



Apply for the MITESOL Travel Grant to the Czech Republic

by Marian Woyciehowicz Gonsior
 Ever dream that you'd be able to put the words "international speaker" as one the credits on your resume or CV? Now is your chance to make your dream come true. Please look for the announcement of the MITESOL/ATECR (Association of Teachers of English in the Czech Republic) Travel Grant elsewhere in this issue of *MITESOL Messages*.
 The travel grant an-

nouncement reminds me of the excitement I felt the day I found out I would be one in the long line of other recipients of the award. I confess at that time I had never even thought of going to the Czech Republic, much less presenting a paper at a conference there. I wasn't even sure how I would get there, or how long I would be able to stay. Now, I look back on my experience with cherished memories of taking part in the confer-

ence and meeting a wonderful group of EFL professionals.
 Remember, this award isn't granted every year, so if you wait, it'll be a while before this opportunity comes around again. The grant includes \$750, along with conference registration fees and accommodations during the conference. Additionally, it covers attendance and your presentation at the

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President's Corner

Welcome to MITESOL – our organization prides itself on providing professional growth for our members through learning and networking opportunities. In an ever-changing landscape of policy and practice, MITESOL members strive to be at the forefront of our field. I encourage you to continue your membership with us.

This year we welcome new board members Wendy Wang (President-Elect), Carol Dimovski (Communications Coordinator), and Morgan Cox (Membership Coordinator). At our 2009 conference we said goodbye to outgoing board members Lisa Hutchison, Suzanne Haxer, and Laura Ramm and outgoing SIG leaders Christy Pearson and Kristine Ekkens; their work and devotion to MITESOL serves as a challenge and inspiration to the rest of us. We are also happy to introduce our new SIG leaders, Lisa Hutchison (K-12), Tamiko Teshima

(ESLxSp.Ed.), and Jane DeGroot (Workplace & ESP). We thank our re-elected and returning SIG leaders and socio-political concerns leader for their enthusiastic service to the organization. Please consider becoming active in our SIGs – they provide both camaraderie and updates in the many aspects of TESOL.

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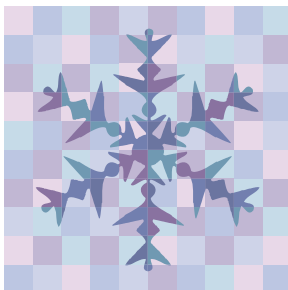
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From the Co-Editors

Winter is upon us and with it a new semester, new classes, and possibly new students to get to know. This edition of *MITESOL Messages* focuses on diversity, with articles that touch on this multifaceted topic in a number of ways. For example, you'll want to check out and possibly respond to James Perren's article entitled "Diversity in ELT." We also present a wonderfully-written piece by Susan Ruellan, who sends us into the new semester with a unique look at the diverse subject of identity and language learning. Other articles focus on the diversity

that is found within ESL itself. Information in this issue will take you from the closely-approaching



MITESOL reception at the TESOL in Boston right on through to the MITESOL conference in October.

We especially hope you don't miss the announcement of the 2010 MITESOL Travel Grant to the Czech Republic. Why not consider applying now for your own adventure in diversity with English-language at the University of Usti nad Labem in North Bohemia? My (Marian) article on my adventure in 2008 may inspire you to do just that. We hope you find something to ponder and enjoy in this February 2010 edition of *MITESOL Matters*.

Marian Woyciehowicz Gonsior & Valerie Weeks, Newsletter Co-Editors

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Diversity in English Language Teaching

by James M. Perren, Ed.D.

Miriam-Webster's online dictionary has two definitions for the word diversity:

- 1 : the condition of being diverse : variety; especially : the inclusion of diverse people (as people of different races or cultures) in a group or organization <programs intended to promote diversity in schools>
- 2 : an instance of being diverse <a diversity of opinion>

I decided to look up this word online to get an idea of what I already knew about the word. The first thing I did was type in the Google.com keyword search of "diversity in English language teaching." I looked at the first 10 results from the 3,080,000 the search engine found in 0.24 seconds. I then looked up the word on

the Webster's website.

I should probably backtrack a little bit and tell you that this is my second year in Michigan and I spent the last seven years of my life living



in the "City of Brotherly Love" a.k.a., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Diversity for me in that context had a different feeling and experience. The university I attended had the nickname of "The Diversity University" and originally had a very large African-American population of students which has gradually de-

creased as more and more European-American students find the urban university experience appealing. The original focus of that university corresponds directly with the first meaning indicated in the Miriam-Webster entry.

Going forward to the point of where I find myself here in Ann Arbor, Michigan, I'm attempting to put this topic of diversity into the context of English language teaching. It is an interesting topic because I find myself engaged in discussions with colleagues, professionals, and friends concerning the meaning associated with the example used in the second definition, the diversity of opinion. Directly related to English language teaching, some points that come to my mind are the diversity of opinion in reference to people. For example, I find the use of the common terms 'native speaker' and 'non-

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Please join the Facebook group "MITESOL - Michigan Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages". It is a great way to keep in touch and stay updated on MITESOL happenings. Anyone can join and make posts.

President's Corner

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Our newsletter editors, Marian Woyciehowicz Gonsior & Valerie Weeks, have done a wonderful job of creating newsletters that are timely, relevant, and enjoyable. They highlight the experiences and ideas of MITESOL members and keep us updated on the latest trends. In a similar vein, our PR committee has also been hard at work representing Michigan at TESOL Denver and

looking forward to Boston, recruiting new members, and planning innovative ways to showcase the benefits of the organization. As always, Pamela Bogart keeps all of us up to date with our MITESOL listserv – if you are not receiving regular messages from our listserv, please email Pamela at pbogart@umich.edu .

2010 promises to be a year of change and growth. MITESOL is currently seeking ways in which to partner with other organizations and

extend our influence and assistance to educators and policy makers. While we look toward the future, our first and foremost concern remains our membership – we want to help and support our members in all of their endeavors. If you have comments, questions or suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact a board member.

Thank you to all-
Casey

Apply Now for the MITESOL Travel Grant to the Czech Republic Cont.

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ATECR conference, an event which only takes place every other year.

The conference is rotated through different areas of the Czech Republic.

When I went, it was in Ceske Budejovice, in South Bohemia, near the border with Austria. This year the conference is in Usti nad Labem, a town in Northern Bohemia, not far from Germany. In fact, Dresden, the famous German city, is only 30 miles away.

The conference I attended was amazing. Over the course of 2 ½ days (Friday afternoon – Sunday afternoon), I had more than ninety



different sessions from which to choose, 6 keynote lectures to attend, and 2 educational theatre performances to enjoy. Lots of Czech cuisine, local beverages, and English-speaking companions were also provided. As in any conference, there were many exhibitor booths to wander by and "freebies" to pick up. Oxford University Press gave out free copies of vol-

umes in its "Oxford Bookworms World Stories" series, featuring stories written in English from around the world. The one I obtained includes a fabulous collection of stories from Irish storytellers, along with a CD of

the complete text. I also picked up some free exercises from a textbook that so impressed me that I later decided to buy it and use it for one of my ESL classes. By far the best part of the conference was the opportunity I had to exchange ideas with English instructors from England, Poland, the Czech Republic, and other countries. The experience of sharing my own presentation with a group thirty or more enthusiastic participants was also a highlight.

I encourage anyone who wants to have a similar international experience to apply for the travel grant before the March 1st deadline. Just fill out the application, and picture yourself as an international speaker. **Užijte si výlet!**

I grew up in Iowa and I knew what to do with butter: you put it on roasting ears [of corn], pancakes, and popcorn. Then I went to France and saw a Frenchman put butter on radishes. I waited for the Cosmic Revenge—for the Eiffel Tower to topple, the Seine to sizzle, or the grape to wither on the vine. But...the universe continued unperturbed.

--Genelle Morain
Toward Internationalism

(Cited in Storti, C. (1999). *Figuring foreigners out: A practical guide*. Boston, MA: Intercultural Press.)

An Overseas English Adventure

MITESOL is proud to support our sister organization, the Association of Teachers of English of the Czech Republic (ATECR). ATECR will be hosting their annual conference "ELT: Sharing Ideas and Experience," at the University of Usti nad Labem in North Bohemia, September 10 – 12, 2010.

This year MITESOL will again be offering the opportunity to attend the ATECR conference to one of our members. MITESOL will provide \$750 toward travel fees and ATECR will provide both the conference registration fee and housing. The selected member will also submit a proposal to the ATECR

conference and gain experience presenting in the Czech Republic.

If you are interested in this opportunity, please complete the ATECR Application form available on the MITESOL website. The deadline to submit your application is March 1st, 2010. Don't miss this once in a lifetime opportunity!

Diversity in English Language Teaching Cont.

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native speaker' as a consistent dichotomy to be limiting in application and limited in scope (needing diversity). Although these terms can be useful for defining particular groups of people in order to work, interact, and collaborate more efficiently with them (often our colleagues, students, and other stakeholders), other terms that would provide a more inclusive approach to a terms and definitions framework are in order.

One specific example would be to implement on a regular basis the terms 'second-language user' or 'L2 User of English.' Cook (2002) introduced the term L2 User to "refer to a person who knows and uses a second language at any level" (p. 4). One purpose for his use of the term L2 user is to contrast the L2 user perspective with the native speaker perspective, in other words, diversity of opinion about an instance of

being diverse. Cook also discusses the issue of being defined by what one is *not* in relation to the native speaker construct and its political and ethical overtones of the power of natives over non-natives. This is problematic. Why would one want to be labeled and defined on a regular basis about what one is not? Imagine what some people may be thinking when they hear these terms on a regular basis in undergraduate and graduate classes, hallway conversations, conferences, popular media, etc.

We can also implement methodology frequently utilized in sociocultural theory of second-language acquisition to find out how people feel when these terms are used to describe other people. This technique is the participant relevant viewpoint; let's ask our colleagues and friends what they think about the use of these terms. Is it limiting? Is it lim-



ited? Do we need more diverse terms to describe the constructs with which we are engaging in English language teaching? Ask around and tell me what you think the next time we see each other in a conference, or simply send me an e-mail. I would be interested to know what your opinions are. In the meantime, we can go back to the dictionary definitions and see what other directions they will take us.

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James M. Perren is Assistant Professor of TESOL at Eastern Michigan University.

S + L2 = ∞ or Creating a new "I" dentity

by Susan Ruellan

*To Prof. Monika Kimball
For generously contributing to
creating many new "I" dentities*

*An invocation to begin
the semester*

Do you like math? I don't like math. So, you might be asking yourselves right now what does math have to do with why we are here today, which is to kick-off a new semester of teaching ESL. Even though I don't like math, I have enjoyed reading books related to math, particularly two books written by Douglas Hofstadter. The

first one I read two years ago, entitled *Gödel, Escher, and Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid*. It was a fascinating, playful exploration of the connections between math, art, music and literature. In search of summer reading, I came across a continuation of his thoughts in a book he wrote in 2007 titled, *I am a Strange Loop*. Hofstadter uses a variety of metaphors and analogies related to mathematical theories to explore the concept of human consciousness, the self, or "I" and the human soul. As I read *I am a Strange Loop*, connections between math and ESL surprisingly

abounded and inspired me to think about what it means to teach English to people from diverse backgrounds. I will probably not do justice to Hofstadter's explanations as I do not possess his expert knowledge of math or his understanding of the mind. Undoubtedly I will make some mistakes in how I interpret some of the ideas in his book, but I would like to share just a few of the connections that I made.

Throughout the book, Hofstadter criticizes Russell and Whitehead's early 20th century *Principia Mathematica*, because it created a system

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Questioning Diversity

by Marian Woyciehowicz Gonsior

Diversity is a good topic for the classroom, whether something to include when planning a timely lesson for Black History Month (February) or Women's History Month (March), or for any one of the so-called ordinary days when a "teachable moment" seems appropriate. To keep the idea of diversity fresh, it is important to help students relate the word to their own lives. In addition, discussing diversity with our students just might lead to an important discussion of the word and its implications for those who work in ESL.

Whenever I want my students to discover new ways of looking at a topic, I tend to use the invention technique called "cubing" (see, for example, Winthrow, Brookes, & Cummings, 2004). The name comes from the six sides of a cube, and in the activity the students are asked to look at a particular idea or concept from six different perspectives. This activity is great to use in the class-

room for discussing the concept of diversity, as it results in diverse explanations of the term. There are variations on the activity, but in the one I usually follow, students are asked to describe the chosen term in the following ways: how would you **describe it?**, what would you **compare it to/contrast it with?**, what do you **associate it with?**, what would you see if you were to **analyze it?** (what is it made of?), how would you **apply it?** (what is it used for?), and how would you **argue for or against it?** The answers to the above questions can be offered in many ways: an illustration can be drawn, a mind map can be designed, or a short paragraph or essay can be written. The activity can be expanded endlessly from there. Especially compelling is the idea of arguing against diversity. Why would anyone argue against it?

Another activity for discussing diversity is found in a persuasive book designed for college-composition courses, *Good Rea-*

sons: Researching and Writing Effective Arguments (Faigley & Selzer, 2009). In an activity entitled "What do we mean by diversity," the authors suggest several different real-world tasks based on the idea of diversity for students to complete. They ask students to: "Formulate your own definition of what **diversity** means on a college campus," "Evaluate **diversity** on your campus according to your definition. Is your campus good or bad in its **diversity?**", and "What are the effects of having a diverse campus... [and] What happens if a campus isn't **diverse?**" The last activity asks students to "write a proposal that would increase diversity on your campus" (p. 111). The proposal could be developed into a letter to the editor of the school newspaper, or even a letter to the president of the univer-

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ESL x Special Education SIG

by Tamiko Teshima

At the fall conference, the ESL x Special Education SIG challenged themselves to put together a list of resources, K-12, for teachers needing assistance with students with both ESL and Special Education needs. While the list is not yet finished, it promises to be a compilation that will be helpful to those who do not have a large availability of resources for these specific purposes. One area in particular that is need of

resources is the Upper Peninsula, specifically the Marquette area.

Additionally, there was much discussion at the fall conference about the legalities (or illegalities) of using IEPs for ESL students who may not have Special Education needs. Several of the members participated in a heated discussion over how schools legally should handle ELLs. Many people con-

tended that it was illegal to place an ELL in Special Education simply for having ESL

needs. Others claimed that district have ways around this, and can, in fact, place ELLs in Special Education even if they do not have Special Education needs. We are currently

looking into providing information on this topic at next year's fall conference.



S + L2 = ∞ or Creating a new “I”dentity Cont.

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that contained axioms and “low-level rules of inference that were rigid and frozen” (p. 206). Paradoxes could not exist. According to Hofstadter, Russell and Whitehead had created a “fortress of mathematical reasoning such that no set could contain itself, no sentence could ever turn around and talk about itself” (p. 113). In a very simplified interpretation, there was a limited dichotomy: there was “0” or there was “1.”: only two possibilities “are” or “are not.” In ESL, the term “othering” is often used in an exclusionary way. It suggests that our L2 students, perceived as “other,” are set apart from the American discourse community. Our students either “are” or they “are not.” They fit in or they do not. They are L1 or L2. Are our students to be eternally trapped in a limited linguistic and cultural fortress?

Hofstadter’s answer to this question would be “no.” He uses the formula $Q + 1$ to demonstrate Euclid’s proof of the infinitude of prime numbers. If there were a “Finite, Closed Club of All Primes” there would be one last prime number, an end. Through careful reasoning, Hofstadter reassures the reader that we can never “fall off the Earth” because there is no “Finite, Closed Club of All Primes.” As I am sure you can imagine, I couldn’t help but think of a similar formula from second language acquisition: $i + 1$. Krashen’s 1985 Input hypothesis. $-i-$ being the learner’s current level of knowledge and $+1$ the next level of learning, which advances the learner’s language progress. Like Hofstadter does with Euclid’s proof, with the addition of 1, Krashen reminds us of our L2 students’ infinite ability to learn more. The fortress in which

L2 learners may find themselves begins to crumble.

In 1931, Kurt Gödel found cracks in Russell and Whitehead’s conventional mathematical fortress. As he analyzed their system from a more macroscopic perspective, Gödel was able to demonstrate that in fact it had the power to represent itself. This loopy, recursive ability to be self-referential is the key to Hofstadter’s idea of human consciousness or the creation of “I.” As human beings we are capable of symbolic thought, recognizing patterns, making analogies and wondering about ourselves. These patterns can be virtual and real, like the character in a book, the concept of a car, or the shared experiences with a close friend. In other words, our mind can contain a multitude of other “I”dentities.



The connections to Hofstadter’s “I”dentity and SLA research seem apparent. In the ESL profession, identity is part of current trends in research. Various types of identities are being studied: cultural identity, social identity, gender identity, and linguistic identity to name just a few. Recent articles often explore the importance of renegotiating identity or reconstructing identity. Miller (2004) explains that language is a form of self-representation. She asserts that it is imperative that L2 students “achieve self-representation in the dominant discourse if they are to participate in mainstream social and academic contexts...and successfully integrate into the wider society” (p. 291). Self-representation becomes linked with discourse and power for the L2 learner.

I think, however, that Hofstadter’s concept of “I”dentity goes be-

yond this because it contributes to defining the essence of what it means to be human. He explains that “the epitome of selfhood – a sense of “I” – is...brought into being if and only if along with that self there is a sense of *other* selves with whom one has bonds of affection. In short, only when generosity is born is an ego born.” (p.355). From this perspective, the idea of “othering” can transform from the connotation of exclusion to a more inclusive meaning. On a purely individual human level Hofstadter explains that “To ‘be’ someone else in a profound way is not merely to see the world intellectually as they see it and to feel rooted in the place and times that molded them as they grew up; it goes much further than that. It is to adopt their values, to take on their

desires, to live their hopes, to feel their yearnings, to share their dreams, to shudder at their dreads, to participate in their life, to merge with their soul, [their “I”]. (pp. 246 -247). This capacity which he terms *representational universality* is in his words “a stone’s throw away from empathy, which [he] see [s] as the most admirable quality of humanity.” (p.246)

After making connections from all of these mathematical influences, an equation came to my mind, $S + L2 = \infty$, to express the connections that exist between us, and our students. In this equation, $S + L2 = \infty$, I hope that we will see ourselves as the “+” symbol between the student and the target language. May what we bring to the equation be more. May we challenge our students to seek out their infinite possibilities and instill in them a thirst for discovering and

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Questioning Diversity Cont.

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sity. These questions seem particularly apt for our students. After all, aren't they often the ones whom administrators are largely counting on when campus literature describes the campus population as "diverse"?

Of course, diversity isn't a subject just for the classroom or just for students. As professionals we need to ask ourselves some serious questions about diversity in our own field. Again, it might be helpful to think in terms of what diversity is and what diversity is not. What promotes diversity? What, on the other hand, gives diversity mere lip service? When everyone talks about how important it is to help newcomers learn to speak

English, but ESL instructors aren't offered full-time positions, with decent pay, is a stand for or against diversity being taken? If the person in charge of the ESL department is labeled an administrator rather than a



faculty member (and no other department head is so designated), what does that really say about how much that particular institution values diversity? Are the diverse students in the ESL program given the same chance for success as students in other programs when the ESL program has to focus on being "cost-

effective" instead of providing excellent education?

Like the possible questions used in cubing, the questions we could ask about our profession and its connection to diversity are multiple. Maybe there's no reason to be alarmed, but maybe there is, and maybe--like the heroes of Black History Month and Women's History Month--we need to work to change what at this point seems unchangeable.

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MITESOL Reception at TESOL

Dear MITESOLers,

Are you going to TESOL in Boston this spring? Read on for this event announcement from Karen Gelardi....

Come join us for a MITESOL reception at TESOL!

March 25, 2010
5:00 pm - 7:30 pm

Morton's Steakhouse
2 Seaport Lane
Boston, MA 02210

If you plan on attending, please rsvp at
<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/SZRB27Q>

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making connections. May we generously give of our *selves* in our teaching to help each one of our students grow. Finally, may we begin to appreciate where each one of our students comes from, to contribute to sharing and creating new “I”dentities that will continue outside the classroom into the vast

global community to which we belong.

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MITESOL 2010 Conference “ESL at the Crossroads” Call for Proposals

October 1 - 2, 2010

Eastern Michigan University
EMU Student Center
Ypsilanti, MI



Michigan Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (MITESOL) invites professionals involved with English language learners to submit proposals for presentations at the annual conference to be held on the campus of Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti the evening of Friday, October 1 and all day Saturday, October 2.

As MITESOL celebrates 35 years of accomplishments, it continues to grow in response to new challenges. The MITESOL 2010 Conference welcomes proposals from diverse perspectives that address current issues related to English language proficiency assessment, standards-based instruction, ELL students in mainstream classrooms, and funding for quality ESL programs in these tough economic times. The conference also invites proposals related to all aspects of ESL/EAP/IEP/CALL/EFL best practices for instruction, materials development, program administration, teacher training, and professional development in various settings.

Proposals are being accepted for the following formats: paper, poster, panel discussion, exhibitor, teaching/tutoring demonstration, and workshop. Online submissions *only* will be accepted at <http://mitesol.elc.msu.edu/proposal>. The proposal deadline is Wednesday, July 7 (11:00 p.m.), 2010 with notification of acceptance via email by mid-August.

If you have any questions about the 2010 Conference or would like to volunteer to help out with the preparations for the conference, please contact:

Dr. Wendy Wang, Conference Chair, at wwang@emich.edu,

Dr. James Perren, Co-Chair, at jperren@emich.edu,

or Kay Stremle, Local Chair, at kstremle@emich.edu.

Please type "MITESOL Conference" in the subject line of your email.

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