

Incorporating Service Learning into an Academic ESL Program

Dennis Bricault
North Park University Chicago

Background

Service learning, an opportunity for students "to get involved with their communities in a tangible way by integrating service projects with classroom learning" (What is Service Learning, 2006, ¶1) is rapidly becoming an integral part of curricula at many levels – adopted by 32% of all elementary and secondary schools, 25% of four-year colleges and universities, and over 50% of all community colleges across the United States (Learn and Serve America Fact Sheet, n.d.; Service Learning Is, 2004).

This integration of learning and service to one's community has numerous benefits, not only for those served (Minor, 2001; Service Learning is, 2004; What is Service Learning, 2006) but also for those serving. A sampling of several studies on the impact of service learning on the volunteers reveals a wide range of favorable outcomes, such as a higher level of tolerance of others (Billig, n.d.; Morgan & Streb, 2001), a greater understanding of social problems (Billig, n.d.; Elwell & Bean, 2001; Minor, 2001; Westheimer & Kahne, 2000), and even improved academic performance (Billig, n.d.; Scales, Blyth, Berkas, &

Kielsmeier, 2000). In light of these and other benefits, it should come as no surprise that service learning is playing an ever larger role in American education.

ESL and Service Learning

An English as a Second Language (ESL) program is a natural partner in the service-learning equation. By way of example, just in the city of Chicago,

tutoring speakers of other languages in English is listed as a service-learning opportunity by several organizations (Adult Education & Family Literacy Service Center Network, 2006; DePaul Weekly Services, 2004; Service Agencies, n.d.; Service Learning Site List, n.d.). There is clearly a need for native speakers of English to assist a growing immigrant population with their language skills.

Service learning between native speakers of English and their international counterparts, however, should not be viewed as a one-way street. Just as service learning has become an integral part of the traditional K-12 curriculum and is quickly moving into the realm of higher education, learning through service has a welcome place in the ESL classroom as well: international students can be active contributors to the community of which they form a part. It has been a rewarding experience to witness how service learning began as one teacher's idea for an advanced speaking-listening course and has been transformed into a key element in North Park University's Academic ESL Program.

At first glance, it may seem that service learning and academic ESL are at cross-purposes. An academic ESL program focuses its energies on preparing international students for the rigors of study in an undergraduate or graduate program in an American college or university. This is certainly the case at North Park: students spend 18 hours a week in class, enrolled in reading, writing, grammar, and speaking and listening classes. They spend their time on honing their language skills through intense study of grammatical structures and academic vocabulary; practice in pronunciation, listening, in-class presentations, and rhetorical styles of writing; and exposure to various genres of reading. Consequently, it might appear that service learning has no place in such a program, but this is not the case. In fact, students at the advanced level have served in a variety of ways: offering computer tutoring to children and the elderly, assisting the blind, working at a women's shelter, visiting residents at a retirement home, or helping out at a food pantry or the Greater Chicago Food Depository.

In This Issue

- 1,5-7 Incorporating Service Learning into an Academic ESL Program
- 2 Submission Guidelines Board Roster
- 3-4 Message from President Save the Date
- 8 2008 Convention Presenters
- 9, 11 The End of the IMAGE: Proposed Recommendations and Accommodations in Testing
- 10-11 Member Snapshot
- 12 The Ticker
- 13 News Bites
- 14 Call for Nominations Form
- 15 Membership Application Professional Planner

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

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

Submission Information

Illinois TESOL•BE welcomes letters and contributions to the *Newsletter*. The *Newsletter* is published four times per year with the following copy deadlines: **July 15 • October 15 • January 15 • April 15**

Articles and other items for consideration should be submitted as Microsoft Word attachments to email and sent to: news@itbe.org Alternatively, Microsoft Word documents on disk, with hard copy enclosed, can be submitted. (For those without access to computers, hard copy only is acceptable.) Mail to:

Irene Brosnahan, Editor
ITBE Newsletter
400 Augustine Way
Normal, IL 61761-3118

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

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

Graphics and layout by Kerri Bonds. Printing by Pantagraph Printing, 217 W. Jefferson St. Bloomington, IL 61701 • (309) 829-1071

2006-2007 Executive Board

Russell Clark
President
DePaul University

Kasia Stadnik
Past President
Illinois State University

Betsy Kubota
Vice President
William Rainey Harper College

Julie Campagna
Executive Secretary
The John Marshall Law School

Eric Bohman
Treasurer
William Rainey Harper College

Susanne McLaughlin
Treasurer-designate
Roosevelt University

Irene Brosnahan
Newsletter Editor
Illinois State University

Marsha Robbins Santelli
Director of Exhibits and Advertising
Consultant, Chicago

Randy Hardwick
BIR Training Centers

Britt Johnson
Albany Park Community Center College

Holly Lawyer
Elgin Community College

Elisa G. Marquez
Little Village Lawndale High School

Becky Swab
University of Illinois-Chicago
Tutorium in Intensive English

Maja Teref
Roosevelt High School and Truman College

Special Interest Group Chairs

Claudia Becker
Higher Education
Saint Xavier University

Ruth Becker
Elementary Education
Beach Park School District

Arlene De La Paz-Kane
Higher Education
Moraine Valley Community College

Margaret Gigous
Elementary Education
Villa Park School District #45

Pat Gillie
Secondary Education
New Trier High School

Catherine Swanson
Adult Education
Albany Park Community College

Newsletter Staff

Editor
Irene Brosnahan
Illinois State University

Editorial Assistant
Sherry Rasmussen
DePaul University

News Bites
Kerry Urquizo
Heartland Community College

The Ticker
Debbie Sternecky
Brooks Middle School and
National-Louis University

SIG Chairs
Claudia Becker
Saint Xavier University
Ruth Becker
Beach Park School District
Arlene De La Paz-Kane
Moraine Valley Community College

Margaret Gigous
Villa Park School District #45

Pat Gillie
New Trier High School

Catherine Swanson
Albany Park Community College

TESOL Liaison
Kasia Stadnik
Illinois State University

Advertising
Marsha Robbins Santelli
Consultant, Chicago

Webmaster
Darcy Christianson

Graphic Designer
Kerri Bonds
Illinois State University

Members-At-Large

Angelyn Balodimas-Bartolomei
North Park University

Kathleen Blackburn
Truman College

Virginia Duran
College of DuPage



Message From The President

Russell Clark - DePaul University



Russell Clark
2007-2008 President

GREETINGS IN THE NEW YEAR OF 2008!!!

As I write my president's message, we are less than two months from the time at which we will convene our 34th annual convention,

"New Horizons, New Vision," once again in Naperville, Illinois. The convention provides us not only with an extraordinarily rich professional development opportunity, but a chance to see new and old friends and to appreciate the diversity and passion of those who work in bilingual education and the teaching of English to speakers of other languages. The profession is impressive, and you, our members, officers, board members, SIG chairs and volunteers, are impressive as well.

I tell you with unconcealed pride that I believe we have assembled the finest group of plenary speakers for you this year that I have experienced throughout my years of involvement with ITBE. One of the pleasures of being president of the organization has been communicating with these four speakers during the period in which we were trying, hoping, to interest them in coming to Illinois to share their expertise with us. They are not only renowned experts, they are delightful and stimulating correspondents, and I expect that the sessions they conduct for us will be first rate. Since I have been privileged to have something of an insider's view of them as we have been in communication, I would like to share with you a little of my anticipation of them, and how I expect that they are going to expand the horizons and vision of us all.

Our two morning plenary speakers are both nationally known authorities and superb choices to open our convention on Friday and Saturday.

James Crawford, President of the newly formed Institute for Language and Education Policy, will speak on Friday on the subject of assessment and accountability issues at a time of transition in the United States. He will analyze the particular issues that No Child Left Behind now poses for ELLs, and look at alternative accountability systems.

Crawford, as many of you know, has recently published a new book jointly authored with Steven Krashen, *English Learners in American Classrooms: 101 Questions, 101 Answers*, which I have been reading during the last few days and found very concise and stimulating. I am looking forward tremendously to meeting him and hearing his policy recommendations for the future.

Kathleen Bailey, a Past President of TESOL and a faculty member at the Monterey Institute of International Studies, will speak on Saturday morning about recent research on reflective teaching as an example of new visions in teachers' professional development. We are fortunate indeed to have a noted researcher such as Dr. Bailey with us. She will be reporting on the results of a very large survey summarizing the experience of over 1,000 language teachers, which suggests as many as 18 different procedures by which we can promote our own professional development. This talk, coming from the crossroads of research and practice, promises to be the perfect blend of the theoretical and the applied.

A brief aside is in order, as I mention our afternoon convention "closers," because I would like you to know that in planning the convention and choosing among the many possible speakers we might invite, we do our best to strike a balance in terms of interest and tone. Whereas our morning speakers may be taking the lead in bringing to our attention high-level policy issues and exploring themes related to research, methodology and practice, this year we have chosen two fine afternoon speakers to widen those horizons again in the area of language itself – but both, I suspect, on a very practical level. In the case of our Friday afternoon speaker, Paul Heacock, he will share his experiences as a lexicographer with Cambridge University Press and managing editor for an ESL dictionary. On Saturday afternoon – again with a focus on words – Cheryl Boyd Zimmerman, a researcher and materials developer from California State-Fullerton, will share her insights into the acquisition of academic vocabulary. I would be remiss if I did not take this occasion to thank Cambridge University Press for sponsoring Paul as one of our plenary speakers, and Oxford University Press, for bringing Cheryl to us. I have

enjoyed many a recent chuckle, looking forward to these two "Oxbridge afternoons," which promise to be lively and dynamic, and not to be missed.

This focus on our big guns, at this point, entirely omits detail about the contributions of our many other local presenters on a two-day program which is only now taking shape, or the vast array of published materials which will be on display in our exhibition area.

I sincerely hope that you have marked your calendars for February 29-March 1 and indeed have already pre-registered for the convention. Do plan to meet us at the comfortable Naperville Holiday Inn Select on Friday, Saturday, or both days. I know that we can promise you a very fine convention, the jewel in the crown of this wonderful organization, two days which will be filled with learning, inspiration, and fun.

Until then, best wishes,

Russell Clark
President, ITBE

Save the Date

ITBE's Spring Workshop

Harper College
Palatine, Illinois
April 19, 2008

Workshop details will be
posted on line at
www.itbe.org

Continental Book Company

Your Resource for ESL, Bilingual, Spanish, French,
German, Italian, & Latin Titles!!!

Encyclopedias

Textbooks

Periodicals

Dictionaries



Graded Readers

Videos

Novels

Grammars

www.continentalbook.com

6425 Washington St. #7 Denver, CO 80229 Tel: (303) 289-1761 Fax: (800) 279-1764

Complimentary Catalogs Available in Spanish, Bilingual, ESL, French, German and Italian
or download at www.continentalbook.com/catalog/

(continued from page 1)

The History of ESL at North Park University

The first traces of service-learning in North Park's ESL Program appeared in the mid-1990s with a few outings to a nearby retirement home. These initial forays, while admirable, were not successful for a number of reasons: elderly residents often had a hard time hearing the often soft-spoken international students; the visits were infrequent; there was no direct link between the experience and class work or the curriculum. Research helps to explain these failures and guide future decisions in setting up service-learning projects: Minor (2001) underscored the necessity of tying service learning back to the class, while Service Learning Is... (2004) reminded program directors that such projects should be neither "episodic" nor "add-ons" to an existing curriculum.

Service learning returned to the North Park classroom in 2002 with more purpose and direction. Melanie Stephens, the instructor of the advanced speaking-listening course, introduced service learning in her course in the fall term. She worked with Audrey Kucia and Julie Westerman, instructors in the two advanced writing courses, to develop assignments that required students to fulfill a ten-hour commitment at a nearby approved site. Students in the two classes kept a journal, wrote a two-page reflective essay, participated in regular in-class discussions of their experiences at their service-learning sites, and made one videotaped presentation about their work in the community. This new focus met the above-mentioned criteria more effectively and was also perfectly aligned with the university's mission of "preparing students for lives of significance and service" (North Park University Catalog, 2006, p.7).

The connection between service learning and the speaking-listening curriculum is underscored at the start of each semester by means of a significant preliminary listening activity. Early in the term, Melanie Stephens invites Tony Zamble, the director of Urban Ministries (the university organization that coordinates all service-learning programs available to North Park students), to speak to her class. The purpose is two-fold: first, students are informed of the range of service options from which to choose; and second, they begin to develop active listening skills in an authentic lecture situation. By working with Urban Ministries, ESL students will have many of the "nuts and bolts" issues sorted out, such as contacting site coordinators (a challenge even for highly proficient international students) and transportation to and from the site (another poten-

tial obstacle, as not all students have cars). Tony Zamble returns twice during the semester, once to be interviewed by students for purposes of completing a journal, and again at the end of the semester for a gathering to recognize the students' contributions to the community.

Advanced-level students in North Park's ESL Program are required to pass exit tests in writing and speaking. In earlier versions of the speaking test, students would engage in short dialogues on a predetermined topic, such as "Do you think you will raise your children the same way as your parents raised you?" – interesting, yes, but hardly inspiring. In the spring of 2002, Melanie Stephens made the service-learning project the focus of the final exam, a significant step in fully integrating the outside learning experience into the larger ESL curriculum. Because students are involved in separate service-learning projects during the semester, the instructor randomly assigns partners for the final videotaped dialogues. Each student is given a set of previously-unseen questions that would target his/her partner's project – requiring the examinees to be both active speakers and listeners. The students are evaluated on their ability to initiate and sustain a conversation, stay on topic, maintain voice volume and eye contact, ask appropriate follow-up questions, and so on. Here are typical sets of questions and prompts for two different students.

Student A, asking Student B about his/her service as a tutor at an elementary school:

1. Can you tell me something about the goals or objectives of your service project?
2. What activities were you involved in?
3. Did you like working in the project when you first started? Did your feelings change after you worked in your project a few times?
4. Would you recommend working in your service project to others? Why or why not?
5. *The student is required to ask a follow-up question of his/her own.*

Student B, asking Student A about his/her experiences at a food pantry:

1. I'd like to hear about your service project.
2. Were you surprised that the United States has homeless people and people who don't have enough food? Were there mostly men, or women and children, too, who needed help?
3. Did you feel you had enough preparation to work on this service project?

4. Do you have any stories you'd like to tell about working on this project?
5. *The student is required to ask a follow-up question of his/her own.*

Impact of Service Learning on North Park University's ESL Program

The service-learning component has had a significant impact on North Park's ESL Program on two levels. On the macro-level, the service project has become the cornerstone of the advanced speaking-listening course. By integrating service learning into the curriculum, the course is enriched in various ways. From a purely academic standpoint, Service learning is listed as one of the course objectives: "provide community service while improving your English in real-life situations." The project comprises a major portion (25%) of the course grade. The project forms the basis of a series of journal entries, submitted electronically. The project is the focus of the final speaking activity.

However, service learning provides the class with other benefits as well: The course gives the students authentic learning experiences: they select projects, make contacts, set up and attend meetings, solve problems, follow up with site leaders, and address other "real-life" stops and starts. Students develop fluency as well as active listening skills; students are encouraged to engage in web-based research on the site as well as the social problem(s) addressed; students feel better prepared for entrance into mainstream courses: they have a reduced fear of interacting with native speakers in mainstream classes, they have opportunities to hear a variety of accents, and they assume responsibility for independent work on a semester-long project. The assignments and off-campus experiences provide avenues for the development of practical skills useful in mainstream classes, such as interviewing, planning in small groups, making presentations, summarizing and paraphrasing, and using the internet. In short, "it creates meaningful contexts for the language learner, and it draws out and cultivates humane values" (Minor, 2001, ¶11).

The second type of impact that service learning has had at North Park is on the micro-level, i.e., on individual students. The service-learning project sets up interaction with native speakers and opportunities for friendships. One student observed, "I liked it so much because the people were so kind. They welcomed us every time we arrived." It enlightens ESL students about social problems in the United States.

For example, many students expressed surprise about the existence of homelessness in such an affluent country. Service learning built not only linguistic skills but also confidence in speaking. During the first few project sessions, students often admitted how nervous they initially felt about talking with site leaders and the other people they would meet at their site but remarked that their comfort level definitely increased as the sessions continued. The projects provide students with a sense of achievement: they serve the local community as they improve their own language skills. "It was a very good chance to make friends and to help [others]," remarked another student.

Service learning is a forum for cross-cultural exchange as students respond to inquiries about their own culture and learn about others of different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. "What I really loved about my service project," noted one student, "is that I could really understand the American educational system."

The learning was not only cross-cultural, but also cross-generational for students who participated in "coffee time" at a nearby retirement home: in the words of one student, "I love talking to [the residents]... they are so kind." ESL students commented on the fun they had hearing the stories of senior citizens in their youth.

Last but not least, quite a few students acknowledged that the bonds they had developed with those whom they served made it difficult to end their commitment. "I want to participate in more volunteer work in the future," as one student put it. Many students spent more than the required hours serving in their project.

Concluding Thoughts

Minor (2001) provides an overview of service learning at Sacred Heart University in Connecticut and a valuable list of "practical tips for getting started" (¶14). Above all are the recommendations to plan for a longer-term project and connect it in some way to the classroom. North Park makes use of the service-learning programs offered through its Urban Ministries Office, but ESL programs that do not have such a support structure will have numerous opportunities in the surrounding community. Local government agencies, literacy programs, churches, shelters, food pantries, elementary schools, retirement facilities, and hospitals are all good places to start and will definitely appreciate the offer of assistance.

The benefits of service learning are highly regarded and well documented, a true "win-win" situation for volun-

teer and recipient alike. There is certainly a place for service projects, even in an academic ESL setting. With a modicum of planning, creativity, and effort, an academic ESL program can incorporate service learning into its curriculum for a truly rewarding outcome for all involved.

References

- Adult Education and Family Literacy Service Center network (2006, August). *ESL Professional Development Planner*. Retrieved from the World Wide Web, December 28, 2006 from <http://www.thecenterweb.org/alrc/pdfs/esl-planner.pdf>
- Billig, S. (n.d.). *The Impacts of Service-Learning on Youth, Schools and Communities: Research on K-12 School-Based Service-Learning, 1990-1999*. Retrieved from the World Wide Web, December 27, 2006 from <http://learningindeed.org/research/slrsearch/slrsrchsy.html>
- DePaul Weekly Services and Justice Bulletin (2004, January 9). Retrieved from the World Wide Web, December 27, 2006 from http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/ministry/via_jan9.html
- Elwell, M. D. & Bean, M. S. (2001, Spring). The efficacy of service-learning for community college ESL students. *Community College Review*, 28 (4), 49-66.
- Learn and Serve America Fact Sheet (n.d.). Retrieved from the World Wide Web, December 27, 2006 from http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/media_kit/factsheet_lsa.pdf
- Minor, J. L. (2001, April). Using Service Learning as Part of an ESL Program. *Internet TESL Journal*, 7 (4).
- Morgan, W., & Streb, M. (March, 2001). Building citizenship: How student voice in service-learning develops civic values. *Social Science Quarterly*, 82(1), 155-169. *North Park University Catalog* (2006). Chicago, IL.
- Scales, P., Blyth, D., Berkas, T & Kielsmeier, J. (2000, August). The effects of service learning on middle school students' social responsibility and academic success. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 20 (3), 331-358.
- Service Agencies (n.d.). Retrieved from the World Wide Web, December 28, 2006 from <http://domin.dom.edu/depts/servicelearning/LINKS.HTM>
- Service Learning Is... (2004). Retrieved from the World Wide Web, January 23, 2007 from http://www.servicelearning.org/welcome_to_service-learning/service-learning_is/index.php
- Service Learning Site List (n.d.). Retrieved from the World Wide Web, December 27, 2006 from <http://faculty.ccc.edu/oruiz/NEWSER%20LERNING%20SITE%20LIST2006.htm>
- Westheimer, J. & Kahne, J. (2000). Report to the Surdna Board. New York: Surdna Foundation.
- What is Service Learning? (2006). Retrieved from the World Wide Web, December 28, 2006 from http://www.learnand-serve.org/about/service_learning/index.asp

Have you ever dreamed of teaching English overseas, living abroad and experiencing another culture?

If so, we have the certificate program for you!

Try our TESOL certificate program! This 12-week intensive course prepares you to teach in a variety of ESL/EFL settings.

This course focuses on putting theory into practice. With plenty of skilled instruction and a lot of practical application, you will be more than prepared to teach ESL/EFL.

The last two weeks of the course give you real classroom experience, teaching actual ESL students who are eager for your instruction. A mentor instructor will guide you every step of the way!

**Adventure is around the corner.
So what are you waiting for?
Join us today!**

SOLEX
COLLEGE SM

**350 E. Dundee Rd.
Wheeling, IL 60090**

**847.229.9595
www.solex.edu**



ITBE's 34th Annual Convention New Horizons, New Vision

Changes and challenges in the fields of ESOL and Bilingual Education have created new opportunities to reassess and recommit to a higher standard of professionalism.

On February 29th and March 1st, presenters will discuss research, instructional methods, materials development projects and a variety of professional issues. Publishers will be exhibiting all their latest materials for teachers at every level. A delicious lunch buffet is included on both days. Attendees can earn CPDUs and six hours of Professional Development per day, as required by the Illinois Community College Board. Check out our website for registration information: www.itbe.org.

The speakers on Friday, February 29th will include:

James Crawford



James Crawford is President of the Institute for Language and Education Policy, a newly formed organization to promote research-based advocacy for English and heritage-language learners, in Washington D.C. Over the past 20 years, he has specialized in these issues as an independent writer, lecturer, and consultant. Crawford's latest book, coauthored with Stephen Krashen, is *English Learners in American Classrooms: 101 Questions, 101 Answers*. From 2004 to 2006, Crawford was Executive Director of the National Association for Bilingual Education.

Paul Heacock



Paul Heacock is an electronic publishing manager and senior lexicographer for American English at Cambridge University Press in New York. He has worked for Cambridge since 1992, first as the American editor of the Cambridge International Dictionary of English, then as managing editor of the *Cambridge Dictionary of American English* and editor in chief of the *Cambridge Dictionary of American Idioms*. He is currently overseeing the second edition of the *Cambridge Dictionary of American English* and the new *Cambridge*.

On Saturday we have the pleasure of hearing:

Kathleen M. Bailey



Kathleen Bailey received her PhD in applied linguistics from UCLA. Since 1981 she has worked at the Monterey Institute of Int'l Studies, where she has been the head of the TESOL-TEFL MA Program and the director of the Intensive English Program. She is currently faculty advisor to the Language Program Administration Certificate students and the Peace Corps masters Internationalist candidates. Her research and teaching interests include language assessment, teacher education and supervision, the teaching of speaking and listening, and research methodology. Bailey is a past president of TESOL.

Cheryl Boyd Zimmerman



Cheryl Zimmerman is assistant professor in the M.S. TESOL Program at California State University, Fullerton. Her publications relate to second language vocabulary acquisition, and have appeared in *Text*, *TESOL Quarterly*, and *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*. She has contributed to vocabulary textbooks and teachers' resources and is a frequent invited lecturer on lexical issues. Her primary interest is creative and principled approaches for the teaching of vocabulary. She is the series director of *Inside Reading* and author of *Word Knowledge*, both published by Oxford University Press.

The End of the IMAGE: Proposed Recommendations and Accommodations in Testing

Judy Yturriago, *IAMME Director*

On October 31, 2007, Illinois State Superintendent of Education, Dr. Christopher A. Koch, communicated to Illinois educators that a peer review team of the United States Department of Education (USDE) had indicated that the IMAGE test (Illinois Measure of Academic Growth in English) would no longer be considered an acceptable academic achievement test for limited English proficient students (LEPs). The peer review team further noted that the IMAGE was not closely aligned enough with the Illinois Learning Standards. Consequently, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has announced that all English Language Learners (ELLs) must take the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT)/ Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE) with accommodations specific for ELLs in March 2008. The specific accommodations will be announced to the field through various methods including at the Annual Conference for Teachers of Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Students in January 2008. See www.thecenterweb.org/irc/ for more details.

For a historical perspective, a recap of events over the last 15 years will clarify the basis of this decision and the need for further action. Sometime during the 1992 school year, the ISBE issued a memo indicating that LEP students with more than one year in a Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) or a Transitional Program of Instruction (TPI) program had to take the Illinois Goal Assessment Program (IGAP). In the spring of 1993, as a result of much testimony against this directive, House Bill 1305 was approved, specifying that bilingual students be exempt from state testing for a period of three years if an English language proficiency test determined that the students' lack of English would keep them from understanding the test.

In the fall of 1993, the LEP Student Alternative Assessment Task Force, mandated by House Bill 1305, was first convened. It recommended the creation of IMAGE, which was considered to be a standardized, mandated state assessment of English literacy proficien-

cy designed for LEP students and built on the principles of second language acquisition and best practices. Starting in the spring of 1997, the IMAGE was administered annually to those LEP students exempt from the IGAP from Grades 3 to 12.

In 1999, the ISAT replaced the IGAP as the State academic achievement measure. In 2002, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) mandated that LEP students needed to be assessed in two ways: 1) progress on English language proficiency, and 2) academic achievement. NCLB also mandated that assessments be aligned to State standards. At that time, Illinois indicated to the USDE that IMAGE results would be used for both NCLB indicators: Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) and Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAO). The IMAGE Math was later developed and the Illinois School Code was changed to allow LEP students to continue to take the IMAGE up to five years if warranted by the student's English language proficiency level. Since the passage of NCLB, the USDE had major concerns about the appropriate use of the IMAGE as a measure of academic performance since it was developed to be a measure of English language proficiency and not academic achievement.

As mentioned by Superintendent Koch, 2008 had already been slated as the last year for the administration of IMAGE. ISBE will be developing and releasing a Request for Sealed Proposal (RFSP) to commercial vendors so that a new academic achievement test for ELLs can be developed, piloted, and put in place as soon as feasible. Also noted by Dr. Koch in his October 2007 memo, ISBE will be seriously exploring the possibility of including native language assessments as part of this new academic achievement test for ELLs. However, until this new assessment is in place, ELLs will continue to take the ISAT/PSAE with accommodations.

At a general membership meeting on November 29, 2007, the Illinois Association for Multicultural Multilingual Education (IAMME) convened working groups of the members to gather information about what educators would want to see in a new RFSP. These groups discussed what actions could be initiated given that, in their judgment, our state's ELLs would be taking an invalid test despite accommodations to ISAT/PSAE. At the meeting, the participants also heard a synopsis of AYP/AMAO recommendations and a list of possible accommodations that were initially developed by the Illinois English Language Learner Assessment Advisory Council (IELLAAC). (For more information and copies of the handouts distributed at the meeting, go to

(continued on page 11)



Member Snapshot

NAME: Tami Forsline

How did you first get interested in teaching ESL?

I spent my sophomore year in college in Sweden at a Folkhögskola (rural, residential community college) where I learned Swedish primarily by total immersion—a humbling experience. This gave me first-hand empathy for immigrants' challenges. Compared to the way I learned French for four years in high school, my Swedish was much more fluent, idiomatic and useable—albeit, with grammatical “irregularities.” I learned Swedish primarily with my ears, but French with my eyes and it interested (and still interests) me that the way we learn a language enormously impacts our facility with it. So when I returned from Sweden, I volunteered to teach ESL to immigrants in Minneapolis.



Where do you teach now, and how long have you been there?

Roberto Clemente Community Academy, a high school, CPS – 7 years. Before that, suburban schools: Highland Park HS, Addison Trail HS as well as Truman & Harold Washington City Colleges just after my M.A. in Linguistics at UIC in 1991.

Many teachers say that they wouldn't be caught dead teaching high school. Why did you choose that level? Are there some misconceptions about teaching that level that you would like to address?

Poverty, initially. It's no little secret that piecing together part-time adjunct college jobs barely feeds you. But now that I've been hooked for over a decade—far above the average run of a K-12 teacher (50% quit after 5 years)—I find the challenges and rewards endorphinic. When you meet kids whom you can barely communicate with in September, and for five days a week, 1 ½ hours a day/class encourage them through Grammar Chants, learning to Google,

looking at a picture book of Day of the Dead and telling the story in English, figuring out how to take the bus, researching and presenting on museums in Chicago, writing about their grandparent, writing interview questions about their break and trying them out on a classmate, and then in January, you realize you're having a conversation with them, it's a rush—endorphins.

And a high school teacher can make quite an impact on his/her students' future. I have my advanced students research jobs and colleges, practice job interviews (good present perfect practice, “How long have you been...”) and we visit a college. It's meaningful to facilitate students whose parents often aren't able to help them become aware of their options because they are new here too. (It's a Chicago Public School (CPS).) So it's rare I have an existential crisis—no stranger stalking me when I walk on the beach (Camus). If anything, this job is too meaningful!

Misconceptions about teaching high school? Not really. Most of the gonad-driven stereotypes hold. But here's the biggest difficulty compared to adult ed: discipline. There are kids who don't want to be in school who make it difficult for the many who do. The extension on “it takes a village...” is: it only takes one kid to destroy a village, or a classroom. And each “event” is unique. You deal with it on its own terms, depending on all the dynamics and personalities in the room; there's no pat response to students unable to regulate their emotions beyond warding it off from the start with interesting lessons and a smart seating chart. An example: Once a student was throwing paper balls whenever I turned my back to write on the board. I didn't say anything. The last two minutes of class I gave everyone else a sheet of scratch paper, had them wad it up, and on the count of three, we all threw them at him. They loved it. Then he (it's usually he) had to pick them up.

Another challenge that K-12 teachers have is that we have ELLs who need Special Education for a variety of reasons—behavioral, learning, emotional—who are undiagnosed or whose paperwork from their home country never materialized. The difficulty of discerning a disability compounded by language interference and possible lack of or sub-standard schooling makes it complex. CPS doesn't have enough Special Ed Bilingual teachers even if we

could, miraculously, get IEPs for the kids who need them—a long process. For this reason, most CPS ELL teachers must be de facto special ed teachers too.

Please describe an especially memorable teaching experience you've had.

My ESL2 class reads a simplified *Romeo & Juliet*. At the end, we have a trial where the Montagues & Capulets sue Friar Lawrence for the deaths of their children. All the students have a part. The most advanced are the lawyers, the most limited one, the bailiff. Invariably, the lawyers get in a heated disagreement where the judge cannot get order in the court, so the F student has to pull apart the A students. That always generates uproarious laughter.

My advanced students work in pairs to collect specific information and give a research speech about a famous building in The Loop in Chicago. We then go downtown with maps so students have to find their buildings and tell the rest of the group about the date, architect, what makes the building stand up, its historical significance, etc. It's beautiful to see the expressions on their faces when they spot their building for the first time, then are able to educate the rest of their peers about it. The empowerment is visible and a treasure to any teacher.

Why did you decide to join ITBE?

I need the mental stimulation, new teaching ideas from the annual convention. I want to be part of a community of professionals who articulate our needs and the needs of our students.

Are there issues that you would like to see ITBE address in the near future?

State testing. 11th grade ELLs are going to have to take the Prairie State & ACT test instead of the IMAGE test, which is modified for ELLs, because the Federal Department of Education deemed it too easy. They'll have accommodations, but so far, those are only to translate the directions and maybe allow more time to an already long test. The vocabulary isn't modified. The scores count toward the school's progress, so since our ELLs can't succeed on this difficult test, this can lead to more schools on probation being shut down, and union teachers losing their jobs as charter schools come in. Teachers of ELLs and their students will look bad. This happens in April and is a new wrinkle this year.

(continued from page 9)

www.iamme.org). These policy recommendations and possible accommodations, outlined below, had been officially approved by the Illinois Bilingual Advisory Council (IBAC) on November 16, 2007 and forwarded to the State Superintendent for ISBE's consideration

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Issue an overall statement from ISBE indicating that there is a state of flux currently with regards to the academic achievement testing of ELLs
Put school status on hold for 2008 and 2009 until the new academic assessment for ELLs is in place.

Only report ELLs for participation but not the actual scores. If this is not possible, then the State should not act on the punitive sanctions of NCLB with regards to AYP and AMAO.

Exempt ELLs ISAT/PSAE scores for those who have a level three or less (composite score) on the ACCESS test.

Exempt ELLs who have been in an Illinois school for fewer than two academic years.

Solicit continual and timely input from various groups including IELLAAC, the state test review committee, and the Illinois Bilingual Advisory Council.

POSSIBLE ACCOMMODATIONS

Allow ELLs to write extended responses in the native language, and use a different rubric for scoring ELLs' extended response in English.

Provide access to comprehension for students in TBE programs who have been schooled in their native language through various means: side by side translation in one booklet for the five to six most common languages; directions clarified in native language orally (on site); dictionaries for all other languages.

Provide shorter testing sessions, extended time, and more breaks during testing.

Provide graphics, organizers, pictures and other visual supports.

Read items aloud, explain and clarify directions using both scripted and unscripted language.

It is important to note that these recommendations and accommodations are based on input from educators in the field of bilingual education and that, as of this writing, there has been no official response from the ISBE regarding any of these recommendations and accommodations.



Debbie Sternecky
*Brooks Middle School and
National-Louis University*

Pair Work Websites

Using pair work (dyadic interaction) in an ESL classroom provides students with an authentic way to interact with each other using the target language as they complete the assigned task. According to Kathryn A. Harris of the NCSALL Lab School at Portland State University, with pair work activities, “pairs often must negotiate how to work together and how to communicate meaning, rephrase statements, ask for clarification, and search for the correct words as they jointly determine the best way to complete the task” (Harris, 2005). In addition, instead of all students having the same learning experience as they do in traditional classrooms, working in pairs gives students an opportunity to learn based on their individual needs (Harris, 2005b).

For some great ideas on how to set up your classroom to maximize the benefits of working in pairs, go to http://www.tefl.net/teacher-training/teaching_tip_01.htm.

One of my favorite sites for finding pair work activities is in the “Idea Cookbook” of Dave’s ESL Café <http://www.eslcafe.com/idea/index.cgi>, a site which contains countless activities which have been created by teachers for other teachers’ use. This site is easy to navigate. From the Idea Cookbook main page, scroll down and click on “Speaking.” There you will see literally hundreds of pair work (and group) activities that you can immediately use in your classroom. Most of these require little or no advance preparation. Beware: because of this website’s user-friendly, fun interface, you may lose all track of time when visiting Dave’s ESL Café (I’ve personally lost several hours while exploring it over the past few years).

For a site that’s a bit more challenging to use, but which offers printable pair work activities to use in your ESL classroom, go to ESL-Lounge <http://www.esl-lounge.com/>. Included here are information-gap exercises (where each person in the pair has a different part of a story and needs the information from the other person’s story in order to fill in the gaps), and those where students need to locate someone in the room who has a

certain quality (these can also be used as effective ice breakers in the beginning of the year). There are also simple questionnaires that can be used to reinforce specific grammar concepts. For example, if you are covering “simple past tense” in your class, students can use a questionnaire in which they ask each other what they were doing on a specific day during the past week.

To access these worksheets from the ESL-Lounge home page, scroll down until you find the “Levels” heading on the far left side of the page. Click on the desired activity level (which ranges from Beginners to Proficiency level). From there, look for the subheading “Pairwork Activities.” Under this heading, you need to scroll past many ads in order to get to the actual activities. Some of the activities are written using British English or have British references, so be sure to look over the pages carefully, and make necessary changes, before printing.

Regardless of whether you use activities from Dave’s ESL Café, ESL-Lounge, or those of your own creation, you will find that your students will become more engaged and will develop their oral language proficiency faster through the use of pair work activities in your ESL classroom!

Do you have a favorite ELL website or computer tip you would like to share with your ITBE colleagues? If so, please e-mail Debbie Sternecky at dsternecky@yahoo.com. Feel free to e-mail education-related technology questions to Debbie as well.

Debbie Sternecky, ESL teacher at Brooks Middle School in Bolingbrook and adjunct technology instructor at National-Louis University.

References

Harris, K. A. (2005a). Meaning negotiation in beginning adult ESL class activities. Manuscript submitted for publication.

Harris, K. A. (2005b). Same activity, different learning. *Focus on Basics: Connecting Research and Practice*. Boston, MA: NCSALL. Available December 2005 at <http://www.ncsall.net>



Kerry Urquizo

ESL Specialist, Heartland Community College

This is my first opportunity to take a stab at writing for News Bites. In my search for newsworthy articles, I encountered quite a few stories about presidential candidates' views on immigration. Although it is only the fifth most important topic raised by candidates at this time, there are still quite a few stories. Because I have a feeling that most of the candidates will flip flop on the issues for the next eleven months, I decided to choose stories that simply shape the debate on immigration.

“Sanctuary City”

One of the newest terms found in the immigration debate recently is *sanctuary city*. This phrase has become negative when used by some politicians and special interest organizations to “out” rivals who are helping immigrants. The term “sanctuary city” was recently discussed in a *Chicago Tribune* article. By definition, a *sanctuary city* is one that adopts a “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy about the immigration status of people. The word “sanctuary” was used by immigration back “in the 1980s, when some U.S. churches said they would offer *sanctuary* to refugees from civil wars in El Salvador, Guatemala, and other Central American countries.” Today a *sanctuary city* is one that offers “most municipal benefits and services such as schools and emergency medical care, or when it involves victims of or witnesses to crimes. The policies generally don’t extend to those arrested for criminal offenses or convicted of crimes.”

In a recent debate, the Republican candidates were tossing the term around like a hot potato, back and forth, to slam their opponents. Rudy Giuliani was accused of “running a sanctuary city” back in his New York days by Mitt Romney. Giuliani retorted with a comment about Romney running a *sanctuary mansion*, referring to his use of illegal immigrants at his residence. The word *sanctuary city* has turned the immigration debate ugly. Stay tuned to see what happens. Anderson, Lisa. “Sanctuary Cities’ Draw Fire, No Light.” *Chicago Tribune* 12 Dec. 2007.

“State Break on Tuition for Illegal Immigrants”

Another hot topic fueling the debate on immigration this year is a four-year-old law found in ten states across the U.S. that allows children of illegal aliens to pay in-state tuition rates at public universities. Illinois is among the states that offer this

benefit. A survey of universities showed that only 300 students used this benefit this year rather than the projected number of 2,200 students. Because so few illegal immigrant families are using the tuition break, many politicians at both the state and federal levels are using the numbers to stir up the debate. Erickson, Kurt. “Few Illegals Use State Break on Tuition.” *The Pantagraph* 6 Dec. 2007.

“Itching to Vote”

It seems like every time any of my students become legal citizens, the first thing they want to do as citizens is to get out there and vote to make a difference in their new community. If you hear of students getting that itch to vote in the upcoming election, warn them to **WAIT** until they are **legally** able to do so. Unfortunately, one Bloomington Illinois citizen-to-be registered to vote, went out to vote, and could be deported for her actions.

Beth Keathley, a Filipino immigrant, voted in her first U.S. election last year and is now facing deportation because of it. She was on her way to becoming an official U.S. citizen when she mentioned to an immigration officer that she voted in last year’s election. She lost her job and is now facing deportation for her alleged crime.

This is how it happened. Keathley simply went to the secretary of state’s facility in Bloomington to get a state ID. A state employee offered to register her for the Motor-Voter program. She assumed that because a state official was offering this to her, it was ok to register.

Keathley’s problems occurred because of two major loopholes. One, state employees are prohibited by federal law to ask immigrants if they are legal or not. Second, she apparently checked a box stating she was a citizen, although she does not remember doing so. Beth Keathley is now facing voter fraud and deportation charges for what is possibly a simple mistake. Be sure to inform students so they, too, don’t make the same mistake. Olivio, Antonio. “Citizenship in Sight, Then She Voted.” *Chicago Tribune* 3 Dec. 2007.

“Lottery Visa Now a Terror Risk”

Just recently, I got several French emails from one of my Congolese students announcing a forthcoming immigration lottery for new U.S. citizens from around the world. This program, created by Ted Kennedy in 1990, grants 50,000 visas a year to citizens in 170 countries around the world. A majority of my students were lucky enough to be selected for the “diversity visa” to come to the United States. Unfortunately, in a new report by the Government Accountability Office (GAO), investigators have found that this program has been corrupted by possible terrorists around the world. Perhaps this loophole will be the next on the docket for the politicians to debate.

Pinkerton, James. “Gao Audit Warns of Visa Terror Risk.” *Houston Chronicle* 1 Dec. 2007.



Call for Nominations Illinois TESOL•BE Executive Board

Network With Your Peers, Represent Your Geographic and Teaching Areas, Participate in Planning Professional Development Activities, Work for Changes in the Educational System!

WE ARE LOOKING FOR NOMINATIONS FOR THE FOLLOWING POSITIONS

Nominate a Colleague or Yourself!

Deadline 3-15-08

VICE PRESIDENT

- Serves as the President elect of the Association from June 2008 - 2009 and presides at all official occasions when the President is absent
- Serves as President of Illinois TESOL•BE from June 2009 -2010
- Serves as Past President, and ITBE liaison to TESOL, from June 2010 - 2011

MEMBERS-AT-LARGE (A member-at-large works on one of the following committees and attends regular monthly board meetings)

- Elected to a three-year term, from June 2008 - 2011
- Serve as members or chairs of the active committees of Illinois TESOL•BE (see brief descriptions below)
 - **Annual Convention**—plans, publicizes, implements, evaluates annual Association Convention
 - **Awards**—publicizes awards given by the Association, evaluates applications, publicizes granting of the awards
 - **Budget**—submits annual budget for Association, solicits committee budget requests, oversees financial matters
 - **Membership**—plans events to promote/retain membership in the Association, manages registration and membership procedures, materials, and personnel at all Association-hosted events
 - **Newsletter**—solicits articles and news of the Association, plans, edits, and publishes quarterly newsletter
 - **Nominations**—prepares and manages annual election of Association
 - **Part-time Issues**: represents concerns of part-time instructors and explores ways to advocate on their behalf
 - **Planning**—conducts long term planning for Association, initiates executive projects, aligns funding for projects
 - **Professional Concerns**—represents and promotes Association, prepares testimony, researches and disseminates relevant issues and legislation, acts as liaison to TESOL
 - **Professional Development Events**—plans, prepares, promotes, implements, evaluates 2 or more events annually apart from the annual convention
 - **Publicity**—disseminates information about Association to members, TESOL, other orgs, public and private agencies, media, etc.
- Participate in the business and activities of Illinois TESOL•BE
- Support the officers and other members of the Board by regularly attending board meetings

Please fill out the form below and email to nominations@itbe.org or mail form by 3/15/08 to address below.

Your Name: _____

Your Address, Phone, and Email: _____

Name of Your Nominee: _____

Nomination For: (Check one) Vice President Member-at-Large

Nominee's Address, Phone, and Email: _____

I/this person would make a good candidate because: _____

This person would be most interested in serving on the following active committees (Member-at-Large only): _____

Send to:
Kasia Stadnik, Chair, ITBE Nominations
English Language Institute
Campus Box 6123, Illinois State University
Normal, IL 61790-6123

Email: nominations@itbe.org
A nomination form is also available on the Illinois
TESOL•BE web site – www.itbe.org

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

NEW RENEWAL DATE _____

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE

Name(s) of Employer(s): _____

NAME _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone () _____

Work Phone () _____

Fax () _____

E-mail Address _____

Check if change of: Name Address

Check if you **DO NOT** want your name published in our state directory:

1 YEAR MEMBERSHIP

Regular \$35.00

Student * \$20.00

Joint ** \$60.00

2 YEAR MEMBERSHIP

Regular \$60.00

*ITBE memberships run the calendar year
from the month you join. e.g. May 2004-2005*

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	
Check #	_____
Amount:	_____
Received:	_____

I am a member of: IEA/NEA IFT/AFT NABE IACEA TESOL
I work primarily in: Adult Education Elementary Education Secondary Education Higher Education

I am interested in working on the following committee(s):

<input type="checkbox"/> Convention	<input type="checkbox"/> Membership	<input type="checkbox"/> Professional Concerns	<input type="checkbox"/> Exhibits and Advertising
<input type="checkbox"/> Awards	<input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter	<input type="checkbox"/> Nominations	<input type="checkbox"/> Part-Time Issues
<input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising	<input type="checkbox"/> Publicity	<input type="checkbox"/> Technology	<input type="checkbox"/> Professional Development Events

I would like to receive the ITBE newsletter by (check one) : ___mail ___e-mail

Make checks payable to Illinois TESOL•BE

Mail your check and this form to: Executive Secretary, Illinois TESOL•BE, PMB 232, 8926 North Greenwood Avenue, Niles, IL 60714-5163
 Illinois TESOL•BE will assess a fee of \$50 on all returned checks. Purchase orders cannot be accepted. For credit card payments, please use our online registration at www.itbe.org.

* Student membership applications must be accompanied by verification of full-time enrollment (e.g., current semester registration).

** Family members residing at the same address may apply at the joint membership rate.

Membership in Illinois TESOL•BE is separate from membership in TESOL.

The Professional Planner

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| Feb. 29-
Mar. 1 | 34th Annual ITBE State Convention
Holiday Inn Select, Naperville
Contact: www.itbe.org |
| Mar. 5-7 | IACEA Conference
Springfield Hilton, Springfield, IL
Contact: www.iacea.net |
| Mar. 29-
Apr. 1 | AAAL 2008
Omni Shoreham Hotel, Washington DC
Contact: www.aaal.org |
| Mar. 30-
Apr. 1 | National Conference on Family Literacy
Louisville, KY
Contact: www.famlit.org |
| Apr. 2-5 | TESOL 2008
New York Hilton & Sheraton, NY
Contact: www.tesol.org |
| Apr. 25-27 | COABE Annual Conference
Adam's Mark Hotel, St. Louis, MO
Contact: www.coabe.org |
| May 25-30 | NAFSA Annual Conference
Washington DC
Contact: www.nafsa.org/washington |



Illinois Teachers of English to
Speakers of Other
Languages • Bilingual Education

PMB 232
8926 N. Greenwood
Niles, IL 60714-5163

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Normal, Illinois
Permit No. 1

Make a Mark, Teach English English Language Fellow Program

Applications for the Academic Year 2008-2009 English Language Fellowship are currently being accepted.

- All fellowships are federally-funded professional positions.
- Assignments are for a ten-month period (typically from September to June).

Eligibility Requirements

- U.S. citizenship
- Master's degree with focus on TESL/TEFL (must be conferred by June 1, 2008)
- Fellows must have minimum two years professional TESL/TEFL experience; both teacher training and curriculum/material development experience are helpful.
- Senior Fellows must have minimum four years of teacher training experience; overseas experience in TEFL is helpful.

For more information or to apply online, view the EL Fellow site at:

<http://elf.georgetown.edu>

Questions? Contact the Midwest Recruitment Center Staff of the English Language Fellow Program: Nancy Stephani, stephani@fvtc.edu, (920) 735-4844, Rose Zoesch, zoesch@fvtc.edu, (920) 735-4728 OR English Language Fellow Program at Georgetown University, Center for Intercultural Education and Development. Email: elf@georgetown.edu. Tel: 202-687-2608. Fax: 202-687-2555