Happy New Year to you all! I am very pleased to report that the 2010 Fall Conference “ESL at the Crossroads” was a great success with an impressive turnout (approximately 350 registered participants). It was worth noting that the conference attracted presenters and attendees not only from across Michigan, but also from other states. Some came from neighboring states (Ohio and Indiana); a few hailed from as far as California, Florida, Iowa, Maryland, and Pennsylvania. The conference featured 63 breakout sessions on a variety of topics. Judging by the written evaluations I received, many sessions were excellent; some merit a return invitation to the next fall conference. Our plenary speech by Dr. Jodi Crandall was inspirational. At a time when TESOL is being re-imagined, Dr. Crandall calls on TESOL professionals to meet the challenges with our strengths. Our featured speaker, Linda Forward from MDE, spoke to a captivated audience about ways of building ‘crossroads’ connections, making all kids key to our future.

2010 marked the 35th anniversary of MITESOL. From Professor Emerita Joan Morley’s featured speech, “A Walk Down Memory Lane!” to “Salsa Dancing with MITESOL Stars,” the conference brought together the ‘old’ and the ‘new’. I was pleased that Margaret Van Naerssen, the very first president of MITESOL, came to join us. Other former presidents who came to the conference (most of them presented) were JoAnn Aebersold (1982), Cathy Day (1984), Jackie Moase-Burke (1991), Betsy Morgan (1996), Sara Tipton (1997), Sandy Hagman (1998), Brenda Prouser Imber (2001), Christy Pearson (2005), Lisa Hutchison (2008), Karen Gelardi (2009) and Casey Gordon (2010). I would like to take this opportunity to thank many of you who came before us; on your shoulders, MITESOL has thrived. Your dedication, expertise, vision and enthusiastic service for 35 years have made the organization what it is today.

Organizing the 2010 Fall Conference was a great learning experience. A BIG

(Continued on page 3)
From the Co-Editors

As we hope that winter will soon come to an end and we will begin to welcome warmer weather, we bring to you our Winter Edition of MITESOL Messages with a variety of topics to reflect on and ponder. You may enjoy taking a walk down memory lane when viewing the names of our Past MITESOL Presidents, as we commend these individuals for taking the time in order to make this organization great. There is an interesting article about how to persevere and be creative when faced with the decline of your student population entitled, “Lexicons, Literacy, and Life Without ESL” written by Patricia Mathews. We have a wonderful summation from Joanna Schrecengost about her ATECR trip to the Czech Republic. Next, we share with you an article written by Matthew Rooks entitled, “Leading Learners to Autonomy”. You may want to take note of the information provided about the MITESOL Reception at TESOL and some of our MITESOLers that are presenting at TESOL this year. We also have information from variety of SIGs that may catch your interest in a specific area. We hope that you find something that peaks your interest and enjoy this February 2011 edition of MITESOL Messages.

Marian Woyciehowicz Gonsior and Valerie Weeks, Newsletter Co-Editors

MITESOL Leadership

Executive Committee
President/ATECR Liaison
Wendy Wang
wwang@emich.edu

President-Elect/Conference Chair
Joel Boyd
joel.boyd@wmich.edu

Treasurer
Ricardo Rojas
rojasri@northvilleschools.org

Secretary
Cyndi Kiser
CKiser@rochester.k12.mi.us

Communications Coordinator
Kay Stremler
kstremler@emich.edu

Membership Development Coordinator
Morgan Cox
morgan.e.cox@gmail.com

Immediate Past President/TESOL Liaison/Nominations Committee
Casey Gordon
caseygordon@kentisd.org

Advisory Board
SIG Leaders:

SIG Leaders’ Liaison/K-12 SIG
Lisa Hutchinson Lockhart
lockhartl@lamphere.k12.mi.us

Post-Secondary/Adult Education SIG
Andrew McCullough
mccullo4@msu.edu

Workplace & ESP SIG
Jane DeGroot
jane.degroot@sbcglobal.net

CALL SIG
Marta Halaczkiewicz
marta.halaczkiewicz@wmich.edu

ESL x Special Education SIG:
Amy Straus
amys@gee-edu.com

Socio-Political Concerns
Carmela Gillette
cargillette@tds.net

Newsletter Co-Editors:
Valerie Weeks
vweeks@bloomfield.org
Marian Woyciehowicz Gonsior
writingspecialist@gmail.com

Conference Proceedings Editor
James Perren
jperren@emich.edu

Public Relations
Andrew Domzalski
adomzalski@madonna.edu

ListServ Manager
Pamela Bogart
pbogart@umich.edu

Exhibits Manager
Alyce Howarth
alycehowarth@hotmail.com

Website Manager
Russ Werner
wernerru@msu.edu
thank-you to all who assisted with its success: James Perren (Co-Chair), Kay Stremler (Local Chair), Alyce Howarth (Exhibits Manager), and all the hardworking board members and many volunteers (see photos inside). A special thanks to Jackie Moase-Burke for preparing a photo album of MITESOL Memories (1975-2010), and to Cathy Day, Sandy Hagman and Jackie Moase-Burke for introducing our distinguished plenary and featured speakers.

I am truly honored to have the opportunity to serve as president of MITESOL. This year we welcome President-Elect, Joel Boyd (from Western Michigan University), and new board members: Cyndi Kiser (Secretary) from Rochester Public Schools, Kay Stremler (Communications Coordinator) from Eastern Michigan University, Marta Halczkiewicz (CALL SIG leader) from Western Michigan University, and Amy Straus (ESL x Special Education SIG leader) from Central Academy. A warm welcome to returning and re-elected SIG leaders and board members (see their names and contact information inside). Their fine leadership is keeping us updated on current issues in the ESL/TESOL field.

As president, I would like to foster discussion on how to move beyond “ESL at the Crossroads.” I hope the choice of the conference theme for 2011, “New Directions: Striding into the Future,” will provide us with a starting point to explore the role of ESL and TESOL in educational reform as well as in the global context. Joel Boyd, our President-Elect and Conference Chair for 2011, has been busy since October. Preliminary plans are already underway. This year’s conference will take place at Western Michigan University, Oct. 7-8, 2011. A call for proposals will come out in March. I hope that you will consider submitting a proposal to the conference.

We have a wonderful group of SIG leaders this year. If you have not signed up for a SIG group, I encourage you to do so. Last year, Angela Predhomme, our outgoing CALL SIG leader, pioneered a spring CALL workshop, a model that I would encourage all SIG leaders to consider as they plan professional development activities and opportunities for their SIG members. Thank you, Angela, for four years of dedicated and innovative service.

The 2011 TESOL Conference in New Orleans is rapidly approaching. If you are going to present at the conference, please let us know. We are compiling a list of presentations by MITESOLers to be posted on the MITESOL website so that other MITESOLers can attend your sessions. If you are planning on attending the conference, do consider writing an article for the newsletter on any session of your interest.

MITESOL is who we are. We would like to encourage you, our members, to participate in MITESOL by being active in your SIG groups or by becoming board members. Ask what you can do for the organization, and help us build a MITESOL that is truly YOUR TESOL, as Carol Wilson-Duffy nicely put it. If you have any thoughts, ideas and suggestions, let us hear from you …

The best to you all in the Year of the Rabbit!

Wendy Wang, MITESOL President

Past MITESOL Presidents

1975  Margaret Van Naerssen
1976  Sharon Grisdale
1977  Sharon Grisdale
1978  Charles Powell
1979  Ruth Crouthamel
1980  Joyce Zuck
1981  Barb Moten
1982  JoAnn Aebersold
1983  Marcelette (Marcy) Williams
1984  Cathy Day
1985  Laura Latulippe
1986  Cindy Gould
1987  Patrick Buckheister
1988  Leslie Prast
1989  Mary Lee Field
1990  Liz England
1991  Jackie Moase-Burke
1992  Nancy Schewe
1993  Bruce Morgan
1994  Barb Moten
1995  Penny Wheeler
1996  Betsy Morgan
1997  Sara Tipton
1998  Sandy Hagman
1999  Jean Holther
2000  Alan Headbloom
2001  Brenda Prouser Imber
2002  Maggie Phillips
2003  Shari Weisbaum
2004  Jennifer Craft
2005  Christy Pearson
2006  Carol Wilson-Duffy
2007  Sue Dyste
2008  Lisa Hutchison
2009  Karen Gelardi
2010  Casey Gordon

Special thanks to the Presidents and Board members who have served MITESOL for 35 years.
Your dedication, expertise, time, and talent have made the organization what it is today!
New Board Members

Thank you to our outgoing Board members for their service and dedication to MITESOL: Karen Gelardi, Erin Luyendyk, Noel Woodcraft, Angela Predhomme, Carol Kubota, Christy Pearson and Tamiko Teshima.

Welcome to our new Board members:

Executive Board

President-Elect: Joel Boyd (3 year term)

Joel Boyd holds degrees from Michigan State University where he has studied mathematics education, curriculum design and theoretical linguistics. He began his career as a junior high math teacher and has taught in public schools in the United States and Germany. On the university level, Joel has worked in Malaysia, Lansing, Michigan and finally at WMU where he has been on the faculty for fourteen years. He also served as Interim Director for the Center for English Language and Culture for International Students for two years. He has now returned to the classroom. Joel enjoys traveling, learning about new cultures and the arts, especially theater and dance.

Secretary: Cyndi Kiser (2 year term)

Cynthia Kiser holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Elementary Education with both ESL and Reading Recovery Endorsements, and a Bilingual Bicultural Master’s Degree with a concentration in ESL Curriculum and Instruction.

She is beginning her seventeenth year as an educator. She has extensive history working with both the ESL and Title One populations of students. Cynthia has been a Classroom Teacher, Academic Interventionist and an ESL Consultant. Outside of her districts, she has also worked with a local church to develop an ESL program for their congregants. Currently, she is working with a local community center to offer support to second language families. They are helping provide “support services” and academic support for the children and parents alike. She has also given presentations regarding ESL students at conferences such as MITESOL and MRA as well as, the MEA conference.

Communications Coordinator: Kay Stremler (1 year term)

Kay Stremler has a Masters in TESOL, and a PhD in Chemistry. Currently she teaches pre-nursing biochemistry and ESL at Washtenaw Community College and Eastern Michigan University, respectively.

She also has extensive experience in international biotechnology drug development. Living and working in Germany for seven years inspired her interest in TESOL which she pursued through a Masters at Eastern Michigan University (2009). Currently at Eastern, Dr. Stremler is involved in collaborative projects to develop and teach international student focused writing workshops and research communication skills courses. She is also an adult community ESL instructor. Dr. Stremler’s interests include ESP- scientific, technical and healthcare settings, EAP, vocabulary acquisition, World Englishes, intercultural competence, use of technology in the classroom and everyday English skills.
Advisory Board

Post Secondary & Adult Education SIGs Andrew McCulloch (1 year term)

Andrew McCullough has been an Academic Specialist at the English Language Center at Michigan State University since 1999. He has served as a coordinator of special programs, including summer contract programs, and coordinates the ELC’s ESL Lab, a mini grant writing center catering to ESL students in tier 1 and tier 2 writing (aka frosh comp and similar classes). He has taught ESL for 27 years, including time at a US Binational Center in Medellin, Colombia and then at a private ESL institute in California. He focuses primarily on academic writing, and is interested in a variety of approaches to teaching, as well as issues that affect ESL students in academic and adult education settings.

Newsletter Editors (2 year term)

Marian Woyciehowicz Gonsior
Marian Gonsior is currently an adjunct assistant professor in the Communication and Writing Program at Madonna University in Livonia. She also works with ESL students as a Writing Center Specialist in the Madonna University Writing Center. 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

Valerie is currently an ESL teacher in Bloomfield Hills School District. She teaches 4th and 5th grade ESL students. 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.

ESL x Special Education Amy Strauss (2 year term)

Amy Strauss is a Grade 5 teacher at Central Academy in Ann Arbor. The 2007 Michigan Charter School Teacher of the Year, Amy has 10 years of experience teaching English Language Learners and at-risk students. Amy has a Master’s in Curriculum and Instruction and is an active member of her school’s Response to Intervention Team for at-risk students. Amy was also a member of the team that developed her district’s RtI program last year. As a Sheltered Instruction Observational Protocol (SIOP) coach and trainer with the Michigan Department of Education, Amy also provides training to teachers on strategies that work for English Language Learners. Amy has presented at MITESOL and other conferences in Michigan and Ohio over the past several years.
CALL SIG

After the Holiday hibernation our CALL SIG is ready for some action. We are planning to have a Spring Workshop sometime in April or May. Therefore we are looking for ideas and volunteers interested in presenting. For presenters it is a great opportunity to get involved and clock some service-to-the-profession experience. For attendees it is a fantastic (and free for MITESOL members) professional development activity and networking opportunity. So, if you are interested or have any questions please send an email to marta.halaczkiewicz@wmich.edu. We are not sure where the workshop will take place yet, but we will try and accommodate the majority.

Talking about PD, don’t forget that 2011 MACUL (Michigan Association for Computer Users in Learning) conference is taking place at Cobo Hall in Detroit between March 16-18. They closed the call for presentation proposal in July of 2010, but you have plenty of time to register still. To find out more about MACUL and the conference, or to become a member go to http://www.macul.org/conferences/2011maculconference/. Unfortunately, this conference coincides with 2011 TESOL Convention in New Orleans, but for those of you who don’t get a chance to visit the Big Easy, and are interested in educational technology, MACUL is a great (and local) alternative.

Wishing you all a Happy New Year and hope that you will have a productive semester,

CALL SIG Leader,
Marta Halaczkiewicz

Post-Secondary and Adult Education SIG

Professionals in these two SIG areas face very different challenges these days. With the large influx of Chinese undergraduates into the U.S. over the past four years, IEPs at Michigan universities have seen a big shift in their student populations. The challenges include teaching classes with large groups of the same L1, teaching students from a culture whose education system, and especially whose social and political background is quite different from other students in our classes, and teaching students who often enter our programs with a much stronger English skill set than do students from other countries, but who, nonetheless, still have many ESL and cultural adaptation needs. The great advantages ESL professionals have in dealing with this population is that they pay substantial fees to the universities they attend, thereby assuring ESL professionals of employment, and by and large they come motivated academically.

On the other side of this discussion, professionals in Adult Education are facing budget cuts as Michigan still struggles to recover from nearly ten years of recession, as well as changing demands from the State of Michigan.

As your SIG leader, I would like to hear how professionals in these two interest sections are facing these challenges, what issues they would like to share with one another and see addressed in a forum such as a SIG blog, and how they view their professional futures.

Please email Andrew S. McCullough at mccullo4@msu.edu

ESL x Special Education SIG

The issue of identifying ELL students with special education needs is one that is forefront on Michigan educators’ minds. The introduction of Response to Intervention has, for some educators, increased interventions and documentation. Yet, listening to you at the Fall MITESOL conference, moving an ELL student into the phase of receiving services remains difficult for most educators. Are the students simply lacking language or do they have a special need? Is language making learning difficult for the student or are there other special needs circumstances.

Are you facing these issues in your teaching situation? What solutions have you or your school come up with? The ESL/Special Education SIG group would like to hear from you. It’s hoped that together we can better service our ELL students with special needs. Over the next few months, our SIG group will be pulling together an online discussion during which we can discuss these and other issues important to our group.

If you would like to contribute or have ideas about this topic, please contact ESL/Special Education SIG Leader Amy Straus at amys@gee-edu.com
Lexicons, Literacy, and Life Without ESL

By: Patricia Mathews

I teach composition in a rural community college in northern Michigan. I love to teach writing, but something is missing. I’m missing the vocabulary of TESOL; I’m missing people who share my lexicon.

After completing my M.Ed/TESOL from Grand Valley State University in 2002, my teaching career plan was challenged by shifts in the global, national, state, local, and family economies. Working as an adjunct was a wonderful opportunity to focus strictly on teaching but didn’t pay the bills. I dropped out of education and took a position as a technical writer; this paid the bills but I was miserable with the work. So, I enrolled in the summer residency PhD program in Composition and TESOL at Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP), with the goal of finding a full time position that would blend teaching composition and working with second language learners. I’m not quite there yet; but I do have full time work teaching composition.

According to the 2009 Census, the population of the counties served by my college is 97.6% white. According to the 2000 census, only 3.5 % of people in this area speak a language other than English at home. The vocabulary of my teaching practice has been grounded in the vocabulary of second language acquisition and cultural diversity. So, what does an ESL specialist do without ESL students? That’s the question behind this reflection about lexicons and wondering about words.

Shortly after I arrived here, a colleague asked me if I found the students much different from the students I had taught in Grand Rapids and Pennsylvania. At the time, a few weeks into the semester, I said no. I have taught composition to mostly homogenous student populations in four-year liberal arts programs. Could it be that different here? After the first year, my answer changed; it is different. In the past, I’ve experienced culture shock as a Peace Corps volunteer, as a consultant for CARE in the Congo, as a grad student in China, and as the spouse of a British colonial in Bombay. Now, I’m feeling it in my native state; I love how language can do this; I see it as an issue of different lexicons.

My students and I differ from each other in the value we place on literacy—in the number and context of the words we know, and what we know about the words we use. Michigan Literacy, Incorporated, citing The State of Literacy in America: Estimates at the Local, State, and National Levels by the National Institute for Literacy, the average percentage of the adult population at literacy 1 level in the four counties served by my school is 22% (MLI, 2011). Low literacy or level 1 literacy is defined as less than fifth-grade reading and comprehension skills, and level 2 is defined as fifth through seventh grades reading and comprehension skills (FHWA, 2006). From my work in technical writing, I knew that much of the general public reads at a fifth to seventh grade level, but it had never impacted my teaching. The lower literacy levels of my students is a distinct contrast from traditional first-year university students, and very different from the English language learners I’ve taught who were all highly motivated young students, career academics, or business professionals.

I am not alone in my need to recognize how literacy impacts my students and my teaching. According to a 2006 study by the Federal Highway Administration of best practices to encourage civic engagement, many practitioners are not aware of the correlations between literacy and low-income, second and third-shift work, transportation dependency, single-parenting, level of governmental distrust, importance of meeting locations, and lack of access to technology. Ironically, as a TESOL specialist, I recognize this list; these factors also seriously impede English language learners. I see now how these same words define the barriers to success for college students who speak English as their first and only language, particularly those from low-income homes and those returning to college through programs like Michigan Works and No Worker Left Behind. Rural community colleges make up 64% of US community colleges (Nelson, 2010). This is a bigger picture, a more widespread difference than I realized when ensconced in graduate studies and teaching in universities.

Another way my students and I differ is in our practice of wondering about words. Wondering with words allows for vocabularies to expand. Anne Fadiman (1997) talks about “standing at the point of tangency, you can see both sides better than if you were in the middle of either one” (p. viii). At this point of tangency, definitions can be compared and contrasted. We become aware of more nuanced meanings and our understanding of the world grows. I want to take my students to new edges, but they say they prefer to stay firmly in the middle of what they know; they just need job (Continued on page 9)
Lexicons, Literacy, and Life Without ESL Cont.

security. I want them to develop a vocabulary of wondering but Ashton-Warner (1963) reminds me to start with the vocabulary that resonates with their student’s lives, with their stories. From there they can become more aware of language and the role of words in their academic and professional success.

Teaching language is always about the individual learner—theyir story, lexicon, and motivations. I am using all my second language acquisition and second language teaching knowledge to help students become effective academic writers in their native language. Fraser notes that if the goal of academic writing is to bring the individual’s language into the larger discourse of the academy, then we should understand how this process takes place (2009, p. 2). TESOL specialists understand this as building communicative competence, the cultural knowledge that enables appropriate word selection. Effective teaching depends on both but is grounded in relationship with the learner—in finding words to create that relationship. I’ve learned to listen differently to rural community college students to understand how they can begin to acquire more vocabulary for wondering and writing. While economies continue to shift and transform lives, I may be missing ESL, but I’m gaining a richer teaching of vocabulary.

References

Leading Learners to Autonomy

By Matthew Rooks

 Autonomous learning has been an active area of interest for language educators for over 30 years, with different aspects of the field coming into the focus of researchers throughout the duration. Autonomous learning is the notion that students tend to be more effective when they take ownership of their own learning; the more aware learners are of the decisions they make during the learning process, and the more active they are in selecting and implementing their learning strategies, the more successful they are in achieving their learning goals. So where do language teachers come into the picture?

At first glance, the idea of learner autonomy can seem anti-teacher in the sense that the burden of devising and carrying out a learning plan is passed largely from teacher to student. In reality, however, this couldn’t be farther from the truth. Paradoxically, well-known researchers in the field of learner autonomy (Holec and Little, to name a few) have shown that without support, autonomous learning is not as successful. This means that even language educators who champion the idea of allowing their students to be more autonomous would do well to offer them more guidance and feedback as they advance through the learning process.

As an English educator at a Japanese university, I am continually searching for effective ways to wean my students off of their “sage on the stage” preconception of a teacher-centric learning style. In public junior and senior high schools in Japan, English classes largely revolve around a teacher lecturing on grammatical

(Continued on page 10)
Leading Learners to Autonomy Cont.

(Continued from page 9)

patterns and assigning reading and translation assignments for homework. This style of teaching has a long tradition in the Japanese educational system, which places a strong emphasis on studying for entrance examinations that will more or less determine students’ future academic and job career paths. Unfortunately, this style of teaching also has a long tradition of turning off students to the joy, excitement, and new opportunities that learning a foreign language can offer. Many Japanese students need to be reminded that learning English doesn’t have to be just as another set of rules to memorize and regurgitate on a test, but that it can be another mode of communication that opens up new avenues for connecting us to the outside world.

It is my opinion that by introducing the concept of autonomy to group-centered learners who have developed an over-reliance on teachers to impart language acquisition, students have the opportunity to mature into more well-rounded learners who can start to enjoy learning English and ultimately achieve greater results. Many teachers may experience positive effects if they reappraised their roles from mere “language teachers” to something more akin to a “learning facilitator” or “learning strategy advisor.” Here are a few general steps that language teachers can take to introduce autonomous learning to their students without removing themselves from the equation:

1) **Negotiate the overall course goals and objectives with the students.** When students are involved in the decision-making process from the beginning, they experience an “ownership” over their learning, and become more motivated to achieve the goals they set.

2) **Help students to devise a plan for monitoring their progress.** Setting an overall goal is just the first step, but staying on schedule and tracking progress to ensure that the goal will be met is equally important. As a teacher, encourage students to find different ways to assess their development at short intervals throughout the semester. This will not only keep students from straying from their target, but also provide additional motivation when they are aware of tangible proof that shows that their learning plans are working.

3) **Promote reflection and give constructive feedback.** Help your students evaluate the choices they make throughout the learning process. Are the decisions they made working out as expected? If so, could they be improved upon even further? If not, what can be modified to improve the situation? Teachers can become valuable resources for their students by playing an active, constructive role throughout the learning process. Reviewing material with students before tests and quizzes is one thing, but counseling students as they reflect on their learning strategies and methods can really strengthen the student-teacher bond.

Many of these suggestions may seem like common sense, and they are! Sometimes, however, teachers can get caught up in big-picture problems like scheduling, deadlines, grading, and lesson planning so that they forget to take an active, participatory role in their students’ learning. Encouraging your students to be more autonomous can be a powerful teaching tool, but that doesn’t mean that you should completely remove yourself from the picture. Fostering learner autonomy requires just as much, if not more involvement and dedication from those who language learners will always look to for guidance and support: their teachers.

Matthew Rooks is an Associate Professor at the Graduate School of Maritime Sciences at Kobe University, Japan. He will be giving a presentation on “Learner autonomy and its implications for group-oriented learners” at the upcoming 2011 TESOL Conference in New Orleans. He can be reached via email at kobe.rooks@gmail.com
Encouraging and Sustaining Parental Involvement in K-12 ESL Programs (K-12 SIG)

By: Suzanne Haxer-Toohey, Bloomfield Hills Schools, Lisa Hutchison Lockhart, The Lamphere Schools, and Liz Sirman, Ypsilanti Public Schools

An essential component of any Title III Program, parental involvement looks different in various districts around the state. A myriad of factors affect how parent involvement becomes meaningful in various environments. Bilingual staff and resources vary, the needs of the families vary, and so the types of outreach or programs look very different. The central idea behind parent involvement remains the same: empower the parents and families to have ownership and be involved in their child’s education.

From Liz Sirman, Ypsilanti Public Schools

We started the year by having a district-wide Family fun night. Each family brought something to pitch in and we provided drinks and pizza. At the gathering, we had some "fall" activities for the younger kids to do, which was supervised by the high school kids. I presented some introductory information to the families, introduced our staff, and talked about plans for the year. We had about 1/3 of our families in attendance, and all spoke very positively about it. I had held more formal meetings in the past, and they just weren't well-attended. We bribed them with food this time!!

In November, our primary magnet school for elementary ESL, held an international night. We probably had 75 families there, not all ELL families, but a large majority. Every family brought food to share. The children performed a few dances and songs, and many families that have traditional clothes wore them. Many of our families have children in multiple schools, so quite a few of my secondary students attended as well.

In December we held a small-group parent committee meeting. This group will meet monthly. At this first meeting, we had an ice-breaker to work on English skills with the parents. After that, we split into smaller groups (language-based with translator) and brainstormed ways that the families have been able to help their children at home and support their school work. I added in some ideas after they shared out. I turned that into a flyer of brief suggestions for all of the ELL families.

I haven't finalized our meetings for the coming months, but I know one meeting I'll be bringing in the Red Cross who does ELL-specific First Aid and Emergency Preparedness presentations. All of the families are really interested in that.

The parent committee also agreed to help with outreach to other families in their communities to increase participation in the general school activities. Having the magnet school this year has been really helpful in building a stronger and more confident community of families. They feel like they are not alone.

From Suzanne Haxer-Toohey, Bloomfield Hills Schools

- We have two ESL Family Nights each year at West Hills Middle School. We usually do some sort of family literacy activity, craft, and either provide dinner or have the families bring food for a pot luck.
- In the past we have arranged ESL Fun Nights for families where we have secured a block of seats at a Detroit Tiger’s baseball game and we all meet and watch the game together.
- We have an annual ESL Thanksgiving celebration where students present what they’ve learned about Thanksgiving (in a variety of manners); I make the turkey and parents sign up to bring traditional side dishes. We all sit down together and eat a traditional Thanksgiving dinner as an ESL family.

From Lisa Hutchison Lockhart, The Lamphere Schools

Every fall during Open House in the high school, we host an ESL-family friendly meeting in our classrooms. This way the parents don’t have to navigate the entire school building. We have administrators, counselors and classroom teachers come down to our room for the various parts of the meeting. We provide translation for our parents who don’t speak English. Coffee and cookies also encourage parents to stay and socialize, helping them to feel more comfortable in our building and with our staff.

For Thanksgiving, our students prepare for weeks to provide cultural dances and songs during our annual Thanksgiving Feast in our cafeteria. Our turnout includes our district superintendent as well as some Board members, teaching

(Continued on page 12)
staff and other administrators. We Americans cook and bring the traditional foods for the holiday – turkey, stuffing, potatoes – while our students’ families bring traditional foods of their own, which we label and present as part of our huge buffet. This year the students also showed their PowerPoint presentations highlighting their native countries.

This year we held our winter parent meeting at our city library. This partnership enabled us to help families get library cards and learn about the wonderful resources available to them, including books in their native languages, ESL books, bilingual materials, and computer software for English language learning.

In addition, we help support our parents so they can take on other roles in our school community. This year our principal invited parents to share their perspectives during a “Pizza with the Principal” meal. Several of our parents were part of that opportunity. We’ve also had parents come into the high school to volunteer. Many of our students benefited from additional tutoring provided by a parent of an ESL student.

Finally, individual parent involvement begins at the first meeting when new families come to our building to enroll. We think it’s so important to get as thorough a picture as possible of our newest high school students. We take the time to meet with each new student and family to interview them and find out not only their educational history but also their future goals. By including the parents in meaningful ways in the beginning, we’ve set the stage for their continued involvement in their child’s education in the U.S.

2011 Michigan Marckwardt Award
This year’s Michigan Marckwardt award goes to Baburhan Uzum (Michigan State University)!

MITESOL Reception at TESOL

Attending the TESOL Convention in New Orleans?
Join us for the MITESOL reception on Thursday, March 17th from 5pm - 7:30pm at the Sun Ray Grill.

1051 Annunciation Street
New Orleans, LA 70130
http://www.sunraygrill.com/

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

Thank you to our sponsors
Eastern Michigan University
Michigan State University
Cornerstone University
Presentations By MITESOLers

As we are getting closer to the TESOL Conference in New Orleans, we’re very pleased to let you know that MITESOL will be well represented at the TESOL Conference. There will be an impressive number of presentations by MITESOLers on a variety of topics (see the list below). If you are going to the conference, please make sure you are not going to miss any of these sessions.

Presentations at the TESOL Conference

Thursday, March 17

Learner Autonomy and Its Implications for Group-Oriented Learners
Matthew Rooks, Kobe University, Japan
7:30 a.m. in …

Taming the iPad Dragon with Speech to Text in English
James Perren (EMU) & Daqing Wang (visiting scholar from Northeast University, China)
11:00 a.m. at the Electronic Village

Friday, March 18

Learning Idioms in E-Context
Sara Okello & Wendy Wang, EMU
11:00 a.m. at the Electronic Village

Student Generated Multimedia on a Shoestring Budget
Rebecca Swab & Scott Duarte, English Language Center, MSU
2:00 p.m. in Room 218

Saturday, March 19

Parental Attitudes Towards Native- and Nonnative-English-Speaking Teachers: Voices from Turkey
Bengu Caliskan Selvi, Ali Fuad Selvi (University of Maryland), & Baburhan Uzum (MSU)
7:30 a.m. at Hilton- Grand Salon 22

E-Tools in Teaching Vocabulary Skills
Wendy Wang & Daniel Hopper (EMU)
7:30 a.m. in Room 214 at the Convention Center

Smile. You are on YouTube
Thom Cullen (EMU)
8:00 a.m. at the Electronic Village

"E” Means Intercultural 'Exchange' with Technology
James Perren & Nguyen Bui (EMU)
9: 00 a.m. at the Electronic Village

(Continued on page 14)
Presentations By MITESOLers Cont.

(Continued from page 13)

Writing Conferencing: Corrective Feedback through Videos
Baburhan Uzum (MSU), Bedrettin Yazan & Ali Fuad Selvi (University of Maryland)
11 a.m. at the Electronic Village

Building a community through blogs
Jessica O’Boyle, EMU
11:00 a.m. at the Electronic Village

Oh the Places We’ve Taught: Transitioning ‘Home’ as a Professional
Lindsay Novara, Tasha Bleistein & Jen Hoosier (ELS Language Schools)
4:00 p.m. in Room Rosedown at the Hilton

Presentation at the Graduate Student Forum

Wednesday, March 16

Building Bridges - World Englishes Internships - EMU/SDU
Krista Osborne, EMU

Blended Pedagogy for Enhancing Intercultural Communicative Competence
Nguyen Bui, EMU

Students’ Perceptions of Video Feedback Using YouTube
Michael Collins, EMU

Using Free Web Tools to Scaffold Reading
Daniel Hopper, EMU

Using SIOP in Secondary Social Studies Classrooms
Kristin Jatkowski, EMU

Effects of Shadowing on Suprasegmental Production
Aya Morihara, EMU

Motivational Factors Evident in Adult ELLs
Sara Okello, EMU

English Vowels produced by late Arab Learners
Yasemin Snounu, EMU

A Quantitative Study on Contributing Factors of English Learning Motivation of Chinese Undergraduate Students
Shihua Zhu, EMU
Joanna Schrecengost

ATECR Conference Travel Report

September 16th – 12th, 2010

Usti Nad Labem, Czech Republic

Hello Wendy and the MUTESOL Board! I am thrilled to be able to report to you on my recent trip to the Czech Republic. I arrived in Prague on Tuesday, September 7th so that I could begin to acclimate to the time change and enjoy some of the historic city sights. After a good nights sleep, I filled Wednesday, September 8th, with as many tourist activities as possible! I walked around the Jewish Quarter and across the St. Charles Bridge, took a tour of Prague Castle and was even able to take in a classical music concert. The time flew by but it was an amazing day in the city.

The next afternoon I hopped a train from Prague to Usti Nad Labem where the conference was being held. I was met at the train station by Natalia Orlova, head of the Department of English at UJEP (University of J.E. Purkyne) where the conference was held and chair of the conference, as well as Joel Cameron a UJEP faculty member. Natalia and Joel helped me get checked into my accommodations and took me to dinner at a local Mexican restaurant. I was housed in the college dormitories, which were
made available to conference attendees. The room was simple, but comfortable and clean. It included a private ensuite bathroom, two twin beds, a desk, and a large storage closet. It was on the 13th floor and I had the room to myself (a welcome break from the hostel in Prague!).

Usti Nad Labem was a beautiful town. There were parts of it that were quite industrial but also parts that were quaint. It was situated amongst rolling hills with a river running through it. Outside of the conference staff and attendees very few people in the area spoke any English. I had a few interesting interactions with some of the locals. I think that because I was traveling alone (and therefore relatively quiet) many people assumed that I spoke Czech. It only added to my sympathy for my beginning-level English students as I had to walk a few miles in their shoes during my time in Usti!

The conference opened with much ceremony, even trumpets (recorded) when it was declared officially open. Plenary speaker Herbert Puchta then gave an inspiring lecture about the impact that a language teacher can have on their student's lives. There were approximately 300 people in attendance. Though session times varied, there were approximately 6 to 8 session choices at any given time. The theme of the conference, *Sharing Innovative Ideas and Experience*, carried through many of the sessions. I gleaned many ideas and insights from simply networking with other individuals.
The next day was busy and nerve racking. I attended a full day of sessions while waiting for my turn to speak. Olga Vrastilova, ATECR President, and a few of her close colleagues took me to lunch at another local restaurant. There I met and got to know Noreen Caplen-Spence another of the plenary speakers. She became quite the ally making sure to attend my session and, at my request, giving me lots of constructive feedback on my presentation. She remarked to me that my presentation was very academic, and gave me a helpful reminder to make sure to not forget to include the practical applications of the theories and concepts. My presentation was scheduled in the last slot of the day on Saturday and I believe because of this it was relatively lightly attended. Although this was somewhat disappointing it did open up opportunity for discussion with the group toward the end of the session and everyone seemed to be pleased to have the opportunity to contribute rather than just absorb.
Overall, I had a fantastic experience at the ATECR conference. My hosts were gracious and kind. I enjoyed my time with them tremendously. The conference presentations were informative, inspiring, and consistently worthwhile. To be able to network with so many first-rate colleagues on an international level is a rare opportunity for which I am infinitely grateful.

View from Prague Castle