President's Corner
by Christy Pearson

Greetings and best wishes for the new year! I am happy to report that the 2004 conference was a success, largely because of your participation, either as presenters or attendees. Thank you for your involvement in the organization, not only at the annual conference, but throughout the year as well. And on that note, I'd like to share with you some of the highlights of the 2004 conference, as well as MITESOL plans in general for 2005.

2004 MITESOL Conference. We had a very good turnout for the conference. Approximately 270 attended, including an array of publisher reps (19 tables of... (Continued on p. 3)

Some Solutions to Part-Time Faculty Problems
by Joel Boyd, Carolyn Fike and John McLaughlin

Several members of the post-secondary student programs special interest group expressed an interest in calling attention at the 2004 MITESOL conference to the plight of the large number of part-time teachers in our profession, at least at the post-secondary level. We advocate for collective solutions to this issue including what professional associations such as MITESOL and TESOL and labor unions can do to support us. This article is divided into three sections.

Thanksgiving in France
Qu'est-ce que c'est que cette salade?**
by Susan Ruellan

Brest, France. September 1991. This was where I landed accompanied by my husband. We were newlyweds and this was going to be home. Unlike my semester abroad in college or the short two-week trips I had taken to France when I was younger, this was going to be different. It was indefinite. It was permanent. I was excited about this new stage in my life - adjusting to married life, getting to know my... (Continued on p. 4)
From the Co-Editors
by Lisa Hutchison & Danielle Valentini

Dear Fellow MITESOLers,

We are pleased to be your new co-editors. This newsletter should look and feel a bit different to those of you who have been loyal MITESOL Messages readers over the past several years. Special thanks to our friend Juan Carlos Velasquez for his invaluable help in redesigning our logo and recreating our template in Microsoft Publisher.

Check out Christy Pearson’s “President’s Corner” for an informative update on the Executive Board’s activities as well as their responses to your feedback from the Fall 2004 Conference in Grand Rapids. Speaking of Fall Conference, Carol Wilson-Duffy has included detailed information about the 2005 Conference to be held in Lansing. Those of you attending TESOL 2005 in San Antonio will want to check out the Announcements section to R.S.V.P. to Jennifer Craft and attend the MITESOL Reception that week!

MITESOL members involved in K-12 ESL will benefit from Ewa Ostrowski’s thorough suggestions in “Practices to Increase Parental Involvement” as well as the feedback received throughout the state on the recently adopted state standards for English Language Proficiency in “Statewide Workshops Launch MI K-12 ELP Standards” by Sandra Hagman.

Adjunct and part-time ESL teachers will find the page one article, “Some Solutions to Part-Time Faculty Problems” helpful and though-provoking. The quest for bi-culturalism is cleverly detailed by Susan Ruellan in “Thanksgiving in France: Qu’est ce que c’est que cette salade?”

We hope you enjoy this edition of MITESOL Messages and that we will have the privilege of including your article in the next edition!

MITESOL Messages’ co-editors reserve the right to edit any material submitted for publication to enhance clarity or style. Submissions may also be shortened to fit available space. The author will be consulted if changes are substantial.
President's Corner (Cont. from pg. 1)

books and materials this year — thanks to Noel Woodcraft’s hard work). Grand Valley State University was the site of the conference, with beautiful views overlooking the Grand River. Grand Rapids’ weather cooperated, providing us with sunshine and moderate temperatures (after threatening record cold and snow). Tony Silva (Purdue University) was our plenary speaker, sharing an overview of current research in the area of second language writing — discussing areas where we are fairly firm in our knowledge, while pointing out those areas where our knowledge base is more limited and in need of further study. Attendees came from all over the state, including the UP. We also had guests from Illinois, Indiana, Canada, and Turkey, thus providing a truly international flavor. Forty-five sessions were offered, with a diverse array of topics, ranging from elementary to adult education; working with low to high proficiency levels; speaking/listening to reading/writing, and yes, even grammar; relevant topical issues for those who teach at the elementary, secondary, post-secondary, adult ed, and university levels; and research presentations, as well as sessions focusing on practical teaching tips. Further good news is that we did not lose funds, thereby providing us a cushion with which to offer what we hope will be an even better conference this year. Speaking of which...

2005 MITESOL Conference. Preliminary plans are already underway for this year’s conference. Your president-elect, Carol Wilson-Duffy, has been busy since before the 2004 conference working to secure a convenient and comfortable site. At the time of this writing, tentative plans are underway to hold the conference in the Lansing area (Michigan State University), with a date of November 11-12. In 2003 the conference was held on the east side of the state, in 2004 on the west side, and now in 2005 a central location. We hope that this rotation over the past few years allows the greatest number of the membership to attend the conference at least every other year or so. Further, due to the stabilization of funds from the 2004 conference, Carol is working on upgrading the conference in at least two areas (as per your input on the conference evaluation forms — we listen!): 1) tech support for presenters, and 2) more substantial food service for Friday evening. Note that decisions are often based on what is available at the site area, as well as budget concerns. Many sites require that their particular food service be used, thus limiting our food choices and price range. Sites also often

(Continued on p. 6)
in-laws and new friends, and becoming French. I had studied French literature in college and had stayed in the south of France for almost a year during my junior year of college. I was relatively fluent with the language and could read, write and communicate pretty well. I thought I was well-prepared to make this transition. Little did I know that my long-term adjustment to living among the French would be so turbulent and that conflict would surface in something that seemed so insignificant as—salad. This crispy, leafy vegetable would come to symbolize my struggle for identity and belonging throughout the eight years that I lived in France.

I had always loved this hexagonal country and I was highly motivated to fit in—to be French in every way possible. And so, my apprenticeship with salad began. I had to learn how and when to serve salad. My sisters-in-law eagerly stepped in to be my trainers and role models. They undertook this mission to teach me about salad with great seriousness, for in France it is expected that new members become completely acculturated. I didn’t realize there was so much to learn about salad. Shortly after my arrival, Francoise, one of my sisters-in-law, explained that, unlike the American way, the salad was served toward the end of the meal. It was served after the entree, after the main course, sometimes with the cheese, sometimes after, and always before the dessert and coffee (but, of course!). It was always a simple, fresh, crisp, green salad with a light Dijon-mustard vinaigrette dressing. Tomatoes, cucumbers, onions or carrots were to be served as an entree. The entree could be many things, usually coordinated to complement the main course meal. "Certain entrees just weren’t served with certain main course meals," she explained. I found all of this a bit complicated, but I would try to do my best.

So, for several months, I observed my in-laws and new-found friends when we were invited for dinner. When my husband and I went out to a restaurant, I paid careful attention to what could be served as an entree with which main course. After careful observation for many weeks, I decided to invite my in-laws for dinner. I felt confident that I had figured it all out and was ready to demonstrate that I was just like them. Three of my sisters-in-law and my brothers-in-law were present. Of course, I had worked very hard at making a delicious French meal. I had set the table according to French custom. My husband had selected an excellent Bordeaux. Throughout the meal I served everyone, always sure to begin with the senior woman guest at the table. Everything should have gone just fine. After the cheese, I served the salad. Suddenly, my sister-in-law, Patricia, remarked that the lettuce leaves had been torn into smaller pieces and told me that this was unacceptable.

Unacceptable? I thought for sure I had seen my brother-in-law serve small pieces of lettuce on previous occasions at his house? Panic set in. I thought I had learned everything right. I thought I was following the customs to the letter, but this little bowl of green leafy salad betrayed me. It reminded me and everyone at the table that I was missing that little something, that savoir-faire, to being like them. Having torn the lettuce leaves, I had violated a rule. I signaled to everyone that I was an outsider despite the fact that I had been working so hard at observing, practicing, and adopting French customs of all sorts. It made me stick out like a sore thumb. So, it was back to French 101. I would have to try

(Continued on p.5)
Thanksgiving in France (Cont. from p. 4)

harder. At Christmas, we had dinner at my sister-in-law, Sylviane's house. The evening was wonderful. The meal was exquisite. At Christmas, we had dinner at my sister-in-law, Sylviane's house. The evening was wonderful. The meal was exquisite. It began with delicately stuffed tomatoes, followed by the first main course of fresh seafood. Our plates were generously filled with spider crab, shrimp, and other small crustaceans. Then we passed on to the second main course - a succulent roasted goose served with a warm buttery chestnut puree. It was followed by a plate of fine brie, camembert and chevre cheese. After that, the salad was served. I had just begun to enjoy it when Sylviane, who had been sitting next to me, leaned over to discreetly inform me that I was not eating my salad correctly. How should one eat a large lettuce leaf I wondered. By cutting it up, I answered myself. No, Sylviane demonstrated "You never cut the leaf of lettuce. You delicately fold it over several times with your fork and knife or a piece of bread, like so." I had just begun to enjoy it when Sylviane, who had been sitting next to me, leaned over to discreetly inform me that I was not eating my salad correctly. How should one eat a large lettuce leaf I wondered. By cutting it up, I answered myself. No, Sylviane demonstrated "You never cut the leaf of lettuce. You delicately fold it over several times with your fork and knife or a piece of bread, like so." Once again, the salad had betrayed me. What was this story all about! What was I to do? Since my arrival, I had been painstakingly trying to fit in. I had set aside all of my American ways learning to become "French", to be accepted by my in-laws, to honor my husband in front of his family. The closer I came to "being French" the farther away I strayed from everything I had known as "being me". I was lost. I didn't know where I belonged anymore. I certainly couldn't go back home to the States. Every time I thought I had adapted to "being French", something gave me away. Salad, this seemingly insignificant vegetable, had become my enemy.

I became determined to take back my identity and I would do it with salad. with salad! November of the next year came and I invited everyone to my house for Thanksgiving dinner - the quintessential American holiday, which the French do not celebrate. I had set the table according to French standards. For this occasion, my husband had selected an excellent Bourgogne. Everyone was jovial from conversation and drinks during the aperitif. Once everyone was seated, I served the en-tée. On the table, I placed a basket of warm bread, salted Breton butter, a plate of fresh smoked salmon, a vinaigrette dressing and - a salad. I proceeded to serve everyone. Eyes darted from person to person. Raised eyebrows showed looks of subtle confusion and surprise. They weren't quite sure what to do in this situation; nonetheless, conversation continued. I sat down, raised my wine glass, and graciously wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving. Dinner started and most of the family, out of politeness, started by buttering their bread. My brother-in-law, who was seated next to me, said "You know, Susan, you're supposed to serve the salad last." I calmly responded, "Today, we are gathered to celebrate an American holiday and in my country the salad is served first. We have to learn to be tolerant of our differences. So, you can enjoy your salad now, or put it aside and enjoy it when the cheese is served." He smiled. I ate my salad. Touche.

"I was determined to take back my identity...with salad."

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Thanksgiving in France
(Cont. from p. 5)

Today, I am thankful to have two cultures that I love very much -
French and American. When I am with my French family, I eat my salad last. When I am with
my American family, I eat my salad first. Sometimes, I even take pleasure in eating just a salad
as a meal and that's okay, too. Bon appetit! ♦

* *** The expression "Qu'est-ce que c'est que cette salade?” can be interpreted in two ways. It can mean "What is this salad" or it can be translated as an idiomatic expression which means "What is this story all about?"

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Board Talk

By Cristina Gonzalez Dekutoski, Secretary

I would like to start off my first Board Talk column by wishing everyone a Happy New Year! December’s Transitional Board Meeting was a day filled with activity, beginning with the transition of board officers, a briefing of the Fall conference in Grand Rapids, as well as looking ahead to 2005. A few points of interest from the meeting include:

- A MITE SOL reception is being planned for those attending the TESOL convention in San Antonio, Texas. Jen Craft is organizing this event. A big thank you in advance to Jen for the time she has put into planning this reception for our members.
- Discussion over the possibility of having an electronic MITE-SOL directory.
- In the area of membership, promotion at local universities will be reviewed in terms of generating interest in our organization.
- The K-12 SIG brought forth the following topics:
  1. Concern over the testing of ELLs.
  2. How to help 1A children who are illiterate and have gaps in schooling.
  3. The implementation of standards. These areas are being explored with further discussion to follow at future board meetings.
- Requests have been made for training in WebPage design – this may be a subject for a future MITE SOL workshop.

As is apparent, December’s meeting was productive, and the year ahead for MITE SOL looks to be filled with many challenges, learning experiences, and opportunities. ♦
President's Corner (cont. from p. 3)

impose significant costs for the use of tech support. In trying to keep conference expenses as low as possible, difficult decisions must sometimes be made – go for the most up-to-date tech available or keep the price down so that as many as possible can afford to attend? Which will it be? – as you can see, a balancing act ensues. Carol has already been working hard for several months and this year’s conference promises to be outstanding. Check the MITESOL web site periodically for updates as they become available. Further information will also be in the next issue of MITESOL Messages.

2005 TESOL Conference. The national TESOL conference will be upon us before we know it. Please check the web site at www.tesol.org for further details. This year it will be held in San Antonio, Texas, the last week of March into the beginning of April. Your immediate past president (Jen), president-elect (Carol Wilson-Duffy), and myself all hope to be in attendance, as well as others from the boards, so MITESOL will be well-represented. We promise to bring back new information for you – look for articles in the next issue of MITESOL Messages. Also, if you are planning on attending the conference, please let us know; additionally, consider writing an article for the newsletter on your experiences while there.

Czech Republic Affiliate. Last year Carolyn Fike traveled to the Czech Republic, where our sister organization resides. We would like to strengthen our ties with these TESOL colleagues this year. If you would be interested in working on this project, please contact me.

Workshops. Work is being done to offer various workshops this coming year. Anne Todd, Sean Anderson, and others are working on possible web classes and message boards for your networking convenience. Information on these will be posted on the MITESOL web site as it becomes available.

Public Relations Position. A new position is being developed this year, that of Public Relations Liaison. We hope that this helps in the dissemination of information at multiple levels, thus better serving you and others involved in TESOL across the state.

SIG News. We have a wonderful group of SIG leaders this year. Please consider signing up for a SIG group – you can now sign up for more than one! – on your membership form. The post-secondary SIG will be working on part-time issues this year. The K-12 SIG will be focusing on standards implementation, how to approach the MEAP, parent involvement, and grading and graduation requirements for secondary ed students, to name but a few. The CALL SIG, as mentioned above, will be working on web page design workshops and a message board. There are other SIG groups in addition to these – please consider joining one or more. We need both your leadership and participation as we grow in membership and further develop as an organization.

In closing, please feel free to contact me with your thoughts, ideas, and enthusiasm. We are here to serve you, but we are also a volunteer organization. We need each of us helping each other in order to grow and truly be a force for positive change. As you share with me your thoughts on what MITESOL can do for you in the coming year, please also consider how you might support your MITESOL colleagues, both locally and across the state.

With best wishes for the new year,

Christy Pearson, MITESOL President
Part-Time Faculty Problems
(Cont from p. 1)

on part-time teachers to teach a majority of classes, fair employment issues raised by these instructors is growing. The major concerns that have been raised in the past several years include lack of benefits, scheduling priorities, and feelings of disrespect.

It is not uncommon for many adjuncts to teach at several schools in a given semester. Often they are teaching a full load which is divided among different locations. They spend hours traveling from school to school, preparing lesson plans, evaluating students, and meeting with students outside of class, all without monetary compensation for their time spent outside of the classroom. Healthcare benefits are not offered by the employers; therefore, many of these teachers have no coverage.

In terms of salary, the difference between what a full timer is paid and what an adjunct is paid is often double. It is understood that full time faculty members often attend meetings, do research, etc.; however, when two qualified teachers are teaching the same class, it is unfair that one should be paid half of what the other is making. It is an outrage that adjuncts are not paid for preparation time; they are only paid for time spent in the classroom. Furthermore, it is not uncommon as an adjunct to wait 6-8 weeks after the semester begins to finally receive the first paycheck. Being paid in a timely manner should not be that difficult.

One of the most fearful times for an adjunct is at the beginning of the semester; time is spent waiting and wondering if there are going to be enough students enrolled in the class that they are scheduled to teach. At a local community college, a part-time instructor was told after the first class period that her class was going to be given to a full-time instructor because of low enrollment in the full time instructor's class. There was no compensation given to the adjunct for her time spent creating the syllabus or organizing the class schedule.

In many post-secondary institutions, the first day of class is spent on diagnostic testing to ensure that students are placed in the correct class. This administrative burden is placed on the part-time instructor who is required to administer, evaluate, and submit scores by the second day of class. Often this means hours spent after class — without compensation.

Adjuncts are treated with disrespect by full-time instructors, deans, and other college/university administrators even though they have the same educational preparation as their full-time counterparts. In the fall 2004 semester, an adjunct was attempting to organize her schedule for the upcoming winter semester. She had been teaching 3 classes at a community college and wanted to ensure that they would be available for her the next semester. During her meeting, she was told that one of the classes was a "late start" and wouldn't begin until February. This concerned the adjunct because if student enrollment was down, the class would be cancelled thereby making it impossible for the teacher to find another class to teach for that semester. She was told that it was a package deal; to take all of the classes — late start or not — or she would get nothing to teach for that semester! This feeling that adjuncts are disposable employees is not only degrading but inhumane.

TESOL has an eloquent paper on its website entitled

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Part-Time Faculty Problems
(Cont. from p. 8)

"TESOL Position Paper on Equitable Treatment for Part-time, Adjunct, and Contingent Faculty" which clearly addresses the needs of this teaching segment as well as the harms secondary institutions will have to overcome if this issue is not rectified soon.

In the past two decades, TESOL and many state affiliates such as NYTESOL, have made statements condemning the over reliance on part-time teachers in ESL. What can MITESOL do here?

Is Unionization the Solution for Adjunct Lecturers?
At the University of Michigan's English Language Institute, almost all of the instructional staff are contract Lecturers with the exception of a few tenured faculty with appointments in other departments. When the Michigan Federation of Teachers began organizing a Lecturers' Employee Organization in 2001, a campaign initiated by foreign language lecturers at the U of M in 2000, the unit was in general supportive and one of the most solidly organized on campus. The organizing drive took almost three years until a contract was negotiated with the university in May 2004. With nearly 1600 lecturers scattered over three campuses and numerous schools and departments, it was not easy to involve and perhaps represent the whole membership. In one respect, negotiating an acceptable first contract with only one day of striking was no small accomplishment.

Almost eight months later, the results of this "accomplishment" have been mixed. There were clear improvements for a majority of Lecturers with this contract, including pay raises as high as 50% in some departments on some campuses, benefits during the summer, seniority rights during layoffs, and some other job security measures. However, the union did not achieve one of its main bargaining platform goals of abolishing distinctions among Lecturers so that the union could negotiate a fairer system for everyone. In fact, in the College of Literature, Science and Arts, of which the ELI is part, there is a move to exacerbate the divisions among Lecturers. All Lecturer III's, who previously had three-year, full-time renewable contracts, may be promoted to Lecturer IV and all Lecturer II's, many of whom were full-time or had served a long time at the university, may be demoted to Lecturer I and have all administrative duties stripped from them, with no direct line of promotion to Lecturer III. Currently there is much confusion, uncertainty and dissatisfaction with the contract as it is being interpreted by the university or some of its colleges. Teachers who wish to pursue unionization need to be aware that it is important to be fully involved and informed about the process of bargaining a contract with the university and that it takes many years to unionize, negotiate and implement a contract.

Steps toward full-time faculty status at Western Michigan University
At the Career English Language Center for International
(Continued on p. 10)
Part-Time Faculty Problems

(Cont. from p. 9)

Students (CELCIS) at Western Michigan University, teachers had been organized for some time as a bargaining unit called the Association of Language Specialists (ALS), which was associated with the local chapter of the AAUP but bargained its own contract. In the mid-1990s, efforts were made to eliminate the differences between them and the other faculty. With the creation of a new category of employee, the Academic Career Specialist (ACS), they were brought into the agreement with other faculty along with Professional Specialists and Clinical Supervisors in the fall of 1999. With this new category came continuing appointment, which provided due process similar to tenure. After difficulties began to arise over the meaning of continuing appointment and the question of whether ACS's were to be considered faculty, the union fought for and achieved in 2002 an additional change in title to Faculty Specialist which carried with it tenure like the traditionally ranked faculty. This designation includes Lecturers, Clinical Specialists, Professional Specialists, Aviation Specialists and Language Specialists. By including the word “faculty” in the title, it makes it clear that they should be considered faculty. By switching to tenure to assure due process, any questions about the meaning of continuing appointment were cleared up. Although Language Specialists are still excluded from some benefits, these changes over the years have not only affected the income that ESL teachers receive but also the way they are perceived by their colleagues.

Part-time teachers have endured insecure working conditions related to their low status as employees. At the same time, every school has a situation unique to its own history and particular administration. Collective solutions such as unionization offer some hope for addressing these issues. Even then, ESL teachers need to pay attention to the solutions being created on their behalf.

Buckheister Award

The 2005 Eastern Michigan University Buckheister TESOL Travel Award was awarded to Liz Sirman. She will be presenting at the Graduate Student Forum at TESOL 2005.

Michigan Presentations at TESOL

Diane Larsen-Freeman will be offering a spotlight session entitled: "Question and Answer: What's on your mind?"

Diane Larsen-Freeman, Wendy Wang, Robert Williams (American University in Cairo, Egypt), Elizabeth O'Dowd (St. Michael's College, Vermont), Howard Williams (Teachers College, Columbia University, New York) will be giving a spotlight session entitled: "Teaching MATESOL Classes Using the Grammar Book."
FALL Conference 2005: Mark Your Calendars!
By Carol Wilson-Duffy

This year’s Fall Conference, “State of the Art: Excellence in TESOL”, will be held on November 11th and 12th (Friday & Saturday) at the Kellogg Center on Michigan State University’s campus. As the title suggests, sessions that focus on sharing examples of what we do best, ways to improve what we do well, and current research ideas and their implications for the classroom will be the main themes of the conference.

We realize it’s not even spring yet, but please begin thinking about what you might be able to contribute to the conference. Some ideas for sessions might be a teaching strategy that works well for you, a curriculum standards success story, or methods for dealing with various classroom sizes. Other options might be organizational issues or the latest research in ESL or SLA and how they apply to our teaching. Perhaps you work with someone who is amazing, but shy. Be their cheerleader – suggest that they send in a proposal! There are lots of wonderfully talented people in our organization – let us hear from you!

In addition to regular sessions, we will also be having a poster session this year. So if you have a great idea that can be explained easily through a poster, please send in your proposal. Don’t forget, this is also a great venue for beginning teachers or MA students to get involved and show off some of their excellence!

We’re also working on a new idea for this conference, called Teaching Buddies. Perhaps you have someone in your school that is not a trained ESL teacher, but working with the ESL population? This conference will be a great way to help them ideas to improve their teaching experience. Teaching Buddies will be able to sign up together and the non-ESL teacher will receive a small discount.

One other important bit of news, the Kellogg Center has some unbelievable room prices for our group. If you reserve ahead of time (even now is not too late) you can get either a single or a double room for just $87 plus tax.

If you would like to volunteer, which of course, I would applaud whole-heartedly, please contact me at wilson77@msu.edu. The Call for Proposals will be sent out electronically at the end of February, and a hard copy should arrive in your mail by mid April. The deadline for proposals will be July 1st. Let’s make this conference a true example of excellence! We look forward to hearing your ideas and suggestions! 🌟
Statewide Workshops Launch MI K-12 ELP Standards
by Sandra Hagman

In April 2004 the Michigan State Board of Education formally approved the Michigan K-12 English Language Proficiency Standards written by MITESOL members Sandy Hagman and Jackie Moase-Burke. Less than a year after the first unveiling of the draft Michigan K-12 English Language Proficiency Standards at the 2003 MITESOL Conference in Ann Arbor, Michigan teachers and administrators began actively putting the new ELP standards and benchmarks to use in local districts throughout the state. Beginning in September last year and continuing until March of 2005, the Michigan Department of Education has funded professional development workshops to roll out the ELP Standards to regional audiences. Sandy and Jackie have taken the standards “on the road” in the form of one-day workshops for educators in the metro Detroit area (Oakland Schools, Wayne RESA, Dearborn), Traverse City, Grand Rapids, and Saginaw. When the seven workshops are completed this spring, nearly 300 teachers, paraprofessionals, and administrators will have attended. The workshops provide a thorough understanding of the entire array of the ELP standards and benchmarks, including hands-on practice and opportunities for discussion. In addition, those attending the workshops have the opportunity to further their thinking about how the MI K-12 ELP Standards and Benchmarks can serve as a catalyst for review of current K-12 ESL programs, curriculum development, improved instruction, and more successful assessment of English language learners.

Workshop evaluations provided by participants throughout the state have been consistently enthusiastic. Following are some of the responses to the question: “As a result of this workshop, what are your ideas about using the ELP standards?”

• Take them back to my school and begin speaking to my colleagues one by one – share this information and start asking questions!
• The standards will help all educational staff to get on the same page! Create a sequence rather than flying by the seat of my pants. Focus my lessons on the standards. I do good stuff, but is it effective? Standards/benchmarks will increase my accountability.
• Separate the standards by level, look at the way I am teaching my students and look at the way I organize what I teach, give students a chart of their progress.
• Benchmark checklists by levels could be used for informal assessment and included in student portfolios.
• The standards will be very helpful in planning lessons, serving students better and training staff, as well as new ESL teachers. I plan to use these to improve our ESL program.
• I’ll use the standards to guide my teaching – where I’ve been and where I’m headed.
• We need to begin developing curriculum by levels.
• These standards will be helpful in that they create an organized framework, a whole picture.
• We will begin creating curriculum and units and lesson plans according to the standards.
• These standards will be very useful in the formation of ESL curriculum as well as in bridging the gap between ELP and content courses/general education.
• Now we’ll start writing ESL curriculum to ELP benchmarks. Exciting and challenging. Thank you!

Further information about the Michigan K-12 ELP Standards and opportunities for professional development will be posted regularly on the MITESOL website.

Contact information: Sandra Hagman (sandrahagman@cs.com)
Jackie Moase-Burke (Jackie.MoaseBurke@oakland.k12.mi.us)
Practices to Increase Parental Involvement
by Ewa Ostrowski

Among the key components of serving the needs of English language learners (ELLs) is establishing relationships between the school and families. In most cases the language barrier and different cultural expectations regarding the appropriate home-school communication make it difficult. Thus, educators need to make additional efforts to engage immigrant families of ELLs. This article lists outlines several strategies used in Oakland County districts to increase parental involvement. Mostly, these are means of informing or educating parents, but also include by engaging them in school events that tighten the community bonds and building staff awareness in the area of interactions with immigrant parents of ELLs.

Successful First Encounter The very first contact between the parents and the school may determine their willingness to be actively involved in their children's education. Hence, it helps to have school secretaries trained in dealing with immigrant families, enrollment forms translated if possible, and informational materials and a welcoming committee in place. Some schools may have their own resources to translate written communication into several languages. Smaller districts may use free Internet translation resources, such as http://babelfish.altavista.com. Be aware that translations programs may not always accurately translate the content of your message. Use the translation programs sparingly. Even if the translation is not perfect, the effort to reach out to families through the use of their home language will be appreciated.

Parent Handbook If your school provides a Parent Handbook, it's a good idea to adapt it to the needs of immigrant families of ELLs. Again, if translation is not possible, a combination of simple English and pictures are helpful to convey such ideas clarify the meaning of dress code, locker organization, spirit days, elective courses and so forth. Including sections on appropriate interaction and personal hygiene may help avoid embarrassing situations. Engaging intermediate English language learners in putting such a handbook together makes the project more relevant and at the same time easy to understand for the newcomers and their parents.

Making Connections Furthermore, in some districts PTO's build a buddy system for immigrant parents, create a welcoming committee across buildings, and provide a directory listing countries and languages. In some instances diversity committees located in every school initiate a dialogue between the city and the new parents to inform them of available services. Some K-12 ESL programs go even further and sponsor English literacy instruction for parents.

Meetings Informational meetings for immigrant parents of English language learners require a number of accommodations. First of all, they meetings need to be offered held at a time convenient for the participants. If they the school wants to target stay-at-home moms, late mornings are most convenient, while late evenings work best for employed parents. In both cases, providing babysitting and setting up car pools increase attendance.

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Practices to Increase Parental Involvement

Cont. from p. 13

Secondly, the information offered to parents must be of high interest to them. The topics can be generated through interviewing key parents representing specific ethnic groups. They topics often include key information about our school system, ESL program structure, parenting, (free) ESL instruction for adults, public library services, school expectations, grading policy, standardized tests, interaction with teachers, reading strategies, math programs, or help available to students and families. Because the American school system requires distinctive organizational skills, even a hands-on workshop on managing papers and homework logs where parents become familiar with the practices and students sharpen their organizational skills might be appreciated. Lastly, the information needs to be delivered in a comprehensible manner. Some meetings may be targeted at one ethnic group, if it is large enough, and include an interpreter. With smaller language groups, the audience may be arranged by languages, where one parent or community member could assume the role of an interpreter. Sometimes it helps to gather parents from several schools within the district for the meeting, thus increasing the number of parents with the same language. When written materials distributed during the meeting can be provided in English only, they the documents need to be written in the simplest and clearest form possible—without school jargon, acronyms, or idioms.

Events The importance of organizing potluck dinners, ESL talent shows, ethnic festivals, and award ceremonies should not be dismissed. As long as they these events are offered along with the services described above, they can significantly strengthen the bond between the school and parents. These occasions invite them parents to school on different terms. They are coming to share their pride, free of intimidation. Whether they parents are asked to educate us about their culture, demonstrate their culinary talents, watch their children perform on stage or receive awards, they are the stars of the day. Students also look forward to these occasions to show pride in their background. The key is to generate the administration and staff support as well as general student and media interest. Parents who have participated in events like this these are more likely to attend parent teacher conferences and will not feel as intimidated while approaching interacting with their child’s a teacher.

Awareness Finally, the school administration and staff need to be aware how to approach and respond to immigrant parents of English language learners. Providing Help with preparing sample enrollment documents that need to be turned in might go a long way. Also, a simple handout for teachers including a few guidelines on conducting conferences with non-native speakers of English will be greatly appreciated. Here are some examples of such guidelines: speak in short sentences and at a slower pace, but not louder; avoid educational jargon, acronyms, and idioms; write down (print) the main points of the conference (reading comprehension may be stronger than oral comprehension or somebody can translate your note later); allow time for translation (Parents are not being rude when they revert to their first language; they are just trying to "negotiate the meaning" of what you have said.) Please ask teachers do not to suggest that the parents speaking only English at home. (Maintaining the first language is very important for cognitive development, academic success, and self-confidence of our students.)

I'd like to encourage MITESOL members to exchange their ideas and experiences. Most of the suggestions above come from one of the Oakland Schools meetings for ESL/Bilingual Directors, where program coordinators exchanged their practices. Please submit descriptions of your successful initiatives in the MITESOL newsletter, post them on the listserv, invite educators to observe your program, or sign up to present your ideas at the next MITESOL conference. Your contribution will be greatly appreciated.
ANNOUNCEMENTS

MITESOL Reception at TESOL 2005

Every year at the TESOL Conference, MITESOL hosts an informal reception for those with connections to Michigan. This year, the reception is scheduled for Thursday, March 31, from 5:30 to 7:30pm at the Original Mexican Restaurant and Bar on San Antonio's Riverwalk where we'll enjoy a buffet of Mexican appetizers and no host bar. Come spend time with friends, old and new, and enjoy chicken fajita quesadillas, chicken flautas, pork tamales, chili con carne, chile con queso, guacamole, sour cream, pico de gallo, beans, chips, and salsa. Yum! If you're planning on attending, please let me know so that I can get accurate numbers. E-mail me at jwcraft4mitesol@yahoo.com or call 248-942-3184 and leave me a message. See you in San Antonio!

Volunteer at TESOL

As everyone is surely aware, TESOL 2005 is being held in San Antonio, TX, from March 29 to April 2. Many people are needed to make a gathering of this size get off the ground and stay in the air. You can play a part in keeping it going by volunteering! I'm one of those people who gets overwhelmed by the immensity of TESOL's get together, and I've found that taking on a specific task at TESOL, even if only for part of one day, grounds me and makes me feel more a part of the process. It also makes me feel good to know I've helped out. To volunteer at TESOL 2005, visit www.tesol.org/tesol2005/ or e-mail Guadalupe Ruvalcaba, Team Leader, at gruvalcaba@saisd.net.

Share Your Knowledge and Experiences

Professionals in all fields face challenges at many levels including individual, institutional, temporary, and on-going. As ESL professionals, many of us have certain challenges in common. This is obvious when a group of us gets together and we start talking about what we're doing. However, we don't always do a good job of helping each other find ways to meet our challenges. That is, we focus on the problems rather than finding solutions. This year, let's try to help each other find ways to meet our challenges more easily by sharing what we've been doing. You can do this by submitting articles to MITESOL Messages and by posting ideas on the discussion list at mitesollistserv@umich.edu. If we share our knowledge and experiences, we can help each other to avoid reinventing the wheel each time a new challenge arises.

Technology Workshop

On Saturday, April 9th, the CALL SIG will hold a technology workshop at Michigan State University starting at 10:00am. The workshop will include training on basic webpage creation using DreamWeaver, followed by short presentations and discussions by CALL SIG members on other CALL materials and how they have been implemented in the classroom. Please contact Anne Todd, toddanne@msu.edu, for more details.
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