

ITBE Newsletter

The Techniques and Characteristics of a Good Reading Teacher

Kathryn M. Kircher
Co-Treasurer of ITBE

What makes a good reading teacher? As Jack Richards noted (1990), for all of the articles published, textbooks written, and information circulated about the reading process and best practices in a reading classroom, there is very little written about the characteristics of good reading teachers themselves. What do skilled teachers do in their classrooms? How do they behave? What techniques do they use? What are the characteristics of such teachers?

Richards' article piqued my interest

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and prompted me to follow his example of observing a reading teacher who is highly respected by her students, supervisor, and peers alike. So through personal interviews with the teacher and her supervisor, approximately three hours of classroom observations, and a brief literature review, I sought the answer to this question: what are the techniques and characteristics of a good reading teacher?

As I reviewed the information that I had collected, the strengths of this reading teacher fell into two basic categories: her classroom techniques and the personal characteristics which influenced her teaching style. Using my observations as a foundation, I came up with the following list of techniques that Teacher L demonstrated in her Reading and Writing class.

TECHNIQUES

Knows and Communicates Strategies and Skills

One of the most notable strengths in Teacher L's techniques was her knowledge of the skills and strategies students need to improve their reading and her ability to communicate that knowledge to her students. During the classes I observed, Teacher L gave information that enhanced her students' understanding of American rhetorical forms such as compare-and-contrast essays and newspaper articles. She also introduced the strategies of skimming and scanning. In addition, she guided the students through pre-reading strategies such as understanding the purpose of the title and taking the time to activate previous knowledge about the main idea of an article. She also took steps to make sure that the students understood the basic vocabulary of the

reading. Another skill she taught was the use of journaling as a means for the students to reflect on what they had read. In my interview with her, Teacher L explained the high value she placed on helping her students develop their critical thinking skills. These various skill areas were presented both in situations that were part of her lesson plan as well as in situations where she simply recognized a teachable moment, an opportunity to present these skills in context.

Gives Students Feedback Regarding Their Reading Performance

A second notable aspect of Teacher L's techniques was the way she gave students multiple opportunities to know how their reading performance was stacking up. In addition to timed reading tests, her students were also able to measure their performance through comprehension questions and vocabulary-usage drills. They also received encouraging and enthusiastic verbal feedback from the teacher during class discussions. Another type of feedback the students received was her written comments on their journal entries related to their readings.

An additional means of feedback for the students was through the "jigsaw" activity that was done twice during the four-week session: students read different articles on the same theme and then came together to share and compare their articles. Because this activity required enough understanding for the students to be able to teach someone else about what they learned in their reading, the students were able to get another picture of their reading-skill level.

(cont. on page 5)

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.

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Message From The President

Fabiola Ehlers-Zavala, Illinois State University



This 2004 will remain in my memories as a year to look back with joy and gratitude, and here is why: ITBE turned 30 years old, and I was privileged with the opportunity to serve as ITBE's President. This year's annual convention, held on February 27-28, represented another milestone in the life of ITBE. At Navy Pier, we celebrated the organization's "birthday" together with hundreds of attendees! What does turning 30 mean for ITBE? By no means do I claim to have the answer, but I can share with you at least one perspective.

First, turning 30 illustrates that ITBE is truly committed to **you**, its membership, and to our field: **ESL and bilingual education**. Over the years, the organization has grown steadily, and each day we continue to work towards its improvement and enhancement of current practices to do our best possible job.

Second, ITBE has been continuously providing you with an opportunity to engage in transformative education--this year's convention theme, which entails taking the steps to actively educate others around us about what we do in ESL/bilingual education. How can this be accomplished? Here are some suggestions:

- ◆ Pledge your yearly support to ITBE by paying your annual dues in a timely manner so that we can continue to function. Always, remember that even non-profit organizations need funding to sustain their professional activities.

- ◆ Recruit others to become members so that we can continue to grow! Remember that you do not have to be an ESL or a bilingual teacher to join ITBE. Get your peers who teach in general-education classes or those who are not in our field to join. In order to meet the needs of English language learners (ELLs) at all levels, we must all work collaboratively. The more our non-ESL/Bilingual colleagues learn about our field, the better prepared they will be to work collaboratively with us!

- ◆ Take advantage of the various opportunities for involvement ITBE offers you. For instance, you may contribute articles or some other feature to the newsletter, which is published four times a year. You may

become active in the special interest group or SIG pertaining to your level of teaching (elementary, secondary, higher ed, and/or adult ed.). You may contact us and express your interest in chairing a committee or actively becoming a member in one of them.

- ◆ Run for election to become actively involved within the ITBE board. Believe it or not, we need you. Bringing new people on board helps us stay renewed! A board that brings together experienced members to mentor new members who come with fresh ideas and energy to work can produce wonderful results! To this I can attest with my own experience. Senior board members welcomed me a couple of years ago, and supported me to become this year's ITBE President. I believe we have had a very productive and innovative year, resulting from our commitment to service and our sustained collaborative work.

Third, turning 30 means that we have nicely matured to thrive well into the future. We have already made it into the twenty-first century, and there is a lot of energy within the board to engage in continuous and ongoing organizational improvement. For three decades, this organization has stayed alive, and our goal is to continue to adapt to meet future challenges.

Finally, since this is the last time I will contribute to the ITBE newsletter in the capacity of ITBE President, I would like to thank you all for the opportunity you gave me to grow professionally. Also, I would like to especially thank each board member for all the work accomplished during my presidency, and the continuous support each has given me. Words cannot really convey my gratitude.

I wish you all my very best for a happy transition into the next year!

Sincerely,

Fabiola Ehlers-Zavala
ITBE President

How to Accomplish our Continued Success in ESL/Bilingual Education:

- ❖ Pay your dues
- ❖ Recruit others
- ❖ Get involved
- ❖ Run for election



Your Board At Work

Madonna Carr

University of Illinois at Chicago

Highlights from the November, January, and February Board Meetings

Under the guidance of Board President, Fabiola Ehlers-Zavala, the Board has been very busy at the past four meetings planning the annual Convention, which was held at Navy Pier on February 27-28th. Alan Seaman, this year's Convention Chair, worked extremely hard to assure that the Convention would run smoothly. Second Vice-President Elect, Paul Angelis, and Past Second Vice President, Ana King, assisted Alan in planning and during the Convention. The processing of memberships and registrations was managed by Executive Secretary, Yasmin Rainey, and co-Treasurers, Kathryn Kircher and Jocelyn Graf. Marsha Santelli,

Chair of Exhibits and Advertising, was extremely busy coordinating the set-up of the Exhibit Hall to facilitate the interaction between attendees and exhibitors. Along with her committee, Betsy Kubota, Chair of the Awards Committee, reviewed the submissions for the annual awards presented to the winners at the Convention luncheon.

The Convention requires an incredible amount of time and effort and the Board would like to thank everyone who planned, managed, presented, and especially volunteered to help in one way or another.

Another project that the Board has been working on is the development and launching of the new ITBE website. Darcy Christianson, the Chair of the Ad Hoc Technology Committee, volunteered her talents and time to cre-

ate the new website, which went live in January. The new website has many new features for members which will make information about the ITBE Convention, events, jobs, and exchange of information between members much easier. It will also save the organization a great deal of money in the long run. Darcy did a lot of research which she presented to the Board for consideration and approval. Her work has been exceptional. She has recently relocated to Arizona. The Board thanks her for her contribution. She will be missed.

The Board has also been exploring different avenues to increase organization revenues and more active participation by members. Different options are still being considered. Stay tuned for future announcements on these two critical areas for the future of ITBE. ♦

From The SIGS

Elementary & Secondary SIG News

Maritza Perez, Chair,
Elementary Education SIG
Pam Forbes, Chair,
Secondary Education SIG

Secondary SIG and Elementary SIG co-sponsored a fall speaker event along with the ESL/Bilingual Program of District U-46 on Sat. Nov. 15, 2003 at Larkin High School. Dr. Teddy Bofman was the guest speaker. She gave a two hour presentation on ESL and Learning Disabilities. The event was a huge success with over 100 participants.

This year 54 secondary ESL students and 42 middle school ESL students participated in the ESL Student Writing Contest. Each participant will receive a certificate of participation. The winners will be invited to read their essays at the awards ceremony during the ITBE Annual Convention at Navy Pier.

(cont. from page 1)

When asked to fill out a self-observation form, Teacher L gave herself the highest rating possible for the statement, "I make my system of grading clear to my students so that there is no misunderstanding of expectations." So whether it was grades, verbal responses, written evaluations, or providing activities that gave students the opportunity to assess their own reading abilities, Teacher L gave her students numerous chances to gauge their skills and progress in reading.

Fosters Cultural Sensitivity and Awareness

Another technique which Teacher L used was based on her cultural awareness: she fostered respect for, awareness of, and sensitivity to the cultural differences among the students. Under the section entitled "Culture and Adjustment" in the teacher self-observation form that she filled out, Teacher L gave herself a perfect score, adding the comment, "The longer I teach, the more aware I become of the need for promoting an atmosphere of cultural understanding and mutual respect."

During her class discussions, she demonstrated this high level of understanding and respect for the variety of cultural perspectives the students brought to the class, whether it was how their culture might view the roles of men and women in marriage, or how adoption is accepted and practiced in their country. She not only fostered an atmosphere of respect for various cultures, but she also encouraged students to share information about their countries to increase their understanding of one another. For example, when a student from Saudi Arabia commented that nothing like the compare-and-contrast essay would be found in the writings of his culture, she not only understood his dilemma, but she also invited him to explain the differences to his classmates. In her interview, Teacher L maintained that creating an atmosphere of respect in the classroom was one of her main goals. She stated, "Respect is so important - no one is allowed to put down the beliefs or ideas of someone else."

Helps Students Know Where They Are Headed and Keeps the Class Moving in that Direction

Another area of strength demonstrated in Teacher L's techniques was her ability to help her students understand the rationale, purpose, and direction of their studies. For example, in the initial class she helped the students understand the benefits of and reasons for studying reading and writing. She also explained the value of taking a reading-rate test. Teacher L took a number of opportunities to help students understand the value of learning American rhetorical conventions and preparing for the types of reading and writing tasks they would encounter in American university study. Another way that she helped the class understand the direction in which they were moving was through her review of previous work and relating it to the assignments to come. She also kept the class moving forward along the path she established in a way that respected the students' time and maintained their interest.

Teacher L's ability to keep the class moving forward was demonstrated by her skill in facilitating discussion. She kept the conversation lively and interesting and evoked responses from everyone in the class, yet lost no time in moving the class on to the next point. When the students were doing the timed reading, she encouraged the students to finish the comprehension questions quickly so that their classmates wouldn't have to wait for long. Another way she kept the class moving forward was to start her classes consistently on time and to stress to the students the importance of being on time for class. Her classes moved quickly, smoothly, and engagingly from one topic to another at a pace that kept her students' interest.

Creates a Student-focused Environment

Teacher L used a student-focused way of presenting the material in her class. She was responsive to and reflective of individual students' input during class discussions. She also supplemented the curriculum when student responses made additional materials necessary. Another way she demonstrated her focus on the students was by giving them some choices in her class, such as which reading

assignment they would use as the basis for a compare-and-contrast essay. An additional facet of her learner-focused approach was the way she presented herself as a consultant rather than the students' sole source of learning. In her interview, she expressed a struggle with the tension between being a consultant and a leader in this way:

"I have to monitor myself and make sure that I'm appropriate in my leadership and yet withdrawing from leadership. I want to make sure that they're not left on their own, but yet they have made a personal investment and aren't just dependent on me."

However, despite her concerns, Teacher L did specifically present herself to the students as a consultant and, judging by the students' responses, they were able to view her that way: they came to her with papers they had written for other classes as well as for suggestions for further reading outside of class. In fact, based on consultations with Teacher L, two students began to read new types of works: one student began her first novel in English and another became a regular reader of *USA Today*.

Techniques Point to Characteristics

As I considered the techniques that Teacher L used in her Reading class, there were two things that struck me: first of all, the only techniques that specifically related to reading were her focus on the skills and strategies needed for improved reading and her feedback to the students about their reading performance. All of the other techniques noted here would be utilized by good teachers in every area of second-language instruction - not just reading. Secondly, I noticed that each of the noteworthy techniques listed here was backed by corresponding personal characteristics (see Table A). In fact, it's significant to note that a number of these characteristics were evident in more than one of her techniques.

(cont. on page 6)

(cont. from page 5)

CHARACTERISTICS

Knowledgeable and Well-Informed

One of the characteristics demonstrated by Teacher L was her knowledgeability. On her self-observation form, she gave herself the highest rating possible for the statement, "I keep up to date on new techniques in the ESL profession by attending conferences and workshops and by reading pertinent professional articles and books." That professional commitment, along with the foundational knowledge she had gained through her education and teaching experience, appears to have informed and influenced all five of the teaching techniques and practices which have been highlighted here. Teacher L's knowledgeability, not only about what to teach and how to teach it, but also regarding the cultural differences that could be found among her students, laid an exceptionally strong foundation for this Reading class.

Flexible

Another characteristic of Teacher L that had a positive impact on the classes that I observed was her flexibility; four out of the five techniques and practices mentioned here were supported by this characteristic. Because of her flexibility, Teacher L was able to recognize opportunities to pass on additional information to the students when the occasion arose. For example, when the class was reviewing the answers to some "true-false" questions in response to one of their readings, the teacher recognized that it was a good time to give the students a tip about how to find the right answer for this type of question. Another moment when Teacher L's flexibility was demonstrated was when the class members were giving their reasons for taking Reading and Writing on the first day of class: she was able to capitalize on their responses to shape their understanding of the purpose of the course and its benefits to them.

Motherly

The Academic Director used "motherly" to describe Teacher L, and it seemed to be quite apt. Although this is a characteristic that has the potential to cause some troubles, Teacher L seemed to be motherly in healthy, balanced ways. She had the capacity to set clear guidelines and direction, and to give firm correction when necessary, while maintaining a caring, supportive environment. She made sure students knew where they were going and what was expected of them. She was a "stickler" about students being tardy and didn't hesi-

tate to kindly reprove students who held up the class because of failure to do their homework. Her motherliness was also evidenced in her alertness to the individual needs of her students.

Encouraging

As I reviewed and analyzed my field notes from the time spent in teacher L's class, perhaps the most pervasive category was "encouragement." Comments like, "Very well stated!" "Good!" "You remembered a lot!" and "Very interesting!" peppered her interactions with the students throughout the two classes that I observed. As I looked at the techniques and practices Teacher L used, encouragement was a characteristic that underlay three out of five of the techniques noted here, but it seemed especially evident in the student-focused environment she created. Her encouragement fostered student participation and established a positive classroom affect.

Culturally Sensitive

Another element of the positive classroom affect established by Teacher L was the respect she had for the variety of cultures and nationalities represented in her classroom. According to Casbon, Schirmer and Twiss (1977), it's essential for teachers who find themselves in cross-cultural situations to develop sensitivity to and appreciation for cultural differences in order to be effective. These authors hold up this characteristic as a test of a teacher's professional maturity, a test that Teacher L passed with flying colors, in my opinion. She was personally aware of many facets of the students' cultures and seemed genuinely interested in learning more as she led class discussions. Her cultural sensitivity laid the foundation for the techniques she used in her classroom to encourage this same kind of respect and sensitivity among her students.

Caring

A final outstanding characteristic of Teacher L manifested itself in many ways but can be summed up as caring. She clearly cared about her students and their success, a characteristic that was especially manifested in her warmth and responsiveness to her students. Her caring was also apparent in her readiness to help these students in any way she could, as evidenced by her personal attention and suggestions for the two students who were ready to move on to other types of reading outside of class.

Casbon et al. (1997) assert that caring is a key element in a successful multicultural

learning situation. According to their analysis, caring is characterized by being open to another's perspective and responding appropriately. It includes acceptance, nurturance, and grace. All of these facets of caring were evident in Teacher L's classroom.

CONCLUSION AND APPLICATION

To me, the most striking outcome of observing Teacher L and analyzing her techniques and characteristics was the power of her personality. Of course Teacher L's classroom techniques and practices were noteworthy. However, it seemed to me that without the personal characteristics that undergirded these techniques and practices, I probably would not have been directed to Teacher L as an exemplary Reading teacher.

There was much that I could learn from Teacher L. Her classroom techniques and practices demonstrated a clear understanding of reading pedagogy that gave me additional motivation to continue my own studies. However, it was evident to me that the heart that I bring to my students -- whatever warmth, whatever cultural sensitivity and respect, whatever encouragement I can bring -- will also have a potent effect on my efforts to be a good teacher.

When I asked her how she would describe a good Reading teacher, Teacher L did a good job of encompassing the need for both sound techniques and empathetic characteristics: A good Reading teacher is someone who loves to read, loves to teach, and loves students, and who is willing to take the time and energy necessary to incorporate those things into a successful classroom experience.

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Being Negative

by Kristin Lems © 2003

Have you ever been told you were "being negative?" I bet you responded indignantly (to what was probably a parent) that you were quite sure they were mistaken--you knew what negative was, and it certainly was not you, end of conversation.

So now you're teaching ESL, and you really know what "being negative" is all about. After all, you teach the negative every day, don't you? By now, it is easy to detect, describe, and explain it, right?

Or is it? If there's one thing that nearly twenty years in the classroom has taught me, it's that the obvious is not always so obvious, and the pat answer may be leaking exceptions out the sides. Figuring out what is, and is not, negative is one such tricky domain, and it requires considerable time teaching ESL at several levels of proficiency to see just what words comprise it, and exactly how they work.

Now, all English teachers would certainly say they know how to teach their (L1) students about negatives, such as how to avoid the double negative (literally a "no-no") and how to correctly attach negatives to auxiliaries and modals, using apostrophes. But only an ESL teacher knows the deeper, more elusive nature of negatives and is able to identify those words that may look neutral in the bright light of day, but carry a negative charge when examined under the special lighting of the ESL classroom.

Let's take the word *any*, for example. English-speaking schoolchildren do not learn that *any* is a negative word. It's not a part of a verb, and it's not likely to cause errors in writing sentences; thus, it is accorded little or no attention. Yet, no sooner does *any* show up, than the sentence it touches turns negative or, at the least, very "questionable." Now how's a student supposed to discern that *any* constitutes a case of "being negative?" With your expert help, of course. You and you alone hold this important bit of insight..... and, of course, that's why they pay you the big bucks.

The same applies to the seemingly innocuous *at all*, a negative wannabe if I ever beheld one. Who could imagine that these two measly words, in combination, would mean an emphatic 'no'? Not I, for one--not at all! On the surface, a preposition which usually designates a point in time or space (*at*), combined with an adjective meaning something like "complete" or "total" (*all*) would seem to carry a positive valence. But instead, the phrase hooks up with other recognizable negatives to create phrases like "*not at all*," "*no one at all*," "*can't do it at all*," etc. In

fact, there's no way that I know of to take those five letters and make them over as an affirmative--no matter how hard you try, the best you'll get, just as is the case for the word *any*, is a question. The negative, downer stuff sticks to *at all* just like lint. And the previously applied analysis can also extend to the word *yet*, a little burr which is found only in negatives or questions too.

As if these three and five letter negatives weren't enough, negativity pervades a word even shorter than the preceding examples: the two letter word *or*! Who but an ESL teacher would ever know that? How do non-ESL trained English teachers explain why the negative for "I like kumquats and mangoes" requires a change not only in the verb, but in its conjunction, too: "I don't like kumquats OR mangoes?" Those teachers that don't realize or can take on a negative identity, well, they only have one oar in the water!

Another of my favorite negatives in hiding is the seemingly innocuous *anything but*. We get some clue that *anything* is negative from our previous discoveries of the negative static cling of the word *any*, but adding the tail of *but* really adds to the confusion. For one thing, it looks like the words are in the wrong order (*but* is normally found in front of a noun), and for another, it goes with an affirmative verb. When my students read the line in one of our readings that goes, "That bridge is anything but safe," I have found that they think something like, "Hmmm, *anything* could mean old or weak, maybe, and the rest of the sentence probably assures us that at least the bridge is safe." That is exactly the opposite of what the line actually means, which is something like "The bridge is not at all safe!" Here is still another apparently neutral phrase caught in the act of "being negative."

It appears that, just like negativity in psychologically complex people, negativity in words may lurk under the surface, not always obvious to the casual onlooker. It's up to us, the knowledgeable language-doctors, to identify negativity, to accept it when it has a legitimate purpose, to straighten it out when it goes awry, and to "have the wisdom to know the difference." ♦

Kristin Lems is an Associate Professor in the Department of Applied Language at National-Louis University in Chicago and has just completed her doctorate in Reading and Language. Her special interest is in music and language. Her website is kristinlems.com, and her email address is: kristinlems@yahoo.com



Member Snapshot

Name: Laurie Martin

Place of birth and current residence:

I was born in Chicago, grew up in Palos Park, have lived in Galesburg and Oak Park, Illinois, and Besancon, France (for my college junior year abroad). I now live in Palos Park, on the southwest edge of suburbia, with my husband and dog.

Currently working as: I'm a consultant with the Adult Learning Resource Center in Des Plaines. We provide pre-service and in-service training and support to adult- education teachers and administrators in northern Illinois.

Years as an ITBE member: I've been a member for about thirteen years or more (I can't remember when I joined, but it was a while ago). I've been a member of the Executive Board for the past six years.

A couple of memorable experiences: The most interesting ESL class I taught was during one summer when my students asked if we could spend the summer studying Chicago neighborhoods and Chicago history. Some of the students researched neighborhoods, I brought in maps and



other information, and together we learned about eight neighborhoods. We took ourselves on walking tours of four of them. We used public transportation, including Metra, so the students had to navigate those systems as well.

Since I joined the staff at the Adult Learning Resource Center, I have been involved in three curriculum development projects. Materials were developed by a team and then pilot tested in adult - education programs. I was amazed and awed by the volume of work that these projects entailed. It was fascinating and

rewarding to work with colleagues from my organization and adult education programs and see these materials move through an entire process of development--from concept to publication.

An unpleasant experience: At one point in my career, I left my position with a volunteer based literacy program and went to work for a French futures and options brokerage firm. At first, it was exciting to speak French every day, but I found no satisfaction in the business. I returned to adult education within a year and haven't left it since.

Professional passions: I have been interested in strategies- based instruction for the past several years, that is, helping ESL students acquire and use strategies for language learning. I am also very interested in learning disabilities and how they affect adult learners, both native and non-native speakers.

Future plans: I would like to teach another ESL class soon, as I miss working directly with students. As for what the future will hold, it's hard to say. The work we do at the ALRC is grant-driven. I am involved in a reading research project at the moment, but there could be another great project just around the corner.

Beyond Work: My personal goal for this year is to learn how to use a pottery wheel and start playing the piano again. And maybe start on the road of learning Spanish.

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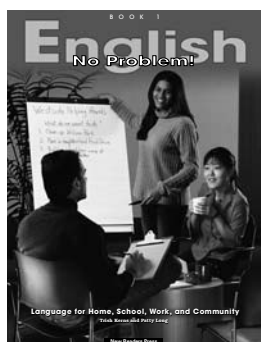
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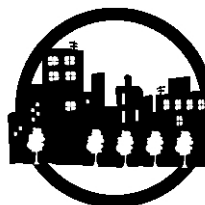
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TEXT BOOKS

Strategic Reading: Building Effective Reading Skills will expand into a three-level text series in December 2003; its low-intermediate and intermediate books will be followed by a new high-intermediate book. Originally published in 2002 by Cambridge University Press, this series deserves a second glance.

The authors, Jack C. Richards and Samuela Eckstut-Didier, designed 60-90 minute lessons centered around units about everyday topics such as clothes, music, travel, friends, and the internet. A unit on clothes includes three high-interest readings: "Dressing for Success," "Casual Dress in the Workplace," and "T-shirts Out; Uniforms In." The readings are adapted from authentic sources: books, newspapers, magazines, and the internet. Though adapted, they retain authentic style and a richness in vocabulary. In fact, one of the major goals of this series is to increase vocabulary and to develop vocabulary-building skills.

There are explicit reading-skill-building activities for each text. In the unit on clothes, the goal is to teach and to improve skills in distinguishing arguments, guessing meaning from context, interpreting meaning in specific contexts, predicting, scanning, skimming, understanding details, and understanding main ideas. Each reading, in fact, has its own set of skill-building activities in an effort at appropriateness. Paragraphs in the readings are numbered for easy reference, and discussion questions are provided. The questions could be used equally well as writing topics; with a little work on the part of the teacher, these could easily be expanded.

The main strengths of the series are the very engaging readings appropriate to a very wide audience and the richness of vocabulary that should challenge but not bewilder. These two strengths are very basic but important, as finding a good collection of mid-length reading material can often prove difficult. Teachers might find the usefulness and ordering of a few of the activities debatable and some exercises a bit short, but with a little inventiveness these weaknesses can be overcome.

If you would like to make use of the internet and its multimedia capabilities, *The Internet and the Language Classroom* is a good staple to add to your professional library. It strikes a nice balance between goals to teach second-language teachers and curriculum designers about the internet, demonstrate how and why to use it in the first place, and provide numerous activities for the classroom.

Author Gavin Dudeney gives the teacher enough information to get started and then allows opportunity to hone skills as time goes on. For the beginner, he spells out email, and for the computer-savvy he outlines browser enhancements; listservs, chat, and internet connection are also covered.

This book provides a solid foundation upon which to build but does not leave the reader with only theoretical knowledge. Over 50 activities, from "Introduction to the Net I," "Introduction to the Net II," "Strange News," and "Film Reviews" all the way to "Discoveries and Inventions" and "Reviewing a Website" should get students clicking away to learn English; these are indexed by level and theme. The more involved projects ("Email Penpal Exchanges," "Writing Projects," and "Web-based Projects") could span an entire semester or year and be integrated into almost any curriculum with adequate computer availability.

A November 2000 publication of Cambridge University Press, this title is still up-to-date even though technology changes quickly. By adding its information to your storehouse of knowledge, you can bring the internet, to whatever extent appropriate, into your classroom. While learning English, students with little to no computer knowledge will gain a valuable skill they never expected. The techie ones will feel right at home and use English to help the rest.

WEB SITES

Free Internet Resources for Adult Literacy Programs

One excellent resource for instructors who are searching for relevant, current, accessible reading materials for their adult students is the **California Distance Learning Project Interactive Learning Resources** (<http://www.cdlponline.org/news.html>). The California Distance Learning Project (CDLP) was created to increase access to adult basic-learning services through the use of distance-learning techniques. Its website revises past and current news stories into a form and level more accessible to ESL students with reading levels that are not high enough to read and understand standard newspaper articles and then offers a variety of detailed online learning activities to reinforce the readings. The CDLP resources are free, and the readings and exercises can be used as interactive online lessons or can be printed out and used in a more traditional classroom setting.

Featured Stories

On the CDLP website, news items are collected and rewritten as a "Featured Story." Each Featured Story includes a "News Report," an "Outline," and a transcript of the original story. The "News Report" is the original news story rewritten to a lower reading level with many of the (cont. on page 12)

(cont. from page 11)
words reduced and the sentences shortened. The "Outline" is a summary of the main points of the story. Below these, the actual transcript of the original news story is made available through a link to the original televised news report.

Curriculum Activities

Each "Featured Story" also includes a set of "Curriculum Activities." These are educational activities that students can use online to practice and expand what they learned from the Featured Story and include topics such as "Vocabulary," "Sequencing," "Drawing Conclusions," and "Show and Tell." In each exercise, students can check their responses by clicking on a button at the end of each lesson.

Show and Tell Responses

By far the most interesting of these exercises is the "Show and Tell" response. In this activity, students have the opportunity to respond to comments made about the "Featured Story." They type in their reactions to

a question about the ideas in the story. Their comments are then posted online for all students to read and respond to. The resulting collection of responses can then be used for further classroom discussion.

Video and Sound Files

Many of the news stories have a video clip of the original newscast. Every page from the news report and outlines to all of the lesson activities has a recording of all of the content on the page for those who want to hear what they are reading. To hear the sound files and view the video files, you may need to download the RealPlayer plug-in/add-on for your browser (it's free!) in order to fully listen to and view their Real/Player files. This can be downloaded for free from <http://www.real.com/player/index.html?src=404>. The web pages are best viewed with Internet Explorer 4.0 or higher or Netscape 4.0 or higher.

Additional Resources

The CDPL website includes further sections with useful resources for

both teachers and students. The first page to visit should be "How to Use the News Stories and Their Lessons." This can be reached by clicking on the Teacher's page button on the "News Stories" page or going directly to <http://www.cdplonline.org/news/teacherpage2.html>.

Finally, the upper right corner of every page on the CDLP website contains a Teacher Resources button and a Student Activities button. The Teacher Resources button leads to a list of links including "Adult Education Resources," "Distance Learning Information," and "Professional Development" (<http://www.cdplonline.org/resorc.html>). The Student Activities button leads to a list of links that includes "How to Vote," "How to be Heard," "Safe Streets," "Employment and Application," and "How to Get a Job" (<http://www.cdplonline.org/studact.html>). ♦

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Elizabeth Minicz, Assistant Professor
Harper College

Chirping Isn't Just for the Birds!

If you have been reading this column for a while, you are aware that the topics covered run the gamut from ESL and bilingual education to language education in general. Several columns included comments on efforts to stave off the extinction of some Native American languages. In light of this columnist's interests in quirky, unusual, odd, language-related stories, here's one that caught my eye in the November 20, 2003 edition of the Chicago Tribune. The headline read, "'Silbo Gomero' whistling language turns tongues again." How's that for an eye stopper? The essence of the story is that in the Canary Islands, silbadores communicate via whistles rather than words. The amazing thing is that the whistles can be heard over distances of at least two miles. According to the story's author, Associated Press reporter Sarah Andrews, "Educators are working hard to save it from extinction by having school children study it until they turn fourteen." If you speak Spanish, you probably know that *silbar* means 'whistle'. Thus the name of the language--silbo. Silbo combines four vowels and four consonants to form more than 4,000 words. Juan Cabello, a speaker of the language, claims it sounds "just like bird conversation." If your computer has sound, go to <http://www.agulo.net/silbo/silbo.mp3> to hear a snippet of dialogue. The language originated in La Gomera, a speck of an island off West Africa. It was used to communicate long distance over the hilly terrain. Moises

Plasencia, the director of the Canary government's historical heritage department claims that "Silbo is the most important pre-Hispanic cultural heritage we have." If you are as intrigued as I am, consider attending the Second International Congress of whistled languages to be held in La Gomera in April, 2005. There may be new meaning to Lauren Bacall's oft-quoted direction to Humphrey Bogart, "Put your lips together and just pucker up and blow." (Or something like that.)

You Say Hispanic, Say Latino

Those of you of a certain age may remember a few verses from a song that went something like this: You say tomato (long A), I say tomato (a = ah); I say potato (long A), You say potato (ah), tomato, tomahto, potato, potahto, Let's call the whole thing off." Well, there's another take on the Hispanic vs. Latino debate in an article in the December 10, 2003, edition of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution by staff writer Yolanda Rodriguez.

In the spring of 2002, the Pew Hispanic Center and the Kaiser Family Foundation asked 3000 adults if they preferred to be identified as "Hispanic" or "Latino." Fifty-three percent said they had no preference. But of those who did have a preference, according to the article in the Atlanta paper, "34 percent chose 'Hispanic,' while 13 percent picked 'Latino.' But even within that group, the preferences varied by where people lived. Texans and people in the South tended to prefer 'Hispanic.' 'Latino' was the term of choice for Californians and people in the Northeast."

Although the preferences of people living in the Midwest were not mentioned, I'm voting for 'Latino' based solely of course on the student organization here at Harper called, Latinos Unidos. How about the rest of you? What do you think, 'Hispanic' or 'Latino?' And if you really want to know the origin of the word 'Hispanic,' read the entire article.

Edutalk-- I Vote for Extinction!

Circle the correct answer. A synonym for essay is:

- a. paragraph
- b. outline
- c. attempt
- d. extended constructed response

If you were a high-school student in Maryland, you would correctly choose "d." Robert Hartwell Fiske, author of the forthcoming Dictionary of Disagreeable English, thinks that introducing educational jargon (educationese or eduspeak) to children is "criminal, dehumanizing." He goes on to say, "You can't have kids going around spouting this stuff." So says an article by Linda Perlstein that appeared in the January 18, 2004, Washington Post. I wouldn't limit my outrage to children using jargon, however. Robert Maeder, a seventeen year-old high-school student in Silver Spring, Maryland, thinks eduspeak is demeaning according to the article. He says, "It's like renaming a prison, 'The Happy Fun Place.' Tests should be called tests. 'Brief constructed response' --you just wonder why they don't say 'paragraph.' It doesn't really serve any purpose renaming them." Ya think?

Not to pick on educators in Virginia or Maryland, but here are a few more examples of obtuseness used in their schools: "Evidence of Student Learning" instead of "Our Students' Work"; "learning cottage" for "classroom trailer"; and "standard units of credit" for classes. In the same article, Georgetown University linguistics professor Deborah Tannen is quoted as saying that she doesn't think jargon hurts children, but she does agree that it is silly. So do I, particularly after almost thirty years spent teaching ESL (or is it ESOL, LEP, ELL, or NNL?) students. ♦



The point at which my students experience grammatical breakdown . . .

. . . is when they are personally, highly emotionally involved in the topic.

*Deborah Sandstrom
Tutorium in Intensive English,
University of Illinois at Chicago*

. . . is when they are excited about conveying a story and they are more focused on telling the story . . .with a lot of intricacies . . .than they are on the accuracy of grammar.

*Margie Kang, retired
Middle/secondary schools, Normal, Illinois*

. . . is when they begin practicing the past continuous tense. I suspect that we would all agree that our students feel uncertain about verb tenses in general. However, they are fairly comfortable and feel quite accomplished as they expand their ability to communicate with the additions of the sim-

ple past and the future to their repertoire of the simple and continuous present tenses. My students, then, temporarily lose this slowly growing confidence in their struggle to internalize the past continuous . . . and especially, reconcile it with the simple past.
Judith Kent, the editor of You Said It

Suggestion for the next issue:

"I believe that Illinois TESOL/BE can best support me in my professional endeavors by . . ."

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Images From ITBE Annual State Convention



ITBE Recognizes Excellence with Awards

Betsy Kubota

McHenry County College, Crystal Lake

Illinois TESOL/BE again this year granted scholarships and awards to ten ITBE members at the Annual Convention on February 28, 2004. These awards were granted to graduate and undergraduate students as well as professionals in the field of ESL/Bilingual education.

The \$1,000 Graduate Scholarship is given each year in honor of Marsha Robins Santelli, who is one of the founding members of IL TESOL/BE and has been actively involved in leading and building this organization for 30 years. Marsha has held each elected office within ITBE and is still very actively involved as the Director of Exhibits and Advertising.

This year, the honor of receiving the \$1,000 Graduate Scholarship went to Barb Linek. Barb is the Adult Education Services coordinator for a family literacy program serving migrant farm workers, called Illinois Migrant Education Even Start. Working at several sites in the Oswego area, Barb is responsible for supervising the adult instructors of ESL, GED, citizenship, and job readiness. Barb started in the field as a middle and high school ESL teacher and has been active in ESL and family literacy for eleven years. Last year she received a grant from the Secretary of State to organize summer reading programs for children of migrant workers. She has presented at numerous state and national conferences, including this convention, and she has written a family literacy curriculum to help parents of bilingual children learn to navigate the American school system. In addition to her coordinator job and teaching evening ESL classes at Joliet Junior College, Barb is working on a Masters degree at Lewis University in Romeoville. Barb is very devoted to her work in family literacy and says, "I believe it is vitally important to provide good quality training to maximize learning." With a Masters degree in

Organizational Leadership, specializing in training, she is sure to reach her goal of becoming a trainer of Adult ESL and Family Literacy instructors.

The \$500 Undergraduate Scholarship is given each year in honor of Jane Curtis. Jane has contributed to Illinois TESOL/BE for more than a decade, serving in almost all capacities. From 2000-2001, Jane served as President of ITBE and was co-Chair of the International TESOL Convention in 1998. More recently, she served as co-editor of the ITBE Newsletter for three years. Jane's leadership abilities continue to be an inspiration to others within ITBE.

This year, ITBE awarded the \$500 Undergraduate Scholarship to Vanessa Andrade. Vanessa came from Brazil to Chicago only two years ago to study ESL as well as linguistics and second language acquisition. Before coming here, she was not only a skilled EFL teacher with many years of experience, but also a director and partner in a language school for children aged 3-15. She has excelled in her studies at Northeastern Illinois University, while still finding time to teach ESL to adults at El Centro and through Evanston Township High School. In her "free time" she is involved in drama and presented a workshop on Drama Techniques for ESL at the ITBE workshop last fall. Vanessa says she is "passionate about second language acquisition." With her passion, determination and intelligence, no doubt many people will benefit from her contributions to the field.

Illinois TESOL/BE also awarded 10 Professional Development Awards, making it possible for the recipients to attend this year's State Convention. These awards cover convention registration fees and one night's accommodations at the Holiday Inn Chicago City Center or transportation costs. ♦

Two of these awards were granted to the recipients of the graduate and undergraduate scholarships, Barb Linek and Vanessa Andrade. The remaining eight awards were granted to: Mary Aquila and Molly Chanson, both master's students in Linguistics/TESOL at University of Illinois-Chicago; Melanie Banta and Kristin Cielocha, both students in Bilingual Education/ESL at Illinois State University; Kathleen Blackburn, MATESL student at University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign; Deborah Hochgesang, master's student in Linguistics/TESOL at Northern Illinois University; Keong Ku, PhD student in Curriculum and Instruction at Southern Illinois University; and Eileen Sotak, ESOL Adjunct Instructor at

National Louis University.

I would like to thank the committee of educators who made these awards possible by volunteering their time to review the applications. The reviewers this year were: Paul Angelis, Southern Illinois University; Karen Carrier, Northern Illinois University; Peggy Kazkaz, Harper College; and Lydia Omori, Harper College.

On behalf of Illinois TESOL/BE and the Awards Committee, I would like to extend our heart-felt congratulations to all of the award recipients!

Betsy Kubota was Chair of the 2003-2004 Illinois TESOL/BE Awards Committee. ♦

Watch for details for next year's applications . . . Look for details on how to apply for ITBE scholarships for 2005 in the upcoming ITBE Newsletters, at ITBE workshops, or online at www.itbe.org. Don't forget to include all the supporting materials required in the guidelines. And be sure to apply in time for next year's convention!

2004 Illinois TESOL•BE Award Winners



Grade 6-8 Writing Contest Winners



Graduate & Undergraduate Scholarship Winners



Grade 9-12 Writing Contest Winners



Professional Development Winners

Illinois TESOL•BE Tenth Annual ESL Student Writing Contest

2003 - 2004

First Place Grades 6 - 8

Debbie Wong

New Year in Taiwan, R.O.C

If you look on a map you would probably find China easily, but have you notice the little island beside China? It's where I came from, Taiwan, Republics Of China (R.O.C). Now, if you know nothing about this island, then listen to my story I will tell you everything I know about it.

Taiwan is a very small island; it's so small that when people first started making maps they didn't even draw Taiwan on the map. The first people who live in Taiwan were Aborigines. They had lived there for thousands of years, but then people from China started going to Taiwan and make it their colonies. Taiwan had been in many wars, with Netherlands,, Japan and many other countries, because they all wanted to take over Taiwan. There was this one country that named Taiwan 'Formosa' which means beautiful mountains island in their language.

But after many wars China still got Taiwan, so now Taiwan is republics of China. They do many things that are similar to China. Taiwan's most important holiday is New Year, same as China and we even celebrate the same way as China! The New Year's Eve whole family member will gather around and eat dinner. We usually eat dumpling on that dinner and inside one of the dumpling there might be a coin. Whoever gets that coin will have good luck for the whole year!

Then the next day is New Year! On the first day of New Year we can't clean our house because if we do then we'll wash out all the good luck. We usually clean our house a week before New Year, we clean our house if you do then we can wash out the bad luck. So on New Year we'd be busy praying the god or go to our family or friend's house to said happy New Year and get red bag. Red bag is a red little bag with money in it, those money were also called "ya shui qian", which mean knock down the monster of the year.

We also light on firecrackers too. We light on firecrackers because we believe that we can scare the monster, year away. Year is a monster that was told in one of the folktale. I'll tell you the whole story, if you want to know just keep reading.

Long ago in China there was this monster called Nian, or year. It live deep under the sea, it comes out every last day in Chinese calendars to eat people. So everybody must move out of the village before the last day of Chinese calendar. But there was this old, blind widow her son and husband get killed by the monster Year, so she is unable to leave the village.

Then the day before the last day of the year an old man came; he was a god that was here to help them get rid of Year. The old man went into the old widow's house and asked her for food. The old widow gave him dumplings. After the old man finished eating, he asked about the monster. The old widow told him about the monster, Nian. The old man said he could help, but the old widow had to keep chopping the pork and find some red clothes for him to wear. Then the next day came and once again Nian came out. So, the old man hurried and light up the firecracker and put on the red clothes. Nian stayed in the sea for a long time and it was quiet and dark, so when it saw the red and heard the firecrackers, it got scared away.

This is why we celebrate New Year and light on the firecrackers. We also put on new clothes and mostly are red. At night the adults are often playing a Chinese game called "ma jiang", it's a game that's played by four people, but I don't really know the rules. We celebrate New Year for 15 days, which is until "Yuan xiao jie". I "Yuan xiao jie" is a holiday too. We eat "tang yuan" during that day. "Tang yuan" is a white or pink rice ball. They taste good. On this day we also take lanterns outside, when it is nighttime.

There are some of the holidays in Taiwan that China doesn't have. Why? Because even the Republic of China, they still have their own holidays. Now, if you look on the map again and you still can't find Taiwan, then just remember that it is a little island beside China. ♦

Illinois TESOL•BE Tenth Annual ESL Student Writing Contest

2003 - 2004

Second Place Grades 6 - 8

Deocelina Chavez

New Year in Mexico

New Year is an important celebration my country just like some other celebrations. New Year is important for most of the people. Many people always add some more things to it but they still celebrate it the Mexican way. My family celebrates it the Mexican way but we add some fun to it. If you want to know how my culture and my family celebrate it you might want to keep reading.

In New Year my family always gets together. My uncles, aunts, cousins and nephews. The party is always at my grandma and grandpa's house, even though they already died. Every year we have a kind of big party. The food we have is tamales, enchilada, pozole, and different kinds of foods each year. Sometimes everybody helps making the food. In the afternoon we go to church. When it starts there's Indians coming in dancing then on the back the priest comes holding up a Crust of Jesus and in it some people carry it. It's beautiful because the priest talks to us about Jesus, Marie, Joseph and God. After Church we have the big party.

Before dinner we give thanks for the food we're going to eat. During dinnertime we take picture and have fun. Then somebody there opens a bottle of sidra. It's kind of like wine but it's not wine because kids can drink it too. Once I took a sip of it and I didn't really like it but each year I take a sip it kind of looks like red wine. Sometimes we go to the living room and put music and have fun. Everybody is excited because the New Year is coming, really soon.

Everyone gets really happy and excited waiting to be 12:00am to come and we get ready. It's a tradition to take grapes out so that when the church bell starts to ring we eat one grape for each bell ring and for each month we make a wish you can eat up to 12 grapes. 1 grape represents a month. You don't have to do it if you don't want to but in my family everyone always does it. It's not a really big sacrifice to wait till 12:00 am because sometimes we stay up until 2:00am.

Once it's twelve we eat the grapes and hug each other. We also give thanks to God for the year we had and hope that the next year is better. We also tell each other Happy New Year. Some people have firecrackers and we watch them although people have to be careful with them.

In conclusion this is how we celebrate New Year in Mexico and how my family celebrates it. There are many different ways people celebrates it but it still has a part of Mexico in their heart and how they celebrate it even if they are in a different continent or country it will still be a tradition that nobody could ever forget. From that New Year in seven more days will have another special day and a very special day for kids the day of "The Three Kings" but that's another story. ♦

Illinois TESOL•BE Tenth Annual ESL Student Writing Contest

2003 - 2004

Third Place Grades 6 - 8

Jacklin Vargas

My Heritage

There are many countries in the world and they have many interesting cultures and lives. But the country I think is the most interesting and unique is Mexico! Because my parents were born over there and the lives that people in Mexico have are the coolest. People in Mexico also celebrate their holidays differently than how we celebrate Christmas and other holidays over in America. If you would like to learn about Mexican holidays and more please continue reading.

An interesting thing about Mexico is that you would wake up in the morning and start hearing people screaming outside your house gas, water, all sorts of food, and other things outside your house. This happens every morning in Mexico streets. People in Mexico start their mornings very early to sell things and to go to work so that they can earn money. Sometimes when they are selling things on the streets the people put on funny music or sounds so that the people who want to buy recognize what they are selling outside your house or near your house. Kids then go to school from around 8:00am to 2:00pm. Schools in Mexico have to wear uniforms in most schools because teachers and principles are sometimes strict.

When the holiday season comes people become very happy and excited that Christmas is almost coming. People start decorating their houses with lights, trees, and Christmas flowers. This is the time of going to church and celebrating baby Jesus birth. People celebrate this by having "Posadas" these parties are celebrated because Mary and Joseph couldn't find a house where Mary could have baby Jesus. So they would go around each house asking if they could stay but the house owners would keep on saying no. So then Mary and Joseph found this little cave and that was where Mary had baby Jesus. The Posadas are celebrated for nine days and there is food and "pinatas" these are big containers that are filled with candy, fruits, and may be even money and then they are decorated from the outside. The kind of food they would have would be rice, beans, tamales which are tamale doe covered from the outside and have chicken in the inside . A couple days before Christmas, people would react how Mary and Joseph had to go around to each house asking if they could stay for the night by doing parades. Kids in Mexico also sing Christmas charols outside people houses. On Christmas Eve people go to church to celebrate that baby Jesus will be born. At midnight all the lights turn off and when the clock strikes n-midnight the church's bells ring and that means baby Jesus is born and all the people start clapping and whistling because the people are very happy. In Mexico little kids don't believe in Santa Clause they believe in Baby Jesus. For example if you want to ask "what did Santa clause bring you" instead in Mexico you would say "What did Baby Jesus bring you?"

On New Years Eve everybody gets together to celebrate the New Year. People make this really big feasts sort of like Thanksgiving day. A special drink is served that people drink it is a fruit punch that has all kind of fruits in it. People sometimes go to church on midnight to celebrate. When the clock reaches midnight people put fireworks and the church's bell ring. People also do this tradition to eat this round circular bread that is called "La Rosca de los Reyes" in Spanish. Everybody eats a piece of this bread. The bread has a little baby doll inside that is suppose to be baby Jesus. Whoever gets the piece of bread with the baby Jesus doll inside she or he will have to make a party on January sixth. When it's midnight people do some things that are beliefs that might help you in the upcoming year. For example people might start sweeping their houses because people say that if you do this all the bad luck will go away. People also grab a suitcase and they walk around the block and this means that you might get lots of vacations. If you eat twelve grapes you will get a better year than last year and if you throw out water this means that it will clean your house from bad spirits. Their is probably more beliefs but this are the only ones I know. These beliefs are only to help you in some way in the new year.

As you read my paper you might of found some different things and beliefs that you have never heard of in your life. But this differences make Mexico cool and unique and this is why this country is my favorite. I love Mexico because of it's holidays and their lives over their that make our family get together very often. I hope you learned something from my paper that you found something interesting or unique about Mexico. ♦

Illinois TESOL•BE Tenth Annual ESL Student Writing Contest

2003 - 2004

First Place Grades 9 - 12

Genelyn Faburada

“Sinulog”

In 1521, a Portuguese explorer named Ferdinand Magellan discovered the Philippines. The king of Spain financed his expedition to the spice island, Moluccas. In his expedition, he brought with him a statue of a boy that is a saint named Sr. Santo Nino and he gave it to the Datu of Cebu. He was killed in Mactan, Cebu so his companions went back to Spain and told the king about the bad news. Then the king ordered a new expedition to the Philippines. They were successful in colonizing the Philippines, and they made Christianity as the only religion in the country.

Sr. Santo Nino became the patron saint of Cebu because he performed miracles there. After that, Sr. Santo Nino was recognized by other cities as their patron saint. In honor of Sr. Santo Nino, they made a feast named "Sinulog" which comes from the word "Saulog" that means to celebrate. "Sinulog" is an offering feast that became one of the Philippine traditions. It is a street dance practiced by the Filipinos. In this event, people wear different costumes worn by our ancestors before. All kinds of people participate or watch the street dancing. People in neighboring cities travel to the cities where "Sinulog" is practiced just to witness the event. Today, we have two categories in "Sinulog": an offering dance and a competition.

When I was nine years old, I participated in our barangay that was one of the candidates in "Sinulog" because of that; I met different kinds of people especially the kids that have the same age as me. We practiced two months before the contest. We were all excited and we couldn't wait for that day to come. When the day of the contest arrived, I wore a colorful costume.

It was a mixture of ethnic and modern styles. Before we went to Santa Cruz, I went to my friend's house, and showed my costume. They were all jealous. After a few minutes, my sister came and told me that we have to go to Santa Cruz because we're going to be late. I went to Santa Cruz with my family.

Before the street dancing started, my family and me attended a mass in Santa Cruz. They were with me because they want to see me dance in the street, and they were supportive. I was really nervous because that was my first time to join. Then we started dancing from Santa Cruz and we stopped in front of the church, we danced there for ten to fifteen minutes and then we continued the street dancing. I was happy to see the audience enjoying our performance. I was really proud of myself because not everyone can feel the way that I felt when I was dancing. After that, we all shouted, "Viva Sr. Santo Nino! Pit Sr.!" at first, I thought that saying those words was embarrassing, but I was wrong because when I experienced it, it was fun.

When we reached ZNNHS, we took a rest and ate lunch for an hour. I started shaking when the contest started because I was really nervous. I was afraid that I might make a mistake. I knew I can do it, but I had second thoughts. When the trainer said that it was our turn, I told myself that I could do it, and no one could stop me. We tried our best to win, as a matter of fact, we used wonderful props and carried the statue of Sr. Santo Nino, and we danced with it.

When we finished dancing, I was relieved. After that, I sat with my family and they said they were proud of me. Next was the awarding, some of the dancers were happy, some were not and we were one of them because we lost. We felt really bad, and we knew that it wasn't enough. What matters is that we tried our best, and we had fun dancing. It was a great experience for me. I'm sad now because I won't be able to join "Sinulog." ♦

Illinois TESOL•BE Tenth Annual ESL Student Writing Contest

2003 - 2004

Second Place Grades 9 - 12

Flamur Pnishi

My Country

For a long time Serbia controlled my country, Kosova. Many people in my country started to get angry and wanted freedom from Serbia. Serbia did not want to give Kosova its freedom. So, In 1998, a war started in my country. Serbia came with guns, tanks, and different dangerous things because they wanted to keep power over Kosova.

I was eleven years old on the first day of the war. That day was a scary day for me. The Serbian army came to Kosova, and they started to kill people, old men and women, young guys and ladies, and babies. I heard a lot of people screaming and crying. My people wanted freedom, and they wanted to live a lone, to have a good life. It was a very strange day-

During the war all schools were closed, and I could not go anywhere because it was very dangerous. My family moved far from our village to my uncle's village because it was safer during that time. We left early in the morning because we were scared that the Serbians would kill us. We took as much as we could from our house, but left a lot there.

After six months Serbians invaded my uncle's village. They came to every door, kicking doors, and they took everyone outside. They said tomorrow we are going to kill all of you. We got very scared, and we went to the city of Prizren because it was safe there. The day we got to Prizren, we called a taxi to escape to Bosnia for one year.

My other uncle lived in Bosnia. When we got to Bosnia, my uncle took us from the airport to his apartment. We got there, we listened to the radio and watched TV. We heard that the Serbians were killing a lot of people, and they were doing a lot of massacres. I felt very strange, and upset when I heard this. I wanted the war to be over in that minute.

After ten months in Bosnia we heard that NATO came to help my country, Kosova. We were very happy because NATO kicked Serbian out and helped us. But not that happy because we heard and we saw a lot of people crying for their children. The Serbians left, but they put a lot of my people in jail.

In 2000 the war ended. Everybody came back to their houses. A lot of people slept outside because they didn't have where to live, no houses. A lot of houses were taken down, broken, and burnt, too.

We moved back to my old house. My house was missing a lot. The Serbians stole a lot of things. They took all things that were important. The roof was missing from our house. We started to work, and to fix some things. We bought a lot of things because we needed them. After a while we fixed our house.

I started sixth grade after the war. When I went back to school my friends were very happy to see me. I was happy to be back in my country. After I finished eighth grade, I moved to the USA. The war was very sad thing for me and for everyone that was hurt in the war. I hope that the war does not happen ever, ever again. As you can see, this was a bad situation. ♦

Illinois TESOL•BE Tenth Annual ESL Student Writing Contest

2003 - 2004

Third Place Grades 9 - 12

Caroline Jungbluth

The Lost City

Not everyone appreciates the riches and the diversity that is found in my culture, but for all Peruvians our culture is very important. It is very difficult for a Peruvian not to know their culture and history, one because you studied at school and two because you heard about it in the streets in jokes or in a conversation.

Peruvians most precious monument is Machu Picchu, or the lost city. This is one of the most exotic places in the world. It was a city built by the Incas in the 1400's. Aguas Calientes, which is the town where Machu Picchu is found gets its money to maintain the town from tourist.

Machu Picchu is a well preserved ruins surrounded by agricultural terraces, the city is build on top of mountains and it is said that on the highest point of the mountain you can find gold. But so far no man has been able reach that high. If you look at a picture of Machu Picchu, and if you turn it

to the side, you will see that the shape of the mountains have the shape of an Inca face.

This tourist place has brought Peru in a favor position, because it encourages Peruvians to learn more about our culture and to appreciate it. In this area many of the food was discovered. Many plates from Peru originated in this place. Its texture colors also originated from this place too. Our government every once a year, donates money to this city for it to become nicer and be able to educate more kids in this poor area.

This empire spread along the coast of Peru, but no cities like Machu Picchu had been found any where else. After the Incas had a governing a great part of South America, The Spanish came to conquered this area and they did, by treating the Incas who did not know of evilness.

Tupac, which was the King of the Empire at the time, was tricked by the Spanish coming to Peru. They got him into prison, which he didn't know what it was, he was suffering for being alone the whole time and not governing his Empire. He told the Spanish that if they let him free, he would give them a room full of gold and two rooms full of silver as high as his hand could reach.

The Spanish agree and told him that before letting him out, he would have to fulfill his promise. And he did as he told them, and after they had the three rooms fill in the Spanish broke their promise and didn't let him out. He was disappointed and told his people to revenge on his name. Since the Spanish didn't fulfill his promise they kill Tupac and took over the Empire.

After setting up their rules, they took as much gold as they could to Spain and made the native people work all day for them and only get one piece of bread. This massacre brought Peru to declare their independence and become free. The Spanish left but they left their language, culture, and religion.

This is a little bit of our rich history, and their still a lot more to discovered that scientist haven't decipher yet. In my case I consider my self lucky because I get to know two cultures. ♦



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**ILLINOIS TESOL•BE ELEVENTH ANNUAL
ESL STUDENT WRITING CONTEST
RULES & REGULATIONS
2004-2005**

ELIGIBILITY- Contestant must be a student who is a full-time student enrolled in grades 6-12 in the state of Illinois, a non-native speaker of English, enrolled in a TBE/TPI program, and the sponsoring teacher must be a current member of Illinois TESOL/BE.

FORM- Essays are to be 500-1000 words (2 to 3 typed pages in English, Font: Times New Roman Size 12, double spaced and neat). Entries must be submitted with a complete cover sheet (enclosed). Cover sheet must include the student's name, home country, name of the sponsoring teacher, name of school, school address, and school phone number. There should be no identifying information on any pages of the essay. This includes any mention of the contestant's name or school.

CONDITIONS- Failure to abide by any of these rules and conditions will result in the disqualification of the student's essay from the competition.

- ◆ Each student may submit only one entry.
- ◆ All essays become the property of Illinois TESOL/BE.
- ◆ All essays must be the ORIGINAL MATERIAL OF THE AUTHOR.
- ◆ The essays must be based on prior knowledge, i.e. this is not a research essay.
- ◆ No teacher editing.
- ◆ No computer editing will be allowed except for spell check, i.e. no grammar check.

**IF A STUDENT HAS PLAGIARIZED ANY PART OF THE ESSAY, IT WILL RESULT
IN IMMEDIATE DISQUALIFICATION.**

TOPIC- Discuss aspects of your culture that you want to share with others, such as holidays, differences in customs, school, culture-shock experiences, other experiences, etc.

JUDGING- Entries will be judged based upon content, organization, vocabulary, language use and mechanics. Criteria for judging will be creativity, writing style, and adherence to form, rules, and conditions.

PRIZES- Monetary prizes (\$150 First Place, \$100 Second Place, \$75 Third Place), certificates of merit, and ITBE ESL Student Writing Contest T-shirts will be presented to first, second, and third place winners in each category (grades 6-8/ grades 9-12). Sponsoring teachers of the winners will receive a one-year complimentary membership to Illinois TESOL/BE added to their current membership and a letter of recognition will be sent to their principals. In addition, the winners will be invited to read their essays at the ESL Writing Contest Awards Ceremony at the Illinois TESOL/BE Annual State Convention. The winners and their sponsoring teachers will be invited as our guests for lunch also at the Illinois TESOL/BE Annual State Convention.

DEADLINE- ALL ENTRIES MUST BE POSTMARKED NO LATER THAN DECEMBER 14, 2004.

MAIL ENTRIES TO:

Illinois TESOL/BE ESL Student Writing Contest
Pamela Forbes
Larkin High School
1475 Larkin Avenue
Elgin, IL 60123

ALL SPONSORING TEACHERS WILL BE NOTIFIED OF THE RESULTS OF THE ILLINOIS TESOL/BE WRITING CONTEST. ALL ENTRANTS WILL RECEIVE A CERTIFICATE OF PARTICIPATION.

**ILLINOIS TESOL•BE TENTH ANNUAL
ESL STUDENT WRITING CONTEST
2004 - 2005**

ESSAY COVER SHEET

(PLEASE PRINT)

NAME OF STUDENT _____
FIRST LAST

GENDER: _____ MALE _____ FEMALE

HOME COUNTRY _____

FIRST LANGUAGE _____

SPONSORING TEACHER _____
FIRST LAST

NAME OF SCHOOL _____

SCHOOL ADDRESS _____
NUMBER STREET
CITY STATE ZIP CODE

SPONSORING TEACHER'S EMAIL ADDRESS _____

TELEPHONE NUMBER _____
(BEST PLACE TO REACH SPONSORING TEACHER)

CHECK THE APPROPRIATE GRADE _____ 6-8 _____ 9-12

MAIL ESSAYS TO: ILLINOIS TESOL/BE ESL STUDENT WRITING CONTEST
PAMELA FORBES
LARKIN HIGH SCHOOL
1475 LARKIN AVENUE
ELGIN, IL 60123

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	April 24-28	Commission on Adult Basic Education National Conference Hyatt Regency Hotel, Columbus, Ohio
	May 19	Illinois Family Education Institute, Springfield, IL
	May 20-21	Illinois Family Literacy Conference, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Springfield, IL
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