language questions. Within this category I see the theory of “strategic competence,” which is the student’s ability to “compensate for gaps in the language user’s knowledge” (Omaggio, 1986, p. 7). Here is how I reworked this portion of my syllabus:

Learning how to learn: A key objective of this course is that you will become a self-directed student of English. That is, you will be able to revise and correct your own writing, and find answers to grammar questions on your own. You will also contribute to your classmates’ learning through pair- and small-group work as well as peer review activities.

Fink offers two more categories, “human dimension: when students learn something important about themselves or

about others, it enables them to function and interact more effectively” (Fink, 2003a, p. 31) and “caring: ... a learning experience [that] changes the degree to which students care about something” (Fink, 2003a, p. 32). I felt that these both of these categories entered the affective arenas of my course, so I combined them into a single category:

Human dimension: In this course, you will watch movies that touch on themes of social and cultural importance. You will have multiple opportunities to write about and discuss your viewpoints on these themes and listen to opinions that may be quite different from your own. A desired goal of this course is that you contribute to making the classroom enjoyable, challenging, supportive, and respectful.

In short, Fink’s taxonomy of significant learning has transformed a terse, dry statement of objectives into a set of five objectives that are not only more specific and active in their wording, but are also more meaningful and applicable to our world of second language learning. I will again note that this reshaping of course objectives is just one step in Fink’s comprehensive review of course design; you can get a more complete picture by reading the text or from on-line sources (Fink 2003b; *Taxonomies...* 2009). Even if you don’t use a syllabus in the language classes that you teach, I think you’ll find Fink’s integrated approach to course (re)design a refreshing way to think about what you do in your classes and how you can more effectively communicate this to your students.

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ITBE Spring Workshop Recap

“Complexities of ELL/Bilingual Education in the State of Illinois”, Prairie State College, April 9, 2011

The Workshop was organized by ITBE’s Professional Development Committee and hosted by Prairie State’s Jennifer Eick-Magan, Assistant Professor/Coordinator, English as a Second Language.

The workshop featured Ed Murphy, Director of ELL, Foreign Languages and Immigrant Community Outreach at Niles Township High Schools District 219 in Skokie as our plenary speaker. Mr. Murphy’s plenary, “Challenges of Managing High School ELL/Bilingual Programs,” offered valuable insight on providing ELL/Bilingual instruction at the high school level; he spoke about the recent audit of District 219’s ELL/Bilingual program by the State Board of Education.

The format for the breakout sessions featured five small-group discussions on current topics of concern to TESOL professionals. Participants had the opportunity to express their concerns in this interactive format. The following is a summary of the issues raised and the solutions offered in the five discussion groups. These ideas will serve to guide the content of future ITBE events.

What ESL Professionals Are Saying About...

Pedagogical Issues and Learning Standards

This discussion focused on academic issues of ELL instruction—how to teach language using challenging content while working within the guidelines of state and federal learning standards.

Issues Raised

- 1. Content/Language Connection:** Content cannot be divorced from language; focus should be on teaching challenging content to prepare ELLs in K-12 for a successful academic life and the rigors of higher education.
- 2. “Dumbed Down” Standards:** Those of us who teach ELL’s must contend with the general tendency to “dumb down” educational standards. When nothing significant is expected of students, they fulfill that low expectation.
- 3. Random Success?:** ELL’s who excel academically are often seen as exceptions, “random acts of success,” but that should be the expectation for all.
- 4. Corporate Model:** Problems with a corporate model of education – focus on test scores, no gain = no funding. This discourages “real” teaching.
- 5. Visionary vs. Tunnel Vision Administrators:** It was agreed that good administrators allow and encourage creative teaching, not simply “to the test.” They understand the deeper goals of education and trust teachers to meet the challenging academic needs of their students without micromanaging.

- 6. Socio-Economic Factors:** We must address socio-economic factors and their effect on learning and educational opportunity.
- 7. ESL Endorsement:** Problem with the ESL endorsement system - allows those with no connection to language teaching (i.e., PE teachers) to become ESL instructors and potentially bump out trained full-time ESL teachers.

Solutions Proposed

1. Work toward state-wide ESL as certification, not endorsement.
2. Find creative ways to hold ELLs to high standards of academic achievement with language support. Teach knowledge for knowledge’s sake, not knowledge for a test.
3. Acknowledge the reality of socio-economic factors in limiting educational opportunity. Prepare ELL’s to compete on equal ground with other students for access to higher education.

Part-Time Issues

This discussion group focused on the challenges of our part-time colleagues, most of whom work in universities and colleges.

Issues Raised

1. How do you build a supportive academic community with your part-time colleagues? How to reach out to your colleagues despite running from one job to another?
2. How do you ensure a seamless transition for students from one level to another when they constantly have new teachers?
3. Teachers would like to meet with their students, but there’s no time, there are no offices, no opportunities to meet with teachers.
4. No benefits or retirement plans.

Solutions Proposed

1. Use online tools (discussion boards, interactive websites, etc.) to stay in touch.
2. Become political active to change employment laws.

ESL Teacher Ed Programs, Teaching Standards and Certification

Discussion focused on the current certification/endorsement requirements to be an ESL teacher in the State of Illinois and what can be done to add more rigor to these requirements to prevent unqualified teachers from teaching core ESL classes in K-12 school districts.

Issues Raised

1. Any certified teacher is eligible for endorsement—teachers of any subject matter can get endorsed.
2. Only 6 classes are required by the State.
3. Without certification, teachers aren’t competent in language instruction—programs lack the linguistic foundation.
4. Programs do not include required practicums where teachers must work in ESL classrooms for extended periods of time.

Possible Solutions

Working on a position paper asking the State to make ESL endorsement more rigorous to move ESL teaching from an endorsed to a certified license.



Book Review

Reviewed by: Constance Parkinson
Northeastern Illinois University

25 Business Stories: A Practical Guide for English Learners

Written by Andrew E. Bennett (2008)

Publisher: Merriam Webster, Inc. Springfield, MA

What better way is there to learn about the business world than to read the stories of successful companies and their leaders? From Starbucks in Seattle to MTN in South Africa, *25 Business Stories: A Practical Guide for English Learners* emphasizes the innovation, the competitiveness, and the influence throughout the world by these companies. From Donna Karan's fashion design creativity at DKNY to Azim Premji's IT ingenuity at India's Wipro Technologies, readers learn about the qualities that characterize the world's top business leaders. And, the book gives the reader an opportunity to learn from the mistakes of others through readings about the failed marketing efforts of "New Coke" and the ethical missteps of Enron and Arthur Anderson. In his interesting and well-written reading passages, author Andrew E. Bennett has done an excellent job of encapsulating the same business concepts that are taught in major business schools across America.

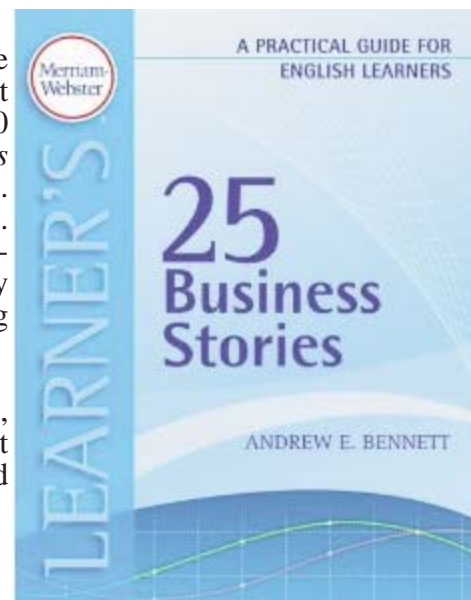
The book, which is a vocabulary lover's dream, is organized into Sections 1 through 5 covering the topics of business successes, business failures, business people, Internet business, and business legends, respectively. Each section begins with an introductory list of 50 target vocabulary words and 15 target phrases which will be used in the five chapters under each section. At the end of each section is a vocabulary and phrase review consisting of cloze, multiple choice, matching, and best response exercises. The book concludes with an answer key and a vocabulary index that provides easy reference to the vocabulary and phrase building segments.

Each of the 25 chapters starts with a one page reading passage of approximately 400 words (example, Chapter 7: *Big Airlines in Big Trouble*). Graphic aids in the form of charts, tables, and graphs follow and enhance each reading passage. The language level targets intermediate language learners (vocabulary words in Chapter 7 include *bankrupt, struggle, pension plan, and fold*; phrases include *cut back on*). Targeted bold type-faced vocabulary words are reintroduced for the learner's reference after a reading comprehension check exercise. The vocabulary building and phrase building segments provide the part of speech, a concise definition, and a sample sentence for each of the 10 words and 3 phrases presented in each chapter. The transition from reading to speaking develops logically via the last three exercises in each chapter: *Why Do We Say That?* (example: *in the red, wake-up call*); *Sentence Patterns:* (example: *Running an airline is no easy task*); and *What People are Saying About...* (*Big Airlines*). Upon completion of Chapter 7, students will have the information and vocabulary to allow them to discuss airline industry competition, cost cutting strategies, and bankruptcy.

This is a textbook that appeals to ESL teachers and adult English-language learners alike. For anyone who has ever been drawn into a conversation that requires any degree of business acumen (perhaps discussions in August 2010 on British Petroleum?) the practicality and authenticity of *25 Business Stories: A Practical Guide for English Learners* is apparent.

This book is a starting point for building knowledge of global business. And, it is a starting point for empowering our students to participate in conversations that millions of native English speaking Americans have every day of the week. Perhaps *25 Business Stories* is just the first step toward reading the *Wall Street Journal*.

As an ESL teacher who has come from the former ranks of MBA'd bankers, I highly recommend this book. It is concise, focused, and "business-like." It will appeal to serious adult students. At the price of \$16.95, this 129 paged book provides excellent value.



Social-Emotional Concerns of Immigrant Students

While academics are of utmost importance, the learner's social and emotional health and well-being that allow for academic success are equally important. Discussion centered on our students' various psychological needs and how to best meet those needs to eliminate barriers to academic success and emotional well-being.

Issues Raised

1. Students often have fragile "second language egos."
2. **Socio-economic status change:** Change in career and economic status. Some students were considered "wealthy" or high-class in their home country, but "poor" or low-class in America or vice-versa.

3. **Loneliness, discrimination, lack of social-network for support, bullying.** Teachers should recognize that students who are a minority in the classroom (i.e. one Japanese student in a classroom of Mexican students) may experience a poor second language ego.

Another example are students who have developed a discriminatory defense system where they are acting out in prejudice towards others.

4. **Poverty,** homelessness or several families in one small apartment, frequent moving and resettling, hunger/nutrition

5. **Hygiene** – how often to shower, what products to use: deodorant, toothpaste, sanitary products – sometimes has to do with economics such as how often to do laundry; sometimes has to do with cultural norms.

6. **Expectations for education:** how a classroom works, how to communicate with a teacher, the idea of excelling or performance expectations, plagiarism and how it is interpreted, etc.

7. **Assumptions of cultural** superiority or inferiority

8. **Non-verbal cultural signals:** especially those that communicate key issues here in America (eye contact, smiling, "come here" gestures, which finger is used to point, personal space)

9. **Family support** or lack-of support for learning/education, work expectations

10. **Parents:** Raising children in a culture different than your own (different traditions and language, how to be the leader when your children act as a translator)

11. **Children:** Are parents able to communicate with the school? Are the parents really leading their children?

12. **Ability to travel** to be with family if a loved one passes or family is in trouble.

13. **Status:** Refugee? Immigrant? Permanent or temporary residence in U.S.? Expired VISA?

14. **Domestic Violence/Depression** can be common with certain immigrant populations

Possible Solutions

1. Incorporate community building activities. Have a multicultural fair. Connect students with church groups. Teach appreciation and toleration within the classroom and outside.

2. Most schools in the Chicago area have a homeless student advocate. A child has a right to remain at the same public school for an entire school year.

3. Regarding hygiene, teachers should be sensitive to decide what to suggest without imposing their own views.

4. Help students know about each other. Share "family" culture instead of just country cultures. Incorporate social networking online. Do projects in teams.

5. Determine how much "social work" a teacher should do.

6. Refer students appropriately to other services, local crisis centers and counseling services (e.g., ICIRR- Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights)

Political and Media Relations

Issues Raised

1. What is the role of politics (and politicians) have in your day-to-day teaching?

2. How have the media and their reporting around these issues impacted your classroom? Your school? Do the media create the news or shine a light on it? NCLB has been incredibly negative for ELLs, not beneficial. If we can't reach the people on the street about what's going on, people don't look for alternative sources and simply believe what they hear in the media.

3. What can teachers do to respond to issues that arise as a result of politics and/or media?

4. What role do you see politics (and politicians) having in your day-to-day teaching? What are some of the issues related to ELLs that arise that involve politics (e.g., immigration reform, undocumented students)?

5. The media leave people with the impression that undocumented students are getting a free education and degree. There has been an outcry against undocumented students and workers which has had an effect on hiring teachers. The public schools are seeking students from other countries to teach as bilingual teachers.

6. What can teachers do to respond to the issues that arise as a result of politics and and/or the media?

Possible Solutions

1. Teach author's intent, using alternative forms of media. Maybe teachers should assign students to attend public meetings or rallies, and then look at the different reporting of it.

2. Write to our congressmen. Be prepared with research-based facts and speak to those on the fence.

3. Speak to mainstream classes to make them aware of immigrant issues.

4. Lobby for funding. Include personal letters from students to let politicians know the programs are working.

5. Support the Dream Act.

6. Make students more aware of politics and media, and create some buy-in so students can see that their current actions lay a foundation for their children. Teachers have to be the catalyst because young people are those who started.

Are you concerned about these topics? Look for more information about the Spring Workshop on ITBE.org and continue the discussion on the discussion boards in the members area. Take it a step further and write an article for the ITBE Newsletter on one of the issues raised above! Clearly, these are topics of interest for ITBE members.

Abolishing *Plagiarism*

By: Patrick T. Randolph

“To plagiarize or not to plagiarize?” That is often, despite the claims of innocence, the real question students ask before taking the plunge into the addictive abyss of academic dishonesty. Of course, there are, to be sure, some students who simply do not know what constitutes plagiarism. However, these are few and far between. In most cases, the guilty students claim “I didn’t have time, so I just cut and pasted it off the Internet. Please, I won’t do it again. I promise.” Sometimes they are true to their word . . . sometimes they are not.

Plagiarism and cheating are two problems that any instructor would absolutely love to rid the classroom of once and for all. This teaching tip shows how this can be accomplished.

Students often claim, as above, that they do not actually know what plagiarism is. Cheating, on the other hand, is a simpler matter. They know it is wrong when they do it.

I would like to offer a painless “three-step process” that guarantees that both cheating and plagiarism will stop in the classroom. The steps are (1) a true and false quiz on cheating and plagiarism; (2) a short worksheet on plagiarism, and (3) a contract signed by the student, teacher and student advisor or director stating that if the student cheats or plagiarizes, he or she will fail the course.

Step I: The True and False Quiz

During the first week of the course, I give a true and false quiz with approximately twenty statements that cover all aspects of plagiarism. Here are some examples:

- Plagiarism is a good study skill that all students should use.*
- Plagiarism is an academic crime.*
- Plagiarism means to steal and pass off as one’s own work.*
- Students may fail a class if they get caught plagiarizing.*
- If you can’t find the source, it is alright to plagiarize.*
- You can copy examples from a dictionary and use them in assignments.*
- If you summarize an idea that is not yours, you don’t need to cite it.*
- Copying something that you wrote on the web is not plagiarism.*
- If you paraphrase something, you do not need to cite the source.*
- Using something from a newspaper or something that you heard on TV or heard from a friend is not plagiarizing.*
- Anything that is not yours must be cited.*
- Plagiarism is alright if the professor doesn’t discover it.*

After the student answers these on their own, they check their answers with a partner and discuss the results. Then we carefully go over each point and discuss the truth or falsity behind each one. This in itself clarifies a great deal for the students. Everyone is clear what actually constitutes plagiarism. The effective element of the quiz is that it always generates very good questions on the particulars of plagiarism. Students are almost always surprised about the American laws on intellectual property.

Step II: The Worksheet

Next, the students pair up and do a worksheet that has three sections, which vary from obvious plagiarism to a well-paraphrased and cited passage. The instructor asks questions about the three different passages that again elicit a number of questions about what exactly constitutes plagiarism. The worksheet has one sample that is obviously plagiarized. The students are given the exact website from which the material was taken. The second sample is a nicely paraphrased passage of the text. However, there are no citations. The last sample is a nicely paraphrased and well-cited writing sample. By analyzing this, the students understand what is expected of them and understand the need for citation.

Step II: The Contract

Finally, the students sign a contract acknowledging that they understand precisely what plagiarism and cheating are. This last step greatly inhibits any notion of trying to “get away with” either of the academic crimes.

The contract has four clauses: the first addresses that the student understands what exactly constitutes both cheating and plagiarism; the second demonstrates that the student is aware that if he or she is “caught” he/she will receive a failing grade for that particular assignment; the third clause details that the plagiarized assignment may cause the student to fail the class; and the final clause states that the student is clear on all of the above and acknowledges the consequences. The student signs his/her name in all four clauses. The contract is then signed by the lecturer of the class and the academic advisor or director of the institute.

Since instituting this three-step method, the number of students who plagiarize each term has dropped from an average of four-five to zero. It is effective because it leaves no doubt in the student’s mind as to what the crimes are, and it ensures that he or she is aware of the severity of the issue and acknowledges the consequences. And ultimately, the original question of “To plagiarize or not to plagiarize?” becomes a ghost that we can all put to rest.

LINCS: Literacy Information and Communication System (A Review)

<http://lincs.ed.gov/lincs> (the home page) or
<http://lincs.ed.gov/lincs/resourcecollections/WorkforceELA>
[A](#) (the Adult ESL page)

By: Cathy McCabe

As an adult ESL instructor, I often feel frustrated when trying to find research and information to help me understand and improve what happens in my adult ESL classroom on a daily basis. It seems that most information that I find is directed to ABE or academic ESL students, and does not relate directly to my adult ESL students. I recently came across a website that is a resource depository for information that is specific to adult ESL.

LINCS, according to their website, “is a national dissemination and professional development system, providing information on literacy research, practice, and resources.” LINCS is funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education. The website focuses on both Adult Basic Education and Adult ESL, so it does take a little “clicking” to get to the right area. However, the quality and range of topics related to Adult ESL make it worth the effort.

The Adult ESL Resource Collection can be found under the “Professional Development” tab. To get to the Adult ESL section, click on the following links: Professional Development-> Resource Collections-> Workforce Competitiveness-> English Language. Some of the topics in the Resource Collection that I found interesting, include:

- What works in helping adults who are English language learners develop and build English language skills?
- Adolescent Learners in Adult ESL Classrooms
- Effective Teaching and Learning: ESOL
- ESL Instruction and Adults with Learning Disabilities
- Adult ESL Teacher Credentialing and Certification
- Integrating Civic Participation and Adult ESL

The list is extensive and includes many different topics that are of current interest to Adult ESL practitioners. LINCS provides both the title of the resource and a general overview, or abstract, of the content which is useful when trying to decide if you should read further. After clicking on the “LINC,” the reader is provided with more detailed information including, author and institutional affiliation, publication year and number of pages, the target audience and the level of the instructional materials, as well as a direct link to the full-document. Here is a sample from an article, “Activities to Promote Reading Development,” that I found on the site:

Authors: NCFL (S. Leishoff, N. Aguilar, S. McShane) & NCLE (M. Burt, J. Peyton, L. Terrill, C. VanDuzer)

Institutional affiliation/Agency/Program: National Center for Family Literacy & National Center for ESL Literacy Education (at CAL)

Publication date or date of most recent update: 2004

Number of pages: This portion 18 pages

Type of product (lesson plans, curriculum, training product): lesson plans

Target population: Instructors, Administrators

Skill levels of instructional materials (lessons, curricula): ESL Literacy (NRS Educational Functioning Level 1), Low Beginning ESL (NRS Educational Functioning Level 2), Low Intermediate ESL (NRS Educational Functioning Level 4), Advanced ESL Literacy (NRS Educational Functioning Level 6)

What I found particularly useful, and unique to LINCS, is the commentary about the resource provided by two experts in the field in a section titled: “What the experts say.” The experts highlight both positive and negative features of the resource which gives the reader a deeper understanding of the article. Here is an excerpt from the What the experts say section for the above article on reading:

The first three pages of this resource include a nice description of what adult English language learners need to know to read English. Particularly useful is the discussion of six types of first language literacy. This section could be used as a handout for training teachers new to teaching reading to adult English language learners. However, the classroom activities would not be appropriate for that audience. They assume fairly substantial background knowledge on the part of the reader. The rationale behind certain assertions is not explained, how to introduce activities and link them to others is missing. This may be because they are excerpted from a much longer publication, and assume that the reader has read the rest of the publication. Experienced ESL reading teachers could use this resource to get some new ideas, but novice teachers will find that these techniques may well raise more questions than answer them.

In summary, the LINCS website provides a central location for resources that most Adult ESL practitioners would find interesting and informative. While I have not had the time to discover the other resources provided for Adult ESL on the LINCS website, it is wonderful to have this list of topics to explore that are specific to Adult ESL. For the next few weeks, I plan to spend my lunch-time minutes clicking on a few “LINCS!”

Reflection

REFLECTION

Domenica Aguilera

I grew up in La Puerta, a very small town in southern Mexico. The population of the town was about 300 people. The town only had one small store to buy groceries. If people needed to buy other accessories, they needed to travel 30 minutes from town to the city. In a poor town like mine, the homes were small, made of bricks, and only had a few rooms. People couldn't afford to build bigger homes. Like the homes, the elementary school was also very small. The playground had one lonely seesaw, and inside only six classrooms and six teachers. Each teacher taught a grade, and the principal of the school was also the sixth grade teacher. In such a close-knit community, the principal always greeted us by name and knew all the parents in the town. A true and caring educator, she regularly organized fundraisers to buy toys and supplies for the school. In my class, there were about twenty students. We all lived in the same town and had grown up together. We often walked to school together because a small town like ours had no school transportation. Despite the small size and lack of money, my education was full and rich. Each teacher took extra time to help with my homework after school. They constantly encouraged me to study at home, so I could practice more and make something of myself. They believed in me. A couple months after I graduated from elementary school, I came to the United States. We arrived at my uncle's two bedroom apartment and I felt like I was in another world. While the first weeks living in the United States were like a dream, a couple months later the dream began to fade and I started feeling frustrated because I did not have any friends, nor did I know English. I was placed in a program called English as a Second Language (ESL). The ESL program offered a wide array of services to help nonnative speakers.

All my classes were taught in Spanish the first two years. There were many students from different countries, like El Salvador, Chile, Colombia, and Costa Rica enrolled in the program who all spoke Spanish. Just like the students, the teachers were also from a variety of countries and spoke both Spanish and English. The years that I attended the program were important in my education because I was learning a new language with the added benefit of learning about other cultures and meeting students from different parts of the world. Little did I know then that this would greatly prepare me for my future career.

At first, it was hard to do my English assignments because I did not know any English. My parents did not know English either, but they always tried to help me despite the language barrier. My teachers also helped me a lot with my homework and encouraged me to go to college. They inspired me and told me that I could be successful and graduate from college. They also told me that learning a second language was a great opportunity and that I should take advantage of it. They inspired a passion for teaching in me. From an early age I learned that teachers are a great support in a student's learning. I was lucky to have bilingual teachers who supported me. Many of my teachers used a variety of strategies that helped me succeed at school. These strategies included linking personal experiences with prior knowledge and social interaction. Some of my teachers incorporated authentic activities and comprehensive input as well.

I am currently working for district 203 in a preschool classroom, and I also incorporate many strategies that are researched based to support the different needs of my students. In the classroom, we all work hard to create a peaceful classroom environment. We learn to respect and help each other; we learn to be responsible. I try to bring the atmosphere of my little town in Mexico to my classroom: we all grow in knowledge together, hand-in-hand.

To support my bilingual students, I modify and contextualize the classwork based on my students' needs. I provide a lot of visual and material adaptation support. In the classroom, we also use social interaction, which consists of sharing something with our friends during circle time. The children usually talk about the things they like to do or their personal experiences.

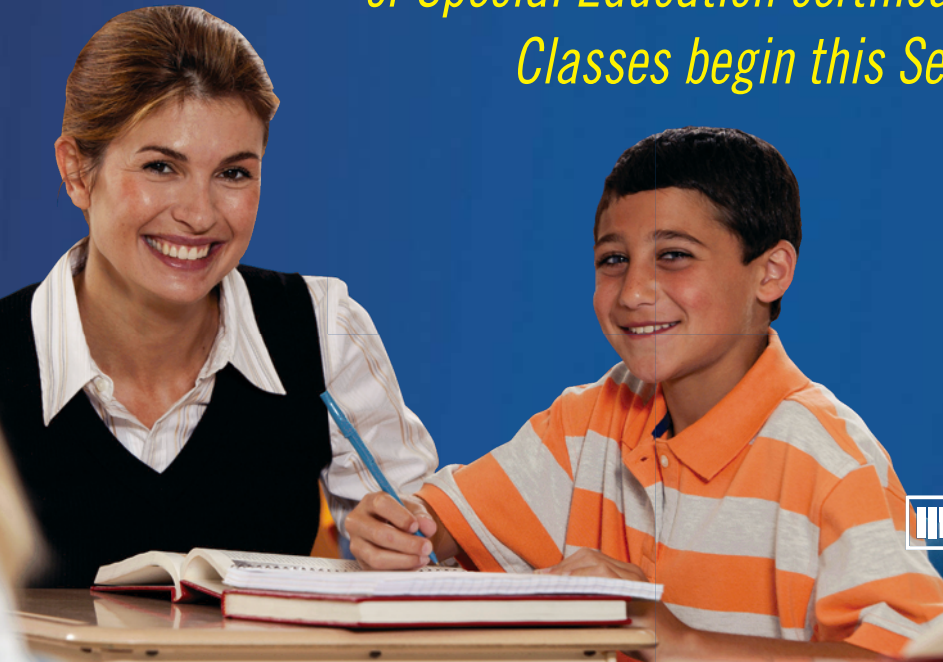
I also facilitate different activities to incorporate the four components of language from the WIDA standards: writing, reading, listening, and speaking. This year I read a lot stories aloud, and I asked questions before, during, and after reading the stories. Following the stories, the children each drew a picture related to the story. To enhance my students' comprehension, I use comprehensive input strategies. For example, when reading stories aloud, I use the Total Physical Response (TPR) strategy. I also use much visual support and provide many authentic activities. I allow the students to do hands-on activities and explore the environment. I connect what the students already know with new information and connect new information with the students' personal experiences.

I think that coming to this country opened new doors to me and reinforced my desire to enter the field of education. I not only learned a new language, but I also learned about other cultures. I understand how hard it is to learn another language; I am a bilingual teacher, so I can help students from other countries learn English as I once did. It is very fulfilling to instruct and help bilingual children in an educational setting as my teachers once helped me. I have learned from the teachers from my past who supported and encouraged me. In the same way, I strive to support and encourage my students everyday.

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**October 15,
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**ITBE Fall Workshop
Elgin Community College**
see itbe.org for detail

**December 2,
2011**

Northern Region Adult Education Fall Conference
Hilton Indian Lakes Resort, Bloomingdale, Illinois

**February 24-25,
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2012 ITBE's 38th Annual Convention
Wyndham Lisle-Chicago Hotel & Exe. Meeting Center
3000 Warrenville Road Lisle, IL 60532

**March 28-31
2012**

TESOL Convention Philadelphia