



Transforming Learning: Teaching and Advocacy

MITESOL Fall Conference 2009

Friday, October 9 – Saturday, October 10, 2009

GVSU's Eberhard Center, downtown Grand Rapids

Proposals due July 15, 2009

Submission information

and online registration will be on the website soon

[www.mitesol.org](http://www.mitesol.org)

Questions? Want to volunteer?

Contact Casey Gordon (please put MITESOL in the subject line)

[Caseygordon@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Caseygordon@sbcglobal.net)

**MITESOL February 2009**

## President's Corner

by Karen Gelardi  
MITESOL President,  
2008-2009

MITESOL is an organization that offers its members a wonderful way of keeping current in regards to the ESL field. This year there were some excellent discussions in the SIG sessions at the conference. Members were discussing ways to collaborate across the state through our website, until our next annual conference. I encourage you to continue your membership with us.

We have some exciting things happening in our organization this year. The Adult SIG is now active again; Andrew McCullough is the SIG leader. We also have a new SIG related to Professional Research & Teacher Resources; Carol Kubota will lead this. Carmela Gillette is now our Socio Political Concerns advocate. Please consider becoming active in the SIGs. You may be a part of more than one SIG, so please do not feel that you have to choose only one!

I would also like to welcome Noel Woodcraft as our new

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## The Ins and Outs of Teaching Cultural Studies Methodological and Theoretical Considerations

By Zénó Vernyik  
Technical University of Liberec, Czech Republic

The title of this article, I have to admit, is quite misleading. I can see at least two things that it suggests, which the text itself is not aiming at. Firstly, it seems to imply that in here I am going to write primarily about tricks and tips, practical *methods* suitable for those intending to teach "Cultural Studies" whatever that may be. In other words, that the article's focus can be summarized in the question *how* and/or *how not to*. Secondly, that it suggests completeness or at least the intention of having a grasp wide enough to encompass all that is worth handling. Needless to say, this second could not happen in the space below, even if I had misjudged my possibilities so enormously.

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## Korean Cultural Issues and Their Impact in the Classroom

By Mimi Doyle  
Hanyang University  
Seoul, S. Korea

While teaching ESL classes for several years at two universities in Michigan, such as Ferris State University and Central Michigan University, I learned how important different cultures are to students and what the impact of these cultures cause upon their learning. However, I did not quite understand how influential these cultures are to a student's learning process until I came over to Korea to

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## MITESOL Executive Officers

### President

#### ATECR Liaison

Karen Gelardi  
kgelardi@sbcglobal.net

#### President-Elect Conference Chair

Casey Gordon  
caseygordon@kentisd.org

### Treasurer

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### Secretary

Noel Woodcraft  
njwoodcraft@comcast.net

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shaxer@bloomfield.org

#### Membership Development Coordinator

Laura Ramm  
rammbo@gmail.com

#### Immediate Past President TESOL Liaison

Nominations Committee  
Lisa Hutchison  
hutchisonl@lamphere.k12.mi.us



## Looking Forward to the Fall Conference

By Gordon Casey

President Elect & Conference Chair

The 2008 MITESOL conference was a great success. The networking opportunities and SIG meetings provided time to share current concerns and issues from the field. One issue that emerged across grade levels and interest sections was the idea of advocacy. It is this idea that inspired the fall 2009 conference theme of *Transforming Learning: Teaching and Advocacy*.

In this uncertain time of economic turmoil and educational reform, we are often the only advocates our students have. Depending on our roles, we may be advocates for everything from student scheduling to obtaining work visas. On a daily basis we act as cultural brokers, vocabulary mediators, and linguistic models for our students and clients.

The idea of advocacy extends beyond being an academic coach or an acculturation cheerleader. To understand how we can integrate teaching and advocacy, I invite you to consider how this idea transforms our ongoing learning as professionals in the field of TESOL. Reflect on your own experiences and consider submitting a proposal for this fall's conference. Professional development is always best when it combines practical experience and researched expertise. Submission information will be available on the website soon and the deadline for proposals is July 15, 2009.

## From the Co-editors

by Marian Woyciehowicz Gonsior & Val Weeks

As editors of *MITESOL Messages* we decided to have a theme issue, discussing the all encompassing subject of culture in the classroom. With that end, we present an issue full of voices from different cultures. For the first time, we have included an article reprinted from the Association of Teachers of English of the Czech Republic's newsletter, *Journal of English Language Teaching*. Also included in this issue are articles from members in S. Korea and Saudi Arabia. Of course, submissions from members in our own great state can also be found. We hope you enjoy this, our first edition as co-editors.

We sincerely thank the previous co-editors, Hadeel Hermiz Betti and Carmela Gillette, for their efforts in the past. We also thank you, our readers, for your future submissions and any suggestions you can provide to make *MITESOL Messages* of interest to all.

The Newsletter 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

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secretary, she is moving on from her role as exhibits chair. Our new exhibits person is Alyce Howarth. Our newsletter editors are also new this year, Marian Woyciehowicz Gonsior and Val Weeks. Ric Rojas has joined our leadership team as treasurer; and of course our new President elect is Casey Gordon.

Something new for us this year is our Public Relations Committee. The committee members are: James Perren, Erin Luyendyk, Jeri Ann Dolch, and Joanna Olejniczak. This committee will help us promote our organization. If you have any ideas for MITESOL, please feel free to contact any of the board members or come to one of our meetings as a member at large. I want every member to feel as if he or she has a voice in this organization. As the saying goes, "an organization is only as strong as its members". Please consider becoming involved in MITESOL.

Finally, I need to thank Carol Wilson Duffy for going above and beyond. Carol agreed to serve an extra year on our executive board, and now is taking on the task of organizing our archive's project. Also, thank you to the board members who are continuing their positions with the board. I value and am thankful for all the hard work you put into this organization.

## SIG Updates

by Carol Kubota

Dear MITESOL SIG leaders,

I have volunteered to help the SIGs and their leaders with their needs. In order for the SIGs to succeed we need to ban together and decide what our mission is going to be. Some SIGs are more active than others and I am asking you to share your activities with all of us in MITESOL. One of the important activities is to submit an article to the newsletter. I know that this requires time and effort, but hopefully you could take the time just once a year to write a short piece. We need to keep our SIGs alive and active. You can contact me at [carolkubota@comcast.net](mailto:carolkubota@comcast.net)

Sincerely,  
Carol Kubota

## MITESOL Advisory Board

### Professional Development, Research & Teacher Resources

Carol Kubota  
[carolkubota@comcast.net](mailto:carolkubota@comcast.net)

### Post-Secondary, Student Programs SIG

Joel Boyd  
[joel.boyd@wmich.edu](mailto:joel.boyd@wmich.edu)

### Workplace and ESP SIG

Kristin Ekkens  
[kekens@kentliteracy.org](mailto:kekens@kentliteracy.org)

### K-12 SIG

Andrea Gordon  
[gordona@lamphere.k12.mi.us](mailto:gordona@lamphere.k12.mi.us)

### CALL SIG

Angela Predhomme  
[apredhomme@chartermi.net](mailto:apredhomme@chartermi.net)

### Adult Education SIG

Andrew McCullough  
[mccullo4@msu.edu](mailto:mccullo4@msu.edu)

### ESL x Special Education SIG

Christy Pearson  
[pearsonc@gvsu.edu](mailto:pearsonc@gvsu.edu)  
Takimo Teshima  
[teshimat@student.gvsu.edu](mailto:teshimat@student.gvsu.edu)

### Socio-Political Concerns

Carmela Gillette  
[cargillette@tds.net](mailto:cargillette@tds.net)

### Newsletter Co-Editors

Val Weeks  
[vweeks@bloomfield.org](mailto:vweeks@bloomfield.org)  
Marian Woyciehowicz Gonsior  
[mgnsr@aol.com](mailto:mgnsr@aol.com)

### Public Relations

James Perren  
[jperren@emich.edu](mailto:jperren@emich.edu)  
Erin Luyendyk  
Jeri-Ann Dolch  
[alcids@hotmail.com](mailto:alcids@hotmail.com)  
Joanna Olejniczak

### Listserv Manager

Pamela Bogart  
[pbogart@umich.edu](mailto:pbogart@umich.edu)

### Exhibits Manager

Alyce Howarth  
[alycehowarth@hotmail.com](mailto:alycehowarth@hotmail.com)

## Thank you to outgoing MITESOL Board members

From Lisa Hutchison

Special thanks to the hard work and volunteer time from the following outgoing Board members. MITESOL could not function without the amazing leadership and devotion of its volunteer Board members.

**Rita Digirolamo Krause** served as Interim Treasurer and did a wonderful job of organizing MITESOL's books. Likewise, **Carol Kubota**, long-time volunteer for MITESOL, served as Interim Secretary.

Our appreciation goes out to **Hadeel Hermiz Betti** and **Carmela Gillette** for their countless hours in gathering, editing and publishing MITESOL Messages as the Newsletter Co-Editors from 2006-2008.

Special thanks goes to **Christy Pearson** for her work as ESL x Special Education SIG Leader. Even after having served a 3-year term as President, she is continuing on the Board another year to mentor the next SIG leader and serve on the MITESOL Conference Proceedings committee.

Leading the discussion groups, organizing conference presentations and facilitating MITESOL's presence at TESOL Advocacy Day, **Scott Riggs** ends his term as Socio-Political Concerns Committee Chair.

**Carol Wilson-Duffy** deserves accolades for her tireless efforts on behalf MITESOL, serving as Past-President, and two terms as President. Carol also served as Proceedings Co-editor during that time. Carol's imprint on the organization will be felt for years to come.

**Noel Woodcraft**'s efforts on behalf of MITESOL produced extraordinary results. During the four years Noel served as Exhibits Manager, the number of exhibitors at the annual MITESOL Conference doubled. The revenue this generates helps offset the cost of the conference and has enabled us to keep prices down and quality up.

We are so very grateful to these MITESOL members who have given of their time, energy and talents so selflessly. On behalf of all MITESOL members, THANK YOU.



## The Ins and Outs of Teaching Cultural Studies

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What it does try to do, however, is to explain what is taught when "Cultural Studies" is taught, or rather what *should be* taught in an ideal world, if an ideal world existed. In addition, it also tries to answer the question why to teach "Cultural Studies" and, closely related to that, what are the fruits that one can hope to harvest by inoculating his or her plants (students if you wish) with this magical potion of our present age. Simply put, in this article I am trying to answer a question some students of mine probably have repeatedly asked, namely, "What's a Cultural Studies Curriculum Doing in a College Like This?" (1) I am venturing for some sort of a reply on the supposition that it will be interesting not only for said students, but also for people who are already practicing teachers, for people who are thinking about becoming teachers, and also for anyone who, for one reason or another, is interested in gaining an insight into an aspect of the training of English teachers.

Bearing in mind the venerable traditions of writing academic essays in English, I have no other choice than to briefly answer my own question here and now. I wetted the appetite of my reader with the verbal foreplay above, thus s/he deserves to find out in what way I am going to satisfy his or her hunger so that s/he can escape from the act before it is too late if s/he expected something else. If I deliberately wanted to continue violating the rules, I would answer here the questions, "What's a Cultural Studies Curriculum Doing in a College Like This?" by stating simply and abruptly: a lot. However, with all my honest intentions to make this text as readable as possible, I have to confess that behind the façade of a somewhat ironic beginning, this essay aims to take itself seriously. That is to say, I hereby admit that the intention of this paper is to prove the relevance of "Cultural Studies" in higher education in general, with special attention to teacher training, and in the context of education of language teachers in particular. I claim below that a working, realistic and useful education has more to do with the development of skills, abilities and attitudes than with increasing dead knowledge, and that the methods and aims of "Cultural Studies" are instrumental in the development of some such skills and abilities.

It is an often mentioned and more or less completely empty statement that we live in a world that is radically different from anything in the past, even if we think of the recent past. To continue with a list of even more disgustingly overused demagoguery, I could mention living in a global village, in a world that is simultaneously growing smaller and bigger, in a Europe without borders, carrying on a dehumanizing and alienating lifestyle where values are relative if existent at all. My intention here, however, is neither to indulge in such empty panels, nor to take an attitude that often comes hand in hand with such statements: nostalgia after a lost golden age, hearts bleeding because of a supposed loss of personal and national identity. First and foremost, I simply do not believe in the existence of such a mythical age of perfection, right because I consider it to be just that: a myth. And second, because I am convinced that the feeling of loss in terms of identity and/or the general level of culture has more to do with a general inclination towards depression and self-victimization and with a narrow and elitist definition of culture itself caused by the interests of a particular political fraction at a given historical moment, than with anything else.

I do admit, however, that there is something to the above mentioned stereotypical statements. Namely, that the present historical situation is, indeed, unique, and that it brings into the forefront questions and problems that are no longer so easy to dismiss, silence or marginalize as it was in the past. For reasons not to be dwelt upon here, most of us have become much more mobile than ever before, taking up residences for shorter or longer periods in places far from where we were born, and in the same vein, even those who have never left (because regardless of newspaper rhetoric they still are and for some time will continue to be the majority) come across people not from their immediate geographical, linguistic and/or cultural vicinity. To quote Ruth Benedict, our "[m]odern existence has thrown many civilizations into close contact [...] There has never been a time when civilization stood more in need of individuals who are genuinely culture-conscious" (Benedict [1934] 1949: 9 – 10). Primarily, she asserted because "at the moment the

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overwhelming response to this situation is nationalism and racial snobbery” (10), and therefore to avoid disastrous consequences, humanity has to produce individuals “who can see objectively the socially conditioned behavior of other peoples without fear and recrimination” (10). It is shocking to realize that Benedict’s statement that she voiced in 1934 is still valid, and if possible, even more valid than it has ever been.

Certain things have changed, however. Namely, it is now possible to realize that we cannot even effectively talk about the clash of civilizations any more, as cultures and nations no longer coincide so equivocally, self-evidently and easily. To illuminate the problem with an example, let me quote Vilém Flusser trying to explain his identity:

I was born a citizen of Prague, and it seems that my ancestors lived more than a thousand years in the Golden City. I am a Jew, and the saying “Next year in Jerusalem” has been with me since my youth. For decades, I was involved in an experiment to synthesize Brazilian culture from a larger mix of Western European, Eastern European, African, East Asian, and Indian cultural phenomena I live in a village in Provence, and I have become woven into the life fabric of this timeless neighborhood. I was raised in the German culture, and I have been involved in German cultural life for several years. (Flusser [1987] 2002: 91)

While the multiplicity of Flusser’s identity(es) may be unique, the basic situation is clearly not. It shows that the experiments of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries to create homogeneous nation-states have failed. Whether this is good or bad is not of interest here, but the lack of success has two, albeit interrelated, consequences that are.

Dennis O. Durocher Jr. (2007) quoting Sercu (2004) points out that “culture” no longer rests on the equivalence of nation—one culture—one language. The term “intercultural” may also refer to communication between people from different ethnic, social, gendered cultures within the boundaries of the same national language” (144). That is, instead of (or in addition to) the clashes of civilizations that Benedict mentioned (and George W. Bush also enjoys repeating) we have to face the much more complex and direct problem of different groups living together in our immediate vicinity. And I have to disagree with Sercu and Durocher, as this is neither a recent problem, nor a specifically American problems as they claim. It is of key necessity to realize that it is just as much a Central European and Czech reality, and this particular reality has a history as well.

The other consequence is even more evident in Flusser’s struggle with putting down who he was. This is the problem that although it is easy to categorize and to put people in little drawers or boxes, it more often distorts reality than not. Simply because most of us clearly do not fit into the existing categories. Besides realizing that the category “citizens of a state” includes a wide variety of different groups based on categories such as ethnicity, cultural heritage, gender and sexuality, it is also important to bear in mind that most of the persons do not belong to any one category, or more precisely: they tend to belong to more of them.

This is the situation that we all of us have to face in [our] everyday lives, and therefore this is the social context any university graduate has to be aware of, and able to deal with. I have to agree with the statement that “the cultural and racial diversity of student population, in and by itself, is not the problem” (Phuntsog 1999: 98). Asserting that it is so, in itself, would be exclusionist and racist. The problem is much more with what we do or refuse to do with it. It is essential to realize that “the way educators and community members respond to it [the diversity] positively nor negatively will impact the self-esteem and academic success of students from varied cultural background” (98).

It is important to stress here that this is not only an issue of minorities, but also that of the majority, for several reasons. First of all, the general quality of living in a given society depends on it. Secondly, someone belonging to the majority, might easily end up in such a locale in time or space that he or she loses his or her majority status and vice versa. Thirdly, what passes for majority, might be something completely different. To put it differently, a

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multicultural environment is an actual reality for most of us, whether we like it or not, and it is in our own interest to create citizens who have the necessary skills and knowledge to tackle with it.

The problem is that with all the focus multiculturalism, cultural diversity and other such popular catchphrases get both in the media and in research, we still have to face that we are dealing with the proverbial situation where the smoke is more significant than the fire it signals. Or to put it differently, there is much ado about all this when it involves words and theory, but unfortunately although we predominantly live in societies “composed of many subcultures, [...] we far more often refer to cultural diversity than actually study it or the desirable balance between diversity and shared values” (Stearns 2004: 15).

The aim of “Cultural Studies” as an academic subject, but also as a way of approaching problems, of looking at society, is exactly to try and approach the situation outlined above. If I was to locate “Cultural Studies” under a more general category, if I was to find an umbrella-term to classify it, I would classify it as a subject and an approach of “critical thinking.” Above all else, the subject is there to try and raise the level of self-consciousness of our students, to make them more aware of why things happen in the world the way they do, what interests are behind political, cultural, religious and other institutions and to make them gain the necessary tools to realize that what we as subjects of a certain society or world order are encouraged to see as natural and inevitable is more often than not just a construct trying to make us act in the interest of certain locatable and recognizable interests groups. In short, “Cultural Studies” aims to turn students into people who have the necessary critical and self-critical sense to raise their interaction with their environment from an unconscious and reactive level to a conscious and active level.

That is, students are expected to realize that “[w]e do not really see through our eyes or hear through our ears, but through our beliefs” (Delpit 1988: 297 quoted in Phuntsog 1999: 106). The basis aims and contents of “Cultural Studies” are summarized by Peter N. Stearns in the following:

The core features of cultural analysis are not complex. They involve examination of the impact of fundamental beliefs and values [...] on social patterns and personal behavior. The subject includes, at the more conventional end, attention to the ways ideologies—religions, philosophies, political ‘isms’—shape social institutions and also assumptions about phenomena such as race, or poverty, or gender. It also includes attention to such issues as the role of beliefs and values in child rearing, or the definition and experience of disease, or displays of emotion. (Stearns 2004: 6-8)

While the list is obviously not complete, nor could it be, it provides a good summary of the types of inquiry that are at the heart of the study of culture as exercised by modern “Cultural Studies.”

It is important to realize here the explicit focus of the subject in questioning and self-questioning. It defines itself, if you wish, much more in questions than in answers, in what we would like to know not in what we know. In this respect the field is obviously closer to philosophy and sociology than history, at least if we take history in its traditional sense and ignore its self-conscious and self-observing newer phase.

What is way more important than the subject’s relation to more traditional ones, however, is what this questioning and critical approach entails. It means that the ability of students to function in a multicultural environment we hope to achieve not through showing them artifacts of different cultures. “Cultural Studies” is not the study of cultures in the sense of “focusing on items that [other] people use, stories that they tell, and artworks that they create” (Wasta 2001: 4). The approach is not: “Look, this is Hungarian goulash. That is a traditional Hungarian folk dress. That is their national music. Isn’t that interesting? See? Hungarians

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## Korean Cultural Issues and Their Impact in the Classroom

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teach EFL. I was hired as an assistant professor at Hanyang University in Korea, June, 2008. I began my job with great enthusiasm, yet, I was confronted with unexpected hurdles concerning cultural issues within my classes. In this article, I would like to share my observations on how these cultural issues such as collectivism, gender separation, and lacking autonomy have influenced Korean EFL learners and how I adapted to these issues to have a successful teaching experience.

First, since Korean culture is based on collectivism, Korean EFL learners prefer collectivism to individualism. As a result, their learning takes the form of collective mentality. In other words, Korean EFL learners have difficulty asking or answering questions individually. The students often look around the classroom to size up the other students' thoughts and their needs. It is similar to a mob mentality, they will answer questions only if other students do, and they will only ask questions reluctantly if other students participate. Needless to say, it was very difficult for me to ask questions individually at the beginning of the semester. For the first weeks, nobody asked questions and if they had any questions, they waited until everybody left the classroom even though their questions could have benefited other students. Therefore, until I learned some new strategies, I had to twist their arms to have them participate.

Secondly, Korean females and males are treated with different degrees of respect in Korean society; male status is regarded as being higher than that of females. Although it is changing, this culture still exists in all aspects of Korean society. As a result, it impacts EFL learners' behavior toward learning. Unlike in my ESL classes in the United States where Korean students collaborated well with the other gender, in my three Practical English classes at Hanyang University, all the females flocked together in and outside of class and the males did the same. Consequently, they avoided talking to each other in class, which created an invisible wall between the two genders and caused problems when doing role-play or any other kinds of in-class speaking activities.

Thirdly, lacking the autonomy, Korean students have difficulty at voicing their own ideas or perspectives. Korean education, in general, though it is changing rapidly, is often passive with teachers lecturing and students listening. Also, since Koreans are supposed to show respect to anyone who is senior to themselves, the teacher's ideas or opinions are considered irrefutable, and this total acceptance and dependency upon their teachers creates a lack of autonomy. In other words, in Korean high school education, there are not many opportunities to have an open discussion between students and teachers. If the students express their opinions, especially when their opinion does not agree with that of the teachers, they may be regarded as disrespectful to the teachers. Consequently, instead of voicing their own thoughts, they expect instructors to tell them how to view certain things or issues. Thus, whenever I asked questions that promoted their ideas expecting Korean students to openly express their perspectives by having autonomy, I was met with total silence that was quite frustrating – of course, this problem was worsened with the students' limited English proficiency.

How did I handle these cultural issues? Because I am Korean, perhaps, I could understand the reasons why the students behave certain way better than the other instructors who are not familiar with Korean culture. This enabled me to adapt and lead the students to overcome these challenges. Also, instead of trying to change them overnight, I modified my lesson plans and tailored them into their cultural identity.

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With the first problem of lacking individualism, I implemented lesson plans that the students had to work collectively such as interview of classmates, role-play, or group presentation. When they had a group discussion, I appointed a group leader who had to sum up their discussion at the end and report to the class. Also, I explained a point system in the beginning of the semester where if a student asks or answers a question, then s/he earns certain points. This helped the students who are sensitive to grades to participate individually better. Thirdly, I praised each time anybody spoke up with their idea or opinion no matter how far they were from what I was expecting to hear. Lastly, I showed examples of what I was looking for in specific way whenever I sensed that the students did not know how to respond. In short, every time I implemented a teaching method, whether it was an impromptu speech or writing a movie review, I explained its intended purpose and how they can achieve the purpose.

For the gender issue, I created a worksheet for the speaking and listening activity in which every student had to interview four to five students in class with several questions given. Distributing a handout or worksheet each time they learned a new topic, they had to walk around and ask other classmates to whom they have not spoken yet and ask questions and write down their answers regarding that topic. I required them to write down these interviewee's names, so that they had to talk to everybody in class over time. This activity not only improved students' speaking and listening ability, but also gave the students the opportunity to talk to other students, which helped them discuss the topics more comfortably with students of different genders. Over time, my students enjoyed this activity immensely, which resulted in its efficacy. What was critical was that I had to be patient at the beginning of implementing this activity regarding time management and mindful of overcorrecting students' errors while monitoring, so that they were not dissuaded. Also, when pairing or grouping, I tried to group students of different genders together.

To help students build their autonomy, I sought out students' ideas or opinions by randomly asking them questions. Also, I let them know that I, in essence, was like a mirror that merely reflected their learning process and that each student was the most important person in the classroom. In other words, it was the students who are essentially the heart and soul of the class. Thus, if they want this class to be successful, then they have to create and express their own ideas or opinions upon which the teacher could build. To demonstrate that this type of learning process can be effective when they participate, one time I waited for a few minutes until someone actually spoke. However, I was also aware not to give too much power to the students, as they may, or might, abuse or misuse it.

Though I may sound confident in retrospect, I certainly had moments where I let out sighs and wanted to walk out of the classroom. Yet, I tried to understand my students when they received me with silence and turned their indifferent behavior into a humorous situation. For example, one time after I was greeted with silence after having said hello to them, I turned around and faced the blackboard and talked to it for a while. Rather than only lecturing how important it is to participate, voice their opinions, and collaborate with students of a different gender, I created various ways in which they could naturally achieve these critical methods.

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## Unexpected Opportunity: Teaching in Saudi Arabia

By Monique Yoder

Prince Mohammad bin Fahd University, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

If anyone would have told me before the NYC TESOL convention last April that I'd be teaching for an IEP program in Saudi Arabia this academic year, I would have said that that person was delusional. What could a young single female gain from working in a theocratic and gender-restricted society? But here I am, finishing up my first semester with the IEP preparatory program at Prince Mohammad bin Fahd University (PMU) in Al Khobar, KSA – and I'm enjoying the challenge!

Located in the Eastern Province of the kingdom, the university itself sits on Half Moon Bay along the Arabian Gulf, which provides an incredible seascape aesthetic on bus rides home from work. Although the university is co-ed, the campus is divided into two parts: a male campus and a female campus, with a 'green zone' in the middle. This allows opportunities for female and male faculty to hold meetings and work collaboratively on projects, an amenity not common for all higher education institutions in the kingdom. Fellow instructors in the preparatory program at PMU hail from all English-speaking parts of the world, but interestingly enough, there are almost two handfuls of Michiganders, four of which claim Spartan alumnus status.



PMU offers undergraduate degrees in engineering, business, and interior design. For students requiring additional language preparation for these degrees, the university offers an IEP program consisting of three levels: beginner, intermediate, and advanced. Depending on students' level of English, students in the preparatory IEP program receive 25-30 hours of English communication, grammar, and writing instruction per week. Students also receive IELTS preparation and individual language learning attention through Dynamic Education (DynEd), an interactive computer-assisted language program. With a strong emphasis on technology-assisted instruction, instructors are given the opportunity to flex their creative CALL muscles. Each classroom comes equipped with a SmartBoard, computer, and projector; all classes are managed through online class management tools.

Having only taught male Saudi students in Michigan, I was interested to see how female Saudi students compare. I am pleased to say that the girls that I teach are just as talkative as their male counterparts, if not more. They are easy to engage in the classroom and I find my beginner writing students to be very considerate. They are more than willing to erase the board for me, carry my work satchels up flights of

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stairs, volunteer to use the SmartBoard, stand on chairs to switch on the overhead projector, you name it! They're eager to participate and extremely curious about the United States, some of whom in the future hope to study in the U.S.

In addition to teaching, the Al Khobar area offers opportunities for TESOL professional development through KSAALT (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Association of Language Teachers), the 100<sup>th</sup> affiliate of TESOL International. The association is two years young and comprises both English and Arabic language teachers looking to expand communicative and student-centered pedagogy throughout the kingdom. PMU will, again, play host to KSAALT's annual conference this May.

Regarding the culture, the past four months have been a period of adjustment for me, to say the least. The *abaya* and head scarf that I wear when in public have become extensions of myself and a convenient coverall. If I feel like wearing a t-shirt and jeans to work, I need only slip my *abaya* over my clothes and am still able to present a professional image to my students and co-workers. Although it is difficult to move as freely as I did in the States (women cannot walk long distances alone, drive cars, or ride bicycles), I have been able to adapt, learning the tricks of the taxi trade.

Living in Khobar, one of the more liberal cities in the kingdom, has been helpful in my transition here in Saudi. Contrary to my preconceived notions, I can freely dine with both male and female expatriate colleagues in family sections of restaurants and cafés without a fuss. While it is not essential to learn Arabic to function here – there is a sizeable expatriate population in the city – I've been fortunate enough to take advantage of Arabic language courses offered at the Arabic Cultural Center in town. I'm taking great pride and pleasure in learning the script and structure of the language. It offers me the opportunity to feel more comfortable in the culture.

In the short time that I have been in the Middle East, I have gained a lot from my experience here in KSA – specifically insight into a society that, at times, feels like a one-eighty from what I have been used to. What I had originally thought to be a land of restriction and inopportunity has proved to be the opposite. As this semester draws to a close, I look forward to more semesters teaching in the kingdom.

*Editors' note: Find out more about the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Association of Language Teachers (KSAALT) organization by going to its website at: <http://www.saudiarabiansaalt.org/index.html>*

## Korean Cultural Issues and Their Impact in the Classroom

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When I first began teaching at Hanyang University, I was concerned about having passive students and this apprehension stayed with me for a while. However, after about three weeks into teaching, my students began joking with their limited English proficiency and learned to laugh with me. This has been one of the best semesters of my ESL/EFL teaching career. It is my fervent hope that my recent experiences will help future EFL instructors who come to Korea to teach.

## FAQs about the ATECR Travel Grant

by Marian Woyciehowicz Gonsior  
Madonna University

Last February I received a congratulatory e-mail from then-MITESOL president Lisa Hutchison in which she told me that I had been awarded the 2008 ATECR Travel grant. I was elated but also panic-stricken. I didn't know anything about the Czech Republic and had no idea what the trip would actually entail. Well, I survived the experience, and I am here to tell *MITESOL Messages* readers just what a wonderful opportunity it turned out to be.

At this fall's MITESOL conference, I'll be giving a full presentation on my trip, so for now I thought I would just give some advice for those MITESOL members who might be considering applying for this grant in the future.

### What is the ATECR?

ATECR stands for the Association of Teachers of English of the Czech Republic. It was founded in January 1990. Today, ATECR has around 700 teachers of English at all levels in the Czech Republic as members. The group is an Associate of the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL) and an Affiliate of TESOL. It has a long partnership with MITESOL, and MITESOL awards a grant similar to the one I received to an ATECR member to facilitate travel to the annual TESOL conference. The ATECR newsletter is quite large, usually 60-80 pages, and is published twice a year. The ATECR organizes a biennial national conference, and so the Travel Grant is awarded every other year.

### When and when is the conference held?

The site of the conference varies. In 2002, the conference was held in Liberec, while in 2004 it was in Pardubice. In 2008, when I attended, the conference was in Ceske Budejovice, the largest city in South Bohemia. It is always in September. In 2008, it was the weekend of September 12-14.

### What is the conference schedule like?

The conference is held Friday through Sunday. In 2008, the conference began at 5:30pm on Friday. Key-note speeches on Friday were followed with a welcoming drink and snacks. After that, we enjoyed a  
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## FAQs about the ATECR Travel Grant

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performance by the Bear Educational Theatre, a traveling theater group that gives school performances designed to teach English to Czech school children. Saturday's sessions began at 9:00am and continued until 6:30pm. There were breaks for lunch and tea. I ate lunch at a wonderful restaurant (described as "typical" of the area) with members of the ATECR board. In the evening there was a reception, which included a short theater performance and an enormous amount of food. Sunday's program started at 8:15am and continued through 2:30pm. There were two coffee breaks scheduled, with snacks. During the entire weekend there were plenty of publisher booths to look at and sample books and catalogs to collect. (Don't forget about the airline weight limits for luggage!) There were dozens of sessions from which to choose; nearly all of them were given in English.

### What does the travel grant cover?

The grant itself was for \$750. The ATECR also covered my accommodations and conference registration fees. In addition, due to the generosity of members of the ATECR, I had to pay for only a few of my meals while I was there. Although it will vary from year to year, my airline ticket cost \$1141, round trip.

### How do you get to the conference?

You will have to get to Prague, the capital of the Czech Republic, and then take a bus or train to the city where the conference is to be held. I wanted the most direct flight, with the fewest number of stop-overs/plane changes. I took Northwest to Amsterdam and then KLM to Prague. The flights were wonderful, marred only by a two-hour delay in Detroit, which caused most people on the flight to Amsterdam to miss their connecting flights. I had planned a four-hour layover between flights, so I didn't have to worry. The flight to Amsterdam took around eight hours. The one from Amsterdam to Prague, only 1 1/2 hours. However, I was certainly ready to leave the plane when we landed. Outside the baggage area, I was met by a representative of the ATECR, who helped me find the right bus to get me to my hotel. There are other ways to get to the CR, including taking a flight to New York, and connecting to Prague via Czech Airlines, but I enjoyed my time in Amsterdam.

### What are the accommodations like in the Czech Republic?

The member of the ATECR who picked me up at the airport had made reservations for me in Prague and in the city where the conference took place. I had bought several travel guides to Prague and the Czech Republic, but discovered that most hotels in Prague have easily accessible websites, available for English-speakers. There were so many hotels that I had a very hard time choosing one, and I was also unfamiliar with the different areas of the city. After spending many hours on the Internet, I chose a centrally-located three-star hotel. With the exchange rate at the time, my room ended up costing \$100 a night. It was a very simple room, but comfortable, and a huge breakfast was included. It was within easy walking distance of many of Prague's most important sights. Of course, if you are used to luxury, there are many hotels that cost a lot more.

If you are thinking about applying for the travel grant in the future, please contact me. You might also want to plan on attending my presentation at the fall MITESOL Conference. *Na shledanou!*

## The Ins and Outs of Teaching Cultural Studies

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are nice people, they have a rich culture. They are just as civilized as you are, therefore do not be nasty and do not be discriminative when you meet them.” (2) Although I am exaggerating here, and focusing on strong stereotypes, the example points out a strong problem with such an approach that hopes to achieve acceptance and an open mind through simply showing the other culture primarily, if it only shows so-called typical aspects, as the selection of typical aspects often border of the stereotypical.

Most important, however, the problem with the approach of “showing the other culture” is that it does not take into consideration “one of the earliest of human distinctions, the difference in kind between ‘my own’ closed group and the outsider [...] those whom are not only outside the provisions of the moral code which holds within the limits of one’s own people, but who are summarily denied a place anywhere in the human scheme” (Benedict [1934] 1949: 6). That is, showing the other still keeps it the other, it is not able to lower the revulsion, fear and disgust that the other, simply by being the other is causing in the subject. Although admittedly, part of the reasons for this fear is that the other is unknown, or uncanny, just learning about *them* is not enough. It will still not turn *them* into *us*.

Thus the interest of “Cultural Studies” in showing that structures, institutions, moral codes, beliefs, values and other systems that we take for granted, consider inevitable, natural and the only possible way of existence, are not necessarily so. Thus the focus on point out the “relativity of what is considered social or asocial, normal or abnormal” (Boaz in Benedict [1934] 1949: np). That is why the subject tries to open the eyes of our students to the inevitable realization that “[n]o man ever looks at the world with pristine eyes. He sees it edited by a definite set of customs and institutions and ways of thinking” (Benedict [1934] 1949: 2), out of which, ours is only one possible way. What we hope, albeit naively, is that being conscious of the fact that a lot of our most cherished and dearly held values and beliefs are (1) cultural, that is, artificial, (2) relative in time and space, and (3) ideological, that is, with recognizable political interest, can help in destabilizing the negatively charged discrimination of the other.

There are some reasons for such a hope, even if it is a somewhat optimistic supposition. First of all, by making students thinking critically about these issues, there is a hope that their decisions will tend to be rather more conscious than unconscious. In addition, it is important to remember that Boaz, among others, identified the centrality of moral issues. That is, by making students aware of the existence of multiple moral standards, as well as the relativity of attributing “rightness” to any one of them, it can be hoped that they will be less prone to radical and fast value judgments and more understanding towards others.

And finally, critical thinking is a skill that can be applied in various, even radically different situations than what the student is used to, whereas simply teaching about a certain set of cultures limits the applicability of what they learn there.

Such an emphasis on destabilizing, critical analysis and making people aware of the relativity of values and beliefs might sound threatening to some readers of this paper. Their fear is unwarranted, however. No one is advocating nihilism, or the total relativization of anything and everything. There is an important difference between being critical and being nihilistic. That is, our “goal is not systematically to unseat student convictions, but to subject them to analysis and scrutiny—to make students think in new ways, and to provide them with tools that can be applied in explaining the human condition” (Stearns 2004: 15). In the same vein, although “Cultural Studies,” at least in its British variety, is rooted in the political movements of the New Left, it is not at all incompatible with being conservative, nor with having a strong conviction in certain values. The only things it is incompatible with are blind faith and fundamentalism. To quote Stearns again:

A key point to establish, against some conservative misgivings, is that cultural analysis does not require relativism in values. This is a tricky point, and one educationally challenging: but good undergraduate programs already help students with firm beliefs understand that they can compare and consider new explanations—

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## The Ins and Outs of Teaching Cultural Studies

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and can critically examine their own assumptions, in the process—without necessarily abandoning their convictions. (Stearns 2004: 10).

The aim is not to create lost, hopeless, pessimistic and clueless students, quite the opposite, to make them able to critically approach problems they might encounter, and to provide them with the skills and tools necessary for this.

The last question to tackle in the rather limited space of this short, explanatory essay is that what makes teacher education a field that is even more in need of a “Cultural Studies” curriculum than other university programs. One of the reasons is the enormous influence teachers can have on the future generations and how students relate to each other in classrooms under their management, and later in life. As Phuntsog (1999) argues, “[b]eing closest to learners, classroom teachers able to think critically, is even more crucial and strategically important than it is in other programs I higher education. Because, to be honest, although “teachers cannot be expected to perform miracles” (99), to a large extent they still are, as most teachers currently teaching up to high school level have not in all cases had the possibility to participate in such courses. Therefore, there is a pressing need also for retraining, requalifying, specializing and other non-degree courses for practicing teachers with a focus on cultural analysis. Because, like it or not, “the public schools’ ability to meet this challenge [...] depends on the way teachers are prepared with skills, attitudes, and knowledge necessary to enhance their ability to undertake this gigantic responsibility of creating classroom environments appropriate for achieving excellence and equality of learning” (99).

And this is the point when we have to talk about reality vs. the ideal situation. “Cultural Studies” is taught to students in our program, and in other programs around the country, which is a highly laudable achievement. And, in some respects, the situation is even better than in some other programs, as the course is one of the core components of becoming a teacher of English, not only an option to take, but the situation is still far from something to be satisfied with. As the curriculum stands now, “multicultural education [and Cultural Studies] as a separate course is assumed to be sufficient to address a plethora of diversity issues” (Phuntsog, 1999: 98), whereas it is clearly naivety, or an act of self-delusion to think that it is so. For a program that is successful in preparing teachers to deal with the challenges of teaching multiple diversities, “Cultural Studies” should be made a much more integral part of the curriculum: not just a core course, but a whole track, and maybe also a general approach throughout the program.

(1) I am borrowing the title of an article by Elizabeth Swanson Goldberg and Danna Greenberg.

(2) I intentionally chose Hungarian ethnicity as an example here. Their number is low enough, and the general attitude towards them in the country is neutral enough to be sure that most readers will get the irony in the statements.

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## “Clicker” Technology in the Classroom

By Jennifer Craft  
Oakland Community College

Picture this: You're teaching your class about some important point, maybe present-perfect verbs or thesis statements, and you ask a quick question to see if the class understands. A few students chime in with suitable answers, and you ask if anyone has questions. No one does, so you think all is well. Then you get their quiz results or their homework, and you realize the majority of the class didn't get it at all. Has this ever happened to you?

Last summer, at the urging of one member, my department chose to purchase a new piece of technology. To be frank, I wasn't sure how useful this device would be, but after one simple exercise, I discovered that I could avoid the above scenario with a bit of preparation by using Turning Point Technologies' "clickers."

What are these "clickers"? Essentially, they're a remote device, much like a remote control with numbered buttons from one to nine, that allows students to "ring in" with their answer on multiple choice questions that you have created. If you can use Power Point, you can easily work out how to use Turning Point. You create a Turning Point slide in much the same way that you create a Power Point slide, but this slide includes a question and a set of possible answers (multiple choice, true false, survey, etc.). Then, you call up that slide (or series of slides) on your computer, which needs to be projected so the class can see it for easiest use, and the students choose which answer they think is correct. If so desired, a time limit can be put on the answers, too. Once the polling is complete, a chart (in my case a bar graph, though it can be adjusted to other styles) appears showing the choices that the students made. Presto! (Almost) instantaneous assessment! In our department, we bought class sets. Each student can use a clicker as an individual, or teams can each use one device. I've heard that some institutions are having students purchase clickers as they would a textbook or calculator, but we're not there at this point.

What are the benefits? First of all, the quiet students get heard because they don't actually have to "speak up." More importantly, you know what your students do and don't know. With one simple slide with just "A, B, C, D" as the answers, I was able to see what my students knew about some TOEFL exercises. As time progresses and you figure out how to work slides into your different lessons, you can learn more about what the class understands already or has understood about what you've presented. I've worked out Power Point

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## “Clicker” Technology in the Classroom

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presentations on various writing themes and have clickers slides within the presentation and at the end so that I can readily see what my class is comprehending (and what I need to review). You could even work out quizzes this way by assigning specific clickers to specific students. I feel I've barely tapped the potential.

Another useful point is documenting assessment. We're ESL teachers, and everything we do is assessment. I, personally, get sick of being asked to prove that I'm assessing. However, with the clickers, I can simply run a report (which uses Excel) at the end of a clickers presentation and save all the responses to show what my students have and have not gotten. Then, I just need to show that I'm making adjustments based on these results. In today's assessment culture, it's nice to be able to give some quantitative numbers in addition to my qualitative work.

Of course, there are drawbacks. The biggest is that you have to create the slide shows, and if you're like me, just putting the information on slides isn't enough. It can really suck up time, just like Power Point. There is also the danger of creating a situation where you just read slides to the class; also not good.

If you're not technologically adept or are unfamiliar with Power Point, you may also need to invest some time in a bit of training. One of our technology specialists walked my department through the basics after we had purchased the clickers, and I was able to go from there. However, I have had to help a few others work out the kinks since I've had the most experience using them so far.

As far as I know, the clickers are also only use-able with Microsoft, as well, and projecting the slides is essential. Finally, there are the students who just opt to give goofball answers. It can skew the results, but just make a note of it for yourself so that you can explain that strange answer later.

Overall, I'm very pleased with using this new piece of technology. I was sold the day that I quickly made about 10 slides to "test" some basic grammar asking students if the sentences were correct or incorrect. When I discovered that the three or four vocal students really didn't speak for the whole class and nearly two-thirds were unsure, I knew I wanted to keep using clickers in my classes, regardless of the extra time they required in preparation. I may not have been sold on them when my department opted to buy these clickers, but now, I think they're great, and I'm sharing my clickers presentations with all of my colleagues to help them save time in developing more presentations. Not everyone has invested the time yet, but slowly, we're making progress, and I hope we'll have appropriate presentations available for all of our classes soon.

*Editors' note: Check out the Turning Point Technologies website: <http://www.turningtechnologies.com>*

## Controversial Topics in the Adult Ed. Classroom

By Beth Langelier

St. Clair Shores Adult & Community Education

“But why they bomb women and little children?”

The words hung in the air as thick and heavy as smoke after a ground rocket attack. The student, her eyes full of anguish, gazed into my face while waiting for an answer. I could feel myself becoming tense as I tried to frame a response, one that provided a rational explanation for the conflict raging in one part of the world without provoking outcries from other students who might view the situation differently. Keeping my voice even, I framed a one-sentence response that sounded fairly neutral, if not particularly conclusive. Other students around the room gave short, one-sentence opinions of the war as I followed each speaker with my eyes. As soon as a lull occurred in the chain of comments, I announced that each student had said something important, but that we needed to move on in the lesson plan. I told the students that I would think about the conflict at home and perhaps read about it on the Internet.

As any teacher of English to adults quickly finds out, teaching English as a second (or third or fourth) language is not confined to lessons in vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation, but involves communicative interaction with someone in a state of dynamic, perhaps volatile, psychological change as the student develops a new ego, or self-identity, as “English speaker.” Immigrant adults often face assimilation issues and may retain strong feelings of loyalty to a homeland while struggling with culture shock in the new country of residence. In the adult education classroom, where verbal communication is not linked to English for academic purposes, there is more time and room for impetuous remarks that might lead to an unplanned debate. Wishing to avoid a fight among students, the adult education ESL teacher may squelch remarks that drift toward religion or politics. Yet we know that language learning takes place best in meaningful, authentic communicative contexts, versus the artificial context of drills. What is personal to the student is one of the best sources for communicative output.

The activities below can help students to safely express their feelings about political conflicts or other crisis involving their homeland while providing opportunities for authentic communication on significant topics. Nations around the world experience crisis periods arising from natural disasters, civil war, conflict with other nations, or other sources. By eliciting oral and written dialogue within the framework of a structured technique, the adult education ESL teacher helps students to express themselves appropriately from a meaningful perspective.

*Read Aloud.* Reading aloud about a particular region or culture can spark thoughtful conversation about current issues. The adult education ESL teacher can call for a pause at certain points in the reading and ask, “Does anyone have a comment or question?” To ensure order in the classroom, the teacher can invoke the rules for seminar comments (see #3 below). If the discussion becomes overly emotional, the teacher can gently steer students back to the reading. Although most texts for ESL classrooms are carefully constructed for literacy skill level, the adult education ESL teacher may, depending on the level of the students, bring in non-curriculum texts from various sources, such as local newspapers or reliable Internet websites. These may provide a richer source of topics for conversation than curriculum texts.

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## Controversial Topics in the Adult Ed. Classroom

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*Socratic Seminar.* The Socratic seminar can be incorporated in an adult education ESL class. After reading a selected text, the teacher divides the class in half and gives each group one or two questions that probe philosophical, moral, religious, and/or political issues stemming from the text (questions should be stated in general, not nation-specific, terms). Students must follow the rules for seminar comments (see #3 below). By using large groups, the teacher can circulate around the room and listen to the flow of comments, and students must keep their comments brief in order to allow other students their turn. After all students have had an opportunity to respond to the questions, the teacher introduces a neutral text to read aloud.

*Journaling.* Journal writing is a dependable technique for encouraging meaningful dialogue between the student composer and the invited reader, usually the teacher. As a journal prompt, the teacher can give students a question similar to those used in Socratic seminar (above) to evoke personal, authentic written expression. An alternative to having the teacher read and respond to the journal entry would be to announce, before the prompt is given, that students will read and respond to each other’s entry on that day. Have all students’ names on slips of paper and match slips randomly to choose partners. The teacher should instruct students on how to write appropriate responses to journal entries.

*Scrapbooking.* Making a scrapbook is a wonderful way for students to showcase their homeland and/or culture with pride. Scrapbooks can be organized chronologically or thematically, but should be as authentic and personal to the student as possible. When completed, students share their scrapbooks with a partner and explain the significance of each page. Although it is unlikely that scrapbooks will elicit controversial topics for discussion, they allow the presenter to nurture his or her “language ego” while sharing details and perspectives on their homeland and culture, and the scrapbook viewer/partner becomes familiar with new cultures and traditions from a positive perspective. The scrapbook viewer/partner should listen to the presentation respectfully and ask only detail-specific questions, saving provocative questions for read aloud or Socratic seminar sessions or for journal writing.

A few guidelines can help the above activities to proceed smoothly.

1. Make the read aloud or Socratic seminar a routine activity versus a one-time response to a “hot topic.” Introduce a different reading, perhaps one a week, so that students become familiar with a variety of regions and cultures. Integrate these with readings on the country of residence.
2. When selecting text for a read aloud or Socratic seminar, choose pieces that discuss a region’s history or current society in neutral or positive tones. Avoid pieces that analyze conflicts with other nations in a prejudicial manner and/or use negative, hostile tones. But when choosing a text on the country of residence, find one that portrays the good, the bad, and the ugly, and ask students if similar events occurred in their homeland.
3. Set the rules for seminar comments and discuss them with students, making sure everyone agrees before the lesson begins. Students should listen to each other without interrupting, raise their hand or use some other signal for turn-taking, respect a time or a sentence limit, kept their voice volume “room

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## Controversial Topics in the Adult Ed. Classroom

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appropriate,” and avoid extreme negativity when speaking about countries and cultures. The teacher is responsible for maintaining a steady flow of comments and ensuring the class does not erupt into communicative chaos.

4. Be flexible about the quality and quantity of journal writing, especially for sensitive topics involving a student's homeland or culture. If a student writes very little or nothing at all in response to a journal prompt, suggest a safer, more neutral, but related prompt and encourage the student to write more.
5. Check your own perspective at the classroom door. You may have strong opinions about different issues around the world, but it would be a mistake to share these views, or to give even a hint. Students must feel free to speak or write their minds appropriately without fearing that “the teacher will disagree.”

When my student asked me her question about the travesty of war, it was in response to a chance remark I made that day, rather than to a reading or journal prompt. I was unable to give her a conclusive answer, let alone a rational explanation for destructive human behavior. I could only listen as other students around the room offered their perspectives, sometimes in opposition to one another. Fortunately, everyone remained calm, and no one went home angry or in tears. Still, this was evidence that adult education ESL students can and do think *in English* about topics beyond those suggested by their class curriculum. By planning structured activities that elicit verbal expression on certain controversial topics, the adult education ESL teacher provides an opportunity for authentic language development, and recognizes the person within the student.

## TESOL Position Statement on Academic and Degree-Granting Credit For ESOL Courses

Courses for English language learners in academic institutions are often mischaracterized as remedial and are not always acknowledged for full credit and/or count toward graduation. These policies and practices fail to recognize that ESOL courses are standards-driven content courses, similar to and on par with other subject matter, such as language arts or foreign language courses.

TESOL advocates that institutions of secondary and tertiary education develop policies that identify those ESOL courses that will be credit-bearing upon successful completion and/or satisfy academic requirements for graduation purposes and that these institutions grant such courses appropriate credit hours. Second, TESOL encourages institutions to examine, and revise as needed, their guidelines for eligibility for participation in or access to programs at their schools that are driven by academic course requirements that do not recognize ESOL coursework as credit-bearing courses. These guidelines for eligibility may currently exclude English language learners from participation. Finally, testing opportunities should be made available that would allow English language learners to receive equivalent credit for appropriate coursework upon demonstrating mastery of expected content and/or skills.

Approved by the Board of Directors, October 2008

## Michigan Presenters at TESOL '09

### Using Language Structure to Decipher Delay v. Disorder in ELLs

Christen M. Pearson, PhD

Scheduled: March 26, 11 a.m.

The interface of ESL and language learning disorders is often perceived as a steep mountain of uncharted territory with few trained in the appropriate assessment and intervention needed to ensure excellence in teaching this underserved population (Miller, 2005). As a basic premise of education is to move from the known to the unknown (Tattershall, 2002), this indicates building the second language (L2) upon the foundational cornerstone of the first (L1) (H.D. Brown, 2000). However, if the learner has problems with the L1, it is difficult to use it as a scaffold for the L2 (Gindis, 2008). Further exacerbating the problem is the paucity of research specifically investigating the language *processing* of this population (Glennen, 2007).

To this end, longitudinal case studies are presented of two ESL delayed preschoolers, where tracking of ESL development, both comprehension and production, took place over a 2 ½-year period. Using overhead visuals and handouts, issues of cognition, the socio-emotional realm, and L2 acquisition (specifically, development of semantics, morphology, and syntax) are explored. Specific areas of semantics include comprehension of passive constructions, time elements, quantity, cause & effect, *yes/no* questions, negation, and plurality. The area of grammar highlighted is both the productive emergence (1<sup>st</sup> use) and acquisition (90% accuracy) of Roger Brown's (1973) classic study of 14 morphemes. Exploration of syntax focuses on the comprehension of *wh-* interrogatives. A unique aspect of this study is that updates on each child will be shared which support initial findings.

By the end of the session, attendees will discern which child was delayed and which disordered, based on analyses of the structures of each child's developing English language system. This, in turn, will aid attendees in identifying “warning flags” of language processing problems in their own students' second language acquisition.

### Using Tiered Lessons to Differentiate for English Language Learners

Karen Gelardi, ESL Consultant, Rochester Community Schools

Scheduled: March 28, 8 a.m.

Suzanne Haxer, ESL Consultant, Bloomfield Hills Schools

The presenters will demonstrate how to use the differentiated technique of tiering lessons in order to meet the diverse linguistic needs of K-12 students. Presenters will show elementary and secondary examples of tiered lessons. Participants will design their own tiered lesson.



## MITESOL Welcomes New Board Members, 2008-2009



### **Casey Gordon, President Elect and Conference Chair.**

Casey Gordon is the ELL Coordinator at Kent ISD. She plans and provides professional development and technical assistance for 23 local school districts. Casey facilitates an ELL Advisory Committee and serves on state-wide subcommittees for ELL assessment and Title III. She is a third year doctoral candidate in K-12 Educational Leadership at Western Michigan University.



### **Suzanne Haxer, Communications Coordinator**

Suzanne Haxer is currently teaching middle school English Language Learners in the Bloomfield Hills School District. Her interest in working with ESL students began with her first teaching job in a private Islamic Academy and only grew stronger when she served as a Peace Corps Volunteer teacher in Belize, Central America. Upon returning to the United States, Suzanne taught ESL and Language Arts for four years to middle school students in Phoenix, Arizona. In 2004, she received a Master's of Bilingual/Multicultural Education from Northern Arizona University, where she graduated with distinction. At present, Suzanne continues to advocate for high quality ESL education in Michigan by working on the Oakland County ESL Leadership team, and serving as the Public Relations Officer for MITESOL



### **James Perren, Public Relations Committee Chair**

James Perren, Ed.D. in Curriculum, Instruction and Technology in Education: Language Arts (Temple University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania); M.A. TESOL (San Jose State University, San Jose, California). Assistant Professor. Service learning in applied linguistics, intercultural communication, ESL teaching methodology, technology in language education, second language acquisition.

Other members of the Public Relations Committee are:  
**Jeri-Ann Dolch, Joanna Olejniczak, and Erin Luyendyk,**



**Noel Woodcraft, Secretary**



### **Other new board members for 2008-2009**

**Andrew S. McCullough,  
Adult Ed SIG Leader**

**Alyce Howarth, Exhibits'  
Manager**

**Ricardo Rojas, Treasurer**



**Carmela Gillette, Socio-Political Concerns Chair**

### **Carol Kubota, Professional Research & Teacher Resources SIG Leader**

Carol completed her BA with a major in English and minor in Spanish. She has a MATESOL degree. She lived and taught in Mexico City on many different levels, which included University, Secondary and private practice. She then moved to Japan and lived there for five years. She taught in both a University and a High School. She speaks both Japanese and Spanish. She has served MITESOL as a SIG leader, part of the conference committee, and issued SBCEUS at the MITESOL conferences.

### **Marian Woyciehowicz Gonsior, Newsletter Co-editor**

Marian Woyciehowicz Gonsior is currently an adjunct assistant professor in the ESL Program at Madonna University in Livonia. In addition, she has taught ESL at Oakland Community College and the University of Detroit Mercy. At UDM she also served as the assistant coordinator of the American Language and Culture Program. She holds an MA in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages from Madonna and an MA in Spanish from New York University. Writing is her first love, so some of her favorite moments are those she spends talking about writing with students and colleagues. Her other interests include gender and cultural issues in the ESL classroom.

### **Valerie Weeks, Newsletter Co-Editor**

Valerie is currently an ESL teacher in Bloomfield Hills School District. She teaches Kindergarten through 5th graders. She received her Master's Degree in Bilingual/Bicultural Education with an ESL endorsement from Wayne State University in 2006. Valerie received a Bachelor's Degree from Albion College in 2001, where she was an English and Elementary Education Major. Valerie is passionate about teaching ESL students, and she really enjoys learning from her students as well.